



## **Fire and Emergency New Zealand Organisational Structure and Approach to Rank Proposals**

# **UNITED FIRE BRIGADES' ASSOCIATION AND FOREST AND RURAL FIRE ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND**

## **JOINT SUBMISSION**

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## Introduction

This is a submission from the United Fire Brigades' Association of New Zealand (UFBA) and the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand (FRFANZ), for and on behalf of our combined memberships on the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Organisational Structure and Approach to Rank Proposal for consultation.

The UFBA was established in 1878, long before New Zealand's first fire legislation was enacted. Its founding objectives were to:

- advocate in the interests of fire brigades to their governing councils and fire boards,
- develop firefighting skills and competencies through friendly inter-brigade competitions
- foster recruitment and retention of volunteers through service recognition, welfare provision and social events.

The UFBA is a professional membership association and is the only association in New Zealand that represents the interests of and provides membership services to all fire brigades.

Today, UFBA membership comprises 561 brigades in total including:

- 462 volunteer brigades across urban metropolitan, provincial, small town, rural and remote rural locations
- 75 Fire and Emergency career brigades including National Headquarters/Region/Area social clubs
- 3 Fire and Emergency Communication Centres
- 8 Operational Support Units
- 4 Airport fire brigades
- 6 Defence Force fire brigades
- 3 Industry brigades.

Our FRFANZ partners provide services to a broad-based membership including 138 brigades within rural and remote rural locations. Between our two Associations, we provide advocacy and support services for 600 (99%) of 605 volunteer brigades registered with FENZ. Volunteer personnel number just under 12,000 individuals.

For the purposes of this consultation process, the UFBA has partnered with FRFANZ in this submission. FRFANZ is a national Association that represents people and organisations concerned with fire and fire protection in the forests and rural areas of New Zealand. FRFANZ works with Fire and Emergency (formerly through the 86 Rural Fire Authorities) and provides communication links between all those involved in rural fire from the firefighters to national administrators.

The Association supports members through annual conferences with overseas speakers, promoting rural fire competitions, sharing information, lobbying, assisting with the publication of research reports, and providing service honours to firefighters.

## Executive Summary

The UFBA and FRFANZ support in principle the rationale for change, and the overall intent of the proposal. Our submission reflects our members views.

The proposal needs to not only uphold the Organisational Design Principles (that came with the proposal) but also the eight key areas of change identified in the Fire and Emergency Operating Model (some of which are similar). In other words, the structure change should be well supported and achieved through:

- strong community focus, creating an outward facing organisation that works in partnership with community and its representatives, really listens, prioritises effectively and helps communities to help themselves become more resilient
- enabling transparent investment that is consistent with community needs
- empowering decision making at the frontline, enabling autonomy with clear direction
- providing insight from intelligence
- being inclusive and people system focused so all personnel are engaged, diverse and inclusive, skilful and respectful. This would seek to build trust, make sure everyone is involved and leaders would leverage the values to inform and validate eg. are we doing the right things?

We anticipate that proposed changes will bring about much **needed organisational culture change** that will over time enable different parts of the organisation to work better together.

We acknowledge the critical role of leaders in bridging existing cultural values with empathy, in order to blend the very best behaviours of Fire and Emergency personnel for the common good.

Making structural changes will only be one of many factors that will influence development of a new culture in Fire and Emergency. The proposal is as much a cultural change, as it is a structural change. If the right people are not appointed to lead the new Fire and Emergency, structural change will be irrelevant in achieving future outcomes. A lot of it comes down to how people will behave and support others around them. People are at the heart of this change.

*He aha te mea nui o te ao. He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata*

*What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people.*

We urge Fire and Emergency to take this opportunity to create not just **transactional change** but also **transformational change**. Sustainable transformational change is dependent on appointing competent people/leaders (i.e. that have soft skills, qualifications and are highly

competent) into positions that provide effective leadership that respects all personnel. Transformational change is long lasting but takes time to achieve.

We support that the proposal is aimed at encouraging an environment within which the values, vision and operating principles for the future organisation become embedded and provide a framework for ALL personnel to successfully engage with.

We acknowledge the vision of *he waka eke noa* but would suggest this is far from a current reality. This is demonstrated in feedback we received that suggests there is still tension between rural and urban, but rightly so emphasises the need to ensure rural experience and knowledge is not lost in this change process. There is work to be done to see all personnel equally respected across all levels of the organisation, as well as with external related organisations. This proposal presents a very real opportunity to demonstrate *he waka eke noa* in practice, not just in principle.

This submission covers a lot of topics resulting from feedback received. The main focus of the feedback relates to operational position changes with a lesser focus on national headquarters changes other than in the Communications Centres and People Branch).

### Stand-out themes

- the dominant NZ Fire Service Culture of the past will defeat any attempts to build a new Fire and Emergency culture
- naming conventions for rank – a number of alternatives were suggested
- the appointment process itself – while respecting contract and employment law, the current opportunities for appointment are too narrow (including for those on fixed term contract and secondment) and do not adequately consider other relevant legislation such as the State Sector Act, The Crown Entities Act, the Fire and Emergency Act or government reform intentions and direction. Appointments should be based on merit and the best/most suitable person for the position in a reformed Fire and Emergency context
- the span of control for Group Managers and relationships between Group Managers and Brigade leaders will make or break Fire and Emergency's ability to provide effective service delivery. Group Managers need to be a "point of contact" for brigade leaders and freed up to be highly visible. Don't burden these managers with national projects. Group Managers should have not more than seven Brigades reporting to them and have sufficient business support services to enable them to form good working relationships with Brigades
- rural representation – there is a concern that rural wildfire management knowledge and experience will be lost and rural communities will suffer as a consequence. Feedback also suggests that there will be limits to bringing together urban and rural and that this needs further thought
- meeting community needs - those appointed to management positions should appreciate that volunteer brigades and their Chief Fire Officers and Controllers have strong community relationships (and understand their risks) and in return, these communities assist/support their local brigades. 65% of respondents were partly or not confident that the proposal meets community needs

- more attention to health, safety and especially psychological wellbeing which hasn't been called out enough in the structural proposals.

While the proposal indirectly impacts volunteers, the UFBA and FRFANZ are keen to ensure that whatever changes are implemented, volunteerism is sustained and developed so communities continue to be involved in supporting themselves through their local brigades while receiving specialist support services they need from Fire and Emergency and its employees.

This is an opportunity for Fire and Emergency to future proof itself and ensure it has a diverse range of experience, qualifications and skill sets (incl. leadership soft skills) to meet changing community needs. The scope is wider than fire now and this has been acknowledged. *"Managers of the future need to truly partner with communities and stop thinking that the only way to deliver outcomes to communities is to "do it to them" or "do it for them," this will take a real **transformation** in the organisation and very different managers who are able to coordinate and cooperate to achieve outcomes instead of the current command and manage mentality."*

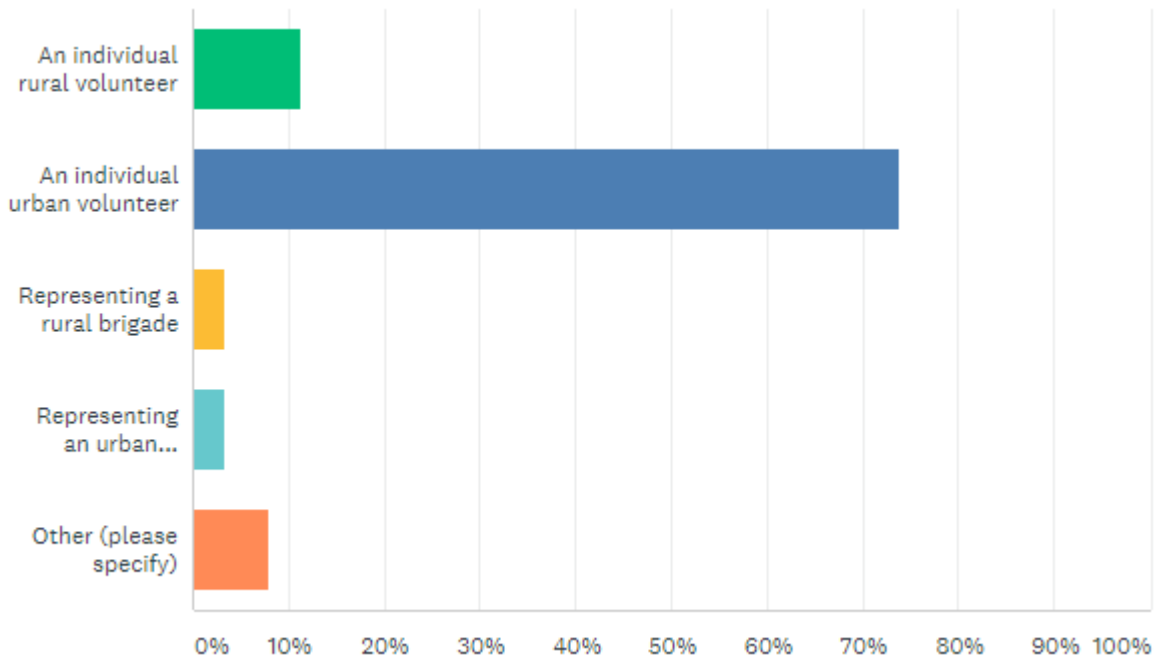
## Methodology

The UFBA, on behalf of the members of the UFBA and FRFANZ, made the Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire and Emergency) proposals available to all its members, as well as a summary document, frequently asked questions and a survey (Attachment 1) designed to ascertain members' opinions on the contents of the proposal.

Results of the survey and views of the Associations have been included in this submission along with other comments and submissions received from individuals and Brigades.

Common themes that were overwhelmingly agreed with are specifically identified in this submission along with other suggestions also made. Some views were significantly mixed and we have done our best to fairly reflect the range of opinions. Recommendations are provided at the end of each common theme and references back to the original proposal are also made for each theme because this submission has been structured to reflect the flow of the original proposal. Where feedback was across multiple sections of the Proposal (i.e. risk) or was not directly related to the proposal we have included this in the Other Issues Raised section.

The submission process reflects membership feedback. 73.86% of the comments were from individual urban volunteers, 11.36% from individual rural volunteers and the remainder were from Brigades or Other. Even though there was a high volume of feedback from urban individuals, the rural and career voices also came through strong as a lot of their feedback was of a similar nature. Career firefighter feedback related mainly to rank and qualifications.



UFBA members include urban, rural, volunteer and career Fire and Emergency personnel. The New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union (NZPFU) made it clear at the outset of this consultation round that they were instructing all their members to channel submissions through them.

The UFBA honoured the intent of our long-standing Partner Agencies Agreement to not interfere in each other's membership and in "good faith" made reference to the NZPFU website for their members to re-direct their submissions to. Towards the end of the consultation process, the President of the NZPFU contacted the UFBA and wanted to know if the survey could also be completed by career staff if they wanted to. The answer was "yes" and the NZPFU said they would let their members know about this. We therefore received some feedback from career personnel which has been incorporated into our submission to ensure we represent the views of all interest groups of our membership. Quote: *"Listen to your career firefighters."*

Some respondents felt the survey was too focused on volunteers (4 of the 16 questions related to volunteers). We acknowledge that view and can only explain our intent to respect the NZPFU's implied request to not represent their members views. We make no judgement on comments and have worked to ensure our final submission is fair and balanced between the various interest groups, even when views were conflicting. Generally, clear themes and common issues have come through and we have highlighted these throughout.

Note that direct quotes from submissions we received are in *italics*.

## Why Change is Important

The proposal is about more than structure and rank – it is an opportunity to nurture a healthy organisational culture across all parts of Fire and Emergency.

Changes proposed will directly affect and impact personnel in positions above Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Controller across the country. While we have leaders at a lot of different levels in Fire and Emergency, these leaders are in prime positions to guide Fire and Emergency personnel and shape Fire and Emergency's future organisational culture. This will in turn set the tone for how Fire and Emergency interacts with the public, its ability to deliver outcomes in partnership with community and how communities and New Zealanders perceive Fire and Emergency. Given the current high level of trust communities have in Fire and Emergency it is important this trust is maintained and grown as a result of proposed changes.

The UFBA and FRFANZ recognise and fully support Fire and Emergency's new approach to respect and inclusion and embracing diversity. It is critical that Fire and Emergency takes this opportunity to appoint people to positions that can move with the times and the changing scope of Fire and Emergency and the increasingly diverse nature of New Zealand communities. It is critical that new leaders embrace the value of volunteerism and nurture its growth and development in line with community aspirations for service. Person specifications for leadership/management positions should include soft skills to bring out the best in all personnel.

*“This is a space where a lot of work is required! Look at how many grievance cases are going on around the country currently.”*

Another reason it is important to get this right, is to ensure all personnel remain safe and healthy (especially in terms of their psychological wellbeing with increasing medical calls and proposals to widen scope of medicals to include red and orange calls for first responders) in all facets of their fire and emergency work (including responding to emergency situations).

We need to know that under new management, all personnel and the public are never put in a situation that could compromise their safety without proper preparation and that the necessary education, support and training is in place to enable personnel to realise their firefighting aspirations, keeping them healthy and safe at all times. This means that appropriate training and development opportunities (through a new competency assessment framework) must be put in place to grow and develop new capabilities and qualifications where needed for the benefit of personnel and their communities. It also means that personnel are not bullied and exposed to psychological or physical harm. This is critical and as Fire and Emergency demonstrates its commitment to looking after its personnel and the public, then trust will grow.

The Fire and Emergency Chief Executive acknowledges the types of issues that Fire and Emergency deals with on a daily basis are changing as the needs of our communities and wider sector and environment are changing. This means that the old way of doing things needs to be refreshed and modernised to ensure Fire and Emergency is more agile to



undertake the 4 R's (readiness, reduction, recovery and response) effectively across a wider scope of service provision (i.e. medical, changes in building standards, climate change etc).

We are not yet fully convinced that the new positions needed reflect demand for the scope of services as detailed in Section 12 of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017.

The UFBA and FRFANZ fully support developing Fire and Emergency in a manner that meets the needs of our communities, but in a way that includes the community in addressing community risk. We would expect to see FENZ harnessing the experience and skills gained by working with the community, adapting and building on them and being more open-minded about new additional qualifications and skill-sets. This is where the new competency assessment framework will need to reflect these changing needs and not just be weighted solely around fire specific skill-sets.

Fire and Emergency can't deliver everything itself. Building partnerships and relationships with other sector agencies will be key to its success, especially in the broader emergency services sector, supporting international deployments and so on. The proposal needs to be clear about how other sector agencies and industry (i.e. forestry) will be engaged to support FENZ and what types of arrangements will be put in place to grow those relationships over time.

## **Intent of the Reform**

As Fire and Emergency moves to make decisions on who sits where in the organisational structure, let's not forget the intent of the reforms that led to the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017. Let's not forget how important it is to have the right capability leading this new organisation to fulfil the intent. This requires the appointment of leaders capable of "transformational" leadership, thinking, behaviour, courage and conviction; which is fundamentally different to leadership on the incident ground, which the sector is already very capable of.

