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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **BAYLES CFA VOLUNTEERS TO CELEBRATE COMMUNITY CONNECTION**

Bayles CFA volunteers are set to celebrate 75 years of protecting communities close to home and far away.

A community open day, afternoon tea and awards night on Saturday August 31 will pay tribute to the work of volunteers from today and yesterday while spreading an important local safety message.

Captain Tim English said the brigade was an integral part of the local community.

Bayles is just a small rural area 75 kilometres south-east of Melbourne with less than 500 people but the volunteering spirit is alive and well.

“We have 29 members, including seven juniors and average 50-60 call-outs a year; not bad for a small area,” Captain English said.

The brigade also contributes to major campaigns, from Black Saturday to more recent fires at Bunyip, adding to the CFA surge capacity while giving local members valuable experience.

“Because we don’t get a lot of local call outs, we make a point of getting volunteers involved in campaign fires,” Captain English said. “It’s an opportunity to be involved on a larger scale which helps their skills while also keeping the community safe.”

The volunteers often go a step further with follow-up relief for fire victims. “Generally, on the back of campaign fires we do relief efforts,” Captain English said. “After the Bunyip fires, we distributed nearly \$10,000 worth of gift cards that were donated through our Facebook page to families who had lost their homes. We’re a very community and family-oriented brigade.”

The brigade has members aged 16 to 60s with a range of experience. About 50 per cent of volunteers are women.

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary community event is from 2-4pm and will include fire safety awareness activities. It will be followed that evening by the annual brigade dinner, including long service presentations and the delivery of a new ultra-light vehicle.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) CEO Adam Barnett congratulated volunteers on the milestone and said they are a great example of local people supporting their communities and beyond.

“The experience and willingness of volunteers to drop everything makes a huge contribution to the safety and response capacity of CFA and the protection of Victoria,” Mr Barnett said.

“Victoria is one of the most fire prone areas in the world, and as we face longer fire danger periods and more and larger fires, there are even more reasons to support and value CFA volunteers.”

Learn more about CFA’s world-respected surge capacity on the VFBV website: <https://vfbv.com.au/index.php/component/k2/item/568-cfa-s-volunteer-surge-capacity-essential-for-victoria>

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