

From: [Reece Thorogood](#)
To: [Gladstone Electorate Office; Finance and Administration Committee](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Inquiries into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.
Date: Sunday, August 2, 2015 5:18:21 PM

Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Date: 2/08/2015

Submission re: Inquiries into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015.

The volunteer members of the *Mount Maurice Rural Fire Brigade* wish to comment on aspects of the above discriminatory bill, as it affects each and every one of us as volunteers in the Rural Fire Service: in particular, page 22, 36 D Presumption of Injury part (c) has attended at least 150 exposure incidents.

1. Until the last 18 months there have been no official records kept of the number of fires each volunteer has attended. In some brigades there are still no official records kept.
2. We attend many of the same fires as urban and auxiliary firefighters do, but without the same quality of lung protection. Volunteers are issued with paper smoke masks, the others with canister masks, some volunteers purchase their own respirators that can be quite costly in order to feel they have some protection from hazardous exposures.
3. There is no research to indicate that the first fire one attends is not dangerous to one's health, but the following 149 are, each fire is different there could be more or less exposures at the next fire volunteers attend.
4. In the long term, disenfranchising the 36,000 volunteer Rural Fire fighters by discriminating against them in their Workers Compensation cover will be far more costly to the government than protecting all firefighters equally. If you lose volunteers, the work they do gratis will need to be covered by paid personnel. It is probable that many volunteers will quit the service if this bill goes ahead.
5. There will be no new volunteers once it must be explained that they are not fully covered until they have attended 150 fires, and those who have been active for many years but have no proof of activity will be inclined to quit the brigades.
6. The First Officer of each brigade has a duty of care to the volunteers. Sending firefighters out to fires, particularly in the izone areas, knowing they are not fully covered may put the First Officer in an untenable position.
7. Volunteers are an integral part of Queensland Fire and Emergency Services without these volunteers who give up their paid jobs (usually their only source of income to

save another's property or life), their family time on weekends and annual leave, the Fire service will fold there is not even close to enough paid Fire personnel to do the job these volunteers do to help out their community. These volunteers are not paid for the service they provide or even recognised with at least a 'thank you' at the end of the day, they should at least feel they have full cover from the second they step foot in their station to respond to a job they know could be life threatening, the illnesses firefighters can contract not only affects the firefighter but their families as well, these firefighters usually leave behind young children and partners when responding to incidents.

Yours faithfully,

Reece Thorogood
Chairman/Training Officer



On behalf of the **Mount Maurice** Rural Fire Brigade and with their authorisation.