

UFBA Annual Conference

Complete coverage of the 133rd UFBA Conference and Annual General Meeting.



SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

The UFBA wishes our members a safe, restful, and happy holiday break.

IMPORTANT: The UFBA Office will be closed starting at noon on Friday, 23 December, and will re-open on Monday, 16 January.

MODEL RULES

▶ President's Message

Another busy calendar year for the UFBA has been topped off with the very successful and well-organised Annual Conference in Invercargill. Our delegates conducted themselves with professionalism, and were well looked after by the Southland Organising Committee. Thank you to all the delegates, speakers, organisers, and local helpers who attended.

One of the big topics discussed at Conference was the Model Rules Revision project. If you haven't already, I encourage you to take the time to learn more about the initiative by visiting the UFBA website. This is an important project, and one that will shape the way brigades function in the future, so make your views known by making submissions before the extended 31 March deadline.

It is a privilege to step into the role of UFBA President for the coming year. My wife, Jeanette, and I are looking forward to being a part of Gold Star presentations and other important occasions – and to meeting many firefighters serving throughout the country.

I also wish to extend my best wishes to you and your family for a merry Christmas, and a safe and happy 2012.



Comprehensive Review, says Commission Chairman

The Chairman of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission, Rt Hon Wyatt Creech, says the Commission will be recommending to the Government that there should be a comprehensive review of New Zealand's emergency services.

Speaking at the 2011 UFBA Annual Conference, Mr Creech said that the 36-year-old Fire Service Act does not adequately cater for the present Service, let alone the future. He also gave other reasons for the review – firefighters are called on to deal with an increasing diversity and number of non-fire emergencies; litigation against emergency service personnel is becoming more commonplace overseas and firefighters on the job here need to be defended against this possibility; and there must be a review of how emergency services are funded, especially the fire service.

The review might point up savings and efficiencies to be had by emergency services cooperating, sharing facilities and possibly co-locating. Describing the NZFS as an "all-hats fire and rescue service" which increasingly deals with medical and accident call-outs, Mr Creech says a comprehensive review of emergency services now would acknowledge present activities, properly fund them and pave the way for the future.



PHOTO: NZFS

▶ Summary of Submissions

During discussion at Conference about the proposed re-write of the Model Rules, it was announced that the deadline for Brigades to make submissions had been extended to March 31st 2012. It was promised that – for the information of the membership – a summary of submissions made to date would be posted on the UFBA's website....

27 organisations and individuals submitted more than 200 comments, criticisms and questions on the draft of proposed changes to the Brigade Rules. This includes a small number of informal emails, comments, and critiques posted on the UFBA online forum. These have been included to help interpret the wider community's mood and views. This summary is not exhaustive, but includes the main topics covered by submitters – with some of their comments included in italics.

Topic	Summary of Submissions	Comments from Brigades
General	The changes to the Rules are much wider and involved than was anticipated.	
	There has been insufficient time to properly consider the new Rules.	<i>"Studies, responses, and submissions regarding the NZFS Restructuring were our priority up to the deadline for submissions for the new Rules."</i>
	Rules should include a template and process for Brigades to amend the model.	<i>"For guidance, there should also be included a list of Rules that cannot be altered because they form part of NZFS policy."</i>
Objects / These Rules	Where appropriate with the emergence of their increasing responsibilities, Area Managers should be written into the Rules in place of, or as well as, Regional Managers.	
	There were numerous comments about Brigade Objects, some asking why this section is included at all, others questioning legalities of the Rules suggested.	<i>"These Rules cannot bind 3rd parties, nor regulate operational, NZFS or Commission activities."</i> <i>"We assume some Objects have been included to satisfy the Charities Commission?"</i>
"Best Club"	Submitters think this term is inappropriate within the Rules.	<i>"Too matey."</i> <i>"Unbecoming of a constitutional document."</i>
	Concerns about both the members' and NZFS commitments being in the Rules and questions as to whether they are appropriate?	<i>"Again, these Rules can't bind 3rd parties."</i> <i>"These stray beyond the scope of these Rules."</i>

Deadline for Submissions Extended

Conference delegates were told that a number of submissions from member-brigades and individuals expressed concern that not enough time was given to properly study and usefully comment on the draft of the rewritten brigade model rules. Some brigades said they were pre-occupied with the NZFS restructuring project at the same time the draft Rules were out for comment.

Conference was advised the period for making submissions has been extended.

Submitters now have until March 31st 2012 to comment on the proposed rules.

The date was set taking into account the traditional break for summer holidays. Those who haven't submitted now have the opportunity to have their say and those who have already put in submissions can add to them if they wish.

In April all the submissions will be collated and considered by the project committee.

Topic	Summary of Submissions	Comments from Brigades
Composite Brigades	Insufficient reference, detail, "difference" and how these brigades "fit in to the new Rules".	<i>"The committee considering the Rules needs a representative from Composites."</i> <i>"The committee should be comprised of members from composite brigades."</i>
Membership	Numerous submissions received re elements of membership, recruitment and new members, with most submissions on these matters concerning probationary membership.	<i>"We think 6 months is too long on probation for those transferring from another brigade."</i> <i>"We know most people in town - it doesn't take us six months on probation to get to know our recruits."</i>
Composition of Management Committee	By far most submitters want the CFO to be the Chairman of the Management Committee as of right, not left to election by members of the Committee.	<i>"If the CFO is not Chairman, brigades will be divided."</i> <i>"Cliques will develop within a brigade and could undermine the CFO."</i> <i>"The arrangement could be used as a lever against the CFO, negating his authority."</i> <i>"There can only be one Chief."</i> <i>"We are such a small brigade that the whole membership forms the Management Committee."</i>
Operational vs Non-Operational Matters	Submitters believe it's impossible to divorce these two aspects of a Fire Brigade.	<i>"Operational matters cannot be left solely to the CFO because it's too much for one person. Various responsibilities must be able to be delegated members of the Management Committee... portfolios or departments within the brigade."</i> <i>"Dividing these elements might lead to undesirable splits or factions within a brigade."</i> <i>"Ours is a small brigade, impossible to separate these two."</i> <i>"Rules do not parallel employment legislation."</i>
Discipline	Submissions note the change in disciplinary processes, "drawn out" timetables, the need for better explanation of process, and a desire to better record findings.	<i>"How come the adjudicator of Appeals doesn't have to be someone with Fire Service experience?"</i> <i>"Re Disciplining CFO or DCFOs, it's noted there are no provisions in these Rules (Are they in NZFS Policy?)"</i> <i>"The present Rules are adequate and appropriate."</i> <i>"There should be no parallel or connection with NZFS Employment policy."</i>
Leave	Submitters took issue with the changes suggested in this section.	<i>"Leave should be determined by the CFO taking into account the Brigade's operational readiness."</i> <i>"Poor recordkeeping and poor attendances which disqualifies members for service honours goes unmentioned in the draft. (A matter for these Rules?)"</i>

Q Why are the Model Rules up for amendment?

A. First, better put you right... they are in fact being rewritten. The project committee did not mean this to be a cut-and-paste job. The re-write is to get the rules up to date, to provide an acceptable, lasting solid set of rules for brigades into the future, and robust rules that will help sustain brigades and their membership.

Q Did you really think you could get buy-in for the idea of separating operational matters from administration and social aspects of the brigade?

A. Well, we know some brigades separate these now. But we have to accept it can be difficult in many brigades, particularly smaller ones.

Q Will the committee persist with this rule in the next draft?

A. I think the committee will rewrite it with a default position - that ordinarily the Chief assumes the chair at the Management Committee but may decide to stand down in which case a chairperson is elected by members of the Committee from among their number.

Q There are heaps of appendices. Why?

A. These are designed to assist brigades administer the Rules. As the committee was putting together the draft it was decided some written guidance, in the same document, would be handy. These appendices are offered merely as assistance, straight up, objective help.

Model Rules

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Reprinted from K1 Magazine.

Q What's in the new rules to show they've been updated?

A. Mention of computers, internet, social web pages and electronic banking, not dreamed of when the present rules were drawn up, are included. But more than that, I believe the new rules promote sustainability... they provide a decent framework so younger recruits can tell fire brigades are as solid as, well run, and they're thus willing to join. Many smaller communities compete for able-bodied members with other local organisations - like sports clubs - and the brigade's got to have a good reputation, promoting a sense of purpose, belonging and camaraderie.

Q There have been heaps of submissions criticising and commenting on the first draft. Do you think you got it wrong?

A. Not so much got it wrong, but got people thinking. As I said, this was a re-write of Rules and the committee pushed the envelope, introducing some new stuff and tweaking the old. As expected we have seen that not everyone agrees with everything we proposed. The views are respected and we go forward to the next draft.

Q Were submitters right to criticise the long durations it will take to complete disciplinary hearings and the need for an independent adjudicator to hear appeals?

A. The durations mentioned are the maximum times each process will take under the new Rules. The committee hopes most decisions will be made much quicker. Even so, the times spelled out in the draft are faster than some present hearings have been allowed to drag out - years in some cases, and then some without resolution. The suggestion of an independent, qualified adjudicator, who is acceptable to both the NZFS and the UFBA, is to bring matters to a just and fair decision which will be accepted by all and acted on. Some decisions made under the present scheme have not been followed up, left hanging, meaning no party is satisfied with the outcome.

Q Is the criticism valid that these are Brigade Rules, so the NZFS has no part on the committee which is considering the re-write?

A. Heard the criticism and disagree. It needs to be a joint project, UFBA and NZFS. Here's why. Each volunteer brigade needs rules to ensure smooth administration. They may have obligations as an Incorporated Society or Charity. In addition the Fire Service Commission, to satisfy legal responsibilities, requires each Brigade to adopt a set of robust rules so that it can be satisfied the all Brigades are being efficiently and properly administered. Plainly the Commission could not deal with XXXX separate sets of Rules so a model, a template if you like, is jointly developed between the UFBA and the Commission which is acceptable to both. So it's essential to have representatives of the Commission sit with UFBA people on the project committee to ensure the draft is going to be acceptable to the Commission, once the UFBA on behalf of its member brigades, agrees a final version. Noting that there is provision in most Brigade's Agreement for Service to alter the model, after approval from the Commission.

Q Composite Brigades say they've been hard done by in the draft. Doesn't the committee recognise they are different and are entitled to consideration?

A. The committee will second a member of a typical composite brigade to help re-write those sections of the Rules which refer to these brigades.

Q What was the reasoning for the rule that the Chief does not automatically assume the chair of the brigade's Management Committee?

A. Some brigades already have this arrangement where the Chief is not the chairperson of the Management Committee. We are told, and recognise, that some Chiefs might be top organisers, operationally, but prefer (or would be better) to stand aside from heading the brigade's administrative affairs.



CONFERENCE NEWS

PHOTOS (from left):
1. Outgoing UFBA President Ian Lindsay presided over Conference.
2. Deputy Prime Minister Bill English officially opened Conference.
3. Invercargill Mayor Tim Shadbolt welcomed delegates.
4. Dr Judy Esmond, the keynote speaker, was very well received.
5. Mike Hall addressed delegates in his last conference as NZFS National Commander and Chief Executive Officer.
6. Rachel de Haas from NZFS updated delegates on the Volunteer Sustainability Project.
7. Chris Price steps into the role of UFBA President in the coming year.

The Government

acknowledged volunteers, thanking them for the time devoted to responding, training and for their civic service. Deputy Prime Minister, Bill English, opening the conference, said “you provide an insurance policy for the whole community”. Looking down on the mass of uniformed delegates he commented “on the eve of polling day for a General Election, it’s a very welcome sea of blue in front me!”

Guest Speaker

Dr Judy Esmond presented a fresh perspective on volunteerism, presenting innovative views and suggestions for recruiting, motivating, and sustaining volunteers in Australia. Dr Esmond suggested specific targeting works best when searching for recruits, rather than spreading the nets, and ran through a list of some of the simplest and cheapest methods – mostly electronic – to connect with and attract new people, especially the younger generation. She said recognition of service – making personnel feel important in the work they do – is proven as one of the keys to sustainability.

National Commander

and Chief Executive, Mike Hall, advised in his address:

- National Training Centre stage 2, costing \$25m, will be open for business in the New Year.
- BA roll-out continues nationwide, an \$8m project.
- A joint fire and ambulance vehicle prototype is being developed again after a delay.
- Renewable fixed term tenures are being considered for volunteer CFOs.
- GPS systems are being fitted to appliances. 300 are already completed, and there are more to come.

As this was Mike Hall’s last conference before he leaves NZFS at the end of December, he reflected on his 10 years in the position. “It’s indeed a rare privilege to be given the task to lead a national fire and rescue service, and it’s also a big responsibility. Sometimes I have felt the burden but always there have been great people – and I must include the senior management team – to enable me to

achieve most things I wanted for the Service. So I want to extend my thanks from the newest recruits in the small volunteer brigades to those in senior positions. I have great pride in what I have done during my tenure, and will take that with me when I go”.

UFBA President, Ian Lindsay, then presented Mike Hall with 2 silver bars to augment service recognised 4 years ago when a silver medal was awarded. This was followed by President Lindsay advising Mike that the rare distinction of Life Membership of the UFBA had been conferred.

Rachel de Haas, in her address about the continuing volunteer sustainability programme, said the Fire Service accounts for some 88,000 years of total experience in volunteer service. She said the project has found that there are four key things that enhance volunteerism in the NZFS: role reputation belonging to the brand, fulfilment of serving the community, personal development opportunities and camaraderie. The

project has suggested reviewing the role description for CFOs and developing one for DCFOs, coupled with additional training and induction packs for those taking up these positions.

Trevor Brown, Director of Operational Efficiency, said it was no longer sufficient for brigades to do their best and that will do. There are all kinds of pressures bearing down on the organisation, including possible legal action and formal enquiries which follow incidents and that’s why the NZFS must be in a position, when the time comes, to defend itself saying that processes, procedures, training and OSM are all in place and are being carried out by everyone in the Service. Trevor Brown said compliance is essential Audits are held to check on this, in addition to independent audits of major events and when things go wrong.

Model Rules

UFBA’s Chief Executive Officer, George Verry, outlined the reasons for model rules, the project to date to review and rewrite them and the enthusiastic response with many submissions after the draft had been published. He said a number of brigades thought the response time too tight, particularly as they were considering effects of the NZFS’s restructure and realignment at the same time. Therefore, the deadline for submissions will be extended until March 31st.

Board member Ric Carlyon outlined how members had been invited to participate throughout the process and summarised the main thrust of submissions received, which would be taken into account when the next version of the document comes under discussion.

Project committee member Alan Kittely reviewed progress to date, through the eyes of an operational volunteer Chief Fire Officer.

It was agreed a summary of submissions received to date would be added on the

UFBA website, and all member brigades were encouraged to express their views.

Benevolent Fund Chairman

Emrys Evans, said the year under review was the most momentous in the Fund's 21 year history. The fund had received contributions from the New Zealand Fire Service Commission and members of the UFBA to assist firefighters and their families who themselves faced trauma and dislocation because of the Canterbury earthquakes. Trustee, Alan Cockburn, outlined some of the devastation that occurred in Christchurch, particularly as the result of the February 'quake, and how thankful some personnel were for the assistance the Fund was able to give.

"Earthquake" Leave

Board member Ric Carlyon advised conference that it's the Board's intention in the New Year to suggest to members that the regulations be altered to give those Canterbury volunteer firefighters some breathing space re their ongoing and future membership of their local brigades. "This would be a humanitarian measure so that those who have moved away from Canterbury, who are thinking of it or who may be forced to leave, are not hung up about membership of their brigade. Special leave entitlement, for say 3 years, would enable them to return, retrain to become operational again and take up their position without loss of service towards awards. It may also mean we don't lose experienced personnel... the way's left open for these firefighters to return to duties when they feel ready."

Challenges Committee and Technical Panel

Those organising and running various events had experienced a full-on year with two events, the National Waterway Challenge and International Road Rescue Challenges, deferred because of the earthquakes in Canterbury, and for the latter event, a change in venue. They were nonetheless successful – a credit to all involved.

Date of Conference

The relatively recent change of the date of conference from March to November each year has not met with universal approval. Several suggestions, and a motion in General Business at this year's conference, indicate late November may not be the optimum. The Conference was brought forward to November in 2010 to enable the Board and management to report on the past year's activities in a much more timely fashion than in previous years. But some say late November is too close to the busy period approaching Christmas and this maybe affecting attendance figures at conference. The UFBA's Board says it will reconsider the November date.

Last Year's Remits

TAPS and other training manuals will soon have a section on Large Animal Rescue, following up on Helensville VFB's remit.

Extending the eligibility of UFBA service honours, as outlined in Laingholm VFB's remit, has been given effect by a change in the Regulations with effect from July

2011 and, it was reported, applications are already being made for back-dated awards.

This Year's Remits

Lyttelton VFB's remit was passed calling for a formal medal to be struck to recognise all NZFS and USAR personnel who assisted in rescue or recovery operations after the earthquakes in Canterbury.

The remit from Orepuki VFB suggesting a new service award, a certificate signifying 40 years of service, was agreed to by Conference delegates

The Board of Directors commended to Conference a change in the regulations allowing a meritorious Service Certificate to be awarded posthumously to a deceased enrolled member who had served fewer than 15 years. Delegates agreed.

NZFS Q&A

As is customary, delegates had an opportunity to ask questions, to which responses were given during the New Zealand Fire Service Forum.

Responses by Paul McGill, Director of Operations and Training:

Industrial action, he said, would not hinder the roll-out of new BA equipment. Suitable personnel would be found, where necessary, to complete its introduction.

There are adequate funds in regional budgets, plus contingency reserves, for fleet maintenance and repairs and there have been no particular issues with

IVECOs. The NZFS has nearly 200 in service.

NZFS is currently working with St John to renew and update the MOU regarding First Response and NZFS executives are well aware of the additional workload on some volunteer brigades who are First Responders.

Answered by Ian Pickard:

Vehicles for Operational Support personnel are usually brigade-owned vehicles and where vans have been seen on station, assumed assigned to Operational Support, are in fact used for other operations. He added that a review of the "white fleet" is about to begin.

Answered by Mike Hall:

16 Rural Fire Forces are being considered for transfer to Volunteer Fire Brigades even though there's a push for government-promoted Enlarged Rural Fire Districts. He said not all 16 will change, and a risk and resource allocation model will have to be considered. In the meantime, two of them – Waitakere and Matakana – will move across on a trial basis.

From the Chair of the UFBA Board...



In presenting the annual report on behalf of the Board, Peter Drummond, MNZM, summarised key points to delegates...

It had been a challenging and dramatic year since last Conference, at which point recovery was well underway from the first Canterbury earthquake and the Pike River disaster was still fresh in our memory. Then, within months fresh devastation and tragedy struck Christchurch.

Response by volunteers from member brigades was outstanding beyond belief. All exercised skills and support for several weeks. All firefighters came through with flying colours. The earthquakes caused reallocation of resources, goals and altered dates and venues for our core activities.

