



SitRep 60/2021

Transition from Lockdown

The FBEU has been in discussions with FRNSW over the past weeks developing a transition from lockdown document. Your union takes the health and safety of our members seriously. We want to thank you all for holding the line and supporting the code red the FBEU put in place on the 20th of August. FRNSW failed to prioritise the safety of members during this time, the FBEU held them to account by enforcing FRNSW's own level 4 restrictions.

The introduction of this document will see business returning to normal in many ways however the FBEU reminds all staff to remain vigilant and continue to follow all COVID safe guidelines and health orders.

Therefore, as of 0800hrs, Friday 22 October the FBEU Level 4 restriction code red issued 20th August will be lifted and the below guidelines will take effect.

1. All FRNSW fire stations and other work locations should limit visitors to authorised personnel, as per the COVID-19 Portal. Visitors must have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccinations validated through the Service NSW COVID Safe Check-in.
2. Individuals must register their details with Service NSW using the COVID Safe Check-in every single time anyone visits the station/work location, even if it is for an incident call.
3. All non-emergency related, face to face external community engagements can recommence on the 1st of December 2021. Essential and critical Pre-Incident Plans (PIPs) and exercises can continue to be undertaken ensuring compliance with physical distancing and regulations.
4. Duty Commanders and Zone Commanders can attend Stations to meet operational needs, safety, or organisational priorities.
5. If an urgent issue (such as provision of first aid) requires a visitor (non FRNSW staff) to enter the stations/work locations, wear a mask, practice physical distancing wherever possible and as a precaution, disinfect the area and any utilised equipment afterwards.
6. Renovations and station maintenance programs can recommence. All contractors must comply with entry procedures, be fully vaccinated and comply with COVID-19 policies and procedures for contractors
7. Masks are still required in all indoor settings except office buildings, however FRNSW still strongly encourages wearing of masks in office buildings including Greenacre HQ, ESA office area, Zone/Area Command offices, fire stations, Greenacre workshop, ESA training areas, regional training centres and communication centres. (FRNSW community masks are not to be worn at incidents or when a higher level of respiratory protection is required).
8. Training, including face to face training, can recommence within COVID-19 safety guidelines.
9. All staff who can work remotely are to work from home and only visit FRNSW workplaces with approval from their manager. Managers are responsible for staff wellbeing and allowing flexible work practices.
10. For on-shift operational staff relieving firefighters and out duties there is no movement restrictions (as per normal guidelines and current Health Orders).
11. All firefighters who are currently working alternative staffing arrangements not at their base station are to return to their base station or allocated a relieving location for their next relieving period by the 1st of November 2021. Those currently undertaking Country Relief positions for allocated periods of identified leave or relief are to remain in position.
12. Secondary employment to be reviewed and risk assessed on a case-by-case basis. Secondary employment that causes potential high risk to FRNSW operations may need to cease. For staff who have secondary or other employment that is high-risk (e.g., working at a quarantine hotel, COVID-19 PCR testing nurse) you



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must inform your Duty Commander who will assess the risk to your crew and determine suitability to continue normal response. Any issues or concerns should be discussed and clarified with the COVID-19 IMT.

13. Recruitment Physical Aptitude Tests (PATs) and medical assessments for permanent and retained on-call firefighter recruitment can be conducted after the 26th of October using the attached risk assessment.
14. Gym facilities within stations and other FRNSW facilities can reopen ensuring compliance with current health restrictions - Public Health (COVID-19 General) Orders 2021
15. CFU initial and skills maintenance training can recommence. Initial and skills maintenance training group sizes to be one member of the CFU Management Team per 10 trainees, with a maximum of 20 trainees in line with current Public Health (COVID-19 General) Orders 2021.
16. All recruitment information to advise candidates FRNSW has a mandatory requirement for all staff to have had two doses of COVID-19 vaccinations as of 17 December 2021

Safework sit-down

Safework NSW sat down with FRNSW, the FBEU and a number of HSR's yesterday to discuss concerns surrounding the approach to consultation currently being employed by FRNSW. The meeting was a productive re-set of the relationship in this very important space. This is some of what was discussed:

- HSR's must have ownership of the process and systems of consultation. FRNSW will require their agreement
- HSR's must be paid and resourced to undertake their duties. **If you are a HSR who has not been paid please contact the office.**
- The FRNSW PCBU must demonstrate due diligence relating to the WHS Act. The FBEU are calling on FRNSW to train their decision makers.
- FRNSW cannot unreasonably prevent a HSR seeking consultation
- A 'dynamic risk assessment' will no longer be a blanket approach to risk mitigation outside of an incident. It is not fit for purpose.

Our job is exceptionally dangerous. It is paramount that we have structured systems to ensure that our members have a seat at the table to shape safe initiatives.

This is a steep learning curve for our employer. Having workers at the table when decisions are being made flies in the face of the top-down culture we have seen from FRNSW. Nonetheless, it is what the legislation requires, it is fair and when workers participate in decision-making, we make safer decisions for Firefighters and the communities we serve.

We will be corresponding with HSR's shortly to discuss next steps. Safety is Union business.

Vaccination update

As reported in Sitrep 57 we wrote to FRNSW to seek clarity on whether consultation with workers and their representatives had occurred. We have yet to hear back from FRNSW but are expecting a reply shortly. We will update members once we have more information.



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Passing of David Proust

Members were notified yesterday of the unfortunate passing of Retired Senior Firefighter David Proust.

Prousty was a true legend of the job and of our Union. In particular, I want to acknowledge his contributions to the fight for presumptive legislation for Firefighters. On behalf of all members, Prousty worked alongside the Union for this win, and despite the state of his ill-health at the time. His dedication to the cause, and to ensure that the next generation of Firefighters had superior protective equipment and conditions is something we can all learn from. Our thoughts are with his family and the many mates he has made in this job

Solidarity Prousty.

FBEU President Election

Voting materials were posted to members on Friday 1 October 2021 and polls will close at 1700hrs, Thursday 28 October 2021. There is only one more week that ballots will be accepted.

Candidates have been offered the opportunity to submit a short bio supporting their candidacies which you can find on the FBEU website:

Sandy Linton [here](#) **Luke Russell** [here](#) **Mick Johnsen** [here](#)

If you have not received your ballot papers or have any enquiries concerning this election these should be directed to the NSW Electoral Commission via ballots@elections.nsw.gov.au.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary