

From: Lauren Smith [REDACTED]
To: lawsafety
Subject: RE: CM: Update QoN committee on law and safety

Good afternoon Frances,

My sincere apologies for the delay in providing our responses to the Questions on Notice.

Please see NSW RFS responses below:

Question 1

Ms TAMARA SMITH: Is there any data that you can give us about injuries of volunteers over the Black Summer bushfires?

Mr McKECHNIE: I would have to take it on notice but certainly there is data available. I would have to take it on notice to provide the statistics.

Ms TAMARA SMITH: I would be interested in physical and psychological injuries. I wonder whether we are entering a new era where there are going to be a lot more volunteers, who might not necessarily have envisaged being in very intense situations, finding themselves in very intense situations.

Mr McKECHNIE: We can supply that.

Response:

Type of Injuries	Number of NSW RFS Injuries
Physical injuries	852
Psychological injuries	31
Physical and Psychological injuries	2
Total	885

Notes:

1. The fire season for 2019/20 extended from 1 August 2019 – 31 March 2019
2. Data excludes illnesses, exposures and cancers

Question 2

The CHAIR: Are you aware of how many compensation claims associated with physical injuries have been sustained by volunteer firefighters? Were there any key trends in the last—obviously we have faced an enormous fire season. Did we see an increase in compensation claims?

Ms TAMARA SMITH: That is what I asked, Chair.

The CHAIR: Did you? Sorry.

Ms TAMARA SMITH: Yes.

The CHAIR: I beg your pardon.

Ms TAMARA SMITH: But could we clarify a time frame? For the benefit of the Committee, could we do 2019 to 2021 compared with 2009 to 2018?* Would that be useful? I would think that would be useful, just to see if there is a—

Mr McKECHNIE: Yes, we can take that on notice.

**Note: the time periods for comparison were later modified email to:*

Period 1: Financial years 2016/17, 2017/18

Period 2: Financial years 2019/20, 2020/21 (to date).

Response:

Financial year	Number of compensation claims
2016/17	207
2017/18	163
2019/20	417
2020/21 (to 1 June 2021)	134

Notes:

1. The above data was provided by icare to the NSW RFS at 1 June 2021
2. Data is for date of injury, not of the compensation claim
3. Data excludes cancer claims

Please let me know if you require anything further from us in relation to this Inquiry.

Again, I apologise for the delay and thank you for your patience.

Kind regards,

Lauren Smith | Manager, Legal
NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE