



ON THE move

93

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AFRA CONFERENCE
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ON THE move

The Official publication of the Australian Furniture Removers Association

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BY NICKI FRENCH

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

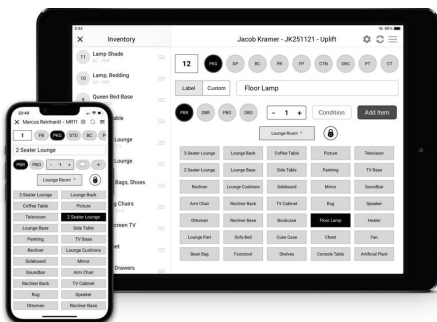
Welcome to the latest edition of *On the Move*. Every time I read through this magazine, I am reminded of the incredible scope and diversity of our industry. Whether you are running a single-truck family business or managing a multi-national fleet, we all share the same baseline: we keep Australia moving, and we do it to a standard that sets us apart.

Being an AFRA member isn't just about carrying a badge; it's about a commitment to doing things the right way. While unregulated operators in the broader market continue to cut corners, our members continue to invest in what matters – rigorous training, safe equipment, and ethical business practices. In an economic environment where every dollar counts, that blue-chip reputation is what keeps clients trusting us with their entire lives packed into the back of our trucks.

“We want to ensure that every single voice has been heard. If you couldn't make it to a roadshow but still have questions, or if you have any concerns at all – no matter how small – please reach out to the office and share them. Your input is vital as we take this next step together.**”**

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To ensure we can protect and grow that reputation for the next generation, we've spent a lot of time recently discussing the future of our association. As many of you know, we have been conducting a series of roadshows to discuss the proposed changes to the AFRA constitution.

In our industry, quiet rooms usually mean one of two things: either everyone is flat-out on the trucks, or the proposals pass the “pub test” and you're generally happy with the direction we're heading.

The feedback we *have* received from those who attended certainly suggests the latter – there is a widespread consensus that it is time for change and that these modernisations are exactly what AFRA needs to stay strong, compliant, and relevant.

However, a constitution belongs to its members, not just the Council. We want to ensure that every single voice has been heard.

If you couldn't make it to a roadshow but still have questions, or if you have any concerns at all – no matter how small – please reach out to the office and share them. Your input is vital as we take this next step together.

Thank you for your continued dedication to upholding the AFRA benchmark. Take care of your teams, stay safe on the roads, and enjoy the read. ●

BY SIMONE HILL



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The year continues to move at pace, with several important projects now reaching completion and beginning to roll out to members.

Over recent months, significant work has gone into the development of AFRA's updated training content. I'm pleased to advise that the new WHS training videos have now been completed and are currently being progressively released through the training platform. These updated modules are designed to provide clearer, more practical guidance for operational staff and reflect current best practice across the industry.

We have also completed filming and production of the new Chain of Responsibility (CoR) training videos. These modules are currently being reviewed by the NHVR prior to release, and we anticipate making them available to members shortly. This has been a substantial project involving extensive planning, consultation and technical input, and I would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise throughout the process. Providing high-quality, practical training resources remains a key priority for AFRA as we continue to strengthen standards across the industry. A big thanks to Simran for heading up this important work.

As members are aware, consultation regarding the proposed membership restructure and transition to a new legal structure is continuing. Over recent months I have held a number of both face-to-face meetings and online Teams sessions with members across the country to discuss the proposed changes, answer questions and hear feedback directly. I appreciate the constructive engagement from members who have participated in these discussions.

Transparent consultation remains critically important throughout this process. Members are encouraged to contact me directly by phone or email should they wish to discuss any aspect of the proposed changes further. A member survey has now been distributed and we strongly encourage all members to complete and return their responses. The feedback received will assist Council in finalising the proposed model and, following this process, we will be in a position to provide members with more detailed information regarding the proposed fee structure relevant to their individual businesses.

The past month has also marked several important milestones within the AFRA office. Rose recently celebrated 20 years with AFRA – an extraordinary achievement and testament to her dedication, professionalism and commitment to the Association over two decades. Her knowledge and steady support



“Conference bookings open soon and we look forward to welcoming members for what promises to be an engaging and valuable program.”

continue to play an integral role in the day-to-day operation of the office.

I also recently marked five years with AFRA, while Simran celebrated her first anniversary with the Association. The continued delivery of quality support is only possible at AFRA through the hard work and commitment of the entire team, and I take this opportunity to sincerely thank them for their ongoing efforts and professionalism.

Planning for Conference is also progressing well. This year AFRA is working with a new external conference organiser, DCB Events, who are delivering the coordination of the event. Conference bookings are due to open as I write, and we look forward to welcoming members for what promises to be an engaging and valuable program. See the report in this edition of OTM for further details.

As always, AFRA remains committed to supporting members, strengthening standards and ensuring the Association continues to evolve in a way that reflects the needs of a modern and nationally representative industry. I look forward to continuing to work with members throughout the remainder of the year – and see you in Cairns! ●



BY SIMRAN KAUR

TRAINING & COMPLIANCE UPDATE

The past few months have continued to be extremely productive across AFRA training and compliance initiatives, with significant progress being made across several major projects and audit activities nationwide.

A major focus over recent months has been the continued development of both the new WHS and Chain of Responsibility (CoR) training video programs, with filming now successfully completed across multiple practical industry scenarios. These projects have been designed to better reflect real operational environments and provide workers with clearer, more engaging and practical training content that aligns closely with the day-to-day realities of the removals industry.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to Two Men and a Truck and Holloway Removals for generously providing access to their staff, facilities and operational

“ A major focus over recent months has been the continued development of both the new WHS and Chain of Responsibility (CoR) training video programs, with filming now successfully completed across multiple practical industry scenarios. ”

environments throughout filming. Their support and willingness to assist played a significant role in helping bring these projects together in a practical and realistic way. We would also like to acknowledge Max for sharing his extensive industry knowledge and operational expertise throughout the filming and development process, which has been invaluable in ensuring the content remains practical, relevant, and industry focused.

We have also continued conducting audits across South Australia, Sydney, Queensland and Victoria. We would like to sincerely thank all members and businesses involved for their cooperation, preparation, and professionalism throughout the audit process. We greatly appreciate the effort made by companies who have been providing documentation ahead of scheduled audits, as this significantly improves efficiency and allows for a smoother assessment process overall.

As a reminder to members, the physical onsite component of an audit is focused on reviewing facilities, depots, warehouses, operational systems, and observing how processes are implemented in practice.

However, all required audit documentation must still be submitted electronically prior to the audit wherever possible. This ensures documentation can be reviewed thoroughly before the onsite assessment takes place and helps avoid delays or incomplete reviews on the day. Please ensure all requested documents are sent directly to: training@afra.com.au

If you have any training, audit or compliance-related questions, please feel free to contact us at training@afra.com.au.

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FWC Emergency Fuel Cost Order

On 20 April 2026, the Fair Work Commission (FWC) made the emergency *Road Transport Contractual Chain Order – Fuel Cost Recovery – 2026* (RTCCO). The Order continues to operate until the Australian Institute of Petroleum reports that the weekly diesel TGP is below \$2.00 per litre.

In late March 2026 changes to the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) were made to empower the FWC to make 'time sensitive' road transport contractual chain and minimum standard orders where events or circumstances are having, or are likely to imminently have, a significant national negative impact on the transport industry.

WHO IS COVERED AND WHAT ARE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES?

Transport operators of all sizes, from public companies to owner-drivers, in road transport contractual chains (except for those in the cash in transit industry) may be covered by this RTCCO. The 'chain' is perhaps easiest to understand if you think of how the chain of responsibility works in the Heavy Vehicle National Law. The RTCCO requires upstream businesses (primary and secondary parties) to take action that ensure those downstream are paid the amounts necessary to recover the increased cost of fuel. Primary parties must take reasonable steps to ensure that this is happening down the chain, if secondary parties are engaging owner drivers (regulated road transport contractors). Notes:

- Primary parties are businesses at the top of the transport chain. An example would be Coles or Woolworths engaging Big Transport to deliver goods.
- Secondary parties are those further down the chain. For example, if Big Transport engages an owner driver to perform some of the Coles work, both Big Transport and the owner driver would be 'secondary parties'.
- 'Small business employers' under the Act, which are not road transport operators, are exempted from the requirement to take reasonable steps to make sure everyone in the chain is being compensated for fuel price variations.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN IN PRACTICE?

Any of the three following circumstances will satisfy the fuel adjustment obligations in the RTCCO:

1. Adjustment of the rate in accordance with an applicable State or Territory industrial instrument involving the application of a 'rise and fall' formula or cost model to account for or address recovery of the increased cost of fuel. This is primarily directed at

those whose rates are regulated by Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act in NSW.

2. *Contract or applicable collective agreement*: adjustment of the rate in accordance with the application of a 'rise and fall' formula, cost model or cost benchmark in a contract or applicable collective agreement to account for or address recovery of the increased cost of fuel.
3. *Ongoing or special arrangement between persons in a road transport contractual chain*: adjustment of the rate in accordance with an agreed 'rise and fall' formula, cost model or other benchmarking methodology to account for or address recovery of the increased cost of fuel. These mechanisms may be applied in a standardised way on the basis of a reasonable averaging of the increased cost of fuel to a group of transport operators or owner-drivers engaged by a single transport operator.

Parties in dispute about the implementation or operation of the RTCCO must first genuinely try to resolve the dispute as between themselves. If the parties cannot resolve the dispute one of them may refer the dispute to the FWC. Then, the FWC may use dispute resolution to resolve the dispute. Should the dispute continue to be unresolved, the FWC may arbitrate the dispute with the parties' consent.

Intended consequences

According to the FWC, the RTCCO is intended to "allow the increased cost of fuel to be recovered by vulnerable participants in road transport contractual chains and passed on up the chain..." Put more simply, owner-drivers and transport operators that do not have contractual fuel levies, or thus far have *not* received any or adequate or ongoing payments to compensate for increased fuel costs, may now have legal rights to gain some relief.

Pain points

The FWC recognises that the RTCCO may have pain points. Its decision highlights that this RTCCO is:

- the first time that the FWC's new powers have been exercised; and
- the novelty of the RTCCO and the urgency with which it has been developed makes it possible that there will be unintended consequences.

This, plus the rapid and unpredictable evolution of the current Middle East conflict, are why the FWC has made the RTCCO subject to review after the first month of its operation and then every three months thereafter. ●

If you would like further information, including a longer explanation of the RTCCO, please don't hesitate to email afrahelpline@bristowlegal.com.au

AFRA CONFERENCE CAIRNS

Cairns provides a spectacular tropical backdrop for the 2026 AFRA Conference – Moving Into The Future. With the Great Barrier Reef, the ancient Daintree Rainforest, the idyllic beach towns of Port Douglas, and impressive waterfalls in the Atherton Tablelands all on the doorstep, there has never been a better reason to head north.

Members and Associate Members will be sent a link to book conference tickets and discounted accommodation. All AFRA Regular Members have one ticket to the conference included as part of their membership – please be sure to take advantage of this no additional cost ticket. If you have any queries regarding your ticket, please email dcb.events@afra.com.au. With the opportunity to gain industry insights, catch up with friends, network with new people in the industry, and expand your skillset, the conference provides a variety of opportunities for everyone.

ACCOMMODATION

Conference attendees will be staying at the stunning Crystalbrook Riley – a five-star luxury resort right where Cairns begins and worries end. Perfectly positioned on the Cairns Esplanade, the hotel features a lagoon swimming pool spanning over 1,000 square metres with a private man-made beach, the Eléme Day Spa, a 24-hour



fitness centre, and signature dining and bar experiences including Paper Crane and the rooftop bar Rocco. The property is just a ten-minute walk from the Great Barrier Reef Departure Terminal – making it the perfect base to extend your stay and explore the region.

SOCIAL EVENTS

We have some incredible social events planned for this year's conference – but we're keeping the locations under wraps for now! Stay tuned for the big reveal as we get closer to the event. We promise it will be worth the wait.

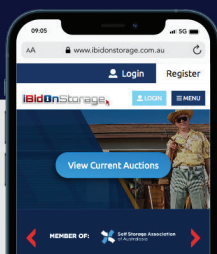
REGISTRATION

Registration is coming soon. Keep an eye on your inbox and the AFRA members' website under the Events tab for details. Do not let your complimentary ticket go to waste – make the most of your AFRA Membership and join us in Cairns for what is set to be an unforgettable conference. ●

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TOOLBOX TALKS – WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR REMOVALIST COMPANIES?

AFRA provides members with suggested Tool box topics and supporting documents in the Members section of the website. But why are toolbox talks necessary, what should they cover and how should they be recorded?

Toolbox talks are not specifically prescribed as a standalone legal requirement under Australian workplace health and safety (WHS) legislation. However, the duties that toolbox talks help fulfil are legal requirements.

Across Australia, employers and Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) are required to provide workers with the information, training, instruction and supervision necessary to work safely. Duty holders must also consult with workers on health and safety matters that may affect them. Toolbox talks are one of the most practical and widely accepted methods of meeting these obligations.

For removalist companies, this is particularly important because crews operate in constantly changing environments, including homes, apartments, warehouses, loading docks, depots, roadsides and customer sites. Removalist businesses may also perform multiple Chain of Responsibility (CoR) functions simultaneously, including employer, operator, scheduler, packer, loader and unloader duties.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD TOOLBOX TALKS BE CONDUCTED?

There is no single Australia-wide law prescribing that toolbox talks must occur weekly, fortnightly or monthly. The legal obligation is that consultation, instruction and

training must occur as often as is reasonably necessary to manage the risks associated with the work being undertaken.

For removalist companies, toolbox talks should generally be conducted:

- regularly as part of normal WHS management
- before high-risk or unusual jobs
- when work conditions or environments change
- after an incident, injury or near miss
- when new equipment, procedures or hazards are introduced
- when workers raise safety concerns
- when audits identify gaps in understanding or compliance

As a practical industry standard, removalist companies should consider conducting toolbox talks weekly or fortnightly for operational crews, supported by daily pre-start discussions where crews are undertaking higher-risk work or attending unfamiliar sites.

STATE AND TERRITORY REQUIREMENTS

New South Wales

New South Wales operates under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and *Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017*.

SafeWork NSW states that consultation with workers is a legal requirement and must provide workers with a genuine opportunity to contribute to WHS matters. Employers must also ensure workers receive appropriate information, training and instruction regarding workplace risks and control measures.

For NSW removalist companies, toolbox talks are an effective method of consulting with workers regarding manual handling, site access, vehicle movement, load restraint, fatigue, electrical safety and customer-site hazards.

Recommended frequency: at least weekly or fortnightly for operational teams, with additional toolbox talks following incidents, when new hazards arise, or before complex relocations.

Victoria

Victoria operates under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and associated regulations.

WorkSafe Victoria states that employers must consult with employees on health and safety matters, although consultation methods may vary depending on the workplace and operational risks.

For Victorian removalist companies, toolbox talks are a practical way to meet consultation obligations where workers are exposed to changing work environments, heavy lifting, vehicle hazards and customer-site risks.

Recommended frequency: regular scheduled toolbox talks, commonly weekly or fortnightly for depot and operational staff, with additional talks when work practices, equipment, sites or risks change.

Queensland

Queensland operates under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and associated regulations.

WorkSafe Queensland states that duty holders must consult, cooperate and coordinate activities with others who share WHS duties and must consult with workers carrying out work for the business.

For Queensland removalist companies, toolbox talks should be used to communicate hazards and controls relating to loading, unloading, fatigue, heavy vehicle movement, warehouse safety, heat stress and Chain of Responsibility obligations.

Recommended frequency: regular toolbox talks, preferably

“Employers and Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) are required to provide workers with the information, training, instruction and supervision necessary to work safely.”

weekly for active operational crews, together with pre-start discussions for high-risk jobs, regional work, large commercial relocations or unusual site conditions.

South Australia

South Australia operates under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and associated regulations.

SafeWork SA states that consultation between employers and workers is a legal requirement and an essential part of proactive workplace management. SafeWork SA also provides toolbox safety talk resources to support short WHS discussions.

For South Australian removalist companies, toolbox talks assist in keeping workers informed about operational risks, audit expectations, safe systems of work and site-specific hazards.

Recommended frequency: regular toolbox talks, generally weekly or fortnightly depending on business size and operational risk, with additional talks following incidents, near misses or audit findings.

Western Australia

Western Australia operates under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2022*.

WorkSafe WA states that the legislation imposes a general duty to consult with workers, including providing workers with a reasonable opportunity to raise WHS issues and contribute to decision-making processes.

For WA removalist companies, toolbox talks help demonstrate that workers have been consulted and informed regarding workplace

hazards, including depot traffic, loading areas, manual handling, fatigue and vehicle safety.

Recommended frequency: regular toolbox talks as part of ongoing WHS consultation processes, with additional talks whenever work changes or higher-risk activities are planned.

Tasmania

Tasmania operates under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012* and associated regulations and follows the model WHS framework.

Tasmania has adopted an approved Code of Practice relating to work health and safety consultation, cooperation and coordination.

For Tasmanian removalist companies, toolbox talks are a practical method of meeting consultation and instruction obligations, particularly where crews work across changing residential, commercial and warehouse environments.

Recommended frequency: regular toolbox talks, commonly weekly or fortnightly for operational businesses, supported by pre-start discussions for higher-risk tasks.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT operates under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and associated regulations and follows the model WHS framework.

PCBUs are required to consult with workers and provide suitable information, training and instruction.

For ACT removalist companies, toolbox talks should address practical risks including manual handling, apartment access, stair carries, traffic management, loading zones, fatigue and electrical equipment safety.

Recommended frequency: regular talks appropriate to operational risk, with additional discussions before high-risk work or when conditions change.

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory operates under the *Work Health and Safety (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011*.

NT WorkSafe states that duty holders must consult, cooperate and coordinate with other duty holders and consult with workers so far as is reasonably practicable.

For NT removalist companies, toolbox talks should address remote work, fatigue, heat exposure, loading and unloading risks, vehicle checks and site access hazards.

Recommended frequency: regular toolbox talks, together with additional pre-start discussions for remote, regional, hot-weather or other higher-risk work.

WHAT SHOULD BE RECORDED?

Although legislation does not specifically require a “toolbox talk form” to be completed, maintaining records is strongly recommended. In the event of an audit, incident investigation or regulatory enquiry, documented toolbox talks may assist in demonstrating that the business provided safety information and consulted with workers.

A toolbox talk record should generally include:

- date and time
- topic discussed
- name of presenter or supervisor
- names and signatures of attendees
- hazards discussed
- control measures identified or agreed
- questions or concerns raised by workers
- follow-up actions required ●

This information is intended as general industry guidance only and should not be relied upon as legal advice. Businesses should obtain independent legal or professional advice relevant to their individual circumstances.

TOOLBOX TALKS



TEST & TAG REQUIREMENTS

Electrical safety is an important part of everyday operations within the removals industry.

Removalist businesses regularly use portable electrical equipment across depots, warehouses, trucks, workshops and customer sites, including extension leads, battery chargers, shrink wrap heat tools, office equipment, vacuums, power boards and lifting equipment chargers.

Because this equipment is frequently transported, moved between locations and exposed to operational wear and tear, regular inspection and testing is essential to ensure it remains safe to use.

WHY TEST & TAG MATTERS

Under Australian Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation, employers and Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBUs) have a duty to ensure electrical equipment used in the workplace is safe and properly maintained.

The nationally recognised standard for demonstrating compliance is: AS/NZS 3760:2022 – In-service safety inspection and testing of electrical equipment and RCDs

This Standard provides guidance on:

- Visual inspection of electrical equipment
- Electrical testing procedures
- Test tagging requirements
- Record keeping

- Inspection and testing intervals
- Testing of Residual Current Devices (RCDs)

Following AS/NZS 3760 helps businesses demonstrate they are actively managing electrical safety risks and meeting their WHS obligations.

REMOVALIST INDUSTRY CONSIDERATIONS

Electrical equipment used within the removals industry is often subject to conditions that increase the likelihood of damage, including:

- Frequent loading and unloading from vehicles
- Use across multiple worksites and customer premises
- Exposure to vibration and movement during transport
- Storage within warehouses and operational environments
- Outdoor use and varying weather conditions
- Increased handling and movement of equipment

Under AS/NZS 3760, these conditions may constitute a hostile operating environment, meaning equipment is exposed to conditions likely to result in damage or accelerated deterioration.

Many removalist businesses operate in environments that are likely to be considered hostile. Businesses should assess their own operating conditions when determining appropriate inspection and testing frequencies.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

All Australian states and territories require employers and PCBUs to ensure electrical equipment is safe for use and maintained in a safe condition.

Regulators throughout Australia recognise AS/NZS 3760:2022 as the accepted framework for electrical equipment inspection and testing.

New South Wales

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* and associated WHS Regulations require electrical equipment exposed to conditions likely to cause damage to be inspected and tested at appropriate intervals.

Victoria

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* requires employers to provide and maintain safe systems of work and safe equipment. AS/NZS 3760 is widely recognised as the accepted inspection and testing benchmark.

Queensland

The *Electrical Safety Act 2002* and WHS legislation require businesses to ensure electrical equipment is electrically safe and appropriately maintained.

South Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and Australian Capital Territory

These jurisdictions operate under harmonised WHS legislation and recognise AS/NZS 3760 as the practical framework for inspection and testing of electrical equipment.

TYPICAL INSPECTION AND TESTING INTERVAL	ENVIRONMENT
Every 3 months	Construction, demolition and mining sites
Every 6 months	Workshops, factories, warehouses and other hostile environments
Every 12 months	Commercial offices and administrative areas
Longer intervals may apply in accordance with AS/NZS 3760	Low-risk equipment that is not frequently moved

Western Australia (WA)

The Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 require electrical equipment to be maintained in a safe condition and inspected where necessary to manage electrical risks.

TYPICAL TESTING INTERVALS

AS/NZS 3760 requires inspection and testing frequencies to be determined based on the environment in which equipment is used and the level of risk.

Typical intervals are shown in the table on the opposite page.

For many removalist businesses, portable electrical equipment such as extension leads, power boards, battery chargers, vacuums, heat guns and workshop equipment will commonly require inspection and testing every 6 months due to the nature of their operating environment. Businesses should always assess their own workplace

conditions and risks when establishing testing schedules.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Every worker plays an important role in electrical safety.

Before using any electrical equipment, workers should conduct a visual inspection and immediately report any defects or damage.

Equipment should be removed from service immediately if it shows signs of:

- Frayed or exposed wiring
- Cracked plugs or sockets
- Damaged leads
- Burn marks or overheating
- Loose fittings
- Broken casings
- Missing test tags
- Equipment overdue for inspection and testing under the company's electrical safety program

Workers should never attempt to repair electrical equipment unless authorised and competent to do so.

RESIDUAL CURRENT DEVICES (RCDs)

Where portable RCDs are used, they should be regularly tested in accordance with AS/NZS 3760 and manufacturer instructions.

RCDs provide critical protection against electric shock by automatically disconnecting power when a fault is detected.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Electrical safety is everyone's responsibility. Regular inspection, testing and reporting of damaged equipment helps prevent injuries, electrical incidents, fires and equipment failures.

For removalist businesses, maintaining an effective Test & Tag program is not simply a compliance requirement – it is an important part of protecting workers, customers, facilities and the public while demonstrating a proactive approach to workplace safety. ●



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IR UPDATE



ROAD TRANSPORT CONTRACTUAL CHAIN ORDER – FUEL COSTS

The Australian Industry Group led advocacy for business throughout the making of the *Road Transport Contractual Chain Order – Fuel Cost Recovery 2026* (RTCCO) on 20 April, outlined in the preceding article.

Following the commencement of the RTCCO on 21 April, attention has turned not only to implementation and application to particular contracts and businesses at various levels of supply chains, but also to the clarity and practicality of the new obligations, and to various problems and uncertainties arising from order and its implementation in practice.

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) is now undertaking a review of the RTCCO. A hearing has been scheduled for 25 May, following the filing of submissions and evidence by 21 May. Australian Industry Group intends to continue to play a leading role in this review.

AFRA members applying the order, or who have been approached seeking increased payments for additional fuel costs, and who may have feedback or experiences relevant to the review should please contact Australian Industry Group to inform what is argued on behalf of industry: WRConsultation@australianindustrygroup.com.au

TEMPORARY FUEL SURCHARGE – NSW TRANSPORT INDUSTRY – GENERAL CARRIERS CONTRACT DETERMINATION 2017

In parallel to the RTCCO being issued, the NSW Industrial Relations Commission has issued orders increasing the temporary fuel surcharge rates payable under the NSW Transport Industry – General Carriers Contract Determination 2017.

AFRA members applying the NSW Transport Industry General Carriers Contract Determination 2017 should note that new fuel surcharge rates apply on a per kilometre basis for the period between 20 April and 17 May and can contact Australian Industry Group's Workplace Advice Line on 1300 55 66 77 for updated rate information.

The next variation to surcharge rates is expected to be issued on 18 May 2026.

VEHICLE ALLOWANCES

On 15 and 16 April, the ACTU and a number of unions applied to vary vehicle allowances in more than 40 modern awards.

Vehicle allowances in awards generally set per kilometre rates for the use of an employee's motorcar (where the employer requires the employee to use their own vehicle in performing their duties). There is also a separate per kilometre rate for motorcycles.

Unions are seeking a temporary schedule providing for monthly adjustments to vehicle allowances to compensate for increased fuel costs.

Detailed submissions are being lodged by unions and employers, with hearings scheduled for 15 May and 18 May 2026.

Applications to date include the vehicle allowance in the *Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020*, which sets a payment of \$0.98 per kilometre for use of an employee's motor car in performing their duties.

2026 ANNUAL WAGE REVIEW

Minimum rates of pay in modern awards are reviewed annually by an Expert Panel of the Fair Work Commission (FWC). The 2026 Annual Wage Review is being undertaken against a backdrop of heightened economic uncertainty, and as employers and employees face fuel price volatility, higher inflation, and rising interest rates.

The Australian Industry Group made its initial submission on 27 March, arguing that the Expert Panel should be conscious of mounting downside risks facing the economy in increasing minimum wage rates in awards, including global energy shocks, inflationary pressures and poor productivity. Employers and unions are finalising the positions they will ultimately commend to the review, with the ACTU recently increasing its claim from 5% to 6%

The FWC expected to announce its decision in early June, with minimum wages and allowances in awards to increase from 1 July 2026 (generally increases take effect in relation to a particular employee from the start of the employee's first full pay period on or after 1 July).

Each annual wage increase also sees an increase in award allowances. An important allowance for AFRA members is payable to 'any employee who is a recognised furniture carter engaged in removing and/or delivering furniture', under the Road Transport and Distribution Award 2020.

This allowance (currently \$26.15) will increase along with any award wage increase payable from 1 July. AFRA members should ensure that they not only review and increase wages (where necessary) in early June but also increase the allowance or ensure it is adequately

provided for as a component of overall remuneration.

Minimum wage rates and allowances under all modern awards are expected to increase from 1 July, including increases in rates payable under both the Road Transport and Distribution Award and the Road Transport (Long Distance Operations) Award, and the Clerks – Private Sector Award.

PAYDAY SUPERANNUATION

The last edition of *On the Move* (#92, March 2026) outlined what furniture removals employers need to know before the commencement of payday superannuation on 1 July 2026.

Members are again reminded of this significant change in when superannuation contributions must be made and the importance of reviewing superannuation arrangements prior to 1 June.

Significant resources are available to support businesses of all sizes, including the following:

Australian Industry Group (www.australianindustrygroup.com.au/resourcecentre/hr/employment-conditions/superannuation/)

This includes access to videos of very useful webinars delivered by Australian Industry Group and AustralianSuper on payday superannuation and how to prepare for it.

AustralianSuper (www.australiansuper.com/employers/paying-super/payday-super)

The ATO (www.ato.gov.au/businesses-and-organisations/super-for-employers/payday-super)

Other useful sources of information and assistance can include superannuation advisers AFRA members may work with, superannuation funds, and clearing house services.



NEW GUIDANCE ON LONG SERVICE LEAVE

The NSW Government's Industrial Relations department has issued updated guidance to help employers apply long service leave legislation in that state: www.nsw.gov.au/employment/rights-responsibilities/leave/long-service-leave/long-service-leave-guidance

The new guidance material gives employers a clearer method for working out who is entitled to long service leave, how service should be counted, and how payments should be calculated. It deals with areas that often create confusion, including:

- Assessing continuous service
- Assess absences for casual workers
- Determining entitlements for workers on fixed term contracts
- Calculating ordinary hours of work for workers with fluctuating hours
- Determining when to use ordinary remuneration and when to use average weekly wage
- The treatment of bonuses for long service leave purposes
- Managing the taking of single days of long service leave
- Accruals after 15 years of service

Other states and territories also offer resources to support employers in complying with Long Service Leave obligations as follows:

“ The new guidance material gives employers a clearer method for working out who is entitled to long service leave, how service should be counted, and how payments should be calculated. ”

Queensland – www.vic.gov.au/long-service-leave

South Australia – www.safework.sa.gov.au/workers/wages-and-conditions/long-service-leave

Tasmania – www.worksafe.tas.gov.au/topics/laws-and-compliance/long-service-leave

Victoria – www.vic.gov.au/long-service-leave

Western Australia – www.wa.gov.au/organisation/private-sector-labour-relations/long-service-leave-western-australia

ACT – www.worksafe.act.gov.au/laws-and-compliance/long-service-leave

Northern Territory – www.nt.gov.au/employ/for-employees-in-nt/holidays-and-leave/long-service-leave

ZERO-TOLERANCE DRUGS POLICY MISAPPLIED AND EMPLOYEE WHO FAILED THE TEST REAPPOINTED

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) has determined an unfair dismissal application under s.394 of the Fair Work Act following a positive drug test. Mr Brew, a long-serving Area Supervisor with 27 years' service and no prior disciplinary record, was summarily dismissed after returning a positive drug test for THC metabolites. The level detected was low and above the laboratory cutoff, but expert evidence established that Mr Brew was not intoxicated or impaired for work at the time of testing.

The FWC found there was a valid reason for dismissal in that Mr Brew breached the employer's drug and alcohol procedure by returning a

positive test. He was notified of the reason, given an opportunity to respond, and afforded procedural fairness during the show cause process.

However, the FWC ultimately found the dismissal was harsh, unjust or unreasonable. Central to this finding was the way the employer had applied its policy and disciplinary process. Although the policy referred to "zero tolerance", it did not mandate dismissal for a positive test and expressly contemplated a range of disciplinary outcomes, including warnings and other corrective measures.


According to the FWC, the employer treated dismissal as the

default or required outcome and failed to give adequate weight to mitigating factors required by its own procedures. Those factors included Mr Brew's lengthy and unblemished service, the very low metabolite reading, an absence of impairment, his cooperation and contrition, and steps taken to satisfy himself he was fit for work. The FWC also found aspects of the testing procedure were not followed correctly.

In the circumstances, the rigid application of the policy was found to have rendered the dismissal disproportionate, and Mr Brew was ordered to be reinstated with continuity of service and back pay. ●

QUESTIONS? AFRA members with queries on rates of pay or allowances under any modern award (or for non-award covered employees), payday superannuation, long service leave, drug and alcohol policies, counselling, discipline or termination of employment, or any other workplace relations or employment matters should contact the Australian Industry Group Workplace Advice Line on **1300 55 66 77**.

The Australian Industry Group can also assist employers in reviewing drug and alcohol policies, training managers and staff, and responding to any specific incidents.







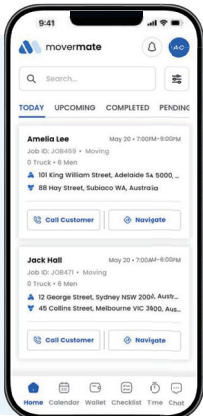
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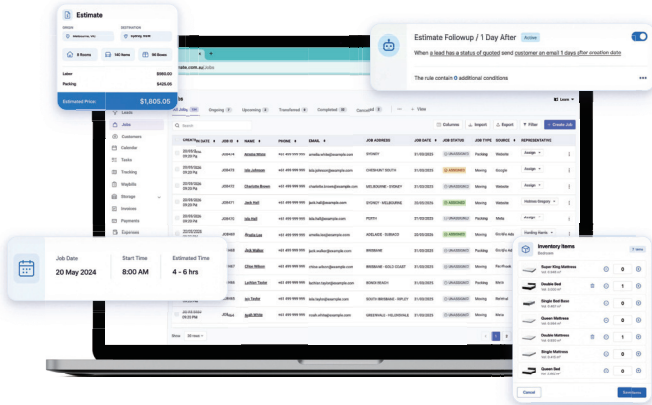
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Branden Shepherd
Completed call



CALL SUMMARY

- ⚡ Branden would like to know more about your storage options and pricing.
- ⚡ Dave provided Branden with availability and helped schedule an appointment.
- ⚡ Branden confirmed the date for April 22nd.

TRANSCRIPT

10:05

Branden Shepherd
Incoming Call...

Remind Me

Decline

5 MINUTES WITH..

AFRA's Council comprises of 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, and your representative council member is an important contact. In each edition of *On The Move* we spend five minutes getting to know a board member. This month we chat with...



David Drezner

Member for Victoria

Business name: Fragile Removals & Storage

Location: Head office in Melbourne with branches in Sydney, Brisbane and Perth

Do you have a nick name?

No, our sales manager often calls me grumpy.

How long have you been in the removals industry? 22 years

How did you get your start? When I was 24 and looking for work, my uncle mentioned that one of his clients owned a removals company and needed workers. I had been working in sales, which I hated, so the chance to work outdoors doing manual labour sounded great. About a year later – and one roller door incident at Storage King Windsor – I was out of a job. Two weeks later, a former work colleague approached me about starting our own removals business, and the rest is history.

What is the biggest change or challenge you have seen in the industry during your time? Customers today expect faster responses, lower prices, more transparency, and near-perfect service, while operators face rising costs in wages, fuel, tolls, insurance, compliance, and equipment.

Another major challenge has been the rise of lead-generation platforms and price comparison websites. While they generate work, they have also increased pricing pressure across the industry and made it harder for quality operators to stand out purely on service standards. Companies now need to balance competitive pricing with maintaining trained staff, compliant operations, proper insurance, and quality equipment.

In many ways, the industry has become split between highly professional operators and low-cost operators working in the grey economy. Maintaining standards while remaining competitive has been one of the biggest long-term pressures on established removal companies over the past two decades.

Despite these challenges, the industry has also become more professional, more systemised, and more scalable for operators willing to invest in quality systems and long-term reputation.

Coffee or tea? Coffee religiously

Favorite holiday destination?

Phillip Island (in the summer) or Byron Bay

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

Sweet Chilli & Sour Cream Potato Chips.

Do you play a musical instrument/play a sport?

No musical bone in me. Dirt bikes and surfing any day.

Finish this sentence: As a kid, when I grew up I wanted to be... an engineer. ●

Happy Pets - Happy Customers - Happy People

AFRA COMPLIANCE ESPRESSO

A QUICK AND CONCENTRATED SHOT OF AFRA REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

2 (c) *An inventory and condition report (at uplift and downlift) must be provided for interstate and country removals.*

2 (d) *An inventory must also be provided for all goods going into store.*

These clauses exist to ensure there is a clear and reliable record of the goods being transported and/or stored and, in the case of interstate or country removals, their condition at both collection and delivery. Inventories and condition reports are an important

safeguard where goods are handled over extended distances and timeframes and may pass through multiple stages of transport or storage. These records assist in protecting both the client and the member by providing an objective reference point in the

event of any dispute regarding missing or damaged items.

Where a dispute is raised by a client regarding the loss of, or condition of, goods after delivery, failure to have undertaken an inventory or condition report will weigh heavily in the client's favour. ●



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