

RFS Delegates Committee meeting

Recently, your PSA delegates met at PSA house for the quarterly Departmental Committee meeting, to discuss current issues within the RFS.

The PSA is currently fighting for RFS employees to have the following entitlements with respect to RFS Base Camps:

1. RFS employees should not be accommodated in RFS Base Camps while motel accommodation is available and practical.
2. If RFS employees have to be accommodated in RFS Base Camps, they should be paid a camping allowance for doing so.

We are pushing for RFS employees to be paid the rate of \$44.15 per day, which is the highest camping allowance rate available under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award*.

The PSA and RFS have been unable to resolve this dispute, and as a result it will be proceeding to hearing before the Industrial Relations Commission on 28-29 April 2020.

The PSA is acting upon the interests of its members and accordingly we encourage members to contact their delegate or PSA industrial staff to share their views on this dispute.

The delegates also extended an invitation to the State Secretary of the FBEU, Leighton Drury, as he and the group recognised disagreements between the two fire-fighting agencies, and the delegates shared their grievances with Leighton - the DC will continue to have an open dialogue with the FBEU ensuring protection of our members.

RFS delegates Jim Killen and Bradley Stewart recently attended the ACTU summit alongside the general secretary Stewart Little and Kim de Govrik from National Parks regarding the horrific fire season and how the government handled the response, and to put in a submission to the enquiry in to the fires.

The PSA is also calling on the NSW Government to amend the 'Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment (Firefighters) Act 2018 to include the negative health impacts of PFAS demonstrated in these recent court findings.

Evidence put before the courts in this case associate PFAS with several health effects currently not listed in the Firefighters Presumptive Legislation, these include:

- Testicular cancer
- Thyroid disease
- Thyroid cancer.

Recent scientific research has provided fairly consistent reports of an association with several other health effects including reduced kidney function, and altered levels of thyroid hormones and sex hormones amongst others.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has in the past used firefighting foam containing PFAS and they are very aware of PFAS contaminated sites across NSW with some sites including bulk storage facilities, NSW RFS Stations and Fire Control Centres where PFAS is likely stored. To date there remains no monitoring systems in place for both staff and volunteers who may have been exposed to PFAS.

As always the PSA welcomes members' feedback. Should you have any questions or comments please contact your delegate firstly and if required, the PSA.



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Your NSW RFS delegates

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