

137th UFBA Annual Conference & AGM

- » **Minister announces new fire services structure**
- » **Keynote speakers move the audience**
- » **Four workshops develop members' skills**



137TH ANNUAL UFBA CONFERENCE



400 attendees representing 230 brigades were fully engaged with electing representatives, celebrating achievements, attending presentations, developing skills in workshops and networking during three activity filled days at Conference from 13-15 November.

The main topic of discussion and the presentations revolved around the proposed changes to fire services legislation, leadership and resourcing. Conference highlights included:

- Minister Peter Dunne announcing the structure of the future Fire Service at the Conference Opening
- Viewing the extraordinary exhibition *Gallipoli: The scale of our war* at the Welcome Function at Te Papa

- Being captivated by keynote speakers Group Captain Catherine McGregor, and Wiremu and Marsella Edmonds
- Participating in one of four UFBA workshops—and taking away useful and relevant tools to use in building strong, sustainable brigades
- Finding out the latest in the fire and rescue services industry from 16 exhibitors including the UFBA Fire Shop
- Celebrating and socialising with 500 colleagues at the Conference Dinner.

Read on for more about the challenges and changes ahead. You can download conference speeches and workshop presentations at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2015_ufba_137th_annual_conference

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Russell Anderson, UFBA President

It was a great honour to accept the Presidential Chain from Past President Mark Adie at Conference for my term as your President.

With the huge pool of knowledgeable predecessors before me, I realise I have

big shoes to fill over the next year.

I thank my family and brigade for their support which will allow me to fulfil my obligations as your President, and to all my supporters for elevating me to this position, especially the Otago Southland crew.

Nothing but hard work and consultation can prepare us for the exciting changes we are about to face as we move toward the new structure for our fire services announced by Minister Peter Dunne.

The proposed changes will affect our people across the entire country, will be complex, and will require thoughtful planning along with intensive involvement from the UFBA.

However, I'm sure you will agree the time is right, and the time is now, to future-proof our organisation and implement legislation

that is fit for purpose for the events and activities we attend on a daily basis.

The UFBA's highest priority is to advocate on the issues and concerns of members. I am proud of our participation in the transition planning to a new Fire Service.

I look forward to meeting many of you throughout this next year, and thank my Vice President and Past Presidents for stepping up to cover all the functions that will be impossible for me attend.

Thank you again.

Save the date!

Christchurch is confirmed as the venue for the 138th UFBA Conference & AGM
28-30 October 2016

NEW FIRE SERVICES STRUCTURE ANNOUNCED

New Zealand's current fire services legislation dates back to the 1970s, when a firefighter's role was focused on putting out fires.

Now our firefighters respond to a wide range of emergencies including medical callouts, flooding and road accidents.

In 2013, there was a Government review of NZFS activities called the 'Swain Report'. UFBA Chief Executive Officer George Verry says this review contained 55 recommendations, ten of which were specifically around the volunteer sector. "UFBA signalled our support of all of the recommendations to the Minister, the NZFS and the NZFS National Commander," says George. "But except for one or two minor points, nothing happened."

Fire Services Review 2015

At the UFBA Conference in Tauranga last year, the Minister of Internal Affairs Hon Peter Dunne, stated he wanted to build on the recommendations of the Swain Report by gathering more information to enhance proposed legislation to make fire services fit for purpose in the 21st century.

In May this year, the Minister released a Government discussion paper setting out options for reforming the Fire Service and asking for submissions.

George says following extensive consultation with members, and 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.

"UFBA is a key stakeholder and is working with the Department of Internal Affairs on ongoing consultation," George says.

Future structure of fire services

At the UFBA 2015 Conference Opening on Friday 13 November, Mr Dunne announced the future structure for the Fire Service which will aim to meet the goals of 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. He said the 235 public submissions received by the review team sent a strong message in favour of change, which ran right through the different sectors of

fire services—rural, urban, volunteers, career firefighters, small towns and big cities.

Mr Dunne acknowledged and thanked UFBA for the role we played in this vitally important process, and for the input we provided.

He said the Government will proceed with the Swain Review's recommendations to modernise the mandate of the Fire Service to include activities like urban search and rescues, motor vehicle accidents and other emergency services that it currently has no legal mandate for.

The Government will also bring together volunteer, career, urban and rural firefighters together in one, integrated, new national fire service. Mr Dunne confirmed this means recognising and respecting their differences and providing support appropriate for their needs.

Regional advisory committees

Mr Dunne said the new national organisation will be supported by a network of regional advisory committees to ensure both the protection of a regional and community-focussed perspective and its input into the work of the Fire Service.

The new national body will be responsible for resourcing fire services, training and professional standards, but will work with the regional boards on delivery matters.

The Minister confirmed it is critical to have a leadership function at the Brigade and Volunteer Rural Fire Forces (VRFF) level, and will work with key stakeholders to ensure details of the leadership roles in the new organisation will be effective and rank is recognised.

The new Fire Service will continue to be funded primarily through levies on insurance premiums with the final details still to be resolved.

New fire service board

Mr Dunne also announced a new fire service board will be appointed as a successor to the NZFS Commission—amalgamating the NZFS, the NRFA, and RFAs (including the ERFDs). This will need



UFBA Chairman Rick Braddock and Chief Executive Officer George Verry with the Minister of Internal Affairs Hon Peter Dunne

"I want to formally thank the UFBA again for the outstanding participation in this whole process. You have provided a strong, clear and influential voice throughout this review."

Hon Peter Dunne

significant transformational change and effective transition management.

Legislation to replace the current Fire Service Act and the Forest and Rural Fires Act will be introduced to Parliament next year, and it is the Minister's aim to have the new fire service in place by mid-2017.

Ongoing UFBA consultation

Mr Dunne assured delegates there will be ongoing opportunities for our members to have their say throughout the transition and implementation, as well as input into the legislative Select Committee process.

George says UFBA will continue to work closely with DIA including on planning the transition to the new Fire Service. "The changes coming will be substantial and our highest priority is effective advocacy on the issues and concerns of members."

At Saturday's Conference session, Bill Butzbach and Murray McKee together with Sue Sherburt from the Department of Internal Affairs provided delegates with a full summary of the consultation and advocacy undertaken by the UFBA.

"The recognition of our work by the Minister during his announcement and the support of DIA personnel reflects the strength of the UFBA's advocacy on behalf of members," George says. "We will continue to keep members informed of developments."

Read the Minister's full speech at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2015_ufba_137th_annual_conference and background information on the new fire services structure at www.dia.govt.nz/Fire-Services-Review

CONFERENCE IN BRIEF

Adding value for members

UFBA Chairman Rick Braddock applauded the intensity and drive of the actions taken by the UFBA to both represent the interests of members, particularly during the fire services review, and deliver constant strong support services.

“Everything we do is aimed at achieving the vision of the UFBA: Better, more sustainable emergency services for New Zealand communities,” he said.

In November 2014, a report commissioned from PricewaterhouseCoopers made observations and recommendations on the UFBA structure and capabilities, and included a recalculation of the volunteer contribution model completed in 2009 for the NZFS. UFBA also commissioned professional business valuation firm, Esperance Capital, to provide an estimated valuation of the volunteer firefighter contribution to urban and rural communities. The conclusion was a conservative, but nonetheless staggering annual contribution value of \$529 million.

In early 2015, UFBA worked together with PwC to visualise and determine the way forward for the Association. The outcome was a UFBA strategy document that condensed key elements of future objectives and direction into a clear, succinct, one-page Strategic Plan.

Rick said UFBA now has a clearer perspective on how to add the most value to members, the communities they serve and to New Zealand’s fire services.

Financial Performance

The Board of Directors reported a deficit of income over expenditure of \$82,134, largely due to significant expenditure on the PricewaterhouseCoopers and Esperance Capital reports and the Fire Services Review submission.

Notwithstanding this year’s deficit, UFBA continues to have a solid financial balance. Accumulated funds stand at \$664,608 and liquidity is strong in that current assets of \$690,469 exceed current liabilities by \$337,853.

See the full reports from the Chairman and the Board of Directors in the **2015 UFBA Annual Report** at www.ufba.org.nz/news/annual_reports

Our Patron

Dame Margaret Bazley said she was proud to be at Conference as Patron. She was impressed with the Minister’s announcement on the future of fire services and said the developments will provide great challenges and opportunities for volunteers. She felt it was a victory for the UFBA who has strongly advocated towards the proposed changes, and said the UFBA is well placed with a strong governance structure to lead members through the upcoming changes.

New Officers and Directors

President for 2015/16, Russell Anderson, was installed by retiring President Mark Adie. Alan Kittelty from Darfield was elected as Vice President for 2015/16.

Glenn Williams was elected for a further two-year term on the Board of Directors. Joe Manihera retired as Technical Panel Convenor and was thanked for his dedication and commitment by Challenges Committee Chairman Nigel Lilley. The new member of the Technical Panel is Wayne Robinson from Carterton.

Benevolent Fund

Chairman Alan Cockburn expressed the great sadness of the passing of Past President Emrys Evans and acknowledged his long and outstanding service. During the year, 16 applications were received and ex gratia payments of \$23,300 were allocated. A remit was passed to increase the annual contribution to the Fund from \$2 per brigade member per annum to \$5—this will take effect with the NZFS grant payable on 15 October 2016.

NZFS Forum

Fire Service Commission Chair Wyatt Creech said the model announced for the new Fire Service will create a greater input for regional decision making through a collaboration of services. A key aspect of the review is getting fit-for-purpose funding arrangements.

Mr Creech acknowledged the contributions of stakeholders, including the UFBA, throughout the consultation process. He thanked all volunteers, along with their families, who make enormous sacrifices to ensure their communities are safe and protected.



UFBA President Russell Anderson welcomes Alan Kittelty as the new Vice President

National Commander Paul Baxter focused on the Fire Service’s first principle—safety. The recent Safety Summit, which was a first for the Fire Service and co-hosted by the UFBA, demonstrated this commitment.

Referring to the recent media attention on bullying, Paul reiterated NZFS has a policy on bullying and that this is enforced vigorously. He encouraged all to *Mind the Gap*—this safety warning can, he thinks, be an analogy for the gap between how people in brigades have acted—and still act—and what is acceptable in society and the workplace today.

Presentations followed from Paul Smith and Kevin Crume on the Workplace Carcinogen Exposure Programme, Manager People Safety and Support Alison Barnes on changes to health and safety legislation, and National Property Manager Dominic Hare. NZFS also provided written answers to questions.

National Rural Fire Authority

National Rural Fire Officer Kevin O’Connor travelled with the Minister during the Fire Services Review consultation phase and was highly impressed by the interest and positive views from firefighters, both urban and rural, and paid and unpaid, about a future integrated fire service.

Last year Kevin’s challenge to the UFBA was to think and work on ways to become more relevant to rural colleagues in the 187 VRFFs. His challenge this year is the same, but now to accept the challenge in the context of the new Fire Service.

Visit www.ufba.org.nz/events/2015 UFBA_137th_annual_conference to download AGM Minutes, speeches, presentations and NZFS Forum Q&As and for links to Conference photos.

SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

The theme of this year's conference was *Sustainability through diversity*. This, along with the topical issue of keeping our people safe, was the focus of two keynote presentations and four interactive workshops.

Group Captain Catherine McGregor

Group Captain Catherine McGregor's astonishing life and courage in sharing her story captivated the Conference audience as she Skyped in from commentating at the recent NZ-Aust cricket test at the WACA in Perth.

Catherine has been a military strategist for the Australian Defence Force (ADF), a political adviser, a speechwriter for the Chief of Army and a cricket writer and commentator.

In 2012, Catherine, then living as Malcolm, decided to transition to the female gender and live fulltime as a woman. She praised her peers in the male-dominated ADF and the cricket world for their powerful messages of

support. Now working with the Royal Australian Air Force, she is "proudly transgender".

Catherine had strong messages on increasing diversity in the workplace. She said if someone is good enough and they can do the job—welcome them on to your team. Having a 'shared passion' is the crucial point. Merit has to count and you have to look past how people present. Suspend your judgement and look to see how people do the job.

She observed that oestrogen is a "good drug" and based on that factor, strongly urged brigades to employ more women.



"This was an amazing speech. One of the highlights if not the highlight of the weekend and great for brigade leaders to hear. Well done UFBA!"

Renee Moffitt
Stokes Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade



Passionate orators Wiremu and Marsella Edmonds inspired Conference attendees with a moving and thought-provoking presentation about their commitment to making workplaces safer.

They told the story of their "tribe" of five children—and how Robert, their eldest son, was killed when he was hit by a tree felled by a co-worker two years ago.

Wiremu and Marsella Edmonds

Wiremu said better communication and safer work practices could have prevented their tragic loss.

He challenged all leaders including the UFBA Board (pictured)

to "stand in the gap" and have the right processes in place to protect the health and safety of their people so everyone gets home safely at night.

Marsella also had a challenge for us: "When was the last time you asked your son or daughter how safe they are at work?"

They stressed making sure we have work safety plans and clear communication—and encouraging fellow workers to stop taking shortcuts—will create a healthy and safe environment.

Wiremu and Marsella's final plea was for all of us to have the courage to stand up and speak if we believe something risky is happening in our workplace.

"I was fortunate enough to hear Wiremu and Marsella at the NZFS Safety Summit but once again I had some dust in my eyes which I had to wipe away."

Rudi Verplancke
Edendale Volunteer Fire Brigade

4 Skills Workshops

- **Coaching & Mentoring Skills** - Carol Scholes: Participants found out how to get the best out of the people they lead by coaching not telling.
- **Building Diverse Teams** - Damian D'Cruz: Participants explored how unconscious bias affects our thinking.

- **Managing Difficult Personalities and Dealing with Toxic Behaviours at Work** - Aly McNicoll: How to identify toxic behaviours and better manage difficult personalities to reduce their negative impact.
- **Leading a Brave New World of Diversity** - Tim McLeod: Discovering how to be an inclusive leader by harnessing the power of diversity.

Download the workshop presentations at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2015_ufba_137th_annual_conference

"I will use the coaching workshop skills to change behaviour on fire calls, work out what type of people I have on the call and coach them into doing the work required."

Warren Maslin
Ashburton Volunteer Fire Brigade

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT

Incident Ground Communications (IGC) update

From Nick Gray, NZFS

Background

The Incident Ground Communications (IGC) radio replacement project is underway, representing movement on a significant theme of your Vision 2020 feedback.

The required budget to progress the project has now been allocated and a tender has been released to select the supplier for our new IGC radio equipment.

IGC Working Group

The IGC Working Group has been created and includes representation from UFBA operations, rural, all regions, PFU, ICT, and USAR.

The IGC Working Group will be responsible for developing practical scenarios to evaluate new IGC equipment, a National IGC radio equipment allocation policy, a training programme and reviewing existing channel plans to support implementation of the new IGC radios.

Evaluation of tenders

Evaluation of tender responses submitted by potential suppliers will begin in late November, with practical scenario testing commencing in January.

The contract for the supply of new radios will then, if a suitable supplier is found, be awarded by 31 March 2016.

While the IGC Working Group has yet to determine the allocation of radios, it is

expected 500 will be deployed by 30 June 2016 with the remainder rolled out over the following two years. We will keep you updated as this project progresses.

More information

For more information including expected benefits, project timeframes, working group members, tender evaluation panel members, agreed radio requirements, the Request for Tender document and FAQs visit the IGC FireNet page:

Menu > ICT > Incident Ground Communications (IGC) Radio Replacement Project

Alternatively, if you have feedback, questions or concerns, please email IGCRadio@fire.org.nz

A SURVEY FOR VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS

You're invited to take part in a voluntary survey on how well people's personal values are met through their volunteer role with the New Zealand Fire Service.

Caroline Stark, life member of the Kaponga Volunteer Fire Brigade, is currently undertaking research for her Master of Arts (Psychology) degree with Massey University. Her survey is focused on how values important to people are satisfied through being a volunteer firefighter. Her findings will help provide information to support the NZFS volunteer resilience programme, specifically the recruitment and

retention of volunteers, and the UFBA's work on behalf of members.

Caroline served for the Kaponga VFB for 15 years. The NZFS and UFBA are eager to support a life member of a volunteer brigade—while no longer a current firefighter she remains committed to the fire service and ensuring it is a rewarding experience for volunteers.

The research has been approved by Massey University's Ethics Committee. The NZFS Privacy Officer has also reviewed the questionnaire and process and approved it. The survey is totally

confidential, all responses will be aggregated and individual responses will be unidentifiable. NZFS and UFBA will not have access to the data.

The online survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete and will run until mid-December. Once completed Caroline will share the findings of her research with the NZFS and UFBA which will help them support a strong and resilient volunteer workforce and brigades.

Visit www.ufba.org.nz/news/survey_for_volunteer_firefighters for the link to complete the online survey.



Attendees at Conference 2015 enjoyed the opportunity to find out the latest in the fire and rescue services industry

Membership support

If you have any questions, comments or issues relating to membership support, please contact:

Jane Davie

Membership Support Manager

Phone: 04 237 2683 or 0274 428 655

Email: membershipsupport@ufba.org.nz

USAR turns 20

New Zealand's Urban Search and Rescue—USAR—is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It has marked its milestone year by achieving accreditation, being deployed overseas and seeking international qualification as instructors.

Earlier this year team members achieved the UN's international classification after a 36-hour exercise in Palmerston North, overseen by overseas assessors.

The team achieved the highest marks of any team, worldwide.

Ajan Stam, lead assessor, said if there was a gold standard he would be awarding it to the Kiwis. Gaining accreditation means the team can be deployed at emergencies anywhere in the world, the qualification hard-earned through years of resourcing, training, application and sheer hard work.

