

NOTICE TO COMM. CENTRE MEMBERS

As advised, the Union met the Fire Service yesterday to discuss with them the matter of translation of members onto the new pay rates consequent on ratification of the variations to the Collective Agreement.

The Union was represented by – Derek Best, Steve Warner, Leeanne Marriott (Wellington Comm.Centre), Riwai Grace (Christchurch Comm.Centre), Colin Underdown (Auckland Comm.Centre).

The Fire Service was represented by Vince Arbuckle, Ian Pickard, Peter O'Driscoll and Bea Goodwin.

It quickly became apparent that the Fire Service accepted they had made a serious error of understanding of the principles that had been agreed for translation of members.

Essentially that agreement was:

- On and from 1 July all members would receive a minimum 3% increase on existing rates.
- Those persons who fully qualified (by service and qualification) for advancement to the appropriate rank would proceed to the substantive pay rate for that rank.
- If not fully qualified, the member could advance to the substantive pay rate on obtaining the necessary qualifications.
- A member who did not fully qualify for the substantive pay rate for the rank appointed to, but who did meet the qualification for the rank below, would be paid at least the substantive pay rate for that rank below.

Essentially, the Fire Service misread the qualifying criteria, and the letters most members received were incorrect, in that the minimum qualification for the rank above the one the member was to be appointed to, was applied.

Example – The letter received for a member who was to translate as a Grade II Communicator was advised of the necessary qualification to become a Grade III Communicator.

As a result of these discussions:

- The Fire Service will revoke all letters sent to members.
- In consultation with the Union, a reworded letter advising of translation details will be sent to members.

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- The Fire Service has agreed to backdate all increases to 1 July 2004 on ratification of the variations to the Collective Agreement.

The effect of this outcome is that a significant number of members will immediately receive larger increases than 3%, and others will be able to obtain the substantive pay rate for their rank a lot quicker and easier than was outlined in the letter received.

It is expected to take a week or so to complete this process and for the Union to receive the final version of the variations to the C.A. for ratification.

Consequently the ratification meetings for 6 July 2004 in Auckland and Wellington and for Christchurch on 7 July have been postponed.

Members must have complete and accurate information before voting on ratification.

The Union will provide full details of the variations before the rescheduled ratification meetings take place in around 2-3 weeks.

N.Z. PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS UNION