

## Massive Fire season looms for NSW

In a sign of what may be a very difficult summer, NSW is currently experiencing severe fires in the north of the state.

Affected members are encouraged to keep track of emergency services alerts and also the [RFS website](#) with specific fire information.

The PSA/CPSU NSW hopes all members in affected areas are safe and well. We also wish to extend a big thank you to the emergency services workers, many of whom are your fellow PSA/CPSU members, defending communities affected by fires.

The current long term weather forecasts, coupled with the ongoing drought, mean the State has arguable never been more vulnerable to severe fire events. It looks like being a long summer for our emergency service workers.

As such, it is an important time to remind all members of the PSA/CPSU NSW that your union has award clauses to support all workers unable to attend work in natural emergencies such as bushfire.

Clause 17 of the [Crown Employees \(Public Service Conditions of Employment\) Award](#) allows public service employees prevented by natural emergency from attending work at a normal work location to apply for varied working hours, alternate working location or to take Family and Carers leave, flex, rec or extended leave or leave without pay to cover the period.

Alternative work locations for those affected by natural disaster can include working from home or from another office or agency.

The award states that, "when a prolonged transport disruption occurs, Department Heads may extend the flexible working hours settlement period during which the transport disruption occurred by a further four weeks, in order to allow employees to make up additional time taken during the disruption".

Family and Community Services leave can be granted if an employee's property is threatened by emergencies such as bushfire.

If leave is exhausted as a result of natural disasters, and another emergency arises, the Department Head shall consider applications for additional FACS leave.

Under Clause 40 of the [State Water Corporation Agreement](#), employees of Water NSW also have access to special leave if they are emergency service volunteers.

TAFE NSW employees prevented from attending work at a normal work location by a natural disaster may negotiate an alternative working location or take available FACS leave, flex leave, annual or extended leave, or leave without pay to cover the period concerned.

Additionally, Section 5, Part A of their [Enterprise Agreement](#) allows TAFE employees to apply to vary their working hours.

According to their [Enterprise Agreement](#), "all Forestry Corporation employees are expected to perform any required role in fighting fire that they are competent to perform safely which includes roles that do not involve frontline firefighting".

Section 56 of the Forestry Corporation agreement stipulates your firefighting duties and hours required, while Section 57 outlines your rates of pay.

Members affected by the fire situations who are unsure of their rights or entitlements or who have a problem with accessing their rights should contact the PSA on 1300 772 679.

