



SIGNAL SEVEN

20 May 2016

Welcome to this edition of Signal 7.

Paid Parking at Fairbairn

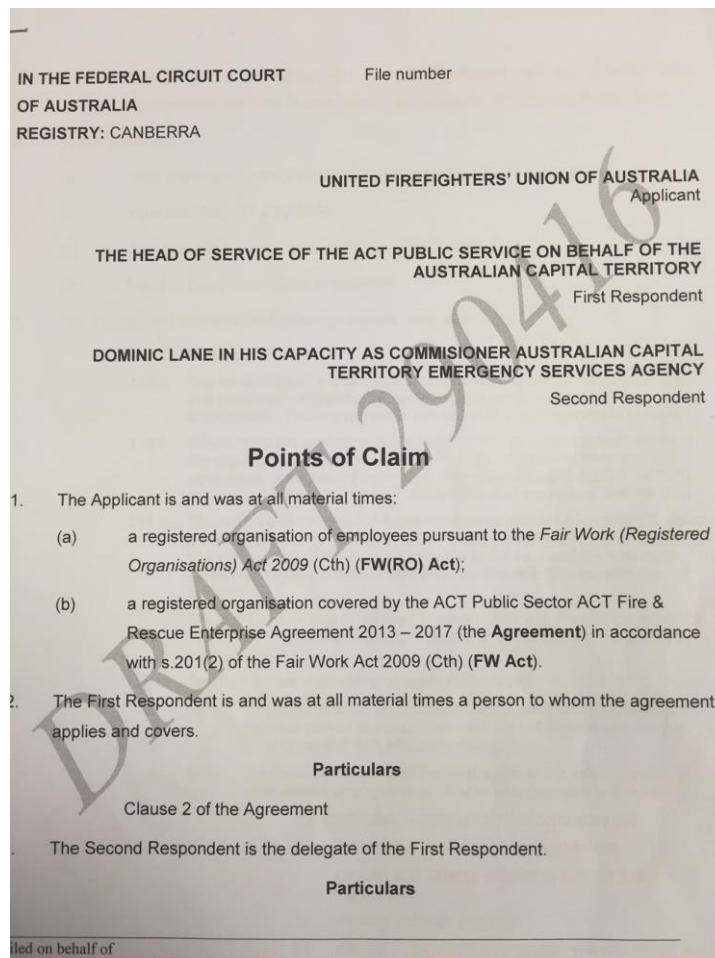
On Monday 9 May, Dominic Lane informed ESA staff by email that:

“the ESA will not implement paid parking in the foreseeable future”

The change of heart was said to be because:

“Throughout this consultative process, the ESA executive has listened to the concerns raised by staff and union representatives.”

Given that we were never provided with any of the financial information we sought about the drivers for the paid parking cash grab, we think the change of heart had more to do with this:



We could be wrong! We did however give a commitment to government that we would let them know before we lodged proceedings. Fortunately, we saved the application fee.

Members will be aware that we thought that this issue had previously gone away, and then it came back again. Just how long is a “foreseeable future”?

Dispute over the SRA Consultation process.

The matter was again before the Fair Work Commission on 19 May.

The UFU received undertakings that position descriptions for roles which are to change in the “Executive Realignment” will be provided to us within a week. This will enable us to assess the full impact of the changed arrangements. This is a positive development.

The UFU did not press the matter of extending the DCO Executive contract further. We did point out that DCO roles have been maintained for other services such as ACTRFS, SES and ACTAS. Instead, we will assess the changed structural arrangements and it may well be that on the basis of what we have to say ESA is persuaded to change its approach. We expect that there will be significant developments in this area soon.

On 12 May we wrote to the ESA about our view that data cited by Dominic Lane in support of the changes to ACTF&R was inaccurate and simply wrong. An excerpt from the email appears below:

“While you may consider it regrettable that we have “awaited (sic) towards the end of the consultation period” to ask for the data sitting behind the statements made in your material, it could more accurately be said that it is regrettable that we had to ask for it at all.

We had thought that you might identify a source of the data other than the “Productivity Commission’s Report on Government Services”, (“ROGS data”) because on our reading of the 2016 report, and the earlier iterations of it, there is no data that directly supports the contention that “response to incidents has declined annually by 10% since 2008-09”. We infer that you might be referring to the data contained in Table 9A.13 of the 2016 report (or an earlier equivalent), and ask which particular statistics support your contention.”

We are also pointed out:

“We do not agree that “the relatively low number of fire emergencies” as you describe it “suggests that there is scope for reform and improvement” in and of itself. We consider that the statistics quoted concerning fire emergencies are not a whole reflection of the work undertaken by our members. There is of course room for improvement in any organisation, however we suggest that the room for improvement is neither identified nor determined by a single measure of productivity.

In addition, we consider that there are significant differences across the agencies within ESA in the ways in which responses are counted for statistical purposes. A good example is the recent Pialligo fire, at which on the first day of the fire on 28 April there were 11 ACTF&R appliances fighting the fire. The fire required significant ACTF&R resources for over a week, and also required significant resources from other agencies. We estimate that hundreds of hours of labour of ACTF&R personnel were expended on the incident up until it was determined to be extinguished in the early hours of 9 May. Despite this, the incident counts as one incident for ACTF&R for statistical purposes. It should be noted that ACTF&R took

responsibility for operations, planning, logistics, and coordination of additional resources. In contrast, within ACT Ambulance Service, non-emergency transport of one patient counts as one incident for statistical purposes. Although no data is contained in the “Information Paper on Refocussing ACTAS Service Delivery Model Information Paper”, we note that it states that demand for ambulance services in the ACT continues to grow significantly, and that further additional resourcing is suggested.

In circumstances where UFU members have been told that concerns that they raised about the SRA are “not supported by data”, you would think that the people pushing the data barrow might have done their homework. It appears not.

The differences in data collection and reporting raise serious policy concerns: if data collection and reporting in ACTF&R were made similar to ACTAS, it would show a massive improvement in the performance of ACTF&R without any other changes being made. Presumably some executives would get performance bonuses for making the SRA a success, but the public would get nothing.

We are yet to receive a response to our concerns about the data. We will tell you when we do.

Comcen

We have again pushed the idea of a workplace consultative committee to delve into the detail of how “one Comcen” could work. We think that establishing a working group with hands on Comcen firefighters would be far more effective than having a proposal drawn up by someone else. Watch this space,

FIREBALL

It’s important to emphasise that this is a big year for the UFU and members. We have significant challenges before us, and it’s a great opportunity to stop, draw breath, look at those around you, gauge the support, and get ready. Social events are simple ways for us to build solidarity, and for those close to us to see first-hand the support that we give each other. For these reasons the UFU BCOM has thrown its support behind the Fireball, and we strongly urge members to do the same.

Buy a ticket, organise a table, get your friends along, help the organisers to make this a success.

The organisers and the UFU have also extracted some sponsorship support from various sources.

The event is on 25 June, and is a great opportunity to support the historical society while having a good time. Contact Morris Brighty or Gina Kikos for further details, or to offer your help.

Community Action

As previously reported, the UFU has formed a community action committee, with two reps per platoon. It will be the focus of community action about issues that affect firefighters and fire and rescue. You will soon be approached to lend support. Please take these approaches seriously, and understand that we must share the load.

Authorised by Greg McConville, Secretary, UFU, A.C.T. Branch.

This is an official Union document to be shared between members only.