

Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2015

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6 Aug 2015  
Finance and  
Administration Committee

*To the Finance and Administration Committee*

**Re: Inquiries into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015**

We as the representative committee (Gold Coast Rural Fire Brigade Group Executive) for the Gold Coast Rural Fire Brigade Group of whom represent 16 rural fire brigades in the City of Gold Coast wish to submit the following responses to the current inquiry into the above mentioned bills.

Please find the following statements of position.

- General statements of position - page 2
- *Workers' Compensation Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015* response statement- page 3
- *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015* response statement - page 4

We understand that evidence and or facts may not be presented in this submission (as requested in the guide '*Submissions to Parliamentary Committees*') and this is due to a limitation of time provided for review, research, collaboration, and endorsement on such a highly complex, emotive and imperative topic. We simply as a result of this submission wish to express on the public record the views, opinions and questions of the committee to at least have our collective and important voice heard regarding mainly the eligibility of volunteer fire fighters to compensation.

We welcome any type of feedback or response on this important topic and look forward to a supportive outcome that provides equality in protection regardless of employment/engagement type.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Dalton  
Group Officer on behalf of the executive committee



**Re: Inquiries into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015**

**General statements of position**

We are disappointed and non-supportive of the short time frame in which is provided in the seeking of submissions therefore preventing a greater response rate.

We are disappointed and non-supportive with the continual differentiation of employed and volunteer personnel in regards to the definition of a fire fighter within the government's proposed legislation and that the simple issue of being paid greatly disadvantages those that perform the same task at no cost to the Queensland Government.

We are supportive of the underlying principles of presumptive legislation in particular in those cases of cancers caused by the attendance and/or extinguishment, and/or overhaul of fire incidents attended to by all types of firefighters including all full time, part time, auxiliary, casual and volunteer personnel.

We are supportive of the continual investigation, research, collaboration and discussion of fire fighters health and wellbeing by the Queensland Government as long as it is all encompassing and not defined by employment or engagement type.

We are supportive of the ability to be able to claim for compensation arising out of the diagnosis of cancer as specified within the above-mentioned bills as a result of firefighting duties and attendance of incidents.

We are supportive and hopeful of Queensland being able to implement legislation that is leading and all encompassing for firefighters regarding their health and wellbeing at the exclusion of employment type. Therefore setting Queensland as the leading state in Australia in whom protects all their firefighters who participate in often challenging, difficult and risky situations to protect life and property for anyone, anywhere and anytime.

Endorsed by

Steve Dalton  
Group Officer on behalf of the executive committee.



**Re: Inquiries into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015**

***Workers' Compensation Rehabilitation and Other Legislation  
Amendment Bill 2015 response statement***

We are non supportive and disappointed with the unfair provision of Section 36D subparagraph 1C of the above bill which places a requirement of the attendance of 150 exposure incidents for volunteer fire fighters. We highlight the unfairness of this requirement due to the following:

- Current now non requirement for members names to be recorded on the form 14 for fire incident reporting therefore now leading to no official documentation of fire attendance and therefore making proof difficult for QFES to show for exposure incidents,
- Unfair requirement now for volunteers with extended volunteer careers or careers in other states to have to gather information to prove 150 exposure incidents,
- The requirement is discriminatory as is not required by a paid staff member and that there only qualifying period is related to time frames and the attendance of one (1) exposure incident,
- We believe that the 150 exposure incidents inclusion is an attempt only to make it difficult for volunteer firefighters to claim compensation due to the potential financial liability that the diagnosis of cancer and provision of compensation would impose on the state government.

We are truly disappointed that volunteer firefighters in this state whom freely give their time to protect life and property in Queensland along side allied agencies and fire and emergency staff are not offered the same protection as a paid staff member.

We specifically request the reasoning for the 150 exposure incidents be clearly explained and reference made to why there is a different between a paid staff member and volunteer who attend the same exposure incidents.

We specifically request if the reasoning for the inclusion of 150 exposure incidents for qualification of compensation for volunteers is related to the possible financial liability exposed to the Queensland Government and or increased premiums by the government's workers compensation insurance scheme.

Endorsed by

Steve Dalton  
Group Officer on behalf of the executive committee.



**Re: Inquiries into the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015**

**Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015 response statement**

We are supportive of Section 32A Paragraph 7 of the above bill which defines a firefighter as a fire officer, rural firefighter or volunteer therefore affording all persons whom engage in firefighting in Queensland an equal level of protection in terms of access to compensation allowing equality and fairness to all.

Endorsed by

Steve Dalton  
Group Officer on behalf of the executive committee.