



December 2014



Auxiliary Update

Queensland Auxiliary Firefighters Association Inc.

Web: www.qafa.asn.au e-mail: admin@qafa.asn.au

President's Message

Christmas 2014 is here and we again look forward to the festive season with family and friends, and to enjoy the holiday period.

It's been a busy year again for many of you, and a busy summer fire and storm season, so far. I and the QAFA team thank you for your efforts, dedication and sacrifice. With the pressures of primary employment, QFES, and normal family life, it's getting to be a challenge in some areas.

It's been a big and successful year for QAFA as well. Changes to the Department together with a Charter document that spells out QAFA's relationship with QFES and Qld Government, a Memorandum of Understanding between QFES and QAFA, further enhancing the relationship, have all provided challenges. Finally, in conjunction with the Charter and MOU, QAFA has achieved improvements to our Employment Conditions with more work underway. Regular meetings with Qld Government and QFES are making a difference. It's slow, frustrating and subject to attack, indifference and blockages. but the outcomes are there and we have the support of Government. It will be an interesting 2015.

Stay Safe!

We wish you, and your loved ones, a Merry Christmas and a Safe, Happy and Healthy New Year !

Best Wishes,

Rodger Sambrooks



News

2 Hours payment for first hour of Turnout

There are still issues with payment of 2 hour minimum turnout payment in a number of Regions. Currently trying to sort out with QFESmore soon hopefully.

The approval was for Auxiliaries to be paid an extra hour for the first hour of any incident response, then normal time for remainder. i.e a 2.5 hour job is paid as a 3.5 hour job. A 40 minute job is paid as 2 hours. Attendance at emergency incidents will be paid at double time for the first hour, by claiming two hours for that hour. A callout of less than one hour is still claimed as two hours. No other duties are required to make up the time claimed.

Examples:

A firefighter responds to a page, but on reaching the station is not required. The firefighter is paid for 2 hours.

A firefighter attends an incident for 2¼ hours. The firefighter is paid 3¼ hours.

A firefighter attends an incident for 30 minutes and while still at station receives another small callout of 30 minutes. The firefighter is paid for the total time, as if it were one incident – 2 hours.

A firefighter attends an incident for 30 minutes and on the way home receives another small callout of 30 minutes. The firefighter is paid for two incidents – 4 hours.

Presumptive Legislation

Minister Jack Dempsey , and Premier Newman, on behalf of Queensland Government, have announced plans to implement Presumptive Legislation for all Queensland Firefighters, including Auxiliary Firefighters.

Legislation creates a legal presumption that if a firefighter is diagnosed with a particular type of cancer then there is a legal presumption that the cancer resulted from their employment as a firefighter. This type of legislation is called presumptive legislation.

The legislation will presume specific cancers suffered by firefighters are caused by exposure to chemicals in the course of their work, unless proven otherwise. These include: brain, prostate, testicular, breast, kidney, bladder, leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, multiple myeloma, ureter, colorectal and oesophageal cancers. If a firefighter with a certain number of years' service develops these types of cancer, then that cancer is considered to have been caused by occupational firefighting exposure to carcinogens at fire scenes and in the clean up afterwards. The effects on firefighters who have been exposed to carcinogens at fire scenes has been the subject of scientific research conducted worldwide. The research has found a clear link between firefighting as an occupation and the increased risk of developing some Cancers.

This research highlights the very real danger to the health of firefighters worldwide, including Auxiliaries in Queensland.

QAFA commends Minister Jack Dempsey, Premier Newman, and the Queensland Government for their part in protecting the health and welfare of ALL Firefighters across Queensland.

Temping

The very recent QFES/UFUQ "Accord includes provisions that will prevent Auxiliaries from 'Temping'. Permanent Rostering will be progressively restricted to those qualified as 'First Class Firefighter'. Those Auxiliaries who joined UFUQ as a part of 'Temping' practice, should be a bit concerned right now. Temping will only be for permanents. UFUQ does not want Auxiliaries on the truck, Only interested in fees and numbers and control.

The 'accord' deal with the UFU brings forward a few conditions – starting January 1 - that were to be part of the modernised award next year. 2 of the 4 are conditions that we already have. Min 4 hours for turnout on public holidays has been offset by taking 'Temping' off Auxiliary Firefighters.

One might cynically think there is a State Election early next year and

Award

A 'Modernised' Award for Firefighters is currently being planned and will include Auxiliaries.

In the meantime, Auxiliary Firefighters are still working under the **existing Standing Order** and WILL get the same pay increase as announced for permanent staff. This automatic flow-on was negotiated by QAFA long ago. This does not include 'special' rates above and beyond.

QAFA has reviewed and upgraded Auxiliary Employment Conditions, submitted these to QFES and Government, and they have been approved and issued and are on QAFA and QFES websites.

I.R. / H.R. / Legal support for Members

Over the past year, a number of Members with serious legal and H.R. difficulties have again been supported as needed. Similarly, our emergency financial support to Members in crisis has provided practical help at a time of need. All happening quietly and confidentially. If you have serious workplace and/or legal issues, our expert partners are right behind you. Currently there is a new Review being held into various bullying and harassment issues. We will support all issues resulting from inappropriate workplace behaviour towards Auxiliary Firefighters.

Training

QAFA has secured vast improvements to training outcomes and continues to monitor training closely. There is currently a high level Review into training. More details when they come to hand in 2015.

Wellness and Fit for Duty.

Starting to see evidence of changes in QFES policies regarding HR issues and 'Fit for Duty' that are adversely impacting on some staff. Currently monitoring this issue, and more news in the New Year.

We urge you to renew your membership or join if you are not yet a member.

Go to www.qafa.asn.au and follow the prompts for 'membership'