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MEDIA RELEASE

EMILY IS THE FACE OF THE FUTURE FOR WERRIBEE CFA

Emily Martignago is the face of the future for the Werribee volunteer CFA brigade.

The 24-year-old occupational therapist uses her training and skills to support the brigade as it responds to about 800 incidents a year – the most of any volunteer brigade in Victoria.

And she uses her leadership qualities to introduce a new generation of juniors to the ranks.

Emily has overseen a major revival of the brigade's juniors since being elected as leader in 2013 when there were just three members. Today there are 18 members and they're fresh from achieving multiple top 10 results at the state junior championships.

Despite having no family connections to the CFA, Emily joined the Werribee brigade in 2012. "I wanted to volunteer and posted on Facebook asking friends if they had any ideas and one came up with the CFA because she was already involved with it," she said.

After a tour of the station, a written application, interview and 10-week intensive recruitment course, Emily became a fully-fledged volunteer member and hasn't looked back.

"I really enjoy the family vibe of the brigade," she said. "I've made a lot of new friends and to be with the kids is very rewarding to see them develop as people and competitors."

"I feel rewarded to be able to give back to the community."

Emily is qualified as a wildfire and low structure firefighter and breathing apparatus operator and is working on her ticket for road accident rescues.

"Going to incidents is a challenge but it teaches you a lot about teamwork," she said. "It's a unique set of skills I don't think you'd learn anywhere else."

Her role with the juniors has also given Emily new leadership and networking skills.

Now working at Geelong Hospital but still living in Werribee, Emily dedicates a lot of her free time to the CFA brigade.

“We train Monday Tuesday and Thursday and the juniors compete on a Saturday and seniors on a Sunday,” she said. “It’s pretty full on but I love what I’m doing.”

“The brigade isn't just about fighting fires, it's about community spirit and for me particularly, empowering the next generation by being a role model for them. I not only have 18 juniors to look after, but I also have a team of assistants and about 60 family members who support me.”

She also competed with the Werribee CFA Brigade at the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria State Championships at Bendigo last weekend. It was her second year of competition and marked a step up to A-division after Werribee won B division in 2016.

The Werribee CFA Brigade is a 100 per cent volunteer brigade with about 70 active volunteer firefighters who respond to more than 800 calls a year. Volunteers from the large urban brigade provide professional fire services to householders, commercial premises and industry, attend many community events and involved in many rescue incidents.

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