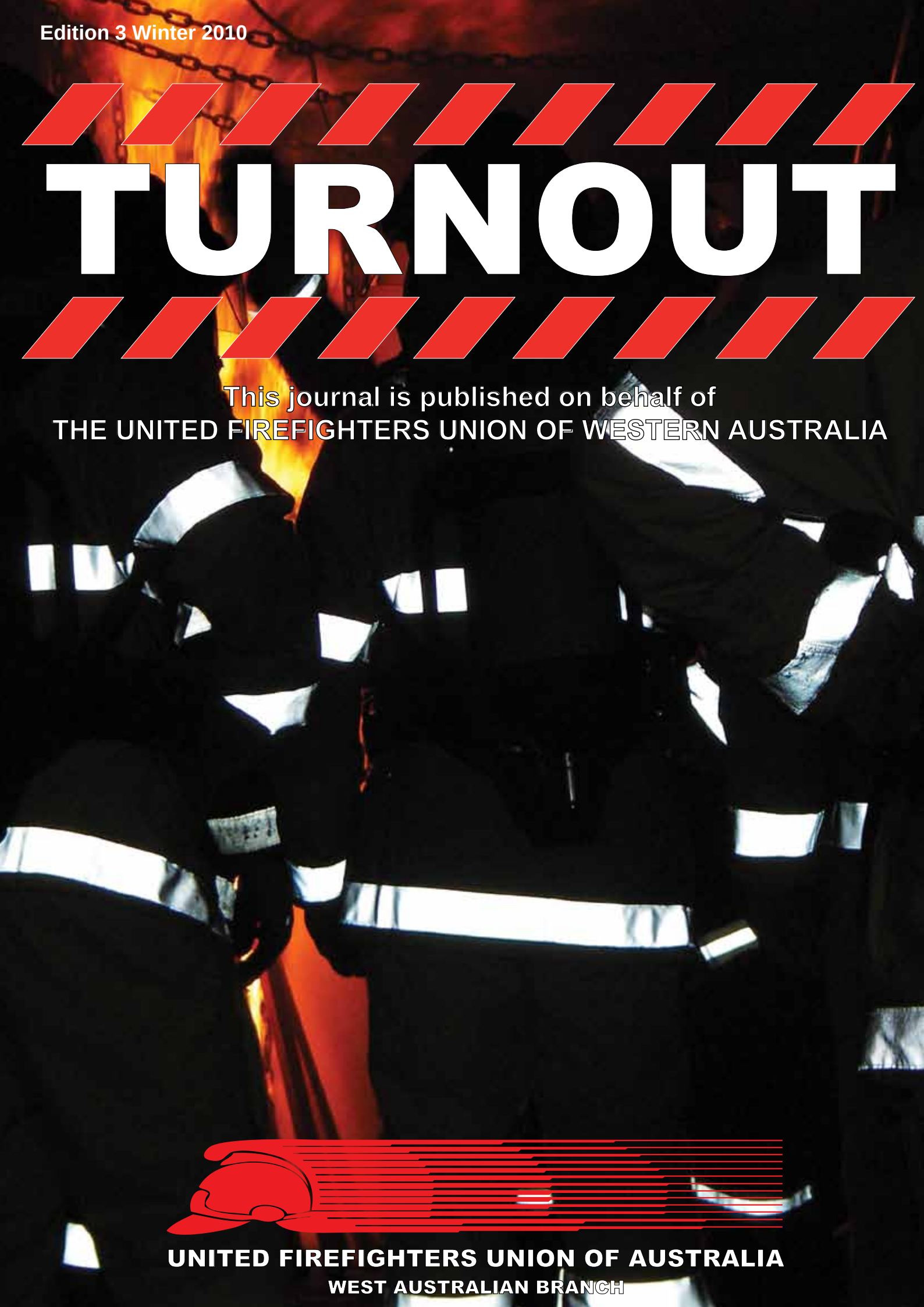
Edition 3 Winter 2010

TURNOUT

This journal is published on behalf of
THE UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



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TFF School 67 conduct a PPE Confidence Activity in the containers at the training centre

Trainees being instructed on correct servicing procedures for fully encapsulated gas suits

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The winter edition of Turnout includes some great stories ranging from a hard hitting Secretary's article to a humorous look at Albany Fire Station.

Unfortunately due to the unprecedented amount of issues the UFU of WA has had to deal with over the past few months the publication of this edition has been delayed.

I am itching to give some prizes away to members so this edition I have included a great photo of our FRS football coach posing for the camera. Send a caption to turnout@ufuofwa.net.au The best few captions will be published in next edition together with another print of this photo.

I hope you enjoy.

HAIL FESA

Since the last edition of Turnout issues have been pelting FESA harder and stronger than a pre-winter hail storm.

The Wellington Street White Elephant continues to be a problem both FESA and the Government want to see disappear.

FESA refuses to acknowledge the importance of quality instructors at Forrestfield Training Centre for recruit schools and SEP – positions that historically held ranks of District Officer and above.

The Communication Centre has recently had several 'insiders' and 'outsiders' employed to look at ways to improve the way the centre functions, yet many staff at the hub of our incident communications are unhappy. This has been evident and was recently highlighted by two front page stories in The West Australian.

But the winner in my opinion was the lack of planning that went in to the hail storm that hit Perth on the 22nd of March earlier this year, hence my title "Hail FESA"

C Platoon were on shift during the day of the storm, which started at around 4pm, hitting the northern suburbs the hardest – but still causing widespread chaos throughout the metropolitan area and neighbouring country districts. From what I have been told, some staff were asked to hold back on the night shift to assist and were then sent home a couple of hours in to the night shift.

