



PROUD TO BE UNION

Registered Office:

86A O'Shanassy St, Sunbury, Victoria 3429

Postal Address: PO Box 966, Sunbury 3429

Ph: (03) 9746 3722 Fax: (03) 9746 3766

Email: ufuavat1@bigpond.com.au

ABN: 96 533 521 914



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2011

TOPICS:

- Annual BCOM conference
- Presumptive Legislation
- CFBT
- Aerial Vehicles
- IR Updates
- Responding in an emergency
- Office Christmas closure

Annual BCOM Conference

New Members: The annual BCOM conference was held recently in Melbourne over three days between the sixth to the eighth of December. There was much to discuss and one of the items up for discussion was the latest applications for membership of the Branch. Subsequently, the following firefighters are now members of the UFUA: Daniel Comben, Billy Barry, Daniel Farris, Greg Moulton, Bevin Lane, Andy Hyatt, Matthew Kelly, Robert Beeftink, Scott Rankin, Dion Hair, Lloyd Wright, Matthew Parker, Shane Pennicuik, Stuart Sharp, David Stevens, James Chislain, Allan Karaitiana, Cale King.

The BCOM extends their congratulations to these newly qualified firefighters and welcomes them into the UFUA family. All new members will receive a personal letter welcoming them to the UFUA however, we request all the older hands do the same by introducing themselves to our new members and please make them feel at home. New members are the future of the ARFF and therefore the Aviation Branch of the UFUA and we look forward to watching them develop in both the Fire Service and the Union.

Darwin Accident: There was as mentioned much to discuss at the recent conference. Most of what was covered in discussions is to remain confidential until the minutes are finalised in early 2012. The reason behind this is to prevent any misinformation going out into the field. Nevertheless, there are certain matters that we are free to inform members about and one of those is the resolution that was adopted in respect to the heartrending accident that occurred in Darwin earlier this year. The Union has been quietly working away in the background on this issue, since first being advised of the incident some hours after occurrence. We have though up until now, specifically sought not to publicise the processes associated with this accident in any newsletters or memorandums, out of respect for the members involved.

In light of the time and surrounding processes that have passed, it was decided that this forum was best situated to now further deliberate on the matter. Consequently, the conference heard a report from the Branch President Joe Stenhouse consisting of all the details available which then enabled the BCOM to be brought up to date. The following resolution of support was adopted as a consequence.

“That having heard the report presented by the President on the fateful accident that occurred in Darwin this year; the BCOM wishes to acknowledge and acclaim the professionalism and extraordinary courage of Darwin firefighters SSO Williams, LFF Norris and LFF McCagh who through great adversity battled tirelessly to preserve the lives of those trapped in their vehicle after it collided with their responding fire appliance. Their actions displayed under extreme pressure are a true testament to their dedication to duty and their selflessness. The BCOM holds these members in the highest regard and we commend them for the bravery demonstrated at this tragic accident. Our thoughts are with them and their families as the trauma of this incident unfortunately remains long after the event”.

That resolution sums up the admiration the BCOM has for these particular members.

The ARFF, in continual consultation with the UFUA has demonstrated throughout this very unfortunate situation, a sense of compassion and a capacity to provide the valuable professional assistance required. The ARFF have been readily available, with advice and assurance for those members and their families. We commend the ARFF for the support shown to our members (which of course are ARFF staff), in their hour of need.



Presumptive Legislation

In my report to this our 33rd conference I stated that: The year 2011 will be recorded in the annals of the UFU of A as the year that Presumptive Legislation came to fruition in Australia. In my experience within the UFU of A as an elected delegate I believe that the passing of the "Fair Protection for Firefighters" Bill which is of course is an amendment to the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, is the most significant accomplishment by the UFU of A since Federal Registration and it has been an absolute privilege and a very humbling experience to have played a small part in the process, that resulted in this historic legislation.

The Chair Senator Gavin Marshall and the Deputy Chair Senator Chris Black of the Senate Inquiry; established as a consequence of our campaign presented to Parliamentarians on this issue, I thought, summed up the politicians overall perspective (that we saw) very well, when they said that:

"The community holds a deep respect and gratitude for those who serve to protect and assist. If we are honest, however, along with this respect and gratitude comes a generous dose of expectation. We expect firefighters to come to our assistance when our homes, schools, hospitals and businesses are ablaze. We expect that a firefighter will enter a burning building when every human instinct tells us to leave. We expect they will search for those trapped inside and bring them out alive. We expect them to do what they can to minimise loss of life and damage to property. While everyone else is fleeing danger, it is the firefighter's duty to tackle it head-on, to enter an extreme and dangerous environment, armed with the best protective gear available."

"It is a duty firefighters take seriously, aware of the inherent risks to their own health and safety. This awareness on their part does not mitigate the community's responsibility towards them"

"The committee has carefully examined the large amount of evidence with which it has been presented. Study after study has pointed to a higher risk of cancer for firefighters than the general population. Science has confirmed what firefighters suspected for decades:

That a disproportionate number of them in the prime of their lives are brought down with illnesses usually reserved for the old and the infirm."

This is the job that our members train for, carry out and what they can expect may happen to them in the course of their daily duties. Yet our members do not seek accolades from the public nor do they seek any sympathy. The least they should expect though is if, or when, they do become ill as a result of their working environment; that they can rely on support to battle whatever that illness may be. In this case the illnesses are certain prescribed cancers. To put it quite simply that is what this Legislation is all about and hence why it is named the "Fair Protection for Firefighters Bill."

There is now a fair and just legislated safeguard in place for our members that are stricken with one of those insidious cancers.

This legislation is particularly noteworthy because it is a first in this country, it had cross party and Independents support and from beginning to end it took approximately six months to achieve which is; the equivalent to warp speed for legislation passing within the Australian Parliament.

The legislation is also particularly noteworthy because; this was the very first time we as a national union had attempted to lobby, educate and convince a Federal Parliament of the need for this type of legislation and as well that we were successful beyond our expectations. In addition therefore, it manifestly demonstrates to all and sundry what the collective can achieve as a united front.

However all that aside the most important factor coming out of the legislation is the immediate and positive affect it will have on the unfortunate firefighters and their families when struck down with one of these dreadful cancers.

No longer will the extra emotional and financial stress be placed upon our member and his or her family if they find themselves in this situation. The relief this will provide is actually measurable in financial terms although, I firmly believe that only those that have suffered this fate could put into words the depth of the emotional drain they now will not have to suffer, by not needing to fight the bureaucracy, for what is rightfully theirs.

That is recognition that these cancers are an occupational hazard and as a consequence reasonable recompense made available to them, to assist in their fight to beat the cancer. The harrowing times that suffering members and their families in the past have had to face in this respect are over.

There are a number of cancers recognised in the table contained within the amendment to the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988 and with each one comes a qualifying period. That is to say that before the disease was sustained that the person concerned was recognised as employed as a firefighter for the qualifying period they are:

Disease	Qualifying Period
• Primary site brain cancer	5 years
• Primary site bladder cancer	15 years
• Primary site kidney cancer	15 years
• Primary non-Hodgkins lymphoma	15 years
• Primary leukaemia	5 years
• Primary site breast cancer	10 years
• Primary site testicular cancer	10 years
• Multiple myeloma	15 years
• Primary site prostate cancer	15 years
• Primary site ureter cancer	15 years
• Primary site colorectal cancer	15 years
• Primary site oesophageal cancer	25 years

NB: Lung cancer has been omitted from the list of cancers pending a legal definition of a non-smoker.

This legislation is pertinent to ARFF firefighters and those firefighters employed in the ACT Brigade as they are the Fire Services that come under the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988.

Australia is only the third country in the world to pass this historic legislation after approximately half of the States in the U.S.A and most of the Provinces in Canada. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to our National Secretary Peter Marshall and our National Industrial Officer "Wattie" Watson for this success. Included in that gratitude is our Global alliance partners the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF) and particularly Alex Forrest. Alex is the President of the United Firefighters of Winnipeg in Canada and a Trustee with the IAFF, he is also a lawyer as well as firefighter and Alex has been instrumental in assisting the UFUA in achieving the success of the legislation in Australia. As he was along with Fire Chief Ken Block from the Edmonton Fire Brigade in Canada; in convincing the Senate Inquiry that the cancers listed should be expanded. Of course none of this could have happened without Dr Adam Bandt (Greens) first introducing this Bill into the House of Representatives. Adam is a long time friend of the UFUA and the catalyst for this success. There are many other politicians such as Chair of the Inquiry Senator Gavin Marshall (ALP) Deputy Chair Senator Chris Back (LP) that provided their support including Maria Vamvakinou MP (ALP) and Bob Katter MP (Ind) both who co-sponsored the Bill in the Parliament. We have numerous politicians and their staff to thank for this Bill.

The firefighters from around Australia that turned up at Parliament House when requested were fantastic, particularly the UFUA Victorian Branch members which consist of MFB and CFA firefighters; who both times travelled across to Canberra in Buses to demonstrate their support for this Bill to the House and the Senate.

The list of appreciation could be expanded however all will be thanked more appropriately in the New Year.

This is a momentous achievement for firefighters in Australia. It would be even better though if it were not needed and the PPE/PPC could prevent the cancers from manifesting in the first place. This unfortunately appears a long way off. In the meantime in the interests of long term health; members must ensure that they continue to adhere to all safety procedures in an effort to protect themselves from inhaling or absorbing these ever present toxic particles, when fighting a fire or training to fight a fire.



COMPARTMENT FIRE BEHAVIOUR TRAINING

Another topic debated at the BCOM conference was the CFBT recently introduced by the ARFF. The BCOM had prior to this agenda item, had the benefit of a presentation given by UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall. That presentation was on the incidence and causation of cancer in firefighters and was developed by Alex Forrest. The presentation has been shown all around the world including the European Union, various domains/courts etc and lately, that has included the Australian Federal Parliament as part of our campaign for Presumptive Legislation. This presentation based on scientific data has been influential in the success of presumption laws worldwide and is very moving.

The BCOM had this presentation and the dire statistics about cancer in firefighters in the forefront of their minds on behalf of the membership; throughout the discussions on the CFBT. Those members of the BCOM that had participated in the CFBT were confident that this type of training was beneficial and believed that it was another worthwhile practise to adopt. Nevertheless, the vote was unanimous that UFUA support for this training should be withdrawn, until or unless it was proven to be as safe as possible for our members to participate in. The BCOM have serious doubts that it is as safe as it can, or should be. As a result of the resolution on this issue we wrote to the ARFF expressing some of those doubts and advising that we had withdrawn our support for the CFBT programme. Since that time there has been some disinformation circulated by some within the ARFF; as to the motives behind the resolution adopted by the BCOM. To assist in alleviating some of that, reprinted below is the actual text of the correspondence that was sent to the ARFF on this matter. Part of this response pertains to a member that had a severe reaction after a rotation through the CFBT programme. Members will also note that we do not believe that all that could be done was done in this instance, contrary to what the ARFF have advised the UFUA.

Dear (name withheld)

Thank you for your email regarding the advice from us that we are withdrawing our support for the CFBT programme.

In response firstly, it needs to be clearly understood that the UFUA fully supports the philosophy behind this type of training and that we wish to see it succeed within the ARFF.

However we have major concerns (based on information we have) that the CFBT processes the ARFF have introduced are not conducted in the safest possible manner. The BCOM were unanimous in their decision to withdraw support based on this position.

Our member's health and safety is not negotiable and until we are assured that this training procedure is as safe as it can be, we are committed to pursue that end result.

To assist in understanding the UFUA position; I have pasted the text (in blue) from your most recent email response and will reply accordingly. The subject matter appertaining to CFBT is quite large therefore; a full explanation surrounding our concerns with this variety of training will not be recorded in this correspondence hence, we still seek a meeting with the ARFF to enable an opportunity to air those matters.

