

Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice, Corrections and Rehabilitation
Minister for Small Business, Trade and Consumer Affairs
Minister for the Environment and Climate Change

Level 10, 15 Murray Street, HOBART TAS 7000
GPO Box 123 HOBART TAS 7001
Phone: 03 6165 7678
Email: barnett.correspondence@dpac.tas.gov.au



Ms Janie Finlay MP
Labor Member for Bass

By email: haprocedure@parliament.tas.gov.au

Dear Ms Finlay,

Constituency Question – Workers Compensation

Thank you for your question in Parliament on 1 September 2026. I provide the following information:

Question

Ian from Launceston would like to know: while police were exempted from workers' compensation step downs while firefighters and paramedics were not, why is it that your government thinks a firefighter or paramedic injured in the line of duty is less worthy of financial support than a police officer injured in the line of duty? Deputy Premier, do you understand the impact this inequity has on injured firefighters?

Response

I thank the Member for the question and acknowledge the important work undertaken by Tasmania's firefighters, paramedics and police officers, often in challenging and dangerous circumstances in service of the community.

Workers compensation "step downs" refer to the gradual reduction of weekly compensation payments over time in accordance with legislated arrangements. Step downs have been a feature of Tasmania's workers compensation scheme since 1995 and, like many jurisdictions around Australia, Tasmania's scheme is designed to support injured workers while also encouraging recovery and return to work wherever possible.

The Member refers to provisions relating to police officers. In 2019, the legislation was amended to provide that, in certain circumstances, weekly compensation payments for police officers are not subject to step downs. That exemption applies where the injury arose from circumstances that are unique to the policing role and where, had the person not been a police officer, it is unlikely they would have been exposed to those circumstances.

It recognises the particular risks associated with police officers routinely attending violent and dangerous incidents as part of their duties.

Importantly, this is not a judgement about the value of one profession over another, nor does it suggest that the contributions or sacrifices of firefighters and paramedics are any less significant. All first responders perform critical roles on behalf of the Tasmanian community and all deserve our respect and support when injured in the course of their work.

The current arrangements are established in legislation and apply across Tasmania's workers compensation scheme. An independent review of Tasmania's workers rehabilitation and compensation framework is now commencing, and that review will provide an opportunity for stakeholders, employee representatives, employers and members of the community to contribute their views on the future direction of the scheme.

I understand the concerns that have been raised by some injured firefighters and paramedics and recognise the financial and personal impacts that workplace injuries can have on individuals and their families. The forthcoming review provides an important opportunity for these issues to be considered as part of a broader examination of Tasmania's workers compensation arrangements.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Guy Barnett', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Hon Guy Barnett MP
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