



2 February 2012

Janine Hearn
Director of Human Resources
New Zealand Fire Service
P.O. Box 2133
WELLINGTON

Dear Janine,

Industrial Action – Impact on Rehabilitation of Ill & Injured Employees

I refer to your letter of 26 January 2012 with a sense of incredulity and astonishment.

As you are aware, the reason, and the only reason, for the stopping of rehabilitative duties is the "Guidelines for Managers – Industrial Action" document distributed to Fire Service Managers on or about 1 August last year.

The document, produced by you (the Human Resources Department of the Fire Service)- states:

Arrangements for striking employees currently undertaking return to work/alternative/light duties as part of a rehabilitation plan will be terminated and these employees are to be placed back on sick leave (with or without pay depending on entitlements) until such time as the strike has ended...." (my emphasis).

I note that nowhere in your letter of 26 January 2012 do you include that:

- This guideline is or will be withdrawn;
- That your guidelines were wrong – morally at least (given the comments in your 26 January letter).

Your statement in your letter that "*some employees have been subject to alienation where their return to work aspirations are viewed as acting outside the strike action....*" Is simply not true.

In the Union's Newsletter to Members of 2 August, the Union described your Guidelines relating to Return to Work/Alternative/Light Duties as "*another punitive attack on the most vulnerable.*"

Quite frankly the extraordinary denying of the true situation, hypocrisy and crocodile tears expressed in your letter is not worthy of further comment.

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Suffice to say that the Union has never prevented the return to work of members on rehabilitative/alternative/light duties and does not intend to act in any way to so prevent any such return.

In fact, Union officials at all levels have spent many hours over the past six months trying to achieve this for any number of individuals.

Because of your Guidelines, members have improperly lost sick leave entitlements and income. Fire Service management needs to address this matter urgently.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Best', written in a cursive style.

DEREK BEST
SECRETARY

c.c. Union Committee
c.c. Chief Executive/National Commander