

FIREFIGHTER

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FIRE BRIGADES UNION | WWW.FBU.ORG.UK | FEBRUARY/MARCH 2020

BUSHFIRES IN AUSTRALIA

THE CONSEQUENCE OF
CLIMATE CHANGE INACTION

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REJECT SCOTLAND PAY
OFFER, SAYS UNION

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MATT WRACK READY FOR THE FIGHT

GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION

First, I want to thank members for trusting me to continue as general secretary of our great union.

It is a huge privilege and honour to serve the members of the FBU for a fourth term, and I am humbled to have received the highest proportion of votes (67%) in any FBU general secretary election.

The result is loud, clear and decisive, and we must now unite around the policies of the union and take the fight to an anti-union, Tory majority government.

Throughout the election, up and down the country, members made their views clear – that enough is enough.

Years of pay restraint have left firefighters struggling to make ends meet, and all while doing more work, for free.

As your newly re-elected general secretary, I will take this fight to the government, across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

It won't be easy – a majority Tory government will make sure of that, but the strength of our members is unrivalled, and when we pull together, in the same direction, we can achieve wonders.

Take pensions, it took years, but our perseverance paid off. I will continue to fight for your pensions, righting what was wronged and facing up to further attacks.

We are already starting to see the beginnings of anti-union rhetoric from the Tory government in Westminster. The recently



Sign thanking Australian Rural Fire Service members at Kurrajong in New South Wales

JOEL CARRETT/PAPIA IMAGES

published HMICFRS annual report is not shy about attacking our union and is undoubtedly a starting pistol for the fight ahead.

Our union will need to remain strong and united to see off these attacks, on collective bargaining, work extra to contract and changes in law on industrial action.

I am ready for the fight ahead and emboldened by the strong mandate to take forward our union's policies.

AUSTRALIA BUSHFIRES

The images from the catastrophic wildfires in Australia have shocked the world, and can leave us in no doubt of the climate challenge we face.

Australian firefighters have lost their lives fighting

the most disastrous fires we have ever seen.

Our colleagues have tackled walls of fire reaching 20 metres in height and miles in length. They have been the only line of defence against fires which have destroyed communities and tragically, taken many lives.

The FBU stands in solidarity with all those affected and we are fundraising to support those who have lost everything. We have produced a limited edition of 1,000 solidarity badges with all proceeds being sent to the wildfire fund.

We hope to raise £10,000 for this vital support. Please show your support by pre-ordering your badge today at the price

of £10 plus p&p www.shop.fbu.org.uk/products/solidarity-with-australia

A BIG THANK YOU ...

To all those members who took part in the FBU contaminants survey, which closed on 10 February.

More than 10,000 of you filled in the FBU contaminants survey. Breaking the 10,000 threshold gives the survey stronger scientific credibility and will eventually give a more solid grounding to the conclusions of the research.

This ground-breaking research into firefighting and toxic contaminants, is co-funded by the Firefighters 100 Lottery and the University of Central Lancashire.



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NEWS

GRENELL DISTRESS

Inquiry suspended after firms demand right not to give evidence

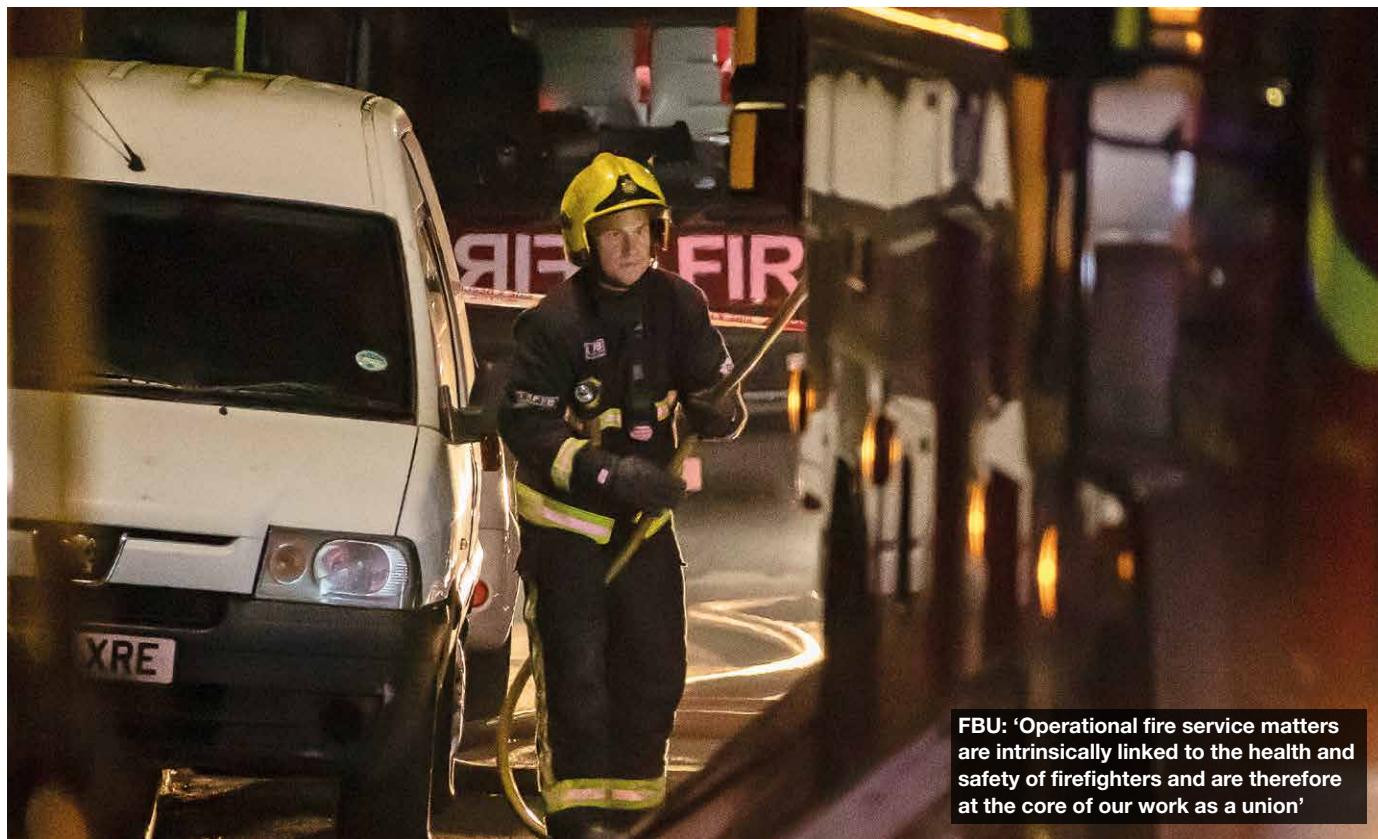
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10,000 RESPOND

Members' response will give contaminants survey greater scientific credibility

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FBU: 'Operational fire service matters are intrinsically linked to the health and safety of firefighters and are therefore at the core of our work as a union'

FBU CONDEMNS 'UNDUE INFLUENCE' CRITICISM AS INSPECTORS ECHO UNION'S FRAGMENTATION FEARS

STATE OF FIRE REPORT

The dangerous fragmentation of the fire and rescue service was highlighted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), in its first annual *State of Fire* report for England.

There is "unjustifiable variation" in the services provided across the country, chief inspector Sir Thomas Winsor said, echoing the FBU's longstanding warning that people face a postcode safety lottery when dialling 999.

The *State of Fire* report follows the first round of inspections of English fire services in 12 years. There has been no independent body responsible for inspecting services since the former inspectorate was scrapped in 2007.

Some services are not doing enough preventive work, the chief inspector warned, highlighting cuts to the number of fire safety officers.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, warned that investment in firefighters and fire safety officers is crucial "if the government is serious about improving building safety".

But the report went on to criticise the role of the FBU, stating the union had "undue influence", an allegation that Matt Wrack "utterly refutes".

"We are the democratically elected representatives of professional firefighters. They know best about their service and should have a strong voice in how it is run.

"In the years that there has been no inspectorate for English fire and rescue

services, the FBU has been the only voice taking on many of the issues raised in this report. We have fought for the safety of the public, firefighters and control staff – and we will continue to do so," said Wrack.

The report criticised the FBU's intervention to halt trials for emergency medical response (EMR), alleging that the union was interfering beyond its industrial remit into operational matters.

"Operational fire service matters are intrinsically linked to the health and safety of firefighters and are therefore at the core of our work as a union," Matt Wrack responded.

