

15 October 2009

Dame Margaret Bazley  
Chairperson  
N.Z. Fire Service Commission  
P.O. Box 2133  
WELLINGTON 6140

Dear Dame Margaret,

I refer to your letter of 6 October 2009 (received by e-mail on 14 October 2009).

The Union Committee has considered your letter and appreciates the honesty you express. The Union will ensure that the content of your letter is advised to members.

However, firefighters are entitled to fair and reasonable reward for the valuable work they do in the communities they serve and that is all they are asking for.

You say the increase in total weekly remuneration (excluding allowances and overtime) the offer provides is \$22.24 for Trainees and \$38.00 for Senior Station Officers.

Union figures suggest a more accurate figure is \$19.58 for Trainees and \$32.71 for Senior Station Officers – and this only by July 2010.

You also state that the increase is exclusive of allowances and overtime. This is not correct and it would appear that you have not been informed of what is included in a firefighter's total weekly remuneration.

This is made up of basic pay – i.e. a firefighter's hourly rate x 40 hours a week; and:

- Availability allowance
- 2 hours overtime a week.
- Driving allowance – Grade 1 or 2
- 2 hours additional pay for Officers
- Shift allowance
- Statutory Holiday penal rates
- Statutory Holiday travel pay
- Weekend work penal rates
- Weekend work travel time

You will see that total weekly remuneration in fact includes payment for 3 allowances, for overtime and for penal rates. As at 1 July 2010, the basis wage – i.e. hourly rate x 40 hours a week is in fact:

- Trainee Firefighter - \$441.84 a week \$22975.68 a year

- Senior Station Officer (Grade 1 Driver) - \$744.00 a week \$38688.00 a year

You also say in your letter that a number of staff (presumably members) have totally withdrawn their labour. This is news to the Union, as certainly this is not what the Union intends and the Union would therefore be grateful for clarification of this.

Members are considering your offer at present and as I have said above, they will do so in the knowledge of your position as outlined in your letter.

As always, the Union and its leadership will be guided by the collective opinion as expressed in the secret ballot to be held.

No doubt after that guidance is received, Union officials will be meeting again with your Bargaining Team.

Yours sincerely,

DEREK BEST  
SECRETARY