

FIREFIGHTERS — POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

1295. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Industrial Relations:

Can the minister please articulate the rationale for the government's decision to extend presumptive post-traumatic stress disorder coverage to professional firefighters while withholding that same coverage from volunteer firefighters?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Industrial Relations.

The state government acknowledges all emergency services volunteers for their unwavering dedication and commitment to keeping our Western Australian communities safe. Workers compensation legislation does not apply to volunteers and only covers workers for injuries that arise in the course of their employment. Therefore any presumptive disease that is prescribed in regulations under the workers compensation legislation can apply only to employed workers as defined in the legislation—such as post-traumatic stress disorder for employed career firefighters. As explained during consideration of the Workers Compensation and Injury Management Bill 2023, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services provides insurance for all its volunteers as required by the Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998. The coverage provided is similar to those employed at DFES who fall under the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Act 1981.