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21 June 2018

Mr Leighton Drury
State Secretary
Fire Brigades Employees' Union of NSW
1-7 Belmore Street
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Dear Leighton

I acknowledge your letter dated 12 June 2018 regarding new branding. Thank you for supplying your Sitrep newsletter, I was unaware of its contents.

The new branding as you are aware is to address the lack of understanding of Fire & Rescue NSW's (FRNSW's) role in the community and to raise that understanding over the next few years. Our research and indeed our internal discussions with the many staff who have contributed to the development of the new strategy strongly reinforced the need.

To increase the awareness of our varied emergency roles we are embarking on an awareness campaign across many streams of which the branding on the trucks is just one.

It is important for the future of FRNSW that we are strongly recognised in the community and the broader emergency services sector for what we do so that we can attract and direct appropriate resources towards those various functions.

The branding represents what we do now and expect to do in an increasing way in the future; something our incident statistics give evidence to.

FRNSW has 10 retained brigades that are Community First Responder (CFR) units providing emergency medical support to rural and remote locations; with more waiting to come on line now. All of our frontline appliances are equipped with medical response kits and Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and are already being utilised in emergency medical response to support NSW Ambulance. Our incidents statistics indicate that we responded to 8358 'ambulance assist' calls last year, an increase of 977 for the year before. Based on the growth we have already seen we expect that support function to increase.

Our emergency medical training has been improved and is appropriate for the type of events operational firefighters are currently called to. As you will be aware one of our immediate (7) priorities is emergency medical response. This is twofold, to better support the CFR program and to implement the Community Early Access to Defibrillator program along with other agencies such as RFS and SES as requested by Ambulance NSW. The working group which we have invited you to be part of would work through the implementation issues. As the statistics indicate, we are already doing this work, it is important our firefighters are equipped, trained and supported to do it well, this is what the project will ensure.



With regard to the Counter Terrorism area, FRNSW is currently involved in collaborating with other emergency agencies in planning and response activities. FRNSW has a dedicated Counter Terrorism liaison officer. FRNSW conducts and participates in many exercises and are involved in significant planning activities. FRNSW has in place and will continue to acquire specific equipment for dealing with potential terrorism events. FRNSW will continue to discharge its legislated obligations as the lead agency in Hazmat incidents, and indeed respond to fire and rescue calls as a consequence of terrorism activity. Additionally the research undertaken as part of our strategy project canvassed more than 3,000 members of the community and a strong message came back from them that they expect as a given, that we are working continually with other agencies to reduce the threat and impacts of terrorist events.

It makes sense that we undertake positive initiatives to clearly communicate to the people of NSW and all staff that FRNSW's strategic direction includes these growth areas of our business to increase our public value and recognition for what firefighters do ensuring that we equip, train and support our firefighters appropriately.

One of our identified perspective areas in our strategy is "unions", specifically how we can work better together for better outcomes for your members and my staff.

As we discussed recently, it would be ideal for you, your president and myself and another ELT member to get together and discuss how we can do this, to this end I suggest we do this soon. If you agree I will ask Marc Stigter (Strategist) to facilitate this session where we can explore options to identify common areas of interest in our strategy where I think the FBEU can add significant value, input and direction. I think it would also be ideal for you to consider how you want to be involved and consulted as the strategy progresses.

Alternatively, I am happy to meet with you separately if that better suits so we could discuss how this could work or any other ideas you may have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Baxter', written in a cursive style.

Paul Baxter
Commissioner



12 June 2018

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

Dear Mr Baxter,

I refer you to SitRep 15 (copy attached) and the lead item therein titled "FRNSW Plus Plan launched", which I assume you read at the time of issue and understood.

There is presently no medical response role for FRNSW beyond the limited number of retained brigades who are performing Community First Response (and being paid accordingly), and the Union considers it industrially provocative, misleading and irresponsible for FRNSW management to publicly project otherwise.

There is also little or no practical counter terrorism role for FRNSW other than our members' traditional response to fire, hazmat and rescue events once they have occurred and it is not only provocative and misleading for FRNSW management to indicate otherwise, it also places our members at increased risk. Firefighters have always taken care to position ourselves in the public eye as neutral emergency service workers, intentionally distancing ourselves from law enforcement agencies – partly because we are not and have no desire to be seen as police, but also because we do not want to become disliked by the public and targeted by criminals and terrorists when there is presently no need for them to do so.

The Union understands FRNSW management's rationale for repositioning the organisation and, by extension, our members as front line medical responders and counter terrorist operatives, but you do not yet have our agreement for either to occur. SitRep 15 was clear in its conclusion that the Union's officials remain willing and available to discuss these new roles, but we will not be ignored and/or worked around and FBEU members will not be taking on any of this extra work without extra pay.

I ask you to pause and reconsider your roll out of this medical response and counter terrorism branding before this issue escalates. The Union will refrain from instructing members to remove or cover up the medical response and counter terrorism branding on their appliances pending receipt of your written response, which is requested by 26 June.

Yours sincerely,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

Fire Brigade Employees' Union of New South Wales

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SitRep 15

FRNSW Plus Plan launched

Key points:

- **Plus Plan supported, but ...**
- **MFR not agreed and will be opposed without extra pay**

Commissioner Baxter and his Executive Leadership Team today launched their new "Plus Plan" for FRNSW, which the Union's State Committee broadly supports as a positive initiative to raise the profile of FRNSW and its firefighters and how we are perceived by Government and the wider community (see SitReps 40/17 and 5/18). That's the positive part.

While the reworked logo is a mixture of old and new and will help differentiate professional firefighters from other services, the replacement of the "&" with a "+" is about much more than simply a new badge. The Plus Plan sees FRNSW expanding its current roles in firefighting, rescue, hazmat and prevention to include new but unclear counter terrorism and humanitarian relief roles and, of course, medical response.

It's about new roles, new training and additional work for FRNSW firefighters, but without any mention of new allowances or additional pay for these extra skills and work. That's the bad part. They expect you to do all of this extra training and work for free.

It is important for members to understand that none of this has been discussed with us, let alone agreed to. That includes new stickers (for a photo see the online version of this SitRep) that the Department has ordered for the pocket shutters of appliances, which members will be instructed to remove or cover up if management proceeds to roll them out without our agreement. The Union's officials remain willing and available to discuss these new roles, but we will not be ignored and/or worked around and FBEU members will not be taking on any of this extra work without extra pay.

Fitness Drill update

Key points:

- **Fitness drill problems sorted, now OK**
- **Does not need to be done with full crew/station – you decide when to do it, and who with**
- **Drill does not replace regular retained drill program, or count for authorised duties**

Further negotiations on the annual fitness drill have led to agreement on all outstanding matters, with next week's Commissioner's Orders 9/2018 expected to include the agreed arrangements.

The main sticking point back in March was the Department's requirement that firefighters complete and sign a Pre-activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR Q) before undertaking the fitness drill. It has now been agreed that while members will still need to complete the PAR Q, you will no longer be expected to sign and/or submit it to the Department. It has also been agreed that members will no longer need to complete the PAR Q once they have undertaken their first health check, and therefore entered the periodic review cycle.

As previously advised, members on a shift or at a station do not all need to undertake the fitness drill at the same time. Provided that doing the drill does not interfere with station operations and that there is at least one other firefighter available to assist you (and for retained members, that it is not Easter Sunday or an additional



SitRep 15

Fitness Drill update (continued from Page 1)

public holiday when penalty rates apply), then you are free to choose the date and time of your fitness drill each calendar year.

The annual fitness drill is not part of, and should not be performed in lieu of, the retained Station Drill Program, or as part of the station's Authorised Duties quota. The Union was careful when negotiating the D&D Award to argue for the insertion of the following wording:

The annual fitness drill for retained firefighters will be considered and paid for as if it is a regular drill provided that attendance at the fitness drill will not count towards the 75% regular drill attendance requirement of subclause 28.1.2 and will be additional to the two regular drills per station, per month provision of subclause 6.5.2.2.

This means a minimum payment of 2 hours per member (the drill should not take longer than one hour per member), which should be entered and paid via SMART.

Finally, while the agreed fitness drill is now compulsory, it is a drill, not a pass/fail assessment. The objective of the drill is to enable firefighters to enhance their personal understanding of their functional capacity as it relates to their role as a firefighter. Members are not required to perform the drill in front of their colleagues or supervising officers, and may refuse to do so if asked.

The periodic health checks remain on track to commence in July, with the remaining outstanding issues around the health check process expected to be finalised by the IRC next week. More then.

DISC profiling is voluntary

DISC profiling is (according to the Department) "*a tool that allows firefighters to gain insight into their behavioural preferences which can then help predict their behaviour towards others in everyday activities*". If that sounds like your bag and your zone offers it to you then you are welcome to participate, but participation is voluntary so you can also say no. Any member told otherwise should decline and contact the Union asap.

Recalls and kilometres – update #4

There has been nothing from the Department since our last update in SitRep 12, with the only development being that members are now reporting not being paid any recall kilometres at all! The next SitRep on this issue will either confirm that all outstanding payments have been made, or that bans have been implemented.

2018 REX set for 24 July

Midday on Tuesday 24 July has been confirmed as the time date for the fourth Rex Threlfo Annual Toast, rounding off the platoons with 2018 being D Platoon's turn to be on shift. Further details on venue and ticket sales to follow shortly.

Mick Nair
President and Acting State Secretary