

**From:** [Michael Vandersar](#)  
**To:** [Finance and Administration Committee](#)  
**Subject:** presumptive legislation  
**Date:** Tuesday, August 4, 2015 8:47:26 PM

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To Ms Di Farmer,

Chair,

Finance and Administration Committee

Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane, 4000.

I wish to submit information for your consideration regarding the proposed new presumptive legislation for firefighters.

Whatever form the new legislation takes it must treat all firefighters equally, regardless of whether they are full time paid staff, part time auxiliaries or unpaid volunteers. Fire, smoke and cancer do not discriminate between firefighters based on their pay, nor should the new legislation. If the new legislation does discriminate against volunteers it will, in the long run, negatively impact our state as there will be some, possibly many, who will choose to no longer volunteer and it will also become even more difficult to attract new volunteers.

It should also be noted that generally, volunteers are exposed to smoke for far longer than paid firefighters. The majority of fires attended by volunteers are landscape fires which generally run for hours or days, whilst paid firefighters are more likely to attend structural fires which generally have a far shorter duration. It should also be noted that paid firefighters are supplied either full face negative pressure masks or breathing apparatus to protect them from smoke whilst volunteers are only issued with disposable paper masks. Given the above conditions, if there is to be any difference in how the legislation treats various firefighters, then the legislation would need to recognise that volunteers might possibly have a higher exposure to smoke per turn out than paid firefighters.

In summary, there should be no differences in how the new legislation treats various

firefighters unless the difference is supported by rigorous and exhaustive scientific data.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Vandersar

1st officer, Kuranda-Myola Rural Fire Brigade