



Michael Berkman MP
For Maiwar ▲

28 October 2020

Ian Pike AFSM
President, Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland
Via email: gm@rfbaq.org

RFBAQ 5 strategies

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your email of 3 August 2020, setting out your organisation's priorities ahead of the 2020 Queensland state election.

For your reference, the Queensland Greens election platform for the 2020 State Election is online at: <https://greens.org.au/qld/plan>. Our long-standing broader policy platform is here: <https://greens.org.au/qld/policies>.

As I'm sure you would understand, if the Greens find ourselves in a balance-of-power scenario there is an enormous list of competing priorities, and the final decision on any negotiated outcome rests with the party as a whole. Our election platform, mentioned above, will guide these priorities.

I understand the Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland (RFBAQ) has developed a Key Strategies document at their General Meeting, outlining five specific requests designed to improve support for rural fire brigades and brigade members. I firmly support these Strategies.

In particular, I want to highlight my support for a presumptive provision in workers compensation legislation relating to PTSD for firefighters, which would greatly reduce the pressure on brigade volunteers navigating the compensation framework for this condition. Given the nature of the work undertaken by these volunteers and the particular complexities associated with PTSD, I agree in principle with the proposal to legislate for a presumption that this condition is work-related.

I believe the government should seriously consider developing a Memorandum of Understanding on conditions of service for Rural Fire Brigade volunteers. Although volunteer firefighters are not covered by a remunerative award, they inarguably deserve access to support while working, just as paid staff and SES volunteers do. The government should work with RFBAQ to establish a set of support conditions for brigade volunteers such as reimbursement for out of pocket expenses, defined working hours, accommodation and provision of meals.

It is vital that the government continues to support hard working rural fire brigades and their members, and adequately acknowledges the invaluable work they do for Queensland communities. I will keep working to ensure this is a reality.

Visit Us
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I hope that this information is of assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact my office on 07 3737 4100 if you would like to discuss this matter in more detail.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Michael Berkman MP