

INQUIRY INTO EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCIES

Organisation: Fire & Rescue NSW

Date Received: 21 July 2017

**Submission
No 78**

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Legislative Council Inquiry into emergency services agencies

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Executive Summary

Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) provides the following information to the Committee to assist with its inquiry into bullying, harassment and discrimination in emergency services agencies, particularly with regard to the terms of reference on the prevalence of this behaviour, the effectiveness of the protocols and procedures around it, support structures to assist victims and services to support workers and volunteers with mental health issues.

FRNSW is a highly reliable, capable and innovative organisation focussed on continually improving our services to safeguard people, property and the environment from fires, emergencies, natural and human-caused disasters. In delivering our services, FRNSW is wholly committed to protecting its people from any form of inappropriate workplace behaviour.

FRNSW does not tolerate bullying and harassment within the workplace. All reports regarding bullying and harassment are referred to FRNSW's Professional Standards Branch for assessment, review, and if appropriate, investigation.

FRNSW's Code of Conduct and Ethics (Code) outlines the standards of behaviour expected of staff. The Code is supported by policies and procedures setting out mandatory requirements for reporting inappropriate workplace behaviour. The Code and supporting policies encourage early intervention to address and resolve inappropriate behaviour, and reinforce a zero-tolerance approach to any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Within FRNSW, support structures have been put in place that actively encourage managers and all staff to recognise and speak out against bullying, harassment and inappropriate behaviours in the workplace.

A significant milestone event for FRNSW to review and improve its systems and initiatives in respect of bullying, harassment and discrimination was the 2010 KPMG report titled *Review of Workplace Conduct Governance, Processes and Culture*, which made a range of recommendations aimed to promote the focus on prevention, increased accountability and transparency.

Following that report, FRNSW has implemented many significant structural, policy and program changes to ensure its staff work in an environment where bullying, harassment and discrimination is known to be simply unacceptable and unwelcome, and where any staff member who does face such an issue, feels able to speak out and knows they will be supported holistically and effectively.

Some of these changes since 2010 include the creation of two new well resourced teams, Professional Standards Branch and the Diversity and Inclusion unit, and implementation of major initiatives in the mental health area.

A. Prevalence of bullying, harassment and discrimination and effectiveness of policies and procedures to manage and resolve complaints

Policies

Code of Ethics & Conduct Policy

Bullying and Harassment

Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure

Resolving Workplace Complaints Policy

Community Fire Unit Prevention of Bullying and Harassment

Be Heard- Embedding Respectful Workplaces Strategy 2014-2017

Compliant Resolution Flowchart Procedure

Work, Health and Safety

Work, Health & Safety Policy

Health, Fitness & Wellbeing Policy

Return to Work Policy and Program

Return to Work Policy & Program Summary

Management of Workplace Injury and Illness Procedure

Diversity

FRNSW Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework

FRNSW Pathways (Aboriginal Employment and Engagement) Strategy

Other Relevant Policies

Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Conduct - Part One - Guidelines for the Management of Conduct

Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Conduct - Part Two - Guidelines for the Management of Serious Offences

Community Fire Unit – Code of Conduct

Community Fire Unit – Misconduct Policy

Community Fire Unit – Grievance Policy

Training for managers

Development of frontline managers

While FRNSW maintains significant structures, programs, policies and a specialised unit to deal with bullying and harassment, continuing to build capacity in frontline and senior managers to manage staff issues is a key factor in early and appropriate resolutions.

Training is undertaken formally through our recruitment, induction and promotional programs, as well as through targeted and ad hoc training sessions. The Professional Standards Branch and the FRNSW Corporate training team undertake a range of training sessions, including:

- “Be Heard” – training designed to encourage the identification and reporting of bullying, as well as emphasising the important role of bystanders in preventing bullying
- Respectful workplace training
- Bullying and Harassment prevention
- Code of conduct
- FRNSW values

Managers routinely seek advice and assistance from their managers, Human Resources, the Professional Standards Branch, the FRNSW organisational psychologist and colleagues to assist in their ongoing development in relation to management of staff issues. FRNSW also offers access to *Manager Assist*, a confidential service provided by the Employee Assistance Program to coach and support managers and provide practical strategies and solutions.

In addition, the Professional Standards Branch has commenced a program of monthly attendance at the Zone Management forums to provide training, policy updates, review case studies and actively discuss current matters to better support frontline managers in dealing with difficult staff related issues. Attendance at these meetings also further deepens the relationships between headquarters and operations, to ensure a collaborative and coordinated management of serious matters.

Awareness raising of staff

NSW has a suite of policies that outline the standards expected across the organisation, responsibilities of the executive, managers and employees and processes that will follow reported breaches. All policies are subject to internal and union consultation, and are communicated across the whole organisation via the Commissioner’s Orders. In addition, the FRNSW intranet has easy to access toolkits available to all staff, that include policies, templates, fact sheets and flowcharts.

- The new Code of Ethics and Conduct, with Commissioner’s foreword, was issued in June 2017. The Code sets the standards required of every employee of FRNSW, and includes an ethical decision-making framework as well as 16 principles that guide our behaviours and conduct.

- The FRNSW Values are respect, integrity, service and courage, which are closely aligned with the NSW Public sector values of integrity, trust, service and accountability. The values are communicated across the whole of FRNSW and are supported by eLearning modules and training at induction. The FRNSW values guide every aspect of the work we do.
- The *Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure* was refined and reissued in December 2015. The policy clearly defines what constitutes bullying, harassment and discrimination, as well as what is not bullying (legitimate management action etc). It outlines the approach to prevention as well as the process for responding to allegations of bullying. It is supported by flowcharts, factsheets, a webinar, links to external resources and an internal workplace bullying and harassment notification form.
- Be Heard - Embedding Respectful Workplaces Strategy 2014-2017, is a strategy that includes over 30 targeted actions designed to embed respectful workplace practices across FRNSW. The supporting training undertaken by the Professional Standards Branch has been delivered to over 70 work groups in the past two years and encourages open discussion and reflection amongst teams about the role each employee has in creating respectful, safe and healthy workplace.

As noted above, training is undertaken formally through our recruitment, induction and promotional programs, as well as through targeted and ad hoc training sessions. Professional Standards Branch and the FRNSW Corporate training team undertake a range of training sessions, including:

- “Be Heard”
- Respectful workplace training
- Bullying and Harassment prevention
- Code of conduct
- FRNSW values

Ongoing education and awareness occurs through regular internal communications to the whole organisation including a regular Professional Standards Branch eNewsletter (quarterly), stories in the Commissioner’s Corner (fortnightly), linkages with external initiatives (such as the National Day of Action Against Bullying) and detailed information and toolkits on the intranet, available to all employees. In addition, the Professional Standards Branch attends a range of metropolitan and regional management meetings, promotional training programs and other forums to deliver training, build relationships and discuss the issues affecting employees.

Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Initiatives

FRNSW is committed to developing a workplace culture which embraces workforce equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) whilst eliminating discrimination and harassment across the organisation.

FRNSW established a specific Diversity and Inclusion team in early 2016. The Unit works to raise awareness about discrimination and harassment and does this through positive staff engagement and through events celebrating diversity and difference such as, but not limited to, International Women’s Day, Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.

FRNSW works to overcome any siloed approaches to problem solving to ensure a holistic resolution of all the issues that may be encountered by a staff member and to enhance proactive issue identification. This is supported within the People and Culture Unit with bimonthly meetings between HR Advisors, Professional Standards, Employee Relations and Diversity to share information.

Agency structures and resourcing

FRNSW recognises the benefits of strong relationships and good lines of communication in the reporting and ongoing effective management of workplace issues. FRNSW is aware that employees engaged in one employment related process may also require support in other areas. To ensure a holistic, approach and process of resolving all matters that one staff member may be faced with, the Professional Standards Branch, Diversity and Inclusion Team, Human Resources Advisory Team and Work Health and Safety Directorate communicate regularly, which is assisted by the fact that those teams are all within the People and Culture Directorate

In 2010, FRNSW established a specialist Workplace Standards Branch (renamed Professional Standards in 2016). This branch has 10 employees, including an investigative team and a prevention team. The Professional Standards Branch is the lead unit for the establishment, promotion and management of ethical and professional standards across FRNSW, and has responsibility for the key policies relating to promotion of professional standards, prevention of bullying and harassment and for the investigation of serious workplace complaints.

An effective professional standards system requires a suite of holistic policies, processes and strategies to:

- promote positive workplaces
- establish appropriate standards for the organisation
- develop and maintain a framework for the management of workplace concerns
- encourage reporting where breaches occur
- investigate or resolve concerns or issues in a timely way when they arise
- protect the welfare of those involved in processes (whether witnesses, complainants or respondents) and
- maintain the highest levels of accountability through effective recording and reporting.

In addition to the strong policy and systems framework for dealing with matters reported to the Professional Standards Branch, a key focus is on embedding these standards within local sectors to try to ensure that managers and all staff are fostering positive workplaces aligned to the values of the organisation. The Be Heard strategy was established in 2014 to introduce a model of shared accountability across the organisation for workplaces to be free from bullying and harassment and to embed a values based workplace culture for FRNSW.

The strategy has over 30 action items attached to it, aimed to strengthen the policy framework around bullying and harassment; support managers through training, toolkits and improved

relationships with headquarters; encourage increased reporting where wrongdoing occurs, and to celebrate positive culture where it is identified.

FRNSW engages a range of strategies to ensure a consistent and informed approach to managing matters that includes the Professional Standards Branch:

- has recently recruited to a permanent Superintendent's position designed to increase the links and improve relationships between the Professional Standards Branch and operational staff.
- attends area management team meetings across the state on a regular basis to report on trends, issues and further embed relationships.
- Health and Safety, Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion and the Professional Standards Branch are all within the People and Culture Directorate, promoting the appropriate sharing of information to effectively manage multi-faceted or complex matters.
- The new FRNSW HQ building at Greenacre is an open plan, activity based working environment that promotes opportunities for collaborative work and increased cross-team communication.

External Agencies

As with all public and government sector agencies in NSW, there are a range of external agencies and oversight mechanisms in place for FRNSW. These include:

- The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was established by the NSW Government in 1988 in response to growing community concern about the integrity of public administration in NSW. FRNSW is required to notify all complaints of corrupt conduct to the ICAC.
- The NSW Ombudsman is an independent and impartial watchdog, and can review any complaint relating to maladministration. FRNSW is required to regularly report on numbers, and outcomes of Public Interest Disclosures. The NSW Ombudsman can oversight individual matters, and undertakes periodical audits of agencies to report on compliance with PID legislation and general complaint handling.
- The Audit Office is the independent auditor of the NSW Public Sector and undertakes regular audits into the use of public monies, to assist with improving performance. FRNSW regularly reports on serious corruption related complaint matters, and the Audit Office recently undertook an audit of the FRNSW and NSW Police management of injured workers.

In addition to the above reporting, audit and oversight functions, these agencies provide training, advice and support to public sector agencies regarding best practice for the management of serious complaints, investigations and public interest disclosures. FRNSW manages its relationship with the ICAC and NSW Ombudsman through the Professional Standards Branch and cooperates fully with all audits, inquiries and investigations.

The Anti-Discrimination Board NSW and Australian Human Rights Commission also provide an external avenue for reporting and resolving discrimination complaints. Details and links to these agencies are included in relevant FRNSW policies and on the intranet.

Process for managing complaints

The Professional Standards Branch has strong systems, supported by legislation and policy, that guide the process for managing serious workplace complaints.

For firefighters, the *Fire Brigades Act*, *Fire Brigades Regulation 2014* and the *Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Conduct* and *Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Serious Offences* prescribe the formal processes required for managing serious matters. The legislative and policy frameworks ensure procedural fairness for involved employees. Staff subject of serious complaint are provided with detail of the specific allegations in writing, advised of potential outcomes, and given appropriate opportunity to provide their response via face to face interview as well as written submissions. In addition, if disciplinary action is being contemplated, the employee subject of the allegation will be provided a copy of the investigation report and have a further opportunity for submissions and a meeting with the decision maker prior to final decision.

The process for managing matters that relate to non-operational employees at FRNSW is governed by the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, the *Government Sector Employment Regulation 2014*, and the *Government Sector Employment (General) Rules 2014*, and as such is entirely consistent with the process utilised for other public and government sector employees. Again, the framework provides for procedural fairness for those under investigation.

All employees are bound by the *Resolving Workplace Complaints Policy*, updated in early 2017. The policy provides the framework for managing concerns and complaints by and about employees of FRNSW. The underpinning principle of the policy is that, wherever reasonably practicable, all concerns or complaints should be addressed in a timely, impartial and confidential manner, at the lowest management level. In this way, minor issues can be prevented from escalating. The policy outlines responsibilities of employees and managers, and provides the procedures for self-resolution of low level matters, manager assisted resolution and formal processes undertaken by Professional Standards.

The Professional Standards Branch has a dedicated case management system, *Resolve*. All new complaints made by employees, managers or members of the public are entered into the *Resolve* system. The system facilitates the effective management of matters and records staff involved, location, issues reported, action taken, findings and outcomes. This allows the monitoring and reporting of trends so that proactive strategies can be identified. All staff in the Professional Standards Branch have access to this system and it is anticipated that in future this will roll out to senior operational staff across the state, allowing for consistent and transparent management of local management matters in future. In the interim, all complaints are required to be reported to the Professional Standards Branch for central assessment and recording.

Previous reviews and forward plans

In 2009/10 FRNSW was made aware of a range of serious allegations of assault, bullying and harassment that dated back as far as 1964 and through the 70s, 80s and 90s. Those matters included reports from 59 individuals and led to the creation of Strike Force SIME by NSW Police. FRNSW cooperated fully with police inquiries and undertook an extensive review (with

KPMG) of the workplace systems, policies and processes for managing serious workplace complaints.

The 2010 KPMG *Review of Workplace Conduct Governance, Processes and Culture* put forward a range of recommendations aimed to promote the focus on prevention, and increased accountability and transparency. The review found no evidence of systemic bullying behaviour, but that there were serious concerns held by staff about real and/or perceived bullying because of poor communication, inadequate leadership, performance issues and the past experience of some individual employees.

As a result, FRNSW created a specialist professional standards unit, undertook training for all employees in respectful workplace behaviour and established strong policies and processes clearly defining bullying and to manage and respond to serious workplace issues.

The 2012 *People Matter Survey* further highlighted concerns that staff held around bullying and harassment, and employees also reported concerns about a lack of leadership and clear communications across the organisation.

In 2013, FRNSW finalised its outcomes from the KPMG report and communicated these to all staff. In addition, WorkCover provided FRNSW with its report into *Bullying Prevention Management - Policies and Procedures Review*. The WorkCover review found that FRNSW had a high level of management commitment to preventing bullying, and that there were strong systems, policies, processes and training in place but that these had not been fully embedded at local management levels.

The 2014 *People Matter Survey* showed improvements on the 2012 survey and provided a platform for the organisation to further develop strategies for embedding a positive culture, coming from a place of strength. A range of initiatives were developed in response to this including the Be Heard Strategy and Performance Partnering (a system for positive performance development).

In October 2015 the former Minister for Emergency services, David Elliott, engaged the Honourable Justice Roger Boland, former President of the Industrial Relations Commission, to independently review a small number of historical complaints. Justice Boland found no major failings on the part of FRNSW and in the majority of matters recommended no further action. The recommendations for consideration of action in several individual matters have now been finalised.

FRNSW is committed to ensuring a positive and healthy workplace for all staff, and continues to develop initiatives and embed existing ones to ensure an optimal workplace environment for all staff. Further detail of the framework, systems, policies, training and strategies for promoting and managing professional standards has been outlined in above sections.

FRNSW intends further and continuing development around bullying and harassment, including:

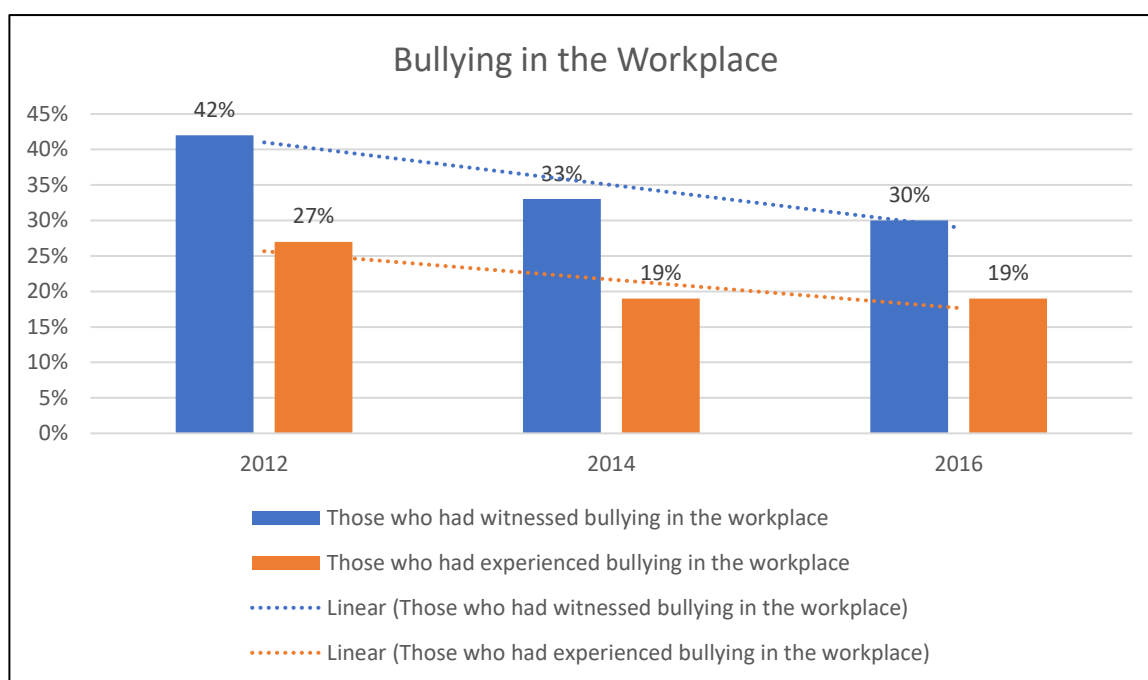
- Ongoing focus on proactive strategies for a positive culture
- Promoting staff welfare and managing the interplay between mental wellbeing and workplace behaviours
- Increased communication and improving awareness of systems for managing concerns across FRNSW
- Continued focus on encouraging reporting

The Diversity and Inclusion Unit has developed the *FRNSW Pathways (Aboriginal Employment and Engagement) Strategy*, the *FRNSW Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy* and the *FRNSW Reconciliation Action Plan*.

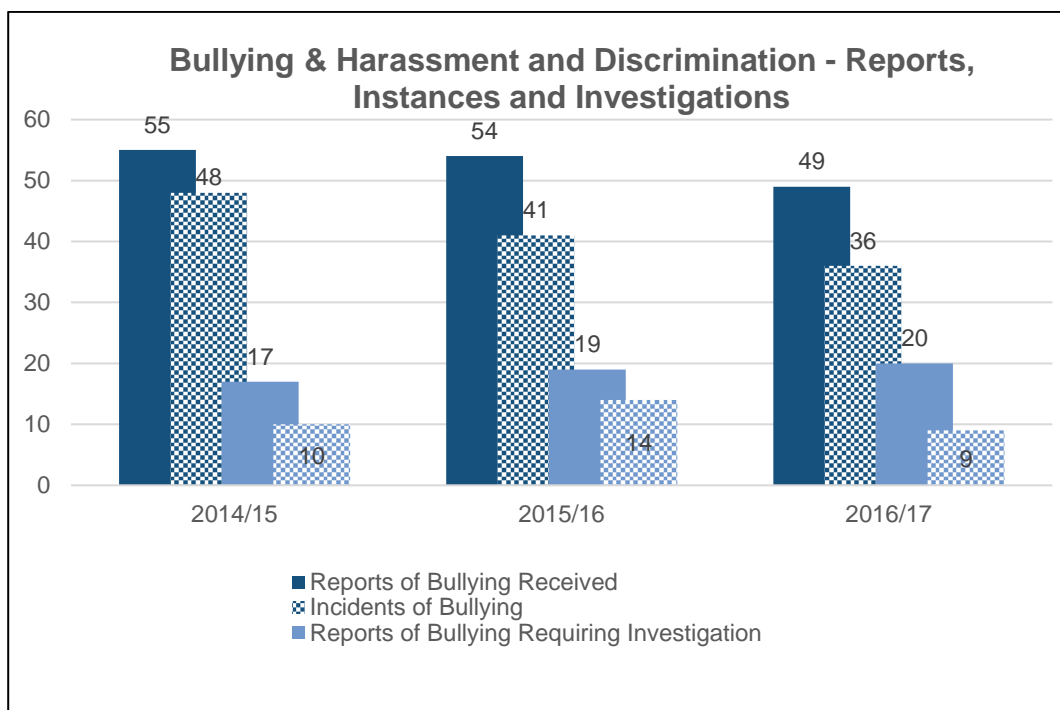
The Diversity and Inclusion Team is currently working with the Education and Training area to ensure that appropriate Inclusive Leadership Units are delivered within the Leadership Training fire fighters receive at the Training College. The Fire & Rescue NSW Commissioner is a Male Champion of Change on the Australasian Fire and Emergency Services Council (AFAC) Diversity Leaders Group, which raises awareness about gender equity and works to minimise discrimination in Emergency Management workplaces.

Bullying, harassment and discrimination statistics

The *People Matter Survey* in 2016 continued to show improved trends in relation to bullying issues at FRNSW.



In 2016/17 (year to date, as at 30 May 2017) the Professional Standards Branch received 317 complaints. Of these, 49 were reported as allegations of bullying and harassment or discrimination. The number of bullying and harassment complaints can be compared with previous years as follows:



*please note the variation between reports of bullying and instances of bullying is because each complaint is recorded separately and several may relate to the one incident or respondent.

Of the bullying and harassment matters reported over the past 3 years, the following actions have been taken:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 ytd
Instances of Bullying Investigated	10	14	9
Sustained	10	4	1
Not sustained	0	8	2
Not yet finalised		2	6
Disciplinary Outcomes			
Caution/Reprimand	4	2	-
Fine	1	1	-
Demotion	-	-	1
Termination/resignation due to process/medical discharge related to process	4	1	-
Remedial Outcomes			
Counselling	1	1	1
Formal Warning	1	-	-
Performance Monitoring	2	1	-
Training & Development	2	2	-

*note some matters have disciplinary and remedial outcomes and a remedial action can be applied even where misconduct is not sustained.

B. Support structures to assist staff

Bullying and harassment invariably leads to a negative impact on the welfare of staff. FRNSW has a range of measures in place to assist staff who make, or are subject of, a complaint about bullying or harassment. These include:

- Efficient and effective handling of matters within the legislative and policy framework.
- Allocation of a dedicated case officer for each matter and direct, ongoing liaison with staff involved - both complainants and respondents.
- Advice to parties to report any reprisal action or other inappropriate conduct directly to the Professional Standards Branch.
- Close links with the peer support coordinator, chaplains and organisational psychologist, and the referral to these experts where required.
- Appointment of a dedicated welfare support officer for matters under investigation.
- Inclusion of details on peer support, chaplaincy and employee assistance program in all formal correspondence to parties involved.
- Close liaison with managers to monitor welfare and ensure all relevant information gathered to assess risk.
- Risk assessment and mitigation strategies to minimise contact and reduce other risks throughout process.
- Formal directions to respondents about reprisal action, confidentiality and consequences if directions are breached.
- Consideration of any post-investigation mediation, or other remedial work where ongoing working relationships are required.

Structures available

FRNSW has a range of ongoing structures in place to assist staff who make, or are the subject of, a complaint about bullying or harassment. These include:

- Peer support, chaplaincy, employee assistance program, mental health first aid programs.
- A full time FRNSW organisational psychologist.
- A strong legislative and policy framework for the management of bullying.
- Allocation of a dedicated case officer for each bullying matter and direct, ongoing liaison with staff involved - both complainants and respondents.

- Advice to parties to report any reprisal action or other inappropriate conduct directly to the Professional Standards Branch, and protection against reprisal under legislation and policy.
- Appointment of a dedicated welfare support officer for matters under investigation.
- Inclusion of details on peer support, chaplaincy and employee assistance program in all formal correspondence to parties involved.
- Close liaison with managers to monitor staff welfare and ensure all relevant information gathered to assess risk, including mitigation strategies to minimise contact and reduce other risks throughout process.
- Formal directions to respondents about reprisal action, confidentiality and consequences if directions are breached.
- Consideration of any post-investigation mediation, or other remedial work where ongoing working relationships are required.
- Referral of any workers compensation claim alleging bullying to the Professional Standards Branch for further assessment and coordinated case management.

Awareness of and access to support structures

As noted throughout the sections above and below, FRNSW has applied a range of measure to increase staff awareness and access to the various supports available. The structures and services are communicated through policy, training, internal newsletters, the intranet, formal correspondence, managers, peer support and chaplains.

C. Mental health related support services

Policies

FRNSW Mental Health Policy

Health, Fitness & Wellbeing Policy

Agency structures and resourcing

The operational nature of firefighting duties places firefighters at increased risk of mental health issues. FRNSW has partnered with the Black Dog Institute, Phoenix Australia and the University of Sydney to develop, implement and research interventions that improve mental health literacy, diagnosis and management of conditions experienced by emergency services workers. There is also a growing focus on ensuring firefighters who can no longer work operationally are appropriately supported as they transition to alternate employment. These initiatives have been embedded into both injury prevention and injury management policies and procedures to ensure prevention where possible, but where injuries occur, early intervention, consistent management and continuity of care.

FRNSW's Mental Health Policy, Return to Work Policy and Management of Workplace Injury and Illness Procedure outline FRNSW's commitment to providing safe and healthy places of employment for all workers, which includes ensuring the psychological health needs of all workers are addressed. These policies outline the framework by which FRNSW will raise awareness of mental health issues, implement preventative initiatives to reduce the incidence of such illness and provide a timely and effective response to situations that may give rise to mental illness, promoting early recovery. It also outlines the responsibilities within the organisation for promoting increased awareness around mental health and supportive programs to help control the effects of workplace stressors and exposure to trauma.

