



NATIONAL BULLETIN

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TO ALL UFUA MEMBERS

FAIR PROTECTION FOR FIREFIGHTERS BILL SENT TO VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR CONSTITUTIONAL INQUIRY

The “Fair Protection for Firefighters” Bill has furthered its journey through the Victorian Parliamentary process after being sent to a Victorian Parliamentary Committee for the consideration of constitutional issues.

Members may recall that in February 2013 the Accident Compensation Legislation (Fair Protection for Firefighters) Bill which would presume 12 cancers were occupational cancers for Victorian firefighters, was introduced and read for a second time in the Victorian Parliament.

The Bill essentially mirrors the Federal “Fair Protection for Firefighters” Bill which was enacted in December 2011 by providing for 12 cancers to be presumed occupational cancers for firefighters. The Victorian legislation provides for both career and volunteer firefighters.

Greens Legislative Council Member Colleen Hartland introduced the legislation in the Upper House with support from the Opposition Labor Party.

The President of the Victorian Legislative Council subsequently ruled the introduction of the Bill through the Upper House was out of order on the grounds that Bills relating to increased costs could not be introduced directly into the Upper House.

Greens MP Colleen Hartland yesterday moved that the Bill be considered by the Economy and Legislative Committee to determine that constitutional issue.

The Liberal National Government did not oppose the move and Labor Member Jaala Pulford voiced the Opposition’s support for the motion and the principle of protecting firefighters through such legislation.

Ms Hartland explained that the Bill would not increase costs as it did not create any new entitlements but would remove the barrier that was prohibiting firefighters from accessing their entitlements. Firefighters generally are unable to prove which fires and which toxins they were exposed to that resulted in the contraction of cancer. By reversing the onus by providing a presumption this barrier is removed.

Ms Hartland also referred to the international experience, which was relied upon by the Federal Government and referred to in the Federal Senate Committee report of the inquiry into the Federal presumptive legislation, which was that similar legislation did not increase costs of result in a flood of claims.

The motion included a requirement of a report back from the Committee on the 12th June 2013.

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