Does this proposal uphold and support reform intentions? For example:

- keep the local rural fire network active and strong
- use contractors and their specialised equipment for rural firefighting
- continue to recognise fire as part of land management for forest and rural land owners
- develop ongoing partnerships with forest owners who want to improve effectiveness of fire services
- recognise significant differences in managing vegetation and urban fire risk are appropriate and should be retained in the new organisation
- recognise the importance of volunteers in delivery of fire and mandated emergency services provided to communities
- recognise that for New Zealand communities to become more resilient within the context of fire and emergency, they must be part of the resilience journey and well connected with Fire and Emergency, principally through (community based) volunteer brigades and their leaders and through Local Advisory Committees

- Fire and Emergency's approach to its management and interactions with volunteers to include mutual trust and respect, fostering volunteers' contributions and involvement in decision making
- have responsibility for volunteers sitting throughout management with managers having appropriately skilled people to support volunteers
- ensure all volunteers receive support appropriate for their needs and circumstances and a reduced administrative burden on volunteers with no need for them to fundraise for emergency services provision
- support, recognise and retain volunteers and rural firefighters including improving capability and their development pathways
- address the three main issues identified in the DIA-led Fire Review process:
  - variable leadership (i.e. 40 different organisations with 40 different leadership models), where management have less oversight and connection to volunteers
  - cultural differences that can generate operational problems
  - support and recognition that is appropriate for the circumstances
- build a unified workforce that has input to and recognises and balances the different needs of career firefighters, support staff, vegetation and urban fire risk, and volunteers in fire services; decision making that affects them, their families and employers
- commitment to the workforce with a particular focus on volunteers to ensure the entire workforce is valued equally
- retain the identity of local leaders where volunteers would still come together in a way much like brigades and rural fire forces did.

Under the Fire and Emergency Act 2017, FENZ must ensure that the new structure, rank and appointment decisions:

- recognise, respect and promote the contribution of Fire and Emergency volunteers
  - to the performance and exercise of Fire and Emergency functions, duties and powers
  - to the maintenance of the well-being and safety of communities
- to consult with Fire and Emergency volunteers and relevant organisations referred to in section 37 on matters that might reasonably be expected to substantially affect those volunteers
- to develop policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain and strengthen the capability of Fire and Emergency volunteers
- To recognise the duty imposed on Fire and Emergency under section 118 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 applies with all necessary modifications to volunteers working for FENZ (maintaining equal employment opportunities and actively and deliberately eliminating discriminatory policies and practices).

We therefore expect Fire and Emergency to utilise this lawful and government policy lens in proposed appointment decisions and to ensure these elements are weaved into performance measures for individuals, teams and directorates and performance assessment processes for Fire and Emergency personnel over time.

## Statistics

### *We all do our fair share*

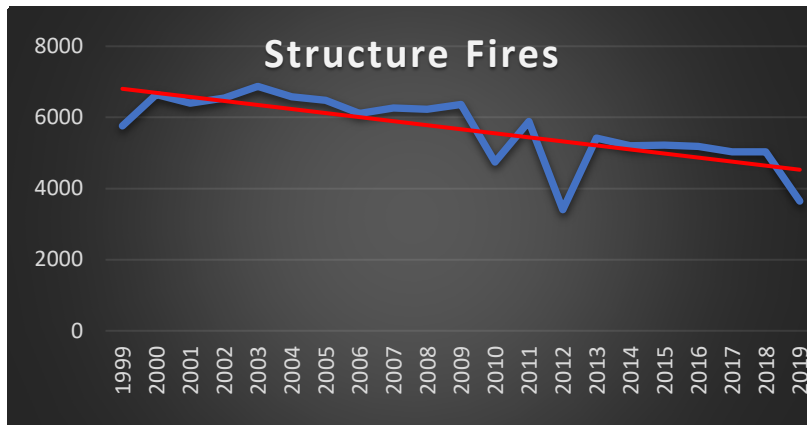
New Zealanders have a strong self-help and good old kiwi “can-do” attitude that is engrained in our communities. Volunteerism is a key element of this self-help ethos and Fire and Emergency is fundamentally a volunteer (community based) organisation, supported by an employee-based infrastructure that provides specialist support and capability.

We acknowledge that all Fire and Emergency personnel play a massive role in providing fire and emergency response services and maintain skill levels appropriate to local risk. We need to continue to work closely together to continue doing it well. Every contribution is equally valuable. A broader focus on the 4 Rs of emergency management will influence a change in the mix of work contributions by all Fire and Emergency personnel. Unlike New Zealand Fire Service, Fire and Emergency has a far more diverse mix of personnel including contractors. Career frontline personnel (on fire appliances) now make up 15% and volunteers 85% of the total emergency response workforce.

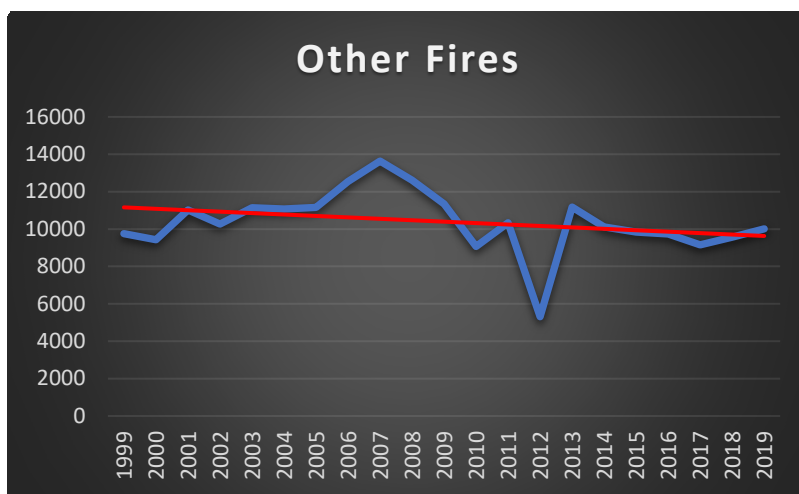
Fire and Emergency personnel contributions reflect variable risk profiles across New Zealand. Risk profiles are a function of a wide range of factors including population distribution and demographics, climate, access to technology, remoteness, and culture to name a few. Outlined below are workload trends derived from 21 years of fire incident reporting data from SMS up to and including 30 June 2019. The data relates to crews that respond and arrive at incidents, not just respond to incidents. The following graphs detail the percentage of average/proportional attendances over 21 years for volunteer and career crews.

The reason the sum of the percentages exceeds 100% in some cases is because both career and volunteer crews attend the same incident on occasion in accordance with local beat lists and pre-determined attendances (PDA's) programmed within ICAD. This is easier to identify when a career and a volunteer brigade respond. However, given some brigades are composite (i.e. a combination of career and volunteer) it is possible that some career responses may also include volunteers.

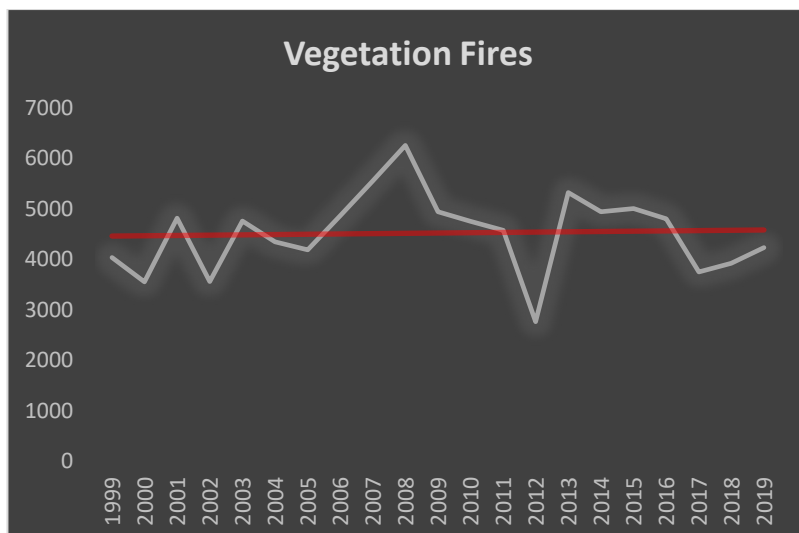
Structure fires have been in steady decline for 21 years despite a nearly ½ million increase in New Zealand's population since the last Census 5 years ago.



Volunteer crews attend 47%, career crews 69% of incidents

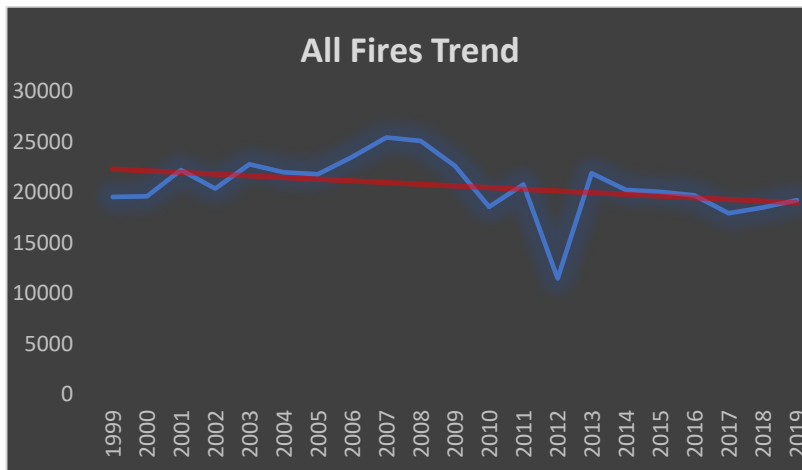


Volunteer crews attend 43%, career crews 61% of incidents



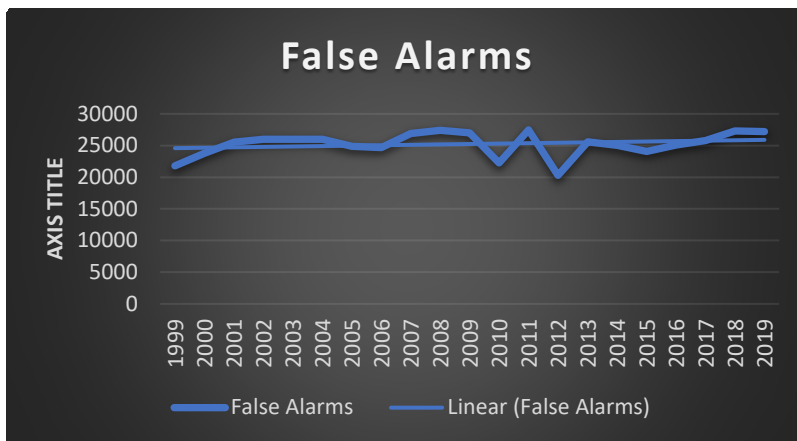
Vegetation wildfires are increasing steadily both here and overseas, in both control, costs and impacts. Fire seasons appear to be longer and many overseas jurisdictions have experienced far greater frequency over recent years. What is the role of climate change here? Wildfires are often of long duration.

Volunteer crews attend 68%, career crews 42% of incidents. Volunteer workloads may increase in the long term.

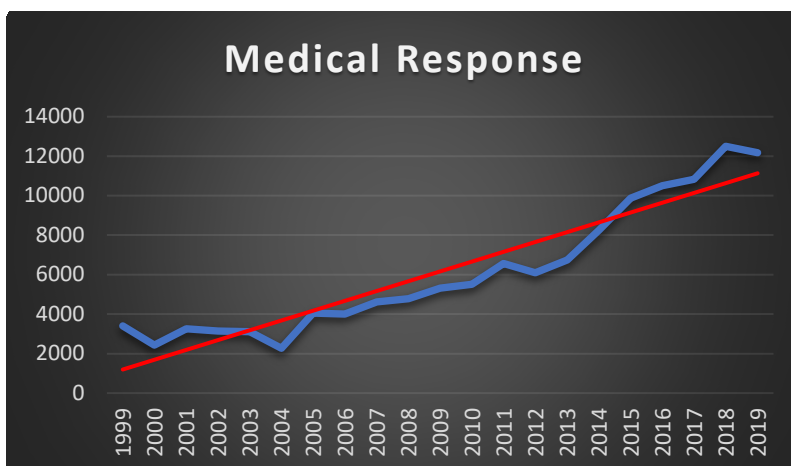


Overall, fires are dropping and yet this is where disproportionate focus and investment is occurring.

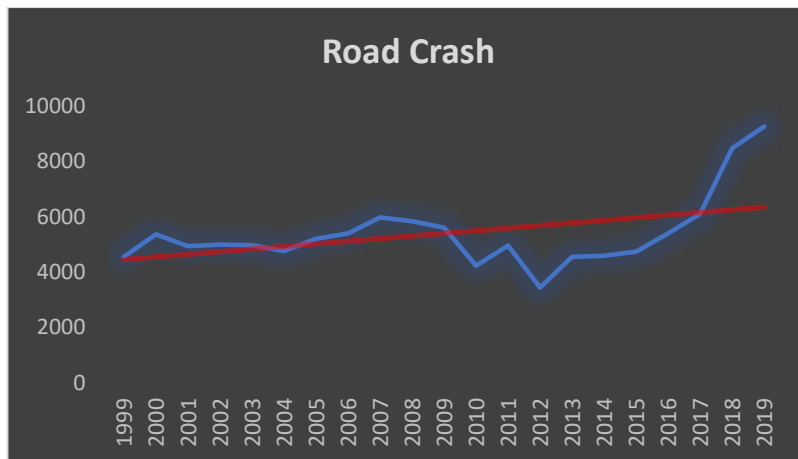
Volunteer crews attend 49%, career crews 60% of incidents



Volunteer crews attend 28%, career crews attend 78%. Reducing the incidence of false alarms will free up resources to focus on higher priority training and risk reduction work and reduce the burden of cost on volunteers, their employers and lost time with family.



Exponential growth in medical call-outs since 2013 and increasing with aging population. Career crews have intense exposure to this work as there are less career stations to spread the workload across and paid firefighters work in major population centres whereas volunteer covered communities are variable in size and scope. Volunteer crews attend 55%, career crew 47% of incidents.



Volunteer crews attend 63%, career crews 49% of incidents.



Volunteer crews attend 49%, career crews 57% of incidents

*What is the nature of Fire and Emergency's business now (where is demand coming from), who is impacted and how and where should investment be made?*

## Common themes – ordered as per the original proposal

These themes are outlined below in the same order as they are mentioned in the proposal document.

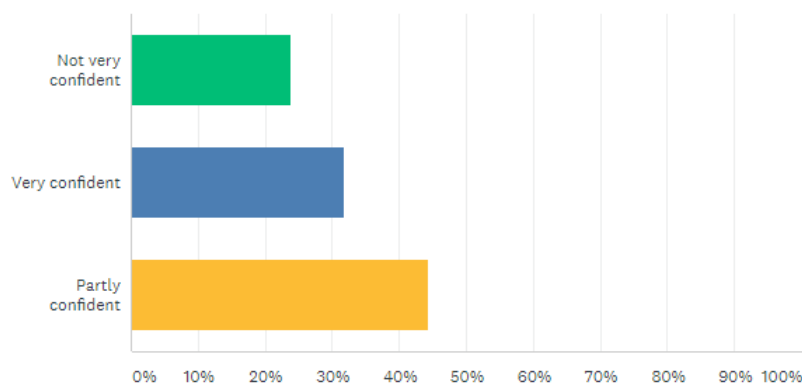
### Section 5 Supporting the new ways of working

#### Meeting community needs

Proposal reference: section 5 page 22

New way of working – “we will be a community focused organisation, committed to serving our communities and working effectively with our partners.”

32.82% of respondents are very confident that the proposed changes to structure/rank will adequately enable Fire and Emergency to deliver fire and emergency services in a way that will meet the future needs of your community, but 44.32% were only partly confident and 23.86% are not confident. This indicates the proposal could be more “outside-in’ – as per the Organisational Design Principle: *“The focus of the organisation is community and partner focused.”*



The risk is, if the best person is not appointed then it could impact the development of the organisation and its ability to deliver to meet community needs.

*“Fire and Emergency have an opportunity to be more community-centric.”*

Effective leadership recognises the power of engaging with different cultures in communities, especially as a lot of our volunteers make up parts of communities and in small towns sometimes large parts of communities. For example, in Central Lakes Area some brigades are made up of personnel identifying as Māori because their communities are almost completely Māori and traditional New Zealand Fire Service management ways of engaging with different cultures may only go so far in terms of their impact and gaining buy-in from brigade members. It is important that brigade members are inspired by and feel safe with their leaders and to know that they are listened to and respected.

We are looking for diversity in leadership that reflects the local cultures of communities (and New Zealand towns are made up of many different cultures) and leadership that respects diversity at all levels of management to give support to the Fire and Emergency Māori Outcomes Strategy and helps build more sustainable communities.

Visible leadership in communities is a must have for Regional Managers, District Managers and Group Managers in particular. Leaders must work to be available to their communities and highly visible with brigades at times when brigade members are most available.

*“Managers should understand the strong community links that volunteer brigades and the brigade chiefs have within communities and assist/support the local brigades.”*

In order to meet future needs of the community, the structure and rank decisions need to consider management approaches that:

- include local people who know and look after local needs
- are more hands on from the top
- listen to brigades and respect brigade autonomy and local leadership *“It depends on who gets the roles and whether they will listen to the staff on the floor or dictate from above”* and *“We need local people to know and manage local needs”*
- attract and retain more volunteer firefighters (including removing large amounts of administration work at a station level, enabling volunteers to engage in more prevention work with communities)
- encourage qualifications to be in the right areas (i.e. enable experienced and qualified people to be in charge of incidents: *“I don't see that a rural area will have rural qualified leaders, and this could be a problem for communities to get the right resources”* and qualifications relating to fire risk management positions)
- enable quick effective decision making
- are resourced appropriately: *“just give us the resources to care for our communities”* and *“Transparency to the wider community over how stretched and under resourced emergency services are.... especially in the smaller towns and regions. Changes to rank and structure will only add to existing frustrations and engagement by volunteers”*
- recognise value and belief systems embedded within local communities and the different types of risks they face: *“The rural need to be represented on a different stream. It's good to have integration but this can be represented as being managed in two different managements, after all they are often two entirely different communities. With a growing likelihood of more vegetation fires we need to keep and grow the existing skills. This new proposal will limit the development of community resilience in rural areas, with more demands on us urban rural brigades being expected to fight more longer duration fires. Most of us joined to look after our towns.”*

*“Fire and Emergency is taking it away from the community, take away the leaders, then that's the community”*



Resilient communities are empowered communities - not managed communities. Make them part of the solution, not the problem.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That positions, proposed management approaches and ways of working be reviewed to ensure they are 'community-centric' and future proofed for meeting changing community's needs (68% were either partly or not at all convinced that the proposal meets their needs).
- Management and leadership positions need to reflect community diversity and understand their values in order to help make them resilient.
- Note: Recognise in unifying rural and urban that they are usually two different types of communities and skill sets and cultures.

### Working collaboratively - urban and rural

Proposal reference: section 5 page 20

New way of working – “we will continue to unify our organisation through working collectively and collaboratively.”

While feedback generally acknowledges the need for unification, we would expect Fire and Emergency to have a supportive plan in place to assist with this transition and for the plan to be able to be tailored in each brigade to support decision making relating to personnel, culture, equipment, property etc. Perhaps this already exists?

Feedback suggests there is some resistance to working collectively across urban and rural. They are different skill-sets *“Keep the two separate at brigade level and brigade management level urban and rural, we can work together but it will mean we can concentrate on our skill requirements and they can theirs. Plus, management will have the right skill-sets”*.

Also *“I have not had good experiences when urban command units have turned up and taken charge with resulting poor decisions being made.”*

Fire and Emergency shouldn't underestimate the impact of social, cultural differences and the impact that unifying them will have. *“Career urban management have trouble relating to our small-town urban brigade and our people, heaven help those small rural brigades and communities.”*

We shouldn't underestimate the valuable relationships that currently exist between rural stations across the country. They have successfully combined their knowledge, experience and skills to good effect when dealing with different incidents in similar geographical locations. There is a concern that this could be lost if different managers come in without the same experience or knowledge.

Some of the very isolated rural communities have worked very hard to establish and keep running their Fire Force. There is a concern that changing the name to Brigades/Stations weakens the link between the community and the Fire Force and may result in less support from the community. It was questioned why we are all being called fire stations and fire brigades when there seems to be a move away from the name 'fire' and the use of 'emergency' coming in.

On the other hand, Fire and Emergency could develop multiple skill-sets within individuals and teams across a range of types of fire and emergencies (for example, those with 70% urban experience growing their experience more in rural and vegetation) that match the risk profiles of communities. These multi skills need to be available to all personnel. *"It depends on how the Groups are formed within each District. If they are geographic then combining urban and rural in each community under one leadership may be helpful."* And *"Much will depend on the actual grouping of brigades. In my view brigades with similar risk profiles that are adjacent to each other should be grouped together."*

The cultural differences between fire personnel from rural communities and urban reflect the way the people must live and survive in vastly different environments. Research indicates that a community's resilience is influenced in direct proportion to the extent it is isolated by location. The more isolated a community is, the more self-sufficient it is and therefore tends to be more resilient. Different cultures have emerged within our society that have evolved out of necessity.

Any attempt to impose one culture upon another or to ignore the strengths that different cultures bring to the table has negative impacts. Human history provides solid evidence of this in relation to "colonisation" by dominant cultures. At a micro level, the same effect will occur if either the urban or rural cultures seek to dominate the other as a result of essentially linear corporate approaches.

While there is an intent to unify and work better together across both rural and urban, the reality is there are deeply engrained cultures and ways of working that will be hard to change. Research from Western Australia on Rural and Urban Approaches (Waroona Fires Report 2016) for example describes the differences in how culture influences values and behaviours amongst rural and urban populations.

The urban culture is described as "do what I'm told," rules based, command authority by rank, a doctrine is risk adverse with a tendency to rigid approaches and an understanding of the needs of the building owner. This is quite different to Australian rural culture that has a "do what works" approach, with decentralised leaders that are elected by the community based on demonstrated competence and experience, a doctrine that recognises initiative, diversity and flexibility and understanding the needs of the rural land owner.

Is any of this familiar in a New Zealand context?

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Any expectations of unification of rural and urban need a supportive plan and operating environment that respects different cultural elements, skillsets and relationships that have already been built in communities. Blending these elements of culture to benefit Fire and Emergency and the community will require insightful, competent leadership.

## Section 6 Proposals

### Naming Conventions

Proposal reference: section 6 page 24

We note the proposed terminology within the Service Delivery Branch of Regions, Districts, Teams and have no specific comment on this other than to query the potential for confusion between 'Team' and 'Group'.

Some Brigades think of themselves as teams though: *"Where a specialist high country fire team trained in the high country, more call outs our way would be great. We are a team, not a brigade, everything done in Australia bushfires is exactly how we are trained the only specialized team in New Zealand."*

### Employee Transition Protocol

Proposal reference: section 6 page 25

### Fixed term contractors and those on secondments

Some existing Area Managers, Principal Rural Fire Officers, Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officers and Assistant Area Managers are on fixed term contracts and secondments and aren't allowed to apply for the roles, despite being affected in the initial appointment rounds.

Volunteers and fixed-term employees of Fire and Emergency are precluded from applying for new/vacant positions within the Service Delivery Branch under the proposed process, unless a position remains unfilled following applications from permanent employees.

Volunteers and fixed-term employees are able to apply for new/vacant positions in the National Headquarters branch contemporaneously to other applicants, but permanent employees for these (and all) positions will have 'preference' - they will be selected automatically, provided they meet the suitability requirements of the position.

We believe that Fire and Emergency is taking too narrow an interpretation of the law, and that from a public policy perspective, there is a very strong case for current seconded

managers, contractors and volunteers to be included in the selection process, to ensure the best person for the position is hired.

Obligations under the Crown Entities Act 2004 apply to Fire and Emergency volunteers through s36(2) of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017. This includes the obligation of 'impartial selection of a suitably qualified person for appointment' as per s118(2)(c) of the Crown Entities Act. However, this does not detract from the obligation to give preference to existing employees before looking at external candidates.

The current proposed application process takes an exceedingly narrow approach. Fire and Emergency should open its application process and ensure it is inclusive, should it wish to conform to the overarching purposes and obligations of its legislation, its operational framework and the stated goals of the restructure.

Fire and Emergency's overarching legislation (as outlined in section 3) explicitly recognises as the legislation's purpose the objective of improving outcomes and engagement with Fire and Emergency volunteers. In pursuit of this, section 36(2) of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017 extends provisions of the Crown Entities Act to cover Fire and Emergency volunteers - in essence requiring Fire and Emergency to treat volunteers as if they were employees.

Fire and Emergency owes its volunteers the duty of being a 'good employer', which statutorily includes the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment.

Public policy interests strongly align with the aim of appointing the best, most skilled and suitable applicant. An application process designed with this in mind therefore should be inclusive of both fixed term employees who have been seconded into management positions in anticipation of the restructure, and Fire and Emergency's wide variety of experienced and skilled volunteers.

An open and inclusive process is desirable from a public policy standpoint but is also demanded by Fire and Emergency's operational frameworks. A major object of the restructure is to transform the culture of Fire and Emergency. The Operating Model outlined at p.12 of the Proposals document states that Fire and Emergency will "...Ensure all of our people can participate fully in our organisation, by having a respectful and inclusive culture that recognises and appreciates the skills they bring to the organisation and their communities".

Fire and Emergency's desired culture transformation, and its goal of ensuring all of its people are able to participate fully in its organisation, necessitates a process oriented to the appointment of the best candidate for the position. Including fixed-term employees and volunteers in the application process from the outset would contribute significantly to these goals and ensure Fire and Emergency is operating within its operational framework and legislative mandate.

As Chief Executive Rhys Jones noted in his introduction to the Proposals document (at p. 2), the proposed changes "...should be considered within a wider context - one that includes the ways in which we are supporting volunteerism and volunteers and our need to have a more

diverse organisation with new approaches to leadership and partnerships". The Chief Executive's desire to place the proposed changes within a wider context, considering the value of volunteers and the need to diversify Fire and Emergency, is entirely congruent with a broadening of the application process to include all the people devoting their time and resources to Fire and Emergency.

Fire and Emergency's employment obligations should not be considered in isolation, nor should its governing legislation be read narrowly. The overarching purposes of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017, the wider obligations to be a good employer under the Crown Entities Act, and the core aims of the restructure all lead to the position that in order for the 'best person' to be appointed, every person engaged in work for Fire and Emergency - permanent, fixed-term and volunteer, should be considered and included in the application process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Widen the Employee Transition Protocol to provide more opportunity to volunteers, fixed term contractors and those on secondments to ensure the best person for the position is hired.

Please note that our Career firefighter members have the opposite view.

## Notification and review of appointments

Under the Fire and Emergency Act there is an obligation to notify vacancies. If the Board intends to fill a position in Fire and Emergency that is vacant or is to become vacant, the Board must, if practicable, notify the vacancy or prospective vacancy in a manner sufficient to enable suitably qualified persons to apply for the position. The State Sector Act requires appointments to be notified to employees of a department. In this case given volunteers make up a large portion of personnel, they too should be notified of appointments.

The UFBA and FRFANZ would also like to know that those that are considered for appointment are credible and have no history of bullying and harassment of personnel, especially of volunteers. Each applicant should be asked the question whether any complaints or disciplinary action (verbal or written) have been upheld against them. This type of question would be consistent with the work Fire and Emergency is doing to remove bullying and harassment and moves forward work relating to the new values and code of behaviour.

Under the Employee Transition Protocol – it states that if an employee disagrees with the decision regarding the outcome of a Position Impact Assessment (PIA) on their position and the outcome of this on them as an individual they can request a review of the decision. Fire and Emergency has clarified that all personnel can apply for a review of an appointment. Fire and Emergency would need to outline the timeframe and process for this.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Notifications of vacancies and opportunities to request a review of appointments be open to all personnel.
- The appointment process considers complaints or disciplinary action (verbal or written) that have been upheld against those being considered for positions.

## Section 7 Service Delivery Branch structure and positions

### District Boundaries

Proposal reference: section 7 page 32

There was no feedback on changes to boundaries.

### Span of control

Proposal reference: section 7 page 32-37

We wanted to explore the ratio of Group Managers to the number of Brigades which could influence the support that Brigades and their members may receive. Note: there is no clear delineation between Volunteer and Career Brigades.

Survey results:

1 Group Manager per 5 Brigades	35.23%
1 Group Manager per 7 Brigades	38.64%
1 Group Manager per 10 Brigades	9.09%
Other (Please specify in the box below)	14.77%

The proposal has a large number of CFO's/Controllers reporting to a single Group Manager. This ratio will not work and is not consistent with the Organisational Design Principle *"spans of control – our guide will be one Manager position for up to eight employees."* If this is the guide for employed personnel, why wouldn't volunteers benefit from a similar ratio to know they are well supported.

It is important there is good communication and not too large a span of control – the majority prefer 1 Group Manager to between 5 and 7 brigades. While some career firefighters agreed with this preference a few also thought a smaller ratio was better: *"The most important aspect within this organisation is the people (He Tangata)....our managers should have the ability to be able to spend time with them, and can only be achieved with a small ratio."* And *"Group Manager should be responsible for a cluster of only 3 stations."*

But the ratio of Group Manager to brigades is only one part of the equation. It is dependent on local conditions, geographic spread, volume of callouts for brigades and we would expect that these factors be considered in every instance: *“The ratios need to be looked at, not just with numbers of brigades, operational requirements, risk, numbers of members, and all the other variables need to be considered as well”*

We would expect a ratio that allows for more one on one with brigades (*“It hopefully would mean more opportunities for the managers to come to the brigades for the members to talk to them openly”*), more local knowledge and better relationships to be built. It is about creating balance - *“close enough to keep up to date with the brigades, but not too top heavy with management.”*

Manageable spans of control for Group Managers is important (i.e. 13 brigades per Group Manager is too many and will impact the relationship they have with brigades). More Group Managers will be needed.

A brigade stated:

- The role of Group Manager isn't clearly defined and the required skill base isn't either, with this new structure all volunteer brigades rural and urban are to be treated the same by the same Group Manager. How can this be achieved when a district will have potentially 11 to 12 brigades per Group Manager all with different requirements. If the Group Manager has a bias or knowledge of one particular brigade type they will struggle to support the other brigade type.
- Currently we report directly to the Area Manager who then reports to the Region Manager. With the creation of another layer, what safe guards will be inserted to maintain consistency across Group Managers? The filtering effect or favouritism to particular Group Managers or brigade types could end up worst they we currently have.

### Support for Managers

The proposal talks about teams – is it referring to Group Managers or teams supporting them? This is not clear but either way some support for these roles to enable Group Managers to engage well with brigades is necessary to consider. *“Group managers can do it if supported, but consultation doesn't say how many people in support roles they will have working for them.” “Maybe - depends on how much and what support the brigades require, geographical distances come into it and how many other administrative reports do the group managers have.”*

Need more VSOs. *“Business support roles should be for all not just rural. The other worry is with DPRFO's not providing the support to the rural brigades in the similar fashion as VSO's do to urban with their removal, who is going to support rural brigades? VSO's are already busy and Fire and Emergency will need more, otherwise it will be back to the support we had 5 years ago.”*

Another theme that came through was to reduce the administration burden on volunteers. There is a risk that there will be no change to the overwhelming burden of administration tasking. *“Be nice to be engaged with management, they are so far away and in their offices. But I feel as brigade members we are getting too much paper work to do. We want to volunteer our time to assist the community not assist management in their jobs, so if they can recognise that that will be a win” and “....I still have not seen in anyway how Fire and Emergency is supporting the large amount of administration work at a station level.”*

Support for all managers across rural and urban is needed. *“Expertise in rural wildfire management and vegetation firefighting must be retained in Group Manager positions. Expertise in urban incident management and in urban firefighting and urban response must also be retained in Group Manager positions. In any District, the collective Group Managers should bring expertise in rural and urban operations so that they can offer collective expertise to any incident. Volunteer support, training and administrative positions need to be established to provide a wide range of support to Rural Brigades. It would make sense that each Group Manager would have volunteer support, training an administrative position answering directly to them for the Brigades under their control. Hawkes Bay Area have submitted an alternative structure. We support that proposal.”*

Support for Group Manager should include training for Brigades: *“It would make sense that each Group Manager would have volunteer support, training an administrative position answering directly to them for the Brigades under their control. A single training template is not appropriate in a unified, integrated FENZ. Any training programme should be tailored to suit the circumstances and needs of the individual Brigade and the functions they perform or wish to perform. A modular approach should not impose training requirements that are not appropriate to that Brigade. The method of training delivery should be improved. There is no value in training for trainings sake. In addition, training undertaken by Rural Fire Forces prior to joining Fire and Emergency should be properly recognised.”*

#### Exclusion of Volunteer Support Officer role

The proposals exclude the role of the Volunteer Support Officer (VSO) but has included the role of the DPRFO, this has created a huge void and questions to be answered for this brigade;

- Currently in OUR District we have 2 VSO's reporting to the Area Manager supporting 12 brigades (6 each for the VSO). We have 4-5 DPRFO supporting 23 Rural Fire Forces (5 each). If this proposal doesn't change, the impact on our VSO's will be huge due to the fact that 2 VSO's will be supporting 35 brigades (17.5 each). Even if more VSO's are employed in Tranche 4 there will be a lag time to fill these positions. This proposal also states that a VSO's only change will be a change of reporting structure to a Group Manager so in this case we have 3 Group Mangers with 2 VSO's how does this work?
- The role of Group Manager versus the VSO isn't explained in the proposal how will the Group Manager support the volunteer brigade?



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- To be visible the ideal span of control for a Group Manager is 5 - 7 brigades.
- A flexible rather than fixed span of control be implemented to allow for variances in geographical spread, workload of brigade and other environmental factors
- Appropriate administrative supports be put in place for Group Managers to have an effective relationship with Brigades and this includes volunteer support, training and administration functions for volunteer urban and rural brigades
- Group Managers be well supported by business positions (also with specific urban and rural knowledge) so as not to add to the administrative burden of Brigades

### Relationship between proposed Group Managers, Brigades and Brigade leaders

Proposal reference: section 7 page 32

The District and Group Managers' ability to build an effective respectful working relationship with Brigades is essential – including spending time with personnel in brigades and understanding the communities they work in. Having empathy for volunteers and building trust with them is vitally important, as is acknowledging the unique position volunteer brigades hold within many communities. *"It depends on who gets the roles and whether they will listen to the staff on the floor or dictate from above"*

Volunteers expect to be treated with the same respect as employees.

*"Volunteers are employees of Fire and Emergency, we just happen to be volunteers. I do agree that the relationship between the local leaders and management is extremely important. But it is also important that brigade leaders have the relationships with others like training officers, VSO's, fleet co-ordinators."*

Expectations of Group Managers (and all other leaders) are to ensure that local leaders (whether rural or urban) are better supported, developed and resourced with appropriate equipment. There is a strong desire for Group Managers in particular to have more regular communication, transparency and contact/visits with everyone in the brigade (not just visits for Honours Nights). *"As a Controller, I really hope to see better relationships and communication between me and the new Group Manager. Communication is key and has been totally lacking in the first two years of Fire and Emergency"*

*"Transparency of management for volunteers at brigade level, particularly in composite brigades where the volunteer fire officers are not considered as relevant by some of the permanent staff and officers. Staff should be allowed to raise their concerns over lack of collaboration between volunteer and permanent officers in composite brigades with the Group Manager if not resolved within the brigade. In totally volunteer brigades, rank should*

*be earned by the officers who demonstrate management competency and leadership, not because there are the longest serving members of the brigade. Brigade members should be allowed to raise concerns about officers regarding their competency to the Group Manager if the concern is not resolved within the brigade."*

The same message has been trying to get through since 2001 in a report commissioned by New Zealand Fire Service called *"Making a Difference for Volunteers"* where it says: *"Volunteers want their ideas and concerns to be heard and acted upon, and many believe that this has not been happening. They express frustration that the hierarchical structure and communication difficulties between National, Regional and local levels and within local brigades affects their ability to know what is happening within the service and for meaningful dialogue and consultation before decisions are made."*

There is increasing disquiet amongst some volunteers at present that relationships between Fire and Emergency management and volunteers is not working as it should be.

*"Will only work if those appointed to Group Managers are sympathetic to volunteers, many aren't and many of those will get reappointed!"*

For example, some existing leaders are not actively supporting their brigade CFOs and Controllers and in some instances are actively working against them. Any changes need to address this issue and be an improvement on the current relationship with volunteers. We expect a genuine effective and respectful working relationship to be developed and that volunteer leaders be empowered in their communities.

There is a strong requirement that Group Managers have experience in a volunteer background and are sympathetic to volunteers. We'd expect that commitment to volunteerism is included in most personnel position descriptions, especially those of District and Group Managers.

Those that completed the survey want to see leadership that:

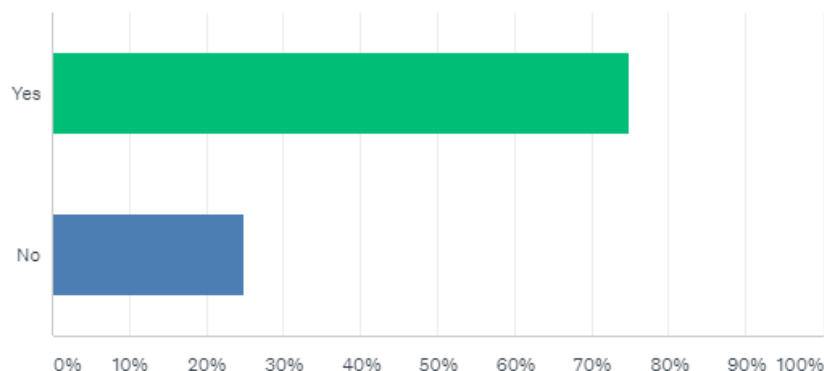
- provides more local support for recruitment of volunteers
- reduces the administration load at a station level
- is open to continually growing brigades' capability and development
- helps remove the split between urban and rural
- ensures that all communities receive the same support and equipment
- understands brigade dynamics and that every volunteer and brigade is different
- is more supportive (i.e. better fatigue management as career staff are better supported in this regard), listens to and is empathetic of volunteers
- ensures ALL personnel get the right equipment, training (i.e. regular pump operator refreshers and more RFTB/structure fire training), replacing dirty gear etc, post-incident support... and be prepared to support and advocate for brigades at higher levels, so that there is a reliable avenue to seek equipment or to provide a response to proposed operational changes

- ensures training and equipment is maintained and up to date, that operational reporting and readiness requirements are met and that brigades are aware of and able to meet their obligations
- assists in command and control of incidents and assumes responsibility in this area
- engage with each Brigade to understand their communities' specific needs - rather than these being dictated by Fire and Emergency Managers from afar who have no idea what each community needs or what each Brigade would like to do for it
- taking Fire and Emergency to the brigades and communities in a culturally and situationally sensitive way that is appropriate to the circumstances and sincerely engaging.

A more direct and effective relationship between Group Managers and their brigades needs to be established with clear accountabilities, trust and honesty. The Group Managers will need to work closely with the local leader (Chief Fire Officer/Controller). If the local leader runs into problems, then the proposed Group Manager would need to stand by them to ensure they get back on track or if they need help to fix any issues. They should not be able to just "wash their hands" of them. They have accountabilities for providing a safe and supportive working environment and to exercise appropriate tools for the challenges encountered. If there are issues, Group Managers will need to take some responsibility and not shift the blame to other parties because the chosen approach didn't work.

#### Point of contact

Being a point of contact works well for most of our members. The proposal currently states that the point of contact for a Chief Fire Officer/Controller is their proposed Group Manager, recognising the role of the local leader and that volunteers aren't employed, but are "engaged" personnel of Fire and Emergency. 75% of those surveyed wanted to keep the relationship as a "point of contact" and only 25% didn't.



- *"We all should be recognised as employed, whether career or volunteer. "*
- *"Chief Fire Officer/Controller would be the local officer but subject to the overarching chain of command"*
- *"...however, we already have a point of contact, being our area commander. It seems that all we are doing is changing words and making more confusion than there needs to be"*

### Same 'Waka'

The UFBA and FRFANZ are fully supportive of the "He waka eke noa" concept and values and would like to see volunteers and contractors welcomed and fully valued in the waka. We know this is the will and intent of the ELT but what we are hearing daily indicates this is not filtering down as it should be. The sacrifices and investments made by volunteers and contractors in order to serve Fire and Emergency are well known. Yet volunteers and contractors feel they are treated as second-class, despite their contributions.

*"Many of them not only feel they are not in the same waka, they are not even on the same ocean."*

Volunteers are volunteers, not employed personnel, and they resent the differentiation between them and career firefighters as being a cause for disunity, no unity or not 'all in the same waka.'

The UFBA and FRFANZ acknowledge the work, and more importantly the will, to change this at a national level – and that it will take time to change culture. Unfortunately, anecdotally it seems this is not filtering down to the regions and areas and must change.

### Accountability

Under the clarity of accountability and responsibility Organisational Design Principle, the UFBA and FRFANZ would like to table the following expectations for consideration:

- District and Group Manager be held accountable for their relationships with, and treatment of volunteer leaders and all volunteer brigades
- District and Group Managers be held accountable for their relationships with contractors, industry brigades and partner agencies and for giving effect to any contracts and agreements in place
- District and Group Managers commit in writing to support their volunteer brigades
- District and Group Managers focus more on learnings, training opportunities and personal development of volunteers rather than punitive action
- District and Group Managers look at how they can improve their soft leadership skills to develop effective working relationships with volunteers and other personnel and undertake to work with volunteer leaders and brigades, not against

- Development of a formal accountability and performance structure (with KPIs) for assessing District and Group Manager commitment to volunteerism, industry and partners and that these KPIs are integrated into the 2021 Statement of Performance Expectations.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Group Managers have regular communication and contact/visits with brigades.
- Group Managers be held to account through formal measures including ensuring Brigades have access to sufficient quality health and safety equipment, that they “live” the values and code of behaviour and have experience in a volunteer background and/or are sympathetic to volunteerism.
- The ‘point of contact’ relationship between Group Managers and Brigades be put into practice as the proposal suggests.

### Preparing our new leaders

Any new leaders need to be inducted and trained to appreciate and value volunteerism and its contribution. They need to understand what it is like to be a volunteer and how to engage and motivate volunteers. : *“That the group manager has a volunteer background - too often paid staff don’t understand the stress the volunteers are under with work and home commitments.”*

*“We don't turn up just because we have a mortgage. We turn up to feel like we've done something positive”*

New leaders need to value volunteerism: *“You cannot treat volunteers like normal civilian staff. We don't get paid. We don't turn up just because we have a mortgage. We turn up to feel like we've done something positive. If this turns into a dysfunctional business structure, you will lose 2/3 of your workforce.”*

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- The UFBA and FRFANZ offer to work with Fire and Emergency on a programme for new leaders that enables them to build strong relationships with volunteers and an understanding of volunteerism.

### Principal Rural Fire Officer and Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer

Proposal reference - Section 7 page 44-45

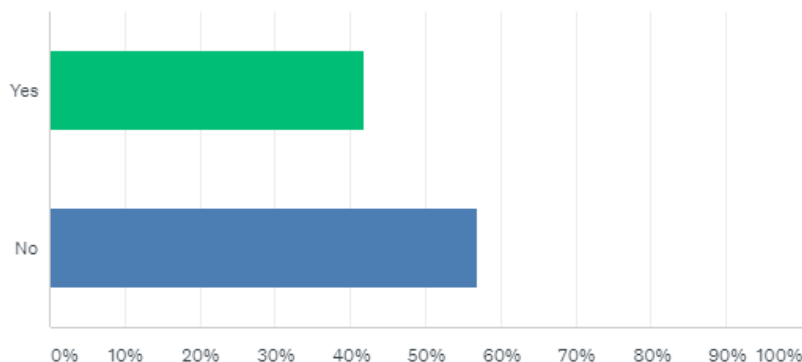
The UFBA and FRFANZ would like to ensure that given climate change is happening and we are likely to see more vegetation fires and extreme weather events, the proposal doesn’t lose or compromise its rural capability at varying level of the organisation.

Fire and Emergency needs access to senior leadership capability in wildfire management (internally and from external partners) and an understanding of rural culture and how to engage with it and support its needs. Also provide for *“more security in relief crews processes in the event of large campaign seasons”*

Fire and Emergency has a challenge to ensure a balance of skill-sets and knowledge across all aspects of fire and emergency, including rural. Some rural members are feeling marginalised (Rural Professional Association notes a similar theme) by the proposed changes but acknowledge the new opportunities and trust that the best person will be appointed to the position. It comes back to how well Fire and Emergency wishes to service its communities and meet its outcomes across a diverse range of services.

*“It’s important that practically skilled people into positions of responsibility and management in the rural firefighting sector as the ability to ‘think on your feet’ and make quick decisions correctly is critical in rural fires. CV’s and interviews are not the only thing to be considered when employing personnel. The need to retain local knowledge in management is necessary as local conditions have a significant effect on how a large fire may be managed.”*

The proposal suggests disestablishing PRFO and DPRFO (and equivalent positions). Accountabilities of this position would be distributed across District Manager, Group Manager, District Risk Reduction and District Community Readiness and Recovery Manager. While 41.86% had concerns about this change, 56.98% didn’t.



Of those that did have concerns they were about loss of specialist rural knowledge and loss of rural specialists *“Who is going to do all the work in this environment when large significant campaign fires occur?” “DPRFO’s know their ground and make quick and good decisions.” “I believe we may lose the expertise in rural matters and not have leaders who understand the rural perspective. It is very different operating in a rural area, where heavy machinery, helicopters, etc; are used regularly and other supporting services like road crews are not quickly available.”*

An alternative view offered by a career fighter was that *“all managers/commander should be expected to be able to fill the roles of incident commander and have available leaders to call on for campaign fires.”* And *“vegetation fire and management are specialised fields.”*

*“Having people skilled in rural fire incidents / vegetation incidents is really beneficial because they are completely different to urban incidents, which is what the majority of the proposed managers would have. We believe there is a need to keep the two separate.”*

There was some support for the status quo - *“Leave them in their positions, we need to keep the vegetation and urban fire management separate....This proposal is going to create disastrous effects for large scale vegetation fire if we remove those experienced people out of their roles. Who's going to do their work.... us small town brigades?”* *“Rural and Urban are not the same, they deserve their own structures. If you really have to do this, why not have two Group Managers, one for Urban, one for Rural?”*

Possible gaps/risks identified in the proposal included:

- *“Only a small percentage of the former rural roles will be picked up by GM, DRR and DCRRM, it remains who, if anyone, will pick up the rest of the workload”*
- *“I would be interested to know if the proposed management areas will have a team or support person with expertise knowledge focussed on the subsets of rural or urban fire risks. Whilst I do not have huge knowledge of the PRFO & DPRFO positions, it would be a shame to lose the specialist knowledge these positions must currently encompass”*
- *“That you would have urban leaders who don't know anything about rural incidents”*
- *“Less support for rural brigades, in training, operational support, VSO type work etc.*

A quote from the survey about concerns relating to PRFO and DPRFO positions being disestablished: *“That the requirements of rural brigades will not be understood by those in the new management positions, and that the needs of rural brigades will not be satisfied. That there may be “anti-rural” sentiment if someone not suitable for the role from an Urban background fills a Group Manager role in charge of rural brigades, and that rural brigades will suffer or disband because of this”*

On the flipside, some are concerned that rural don't know enough about urban. *“Many of those in these rural roles have no urban command experience, and many have very little if any experience in emergency response work. If the organisation is to absorb all the current ones, we are going to end up with District Managers, Group Managers and these associated roles being filled by non-qualified and non-suitable people.”*

Another similar comment is: *“Our current career professional Fire Risk Management Officers, many of whom have decades of built environment, specialist fire investigation skills, have built up large community relationships are now being asked to compete in new positions against Deputy Rural Fire Officers. I believe the proposals outlined in this document will divide and disrupt Fire Emergency New Zealand, and cause angst among many of the experienced and*



*trained professional career staff currently employed. If these proposals go ahead, the requirement for Senior Fire and Emergency Managers to have training and experience throughout ALL emergency incidents will no longer be present. This will create a serious safety and wellbeing issue for those career professional staff forced to work alongside and report to those Managers."*

### Working with industry partners

Fire and Emergency managers need to adapt to working with partner agencies, industry brigades and contractors to fully utilise the expertise and resources within this sector. This will require managers to respect the skills and resources from this sector and to operate as an equal and respectful partner with other sectors. Fully utilising partner resources is key to reducing the ever-increasing workload on volunteers, particularly in the event of long duration events, but this will require managers to build respectful and meaningful relationships at the operational level.

