

This Just seems Strange

"D-1"

How Safe do you feel?

The United Firefighters Union believe that the public that live and travel through Toowoomba and surrounding communities are at risk from injury or death due to a chronic shortage of operational, front line firefighters who's crewing levels have remained unchanged since 1975 which is two front line fire fighting /rescue pumpers.

It appears to the public that the fire stations have plenty of fire appliances, which is correct, but the reality is we have no first response firefighters to respond in them.

In the Toowoomba area

- Current crewing levels only permit safe operations to be carried out at one incident at a time.
- Highest road traffic crash rate per capita in Queensland
- the population has grown by 2.5 times to 144,000
- The traffic volume has increased to a heavy transport passing any given point in James St, every 20 seconds, 24 hours/day on average

How Lucky Do You Feel?

Do you realise that depending on what time of the month you may get a limited response to your emergency?

In South West region we have 18 sick relief days per month.

When we have run out of sick relief days the specialists appliances are taken off the road. These appliances are cross crewed with 1 Station Officer+1 Firefighter for the four appliances leaving the other 3 un-crewed in there event of another emergency the levy paying public will have to wait for specialist appliances from Brisbane

- 311L (Heavy rescue/technical)
- 311S (Breathing Apparatus/Hazardous materials/Command and Control)
- 311Y (4x4 Bushfire/Grassfire Light Attack)
- 311J (Telescopic aerial pumper)

This means that the new station looks impressive, but in reality is a high priced storage shed.

We as firefighters are no fitter or slacker than the general population when it comes to work absences and illness but we have a draconian system that to the United Firefighters Union seems to completely over look the basic reason why we are here, and that is to serve the public who pay for our emergency response. You won't die from a paper cut if you've got a head cold, but you can sure as hell pay the price if you're wearing breathing apparatus at a structure fire!!

If a teacher books in sick they don't send the class home!

If the local council has a report of sewerage running down the streets they don't say "we're out of sick leave, see you next month!!"

It seems absolutely absurd that the public we are chartered to serve under an Act of Parliament are now accepting the following situations:-

1. If you are going to have a Heavy Rescue incident, make sure its early in the month (we can't guarantee a response at all latter in the month)
2. If we have a grass fire/bushfire make sure it's early in the month.
3. A Hazardous Materials Incident make it early in the month.
4. Technical rescue (Swift water, Cliff Rescue, Trench and Confined Space Rescue) make sure you book them early in the month.

The possibilities are endless, but in the interests of cutting to the chase the following has occurred and the U.F.U. would like to know why these types of managerial frugality are occurring?

- Assistant Commissioner breeches agreement and won't pay for operational backfill?
- Protracted incidents with no coverage in your area of response?
- Slow Auxiliary responses to pagers (up to 28mins to crew up at station)?
- Removal of Operational crew from the duty crew to day work, with no notice?
- On a regular basis there is no heavy rescue response capability between Brisbane and the N.T, and N.S.W Borders (an area 1.5 times the size of Victoria)

The United Firefighters Union find it obscene that management are playing Russian Roulette with people's lives, breach their own agreements and hide under the fact that the caring and compassionate side of the average fire-fighter will get them out of any liability because we will still have a go with the limited crew available.

If we get away with the emergency response without injury or loss of life we've saved management from their failure to act responsibly in the interests of the community. If a fire-fighter is injured in the attempt to save life of property, management hide under the

"Zero Harm" and WH&S legislation and the 90 percentile and will use the Incident Controller and crew as scapegoats to cover their willingness to gamble with the public and firefighters lives.

Management have now directed that the specialist/s appliances will be taken of the road and unavailable for response instead of maintaining crewing levels in order to save lives.

Management are hell bent on saving Dollars instead of saving lives.

Are the United firefighters Union the only ones to believe that we should have robust crewing on ALL appliances?

The United firefighters Union have nothing to gain other than increasing the safety of the community and firefighters.

John Burrows