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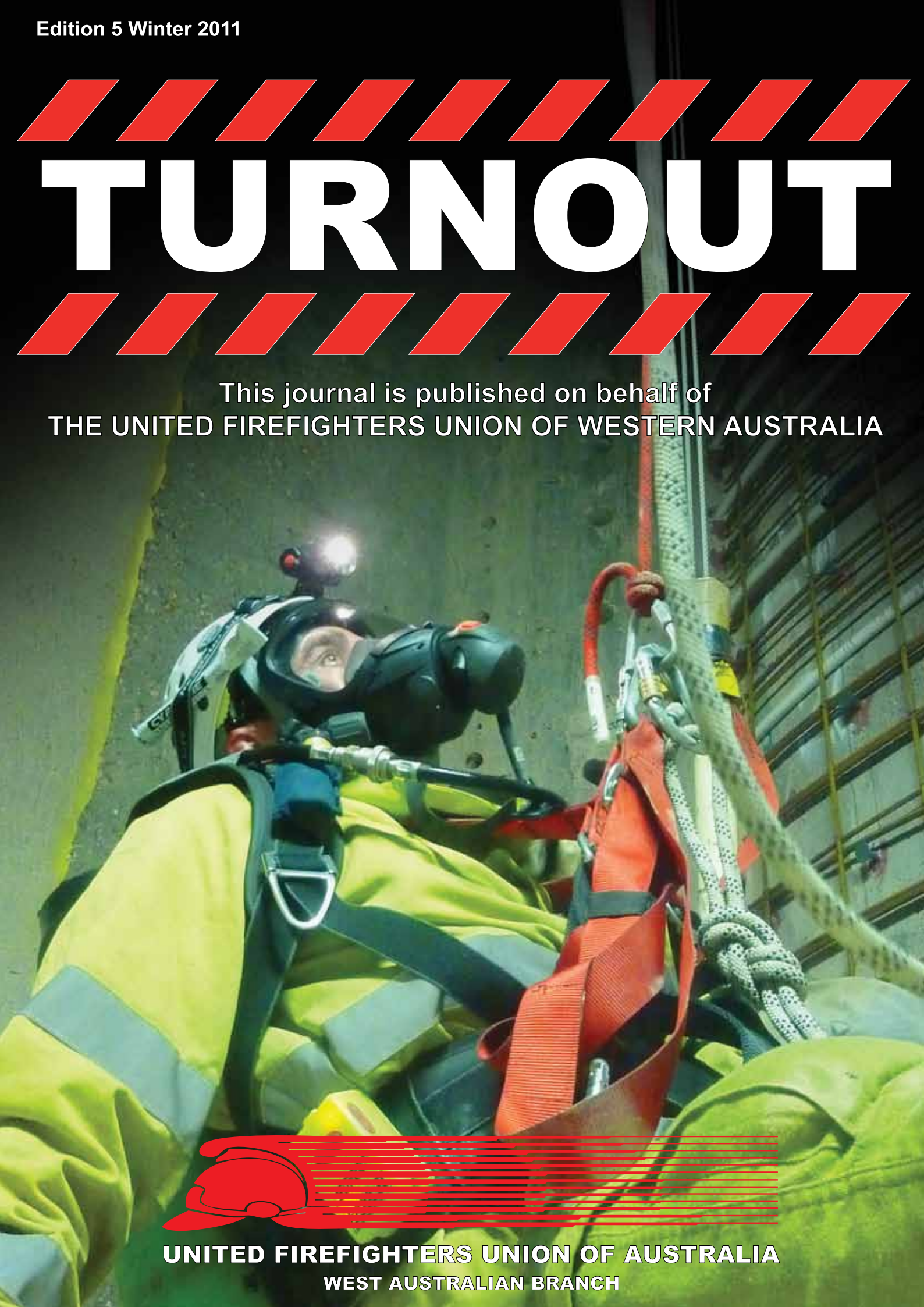
TURNOUT

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



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CONTENTS

TFF 69 Hail and Search Line USAR Cat 1

TFF 69 Safe movement Three Points of Contact

RCR Roof Oyster

THE EDITOR	2
THE PRESIDENT	4
THE SECRETARY	5
INDUSTRIAL OFFICER	6
ACHIEVEMENT	8
HISTORY	9
UFU OUTDOOR PERSUITS	11
GIBSON & GIBSON LAWYERS	14
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT	15
CENTENARY	19

Cover: Jason Merritt Confined Space Rescue Exercise

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As the newly appointed Editor of Turnout, it is my pleasure to offer on behalf of all members of the United Firefighters Union of Western Australia, a sincere thanks to the retiring Editor, Danny Mosconi.

For those that may not be aware, Danny has been promoted to District Officer and with that position has accepted a tree change to Manjimup as District Manager Capes.

I take this opportunity to wish both Danny and his family our combined very best wishes in the future in his new role and their new life in the South West.

As Editor, I believe it is my role to moderate and maintain a balance that avoids negatives and criticism wherever possible. Arguably there is a great deal to be critical of but, I would prefer to focus on the achievements of our membership, who to me, really matter. The rest, simply do not.

The recent Retired Firefighters Union Dinner was, as usual, a great success. Chaplain Ron Wingate made comment to me that it was a privilege to be in a room that was full of so many great people, a comment that I echo.

Brad Stringer, the dinner coordinator did a fantastic job in its organisation.

Alan Crossman, as the MC for the evening, gets better every year.

The six retirees honoured that evening had a combined service history of more than 180 years and it is a great tribute to the Union that it continues to assist in the hosting of such an event.

It is further demonstration of the value we, the Union Membership place in our people.

Graham Hunt was the worthy recipient of the UFUWA Firefighter of the Year Award against two other deserved nominations of the combination, Dave Gill/Chris O'Keefe, (FTC mapping) and Brad Jones, Perth Fire Station (OHS).

Finally we have a return to a credible promotional training for Senior Firefighters to Station Officer that reflects a commitment to vital supervisory skills and sound educational principles. This aspect of commitment by the organisation toward SO promotional education has been missing for some years since FESA and the earlier years of Burton and his civilian bean counting cronies.

As credit, where it is deserved, from FESA, is not likely, nor has it been given, we need to; recognise the dogged determination of the UFUWA to return an appropriate Station Officer Training Course. Coupled to this is the foresight demonstrated by the Career Training Department in initiating the development of the 5 Units of Competency in Fire and Rescue WA speak instead of some obscure provider in another state of Australia. These 5 packages took over 12 months to write and would have technically delayed the Program as we know it today if they had not been written, although, there is little doubt that the Program would have been pursued albeit without appropriate compliance.

The SO promotional Program is the composite of many individuals, most of them being UFU members.
Thankfully we all know who really deserves the praise in this instance.

We have, as a collective group, been involved, this year, in a range of Emergency Incidents that include, Roleystone, Red Hill, local floods and cyclones, Queensland floods and the Christchurch earthquake.

We continue to make the Administrative Authority look good and the most satisfying thing for us all is, they know it.

Recently the Union and select members with underpinning training knowledge and history were successful in arguing in the Industrial Relations Commission for an Instructors rate of pay. A fantastic, fair, long overdue result that was argued strongly against by the Authority.

On the issue of visual recognition, which makes sense to the majority of the population, we, as a collective, are still arguing for recognition of the individual vocational groups that we belong through uniforms, appropriate epaulettes and insignia. We will be successful, the wheel turns and we all remember that not too long ago the 'excessive champions' were wearing civilian dress, even though they were senior operational personnel, as they were instructed to do so by civilians, that had an aversion to uniform and what it signified. We have passed through some of this stupid phase and their individual complicity and we need to remind ourselves that we will be here long after these individuals are moved on. We will then see a return to recognition and lessening of confusion of competencies held by individuals by not only our operational personnel but other agencies and the community.

Not one member of an incident affected community can take comfort in direction from a civilian suit or pretenders that have no real vocational competencies or career experience.

If anyone has an article they consider of value to the Turnout and wish to have it considered for publication contact the Editor.

Keep up the magnificent work, we will prevail, Strength in Unity.

Rob Forster
Editor

On road or off road?

Look how dirty the end of my finger is

Bird's eye view of the damage

Are my slippers and pipe in the cab?

Why we are against decommissioning of 2.4 or any appliance

Photovoltaic SEP 2011

Doesn't time fly - it seems like only the other day that we were enjoying our Christmas and New Year celebrations and soon Easter will be upon us.

This year has flown and what a year it has been - 2011 will be remembered as a year of terrible disasters - fires, floods, storms, cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis. The devastation has been catastrophic - too many lives have been lost and much has been destroyed.

All of our thoughts, care and concern goes out to the victims and survivors of these catastrophic events at home, within Australia and overseas. We also pay special tribute to the fire and rescue personnel who have laboured and toiled to protect their communities - especially those that also lost their lives, colleagues, families, friends and are now living with the task of re-establishing their homes and stations.

Much has been said about climate change and this is not the time for me to comment about that but what needs to be said - is that our job is changing. Our members are finding themselves at bigger fires and more catastrophic incidents than ever before - this summer in WA we have faced the driest season in the metropolitan areas on record and together with extreme winds this puts Firefighters lives at risk.

Your Union has been active in challenging FESA Management and we are trying to get them to re-think their Risk to Resource methodology. The current faulty methodology underpins the chronic under resourcing of the Fire and Rescue and Bushfire Services across WA and we all know that this is the major cause of our problems.

FESA Management think they can deploy volunteers as a primary response.

This is no longer satisfactory for many WA communities.

Volunteers are dedicated and are valued but they can only ever be a secondary response in and around Perth and if FESA don't take the warnings more seriously now, then they are irresponsible and must be held accountable.

FESA needs to resource WA communities more responsibly to ensure we grow the service to reflect the growth of the population and infrastructure in metropolitan and regional WA.

WA citizens pay the ESL every year and are not getting value for their money - the shortage of equipment at some of the catastrophic fires we have attended put Firefighters under enormous pressure and homes were lost because our members did not have enough trucks and equipment to fight everything that was under threat during those incidents. Many members were recalled to duty only to find no trucks to ride! The whole Perth Metropolitan area was vulnerable because most of the Fire Station crews were at the Kelmscott, Roleystone and Red Hill fires.

What sort of a Disaster Plan is that?

The picture being portrayed here reads like a B class movie and if it wasn't so serious one might be forgiven for laughing. Well I am not laughing and we are very lucky no- one was killed.

You may be interested to know that in New Zealand many stations have extra appliances on stations and when crews are recalled there are trucks and equipment around that can be utilised. This sort of planning and resourcing must be too hard to manage for FESA.

When I started in the job 26 years ago we had three medium tankers (scrub trucks) – one at Osborne Park, one at Kensington and the other at Belmont Fire Station. Today the Career Fire and Rescue Service still only has three medium tankers (2.4's). What is wrong with this picture? Blind Freddy can see it, so why can't the senior management in FESA!

All of our out stations fight bushfires on a regular basis and FESA has not grown our capability through building and supplying more resources. This is a disgrace and the decision makers within FESA should be made accountable for this chronic and wilful under resourcing.

The many West Australians who lost their homes should have answers about how their ESL has been spent by FESA in an era when the number of FESA administrators has grown exponentially and way beyond the number of Firefighters.

Every metro fringe career Fire Station should have a Medium Tanker (2.4) as well as every Country Fire Station and the staffing should be one Station Officer and five Firefighters. As a bare minimum!

Early detection and suppression is the only way to mitigate against major destruction - increasing the number of Firefighters and resources are required for an immediate response - that is to the level of International Standards and not for an average response time of 12 - 20 minutes.

FESA should have a plan to respond to the challenges presented by climate change - they should be open and accountable about what funding they have sought from State and Federal Governments to increase resources (and not to merely write more reports and submissions). The absence of a Career Fire Station in the entire Perth Hills suburbs is scandalous. We need at least 3 new stations in these areas to cope with the population and infrastructure.

How many more homes will be lost in WA before FESA Management are held accountable for the poor decisions they have made and will make about adequate resourcing for the people of WA - that protect both the community and Firefighters?

2011 has already seen too much devastation and destruction - now is the time to act. I call on all of you to consider what you are paying for the ESL and to check on how it is being spent where you live - make sure you speak to your family and neighbors.

If FESA won't listen to the subject matter experts in their own work force then maybe they will be more accountable to local government, politicians and the insurance companies now forced to assist and to fund people to rebuild lost homes and infrastructure.

Kevin Jolly
President

What will it take to get the Minister Rob Johnson and FESA to change the way they service the people of WA? The combined loss of houses and property in the last 2 years is a disgrace. No lives were lost - thank goodness - but who is going to take responsibility for how WA's Fire and Rescue services are resourced and administrated?

The Toodyay fires (and the resulting loss of 41 homes) should have woken the Minister from his malaise and into action, but it seems he is still asleep at the wheel. The Lake Clifton fires resulted in more homes being lost, and then the Roleystone / Kelmscott fires resulted in the loss of 73 homes - and have we seen any evidence of change from the Minister in his response to these catastrophes?
The Union has been trying to get all of those responsible for providing sufficient resources to protect lives and property to listen to the subject matter experts for years - all of you are the experts and the Union is your voice. Does WA have to suffer the loss of lives before the Minister responds to the dire situation?

In Victoria, the Government responded to the catastrophic fires which did result in the tragic loss of lives and the Victorian Government lifted resources to include 400 additional career fire-fighters and 15 new24/7 stations. We had a close call with our recent fires in WA - and our Government and FESA administrators should be held accountable and need to change the way they resource our Fire and Rescue services. Our Government has not responded to increase our Fire and Rescue resources.

In WA we have one of the (if not the) lowest amount of financial expenditure on Fire -fighting resources per capita in Australia. Why is this the case? Each year our WA citizens pay their ESL and yet our resourcing is not keeping up with WA's population and industry growth.

If there were reserve Fire engines in the system in WA then we could mobilise the potential of the 500 Fire Fighters off duty at any given time, and they could be recalled to save homes and protect our communities. Only 41 Fire fighters responded to call back at Kelmscott (some from Albany) and FESA struggled to find fire appliances and equipment for them to take to the fire ground.

Three years ago the Union was promised that FESA would increase the number of Fire Fighters in Bunbury until the new station at Australind / Eaton was built. In January this year they finally began to implement their commitment but as we go to print - FESA have backtracked on their written words and we are in dispute because they won't maintain the promised staffing levels at Bunbury 24/7 -what a disgrace! Last week FESA had to send Perth 1st and Fremantle 1st to Bunbury to assist at a structural fire. Surely a City the size of Bunbury should be properly resourced and able to cope with such incidents?

Some may say it is easy with hind- sight to say there are not enough resources. We have been yelling for years. This summer your President was hauled over the coals by FESA for telling the truth and trying to warn the people in the hills areas about the lack of resources in the hills (Kelmscott Roleystone) It is not hind sight that gives the Union its voice but years of experience based on all of your collective work, blood, sweat and tears. The Government did not learn from our warnings and we are lucky to have only lost homes and not lives.

There will be more large emergencies. The CEO and COO have to be accountable - there is no excuse and to rely on a description of these catastrophic fires and incidents as being "100 year events" does not excuse anyone from their responsibilities. These fires are emergencies we can predict (and they were the subject of our warnings) and the fire service should have enough resources to save lives and property. It is time the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Officer of Operations are made accountable for not adequately planning for the emergencies which lead to the unprecedented loss of homes.

Perhaps the Minister and FESA need to address competencies and Key Performance Indicators and re-assess whether all those years driving a desk in staff deployment ,OH&S, and at the Training Centre have not given the COO the experience and knowledge required to ensure the fire service can cope with more than 2 fires at once. When will the Chief Officer stand up and take responsibility for people losing there HOMES? The same examination of competencies and qualifications should be rigorously enforced for the CEO - the FESA Act and Structure gives ultimate power to the CEO but we have heard nothing about the CEO's ultimate responsibility.

I call on your behalf -for the State Government's Minister for Emergency Services, the COO and the CEO to be made accountable for not doing enough to give Fire Fighters the resources they need to save HOMES! Let us all sit back and listen for the response.

Graeme Geer
Secretary

I would like to be writing an article on the EBA negotiations but we are still speaking to our claims and addressing the issues that Management have put up. Report backs on the issues not agreed will occur through our Delegate structures, the Branch Committee and Special General Meetings.

Members will get the opportunity to vote on the EBA offers but I encourage all of you to participate in the meetings and discussions leading up to a ballot so you are fully informed of all of your options and the risks and benefits associated with those options.

The most frustrating part of the process to date is that FESA will not move away from the Government's Wages Policy - this policy is restrictive and does not cater for our industry which is specialised and services the community - and for us to justify the "additional 1.3% per year" on offer above the CPI - or Consumer Price Index we apparently have to demonstrate savings or improvements in productivity.

The Union's view is that genuine improvements to our services for the people of WA will cost Government and you can't strip more flesh from the skeleton.

The Government are enjoying an unprecedented budgetary windfall courtesy of the developments in the mining industry - and the Union has a fairly practical common sense approach to this set of circumstances. We have lived through resource booms before and the wealth earnt through royalties and taxes should be shared across WA - this is the time to increase the number of fire stations and the number of career Fire Fighters and to ensure that Fire Fighting is an attractive career by improving wages and conditions. If the Government ignores this opportunity we will lose more and more people to the mining industry and our communities will struggle to cope with fires of the magnitude recently experienced in WA - including the fires at Toodyay, Red Hill, Lake Clifton and Kelmscott - Roleystone.

"YOUR UNION - MORE RELEVANT TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE"

In my office I am lucky enough to sit beneath an old Turnout poster that spells out the message above and having worked in a number of different unions in both State and National offices, including the Trades and Labour Council (now known as Unions WA) I want to set out for you why we are the envy of the Union movement.

We are 99% organised - that means nearly everyone who works for FESA and Transfield in the Fire and Rescue Services are members of the UFU. Most of our members are covered by our Agreements but we also cover members who work under conditions set out by the GOSAC Agreement and who may be on individual contracts (very senior personnel).

We service our members and not only look after their industrial needs, we represent them in disciplinary and grievance matters and assist them with their welfare issues and refer them to broader legal services when that is required. We look after our people - and to those (less than 10 people who are not our members) I remind you that you are the losers - your conditions exist because you ride on the backs of unionists and there is no such thing as a free ride. It is poor form to rely on the work and wages of others to enjoy the benefits you have.
I am proud to be a member of our Union because we do look after each other and we work well together to tackle difficult and complex problems for the benefit of our members and each other. From time to time there are strongly held different sets of opinions and that is a healthy sign of democracy at work within our Union ranks. You elect a Branch Committee to provide leadership and to run our Union and we have a great responsibility to the members who served before us to build and maintain our assets and services and finances.

Together we will face an industrial landscape that is changing and that attempts to enforce regimes more suited to a "one size fits all approach" to work without recognising the unique features of industries like the Fire and Rescue Service and I am proud of the fact that we have the resources, unity and strength to meet these challenges together. The collective experience around our Branch Committee table is enormous and reflects the talents in our ranks - we have to encourage and support our newer members to participate in Union life as we share our experience and knowledge. This EBA process is one of the most difficult we have seen and the next few may be worse - it is a time to stand united and strong. We are in good hands as we move into these more difficult times. I hope that you continue to look after each other - we've got your back too!

Lea Anderson
Industrial Officer

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TOP OF THE WORLD

Live your dream, it's an old cliché but for some lucky people it comes true and I happen to be one of them. Not only did I fulfil a dream of becoming a firefighter at the ripe old age of 39, I'm getting the chance to climb Mount Everest. A double dose of luck which leads to another old cliché you're never too old. I'll be 43 when I attempt Everest after many years of hiking, climbing, running, swimming, cycling, anything that would keep me fit in the off chance that this dream would eventually come true.

I don't consider myself an expert mountaineer but that makes the challenge all the more exciting for me. There are many things written about Everest, quite a lot of them negative – many experienced mountaineers not choosing to try the now commercialised mountain. But for me it remains the ultimate challenge of mind and body, plus some luck. Anyone who did the Avon descent last year will know what I mean!

The training is getting harder as the years go by but I've managed to clock up a few ascents starting with a solo climb of Mont Blanc in Europe. This is what gave me a real passion for the mountains. After that I decided to get some instruction in the form of a two week course in the Rockies, Canada a fantastic place with ample opportunities to practice self arrest and crevasse rescues. Then a few summers in Europe helped me get accustomed to mountain life and the very unpredictable weather, in total climbing Mont Blanc four times.

Then I discovered New Zealand. Although not as high as the Himalayas the weather can be ferocious and it makes a great adult playground. Up until this time I'd done most things alone and that's how it was till I went to climb Mount Aspiring in New Zealand, the Matterhorn of the south. My first attempt failing due the unreliable conditions of the ramp (a 45 degree snow slope leading to the summit ridge) making me feel a little edgy about being alone. Four people died falling from the ramp into the bergschrund that summer.

After that I decided to do a more advanced climbing course with a com- pany in New Zealand called Alpine Guides. We spent ten days in a mountain hut near Mount Cook learning various climbing techniques. We also got snowed in for two days during one of New Zealands famous storms. This led me to attempt Mt Aspiring again with a more successful result, and after a few more trips to New Zealand it dawned on me I could actually attempt Everest and without the hassle of trying to find sponsorship I could do it reasonably soon but first I needed to test myself a little more.

Mount Mckinley is the highest mountain in North America, famous for its cold and windy isolation. No sherpas here, 25kg in your pack and pulling a sledge with 25kg behind was a great chance to test myself. Twelve days after leaving base camp we're in a position for the summit at high camp but the wind is howling and it's minus 40 outside the tent. One mans turned back and one has frostbite, six days stuck in a two man tent with three people, pee bottles freezing over night and waking to hoar frost covering the inside of the tent. Perfect preparation for Everest, in fact some say you do Everest to train for Mt Mckinley (that was probably a firey). We made one summit attempt but turned back 400m from the summit due to strong winds.

Not reaching the summit didn't phase me in any way, the experience was what it was all about and so that's how it will be for Everest. A fantastic experience summit or not though the truth be known if I don't make it this year I may well be back next - that's the way I am

Kevin Farebrother

Editors Note: At around 0400, 13 May 2011, at the top of the world Kev sat, contemplating what he had just achieved, but that's another story.

THE RESCUE OF ELIZA LOCKYER

Authors Note: This is the true story of a rescue that took place on March 20th 1907 somewhere in Pansy St, North Perth. It has been reconstructed using facts from many sources. The men involved in the rescue took risks that today would not be sanctioned. All of the men have living relatives in Perth whom I'd like to thank for providing photos and some of the details of this story.

The LOCKYER PREDICAMENT

It was a normal balmy evening in North Perth as a flock of pink and grey galahs punched through the humid silence, squawking as if their lives depended on it. They zagged and zoomed then disappeared south towards the town hall. William (Billy) Mills[1] listened intently as the low rumble of the Forrest street tram took over, providing the bass accompaniment.

Billy liked to play, scuttling down the lanes, peering through the picket fences. At the back was Mrs Lockyer's house fronting Pansy Street. Billy didn't think it was much of a house though, bit rough and ready. More than a bit actually (it was made of sacks after all). Still, Mrs Lockyer was poor, and a cripple[2] so her tiny 21ft by 10ft[3] 2 roomed house was the best she could do. Billy continued to gaze through a hole in the fence. Someone was about.

Was it the police back again? Mrs Lockyer might have been poor but at least she was interesting. Shouted a lot she did, arguments mostly. Mr Abrahams, the ex convict (expiree)[1,2] was living with her but didn't have any patience with Elly. Elly wasn't right in the head Mum said. Elly was Mrs Lockyer's youngest girl. They took her away the other day. Not to the poor house where they wanted to go, or the hospital. No, much, much worse. Elly went to the lunatic asylum[1].

"What you doing there young Billy" Mrs Lockyer croaked. "Got anyfing to eat av yer?" She seemed distant even from through the hole in the fence.

"Sorry Mrs Lockyer, I've had my dinner already. Mum might bring you something later on." Billy moved through a gap in the fence and trundled forward, not too close though, Mrs Lockyer smelled a bit. Not her fault Dad said, victim of circumstance really. Dad said she married a convict called Benjamin years ago but he had died and left her on her own with 5 kids. The Lockyer's had it tough and had to do anything they could to get by[4]. In the twilight Billy approached the old well where Mrs Locker was standing.

