SES
NSW STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

Celebrating Youth in the NSW SES

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY
12 August 2019

The NSW SES is committed to building a workplace culture of diversity and inclusion at all levels that:

- provides a safe environment for staff and volunteers to bring their whole selves to work;

- builds confidence and capacity to engage with, and learn from, diverse thinking and practices;

- strengthens capability for emergency preparedness and response by better reflecting and connecting with the communities we serve; and

- is a living expression of our values - Trust, Accountability, Respect, Professionalism and integrity, Safety and service (TARPS).

Building a diverse workforce of staff and volunteers and pursuing an inclusive approach to our work enables the NSW SES to achieve our mission and vision by engaging effectively with diverse communities across the State to build resilience. Focal areas for strengthening diversity and inclusion within the NSW SES include:

- Aboriginal/Indigenous
- Age
- Culture & Religion
- Disability & Accessibility
- Gender
- LGBTIQ+

For members across the NSW SES, there are opportunities for us to learn and practice aspects of diversity and inclusion as part of our everyday work. The starting point is building our own knowledge and understanding in small but meaningful ways, such as:

- making ourselves aware of how the words we use in the workplace may impact on colleagues and the wider community around us;

- learning about significant national/international days of celebration or commemoration;

- establishing relationships with diverse individuals/groups through diversity networks, local organisations or community leaders; and

- creating opportunities for individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage with the NSW SES.

Diversity Council Australia

The NSW SES is a member of the Diversity Council Australia (DCA) – the peak body leading diversity and inclusion in the workplace across the diversity spectrum. DCA has an excellent bank of resources for creating and maintaining a diverse and inclusive workforce. You can find out more at https://www.dca.org.au/. Create your own login (using your NSW SES email address) to access additional resources available to members.

If you have any questions about Diversity and Inclusion within the NSW SES, contact diversityandinclusion@ses.nsw.gov.au

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INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY | 2019 TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

International Youth Day 12 August 2019

International Youth Day is commemorated every year on 12 August, bringing youth issues to the attention of the international community and celebrating the potential of youth as partners in today's global society.

The 2019 theme for International Youth Day is 'Transforming Education' highlighting efforts to make education more inclusive and accessible for all youth, including efforts by youth themselves.

International Youth Day 2019 explores how Governments, young people, youth-led and youth-focused organizations, and other stakeholders, are transforming education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Youth in the NSW SES

The NSW SES appreciates the energy and expertise of over 2500 youth members, aged 16 – 30, who generously volunteer to share their time, skills and experience for the benefit of the Service and the wider community. THANK YOU for your dedication and invaluable contribution to the work of the NSW SES.

To celebrate International Youth Day, we're asking youth members to share their memorable SES moments and what motivates them to volunteer. To start, we have five snapshots kindly shared by Isaiah, Taryn, Dylan, Andrew and Linda.

If you're a young person in the NSW SES and would like to share your story of why you joined the SES, contact

community.engagement@ses.nsw.gov.au or diversityandinclusion@ses.nsw.gov.au

Isaiah
17 years old

When did you join the NSW SES and how old were you when you joined?

I joined the NSW SES in mid-November 2018 when I was 16 Years old.

What sparked your interest in the NSW SES?

I had family members serve in the SES and decided to follow with the family tradition in serving. My biggest drive was being Aboriginal and representing my Culture in an important way - I found it a big motivation to do better.

Why do you choose to be a NSW SES volunteer?

I joined the SES to do something within my Community, learn new skills and meet new people and that's happened. I've heard the saying "We're ordinary people, doing extraordinary things" a lot and it pushes me and motivates me more and more each week.

What's your most memorable experience in your time as an SES volunteer?

My first call-out - a storm rolled through Campbelltown and we received a call and it being my first job I didn't know what I was going to turn up to but when I arrived on the job, I instantly realised why I joined and after 8 hours I left and I've almost never missed out on a call-out since.

What would be your top tip for young people who may be thinking about becoming a NSW SES member?

Do it - it's an amazing experience. I've met so many people, I've made new friends, new mentors and learnt so much. It's also a brilliant way to further yourself as a human and it's grown me up a little.

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Taryn
17 years old

When did you join the NSW SES and how old were you when you joined?

I joined the NSW SES in May 2018. I was 16 and applied at 12.30am on my birthday (officially), but I had been coming to training nights with Mum as an unofficial member for a while!

What sparked your interest in the NSW SES?

Well, I had some family history with the SES. Both my Mum and Dad are heavily involved with my local Unit (Wingecarribee), in fact my Mum is the Commander and Dad is one of the Rescue members. I have always loved helping others in times of need, and the SES is a great way to do that!

Why do you choose to be a NSW SES volunteer?

Helping others is definitely what motivates me! But being involved in such a close Unit makes the experience even better - everyone is like family!

What's your most memorable experience in your time as an SES volunteer?

There are so many different experiences involving many of our fellow members, but mostly during community engagement events when I play the role of Paddy the Platypus! Especially at the Relay for Life event. All of this was right before an electric storm attacked us and the gazebos decided to take off in flight towards the crowds! It was a fantastic experience that I'll never forget.

What would be your top tip for young people who may be thinking about becoming a NSW SES member?

Don't think about it, just do it! It is such an awesome experience, you get loads of cool training, meet heaps of really nice people and you get to give back to your community! What more could you want?!

Dylan
18 years old

When did you join the NSW SES and how old were you when you joined?

I joined the SES when I was 17 years old! I joined back in May 2018.

What sparked your interest in the NSW SES?

I was looking for something that gave me the opportunity to give back to my local community, and I was scrolling through Facebook one afternoon and saw an ad from my local Unit advertising for new volunteers....! I applied that afternoon and the rest is history!

Why do you choose to be a NSW SES volunteer?

I love helping people, and the SES provides a great avenue to do this. With the high-quality training that the SES gives, it is an exceptional organisation to volunteer with.

SES also provide a range of community services such as Road Crash Rescue and General Land Rescue, in addition to our role of flood and storm!

Seeing the faces of members of the community after you have helped them is priceless. They have just had an extremely tough day and the fact that you are able to make that day a bit better for them is extremely rewarding.

What's your most memorable experience in your time as an SES volunteer?

It is so hard to narrow it down to just one experience, but as a general comment, anytime our unit goes operational is a great experience - seeing all the volunteers come together to help the community is a really cool thing to see!

What would be your top tip for young people who may be thinking about becoming a NSW SES member?

Just do it and get involved, it is one of the best things you will ever do! Your local Unit will become like a second family to you! The skills and friends you make will last a life-time, it is a very rewarding experience!

Andrew
24 years old

When did you join the NSW SES and how old were you when you joined?

I joined the Warringah/Pittwater SES Unit in February 2013 at the age of 18 and have been an active member ever since. While I am still a member at the Warringah/Pittwater Unit I have also transferred to the Bathurst SES rescue Unit in 2017 while I attend university here in Bathurst.

What sparked your interest in the NSW SES?

My late grandmother actually suggested I join so I could start giving back to the community that I grew up in. So I ended up looking up what the SES was and how to join, I gave my local Unit a call and I guess the rest is history now.

Why do you choose to be a NSW SES volunteer?

It started as just a general desire to help people out in times of need but it's so much more than that now. I love the challenges that SES provides, it pushes me out of my comfort zone to achieve amazing things. Working in a team is also really important for me and I've found there is a great sense of comradery in the SES as everyone is bonded by a common goal of wanting to help their communities in times of need which is great.

I love that we are able to go out to people on what is perhaps one of the worst days of their lives and we can help resolve whatever issues they have, and in terms of rescues, we are even able to help save their lives. I honestly couldn't imagine my life without being in the SES and I count it as probably the best thing I've ever done with my life.

What's your most memorable experience in your time as an SES volunteer?

Tough one cause there have been so many over the past 6 years. One of the most memorable would have been the 2015 East Coast Low which hit the Northern Beaches resulting in over 1000 jobs for our Unit alone within a few days. The extent of the damage was so bad that we'd leave headquarters to attend a job and would come across several trees and roofs across roads that you'd have to clear before moving on to the original job. Then we got hit again in 2016 resulting in a further 800 jobs, several flood rescues, mass evacuations and major coastal erosion in Collaroy. It was a very tiring but exciting 2 weeks of continuous operations for me and the Warringah/Pittwater Unit.

What would be your top tip for young people who may be thinking about becoming a NSW SES member?

You get out as much as you put in with the SES

so just jump in and give it a go, there's a job for everyone in the SES and there are so many different avenues you can specialise in. I started my SES career straight out of high school with no experience or special skills. Now I'm able to help rescue people trapped in road crashes or industrial and domestic accidents, lead teams, fell trees using chainsaws, repair roofs and participate in search and rescues for missing persons just to name a few, and the NSW SES can definitely do the same for you.

Linda
26 years old

When did you join the NSW SES and how old were you when you joined?

3 years ago, which means I was 23 years old!

What sparked your interest in the NSW SES?

I've always had a sense of giving back and being a part of something bigger than myself. The SES, along with other emergency services played an integral role in the rescue and recovery of victims in the 1989 Kempsey bus crash, sadly, my cousins, auntie and uncle were involved. I was first introduced to the SES when my cousin told me about WOW day, I then looked into it and figured it was something I could be a part of! It's my way of saying thank you on behalf of my family.

Why do you choose to be a NSW SES volunteer?

It's the feeling that I'm making a positive difference to someone's life.

And I always think back to "the worst in nature, the best in us"

What's your most memorable experience in your time as an SES volunteer?

The lifelong friends I've made, as well as the invaluable experience I've gained. That's been the most memorable experience so far!

What would be your top tip for young people who may be thinking about becoming a NSW SES member?

Give it a go! Get your application in, go have a chat to your local Unit volunteers and step out of your comfort zone! You won't regret it! You'll make amazing friends and you'll learn a whole lot!