Career Firefighters, professionals in charge of 'saving life, protecting property and rendering humanitarian service (remember that), were sent to babysit power lines down because, understandably, Western Power could not cope with the number of calls. In the mean time, volunteers from local brigades were sent to vacant stations in ESL 1 areas such as Perth, to standby, and YES they were mobilized to and from areas inside the gazetted fire district.

FESA's webpage, in summary, describes ESL 1 areas as areas covered by Career FRS and SES personnel. ESL 2 are a combination of Career FRS and volunteers (eg Geraldton). ESL 3 are covered by volunteer FRS and BFS with availability of CFRS. Rates are determined depending on where you live and you pay accordingly.

Maybe the people of Perth should be given a discount next year?

NOTE 1– the decision to bring the volunteers in to the city was not made by Supervisors in the Communication Centre.

NOTE 2 – it is not my intention to play down the importance volunteers play in our community. Being an ex-SOO, I understand the great job they do and how much the community of WA needs them. Unfortunately FESA takes advantage of their goodwill on too many occasions.

Other issues arose from this night which I will not go in to, however I think it is fair to say that on this particular night - FESA dropped the ball. For me, two issues stand out bigger than a dog's proverbials regarding the mismanagement of this incident.

One – when a storm hits Perth and causes damage to more than two or three suburbs, FESA's SES cannot cope. This was evident on this particular night, as well as back in May 2005 when a tornado ripped through Bicton, Palmyra and Melville causing widespread damage. On that particular day the orange overalls were few and far between and it was left to the Fire and Rescue to pick up the pieces. FESA should acknowledge their shortfalls during these types of incidents and employ more SES Career Personnel to cater for these incidents.

Two – planning for these types of incidents needs to occur. Long term and short term. I believe the Bureau of Meteorology knew about this recent storm 5 to 6 hours before it hit. To me, this is more than enough time to arrange for extra crews to be available to assist with these incidents. This is more than enough time to arrange for extra appliances to be available for these crews to ride. Unfortunately, a decision was made to send career staff home (staff who were prepared to stay and assist) and rely on the goodwill of the volunteers to pick up the slack.

Those in charge will justify their decisions and say that the 22nd was an unprecedented event – emergencies usually are. That what makes them 'emergencies' and that is why the people of Western Australia pay our wages to deal with these emergencies in the best possible way.

We can only dream of a day when managers make decisions based on operational needs and not on how much it is going to cost.

TRAINEE FIREFIGHTER SCHOOL 67

I recently instructed on one of the Breathing Apparatus rotations for Trainee Firefighter School 67. There are 23 trainees currently being put through the rigors of three firefighting modules, driving, breathing apparatus, manage injuries and other soft modules. The BA rotation is 11 days of intense instruction with the 6 TFFs each averaging close to 15 hours in BA wears. The wears include correct donning and doffing procedures, search and rescue techniques, twinning, buddy breathing and servicing procedures. The BA rotation climaxes with a walk to the top of Allendale Square wearing BA, carrying spare cylinders and other ancillary equipment. The TFF graduation takes place at Forrestfield on the 13th of August.

Danny Mosconi
Editor

THE LONG HAUL - OUR HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE

It has been a hectic few months since the last Turnout Magazine was published.

The Union Office has been very busy responding to member's issues and as part of our broader campaign to win improvements for our conditions and pay.

The shameful forced move into the Wellington Street Station has not been easy for any of us, but history will show that the issues we are fighting with management about will be improved for future stations. We now have a commitment from management that the consultation with members over new stations and significant modifications will include elected OSH&W representatives. We are still fighting for improvements at Wellington Street through the WAIRC over issues which include de-contamination showers off the engine room so that you don't have to walk through your living and working areas spreading contaminants after incidents. I would like to thank our members at the Perth Station for their resilience, strength and dignity - the changes you are fighting for will have a flow on impact for all Firefighters. Needless to say, and it has to be said, I am disappointed that the same dignity and wisdom has not been shown by some of the most senior Managers who have made the move more difficult by not accommodating some of the small changes.

Most notably the dinning room tables. Why would anyone refuse to allow square dinning room tables? You would have to ask the question, What is going on up stairs? Has someone put something in the water or are our senior managers just being pigheaded. I'll leave that one for you all to decide!

On the 3rd of March through to the 5th of March the Union hosted the National Committee of Management Conference in Perth for the first time since 1993 and I must say it was a great success. Many thanks must go to the Branch Committee and in particular Graeme Geer, Lea Anderson, Rob Forster, Brian Longman, Steve Mathews, Frank Martinelli and Neil Mackintosh for their efforts in organising, accommodation, catering and travel as well as sponsorship . Very well done.

There were also many helpers and bus drivers, Thank you all and well done. The West Australian Conference has now set a new bench mark and everyone from the East commented on how well it was conducted and run. The conference was very successful in achieving many outcomes the most notable being the implementation of a funding model that will give the National body the ability to restructure and function as it should, to achieve many issues like Presumptive Legislation, Retirement age from 55, Global alliance of the International Fire Fighters Union, Training and Development of Delegates, EBA negotiation assistance and many others.

I certainly look forward to seeing the National body develop into the entity that it was suppose to be when our very wise fire fighting brothers first developed it in the early 90's.

On the evening of the 3rd of March the Union took advantage of having the Eastern States UFU Delegates here by having the Official Opening of the Union office at 21 View Street North Perth. Many Dignitaries and other Union officials were invited as well as our Life Members and Jack Dennis Award recipients.

The night was a great success and our guest of Honour retired Chief Officer John McMahon Affectionately known as "Macca" cut the Ribbon to Officially open the new Union Office.

The Union had a well attended AGM/ SGM on the 14th May 2010 and that meeting followed a full day of Delegate's training. Thanks to all those Delegates who attended and especially our Country Delegates. The new Union Office also held the first function for all members and we look forward to hosting Sundowners and Send- Offs.

