

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Finance and Administration Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Re: The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation & Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers Compensation & Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015.  
**Date:** Sunday, August 9, 2015 7:42:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [fire submission.pdf](#)

Submission by Nadine O'Brien(Volunteer Fire Fighter in Koah Qld 4881)

[REDACTED] on  
Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2015

Re: The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation & Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015 and Workers Compensation & Rehabilitation (Protecting Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015.

Government Bill Amendment Bill Introduced 15 th June by Treasurer, Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations and minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships.

Private Member's Bill introduced by Member for Kawana 3 June.

Each Bill is commended in having the welfare of Fire Fighters at heart. The difference between these Bills, is the inequality with implementation. The core of the application of the Government's Bill is one of discrimination towards one Fire Fighter against that of others. No State will, nor should, permit unquantified damages for any Class of Fire Fighter, be he/she full time, part time or unpaid. This will always be in line with Legislation for Return to Work/ Work Cover of each State.

Acknowledging proposed amendments to the Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003 –

Onus of proof now to be upon Work Cover Queensland to prove that the cancer is not work-related.

Each Fire Fighter in his/her own right is a Professional – Specialist in a structural fire or specialist in a wild fire in bush vegetation be they Urban (Paid), Urban Auxiliary (Part paid/part Volunteer) and Voluntary Rural Fire Fighter (Unpaid). All in their specialist roles find themselves in the same situation in smoke of fires.

One difference is the equipment supplied by Governments. Urban Fire Fighters supplied with P3 masks and the other with ineffective paper or woven material masks.

Another difference is the length of time spent in the smoke that is known to have carcinogenic effects on human health. Attendance at Wild Fires by Volunteer Fire Fighters is usually for very long periods, taking in the initial fight to confine the fire (or when necessary, to let it run to a given point where a back burn will halt it) and then the eventual 'mopping up' where clouds of smoke are present. This is not the case with Paid Urban Fire Fighters, where they work on shift rosters and are obliged to be replaced by a fresh Paid Crew or a part time Paid/Voluntary Auxiliary Crew after a given time when continued urgency of the event is required.

A volunteer fire fighter should not be discriminated against in the unfortunate event of an injury obtained while fighting a fire, whether it is immediate or late onset.

Therefore the Bill should only include all fire fighters(including volunteer fire fighters) are covered after only one exposure.

Hopefully putting a price tag on volunteers health will also lead to a more responsible way of dealing with fires:

Better smoke masks for volunteer fire fighters

Burns to manage land as a cheap and easy way are no longer acceptable

Arsonist are dealt with more rigorously

Heavy fines for people who accidentally caused a fire

Yours

Nadine O'Brien