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April 2018

The view from the Station Floor.

UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION AUSTRALIA
AVIATION BRANCH

Our Union belongs to you, our 806 professional Aviation Firefighter members. To remain strong, it needs your support, your input and your actions.

FLASHPOINT is your Newsletter, so read it, be informed, share it, contribute to it.

Speak Up and Have your Say!

'Strength In Unity - Proud to be Union'



- From the Branch Secretary
- TRA
- Brisbane HSR's
- PFAS Health Guide
- Cancer Best Practice
- RAAF Amberley
- PTSD
- Non-Negotiables
- Emirates A380 Plans

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Members who wish to contribute ideas or provide comments or contribute articles please just hit reply to this email. It will be passed on to the appropriate BCOM member or UFUA Executive.

Change



FROM THE BRANCH SECRETARY

As you are aware, your BCOM determined to withdraw from the in-principle agreement reached with Airservices in Canberra on the 21st March. This was due to Airservices renegeing, in our view, on agreement to include urine testing with blood testing in 3 yearly medicals to screen for markers for the cancers listed in the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Act 2011.

On top of this, and of extreme concern to your BCOM was the fact that Airservices provided a draft Agreement which had at least 20 omissions and errors in it.

This caused extreme concern to your BCOM and hence the decision to withdraw from the in-principle agreement and recommence protected industrial action. Although the 30-day period in which to commence our protected action had not expired, we made application to the Fair Work Commission for an extension of the period to ensure we could meet all requirements for commencing action.

The Fair Work Commission approved our application for an extension late on Friday afternoon. This cleared the way for the notice of commencement of action I have sent to Airservices advising that we will be commencing action from 0800 this Thursday 12th April 2018.

The Branch President and I spent the day with our legal counsel last Friday and found several further issues with the draft Agreement provided by Airservices.

Clearly, no Agreement will be put to you to vote on until we are satisfied it is ready for you to consider and vote to accept or reject. Any questions in regard to the protected industrial action commencing this coming Thursday should be addressed to your Organiser or BCOM Delegate.

As you are aware, the triennial Branch elections have commenced, and I will not be re-contesting the Branch Secretary's position. I will turn 65 on the day after the ballot closes on 11th May and I think it is time for new blood in the Secretary's chair.

Henry Lawrence

STRENGTH IN UNITY - PROUD TO BE UNION

**Make sure your address and contact details are up to date.
Phone Julie on 07 38465580**

Your Union has completed a comprehensive Task and Resource Analysis on Brisbane ARFFS. Click the link below to access this extensive work.

It has been sent to CASA, Comcare, the Minister and the Shadow Minister, the EGM ARFFS and the Chairman of the Board of Airservices.

The CEO of Airservices has replied already and from his letter you would not think that the UFU has tried unsuccessfully for several years now to engage with Airservices ARFFS around the TRA.

But we can assure you that we have and the only avenue we had left was to do it ourselves and let everyone know just how understaffed we really are.

Safe and Effective staffing for all stations is one of your Unions highest priorities.

TRA Link

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1wKEf7a3byxIYIFp2IKrTuz0pJ7mD9PeY?usp=sharing>

UFUA Photo Library

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0ByXrMwIAV5n8VEFubGtTOWU2SkU?usp=sharing>

UFUA Communications: (New Correspondence)

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0ByXrMwIAV5n8U2t1a2xocDZDUTA?usp=sharing>

Lessons Learned:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0ByXrMwIAV5n8TjNHT3B1WmFhREk?usp=sharing>

WHS Toolbox:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LNiKnCSa8bjaL4I3KUXo07p6s-RIGqL1?usp=sharing>

Great work by the Brisbane HSR's

Brisbane's Main Fire Station was subject to two WHS interventions by the HSR's. The station lesson room is infected with a serious mould problem which is potentially a significant health risk to all our members. This is a station that has had serious leaks and should have been re-roofed many years ago. Another great example of how Airservices efficiencies keep missing their targets. Also how safety always takes a back seat to budgets in this organisation.



The second WHS issue raised was the Diesel Particulate problem that is common to all stations without a drive in/out engine bay.

Comcare has supported the Brisbane Health & Safety Representatives stating that Airservices has had plenty of time to do something constructive and had chosen not to.

The UFUA supports and encourages our Health & Safety Representative members to be proactive and take on these issues if they are effecting your working groups.



WHS Letters

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VhfRUSWWj_uf8acER3zc-YKay5O29m63?usp=sharing



PFAS health guidance 'sick' and needs to be changed immediately, doctor says

By [Georgia Hitch](#) Updated 16 Mar 2018, 12:25pm

A GP and environment medicine

specialist has described the Federal Government's health advice on PFAS chemicals as "sick" and is calling for it to be changed immediately.

PFAS are a group of chemicals historically used in firefighting foam that includes a number of sub categories but the focus in Australia is on perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS), perfluoro-octanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorohexane sulfonate (PFHxS).

Dr Andrew Jeremijenko was one of many who made a public submission to the Government's Expert Health Panel for PFAS and said the current national guidance was misleading the public.

"It needs to be more accurate, it needs to reflect the scientific literature," he said.

Dr Jeremijenko said studies, including one done by the US Department of Human Services, showed links between PFAS exposure and health effects including:

- Lower response rates to vaccines in children
- Reduced infectious disease resistance
- Increased hypersensitivity-related outcomes
- Increased autoimmune disease incidence

Current guidance like 'Monty Python advice'

Dr Jeremijenko described advice given to residents in the Northern Territory town of Katherine last year to not drink bore water and to avoid eating local fish as "Monty Python advice".

"The Defence Force is going out to communities like Katherine and saying there's no health effects ... the bore water's fine, it's really not a big issue but we want you to drink this bottled water, not the tap water," he said.

"Now to me that doesn't make sense, they're saying take the precautionary approach but they're not saying why — that's not a good message.

"A good message is we are taking this precautionary approach because we are concerned that these chemicals are associated with cancer, are associated with thyroid

disease, are associated with liver disease. That is a much clearer health message."

PFOS was added to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants nearly a decade ago in 2009 and Dr Jeremijenko said he did not understand why Australia had not ratified it.

"Now that means it's the baddest of the bad chemicals, it's with things like DDT and dieldrin, these are very dangerous chemicals," he said.

PFAS Guidance overseas:

- Germany: health effects are "well proven, relevant, and significantly associated with exposure to PFOA and/or PFOS"
- England: "prolonged exposure may cause cancer" but not thought to pose a risk to humans given concentration in environment
- United States: epidemiological studies have indicated "that exposure to PFOA and PFOS over certain levels may result in adverse health effects"

"You get on the Stockholm Convention because it's dangerous to your health and it's dangerous to the environment ... the problem we have is that Australia decided not to ratify that."

Dr Jeremijenko also said as well as ratifying the convention, countries including England, Germany and the United States had all updated their health guidance based on the latest scientific data.

He said Australia needed to follow suit.

The Department of Health's advice is that "there is no consistent evidence that PFAS cause any specific illnesses, including cancer".

"Saying that there's no consistent evidence is not saying that there's no evidence, they're just saying there's a little bit of doubt but we don't want to tell you about it at the moment," Dr Jeremijenko said.

The Health Department convened an Expert Health Panel last year to advise it "on the potential health impacts associated with PFAS exposure and to identify priority areas for further research".

A spokeswoman for the Department said the panel's final advice was currently being finalised.

A spokesperson for the Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt said he would respond once the report was finalised and received by the Government and that Mr Hunt was deeply committed to working quickly on the issue.

Your Union will be keeping the pressure on Airservices to take appropriate actions to protect and monitor the health of all our members past and present.

Your Union is a Democratic Association of Australia's Aviation Firefighters.

Like all democratic institutions it requires your input and participation to be successful in promoting and protecting the cause of our members.

Please take the time and effort to vote in the upcoming Union elections. If you can participate, take on a role, support your local organiser, or your BCOM member. Be involved, let us hear your opinions and ideas.

We work for you so help us to help you.

BEST PRACTICES

for Preventing

FIREFIGHTER CANCER



- 1/** Full protective equipment (PPE) must be worn throughout the entire incident, including SCBA during salvage and overhaul.
- 2/** A second hood should be provided to all entry-certified personnel in the department.
- 3/** Following exit from the IDLH, and while still on air, you should begin immediate gross decon of PPE using soap water and a brush, if weather conditions allow. PPE should then be placed into a sealed plastic bag and placed in an exterior compartment of the rig, or if responding in Personal Vehicles, placed in a large storage tote, thus keeping the off-gassing PPE away from passengers and self.
- 4/** After completion of gross decon procedures as discussed above, and while still on scene, the exposed areas of the body (neck, face, arms and hands) should be wiped off immediately using wipes, which must be carried on all apparatus. Use the wipes to remove as much soot as possible from head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands immediately.
- 5/** Change your clothes and wash them after exposure to products of combustion or other contaminants.

- 6/** Do this as soon as possible and/or isolate in a trash bag until washing is available.
- 7/** Shower as soon as possible after being exposed to products of combustion or other contaminants. "Shower within the Hour"
- 8/** PPE, especially turnout pants must be prohibited in areas outside the apparatus floor (i.e. kitchen, sleeping areas, etc.) and never in the household. Wipes, or soap and water, should also be used to decontaminate and clean apparatus seats, SCBA and interior crew area regularly, especially after incidents where personnel were exposed to products of combustion.
- 9/** Get an annual physical, as early detection is the key to survival. The NVFC outlines several options at www.nvfc.org. "A Healthcare Provider's Guide to Firefighter Physicals" can be downloaded from www.fstaresearch.org/resource/?FstarId=11591.
- 10/** Tobacco products of any variety, including dip and e-cigarettes should never be used at anytime on or off duty.
- 11/** Fully document ALL fire or chemical exposures on incident reports and personal exposure reports.

Note: Thanks to the UFU the New EA will have Cancer Screening included in the 3yr medicals.



