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MEDIA RELEASE

We have your back: CFA volunteer Geoff Read says helping Queensland was an opportunity to repay a favour

Volunteering to leave his family and property to protect those of the Queensland community was not only second nature for Hilldene CFA captain Geoff Read, but an opportunity to return a deeply appreciated favour.

Captain Read was one of a contingent of Victorian CFA volunteers who recently spent five days in Queensland, using their years of experience, training and strength of numbers to help bring the blazes under control.

“One of the main reasons I went was because of Black Saturday when we had so many teams from other states helping us,” Captain Read said. “It’s like one family; we’re all here to help each other and the general public.”

Captain Read’s extensive training and experience over 25 years as a CFA volunteer led to his appointment as a crew leader in Queensland.

“We do so many different things at Hilldene; we’re in a rural area but also near a freeway and we support into Seymour for a variety of incidents fires so we do a lot of cross training,” he said.

“That experience means we are able to adapt to almost any incident and no matter where we are needed, we can hit the ground running.”

Captain Read has previously joined strike teams in New South Wales and supported his fellow Victorian firefighters during many major incidents.

In Queensland, Captain Read and his fellow Victorian volunteers supported Queensland crews in fighting grass and scrub fires and in setting containment lines near Undullah.

Hilldene has 55 members, including about 35 active volunteer firefighters who respond to about 120 calls a year.

VFBV CEO Andrew Ford praised all the volunteers who assisted in Queensland, saying it was another example of the strength of Victoria's flexible integrated CFA model.

"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.

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