



JUNE 2017 (LATE ED)

BUMPER MONITOR



The view from the Station Floor.

The United Firefighters Union (Aviation Branch) represents the majority of Aviation Firefighters across Australia.

The Union belongs to you, the members. To be strong, it needs **your** support and **your** actions. The bumper is your Newsletter, so read it, be informed, share it, and contribute to it. Speak Up and Have your Say!

F/F Video

<https://www.facebook.com/1365948480135411/videos/1519703664759891>

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**UNITED FIREFIGHTERS
UNION AUSTRALIA
AVIATION BRANCH**

16 Peel St, South Brisbane QLD
4101

07 3846 5580

www.ufuav.asn.au

branchsecretary@ufuav.asn.au

admin@ufuav.asn.au

SME@ufuav.asn.au

From the Branch Secretary:

So where to from here with the Enterprise Bargaining? Last week your Branch Executive spent time planning and strategizing with our National Secretary, National Industrial Officer and our legal counsel. The time was well spent and an action plan has been developed and ready to go when needed.

On 20th June we sent correspondence to Airservices in response to their proposed "deal" for a 2% pay increase. A copy of that correspondence has been provided to your Committee of Management Delegates and Organisers for your information. That response was sent after two meetings of your Branch Committee of Management considered the

"deal" and determined that the proposal was not acceptable. Ask your BCOM Delegate or Organiser to show you the letter so you can see why the "deal" was rejected and not in your best interests. It is worth pointing out that your Union did attempt to have further negotiations in the week of 5th June on the basis we felt there was still room to negotiate on some issues not included in the "deal" and others in the deal. Despite providing an agenda of approximately 8 items, Airservices felt there was little point in meeting face to face if there was not any change to the Union's position. We are anticipating negotiations will resume within the next week or so.

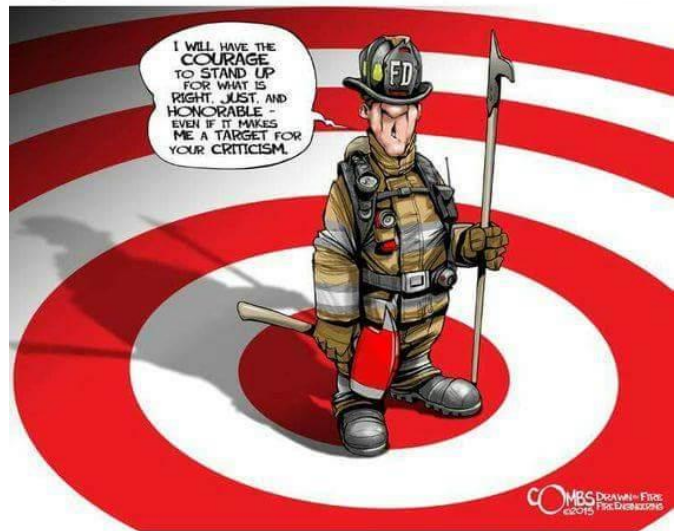
From reports from members around the country, it seems there is a difference between what Airservices negotiators are saying to us in negotiations and what is being reported to members on stations by visiting dignitaries. An EA Update Number 7 is due for release at the end of this week and an email has been sent to all BCOM Delegates and Organisers with responses to statements that have been made recently at Coffs Harbour. Ask your BCOM Delegate and Organiser to show you that email for the facts.

One of the issues of difference between the Union and Airservices is proposed changes to your personal [sick] leave entitlements. The key proposal is to deduct all absences from your personal leave bank irrespective of the duration of the absence. If you are unfortunate enough to have to exhaust your accrual due to long term illness or injury it is proposed that you will carry the bag for up to 28 days and on the 29th day Airservices will start paying you again. This means you would have to take leave without pay or else use other leave entitlements for the first 28 days of absence or part thereof. Negotiators went so far as to ask why we think you should have such generous entitlements when no one else gets these conditions. A read of the Grenfell Tower disaster article in this issue will give you a good idea of why firefighters need to know they will be looked after if they put their lives on the line to protect public safety.

While saying they will continue to negotiate with your Union, Airservices have indicated that they have a proposal ready to put to staff without your Union's endorsement and at the last negotiation meeting on 29th May asked if your Union would be prepared to take a neutral stance on any proposal put to you. The answer to the question, "what do you mean?" was, don't promote a yes or no vote on the proposal. Airservices negotiators were told that wouldn't happen because you joined your Union to promote and protect your interests and to provide you with advice and direction on important matters such as a proposal for a new EA. Like Airservices your Union is keen to get back to negotiations and find common ground allowing for a new Agreement to be concluded as quickly as possible coupled with a wage increase for you.

DRAWN^{BY}FIRE™

BY PAUL COMBS



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Make sure you stay in contact with your BCOM Delegates and Organisers for the facts of where negotiations are up to and feel free to request a hook-up with your Branch Secretary or other members of your negotiating team. Remember, you are all Fire Fighters first and foremost and Fire Fighters stick together and have each other's backs. This is a time that requires unity and solidarity and it is only through unity and solidarity that a good outcome will be achieved.

You are, each and every one, "the Union" and our objective in these negotiations is to look after the interests of all members no matter where you are stationed. You have told us that you want your conditions maintained and that you support your Union in this. Airservices also need to know that is where you stand – **strongly behind YOUR Union.**

It is of the utmost importance to understand that an Agreement can be voted up on the smallest of numbers. All it takes is for a majority of those voting to vote yes. This could mean ten people could decide your fate with a new Agreement. **Every single member must vote in any ballot for a new Agreement don't leave anything to chance.** We know that you will be looking to your BCOM for advice and direction with any ballot and we will be there for you.

**In Unity
Henry**

Strength in Unity

Airservices Hits the Headlines

Airservices Australia faces a massive class action in the Federal Court following the slashing of more than 500 jobs in a controversial redundancy program.

The government entity could be stung as much as \$12 million in payouts and penalties for the "systemic" use of allegedly unlawful contracts, said the Canberra law firm launching the claim.

Former staff of Airservices Australia are launching a class action against the government entity.

Rory Markham, the employment litigation director for Chamberlains, said the alleged contract breaches could have affected as many as 150 former employees.

"There was a large redundancy in 2016 – the largest on Airservice's record – where 150 people alone in the Canberra market at that level were let go," Mr Markham said.

"What appears to be the case is that there were a series of contracts that came into existence that didn't meet enterprise agreement standards.

"Those contracts were effectively relied upon to make those people redundant.

"Former employees who signed such contracts could be due thousands of dollars in additional redundancy payments.

So far 78 former Airservices staff had registered for the class action, which Mr Markham expected to lodge in the Federal Court next week.



"The losses can range between \$70,000 up to about \$130,000 per person on our modelling," Mr Markham said.

"We suspect we have only reached about 60 per cent of the group from what we know.

"If you looked at the accumulative value, it would be somewhere in the total of about \$5 to \$8 million just on the redundancy shortfalls alone."

In addition to the redundancy payouts, Airservices could be eligible to pay around \$4 million in penalties, Mr Markham said.

"The other thing that is significant is that – if our case is right – this would be the first time that a government has engaged in a breach of an enterprise agreement on a systemic level.

"Breaches of employment agreements carry penalties of up to \$52,000 per contravention. It might cost as much as \$10 to \$12 million with penalties on that basis."

The alleged contract breaches generally applied to employees on individual contracts who were made redundant in the past six years, he added.

Mr Markham said it was likely there were employees of other government entities who had been impacted by similar alleged breaches.

"I think it is a broader issue that applies in the public service. It is most likely to apply outside of the key agencies of government.

"I suspect there has been a malaise that has come in around employment relationships where they haven't quite held up to the enterprise agreements they are being entered into."

Throughout 2016 Airservices offered redundancy packages to 523 employees in a bid to cut operating costs and halt shrinking profitability.

Airservices profitability fell by 90 per cent between 2013 and 2015, from \$45.5 million to \$4.5 million.

The entity is responsible for air traffic control, firefighting and navigation services at a number of federally-leased airports across the country.

Critics of the redundancy program feared that the loss of frontline staff would impact safety at these airports.

Airservices chief executive Jason Harfield has previously dismissed these claims as "irresponsible".

A spokeswoman for Airservices said the entity was willing to work with any employees who felt they may have been affected.

"Airservices Australia complies with its obligations as an employer, including those set out by the Fair Work Act 2009 and other relevant legislative and industrial instruments," she said.

"It would be inappropriate to comment on individual matters. Airservices is willing to engage with relevant parties to resolve any outstanding employment issues."

Canberra Times

Grenfell Tower

POSTED BY: EDITOR JUNE 20, 2017



The following is an edited account of a Grenfell firefighter's experience that was posted anonymously on the Save the UK Fire Service Facebook page.

I'm not sure if this is something that I should vocalise or whether or not it should be shared with the world but as I sit at home thinking about the other night the Grenfell Tower I feel like people might want to know how the incident went from the point of view of a firefighter who was sent inside, while the tower burned all around us and how after years of cuts to the service I work for, how I feel about what we do and how the past few years have been for us.

I've always been very proud of the job my colleagues and I do week in week out as part of the fire service. At times it's hard, at others not so much, but the uncertainty of what might happen is always there.

Some things I will miss out as they don't need to be said, some I can't say, other things I will simplify so hopefully everyone can understand them, I'm not looking for praise I just want to let you know we did all we could.

As always we were woken with a start, the lights came on and the automated tannoy voice started shouting our call signs.

It never fails to set your heart racing. Getting dressed I looked at the clock, I'd only lay down less than an hour ago. Time to see what we've got this time.

Down the pole to the trucks and it's here, I'm handed the call slip make pumps plenty ... what! No ...

That's a big incident.

Wait ... I don't know where this is ... it's not on our ground.

We have to look it up and then we're out the doors.



We arrived about 0120hrs but due to the way cars are parked in the streets and the fire engines that are arriving with us we couldn't get closer than 4-5 streets away from the building. Other trucks were closer they would be setting up water ready for us.

We could see this was a bad one immediately. The sky was glowing. Leaving our truck we started quickly towards it.

Picking up pace we are carrying our BA sets on our back. While making our way we are trying to read the conditions in front of us, trying to take in as much information as we could.

To read the whole story go to:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0ByXrMwIAV5n8R2R3UWZVYmgYTDQ/view?usp=sharing>

How are the Numbers Stacking Up?

TOP TEN AIRPORTS – DOMESTIC PASSENGER MOVEMENTS

RPT passenger movements (000s) - annual activity



Airport	YE Mar 2016	YE Mar 2017	% Change	% of Total
1 Sydney	26 328.3	26 943.8	2.3	22.8
2 Melbourne	24 280.3	24 838.9	2.3	21.1
3 Brisbane	16 937.8	17 054.1	0.7	14.5
4 Perth	8 357.2	8 063.1	-3.5	6.8
5 Adelaide	6 866.2	7 031.5	2.4	6.0
6 Gold Coast	5 205.4	5 307.5	2.0	4.5
7 Cairns	4 099.1	4 241.6	3.5	3.6
8 Canberra	2 812.1	2 904.1	3.3	2.5
9 Hobart	2 267.9	2 412.6	6.4	2.0
10 Darwin	1 778.2	1 809.3	1.7	1.5

REGIONAL AIRPORTS (000s) – passenger movements, annual

Airport	YE Mar 2016	YE Mar 2017	% Change
4 Townsville	1 541.5	1 530.8	-0.7
5 Launceston	1 306.4	1 338.3	2.4
6 Williamtown	1 170.5	1 220.0 (RAAF)	4.2
Sunshine Coast	964,362 (total)	Not on BITRE	
7 Mackay	872.5	774.6	-11.2
8 Alice Springs	601.1	616.2	2.5
9 Rockhampton	606.0	586.8	-3.2
10 Hamilton Island	500.9	550.1	9.8
11 Ballina	465.2	485.6	4.4
12 Karratha	580.0	479.9	-17.2
13 Coffs Harbour	367.0	398.2	8.5
14 Ayers Rock	324.9	365.8	12.6

