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

28 November 2013

Dear Mr Casey

As you are aware, late last year (2012) a report prepared by a former Director General of the Premier's Department was released. The report made a number of recommendations about reforms to the Ambulance Service of NSW (ASNSW). One of the recommendations was that NSW should look at the successful Emergency Medical Response (EMR) model in Melbourne that leverages the rapid response times of urban firefighters in life critical cases.

A Project Steering Group from ASNSW, FRNSW, RFS, SES and NSW Ministry of Health was formed to consider recommendations in relation to FRNSW co responding with ASNSW with a program similar to the First Responder model adopted by MFB, as well as the regional CFR Program.

First Responder programs are based on the premise that the response times of fire services means that they will often be able to provide life saving intervention before arrival of an ambulance. In NSW FRNSW response times are significantly lower than those of the ASNSW.

A study into the Melbourne program found *"that the MFESB EMR program is providing defibrillator equipped fire fighters to the scene of a cardiac arrest on average quicker than the ambulance service and that the program has assisted in increasing survival from cardiac arrest in the MFESB area of operation"*.

Last year the Ambulance Service of NSW responded to more than 1.1 million calls, compared to FRNSW which responded to less than 140,000. The Steering Committee is of the view that FRNSW with less calls and a greater coverage across

metropolitan and regional centres could leverage its faster response times and the life-saving skill sets of firefighters.

The concept would see 10/14 permanent crews dispatched to co-respond with paramedics to Category 1A calls (unconscious / non breathing, life threatening bleeding). In 2012/2013 ASNSW responded to just 8500 category 1A calls.

This would equate to an average of 18 calls per year per platoon across all 10/14 stations.

FRNSW responded to 133,611 calls in NSW in 2012/2013. In comparison to EFR forecast of 8500 additional calls, FRNSW responded to 15795 Hazmat calls.

EFR is not a firefighter response in preference to Ambulance but is a firefighter **and** ambulance **co-response**.

It has been proposed by the Steering Committee a limited trial of the program take place at 6 stations on the Northern Beaches (60 Avalon, 6 Mona Vale, 68 Narrabeen, 69 Dee Why, 24 Manly and 51 Forestville).


The proposed trial would gather data to test the assumptions underpinning the proposal in relation to increased survivability of patients, joint dispatch protocols, firefighter skillsets and equipment and workload.

I am aware of the FBEU's position with regard to AFR and wage increases, however I have previously discussed with you the inability of FRNSW to work outside the Government Wages Policy. As such no additional payments to firefighters would be possible during the proposed trial.

FRNSW will provide the FBEU further detail of training, support and response parameters if this proposal receives in-principle support to proceed.

If there are any questions in relation to this proposal, please contact Acting Superintendent Wayne Phillips at 9318 4423 or wayne.phillips@fire.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Mullins', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner



13 December 2013

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

Dear Mr Mullins,

I write in response to your letter of 28 November 2013 wherein you sought the Union's support for a "limited" trial of a first responder role for permanent firefighters that was variously referred to as either EMR, EFR and/or AFR. I will refer to it here simply as first responder.

The Union's State Committee yesterday resolved to offer the Union's in-principle support for the conduct of an appropriate trial in 2014 subject to the Department's acceptance of certain conditions including:

- agreed commencement and conclusion dates, with a preliminary Union view that the trial should operate for no longer than six months;
- agreed area(s) and stations where the trial should be conducted, with a preliminary Union preference for a more broadly representative area of Sydney;
- agreed objectives and performance indicators by which a trial would be jointly measured; and
- your nomination of the work value of the first responder role.

You are of course aware of the Union's General Meeting decision regarding a 12.5% wage increase for members who agreed to perform first responder duties. There is, we believe, nothing in either the Government's Wages Policy or Act to prevent an employer from agreeing to an appropriate allowance for this work and amending an award to provide for this. The difficulty lies not in the fixing of an amount but rather in its payment which (as the recent CFR work-value decision confirmed) would not be possible due to the operation of the *Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Regulation 2011* unless and until other labour cost savings were found:

6(1)(b)(ii) increases may be awarded before the relevant savings have been achieved, but are not payable until they are achieved ...

Put simply, the Union is asking the Department to make a counter offer based on what it believes the work value of the permanent firefighters' first responder role to be before the trial, not afterwards.

Please contact me directly in order to arrange a mutually convenient meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Casey
State Secretary

Fire Brigade Employees' Union (FBEU)

1-7 Belmore Street Surry Hills NSW 2010

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