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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **WENDOUREE VOLUNTEER ENCOURAGING JUNIORS**

Peter Every says he was born to become a CFA volunteer.

With more than three-quarters of his life directly connected with CFA volunteering, he has a good point.

It has been 29 years since Peter joined the Wendouree junior brigade when he turned 11. Inspired by his father Des, Peter says “I was born in it” and the Ballarat teacher still carries a passion for the cause.

“I was unhappy that I couldn’t start as a junior till I was 11,” he said. “I would have started younger if I was allowed to.”

After competing with the junior brigade, Peter went on to serve 20 years as Wendouree’s junior coordinator, matching the time dedicated by his father in the role.

He also trained to become a volunteer and joined CFA strike teams at major incidents across the state and beyond.

“I’ve twice been to New South Wales, helped during Black Saturday and attended fires in north-east Victoria and the Grampians.

“For me it’s like a big family; you help where you’re needed and I could go to any town in Victoria and know someone through the CFA.”

Volunteering and junior coaching has had to take a backseat while Peter raises his young family, but he remains connected. He’s still involved in fundraising and joins strike teams when needed to boost the CFA surge capacity.

He’s on the CFA Western Zone and Central Districts committee and at the weekend was part of Wendouree’s ladder 8s team at the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) state urban senior championships.

Peter, who was an apprentice building fire trucks before becoming a teacher, said that keeping the junior brigade running was always one of his prime objectives.

“It was a big focus of mine was to keep the juniors going. My eldest daughter turns 11 next year and she’s keen to join.”

The junior brigade has been a prime source of volunteers over the years.

“All the guys I run with now either run in or coached the juniors and become volunteers,” he said.

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.

“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.

“Volunteers are essential to public safety and provide a professional service that is effective and affordable, and they contribute to the CFA’s well-established ability to mobilise huge numbers of highly trained and experienced volunteers to deal with major incidents.”

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