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**VOL 53 ISSUE 1 2017**

Tasmanian firefighter Craig Machen and his support team off Clifton Beach, southern Tasmania.



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**National President**  
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**National Secretary**  
Peter Marshall

## From the Secretary

# THE MODERNISATION OF POLITICS IN THE GUISE OF DEMOCRACY



National Secretary Peter Marshall

**You would have to be hiding under a rock without wi-fi access or mobile coverage for the past 12 months to not have noticed the shift in power and politics both here in Australia and globally.**

Policy platforms designed to deliver stability and certainly are out of vogue, and rash and rapid statements made on social media are in.

Whatever you may think about Donald Trump and his xenophobic policies, he certainly gets his point across and does so leaving mainstream media open-mouthed in his wake.

He ignores the roar of criticism for governing by Twitter by continuing to say what he wants at the moment he thinks it and in doing so defies all convention or political diplomacy while the rest of us shudder.

The world and commentators appeared shocked that Donald Trump could not only win the right to contest the Presidential campaign, but was able to win it hands-down. Whatever your opinion of his behaviour and policies, it cannot be denied that he tapped into hearts and minds that rallied en masse and followed through loyally turning out to vote. He did so without a machine of seasoned election campaigners and blatantly splashed his cash. His voters turned out – Hillary's didn't.

He did not let the facts get in the way of his message and the phrases "fake news" and "alternative facts" are now part of our everyday news diet.

It was a campaign that defied convention and apparently, that was what the majority of American's who turned out to vote wanted.

He was bold, brash and belligerent shrugging off video evidence of his misogynistic behaviour while capitalising on an FBI probe into Hillary Clinton's email amid allegations of Russian interference. His campaign appears to have been cemented with his xenophobic rants. His radical claims including that he would consider requiring Muslim-Americans to register on a Government Database and carry special identification cards shocked the media but did not quell the rise of his support.

His notorious midnight tweets appeared more perturbed about his image than any international ramifications.

And somehow he did this convincing his supporters he was heralding in a new form of democracy while flanked with an excess of bankers and businessmen at his side.

On November 9 2016 the Australian media reported most Federal politicians were shocked with Trump's election win – except for Pauline Hanson. As Senator Hanson was photographed quaffing celebratory champagne she told the media *"Give people the power back to have their own democracy. I think Donald Trump will bring that to America and I can see in Donald Trump a lot of me and what I stand for in Australia. I think it's great."*

I don't understand Senator Hanson's view that somewhere along the way we had lost democracy. I always thought democracy was the power of people – the election of a government through a democratic system. A system that elected her and three others of her party into the Senate last July.

But it is clear that her brand of politics and radical dogma focused on exclusion rather than unity has found favour.

The politics of stable and consistent policy has fallen in popularity according to the polls.

And so has the preferred vehicle for that message.

Hanson uses social media to her advantage. Absurdly a section of the public was intrigued rather than appalled as she live-streamed herself watching a SBS documentary about herself. According to news reports at the time more than 70,000 viewers tuned in to see her mainly sit in silence and occasionally react.

Once upon a time such behaviour would have been characterised as narcissistic or just bonkers, but in the age of social media where the daily mundane and minuscule is promoted by "post" in a bid for the most "likes" and "emojis", it was bordering on normal.

That is not the say the rest of the political spectrum are luddites.

The ALP and Liberals have also effectively used social media to capture the demographic who prefer politics in sound-bites or in 140 characters or less.

But it is far more difficult to promote carefully fashioned policy and to do so consistently in a tweet than just let loose with a rant.

Shameless self-promotion does not require spin-doctors or a gaggle of policy makers – it merely takes the guts to say what you want, when you want, regardless of how absurd or damaging it may be in the long run. It can also fit easily into 140 characters.

The support for personalities without policy is becoming a run-away train here for Australia's liberal politics – with Malcolm Turnbull looking wide-eyed in the engine room trying to navigate an increasingly dangerous political path while hoping the surge of "alternative" politics will run out of steam.

Last year the Turnbull took a gamble with a double dissolution and a winter election in an attempt to clean out a Senate that was proving too difficult for the Coalition to ram through its anti-union and worker policies. He prepared for the clean-out by twiddling with the proportional representation system and ensuring the trigger were the Bills attacking the building sector unions and a restructure of the control on registered organisations.

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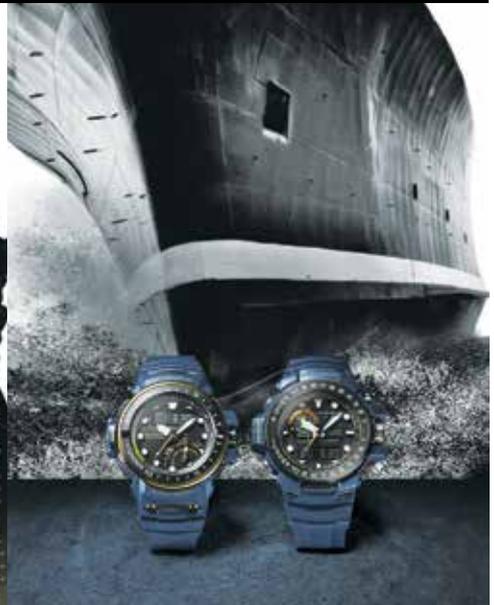
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Turnbull banked on clearing the Senate of its rash of independents and one-policy parties. It was also a stamp of his authority while the rumblings from the ousted Tony Abbott continued to make headlines.

The double dissolution did change the Senate but seriously backfired.

Not only did the Coalition drop four Senate seats but now contains the largest cross-bench in Australian Senate history, with the balance of power now held by the unpredictable, and at times unfathomable, Pauline Hanson's One Nation and the Nick Xenophon Team. And that was before Senator Cory Bernardi deserted the Liberals to bolster the cross-bench.

There is no doubt that the right is becoming more crowded as many claim the major parties have lost their way and in doing so have lost their connection to the people.

Early February 2017 polls showed the Government was trailing Labor in two-party terms with support for the independents and fringe parties surging. The poll demonstrated that at that time Pauline Hanson's One Nation had doubled its support since the July election while the Government's support tumbled.

This was just an appetiser for the coming menu of state elections.

In December 2016 Pauline Hanson's One Nation unveiled 36 candidates to run at the next Queensland election including a former LNP state Member of Parliament.

The Western Australian state election on March 11 saw Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party contesting many of the State's 59 Legislative Assembly seats and running candidates in each Legislative Council region.

But wait there's more!

The WA election was awash with those claiming to fix the electoral system – ironically claiming the lack of articulated policy pre-election is democracy at its best.

In addition to the flood of One Nation candidates, the Nick Xenophon Team branched out of its South Australian nest to also contest the WA election.

Then there is the Flux Party that will ... well fluctuate according to responses on an App. According to its website "Flux is a gateway Australians can use, to participate directly in Parliament, making the need for trust in elected officials a thing of the past. Elected Flux MPs and Senators give up their autonomy and use their votes in line with the outcomes produced by the Flux."

Both the Nick Xenophon Team and Flux candidates campaigned on a platform of disillusionment with the major parties.

The "alternative" fighting for your vote is a brand of politics that promotes one-trick ponies focused on one particular issue that has wide-support in one demographic or geographic area but are devoid of other policy.

They claim to be the representatives of the people – but once in Parliament, will run their offices like an auction – they will support the highest bidder.

Their lack of coherent policy is only matched by the chaos in their offices and organisations.

By definition a political party is an organisation of people that share similar views on policy and governance.

These are not political parties but a plethora of personalities who excel in self-interest at the cost of public interest.

They are not fighting to protect democracy but shamelessly self-promoting on a repressive political ticket that will inhibit rather than unite.

But in doing so they are primarily making an attack on the liberal vote and picking up those that feel disenfranchised. The user-pays and free-market ideology of the right has resulted in a massive divide between the haves and the have-nots. The result is the high visibility of real poverty and homelessness.

It is a world where the middle class is a family that can afford a mortgage but still feel like they are treading water economically. They are the people that fear shrinking job prospects for their children and are feeling increasingly unsafe in a global community.

It is those people that are supposedly looking to the "alternative" vote for representation and given the swing in polls it is those people that used to vote conservatively.

The lesson to be learned is that the best antidote is the strength of unity. Collectively stand as a group looking after the group and those that cannot look after themselves.

We promote fairness and equality. We promote inclusive policy not exclusive rights.

We might need to tweak or tweet the message – but we need to stick to our principles.

Strength in Unity.

**“The lesson to be learned is that the best antidote is the strength of unity. Collectively stand as a group looking after the group and those that cannot look after themselves.”**

**PETER MARSHALL ■**  
FEDERAL SECRETARY

## From the President

*Come senators, congressmen  
Please heed the call  
Don't stand in the doorway  
Don't block up the hall  
For he that gets hurt  
Will be he who has stalled  
There's the battle outside raging  
It'll soon shake your windows and rattle your walls  
For the times they are a-changin*

**Bob Dylan, *The Times They Are A-Changin'***

**Bob Dylan's Noble Prize for Literature may have been a contentious choice, but his lyrics are in many ways timeless and timely.**

The change in the political landscape here and globally is fast-moving and the machinations of Parliamentary processes no longer seem to be able to slow it down.

While the uprising of the alternative right parties and so-called personalities are currently more of an attack on the traditional Liberal-National vote, it brings challenges across the political spectrum.

Secretary Peter Marshall's message in this edition of the magazine articulates the current political landscape and the rise of personalities elected without consistent or coherent policy resulting in critical decisions being made by those with the balance of power on a case-by-case or random basis.

This is a particularly challenging environment for trade unions, and indeed the UFUA, as our message and priorities are often complex and require an opportunity to explain the context and lobby on an evidence-basis rather than catchy one-liners and retorts.

We have witnessed how easy it is to vilify unions, workers and firefighters by throwing around demonising language such as "thugs" and "bullies". Those condemning firefighters have not had to provide evidence or even remotely substantiate their claims but can just throw around such language to get the media coverage.

To explain that an issue is a health and safety matter, directly affects firefighters' ability to protect community and affects the safety the firefighters on scene takes a bit more time and media space, and the evidence is not always eye-grabbing or "sexy". Sometimes it is cold hard facts and history that proves our points.

We do not work in isolation and our ability to successfully forecast change, identify possible threats, and to lobby to instigate positive change is a critical part of our work as a Union at fire agency level,

community, state and federal level.

It is our experience that we cannot rely on anyone but the UFUA to ensure that the safety of firefighters is not compromised.

It is also our experience that we cannot rely on anyone other than the UFUA to ensure that community protection is held paramount.

It is not often recognised or publicly understood that the UFUA, and the trade union movement generally, are the upholders of community principles and public safety. Without the diligence and tenacity of the union many protections and community initiatives would not survive.

The UFUA has been very successful initiating a legislative reform agenda, participating in Senate and state Parliament Inquiries, Commissions of Inquiry, Coroner's hearings, lobbying appropriate Ministers and MPs and Councillors at every level.

Our success has been in part due to our diligent evidence-based approach drawing on external reviews and documentation as part of our detailed submissions.

We have followed that up with one-on-one lobbying of the relevant politician of all political persuasions and we have used the media and social media to help educate and involve the community we serve.

Our members have rallied, door-knocked, attended public meetings and personally lobbied politicians to effect change or to shut-down rogue proposals or decision-makers.

On a daily basis, we face relentless change mooted by fire agencies and we persistently take up the challenge to ensure changes are not made without careful consideration and ensuring they

will not be detrimental to the safety of firefighters or the firefighters' ability to protect the community.

We do not do so for public recognition, or to self-promote.

We are by nature focused on the safety of the community and our comrades.

But we will have to constantly adapt our message and the forum we use to make it in.

Increasingly it appears that the general public has been starved of informed and non-partisan journalism and are becoming increasingly reliant on news bites and sound grabs.

Independent journalism is nearly non-existent.



