



6 June 2023

The Hon. Sophie Cotsis, MP
Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for
Work Health and Safety
52 Martin Place
Sydney, NSW 2000

CC: Jihad Dib MP; Chris Minns MP; Daniel Mookhey MLC; Anthony D'Adam MLC

Dear Minister,

Re: Public Sector Wages Policy Announcement

I am writing in respect to the announcement yesterday from your Government to formally offer to increase public sector wages by 4%. It is my understanding that this offer is exclusive of 0.5% increase in compulsory superannuation contributions and will be payable from the first pay period on or after 1 July 2023.

The FBEU is seeking that the Government clarify in writing the exact parameters of this wage offer as a matter of urgency to allow my members to fully consider your offer.

As you are also aware, the Awards which cover NSW professional firefighters (both permanent and retained) expired on 25 February 2023. It is our position, and through our recent meetings I understand the Government's position, that the wage increase which ultimately is applied, must be applied in full from that date.

Further, the FBEU is seeking clarification regarding other specific items which, in our view, would be vital as a minimum to any resolution of Award negotiations including:

1. Full and proper consultation provisions which encompass the wide scope of matters which go directly to the inherently dangerous nature of firefighting work, and ensure that they have an equal seat at the table when change is implemented;
2. Implementation of a less punitive, more efficient, and most importantly safer health screening program for firefighters including screening for occupational cancer and PFAS;

Fire Brigade Employees' Union of New South Wales

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3. New promotional and workforce planning processes and structures to ensure fair and consistent access to training and promotions while delivering the necessary workforce planning tools to avoid unnecessary and costly shortages and overtime;
4. A new model for payment of Retained firefighters to ensure better recruitment and longer term retention of retained firefighters.

As per your announcements yesterday, we understand that this offer is made on the basis of a 1 year Award with an Industrial Relations Taskforce to be implemented in the meantime to fully review the current industrial relations framework. We also seek confirmation that the outcomes of any review will include:

1. The restoration of an independent NSW Industrial Relations Commission and the restoration of the industrial court functions to this jurisdiction ensuring the IRC is provided with the necessary powers to properly resolve and determine matters brought before it and that outcomes of the IRC are enforceable;
2. Confirmation that the *Government Sector Employment Regulation 2014* will be repealed and an expected timeframe;
3. A commitment that new approaches to negotiations (including interest-based bargaining) for either Award negotiations and/or disputes resolution will ensure productivity/efficiency outcomes can be fully captured and realized in the form of direct wage increases to workers.

We would also ask that you provide, as a matter of urgency, the proposed Terms of Reference and timeframe for the Industrial Relations Taskforce.

As soon as we have a response to this correspondence fully outlining the position of the Government, we commit to further consultation with our members regarding your offer.

We look forward to your response, please do not hesitate to contact me directly should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours Fraternally,



Leighton Drury
State Secretary