

# AUSTRALIAN FEDERATED UNION OF LOCOMOTIVE EMPLOYEES

Circular: 41/20  
Ref: Bulk Q&A  
20/04/2020



## Aurizon Bulk Questions and Answers

Dear members,

Over the past several weeks your depot AFULE representatives have been participating in regular phone hook-ups with your state office to address localised issues relating to the COVID 19 crisis. Many of the changes you have seen around your workplace are a direct result of AFULE delegates participating regularly and passing on depot concerns to be addressed.

Below I am passing on to the wider membership the questions that I have raised on your behalf and the response I have received from Bulk Group Executive - Clay McDonald and Bulk General Manager – Sarah Dixon.

**From:** McDonald, Clayton <Clayton.McDonald@aurizon.com.au>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 March 2020 6:42 PM  
**To:** AFULE <statesecretary@afule.org.au>; McKeiver, Edward <Edward.McKeiver@aurizon.com.au>  
**Subject:** RE: AFULE member raised issues

Hi Mick, thanks for your email and providing details of member related issues.

We have looked to address each one of these and will then connect representatives to discuss detail with appropriate management to work through. This email is without prejudice and taking into consideration the current environment and based on the principals of keeping people, safe, keeping people healthy and keeping the business sustainable. My notes are in Red below. We can discuss further tomorrow in our meeting,

Regards,

Clay

**From:** AFULE <statesecretary@afule.org.au>  
**Sent:** Friday, 27 March 2020 1:38 PM  
**To:** McKeiver, Edward <Edward.McKeiver@aurizon.com.au>; McDonald, Clayton <Clayton.McDonald@aurizon.com.au>  
**Subject:** AFULE member raised issues

Good afternoon Ed & Clay,

As mentioned during our phone hook-ups today I have some concerns/ issues that have been raised by AFULE members that I would appreciate a company response on so that I can feed that information back.

- Traincrew are seeking the urgent Implementation of signage in depots encouraging to keep a 1.5m distance where possible - **agree, has been, or is being implemented**
- Signage in meal rooms as to the maximum number of employees to be in any room at any time – **agree, has been or is being implemented where appropriate**
- The opening of additional training rooms etc or outdoor gazebo's established to allow space between employees – **makes sense - being arranged where possible**

**Traincrew representing Traincrew**

- The immediate scaling back on the requirement of Tuckerbox jobs, we suggest this is done in consultation with individual work groups i.e. Coal SEQ, Bulk & AER. This is a big concern of Traincrew and the feedback is that the loss of potential layover expenses is not a high priority to them at this time. – Principal – we will look to reduce where possible during the current circumstance. Reducing camp jobs is being worked through. Change jobs in replace of layovers that can be supported without compromising service levels and critical customer orders will be considered. This is likely to reduce the number of layovers but not remove them. NWL looks slightly easier than the NCL. Where a layover needs to occur we will seek to book hotel rooms for the exclusive use of Aurizon employees (Block and permanent booking). At this point there is no evidence that Hotel or Motel rooms contribute to the spread of the virus. This is supported by the Governments decision to isolate international visitors in hotels upon arrival from overseas into Australia. The increase in change jobs will require a change to the master roster. We are looking for support in reducing consultation timeframes so we can implement and that the change in the master roster does not represent 1 of the 3 enabled by the EA. Please advise. Members also raised the issue in regards to the use of Taxi's. We are aiming to reduce the amount of taxi rides required by Aurizon staff by using crew cars and hire cars. Despite this there may be situations where a taxi is required to relocate staff.
- Also testers are a constant issue raised as a point of concern due to hygiene, I took notice of the number of positive breath tests in the business, however, is there an alternative to the wall mounted tester. There has been no change to our policy on this matter at this stage. Information has been provided on the safe and Hygienic use of these machines.
- We are seeking that Bulk employees on AFD windows are informed to remain at home unless operationally essential. We believe this can be supported in the current circumstances however we need commitment that the employee is ready for work, able to move at short notice and is contactable. If it doesn't work effectively we will need to go back to presenting at the depot
- We are requesting that AER employees on SHED shift are informed to remain at home unless operationally essential, these employees would be expected to remain fit for duty for their shift length and ready to complete their shift if called. We believe this can be supported in the current circumstances however we need commitment that the employee is ready for work, able to move at short notice and is contactable. If it doesn't work effectively we will need to go back to presenting at the depot so we would appreciate you communicating this to members.
- A relaxed approach to the taking of personal leave due to doctor shortage and the advice to stay home if ill We can take this into account in the current situation.
- Members are seeking the regular and professional cleaning of air con filters in locomotives, news outlets have been reporting this is a maintenance issue that requires regular cleaning to minimise spread. This could take place during provisioning. We will need some more time and CMO advice to respond to this.
- Members are seeking the maintenance log of how often Diesel locomotive air conditioner filters are cleaned as the belief is that this is not completed. As per the above

I appreciate your time in responding to the issues that I have raised here.

Kind regards,

Mick

**From:** Dixon, Sarah <Sarah.Dixon@aurizon.com.au>

**Sent:** Sunday, 19 April 2020 1:07 PM

**To:** Mick McKittrick <mick@afule.org.au>

**Cc:** Mel <mel@afule.org.au>; Matthews, Aaron <Aaron.Matthews@aurizon.com.au>; Orth, Thomas <Thomas.Orth@aurizon.com.au>; Currin, Mark <Mark.Currin@aurizon.com.au>; Fulton, Ian <Ian.Fulton@aurizon.com.au>; Nolan, Declan <Declan.Nolan@aurizon.com.au>

**Subject:** RE: Questions raised by AFULE Bulk delegates

Mick,

Thank you for sharing the feedback and concerns raised by your representatives on behalf of your members across Bulk depots in Queensland.

**Traincrew representing Traincrew**

I asked for information from each of my Regional Operations Managers, which has informed my responses noted in blue text below.

Happy to discuss this further as keen to work together to address concerns from your members in Bulk East train crew.

Sarah

**From:** Mick McKittrick <[mick@afule.org.au](mailto:mick@afule.org.au)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, 15 April 2020 9:53 AM  
**To:** Dixon, Sarah <[Sarah.Dixon@aurizon.com.au](mailto:Sarah.Dixon@aurizon.com.au)>  
**Cc:** Mel <[mel@afule.org.au](mailto:mel@afule.org.au)>  
**Subject:** Questions raised by AFULE Bulk delegates

Good morning Sarah,

Yesterday I had a phone hook-up with AFULE Bulk reps from across the state. A number of questions/ concerns were raised and I respectfully ask that you reply with responses that I can share with AFULE members.

Despite a company directive to limit the number of drivers in a locomotive cab at any time to essential purposes only, I have been notified of cases (predominantly) Acacia Ridge/Maryborough whereby there have been cases of 3 drivers in a cab. In driver only territory we can see no essential reasoning to have 3 drivers in a locomotive cab. Would you agree, and if not, can you please provide an essential reason for 3 drivers to be in locomotive cab in DOO territory. Part of this issue may relate to the unavailability of work cars to transport crews to their locations, could the Bulk business, as Coal has done, look into the short term hire of additional cars? It appears the problem depots for car shortages are Cloncurry, Emerald, Acacia Ridge and Maryborough.

In week commencing 30 March and on Wednesday last week a stock service was rostered TDO from Maryborough to Dinmore. An Acacia Ridge driver is planned to assist them with their first delivery at Dinmore, therefore 3 drivers in the cab for a period of time. It was felt this came under Operationally Required as one of the situations where 3 persons in a cab was supported. Also Brodie Jackson, as Regional Operations Leader at ACR, has attended both Dinmore and Holmview deliveries and would have been the third person in the cab. In these situations above, the involved Drivers were consulted and did not raised any concerns.

I am unaware of any issues with car shortages requiring crews to travel in locos. Each Bulk East depot has reviewed car numbers with Maryborough hiring 3 additional vehicles, Acacia Ridge having 1 additional vehicle and Stuart hiring 2 additional vehicles to support the reduced number of employees in vehicle and the removal wherever possible of use of public transport such as taxis and TravelTrain.

Concerns have been raised regarding the cleanliness of locomotive cabs after leaving the locomotive maintainers area in Townsville, particularly with the second driving cab not being cleaned. I understand that Declan Knowlan(?) Nolan is the responsible manager for that area. Can we confirm that an updated work method statement has been completed due to COVID 19? Is there a locomotive cleaning checklist? If not, can one be developed to put our members at ease that the locomotive cabs have been provisioned and cleaned before leaving the shed?

Aaron and Declan have brought members of the Locomotive Maintenance team and Stuart Train Crew together to discuss a cleaning checklist. I believe Rob Daniel as the AFULE representative in Townsville is part of this discussion. The group is also expected to discuss the condition of the cabs when the locomotive presents for provisioning given the COVID-19 protocol where train crew clean the main surfaces of the cab and toilet facilities at the start and end of their shift and cleaning products are provided to support this cleaning.

**Traincrew representing Traincrew**

There isn't an updated Work Method Statement under COVID-19 as the cleaning approach by Maintenance staff was reviewed and confirmed as appropriate to address required hygiene and cleaning under coronavirus advice.

Are any of the accommodation buildings that employees are laying over in designated quarantine sites? If so and employees feel uncomfortable staying at one of these locations, would the company entertain individual employees nominating with sufficient notification, laying over at a different hotel?

None of our accommodation providers have informed us that they are designated quarantine sites.

As you are aware from other discussions with Aurizon, we have also had very clearly articulated cleaning protocols with each external accommodation provider and cleaning service provider for Aurizon held crew quarters. Aurizon had already implemented protocols with every accommodation provider for escalated communication if a positive COVID-19 case was known to have stayed at their accommodation.

Bulk East engaged with our Chief Medical Officer when leaders passed on concerns from some of their teams. Our CMO therefore clarified that given self isolation is removal from contact with others, there was no additional risk to be addressed.

If AFULE would like to propose a detailed process to support booking accommodation for tucker box jobs where some team members opt to secure their own accommodation, I am open to considering if this could be adopted to address team members' concerns.

I am receiving feedback that Aurizon employees are being called in on AFD windows to complete online training (months prior to expiry), fuel call cars, clean call cars externally etc. Below I have attached a response from Clay outlining his position on essential work to be done on AFD windows, I am unaware of the current process of calling drivers to attend work not working, if this is the case, will you send a directive to your frontline supervisors to limit attendances on AFD windows to be inline with as has been outlined by Clay? The issues I have outlined above could be completed by Traincrew already on shift and not by calling an additional driver on site.

- *We are seeking that Bulk employees on AFD windows are informed to remain at home unless operationally essential. We believe this can be supported in the current circumstances however we need commitment that the employee is ready for work, able to move at short notice and is contactable. If it doesn't work effectively we will need to go back to presenting at the depot*

Similarly with AER, I have had reports of drivers not being released by some frontline supervisors, can the below be reinforced?

- *We are requesting that AER employees on SHED shift are informed to remain at home unless operationally essential, these employees would be expected to remain fit for duty for their shift length and ready to complete their shift if called. We believe this can be supported in the current circumstances however we need commitment that the employee is ready for work, able to move at short notice and is contactable. If it doesn't work effectively we will need to go back to presenting at the depot so we would appreciate you communicating this to members.*

Our members have no issue at all completing work that needs to be undertaken to ensure the smooth operation of the business whilst on windows or shed shifts, with the threat of COVID 19 however, we are hoping that Aurizon maintain their commitment to limit unnecessary time at the depots.

In March, depots that operate on Aurizon Network infrastructure needed to complete training in Rail Corridor Safety Standard, as Aurizon Network replaced their previous Standard 148. This was operationally required training. This training had very specific timelines for completion to support Aurizon Network's move to a less complicated approach to safe track access in their corridors.

**Traincrew representing Traincrew**

As you noted, there are also other requirements within a depot, especially given the increased focus on cleaning and hygiene actions being completed at least daily, that can not always be accommodated within existing shifts without risk of extending the shift.

As such, feedback from frontline leaders was that they were working with their teams in line with Clay's commitment above.

Can AFULE please provide examples of where your members felt this was not the case, so that I can explore this concern further.

There are ongoing kiosk issues... Traincrew are seeking the ability to request payroll data that has been sent by their local ROL's to the pay office. We are seeking clarity around changes that have been made to reduce a drivers expected take home wage. We are seeking reasoning as to why what a driver has entered into the kiosk has been altered by an ROL. This will assist with fortnightly budgeting and could be used as a learning tool by traincrew if claiming expenses that they are not entitled to.

Bulk East implemented a process where any change by a leader to submitted kiosk information by train crew would be supported by a conversation with the impacted employee or at the very least an email to clarify the adjustment made, so that both parties could learn as we get use to operating under our new EA.

Can AFULE please provide examples where changes have been made to train crew timesheets, impacting their take home pay, where a communication from the leader wasn't provided and I will ensure we investigate these.

There is an increasing issue around daily rosters not displaying a finish time or shift length, this is especially apparent in Rockhampton it appears. To avoid disputation, can this be rectified so that rosters display a sign on and sign off time.

The Operations Planning team were made aware of the issue with the Rockhampton rosters and have escalated to IT as they believe that a local setting has been changed. We were not aware of this issue occurring at other depots outside Rockhampton. Tom and his leaders in Rockhampton will provide updates to the Rockhampton team on how this is progressing.

Can AFULE please provide details of other depots where daily rosters are not displaying a finish time or shift length so I can investigate these with our IT team.

I appreciate your time to respond to these issues as we all continue to work through the challenges of COVID 19.

Regards,

Mick McKitrick  
AFULE State Secretary

If you have any issues or concerns you would like to raise with AFULE please email these to [statesecretary@afule.org.au](mailto:statesecretary@afule.org.au) or call your State Office on 3844 9163.

In Solidarity,



Mick McKitrick AFULE State Secretary

**Traincrew representing Traincrew**