



State Election 2023 – We Need You

Pre-poll for the State Election starts tomorrow, and our members are fired up and having a huge impact through our campaign. Hundreds of members have so far turned out to campaign against this oppressive state government, who has failed to provide professional firefighters with what they need to get the job done, and to value and respect our work.

More than ever your Union need you to get involved. Early voting starts tomorrow and continues through to Friday 24 March. We need to ensure that firefighters are a constant presence at voting booths so your message to voters and the future government is heard.

All available members not yet booked should sign up to [here](#) to actions in the following seats:

- Upper Hunter
- Port Stephens
- Heathcote
- Leppington
- Camden
- Tweed
- Goulburn

If we're serious about making sure firefighters are getting what we need to get the job done, and a wages system that values and respects our work we need to turn up on election day as well.

We're calling on all members to step up for this last push. Put your name down [here](#) to register your availability to campaign in one of the above seats on election day (Saturday 25 March). An organiser will be in touch.

Let's get this done.

Health Checks Dispute Progresses

As per the outcome of the Hearing regarding the Code Red on Health Checks, we met with FRNSW last week and attended conciliation before the IRC on Wednesday.

Following the meeting, FRNSW has finally committed to schedule a meeting with UHG representatives to discuss our ongoing concerns with the Health Checks process. This meeting will be held Wednesday 29 March.

While this meeting represents a positive step forward, at conciliation before the IRC the FBEU made clear that we are seeking concrete resolutions to our concerns with the Health Checks process and made several suggestions for actual remedies.

Most importantly the FBEU pressed the need for improved communications from UHG to employees regarding the health checks process which they are now working towards implementing.



We have been scheduled to return to the IRC on 3 April following our meeting with UHG. We are hopeful that we will be able to report back to members following that date on some resolutions to the issues.

In the meantime we remind you all that this dispute is separate to our claim in the Award negotiations regarding replacing the current Health Check process with a new Health Screening model that is designed to assess us against a standard relevant to firefighting and for the illnesses and injuries we know our job causes us in a non-punitive fashion.

The FBEU and Department have had some further discussions regarding these claims this week and we intend to continue to press this position through the separate Award negotiation process.

Award Negotiations - Update

The FBEU and Department met this week for a further negotiation ahead of Monday's IRC conciliation.

Much of the discussion at this week's meeting centred on the D&D Award and our claims regarding a Health Screening Program to replace the current Health Checks.

While the FBEU has now had an opportunity to outline an overview of our claims to the Department a high level description of our claims, we can report to members that no items are agreed between the parties, including cost-neutral items. At this stage it remains unclear which claims they may want to discuss further or if they simply object to all claims.

We have asked them to indicate this ahead of our conciliation on Monday so as to allow us to use the time efficiently to understand where the parties might be able to reach consent positions.

We maintain our position at this stage that we continue to press all our claims.

As above, we have a full day conciliation before the IRC Monday where we hope the Department will be able to articulate its position more clearly with respect to our Log of Claims.

Members will receive a further update after this.

COVID-19 Updated Risk Assessment

This week the FBEU received correspondence from FRNSW with a new COVID draft risk assessment.

The FBEU is currently reviewing this material and the underpinning health advice relied on by FRNSW in drafting this risk assessment, however from an initial reading we have significant concerns that the Risk Assessment does not adequately reflect the health advice and fails to take into consideration risk factors outside of Covid-19 that impact on decisions which flow from this risk assessment.



The Department is also unclear as to their intention for employees currently stood down because of the vaccination mandate.

The FBEU has written to FRNSW seeking to meet to understand the full intention of FRNSW's current risk assessment and the impact it will have on staff.

We will continue to update members as we get more information.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary