

Media Release

The Hon Lisa Neville MP

Minister for Water

Minister for Police and Emergency Services



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Wednesday, 29 May 2019

A MODERN FIRE SERVICE FOR ALL VICTORIANS

The Andrews Labor Government is delivering on our election commitment and giving Victoria the modern emergency services our state needs by enshrining the CFA as a truly community-based, volunteer organisation and creating a new organisation, Fire Rescue Victoria.

Victoria has the best firefighters in the world, but they currently operate under systems and structures that have not changed since the 1950s. Our cities and suburbs have grown significantly and it's clear that these services are in need of modernisation.

As part of our election commitment, the Labor Government today introduced the Firefighters' Presumptive Rights Compensation and Fire Services Legislation Amendment (Reform) Bill 2019 into the Parliament which will provide much-needed and overdue reforms to the state's fire services.

These reforms will deliver modernised governance and organisational structures that meet the demands of twenty-first century Victoria.

The Bill provides presumptive rights to cancer compensation for career and volunteer firefighters, recognising the invaluable service they provide which often requires them to work in inherently dangerous conditions.

Administered through WorkSafe, the new scheme will apply to individuals who have served as firefighters for a specified number of years, depending on the cancer type, and have been diagnosed since 1 June 2016.

Last year the Liberals deceived the Parliament and abused religious beliefs to vote down this reform, including vital cancer rights for firefighters.

Under the reforms, the CFA will be further protected under law as a volunteer service and our 1,220 volunteer CFA brigades will be untouched, continuing to serve their communities day-to-day as they have always done, as well as providing vital surge capacity during major emergencies.

Importantly, CFA volunteers currently serving at one of the state's 38 integrated stations will be able to remain at that station if they choose to, co-locating with Fire Rescue Victoria services under the altered boundaries

The new Fire Rescue Victoria will cover existing Metropolitan Fire Brigade boundaries and serve metropolitan Melbourne, outer urban areas and larger regional centres across Victoria.

It will also bring together the MFB and career CFA staff from the state's 38 integrated CFA stations, including the 450 extra career firefighters delivered in the Labor Government's first term. Boundaries will also be altered to reflect population growth across the state – a change the fire services have requested for a long time.

In transitioning to these new arrangements, the new model will not come into effect until mid-2020, which will mean no change for the upcoming 2019/20 fire season.

An implementation Monitor will be established for 10 years to ensure strong, independent oversight of the reforms and the ongoing operation of Fire Rescue Victoria and the CFA.

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Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville

“Our firefighters are the best in the world and as our population grows, we’re making sure that they and the Victorian community have the modern fire service that they deserve.”

“We made a commitment at the last election to reform our fire services and ensure our career and volunteer firefighters are supported in keeping the community safe – and that’s exactly what we’re delivering.”