The UFBA Benevolent Fund, supported by NZFS funding and UFBA members' donations, provided assistance to firefighters and their families, and the welfare team is still on the ground there offering help.

The strong challenges programme, despite adversities, was not only completed but generally well supported.

The first UFBA Leadership and Governance workshop was held in August. These will continue and from them we are keen to identify emerging young leaders.

The review of the Model Rules is about sustainability. Brigades have to be attractive to new generations, administered transparently following the Brigade's agreed rules.

Much energy was put into responding to the NZFS Regional Reduction and Realignment Project which, once members' reaction had been judged, resulted in a comprehensive submission.

The planned deficit for last year was not as much as was budgeted, mainly because of delayed activities beyond the 2010-2011 financial year. But the UFBA is soundly placed with accumulated funds.

The Board, on behalf of the Association, thanked National Commander/Chief Executive Mike Hall and former Chair of the Fire Service Commission, Dame Margaret Bazley, for their support over the years



UFBA PEOPLE



► New Patron

The Association has a new Patron. Garry Stanley was nominated by President Ian Lindsay, the move instantaneously carried by acclamation. Garry was installed immediately, saying he was humbled to be nominated and that he takes office aware of those important and wise people who have preceded him in the position. He hopes he can do just as well, and promised his full support.

In standing down, Past Patron Emrys Evans said he had signalled his intention to retire sometime ago - for personal and family reasons he felt he should relinquish office. Ian Lindsay said Patron Evans' term had been noteworthy and not without calls on his experience for advice and help over the years. His dual role as Chairman of Trustees for the Benevolent Fund meant he had been very busy this past year overseeing Canterbury matters.

With Emrys goes his unique salutation that he has used at conferences for many years to preface his Patron's report... "Delegates All", which was invariably followed by a well-chosen joke to ensure everyone was alert, hanging on his every word, and ready to listen to his annual report!

► Changing of the Guard

At the Conference, Garry Stanley was elected as Patron of the UFBA, Chris Price was installed into the office of President, and Brian Watters was elected as Vice President.

Peter Drummond (Chair), Ric Carlyon, Pat Fitzell and Nigel Lilley continue on the Board of Directors along with Glenn Williams who was elected to the Board of Directors at Conference.

Joe Manihera was elected to the Technical Panel and, at a subsequent meeting, Ewen Heron became Convenor of the Panel.

For the NZFBI Council, Ian Wellings stepped up to the position of President, succeeding Cathy Trevathan-Kendrew, and John Stevenson and Michael Dombroski were added to the Council.



PHOTO: The Board of Directors and UFBA Officers. (Back, from L to R) Glenn Williams, CEO George Verry, Nigel Lilley. (Front, from L to R) Vice President Brian Watters, President Chris Price, Pat Fitzell, Ric Carlyon. Photo of Chairman Peter Drummond appears on page 9.



PHOTO: Joe Manihera, the newest addition to the Technical Panel.

THANKS, SOUTHLAND!

The warm hospitality, friendliness, and smooth operation of Conference activities quickly countered the blustery and sometimes damp Invercargill over the three days. The organising committee, comprising Southland Provincial Association brigades, did us proud. Perhaps it was because they've done it all before, in 1919, 1991 and 1999! Conference went like clockwork, right from cheery greetings from our hosts at the airport - affirmation that visitors had arrived safe and sound with their feet firmly on the ground after a sometimes turbulent, long flight and an anxious landing.

Thanks to the organising committee and UFBA office staff, the transport, accommodation

and general arrangements could not be faulted. The venue for conference sessions was more than adequate. The social events had obviously been well planned and carried through. The welcome function at Ascot Raceway will not be forgotten for the range and quantity of seafood entrees and then that enormous barbecue-style meal. The follow-up Saturday night social was just as pleasant - whoever dreamed of dining in the centre of a velodrome, complete with cycle races to accompany the aperitifs and pre-dinner lagers? Magic! Thanks, Southerners. You lived up to your reputation for hospitality par excellence!



