

18 September 2026

Ms Anthea Harris
Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator
Fuel Supply Taskforce

Via email: fstccordinator@pmc.gov.au

CC: fuelsupplytaskforce@pmc.gov.au;

The Hon. Chris Bowen MP, Minister for Climate Change and Energy (Chris.Bowen.MP@aph.gov.au)

Dear Ms Harris,

Re: Fire Protection Workers — Essential Worker Classification under the National Fuel Security Plan
Your ref: MC26-003094

I write to you in your capacity as Fuel Supply Taskforce Coordinator in relation to the classification of fire protection workers under the National Fuel Security Plan.

On 26 March 2026, the Fire Industry Alliance wrote to the Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Hon. Chris Bowen MP, to request that fire protection workers be formally classified as Essential Workers in any fuel shortage response or allocation framework. In his response on behalf of Minister Bowen (ref. MC26-003094), the Branch Head of the Energy Security Taskforce acknowledged that the Liquid Fuel Emergency Act 1984 makes special provisions for defence and other fuel users that deliver law enforcement, emergency and public transport services, and stated that “Government can have regard to critical sectors, and we note your case for priority access.”

We are writing to you now as international fuel supply disruptions remain ongoing and, as we understand it, government agencies have recently been issued with details of Level 3 restrictions under the National Fuel Security Plan and directed to reduce diesel usage where possible.

Given this escalation in preparedness, the Fire Industry Alliance respectfully asks that the Fuel Supply Taskforce act on the Government's earlier acknowledgement that it can have regard to critical sectors, and formally include fire protection within any fuel allocation or priority access framework activated under the National Fuel Security Plan.

Why Fire Protection is a Critical Sector

The Fire Industry Alliance is the peak national body representing Australia's fire protection industry. We represent contractors, suppliers, manufacturers and industry stakeholders who work at the frontline of fire protection.

Fire protection systems are our community's first line of defence, in the built environment, against fire. These systems enable building occupants to be alerted to danger and to evacuate safely, and allow our fire services to enter a structure and reach the source of a fire. Without a functioning and compliant fire protection system, the safety, health, and welfare of the community is seriously endangered. It is not possible, nor legal, for a building to remain operational without a working and compliant fire protection system.

Our Members provide critical support to emergency services by ensuring the ongoing reliability of these systems. Once constructed and installed, fire protection systems are subject to scheduled

attendances to maintain, repair, and test, so as to avoid system failures. Any interruption to these service schedules would lead to a rapid deterioration in the operational readiness of systems that Australians depend on every day to preserve life and protect the integrity of buildings in the event of a fire.

Fire protection work and therefore our workers are inherently mobile. They travel extensively by vehicle to attend sites across metropolitan, regional, and remote areas. Unlike many other trades, their work cannot be deferred, consolidated into a single location, or performed remotely. If fuel restrictions prevent these workers from reaching their scheduled sites, the consequences for community safety are immediate and compounding — and they fall hardest on the buildings and facilities Australians depend on most, including hospitals, aged care facilities, schools, airports, apartment buildings, data centres, resource installations, and government and defence establishments.

During a fuel shortage, when emergency services themselves may be operating under constrained resources, the need for reliable, compliant fire protection systems is heightened, not diminished. Fire protection workers are, in practical terms, an extension of our emergency services capability. Excluding them from priority fuel access would be inconsistent with the Government's stated objective of ensuring fuel goes where it is most needed.

The Fire Industry Alliance respectfully requests that the Fuel Supply Taskforce formally classify fire protection workers as essential users entitled to priority fuel access under the National Fuel Security Plan.

The Government's response to our March correspondence acknowledged the fire protection industry's case for priority access. We are now asking for that acknowledgement to be given practical effect within the Taskforce's planning, before restrictions reach a point where our members' ability to protect the community is compromised.

Should you have any questions or require any further information on any aspects of this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind Regards,



Joe Smith
CEO
Fire Industry Alliance