15 Broome	389.0	365.4	-6.1
16 Port Hedland	397.0	356.2	-10.3
17 Proserpine	338.7	335.7	-0.9
18 Gladstone	387.5	313.3	-19.2
19 Newman	325.3	303.0	-6.9
20 Albury	243.8	256.4	5.2
Avalon	Unknown	Commercial in Confidence Not on BITRE	Possible China International fit
34 Wellcamp	76.5	133.0	73.8

Out of the top 50 regional airports, the strongest growth was at Wellcamp airport (up 37.2 per cent for the month on March 2016), while the largest decrease was at Gladstone airport (down 23.5 per cent for the month on March 2016).

https://bitre.gov.au/publications/ongoing/files/Domestic_aviation_Mar_2017.pdf

Six Years On (Have They Really Learnt Anything?)

Darwin Coroners Report

On the morning of 7 August 2011, a fatal collision occurred between an emergency fire truck owned and operated by Airservices Australia and a Mitsubishi Triton, causing the death of three of those in the Triton, including the driver. Kevin Taylor and Lena Yali died on 7 August shortly after the accident, and Gregory McNamara died on 10 August 2011 at Royal Darwin Hospital. There was one survivor from the Mitsubishi Triton, and none of the three occupants in the Airservices vehicle were harmed.



This shocking road fatality has been devastating for the family and friends of the three individuals who died and has profoundly impacted on the driver and crew of the Airservices vehicle involved in the collision, and in fact on the broader Airservices workforce.

Most of those reports focus not only on the cause of the accident, but also on recommendations as to steps that should be taken by Airservices to minimise the risk of any similar accident. The open and cooperative stance taken by Airservices does them great credit and **suggests that reforms will be thorough and lasting** and will minimise the risk of a tragedy of this nature occurring in the future.

Six Years Later

In the nearly six years since this terrible event rocked the ARFF can we really say that the behaviour of Airservices management has now been altered for the better. Do they really understand where the failings of the management team responsible for the tragic events in Darwin were?

Since the late 1990's Airservices toyed with the idea of Advanced Driver Training. During this period our members regularly voiced their concerns about the lack of professional driver instruction. Some were sent to participate in the Defence run course at Puckapunyal as a token

gesture. Other efforts were made and minutes of the FSM conferences held for the next decade would clearly show how it would be raised and then rejected and always because of costs and logistics. For a short time an abbreviated course during recruit training was implemented at the Brisbane Learning Academy but again, this was discontinued due to managements cost containment.

Tragically it took the lives of three innocent people, a huge fine from COMCARE and the career, mental health and livelihood of one of our own members to get Airservices to take advanced driver training seriously. But for how long? The recommendation in the original report by John Black that refresher training be done every two years does not appear to have been adopted. How long has it been since the first members to go through this training attended their course?

When our members told Airservices that the Corporate Logo Stickers and paint job applied to the trucks took away their emergency services persona and made them hard to distinguish as emergency vehicles they were told to mind their own business as Airservices owns these vehicles and will paint them and use the corporate logo as they see fit.

When our members suggested that if you are bringing a 17 year old ARFF truck back from the dead you will need to retrain the staff that are unfortunate enough to have to drive and operate it. No, they said, our operations specialists "risk assessed" it, and found no problems.

Again the voice from the staff and their Union was ignored. Resurrecting a vehicle that is several generations behind modern ARFF vehicles with rubber block suspension and a unique set of handling characteristics and braking performance, no, no risk there. A vehicle that had a reputation for lifting wheels off the ground when you pushed it too hard and that already fell over once before during its introduction into service. No problem they said, ARFF driver training is generic just because you learnt to drive in a Ferrari you still have all the skills you will ever need to drive this block of flats on wheels.

