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BY CATHERINE KUIPERS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome 2024. I hope that everyone had a lucrative busy and managed to spend some time with the family. I myself was lucky enough to take six weeks off to travel across the globe to Brazil to spend time with family, brush up on my Portuguese and get some much-needed R&R.

I don't know about anyone else, but I was certainly glad to put 2023 behind me. For a person like myself that loves to plan, the continuous uncertainty of what was coming next, and the difficulty of setting a fixed plan was not ideal. Setting one budget is hard enough but this year I have three! Worst, best and acceptable.

Each month we would wait to hear what the current inflation rate was, then the debates would ensue over whether interest rates would rise again or stay, until the RBA made its announcements, and then we try and use this data to map out the direction of the business for the next quarter.

2023 was a year of extremes, we had fire, we had floods and we had heat.

Cost of living pressures continued to be punishing on Australian households, forcing the prioritisation of essential spending.

The uncertainty of more interest rates led to a reduced number of properties hitting the market and construction of new dwellings. Which meant an unstable year for those of us focused in the residential sector.

The post-covid glow has certainly ended for our industry, with a reduced demand for relocation services, and for those on the move, having less money to spend, means further pressure on our pricing at a time when costs are at an all-time high.

It's not all doom and gloom, inflation is thankfully continuing to fall, interest rates are stable, for now, and confidence has returned to the housing market, reflecting in an increase in enquiries.

Thankfully, there is nothing like the start of a New Year to stimulate feelings of hope and opportunity, both personally and professionally. Nothing like a good old New Year's Resolution to kick start the year!

A time for setting personal goals for the year ahead, be it a new health kick, learning a language or starting a new hobby. I myself have signed up to undertake an 800km charity bike ride through Thailand in January 2025, despite not having been on a bike for the best part of 10 years. But nothing like making a decision after a few glasses, oh who am I kidding, perhaps it was closer to a bottle of bubbles, the realisation that I am now closer to 50 than 40, my daughter was about to start kindergarten, and realising the business can happily continue on without my presence for 6 weeks, that when the challenge presented itself to me, I jumped at it.

The start of a new year also presents us with an opportunity to reset our businesses, reflect on what did and didn't work last year and then map out a path for the year ahead. Like the saying goes "Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail", and with so much change and uncertainty in the world what worked for your business in the past may not be what will work for you now.

My team love "strategic" planning days, not only is it a win-win for the business owners, as it enhances decision-making, improves resource management and increases operational efficiency, but what my people love is that it also increases

“2023 was a year of extremes, we had fire, we had floods and we had heat.”

transparency, which in turn helps to build trust, eliminate ambiguity and effectively gets your people to buy in to your vision.

Often despite all of our best intentions, many of us fail at maintaining, completing or even starting the goals we set ourselves each year. Lack of motivation, time, accountability and knowledge often contribute to our failure. In business we can't afford to fail, so setting goals and directions with your team ensures that accountability and with that a higher chance of success.

So don't let the start of the New Year get away from you, take some time out of your business, if I can take six weeks you can manage a few hours, or a day and work out what you really want to achieve for yourself this year both personally and professionally. Sit with your teams and think about what did or didn't work for the business last year. Map out the why of the wins and the failures and then make some new goals.

One great resource I came across last year was The Growth Faculty. They run amazing speakers across every topic you can imagine throughout the course of the year, both online and face to face. It's a fantastic resource for yourself as a leader and for your people to stay across all the current thinking on leadership, culture and people. Perhaps this could be this year's goal. ●

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BY SIMONE HILL

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

How can we be into the third month of the year? It feels like it was only last week that we were celebrating Christmas and the New Year, and yet now we are nearly a quarter of the way through 2024. My husband and I went 'home' to France – sans enfants – for the break. No heating in our house for the first week thanks to a troubled central heating service was an unexpected challenge! I hope you managed to have a bit of a break with family too.

What a productive year we are already having here at AFRA. I enjoyed reading Catherine's report and her emphasis on the need for a 'plan'. A planning and 'to-do list' fan myself, the possibilities and promise that a fresh new year bring are always great motivation for me. This year we have a big, bold and bodacious 'to do' list here at AFRA.

With the introduction of our new team member Madeleine, we have been able to tick some big jobs off our long list of 'one day' tasks and launch into a number of new projects.

Maddy has been hard at work building recognition for the AFRA brand. Outside of the removals industry, brand recognition of AFRA – What does AFRA mean? What can we offer? Why choose an AFRA member? – is low.

Many moving clients only find us AFTER they have booked a dodgy removalist and things have gone horribly wrong. We want to change this by building brand recognition for AFRA. You may have seen the sharp increase in AFRA's social media activity.

We have also developed a new marketing strategy – Reuse, Relove, Relocate – sparking a conversation around furniture waste. I have set

out our intentions with this project on page 15. This campaign has been developed by Maddy and is just one example of the direction we want to take AFRA in moving forward.

You may also have noticed the work Maddy has undertaken giving a new look to our AFRA documents and the website. These improvements all help with the continued professional evolution of AFRA.

AFRA is also working with its Associate Members to better promote them through our social media. AFRA is able to continue to offer our high standard of services because of the support we receive from Associate Members.

Our regular members are encouraged to support our Associate Members when making purchasing decisions. If our members continue to support our Associate Members, they will continue to support AFRA. Many of our Associate Members have been loyal supporters of AFRA for years or even decades. Support the businesses that support you!

Jo has been working through our member resources, filling in resource gaps and grouping resources into user friendly 'packs' – for example, the 'Onboarding New Staff' resource package available in the <Library> section of the members website.

Toolbox Talk kits have also been put together, gathering all the required resources in one place to enable members to more easily present and record staff training on key topics.

This year also brings an exciting training challenge for AFRA. Last year, AFRA won a competitive grant from the HVNR to develop a new video based, online CoR training program. This is an enormous task and will see Jo heavily focused on

this aspect of her role as AFRA's training officer. To assist Jo, Rose will become the first point of contact for enquiries about aXcelerate. We encourage members who may be looking for assistance to first use the many resources available on the AFRA member's website. Of course, our team are always happy to help if your problem cannot be self-resolved.

Conference 2024 planning is well underway. Join us in the beautiful Barossa 15–17 August. With keynote speakers Bernard Salt and Stirling Mortlock booked, its shaping up to be a great conference. Conference bookings will open soon, but accommodation bookings are open now. Follow the link in the members' section of the website to book your room.

Late last year AFRA entered into a new arrangement with the AI Group to offer members complimentary access to IR support as part of AFRA membership benefits. This step was taken as Bristow Legal were no longer able to provide this support with the departure from the firm of Paul Murray. The AI group have a great article in this edition of *OTM*, and I urge you to reach out to them via the helpline if you require IR assistance. Their helpline telephone number is 1300 55 66 77. AFRA is measuring use of this service for 2024 – use it or lose it!

I'm about to ramp up audits again. We don't visit members during the busy, but with March upon us it's time to get out on the road again. Rose and I have been working on an audit schedule that will keep me busy for most of the year.

Regional Meetings are also penciled in. I hope to see you at one of these.

Until next time. ●



TRAINING OFFICER'S REPORT

Another new year may it be full of successful business opportunities, accomplishing your targets and goals and be a profitable year for all our members.

Looking back over AFRA's last year accomplishments, it was a very busy year of catching up and finalising audits, the launching of the updated Cowden's Finance course, a successful conference and planning new projects for this year.

So, what is happening in training this year? Well, there are plenty of new training projects in the pipeline, with new courses and updates coming to some of the current training courses, eg: Chain of Responsibility being updated and the online hybrid Estimator's course will be finally available by the second quarter of this year.

Are you interested in the Pack & Unpack (1 day) or the Furniture & Effects (1 day) face-to-face training courses with our trainer, Max? These will be on offer throughout the year at different locations. If you have a group of 8 to 10 employees in your business that you want to have trained in either or both courses, why not organise with us to book Max to run these face-to-face course in your business. If you are interested just contact training@afra.com.au or the AFRA office for further information on how to organise this.

Last year in *OTM* we did some articles on Induction, Onboarding and Orientation, to assist you with how to integrate a new employee into your business. In this issue we have outlined a guideline for you to utilise and assist you further with the induction process, what is some of the paperwork you can use and how to plan together an orientation program for a new employee. You will see that there are two types of orientation programs, one tailored toward drivers/offsidiers and the other one tailored towards managers/ administration employees. All this information and forms you can use can be downloaded from the AFRA members area of the website, located under the Library >Onboarding New Staff.

We are regularly adding toolbox talks into the AFRA members website, located under the Library >Toolbox Talks. Evidence of Toolbox Talks is one of the items that we ask for when we do our AFRA Compliance audit. If you do not have any of your own available, remember to check out the toolbox talks located on the AFRA website. If you have a Toolbox Talk idea you would like to share or one you want us to create let us know.

Are you due for a 2024 AFRA audit? If you are and want to get through an audit stress free, we suggest that you start getting your paperwork in ready. Examples of

what we ask for include evidence of fire drill, workplace inspections, pest reports, employee training etc. Book any employees who have not completed their WH&S or Chain of Responsibility online courses now. COR and WHS training for all employees is a condition of AFRA membership – see Code 4 (c) AFRA Code of Conduct.

In addition, you will be asked to provide proof that you are using specific policies and procedures. You should already have these because they are a necessity for inducting new employees into your business. These policies and procedures can be found on the AFRA members area of the website, so if you do not have a copy of these download them from there.

Finally, if you have any questions on your upcoming audit, training or booking your employees into training, please email training@afra.com.au or contact the AFRA office. ●

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TOOLBOX TALKS

SAFETY IN AND AROUND THE TRUCK

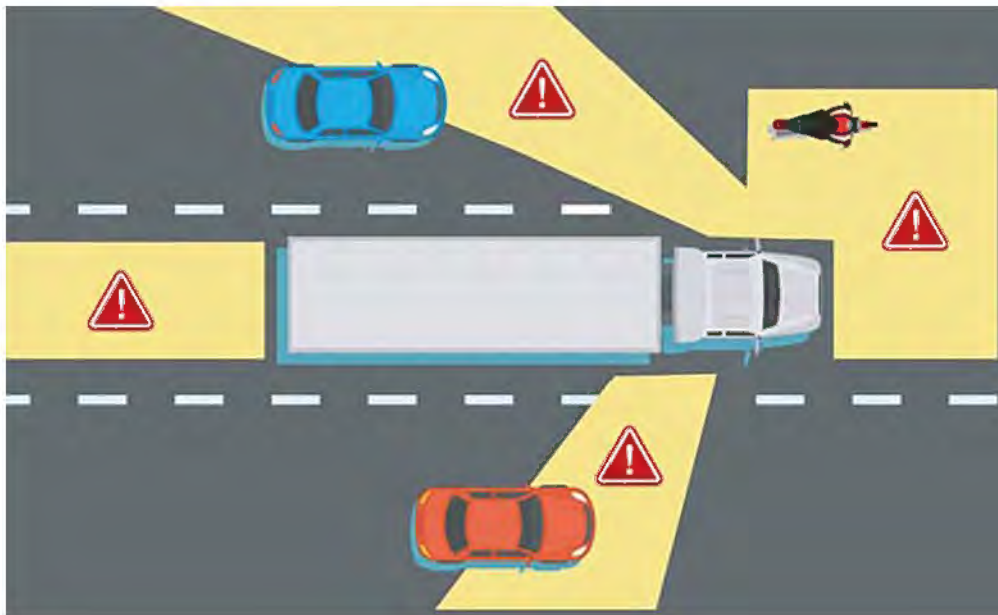
A significant number of work accidents in the removals industry are caused by employees getting into and out of the cabin of the vehicle incorrectly.

One of the first things you must learn to do correctly is to get in and out of the truck.

Many injuries happen because people do not know the right way to do this simple thing.

When getting in on the right-hand side of the truck:

- put your left foot on the lower step
 - at the same time, with your right hand, grasp the front handgrip on the door jamb
 - swing yourself up until you can reach the other hand grip
 - place your right foot on the next step
 - pull yourself into the cabin
- To get out of the truck, reverse this process



“ One of the first things you must learn to do correctly is to get in and out of the truck. ”

NOTE: There must always be **always three points of contact;** **never get out of the truck frontwards and never jump out of the vehicle.**

Exit the truck backwards, grasp the front hand door grip, place a foot on the truck's upper step, steady yourself with your other hand and step down.

REMEMBER, OUR TRUCKS SHARE THE ROAD WITH OTHER TRAFFIC.

There are a few more basic procedures we should follow while working around the truck, especially where there is traffic.

STOPPING DISTANCES

Trucks cannot stop as quickly as other vehicles on the road. B-double truck (unloaded) travelling at only 40km/h can take up to 35 metres to stop, and at 60km/h the stopping distance almost doubles to 67 metres.

BLIND SPOTS

Remember as a truck driver you have four main blind spots, immediately in front, directly behind, beside the driver door and a significant area on the passenger side.

- Regularly check your mirrors.
- Leave space in case you need to break suddenly.
- Don't over occupy the right lane, allow motorists to overtake safely.
- Indicate well in advance to give motorists notice of your movements and time to move out of the way.
- Consider installation of blind spot sensors.





MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES OFFICE REPORT

WHEN YOUR TRUCK IS PARKED ON THE ROADSIDE

Make sure the park brake has been applied before leaving the truck.

Always check the wing mirror before opening the cabin door so you are aware of passing traffic. Any time that you must check the offside of the truck, you should always face the oncoming traffic so you do not get hit from behind.

You need to be just as careful when returning to the cab. First, you look around the corner of the cab prior to stepping out on the road, as motorists will not see you coming. Second, you approach the cab door from the front of the truck to minimise exposure time, this also enables you to face traffic.

WALKING ABOUT

When walking around the truck, you should bear in mind that you are a pedestrian, exposed to traffic.

Many workers are injured when trucks or forklifts hit them; you should wear reflective vests/ clothing and follow the company's safety rules.

CHANGING PRIME MOVERS OR TRAILERS

Never change prime movers on a journey without the consent of management. If necessary, do it in a safe place off the roadway, taking care that soft surfaces do not cause the legs of the trailer to sink.

Work together as a team with your offsider/driver during the changeover.

Remember that the company requires you to check that the turntable jaws are fully locked, all the connections are secure and that a 'tug test' is performed on the new trailer before moving off. ●

As we are well into the new year, I would like to properly introduce myself as the newest member of the AFRA team as Marketing and Member Services Officer as of November 2023. My name is Maddy, I recently graduated from a Bachelor of Marketing and Media from Macquarie University, so this is really the first step in my career. Being new to the removals, transportation, and logistics industry, it's a very broad world that I am eager to learn more about.

In my role as Marketing and Member Services Officer I have been tending to the AFRA social media pages and I love all the fun pictures and videos of where removals take you all. Keep all the great pictures coming in! Follow us on Instagram (@afra_au), Facebook (@Australian Furniture Removers Association), and LinkedIn (Australian Furniture Removers Association (AFRA)). I found that our X account (formerly Twitter) was

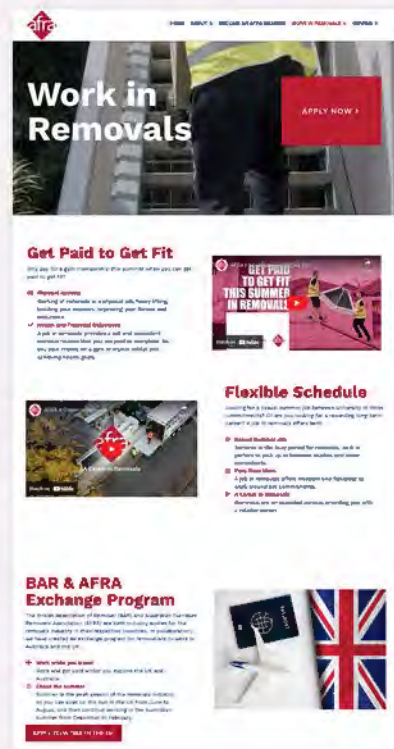
not a successful way to reach our members and target demographic, due to user being very inactive on the platform and so we not to continue activity on that account. There are a few social media campaigns that I have worked on and are rolling out such as 'AFRA's Moving Tips', and 'Reuse, Relove, Relocate', so keep an eye out to see all our content.

The AFRA website and Members website has a few new pages that I have worked on with resources for members and the public. The "why work in removals" page on our website was created with the intention of gaining more movers in the industry with a section to be able to submit a resume that we can then pass on to members. Jo and I have also compiled various resources for recruitment processes available on the members only website library. You may notice

the document's new look. I am in the process of reformatted the AFRA resources to all look the same.

I am looking forward to meeting all our members at the 2024 AFRA Conference in the Barossa Valley. The annual conference has been the biggest project I have been working on alongside Simone. Event planning is not something I was expecting to be able to do in my first year out of university, but I have been enjoying the organisation and at some points, the challenges that come with it.

I am excited to see what this year will bring and hope you all have enjoyed your summer. ●



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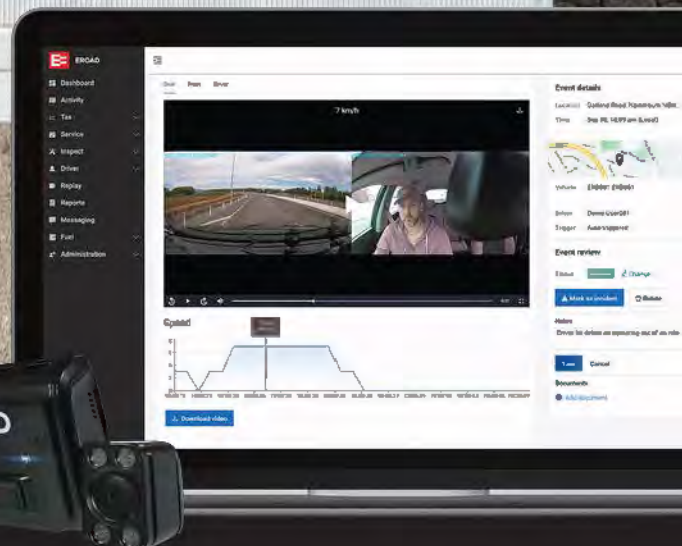
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IGNORANCE IS NOT BLISS, IT'S 3 YEARS IN JAIL

Members will recall the tragic death of four Victorian police officers in April 2020, when a Connect Logistics heavy vehicle collided with the police officers on the Melbourne Eastern Freeway. Connect Logistics (the Company) was charged with a category 1 offence under the Heavy Vehicle National Law (HVNL), issued a \$2,300,000 fine and prohibited from conducting transport activities for 12 months.

On 23 January 2024, the Company's National Operations Manager, Cris Large, was also found guilty of a category 1 offence and sentenced to three years imprisonment for failing to ensure the Company complied with its duty to ensure the safety of transport activities.

HVNL FAILURES

At the time of the incident, the driver was fatigued and under the influence of drugs. A further investigation revealed major failures by those in the chain of responsibility (CoR) to comply with appropriate safety practices, including failures to comply with fatigue prevention and management requirements. The investigation identified:

- More than 40% of driving shifts breached fatigue management requirements;
- Only 2.6% of the offending shifts had been identified by the Company;
- No non-conformance reports were issued to the Company's drivers for the HVNL breaches; and
- Management used and approved falsified timesheets.

The media has reported that Mr Large falsified timesheets, failed to ensure appropriate measures were

taken to manage drivers' fatigue and allowed systemic failures with safety measures. There were further reports that Mr Large urged Simiona Tuteru, the Company's Manager who was charged with \$22,500 for his own breach of HVNL duties, to 'get the job done at all costs'.

On this basis, Mr Large was found to have breached his primary duty as an operator to ensure that the Company complied with its primary duty under section 26C of the HVNL.

This case is a timely reminder to members of the importance of understanding the primary duty, and the serious consequences that flow from a breach of that duty.

THE DUTY

The primary duty requires each person in the CoR to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of their transport activities (primary duty).

Each person bound by this duty must do everything reasonably practicable to eliminate the risks to the public, including to drivers and other persons in and around heavy vehicles, to road infrastructure and the environment, and to other road users.

What is reasonably practicable is assessed by the duty-holder in each circumstance, considering the proportionality of all potential measures to the potential harm and probability of harm occurring. While cost is a factor to consider in this assessment, a potential safety measure should only be disregarded where the cost involved would be out of all proportion to the risk.

Because the circumstances vary, it is essential to constantly reassess these factors to establish

“ A timely reminder to members of the importance of understanding the primary duty. ”

what measures are appropriate to eliminate the risk.

While the Connect Logistics case had tragic consequences, liability under sections 26C can arise irrespective of any incident or actual damage occurring, and it is no defence to claim ignorance of non-compliance; the duty is focused on risk prevention and requires positive steps.

To this end, operators and other members of the chain of responsibility must take active steps to:

- Ensure drivers are not affected by fatigue including by preparing safe driving plans with adequate rest breaks and by listening to drivers' concerns;
- Ensure there is no incentive for drivers to speed or otherwise breach the HVNL, including by factoring in potential delays when scheduling; and
- Monitor and promptly enforce drivers' compliance with work and rest hours, including by using GPS systems to confirm drivers' actual work hours. ●

If you have any questions about COR and compliance, you can contact the AFRA helpline at afrahelpline@bristowlegal.com.au.

ONBOARDING



THE PROCESS OF RECRUITMENT

When an employee resigns or you have developed a new position in your business you suddenly need to fill that vacancy. You find yourself thinking what is crucial to find the right replacement or new candidate for that job?

The recruitment process involves different stages that you must consider when looking for the ideal candidate. The steps we are going to cover are on recruitment planning, the interview, preparing for the new employee and the induction process.

RECRUITMENT PLANNING

The planning stage consist of having a prepared job description, making sure you clearly list what the role and responsibilities are, what are the required and desired skills, if specific qualifications and licences are essential. Think of what the candidate would like to know, such as, is it a full-time or part-time, what are the working conditions and the business benefits, work culture and so on.

How will the position vacancy be advertised? Will it be through an internet job board (eg: Seek, Indeed), the company website, social media, an employment agency, newspaper, etc.

Next is shortlisting candidates from the applications received. You

“The induction process should be tailored to suit the position’s tasks, skills and responsibilities.”

need to screen these based on the skills and experience required for the job role to determine which individuals should be invited for an interview. It is a good idea to have another person who understands the role to help review the applications. Ideally, shortlist down to three to four people and get in touch with these candidates to organise suitable interview times.

INTERVIEW REQUIREMENTS

Be fully prepared for the interview by having the potential candidate complete an employment application form. Make sure you have prepared a list of questions plus use an interview checklist and refer to it so you do not miss any key questions or details.

Once you have chosen a candidate that you think will be

suitable, do a reference check with their previous employers. When you have completed the relevant reference checks you are then ready to offer the successful candidate the position. Contact the person to make the job offer, if they accept the position follow this up with a successful applicant letter.

Remember it is courteous to send out unsuccessful applicants a letter by email or mail to let them know you have filled the position.

PREPARING FOR THE NEW EMPLOYEE (PRE-ONBOARDING)

This is the stage where the new employee has accepted the job offer by responding to your letter. Subsequently, send them an introductory email containing any paperwork that can be completed before their first day on the job, that is, payroll form, emergency contact form, deed of confidentiality, instructions on parking, dress code and whatever else you think they need to know before they start.

The business next needs to prepare for the new employee’s first day. Have a welcome pack ready that contains the employee’s handbook, induction/orientation schedule, key personnel with their functions, policies, procedures and



Save the Date

any paperwork that needs to be completed. In addition, depending on their role and your business, you need to make sure that they have the relevant “tools of trade” or what an employee will need to carry out their work. Some examples of what they may need:

- **Truck Driver:** Uniform, hi-vis vest, personal protective equipment, work diary, daily vehicle checklist, organise any relevant training, etc.
- **Manager:** Workstation setup, relevant computer logins and passwords to business systems, keys, business cards, mobile phone, organise any relevant training, etc.

INDUCTION

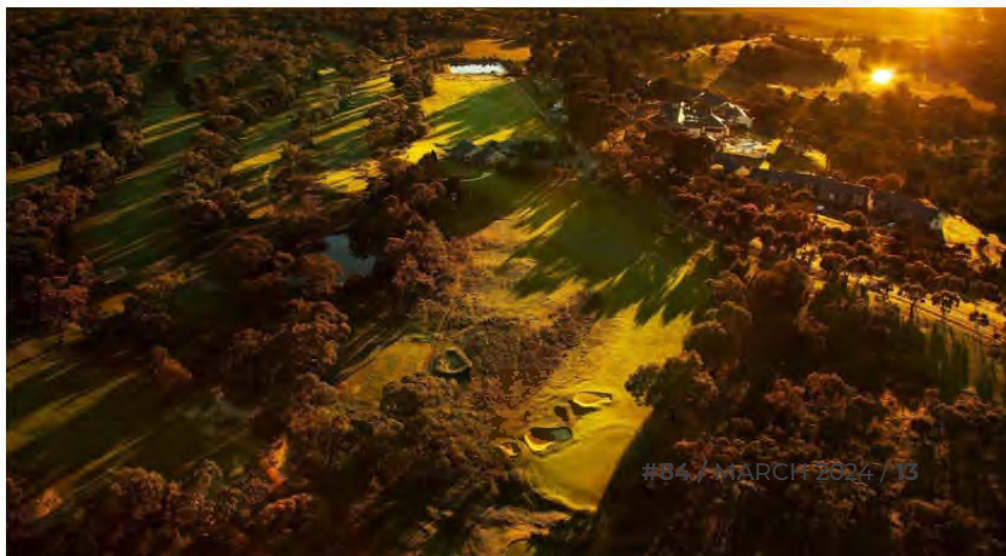
On the new employee's first day you should hand them the prepared welcome pack, followed by a site tour and explain safety and emergency evacuation procedures. Afterwards let them meet their work colleagues and it is a good idea to assign a mentor or buddy who they can ask for advice or assistance. You should provide them with a company overview, followed by a discussion on the Induction/Orientation schedule you have organised and give instructions on what their tasks and responsibilities will be. All new employees must be given all the relevant business' policies and procedures, instructed on safety and depending on their job role complete any mandatory training.

Remember – subject to the new employee's job role the induction process should be tailored to suit the position's tasks, skills and responsibilities. ●

Visit the AFRA members website and located in the library menu is a link to the Recruitment Process where you can download some forms and tailor them to your business. See Library >Onboarding New Staff



AFRA CONFERENCE 15 – 17 AUGUST 2024 Novotel Barossa Valley, South Australia



IR UPDATE

GOVERNMENT SECURES MAJOR CHANGES TO WORKPLACE RELATIONS LAWS. BY COLIN CHANG.



The Government recently secured the passage of its controversial amendments to workplace relations laws. This follows a raft of earlier amendments that were passed by the Government in late 2022 (the 'Secure Jobs Better Pay' amendments) and mid-2023 (the 'Protecting Worker Entitlements' amendments).

The recent changes will have a significant impact on employers and, in particular, businesses in and connected to the road transport industry.

Closing Loopholes Act 2023

The *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023 (Closing Loopholes Bill)* was introduced into Parliament on 4 September 2023 and proposed a raft of changes to the Fair Work Act.

Although the development of the Closing Loopholes Bill followed extensive consultation with major business groups, including the Australian Industry Group (**Ai Group**), it was the subject of vocal opposition from industry.

It was not expected that the Closing Loopholes Bill would be passed by the Senate until it handed down a report considering the Bill in early February this year. However, a surprise deal was reached in the Senate late last year which resulted in the Bill being effectively split into two, with parts of it being passed by the Parliament in the last sitting day of 2023, now known as the 'Closing Loopholes Act 2023'. This legislation included changes relating to:

- The criminalisation of 'wage left'.
- The closing of the 'labour hire loophole', i.e. requiring a labour hire employer to provide the same rate of pay as those employees

engaged by the host employer under the host's enterprise agreement.

- The introduction of new entitlements for union delegates, including 'reasonable' access to workplace facilities, to communicate with other workers, and to access training during paid time (although this last entitlement will not extend to those engaged by small business employers).

Ai Group will be appearing before the Fair Work Commission (**Commission**) this week to discuss the development of new clauses to be inserted into modern awards that are expected to potentially provide more specific requirements relating to the operation of the new delegates rights described above. The legislation requires that such clauses are developed by 1 July 2024.

A Guide to the above changes will be made available to AFRA members on the dedicated workplace relations webpage on the AFRA website.

Closing Loopholes Bill No. 2

The provisions that were not passed by Parliament last year, were moved to the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes No. 2) Bill 2023 (Closing Loopholes No.2 Bill)*. This Bill recently passed Parliament on 12 February 2024.

The changes resulting from this included a range of amendments that were pushed for by industry, including many changes pressed for by Ai Group.

Notwithstanding the improvements that were secured, many changes will still be very challenging for businesses to deal with, including the controversial 'right to disconnect' and the change to 'intractable bargaining'

disputes that will essentially prevent the Commission from imposing an outcome that would be less favourable to an employee or union than the corresponding provisions under their current enterprise agreement. Other significant changes include:

- Changes to the definition of casual employment and casual conversion requirements.
- The introduction of a definition of who is an 'employee' (as opposed to a contractor) for the purposes of the Fair Work Act.
- A new jurisdiction enabling the FWC to deal with 'unfair contract claims' brought by certain contractors.
- Changes to 'sham contracting' provisions that will make it more difficult for employers to defend any such claim made against them.
- Significant increases to penalties for contravening certain workplace laws (particularly those related to underpayment).
- Giving unions greater capacity to enter workplaces without providing advanced notice in certain circumstances, particularly, where there is a reasonable suspicion of an underpayment.

Specific changes for the road transport industry

The Closing Loopholes No.2 Bill also includes specific changes related to the road transport industry, such as:

- The power for the Commission to set binding minimum standards orders, as well as non-binding guidelines, for road transport contractors.
- The power for the Commission to make regulations for supply chain participants associated with the road transport industry through the making of binding 'road

transport industry contractual chain orders' and non-binding guidelines. Such orders can deal with matters including payment times, fuel levies, rate reviews, termination, and cost recovery, but cannot include terms dealing with overtime rates, rostering arrangements, or terms which change the form / status of regulated workers.

- The ability for the Commission to approve, vary and terminate collective agreements between road transport businesses and unions.
- The ability for the Commission to deal with unfair termination claims filed by road transport contractors, including the power to order financial compensation and reinstatement.

A Guide to the changes introduced by the Closing Loopholes No.2 Bill is being prepared and will be made available on the dedicated workplace relations webpage on the AFRA website. Members will be notified once this is available.

In the interim, a short advice outlining the changes introduced by the Closing Loopholes No.2 Bill is available on the dedicated workplace relations webpage on the AFRA website.

More assistance required?

Should members have any questions or require further assistance regarding the changes outlined in this article, please feel free to contact, Brent Ferguson, Ai Group's Head of National Workplace Relations Policy on brent.ferguson@aigroup.com.au.

Members are also encouraged to attend one of a series of briefings covering these changes that Ai Group will be running in March 2024. Further details will be sent to members shortly. ●

1 & 2: To access this Guide, go to AFRA members website >IR> Closing Loopholes

REUSE RELOVE RELOCATE

After the success of slow fashion, slow food and slow living – and the runaway success of shows like *The War on Waste* – AFRA seeks to direct the attention of the waste free living movement toward the issue of furniture waste. With the focus on 'fall in love with your furniture again' AFRA launched this initiative on social media on Valentines Day.

Reuse, Relove, Relocate encourages people to retain rather than dispose of their furniture when they move house. Just as we have learned that a high turnover of clothes is determinantal for the environment and the communities who produce it, so too we are discovering the huge environmental impact of frequently replacing one's furniture.

An immense amount of resources are expended in the production of furniture – raw materials are produced and harvested for timber, fiber and fabric, fossil fuels are burned to run factories and production plants, pollutants are manufactured and released in the painting, glueing and dyeing of items – the list goes on.

Every time we buy a new item of furniture we contribute to further to this cycle of destruction and pollution. This is particularly the case with cheaper 'fast furniture' which is manufactured with fashion not longevity in mind.

Coupled with the waste when furniture is produced is the landfill problem when items are discarded. Each year in Sydney alone 48,000 tonnes of furniture goes to landfill. That is equivalent to 1.65 million dining tables, 6.85 million wooden chairs, 3.5 million coffee tables or 800,000 three seater sofas. And this is only in Sydney!

The statistics for the country as a whole are even more overwhelming. This is a huge waste problem that AFRA members are in a position to help solve.

AFRA wants to spark a conversation around furniture waste, and is working to draw media attention to the issue through social media (Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn).

This campaign is intended to be a permanent part of AFRA's public promotional work, a topic we will continue to give a voice to. You will see the new logo used in our correspondence with you, including our email signatures. Reuse, Relove, Relocate will also be the theme for this year's conference in the Barossa.

Removals work is often touted as not being 'very sexy'. By refocusing our role – not just a necessary service but also a having a positive and environmentally impactful role in our community – we assist the general public to view our services through a new lens.

Relocating your furniture rather than buying new furniture might not only save you money, it might just save the planet. ●

Members are encouraged to consider using the new logo in their own promotional materials and social media. A general media kit is available in the members only section of the website.



WHAT IS A CODE OF CONDUCT AND WHY YOU NEED ONE

Workplaces potentially bring together a diverse and wide variety of people.

People of different age, gender, religion, cultural background and beliefs are all thrown into an environment where they need to work together. It is important – and to a legal requirement – that persons entering your workplace, or attending a workplace event organised by you, feel safe and respected. A Code of Conduct helps all persons attending your workplace or event understand what behaviour is expected of them, and what behaviour is not acceptable.

WHAT IS A WORKPLACE CODE OF CONDUCT?

A workplace Code of Conduct sets out in clear terms behaviour that is expected from anyone attending a workplace. An Event Code of Conduct sets out in clear terms behaviour that is expected from anyone attending a social event, such as a workplace Christmas party or offsite team building day.

Usually a code of conduct will also set out to whom a complaint or concern can be raised, and the consequences for breaching the code.

WHY DO WE NEED ONE?

A workplace is a place of business, and as such a certain level of professionalism is expected. Most businesses have a uniform or dress code for team members. This ensures everyone understands what standard of dress is expected when attending the workplace. A Code of Conduct is similar, except it sets out the expected behaviour of workplace attendees.

Legal obligations for business owners and managers, including that you operate a safe workplace. A breach of a code of conduct may result in disciplinary action if behaviour is considered particularly serious. Without a code of conduct, a workplace may not have the grounds for taking any action against a perpetrator, and/or may leave themselves open to legal action from the complainant.

WHO DOES IT APPLY TO?

A Code of Conduct should be worded to apply broadly to any person entering or attending a workplace or event. This ensures the Code applies to persons other than direct employees – including persons on work experience, contractors or non-employee attendees at an event.

GETTING THE BEST FROM YOUR TEAM

A Code of Conduct can help you get the best from your team. Research indicates that staff members who experience harassment take more sick leave and work less efficiently. A team member who experiences racial slurs, demeaning comments about their physical appearance or unwelcome sexual attention may feel so uncomfortable they leave – or bring a harassment action against your workplace. On the other hand, team members who feel their contribution is valued are more likely to enjoy coming to work and in turn will be more productive.

What one person thinks is a joke may be deeply hurtful or offensive

“ A Code of Conduct makes expected behaviour clear for everyone. ”

to another. A Code of Conduct makes expected behaviour clear for everyone. Think of a Code of Conduct as a form of ‘rules of the game’ that is the workplace or workplace social event.

WHERE CAN I GET HELP WITH A CODE OF CONDUCT?

AFRA has drafted two Code of Conduct examples available for members to view and adapt in their business. These are available in the members’ section of the AFRA website under Workplace Library>Policies & Templates.

AFRA is also in the process of creating training materials in support of these documents for use in our member’s workplaces.

Here’s a brief overview of what a Code of Conduct can achieve for you:

- **Maintain Professionalism:**

A professional and inclusive workplace is key. A code of Conduct sets the standard for acceptable behavior, fostering a culture of hard work without any inappropriate antics.

- **Encourage Positive Communication:**

Many people love a good chat, but it’s crucial to draw the line at bullying. A Workplace Code of Conduct promotes friendly banter while discouraging any behavior that might harm the team spirit.

- **Ensure Enjoyable Events:**

Whether it’s a corporate gathering or a team-building session, having

an Events Code of Conduct ensures that everyone has a good time without any hiccups.

- **Set the Right Atmosphere:**

Every event, whether casual or formal, should be a positive experience and maintain a balance. An Events Code of Conduct encourages an inclusive environment where everyone can relax and enjoy themselves, by outlining acceptable behaviour and ensuring that the event’s purpose isn’t overshadowed by excessive antics.

- **Respect the Rules:** A Code of Conduct ensures that all attendees understand that following the rules is expected and important. Whether it’s a normal workday, a team-building exercise or a celebration, maintaining a respectful atmosphere ensures everyone feels safe and enjoys the experience. ●

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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...

Shaun Lindsay

Business Name: Ready Movers

Business Location: Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, and Darwin



Do you have a Nick Name?

Lindsay

How long have you been in the removals industry?

20 years

How did you get into it?

I was working as a delivery driver for a furniture and homewares company called House and Garden and I spotted an opportunity to deliver new furniture to client's homes after my work hours, at the same time I also started doing small furniture removals, my first truck was a 1986 Ford Trader with an 18 cube Pantech.

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

Biggest change is Pantechs to 20 foot containers. Biggest challenge – finding quality staff with the right work ethic, attitude, and experience.

Coffee or Tea?

Both

Favourite holiday destination?

Berlin

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

Spag bol with lots of cheese!

Do you play a musical instrument/play a sport/have a hobby?

No musical instruments for me, my hobbies – game fishing and I own a few racing greyhounds

When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A professional rugby league player. ●



Submit your photos, gossip and rumors to
The Ferret c/o ceo@afra.com.au.
All submission handled confidentially.

Many a long term reader of this newsletter will recall The Ferret. The Ferret was responsible for sniffing out potential gossip and other interesting titbits 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....

This edition of The Ferret is perhaps the best gossip we have ever had! Long time AFRA personality [redacted] from removalist member [name withheld] was allegedly involved in [redacted] and was seen [redacted redacted redacted] only to then [redacted] later that same week. Unfortunately [name withheld] has since [redacted on legal advice]. See photo. There is a lesson in this for everyone – give the Ferret usable gossip!

GOT GOSSIP FOR THE FERRET?



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