Under these policies Fire & Rescue NSW run a comprehensive work, health, safety and rehabilitation program with a focus on the mental health of its firefighters. The following programs and initiatives are available to FRNSW employees (additional information is available in the Appendices as noted):

- Peer Support is a key support program providing one-to-one assistance and follow-up service, and an education and advisory service for current and retired employees, who experience mental illness. (Appendix 1, page 23; Appendix 2)
- The WellCheck program (Clinical Psychologist consultation) provides psychological assessments in high risk areas, particularly where workplace stressors or exposure to trauma are deemed to be elevated.
- The Employee Assistance Program is an external service providing professional and confidential counselling to all firefighters and their families, 24/7, including up to 6 visits every year.
- Critical incident support is offered to firefighters potentially affected by individual traumatic incidents or a cumulative effect over their career. (Appendix 1, page 23)
- The RESPECT program is an education session facilitated by the Black Dog Institute to develop mental health literacy and welfare management skills for team leaders and managers. (Appendix 1, page 21; Appendix 2)

- The SANE Mindful Employer, an online program, has been offered to all FRNSW supervisors to increase workplace mental health literacy. (Appendix 1, page 22)
- FRNSW has developed a team of internal accredited Mental Health First Aid Trainers who are strategically delivering face to face training across the organisation. To improve the reach of this training FRNSW are investigating a hybrid program (online and face to face).
- FRNSW is working to build mental health resilience through the FIT MIND program for recruit firefighters and the Resilience@Work program. (Appendix 1, page 20; Appendix 2). Further, FRNSW has processes to ensure injured firefighters with accepted workers compensation claims are offered 12 sessions of personalised resilience training during their recovery.
- FRNSW has raised awareness around PTSD, including through holding seminars for staff and the publication of the book *Recovery After Trauma: A Guide For Firefighters With Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*. (Appendix 1, Page 25)
- All of the above programs are implemented and coordinated by the FRNSW Health Promotion and Injury management teams which have the following relevant resources:
 - Manager Health Promotion
 - Occupational Psychologist
 - Wellbeing Coordinator (Operational Support Inspector)
 - Manager Injury Management
 - Team Leader Return to Work
 - 7 Return to Work Coordinators

External resources/expertise

Fire & Rescue NSW worked with the NSW Mental Health Commission, other NSW Emergency Services and lead researchers in the field of mental health to develop a strategy which outlines the approach to enhancing the mental health of emergency service workers in NSW. This strategy was launched at Parliament House by Premier Baird on 12 October 2016. A video on first responder mental health (featuring a FRNSW firefighter, Peer Supporter and Wellbeing Coordinator) was launched by Minister Goward at Parliament House on 12 October 2016.

FRNSW hosted an International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership ‘match’, on first responder mental health in conjunction with A/Prof Sam Harvey (UNSW) on 27 and 28th February 2017.

To promote the MHC NSW Emergency Services Strategy, FRNSW ran a “Let’s Talk” campaign during Mental Health Month (October 2016) with mental health messaging being sent to all stations encouraging individuals and crews to discuss mental health, their role in looking after each other and what support is available both internally within FRNSW and externally.

FRNSW is about to commence a trial of the Headgear App developed as part of the Well@Work Project, funded by Movember Foundation and being led by A/Prof Sam Harvey (UNSW/Black Dog Institute), Nick Glozier (Brain and Mind Institute, University of Sydney) and

Rafael Calvo (Engineering & IT, University of Sydney). The Headgear App program will see around 60,000 Australian workers in high-risk workforces receive specialised and interactive mental health support via a proven yet anonymous source – their mobile phone.

FRNSW, in consultation with Employers Mutual, implemented a vocational rehabilitation program for firefighters injured at work in 2013. This program, based on feedback from firefighters who had been through the re-deployment process, included transitional counselling, vocational counselling, vocational assessment, provision of qualifications through recognition of prior learning and training, job seeking/interview training, and the option to opt out and into the process (Appendix 1, page 28).

FRNSW, in consultation with Employers Mutual have developed and implemented workers compensation claim protocols for claims related to Bullying and Harassment. These ensure correct diagnosis and treatment, and inform the Commands/Directorates on potential pathways to resolve the issue raised, including if mediation or conferencing is required.

FRNSW, in consultation with Employers Mutual has developed and implemented workers compensation claim protocols for claims related to PTSD. These follow the PTSD expert guidelines. They ensure correct diagnosis and treatment, increased consultation with treating parties, specific return to work tasks that allow gradual desensitisation and ongoing treatment and medication monitoring.

FRNSW, in consultation with Employers Mutual has developed and implemented workers compensation claim protocols for claims with psycho-social issues. Common psycho-social issues sometimes relate to unresolved workplace issues and subclinical factors related to trauma. These protocols provide for holistic care, by ensuring evidenced based treatment for the physical injury, while also facilitating access to internal and external psychological supports for the psycho-social issues the employee has reported. This facilitates awareness of potential issues within the workplace and promotes early resolution, while also improving managing the wellbeing of our employees. This approach has been subject to research through University of Sydney and results will be published in the next 6 months.

By implementing these programs, FRNSW has experienced a decrease in workers compensation claims, decrease in cost of workers compensation claims and improved vocational outcomes for discharged firefighters. There has been an increase in the costs for medical treatment, investigation and rehabilitation consistent with the supportive approach taken. However, the total impact has been a significant decrease in the overall premium as the benefits of recovery and return to work have shown longer term benefits. In 2016, FRNSW has received awards for collaboration and innovation in relation to management of psychological injuries from PIEF and TMF/ICare.

Statistics

Over the past 5 years, workers compensation claims for psychological injuries have decreased from 43 in 2012/13 to 17 to date in 2016/17. Workers compensation benefits for psychological injuries have decreased, indicating less time off work and facilitated return to suitable duties. Consistent with these improvements, FRNSW has experienced a decrease in workers compensation premium from \$24.01 million in 2009/10 to \$18.43 million in 2011/12. FRNSW will receive a hindsight return of \$10.7 million in 2016/17 and \$1.45 return on deposit premium for the 2017/18 fund year.

D. Appropriateness of uniforms

A survey of all female firefighters in February 2016 indicated strong support for a female specific uniform range, on the basis that uniforms need to allow for different body shapes. There was also support for any changes to maintain uniformity across the organisation, ensuring male and female firefighters are identifiable as belonging to FRNSW.

A new uniform range was launched in April 2017, with a full set of dress uniform being ordered for every female firefighter. Although it is not mandatory for female firefighters to wear the new female designs (firefighters can still order from the men's range if preferred), this new range offers a level of choice, style and professionalism that ALL firefighters should expect as standard.

New elements of the uniforms include:

- Duty wear items currently in men's styles (shirts, shorts, t-shirt and winter jacket) have been redesigned for the female shape.
- A slimline pocket has been introduced on all female shirts addressing the need for a pocket without adding bulk. Internal buttons have been added to prevent gaping.
- The survey demonstrated the need to accommodate two distinct female body shapes therefore two styles of pants have been introduced; a relaxed fit and a slim fit.
- The maternity shirt has been modernised, with the antiquated side tabs removed. Maternity shirts will now be held in stock with the supplier, reducing wait times for delivery.
- All PPC items will be made available in female sizing. Multipurpose coats and appliance raincoats are being produced to accommodate smaller sizing (XS). Small goggles and chemical boots are also currently being sourced.



Appendix

List of relevant policies, procedures and standards and when last reviewed

Document	Reviewed Date
FRNSW Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	26 June 2017
Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Framework	26 June 2017
Compliant Resolution Flowchart Procedure	10 August 2010
Health, Fitness & Wellbeing Policy	2 February 2012
Work, Health & Safety Policy	19 March 2013
Code of Ethics & Conduct Policy	7 June 2013
Mental Health Policy	30 October 2013
Return to Work Policy & Program Summary	21 July 2014
Return to Work Policy and Program	24 July 2014
Community Fire - Unit Prevention of Bullying and Harassment	22 May 2015
Community Fire Unit – Code of Conduct	22 May 2015
Community Fire Unit – Misconduct Policy	22 May 2015
Community Fire Unit – Grievance Policy	22 May 2015
Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Conduct - Part One - Guidelines for the Management of Conduct	18 August 2015
Procedural Guidelines for the Management of Conduct - Part Two - Guidelines for the Management of Serious Offences	18 August 2015
Management of Workplace Injury and Illness Procedure	1 December 2015
Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Harassment Policy and Procedure	7 December 2015
Be Heard- Embedding Respectful Workplaces Strategy 2014-2017	28 June 2016
FRNSW Pathways (Aboriginal Employment and Engagement) Strategy	26 June 2017
Resolving Workplace Complaints Policy	15 February 2017