Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship 2005

Title: Work Force Development

By: Phil Smith, Station Manager, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service
Executive Summary

The following report forms part of the Winston Churchill Trust Fellowship and is entitled “Workforce Development”. It analyses in detail the recruitment & selection, development programmes and competency based training associated with the New South Wales Fire Brigade (NSWFB) Australia. At the time of applying for a fellowship I was a senior instructor with Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, I am currently a Station Manager having completed 20 years service.

The New South Wales Fire Brigade (NSWFB) has approximately 6500 firefighters, over 300 fire stations and provides protection to around 6.7 million people and is governed by the Fire Brigades Act 1989. The NSWFB is a professional organisation and endeavours to recruit from Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) target groups, in order to reflect the community which it serves. The recruitment and selection process varies between permanent and retained firefighters, the training course for a permanent firefighter is significantly longer and takes 16 weeks as opposed to a retained firefighters training which takes 6 days. Permanent firefighters achieve a certificate 2/3 in firefighting and emergency response, part time firefighters achieve designated units out of the certificate.

The recording of acquisition of skills, maintenance of competence and development programmes is the same for permanent and retained with all entries being made in the individual log book.

The maintenance of competence is achieved by a firefighter following an on station training programme with activities being carried out on a 6 or 12 month basis, the training event is then recorded as being completed in the individual training log book but there is no individual assessment of performance.

Firefighters who seek promotion to higher ranks embark on a series of development programmes and statutory examinations. The development programmes are also
supported by outside organisations such as the University of Western Sydney and the Charles Stuart University. Promotion to the higher ranks operates on a merit based system, all senior officers achieved their positions by moving through the ranks following a time based progression.

This concludes the executive summary, the detailed analysis of my findings are included in the main body of the report.
Acknowledgements

I wish to express my sincerest thanks to those listed below and many others to numerous to list for all their help, which allowed me to complete the fellowship.

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Marrickville Fire Station Platoon A, B, C, D (NSWFB)
Bibliography

The New South Wales Fire Brigade Annual Report 2003/4
Fire Brigades Act 1989 issue no. 192
Government Public Safety Packages
New South Wales Training Programmes
Australian Fire Competencies (AFC)
The Professional Aspects of the Fellowship

Aims of the Fellowship

The aims of the fellowship were to look at recruitment and selection of permanent and retained fire fighters, competency based training and development programmes for those wishing to progress to managerial positions within the fire service. The background against which this fellowship was initiated was that at the time of application to the Winston Churchill Trust I was a senior fire and rescue trainer with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue service. At the present day I am now a Station Manager serving within South Staffordshire Area Command which I believe has enhanced the report by not just allowing myself to concentrate on the fellowship from a trainer’s point of view but also from a managerial position working alongside operational fire fighters. In 2006 I will have completed twenty years service, eleven of which were operational as a fire fighter on station, seven years within the training department and two years within an Area Command. It is my intention that the fellowship and the study of work force development will allow my organization to draw comparisons between overseas fire services and the UK fire services and learn and adopt best practices, indeed a lot of the information exchanged will benefit the Australian Fire Service as we have undergone significant change following the modernisation of the fire service after the 2003 strike.

Background of New South Wales Fire Service

The New South Wales Fire Brigades have served the community of New South Wales since 1884. Under the Fire Brigade Act 1989 the New South Wales Fire Brigade has the responsibility to provide fire prevention, litigation and suppression services to the 6.7 million people in major metropolitan areas, regional centres and towns in New South Wales. It has also a responsibility for rescue responsibilities and state wide management of hazardous material incidents. The New South Wales Fire Brigade (NSWFB) has the organisational capability and resilience to support other government agencies such as the
New South Wales Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service, New South Wales Police and New South Wales Department of Environment. The NSWFB central office is in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. Its training centre is in Alexandria. There is a network of three hundred and thirty eight fire stations across the state. In 2003/4 NSWFB had 6,517 fire fighters, 4,200 community fire unit members and 340 administrative and trade staff. Its key stakeholders are the people of New South Wales, funding providers, the community which it serves, the state and local governments, insurance companies, and other emergency services and government agencies who they are working in partnership with.

The three main areas which make up the theme for the corporate plan of the NSWFB are community safety, prevention and community preparedness, operational preparedness/capability. It is the area of operational preparedness/capability which is the area where I am concentrating my efforts to achieve my fellowship on work force development. Its sole aim is to improve operational capability to meet current and emerging risks and demands upon the fire service ensuring that their staff has the necessary skills to ensure the best possible service delivery.

**Critical Capabilities**

- to match the emergency resources in the community with the risk profile:
- to maintain a fit healthy highly trained work force

**Priorities**

recruit, train and develop its work force to ensure quality
improve the health and fitness of the staff to ensure they can perform their job safely
Achievements 2003/4

graduated 214 recruits from State Training College with a certificate 2 in fire fighting operations
trained 812 permanent fire fighters and 517 retained fire officers in basic life support
organised exchanges of fire officers on secondment to external agencies to broaden NSWFB knowledge
NSWFB was granted a five year license to continue training and issue National Qualifications
Successfully trialed Incident Crew Management System implemented during 2003/4

Future Directions

introduce E recruitment as part of an increased electronic delivery of services
develop a Bachelor Degree in Fire Fighting in conjunction with University of Western Sydney
ensure that the NSWFB work force better reflects the community by increasing recruitment of women, indigenous Australians and people of cultural and diverse backgrounds
focus on professional development of senior officers to strengthen leadership and management skills
further develop operational tools to help managers and staff carry out their work more effectively and efficiently

Recruitment and Selections of Permanent Firefighters
This report will concentrate on the recruitment and selection of permanent fire fighters and retained fire fighters. Due to the large area that the state of New South Wales covers the service has decided upon a policy of advertising vacancies via its website. The Human Resources Department now sends out application packs to those who have applied via e-mail. I find this a positive step forward for recruitment and eases the burden upon the Human Resources Department. I believe that the UK Fire Service could adopt this approach without too much difficulty.

One of my first thoughts was whether this actually discriminated against people who live in the country area of New South Wales but it has not been challenged by any individual who has applied and indeed because of the extent of the area of New South Wales most of the people who live in the country areas have access to a PC in their own home or at local libraries or schools or colleges. The NSWFB strives for equal opportunities within its organisation. The Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) figures are stated as target figures for the organisation to achieve, interestingly though there is no performance indicator to assess how well the organisation is doing in achieving the government benchmarks. It is seen more of a long term aim. The EEO target groups are as follows:

- women
- aboriginal and torres strait islanders
- people whose first language is not English
- people with a disability
- people with a disability requiring work related adjustments

Women
The Government benchmark is that 50 per cent of the work force associated with fire and
rescue should be women. Currently 2 per cent of permanent fire fighters and and 5.1 per
cent of retained fire fighters are female. The NSWFB performs slightly better than other
Australian fire services but nevertheless has a long way to go. However, 22 per cent of
the NSWFB community fire unit volunteers are women.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders**

The Government benchmark is 2 per cent. Currently 1.1 per cent of permanent fire
fighters, 0.7 per cent of retained fire fighters are identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait
Islanders. The NSWFB employs a full time Aboriginal Services Officer to assist with
improving this figure.

**People whose first language is not English**

The Government benchmark is 19 per cent. Currently 1 per cent of permanent fire
fighters and 0.6 per cent of retained fire fighters are identified as people whose first
language is not English.

**People with a Disability**

The Government benchmark is 12 per cent. 3 per cent of permanent fire fighters and 0.9
per cent of retained fire fighters are identified as having a disability. The number of
permanent and retained fire fighters within this category is always low due to the physical
and psychological requirements of their work. Permanent and retained fire fighters rarely
complete this part of the EEO survey as they are required to be fully fit to perform in
their fire fighting role. Non-operational duties are offered to permanent fire fighters with
injuries and disabilities but they do have the option to be medically retired if they are
permanently unfit. Retained fire fighters who are unfit are medically retired.

**People with a disability requiring work related adjustments**
The Government benchmark is 7 per cent. 1.1 permanent fire fighters, 0.2 of retained identify their disability require adjustments. Again, as above this number will continue to be low for fire fighters for the reasons outlined previously. The EEO frame work main objectives are; a diverse and skilled workforce, a work force culture displaying fair practices of behavior and improved employment access and participation by EEO groups.

**The Recruitment Process**

The organisation generally recruits once every one to two years. The number of retirements from the service is anticipated over that period and the candidates who have been successful are placed upon a merit list awaiting a course. The following criteria are essential in order to be successful with the selection process:

- be an Australian citizen or permanent resident
- possess a current drivers license
- be prepared to work anywhere in Sydney
- prior to commencing recruit training hold a senior first aid certificate
- have a good driving record

If accepted by the organisation, the successful applicants then attend a recruit training course which runs for sixteen weeks and takes place at the NSWFB training college, Alexandria. It is a non residential course and the recruits need to be available for duty Monday to Friday throughout the sixteen weeks:

Submit online application

Stage one testing (cognitive ability testing)
- the areas that will be assessed will be the areas of literacy, numeracy and problem solving.

3. Stage two testing (candidate suitability testing)
- these are based upon performance in stage one, selected candidates are invited to take further cognitive ability testing to determine their suitability for a position as a permanent fire fighter.

4. Physical aptitude test
   - the physical test is called physical aptitude test (PAT), job related physical tests are given which include: hose drag, victim rescue, drum carry, cardiovascular fitness (shuttle run), ladder raise, tower climb and container haul.

Interview
   - applicants are invited to interview; the outcome of the interview determines whether the candidate will progress to the next selection stage. It is worth noting that the panel consists of a member of human resources, an officer within the organisation and a representative from another public agency unrelated to fire services to ensure fairness.

Driver history check
   - applicants must provide evidence of good driving record when requested.

7. Medical examination
   - candidates must undergo a full medical examination to meet the NSWFB standards.

Referee checks

9. Criminal records checks

Offer of employment
letters offering employment detail start date for training and specify what is required of a recruit fire fighter.

11. Training
- sixteen weeks

Graduation
- pending successful completion of the course recruits graduate from the training college and are posted to fire stations.

Recruitment and Selection of Retained Fire Fighters

The selection procedure varies greatly to that of a permanent fire fighter. Vacancies are advertised at local level as and when they occur. When a retained fire station is recruiting the NSWFB regional or zone office will advertise vacancies in a local newspaper or by letter box drop. Once the individual has decided to apply the application form is returned to the address specified on the advertisement. Applicants then attend an initial interview and are subjected to occupational suitability tests prior to training. If they are successful they have to undergo a six day training programme rather than the sixteen weeks for full time fire fighters.

The experiences or competencies required in order to be successful in being recruited as a retained fire fighter are; demonstrates enthusiasm and willingness to operate in a team environment and demonstrates personal initiative. They must undergo the literacy test, numeracy test and pass the final interview and must demonstrate a full commitment and motivation to the requirements of ongoing training, there is a requirement that they must live and work within three kilometers of a retained fire station. They must also be willing and able to clean and maintain equipment and demonstrate an understanding of personal responsibility for the health and safety of others by complying with the NSWFB Operational Health and Safety policies. It is also essential that they demonstrate a commitment to treating colleagues and the
public in a fair and dignified manner by complying with the NSWFB Code of Conduct.

A criminal record check then takes place which is followed by an occupational suitability test conducted by a Zone Commander, Station commander or Senior Instructor. The recruit will then undergo a six day training programme learning about chemical fires, dust explosions, electricity, radioactive materials and biological hazards, hazards associated with bush fires, trains and aircraft. Practical training involves the use of various pieces of equipment used for fire fighting. They also learn to wear breathing apparatus and the recruits are required to attend compartment fire behavior training, rescue training and hazardous material training. It is evident looking at the selection procedures for permanent fire fighters and retained fire fighters that there is a considerable gap in the amount of training that retained fire fighters receive.

The way the British fire service has moved its approach to provide a common standard of competence and training for permanent fire fighters and retained fire fighters but it is clear that the current model used by the NSWFB is very similar to that of the UK fire service in the 1990s. The New South Wales Fire Brigade has taken a keen interest in my comments and observations and indeed is extremely interested in the model used for training permanent and retained fire fighters that Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service now adopts.

**Recruit Training Permanent/Retained**

Permanent Fire Fighter Recruit Training

All recruit permanent fire fighters have to achieve a certificate level 2 in fire fighting and emergency operations. These form part of the public safety packages which are government led. The delivery of such safety packages has to be delivered by an
approved centre. The NSWFB is such an approved centre and can delivery the following Australian fire competencies (AFC). The AFC comprises the following qualifications:

certificate 2 in fire fighting operations
certificate 3 in fire fighting operations
certificate 4 in fire fighting and supervision
diploma in fire fighting management
advanced diploma in fire fighting management

Each certificate comprises a number of core and elective modules that must be completed before gaining that particular qualification. The NSWFB have identified some elective modules that are compulsory for NSWFB fire fighters and therefore must be completed. With regard to the training of permanent recruit fire fighters and what core and elective modules need to be completed see appendix 1.

All the recording of competence from the beginning as a recruit firefighter to higher rank levels are recorded in an individual log book. The log book provides tangible evidence of the training undertaken and the skills they possess. It provides a personal record of training and competence. The responsibility for its safe keeping and ensuring records are up to date and accurate is that of the individual. Only the individual and authorised personnel, i.e. assessors are allowed to make entries in the log book. Any unauthorised copy, false or misleading entry or misuse of the training log book represents a breach of discipline under the fire brigades legislation 1997.

The training log book is divided into five sections with each section having its own guidelines. The following is a summary of each of the five sections:
Section 1 – Australian Fire Competencies (AFC)

This section is used to provide all competencies assessed and attained under the national Competency Based Training (CBT) Fire Curriculum. Fire fighters who were trained before introduction of CBT are also able to use this section because:

- there existing skills have been aligned with the CBT
- they may have completed national modules
- they may have received recognition of prior learning or recognition of current competence

Section 2 – Skills Maintenance

This section is used to record the completion of skills maintenance training conducted during the station training programme.

Section 3 – Specialist Skills

Details of new skills acquired through specialist training are recorded in this section. Some examples include BA/Hazmat Technicians course, boat handlers course, general land secondary rescue. Some of the above courses acquire reaccreditation after a period of time and again this is recorded in this section.

Section 4 – Professional or Promotional Development

This section is used for recording details of all promotional programmes which have been attended and completed.

Section 5 – Work Place Assessments
Most NSWFB competence based assessments have a practical component and many of these assessments can be conducted under simulated conditions in the training environment. For some modules such as fire suppression 2, fire fighters need to gather a portfolio of evidence and gain experience in specific areas. This section is also used to record details of other work base activities, e.g. the types of incident you have attended or the different pieces of equipment you can operate. This can provide invaluable evidence should they wish to apply or seek employment in another industry.

The log book duplicates the training and assessment information contained in an individual’s personal record on the human resources database.

The individual training log book which records from recruitment all the way through to promotion at higher levels is an excellent idea and provides at a glance historical background of an individual. It also places the individual clearly responsible for maintaining the training log book in a comprehensive order which is then reinforced by the brigades own discipline regulations. I know, coming from a training background, that the recording of the acquired skills and maintenance of competence in this manner will be of great interest to the training department of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. In addition it also helps to provide a clear path of personal development for the individual throughout their career in the fire service.

**Retained Fire Fighter – Recruit Training**

The training of a recruit retained fire fighter varies considerably with that of a permanent fire fighter. For a retained recruit there is only a six day induction period as opposed to
sixteen weeks for a permanent fire fighter. This makes it impossible for the retained
recruit to achieve a certificate 2 and 3 in fire fighting and emergency operations.

The organisation realizes there are differences in the training and therefore the
competence standards of a permanent fire fighter vary to that of a retained fire fighter. The
NSWB has therefore decided to select units out of the certificate 2 and certificate 3
to satisfy health and safety requirements. In addition the retained fire fighter can work
towards the complete certificate once operational on a fire station. There are a number of
factors why the training is a lot shorter than that of a permanent fire fighter some of
which are as follows:

retained fire fighters are unable to be released for a period of sixteen weeks from their
full time employment
there is insufficient assessors in place to assess the competence of the firefighter on
station
the maintenance of competence once the certificate has been achieved could be
extremely difficult to accomplish due to the small number of calls some of the retaining
stations received and also the nature of the calls

**Competency Based Training**

The NSWFB works towards a competency based training approach to both permanent
fire fighters and retained fire fighters. Acquisition of skills takes place within a training
environment at the training centre based at Alexandria (State Training College). A
permanent fire fighter recruit achieves 8 core units within the certificate 2 in public safety
(Fire Fighting and Emergency Operations). In addition the organisation also chooses
three elective units from a number of other units within the certificate. This makes the
total qualification required as eleven units. In addition the organisation is undergoing
change where recruit fire fighters are also achieving certificate 3 in public safety (Fire
Fighting and Emergency Operations). There are nine core units and three elective units
to this certificate, therefore it is the policy of the organisation to achieve the units in certificate 2 and certificate 3 making a total of 25 units.

In order to progress through the ranks, a fire fighter must achieve other certificates in public safety or diplomas. Certificate 1, 3 and 4 are in public safety (Fire Fighting Supervision). There is a diploma in public safety (Fire Fighting Management) and advanced diploma in public safety (Fire Fighting Management). Once the skills have been acquired at the State Training College, the fire fighter is then allocated to a relevant station and follows a station training programme in order to maintain competence. The station training programme is divided into group A and group B topics. Group A are those which are delivered at least once every six months. Group B are those that are delivered at least once every twelve months.

Interestingly, the organisation follows a competency based training approach but I believe it is flawed in some areas regarding it methodology. Competency based approach should be an individual assessment of a person’s competence, however the recording of the competence is not actually achieved instead it is recorded as training that the individual has received in one of the topics in Group A or Group B see appendix 2. There is no outcome, indeed there is no actual assessment of competence in the work place, and it is purely a record of training events.

In addition the choosing of which topic is at the discretion of the station officer based upon a time based approach to when they last carried out that particular type of training. There is no evidence to suggest that it is linked to development needs of the platoon or individual needs. Therefore there is no audit trail between the assessment of performance and the debrief of the individual to identify individual development needs and therefore development plans tend to be for the whole of the platoon in one particular theme.

The link between acquisition of skills and maintenance of competence I find confusing in so far as within the individual training log book the fire fighter is deemed and signed off as competent on particular modules, but once that has been achieved the fire fighter then
goes to station and there is no record of maintaining competence only purely of fire fighters attending training events. The training department’s response to competence based training is that it recognizes this fact and is frustrated in its attempts to bring in line a more modern approach to recording competence in the work place, but its efforts are sometimes thwarted by the Fire Brigades Union.

The verification of whether the training programme for each station is being maintained is the responsibility of the Inspector of that station who carries out an audit on individual training log books on a random basis. In comparison to NSWFB, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has piloted an individual competency based approach in the maintenance of skills. Development needs are identified either through a debrief on an incident or simulated activity. The individual’s log book is then signed by the assessor as either the individual has development needs or has been deemed competent. If the individual has been given development needs these are then programmed into the monthly training plan. The outcome of which is then recorded at a later date when they are reassessed to say whether they are competent or still having further development needs. This provides a clear link between work place performance, i.e. on the fire ground or drill ground to individual competence in differing areas of fire fighting activity.

It is clear that for a state as large as New South Wales the paper based version of recording competency is an enormous task therefore the organisation is endeavoring to use an electronic recorded system which not only demonstrates that the individual has carried out training but also the outcome of that particular training event. This will be of great interest to Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service once this system has been implemented.
Development Programme

As already stated at the beginning of the report I was unable to explore fully this particular area due to a personal injury which meant I was in hospital for a month, therefore I intend to provide an overview based upon the information which I was able to obtain. One of the distinct differences between the UK Fire Service to that of the Australian Fire Service is that the system used for progression to managerial positions is that the Australian Fire Service adopts a time based approach, with years service counting as essential criteria in order for the individual to be put on development programmes. The UK Fire Service does not count years service as essential criteria and seeks though assessment centers to assess for potential of an individual to perform in a managerial role, to demonstrate an individual’s ability is regarded as an essential requirement. Stated below are the requirements for progression to the rank of Inspector within the Australian Fire Service.

Level 1 to Qualified Firefighter

Requires the individual to complete specific modules offered by OTEN (Open Training & Education Network) as well as 12 months service.

Qualified Firefighter to Senior Firefighter

Personnel wanting to progress to this rank must be of Qualified Firefighter rank and completed the 9 modules as listed below, this is the minimum requirement in order to participate on the Senior Firefighters Promotional Programme, and successful candidates are required to have completed 2 years satisfactory service.

Pre- Requisite Modules

- Occupational Health and Safety
- Workplace Trainer Category A
Writing Workplace Documents
Public Speaking
Dealing with Conflict
Leadership
Supervising Teams
Mathematics for Data Representation
Meetings

All of the nine modules are available through the Open training & Education Network.

**Senior Firefighter to Station Officer**

Personnel wanting to progress to this rank must have completed 3 years service and successfully completed the 9 modules listed below, this is the requirement for eligibility to sit a merit based test. Successful candidates undergo a promotional programme that is an educational partnership between the New South Wales Fire Brigade and the University of Western Sydney.

**Pre–requisite Modules**

- Building Evacuation Systems
- Mechanical Venting and Air Handling Systems
- Building Structures 2
- Present Information 2
- OH&S
- Building Fire Safety 2
- Workplace Trainer Category A
- Public Speaking
- Dealing with Conflict
All of the nine modules are available through the Open training & Education Network.

**Station Officer to Inspector**

Upon serving two years as a Station Officer an individual becomes eligible to sit for a merit based assessment for the rank of Inspector. Successful candidates undergo a twelve week training programme and on satisfactory completion are promoted to the rank of inspector. Inspector Promotional Programmes are conducted on the basis of staffing estimates for that particular year, to gain placement on such a course is by pre-entry assessment, which is a two part process involving the NSWFB and the Charles Stuart University. The NSWFB deals with an assessment on Administration and Incident Command and the Charles Stuart University carries out an assessment on work related professional writing (including research, analysis, and basic computer skills, etc) Ranks higher than that of Inspector are achieved by purely a merit based award system and the achievement of academic qualifications through universities, with the most senior positions in the organisation being held by long serving firefighters who have progressed through the ranks.
Conclusions

To conclude the report on Workforce Development, I would again like to thank all those who gave their time and effort in assisting me to complete the fellowship. Those included in the acknowledgement section are but a few, many more uniformed and non-uniformed assisted myself with technical support and practical help. The fellowship with the NSWFB was a fantastic experience and one which I am extremely grateful to the trust for giving me that opportunity.

The fellowship not only allowed myself to study workforce development, but exposed myself to different life styles and cultures and became a life experience which I shall always remember.

In comparing the Australian Fire Service to that of the British Fire Service, it is fair to say that many aspects are very similar, in particular the practical side of dealing with fires and road traffic collisions. The differences are more evident between the two organisations in the way we manage and develop our workforces.

The NSWFB adopts an approach similar to many fire brigades in the UK in the 1990s, statutory examinations based upon memory testing of operational procedures along with length of service (being used as an indicator of experience) are seen as important when selecting people for promotion. As highlighted within this report the UK adopts a different approach, but it is clear that neither way is detrimental to the organisations service delivery, and indeed some of the finest officers I met were from the NSWFB, their knowledge and experience was vast.

I believe that knowledge and experience should be shared freely among fire services across the world. Following the UK fire service strike in 2003 there have been many changes, as an advocate of change I fully support many of the changes but I also believe that there is not a requirement to “change for changes sake”, many of the pre-strike working practices still exist in the NSWFB.
Moral amongst the NSWFB workforce was high along with respect for its senior officers, which could be used as an indicator to say that the NSWFB working practices and style of management are performing well. However, there are areas where improvement could be made, in particular a move from the organisation’s focus on operational response to that of community fire safety. The UK fire service goes to great lengths to be pro-active in community safety whereas the NSWFB has a more reactive approach and many of the community safety initiatives present in the UK were not evident in Australia.

**Recommendations**

On analysis of my findings, there are a number of recommendations which I consider to be of value to the NSWFB and the UK fire service.

With regard to the NSWFB, it is clear that they were committed to increasing the number of people within the EEO target groups, and long-term aims have been highlighted within the corporate plans but there were no performance indicators to analyse how well the organisation was performing. The use of such indicators would allow the organisation to assess performance and modify its strategy in under-performing areas. Such indicators will also help to keep the EEO target groups high on the political agenda, and help their workforce to be aware of the NSWFB commitment to create a diverse workforce.

With reference to competency-based training, I believe that the model used by Staffordshire Fire & Rescue would be of benefit to NSWFB and would provide sound advice on the assessment and recording of individual competence.

The individual training log book used by NSWFB which records acquisition of skills, maintenance of competence and development programmes is an excellent idea which tracks an individual from recruitment through development programmes to promotion of the individual, it provides an at-a-glance overview of the individual’s career.
One of the issues which face the UK fire service is how it maintains a common standard amongst its permanent and retained fire service. Staffordshire Fire & Rescue has introduced a mixed training course of permanent and retained fire fighters, with the same selection criteria which has assisted this process. NSWFB has reconciled itself that retained firefighters cannot realistically achieve Certificate 2/3 in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations) due to the structure of the service, and instead has opted to choose units from the certificate to achieve Health & Safety requirements. It is this acceptance by the senior officers in the organisation that the retained service is limited to what it can be realistically expected to do, not because of their individual ability but because the majority already have full time occupations and further expectations in relation to completing additional training would put unreasonable pressure on their personal life and disrupt their work life balance.

The NSWFB has made a difficult decision in this area which could have made it open to criticism that the fire service operates a two tier system. I believe that the NSWFB is being honest about the services capability. It is a decision which many fire authorities in the UK may wish to reflect on.

The NSWFB has strong links with the University of Western Sydney and the Charles Stuart University developing educational partnerships with both of them to assist in development programmes for its officers, it is an area where the UK fire service could develop more effective partnerships and learn from the NSWFB experiences to reduce the burden on human resource sections.

I will conclude this report by saying that both the Australian and UK fire service are professional bodies who have committed workforces. Each have learned from a trial and error basis about what works for their own organisation, but this fellowship has hopefully created links between the two organisations to allow exchange of information with the sole aim of providing the very best service and protection to the community which each serves.
Once again I wish to thank the trust and all those who have helped to complete the fellowship.