Six years on and ARFF still don't have a lighting package on their vehicles? Modifications to all our vehicles to secure cabin equipment and address serious WHS concerns have been ignored by engineering and ARFF management for the same amount of time. What will it take to get the message through? More deaths and more injuries? Its time someone in Airservices takes a good hard look at what is going on. Our member's lives are at risk and that is unacceptable.





The Tragic Legacy of an ARFF Firie (The Human Face)

Meet Deputy Chief Fire Officer (ret) Kim Curwood. Many of you may only remember Kim as the CASA Auditor (aka the bogeyman) but he had a long, happy and significant career within the ARFF.

Kim commenced employment with Airservices Australia (predecessors) as a Linesman Installing and maintaining aircraft navigation aids in the Victoria/Tasmania Region. January 1978 - April 1984.



Recruit Course May 1984



AFF Avalon June 1984 - March 1985



AFF Melbourne March 1985 - February 1988



AFF/LAFF & AFO 1 Launceston February 1988 - May 1992



AFO 1 Melbourne May 1992 - April 1993



Divisional Officer (DO) Instructor April 1993 - January 1997



DO ARFFS Head Office (HR Manager) Canberra January 1997 - August 2001



Senior Fire Commander (FSM) Alice Springs August 2001 - May 2003



Senior Fire Commander (FSM) Launceston May 2003 - November 2003



Deputy Chief Fire Officer ARFFS Head Office Canberra Nov 2003 - February 2007



ARFFS Auditor with CASA Canberra September 2007 - February 2015.











Kim was diagnosed with prostate cancer in June 2016. He used the presumptive legislation that now protects our firefighters that contract cancer. Legislation that your Union proposed and fought for and finally achieved to protect our members past and present. Comcare accepted Kim's claim on 2 March 2017, he is currently undergoing Seed Brachytherapy to try and beat his cancer. Kim's advice to all current and past members of the UFUA is to get checked early and get checked regularly it just may save your life. http://prostatecancer.org.au/PCI/Seed_Brachy.html

Airservices ARFF owes it to our members to regularly screen for cancer markers. Airservices entire workforce of operational firefighters have been exposed too, and contaminated with, dirty training fuels for decades. Exposed to carcinogens from firefighting without effective controls in place and our UFU members have also been exposed to potentially carcinogenic PFAS Chemicals.














Your Union will continue to highlight these facts until Airservices accepts full responsibility and starts regularly screening our members past and present for the health effects of decades of exposure to carcinogenic fuels, products of combustion and PFAS chemicals.

What is the Firefighter cancer Problem?

Firefighter cancer is a looming personal catastrophe for each and every firefighter. Cancer is the most dangerous and unrecognized threat to the health and safety of our nation's firefighters. Multiple studies, including the soon-to-be-released NIOSH cancer study, have repeatedly demonstrated credible evidence and biologic creditability for statistically higher rates of multiple types of cancers in firefighters compared to the general American population including:

-  Testicular cancer (2.02 times greater risk)
-  Multiple myeloma (1.53 times greater risk)
-  Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma (1.51 times greater risk)
-  Skin cancer (1.39 times greater risk)
-  Prostate cancer (1.28 times greater risk)
-  Malignant melanoma (1.31 times great risk)
-  Brain cancer (1.31 times greater risk)
-  Colon cancer (1.21 times great risk)
-  Leukaemia (1.14 times greater risk)
-  Breast cancer in women (SFFD)

We are just beginning to understand the horrific magnitude of the problem, the depth of our naiveté, the challenges involved and the changes required in education, training, operations, medical screenings and personal accountability to effectively address cancer in the fire service. The signs of firefighters' exposure to carcinogens are everywhere:

