

MEDIA RELEASE

April 15, 2024

Fire Services Protected Industrial Action

Norfolk Island Regional Council (Council) wishes to clarify its position regarding the protected industrial action by Norfolk Island firefighters in relation to Enterprise Agreement (EA) negotiations.

Council values the service provided by the Fire Services, particularly their response to community fire events and their efforts in supporting the community to be fire prepared.

We also respect the Firefighters' right to take industrial action, following approval from the Fair Work Commission. Council is currently in negotiations with the United Firefighters Union of Australia (UFUA) to establish a new enterprise agreement for the Norfolk Island Fire Services unit. This is a separate agreement to that between Council and the remainder of its employees.

It is important to note that the Norfolk Island Fire Services fulfill dual roles, serving as both the fire service for the Norfolk Island community and the Aviation Fire Fighting Service for airport operations. As negotiations continue with the UFUA, we want to reassure the community that emergencies and aircraft operations are still being attended, as these are not the subject of protected industrial action.

For the community's awareness, Council funds the Fire Services through a valued contribution from the Commonwealth for community fire, and separately from a proportion of revenue generated at the airport from landing fees and other services to airlines. There is also a small amount of revenue received from local businesses and organisations through provision of fire safety audits. Council budgets for fire services based on reliable revenue and affordable expenditure, as with other business units across a range of services. The view that the Fire Services unit is a for-profit enterprise is simply untrue. Equally, any increased expenditure for Fire Services must be affordable for airport operations and the community more broadly.

Council is committed to ongoing discussions with the UFUA to reach an agreeable outcome, as it has done for its other employees across the full range of Council services. We will continue to update the community with any changes as they arise.

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