**National President Greg Northcott**

**“It is our experience that we cannot rely on anyone but the UFUA to ensure that the safety of firefighters is not compromised.**

**It is also our experience that we cannot rely on anyone other than the UFUA to ensure that community protection is held paramount.”**

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The ability for anyone to affect the story by merely posting an opinion on social media or on an electronic newspaper website further skews the information the public can absorb.

Traditionally we are very successful in getting our messages to our members and our members getting those messages out to the community.

Despite the despicable attempt to vilify firefighters for political reasons, we know that firefighters are deservedly well-respected throughout the community.

The UFUA is strong, united and growing. We have the privilege of high-union density with members that are passionate about their community and their colleagues.

Our traditional methods of communication are still very valid today and remain successful.

Our challenge is to complement those traditional and highly successful communication lines and strategies to maintain our positive presence in the community, and in the decision-making circles and Parliamentary chambers.

Our challenge is to be able to continue to effect positive and necessary change while maintaining our integrity and evidence-based approach.

We may need to mix it up a bit, streamline the message for the different media outlets, and embrace the challenges of communication today while continuing to engage our communities that are increasingly media-saturated.

We cannot and should not ignore the political battle that is being waged, or the methods being used to wage it.

We are adaptable problem-solvers and the voice of reason in our day-to-day working lives.

We can use all those skills to ensure our Governments – local, state and federal are populated by those that respect the protection of the community is of chief importance and that decisions cannot be made without the valuable expert knowledge of firefighters through their union.

These times they are a-changin' but united we will meet the challenges of these times.

**GREG NORTHCOTT** ■  
FEDERAL PRESIDENT

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## ACT Firefighter Recruitment Recognised

**While some fire services have sought to politicise gender diversity, ACT Fire and Rescue has shown the way in recruiting women while maintaining entry standards, and without capping the number of applications from men.**

### Firefighter “culture” attacked

Like many fire services, ACT Fire and rescue has traditionally been the domain of men who are committed to the safety of the community. There has not in the past been any significant effort aimed at promoting, attracting and recruiting women to the fire service. The result until recently was that, of a funded establishment of 344 firefighters, only six were women.

In highly controversial circumstances in 2014, unnamed persons employed in the wider public service sought to attribute the under-representation of women in ACT Fire and Rescue to a “culture dominated by men” – an attempt to conveniently shift blame from high-level decision makers who had been inactive on the issue, to the dedicated firefighters who trained, studied and worked to successfully meet the rigorous standards required for entry to recruit college. A consultant was engaged, a report was prepared, an ambush planned and even the Minister got in on the act. Newspaper headlines critical of the culture of ACT Fire and Rescue followed, and the community’s confidence in the integrity and dedication of ACT Firefighters was deliberately undermined for collateral purposes.

The specific criticisms, contained in a copy of a heavily redacted report obtained by the UFU in 2015, do not bear mention here since they were never supported by any evidence, and were heavily contested by firefighters including the then Chief Officer of ACT Fire and Rescue.

Foremost among the critics of the attacks on firefighter reputations were the women of ACT Fire and Rescue, who took the unprecedented step of conveying their support for their male colleagues in

correspondence to the Minister and to the community through mainstream media. The ranks of ACT firefighters stood together in the face of a vicious attack on their reputations and professionalism.

### Firefighters meet the challenge

Fast forward to 2016: the number of women in ACT Fire and Rescue has almost doubled, a woman was awarded dux of the recruit class, and the Training Delivery Commander was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in recognition of his work in the recruitment and selection process.

“What changed?” we asked UFU Branch Secretary Greg McConville.

“Not much,” he replied, “but what didn’t change was as important as what did change.”

The UFU maintained throughout that the relatively low number of women was attributable to the lack of effort that had previously gone into promoting firefighting as a career option for women. “It had more to do with what was going on outside the membership than what was happening in the membership.” McConville explains.

“We also maintained that increasing the number of women in firefighting should not and would not be achieved by lowering the standards for entry. The women in fire and rescue got there on merit, and it is a slur on them to suggest that standards need to change in order to increase the number of women being recruited.”

### Targeted Advertisement and Promotion

“What did change was the extent to which firefighting was promoted as a career option for women to pursue. A concerted effort was made to take a “roadshow” to groups and places where women who might be interested were involved: sporting and social clubs, education institutions, rural communities. A media promotion campaign was launched. Specific information sessions were conducted and women, like potential male recruits, were afforded opportunities to attend fire stations and get familiar with equipment and facilities. This was all underpinned by a social research project.”

Applications for firefighter college 37 opened on February 1 2016, and were open for two weeks. A target of 50% women had been previously announced by the Minister

for Emergency Services, but UFU secretary Greg McConville emphasised that this was not a quota.

“It was not a case of bending the rules to ensure that the 50% outcome (of women college recruits) was achieved. Instead, the target was aspirational. If there were enough women applying who could meet the standard, then the target could be met. If not, then so be it.” McConville said.

This was explained by ACT Fire and Rescue Chief Officer Mark Brown: “The outcome did send a clear message to our staff that, while Fire & Rescue was serious about recruiting more women, we were not going to lower entry standards to achieve this. It also reinforced that the objective to have 50% of positions filled by women in all future Fire & Rescue recruit intakes was a target and not a quota.” (“Recruiting Female Firefighters: ACT Fire



Recruit college 37.

& Rescue’s approach”, AFAC Conference Paper 2016)

On February 23 2016, a media release from the Minister for Emergency Services stated that by the time that applications closed:

- A total of 802 applications were received for the 16 recruit places;
- Of the 802 applicants, 144 were women;
- The increase in the number of women applicants was a fivefold increase on the previous recruitment intake in 2012, where 26 women applied out of a total of 395 applicants.

Importantly, the Minister stated at the time: “The government is committed that half

of the 16 places available will be filled by women who demonstrate their ability to meet the necessary standards to become a firefighter.”

The Minister hailed the recruitment campaign as “an overwhelming success”.

Greg McConville points out that the high profile publicity campaign aimed at recruiting women had the added effect of increasing the number of applications overall: with over double the number of applications received from men and women when compared to the previous process. This was in contrast to the controversy surrounding MFB Victoria recruitment, where applications from men were cut off after a ‘quota’ had been reached.

“This had the effect of increasing the pool of applicants, and the result is that ACT Fire and Rescue was able to recruit 16 excellent candidates who have now graduated as firefighters,” McConville explained.

### Success recognised

According to Mark Brown, the success of the selection process was attributable to four main factors:

- the social research which informed our marketing campaign and all of the resources that supported our engagement with potential female applicants
- the ACT Government’s commitment to an Equal Opportunity Employment program with 50% of places reserved for women who meet the employment standard
- the ongoing support provided by the ACT Branch of the United Firefighters Union, and
- current ACT Fire & Rescue officers and firefighters, who supported this initiative because it was the right thing to do. (*“Recruiting Female Firefighters: ACT Fire & Rescue’s approach”, AFAC Conference Paper 2016*)

*partnership with ESA’s WIES team he played a leadership role in the recruitment of a significantly increased number of female applicants and then oversaw all facets of the selection process.”*

The capability of the women recruited during the process is that for the first time, a woman was awarded dux of the recruit college. Firefighter Danielle Curcio was awarded the Chief Officers’ Award for Academic Excellence at the recruit graduation on October 27 2016.

UFU Secretary Greg McConville agreed that the process was worthwhile.

“In any area of the public sector, if you made one change, and that change resulted in a near doubling of the representation of an under-represented group, you would hail that as an overwhelming success and you would do the same thing again. In this case, the one change was targeted promotion of the recruit college, and we’d support that happening again.

“With firefighter numbers currently 20 below the funded establishment, we’d like to see it sooner rather than later,” McConville concluded.



Photo: ACT Fire & Rescue.

“The selection process itself was rigorous, and the UFU was involved at every step of the process: from the point that the project commenced we were represented. UFU members were involved as invigilators in the beep test, the physical aptitude test and in the informal and formal interviews.

“The end result of this was that we were able to say, with 100% confidence, that the process was genuine. This is critical to ensuring that there is no perception that any applicant was afforded any special treatment, and in turn every applicant is accepted as an equal when they begin station life.”

The meticulous attention to detail exhibited in the selection process underlined the career achievements of UFU member Commander Richard Maloney, who was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal on Australia Day this year. The citation for Commander Maloney’s award states:

*“Most recently Mr Maloney has also been instrumental in the delivery of a recruitment campaign as part of the Emergency Service Agency’s Women in Emergency Services (ESAWIES) Strategy which aimed to increase the diversity of the Service by firstly attracting more, and subsequently employing a greater number of, female firefighters. Working in close*

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# AVIATION BRANCH

## LESSONS LEARNED 5

### American Airlines (Flt 383) Boeing 767-300 ER

Oct 28, 2016 (15:26hrs)

Chicago O'Hare Airport

**Crew on board: 9**

**Pax on board: 161**

**Total fatalities: 0**

**Minor Injuries: 20 (CFD) 8 (AA)**

**Serious Injuries: 0**

The uncontained failure of a GE CF6-80C2B6 engine occurred on a Boeing 767-300 (N345AN) during the take-off roll at Chicago O'Hare International Airport. An emergency evacuation of the 161 passengers and nine crew members on board was conducted.

The airplane experienced an uncontained failure of the right engine about 6550 feet from runway 28R threshold, and came to a full stop about 9225 feet from runway 28R threshold. Preliminary FDR data show that the right engine failure occurred at an airspeed of about 128 knots with the engine operating at take-off power.

Approximately two seconds after the engine failure, at an airspeed of about 134 knots, the take-off was aborted. The aircraft rapidly decelerated, coming to a stop about 25 seconds after the throttle reduction. As a result of the uncontained engine failure, a fuel leak resulted in a pool fire under the right wing.

The right engine stage 2 high pressure turbine disk fractured into at least four pieces. One piece went through the inboard section of the right wing, over the fuselage and into a UPS warehouse facility, 900 metres from the runway.

Investigation showed that one of the fractures exhibited features consistent with fatigue cracking initiating at an internal inclusion near the forward side of the hub's inner bore. The disk had 10,984 cycles and had a life limit of 15,000 cycles.

Airport Rescue and Fire Fighting personnel began applying foam within 2 minutes 51 seconds of being notified of the emergency.

#### NTSB Findings of Note to ARFF:

The emergency response

#### So what do UFU Members learn from this:

GE is one of the world's leading aircraft engine manufacturers with over 30,000



engines currently in service all around the globe.

GE have stringent quality control and safety systems in place.

This aircraft was well maintained, professionally staffed and serviced properly

by a quality airline.

The part that failed (High Pressure Turbine Disk) was well within its service life of 15,000 cycles, but had a manufacturing flaw (inclusion) in the casting process.

This incident, like some of the previous



Airport Overview with Disk Fragment Locations



lessons learned, just highlights that, despite rigidly sticking to the safety requirements, the aircraft still failed in a spectacular fashion endangering the lives of the 161 passengers and 9 crew on board.

This is the reason ICAO recognises we need have an ARFF in place at all certified airports.

The other interesting bit of research into this incident is the ARFF itself. The ARFF in Chicago O'Hare is run by the Chicago Fire Department who obviously take their responsibility for public safety very seriously. If they adopted a minimalist, barely compliant, is-good-enough policy like we are seeing being promoted by ARFFs here in Australia they could get by under the FAA rules with only 8 staff, one for each ARFF truck, and in fact some airport owned ARFFs in the US do this.

The Chicago Fire Department though, lead the way for operationally effective ARFF service provision:

Note the figures here are a collective from various websites as the CFD website, Firemap, Wikipedia and several Facebook pages all vary slightly in crew sizes and vehicle dispositions. However the staffing levels of 5 firefighters per engine crew, and 2 firefighters per ARFF vehicle check out across the websites so at best 57 staff, at worst 45 across 3 or 4 operational stations. There is also an AMC (maintenance compound) and Rescue 4/Training station on the airport.

### Chicago Fire Department O'Hare International Airport Division

#### O'Hare Rescue Station #1

- 22 staff
- ENGINE 12 (5 Staff)
- TOWER LADDER 63 (ALS Staffed) (2 Staff)
- EMS AMBULANCE 26 (ALS Staffed) (2 Staff)
- 5-1-2 (Haz-Mat. Unit) (3 Staff)

- 5-3-1 Mass decontamination unit (1 Staff)
- 6-5-3 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 6-5-7 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 6-5-8 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 6-5-10 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 5-7-3 (Rehab. Unit) (1 Staff)

#### O'Hare Rescue Station #2

- 15 Staff
- ENGINE 10 (ALS Staffed) (5 Staff)
- EMS AMBULANCE 16 (ALS Staffed) (2 Staff)
- Special 6-3-5 (Portable Stairway Unit) (1 Staff)
- 6-5-4 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 6-5-5 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 6-5-6 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- Special 2-7-8 (Airport Command Van) (1 Staff ICS Support)

#### O'Hare Rescue Station #3

- 15 Staff
- ENGINE 9 (ALS Staffed) (5 Staff)
- EMS AMBULANCE 59 (ALS Staffed) (2 Staff)
- Special Squad 7 (Heavy Rescue) (3 Staff)
- Squad 7A (Mini-Pumper) (3 Staff)
- 9-2-4 (Mobile Ventilation Unit) (1 Staff)
- Deputy District Chief 2-1-23 (1 Staff)

#### O'Hare Rescue Station #4 (Training) and AMC

- 3 Staff
- Battalion Chief 6 (BC6) (1 staff)
- 6-5-9 (ARFF Crash Unit) (2 Staff)
- 4 Reserve ARFF Crash Rescue Units (6-5-11, 6-5-12, 6-5-13, 6-5-14)
- 4 Spare Engines (E9r, E9s, E10r, E10s)
- 2 Spare Tower Ladders (TL63r, TL63s)
- 8-8-1(Mass Casualty Unit)
- 8-8-1A (Mass Casualty/EMS Support Unit)

**Total of 55 ARFF staff on duty**

[http://chicagoareafire.com/CAF\\_Div\\_9\\_D3.html](http://chicagoareafire.com/CAF_Div_9_D3.html)  
[http://chicagoareafire.com/Div\\_9\\_D\\_B6\\_127.html](http://chicagoareafire.com/Div_9_D_B6_127.html)  
<http://chicagoareafire.com/blog/tag/ohare-airport-firefighters/>  
<http://chicagoareafire.com/blog/tag/chicago-ohare-airport-arff/page/2/>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization\\_of\\_the\\_Chicago\\_Fire\\_Department](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organization_of_the_Chicago_Fire_Department)

## LESSONS LEARNED 6

### Air France Airbus A340-313 (Fit AF358)

Aug 2 2005 (16:02hrs) Pearson, Toronto, Ontario

**Crew on board: 12**

**Pax on board: 297**

**Total fatalities: 0**

There was heavy rain, lightning and poor visibility and the aircraft was on an ILS approach.

Pilots of the preceding aircraft warned ATC of the poor braking action they experienced on landing. The aircraft touched down at the 1158 m mark on a 2740 m runway, just under halfway along.

Unable to stop the aircraft in the 1582 m remaining it left the runway at about 80 knots 150 kph and ended up in the Overshoot area runway 24L Toronto. Aircraft finally stopped in a ravine at 16:02 and caught fire.

All Passengers and crew survived. 33 survivors were taken to hospital via ambulance.

Two crew and 10 passengers were seriously injured, however all injured passengers and crew were still able to evacuate.

The two seriously injured crew members still managed to perform their emergency duties effectively.

**The TSB Canada report alleged the Pilot and First Officer's actions and omissions directly caused this accident. Air France contested that it was the ATC, Nav-Canada, and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority's (GTAA) fault.**

#### TSB Canada Findings of Note to ARFFS

- Pearson INTL Airport was designated **Category Nine** for ARFFS.
- ARFF's immediate response from the two Airport Fire Stations consisted of 15 staff (11 minimum crewing), one ICV, one RIV, two Urban Pumpers and four 12,000L Airport Fire Tenders.
- 8 Vehicles in total two with HRET capability.
- ARFFs first arriving was on scene one minute after crash alarm.
- Significant **Difficult Terrain Access issues** were encountered.
- Initial agent delivered **was 39,500 litres 63% above regulatory requirements.**



- More water was obtained from hydrants located at the airports bus terminal about a 1km away via a **vehicle shuttle.**
- Eventually a Fire Authority water tanker arrived to keep the ARFF vehicles on scene and operating effectively.
- Heavy rain diluted the foam blankets (AFF) **causing it to break down** and be less effective.
- It took approximately 1hr 40 mins after the crash before the passenger manifest arrived and passenger numbers could be confirmed.
- L2 door opened by itself due to crash forces, the chute then failed to deploy.
- In 1978 a similar accident involving a DC9 occurred in the overshoot area of the Toronto Pearson INTL 24L (old runway).
- This resulted in two fatalities and 47 serious injuries.
- The Coroner examining this 1978 incident recommended immediate action to extend the RESA area and place a 300m causeway over the ravine. (It was rejected by the Greater Toronto Airport Authority GTAA due to cost.)

Nearly three years after the 2005 A 340 crash, Air France attempted to sue the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA), which runs Pearson, as well as the Canadian government and Nav-Canada. Nav-Canada is the privatised agency in charge of air-traffic control in Canada. Air France is suing for \$180 million, claiming the runway the plane slid off lacks proper safety margins and did not meet international standards. Specifically, negligence that the GTAA did not enact the recommendations of the Coroner from the 1978 crash, there was no 300m run off area, there were no grooves in the runway to aid water runoff and traction and there were no arrestor beds to prevent an aircraft sliding into the ravine.

The Nav-Canada and GTAA defence is that they might not comply with ICAO but they comply with the Canadian Regulation. **Sound familiar?** Regulations that a cynic might suggest the GTAA helped formulate to reduce their costs rather than to increase safety.

A \$12 million plus class action law suit on behalf of 184 passengers was settled which

included \$10 mil from Air France, \$2 mil from the airport and \$1.65 mil from Airbus and Goodrich the slide manufacturer. Nav-Canada and Air France also jointly contributed another \$7.1 mil in 2010. In 2011 counsel for the class action claimants were also awarded costs of over \$6.2 mil. That's a lot of millions that could have bought a decent size arrestor bed or possibly grooved the runway in the first place.

### So what do UFU Members learn from this:

1. People with safety accountabilities should never be pressured into making decisions that are based purely on costs and not safety consequences. Why did these pilots choose to land when many others had already diverted to safer airports? Why did ATC keep this airport open when the weather was so bad? Why did the airport authority reject the Runway End Safety Area advice and knowingly choose to ignore ICAO recommendations regarding runway safety? Why does Airservices, CASA and DIRD promote and apply the same flawed logic of ignoring ICAO SARPS here in Australia?
2. Are you relying on Shuttling Trucks to get water to the scene? Have you really considered in detail the practical and time implications of this strategy? Don't be fooled by the old 'don't get down in the weeds' argument. You need to get down in the weeds and you need to take a magnifying glass with you when you are preparing for PPRR. (Prevention, Planning, Response, Recovery)
3. Primarily Adelaide is our only real Cat 9 airport, 3 trucks on line and a crew of 2 + 8. Our stations at Cat 8 that use remission Coolangatta, Darwin and Cairns have the same vehicles but only 2+6 staff, to protect category 9 aircraft.
  - So do you go to the closest hydrants?
  - Do you know how much water you can get out of them? Have you checked lately?
  - Do you go to the designated hydrants?
  - How far away are these hydrants from the runway ends?
  - How long will it take for the Mk 8 to get there?
  - How long to fill up? How long for the Mk 8 to get back?
  - Do you follow the ARFFs driving SOP and have two staff return?

- How do you conduct rescue and control the critical area with only 4 firefighters left on a Cat 9 fireground?
4. So Category 9 and 8 here with Mk8's have 26,700 litres on-board, as well as that we also have the known performance issues of F3 foams. This incident used nearly 40,000 litres just in the initial attack before crews started to shuttle vehicles for water. The question that should be asked by any safety focussed operations authority is **do we have enough agent on board to actually do the job?** Is that assessment based on research of real aircraft incidents or is it just the minimum agent ARFFS can get away with and not be charged as negligent?
  5. What happens when decisions are not being made with real operational knowledge and depth of understanding is the Canadian situation and defence of 'but we met the minimum regulations required in this country'.
  6. Have you really conducted a proper assessment of all the difficult terrain access on your airports or only the wedge? Wherever it crashes on the airport you will still be expected to attend and operate effectively.
  7. Flight attendants and crew are on-board the aircraft when it crashes. Is it wise to think they will always be fully capable of supporting the evacuation and mustering the survivors to a safe area? In this case two were seriously injured.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/pictures/air-france-flight-358-crash/>  
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/air-france-settles-flight-358-class-action-suit-1.854222>  
<http://www.citynews.ca/2008/06/04/air-france-sues-gtaa-ottawa-over-2005-crash-at-pearson/>  
[https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2008/06/04/air\\_france\\_sues\\_over\\_crash.html](https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2008/06/04/air_france_sues_over_crash.html)  
<http://www.cfmlawyers.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Air-France-Nav-Canada-Statement-of-Defence.pdf>  
<https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/10/31/transport-canada-dragging-its-feet-on-addressing-safety-risks-watchdog.html>

## The DIRDy Review:

### Introduction:

**On December 18 2015, the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development (DIRD) released a regulatory policy review consultation paper that considered future arrangements in relation to the provision of ARFFS at Australian airports.** Public and industry comments on the paper closed on February 12 2016. Eleven submissions were received, from the following entities:

- Airservices Australia
- Australian Airports Association
- Ayers Rock Airport
- Board of Airlines Representatives of Australia Inc
- International Air Transport Association
- Qantas
- Regional Aviation Association of Australia
- Regional Express
- The Administration of Norfolk Island
- United Fire Fighters Union
- Virgin Australia

In December 2016, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Darren Chester MP announced the outcomes of the ARFFS Regulatory Policy Review.

### Summary of the Review:

Recommended amendments to the Civil Aviation Safety Regulations (CASR) Subpart 139.H and Manual of Standards:

ARFFS to be established at a location where a trigger event occurs and where the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) decides, following a risk review, that ARFFS is required at that location.

The establishment triggers for a risk review are:

- Scheduled international passenger air services, or
- 500,000 passengers on scheduled commercial air services P/A.

ARFFS is disestablished when a trigger event occurs and where CASA decides, following the conduct of a risk review **by the ARFFS provider** that ARFFS is no longer required.

Disestablishment triggers for a risk review are:

- Withdrawal of scheduled international passenger air services, or

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- Passenger on scheduled commercial air services falling below 400,000 P/A. CASA and the ARFFS provider to consult with industry, **the public** and relevant government agencies during the conduct of risk reviews.

CASA must complete a risk review for establishment of an ARFFS within six months of a scheduled international passenger air services approved to commence operating at an airport. Or when the Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE) confirms 500,000 passenger's P/A trigger has been met at an airport.

An ARFFS provider must complete a risk review within six months of the withdrawal of scheduled international passenger air services or the BITRE confirming passenger numbers below 400,000 P/A.

Where an establishment risk review decides that ARFFS is not required, CASA will monitor activities to determine whether a further risk assessment is required. If numbers continue to be above 500,000 P/A or scheduled international passenger air services continue a further risk review is to be undertaken. A risk review should be undertaken if significant changes of safety risk factors occur.

Where the risk review decides ARFFS is required at a location, CASA in consultation with the ARFFS provider, will determine the timeframe for establishment.

CASA may permit a graduated service prior to the establishment of full ARFFS operations. A graduated service could include the initial provision of ARFFS at a category lower than the services required. Alternatively, other measures including the training of the local fire brigade, and the provision of personnel and firefighting equipment.

Where the risk review indicates that ARFFS should remain at the location, and twelve months after CASA's decision, passenger numbers remain below the

disestablishment trigger or does not receive a scheduled international passenger air service, further risk review should be undertaken by the ARFFS provider and decision made by CASA.

