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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **CFA VOLUNTEER SPREADS HIS WINGS ACROSS THE STATE**

Glenn Mercer doesn't remember exactly when he started nagging his father Ian about joining the CFA, but he knows he was young.

"Dad was a brigade volunteer and I liked the community connection and competition side of it," Glenn said.

"I'd be nagging Dad about when I could join and he's always say not until you're 11."

It didn't take long after he turned 11 for Glenn to join the Boort volunteer brigade's junior ranks and after 32 years he's spreading his wings.

Now a Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria Support Officer, Glenn has relocated with his family to Milawa south of Wangaratta and intends to maintain dual memberships of both brigades.

"That's one of the advantages of being a CFA volunteer – we can work together across the state," he said.

Although he won't be an active member with Boort, Glenn was keen to continue his connection which included 15 years as captain and 24 years as brigade officer.

"That's a big chunk of your life," he said. "In a small community people approach you because you're the brigade captain; I've helped a lot of older residents change their smoke alarms."

He recalls going to state junior championships at Echuca and putting on his father's brigade captain coat and saying one day he'd become captain. A few years later it happened.

Glenn remains a staunch supporter of the volunteer fire service.

"I enjoy being part of an organisation that does something for the community in times of trouble and generally promotes fire safety," he said.

Volunteers work well together and with the paid staff in integrated brigades. Volunteerism is an integral part of the community, whether it's emergency services, school council or local sporting clubs."

“We’re fortunate we have good members who do their bit. Being trained and actively responding in our local communities all year round means that we are always ready and able to help out wherever and whenever required.”

The Boort brigade has about 25 volunteer members who respond to about 25 calls each year, mostly grass fires but also car accidents and even a World War I grenade that was dug up in a back yard.

The volunteers played a huge role in protecting the region during the January 2011 floods. “We kept the station open for nine days straight,” Glenn said. “For the first five days we went around-the-clock checking on water levels.”

Glenn has been to a few training sessions with the Milawa brigade and plans to officially join the brigade shortly.

“They’ve been very welcoming and it’s nice to be working in the background. You’re learning all the time in this field.”

It looks like the family tradition is set to continue. While his wife Tamara is working as a swimming instructor, their son Luke turned 11 in March and has been to training sessions with the El Dorado brigade.

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