



Firefighters' Cancer Compensation Petition

An important task for all CFA Members

Dear CFA Member

The attached petition calls for the Victorian Parliament to establish legislation to provide all firefighters in Victoria with fairer and simpler access to compensation for 12 types of cancer known to be more prevalent in firefighters.

Any Victorian resident can sign this petition to show they support CFA volunteers – the more signatures we collect, the more weight the petition will have in Parliament.

This important change to the law will not only support firefighters who suffer from cancer, it will show fairness to all volunteers.

For this petition to be tabled in Parliament, we must follow some simple rules;

- Use the attached form (we've included five copies for ease of printing) – if you photocopy the form it must include the petition wording on every copy
- Everyone who signs must include their full name and address details – a few will be chosen for checking
- There must be no writing on the back of the form
- VFBV must present the petitions to Member(s) of Parliament who will make the formal presentation in Parliament

How to make this petition really work;

- Take it everywhere with you
- Ask your fellow volunteers, family, friends and neighbours to sign the petition
- Invite members of the community to sign as a show of support for CFA volunteers
- Return batches of signed petitions as you go – post to VFBV, PO Box 453, Mr Waverley 3149 (Parliament will only accept the original signed sheets).

This is a simple way for every Victorian to show their support for the CFA volunteers.

You can use the printed flyer on the next page to explain the petition to members of the public. To learn more about the firefighters' cancer issue, or to make a donation to help the CFA volunteers' campaign at www.vfbv.com.au



VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Firefighters' Cancer Law

CFA volunteers are calling for a change in the law to give Victorian firefighters fairer access to cancer compensation.

Evidence shows that firefighters are more likely to suffer certain cancers because of their work - they are entitled to cancer compensation, but it is almost impossible to access that compensation because the sick firefighter has to provide sufficient evidence to prove the cause of the cancer arose from particular fires or incidents or other work duties - events that might have happened 10, 15 or more years ago.

The Federal Parliament and three other State Parliaments have already recognised and acted on the available evidence and the problem of firefighters accessing fair protection for occupational cancer. They have changed their laws so 12 cancers with higher incidence in firefighters are presumed to be work-related, if the firefighter has sufficient years of service and therefore exposure risk. It's a simple solution that allows the firefighter to concentrate on treatment and recovery, not a lengthy and expensive court case. It is also the approach widely adopted in Canada and the USA.

Victoria lags behind - the current Victorian Government says it is still waiting for more studies, despite the evidence already accepted by governments in Australia and overseas. Victorian firefighters are tired of continual excuses and hope that with your help we can convince the Victorian Government to act.

The Greens have drafted firefighters' cancer presumptive legislation and introduced it into Parliament, only to be ruled out under parliamentary procedure. **Labor says it believes "that firefighters deserve to have presumptive access to compensation for illness and cancer caused by exposure to chemicals"** and "the Victorian Labor Party supports a legislative and regulatory framework that gives both career and volunteer firefighters easier access to compensation when they need it."

But so far there is **no commitment from the Victorian Coalition Government.**

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Sign the CFA volunteers' petition
- Ask your local MP why they are not actively supporting fairer access to cancer compensation for firefighters
- Make a donation at www.vfbv.com.au to support the volunteers' campaign

For more information, visit www.vfbv.com.au

To the Legislative Assembly of Victoria

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION FOR FIREFIGHTERS WITH CANCER

The petition of certain residents of Victoria draws the attention of the House to the following:

1. That Victoria's firefighters, both volunteer and career, have a greater risk of contracting certain cancers because of their service to the people of Victoria as firefighters.
2. That Victoria's compensation requirements for firefighters who have contracted such cancers are significantly more onerous compared to compensation requirements for Federal firefighters and those in other parts of Australia and the western world including Canada and the United States.
3. Notes that because of the recognised greater risk of contracting certain cancers, and the practical difficulty of identifying specific exposures which caused such cancer, firefighters in these jurisdictions outside Victoria are 'presumed at law' to have contracted the specified cancers during their duties as firefighters (unless proved otherwise) and are therefore entitled to quick and easy access to compensation for medical treatment and financial support for them and their dependent family.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Assembly take urgent action to legislate for changes to Victorian compensation laws so that they provide those who serve or have served the people of Victoria as volunteer or career firefighters and who contract one of the 12 forms of cancer listed in the Commonwealth's *Fair Protection for Firefighters Act 2011* are presumed to have contracted such cancer as a result of their duties and activities as firefighters (unless it can be proved otherwise) and consequently have speedy access to full compensation entitlements as provided under current and future law and financial arrangements.

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