



August, 2017

MEDIA RELEASE

CFA VOLUNTEER CONTINUES FAMILY TRADITION

Being ready to fight fires has been part of Truganina volunteer CFA Brigade captain Colleen Goodfellow's life for as long as she can remember.

Colleen has notched up five years as captain and more than 30 years as a junior and member of the brigade.

Her father Colin Squires, AFSM, is the brigade president and remains an operational firefighter while her mother Jill is one of the junior leaders.

Colleen's children might be only six and eight, still a few years away from being eligible to volunteer, but they're already showing interest in joining the junior brigade.

"My family was all involved," Colleen said. "As soon as I turned 11 I joined juniors and I've been a member ever since, which is about 31 years."

Colleen has been a communications officer, lieutenant and delegate before becoming captain.

A lot has changed over time, but some things remain the same.

"People used to walk off the street and say they want to join and you'd hand them a pair of overalls and say off you go," Colleen said. "These days there is much more emphasis on training and being prepared. We have to adhere to developing minimum skills, which is a good thing."

While the volunteers have become more professional, the heart of volunteering hasn't changed.

"It was the community spirit and family feel of the CFA and the brigade that attracted me early on and it still does today," Colleen said.

"Being trained and being able to respond to the community when they need help is a good achievement."

The 100 per cent volunteer Truganina brigade has about 75 members, including about 40 operational firefighters. The brigade's service capacity continues to expand and evolve to meet growing community needs.

The volunteers respond to nearly 400 calls each year, covering a wide range of incidents in a fast growing urban fringe area.

Colleen said the brigade has a good range of volunteers, including a mix of experienced and younger members who work in different fields and so are available at different times of the day to respond when needed.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said volunteers are essential to public safety and provide a professional service that is effective and affordable.

"Our dedicated volunteers are continuing a great Australian tradition that is well respected in our communities," Mr Ford said.

Mr Ford said volunteers are part of the fabric of society and contribute to community resilience.

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