



## U.F.B.A

UNITED FIRE BRIGADES'  
ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

### MINUTES

**Minutes of the 145<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the United Fire Brigades' Association (Inc)  
held at Michael Fowler Centre Wellington and Live Streamed via the UFBA Website  
Friday 3 November 2023**

#### **Apologies:**

The following apologies were received:

Past President Ray Brokenshire

Past President Max Robinson

Past President Chris Price

The President of the UFBA Amber Hollis welcomed dignitaries, past presidents, life honorary members, delegates and observers.

Following a Karakia by SSO Ahron Eastall, the UFBA Board Chair officially declared open the 145<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the United Fire Brigades' Association at 1304 hours.

#### **Theme of Conference**

The theme of the 2023 Conference is "Activate".

#### **Obituaries**

The delegation was upstanding for a Moments Silence to acknowledge and remember those who have passed.

Below is the official obituary list:

Rank	First Name	Surname	Brigade
Firefighter	Michael	Wells	Apiti Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	Ray	Warby	Auckland City Station
Retired Chief Fire Commander	Trevor	Bean QSM	Auckland Fire Brigade
Retired Divisional Officer	Norman	Golding (Goldey)	Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board
Retired Senior Firefighter	Rodney	Atchinson	Awhitu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Graham	Veitch	Balclutha Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ken	Steen	Cambridge Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Helen	Murphy	Chatham Islands Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Joseph	Thomas QSM	Chatham Islands Volunteer Fire Brigade

Retired Member	Paul	Habgood	Christchurch Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Trevor	Molloy	Cobden Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Elizabeth (Betty)	Skeats	Cobden Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Desmond	Miller	Collingwood Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Norm	Jermyn	Cromwell Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Desmond	Earl	Culverden Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Divisional Officer	Terry	Scott	Dunedin Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Peter	Scoles	Dunedin Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	John	Bethune	Dunedin Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Fred	Rowe	Dunedin Fire Brigade
Senior Firefighter	Edwin	Traill	Eketahuna Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ray	Huxford QSM	Feilding Volunteer Fire Brigade
Advisor	Glen	Kessell	FENZ People Branch
Retired Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Melvin	Hirini	Foxton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Jack	Glassford	Gisborne Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Peter	Thompson	Hokitika Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Neil Douglas	Oliver	Hororata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support	Kura	Egan	Inglewood Volunteer Fire Brigade
Firefighter	Peter	Smith	Inglewood Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Derek	Guerin	Kaikohe Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Deputy Chief Fire Officer	John (Jack)	Hurring	Kaitangata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Frank	Bethell	Katikati Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Member	Simon	Wilson	Lauriston Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Noel (Sam)	Thian	Leeston Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ian (Minty)	Thomas	Leeston Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Dave	Thompson	Lower Hutt Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Ron	Biel	Martinborough Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Firefighter	Miki	Te Moananui	Marton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Trevor	Marshall	Mataura Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Barrie	Delaney	Milton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Joyce	Klempel B.E.M.	Moana Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Trevor	Barlow	Morrinsville Volunteer Fire Brigade
Station Officer	David	van Zwanenberg	Muriwai Volunteer Fire Brigade
Qualified Firefighter	Craig	Stevens	Muriwai Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Station Officer	Robbie	Allan	Nelson Fire Brigade
Retired Operational Support Member	Allan	Cox	Ngunguru Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	John	McCormack	Oamaru Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Jeff	McGuire	Okaiawa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Brian	Denton	Okaihau Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Raymond (Ray)	Rook	Okato Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Kevin	Grant	Omarama Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	John	Luckman	Omokoroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Graeme	Watson	Otaki Volunteer Fire Brigade
Chief Fire Officer	William (Bill)	Rackham QSM	Paeroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Joseph	Rush	Palmerston North Fire Brigade
Brigade Support	Mark	Stewart	Palmerston Volunteer Fire Brigade
Rural Controller	Robert	Poulton	Patoka Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Arthur (Arch)	Moore	Pauanui Volunteer Fire Brigade

Brigade Life Honorary Member	John	McGarvey	Piopio Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Keith	Askew	Plimmerton Volunteer Fire Brigade
Chief Fire Officer	John	Hills	Pongoroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Firefighter	Jim	Howland	Putaruru Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Alan	Bowater	Raetihi Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Nathan	Haigh	Rahotu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Kevin	Fryer	Rahotu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Ray	Andrews	Rangiora Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Richard	Martin	Rangiwahia Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Alan (Lofty)	Harrington	Rissington Volunteer Fire Brigade
Founding Member	Norman	Bottcher	Rongotea Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Member	Kim	Morrice	Ross Volunteer Fire Brigade
Senior Station Officer	Royce	Mathieson	Ruatoria Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Bryan	Hayes	Southern Lakes Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Station Officer	Ian	McNab	Sumner Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Bruce	Efford	Tapu Volunteer Fire Brigade
UFBA Life Honorary Member/Past President	Robert	Morriss	Te Awamutu Volunteer Fire Brigade
Senior Firefighter	Warren	Moorfield	Te Kauwhata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Member	Paul	Halversen	Te Kauwhata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Winston	Saxton	Thornbury Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	George	Gallop	Toko Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Fire Police Captain	Neville	Beale	Tokoroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Robbie	Clyde	Tokoroa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	John	Morshead	Turangi Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Member	Kim	Leatham	Turangi Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Deputy Chief Fire Officer	Brian	Wigmore (Wiggy)	Turua Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Rural Controller	Bill	Green	Waihau Bay Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Jim	Shaw	Waihi Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Firefighter	Stephen	Shepherd	Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Qualified Firefighter	Jay	House	Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Eric	Archibald	Waipara Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Henry (Jack)	McCleary QSM	Waipawa Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Operational Support Member	Graeme (Keith)	Templeton QSM	Waitati Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Cliff	Jolly	Waitati Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Senior Firefighter	Ross	Harvey	Wellington District
Retired Assistant Fire Commander	David	Owens	Wellington District
Retired Member	George (Paddy)	McKay	Wellington Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Bryan	Rowband	Wellington Operational Support Unit
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Harry	Heaven	Wellsford Volunteer Fire Brigade
Brigade Life Honorary Member	Geoffrey	Gillies	Weston Volunteer Fire Brigade
Operational Support Member	Mark (Monty)	Montgomery	Whangarei Operational Support Unit
Chief Fire Officer/Volunteer Support Officer	Te Rangihwinui Parry (Steve)	Peretini	Woodville Volunteer Fire Brigade
Retired Chief Fire Officer	Ray	Walker	Woodville Volunteer Fire Brigade

### **Quorum**

The Chair stated that Quorum had been met enabling AGM business to be conducted.  
314 Delegates; 15 proxy votes. A majority vote of 50% + 1 is 166

### **Board Candidates**

There were no Board Director vacancies

### **The UFBA Chair, the Hon. Peter Dunne addressed the Delegation:**

#### ***UFBA Chair Address and Board Introduction***

This is one of our largest Annual General Meetings turnouts on record. It validates the Engagement Strategy that the Board and management have been pursuing this year. While it is always nice to see familiar faces and the opportunity that provides to catch up and renew friendships and acquaintances forged over the years, it is especially pleasing to welcome the influx of first-time delegates and observers here this year. After all, you are the future of this organisation, and the UFBA needs your support and involvement, alongside the work you do in your local brigades, if we are to continue to prosper and grow in the future. I look forward to your participation over the next few days. I also welcome those of you who are watching via our live stream. We have also received apologies from Past Presidents and LHM's who were unable to attend today but are hopefully watching from home. What seemed a novel technology when it started to become used during the pandemic era is now a much more mainstream and accepted form of communication.

Although I do not want to see it ever replace entirely face-to-face contacts and meetings, you can expect to see the UFBA using virtual meeting and related technologies much more regularly in the future, to convey information and obtain feedback much more quickly and immediately than has been the case previously.

Our presence here in such numbers today is a reminder to New Zealand, and to Fire and Emergency New Zealand especially, that 86% of their frontline firefighters, are volunteers, and that the UFBA has been their primary representative organisation for the last 145 years.

I acknowledge the message received from the Minister of Internal Affairs. Minister, we appreciate your recognition and support. We know you will be extremely busy as the process of government gets underway again after the recent election. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues over the next three years to advance the issues that matter to volunteer firefighters.

Earlier this year, firefighters were shattered by news of the tragic deaths of two volunteers from the Muriwai Volunteer Fire Brigade when responding to the impact of Cyclone Gabrielle on their local community. The sacrifice of Dave van Zwannenberg and Craig Stevens tore at the heart strings of all of us, and was a tragic, timely reminder of the risks our members take when seeking to meet the needs of their communities. We extend our deepest sympathy to Dave's and Craig's families, friends, and Brigade colleagues on their awful loss.

