

A CAREER IN FIREFIGHTING

Five years ago, the NSW Fire Brigades called on people from a range of cultural backgrounds and a variety of professional skills, to consider a career with one of Australia's leading fire and rescue services. Romeo Ayoub stepped forward and accepted the challenge.



This year the NSW Fire Brigades (NSWFB) is hoping to attract more than 160 talented firefighting recruits as part of its 2008 Firefighter Recruitment Campaign. The campaign encourages a diversity of people to apply for a position in the NSWFB's firefighting ranks.

Over the years, the role of a NSWFB firefighter has increased and with it, so too has the need to recruit people with a variety of work experience and who reflect the diversity in the community.

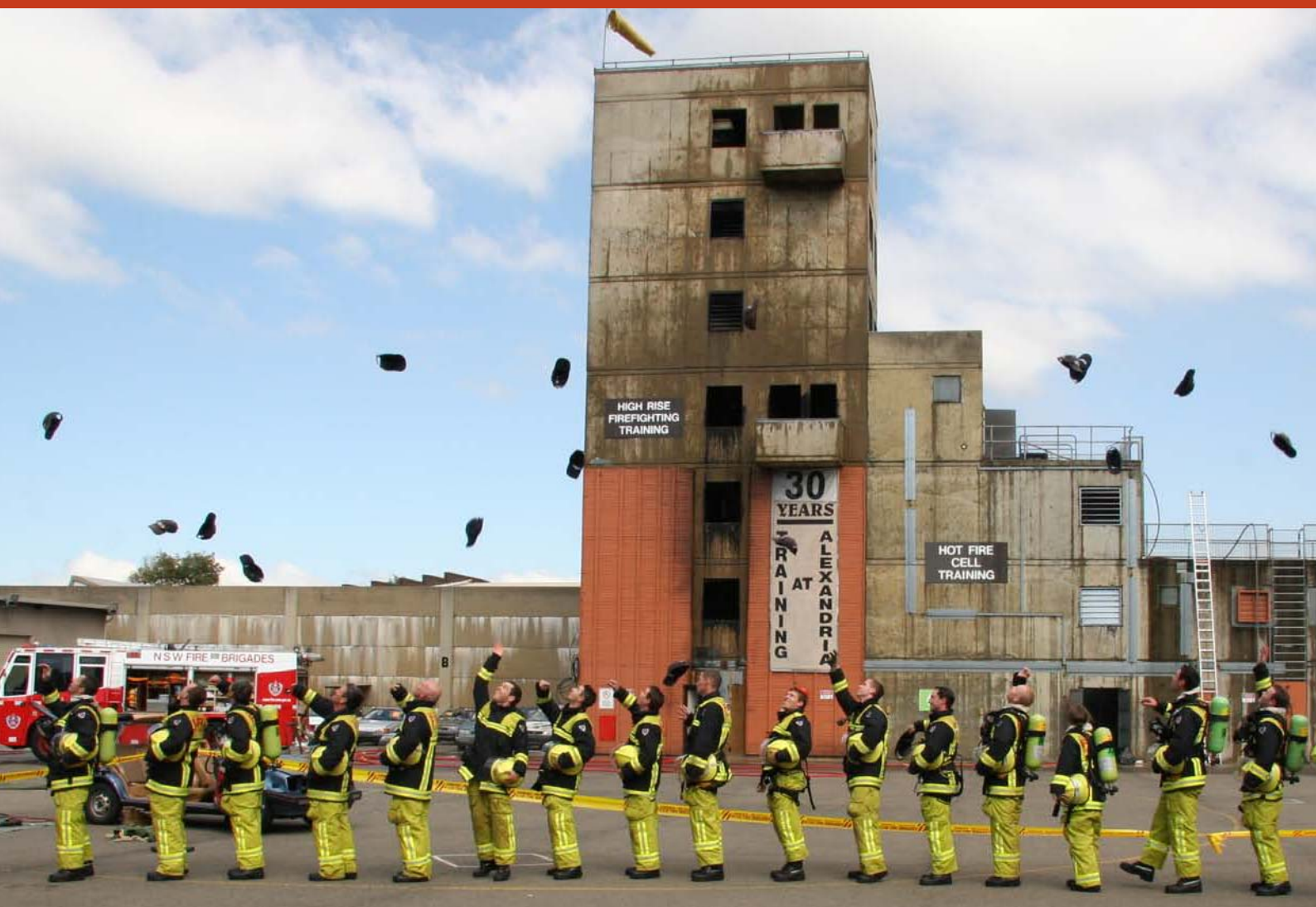
Before joining the NSWFB in 2003, Firefighter Romeo Ayoub, was running his own business.

"Firefighting was something I wanted to do for a long time and I knew it would be a noble job where I could make a difference in the community," Firefighter Ayoub says.

Firefighter Ayoub says he has developed a breadth of firefighting techniques as a result of working with different crews in Sydney's inner west.

"As a firefighter I often travel around to different fire stations in my area and work with different fire crews. Something I have noticed about the NSWFB is no matter where you go, you are working with firefighters who have very similar attitudes to their careers and most importantly, you can rely on them in any situation."

“ Firefighting was something I wanted to do for a long time ... and where I could make a difference in the community. ”



Recruitment testing

To accommodate the thousands of people who are expected to apply for firefighting roles, the NSWFB has established a recruitment program where applicants need to complete online and supervised assessments, medical and aptitude tests, a driving record check and a face-to-face interview.

Successful applicants, who pass all stages of testing, will then go on to complete 16 weeks of intensive training at the NSWFB State Training College in Alexandria where they will learn the basic skills of firefighting, community risk management and safety training.

"Before I considered a career with the NSWFB, I did my research to ensure I knew exactly what was expected of me in the role of firefighter," Firefighter Ayoub says.

"The recruitment campaign was a big process and involved physical tests but I persevered for three years just to get my foot in the door and it was worth it because I enjoy working for the Brigades."

“ Before applying for a role as a full-time firefighter, it's really important you do your homework and make sure you know exactly what the job involves. ”

Working as part of the NSW Fire Brigades

Today's firefighters serve an important role in the community in a career that involves so much more than just putting out fires.

In reality, fighting fires is only part of what the job involves. Fire prevention and community safety are also crucial parts of the job. In addition firefighters also provide vital assistance when responding to emergencies and accidents.

With one of the highest retention rates of any emergency services organisation in the State, the NSWFB provides plenty of opportunities for its firefighters to move up through the ranks and take up specialist roles in areas including counter-terrorism, rescue, hazards material incidents and fire investigation.

"Once people join the NSWFB, hardly anyone leaves the job," Firefighter Ayoub says.

"Before applying for a role as a full-time firefighter, however, it's really important you do your homework and make sure you know exactly what the job involves."

"One of the attractions about being a firefighter are the flexibility of rosters, because it can offer you great work/life balance and allow you to spend quality time with your family and friends,

which you need when you're working in such a busy and challenging job."

While on the job, Firefighter Ayoub says if he isn't combating a fire in dangerous and life-threatening situations, he's carrying out station duties including hydrant inspections and training to ensure good levels of physical fitness. During downtime, he also conducts community education and engagement activities to get important fire safety messages across to residents in his local community.

"As firefighters, we are always doing something, whether we are putting out a fire, talking about fire safety at preschools and aged care homes, or providing advice to community members who contact our fire station," Firefighter Ayoub says.

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Consider a career with the NSWFB

There are many reasons people consider careers with the NSWFB. Many are drawn to the camaraderie, team work and adrenalin rush, which can characterise the role. Others apply because they are committed to making a difference in their community and helping people on what can be the worse day of their life.

"You experience an adrenalin rush when you're responding to an emergency, every firefighter does," Firefighter Ayoub says. "When you receive a Triple Zero (000) call and you're responding to an emergency, and you are advised by our Communications Centre there are possible persons trapped in a burning building, you need to get into the right frame of mind and prepare yourself for the job ahead of you."

Interestingly, Firefighter Ayoub says during his five years working on the NSWFB frontline, he hasn't encountered a situation he wasn't prepared for, despite responding to some major fires and emergency situations.

"Firefighters are trained in such a way that when you respond to an emergency, you feel well protected by your surrounding crew and this is why the NSWFB focus on recruiting people who having strong communication and people skills. You need to be able to communicate with people."

"If you want to join the NSWFB you need to be someone who can work as part of a team and you need to be really passionate and 100% committed to your job," Firefighter Ayoub says.

As an equal opportunity employer, the NSWFB encourages everyone to consider a career in firefighting. Research suggests women and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds don't traditionally consider firefighting to be an attractive career option. It's important to remember however, the NSWFB protects the community, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity and it applies the same principles to its recruitment process and work culture.

"I would recommend firefighting to anyone, but if you're thinking about joining make sure you do your research, because it's so important that you love what you're doing."

Firefighter Ayoub says that after five years working in the role, firefighting has turned out to be so much more than he had hoped for.

"I've really made some great friends in this role and I am enjoying working with the Brigades."



For further information please visit our website at
www.fire.nsw.gov.au

T: (02) 9265 2636

F: (02) 9265 2883

E: recruitment@fire.nsw.gov.au