



SitRep 43/2021

COVID Update

It has been a busy week with COVID for your union. The FBEU continues to work as part of the COVID IMT to help deal with a rapidly evolving and complex situation. Our priority is to keep members safe as we manage a highly virulent strain of the virus and a slow vaccine rollout.

As you may already know, unfortunately one of our firefighters has tested positive to COVID19. Whilst the positive test was taken off shift the results found the firefighter was infectious while at work on both previous shifts, even though there were no symptoms at the time. COVID IMT and the FBEU worked to contain the outbreak and notify contacts, and although we had some concerns around the process, the incident was well managed. We will continue to work with FRNSW to make changes and improvements where needed.

It is important to point out that at every step the firefighter in question did the right thing and followed the correct process. It is an unfortunate situation but nobody is at fault. There is no reason or justification to besmirch one of our own.

We continue to work with FRNSW toward a measured approach to safely opening up essential training, along with ongoing discussions around local restriction levels, staff movements and more.

If you have any question about your circumstances and COVID, in the first instance contact COVIDIMT@frnsw.nsw.gov.au or COVID@fbeu.net or for anything urgent your local command or Sub Branch representative.

Retained pagers

Following from SitRep 42/2021 and 28/2021, FBEU representatives met with FRNSW today to continue discussions around Retained pagers.

There has been a lot of feedback from members saying removing the option of using a phone instead of the pager is their number one concern.

We happily report that FRNSW will be looking into a phone/app-based turnout system in addition to the new pagers, and will report back their findings. This is by no means an assurance a phone-based system will remain, however it's a reassurance that your feedback and our concerns are being considered.

We are also pleased to announce that at the conclusion of the pager pilot in a few weeks, a working group will be formed to drive the system going forward, and a FBEU nominated Retained member will be part of that group. Retained staff deserve a seat at the table as the subject matter experts. This will ensure the needs of Retained are being properly considered and resolved.

We continue to encourage members to contact the FBEU with any feedback on the new pagers via email to garnott@fbeu.net. If you are comfortable doing so, we also encourage you to CC your feedback to opcommssupport@fire.nsw.gov.au so that FRNSW gets it first-hand.

We have also prepared a survey to better understand your thoughts about the new pagers and your habits using the existing setup. Please complete it prior to 26th of August.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6928GWX>



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Meetings

I have joined in on numerous sub-branch and delegate zoom meetings in the past 2 weeks. Thanks to the Sub-Branch representatives who arranged these and for the members who attended. These meetings are the best we have to remain connected in these strange times but remain a valuable space to engage.

If you want to arrange a zoom meeting for your area, please contact your Sub-Branch representative. I will always find time talk to members.

In Unity,

Martin Dixon
Acting State Secretary