



# SITREP 36/17

## Tamworth to go 10/14 - update #1

SITREP 16/2017 reported that the Union and Department had agreed on 452 Tamworth's move to 24/7 permanent staffing by October this year - which was true until the Department decided to revisit that agreement for the Station Officers at Glen Innes and Inverell to have the option of transferring to Tamworth or remaining in place. The Department suddenly wrote on 14 September to say that the 10/14 (and associated extra staff) "will be delayed until these Station Officers can be transferred".

If the Department was trying to scare the Union to back down and abandon our two SO members then it misread us. The Union replied on 19 September dismissing the Department's threat. Back in April the Berejkilian Government and its local MP Kevin Anderson promised the upgrade would occur "before the end of the year". If that occurs then well and good, otherwise Mr Anderson is in for a rough 2018.

## Health and Fitness testing – update #6

FRNSW management today emailed all firefighters about the wonders and benefits of its proposed Health Checks and Fitness Drill program, reassuring the workforce that "*the main vision of the organisation is to have a healthy and fit workforce*". Great, but it does beg the question of why?

The Union and Department agreed on a compulsory health and fitness program for firefighters with the first D&D Award back in 2003 and we're not backing away from that, but we're not under any illusions about their motives either. If you think our cash-strapped employer is about to spend millions of dollars it doesn't have on these programs simply because they care about you then think again. The real FRNSW vision here is a younger, fitter workforce with less absenteeism and fewer workers comp claims that will save the Department millions more each year than its H&F program will ever cost.

There is no dispute that we will have a health and fitness program in 2018, nor that we will "*regularly consult with a doctor*". Today's FRNSW email update was remarkable for its complete failure to mention the only real point of disagreement left - the confidentiality of your health check results.

## Dept puts EAP confidentiality in doubt – update #1

Today's email update to firefighters (see above) concluded with management expressing concern over "*the distress relayed to me by members of the Peer Support program who on a typical day provide essential, caring and HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL support .... I find it disappointing that the fine people who volunteer their time have been drawn into an IR matter unrelated to the great work they have been doing.*"

It is not an unrelated matter at all. As SITREP 34 explained, the Department is arguing that it must be informed of any health issue (including mental health) that might pose a risk to firefighter safety, raising obvious questions about confidentiality and putting our Peer Support members in an impossible position. Yesterday I asked management for "*an unconditional guarantee that any information given to the EAP, Peers, or similar is entirely confidential and is not subject to the Department's claimed statutory obligation*". My simple request was sidestepped and no guarantee was given. More to follow.

Leighton Drury  
State Secretary

Thursday 19 October 2017