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MEDIA RELEASE

FERNTREE GULLY FIREFIGHTERS STEP UP FOR SAFETY

Ferntree Gully Fire Brigade volunteers constantly step up to support the community in times of emergency, now they're stepping up to a new challenge in the fight against depression, PTSD and suicide amongst emergency services personnel.

Thirteen volunteer fire fighters from the brigade will take part in the Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb on September 2, climbing 28 floors of the Crown Metropol Hotel Crown while wearing 25kg of turnout gear and breathing apparatus.

Brigade captain Seamus Smith said the 100 per cent volunteer brigade was always keen to help the community, not only in providing professional fire services but in supporting community events.

"We raising funds for a good cause and it's a good personal challenge for the brigade members," Mr Smith said.

Last year 11 volunteers raised more than \$11,900 in the stair climb. This year they are seeking second-hand batteries for their fund-raising efforts.

People can donate by going to www.firefighterclimb.org.au and search for the Ferntree Gully brigade or by contacting stairclimb@ftgcfa.org.au

The brigade has more than 50 members most of whom are operational, who respond to 280-300 incidents each year.

"The brigade is going well and we're always encouraging more people to join, particularly those who can help during the day," Mr Smith said.

The stair climb hosted by the Firefighter's Charity Fund aims to raise \$500,000 for Lifeline and the Black Dog Institute to improve support services, fund research, remove stigmas and raise awareness of Mental health issues like depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and suicide, especially for those within the Emergency Service and Defence communities..

The Ferntree Gully brigade's engagement with the local community was well illustrated during a recent story time day in June with more than 250 people through the station. Educating the public on fire safety was a key component of the day.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said volunteers are essential to public safety and provide a professional service that is effective and affordable.

“Our dedicated volunteers are continuing a great Australian tradition that is well respected in our communities,” Mr Ford said.

Mr Ford said volunteers are part of the fabric of society and contribute to community resilience.

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