### Retaining rural commitment

This quote says it all: *"We would build on our unified service delivery model by bringing together rural and urban at national, region and district level."* This has been a constant theme that has been talked about since the early meetings to discuss the Fire Services Review Document. But, at a grass roots Rural Brigade level this theme feels like it's just words, not backed up by action. Our Rural Brigades do not trust the current proposals and do not have confidence in the proposal as it stands because it signals more of the same old management style and management attitudes. If District and Group Managers are appointed who do not have a commitment to an inclusive, unified service delivery model then this will signal "more of the same old management style" and will lead to a failure, at Brigade and District level, of the unified service delivery model.

*"Without the injection of "new blood" and new attitudes which includes Group Managers with specialist rural wildfire firefighting and rural incident management, and a less dogmatic management approach it is likely that....., Fire and Emergency could lose as many as half their more remote Rural Brigades as Rural Firefighters, feeling betrayed and overlooked by the reorganisation, find other, more rewarding, ways to serve their small communities."*

*Rural Firefighters choose to serve their communities, not a FENZ bureaucracy. This proposal does not seem like an integration of our Rural Brigades into FENZ, it appears to represent a total surrender of Rural Brigades to the old NZ Fire Service model."*

Another comment: *"The current Position Description for Group Managers is too restrictive. The way it is worded at the moment potentially excludes all, or most PRFOs and DPRFOs."*



*“If this was to occur and the Group Managers positions were filled only from the Paid Firefighter ranks the relationship between FENZ and its Rural Brigades could fail because of the lack of understanding of the difference between Urban Fire Fighting and Rural Fire Fighting. Substantive rural wildfire management and vegetation firefighting experience would be lost. Expertise in rural wildfire management and vegetation firefighting must be retained in Group Manager positions. Expertise in urban incident management and in urban firefighting and urban response must also be retained in Group Manager positions. In any District, the collective Group Managers should bring expertise in rural and urban operations so that they can offer collective expertise to any incident.*

*The proposed Position Description for Group Managers needs to be expanded and amended to allow for rural and urban managers to take up these positions. There will need to be a transition period during which time all parties gain trust, understanding and confidence with each other. Ultimately, over a transition period, passage of time will allow a revised organisational structure to succeed. This proposal does not seem like an integration of our Rural Brigades into FENZ, it appears to represent a total surrender of Rural Brigades to the old NZ Fire Service model. Rural volunteers can choose to just walk away from FENZ. The loss of Rural Brigades has started. As this occurs Fire and Emergency will lose rural intelligence and capability including:*

- loss of important local knowledge about terrain, water sources, access and local weather patterns*
- reduced access to privately owned rural based resources that could assist at an incident,*
- significant loss of Rural Crew initiated fire reduction, fire prevention and risk management in the area covered by the former Brigade,*
- loss of practical expertise particularly with respect to wildfire management,*
- loss of knowledge of potential hazards in an area with particular reference to those hazards that could impact on an Urban Crew unfamiliar with the location*
- loss of readily available four-wheel drive capability*
- loss of support in the local community served by the former Rural Brigade*
- There is a risk of larger rural fire incidents resulting from loss of remote Rural Brigade response especially in the face of current climate change.”*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That with more vegetation fires, specialist wildfire capability and capacity mustn't be marginalised or knowledge lost, especially in management/leadership positions.
- Factor in the need to maintain and build partnerships with other sectors (i.e. forestry) with any changes to rural positions.
- The proposal better recognise what motivates and retains rural commitment in order to preserve and grow the rural capability it currently has.
- Group Manager position descriptions allow for rural and urban managers to take up the positions.

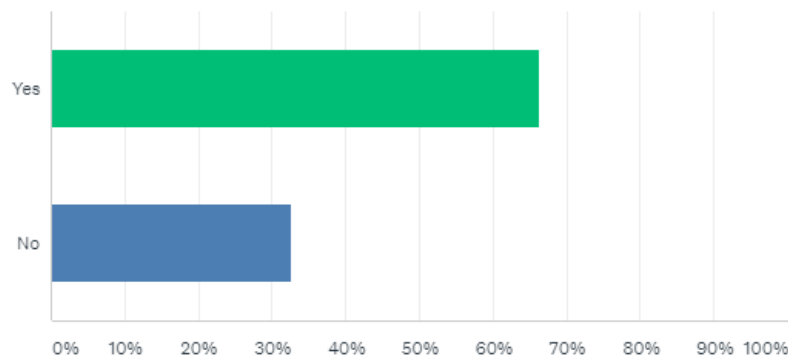
## Proposed approach to recruitment

Proposal reference: section 7 page 32

Keeping in mind legal obligations of Fire and Emergency the employer (and the Employee Transition Protocol), we asked if members and their brigades were convinced that new and changing roles provide adequate opportunity for Fire and Emergency personnel and/or external applicants to apply for roles.

*“Not at all. They only seek externally if they can’t be filled internally. That’s not a way to find the best people. It’s the exact behaviour firefighters argue against when we talk about diversity quotas in recruitment.”*

Most (66.28%) thought there was adequate opportunity but of those that would like to see more opportunity for other applicants, their concerns (32.56%) were that new blood seems limited since internal applicants are preferred and that rural will not get an opportunity.



### Specific comments:

- *“The senior specialist advisor needs to be opened up to more than just a Senior Fire Risk Management officer or a DPRFO”*
- *“Maybe - traditionally there has been one progression path, generally starting from career firefighter. It appears some application requirements maybe too limiting, allowing for those with extensive operational experience, while needing to be in the mix, can put an uneven emphasis on skills that don't necessarily serve the diversity of the organisation. There is also a concern, staff unsuccessful in getting their preferred or most suitable role, will be put into a role as an employment gap filler and be uncommitted to that role”*
- *“Some positions are ring fenced, so persons with vast experience are not eligible to apply for positions because of their current role. Where others are proposed into senior positions”*
- *“No, it appears semi-external applicants, i.e. Chief Fire Officer's, Career Senior Station Officers, are not going to be allowed to apply for any positions, even at Group Manager level, because of the way the job positions are worded”*

- *"...The risk management area will be a dumping ground for rural staff who can't get appointed elsewhere. We work very closely with our risk management people and are very concerned that they are being overlooked"*
- *"The rank requirement for District and Group Managers is being used as a proxy to make these roles "closed pool" for those already in the equivalent leadership roles now. They say that volunteers are able to apply but the rank (or equivalent experience) requirement as a prerequisite to even be considered is too high. The separation of position and rank should mean that someone could hold the position of District and Group Manager and NOT hold the rank. The requirement to hold the rank is unnecessary and should be changed such that it is "desirable" but not essential."*

*"I am worried that folk in current roles will be preselected for the new roles - rather than following a robust recruitment process. I am concerned it will be the same old blokes just wearing different hats."*

An alternative view from a career firefighter was: *"I do not believe that volunteers and contractors would have the required experience and training to safely carry out the job of a senior fire officer that is required to respond to all types of emergency incidents and assume control. Senior professional Officers such as the proposed District and Group Managers must have adequate experience and training to respond to ALL types of incidents, and therefore MUST be career professional firefighters. Many Station Officers and Senior Station Officers would struggle to maintain respect for any manager that has not also "walked in their shoes". Respect must be earned, it is not automatically given."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fire and Emergency considers a wider pool of candidates for positions and review position descriptions and person specifications to enable this to occur, while still requiring necessary experience, qualifications and leadership skills to be in place.

Note: Our career firefighter members have a different view, that District and Group Managers should not be advertised to all personnel including volunteers and contractors.

## Best suited person

The position descriptions say: *"For affected candidates the requirement is to meet the minimum selection criteria for the position, rather than the normal requirement of being the 'best suited person' for the position."* Although the Proposal states: *'If there was more than one affected employee who met the suitability requirements for a position, the person best suited would be offered the position.'*

The Fire and Emergency Act states: Appointments on merit - The Board, in making an appointment to Fire and Emergency under this Act, must give preference to the person who is best suited to the position.

***“We must have the BEST persons for the jobs.”***

*“Appoint persons who are qualified, especially in Urban areas for urban operations. Keep and increase the amount of VSO's. I agree with the proposed CRR advisor roles to assist brigades engage more with communities. Don't appoint persons because they meet the minimum criteria, we must have the BEST persons for the jobs.”*

The UFBA and FRFANZ believe the best person suited for the job should be applied and no exceptions. ***“It is important that the net is cast wide enough to ensure the correct people are appointed.... Appointees should have the skill set to cultivate positive working relationships with the volunteer sector. Supporting volunteer brigade chiefs and management teams without taking over or undermining local leadership during business as usual brigade management and leadership activities.”*** Achieving the intent of reform and an improved connection with the community must weigh heavily against a pure human resource driven process that looks at employment law in isolation of other related law.

It is critical that the person specification reflects the future needs of the communities and genuine respect for volunteerism. *“My biggest concern is the “closed pool” being used to limit candidates that can apply to the key roles of District and Group Managers based on the false belief that health and safety will be put at risk if position and rank are separated in these roles.”*

*“The right people employed into the right roles with the appropriate amount of service, qualifications and assessed against known criteria. The BEST person in a role.”*

The best suited for the job should not just be technical firefighting qualifications but also take into account soft skills and ability to lead in a manner that is respectful. This is an opportunity for change to meet changing community needs and not just “reshuffling the deck-chairs” or keeping the status quo: *“Just names. Same people. Will make no difference.”* Another quote of relevance: *“Their level or experience, their proven ability to handle personnel, to have experience with the volunteer culture. Not just be given the job because there is nothing else in the tree for them in their existing position. They need to have experience in commanding fires too if they are responding to incidents to assist us.”*

The scope of positions and community expectations are changing (refer to section 12 of the Fire and Emergency Act) and need to be considered, the growing demand for medicals,

*“Listen to the community and the brigade before you fully define roles for an area; not all communities and stations are the same.”*

changes impacting the type of emergencies (i.e. extreme weather events and climate change) and eventually risk profiles. Position descriptions need to anticipate current and potential changes in scope – the question is do they do this now or do they need further amendment?

Finding the best suited person is critical. The selection criteria for most position descriptions does not sufficiently or appropriately recognise the special

relationship Fire and Emergency has and needs to continue to develop with its volunteers. Some position description selection criteria don't even mention volunteers at all and should do. All personnel (including NHQ personnel) in Fire and Emergency need to be able to bring out the best in our volunteers and provide an environment for them to look after their communities while encouraging their personal growth. This is a mandated requirement of Fire and Emergency and its personnel, a “new duty” that cannot be ignored.

The process used to determine who is appropriate for a position/rank needs to consider and respect the leadership qualities and qualifications/experiences that may be found in different types of personnel (operational, non-operational, volunteer, career, urban, rural) and in some cases perhaps outside the organisation, depending on the position to be filled.

This change process should recognise the unique contribution of all personnel and (working within employment contract provisions), still enable (where legally possible) other personnel that may not currently be “employed” by Fire and Emergency opportunities to apply for roles if they meet the requirements. Section 25 of the Fire and Emergency Act states that appointments to roles, rank or positions in Fire and Emergency must be either a Fire and Emergency employee or a Fire and Emergency volunteer. While the Employee Transition Protocol excludes volunteers and contractors, it should be recognised that if they happen to meet the requirements for a position and are “suitable/best person for the position” that they can be considered for appointment at some stage in the process.

The District Manager personal specification refers to “ability to establish credibility with staff, volunteers and contractors.” While the intent of this is good its wording is an easy-out – having the “ability to” is quite different from being able to demonstrate and prove commitment. There's a difference between saying something knowing the answer that the interviewer wants to hear and actually having evidence of the fact. While many incumbent managers clearly understand this requirement, some openly display hostility toward contractors and volunteers; this hostility is growing as some perceive volunteers, contractors and rural staff as second-best. This cannot be allowed to continue regardless of the preferred status of an applicant for these positions or this bad behaviour will become entrenched into the new organisation as it is in some places in New Zealand and will prevent any future positive culture change. Any history of this type of behaviour should exclude an applicant from the process due to being entirely unsuitable for the position.

The UFBA and FRFANZ would like to see a stronger requirement in the selection criteria reflecting the need to sustain and nurture volunteerism and proof of their commitment to

volunteerism, including a commitment to implementing the volunteerism principles and how they would uphold them, not just understanding the principles. They would need to talk about the contribution they would make to implementing the volunteerism strategy and what they will commit to delivering for volunteers to enable their health and safety, access to appropriate assets and resources to do their work and support and assistance in development and for psychological wellbeing. Such commitments should become part of their KPIs.

The selection criteria for some positions should be opened up, where appropriate, so that a broader range of leaders can be attracted into these roles, both from within and from outside the traditional sources (not just Fire and Emergency, Department of Conservation or overseas fire services). However, this was also contradicted *“many of the risk reduction and community positions if they are given to civilians who know little about how we operate could impact on the standing of fire brigades in their communities. This could be true of Local Advisory Committees too who don't understand how we work in a voluntary capacity.”*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fire and Emergency comply with legislation and appoint the best suited person for the role (not a minimum criteria)
- Position descriptions and selection criteria be rewritten to better reflect commitment to and respect for volunteerism
- Build in a heavier weighting towards soft leadership skill sets especially for Group and District Managers when determining the best person for a position
- Widen the scope of the new roles to take on additional functions in the Act, impacts of climate change and potentially the risk profiles of local communities
- Acknowledge that the largest proportion of Fire and Emergency's workforce are volunteers who have diverse skill sets that could in some cases adequately perform certain roles and so therefore the process must not disadvantage them.

## Equal employment opportunity

Fire and Emergency as a Crown Entity is obliged to be a good employer which includes operating a personnel policy that complies with the principle of being a good employer, including an equal employment opportunities programme which identifies and eliminates all aspects of policies, procedures, and other institutional barriers that cause or perpetuate, or tend to cause or perpetuate, inequality in respect of the employment of any persons or group of persons.

It also requires a policy containing provisions generally accepted as necessary for the fair and proper treatment of employees in all aspects of their employment, including provisions requiring:

- good and safe working conditions; and
- an equal employment opportunities programme; and
- the impartial selection of suitably qualified persons for appointment; and
- recognition of—
  - the aims and aspirations of Māori; and
  - the employment requirements of Māori; and
  - the need for involvement of Māori as employees of the entity; and
- opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees; and
- recognition of the aims and aspirations and employment requirements, and the cultural differences, of ethnic or minority groups; and
- recognition of the employment requirements of women; and
- recognition of the employment requirements of persons with disabilities.

The Crown Entities Act refers to employees but under the Fire and Emergency Act NZ it recognises that under Section 162 sections 120 to 126 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 apply to a Fire and Emergency volunteer as if that volunteer were an employee of Fire and Emergency (where practical).

*“We all should be recognised as employed, whether career or volunteer.”*

Although this is about “protections from liability of members, office holders, and employees”, one wonders why, given volunteers are exposed to the same issues and challenges as career staff. We expect that Fire and Emergency volunteers be afforded the same treatment (other than being paid) in every respect including the ability to apply for positions within Fire and Emergency that they can demonstrate they have the capability for or ability to be trained in.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Treat all personnel fairly throughout the restructuring process to comply with the Crown Entities Act, the Fire and Emergency Act and the State Sector Act especially relating to equal employment opportunity
- Afford volunteers the same treatment (other than being paid) in every respect including the ability to apply for positions within Fire and Emergency where they can demonstrate they have the capability or ability to be trained.



## Suitably qualified

Although the Crown Entities Act refers to suitably qualified (without definition) the Fire and Emergency Act 2017 refers to suitably qualified or trained to perform an exercise, duty, function or power. There is an ability for those that **that can** be trained to also perform a role.

The Act also states that the Fire and Emergency board may only authorise a person who the board is satisfied is suitably qualified or trained to perform or exercise the function, duty, or power.

There is no definition of 'suitably qualified.' Fire and Emergency needs to define 'suitably qualified' and build in its new values and respect and inclusion approach to ensure those that are appointed are capable of fair and effective leadership and management that empowers all personnel to perform to their best. This includes respecting volunteerism and how to work with volunteers to build a positive workplace culture. It is also consistent with the Organisational Design Principle: that structure and positions will incorporate a commitment to diversity, inclusion and respect, including meeting out Treaty of Waitangi commitments.

Given Fire and Emergency is recognising that Fire and Emergency is more than just being about fires and growing capability in medical and first responders and other emergency services that our communities need – it is important that the term 'suitably qualified' is not just constrained to technical firefighting qualifications (refer to Section 12 of the Fire and Emergency Act). In addition, good leaders and managers need more than just technical qualifications, they also need "soft skills" in the position descriptions that enable them to engage effectively with people and build effective working relationship that empower those around them.

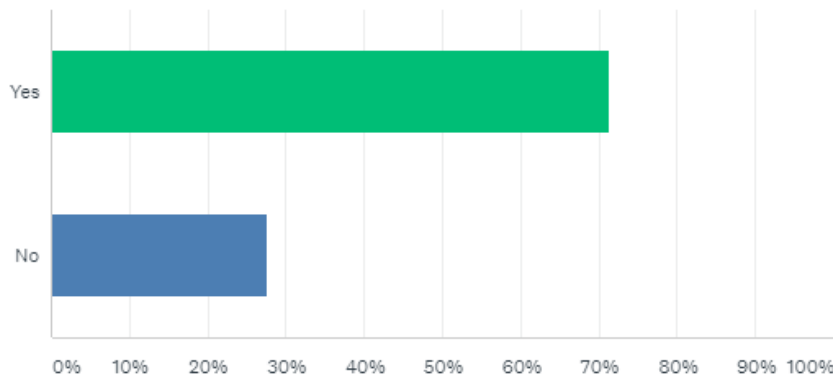
### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fire and Emergency define "suitably qualified" and when it does so ensure that it relates to competence which is wider than just technical qualifications and includes behavioural soft leadership skills and recognises that the scope of suitably qualified could be more than just fire related.

## Soft leadership skills

71.26% of survey respondents were confident that soft skills for positions are adequately reflected in the proposal, supporting information and job descriptions.





Soft skills mean the combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve.

Of those that didn't think soft skills came through strong enough (27.59%) they were concerned that the proposal would end up with 'jobs for the boys.' They are also concerned that there is no mention of volunteerism when considering existing personnel for new positions (proposed assessment process for affected employees).

There seems to be a major focus on operational experience, yet District Managers need to manage people, budgets, resources, stakeholders etc. means the operational experience would be most suited at the Group Manager level, those who have direct contact with the brigades.

There is an even bigger risk than soft leadership skills not being present and that is *"Regardless of what the position descriptions say, if the pool of eligible candidates is limited to the same people that are currently in the roles, then they will get the roles and the opportunity to inject new leadership talent will be lost."*

Fire and Emergency needs to ask for proof of these skills the people who are going to be appointed. Fire and Emergency would need to consider *"What training does a Group Manager do to obtain soft skills, many volunteers already have these as they are business operators."*

Rather than soft skills some would *"rather see trainers once a month helping the trainers train the crew, we don't get a lot of help."*

We need commitment and leadership by example from the top *“The positions will be filled by paid staff. While there is a lot of talk of encouraging volunteers just use training as an example of the disinterest from the top of the organisation. When paid recruits graduate national commanders are in attendance. When a recruit course concludes no senior Fire and Emergency management attend and welcome them to the organisation. They seem to have no real interest.”*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate a requirement for soft leadership skills into the appointment process.
- That existing leaders lead by example and value all personnel.

## Section 8 Future of rank

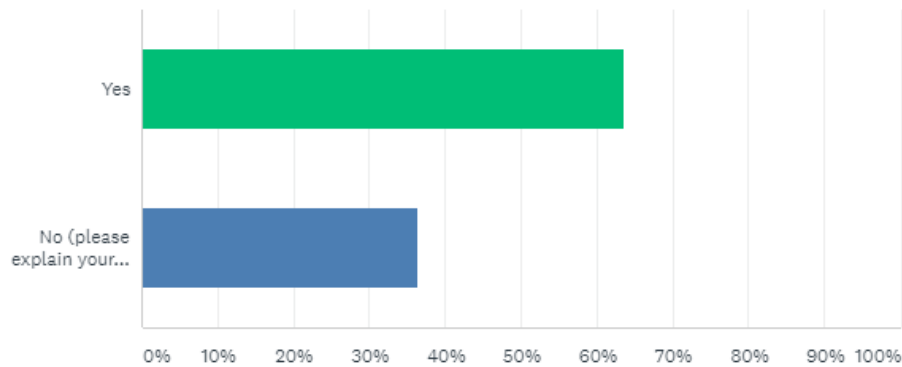
### Position and rank

Proposal reference: section 8

Historically rank has been associated with seniority and authority, and best suits organisations that operate a “command and control” doctrine. We note the proposal indicates that this is proposed to continue but only on the incident ground in a fast-moving dynamic emergency scenario. While not specifically referenced, this reads as code for justifying the retention of rank to an urban audience in relation to “fast moving dynamic situations.” Rank is not used in wildfire management nationally or internationally. Do these comments in the proposals mean that “wildfires” are not fast moving and dynamic emergency situations? Where is the evidence of this?

In the proposal, rank is no longer necessary for everyday management decisions (excluding on the incident ground). This makes sense, is essential to building and maintaining constructive relationships and networks and enables different types of leadership qualities to come through at more levels in the organisation, empowering more staff to do the right thing – as they are being encouraged to do.

63.64% of survey respondents agree with the proposed treatment of rank for operational purposes to control and direct personnel in fast moving and dynamic fire and emergency situations, where escalation of incident management competency requires immediate attention.



Of those that had concerns (36.36%), they related to the need to respect different skill-sets of urban and rural *“Again, two separate roles, rural managers know little about large building fire control ... and urban managers will struggle with getting and managing the resources for a vegetation fire”* and keeping the status quo (i.e. if it’s not broke don’t fix it. *“I believe the system we have now works perfectly”*).

There was also a view from career firefighters that:

- *“we need to maintain levels of rank and command at operational level, i.e. SO, SSO as their roles are very different”*
- *“concerned at the potential for future managers/leaders having a lack of operational experience”*
- *“You can NOT in any way have a person who has not had substantial training, time and assessed qualifications, in ANY sort of command structure. This can NOT be shortened (lateral entry, lowered qualifications etc), without seriously endangering our people or the public.”*
- *“I have great concern reading the proposal document where it states positions for District and Group Managers will be advertised to all personnel including volunteers and contractors. I do not believe that volunteers and contractors would have the required experience and training to safely carry out the job of a senior fire officer that is required to respond to all types of emergency incidents and assume control. Senior professional Officers such as the proposed District and Group Managers must have adequate experience and training to respond to ALL types of incidents, and therefore MUST be career professional firefighters. Many Station Officers and Senior Station Officers would struggle to maintain respect for any manager that has not also “walked in their shoes”. Respect must be earned, it is not automatically given..... Career professional firefighters look after the safety and well-being of the majority of the population of New Zealand with all Metropolitan and many Provincial centres covered by professional staff. A career professional officer in a Provincial Centre will have had the same minimum training and experience as an officer at a Metropolitan City. Both centres have the same rigorous training requirements, minimum years of service of at least 6 years, and successfully pass a formal application and assessment process, including interviews, before this rank is earned.”*
- *“We would like to get absolute assurance that there would be suitably qualified people in charge of incidences and brigades.”*

- *“Why complicate rank and role....rank is specifically designated to enable effective command and control and MUST remain. It is only civilian personnel who don’t understand or appreciate the rank structure and its importance to what we do EVERYDAY!”*

Even in today’s environment application of rank means different things to different people, depending on someone’s background and experiences. *“I found that for rank, it started off with the base assumption that it was a good thing and that everyone understood what it was and how good it was and carried on from there. “Rank is needed in fast-moving and dynamic fire and emergency response...” - really? Rural has operated very successfully without rank and if a wildfire isn’t fast-moving and dynamic, I don’t know what is. I don’t dispute that rank may be useful, but I think the proposal overcomplicates things and makes assumptions that aren’t supported by anything. I think the documentation assumes a very high level of knowledge of existing urban systems which makes it difficult for rural people to engage with.”*

Another example of what rank means to rural: *“Rural wildfire firefighting and rural incident management skills need to be retained within Fire and Emergency Service Delivery Branch, at a District Leadership Team level and at a Brigade level. These skills need to be further developed and enhanced. These proposals need to be modified to clearly demonstrate that Fire and Emergency intends to maintain and develop the role of specialist rural wildfire firefighters, rural firefighters and experienced rural wildfire incident managers at a District Leadership Team level and at a Brigade level. As a Rural Fire Force with a “country ethos” we have generally been unimpressed by rank and authority. We don’t operate under that sort of structure within our Brigade. We don’t appreciate rank which relies on giving orders rather than providing inclusive leadership. Our training and culture have always empowered us to question, and provide sensible alternatives, to directions which seem to put us, and fellow firefighters at risk, or reduce their effectiveness. Within our Rural Fire Force there is an inherent recognition and respect of those who demonstrate good leadership skills, support, experience and empathy (regardless of rank). Our current Rural Fire Officer group show those skills and have our respect, we would follow them to hell and back, others we have met on the job could make that trip on their own. This attitude to rank tends to differ from the attitudes of Urban Brigades that were established and operate under a rank system.”*

Another similar example: *“Where people need to use (or pull) rank as an alternative to good leadership we will be very unimpressed.”*

Another view is that rank needs to be with the person that has the right amount of experience and qualifications to be in charge of incidents. *“Confusion will occur on the Fireground as to who is in charge, i.e. Chiefs and Controllers wear the white helmets or will this change, if they are a District Manager with no fire ground experience then definitely not”*

Further information was requested relating to transparency of rank decisions in the appointment process. *“They need to be clearer on how they will manage the appointment process for rank. At present all they are saying is there will be a process and not identifying that process.”*

The term “rank” brings with it connotations of a traditional command and a “telling” culture that may not always bring out the best in people. This approach is not the modern health and safety approach where personnel are empowered to “speak up” and talk about what doesn’t feel safe and why.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

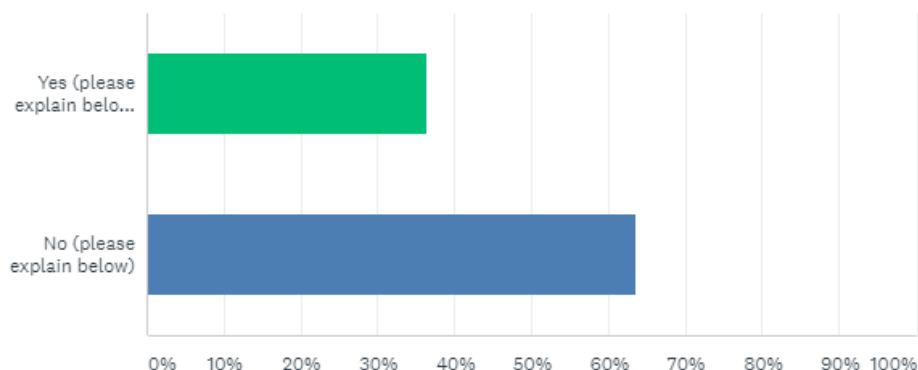
- Using the term ‘rank’ has different meanings for rural and this needs to be appreciated and respected.
- It may not need to be a specific requirement of District Managers and Group Managers to have rank, as long as the capability to manage an incident is available within a geographic location.

Note from Career firefighter members: District and Group Managers must have adequate experience and training to respond to ALL types of incidents, and therefore MUST be career professional firefighters. In addition, there is a view that if a person is not operational then they shouldn’t have rank.

## Separate rank names

The proposal suggests rank names of Chief Officer for District Manager and Deputy Chief Officer for Group Manager.

63.64% of respondents said there shouldn’t be both a position and a rank name for the same person. *“There is no need for both, we are making it too confusing and hard to follow, it should be role, and your role should be identified as such, people educated so they know what the role is, and for those who are in non-operational roles, identified as such, but as some of these personnel do respond, they should have an operational role and it be clearly identified and understandable. Keep it simple.”*



Members of some brigades would like to see a move away from any military command type titles as it has a negative impact on volunteerism and creates a mind-set within District Management that it is not fit for purpose in this new environment.

On the other hand, another Brigade made the following comment:

- The use of the word Chief Officer and Deputy Officer as an operational rank is at least confusing or at worst mischievous for their similarity to the current volunteer rank of CFO or DCFO.
- The creation of an organisational title and then an operational rank will only create confusion amongst staff and the community. Both these roles have a very clear operational requirement as such they should have one title, we are suggesting commander, in line with Police and military roles.
- Some Districts where are geographically spread and therefore see a need for rural and urban qualified managers to maintain an operational roster for large or complex events both rural or urban. How will this be maintained with only 1 District Manager and 5 Group Managers – they can't utilise District Risk Reduction Officers or District Community Readiness and Recovery Officers as they will need to maintain an operational roster for investigations and they won't have the experience or qualifications to respond as executive officer.

*"We want to retain our chief and deputy fire officer name, it has mana in our community and is recognised."*

Respondents found the rank names confusing and unnecessary given the current title of Chief Fire Officer for the leader of an urban volunteer brigade *"position and rank title should be the same, this is way too confusing"* and another suggestion was *"rank for when they are at an incident and Position for when they are in their day to day job."* Also *"Reference to role of Chief Officer - easily confused with Chief Fire Officer - seems likely they intend to get rid of this rank in the future."* There should be no

confusion to uphold the Organisational Design Principle: *"Positions are designed to ensure clarity of accountability and responsibility."*

Some want the term Chief Fire Officer to stay the same as it is a highly recognised and respected term by communities and other emergency services.

Another views is that having the position names for District Manager and Group Manager (without a requirement for rank) could be sufficient as long as there is capability within their management structure (including with Chief Fire Officers and Controllers) to effectively deploy for an incident.

Members of a Brigade liked the broader use of the international fire services term of Chief but consider that this needs some definition and local communities focus defining the role to avoid confusion. A broader community's definition using the provincial name would be more acceptable.

