

6th August, 2015

Mrs L Hicks

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Dear Sir Madam

I wish to make a submission to the Inquiries into the Workers Compensation and Rehabilitation(Protection Firefighters) Amendment Bill 2015

As a Queensland rural Rural fire volunteer (QRFV) I feel that I am and other people in our circumstances are being unfairly discriminated against by the proposal to set different conditions that rural fire volunteers have to meet compared to that of Paid fire fighters.

Why should 30000 plus UNPAID QRFV have to attend 150 fires in 5 years as opposed to the ONE fire that paid fire fighters only have to attend to receive same level of benefits/consideration ??

I feel the above proposal is unbelievably unfair and will not protect the QRFV on a level playing field compared to Paid fire fighters.

Also the time frame given to rural people like myself struggling in a crippling drought who rely on mail service deliveries to receive a letter dated 24th July, 2015 and have time to read it – digest it , and to pass on the information to neighbours is also unfair.

I am typing this at 3-59pm Thursday 6th August in the hope that the committee will extend the closing date to allow more rural volunteers greatly affected by this proposal to make a submission. After 30 minutes ago reading that I have to send a separate submission with a different title.

I feel volunteers will reconsider being a rural fire volunteer in Queensland if to receive the same level of cover and benefits as paid fire fighters I am required to attend 150 fires in 5 years where as paid fire fighters are required to attend one fire . What will happen in rural areas when paid fire fighters are called to protect peoples lives that are at risk of a fire and they are over an hour out of town.

Will paid fire fighters have the equipment and knowledge to even make it safely (eg 4 wheel drive vehicles and not get lost en route) to a rural house fire or major blaze or wild fire started by multiple (up to thousands of lightening strikes in a wide area of the state as per forecast for severe wild storms

What about fires started along highways by travelling public flicking smouldering cigarettes out the window or leaving a camping fire smouldering that later ignites how would the existing paid fire service cope having to potentially take over the workload of thousands of volunteers ?

What about fires started by lightening strikes some volunteers if they are not going to be given the same level of cover as paid firefighters I feel will definitely reconsider there membership .

It is now 4-19pm after I have tried to proof read this quickly and By the time I print this and re scan it will be submitted via email after 4pm.

I request you accept this and my submission to the other Inquiry despite it being late.

Regards

Louise Hicks

Signed [REDACTED] 6th August 2015