



WORD BACK

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12 January 2021

A B C D Day Retained

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2021

The New Year has now well and truly kicked off and on behalf of us all at the UFUSA, I extend our very best wishes to all our members and families for a happy, safe and healthy 2021.

We look forward to continuing to work collectively to ensure the voice of professional firefighters is heard, and your collective concerns are addressed in order that you can safely continue to do the important job of protecting our community.



CAMPAIGN UPDATE - EMPLOYER STARTS THE NEW YEAR WITH SAME OLD BAD ATTITUDE



While the calendar has clicked over into the new year, disappointingly at the MFS, management attitudes and practices appear to remain circa 1950.

So I guess it's not surprising that 2021 has seen the continuation of the same old inadequate employer attitude to firefighters and our legitimate professional concerns.

For example, rather than engaging in meaningful dialogue about the inadequate resourcing of the fire service and how to address the problems raised, MFS management has now openly joined the government in trying to silence the voice of firefighters with a clumsy gag, stopgap measures, smoke and mirrors. And unspecified legal threats.

Having failed in trying to coerce and bully members into removing our campaign signage from our workplaces, an external contractor was brought in yesterday to do the employer's dirty work in removing many of our resourcing campaign signs. This despite the fact MFS management well know and privately agree, that the MFS is *significantly* underfunded, and even more shamefully, they know only too well the negative impact of this on firefighters who are just trying to do the job.

It is fantastic to see members responding so passionately, clearly seeing through the smoke and mirrors and rather than being downcast by the intended slap in the face, not just rising to the occasion but vowing to continue and escalate the campaign. There is great strength in our solidarity.

A heartfelt thank you especially to all who provided photos, videos and information about yesterday's events in such a timely way and who have offered your assistance in ongoing activities. It is very much appreciated.

Your UFU State Council will meet at 19:00 hours tonight to consider and determine the escalation of the campaign from 15 January 2021 as previously advised. Fasten your seat belts - well, those of you with operational seat belts in your appliance anyway... It's going to be a long and bumpy ride.

Members will of course be kept informed of proposed actions through Wordback however as we are advised that senior management are providing Wordback directly to the industrial arm of government in the Department of Treasury and Finance, confidential and time sensitive campaign information will now be distributed through our Shop Steward network. So if your Station does not currently have a Shop Steward, we urge you to *urgently* discuss this and nominate a representative NOW.



SENIOR FIREFIGHTER LEVEL 2 QUALIFIED

A response was provided by MFS management on Friday 8 January 2021 in relation to the dispute initiated by the UFU in relation to MFS threats of disciplinary action against those involved in the SFQ Level 2 upskilling process. We are now advised that management has sought and is awaiting advice from the industrial relations arm (IRAP) of Department of Treasury and Finance.

In the meantime, previous advice to those involved is reiterated, that we strongly encourage members to take every opportunity to upskill however if you confront obstacles to participation in the current SFQ assessment process, we urge you to communicate that in writing to your employer ASAP. Our union has sought that the employer advise of alternative arrangements to be made available to those in this situation.

The terms of the dispute invokes the requirement in the meantime for the status quo to continue, precluding the employer from initiating *disciplinary* action against any unsuccessful participant.

This is an important principle which if it proceeded unchallenged, would impact negatively on future training and development, and, while it may not affect you now, it certainly could in the future.

UFUSA Office Closure

The UFU office was closed over the Christmas period from COB 23 December 2020 and re-opened 0830 4 January 2021. During this time, a number of messages were left on the answering machine which were not able to be retrieved due to technical difficulties on the line.

If you did call the office over the closure period and have not yet received a response, please call us on 8352 7211 or email the office at info@ufusa.com.au so that we can attend to your query as soon as possible.

In solidarity

Max Adlam

Secretary