Difficult birth

The Kiwi team's accreditation means USAR in New Zealand has come of age, well-deserved because it hasn't always been plain-sailing. It was first talked about in 1994 and a pilot scheme began the following year in Palmerston North. But insufficient funding, no legislative authority and problems with multiple stakeholders created difficulties.

In 2003, finance was earmarked to complete Palmerston North and Christchurch teams to full strength and to add a third unit in Auckland. But those

in the business knew the funding wasn't enough for all three. Notwithstanding, the Units went on to recruit personnel who trained hard, tooled up and responded to local emergencies as required. Further funding followed.

Progress

In 2008 there was a review of USAR. There was a shake-up and the multiple stakeholder model ended.

The Government mandated management be taken over by the New Zealand Fire Service.

In September 2009, a tsunami devastated parts of Samoa, our near Pacific neighbours—but whereas Queensland USAR teams responded to assist wrecked island communities, their New Zealand counterparts stayed home.

The three local teams continued here very much below the radar until the Canterbury earthquakes when USAR personnel were on-site, entering collapsed buildings, effecting rescues less than an hour after the quake occurred.

Auckland and Palmerston North teams arrived in the city within hours in support and then international units joined them on the ground within days. Life-saving operations featured widely across all media. USAR and Fire Service rescue efforts emerged into the limelight.

Overseas

Work in Christchurch had hardly ended when, accredited or not, 52 members of the USAR team answered the call from Japan when an earthquake and tsunami hit. The New Zealanders assisted alongside Japanese, Australian and Swiss teams searching for quake survivors in bitterly cold conditions.

In sharp contrast, the most recent deployment, within weeks of accreditation, was to the heat of the tropics, to cyclone-ravaged



USAR workers effecting rescues in a simulated pancaked concrete building

Photo: Ric Carlyon

Vanuatu. Fourteen personnel provided logistical support for medics and deployed USAR equipment to provide much-needed drinking water in a number of islands that had been wrecked by Cyclone Pam.

It was the first time an NZ Inc. operation was mounted to meet an off-shore emergency.

Maintenance

210 trained USAR personnel, three teams of 70, must always be at the ready. This calls for constant training with realistic exercises—and regular recruitment of core members such as firefighters, engineers, doctors and paramedics.

Those who have nurtured USAR since its beginnings in New Zealand realise it's time to refresh the personnel, providing continuity.

In October, top officials from the United States Federal Emergency Management Agency were in Palmerston North to assess local Rescue Technicians who were seeking accreditation as Category 2 (the highest) trainers. They all passed with flying colours.

Readiness

USAR is now a multi-million dollar enterprise, well-accepted as part and parcel of the Fire Service. And it's not always major events or international appeals where the teams provide help.

Personnel recently assisted at the scene of a fatal accident that proved to be a difficult rescue and recovery where a truck ran off the road on Auckland's North Shore, crashed down a steep bank and overturned in difficult bush country. They also assisted at a cave-in, shoring and tunnelling to effect a rescue.

USAR is available for what might be termed 'business as usual' here at home.



Exercise towards excellence: USAR team practice rescue in confined spaces

Photo: Ric Carlyon

EVENTS

REGISTER ONLINE NOW!

North Island Waterway Challenge

- **Turangi:** 30 January 2016
- Register online at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2016_north_island_waterway_challenge

South Island Waterway Challenge

- **Methven:** 13 February 2016
- Register online at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2016_south_island_waterway_challenge

North Island Firefighter Combat Challenge

- **Whanganui:** 27 February 2016
- Register online at www.ufba.org.nz/events/2016_north_island_firefighter_combat_challenge

National Firefighter Combat Challenge

- **Wellington:** 18-19 March 2016
- Registration will open in mid-January 2016

Events Calendar

5 December	South Island Firefighter Combat Challenge, Westport
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
27 February	North Island Firefighter Combat Challenge, Whanganui
18-19 March	National Firefighter Combat Challenge, Wellington
26 March	Stratford 125th Celebration

STOP PRESS!

UFBA funded four teams—Darfield, Silverdale, Greymouth and Morrinsville—to the Australasian Firefighter Championships in Echuca, Victoria in October. Our teams did a great job in 30+ temperatures.

Silverdale got a first in Event 7 and Greymouth came second in Event 6. Following a persuasive presentation at the event by UFBA Events Manager Ceara Owen-Perry, New Zealand has been awarded the **2017 Australasian Firefighter Championships!** The venue is yet to be decided.



Darfield and Morrinsville working together at the Australasian Firefighter Championships in Echuca



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Register at:
www.ufba.org.nz

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

info@ufba.org.nz

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