-  Photos appear every day of firefighters working in active and overhaul fire environments with SCBA on their backs but not masks on their faces.
-  Firefighters still proudly wear dirty and contaminated turnout gear and helmets.
-  Some fire instructors wear their carcinogen-loaded helmets and bunker gear as symbols of their firefighting experience.
-  Diesel exhaust, a recognized carcinogen, still contaminates many fire stations — apparatus bays as well as living, sleeping and eating quarters.
-  Many firefighters only have one set of gear which means they are continually re-contaminated from previous fires.
-  Some diesel exhaust systems — even when installed — are not used, are used incorrectly or are poorly maintained.
-  Bunker gear still is stored in apparatus bays where it is bathed in diesel exhaust.
-  Bunker gear goes unwashed for months at a time, even after significant fires.
-  Many volunteers carry their contaminated gear in the trunks of their personal vehicles resulting in superheating and enhanced off-gassing of contaminants into the passenger compartment and sometimes even into their homes.
-  Firefighters put their contaminated gear into the cabs of their apparatus both before and after fires.
-  Some firefighters still take their contaminated bunker pants and boots into sleeping quarters.
-  The interiors of apparatus cabs are rarely decontaminated.
-  Many firefighters do not take showers immediately following fires.

In 2012, case studies in the San Francisco Fire Department suggested an increase in breast cancer among women firefighters. While previous studies have not examined cancer risks specific to women, women have now been in the fire service long enough to begin experiencing the effects of long-term exposure to the toxic chemicals from fires. The pending NIOSH Cancer Study will be

the one of the few studies examining cancer risks in U.S. female firefighters, although the sample size for female firefighters remains relatively small.

What is the role of the Station officer in addressing Firefighter Cancer?

The Station Officer, as the leader of the most operational working group in the fire service, is the single most influential person concerning the team's attitude, operations and willingness to change. In this key role, the SO must lead by example and set clear expectations concerning cancer awareness, prevention, tracking of exposure and the essential operational changes necessary to minimize exposure to carcinogens and other toxins.

What is the role of the Fire Commander in addressing Firefighter Cancer?

As a second set of eyes, the next level of supervision and the person in charge of multi-unit operations, the FC has the responsibility of overall command and situational awareness. This key position allows the FC to provide reinforcement of SOP's Local Instructions and implement good operational practices concerning cancer exposure reduction.

Today's residential fires have more in common with hazmat events than old-fashioned house fires due to the materials now common in homes such as plastics and synthetics. Commercial and vehicle fires have highly concentrated toxicants and dumpster fires contain completely unknown substances and toxicants.

Many researchers believe that cancer rates among firefighters would be even higher if it was not for the "healthy-worker effect." Firefighters are expected to have a lower rate of cancer than the general population because the job tends to attract people who are healthy and in better shape, at least when they start their careers.

It is also believed that cancer rates are potentially underreported among firefighters because many firefighters do not discover they have cancer until after retiring and are subsequently then considered to be a part of the general population comparison group.

Following the lungs, the skin is the body's second largest organ in area and it is highly absorptive. Some areas of skin are more permeable than others, specifically the face, the angle of the jaw, the neck and throat and the groin. Skin's permeability increases with temperature and for every 5° increase in skin temperature, absorption increases 400%.

The most permeable piece of personal protective equipment is the hood. Hoods are designed to protect our head and neck from heat but are not designed to stop skin absorption through the forehead, angle of the jaw, the neck and throat. Every firefighter knows that a lot of soot gets through their hoods, sits on sweaty, hot, highly permeable areas of skin, and then is rubbed into the skin as the firefighter is working.

Some cancer studies are also noting that firefighters are developing far more aggressive types of cancers, such as brain cancers, at a younger age than the general population, which provides further indications that the cancer could be a result of firefighting.

What Immediate Actions Can I take to Protect Myself?

- 🦺 Use CABA from initial attack to finish of overhaul. (Not wearing CABA in both active and post-fire environments is the most dangerous voluntary activity in the fire service today.)
- 🦺 Do gross field decontamination of PPE to remove as much soot and particulates as possible. (Hose reel)

- Do not place used/soiled PPE back in the Fire Vehicle Cabin after firefighting including hot fire training.
- Use Wet-Wipes or baby wipes to remove as much soot as possible from head, neck, jaw, throat, underarms and hands immediately and while still on the scene.
- Change your clothes and wash them immediately after a fire.
- Shower thoroughly after a fire including hot fire training.
- Clean your PPE, gloves, hood and helmet immediately after a fire.
- Do not take contaminated clothes or PPE home or store it in your vehicle.
- Decontaminate fire apparatus interior after fires.
- Keep PPE out of living and sleeping quarters.
- Always use the exhaust extraction systems if available.
- Close clean/living areas off by shutting door before starting vehicles.
- Stop using tobacco products.
- Use sunscreen or sun block.

The importance of annual medical examinations cannot be overstated – early detection and early treatment are essential to increasing survival.

This is an extract from the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) white paper on cancer in the fire service 2013 report, the full report is available at:
<https://firefightercancersupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Taking-Action-against-Cancer-in-the-Fire-Service.pdf>



Who wants to keep working until 70?

Andrew P Street

Think you'll still be killing it in job interviews in your fifties? Research suggests "nope".

Here's a fun question for you: how long before death would you fancy some time off? See, there's a still-entirely-live plan to raise the retirement age to 70 for anyone born after 1966, which is touted as a way to ensure that people maintain their independence and keep contributing to our great shared future - oh, and coincidentally reduce the amount the pension is costing the federal budget.

And that's lovely, except there are a few big problems for our still mortal population. One is that ageism is alive and well in the Australian workplace, with a recent study by the University of South Australia's Centre for Workplace Excellence concluding that "almost a third of Australians perceived some form of age-related discrimination while employed or looking for work in the last 12 months - starting as early as 45 years of age". When it comes to the Australian workforce it appears that the older you are, the more desirable you ain't.

At the same time that older workers are finding it hard to impress employers, they're simultaneously going to need to be doing it more regularly. Secure full-time work is rarer than ever, with underemployment and the gig economy increasingly become the norm. The chances of walking into a high-paying full-time job at 60 has never been lower, despite the government expecting you to do another decade before claiming the pension. Keen on spending your golden years as an Uber driver?

The other is that changing jobs in middle age very often means changing careers. And doing that when you're an adult is incredibly difficult.

The idea that one can easily retrain people sidelined from dying or dead industries is blithely thrown around by optimistic futurists, normally with some sort of comment about how today's flexible workforce needs to be constantly updating their skills something something 2.0. And that's just straight up impossible for a lot of people.

It's not because people are dumber or because older people get stuck in their ways dagnabbit and become concerned only with yelling at clouds and telling the young people to get off their lawn. Neuroscience has shown that our brains remain marvellously malleable and peaks in different abilities throughout our lives, as I assume my saxophone-learning neighbour is noisily trying to prove a couple of ear-splitting evenings a week. The reason is that learning new skills requires time and mental space to focus, and you get less and less of that as you get older.

The vast majority of Australians got their initial training - school, university degrees, apprenticeships, diplomas - while being supported for the most part by their families, before working their way up in their 20s - an age when, for most people, there were fewer responsibilities to distract one from building a career. By our forties and fifties we're far more likely to be financially responsible for the household, to have children and partners that depend on our bringing money in, and therefore aren't easily able to say "OK, family I'm going to take a few years off to learn a new and more market-friendly trade, followed by a decade interning and working on low-tier wages! Hope everyone's cool with living in this tent for the foreseeable!"



When I was 17 I spent entire weekends fiddling with a single guitar pedal to see what noises it would make if I used it as wrongly as possible. There's no way I could carve out that sort of time now, even for something that wasn't nearly as screamingly useless. These days I have a wife and a child and rent and bills, and a wildly time-consuming job which keeps everything on an even-ish financial keel. If this writing lark was to evaporate, as the more terrifying predictions of automation keep suggesting will happen any old tick of the clock, then I don't see any way I could support us and be an active and involved parent while also doing the necessary several years of fulltime study to learn how to... um, repair our robotic drone overlords, I assume?

That's what we're all going to be doing, right? If we're going to pretend that raising the retirement age isn't purely driven by the politics of the budget-line marked "pensions" - and let's be clear, that's exactly what it is - then we need to do a hell of a lot more to make it possible for older people to find and keep jobs, to have access to education and training, and to be supported during periods of reskilling.

Given that there's no sign that there's going to be a massive uptick in national employment, and signs that the idea of "work" itself is reaching its use-by date, it's probably more reasonable (and cheaper) just to start paying out pensions from an early age and encourage the citizenry to have a bit of free time before the Reaper comes a-knocking. Or we can just blame older people for their failure to avoid late-in-life unemployment. At least that'll give us something to do until the robotic drones take over.

Naming Competition

The Naming Competition is going very well there is still time to enter. Some very creative and funny entries having a dig at you know who.

We will close it out at the end of June so there is still some time to have a crack. The BCOM will be asked to pick the top five and we will publish these in a POLL for you to vote on.



3rd June 2017 marks 25 years since the historic Mabo Case on Native Title.

"It is imperative in today's world that the common law should neither be, nor be seen to be frozen in an age of racial discrimination." ~From the High Court's judgement on the Native Title or 'Mabo' Case, 1992.

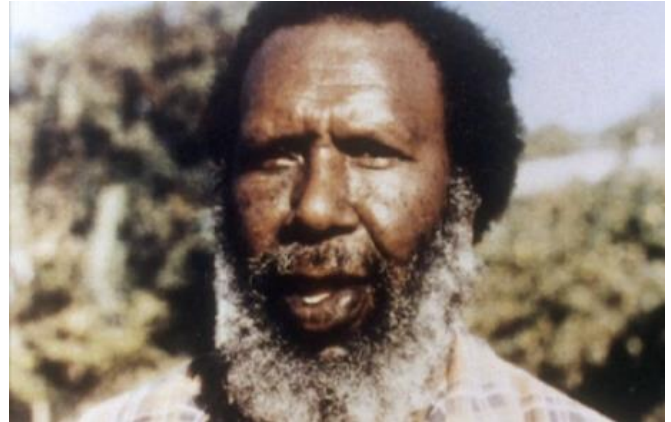
Eddie Koiki Mabo

Born: 29th June 1936

Community of Las on the island of Mer in the Torres Strait (also known as Murray Island)

Raised by his Uncle, Benny Mabo, following the death of his mother during childbirth.

At the age of 16, Eddie was exiled from Murray Island for breaking customary law. He moved to mainland Queensland, where he worked at various jobs, including deck hand, cane cutter and railway labourer.



In 1959, aged twenty-three, Eddie married Bonita Nehow. They eventually settled in Townsville, Queensland, where they raised ten children.

In Townsville, Eddie became a spokesperson for the Torres Strait Islander community. He was involved with **the trade union movement** and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advancement League. He was also helped to found the city's Aboriginal and Islander Health Service, and co-founded and directed the Townsville Black Community School.

In 1974, while working as a grounds keeper at James Cook University, Eddie discovered during a discussion with Henry Reynolds that what he regarded as his people's traditional land was actually owned by the Government. This discovery inspired Eddie to challenge land ownership laws in Australia.

At a Land Rights Conference in 1981, a lawyer suggested there should be a test case to claim land rights through the court system. Five Meriam men, Eddie Koiki Mabo, Sam Passi, Father Dave Passi, James Rice and Celuia Mapo Salee, decided to challenge for land rights in the High Court. In May 1982, led by Eddie Mabo, they began their legal claim for ownership of their lands

You can just sit back and accept that it's the way it is, or you can step up and change it to how it should be!



Acknowledgement

The United Firefighters Union Aviation branch acknowledges the traditional custodians of Australia and pay our respects to the elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Aboriginal Australia. We must always remember that under the concrete and asphalt this land is, was and always will be traditional Aboriginal land.

Our Branch of the Union affirms that Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people are the First Peoples of Australia.