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EB NEWSLETTER

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5 days to go!



EB UPDATE AND QIRC INVOLVEMENT

Protected Industrial Action

Members will be aware that Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and the State Government are taking action in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) in relation to our intended "Fire Calls Only" bans and the associated enterprise bargaining.

This action has the potential to affect our industrial action due to commence on 1 August 2012. I will send out urgent updates if the intended action is affected in any way.

Further Protected Industrial Action

Brisbane region roster officers are also considering taking additional action which would involve total work stoppages of varying duration. QIRC has granted a union application for a ballot to be conducted under the new laws about this specific action. This ballot will only affect a small group of members.

We will advise if further such ballots will occur for other groups of members.

QIRC Intervention

As previously advised, QFRS has requested QIRC to assist in the negotiations for the new certified agreement. The union was very surprised by this request and even more surprised when QIRC convened an urgent hearing with less than 24 hours notice to the union. Our surprise increased when QFRS told QIRC that they believed the negotiations were at an impasse.

At no stage prior to that moment have QFRS ever suggested to this union that negotiations have stalled. As I have reported previously, negotiations are complex and difficult and involve a range of demands placed on you by QFRS and the Government but we are working our way through the issues and are still at an early stage.



The reason for the surprise burst of haste from QFRS and the Government was explained as a desire to conclude an agreement prior to the end of the month. It is of course an absurd suggestion that an agreement could be reached within the next few days.

QFRS does seem to be all of a sudden concerned about the intended industrial action despite having been told about it 7 weeks ago. This may be motivating them to try to shut down talks.

It is my view that an agreement could be reached within a sensible time frame but the complexity of the issues particularly the extent of QFRS and Government demands mean that all detail needs to be examined carefully.

The commencement of the negotiations was delayed as you will be aware, primarily because of a change in the state government. Undue haste at this stage will not overcome those initial delays.

We are due to report back to the QIRC the week after next in relation to negotiations progress and it is possible that QIRC will chair a number of conferences.

We note that a number of other negotiations for other public sector agreements are also now subject to government requests for QIRC assistance. These negotiations are also being chaired by QIRC. This suggests perhaps a government policy of involving the QIRC in negotiations.

Members should note that the current circumstances are dynamic particularly as QFRS has now involved the QIRC. I will continue to send regular updates as they occur.

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5 Days to go!

John Oliver
State Secretary

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