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MEDIA RELEASE

CFA volunteers cautiously welcome Coalition's cancer announcement

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria, the CFA volunteers' association, says that on face value the coalition's announcement of a commitment to presumptive legislation for Victorian firefighters sounds like the makings of good news.

"We cautiously welcome this morning's announcement, but await the detail, to confirm the Coalition's commitment delivers the cancer compensation arrangements that we have been seeking for the past three years," said Mr Andrew Ford, VFBV Chief Executive Officer.

"The issue is very important to Victoria's volunteer and career firefighters," he said.

"VFBV has been stepping up its campaign with tens of thousands of signatures on a petition to Parliament and increasing community awareness and support."

"There are 12 cancers included in the presumptive legislation arrangements federally and in other states, and we expect the same in Victoria," Mr Ford said.

"We would expect the detail of the Coalition's commitment contains at least the same standards, and we look forward to the Government providing the information to us as soon as possible," he said.

Current Victorian compensation arrangements have meant that it is almost impossible to access cancer compensation because the firefighter has to show evidence of fires or incidents they attended that might be 10 or 15 years ago and prove on the balance of probabilities which incidents or which toxic exposures caused their cancer.

Presumptive legislation would work by reversing the onus of proof – the firefighter's cancer would be presumed to be work related provided the firefighter has sufficient years of service. A firefighter's claim could still be rejected if it could be proven that the cancer was not related to firefighting duties.

More.....

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Federal legislation and laws in South Australia, WA, Tasmania and NT recognise 12 specific cancers to be covered by presumptive legislation for firefighters.

Ends...

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