



THE UNION RANGER

May 2010

All QPWS Rangers would be aware that the negotiations for the new collective bargaining agreement were finalised and voted on by all AWU members in August 2009. The agreement went to the Queensland government for certification; however this was delayed due to a dispute between ex-Main Roads workers and ex-Transport workers. It is hoped that the agreement will be certified by the end of June, 2010. This delay was beyond the control of the AWU and the department.

The Premier of Queensland, Anna Bligh, allowed all public service workers to receive early payment and back-pay for their 4.5% wage increase, from 1 August 2009. The AWU has been negotiating with Public Sector Industrial and Employee Relations (PSIER) and has won a concession on the payment of the increased fire allowance, an outcome of the 2009 agreement. The new fire allowance of \$75.00 (previously \$39.40) will now be back dated to the 1st November, 2009. While there is significant frustration over the delays in the process of certifying the EB agreement, this has been a positive negotiated outcome for AWU members. There was initially a possibility that these allowances would not be paid until the agreement was certified, however through negotiations by the unions this outcome at least sees the efforts of QPWS fire fighters remunerated to a greater degree than was originally going to happen.

Until the 2009 core agreement is certified, many of the items in the agreement cannot be progressed. However some things, like the appointment of the Liaison Ranger, which was agreed to outside the core agreement has already been implemented. AWU Rangers delegate Stirling MacDonald commenced in the position at the beginning of February and has begun work on developing project plans to implement outstanding items agreed to between the department and the AWU during the 2003, 2004 and 2006 enterprise bargaining negotiations. Once the 2009 agreement is certified the current items can also be completed.

The Liaison Ranger position is an important outcome of negotiations between the AWU and its members, and the department. It will oversee the implementation of projects, some of which have been outstanding since 2003. It will also be in important link between the AWU and the department to gather information on operational issues that affect rangers in the field. The role is seen as a great benefit to both parties.

Project plans being developed by the Liaison Ranger are for:

- The Amalgamation of the Supplementary Arrangements and the CWPE Award. This will include switching rangers to Public Service TA rates, including vessel maintenance under the construction reconstruction allowance, and including new centres on the remote area allowance list.

- A review of current ATL arrangements. **No reduction in entitlements will result from the review.** It is intended to clarify some items that currently cause confusion, such as the use of SDO's and RDO's.
- A review of support for rangers in remote areas and on mountain parks. This will cover aspects such as the cost of housing in areas where the resource industry has increased the cost of living, recruitment and retention of staff in these areas, an effective communication network for rangers, and different methods of reporting for duty and ranger relocation scheme.
- A review of the current safety at sea requirements combined with Transition to National Regulation and Certification.

The final outstanding item is a trial of an alternative Job Evaluation Methodology System (JEMS). Currently, a working party from Public Sector Industrial and Employee Relations (PSIER) is conducting a state wide review of JEMS and is preparing information on a work level statement method of job evaluation. This information should be available in the new financial year.

Fire Review Meeting

In April an annual Fire Review meeting was held in Brisbane. The review was conducted by the Regional Fire Coordinators with AWU delegates also attending. The review looked at a variety of issues that arose from the last fire season. These issues were identified from concerns expressed by members who attended the fires and from responses to a survey sent out by the AWU prior to the meeting. Discussion topics the AWU were involved in were

- Fire fighter fatigue
- Availability and type of fire line rations
- Mentoring of ICS staff to improve skills and knowledge after completing training
- Shift management for operational staff
- Preseason prescribed burning to reduce fuel loads
- Preseason preparation, planning, and coordination, of resources and crews
- Contract fire fighters being used during the fire season

Reports from the delegates that attended the meeting say that it was a useful exercise with open and constructive discussion on concerns that arose from the last fire season. The AWU will continue to liaison the department and monitor the outcomes for the next fire season. The outcomes from the meeting will be released soon. The AWU will keep members informed.

RANGER INDUSTRIAL FORUM MEETING NO 2.

The second meeting of the Rangers Industrial Forum (RIF) was held on Friday, the 30/04/2010 to discuss:

- the direction of the projects being developed by the Liaison Ranger,
- the impact of low operating budgets and high vacancy rates on prescribed burns, rosters, retention of casual staff, and other operational work

- the effect the EMC process is having on moral and career development opportunities for existing staff (this process has since been dropped)
- the reduction in the number of Park Info licences (negotiation with the department has seen the issuing of and extra 30 new licences)
- Progress of the trial of an alternative method for JEMS
- The fire review meeting being held in April

The minutes from that meeting are attached. Another RIF meeting is scheduled for 11/06/2010.

The Ranger Industrial Forum is an important link for ranger staff directly to the Senior Directors of the QPWS. Concerns raised by members on the ground are discussed at delegate teleconferences prior to a Rif. These concerns are then taken directly to senior management by the RIF. A key factor is having a strong delegate network in the workplace. If your workplace does not have a delegate or you would like to know who your nearest delegate is, please contact Stirling MacDonald, at rangers@awu.org.au, or phone 0429 059 014.

Attachments

Attached to this newsletter are the minutes from the last RIF meeting, and a list of current and resolved issues the AWU has negotiated with the department. This list will be updated after the next Ranger Industrial Forum meeting to be held on the 11th June.

The AWU rangers' website

www.awu.org.au/rangers/

The AWU has updated its website with the latest issues and outcomes that have come from ongoing negotiations with the department. Follow the links through "news and communication/awu news for derm/qpws rangers/standing issues. Here you will find what issues the AWU are currently addressing with the department and what matters the AWU have been able to resolve for rangers. While you're there have a look around the website and give us some feedback. There are a number of sections for rangers to contribute to. Have a look at the photo gallery and send some of your own in. This is site for rangers to use and develop for their benefit and will be updated monthly. Send any contributions or feedback to rangers@awu.org.au.

The members are the "union"

The more AWU members that are active within the QPWS, the more negotiating power rangers have. This means a safer, more prosperous workplace for all rangers.

AWU members achieved success with the last round of enterprise bargaining in difficult economic circumstances, because of their commitment. Now is the time to begin preparing for the next EB campaign. Members should encourage workmates to become part of the

AWU. By becoming part of the AWU, rangers will have a strong voice to campaign for better working conditions, and better resourcing for the QPWS. For more information on becoming part of the Australian Workers Union, please contact your workplace delegate or your AWU local organiser, or visit www.awu.org.au/rangers/ and download a membership form.

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