



Our events season gets underway

Providing unique opportunities to enhance skills

Fire Services Review: Working on the detail



George Verry, UFBA Chief Executive Officer

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 Service.

The Fire Services Review Team is a group of representatives from the Government, NZFS, National Rural Fire Authority (NRFA) and the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA).

Following the release last year of the Fire Services Review Discussion Document by the Government, the UFBA carried out extensive consultation with members.

With the best expertise on board—UFBA Director Bill Butzbach and consultant Murray McKee—UFBA formed a well-researched, soundly based and well-presented submission on behalf of members that reflected your views and provided an informed analysis of current and relevant issues.

Key points of our submission

There were a number of major thrusts in the UFBA submission.

We strongly supported the *continued independence of volunteer brigades*. The majority of you do not want to be directly engaged as part of a national service as you believe this would reduce your links and commitment to your communities.

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.*

We argued volunteer brigades should

remain independent organisations that serve their communities, resourced by a central agency (currently the New Zealand Fire Service and Rural Fire Authorities).

It is critical to have *a local leadership function* at the Brigade and Volunteer Rural Fire Force (VRFF) level to ensure the new organisation will be effective and rank is recognised. *Enhanced support of firefighters as 'community leaders'* is essential—as those who previously filled these roles, for example, police, bank managers and postmasters, no longer have a presence in many areas.

Updating the law so volunteers are protected against any liability for both the fire and non-fire services you provide is a further crucial point.

Sustainable volunteerism

Bill and Murray are having ongoing meetings with the Fire Services Review Team to ensure members have appropriate visibility of the matters that affect them. The pace of the work will increase in the coming months as officials prepare the detailed change proposals which the new Board will develop and implement.

We are working with the Fire Services Review team on matters considered to be potentially contentious, such as the way in which fire-rescue personnel are engaged and supported in the new fire services environment.

The Minister has assured stakeholders the focus of this review is not on changing terms and conditions but on broader sector issues such as governance, mandate, and increased volunteer support. The UFBA is keen to understand how payments such as brigade grants and individual gratuities will be adequately catered for with the new legislation.

New Zealand depends on our volunteer culture of firefighters protecting their local communities with the right people and the right resources.

An independent report from Esperance Capital commissioned by the UFBA in 2014 estimated New Zealand's volunteer firefighter contributions at \$529 million.

A figure that backs up our assertion that retaining our unique firefighting volunteer culture is worth fighting for.

Rest assured, the UFBA will be proactive in advocating for our members at all levels—with the Minister, DIA and the Fire Services Review Team—to ensure the future of sustainable volunteer firefighting in New Zealand.

NZFS Commission changes

We understand appointments to the NZFS Commission are on track to take effect from 1 April 2016. The NZFS Commission will be known as the new Board from 1 April 2016 and when the legislation comes into effect, the new fire services organisation will succeed the NZFS Commission. The UFBA submission asked for legislation to require the appointment of at least one person to the Board who is well qualified and experienced in volunteer matters.

Rural consultation

UFBA intends to continue extensive consultation with all members—rural, urban, volunteer and career—on the proposed changes to fire legislation, leadership and resourcing. We are also liaising with National Rural Fire Officer Kevin O'Connor on connecting with more of our rural colleagues.

In our December/January newsletter, I asked members to encourage their rural contacts who are not members of UFBA to consider joining our advocacy organisation. I am pleased to report an excellent response to this call, including from graduates of our Leadership and Governance workshops.

The 122 graduates of these workshops are proving an excellent consultancy resource for UFBA advocacy processes, with many making themselves available to assist with rural consultation during the Fire Services Review. For details of this year's workshops, see the back page of this newsletter.

To keep up-to-date with the Fire Services Review visit www.dia.govt.nz/Fire-Services-Transition or www.ufba.org.nz/fire_services_review/actions

Kiwi skills help battle Aussie bushfires

From the National Rural Fire Authority

It's been a busy summer for New Zealand's National Rural Fire Authority (NRFA), who have coordinated the deployment of four taskforces (173 personnel) to Australia to assist in battling bushfires in both Victoria, and most recently, Tasmania.

The taskforces deployed typically comprise up to 43 personnel (three operational staff and 8 crews from various Rural Fire Authorities (RFA) around New Zealand, the NZ Defence Force, the Department of Conservation, and RFA contractors).

Assisting in Tasmania

The most current deployment departed for Australia on 14 February and will see Kiwi personnel assisting fire authorities in Tasmania, who are still battling more than 76 bushfires across the State (around 27 of these fires are still uncontained).

Blazes in Tasmania have caused unprecedented damage, with approximately 125,000 hectares of land affected by the fires. Of great concern, is that many of these fires are burning in, and around, World Heritage wilderness areas.

Some of the wilderness areas have trees believed to be 1000 -1500 years old, and contain rare and unique plant species, such as the Pencil Pine (a species endemic

to Tasmania, the Pencil Pine grows in subalpine areas (over 800m). But, due to its sensitivity to fire, slow growth rate, and poor seed dispersal their numbers are declining).

Challenging terrain

National Rural Fire Officer, Kevin O'Connor, says "our firefighters have a diverse range of skills and knowledge to assist with the firefighting effort in Australia.

"The fire training our crews have remains very much applicable across the Tasman, as much of the work our crews are involved in is very similar to back home," he says.

The topography of Tasmania is very similar to New Zealand's South Island. Many of the areas where the New Zealand crews are working are quite remote, and while crews are being flown into, and out of the fires assigned each day, crews were finding the work physically demanding, but very rewarding.

Diverse range of skills

Kevin says, "both the Victorian and Tasmanian fire authorities have been impressed with the skills, 'can do' attitude, and work rates of the New Zealand crews.

"The Tasmanians are very grateful for the work being done, many taking the time to talk to, and thank, the firefighters personally. Equally, our Kiwi firefighters

"Both the Victorian and Tasmanian fire authorities have been impressed with the skills, 'can do' attitude, and work rates of the New Zealand crews."

Kevin O'Connor, National Rural Fire Officer

find the deployments are a rewarding experience, and enjoy the challenge.

"While we are very keen to continue to offer assistance to our Australian counterparts, we are also very conscious back home in New Zealand we are approaching a high-risk time of year for vegetation fires. So, we need to carefully manage our rural firefighting resources," he says.

Sharing resources

The USA, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, and Canada have reciprocal agreements in place to enable the sharing of firefighting resources as well as knowledge.

Kevin says, "due to climate change, plus other factors we are seeing around the world, and an increase in large fires (and their severity), it is important we work together to take advantage of the collective knowledge and capability to help resolve current and future issues.

"Overseas deployments are helpful, not only from the experience and skills gained by personnel, but also because of the contacts and relationships which are formed.

"New Zealand's got a reputation as a skilled and important partner in helping to manage rural fire."



Photo: Waitakere Volunteer Fire Brigade

Mike Donovan from Puhoi Volunteer Rural Fire Force tackles steep terrain in Victoria

EVENTS



United Fire Brigades' Association
WATERWAYCHALLENGE

Expanded Waterway Challenge boosts skills

This year has seen the launch of the inaugural UFBA North and South Island Waterway Challenges.

These events complement our traditional competition that takes place every two years and provide brigades with opportunities to train and build on skills in a year where there is no National Waterway Challenge.

Island Challenges funded

With support from the New Zealand Fire Service, the UFBA can now fund one new Challenge in each Island. Held in the off-year to the National challenge, these events serve to encourage more participation and opportunities to practise skills.

There have always been North and South Island Challenges, but these have been self-funded and organised by a group of committed people that has grown these two prestigious events over the years.

The UFBA does not want to take anything away from these historical events and hopes they will continue to run alongside the two new funded Challenges.

This year, we combined forces with both of the joint provincial committees that have organised these events in the past. This took some of the pressure off our dedicated volunteers.



Wainuiomata test their hose-running skills under the watchful eyes of Officials at the North Island Waterway Challenge in Turangi

Events a great success

The North Islands were held on 30 January in Turangi—where it has been hosted for 25 years. It was an outstanding day with some surprising results.

Carterton took first place in the 4-person event and Havelock North B won the 2-person event.

The beautiful town of Methven hosted the South Island event on 13 February—this was equally successful with a tight finish in both the 2-person and 4-person competition.

Greymouth won the 4-person challenge, chased by Rangiora. The 2-person champions were Mossburn.

Our thanks to all of the Host committees that supported these events. We hope to work with them again soon, however, we do not want to unnecessarily put pressure on the same hosts every year.

The aim is to grow the Challenge, and add events, so we encourage other brigades to come forward to host the North and South Island events in 2018.

