

COPY

Reassurance for volunteer firefighters under new laws

(<https://www.dmirs.wa.gov.au>)

The WorkSafe Western Australia Commissioner has moved to reassure senior leaders that volunteer firefighters will not be adversely affected by the incoming new workplace safety laws.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Darren Kavanagh met with senior leaders from WAFarmers, Pastoralists and Graziers Association, Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades and Country Women's Association on Friday to discuss the implementation of the Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WHS Act) and its implications for volunteers.

Representatives discussed recent concerns regarding the safety duties applicable to bushfire volunteers under the WHS Act and how they may impact the volunteer bush fire brigade and farmers' response to bushfires.

The forum was briefed on the relevant definitions and obligations under the WHS Act in the context of work performed by volunteers.

The role of the Person Conducting Business or Undertaking (PCBU) and the due diligence responsibilities of officers, workers and volunteers were discussed at the forum.

"There was a lot of valuable interaction between the agencies and a resulting improved understanding of the requirements of the WHS legislation," Mr Kavanagh said. "The WHS Act is intended to ensure the health and safety of volunteers is maintained.

"This is in addition to the important role that DFES, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and local governments performing as Controlling Agencies for bushfires in WA."

DFES Acting Deputy Commissioner Brad Delavale said DFES was committed to working with local government and volunteer associations to ensure that Western Australia was well prepared in offering training, operating procedures and safety packages.

"We believe we are in a good position to continue working with those representatives to protect our personnel and the community under the Act," he said.

The Association of Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades Executive Officer Darren Brown represented bushfire volunteers and expressed their concerns in relation to the WHS Act, but said he was pleased with the engagement and commitment to working with the Association.

WAFarmers CEO Trevor Whittington was also pleased with the meeting.

"While there may be concerns out there with our members on attending fires, on the whole we are satisfied that the new laws will not unduly impact farmers and their staff who attend fires as long as they continue to act with a duty of care and common sense for their own and others' safety.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Laid on the Table of the
Legislative Assembly

11 NOV 2021

This page could not be
removed from the Chamber

something they have always done," he said.

WorkSafe is in the process of producing a range information and guidance material specifically for volunteers in addition to webinars and other material in relation to the impending WHS Act.

Further information on the WHS Act can be obtained by telephoning WorkSafe on 1300 307877 or on the website at www.worksafe.wa.gov.au (<http://www.worksafe.wa.gov.au/>).

Media Contact: Caroline De Vaney 6251 2363 or 0408 927563 (media enquiries only).

caroline.devaney@dmirs.wa.gov.au (<mailto:caroline.devaney@dmirs.wa.gov.au>).

Follow @WorkSafeWA on Twitter

WorkSafe | Media release | 04 Oct 2021

Share this page:

() () () ()

Last modified: Monday, October 4, 2021 - 14:27

All contents copyright © Government of Western Australia. All rights reserved.