



BULLETIN

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TO ALL UFUA MEMBERS

Australia to Lead the World in Firefighter Cancer Laws

Australia is set to lead the world as the Australian Parliament prepares to add eight new cancers to presumptive legislation for firefighters, including, for the first time, cancers specifically impacting women.

To date, 12 types of cancer have been covered by all Australian jurisdictions. A total of 20 cancers will now fall under presumptive legislation, making Australia a world leader in this field of legislation. Thyroid, Pancreatic, Skin, Cervical, Ovarian, Penile and Lung cancer, as well as Malignant Mesothelioma will be added to the presumptive cancers covered by law. The changes will apply to ACT firefighters and aviation firefighters. The UFUA will now pursue these improvements nationally.

The inclusion of eight additional cancers was made possible thanks to the strong advocacy of ACT Independent Senator David Pocock, and the support of the Australian Greens for amendments ensuring the ongoing viability of the cancer laws. Industrial Relations Minister Tony Burke and the Albanese Government upheld their commitment to work with the UFU on these issues. History has been made today with these improvements, with the additional cancers putting Australia ahead of Canadian Provinces, which have 19 cancers covered by presumptive legislation for firefighters.

This morning ACT Independent Senator David Pocock attended a media conference at Parliament House with UFUA National Secretary Greg McConville and ACT Firefighters to announce the addition of the eight cancers to presumptive legislation. This development follows the declaration of firefighting as a cancer-causing occupation by the World Health Organisation IARC in July this year. The focus will now be on building on this achievement in the Australian Parliament and the ACT by having these eight additional cancers added to presumptive legislation in each State and Territory.

The UFU will redouble our efforts in cancer prevention through improved work health and safety enforcement, and through firefighter wellbeing programs and health screening. Through the addition of Cervical and Ovarian cancer to Federal and ACT presumptive legislation, we have made a huge step in the journey to protect the health of women firefighters across the country.

This outstanding achievement would not have been possible without the ongoing commitment and invaluable assistance of Alex Forrest, Canadian Trustee of the International Association of Firefighters. Many UFU members will have met Alex through his involvement in parliamentary inquiries, conferences and media events on firefighter cancer over the last 11 years. UFU Victorian Branch Secretary and past UFUA National Secretary Peter Marshall must also be recognised as a huge contributor to this success: he laid the foundation for firefighter presumptive cancer in Australia and under his leadership the UFUA achieved presumptive legislation in every state and territory. As recently as the National Committee of Management meeting in Canberra, Peter was directly involved in lobbying Commonwealth Parliamentarians on this critical issue.

Only 5 months ago the World Health organisation International Agency for Research on Cancer declared firefighter a cancer-causing occupation. Today, the UFUA achieved world leader status on firefighter cancer compensation. UFUA members can be justly proud.

Authorised by National Secretary Greg McConville