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MEDIA RELEASE

NEW LOOK FOR CAMPERDOWN GROUP CFA BRIGADES

Fire brigades in the Camperdown region have a fresh look with six new volunteer captains taking over the reins.

In all cases, younger brigade members have stepped up to replace their experienced mentors in a major regeneration.

Camperdown CFA group officer Chris Place said six of the 11 volunteer brigades in the group appointed new captains this year.

“it is coincidental but it’s also refreshing,” Mr Place said.

“We’ve had some very good captains in the area and they’ve seen the value in promoting younger people into the roles,” he said.

“The good thing is that the captains have mentored these younger people to make sure they are trained and ready for the responsibility and in most cases they’re still there to guide and assist them.”

Terang’s new captain Ash Miller took over from Mark Cole, at Bookar Andrew Smith replaced Andrew Duynhoven who became a deputy group officer, at Chocolyn Geoff Whytcross replaced David Manifold, at Pomborneit Garth Wesson replaced Terry Place, at Stonyford James Reynolds replaced Terry Riggs and at Noorat Michael Williams replaced Craig Wood who also stepped up to deputy group officer.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) CEO Andrew Ford recognised the outstanding contribution of the outgoing captains and welcomed the influx of new leaders, saying it reflected the changing face of volunteering.

“The VFBV continues to encourage everyone to become volunteer firefighters to help protect their communities,” he said. “We have highly experienced and very qualified people from all ages, gender, backgrounds and demographics performing front line firefighting roles, operational leadership roles and support roles.”

Mr Place said brigades in the region were busy and needed strong volunteer numbers.

“We’ve had a lot of work going back to Black Saturday and numerous fires in the Stony Rises and across the area since then,” he said.

This year the Camperdown group brigades added to the huge volunteer response to the St Patrick’s day fires.

Mr Place said volunteer numbers in the group were strong. “It could be because we’re close to the highway and the towns are doing well, or maybe we’ve just been so bloody busy in recent years we’ve had to do well.”

The brigades are trying to encourage more female members to complete their wildfire training.

In Victoria there are 11,924 female volunteers, 22 per cent of the total number and steadily rising over recent years.

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