



# WORD BACK

No.26/2020

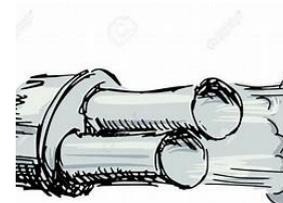
8 July 2020

A  B  C  D  Day  Retained

## DIESEL EMISSIONS AND WHY YOU SHOULD BE CONCERNED.

Before the commencement of the current EA negotiations, our Union surveyed all members and asked you to rank areas of concern to you in your employment with the SAMFS.

One area of concern clearly identified is the impact of diesel exhaust emissions on your health and safety and the testing of this contaminant in the MFS.



Overwhelmingly members told us that this is of great concern to you and that you believe more work is required in this area. As a result, our Union has taken a deeper dive into the most current science on exposure to diesel emissions and the SAMFS's approach to mitigating your exposure.

Over future Word Backs we will be exploring this topic further but to begin with we wanted to highlight why our Union believes this is an area of concern which places your short and long term health at serious risk.

- In 2012 the World Health Organisation reclassified diesel exhaust to a Group 1 Carcinogen (*Will* cause cancer in humans)
- Specifically, diesel exhaust emissions have been linked to lung cancer and bladder cancer (Please note that lung cancer is not currently covered in our presumptive cancer legislation).
- Diesel exhaust emissions are also linked to lung and heart disease and parental exposure prior to childbirth shows increased risk of childhood brain tumours (Cancer Council, March 2017)
- What's in diesel emissions? Diesel Particulate Matter (DPM), Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs), Benzene, Carbon Monoxide and Hydrogen Cyanide (The toxic twins), Sulphur dioxide, Hydrocarbons and many more chemicals.
- There is no national occupational standard for exposure to diesel emissions. However, there is a guideline for exposure to DPM which we adopted from the US (Please note they abandoned that guideline after the WHO classified it as a Group 1 carcinogen).
- Every year in Australia 130 deaths are attributed to exposure to Diesel exhaust (Cancer Council Australia).
- Diesel exhaust exposure is the second most common cause of workplace cancer behind UV (Cancer Council Australia).

We believe that the above facts and more, identify serious risks to your health. In future Word Backs this topic will be explored further including the identification of ways to reduce your exposure to this carcinogen.

Meantime, your Work Health and Safety Representatives have received a copy of the report commissioned by the UFUSA in relation to diesel particulate matter (DPM) in the MFS. WHSRs are encouraged to share and discuss the report with members.

That report has also been provided to the MFS and a special out of session meeting of the SAMFS WHS Committee has been sought by our union to focus on this issue and to discuss how we can work together with your employer to eliminate or reduce the risks identified.

The next meeting of WHSRs is scheduled for Thursday, 30 July 2020 at the union office, where an updated report will be provided.

### **Sick Leave Anomalies**

Since our update on the MFS “Sick Leave Project” in Wordback 21/2020 (see [here](#)) we have received numerous queries from members who have contacted Workforce Rostering and requested, but not been provided, further information about alleged anomalies in their sick leave balances that they have been notified of.

Despite the lack of information, members have received correspondence from the MFS Chief Officer requesting that they “*advise other accrued leave entitlements or request the absence be converted to sick leave without pay*” and that if they do not respond within 14 calendar days “*the sick leave will be adjusted to unpaid sick leave*”.

We advise members that the MFS does not have an automatic right to recover/convert leave, even if it is extended by the MFS in error, and that members are entitled to request a copy of all calculations and supporting documentation to substantiate any alleged anomalies so that members can check them and respond accordingly.

We have written to the Chief Officer notifying him of our concerns about the lack of information provided to members about alleged anomalies and requested explanation of the industrial/statutory basis, if any, upon which the MFS proposes to deal with them.

Because we are now in dispute, we have requested that the Chief Officer “*cease all recoveries/conversions of leave for all members with alleged anomalies arising out of the Workforce Rostering Team’s ‘sick leave project’*”. The effect of this is that the MFS is not permitted to take any further action in respect of these alleged anomalies until the dispute is resolved.

If the MFS does take further action in respect of any alleged anomaly in sick leave balances arising out of the “sick leave project” that you have been or might be notified of, we urge you to contact Séamus Krumrey-Quinn at [projectofficer@ufusa.com.au](mailto:projectofficer@ufusa.com.au) or at the office on 8352 7211.

I can’t stress enough our previous advice that you always check and double-check your pay slips to ensure that the information provided by your employer is correct, and to compare your pay slip to any other records you keep.

Our experience over and over with the MFS and Shared Services is that you are best placed to resolve any issues arising, if you have practiced good record keeping.

Members will be kept updated in relation to this matter as further information becomes available.

### **KI Deployment payments**

Last week the UFUSA received confirmation in writing from the MFS of the matters discussed at our February meeting with MFS management (see mention in Wordback 9/2020 [here](#)) about issues to do with MFS' payments to both fulltime and retained members deployed to KI in January & February this year.

You will recall that prior to KI deployments the MFS assured members that they would be paid in accordance with the Agreement and/or Award.

Unfortunately this has not happened and the Chief Officer confirmed last week that the MFS has paid all members deployed to KI in accordance with the **inter**-state provisions of the Award, and that to pay in accordance with all provisions of the Award and Agreement would be administratively difficult.

Neither has the MFS paid members in accordance with the Chief's own letter to the UFUSA of 21 January which said that the MFS would pay those members "on call" at Kingscote and Parndana overtime for "the full 24 hour periods" (see Wordback 4/2020 [here](#)).

The MFS is conducting an audit of KI deployment payments and they propose to send this audit to Shared Services "*to enable them to calculate the correct amounts for payment or repayments*".

The UFUSA reiterates to members that employers have no *automatic* right to recover payments made by employers to workers, even if the payment is over and above what is required under the Award or Agreement.

We have notified the Chief Officer that we are in dispute in respect of this matter and reiterated the requirement that we be consulted in respect of the audit and that there be no implementation of the audit (including any payments or deductions) until the dispute is resolved.

In the interim, our previous advice is reiterated that all members keep your own records of your deployment including times and dates of travel and hours worked whilst on deployment, as well as the times you arrived at and returned to your home stations at the beginning and end of deployment.

We will keep you updated in relation to this matter as further information becomes available.

### **Duty Officer Critical Mission Store Duties at Adelaide Station**

In April the MFS issued Memorandum No 27/2020 which imposed new administrative duties in respect of the critical mission store amounting to hours of additional work on Duty Officers at Adelaide Station without consultation with members or the UFUSA.

After writing to the MFS in June, the Chief Officer has now advised the UFU that these new administrative duties will now not form part of the Duty Officer's functions. Instead

we are advised that a new process is now being proposed to address the issue, which will be led by ACFO Kilsby and A/ACFO Haatainen which the UFUSA will be consulted about.

Members will be kept updated in relation to this matter as further information becomes available.

The consultative provisions under our Award and Agreement require the employer to consult members and the UFUSA in respect of a “workplace change”, which includes changes to duties, which “will affect a significant number of employees”.

If there are any workplace changes afoot that you are uncertain about, please don't hesitate to contact the Union on 8352 7211.

### **Broadspectrum Sale**

On 1 July 2020, our union was notified by Broadspectrum of the sale of the company to Ventia, and we understand that from 31 August 2020, the company will be rebadged as Ventia.

Whilst we have had oral reassurances from Broadspectrum management that there will be “*no impact for staff on the ground*” and that “*service delivery will not be affected*” the UFUSA together with other impacted branches, has sought written confirmation of this from the company.

### **Broadspectrum Pandemic Leave**

It has been reported by UFU members in SA and interstate that Broadspectrum is requiring employees who have Covid-19 symptoms and are required to self-isolate, to use their personal leave for this purpose.

The UFUSA has sought that Broadspectrum make available up to 2 weeks paid special leave or “pandemic” leave, (similar to what already exists for our MFS members) for all employees impacted by Covid-19 and who have been and are required to self-isolate or are unable to work.

### **Work Health and Safety Reps at Edinburgh**

Finally, congratulations to Daryl Stichel and James Hughes who are the new Work Health and Safety Representatives for members employed at Edinburgh RAAF Base. We look forward to supporting and working with you to help ensure health and safety at Edinburgh Base is a number one priority.

We will keep you updated in relation to the above matters as further information becomes available.

**In solidarity**

**Max Adlam**

**Secretary**