



19 September 2017

Mr Paul Baxter
Commissioner
Fire and Rescue NSW
1 Amarina Avenue
GREENACRE NSW 2190

Attention: Assistant Commissioner Rob McNeil

Dear Mr Baxter,

I write in response to the letter from AC McNeil dated 14 September and further to the previous correspondence between the parties around the Berejiklian Government's now-confirmed upgrade to 24/7 permanent staffing at 452 Tamworth and related staffing matters.

The Union has already noted this Government's failure to create new permanent positions in regional NSW in our letter of 6 April 2017. Making the proposed Tamworth enhancement conditional on the removal of the Station Officers at Glen Innes and Inverell means a 25% cut in the number permanent firefighter jobs – and the loss of over quarter of a million dollars per annum - from the already under-resourced Northern Tablelands electorate. It follows that the proposed transfers are bad for the local communities not only in terms of service delivery, but also economically. The Government and the sitting National Party member can be expected to be held to account for this in the lead up to the March 2019 election.

In the meantime, however, the Department's threat to delay the upgrade at 452 Tamworth is both noted, and dismissed. The Union's conditions around the Station Officer positions at Glen Innes, Inverell and Casino were clearly set out in our letter of 6 April and were verbally agreed to in discussions between senior representatives of both parties. To suggest otherwise has serious implications for the conduct of relations between the parties, although there is no need to rely on those verbal exchanges in this instance.

The local MP, Kevin Anderson, did not announce the 24/7 upgrade for Tamworth (with the obvious support of FRNSW) until Thursday 20 April – a full two weeks following the Union's letter. If the Department no longer agreed with our conditions then it should have confirmed that then, not now.

I am meeting with the Minister tomorrow and will be raising this matter with him. I invite Mr McNeil to contact me should he wish to discuss this with me in the interim.

Yours sincerely,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

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