Philip George Smith
# Appendix 1

**Recruit Program – Cert 2 and 3 in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Elective and Modules</th>
<th>Unit Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Prevent injury</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Respond to urban fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Operate breathing apparatus</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Prepare maintain and test response equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Operate communications systems and equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Work in a team</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Provide emergency care</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Participate in a rescue operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Respond to wildfire</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Check installed fire safety systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Communicate in the workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Provide services to clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Follow defined OH &amp; S policies and procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Work effectively in a public safety organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Render hazardous materials incidents safe</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Employ personal protection at a hazardous materials incident</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Operate pumps</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Manage injuries at emergency incident</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Administer oxygen in an emergency situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Maintain safety at an incident scene</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Drive vehicles under operational conditions</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Suppress urban fire</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Work autonomously</td>
</tr>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Navigate in urban and rural environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Utilize installed fire safety systems</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix 2

Station Training Programme Group A  (delivered at least once every 6 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firefighting Operations</th>
<th>Breathing Apparatus</th>
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<tr>
<td>Firefighting strategies</td>
<td>4.1 Self contained breathing apparatus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incident control systems</td>
<td>4.2 Protective clothing</td>
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<td>Salvage and overhaul</td>
<td>4.3 Procedures</td>
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<td>Hose handling</td>
<td>4.4 Safe working practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foam</td>
<td>4.5 Search and rescue</td>
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<td>Water supplies</td>
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<td>Occupational hazards</td>
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<td>Safe work on roads</td>
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<td>1.10 Ventilation</td>
<td>5.1 Government radio network</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.11 Fire cause and determination</td>
<td>5.2 Radio Communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.12 Pumps and primers</td>
<td>5.3 Operational communications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
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<td>Minor equipment</td>
<td>6.1 Cordage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portable ladders</td>
<td>6.2 Rescue equipment</td>
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<td>Foam equipment</td>
<td>6.3 Policy and legislation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ventilation</td>
<td>6.4 Entry techniques</td>
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<td>Salvage equipment</td>
<td>6.5 Extrication techniques</td>
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<td>Branches and nozzles</td>
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<td>Life Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1 Life support equipment</td>
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<td>3.2 Life support techniques</td>
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Station Training Programme Group B (delivered at least once every 12 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fire science</th>
<th>Specialist</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Principles of fire</td>
<td>4.5 Moveable property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extinguishing mediums</td>
<td>4.6 Structure fires</td>
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<td>4.7 Electrical fires</td>
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<td>4.8 Plastic fires</td>
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<td>4.10 Fertilizer fires</td>
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<td>4.11 Metal fires</td>
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<td>4.12 Radioactive incidents</td>
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<td>4.13 Animal fibre fires</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.14 Vegetable fibre fires</td>
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<td>4.15 Hops and grain fires</td>
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<td>4.16 Sugar fires</td>
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<td>4.17 Coal stack fires</td>
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<td>4.18 Molten salt and quench fire tanks</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.19 Shipboard firefighting</td>
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<td>4.20 Aircraft firefighting</td>
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<td>4.21 Train incidents</td>
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<td>4.22 Solvent fires</td>
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<td>4.23 Explosive fires</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bushfires

2.1 Policy and procedures
2.2 Occupational hazards
2.3 Equipment
2.4 Bushfire behavior
2.5 Bushfire suppression and control

Fire safety

3.1 Building code of Australia
3.2 Fire control rooms
3.3 Hydrant installation and booster fittings
3.4 Early warning intercommunication systems
3.5 Sprinkler systems
3.6 Detection systems

Specialist

4.1 Rubber fires
4.2 Dust explosions
4.3 Flammable liquid fires
4.4 Flammable gases