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MEDIA RELEASE

EUROA FIRE BRIGADE JUNIOR RACES INTO HISTORY BOOKS

Euroa junior fire brigade member Teagan Kubeil has raced into the history books, breaking a 45-year male stranglehold in one of Victoria's premier fire championship events.

Teagan, from Euroa's under 14 team, became the first girl to win the hydrant race at the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) State Urban Junior Championships in Warrnambool.

Teagan was the only competitor to break the 11 second barrier in the event, recording a best time of 10.77 seconds.

Coach Gerrard Williams from Euroa Urban Fire Brigade described Teagan as one of the most competitive runners he has seen in 20 years of coaching.

"Teagan's up there with the best," he said. "She's like a bull at a gate. She loves to succeed and she's a great kid.

"While other girls have achieved placings in the event, to everyone's knowledge she's the first female to win," Gerrard said.

He hopes the success will encourage more girls to join.

"It's good to show that competing and becoming involved in the brigade is not just for boys. We've had a lot of girls who've raced for us over the years," he said.

In the event, competitors run carrying a hydrant, flick a cap, remove a plug, fit and tighten the hydrant, then run again to the end of the course.

It is one of many events at the championships designed to give young people an early taste of the operational skills they need to become volunteer firefighters.

The junior brigade has been a strong recruitment ground for the brigade, including Gerrard who joined more than 35 years ago and went on to train and become a volunteer firefighter, including 10 years as captain.

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 added that diversity is an important facet of volunteer firefighting. “When our CFA volunteers are saving your property or helping in a time of need, you don’t care whether we’re male or female, paid or volunteer, or what our race, religion or sexuality we might be; the thing you take comfort in is that we are there, doing what needs to be done backed by our experience, training, professionalism and community compassion,” he said.

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