

**MM-4 MAYORAL MINUTE - FIRE STATIONS IN CITY OF CANADA
BAY**

Department Executive Services

Author Initials: AT

REPORT

At the 7 May 2013 meeting, Council considered a Mayoral Minute where I expressed my concerns about the risks posed to our community by the decision not to maintain 24 hour operations at our local Fire Stations at Drummoyne and Concord. At that time, Council resolved that I write to the Premier, the Minister for Police, the Member for Drummoyne and the Leader of the Opposition regarding the issue of response times and community safety.

As Council will be aware, the recent hostel fire at Concord was a serious incident that posed a significant threat. At the time of this major fire, the closest station and crew in Concord, had been sent some 37 kilometres away to Avalon on the northern beaches.

While this fire was ultimately contained with first responders on site coming from Ashfield, the bigger issue remains that our local stations are regularly taken off line (TOLED) or on standby whereby the pump and crew are moved to another area (like Avalon).

Following last year's 7 May Council resolution, I received a response from the Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services on behalf of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, regarding both Concord and Drummoyne Fire Stations.

The six month figures provided (from 19 November 2012 to 24 May 2013) indicate Concord had been TOLED on 4 occasions and moved to cover other stations on 14 other occasions, totalling 18 times in a 6+ month period. This is in stark contrast to recent figures provided by the Fire Brigade Employees' Union.

From 1 March up until the time of this incident in Concord, the Concord Fire Station had been TOLED 12 times and performed Standbys 14 times. That's 26 times in the space of 4.5 months where Concord Fire Station was completely unmanned and, on a couple of occasions, up to five (5) times in one week.

More alarmingly, the Parliamentary Secretary's letter stated that Fire and Rescue NSW had identified Drummoyne as a station that must always have an available fire engine and crew due to its strategic location, however, despite this, Drummoyne Fire Station was TOLED 11 times in the past 4.5 months, with cover brought in on only 6 occasions.

Our community is entitled to have vital emergency services maintained and given the consistent increases in Council's fire service levy, to have these services maintained on a 24 hour basis. It seems that the probability of having unmanned Fire Stations is increasing in our area and that is unacceptable.

We were extremely fortunate on this occasion that the fire was contained and that no-one was seriously injured. The State Government's decision to cut services is inexcusable and compromises the safety of our community.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council write to the Premier, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the Member for Drummoyne reiterating our grave concerns over the increase in our local stations being TOLed and covering other stations, particularly Drummoyne which is meant to be manned at all times.