

Kaitlyn Matuschka – Class of 2013

In-school Achievements –

‘Leadership Achievements’ - School Captain (2013) and prior to that a Peer Support leader in Year 10 (2011).

‘Sporting Achievements’- I participated in several sporting teams (including: touch football, Oztag, waterpolo, soccer, netball, volleyball, softball). In addition, I represented the school at zone, regional and state level in swimming, athletics and cross country.



Out of School Achievements –

‘Sporting Achievements’ Competing in Surf Life Saving events for Avoca Beach SLSC I’ve won several individual and team medals at both State and National Level, and I’ve also been selected to represent my branch in the Central Coast SLS team as well as my state in the NSW SLS team.

1. What are you doing now?

I’m employed by Fire and Rescue New South Wales as a Fire Fighter, and I am currently based at Cabramatta Fire Station.

2. How did you get there?

After graduating from Kincumber High School with my HSC in November of 2013, I almost immediately applied to become a fire fighter, which was a lengthy process consisting of: several exams that tested cognitive ability, emotional intelligence and individual attitude towards health and safety, followed by a physical aptitude test and a 4 panel interview process.

After receiving a letter of offer from FRNSW in March, I commenced a 3 month training course at the Fire and Rescue New South Wales College located in Alexandria, Sydney starting at the end of May 2014. I was the youngest recruit fire fighter in my class by 6 years, and possibly the youngest FRNSW has ever had at 18 years old. My training at the FRNSW College was a combination of both classroom and practical learning of the fundamental skills and practices required for fire fighting, and in turn, this included both written and practical assessments. I graduated top of my class in mid-September 2014, receiving the Commissioner’s Award of Merit.

Initially I was stationed at Ryde Fire Station, however, after 2 months of working there I was shifted to Cabramatta Fire Station where I have been for the past 6 months.



3. Who was your inspiration?

My Dad was my inspiration. If I'm honest, 'Fire Fighter' wasn't a job title I had ever seriously considered or thought possible for myself until Dad suggested I apply. So I did, without even giving it a second thought. My dad had become a fire fighter when I was 9 years old, and still is today. I grew up with a father who loved his job, and would come home with exciting stories, always different. Seeing the fulfilment and enjoyment that Dad got from being a fire fighter appealed to me very much, and Dad, being my biggest supporter in all aspects of my life was right behind me the whole way.

4. What are your memories of school?

My memories of school vary from enjoying a very large array of sporting team excursions, to last minute moments of panic before an exam when someone mentions a quote, date or reference you've never even heard of.

I suppose I would say my standout memories of my time at school are almost all shared experiences of some sort. Whether it be escaping the classroom for the afternoon to play against another school in sports with my friends (I think we signed up for almost every team on offer, regardless of whether or not we had or even knew how to play) or the group study sessions before half yearly and trial exams or the countless lunch times spent just hanging out and enjoying the company of your friends.

5. Knowing what you know now, what would say to your 15 year old self?

The next few years are important, but they aren't the be all and end all. Your time at school is yours and yours alone. Looking back, I see that school is whatever you make it. So make it enjoyable. Sure, you should strive to achieve the best you can, but don't forget to have a little fun along the way.

"Don't sweat the small stuff."

6. In your opinion, what makes a successful person?

If you asked me this question when I was still at school, I probably would've shrugged and said something like: "someone who achieves a high enough ATAR to get into the university course they're interested in at their desired university".

Now, however, I have an entirely new perception of what makes a successful person. People measure success in dollars, and gold medals, and HSC results, and Uni scholarships, but really, I believe true success is found in achieving a balance. Sure earning big money, winning sporting events, scoring a high ATAR and landing scholarships are successful achievements in themselves, but true success is achieving such goals without sacrificing the social and emotional aspects of your life. Success is when all aspects of your life are feeding you happiness and fulfilment.