



UNITED
FIRE
FIGHTERS
UNION
QUEENSLAND

Friday 20 March 2020

Mr Stephen Smith
Assistant Commissioner
Human Capital Management
Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

Delivered via email: *StephenA.Smith@qfes.qld.gov.au*
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Dear Assistant Commissioner

Re: COVID19 control measures effect on consultative processes

I refer to the constantly evolving recommendations and requirements being placed upon both of our organisations and employees as a result of medical advice both state and federal relating to COVID19.

I acknowledge that our organisations must take these matters seriously, particularly with regard to protecting employees (and members) from exposure to, and exposing others to, infection.

As such I wanted to also acknowledge that whilst we expect open and positive dialogue between us will continue under the 'new normal' of there being social distancing, including minimal face to face contact or unnecessary travel, progression of industrial and other matters will naturally be affected.

I don't expect that COVID19 controls can (or will) be used as an 'excuse' by either party to avoid engagement or progression of any industrial matter and the UFUQ will maintain its expectation of early and genuine engagement on any matter affecting the employment conditions or entitlements of our members.

However, when considering, for example, some of the fast approaching required timeframes within clause 36 of CA19 (May 2020), I accept that delays need not result in disputation as long as both parties remain committed to progression through open and genuine consultation using whatever means available.

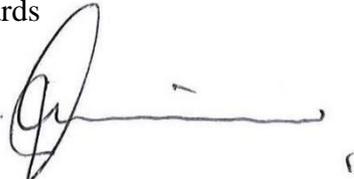
I would consider it reasonable that the parties agree that we intend to progress all existing and any new engagement and consultation without a focus on 'deadlines' and that we commit to a regular mutual assessment of progression.

The consideration of extending the reasonable amount of time to progress matters is of course not restricted to clause 36 of CA19, but nor should it be relied upon to simply defer progress any matter.

To be clear, the UFUQ consider all matters will remain 'on foot' and intends to work proactively with QFES to conclude them and that any new matters will not be deferred from being communicated. As such, I expect the parties will continue to remain in contact and that, for example, the regularly scheduled extraordinary ACC meetings can continue for the foreseeable future (albeit likely by video/phone). In fact, this correspondence and our mutual arrangements can be discussed at the next ACC.

I have no doubt you and QFES will be supportive of the matters I have raised in this correspondence however I must as always state that we reserve our rights and the rights of our members with regard to these matters.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JO' followed by a long horizontal line.

John Oliver
General Secretary