

**QUEENSLAND FIRE SERVICE**  
**SENIOR OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION**

Union of Employees  
P.O. Box 217  
**LUTWYCHE QLD 4030**

**NEWSLETTER**

Issue 8

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**Presumptive legislation**

A recent initiative by the UFU on progressing presumptive legislation led to a request by the State Secretary (through Branch Coucillors) for input on this topic so an SOA position could be relayed to the UFU.

Thank you to all those who provided responses, as this allowed a reply to be made and for the State Secretary to be confident that this reply reflected the views of SOA members. For your reference and based on feedback that was received, see below the response that was forwarded to the UFU.

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There were three separate issues that were identified, being *presumptive legislation*, *data collection* to support this initiative and *process*.

**PRESUMPTIVE LEGISLATION**

**There is unanimous support for presumptive legislation and the SOA supports the progression of this initiative.**

**DATA COLLECTION**

**There is a strong view that data must be factual and not anecdotal or hearsay evidence. A clear preference was made to undertake a formal survey through a partnership with QFRS, UFU and SOA representation.**

**SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM SOA MEMBERS -**

There was also the view from some responses that if gathering this data in the method being used and this led to a formal investigation, then the process the UFU is doing would be viewed as worthwhile. These responses believed that a formal investigation and survey would be required at some stage. Concerns were also raised by most responses that process must withstand rigour of examination as critics of such an initiative will question whether the impact of some illnesses was self inflicted - e.g. heavy smoker - and a flawed process could implode.

**PROCESS**

**A clear response was received that it is not only UFU members who may have been affected by attendances at fires during their careers. Process must involve surveys of all firefighters, regardless of rank.**

**SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM SOA MEMBERS -**

Senior officers have usually been in the fire service for a long time and all were firefighters/SO's for significant periods of time - usually when there were numerous brigades and standards varied across the state. Some (anecdotal) examples were provided of operational experiences during the brigade era where BA/protective clothing was infrequently or not used.

It is easily argued that those firefighters who have been in the fire service for many years - regardless of current rank - are probably at a heightened exposure when compared to those who have recently joined the QFRS. This

is because of improved and consistent operational standards being implemented. Also, equipment availability to all firefighters and the standards of this equipment are higher. Therefore all ranks should be involved in data collection - through due process - and the idea of a partnership approach is the best way forward.



**Ron James**  
**STATE SECRETARY**  
**Queensland Fire Service**  
**Senior Officers' Association – Union of Employees**