The UFBA, where we can, and through the Benevolent Fund has been supporting their families and others during the year as they adjust to this tragedy. Dave's and Craig's sacrifice will never be forgotten.

In tribute to them the UFBA will do all it can to ensure the proper lessons are learnt, and that their sacrifices will not have been in vain.

#### ***Board Membership and Staffing***

Before moving to the bulk of my remarks, I would like to give a special acknowledgement to our Patron, Dave McFarlane QSM, who is here today and will address the membership shortly.

I would like to introduce the members of our Board:

- Deputy Chair, Kevin Ihaka. He is the Managing Director of Forest Protection Services based in Whangārei and brings extensive experience in fighting wildfires across New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and North America. Kevin was previously Chair of the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand and was first appointed to the UFBA Board in 2019, then re-appointed in March 2023.
- Director Daryl Sayer. Elected to the Board in 2018, Daryl is Chief Fire Officer of the Sumner Volunteer Fire Brigade, and a community pharmacy owner. He is the chair of the Complaints and Disciplinary Committee.
- Director Tom Thomson, ONZM. Appointed to the Board in 2019, Tom is a former executive member of the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand. He is Deputy Controller of the Motunau Rural Fire Brigade, and the Managing Director of Elastomer Products. Tom is chair of the Board's Audit and Risk Committee.
- Director, Jason Prendergast. Elected to the Board in 2022, Jason is a Past President of the UFBA, and is well known to you all and he supports the volunteers on the West Coast as a Volunteer Support Officer for FENZ. He is a long-serving and senior official for our Challenges and makes a valuable and conscientious contribution to the Board's deliberations.
- Director, Howard Cole, QSM. Elected in 2022, Howard has extensive experience with wildfire and is the Chief Fire Officer of the Maramarua Volunteer Fire Brigade. He is the managing director of three dairy farms in the Waikato, a former executive member of the Forest and Rural Fire Association of New Zealand and has been on the UFBA Membership Advisory Panel.

I also acknowledge our President Amber Hollis, and Vice President Warren Maslin.

To the Board, Dave, Amber, and Warren, I express my thanks and appreciation for your contributions and support during the year. You all serve the Association well.

And to our dedicated professional staff, so ably led by Chief Executive Bill Butzbach, thank you all for your dedication and service throughout the year. Your commitment is inspiring, and I am in awe of the hard work you all put in on our behalf, to ensure the UFBA operates to the highest standards of professionalism.

### ***Improving Community Resilience***

The devastation wrought by the cyclones that struck the north and east of the North Island earlier this year was a powerful reminder that our weather patterns are changing dramatically with often catastrophic consequences. Already we have seen over the last couple of years more widespread and intense bush and scrub fires that we have been accustomed to historically.

With the return of an El Nino weather pattern for the first time since 2015-16, more adverse events are to be expected over the next couple of years at least. Beyond that, the wider impacts of climate change are likely to be severe and ongoing, stretching the capability of our emergency response services.

The one certainty in all this is that volunteer firefighters will play the dominant role in responding to those emergencies.

That raises the wider question of our resilience capability. While our volunteers will always respond to the challenges facing their communities as professionally and skilfully as they can, as we saw earlier this year, there is a need for them to be better trained and resourced to have maximum beneficial impact.

In our view, it is incumbent upon FENZ to ensure that volunteer firefighters are at the front of the queue when it comes to better training and resourcing to deal with climate emergencies.

I note the PFU has made a similar call to FENZ in respect of its members. But I say to FENZ and the PFU with the utmost respect that the priority needs to be with volunteer firefighters for the simple reason that nearly all the small communities likely to be hit by future climate emergencies are served by volunteer firefighters.

It would be an unwise use of resources to focus on training and upskilling employed firefighters ahead of volunteers when the immediate response to future adverse events is likely to rest more heavily on the shoulders of volunteers.

At another level, changing climate and weather patterns have highlighted an urgent need for a better way of enabling those involved in land management issues, including forestry, to become more involved in the emergency management policies and practices that affect them.

For some time now the UFBA has been calling for the establishment of a new, independent forum for all those with an interest in wider land management issues so they can have a better say on the best emergency management policies for their sector and are able to offer specialist advice to FENZ and the government accordingly.

