

To all ESA staff

ACT Fire & Rescue Enterprise Agreement – Commissioner’s Update – 30 April 2019

I wish to update all staff regarding the United Firefighters Union (UFU) members’ protected industrial action under the Fair Work Act.

Since my message of 26 March 2019, Enterprise Agreement meetings have been held on 9, 18 and 24 April 2019. I am advised that progress has been made on the UFU’s log of claims. The ACTF&R Enterprise Bargaining team will continue to work towards developing the next ACTF&R Enterprise Agreement.

In my previous message I advised that information would be published on the ESA website, to ensure transparency and promote greater understanding of the current situation. This information is now available by going to <http://esa.act.gov.au/updates-on-industrial-action/>. If anyone has any queries or concerns after going through this information, they can submit questions via ESAHaveYourSay@act.gov.au. Thank you to those who have already submitted questions. We will continue to gather requested information and publish a Q&A document in the coming weeks.

In my discussions, the most commonly asked question to date has been around clarification of the actual pay offer and whether it is 10% or a higher figure. Two documents published on the Industrial Relations Update page provide this clarification. The two documents are ‘*Explanatory Document – ACTF&R Enterprise Agreement*’ and ‘*Explanatory Document – Common Core Offer*’.

In summary, the Government’s Common Core outcome is 11.4% over four years. The offer to firefighters is a further 10% in addition to the Common Core. When the Common Core and the offer to firefighters is combined, this represents a compounded increase of 22.5% over the four-year life of the next ACTF&R Enterprise Agreement.

ACT Budget papers demonstrate that the Government has a proven record of increased investment in our emergency services. The Government is also keen to invest in its firefighters. The 22.5% pay rise was offered in recognition of the trust the Government, the ESA, and the community has in its firefighters. We consider our firefighters are capable, adaptive, can think for themselves, and want more flexible ways of operating to deliver even better services. Similarly, we seek to attract firefighters with these qualities in the future. The significant pay increase offer requests an offset against what the employer sees as restrictive provisions of the ACTF&R Enterprise Agreement, however, this occurs in any negotiation process.

The UFU has rejected the offer put forward, and has elected to pursue a campaign of industrial action. While this is unfortunate, the ESA fully supports and acknowledges workers' rights to undertake industrial action. While we go through this process the ESA will continue to meet with the UFU in an attempt to settle the issues raised, and will also keep working on strategies to ensure the safety of Canberrans is not compromised.

I appreciate the significant interest in this matter and remind everyone that you can stay informed via the 'Industrial Relations Update' page.

Dominic Lane AFSM
Commissioner
ACT Emergency Services Agency

30 April 2019