



MEDIA RELEASE

May 2021

Sale family continues firefighting legacy

Sale's youngest volunteer firefighter Dana King is continuing a four-generation family tradition – and her youth is already coming in handy.

At 16, Dana was ideally placed to help on her first call out as a volunteer, alongside her father Anthony.

"We had a kid locked inside a bank and because of her youth she got to chat to the child and keep them calm while we figured out how to get a key," Anthony said. "She was great. She's been involved in the juniors for four years and done all the training so was confident and knew what to do. I was happy to see her involved."

For Dana, becoming a volunteer was like a rite of passage. "My family has been part of it for as long as I can remember; my grandfather and my father and his brothers are all involved," she said. "It's our legacy in a way."

Dana, a year 11 student, has now attended three incidents, with a house stove-top fire and a house false alarm adding to the lock-up drama.

"The first one was a good way to start. Going to the house fires was a little stressful but being surrounded by familiar faces and friendly people made it a lot easier," she said.

"Everyone is helpful and supports each other and I've been involved for about five years so I feel confident now. It's like a big family."

Anthony, the first lieutenant at Sale, originally volunteered at Stratford with his brother Brendan. His father Terry went on to be Stratford captain and secretary of the Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) district council, while brother Matthew is third lieutenant at Inverloch. Terry's Uncle Aub McQuillen was a captain of the Stratford urban fire brigade during the 1950s. Aub instigated a brigade women's auxiliary and his wife Vera was elected as first president.

Anthony's wife Ruby is in Sale's women's auxiliary and their younger children Daniel and Ruth have been junior members since turning 11.

Anthony, who has been to 150 calls this financial year, says the brigade has an intensive training program to prepare younger volunteers. "We have a general firefighting program even during winter so they understand how the brigade works and get to use the appliances. It prepares them to be operational when they turn 16 and that's what happened with Dana. She had no problem with the assessment and that's because of the training we do at Sale."

The annual CFA-VFBV championships also play a role in preparing the next generation of volunteers.

“Dana is very confident and I think the competition side of the CFA has given her that confidence,” Anthony said.

Dana finished third in the recent pumper ladder event and second in a two-person marshalling event.

“She was probably the youngest in the senior competition but in the hydrant race she knocked out three men in the first heat and just missed the final in the second heat,” Anthony said.

Daniel and Ruth also competed in the junior championships as they get ready to join the brigade’s operational ranks when they turn 18.

VFBV CEO Adam Barnett said families were often at the heart of local volunteer organisations and communities.

“Junior brigades and the championships are a perfect way for young people to become engaged and learn practical skills before being old enough to attend fires,” Mr Barnett said. “They create a pathway for young people to contribute to keeping their communities safe.”

“Dana’s story, and that of her family shows the incredible dedication and contribution to their communities that volunteering in the CFA brings.

“Volunteers are critical to emergency management in Victoria, and we celebrate and thank them for the vital role they play in our lives this National Volunteer Week being celebrated between May 17-23.”