In 2021 the UFBA established Tāngata Matatau to be this peak organisation. FENZ's response has been lukewarm at best, as it prefers to believe its rural forums best meet the needs of this sector. Following feedback from stakeholders that FENZ's rural forums are not meeting their concerns, the UFBA convened in July this year a meeting to further test the idea of a body like Tāngata Matatau.

We note that a similar structure has now been set up in Portugal following its recent devastating fires and that the European Union is encouraging other European states to do likewise.

At the July Tāngata Matatau meeting, there was strong support from many of the sectors present – including forestry, ambulance services, and conservation groups – for a body like Tāngata Matatau to be established, so the UFBA is continuing to work on the plan.

Unfortunately, FENZ continues to remain sceptical, seemingly seeing the establishment of Tāngata Matatau as a direct challenge. It is no such thing – FENZ's role is to be the primary delivery agent for fire and emergency services across New Zealand, whereas Tāngata Matatau is designed to be a high-level policy body delivering independent policy advice to FENZ, but with no operational responsibility. It would be a supplement to FENZ's role, not a challenge to it. Tāngata Matatau fills a gap that is presently not catered for, but which needs to be addressed.

We earnestly urge FENZ to reconsider its wariness about Tāngata Matatau and to become directly involved, given its critical organisational and service delivery role.

### ***Relationship with FENZ***

At last year's AGM, I was critical that progress on the full implementation of the 2017 reforms has slowed to an unacceptable rate, and I called on FENZ to pick up the pace of change once more.

I offered the UFBA's full support to working with FENZ to ensure that the fundamental impact of the 2017 reforms to place urban and rural volunteers at the front and centre of the new organisation, and to be resourced accordingly was at last achieved. Since that time, and following many discussions after the AGM, a great deal of progress has been with FENZ in addressing the outstanding issues.

The full details are set out in my Review of the Year in the Annual Report which you will have received a copy of, so they do not need repetition here. Suffice it to say, there has now been progress or completion of just over 70% of the matters we expressed concern about, which we acknowledge.

While we will always have our differences, the relationship with FENZ is generally good.

Throughout the year the two Board chairs and chief executives have met regularly and enjoy a good working relationship. Last week, the full FENZ and UFBA Boards met for the first time. An earlier attempt during 2021 to bring the two Boards together had been thwarted by Covid19 restrictions at the time.

At all times, we remind FENZ that 86% of its frontline workforce are volunteers and that the UFBA is its largest stakeholder and that it is important we work together constructively. We remain committed to doing so.

### ***Outstanding Issues***

Nevertheless, there are some outstanding issues the UFBA believes need to be progressed further. We remain concerned that FENZ is not giving greater priority to strengthening its relationships with its key partners and the community generally.

We appreciate that the years of Covid19 disruption distracted FENZ, as it did so many other organisations, from the wider picture. But now the pandemic is largely behind us, and with changing environmental circumstances becoming more dominant, we think there is an urgent for FENZ to increase its engagement level with its key stakeholders and the community generally, and we remain committed to working with FENZ to achieve that.

Beyond FENZ, we are keen to see progress on changes to the ACC legislation to ensure that volunteer firefighters are recognised as a unique group and fully covered by the ACC for specified occupational diseases. These include specific cancers, asthma, heart attack, stroke, and musculoskeletal disorders they may contract in the course of their work as firefighters.

At present, they are not covered because, incredibly, volunteer firefighting has previously been classified by the ACC as a leisure activity, and therefore not subject to ACC coverage. Our submissions to the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment seeking change are now before the government for consideration. We will be pursuing this matter with Ministers at the earliest opportunity.

### ***Challenges for the Future***

You will see from the Annual Report and the Financial Statements that the Association is in a sound financial position, with a prudent investment policy. More details will be provided by the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee when he speaks shortly.

Last year the government advanced a significant loan to FENZ so that it could settle the long-running dispute with its employed staff. Repaying that loan will place further pressure on the FENZ budget, which is likely to impact on our ongoing funding, a substantial portion of which is by way of an annual grant from FENZ. What that means is that the 86% of firefighters who are volunteers are effectively being asked by the government to pay for salary increases for minority who are employed staff.

While that is in its own way a telling reflection of the underlying attitude towards volunteers, it does create some new opportunities for the UFBA to diversify its income base to become more self-reliant. A more self-reliant UFBA with its own income streams based on commercialising some of our operations, and seeking sponsorship for others will have more flexibility and freedom than at present.

