



June 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

YOUNG HEALESVILLE VOLUNTEER STEPS UP TO LEADERSHIP ROLE

Young Healesville CFA volunteer Ethan Adams is spearheading a new generation of firefighters and community leaders in the region.

Ethan, 21, is moving up in the ranks of the brigade, taking on the role of fourth lieutenant this year, and he hopes other young people follow his example.

Ethan joined after leaving school in 2015. "I had free time and had seen the trucks around town and thought it would be a good thing to do to give back to the community," he said.

"I just fell in love with it and I've loved every minute of it since. The mateship is great and you get to go out in the community to help someone and use the skills that you learn."

Ethan, who works part-time at a supermarket and as a gardener, has trained extensively to move ahead in the brigade and contribute to his community. After completing his minimum skills training, Ethan has undertaken breathing apparatus and structural firefighting training and will do crew leader and officer development courses as part of his new role.

The training holds him in good stead in the brigade and the community.

"My role involves taking on more leadership and behind-the-scenes admin, running the Sunday rosters and hydrant inspections, and I'm also responsible for organising maintenance at the station, including the garden," he said.

The Healesville brigade is busy, responding to about 200 calls a year and has about 40 operational volunteers, the strongest it has been for many years.

Ethan is no longer the youngest brigade member with two recent young recruits joining, and he is encouraging anyone in the community to consider volunteering.

"I'd definitely encourage anyone to join. There are times when you go to incidents that are hard to see but there's a feeling of mateship and doing something positive for the community. It's very fulfilling to learn new skills and put them into practice."

Ethan has also added his name to stand-by crews to join strike teams, boosting the CFA volunteer surge capacity to respond to major disasters.

"That's part of what we do; we're here for the community," he said.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Adam Barnett said volunteers are the cornerstone of local communities and their experience and willingness to drop everything made a huge contribution to the safety and response capacity of CFA and the protection of Victoria.

CFA volunteers deliver a highly professional emergency service that is admired and envied around the world, with CFA volunteers making up 95 per cent of Victoria's firefighting forces.

Victoria is one of the most fire prone areas in the world, and as it faces longer fire danger periods, with more and larger fires than ever before, there are even more reasons to support and value CFA volunteers. They are the critical component of CFA's ability to mobilise huge numbers of highly trained people and resources to multiple, major and long-duration fires while still maintaining capacity at home to deal with local incidents.

Learn more about CFA's world-respected surge capacity on the VFBV website: <https://vfbv.com.au/index.php/component/k2/item/568-cfa-s-volunteer-surge-capacity-essential-for-victoria>

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