



Bargaining Dispute Imminent

As detailed in [Sitrep 6](#), last week the FBEU wrote to Premier Minns requesting his urgent intervention in order to avoid an escalation of an industrial dispute pertaining to our Awards.

A response to the letter from Industrial Relations Minister Cotsis came yesterday morning as per below attachment. As you will read, Minister Cotsis acknowledges that bargaining between the parties should have commenced, and states that FRNSW is actively considering the Union's log of claims, and that the parties would commence immediate discussion the same day. The Minister also urges the FBEU to reconsider progressing the industrial action developed by the FBEU Bans Committee.

In good-faith, FBEU Officials and FRNSW met yesterday to discuss these circumstances, with the Department unwillingly admitting that the lack of bargaining parameters by the Minns Government had made for an untenable deadlock in the bargaining process. Discussions were otherwise, however, constructive with the parties progressing agreed costings on at least one significant wage-increasing initiative from the FBEU's log of claims.

Nevertheless, the fundamental roadblock to securing much needed improvements to your wages and conditions remains both unaddressed by the Minister and solely the responsibility of the Minns Government. With Awards set to expire on Sunday, this matter can no longer go unaddressed.

State Committee met this afternoon to discuss these circumstances. A further scheduled meeting with Minister Dib will also take place later today.

Members are advised that urgent updates will be provided over the weekend, with an imminent industrial campaign seemingly inevitable.

Meanwhile, in order to preserve our back pay date, the FBEU this week filed our position for new Awards at the IRC. It seems at this stage FRNSW have not filed and do not intend to which will make for interesting conciliation before the Commission. Further on this as the process continues.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary



FBEU SEEKS URGENT INTERVENTION FROM PREMIER MINNS IN AWARD NEGOTIATIONS – CAMPAIGN ACTION IMMINENT

This week, the FBEU Bans/Industrial Campaign Committee reconvened to consider and discuss our imminent plan for action to progress the stalled 2024 Award negotiations. This plan is now also being put to delegates in zoom meetings one of which occurred yesterday, the other being held this evening.

The responses received to our communication to both the Emergency Services Minister, Jihad Dib and FRNSW, as outlined in sitrep 4, was wholly inadequate and failed to address the continued reason negotiations have not progressed, namely the lack of FRNSW's bargaining parameters approved by the Government.

In a last-ditch attempt to move negotiations forward we have today written to Premier Minns seeking his urgent intervention to avoid an escalation of this dispute. You can find a copy of our letter below.

NSW professional firefighters deserve better, and our patience has now worn out.

With our Awards expiring in 10 days, without urgent action from the Minns Government, we will likely be launching an industrial campaign within days. This campaign will need the support and involvement of all members to send a clear message to this government that NSW professional firefighters deserve real wages growth and reform to our job. We can no longer be under resourced, underfunded, and undervalued.

Watch this space for updates in coming days.

In Unity

Leighton Drury
State Secretary



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

The Hon Sophie Cotsis MPMinister for Industrial Relations
Minister for Work Health and Safety

22 February 2024

Mr Leighton Drury
State Secretary
Fire Brigade Employees Unionldrury@fbeu.net

Re: NSW Professional Firefighter Awards (2024)

Dear Mr ~~Drury~~ Leighton

I refer to your letter dated 16 February 2024 to the Premier in relation to the Awards which cover NSW's much valued firefighters and the imminent expiry of their nominal term. The Premier has asked me to reply on his behalf.

I confirm that the NSW Government is committed to the new collaborative approach to negotiations recently enshrined in the recent amendments to the *Industrial Relations Act 1996*. In this regard, I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the FBEU's genuine commitment to working within the new framework, noting your participation at the recent mutual gains bargaining training session together with FRNSW.

Ideally, bargaining with FRNSW would have commenced at this point in time. However, I wish to assure you that FRNSW is actively considering your Log of Claims and their own proposals with a view commencing discussions with you without further delay.

To this end, I have been advised that a meeting was organised for today Thursday 22 February 2024 at 9 am to commence immediate discussions. I would urge you to reconsider progressing any plan for imminent action.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sophie Cotsis".

Sophie Cotsis MP
Minister for Industrial Relations
Minister for Work Health and Safety