PHOTOS: Members of the Southland Fire Brigades pause to enjoy the successful Conference.

▶ Delegates Rate Networking Important

After conference, we sent a survey out to all delegates to find out what they thought. So far, we've received 61 responses.

Over 90% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the event overall (7% were neutral).

98.3% of respondents rated Functions / opportunities to socialise and network as important or very important. Networking was rated more important than the content of conference itself.

94.9% of all delegates would recommend attending the conference to another brigade.



Above: Delegates enjoy a top-class Conference Dinner at the ITL Velodrome in Invercargill.

▶ More from the Chair of the NZFS Commission...

The Right Honourable Wyatt Creech addressed conference for the first time since taking over the chair of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission from Dame Margeret Bazley, whom he thanked for her long, distinguished service as member and Chair.

He also paid tribute to National Commander/Chief Executive Mike Hall on the eve of his vacating office. "Mike's no-nonsense style was welcomed and his modernisation of fleet and procedures will endure," he said.

He said the Commission was pleased to appoint Mike's successor from within the Service, a New Zealander, Paul Baxter, leads the organisation into the future.

An innovation within the Commission means each member has been given a specific area of responsibility.

Giving thanks to volunteers, Mr Creech said there could not be a fire service in New Zealand without them. "You are the salt of the earth," he told delegates, "dedicated to the service of the communities you live in, deeply respected and facing many tasks without bother,

fuss and without payment, an all-hats fire and rescue service."

It has been a busy year for the service beginning with the plane crash at Fox Glacier followed by a string of emergencies, including the Canterbury earthquakes. Matters arising after operational reviews and audit of each emergency will require fine-tuning, and there may be calls for further changes when the various Commissions of Inquiry deliver their findings. While heroic stories abound arising from these events, many have not been told about the dedication of the fire services in many instances.

The decline in structural fires is a worldwide trend. Fire services globally look to reach out to improve coverage of other risks, particularly zeroing in on preparing for known specific local events – in New Zealand, it's earthquake. Given this trend, we must ask if training and equipment properly reflects the work we do and whether the present law has the scope to allow us, without fear of litigation, to get on with it. The present 1975 Fire Service Act ought to be changed to reflect today's requirements.

In tightened economic times the Service's need for constraint is no different to other organisations. Financially, this will be a no-growth year for the Fire Service.

Canterbury, Pike River and the response by the New Zealand USAR team to Japan's earthquake and tsunami added some \$13m in costs to last financial year.

Questions will be asked whether the present funding model is optimum. Those who under-insure, or don't insure at all, still receive service and perhaps the better way would be a charge against each property to help carry the cost.

The present law regarding Fire Service levies is subject to interpretation. The Fire Service is taking legal action to define it, and the matter will be heard in the High Court at Auckland in the New Year.

The Government policy move towards Enlarged Rural Fire Districts will continue. There used to be 121 Rural Fire Authorities, this has been reduced to 76 in recent years, and 17 is thought to be optimal.

Wyatt Creech said he had heard rumours that, as funder, the NZFS has impinged on the independence of the UFBA and somehow constrained its activities. He said this is not true. The Commission wants to see a strong organisation representing volunteer firefighters – it's proper that the UFBA's remains their independent voice.

Three New Life Members

Three Life Memberships of the Association were conferred during the 2011 Conference in Invercargill...

Dame Margaret Bazley

Towards the end of conference, President Ian Lindsay, spelled out an item of extraordinary business when he advised delegates that, in accordance with the UFBA rules, sufficient brigades had moved that Dame Margaret be made a Life Member of the Association. This move was supported by UFBA Board members and he was delighted to make the announcement. "Dame Margaret has been an ardent supporter of volunteers and the UFBA for the whole time she was a member, and Chair, of the Commission. And as the supporting fire brigades said in their letter recommending Life Membership, Dame Margaret quickly identified with the ethos and culture of volunteerism, enthusiastically supporting UFBA events and initiatives. She was often present at brigade and UFBA functions and never let an opportunity pass to thank and acknowledge volunteer firefighters."

Mike Hall

The first award was made during the New Zealand Fire Service's session on Day 2 when President Ian Lindsay surprised retiring National Commander/Chief Executive, Mike Hall, when he announced the award. "During your tenure of some 10 years you, personally, have led the organisation to modernisation and to mature as a national fire service," said President Lindsay. "But always with special interest in, and support for, volunteers and our Association's activities. Life Membership is our way of acknowledging this and to show it has been greatly appreciated. We wish you well in retirement."

Immediate Past President Ian Lindsay

It was the task of incoming President, Chris Price, to confer Life Membership on the outgoing President, Ian Lindsay. Chris said Ian had served the organisation for many years with provincial affairs, challenges, helping organise conferences, plus his varied duties on the Executive and then attending Board meetings as he rose to and attained the office of President. He had just completed overseeing what had been a successful conference. It was a special honour for Ian to make Life Member at a conference held in and hosted by the province with which he has been associated over many years.

► Brigade To-Do List

Update Your Brigade Details

New CEO or Secretary? Has your brigade address or contact details changed? Have you launched a new website or gotten a new email address? Help us keep our records up to date by going to www.ufba.org.nz and taking two minutes to complete the Update Brigade Details Form.

Make a Submission on the Proposed Revised Model Rules of Association

Deadline for submissions has been moved to 31 March. Visit www.ufba.org.nz for more information.

Register for the National Road Crash Rescue Challenge

Teams that registered their interest in November have first priority to register for the Nationals in Queenstown, but as of 18 December, registration opens up to all member brigades. Visit www.ufba.org.nz for more information about the Challenge and how to register, or email events@ufba.org.nz.

Member Forum

Find out what other members are talking about and join the discussion in the UFBA members forum.

Just go to www.ufba.org.nz/forum and post your comments on the UFBA member forum. *NOTE: You must be a registered user of the website and logged in to participate.*

Sign Up for the UFBA E-Newsletter

Have the latest UFBA news delivered straight to your inbox. Just log onto www.ufba.org.nz/user/register and register as a member to start receiving your own copy electronically.

Spreading the News

We're always interested in hearing about what's happening in brigades around the country. If you have a story you'd like to share with the wider membership in our newsletter, email us at news@ufba.org.nz.

NZFBI Field Day at SKYCITY



25 & 26 February 2012

Don't miss this opportunity to visit the back of house areas not normally seen by the public and get a glimpse of the fire protection systems used onsite at SKYCITY.

- COST:** Free of charge
- TIME:** Starting at 08:00hrs and ending at 17:00hrs
- DRESS:** Fire service uniform mandatory
- MEALS:** Morning and afternoon tea are being supplied by BROOKS NZ LTD on Saturday and NOTIFIER on Sunday. Lunch as well as tea and coffee will be available in the staff cafeteria, tea and coffee is available in the cafeteria.
- REGISTRATION:** Participants can choose whether they would like to attend on the Saturday or Sunday, but places are limited to 25 per day and will be allocated on a first in, first served basis.

Register online at www.ufba.org.nz/events/nzfbifielddayatskycity



The New Zealand Firefighters Credit Union:
Financial Services for the Emergency Services
Community

Contact us now on freephone 0508 613328 or visit
our website www.firefighters.co.nz.



NZFF Welfare Society Facebook Page

Recently a Facebook page for the NZFF Welfare Society has been created. We hope everyone will visit and give it a "like" and use it as a forum for sharing information on various benefits that the society offers. We also welcome questions and comments to which we will reply. The Facebook page is called "The New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society".





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The UFBA is proudly supported by:

