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MEDIA RELEASE

JUNIOR FIRE BRIGADES IN WARRNAMBOOL FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

More than 500 budding volunteer firefighters will descend on Warrnambool on February 24-25 to compete in the Victorian urban junior championships.

Sixty seven junior teams from around Victoria and one team from Western Australia will compete in the annual championships run by Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) in conjunction with the CFA.

Warrnambool has hosted the event five times in its 45-year history, most recently in 2013.

With the family members the event will attract about 2000 people to Warrnambool.

Warrnambool Urban Fire Brigade organising committee chairman and VFBV competition and rules committee member Malcolm Bishop said joining a junior brigade and competing in the championships gave young people an early insight into the work of volunteer firefighters.

“It gives them a taste of what it’s like to be a firefighter and hopefully they will go on to join the brigade,” Mr Bishop said.

“We’ve seen hundreds of junior members progress through to senior ranks and become volunteer firefighters,” he said.

Teams will compete in under 14 and under 17 competitions in practical events with hoses, hydrants and targets. “There are a lot of traditional events that stem back to the late 1880s when people would couple hoses to hydrants to fight fires,” Mr Bishop said.

“It’s all about hitting targets in the quickest possible times and becoming efficient in their operational skills.”

VFBV CEO Andrew Ford said junior brigades and the championships were the best way for young people to become engaged and learn practical skills before being old enough to attend fires.

“The VFBV State Urban Junior Championships can set young people on a pathway to serve their communities,” Mr Ford said.

“They encourage family participation and help to instil a sense of community service and volunteerism in young people while raising the importance of local fire brigades,” Mr Ford said.

Warrnambool will have both under 14 and under 17 teams competing on February 24-25.

The VFBV rural state championships will be held at the Warrnambool Showgrounds on April 7-8.

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