



## IRC AWARD ARBITRATION DECISION – UPDATE

As previously discussed, a large body of work continues to progress as both the FBEU and the Department continue to work through the IRC's recent Award decision. All elements of this work, from the agreed drafting of clauses to further negotiations, are important and not to be rushed. By consent, the report-back timelines for the IRC have been extended with both parties expected before the IRC on 11 September to provide a progress update.

We are informed by FRNSW that the backpay of wages remains on track with the original estimate, likely to be finalised by 18 September.

## BUDGET ESTIMATES UPDATE

The second round of Budget Estimates for 2025 finished this week, with the Department and Minister Dib facing questions from the estimates committee on Wednesday. In the lead up to the hearings, the FBEU met with a broad cross section of members of the Legislative Committee to discuss the priorities of the membership, ensuring the needs of professional firefighters feature across as many portfolios as possible.

Key updates will be provided across FBEU socials in the coming weeks, and full transcripts are available. In the meantime, members can locate the entirety of the Emergency Services discussions [here](#) on YouTube and via transcript [here](#).

## NSW AUDIT OFFICE PLANNED WORK 2025-2028

In [Sitrep 25/2025](#), we discussed FBEU involvement with the NSW Audit Office planned audit *Managing unplanned leave and overtime*. With a remit to deliver comprehensive reviews and assurance, and to respond to emerging areas of risk in government, the work of the Audit Office has significant influence on the operation and performance of public sector agencies. FBEU members have seen this first hand with examples such as the 2014 [Fitness of Firefighters](#) report and the 2005 [Coordination of Rescue Services](#) report.

In recent times the FBEU has encouraged the Audit Office to examine efficiencies in areas of the emergency services sector where the Union considered the optimal use of public resources required further examination. In the current circumstances, with a decline in volunteerism, and the increasing risk and magnitude of natural disasters, it is crucial that such examination occurs. Last month the Audit Office released their [Audit Program for 2025-2028](#) providing important opportunities for the FBEU to contribute into the future, and to promote the growth of capability and resources for professional firefighters. The following short-list of planned audits demonstrating some of those opportunities:

1. **Metro rail:** *Sydney Metro is currently Australia's biggest public transport project. It is a fully automated rapid transit system serving metropolitan Sydney. This audit will consider the effectiveness and integrity of the government's identification and management of risk, with a focus on the project's initiation, planning and development, procurement and delivery stages. The quality of advice to government and probity will be key considerations.*
2. **Managing ongoing risks of PFAS chemicals from firefighting foams:** *Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large group of manufactured chemicals used in a variety of applications, including in some firefighting foams. The historical ongoing use of PFAS firefighting foam has been identified as a primary cause of PFAS contamination in the environment in NSW. This audit will consider how Fire and Rescue NSW and the NSW Rural Fire Service are investigating and managing the potential presence and impacts of PFAS*



chemicals on their sites. The audit will also have regard to the role of the NSW Environment Protection Authority, which has overall regulatory responsibility.

3. **Workforce capability of emergency services agencies:** Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW), the State Emergency Service (SES) and Rural Fire Service (RFS) are comprised of paid staff and volunteers. Changing climatic conditions have increased the number and intensity of emergency events in NSW in recent years. This has increased the workload of these emergency response agencies. This audit will assess the workforce capability of the agencies to provide statewide emergency assistance in the context of increasing emergency events.
4. **Electric vehicle infrastructure:** The NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy is intended to increase the State's share of electric vehicles to 52% of all new car sales by 2030–31. Under the strategy the NSW Government has announced \$189 million in electric vehicle charging infrastructure. This includes ensuring that ultrafast charging stations are available at 100 km intervals across all major highways in NSW, as well as increasing the availability of charging infrastructure in areas with limited off-street parking. This audit will consider how effectively the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water is administering this funding and whether the program is effectively providing electric vehicle infrastructure in identified priority areas. The audit may also consider other aspects of the NSW Electric Vehicle Strategy
5. **Climate risks to local government assets and services :** Councils face climate risks that may impact the assets they use to provide services and infrastructure to local communities, especially in local government areas near the coast, on floodplains, or on bushfire-prone land. The 2021 performance audit report on Managing climate risks to assets and services identified that key state government agencies had not conducted climate risk assessments and most lacked adaptation plans. Councils should be preparing for, implementing and monitoring actions to adapt to climate risks, for both current assets and services as well as longer term strategic planning. This audit will consider how effectively selected councils are considering climate risks in their asset and services planning.

In Unity

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State Secretary