

# Media release

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## Next generation of aviation fire fighters enter service

Airservices has welcomed 23 new aviation rescue fire fighters into service at a graduation ceremony held at the Airservices Learning Academy at Melbourne Airport on Friday 16 August.

The graduating recruits will now join more than 700 fire fighters at the nation's 22 busiest airports as part of Airservices Aviation Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) service.

Trainee fire fighter Timothy Kershaw from Bridport in Tasmania was presented with the Silver Axe Award for the most outstanding recruit of the course, and will now join the ARFF service in Launceston.

Airservices Executive General Manager ARFF, Michelle Bennetts, said the new recruits will work at stations in Adelaide, Broome, Cairns, Darwin, Launceston, Mackay, Melbourne, Perth, Rockhampton, Sydney and Townsville.

"Airservices has one of the largest, most highly trained, professional aviation rescue and fire-fighting services in the world," Ms Bennetts said.

"Our fire fighters have the expertise to provide airline passengers and Australian airports with a first-rate rescue and fire fighting service."

The recruits completed an intense 11-week training course at Airservices Learning Academy in Melbourne using a new state-of-the-art training simulator. Their theoretical and practical training included fighting simulated aircraft and structural fires, aviation rescue techniques, first-aid and dealing with the hazards of highly flammable aviation fuels.

Airservices General Manager Learning Academy, Linda Spurr, congratulated the graduates on successfully completing the demanding training course, for which they received nationally recognised, accredited qualifications.

"These recruits are amongst the first to train at our new hot fire training ground and have demonstrated its functionality and their own skills and abilities," Ms Spurr said.

"Over the last four years we have trained and developed more than 200 new fire fighters and are now realising the significant benefits of our 'true to life' training facility, which we opened earlier this year."

The graduating recruits come from a diverse range of backgrounds and include two women and three Indigenous Australians.

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**Images of the graduation are available for download at <http://newsroom.airservicesaustralia.com> (registration required).**