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MEDIA RELEASE

SCHOOL VISIT INSPIRED NEW CAPTAIN

It didn't take long for Cameron Sibeijn to become interested in volunteer fire fighting after arriving in Australia.

A visit to his school by the local fire brigade just three weeks after the South African born teenager arrived in Australia inspired a dedication that has never waned.

Twelve years later and now aged 25; Mr Sibeijn has become one of the youngest CFA captains after being elected to the top role for the Yarrambat fire Brigade.

Mr Sibeijn still recalls when he realised he wanted to dedicate himself to public safety through volunteering with the CFA.

"I was in Year 9 at the time. I can't remember exactly what it was that got me hooked but I thought what they were doing was good so I decided to go the same night and sign up," he said.

"I love the idea of being able to be give back to the community and to help people when they need it."

Whether it's helping to provide a professional service in times of emergency, delivering community education or changing a smoke alarm for an elderly person, Mr Sibeijn is dedicated to his professional and volunteer roles.

Mr Sibeijn also works for the CFA and also delivers public safety packages to VCAL students, including fire warnings and first aid training.

"I'm very passionate about public safety," he said.

Mr Sibeijn is also a graduate of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria leadership scholarship training program, where he completed his Certificate IV in Front Line Management and Business Management.

"It was great to take some of the skills I'd learnt and put them in practice as a lieutenant," he said.

In many respects, Mr Sibeijn's initial interest has come full circle and he now returns to the classroom to inspire the next generation of volunteer fire fighters.

He works in the CFA mobile engagement unit, a community education bus that attends fire safe events, visits schools and attends community events.

It's also part of operational use in summer, working with incident management teams and providing information to residents.

"We go into schools and meet students from preps to Year 12," he said.

The Yarrambat brigade has more than 90 members who usually respond to about 90 incidents a year.

"The brigade has worked hard with the community to keep our false alarm rates low by educating people about emergencies and when to call 000, which ensures the brigade is efficient and cost effective for the community," Mr Sibeijn said.

"We've got a good team and a positive outlook but we're always looking for more volunteers."

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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