



10 May 2016

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

Dear Mr Mullins,

**Re: Firefighting Foam**

I write with regard to your correspondence dated 14 April 2016 in which you notified us of your intention to withdraw the offer of blood testing at no cost. It appears the Department is relying upon NSW Health's advice that testing will have no clinical value for residents to withdraw the offer of testing.

NSW Health's advice in this regard was for affected residents, not firefighters.

Regardless of any current clinical value, there is no question that FRNSW is responsible for the exposure of firefighters and may be liable for any future health effects. It is on this basis that testing should be offered by FRNSW, as the body responsible for the exposure. Indeed, if the risk is negligible, it is in FRNSW's interests to pay for testing to disclaim future liability. If in the future exposure is found to have detrimental effects, this testing will provide a baseline assessment of clinical value.

Far from being provided with peace of mind by being told NSW Health does not assign testing any current value, the tenor of member feedback indicates it is more distressing to not have testing available and have it implied their fears are baseless. Members will have these tests to ensure their peace of mind. As the party responsible for their exposure, the Department should bear the cost of these tests, not the concerned members.

Noting the correspondence from NSW Health states it would be happy to discuss the ethics and limitations of tests with the NSW Health doctors providing these tests, it may be of use for these experts to address a meeting of concerned members and former members to explain the value and process of testing.

In any case, it is the Union's view that testing should be offered without cost to those members who seek it. We await your advice that the testing will be offered to those who seek it on a voluntary basis.

Yours sincerely,

Darin Sullivan  
Acting State Secretary

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