



23 May 2013

Mr Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner
Fire and Rescue NSW
PO Box A249
SYDNEY SOUTH NSW 1232

Dear Mr Mullins,

Re: Entry requirements for the Inspectors Promotional Program (IPP)

I write in response to your correspondence concerning proposed new entry requirements for the Inspectors Promotional Program (IPP) dated last Thursday 16 May, noting that the attachment referred to therein was not in fact attached and was only forwarded separately by email on Tuesday 21 May.

I note that this is your first letter on the subject since 16 November 2011 wherein you acknowledged the Union's position, as expressed by the Department, *"that as a first principle, the FBEU would expect that candidates who meet specific first stage selection criteria for the IPP should attract some increase in remuneration. This would be in recognition of [sic] that the proposed changes would not guarantee all successful candidates a position on an IPP."*

Despite the Union reaffirming this position in the couple of brief discussions held between the parties since that time (and I will return to this shortly), it would appear from your latest letter that there is no such additional progression or payment proposed in the Department's current proposal. Needless to say we are more than merely disappointed by the Department's apparent failure to address what both parties identified early on as a threshold issue.

It is wrong for you to assert that "no feedback was ever received from the FBEU regarding the (Department's IPP) proposal". I am advised that numerous proposals were discussed at some six separate "reform" meetings between the parties during the course of 2012, but for no more than 5 minutes on each occasion (the IPP being only one of many items on those meetings' agenda). I am also advised that those discussions never progressed beyond "broad-brush" concepts, with the Department consistently advocating its "portfolio of evidence" approach and the Union proffering an alternative CBT-based model coupled with the additional remuneration referred to in the preceding paragraph.

What is abundantly clear here is; firstly, that there was no consensus reached; secondly, that there was very little detail provided by either party and thirdly, that both parties share an in-principle preference for a revised promotional system. In all of the circumstances it is difficult to see how it could reasonably be concluded that consultation between the parties has been exhausted.

It would be fair to say that the Union does not accept all of the Department's criticisms of the current arrangements. For instance, the Department claims that the current arrangement *"discriminated [sic] in favour of those stations [sic] officers who worked in quieter fire stations as it allowed greater opportunity to study; and dissuaded [sic] station officers in busy areas from applying"*. Whilst those statements are open to debate, it appears certain that the Department's

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proposal would do precisely the opposite. That is to say, the Department's proposal would discriminate in favour of those Station Officers who worked in busier fire stations as it would allow them greater opportunity to collect their "portfolios of evidence"; and would therefore dissuade Station Officers in quieter areas from applying. It would also make it difficult if not impossible for any Station Officer located outside of Sydney to compete with GSA-based officers with a far greater likelihood of accessing Operational Support experience.

Of immediate concern is your stated desire to "finalise the new entry requirements in order to run an IPP in August/September". Your observation that the current arrangement is "laborious and time consuming" implicitly acknowledges (however unintentionally) the fact that many Station Officers have been studying for the past 12-24 months in reasonable anticipation of the continuation of the current arrangements. I am confident you will agree that it would be grossly unfair to these members to change the system now with barely ten weeks' notice.

Frankly, the Department has acted prematurely (and possibly in contravention of the Permanent Award's subclauses 13.11, 36.4 and 36.5) by notifying staff of the Department's proposed changes and staff information forums by way of today's intranet post. If you have concluded that the consultation process has been exhausted then you have not yet advised the Union of this conclusion, as is required of you by subclause 36.6. If, however, you have not concluded this then it was both inappropriate and unfair to all potential IPP candidates for these proposals to be announced at this time and in this fashion.

The Union remains open to further discussions on the IPP but cannot support any substantial changes to the current arrangements during this calendar year. As you would be aware, the Union has consistently argued that any changes to the IPP Pre-Entry Test should be made in concert with corresponding changes to the SOPP Pre-Entry Test on the grounds that if one warrants attention then so does the other. Consistent with the concerns raised in the preceding paragraph, the Union strongly believes that all members should be afforded at least 12 months' notice before any such change takes effect.

Negotiations for the 2014 Permanent Award are due to start within the next few months. Rather than attempting to force this unrefined proposal through now, and holding scores of IPP candidates hostage in the process, I urge you to instead return to the negotiating table and work with me to deliver a win/win outcome for both FRNSW and the Union's members. To avoid doubt, the Union expects that in the absence of any agreement to the contrary that the 2013 IPP will be conducted in strict accordance with the current arrangements.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Casey
State Secretary



Fire & Rescue NSW

TRIM Ref. No: D13/20133

16 May 2013

Mr Jim Casey
State Secretary
Fire Brigade Employees' Union
1-7 Belmore Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Dear Mr Casey

I refer to our discussions regarding new entry requirements for the Inspectors Promotional Program (the IPP).

As you may recall, FRNSW proposed to introduce new entry requirements for the IPP following criticism that: the current arrangement was simply a memory test reflecting rote learning; there was little evidence of a correlation between the test to the skills and attributes required for the role; it was laborious and time consuming to prepare; it discriminated in favour of those stations officers who worked in quieter fire stations as it allowed greater opportunity to study; and dissuaded station officers in busy areas from applying.

Last year FRNSW presented a model to the FBEU that would encourage a greater field of candidates who have a range of experiences with the skills, attributes and capabilities required to successfully fulfil the role of Inspector. The proposed new entry requirements had the following features: a portfolio of work to demonstrate capacity to undertake the role; and a merit based interview and references. I have previously provided the FBEU with a sample portfolio to demonstrate how to undertake this part of the application process. For clarity, I have attached a table which outlines the proposed level of competence.

While no feedback was ever received from the FBEU regarding the proposal, FRNSW undertook to canvass the views of a cross section of employees within the organisation. The overwhelming response has been very positive and totally supportive. As a consequence of the consultation it has been suggested to include a practical 'desk top' testing component to assess incident management capability. This will be undertaken as part of the interview process. In addition, psychometric testing comprising elements such as cognitive ability and emotional intelligence is also proposed.



I am keen to finalise the new entry requirements in order to run an IPP in August/September. To ensure you fully understand the proposed new entry requirements, I would welcome the opportunity to present the model to both the FBEU's State Committee of Management, and to the Senior Officers Sub-Branch in order to address any issues you may have.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact Rosemary Milkins, Deputy Chief Executive on (02) 9265 3956.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Mullins', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

**Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner**

Pre-requisite	Knowledge / Skills
Minimum 2 years experience as a Station Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of skills in command, leadership and management at station level. • Experience in a range of operational positions. • Knowledge of FRNSW policies, procedures and operational requirements.
Incident Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of skills and experience in incident management including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Command • Operations • Safety • Planning • Logistics
Competencies in Firefighter Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and experience in promoting learning in the workplace. • Certificate III or IV in training or equivalent, skills and experience. • Extensive experience in managing front line fire fighting and supervision of fire fighting tasks.
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and experience in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and sustaining relationships with the community • Risk assessments of communities • Preparing and implementing risk mitigation and sustaining relationships with the community
Experience in a range of non-operational fields or equivalent tertiary studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in managing non-operational business activities in FRNSW • Or equivalent tertiary studies such as Certificate IV in frontline management or in areas such as Finance, Human Resources, Logistics, Administration or Service Industry experience.
Emergency Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding and experience diploma level of higher in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Preparedness • Response • Recovery • Liaison with inter-agency operations
Fire Investigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate or Diploma in Fire Investigation or equivalent experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and skills in conducting fire scene investigations • Ability to gather information through interviews and compile an investigation report • An understanding of presenting reports, statistics or giving evidence in quasi / judicial settings.