[It is very disappointing that the UFU has withdrawn its support for the CFBT program, as this program was developed around comprehensive consultation with the UFU, the fire industry and our own staff.](#)

UFUA/Consultation:

The comprehensive consultation to which you refer with the UFUA on CFBT prior to its introduction within the ARFF consisted of one of our BCOM members attending a demonstration (as an observer) of the CFBT procedure over a period of one day at a facility in NSW. Then earlier this year; we received hard copies of the Heggies report, a MSDS pertaining to the material burnt and the NSWFB-CFBT processes.

We have never had a specific meeting about this procedure with the ARFF to discuss the CFBT and the issues of concern we have with its introduction. It is true to say though, that we did revisit all the information available to us on CFBT as a result of the adverse reaction that was experienced by one of our members following participation in CFBT. Consequently, more matters of concern arose.

Heggies Report:

The Heggies report we understand to be very useful information and a good start in estimating fire fighter exposures, so that now everyone can start to look at what the issues are and the complexity of the environment and the requirement to really understand what is going on.

Among other concerns we have with the Heggies report; is that the focus was on inhalation which we also understand to be essentially irrelevant as the firefighters wore SCBA. Two of the issues of concern for the UFUA are the material burnt and the toxic products released as a result of that combustion and the subsequent transference through the PPE/PPC, onto the skin and hence into the body through either dermal absorption or perhaps the ear canal. It is fact that the PPE/PPC offers protection however; it does not and cannot provide an impenetrable barrier against the carcinogens released whilst fighting a fire nor them then being deposited on the skin and absorbed.

We have just witnessed a Presumptive Legislation Bill for professional firefighters passed in the Federal Parliament this year. As part of that process a Senate Inquiry was established. During that Inquiry scientific evidence was provided and accepted which now recognises that: there is no doubt that firefighting significantly increases cancer risk; the issue is now by how much. For example on recruitment firefighters are within the top 5-10 percent of the general population in terms of physical health and fitness. Yet, within a few years of employment, firefighters are between 2 and 5 times more likely to develop one of the many cancers listed in the Bill than the general population.

As of the 4th of July 2011, certain cancers contracted by professional firefighters are now recognised as being as a result of their working environment i.e., it is now viewed as an occupational disease and treated in the same manner as an occupational death or injury. The difference is in this instance is that it takes dozens of fires to kill a firefighter, not a single fire or accident.

Obviously the carcinogens of which we speak are ingested by breathing them in or absorbing them through the skin. The cumulative effect of which in many cases results in a specific type of cancer. Members cannot control their workplace when fighting a fire in anger. The SCBA that they don and the PPC/PPE that they wear is some of the best available. Ultimately and unfortunately however, it cannot protect them from the toxic particles that penetrate their PPE/PPC and settle on their skin. Therefore neither cannot it protect them from absorbing those carcinogens into their bodies. We accept this fact, as we accept that as a result some may die from one of those insidious cancers.

What can be controlled though is their training environment. The days where firefighters were expected to be "smoke eaters" are professed to be long gone. Simply put to allay one concern, we seek a safer alternative to burn during the CFBT than is presently being used; in an effort to reduce members exposure to carcinogens and therefore lower the probability of contracting cancer.

MSDS:

The Material Safety Data Sheet provided by ARFF pertaining to the substance burnt in CFBT states in part that; this material is not to be burnt in barbeques, combustion stoves or open fires in the home as irritating gases are emitted.

NSWFB Standard Operational Guideline:

The CFBT cell safety documentation provided by the NSWFB at page ten states in part that: Due to the composition of the particle board fuel that is used in the Flashover Cell, all Instructors and firefighters must take all due care to ensure that they remain uncontaminated during and after the training session.

The **urea formaldehyde** based resin that binds the wood particles together is of particular concern as the vapours given off while burning can be absorbed through the skin as well as inhaled.

It goes on to advise that **Urea** is: harmful by inhalation, ingestion, through skin absorption and causes eye and skin irritation.

Formaldehyde: Causes burns. Very toxic by inhalation, ingestion and through skin absorption. Possible cancer hazard. May cause damage to kidneys.

May cause allergic reactions. May cause heritable genetic damage. Very destructive of mucous membranes and upper respiratory tract, eyes and skin.

Hydrogen Cyanide: Very toxic by inhalation, ingestion and through skin contact. May be fatal. Note: very low LD50's (Lethal Dose 50% kill in animal experiments).

Ammonia: Toxic by inhalation or skin contact – may be fatal if inhaled. This material is extremely harmful to the eyes.

These are the gases the NSWFB state are the result of the combustion process using the particle board presently in use when conducting CFBT. Of particular concern to us is the fact that the recommendation to remain uncontaminated cannot be achieved and the subsequent absorption of these carcinogens by members through their skin or ear canal. As the ARFF should be aware the PPC/PPE must breathe to mitigate metabolic heat build up and because it does it then allows a certain amount of the toxic particles through the PPE/PPC which then settle on the firefighter's skin whereby it is absorbed into their body's filter system. This describes the cumulative effect as previously referred which then provides the reasoning behind a firefighters predisposition to certain cancers at such a much larger rate than the general population.

Of further concern to us is that the amount of toxic material that does come in contact with the skin following CFBT has not been measured, therefore the exposure members are subjected to is unknown.

The safety investigation and the OHS report of the event in Adelaide identified that restricted breathing and sore eyes manifested 4 hours after a second CFBT training program in one fire fighter that had participated. The breathing difficulties subsequently improved but the sore throat persisted. The investigation also found that the hygiene processes developed for the program had been followed, and that no other events of this nature had been reported in the ARFF or NSWFB programs identifying in excess of 8000 people training .

Investigation:

It is noteworthy that the investigation was not as we understand carried out by an independent source from ASA, nor for some reason was Comcare involved despite the reality that this injury/reaction occurred during working hours whilst training. It is also noteworthy that following a CFBT rotation that the symptoms suffered by the member are now presumed to be as a result of "the airport normal seasonal environment" for the reason that there is no specific medical report.

We suggest that if the above is accurate that this is a huge coincidence and a very convenient one for the ARFF. In actuality the member's sore throat persisted as did the sore eyes. Further the sore eyes did not manifest as suggested four hours after the training process. The sore eyes were evident although not immediately debilitating after the CFBT rotation. Four hours later the member's eyes were streaming and closed to the degree that he appeared as if he were squinting.

The comment that the hygiene processes developed for CFBT were followed raises another issue of concern particularly; if the presumption that this member suffered an "airport seasonal environment" reaction is not accurate. Also it should be noted that this member has not experienced a comparable episode before when on duty and during this time of year whilst employed by the ARFF. However of further note; some of the symptoms described in the NSWFB CFBT Cell Safety Standard Operational Guideline were those experienced by the member in question.

To be informed that eight thousand people have been trained in CFBT using this method and not one similar reaction recorded is a phenomenal statistic. One which we find quite astonishing. How many will be affected in other ways in the years to come; as a result of being exposed unnecessarily to carcinogenic particles is one statistic that cannot be recorded, because as mentioned earlier this concern is all about the cumulative consequences of working in just such an environment.

The investigation also concluded, "The evidence gathered during this investigation suggests that the procedure for the CFBT activity contained in the local instructions adequately addressed the risks of exposure by ARFF personnel to fumes and other airborne particles."

The evidence gathered is unknown to us however; whatever evidence that was gathered has apparently been restricted to a comparison with local instructions. Which then supposes that the risks were adequately

addressed on that basis? We contend that those instructions do not adequately address all the risks of exposure.

Non-emergency treatment by a doctor / casualty, provided no further supporting evidence or clarity as to the cause.

As a result I reached the conclusion that this event was unrelated to the CFBT program and it was more probable that the airport normal seasonal environment were having an influence. As a result I directed the recommencement of this valuable program.

I have noted some confusion in UFU correspondence regarding the data we have made available and would be happy to assist you in this regard. Unfortunately I am currently only available on the 19th December 2011 and discussion would need to take place in Canberra unless a phone hook up with appropriate people would suffice.

(Name withheld), as the (rank withheld) you would be aware that a duty of care exists to provide ARFF staff with a safe working environment. We believe this is not being done with the CFBT. We raise these bone fide safety matters of concern with the ARFF because of the apprehension we have surrounding the CFBT. We are of the opinion that perhaps there is a flaw in the premise on which CFBT has been based which will result in members being needlessly exposed to the physical absorption of carcinogenic materials.

Subsequently, until we are advised otherwise we cannot in good conscience support the process as it currently stands. There is much we need to learn about the consequences of CFBT in respect to, any probable harmful health outcomes to which members may be exposed and we readily admit to that failing. What we simply seek on this occasion is the safest way for members to participate in CFBT.

Foaming at the mouth

The unanimous decision by the BCOM to withdraw support for CFBT in its current form has brought a few cries of derision from some members, and some in ARFF Management and we are informed as from far afield as the NSWFB; for what they perceive as an attack by the Luddites who dare challenge their great wisdom. We recognise and support contributions to any debate within the UFUA however our motives appear misunderstood or, are being purposely spun for general consumption.

The issue however is purely and simply about health and safety for our members and only that.

The withdrawal of support for the current CFBT was primarily due to one issue and that is what is being burnt in the confined burn cell. Importantly, our concerns also encompass any potential long term effects that material has when it is combusted on the trainers and students. We believe that there are safer alternatives.

Members are reminded it was the UFUA that insisted the ARFF use only natural products (i.e. untreated wood and pesticide free hay) to burn in the LMU so as to reduce the members exposure to the toxic cocktail of gases that man made products produce when combusted.

Communications from some within ARFF argue that delaying CFBT means it is only a matter of time before one or two members perish in a fire because of the lack of that type of training. It is also been suggested that 30 minutes exposure to burning MDF doesn't constitute a hazardous environment (Read the MSDS and spare a thought for the trainers who will have repeated and cumulative exposures).

The facts speak for themselves and unfortunately more ARFF firefighters have, and will continue to die a very unpleasant death from cancer than from flashovers. If we can find a safer alternative to demonstrate flashover, rather than voluntarily bathing in a toxic cocktail of carcinogens we are guaranteed to save more lives than if we do nothing.

SCBA and SCBA practices has been in use for decades, the days of eating smoke disappeared decades ago yet firefighters continue to suffer cancers at rates anywhere from twice to ten times the general population. Why?

It is because the toxic gases given off by burning plastics and composite materials are absorbed into the body through the skin (dermal absorption) and ear canals. PPE/PPC does not and cannot prevent that it; only helps to protect against the heat, flames, and blood pathogens.

This is not the first time the Union has had to take action on OH&S matters that had the possibility to affect member's health and safety. It wasn't that long ago that ARFF saw nothing wrong in burning toxic waste fuels,

rubber tyres, blistering recruits ears to give them a real fire experience, ignoring asbestos issues, ignoring the dangers of diesel fumes or for that matter waddling around in benzene.

It is incomprehensible to the Union that some sections within ARFF seem so indignant about making CFBT safer. Yet they remained stunningly silent and compliant and sat idly by and watched as foam training was abandoned by the ARFF; the most basic and essential skill required by an Aviation Firefighter.

Then without a murmur observed the ARFF determine; that using water on fuel fires was the best way to train Aviation Firefighters and further that the practice of using foam (the primary agent) only required a 4 yearly practice evolution. In addition this decision was taken with the introduction of a type of foam; that most have and possibly never will use.

Today, as well as winding training backwards, the ARFF are also advocating lowering the bar on recruitment. How? By removing the hose drag; thus allowing more applicants to participate in recruit selection. Members will note that the Union is taking an active stand on these matters as well, so as to protect the interest of our members.

The introduction of Presumptive legislation is definitely not an excuse for ARFF to persist with bad practices. The environmental legislation, should also bring the ARFF to account for burning lead and epoxy based paints without regard for the environment as they do when preparing the CFBT burn cell.

Finally, the harmonization of National OH&S laws should be the catalyst for ARFF to pursue safer work and training practices for members; rather than to be criticizing the union for insisting on greater protections for our membership.

