



# SitRep 35/2020

## Assist Ambo Code Red remains in place - if needed

Following on from Saturday's Code Red, here is an update for members.

Shortly after the [Code Red](#) was issued Ambulance Comms started putting all "Assist Ambulance" calls through the Rescue Coordinator. From speaking to officials and delegates in the Health Services Union and the Police Association over the weekend they are in agreement with the FBEU and the process going forward. What is becoming apparent is that FRNSW and ANSW have been acting outside the *State Emergency Rescue Management Act* when dealing with Domestic Rescue calls. This has potentially put firefighters at risk of unnecessary litigation, work related injuries and now disciplinary proceedings. It also appears that in just one weekend FBEU members have solved the legislative fiasco that is Assist Ambulance calls.

Putting that aside, the FBEU first raised this issue on 14 July where FRNSW said it was 'business as usual' and that "there was no spike in calls and that spare closer ambulances would not be overlooked for FRNSW trucks". We all now know that not to be true. We made contact with the Department two more times and only when [SitRep 34](#) mentioned State Committee were to consider the next steps we received an agreement to our request to meet scheduled two weeks into the future. With unconfirmed reports of Assist Ambulance calls nearly tripling since "*NSW Ambulance has formalised with their staff the use of FRNSW to assist paramedics*", management are either asleep at the wheel in not knowing what the formalisation would do, or blatantly disingenuous when communicating with FBEU members. One thing to be said about ANSW is that they had the decency to inform their staff of the new process on 26 June. FBEU members are still waiting.

As I said in Saturday's Code Red, the emerging trend of the Department listening to and backing in anyone other than their own firefighters is deeply troubling. Recent meetings with the Senior Officers Sub Branch, Country Sub Branch Exec, Basic Life Support working group, Major Aerial Pump working group, Armidale Driver Training working group and various HSRs about a number of related issues, to name but a few, gave feedback that only confirms this trend.

It has been said to me a couple of times recently that Senior Executive Service need to back in their line managers. Putting aside the totality of that statement, I agree, and this should flow all the way down to the frontline. Sadly it does not. 'Protecting the Irreplaceable' doesn't appear to extend to firefighters.

**The Code Red from Saturday, 29 August remains in place. Assist Ambulance calls are only to be attended if responded by the Rescue Coordinator.**

I congratulate members in taking this important stance. I look forward to the Department coming to the meeting on Wednesday to listen to and understand the real issues facing us at the frontline, including the scandalous overreach of standing down a Station Officer doing their duty and keeping firefighters and the public safe. More to follow after Wednesday's meeting.

In Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary