



SitRep 30/2020

Medical Work

The Department's proposal for new medical work continues to unravel, with members reporting concerns it is risky, poorly thought-out and will add additional work and trauma on an already impaired training and support framework.

We have been in a period of consultation about the proposal with the Department for a number of weeks – as directed by the Industrial Relations Commission. Unfortunately, in those discussions the Department has not provided us with the information we need to either understand why this program is proposed and what implications it might have on our jobs and our safety at work.

As part of these discussions a number of major issues have emerged and are of focus for your union.

The introduction of any new medical work is of a huge interest and significance to members and it has been for many years – be it MFR, EAD, PAD or any other thing. Union members have discussed and developed positions in relation to this and we have been in discussions and disputes at various times about it.

Any attempt to incrementally introduce new medical work must be taken very seriously and the implications of any such attempt considered.

This time a number of important things are up for discussion. These include, but are not limited to:

1. We are of the view that this proposal is new work – and therefore, an extra claim. We have put this to the Department and they have said they will seek advice in relation to it, that has not been forthcoming and we will be seeking assistance in the IRC if the Department disagrees.
2. The Department has not provided us with any real reason that this work should be or needs to be performed by firefighters.
3. The Department has not provided us with all details of the discussions had with Ambulance about this work.
4. The Department, prior to proposing this work, had not conducted any risk assessment about the proposal and when this was brought to them in discussion they conducted a 'risk assessment' within a very short period. We are of the view that the process is completely flawed, the methodology and scope of the assessment inadequate and therefore, reject the 'risk assessment'.
5. The Department is of the view that BLS is adequate training to introduce this work. We disagree and in addition – it has come to light that in some stations up to 50 percent of crews do not currently have up-to-date BLS.
6. We are aware of the Memo from Ambulance re. Assist Ambulance and have alerted the Department of our concerns about this – seeking more information and advising them we believe it breaches the Status-Quo in place in this dispute.

This dispute is moving quickly and is multi-faceted. I will continue to update members.



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HSR Elections – Advice for members

Next week the Department will begin the process of the elections for HSRs across NSW.

The process was slightly delayed by mutual agreement between FRNSW and the FBEU and with the support of SafeWork NSW due to the difficulties we faced at the height of the pandemic.

The FBEU has also been in discussions with the Department about establishing a best practise State-wide WHS Consultation Committee made up of HSRs and representatives of the PCBU (Employer) to ensure improved consultation processes in relation to your health and safety at work.

The FBEU will support the HSRs in this committee. The FBEU expects the final details of the Committee, which is agreed in principle, to be locked in the coming days.

We encourage FBEU members to:

1. Get active and make sure you have an HSR nominated in your workgroup.
2. Members who are HSRs or keen to be HSRs and/or active in WHS should register with us here. The FBEU is holding zoom meetings, keeping members informed, giving advice and linking you together. As we progress, we will organise around and support you to build the State-wide Committee too.

For more information about being an HSR or the organising we are doing around health and safety get in touch with your Organiser or Emily Mayo emayo@fbeu.net

Delegate Training

As reported in the last SitRep we are opening up training and spots are filling fast - Register your interest here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FBEUDelegateTraining>. We will continue to monitor COVID and numbers and confirm, but the upcoming locations and dates are:

Sydney – Tuesday, 28 July – Surry Hills
Sydney – Tuesday, 4 August – Surry Hills
Blue Mountains – Wednesday, 12 August – Location TBC
Sydney – Tuesday, 18 August – Surry Hills
Sydney – Tuesday, 1 September – Surry Hills
Port Macquarie – Wednesday, 9 September – Location TBC
Sydney – Tuesday, 15 September – Surry Hills
Illawarra – Wednesday, 23 September – Location TBC

We are also more than happy to run additional days where there are enough delegates interested and able to come together. For more information about delegate training and support contact your organiser or Emily Mayo emayo@fbeu.net



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On The Road

I went on the road last week with our northern organiser Georgie to finally see some members now COVID restrictions are being gradually lifted. We met with permanent and retained stations across the Mid North Coast and Hunter. We had great conversations about everything the Union has been doing and listening to your feedback about current issues.

The biggest issues you all raised were training, medical work and issues surrounding country relief. All of these are huge issues for members across the State and our team is working on them with you.

I'm excited to continue getting out on the road with our other organisers to see more members across the state.

Our organisers are starting to get back into stations, if you are wanting to call a meeting or elect a delegate, please get in touch with your relevant organiser.

Maitland – TOLing.

Members may be aware of our ongoing 08/22 dispute. Part of this dispute involves the Department TOLing stations that are not on the list of stations able to be taken offline in the event of a shortage of firefighters.

Such has been the case at Maitland 374 for a number of years. 455 Telarah is listed within in-order 08/22, and the Department decided to transfer this to 374 Maitland when 455 Telarah became 455 Rutherford.

It was clearly unreasonable for the Department to do this.

We were alerted to another shortage at Maitland 374 on Wednesday this week, so we sent an email to the Department asking them to ensure that the shortage slated for the following day, Thursday, did not occur, or your union would be listing the matter in the Industrial Relations Commission.

We are pleased to report that common sense has prevailed, and 374 Maitland has minimum staffing at all times.

This is a victory for common sense, our members, and the Maitland community.

Alternate Rosters – Notice to FBEU

Recently, the Union has been assisting members with the introduction of alternate rosters. In some instances FRNSW has failed to formally advise the Union of an Alternate Roster before its introduction, which is a breach of the Award. Under the Award, an alternate roster may not commence until the Union is provided with notice, which must be a minimum of 14 days prior to the roster's intended start date.



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Members are reminded that if they agree to an alternate roster, then they must make sure that the roster is provided to the Union at least 14 days before it is to begin. Please note, however, that the notice requirement does not apply to the 24 hour roster system.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary