

NTFRS WORKPLACE AGREEMENT FACT SHEET 3/2008

Details of the enhanced offer made for a new Northern Territory Fire Rescue Service (NTFRS) workplace agreement

The offer has been developed following careful and detailed consideration of the LHMU's log of claims and within the context of the NTPS Wages Policy. The Policy sets out the parameters for bargaining new workplace agreements. In essence, it requires that the quantum of salary increases is to be based upon consideration of the following factors:

- Productivity improvements;
- Market forces;
- Consumer Price Index; and
- Government's fiscal position.

The offer

The offer is a total package for settlement of the union's logs of claims. The details of the offer are as follows:

Union collective agreement

The new agreement is to be a union collective agreement made under the *Workplace Relations Act*.

Duration

It is proposed the new agreement will expire on 7th November 2011.

Salary quantum

- An initial increase in salary of 4% effective from the commencement of the first pay period beginning on or after 7th November 2007;
- A second increase in salary of 4% effective from the commencement of the first pay period beginning on or after 7th November 2008;
- A third increase in salary of 4% effective from the commencement of the first pay period beginning on or after 7th November 2009; and
- A fourth increase of 3% (or whatever the general public sector receives at this time) effective from the commencement of the first pay period beginning on or after 7 November 2010.

Outstation relief allowance

On occasions, firefighters in Darwin on finishing a shift are requested to be ready to work at a station other than No.1 Station (Palmerston, Humpty Doo or Marrara) to cover unexpected absences at these stations. It is proposed that firefighters receive a \$30 allowance per occurrence for outstation relief to cover any inconvenience and any additional travel and expenses associated with this. The allowance is proposed on the condition that firefighters take their personal equipment home and travel directly to the new station to be available for commencement at the start of their next shift.

In addition to payment to firefighters who are rostered as Outstation Relief, payment of the allowance may, subject to the approval of the Director on a case by case basis, be made to a firefighter who is required to work at an alternative station other than that which they were originally rostered to attend. This payment will only occur if the change of location is caused by the need to meet an unforeseen staffing shortage where a specific qualification or skill is required (eg Bronto qualification).

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Technician Category 2 Qualification Allowance

Urban Search and Rescue Category 2 Technicians require additional specialised skills that are beyond the normal firefighter skills and in recognition of this it is proposed that an allowance of \$1.50 per hour be paid to firefighters who have obtained and maintain currency in skills and knowledge required of a Category 2 USAR Technician.

Transfers

The following provisions relating to transfers are proposed:

- Voluntary Transfers (no change to existing Award sub-clause 13.8.1).
- Compulsory Transfers
 - Within a Centre (within Darwin and Alice Springs only)
A member may be transferred from shift to day work or day work to shift **within a centre** to meet a foreseen organizational requirement or for the member's career development. The member is to be notified not less than one calendar month prior to the transfer. However, by agreement with the member, the member may take up the transfer at any time agreeable to both parties following notification. At the conclusion of the transfer period or 12 months, whichever comes sooner, the member is to be reinstated at their previous position.
 - Between Centres (eg Darwin to Tennant Creek) (no change to existing Award sub-clause 13.8.2 (b) (i) to 13.8.2 (b) (vi) inclusive).
 - Compulsory transfers between centres will only occur after all avenues to fill vacant positions through voluntary transfer and lateral entry have been exhausted.
 - Unforeseen circumstances (retain existing Award sub-clause 13.8.2 (b) (vii)).

District Officer Development

Career development for District Officers is a joint responsibility between NTFRS and the individual officer. The NTFRS is committed to the ongoing career and personal development of all members. Opportunities for an officer's development will be negotiated on a case by case basis depending on the aspirations of the officer concerned and the requirements of the NTFRS. Career development opportunities are to be recorded in the officer's Personal Development Plan.

Sick Leave Certificates

The offer includes an increase in the number of consecutive shifts that may be taken in one calendar year without the requirement to produce a medical certificate from one to two.

Lateral Entry

It is proposed that the recruitment of lateral entry officers and firefighters will be based on the merit principle. All lateral entry applicants must satisfy the PSTP training requirements contained in the NTFRS Career Path and any other qualifications or experience relative to the rank level and position of the advertised vacancy they are applying for.

Lateral entry applicants must satisfy the requirements of the NTFRS Lateral Entry Policy before appointment which will require the applicant to undergo challenge tests and any other examinations appropriate to the rank level and position they have applied for. Lateral entry members will be required to serve a minimum period of six months before their appointment is confirmed as permanent. The current lateral entry policy will be amended to reflect this change and to remove any inconsistencies.

It is proposed by NTFRS that Psychological testing will be introduced and will be a requirement for all new recruits and lateral entry applicants. All applicants will be required to satisfy the requirements of NTFRS Psychological testing to join NTFRS.

Medical and Health Monitoring

It is proposed that existing sub-clause 34.1 of Northern Territory Public Sector Fire and Rescue Service 2004 Partnership Agreement be incorporated into the new agreement. In addition, NTFRS, subject to Government endorsement, agree to participate in the proposed national longitudinal study to be commissioned by AFAC using Monash University. This long term study will aim to establish whether there is any relationship between firefighting and cancer, respiratory and/or heart disease.

Filling of vacancies between Darwin and Alice Springs

As indicated under “transfers” it is proposed that the process for filling vacancies between Darwin and Alice Springs will be on a voluntary basis or through lateral entry and that forced transfers will be used when other avenues have been exhausted.

Final agreement to this proposal will be predicated on the revised Lateral Entry Policy agreed to by both parties.

Interstate Travel

The NTFRS will endeavour to make travel arrangements so that the non-operational travel occurs during “sociable hours” for members who are required to travel interstate. This however may not be always possible depending on the period of notice given prior to the travel occurring and exigencies related to commercial airline travel scheduling and operational abnormalities.

Career Path

Agreement for the career path for all levels up to and including Station Officer has been reached. This offer is contingent on the parties agreeing to the development of the career path provisions for rank levels above Station Officer.

Other matters

The offer includes the following elements:

- The introduction of paid paternity/partner's leave of five days on the birth or adoption of a child by the employee's spouse or partner;
- The inclusion within the agreement of new clauses specifying conditions for parental leave, personal/carer's leave and recreation leave – including cash-up provisions;
- Introduction of a Training and Development Instructors allowance for non-certificate IV trainers of \$1.00 per hour;
- Enhanced flexibility in taking long service leave – minimum of seven days;
- No reductions to existing staffing levels in the Agreement; and
- Other than proposed in the new Agreement, retention of all other existing conditions.

Preserving current conditions

The NTPS commits in this offer to preserve current Agreement and Award provisions (where relevant) in compliance with the prohibited content provisions of the *Workplace Relations Act*. The instrument(s) used to preserve these matters will be a matter for the parties to agree upon.