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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **CARRUM DOWNS CFA ENTERS A NEW ERA**

The Carrum Downs Fire Brigade attended more calls than ever before in 2016-17 and is now even better placed to support the community with a new station and a new truck.

The 100 per cent volunteer brigade is going through a period of revitalisation and it couldn't come at a better time, according to Captain Stephen Rhodes.

"We're a fairly busy brigade and the area warrants the upgrades," Captain Rhodes said. "We usually attend about 450 fires but we've been very busy this year with 472."

The previous busiest year on record, involving 462 incidents, was about seven years ago. "Our volunteers have shown they are well and truly capable and trained to manage this high incident volume, the new facilities and truck will help our dedicated volunteers continue this good work as the area continues to grow."

The volunteers have relocated to a new fire station of the corner of Wedge Road and Frankston-Dandenong Road. An official opening will be held at a later date.

Captain Rhodes said the volunteer firefighters were enjoying the new facilities which provide more space, more training opportunities and easier access.

"Our old station could completely fit into the motor room of the new station," he said.

"We've been working towards a new station for about 18 years all up and it's now in the best possible location. It's at a traffic light controlled intersection, and is closer to our membership which means it's quicker to get to the station and as a result it will reduce our turn out time by an estimated 45 seconds to a minute."

The brigade has about 40 volunteer operational members and a further 12 non-operational volunteers.

"We have a strong and very experienced volunteer team and bringing our facilities and equipment up to scratch will help maintain and strengthen our volunteer capacity and professionalism. We have a shed in the rear yard with a reasonable concrete area so we can train on site and there's plenty of room for members' brigade meetings."

This is the third station in the history of the brigade which dates back to 1944. It had been in the previous station since around 1970.

Brigade volunteers are also training to use a new 4.4 heavy tanker which will be out in the community over the next few months.

Captain Rhodes said the volunteers respond to a variety of calls, from grass fires and vehicle accidents to industrial and structural fires.

“Because we’re on the outskirts of the metropolitan area the calls are wide ranging,” he said.

“Working with our neighbouring integrated and volunteer brigades, our volunteers service the biggest industrial area in the city of Frankston and part of the industrial areas in Dandenong South. We are trained and equipped for this risk and there is enormous experience amongst our volunteer ranks. An example of this is that the brigade has nearly 30 members qualified in CABA Search and rescue.”

“The brigade has a great working relationship with the career staff and volunteers around us, and this leads to very effective fire suppression activities between all fire fighters.”

The Carrum Down brigade is also engaged with the community, including attending pre-schools, distributing fire safety tips, attending community events and holding regular open days as part of prevention efforts.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said volunteers like those at Carrum Downs 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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