



VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADES VICTORIA

STATEMENT

26 August 2022

VOLUNTEERS WELCOME FISKVILLE REDRESS SCHEME

VFBV has welcomed today's announcement by the Victorian Government of the establishment of a Fiskville Redress Scheme to support Fiskville affected persons.

The scheme will open on Monday 5th September 2022, and addresses a key recommendation from the 2016 Parliamentary Enquiry into Fiskville.

The enquiry recommended that the Victorian Government establish a dedicated redress scheme offering a range of options such as access to health services, a financial payment and a meaningful apology.

While it has taken a while, this is an important milestone, especially for those still dealing with the physical and mental effects of their time at Fiskville. In our discussions with Government, we have emphasised our support for a victim centred approach, and that provides support for people to ensure the evidentiary burden is not onerous or unachievable, that volunteers and members of the community are eligible to apply and that the scheme provides acknowledgement and reassurance to those impacted that they will be supported.

Further details of the scheme will be shared following the schemes launch early next month, including eligibility, how to apply and other frequently asked questions.

In the same way that firefighting is an inherently dangerous activity, the exposure to toxins released during combustion and sometimes the agents used to extinguish fires also pose a large risk to firefighters. The historic Fiskville experience demonstrates that these toxic exposures can be present in hot fire training scenarios in just the same way as random fire events. All firefighters must be protected from these exposures and supported if they suffer illness as a result of exposure.

As we said in our March 2015 submission to the enquiry - whatever underlying causes contributed to the exposure of the firefighters attending Fiskville in the past, one thing that must be resolved is the fair protection of any firefighters who may be suffering illness as a result of past practices.

Today's announcement is an important step in honouring that commitment, and honouring our firefighters both volunteer and career.

Media: Quotes may be attributed to VFBV CEO, Adam Barnett on behalf of Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria.