



WORD BACK

No.18/2019

24 May 2019

A B C D Day Retained

BA VALVE OHS RISK

The UFU was made aware this week of a potential serious OHS risk with the valves on the BA tanks. This potential risk was identified with the BA tank valves earlier this year during a BA recruit training course when as a BA Instructor was removed from the exercise, his cylinder valve rolled on contact with the floor, causing the valve to turn off the air supply.

The instructor was alert to this, and after re-opening the valve and allowing the team to re-position, commenced the exercise again. Unfortunately, the same result ensued in that the valve again rolled against the floor and closed off the air supply.

A HIRMS report was appropriately lodged and SAMFS BA Technicians, in conjunction with the appropriate OHSR, have proposed a measure to minimise this risk. UFU Members in the BA Technicians team are commended for the excellent problem-solving initiative displayed and your dedication to keeping firefighters safe.

The UFU notes however that this measure is yet to be rolled out on to all BA tanks and of course the resourcing of the BA technician team is an on-going issue so this is likely to take some time. In the absence of a Safety Alert being issued by the MFS the UFU has written to the Chief Officer today advising our concern and seeking it be appropriately addressed.

Meantime, all members are asked to be aware of the potential problem (if indeed you are not already) and discuss it with your crew who may not all read this Word Back and keep looking after one another.

MID TERM PAY INCREASE

Members of the UFU State Council and Staff met yesterday with the MFS and officers of the Office for the Public Service to discuss the Mid Term Review of the Enterprise Agreement including the forthcoming interim pay increase due on 1 July 2019.

State Councillors present were Chas Thomas, Chris Barry, Matt Watherston, Gideon Douglas and Shaun Goad and me so don't hesitate to speak to any of us about our view of the meeting.

Issues discussed included the parlous state of resourcing of the MFS whether it be training, appliances, Engineering, BATA, or PPE. We addressed the many and varied areas which have or are being reviewed including CSRD Review, Commcen Surge Capacity, electronic rostering, Marine Capability, Retained Firefighter Consultation, and many more, thereby leading to an increase in the efficiency and productivity of the MFS.

It was an interesting meeting however no quantum has yet been agreed for the interim pay increase in the Terms of Offer range of 1 – 2% though you know what our position is. The next meeting is scheduled for 11 June 2019 and members will be kept informed of progress or otherwise.

SHOP STEWARDS' MEETING

A reminder that the UFU Shop Stewards representing full time firefighters will be meeting on Friday 31 May at the Union Office at 0930 hours largely to develop the EA Log of Claims so please ensure you speak to your Shop Steward about any issues you wish to have included or email us at info@ufusa.com.au

MV GALLANTRY

Additional staffing of the MV Gallantry was due to commence in the first week following the graduation of the Recruit Squad 54/2019 and the Union appreciates the efforts made by MFS Officers to informally cover the position while management finalise their concerns.

PFAS UPDATE

ALL UFU members and your families are invited to a meeting at the UFU Office with Commander Mick Tisbury of the MFB, the pre-eminent expert on PFAS in the firefighting community. The MFS acknowledged this in inviting Commander Tisbury to Adelaide to advise on management of PFAS issues here.

Mick has just returned from Stockholm where he presented a paper on PFAS as a member of an expert panel to the International PFAS Convention. The paper is attached to the email and I encourage all members to have a look at it (Page 49 on is particularly relevant to our current circumstances). It is also available on our website www.ufusa.com.au

The meeting will commence at 1400 hours and afternoon tea will be served. Please RSVP to info@ufusa.com.au for catering purposes. The UFU office is located at 148 South Road. Please enter from the Carlton Parade entrance.

Members are also advised that the UFU, having had discussions with members at Largs, wrote two weeks ago to the MFS with a proposal for a new temporary station on the Le Fevre Peninsula to give stability and more convenience to the crews located there and enhance community safety and we await the MFS' response. A meeting about the future of Largs North Station had to be unfortunately cancelled by the MFS last week and as yet, has not been rescheduled. The UFU looks forward to progressing the matter with MFS management.

The Union now has a dedicated PFAS page on our website to access information which can be accessed at <https://www.ufusa.com.au/>

PFAS REMINDER:

Just a reminder that we continue to urge *all* UFU members *and retired members* to participate in the PFAS Testing Programme. You can get the referral documents for the PFAS blood test from the MFS through Clara Cipriani 0436 406 905 or by email Clara.Cipriani@sa.gov.au or Steve Pavlich on 0419 806 295 or by email steve.pavlich@sa.gov.au

Members in country areas are advised that you are able to have blood taken for testing at a number of regional locations, rather than have to come to Adelaide – please email steve.pavlich@sa.gov.au to make the necessary arrangements and obtain the written referral.

Once you have your test results it would be appreciated if you would complete the UFU survey (see the foreword to this email) so that we can continue to look for any other clusters of high results and take appropriate action. All information will be kept confidential.

RAIN AGAIN AND STILL NO WET WEATHER GEAR...BUT THERE'S PROGRESS?

Rain is again forecast in coming days and once again MFS firefighters in SA will be expected to turn out in pouring rain without the protective wet weather gear we were promised in 2018...and which is provided to all other emergency services alongside whom we work.

But some promising progress has been made and we are told there are likely to be some trial jackets coming out SOON.

For the cynics out there, yes we are waiting to see them too but I do know our UFU State Councillor Tim Maitland is hot on the trail and has put much of his own time in to chasing up possible items and developing the 'business case' to ensure this matter is resolved. Thanks HEAPS Tim.

Please do let us know if you'd like to help trial the items as it's your needs which must be met.

UFU Members are reminded that it is *hazardous* for firefighters to respond to a fire call in wet PPE so please remember the drill and do what you need to keep yourself and your crew safe if you find yourself in this situation.

Members are again urged to *please* take the time to write and lodge reports, in particular HIRMS reports, and to keep a copy of any report lodged and to let your Shop Steward, State Councillor or the UFU Office at info@ufusa.com.au or 83527211 know of any issues.



RETAINED STATION TRAINING NIGHT START TIMES

Retained Firefighter Stations report they are still experiencing difficulties in relation to the start time of their Training Nights. The UFU clarified with the MFS Chief Officer on 1 May 2019 that changes to start times at stations will only occur with the agreement of the *majority* of employees at that station.

CO Mr Morgan rightly stated that otherwise “it’s not consultation”.

BUT it’s still not fixed. At one station despite a meeting voting overwhelmingly to maintain the 1830 start time, a unilateral change was made which results in members with day jobs having to work later into the weeknight. Regrettably, the UFU has subsequently had to take the ongoing concern right up to ACFO level with a remarkably uncivil response (Public Service Code of Ethics?) and *still* no resolution.

It’s not a great start and sadly, it seems that this is not the only issue coming out of that particular station which is not being addressed appropriately. It seems obvious to us that it is far more productive to work together than try to hide behind a fallacy. The Union will doggedly continue to pursue an appropriate outcome as **Firefighters deserve and must be afforded respect, regardless of whether they are full time or Retained.**

FIREFIGHTERS’ BALL

As previously reported, this will most likely be the very last Ball to be held. The UFU looks forward to seeing you tomorrow at the Adelaide Convention Centre. A celebration of good people doing good things!



In solidarity

Max Adlam

UFU Secretary