

QUEENSLAND FIRE SERVICE
SENIOR OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

Union of Employees
P.O. Box 217
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NEWSLETTER

Issue 1

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Goals of the SOA for 2008

There are many challenges facing the SOA in the coming months and years and the Executive Committee has set a number of realistic goals that they want to achieve in 2008. These are to:

- complete the review of the governance arrangements;
- undertake the required review of the SOA management through the compulsory election process;
- review and improve the administrative processes; and
- complete the Senior Officer Review.

GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

As you will recall, the SOA has been progressing the review of the "Rules of the SOA". This has been challenging and a major stumbling block has been the provisions within the existing rules. That is, changes to the rules must be completed within the criteria established in the existing rules.

A particular challenge has been that to change the rules requires the absolute majority of SOA members to vote in favour of a rule change at State Conference. This is particularly challenging when it is recognised that there has never been an absolute majority of members attend State Conference. That is probably why the existing rules are 19 years old and have never been changed.

Accordingly, the Executive Committee has been working with our legal advisors (Clayton Utz) on developing new rules and also a process to address this issue. Because of the complexities involved, this will be the subject of a separate Newsletter in the very near future.

MANAGEMENT OF THE SOA

As many of you will be aware, it will be three years in June since the last elections for officer bearers (i.e. Executive Committee members and Branch Councillors) were held. Accordingly, elections will be held in mid 2008 for all office positions.

The SOA Executive Committee encourages as many senior officers as possible to seek appointment to a position within the Executive or your local Branch. We are a small union with all positions unpaid and voluntary. The success of the SOA will depend upon the level of energy members wish to contribute, so it is time for members to step up to the plate. The State President will be leading the process for managing the elections.

As the State Secretary I continue as a loyal member of the SOA but I will not be standing again for election as an office bearer. I have been in this position for five years and it is time for a new secretary with new ideas & energy to take our Union into the future.

ADMINISTRATION

Whilst the SOA has had numerous successes as an industrial organisation that has led to the wages and conditions we now enjoy, there are a number of areas where the Executive Committee wishes to improve the administrative functions within the SOA.

Development of a SOA logo

The SOA has never had a logo similar to other industrial organisations. A concept for a logo has been developed and will be distributed to members for their feedback in the near future. When agreement is reached, the logo will be used on Newsletters and official Union correspondence.

Regular communications

One area the Executive Committee has recognised that we can improve is regularity in communications.

Meetings

The Vice President will be developing a regular schedule of meetings of State Council and State Conference so regular feedback can be provided to members through their elected Branch Councillor.

Similarly, Branch Councillors will be required to provide regular feedback to Branch members following the State Council meetings.

Newsletters

The State Secretary will be issuing a Newsletter at least every two months, with more frequent issues based on topics of interest that occur from time to time. In this case they will be issued as regularly as the topic of interest determines. Also, a standard Newsletter format will be developed. Our records indicate that there have been many versions over the last 19 years and this requires attention.

Website

In today's environment it is almost essential to have instant communications and the development of a website for the SOA will improve communications and access to information by members. This initiative will be investigated and costs determined for a cost/benefit analysis. Feedback will be sought from members prior to progression of this idea.

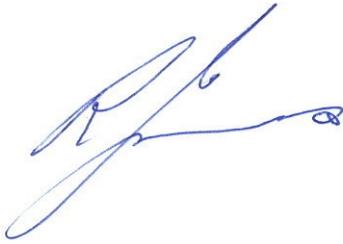
SENIOR OFFICER REVIEW

Those members who are subject to the review (i.e. Senior Officers in the urban stream) have been kept informed of progress and issues through monthly Newsletters from the Senior Officer Review Working Party. The process (and progress) to date is well documented in these Newsletters and it is not the intention to duplicate this information in this, or future, Newsletters. However, issues from an SOA perspective will be discussed in this media.

One issue that was unforeseen when this review commenced was the current environment where the QFRS as a whole is now undergoing a review. The most likely catalyst for this whole-of-QFRS review appears to be a flow-on within the department from the outcomes of the QAS audit, although there may have been other drivers that led to this review. Any such drivers have not yet been confirmed so will not be speculated upon until confirmed. If and when these are confirmed, this information will be forwarded for the awareness of members, as it is important to keep members informed of any issues that may affect them.

The impact of the QFRS review are unknown (as the outcomes are not known) but it is logical that a part of this review will be achieved by the current Senior Officer Review process. This may be an opportunity to advance

our review but we will have to monitor the process closely. Otherwise, the Senior Officer Review will be continuing as per the planned process in order to meet the provisions of the CA 2006.



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