

The National

Firefighter

VOL 2 EDITION 1

Summer Edition

INSIDE

Girls On Fire

*Respiratory
Protection
Considerations*

Transport for
Superheroes

YOGA FOR
MENTAL HEALTH

Braving
Leadership



ISSN 2208-4975

WHO'S WATCHING YOUR PLACE WHILE YOU'RE OUT FIGHTING FIRES?



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Our system detects and responds to bushfire threats up to and over 250 metres away.

Embarr is an Australian-owned and operated pioneer of bushfire detection technology founded by long-term volunteer firefighter Graham Pole, who has lived in bushfire-prone areas all his life.

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EDITORIAL BOARD

An Editorial Board is in place for the magazine. The Board includes a number of experienced Fire Fighters who offer expertise in various areas of Fire Fighting. The Board's role will be to oversee articles to ensure the content and information is accurate and timely, and to provide advice on direction for the journal.

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The opinions presented in our magazine are those of the authors of the articles. We enjoy the opportunity to present a variety of viewpoints but do not necessarily endorse them.

ABOUT US

The National Firefighter is a journal delivered to Firefighters and selected universities across Australia. Our mission is to support Firefighters through the sharing of knowledge and information from across Australia, and at the same time aid Firefighters through delivering current information from recognised leaders in the field. We are independent from any employer, associations or groups and our aim is simply to provide current, relevant information to Australian Firefighters.

The National Firefighter will evolve over time with feedback and review from readers and industry peers. The aim of The National Firefighter is to share knowledge and commentary from experts in the field, as well as provide background information.



www.thenationalfirefighter.com.au

Editor's Note



WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS MAGAZINE

Like most young boys of his era, my son was gifted a toy fire truck. It was red and shiny with ladders, flashing lights and sirens. And like most young boys, when asked what he would like to be when he grew up, "firefighter" was up there with astronauts as one of the most exciting things you could do!

As adults, most peoples desire to join the fire service stems from the desire to serve others-like most First Responders, it is an altruistic profession. Firefighters put themselves at risk to aid and assist other people. You need to have a strong sense of community to do this job.

As much as the life of a firefighter is rewarding, it is also very challenging. You are asked to run into burning buildings to rescue complete strangers, to be there in someone's dire time of need. But there are also callouts to road

crashes, and assistance with storms and floods, to mention just a few.

However, the mental health conditions that first responders report include depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. Good mental health should be a priority for ALL our first responders, which is why we give precedence to ensuring TNF places much importance on publishing a plethora of relevant mental health articles, all penned by people/ organizations who are passionate about this subject.

Everyone in the community will at some stage encounter issues with mental health. First Responders are living their life like everyone else, but on top of that, they are working in a stressful environment where their safety can be at risk, and where they are dealing with very traumatic circumstances.

Firefighting is a vital, challenging role.

As a community, we should hold them in high esteem and gratitude for the work they do. It takes a very special person to be a First Responder-whether that be a firefighter, paramedic, police officer, etc.

We thank all our contributors for their educative and informative articles. And of course all The National Firefighter supporters.

We wish you all good mental health, strength in adversity, and warm appreciation.

Leigh Leonard
Editor
The National Firefighter




Bushfire Respiratory Protection

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Full-face Mask



Half-face Mask



| Mask | X-plore 5500 | X-plore 3500 |
|--|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Filter class | A1B1E1K1 Hg P3 | A1B1E1K1 Hg P3 |
| Organic & Inorganic Gases | ✓ | ✓ |
| Acid and Ammonia Gases | ✓ | ✓ |
| Pesticides | ✓ | ✓ |
| Fine particles in smoke & other dust, mold, etc. | ✓ | ✓ |
| Eye protection | ✓ | *Compatible with protective eye wear |





Harnessing Collective Efficacy to bring out the best in your team

The term 'collective efficacy' relates to the shared belief of team members in their ability to successfully accomplish a task (Bandura, 1997). Tasks might be relatively small, such as the completion of a project, or might perhaps be as large as the achievement of the objectives in your organisation's strategic plan.

When a team of employees have a shared belief in the ability of their team, there is a correlation between this and the amount of effort a team will expend, as well as improvement in their levels of motivation and the interpersonal environment which prevails (Rapp et al, 2021) It stands to reason, therefore, that there is a positive correlation between levels of collective efficacy and levels of satisfaction.

Different industries and sectors may have slightly nuanced interpretations of the notion of collective efficacy. In the education sector, for example, John

Hattie identifies collective efficacy for teachers, or collective teacher efficacy (CTE), as being the collective belief of teacher in their ability to positively affect students. Hattie considers this to be the second most significant influence related to student achievement in his published list of the 195 Effects in The Applicability of Visible Learning to Higher Education (2015) Essentially, Hattie's meta-analysis indicates a school staff that believes it can collectively accomplish great things is vital for the health of a school. If they believe they can make a positive difference then they very likely will. (Visible Learning. Org)

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF COLLECTIVE EFFICACY?

- Collective efficacy ultimately contributes to team performance because it motivates and drives effort. (Goncalo, 2010) Team members need to have belief in a team's ability to execute

tasks effectively in order to work harder and collaborate more effectively.

- The link between collective efficacy and team satisfaction is important when taking into consideration the value that trust, support and a sense of well-being have on reducing employee turnover and burnout.
- Strong collective efficacy can lead to adaptability and adeptness at planning, structuring and the setting of appropriate goals (De Rue et al., 2010)
- Collective efficacy can lead to a healthy confidence that translates into positive emotional interactions within the team, driving greater levels of engagement (Elms et al, 2023)

ARE THERE ANY DISADVANTAGES TO HIGH LEVELS OF COLLECTIVE EFFICACY IN AN ORGANISATION?

While increases in engagement, motivation, belief and effort are highly valued consequences of healthy collective efficacy in organisations, very high levels of collective efficacy can have some disadvantages which need to be managed and mitigated by the leaders of a team.

- Too much collective efficacy may hinder performance, as there is the potential for teams to become overconfident and therefore have a reduced responsiveness to feedback
- Teams with very high levels of collective efficacy may have a tendency to desire to maintain the 'status quo' and therefore have a resistance to adaptability or a consideration of alternative approaches.

WHAT CAN LEADERS IN ORGANISATIONS DO IN ORDER TO FOSTER COLLECTIVE EFFICACY WHILE OPTIMISING TEAM EFFECTIVENESS?

Organisational leaders need to prioritise opportunities for employees to build trust, while fostering cohesiveness and a sense of shared purpose. The potential downsides of high levels of collective efficacy, as discussed above, can be mitigated by providing teams with the opportunity to foster critical thinking, drive questioning and feel comfortable enough to challenge the status quo.

At Be Challenged, we relish partnering with organisations to 'Build the Buzz' of their teams. We would love to partner with you in the design and delivery of programs to foster and develop collective efficacy, while also challenging team members to think critically, to challenge and to question.

Lisa Kelliher
Head of People & Culture
Be Challenged
www.bechallenged.com.au





Empowering Firefighters: The True Power of Your Mind, Your Body, and Your Soul

In the heart of every fire station across Australia, where courage meets adversity and strength faces the fiercest of challenges, there exists a power within that can transform lives. It's a power born from the fusion of mindset, mindfulness, and movement—a triumvirate that not only defines our physical prowess but also shapes the very core of our mental resilience.

Allow me to introduce myself. I'm Ben, a firm believer in the potential of the human mind and a leader for holistic wellness. From the sun-kissed shores of a coastal town in NSW, I embarked on a journey that led me to the forefront of a wellness revolution. My mission is

simple yet profound: to unlock the door to a more enriching life by leveraging the power of the mind, bringing together tools of mindset, mindfulness, and movement.

Imagine a life where the crashing waves and the smooth ocean air were your companions, where the hours slipped away like sand through your fingers, and the joy of movement was the rhythm of your existence. This childhood, marked by physical activity and the camaraderie of mateship, became the cornerstone of my guiding principle—physical health is the key to a life well-lived.

As the years unfolded, my passion for

wellness led me down diverse paths, from chasing footballs around ovals to empowering others as a personal trainer. But my journey didn't stop there. The scientific exploration of the body paved the way for a profound realisation: the mind holds the key to every facet of our being. It became evident that the mind is not just a passenger; it is the captain, the skipper, the big dog steering our experiences, emotions, and reactions.

This revelation catalysed the evolution of Benefitlab Health and Wellness—a sanctuary where the balance of mindset, mindfulness, and movement is not just a philosophy but a

way of life. It's a retreat where these three pillars stand tall, serving as the foundation of a transformative journey. Through Health Performance Coaching and interactive workshops, I've witnessed firsthand the power of proactive mindset, mindfulness practices, and purposeful movement in building mental resilience.

In the unpredictable world we



navigate, where challenges can feel like an uncontrollable vehicle lacking a steering wheel, these tools become our control. A resilient mindset transforms challenges into stepping stones, mindfulness becomes our anchor amidst the chaos, and movement becomes our physical expression of strength.

Firefighters, your journey is unparalleled. You face the heat, the chaos, and the unknown with unwavering courage. Yet, in the heart of every fire, amidst the smoke and the blaze, lies an opportunity—to embrace the simplicity of wellness. Beneath the complexities of your duty, beneath the pressure to succeed, lies a truth: by understanding your mindset, challenging your bodies, and embracing mindfulness, you equip yourselves with the tools not just to survive but to thrive.

Self-care, often overshadowed by the pursuit of success, must become your ally. Just as you nurture the flame within you to protect others, nurture your own soul. Embrace a journey that

celebrates wellness in its entirety. Let laughter, play, and self-love be your companions. Let every step be a step towards a stronger, more resilient you.

I urge you to consider the power of practises such as gratitude, meditation, breathwork, exercise, and cold therapy not just as tools in your arsenal but as companions on your journey. As you navigate the challenges that come your way, remember this: the power to transform, to endure, and to conquer resides within you. You are not just firefighters; you are beacons of hope, strength, and unwavering determination.

Together, let's embark on this journey towards resilience, confidence, and a life empowered by mindset, mindfulness, and movement. Should you wish to explore this path further, I stand ready to guide you.

With deepest respect and unwavering belief in your strength,

Ben | Founder
Benefitlab Health and Wellness
benefitlabwellness.com.au



THE CODE 9 FOUNDATION

SUPPORTING FIRST RESPONDERS WITH PTSD
#YOUARENEVERALONE

The precursor to The Code 9 Foundation, The Blue Initiative, was formed in June 2015 after I felt intensely alone after being hospitalised and diagnosed with PTSD, depression and anxiety in 2013. There was a demonstrated need to plug a gap in mental health support for professional first responders and to make sure that no one feels alone in their mental health journey, ever.

The decision to represent members of the agencies that respond to “000” and “000” operators and not our voluntary brothers and sisters was a decision that was not taken lightly. Eventually we settled on the professional aspect due to the belief that if we wanted to make an impact, the inclusion of 10’s of 1,000’s more voluntary members would spread us way too thin to have a proper impact.



(MARK THOMAS)

Make no mistake though, we absolutely acknowledge and appreciate the incredible work all the volunteers do and should future resources become available to effectively handle this cohort, we will look at taking the step to include our volunteer brothers and sisters.

One of the support strategies that we

adopted was to have monthly catch ups at various places around Victoria. This was not group therapy by any stretch, rather a bunch of mentally injured members getting together in a protected environment to have a chat among others that have walked and are walking in the same shoes as them.

It was in August 2015 that Victoria Police member Rob Atkins came to a catch up and had Jimmy, his assistance dog, with him. Rob, since ill health retired, spoke about the power of these assistance dogs and I was able to see first hand just how incredible they are when I watched as Jimmy launched into action to help Rob combat an anxiety attack.

Fast forward a few years when Rob, Ben and I were sitting at a catch chatting about Jimmy when we had the thought of registering as a charity to raise funds and sponsor these life saving dogs.



(ROB ATKINS AND JIMMY)

On 1 April 2018, The Code 9 Foundation was formally registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission as a health promotion charity.

From day one we established that there

are no paid positions, pure volunteer run, we support both serving and former members, be that retired, resigned or ill health retired, everyone is treated the same, and critically, we support the families of our members equally as the members. We were determined to be able to say that every cent donated to us, goes directly back to the wellbeing of our members.

We operate two private Facebook groups, one for the members and one for the partners/carers of our members. The members page is strictly administered with no negativity or anti organisational comments allowed. We believe in being positive, even when you are mentally injured, it is critical to try and find some positives in your journey. Being negative will not allow recovery.

From monitoring and engaging within the groups, the admin get a handle on how people are travelling and this allows us to offer meals for delivery to take the stress off, send away for a respite weekend, get the lawns mowed, the garden taken care of, some firewood delivered, the house cleaned and many other ways that we have been able to help support our members.

We do not delve into clinical work, we leave that to the qualified members of the psych industry, but members can and do gain advice on the process of prolonged exposure therapy, EMDR, TMS and other treatments to help alleviate their anxieties heading into treatment.

We are able to indicate to members where good psychs are when they are



looking for them which is super helpful as trying to find a decent psych when you are struggling, is a difficult task to undertake.

Equally we can let members know what it is like in a psych hospital, what to expect, what to take with them and importantly, what happens once you are discharged, which can be a very vulnerable time for the member.

We have launched and maintain four campaigns throughout the year.

In February we run, “Find Your Fit”. This is designed to get people moving. Body movement is critical to positive mental health and we want you to find what is best for you, not someone else, you.

In May we run, “Mindful May” which is all about encouraging meditation and mindfulness, the benefits of which are well documented.

In September we run, “Food for

Thought” which is all about healthy eating.

In November we run, “000-9000+” steps where we encourage people to get to 9000 steps. We know some members struggle to get out of the house due to their anxieties, so it may take them a few days to get to 9000 steps, and that is okay, just setting the goal to obtain. Others can do 9000 steps before breakfast, this is why we have the “+” to motivate them to go further. This also doubles as a major fundraiser for us.

We seek out and build relationships with other organisations that fit our morals and ethics, such as Emerge & See (NSW) and especially Aussie Veterans Coffee CO (ADF ESO), who we run social connection activities such as axe throwing, fishing, mountain bike riding, surfing and stand-up paddle boarding with.

Everything we do is geared towards the wellbeing of our members and their families.

For further information or to contact us:

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Connecting with kids through The Fathering Project Working Families Program

In June 2022, WesCEF recognised the need to connect and support the fathers and families in their organisation and were the first to embrace The Fathering Project's Working Families Program. What began with just 20 dads has now flourished into a heartwarming community of 55 dads and counting, each one forging connections with their children, and each other, through a program that's changing lives.

Together with dozens of new companies embracing this important new workplace program for improving outcomes for kids, WesCEF has just resigned a new contract for 2023-24. This sustained commitment speaks volumes about the impact the program has had on the company's culture and, more importantly, on the lives of the dads and their children.

The WesCEF initiative represents a significant milestone, not just in terms of corporate social responsibility, but in the realm of fatherhood and family bonding. The journey has been nothing short of inspiring, with an average of two new dads joining every session. In total, there have been 11 sessions to date, offering a variety of activities to foster camaraderie and genuine connections.

Lisa Moore, the program lead at WesCEF said, "Since starting The Working Families Program we have seen a massive shift in the way our employees who are dads are not only showing up at work, but how they engage with one another.

"The workshops have facilitated some deep, raw and open conversations, that otherwise would never have come to the surface. They talk about being a dad, share their advice and challenges - the program has provided a space for dads to connect like never before", said Moore.



Hear what employees from WesCEF have to say about the Working Families Program. Scan the QR code to listen.

"The more seasoned dads, sharing their wisdom, have taken on a sense of responsibility to ensure the newer dads avoid the same pitfalls they once encountered", Moore continued. "It's a virtuous cycle of learning, growing, and bonding that enriches not only the individual lives of these fathers but the entire organisation as well".

In the end, WesCEF's embrace of the program has set a shining example of corporate social responsibility that goes beyond financial contributions. It's about investing in the well-being and happiness of employees and their families. This initiative is a testament to the power of connection, and it reaffirms the belief that fatherhood is not a solitary journey but a shared, joyous adventure.

Fire fighter connects with his kids through The Fathering Project

Firefighter Adam Murphy experienced the benefits of The Fathering Project program in his child's school.

"Because of the shift work involved in firefighting, I've had the privilege to regularly attend the program at Oatley, my kids' school.", said Murphy.

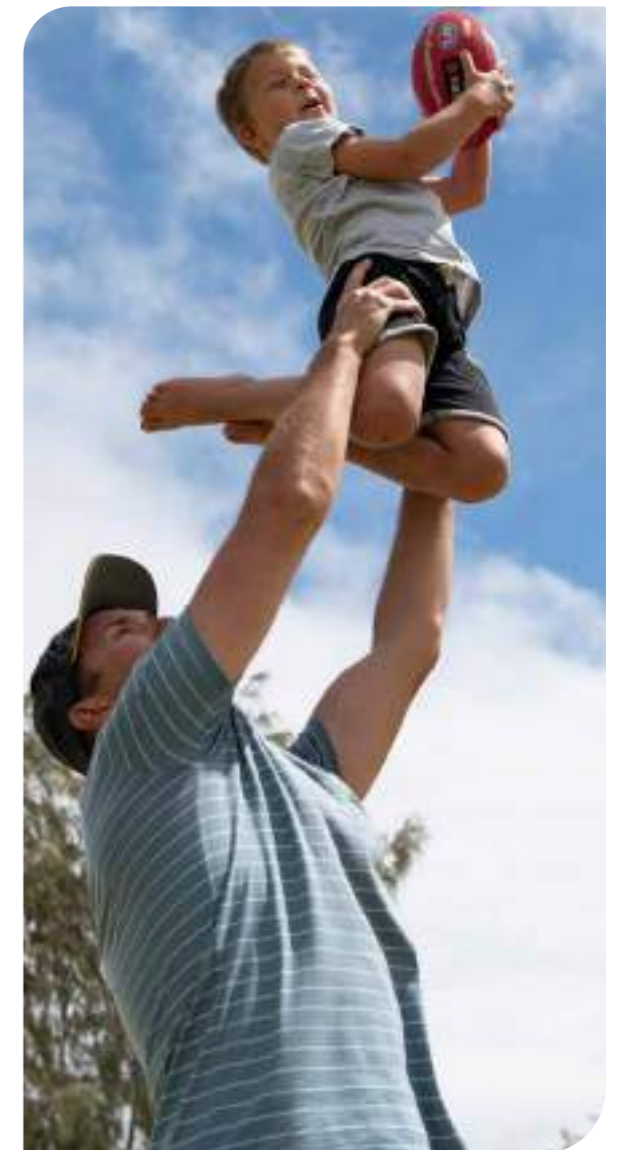
"Changing children's lives" is an outcome and vision The Fathering Project seeks to achieve.

"I talk to Dads at school pick up, who have never been on the school grounds, and not experienced the connections I've been given with my kids through The Fathering Project", Murphy said ruefully.

"I can see my kids more confidently connected to school and their challenges, partly because I've engaged closely with their experiences."

Oatley Public School in Sydney's southwest hold regular events for Dads and Kids. **At their Term 1 activity, 200 Dads and kids connected over Paper Planes and Pizza.** Principal Debbie Hunter commented that with the growing numbers of engaged Dads on campus, there are also more Dads attending parent-teacher nights, with more kids better engaged with their learning.

Though he's yet to experience The Fathering Project's Corporate Program, Murphy can see the opportunity for a supported, interactive professional development program in Fire Services units.



Check out what other dads have to say about The Fathering Project at their child's school! Scan the QR code to listen.

About The Fathering Project

The Fathering Project is a secular not-for-profit organisation, operating nationally. Our mission is to educate, connect and empower fathers and father figures across Australia to prevent long term social, emotional and cognitive difficulties and create the conditions for children to thrive. Through resources, programs, events and community intervention programs we ensure all dads are best equipped to care for their children as they need.



To learn more, visit thefatheringproject.org or scan the QR code to view a variety of program offerings in early learning centres, schools and workplaces!



How generational reform is preparing Victoria's firefighters



The Bureau of Meteorology's declaration of an El Niño event and recent scenes of fire-scarred landscapes in Australia and overseas have some communities on edge. While this may bring back memories of Australia's darkest fire days, our communities can be assured their fire services are prepared for summer, and to protect life and property year-round.

While we are no stranger to bushfires in Australia, it is important to be aware that the risk to communities is changing. Across the country, more people are moving to, living and working in regional areas. At the same time, bushfires are occurring more often and causing greater damage. Current predictions indicate the change in global patterns from La Niña to El Niño will bring hotter and drier weather, more so than over the past three years.

An El Niño event is likely to mean extended periods of reduced rainfall and temperature extremes across Australia. Climate change becomes very real during weather events such as this, the impact of which is longer, more intense fire seasons and an increase in the average number of elevated fire weather days. Indeed, the weather is a significant contributor to bushfire risk and severity and is beyond the control of firefighters. While this is our reality, Victoria has a strong firefighting force that is well prepared to respond when needed. I speak to interstate colleagues

frequently, and I know there is also a very high level of preparedness for fire and emergencies across our jurisdictions.

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV) is a modern fire service, serving Victorians across metropolitan Melbourne and major regional centres, and I had the great privilege of being appointed Fire Rescue Commissioner earlier this year. We operate 85 stations across the state and deliver fire and emergency prevention, response, and recovery services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. FRV has over 4,500 employees, most of whom are operationally focused.

FRV stands at the ready to support the Country Fire Authority (CFA) and Forest Fire Management Victoria's (FFMVic) firefighting response year-round, and we work seamlessly with the state's emergency agencies to protect communities. While there are clear fire district boundaries in place, the state's firefighting resources are not bound to the distinction between city and country. Victorians, regardless of whether they live in an area serviced by either FRV, CFA or FFMVic, can rely on interagency cooperation to deliver the best fire and emergency service response.

Interagency cooperation is a central outcome of Victoria's Fire Services Reform and has significantly improved

since the devastating Black Saturday, and the more recent 2019-2020 Black Summer fires. The reform has created a deeper and wider pool of highly qualified career firefighters within the one organisation, Fire Rescue Victoria, and solidified the vital role of volunteers within CFA. The reform means our career firefighters are afforded the same training structures, similar career progression pathways, and clear roles and responsibilities – regardless of where they work in Victoria. Conversely, CFA has a clear mandate to support and grow its volunteer base, which is critical to our communities, especially those living or working in regional Victoria or on Melbourne's edges.

Together, with CFA, FRV is building on the expertise of Victoria's firefighters and ensuring the state's fire services have the resources they need to protect life and property. In every instance, the reform sees us working towards a common goal of delivering a world-class fire service and ensuring a sustainable system that will keep Victorians safe for decades to come. FRV is proud to work closely with the Victorian Government

and stakeholders in the delivery of this generational reform.

Victoria's fire services have comprehensive plans in place to keep communities safe, including for lithium-ion batteries and electric vehicles, weather and fuel loads, while historical data helps us to anticipate and prepare for heightened fire risks. Together, we are navigating the challenges posed by a changing climate and ensuring that Victorians remain safe and resilient in the face of fire risks.

Importantly, we must not lose sight of the year-round fire risks in our homes and the urban environment. House fires are one of the biggest causes of preventable deaths. Each year in Victoria, an average of 18 people lose their lives in house fires and many more are seriously injured. The risks of unattended cooking, barbecues and, more recently, lithium-ion batteries cannot be underestimated. Victorian fire services respond to about one preventable house fire a week that has been started from a lithium-ion battery. While making our lives incredibly convenient, these batteries pose

fire risks if they are overcharged or incorrectly handled.

Fire preparedness is a shared responsibility, and I am encouraged that Victorians are doing their part by preparing their properties, staying informed and having fire plans in place. All these activities support our firefighters in their efforts to protect life and property. FRV works tirelessly to place targeted resources and equipment in the hands of our firefighters, and we train them well to respond to all emergencies. Our training capability is world class and is preparing our firefighters to face the extraordinary challenges ahead.

As the Fire Rescue Commissioner, it's my job to set the strategic direction of FRV and make it very clear who is responsible when emergencies happen so that action is immediate, seamless and appropriate. I am well supported in my role by a highly skilled Executive Leadership Team and whole-of-government emergency management structure. My focus is on listening and empowering our people and supporting them through any challenges they

may face. Placing others before self has been my intention throughout my career. It is what drove me to become a firefighter, and it's this same sense of purpose drives me today.

FRV also has a responsibility to share knowledge, expertise, doctrine and advice with our colleagues across the country, and internationally. We all benefit when our fire services work together, and this is a mantra I am championing with colleagues from all jurisdictions.

While response is critical, preventing fires is just as important. FRV is continually engaging with communities to build awareness and encourage behavioural change. We work tirelessly to educate people about ways they can reduce the risk of fire. However, when these incidents occur, we will be there. Victoria's firefighting force is prepared.

Gavin Freeman AFSM
Fire Rescue Commissioner
Fire Rescue Victoria



Girls on Fire: Lighting the flame under Australian youth

Girls on Fire is a non-profit that works with schools and emergency services to teach high schoolers about fire and disaster management via hands-on camps and virtual programs. Girls on Fire aims to teach young people the importance of teamwork, resilience, and self-development in an emergency and disaster prevention, preparedness, management, and recovery setting.

Since 2018, Girls on Fire have helped over 500 young people and countless volunteers understand fire and emergency principles they never dreamed possible. Armed with a trailer and the support of a multitude of emergency agencies and other stakeholders, Girls on Fire has gone from a Churchill Fellowship exploring diversity in recruitment to an incorporated not-for-profit offering statewide roadshows in New South Wales, and camps in Victoria, New Zealand and Queensland in five short years.

Participants are drawn to Girls on Fire

for a wide variety of reasons. They are transforming their powerlessness into hope in the face of climate change and natural disasters. Or at the very least, gaining confidence and skills in preparedness and a community's ability to recover. Some come to explore career opportunities outside of university or for the chance to remain in regional, coastal and rural areas as employment opportunities dwindle.

Watching LGBTQIA+, non-neurotypical, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mentors and leaders in action inspires young individuals who are searching for their role models. Many campers come ready to see if their passion for science or sports can transition into an exciting and challenging career. A small percentage come to understand or carry forward their family tradition of life as emergency personnel or in community service. Others are simply curious about what a day being a firefighter might look like.

The reasons may be wide and varied, but the outcome is always the same – more young people are finding a new sense of self and purpose at Girls on Fire camps.

WHAT'S ON OFFER

Girls on Fire conducts non-residential camps lasting one or two days, mainly for girls aged 14 to 18. Participants can experience firefighting and emergency situations through hands-on simulations, not unlike basic firefighter training tailored for a teen audience.

Each camp highlights volunteering and vocational pathways, while putting teamwork, resilience, inclusiveness and local community connection at centre stage. The camps are as empowering as they are educational. Working with commissioned trucks and other equipment, the camp participants learn how to extinguish fires, free someone from a wrecked car, work hoses and scenarios, and experience the physical demands of firefighting and sensory deprivation simulations. Passionate volunteers and representatives that believe in empowering young people to take an active role in disaster management introduce participants to agencies in a welcoming, hands-on way.

Girls on Fire camps run in response to local demand. This includes focussing on towns ravaged by natural disaster as



part of their physical and psychological recovery. Funding often comes from sponsorships, grants, or requests from local government or state-run government departments. Girls on Fire collaborate with independent and public schools seeking to provide additional opportunities to their students, or as part of larger initiatives like the statewide roadshow offered by RIEP and the NSW Department of Education in 2022.

Principal sponsor, the National Australia Bank foundation, is helping expand Girls on Fire's reach in disaster prone and culturally diverse communities in New South Wales, as well as into Queensland and Victoria as part of a three-year funding commitment. With a desire to promote community engagement and enabling strategies to prevent and recover from disasters, NAB has also introduced Girls on Fire to dedicated business volunteers and other resources to provide crucial support.

No matter the format or the funding, Girls on Fire camps give practical, hands-on experience with community engagement in fire, emergency and disaster prevention, preparedness and relief in a fun, skills-focussed, evidence-based camp format.

REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Adopting the mantra of "what you can see you can be", founder Bronnie Mackintosh brings an army of volunteers and mentors from all kinds of background to each program. Agencies such as NSW Fire and Rescue, Rural Fire Service, Airservices Australia, National Parks and Wildlife Service, the SES, Forestry Corporation, and VRA have been long-term supporters. As the camps expand geographic reach, they are joined by the likes of the Victorian CFA <VIC agencies> and New Zealand's <agencies>.

Matching programs to specific locations is a key to Girls on Fire's approach. Each year, areas affected by bushfires and floods are incorporated into the planning to contribute to recovery efforts and uplift morale. Urban firefighting camps are tailored to teenagers living in cities, providing a targeted experience that aligns with inner city living. To promote cultural inclusivity, Girls on Fire develops camps specifically for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants, integrating Indigenous firefighting techniques and cultural principles into the curriculum. These camps are held in locations such as Tamworth, Brewarrina, Nowra, and Campbelltown, coinciding with important celebrations like NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week.

In recognition of local challenges, Girls on Fire collaborates with schools to offer programs that address recruitment, disaster management, and regional brain drain. Pilot initiatives, including the Rainbow Fire and Resilience Program, aim to expand diversity offerings and challenge homophobic messaging. These programs provide a safe and supportive environment for young people, particularly LGBTQIA+ youth and their allies, fostering inclusivity and challenging societal norms. With their tailored and comprehensive approach, Girls on Fire continuously adapts to meet the diverse needs of participants, leaving a lasting impact in various communities.

WHERE THE THEORY MEETS THE PRACTICAL

Research is a big part of the Girls on Fire experience. Programs were created based on Mackintosh's Churchill Fellowship research, which explored ways to promote diversity during recruitment and development everywhere from the UK, Japan, Sweden, India, and the United States.



Dr. Karen Lambert from Monash University conducted research on girls' participation, attitudes and confidence before and after camp attendance at 2018 Pilot Program at Yarramundi and a statewide roadshow in 2022. The change is immediate.

101 camp participants surveyed as part of the RIEP NSW roadshow in 2022 found 68% of participants held the view that preparedness for emergencies could lead to a more effective recovery and diminish its impact. An impressive 67% of the girls displayed a clear understanding of the right emergency actions. And 85% of participants felt better prepared to handle emergency situations. Data like this and the Monash studies prove Girls on Fire has a positive impact on young people, teaching them the skills needed to manage emergencies and boosts their confidence and readiness when disaster strikes.

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT

With their partnership with NAB still in full swing and interest from multiple agencies in most states of Australia, Girls on Fire is making significant strides towards encouraging young people that opportunity awaits as a first responder.

To learn more about how you or your agency can become involved in this inspiring initiative, check out

<https://girlsonfire.com.au/>

Benefits of Yoga for Mental Health

Yoga is an ancient practice that brings with it a multitude of health benefits, physical, mental and emotional.

People are drawn to Yoga for many different reasons, but the benefits received through a consistent practice are generally more far-reaching than what initially drew them to the Yoga mat.

Even so, there is still resistance by many to give Yoga a go, perhaps due to preconceived ideas about what Yoga is, and who Yoga is for. But let's be clear, Yoga is for everyone!

We've all seen photos of people in Yoga poses on the internet where they are looking somewhat like a pretzel! This is not what Yoga is about. Images like these do the practice of Yoga a disservice, as people believe they need to be flexible to do Yoga. Whereas the opposite is true. Yoga helps us become more flexible, so stiff bodies on the mat is what it is all about!

Through the practice of Yoga your flexibility will improve over time, which will in turn improve your general health and wellbeing. Your

overall performance in physical activities will improve, you'll most likely experience less pain and discomfort during activities, you'll be less likely to injure yourself, posture and balance will improve, the list really does go on.

Not only will your flexibility improve through Yoga, but Yoga has also been shown to boost muscle strength and endurance, consistency is key.

Beyond strength and flexibility, there are many physical benefits to be found through Yoga, including reduction of chronic inflammation, boosting immunity, improvement of cardiovascular function, improvement of bone density and better sleep.

Where Yoga really shines though is its positive effects on mental health.

Working in the Fire Service brings with it many challenges, most of which are shared by others who also work on the Frontline to protect our community, such as Police, Paramedics, Healthcare workers, SES and Military personnel.

In these professions, people can be exposed to very traumatic events,

which can have a lasting impact on their psychological state, leading to PTSD, depression and anxiety.

There are a growing number of studies that are showing that a regular Yoga practice can assist people in the management of these conditions.

Yoga combines the physical practice of the poses (asanas) with breathing exercises, mindfulness, deep relaxation and meditation.

More important than how deep, strong or long you hold a pose, is the quality of your breath. Yoga can include specific breathing exercises, or quite often simply cultivating a good quality, mindful breath as you move through the Yoga poses.

Many people working in Frontline professions find themselves in a state of hypervigilance, which of course can have its place in certain work-related circumstances, where being on high alert is imperative for the safety of oneself and others but can have very negative effects on other aspects of their lives. Never being able to fully relax, and always being on alert is exhausting, and even with this



exhaustion, sleep can be hard to find.

Mindful breathing allows the participant to better focus on the present, clearing their mind of thoughts, fears or regrets of the past, and letting go of worries about what may lay ahead. The mind can then become much quieter, bringing with it a sense of more peace, calm and clarity.

Every Yoga class finishes with Savasana. This is where we lay on the floor, eyes closed, with the body completely relaxed. Savasana stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and calms the sympathetic nervous system. It is in savasana that the real quieting of the mind can begin. Savasana is not easy, and it does take practice. At first there may be many wriggles throughout the body and many distractions of the mind. Over time however, the body and the mind will settle more easily. You'll begin

to find true stillness deep within, as you let go of everything you've been holding onto, physically, mentally and emotionally.

If you are ready to try Yoga but are perhaps still a little unsure where to start, "Frontline Yoga Inc" is a not for profit organisation throughout Australia, that provides free Yoga classes specifically for Frontline personnel.

These classes are taught with clear instructions and are particularly suitable for people that may be experiencing PTSD, depression and anxiety. You'll find classes taught in person throughout Australia, and they also have classes where you can join online. Please visit their website for further details and where you can find a class near you.

Naomi Husain
Yoga Teacher and Studio Owner at
Kanti Yoga Pty Ltd
www.kantiyoga.com.au



Are you our next aviation rescue fire fighter?

In a world where the skies are again bustling with activity, back on the ground there is a remarkable group who stand ready to safeguard lives and uphold safety.

Airservices Australia's Aviation Rescue Fire Fighting Service (ARFFS) is the epitome of courage, resilience and unwavering commitment. ARFFS is the only national fire service in the country – a rapid intervention function engaging within minutes of any incident, whether it be a first-aid call, fire alarm or an aircraft in trouble.

And in early 2024, ARFFS celebrates its historic 100th recruit course – a momentous occasion to reflect on the service's dedication and unwavering commitment to public safety. ARFFS has evolved from humble beginnings to become a symbol of excellence in aviation rescue fire fighting.

As the legacy of ARFFS lives on, it will continue to inspire the next generation of fire fighters to embrace a life of service, making the skies and beyond a safer place for all.

"We're proud to serve the

community and aviation industry as first responders – operating a fleet of more than 100 of the largest fire-fighting vehicles in the country," said Airservices' Head of Aerodrome Services Rodney Sciortino.

"We play a crucial role at 27 of Australia's busiest airports – ensuring the safe, reliable and efficient use of Australia's skies. We are an essential service underpinning the Australian economy.

"It's our team of diverse and dynamic people on the ground that will be there to

respond to any emergency and the safety needs of airlines, airports and the travelling public."

To build on this legacy of service, Airservices is seeking expressions of interest from those keen to hear more about this important and exciting opportunity. This is an invitation for the brave and the compassionate to join the ranks of those who soar above the ordinary and make a real difference in the lives of others.

Since its inception, ARFFS has grown from strength-



to-strength, adapting and evolving to meet the challenges posed by an ever-changing aviation landscape. With a proud legacy of fire fighting daring rescues, and responding to emergencies with utmost professionalism, ARFFS has become a symbol of excellence in aviation rescue fire fighting.

What sets ARFFS apart is a world-class specialist dedication to aviation and its continued commitment to innovation. Every individual who dons the ARFFS uniform does so with the understanding that they are signing up for a life of selfless service and bravery. Beyond the call of duty, these men and women have demonstrated a willingness to go above and beyond, facing challenges head-on and saving lives in the process.

Celebrating its centenary recruitment course, ARFFS takes great pride in its

commitment to staying at the forefront of training and innovation. The recruits of today benefit from state-of-the-art facilities, advanced simulation technology and comprehensive training programs that equip them with the necessary skills to handle any emergency. The service's continuous drive for improvement ensures that each aviation rescue fire fighter receives the best education and resources to meet the demands of the ever-evolving aviation industry.

Airservices also fosters a culture of diversity and inclusivity. Regardless of gender, race, or background, aspiring fire fighters are welcomed with open arms. Airservices values the unique perspectives and experiences each individual brings to the table, believing that a diverse team is a stronger team. This sense of camaraderie and mutual respect creates a nurturing

environment where all can flourish and contribute their best to the service and the community.

Ready to respond to an aircraft incident at either end of a runway within three minutes from the initial call, ARFFS aviation rescue fire fighters are stationed at 27 of Australia's busiest airports providing a 24-hour service.

The significant evolution in new technologies presents an exciting opportunity for us to enhance our service – keeping our people safe from harm, protecting the environment and ensuring we continue to provide a valued first responder service at Australian aerodromes.

We are currently exploring the deployment of a fleet of remotely controlled vehicles and augmented surveillance that will enable us to adapt and grow with Australian airports, ensuring we are

able to respond to broader market needs as the aviation industry.

Responsible for the management of 11 per cent of the world's airspace, Airservices provides safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible air navigation and aviation rescue fire fighting services to the aviation industry. With millions of air passengers reliant on us, there is always something to do!

If you want to take your career above and beyond, are passionate about fitness, attracted to a flexible work environment and enjoy giving back to the community, this could be the job for you. If this sounds like you, or someone you know, jump on Airservices' website today!

Airservices Australia is leading the way in shaping the future of aviation. Now

is the best time to apply via Airservices' website – we're always on the lookout for diverse and passionate aviation rescue fire fighter recruits.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

Many adventurous and active types are attracted to this vocation for the amazing lifestyle benefits – you'll get paid to work out when not in active duty!

Minimum requirements to join ARFFS include:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Hold Australian or New Zealand Citizenship or Australian Permanent Residency (please note,

Darwin applicants must be Australian Citizens)

- Have a current unrestricted full manual driver's licence and the ability to gain a heavy rigid license at least four weeks' prior to commencement

- Hold either a Year 10 or Year 12 Certificate plus a minimum of two years' full-time equivalent experience (can be combination of paid work, volunteer work, professional or elite sports experience or representation)* or a bachelor's/master's degree (not a necessity)

Training:

- The 15-week recruit

training course in Melbourne is one of the most challenging, but rewarding experiences of any budding fire fighter's career. Aviation rescue fire fighter recruits become skilled in aviation fire fighting, first aid and rescue before commencing as an operational Aviation Rescue Fire Fighter.

- Each 15-week ARFFS recruit course at our ARFFS Melbourne academy at Melbourne Airport requires trainees to obtain their Heavy Rigid Licence (truck), undergo a medical and complete a range of theory and practical rescue and fire fighting rotations. For more on our fitness requirements, check out this video: ARFFS Physical Aptitude Test - YouTube.

Salary:

- The training program combines extensive theory components as well as practical training, seeing recruits earn \$48,622 per annum plus superannuation – they get paid to train and learn during the 15-week training program. When a recruit obtains their qualification, their salary instantly increases to \$68,094 per annum plus superannuation.

Airservices Australia is leading the way in shaping the future of aviation. Visit www.airservicesaustralia.com today!





■ **Balancing the Pillars of Health: Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Health**

Every single individual on earth is on the quest for happiness - for a fulfilling and joyful life.

In this journey, the significance of nurturing your mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health cannot be overstated. These four aspects of health shape our overall wellbeing, happiness and quality of life.

In this article, we delve into the importance of maintaining a harmonious balance between mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health.

PHYSICAL HEALTH

Let's start with the one most people are aware of and are already doing at least one thing to improve. Factors that contribute to our physical health include:

- exercise and movement
- nutrition, diet and hydration
- sleep quality and quantity
- physical environment and habits

It is essential to remember that physical health is not just about appearance;

rather about respecting and nurturing our bodies to help us feel good, engage in the activities we love and live life to the fullest.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health encompasses our emotional and psychological wellbeing as well as our cognitive wellbeing. Just as a sturdy foundation supports a building, a healthy mind enables us to navigate the complexities of life. Unfortunately, mental health issues have become prevalent in modern society due to stressors from social media to financial struggles.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Our ability to understand and manage our emotions, express ourselves authentically and form healthy relationships all come under the umbrella of emotional health. It weaves together threads of - emotional regulation

- self-awareness
- empathy and kindness
- resilience

These areas all form a beautiful tapestry that reflects our capacity to connect with ourselves and others. Individuals who have solid emotional health tend to exhibit greater compassion, experience deeper and more meaningful relationships and handle stress more effectively.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH

A lesser known and understood area of health is spiritual health. While it is often associated with religious beliefs, spiritual health pertains to an individual's beliefs, values and purpose. Our spiritual health focuses on areas such as: - connection to something bigger than us

- mind-body connection, mindfulness and being present
- meaning and purpose
- self-exploration and growth

The Interplay and Impact

Mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health are interconnected, and any imbalance within them can disrupt

MENTAL HEALTH



the harmony of the others. For instance, chronic physical health issues can take a toll on mental wellbeing, leading to feelings of frustration, helplessness, and even depression. Similarly, unresolved emotional issues can manifest in physical symptoms, such as headaches or digestive problems. The interplay between these dimensions necessitates an integrated approach to health and wellbeing.

STRATEGIES FOR NURTURING THE PILLARS OF HEALTH:

Physical Health

- Improve nutrition and hydration
- Work on sleep conditions (mattress, technology before bed)
- Incorporate daily exercise
- Clean house and environment

Mental Health

- Set achievable goals
- Read, educate yourself and learn - Increase productivity

Emotional Health

- Set and honour boundaries
- Practice gratitude
- Improve emotional regulation
- Work on social connections

Spiritual Health

- Mind-body practices (mindfulness, yoga, meditation, breathwork)
- Find your core values
- Connect with your purpose

Achieving a state of wellbeing requires a conscious effort to nurture our mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health. By prioritising a balance of these pillars of health, we pave the way for a happier, more fulfilling and enriched life.

Embracing this holistic approach not only benefits individuals but also contributes to the creation of a happier and healthier society.

Courtney Asser
www.themindsetproject.com.au



The 30-Year Anniversary Of The World's Most Loved Calendar

SINCE ITS LAUNCH 30 YEARS AGO, the Australian Firefighters Calendar has donated millions of dollars to Australian charities and has become the world's most popular calendar. Funds from calendar sales over the last three decades have supported medical research into sourcing better methods to treat severe burns in children. The calendar also has a proud history of supporting animal refuges and Australian Wildlife in the past and that will continue into the future.

THE FIREFIGHTERS

Taking into account the extraordinary difference that calendar and the firefighters have made, it is also important to get to know some of the real-life heroes who take part in the world's most iconic calendar.

DENNIS FAY: One of those firefighters is Dennis Fay, a proud indigenous Torres Strait islander. Born on the tiny island of Badu (located between Australia and New Guinea), Dennis is a returned military veteran who was also a world ranked Muay Thai fighter. Along with his full-time job as an Aviation Firefighter, Dennis is now also fighting for another cause, something more important than anything he could achieve in the ring.... the preservation of marine life surrounding Badu.

To assist in the sustainability of the ocean vital to his people's way of life, Dennis is doing his utmost to keep the waters surrounding Badu free of discarded plastic. Badu's once pristine oceans and beaches have become littered with harmful plastic and this plastic is devastating the local marine life. Working with locals, Dennis is ingeniously helping his community by recycling the discarded plastic and transforming it into diving flippers. This initiative is proving to be a huge opportunity for his community, providing vital jobs and also helping to keep the waters of Badu clean.

"Our hope is that by promoting authentic indigenous artists on our flippers that we can share our connection to nature with the world. Our aim is to repurpose something that was harmful to our environment into a product we can use back in the ocean to support the community. I have aligned our work with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals program (SDG), which is of particular importance to our island and the UN's Responsible Consumption and Production and Life Below Water initiatives. These programs are going to be very important in transforming our part of the world and providing a better way of life for my community" - Dennis Fay - Aviation firefighter.

BRENDEN PURVIS: Another calendar firefighter that has served his community for many years is Brenden Purvis. Every long hot summer, unsung Australian heroes give up their time and tragically sometimes their lives to keep our rural areas safe during these unforgiving months. Before Brenden became a Royal Australian Airforce firefighter, he was a member of his local Rural Fire Brigade (RFS) from the age of 16.

"Serving in the Rural Fire Brigade with my community members inspired me to serve my country further. When I was old enough, I enlisted with the Royal Australian Air Force. Before I left for my first deployment overseas, I was also able to convince my Mum to get involved in the Wamuran Rural Fire Brigade organisation too. Mum is still a serving member of the Rural Fire Brigade, far exceeding the number of years I was there. Mum's involvement in serving our community fills me with immense pride" - Brenden Purvis - Royal Australian Airforce firefighter

BEN WALLACE: Before joining Fire Rescue Victoria, Ben Wallace had a distinguished career in the Australian Army. Deployed for 3 active tours of Iraq and 1 tour of Afghanistan, Ben's work in these war-torn countries changed the lives of countless families desperate for peace and safety.



"In Afghanistan I was deployed with the Australian Army Reconstruction Task Force. Our job was to build schools for young Afghani girls, my role was to protect the members of our task force and the Afghani girls from the Taliban. The schools we provided made it possible for these young girls to be educated, which in turn, provided better opportunities for them and their families". - Ben Wallace - Fire Rescue Victoria firefighter.

RICKY SMITH: A hero of a different kind, Ricky Smith served his community as a Surf Lifesaver for 23 years before joining the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service (QFES). Australia is known around the world for its beautiful beaches and keeping our beach goers safe are our equally famous Australian Surf Lifesavers. Joining his first surf club as an 8-year-

old, Ricky finished his surf lifesaving career as a professional surf lifesaver, rescuing swimmers from Australia's unpredictable and sometimes treacherous oceans every summer.

"The most rewarding part of being a surf lifesaver was rescuing people from a potentially life-threatening event and that's why I wanted to continue serving the community by joining the fire service. For the past 6 years I have been able to continue helping people when they are at their most vulnerable" - Ricky Smith - QFES firefighter.

MATT ROSS: Studying finance and commerce through school and University, Matt Ross was headed for a life in high finance working for one of Australia's biggest banks. After achieving his original goal of working in his chosen field he found

that something was missing in his life. Matt wanted to seek a career in something more community based. Matt threw in his high paying job to embark on the challenge of becoming a firefighter.

"Although the selection process for the fire service was long and extremely competitive, it was well worth the effort. In the fire service I have found a more community focused and fulfilling career. Due to the nature of the job, I found it necessary to increase my overall fitness level" Matt Ross - Fire Rescue Victoria firefighter.

30 YEARS

To help celebrate the 30-year anniversary of the Australian Firefighters Calendar, 6 calendar firefighters were invited to LA to appear on the Kelly Clarkson Show in



October. The firefighters also appeared in a series of segments on NBC's popular ACCESS Hollywood and CBS's Entertainment Tonight and FOX's Good Morning LA.

"We were so excited to appear on The Kelly Clarkson Show because it's the biggest talk show in the US. The producers contacted us to see if the firefighters would be available to appear on the show, the firefighters could not pack their bags fast enough! It is a great tribute to the work we do to be asked to appear on such a popular TV show" Sherryn Hollioake - Creative Director - Australian Firefighters Calendar

"After 3 years of not being able to travel it was fantastic to be appearing back on a live US TV show again. The last time we visited the US we appeared on the Steve Harvey Show, the Doctors and the TODAY show with Kathie Lee and Hoda. We were really looking forward to connecting with our US fans again. - Crystal Doohan - Media Co-ordinator - Australian Firefighters Calendar.

"As the world has opened up after the travel restrictions the firefighters have been asked to help rebuild Australia's

tourism industry. China Airlines have asked the firefighters to promote Australia at the upcoming Taipei International Travel Show. The last time we attended this event we helped sell 3000 trips to Australia". - David Rogers - Director - Australia Firefighters Calendar.

EDITIONS

All the most popular editions are back, the new edition for our 30 years anniversary is the all-new denim edition. Last year the firefighters wanted to spice things up by producing a summer calendar. This year the firefighters have decided to wear denim jeans and the images are sizzling hot.

All the fan favourites are back, including Australia's hottest firefighters in the classic calendar. The dog calendar features the firefighters with rescue dogs from Safe Haven Animal Rescue and All Breeds Canine rescue. The horse calendar features therapy horses from Healing Hooves. All the cats for this year's cat calendar were rescues from Best Friends Felines. Our hope is the images from this year's calendars will inspire the public to adopt a pet

from one of these vital organisations.

The most popular edition is always the mixed animal calendar. We have not changed using a firefighter holding Australia's most recognizable animal, the Koala, since that edition was created 5 years ago. The cover of that calendar is always coveted by international fans of the calendar and media outlets around the globe. It is the cover that all the firefighters want to feature on.

CHARITIES

To repay the support its U.S. fans have shown, the Australian Firefighters Calendar will continue to support U.S. charities for the second year in row.

Rescue Rebuild, a shelter renovation program of Greater Good Charities, recruits' volunteers from across the U.S. to renovate animal shelters, domestic violence shelters, veterans housing and homeless shelters. The Rescue Rebuild team has completed 175 renovations that have helped more than 3,200 people and more than 720,000 pets.

"We are thrilled to be the recipients of sales for the Australian Firefighters

Calendar for two consecutive years, the calendar funds will directly help support our Rescue Rebuild renovation at the Wildlife Clinic of Rhode Island to allow the clinic to take in more animals every year and help reduce the stress for the wildlife and the staff." Liz Baker - CEO - Greater Good.

Donations from this year's calendar help to support the Council of Australian Volunteer Fire Associations (CAVFA). The funds will be used to supply the much-needed equipment for our army of volunteer firefighters.

"Having designed, built and given to brigades 8 Landcruiser light attack fire trucks, 1 Mercedes Benz light attack fire truck and 2 town heavy attack fire trucks (worth \$500,000 each) in the last 18 months, the RFBAQ certainly turns donations into much needed equipment for rural communities." - Justin Choveaux - General Manager - Rural Fire Brigades Association Queensland.

The calendar continues its support of the Kids With Cancer Foundation. Since 1998 the work this foundation does in supporting Australian families and hospitals around the country is nothing less than extraordinary.

"For 25 years Kids With Cancer Foundation exists to practically help every one of the nearly 800 children diagnosed with cancer each year in Australia and make today easier for them and their families. KWCF do this by providing direct financial assistance in the form of payments for mortgage, rent, transportation, utility, and other bills or by supplying much needed food vouchers and whitegoods" Peter Bodman - Director & Founder - Kids With Cancer Foundation.

We will always continue to work conserving Australian wildlife by donating funds to community-based organisation around the country. The Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital is one of those organisations.

Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital (BBWH) provides all of its expert veterinary care free of charge and operates on the frontline of wildlife protection and biodiversity conservation. It has grown from grassroots concerns to address the rapid loss injury and illness of native animals, many of which are threatened species in our region. Australia's increasing vulnerability to extreme weather events and natural disasters like bushfires, and more recently

catastrophic floods have exacerbated this situation.

The licensed veterinary hospital, affectionately named Matilda, operates from a custom-built semi-trailer, making it Australia's largest Mobile Wildlife Hospital, and the only one of its kind in the world. Operating from its base near Byron Bay Australia, BBWH's mobility enables it to be immediately deployed to a natural disaster to assist in the triage, assessment and treatment of injured, traumatised and displaced wildlife, anywhere in Australia.

The 2023 Australian Firefighters Calendar will also be supporting the following organizations.

- Australian Seabird Rescue
- Fauna Rescue of SA
- Healing Hooves
- Native Animal Rescue
- Wildcare Inc
- Safe Haven Animal Rescue
- Best Friends Felines
- All Breed Canine Rescue Inc

We can train your team or supply you a team to cover all of your emergency response needs.

DIAMOND PROTECTION is a leading provider of integrated security, emergency response and training services. Established in 1995, this private Australian owned and operated company is committed to leading the way and to be the standard of excellence within the industry.

Diamond operates an internationally certified Integrated Management System (IMS) incorporating ISO accreditation for Quality (ISO 9001), Occupational Health & Safety (OHSAS18001) and Environmental Management (ISO 14001) Systems. The company has placed significant importance in continual improvement and commitment to the community and environment.

Diamond works closely with industries including government, education, oil and gas, power and mining, maritime ports, defence and other critical infrastructure facilities throughout Australia. Key services include: security guards/officers, concierge/reception, patrols, risk and crisis management, emergency response and services including fire fighters, medical and rescue and life support.

Diamond has established a framework for management to demonstrate leadership and commitment by:

- Defining accountability and responsibilities to ensure effectiveness of management system;

- Ensuring that objectives are established and are consistent to the context of the organisation;
- Ensuring that the management system is integrated into business processes;
- Applying risk based thinking to the activities and decision of Diamond;
- Ensure that resources required to implement the management system are available;
- Communicating the importance of conforming to the management system requirements;
- Supporting Diamond personnel to contribute to the effectiveness of the management system;
- Defining roles, responsibilities and authorities for all personnel and support personnel in management roles to demonstrate leadership;
- Identifying, communicating, managing and meeting relevant regulatory and interested party requirements;
- Identifying risks & opportunities that can affect Diamond operations, projects and services.

Policies are communicated during induction and available through the organisation's online portal.

RESOURCES:

Diamond is well equipped and resourced. The company is able to provide the appropriate level of support to this contract by providing local and additional resources necessary to meet



the contract obligations.

In summary this includes:

- Quality management systems and processes for managing the contract including local implementation teams and external auditors (SAI Global);
- Reporting and record keeping;
- OHS&E processes and management;
- Other technical, management and administrative support;

As Diamond's national 24/7 operations centre is based locally (Mount Waverley), the company has the following resources and support available to this contract.

KEY LOCAL RESOURCES INCLUDE:

- Directors and senior leadership team;
- HSSE management system;
- Access to over 400+ local emergency service officers (ESO'), security officers/ crowd controllers and specialist personnel;
- Technical security systems;
- Mobile patrol units;
- Fire and emergency response capability (ESO's, fire appliances and support equipment);
- Security and risk management consultancy capabilities;
- Training support for fire warden, fire extinguisher and other related 'value add' training and education capabilities;
- Access to training grounds for

security, emergency response, first aid and other exercise scenario capabilities;

- IT support for implementation of leading edge software for daily and incident reporting capabilities.

CAPABILITY

Diamond, founded and based in Victoria, has been providing integrated security services, emergency response services and emergency response training across Australia for over 20 years (since 1995). Key services provided include concierge/reception, manned guarding, alarm monitoring, mobile security patrol/response and emergency management services.

For more information go to : diamondprotection.com

Diamond Protection Training (DPT) is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) dedicated to delivering nationally accredited training programs throughout Australia.

Our training and assessment materials are moderated and validated regularly to ensure that they meet with Australian Skills Quality Association (ASQA) standards and requirements.

DPT operates an internationally certified Integrated Management System (IMS) incorporating ISO accreditation for Quality (ISO 9001),

Occupational Health & Safety (OHSAS18001) and Environmental Management (ISO 14001) Systems.

All training is outcome-based with a focus on achieving measurable changes in the workplace.

We are experts in tailoring training to the requirements of our customers to ensure active learner engagement and 'hands on' practical training.

'hands on practical training'

Diamond Protection Training's structure and practices are designed to ensure our training product relevance, standards and consistency, and delivery excellence.

This is achieved through industry liaison, providing a credible point of reference for industry stakeholders to discuss current and future training needs.

Our team consists of industry experienced professionals who can practice what they preach due to years of experience in medical, fire, rescue and workplace safety.

We are flexible in our training approach and understand the differing styles abilities and needs of learners. We enable trainees to prove their abilities in a supportive learning environment

providing mentoring services to both learners and their supervisors.

We recruit only the best people, and we truly love what we do!

Our team exists to help you keep your team safe, please talk to us about putting together a site-specific tailored training program to ensure that your team retains the skills and knowledge required to keep safe at work.

ABOUT US

Established in 2008 the Trustee for First Aid Training Trust RTO # 32273. In 2020, this entity is now trading as 'Diamond Protection Training' ABN: 34 857 814 019.

Diamond Protection Training is a 100% Australian owned and operated training business. Its primary objective is to deliver professional and high quality nationally recognised training in safety, first aid and emergency response throughout Australia and at its National Tactical Training Centre based in Chinchilla Queensland Australia.

100% Australian owned and operated training business

We are excited to announce that our National Tactical Training Centre in Queensland is completed and provides



a 'one-stop-live-in-solution' to industry, clients and general public in the fields of safety, first aid and emergency services.

In this current climate, strategic planning is vital to achieve successful and sustainable growth.

Our focus is on providing high quality, personalized, industry relevant educational programs and services within a flexible framework.

Our trainers and leadership / support team believe in building relationships based on mutual trust, respect and support.

Our strategic plan will underpin all future work undertaken by us. More than a call for action, the plan's priorities reflect the key challenges we face and our strategic steps to ensure quality delivery of training and success for all.

Through this plan we will determine how our business will build relationships internally, with business/ industry, with our partners, staff, students, clients and within the wider community - at local and state levels throughout the nation.

We commend Our Strategic Plan to our stakeholders and thank them to enable us to build a centre and

training capabilities which is vibrant, prosperous, connected and sustainable - we are excited about our future.

OFFERINGS ON SCOPE

Qualifications

PUA30619 - Certificate III in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations)

RII30719 - Certificate III in Emergency Response and Rescue

**Short Courses
Medical**

CPR Training | Provide First Aid | Advanced First Aid | Advanced Resuscitation | Pain Management | Occupational First Aid

Workplace Safety

Fire Extinguisher | Warden | Chief Warden

Heights

Working @ Heights | Basic Heights Rescue | Vertical Rescue

Confined Space

Enter and Work in Confined Spaces | Gas Test Atmospheres | Breathing Apparatus | Confined Space Rescue

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Transporting Everyday HEROES



AS A FIREFIGHTER, you're there for people on their worst days, protecting the lives and livelihoods of countless Australians. Alongside the physical and mental intensity of being involved in emergencies and disasters on the front line, the emotional toll that exposure to other people's extreme distress and trauma can have on your mental wellbeing is significant. It's essential to balance your role of caring for community with ensuring you care for yourself and your peers.

Understanding and addressing the possible effects that repeated exposure to these traumatic incidents can have on mental health is crucial. While exposure to traumatic situations and trauma-impacted people is inherent to the work that you do, there is a range of strategies that you, your team and organisation can implement to mitigate the effects of your work on your mental health.

Psychological First Aid (PFA) is just one tool that can be immensely valuable in helping you assist trauma-impacted people, including your peers, while safeguarding your own wellbeing. By utilising PFA, you can take better care of yourself, your peers and others during a traumatic situation.

How does PFA help you support your peers and others?

PFA is centered around providing empathetic support and practical assistance to people facing distress during and after emergencies. Its aim is to promote recovery from traumatic events by creating a sense of safety for the impacted person and encouraging effective coping strategies and adjustment.

PFA acknowledges that those affected by trauma will experience a range of reactions that can get in the way of effective coping, and provides the person delivering PFA with a comprehensive framework to help guide their interactions with the trauma-impacted person to encourage their resilience and help them on their recovery journey. Through practicality and empathy, PFA plays a critical role in helping people navigate the aftermath of a traumatic experience and rebuild their lives.

The five essential elements PFA promotes are a sense of safety, calm, self and community efficacy, connectedness and a sense of hope, and each principle can be promoted with a set of simple skills and practices. Being confident to deliver PFA equips you with the tools to create a safe and supportive environment for individuals affected by trauma. In these situations, your skills enable you to skillfully listen to their stories without imposing any pressure to share, provide assistance in reconnecting with loved ones, and instill in them the belief that they possess the strength to cope and recover from the distressing experiences they have endured. Your ability to offer PFA becomes invaluable in offering practical help, empathy, and hope to those in need during challenging times.

PFA in practice

In the aftermath of the devastating Black Summer bushfires, Phoenix Australia launched a nationwide Bushfire Recovery Project. This initiative aimed to equip frontline workers, including firefighters, with the skills to deliver PFA. Through the project's comprehensive focus

on mental well-being and resilience, frontline workers across mastered PFA techniques and cultivated compassionate and supportive environments for those dealing with the aftermath of the fires. Their contributions were crucial in fostering healing and restoration among affected individuals and communities. Participants not only utilised their newfound skills to support their teams and communities after Black Summer, but also found them useful in a wide range of emergencies, empowering them to be better equipped to handle the challenges posed by various crises.

The Bushfire Recovery Project is a testament to the power of targeted mental health initiatives to foster resilience within communities. By supporting the incredible frontline workers who keep us safe, this initiative continues to leave a lasting positive impact on Australian communities.

Resources

You can find more resources on PFA and other ways to support your wellbeing on the Phoenix Australia website, as well as our Disaster Mental Health Hub and our Responder Assist website dedicated to supporting emergency workers.

 **Alexandra Howard**
 Director, Disasters and Public Health Emergencies
 Phoenix Australia - Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health

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Nurturing Healthy Empathy: The Critical Link to Firefighters' Mental Health



If I asked you now to write down your definition of empathy, what would you write? You might jot down something about putting yourself in someone else's shoes or feeling what someone else feels (which may give you the icks), or even feeling sorry for someone, but empathy is one of those concepts that we think is simple until tie ourselves up in knots trying to define it. We think we know what it is but we kind of don't at the same time.

I've spoken to hundreds of emergency service personnel, and I often hear a collective 'uughh' when Leanne from Empathy First is introduced. (It does wonders for my self-esteem!) And I totally get it. For many Australians, the word empathy often makes us uncomfortable. In 2016 Chopik conducted an empathy survey of 63 countries and I'll give you 3 guesses where Australia ranked..... I'll wait..... It was 45th out of 63! I'll often hear people (incorrectly) say things like 'you're either born with it, or you're not', 'empathy is give, give, give', 'empathy doesn't belong at work', 'empathy is a weakness', 'I don't have time for empathy', or 'empathy leads to burnout'. Our national motto is

"she'll be right mate". We don't have a collective understanding of what empathy is, let alone healthy empathy.

So, what is healthy empathy?

I describe healthy empathy as having three types- emotional (feeling), cognitive (thinking) and compassionate (doing).

Emotional empathy is the one most of us are familiar with - feeling the feelings of others. It's also known as emotional contagion - you kind of 'catch' their feelings. For example, you might feel angry when your colleague is angry or take on the grief of a patient. Emotional Empathy is the one that can give some folks the icks when they think it is ENTIRETY of empathy - "you want me to feel more?" (which makes perfect sense, if you think empathy is only feeling the feelings and you live in an individualist culture that values me, me, me, more, more, more, (Australia is the 2nd most individualist country in the world!) then of course feeling MORE might make you feel uncomfortable, you have enough on your plate). Feeling what others are feeling is an important part of being human and building relationships but

when we don't have good emotional boundaries and we repeatedly take on and internalise the emotions of others we can become overwhelmed and experience emotional burn out - which negatively affects our work, our health and our relationships. It's important to note the warning signs of emotional empathy overload include increased irritability, difficulty sleeping, and emotional detachment or apathy. Compassion fatigue may manifest as physical and emotional exhaustion, while vicarious trauma can lead to intrusive thoughts and symptoms similar to PTSD (Wagner, 2019). Healthy emotional empathy on the other hand, is getting curious, listening, expanding your emotional literacy, practicing good emotional boundaries and leaning into self-empathy and emotional regulation.

The next type is cognitive empathy - 'putting yourself in someone else's shoes' or trying to see someone else's perspective. To practice cognitive empathy in a healthy, inclusive way, we must acknowledge our own values, privilege and assumptions and listen with an open heart to really learn what it's like to be someone else. Who are

they? Where are they coming from? What is their perspective? What is their reality? What might they be afraid of or insecure about?

If we fail to suspend our own judgements and biases when trying to understand the perspective of someone else, we might reply with unhelpful phrases such as 'if I was you I would ..', or 'Why don't you just...!' or we might start talking about ourselves. In other words, when putting yourself in someone else's shoes, we need to make sure that we've taken our own shoes off first! Practicing healthy cognitive empathy involves listening, curiosity, imagination, respect and a growth mindset while also practicing good cognitive boundaries. As a firey, you don't want to go too deep into someone else's experiences.

However, if we practice emotional and cognitive empathy - even if they're healthy - we can fail to build connection if we don't respond in a way that develops trust and safety.

The third type is compassionate empathy - the doing - it's the ability to share and understand the feelings and perspective of another person and respond appropriately.

Healthy compassionate empathy combines healthy feeling and perspective-taking while also prioritizing our own emotional needs. It's learning to respond in a healthy way that makes the other person feel

authentically heard, valued, visible and safe. Asking curious questions and saying things like "thank you for telling me that", "I'm here for you", "it makes perfect sense you feel that way", or "I get it".

In a nutshell, healthy compassionate empathy is the glue that improves our mental health, strengthens our relationships and connects our communities.

And here's the cool bit - the ability to share and understand the feelings and perspectives of another person and respond appropriately is a learned skill.

Practicing Healthy Empathy positively impacts your mental health by enhancing emotional regulation, improving communication, and reducing stress. Nurturing healthy empathy can lead to better decision-making during high-stress situations, stronger teamwork, and a decreased risk of emotional burnout.

To promote empathy and emotional support within your team, encourage open communication, discuss the three types of empathy, focus on positive



relationships, create opportunities for peer support and stigma-free debriefing after difficult incidents, and participate in empathy training programs as a group. Learning about topics like unconscious bias, emotional literacy and empathetic communication techniques will also help.

The relationship between healthy empathy and mental health for firefighters is profound. Healthy Empathy is the bridge that connects them to the people they serve and the colleagues they rely on. It can be a source of strength and resilience when nurtured and managed properly.

However, it can also lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout if misunderstood and left unchecked. It is the collective responsibility of individuals, fire departments, and organisations to prioritise mental health and healthy empathy in the fire service. By doing so, we can ensure that our firefighters remain strong, both physically and mentally, as they continue to protect our communities.



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Emergency Services Foundation

who died in the line of duty a sum of money. It was not large, but it was enough to cover funeral costs and ease the burden of other immediate debts. Most importantly it was paid within a few days and often the recipient had no idea where it came from.

Alongside these payments

The Emergency Services Foundation (ESF) is a Victorian not for profit organization which was established after Ash Wednesday in response to the deaths of 14 CFA volunteers. Police Chief Mick Miller, who led the investigation into those fires, was disturbed to learn that the families of the deceased were not granted any sort of recompense. He approached the State Government for funds to create a Foundation which had the purpose to provide the next of kin of anyone

ESF also ran an annual Scholarship program which enabled Victorian emergency service workers to undertake a study tour to better understand hazards which impacted on the safety and wellbeing of people working in frontline roles. X scholarships have been awarded and ESF has just recently entered a partnership with Rotary to support its 2023 Scholarship program.

Times change and so too has the

working environment. Thankfully over the years greater awareness and emphasis on safety meant the prevalence of deaths has diminished. In conjunction with this, workers' compensation payments have significantly increased and extended to volunteers. Six years ago, the ESF Board determined that a strategic review was required to understand the place of the Foundation in the contemporary emergency management system.

I was appointed at that time to undertake the review and for the first time the Foundation sought the views of a diverse range of stakeholders. This informed the recommendation that ESF could have an important role in bringing the sector together to collectively tackle the emerging occupational health and safety challenge which was the mental health of emergency service workers. Everyone was worried about the issue

but working in silos to address when the issues were so closely shared.

This was timely because it coincided with the release of Beyond Blue's Answering the Call Report which for the first time provided a very clear and alarming picture of the mental wellbeing of police and emergency service workers nationwide. And it was not a pretty picture.

The absence of national data up to this point created challenges in understanding the true extent of mental health issues in the sector. Three things stood out. Firstly, poor workplace practices and culture are equally debilitating for emergency service personnel as exposure to trauma.

Secondly, poor mental health literacy many people did not recognise they had a mental health condition and thirdly self-stigma gets in the way of people seeking support and is associated with poorer mental health outcomes. ESF used these findings to underpin its initial evidence informed strategic approach.

The Foundation's membership was expanded in 2018 from the key response agencies to a 15-member Stakeholder Council with a new skills-based board. The 15 members represent all agencies in Victoria which have a key role in preparedness, response, and recovery and cover 139,000 paid and volunteer front line and support people working in emergency management.

ESF determined that it would focus upstream on the prevention and early intervention space which has to date received far less attention than treatment of ill people but is crucial to improving mental health outcomes. Our purpose is to reduce the detrimental impact emergency service work has on the mental health of the workforce

through the development of leading practice prevention initiatives. Our current areas of focus are leadership, families, stigma early help seeking, transition to retirement, vicarious trauma, and collaborative data collection.

The first key action of the new Foundation was to bring together well-being managers from across the sector to fully understand how each agency was addressing mental health issues. This highlighted tremendous differences in maturity. The Learning Network was formed, and wellbeing managers have come together monthly ever since to share and learn from each other and national and international subject matter experts.

The Network determined that a new way of developing team leaders that put the emphasis on psychological safety and nurturing mentally healthy workplaces was required and would have the greatest impact sector wide. With the support of a WorkSafe WorkWell grant the Leading for Better Mental Health program was developed and piloted.

This is a unique action learning approach to building awareness of the leader's role in psychological safety and then building capability and confidence to change behaviour. The program was evaluated by Charles Sturt University and was found to be a strong enabler of positive culture change. It is now on offer for team leaders' sector wide.

ESF developed its Mental Health Matters program to address the issue of mental health literacy amongst volunteers. This highly successful program which addresses the fundamentals of recognizing signs and symptoms, where to draw support from and how to have effective conversations about wellbeing has evolved over recent years to include the

partners of volunteers. Alongside this ESF has undertaken various studies to understand how families and children of emergency service workers want and need to be supported. This information is currently being translated into a comprehensive Family Matters strategy which aims to create a supportive and supported environment for the families of emergency service workers who are now well recognised as fundamental players in supporting the wellbeing of emergency management workers and sustainability of the sector.

ESF undertook its own study to dive more deeply into this issue of stigma and build the evidence for its response. As a result, it has determined to develop a Lived Experience program which will develop a process for recruiting and training people to safely share their stories in the hope of encouraging others to recognise the signs of distress and to seek help early when the hope of recovery is greatest.

In recent years there has been an alarming rise in the number of mental health claims from emergency service workers. According to WorkSafe 25% of all claims in Victoria now emanate from emergency service workers. With the impact of mental health claims being more costly in every sense - financially, personally, and organizationally - ESF has developed a new Residential Wellbeing program which aims to work with people in the orange zone of the mental health continuum who could be described as the 'walking wobbly' or with plenty of 'crap in their backpack'.

They are not clinically diagnosed with a mental health condition and over four days of intense trauma informed work the aim is to prevent them reaching that point and a mental health claim. The program is informed by international experience and is scheduled to begin as a pilot early in 2024 with widespread support from all stakeholders.

Another innovative program developed by ESF is Well Beyond. This is designed to improve the experience of people as they transition to retirement and was also founded in the findings of Answering the Call.

A framework is provided for agencies which outlines a strategic approach and leading practices to help provide a positive experience for people as they retire after many years of service. In addition to this is the Well Beyond coaching program which saw retired police and paramedics trained to coach others approaching retirement in the four key areas ESFs research indicated were a priority. This includes creating a new purpose, social connection, financial management and dealing with accumulated trauma. The program has been found to benefit both the coach and coachee and has been welcomed by all participants.

ESF is a small organization with big ambition which has, over the past four years, made a tremendous impact across

the sector in Victoria. In addition to the programs outlined above ESF also hosts a range of events including the highly regarded Emergency Management Conference, International Women's Day, A mental health showcase and the AFL emergency services round all of which serve to bring people from the sector together.

One member agency recently referred to us as "a trusted advisor, free from organisational biases and constraints." In this role we will continue to keep our eye over the horizon, build the evidence and develop leading practice initiatives for agencies to integrate into their OHS strategies.

ESF is not responsible for the psychological safety of employees and volunteers. That responsibility sits with the various agencies who employ them. ESF in its sole focus on mental ill health prevention and early intervention aims to support the agencies by applying an over the horizon view and evidence to create

new initiatives that effectively address this burning and debilitating issue affecting way too many people and by association their families. Through collaboration we can be better together.

For more information go to www.esf.com.au

Author: Siusan MacKenzie ESF CEO



In 2023 ESF hosted Tony's Trek, a 1500 km solo walk undertaken by Chair Tony Pearce. Over 50 days he walked around fire affected areas of Victoria to raise awareness of the mental toll emergency management work can have on the people involved. Along the way Tony and his team met and had conversations with hundreds of people with personal stories to share of their mental struggles which served to reinforce ESFs commitment to a strategic and preventative focus on improving wellbeing. Funds raised through this initiative will go towards the Residential Wellbeing Pilot and the Lived Experience Program.

In 2024 Tony's Trek will head overseas to

take on the challenge of Mt Everest base camp walk.

According to Adam Broad, Firefighter Fire Rescue Victoria, 'Every one of us has our own mental mountains to climb at times. As emergency service workers we can be exposed to more potentially impactful scenes than most. But just as we work side by side to serve our community, together we can face these mountains together. So why not go climb the biggest mountain there is, side by side, to raise vitally needed money to support the mental health of those who help others.'

Do you want to join us?



LET'S CLIMB MOUNTAINS SIDE BY SIDE IN 2024

In 2022, emergency service workers trekked Side-by-Side the notorious and historically significant Kokoda Track to raise awareness of the need to support the mental health and wellbeing of Victoria's emergency service workers. The Kokoda Trek raised more than \$30,000 for the Emergency Services Foundation.

In 2023 Tony's Trek covered 1500km around Victoria to also raise awareness and funds.

In 2024 we will continue the journey together with Tony's Trek Side-by-Side, and we are aiming high by heading to Everest Base Camp via Gokyo Lakes in the magnificent Sagarmatha National Park, Nepal.

From 8 to 28 of March 2024, we will embark on a 19-day trek, with the amazing crew from No Roads Expeditions.

This is a unique opportunity for all emergency service personnel, family, and friends to hike Side-by-Side and help raise awareness and funds for much needed mental health prevention and early intervention programs for our emergency services workers.

Mental health challenges can often seem like a mountain, but Side-by-Side we can climb mountains together.

Is Everest Base Camp calling you? Come join us as we trek with No Roads Expeditions in March 2024.

All-inclusive cost is \$3,250
(excluding International Flights Aus-Nepal)

Symbolically, Tony's Trek Side-by-Side represents how we work – Emergency Services, Side-by-Side, when it counts, and in it together for the greater good.

If you're up for the challenge or need more information, please email sidebysidetrek@gmail.com

or check out more.



Why I Focus More on the Quality of Movement than the Level of Fitness When Training Firefighters

I have been a trainer for almost 19 years now and have worked with many people in emergency services occupations, and the thing that I have found essential to their training successful was making the program specific to their abilities and weaknesses.

When people look to get in shape they believe that moving well will just happen. All they have to do is get out there and get it done and the body will fix itself.

Unfortunately, this strategy very rarely works and only serves to create multitudes of movement problems that continue to worsen with higher volumes of training.

It should not come as a surprise that poor performance, injury, and pain is the end result from using poor training techniques. What does come as a surprise to people is how difficult it can be to change a faulty movement once it is encoded into your nervous system. Learning to move poorly can easily ruin a firefighter's career if compensation develops into chronic pain.

The two biggest mistakes I see so many firefighters make with their exercise programs is trying to achieve fitness without learning to move correctly first. This is often seen with people trying to pass the entry exam process.

The second biggest mistake many firefighters make is seen with people already in their occupation. These are

people who end up injured not from the job, but from their own fitness training methods that were meant to keep them safe and in shape for the job.

It is quite ironic that the gym training programs that were being used to prevent injuries, end up being the reason they acquired an injury!

While strength and fitness is essential to a firefighter, it cannot be achieved at the expense of your health. It must be earned, and it must be respected.

What Your Physical Training Should Consist Of?

There has been a lot of research into this very problem over the years and one of the best I have seen was by Dr Stuart McGill, one of the world's leading researchers into back pain.

What his research found was that injuries with firefighters occurred due to three reasons

The back injuries were associated with lifting.

The knee injuries were associated with gait patterns and running on and off the truck.

The shoulder injuries were associated with pushing and pulling.

This is where if I meet up with a person looking to get into the Fire Department I will be assessing and coaching them on the movements most likely to cause

injury or pain. This would include exercises like

Bending (deadlifts) and squats for lifting

Single leg stance and lunges for gait patterns and running

Pushing and pulling exercises in standing positions for upper body movement

There will also be elements of fitness training included but only with the movements that are of an acceptable standard. This means the person may be performing progressions of some things but regressions of others.

These are the same principles I use when working with sporting athletes. The quality of moving precedes the use of specific abilities and sport-specific skills, or in this case fire department skills.

For example, I will not implement advanced agility drills if the person cannot demonstrate a perfect multidirectional lunge and single leg squat first.

I have to coach these basic fundamentals before making it about fitness, otherwise they risk developing a faulty movement that will set them up for injury and pain in the future.



Written by Nick Jack who is the owner of No Regrets Personal Training and has over 18 years' experience as a qualified Personal Trainer, Level 2 Rehabilitation trainer, CHEK practitioner, and Level 2 Sports conditioning Coach. Based in Melbourne Australia he specializes in providing solutions to injury and health problems for people of all ages using the latest methods of assessing movement and corrective exercise.

www.noregretspt.com.au



Braving Leadership

Training and Mentoring your Frontline Leaders

LEADERSHIP IS A RESPONSIBILITY NOT JUST A TITLE

Team and department leaders that have been chosen to lead are all too often throwing their hands in the air as they struggle to gain the following of their peers while encouraging a more inclusive, mentally safe and respectful culture. Knowing all too well the stigma of not being ok is feeding the continual pressure to toughen up and get the job done, actually leaves many peers masking their struggle often resulting in bad behaviour and poor mental health. Unfortunately many do not feel safe to speak up, and all too often

witness, or fall victim to such struggles and behaviour, without really knowing how to respond. Leaving many feeling helpless, isolated and alone.

Here is found our opportunity to train and mentor your team leaders to step up as people of influence. By understanding that the majority of their people at times will all struggle to some degree, don't feel safe to ask for help or speak out. That they are actually yearning for leadership that provides guidance to inspire safe, trusting and respectful cultures where it is normal to look after each other and hold each other to account to thrive together.

EVERYONE HAS THEIR STRUGGLE ... SO BE KIND.

The Braving Leadership Program empowers your leaders to build a culture of trust and respect while encouraging peer to peer support and accountability to be up-standers as people of influence. To influence a check-in culture where it is Ok not be OK.

Where it is considered brave and normal to seek support and make continual personal agreements to look after "what I need to stay well". To encourage responsibility for self and



to encourage others to consider the imperative of who is counting on me to look after me?

WHO IS COUNTING ON ME TO LOOK AFTER ME?

Leading by example leaders can create a deeper understanding of ... "how can I help someone else or support my mates if I am not OK?"

By making it OK and normal for peers to tap each other on the shoulder and say, "You are not yourself ...RUOK?" or "Hey I Respect you...but...you are better than that" or "We talked about this..."

Braving Leadership Program includes a one day workshop for your leaders which is followed up by momentum sessions, team talks and mentoring/ coaching as required over a 12 month period.

MARK WADIE - 15 YEARS OF BRAVING LEADERSHIP AT I RESPECT

Mark has spent the last 15 years mentoring and training first responders all over Australia including Firefighters, AFP, Border Force and ADF.

Mark believes that society is now ready and asking to move from awareness into responsibility through proactive leadership within the first responder community. As evidenced with incredible media support, having Mark being showcased on Channel 9, Win and ABC news, regular features on ABC radio, The Canberra Times and featured in the national gender violence prevention campaign 'Stop it at the Start.'

'Knowing all participants, I was surprised at the openness and willingness to communicate which the format brought out' ACT Fire and Rescue participant

'I couldn't believe how open I was to sharing. I don't feel so alone' ACT Fire and Rescue participant

For more information get in touch with Mark Wadie at I Respect
www.markwadie.com
mark@markwadie.com
 0437850462





The Male Hug

THE MALE HUG is a men's mental health organisation that was formed over 4 years ago with the primary focus of getting men to talk more about their feelings, their moods, their relationships and so much more. Men are notorious for not wanting to share their feelings about anything apart from how their footy team went on the weekend.

The Male Hug utilises its resources into the following services to get the message about men talking more out into the community. Education - The Male Hug has devised an education program focusing on talking and the program has been delivered to corporates, schools, and community groups. The Male Hug runs

a voluntary phone line dedicated to men who may not have anyone to talk to, or feel they want to remain anonymous. The 1800 my buddy line connects callers to a Male Hug Buddy who will be a listening ear or can assist in pointing the caller in the right direction. Each October, The Male Hug, runs its major fundraiser and awareness project called Talktober.

Let's talk about the facts right off the top, 45% of working Australians will have mental health struggles at some stage in their life. Seven Aussie men every day commit suicide, that's seven brothers, sons, fathers, partners, seven best mates leave this world every day, because they didn't know

how to handle their situation at the time.

Australian men are more likely to die by suicide than skin cancer, suicide is double the road toll every year. Men are socially conditioned to hide their feelings rather than talk about them. Feelings then build up, but life goes on, and more issues start to arise and our feelings build up even more to a point where things start to get out of control, we have all been there. We start to drink more to take away the pain, we take drugs to escape whatever our situation maybe, we do everything other than the thing that just maybe the easiest thing to do and that's talk to someone.

Our mental health isn't

like our physical health. Our mental health can bounce around on us all the time depending on our circumstances. But like our physical health we do know that the more we work on our mental health the better it can become. Just like a PT for our Physical health, having support can help our mental health get back on track. That support can come in many ways. Confiding in our partners and family and allowing yourself to be vulnerable. If you find you want to talk to someone but can't face your loved ones then you can call The Male Hug's 1800 MY Buddy line, that's 1800 692 833.

Our 1800 MY BUDDY line will connect you with one

of our volunteer Buddies. You can discuss whatever you're comfortable with. All conversations take place in a safe, confidential, non-judgemental, and friendly space. Remember a problem shared is a problem halved.

The Male Hug CEO and Founder Tony Rabah "As men, we need courage to open up and speak to our family and friends. Men are so good at masking and hiding whatever is really going on. I see it within my own network of family, friends, and clients. The Male Hug was established 4 years ago to fill a void and provide support and relief to many men. When I look back at the dark days that I endured at the start of the GFC in 2008 through to approximately 2012, the tough days in business, a relationship breakdown, losing my father in his prime and I remember the feeling of total hopelessness. A combination of circumstances and making mistakes brought me to breaking point. Get vulnerable a close friend said. I had too much pride; I couldn't do that. Thankfully I did."

The month of October is a special month for The Male Hug, and we have just completed another 'Talktober'. It is a time where we really ram home the message of talking. The second week in Talktober also happens to be Mental Health Awareness week and



there is one thing that all mental health organisations agree with, talking can make a massive difference. To find out more head to Talktober.com.au

While we are called The Male Hug, we do have a focus on women as well. We know that helping men become better acquainted with their feelings by talking, men then become better husbands, better fathers, better colleagues, and just better blokes.

So, remember the benefits of talking:

- Talking can help sort through your own thoughts, saying things out loud brings both order and perspective

to your thoughts.

- When your thoughts are sorted you feel more prepared and organized
- Talking helps gain insight, it allows you to hear other ideas and maybe a different perspective.

- There is truth to the phrase "lifted a weight from my shoulders". Talking can often feel better mentally and physically when you talk about it.

Remember the last time you went out with your mates. Maybe it was a game of golf, a beer after work, to the local footy match or maybe even a weekend away camping. Remember the

feeling of laughter and how comfortable it felt to be in their company talking about anything and everything in the world. Well never forget that feeling, especially when your feeling down, reach out to a mate, spill the beans and wonder why you didn't talk to him earlier.

Don't let life get too hard, get in early. Talk to a mate, talk to your partner, talk to your family or call the 1800 MY BUDDY line. Get it off your chest and get on with living. Head to themalehug.com.au to find out more about the benefits of talking and how The Male Hug can help you or someone you know.

Tony Schibeci.

Respiratory Protection Considerations



CLEAN, TOXIN-FREE air is a basic requirement for being able to live and work. Where hazardous substances pose a threat or make safe breathing difficult it is important to have suitable respiratory protection.

During a bushfire, the combustion of natural forest fuels and foreign materials can release toxic gases and particulate matter. A range of gases can be produced from burning material. These can include Carbon Monoxide, Carbon Dioxide, Nitrogen Oxides, Formaldehyde, Acrolein, Volatile Organic Compounds and other acidic and inorganic gases¹. Particulate matter or aerosols of various size and distribution can also be produced during a fire.

The presence of toxic air pollutants within bushfire smoke can pose potential health risks to firefighters. Toxic pollutants can also be present in the smoke haze and residues in fire damaged areas.

To avoid irritation or damage to respiratory organs, the selection of respiratory protection can be multifaceted. Generally, the goal of any respiratory protection is to provide maximum security with the least amount of discomfort.

When using filtering respiratory protection, always keep the following in mind. Never use any kind of filtering respiratory protection device:

- In oxygen deficient atmospheres
- In poorly ventilated areas or confined spaces
- Where the concentrations are unknown
- Where the contaminant has poor or no warning properties (smell, taste or irritation) such as CO.

A P2 disposable mask will protect against particulate matter. Where gaseous contaminants are present, or where there is any doubt, a full face or half face mask should be worn

with a combination filter attached. To protect against the contaminants in a bushfire, a combination filter with multi-gas (ABEK) and particulate (P2/P3) filtration is ideal.

A full face mask with an impact rated visor can provide eye and face protection along with respiratory protection. Adequate eye protection is recommended if using a half face mask.

The life of a filter depends upon the class and conditions of use. The following factors can affect the service life of a filter:

- Combination and concentration of contaminants
- Temperature and humidity
- Duration of use and breathing rate of the user

The end of service life can be recognised by:

- in gas filters, a noticeable taste or smell of the contaminant
- in particle filters, an increased breathing resistance
- in combination filters, a noticeable taste or smell and/or an increased breathing resistance.

In addition to the above, the Australian Standard for the Selection, Use and Maintenance of Respiratory Protection Equipment (AS/NZ 1715:2009) states that all classes of gas filters shall be discarded no longer than six months after opening, irrespective of the number of periods of use¹.

If you have any questions, please contact our customer service on **1800 372 437**

¹ F. Reisen, B.E Tiganis, *Australian Firefighters Exposure To Air Toxics In Bushfire Smoke. What Do We Know?*, 2007

The ASK Program:

A Holistic Approach to Firefighters' Mental Health driven by Prevent Consultants



In the demanding world of firefighting, confronting blazes is only one part of the challenge. The psychological and emotional toll this line of work inflicts is profound. Firefighters, our community's unsung heroes, are frequently exposed to traumatic experiences that can deeply affect their mental health. Recognizing this critical need, Prevent Consultants, under the leadership of Trent Chapman – a renowned mental health advocate and spokesperson for several of Australia's mental health organizations – introduced the ASK program.

A UNIQUE PEDAGOGY TAILORED FOR THE INDUSTRY

What sets the ASK program apart from traditional training modules is its industry-specific design. Curated by professionals with lived experience and backed by health professionals, it's meticulously tailored to resonate with the unique challenges faced by firefighters and aviation teams. This specificity ensures that the training is not just theoretical but deeply rooted in the realities these professionals encounter daily.

Under Chapman's guidance, a recognized figure in the mental health landscape, the ASK program has gained credibility and respect. His association with many of Australia's mental health organizations reinforces the program's

commitment to quality, understanding, and compassion.

HOLISTIC MENTAL HEALTH: BEYOND SURFACE-LEVEL SOLUTIONS

Mental health, though a widely discussed topic, often gets reduced to surface-level conversations, especially in high-stress professions. In our attempts to manage our thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and the trauma we face, the core foundations of mental health can get overshadowed. The ASK program, with its "feet up philosophy", emphasizes addressing the root causes rather than just the symptoms. It seeks to equip firefighters with the tools to identify early signs of mental distress and arm them with strategies to maintain their mental equilibrium.

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE

As the significance of mental health becomes increasingly acknowledged worldwide, Prevent Consultants invites communities to prioritize the well-being of their firefighters actively. The ASK program isn't just an educational module; it's a commitment to the brave souls who lay their lives on the line for our safety.

Firefighting units across the country, in the aftermath of fire and flood recovery missions, have reported improved

mental resilience and a fortified sense of camaraderie after undergoing this training. It's a testament to the program's efficacy and relevance.

CONCLUSION

The ASK program, spearheaded by Trent Chapman and backed by Prevent Consultants, offers more than just training – it offers hope. By emphasizing a holistic approach to mental health, grounded in real-world experiences and the foundational principles of well-being, it promises not just to heal but to empower. Our firefighters, as they brave the flames and challenges of their profession, deserve this comprehensive support system.

You can access the ASK program through www.preventconsultants.com

Trent Chapman



Transport for Superheroes

SCANIA continues to supply heavy-duty fire trucks to every state and territory in Australia, for urban and regional use, and more are on the way.

“Scania drives the first response fleets of most Australian metropolitan and outer urban fire and rescue services, and has done so for a long while,” says Benjamin Nye, Director of Sales for Scania Trucks Australia.

“Behind our success in providing heavy pumpers for residential and industrial firefighting is a safe, comfortable spacious CrewCab platform that has proven itself in service over decades, and which is loved by the crews who drive and ride in it.

“Scania’s commitment to the fire services of Australia does not start and end with the provision of the powertrain and cab but extends throughout the service life of the vehicle with bespoke maintenance and repair solutions that ensure high uptime, safe operation and deliver dependability for every cold start and high-speed departure.

“Scania’s commitment to crew safety is unmatched in the industry, with four side curtain rollover protection airbags fitted as standard to our current Scania

NTG and SUPER CrewCab fire-fighting appliances,” Ben says.

Scania’s CrewCab is the only vehicle equipped with this unique – and award-winning – rollover side curtain airbag system. When Scania introduced this technology in 2016, it took an important step towards mitigating one of the most critical consequences of rollover accidents, where drivers or passengers are injured or even fatally crushed by their own vehicle. This clever solution deploys and protects seat-belted occupants if the truck happens to roll over.

“We have fitted a driver airbag to the steering wheel for more than 15 years and we have had ABS, traction control and Advanced Emergency Braking on our fire trucks for a long time. These features ensure the teams aboard our CrewCabs remain safe on a high-speed dash to an emergency,” says Scott Slater, Scania Australia’s National Specialised Vehicle Manager.

“We have more than 700 Scania-based fire appliances in service across Australia’s key fire-fighting services, and currently have orders in build for every state in Australia. We’re pleased to report sustained interest in our products for bushfire fighting also, with a significant multi-year order to supply many new trucks for country firefighters,” Scott says. “Feedback

from firefighters about our vehicles is overwhelmingly positive. The way they perform and their reliability, safety and comfort is always commented on.”

Scania recently imported its first 100% battery electric vehicles. These BEVs can provide an excellent platform for zero tailpipe emission fire authority vehicles.

Scania’s BEV chassis can easily accommodate a rescue body or command centre. With fire appliances spending most of their time at the fire station, maintaining a full charge would be no problem, and the vehicle itself could be used to provide onsite power for firefighting or support tools during a rescue event, such as a road accident or during a search and rescue deployment.

Globally, battery electric vehicles are attracting more and more attention for firefighting purposes. An obvious upside is their ability to do the job at the location without creating noise or emissions.

“As Europe focusses more firmly on introducing battery electric vehicles into its transport and logistics fleets, as well as for vocational vehicles, it is patently obvious that attention will turn to the electrification of the fire-fighting fleets,” Benjamin Nye says.

“Scania will be at the forefront of this development naturally, given our pre-eminent position as a supplier of fire-fighting platforms, and the performance benefits of a BEV, particularly its step-off acceleration and its surfeit of torque, will be highly prized by fire service members when answering emergency calls,” he says.

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