



STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR RURAL FIRE SERVICE MEMBERS

NSW Labor recognises and respects the incredible efforts and community dedication of the volunteer firefighters and staff of the RFS.

We acknowledge that the work undertaken by volunteers wouldn't be possible if the State had to pay for it to be done, and that communities in rural, regional, and bush/urban interface areas across NSW would be poorer without them.

NSW Labor believes that volunteers deserve the support of government to ensure they are safe, and to demonstrate that they are respected and won't be taken for granted.

If elected, we commit to:

1. **Protect the independence of the RFS** – NSW Labor will ensure the RFS continues to operate as a stand-alone emergency service. This includes opposing the proposed back-office merger between the RFS and SES.
2. **Give injured firefighters a fair go** – NSW Labor is committed to a comprehensive review of the NSW Workers Compensation system. The current system is broken, and payments for workers are haphazard and inconsistent in its supports for volunteer workers who we rely on to keep our state safe.

We will ensure firefighters suffering permanent impairment receive payments at the same level as other workers. Furthermore, given the risky and often traumatic work that volunteer firefighters undertake in keeping our communities safe, we will examine legislating presumption in workers compensation laws for PTSD claims. This will mean that firefighters with PTSD, acquired through their service, will have more ease in the claim process.

3. **Provide the safest vehicles and equipment** – NSW Labor is committed to funding for the RFS that delivers newer, safer appliances, up to date safety equipment and decontamination processes, and improved brigade stations.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sophie Cotsis".

Sophie Cotsis
**Shadow Minister for Work
Health & Safety**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jihad Dib".

Jihad Dib
**Shadow Minister for
Emergency Services**