In transitioning to the new arrangements, **it would not be necessary to undertake a disestablishment risk review relating to an existing ARFFS unless the total number of passengers falls below the existing disestablishment threshold of 300,000 P/A.**

A "fire-fighting related service" provided at an airport that is not required to have an ARFFS under the CASR is not an "ARFFS" within the meaning of the CASR. A "firefighting related service" could still be provided at an airport but would not be subject to the regulatory framework or regulation by CASA.

ARFFS are for areas or facilities which are used or intended to be used for aviation activities and activities closely connected with aviation activities; including: taxiways, runways, aprons, airside roads, airside grounds and aircraft parking areas; airside freight handling and staging areas; air traffic control towers; airport terminals; and aircraft hangars, on-airport maintenance facilities and aviation fuel storage/refuelling facilities.

Aviation-related infrastructure may be identified as such in an agreement (Memorandum of Agreement) between ARFFS and fire authorities. Agreements should be developed in consultation with the airport owner/operator.

Fire authorities are not required to hold separate CASA approval to assist an ARFFS provider in the provision of ARFFS under an agreement with ARFFS.

The airport operator facilitates the provision of ARFFS and are required to facilitate the provision of: access to on airport utilities to meet service delivery requirements; adequate facilities for rapidly replenishing water supply; emergency roads capable of supporting ARFFS vehicles;

crash gates for off airside access; regular communication about the provision of ARFFS at the airport, and access to a reasonable area on the airport for storage, training and other ARFFS related uses.

Prescriptive requirements relating to training and equipment provisions be replaced with a more systems and outcomes-based approach supported by the regulatory requirement for the ARFFS provider to establish a safety management system which is approved and audited by CASA.

## Conclusion:

The UFUA Aviation Branch tried very hard to prevent this travesty of a regulatory review from proceeding. It looks as though our efforts may have saved the ARFFS at those airports that don't currently meet the 400k disestablishment threshold. Our letters to CASA, the Minister, Comcare & all Australian Ministers and Senators asking for support along with our Three Minutes to Live campaign may have been responsible for preventing a total disaster.

But there are still significant dangers to our members in these changes. We are all aware how light on any kind of operational facts Airservices Risk work is when it comes to ARFF. Airservices cannot be trusted to meet the requirements of the regulations now without running to CASA for exemptions. So, if they can't or won't comply now when they are legally obliged to, what will it look like when they can do what they like.

Providing an ARFFS at a lower category as a graduated service just goes to show how little these people writing these regulations know about ARFFS. If you don't have the agent required, you can't put out the fire. If you don't have the staff required you can't operate in a safe an effective manner, as per the SOP's. Passengers and ARFF staff put at risk again but at least they saved some money.



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## What is the real story with Sick Leave?

The UFU has been asked by our members to have a look at sick leave and to discuss it in terms of what are your rights and entitlements.

To start with a lot of our members are increasing tired of the various ad-hoc arrangements that are being touted by ARFF Managers such as ARFFCARE. As well as this they are quite suspect of some of the **average figures** and targets being bandied around by Airservices.

So here is the real statistics for the **Australian Public Service:**

	Average 2015-16 leave rates	Minimum rate	Maximum rate	Average 2014-15 leave rates
Small agencies	10.9	3.0	19.1	10.7
Medium agencies	12.0	6.7	17.5	12.2
Large agencies	12.5	9.5	14.9	12.4
Overall APS	11.5	3.0	19.1	11.6

Absenteeism levels per employee per year in Australia as a whole (Public/Private sectors) have increased by about 10.5% from 8.6 days to 9.5 days, according to DHS' 2016 Absence Management and Wellbeing Survey Report. The survey benchmarks absenteeism levels by major industry sectors. Absenteeism was highest in the telecommunications & utilities sector (11.6 days), followed by the public sector (10.9 days) and transport & logistics (10.8 days).

Absence levels in banking, finance & insurance increased significantly to 9.7 days. The contact centre industry experienced a 14% reduction in absence

levels, to 9.7 days per employee per annum, down from 11.6 days in 2015.

The data also identifies a complex, **but clear relationship between employee engagement and absence**. The facts show that employees with higher engagement levels take fewer days of sick and carer's leave. This is supported by industry research that provides links between an engaged workforce and its impact on unscheduled absence.

The top ten reasons for absenteeism given in a UK report are:

- **Childcare** (80% of women with children work in the UK, or both parents working)
- **Accidents** (UK Employers looking at subsidising health insurance or paying for operations to avoid National Health System Queues)

- **Sickness** (stress rates as one of the highest causes)
- **Bullying** (1 in 10 staff experience bullying, 18 mil work days a year lost UK)
- **Flexibility** (work life balance and flexible hours and arrangements)
- **Poor Leadership** (UK figures: 80% of workers are disengaged due poor managers)
- **Bereavement** (Aging workforce, mental health, existing stressors)
- **Change** (constant, invasive, poorly communicated, and unnecessary)
- **Travel** (to and from work, UK Employers looking at subsidising public transport costs)

- **Ergonomics** (the workplace environment) As you can see the reality of our members absenteeism performance is quite different to the unrealistic target figures being set by ARFF management. Also the accusations that somehow ARFF firefighters are malingerers when it comes to sick leave is quite false. The UFU believes that instead of constantly harassing our members on return to work Airservices should concentrate on the top 10 reasons for absence's provided above.

Our members are asked to seriously consider the actions taken by their managers when accessing **legal entitlements**.

Remember **it is unlawful to take adverse action** against an employee, to prevent an employee from exercising a workplace right, such as accessing a lawful entitlement to take leave. (Fair Work Ombudsman) If a company is found to have breached these workplace laws, the company directors each **personally** face penalties.

For adverse actions claims, the onus of proof lies with **the employer** who must prove that the adverse action was not a result of the employee attempting to exercise their workplace rights. Adverse actions under the *Fair Work Act* are available to our members if you can rightfully claim that any action was taken against you resulting in harm to your employment and it was initiated as a result of you **properly** exercising your workplace rights.

If you feel you have experienced this kind of treatment contact your UFU Station Representative immediately.

### UFU AVIATION BRANCH

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UFUQ General Secretary John Oliver, UFUQ Assistant Secretary Shane Malley and Retired Firefighters Association Queensland President Allan Young with the retiring firefighters' party.

## An overview of 2016

**Overall, 2016 was a positive year for the Queensland branch, and for all members across the state.**

In 2015 we were focussed on making our way back to the position we were in before the Newman Government's cuts. Thankfully, we can now instead focus on securing gains such as new allowances and entitlements and higher rates of pay in the certified agreement, and ensuring the smooth implementation of the auxiliary award.

It was an exciting year for our auxiliary members with the commencement of their first ever award, conferring a range of new entitlements and conditions.

We also finalised the award modernisation process, for professional firefighters and fire communications officers, and we signed an agreement that requires the QFES to cease

the use of temporary firefighters when filling staffing gaps in professional rosters.

We had some good outcomes in the political sphere as well, with the introduction of nation-leading smoke alarm laws, a new Industrial Relations Act and the transferral of key powers away from the bureaucratic Public Safety Business Agency.

We could not have made as much ground as we did in 2016 without the support of each other and without the collective power we vest in our union.

### Fire and Rescue restructure

The QFES recently announced a review of the structure of Fire and Rescue, following the partial disassembling of the PSBA. UFUQ is broadly in favour of a restructure, though we are mindful that any proposed change on this scale must be treated with the utmost caution.

In any restructure, we want to ensure that Fire and Rescue retains, maintains and improves the role of firefighters and of fire communications officers.

General Secretary John Oliver has had meetings with senior Fire and Rescue management about their plans and how UFUQ members may be affected. John was seeking assurances that any restructure would not have a negative effect on the capacity of members to provide a world class fire and rescue response to our communities.

UFUQ will fight to ensure that the review is not influenced by the same political and ideological interests as determined the outcomes of the 2013 Keelty Review. The Keelty Review was intended to justify the privatisation of parts of Fire and Rescue, and its recommendations have now been entirely discredited.

Members can rest assured that UFUQ will continue to fight for the conditions, recognition and respect that Fire and Rescue workers deserve. Members will be kept well informed as this matter progresses.

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Emergency Services & State Super



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## New minister

The Queensland branch has been working closely with a new Minister for Fire and Rescue this year, following a cabinet reshuffle that occurred in November 2016. Minister Mark Ryan has met with UFUQ representatives on multiple occasions already, and has been receptive to many of the concerns raised on behalf of members.

The Queensland branch acknowledges the great work of outgoing minister Bill Byrne. Over the past year we have enjoyed a positive and open working relationship with the government, from our certified agreement negotiations, to various legislative changes.

Minister Byrne has proven himself to be a supporter of firefighters and fire communications officers and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

## New IR Act

Queensland's new Industrial Relations Act 2016 has recently been passed.

UFUQ participated actively in the 18 month consultation process, and we made it clear that the current system has failed fires. We pushed for better dispute resolution processes, protections for collective action and for an industrial tribunal that is entirely independent from the government of the day.

The government decided to create an entirely new Act, overhauling the existing industrial relations framework. While it does not go as far as we were hoping, particularly in terms of strengthening the independence of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC), it does introduce a few new provisions that are relevant to us.

A general protections jurisdiction has been included to create a layer of security for employees faced with any form of adverse action. This section comes from the federal Fair Work Act 2009, and protects employees

from any retribution made against them by their employer when they exercise their legitimate workplace rights.

The Queensland branch considers the changes to be broadly positive for our members and we will closely monitor their implementation.

## Certified Agreement

Following a tumultuous period between 2012 and 2015, including a lengthy arbitration and a QIRC Determination, UFUQ has finally been able to secure a new certified agreement for our professional firefighter and fire communications members.

The union initially put 20 claims to QFES, and QFES had 5 claims on the table. Our log of claims was compiled in conjunction with branches and SCM representatives, and a copy was circulated to all members for feedback in August 2016.

Intensive negotiations were held multiple times per week. An 'in principle agreement' was reached on 31 October 2016. This means that when the next certified agreement commences, there will be a back payment of wages to 1 October 2016.

As a result of pushing through the basics of the agreed content by that deadline, there was still some work to do on further content within the certified agreement, and on supporting business rules and other policies and procedures that will need to be ready to commence when the certified agreement does.

Some significant gains for firefighter and fire communications members were achieved during the negotiations and we will be advocating for members to vote yes on the new certified agreement when the time comes.

Much more information will come in the next couple of months, and a draft copy of the certified agreement will be circulated prior to the Yes/No vote. Once the vote occurs, if a

positive result occurs, the QFES and UFUQ will make an application to the QIRC to have the agreement certified and to provide a nominal commencement date.

## Joe Ryan AFSM

The Queensland branch was delighted to hear that one of our most active union members was awarded the Australian Fire Services Medal (AFSM) on Australia Day this year. Joe Ryan is a Station Officer from Brisbane North branch who has held various union positions over the last 20 years including Branch Secretary, Branch President, Assistant State Secretary and Senior Vice President.

Joe has always been a strong advocate in the workplace, using his natural leadership and integrity to stand up for the rights and entitlements of his fellow firefighters. Joe demonstrated this dedication and passion when he stood in as a key witness in the union's lengthy QIRC arbitration against QFES in 2014. He has also played an integral role in negotiating the implementation of the reserve roster, an achievement that will have positive ramifications for members across the state.

Joe is an exemplary role model for firefighters. The AFSM could not have gone to a more worthy candidate.

## Retiring firefighters' party 2016

Last year 18 firefighter members hung up the helmet. On 28 October 2016, the UFUQ was in attendance at the retiring firefighters' party to celebrate each of their careers.

The UFUQ would like to thank all retiring members for their years of service, and wish them all the best in retirement.

### UFUA QUEENSLAND BRANCH

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Branch Secretary: John Oliver

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## At last the Total Wage!

**Operative from 8 December 2016, the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service Enterprise Agreement 2014 and the Firefighting Industry Employees (South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service) Award 2007 were varied by consent between the UFU and the SAMFS.**

This variation is the culmination of a long campaign by firefighters in SA to implement a Total Wage which means that the enterprise agreement (EA) now reflects what firefighters are actually paid; importantly it also means that our penalty rates which comprise 39.33% of our weekly wage will be much harder to undermine.

In addition to generally tidying up the Award and EA, the variation also means that provisions such as domestic/family violence leave have been added to the Award, there is clarification that the day work allowance applies to all leave (as it always has done) and is now put beyond doubt, travel rates are set out more clearly, public holidays have been updated and the historic practice of adding them to annual leave where they occur during a period of leave, has been formalised.

Most importantly the total wage is now enshrined in both our Award and our EA.

The campaign for the Total Wage commenced with the agreement between the parties included in the 2011 EA to work towards this outcome; the clause containing the agreement was reiterated in the 2014

EA but action was not forthcoming from the MFS to bring it to fruition.

Industrial action was on the agenda in 2015 when the then new Chief Officer Mr Greg Crossman intervened and agreed to retain the services of retired IRC Commissioner and SBC Chair Mick Doyle to investigate and report on a methodology to introduce the total wage on the agreed cost neutral basis.

Throughout the process the Chief Officer demonstrated a consultative and positive approach to the issue which assisted in developing an effective working relationship.

Both the UFU SA Branch and the SAMFS are deeply grateful to Mick Doyle for his hard work and commitment to the outcome achieved; in particular for developing the Total Wage model proposed in his feasibility study report commissioned by the SAMFS and for his comprehensive review of the Award which puts SA firefighters in a strong position into the future.

The consultative process with members on the proposed changes to the Award and Agreement to introduce the Total Wage was extensive, with more than 20 meetings on all shifts and at a range of locations being conducted between October 31 and November 7 2016. Those meetings were all the more informative for Mick Doyle addressing members on the background and history of this important issue.

Any variation to an enterprise agreement is required to go to a ballot and for the first time the ballot for SAMFS EA variation was conducted by electronic means.

Not only is an electronic ballot considerably more cost-effective, importantly the ease of use for members was exceptional and it enabled the ballot to be carried out in a very short timeframe of 8 days.

That UFUSA members embraced electronic voting was demonstrated by their historic level of participation in the ballot.

At the close of the ballot on November 23 2016, 88.8% of Firefighters had cast a ballot with 870 (99%) in favour and 10 (1%) against.

This historic ballot outcome is a great achievement which members in SA are justly proud to have attained and which will serve us well in our determination to protect our penalty rates into the future.



Mick Doyle.



Mick Doyle explains in the engine bay at Port Adelaide.

# SOUTH AUSTRALIA BRANCH



Left to right: Lindsay Brown, Peter Brooks, Chris Canavan, Les French, Robin Mills, John Stephanos, Jeff Drew

## Engineering Workers at SAMFS Organise For Change

**UFU members employed in the Engineering Department of the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service are working together to upgrade conditions in the SAMFS workshop at Angle Park.**

They are addressing issues such as safer working conditions, including adequate lighting, fume extraction, elevated platform work and climate control which will not

only make the workshop a better and more efficient place to work, but will also ensure they are able to maintain the provision of high-quality service to SAMFS appliances and the crews who depend on them.

In cooperation with SAMFS management, a new business plan is also being developed to chart the path for the Engineering Department into the future and hopefully this will ensure there are sufficient resources to keep core business in-house rather than outsourcing it.

As emergency vehicle technicians, UFU members employed in engineering have specialty skills, knowledge and experience seldom found elsewhere not to mention their intense focus on doing their utmost and

ensuring appliances best serve the safety and well-being of our firefighters.

A key current concern of members is the reduction of staffing in the Engineering Department over the last 6 years which is having a severe impact not just on the resources available but on staff morale.

These matters have been brought to the attention of SAMFS management, with some issues being immediately addressed and others under consideration.

UFU members in the Engineering Department understand that their strength is in solidarity and they stand together on the pursuit of a resolution to these important issues.





## SAMFS and UFU participate in Gay Pride Rally in Adelaide!

**Pride March Adelaide celebrates Adelaide's LGBTIQ love, strength and diversity each year with a joyous march through the streets of Adelaide.**

Late last year the United Firefighters' Union was proud to join the SAMFS as members turned out for the rally, alongside other emergency services to actively demonstrate our embrace of diversity.

The Chief and Deputy led the way for the MFS contingent, with the appropriately decorated MFS appliance having pride of



place, followed by a huge crowd of men, women, children and even a range of pets dressed for the occasion.

Excitement, acceptance, love and joy filled the air and a great time was had by all.

### UFUA SA BRANCH

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# Firefighter Exchange Fellowship Programme and the Tasmania Fire Service

## What is the Firefighter Fellowship Exchange Fellowship?

An exchange programme briefly defined: “is an opportunity for two persons of the same profession, working for different employers to temporarily exchange their jobs for a defined period of time”.

The Firefighter Exchange Fellowship Programme supports reciprocal exchanges between Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) firefighters and firefighters from overseas or other Australian States or Territories. An exchange gives firefighters the opportunity to improve their practical skills, knowledge and experience by being an active member of an overseas or interstate fire brigade. The term ‘Fellowship’ is used to indicate the spirit of the exchange. The concept of Fellowship is used in the hope and expectation that those firefighters and their families will be keen to join the network of others who have benefited from an exchange and will continue to participate in promoting the programme to others. Fellowship also refers to the hope that exchange partners will develop a bond of friendship through their shared experience which will last beyond the formal boundaries of the exchange.

To be considered for an exchange firefighters need to be a worthy representative and have the endorsement of their Fire Service. Since 1994, 14 TFS firefighters have taken the opportunity to spend time in overseas and interstate fire services.

## What are the benefits of the Programme?

An exchange programme is more than just a learning experience. The opportunity for a change of environment offers a refreshing break for the employee. The Programme is a personally and professionally rewarding opportunity that encourages a more diverse Fire Service and the positive development of our profession.

While we live in an ever connected world and access to information is just a swipe away, sometimes you just can’t beat the ability to experience something first hand

to truly learn what it is you know, what is you don’t know and what it is you could do better. Sure there are the usual benefits such as, being able to share knowledge and improve efficiency and morale, build international networks, being able to professionally represent your home fire service, gaining knowledge in specialist areas, gaining interesting life experience from living in a location away from your home base and experiencing growth in your professionalism and understanding of different organisations/cultures.

But occasionally there are unexpected outcomes that really drive home the tangible benefits of this programme.

Did you know, arguably, one of the catalysts for the introduction of Presumptive Cancer Legislation in Australia was from an exchange between TFS firefighter James Newstead and Canadian Firefighter Terry Peters in 2006. Whilst in Tasmania Terry Peters, from Powell River Fire Service, British Columbia, Canada, briefed the UFUATAS Branch Committee of Management about the Canadian push for Presumptive Cancer Legislation and then the UFUA Executive. From there it became a national agenda item and years down the track we have seen federal and state legislation enacted. The push continues to have all professional firefighters covered by Presumptive Cancer Legislation in all Australian states and territories. This is one of the most significant outcomes I have seen in my 32 years as a proud UFUA member.

## What an exchange is not.

An exchange is not a paid holiday. Exchange firefighters will be employed on contract with another Fire Service and have the same responsibilities they do with their own Fire Service. The purpose is to enable exchange firefighters to experience another way of life and a different work environment. It is a dynamic opportunity that allows them to use their new location as a base in which to explore other places of interest, and learn more about their profession. On beginning

work with the host employer, exchange firefighters assume the role of ambassador for their home agency. Appropriate etiquette is a necessity to ensure the ongoing success of the programme.

## How does the programme operate?

This programme operates as far as practicable on a cost neutral basis. Firefighters replace each other, time for time, position for position, leave for leave, working agreement for working agreement. Firefighters maintain their employment with their current Fire Service and therefore all salary and benefits are maintained by their existing employer, even whilst on the exchange. There is generally no facility for overtime payment whilst on exchange. Any overtime accrued needs to be recorded and then taken as time off in lieu. Their children exchange schools, and their families either exchange accommodations directly or help each other arranging alternative living arrangements. All costs for travel, personal and health insurances and living expenses are the responsibility of the firefighters.

Costs for induction and uniforms are met by the host Fire Services. Fire Services are required to continue to supply workers compensation for their employee whilst working internationally or interstate. Without this an exchange is unlikely to proceed.

## Eligibility

The exchange programme is not for everyone and can only be successful if those who choose to exchange apply for the right reasons. Firefighters need to be dedicated, professional and flexible. The application process is extensive, complex and largely self-driven. The TFS will only consider candidates that can:

- be ambassadors for the organisation
- present themselves in a professional manner and
- add value to their role upon their return, based on what they have learned.

To be eligible to participate in the programme firefighters need to be an experienced and qualified career (professional) firefighter, with a minimum

of four years full time service. The TFS has established criteria for participating in the programme.

### **What are the chances of getting an exchange once accepted into the programme?**

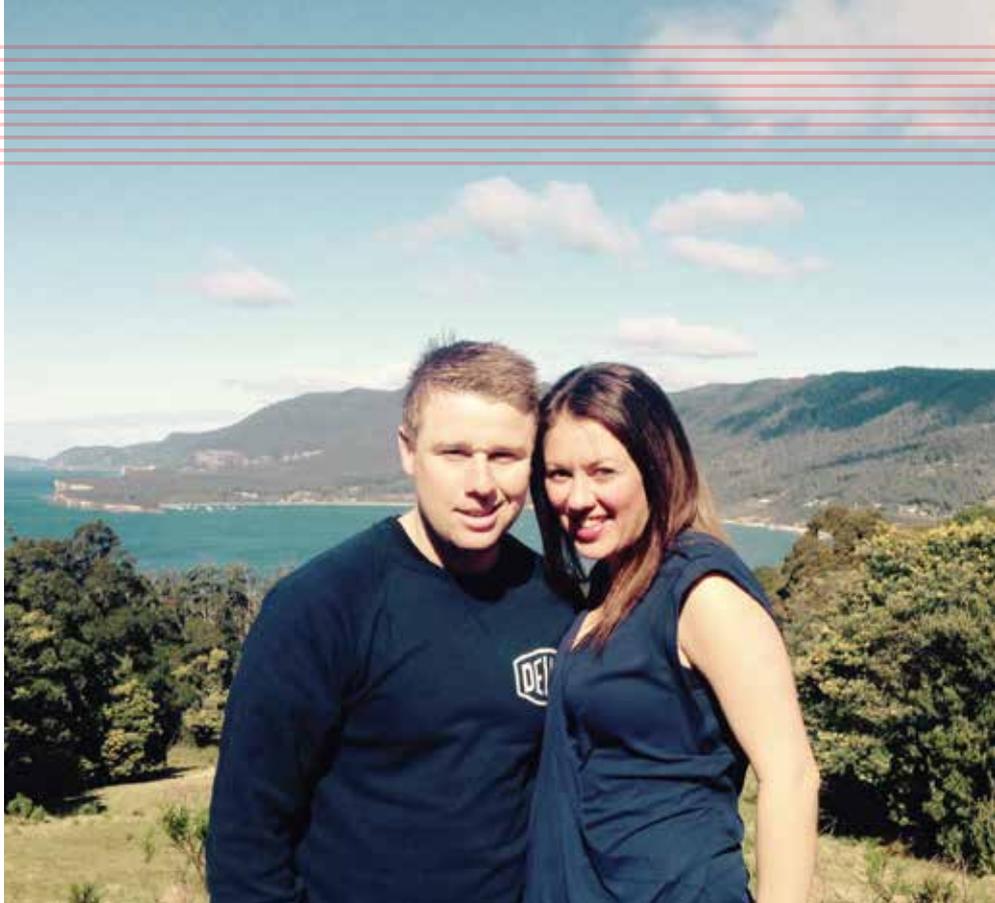
One of the hardest parts of the exchange process can be locating a suitable exchange partner. In the case of the TFS it is up to individuals to arrange/locate suitable exchange partners. The TFS does not locate exchange partners. As the TFS Exchange Coordinator I regularly receive overseas enquiries from firefighters enquiring about the programme. Generally these exchange opportunities are e-mailed to all operational staff allowing anyone to make direct contact with the firefighter making the enquiry. *Note that it can sometimes take years before a match is found and not all applicants accepted into the programme will locate an exchange match.*

### **What about Professional Associations or Unions?**

This programme has been endorsed by a number of International Associations. Most Associations value this programme and are anxious to offer this dynamic lifestyle experience to their members. Their interests are protecting the integrity of their working arrangements while at the same time improving the Fire Service. As a result exchanging parties will accept the terms of the Department or Brigade they are exchanging to. A guest employee will also become a guest member of the Association or Union of the employee they are replacing.

### **Summary of an exchange.**

The simplest way to understand the concept of exchange is to view the exchange as a replacement. Your replacement becomes you in your absence from the date you begin the exchange until the date the exchange is final. Salaries and benefits are not exchanged, you will be continued to be paid by your permanent employer. You will be exchanging work hours, leave, holidays and positions. You will adopt the policies and working agreements of the host employer and you will wear clothing and protective equipment provided by the host employer. Most importantly, the success of the programme depends on sending the right people for the right reasons.



Roger and Tanya.



The Babinsky Family.

TFS exchange programme information is available @ [www.fire.tas.gov.au/Show?pagel=colViewIFF](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au/Show?pagel=colViewIFF)

Get on the internet and research both the demographics and agencies you are interested in applying to. Make contact with these agencies – good luck.

### **Current TFS international exchange.**

Firefighters Roger Brown from TFS Launceston Fire Brigade and Alex Babinsky from the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Manitoba, Canada are participating in the exchange programme from 1 September 2016 to 30 August 2017.

Roger will be accompanied by his partner Tanya. (Photo attached)

Alex will be accompanied by his wife Jenna and their sons Ryan and Emmett.

### **Where to find information about exchange programmes.**

Make enquiries within your own agency to ensure an exchange will be supported, without this, an exchange will not proceed. There needs to be someone with the appropriate authority to oversee the process, usually referred to as the exchange coordinator. Your Human Resources Department is a good place start, or if you know someone who has previously been on an exchange find out who managed their programme.

#### **WRITTEN BY CHRIS TOMES**

Professional firefighter since 1984  
Proud UFU member since 1984  
First TFS firefighter to exchange internationally - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada, 1995  
TFS Exchange Coordinator since 1996  
Current UFUATAS Workplace Representative  
Previous UFUATAS Trustee, Branch Committee of Management  
Previous UFUATAS President

## Enterprise bargaining

**The bargaining process extended until January 2017.** The UFUA had to call on the Tasmanian Industrial Commission four times during the negotiations. This was a difficult bargain to negotiate. The Government position initially was all benefits arising from the agreements will be costed against the 2% per annum wages offer. The Government also attempted to remove a number of conditions from the agreement, including minimum manning and the wellness programme.

UFUA members rejected this position and advised the government the offer was insulting to firefighters. A revised offer was provided in December that included the following: 2% per annum wages increase, a commitment to the work value on classifications, a commitment to develop a wellness programme tailored for firefighters, introduction of access to novated leasing for vehicles, two weeks extra maternity leave, improved access to lactation facilities, flexibility to access bereavement and compassionate leave, revised payments to firefighters for interstate deployment, clarification on 1AM payment for attending meetings, agreement to retain provisions for the UFUA to pursue minimum staffing, uniform and PPC, history of superannuation contributions for firefighters and officers and further development of the provisions for lateral entry.

The agreement was supported at a ballot that concluded on Tuesday 21 February.

## Budgets for the SFC

**The State Fire Commission (SFC) has run deficit budgets for the past three years.** This of concern to the UFUA and coincidentally aligns with the incoming Liberal Government and their fiscal

strategies of aligning the State Emergency Services with the Fire Service, Corporate Services Integration and the introduction of the Fuel Reduction Unit. The Chief Officer and a TFS delegation provided the UFUA Branch Committee of Management, (BCOM) with a briefing on a Wise Lord Ferguson Audit conducted for the SFC. The audit will be used to assist the SFC to return to a budget surplus by 2017. The information provided to BCOM will be analysed and further updates will be developed once the analysis is completed.

## Policies and procedures

**The BCOM is pursuing policy development with the TFS on Noise Prevention/Noise Exposure and Heat Stress.** These matters are extremely important to BCOM and whilst preliminary exchanges of correspondence have occurred detailed policy on both matters is lacking. These matters will continue as a priority for BCOM in 2017.

## Recruit Course

**The Fire Service recently announced a recruit course of 15 firefighters for 2017.** This is good news. The recruits should be passing out in November. The new recruits will be welcomed on stations and will hopefully have an impact on reducing the increasing amount of overtime that firefighters are called to undertake. The TFS is putting a positive focus on recruitment of female firefighters. Best of luck to all applicants.

### UFUA TASMANIA BRANCH

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## Fire Preparedness Inquiry

**The UFU's Victorian Branch has told a parliamentary inquiry into bushfire preparedness that community safety must be paramount.**

UFU Victorian secretary Peter Marshall challenged: "Are the communities, that the CFA are responsible for, being protected in accordance with the standards required to maximise the potential for saving life, minimising damage to property, and preventing the flow-on of economic loss?"

He warned: "Failure to meet those standards of response does not meet community expectations, puts lives at risk and increases damage to property resulting in economic loss."

In 2016 the Legislative Council Environment and Planning Standing Committee of the Parliament of Victoria initiated an Inquiry to inquire into and report on the preparation and planning for fire seasons.

In December 2016 the Committee published an Interim Report. This Interim Report made no findings but advised that the Committee was extending its reporting date for the Fires Season Preparedness inquiry until April 5 2017.

Peter Marshall told the inquiry that Victoria was ready – despite damaging politics and inaccurate media:

"The state is properly fire-prepared for this upcoming fire season. At the end of the day, there have been disputes before, and firefighters are firefighters for a reason — that is, to look after the communities. That is in their blood, if you like, and that continues irrespective."

An inquiry such as this could be expected to be apolitical and focus on a genuine evaluation of the state of fire preparedness in Victoria ahead of a looming bushfire season.

However this Inquiry sat in the context of a virulent and wildly untrue campaign by the Herald Sun and other media against the proposed agreement between the CFA and the UFU. This campaign falsely accused the UFU of trying to take control of the CFA and

trying to sideline the volunteers. The Liberal and National Parties also seized upon these falsehoods and sought to make the agreement an issue in the Federal election.

Peter Marshall spoke to the positives. He emphasised the improved interoperability provided by the proposed EB, and its contribution and aims of productivity, efficiency, trying to make the service more efficient and trying to streamline the operations, particularly between the MFB and the CFA.

He explained that it was necessary for officers to be able to identify a skill set on the fireground, and that provisions of the EB about uniforms and the like addressed this need.

Peter refuted claims that the proposed EB affected volunteers. He emphasised the effects of the clauses inserted by the Fair Work Commission which specifically provided that there was nothing in the agreement which had an affect on volunteers. Similarly he explained that the Incident controller would be in charge of all CFA personnel at the incident whether he/she was a volunteer.

He charitably described political and media claims that volunteers will have to wait until seven career firefighters turn up to put out a fire as “misinformation”.

Finally he called on politicians to take action to stop the denigration of firefighters. He pointed out that firefighters were “suffering dearly from this (denigration). They have been hurt very badly from this. Many of them have booked off work, many of them are suffering post-traumatic stress and many of them have become pariahs in their own community because of comments ...”

In contrast, the MFB tried to suggest that the UFU draft proposed agreement would have the effect of requiring any direction by the Chief Officer to be subject to consultation and veto by the UFU.

But then the MFB had to concede that the consultation clauses were largely the ones in the current EB.

The MFB said that it needed “some relief from the current arrangements that are prescribed within a very

## The Committee's terms of references included:

- a. the amount and nature of preventative burning undertaken to date;
- b. the measures in place to ensure preventative burning is undertaken safely;
- c. the effectiveness of preventative burns in achieving community safety;
- d. the impact of preventative burns on threatened species;
- e. the impact of preventative burns on Ecological Vegetation Classes;
- f. the impact of preventative burns on the climate;
- g. the targeting of preventative measures state wide;
- h. the resources available to ensure that adequate preparation is undertaken;
- i. the co ordination of such planning and preparation with other departments and agencies across government;
- j. the nature and level of emergency response;
- k. the relevant administrative and organisational structures in place within the Department and with other relevant government departments and agencies; and
- l. the impact of land tenure on the ability to provide fire prevention activities and the differences between types of land tenure such as National Park, State Forest, Regional Park and others.

prescriptive document, which is the 2010 arrangements.” Its submission was really a rehash of its failed Fair Work attempt to terminate the 2010 Agreement.

Meanwhile, current and former leaders of the CFA gave conflicting evidence.

Former CFA CEO Lucinda Nolan said she believed the proposed CFA-UFU EB would be “destructive and divisive” and impact on the volunteers – despite the specific clause which stated that the EB would not affect volunteers.

Former CFA Chief Officer Joe Buffone said the proposed EB consultation provisions affected the ability to make timely decisions, and that it was inflexible because it would lock in for the period of the EBA staffing levels, appliance levels, and policies. He said the proposed EB would inhibit the ability of the Chief Officer to perform his statutory obligations.

However, in telling contrast, the current Chief Officer of the CFA, Steve Warrington, the CFA Chair Greg Smith, and its CEO Frances Diver, did not accept these characterisations.

Mr Warrington said that the “CFA for decades has served this state with our volunteers and with our career staff working side by side in an integrated model. We have done that for decades. We will do that this season, and we will do that for years to

come. So to suggest that there is a divide is not true.”

He acknowledged that there had been an effect on morale, and attributed this to media comment about the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement, which he described as “most of which has been speculative and most of which has been embellished. It is just bizarre. He said that “most of our people have had a gutful” of such comment.

He made it clear that the CFA was ready for the summer season, but also pointed out that the reality is CFA is one of the biggest urban fire services and was ready at any time to respond to the broad gamut of functions as a fire service.

CEO Ms Diver also criticised the selective quoting of clauses of the proposed EB to suit particular purposes.

### UFU VIC BRANCH

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## A New State Government in WA

**Western Australia has a new State Government and the Liberal Party in WA suffered the worst electoral defeat in 72 years.** The ALP has a clear majority in the Upper House and the complex counting for the State's Upper House is not complete and it appears that despite the disunity and flakey ideas perpetuated by Pauline Hanson's One Nation, that they received around 6.5% of the vote and may have 2 -3 members in the new Upper House.

The major issue for Western Australians has been the unfair distribution of the GST back to our State and this year it is estimated that we will receive 30c back for every GST dollar collected in our State. This is grossly unfair and it sets back the capacity of our State Government to provide critical infrastructure for the largest State in Australia. The challenge for all of the political parties in the lead up to the next Federal election is how will they guarantee to fix this inequity, and will they finally address this issue or continue to abandon Western Australians?

The WA Branch pays tribute to the outgoing Liberal Minister Joe Francis who strongly supported our presumptive legislation for firefighter cancers for both serving and retired personnel and we thank him for his care and protection of firefighters' wellbeing and welfare and we acknowledge his common sense approach to achieving this result with support from all of the major parties.

The WA Branch also welcomes our new Minister, Fran Logan, and we look forward to working with him and Premier Mark McGowan to ensure the most rational operationally focussed distribution of resources is applied to our industry. This is an exciting opportunity for our members and we look forward to working constructively with the new Government for the benefit and wellbeing of all firefighters.

The new Minister was a fitter and turner before he became a delegate, union researcher and official with the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union and he will have a very practical approach to his new portfolio.

