



SitRep 24

Emergency services inquiry report released

Further to Sitreps 29/2017 and 19/2017, the report of the Parliamentary inquiry into emergency services was released last week. A link to download a copy of the report is on the online version of this SitRep. Unsurprisingly, the report found that emergency services workers experienced bullying, harassment and discrimination across all agencies, and that employees had little confidence in their agencies current policies and procedures in dealing with complaints.

The report contains 27 recommendations, all of which the Union's State Committee have endorsed in principle, subject to further details being provided. For example, Recommendation 1 (the key recommendation of the Inquiry) provides:

That the NSW Government establish an independent, external complaints management oversight body for workplace bullying, harassment and discrimination in the NSW Police Force, NSW Rural Fire Service, Ambulance Service of New South Wales, NSW State Emergency Service and Fire & Rescue NSW, which:

- is available to workers who have exhausted their agency's internal complaints management processes, or whose complaint has not been determined within a reasonable timeframe*
- facilitates the timely resolution of complaints*
- promotes procedural fairness and natural justice*
- provides advice and support to all involved parties*
- works with the agencies to improve policies and procedures relating to complaints management.*

The mental health and wellbeing of first responders also was a key theme of the inquiry, with a number of recommendations to make mental health a priority action, and to do more research on developing effective mental health interventions for emergency services workers. Recommendations 23 to 27 apply specifically to Fire and Rescue NSW, with Recommendation 25 calling on the NSW Government to provide additional funding to Fire and Rescue NSW to support the mental health and well being of its employees.

The NSW Government has yet to respond to the recommendations, so more to follow.

Recall kilometres update # 1

This dispute returned to the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) last week, with the Department effectively renegeing on its undertaking to review and pay outstanding claims in line with the Award. Commissioner Stanton has issued a certificate of failed conciliation, and the Union is now considering our legal and industrial options to bring the Department's attempts at wage theft to an end.

Keelty's Tathra Review update #2

Last week the IRC's Commissioner Murphy recommended that a Joint Consultative Committee meeting between the Union and Department with Commissioner Baxter and myself in attendance be convened regarding the recommendations arising from the Keelty Tathra Review. A date for the JCC is being arranged, and an update will be provided.

260 Newcastle rescue and aerial allowances update #1

Also in the IRC last week was this dispute, with Commissioner Stanton recommending that no appliances be moved from 260 Stn, with the parties to negotiate the appropriate location of the rescue appliance and maintenance of allowances if appliances are moved. The matter returns to the IRC on 16 August.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary