



John Barilaro
Acting Premier

Shelley Hancock
Minister for Local Government

MEDIA RELEASE

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ONE YEAR REPRIEVE FOR COUNCIL EMERGENCY SERVICES LEVY

The NSW Government today announced it would fund the increase in the emergency services levy for NSW councils this financial year to meet the cost of new workers' compensation for firefighters.

Acting Premier and Minister for Regional NSW John Barilaro and the Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock said the State's 128 councils would not have to pay the additional \$13.6 million this financial year.

"The NSW Government acknowledges that this additional cost presented challenges for councils, particularly those in regional and rural areas badly affected by the drought," Mr Barilaro said.

"That's why the Government will fund the \$13.6 million to cover the additional levy costs to support firefighters who develop cancer, to alleviate the immediate pressure on local councils.

"Our emergency services have long been funded through a cost sharing arrangement between insurers, councils and the Government. It's important that this continues and we look after the health and wellbeing of our frontline firefighters."

Mrs Hancock said the Government has listened to the concerns of local councils.

"We acknowledge that many councils had already developed and approved their 2019-20 Budgets before the invoices for the increased emergency services levy were issued and this has caused some angst," Mrs Hancock said.

"We will continue to consult with local councils to better manage the impacts of the emergency services levy especially on their annual budgeting cycles.

"It is clear that both State and local governments acknowledge the importance of providing support for those emergency service workers who have given so much to protect communities and I look forward to continuing to work with local councils to ensure this is the case."

Minister for Emergency Services David Elliott said firefighters risk their lives to keep the people of NSW safe every day and it's important they receive the full support of the communities they serve.

"The new laws enable eligible firefighters diagnosed with one of 12 cancers to automatically be presumed to have acquired that cancer because of their firefighting work," Mr Elliott said.

"These changes will ensure current and former firefighters – both volunteer and paid – who need care and support receive their entitlements immediately."

Mrs Hancock said the Government will continue to support local councils to deliver for their local communities.

“Since 2011, the NSW Government has provided more than \$9 billion to councils to deliver and improve local infrastructure, services and facilities for their communities,” Mrs Hancock said.

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