

BULLETIN

Bulletin No. 202 Vol.

14

Date 31ST October 2007

TO: ALL UFU MEMBERS

RE: UNIFORM UPDATE

The UFU wrote the attached letter to both the MFB and CFA and sent a copy to the Minister.

As a result the MFB has agreed to the following:

- 1. The PBI product will be ordered for the first issue of PPC in the next week or so allowing the product to be woven early in the new year, bringing forward the program by 4 to 8 weeks (depending on US supply.) This approach will provide 2000 kg (5700 m) of fabric four (4) weeks ahead of the current arrangement of waiting for the BTTG testing. PPC garments would be rolled out in March '08 with immediate issue to on-shift firefighters as the garments become available (1800 units in 10-12 weeks from delivery of material.) This arrangement will still allow the UK BTTG testing results to be taken into consideration for the design of the PPC.*
- 2. PBI Flash Hoods will be purchased ahead of the new PPC being issued and commissioned as soon as available. Order has been placed with the supplier informing that there are 300 ex-stock Australia and 1500 ex-US Air Express in two weeks. A second issue is being ordered in the week of 29 October 2007.*
- 3. 100% Cotton Tee Shirts have been the standard issue of the MFB and no immediate change is envisaged. Change will only occur through the MFB Uniform Committee consultation process which includes UFU participation.*
- 4. The CFO will issue a Safety Alert on Tuesday 30 October 2007 advising that Polyester Uniform Shirts are not to be worn under the current PPC. The MFB Uniform Committee will be reviewing all Station Wear as part of the new PPC program.*
- 5. Agreement to progress the Firefighting Helmet procurement program to coincide with the issuing of new PPC and to commence the evaluation of "turn out" footwear (both Bunker and other Firefighting boots). The project officer for these two projects (Helmets and Firefighter boots) will be SSO Phil Taylor acting up to the rank of Commander reporting to the CFO working out of the supply office in accordance with governance arrangements as stipulated by Supply Manager, Elizabeth Bednarski.*

6. *SSO Phil Taylor will be a key player (most senior operational representative other than the CFO) on the MFB working parties for both Structural Firefighting garments (PPC) and Station Wear as part of the PPC Implementation Committee headed up by the CFO which encompasses the MFB Uniform Committee.*
7. *The above arrangements will be implemented if agreed, by 26 October 2007. Discussion regarding SSO Phil Taylor will be undertaken when he returns from overseas.*
8. *The MFB will make available SSO Phil Taylor as required to expedite the process (i.e. will come off shift to perform these duties for an expected period of 6 – 8 months).*
9. *The MFB will respect the UFU position to nominate a CFA representative to the Joint CFA/MFB Uniform Committee.*

Further the UFU has expressed its concern regarding the delay of both CFA and MFB providing new uniforms for members in both the CFA and MFB.

We have vigorously expressed our concerns over this delay with both the Fire Service and Government.

Since our concerns have been raised, the UFU has received advice that the Minister has commissioned an enquiry to ascertain why there was a delay in the procurement of new uniforms for firefighters

This is in the context of the background regarding injuries to Firefighter Zappart.

Overseeing the enquiry that will produce findings for the Ministers consideration is County Court Judge Justice Lewis.

The UFU looks forward to this enquiry as it is totally unacceptable that there has been a delay of five years on the replacement of new uniforms. At the very least the impediments must be exposed so the situation never reoccurs.

If you have any inquiries, please contact Peter Marshall on 0419 127 004.

Authorised by:
Peter Marshall, Branch Secretary

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BULLETIN

Bulletin No: 297
TO: UFU MEMBERS

Volume: 15

Thursday 30 October 2008

WHITEWASH REPORTS BY MINISTER CAMERON & MFB DENY RESPONSIBILITY FOR FIREFIGHTER'S CRITICAL INJURIES

UFU Insists On Coronial Inquiry To Provide The Truth

Members are advised that the MFB has recently disseminated an email to all staff containing Judge Lewis' Report, tabled in parliament today, together with the MFB's own internal report regarding PPC and the Yarraville fire of October 12, 2007.

Both reports are critical of the UFU. The UFU does not understand how this could be the case.

Judge Lewis was informed by the UFU that for legal reasons the most appropriate forum for investigating the uniform issue and the Yarraville fire should be the coroner's court, not a report engaged by a Minister who has a vested interest in protecting the Government and the agency who the UFU have directly accused of being responsible for delaying implementation of improved PPC that could have prevented serious injuries.

Members will recall that the Yarraville fire resulted in critical injuries to Leading Firefighter Richard Zappart.

In this context, the UFU views both Judge Lewis' report on behalf of the Government, (the Government's report), and indeed the MFB's internal report, as self-serving.

We look forward to embracing the coronial inquest where any statement that is made will be tested by cross-examination under oath and documents and persons that may be able to help the inquest can be subpoenaed.

This is the only forum that will enable a true ventilation of the facts surrounding the delay in issuing a new uniform that resulted in critical injuries to Leading Firefighter Zappart.

In short, the MFB's email and timing of its report should be seen as no more than an attempt to cover up and deflect blame whilst attempting to portray MFB in a good light and denigrate the UFU. The UFU suggests that you dispose of the email in an appropriate manner.

Members should also be extremely suspicious of the fact that the Government Report seeks to bring into question clauses and entitlements of your enterprise agreement and purports to be a justification for removing such clauses. It is no coincidence in our view that we're about to enter into EBA negotiations.

In relation to the coronial inquest, the UFU's legal counsel received the following correspondence from the coroner's office on Friday. See Below.

Dear Sir,

Re: Fire at Japanese Screens and Interiors, Yarraville on 12 October 2007

Thank you for your letter dated 20 October 2008.

We have been awaiting reports and statements and the brief is now being collated by a coroner's assistant. You shall be notified of the inquest date as soon as this matter is set down for hearing. If you have any further queries please contact this office.

Yours sincerely

*Gayle Chirgwin
Principal Registrar*

In closing, we look forward to this matter being heard in a proper court environment, where innuendo and ill-informed comment can be brought into question through the proper judicial process of cross-examination and testimony by oath.

The UFU will keep you informed of further developments. If you have any queries contact Peter Marshall on 0419 127 004.

*Authorised by:
Peter Marshall,
Branch Secretary*

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