

## Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 41  
**Submitted by:** Christy Lewis  
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**From:** Christy Lewis [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, 15 March 2024 9:46 AM  
**To:** Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee  
**Subject:** Submission for the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 by Ms Christy Lewis

Committee Secretary  
Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

I am writing to provide a submission on the Disaster Management and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024.

First and foremost, my name is Ms Christy Lewis, I am a volunteer firefighter in South East Queensland for the last 8 years. I train within my Brigade's (two Brigades) almost every week all year round for no financial gain whatsoever. I am a member of my community, giving back to my community to ensure my community including near and far is safer. It is extremely offensive to be a volunteer firefighter and not be classed as a "professional firefighter". I am a professional firefighter and I do not do it for any financial gain. I feel that the terminology of "professional firefighter" should be reviewed and firefighter who receives financial gain should be referred to as "Career firefighter/s". All fire fighters should be classed as "professional" and should not be discriminated against one way or another based of paid verses unpaid status.

I am very concerned that the proposed bill is in fact not empowering the Rural Fire Service and the Volunteers. I am very active RFS volunteer in my community and I hold the elected role of Group Officer. It is my role to provide support to Brigade's in both an operational and an administrate capacity. I work almost daily with Brigade's and provide guidance on matters relating to Brigade business including policy, procedures, legislation and more.

I am extremely concerned that the proposed bill doesn't empower volunteers or the Rural Fire Service in several ways. This bill is doing the complete opposite and granting more power to Fire and Rescue which is exactly what the KPMG review was highlighting. A whopping 86% of corporate services went to Fire & Rescue and only 6% went to the Rural Fire Service. This was identified by KPMG as a cultural change that was required to be addressed and changed. This bill is not conducive to that the KPMG review.

The Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Act 1990 is not great legislation however in my opinion, it is in fact far better legislation than the proposed bill for the time being. In the current Act, Volunteers are empowered to vote in or out members of their Brigade's. This empowerment has given the members of their respective Brigades a voice on who are members of their Brigade in their community. This is just absurd and taking away

volunteer's voices and placing it withing the hand of a commissioner who doesn't understand RFS business. Why are we taking that away from Brigade's and volunteers is beyond me and insulting.

I could write so much however, I have been restricted on the time given by the Queensland Government to provide submission which is also offensive. If the Governments proposed bill is so great, then why not spread the word and allow for an adequate time frame for submissions?

I completely and utterly agree with The Rural Fire Brigades Association Qld on their submission provided to your office. We are the frontline people telling you that this bill will not be conducive to our operational and administrative business. We use and apply the legislative powers where we can to keep our community safe. You are taking that away from us and you don't see or know it because you have not or are in our shoes to know our day-to-day business is or how we apply it. When you have done 2 years being a volunteer within the Rural Fire Service is when you may get a little in sight to our world. I encourage you to join your local Rural Fire Brigade and sit in our shoes to see and know definitively how this bill will greatly affect RFS.

This proposed bill will further cripple the Rural Fire Service as we see and know it for not only now but into the future for everyone if this is passed in Parliament. People will get hurt because Fire and Rescue don't have the expertise of landscape fires like we the RFS do but if this bill is passed its agreeing to giving Fire and Rescue all the power. Life, property and the environment will be lost due to it, can you live with that? I couldn't and nor should you.

I request that all amendments to the current Fire Service Act 1990 be dismissed ahead of a full legislative rewrite following the 2024 Queensland state election, and the Parliamentary Committee acknowledge and support the AgForce call of the 13th February 2024 for a State Parliamentary Inquiry into the 2023/24 fire season and an investigation into the mistakes that were made.

Yours sincerely

Christy Lewis  
Volunteer firefighter in Southeast Qld.

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