



8 May 2020

Mr Jeremy Fewtrell
Deputy Commissioner Field Operations
Fire and Rescue NSW
1 Amarina Ave,
GREENACRE NSW 2190

Dear Jeremy,

Re: Collaboration with NSW Ambulance regarding Access to Defibrillation

I refer to your correspondence titled "Re: Collaboration with NSW Ambulance regarding Access to Defibrillation" received by the FBEU at 15:59 May 6, 2020

I note that the Department communicated with our membership directly about the same at 16:44 on May 6, 2020.

In addition, you have sent a second communication on May 7, 2020 in which you state:

"It was never the intention of FRNSW not to consult with the FBEU regarding the proposal and indeed the letter, which was intended as formal notification of the program, clearly indicated that FRNSW would continue to consult with the FBEU throughout the process."

We note that your May 6 correspondence implies you have been in discussions with other related parties about this for some time. We also note that you have been in discussion with a number of volunteer-based organisations. We also note that a number of MOUs have been reached in relation to this issue between NSW Ambulance and a number of volunteer-based organisations.

Your initial communication makes no mention of consultation and, in fact, suggests that the program is simply awaiting implementation.

As you are well aware, FRNSW firefighters are not volunteers and you are required to enter into consultation with us should you propose any significant changes – of which this most certainly is – to our work. Your second correspondence appears to suggest your requirement to enter into consultation.

The May 7 letter is partly in response to our Code Red, which you describe as 'disappointing'.

The FBEU and FRNSW have a long history of collaborating and entering into genuine consultation, and so we too are extremely disappointed.

The FBEU has not agreed to implement the program and is not interested in discussing the implementation of any program where no genuine consultation has **taken** place in relation to it. We have serious concerns about your intention to enter into genuine consultation given the communications you have made about implementation.

In addition, there are significant Work Health and Safety implications linked with the introduction of any additional medical work – especially relating to exposure to trauma and mental health, already a substantial issue for our members in their current day-to-day work. We are unaware that FRNSW has taken any steps to enter into consultation with us or Health and Safety Reps about the related health and safety issues.

As you know, the regularly rumoured and varyingly discussed, performance of medical work for our members is a long-standing matter of great importance to us. We will not stand by and allow such work to be incrementally introduced. We have just completed Award negotiations, FRNSW did not include the proposed introduction of new medical work in those discussions – which is where conversations like this should be had.

This work has a value – and while volunteers may be willing to perform these duties for free, they do not carry the same responsibilities, possible consequences, or to be frank, skills of our members, to perform our roles. The NSW government may be willing to let under 10's play first grade, we are not. Our community and members deserve better.

It is very concerning to the FBEU that FRNSW would communicate directly with our members in the way that you have and show such disrespect for professional firefighters and for our members' industrial rights, the nature of our jobs and our safety at work.

We do not agree to the implementation of this program and respectfully suggest FRNSW enter into genuine consultation with us in relation to this or any other matter, before making announcements of 'collaborating' about implementation. It is, quite frankly, disingenuous to expect that you are wanting to genuinely consult now.

That said, we look forward to discussing a way forward that is mutually acceptable to both the parties.

Regards,



Leighton Drury
State Secretary