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MEDIA RELEASE

SWAN HILL FIRE BRIGADE SHOWS ITS DIVERSITY

Swan Hill Fire Brigade's diversity is on show every time the volunteers step out to help the community.

From young female members taking on senior roles and a mother being named champion fireman of the year to new recruits from Indian and Sri Lankan backgrounds, the brigade is a role model for diversity and inclusion.

Overall the brigade now has nine active female firefighters, including Meagan Burt who has been appointed brigade secretary and Monique Bruton, 18, who is the new district council secretary/treasurer.

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The brigade has also recently welcomed recruits from Indian and Sri Lankan backgrounds.

Originally from India, Harpreet Brar moved to Swan Hill in 2006 and has long harboured ambitions to become involved in the brigade,

Mr Brar, who works for the Department of Health and Human Services, said he was enjoying being part of a community-minded group where more senior volunteers were always willing to help.

"I always wanted to do something for the community and this was a good opportunity," he said.

Originally from Sri Lanka, Anton Fernando moved from Melbourne to Swan Hill six years ago.

Like Mr Brar, Mr Fernando has enrolled to do the CFA wildfire training course starting in October and is enjoying being part of the group.

He got involved after getting to know brigade captain Dennis 'Nipper' Turner through his work with the RACV emergency service.

"I wanted to do something for the community and it's good to get to know people around town

Brigade member and Volunteer Fire Brigade Victoria board member Graeme Jilbert said the brigade was “ticking all the right boxes”.

“When it comes to diversity and multiculturalism we’re reflecting our local community,” he said.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said the VFBV continues to encourage everyone to become volunteer firefighters to help protect their communities.

“Our CFA volunteers train to national professional standards and the community is proud of the work they do, regardless of who they are or where they’re from.

“Gone are the days when firefighting was a role for just 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.”

The Swan Hill Fire Brigade is 100 per cent volunteer with about 100 members, including 40 active firefighters, who responded to 187 calls last year.

Victoria now has 11,924 female volunteers, 22 per cent of the total number. The number of female volunteers has been steadily rising over recent years.

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