

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS - 1 DECEMBER 2006

### CONFERENCE 2006

#### **General**

A very successful 2006 Conference was held in Wellington 21 – 23 November.

What was very different was this Conference was held in conjunction with the United Firefighters Union of Australia's 2006 Conference.

As well as separate sessions, considerable time was devoted to Joint Sessions with 30 New Zealand and 55 Australian delegates coming together to discuss and consider issues of mutual interest.

Also attending the Joint Sessions and contributing to the discussions were the General President of the International Association of Firefighters, Harold Schaitberger, and Vice Presidents Michael Mullane (Boston) and Louie Wright (Kansas City).

Matt Wrack, General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union of the United Kingdom also addressed the Joint Sessions by telephone speaker.

Both the Union and the UFU of Australia endorsed a Resolution establishing a formal international structure (this had been previously endorsed by the IAFF). This development – which is anticipated to extend to Firefighter Unions in other countries, is an exciting development that will allow Firefighter Unions everywhere to protect and enhance members' and their families' conditions of employment, work environment and health and safety.

Attached to this Notice is the Resolution adopted. In the New Year further information will be distributed concerning the International Alliances.

As well as the senior officials of the four Unions participating, other speakers to the Joint Sessions included:

- The Prime Minister, Helen Clark
- The Minister of Internal Affairs, Rick Barker
- The President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the President of the Australian CTU, Sharan Burrow.
- The President of the NZCTU, Ross Wilson
- Assistant Commissioner for the Queensland Fire & Rescue Service, Iain McKenzie
- Chief Executive/National Commander, N.Z. Fire Service, Mike Hall
- Warren Gray, NZ Ministry of the Environment and Simon Terry, Sustainability Council of N.Z. – on Climate Change and the implications for Fire Services.

#### **Resolutions of Importance from Conference 2006**

- a) That the delegates at the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference – November 2006 – deem that 11<sup>th</sup> September (9/11) each year be solemnly recognized as a Day of Remembrance for all firefighters who fall in the line of duty everywhere.

The significance of this resolution is obvious and reflects a similar resolution adopted at the 2006 IAFF Convention.

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Delegates were privileged to hear from the Vice President of the IAFF, Michael Mullane on the massive IAFF effort and contribution to assist surviving firefighters and the families of those who suffered bereavement, after 9/11.

- b) That all Station OSH Representatives receive a suitable fortnightly payment for the work involved in obtaining and maintaining tertiary qualifications for the N.Z. Fire Service A.C.C. Audit process.
- c) Professional firefighters will only accept core operational training from trainees with a N.Z. Fire Service professional firefighting background. No volunteer, or person from a direct volunteer background, or a person employed as a volunteer, will be accepted as a trainer of professional firefighters.
- d) That unqualified persons will not act/relieve up on a pre-planned basis.
- e) That this 2006 Conference note the outstanding commitment, leadership and dedication by Mike McEnaney during his tenure as an official of the NZPFU.
- f) That this Conference, in noting the discussions and decisions regarding the International Alliance made within the Joint Conference of the NZPFU and the UFU of Australia, and to ensure that the Union is best placed to protect and enhance membership services, instructs the Committee to investigate and report back to Conference delegates, as soon as possible, but not later than next Conference, the level of Union fees necessary to:
  - Address the present anomalies with Honoraria;
  - Take full advantage of the International Alliance; and
  - To increase staffing resources to, for example, improve delegate training, handling of disputes and to generally provide support to the Secretary and the Committee.
- g) That Athol Conway and Denis Fitzmaurice replace Ken Simons and Mike McEnaney as Union appointed Trustees of the Superannuation Scheme.

If there are any Local problems, particularly with Resolutions c) and d) above, please discuss these with Branch officials.

**N.Z. PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS UNION**

## INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE RESOLUTION

This Conference endorses the following resolution to be put to the Joint Conference with the UFU of Australia.

This Joint Conference of the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union and the United Firefighters Union of Australia welcomes this historic opportunity to meet and share information and strategies about issues of common concern. We also welcome the involvement of leaders from the IAFF and the FBU.

We note the report on the meeting 25 – 25 July 2006 between our four Unions and endorse the statement from that meeting, especially the proposed formation of an International Firefighters Union Alliance.

We note in particular that:

- In a globalizing world, the labour movement must cooperate and organize more effectively at the international level, as well as within national boundaries.
- This cooperation is necessary for firefighting industry Unions as our employers increasingly communicate and strategize on a regional and global basis.
- We face enormous challenges from political opponents and corporate-minded managers as moves to cost cutting, risk management and privatization threaten both firefighter safety and community protection.
- Firefighters and their Unions in North America, the U.K., Australia and New Zealand share common language, culture and customs.
- Our members' needs are best met if we learn from the experiences and struggles of other genuine Firefighter Unions, and adapt those lessons to our own circumstances.

It is in all of our interests to pursue a formal and strategic relationship, including information sharing, standard development, campaign assistance and formulating a united response to changes in the Fire Service industry.

We also note that the partnership/alliance is based on mutual respect in which we:

- Recognize the independence of each organization and the need for accountability to our respective memberships.
- Respect the past successes of each organization, achieved in different national contexts and circumstances.
- Acknowledge that decisions will be by consensus, with information provided in an open and transparent manner.
- Acknowledge that we can all learn from each other and that learning organizations are successful organizations.
- Recognize the necessity of political engagement, the form of which is best determined by the individual Unions.

For our Unions, the partnership/alliance is not about building another organization for its own sake, but a new working relationship which will ultimately deliver better results for members. In the short to medium term, we endorse the aim of the four organizations to:

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- Establish an annual face to face meeting to discuss priorities for moving forward on key issues and policies
- Extend invitations to the respective unions to send representatives to attend each National Conference or Convention.
- Provide formalized access to research and information that would assist partner organizations to meet the needs of members.
- Share information and skills in campaigning.
- Undertake other initiatives as agreed between our organizations.
- Work together to establish a global firefighters' network.

We call on our respective leaderships to work to ensure that the Alliance is formed and supported. We note and endorse in principle, the draft Constitution of the International Firefighters Union Alliance that has been circulated. We support the framework outlined in the Constitution, subject to any technical amendments that may be negotiated by the leadership of our organizations.