During the training, we showed a DVD which told the story of Mark Noble, an American Firefighter who contracted cancer as a result of his exposure to harmful toxins through work. All Stations should have seen the DVD by now, and if you have not please contact your Delegate to organise a viewing. The DVD has been distributed with supporting paperwork and we are keen to hear your responses to the issues Mark Noble and our American fellow Firefighters have raised.

We have been affected by the loss of our brother Rob Reed, and the illnesses fought recently by other Firefighters and Officers. The Union does not accept that just because Cancer is experienced in the broader community that we should expect that it will be experienced within our service. I look forward to the CEO and the Minister seeing the Mark Noble DVD - they wanted evidence of the increased risk of cancer for Firefighters and it does exist.

It beggars belief that we should have to re-invent the wheel to prove the instance of cancers in our industry are related to the toxins we deal with across the full range of incidents that we attend.

The DVD highlights many area's where a Firefighter is exposed to carcinogenic substances, some avoidable and many are not. Interestingly, diesel fumes are seen as a very bad pollutant with many toxic and carcinogenic substances that float around an engine room for many hours. The Americans have had exhaust extraction hoses for 40 years, we have had the Fremantle doctor. Think about the Light Tanker crews following the pump around day and night breathing diesel fumes every time, not good!

Another exposure is the small motors that power the rescue gear and generators. These run on unleaded fuel but have no catalytic convertor and so emit more dangerous toxic substances into the work area's at the stations.

These are the passive times where we are exposed so I would like you all to think about how you can take better control of these exposures, but if you cannot please fill in an OHS hazard exposure form.

The Unions in WA and Nationally needs to be better resourced to ensure that we get Presumptive Legislation and better health care for our serving and retired members. Many of the toxins and chemicals that we are exposed to can trigger cancers long after retirement - and we have a duty to look after our retired Firefighters and Officers that is as strong as our duty to those currently serving, and to the Firefighters of the future.

Presumptive Legislation will enable Governments to automatically recognise the incidence of certain classified illnesses (not necessarily just cancers) for Firefighters as having been caused by occupational exposure. Which means that individuals who are fighting to survive their illnesses will not have to fight for the recognition of the causal link between their illnesses and work exposure to hazards and toxins. Having lived through the generation of Unionists and Australians who have seen the suffering that victims of Asbestos exposure have suffered, I am fully committed to fighting through our Union for change and a better deal for all our Firefighters.

These strategies will come at a cost to the membership but I believe it will be money worth spending to ensure that Governments around Australia recognise the worth of a Firefighter and the service that each and everyone of you provide to the community, that is inherently dangerous with great risks and associated hazards to the health and wellbeing of you all.

Stay safe - remain vigilant and remember that in Unity there is Strength.

Kevin Jolly
President

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Serves 170ml Cups	140 Serves

...Needless to say there wasn't anything left at the end of the night... - Kim Simpson, Byford

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HOMOGENISATION

Fire Brigades have served the community well for over a hundred years.

There are volunteer Brigades and career Brigades - both essential to protecting the community.

I believe the model that had worked in this state for nearly one hundred years was pretty damn good. Unfortunately we were invaded by a bean counter out to make a name for him self and re-invent firefighting.

So now we have Fire and Emergency Services Authority. New legislation was drafted with a promise each entity would be maintained within the new Authority and a shared administration would be the only change.

Craig Hynes in giving evidence to the Victorian Bush Fire Royal Commission stated how easy it had been to bring FESA into place. Perhaps firefighters are too honest and believed what they were promised.

In reality the bureaucrats that occupy FESA House are just trying to create a generic emergency worker who can respond to ALL incidents. Given half a chance they will have firefighters, police, ambos, SES, marine rescues, surf life saving, security guards, garbage collectors and brain surgeons rolled into one as a government Super Emergency Worker.

The reason Firefighters, Police, Ambos and SES workers are separate entities is that they have fundamentally different skills with each entity requiring significantly different sociological profiles. To homogenise these workers can only lead to poor service delivery to the community.

Firefighting is about saving lives and property. Expecting our managers to be in incident management teams for all types of emergencies without the under-pinning vocational knowledge or experience will lead to disasters.

Senior management in FESA plan to have anyone who has completed a course in planning or logistics fill the role regardless of the emergency. Scary! They can think like this, but it just reflects a lack of understanding for these particular roles. This probably stems from the very few jobs they attended as fire fighters, if any.

We need stop the dumbing down of the skills required to manage emergencies and maintain properly trained firefighters to deal with fire and rescue emergencies.

The COO of FESA tells any one who will listen that FESA works well and they are doing a great job.

Lets have a quick look - FESA has lost more houses to fire this year than ever before, the training centre mismanaged the fire fighters development program losing exam papers and records of firefighters qualifications, failure rates in recruit schools have never been higher, the second set of PPC is 2 years behind, Perth Fire Station was and is a debacle, extra staff were promised for Bunbury starting January 2008 and firefighters are leaving the service at a higher rate than ever. The list goes on!

Craig Hynes the self proclaimed Ideas man - some say he has no idea!

Graeme Geer
Secretary

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BACK TO BASICS

This edition I thought it would be helpful to run through a few common procedures to assist members to contact the Union for help with the different sorts of matters members may have:

1. HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR EBA, RELIEF AND TRANSFER GUIDELINES OR RECENT CIRCULARS AND UNION POLICIES?

These documents are on the Union's website and a hard copy should be at your station - if in doubt ask your Delegate where these documents are kept at your station or workplace. It is a good idea to check these documents first - the answer could be in the detail written there.

Don't forget to check your Union's Rules - which are also on the website, they are a great guide to understanding how the Union works and is structured.

