



TURKEY BEACH RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

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Chairperson



Secretary



Treasurer



29 July, 2015

Finance and Administration Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

To Whom It May Concern

Re: The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015

I believe the proposed legislation to be introduced by the Queensland Government will victimise the volunteers of the Queensland Rural Fire Service.

The Urban Fire Service spends approximately 80% of their incidents responding to motor vehicle accidents and alarm activations and when they do respond to a fire incident have far superior breathing apparatus than what is supplied to Rural firefighters. On the other hand, the majority of the turnouts by Rural Fire Brigades are to fires. Volunteers are subjected to smoke until the fires are extinguished. This could be for a few hours or over several days. The smoke mask provided is a paper mask.

I personally have attended and extinguished car fires before the Urban Brigade has arrived wearing a paper mask, only to have the Urban Brigade arrive with full breathing apparatus after the event. For years, Rural Brigades were issued Forexpan foam (in the black drum) only to be told in the past couple of years to cease using this as it is carcinogenic. The new foam issued in the green drums, according to the MSDS sheet also requires the wearing of breathing apparatus. What do the Rural firefighters have – paper masks.

Also, over the last three years, we have spent four weeks cleaning up flood damaged properties in the Baffle area with rotting food in fridges, mould and sheds where pesticides and herbicides have been mixed in with the mud and debris. Members have actually vomited from the stench of this.

**SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES
REPORT FIRES TO "000"**



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With these few facts in mind, we believe our volunteers should be issued with better and safer breathing apparatus as they are just as susceptible to cancer and other health problems as the paid staff. All firefighters, whether paid staff or volunteers should be treated as equals and I believe the Queensland Government has a duty of care to see that this happens.

Kind Regards



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First Officer

Turkey Beach Rural Fire Brigade

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Department of
Emergency Services



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