

# Mr Gay World entrant draws on Air Force experience

Tuesday 3 Mar 2015 4:35 p.m.



Matt Fistonich (C) (Supplied)

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A former Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) firefighter has been announced as New Zealand's next Mr Gay World nominee.

[Matt Fistonich](#), 24, will travel to South Africa in April to represent the country next month.

New Zealand entrants have won the competition twice in the past five years and Mr Fistonich is eager to follow in their footsteps.

"It will be an honour and a privilege to represent my community on such an international level," says Mr Fistonich. "Being able to represent my country in such a prestigious way is very exciting."

Mr Fistonich joined the RNZAF at the age of 17 and was enlisted as a firefighter. Over his six year career he worked his way up to a station officer.

"For the majority of my time in the RNZAF I was openly gay, and I've helped many people after me come out," says Mr Fistonich.

As part of RNZAF service, Mr Fistonich also took part in competitions, including the Fighter Sky Tower Stair Climb, which raises money for the Leukaemia and Blood Cancer Foundation.

Mr Fistonich feels his strong suit is his personality skills, which he developed through working with a wide range of people in his career.

Mr Fistonich is excited about the challenge of taking on other competitors from around the world, but is also realistic given two of the past three winners have been Kiwis.

"I'm hoping personal qualities can make their mark on the competition and, who knows, maybe New Zealand is just meant to win this competition.

"However, if I don't win then I know I have my family and friends supporting me and hopefully and can make a positive impact on the gay community in New Zealand in some small way."

The first Mr Gay World competition was held in 2009 and isn't labelled as a beauty pageant.

Mr Fistonich says the competition allows entrants to demonstrate both inward beauty and physical appearance as well as leadership and confidence.

Mr Gay World 2015 begins on April 26 with the winner announced in Cape Town on May 3.

Mr Fistonich will embark on a six-week fundraising campaign before traveling to South Africa.

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