"Our real wages have fallen by more than £4,000 over the last decade. Fair pay for more work is not too much to ask."

MEMBERS RE-ELECT MATT WRACK AND ANDY DARK

Matt Wrack has been re-elected for a fourth term as FBU general secretary, securing 67% of the vote, the highest percentage in any FBU general secretary election.

Andy Dark was re-elected unopposed as assistant general secretary, after other nominated candidates declined to stand. Both were first elected in 2005.

Matt Wrack thanked FBU members for trusting him to continue in the role, calling it a “huge privilege and honour” to serve a fourth term.

Andy Dark said that “every detail of fire policy affects firefighters’ work and I’ll be meticulous in protecting our members’ interests”.

Wrack said that, having spoken to firefighters across the country, it was

clear that in members’ minds “enough is enough”, Vowing to challenge years of underfunding and pay restraint.

He warned of “difficult times ahead” with the election of a majority Tory government, pointing to anti-union rhetoric filtering through in the HMICFRS annual report. “Our union will need to remain strong and united to see off these attacks, on collective bargaining, work extra to contract and changes in law on industrial action.”

“I’m ready for the fight ahead and emboldened by the strong mandate to take forward our union’s policies,” said Wrack.

“The FBU will keep fighting for firefighters and the public they serve. We will not be silenced.”

SOUNDING OFF

Karl Wager, Cleveland FBU chair, outlines plans to include and educate young members about trade unionism

YOUNG MEMBERS HOLD KEY TO UNION’S FUTURE

A vibrant, diverse and inclusive membership is vital in any organisation. Young members hold the key to the future of the FBU.

Because of decades of attacks on trade unions, young people are not given the opportunity to learn about the importance of trade unionism in school.

The decline of trade union membership has led to a generation of workers unsure what the trade union movement is about and, indeed, how being involved in that movement can enrich their working lives.

At FBU annual conference last year, a resolution from Cleveland: Young and newer members’ education, was debated and carried.

To progress that resolution, Lindsey McDowell, FBU head of education, tasked me and three other young people from our union: Leoni Munslow, Rosa Crowley-Bennett and Craig Lloyd, to design and trial an event to encourage young members to become involved in the FBU.

Although the project is still in its early stages, we have picked a residential venue steeped in trade union tradition, discussed what subjects we would like young members to focus on and found ways we can get key messages from our movement and industry to them.

The union’s centenary film *The Firefighters’ Story*, will form part of this education, along with a question and answer session. Key speakers for all subjects will be there to inspire these members to take the FBU forward with them throughout their careers.

If we can arm those taking part with useful information, inspire some to be active in branches across the country and, hopefully, encourage a few to take the step to become the reps and activists of the future, this project will have done its job.



Firefighters rally in Paris against central government pension reforms, for more resources for the fire service, and to press for an increase in their hazard bonus from 19 to 28 per cent of basic pay – bringing it into line with that of police. The firefighters’ bonus level had not changed since 1990. After seven months of strikes, firefighters’ unions said members would work normally from 1 February after the French government announced, following talks, that it would revalue the hazard bonus to 25% and preserve pension mechanisms allowing firefighters to retire early in exchange for additional contributions

FBU WINS £4BN FOR PUBLIC SECTOR PENSIONERS

The 6,000 claimants in the FBU’s pensions case are entitled to be treated as members of their pre-2015 pension scheme, an employment tribunal ruled in December.

The claimants, members of the 1992 firefighters’ pension scheme, are now entitled to be treated as if they had never left the original scheme,

with benefits including a retirement age of between 50 and 55. The government has accepted that affected non-claimants will be treated in the same way as claimants.

In July, the government admitted it had spent £495,000 on legal costs fighting to maintain discriminatory pensions. The ruling is expected to be applied

across the entire public sector, costing a total of up to £4bn. “There can be no delay in implementing this remedy,” Matt Wrack said. “Firefighters were robbed, and they must now be repaid.”

The tribunal was a preliminary hearing, ahead of a final hearing in July.

■ For more information, see page 16



CAMPAIGN FORCES FIRE SERVICE TO SCALE BACK CUTS

DEVON AND SOMERSET

Firefighters have claimed victory in their campaign to stop the worst of planned cuts to Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS).

The fire authority voted for a revised plan in January. It included closing two fire stations and crews of fewer than four in some engines responding to incidents.

An FBU campaign saw more than 4,000 people respond to the service's consultation and more than 43,000 sign a petition rejecting the cuts.

The revised proposals mean that six stations earmarked for closure will remain open, more than 100 jobs will be saved, and all whole-time stations will remain 24 hours.

James Leslie, FBU Devon and Somerset brigade secretary, said: "We're pleased that DSFRS listened to firefighters and the public and stopped the worst of the cuts. Although we didn't achieve everything we set out to do, we're thankful to everyone who supported us throughout this campaign."

10,000 RESPOND TO FBU SURVEY

CONTAMINANTS

More than 10,000 firefighters have completed the FBU contaminants survey, part of the union's groundbreaking research with the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) into firefighting and toxic contaminants.

The survey of currently serving firefighters is a part of a project to prove the link between firefighting, contaminants, and diseases including cancer.

Along with environmental tests at firefighters' workplaces, the survey will

help form a picture of UK firefighters' exposure to toxic materials.

Breaking the 10,000 threshold gives the survey stronger scientific credibility.

Currently, if a UK firefighter develops cancer or other disease, there is no legal assumption that it is related to their work. By establishing a link between firefighters' work and disease, the research aims to change this legal status and, ultimately, to stop firefighters from developing diseases.

The research is co-funded by the Firefighters 100 Lottery and UCLan.

'WE REFUSE TO BE BULLIED'

SURREY

More than 50 Surrey Fire and Rescue Service firefighters taking industrial action have been threatened with formal or informal disciplinary action by SFRS managers.

Surrey firefighters voted in favour of six months of industrial action short of strike in response to dangerous cuts which were approved by Surrey County Council's cabinet meeting in September.

They include the removal of seven fire engines at night and cutting 70 firefighter posts. More than 68% of respondents to the official consultation opposed the cuts.

Graham Whitfield, FBU Surrey brigade chair, said: "SFRS are hell-bent on driving through their plan, despite clear opposition from the public and firefighters.

"We refuse to be bullied and intimidated by management. We will do everything it takes to protect our fire and rescue service."

MPs HEAR OF CONCERNS ON FUNDS FOR FLOODS AND BUILDING SAFETY

SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Firefighters, senior fire managers and fire authority members from South Yorkshire lobbied MPs in January for the funds and powers needed to combat flooding and building safety.

Neil Carbott, FBU South Yorkshire brigade secretary, said: "After the devastating floods in South Yorkshire, the need for more investment and a statutory duty is clearer than ever. The climate crisis is only going to make these incidents more frequent. We need the tools to keep people and properties safe.

The FBU won a campaign to

postpone cuts to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service last September but, without extra funding from Westminster, the service will face cuts again in the next 18 months. Firefighters also raised concerns about building safety, after dangerous cladding was removed from Hanover Tower in Sheffield.

MPs from across South Yorkshire and beyond listened to the firefighters' concerns, including deputy speaker Rosie Winterton and former Labour leader Ed Miliband.

South Yorkshire firefighters plan to continue lobbying MPs for funding over the coming months.

MORE THAN 1,000 ATTACKS ON FIREFIGHTERS

There were 1,170 attacks on UK firefighters in 2018/19, research by the FBU has revealed.

Attacks in England, at 961, were up 3% on the year before. There were 72

attacks in Scotland and 44 in Wales, both up a third. Northern Ireland saw a five-year low of 93 attacks.

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, condemned the "absolutely appalling"

attacks. "Firefighters are a vital part of the community and will save anyone and everyone, regardless of who they are, which could even include their attackers," he said.



MARK THOMAS

There is no point in 'fire stopping', as we all know; the ACM will be gone rather quickly in a fire! – email from an expert cladding company

GRENFELL INQUIRY FIRMS' SHOCK DEMAND DISTRESSES SURVIVORS AND BEREAVED

The second phase of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI), which opened on 27 January, is intended to cover the background issues and decisions behind the building failures that resulted in such a catastrophic fire.

It will continue until at least May next year, structured into eight modules that focus on different areas for examination: the refurbishment, the cladding products, compliance with regulations, the aftermath, firefighting, the experts' views, and a final module looking at the exact circumstances of individual deaths.

The first witnesses are from the organisations, both public and private, involved with the refurbishment of the tower.

Phase 2 opened with a number of revelations. On day three, some of the corporate witnesses, including employees of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Tenants' Management Organisation (RBKCTMO), asked the chair for an undertaking from the Attorney-General that the evidence they give would not be used to further a criminal prosecution against them.

The alternative, they argued, was that witnesses would exercise their right to refuse to give evidence that might be

self-incriminating, thus causing what they describe as "inevitable" disruption to the inquiry proceedings.

The FBU, along with many of the bereaved, survivor and resident (BSR) core participants, opposed the request.

Despite this opposition, the GTI panel has agreed to write to the Attorney-General, Geoffrey Cox, to ask him to grant the undertaking and, at the time of writing, the inquiry is suspended until the Attorney-General has made his ruling.

The request caused a great deal of distress and anger amongst the BSRs. During phase 1 of the GTI, scores of FBU members diligently took their place in the witness box and recounted their recollections of the night of the fire. Hundreds more gave statements to

the police.

They did so because of their commitment to helping the Grenfell community obtain the truth, in order to seek justice and change.

The unexpected development followed three disappointing days of mutual recrimination by the various firms involved in the refurbishment.

Damning evidence was revealed about what was known about the dangers of the cladding applied to Grenfell: the manufacturer of the cladding panels (Arconic) was aware they had a low fire rating that made them "dangerous" for use on tall buildings; the contractors, architects and fire safety consultants responsible for the refurbishment knew the cladding system would fail in a fire, with one email from the cladding specialist Harley in 2015 stating: "There is no point in 'fire stopping', as we all know; the ACM will be gone rather quickly in a fire!"

The FBU remains involved in the inquiry as a core participant, submitting position statements and other relevant evidence.

Members in specialised roles may be called to give oral evidence in later modules.

THREE DISAPPOINTING DAYS OF MUTUAL RECRIMINATION BY FIRMS INVOLVED IN THE REFURBISHMENT

A photograph of a kangaroo in a landscape of dead, blackened trees, likely after a bushfire. The kangaroo is standing on the right side of the frame, looking towards the left. The background is filled with a dense network of dark, charred tree branches against a clear blue sky. The ground is dry and dusty.

AUSTRALIA

CLIMATE CHANGE IN ACTION

Raymond Markey on the bushfires devastating large parts of Australia – their impact on firefighters and communities and the warnings that went unheeded



IN 1987, DR TOM BEER, A GOVERNMENT CLIMATE SCIENTIST, PREDICTED HORRIFIC CONSEQUENCES FOR THE BUSHFIRE SEASON AS A RESULT OF GREENHOUSE EMISSIONS

33

lives have been lost in the current bushfires in Australia. Almost half have been firefighters, including three American crew members in a C-130 Hercules water bomber that crashed. An estimated 1 bn native animals have died. In addition, 2,200 homes, and countless other

buildings, equipment and hectares of fencing have been lost. The long-term health impact of smoke on firefighters and residents is unknown, but has been compared to smoking a pack of cigarettes a day. Mental health issues are also common.

The major fires have been burning for six months. Many are in inaccessible areas or are too big to extinguish, and the best that firefighters can hope for is containment. Without prolonged heavy rain they will continue to burn and threaten life and property when high temperatures and strong winds boost them. There has been some rain recently, but this has assisted control efforts rather than extinguishing most fires.

The immediate causes have been record periods of temperatures over 40 degrees centigrade and strong hot winds. Extremely dry vegetation after a long drought and record low rainfall have produced tinderbox conditions.

It is impossible not to see the impact of climate change here – except for the most ardent denialists in the fossil fuel industry, national government and the

Murdoch media. We had been warned. In 1987 Dr Tom Beer, a government climate scientist, predicted horrific consequences for the Australian bushfire season as a result of growing greenhouse emissions that would warm the earth, the first of many warnings by scientists.

HOTTEST DECADE EVER RECORDED

Beer's alert followed the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires, the worst to that date, which burned across 180 sites in the states of South Australia and Victoria, killing 75 people, including 17 firefighters. Since then, temperatures have risen, increasing the number of days above 35, or even 40, degrees. Australia is having its hottest decade ever recorded, each year bringing new record highs. Average rainfall has decreased and, with more regular and extensive drought conditions, river systems are drying up with devastating consequences for wildlife and for rural towns running out of water.

The bushfire season has been growing longer and fires have been becoming more intense. In February 2009 on "Black Friday" 400 fires burnt across Victoria killing 174 people. Australia recently adopted a new fire warning level of "catastrophic", sitting above

PREVIOUS PAGE

A kangaroo in the Flinder Chase National Park during bushfires in January this year on Kangaroo Island, south west of Adelaide, the capital of South Australia

DAVID MARIUZ/AAP/PA IMAGES

UNPRECEDENTED

“Unprecedented” is the term regularly applied to the current Australian bushfire crisis, in terms of

- **length of the current bushfire season:** beginning in July/August during late winter and continuing into summer, which has two months to go yet
- **geographical extent:** more than 10m hectares (38,500 square miles) burnt by fires in six states, encircling every state capital city and extending along the coast from West of Adelaide in South Australia, through Victoria and up through New South Wales to the North of Queensland, a distance of more than 2,500 kilometres
- **the fires’ ferocity:** hundreds of metres high and sometimes creating fire tornadoes. Even the national capital, Canberra, was encircled by fire, and in “cooler” Tasmania fires have burnt in rainforest that has never burnt before
- **levels of smoke haze** and hazardous air quality have blanketed major cities for days at a time and been seen across the globe.



ABOVE

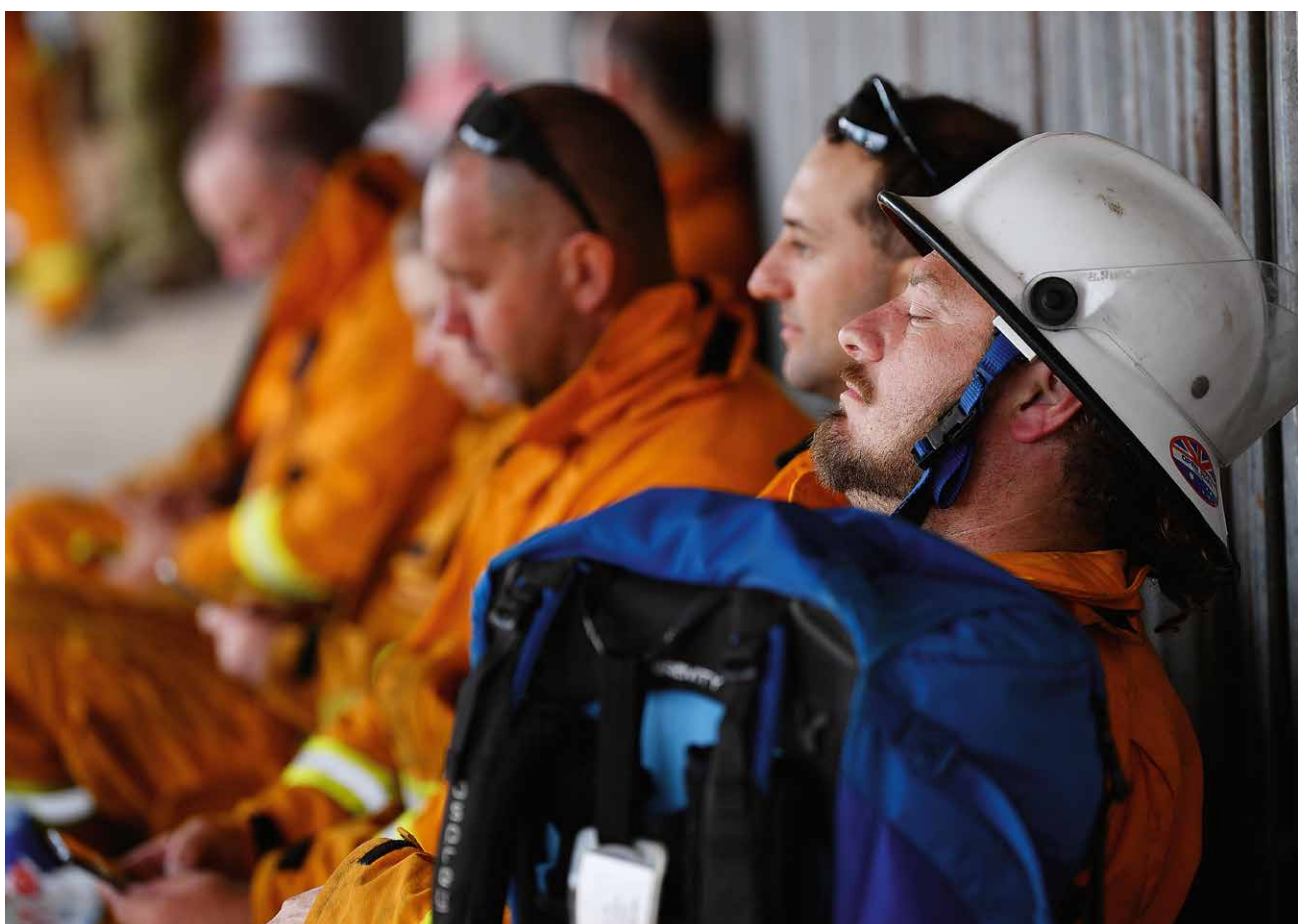
Bushfire on New Year's Eve 2019 near Bairnsdale in Victoria's East Gippsland region

STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA/AAP/PA IMAGES

RIGHT

Firefighters at Kingscote oval sports ground after fighting fires through the night, on Kangaroo Island in January

DAVID MARIUZ/AAP/PA IMAGES



“extreme” and “very high”. A catastrophic rating essentially means evacuate, because if a fire begins there is nothing that can be done to prevent it spreading under these conditions.

The response of more than 2,000 firefighters in the field has been nothing short of heroic. Thousands of homes and lives have been saved as a result of their efforts. Most of these men and women are volunteers organised in rural fire services at localities throughout the country. Professional firefighters tend to be based in larger towns and cities.

Some volunteers have fought on knowing their own homes were burning or under threat. They have been active for months now, at considerable personal cost, unpaid and unable to work in their normal jobs. Because of the length of the emergency, and often little sleep, they are also exhausted. The Australian people have often been heroic too. The picture of a teenager in a small dinghy enveloped by smoke as he evacuated his family went viral across the world.

The hurt of those affected extends beyond the loss

Unsurprisingly, when the PM toured burning areas, essentially for photo opportunities, many residents abused him and some firefighters walked away.

In contrast, the Labor Party opposition leader, Anthony Albanese, quietly stayed near fire zones, helping organise assistance.

The government has suffered a substantial slide in opinion poll ratings. Its defence has been that bushfires are a state government responsibility and that there had been no formal requests for assistance. However, there is no doubt that a nationwide emergency requires national leadership.

It is also untrue that there had not been earlier calls for assistance. Some applications for financial assistance from state rural fire services had been ignored.

In addition, since June 2019, a group of recently retired state rural fire commissioners have been vainly calling for a meeting with the prime minister to warn of extra action that would be required as a result of climate change.

RIGHT

Projections on the sail-shaped sides of Sydney Opera House in January recognise the work of firefighters across Australia

PAUL BRAVEN/AAP/PA IMAGES

BELOW

A fire engine at the village of Nana Glen, near Coffs Harbour, New South Wales, in November last year.

DAN PELED/AAP/PA IMAGES

VOLUNTEERS HAVE FOUGHT ON KNOWING THEIR OWN HOMES WERE BURNING – ACTIVE FOR MONTHS, UNPAID AND UNABLE TO WORK IN THEIR REGULAR JOBS

of homes, farms and vineyards – this is peak summer holiday season for most of the affected coastal communities, and small business has lost much of its most important period of trade.

As a national community, however, Australians have dug deeply to contribute to various assistance organisations, including the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

Eventually, assistance came from wider sources. The US sent 200 firefighters, with contributions also coming from Canada and New Zealand. The Australian government has brought two ships into action for evacuations by sea, and army reservists were called in to assist on land, clearing roads, felling dangerously weakened trees that have accounted for some deaths, bulldozing earth fire breaks, and providing medical assistance for people and animals.

AUSTRALIA'S ROLE IN CLIMATE CHANGE

Papua New Guinea and Fiji have also sent military support contingents composed of engineers and logistics personnel. Accepting this support from much poorer countries is ironic given Australia's role in preventing agreement on climate change policies at Pacific leaders' forums recently, especially since some small Pacific nations face being overwhelmed by rising sea levels.

National leadership has been seriously lacking, with prime minister Scott Morrison reluctantly returning from a Hawaiian holiday almost a day early. Most senior ministers were holidaying overseas during the crisis, and nothing has been heard from the minister for home affairs, Peter Dutton.

When the PM finally returned to call in defence force personnel and announce financial support for firefighters and small businesses affected, the fires had been burning for more than five months.





The Australian national government refuses to adopt meaningful climate mitigation policies because of the influence of the coal lobby and right-wing hardliners in its ranks.

It played a major role in scuppering the Madrid climate conference in December. It abolished the former Labor government's carbon price in 2013 and since then Australia's emissions have increased.

The government claims that it will meet its Paris reduction target of 26%, but this is only by counting "credits" from technically over-achieving on the previous Kyoto target.

ONE OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST EXPORTERS OF COAL

The government also notes that Australia's contribution to world emissions is only 1.3%, and therefore makes little difference to the fires. But Australia is one of the world's largest exporters of coal, and its per capita emissions are the highest in the world.

Some in government and the Murdoch media have blamed the influence of "city latte-sipping greenies" for a reduction in hazard burning of undergrowth in winter months. However, state fire commissioners have denied that this has been an issue, with some fires occurring despite hazard reduction burns, and noting that the window of opportunity for safe hazard burning has narrowed significantly because of climate change. Insofar as there has been any reduction in hazard burning recently, it has been in state forests as a result of cutbacks in the number of rangers responsible, at least in New South Wales (NSW). Furthermore, in NSW volunteer firefighters have often needed to provide their own equipment, such as facemasks.

There is a long way to go, with the fires and with developing an adequate national response to climate change. In the meantime, those of us living anywhere near bush live in fear. Summer holidays have changed forever in Australia.

Raymond Markey, emeritus professor of employment relations, Macquarie University, BA Hons, Dip Ed (Sydney) PhD (Wollongong)





REJECT A DEAL THAT WOULD TAKE AWAY FROM PRIMARY DUTY UNDER PRESSURE TO AN OVER-STRETCHED SERVICE

A pay deal we deserve, but not at any price, says Scotland regional secretary

FBU members in Scotland are being urged to reject a pay offer linked to broadening the role of firefighters to plug gaps in other over-stretched services – including the crisis-hit adult health and social care sector.

The offer is dependent on firefighters taking on new roles, including non-emergency co-responding with adult social care and health teams in attending “slips, trips and falls” (STF).

The union fears this will dilute the core services members provide to the public as professionals and will add pressure to an already over-stretched service.

Both the FBU’s executive council and Scottish regional committee are recommending that members reject the pay offer in a consultative ballot, which closes on 28 February.

At branch meetings around the country, members are making their views known to FBU officials – and seeking further clarification on how the proposed changes would change their working lives.

Denise Christie, Scottish regional secretary, says concerns over attending STFs have been raised by many who see their core role as emergency service workers and the proposed new non-emergency roles as incompatible with current duties.

It is hardly a secret that health and social care is under-resourced and under-funded – which does not augur well for the plan. There is a wealth of evidence that the sector is under huge strain, as reported by Unison, the union representing many workers in it.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

The FBU has, over two years, co-operated with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) on “out of hospital cardiac arrest” (OHCA) trials responding to heart attacks with the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS).

“We’ve been involved in the technical working group, done our research from the trials and our members mostly accept that it’s a role firefighters can adequately move into,” Denise Christie says.

But now the SFRS wants to bring in “OHCA-plus” as part of the pay offer – expanding the role to include co-responding to any life-threatening injury.

It is a step too far for the Scottish regional committee – and members are concerned that they are not entirely sure what they are being asked to sign up to.

“We have no idea what impact that would have on our primary ability to respond to our core duties,” Denise Christie says.

“We believe we should not be expanding into an extended role at a time when OHCA has not yet been launched. Let’s not run before we can walk. We asked the SFRS to take this off the table, but they didn’t listen.

“Our members told them in June at the staff engagement meetings but they didn’t listen.”

There are also worries over the cumulative effect the additional work that the SFRS wants firefighters to carry out would have, both on firefighters and the communities they serve.

The FBU fears it will have an adverse impact on training, which is vital for keeping core skills up to date. Emergency call handlers in the three remaining control rooms left in Scotland could also face extra pressure.

