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GENERAL

New Retained Award finalised

Both FRNSW and the Fire Brigade Employees' Union are pleased to advise that a new Retained Award was made by agreement last Friday, to operate from 30 May 2014 onward. A tracked-changes version is available at this [link](#) showing the detailed changes. The new Award will improve efficiency, increase pay and allow Retained Firefighters to achieve a better work/life balance. Addressing availability and equity issues has been a key goal of the parties to ensure the retained system is strong, fair and viable into the future. Detailed information sessions by Zone Management teams have now commenced for Retained Firefighters.

The main changes are:

- increased retainers and hourly rates
- realignment of rates to reflect appropriate relativities between the ranks of Retained Firefighters
- creation of new retainer types that will help address shortages at stations while they are experiencing difficulties with availability
- a new requirement, to be rolled out progressively, that Retained Firefighters be available for 80% of the calls received by their station in a 24-hour period per week, that period being nominated by the individual Retained Firefighter in consultation with their colleagues and Captain
- use of a new IT tool that will assist in maintaining availability of minimum crewing at each station
- creation of new hourly rates that recognise Deputy Captains and new Recruits
- streamlining of base retainers so that availability is rewarded on a more equitable basis
- Easter Sunday and any other "additional" declared public holidays to be paid at overtime rates, reflecting a similar provision of the *Permanent Firefighter Award*
- Retained Firefighters to be allowed to take three 'no medical certificate' sick leave days per annum in specified circumstances
- higher rates for Retained Firefighters performing the Community First Responder medical response role
- retention of the Retained Telephone Alerting System Allowance in view of introduction of the new IT tool
- a requirement that Retained Firefighters attend the station or incident within 30 minutes of an incident call to qualify for payment
- a reduced rate paid for relief duties for the first 2 hours but also a new 2-hour minimum payment created
- a new 14km cap on 'incident kilometre' claims for the home-station-home journey
- a new limit on hourly rates payable for Higher Duties at incidents, and
- reduced timeframes involved in managing poor attendance.

The new Award lays the basis for a strong future for the retained system. The basis of the changes came from the Retained Summit, and achievement of the

changes came about because of the goodwill of the FBEU, Retained Firefighters, FRNSW senior officers and management, and the assistance of the President of the Industrial Relations Commission, Justice Walton. In making the new Award, Justice Walton made particular comment on the maturing of the industrial relationship between the FBEU and FRNSW. Despite some of the challenges we face, this can only bode well for the future.

New Minister

Today I met with our new Minister, Stuart Ayres, Member for Penrith, who is also the Minister for Sport and Recreation, and Minister assisting the Minister for Western Sydney. He indicated a strong desire to meet as many FRNSW firefighters and staff as possible, so do not be surprised if he drops in to stations and workplaces following his initial settling in period. I welcome Minister Ayres to the Emergency Services portfolio. I have thanked our former Minister, Mike Gallacher, for his strong support during his tenure.

2014 Fire Station Open Day and launch of Winter Fire Safety Campaign

It is great to see so many firefighters across the State getting behind our Open Day this Saturday 17 May. The event is set to be our biggest ever, with most fire stations indicating that they will be participating. I anticipate considerable coverage of the day in suburban, regional, metropolitan and State-wide media. I look forward to being at 36 Station Crows Nest from 10am on Open Day with the local member for the North Shore, Jillian Skinner, to launch the Winter Fire Safety Campaign.

Information bags have been sent to each participating station, so keep an eye out for yours. If your station hasn't received these yet, please contact the Community Engagement Unit at cedu@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Open Day promises to be enjoyable for firefighters and visitors alike. The activities planned will highlight important fire safety messages to communities across NSW which will contribute to making people safer in their homes this Winter.

Governor presents Australia Day Honours

On Friday 2 May it was with great pride that I attended an investiture ceremony at Government House where the NSW Governor, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO, presented Australia Day Honours, announced earlier this year, to dozens of people. Amongst them were three of our own who were invested with the Australian Fire Service Medal (AFSM). Those receiving the awards were Chief Superintendent Gerry Byrne AFSM; Mosman Station Officer Bill King AFSM, our longest serving permanent firefighter; and Balgownie Captain Greg Fredericks AFSM, who is also President of the Firefighter Championships Association. Congratulations to all three officers on their well-deserved awards.

Retirements after half centuries of service

Last Wednesday I attended a morning tea at 445 Springwood to mark the retirement of Retained Firefighter Stuart Hume who served for almost 53 years of service at 445 and 359 Lawson. Stuart joined 359 in December 1961 and transferred to 445 after nine years where he took over as engine keeper. He retired on 1 January 2014.