One of the features of the election result has been the overwhelming rejection of an independent Rural Fire Service established as a separate government agency. The outgoing Premier Colin Barnett made a promise to establish a separate Rural Fire Service new headquarters in a regional South West Australian seat that had become a notional Liberal seat on paper. He made this commitment despite being in the middle of a genuine process of consultation about what sort of additional services would be provided to country WA. This was in effect a cheap grab for votes and the citizens of Collie saw through it, and they supported Mick Murray to return to serve their interests. Robyn Clarke defeated one of the strongest Liberal proponents of a separate Rural Fire Service and given his strident biased and emotive advocacy for a separate service, many of our members have not been sorry to see the back of Murray Cowper. In short there is no mandate for a new Government Department and given the state of our economy, any additional resources going into rural and regional WA need to be delivered where they are most needed – at the coal face without wasting scarce resources on a new bureaucracy.

The Union's work is never done and we will continue to fight for more resources in country regional Western Australia and to ensure that we also have adequate protection on the urban rural interface on the periphery of the major cities in the country as well as in Perth. For too long our network of regional Offices have been understaffed and the pressure of workloads, especially when returning from leave and during the fire season has to be recognised. Our members work very hard to ensure that our communities across WA are resourced by both professional and volunteer firefighters and we need to ensure that all firefighters are well trained, equipped, resourced and supported so that we can protect our communities across our vast State.

## 2017 EBA Negotiations:

**Both the Liberal and Labour parties endorsed Government Wages Policy which is too low – at 1.5% for 2017 and 2018.**

We do not anticipate any change or trade

offs for 1.5% and the challenge we have ahead of us is to ensure that our conditions are maintained and service delivery is not impacted. There is a need to upgrade our fleet and PPC and firefighter safety cannot be compromised.

We expect negotiations to commence shortly and we will be reporting back through SGMs and the delegate network.

## Other Issues:

**The WA Branch has been dealing with a number of minor assistance and disciplinary matters and has been in dispute with DFES about a range of matters including Workers Compensation Injury Management (WCIM).** With the assistance of the Commissioner we have set in place a new system to ensure that our most vulnerable members are not relegated to the scrap heap and we look forward to working with the Department's staff to deliver the best results for our members, particularly where they cannot return to operations. Many of our members in these circumstances have incredible industry knowledge and have a lot to offer to the Fire Service in non-operational roles.

The Department is about to trial a new senior Officer role in the Occupational Health and Safety section and this is a welcome initiative which we hope will focus OSH on Firefighter Safety and less on Corporate Risk.

Recently the WA Branch sent two Branch Committee members to a Firefighting Foam seminar in Queensland and both Leigh Bishop and Cian Evans have come back with a lot of information and strategies to help us to campaign for the safest of foams as well as for the implementation of updated SOPs related to the safe use of foam at incidents.

We look forward to the next few months of work and with a strong and united membership there is much we can achieve.

### UFUA WA BRANCH

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WA Branch Secretary: Lea Anderson  
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email: [ufuofwa.net.au/contact.html](mailto:ufuofwa.net.au/contact.html)



## Iran

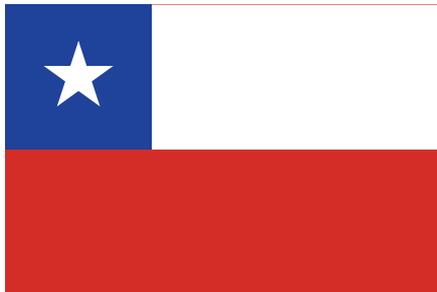
**In Tehran, 30 Iranian firefighters have died when a multi-storey building collapsed as they were battling the structure fire on January 20 2017.**

Flowers and a card were left outside the MFB's East Melbourne fire station.

The card read: "Dear dedicated firefighters, May their souls rest in peace and their memories cherished. Our condolences to all Iranians and the dear families of the brave firefighters – wishing patience for these dear people."

The message also included a poem by Mehdi Akhavan Sales.

*My house is on fire, soul burning  
Ablaze in every direction  
Carpets and curtains threaded to dust.  
Within the smoke of this raging fire  
I sob, run to each corner  
Shout, scream, yelp  
With the voice of a sad howl and bitter  
laughter.*



## Chile

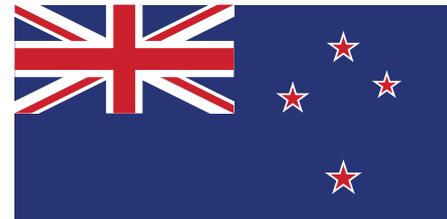
**One of Chile's greatest natural disasters has seen more than 100 forest fires, which began in January and continued for weeks.**

Eleven people died and 1600 dwellings were lost, as well as hundreds of thousands of hectares of forest and farmland.

Chile's eucalyptus and pine plantation owners have been accused of putting profits before safety.

While many factors caused the blazes, environmentalists say the toll was higher because plantations had expanded to the edge of communities and the companies failed to insert firebreaks.

Climate change also contributed, with prolonged droughts drying out Chile's forests and helping fuel the fire, described by Chile's President Michelle Bachelet as the "greatest forest disaster in our history."



## New Zealand

**NZ firefighters are battling the new Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill with not one of the Union's submissions reflected in the latest version of the Bill.**

The New Zealand Professional Firefighters' Union says the omission of the word 'service' from the name of the new organisation offends the thousands of dedicated men and women, career and volunteer, who have given many years of service to their communities.

Conditions of Employment have been reduced or eliminated in the Bill. For example, the Bill allows all Firefighters challenging a decision to Medically Board to be placed on leave without pay, and to pay the heavy costs of such an appeal. (Currently firefighters remain on pay while the appeal procedure proceeds and the employer meets the cost of an appeal.)

The NZPFU says the proposal denigrates the current uniform and history/traditions with a rebranding exercise costing millions of dollars.

The Bill relegates Operations to the background, and the NZPFU has criticized the "stupidity" of an operational service having a civilian Chief Executive.

They also argue that the merger elevates and focuses on Rural, and the appointment of Regional Rural Fire Managers who will form their own empires means that Rural and Urban will be more separated than ever.

# Increased fire threat for Australia's south-east

New reports from the Climate Council update the bushfire risk for our most populous States.

Climate change is increasing the risk of bushfires in NSW, the ACT and Victoria, and lengthening fire seasons. Extreme fire weather has increased since the 1970s in the east and south of Australia with the fire season length extending from October to March.

Climate change is now making hot days hotter, and heatwaves longer and more frequent. Drought conditions have been increasing in Australia's southeast.

Climate change is driving an increase in dangerous fire weather, which in turn is increasing the frequency and severity of bushfires.

The 2015-16 summer was Australia's sixth hottest on record and in NSW and the ACT the mean maximum temperatures were 1.4°C and 1.9°C above average, respectively. February 2016 was also the driest that NSW has experienced since 1978. Hot and dry conditions are driving up the likelihood of dangerous fire weather in NSW and the ACT.

Victoria, Australia's smallest mainland state, is the state in Australia most affected by bushfires and is on the frontline of increasing bushfire risk.

More than two thirds of known civilian bushfire fatalities in Australia have occurred in Victoria (more than 450 fatalities since the start of the 20th century). Bushfires have claimed 82 civilian lives in NSW and the ACT in the same period, since 1901.

The annual economic cost of bushfires in Victoria is approximately

\$180 million and is projected to more than double by 2050 to \$378 million. The annual economic costs of bushfires in NSW and the ACT are estimated to average \$45 million and \$56 million per annum, respectively in 2011 dollars. By about mid-century these costs could also double, potentially reaching \$232 million combined (Deloitte Access Economics 2014).

These projections do not incorporate increased bushfire incident rates and severity due to climate change, so the total cost is likely to be much higher.

And, while Victoria sustains around half of Australia's economic losses from bushfires, it comprises only 3% of the continent.

Residents of New South Wales (NSW) and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) have also frequently experienced the serious consequences of bushfires.

In 2003 the Canberra and Alpine bushfires caused significant economic damage: 500 properties were destroyed and insured losses were \$660 million. But a substantial proportion of these costs was borne by home owners as 27-81% of households affected by the fires were either uninsured or underinsured.

Losses in farming areas included 13,000 sheep, nearly 4000 cattle, and more than 300 agricultural buildings.

These 2003 fires also caused \$1.5 billion worth of losses to the timber industry, as well as destroying 4000 km of fencing.



Photo by Flickr user Sascha Grant licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

In 2013, bushfires in January and October burnt 768,000 hectares of land and destroyed 279 homes in NSW. Tragically, 2 people lost their lives and damages were estimated to be more than \$180 million.

The October 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires show the role of weather conditions in affecting fire severity. The bushfires were preceded by the warmest September on record for the state, the warmest 12 months on record for Australia, and below average rainfall in forested areas, leading to very dry fuels. The most direct link between bushfires and climate change therefore comes from the relationship between the long-term trend towards a warmer climate due to increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which are increasing the amount of heat in the atmosphere, in turn leading to increased incidence of very hot days. Put simply, climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of very hot days (IPCC 2013), and is driving up the likelihood of dangerous fire danger weather. The latest IPCC report confirms with high confidence that climate change is expected to increase the number of days with very high and extreme fire weather, particularly in southern Australia (IPCC 2014).

The Climate Council report notes:

- Victoria is very likely to experience an increased number of days with extreme fire danger. Communities, emergency services and health services across Victoria must keep preparing.
- Fire severity and intensity is expected to increase substantially in coming decades in Victoria. The fire season will continue to

lengthen, further reducing the opportunities for safe hazard reduction burning.

- Melbourne's rural-urban fringe is among the most vulnerable in the world to bushfires. The population of Melbourne is continuing to spread, encroaching into surrounding bushland, increasing risk to life and property from bushfires.
- An increased likelihood of dangerous fire weather and a lengthening fire season will strain Victoria's existing resources for fighting and managing fires.

Other impacts of increased fires include:

- Bushfire smoke seriously affecting human health because it contains respiratory irritants, as well as inflammatory and cancer-causing chemicals. Elderly, infants and those with chronic heart or lung diseases are at most risk.
- Major fires cause some members of the community to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, major depressive episodes and increased alcohol use.
- Fires can affect water infrastructure. The Black Saturday fires affected about 30% of catchments supplying Melbourne's drinking water, with estimated recovery costs totalling more than \$2 billion.
- Increasing fire frequency can cause rapid ecosystem change. After successive fires in 2003 and 2006–07, acacia shrublands replaced some mountain and alpine forests, putting species at risk.



Group photo at VEMTC meeting.

# UFU Victoria sets up Retired Members Division

BY ROD KNOWLES

The Victorian Branch of the UFU has formed a Retired Members Division (RMD), not that we have not had an organisation to cater for firefighters as they retire, we have, and it is known as the Retired Firefighters Association (RFA) but the RFA is not part of the UFU therefore not mentioned in the UFU Rules. A rule covering the RMD has been inserted in the rules and the RMD budgeted for.

The Vic Branch has for well over 50 years funded a Retired Firefighters Christmas Reunion that sees more than 500 retired firefighters and their wives come together once a year and have a wow of a time, it has been a function not to be missed, also an invitation is extended annually to the retirees and their grandchildren to attend the Firefighters Picnic, usually held at the Moonee Valley Racecourse in February.

## This is No Takeover

It is not the intention of the RMD to take over the RFA instead the plan is to work in unison with it. The majority of RMD members (RMD membership is 360) are also members of the RFA and vice versa.

Having the RMD under the umbrella of the UFU who are a part of the broader Australian trade union movement means that our Retired Members can liaise with other retired Union workers throughout Victoria and/or Australia, and join forces if there is an attack by the government of the day on pension's healthcare concessions and other concessions, which many, if not most of us retired firefighters enjoy. It would also very handy to have the VTHC and the ACTU onside if pensioners are put under the pump by the Government of the day

## National & International Links

The Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC) has a Retired Unionist Network (RUN), members of which are authorised by their respective unions to attend such meetings, as are those that represent the RMD. They meet 4 times a year and they discuss matters affecting the aged. RUN has access to VTHC and the ACTU.

