

The PSA has your back

As the mop-up begins and the finger-pointing commences, the PSA has received reports of NPWS employees receiving abuse from members of the public with regard to the cause of the bushfires that have engulfed our state over recent months.

This is completely unacceptable and undeserved. As your union we know too well the important work you are attempting to undertake, and the challenges your under resourced agency has been under which has made this response later and more difficult than it should have been. We know that the fires have been fuelled by a combination of a drought-impacted landscape and the impacts of climate change. And we know that whilst the NPWS has met its hazard reduction targets in previous years, more could have been done had the conditions permitted and the Berejiklian Government not slashed jobs in the 2017/18 restructure of the Service.

Unfortunately, this unfair allocation of blame is a product of a deliberate and calculated misinformation campaign by conservative voices in the media to deflect from Government failings at all levels.

In the longer term, we will not let this narrative go unanswered. We have already raised your version of events on numerous occasions in the media when given the opportunity, and will continue to do so. We also intend to be a loud advocate for your profession at any Government inquiry, State or Federal, that is held over the coming months to make sure the truth is heard.

In the short term we will be calling on your employer to go on the front foot and better support staff in the field as you undertake work for the good of our community.

On behalf of the PSA Executive, staff and its members across the state, we want to say thank you for everything you have done over the last few months. Our appreciation for your tireless and dangerous work will never be properly articulated. In our view you represent the best in the public sector and the values it should represent. It is time that politicians of all levels appreciated you in the same way and stopped the unfair scapegoating.

Should you hear of any further incidents of abuse or harassment please do not hesitate to report them to your local delegate listed below and/or our Member Support Centre on 1300 772 679.

Finally, if you have any photos of your days in the field and the work you have undertaken, we would love to receive a copy to better promote the work you do. They can be emailed to nmiles@psa.asn.au.

Once again, thank you and stay safe.

Your delegates

Greater Sydney – Tegan Burton

Blue Mountains – Ben Owers

North Coast – Martin Smith

South Coast (including Wollongong) – Alex Deura

Southern Ranges – Danny Corcoran

Northern Inland – Janet Cavanaugh

West – Johann Keno Brueggemann

Hunter Central Coast – Tegan Burton

Head Office Park Programs staff

(Parramatta/Hurstville/Goulburn St) – Anita Zubovic