2. If your query is complicated and you and the delegate cannot resolve it by checking your documents, then try running this checklist:

(a) NEVER RELY ON TELEPHONE INFORMATION - GET YOUR ADVICE IN WRITING.

Make sure you have a paper trail and ask for confirmation of the advice about your issues in an email from Staff Deployment or the Pay Office or Human Resources? When you receive that written confirmation, if it doesn't seem right then contact your Delegate for help or the Union Office for assistance if you cannot resolve it with your Delegate. Make sure you keep a copy of your paper trail - and that includes assignments and assessments sent to the Training Centre- all that hard work is too valuable to lose track of in the process.

(b) THE DUTY PHONE.

The Duty Phone exists for urgent union assistance outside of normal office hours, if your issue is not urgent then contact the Union Office during normal business hours. The Duty Phone should not be used to double check an answer you don't agree with or that you think is unclear - if the solution to your issue needs to be explained more clearly ask for that assistance from the official or officer who first provided the advice to you.

(c) URGENT MATTERS.

Your officials and officers will give you their mobiles telephone numbers so you can stay in touch when you have a difficult issue or complex problem - but if you want to talk about a non urgent matter or catch up on Union business - send them an email. Remember when your Branch Committee member is on shift, they are on shift and union business is best dealt with through an email or call at a reasonable time or during Union Office Hours. Some of our best Officials and BCom members will burn out if everyone rings them all the time - they need to re-charge their batteries too! The Duty Phone is for Urgent matters outside of normal business hours.

(d) SUPPORT YOUR DELEGATE, BRANCH COMMITTEE OFFICIALS AND OSH&W REPRESENTATIVES.

We are very lucky to be such a tight knit union servicing an industry that likes to look after people and each other. Stepping up to do a Union job can be a bit daunting and we do provide training and support for our people who take on extra responsibilities in these areas. It is an honour to work for your fellow firefighters and we need to make sure that we support our Delegates, BCom Officials and OSH&W Representatives so that they are not worn out and they can continue their good work. If they ask for assistance it could be a great way to get mentored into more Union work.

And if all of this seems a bit too much - step up and write an article for Turnout Magazine- the Industrial Officer would prefer to read your stuff instead of hers and the Editor would welcome new voices. Life on your station and in your workplace is always interesting and your stories are worth sharing.

Lea Anderson
Industrial Officer

Prime Minister
Minister for Health
Minister for Indigenous Health, Rural and Regional Health
Media Release

6 May 2010

Australia's First Male Health Policy

The Rudd Government today launched Australia's first ever National Male Health Policy.

The National Male Health Policy has been developed through extensive consultations with health services, health professionals, and men themselves in 26 public forums attended by 1,300 people.

It encourages men of all ages to take action to improve their own health and recognises that this requires information, assistance and support, across 6 priority areas.

The Rudd Government is investing an initial $16.7 million to assist in addressing male health challenges.

The Prime Minister Kevin Rudd joined the Minister for Indigenous Health and Rural and Regional Health, Warren Snowdon, to make the announcement at the Whittlesea Men's Shed.

The $16.7 million commitment includes:

- $3 million for the Australian Men's Sheds Association to help secure the future of men's sheds and support new sheds, especially in areas of high need. Men's sheds play an important role in the community by providing meeting places where men can find social support and camaraderie.
- $6.9 million to establish the first Australian longitudinal study into the social determinants of male health to understand and address all of the determining factors – social, economic and behavioural – that affect the length and quality of life of Australian men.
- $6 million to promote the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, and encourage them to actively participate in their children's and families' lives, particularly during the antenatal period and in early childhood.
- $400,000 for regular bulletins on male health to further build the evidence base in male health and inform health professionals, policy developers and consumers.

- $350,000 to develop health promotion materials targeting males at key transition points in life, for distribution in men's sheds and more broadly.
- $50,000 to support GPs to better engage and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait males through the Andrology Australia forum in June 2010.

The National Male Health Policy recognises that while the life expectancy of the Australian man at 78.7 years is among the highest in the world, this is still five years shorter than the expected life of an Australian woman at 83.7 years.

This is partly due to preventable conditions or where men experience premature deaths such as cardiovascular disease and lung cancer at higher rates than women.

Further to this, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men are particularly vulnerable, living on average 11.5 years less than non-Indigenous men.

The policy sets out six priority areas for investment:

1. Optimal health outcomes for males – Deliver initiatives and services that take into account the needs of Australian men and promote optimal health outcomes for all Australian men.
2. Health equity between population groups of males – Recognising some groups of men have worse health outcomes than others, like those living in rural and remote communities and that different initiatives and services may be needed.
3. Improved health for males at different life stages – Deliver initiatives and services that consider the health needs of Australian men in different age groups and at key transition points from youth to old age.
4. A focus on preventive health for males – Deliver preventative-health initiatives that take into account the needs of Australian men.
5. Building a strong evidence base on male health – Build the evidence base in Australian male health and use it to inform the development of policies, programs and initiatives.
6. Improved access to health care for males – Tailor health care services and initiatives to facilitate access by men, particularly for population groups of men at risk of poor health.

The National Male Health Policy is available at
www.health.gov.au/malehealthpolicy

Press Office (02) 6277 7744
Minister Roxon's Office (02) 6277 7220
Minister Snowdon's Office (02) 6277 7380

ON THE NOSE WITH VAN NOSTRUM

The Bureaucratic rolling stone is gathering no moss; FESA has proposed yet another Branch of 'experts' called the Operational Resources Review and Development Branch. *Once again no sign of the Major main end user being represented.* The specific responsibilities of this new Branch include;
Develop and maintain FESAs operational review and development framework and assess it effectiveness to ensure a best practise approach.

Err that means err looking at stuff to make sure it can do the job it's supposed to do, I think?

The branch will provide executive support for to FESAs key resources and development focussed committees.

Oh hang on a minute they sound like pretty serious subjects for career fire-fighters.

The new committees which replace the old uniform committee and VEAC vehicle committee are the;

- Development of Operational Resources committee of Steering (DORCS)
- Fleet and Equipment Advisory Committee - emergency services (FEAC ES)
- Uniform/Protective clothing Advisory Committee (UPCAC)

In addition the Operational Resources Review and Development Branch will manage and coordinate other PATs and reviews when required.

Shit that is important. So the bureaucrats have changed the name of the VEAC with the Fleet and Equipment Advisory Committee – Emergency Services or FEACES (fair dinkum)

Ok so it's not a great name let's see the operational heavy weights who make up this Committee. With a view to using their experiences at incidents to provide the best appliances and equipment to those that respond to the majority of incidents.

FEAC ES is made up of

- Manager Fleet Service (Chair)
- Manager ORRD (Exec Services)
- Manager Fleet Engineering
- Metropolitan Regional Director
- Country Regional Director
- Director Operational Effectiveness
- Manager training and Compliance
- SES District Manager
- ORRD Level Six (Exec Officer)
- Manager Planning and Service Delivery
- Principal Health and Safety Coordinator
- 2 x VFRS reps
- 2 x BFS reps
- 2 x SES reps
- 1 x VES rep
- 1 x VMRS rep

Oh Dear, looking at the makeup a cynic might think that this is a bit of warm and fuzzy hug session which is used by management to pay lip service to the consultation process. Hmmm I must check those FESA Values again.

Ok let's forget about choosing Appliances and Equipment, Protective Clothing and Uniforms are important subjects for Fire-fighters and their Industrial Body, let's look at who makes up the Uniform and Protective Clothing Advisory Committee or UPCAC (Yuk!!).

- Manager ORRD (Chair)
- Contracts Manager
- Regional Director Fire Services
- Regional Director SES
- WA VFRS Assoc. Rep
- BFS Volunteer Rep
- SES Volunteer Rep
- VES Volunteer Rep
- VMRS Volunteer rep
- ORRD Level Six (Exec Officer)
- OSH rep

Now it's time to Panic, not only have these committees begun operating but I have managed to source some of their findings.

FIRSTLY MDTS

Finally Senior Management have recognised that MDTS are crap, it apparently is not operator error, but the quality of the product.

Never fear FEAC ES have done extensive research and approved a replacement for the MDTS. Wangara Fire and Rescue are currently trialling the new system. It is manufactured by a company called Sumeria, apparently it is one hundred percent accurate but it is a little slow, the technicians have assured the FEAC ES committee that it will get faster. See Diagram of prototype below.

Wangara receives call on new Sumerian writing tablet MDT to respond to Bushfire at Gnangara pine plantation

I don't feel confident that this will work any better than the MDTs but I recall when the VSUs came out there were some teething problems, hey let's give the Sumerian writing tablet MDT a fair go.

PPE

The hard work that was done to select the new PPE has been overturned by UPCAC; they in their wisdom have determined that there is a better High Vis uniform out there. New technologies in Helmet design have provided new lightweight helmets to the market. UPCAC if nothing else is into cutting edge technology. All the discussions about Moisture Barriers in Fire Tunics have been put to rest by UPCAC, they have decided unanimously to go with PVC and incorporate it into a 21st Century Design. See Below.

C Platoon Fremantle reluctantly muster in new Tunic and Helmets as provided by FESAs UPCAC 'committee.'

NEW FIRE STATIONS

Whereas in the past fire-fighters have had a lot of input into the design and building of new fire stations and there are many good news stories where the members are very happy with the new buildings. Unfortunately DORCS are now responsible for designing stations and the fit out.

It's true that they aren't going to be the end user or that they have any experience in this field but they are keen to make their mark. I have included an architect's model for Ellenbrook and the design provided by DORCS to become the standard arrangement for suburban fire stations.

Again early results are impressive well done to the DORCS from FESA.

Architects impression for Ellenbrook Fire station, including landscaping.

Stay tuned for further developments in this area, god only knows; they will probably outsource the workshops next.

THE DIG

The UFU had recently purchased the North Perth fire station and being very keen about our history I couldn't wait to have a look around. I was very impressed with the building and the great work done in readying it for the next phase of its life. Walking around out the back it occurred to me there could be some buried 'treasure' beneath. So, with permission I decided to dig.

The trouble was, I left it a bit late and Graeme informed me that the yard was about to be covered in tarmac. When I asked, now was the reply! I grabbed a shovel and a metal detector that I didn't have a clue how to use. Headed down at about 3pm in February some time to find a bobcat had almost levelled everything.

Working around the driver (he was a mate of a firey so he didn't mind too much) I got to work. The metal detector went crazy every 5cm and no, I wasn't detecting my steel caps. It was looking pretty ordinary until it gave an extra loud beeeeeep. I dug down towards the back of the yard and found a very familiar looking shovel, pointed, light tanker style.

Anyway, what followed was a fairly nice haul consisting of:

- About 20 bottles including ink bottles, a cider bottle from the Tasma Brewery (king brown), probably consumed on duty, a load of unknown bottles with corks in the top and some sort of poison bottle.
- Some paint tins with paint still inside (hydrant)
- A false spindle
- Some fire engine red pieces of timber
- A black and white ceramic number plate – I plan to track it to it's appliance
- Assorted metal tools
- A tooth brush
- Some carpet scraps
- Some bits of ceramic plate

It was overall a worthwhile day and the artefacts will remain at the station.

