



17 August 2016

The Hon. David Elliot MP
Minister for Corrections, Emergency Services and Veterans Affairs
GPO Box 5341
Sydney NSW 2001

By email: office@elliott.minister.nsw.gov.au

Dear Minister,

I refer to your letter in response to the Rural Fire Service Association's (RFSA) correspondence dated 22 June 2016 regarding their concerns about the proposed industrial agreement between the Victorian Country Fire Authority (CFA) and the Victorian Branch of the United Firefighters Union (UFU).

Specifically, the RFSA sought *"an assurance from the Premier and you as our Minister that at no time will the NSW Government attempt to register an enterprise agreement that overrides State legislation that defines and regulates volunteers/volunteer based emergency services and protects the volunteer rights and operational systems."*

The RFSA's intervention here is both unnecessary and provocative. While I note that the assurance sought from you was not given, I am nonetheless obliged to warn both the RFSA and Government that any attempt to block or interfere with firefighters' industrial arrangements in this state due to the alleged concerns of volunteers will be responded to by the FBEU in the strongest possible terms.

The FBEU supports the consultative framework between the RFS, FRNSW, RFSA and FBEU that is the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee (FSJSC). While far from perfect, the FSJSC has resulted in regular dialogue between the stakeholders where little if any previously occurred, and has led to greater understanding and harmony within the industry. It is model that Victoria would do well to replicate.

If the RFSA held genuine concerns over this matter then it should have raised them at the FSJSC first. The FBEU will be doing so at the next opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

cc: Premier, Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Emergency Services

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