



IN BRIEF



MATTHAYES

Time to act

The UFUA is questioning the need for further cancer studies before Governments act. "There is already enough evidence to justify statutory protection for firefighters across Australia," says UFUA National Secretary, Peter Marshall.



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Only will required

Legislation to reverse the onus of proof in cancer compensation claims is not required in most Australian jurisdictions. "Outside Qld and NSW, it needs only the Minister's approval," says Peter Marshall. "But that requires political will."



Protective log

The UFUA National Occupational Health and Safety Committee is building a log of claims around protective equipment standards and procedures to help prevent firefighter exposure to carcinogens.

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THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION ESTIMATES THERE IS ONE WORKPLACE CANCER-RELATED DEATH SOMEWHERE ON EARTH EVERY 52 SECONDS/ STOCK.XCHNG

Cancer targeted

The UFUA has joined the ACTU in a global campaign to tackle and eradicate work related cancer

In Australia, occupational cancer is the most common work-related cause of death. "Some 1.5 million workers are at risk," says UFUA National Secretary, Peter Marshall. "Unfortunately, we have the world's highest recorded rates of the asbestos related cancer, mesothelioma. In 2005 alone, over 500 workers died from this disease."

The ACTU has begun a three year, Zero Cancer campaign involving research, advocacy, policy development and legislation to support Australian workers who face exposure. "This is a particularly important campaign for

firefighters," says Peter. "We're exposed to carcinogens every work day. It doesn't matter if it's diesel fumes or asbestos, our straightforward demand is that Members' lives must not be cut short because workplaces are unsafe."

The UFUA's presumptive protection campaign ties-in well with the ACTU's zero workplace cancer strategy. "We must also move quickly to identify all toxic substances faced by Members at work, get better protective equipment and keep all firefighters safe from work related disease," says Peter Marshall.

10 YEAR STUDY

The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council is sponsoring a study of cancer in Australian firefighters. The ten year investigation, by researchers from Monash University's Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health, will monitor rates of death and cases of cancer among firefighters and compare this data against trends in the general Australian community.

However, the Union has concerns about its scope. "This investigation will look at trends across the next decade," says UFUA National Secretary, Peter Marshall. "But this won't tell us what has happened to firefighters to date." The UFUA is considering the terms of reference for the study's Advisory Committee and will meet with AFAC in October.