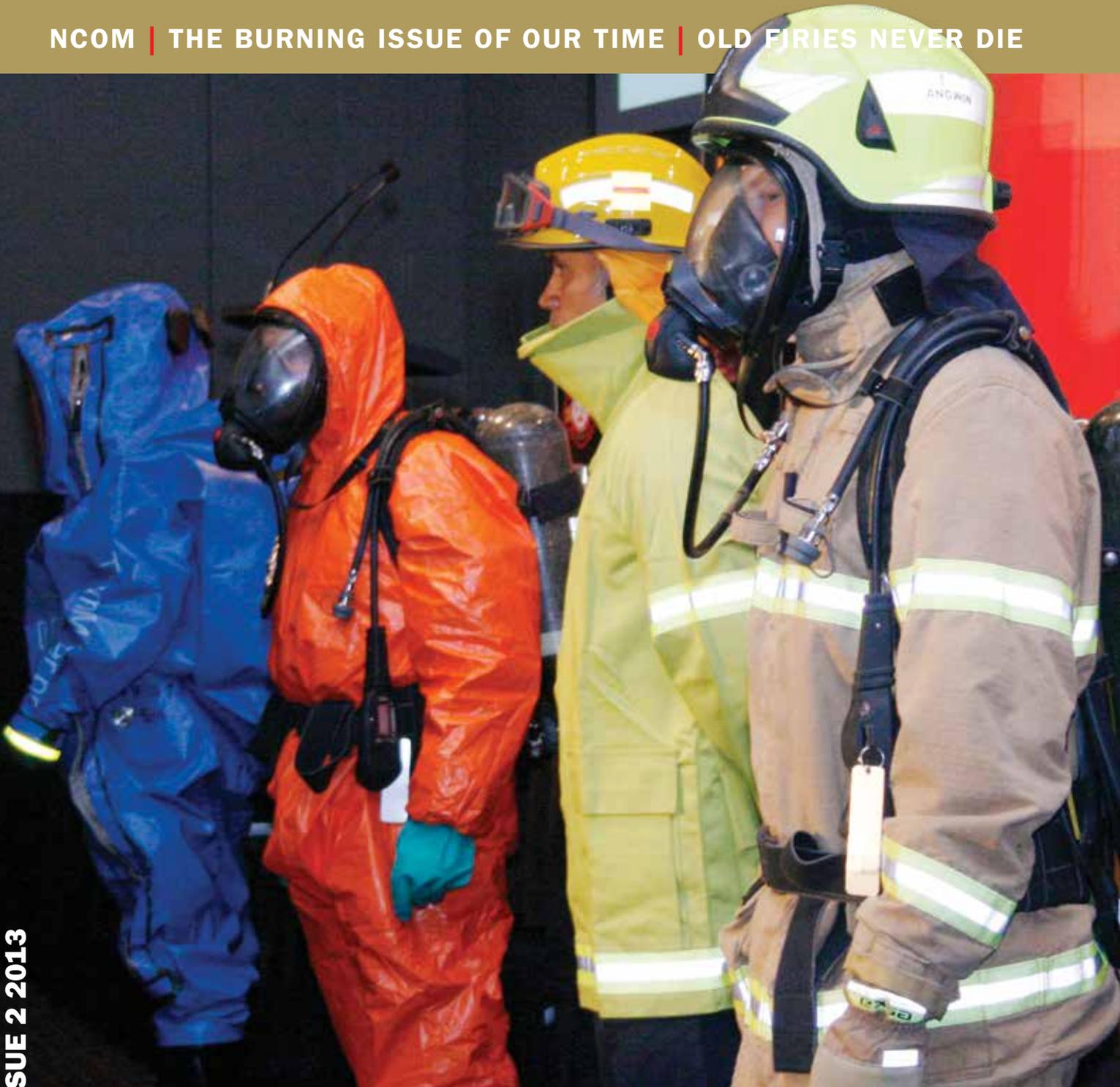


The Australian

# FIRE FIGHTER

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Global Conference on Occupational  
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We welcome your contributions to The Australian Firefighter Magazine. Make it a letter, story, column, feature or even just an idea. Send us your photographs too, but make them a minimum of 120mm x 80mm at 300dpi. We like travel and workplace stories, as well as personal profiles. Email all to editor@ufunat.asn.au

Authorised by P Marshall  
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**National President**  
Greg Northcott



**National Secretary**  
Peter Marshall

## From the National Secretary

**The dedication of a firefighter to serve the community cannot be over stated.**

The call to serve and protect the community outweighs the risks to personal health and safety. With courage and commitment, firefighters walk into flames to rescue and protect when all others are running in the opposite direction.

It is with great sadness and respect that we acknowledge that there are firefighters that have, and will, pay the ultimate sacrifice.

The recent deaths of four firefighters in the line of duty in Houston, Texas, are another sombre reminder of the dangers inherent in protecting the community.

The UFUA, as part of the global alliance, sends its condolences to our brothers and sisters in Houston and to the families and friends of the four that perished.

It is important that the sacrifice and service of those four Houston firefighters, as with all fallen firefighters, is not only recognised at this sad time but is recorded for future reflection.

The Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial in the shadow of Pike's Peak in Colorado honours the IAFF firefighters and emergency medical

personnel who have given their lives in the line of duty. A number of UFUA officials and members have had the honour of experiencing one of the moving ceremonies held annually at the Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial to commemorate the lives, heroism and accomplishments of these brave men and women who made the

**“The call to serve and protect the community outweighs the risks to personal health and safety. With courage and commitment, firefighters walk into flames to rescue and protect when all others are running in the opposite direction.”**

ultimate sacrifice. It is a place where families, comrades, friends and the public can pay their respects to these fallen protectors.

Similar memorials have been established in other jurisdictions including the bronze statue in London commemorating the lives of all firefighters in the United Kingdom, and the Firefighters Reserve in NZ which stands as silent tribute to firefighters worldwide who risk their lives in the pursuit of duty.

It is time for Australia to pay its respects through a National Firefighters Memorial.

The UFUA has been advocating for a national memorial to be built to commemorate Australia's fallen firefighters.

While commitment for such a memorial has not been confirmed, we have had positive and progressive discussions with the appropriate Federal Members of Parliament to establish such a national memorial in Canberra.

The National Police Memorial located in Kings Park, Canberra was dedicated on the National Police Remembrance Day on September 29, 2006, and was established to pay tribute to Australian police officers who have been killed on duty or have died as a result of their duties since the advent of policing in Australia.

As with the police memorial, a National Firefighter Memorial would be a focus point for ceremonies recognising perils faced in protecting the community and those that have fallen in the line of duty.

We will keep members informed of any development in this important project.

### Federal Election

On September 14 2013 we will once again go to the polls to determine the immediate political future of Australia. In doing so, we will be determining the reigning ideology of all federal matters that will impact on your work, your wages and conditions, as well as all key issues that affect our families such as education and health.

Politics can be polarising. We all come from different walks of life and backgrounds and as individuals have differing personal priorities.

But I am confident we are all united in understanding that the protection of key rights such as the right to bargain collectively and the right of union representation directly impacts on the ability to maintain reasonable wages and conditions and to provide safe workplaces.

Maintaining reasonable wages and conditions is pivotal to our ability to provide for our families and their future.

continued on page 5



National Secretary Peter Marshall.

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## From the National Secretary continued

continued from page 3

So we cannot shy away from the reality.

In a number of States we are bearing the brunt of a right-wing ideology that holds little regard or respect for our role in protecting the community.

In NSW they have taken fire stations off line to leave sections of the community without cover, in the name of reducing overtime bills. The NSW union is the only obstacle to the Government from this continuing trend of lowering community protection.

In Queensland our brothers and sisters are facing the biggest challenges of their history with the backdrop of budget cuts, massive state sector redundancies and legislative reform designed to obliterate any fair bargaining regime. Again – in the name of overtime – the fire service is pushing for the right to use casuals to relieve

**“Be under no illusion: minimum crew sizes, safety standards, trucks and stations, hours of work and rosters are all part of your conditions of employment that have been hard won over the years.”**

career firefighters with no regard for the ability to protect the community or for the safety of firefighters.

In Victoria the demonising of firefighters has begun with a media campaign claiming firefighters misuse and over-use personal leave while ignoring

the recent Newcastle University report which demonstrates a high incidence of post traumatic stress syndrome in firefighters as a direct result of their duties.

In Western Australia and Victoria fire services are attempting to employ untrained, non-qualified personnel into senior firefighter management roles. The risk to firefighter safety and lives does not outweigh the Government's desire to undermine the profession of firefighting.

Budget cuts in various States are affecting front-line operations – fire stations are crumbling into disrepair, fire trucks are not being replaced, fire services are attempting to avoid recalling relief firefighters and undermining minimum crew and professional standards if they can get away with it.

Be under no illusion: minimum crew sizes, safety standards, trucks and stations, hours of work and rosters are all part of your conditions of employment that have been hard won over the years.

Your right to be consulted in matters that directly affect your employment was fought for.

We must stand strong and protect those wages and conditions our union has achieved over the years. We are all custodians and as such it is our obligation to protect those conditions and rights for future generations.

Be under no illusion that a conservative government will, if elected:

- impact on your union's ability to advocate on your behalf
- result in an attempt to undermine your working conditions
- attack the right to representation
- attack the independence of unions
- orchestrate a public relations campaign against union credibility e.g. invoke a royal commission

It is clear that if there is a change of federal government the theory and energy for industrial reform on the scale of the abhorrent Work Choices will be very much a part of the agenda.

Whether you are in a State or federal industrial relations jurisdiction, when you go to the polls in September look past the rhetoric and posturing and honestly reflect on the choice that will protect your work rights.

PETER MARSHALL ■

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## From the National President

**Welcome to the Winter Edition 2013 of the *Australian Firefighter magazine*.** We have seen an eventful and Union-building few months since our last magazine, with the highlight being the Global Forum on Occupational Cancer in Firefighters held in Melbourne in March.

This Global Forum was hosted by the UFU and jointly sponsored by the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg and the Edmonton Firefighters Union. With our Global colleagues from Canada, Norway, New Zealand and the United States present, attendees were privy to two days of world leading analysis and research on this critical issues. World renowned epidemiologist Professor T. Lee Guidotti, the researcher behind the world's leading firefighter occupational cancer studies, was the keynote speaker for the event. Professor Guidotti was warmly received by the Forum, and he provided rare and valuable insight into his decades of research into the links between professional firefighting and cancer. Professor Guidotti's research, coupled with the testimony of the President of the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg Alex Forrest and Chief Fire Officer for the City of Edmonton Ken Block, was pivotal in persuading the Commonwealth Parliament into enacting Firefighter Presumptive Cancer laws. We were also fortunate to have Alex Forrest and Chief Officer Block address the Global Forum.

We have also seen the Queensland campaign against public sector cuts escalate, with the Queensland Branch of the Union front and centre of this important work. A coalition has been formed with the ambulance officers' union United Voice Union and the UFU to mount the 'Standing with Us' campaign. Our Queensland colleagues are facing a raft of savage austerity measures from the Liberal National Newman Government, including the rolling-back of recruitment, cuts to back room staff, necessitating the use of operational members in administrative roles, as well as attempts to force casualisation and the removal of consultation through enterprise bargaining. Make no mistake – the enforcing of austerity measures by Governments simply punish workers and the community for the failings of Government. The UFU will continue to stand with Queensland through their fight against Campbell Newman and his campaign of cuts.

This may well be the final *Australian Firefighter* before Australians go the polls on September 14 this year to decide on their Federal Government. Members will be faced with a clear and distinct choice between Labor and the Liberal National Coalition. Labor has certainly had faults, and made some critical if not fatal errors of judgment in its two terms in government. The handling of the mining tax and media reform have seen Labor strategy left wanting, and its internal quarrelling has been unbecoming of the party that was founded and exists to further and protect the interest of workers and the community.

As members of the UFU we all discuss what our fire services, what our Union, and what our Government have done for us and our interests. In a minority Government the Federal Labor Government has been reformist with an ambitious and important legislative agenda, against the back drop of Tony Abbot and the Liberal National Opposition who have spent the last three years throwing a tantrum for not forming Government after the 2010 election.

The Labor Government, having been driven by Adam Bandt and the Australian Greens, secured passage of presumptive legislation through Parliament to recognise firefighters' occupational cancer. These laws have been the backbone for legislation at the time of print currently being considered by the Tasmanian and South

Australian Parliaments. The Government has made nation-building reforms in the areas of health, disability and education, in the form of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the Gonski Reforms. These initiatives will be remembered in decades to come with the magnitude in which Whitlam's Medicare and university education are. Labor has taken steps to slow and mitigate the effects of climate change. The UFU has made submissions to, and appeared before the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into climate change. As first responders, the effects and proliferation of severe weather events as a result of climate change acutely affect us.

Labor scrapped Howard's WorkChoices and implemented a paid parental leave scheme that brought Australia in line with the rest of the developed world. The first changes to superannuation in Australia since its introduction by Paul Keating in 1992 have begun, with the Superannuation Guarantee to be raised from 9% to 12% starting this July.

And perhaps the most critical achievement, and underpinning these noted reforms, but the most subtle of all to the public, is Australia's resilience through the Global Financial Crisis. Times are still tough, and the economy is far from booming, but in relation to the rest of the world Australia is the economic and financial lighthouse. Australia is amongst the world leading nations for low national debt, economic growth and average wage growth. Where our North American colleagues have seen wage freezes for numerous years, we continue to see real wage growth and additional increase to superannuation.

On the other side of the equation is Tony Abbot running with his best impersonation of 'Dr. No'. Tony Abbot knows exactly what he doesn't like and what reforms he will attempt to roll back, but provides no clear vision or economic accountability. The clearest vision Tony Abbot has articulated to date is to sack 12,000 public servants, his distaste for workers joining their union, and his intention to attack trade unions and their capacity to represent their members.

When the dust settles, Australia cannot be governed or led by rhetoric. There must be ideas and vision, and most importantly for UFU members, a clear plan to further and protect the interests of workers and the community in which we live and serve.

When voting on September 14, I urge you all to do so diligently and not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

**GREG NORTHCOTT ■**



**National President Greg Northcott.**

# Presumptive legislation update

**The UFUA campaign for presumptive legislation to recognise occupational cancer for firefighters is well underway in a number of states.**

Tasmania and South Australia have had Bills introduced in Parliament and the Western Australian Government has pledged its commitment to similar legislation.

In Victoria the Government is under pressure to support presumption legislation. A Victorian Parliament constitutional issue has resulted in the withdrawal of the Bill so the campaign stepped up with a media conference calling on the Government to provide for firefighters in their time of need.



Station Officer Tony Martin and UFU National Secretary Peter Marshall at a press conference at a Victorian Parliament calling on the Government to support presumptive legislation for occupational cancer. SO Martin has been diagnosed with cancer but his claim for work cover entitlements has been rejected. The 11 helmets before them represent the 11 claims by Victorian firefighters for occupational cancer that have been rejected in the past 12 months.



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## Firefighters injured in the line of duty

**On Tuesday, April 9, I received the phone call that your parents, partner, family or Union Secretary do not want to hear.** The Chief Officer rang to tell me that two of our members had been burnt at a house fire and were in a critical condition in the Royal Adelaide Hospital. Both Brad and Dave were fit well-trained firefighters from Woodville Station. The SAMFS Employee Support Coordinator had been put into overdrive and the next six hours saw a firefighter who is also a family friend taken off duty to assist Dave's partner. Brad's family were given all the support they required. Brad's father is also a firefighter and understands all too well the dangers of our work. The Union and the SAMFS agreed that there needed to be an investigation that would be a lessons-learned review with credibility and not

a blame game. It was agreed with the Deputy Chief Officer Mick Smith on the Tuesday night that the committee would consist of an Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Fire Cause Investigator (not involved in this fire), Training Commander, UFU National OH&S Coordinator and one independent.

Early the next morning at the RAH I found Brad recovering in the Burns Unit following an overnight operation, with burns to both arms and his neck. Dave however was in the Intensive Care Unit in a critical but stable condition with burns to 40% of his body.

Thankfully now, eight weeks later, Brad has returned to restricted duties in Headquarters, and hopefully in time will make a full recovery.

Dave has been released from hospital and for the past two weeks has been conducting his rehabilitation as a patient at the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Dave, Brad and their families to thank all the doctors, nurses and support

staff, who have assisted them on their road to recovery.

The Lessons Learned Review was completed and released on June 7 2013, and is available on the SAMFS website.

Most importantly it showed that this was an accident that can occur anytime without notice when we are performing our duties, in this case searching for missing persons with known disabilities.

Finally it needs to be acknowledged the command and control and initiative shown by all firefighters at this incident clearly saved the lives of two of our brothers.

## Mother's Day Classic

**The Union again sponsored the annual Mother's Day Classic, where some of our fitter firefighters ran, while our Secretary walked, to raise funds for Breast Cancer Awareness.**

On the evening before, crews were deployed to assist in packing the sample bags that were provided for all 10,000 competitors. At 5 am on the day they were again seen assisting in the set up.

This is the second year we have participated in the event and next year it is planned for even further involvement by our membership.

Thanks to all our members who took part in the run, walk or organisation of this important event.

**GREG NORTHCOTT  
SA BRANCH SECRETARY**

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## 2013 EBA Negotiations

### Introduction

**On June 30 this year the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) between the UFUA Tasmania branch and the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) expires.** In Tasmania the government continues to look to ways to bring the state budget out of deficit. One tactic has been to implement a state government wages policy which caps any pay rise to public sector employees at 2% with a .5% bonus for demonstrated productivity gains. In the context of firefighters this would essentially mean trading off conditions or entitlements to qualify for the .5%. Clearly this is not something the Tasmania branch would entertain.

Given that tens of thousands of State public sector employees have already reluctantly acceded to this policy, the Branch Committee of Management (BCOM) seeks to ensure that the upcoming EBA negotiations will achieve improved conditions in spite of the financial constraints imposed

by Government. For this to take place the BCOM identified early on that we would need to engage with our members in a way that would ensure that everyone had the opportunity to have input into formulating our claim. By undertaking this process the BCOM would be in a strong position to negotiate, as the claim will be put together with the input and endorsement of a majority of the membership.

### Preparing the claim

In October 2012 a round of general meetings was held to inform our members on the process we would be undertaking to formulate our 2013 EBA claim. It involved a number of strategies to consult with and seek feedback from our members on what items they believed should be included with our claim.

- Each union workplace representative (UWPR) was asked to canvas the people in their work areas for claim items.
- A union news email was sent to all members inviting them to email or phone the Union office with claim items.

- An electronic survey was sent to all members seeking their views on specific topics including sick leave and wage relativity. Members were also asked for any items they would like to see included in the claim.

This process generated a list of over 100 items. Many of the items fell into similar categories such as training, protective clothing or staffing. Others were issues that fell outside the scope of EBA negotiations but can be followed up through other channels.

In March 2013 the list of items was discussed at a Union EBA conference attended by UWPR and the BCOM.

The conference was tasked with sorting through and prioritising the claim items. It then put together a draft claim.

### Endorsing the claim

Once the draft claim was complete a round of general meetings was held in April to present the draft claim to members. At these meetings the draft was explained and there was an opportunity to ask questions.



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Each meeting was then requested to pass a motion endorsing the claim. These motions were unanimously passed all round the State. The members of the UFU negotiating team were also endorsed at these meetings.

### The claim

- Relativities and work value
- Superannuation
- Sick Leave Entitlements
- Staffing levels
- PPE/C and general uniform, dress uniform, shorts, jacket and beanie etc
- Accept Wages increases of Government wages policy
- Term of Agreement (1 year from 1 July 2013 – 31 June 2014)

It has been the past practice of the UFUA Tasmania branch to provide our claim well in advance of the expiry of the old. In the case of this EBA period the UFU has provided our claim three months before the EBA expires. At the time of writing one EBA meeting has taken place and the dates for future meetings have been agreed to.

### Negotiating and voting arrangements for the 2013 EBA

At the beginning of a new EBA period a negotiating team is selected by the BCOM. That recommendation is then put to the membership for endorsement. The negotiating team act on behalf of the membership to explain our claim and argue the UFU's case. In situations where a particular aspect of the claim affects only a specific work area, members in that area have the right to nominate representatives to attend negotiations alongside the UFU negotiating team.

The EBA negotiation team does not make the agreement. Only the members of the UFU can do that through a democratic vote. Nor does the EBA negotiating team make counter offers to the employer. The Union makes the claim, and the employer makes an offer.

After each meeting the negotiating team may provide a report to the membership on the nature and progress of the negotiations.

### Consideration of an offer

When the employer makes an offer, the EBA negotiating team must make a judgment about whether or not the offer should be put to members.

An offer might be a complete insult, in which case the EBA negotiating team may

release it to members to demonstrate how unreasonable the employer is being.

An offer might contain a serious proposal for a wage rise, but may contain some other provisions that members will not accept under any circumstances. In this case the EBA negotiating team might try to continue to negotiate.

An offer might contain a serious proposal for a wage rise but there may be other elements in it that some members will support and other will not. In this case, the EBA negotiating team would probably seek to have it put to a vote.

### Separate work areas

Once an offer is received and has been referred to the members by the EBA negotiating team, separate work area meetings must take place.

There are nine separate work areas identified in the UFUA Tasmania Branch policy on negotiating and voting.

Each of these work areas has a power of veto in respect to those matters that affect only them. That is, if a majority of members in a work area are dissatisfied with provisions in the offer that relate only to them, they have the right to veto the offer going to a vote of all members.

This right of veto does not extend to aspects of the offer that affect all members (e.g. the size of the overall wage rise).

In operations, for example, general meetings will be called and a vote will be taken on whether operational staff wish to exercise their right of veto.

If one or more work areas exercise their right of veto, then the EBA negotiating team must go back into negotiations with the employer to try to resolve the outstanding issues that affect that work area.

The purpose of this is to prevent the employer picking off particular work areas or playing one off against another.

Once a majority of members in all work areas have agreed to the offer being put to a vote of all members, the offer is referred to the BCOM.

### Branch Committee of Management (BCOM)

In considering the offer, the BCOM makes a recommendation as to whether or not the members should accept or reject the offer.

The BCOM does not have the power to tell people what to do. It makes a recommendation only. However, many members take considerable notice of the views of the BCOM. After all, BCOM members have been democratically elected by UFU members to represent them. Once the BCOM has made its recommendation, the Branch returning officer is then asked to conduct a ballot.

### Voting procedure

Voting for acceptance or rejection of an EBA offer is by way of a secret postal ballot of all members entitled to vote. Only members whose employment will be affected if the agreement is made are entitled to vote.

Correspondence forwarded to members includes a ballot paper, an explanation of the offer, and return envelopes to ensure that the ballot is confidential.

If the answer is yes, then the secretary makes an application to certify the agreement.

If the answer is no, then general meetings are called to consider what further course of action the members wish to take to secure an offer that is acceptable.

### Conclusion

The process used by the UFUA Tasmanian branch to formulate, negotiate and ultimately vote on the EBA is a long and detailed one. There some majors benefits to this though.

**Education:** This process gives the UFUA Tasmania branch a number of opportunities to inform our members about industrial matters that affect them.

**Engagement:** Our process provides a number of ways that UFU members can have input into their claim, be it by phone, email, electronic survey, face to face or group meeting. Every member has the right and is encouraged to speak up on matters that are important to them and our union as a whole.

**Consensus:** Consulting, educating and informing our members at every stage of this process means that the UFU negotiators and the TFS know that the claim we are making is supported widely, deeply and strongly by our members.

#### UFUA TASMANIA BRANCH

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# VIC BRANCH

## DMOs: keeping the wheels turning

**The urgent need for new appliances and modifications to existing equipment highlighted by the Black Saturday Royal Commission has demonstrated the value of having a highly skilled and experienced workforce within the CFA able to perform this vital work.**

Despite the limited additional staff made available to the CFA's mechanical maintenance workshops, the CFA's district mechanical officers have shown resourcefulness and ingenuity in adjusting to their increased workload. In the past year alone more than 100 new appliances have been commissioned by the CFA. DMO's have worked hard to seamlessly absorb this extra workload with limited resources.

DMO's have also been responsible for fitting the crew protection sprayer which

is used to spray water over a fire truck in the event it is overwhelmed by fire. DMO's have fitted the system- which is critical to firefighter safety- on time and on budget- despite the addition of just one permanent staff member.

District Mechanical Officers also perform a crucial role in CFA operations. DMOs are available to be called out to perform running repairs and salvage trucks. If a mechanical fault occurs on a fire truck in an at risk area, it's up to them to fix it. When weather changes and fire conditions ease, the work of DMOs can be just as difficult as trucks become bogged and salvage is required.

DMOs describe their role in maintaining community safety, and the safety of firefighters who depend on the appliances they repair, modify and maintain, as being their primary motivation when performing their difficult and important work.

The enterprise agreement covering

DMOs and Tower Overseers expired on 28 December 2012. Negotiations for a new agreement have been ongoing since last December. However, little meaningful progress could be made towards an agreement for much of this time due to the fact that the CFA did not table their log of claims until May 22 of this year.

The reason given by the CFA for this is that they were unable to get approval from government for their bargaining position. The Victorian government's workplace relations policies required the CFA to have approval for their bargaining position six months before the expiry of the current agreement – almost a year before they were able to table it. This seems to be yet another example of the Victorian government and agencies only applying workplace relations policies when it suits them.

**JEREMY MURPHY**  
**INDUSTRIAL OFFICER**

## Retired firies



Retired firies were out in force at their April 15 barbecue.



### UFU VIC BRANCH

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## EBA briefings

**Approximately 1500 Victorian UFU members attended morning and evening meetings on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May for an update on the current industrial climate and negotiations for new enterprise agreements.**

The morning meeting was also addressed by the Hon Bill Shorten, Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

Mr Shorten told firefighters they deserved thanks, not budget cuts, for the work they do.

“Victorians understand, more than most, how important our fire and rescue workers are to protecting our families, our homes and our livelihoods,” he said.

“Labor understands the sacrifices our fire and rescue workers and their families make every day, from rescuing kids from locked cars to saving lives and property.

“That’s why under Labor the rights and entitlements of our fire and rescue workers are protected.”



**Nearly two years after newly-commissioned Wayne Gregson was appointed to lead our now Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Union is preparing a “Report Card” on the top 20 issues that were raised with Wayne Gregson.** For those of you from outside WA, after the disastrous Kelmscott Roleystone Fires, the WA Government commissioned ex-Federal Police Commissioner Mick Keelty to prepare a report and one of the outcomes was the side lining of the then CEO, and the appointment of Wayne Gregson who went on to implement a restructure of the Authority as it evolved into a Government department.

One of the most disastrous legacies of the previous era was the closure of the purpose-built CBD Fire Station (which had the capacity for 10 bays) and the subsequent re-location of the Number One Station to Wellington Street in Perth. The Wellington Street Station has never had an official opening and the “ribbon cutters” from succession of State Governments responsible for this disastrous change, who would normally turn out for a camera and any morning tea going, have hidden themselves away in shame.

Wayne Gregson in his first week at the helm, made a strategic decision to stop fighting the Union over the myriad of OSH faults arising from the design and directed that the decontamination showers for the Station should be retro fitted. He went further and guaranteed that the decontamination showers would be a standard design feature of all new fire stations and would be retro fitted to

any existing fire stations that were being substantially renovated. This decision supports the Union’s ongoing campaign to ensure that we protect firefighters from the occupational toxins that they are exposed to in their workplaces doing a job that is now acknowledged as one that is characterised by a high rate of occupational cancer.

Having observed the expenditure of over \$13 million dollars of taxpayers’ money for a second rate CBD station, the Union has prioritised Fire Station Design. The Branch President, Frank Martinelli, oversees the Union’s response to Fire Station Design and has been working with concepts that have been incorporated in other fire stations in Australia and builds on the work done by Project Action Teams (including the firefighters most directly involved) formed for new stations in WA.

