



UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA  
NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

# POLICY BOOK 2024



# UNIFY24

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**UNITED FIREFIGHTERS UNION OF AUSTRALIA  
NCOM POLICY BOOK 2024**

## **FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES TRAINING, COMPETENCIES AND CAPABILITY** [NP1-2024]

### **Recognising:**

The adoption by all State and Territory Fire and Emergency Services, Recovery Agencies, Police Services and Health Services of an “all hazards” approach and the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS).

The identification of interoperability as a necessary feature of fire emergency services nationally through various government inquiries and royal commissions.

The complexity and inconsistency of State and Territory Emergency Management legislative arrangements.

The intensification and increase in frequency of large-scale fire and emergency incidents, particularly arising from climate change.

### **Noting:**

The deployment of personnel in Incident Management Teams (IMTs) as Incident Controllers and other roles on the basis only of completion of an AIIMS awareness course (with no underlying fire or rescue competencies).

Inconsistency in approaches to incident management training, qualification, competency, accreditation and re-accreditation arrangements between jurisdictions and agencies.

### **NCOM Resolves that:**

The UFUA in conjunction with Branches advocate nationally for:

- Re-definition of legislative arrangements for Fire and Emergency Services to ensure more direct accountability and reporting of Fire and Emergency Services to Ministers in each jurisdiction.
- Consistent standards for incident management training, qualification, competency, accreditation and re-accreditation arrangements between jurisdictions and agencies, including through involvement of the National Emergency Management Agency, and industrial regulation.
- The pursuit of enterprise agreement regulation of lines of accountability and chain of command to ensure that firefighters are not exposed to unacceptable safety risks through being overseen, managed and/or directed by persons not qualified in fire and emergency response;
- National investment to support the re-definition of incident management, interoperability and provision of surge capability across jurisdictions.
- Hypothecation of fire and emergency services levies (howsoever named) to ensure greater accountability to communities for the expenditure of funds ostensibly raised for the purposes of emergency services funding.

## **NUCLEAR ENERGY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

[NP2-2024]

### **Recognising:**

The decision of the Australian Government to acquire and build nuclear powered submarines, and the consequential likelihood of nuclear waste being stored at submarine manufacturing facilities; and

The consequences of the use of nuclear weapons in wartime, and the disastrous ecological, environmental, social, health and safety consequences of nuclear radiation incidents in peacetime (such as three-mile island, Chernobyl and Fukushima); and

The absences of any effective mechanisms to avoid deaths and serious illness stemming from nuclear accidents and warfare

### **And noting:**

The proposal by the Liberal, National and some other parties to construct and deploy nuclear reactors within Australia to supply domestic and industrial energy; and

The availability and suitability of safer practicable alternatives for the supply of renewable energy in Australia

This meeting of the National Committee of Management of the UFUA:

- Considers that an expansion of nuclear weapons related industries, and the introduction of nuclear reactors for the purposes of electricity generation, pose unacceptable risks to the safety of Australian communities, and
- Opposes the AUKUS defence arrangements.

### **NCOM resolves to:**

- Authorise the National Secretary, and encourage Branches to:
  - widely publicise this policy before the 2025 Federal Election at an appropriate time determined by the National Executive.
  - Continue to promote the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.
  - Enlist the support of Associated Bodies to the UFUA in publicising this policy
  - build alliances with communities likely to be most affected by the submarine and nuclear reactor proposals.

## **PRESUMPTIVE CANCER RIGHTS FOR FIREFIGHTERS**

[NP3-2024]

### **Recognising:**

The World Health Organisation International Agency for Research on Cancer (WHO IARC) in 2022 classified firefighting as conclusively carcinogenic to humans.

In response, jurisdictions across Australia have legislated to increase the number of cancers covered by presumptive legislation from 12 to:

- 20 in the Commonwealth and ACT
- 20 in Western Australia
- 21 in Tasmania
- 23 in Queensland
- 23 in the Northern Territory

### **NCOM further notes that:**

the South Australian Legislative Council has amended a workers compensation Bill to add a further 11 cancers (total 23), and that the South Australian Government is yet to confirm support for this expansion;

the New South Wales Government has not made any commitment to expansion of presumptive cancer legislation;

the Victorian Government has pursued legislation to only add three cancers to the 12 already legislated; and

Ventia Firefighters have inconsistent presumptive cancer rights depending on where they are located.

### **NCOM resolves to:**

Commit the UFUA to pursuit of harmonisation of presumptive cancer and presumptive post-traumatic stress legislation across Australia by:

- Highlighting the differences identified by this motion;
- Lobbying Commonwealth, State and Territory Work Health Safety ministers to give effect to harmonisation;
- Lowering the qualifying (latency) periods mandated in presumptive cancer legislation.
- Active pursuit of cancer prevention and presumptive rights for Ventia and other private sector firefighters.

## **ALS AND MOTOR NEURONE DISEASES**

[NP4-2024]

### **Recognising that:**

Firefighters are succumbing to Motor Neurone diseases (ALS and Parkinsons) at increasing rates; These diseases are related to many of the same chemical exposures that are associated with firefighter occupational cancer;

The incidence of these diseases among defence force personnel has similarly been associated with chemicals that firefighters are exposed to.

### **NCOM notes:**

That there is currently no specific legal recognition of these diseases as firefighter occupational diseases.

### **NCOM resolves:**

To commence national advocacy for the addition of these diseases to firefighter presumptive workers compensation provisions.

To develop a body of expertise to support workers compensation claims despite the absence of presumptive rights.

To facilitate among branches a strategic approach to litigation where necessary to achieve workers compensation entitlements for adversely affected members.





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