

My name is Stacey Porch and I am a Firefighter in The Metropolitan Fire Brigade based at Sunshine Fire Station in Western District. I have been a Firefighter for close to 10 years and hold the rank of Leading Firefighter. I am EMR Certified and am qualified on Mark IV and Mark V Primary appliances along with specialist qualifications in Teleboom, Water Tanker and Transporter.

Having worked (and previously lived) in the Sunshine area, as a Firefighter I take comfort in the fact that we adhere to the 7 Firefighters on the fireground rule. It means that if we are first appliance on scene we can get to work safe in the knowledge that someone will be there shortly to help with the job or render assistance to us personally if required. Not only does this allow for safer firefighting conditions for Firefighters but it means that the community is better protected.

During the last 10 years I have been witness to the huge urbanised growth (both residential and commercial) that has taken place in the Western suburbs. Volunteers do a great job, but it is unreasonable to expect volunteers to cover such highly urbanised areas 24/7.

Just over two years ago I moved to Gisborne whose Fire Brigade is run by volunteers. I am grateful for the work they do for the town. But it saddens me that in recent times due to the ongoing industrial dispute and outrageous comments by politicians and the media, I now remain tight lipped about my profession when once I would proudly say I was a professional Firefighter. I also hope that in the future with residential growth in the Gisborne area that there is a mechanism in place that will allow us to have professional Firefighters as the need arises.

Stacey Porch

