

Taking action for positive outcomes for all brigades—volunteer, career, urban, rural and industrial

For some considerable time, and particularly following the report of the Fire Review Panel in 2012, the UFBA has advocated hard for change to fire service functions and funding legislation.

On 27 May 2015, the Government released a Fire Services Review Discussion Document setting out options to review and reform the structure, funding, legislation and organisation of rural and urban fire services.

In July 2015, we formed the UFBA Fire Services Review Submission following extensive consultation with our

members—see more at www.ufba.org.nz/fire_services_review/submission_2015 In August 2016, UFBA/FRFANZ submitted a joint submission on the FENZ Bill—www.ufba.org.nz/news/ufba_frfanz_submission_fenz_bill

Below is a summary of the actions and advocacy undertaken by the UFBA on behalf of all our members—volunteer, career, urban, rural and industrial—during the transition to FENZ.

Click on the links below to find out more about each action and the outcomes. For background information about the fire services reform visit fenzproject.co.nz

27 May 2015

Immediate media statement

On the same day the Government released the Fire Services Review Discussion Document, UFBA issued a **media statement**, saying we would consult with member brigades and fire forces to get their views and make an independent submission. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/ufba_media_release_fire_services_review_27_may_2015

29 May 2015

Consultation questionnaire

Just two days later, UFBA emailed a summary of the main issues and a comprehensive **Fire Services Review Consultation Questionnaire** to all brigades and rural fire forces, asking Chief Fire Officers to consult with their brigades and complete the questionnaire. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/have_your_say_in_reviewing_fire_services

5 June 2015

Online consultation survey

To obtain responses of volunteers as individuals, UFBA sent the Fire Services Review Consultation Questionnaire as an **online survey** to the 4,000 members of UFBA member brigades who have signed up to receive UFBA News. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/ufba_fire_services_review_consultation_questionnaire

June 2015

Research study and key strategies

Throughout June, UFBA completed a **significant research study and identified key strategies**—including the continuing independence of brigades, fostering and support of volunteerism, updating the law to protect against any liability for fire and non-fire services provided, and a Volunteer Charter to be agreed.

We also instigated a **Telephone Tree**, with UFBA leaders around the country contacting more than 100 brigades and individuals to answer queries about the main issues and our consultation questionnaire.

30 June 2015

Excellent return of survey responses

We received an excellent return of over **650 consultation survey responses from brigades and individuals**. Members who responded, strongly supported the continued independence of brigades. Any reforms must therefore bring with them more representation of volunteers and their needs at all levels of the structure. Volunteerism must be fostered and supported.

10 July 2015

UFBA Submission

We combined the results of our research study and the key strategies with members' views to form the **UFBA submission on behalf of members**. The UFBA was confident the submission reflected members' views and provided an informed analysis of current and relevant issues. Download our submission and associated documents at www.ufba.org.nz/fire_services_review/submission_2015

7 August 2015

UFBA continued to represent members' interests

Minister Peter Dunne released a statement on 7 August regarding the extensive consultation around the Fire Services Review. Mr Dunne said consultation meetings around the country and the submissions had together sent a strong message in favour of change.

He said he would keep stakeholders involved to work through the best way to achieve greater coordination and integration, and better support for firefighters. UFBA continued to represent members' interests in ongoing consultation. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/Ministers_statement_7Aug15

September-October 2015

UFBA Submission well received

In late September, Minister Peter Dunne hosted a forum to **update stakeholders including the UFBA** on the common themes that emerged during the Fire Services Review consultation. In response to consultation feedback, the three options presented in the Discussion Document in May had been modified with a view to strengthening community engagement in the delivery of fire services. The new option developed combines a unified fire service with strong regional influence.

From feedback, it is clear the **UFBA Fire Services Review Submission was well received**. UFBA will continue to participate in the review process including in transition planning to a new Fire Service. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_review_update_Oct15

13 November 2015

Minister announced future structure for fire services at the UFBA Conference

At the 2015 UFBA Annual Conference in Wellington, Minister Peter Dunne announced the proposed future structure for fire services. The Government will bring together volunteer, career, urban and rural firefighters together in **one, unified new national fire service**.