"Need any help to draw water?" Billy offered hoping he wouldn't have to.
"No good Billy, no good, run along now, off you go"

Sure thought Billy, I'd have to be getting in soon anyway, school tomorrow and a test. Billy turned to walk home and as he did caught a whiff of burning, not chimney smoke, something else; stronger. Then suddenly; another noise, scrape, thud, scream[1]. Billy's head turned quickly, Mrs Lockyer must have fallen over. Perhaps her bad foot has gotten worse. She could hardly walk. In the gloom Billy couldn't see her lying on the ground. Couldn't see her near the house either but, he could hear her alright. Muffled screams of agony. Swearing too. What, where...oh no, the well, she's gone in, must have fallen down. Oh shit, shit, must get home and tell Mum.

CALLING THE TROOPS

North Perth in 1907 was going ahead rapidly. Tram services, street lighting, public facilities and mains water on the way. The police station in Angove street was soon to be built and staffed by Constable James Strapp, but for now policing for the North Perth district was carried out from James's house in Albert Street.[5] Constable Strapp regimental number 152[6] had joined the force in 1894 and had been North Perth's solitary officer since 1903, so he knew the neighbourhood and its characters very well. Blue eyed and 5' 11 ½"[6] he was an imposing character on the beat.

Constable Strapp arrived on his police issue bicycle[5], and out of breath. Billy's older brother Jack had made the run to raise the alarm. Before he left, James had the foresight to ring the fire station on Fitzgerald Street. Luckily thought James the Captain was on duty. He'd be here soon, but not yet.

Constable James Strapp

James Strapp approached the edge of the well carrying his hand lantern. Tread carefully he thought, I don't fancy landing on her. Her screams had subsided into moans and wails. "Liza, it's me, Constable Strapp, are you okay?" James enquired in a firm voice. No response. James peered down the well. Just an indistinguishable outline in the darkness. The hand lamp helped a bit. By now a few onlookers had arrived including Billy's Dad Augustus. They were watching expectantly. James glanced over his shoulder and knew what he had to do. Damn, they don't pay me anywhere near enough for this he thought.

The well was narrow and about 60ft deep[1]; not properly lined all the way down either. This will be very tricky. Hurry up Fred Maller he thought. Quickly James stripped to the waist[3] and secured the well's rope around a large nearby Jarrah tree. It (the rope) was just long enough. James readied himself. As he was mentally preparing a commotion developed at the side of Mrs Locker's house. "Fire", the cry went out, "her house is on fire".

James barked orders as he stepped to the darkened edge and felt his pulse quicken. "Augustus, get buckets and tackle the fire, John, race down to the fire station and let them know, and we're going to need lots of trained men, and the brigade ambulance. Gripping the rope tightly James descended. It was hard to hang on but there were some footholds. It was narrow, about 2ft[3] wide, so pushing against the side provided some purchase. Getting down was never going to be the problem though. Going the other way would be.

Eliza Locker was in agony. Her legs both had compound fractures, a result to be expected from a women in her 60's who had eked out an existence on a subsistence diet of bread and other basic staples. As James approached in the musty darkness he could hear her laboured breathing. The lantern illuminated the carnage. She was doubled over, bloodied and broken. Her Fibula was protruding from behind her knee and she was half submerged in muddied water. This is bad. This is very bad. James was momentarily shocked. His years of training kicked in and he steadied himself.

1 The West Australian, 21 March, 1904, p4
2 State Records Centre of WA, ITEM-1884/1373
3 Adelaide Advertiser, 22 March 1907, p5
4 The West Australian Times, 8 December, 1874, p3
5 Heritage Council of WA, Register of Heritage Places - Assessment Doc'n North Perth Police Station 08/01/1999
6 WA Police Historical Society, Graeme Sisson, 2010

"Liza, did Henry (Abrahams) push you?", James quickly pressed.

Henry Abrahams was removed from the premises about 2 hours earlier due to a breach of the peace. The two were always at each other but this time it went too far. Many of the neighbours had complained this afternoon.

"I (gasp) did this you fool, now let me die. Get away and let me die."

She was pale and her breathing had shallowed. Two things were for certain. She's not getting out easily and I can't do it on my own. It was then that Captain Frederick Maller and the North Perth brigade arrived.

BRIGADE ASSISTANCE REQUIRED

The North Perth Volunteer Fire Brigade had been around for a while, getting close to five years[7]. A dedicated bunch of men who met and trained weekly. Played weekly as well. The brigade was a chance to escape for a while, play some billiards and have a drink. Socialise both with the men and the families. A solid endeavour to be sure. Fred had been Captain for a touch over 3 years ever since the founding Captain Bolton left for NSW[8]. He was well respected and loved the work. It made an interesting change from the day job of being a vet[8]. Unlike the Constable, Captain Maller didn't get paid.

Captain Frederick Maller

Training was mostly about working the reel, finding water if it was about, using sand or beaters if it wasn't. Fitness was a big part. This job would require it in spades too. Fred assessed. The fire didn't get a chance to take hold of the humpy that was Mrs Lockyer's house so he assigned two men to finish the task the locals had begun. Good, now.... The well was about 60ft deep so out of reach of the brigade ladder. Better go down and see what I can do Fred thought. Gripping the rope Fred Maller's small frame[9] quickly descended the 60ft well; 59ft anyway. There was no room in the narrow confines at the bottom for three so Fred propped above the tepid water and the injured woman.

After a discussion with the Constable it was decided that Fred should go up and await Lapsley's men from the Perth brigade who had special equipment; more ropes, a rope ladder, the ambulance. Once they arrived the work could begin. They wouldn't be too long; Perth in 1907 had horse power. Fred briefed his men while they waited.

"We'll have to haul her up quickly when the gear arrives men. The well's none too solid and sand is coming in so let's get ready. Clear a path for the rope."

The Perth appliance arrived at the front of Pansy Street. Senior fireman Andrew Robertson[7] was in charge. A quick exchange took place then the Perth men got to work. A rope ladder and another rope were carried in. The plan was to manhandle Eliza up the rope ladder to the waiting ambulance. However, it was apparent that the well was too narrow and she was too heavy for this to eventuate. The extent of her injuries would have made this impossible. A plan B would be required.

"Hurry boys, she's passed out", Constable Strapp informed the firemen.

Fred glanced over to see fireman Robertson tying a self rescue knot known in the fire brigade as a fireman's chair. His concentration was intense. Good idea Fred thought.

"Come up James" Fred shouted down. "Robertson's coming down to get her. We'll need you at the top."

As fireman Robertson headed into the depths below Captain Maller asked that a horse be brought around to assist with the lift.

"Get a tarp on the edge of the well John, there's one on the reel."

Fireman John Chapman hurried to complete the task. Meanwhile fireman Robertson had managed to secure the chair knot around Mrs Lockyer's arms and legs as well as leaving another portion with which to secure himself.

"This is the best I can do Fred" Andrew Robertson said. "Lucky she's unconscious; this is going to hurt her bad."
Everything was now in place for the extrication to begin.

EPILOGUE

The superbly trained brigade horse made light work of raising the injured woman from the well. Robertson's job was difficult though; trying to keep her from being dragged against the uneven walls of the well, protecting her injured limbs and most importantly not letting her fall on top of him. Her removal occurred at approximately a quarter to nine at night, less than 2 hours after the alarm was raised.

SFF Andrew Robertson

Once out of the ground Mrs Lockyer's injured limbs were bandaged and splinted by the fire brigade ambulance crew. The now considerable crowd that had gathered erupted into cheers. She was then conveyed to Perth hospital in a state of shock and unconsciousness. Her injuries were severe, too severe to recover from. Her legs were both amputated below the knee[10] in a vain attempt to save her. The doctors said she rallied briefly but she had given up the will to live. Eliza Lockyer didn't want saving. Her life had been harsh and unrewarding.

Constable Strapp, Captain Maller and Senior Fireman Robertson were singled out by the people of Perth for recognition in the days and months that followed. The three were each awarded a gold medal by the North Perth Municipal[11] Council for bravery displayed during the rescue. All of the papers carried the story. Then 20 months later on the 16th of November 1908 Constable Strapp and Fireman Robertson were summoned to appear before the Governor where they were each presented with Royal Humane Society Awards from the then Governor Campion.[12] Sadly, Captain Maller was not able to be summoned. His life was taken on duty at a shop fire on Wanneroo road in the early hours of January 29th, 1908.

In the intervening years between now and then this captivating story has been all but forgotten.

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7 The West Australian, 13th July, 1903, p7
8 FESA Heritage and Education Centre Records, Deaths on duty folder, author & date unknown
9 Inferred from photograph supplied by descendants of Frederick Thomas Maller
10 The West Australian, 10th April, 1907, p5
11 The West Australian, 12th August, 1907, p5
12 Western Mail, 21 November, 1908, p44

WAFRS FOOTBALL CLUB VS POLICE HOGS

The annual Footy grudge match between the Firies and the Coppers was once again a game fought from go to woe with the Fire and Rescue Service FC winning 17.12 114 to 9.13 67

This years game saw the introduction of the Daniel Mussen medal which was awarded to the best player from both teams. This years winner was proudly awarded by Kieren Mussen to Toby McGrath.

The game was changed to a different venue in Leederville Oval and due to commitments from the grounds hosts (Subiaco and East Perth) was also moved to a Thursday night.

The game started at a frenetic pace with the coppers having a real crack at our boys from the first bounce. We were able to weather the storm and although we copped a bit of rough stuff we managed to apply some score board pressure and put the boys in blue on the back foot and chasing our tails. Ben Borrat dominated the midfield early on and had the ball on a string. The experience of Clayton Lasscock and Mick Taylor in defence held our back line together and the forwards were able to sneak in a few sausage rolls which gave us a handy advantage going into quarter time.

The message from Rick (our super coach) at the short break was to keep up the hard running and to work hard around the ground, whilst getting plenty of numbers to the contests.

The second quarter was virtually a mirror image of the first, with the coppers throwing everything they could muster at us early. Our superior fitness was starting to shine through and the boys ball movement was getting better as the game went on. Mark McQeen was having a big impact whilst also keeping one of the coppers best players very quiet. Nathan Stevenson was running amok out on the wing and Toby McGrath was showing why he is still one of the best WAFL players going around.

The second half saw the firies play some real team orientated footy. Our boys out run and out played the coppers for most of the second half, but it certainly didn't go all our own way with the Hogs giving us some anxious momements towards the end of the third quarter with a few unanswered goals going through to the keeper.
All in all it was another tough and grueling contest played in great spirits by all people involved. The team camaraderie with the boys is alive and well and we look forward to next years game.

The 1% award presented to Ben by Kevin

Toby McGrath was awarded our best player with Clayton Lasscock, and Mark McQueen taking out our minor awards. This years 1% award which is donated by UFU and presented by Kev Jolly was won by Ben "where is my best mate Joel" Borrat.

Once again on behalf of the WAFRSFC committee, thank you to all who assisted in any way shape or form not only on the night but also in the lead up to the game. Also a big thanks to all of our sponsors "The Royal on the Waterfront", UFU of WA, FESA and the game sponsor Altitude Realty.

Our next game will be against the Navy boys in mid October so we hope to see everyone there to help us celebrate another victory for F&RS.

Cheers
Troy Stubberfield
Captain WAFRSFC

FRS FOOTY TEAM

The ‘old man of the sea’, Frank Martinelli in his leaky but trusty clinker built ‘Pompiere’ recently hosted the Industrial Officer, Secretary and President on a fishing trip. Apparently Lea was heard to scream Yibberty Yibbida when she landed a 1.5 metre shark. She was ably assisted by the Secretary who was full of advice.

Yibberty Yibbida

A lady used to dealin with sharks albiet corporate types

A good catch for the day was had with a Dhufish and Black Spotted Cod added to the flake fillets. The old fella also reported that the President had no role in any of the catch.

Editor

Hank with a couple of bait fish

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Legal Q&A

I was driving home from work when I was rear-ended when stopped at a red light. I broke my leg and am off work without wages. What can I do?

Workers compensation benefits do not normally apply to workers travelling to and from work. You probably have an entitlement to a claim for a lump sum from ICWA through a damages claim against the other driver. We will refer you to Gibson & Gibson, the union lawyers, who will provide you with advice on how to obtain a lump sum for pain and suffering, lost wages/overtime/superannuation, past and future treatment expenses and any other entitlements you may have. You should not enter into negotiations, or put any settlement offers to ICWA, without first seeking legal advice. A claim must be settled, or District Court proceedings commenced, within 3 years of the date of the crash.

I was assaulted at the Train Station on the weekend. I am likely to be off work for some weeks and have medical bills to pay. Can I claim compensation?

If you have suffered injury and/or loss as a result of a crime, you may be eligible to make a claim for criminal injuries compensation. 'Loss' includes the loss of personal items and/or income that you have lost as a result of the offence. Compensation may be awarded in relation to any offence that has been reported to the police, regardless of whether a person has been charged or convicted of the offence. If a person has been acquitted of the offence, you may only seek compensation if you claim that someone other than the acquitted person committed the offence.

You have 3 years from the date of the offence to lodge an application. If your application is late, you can also submit reasons why your application was late and why you should be granted an extension of time.

If you have suffered injury as a result of a crime and intend to lodge an application for compensation, you should obtain medical reports identifying the extent of the injuries you have suffered and lodge those reports with your application

You need to also draft a statement of impact and injury to file in support of your application, detailing precisely how the offence and your injuries have impacted on your life.

The maximum compensation that may be awarded in relation to a single offence is $75,000.

The Assessor also has the power to seek reimbursement from the offender of some or all of any compensation awarded to you.

For assistance with making a claim for criminal injuries compensation, contact the union for a referral to our Lawyers Gibson & Gibson.

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After much pressure from fire fighters over the last 15 years, management has reluctantly agreed to supply personal lighting to each firefighter. Accordingly, an evaluation phase has commenced with the aim of finding the best possible choice of personal lighting.

The evaluation is being conducted by on shift firefighters over the next three months and will look at such factors as:

1. weight
2. ease of use
3. durability
4. efficiency
5. portability
6. size
7. method of operation
8. construction and;
9. most importantly, cost

Management has provided selected on shift fire fighters with four possible choices to choose from, see photos;

Option 1: Hand held torch – model 200BC

Option 2: Helmet mounted portable lighting with petrol powered generator

Option 3: Helmet mounted Dolphin torch

Option 4: Dolphin torch with short line neck lanyard

I think you'll agree they are all excellent options and testing to date has elicited many favorable comments.

Initial day light trials have focused on comfort, weight and ease of use and soon we will be conducting night time trials which we will report back on as soon as possible.

Once the results of the evaluation have been collated they will be forwarded to management for their consideration – where upon you can expect a final decision will be made - eventually.

At this stage all indications are that you can expect the roll-out of the new personal lighting to begin in about ten years time.

Finally, some light at the end of the tunnel (pun intended).

Personal Lighting Evaluation Team

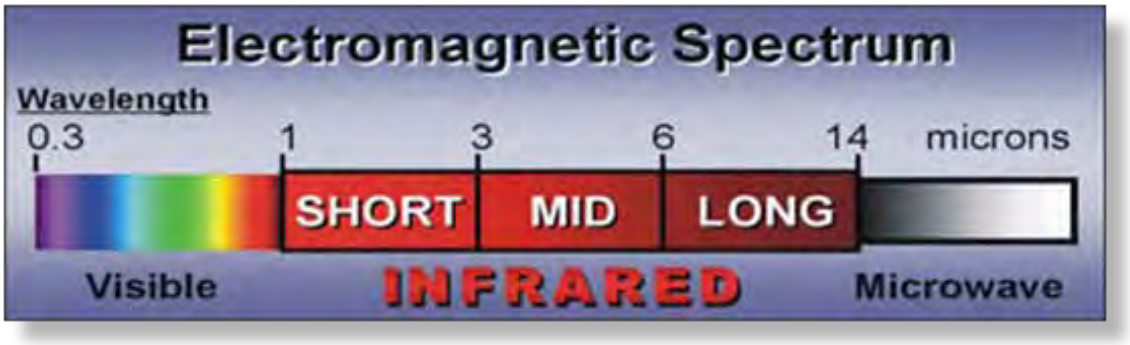
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN CAREER FIREFIGHTERS TO GET THERMAL IMAGING CAMERAS

Introduction
Thermal Imaging technology and the application of this equipment in our Fire Service is in the beginning stages. Although the technology has been in use for several decades, the application for the Fire Service has only been available since the early 1990's. The technology for the Fire Service has now become reasonably available and is limited in its use.

Now that we are to use this tool a formal training package must be applied for strategy and tactics at incident scenes. Now that we are utilising this new tool, our formal training needs to encompass the strengths and limitations of the TIC.

What is Thermal Imaging?
All objects have a certain temperature and emit waves of energy called infrared radiation. Hot objects emit more energy than cold objects. A Thermal Imager (TI) translates these energy waves into a viewable image, which shows a "heat picture" of a scene. On the screen of a thermal imager set to white-hot, hotter objects show as white, cooler objects show as black, and objects in between these temperatures are displayed in shades of gray.

In some respects, the detector in the thermal imager is similar to the human eye. The thermal imager's detector (called a focal plane array, or FPA) and the eye are both receivers. They receive electromagnetic energy and convert it into an image for our brains to interpret. The eye receives wavelengths of energy called "visible light," while the FPA receives wavelengths of heat energy called "infrared."



The human eye and the TI do not "see" through most materials. Plaster, concrete, steel, wood, paneling, window furnishings, doors, sofas and the like are not transparent to visible light or infrared. They "see" only what is on the surface: colors for the eye, temperature differences for the TI. However, due to the unique characteristics of IR, you can see through thick smoke.

Characteristics:
Most Thermal Imagers will have the following characteristics:

- Housing is water resistant.
- Vibration and impact resistant.
- Housing will support the weight of 135 kilograms.
- Focus on objects 1 metre away, to infinity.
- Thermal images detected up to 180 metres.
- Radiometry- Degree read out F or C.
- Provides a special combination Grey monochrome/color display where objects in excess of 2300C appear as shades of red in an otherwise Monochrome image.
- Rechargeable Nickel-Metal Hydride battery capable of powering the unit for up to four hours use.

Limitations:
It is critical that fire fighters do not come to the misconception that "ease of use, means easy to use". Always maintain awareness of your location and escape routes when using this device. Failure to do so may result in personal injury or death. As the TIC may also seem to speed up operations, it is common for firefighters to go deeper into buildings resulting in low air supply. Firefighters also have a natural desire to stand because they can now see. This goes against the fundamentals of staying low below superheated smoke and gases. Firefighters can also become too dependant on the device and in time of failure become totally disorientated. Untrained users may also misinterpret the TIC data, such as holes in the floor or reflections of thermal signatures off a polished surface.

Cook (2000) states, "The TIC is just a tool, and you have to apply standard training and tactics to ensure continued safe operations in the event a failure occurs. Lack of adequate personnel training can render a TIC useless", he goes on to say "Fire Departments in Texas, conduct search and rescue drills at buildings within their Fire District after they close of an evening. The drill is conducted in the dark, victims are hidden, firefighters use the TIC to locate victims, and the TIC is taken away at some point during the training to see if crews react accordingly."

Listed below are some of the major limitations of the TIC;

- Not for night vision.
- Will not see through walls (Will see temperature differences in the wall)
- Glass, water, painted metal door and surfaces similar can reflect infrared waves and not detect behind.
- Steel, brass, copper, and aluminum can vary accuracy. Actual temperature for steel can be 260oC but TIC may read over 520oC.
- Extremely dense smoke can obscure some heat sources or high temperature objects by absorbing the infrared energy from the objects.
- Heated smoke or a layer of heated gases can obscure the presence of heat sources or high temperature objects by creating a uniform temperature image.
- Dirt and soot off lens may obscure or reduce the clarity of the thermal image.

Major uses of the TIC:
If management spend $700 000 on the device, plus the cost of training and ongoing maintenance there will be an expectation of a return on the device. I encourage all crews who use the device successfully at incidents to contact their District Manager or FESA Media. This may be at house fires finding a victim or at any incident where a firefighter was saved from personal injury due to the TIC been present.

Do not limit the use of TIC's to fires; they have so many more uses:

- Road Crash Rescue – Most US Firefighters use the device at all accidents to scan seats for heat signatures of people who have wandered or who have been ejected from the car. They also use it for scanning the road for skid marks for other vehicles that may have veered off out of site. It can also be used to scan the surrounding area for people who may have wandered off from the scene.

- Hazmat – Corrosives liberate metal and give off heat and leaking gas is cold, meaning the TIC is useful in both incidents. The TIC is also great for seeing where the leak has flowed too or pooled as it will generally cool the area around.

- Bush Fires/Peat Fires – the use of the TIC will give crews the ability to see hot spots. No need to turn beacons and head lights off at night to see glowing hot spots.

- Training – on station search and rescue drills. The instructor now has the ability to watch crews move in smoke and darkness without the TIC and provide valuable feedback. This will enable crews to still read their pressure gauges and consolidate their air use.

Finally:
Fellow firefighters, this is a great tool and a fantastic move forward for the Fire & Rescue Service. Although it has taken time to achieve I congratulate the Managers who have supported the purchase of these devices. They certainly will assist in saving lives and ease fire fighters minds knowing they did everything possible at house fires where life is involved. Mainly though, I want to congratulate the nominated station delegates who assisted me to drive this message forward and also the Editor of this magazine for printing a recent article which certainly helped the cause. Well done!

Peter Sutton

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THE PAST SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN

Pam Keys retired from the FESA Training Centre (FTC) after approximately 28 years of service. Through her continued involvement at the FTC and personal contact, we have kept in touch.

Pam would talk to me about the past and how things have changed in the Fire Brigade so much.

As is true with many firefighters I have a real interest and deep commitment to the Fire Service and Fire Brigades history as well,

I have been the BA Training Development Officer and have worked to establish a historical wall of BA Sets used since Breathing Apparatus was introduced in the Fire Brigade over thirty years ago. This was achieved with help from a number of people, but mainly the Historical Society. I would visit the fondly termed 'Wrinklies Shed' and often talk to the Chief, John Mc Mahon.

The Chief or Macca, former Chief Officer of the WA Fire Brigades Board, would be at the shed every Monday, so I would find myself dropping by for a ten minute chat, which often ended up being for more than an hour. The stories of the past fascinated me and I liked to hear how things were done in the old days, often to find that particularly with BA, many procedures had stayed the same. The equipment definitely improved, but in essence the way we did our business in BA had only needed some fine tuning over time. As the person in charge of the BA rotations of the Trainee Firefighter Courses, this information was important to me, so I asked Macca to come and join us on each rotation on the night drills and tell his stories to the new recruits. He would also watch with interest, the Trainees perform a couple of exercises and was always happy to supply feedback through the Instructors.

Getting back to Pam, about 3 years ago, she contacted me with an idea that involved collecting a record of the past experiences of Macca and some of his team. Pam told me that her retired brother in law, Danny Luke and his wife Jan, were touring Australia with their caravan and spending some time in Perth, he was interested in history and cars and had bought old Holden wrecks and restored them from the age of 17. Pam asked if he would like to go and see what the Historical Society was doing at the FTC.

Danny was keen so Pam arranged a visit to see "Macca and his dedicated volunteers". At least one and half hours later after listening to Macca talk on the machinery in their shed and with all the details of what mileage they did, petrol consumption and pumping capacities etc a seed was sewn in Danny's mind.

Later Danny said to Pam that all that information and history should be documented.

Since that time Danny has constantly telephoned Pam reiterating how much of an impact the meeting with Macca and the team had on him. Pam would then ring me and we would talk about how we could achieve a record of times past through these interesting and living examples of our past.

So, over a year ago an interview on camera was arranged to try to capture Macca's stories. This was done one day at the shed with the FESA Cameraman of the time, Bryn Watkins, unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the footage was lost in FESA archives.

Several months ago, Pam again, was on to me about the interviews. Pam had also spoken to Rob Forster at this time and the seed that was planted in Danny's head finally sprouted after Rob gained Union support for the project.

With the assistance of Ex FESA Cameraman Bryn Watkins and a script I interviewed Chief Fire Officer John McMahon QFSM (Ret), Station Officer Bob Wigley (Ret) and SFF Bob Cook (Ret).

With the upcoming 100 year anniversary of the WA United Firefighters Union in 2016, this record will be sure to appear as part of those celebrations. There is no doubt that the foresight and assistance shown in this initiative by the few people mentioned above will be a testimony to days past and a history that needs to be retained for further generations.

Peter Sutton

Gymnastic Team circa 1920s

This historical photograph is supplied by Andrew Duckworth, Butler Fire Station.

It is a photo of the Fire Brigades Gymnastics Team from the 1920's and example of a great deal of photographic and text history that Andy is putting together for the future generations to reflect.

This photo was provided by the family of Jack Caddy who was the last Station Keeper at North Perth Fire Station.

If anyone has photos of days past that has some connection to the Western Australian Fire Service including those that may be considered recent please consider scanning copies for Andy and our eventual archive.

Editor

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