

Branch Newsletter

May 2014



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Next Wage Increase Due 2nd June 2014

Your next wage increase due under the 2013-2017 Enterprise Agreement will be effective from 2nd of June 2014.

Clause 5.8.1 of the Enterprise Agreement provides:

“The following base salary increases will apply to all classifications under this Agreement and Schedules from the first pay period commencing on or after the dates shown:

Date	Percentage Increase
<i>Date Agreement commences to operate (Commencement Date)</i>	1.965%
<i>6 months from Commencement Date</i>	1.965%
<i>1 Year from Commencement Date</i>	1.965%
<i>18 months from Commencement Date</i>	1.965%

The 2013-2017 Agreement commenced on 22nd May 2013 so the relevant increase in the table above is “1 Year from Commencement Date”, being 22nd May 2014. The first pay period commencing on or after 22nd May 2014 is Pay Period 26/13 which commenced on 2nd June.

Salary rates effective from 2nd June will be:

Classification	Annual Salary	Per fortnight
Recruit	\$31431	\$1205.02
TFL1	\$55503	\$2127.91
TFL2	\$63830	\$2447.15
LFF	\$79262	\$3038.79
SSO	\$83810	\$3213.16
SO	\$92334	\$3539.96
FC	\$99621	\$3819.33

Fortnightly amounts may vary with rounding.

Category Allowance rates effective from 2nd June will be:

Classification	Annual Salary	Per fortnight
LFF	\$3202	\$122.76
SSO	\$3385	\$129.77
SO	\$3730	\$143.00
FC	\$4024	\$154.27

Fortnightly amounts may vary with rounding.

Subs increase from 20th June 2014

In compliance with Resolution 22 of the November 2010 BCOM meeting, subscriptions are levied at the rate of 1% of the salary rate for a Leading Fire Fighter. Consequently, subscriptions move each time there is a movement in this salary rate.

From the 20th June the new subscription rates will be:

Full rate per fortnight direct debit	\$30.40
TFL1 per fortnight direct debit [new members first 12 mths membership	\$15.20

An increase in union dues is rarely celebrated by members. Although by the same financial appraisal that underscores that position follows the obvious, and that is rising costs faced by members are also faced by the union and to be effective a union needs to remain solvent.

There are a myriad of costs associated with operating a union and we are yet to see any of those decrease. Without member's financial support, the union could not comply with many of the resolutions adopted by the membership or pursue projects that have been identified as beneficial to members. In truth the union would falter badly and in reality possibly fail completely.

It should be remembered that your union subscriptions are fully tax deductible and that obviously, member's ongoing support is not only appreciated but paramount for the continued success of your union.

Divisional Consultative Council [DCC] and National Consultative Council [NCC] Meetings

The most recent meetings of the Councils were held on 27th and 28th May.

Agenda items at the DCC covered:

Update on the FRMS2 project	Update on Stations – Design and
Upgrade/refurbishments	
Entox Fluorosurfactant Study	Learning Academy Update
CASA Audits	Fitness for Duty
Recommendations NFPA 1851	Merit Based Selection Process for selection for promotion
	Promotion beyond LFF

Two other items placed on the agenda by the Union, FIFO appointments and the interpretation of clause 6.18 of the EA [Paternity (Supporting Partner) Leave], were referred to the Employee Relations for further consideration and response [FIFO appointments] or resolved prior to the meeting [clause 6.18].

Clause 6.18 provides that if you have at least 12 months continuous service and your partner gives birth to a child or you adopt a child you will be entitled to one (1) week paid paternity (supporting partner leave) within three (3) weeks of the birth or adoption of the child or, depending on circumstances, at an alternative time agreed with your manager. A Unit manager was interpreting one week to mean 38 hours however it was subsequently found in HR-Guide-0004 [Leave Guidelines effective June 2014] at 3.13.3, **one week means one calendar week.**

The Union is awaiting ASAs response on the FIFO appointment issue and on the status of the upgrade for the station at Perth Unit.

Agenda items covered at the NCC covered:

An address from the CEO	Culture Program update
NCC Terms of Reference and future direction	Finance Business update
CapEX update	ATC Business update [ATC Restructure, TCU integration]
Safety, Environment and Assurance update	Fit and Well [Health and Wellbeing Program]
Diversity update [process review, contact Officers and Diversity Council update]	Award modernisation

Draft minutes from these meetings are usually available within a couple of weeks and can be accessed at the following link http://avnet/2/3899/1/consultative_council_meetings.pm. The file path is Avnet> HR> Consultation.

Vehicles and Equipment Portfolio [UFU BCOM Portfolio]

[BCOM Delegate John Ring]

As a portfolio holder for Vehicles and Equipment in the Aviation Branch I represented our Union and attended a Rescue Tool comparison day in Brisbane on the 27th of May.

The purpose of the day was to trial the new rescue equipment technologies out there in the market today that could replace our current ageing rescue tool set. The tools selected for the trials were battery powered, electrically driven hydraulic tools. This is so that the equipment can be used at remote sites in confined spaces E.g. ACFT fuselage in difficult terrain. It is important that we have the most powerful tools but the most powerful, compact, portable, ergonomic and reliable tools to do the job. In other words, tools that are properly fit for purpose.

The comparison day involved several ARFF firefighters from Brisbane and around the country. All operational ranks were represented in this group and several had RAR experience from other services. The QFES also took part on the day with two officers present. We were able to get on the end of the tools under the direction and supervision of the tool manufactures trainers. After each trial we all filled out a "pro's and con's" critique form for each manufacturer and I understand that these critiques will be used in the selection process. The four Rescue tool manufactures that took part in the trial were Holmatro, Weber, Lucas and Genesis.

It is understood the new tool kits, when they arrive will include dedicated spreaders, cutters, ram, reciprocating saw and a lighting system, and that there are to be 36 kits purchased so that all stations can be supplied.

I reiterated the Union's position on the need for sharp edge protection kits, glass management kits, patient protection kits and specialised training in the use of the equipment to be part of the package. The Union sees this as critical especially for those stations that do not have a DRV with access to this equipment already. The Union also believes there is a need for a light weight turnout jacket, similar to that used by metropolitan fire services to mitigate heat stress at these type of incidents where the ability to dress up or down according to the conditions makes better sense from a health and safety perspective.

Other items discussed during the day were future trials taking place for a new disc cutter/rescue saw that will be equipped with a blade able to cut through CFM's as well as ACFT aluminium, standardised lockage and other modifications for our Mk8 vehicles that were proposed by my portfolio predecessor John Hancox. There finally seems to be some movement on these Mk8 issues.

Overall I believe that the Rescue Tool comparison day was an excellent way to trial new equipment because it involved operational firefighters, with varying degrees of experience, giving their honest opinion on tools that they had used first hand. However, the comparison day was only one part of the overall process with procurement, cost, ongoing maintenance, training and fitment to our vehicles also in the mix. It was important to be part of the consultation process as your Union representative because after all, your Union is working beside you at your Station and is what your Union is about, protecting and promoting your interests with our employer. We all benefit when ARFF management works with your Union in this way. Strength In Unity, it's your Union.

WHS [UFU BCOM Portfolio]

[Wes Garrett – National WHS Co-ordinator]

MYTHBUSTERS

WHS Mythbusters - Health and Safety Representatives

Recently a number of members have asked for clarification regarding the nomination and election of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs). It seems some members wrongly believe that the powers of appointment belong with their station manager. This is categorically *not the case!* Please read on for the facts.

How is a HSR elected and how often should elections be held? The legislated procedure regarding nomination and election of a HSR is detailed in Part 5-Consultation, representation and participation of the WHS Act 2011. Some of the relevant sections are listed below;

“61 Procedure for election of health and safety representatives

- 1) *The workers in a work group may determine how an election of a health and safety representative for the work group is to be conducted.*
- 2) *However, an election must comply with the procedures (if any) prescribed by the regulations.*
- 3) *If a majority of the workers in a work group so determine, the election may be conducted with the assistance of a union or other person or organisation.*
- 4) *The person conducting the business or undertaking to which the work group relates must provide any resources, facilities and assistance that are reasonably necessary or are prescribed by the regulations to enable elections to be conducted.*

64 Term of office of health and safety representative

- 1) *A health and safety representative for a work group holds office for 3 years.*
- 2) *However a person ceases to hold office as a health and safety representative for a work group if:*
 - a) *the person resigns as a health and safety representative for the work group by written notice given to the person conducting the relevant business or undertaking; or*
 - b) *the person ceases to be a worker in the work group for which he or she was elected as a health and safety representative; or*
 - c) *the person is disqualified under section 65 from acting as a health and safety representative; or*
 - d) *the person is removed from that position by a majority of the members of the work group in accordance with the regulations.*

62 Eligibility to vote

- 1) *A health and safety representative for a work group is to be elected by members of that work group.*
- 2) *All workers in a work group are entitled to vote for the election of a health and safety representative for that work group.”*

(WHS Act 2011)

What are the roles and responsibilities of a HSR?

“As a HSR your role is to promote the health and safety of the workers in your work group. Powers and functions allow you to effectively represent the interests of workers and contribute to WHS matters. Broadly your powers extend to:

- *Inspecting the workplace of members of your work group if:*
 - *there has been an incident or situation involving a serious risk to a person’s health or safety from an immediate or imminent exposure to a hazard*
 - *after giving the PCBU reasonable notice of the inspection.*
- *Making a request to Comcare, that an inspector attend a workplace and assist where a WHS issue has not been resolved after reasonable efforts.*
- *Accompanying an inspector during an investigation.*
- *Representing the members of the work group in WHS.*
- *Initiating emergency stop work procedures (if trained).*
- *Issuing provisional improvement notices (PINs) (if trained).*
- *Requesting the establishment of a health and safety committee (HSC).*

You can choose when to exercise your powers and functions—the WHS Act does not impose mandatory obligations or duties on HSRs.”

(Comcare.gov.au 2014)

The types of issues or concerns HSR’s may encounter include but are not limited to:

- Bullying and harassment
- Workplace exposure to toxic and carcinogenic materials
- Workplace amenities
- Unsafe work practices

- Unguarded machines
- Fall hazards
- Odours
- Poor housekeeping

It is important that members endeavour to install HSR's who possess the personal characteristics and qualities required to effectively represent the interests of their working group without fear or favour.

Our current HSR has resigned and I am the Deputy HSR. I assume I become acting HSR until the DWG selects a replacement?

That's right – as the Deputy HSR, you step into the role when the HSR is not able to carry out the role. Of course, you can put yourself forward to be elected as HSR if you like, or if nominated by another member of your DWG. Alternatively, you may wish to remain as the Deputy HSR until such time as your term ends.

Regarding the election process - under the OHS Act, the employer has basically NO ROLE in determining how an election is held UNLESS the members of the DWG request it. The Act clearly states that it is up to the members of the DWG to determine how they elect their HSR and/or deputy HSR.

Do not allow the employer to pressure you to change the process - if you have any issues, then I recommend you contact your union OHS Officer to help. It's a very common thing for employers to want to either be involved in or even run elections. This should not happen, as the HSR is the representative of the DWG members.

WHS ITEMS OF INTEREST

Diesel responsible for 6 per cent of lung cancer deaths

According to a study published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, an estimated 6 per cent of lung cancer deaths in the USA and UK – approximately 11,000 deaths per year – may be due to diesel exhaust. The researchers estimate that 4.8 per cent of lung cancer deaths are due to occupational exposure – while 1.3 per cent is due to environmental exposure. Truck drivers and miners exposed to diesel fumes over their working lives face a risk that is 70 per cent higher than the risk considered 'acceptable' under US occupational standards.

Source: ETUI HesaMag #09 2014

17 common chemicals identified linked to breast cancer

A recent US research report, published in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, has identified a number of common chemicals as being linked to breast cancer. As it is not ethical to expose humans to chemicals to undertake research, Ruthann Rudel and her team at the Silent Spring Institute analysed substances that have been studied in both humans and rodents and found the results were largely consistent. Rudel is research director at the Institute, a non-profit organisation studying links between the environment and women's health, in Newton, Massachusetts.

The group identified 102 "high priority" chemicals for breast cancer prevention and consolidated many of them into 17 groups. These include flame retardants, perfluorinated compounds in coatings to resist stains, by-products of water disinfection, dry-cleaning fluids and other solvents, benzene, which is in vehicle exhaust and tobacco smoke, and diesel. The researchers also recommend seven ways women can minimize their exposure to these chemicals – none of these take account of potential occupational exposures, however.