Then there is the Global Alliance. (Our UFU Vic Branch Secretary and National Secretary Peter Marshall is also Chairperson of the International Firefighters Global Alliance.) The Global Alliance opens



July meeting at Fire Services Museum.



Inaugural lunch at Parliament House.

up a whole new dimension for RMD Members. Contact with Retired Firefighters' organisations worldwide is a real possibility and could further throw light on the common health effects of the job after you retire thus helping worker compensation claims. Also we could assist each other when visiting our respective countries, even the possibility of house swapping and/or international firefighter master sporting activities taking place – the sky is the limit.

## 2016 RMD commences operation

The RMD of the Vic Branch commenced operating in earnest on August 2015 when over 80 members responded to an invitation to attend a luncheon at Parliament House as guests of Premier Daniel Andrews. It was a huge success and a great time was had by all. Our inaugural meeting followed by a luncheon was held on March 30, 2016 at the Victorian Trades Hall where after a short meeting we had



VEMTC props include a ship and a refinery.



Visited Melbourne Trades Hall – the Workers Parliament.



Flashover drill at VEMTC.

a conducted tour of that wonderful old building which has been the Victorian Workers Parliament since 1856. July saw us have another meeting which was held at the Fire Services Museum workshops at Newport. Once again we got a conducted tour of the fantastic fire appliances they have at Newport.

Then we had our wonderful as usual November Christmas Reunion. This time it was held at a new venue situated in Melbourne's Docklands with approximately 500 Retirees and their Wives attending. 2016 had been a great start for the RMD.

### 2017 Visit to VEMTC

On February 9 2017 more than 80 RMD members accepted an invitation by the MFB to tour and inspect their new world class Victorian Emergency Services Training Centre (VEMTC). The effects of PTSD on Retired Firefighters was discussed at meeting held at the

centre followed by a bus tour of this fantastic Training Centre (see photos) and then we all enjoyed a beautiful lunch provided by the catering staff at the canteen. A big thank you to everybody concerned at the Training Centre also to the MFB. It was a great day.

### RMD Committee Workshop

In March the RMD Committee is taking part in a facilitated workshop to come up with a plan on how we can efficiently and effectively ensure that the aims and the aspirations of the RMD can come into fruition.

### WATCH THIS SPACE!

**PS** Any interstate Retired Firefighters organisations reading this article who are interested in a National Retired Firefighters Alliance for all of the above mentioned reasons please contact RMD President Eddie McMullen on 0425 863 285.

# CHAMPION for a MATE

BY GREG COOPER

In the mid-morning of January 4 in the sea off the coast from the Burnie Surf Life Saving Club, LFF Craig Machen heads east in his surf ski to circumnavigate Tasmania. This epic journey is to help Craig's long-time friend Kirk Dicker, who, two years earlier, was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

To put some further context on this story we need to understand a little about Craig Machen.

**W**e also need to understand what makes a champion and who can we call a champion. For me I borrow my definition of a champion from the great boxer Jack Dempsey who said: "A champion is someone who gets up when they can't."

So to better appreciate what's happening here and to gain some insight into who is Craig Machen we need to go back a few years.

February 1990, shortly before midnight, Firefighter Craig Machen is part of the Launceston Fire Brigade crew called to respond to a structure fire. During the response a brick wall comprising 2000 bricks collapses. The bricks fall mainly on FF Machen. Trapped beneath the hot bricks his crew act quickly to retrieve their colleague and friend.



Craig is suffering serious life-threatening injuries including multiple burns and lacerations, broken bones, a smashed pelvis and severe bruising from the many bricks that hit his body, then trapped him by sheer number and weight.

Craig is rushed to hospital. The initial prognosis is not good. May struggle to walk properly, will not firefight again and his days as a surf lifesaving member are over. Craig did not accept any of these suggestions. Very early in his time in hospital he decided he would fully recover. With steely determination and an iron will, as soon as Craig was well enough, he started the long road of rehabilitation to physical recovery. This was difficult. The treatment for Craig's



Photo: Brodie Weeding, Burnie Advocate

principle injuries created secondary medical issues that each required further treatment and medication. The rehabilitation process would be ongoing.

Craig did go back on station, cleared fully fit to be a firefighter. He returned to his surf lifesaving club and continued to participate in all SLS activities, including competition. But whilst Craig had managed to recover from the horrific physical injuries he was unclear about why he didn't quite feel right. He wasn't his usual happy go lucky self. He was not aware that he was slowly succumbing to post traumatic stress. In 2012, 22 years after his initial accident Craig sought treatment for Post-Traumatic Stress. Again with steely resolve

Craig was determined to beat this condition. It is great pleasure that I can announce Craig is on top of his PTS. So let's go back to Burnie beach.

As stated earlier Craig's good friend Kirk was diagnosed with MND. Craig felt a need to support his mate. His journey around Tasmania was designed to promote general public awareness of Motor Neurone Disease, a debilitating disease that wastes the muscles, is diagnosed as fatal, and for which there is no cure.

So Craig begins his paddle with a goal of raising \$20,000 for MND.

[continued on page 40](#)

START	FINISH	NAUTICAL MILES (1.0)	KILOMETRES (1.9)
Burnie	Devonport	22.1	41.0
Devonport	Low Head	21.9	40.5
Low Head	Bridport	34.8	64.4
Bridport	Cape Portland	34.5	63.8
Cape Portland	Eddystone Point	27.1	50.1
Eddystone Point	Scamander	30.7	56.8
Scamander	Bicheno	25.0	46.3
Bicheno	Wineglass Bay	19.7	36.5
Wineglass Bay	Orford	37.7	69.7
Orford	Fortescue Bay	38.6	71.5
Fortescue Bay	Adventure Bay	38.7	71.7
Adventure Bay	Whale Head	33.1	61.3
Whale Head	Cox Bight	37.7	69.9
Cox Bight	Port Davey	30.0	55.6
Port Davey	Low rocky Point	32.7	60.6
Low rocky Point	Hibbs Bay	27.2	50.3
Hibbs Bay	Macquarie Harbour	30.0	55.6
Macquarie Harbour	Conical Rocks	36.8	68.2
Conical Rocks	Arthur River	41.9	77.5
Arthur River	Woolnorth Point	30.0	55.6
Woolnorth Point	Stanley	33.4	61.9
Stanley	Burnie	33.5	62.0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>698.0</b>	<b>1292.6</b>

continued from page 39

His journey was carefully plotted. Support land vehicles, support sea vessels, support staff, tracking devices, state of the art communication and safety features were all put in place.

Despite all the planning a number of new challenges quickly beset Craig. Within a few days deep blisters formed on Craig's hands. The constant wetting by the sea soon resulted in serious chafing of Craig's shoulders and midriff. And of course a surf ski is not designed to be used for up to nine hours a day without inflicting its mark on the paddler. Despite these new challenges and the pain they brought with them Craig did not resile for one moment from the task at hand. This journey wasn't about Craig; it was for Kirk. At the end of a day's paddling Craig would slowly emerge from his surf ski and bring himself as close as he could to an upright standing position. A mandatory vanilla milkshake or two, a change into dry clothes then to camp for the night where a hot shower, if one was available, medical treatment and some dinner would be closely followed by an early night.

Support for Craig's fundraising efforts was tremendous. The journey details are included in the table above.

Mid-afternoon on Saturday January 28 Craig arrived back at the Burnie Surf Live Saving Club. He was farewelled by 250-300 people on January 4 and greeted on return by almost 400 people. His schedule was thwarted on occasion by bad weather and rough seas, but this didn't stop this champion from completing his journey.

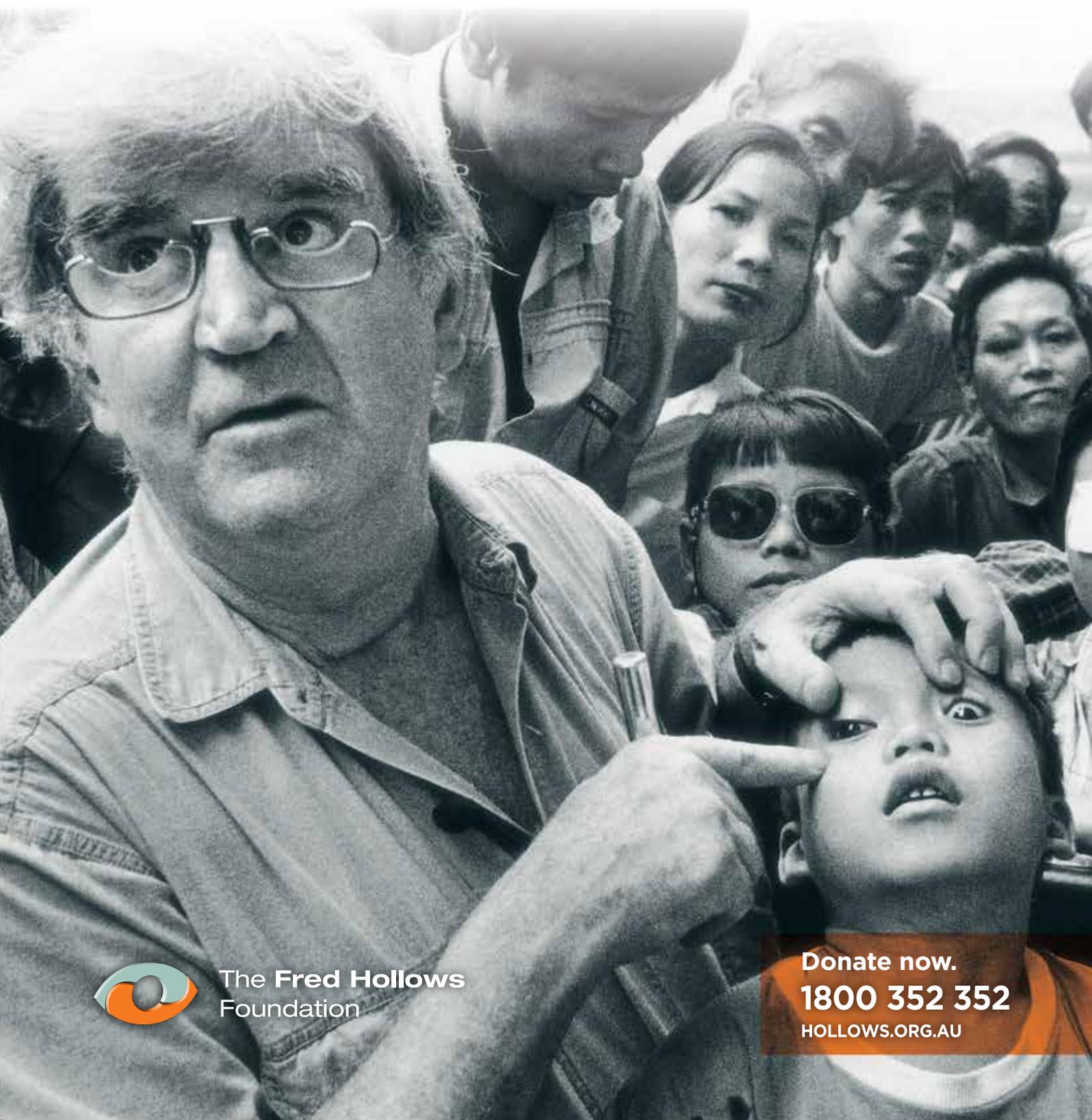
On his arrival in Burnie an announcement was made that more than \$43,000 had been raised. Social awareness was well and truly increased. Craig made friends on his journey, brought complete strangers on board to support his campaign, made his family and friends very proud, inspired his fellow firefighters and all because he wanted to help a mate.

Mach, you are a champion in every sense of the word. You selflessly put yourself through an ordeal to help others. You have had tremendous support along the way from people willing to support your endeavour. You are an inspiration. You have taken the community on a journey of hardship and friendship. You are truly Australian and someone I'm privileged to be able to call a friend. You should be very proud of yourself and what you have achieved.

**Greg Cooper is Secretary of the Tasmanian Branch.**

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Supporting our Australian Firefighters

