

Spotlight on rural firefighting
Connecting with our rural colleagues



FROM THE PRESIDENT



Russell Anderson, UFBA President

Already we are seeing the effects of a predicted severe El Nino weather pattern this summer with large

fires recently in the Wairarapa, Marlborough, Canterbury and Otago.

Many of our members will become increasingly busy as the season progresses and I urge you all to protect the health and safety of your people so everyone gets home safely each night.

At the UFBA Conference in November, Minister Peter Dunne announced a new structure for our fire services bringing volunteer, career, urban and rural firefighters together in one, unified new national fire service.

Only 37 of our country's rural fire forces are UFBA members. However, many of us train and work with rural firefighters and,

like urban brigades, they are focused on protecting their communities.

National Rural Fire Officer Kevin O'Connor encouraged us at Conference to make opportunities to get to know our rural colleagues better through training exercises or social occasions.

Together, we'll have a stronger voice to influence change during the transition to a new Fire Service.

As we head into the festive season, and possibly a heavier firefighting workload due to the El Nino conditions, I wish all UFBA members a safe and happy Christmas and New Year. I look forward to meeting many of you during 2016.

EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY

Connecting with our rural colleagues



George Verry, UFBA Chief Executive Officer

With 400 attendees representing 230 fire brigades and rural fire forces, this year's Annual Conference in November provided an inspiring forum for members to discuss issues regarding our fire services and the challenges and changes ahead.

Of particular significance was Minister Peter Dunne's announcement of the structure of our future fire services at the Conference Opening.

The goals for the proposed unified national fire service are to provide stronger support for volunteers at all levels, ensure fire services meet community expectations, and modernise the management of the Fire Service to make it fit for purpose in the 21st century.

Mr Dunne acknowledged and thanked UFBA for the role we played in the fire services review. This recognition of our work by the Minister and the support of DIA personnel at Conference underpins the strength of the UFBA's advocacy on behalf of members.

Ongoing relationship with DIA

Recently I met with Helen Wyn, the newly appointed Deputy Chief Executive, Policy, Regulatory and Ethnic Affairs at the Department of Internal Affairs. We discussed the consultation process the UFBA put in place with members following the release of the Fire Services Review Discussion Document in May and our well-regarded submission.

I confirmed our intention to undertake extensive member consultation on the proposed changes to fire legislation, leadership and resourcing and continue working with DIA during the transition to the new Fire Service. Ms Wyn assured me that DIA sees the UFBA as a major stakeholder in this ongoing process.

Our rural colleagues

This newsletter has a strong focus on rural firefighting. However, only 37 out of 187 rural fire forces are UFBA members—you can see these at www.ufba.org.nz/news/members_rural_fire_forces.

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 enhanced support of firefighters as 'community leaders' (as those who previously filled these roles, for example, police, bank managers and postmasters, no longer have a presence in many areas).

I would appreciate you encouraging your rural contacts who are not members of UFBA to consider joining our advocacy organisation. Please email their name, email address and phone number to me at george.verry@ufba.org.nz so we can contact them about the benefits of joining.

If your rural colleagues are already UFBA members, please encourage them to register on www.ufba.org.nz to receive regular news about our effective work representing the interests of members.

Have your say

We will ensure all our members—rural, urban, volunteer and career—will have opportunities to 'have their say' during the transition to the new Fire Service.

Thank you all for your commitment to building strong sustainable brigades. My best wishes for the festive season and for the busy year ahead in 2016.

SPOTLIGHT ON RURAL FIREFIGHTING

Weather prediction means lots of work ahead

New Zealand will feel the full effect of an El Nino weather pattern over the next four months or so, and this will have consequences for the country's firefighters, including UFBA members.

Meteorologists are predicting this summer and autumn will be the country's driest since 1997-98. They expect the El Nino weather pattern to bring very dry conditions to the eastern parts of New Zealand from December through to early April 2016.

This will mean fires start more easily, and are harder to put out once they get a foothold. The only good news, from a fire perspective at least, is that western parts of the country are likely to be wetter than normal.

What to expect

Warm dry winds will create large areas of dry vegetation in the east of the country, and this in turn will result in more fire-prone areas. Fires that start from old burns, thrown cigarettes, in rubbish pits and so on will result in more rural fires.

Firefighters in towns can also expect a heavier workload as a consequence of incinerator fires or barbecues that get out of control.

Fires could smoulder underground for several months before reigniting, and

this could be a recurring pattern in the east until about mid-April. Strong winds and low relative humidity will compound the problem, resulting in easier fire starts and faster rates of spread.

Drought situation in 2015-16

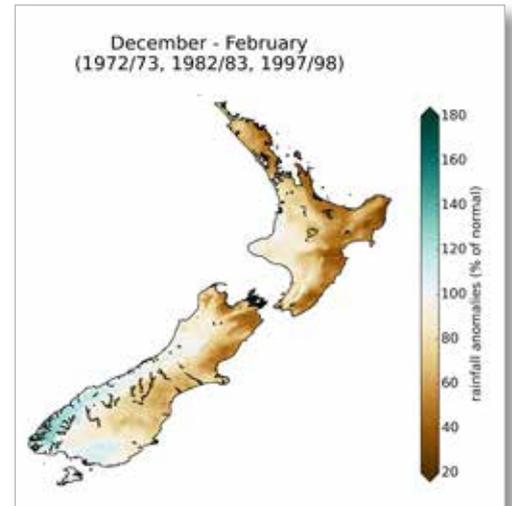
Rainfall is likely to be below normal in the north and east of the North Island and below normal in the east of the South Island and coastal Nelson. This predicted rainfall pattern was publicised in autumn this year.

Where UFBA members fit in

Members have a strong influence on their communities' fire behaviour, especially in encouraging the prevention of fires. Spreading the word about the potential impact of an El Nino season—and what to do in response—will go a long way towards countering those effects. It is important, too, to be available to provide a quick response—the emphasis here being on 'quick'.

Working on fire suppression until rural fire authority personnel get on site is a key to the continuity of any response, as is supporting these people until it is safe to leave.

Working alongside rural fire authority people until mid-April 2016 is very necessary, as is acceptance of people from outside areas who come in to help.



Areas worst affected by earlier El Nino weather. A similar pattern of rainfall is likely during the 2015-16 fire season.

Adapting to different types of command systems, stepping up to help and being adaptable, flexible, patient and hospitable will all make the fire season easier.

The mark of the country's success this fire season will be determined, in part, by every individual involved in firefighting efforts, but also by allied services working together as one, without fuss, to get the job done as efficiently as possible

I wish you all well in this, and thank you in anticipation of your continuing—and much appreciated—support.

*From Paul Baker
Manager Rural Fire Napier*



Photo: Akaroa Volunteer Fire Brigade

SPOTLIGHT ON RURAL FIREFIGHTING

Volunteers protecting their rural communities



From left: Joel Robb, Maureen Robb, James Marks, Karen Purchas, Duncan O'Keefe, Penny Stewart (No. 1 whitebait catcher)

Waikuku Beach Volunteer Rural Fire Force, Waimakariri

Waikuku Beach trains every Monday night 7-9pm and the last Sunday of the month from 2-4pm.

A lot of what we do is area familiarisation, training and assessments of our local patch.

When we are out on calls we can be on the job for 10 hours, sometimes more.

We all have jobs and are very grateful to our employers that give us time off to do what we need to do.

We cover and support the whole of the Waimakariri District, so it's quite vast. We have a small group of 15 active members, support crew and a lot of community involvement. Plus 1 x Rural

Pump, 1 x Rural Tanker, 1 Smoke Chaser and a Support Vehicle, all 4x4.

Our motto is '*We protect what you value*'—through off-road, river crossings, paddocks, tracks, forests, beaches and river beds.

We also do medical assists and work alongside other agencies. Our last big call was at the Oxford fires, where we rescued and evacuated people out of their houses in winds over 130km. That was very scary! But we had support from Swannanoa and Oxford brigades to name a few.

We are very lucky to have a beach forest and the Ashley River in our area with a lot of wild life, rural businesses and farms.

We have seen quite a shift with rural areas redeveloped into residential properties and a growing urban population post the Christchurch earthquakes.

"We are also members of the UFBA which is a key stakeholder in the fire services review and an important voice for all brigades and fire forces in New Zealand."

Brett Reed, Brigade Secretary

Mayfield Rural Fire Unit, Canterbury



Callout to a rubbish hole fire

Waimakariri UFBA members include Swannanoa & Sefton Rural Fire Forces



Fire at Loburn

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

AFFCO bobby calf donations

AFFCO supports volunteer fire brigades because of the important role they play in rural communities.

They extended their annual bobby calf promotion, previously available only to schools, to provide farmers with the option of nominating their local volunteer brigade to receive a donation of 40 cents per calf supplied. The 2015 bobby calf season is now over and the total donations to volunteer fire brigades were over \$30,000.

We are now distributing these funds on behalf of NZFS and the UFBA. Brigades who have received a donation can expect to receive this money by direct credit to their brigade bank account within the next 3-4 weeks.

UFBA thanks AFFCO and farmers for their generous support of their local volunteer fire brigades.

NZFS Safety Summit video

You can now view the summary video of the 2015 NZFS Safety Summit in August at www.ufba.org.nz/media/video_gallery_list. NZFS aims to distribute a DVD to all brigades in the New Year.

JOIN THE UFBA

The United Fire Brigades' Association of New Zealand (UFBA) serves and represents the interests of 523 member brigades and rural fire forces throughout the country, comprising more than 10,000 firefighters.

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

See the benefits of joining the UFBA at www.ufba.org.nz/about/who_we_are

If your brigade or rural fire force would like to find out more about joining the UFBA, please contact:

Jane Davie

Membership Support Manager

Phone: 04 237 2683 or 0274 428 655

Email: membershipsupport@ufba.org.nz

Your photos

If your brigade or rural fire force has photos of your volunteers hard at work protecting their local communities, please email them to news@ufba.org.nz

EVENTS

Firefighter Combat Challenge World Finals

An intrepid bunch of Kiwis headed over to Montgomery, Alabama in the United States from 19-25 October, running as members of Team Hobbit New Zealand at the Firefighter Combat Challenge World Finals.

This year saw a record 18 countries compete with over 600 athletes taking part. Team Hobbit's 2015 members were

Tom Reid, Scott Cubitt (CHC Crash Fire), Wayne Maw, Hamish Maw (Southbridge) Steve Maw (Southbridge/CHC Crash Fire), Dave Shaw, Anna Alexander (Te Awamutu), Haydn Parker (Nelson), Amelia Wood (Lincoln), Geoff Curle (Sumner) and Ed Jackman and Sean Jackman (Cust).

Lion's Den inauguration

Entry to the Lion's Den is achieved by hitting pretty demanding times by age group—this is the target for the most serious FCC competitors.

Scott, Dave, Wayne, Ed and Sean were inducted at the Lion's Den inauguration, having qualified in the previous year at last year's Worlds or the New Zealand Nationals.

Notable achievements

Over the week everyone achieved times ahead of their personal goals.

- Geoff earned Lion's Den with the very first run of the competition
- Amelia, Hamish and Haydn joined him as the week progressed
- Anna and Amelia became the first NZ female tandem to compete at Worlds
- Tom set a world record and medalled, finishing second in the 60+ tandem
- Haydn is now a world record holder by being in the gold medal hybrid relay
- Dave earned bronze in the 45+ category
- Steve became the fastest ever Kiwi running a lightening 1:28:22!

See more about the Worlds and results at www.ufba.org.nz/news/combat_challenge_world_finals_2015



EVENTS

Firefighter Combat Challenge continues to grow

The Firefighter Combat Challenge 2016 season got off to an early start, with the first of the three annual events held on 5 December in Westport.

There has been debate about the time of year and the location for the South Island event, but the weather stayed true and competitor numbers were in line with what we expected. With 51 individuals competing across the range of disciplines, we had close to a full day's worth of competition.

Westport a great location

Westport were fantastic hosts, working hard to ensure the rain stayed away, the track was laid out in plenty of time and everyone was fed and watered. The effort they put in to making sure the show went well was greatly appreciated by all.

With a little bit of damp in the air, there were no record breaking times. With a massive 27 competitors new to the Challenge, it was not surprising no one could catch Steven Maw and the Canterbury teams.

Steven took first place title for the Open Male, but we had some surprises with a number of first time competitors ranking in the top three of their category—showing great levels of fitness and raw determination.

First timers shine

First time competitor and newly appointed UFBA Vice President Alan Kittelty ranked third in the Over 40 Men's category and 10th overall. Alan and his tandem partner Hayley Rossiter also took out first place in the Co-ed Tandem category.

"The Combat Challenge for me was about developing skills, strengths and confidence which I can take back to my training nights to allow our brigade to function at its full potential. The comradeship at the Combat Challenge was uplifting. Nobody ever fails."

Jude Patterson
Lawrence Volunteer Fire Brigade



New competitors from Rolleston were still smiling at the end of an epic day. From left: Pete Savage, Rick Coburn, Sarah Lilley, Bruce Moffat, Carl Dierck, Callen Saunders, Rob Eggers

Hayley was also a first timer and shined in the Open Women's competition where she took first place, followed closely by Kim Holmes and another newbie, Jude Patterson of Lawrence. We were thrilled to see so many new competitors succeed.

All competitors finished their chosen discipline on time—this shows a great improvement in everyone's fitness. It's encouraging to have a 50% growth in the Challenge, which is attracting more and more competitors each year.

A supportive family

Warren Maslin, accepting certificates both for himself (1st in the Over 40s and 2nd in Open Male) and for Southbridge, spoke of the overwhelming sense of family and belonging the Challenge had.

He welcomed all the new competitors to this supportive family group of firefighters. Warren also acknowledged the UFBA for their commitment to the Challenge and said the decision to move the Island Challenges around different locations was a good one, particularly if we continue to see a great level of growth in high quality and keen competitors.

Future Challenge format

UFBA is committed to making sure everyone enjoys the opportunity to compete in the Firefighter Combat Challenge and will continue to move the Regional level competitions around.

That's not to say we won't revisit some of our old favourites and friends—but we would like to open the doors for better access to the Otago Southland and Nelson Marlborough regions and the Upper North Island.

Timing of Challenges

We have given much consideration to the time of year when the Firefighter Combat Challenge should take place. Some would like it in the months leading up to the Worlds, in September/October, even though the weather may not be that great for this outdoor event. Whereas others would like it in the more weather favourable months at the beginning of the year. We need to carefully balance the time commitments of our Officials along with the other eight Challenge events.

The UFBA is interested in the opinions of our competitors and Officials and we will send out a one-question survey soon to determine what the majority would like. This will help us plan long-term strategies for this and other events.

However, it's safe to assume the Firefighter Combat Challenge is growing from strength to strength and is here to stay in its current format of a three event annual programme.

See the results of the South Island event at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2016_south_island_combat_challenge

Trainees receive certificates

The Hon Peter Dunne, Minister of Internal Affairs, hosted an event at the Beehive Theatre in October to present training and participation certificates to students who took part in Wellington region Youth in Emergency Services training programmes in April and July.

Thirty-five students, their parents, caregivers and teachers, and several school principals attended the event celebrating student achievement.

The Minister commended them for their commitment to training which took place during their school holiday break.

He also reminded everyone that the emergency management sector relies on volunteers who respond to a wide range of emergency situations and that those who completed the training represented

the potential of the fire and emergency workforce.

Daniella Emer-Barbalich from St Catherine's College spoke about the practical skills she developed and the valuable team-building and problem-solving opportunities which were part of the training provided by FETS (Fire and Emergency Training Solutions). The programme is supported by the Ministry of Youth Development.

Several students also mentioned that they had made new friends during the programme and are interested in becoming part of local response crews.

Emily Leason and Ebony Peck spoke about the Heretaunga College emergency response team which has been part of



a school-wide capability and resilience-building initiative.

UFBA Director Bill Butzbach spoke about the initiative being part of a strategic approach to supporting volunteer workforce sustainability.

The event was also attended by Dave Key, Region 3 Area Manager, representing the New Zealand Fire Service, who encouraged the young people to join fire and rescue brigades to maintain and develop their skills.

SERVICE HONOURS

Congratulations to the following members who have received 50 Year and Gold Star medals from September to December. Thank you for your dedicated service to the Fire Service and your communities.

50 Year Medals

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Dargaville | MURDOCH Gary |
| Diamond Harbour | CAMERON Don |
| Fairlie | IRVING Jim |
| Newlands | BAMBERY William |
| Port Chalmers | WILSON Kenneth |
| Upper Hutt | BENNETT Ash |
| Whangamata | PITCHER Ralph |

Gold Stars

| | |
|-----------|------------------|
| Auckland | GADDES Melvyn |
| | GREGORY Kerry |
| | GRIFFIN Mark |
| | MORRISON Robert |
| | REAY Grant |
| | RICHARDS Warrick |
| | WILDING Peter |
| Blenheim | PHIBBS John |
| Cambridge | RUSSELL Steve |
| | WEINBERG Don |

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Counties | BENJAMIN Ian |
| Manukau | SHANKS Murray |
| | TRUDGEON Chris |
| | WARD Andrew |
| Dannevirke | STEED Norman |
| | WALKER Scott |
| Diamond Harbour | CRAW Barry |
| Fairlie | MACKAY Phil |
| Gore | KELLY Michael |
| Greytown | BAIN Nigel |
| Hawera | KUKLINSKI David |
| Helensville | GRIPPELING Tony |
| Invercargill | NEILSON Graeme |
| Katikati | PHILLIPS Murray |
| Kawakawa | SCOTT Tony |
| Kawerau | MARTIN Gary |
| Kerikeri | RILEY Glen |
| Kirwee | HUGHES Gregory |
| Matakana | STEPHENS Lance |
| Mercer | WHITFIELD Clive |
| Methven | WATSON Arthur |
| Motueka | COMPTON Michael |
| Ngaruawahia | MCLEAN Terry |
| Ngongotaha | LEPPER Michael |
| North West | BUTTER Graeme |
| Auckland | ELLINGTON John |
| | HODGETTS Wayne |
| | JOHNSTON Bruce |

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| North West | MCLEAN Michael |
| Auckland | OLSEN Dean |
| | RENSFORD David |
| Okato | HILL Brian |
| Omokoroa | PRIEST Simon |
| Onerahi | POWELL Brian |
| Onga Onga | TAYLOR Bryan |
| Oxford | KERR Jeffrey |
| Palmerston | BUNGARD Shane |
| Paraparaumu | STRONG Robert |
| Pleasant Point | SHAW Darryn |
| Seaview | CHARLTON Stephen |
| Stokes Valley | MANSFIELD Andrew |
| Stratford | FOLEY Tony |
| Tapanui | WHYTE Lindsay |
| Tapu | HART Dhea |
| Taupo | PELHAM Stephen |
| | PETERS Paul |
| Tawa | JOHNSON Christopher |
| | TUTTON Dean |
| Tokoroa | TAYLOR John |
| Waiheke | PAGE Tony |
| Waitahuna | DICKEY Russell |
| Waitarere Beach | PESCINI Mark |
| Waitati | CLEMENTS Paul |
| Wanaka | WELLSMAN Tony |
| Wellsford | CONNOLLY Richard |
| | GREENWOOD Steven |
| | MARCHANT Scott |

NOTICES

With Christmas fast approaching, the Welfare Society holiday homes are in hot demand. This is great to see as it means our members are getting the chance to take a break and enjoy some holiday time.

Our Kapiti holiday home has just had a new kitchen installed and the lino updated in the bathroom and toilet.

Our offices will be closed from 1500 hours Wednesday 23 December until 0900 hours Monday 11 January. For urgent matters you can contact your local area representative—find their details on our website www.firefighters.org.nz

Our iPhone/iPad app for online holiday home bookings has been updated and is ready for downloading from the Apple Store. Search for NZFFWS. This upgrade adds additional calendars and a contact page.

An Android app has recently been released which also incorporates additional calendars and contacts page. Download the app from the Google Play Store.



Events Calendar

- 30 January North Island Waterway Challenge, Turangi
- 5 February Otago Southland Provincial AGM
- 6 February Otago Southland Provincial Waterways, Clyde
- 13 February South Island Waterway Challenge, Methven
- 20 February Rapaki Memorial Firefighter Challenge
- 27 February North Island Firefighter Combat Challenge, Whanganui
- 18-19 March National Firefighter Combat Challenge, Wellington—*registration will open in mid-January 2016*
- 26 March Stratford 125th Celebration



Like many brigades and rural fire forces throughout New Zealand, Upper Hutt Rural Fire Force was out supporting their community in the annual Christmas Parade

THANKS TO YOU ALL

UFBA thanks all our members (and their families and employers) for all the hard work they have done and the time they have given this year to protect and support their local communities.

We are proud of all brigade members for their service and commitment to the Fire Service, their communities and our country.

We are also grateful for the many contributions made by members during our consultation and advocacy work during the Fire Services Review. There is another busy year ahead for us all as we face the challenges and changes of transitioning to a new, unified Fire Service.

Our best wishes for the festive season and for 2016. Thank you all again.

Connect

We'd love to hear from you. Share your news or information, contact:

news@ufba.org.nz

Engage

Be the first to hear about news and events. Take part in online polls and our forum.

Register at:
www.ufba.org.nz

Consult

We're committed to representing and supporting you. Get in touch:

info@ufba.org.nz

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