

## **RFS Award Variation 2018 Survey Results**

Dear members,

Thank you for your time and effort in responding to our recent survey. A summary of results is outlined below and where appropriate our Departmental Committee comment.

Disclaimer – the views of the Departmental Committee are those of the committee, not all member's may agree with the committee's opinion, any view expressed should be considered the agreed position of the committee in the best interests of the staff of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

### **Question 1**

*Should the NSW RFS and PSA have a consolidated award (containing all conditions and allowances), or the RFS Award have incorporated conditions from the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 ('Conditions Award')?*

There was Strong support to retain our own award, it should be noted that there was moderate support to revert to the Conditions Award.

Your Departmental Committee recommends at this stage, we continue to negotiate in good faith for a NSW RFS and PSA consolidated award.

### **Question 2**

*Refer to Clause 5 – Classification and Salary Rates. Should RFS maintain separate salary rates as currently, or revert to Crown Employees (Common Salary Points) Award? Common salary points may provide clarity for people considering moving across agencies. The salary rates are the same, but RFS salaries include annual leave loading. That means RFS salary grades appear higher than other public sector agencies.*

There was strong support to maintain our own salary rates incorporating leave loading.

### **Question 3**

*Do you support a standard working week of Monday to Friday?*

There was very strong support for the principle that a standard working week is Monday to Friday.

### **Question 4**

*It is proposed that Staff record hours worked. This is to ensure employer/employee responsibilities under the Industrial Relations Act are met, for example fatigue management. Are you willing to record work hours?*

There was strong support to record work hours.

**Question 5**

*If you agree to record work hours, what would you like? A time recording system, covered by the award or a time recording system stipulated in the award to be covered by policy?*

There was strong support for a work hour system covered by the award

**Question 6**

*Do you support renaming Local Arrangement to Local Agreement, and bringing all references to this into the one clause for clarity?*

There was very strong support for the clause to be maintained as proposed.

**Question 7**

*Is the detail of a Local Agreement covered by the proposed Clause 8?*

There was very strong support for the clause to be maintained as proposed.

**Question 8**

*Do you support the deletion of clause 9?*

There was very strong support to delete clause 9.

**Question 9**

*Should there be a limit on the number of afterhours and weekend events staff should undertake to provide opportunity for work/life balance, and manage fatigue?*

There was strong support to limiting number of days and hours worked after hours and weekends.

**Question 10**

*Do you support the award clarifying compensation for after hours and weekend work?*

There was very strong support to clarifying compensation for after hours and weekend work.

**Question 11**

*If staff who are required to work after hours and on weekends to meet service needs of RFS, and be compensated. As compensation, would you prefer?*

There was strong support to a combined system of compensation (OT, TIL and LA) and moderate support for overtime payments.

Departmental Committee Comment – It is the view of the committee that a combination of compensation systems be used. This will ensure that all time worked is compensated, whilst maintaining flexibility and will address the concerns of the majority of the members. The award shall provide clear triggers for compensation so that it can be clearly understood and implemented across the organisation in consistent manner.

**Question 12**

*Refer to Clause 10 Agreed Absences. Agreed Absences are given to all staff (other than staff on standard hours), in recognition of hours worked by staff and for professional commitment. Do you support the continuation of Agreed Absence.*

There was moderate support for AA's to be granted to all staff regardless of hours worked. There was moderate support for AA's to be granted to staff in recognition of additional hours worked. There were also a wide variety of alternative ideas put forward.

Departmental Committee Comment – As an overarching principle, all time worked shall be recorded and compensated. The current Agreed Absence clause allows staff to have a day off as compensation for having to work additional hours. The actual time worked is not always compensated in its own right. The DC recommends an alternative clause that compensates all staff for the actual work performed and in particular instances the inconvenience of having to perform particular work will be compensated in addition.

**Question 13**

*Do you receive ACA?*

Just over half of the respondents receive a form of ACA.