In summary, as can be deduced from all of the above the UFUA:

- Fully supports the principle and learning outcomes of CFBT for the membership.
- The UFUA believes however, that there are inherent dangers that are unaddressed, such as the unnecessary absorption of carcinogens.
- The UFUA want the ARFF to consider using untreated combustible material in the CFBT cell.
- This is a bone fide safety issue (not industrial) that warrants much closer examination.
- Member's health and welfare must be protected at all costs where possible.
- We are still seeking a meeting with the ARFF to put these concerns into context.

At the end of the day in respect to CFBT; the UFUA would be happy to be proven wrong on the concerns we have with this training, because as informed by the ARFF, 8000 firefighters have already undergone the process. If we are wrong, we believe that we have done our utmost to protect member's health and safety based on the understanding we have of the current CFBT programme; as would be expected by the majority of members and as unanimously resolved by your BCOM.

On the other hand, if the BCOM is correct on this, we feel that we have done our job either way.



What another ARFF does regarding an aerial vehicle

Delhi International Airport Limited has installed new fire-fighting apparatus, the turntable ladder.

The turntable ladder is useful for aerial fire-fighting and evacuating passengers during an emergency situation.

Using a large telescopic ladder, the turntable ladder can be raised to a height of 32m and turned horizontally and vertically to control fires occurring at a greater height.

The apparatus, which can be deployed quickly, is suitable for rescue operations that involve mass evacuations of uninjured and casualties during an emergency situation in an aircraft.

Delhi International Airport CEO Prabhakara Rao said that the turntable ladder is a boost to the airport's fire-fighting and rescue capabilities, and the airport already has 11 Rosenbauer crash fire tenders, which are positioned at four fire stations.



"We have a deep sense of responsibility and like to be prepared for any emergency," said Rao. "Our fire tenders are a vast improvement over the ones we had in the past. Each vehicle has 12,500l of water and 1,500l of foam compound."

The turntable ladder is also capable of executing high-rise tasks such as a sky lift, and it can be deployed in confined spaces and relocated easily for other duties.

The equipment can perform multitasking roles and can also be used as a crane.

Recently, Delhi airport also introduced highly sensitive, hand-held metal detectors, called Garrett metal detectors,

which are used to search passengers.

The detectors' ultra-quick response time and extreme accuracy provide uniform sensitivity and tip pinpointing to detect ferrous, non-ferrous and stainless steel weapons, contraband or other metallic objects.

IR Updates from Thomson Reuters Workforce

New WR minister facing tough first day in office with POAGS strike (14.12.11)

Bill Shorten, sworn in as Workplace Relations minister shortly before press time today, will be under the spotlight from the first hour on the job with a Qantas-style lockout of wharfies on the western and eastern seaboard threatening to snowball into a major IR war.

Bulk & General stevedoring company POAGS yesterday locked out more than 300 wharfies at Fremantle and Bunbury ports in Western Australia and at Port Kembla in NSW, where the company flew in management staff and non-union labour in helicopters to beat a Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) picket line. The Port Kembla workers were allowed back to work today, but Fremantle and Bunbury workers remained locked out at press time with the company saying they would stay out until the MUA lifted work bans.

POAGS is chaired by former Patrick chairman Chris Corrigan who is best known for his role in the 1998 waterfront dispute. POAGS claimed MUA industrial action at the ports had made parts of the business unviable. The union commenced industrial action on December 9. It claimed the dispute had been brewing for years, and came to a head over delays in enterprise agreement bargaining. The MUA said it wants pay rises of 5%, plus increases in superannuation.

The union also has "significant issues" around rostering, casuals, grading and safety, MUA assistant national secretary Warren Smith said. "This is not a knee-jerk reaction. This has been building for years and years after widespread management bullying and harassment in the workplace," he said. "The current POAGS agreement expired in the middle of the year. The company has been dragging its heels when it comes to negotiating in good faith."

MUAWA officials were meeting in Perth today with MUA WA assistant national secretary Will Tracey telling *Workforce Daily* at press time there had been no breakthrough with the company to allow the workers to return to the job. Tracey took aim at Corrigan who he described as the "Grinch who cannot help himself but ruin Christmas for wharfies". Tracey said the work bans were justified and were more strongly motivated by safety concerns than wages. "What is not being said about the work bans are the safety concerns that the MUA and the workforce at POAGS have. Close to a third of the workforce is on workers' compensation due to workplace injuries," Tracey said.

