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Finance and  
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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Finance and Administration Committee](#)  
**Subject:** submission to f&ccommitteere workers compensation[protecting fire-eighters]amendment bill 2015  
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Rural fire-fighters by their very nature place themselves in harms way to protect their fellow man.

We would like to think that the state government would be there to assist them if become ill as a result of their efforts.

This legislation if enacted will set a double standard where professional fire-fighters will receive preferential treatment in respect of workers compensation for the term of their life while volunteers responsible for 85 percent of the state have unfair limits applied to them. Contrary to what some may think our duties are not limited to fighting bush fires and include first response to structural fires hazard reduction burns, accidental injuries, road accident response and all other local incidents.

Our brigade is located near a major arterial road with all manner of heavy transports carrying mining, agricultural and industrial goods mixed with tourists a very dangerous combination and we are the first responders at all incidents.

Our members are equipped with very basic personal protective equipment designed for use in our primary role of bush fire fighting and the health risks associated with this activity are very high with out consideration of the risks associated with other duties we can be called on to preform.

The restrictions placed on volunteers rights to apply for compensation are, under this is legislation, unfair as unlike residents in major centres we rely on the local GP for all medical help. Specialist medical help at a regional hospital may be hours even days away hence diagnosis of these illnesses can take much longer than in a city as contact with medical professionals is not a regular occurrence.

We wonder that if all volunteers were to withdraw their services would the state government be prepared to employ paid professional responders?

Is the state government prepared to face the possibility of a major class action if multiple illness of this nature are detected in volunteers or will they treat them as equals with the paid professional fire-fighters and offer them the same conditions?

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