**Question 14**

*Do you support that 'standard public service allowances' being continued to be rolled together into one payment (ACA)*

There was strong support that standard allowances being available in a ACA.

**Question 15**

*Do you support that the ACA be available to all staff?*

There was strong support to standard allowances being available in a ACA.

Departmental Committee Comment – The committee has no issue with standard allowances being available to all RFS staff to alleviate administrative burden on the organisation. However, there shall be very clear parameters provided in the award that stipulates when allowances apply removing the ability for allowances to be utilised as a catch all by RFS. The concept of individualised allowances allows for a more transparent and equitable approach to compensating members.

**Question 16**

*The ACA amount is a % of salary. Staff undertaking similar roles e.g. receipt of "000" calls, dispatch brigades, radios etc may receive a different amount of ACA. Should ACA be the same amount for the role delivered regardless of person's salary?*

There was strong support for any ACA payment to be for role performed regardless of grading.

**Question 17**

*Should the components of the ACA remain rolled into one payment, or be claimed as individual payments?*

There was strong support for a single payment.

Departmental Committee Comment – The committee has no issue with standard allowances being available to all RFS staff as a single payment to alleviate administrative burden on the organisation.

**Question 18**

*Do you support this allowance being available for staff?*

There was very strong support for this to be available to all staff

Departmental Committee Comment – The committee has no issue with standard allowances being available to all RFS staff as a single payment to alleviate administrative burden on the organisation. The Committee believes that in its current format the ACA cannot deliver against the majority of members wishes.

**Question 19**

*If majority of staff support After Hours Allowance, what should it cover?*

There was strong support for the allowance to cover all perceivable situations and moderate support for an allowance to cover On call/disturbance.

Departmental Committee Comment – The committee believes that in order to deliver against the majority of members interests, that the After Hours Allowance cannot be included in an all conditions allowance. The RFS has a number of different types of Duty Officers and a single allowance wrapped into an All Conditions Allowance cannot be delivered equitably across the organisation.

**Question 20**

*Refer to Clause 13 – District Support Staff/Fleet Roles and Allowances. Should there be No Change to the clause or Clause Expanded to include other specialist roles.*

There was strong support to expand the clause to include other specialist roles across the organisation.

**Question 21**

*Should Incident Management Team positions have role descriptions with corresponding grades as required under the Government Sector Employment Act. You would be paid what the role would be graded at or at your substantive salary, whichever is higher?*

There was very strong support for the principle of IMT roles being graded and being paid the IMT role grade or your substantive salary , whichever is higher.

**Question 22**

*Should there be more flexibility to work shift hours over a spread of days, depending on role, fire intensity and need rather than 7 to 12 hour day/night shifts for 3 or 5 days?*

There was strong support for greater flexibility for shift arrangements.

**Question 23**

*Should Major Incidents incorporate an intermediate system? For example: An area/s require active incident management with multiple small incidents including 1 or 2 campaign fires (class 1 or 2), but not up to 'major incident' status.*

There was very strong support for an intermediate system to be implemented.

**Question 24**

*Within Major Incidents in the award. What do you think should be changed, or what could be improved?*

Departmental Committee Comment – The committee thanks the members for the very large number of comments suggestions and ideas provided for this question, great work! The main themes in the comments were grading of IMT roles, shift lengths and patterns being too restrictive, and being paid for what you actually work.

**Question 25**

*On-call relates to a role 365 days per year carried out across RFS in nearly every section. Should On-call be a separate allowance that is not included in the Major Incident clause?*

There was strong support for on-call to be considered separately.

**Question 26**

*What other conditions would you like included in the RFS Award that is not covered by this survey.*

Departmental Committee Comment – The committee thanks the members for the very large number of comments suggestions and ideas provided for this question, great work! The main themes in the comments were changes to the ACA so that it is more equitable and can be applied to all staff, being paid for what you work and maintain flexibility in choosing work hours.

**If you do think of anything else you can let your delegate know.**