



BULLETIN

Bulletin No: 030

26 February 2020

TO ALL UFUA MEMBERS

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO MENTAL HEALTH OF FIRST RESPONDERS SENATE INQUIRY REPORT

**Support in principle for presumptive legislation covering
PTSD and other psychological injuries, compulsory first
responder mental health awareness training, and more**

Yesterday, the Government Response on the Senate Education and Employment Reference Committee report “The people behind 000: mental health of our first responders” was tabled in the Senate. A copy of this response can be found online: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/Mentalhealth/Government_Response

As UFUA members may be aware, the UFUA had extensive involvement in the above Senate Inquiry in 2018.

The UFUA National Office provided a substantial submission supported by commissioned reports and other evidentiary documentation. This submission was high-impact, and much of the UFUA’s evidence and many of the UFUA recommendations were accepted by the Senate Committee and replicated, in part or in full, in the Final Report which was released in February 2019. A copy of the UFUA submission plus attachments can be found online and downloaded by members (Submission No. 70 under United Firefighters Union of Australia): https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Education_and_Employment/Mentalhealth/Submissions

Additionally, through the UFUA’s global alliance network and relationship in particular with the North American union, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), then-Edmonton Fire Chief Ken Block and Captain-President of the United Firefighters Union of Winnipeg and IAFF Canadian Trustee Alex Forrest also

provided written submissions to the Inquiry. These submissions can also be found online (No. 49 and No. 50 respectively).

In July 2018, following the submissions made to the Inquiry, UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall, Mr Alex Forrest and Fire Chief Ken Block appeared before the Senate Committee for approximately 1.5 hours, a significant amount of time considering the Inquiry looked into all Australian first responders, and not only career firefighters. The Senate Committee took the opportunity to ask in-depth questions on the incidence and prevalence of mental health issues, wellness programmes currently available (nationally and internationally) for firefighter health and wellbeing, and the international (Canadian) best practice.

The UFUA and UFUA members have greatly benefited from the submissions made, and appearances by, our international colleagues. Their expertise clearly made an impact on the Senate Committee as evidence in their subsequent Final Report.

Authorised by National Secretary Peter Marshall