

Our reference: mp4/mw

31 October 2008

Dear

You will recall that on 23 May 2008 I wrote to you and each of your Labor Party colleagues regarding the ongoing firefighter pay dispute. You will recall at the time I sought your support in resolving the issue and ensuring that firefighters received wage justice. The responses received ranged from no response at all to a letter from the Minister for Emergency Services on behalf of Government members advising that the matter would run its course in the Industrial Relations Commission.

Currently, the offer proposed by the Government is for a 2.5% increase in wages for most ranks. The offer was put to a ballot of members by direction of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC), and the result of that ballot is that the offer has been overwhelmingly rejected by over 92% of my members. The Union is seeking base rates of pay no higher than those paid to the rest of the Government's public sector employees of the same work value using the Government's Jobs Evaluation Management System (JEMS). The Government insists on using the base rates plus the shiftwork penalty rates for firefighters to compare with other employees' base rates. To use this logic means, effectively, my members performing shiftwork are not being compensated for that shiftwork.

The Minister for Emergency Services recently issued a media release urging members to accept the offer. He stated in his release that, since the last work value assessment of firefighters in 1994, "*...wages of firefighters have increased by around 70%, which is more than 40% above CPI.*" He went on to label our claim "*irresponsible*". You may be interested to know that, in the same period, the Average Weekly Earnings for adults in Queensland increased by 82.37% according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Even more interesting is the fact that the wages for Members of the Legislative Assembly in Queensland rose by 200.27% in the same

period. I have made my members aware of these facts, and the feeling of members is one of total disgust of the treatment by this Government of firefighters.

The UFU is currently developing its strategy for the next state election due in 2009. In order to us to make an informed opinion on our support for candidates, we are seeking your written position on whether you support firefighters being paid a base rate of pay no less than other Government public sector employees. The absence of an individual response will be taken to mean a lack of support for our case, and our determination of support for you in the state election will be based accordingly.

My members have been extremely tolerant up to this time. Any MP who does not publicly support fair wages for firefighters can expect to have firefighters in their electorates having a very high profile right up until the election.

Can you please notify me of your position in this matter by COB Friday 14 November 2008.

Should you wish to have the details of our claim explained to you in a logical and simple fashion, please do not hesitate to make contact with me on either my office number or (mob) 0414-814432.

I sincerely hope that the UFU and its members can work with you in securing the re-election of Labor candidates. Whether our support eventuates is entirely up to you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'mwalker', written in a cursive style.

MARK WALKER
State Secretary