

I thank the committee for its time.

I just want to highlight a few concerns police have today:

Common Law Claims

The use of common law claims provides an appropriate balance for police who incur significant injuries.

The benefit of preserving access to common law claims is that it brings finality to a claim in a timely fashion. The Police Union understands that the worst performing schemes in the nation are those schemes that have had their access to common law severely restricted by thresholds or abolished.

Whole Personal Impairment Thresholds

The Police Union is also opposed to the introduction of a whole personal impairment threshold given the nature of the work undertaken by our members. Policing is an extremely dangerous calling where our members are required to attend life threatening or traumatic incidents on a regular basis. As a result members are often subjected to injuries of both a physical and psychological nature. The vast majority of police officers are employed in general duties which requires them to be “first response” officers and they are supposed to get into physical altercations every day. 2,639 police in Qld were assaulted on the job last year alone.

Journey Claims

Police are often recalled to duty and required to attend major incidents, travelling directly from their place of residence. This occurs in all manner of situations, from on-call police in the Special Emergency Response Team attending a siege, through to detectives being recalled following the commission of a serious crime.

In addition, police are encouraged by the Police Service and Government to travel to and from work on public transport. Incentives such as free or discounted rail and bus travel are offered in various localities, in an effort by transport providers to increase a visible police presence and enhance public safety.

A removal of journey entitlements for police officers will result in officers becoming unwilling to assist outside of their rostered hours of duty so we believe journey claims at least for police should stay.

Recommendations

It is the Police Union's position that the Government should:

- maintain the current statutory Scheme;
- maintain access to common law claims with no tightening of the existing restrictions;
- maintain access to journey claims, at least for police officers in recognition of the specialist nature of their calling; and
- not introduce an injury claims threshold.