In an environment that is dominated by budget cuts and a civilian administrative outlook that can only be described as “constipated”, the Union has struggled to convince the bean counters to work towards a standard of excellence. Fire Station Design should include capacity for growth and for the potential modifications that impact on fire engines and equipment. As we succeed with our goals to ensure better services across WA communities, fire stations should be able to accommodate more personnel (without over crowding) and new equipment - including aerial appliances for the professional fire stations in our regional cities throughout WA. Never again does the Union want to see poor design and inadequate business cases dominate

the administrative outlook for our service - “near enough is not good enough” and WA taxpayers deserve the expansion of professional fire and rescue services to mirror the State’s growth in population and infrastructure.

Our retired members frequently remind us of the iconic fire stations designed in days gone by, their place in the heart of communities and of the operational strategic placement of fire stations for egress and response. In 2013 the Commissioner’s challenge will be to take on his administrative bureaucrats and make them accountable for their advice and products. The Union has fought for state of the art station design and we will not quietly stand by to watch new stations being built on sub standard blocks of land, selected without due recourse to traffic management, egress, turnouts and a lack of vision for the future.

Wayne Gregson will soon be presented with the Union’s Report Card and our members can rest assured that the top two matters being assessed will be: proper accountable administrative support for operations and a more rational, operational focus for the growth of our professional services - including but not limited to new fire stations.

#### UFUA WA BRANCH

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# Global Conference on Occupational Cancer and Firefighters

Occupational cancer and firefighting took centre stage in Melbourne in March with leading international scientists and researchers, firefighters, leaders of fire services and politicians gathering for a Global Conference on Occupational Cancer and other occupational health and safety issues.

**T**he United Firefighters Union, the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg and the Edmonton Fire Fighters Union co-hosted the two-day international event which was attended by more than 170 including firefighters from Australia, Canada, Finland, Norway, Denmark and New Zealand as well as Chief Fire Officers and management from various fire services as well as fire chiefs and fire service representatives from Canada and various Australian states.

The calibre of the presenters including internationally acclaimed epidemiologist Tee Guidotti, and firefighting experts from around the world, underscored the significance of the issue and was evidence

of the high regard firefighters and their unions hold within the global community.

As conference delegates settled, the lights dimmed and a video message from Prime Minister Julia Gillard streamed in cementing the significance of this forum to discuss a life and death issue. In doing so she welcomed the opportunity for the information sharing and discussion that was scheduled to take place and personally thanked firefighters for their service. "Thank you for your endeavours to protect the men and women who do so much to protect us," Prime Minister Gillard said.

Under the Labor Government's leadership Australia became the third nation to recognise occupational cancer for firefighters

when the Australian Parliament unanimously passed the federal "Fair Protection for Firefighters" Bill in 2011.

UFUA National Secretary and International Fire Fighter Unions Alliance (IFFUA) Chair Peter Marshall welcomed all attendees and presenters recognising in particular the international visitors and the relevance of the global alliance of firefighters.

The significance of this forum on the global stage was reinforced with a video message from International Trade Union Confederation General Secretary Sharan Burrow who spoke about the strength and

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Edmonton Fire Fighters Union President Greg Holubowich, UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall, UFUA National President Greg Northcott, United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg President Alex Forrest and former UFUA National President Mick Farrell.



Professor Malcolm Sim, Monash University.



Edmonton Fire Fighters Union President Greg Holubowich.



Epidemiologist Dr Tee Guidotti.



Brian Potter.



United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg President Alex Forrest.



United Fire Fighters Union of Winnipeg Secretary Rob Labossiere.

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unity of the firefighters unions and the achievements that have resulted.

A powerful presentation by MFB Commander Brian Whittaker set the scene using spotlights to point out the toxins and carcinogens that would combust into a toxic cocktail if the conference room itself was engulfed in flames. This left the audience in no doubt about the dangers of firefighting with every-day structures and homes.

The key note speaker was internationally acclaimed epidemiologist Dr Tee Guidotti whose research and findings laid the foundation for the breath of research and the accepted findings of the nexus between firefighting and

cancer. His work was among the international research accepted by the Canadian, US and more recently the Australian Governments in legislating for a presumption to enable firefighters to access their entitlements for these occupational illnesses.

“There really is no other occupation which forces people to work at the outer limits of what the human body can tolerate,” Dr Guidotti went on to recount many of the studies undertaken on firefighters health, the reviews of such studies and some of the discussion they’ve provoked.

He told the forum he’d started as a voice howling in the wilderness, then realised other researchers were doing the same thing. He

firmly believes that firefighters are at increased risk of a variety of cancers, and above all, he says governments must do what is right.

It was a theme echoed by the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg President and highly respected presumptive legislation campaigner Alex Forrest, who has spent the past 15 years travelling the world to educate communities and lobby politicians. As both a firefighter and a lawyer, Alex is a persuasive advocate. He came to Australia four times during the efforts to secure our Federal ‘Fair Protection for Firefighters’ Bill including appearing before the Senate committee twice.

“Australia is one of the most successful union lobby efforts I’ve seen anywhere in



Commander Brian Whittaker.



NZPFU Vice President Ian Wright.

## What is Presumptive Legislation?

It's a phrase that firefighters are hearing a bit about lately, but what does 'Presumptive Legislation' actually mean?

Lawyer Craig Sidebottom summed it up at the recent Global Forum. Craig took the audience through a painfully real scenario of a firefighter in his forties battling cancer. Currently, if he's under state legislation – as most firefighters are - he has an uphill battle for compensation. If he goes to court, he has to prove WHAT caused his cancer and WHEN it happened.

The UFUA is pushing for law changes in each State, to reverse the onus of proof. "Presumptive Legislation PRESUMES that an illness or injury is due to a particular type of employment," says Craig Sidebottom.

The Slater & Gordon lawyer says Presumptive Legislation places the burden on employers and insurers to DISPROVE the connection between employment and a particular type of cancer.

There are some extra conditions in the legislation being sought, such as the length of time the firefighter has worked in the industry. For now, 12 types of cancer are on the list with others being the subject of further study and debate.

Mr Sidebottom wants people at the sickest part of their lives to have a path to compensation. "It's compelling, it's needed, and it's needed now," he said.

the world," he told the audience. "There's no greater work that a union can do than look after the health and wellbeing of its members." Alex pointed out that residential and structure fires are increasingly sinister fires as modern structures contain more plastics and glues than wood. He blames the proliferation of plastics for more and more instances of cancer in firefighters.

Dr Guidotti was also concerned about the increasing use of plastics, using amazing new 3D printing technology as an example. "Engineers don't think about the hazard when they produce these materials," he said, "They think about performance." Dr Guidotti said. As with construction, designers and engineers

and developers of new technology should be required to consider the adverse health effects.

Highly respected Edmonton Fire Chief Ken Block said it was a privilege and honour to take part. Needless to say, the audience was just as honoured to hear from the highly respected Chief Officer whose evidence was integral to the Australian Senate Committee inquiry and subsequent valued report. Chief Block is an avid supporter of voluntary health programmes to ensure early detection of cancer among firefighters. Edmonton is in the Canadian province of Alberta which recently legislated to designate post-traumatic stress disorder as a presumptive illness. Fire Chief Ken Block emphasised team work and unity

and was confident that firefighters of all ranks will support the campaign for presumptive legislation to recognise firefighters occupational illnesses once educated about the very real risk.

The Australian experience was showcased with a video of the UFUA's journey to federal presumptive legislation presented by National Secretary Peter Marshall.

