

# HELPERS IN OUR COMMUNITY



## Support material 3

### What is a firefighter?

Firefighters are people who are trained and equipped to respond to fires and other hazardous situations. Their main job is to put out fires that pose a threat to people and property, but they can also be involved in fire preparedness and community education.

### Who can become a firefighter?

Just over 39,000 of CFA's 59,000 volunteers are firefighters. They are everyday citizens who come from a variety of backgrounds, interests and careers. They can be young (minimum age is 16) or old. In addition to firefighting people can volunteer in a range of roles such as working in the office, fundraising, or conducting community displays. These volunteers are equipped with quality equipment, comprehensive training, and a desire to contribute to the community.

### How do you become a firefighter?

Training for volunteer firefighters usually lasts for three to six months with weekly courses lasting two to six hours. Trainees learn many things including basic firefighting, first aid, map reading, and safety requirements. There is also an opportunity for people to choose firefighting as a career. This involves a tough selection process, followed by training for four months at a training college.

### What does a CFA firefighter do?

Firefighters:

- learn special skills to operate fire equipment
- control bushfires, grassfires, chemical fires, and house and building fires
- analyse a fire to find out how it started and spread
- help clean up chemical spills resulting from transport accidents
- rescue people trapped in vehicles in road accidents
- rescue people trapped in mines or trenches
- work with the community to advise residents on fire safety procedures to carry out around their homes
- visit schools to teach children

Firefighters, both volunteer and career, are also active in the community. They perform administrative duties, help out with school competitions and fetes, present education programs, and promote fire safety in the wider community through various campaigns.

Firefighters are people just like us who often put their lives at great risk to help us, and in this sense are helpers and heroes in the community.