*"I believe that the ranks of chief officer and deputy chief officer will cause confusion on the incident ground, they are too close to CFO and DCFO. They need to have a rethink."*

*"If a person in the District Manager of Group Manager position has a rank, then they should be known by their rank. The rank Chief Officer and Chief Fire Officer are too similar and believe it will create confusion."*

Alternatively:

*".... having two names for the same role gets confusing. Have either one or the other. Preferably the rank name, i.e. Chief Officer or deputy Chief Officer."*

If rank names are agreed to come into effect, then alternative suggestions were:

- District Manager, rank of District Commander and Group Manager, rank of Group Commander
- change the names of either the Group Manager, District Manager or the present Chief Fire Officer Deputy Chief Fire Officer possibly to Station Manager, Assistant Manager then if ranked Senior Station Officer/Senior Station Officer
- keep the volunteer status quo of Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Senior Station Officer, Station Officer
- District Commander and Deputy District Commander with same Epaulet identifiers as current Area Managers and Assistant Area Managers
- Regional Manager, District Manager (rank District Chief Officer), Group Manager (rank Deputy District Chief Officer), then this could eventually go down to change Chief Fire Officer to Brigade Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer (even though the current proposal is not intended to impact on Chief Fire Officers). This way the titles are not "fire" only they are open to other emergencies and there is no distinction between urban and rural, in other words signalling unification. This option could only be pursued if it didn't change anything for CFOs other than their title
- Use the term Chief but link it to a geographic location at a district level, group level and then at a local community level (possibly), each title would signal a different geographic coverage. Retaining chief will respect what is already known in local communities but must be done in such a way that doesn't take-away from or confuse current Chief Fire Officer and Controller titles.

While Fire and Emergency has confirmed that CFO and Controller are not directly affected by the proposal, there could be flow-on implications that are concerning for our members. Fire and Emergency would need to provide assurances to our members on this topic and respect the reform's intent of upholding local leaders in our communities.

*"Our concern is they don't recognise our skill-set as volunteers and downgrade our ranks against career"*

*"Rank or role can be almost the same, if a person's role is an officer, then they should be identified and do what is expected, the same as one would with rank, people need to be forward looking and more flexible to different ideas."*

We suggest keeping it simple, and question whether rank is really necessary at this level of management and the need to separate rank and position *"A "fire ground" rank should not be necessary for performing business functions of the organisation. As long as competency is assessed for the operational requirements of a rank, the position that someone holds should not affect their operational standing. Similarly, someone's qualifications for an Incident Management Team (IMT) position should not be undercut by their "lack of rank", so a separation of role and rank will prevent this from occurring."*

And another quote *"I believe the separation of position and rank is fundamental to the success of the restructure. Without it, there is no difference to what we have now (apart from the separation of urban and rural). I also believe that the importance of the separation should be ingrained from the beginning such that there is no requirement for the position of District or Group Managers to hold the associated rank as proposed. Further, the proposed prerequisite for candidates to essentially have the rank now (or equivalent experience) to even apply will exclude many excellent candidates from being able to be considered for these roles."*

It's also important not to confuse the naming of titles between operational and non-operational type positions. *"Non-operational staff to have managerial titles is manager and operational staff to have operational titles i.e. Commander, Chief Fire Officer. Combined, paired up titles are confusing for everybody."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Note: There are split views about whether to have both a separate rank name and position name, most found having two names confusing.

- Rank is not needed to manage a business (use position name instead of having both a rank name and position name for the same person). An alternative view for career firefighters is to have rank name only.
- Alternative rank names be considered but any resulting impacts on Chief Fire Officers and Controllers would require a separate consultation round with them specifically before any changes, to hear their views more widely and preserve the mana they currently have within their communities.

## Competency assessment framework

Proposal reference: section 8 page 72

A competency assessment framework (when designed) needs to recognise that there is a mixture of skill-sets in Fire and Emergency and that 'suitably qualified' includes those that can be trained to meet certain standards and requirements. In these situations, we encourage health and safety first and a transition plan for development that upholds the importance of health and safety throughout this transition period, including having access to necessary



support and advice along the way. Those applying for roles need to be able to see a pathway for themselves in the framework to know and understand how they can develop.

It seems that in the past, recruitment for District and Group Manager type positions has largely been based on operational/technical related criteria with little emphasis on soft skills, and that personnel management, relationship management and communication skills are not always as developed as they need to be for such a role. As a result, we are seeing situations where decisions are being made by some leaders that are ineffective and, in some cases, unsafe, flawed and biased.

This framework should recognise (and give suitable credit to) volunteers skill-sets outside of Fire and Emergency New Zealand where they are relevant for their positions.

The UFBA and FRFANZ would like to know that - whether someone is from a rural or urban background - if there are skill gaps then how will the new competency framework help bridge those gaps through a transition period for the best suited person for the role?

The competency framework would need to be designed to ensure desired outcomes for that community (relating to the risk profile) but also support personnel to be able to meet the demand of their community.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- The competency assessment framework (when designed) needs to recognise that there is a mixture of skill-sets in Fire and Emergency and that 'suitably qualified' includes those that can be trained to meet certain standards and requirements

### Communication Centre (Comcen) Leadership Team

Proposal reference: section 8 – page 75

As members of the UFBA, the Communications Centre Leadership Team provided feedback in respect to Section 8B of the draft Proposal regarding rank, specifically in the Communication Centres.

The Proposal suggests removing rank from the Comcens, yet Comcens are clear that they must retain their current recognised rank. It is crucial to the way they operate, and how closely they work with partner agencies who also wear the equivalent rank.

Comcen believe the following statement made by the authors of the proposal document sums up their position on removing rank from Comcens, and they believe this view was endorsed by many representative members of the Structure and Rank Working Group. *'In developing this proposal views were expressed that the Comcen positions should be ranked positions. This is because they work in a fast-moving and developing environment, they may be making command decisions that impact the deployment of resources on the incident ground, they are a first point of [contact and] response and they are required to go through training and competency assessments.'*

The Comcen is essentially the first step in any emergency response – they deal with other agencies every hour of every day in our immediate work environment, on a far more frequent basis than any other sector of Fire and Emergency and use the CIMS structure in these dealings.

Our Comcen partner emergency agencies are all ranked – the reason for this is quite simply so they know quickly who is in charge in, and of, the Comcen, who can make tactical decisions and who can provide strategic overview of Comcen operations.

The statement that *'rank does not apply to Comcens because while Comcen staff support largescale incidents on the ground, this is not in the same context where the immediate recognition of incident management competency is required'* is incorrect.

Comcens are critical in the start of the response to fires and other emergencies. Command decisions made around responses during the call taking and dispatching process are critical to how smoothly an event progresses, and this is supported through the wearing of rank during our ongoing interaction with Fire and Emergency fire fighters, commanders and most importantly partner agencies such as Police and St John.

On page 63 of Section 8A, the document proposal sums up the Comcen environment very accurately when it states *'Rank would continue to have a place in Fire and Emergency. It is essential when controlling and directing personnel in fast-moving and dynamic fire and emergency response situations where the escalation of incident management competency requires immediate recognition.'*

It is crucial the Structure and Rank Working Group understands and recognises that their definition of 'a place for rank' closely aligns with how the Comcen operates. This is particularly relevant during multi-agency events where Police assume command and control of an incident from within the Comcen.

AOS / STG Commanders may be in the Comcen requesting urgent FENZ attendance and they need to quickly identify who is in charge and can make decisions around the control of resources. Comcen Leadership Team attendance at multi agency briefings while wearing rank, affords them talk time and assists with influencing decisions that may impact FENZ.

The same applies during business as usual Project work when Fire and Emergency need to 'punch above their weight' amongst bigger agencies to have their requirements acknowledged. The benefit of rank in these situations has been proven time and time again over many years, as was the detrimental impact of no rank experienced in the late 90's. Retaining rank in the Comcens provides significant benefit that should not be underestimated.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Retain rank for the Communications Centre Leadership Team

## Section 9 National Headquarter branches – tranche 3

Proposal reference: section 9 page 77

There was no feedback on changes to National headquarter roles, other than to say that more resource is needed to address psychological wellbeing across the country.

Good to see Chief Advisor Volunteerism but what support will they have in this Branch? Could the role have dual accountability so it also has line management accountability and could similar roles be in place at Regional and District levels?

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the Chief Advisor Volunteerism has sufficient support for the role in place across different parts of Fire and Emergency (i.e. at Regional, District and Group levels) and that they have a direct reporting line accountability as well as an accountability to National Managers in the People Branch Leadership Team.

## Section 10 Implementation

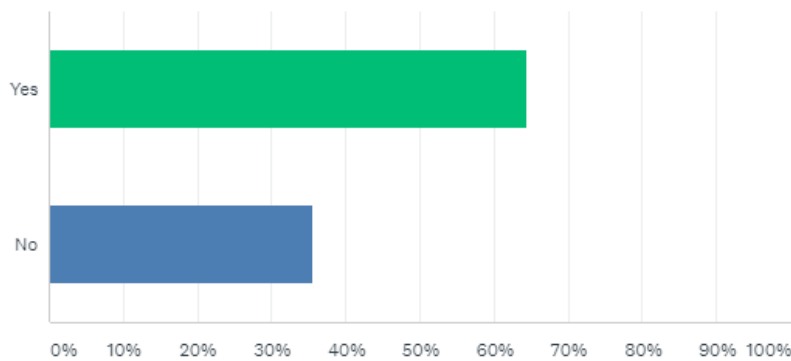
It is important that the appointment process doesn't drag on too long or a long period of uncertainty will increase risk to the organisation.

### Other issues raised

Some feedback was only partly related to the proposal but is worth capturing and providing to Fire and Emergency.

#### Health, safety and wellbeing (including psychological wellbeing)

Of respondents 64.37% are confident that their own and their Brigade's health, safety and wellbeing needs will be adequately addressed and upheld if this proposal is implemented (which is consistent with the Organisational Design Principle: that structure and positions will incorporate a commitment to safety, health and wellbeing). Although 35.63% didn't agree. Some reasons for this lack of confidence are outlined below.



More information on health and safety implications of the proposed changes is needed in the proposal. *"It's a bit silent on that" and "need to see more info as - in my opinion we are not very well supported by local management presently".*

*"We are not very well supported by local management presently"*

There is a feeling that Fire and Emergency doesn't genuinely care about their people. *"..... We've been waiting two years for running water so our 25 members can wash their hands and for our station to be bird proofed so we don't have our gear covered in bird nests and poo!! I am unsure the new management structure is going to change this!"*

A lot of it comes down to the quality of the people that are appointed. *"It will most certainly depend on the persons appointed at District and Group level. These are the biggest influencers of anything affecting our volunteer stations."*

There is more work for Fire and Emergency to do in this area including adding more Welfare Officers and Psychological Wellbeing Advisors across the country. These roles would support recognising the signs of psychological distress and advising personnel where to refer for help, while providing better management for leaders and accountability to remove bullying and harassment.

A specific position called Chief Advisor Psychological Wellbeing (currently combined with health and safety) is needed to increase emphasis on psychological wellbeing rather than it being perceived as an "add on."

More emphasis needs to be put on psychological wellbeing - *"We have medical examination before joining the Fire Service, we have an annual medical check, but we do not have psychological testing which I feel is a priority now!!!!"*

*"Yearly psycho health check required."*

*"Our brigade has been effected by several different calls... what's in place currently was poor" and "I am concerned that these changes will break the "psychological contract" between firefighters and FENZ and lead to increased mental health issues for paid staff, and volunteers walking away."*

More support and commitment is needed for investigating all health and safety issues, not just some. *"I am a passionate volunteer, disappointed by the delays, lack of transparency and engagement by some paid employees of Fire and Emergency. People's whose paid responsibility it is to facilitate my ongoing training and H&S support."*

An alternative view was provided: *"Most volunteer brigades need the support of a highly trained and competent career officer (SSO) for bigger jobs, those that do not have this should have a provincial commander available to respond and take command."* Plus: *"Biggest concern is the possible employment of unqualified, non-assessed, inappropriate people into roles, just to keep them employed! It will be disastrous for our organisation and will make for an unsafe and unpleasant work environment."*

Equipment concerns that affect health and safety:

- The risk of cancer and causes is not being addressed right now, why? *"...Showers for staff after fires etc, washing machines at stations to wash your own clothes after an incident, no waiting, should have being done by now, borrow the funds if you have to, we are supposed to be number 1 for the service, not way down the list."*
- *"More focus on improving our standard & availability of equipment to do our job, rather than on "glamour" change of new uniforms, management positions etc. Brigades are trying to work with substandard & antiquated equipment - this is unfair & unsafe for those brigades."*
- *"Actual firefighting equipment we still only have one controlled standpipe and still need other basic waterway gear"*
- *"There is still a collective consensus that the organisation should provide more PPE from the onset. Gas detectors are essential and there should be no delay in their purchase and distribution to all brigades with one per seatbelt in each response vehicle as these would be considered as PPE for each individual member of the crew (ie. a volunteer appliance frequently turnout 6 personnel)."*

*"[We] are trying to work with substandard and antiquated equipment..."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That significantly more work needs to be done to ensure psychological wellbeing for all frontline personnel along with sufficient and good quality resource (ie. Welfare Officers and Psychological Wellbeing Advisors) being in place across the country.
- Ensure the position description for the Chief Advisor Health, Safety and Wellbeing reflects a very strong emphasis on psychological wellbeing and that their position description involves treating all personnel equally in terms of access to PPE, equipment, training and so on.
- That volunteer brigades (both urban and rural) need better health and safety support, equipment, access to cleaning etc to keep them safe.

### Risks with the proposal

Risks relate to top heavy structure (*"There will become too many middle management between station level and area management"*), political agendas, relationships with brigades, potentially inappropriate appointments to positions and not understanding volunteerism or indeed the reform intent.

*"Like all big companies this is just another person to go through to try get an answer from someone who has to ask someone. You talk about simplifying things - this is not simplified."*

There is a concern that while there are a number of positions being disestablished in some cases there are even more new positions being created and therefore the potential for the organisation to become very top heavy and overly bureaucratic, relative to the frontline resource needed to reach communities directly. Fire and Emergency needs to get the balance right between management and frontline resource – how is this going to be tested and ensured? Given we are in the digital age why so many levels when we can

have a more direct relationship. *"Fire and Emergency seems to be obsessed with head count adding 100's of additional staff. Do they have a clue what they are going to do & how to measure if they are necessary?"*

*This is still a national service so with creation of so many middle management roles we need to make sure that consistency is maintained across New Zealand.*

There is a concern that this structure is too bureaucratic with too many layers and could be simplified. *"There seems to be a lot of creation of management positions. While in some terms of the proposals I agree (standardising and streamlining structure), it does seem excessive and unnecessary."*

*"My biggest concern is the "closed pool" being used to limit candidates that can apply to the key roles of District and Group Managers based on the false belief that health and safety will be put at risk if position and rank are separated in these roles"*

*"It is important we don't go making changes for the sake of change. The fire service has lost a lot of its trust because people think that the last few parts of consultation have been window dressing only"*

There is a concern that people won't be held to account, there will be a loss of skill-sets, changes will take too long and more funding support is needed. There is a concern about increasing bureaucracy *"Losing volunteers through increasing bureaucracy"*

There is the stress of change and uncertainty itself and the impact it's having, there is a risk of limited ability to apply for roles, too wide or narrow spans of control and losing volunteers through increased bureaucracy (which is contrary to the intent of the Fire and Emergency Act).

There are also risks associated with loss of support for rural and loss of knowledge (particularly rural). *"Major concern is that if we don't have people with the required experience, then support for Rural units could be undermined, especially if the leader has no previous rural experience."* With unification comes a risk that small rural towns will be forgotten. *"Even more focus on career and rural with the smaller brigades missing out again."*

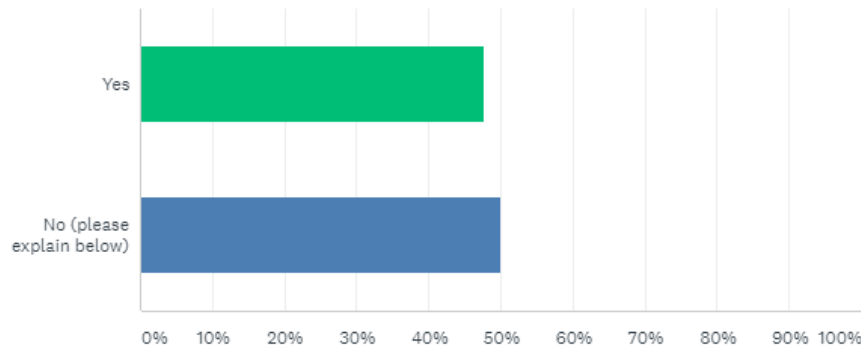
There is concern at how long the changes are all taking and that impacts on people's confidence levels. *"So much of what has been included is to be proved in practice. My confidence would improve if what I see in practice reflects what is promised"*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Fire and Emergency consider how to address these risks (especially a top-heavy structure and closed pool of candidates for positions) and work with all personnel and our Associations to mitigate them.

