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MEDIA RELEASE

CFA VOLUNTEERS LAUNCH CANCER PETITION

The CFA volunteers' association is calling on all Victorians to sign a petition to help firefighters to get fairer and simpler cancer compensation.

Speaking at a rally of hundreds of CFA volunteers at Scoresby on Sunday, Andrew Ford of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria said the volunteers are campaigning to get rid of an unfair barrier that prevents firefighters from getting the compensation they have been promised.

"We have been working with the Government and opposition parties for several years, but firefighters who suffer from cancer that's related to their firefighting services are still facing an almost impossible barrier, right when they are sick and most in need of help," Mr Ford said.

"The problem is in proving the cancer was work related, whether it be for a volunteer firefighter or one of their career colleagues," he said.

"Unlike a broken bone, cancer can take many years to appear, leaving the firefighter with the nearly impossible task of proving that one particular incident caused the cancer."

"It effectively says you are entitled to the compensation, but when you get sick, you can't have it," Mr Ford said.

The CFA volunteers are now collecting signatures for a statewide petition, calling on the Victorian Parliament to change the law so the onus of proof is reversed.

"Certain types of cancer are known to be more common in firefighters, and we need Victoria to follow the lead of the Australian, Tasmanian, West Australian and South Australian Governments in recognising those 12 cancers and presuming them to be work related if the sick firefighter has sufficient years of service," Mr Ford said.

More...

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“The firefighters’ cancer law would relieve the sick CFA volunteer of the almost impossible task of proving the cancer was work related, and would allow them to concentrate on their treatment and recovery, instead of a lengthy court case,” he said.

“As the CFA volunteers’ association, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria is distributing the Firefighters’ Cancer Petition to every district in the state, and we call on every Victorian to sign the petition and show support for the volunteers who do so much to protect the community.”

The Firefighters’ Cancer Petition calls on the Victorian Parliament to introduce legislation based on the Australian Government’s legislation, listing 12 known firefighter cancers, with equal coverage for volunteer firefighters and their career colleagues.

You can download the petition and learn more about presumptive legislation, the firefighters’ cancer law, at the CFA volunteers’ website; www.vfbv.com.au

CFA Brigades protect 60% of suburban Melbourne, regional cities and all of country Victoria, every day and night of the year.

Ends...

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