Last Friday I also attended the retirement function for Retained Firefighter Kevin Gray from 204 Alstonville. Kevin joined the NSWFB in June 1962 and decided to

retire after almost 52 years of service, during which he rarely missed a call. Firefighting runs in the family, with Kevin's son Jeff formerly a FRNSW member at 204 Alstonville, 316 Goonellabah and 514 Banora Point.

I wish both Stuart and Kevin all the best in their well-deserved retirements and thank them for their more than half a century of dedicated community service.

National Volunteer Week

This week is the 25th anniversary of National Volunteer Week. During this week, the country celebrates the 6 million Australians who generously volunteer their time in many different ways. I thank all of our CFU volunteers for their vital contribution to both FRNSW and the community, in particular during the last busy bushfire season. From its humble beginnings after the 1994 bushfires, our CFU Program has grown to over 7,000 members crewing more than 600 units. I also thank crews at the many stations that provide strong ongoing support to the CFU program. The commitment and support of both our CFU members and stations are paramount in increasing bushfire resilience on the urban / bushland interface.

St Florian's Day – awards ceremony at State Training College

In last Commish's Corner I mentioned that this year we would mark St Florian's Day or International Firefighters' Day on 4 May by officially recognising the courage and commitment of firefighters and members of the public who risked their lives to help others during major emergencies. At an awards presentation at the State Training College on that day I presented Commissioner's Commendations for Courageous and Meritorious Action to firefighters who responded to a major fuel leak at the Caltex Banksmeadow Fuel Terminal on 12 July 2013; to a multi-storey unit fire at West Terrace, Bankstown on 6 September 2012; and to a petrol tanker fire on Mona Vale Rd, Warriewood on 1 October 2013.

Our top bravery medal, the Fire & Rescue NSW Medal for Conspicuous Bravery, was presented to retired Station Officer Ron Morasso from 13 Alexandria who volunteered to wade through knee-deep fuel to close a leaking valve on a 2-million-litre fuel storage tank at the Banksmeadow incident, thus averting a potentially catastrophic explosion and fire. I also presented a Commendation for Meritorious Service to Station Officer Bruce Fitzpatrick for his outstanding voluntary work in supporting firefighters as a member of our Critical Incident Support Program.

Two members of the public received Commissioner's Commendations for rescuing 2 people from a car at the Warriewood tanker fire just before it exploded into flames, and to RFS Deputy Captain Joshua Sheedy from Belrose Rural Fire Brigade for assisting with the rendering of first aid to a badly burned victim at that incident who sadly died on scene.

The firefighters we acknowledged are a credit to themselves, the community and the FRNSW. It was an extremely proud day for me and for everyone who attended.

Dorrigo wins at Unanderra Firefighter Championships

On Saturday 3 May I opened the Firefighter Championship at Unanderra where 13 teams, including our friends from Kootingal Rural Fire Brigade, competed in 11 events. Dorriggo eventually triumphed claiming the championship over Tamworth

who came second and reigning state champions Kelso who came third. Wild weather on Saturday night damaged two of the championship tents, forcing firefighters to rush out to the grounds to 'batten down the hatches' to ensure Sunday's events could proceed.

The competition, intensity and camaraderie at the championship was of the usual high standard and I congratulate all teams on their efforts and enthusiasm. My thanks to Unanderra Captain Paul Dawson and his crew who did a great job hosting the event.

Eastwood Fire Station Centenary

Last Friday I attended the centenary of the Eastwood Fire Brigade. The station yard was packed with people as children from Eastwood Public School sang and danced. We also had a special blessing of the station with a Chinese Lion Dance – a great reflection of the cultural diversity of Eastwood, and an impromptu display of Shaolin Kung Fu by one of the lion dancers. Attendees included Epping MP Greg Smith, Ryde MP Victor Dominello, Federal Member for Bennelong John Alexander and Ryde Mayor Roy Maggio as well as dozens of community members and past and serving firefighters from 59 Station. Congratulations to Senior Firefighter Matt Breen for organising a great event.

Have your say in the 'People Matter' Employee Survey

I encourage all staff to have their say in the 2014 'People Matter' Employee Survey. This is an opportunity to share your perceptions of how well the public sector values and principles are applied within FRNSW, and to comment about important indicators such as your job satisfaction, wellbeing at work and commitment to the organisation. Your feedback from the 2012 Survey was invaluable in shaping how we implement new strategies and projects.

