



2023 Delegates Conference Wrap-up

100 + FBEU delegates from across the state came together in Sydney this week to reflect on the Union's substantial achievements of 2023 and to plan and prioritise for more wins in the year ahead.

On Tuesday evening, the conference dinner was supported by members of NSW Labor Government, Commissioner Jeremy Fewtrell, and the broader Union Movement. NSW Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, addressed delegates on behalf of Premier Chris Minns, who was notably absent due to illness. Importantly, I would like to make a special thanks to officials of the Public Service Association (PSA), the Police Association of NSW (PANSW), and Unions NSW for their attendance and support this week. Our combined efforts as a Union Movement have ensured safe passage for what is the first step in a fairer industrial relations system for NSW, notwithstanding last-minute obstructions from others in Macquarie Street – more on this below.

With our last conference just over a year ago, reflecting on just how far we have come is crucial. Support for the Union's plan to put professional firefighters back on the Government's agenda has delivered some important reform in 2023. By now, the NSW Labor Government are well-aware that FBEU members are dedicated to protecting the NSW community, and that it remains completely unacceptable that professional firefighters be without the things we need to get the job done safely. With major problems in FRNSW yet to be addressed, I am proud to report that FBEU delegates remain ready to ensure that the NSW Labor Government honour their commitments to further improvements to the safety and working conditions of professional firefighter. Most crucially, this includes urgent reform to the laws which protect us from occupational cancer.

I would like to thank all our delegates who took time out of their schedule to represent their views and for their continued commitment to standing up for all FBEU members.

IR Reform Passes Parliament

Yesterday evening the Government's proposed IR Reform passed through the upper house of Parliament meaning it will now come in to place and amend the current IR Act.

This reform was only possible due to the solidarity of union members across the public sector who not only campaigned for a change in Government in the March State Election, but ensured we continued to press for these vital changes to our IR system throughout 2023 with both Labor and the crossbenchers.

This is a significant win for the union movement, public sector workers and represents the first step towards further substantial industrial reform.

This bill has now, after more than a decade, finally and officially list the unfair and restrictive wages cap that stifled public sector growth and will allow us, along with other essential service workers to bargain and campaign for fair pay increases.



Along with finally removing the last vestiges of the wages cap this reform will also:

- Bring back the Industrial Relations Court and Judges giving us a forum to have industrial disputes heard, determined, and have enforceable outcomes.
- Establish WHS prosecutions within the court jurisdiction allowing for WHS breaches to be prosecuted.
- Bring in mutual gain's negotiations pathway allowing for interest-based bargaining through an IRC Commissioner or Facilitator.

As professional firefighters, and NSW public sector workers, these changes are the beginning of the IR framework we needed as we launch into our next round of Award negotiations in 2024.

In Unity,

Leighton Drury
State Secretary