'We won't negotiate with guns to our head': POAGS

POAGS rubbished the union's claims, saying its 5% a year increase was, when everything was included, about 30% a year.

"The MUA claims are not what they have been saying," a POAGS spokesperson told *Workforce*. "The 5% or 6% that's been bandied about is purely the wage component. What the MUA also want is a change to pay scales which would automatically mean a large number of employees would get a big pay increase." He said the MUA also wanted to change annual leave provisions which would cost the company an extra

"All up - and this is an average across the business - we're looking at a 29% cost increase for us over one year, or \$25m a year. It'll just send us broke," the spokesperson said. "We're trying to offer something sensible and we have put forward 12% over three years and we're happy to progress that," he said.

The company called on the union to terminate all industrial action at POAGS sites and "come back to the negotiating table so we can recommence good faith discussions". "We are ready to do that as soon as they respond to us," the spokesperson said. "The threat of industrial action has to be removed. We can't negotiate in good faith if there's a gun at our heads."

Abetz slams 'pass the parcel', Bandt says Corrigan needs sorting out

Bill Shorten was to be sworn in as WR minister today at a ceremony at Admiralty House at 3.15pm. He has declined to comment on the POAGS dispute, telling journalists Chris Evans was still the WR minister until the swearing in. Evans' media advisor told *Workforce* he was about to board a flight shortly before press time and couldn't talk.



Opposition WR spokesperson Eric Abetz said Shorten should have addressed the matter yesterday. "Stop playing pass the parcel and get on with fixing the mess," Abetz said. He said Shorten did several media interviews when his elevation to WR minister was announced yesterday morning, but was a "no show on his first test" when questions were asked about POAGS. "Mr Shorten can't pussy foot around trying not to offend his union boss mates - he must be prepared to step up to the plate and disarm this ticking time bomb," Abetz said.

Greens WR spokesperson Adam Bandt called on Shorten to "pull Chris Corrigan into line" as soon as he is minister. "We all remember Chris Corrigan's balaclavas and dogs on the waterfront methods from last time around. Now he is back and doing a Qantas," Bandt said.

Bandt said he would push ahead with Greens legislation limiting employers' capacity to "use lock-outs as a legal tactic in industrial disputes". The Greens Fair Work Amendment (Job Security and Fairer Bargaining) Bill 2012 includes provisions requiring employers give three days' notice of a lockout, and for Fair Work Australia to consider whether the lockout was intended to make it easier to succeed in s418 proceedings ([WF17985](#)).

Responding in an emergency:

The ARFF have finally put out a memo to staff on "Driving Vehicles under Response Conditions". We have often written to the ARFF requesting clarification on this matter. For example just this year, we wrote on the 27th of June, the 27th of July, the 12th of August and it was also an agenda item for discussion at the DCC in November. In the memo the ARFF now state that responding to emergencies off airport are out of their legislative responsibility. Then advise that however, it is fine to respond under lights and sirens if turning out to an aircraft crash.

Does this now mean that for all the years members have been responding under lights and sirens to emergency medical call outs, motor vehicle accidents/fires and grass fires and mutual aid for example that the road laws were continually breached?

If management believe that this is not their legislative responsibility to; check and ensure that ARFF are included in the applicable laws in each State and Territory, so as the members that do respond and use their skills and save those lives, whose responsibility is it then? How many heart attack victims lives will now be lost because of this blunder?

Office Christmas Closure:

It has been a great year for the union capped off by the passing of the historical presumptive legislation, it is amazing what the collective can do when we show that strength in unity.

There is still much to do in 2012 and we look forward to the challenge. As usual we will close the office over the Christmas period.

The union office will close on the 22nd of December 2011 and reopen on the 9th of January 2012.

We thank all members for their support this year; it is truly appreciated because without your support the union would not exist.

On behalf of the Branch President, the Branch Committee of Management and myself and Laraine in the union office: we wish all members and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Safe, Healthy, Happy New Year.



In unity,

Mick Farrell
Branch Secretary