

## Media Release

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### **The firefighters that Government left behind**

*Victorian Government denies Forest Industry Brigade members access to presumptive rights again.*

In Victoria, 800 people employed in the forestry sector are members of a Forest Industry Brigade under the [Country Fire Authority](#). These men and women protect our state during bushfire season alongside other firefighters – volunteers and professionals. The current debate about presumptive rights in the Legislative Council shows a shocking disregard for these firefighters who have served their communities well, Deb Kerr, CEO of the Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA), said today.

“Regardless of whether you support the forestry sector or not – human lives should always come first. Every bushfire season, these men and women stand shoulder to shoulder with other firefighters to protect people, their homes, forests, communities, critical infrastructure, and wildlife. With an average of 10 years of service each, this group has amassed 8000 years of service to the Victorian community. To now hear that the Government denies them access to compensation should they develop cancer typically associated with firefighting activities is a horrible insult,” Ms Kerr said.

“While we support the access proposed in the Bill before Parliament, and previously given to professional and other firefighters, forestry firefighters have been left behind.”

“Our Forestry Industry Brigades are proud to protect their communities when the worst comes to pass. But the risks to the individual are the same, regardless of the uniform you wear,” Ms Kerr concluded.

### **ENDS**

#### **About**

The Victorian Forest Products Association (VFPA) represents all elements of the value chain from sustainable harvesting of plantations and multiple-use natural forest resources. VFPA is a policy development and advocacy group that represents the interests of Victoria’s sustainable forestry. We collaborate strongly with other industry bodies to ensure the best outcomes for forestry in general and our members more specifically. Our charter provides autonomy to manage state issues. We collaborate with the Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) on any issues that transcend state borders and have national implications.

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