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MEDIA RELEASE

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS CEO FOLLOWS PASSION FOR CFA VOLUNTEERING

When Southern Grampians Shire CEO Michael Tudball moved to Hamilton last year he knew there was one sure-fire way to integrate with the community...join the local CFA.

A veteran of 37 years with the Bacchus Marsh CFA brigade and a former CFA Board member, Mr Tudball was well aware that volunteering with a local brigade would make him feel part of the local and broader community.

After allowing 12 months to settle into his job, Mr Tudball has now signed on with Strathkellar volunteer rural brigade and is already on the truck roster.

“They’ve been really welcoming,” he said. “We just get on and do what’s needed. The brigade is very strong and has a lot of younger members and we’re involved in strike teams able to help across the district and the region.”

“If you go anywhere in Victoria, metropolitan or regional, and you’re a fire brigade member it’s a great way to integrate into a community.”

Mr Tudball joined the Bacchus Marsh juniors in 1977 and was the first in his family to volunteer with the CFA.

“The only reason I can think of is that my grandmother used to play cards at the fire station. As kids we went with her and that probably got me fascinated with fire trucks and fire stations.

“Since then it’s been a big part of my life.”

Mr Tudball, who was part of the CFA Board sacked last year by the Victorian Government over the bitter EBA dispute, was courted by a number of brigades after moving to Hamilton.

“I did have quite a profile at the time,” he admitted. “It’s still a passion of mine though I’m glad now not to be caught up in the politics.”

“Also coming from an urban brigade I had some sought-after skills such as experience with breathing apparatus and a truck licence.”

Mr Tudball joined Strathkellar because council meetings clashed with meetings and training which stopped him from joining the urban brigade.

In his council role and his contribution to the CFA, Mr Tudball recognises the importance of volunteers.

“Communities like ours couldn’t survive without volunteers,” he said. “We couldn’t deliver the services we do as a council or local community without volunteers.”

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria CEO Andrew Ford said volunteers play a vital role in developing community connections, capacity and resilience.

“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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