



BRIEFS



Battleground

Prime Minister Gillard has said IR will be a battleground during the election campaign. "Firefighters demand that all parties, their leaders and candidates commit to firefighter rosters and crewing that protect them and the communities they serve," says Peter Marshall.



Numbers

The ALP says it will tackle the opposition over its desire to reintroduce a version of WorkChoices. "However, firefighter conditions and entitlements, like to the 10/14 roster, are under challenge as the ALP ploughs ahead with award restructuring," says Peter.



National magazine

A new edition of *The Australian Firefighter* will be out in the next few days: Stories include One fire service, Buy local, Presumptive explained, Sir Mussa, Mannix and more. Don't miss it!

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Firefighter rosters and crewing standards that optimise safety are under challenge from the national award restructure
pic: warren frey /tas

Poll fever

A surprise turnover at the top and the stage is now set for a federal election that will again focus on the work place

With a national election on the doorstep, Julia Gillard's two year tussle with Unions over award restructuring and national OH&S laws is no closer to resolution. "The new Prime Minister in her role as IR minister has been driving the overhaul of Australia's Award system," says UFUA National Secretary, Peter Marshall. "We welcomed the replacement of John Howard's anti-worker *WorkChoices* with the ALP's Fair Work Act but the award overhaul, with its focus on workplace flexibility, presents a number of challenges for firefighters."

Union members know that, more often than

not, workplace flexibility means leeway for the employer and disadvantage for workers. Late last year, the IRC inserted clauses into the new national Firefighting Industry Award that allow for roster flexibility and part-time employment in the private sector.

"The UFUA's collective agreements and the no-disadvantage test protect current firefighter pay and roster arrangements," says Peter Marshall. "However, public sector awards and agreements are to be reviewed later this year; so now is the time for Members to campaign vigorously to protect their entitlements and safety at work."

HOW MUCH HARMONY?

Replacing state and territory based occupational health and safety laws with a national set of standards, is another Howard era program continued by the Rudd, now Gillard, Labor government. And after a draft set of laws was circulated, the Union movement began to wonder who would benefit most from this new approach to OHS.

"Unions are campaigning to ensure OHS laws are strengthened in every jurisdiction," says UFUA National President Mick Farrell. "We are concerned that in some states, Union prosecutions over OHS breaches will be removed, as will the reverse onus of proof for employers. OH&S regs should not be watered down anywhere."