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## Stale, failed and wailing

You are no doubt all aware by now that Minister Dib has appointed an administrator to oversee FRNSW until the search for a new Commissioner has concluded.

As we all know there is a serious overtime crisis within FRNSW, and the recently elected Minns Government have rightfully asked the Executive Leadership Team for some answers. Not answers about *why*, but answers about *how* they plan to resolve this massive overspend. Unsurprisingly for those of us who have seen how dysfunctional part of our Leadership Team really is, all they could come up with was vacant stares and the same old cost cutting ideas from years past.

This is a team who walked lockstep with our former Commissioner on a wasteful Plus Plan vanity project, who oversaw huge increases in spending on consultants, orchestrated massive and questionable increases in senior executive roles whilst watching firefighter numbers stagnate, allowed promotions to lag behind requirements, watched as stations and fleet disintegrated around us, allowed training to disappear, and caused the disconnect between management and firefighters to grow exponentially.

A perfect example of the misguided and disconnected management we are suffering through is in the "Commissioner's Update" email of 28<sup>th</sup> September:

*"We must commit to a savings plan and have significant results by March 2024 and we are on notice that the Government will not accept overtime spend at the levels we have experienced over the last few years. Those two requests are made to all of us. This is a team effort and it is important that we all take this need for reform seriously. It is not the time to shift blame to others, but rather to support each other in looking forward to a better, more sustainable FRNSW, one that delivers to our community."*

It is quite clear to me, and to the vast majority of FBEU members that this email is the absolute definition of blame shifting. Firefighter unavailability has also been mentioned in a previous email as the cause for overtime. If by unavailability the email was referring to FRNSW not employing enough Firefighters then yes, I would agree, but we all know that's not what was meant.

An example of one of the many failings of our ELT is the undeniable fact that not a single additional permanent firefighter has been employed to cover the vacancies created by the expansion of parental leave entitlements. Not one.

Yet still, as always, Firefighters get the blame for the amount of overtime worked.



The ELT have become Frequent Flyers around trying to Ram blame down Firefighters' throats, instead of taking their Hats off to those who wrap themselves in pride around the work that they do.

The old saying that a fish rots from the head really does apply to FRNSW, although in this case the head does not just mean the Commissioner.

We all know a few more cuts from the top end may be required before we can once again realise ["Orta recens quam pura nites"](#).

## 2023 Award update

The process for the making of the 2023 Awards continues.

Yesterday, FRNSW were due to file the Awards with the IRC, prior to them being made in a consent hearing on 17 October. Unfortunately, FRNSW were unable to file the Awards as, according to them, Government has required the costings of the Award to move to another Government committee, which is meeting on 13 October.

The FBEU has made clear to the Commission that we did not agree with any extension which would result in delays to the Award, unless FRNSW committed to back paying the new cost items in the Award to 17 October. Ultimately, the IRC has granted the extension to FRNSW to file the documents on the 13<sup>th</sup> October while still retaining our hearing date on 17<sup>th</sup> October.

**It is our clear expectation that the making of these Awards should not be delayed any further.** Members are rightly expecting delivery of the pay increases and other conditions you have been promised. I assure you we are, and will continue to do all we can to hold FRNSW to that commitment.

Once we know the outcome of the meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> October, we will advise members further.

## Health Screening transition

We have continued to meet with FRNSW to work through the transition from the Health Checks process to the new Health Screening Program. We held our second Working Party meeting with FRNSW where we are working on the correspondence that members who are either in the process, or are due to complete a Health Check, will be receiving.

This correspondence will go out via Australia Post so please make sure your postal address is up to date with FRNSW.



## COVID-19 vaccination policy

FRNSW have confirmed that they will be formally moving from the Covid-19 Vaccination Policy to the Vaccination and Screening Requirements Policy, which will no longer mandate any vaccine for employees outside of CFR and USAR.

This process will be occurring very shortly.

FRNSW are working through the arrangements for the return-to-work process for those who are currently excluded from the workplace. Subject to the outcome of the PSB matters, members will be returning to work in the coming weeks.

We ask that all members in this category please monitor their FRNSW email as communication regarding your return to work will be sent to that email, and you will be required to take action to confirm your arrangements for returning.

In Unity,

**Leighton Drury**  
State Secretary

