



SitRep 02/2022

Workforce planning failure

The state of COVID-19 infection is having a dramatic and undeniable impact on the FRNSW workforce. We're now seeing more cases amongst our membership in one day than in the previous two years combined.

I want to thank members for sticking together during this period and doing what is required to maintain safe workplaces. That said, FRNSW must now take greater responsibility for this situation and for the need for proactive workforce planning.

FRNSW ELT have had two years to plan for this situation. Their response has been slow, and FRNSW have largely put their head in the sand when fronted with the issues. The response is also built on years of neglect to career progression, access to training, and workforce planning. This is no way to run a fire service. We will be meeting with FRNSW over the coming weeks to address some of these concerns. More to follow.

Greater COVID control measures

We are glad to report that the FBEU recommendations put to the FRNSW COVID IMT are now being progressed. These changes include:

- Substantial orders of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) received with ongoing supply being arranged for the coming months
- Arrangements for RAT for the start of every shift being worked towards
- Deep cleaning of worksites resulting from an exposure will be maintained
- Fit-testing of P2 masks is being worked through

This is an evolving situation and further arrangements may be required. The FBEU have corresponded with FRNSW to ensure regular check-ins and ongoing consultation with HSRs. I want to thank all members for maintaining the pressure to ensure these reasonable changes were adopted.

Award bargaining

With bargaining upon us, the FBEU will be pushing ahead with award discussions, with meetings commencing this month.

With the learnings from 2021 fresh in our mind, it is imperative that FRNSW begin to embrace members at the decision-making table. FRNSW's best asset when considering change are its own employees intended to undertake the work.

Better decisions mean a better service both for us and the communities we serve.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary