

FIREFIGHTING IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

Indigenous firefighter Jason Hardy was inspired by his older brother, Stephen, to join the NSW Fire Brigades. A year later, Jason's twin brother Grant also took up the challenge of becoming a firefighter. Jason is now completing his Senior Firefighter module and has his sights set on becoming a Station Officer.



Six years ago, Jason Hardy was working in customer relations. He was happy in his role but felt that he had something more to offer and wanted a new challenge.

It was his older brother Stephen, a firefighter for almost 10 years, who alerted Jason to the New South Wales Fire Brigades (NSWFB) Firefighter Recruitment Campaign in 2001 and encouraged him to apply.

“When Stephen joined the NSWFB, I started thinking about whether or not it was the career for me. He always talked about how great the job was, so when the 2001 recruitment campaign came around, I decided to give it a go,” Firefighter Hardy said.

And so far, the job has been all that Firefighter Hardy was hoping for.

“As a firefighter, you are often placed in situations that the average person would never experience and you have the opportunity to develop skills and undertake training that you just can't get anywhere else.”

“You also have the chance to help the community and interact with them in a really unique way.”

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Qualities of a firefighter

When most people think about firefighters, they think 'fit, mentally tough, and brave'. While these qualities are important, a diverse skill set will ensure your success as a firefighter.

Firefighter Hardy said that, in addition to a good level of fitness, the ability to work under pressure and as part of a team was just as important.

"As a firefighter, you deal with situations that are confronting and at times stressful, so it's important that you can remain calm under pressure."

"The ability to work as part of a team is also essential because when you respond to incidents, you have to be able to rely on your team to get the job done, and they have to be able to rely on you."

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Recruitment and testing

The 2008 Firefighter Recruitment Campaign has a number of elements which all applicants will be expected to complete in order to be selected for the recruit classes later this year. This includes online and supervised assessments, medical and aptitude tests, a driver record check and a face-to-face interview.

Firefighter Hardy admits that the recruitment process was challenging, but said that with research and preparation, it would not seem as daunting.

"It's really important that you prepare both physically and mentally for the recruitment process. I spent a lot of time on the NSWFB website to learn more about the organisation and the work that it did."

"I also did a lot of physical training, and visited a fire station with my brother to familiarise myself with a fire station, the equipment and the role of a firefighter."





Climbing the ladder

Firefighters have plenty of opportunities to undertake further study and career development. After completing 16 weeks of training at the NSWFB Training College in Alexandria, firefighters graduate at the rank of Firefighter Level 1 and are generally assigned to a station in the Sydney metropolitan area.

Within three years from the date they entered the Training College, firefighters are expected to complete the necessary modules and training to reach the rank of Qualified Firefighter. Firefighters can then choose to complete the necessary requirements to reach the rank of Senior Firefighter or to specialise in areas such as risk management, training and development or rescue.

“There are lots of opportunities for ongoing training and development in the NSWFB if you are prepared to give it a go. I am already qualified to drive and operate an aerial appliance (a 37-metre high ladder platform truck for high-rise rescues and firefighting) and I am in the process of completing the modules I need to become a Senior Firefighter,” Firefighter Hardy said.

“My next goal is to reach the rank of Station Officer which means I would be in charge of a crew of four firefighters and be responsible for the running of a station. I have also considered specialising in rescue, but for the moment I am focused on becoming a Senior Firefighter.”

A unique career

People are drawn to a career as a firefighter for many reasons – the idea of responding to an emergency, the flexibility of the shift work, making a contribution to the community.

Whatever your reason for joining, you can be confident that you are entering a unique and diverse career.

Firefighter Hardy said that while he'd been to some memorable incidents, there were other aspects of the job that stood out in his mind.

"Responding to fires and other emergencies is definitely exciting and it's what we all signed up for but working with the community is just as memorable and rewarding."

"I've had the opportunity to talk to many different groups about fire safety including children and women at a women's refuge. Last year, Saturday Disney filmed a segment on escape plans at Glebe Fire Station – the whole crew, including the Station Officer was involved. It's not something I expected to do when I joined but it was a great experience."

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For further information please visit our website at
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