

INSPIRE *Project*

*Empower a woman,
Empower a community*



BACKGROUND *Project*

The Livingstone Youth Action Group (YAG) consists of secondary students from various high schools on the Capricorn Coast. YAG meet regularly with Livingstone Shire Council's Youth Services to discuss, design and implement various youth projects in the community. These young people are committed to improving the liveability of Livingstone for all young people and gain a variety of skills along the way.

In July 2021 the Livingstone Youth Action Group took the opportunity, alongside Council, to apply for funding through the Queensland State Government's 'Investing in Queensland Women' initiative, with the aim to address a unique issue faced by women and girls in the Livingstone community.

YAG researched the Queensland Women's Strategy 2016 - 2021 and considered the four strategic priorities. YAG had a particular interest in key priority area 1: Participation & Leadership. This priority ensures Queensland women and girls participate fully and equally in society, and as leaders in the community, in politics and business.

After the research phase, YAG discussed project ideas that would create positive change for women and girls in the community, and in particular their workplace of choice.

After several brainstorming sessions, the group developed 'Project INSPIRE'!

'Project INSPIRE' was designed to share the stories of local women working in male dominated industries and/or in leadership positions, which in return inspires young females to take a step towards their career goals, regardless of the industry.

In November 2021, the group were advised by the Queensland Government that their funding application was successful!

YAG then began bringing 'Project INSPIRE' to life, as they set out to find five Livingstone women whose career journeys have been challenging yet inspiring!

YAG approached local male dominated industries to seek out female employees who may be interested in participating, and as a result of their efforts found a female Police Officer, a female Fire Fighter, a female Builder, a female Truck Driver and a female Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Worker.

YAG interviewed these women and asked a variety of questions they, and their peers, are curious about.

The last challenge for the Youth Action Group was to find a way to publish this information in a fun and funky way to encourage young people's engagement. YAG worked alongside a graphic designer to create avatars of the women involved and to share the stories through a series of colourful and interesting Library displays across the Shire. Of course, this could only be thought of by young people, right?!

Each Secondary School and Library in Livingstone Shire received a unique display as part of 'Project INSPIRE' to continue encouraging young women and empower them to take the first step towards their career of interest, regardless of the challenges!

This book compliments the Library displays and showcases the efforts of all involved in 'Project INSPIRE', we hope all readers can relate to the stories and realise anything is possible!

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THANKS *special*

The Livingstone Youth Action Group (2021 – 2022)

- Breanna Willett (St Ursula’s College)
- Brienna Coughlan (St Ursula’s College)
- Chantelle Carney (St Ursula’s College)
- Mack Clanfield (Yeppoon State High School)
- Blake Mcelhenny (Yeppoon State High School)
- Mason Fuller (St Brendan’s College)

Our 5 Inspiring Livingstone Ladies

- Amy Smith
- Emily Bailey
- Louise Hayes
- Lucie Page
- Lyndie Scott



AMY SMITH

Occupation: Mining Training Specialist

When I was Sixteen, I wanted to be the Prime Minister of New Zealand, fast forward to my early thirties I became a Trainee Dump Truck Operator!

Life doesn't always turn out the way you planned or the way you think it will and that is ok. Develop your own personal definition of success.

What advice would you share with young women entering a male-dominated profession?

Invest in relationships - Job opportunities, career advice and introductions can come through people you know. Make maintaining relationships a priority. This is especially hard in a male-dominated industry as you may or may not have the same interests as the men in the workplace. Be yourself and be genuine in your interactions with others and the relationships will happen.

Trust your skills - Remember you are working in your industry because you have the skills and know-how to do your job no matter what your gender.

Be Curious - Never stop learning. This will boost your confidence and open new opportunities within your industry.

Stay Positive - Think about your past victories, not defeats. Don't let that voice in your head tell you that you can't do something. Focus on the positive feedback and use any negativity to fuel your efforts to improve your skills.



Have you ever been criticised/ judged for your career decisions? If so, how did you overcome this?

There have been many instances where I have had conversations with people regarding my choice to work away from home when I have children.

It used to make me angry that nobody ever questioned a man's choice to work away.

Initially, I felt judged. I soon realised that I needed to be ok with being judged as those who really mattered, didn't mind that I was working away and those who did mind, didn't matter to me at all.

Sometimes I need to remind myself that my choice to work away from home is based on choices that suit MY family. In 2022 there is still considerable pressure to conform to social roles of Mums staying home to look after the children. However, by not conforming to social norms I've had to choose not to conform to the expectations of others and therefore not responding to their approval or disapproval.

Being clear on the 'WHY' I have made career decisions allows me to not get caught up in the judgement from others.

What do you enjoy the most about your career? What keeps it interesting for you?

I love the people in mining. People gather from different places with diverse life experiences and live, eat and work together for 7 days. I constantly meet people on crews that have led very interesting lives and I enjoy hearing their stories. Miners usually have a great sense of humour and I love the way a crew uses humour to overcome the challenges they face on the daily.

What do you believe is the biggest personal quality to have when in a leadership position?

Integrity – Do the right thing even when no one is watching. This means being dependable and following through on commitments, being open and honest when communicating with others and holding yourself accountable when things don't go to plan. I always try to own my mistakes and learn from them.

What do you enjoy as a hobby outside of your work responsibilities?

I love to travel. Even time rosters have allowed me to indulge this passion. I have lost count of the number of countries I have travelled to. Prior to Covid I travelled to Cuba and Morocco which were life changing experiences. Closer to home I love hooning around the Keppel's on my jet ski, hanging with my puppy dog Alfie and volunteering at the Yeppoon Community Centre.

What, if anything, has been a significant barrier in your career?

Trying to juggle work and family. Being a single parent, I could not do what I do without the unwavering support of my parents and sister. They have allowed me to pursue my career and without them I could not continue to do what I do.

Is there anything you would like to share that you feel would benefit young minds in the next generation?

“Be yourself – everyone else is taken” – Oscar Wilde

What does your day-to-day life involve?

I manage a team of trainers across different business units including Production, Maintenance, Drill & Blast, and the Coal Handling Preparation Plant that train and upskill operators to perform their roles. The equipment we train on is awe inspiring and daily I have to remind myself not to get complacent about the size and scale of the gear we train on. For example, the Liebherr 9800 excavator drops 80 tonnes of overburden from each bucket into our equally impressive Liebherr T282 trucks which carry upwards of 360 tonnes from the digger to the dump.





EMILY BAILEY

Occupation: Carpenter

It was through my classes and assessments in high school that I knew I wanted to become a builder as I really enjoyed the hands-on work involved.

I believe if you find something you are naturally good at and enjoy, it's worth the extra effort to continue that passion and pathway after school.

Have you ever come across a situation where you felt you were treated differently due to your gender?

I have experienced a situation where I felt I was treated differently as a female compared to my male colleagues. I was directed to do certain jobs such as cleaning, while the male staff at the time weren't asked to do the same. I felt this was due to a gender imbalance at the work site.

What advice would you share with young women entering a male-dominated profession?

My advice is to know your role and the part you play within your team and be confident in how you approach your work no matter what your gender or age. Don't stand back and allow gender imbalances to occur.

What do you enjoy as a hobby outside of the work responsibilities?

My hobby outside of work is motocross, I have been racing bikes for 7 years. This sport allows me to travel as I race every weekend in various locations. I try my best to find time during the working week to prepare for motocross, this is easier to achieve on the days I work close to town as I can spend extra time at the gym.

What have been some difficult times to deal with while on the job?

When I first started my career as an apprentice Builder I was afraid of making mistakes on a job site due to in-experience and sometimes being 'rushed into things', this at times made the job feel difficult. Another difficulty in this trade is managing the different ways people complete tasks and ensuring the job gets completed correctly. Many people do things in many different ways but the outcomes need to be to standard, and that's important to me.

Is there any setbacks in your career that you would like to share? And how did you overcome the setback?

Unfortunately, I have been treated unfairly in numerous work environments which has made it difficult to complete my carpentry apprenticeship as I have had to move through three different companies to achieve my goal. I have overcome these setbacks by staying determined and focused on my goal, pushing myself to do as much as I can to gain my qualification.

What does your day to day life involve?

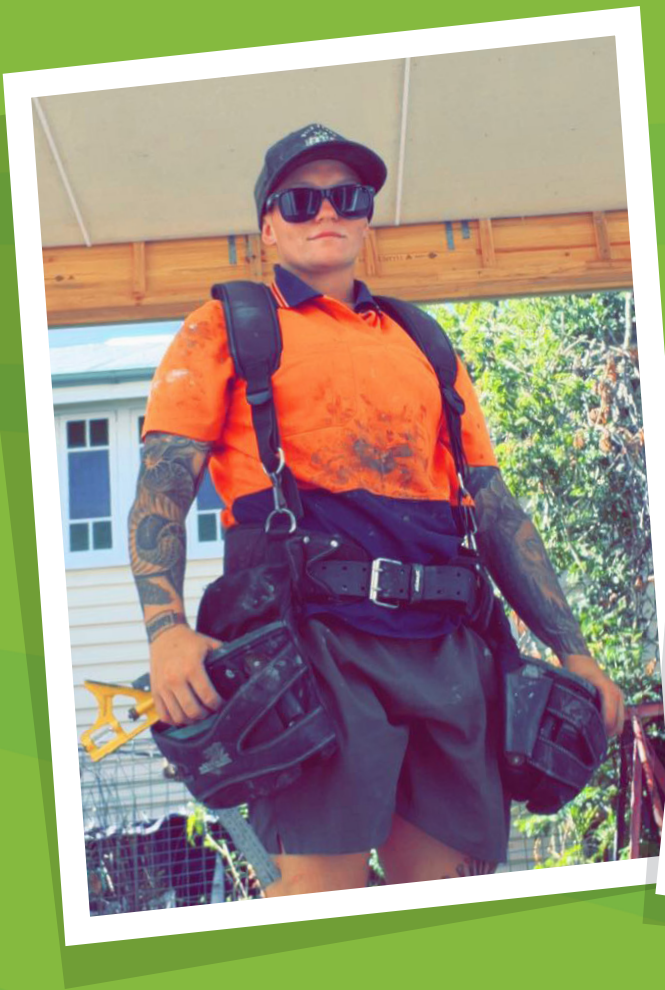
I follow a regular routine throughout the working week which involves starting each day at 6am to allow me to be ready and on the job site for a 7am start. My typical working day involves an 8 hour shift. At the conclusion of my shift I switch my focus to my fitness goals and head to the gym for an hour workout. After the gym I head home for the day to take care of my dogs, cook dinner, do household chores and get ready for bed. It's a consistent routine that works for me in finding some work/ life balance.

How do you balance work/life responsibilities?

I believe it is hard to find a balance between work and life responsibilities due to my work schedule. Sometimes I feel like there are not enough hours left in the day for me to be able to focus on my personal life outside of work, due to travel and timeframes associated with my trade. For example job sites may not be near my home. Weekends are time for me to enjoy my hobbies, and its important for young people to know early that to get the work/ life balance right you need to make time for the things you enjoy outside of work also.

Did you do anything whilst in high school that supported the direction you were wanting to go with your career?

Throughout my high school years I participated in furnishing classes, and would complete the assessments quickly and excel with high grades. In year 12, I then went on to complete a certificate in construction. It was through my classes and assessments in high school that I knew I wanted to become a builder as I really enjoyed the hands on work involved. I believe if you find something you are naturally good at and enjoy, it's worth the extra effort to continue that passion after school.



LOUISE HAYES

Occupation: *Domestic & Family Violence Prevention Worker*

My life reflects my beliefs to 'NEVER GIVE UP', 'YOU ARE NEVER TOO OLD' and 'WHY NOT?' It's better to not succeed than to have never tried!

I love that I always keep learning and meeting new people that compliment my 'box of tricks' to help me help others.

How did you land in this field of work?

When all my children were of school age, I decided I wanted to do something more meaningful than running my own bookkeeping business, but something that still allowed me to work my own hours and be present and active in the kids schooling, sports and other interests.

I decided to complete a university degree. I booked an appointment at Central Queensland University with a Careers Advisor, although I had already set my sights on doing an Environmental Science degree as I felt it was a career that would be super interesting and very much a part of the future. The Careers advisor let me know that completing this degree would involve some travel and overnight stays. As a single Mum, he was telling me it probably wasn't going to be do-able. For once, I listened and I am very glad I did, and chose a Psychology degree instead.

It was while I was doing my degree I became very interested in relationships and social interactions and started focussing my studies in that area. I had an opportunity to choose a Domestic and Family Violence topic for one of my assignments and while completing some research on the topic attended a local support service. It was here I met my future employers and two ladies that became my mentors. The information they shared about their roles and their work piqued my interest. When I had almost finished my degree, I was very lucky to be offered a part time job with the service. The rest is history. I have been working in the industry ever since, commencing in January 2010. I graduated from University in July 2012.



Who inspired you to become a DFV worker?

The two ladies I met during my university studies (who I acknowledge as my mentors) had been working in the industry for a very long time. I was very lucky to have been given the opportunity to join their team as they willingly shared their knowledge with me. It gave me an amazing start to my professional career.

However, it is my MUM who is the person that INSPIRES me every single day. I only have to remember the time, the era in which she grew up in, the gender inequality she has experienced in her lifetime, the unhealthy relationships she endured and the lonely life she has sometimes led. She is truly a STRONG woman and has always supported me, cheered me on and encouraged me to set goals and reach for them. My Mother completed a university degree at the same time I did. Apparently, I inspired her to undertake a university degree, or so she says, something she never thought she could do or was ever encouraged to do in her era.

Were you aware of any potential challenges working in a male dominated industry?

This question is not so relevant in the legal industry, as female lawyers are plentiful now, with plenty of female Magistrates and Judges as well. As an example, in the Rockhampton Legal Aid office, there are six female and two male solicitors. In another free legal service in town, their entire staff are females.

When I first started in the DFV court sector, it was slightly less apparent, but great to see plenty of females choosing LAW as a career and the gender imbalance levelling out.

What is your greatest strength?

Curiosity. Asking questions and searching for a better understanding of anything allows me to move forward with confidence.

Listening and accepting constructive criticism and using it as a tool to learn and grow. The two mentors I worked alongside in my career were fabulous and would let me know if I wasn't doing things correctly (which is very important in the court system). I knew to not get offended by the recommendations and advice and instead was eager to learn and proud to do the job correctly, so I always took on board what those with more experience shared with me.

How do you balance work/life responsibilities?

Work/ life balance is a juggle. Self-Care is super important especially in this industry where I hear some quite disturbing stories, sometimes daily. It's important to identify who your supports are and who you can debrief with and lean on through difficult days. My self care involves an early start to the day with a workout, walk, run or a gym session. This routine puts me in a great state of mind to start the day and allows me to just be. This time will often also involve a phone call to my Mum.

Self-care means prioritising yourself and your family, but also setting healthy boundaries that ensure you can maintain your work commitments.

I don't always get it right, but reflection is also a powerful tool. Reflecting on what could be done better or how the schedule can be adapted helps keep order of my priorities.

Have you ever been afraid on the job?

Considering the industry I work in I'm sure its not surprising that my answer to this is yes. I can recall, quite clearly a few occasions where I was concerned for my safety. These occasions were early in my current career where a perpetrator's behaviour affected me, I believe being new to the sector played a part in this.

The perpetrator's I work with are in the court system because they have intimidated, harassed, threatened to harm or have physically and/ or emotionally harmed another person. So it's not surprising that they use these behaviours on those working with them. There is a high awareness of these behaviours and a personal confidence that develops while working with these people which helps lessen the fear factor. It has been a long time now since I have felt unsafe. Following the workplace policies to reduce unsafe situations is vital.

What other career choices were you interested in during your youth?

I have always wanted to be a Police Officer. When I was 17, I submitted my first application to the police force but was told I didn't have enough life experience; 'I was too green'.

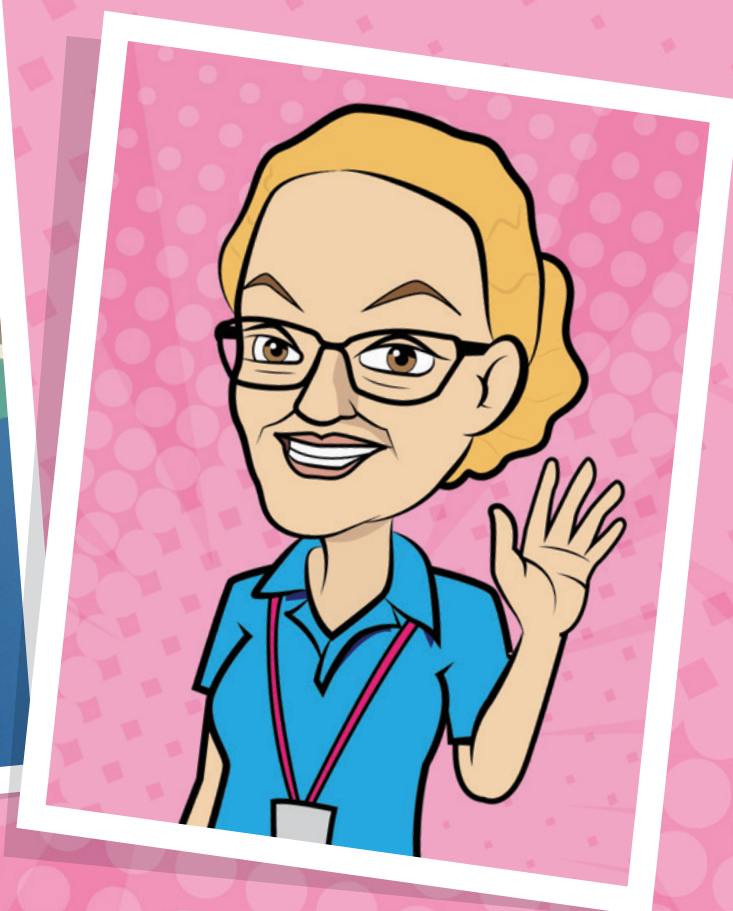
So, I ventured out and went and got some life experience. The second time I applied, I was in my late 20s but was told I didn't have suitable education qualifications. The third time I applied, I had a science degree (in psychology), I had a black belt and was instructing, I had life experience, I had been working in the DFV sector for about 8 years and had a great understanding of the justice system. This time I was accepted to go through the application process and made it all the way through the many (and fun) trials. However, it wasn't meant to be and I'm OK with that because I know I gave it all I had, and I didn't give up trying. I LOVE the job I have now, this is where my career path has taken me.

What do you enjoy most about your career? What keeps it interesting for you?

Getting great outcomes for families I am working with is my largest satisfaction. Hoping that I have improved their lives and played a part in making their lives safer.

The rewards come from helping people who just need some help, some information, or some support. What keeps it interesting is the challenge to get good outcomes for families, I must use my knowledge and my networks I have established to assist and support people the best I can. I often need to "think outside the box" to keep people safe, individualising their safety needs or legal needs along the way.

I love that I keep learning and meeting new people that compliment my 'box of tricks' to help me help others.



LUCIE PAGE

Occupation: Police Officer

My advice when things don't go the way you intended is to take time to reflect on what you could have changed or done differently and then put those learnings in place in the future, this is called growth and it's vital to succeed.

Were you aware of any potential challenges working in a male dominated industry?

The obvious one would be the physiological differences between men and women, which I have to consider as the job requires physical strength and conditioning. It is also a male-dominated industry, which presents various issues of sexism, some insidious and some overt.

Who was your biggest support through your career ambitions?

My family and friends: my family guided me through all of my career choices and becoming a police officer was no different, despite my decision to move into policing being decades in the making. Having family support in Yeppoon is very important.

My beautiful community has also motivated me in my career, because as a community-minded person, I love contributing positively to the community I live and work in!

Perhaps not a support but more a childhood inspiration, I loved watching police shows in my younger years, Blue Heelers in particular, my interest to be a police officer existed from a young age.



What is one decision you wish you didn't make?

In my job there are plenty of times where one must make a snap decision, and I've certainly made the wrong one a few times, especially as a new recruit. However, after properly processing the incidents, I can say I don't regret any of them as they were all learning experiences and have made me a stronger and better officer.

Is there anything you would like to share that you feel would benefit young minds in the next generation?

I feel a life prior to policing is very beneficial. My life experience in all my travels and previous jobs has benefitted me greatly with communicating with the community on all different levels. Communication is key in policing.

Accept the many failures you will make and take any rejections you receive as part of reaching your goals and learn from them to make smarter decisions in the future. They are part of being human: everyone experiences them.

What advice would you share with young women entering a male-dominated profession?

Stay true to who you are and don't feel pressured to mould yourself to the male version of the role. Women contribute a unique and valuable perspective to any job; use your strengths and support other women. Look up to people like Jacinda Ardern who are excelling, being different in their feminine approach to their role.

I am often required to deal with situations where female members of the community are involved; they feel more comfortable dealing with a female officer and this is one example of how both genders can create a more supportive work environment.

How have you overcome any setbacks in your career?

I would say that being open to criticism and knowing yourself is important; this job can be very harsh, and people can be very critical. Being open to feedback and not taking things personally is imperative.

I actually failed the testing with my first application to QPS! But I used this to my advantage, using the extra time to train my fitness and my mind before re-applying.

I know the value of phoning a friend or debriefing with my partner after any setback in life. I also partake in community events and sport, which also serves to let the community see me in a different capacity.

What other career choices were you interested in during your youth?

I started out in sports science, customer service, hospitality, then management. Policing was always on my radar but I think I needed to experience life first. Looking back, I see that the common denominators for me were being physical and working with people.

Personally, my interests include touch football, heading over to Great Keppel Island, and going on hikes. Any which includes food and wine—I'm there!

Have you ever been criticised/ judged for your career decisions? If so how did you overcome this?

Pre-determining and clearly defining the people whose opinions actually matter. Those who matter don't mind, and those who mind don't matter—if there were any naysayers, I can't remember them, and I likely wouldn't have listened anyway.





LYNDIE SCOTT

Occupation: *Firefighter*

My Dad is a huge inspiration to me. He never deterred us children from trying anything, and he would give the girls in the family the same tasks that he'd ask of my brother.

I'd always really admire him in his working role, as a firefighter he would always stay calm under pressure and could pull people together to get the job done, he's been my inspiration.

What inspired you to become a firefighter?

I have been exposed to the firefighting industry since I was a child. I think that if you have the interest to protect your community, your neighbours, and your family that you should expand your skills and learn how you can do this. I feel a strong mateship within the firefighting industry and with the increasing occurrence of fire events my skills are ever improving with still lots more to learn.

Who inspired you and why?

My Dad (Haydn Johnson) is a huge inspiration to me. He first became a rural fire brigade officer in 1979 and has always involved my siblings and I in rural fire brigade events, even as children. He taught us skills on the farm that were hugely valuable whilst firefighting and operating equipment.

He never deterred us from trying anything, and in tough operational situations he was always calm under pressure, something that I still admire to this day. He also has great respect from his peers and the community and was awarded Australian of the Year for his contribution to the community.

Is there anything you would like to share that you feel would benefit young minds in the next generation?

I want to let the next generation know that this is a role they can achieve and excel in. That volunteering your time can lead to great career options. Volunteering has given me valuable qualifications and built my skills in many aspects including community education and people management skills. If you have a passion that doesn't 'pay the bills' find a way of sustaining this interest and growing your skills as the pathways are out there. Experience is invaluable.

What is one decision you are glad you made?

I'm glad I took on the Bushfire Resilience Officer role for Livingstone Shire Council, it was a new role for the area, and I had to forge my own way to establish the role and achieve outcomes. It definitely wasn't easy and continues to be that way but the outcomes we are delivering for the community are very important and that's what drives my determination.

What do you believe is the biggest personal quality to have when in a leadership position?

Communication skills are essential. I think the best quality you can have is being a great listener, don't talk down to people and involve them in the solution and value their opinion. You need to be calm under pressure and use your experience to work your way to a solution.

What other career choices were you interested in during your youth?

During my youth I was drawn to the agricultural industry. Working on properties, preparing show cattle, feedlot cattle, working horses and station life felt like a direction I was comfortable going in. I enjoyed the freedom, the different people you would meet and especially the skills learnt from the older generation.

Have you ever been afraid on the job?

Until recent years I would have said no but the 2018 and 2019 fire seasons were definitely filled with scary moments. I guess in all fire situations I had faced up until that time my training and experience gave me the tools to do the job.

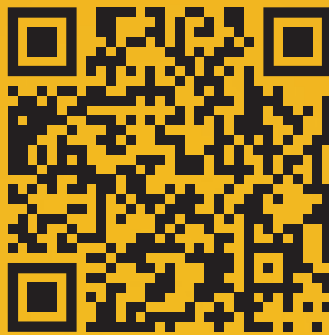
I was also mentored by some wonderful older fire fighters. After shifting to Yeppoon in 2015 I become 1st officer of the local rural fire brigade and become part of a new team.

Facing these big fires, whilst being an experience I wouldn't like to relive in a hurry, also proved to be a catalyst that pulled people (volunteer firefighters and residents) together and brought out the best of qualities in people.

What advice would you share with young women entering a male-dominated profession?

I would advise them to find someone that inspires them, volunteer where you can build your skills and qualifications whilst helping the community. I have never been discouraged from performing my role because I'm a female and I've never used the fact that I'm female as an excuse to not do something. Find the 'thing' that you're passionate about, build your skills and experience in the field and go from there regardless of gender.





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