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FIRE SERVICE THREATENS TO SACK FIREFIGHTERS!

QFRS are sinking to desperate conduct in their attempts to shore up a disintegrating service.

Station Officers at Cairns Station elected not to update their Bronto accreditation and let their qualifications lapse. These members voluntarily undertook elective training some time ago as firefighters who had replied to a QFRS call for expressions of interest in learning that particular skill.

On appointment to station officer, not one of these members were told that Bronto accreditation was a prerequisite or requirement for a station officer position.

In response to scarce staff and inadequate regional training, QFRS have now demanded that these officers update their Bronto accreditation and are distorting the facts by now saying that the elective training these members undertook as firefighters is now mandatory for station officers.

Your union requested QFRS to show any evidence that this training and accreditation was mandatory. QFRS did not produce any relevant documentation to satisfy your union that the accreditation was mandatory.

QFRS also stated that if they say something is mandatory, then that's all there is to it, they can say something is mandatory any time they like and firefighters and station officers just have to do as they are told. What isn't mandatory one day can be mandatory the next day if QFRS say so.

Your union backed our members 100% in their decision not to re-accredit their elective training.

QFRS notified the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) of a dispute with the union and asked the tribunal for assistance.

Despite asking QIRC for assistance QFRS openly threatened to suspend, discipline or dismiss our members if they did not re-accredit their elective qualifications!

This disgraceful conduct occurred as the fire service attempts to rewrite the facts and cover up a situation where there aren't enough Bronto qualified and accredited people.

The answer is sufficient staffing and professional training not grubby threats from QFRS!!!!

The QIRC is now going to arbitrate a resolution to that particular dispute as to whether Bronco training is mandatory or elective, but the grubby threats from the fire service were not withdrawn.

I counsel all members to be careful when responding to expressions of interest for **ANY** elective training in circumstances where your volunteering might be held against you later.

Also, if you are aware of any member who is threatened in any way by QFRS management please record as much detail as you can and forward the information to me at the state office.

If we are moving into a grubby new world where firefighters are openly threatened for having a different opinion to the fire service then we need to be vigilant and fight back whenever required.

JOHN OLIVER
State Secretary