



2026 DELEGATES CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

More than 100 delegates from across the state gathered in Sydney this week to reflect on the success of recent campaigns and to plan and prioritise the work ahead.

The State Committee of Management acknowledged the persistence and hard work of delegates in achieving many recent milestones, and reinforced the critical importance of the delegate structure in advancing the union's core initiatives.

On Tuesday evening, a conference dinner was held with attendees including members of the NSW Labor Government, as well as representatives from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, the Greens, and the Nationals.

Commissioners from both Fire and Rescue NSW and the Rural Fire Service were also in attendance, alongside representatives from the broader union movement.

The Hon. Mark Buttigieg and Mark Banasiak MLC addressed the dinner, reflecting on recent reforms including presumptive cancer legislation, among other key issues.

The FBEU also acknowledges the presence and ongoing support of the QPFU, NZPFU, PANSW and the PSA, as well as our workers' compensation lawyers, Masselos & Co. Additionally, we acknowledge Hall & Payne Lawyers, and barrister Leo Saunders, both of whom have been instrumental in our recent arbitration work.

A special mention to Matt Carroll, who addressed the conference and shared the story of his late father, Mick Carroll - a long-serving firefighter and FBEU member - and how that experience continues to drive his advocacy for stronger presumptive cancer protections.

We thank all delegates who took time out of their schedules to represent their members and for their continued commitment to standing up for FBEU members across the state. Significant progress has been made in recent years through collective unity, and it is encouraging to see continued commitment to the union's long-term, building-blocks strategy.

DEPARTMENT MOVES TO ACTIVATE MINIMAL CREWING THREAT

After several months without discussion, the Department's deeply flawed 'Tanker Strategy' has re-emerged as an immediate concern. This week, the Department issued correspondence indicating their intention to proceed with the project within seven days.

The safety implications for both firefighters and the community are serious. There are also clear political consequences for the NSW Government, particularly as it looks ahead to the 2027 election.

It is understood that this development has come as a shock to many within the Department itself. Earlier this week, prior to the conference, productive discussions were held between the Department and regional firefighters regarding ongoing issues in regional operations, particularly within the retained system. Delegates reported that these discussions were constructive, with the Department acknowledging broader systemic challenges - a step that had begun to rebuild goodwill and lay the foundation for meaningful solutions.



The decision to push ahead with the tanker strategy has now undermined that goodwill.

This morning, the President and I met with Minister Jihad Dib to raise these concerns directly. Some sanity has prevailed, as the Minister has asked the Department to continue discussions on finding better solutions to the budget overrun challenges. The Department has since written to the FBEU confirming that implementation is paused to allow this to occur.

LOG OF CLAIMS SURVEY TO RE-OPEN

Following requests from members, we have decided to re-open the 2027 Award Log of Claims survey for another week to ensure we capture the feedback of as many members as possible. The survey will now close on Sunday 5 April.

This survey is vital in ensuring that we understand the priorities of the membership for the 2027 Awards and can develop our Log of Claims to reflect those priorities.

To access and complete the survey, [please click here](#).

We are asking that all members take the time to complete this survey so that we can ensure that the final Log of Claims is driven by member priorities and goals.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary