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Research Director  
Finance and Administration Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

**RE: Workers Compensation & Rehabilitation & Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 & Workers Compensation & Rehabilitation (Protecting Fire fighters) Amendment Bill 2015.**

Dear Sir

I wish to make a **submission to the Workers Compensation & Rehabilitation & Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015** because of the shameless & blatant discrimination shown to rural fire fighters which is reflected in this Bill.

My understanding firstly, is that the Qld Fire & Emergency Services comprise both urban & rural fire fighters & that this bill states that QFES rural fire fighters have to attend 150 exposure fire calls every 5 years & cannot make a claim after 10 years. Whereas QFES operational & retired urban fire fighters who attend just one fire call, are covered for life when seeking compensation for late onset cancers caused in their duties.

The QFRS Mission Driven Charter of 2008 states "**Queensland Fire and Rescue Service values reflect a culture developed in the workplace environment. They reveal a level of commitment and professionalism essential to do the job and meet the expectations of the communities that fire fighters serve.**" These traits are evident in both the rural & urban services & as such the government should respond accordingly when it comes to equal compensation.

My service in the QFES involves 35 years as a volunteer rural fire fighter & I am still an active member. I was also Captain of the Childers Auxiliary station (QFES) from 1995 until my retirement in November 2014.

Throughout those years rural bushfires were often attended by both services & all men were exposed to the same amount of smoke & chemicals.

These same elements are present in house fires & transportation fires where the rural brigade often backed up the urban fire fighters. At these events urban fire fighters are issued with BA masks & flash hoods whilst rural fire fighters aren't.

My observances are from both sides of the fire service. The QFRS Mission Driven Charter of 2008 says “ ***We encourage a work environment based on teamwork, mutual support, common purpose, trust & respect for the history & cultures of all the emergency services, volunteer services & others who contribute to our business achievements***”. How can this be achieved by introducing a bill that will cause distension among fire fighters in the Qld Fire & Emergency Service who often work side by side?

It is very important to acknowledge that **volunteer fire fighters** engaged by the rural fire service & **permanent & auxiliary fire fighters** employed in the urban fire service all come under the umbrella of the **Queensland Fire & Emergency Service** & as such should be entitled to the same entitlements when it involves their health.

Please redress the clause which differentiates between volunteer rural fire fighters & urban fire fighters.

Yours faithfully



Colin Santacaterina

Email:

