

Proposed Presumptive Legislation for Victorian Firefighters

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The proposed legislation fails to fully recognise and encompass the service of firefighters who were diagnosed with one of the recognised cancers prior to the date of June 2016.

The current government stated that within 100 days of assuming office Presumptive Legislation, would be passed, and now some two and a half years later this has not occurred.

Firefighters have campaigned for retrospective legislation to compensate all firefighters, regardless of when such legislation may be passed into law and my request is that you please review the legislation and remove the start date of June 2016 and insert, Retrospective.

My cancer was diagnosed in early December of 2014 and I was operated on 31st December 2014.

Whilst that operation was successful, the effects of the cancer I had has had a profound effect on my life, requiring daily attention and yearly additional minor corrective surgery

My service with CFA commenced with a rural fire brigade in the Dandenong Ranges in October 1978, and was registered with CFA in March 1979, with the number of [REDACTED].

New members were issued with a pair of combination overalls. I had to buy my helmet, gloves, boots and goggles, no other facial protection was supplied. Heavy duty coats were sourced from either disposal stores or a cast off from a friendly MFB member.

Training was centred round risks in our local area of scrub, dwelling and road rescue. Our training grounds included Wandin Quarry for volatile burning chemical extinguishment and Fiskville for intensive fuel and chemical extinguishment, and search and rescue.

Firefighters of today whilst working in a hazardous occupation, have greater protective clothing and safe working practices reducing exposure to personal dangers, unlike that of the 70's and 80's

Over the past 38 years I have attended in excess of 1000 call outs, to house, major and minor scrub and bush fires and vehicle incidents of non fatal and fatal involving body retrieval.

In house fires before we had Breathing Apparatus I have fought up close in buildings, been on a roof collapse and under a collapsing structure. I have had to fight my way out of a fire when covered in fire courtesy of the down draft of a low flying press helicopter when it blew a burning canopy of trees onto my position

The fire season of 1982/1983 is etched in the memory of all who experienced that time, facing Firestorm and the effects of that period.

CFA has recognised my service with 12 year, 20 year and 25 year service badges, Long and distinguished service badge, then VFBV Brigade Life Member Medal, CFA 30 Year Service Medal, 35 Year CFA Life Member Medal, and their top award CFA Outstanding Service Medal, and, from Canberra, the National Medal with two clasps recognising 35 years of service.

I believe that government and CFA have a duty of care as an employer to recompense and assist its staff whether paid or unpaid and ask that your committee recommends that we are fairly treated.

Thankyou for accepting my submission