



SITREP 34/2022

FBEU Calls on Emergency Services Minister to Ensure Professional Firefighters are not Left Behind

Members will no doubt have seen the significant announcements made by the State Liberal/National Government this week regarding NSW Health and NSW Ambulance.

Following on from previous meetings, the FBEU has today written to Emergency Services Minister Steph Cooke MP to call on her to ensure the departments under her portfolio, notably Professional Firefighters, are not left behind.

This week's announcement provides for a \$4.5 billion investment in health and emergency services including over 10,000 additional front-line staff. Alongside this announcement the Government has increased the public sector wages cap from 2.5% to 3.0% and offered health workers a one-off \$3000 'thank you' payment.

The FBEU acknowledges the huge stress our comrades in the health sector have faced over recent years and welcomes any increase in resourcing. The FBEU also know that a measly 0.5% annual increase in wages and a one-off \$3000 payment to our health workers is far less than what they deserve.

The 'thank you' payments are only made to a fraction of the public service. The 0.5% increase, barely scratches the surface of what is needed to fix over a decade of under-resourcing across NSW by the Liberal/National Government. It also most certainly fails to fix the problems faced by Professional Firefighters.

In our correspondence today with Minister Cooke we have reminded her that while her Government were developing these policy announcements on health funding she was allowing her own department – FRNSW, to:

- Fight Professional Firefighters and their Union in the IRC over the basic right to seek consultation in the Award.
- Continue to push the underresourced and dangerous PAD Program on Permanent Firefighters (and make them pay for it in the form of reduced conditions)

This is not good enough.

Under the watch of the State Liberal/National Government, FRNSW has also been allowed to:

- Close over 50 Fire Stations across NSW at will.
- Abandon standards of fire cover meaning the community cannot be guaranteed a fire response in a timely manner.
- Abandon safe systems of work leaving Professional Firefighters at risk on the fireground.
- Fail to recruit even close to enough Professional Firefighters to keep up with population growth.
- Allow Fire Stations and appliances to become so outdated that many are now not fit-for-purpose.

For too long Professional Firefighters have been patient in seeking resolution to these issues.

It is time as a profession we step up and take up the fight to ensure we have the tools and resourcing to do the job we know our community deserves.

In light of this week's announcement, the FBEU will be reconsidering its current position in regard to Award negotiations. Members will be updated shortly on the Union's position along with further action you can take to fight for change.

In the meantime, a full copy of our letter to the Minister can be found [here](#).



SITREP 34/2022

FBEU to Appear before NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on the Response to Major Flooding across NSW

The FBEU has been asked to appear before the *NSW Legislative Council Select Committee on the Response to Major Flooding across NSW* on Tuesday 14 June.

The FBEU has made a submission to this committee which was previously circulated to Members in [SitRep 30/2022](#).

This submission focused primarily on the resourcing needs of Professional Firefighters when responding to these events along with the need to ensure that the lead combat agency for major emergencies such as these is an appropriately resourced and trained professional fire service.

The Union will continue to press this submission before the Committee.

COVID-19 Vaccination Non-Compliance Misconduct Processes

Members who have nominated the FBEU as their representative regarding the misconduct processes for non-compliance with COVID-19 vaccinations will either today or over the coming days, receive correspondence from FRNSW regarding your response.

As Members who sought FBEU advice and representation would be aware, the Union provided Members with a pro forma response to deliver to FRNSW in regards to the initial investigation. If you have provided this response to FRNSW in accordance with our advice then at this stage no further action is required.

If your circumstances have changed or you wish to provide an additional individual response then please contact office@fbeu.net for further advice before taking any action.

FRNSW has advised that once each investigation has been concluded then each individual Member will be assigned to a decision-maker. At this point, the FBEU will make a further individual submission on your behalf in response to any proposed decision by FRNSW. Each Member who has nominated the FBEU as your representative in accordance with our advice will be contacted shortly to discuss your matter.

Correction to Email Address for Industrial Action Committee

Members may have noticed in Friday's SitRep an error in the email address to provide your EOI for the FBEU's internal Industrial Action Committee.

This SitRep advised to email rkoruskos@fbeu.net. Please note this email contained a typo. The correct address is rkrouskos@fbeu.net

Please resubmit an EOI to the corrected address prior to Friday 10 June.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary