



Maroochy South Rural Fire Brigades Group



5th August 2015

The Research Director,
Finance and Administration Committee,
Parliament House,
George Street,
Brisbane,
Queensland 4000.

Dear Sir,

Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2015


The Maroochy South Rural Fire Brigades Group represents 10 Rural Fire Brigades on the Sunshine Coast: Bli Bli, Kiel Mountain, West Woombye, Obi Obi, Kureelipa, Mapleton, Montville, Palmwoods, Eudlo and Ilkley. These Brigades are supported by some 250 volunteer fire fighters.

We would like to make the following point's regarding the proposed legislation:

1. Our view is that this legislation discriminates against volunteer Rural fire fighters. Our understanding is that Urban, Auxiliary and paid Rural Operations employees who perform firefighting duties only have to attend a single incident to qualify for cover under this legislation. Volunteer Rural firefighters have to attend 150 events before they can qualify for coverage.
2. According to Schedule 4A a volunteer Rural fire fighter will have to attend 150 events within a 5 year period to qualify for cover for the most aggressive cancers. This means that the volunteer has to attend an average of 30 events in a fire season. It is our view that this is a performance figure that would be rarely achieved by even the most enthusiastic volunteer.
3. We seek confirmation of the science which shows that there is a difference between the effects of smoke on an Urban fire fighter, Auxiliary fire fighter or a paid Rural Operations member of staff compared to a Rural volunteer fire fighter.
4. We certainly disagree with the methodology of counting the number of incidents attended in a day. It is quite possible that a volunteer can do a

full shift on the downwind side of a single vegetation fire and therefore be constantly breathing in a toxic atmosphere. This would be very different to attending two small fires on the same day which may be controlled very easily with little or no smoke issues.

We acknowledge the efforts of the Queensland Parliament to address this important reform which will be of great benefit to Rural volunteer firefighters.



Hamish Murdoch
Group Officer

