



# SITREP 02/18

## Health and Fitness testing – update #9

An intranet story this week announced that *“Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) today launched its new Health + Fitness program to help frontline firefighters remain fit, healthy and prepared for anything, anywhere, anytime. The program is a first for Australian fire and rescue services and has been designed in accordance with the Award made by the Industrial Relations Commission on 22 December 2017.”* That was as close as the story got to acknowledging the program’s many industrial implications, and the Department’s continuing need to negotiate with the Union over the implementation of both the fitness drill and the health checks.

It’s not off to a good start. The fitness drill launched this week is not the drill the Union agreed to in December. While participation at the moment is voluntary, members are advised to not do so before we’ve been able to discuss those changes with the Department next week. More to follow in Sitrep 3/18.

## FRNSW identity – update #1

Further to Sitrep 40/17 and the above item, the Union is yet to receive our briefing on the *“refreshed identity”* being developed for FRNSW but it appears increasingly likely that a *“+”* will be central to it.

We saw the launch of the FRNSW *“Health + Fitness program”* this week, so will we soon be seeing *“Fire + Rescue”* too? If you’re asking yourself how a *+* symbol could help *“elevate the public’s view and understanding of who we are and what we do”*, then management’s answer will be clear if it turns out to be a big, green CFR-style *+*. This all follows closely on last October’s *“Life First”* permanent recruitment campaign and its *“Join the team that puts life first”* slogan, which sounded much more like an appeal for new ambulance officers than new firefighters. Perhaps that’s all just coincidence and means nothing, but it does fit with the growing rumours about a MFR launch sometime after April. More to follow.

## e-Recalls initiative – update #3

Since our last update in Sitrep 40/17 the Department has launched its e-recall system in SAM and invited members to input their preferences for recalls. It has also launched a series of online tutorials to help members understand the new system before it goes *“live”* on 19 February.

Members immediately asked why the new system included a *“banked leave”* nomination page after members voted to reject it last year? Good question. It had nothing to do with us and it has since been removed, but it might have given the game away about management’s true intentions here.

We predict the Department will attempt to use members’ declared e-recall preferences to build up data that shows management which, where, when and for how long off-duty members are prepared to work. Once they have all of that information it will be only a small leap to offering banked leave (ie, leave in lieu of overtime) to members on the e-recall list as a first stage, and only offering overtime after the banked leave options haven’t been taken up. If we are correct about this then e-Recall is not about fairness or transparency at all. It’s about reducing overtime.

To be clear, the e-recall system that is about to commence is the Department’s system, not ours. The Union’s officials don’t particularly like it, in fact we expect it will give rise to a lot of problems, but we agreed to trial it after our own e-recall proposals failed to attract much membership support, and subject to a joint review after 6 months. So we encourage all members to approach this as a trial only, and to give us your feedback – good and bad – on their system between now and then.



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## Lismore-Tweed Heads transfers banned

The Department last month notified members attached to Lismore and Tweed Heads that they were to be transferred to the other station, which has never occurred before without the member's agreement. Following unsuccessful attempts by local Union representatives to turn RN2 management back, the Union's State Committee this week resolved to intervene by banning all involuntary transfers between the two stations, and all members at both stations are hereby so instructed, effective immediately:

*"That the State Secretary's report on the recent notification by the Department of involuntary transfers of Station Officer members between 362 Lismore and 478 Tweed Heads be received, and that State Committee notes that:*

- a) the Department's mobility policy is a management policy, not an agreed arrangement between the Department and Union;*
- b) point (a) notwithstanding, the policy's blanket prohibition of intra-zone transfer reviews or appeals is plainly unfair and unreasonable given that it disallows reviews of transfers between Lismore and Tweed Heads (105 kms one way) but allows reviews of transfers between, for example, Randwick and Woollahra (3.2 kms one way); and*
- c) there are no other regional stations in FRNSW whose members may be involuntarily transferred, and no need to do so in the case of Lismore and Tweed Heads;*

*and consequently resolves to ban involuntary transfers from either station and to instruct those members to ignore any transfer direction from management, effective immediately, provided that a transfer as a consequence of disciplinary action that is not contested by the Union shall not be subject to this ban and instruction unless expressly determined otherwise."*

## Presumptive Legislation and World Cancer Day

Next Sunday, 4 February is World Cancer Day – a day of particular significance for firefighters.

Presumptive legislation is something we have been working on for several years now. Not only are the FBEU and United Voice (NT Branch) jointly responsible for the full list of occupational cancers now recognised as such in other Australian jurisdictions, we've made submissions in various jurisdictions, sat on the advisory board of the Monash Study linking firefighting and cancer, and most importantly, assisted affected members to navigate and access workers' comp and D&D Award benefits.

Progress has continued to be made since Sitreps 33 and 39 of 2017, with Labor's Shadow Minister for Emergency Services Guy Zangari having a draft legislation prepared for introduction into Parliament shortly. We know that Labor and the Greens will support the Bill, but we have nothing from the Government apart from a verbal personal commitment to me from the Minister. We cannot assume the Coalition's support until the Government confirms it, so there is more work to be done.

The next step is for affected members and your families to tell your stories. If you're prepared to do so then please contact me directly so we can begin collecting your details and arranging meetings with relevant MPs and stakeholders. More to follow shortly.

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary

Saturday 3 February 2018