



16 February 2024

The Hon. Chris Minns MP
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Dear Premier Minns,

RE: NSW Professional Firefighter Awards (2024)

On 26 February 2024, 10 days from now, the three Awards which cover NSW's professional firefighters are due to expire. Despite this, negotiations on new Awards, have not commenced.

This situation is not due to any fault of FBEU members but simply because FRNSW is unable to negotiate, as they do not yet to have any approved bargaining parameters.

With the introduction of much needed reform to the NSW Industrial Relations (IR) Act last year, FBEU members were promised a system which would enable real wage growth for public sector workers through a model of "mutual gains" bargaining.

As the IR bill was introduced in November, IR Minister Sophie Cotsis thanked firefighters and other public sector workers and reassured public sector Unions that "the Government can once again negotiate effectively with public sector workers to promote potential increases in real wages while returning benefit to the people of New South Wales".

And yet, 10 days from the expiry of our Awards, your Government has failed to provide FRNSW with bargaining parameters or any capacity for decision making.

That situation is unacceptable and NSW professional firefighters rightly feel undervalued and disrespected by your Government.

FBEU members are consistently being asked to do more with less. And yet, our performance and our ongoing commitment to the job continues to lead to quality outcomes for the Government and cost-effective outcomes at that.

The FBEU has written to FRNSW and Minister Dib seeking to progress negotiations as recently as two weeks ago however the current situation persists.

FBEU members endorsed our Log of Claims and provided such to FRNSW in November of 2023. This claim includes significant reform to ensure fair pay and conditions for firefighters along with provisions to bring enhancements to the protection FBEU members provide the community of NSW each day.

FBEU members felt the full impact of the previous Governments wages cap and with the current cost-of-living pressures, a lack of real wage growth is having serious

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implications. In these circumstances, FBEU members can no longer afford to sit idle and wait for your Government to recognise our value.

As such, I am writing to you as Premier to seek your urgent intervention to ensure FRNSW are provided with clear bargaining parameters and negotiations commence without delay.

FBEU Delegates have met this week to discuss and progress a plan for imminent action should your Government continue to fail to act to properly value their ongoing work and commitment to the NSW community.

I hope that such action is not required, however without urgent, and genuine action by your Government in the next 10 days FBEU members will have no choice.

I would be happy to meet to discuss this matter further should you wish.

Yours fraternally

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L. Drury', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Leighton Drury
State Secretary