



Strength in Unity

Dear members,

The UFUA wishes to update members on the ongoing relationships with the United Firefighters Union of Australia, Union of Employees, Queensland (**UFUQ**), and the Fire Brigade Employees' Union of New South Wales (**FBEU**). This update follows the Fair Work Commissions decision in December 2023, outlined below. We wish to clarify what occurred and reaffirm our commitment to rebuilding a constructive dialogue with the UFUQ and FBEU.

Federal Court Decision 2022

In National Bulletin No: 002 (2022), we provided details of a decision of the Federal Court, based on proceedings the UFUA took following the actions of the former UFU Queensland BCOM. The Court found that the UFUA Queensland Branch ceased to function effectively, following the conduct of the UFU Queensland BCOM in disenfranchising approximately 2500 members. The Court ordered that an administrator be appointed to reconstitute the Queensland Branch. The UFUA strongly encourages members to read the Decision, linked here. Members may also wish to refer to the following Bulletin's relating to the Federal Court matter:

- **Bulletin no. 002A (2022): Federal Court declares UFUA Queensland Branch has ceased to function effectively**
- **Bulletin no. 006 (2022): Rule Changes to Facilitate UFU Queensland Branch Elections**
- **Bulletin no. 018 (2023): QLD Election – Declaration of Results**

Fair Work Commission (FWC) Decision and Appeal

Following the resolution of the matter in the Federal Court, the Court appointed Administrator submitted rule changes to the FWC to help reconstitute the UFUA Queensland Branch. The UFUQ along with the FBEU opposed those changes and lodged a request to the FWC to remove all reference to the UFUQ and FBEU in the "Associated Body" definition in the UFUA Rules.

On 6 July 2023, the FWC General Manager Murray Furlong handed down a decision to reject this request. Following this decision, UFUQ and FBEU filed a Notice of appeal to the FWC. Their appeal was refused by the Full Bench of the FWC on 16 December 2023.

The FWC Full Bench Decision states that:

“It is therefore apparent that there is an association between each of the Appellants [UFUQ and FBEU] and their federal counterpart, the UFUA, as recognised in the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Regulations 2009”.

You can read the initial FWC Decision **HERE**, as well as the subsequent Full Bench Decision **HERE**.

UFUQ and FBEU Attempt to Cut Ties

The intervention taken by the UFUQ and FBEU in the FWC proceedings devoted significant resources in an attempt to destroy the relationship between members in Qld and NSW, and the National Union, the UFUA. We support the Commission’s decision to maintain the reference to the State Unions in the Rules to “enable” a relationship between the UFUA and the UFUQ/FBEU, if all parties agree.

Firefighters nationally benefit from co-operation between the UFUA and state-based firefighter Unions.

The UFUA continues to express a willingness to engage with and assist both the UFUQ and FBEU where possible. In doing so, the UFUA extended an offer to both the State Unions to work cooperatively on Presumptive Cancer Reform. Such collaboration between the UFUA and State/Territory Branches has seen world leading reform in WA, Tasmania and Federally in the ACT and Aviation. Unfortunately, no response has been received from the UFUQ or FBEU, but we remain hopeful that this important work is still possible.

Association with the UFUA when convenient

Notwithstanding the Federal Court matters and the decisions of the FWC, some UFUQ officials appear to continue to represent themselves as part of the UFUA when convenient. Greg McConville, UFUA National Secretary ran into the UFUQ Senior Vice President, Peter Chalmers at the Redmond Symposium last year in New York. Mr McConville was surprised to see Mr Chalmers’ name badge showing that he was registered as a representative of the UFUA (the UFUA is a member of the Global Alliance of Firefighter Unions, but the UFUQ is not).

Upon meeting, Mr McConville reminded Mr Chalmers that the UFUA had offered to help the UFUQ on firefighter presumptive cancer. This was a genuine offer and as mentioned above, that offer remains open.

The UFUA continues to look forward and strive towards delivering for firefighters all across Australia. We hope that this last decision of the FWC will mark the end of a turbulent period, and see money and resources redirected back to doing what’s best for members. If any member wishes to learn more about what the UFUA does and how to get involved, please email Donni Luther at **secretaryufuaqld@gmail.com** or the National Office at **admin@ufua.asn.au**.

Membership Details Update

Thank you to all members who have responded to the request to update contact details. If you still wish to update your contact details, please email admin@ufua.asn.au.

UFUA Aviation Branch Industrial Action

As we speak, members of the UFUA Aviation Branch are stepping up industrial action in pursuit of increases to crewing and related conditions. You can read more about your colleague's industrial campaign **[HERE](#)**.

In unity,

Donni Luther
Queensland Branch Secretary
United Firefighters Union of Australia