Mr Dunne formally thanked the UFBA for their outstanding participation in the whole process and for providing a strong, clear and influential voice throughout the review. The UFBA will continue to work closely with DIA including on planning the transition to the new Fire Service. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/new_fire_services_structure_ufba_consultation

18 December 2015

Connecting with our rural colleagues

Only 37 of our country's 187 rural fire forces are UFBA members. We intend to **represent the interests of our rural members** on issues such as: the need to continue the community based focus of volunteer forces; funding for training, resources and equipment; and promoting the importance of local leadership.

We asked members to encourage their rural contacts who are not members of UFBA to consider joining our advocacy organisation. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/connecting_with_rural_colleagues

25 February 2016

Working on the detail

As a key stakeholder, the UFBA is continuing to represent the interests of our members as the Fire Services Review Team works through the early transition design phase to a new fire services organisation. UFBA Director Bill Butzbach and consultant Murray McKee are meeting with the team **on matters that affect our members**. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_review_detail

31 March 2016

Advocating for a clear road map

On 8 March, we convened a full day workshop of the UFBA Board to consider a report prepared by Director Bill Butzbach and consultant Murray McKee on the progress of the review from our members' point of view and to identify matters of importance in the work to date.

At this stage, many of the proposals on **policy issues have a low level of definition, rather than a precise road map with specific routes, waypoints and milestones**. We have strongly indicated to the Review Team that detailed policy work is required before the UFBA can form comprehensive views on the merits or otherwise of many of the reform proposals. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_review_road_map

February-April 2016

Representing the interests of rural fire forces

We continue to liaise with National Rural Fire Officer Kevin O'Connor on strategies to raise our profile amongst non-UFBA member rural fire forces and to encourage them to join our advocacy organisation so we can represent their interests.

On 12 February we **mailed 143 rural fire forces who are not UFBA members** with information on what we do and the benefits of joining—and on how UFBA has represented the interests of rural fire forces during the Fire Services Review. We have received a number of expressions of interest. Chief Executive Officer George Verry is now **phoning Principal Rural Fire Officers** to keep them up to date with our actions.

April-May 2016

Meeting the NZFSC Board

1. The Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the UFBA along with the Chief Executive of NZFS **met with Paul Swain, the Chair of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission**, shortly after his appointment.
2. The NZFSC Board and senior leaders held a two-day planning session at the National Training Centre in Rotorua in mid-May. The **UFBA prepared a comprehensive paper for the session** detailing how we speak for all 400 volunteer fire brigades and many rural fire forces, their members and the communities they serve.
3. The Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the UFBA met with the NZFSC Board on 17 May and **reinforced the key points of our paper** prepared for the NZFSC Board's planning session and our recommendations.
4. We also presented the UFBA 2016-2017 Business Plan to the NZFSC Board—this seeks for **additional resources to advocate for our members' interests during the fire services reform and to support volunteer members e.g. in conflict and dispute resolution**.
5. A number of rural fire forces belong to FRFANZ (Forest and Rural Fire Association). We are **working in partnership with FRFANZ on common interests**.

Working in partnership with FRFANZ

3 June 2016

Proactively providing input into fire services reform processes

As always, the devil is in the detail

The UFBA continues to **work tirelessly on behalf of members during the transition to a new unified organisation** by proactively providing input into the fire services reform processes. Through our effective advocacy we have some significant wins, but there are more questions than answers—and there is **slow progress so far with the detail**.

We are **not comfortable with the direct engagement model** given the current level of detail around it.

The Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) published a fact sheet *Background—Supporting the fire services' workforce*. See www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_reform_detail for how the **UFBA is supporting members during the fire services reform and our comments on the DIA fact sheet**.

27 June 2016

Conveying our key areas of concern to the Minister

On 27 June, the Board and senior staff working on the reform process met for a full day workshop. The outcome of discussion was that we would urgently:

- a) Seek to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with the NZFSC Board to **cement formally the role of UFBA as the representative advocate for the current membership**, and
- b) That having already clearly expressed our concerns of the **potential implications of a 'direct relationship'** between volunteer brigades and the new FENZ organisation at all levels, we would seek **an early meeting with the Minister to convey and reinforce our members' views on this matter**.

See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_reform_areas_of_focus

30 June 2016

FENZ legislation introduced

The **Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill** was introduced on 30 June to set up a single organisation responsible for urban and rural fire services. The UFBA Chairman and other representatives **met with the Minister on Monday 4 July to discuss our key areas of concern**. See more details at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fenz_legislation_introduced

7 July 2016

UFBA and FRFANZ sign Memorandum of Understanding

UFBA and FRFANZ (Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand) signed a **Memorandum of Understanding to work together** to make sure fire brigades and rural fire forces have **a single powerful voice** as our fire and emergency services transition to Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ). See www.ufba.org.nz/news/ufba_frfanz_mou

28 July 2016

What is ahead in terms of process

July saw a burst of activity with the **first reading of the FENZ Bill** on 5 July. UFBA representatives **met with both the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon Peter Dunne and the NZFSC Chair Paul Swain to discuss our concerns** including the lack of clarity around the proposed direct engagement model, the uncertainty surrounding the future status of volunteer brigades and the future status and funding arrangements of the UFBA.

We also attended a **FENZ transition stakeholder seminar/workshop** in Wellington along with approximately 180 stakeholders from a wide range of organisations.

See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_reform_process

12 August 2016

Completing a plain language analysis of the FENZ Bill and inviting members to 'have their say'

For ease of reading and understanding, the **UFBA put together a short plain language analysis of the FENZ Bill** from a volunteer perspective. Our analysis emphasised points in the Bill that our members, in particular volunteers, would consider most relevant.

We also sought feedback from members on the specific provisions of the Bill we are focusing on during our member consultation by **inviting members to 'have their say' through a short survey**. We were delighted with the strong response in the limited time available.

See the plain language analysis at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fenz_bill_survey_Aug16

19 August 2016

Joint UFBA/FRFANZ submission on FENZ Bill

UFBA and FRFANZ submitted a joint submission on the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill to the Government Administration Committee. The submission was the culmination of a significant amount of work during a few weeks since then covering in-depth research, widespread consultation with volunteer fire brigades and rural fire forces and seeking feedback from individual members through an online survey.

We believe **our submission presents a sound and thorough examination of the FENZ Bill** and addresses issues identified by our organisations and membership in a logical and constructive way. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/ufba_frfanz_submission_fenz_bill

21 September 2016

Speaking at the Select Committee hearing on issues in the FENZ Bill

The **UFBA and FRFANZ addressed the Government Administration Committee on issues in the FENZ 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.

See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fenz_bill_select_committee_hearing

30 September 2016

Extensive member consultation on the FENZ Bill

UFBA and FRFANZ have undertaken widespread consultation on the FENZ Bill with volunteer fire brigades and rural fire forces across most regions of the country. It became evident very early on in the roadshow that there is a large demand for information about the FENZ transition. There is also a multitude of misinformation about the transition process.

We recorded a substantial amount of information at the meetings—this will **reinforce the quality of the UFBA/FRFANZ contributions to the FENZ transition process** over the next few years. See www.ufba.org.nz/news/fenz_bill_member_consultation

28 October 2016

Transitional Advocacy and Support Agreement signed

NZFS 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. See more about this important agreement at www.ufba.org.nz/news/transitional_advocacy_agreement_nzfs

29 October 2016

Partnership approach with FENZ on co-design proposals

At the 2016 Conference, UFBA Director Bill Butzbach reported on the **extensive consultation and effective advocacy undertaken by the UFBA** during the fire services reform. Bill also covered our recent achievements and how **UFBA/FRFANZ are fostering a partnership approach with the FENZ Transition Team** on a large number of co-design proposals. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/fire_services_reform_update_Oct16

15 December 2016

UFBA Advocacy Reference Panel established

To provide a sounding board on various positions, issues or other considerations, we have established a **UFBA Advocacy Reference Panel** with Board Director Glenn Williams as Chair. We will 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 will vary according to the needs at the time. See more at www.ufba.org.nz/news/2016_proactive_advocacy

1 February 2017

FENZ Volunteer Co-Design Reference Group (VCRG)

The FENZ Transition Team asked the UFBA for assistance with forming a group of volunteers (VCRG) 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 VCRG are UFBA Leadership & Governance Workshop graduates.

17 February 2017

**Taking action for
positive outcomes
for all brigades**

The UFBA is making sure the NZFSC, NZFS and FENZ Transition Team listen to the strong, united voice of all brigades—**career, volunteer, urban, rural and industrial**. See more detail on our current work with FENZ on co-design projects, the positive outcomes of recommendations the UFBA/FRFANZ made in our joint submission on the FENZ Bill, the **FENZ Volunteer Co-Design Reference Group** and the **FENZ Chief Executive** role at www.ufba.org.nz/news/taking_action_for_all_brigades