

**Question on Notice**  
**Council of Ambulance Authorities**  
**Albury Hearing**  
**5 June 2012**

**Senator NASH:** Could you explain the following statement in your submission:

For volunteer ambulance officers who are recruited from within the local community there are specific issues that impact the retention of these staff including: —

and this is the bit I am interested in:

relations with local government and professional personnel, level of formality, training barriers ...

As Senator Moore correctly surmised from the chair, the original source did relate to Western Australia, specifically to a Fire and Emergency Services Agency (FESA) research project on volunteer firefighters, the data from which was reproduced in an article by A. Aitken in the *Australian Journal of Emergency Management* ([http://www.em.gov.au/Documents/AJEM\\_Vol15\\_Issue2.pdf](http://www.em.gov.au/Documents/AJEM_Vol15_Issue2.pdf) p16)

Having now read this original source it seems that it would be more correct to say that the volunteers in question had issues with central state bodies (such as the headquarters of emergency services organisations) rather than local government ones as our submission suggested. There were also issues with professional (ie paid) personnel and our submission accurately cited this research in this respect. I should also point out that this study, which has been fairly widely cited, is now rather out-of-date and that a lot of work has subsequently gone into addressing the issues it reported, with good results.