



August, 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

ADORA CONTINUES A FAMILY CFA TRADITION

When Ken O'Brian turned 16 he joined his local fire brigade at the first opportunity.

Twenty-five years later his daughter Adora has joined the Colac Junior Fire Brigade as soon as she reached the minimum age of 11.

They are both following in the footsteps of Ken's father Terry, who has volunteered with the CFA at Connewarre and Barongarook brigades for more than 36 years. Terry was a member of Connewarre's brigade management team for more than 10 years, and has been awarded a National Medal and CFA Life Membership for his contributions to the CFA

Ken and Terry are members at Barongarook, 12 kilometres south of Colac, but because the small rural brigade doesn't have a junior program Adora has enrolled at Colac.

Ken served at Connewarre for 16 years and has served at Barongarook for 9 years and he still enjoys making a contribution to community safety.

"I grew up on a farm when it was just the thing you did; when you turned 16 you joined," Ken said.

"Adora was the same; as soon as she could join she did. She's already showing a keen interest in actually learning about firefighting, not just social activities with her friends," Ken said.

"It's her choice what she wants to do in the future but she's very community minded," he added.

Having three generations actively involved in the CFA is a rarity, although Ken says he knows other families likely to reach the same achievement in the next few years.

Ken is the Barongarook brigade third lieutenant, Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria representative and equipment officer while Terry, who turns 70 next year, is training officer.

"It's all about giving back to the community," Ken said. "I don't feel any obligation but it's the right thing to do."

Ken describes Barongarook as a "genuine bush brigade".

“We’re one of the gateways to the Otways so the brigade is actively involved in burn-off programs. We’re not extremely busy in terms of call outs but we’re very active in community protection and the burns program from Brucknell through to Lorne,” he said.

“If something happens across the region our members are generally involved in it.”

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said family connections have often inspired a new generation of volunteers and a new-look to local CFA brigades.

Mr Ford said the VFBV continues to encourage everyone to become volunteer firefighters to help protect their communities.

“Gone are the days when firefighting is a role for just the men, we have highly experienced and very qualified people from all ages, gender, backgrounds and demographics performing front line firefighting roles, operational leadership roles and support roles.”

Ends...