

DANDENONG

# Firey says reforms 'overdue'

Changes would modernise services

Josh Fagan

A DANDENONG firefighter says the planned restructure of paid and volunteer fire services is "long overdue".

Ryan Vague, who has worked at the Dandenong station for five years, is urging politicians to support the proposal that is before the state Upper House.

The move would see the creation of Fire Rescue Victoria for paid firefighters, while the CFA would be solely for volunteers.

Mr Vague, a United Firefighters Union member, said the changes would benefit brigades and make them more efficient, particularly in areas such as Greater Dandenong. The Dandenong CFA last year attended 2432 call-outs.

He said he wasn't detracting from the great work of volunteers, but wanted to highlight the need to adapt and modernise. "We've got to come up to speed with the growth that's occurred."

Greater Dandenong Council discussed the impact of reforms at last week's meeting as councillor Tim Dark called on the council to oppose splitting volunteer and integrated stations. Councillors did not support the motion, but agreed to seek further meetings with the government.

After the meeting, Cr Dark, a former volunteer firefighter, said that volunteers were "well and truly under threat by these proposed changes".

Mr Vague said even with new branding, volunteers and paid firefighters would continue to work together.

"Whatever change comes, it's still going to be business as usual whatever badge we carry - that's to provide a service to the community and that will continue no matter what," he said.

Mr Vague said the current model that relied on volunteers was no longer viable for Melbourne's expanding suburbs, urban growth corridors and regional centres.



Dandenong firefighter Ryan Vague supports reforms of services. Picture: CHRIS EASTMAN

## On the market

A landmark Dandenong property is up for sale. The three-level site is on the corner of Lonsdale St and Boyd Lane, is adjacent to Dandenong Plaza and Dandenong Market. The property will be auctioned on Friday, July 14.

## Talk safe streets

Keeping Springvale's streets safe will be discussed at a community forum on Wednesday, June 28. The event is responding to concerns about crime in the suburb. It will be attended by police, state Labor MP for Keysborough Martin Pakula, Greater Dandenong Mayor Jim Memeti and councillors Youhorn Chea, Sean O'Reilly and Loi Truong.

## Women wanted

The State Government wants more women skilled up for board opportunities in Victoria. Applications are open until July 31 for the Women's Board Leadership program, which aims to increase the number and diversity of board-ready women in Victoria. Visit [vic.gov.au/women](http://vic.gov.au/women) for details.

## Cash available

Leader Local Grants are back, celebrating initiatives that help our communities by giving away thousands of dollars to projects across Melbourne. We want to hear from community groups and organisations with inspirational ideas that just need a \$1000 grant to get going. Applications can be made now and close Friday, July 14. For more information and to apply, go to [leaderlocalgrants.com.au](http://leaderlocalgrants.com.au)



FREE MORNING TEA

## How to live at home for longer

Dandenong - Thursday 22 June at 10.30am

Dandenong Club (View Room) 1579 Heatherton Rd, Dandenong North

Our health needs change as we age, but one thing stays the same: our desire to remain living in our own home. Hear from a range of sector experts on how to access government funding to help you stay living at home for longer.

Bookings are essential. Reserve your place by calling 1800 242 696, or register online at [care.lchs.com.au](http://care.lchs.com.au)

Latrobe  
**Community Health** Service  
Happy • Healthy • Home

FREE EVENT