

BULLETIN

Bulletin No: 017

31 October 2012

TO ALL UFUA MEMBERS

WA GOVERNMENT DECLARES COMMITMENT TO PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION NEW WORKERS COMPENSATION LAWS EXPECTED IN EARLY 2013

The Western Australian Government has declared its commitment to legislation to recognise occupational cancer for firefighters.

Today WA Premier Colin Barnett, Emergency Services Troy Buswell and Commerce Minister Simon O'Brien announced a support package to protect and assist career and volunteer firefighters that included presumptive legislation for 12 occupational cancers, insurance coverage for all volunteers operating under the emergency services legislation and the establishment of a volunteer hardship assistance scheme.

The Government's announcement means that now all political parties and independent Members of the WA State Parliament support changes to the workers compensation laws to protect firefighters who are diagnosed with occupational cancer.

In an open letter addressed to all career and volunteer firefighters, the WA Government acknowledged the studies that have demonstrated that firefighters have an increased risk of developing specific cancers through prolonged exposure to carcinogens while protecting the community.

WA Branch Secretary Kevin Jolly hailed the announcement while paying tribute to the firefighters who have suffered occupational cancers, many assisting with the campaign for presumptive legislation.

“Our members have lost too many colleagues to occupational cancer and we have had too many families suffer as a result of inadequate Workers Compensation Law. The Government’s commitment to change WA law will mean that WA firefighters will see real changes and the new presumptive legislation will offer protections to the people who protect our communities across WA.”

A unified UFUA campaign resulted in the 2011 presumptive legislation recognising 12 occupational cancers for Federal firefighters. The success of that campaign was a result of a collective approach including one of the three Senate Inquiry hearings during that Federal parliamentary process being held in Perth with WA firefighters and their families appearing before the Senate Committee detailing the impact occupational cancer had on their lives.

Mr Jolly also acknowledged *“the many politicians who we have lobbied for their time, and for their understanding that this issue is one that is beyond the usual partisan party politics”*.

The new workers compensation laws are expected to be introduced in WA early in 2013.

Strength in Unity
READ OUT AT MUSTER AND PIN ON NOTICE BOARD
Authorised by Peter Marshall, National Secretary