

## **Quick update on life Down Unda',**

G'day Mates!! How ya goin'? I've been on exchange for about 8 months now just waiting for the perfect day to sit down and give a detailed account of what life has been like here in Brisbane, Australia. Well the problem is, almost everyday is perfect and it's hard to be inside at the computer!

I arrived here July 23<sup>rd</sup> in the middle of their winter faced with the question - should I use the SPF 30 or 45 and did I pack enough pairs of Togs (swim trunks)? After settling in here and a brief induction I was warmly welcomed as member of the QFRS (Queensland Fire and Rescue Service), a state operated service with almost 2300 full-time and 2000 auxiliary (part-time) firefighters. Brisbane has a population of approximately 1.5 million and the region is protected by 36 urban fire stations. My first two months were spent at Station #17, but due to Brisbane's rapidly developing south-side the old Mt Gravatt Station was replaced by the newly built Wishart Fire Station. The \$2.9 million new station became fully operational in November and was officially opened on Dec. 12<sup>th</sup> 2006 .

The new station has two crews – A Mercedes Atego pumper (517A) consisting of a Station Officer and three firefighters. The other a Ford F350 Emergency Tender (517K) with a Station Officer and one firefighter.

The station responds to approximately 1000 calls annually, with most turn-outs being structural fires (22 per cent) and motor vehicle accidents (36 per cent).

Recently I traveled to Adelaide in Southern Australia to compete in the World Police and Fire Games and was able to catch up with the Canadian contingent. It was a terrific event and I enjoyed sharing stories and some laughs with the boys over a few cold stubbies! I have to admit having the support of both the Canucks and the Aussies really helped me in my competition. The only drama came when I had to declare which flag I was competing under after winning a medal.

Anyway, I'm back in Brissy now and looking forward to enjoying the last 4 months of the exchange. Between work, friends and family visiting, and some travel plans, I'm sure the time will fly. Hope everyone is well, especially the Boys at 323 and see you soon!!

Dan Alston  
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