

Workplace Feedback System Agreement 2007

between the

Tasmania Fire Service

and the

United Firefighters Union of Australia (Tasmanian Branch)

1. TITLE OF AGREEMENT

This agreement is to be known as the *Tasmania Fire Service Workplace Feedback System Agreement 2007*.

2. PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

The parties to the Agreement are the United Firefighters Union of Australia (Tasmanian Branch) (UFU) and the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS).

3. APPLICATION

This Agreement applies to all members occupying positions classified under the *Tasmanian Fire Fighting Industry Employees Award 2000*.

4. TERM OF THE AGREEMENT

This Agreement will take effect from the date on which it is signed by the parties and will cease when it is replaced with a new agreement.

5. DEFINITIONS

'Agreement' means the *Tasmania Fire Service Workplace Feedback Agreement 2007*.

'Award' means the *Tasmanian Fire Fighting Industry Employees Award 2000*.

'Employee' means a person whose conditions of employment are covered by the *Tasmanian Fire Fighting Industry Employees Award 2000*.

6. PURPOSE OF THE AGREEMENT

The parties agree that a feedback system is to be implemented for all employees covered by this agreement. The purpose of this agreement is to outline the major features of the agreement. As the system is implemented and reviewed, the detail outlined in this agreement may be varied through consultation and agreement between the parties.

7. PRINCIPLES

The effective operation of a feedback system is underpinned by a number of principles. The parties have identified the following principles as being essential.

Flexibility

The TFS is made up of diverse work groups with varying management arrangements and work cultures and individual diversity. It is important that the system is flexible enough to meet the needs of these groups.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is essential to the integrity of the system. People will usually gain significant benefits when they can openly and honestly discuss skills and behaviour that affect performance. People may not participate openly and willingly if they believe their privacy will not be respected.

Discussions that occur as part of the feedback process are confidential. The issues discussed are to remain between the people who participated in the discussion unless:

- it is part of the discussion which forms a development plan or part of that plan;
- the participants in the discussion have agreed that information is to be shared with others and what information is to be shared and with whom it is to be shared;
- information is raised that could legally affect the TFS; or
- the actions of individuals may be inconsistent with the State Service Code of Conduct. In this case, the person sharing the information must be prepared to justify in writing the reasons why the information needs to be shared and with whom it has been shared.

Consistency with TFS Values

The feedback system needs to be developed, implemented and operated in a way that is consistent with the TFS Values and Behaviours. It is particularly important that the following values are evident in the way the system works:

Honesty

It is important that people participating in a feedback discussion can be honest about how well they are performing in the workplace, both technically and behaviourally. Feedback needs to be given in context and supported by examples to assist with understanding.

Fairness

People are to be treated at all times with respect and dignity, and without bias.

To this end, each person is to be treated as an individual and be given feedback that takes into consideration the attributes and abilities of that person alone. Feedback is to be based on the genuine work-related requirements of the position the person occupies. Feedback is not to be based on comparisons with the abilities or performance of other members of a work team.

Commitment

For the feedback system to have credibility and effectiveness, it is critical that:

- people make time to have the discussions;
- discussions occur on a timely basis; and
- outcomes agreed in discussions are implemented and can be achieved.

Consideration

Discussions need to take place in a manner that is diplomatic, tactful and constructive. The aim at all times is to improve performance and not to humiliate or demean individuals. Recognition is to be given for good performance. Constructive feedback is to be delivered in a way that focuses on the issue and not the individual.

People will trust a system that they believe is there to help them and not "catch them out". With feedback existing as a normal part of the way we do our work, people need to participate in formal discussions without fear that issues will be raised with them 'out of the blue'. An underpinning philosophy, then, is that summary discussions will occur on the basis that there are 'no surprises'.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES

TFS is responsible for providing:

- the environment for individual and organisational goals to be met; and
- the training and resources for the system to operate.

Each employee is responsible for their own behaviour.

Each supervisor and employee is responsible for participating in general and summary discussions in a constructive and considerate manner that is consistent with the following principles.

9. FEEDBACK SYSTEM

The Feedback System provides for two forms of feedback, General and Summary.

General Feedback

General Feedback refers to the giving and receiving of two-way feedback as part of normal work routine. This should occur frequently.

Summary Feedback

Summary Feedback refers to a structured discussion that occurs between the participants on a regular basis. The aims of the discussion are to:

- summarise any general feedback discussions and other issues that have occurred since the last summary feedback session (including self-evaluation);
- review progress on the achievement of the plan developed as part of the last session; and
- develop a new plan based on the outcomes of the summary feedback session.

The feedback system is not designed to manage disciplinary issues or continuing poor performance issues that require a specific performance improvement plan. These issues are to be managed through a poor performance system or a disciplinary process.

The documented outcomes of any summary feedback discussions are not to be used as part of TFS promotional processes.

10. TRAINING

All members will have the opportunity to participate in training to enable them to effectively participate in the feedback system.

11. RESOLUTION

From time to time a member may have a concern regarding the manner in which a feedback discussion has occurred or the content of the discussion. Should this occur, the appropriate way for the concern to be resolved is through the TFS Resolution Process (available on TFS intranet). Employees have, at all times, the right to seek advice from their union.

12. EVALUATION OF THE SYSTEM

The performance of the feedback system will be evaluated on a regular basis using performance indicators that can measure the effectiveness and outcomes achieved by the system over time. These indicators will be developed in consultation between the parties.

13. REVIEW OF THE SYSTEM

The feedback system is to be reviewed on a regular basis, at least every 4 years, to ensure that it continues to:

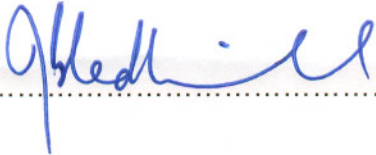
- meet its objective;
- operate in accordance with the principles contained in this agreement; and
- meet the requirements of Commissioner's Direction 4.

14. GRIEVANCES AND DISPUTE SETTLING PROCEDURE

In the event of the agreement being disputed, the parties will take all steps to resolve the issues through internal processes. Where resolution cannot be achieved, the matter will be referred to the relevant industrial tribunal.

This Agreement is made at Hobart on this 24th day of September 2007.

SIGNED BY
Chief Officer, Tasmania Fire Service



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SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF
Secretary, United Firefighters Union of Australia (Tasmanian Branch)



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