



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

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## **NEWSLETTER**

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### **Rural and Remote Issues**

The issue of enacting an appropriate rural and remote area incentive policy for QFRS senior officers remains forefront in current SOU discussions with the QFRS. During these discussions the SOU recently provided the QFRS with the latest Transport and Main Roads policy in this important area of concern, to demonstrate how other areas of Government are better supporting their staff in this aspect. We are advised that the QFRS policy being developed on this matter is well advanced, and look forward to an improved situation for our members who remain impacted in by the current inequitable arrangement.

### **Reportable Fringe Benefit**

Please be aware that as the end of the year approaches you may incorrectly receive notification of a Reportable Fringe Benefit pertaining to the ERV allocated against your position. This has already occurred on one occasion and although it was fixed up quickly it is possible others may have been incorrectly sent out. All Members should be aware that there is no reportable FBT against an ERV. If you get a notification please contact SSA immediately for rectification and also advise your Branch Councillor. The SOU Executive will be raising this issue at the next Deputy Commissioners Forum.

### **QFRS Fitness for Duty Program**

The QFRS will be implementing a Fitness for Duty Program over the next 6 – 18 months. The DCQFRS is committed to making the implementation a consultative and cooperative process with unions, stating that it will not be punitive in nature. An implementation plan has been released to all applicable unions for comment, with the next meeting to be held Tuesday 15 June. An SOU representative is, and will remain part of this process, and as the need arises input from State Council will also be sought.

A three stage implementation is being considered:

**Stage 1:** (rollout approximately 6 months) a) implement regular medical assessments for all recruits; b) implement drug and alcohol policy and procedures; c) implement a Standing Order on 'Disclosure of Medical Conditions'.

**Stage 2:** (rollout approximately 12 months) implement regular medical assessments for all permanent, fulltime fire officers (i.e. all current, permanent uniformed staff, up to and including the Commissioner. This will also include permanent uniformed Rural Senior Officers).

**Stage 3:** (rollout approximately 18 months) implement regular, task-based fitness assessment for all permanent, fulltime fire officers. These will be developed and implemented after completion of stages one and two.

The precise nature of the physical assessment is yet to be determined. In recent discussions, the DCQFRS posed the question on whether the current Physical Abilities Assessment is the best model or whether another model facilitating examination by external sports physiologists may be more appropriate.

The medical assessment process will be based on the QFRS Medical Standards, which are currently being reviewed by the QFRS medical advisor, Recovre. The main issues for continued discussion appear to be privacy, the relevance of some of the medical standards and the question of who will be responsible for performing the medical assessments (i.e. independent or QFRS appointed practitioner).

The SOU presented the implementation team with a discussion paper of its own, outlining some of the concerns raised by SOU members following dissemination of the initial 'Fit for Work' document. It is proposed that the points raised in that paper will be addressed by the implementation team in due course.

In the mean time, the SOU will review the detail of implementation plan and report back to members in the near future. I ask that members continue to provide their views/concerns regarding this QFRS initiative to Inspector Damien Reid (via your regional councillor) so that he may continue to effectively coordinate SOU activity in this space.

### **Outcome of Demarcation Dispute with QPSU**

No Industrial Relations Commission notification has been received at this time regarding the outcome of the SOU/QPSU representation of Rural Seniors matter.

*And finally*, in the tradition of a quote being provided at the conclusion of a Newsletter - please consider this:

**“Any sufficiently advanced bureaucracy is indistinguishable from molasses”.**

Source unknown

Regards



Andrew Short AFSM  
**State Secretary**  
**Queensland Fire and Rescue -**  
**Senior Officers Union of Employees**