



Firefighter Fit Friday!

How Deloraine Fire Brigade is building community through laughter and fitness

Deloraine Fire Brigade is proving that fitness and camaraderie go hand in hand. Through their program “Firefighter Fit Friday,” this small brigade is not only improving their physical and mental wellbeing but also fostering a stronger sense of community among its members and their families.

Making Yourself the Priority

The idea for **“Firefighter Fit Friday”** was born out of a desire to prioritise personal health and fitness.

Brigade Chief, Dan Watson shared, “I was getting a bit bored training by myself, and a couple of other members were starting their own fitness journeys—giving up smoking or thinking about getting back into football. So, we threw the idea out there, and it seems to have stuck.”

The program encourages members to focus on their own wellbeing, recognising that a healthier, fitter firefighter is better equipped to handle the physical and mental demands of the job. With workouts tailored to individual fitness levels, participants can work at their own pace, whether they prefer low-impact bodyweight exercises or full-body workouts with weights.



Image: Brigade members mid work-out!

Looking Out for Your Colleagues

Beyond personal fitness, “Firefighter Fit Friday” has become a cornerstone for building camaraderie within the brigade. “We’re only a little brigade, but over the last few years, we’ve been getting busier with call-outs and training. This has been a great way for us to come together and hang out without any stress or pressure,” Dan explained.

The program has also opened its doors to social members, families, and even neighbouring brigades and local SES units. This inclusivity has strengthened bonds within the brigade and created a welcoming environment for new members.

As Dan noted,

“An open-door fire station always gets passers-by looking in and gives them a chance to pop in and say hello or ask questions, which is always nice for members to be involved with.”



Fitness for Firefighting and Mental Health

While the program is still in its early stages, the benefits are already evident. Members are noticing improvements in their physical capabilities, such as dragging hoses over long distances or increasing their push-up counts.

These gains not only enhance their performance as firefighters but also help prevent injuries and reduce stress.

Mental health has also seen a positive shift. The brigade often faces high-stress situations, and the program provides a much-needed outlet for members to balance the emotional toll of their work. Dan said “It’s great to see different members getting involved and opening up a little bit, from social members being on station more to Coach Paddy, who is developing his leadership skills, it’s been great for everyone.”



Image: Brigade members making the most out of all available equipment!

Family Matters

Recognising the impact of volunteer firefighting on families, the brigade has made it a priority to include them in the program.

Family members are welcome to participate or observe, ensuring that the fire brigade remains a positive part of their lives. As one member put it, “It’s nice to feel more included and maybe have less of a negative feeling about volunteer life and dreading the pager going off.”

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Rhys, a key member of the brigade, said, “Firefighter Fit Fridays (and now Mondays) are about ensuring we’re always at our peak, ready to serve our community to the best of our abilities. It’s about pushing our limits, supporting each other, and continuously striving to be the most capable and resilient team we can be while also looking after our mental health.”

Ryan, a machine operator and footballer, shared, “Firefighter Fit Friday has made a big impact on my day-to-day life and also my firefighting, improving my fitness and health.”

Catherine, a new Level 1 firefighter, added, “I find it more motivating than trying to get to the gym on my own early in the morning. It’s also a good way to spend time with everyone outside of fire training or call-outs.”



Into the Future

With its growing popularity, “Firefighter Fit Friday” has already expanded to two nights a week, and the brigade is considering investing in more gym equipment to support its members.

The program is not only helping firefighters become stronger and more resilient but also creating a supportive environment where laughter, fitness, and community thrive.

The Deloraine Fire Brigade’s initiative is a shining example of how prioritising health and wellbeing can bring people together, improve morale, and make a positive impact on both individuals and the community they serve.



Image: Volunteer Member, Polly, a recent recipient of a Garmin courtesy of Wellbeing Support & MyPulse.



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