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Volunteers call on all Parties to match Liberal Nationals' promise

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) CEO Andrew Ford has welcomed today's Liberal Nationals commitment to immediately introduce stand-alone presumptive legislation that does not discriminate between paid and volunteer firefighters and called on all sides of politics to commit to the same.

"Sadly, Victoria is the only Australian State that does not provide presumptive rights to firefighters if they are impacted by one of the cancers recognized as being linked with their work," Mr. Ford said.

"Today's commitment from the Liberal National opposition to right this wrong is very, very welcome."

"VFBV has been advocating for this specific outcome since before the 2014 State Election and have consistently argued that the health and safety of our firefighters should be a priority, above politics."

"We congratulate Matthew Guy for his commitment to urgently protect all firefighters equally and we call on every other political leader to immediately make the same public pledge."

"More than three years after the last election promise, presumptive cancer legislation was introduced to Parliament at Easter this year, but it didn't pass for two important reasons."

"Firstly, the Bill treated volunteer and paid firefighters differently and set conditions for volunteers that meant many who contract cancer would not have been able to access compensation."

"The other reason that Bill failed to achieve the support of the majority of MP's was that it combined the Government's completely separate, highly political plan to carve up the CFA."

"Combining the issues not only doomed the presumptive cancer provisions to fail but was also seen by many innocent firefighters as a cynical attempt to use their health as a political bargaining chip."

"As firefighters across Victoria prepare for a high-risk fire season, the least they should be offered is the knowledge that if they contract cancer as a result, a simple and equitable system will look after them and their families without the need for the complex legal battles the last Bill would have required."

"All emergency workers deserve the greatest respect, especially volunteers who leave their homes and families to protect those of others without payment."

"Every political leader should demonstrate that respect today by committing to support stand-alone, unambiguous, no tricks presumptive cancer legislation that does not discriminate between paid and volunteer firefighters as the first item on the Notice Paper of the next Parliament," Mr. Ford ended.

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