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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Paul Bannan another shining example of Victoria's incredible CFA volunteers**

Limestone Fire Brigade volunteer Paul Bannan has always followed the philosophy of helping anybody at any time in any place.

Three years ago, Mr Bannan was one of seven donors involved in one of Australia's largest paired kidney exchanges, donating one of his kidneys to help a stranger. This month he's been protecting life and property in Queensland in his role as a volunteer firefighter.

Mr Bannan was part of contingent of Victorian CFA volunteers who lent their experience and strength of numbers to respond to the fire disasters in Queensland.

"They asked for volunteers and I put my hand up," he said. "You help where you can, when you can and when it comes to volunteer firefighters it's just helping out the extended family."

Mr Bannan's employer, Nestle, allows him four days a year emergency services leave which he uses for local incidents. For the interstate strike team, Mr Bannan was able to use annual leave on short notice.

He has been part of previous strike team tours to New South Wales and South Australia and has regularly added to the CFA volunteer surge capacity during major incidents around Victoria.

Joining fellow volunteers at Undullah, south of Brisbane, Mr Bannan did a "bit of everything", including blacking out fire areas, equipment support to slashing bush tracks through a conservation park.

"It was a good test," he said. "It was just after the three-year anniversary of donating my kidney and going into the high humidity was a challenge but it wasn't a problem."

With 28 years' experience as a volunteer, Mr Bannan said his training and preparation held him in good stead for the Queensland strike team work.

“We’re really well trained in district 12, especially with our wildfire instructor Tony Scicluna. It was a good experience and I was gobsmacked at how well they looked after us in Queensland.”

VFBV CEO Andrew Ford praised all the volunteers who assisted in Queensland, saying Paul is yet another example of the strength of Victoria’s incredible volunteers and the system in which they operate.

“As one of the most fire-prone places in the world, Victoria’s excellent integrated CFA model provides a critically important surge capacity that delivers a ready workforce of professionally trained and equipped volunteers, able to step up and respond anywhere in the state and even interstate in times of disaster,” Mr Ford said.