

**Submission
No 9**

**EXAMINATION OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL'S
PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORTS SEPTEMBER
2013 – JULY 2014**

Organisation: Fire & Rescue NSW

Date Received: 2 September 2015



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2 September 2015

Mr Bruce Notley-Smith MP
Chair
Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Notley-Smith

I write in relation to your letter of 6 August 2015 requesting a submission outlining the response of Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) to the Auditor-General's Report on the Fitness of Firefighters. I am pleased to advise that FRNSW accepted all of the recommendations contained within the audit report and continues to actively work to achieve these.

Policy and procedural elements that form the foundation of implementing the recommendations are underway. Consultation with the Fire Brigade Employees' Union (FBEU) continues on this matter.

Please see attached table (based on your suggested template) which provides advice relating to FRNSW's response to the audit and actions undertaken to date.

The Auditor-General's report was very effective in identifying key areas of risk that FRNSW had already commenced a body of work to address. The report has provided considerable backing to FRNSW'S desire to mitigate safety risk through improved firefighter health and fitness.

If you would like any further information in relation to the work being undertaken, please contact Wayne Phillips, Acting Assistant Director Health and Safety on (02) 9265 2642 or wayne.phillips@fire.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Greg Mullins AFSM
Commissioner



Recommendations in the Performance Audit
Fitness of Firefighters

RECOMMENDATION	ACCEPTED/ REJECTED	ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN	DUE DATE	STATUS & COMMENT	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Introduce an ongoing health and fitness assessment for firefighters. This should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be mandatory • Define frequency of assessment 	Accepted	Develop procedures and frameworks to support implementation of both the health and fitness standards (which define frequency of assessment)	Dec 2015	<p>Following ratification of the Crown Employees (Fire and Rescue NSW Firefighting Staff Death and Disability) Award 2015, FRNSW has developed procedures for the implementation of mandatory periodic health and fitness assessments for incumbent firefighters. Clause 4 and Annexure A of the Award outline a health and fitness program structure.</p> <p>The planned implementation of these procedures and the overarching health and fitness program are currently the subject of negotiations with Fire Brigade Employees' Union (FBEU).</p>	FRNSW Health & Safety and Industrial Relations Branches
<p>Implement measures that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require firefighters, as part of their duties, to undertake activities to maintain their fitness 	Accepted	FRNSW will develop appropriate health and fitness programs to assist firefighters attain the required level of health and fitness to meet the standards. These will complement injury prevention and health promotion programs already in existence, and those being developed to target identified areas of need.	Dec 2015	<p>FRNSW has strengthened its Fire Fit program through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of a targeted health and fitness education and planning program. This program fosters a competitive environment where firefighters can compete against each other while striving to achieve personal goals. This is currently being trialled • Physical Aptitude Test (proposed fitness standard) familiarisation sessions for incumbent firefighters. These are currently being planned across all area commands • Functional Movement Screening program which allows individual injury risk and areas of physical fitness requiring attention to be identified. 	FRNSW Health & Safety Branch

<p>2. Assist firefighters who fail their assessment to regain the required fitness standard</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Individualised programs will be developed to assist those firefighters who fail to meet the standards.</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardio Check Program has seen mobile blood testing being offered to firefighters during visits by Health and Fitness Advisors. <p>The above programs will be available to assist those firefighters who do not meet the required health and fitness benchmarks.</p>	<p>FRNSW Health & Safety Branch</p>
<p>3. Manage firefighters who continually fail assessments including terminating employment either through the Crown Employees (Fire and Rescue NSW Firefighting Staff Death and Disability) Award or Fire Brigades Regulation 2014</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The process, by which firefighters who continually fail to meet the required standard will be terminated, will form part of the procedure for application of the standard.</p>	<p>Dec 2015</p>	<p>Draft procedures have been developed relating to the management of firefighters who fail to meet the necessary fitness benchmarks. These procedures will see a risk assessment based model applied in order to accommodate firefighters, where practicable, through reasonable adjustment, role variation, internal deployment or assisting redeployment following termination of employment through the Crown Employees (Fire and Rescue NSW Firefighting Staff Death and Disability) Award. These procedures are being negotiated with the FBEU.</p>	<p>FRNSW Health & Safety and Industrial Relations Branches</p>