

SUPPORTING MEMBERS DURING THE FIRE AND EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND INTEGRATION

Over the past two years, the UFBA has delivered an outstanding level of effective advocacy with very positive outcomes for members.

ADVOCACY

The principal focus of our long established organisation has always been the provision of advocacy and support services for our membership. The year under review, in which the Government finalised new and modern legislation governing fire and emergency services, was an increasingly busy and challenging one for all in the UFBA. Our Board, management and staff together with member brigades and their personnel were all involved in the enormous effort required to effectively represent our fire and emergency services membership.

The challenges UFBA faced during the year have included ensuring members' needs and interests were represented in terms of the new legislation and ultimately, the underpinning regulations, powers and policies, and canvassing and relating to other organisations in the wider environment including the Forest and Rural Fire Association (FRFANZ).

THE UNITED VOICE OF ALL BRIGADES

Two key roles of the UFBA are to provide effective advocacy and support services for member brigades and their personnel.

When the latest reforms were announced by Minister Peter Dunne in May 2015, the UFBA moved swiftly to make sure the Government, NZFSC, NZFS and the FENZ Transition Team listened to the strong, united voice of all brigades—career, volunteer, urban, rural and industry. We adopted a strategic, positive and evidence-based approach to our work within the sector and have worked hard to make sure we are viewed as a trusted partner rather than just another stakeholder.

To make sure fire brigades and rural fire forces had a single powerful voice during the transition to Fire and Emergency NZ, UFBA and FRFANZ signed a Memorandum of Understanding last year to work closely together.

NEW LEGISLATION

Hon Peter Dunne tabled the Fire and Emergency New Zealand in Parliament on 30 June 2016 to repeal the Fire Service Act 1975 and the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 and give effect to a single unified fire services organisation.

On 18 August, UFBA and FRFANZ submitted a joint submission to the Government Administration Committee that presented a sound and thorough examination of the Bill and addressed issues identified by our organisations and memberships in a logical and constructive way. The submission was the culmination of a significant amount of work during a few weeks available covering in-depth research, widespread consultation with volunteer fire brigades and rural fire forces including

a roadshow through key areas of the country and seeking feedback from individual members through an online survey to over 4,350 individuals on the UFBA database.

UFBA and FRFANZ addressed the Government Administration Committee on 21 September on issues in the Bill identified by our organisations and members. We were privileged to be among the few submitters to have an extended hearing time at the Committee and came away very positive about the opportunity to be heard. The hearing provided yet another opportunity to demonstrate the joint commitment of the UFBA and FRFANZ to our arrangement under the MoU to work together.

MEMBER CONSULTATION ROADSHOW

By the end of September, UFBA Director Bill Butzbach, consultant Murray McKee and FRFANZ officials had attended consultation meetings in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Hawke's Bay, Wairarapa, Wellington, Manawatu-Wanganui, Nelson-Tasman, Canterbury, West Coast, Otago and Southland. The meetings were well attended with a good mix of urban and rural members. Members travelled considerable distances to attend the meeting which spoke volumes about the importance they place on their future in the sector.

TRANSITIONAL ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT AGREEMENT

At the 2016 UFBA Conference on 28 October, NZFSC Chair Hon Paul Swain and UFBA Chair Rick Braddock signed a Transitional Advocacy and Support Agreement in the presence of the Minister of Internal Affairs Hon Peter Dunne. This agreement provides for the UFBA to continue as the advocate for our members until the completion of the fire services reform.

SUPPORT OF TRANSITION PROJECTS

The UFBA Board (in particular, Director Bill Butzbach) and FRFANZ together with management and members of our organisations supported relevant transition projects in two key ways during the year:

- 1) To facilitate connections between FENZ Transition projects and interested volunteers from urban and rural member brigades, and
- 2) To provide strategic and tactical advice to the FENZ Transition Team across five workstreams. Most day-to-day involvement was with the People and Change workstream, ensuring the voice of all members was reflected in co-design work.



CO-DESIGN PROJECTS

- Co-designing the approach to developing a volunteer strategy
- Co-designing the new relationship volunteers may have with Fire and Emergency NZ
- Co-designing future advocacy and support services
- Dispute resolution model
- Funding new support for volunteers
- Assisting in the design of Local Advisory Committees
- Co-designing new safety, health and wellbeing systems.

UFBA ADVOCACY REFERENCE PANEL

To provide a sounding board on various positions, issues or other considerations, we established a UFBA Advocacy Reference Panel in December with UFBA Board Deputy Chair Glenn Williams as Chair. The aim was to draw on the experience and expertise of members around the country (volunteer, career, urban and rural) to form the panel, the make-up of which varies according to needs at the time.

FENZ VOLUNTEER WORKING GROUP

Early in 2017, the FENZ Transition Team asked the UFBA for assistance with forming a group of volunteers to provide input and feedback on various co-design projects. We consulted with expert members including those in the UFBA Advocacy Reference Panel and Leadership & Governance graduate group and were delighted with the response of members—58% of the accepted applicants for the FENZ Volunteer Working Group were UFBA Leadership & Governance Workshop graduates.

This group continues to provide an excellent consultancy resource for UFBA and FRFANZ advocacy processes with many of the 185 graduates making themselves available to help out with member engagement and consultation.

FENZ BILL SUBMISSION OUTCOMES

The Government Administration Committee reported back to Parliament on the FENZ Bill on 22 December, with the Committee regarding a number of recommendations made in the UFBA/FRFANZ joint submission favourably including:

- Spelling out the status of volunteer fire brigades from the commencement of Fire and Emergency NZ in legislation
- Strengthening the obligation on Fire and Emergency NZ to consult with organisations representing volunteers
- Clarifying the position regarding the taking over of response assets and their transfer to communities that did not raise the funds to acquire them.

