



Workers Compensation and Policy Branch
Department of Jobs and Small Business

REVIEW OF THE FIREFIGHTER PROVISIONS OF THE SAFETY, REHABILITATION AND COMPENSATION ACT 1998

The Volunteer Brigades Association represents a confederation of Volunteer Bushfire Brigades in the Australian Capital Territory that operate under the jurisdiction of the ACT Rural Fire Service, which in turn is part of the ACT Emergency Services Agency.

Our volunteers attend fires and other incidents anywhere within the Australian Capital Territory. We also deploy both interstate and overseas. In recent years ACT volunteers have deployed to Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Often these deployments draw upon the ACT's singular capacity for Remote Area Fire Fighting.

Under the ACT Emergencies Act 2004 the main function of the Rural Fire Service is to protect and preserve life, property and the environment in rural areas. But the Act confers additional responsibilities on the Rural Fire Service for undertaking assistance operations to other services in rural areas, and the Service may be called upon to respond to fires in built up areas.


Indeed, the Rural Fires Service has specialist equipment and capabilities, including a Heavy Tanker and Compressed Air Foam vehicle, that have application in support of a range of incidents that occur in the urban area, ranging from vehicle to industrial fires.

In effect, our volunteers can be exposed to the same hazards as their full-time counterparts.

Accordingly, there is a compelling case and strong community support for amending the Firefighter Provisions to ensure that ACT volunteer firefighters are provided timely access to the same Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation provisions accorded to firefighters identified as employees in Section 5 of the Act.

This would bring the Australian Capital Territory in line with recent amendments made to the relevant workers compensation legislation in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania.

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