Rudel, Ruth, et al: *New Exposure Biomarkers as Tools For Breast Cancer Epidemiology, Biomonitoring, and Prevention: A Systematic Approach Based on Animal Evidence*. *Environ Health Perspect*;

DOI:10.1289/ehp.1307455 [abstract; the full study, including the list of chemicals, can be downloaded from this page]

Sources: [Huffington Post](#) [Dangerous Chemicals Linked To Breast Cancer: Report](#) [Philly.com](#) [Greenspace: Chemical exposure and breast cancer risk](#)

IAFF CAMPAIGN FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES TO BE INCLUDED IN PRESUMPTION LEGISLATION

As reported in:

<http://www.businessinsurance.com/article/20140608/NEWS06/306089986?tags=|62|338|302|342|304|92>

A push for benefits related to infectious diseases could be the next trend in workers compensation presumption legislation. The International Association of Fire Fighters wants firefighters to receive coverage for infectious diseases, such as methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, said Jim Brinkley, Washington-based director of occupational health and safety for the association. MRSA “is an emerging disease that we’re seeing a higher incidence of within our population, (as well as) hepatitis A, B and C,” Mr. Brinkley said. While more than 35 states include heart disease in firefighter presumption laws, only about 25 states include infectious diseases, according to the firefighters association.

IR Issues

Carer’s Leave

The Union has written to ASA to have discussions on clarifying the amount of personal leave an employee can access for caring purposes according to clause 6.5.8 of the 2013-2017 EA. The clause provides for 144 hours. The National Employment Standards do not provide for a cap or limit on the amount of leave that can be accessed so this matter needs to be clarified.

Payment for higher duties

Clause 4.12.1 (b) of the 2013-2017 EA provides that “when performing duties, you will be paid at the substantive salary of the higher classification. The Union’s advice is that this is not happening when members perform higher duties at the rank of Inspector and above. The Union has received legal advice on this matter and will be seeking to have discussions with ASA on this issue.

Rest Relief

Clause 4.7 of the EA provides for a break of 8 hours (plus reasonable travelling time) if you are required to work additional hours or emergency duty and there is less than 8 hours break to your next regular shift commencement time. ASA do not appear to have a consistent approach to claims made under this clause. Some claims are paid while others are rejected. The Union was of the view the matter had been settled on the basis of previous advice from “People Services” in response to a “Heatcase” request but as it turns out it will have to be clarified again.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

FBU CALLS FOR 24 HOUR STRIKE ON 12TH JUNE

The pension battle heats up in Britain with the FBU notifying of new strike action including a 24-hour strike.

Fire Services have allegedly employed strike-breakers and given them some basic training.

Watch the FBU video where National Secretary Matt Wrack discusses the basis for the industrial action and the plans in place. http://www.youtube.com/watch?sns=fb&v=lc3iA_AauFo&app=desktop

As reported on the FBU website <http://www.fbu.org.uk/>

First 24-hour firefighter strike announced after minister ploughs ahead with “unworkable” pension scheme
Firefighters in England and Wales will strike again over attacks on their pensions after the government confirmed it would implement a new scheme without further negotiations.

A 24-hour strike — the longest yet in the three-year campaign — will take place from 9am on Thursday 12 June, with another set for 10am-5pm on Saturday 21 June.

In addition between the two strikes firefighters will not carry out any voluntary overtime — which is routinely needed by many fire and rescue services to maintain fire cover — or conduct training of strikebreakers between the beginning of the first strike and 9am on Sunday 22 June.

Matt Wrack, general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, said: “The minister has decided to bury his head in the sand, but he must accept that firefighters simply will not give up fighting for their futures — and our fire and rescue service.

“Concerns over these unworkable proposals remain as valid and grave as ever, and the government has ignored all the evidence including it’s own reports. “It is as ever a difficult decision for us to take, but the only way for us to resolve this unnecessary and costly dispute is for the government to start listening to reason.”

The decision to strike was made at a meeting of the FBU’s executive council on Wednesday 4 June.

On Tuesday FBU officials had met the fire minister, Brandon Lewis, in the hope that discussion could continue, although their appeal fell on deaf ears.

On Monday 23 May, the minister opened a ‘consultation’ on their proposals, signalling an end to discussions with firefighters over the scheme. However, the Department for Communities and Local Government is still refusing to publish alternative, fully-costed proposals that they have admitted to being in possession of since Wednesday 19 March. As a result, the FBU argues that the firefighters, the public and other parties — including ministers in the Welsh and Scottish governments — are being kept in the dark, and the consultation being rendered meaningless.

Before 2010, firefighters already contributed one of the highest proportions of their salary towards their pensions (11%), and in April this increased for the third year running. Firefighters typically now pay over £4,000 a year from a £29,000 salary, and the government has announced they will impose another increase in 2015.

The FBU says increasing numbers of members are considering leaving the pension scheme as a result of its decreasing affordability — posing difficult questions over its sustainability.

Under the government’s proposals, firefighters who are forced to retire before the age of 60 as a result of ageing will have half of their pension taken away.

The government’s own report, published in December 2013 by Dr Tony Williams, found that large numbers of firefighters would be unable to maintain operational fitness until 60.

The two strikes will be the thirteenth and fourteenth over pensions. The first was on Thursday 24 September 2013.

Super News



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Making super contributions

Silas Dingiria, AvSuper

Building up your super is a great way to prepare for the retirement lifestyle you want. And a key means of building your super is to contribute to your super account throughout your working life.

Types of contributions

Contributions are divided into two main categories – employer and personal contributions.

Contributions made by your employer include Superannuation Guarantee (SG) and salary sacrifice. Your super fund must tax these amounts as they are received. These are known as concessional contributions. Personal contributions are made from your (or your spouse's) after-tax salary. These contributions are known as non-concessional contributions and are not taxed by your super fund.

Contributions limits

The Government restricts the amount of money you can contribute to your super account at concessional tax rates - and there are tax implications once your contributions reach these limits.

For the 2013-14 financial year the limit on concessional contributions is \$25,000. Based on the 9.25% superannuation guarantee, you will reach this limit if you earn \$270,270 or more per year. The limit increases to \$35,000 for members over 60. From 1 July 2014, the limit will be \$30,000 or \$35,000 for members over 50.

The limit on non-concessional contributions is \$150,000 in 2013-14 and \$180,000 in 2014-15. There is also a 'bring forward' option, which allows you to contribute up to \$450,000 over 3 years if you are under age 65 (e.g. you could make non-concessional contributions of \$450,000 in 2010-11 but you could not make further non-concessional contributions until 2013-14) without paying additional tax. The 'bring forward' option increases to \$540,000 on 1 July 2014 unless you use this option before that date – talk to AvSuper to figure out your best option if you're thinking of making a large contribution.

Exceeding contribution limits

The ATO will send you a notice if you have exceeded a contribution limit. This notice will tell you how much additional tax you are required to pay and how to do so.

You can choose to withdraw excess concessional contributions to avoid the additional tax. If a proposal in the May 2014 Federal Budget goes ahead, you may also be able to withdraw non-concessional contributions above the limit.

Sound complex? The *Understanding contributions limits fact sheet* on AvSuper's website explains the process in greater detail and will make it easier to understand.

While avoiding the excess contributions tax may seem desirable, it is worth considering your options as you will also have to pay tax on the money if it is not in super. AvSuper member advice consultants understand your super account and can help you set a contributions strategy that suits your circumstances. Appointments are provided at no additional cost for AvSuper members so why not ask for help today?

Silas Dingiria is the Member Services Manager for **AvSuper, a profit-for-members superannuation fund**, dedicated to the aviation industry that also offers income streams. AvSuper operates for the benefit of members, with low fees and strong long term investment returns and is open to all Australians wanting knowledgeable service, **access to free personalised AvSuper specific and income stream advice** and competitively priced insurance options.

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ACTU Member Connect



Your Union Benefits Update



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- Banking
- Automotive
- Tyres
- Insurance
- Merchandise
- Financial Planning
- Superannuation
- Movies
- Home Loans
- Credit Cards
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To view the latest edition of “member connect” to the following link:

<http://www.memberconnect.com.au/newsletters/Member-Update-201406.html>

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