

# Branch Bulletin December 2013

## Inside this issue:

Branch boosts WHS Resources	2
Gloves	2
Travel Allowance	2
New rules-Retirement Membership and 5%	3
Office Xmas Closure	3
New fees applying from 6th December	3

## John "Horrie" Hancox - True Believer and Union Warrior

After more than 20 years of dedicated and meritorious service to the members and the Union at a Branch and national level, John "Horrie" Hancox has decided it is time to hand over the reins. Horrie will officially stand down from his various roles in the Branch from 31st December.

BCOM recognized Horrie's magnificent contribution by presenting him with a certificate of honor and a sports watch to time his nags at the track and while wiling away the hours fishing.

Horrie started his career with ARFF at Brisbane in 1984. He was stationed at Mackay from 1985 to 1989 before moving to Mt Isa in 1989 and then back to Brisbane in 1991 following the closure of the Mt Isa Unit.

Horrie became a Branch Committee of Management Delegate in 1991. At that time, the Queensland Delegate covered the whole state at that time.



**Branch President Joe Stenhouse thanks Horrie on behalf of BCOM, members and Branch**

Queensland was subsequently divided into North and South Queensland and Horrie became the South Queensland Delegate and a member of the Branch Executive where he has served for over 15 years.

Horrie said what he calls his "badge of honor" is a letter that he carries in Union briefcase to this day. He said it goes back to the time he raised safety concerns with the smoke hut facility with management. He took photos of the rust, holes and

broken steps and sent them off to Canberra. The response he says, was a threat of him being investigated by head office and a charge of willful destruction of an ARFF asset against him. He said he was written up but the investigation didn't proceed.

Horrie has held the Vehicle and Equipment, Equity and Diversity and Station Design portfolios, part of the negotiating team for many EAs, been an advocate and union board member on EGBs,

member of the Union's DCC and NCC teams. To tell the full story of Horrie's contribution would require a single dedicated issue of our newsletter.

Horrie's contribution was also recognized at the recent NCOM meeting on the Gold Coast with a special mention by National Secretary Peter Marshall and a national certificate of appreciation being issued to Horrie.

## New VPs



Jon Vaughan has been elected as Branch Senior Vice President following advice from current Senior Vice President John Hancox that he will be standing down from

the office from 31st December. Jon is currently the



Branch Junior Vice President and ACT BCOM Delegate. Simon Osborn from Adelaide has been elected to

the office of Branch Junior Vice President with Jon's promotion to the office of Senior VP. Simon will assume office from 31st December. Simon is currently the SA BCOM Delegate.



## Branch boosts WHS Resources

Given the significance of WHS for Aviation firefighters, the Branch Committee of Management at its annual meeting in Brisbane in November resolved to increase our WHS resource by appointing a Deputy WHS Co-ordinator. The first appointee to this position will be Adelaide HSR Wes Garrett.

Wes will work alongside our current Co-ordinator Mal Lacy who is based in Melbourne.

BCOM resolved that future appointments to these positions will be for a 3 year term aligning with the election of

our Officers, BCOM Delegates and Organizers.

To be eligible for appointment, nominees must be a current HSR or willing to undertake the training necessary to become a HSR. The Branch will pay these training costs.



**Wes Garrett - Deputy WHS CO-ordinator**

BCOM welcomes Wes to the team.

Wes has established his credentials for the role with his work on diesel emissions at Adelaide Station and he will be a real asset for the Branch

in this important and significant area of service to our members.

## Gloves

The Union and ARFF have agreed on replacements for the current gloves. Two gloves have been trialed at four Units with a generally favorable response. Both gloves comply with the current Australian Standard as required by CASA.

The gloves trialed were a Level 3 Super Mars Plus

structural firefighting glove and the other, a Level 1 multi purpose fire and rescue glove. The Level 3 glove will also meet the new Australian Standard to be introduced in mid 2014.

Members will be individually sized for correct fitting gloves and from this a database will be established that

the correct size glove is supplied on replacement

It is proposed that an instructional video and written instruction will be developed and issued so the gloves are used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and intended purpose.

## Travel Allowance

The Union has filed an application under s217 of the Fair Work Act "to remove an ambiguity or uncertainty" in the current Enterprise Agreement in clause 4.11.4, Travel Expenses. If successful the application will restore all TA payments to their proper level as negotiated in the last round of bargaining. The matter has been set down for conference on 10th February 2014.

In addition, the Union has also made application to the Australian Taxation Office for a "class ruling" to determine whether the payments made to FIFO members are "travel allowances" or "Living-Away-From-Home allowances." As stated in previous newsletters, the Union and ASA have differing legal opinions on this point and the Union's applica-

tion to the ATO should clarify the matter. As soon as any advice is received from the ATO members will be updated. In the meantime, as previously indicated, members should retain all receipts for spend on food and drink.

It is anticipated that the ATO will give its ruling early in 2014.

*The Union and ARFF have agreed on replacements for the current gloves.*

## New Rules—Retirement Membership and 5% Rule (Branch Financial Statements)

### Retirement Membership

The Branch Committee of Management endorsed two new rules at its meeting in Brisbane in November. The first is a new "Retired Membership" rule and the second, a new rule relating to the Union's annual financial statements. The Retired Membership rule will allow members who retire due to aged retirement or are retired due to LOEQ/medical grounds to apply for "retired membership". These members will be able to access the Union's legal service, discount purchasing services and receive copies of newsletters and journals but will not be entitled to nominate anyone for office or hold office within the Union. The proposed new rule has been forwarded to the National Executive for processing in accordance with the Union's rule relating to amendment of rules.

### Branch Financial Statements

Currently the rules of the Union require that annual meetings are conducted at every ARFF unit

around the country for members to consider the Union's annual financial statements. These meetings have to be conducted within a timeframe which allows the Union to comply with its legislative obligations in regard to the filing of annual returns with the Fair Work Commission. In recent years there have been difficulties in meeting the timeframes for the filing of the annual returns because not all units have conducted these meetings or have not done so within the timeframe imposed on the Union.

The Fair Work Commission has recommended that the Union adopt what is commonly referred to as the "5% rule". A model rule was considered and adopted by the recent meeting of BCOM. This is the rule:

#### "Branch Financial Report

(a) The Branch must cause, within the period of 6 months starting at the end of the financial year:

(i) the auditor's report, general purpose financial report and the operating report to be presented to a general meeting of the members of the Branch;

or

(ii) the auditor's report, general purpose financial report and the operating report to be presented to a meeting of the Branch Committee of Management.

(b) Provided that, upon receipt by the Branch Secretary of a request signed by not less than 5% of membership of the Branch, calling for a general meeting for the purposes of considering the auditor's report, the general purpose financial report and the operating report made in respect of the Branch, the Branch Secretary shall convene such a meeting as soon as is practicable."

The rule allows the annual financial statements to be endorsed and adopted by a meeting of the Branch Committee of Management and without the need to conduct a meeting of every unit around the country.

The adoption of the rule does not affect in any way your access to the statements as they would still be made available on the Union's website and in hard copy.

*The adoption of the rule does not affect in any way your access to the statements as they would still be available to members on the Union's website and in hard copy.*

## Office Xmas Closure

The Union Office will be closed from **Monday 23rd December 2013** and will reopen on **Monday 6th January 2014**.

During this time members will be able to contact their Organizer or BCOM Delegate

with any issues.

On behalf of Julie and myself, a very Safe and Merry Christmas to you and yours and our hope that 2014 is full of health, wealth and happiness.



## New fees applying 6th December 2013

Members subscriptions are set at 1% of the annual rate applying to the rate for a Leading Firefighter under the Enterprise Agreement.

Structuring subscriptions on this basis means that each time there is an increase in the rate at the LFF rank there is a consequent increase in the subscription rate. Increases in subscriptions are necessary for the Union to continue to function to protect and promote the interests of members and provide the many services that it does. Just as it is for households

and businesses, the costs of living and operating for the Union are continually increasing.

Remember that your Union subscription is a legitimate tax deduction and details of your annual contributions can be obtained from the Union office over the phone or email request. Also if requested, a certificate of payment for the tax year can be provided.

Subscriptions can be paid by direct debit from an account nominated by you and is the preferred method

of payment. If you are not paying your subscriptions by direct debit, please contact Julie at the office and the form can be sent to you.

Subscription rates from 6th December are:

\$14.95 per week

\$29.90 per fortnight

\$64.80 per month

Recruits on graduation \$14.95 pfn for first 12 months of membership



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**Branch President:** Joe Stenhouse  
**Senior Vice President:** Jon Vaughan  
**Junior Vice President:** Simon Osborn  
**Branch Secretary:** Henry Lawrence

### BCOM Delegates

**North Queensland:** John Ring  
**South East Queensland:** Karl McDonald  
**New South Wales:** Al Lerpiniere  
**Victoria:** Jake Callaghan  
**South Australia:** Simon Osborn  
**Tasmania:** Simon Owen  
**Western Australia:** Les Milhinch  
**Northern Territory:** Ricky Nolan

**National WHS Co-coordinator:** Mal Lacy  
**Deputy WHS Co-ordinator:** Wes Garrett

### Organizers

<b>Cairns:</b> Mike McCarthy	<b>Townsville:</b> Tim Crighton
<b>Mackay:</b> David Tromba	<b>Rockhampton:</b> Phil Turner
<b>Maroochydore:</b> Derrick Runge	<b>Brisbane:</b> Karl McDonald
<b>Coolangatta:</b> Peter Young	<b>Sydney:</b> Mat Crook
<b>Melbourne:</b> Brendon Mimmo	<b>Hobart:</b> Scott Greenwood
<b>Launceston:</b> Vacant	<b>Adelaide:</b> Wes Garrett
<b>Perth:</b> Vacant	<b>Darwin:</b> Vacant
<b>Broome:</b> Matt Reynolds	<b>Port Hedland:</b> Dennis Nixon
<b>Karratha:</b> John Le Bon	<b>Alice Springs:</b> Dan Thompson
<b>Ayers Rock:</b> Perry Stedman	<b>Hamilton Island:</b> Shane Campbell
<b>Avalon:</b> Marc Jansen	<b>Canberra:</b> Vacant

*We're on the web at*  
[www.ufuav.asn.au](http://www.ufuav.asn.au)