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FIRST AID TRAINING

On 18 May, the Union and the QFRS were back before Deputy President Swan in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) regarding the Union's ban on undertaking defibrillator training. This conference followed an earlier one where the QFRS provided certain commitments to the Union regarding defibrillators. At the conference on 17 April, the Deputy Commission said the following –

“Now, through those meetings (with the Union), clearly the UFU have indicated concerns to us and we're noting those concerns. And those concerns centre around the defibrillators being placed on vehicles and the subsequent consequence, perhaps the unintended consequences to QFRS operational personnel. Through yesterday's meeting in particular, it's quite clear that one of those consequences from the Union's point of view, that we have interpreted, is the extended use of firefighters into more of a first responder or co-responder role to medical incidents.

“And, clearly, quite frankly, a lack of trust of the organisation when we give assurances that that's not our desire. For that reason, I certainly want to put on transcript my feelings and - behalf of the Commissioner that whilst we have views - personal views, perhaps about the issue of trust that we want to give assurances to the firefighters, to the UFU's members and try and mitigate the concerns that they have raised.

“The QFRS absolutely commit to extensive consultation with the UFU before any defibrillators are placed on our fleet - which the UFU crew. And, this would include - this consultation would include not just The United Firefighters Union of Australia, but it would also include the Senior Officers' Union which represent another group of our key employees. It would include the LHMU who represent Ambulance Officers and it would include senior executives from QAS and the other group that we would include is representatives from the communications offices of both services, so that everybody had a clear understanding of our intent for the use of these pieces of equipment.

To try and give that reassurance I have also given an undertaking to Mr Lawrence and Mr Walker yesterday, that I will personally attend their next State Committee of Management meeting on the 5th of May in order

to try and personally address the concerns raised by the State Committee of Management members and, at that point, when I have explained our intent and given those assurances, not just in transcript here but in face to face to them, at that point I would be asking that the bans on the training be lifted.

“Albeit, I clearly understand that they will require - and rightly require that level of consultation that I've outlined before we were to do anything. In that regard we would be seeking to report back to yourself as soon as possible after that, presumably that would be in the week of the 11th of May, following the State Committee of Management meeting, and, until such time of that report back, we won't be seeking any formal intervention from the Commission in that regard.

“It is our intention and direction that we'd only proceed with the installation of defibs on trucks once that consultation has been undertaken. That would clearly require the production of a number of documented processes and procedures which all parties would have input to. I do need, though, to reaffirm and confirm the organisations desire and intent to use a new health training packages including the competencies offered by the QAS in terms of delivering the applied first aid and advanced resuscitation techniques and that would be our desired outcome after that level of discussion with the State Committee Management.”

At the Union's SCM meeting on 5 May, the Deputy Commissioner reaffirmed his comments and the commitments by the QFRS.

In light of those commitments, SCM determined that members will undertake the defibrillation component of the health training packages for Senior First Aid and Apply Resuscitation Techniques. However, as was made clear by the QFRS, there will be no attempt to introduce defibrillators until the extensive consultation process and formulation of protocols regarding their use is undertaken.

Accordingly, the QIRC was advised of this at the conference on 18 May 2009.