



21 December 2018

The Hon Gladys Berejiklian MP
Premier of NSW

By email: willoughby@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Premier,

I write regarding the tabling of Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's report into PFAS contamination and management in and around Defence Bases in the Commonwealth Parliament on 4 December 2018.

The Union urges the NSW Government to adopt all the Committee's recommendations, but in particular Recommendation 3 which states:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government review its existing advice in relation to the human health effects of PFAS exposure, including to acknowledge the potential links to certain medical conditions.

As you may be aware, PFAS was in widespread use in the NSW Fire Brigades prior to March 2007, when the Union banned its use, despite opposition from the Department in the Industrial Relations Commission.

It is also of concern to the Union that Fire and Rescue NSW continues to reject the entirely reasonable proposition that it provide firefighters the option of blood tests for future reference given the present uncertainty around the health effects of PFAS exposure. I seek that the NSW Government direct FRNSW to do so as soon as possible, per Recommendation 4 of the Report:

The Committee recommends that the Australian Government, as soon as possible, undertake measures to improve participation in the voluntary blood testing program for PFAS. This should include measures to:

- *increase community awareness about the purpose and importance of the tests, and the associated epidemiological study;*
- *simplify the testing process;*
- *extend the program to be available in additional areas; and*
- *ensure Australia's testing strategy is comparable to international studies.*

Further, the Committee recommends that the Government consider the potential value of blood testing to monitor the effectiveness of measures being used to break PFAS exposure pathways in affected communities. This will necessitate longitudinal analysis of those who have been previously tested and additional tests being made available, after an appropriate period, to persons who have previously been tested.

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I am available to discuss these matters at short notice with yourself and relevant staff. Please don't hesitate to contact my office to arrange a suitable date and time for such a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

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

Leighton Drury
State Secretary