



# SitRep 45/2020

## **Minister Elliot Fails to Consult on Bushfire Legislation**

Yesterday the NSW Legislative Assembly passed the [Bushfires Legislation Amendment Bill 2020](#), despite it only being introduced by the Minister for Emergency Services, David Elliott, Tuesday evening.

The legislation is allegedly in response to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry however, most of the legislation has little to do with the recommendations of the Inquiry including what looks like an attempt to privatise some aspects of firefighting and preparedness.

To make matters worse, it's become apparent that no one was consulted. Not FRNSW, not the Fire Services Joint Standing Committee, and not the FBEU and firefighters.

The Bushfire Inquiry Report made a recommendation that better communication was needed between all those involved in bushfire prevention and firefighting, yet the NSW Coalition Government is ramming through legislation that nobody has had a proper chance to look at.

I've spent much of the last few days in Parliament talking to the Opposition and crossbench, both to try to better understand the legislation and recommend changes that will support our firefighters and improve the protection of lives and property across the state.

The legislation will now be debated in the Legislative Council within the next fortnight which will include amendments being put forward. We'll continue to work with other unions and politicians across the spectrum to resist any changes that could damage our jobs, work and services in our community.

## **Double No Medical Certificate Days Being Deducted**

Following on from meal & refreshment allowance amounts being incorrect, the FBEU has discovered another error being made by FRNSW.

Not long ago, a member contacted us regarding no medical certificate sick leave that was taken for part of a shift.

The Award makes clear that part of a shift counts as an 'occasion' for the purposes of deducting one of your NMC days. Despite this, FRNSW's system was deducting two days for a single part shift that was taken as sick leave with no medical certificate.

The FBEU contacted FRNSW, who admitted that this problem has been ongoing since February 2020. FRNSW have since committed to an audit to ensure that all employees whose days have been excessively debited have their remaining days corrected.



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It's clear that FRNSW is unable to properly apply your Award entitlements, so it's up to all of us to hold them to account. Continue to let us know if anything doesn't seem quite right.

If you have taken a NMC part-shift this year, double check your entitlements to make sure you haven't been double-deducted and if you have, raise it with your Zone office to ensure you have been included in the audit.

If your days are still not fixed following this, please get in touch with the Union office.

## **Underpayments**

Members should be aware that if there has been underpayment, or a dispute about pay or allowances, there is a six-year time limit to take action. For some entitlements, for example, annual leave or other entitlements that accumulate, the time limit does not start until you have stopped working for FRNSW.

If you believe you have not been paid correctly in the last six years, you should check the relevant award provision and contact payroll to make an inquiry in the first instance. If it remains unresolved, please contact the Union.

## **More Firefighters and Investments in Us and Our Services... in Queensland and the ACT. None Here.**

The recently returned Palaszczuk Labour Government in Queensland will add 357 new firefighters to the ranks this term. This is in addition to the 100 firefighters and 12 communication officers brought into the service in the previous term of government.

The United Firefighters Union of Queensland has welcomed this commitment, having campaigned in an ongoing way for more firefighters and services in the State. I congratulate the union on their work and the Queensland Government on their commitment to our work, services and the community.

A few months ago in the ACT, an ongoing dispute about firefighters' pay and conditions was resolved and as part of the win, the ranks in the ACT are to swell by 99. We congratulate the UFU in the ACT and the Government for reaching agreement.

Next week the NSW Liberal Government will hand down a budget and we hold out little hope that there will be any commitment to us, our stations or our services in the community.

The NSW Coalition Government has neglected our services and restricted our ability to improve our wages and conditions for almost a decade. I expect nothing different this time.



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NSW is in desperate need of more stations, more firefighters and a huge investment in our infrastructure, capabilities, training and much more. We deserve better and the community deserves better. Like our friends in Queensland and the ACT, it is our intention to actively campaign now and all the way up to the next state election.

Check out our new Fix our Fire Service Facebook page [here](#).

## **Movember – Momentum Building Again**

I am very pleased to see that FBEU members are once again active in Movember. I recently met with member Rob Hansen and he shared his story and motivation for kicking off FBEU Movember with me.

*I am Leading Firefighter Rob Hansen from 304B Gosford and I'm a testicular cancer survivor. I have been a Mobro for eight years and started after my diagnosis in September 2012.*

*I've asked to take over and help run our FBEU Movember campaign – and we have kicked it off this year. We're a little late this year so we'll start small with the view to ramping up again next year.*

*My goals are really to get the conversations started and build momentum again. I want to reach out to those having a tough time and be a support. I want to remind everyone that it's important to go to the doctor and get checked out. I want to support those mates, friends and anyone in that recovery back from surgery and treatment and into the next phase of recovery.*

After I met with Rob, myself and the President have started growing our mos and having conversations. You can show your support by [signing up to Movember](#) this year. The FBEU will look to include a plan to reinvigorate our involvement again next year.

Thanks Rob, for getting us going again.

In Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary