

WITHOUT PREJUDICE

Principal points of the proposal to restructure the retainer and kilometre payments to allow for a new retainer based on availability:

- (1) The retainer would operate as the appropriate mechanism to recognise availability, not hourly rates, which instead reflect and reward work intensity;
- (2) The current retainers are a fixed classification-based amount, with no pre-requisite for payment other than ongoing employment. These would be replaced by a variable (and possibly single) retainer paid by the hour (or possible minimum blocks) based on declared availability within the subject period;
- (3) Unlike the current retainers, payment would in future be made only to the minimum number of firefighters required to staff each appliance at their station. For example, a station which had a standard pumper (requiring a minimum staff of four) and a water tanker (requiring a minimum staff of two) would have a total of 1008 availability hours per week (ie, 6 positions x 24 hours per day x 7 days per week);
- (4) The new retainer would commence at the rate of \$1.75 per hour;
- (5) This would cost \$12.7M per annum based on full and permanent availability:
10 stations requiring a minimum retained staff of 2 (175,200 availability hours p.a.);
157 stations requiring a minimum retained staff of 4 (5,501,280 availability hours p.a.); and
30 stations requiring a minimum retained staff of 6 (1,576,800 availability hours p.a.);
- (6) This \$12.7M annual cost would in reality be reduced by each instance of non-availability, and would be offset by the \$9M per annum (this will require precise costing) that would be saved by the removal of the current retainers and kilometre payments for incidents;
- (7) Individual firefighters could elect to declare full, some or no availability. Subject to the provisions of points 8 and 9 below, there would be no restriction on the ability of any firefighter to respond to calls, however there would be consequences (penalties?) for a firefighter who had declared availability but then failed to respond without adequate reason. Conversely, while there would be no consequences for a firefighter who had not declared their availability, there would also be no retainer paid;
- (8) In the event that there were more firefighters willing to declare their availability for a certain period than minimum staffing required, the availability would be allocated on a yet to be determined system that ideally balanced fairness and equity for the station staff with the Department's need to maintain 24/7 availability;
- (9) In the event that the Department was required to cover a minimum staffing shortage with either a permanent firefighter or a retained firefighter from another station, then only those staff who had declared availability would be responded until such time as minimum staffing was restored, at which point the station would then resume full retained notification and response;
- (10) Each retained station/appliance would be given a defined area of operation into which it would be responded to all calls, subject to the availability of minimum staffing.