



UNITED
**FIRE
FIGHTERS
UNION**
QUEENSLAND

Monday 16 March 2020

The Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk
Premier and Minister for Trade
1 William Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Delivered via email: ThePremier@premiers.qld.gov.au

Dear Premier

Re: Backing Queensland firefighters

I am writing on behalf of Queensland firefighters and their families.

Queensland firefighters have been at the forefront of protecting Queenslanders from some of the nation's biggest natural disasters.

Right now, Queensland firefighters are struggling to meet the increasing demand which is placing a strain on our workers on the front line and risking public safety.

The Newman Government attacked Queensland firefighters by freezing recruitment, closing and merged stations, stripped us of our support staff forcing frontline firefighters to desk-duty and attacked our wages and conditions.

The Palaszczuk Government's 2017 election commitment for 100 new firefighters was welcome but is still a long way from addressing the historic underinvestment in professional firefighters in Queensland. Your commitment was the first real increase in firefighter numbers since 1995.

Queensland currently has 50.2 professional firefighters per 100,000 population, below the national average of 63.1 and well below New South Wales on 67.8 and Victoria on 75.2 firefighters per 100,000 population.

Queensland needs a further 700 firefighters as a first step to bolster our emergency response, and 950 firefighters to bring us to the average of Australian jurisdictions. Queensland's professional firefighters have spent 2019 and 2020 responding to floods, cyclones and fires. Twenty-two of the last 100 natural disasters in Australia were primarily in Queensland.

UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA UNION OF EMPLOYEES QUEENSLAND

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The growing threat of climate change, drought and coronavirus only highlight the need for an increase to our firefighting workforce. With 2019 being the driest year on record, and with the CSIRO labelling the threat of climate change leading to longer and more intense fire weather days, there has never been a more important time to act.

I know you and your government have always prided yourselves on listening and responding to the needs of Queenslanders. I hope you can work with firefighters in providing them with the additional firefighters that are so desperately needed.

I would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you to discuss the need to invest in Queensland's professional firefighters.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Oliver', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

John Oliver
General Secretary