



**QUEENSLAND FIRE AND RESCUE -
SENIOR OFFICERS UNION OF EMPLOYEES**

P.O. Box 217
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NEWSLETTER

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Update

State AGM

The SOU AGM was held on the 27 March with almost 50 members from all departments and regions attending. This was a great turnout and gives a good indication of the strength of the SOU. While there were many issues discussed the main topic was developing our Log of Claims for the upcoming EB process. I encourage you to talk with your Branch Delegate for further detail.

Emergency Response Vehicles – Cargo Barriers

With a standardised fleet of ERV's being introduced across the QFRS the SOU has been active to ensure there is no reduction in safety for Senior Officers. The particular issue of cargo barriers suitable for the Santa Fe has been raised and this was brought up at a recent meeting with the Deputy Commissioner. We were advised that the QFRS was committed to a 'fit for purpose' solution and that included ensuring that station wagons were fitted with a suitable barrier to prevent equipment from entering the passenger area in the event of a crash.

Senior Officer Review Project

A motion passed at the AGM was that the SOU would seek from the QFRS a commitment to progress the implementation of the Mercer review recommendations. While the formal letter has been sent and we are waiting on a reply the SOU has received verbal confirmation from the Deputy Commissioner that the Mercer evaluation has been received and that they will be seeking to bring all parties together shortly with the intention to developing an agreed plan. The SOU representative on this project will continue to be Supt. Ron James.

Change to the Department of Community Safety

As you are aware there has been a change to the Department to include Corrective Services and Police. At this stage it is too early to see what impact this may have on our members however we will continue to monitor. The SOU has written to the Director-General expressing our concern that the transition implementation team does not include any operational staff and the possibility of decisions being made that inadvertently affects our members. We are waiting a reply.

Uniform Update

At the AGM the issue was raised regarding the new uniforms. The QFRS has advised that the status-quo remains until such time as the contract is finalized for structural PPE.

Log of Claims – CA 2009

The Log of Claims as decided by members at the AGM has been submitted. A number of sub-groups have been established including the following;

Firefighters & Station Officers Sub-Group : with representation from the UFU and QFRS
Senior Officers Sub-Group : with representation from the SOU, UFU and QFRS
Communications Sub-Group : with representation from the UFU and QFRS
Rural Operations Sub-Group : with representation from the SOU, QPSU and QFRS
Maintenance & Services Sub-Group : with representation from the AMWU, ETU, CFMEU and QFRS

The Deputy Commissioner is keen to come to an agreement before the start of the new agreement, but the 31 July 2009 is the final date to ensure that back pay is available to the expiry date of the current CA. As you would understand this process is quite intense and weekly meetings have been scheduled through to the end of July. The Executive will be arranging frequent teleconferences with Branch Councilors' to keep members informed.

Right to represent members - Industrial Commission hearing

The QPSU has made application to the Industrial Commission to remove the eligibility of Rural Senior Officers to be represented by the SOU. This is an attack on our approved rules and undermines the fundamental right for Senior Officers to be represented by the union of their choice. The SOU intends to fight this application with the full bench hearing set down for the 25 and 26 April. The SOU maintains the position that we are the only industrial body specifically focused on Senior Officer issues and has every right to represent Senior Officers whether they are working in an urban, rural or Scientific area.

Outstanding Correspondence

1. Email dated 6 April to the Commissioner seeking approval to present an SOU Award for 'Leadership' to Recruits.
2. Letter to the Director-General dated 7 April expressing our concern of the lack of operational representation on the Dept of Community Safety Transition team.
3. Letter to the QFRS dated 13 April regarding progressing the implementation of the Senior Officers review.
4. Letter to the Minister dated 15 April regarding the unacknowledged role that QFRS Senior Officers played in the recent MV Pacific Adventurer Oil Spill.

I encourage all members to take an active interest in their union and to maintain in frequent contact with their Branch Councilors for information.



John Cawcutt AFSM
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Queensland Fire and Rescue -
Senior Officers Union of Employees