



Media Release
Thursday 7 July 2016

Volunteer Rural Fire Fighters wanted

Selwyn District Council is looking for volunteers to join the Darfield Rural Fire Force.

Volunteer rural fire fighters play an extremely important role in the community. In the summer Selwyn often experiences hot, dry weather and strong nor' west winds mean that fires can quickly spread and threaten lives and property if they are not brought under control by fire crews.

Selwyn currently has four rural fire forces located at Arthur's Pass, Darfield, Lake Coleridge and West Melton. The Darfield volunteer Rural Fire Force was formed last year as a new force and currently has around 12 members but is looking for more volunteers to join them.

"All fire callouts are routed to the New Zealand Fire Service who call on the nearest brigade with suitable equipment to respond to calls, says Douglas Marshall, Selwyn District Principal Rural Fire Officer. "In a large fire, urban and rural volunteer fire fighters often work together to control fires."

Mr Marshall says that volunteer rural fire fighters are provided with ongoing training and protective equipment. "Before volunteers can attend fires they need to complete two days training and receive NZQA rural fire qualifications. Applicants are also vetted by Police and need to pass a medical exam. Once qualified, most brigades also train for two or three hours once a week or fortnight."

"The amount of time volunteers spend attending to fires varies a lot throughout the year. Generally, callouts in winter and springtime are limited while during a hot summer fire fighters can be very busy."

Mr Marshall says that the Council is hoping to recruit a number of volunteers for the Darfield Rural Fire Force so that the rural Selwyn district area has more capacity to cope with callouts during the busy summer periods that the district is facing. "The time commitment can vary depending on the amount of time an individual has available."

Anyone interested in finding out more about becoming a volunteer can contact the Council on 318 8338, 347 2800 or email ruralfire@selwyn.govt.nz

Image attached: *The Rowallan Road fire was one of the fires the Darfield Volunteer Fire Force attended since it was formed last year*

ENDS

For media enquiries, please contact:

Allanah Jarman
Selwyn District Council
Phone 03 347 2807
Allanah.jarman@selwyn.govt.nz