



# WORD BACK

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## RECRUIT SQUAD 57/2020 GRADUATION

Warmest congratulations to all the fabulous members of Recruit Squad 57/2020 who graduate tomorrow.

It was fantastic to finally meet you last week and to welcome you to our union, and to recognise the terrific efforts of all our members in the hard-working Learning and Development Department.

We're sorry that we can't all be with you at the ceremony in person tomorrow due to COVID precautions, to celebrate your amazing achievements but UFUSA members will certainly be with you in spirit.



## UPDATE - UFUSA RESOURCING CAMPAIGN



Thank you to all members who have been so enthusiastic in displaying the campaign materials designed to get the attention of the employer. The Marshall government keeps saying in the media that they will talk to us about resourcing, but they don't. Nor do they explain the \$67 million they say they have spent on the MFS since taking government.

Yesterday, MFS management wrote to us demanding that the campaign materials, the banners and signs be removed within 24 hours. This is *despite* management knowing this is a critical campaign and being all too ready to get their hands on additional resources to plug the holes.

We have advised MFS management that proper consideration of and professional planning for the effective resourcing of the MFS is both urgent and essential. The Marshall government continues to put the lives of firefighters at risk and UFUSA members consider the signage is more than reasonable on this matter of great importance. The employer has also been reminded of outstanding correspondence where our union continues to seek discussions on this critical issue. Urgent matter but no response to date.



## **DIESEL PARTICULATE MATTER UPDATE**

While it's pleasing to see that MFS management has finally released a Safety Alert "Diesel Exhaust in Engine Bays" (08/20) (see the Members Only Website), acknowledging this health threat to members, disappointingly there is still a long way to go.

A work in progress for three months, despite it not being the actual version our Union signed off on, the Safety Alert does state the obvious that "Exposure of firefighters to diesel exhaust and/or particulate matter is a health risk as diesel particulate matter is classified as a Group 1 Carcinogen."

This acknowledgement *should* now lead to swift and decisive action by the employer to take proactive steps to reduce your exposure to the carcinogen.

To assist, the UFU has prepared a list of Short, Medium and Long-term Goals which we have asked management to implement to ensure that the risk to firefighters is reduced to 'as low as reasonably practicable' (*As stated by Safe Work SA and advised by the Australia Institute of Occupational Hygienists*).

Unfortunately, the MFS Executive management group has decided (without consulting the UFU or even the SAMFS WHS Committee) to commit to completing only *some* of the short-term goals which, in nature are largely administrative solutions.

In correspondence, the Chief states that *'the level of risk is unknown as there is no agreed accepted safe level'*. Given that the World Health Organisation has classed Diesel Particulate Matter as a Group 1 Carcinogen, meaning it will cause cancer, we ask *what can be an accepted level to MFS employees?*

The Chief goes on to say that *"regardless of this, the MFS is committed to working through preventative actions to provide a safe workplace for employees"*. He further states that *'Where our budget allows the short-term goals listed which are deemed necessary and appropriate, will be completed within 12 months; however, larger projects (additional areas for PPE etc) will be planned over a longer period'*.

According to SafeWork SA, the hierarchy of controls should be implemented so our Union is advocating for the utilisation of substitution and engineering control measures as ways to reduce your exposure.

With the acknowledgement of this exposure potentially leading to cancer and subsequently death, and the Chief stating that the MFS is committed to working through preventative actions to provide a safe workplace, we expect to see, and will demand stronger consistent action, a firm commitment to implementation of actions to address the short medium and long-term goals and a timeframe in which these will occur. ***And the defence of “we can’t afford it” being declared null and void.***

**In solidarity**

**Max Adlam**

**Secretary**