



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

P.O. Box 217
LUTWYCHE QLD 4030
www.qfr-sou.asn.au

NEWSLETTER

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In bringing 2010 to a close it is important and timely to brief members on a number of SOU matters.

Northern Region (NR) Director Regional Development (DRD) Matter

As members would be aware, the SOU challenged the QFRS on the appointment of an Administration Officer into the Superintendent designated DRD position in NR. As has been regularly communicated, the SOU, (in seeking to resolve this matter,) has been party to a number of compulsory conferences in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). Members are now advised that the SOU has been successful in this challenge, with the said DRD position soon to be made available for the meritorious appointment of a Superintendent level officer.

Draft QFRS Rural & Remote Allowance

The QFRS recently provided the SOU with a draft copy of an intended Rural and Remote Incentive policy. The policy objective is to improve the attractiveness of various remote and rural based positions, especially in light of the challenging financial and social aspects associated with working in these locations. This policy was provided to a number of SOU members in Rural and Remote locations for their review and feedback. The overwhelming feedback provided was that the draft policy, (in its current form,) would fail to meet the policy objectives as stated. In providing feedback to the QFRS, the SOU has highlighted a number of aspects where improvement could be made. SOU members will continue to be briefed as this matter progresses.

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SOU Meeting with the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services 24 November 2010

During a meeting with the Minister that took place on 24 November 2010, the SOU raised a number of matters of current importance to the SOU. The three key outstanding SOU issues raised were:

- Our concerns relating to the provision of a fair and effective Rural and Remote Incentive policy (as outlined above in this newsletter).
- The unresolved wage disparity between the ranks of Station Officer and Inspector. This issue (previously and formally acknowledged by the QFRS) remains a very important issue for the SOU, given its negative impact on individuals and indeed the organisation.
- The need for the Government to reconsider the non-provision of Superintendent level Zone Commander positions in 3 regions (FNR, NR and SWR); which now sees Inspectors in these locations reporting directly to a Chief Superintendent – a situation which is not ideal for a number of reasons. These 3 positions (although identified through the Senior Officers Review) were not supported in the initial DG approved implementation plan.

In summary - our delegation proceeded in a professional yet direct manner and the matters raised were duly acknowledged. We look forward to continuing discussions with the Minister during 2011.

Other Matters of Note

Unfortunately, there have been numerous occasions during 2010, where members of State Council or the State Executive have acted to support local members through difficult and challenging issues, including where members have sought assistance with medical review, grievance, ethical standard and/or disciplinary processes. Indeed, some of these matters have required representation in the QIRC.

Given the confidential nature of these matters it would be inappropriate for any detail to be provided in an open newsletter. I can however, confirm that the SOU has successfully represented and supported three separate issues recently which have resulted in an outcome that was better than might what have potentially resulted. The SOU will always seek to protect the organisational processes used in judging these matters, as it's these processes that are intended and technically designed to maintain natural justice.

SOU Administrative Processes

Members should be aware that through 2010 the SOU State Executive Committee continued to work closely with State Council members, where necessary for the purposes of identifying strategy, seeking feedback and endorsing SOU direction. Since the April 2010 State Conference, the State Council have convened by teleconference on four separate occasions to progress pertinent matters. All members are encouraged to liaise with their Branch Councillors (in the first instance) should they wish to be briefed on any SOU matter.

A standing offer also exists whereby a member of the State Executive will always be available should any branch wish to convene a branch meeting, whether for the purpose of raising

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branch issues, or simply to allow the branch membership to be briefed in detail on pertinent matters.

The SOU website (obviously) remains as the primary means for communication to members on a wide range of matters. The intention is to survey members (via the website) early in 2011 to ensure the SOU leadership remains cognisant of the key issues of concern to the membership.

In conclusion – on behalf of the SOU State Executive Committee, I extend my sincere thanks to all those many SOU members who have assisted us in progressing the interests of the SOU throughout 2010. We wish you all a safe and festive Xmas Season where time can be spent with those many friends and family who mean so much to us all. See you in 2011.

Yours in service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Short', written over a horizontal line.

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