



# WORD BACK

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No.12/2018  
22 June 2018

## A B C D Day Retained

### **Mid-Term Pay Increase Quantum Agreed**

As members are aware, significant work effort is being invested in driving the agenda of the Enterprise Agreement 2017 (EA), designed to modernise the Metropolitan Fire Service through consultation and cooperation.

I'm pleased to advise that due to this work, some negotiations on 18 June 2018 resulted in agreement in principle finally being reached, between the MFS and the UFU, for a 2% mid-term pay increase to apply from 1 July 2018.

Once the agreement is confirmed in writing, the UFU will prepare and lodge the application for the variation of the EA in the Employment Tribunal, as a priority.

It will regrettably take some time nevertheless, for the increase to appear in your pay packet.

Shared Services has advised that there is a lengthy period of approximately six to eight weeks from certification of the variation to the EA which is required for them to amend their system to commence paying the increase.

Your union will continue to vigorously pursue this matter and you will ultimately receive back pay from 1 July 2018.

### **Working Parties**

A short update on several of the working groups is below and others will follow in subsequent WordBacks to keep you informed; meantime, please don't hesitate to forward any queries to either the UFU representative on the working group or through the union office.

#### *Health and Wellness*

This working party is dealing with a range of issues including functional fitness, fire ground welfare, and health screening.

UFU Vice President Firefighters Michael Riggs is the UFU representative on the working party. Michael recently reported to the State Council that the functional fitness project has proven more complex than originally anticipated. In order to do justice to the issue and get best outcomes for firefighters, it has been agreed that a PhD student will be engaged to undertake a rigorous three year study.

#### *Comcen Surge Capacity*

Consultation through the Surge Capacity Working Group resulted in agreement on the provision of a capacity to meet requirements at peak times from within current staffing levels. Training of uniformed staff for surge capacity has commenced and the new arrangements will meet all requirements of the EA and the Award.

#### *Retained Firefighters – Rosters*

Retained Firefighter Shop Stewards will meet with MFS management in July to discuss the widespread concerns in relation to the issue of rosters. Possible dates for the meeting have been proposed by email to Shop Stewards for consideration and response to the union office ASAP. The meeting will provide an opportunity for other issues of concern to also be discussed.

## *Regional Enhancement*

The implementation of the second shift at Mount Gambier station is projected for August 2018 with the recruitment and training process now underway. The MFS and UFU are currently working on the appropriate terms and conditions of employment recognising that the new hours of work do not fall neatly within the parameters of current industrial instruments.

### **Senior Firefighter Qualified (SFFQ)**

Members currently undertaking training and assessment for SFFQ (also referred to as SFF level 2) were scheduled to complete assessment on shift on station, as agreed in enterprise agreement negotiations. However, MFS advised participants midway through the process that this would no longer be possible due to the logistics of assessing the unprecedented numbers involved and their 'goodwill' was sought to return to Angle Park Training Centre for the 1.5 hour assessment, in their own time.

Disappointingly there was no communication or consultation with the UFU about the change of direction. One wonders how the process was commenced without consideration being given to this.

The matter has been taken up with senior management with a view to looking at how logistics could be managed for the assessments to be conducted on shift, on station in the necessary time frame for the numbers involved.

The MFS has also been running a working group on SFFQ which will henceforth involve Rhys Lauritsen, Brad Robertson, Chris Barry, Michael Riggs, Jesse Virgo and Tim Maitland. Further updates to come.

### **Meeting with Shared Services**

A meeting was held with management of both the MFS and Shared Services on 21 June 2018 in relation to the ongoing concerns about members' pay issues. Underpayments and overpayments regrettably are still occurring however they are now being dealt with more expeditiously, with members affected able to access a real person at Shared Services to discuss concerns with. Actual calculations of any under and overpayments are also now being provided by Shared Services to members for you to review and check before the matter proceeds further.

Members are urged to check your payslips regularly. If you have concerns you are urged to address the matter as early as possible and to forward any documentation including email exchanges to the UFU [info@ufusa.com.au](mailto:info@ufusa.com.au)

### **Retention leave**

Please don't forget! As in last WordBack, the five-year expiration rule in relation to retention leave will take effect commencing on 1 July 2018. Please contact the union office on 83527211 *immediately* if you have not received advice but think you may be affected.

### **Wet Weather PPE**

As previously noted, the wet winter weather continues and so does our need for members to be issued wet weather gear. Some have even resorted in frustration to buying their own! State Council has called upon the MFS to address this poor state of affairs as a priority, While the Chief Officer has responded positively to the call we await an announcement that the Service will issue the necessary wet weather PPC this season. Meantime, the UFU has sought and received confirmation that firefighters in sodden turnout gear will not be deployed to a structural fire in line with the MFS' duty of care.



### **Meeting of Work Health and Safety Representatives (WHSRs)**

WHSRs will meet at 10:00 hours on Thursday, 28 June 2018. Members should raise any issues of concern which you wish to have addressed either with your local WHSR or by telephone to the UFU office on 8352 7211 or email [info@ufusa.com.au](mailto:info@ufusa.com.au).

At the last meeting on 14 June 2018, State Council endorsed SO Shaun Goad to take the lead for the SA Branch on health and safety, working with WHSRs and other State Councillors to progress issues of concern.

President Chas Thomas, Shaun Goad and I have been nominated by State Council to serve on the MFS WHS Committee which meets on the second Tuesday of every month at HQ.

Shaun completed the WHSR training several years ago and has been an active WHSR so I look forward to working collectively on a strong, progressive union agenda.

### **June is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month**

Members may be aware that bowel cancer is the 2<sup>nd</sup> deadliest cancer and is on the list of twelve cancers recognised as being injuries presumed to arise from employment as a firefighter in SA.

Sadly, we have farewelled too many of our comrades who've suffered and died of this terrible disease, at a higher rate and younger age than the general population.

Yet this shouldn't be the case since it is treatable and curable, especially when diagnosed at an early stage. Early diagnosis for Bowel Cancer and any other type of cancer saves lives.

It is anticipated that bowel cancer screening may eventually be made available to MFS firefighters within the MFS Health and Wellbeing project currently underway as a result of the enterprise agreement outcomes. However, in the meantime, all firefighters should be aware of the risk and consider relevant issues such as diet, lifestyle, bowel cancer screening as well as known symptoms. While risk increases from the age of 50, never think you are too young.

You can access some helpful information at [www.bowelcanceraustralia.org](http://www.bowelcanceraustralia.org)

In solidarity

**Max Adlam**  
**UFU Secretary**