The scope and method of the current Monash University Australian Firefighter Health Study was also on the agenda. Professor Malcolm Sim and Associate Professor Deb Glass explained that the study will build upon the accepted international

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research that has demonstrated the link between firefighting and the higher risk of contracting specific cancers and will focus on preventative measures as well as looking at other adverse health risks for firefighters other than cancer. Associate Professor Deb Glass broadened discussions with detail of her research into the effects of exposure to benzene and findings of the increased risk of leukemia.

The conference included interactive question and answer sessions and looked forward to proactive and constructive practical measures that can be taken to reduce the levels of exposure to contaminants and toxins.

A panel of United Fire Fighters Union of Winnipeg Secretary Rob Labossiere and Edmonton Fire Fighters Union President Greg Holubowich and Secretary Brad Hoekstra discussed lessons during the 10 year campaign for presumptive legislation that has succeeded in nearly every province in Canada. Their presentation on contamination, wellness programmes and effective fire station design was enlightening for the firefighters and fire service management that were in attendance.

The health firefighter model was continued with a presentation that emphasised the need for clean and dirty areas in station design to restrict contamination from used PPE. Norwegian and Danish union representatives Tommy

Kristoffersen and Tommy Kjaer delivered a presentation that had been developed by Finnish Fire Fighter Union President Kim Nukula who was unable to present due to illness.

The mechanics and benefits of presumptive legislation were succinctly described by Slater & Gordon lawyer Sidebottom. He shared with the forum his extensive experience in the field and his experience in work cover claims including firefighters with occupational cancer claims.

“It’s really sobering when you think about how many people are affected by this,” said Mr Sidebottom.

Political support for the recognition of occupational cancer for firefighters was evident with Victorian Labor and Green MPs in



Norwegian Fire Fighters Union Vice President  
Tommy Kristoffersen.



Senator Penny Wright.



Edmonton Fire Fighters Union President  
Secretary Brad Hoekstra.



Adam Bandt MP.



Associate Professor Deb Glass,  
Monash University.



WA Secretary Kevin Jolly.

attendance. A standing ovation greeted Federal Greens MP Adam Bandt acknowledging his dedication and efforts which resulted in his “Fair Protection for Firefighters” Bill being unanimously passed in the Australian Parliament in 2011. It was a welcome occasion to mark his involvement and commitment to the UFUA and Australian firefighters.

He was full of praise in return. “You get things done!” he told the union members at the forum. Mr Bandt said the whole experience had reinforced to him that you have got to know what you believe in and you have got to have the guts to stand up for it.

The audience also stood for Greens Senator Penny Wright who was also integral

to the passing of the federal legislation. She paid tribute to the ‘immaculate’ UFUA campaign to achieve Federal recognition and spoke of Peter Marshall’s persuasiveness that quickly won her support. Her understanding of the issues was cemented with hot fire training facilitated by the Queensland Branch of the UFUA. Senator Wright described how other politicians were eventually also brought around with Peter’s tenacity, solid research, and the personal firefighter stories that captured the heart. “I saw the benefit of pure doggedness and determination and hope,” said Senator Wright.

All left the conference armed with comprehensive information about the

risks of firefighting and the reality of occupational cancer for firefighters. Some were lucky to go home with a little extra as the major sponsor Sasgar, raffled a wildfire helmet, some 14 inch boots and a model fire truck. Many delegates also welcomed the opportunity to explore Sasgar’s display of the latest firefighting equipment and personal protective clothing.

The feedback since the Global conference has confirmed it was a resounding success but the UFUA and the global alliance will not be resting on the issue.

UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall put it succinctly - “Firefighters are still dying and we need to fix that!” ■



A record heatwave in Melbourne set the scene for hot topics at the 23rd Annual National Committee of Management Meeting. Outside the Crown Promenade Hotel, the temperature was headed for 37 degrees. Inside, everyone kept their cool, and enjoyed the opportunity to debate the current issues affecting firefighters and the union

**T**he theme of the conference was 'Unity and Progress'. Both of those aims were helped along by some high profile participants and passionate delegates.

The meeting began with outgoing National President Mick Farrell handing over the reins to new National President Greg Northcott. Mick assured the delegates that even though he's retiring, he'll never lose his passion for the issues affecting firefighters. He praised the 'legendary' work ethic of National Secretary Peter Marshall, and also thanked past and present members, plus the National Executive, for their fantastic support.

NCOM meetings are normally very much about the nuts and bolts of the union and the industrial issues it is facing but this year it was a little different. It was held on the days either side of the landmark Global Forum on Cancer and Firefighters, so delegates

were privileged to have access to plenty of international expertise. Guests from New Zealand, Canada, Norway and Finland firefighter unions who were in Melbourne for the Global Forum took the opportunity to attend NCOM.

A video of the UFUA's achievements and progress in recent years complimented National Secretary Peter Marshall's annual report. While Peter recognised the work achieved he stressed the need for more to be done detailing the unprecedented attack on firefighters through budget cuts and right-wing ideology. Recent UFUA campaigning achievements included reversing Tasmania's fire service budget cuts. Peter outlined the extensive and successful campaign by the Tasmania Branch and the national union. Politicians were lobbied to reverse dramatic budget cuts while the community was

being educated with radio advertisements, community-group visits, mail-outs and a dedicated website which resulted in more than 15,000 letters being sent by the public to their politicians calling for the reverse of the cuts. As a result "Tasmania's Fire Crisis" was stopped in its tracks with no job losses, keeping all stations open and with the added benefits of funding for Personnel Protection Equipment, and the Government's commitment to introduce presumptive legislation to recognise occupational cancer for firefighters. Peter informed the meeting that the Tasmania Fire Service was the only public agency in Tasmania to have budget cuts reversed. "We were the only public service running this sort of campaign," said Peter. "It was a great achievement."

In the ACT, budget cuts of 10 per cent were on the government's agenda which



ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver.



Former UFUA National President Mick Farrell.



NZPFU Vice President Ian Wright.



UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall.



MFB CFO Shane Wright.



UFFW President Alex Forrest.

was significant and would have impacted on key operational matters such as crew sizes. The Act Branch and national union successfully averted that crisis.

With the Global Conference on occupational cancer held the same week, presumptive legislation was a hot topic. Peter Marshall detailed the successful campaign which resulted in the Federal Fair Protection for Firefighters Bill being enacted in December 2011. It took a lot of work to get to that point, with 220 politicians lobbied in person, six months of inter-state travel, more than 6,000 personal emails and the public sending 95,000 letters to federal MPs through the UFUA campaign website. The Senate Inquiry was one major milestone in a campaign resulting in a report that has already been useful internationally and in various states to further the campaign for

presumptive legislation. “We achieved the legislative change in an extremely short time,” said Peter, “beyond even our own high expectations.” His presentation was an opportunity for delegates and branches to reflect on their own campaigns for presumptive legislation. Now the work continues at state level, with progress in Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria.

Former National President Mick Farrell noted Peter Marshall’s modesty, praising his enormous contribution to presumptive legislation and averting the Tasmanian fire crisis. He stressed the detail involved and the huge workload. Peter’s tenacity and unique skills were pivotal to the success of these campaigns. National President Greg Northcott added his praise, crediting the union leadership in achieving the wins.