SO Andrew Duckworth

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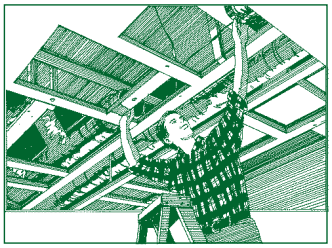


ALBANY FIRE STATION

WELCOME TO ALBANY! *If you think the weather's crap now, you should have seen it yesterday...*

Hello, and welcome to Albany Fire Station. This photo was taken before the refurbishment, and as you can see, the place needed a little work.

Heres a more recent photo for you, taken just this week. It's amazing what they can do with a million dollars these days. We would have preferred a red pot but it seems that would have blown the budget. You may have noticed that the trucks are missing. That's because we don't keep them here any more.

We keep them here. Recycled Acco backs and live drive Urban Tankers - there sure are some ideas men at FESA! Parking them here does delay turnouts a little bit, but at least since we made the move we haven't had another wheel fall off on the way to a job.

Plus, now we have plenty of room to store the trailers back at the station. We no longer hear calls from Simmo across the engine room: "Hey Puff, can you move the CSR trailer so Alex can get the portable pump trailer so Matt can move out the HAZMAT/ Rescue trailer so I can get to the foam trailer?!" The above photo shows the latest technology Albany 1st LTCSRPPFTHAZMAT/ RESCUE appliance turning out.

Talking about technology, we've had some major breakthroughs in communications too. Here is SO Symmans using the CCS to relay an urgent message to the operations centre.

Unfortunately there wasn't any money left over in the refurbishment budget for a training tower, but we were still lucky enough to be chosen as a trial station for the new FESA-approved mobile training towers. You can even haul equipment aloft with the short line! Still, we never let the lack of training facilities get us down...

Thankfully, FF Brass (not his real name) is always prepared to help us out when we need a realistic scenario for a CSR drill, and he will happily knock up a toxic and explosive atmosphere.

(By the way, what ever happened to that bloke who came down, promised all country stations a trip to Perth every year for winter training, and then boarded the plane and was never seen again? Maybe we should check and see if any wheelie bins have disappeared from the 6th floor.)

This photo illustrates another great moment in Albany Fire Station history. After years of firefighters campaigning for security gates at the station, FESA finally decided to do something about security… at the Regional Office.

We will leave you with a picture of our beautiful port. The arrows mark the locations of the two big CSR jobs we've had in recent years (although for some reason if you check the Hansard those jobs didn't even happen).

But hey, come for a visit to our beautiful town! Some people complain about the rain, but with the mobilising down here, at least it puts out the bush fires...

Matt Morcombe and Mark Cameron

MALAGA FIRE STATION - A HISTORY OF SORTS

After 37 years 4 months and 12 days Bedford Fire Station was laid to rest.

Rising from the ashes Phoenix (not Gumby) like was Malaga Fire Station. Officially in existence from 29-10-2002, Malaga Fire Station was based on the successful Success FS design albeit with some minor modification or more correctly fortifications - namely twenty foot high tilt up concrete panels. It added a nice Canning Vale Prison feel to the place.

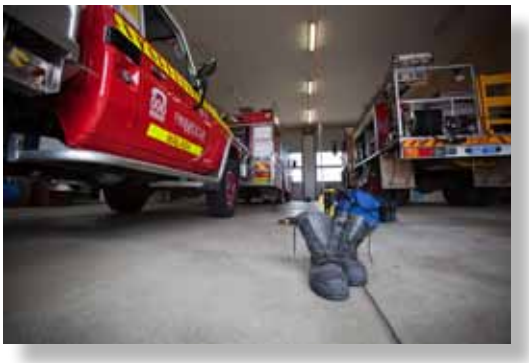
Dave "The Bear" Cameron was heavily involved with the process looking after the prospective tenants, wheeling and dealing with management to get the best he could for the firies within the allowed budget. He also ended up with the biggest locker in the known universe "The Tardis". So big in fact that when management were recently measuring the station to see how many sardines/relievers they could squeeze in they thought they'd found another dorm.

The boys soon settled into a relative life of luxury. After the space constraints of Bedford FS the boys often got lost and had to put out PA messages to locate each other. As with all wonderful things it could not last forever. Two events were to rock their world.

The first was the relocation of the medium tanker from Belmont to Malaga. This meant having to share the station with the interlopers - some from Belmont and some from town and teaching them in the ways of the station. Secondly, the relocation of Balcatta FS to Duncraig thereby forcing the Malaga crews to extend their fire district into the heartland of the wasteland. I'm sure the Duncraig crews sleep well knowing they do not have to return to the bush near Balga Swimming Pool to extinguish another blackboy/grass tree/xanthorrhoea tree nor venture into Roxwell Way which in some instances is a true test of courage.

After a short period of time all was harmonious again and anecdotal evidence suggest that Malaga Fire Station became the busiest in the southern hemisphere, or at least that part of the southern hemisphere located in Perth north of Reid Hwy and east of Alexander Dve. The medium tanker, now called the 2.4 urban, joined the Perth A-List and got invited to all the best fires allowing old friends and foes to meet up every summer at the Salvo van for a feed and a catch up. It's not the best of both worlds but if you've got to work its good to be able to meet with some of your mates you don't see often enough.

The post 9-11 world also saw large sums of cash being thrown about to protect us from all things terrorist. Some of that money found its way to Malaga and finally a use was found for the shed that had been lying idle since the station was built (Which was nobody's fault - not even the Romans). The mass decontamination tent arrived on the POD Carrier to much fanfare and a new round of upskilling took place to ensure that we were capable of protecting the fair citizens of Perth, or at least those who pay their ESL.



Since the station was open the following people have departed the premises in no particular order:
Aaron Barwick, Dave Cameron, Jim Bell, Wayne Bajars, Brad Delavale, Tony Hill, Rob Warren, Al Phoenix, John (he came, he went, he came again and he went again) Warin and Pat Marsh. The last on the list Pat Marsh deserves a special mention.

