



# SitRep 5/2021

## Fix Our Fire Service: State of the Stations Audit

This week the FBEU is launching the first part of Fix our Fire Service – The State of the Stations Project. We'll be working with delegates and HSRs to complete a state-wide audit of all stations.

I know I don't need to tell you that many of our stations are in dire need of serious work. At a local and state-wide level, we're told there's no budget to fix things. We don't think that's good enough.

This project will help us understand how broad and how bad the issues are so we can work and campaign together to make our stations better.

Delegates and HSRs will be receiving further information about the State of the Stations Audit very shortly.

It's important that we get one audit done at each station. If you have multiple delegates/HSRs based at your station, please talk together so that you don't double up. If you don't have a delegate at your station, speak with your organiser to make a plan.

## Health Checks

In [SitRep 2/2021](#) we reported that we were receiving a high number of enquiries from members about their experiences with the health check process. One of the most reported issues was confusion over the external agency FRNSW uses to review the medical information and assess members' fitness for duty.

We met with FRNSW on 29 January 2021 to inform them of members' concerns. At that meeting, FRNSW agreed to provide the FBEU with information that will help us assess the role this external agency plays and the processes they've agreed to with FRNSW. This will allow us to determine:

- What KPIs the agency is bound by per their agreement with FRNSW,
- Statistics regarding member participation rate,
- Statistics regarding the outcomes made by the agency; and
- An understanding as to how member confidentiality is handled.

We want to be able to provide you with a better understanding of the process and also to ensure FRNSW and their external vendors are complying with all relevant laws. We'll continue to update you about this issue.

## e-Recall Review

We've also received a lot of feedback from members regarding the problems with the current e-Recall system including, but not limited to, a lack of policies and procedures, inspector contact issues, kilometre issues, and the need for better transparency.

We're set to have our first meeting about the e-Recall review with FRNSW next week where we'll raise all of the above. We certainly have ideas about how to improve the system and are willing to work with FRNSW to come up with solutions to these issues. We will keep you updated as we proceed.



# SitRep 5/2021

## Member Wins in Dispute

This week your union settled a long running and bitter individual dispute with the issue resolved entirely in favour of our member. We don't often update on individual matters in detail, even when they are on the public record, to protect the privacy and dignity of the member/s involved.

Sometimes these matters are the subject of deeds though that is not the case here. We write about it with the permission of the member involved.

The dispute goes back to 2016 and is a matter of general interest because during submissions, the results of a 2017 inquiry into bullying in the emergency services was referred to. One submission, from someone whose name was withheld, suggested that the FBEU did not always offer members its full support for reasons of political or personal advantage (as opposed to weighing the facts of the matter and the best course for the union and the member).

A union that wants to look after members and democratically build power should operate in ways members understand and not give an impression that deals are being done with the boss without members knowing.

I gave evidence at the Inquiry and your State Committee has worked hard to build a union that looks after members well, works to represent members fairly and transparently, and gives members real and significant opportunities to have an organised and active say.

All disciplinary matters have the potential to be difficult and the nature of our very high-density union can sometimes make things even more complex. The way through this is simple. It is to say: it is the role of the union, no matter what, to demand and enforce a fair process from the employer.

That's what we did in this matter.

## FBEU State Committee Elections

An important reminder to update your address details by contacting the Union office at [office@fbeu.net](mailto:office@fbeu.net) or using [this form](#) to ensure you can participate in the upcoming union elections. You need a ballot paper to be able to vote but you won't receive one from the NSW Electoral Commission if we don't have your current address.

In Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
**State Secretary**

P.S. My op-ed from the Newcastle Herald last weekend is now up on the [FBEU website](#) (it's paywalled online).