The increase in call-outs could also deter retained duty members’ main employer from releasing them to carry out their duties as retained firefighters.

And if wholetime firefighters find themselves traumatised or overburdened by the after-effects of attending medical incidents, officers will be under yet more pressure to ensure they are properly supported.

FBU officials have been crossing the

Firefighters join ambulance and police service staff at an incident in Edinburgh

Exchange Place 3

STEVE KYDOJALANY

FIREFIGHTERS TIES AND ADD STRETCHED SERVICE

Denise Christie

country, addressing up to three branch meetings a day, travelling hundreds of miles to ensure members are properly informed before they cast their vote on a prospective pay deal that could have a huge impact on the working lives of firefighters in Scotland, now and in the future.

PARAMEDICS

It is clear many firefighters do not want to do the work of paramedics – or see appliances tied up while waiting for paramedics to arrive.

On one occasion, firefighters had to wait for nine hours before help arrived, and these occurrences are on the increase.

After years of austerity, Denise Christie wants to see members get a pay deal they deserve – but not at any price: “We want to get back to negotiations – and will get back round the table if members reject these proposals. The SFRS always said its employees are its most important asset.”

So let the fire service know what you think of the “with-strings” deal it is proposing.

Make sure you vote to make your voice heard – and give your FBU officials crucial bargaining power to get the deal firefighters and the people of Scotland deserve.

SCOTLAND PAY AND CONDITIONS OFFER



FBU officials have been criss-crossing Scotland to hear members' concerns and to make sure they are fully informed



THE FBU'S CONCERNS

WHOLETIME

The FBU is not confident that SFRS has the capacity to provide adequate training for OHCA+ and STF.

RETAINED

A retained firefighter's contract is for release from their primary employer for emergency calls only. Co-responding to STF is non-emergency work. This could force retained firefighters to quit. STF and OHCA+ training would increase already onerous workload pressures.

CONTROL

The proposal suggests control staff

would give basic life support advice to callers. Beyond fire survival guidance, basic life support is not the responsibility of control staff. There are also concerns about added stress and mergers with police and ambulance service controls.

OFFICERS

Officers could be the first at the scene and need to carry out CPR or other interventions on their own. The proposal refers to welfare support for wholtime and retained firefighters responding to OHCA+ but there is no reference to such support for officers.

Ballot papers have been sent to all Scottish members' home addresses. To vote online go to www.votepopularis.com/fbuscotland and enter the unique password printed on your ballot paper. The ballot closes at midday on 28 February. **Vote to REJECT the offer**

YOU AND THE FBU

What does the most recent pensions victory mean for you? Your questions answered

WHAT IS ALL OF THIS TALK ABOUT PENSIONS?

The Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government carried out a series of attacks on the pensions of firefighters and other public sector workers. The “transitional protection” built into the changes meant that firefighters who were born before a certain date were allowed to stay on their old, better pension scheme, but firefighters born after that date were forced onto the 2015 firefighters’ pension scheme, significantly worsening their pension.

Clearly, in the view of the FBU, the government was discriminating against younger firefighters by forcing them onto worse pension schemes. So the union took the government to court, charging it with unlawful age discrimination. After the Court of Appeal ruled in the union’s favour, the government attempted to appeal to the Supreme Court. This was denied.

The FBU has won the case, but is still ironing out the details of the “remedy” – how the unlawful age discrimination will be rectified.

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE REMEDY?

In December last year, an Employment Tribunal remedy hearing made an interim declaration that claimants were eligible to be treated as if they were still members of the 1992 scheme.

In other words, if you are one of the 6,000 claimants in our case, you are entitled to move back onto your older, better scheme.

I WAS AFFECTED BY DISCRIMINATION BUT AM NOT A CLAIMANT ...

The government has already accepted that non-claimants will be treated in the same way as claimants regarding the remedy.

There may eventually be specific benefits for claimants, so the FBU is looking at reopening the process for members to register as claimants. This process has not yet been finalised, but members will be notified when it has reopened. Please do not email to check if you are a claimant until the form is up and running on the FBU website.

WHAT IF I'M BETTER OFF UNDER THE NEW PENSION SCHEME?

For a small number of firefighters, moving onto the 2015 firefighters’ pension scheme will have been financially beneficial. The ruling states that members are “entitled” to return to their previous scheme – they are not obliged to do so. It is important that you are given details from each scheme to enable you to make the right choice.

PENSION VICTORY

WHAT CAN I EXPECT OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS?

The government is consulting the FBU and other public sector unions on the options for addressing the unlawful age discrimination. A Scheme advisory board is currently considering draft proposals. Discussions are at a very early stage and more detail is required before the FBU can take a view. Members will be fully updated through the usual channels as the situation develops.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR MEMBERS WHO WILL STAY IN THE 2015 SCHEME?

The FBU has raised a concern around the process following the valuation of the 2015 scheme. Essentially, firefighters have been paying too much for their benefits for the last five years.

The 2015 scheme has an inbuilt process to remedy this and, as the pension valuation changes, improve benefits if necessary. Unfortunately, there are significant improvements that the government has refused to implement. In December, the union wrote to the government demanding that it rectifies the issue. As our deadline has now passed, the FBU is, once again, launching legal action against the government.

WHAT IS THIS INBUILT PROCESS?

As with most 2015 public sector pension schemes, the government sets a target cost for firefighters' pensions, with a cap at the maximum and floor at the minimum total cost for funding the scheme. If the actual cost is above the cap or below the floor by a certain amount, the benefits of scheme members are improved or worsened.

The cost of the firefighters' pension scheme has been far below the floor. This means that members' benefits should have been improved and the FBU has been involved in discussions about introducing these benefits.

WHY HAVEN'T OUR BENEFITS IMPROVED?

The cost mechanism is supposed to be automatic. But the government "paused" the cost-mechanism in January 2019, claiming that it needed to know the outcome of the FBU's age discrimination case before improving the pensions of those on these schemes.

WHY ARE IMPROVEMENTS AFFECTED BY THE AGE DISCRIMINATION CASE?

In short, they should not be. The cost-control mechanism pension scheme is completely separate to the age discrimination inflicted on members who were forced onto the 2015 scheme.

The FBU is now preparing to challenge government to make sure that these improvements are introduced.

**THE GOVERNMENT HAS ACCEPTED THAT
NON-CLAIMANTS WILL BE TREATED IN
THE SAME WAY AS CLAIMANTS**

LABOUR MUST EMPOWER THE WORKING CLASS, NOT THE ESTABLISHMENT

Matt Wrack, FBU general secretary, reflects on the general election result and what it means for FBU members

At the dawn of the last decade, we saw a crushing defeat of Gordon Brown's Labour party, ushering in a devastating era of Tory-led austerity. As we enter a new decade, reeling from another terrible defeat, we must not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Make no mistake – December's general election was a momentous defeat for Labour and our movement, which requires deep reflection, and there are no easy answers to why we lost. It is Labour's worst election result since 1935, which has led some on Labour's right to demand a shift to the so-called "centre-ground".

Even many committed supporters of Jeremy Corbyn have acknowledged that he was an issue on the doorstep. But that must also be put in context; it is hard to think of another British political leader in recent history who has faced such a barrage of attack from all elements of the media over such a sustained

period. And, of course, much of this reflected the relentless attacks Corbyn faced within his own parliamentary party.

Behind these attacks was a wider agenda – to defeat and eliminate not just Corbyn but “Corbynism”; the idea that the left should pursue radical change. These are challenges which will face any Labour leader unless they are prepared to completely abandon any commitment to left wing policies and make the Labour party once again “safe” for the establishment.

Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell have facilitated debate on public ownership, public services, trade union rights, and tackling the climate emergency, in a way that was previously unthinkable in “mainstream” politics. For this alone they deserve our thanks and support.

CHANGING THE CONVERSATION

The 2017 election saw Labour make gains by changing the conversation; by making the election about radical policy solutions rather than Brexit. It led to the biggest increase in Labour’s vote share since the momentous victory of 1945.

But it is a formula Labour failed to repeat; the party ultimately failed to make this anything other than a Brexit election, which inevitably ate away votes on all sides. Indeed, analysis from YouGov has shown that Labour lost as many votes to anti-Brexit parties as to pro-Brexit parties.

It’s inescapable that many of the seats lost were in working class leave-voting towns, and there are some who blame Labour’s defeat solely on its support for a second referendum. But to focus so narrowly ignores the swathes of other voters who Labour failed to convince.