RAAF Amberley's New Fire Station Nears Completion

As part of the \$370 Million-dollar upgrade to the Amberley Airforce Base out near Ipswich in Queensland, the RAAF have built this new Fire Station. The upgrade forms part of a plan to locate and house a fleet of 10 new C-27J Battlefield Airlifters at the base.

The project includes constructing training areas, flight simulator, an aircraft parking tarmac, meteorology observation room, and this fire station and storage.

It also includes road extensions, demolition work and relocating heritage buildings.



Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD is a potentially debilitating anxiety/psychological disorder triggered by exposure to a traumatic experience, such as an interpersonal event like physical or sexual assault, exposure to disaster or accidents, combat or witnessing a traumatic event.

PTSD is believed to be caused by experiencing any of a wide range of events that produce intense negative feelings of fear, helplessness or horror. Such events are common for first responders who can see traumatic events in the course of their jobs, sometimes on a regular basis.

In fact, Smith noted that a study published in The Journal of Traumatic Stress in 2017 shows that approximately 1 in 10 firefighters interviewed showed symptoms of PTSD. He added that other studies suggest the numbers are closer to 1 in 3 or 1 in 5.

Signs to look out for:

- A significant change in appetite
- Recurring disturbances in sleep pattern
- Increased agitation or inability to relax
- Fatigue, lethargy or loss of energy
- Sadness, despondency, despair or loneliness

- Inability to concentrate, focus or make decisions
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide
- Plans for suicide or an attempt at suicide

Note that some Canadian Provinces have instituted Presumptive Legislation for First Responders who succumb to PTSD and mental health illnesses. We will be raising this at the next National UFUA Conference.

PTSD

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CHCUBUEwK3f3qOO_TT6YtVmrw0I6IP7f/view?usp=sharing



Non-Negotiables Training for shared Expectations (John McDonough)

How do we best articulate our lawful Workplace Health & Safety obligations? Every worker has a right to a safe workplace. If the Incident Commander (I/C) can't reasonably provide a safe workplace, then they are breaking the law, a law which over-rides the Fire Brigades Act. This aspect of our job can, at times, make what we do incredibly difficult.

During the early stages of an incident when information may be poor or incomplete, an I/C is setting strategies and tactics by taking into consideration a numbers of critical factors including building type, special risks, occupancy and the prevailing fire conditions. These factors form the basis for a number of initial decisions.

Essentially the I/C is assessing where the fire is now, where it will be in the near future (usually measured in minutes) and what can be done by the resources at their disposal to mitigate the situation as quickly, safely and efficiently as possible. This process is time critical and will rely heavily on experience, knowledge and a realistic and honest understanding of what his or her crew are capable of. This last element is crucial to safe and effective firefighting. A very knowledgeable and experienced I/C will very like get this 'equation' wrong if they do not realise the capabilities (or lack thereof), of their firefighters.

So what is non-negotiable?

1. Stay low
2. Control the flowpath
3. Cool the gases
4. Put water on the fire ASAP

Read the rest of John's article hit the link button below.

Non-Negotiables

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/13CViHDHkrvznpkplRSSrhvoJ1419jahO/view?usp=sharing>



Emirates CEO plans Airbus A380s for Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide

by [David Flynn](#) | January 31, 2018

Emirates hopes to upgrade all its flights to Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide to Airbus A380 jets on the back of the airline's recent [US\\$16 billion order](#) for an additional 36 superjumbos on top of its current 101-strong fleet.

Boeing 777s currently darting between each of those three cities and Dubai would be replaced by the flagship A380s, providing a substantial boost in capacity.

"There will come a time when people will say 'now what do we do? I've got no more (airport) slots'," Sir Tim Clark told [Fairfax Media](#), which also reported Clark saying Emirates "would likely replace its remaining 777s flying into Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide with A380s following its recent order."

Emirates already has three daily A380 flights from Sydney, which Clark praised as a "goldmine" market, and one each out of Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth.

However, the Gulf carrier has also [pulled out its A380s off trans-Tasman flights](#) between Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane to Auckland citing competition on that add-on leg.

Clark considers [Qantas' imminent move to abandon Dubai](#) as its hub for London flights and move back to Singapore as a "strategic" decision by Qantas CEO Alan Joyce.

"Alan was starting to realise that the partnership was so strong, with our metal doing so much in the west for him, that it was perhaps a good time to rethink their strategy."

However, the impact of Qantas' shift towards ultra-long range non-stop flights – including direct routes to London and New York from 2022 – remains to be seen.

"Will that affect what we do out of Australia into those cities, because he'll be going non-stop and we'll have an intermediate point (our hub) is anybody's guess," Clark said.

"If the market grows, there's plenty for all. If it flatlines or goes south, all of us have to go into a reset mode."

Even More Reason to ensure we have a proper Task Resource Analysis Conducted at all locations not just a questionable SCARD process.



As a member of the United Firefighters Union Aviation Branch you have access to the Union Shopper and the great deals and benefits that entails. Click the button below and register now to begin saving. Just another reason why it pays to belong to your UFUA.

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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, both past and present, and celebrate their cultural contribution to society.