To access the survey, click on this [link](#). Responses are completely confidential and anonymous, and no individual response will be identified. The survey closes on Friday 30 May. See the email sent to all staff on 5 May or the previous [Intranet story](#) if you have questions or want more information. Thank you for your contribution and for helping to make our workplace and the wider NSW public sector a better place to work.

Hydrant identification project

On 23 April, a survey was sent out to evaluate hydrant marking practices across FRNSW. Thank you to those who have already responded to the survey. Hydrants are part of the bread and butter of our trade and it is of critical importance that we can readily access and use them. Optimising our hydrant marking practices is vital to ensure that we maintain our excellent standards of service delivery.

The survey closes on Monday 19 May and I encourage those who haven't submitted a response, to participate. The survey will only take a few minutes and can be found at this [link](#). If you have comments that don't fit in with the survey questions, please email Chris Jurgeit on christopher.jurgeit@fire.nsw.gov.au and put 'Hydrant Identification' as the subject of the email.

FRNSW email now available for personal phones and tablets

Everyone now has the option of accessing their FRNSW email on personal mobile phones or tablets. All you need to do is download, read, accept and electronically submit the [Personal Device Email Policy](#) form, then set up your device to run

Microsoft Outlook. For all the details on how to do this for your iPhone, iPad, Android device or Windows mobile device, please see the recent [Intranet story](#) . And don't forget, you can also access your FRNSW email from any web browser at anytime at email.fire.nsw.gov.au

INCIDENTS

Large pallet fire at Port Kembla

Illawarra crews were kept busy attacking a large timber and waste pallet fire in a Bluescope Steel facility at Five Islands Rd, Port Kembla on Friday 2 May. The first 000 call came in at 1330 hrs advising that fire had taken hold of a large area of timber pallets, paper and wood chip and was threatening several adjoining Bluescope properties.

422 Warrawong was first on scene and quickly requested additional resources to protect an adjoining factory complex and the nearby Southern Freeway. Crews from 503 Wollongong, 488 Shellharbour, 207 Albion Park Rail and 461 Thirroul responded and together with private company bulk water tankers, deployed numerous handlines and several fixed monitors to contain the deep-seated blaze.

The operation continued throughout the afternoon with bulldozers deployed to pull the large area of wood chips and pallets apart. The Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) pumper from 31 Busby was deployed in the afternoon to help contain the fire. At 1633 hrs the Duty Commander declared the position in hand, however final extinguishment would be a protracted process. Bluescope provided lighting to enable the firefighting operations to continue throughout the night and Hazmat crews were also deployed to monitor the atmosphere and the significant water runoff from the site.

The Stop was finally sent at 1447 hrs on Saturday 3 May. Additional crews from 346 Kiama, 269 Corrimal, 277 Dapto, and 474 Unanderra assisted throughout the lengthy incident. Well done to all for a rapid containment and preventing any damage to the surrounding factory complexes.

Carbon monoxide incident prompts community warning

At 0250 hrs on Saturday 03 May, crews from 49 Cabramatta and 85 Chester Hill were called by Ambulance to a unit in George Street, Liverpool to assist with carbon monoxide poisoning resulting from a fire lit inside a residential unit. Apparently the occupants had lit a charcoal burner inside the unit in an effort to keep warm.

Three children and two adults were treated by Ambulance paramedics after inhaling carbon monoxide gas from the unvented fire inside the unit. A child and a Police Officer who was first on scene were transported to hospital with breathing difficulties. Firefighters ventilated the premises and declared the building safe for the remainder of the units within the building complex. Superintendent Wayne Phillips' warning to the public about the dangers of lighting open fires in unventilated rooms received extensive media coverage on Saturday morning following the incident.

This particular incident at Liverpool was fortunately resolved without a fatality but is a stark reminder to all of the dangers at this time of year. With the onset of cooler

weather, I urge all firefighters to take every opportunity to alert the community regarding the specific dangers related to heating appliances and the need to ensure that working smoke alarms are correctly installed. Click here for the [Winter Fire Safety checklist](#).

ASK THE COMMISSIONER

NOTE: Apparently "27's Truckie" must be on annuals, as no rumours were received.

Commissioner's email: Commissioner@fire.nsw.gov.au

Sandra Garcia, EA to Commissioner: 9265 2930

Ask the Commissioner: OfficeOfTheCommissioner@fire.nsw.gov.au

To contribute a story, please contact the Media and Communications Unit: 9265 2907