

NATIONAL BULLETIN

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TO ALL UFUA MEMBERS

PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION WELL ON ITS WAY IN WA WHILE SENATE INQUIRY TAKES UP UFUA CALL FOR INTEROPERABILITY OF FIRE SERVICES TO MEET CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The United Firefighters Union of Australia is again at the forefront of progressive change with two key achievements this week.

Yesterday about 90 firefighters and Western Australian Branch representatives were in Parliament to witness the introduction of the Workers' Compensation and Injury Management Amendment Bill 2013. Despite short notice, the firefighters were on hand to witness this watershed moment which included the second reading of the Bill which will provide a presumption that 12 cancers are occupational cancers for WA firefighters.

As it is a Government Bill it is predicted to pass through the Parliamentary process promptly to ensure WA career firefighters are able to access assistance and entitlements for cancer as they would for any other work-related illness or injury.

WA Branch and members are congratulated for their efforts which has resulted in the third state government introducing legislation to recognise occupational cancer for firefighters. Tasmania and SA also have Government-introduced presumptive legislation progressing through parliamentary processes. In December 2011 the "Fair Protection for Firefighters" Bill was enacted recognising 12 occupational cancers for ACT and Aviation firefighters.

While WA were witnessing an historic and watershed moment for its membership, a Federal Senate Committee report was released that embraced UFUA calls for Government action to achieve interoperability between fire services and states and the need to increase the number of firefighters.

The Australian Senate Environment and Communications References Committee released its report of its inquiry into "recent trends in and preparedness for extreme weather events" yesterday.

The Committee considered 344 submissions and the UFUA appeared before the Committee in Melbourne during the 8-month inquiry.

The UFUA provided the Committee with a comprehensive submission earlier this year which included a UFUA commissioned NIEIR report assessing the impact of climate change on firefighting and predicting and mapping a need to significantly increase the number of firefighters across Australia to meet the challenges of climate change.

The committee specifically referred to the UFUA's submission and evidence on two key points - the need to significantly increase the number of firefighters, and the dangers of the lack of interoperability between fire services and states.

Referring to the UFUA submission and National Secretary Peter Marshall's evidence the Committee recommended:

Recommendation 9:

"The committee recommends that Australian governments specifically address issues of compatibility and capacity to facilitate the effective interoperability of emergency service organisations and their key personnel, especially fire services."

The Senate's acceptance of the UFUA's submissions and the successful progression of the campaign for presumptive legislation in three states is further evidence of the effectiveness of a unified and builds upon recent achievements.

The Senate report can be viewed in full at

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=ec_ctte/completed_inquiries/2010-13/extreme_weather/report/report.pdf.

Strength in Unity

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