



# ***ECHUCA URBAN FIRE BRIGADE***

**Founded 1872**

Secretary: Robert Amos



5 July 2017

Assistant Clerk Committees  
 Department of the Legislative Council  
 Fire Services Bill Select Committee  
 Parliament House, Spring Street  
**EAST MELBOURNE VIC 3002**

Email: [LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au](mailto:LCSC@parliament.vic.gov.au)

**RE: Fire Services Restructure – Presumptive Legislation**

To whom it may concern,

On Tuesday the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the monthly meeting of the Echuca Urban Fire Brigade members voted overwhelmingly to support a motion to write a submission to the committee regarding the Fire Services Restructure, particularly with regards to the separating out the Presumptive Rights Compensation Legislation. We are deeply disappointed that the Bill combines two totally separate issues and believe these are two separate issues and as such should be treated and considered separately. It is highly offensive and morally wrong to combine an issue as important as firefighter cancer protection with the proposed reforms to the fire services.

It is untrue and blatantly misleading for the Government to say the Firefighters Presumptive Rights Compensation aspects of the proposed Bill is the same as the Queensland presumptive legislation. The proposed Victorian cancer protection legislation is not the Queensland model, it sets up a complex and ambiguous legal battle for volunteers and a much simpler process for paid firefighters. Our members are pleased that paid firefighters will be provided with simple and compassionate cancer protection but why discriminate against volunteers?

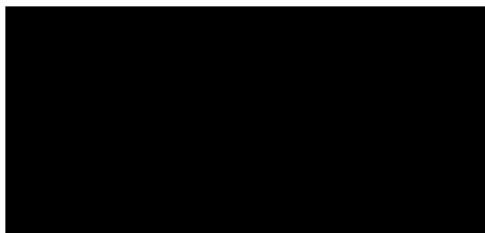
These are the main differences as we see them. Firstly, in the Queensland legislation, there is no difference between the career staff and volunteers. This is a quote is directly from the Work Cover Queensland website "Permanent and auxiliary firefighters employed by Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and volunteer firefighters and fire wardens engaged by the Rural Fire Service Queensland are all defined as firefighters for the purposes of these provisions." Secondly, the Queensland model has no timeout whereas the Victorian model times out 10 years after you leave the fire service. This means a firefighter from Victoria (whether volunteer or career) loses protection under the legislation 10 years after they have left the fire service. This makes no sense as some of these cancers may not rear their ugly heads until decades later.

Including the implementation of presumptive cancer provisions within the proposal should be seen for what it is, a cynical attempt to encourage the passage of a contentious and divisive change by embedding a popular and well-supported measure within it on a “take it all or take none” basis. The matters are separate and should be dealt with as such.

The CFA volunteers of the Echuca Urban Fire Brigade are not opposed to change, providing it can be demonstrated that the change will be beneficial to the community we serve. At the moment that outcome is not evident and the reverse may be likely.

If you require any further information or comment please do not hesitate to contact me on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Robert Amos  
Secretary