## Valuing and strengthening volunteers

Only 47.73% of respondents were confident that volunteers' contributions will be valued and respected and that the organisational arrangements will encourage, maintain and strengthen the capability of Fire and Emergency volunteers.



One quote summarises it well: *“Time will tell if the organisation gets it right. How much do Fire and Emergency actually value volunteer staff and their employees. More action is required.”*

There is some cynicism that the changes aren’t and won’t look after volunteers. *“Many times, people are expected to have experience in working with volunteers then the same old faces are appointed to senior positions despite not managing volunteer brigades successfully in the past.”* We would like to see Fire and Emergency continue to develop volunteer brigades *“Don’t discourage volunteers from evolving their brigade, just because there is a career truck down the road.”*

*“There is no mention of more VSO’s. How are they going to support the brigades better? If no more VSO’s then how they are going to manage this?”*

*“The lack of training course availability is the most fundamental roadblock to strengthening brigade capability and the proposal does little to address when there will be a swift and dramatic improvement”*

Changes that respondents expect to see Fire and Emergency making to implement the **Volunteerism Strategy** as a result of implementing this change process include:

- *“Group Managers drawn from the volunteer crews would be a valuable development”*

An alternative view from a career firefighter was: *“instigate a ‘provincial commander’ role to carry this load and be available for higher level command and control.”* Another suggestion was: *“More support given to volunteers. Especially at composite station level.”*

- *“Lessen the compliance burden and make systems easier”*

An alternative view from a career firefighter was: *“lessening the workload burden on volunteers by employing more paid staff at busy volunteer stations.”*

- *“Local strategy committees’ setup with volunteer representatives on these groups...”*



- *"Would like to see more assistance to brigades in recruitment. Currently small out of the way brigades are left out. The one size fits all mentality needs to change as smaller communities have different needs and issues in getting recruits for the brigade"*
- *"Greater involvement of volunteer personnel in all levels of the organisation is required. Encouraging to see the role of Chief Advisor Volunteerism, but we also need to see similar roles at Region and District level"*
- *"Better support for brigades by increasing the number of Support personal and Group Managers. This will take the workload off our management team and our Controller"*
- *"talk to us face to face and give us what we need to do our jobs"*
- *"More group managers, or asst group managers to relieve brigades of present workload"*
- *"Accountability"*
- *"Putting volunteers as equals to our paid personnel"*
- *"ensuring that the group managers are sufficiently resourced and empowered to work with their respective brigades"*
- *"Far greater flexibility in the way volunteers can engage and contribute to FENZ and their communities. This flexibility should enable volunteers to engage in a way that suits them without compromising the reward they receive from it. Volunteers also need to have a greater say in what happens between FENZ and their communities"*
- *"Ensuring that the people who are the life blood of the organisation are recognised, valued and respected."*

*"If volunteers are looked after they will follow but if Fire and Emergency decides to do its own thing regardless of listening to volunteers then a lot of volunteers will leave."*

- *"Swift implementation and transparency over costs and budgets. Individual accountability for failing to deliver on expectations."*
- *"More collaboration, inclusion and the same practices for all composite brigades. Example-some composite brigades will tip out volunteers FF to the station on a K25 but the volunteers FFs cannot crew a truck because they have to wait for paid staff to be called back for overtime"*
- *"Managers responsible for vollies be selected from vollies rather than paid staff?"*
- *"A more streamlined structure & points of contact to support brigades"*
- *"There is not strategy for operational support operationally, this needs to be sorted"*
- *"Recognition of experience and ability to apply for roles of Group Manager and above"*
- *"Less paperwork, hence more incentive to be a volunteer. (We don't want a volunteer job like our day job)"*
- *"More contact with local crews and easy access to local training"*
- *"National Advisor volunteerism is good to see but again there will be variances around the country based on experience and skill levels and perceptions from group and district managers towards volunteers. Many of the current ones who will undoubtedly get reappointed don't "walk the talk"*
- *"A total aim to unify both Rural and Urban jurisdictions so there can be no confusion or misunderstanding of each functions."*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Fire and Emergency consider how to more convincingly provide assurance that volunteers contributions will be valued and respected and that the organisational arrangements will encourage, maintain and strengthen the capability of Fire and Emergency volunteers
- The new ideas for the Volunteerism strategy be considered by Fire and Emergency, especially where they relate to the proposal for change.

## Recommendations

### Meeting community needs

- That positions, proposed management approaches and ways of working be reviewed to ensure they are 'community -centric' and future proofed for meeting changing community's needs (68% were either partly or not at all convinced that the proposal meets their needs).
- Management and leadership positions need to reflect community diversity and understand their values in order to help make them resilient.
- Note: Recognise in unifying rural and urban that they are usually two different types of communities and skill sets and cultures.

### Working collaboratively – urban and rural

- Any expectations of unification of rural and urban need a supportive plan and operating environment that respects different cultural elements, skillsets and relationships that have already been built in communities. Blending these elements of culture to benefit Fire and Emergency and the community will require insightful, competent leadership.

### Fixed term contractors and secondees

- Widen the Employee Transition Protocol to provide more opportunity to volunteers, fixed term contractors and those on secondments to ensure the best person for the position is hired.

Please note that our Career firefighter members have the opposite view.

### Notification and review of appointments

- Notifications of vacancies and opportunities to request a review of appointments be open to all personnel.
- The appointment process considers complaints or disciplinary action (verbal or written) that have been upheld against those being considered for positions.

### Span of control

- To be visible the ideal span of control for a Group Manager is 5 – 7 brigades.
- A flexible rather than fixed span of control be implemented to allow for variances in geographical spread, workload of brigade and other environmental factors.
- Appropriate administrative supports be put in place for Group Managers to have an effective relationship with Brigades and this includes volunteer support, training and administration functions for volunteer urban and rural brigades.

- Group Managers be well supported by business positions (also with specific urban and rural knowledge) so as not to add to the administrative burden of Brigades.

#### **Relationships between Group Managers, Brigades and Brigade leaders**

- Group Managers have regular communication and contact/visits with brigades.
- Group Managers be held to account through formal measures including ensuring Brigades have access to sufficient quality health and safety equipment, that they “live” the values and code of behaviour and have experience in a volunteer background and/or are sympathetic to volunteerism.
- The ‘point of contact’ relationship between Group Managers and Brigades be put into practice as the proposal suggests.

#### **Preparing our leaders**

- The UFBA and FRFANZ offer to work with Fire and Emergency on a programme for new leaders that enables them to build strong relationships with volunteers and an understanding of volunteerism.

#### **Principal Rural Fire Office and Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officer**

- That with more vegetation fires, specialist wildfire capability and capacity mustn’t be marginalised or knowledge lost, especially in management/leadership positions.
- Factor in the need to maintain and build partnerships with other sectors (i.e. forestry) with any changes to rural positions.
- The proposal better recognise what motivates and retains rural commitment in order to preserve and grow the rural capability it currently has.
- Group Manager position descriptions allow for rural and urban managers to take up the positions.

#### **Proposed approach to recruitment**

- Fire and Emergency considers a wider pool of candidates for positions and review position descriptions and person specifications to enable this to occur, while still requiring necessary experience, qualifications and leadership skills to be in place.

Note: Our career firefighter members have a different view, that District and Group Managers should not be advertised to all personnel including volunteers and contractors.

- Fire and Emergency comply with legislation and appoint the best suited person for the role (not a minimum criteria).
- Position descriptions and selection criteria be rewritten to better reflect commitment to and respect for volunteerism.

- Build in a heavier weighting towards soft leadership skill sets especially for Group and District Managers when determining the best person for a position.
- Widen the scope of the new roles to take on additional functions in the Act, impacts of climate change and potentially the risk profiles of local communities.
- Acknowledge that the largest proportion of Fire and Emergency's workforce are volunteers who have diverse skill sets that could in some cases adequately perform certain roles and so therefore the process must not disadvantage them.
- Treat all personnel fairly throughout the restructuring process to comply with the Crown Entities Act, the Fire and Emergency Act and the State Sector Act especially relating to equal employment opportunity.
- Afford volunteers the same treatment (other than being paid) in every respect including the ability to apply for positions within Fire and Emergency where they can demonstrate they have the capability or ability to be trained.
- Fire and Emergency define "suitably qualified" and when it does so ensure that it relates to competence which is wider than just technical qualifications and includes behavioural soft leadership skills and recognises that the scope of suitably qualified could be more than just fire related.

#### **Soft leadership skills**

- Integrate a requirement for soft leadership skills into the appointment process.
- That existing leaders lead by example and value all personnel.

#### **Position and rank**

- Using the term 'rank' has different meanings for rural and this needs to be appreciated and respected.
- It may not need to be a specific requirement of District Managers and Group Managers to have rank, as long as the capability to manage an incident is available within a geographic location.

Note from Career firefighter members: District and Group Managers must have adequate experience and training to respond to ALL types of incidents, and therefore MUST be career professional firefighters. In addition, there is a view that if a person is not operational then they shouldn't have rank.

#### **Rank names**

Note: There are split views about whether to have both a separate rank name and position name, most found having two names confusing.

- Rank is not needed to manage a business (use position name instead of having both a rank name and position name for the same person). An alternative view for career firefighters is to have rank name only.
- Alternative rank names be considered but any resulting impacts on Chief Fire Officers and Controllers would require a separate consultation round with them specifically before any changes, to hear their views more widely and preserve the mana they currently have within their communities.

#### **Competency framework assessment**

- The competency assessment framework (when designed) needs to recognise that there is a mixture of skill-sets in Fire and Emergency and that 'suitably qualified' includes those that can be trained to meet certain standards and requirements.

#### **Communications Centre**

- Retain rank for the Communications Centre Leadership Team.

#### **National Headquarter Branches**

- That the Chief Advisor Volunteerism has sufficient support for the role in place across different parts of Fire and Emergency (i.e. at Regional, District and Group levels) and that they have a direct reporting line accountability as well as an accountability to National Managers in the People Branch Leadership Team.

#### **Health, safety and wellbeing**

- That significantly more work needs to be done to ensure psychological wellbeing for all frontline personnel along with sufficient and good quality resource (ie. Welfare Officers and Psychological Wellbeing Advisors) being in place across the country.
- Ensure the position description for the Chief Advisor Health, Safety and Wellbeing reflects a very strong emphasis on psychological wellbeing and that their position description involves treating all personnel equally in terms of access to PPE, equipment, training and so on.
- That volunteer brigades (both urban and rural) need better health and safety support, equipment, access to cleaning etc to keep them safe.

#### **Risks**

- That Fire and Emergency consider how to address these risks (especially a top-heavy structure and closed pool of candidates for positions) and work with all personnel and our Associations to mitigate them.

**Valuing and strengthening volunteerism**

- That Fire and Emergency consider how to more convincingly provide assurance that volunteers contributions will be valued and respected and that the organisational arrangements will encourage, maintain and strengthen the capability of Fire and Emergency volunteers.
- The new ideas for the Volunteerism strategy be considered by Fire and Emergency, especially where they relate to the proposal for change.

## Attachment 1: UFBA Survey on Organisational Structure and Rank

Q1 Are you completing this survey as:

- An individual rural volunteer
- An individual urban volunteer
- Representing a rural brigade
- Representing an urban brigade
- Other (please specify)

Q2 Meeting community needs - How confident are you/your Brigade that the proposed changes to structure/rank will adequately enable Fire and Emergency to deliver fire and emergency services in a way that will meet the future needs of your community?

- Not very confident
- Very confident
- Partly confident

Q3 If not or partly confident – what would you/your Brigade like to see change to better meet community needs?

Q4 APPLYING RANK - (a) Do you/your Brigade agree with the proposed treatment of rank for operational purposes to control and direct personnel in fast moving and dynamic fire and emergency situations, where escalation of incident management competency requires immediate attention? Pages 29-76 of Proposal.

- Yes
- No (please explain your answer)

Q5 POSITION AND RANK (b) Should there be both a position name and a rank name for the same person? (eg. it is proposed that the position is District Manager but their rank is Chief Officer, it is also proposed that Group Manager has a rank name of Deputy Chief Officer). Page 71 of Proposal.

- Yes (please explain below including any alternative rank names that could work for District Manager and Group Manager?)
- No (please explain below)

Q6 SUPPORTING AND ENABLING VOLUNTEERISM - If the proposal is agreed, then Chief Fire Officers, Controllers and SSOs would report through to a Group Manager who will be their main point of contact. The Group Manager would then report to a District Manager who in-turn would report to a Region Manager. What expectations would you/your Brigade have of Group Manager to ensure that local leaders and volunteerism (whether rural or urban) is better supported, developed and resourced with appropriate equipment etc

Q7 VALUING AND STRENGTHENING VOLUNTEERS - Does the proposal give you/your Brigade confidence that volunteers contributions will be valued and respected and that the organisational arrangements will encourage, maintain and strengthen the capability of FENZ volunteers (Section 36 (1) (C) of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017. Refer to the Supporting information, Job Descriptions).



- Yes
- No (please explain your answer)

Q8 VOLUNTEERISM STRATEGY - What changes would you/your Brigade expect to see Fire and Emergency making to implement the Volunteerism Strategy as a result of implementing this change process?

Q9 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROPOSED GROUP MANAGER AND CONTROLLER/CHIEF FIRE OFFICER. The proposal currently states that the point of contact for a Chief Fire Officer/Controller is their proposed Group Manager, recognising the role of the local leader and that volunteers aren't employed, but are "engaged" personnel of Fire and Emergency. Do you agree with how this relationship is described?

- Yes
- No

Q10 RURAL CAPABILITY AND CAPACITY - The proposal suggests disestablishing PRFO and DPRFO (and equivalent positions). Accountabilities of this position would be distributed across District Manager, Group Manager, District Risk Reduction and District Community Readiness and Recovery Manager. Do you/your Brigade have concerns about this change?

- Yes
- No

Q11 CULTURE AND SKILL SETS. Are you confident that soft skills [1] for positions are adequately reflected in the proposal, supporting information and job descriptions? Note [1] - Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication skills, character or personality traits, attitudes, career attributes, social intelligence and emotional intelligence quotients, among others, that enable people to navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve.

- Yes
- No

Q12 ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY FOR POSITIONS - Keeping in mind legal obligations of Fire and Emergency the employer (and the Employee Transition Protocol), are you/your Brigade convinced that new and changing roles provide adequate opportunity for Fire and Emergency personnel and/or external applicants to apply for roles? Page 27 of Proposal and then 83-104.

- Yes
- No

Q13 RATIO OF PROPOSED GROUP MANAGER TO BRIGADE. Has the proposal got the right ratio of Group Managers to the number of Brigades which could influence the support you/your Brigades may receive.

Note: there is no clear delineation between Volunteer and Career Brigades). What is the ideal ratio (tick one below):

- 1 Group Manager per 5 Brigades
- 1 Group Manager per 7 Brigades
- 1 Group Manager per 10 Brigades

- Other (please specify below).

Q14 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING (INCL. PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING) - Are you confident that your/your Brigades health, safety and wellbeing needs will be adequately addressed and upheld if this proposal is implemented?

- Yes
- No

Q15 RISKS OF THE PROPOSAL - What are your/your Brigades biggest concerns in terms of: a) the types of changes the proposal is suggesting? b) how the proposal could be implemented in reality

Q16 OTHER - Are there any other points you/your Brigade would like to make?