The Bill as reported back by the Select Committee responded satisfactorily to the primary concerns of UFBA/FRFANZ. We consider the interests of all brigades and their respective associations are now substantially better served in the legislation which was enacted from 1 July 2017.

FENZ CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The UFBA had long advocated for the Chief Executive be separate to, and distinct from, any other leadership roles in

the fire service. This is important to successfully bring together so many different groups into a unified fire and emergency services organisation—career, volunteer, rural, urban, and industry brigades. A separate Chief Executive would also allow for more effective engagement with communities, agencies within our sector, the public and the wider community.

We were pleased that the then NZFSC confirmed this action and now look forward to working with Rhys Jones as the Fire and Emergency NZ Chief Executive and his Senior Leadership Team.

ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT SERVICES

UFBA/FRFANZ are recognised by Fire and Emergency New Zealand as key partners for providing advocacy and support services to our members. We also have a high level of understanding of the processes of the two new Fire and Emergency NZ dispute resolution processes: the Volunteer Issues and Interim Dispute Resolution Processes. Through our co-design work with the FENZ Transition Team on the Volunteer Strategy, from 1 July 2017 individual Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers can access advocacy and support services provided by UFBA/FRFANZ for any dispute, complaint or conflict, free of charge.

HEALTH STANDARDS

Under the new legislation, the Fire and Emergency NZ Board is able to prescribe physical and psychological health standards to ensure operational personnel can perform duties that may be required of them without undue risk to their safety, health and wellbeing. UFBA Deputy Chair Glenn Williams and other members are representing the interests of UFBA members on a working party formed to work with the Fire and Emergency NZ Safety, Health and Wellbeing project team on what this might mean for members.

THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

Over the past two years, UFBA has delivered an outstanding level of effective advocacy with very positive outcomes for members.

We very much appreciate the dedication and the work of our Board, Officers, staff, consultant Murray McKee, UFBA Advocacy Reference Panel, UFBA Leadership & Governance Workshop graduates, Provincial Associations and our members, most of whom are volunteers, who have given their time freely to our advocacy actions—through their engagement with consultation, helping to develop new policies and processes and providing feedback to Fire and Emergency NZ.

We also acknowledge the major contributions of the families and employers of our members for their support and understanding during this time.

During the three-year integration phase of Fire and Emergency New Zealand, UFBA/FRFANZ will continue to advocate for a positive culture that supports change for our members and embraces community focus and volunteer sustainability, with a particular focus initially on Fire and Emergency NZ Year One Volunteer Support Initiatives.



Photo credit: Fire and Emergency NZ

From left: UFBA Chair Rick Braddock, UFBA Deputy Chair Glenn Williams, Fire and Emergency NZ Board Chair Paul Swain, UFBA President Alan Kittelty, UFBA Chief Executive Officer George Verry and Fire and Emergency NZ Chief Executive Rhys Jones.

Safety, health and wellbeing commitment

UFBA Chair Rick Braddock, Deputy Chair Glenn Williams, President Alan Kittelty and Chief Executive Officer George Verry along with FRFANZ Chair Kevin Ihaka and Deputy Chair Bruce Kitto attended a welcome pōwhiri at Wellington City Station for the new Fire and Emergency NZ Chief Executive, Rhys Jones.

The welcome was followed by Fire and Emergency NZ and associations and unions representing firefighters signing a commitment to work together on safety, health and wellbeing matters.



FIRE SERVICES REFORM

- Memorandum of Understanding to work together signed by UFBA and FRFANZ
- Consultation roadshow on FENZ Bill through key areas of the country
- Online consultation survey sent to 4,350 individuals
- Joint UFBA/FRFANZ submission on FENZ Bill completed
- UFBA/FRFANZ addressed the Government Administration Committee on issues in the Bill
- Transitional Advocacy and Support Agreement signed by NZFSC and UFBA
- Worked with the FENZ Transition Team on co-design projects
- UFBA Advocacy Reference Panel established
- UFBA/FRFANZ Advocacy and Support Services developed for individual Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers



MEMBER ASSISTANCE

Accident Assurance

37 claims

\$28,169 paid

792 days of lost wages covered

Benevolent Fund

102 applications

\$157,750 ex gratia payments



CONFERENCE 2016

138th Annual General Meeting

265 delegates represented brigades with an additional **24** represented by proxy

92 'first timer' delegates and observers

40 women firefighter attendees

First woman elected as a

UFBA Director—Judith Stanley

4 interactive UFBA workshops

500 guests at the Welcome Function and **560** at the Conference dinner



SERVICE HONOURS & AWARDS

16 Fifty Year Medals

124 Gold Star Medals

11 firefighters awarded New Zealand Honours



EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING

47 new graduates of Leadership & Governance workshops

185 Leadership & Governance graduates in total since 2011

39 participants at 2 Secretaries & Treasurers Workshops

5 NZFBI Field Days

New Leading Wellbeing in Brigades workshop developed



CHALLENGES

11 events held

165 competitors at National Firefighter Combat

96 competitors at National Drivers

130 competitors at National Waterway

3 teams sponsored to 2016 Australasian Rescue Challenge

Geraldine 2016 Australasian Rescue Challenge Overall Champions

Over **100** officials volunteered

The United Fire Brigades' Association of New Zealand (UFBA) serves and represents the interests of 540 member brigades and rural fire forces throughout the country, comprising more than 12,000 firefighters.

Our members consist of volunteer, paid, urban, rural, industry and defence brigades, with 80% being volunteers. The UFBA is the only national organisation that unites and represents fire brigades of all kinds.