



Cancer compo to be baptism of fire for MPs

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CANCER compensation for volunteer firefighters will be among the first laws voted on in Parliament to test the allegiance of the two independent MPs in Labor's Cabinet.

All crossbenchers and Opposition MPs voted in support of a Greens Bill to ensure CFS volunteers can access the same presumptive cancer compensation treatment as paid firefighters under WorkCover.

It passed the Upper House of Parliament this week and only Labor voted against it.

The Bill will need to pass the Lower House to become law, and would have the numbers with support from Geoff Brock and Martin Hamilton-Smith.

However, both independent members of Labor's Cabinet are yet to indicate how they will vote on the matter.

Mr Brock co-sponsored the same Bill when the Greens attempted to pass it before the

election. He told *The Advertiser* that as part of his agreement with Mr Weatherill to support a Labor Government, he had secured a review of the current scheme, which gives greater support to paid firefighters.

The review is expected to be completed by September.

"It's only sensible that I consider the options once the review is completed," Mr Brock said.

When he was a member of the Liberal Party, Mr Hamilton-Smith supported equal compensation. A spokesman said Mr Hamilton-Smith would decide how he would vote after receiving briefings.

Greens MLC Tammy Franks said the Labor Government had again showed "contempt" for CFS firefighters and asked these volunteers to await the findings of the government's review into the matter.

"(It's) a review that is simply yet another diversion from a government that has had to be dragged kicking and scream-

ing towards true CFS equality," Ms Franks said.

"That means it is the votes of Minister Brock, Dr Bob Such and Minister Hamilton-Smith who will determine the vote in the Lower House.

"All three of those MPs supported this Bill in 2013. It remains to be seen whether the Weatherill Government will be able to impose Labor's position on them in 2014."

In Parliament yesterday, Liberal MP Dan van Holst Pellekaan made a plea to Mr Brock to "not to change his principle" on this issue.

"He understands this issue and before the last election he was in lockstep with us on this issue of principle," Mr van Holst Pellekaan said.

Liberal MP Adrian Pederick said volunteers saved the government hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

"I think it is a very small price to pay to give them the eligibility to qualify for cancer compensation."