

YOUR UFU MEMBERSHIP FEES YOUR INFORMED CHOICE

1. Legally, there are 2 “United Firefighters Unions”:
 - a. the “United Firefighters Union of South Australia Inc” (“the SA Union”); and
 - b. the “United Firefighters Union of Australia” (“the Federal Union”).
2. The difference between the two Unions can be confusing, for example, because in South Australia, the same officials have been officials for both Unions.
3. The SA Union works under SA legislation that governs SAMFS members’ working conditions; the SAMFS Award & Enterprise Agreement. The SA Union represents you in enterprise bargaining. The SA Union represents its members (the “SA members”) in disputes with SAMFS.
4. The Federal Union works under federal legislation. The Federal legislation does not apply to the SAMFS enterprise agreement or award. Industrial/employment disputes with SAMFS are not dealt with under federal legislation. The Federal Union does not represent members employed by SAMFS in enterprise bargaining or in employment disputes.
5. When SA members are also members of the Federal Union, part of their membership fees are effectively given to the Federal Union. In the 5 financial years, between July 2015 and June 2020 SA members paid \$376,705.18 to the Federal Union in addition to the ACTU affiliation fees paid per member.
6. Money drawn from the membership fees of SA members given to the Federal Union is used to pay for officials based in Melbourne (the Federal Union’s National Office) and other things the Federal Union decides to spend money on. SA members have no “veto” on what the money given to the Federal Union is spent on.
7. SA members will obviously get better value for money if it wasn’t necessary to give some of their membership fees to the Federal Union for things that members do not need.
8. Firefighters Unions in other states have decided that automatically sending money to the Federal Union is not in members’ interests. Firefighters Unions in New South Wales and Queensland have stopped automatically sending money to the Federal Union.
9. Until recently, the SA Union’s rules required SA Union members to also be Federal Union members.
10. The SA Union AGM in 2019 approved rule changes so each SA Union member can choose whether they want to be a member of the Federal Union (or not). The SA Employment Tribunal has now formally approved that rule change.
11. It is important that SA members be fully informed of this new choice. State Council (the SA Union’s governing committee) supports member choice. Members should be free to decide if they want some of their membership fees given to the Federal Union, or whether their membership fees should stay in SA to be used as SA members decide. Members should be free to decide if they want to be members of the Federal Union. The rule changes passed at the 2019 SA Union AGM make it clear that SA members giving membership to the Federal Union and being members of the Federal Union should not be compulsory.

- 12. State Council believes that if specific Federal Union projects are in SA members' interests, they should be supported.
- 13. If you choose to only be a member of the State Union, the SA Union will have more flexibility to decide how to get the best "bang for your buck".
- 14. State Council members were elected to positions in the SA Branch of the Federal Union and on National Committees. At the moment, State Council members generally intend to remain members of the Federal Union at least until their terms in the positions they were elected to expire (2021). State Council is keen to avoid unnecessary disruption.
- 15. If you want to be a member of the Federal Union, that is your choice. If that is what you choose, part of your membership fees, currently a little over \$22.50 per quarter per full-time member is given to the Federal Union. For one member, that might not seem like a lot. In considering the total membership, it is significant at \$26,658.88 per quarter.
- 16. You can choose to be a member of the SA Union and not a member of the Federal Union. That choice means more of your membership fees will be kept in SA to directly benefit SA members.

A simple way of doing that is filling out the form, taking a clear photograph, and emailing it to info@ufusa.com.au, giving it to a member of State Council or dropping it into the office.

- 17. If you would like more information (or if you wish to join the Federal Union) please contact us on (08) 83527211.

To the Branch Secretary, United Firefighters Union of Australia, South Australian Branch and the Branch Secretary of United Firefighters Union of South Australia Inc:

- A. I hereby resign my membership of the United Firefighters Union of Australia, the Federal Union.
- B. If I am already a member of the United Firefighters Union of South Australia Inc, I am not resigning from that SA Union.
- C. If I am not already a member of the United Firefighters Union of South Australia Inc, I am applying to become admitted as a member of that SA Union.

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[please print full name]

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[signature]

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[date]