The Brexit vote was, in part, a reaction to a failed neoliberal economic settlement; to years of austerity and decades of deindustrialisation. As working-class jobs in these communities have disappeared, the influence of trade unions and the Labour movement has waned.

Their geographical history may be mining and unions, but it is not their present – and the Labour movement has not yet adequately analysed or debated the impact of these huge long-term social, economic and political changes.

While the post-election debate about Labour’s lost working-class voters is essential, perhaps we also need a discussion about what Britain’s working class looks like in 2020.

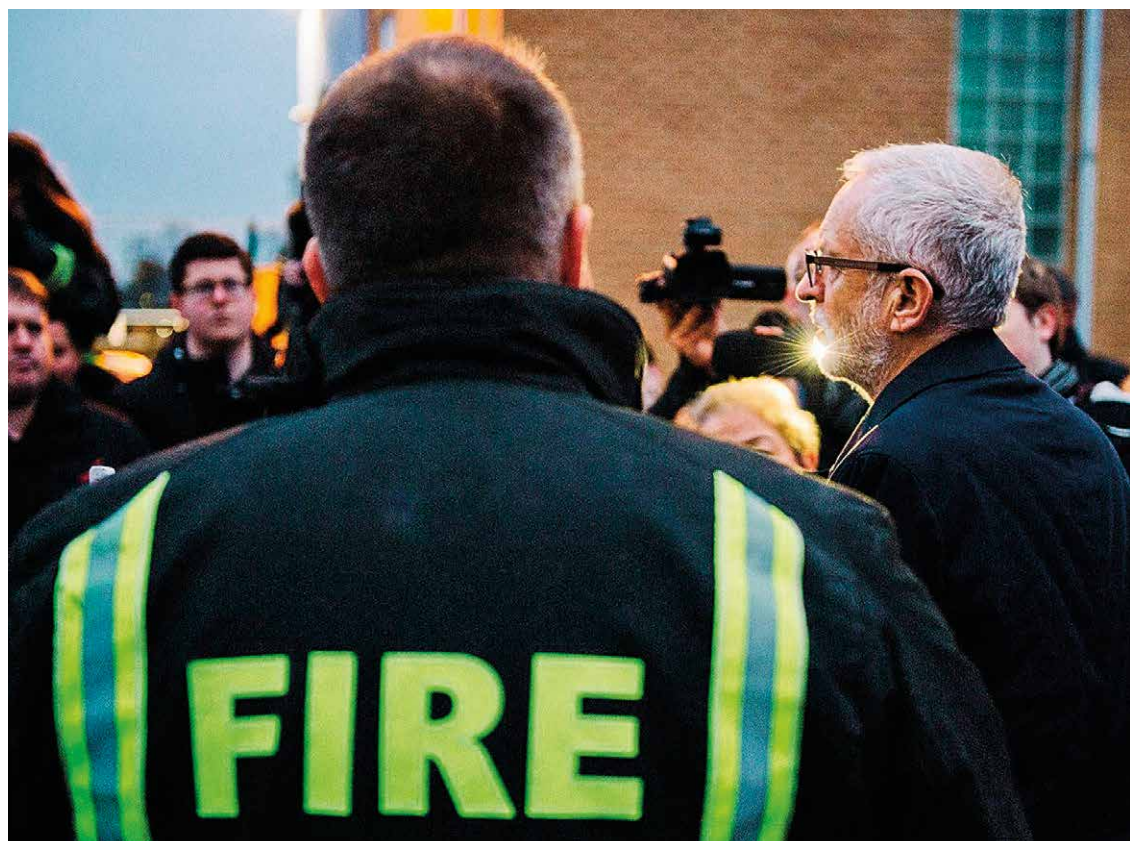
WHOEVER LEADS LABOUR MUST BE ABLE TO WIN BACK WORKING-CLASS COMMUNITIES WE HAVE LOST

As an affiliated union, the FBU enjoyed an unprecedented role in shaping Labour’s 2019 manifesto, helping to formulate a detailed plan to rebuild the fire and rescue service. But we also fought for a manifesto that would have reinvigorated trade unions, freeing us from decades of anti-union legislation, and ensuring that Labour’s approach to the climate crisis was empowering to workers, with a socialist green new deal.

In the rushed timetable for Labour’s leadership election, the FBU will need to consider the policies and views of Labour leadership contenders – and there must be no retreat on policy. Whoever leads Labour into the next election must continue Jeremy Corbyn’s commitment to trade union rights, to public ownership, and to party democracy.

Above all else, they must be able to win back the working-class communities we have lost – both leave and remain. That will require a long-term strategic approach to build support in those communities for an empowering alternative to continued stagnation and decline – or we face another decade of Tory rule and the devastation it will bring.

■ Members who contribute through subs to the union’s political fund are eligible to vote in the Labour party leadership election. For more information visit www.fbu.org.uk/labour-leadership-election-2020



Jeremy Corbyn visited Doncaster fire station after floods in the area in January

WE ARE RIGHT TO BE OUTRAGED

Tam McFarlane, national officer, reflects on the latest inspectorate report findings on equalities

In 1999, Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate published a damning report into equality and fairness at work in the fire service.

Page after page criticised the failure of management, leadership style and political ownership across all aspects of equality in our industry.

The recommendations made by the report included demands that the "leadership of the fire service takes positive steps to display commitment to equality and fairness", best practice policies be implemented, resources be made available in respect of equality and "that facilities required by women firefighters are introduced as a matter of the highest priority".

Only one organisation was singled out for praise by the inspectorate in that report – the Fire Brigades Union. A lengthy paragraph highlighted that "the most significant involvement by far was on the part of the Fire Brigades Union" and that "at national level, a clear leadership role has emerged" for the union.

Fast forward more than 20 years and where are we now?

Another report by the inspectorate in England, and findings that should bring shame to senior managers and politicians responsible for our fire and rescue services.

A striking lack of diversity across our services represents a failure to recruit properly or introduce effective outreach programmes.

Many staff report bullying, perpetuated overwhelmingly by service managers, in many cases leaving firefighters unable to report it for fear of being victimised.

Amazingly, it was discovered that some services are still failing to provide our women members with



Kit campaign: The FBU women's committee was campaigning for kit that fitted women as well as adequate facilities more than a decade ago

correctly fitting personal protective equipment or even basic facilities. This is simply unacceptable.

Even worse, the individual leading the inspectorate denigrated the vital role of the FBU, making an overtly political attack on our union, for no other reason than we successfully protect our members' working conditions.

Instead of dancing to its Tory masters' tune, the inspectorate should have concentrated on demanding solutions to the indignities that FRS staff have to endure on a daily basis.

It is a disgrace that, in 2020,

workplaces do not provide proper toilets, showers or changing areas for women. Basic protection, in the form of fire kit that fits properly is still not being provided to individuals who risk their lives on a daily basis to save others.

On large scale incidents firefighters face the indignity of trying to find a place to urinate on an ad hoc basis, or have to change tampons in the back of fire appliances while colleagues guard the doors.

This is a situation which we should rightly be outraged about. We are therefore launching a number of initiatives across a range of bodies, including the National Joint Council (NJC) to demand action.

We are currently undertaking research to assist our policy development and are working with our equality sections and fairness at work reps to build best practice.

This national work is under way and members should see it come to fruition in the next few months.

No member should have to compromise their dignity, tolerate a lack of facilities or suffer inadequate PPE whilst at work. No member should have to suffer any form of bullying at work.

These are situations which we must unite around and demand change.

RIGHT TO STRIKE UNIONS MUST RETAIN ABILITY TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION

Government proposals for 'minimum service' levels during a transport strike are an attack on the rights of trade unionists, says **Neil Todd** of Thompsons Solicitors

The government's manifesto for the general election included the proposal that a minimum service must remain in operation during a transport strike.

Rhetoric surrounding this suggested that rail workers are the target for the proposal, although it remains unclear whether it would cover the whole transport sector.

Measures to impose the provision of minimum levels of service during transport strikes are now to be developed.

The proposal represents yet another attack on the right to strike. It follows the Trade Union Act 2016 which, among other things, introduced the requirement for a "minimum vote" when the majority of people entitled to vote in a ballot on industrial action are engaged in "important public services" (which includes railways).

If the action is to be lawful, 40 per cent of all those entitled to take part in the ballot must vote in favour of it.

The government has said that the two main elements of

its new proposal will be that:

- "Minimum service agreements" will set out the minimum service pattern to be provided during rail strikes, and the minimum number and nature of staff who would work to provide that service; and
- Any strike against a rail employer shall be unlawful unless a minimum service agreement is in place.

This damaging proposal raises very important human

rights and societal questions:

- First, the right to strike is protected by Article 11 of the European Convention of Human Rights. Any restriction on that right can only be on prescribed grounds.
- Second, both the International Labour Organisation and the European Committee of Social Rights have made clear that railways are not an essential public service.

This has been confirmed

by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Ognevenko v Russia* Appn No 44873/09.

The court found that the Russian government could not rely on the rail network being an essential service in order to justify interference with Article 11 and the right to strike.

Given that the UK government's proposal is yet another restriction on the right to strike in the rail sector, following the implementation of the Trade Union Act 2016, there is a significant question mark over whether it is consistent with Article 11 requirements.

It is entirely unclear how, in practical terms, a minimum service agreement would establish service requirements.

How would such an agreement be reached without it undermining and interfering with the right to strike?

Who would determine whether it was acceptable or sufficient?

Trade unions must retain the ability to take effective industrial action. Any attempts to thwart that should be met with strong resistance.

Government time would be better spent addressing why strikes are necessary in the sector in the first place and addressing the issues that they raise, which often relate to the safety of the travelling public, rather than introducing draconian legislation aimed at limiting the fundamental rights of trade union members.

That requires thought, commitment and strategy – something on which a dog-whistle Johnson government is unlikely to be bothered to spend time.



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FBU members unloading clothing and other essentials carried on the FBU fire appliance and helping Care4Calais volunteers to distribute them

PICTURES: JESS HURD



SOLIDARITY NOT CHARITY

By **Jim Bittlestone**, FBU North East regional chair

When FBU members embarked on a solidarity mission to refugee camps in France a Care4Calais volunteer said: "Charity won't fix the crisis that is facing the working people in these camps. We can hand out blankets every day for the rest of our lives and we won't fix it. What we need is solidarity!"

That theme drove the next education and solidarity visit in December. FBU members from across the country travelled to camps in Calais and Brussels to cut through the propaganda and myths pushed on us by an anti-worker media intent on dividing us.

With the question of "what is the difference between charity and solidarity?" we travelled to meet the men, women and children stranded in the Belgian and French camps.

We found bricklayers, engineers, teachers, hairdressers, students and nurses with the same life, work and family aspirations as us. They did not resemble anything like the threat

to our culture and wages that the populist right-wing media would have us believe. These courageous working people, many of whom are fleeing persecution for the type of resistance that FBU members and activists show every day, had no idea of the lies being spread about them.

The need not only to show solidarity with other working people, but also to seek the truth by way of experience and knowledge, became quickly apparent to the volunteers on the trip. We will never be able to effectively organise, fight and address issues such as low pay in the fire service, if we allow members to be misled into believing that other struggling working people are to blame. We need to understand the real causes if we are to fight them.

So not only is it in the proud tradition of our union to show international solidarity with all workers, but the knowledge members gain on these trips also shows that this is an industrial issue, a workplace issue and the responsibility of a trade union.

■ <https://care4calais.org/the-refugee-crisis>

COULD YOU BE A DONOR FOR GUY?

The FBU's Trowbridge rep, Guy Tadman, has been diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia and is in need of a stem cell transplant. Unfortunately, he is still waiting for a donor.

Could you be a one?

Dozens of Guy's colleagues from Trowbridge and elsewhere in Dorset & Wiltshire FRS have already registered with the charity DKMS.

They are also encouraging financial contributions as each donor swab kit costs £40.

■ Find out more at: <https://dkms.org.uk/en/register-now>

LETTER



A GREAT PHOTO, BUT ...

I must share my amusement at the choice for the union photography competition winner and cover photo for the October/November 2019 *Firefighter*.

I believe that many serving firefighters understand what has just happened.

This individual is definitely not the first, and won't be the last, who has disconnected the hose from a hydrant standpost without first turning it off!

If they were indeed trying to shut down this hydrant they should have been using the key and bar which remain untouched.

I have seen this happen (and done it) and the display that follows is one of the funniest sights on a fireground.

The desperation of trying to overcome the water pressure and get the hose back on while getting soaking wet provides amusement for all.

Once the panic is over a sheepish look around to see if anybody was watching usually follows, and inevitably everyone was.

A great photo and worthy winner no doubt.

Rob Cable



STATION CAT HEALTH AND SAFETY

SAFE AS HOUSES?

Your Cat was perusing her copy of the *Financial Times* recently when she came across a story about fat cat (no relation) Jeff Fairburn, the former boss of housebuilder Persimmon.

While at Persimmon, Mr Fairburn was paid £85m in a two-year period. How do you manage that? I hear you ask. Well, it has been suggested Mr Fairburn did nothing more than become chief executive of the housebuilder just as a government subsidy scheme artificially inflated its share price – and his share-based bonuses.

Adding to the criticism, customers claimed Persimmon skimmed on quality and, to keep profit margins high, they left fully paid-for homes unfinished.

Now, Stephanie Barwise QC, an independent reviewer, has found that Mr Fairburn presided over a company that, despite making £1bn annual profit did not properly check whether fire safety measures had been installed.

Ms Barwise went on to say that, under Mr Fairburn, Persimmon had become an organisation where “a culture of non-observance” and “box-ticking” had been encouraged. She found “incidences of missing or incorrectly installed cavity barriers” — needed to prevent fire spreading via the walls of timber-frame properties.

Profit above fire safety, surely this must be an isolated case?



GREAT BALL OF FIRE

Your Cat will be the first to admit that she was not a big fan of BBC Radio 2's *Breakfast Show* host, Zoe Ball.

Anyway, your Cat was on her commute into work (in her Jaguar), listening to the *Breakfast Show* and raging about an item on the 8am news slating the London Fire Brigade.

Then Zoe Ball came on saying: “Big shout out to all the firefighters who might be listening this morning. It is hard to hear them (firefighters) getting a hard time in the news. You are all loved and appreciated.”

Could someone please pass the humble pie?

WEIGHTY MATTERS

Newspapers report that a national obesity crisis is putting a burden on fire and rescue services across the country.

The *i* newspaper said it had figures that show fire crews were called out more than 2,000 times in three years to help lift obese patients.

The *i* pointed to cases of firefighters having to remove windows or widen doors to extract patients.

The figures illustrate how decades of inadequate measures have led to the “epidemic” of obesity and how, like flooding and climate change, fire and rescue services are expected to step up to cover government failings.

The paper said

New South Wales premier Gladys Berejiklian and Australian prime minister Scott Morrison at a recent news conference on energy supply – see Burning issue

BIANCA DE MARCHI/AAP/PA IMAGES



campaigners are calling for “bold moves” to deal with this public health emergency that is costing the country £24bn a year.

Your Cat would like to suggest a “bold move” of her own. How about providing the people of Britain with a properly financed and resourced fire and rescue service and, while we are about it, put some more money into the NHS as well.

BURNING ISSUE

As New South Wales had a respite from catastrophic fires, your Cat heard from one of her Antipodean kin.

A row has broken out that is almost as blistering as the fires. NSW Labor party leader Jodi McKay claimed that government papers show the state's fire services are facing a \$40m budget cut.

NSW premier Gladys Berejiklian replied that her government had provided record funding to all frontline agencies in the emergency services.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Fact Check* website says that, while Ms McKay's claim doesn't stack up, firefighting expenditure would need to grow by at least \$39m just to keep pace with inflation and population growth.

Both Ms Berejiklian and Australian prime minister Scott Morrison have denied that human-induced climate change has anything to do with the current fires across Australia.

Is your Cat the only one to think that our planet limps on despite the best efforts of its politicians?



25-YEAR BADGES



Terry Nottle (r), orange watch, St Austell, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from branch official Gary Cotton with colleagues looking on



John Bowden (r), Looe, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade vice chair Mike Tremellen, with colleagues looking on



Dave Burn (r), Carlisle West, Cumbria, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Steven Ratcliffe with colleagues (l-r), Mark Wightman, Liam Marr and Nic Bell



Edward Affection (r), Kirton, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Stephen Waters



Ben Leigh-Brown (r), Cambridge, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Riccardo La Torre



Ian Gibbins (r), Stanground, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Riccardo La Torre



Phil Pilbeam (r), Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, receives his 25-year badge from regional secretary Riccardo La Torre



Tim Gillett (r), white watch, Bridgwater, Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dave Lock with colleagues and brigade secretary James Leslie looking on



Robert Ervin (l), receives his 25-year badge from London EC member Dave Shek at a regional committee meeting



Jonty Irwin (r), red watch, Swindon, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Thompson with (l-r), Simon Todd, Jason Close, Mark Shipway, Rio Ockenden and Rob Haddow



Billy Cameron (r), amber watch, Clydebank, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Andy McGregor



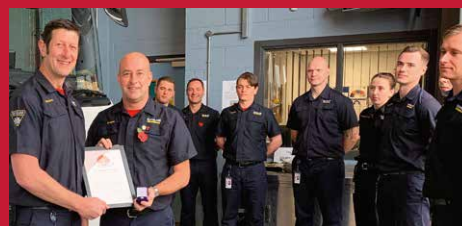
Neil Porteous, (l), red watch, Staveley, Derbyshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade assistant secretary Paul Revill with colleagues looking on



Nick Pope (r), blue watch, Salisbury, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Thompson with (l-r), Lisa Morrell, Andy Bentley, Darren Masini and Jo Riddiford



Chris Kelly (r), Tyne and Wear, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Wayne Anderson with members of the inspection support team



Steven Kitching (l), learning and development centre, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe



Pete Tonkin (r), Training, South West, receives his 25-year badge from brigade official Nick Harvey



Mark Drinkwater (r), Leicester-shire brigade secretary, and green watch, Leicester Central, receives his 25-year badge from general secretary Matt Wrack



Lisa Watkins (r), green watch, Hereford, receives her 25-year badge from Hereford & Worcester brigade organiser Neil Bevan



Tony Bryant (l), red watch, Egham, Surrey, receives his 25-year badge from North area rep Karl Jones



Rob Devereux (r), fire protection, Hertfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Rob Fortune



Paul Nicholson (r), Duty Chippenham, Dorset & Wiltshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Andy Thompson with (l-r), Dave Bishop, Gareth Challinor, Samson Van Weenen, Ken Griffin and Colin Tailby



John Palmer (r), black watch, Falmouth, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Stu Pulley with colleagues looking on



Gary Wright (r), green watch, Bridgwater, Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dave Lock



Kevin Lee (r), blue watch, Beckenham, London, receives his 25-year badge from London South East area organiser Terry Leigh



Robert Kinnaird (r), Doune, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from East area secretary John McKenzie



Dave Carlisle (r), Tolvaddon, Cornwall, receives his 25-year badge from brigade official Stu Pulley



Rick Collier (l), white watch, at Surrey's new station, Spelthorne, receives his 25-year badge from station rep Will Knowlton with colleagues looking on



Steve Ockerby (r), green watch, Bradford, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from FBU general secretary Matt Wrack



Paul Henderson (l), Lowestoft South, Suffolk, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Phil Johnston with blue watch colleagues (l-r): Steve Brown, James Field, Declan Macavoy and Ben Whale



Andrew Richards (l), operational response, officers branch, Mid & West Wales, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Simon Jones with officer branch members looking on



Ken Moore (l), blue watch, Roedean, East Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Ben Ashton, with watch colleagues looking on



Richard Harrison (l), green watch, Newhaven, East Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Sean McFadden, with watch colleagues looking on

25-YEAR BADGES



Jon Reay (l), red watch, Durham, receives his 25-year badge from Durham & Darlington brigade chair Holly Ferguson with colleagues (l-r) Dave Ratcliffe, Paul Hindmoor, Paul Bainbridge, Warren Metcalfe and Martin Hollingsworth



Jack Parnell (l), Grangetown, Cleveland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Davy Howe with red watch colleagues looking on



Jamie Roberts (l), Roedean, East Sussex, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Ben Ashton, with colleagues from green watch looking on



Simon Glew (r), officers' branch, Nottinghamshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Nick Hardy



Alan McFadyen (l), fire safety, Oxfordshire, receives his 25-year badge from brigade chair Jimmy Harris with colleagues looking on



Paul Redman (r), Avon, receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary Gary Spindler



Giles Parker (r), technical rescue branch, Kent, receives his 25-year badge from branch rep Jim Chaston with colleagues (l-r) Stacey Irvine, Andy Parks and Roy Ingram and search dogs (l-r) Max and Buzz



Ewen McNeish, red watch, Redhill Park, Bournemouth, with his 25-year presentation, in his usual place of work, with his hungry colleagues (l-r), James Moffat, Carl Deacon, Simon Goodchild and Shaun Milton



Lindsay Smith (l), recently retired, Highlands and Islands, Scotland, receives his 25-year badge from Aviemore branch rep Barry Taylor



Ian Balfour (r), Yeovil group support, Devon & Somerset, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Dave Lock with Yeovil blue watch and other group support colleagues



Andy Railton (l), fire safety, Northumberland, receives his 25-year badge from brigade organiser Ash Fox



John Hunt (r), white watch, Whitechapel, London, receives his 25-year badge from London NE area organiser Nat Cane with members of white watch on parade



Rick Sewell (r), Philips Park, Greater Manchester, receives his 25-year badge from branch secretary Jamie Taggart with white watch colleagues looking on



Sean O'Flynn (r), white watch, branch rep at Hunslet, West Yorkshire, receives his 25-year badge from district secretary Mike Ferries with colleagues looking on

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020 7359 3638, london@fbu.org.uk

Region 11 Bucks, Berks, Hants, Oxon, Isle of Wight, Kent, Surrey, E Sussex, W Sussex

Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way,
Woodingdean, Brighton, BN2 6AH
11rs@fbu.org.uk

Region 12 Cornwall, Devon & Somerset, Avon, Gloucs, Wilts, Dorset

158 Muller Road, Horfield,
Bristol, BS7 9RE
0117 935 5132, 13rs@fbu.org.uk

Change of address or next of kin

Advise your brigade organiser of any
change of address and head office of
changes to next of kin or nominations
for benefits.

FBU FREEPHONE LEGAL ADVICE LINE

0808 100 6061

ENGLAND, WALES AND N IRELAND

0800 089 1331

SCOTLAND

The line provides advice for personal
injury, family law, wills, conveyancing,
personal finance and consumer issues.
For disciplinary and employment-
related queries contact your local FBU
representative.

T THOMPSONS
SOLICITORS



Richie Walton (r), Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire, receives his
25-year badge from regional
secretary Riccardo La Torre



Jason Bown (r), Warwickshire,
receives his 25-year badge from
brigade secretary Steve Rule



Tony Bull (l), FBU rep at
Hornchurch, London, receives his
25-year badge on his retirement
from former London regional
secretary Joe McVeigh



Darren Farndale (l), Coulby Newham, Cleveland,
receives his 25-year badge from brigade secretary
Davy Howe, with red watch colleagues looking on



Marc Bridger (l), Sevenoaks, Kent, receives his
25-year badge from Kent brigade secretary Danny
Barrett with (l-r) James Heath, Sam Miles, Mark
Winchcombe, Ed Gibbs and Jason Jones



Andy Robinson (r), Cleveland,
receives his 25-year badge from
brigade secretary Davy Howe



Darren Burchnall (r), Spalding, Lincolnshire, receives his 25-year
badge from regional secretary Adam Taylor alongside colleagues at the
Lincolnshire AGM

Please send good quality, high resolution digital files or prints to:

firefighter@fbu.org.uk or

Firefighter, FBU, 68 Coombe Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT2 7AE.

For your image to look its best, we
need the original, full-resolution
image. One lifted from a website may
not do justice to a unique occasion.
We do our best with images that are
low resolution, taken directly into a
bright light or suffer from camera-
shake, or have other problems, but

cannot perform miracles.
Please include details for each
image – full names of everyone who
is in it; their station/brigade/watch
etc; where they are in the picture
(eg: left to right); their union posts/
branch if relevant; and where/when it
was taken.

SOLIDARITY WITH AUSTRALIA



AAP/PA IMAGES

Australia is being ravaged by the worst wildfires in decades. Large swathes of the country have been devastated and many lives lost, including firefighters who have faced unprecedented risks. The FBU has produced a limited edition run of 1,000 individually numbered solidarity badges and hopes to raise £10,000 with all proceeds sent to the wildfire fund.

£10
PLUS P&P



Individually numbered badges made to a high specification from enamel with a metal finish: 30mm wide and 22.6mm high

Buy this badge and help to support those most affected

All proceeds raised from the sale of these badges will go to support people directly affected by the fires

Available at shop.fbu.org.uk