



BULLETIN

Bulletin No: 019

6 April 2023

TO ALL UFUA MEMBERS

Australian Firefighter Presumptive Cancer Law Developments

The Tasmanian Government announced last week that it would follow the lead set by the Commonwealth and ACT in November last year, by adding 8 cancers to the list covered by presumptive legislation.

Presumptive cancer legislation in Australia since 2011 has been led by the Commonwealth Government legislating in relation to aviation firefighters and firefighters in the ACT, and for those gains to flow on to other state and territory jurisdictions. There were 12 Cancers recognised in the initial legislation which was replicated throughout Australia. In November 2022 this list was expanded by another 8 cancers, including women's reproductive cancers to now be incorporated into Commonwealth legislation.

The additional cancers covered by the legislation are as follows:

Disease	Qualifying Period
Primary site lung cancer	15 years
Primary site skin cancer	15 years
Primary site cervical cancer	10 years
Primary site ovarian cancer	10 years
Primary site penile cancer	10 years
Primary site pancreatic cancer	10 years
Primary site thyroid cancer	10 years
Malignant mesothelioma	15 years

At a rally of firefighters held outside of the Tasmanian Parliament in Hobart on Friday 31st March, the Rockcliff Government announced that it would expand its presumptive cancer legislation to include the additional 8 cancers. The rally was attended by National Secretary Greg McConville as well as

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Alex Forrest, Trustee of the International Association of Firefighters. Alex had travelled from Canada to address politicians with his international presumptive cancer expertise. Tasmania has now become the first State to expand the number of cancers included under their presumptive cancer legislation from 12 to 20.

In late March the West Australian branch assisted by the National Office and Alex Forrest had many meetings with their politicians to agitate for improvements in presumptive cancer legislation there. There was a blitz of media and discussion of presumptive cancer legislation, with the hope that the McGowan Government will soon be on board with the expansion to their legislation.

The sad irony is that while all states have their Aviation firefighters covered by the expanded legislation, their fellow firefighters working within the same geographical location are not covered by the same protections. With increasing numbers of women joining the ranks of professional firefighters, it is critical that coverage and protection for these cancers is available to support them. The additional cancers to presumptive cancer legislation deliver the protection that both female and male firefighters deserve, and it should be legislated across the country.

With the Tasmanian government's announcement that it will include 8 additional cancers in its presumptive cancer legislation, the United Firefighters Union of Australia looks forward to meeting with other State and Territory leaders to convince them to expand cancer protection for their firefighters.

We congratulate the Tasmania branch on this outstanding success. We also commend the Western Australian branch on the hard work undertaken to convince their government of the need to move on this issue. We are confident that this work will soon yield a positive outcome across Australia.

We will continue to work to deliver comprehensive health screening for firefighters to identify cancer and other health risk, to support firefighters throughout their careers and retirement.

Authorised by National Secretary Greg McConville