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MEDIA RELEASE

GEELONG WEST VOLUNTEER RETURNS TO CFA `FAMILY`

Tiffany Burns followed her father into the CFA and found herself a new extended family in the process.

Tiffany's father Michael Woods was a career CFA firefighter and as soon as she was old enough at 11, she joined a junior brigade.

"You could say I've lived it," Tiffany said. "It's always been in the family."

After the family moved to Geelong, she joined the juniors in 1994 and went on to complete her wildfire training to become a fully-fledged volunteer.

Tiffany left for a few years while having children but there was always a desire to return.

"I came back about five years ago," Tiffany said. "I missed it and when my son Ben Dines joined the juniors I really wanted to get involved again."

Tiffany took the next step and became the junior coordinator, helping young potential volunteer firefighters to hone their skills and to compete at the annual Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) junior championships.

"It's like family," Tiffany said. "I love being junior coordinator; they're just like my own kids."

"It feels like it's something really worthwhile to do in the community. It's very rewarding to see the juniors start out as 11-year-olds now turning 17 and turning out to fire calls. It's nice to know we've helped with that."

VFBV CEO Andrew Ford said junior brigades and 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.

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