Pat retired last year, he had been in the job so long his service number was a negative number. Pat was, and is universally liked and admired by those who have worked with him at Malaga. When required he could rib someone to get a laugh but the ribbing would never cause offence or insult. What really set Pat apart was that after 35+ years in the job he still enjoyed coming to work to have a laugh whilst maintaining the high standards of professionalism he adhered to whether it be training, vehicle checks or working jobs. He never used his seniority to get out of work or to make others do the work for him. The legacy he has left for all at Malaga is that you can be professional in attitude and have good time in this job for a long time.

Any factual errors were somebody else fault. For the good stories see past or present Malaga alumni. Libel laws prevent us printing them here.

Jack Vanderklau

RUGBY

The long awaited inaugural match of the Fire and Rescue Service's Rugby Union Football Team was held at ME Stadium on the 23 April 2010. The game against a highly fancied WA Police team, who has been together since 2007, was an ominous test for the new FRS team. Even more so given the Police team was in the final preparations for their campaign in the national championships, with the aim of going 1 better than their 2008 campaign when they were runner up to Queensland.

Up for grabs the Chubb Fire and Security Shield, which was kindly donated by Chubb Fire and Security one of the FRS Team's many sponsors.

In what was the only Curtain Raiser of the Super 14 season in Perth, the match was played before the Western Force's last home game against the Canterbury Crusaders, which attracted a capacity crowd of 23,000.

The game was a culmination of over 12 months in the planning, with tremendous support from the Western Force and RugbyWA. Conversion of a few AFL and Rugby League players, as well as a few players new to the game altogether showed that there was potential within the FRS ranks. Scratch matches against Cottesloe RUFC and Curtin University RUFC saw the FRS team develop. Final preparations even included a late call up of guest coach in the guise of Western Force and Wallaby No 8 Richard Brown at the final training sessions – although his appraisal of the team suggested another 12 months preparation may have been required!

Pre game preparations included the unveiling of the new kit, which thanks to the support of our many Sponsors had the team looking the part, and had confidence grew despite knowing the huge task at hand.

As expected, the Police team started strongly scoring 2 unanswered tries in the first 10 minutes, and the game was looking an ominously one sided affair. The FRS team was looking somewhat overwhelmed until a bone jarring tackle on the Police Inside Centre by Jared Millar (Perth FS), which turned the game around and sent a clear message to the Police that they still had a game on their hands. The FRS settled in to the game and were rewarded midway through the first half with a penalty goal to Jared Millar, leaving the FRS team trailing 10 3. A cheap shot on first gamer Prop Tony Smith (Success FS) from the restart, unfortunately saw him take no further part in the game, at a time he was starting to show some dominance in the set plays.

A try against the run of play just before half time was disappointing given the FRS team were starting to dominate scrums, lineouts and loose play. The halftime scores of WA Police 17 WA FRS 3.

The second half was a much more even affair, which coupled with injuries to the Police team's captain and number 8 saw the FRS team start to gain an upper hand. The FRS backs showed enormous promise with very limited ball, with great line breaks from Cian Evans (Success FS) at outside centre gaining huge territory and were unlucky not to score a breakthrough try. The continued pressure paid off with a try to FRS Captain Adam Monson (Maddington FS), 5 minutes before fulltime. A conversion would have left the

margin to 1 converted try but unfortunately the attempt was pushed wide and the final whistle sounded with the WA Police victorious, defeating the FRS 17 points to 8.

The Minister for Emergency Services, the Hon Rob Johnson presented the Police with the Chubb Fire and Security Shield and commended both teams for a great game with special mention for the FRS team on its first official game.

Mr Dave Fryer from Chubb presented best player awards to each team, with Cian Evans (Success FS) taking out the FRS Best Player in his first official game of Rugby Union, well done Cian.

Despite the defeat, the team should take heart by pressuring the very slick WA Police team to such a close result. RugbyWA were pleased with the result and particularly the number of FRS supporters that took up the group booking offer, planning has already started for the return match next year.

In the main game of the night Western Force Supporters were treated to an awesome performance by the Force defeating the Crusaders for the first time in history. The FRS did gain some redemption at halftime of the main game in the Mega Ball Relay, coming from behind to beat the police on the finish line. Captain of the FRS team, Clem Chan was gracious in victory and made a inspirational victory speech in front of the 23,000 strong crowd!!
A special mention goes to all the guys who helped make the game a huge success, particularly those who did'nt get on the field on the 23rd – the FRS Rugby Union Football Club is alive and well. Plans are already underway for the Club's next campaign – an international appearance at the Bali 10s in October. This should be a much more relaxed affair and will see the team play at least 6 games of the abridged format of the game, with plenty of team building in between! New members are welcome and should contact either Michael Parker at Canningvale FS, Mark Hatty (Fremantle FS) or Derrin Rodriguez (Success FS).

TRAGIC FISHERMEN

The fact is I am a novice fisherman, but worst of all I am a novice computer operator. Unfortunately because I come to work talking and spruking fishing, to the annoyance of most of my fellow firefighters, I have been told to shut up and put it into some sort of script.

With that I take up the challenge but I need your help. I don't mind telling you of my fishing experiences and would dearly love to hear some of yours. Photos would be good too.

I've been lucky the last few years, where we have the use of a house in Denham (Shark Bay). The house has all the facilities - filleting tables, outdoor looking and a heap of beds. More importantly fridges and freezers.

I`ve tried different spots within the Shark Bay area, i.e. Steep Point , Bent Pin ,Monkies, Small and Large Lagoon, Bottle Bay ,South Gregories and Gregories. The majority of times doing better than most. This year there was 9 of us in 4 boats (4.75 quinnies & mine is a 4.9 savage c/c) all you need up there because it so shallow everywhere you go.

Our M 0 is normally put the boats in at Monkey Mia, head north to the end of Cape Peron with the boats and follow with the 4x4 up the track. We then leave the boats up there for the duration,and commute back and forth in the 4b`s.

A lot of die hards camp up there, and there are facilities, however, call me an old fart but I do enjoy a fresh water shower and a comfortable bed. A lot of fisherman complain of the restrictions in Shark Bay, but I`ve nearly always come away with my 20 kgs of prize fillets, not including the nightly consumption.

Attached are some photos, if you are interested in continuing these fishing stories, give me some sort of inclination. Then I'll try and do better next time with your input. Maybe we could swap fishing spots.

Email your fishing adventures to turnout@ufuofwa.net.au or call me at Fremantle Fire Station and they will be passed on to be published in Turnout.

Grant Cowper

TOODYAY BUSHFIRE RESPONSE A MESS

This headline on the front page of the West Australian newspaper on the 15th April could be viewed as provocative by some people, namely fire service personnel.

What was the catalyst that prompted this headline and what was the underlying message?

The article focused on the lack of communication from the fire ground back to the Communications Centre. Not being rostered on that day I can only second guess why it took 1hour and 40 minutes to receive information about houses being lost. After reading the article it does appear the incident management team was overwhelmed in the first instance, this is a concern and reinforces again the importance in establishing an incident management team as a high priority in the early stages of an impending major incident. I'm sure there will be more discussion on this issue at a later date once the final review of "FESA's Response" currently being undertaken becomes available for further comment.

There has been lots of criticism from numerous people enquiring why it took so long to mobilise career fire fighters to assist the volunteers based on the catastrophic fire index determination on that day, also more importantly why some people were continually trying to dial 000 as they had legitimate concerns about their welfare and the approaching fire on their door step, surely people have the right to dial an emergency service and receive an appropriate response.

Apart from our media department becoming more proactive and getting community alerts out earlier to the general public advising them of major incidents occurring in their vicinity, didn't we also learn from some of the short falls that occurred in the Operations / Communications Centre over east on black Saturday in Victoria, my concern in particular is the infrastructure of our Communications Centre. We clearly haven't the infrastructure (staff/equipment) in place to cope when we do have a significant incident.

It is obvious to everyone that when we do have a major campaign that the Comcentre struggles to operate effectively and our service delivery is severely compromised, this has been identified on numerous occasions, especially when we have an event like the Toodyay fires or a severe storm in the Metro area.

Management have attempted to put in strategies to overcome these problems with very little success.

I agree it wouldn't be practical to increase our staff numbers 10 fold but to sit back and cross our fingers each time and hope we get through unscathed really isn't acceptable or professional in this type of industry. We need to really look outside our current situation and come up with a plan that ultimately works. Two major sticking points are answering all 000 calls in a timely manner when there is a surge in calls and good communications out in the field.

The community of Western Australia expect and deserve better.

Just digressing a little but continuing on the same theme, when you look at the attributes required to follow the "FESA Leadership way" it clearly states the following:

- Challenge the way we do business
- Learn from mistakes
- Look how we can do things better, question the status quo in a positive manner.
- Try something different
- Encourage others to try different things.

To challenge the way we do our business in a positive way is a good thing and the organisation is encouraging us to do this is a positive initiative, how are we expected to improve our efficiency if we keep going down the same path making the same mistakes.

The stumbling block could be the attitude displayed by some people in management who genuinely believe they have all the answers only because they wear the authority on their shoulders, this is being very short sighted and a big mistake!

We all know unpopular decisions need to be made sometimes for the benefit of the people and the organisation and that is one of the reasons these people are in these positions - all I'm saying is perhaps egos need to be put to one side and listen carefully to the more experienced individual regardless of rank.

On another note, we have now returned to the low season manning, 3 CSO's and a delta CSO from 1100 till 2300 hrs. The consequences of the reduced manning does have an impact on everybody when we experience a surge in calls, for example between the hours of 2300 and 1100 and an operator goes to the loo or has a break, there will only be 1 person monitoring the radio network and 1 person handling all the 000/ other calls coming into the centre, you're probably thinking this is a misprint, it's reality.

I put this challenge up. If the media department closed down for 1 week in the low fire season, what impact would this have on the organisation?

If the Comcentre missed one 000 call due to a lack of staff/infrastructure in place involving life involvement and people died, what impact would this have on the organisation?

Are we admin driven or Operations focused, this is where the blow torch needs to be applied and determined what are we here for, the community of WA would surely pick the latter I'm sure.

Operations staff I talk to say the pendulum has swung too far to the left, clearly operations has suffered.

Fremantle B Platoon attend a Winnebago going well on Stock Rd in Palmyra

Perhaps some people may perceive this in a negative fashion, but it is reality and they should read it carefully and take on board the issues to make sure that we continually strive to improve our service delivery. We should never rest on our laurels; every one of us can improve the way we do things by working as a team and learning from each other.

David Wilson
Shift Operations Officer D Platoon

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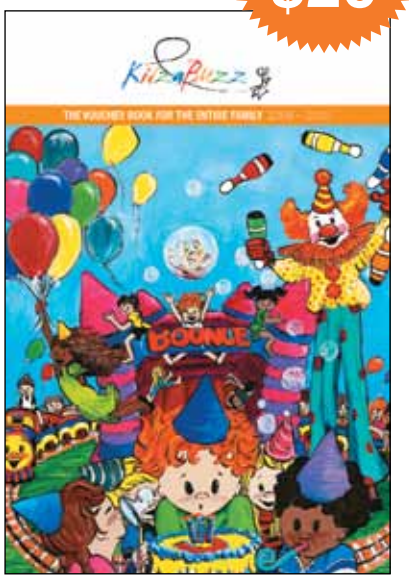

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