He acknowledge that many members were probably unaware of the significance and national importance of the fight for the recognition of occupational cancer and the legacy for future firefighters.

Peter Marshall acknowledged the benefits of the Global Alliance of firefighter unions and that the UFUA had relied upon the assistance and expertise of global alliance partners in the campaign for presumptive legislation. On four occasions, global partners travelled to Australia from Canada to help the fight. The international experience was valuable and a lesson for all politicians. “You don’t operate in a vacuum,” said Peter Marshall. “The world is watching how you treat firefighters.”

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WA Branch Secretary Kevin Jolly, Assistant Secretary Lea Anderson and President Frank Martinelli.



NZPFU Secretary Derek Best.



WA Branch Assistant Secretary Lea Anderson.



Tasmania Branch President Darren Gye.



Norwegian Fire Fighters Union Vice President Tommy Kristoffersen.



Tasmania Branch Secretary Vinnie Males.



Tasmanian Leading Firefighter Val Ansett.

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Peter pointed out that employers talk and strategise around the world and as a union we can learn from effective campaigns our comrades have conducted overseas. Globally firefighters have come under attack, with budget cuts and attempts to undermine the community support for firefighters by trying to invoke a politic of envy.

United Fire Fighters Union of Winnipeg President Alex Forrest summed it up succinctly. “The world is no longer local,” he said. “That is why the global alliance is so important. Our future lies in the strength of that alliance.”

The first guest speaker certainly got everyone thinking about the changing workload for firefighters. “We already know the work we are doing today is not the work we were doing 20 years ago,”

said Melbourne’s Chief Fire Officer, Shane Wright. He described how crews with the Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board are more in demand as Emergency Medical Responders. “EMR responses now consistently out-number structure fires.” He went on to describe other changes at the MFESB, including 110 trained shipboard firefighters and special new firefighting vessels.

Mr Wright shared experiences where he had to step outside his own comfort zone. He described a day on duty at Victoria’s State Control Centre, handling a blaze at Mount Hotham; hundreds of kilometres from his stomping ground in metropolitan Melbourne, and presented some powerful memories from his visit to Christchurch, New Zealand, in the aftermath of the fatal earthquake.

A question and answer session was an

opportunity to discuss how work changes affect firefighters. In particular delegates voiced concerns about how they’ll cope with the extra work and required training if their states adopt EMR requirements for firefighters. Foremost of concerns was the potential psychological impact on firefighters with EMR work. The Victoria Branch had recently commissioned a report by Newcastle University into the extent and implications of physical and psychological injuries for firefighters. That report revealed a significant number of firefighters are exhibiting post traumatic stress syndrome due to the nature of the incidents they attend as part of their duties. Victorian Danny Ward stepped in to tell delegates that, despite his original reluctance, the EMR training was one of the best things to have happened to him in the fire service. He admitted his reluctance to



ACT Branch President Brett Baulman, Secretary Dave Livingstone and Aviation Branch delegates.



International guests.



Sponsor Sasgar's PPE and equipment on display.

undertake the training initially. "I didn't want to do it." But he went on to explain the joy of being able to assist people in life and death situations in addition to fire incidents. "It has been a workload, but a good workload to take on," he said.

Guest speaker ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver described the advancements in union communication through new mediums. He also highlighted recent campaigns and how important it is to keep all campaigners in the loop. The Qantas dispute and Grocon confrontations were cited as examples of management decisions that had widespread impact.

Mr Oliver said Tony Abbott wants to resurrect Workchoices by another name. He believes it'll be done through attacking workers' rights to unions, and how unions function.

Branch Secretaries were given forums to share their recent experiences and how they've handled issues in their local industrial/political landscapes.

It was also important to look at the UFUA's strengths as a single entity. The meeting worked through a SWOT analysis, covering strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.

Delegates identified some of the the union's best strengths including political capital, density of union membership, the global alliance, public support, and the high visibility in the community. Unfortunately, the threats are many. There are significant legal battles being fought by Victorian and Queensland branches, State White Papers promoting restructuring of fire services with policies developed without union input, and the looming federal election.

Key opportunities include embracing inquiries such as the recent federal inquiry into the effects of climate change.

There was a special recognition for the work and dedication of outgoing National President Mick Farrell. The meeting unanimously awarded a Life Membership. Peter Marshall described Mick's amazing contributions to the UFU during 38 years of membership. He was perhaps best known as President for the previous 7 years, but that was a mere fraction of Mick's 33 years service in elected positions. Among many other achievements, Mick's legacies include fending off attacks on roster systems, developing Aviation regulations, blocking privatisation and raising the employer super contribution for aviation firefighters. He was also instrumental in the campaign for presumptive legislation. ■



# The burning issue of our time

BY ADAM BANDT

Having spent many years working with the firefighters union, I know a little about what firefighters face on the job.

While everyone else is running away from a fire, firefighters are running towards it. Firefighters respond to whatever is thrown at them, rising to the many challenges of the modern fire environment.

But there is a big and growing challenge. Unless it is brought under control, it will swamp the resources and capacity of our emergency services.

The challenge of climate change.

## Climate Code Red

The debate over global warming has been raging for almost a decade, but reality is now catching up with the arguments.

The Arctic is melting. More extreme storms and hurricanes like Hurricane Sandy

are hitting and here in Australia we have seen records tumble for heat and unprecedented fire storms, such as the Black Saturday bushfires.

The current Senate inquiry into extreme weather, established by the Greens, has been examining the implications of climate change fuelled extreme weather and what it means for Australia, including our emergency services.

Australia has always had extreme weather but evidence to the inquiry has outlined how global warming supercharges extreme weather, loading the dice and increasing the chance of catastrophic events.

For firefighters who are so often the first responders, it means having to act on more extreme flooding and storm surges, heat stress and most importantly extreme fire weather.

## Extreme Bushfires

The last 10 years have seen large and uncontrollable fires devastate Canberra suburbs in 2003 and take 173 lives and destroy more than 2000 houses in Victoria in 2009. Earlier this year a large fire in Tasmania destroyed nearly 200 properties and forced the evacuation of hundreds of people from the Tasman Peninsula.

Evidence from the Climate Commission to the inquiry has set out the increase in extreme fire weather in many parts of Australia, including southern NSW, Victoria and Tasmania:

“On Black Saturday 2009, the bushfire threat across Victoria reached unprecedented levels. The Forest Fire



Former Victorian CFA Chief Fire Officer Brian Potter – a strong campaigner for presumptive legislation – with MP Adam Bandt

In 2010 Adam Bandt made history when Melbourne shifted to the Greens and he was elected to the Federal Parliament.

Backing in the Labor government, Adam and the Greens were able to secure some big reforms including the Clean Energy Act and getting kids' dental into Medicare.

Adam has been a big friend to firefighters. In 2011 he introduced the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters)* Act and successfully shepherded it through Parliament. The legislation enables firefighters who contract cancer to better access compensation and support. The law has kickstarted similar moves in the State Parliaments.

Before entering Parliament, Adam worked as public interest and industrial lawyer representing the United Firefighters Union and providing advice in countless cases.

Adam is up for re-election this year and has committed to fighting the extreme agenda of an Abbott government.

Danger Index, one of the measures of bushfire threat was much higher than the fire weather conditions on Black Friday 1939 or Ash Wednesday 1983. The Forest Fire Danger Index has increased significantly at 16 of 38 weather stations across Australia between 1973 and 2010, none of the stations recorded a significant decrease."

The increase in extreme fire weather has also meant a much longer fire season extending into November and March. This means less opportunity for fuel reduction burning and greater strain on firefighting resources.

The economic cost of the 2009 Black Saturday bush fires to Victoria is estimated to be approximately \$4.4 billion,

but this underestimates the true social and cultural cost to the community from lives lost and the dislocation, disruption and fear.

The Climate Commission say the projected increases in hot days across the country, and in consecutive dry days and droughts in the southwest and southeast, will lead to increased extreme fire days.

This is just the beginning of the creeping disaster of global warming and fire conditions will continue to worsen throughout the century because of the global warming already locked in. However we face much more catastrophic conditions if we do not make radical cuts to global warming pollution.

## Fighting for the future

Successive governments are failing to confront the ramifications of climate change for emergency services resources.

A report commissioned by the United Firefighters Union for the Senate inquiry found the number of firefighters employed in Australia will need to jump by 20 percent or 2300 firefighters over the next decade just to keep pace with population and the growth in built assets. Another 1200 firefighters will be needed to respond to extreme fire risk. The report does not quantify the impact of more frequent flooding, intense cyclones, heat waves and other extreme weather but these will inevitably require substantial additional resources as well. And this is just the next decade.

Each decade will see extreme weather increase and the need for resources grow. As the impacts mounts across the community and economy the competition for resources will become greater.

That is why it is crucial that while we advocate for increased investment in our emergency services we also work to minimise the increase in global warming.

## A clean energy revolution

We are not going to halt the march of global warming unless we take urgent and strong measures to shift from an economy based on burning fossil fuels to one based on clean energy.

The key to this transformation will be government action to cut pollution and make clean energy cheaper.

The looming threat of global warming is what drove me shift from my work as industrial lawyer and enter Parliament. Together with the people of Melbourne and the Greens I was able to make climate action a central condition of my support for a Gillard government. This has enabled us to put in place some of then far reaching clean energy program in the world, including a price on pollution and \$13 billion investment in renewable energy.

But we've only just begun. If we are to hold back the firestorms that will threaten our country we must take stronger and deeper action. Tony Abbott will not do this; he will try and undo everything we have already achieved.

I will be doing everything I can to stop him. ■



Fred's small gear and memorabilia room.

BY ROD KNOWLES

Most of us have heard or seen on car stickers the saying “Old firies never die, they just keep on arson about”.

**T**he word “arson” here has a double meaning of malicious use of fire or someone that just mucks or tinkers around.

The latter describes retired firie Frederick Kerr who has been tinkering with vintage and veteran firefighting appliances and fire brigade memorabilia for more than 33 years since he was forced to retire in 1979 from Melbourne’s Metropolitan Fire Brigade due to a serious injury sustained at a fire after 25 years service with the MFB.

Fred, who reached the rank of District Officer said: “Just before I was injured I was

well on the way to climbing ladder of success, then I fell down the “bastard” at a fire at Kent Steering and Brake company in Swanston Street, Carlton.”

Although pensioned out of the job, his love affair with the Fire Brigade has continued to this day.

He now has a collection of yesteryear fire appliances and memorabilia valued at well over \$150,000.

In 2007 he actually purchased a huge factory (or garage in his case) in Ballarat Road, Kingsville (near Footscray), to house his collection. The factory has

its own overhead crane which runs from one end of his factory to the other and allows him to store a number of vehicles on a purpose built (by him) mezzanine floor. You could probably call it a “high pile” storage fire truck factory

Fred’s favourite appliance is his beautifully restored 1914 Hotchkiss Hose Carriage that is presently on display in the Fire Services Museum of Victoria at Eastern Hill. He bought the Hotchkiss in 1975 which had been used to irrigate a market garden in Beaconsfield after Melbourne’s MFB sold it in 1949.



High Pile truck storage at the Kerr garage.



Small gear Compartment Mack Comb-Ladder.



1942 ex CFA Inter' Pumper For Sale.



Newspaper Fire Banners.



Fred's 1962 Mack Comb-ladder.



Ex NSW 1942 Mack Pumper.



Fred proudly displays his 1914 Hodgkiss.



The 1962 Mack Combination-Ladder that Fred has nearly fully restored.

Fred has been a member of the Fire Services Museum for 42 years, being President from 1997 until 2005.

Fred's current pride and joy is his 1962 Mack Pumper/Wheeled Escape. This ex-Queensland Fire Service 4500 litre per minute pumper should be fully restored within a few months and ready for display to the general public.

Another appliance that is close to being fully restored by Fred is a 1942 ex-NSW Fire Service Mack 750 GPM (3375LPM) Pumper. Both the Macks are left hand drives. What a heart stopping learning experience

that would have been for fires in those days. You drive around most of the time in your right hand drive car, then once you are at work you respond to emergency fire calls driving a left hand drive fire appliance at break neck speeds, I reckon it would have been a heart stopper for the driver, not to mention front passenger.

When Fred finishes restoring his two Macks he will still have plenty to do as he has another two trucks he would like to restore: a 1942 ex-Army international which sits on a shelf in his garage and a 1942 ex-CFA international pumper. Although, Fred (who is in his 79th

year) told me that he gets the feeling at times that time is catching up with him and that he should, and would, sell the CFA pumper if someone made a reasonable offer.

"The powers that be" keep on trying to tell us that retired life is not good for our health and that we should continue in full time employment as long as possible.

Fred Kerr puts an end to that myth. He has been retired for 34 years and every day is an enjoyable challenge for him as he tinkers with his beloved fire appliances.

Keep on keeping on, Fred. You are doing a great job! ■

# AUSSIES SUCCEED in the AUCKLAND TOWER CLIMB

Meet a very happy team after a very successful firefighters stair challenge at the Auckland Sky Tower.

The team competing included six members from Melbourne, as well as a delegate from Gladstone, Tommy Neville.

All troops had full gear on including masks.

Sandy Hearn was the 1st female overall, as well as the 1st Masters female, in 14:12

Steve Axup at 11:26 was part of the fastest male brigade team that won first place.

Bill Nugent at 12:49 was also part of this Gold medal team; he got 3rd in the Grand Masters. Scott McGraw at 9:28 placed 3rd overall, 1st in Masters and part of that winning team.

Other members to finish and ensure our place getters' welfare were Mick Whitty and Tony 'Plugga' Martin.

The winner was a Kiwi firefighter who also won Gold in the stair climb at the WPFPG in New York. His time was a new record of 8:37. ■





# FIRE TRAINING

*the safe way*



#### Trainer 101

Fully portable  
Battery operated



#### Trainer 201

500 cubic metres  
fill in 60 seconds



#### Trainer 401

1000 cubic metres  
of smoke in 60 seconds



#### Trainer X-Stream

5000 cubic metres  
of smoke in 60 seconds

You might think it strange that we have put so much energy into making your fire training scenarios as uncomfortable as possible, but when the situation becomes real, we know you'll understand.

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Our units provide a fully adjustable smoke dispersion capability to suit all training scenarios with an unprecedented smoke hang time.

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