



**ON
THE**

move

87

DECEMBER 2024 THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AUSTRALIAN FURNITURE REMOVERS ASSOCIATION



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

from the AFRA Team



Australia's car carrying specialist,
are proud to support the
publication of *ON THE MOVE*.
www.cevacarrying.com.au

IN THIS ISSUE

- COUNCIL MEMBER PROFILE – TONY DONELLAN
- TOOLBOX TALKS – CUSTOMER SERVICE
- PRIVACY ACT CHANGES COMING YOUR WAY
- A BIG YEAR IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

For all AFRA Members we've got **everything you need** for this season...**and more!**



Enquire about our new **Sofa Lite** product



BUBBLE CUSHION



ADHESIVE TAPES



MOVING PADS



BOXES & CORRUGATED



SEASONS GREETINGS TO ALL AFRA MEMBERS

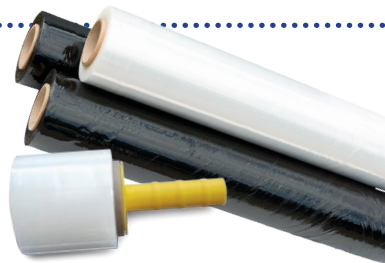
From all of us at Visy Boxes & More, we'd like to wish you and your families all the best over the holiday season and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025!

Christmas Closures

STATE	CLOSED	REOPEN
NSW	DEC 24	JAN 2
VIC	DEC 24	JAN 2
QLD	DEC 20	JAN 2
SA	DEC 23	JAN 6
WA	DEC 25	JAN 2
NT	DEC 23	JAN 6
TAS	PUB. HOL	
NZ	DEC 21	JAN 6



FURNITURE COVERS



BUNDLING & STRETCH

Some of our branches are closed over Christmas. Visit boxesandmore.com.au to check your local branch's closure dates and last order dates..



ON THE move

The Official publication of the Australian Furniture Removers Association

EDITOR

Simone Hill Executive Director
Australian Furniture Removers Association
admin@afra.com.au

EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

admin@afra.com.au

ADVERTISING

admin@afra.com.au

CONTRIBUTORS

Nicki French, Simone Hill,
Madeleine Vumbaca, Gillian Bristow –
Bristow Legal, Scott Barklamb – Ai Group

EDITORIAL DESIGN

Keely Goodall
keely@itsallgood.net.au

PRINTING

MBE Parramatta
www.mbe.com.au

PUBLISHED BY



Australian Furniture Removers Association
PO Box 7104
Baulkham Hills
Business Centre
NSW 2153

Ph: 1800 671 806
(02) 9659 5300
Fax: (02) 9659 5311

www.afra.com.au

Contributions are welcomed and acknowledged. For further details call the Executive Director.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, internet, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publishers. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication, the publishers accept no responsibility or liability for any errors, omissions or resultant consequences including any loss or damage arising from reliance on information in this publication. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily endorsed by the editor, publisher or AFRA.



CONTENTS

- 4 PRESIDENT'S REPORT**
Nicki French
- 5 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**
Simone Hill
- 6 MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES OFFICE REPORT**
Madeleine Vumbaca
- 7 BRISTOW LEGAL**
Privacy Act changes coming your way
- 8 AFRA EVENTS**
National Moving Day
- 9 AFRA CHRISTMAS**
Pics from the both the East and West AFRA Christmas gatherings for members
- 10 TOOLBOX TALKS**
Customer service
- 14 IR UPDATE**
Another big year in Industrial Relations, and another to come
- 18 COUNCIL MEMBER PROFILE**
Tony Donellan
- 19 THE FERRET**

COWDEN

THE INSURANCE BROKERS

ABN 66 008 889 450 AFS Licence No: 245658

Level 18, 60 Albert Rd, South Melbourne 3205
PO Box 33044, Melbourne VIC 3004
Telephone: 03 9686 6500

www.cowden.com.au



BY NICKI FRENCH

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

AFRA can boldly say that it has now been the trusted professional voice for the removals industry for more than 30 years, and it's a great honour to be entrusted as your newest President. With a tenure in the industry as long as AFRA's, I have undertaken a broad variety of roles both for large corporate organisations and family-run businesses, culminating in my current role leading the Grace Removals business. I hope to represent you all with empathy to what's important to you in the wider context of our industry needs.

I would like to thank past president Catherine Kuipers, our first female president, for her outstanding contribution over the last two years, and to our Council members who continue to volunteer their time to enhance our industry. Being a council member is incredibly rewarding both professionally and personally;

Jetpets
the pet travel people

GEN. EXCELLENCE IN LOGISTICS
IATA
ANIMALS

ASSOCIATE MEMBER
afra
Australian Furniture Removers Association

WO
WO
WO

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.
We Truly Appreciate & Value Your On-going Support.

PRODUCT REVIEW .COM.AU 2023-24 AWARDS WINNER

Happy Pets - Happy Customers - Happy People

“ Market insights help us all to navigate industry challenges and grow our businesses. AFRA is leading the way in maintaining high industry standards that enhance the reputation and credibility of us all. ”

we also have a lot of fun. If you think you would like to join us, please reach out.

I am often asked why the large companies bother with membership—what's in it for us? Large or small, I think it's very important we have a unified voice, especially when it comes to advocating on policies and regulations that will benefit our industry as a whole. When it comes to industry data, AFRA has the resources to gather information for everyone and the independence to get access to more than each company could in their own right. Those valuable (but anonymous) market insights help us all to navigate industry challenges and grow our businesses. AFRA is leading the way in maintaining high industry standards that enhance the reputation and credibility of us all.

I am a huge advocate for training and am committed to seeing the continued growth and development of AFRA training. I think there is a significant opportunity to re-certify our existing training as a professional qualification that can attract funding, especially in the apprenticeship space. This is a long-term solution to our chronic labour shortages. I am excited about the future and committed to leading AFRA to continued success.

Our association is enriched by the participation of all its members, so I encourage you to take full advantage of the benefits offered and participate in all the association's activities.

The summer is nearly here, so I take this opportunity to wish you all well. Let's make hay whilst the sun shines. May you, your teams, and your families have a safe and busy December, a happy Christmas, and a prosperous New Year. ●

BY SIMONE HILL



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The end of another busy year here at AFRA – where have the past 12 months gone?

This past year AFRA has completed the move of digital assets and systems 'in-house'. Previously our website sites (public and members), our CRM and conference booking site were being handled offsite by a third party provider, resulting in lengthy delays and additional expense should any updates be required. Behind the scenes Rose has worked hard to implement a new CRM, an enormous task. We have also rolled out booking for all events via the Humanitix platform. This booking platform is easy for both the AFRA admin team and members to use, with bookings able to be made instantly with no need for AFRA staff to chase up payments. It is light years away from our previous 'fill in a form and we will bill you later' paper heavy procedures.

With all digital assets now 'in house' our next step is to overhaul the website to more efficiently service our members and their businesses, and further digitise AFRA's member resources. This will dovetail with the work Madeleine has undertaken overhauling the look and feel of our forms and documentation, with Madeleine using her graphic designer skills to give our outgoing correspondence a fresh, unified, and clearly branded look.

It has been a challenging year for members with the fast-paced changes to employment laws. We are grateful to have welcomed on board new IR advisors the Ai Group and encourage members to continue to take advantage of their 'hotline' service which is included as part of your membership.



“ The year has ended on a high with the Christmas parties in Sydney and Perth well attended. See page 9 for photographic evidence that AFRA members know how to let their hair down. ”

I thank members who have already returned their membership survey. Responses to this survey will guide the future direction of AFRA. The appropriateness of AFRA's membership structure in contemporary business times, the services we provide, and the relevance of our Association moving forward are the motives behind this survey. To ensure Council is best placed to make important decisions about the future direction of AFRA, the decision was made to make a response to this survey a compulsory membership requirement from 2024. I have received feedback from members, some of whom have expressed concern about the nature of the survey and/or the manner in which the data may be used. I thank those who took the time to provide me with specific and informative feedback, and I will take this to Council for discussion at our February meeting. I welcome

any and all constructive comments, and encourage you to send your correspondence on the matter directly to me ceo@afra.com.au. Decisions about the future direction of AFRA will be made with the best interests of members at its core.

The year has ended on a high with the Christmas parties in Sydney and Perth well attended, and a good night was had by all. See page 9 for photographic evidence that AFRA members know how to let their hair down.

Finally, I thank our members, both Associate and removals. AFRA works for you, and on behalf of my team I thank you for continuing to support the work we do in this mighty association. I am excited about executing the next stages of AFRA's evolution and look forward to the next 12 months.

To you and your families (be they work, personal or furry – or more than one!) I wish you a joyous festive season and prosperous new year. ●



BY MADELEINE VUMBACA

MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES OFFICE REPORT

As 2024 is coming to an end, I look back on my first year at AFRA and wonder where has the time gone? From the Barossa Valley Conference, website development, and social media campaigns, we have tackled a lot this year at AFRA. Whilst our members enter their busy period, we are tying up loose ends and preparing for the new year.

Conference 2025 will be held at The Hotel Windsor in Melbourne from Wednesday, 20 August to Friday, 22 August. Make sure to save the date! We look forward to having you all there. Simone and I have visited some exciting locations for the conference, and it is shaping up to be an outstanding event. Ticket registrations will be available at the beginning of next year, so keep an eye out for updates on our social media and emails.

“Keep an eye out for the newly founded AFRA Foundation’s website that is launching very soon.”

The social media campaigns that I have been pushing across the AFRA platforms have been vital to displaying our association’s values, spreading awareness, and creating an online community. For example, our ‘Reuse, Relove, Relocate’ campaign demonstrates AFRA’s commitment to sustainability whilst also spreading awareness about the importance of the triple bottom line in our industry. National Moving Day is AFRA’s most recent campaign that we launched last month. After surveying our members on what their busiest day of the year is, the results showed that the 18 December was most commonly the peak for removals. Hence, the first annual National Moving Day is on Wednesday, 18 December 2024. This initiative marks the busiest day of the year for the Australian removals industry. To learn more about this campaign, see page 8.

The newly founded AFRA Foundation has a new website launching very soon that I have been working on. AFRA and its associated websites are a hub for our members and the general public to turn to, and they provide an exponential amount of information. It is of utmost importance that our websites are user friendly and up to date. The AFRA Foundation website will have a new look that is more modern, with the AFRA website and Members website following the new design in the new year. If you have any issues with the current AFRA website that you think need improvement, or have suggestions for our forthcoming one, please email me on memberservices@afra.com.au.

Thank you for your continuous support over the past year at AFRA. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy new year. I hope you all have a safe and joyous holiday season, surrounded by your loved ones. I am looking forward to what 2025 will bring to AFRA. ●



Introducing the UBEECO™ Group

As a member of AFRA, Ubeeco Packaging Solutions has a growing list of innovative products to offer members. We understand that storage customers want more varied storage options and storage owners need to cater for those changing market demands. Technical Packaging Specialist, Sean Clark said, “you can enhance your ability to service customer needs, give yourself a real point of difference from your competition – and increase revenue.”



Portable / Stackable Storage Solutions

Portable / stackable timber storage units provide a real space-saving alternative. Strong, compact and durable – each module can hold 1.44 tonne and can be stacked up to 4 units high (see top right). Sean Clark said “Facilities need every option to optimize the airspace of properties without costly mezzanine floors and large steel units. The smaller lockable / stackable units provide flexibility allowing operators to make the best use of available space and provide options to their customers at a competitive pricepoint.”



Collapsible Plywood Storage Solutions

User Friendly, lightweight, durable European design provides excellent stacking capability. With boxes available in flat-pack form, they become a superior solution to cardboard for long term storage of heavy, sensitive or expensive goods. Just like cardboard they can be printed or company branded for a smarter looking finished product. The units are easily assembled by staff or client. Ideal for fine art moving and storage or as a timber tea chest.

ISPM-15 Export Certified Timber Dunnage & Custom-Built Crates



Our custom-built crates and certified timber dunnage are a great option for Packing containers, motorbikes, statues and for those other heavy or fragile items where a cardboard option will just not protect the item.



Contact our friendly Sales QLD team for a prompt quote.

www.ubeeco.com.au

Email: salesqld@ubeeco.com.au, Ph: 07 3848 9290

Email: sean.clark@ubeeco.com.au, Ph: 0403 466 346



Privacy Act changes coming your way

Removalists and other businesses may neglect to consider whether they have substantial legal obligations with respect to the privacy of customers' personal information – it is an area that hasn't generally been something they have worried about.

However, since September 2024, there has been growing talk regarding proposed new privacy laws currently before Federal Parliament. Multiple government reports regarding regulating online behaviour have culminated in the Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 (the Privacy Bill) being debated in Parliament at the moment – and it's looking like it will succeed in becoming law by early next year.

So, what is this Bill? If it becomes law, what does it mean for removalists and small business owners? And are there more significant changes coming?

The state of the law at the moment – businesses' current obligations

Privacy laws, nationwide, don't currently tend to apply to small businesses. The key piece of legislation about privacy – the *Privacy Act 1988* – is only applicable to certain businesses, including those with an annual turnover of more than \$3 million, businesses which purchase or sell information, private healthcare practices, and others.

Businesses that fall within these categories must have a privacy policy, and there are restrictions on how personal information is used, stored and collected, and other applicable privacy principles. For businesses not covered by the Privacy Act, there is currently no legal obligation to have a privacy policy, nor do they need to comply with many rules.

“ Privacy law is changing. The current Privacy Bill is based on recommendations of a report by the Attorney General. ”

Changes incoming – the Privacy Bill

The Privacy Bill contains many interesting proposed reforms to the area of privacy. These include:

- A new (and controversial) law against serious invasion of privacy (where there has been an invasion either to a person's private space or through the misuse of private information);
 - A new criminal offence for 'doxxing' – that is, the release of people's personal information in a menacing or harassing way;
 - Changing the Privacy Act to require taking 'reasonable steps' such as 'technical and organisational measures' to protect personal information (e.g. implementing more employee training on data protection);
 - Changes regarding giving personal data to overseas recipients, and who is responsible for subsequent privacy breaches;
 - Changes to penalties for breach of privacy law; and
 - Clarifying when data can be shared due to a disaster or emergency, and other changes.
- For many, these are welcome changes, to ensure people are held responsible in businesses and online behaviour for keeping personal information private.

These proposed changes largely affect businesses already regulated by the Privacy Act (likely not to include small businesses, such as some removalists) or create new

rules which seem largely unrelated to removalists' activities (such as the new rules against doxxing and serious invasion of privacy). However, this isn't the end of the story.

Further changes on the horizon?

Privacy law is changing. The current Privacy Bill is based on recommendations of a report by the Attorney General. One recommendation of this report, which the government agreed to in-principle but didn't include in the current Privacy Bill, was to extend the many rules of the Privacy Act to apply to small businesses.

If this was the case, small businesses would have to navigate a host of new measures to comply with the Privacy Act, including having a Privacy Policy and implementing substantive measures to ensure compliance with rules regarding storage, collection and use of customers' information. This could be a significant and pricey process.

The current Privacy Bill has been described as the 'first tranche' of changes, suggesting more are to come, especially those recommended in the report and agreed to in-principle. Further significant amendments are under consideration. In short – watch this space. ●

If any aspect of these proposed reforms raises any questions or concerns, please get in touch with us via the AFRA helpline (afrahelpline@bristowlegal.com.au).

NATIONAL MOVING DAY

National Moving Day is coming up on Wednesday, 18 December, a day commemorating the hard work of our industry who move Australians to places where they want to be. After conducting a survey with AFRA members, we discovered that the busiest time of the year for removals is the week prior to Christmas, more specifically this year, the 18 December. Hence, we have named this day National Moving Day as a way to highlight our industry's impact on Australians as they enter new chapter of their lives.

Consumers move in the summer as a means to minimise the disruption caused in their lives. As this peak moving season is in-between school years, children's education is not interrupted. Members of the defense force, teachers and police are all traditionally moved during this period. Summer moves also mean that the days are longer, and the weather is more accommodating to ensure a safer, more efficient moving process.

NATIONAL MOVING DAY AIMS TO:

- Uphold our Association's commitment to excellence
- Educate consumers on best practices for a seamless moving experience
- Minimise last-minute bookings and hurried moving processes
- Prevent the disaster of consumers being unable to secure an AFRA Member
- Enhance the visibility of our association and its members in the public eye
- Honour the hard work and achievements within our industry

National Moving Day also brings us all together with a sense of community and collaboration. There are many ways for you all to get involved with this campaign. You can share posts on social media in the lead up to the 18 December about your busy period, moving tips, or promotions, tagging AFRA's social media and #NationalMovingDayAUS.

Although you will be busy, if you can make time to celebrate the peak season with your team over a breakfast or morning tea for example, this a great way to get involved.

Any photos or videos you capture in the busy, jobs on National Moving Day, and peak season celebration, please email them to me at memberservices@afra.com.au for sharing and promotion on AFRA's platforms. ●

afra

NATIONAL MOVING DAY

What is National Moving Day?

National Moving Day marks the busiest time of the year for removals, when our industry works hardest to get Australians to where they want to be. **Wednesday, 18th December 2024** will be Australia's first annual National Moving Day, bringing awareness of our industry's peak time to businesses and the community at large.

Our Aim

We aim to:

- Maintain our Association's standard of excellence
- Provide awareness to consumers on best practices for a smooth moving day
- Reduce last minute bookings and rushed moving processes
- Avoid the disaster of not being able to book an AFRA Member for consumers
- Increase the visibility of our association and members to the public
- Celebrate our industry's efforts

Get Involved

- Share posts on social media about National Moving Day tagging AFRA and **#NationalMovingDayAUS**
- Celebrate the peak season with your employees such as hosting a morning tea
- Send photos to memberservices@afra.com.au of your lead up to the busy, jobs on National Moving Day, peak season celebration, etc.

www.afra.com.au



EAST COAST Christmas Dinner

East coast members enjoyed a great night at Chin Chin in November. The Sydney event is always a popular and fun evening, and this year saw a change of venue. Delicious modern Asian food and a generous drinks menu had members in a celebratory mood. Thank you to all those who came along and helped make this a fun and social evening.



WEST COAST Christmas Dinner

The West Coast Christmas regional meeting was held at Raffles. A great turnout in Perth, with 30 attendees. Thanks to Western Australian members making this a successful event.



TOOLBOX TALKS

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Moving house is often a very emotional time and your courteous and professional manner will help the customer perceive that you are in control and understanding of their situation.

Remember, as a removalist, you are there at a time when a family closes a door on memories within that house to open the door on a new life and new memories - your role is not just about moving furniture.

What is customer service in furniture removals?

Customer services in the removals industry is the support and assistance provided to a customer before, during and after the service.

It encompasses a range of activities aimed at enhancing customer satisfaction, addressing inquiries, resolving issues, and ensuring a positive experience. Effective customer service can include various ways, that is, via phone, email communication, and in-person interactions. The main goal is to build strong relationships with customers, foster loyalty, and encourage repeat business.

What are the expectations for a removalist in terms of customer service?

Remember, when you are working for your company, whether in a company vehicle or in company uniform you are representing your company to the public. The general public are potential customers and your appearance and behaviour will influence their opinions.

So always remember - when you are doing a removal you are a guest in someone else's house. You are also a professional, representing your company and responsible for your

actions and attitudes while you are on the job.

A couple of golden rules to remember:

- "Respect your customers"
- "Treat others as you would want to be treated"

Customers are individuals with feelings, and their financial transaction do not diminish their need for understanding. It is essential to listen to them when they speak, take the time to listen and respond to their questions and concerns and handle their issues with the seriousness they deserve.

You are there to provide quality service, enhance customer satisfaction, build a positive reputation in the removals industry and to encourage repeat business and referrals to potential customers.

Removalist presentation

You are the face of the company, so it is important how you present yourself to the customer and that you are professional. The "golden rules" to remember about presentation are:

- Be on time
- Park outside the residence
- Be well groomed
- Introduce yourself to the customer
- Be polite and courteous
- Inspect the customer's effects
- Keep the customer's house clean and tidy
- Take lunch breaks outside the residence
- Use appropriate language
- Alcohol on the job is never tolerated

Removalist appearance

Before entering a customer's home, make sure you:

- Have showered
- Are wearing a good deodorant

- Safely put away your mobile phone and any personal effects
- Are presentable and neatly dressed
- Are wearing clean closed in shoes or boots

Meeting the customers

When meeting a customer/s reassure them and make them feel comfortable with you in the house.

- Ask him/her if there are any precious or delicate items that you should be aware of.
- Ask the customer if you can walk on their floors in your shoes
- Listen and be patient
- Ask questions
- Emphasise the quality of your company's services

If you are going to be late for a job, call your supervisor and notify him/her so that the customer can be informed.

Promote a positive image

The furniture removals industry serves the public. As an employee, you are expected to contribute to the high standards of the Australian Furniture Removers Association, industry standards and your employer's requirements and responsibilities.

The public will form an opinion of your company through your actions.

"I can't hear what you are saying, your actions are speaking to loudly".

Honesty, integrity, common courtesy and reliability are essential characteristics for an employee who is representing his/her company to the public.

How can you make your job more PERSONAL?

This can be done quite simply – by relating to customers in a way that is characterised by:

- A positive attitude to your work
- A genuine interest in helping the customer and solving their problems
- Appropriate language always in and around the customer's property
- Showing patience with the customer
- Listening to the customer
- Tact and sincerity
- Appreciation of the customer's point of view

How can you make your job more PROFESSIONAL?

When you arrive, please ask the customer if you can conduct a walk-through of the residence with them and ask them questions. During the walk-through request that they identify any fragile or specific items that require special attention. Additionally, do a safety check to identify any risks or hazards prior to starting the move, eg: narrow staircases, trip hazards, oversized items that require special equipment, etc.

Whilst carrying out your tasks, ensure that you approach is characterised by:

- Careful handling furniture and effects
- Pride in what you do
- Pride in your personal appearance and level of hygiene
- A pleasant, cheerful approach to your work
- Complete honesty
- Attention to safety and commitment to reducing risks

Keep in mind that your customers include, not only the customers whose furniture you are moving, but also includes the other people you engage with in your role, such as your colleagues, team leader, sales staff, storage staff and maintenance staff.

In addition, it includes people you interact with outside of your company whilst doing your day-to-day work.

The customer's possessions

The goods you are handling have sentimental value to the customer. It might look like junk to you, but it may be precious to the customer. Be tactful and respect all their possessions.

Be attentive to the customer and sensitive to their anxieties and stresses. After all, moving house is a major change in the customer's life. They will naturally be anxious about damage to their possessions.

Reassuring the customer

Here are some further things that you can do to help reassure the customer that they are dealing with a professional. If these actions are carried out, it will show respect for the customers and their personal effects; it will help dispel anxiety and make the move more pleasant for all concerned. Remember, the customer is the most important person you will deal with and your actions as your company's representative must be of a high, professional standard.

Be truthful

- Be safe
- Emphasise the quality of your company's services
- Promote prospective business
- Be proud of your company
- Sell yourself
- Listen
- Ask questions
- Be patient
- Be discreet
- Be honest
- Be sincere
- Be truthful

Advising customers

Furniture removalists must be able to advise customers of the steps involved in the removal process. The customer is likely to have some questions and concerns about the removals process and how it will affect them; you should be able to answer their questions.

The customer is entitled to know what the removal process will be. It would be best practice to go through

the move with the customer, reconfirming what is to be moved and work to be undertaken. Many of the problems that occur with moves are often defended by the question... "Why wasn't I told about that?" OR "I didn't know I couldn't claim for a breakage if I packed the carton" OR "I just assumed that you would take the gas cylinder for the BBQ" This confusion could all be avoided through communication.

Customer's responsibilities

The customer should be aware of his or her responsibilities.

Some companies use information booklets or brochures to inform their customers of their responsibilities. If these are adhered to, your job will be simple and straightforward.

Handling problems

"You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time" - John Lydgate

No matter how good your service is or how hard you try to provide high standards, there will still be complaints from customers; it is how you handle these complaints that matters most.

If customer complaints are not handled quickly and effectively, an ongoing relationship with that customer can be damaged and will be difficult to recover. Some of the issues maybe because the customer is stressed about moving:

Customer stress

Customer problems may arise when the removalist does not recognise that the customer is experiencing difficulties.

So, by recognising symptoms of stress and practicing effective people skills such as empathy, major conflicts can often be avoided.

On occasions, angry customers will show their discomfort and anger, but most often people can be passively, or quietly angry or impatient.

Signals of stress

Some of these clues are more obvious than others and it is important to realise that people can be simmering with anger, without being obviously angry.

The aggressive ones are easy to recognise. But if you do not recognise the passive ones who keep their feelings hidden, you can unknowingly lose business.

Handling stress

Once you are aware that the customer is sending out signals indicating that they are impatient, you should become alert for the clues that will help you say and do the right things.

Remember, by approaching and greeting customers in a sensitive manner, you may prevent them from becoming aggressively angry.

Without doubt, the best way to resolve a problem is to prevent it

from happening in the first place. This is where your communication skills are important.

Questioning the customer carefully, actively listening to them and seeking feedback will help to reduce the chance of misunderstanding and conflict.

However, it is not possible to avoid all problems and conflict. You can be responsible for your own words and actions, but you really have no control over the words and actions of others. If the other person is confused, impatient, upset, irritable, angry, hostile, or aggressive then you will have to deal with it.

As a professional removalist, you will be expected to solve problems as they occur and maintain good relations with your customers.

Here are some other ideas to help you avoid problems and handle them correctly when they do occur.

- Put yourself in the customer's shoes
- Acknowledge and address the customer's feelings
- Focus on how you can reduce the customer's problems

So why do customers complain?

A good way to answer this question is for you to think of a time when you, as a customer, complained. You may have complained about a product, service, a professional or price.

But the bottom line is that people who complain usually want someone to listen, sympathise, apologise and, if indicated, correct the matter.

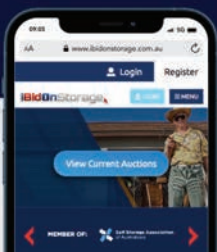
Having the right attitude even when there's a problem

Interestingly, the reasons for liking or disliking a company rarely have to do with the product or price. The good or bad experience is almost directly related to an experience

iBidOnStorage

DO YOU HAVE CUSTOMERS NOT PAYING RENT?

Join the 1750+ Storage Locations that have already held **35,000+** auctions on www.iBidOnStorage.com.au



FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 02 4302 0605



with people, either their attitude or their service.

So, what is the right attitude to have even when there's a problem? Simply follow these steps.

- Listen sympathetically to the customer
- Show your understanding
- Mutually agree on a solution
- Follow through and follow up
- Learn from your mistakes
- Handle a serious complaint promptly
- How to handle unreasonable customers

Paperwork

It is important that documentation must be completed:

- Protect the customer and removal company, should anything go wrong or a claim is filled
 - Avoid any misunderstandings
- Common removalist paperwork that is required and needs to be completed is:

- Job Safety Analysis (JSA)/Risk and hazard assessments
- Inventory condition report
- Uplift docket/job sheet

Remember

Customer satisfaction plays a major role in the success of any business. When customers are happy, they return. They spread positive word-of-mouth to family and friends. Consequently, this enhances a company's reputation.

Having the right attitude even when there's a problem

Interestingly, the reasons for liking or disliking a company rarely have to do with the product or price. The good or bad experience is almost directly related to an experience with people, either their attitude or their service.

So, what is the right attitude to have even when there's a problem? Simply follow these steps.

Remember that customer satisfaction plays a major role in the success of any business.

- Listen sympathetically to the customer
- Show your understanding
- Mutually agree on a solution
- Follow through and follow up
- Learn from your mistakes
- Handle a serious complaint promptly
- How to handle unreasonable customers ●



KEEP IT SAFE.

10ft High Cube Containers



KEEP IT SECURE.

20ft High Cube Pallet Wide Containers



KEEP IT STORED.

40ft High Cube Pallet Wide Containers

Royal Wolf container provide secure, weatherproof storage, ensuring your items are kept in premium conditions. Being a portable storage solution, you can also relocate your container whenever you need to.

HIRE • BUY • MODIFY 1300 651 700 | ROYALWOLF.COM.AU



A United Rentals Company

ROYAL0041 - L1 - 08/2024

IR UPDATE

ANOTHER BIG YEAR IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, AND ANOTHER TO COME

The end of 2024 marks more than 30 months since the election of the Albanese Government, and 24 months of almost continuous change to Australia's national industrial relations legislation, the Fair Work Act.

As we enter 2025, the impact and application of many of the Government's first rounds of amendments are still being determined. Many of the most significant changes have not yet been fully tested in the courts or Fair Work Commission, with 'test case' proceedings still underway. In many respects, unions are only just starting to grapple with how to use the various avenues and powers now available to them through operation of the new laws.

It is a good time to take stock of how employers' obligations have changed, and key issues to look out for in 2025. The year ahead will undoubtedly see industry continuing to face the challenge of implementing new workplace laws and industrial relations looks likely to again loom large as a contested issue at the next federal election.

SUCCESSIVE WAVES OF CHANGES TO WORKPLACE RELATION LAWS

The Government's first change to workplace relations laws, in its initial months in office, was to legislate a new entitlement to 10 days' paid leave for employees experiencing family and domestic violence (commencing from 1 February 2023 and from 1 August 2023 for small business employees).

This was followed by three significant tranches of ambitious and in many respects controversial legislative amendments.

TRANCHE 1 - THE SECURE JOBS, BETTER PAY AMENDMENTS - 2022

The Albanese Government's first major package of industrial relations changes, the Secure Jobs, Better Pay amendments, passed in December 2022. These were brutally pushed through Parliament within two months and with limited consultation with industry.

Key changes included:

- Restrictions for the first time on fixed term employment; limiting fixed term contracts to two years, or a single contract renewal or extension in most cases. There are some exceptions and exclusions, but they are limited.
- Prohibitions on 'pay secrecy' and new rights for employees to ask their coworkers (and former employees) how much they are paid (along with rights for the employees being asked about their pay to answer or refuse to answer).
- New prohibited grounds for discrimination, based on breastfeeding, gender identity and intersex status.
- Expanding the circumstances in which employees can request flexible work arrangements, increasing employers' obligations in considering such requests, and requiring more engagement and communication with employees to try and come to an agreement. Controversially, employees will also be able to seek arbitrated outcomes / orders from the Fair Work Commission against employers if there is no agreement following a process of consideration and dispute settlement.
- Similar procedures also now apply where employees request extended unpaid parental leave beyond their initial 12 months after the birth of a child (up to a maximum of 24 months). Again, it

is now possible for employees to contest an employer's decision to refuse a request in the Fair Work Commission, including through arbitration.

- Prohibiting employers from advertising jobs at rates of pay lower than applicable minimum wages in awards or enterprise agreements.
- A significant increase in the scope of underpayment / backpay claims that can be heard as 'small claims' (up to \$100,000). Such claims are heard in a jurisdiction in which parties have limited rights to legal representation and where strict rules of evidence and legal procedure do not apply.
- Changes to what employers must include on payslips when an employee accesses paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave.

The Secure Jobs, Better Pay amendments also made significant changes to the rules for enterprise bargaining, including:

- Making it easier for unions to initiate bargaining where employers do not agree to bargain with them.
- Making it considerably more difficult for employers to successfully apply to the FWC to terminate an expired enterprise agreement.
- Giving the Fair Work Commission more flexibility to ensure agreements can be approved, including assessing agreements against awards on an overall basis.
- Empowering the Fair Work Commission to arbitrate matters in dispute during protracted bargaining, effectively giving the Commission radical new power to set terms and conditions in workplaces.

One of the most significant, and certainly most controversial changes

to bargaining was expanding the role Multi Enterprise Bargaining plays in the industrial relations system, effectively creating mechanisms for unions to seek to shift employers into a second level of 'standard' pay and conditions above award obligations.

More than 24 months after these changes were legislated, the full impact of expanded Multi-Enterprise Bargaining is yet to be felt. Nonetheless, we have already seen the new laws used by unions seeking to lock employers in the mining, fast food and disability sectors into new multi-party agreements despite employer opposition. This is a trend that will undoubtedly gather pace.

TRANCHE 2 - THE PROTECTING WORKER ENTITLEMENTS AMENDMENTS - 2023

2023 saw the implementation of the less controversial but still significant 'Protecting Worker Entitlements' changes. This included:

Changing various rules for accessing unpaid parental leave:

- Increasing the number of days that can be taken as flexible unpaid parental leave after the birth of a child and allowing pregnant employees to take flexible unpaid parental leave 6 weeks before the expected birth of the child.
- Allowing unpaid parental to start and end at any time in the 24 months following birth or adoption and changing the service accrual date to the date leave is to be taken, rather than the date of birth or adoption.
- Removing limitations on employee couples taking leave concurrently, with each employee now having the right to request an additional 12 months of unpaid leave regardless of the leave taken by their spouse or partner.
- Requiring employers to make superannuation under the National Employment Standards,

expanding scope for unions, inspectors and employees to recover unpaid superannuation.

- Allowing employees to authorise ongoing variable deductions from their pay.
- Clarifying that migrant workers working in Australia are entitled to the benefits of the FW Act, regardless of their migration status.

TRANCHE 3 - CLOSING LOOPHOLES AMENDMENTS – LATE 2023 AND EARLY 2024

The Government's final tranche of amendments was always going to be highly contested and controversial.

As the Government framed it, having taken steps to make jobs more secure and to accelerate wages growth, it also needed to 'close loopholes' that were undermining these objectives. In practical terms, the changes introduced a radical reframing of key elements of our industrial relations system in line with long ventilated union demands.

The Government surprised everyone by securing the support of cross bench Senators to enable the passage of some of its changes on the final parliamentary sitting day in December 2023.

Relevantly for AFRA members, this first round of Closing Loopholes amendments:

- Allowed unions and others to apply to the FWC to make orders which require labour hire employees to be paid at least the 'protected rate of pay' (i.e., the 'full rate of pay' that would be available under an enterprise agreement if they were directly employed by the host business). These orders are now being secured rapidly in the resources and aviation sectors and are set to impact more widely on the cost and accessibility of labour hire services.
- Created a new criminal offence of wage theft at the national level, which exposes employers who intentionally underpay employee

entitlements to potential jail terms and very high fines.

- Introduced new obligations for employers to support union delegates' communication with other employees, access to workplace facilities and, except in the context of small business employers, access to paid time off for union delegate training. (Road transport contractors also now have delegates' rights).
- Allowed union officials a right of entry into workplaces if a health and safety representative requests their assistance. This included allowing union officials to come onto a work site where their entry permits for industrial relations purposes may have been revoked, or had conditions attached to them.
- Diluted the requirement on all bargaining representatives to attend compulsory conciliation conferences for proposed industrial action, to only those representatives who applied for the relevant protected action ballot order.
- Removed the application of an exemption to pay redundancy pay under the National Employment Standards that applies to small businesses in limited circumstances essentially involving redundancy.

February 2024 saw the passage of the remainder of the Government's Closing Loopholes package. These amendments included:

- A change in the definition of casual employment, and a new process of 'employee choice notifications' for those wanting to move from casual to full time or part time employment. Employers can still refuse a notification of a change away from casual employment, but the grounds to do so are more limited and employees can contest the employer's decision in the Fair Work Commission, including through arbitration.

- The creation of the new 'right to disconnect' allowing employees to refuse contact or attempted contact from their employer (or from a third party, where the contact relates to their work) outside the employee's working hours, unless the refusal is unreasonable. A model right to disconnect term was also inserted into awards.
- Further substantial increases in fines for underpayments, complementing the new criminal offence for intentional underpayment.
- Limiting scope for employers to use the intractable bargaining process to draw protracted negotiations, and disputation, to an effective outcome. The Fair Work Commission's determination must not include terms which are less favourable to employees, or their bargaining representatives, compared to a comparable term in their preceding enterprise agreement.
- Enabling union officials to obtain an exemption certificate from the Fair Work Commission to waive the 24 hours' notice required for entry if the official suspects a member is being or has been underpaid.

Two major areas of the early 2024 amendments are particularly relevant to the road transport industry and may have either direct consequences or flow-on impacts for AFRA members.

A NEW DEFINITION OF WHO IS AN 'EMPLOYEE' AND WHO IS AN 'EMPLOYER'

This new definition affects independent contractors, including contract drivers and owner drivers. The Government effectively reversed two important High Court decisions by providing a legislated definition of who is an "employee" or "employer" under the Fair Work Act. This has the effect of placing less weight on the legal relationship that business and contractors agree to in a contract

(either employment or independent contracting), and more weight on the "real substance, practical reality and true nature of the relationship" between the business and the person working for it.

Decisions applying and clarifying the impact of the new rules are still pending. However, businesses may again face the prospect of having clearly documented independent contracting relationships overturned and claims for back pay and unpaid leave entitlements. Penalties for misrepresenting employment as independent contracting were also increased.

This underscores the importance of businesses that use independent contracting arrangements getting up-to-date advice and ensuring that both written contracts and the ongoing organisation and direction of work are consistent with independent contracting rather than an employment relationship.

THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION'S NEW POWERS FOR ROAD TRANSPORT CONTRACTORS

The second set of changes are very complex and are only now starting to be implemented by the Fair Work Commission. The TWU has been given a new mechanism to pursue 'Minimum Standards Orders' for road transport contractors, which will effectively allow for the making of award like standards for road transport contractors.

Accompanying this is:

- A capacity for parties, including unions, to pursue contractual chain orders, which enable the Fair Work Commission to set binding minimum standards for road transport contractors, road transport workers and other participants. These orders may set terms addressing requirements such as payment times, fuel levies, or increased contract payments where operating costs rise.
- New rules allowing road transport contractors earning less than the

contractor high income threshold (currently \$175,000) to argue that their contracts are unfair and to have them rewritten by the Fair Work Commission

- A new FWC jurisdiction which enables eligible road transport contractors to contest the fairness of decisions to terminate a contract with a road transport business.
 - The capacity for the Fair Work Commission to approve collective agreements between a road transport business and the TWU dealing with terms and conditions for road transport contractors.
- 2024 also saw the ongoing commencement of changes passed in December of the preceding year. The first set of Closing Loopholes amendments commenced in December 2023, and February, July, August, and November 2024, with the final changes to commence in January 2025. This has seen employers reckoning with major changes to employment rules on a roughly quarterly basis.

Ai Group is playing a leading role as the Fair Work Commission considers union claims for new minimum standards for road transport contractors and in a range of award proceedings following wider changes in industrial relations legislation. This includes the development of various model or default terms for enterprise agreements and awards.

Ai Group is also dealing with an application seeking a raft of problematic and potentially costly changes to the Road Transport (Long Distance Operations Award) 2020 – members will be provided with further updates on this matter if it proceeds.

As we come to the end of 2024 and after two years of near continuous change to industrial relations rules and requirements, the Government is now asking users to reflect on what is working and not working from the changes outlined above. As the first

step in this process, the Government has recently commissioned an independent review of the effectiveness and impact of the Secure Jobs, Better Pay changes passed in late 2022. A draft report will be provided to Government at the end of January 2025 and a final report in March 2025.

Ai Group is committing significant resources to this review of the amendments and will seek to persuade the reviewers and the Government of the need for amendments to ensure that these measures operate as practically and proportionately as possible.

2025

Looking forward, 2025 is set to be another big year in industrial relations.

The new criminal jurisdiction for intentional underpayments is expected to commence in January, further model terms for awards and agreements will be determined in February, and the right to disconnect for smaller businesses will commence in August.

Union campaigns to apply some of the key mechanisms and measures put in place since late 2022 are expected to intensify and progress.

Courts and tribunals will start to hand down decisions clarifying what employers need to do to. We expect to see decisions applying the new right to disconnect, considering whether a person is a casual employee, dealing with the new rules on when a relationship is employment or independent contracting, and arbitrating disputes following employee requests for flexible working arrangements.

AFRA members should continue to monitor the information provided by Ai Group, particularly the regular Significant Workplace Relations Issues reports.

Changes to modern awards will also be important. A number of major Fair Work Commission

'test cases' are due to be heard in 2025, addressing:

- Whether clerical employees should have rights to work from home, or to request to work from home, along with alternatives to award terms which may make it easier for employers and employees to agree on working from home arrangements.
- Part time employment, including definitions, rostering, minimum hours, job security and payment for working additional hours.
- Whether employers of high earning employees, earning well above award rates, should be exempted from complying with some of the obligations in the Clerks Private Sector Award.

The Government may also make changes in response to the completed review of the effectiveness and impact of the Secure Jobs, Better Pay changes passed in late 2022.

In the wake of each tranche of amendments, Ai Group plays a lead role in the Fair Work Commission seeking to shape new clauses in modern awards (e.g. on delegates rights and the right to disconnect), and the new model terms for enterprise agreements, which are to commence from 26 February 2025.

Members are also reminded that minimum wages in modern awards, including the Road Transport and Distribution Award and the Storage Services and Wholesale Award will increase from 1 July 2025, following a decision expected in early June.

THE NEXT ELECTION

The big-ticket item for 2025 will however be the next federal election, and the competing industrial relations policies of the major parties.

Details remain scant at this stage, but unions are starting to agitate for further changes from a re-elected Albanese Government, including pressures for an additional form of 'reproductive health leave'. This would be an additional form of paid leave for employees to

deal with severe menstrual pain, endometriosis, IVF, menopause, gender transition, vasectomies and other reproductive health issues.

Another area that a returned Albanese Government has previously indicated it will consider is leave portability, with some unions agitating for long service leave to be extended to employees who change employers, and the potential for calls for the portability of other forms of leave when an employee leaves one business to work for another.

On the Coalition side, further announcements are expected during the election campaign. Indications to date point to a reversal of the right to disconnect and further changes to the definition of who is a casual employee. There will also be a focus on the clarity and useability of the system for small businesses.

Ai Group will be stressing the need to improve the focus and quality of our industrial relations laws, to better support productivity as the foundation for improving living standards and the security of not only jobs, but also of the enterprises that provide them.

AFRA, through its partnership with Ai Group, will continue to keep members informed on key developments in industrial relations in 2025. ●

AFRA members can contact Ai Group's Workplace Relations Advice Line on 1300 55 66 77 for more information on any of these matters or with any other staffing or workplace relations questions.

Note: The above summaries of legislative amendments focus on major changes most relevant to AFRA members, but they are not comprehensive. Detailed guides to changes are available through AFRA. Members with questions on any matters from the various recent tranches of legislation are also welcome to contact Ai Group for further information.

5 MINUTES WITH..

AFRA's Council comprises up to sixteen council members – two from each state and territory – plus the president and the immediate past president. Council members represent you at AFRA Council meetings. In each edition of *On The Move* we spend five minutes getting to know a board member. This month we chat with the member for the Northern Territory...

Tony Donellan

Business Name:

Allied Moving Services

Business Location:

National / Worldwide

I personally live in Perth but travel a lot!

Do you have a nick name?

I am an Anthony, but very few people call me that (mostly just my Mum when she is angry). Normally just Tone, however the in the company; Disco Donellan is brought up quiet a bit. Long Story....

**How long have you been in the removals industry?
How did you get your start?**

I have been in the industry 30+ years. My first moving job was actually working on the road in Eilat, Israel in 1993. Interesting times, I was young and knew nothing, except it was really hot, and working 12 hour days for next to nothing was really hard, and seemed like a bad idea. I really started my career in the UK at a small firm and worked through being on the road, Op's, Sales, and learnt admin etc, then one of the directors of the company. This was my real apprenticeship. I then moved into corporate environments with a few companies and ended up at Pickfords. I then came back to Australia in 2012, and I am still loving my job (mostly).

What is the biggest change or challenge you have seen in the industry during your time?

I am unfortunately old enough to remember transitioning from Pans and trailers to containers, very different at the time. The GFC in 2007 was not a lot of fun, wherever you were in the world.

Coffee or tea?

Neither, a lot of people find this strange. Normally water during the day, (and the odd beer come evening)

Favorite holiday destination?

Raratonga, in the Cook Islands is probably the most chilled place on Earth. Goa in India many years ago was



also a big favourite. We may as well throw in Jerusalem, Varanasi in India, London, and the South of France, I love the history of these places. In Australia, the Western McDonnell Ranges and gorges west of Alice are amazing. I guess I haven't done a great job answering this question, too hard..

If you were shipwrecked on a desert island, what food or meal could you not live without?

I love pasta, I always have since I was a kid. I would need Mum's spaghetti bol, and her homemade rissoles.

Do you play a musical instrument/play a sport?

I love music, but am tone deaf. I played both League and Union growing up. I played my last rugby union game in England when I was 38, I thought I was really old. Apparently it gets worse, 38 seems like a spring chicken now.

Finish this sentence:

As a kid, when I grew up I wanted to be: I honestly had no idea. I probably still don't, but it is looking like Relo and Removals at this stage! ●



GOT GOSSIP FOR THE FERRET?
Submit your photos, gossip and rumors to
The Ferret c/o ceo@afra.com.au.
All submission handled confidentially.

Mardis gras bid in the land of the long white cloud? How an international moving company was born...

Many a long term reader of this newsletter will recall *The Ferret*. *The Ferret* was responsible for sniffing out potential gossip and other interesting tidbits involving AFRA members. The identity of *The Ferret* was never disclosed. Anonymous, apparently all knowing, *The Ferret* knew all. But one day the *Ferret* just disappeared. One day the *Ferret* was around, the next, gone. No one had heard from *The Ferret* in many years...until now...



It's not well known, but during the 1980s Sydney nearly lost the Mardi Gras to Napier, New Zealand. A recently rediscovered clipping from local paper the *Napier Nattering* contained the following report:

Watch out Sydney!

Local men show how it's done!

On Saturday, Napier locals were treated to a spectacular parade that rivaled the glitz and glamour of Sydney's beloved Mardi Gras. On parade were a group of burly young men in singlets who pushed an upright piano from Hastings to Napier.

The piano pushing campaign leaders Dave 'the brains' Conroy and Phil 'the brawn' Gordon - along with a group of fellow festival enthusiasts - pushed the piano some 21 kilometers.

Sporting an on-trend hair perm - given to him by an unnamed local, but whom Phil shyly admitted was a girl he was 'heaps keen on eh' - Phil

described the razzle dazzle of the Sydney Mardi Gras parade, and the inspiration it provided for their own parade efforts.

Phil enthused 'the ANZ bank just opened branches in Napier and Hastings - and we wanted to be involved, eh. For our parade float, we wanted to do something spectacular, just like they do at the Sydney parade that looks heaps fun. I saw it when I was over there on my OE!'

Dave admitted he had not attended the Sydney Mardis Gras himself when on his own OE, but trusted Phil's account that 'all those floats were tops!' Both men feel their piano float would 'hold its own' if they decided to go international with their parade contribution.

The *Ferret* is unable to find any further record of local residents' reaction to the band of fit young men and their piano float, but Napier never did manage to steel Mardi

Gras. And the *Ferret* understands Phil didn't end up with the hairdresser. But Phil and Dave continue to move furniture and household items to this day, including internationally. The *Ferret* will be sure to report if a Conroy float is in next year's Sydney event. ●

¹ OE = overseas experience. An OE is a coming of age ritual for New Zealand youth who leave their homeland to visit other countries. This trip is undertaken so Kiwis can return to New Zealand and spend the rest of their lives smugly talking to other Kiwis about how they 'tried other countries once' but it just confirmed what they had always suspected - that New Zealand is the best country on earth - thus alleviating the need to go anywhere or try anything new ever again whilst simultaneously giving every person in the land of the long white cloud something in common to talk about at each and every social event. A crucial right of passage for all Kiwis.

You take care of the
pedal power



**And we'll take care
of the horsepower**

Whether it's a boat, a caravan, a motorcycle, a classic or family car, or the whole lot... if it's part of what you need to move - just call us.

We've set the industry standard with our door to door vehicle moving solutions. From a tiny hatchback to a monster truck, we can take care of it.



relocations@cevalogistics.com
www.CevaCarCarrying.com.au