



---

Volume 27 Number 06

8 February 2013

---

## **Minister Dempsey meets with Union**

After months of requests, letters and campaigning, Minister Jack Dempsey's office contacted me this week to arrange a meeting. Minister Dempsey and his Policy Advisor came over to our office that same day.

State President Mark Dearlove, Senior Industrial Officer John Spreckley and I met with the Minister.

This was the first meeting your union had with the Minister since he took up the portfolio over 9 months ago.

The Minister conveyed his thanks and appreciation to UFUQ members for all of your efforts and professionalism displayed this year so far in the emergency situations. The Minister asked that I pass his appreciation and thanks on to you.

I conveyed our concerns to the Minister about the sustained attacks on firefighters' employment conditions, the aggressive bargaining stance from government, and the misinformation given to him by government bureaucrats.

I expressed a view that firefighters needed to be treated better and dealt with in a consultative, fair way and attacking our employment conditions through bargaining or arbitration will not assist in the big picture or the long term future of the service.

The Minister stated that he would look into our concerns and noted that much of the government bargaining agenda was managed through different government decision making processes.

I expect that our campaigning and professionalism has impressed upon the Minister the need to work with us, not against us and have us on-side and not off-side.

However, I am not so naïve that I believe our concerns will be resolved without a continuing fight, simply because the Minister has finally met with us once.

It is up to the government and QFRS to back off and make some efforts to resolve matters so we can get on with protecting the community. If the Minister can intervene and make a difference that would assist greatly. I won't hold my breath, but I do acknowledge the effort finally made to talk with us.

## **Keelty Review**

Your union was invited to meet with Mick Keelty to discuss his sweeping review of the Department of Community Safety. I attended this meeting along with State President Mark Dearlove and Senior Industrial Officer John Spreckley.

The meeting didn't canvass any government proposals and we weren't able to anticipate what the government intends by the review.

We did note however that there will most likely be a range of recommendations arising which will impact on the fire service.

I am considering the best way to provide further input into the review to ensure firefighters' interests are protected.

## **Arbitration**

A full bench of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC) convened on 1 February 2013 to issue directions for the arbitration of the government's bargaining demands.

These directions are for the filing and exchange of material and evidence over the course of the next few months. These directions also set some preliminary dates down for hearing in June 2013.

I emphasise that the attacks on our working conditions and the refusals to address any of our bargaining issues are all concocted by senior QFRS personnel and the state government. The QFRS and the government have not backed off their attacks or their demands.

Attacks on our employment conditions are attacks no matter where they are made. They are still attacks whether they are made in bargaining, media or QIRC.

Our campaign against the attacks must continue throughout this year!

## **Charter**

As we all know Minister Jack Dempsey, Director General Kelvin Anderson and Commissioner Lee Johnson all signed a Charter with rural volunteers committing, amongst other things, to consult on a range of matters.

As you are aware all of the above refused point blank to extend the same respect to full time and auxiliary firefighters.

I note RFBAQ has now been waving their charter at the government and relying on its terms to assert their rights.

We need to express our disgust at the failure to sign a charter for us and the union will be conveying our plans in the near future!

**John Oliver**  
**State Secretary**