

**2014 International Day of Commemoration for Dead and Injured Workers  
Rally  
UFU Secretary Kevin Jolly Speech**



**COMRADES - TODAY WE GATHER TO JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL DAY THAT COMMEMORATES DEAD AND INJURED WORKERS.**

MY NAME IS KEVIN JOLLY, I REPRESENT PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS AND I AM SPEAKING TODAY BECAUSE MY UNION IS PART OF AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO EXTEND PROTECTIONS FOR OUR MEMBERS AROUND THE WORLD. WE WORK IN ARGUABLY ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS INDUSTRIES AND OUR CAMPAIGN RECOGNISES A "SILENT" KILLER THAT SURFACES AS OCCUPATIONAL CANCER - WHICH RESULT FROM EXPOSURE TO TOXINS THAT WE ARE EXPOSED TO DAY AND NIGHT IN THE COURSE OF OUR WORK AND DUTY.

WHEN I STARTED MY TRAINING AS A FIREFIGHTER IN 1985, I WAS ONE OF 30 RECRUITS SELECTED FROM 2,500 APPLICANTS. WE TYPIFIED FIREFIGHTERS - WE WERE MORE FIT AND HEALTHY

THAN THE AVERAGE CITIZEN AND YET AFTER YEARS OF SERVICE WE ARE EXPERIENCING OCCUPATIONAL CANCER RATES THAT ARE WAY ABOVE THE RATES SEEN IN ORDINARY CITIZENS.

FROM MY FIREFIGHTING SCHOOL ALONE, 6 OF MY COMRADES HAVE DEVELOPED SERIOUS CANCERS. ONE HAS DIED RECENTLY AND 5 ARE IN REMISSION FOLLOWING RUGGED AND PROLONGED TREATMENT.

SINCE 1995 OUR UNION HAS SUPPORTED OVER 40 MEMBERS WHO HAVE DEVELOPED SERIOUS LIFE THREATENING OCCUPATIONAL CANCER AND WE HAVE BURIED 6 OF OUR FINEST. WE HAVE PROVIDED WELFARE SUPPORT TO THEIR WIVES AND HUSBANDS AND FAMILIES. WE HAVE TRIED TO SUPPORT OUR MEMBERS FINAL WISHES AND AT THE TIME WHEN THEY SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON FAMILY AND FRIENDS - THEY HAVE BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION THEIR WORRIES ABOUT FINANCIAL BURDENS FOR THEIR FAMILIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE MEDICAL TREATMENT THEY HAVE REQUIRED.

THE STATE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED CHANGES TO OUR WORKERS COMPENSATION LAWS THAT RECOGNISED THE OCCUPATIONAL CANCERS THAT FIREFIGHTERS MOST COMMONLY DEVELOP - THESE NEW LAWS NOW MEAN THAT OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES DO NOT HAVE TO BATTLE SYSTEMS OF LAW FOR COMPENSATION AND THEIR MEDICAL EXPENSES ARE COVERED.

WHAT FLOWS FROM THIS IS HOW BEST CAN WE PROTECT OUR RETIRED MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT COVERED BY WORKERS COMPENSATION LAWS LONG INTO THEIR RETIREMENTS - AND THE SOLUTION IS TO EXTEND SIMILAR PROTECTIONS BASED ON THE SAME CRITERIA OF LONG AND FREQUENT EXPOSURE TO THE TOXINS AND HAZARDS AS A RESULT OF FIREFIGHTING THROUGH A WELFARE BILL.

MY MEMBERS EXPECT THAT A WELFARE BILL WILL RECEIVE BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FROM ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICIANS - THE HISTORY OF OUR UNIONS CAMPAIGN FOR THESE PROTECTIONS IN WA AND IN THE COMMONWEALTH JURISDICTION HAS BEEN BASED ON BROAD POLITICAL SUPPORT

AND FOR SOME THAT HAS BEEN HARD - OUR UNION EXPECTS POLITICIANS AND DECISION MAKERS TO SET ASIDE THEIR DIFFERENCES TO WORK FOR CHANGES TO PROTECT FIREFIGHTERS AND OUR RETIRED MEMBERS. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE PROTECTED OUR COMMUNITIES FOR YEARS AT A GREAT COST TO THEIR OWN HEALTH.

MY UNION IS INDEBTED TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIREFIGHTERS AND IN PARTICULAR TO THE SUPPORT, ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OUR CANADIAN AND NORTH AMERICAN COMRADES - ESPECIALLY IAFF TRUSTEE, ALEX FORREST. MY UNION IS COMMITTED TO SEEING THESE PROTECTIONS EXPANDED FOR FIREFIGHTERS AROUND THE WORLD AND IT IS FITTING THAT TODAY WE RECOGNISE AND HONOUR THE FIREFIGHTERS WHO HAVE DIED FROM OCCUPATIONAL CANCER AND THOSE WHO ARE FIGHTING THE DISEASE AND THOSE THAT HAVE SURVIVED.

MY UNION WILL NEVER STOP WORKING TO IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS AND WAYS OF PREVENTION FOR THE EXPOSURES THAT FIREFIGHTERS FACE. IN 2014 WE STILL CANNOT DESIGN PROTECTIVE CLOTHING THAT MINIMISES HEAT, PROTECTS FROM FIRE AND STOPS THE ABSORPTION THROUGH SKIN OF THESE OCCUPATIONAL TOXINS. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE WILL GIVE UP - WE HAVE BEEN AT THE FOR FRONT OF STATION DESIGN TO ENSURE THAT THERE ARE DECONTAMINATION SHOWERS INSTALLED ON NEW AND EXTENDED EXISTING FIRE STATIONS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO REDUCE EXPOSURE TO DIESEL CONTAMINANTS AND WE STAND TOGETHER WITH OUR COMRADE FIRE FIGHTING UNIONS AROUND THE WORLD TO ACHIEVE THESE IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR WORKERS COMPENSATION LAWS, STATION DESIGN, PROTECTIVE CLOTHING, EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES.

**IN UNITY IS STRENGTH –**

**TOGETHER WE HONOUR OUR DEAD AND INJURED COMRADES  
IN AUSTRALIA AND OVERSEAS.**