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ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT UPDATE

A joint meeting of the UFU State Council and Shop Stewards was held on Wednesday 9 August 2017 to hear a report on the enterprise bargaining negotiations and to determine the way forward to achieve our objectives of a safer, more professional fire service.

On behalf of the government, the Office for the Public Sector only negotiates on a confidential basis, so the *detail* of negotiations to date is subject to an embargo until either an offer is made or negotiations break down.

The UFU has made our objections to such confidentiality provisions vigorously known to the government however we are still not currently able to share all the detail on the negotiations we would wish to.

Our original UFU log of claims was revisited however, and the firm commitment of the meeting to the priorities originally identified was reiterated and remains unwavering.

These include bargaining hard for the resources and enhanced training necessary to ensure the SAMFS is a safer and more professional place to work as a firefighter.

They also include regaining fair access to your leave, the provision of adequate sets of PPC to offer you proper levels of protection, addressing your health and welfare proactively, that country stations are resourced properly, fire ground welfare is addressed, and that senior firefighters and retained firefighters get a fair deal.

Once we know what the government is prepared to offer in relation to our priority issues/claims, we can then discuss the quantum of our pay increase.

The meeting heard that despite the months of negotiations and the positive approach of SAMFS management in response to our claims, the government has not yet put an offer on the table.

Following consideration of the report, there was a *unanimous* resolution carried expressing grave disappointment in the failure of the government to make an offer in response to our reasonable enterprise agreement claims designed to make the SAMFS a safer more professional place in which to work.

The meeting unanimously resolved to commence a campaign of action with the object of achieving a satisfactory resolution to our claims.

In the first instance, such action will involve a campaign of publicity with banners to be erected outside of all SAMFS property alerting the community to our claims and the justification for them. Appropriate campaign messages will be provided for appliances and smaller stickers will be available for members' personal use.

The materials have been printed and will be distributed to the membership over the coming week ready for the campaign to proceed in a *disciplined* manner on a *coordinated* date and time to be announced.

Members are requested to please keep all campaign material in a safe, secure and private place *until you receive the word* to put them on display. This will occur in each location on the same date and at the same time for maximum impact.

The meeting acknowledged the request from the SAMFS Chief Officer to temporarily defer the implementation of our campaign to provide him with some additional time to work for an offer from the government in satisfaction of our claims.

In consideration of this request, the meeting determined that the implementation of the campaign be deferred until close of business on **Monday, 21 August 2017**.

If no reasonable offer is made by this time the UFU Secretary is empowered to determine the date and time for the co-ordinated commencement of the public campaign and to advise the membership accordingly.

A handout with a few key points will also be available to members for if/when you are asked questions by the public for more information on what our campaign is about. This will also ensure consistency of our message.

If we do receive an offer from the government then it is likely that further negotiations may be required and a further joint meeting of the State Council and Shop Stewards called to consider our position.

Campaign action can be lifted and reinstated at any time and plans are also in place for the escalation of the campaign should that prove necessary.

While meaningful discussions with the government to progress and resolve our claims will always be our first option, no one should be in any doubt of our resolve to campaign *hard* to achieve the worthy objectives we seek.

Your UFU elected representatives, your Shop Stewards and State Councillors are congratulated on the unity, strength and resolve they display and we know all members stand shoulder to shoulder with them, ready for this struggle.

United we bargain, divided we beg.

Members will be kept informed of any progress.

Michael Vanderjeugd
UFU President