Host a challenge

Most townships have the facilities to host a Waterway Challenge. The UFBA has plenty of advisers that can help with the planning and the technical side of things.

Bringing a Challenge to your neighbourhood can help encourage new teams to participate.

We are also looking for hosts for our 2017 Regional Challenges. These are smaller

“Waterways is a great way to test our skills against other brigades. It gets highly competitive. It’s not just about that, we meet lots of people and make good friends too. We really appreciate all the hard work the hosts, Officials and Events Team put in to make it a great experience for us all.”

Rangiora 4-person team

events so may be a good place to start if you have never hosted before.

Hosting provides a great opportunity to network and fundraise for your brigade. You will get to know more brigades and firefighters in your Region and have some fun along the way too. And maybe even learn some new skills!

Visit www.ufba.org.nz/events/host_an_event for more about hosting an event or contact us at events@ufba.org.nz

See the results of this year’s Waterway Challenges: North Island at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2016_north_island_waterway_challenge and South Island at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2016_south_island_waterway_challenge

Combat Challenge Timing

To gather the opinions of our competitors and Officials on the timing of this Challenge, we recently sent a one-question survey to a large group of recently registered participants. Thank you for your responses. Results were:

- Season from March - May: 83%
- Season from August - September: 17%



Brunner competes at the South Island Waterway Challenge in Methven

EVENTS

Registration opening!

Registration for the Road Crash Rescue Challenge opens **29 February**.

Information will be at your Brigade by 25 February to register for:

- Region 3 and 4—Milton, 15-16 April
- Region 1 and 2—Greytown, 30 April-1 May
- Nationals—Inglewood, 19-21 May

Check www.ufba.org.nz for the registration link.



138th UFBA Annual Conference & AGM

Christchurch
28-30 October

Building Strong Foundations

Save the date now!

Events Calendar

18-19 March	National Firefighter Combat Challenge, Wellington
7-9 April	UFBA Leadership and Governance Workshop, Wellington
15-16 April	South Island Road Crash Rescue Challenge, Milton
30 April-1 May	North Island Road Crash Rescue Challenge, Greytown
15 May	Secretaries & Treasurers Workshop, Whangarei
19-21 May	National Road Crash Rescue Challenge, Inglewood
3-6 June	Wanganui 150th Jubilee
21-24 July	Australasian Rescue Challenge, Warragul, Victoria, Australia
18-20 August	National Drivers Challenge, Ruapuna
28-30 October	UFBA 138th Annual Conference, Christchurch

HIGH SATISFACTION WITH 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE



The UFBA sent a satisfaction survey on 21 December to registered attendees at our 2015 Annual Conference.

The objectives of the survey were to:

- Determine overall satisfaction with the Conference
- Find out how important specific aspects of the Conference are
- Identify how well delegates understood the voting process (as only 199 out of 229 eligible delegates voted at the AGM)
- Rate the content, impact and delivery of the keynote speaker and workshop presentations
- Determine satisfaction with the NZFS Forum.

Results summary

- Overall, 92.4% of attendees were very satisfied/somewhat satisfied with the Conference
- The majority of attendees were very satisfied/somewhat satisfied with the aspects of the Conference
 - The highest ratings were for location (89%) and registration process (87.5%)
- Attendees think the majority of the aspects of Conference are very important/somewhat important
 - The most important aspects are functions/opportunities

to socialise (96.6%), accommodation (93.8%) and NZFS Forum (90.3%)

- 70.7% were very satisfied/somewhat satisfied with the format of the NZFS Forum.

Delegate voting

- 79.4% of delegates understood the voting process extremely well/very well
- 88.2% were provided with voting cards and papers by their brigade
- 33.3% were **not aware** voting cards and papers for their brigade were available at registration if required.

Voting by delegates at the AGM provides member brigades with the opportunity to 'have their say' on who represents them on the UFBA Board, as Officers and on the Technical Panel. It is concerning 13% of delegates at the Conference did not vote and 20% do not understand the voting process well.

The UFBA is considering effective strategies that will increase member participation at the AGM. Thank you to all who took the time to complete the survey. Your views will help us plan future conferences that meet the needs of our members.

PROTECTING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Young firefighters committed to volunteering



There's no experience like it

Seb Fiddymont was just 16 when he joined the Swannanoa Rural Fire Force in Canterbury.

Now aged 19, Seb says Swannanoa is a relatively new brigade and his dad was involved 'so I got stuck into it'.

"It's good helping out the community," he says. "Firefighting is also a great learning experience. I've now got my Class 2 Truck licence and am learning to drive the fire appliance."

His rural fire force fights mainly vegetation and hedge fires and backs up other brigades at structural fires when needed.

Seb has learnt other new skills volunteering. "Working with different people helps develop people skills," he says.

"Volunteer firefighting is an awesome thing to do. There's definitely no experience like it, it's a lot of fun and you meet a lot of people. I love doing this."

Giving back to the community

Two years ago, **Raegan Katene** joined the Marton Volunteer Fire Brigade when she was 16 years old.

"I volunteer because I love helping others and giving back to our community which has helped me out when I've needed fundraising," Raegan says.

The hardest thing she finds about callouts is not knowing if someone she knows is involved.

Along with her brigade, Raegan always looks forward to training new recruits and having people join.

"Everyone is respectful and it's incredibly enjoyable," she says. "Volunteering gives males and females a chance to give back, help out and create a difference.

"The fact that we get to be involved in hands-on experience is amazing. Great people, great atmosphere and a great team!"



Photo: Fairfax Media NZ / Manawatu Standard



Working towards a common goal

Originally from Scotland, **Scott Henry** joined the Rarangi Rural Fire Force in Marlborough three years ago.

"I found out about volunteer firefighting at an open night at the community hall," Scott says. "I visited the rural fire force on a training night and went on my first callout a few weeks later.

"It's fantastic to help the local community," he says. "There's the satisfaction of making a big difference by keeping the community safe, educating people and getting everyone working towards a common goal."

Being self-employed, Scott's biggest challenge is balancing his own workload and the needs of his family with being away firefighting—which can be for a few days for large-scale fires.

"A positive side is the results of what we do are measurable, with obvious outcomes that are quantifiable," he says.

Tips for building your resilience

From Nick Gray, NZFS

Change happens all the time. Some people take it in their stride, while for others the experience can be unsettling and stressful.

Below are some tips to help you to be resilient during times of change.

A range of factors determine people's resilience, but research shows building the following five actions into our day-to-day lives is the best way to maintain and enhance personal wellbeing.

Five activities to focus on

1. Connect, *Me Whakawhanaunga*—Connect with the people around you—whānau, friends, colleagues and neighbours. Think of these relationships as the cornerstone of your life and invest time in developing them.

2. Be active, *Me kori tonu*—Step outside, go for a bike ride, a jog or a walk around the block. Do what you can, enjoy what you do, be active and move your mood.

3. Take notice, *Me aro tonu*—Learn to savour the moment. Whether walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends—enjoy it. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

4. Keep learning, *Me ako tonu*—Try something new or rediscover an old interest. Sign up for a course or take on a different responsibility at work. Seek out new experiences and challenge yourself.

5. Give, *Tukua*—Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Seeing yourself, and your happiness, linked to the wider community can be incredibly

rewarding and creates connection with the people around you.

Source: www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/ways-to-wellbeing

The more you make these activities part of your daily routine, the easier it is to maintain your own wellbeing and support others during times of change.

For more tips on how to recharge your resilience batteries see <http://umbrella.org.nz/recharge-your-resilience-batteries/>

You can also access a range of resources about resilience via the NZFS Library Services page on Firenet: <http://firenet.fire.org.nz/Library-Services/Pages/Default.aspx> and on the NZFS Wellness Portal: <http://www.wellnessportal.co.nz/fireservice/>



Brendon Wood, NZFBI President

It is with continued enthusiasm and renewed vigour that I step back into the role of President of the New Zealand Fire Brigades' Institute.

It is an exciting time for the Institute as we seek to invigorate the membership and enhance the learning opportunities provided. Our main focus will continue to be the development and education of firefighters—but this focus will be shared with our partners the Institution of Fire Engineers (IFE) and the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) training teams.

Planning is already underway to ensure the work being carried out is cost

effective, worthwhile and valuable to you as an active member of your brigade. There will be continued opportunities to enhance your theoretical knowledge via examinations and the facilitation of technical field days and training days in conjunction with the IFE and local fire brigades at sites of mutual interest.

One of our key projects will be the membership database. It has become increasingly hard to maintain an accurate picture of who is a member, where they are from and how to make contact. Without access to our members, it is difficult to maintain a customer focused approach to the Institute's activities and even harder to alert members to what is being provided. If you feel that your details may be inaccurate due to recent moves or you are aware of other movements, please let us know—the NZFBI Council is your Leadership Team, and you, the members, are the Institute.

Treading the same ground will not provide the effectiveness required from the NZFBI in this current age. Fire services have changed and the role of the NZFBI needs to change with it. We will seek to ensure the work we do is



current and effective, and provides good value to the membership.

This has seen the need for a new and improved examination structure. This new format is now into its second year with the gradual phasing out of the old structure occurring concurrently. I encourage any NZFBI student who is part way through a qualification to continue their study to ensure that previous effort is not lost as the exam structures transition.

This year will be a busy one for the NZFBI Council. Along with the usual activities conducted throughout the year, we will be looking at our membership database, modernising our rules and regulations (constitution), developing a marketing and communications plan and continuing our IFE and NZFS relationships.

If you are a member of the Institute and feel you have some skills to assist, please let us know. Find the NZFBI Council contact details at www.ufba.org.nz/nzfb/nzfb_council

Support when you need it

The first thing that may spring to mind for many people about the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society is our fabulous holiday homes. But we are so much more than this.



Recently a member (an ex volunteer CFO who joined the Welfare Society and Healthcare 99 when he started at the Fire Service) needed back surgery in Christchurch. After finding a surgeon and getting quotes for the surgery and all the necessary extras, he made a phone call to the HealthCare 99 contact person and after a bit of paperwork was informed that HealthCare 99 would cover his operation.

This member lives in Nelson so he made arrangements to get to Christchurch for his health checks. He passed all the tests and went into surgery. Unfortunately, while in recovery he suffered a heart attack, so was transferred to Christchurch Public Hospital. After a few days of treatment, he was told he was being released. The hospital booked him into a motel and even though he didn't have a support person or family with him, he was given a walking stick, put into a wheelchair and taken outside to wait for a taxi.

This is where being a member of the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society became invaluable

Arriving at the motel, our member realised he was not able to do much for himself. With a prescription needing to be filled, a bit of panic began to set in so he rang the Welfare Society. Our Station Representative quickly showed up, picked up his prescription and went to get that filled. Meanwhile, Board Member Alice Jonathan stopped by to ensure our Welfare Member was ok and had what he needed while he was so far away from family.

Another member of the Welfare Society brought him a gift basket and groceries to ensure he would be ok until his family were able to travel down to Christchurch and collect him to take him home.

This is just one example of the benefits of being a member of the Welfare Society—we stand behind our motto of **firefighters helping firefighters**. In a time of need, there will always be someone there to help.

Find out more about the benefits of joining the Welfare Society at www.firefighters.org.nz



Strengthen vital life skills

Leadership & Governance Workshop

Strong leadership is key to us working together to deliver vital services to our local communities. Enhance your leadership skills at this fully interactive 2.5 day workshop.

- Learn from leading experts in the field
- Develop new leadership and coaching techniques
- Gain valuable insights into the key elements of governance
- Strengthen your professional development
- Great for your personal life, career and fire service

UFBA manages and covers the cost of travel arrangements, accommodation and meals. Find out more at www.ufba.org.nz/events/leadership_governance_workshop_Apr16

If you are interested in attending or nominating someone for the next UFBA Leadership & Governance Workshop from 7-9 April in Wellington (spaces are limited), email Hayley at hayley@ufba.org.nz. The next workshop will be in October.

Secretaries & Treasurers Workshop

Are you a new Secretary or Treasurer to your brigade or would you like to enhance your skills? This comprehensive workshop will strengthen your skills and help you gain insights into key responsibilities of your role.

A Secretaries & Treasurers Workshop will be held in Whangarei at the Kaipara Area Office Training Room on **Sunday 15 May**. Find out more at www.ufba.org.nz/events/secretaries_treasurers_workshop_May16

To register your attendance, please email Jane at membershipsupport@ufba.org.nz with your name, brigade, your role at the brigade and mobile phone number.

If you would like a workshop held in your area, please contact Jane. A minimum of 15 participants is needed.

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:

membershipsupport@ufba.org.nz

United Fire Brigades' Association NZ

86 Main Road, PO Box 56079, Tawa, Wellington 5249

P. 04 237 0265 | F. 04 237 2680 | www.ufba.org.nz | www.facebook.com/unitedfirebrigades