

**Submission
No 193**

INQUIRY INTO EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCIES

Name: Mr Warren Kelly

Date Received: 15 May 2018

Minister,
I hope this finds you well.

I believe that you have had involvement in the inquiry into bullying, harassment and discrimination in the emergency services in NSW.

As a volunteer firefighter of 38 years in both NSW and QLD I have the greatest respect for the service and government alike. I am currently the First Officer of Black River RFB in Townsville.

As you will see by the email thread below, I believe that the NSWRF is discriminating against people who have served faithfully and for one reason or another have either left the service or have been retired from the service (including membership of a brigade) due to work / family commitments interstate.

I served from 1980 until I was required to follow my family to QLD in 2005, (a little under 25 years)

Documentation was submitted in 1996 (and subsequently lost twice and resubmitted a further 2 times) for the National Medal which I received in the mail in 2005 and still not recorded by NSWRF records as stated below. In that time I was also awarded the ACCT Emergency Medal for the fires in Canberra (2003), and this was recorded by the NSWRF and forwarded to RFS Queensland for ministerial presentation in 2006.

During my time in the NSWRF it was commonplace for awards to be for those favoured by the management or if a brigade secretary liked you. More often than not, brigade secretaries simply were not aware of the provisions of long service awards (at that time a badge).

I, (and many others), was never awarded a NSWRF Long Service badge. Because the rules that established the Long Service Medal instituted in 2009, I am ineligible for this award because I was retired from the RFS without consultation. I was fully intending and tried to retain membership of Wilberforce brigade after I left the state as it was my intention at the time to try and return to the state. With my compulsory removal from the RFS I was not able to remain a member. I, therefore became ineligible for the award of the new medal.

The new award is not available to any person who was not serving during or after 2009, in other words, it is not retrospective. I am not alone in this situation I believe.

The new award was supposed to be an equivalent to the NSWFB long service award and for most parts it is true however the NSWFB medal can be issued retrospectively.

I firmly believe this to be discriminative and feel that the retrospectivity of the award should be granted providing that there is evidence of time served and ability to perform the function of the role.

I hope that you can include this in any prt of your inquiry,

Sincerely

Warren Kelly