

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND RESCUE -
SENIOR OFFICERS UNION OF EMPLOYEES

P.O. Box 217
LUTWYCHE QLD 4030

NEWSLETTER

Special Issue

6 November 2008

Covert publication – “Stop Press”

The letter

As most members would be aware, a letter titled “Stop Press” was mailed to many SOU members by an anonymous author. The SOU Executive has received copies of this letter and has taken time to consider the most appropriate response. This Newsletter is an unemotional and dignified response to an emotionally charged and undignified letter.

The SOU Executive is extremely disappointed that an officer within the QFRS would engage in this type of subversive and destructive tactics. For many members of the SOU this type of action has sadly revived memories of a previous era when anonymous publications were distributed, and these publications engaged in personal attacks on QFRS officers.

There is no doubt that the issue of this letter is a spineless and cowardly action where a person chooses to engage in character assassination without recourse. The SOU Executive believes these actions possibly indicate a person acting in an unstable state of mind.

Unfortunately, this letter may find its way to the highest levels within this Department and to organisations outside the QFRS. The damage to the SOU could be significant, hard to reverse, and unfortunately may endure long after the ‘faceless defamer’ has left our ranks.

Investigations

There are a number of overt indicators that are leading the SOU Executive to identify the author of this letter. In the interests of the SOU and all Senior Officers, it is important that this person is identified and all efforts are being made to confirm the author. Once the identity of the author can be confirmed, **the SOU will explore all avenues to redress this issue and that nothing (legal avenues included) have been ruled out in relation to recourse for this letter.**

This cannot be tolerated as it will only be a matter of time before this type of anonymous acerbic vitriol is directed to another person or persons within the SOU and/or QFRS.

Have a say – the proper way

“May we never confuse honest dissent with disloyal subversion” - Dwight D. Eisenhower

Like all industrial organisations, the SOU understands that not all members are always happy with all industrial issues as raised and the outcomes that are achieved. This is normal in a democracy. However, there are ways to express views and it is appreciated by the SOU Executive that most members choose to ask questions or voice their opinions in the appropriate manner, including directly with the SOU Executive. Voicing an opinion can be to disagree, and that is OK.

To put this letter and the concerns of some members into context, the SOU Executive is proud and pleased with the results that the SOU has achieved in recent years. Many of the gains that have been achieved now unfortunately appear to be forgotten and taken for granted by some members. Based on feedback received, I am certain most members do recognise the gains that have been made, but it is a worthwhile exercise for members to reflect on these gains and the improved standing the SOU has within the industrial environment within the QFRS and DES.

Change – be a driver, not driven

The SOU has recognised that change has previously been thrust upon Senior Officers, resulting in lost positions. Please reflect back to 1990, 1996 and 2002. The SOU also believes that change is imminent (we have had the current flawed model for over 12 years – an extraordinary period of time in the life of an organisation). The time is ripe for a new direction and the SOU believes it is preferable to be driving the change than being driven (like the past). I realise that to implement improvements of this magnitude in our domain, carries personal trepidation and risk.

The goal is to manage long term work/life balance issues for all seniors. Taking control of one's future is a challenging task and requires demonstrated maturity to work through the process. By requesting this change as a part of the EB negotiations, and having it enshrined in the CA 2006, the members of the SOU have clearly demonstrated that they have this maturity so we can move ourselves forward. The safeguards are there, and proposals on how to move forward and address the concerns in the feedback are being progressed.

Dealing with the challenge

Each individual must make up their minds how to deal with challenges. The SOU is dealing with this letter in a mature and considered way. We urge all members to view the letter that was distributed for what it is. We also urge members to weigh up the views in this Newsletter in a mature and considered way when thinking about and discussing the challenges facing the SOU and its members.

Finally, I wish to express my personal appreciation for the many messages of support received by the State Executive, as a result of this unfortunate event.

Regards

Bruce Byatt

Bruce Byatt AFSM

PRESIDENT

Queensland Fire and Rescue -

Senior Officers Union of Employees