The Board is looking to explore these opportunities, particularly in the areas of training and event management. At the same time, changed funding arrangements and rising external costs will require us to look again at the way we currently do things.

Our Challenges are an important part of our annual calendar, as the unqualified success of this year's round of Challenges has shown. The Board is very keen that they be retained and developed further. Similarly with our Annual Conference. At present, this is funded substantially by FENZ, and there is the possibility of it being expanded to become a more sector-wide event. That is likely to mean there will be significant changes to the format and structure of the Annual General Meeting which, for understandable reasons, FENZ is not willing to fund.

Consistently with my earlier comments that the UFBA will be making much greater use of online meetings and general communications in the future, we are considering shifting future AGMs to a largely online format, to be held alongside or separately from the Annual Conference.

I must make it very clear that no definite decisions have been made on any of these matters at this stage, nor will they be without proper consideration by our members. But I raise them now as matters we ought to be giving consideration to. My intention is that any changes we ultimately make will enhance both the UFBA's ongoing relationship and contact with members and the service it provides. For that reason, I see the challenges ahead of us as positive opportunities to be embraced, rather than difficult problems to be overcome.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, let me pay a huge tribute to all of you for the constant way you serve your communities and keep them safe. You are always on call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. For you, there are no shifts or rosters—your commitment means you are always on call. And you respond when called out, rain hail, or shine.

Alongside your extraordinary commitment is the support of your families who support and encourage you. You will have all endured disrupted family occasions to enable your partner, sibling, parent, or child to answer the community's call. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude and a mighty thank you.

I must also acknowledge employers, who stand by you when you are called out. Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding. Our members are committed, highly skilled, and uncomplaining. You serve our communities passionately and professionally, and it is an absolute privilege to be working alongside you.

Please enjoy the next few days of camaraderie and learning.

I look forward to catching up with many of you over that time and I wish you well for the future.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā tatou katoa.

### **Confirmation of the 2022 AGM minutes**

**MOTION:** That the minutes from the 2022 AGM which are on the UFBA website, are true and correct as confirmed and adopted by the UFBA Board on the 2 February 2023, in accordance with UFBA Constitution 6.1 (b)(i).

**Moved:** CFO Russell Anderson Alexandra Fire Brigade

**Seconded:** SFF Russell Hardman, Thornbury Volunteer Fire Brigade

Let the minutes show that the Minutes of the 2022 AGM are adopted.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

### **2022/23 Annual Report**

All Brigades have received a copy of the 2022/23 Annual Report. Reporting on the years activities has been provided in the annual report as required by constitution and financial statements have been audited.

### **Director Thomson addressed the delegation:**

As chair of the Audit and Risk committee, it falls to me to make a few opening remarks about this year's financial results. The financials have been circulated and for the most part I will take them as read. I do, however, need to comment on some areas of this year's results, as we are going through a major period of readjustment for two main reasons.

The first is the ongoing impacts of the recent covid pandemic. Our ability to run challenge and other events, under post covid conditions, has been difficult to say the least. This combined with increased costs for travel, accommodation, and so on, has severely impacted the viability of some of these activities. We are always reluctant to just simply pass on increases and all our team are working hard to deal with this situation.



The second, and by far the biggest impact on us as an association, is a direct result of a reduction in the operational funding grant from FENZ. In the year under discussion this has been reduced to 70% of previous levels and will be further reduced to 60% for the 23/24 year. This reduction has negatively impacted the association in several ways as you can imagine. The covid lockdowns meant the postponement of many honours' nights for brigades. The resulting catch up has seen a big blip in medals required by our members and led to an approximate 50% increase in the number of medals purchased in a short period of time.

This in turn caused us to exceed the honours subsidy cap which was historically agreed to with FENZ. FENZ assist us in the 50% discount applied to costs of the 25- and 50-year gold star and medal awards respectively. The funds towards the discount cannot be "banked" if not used in any given year, so when we have a surge, as we have had, the capped funding is not enough to cover the full cost of the discount, thereby contributing to our losses. With our new honours database, we should be able to better predict these sudden surges in advance and hopefully we can agree an increase, as appropriate, with FENZ.

It is also fair to say that following the FRFANZ and UFBA merger, there are now more recipients coming forward for long service awards and this has also not been recognised in the size of the cap.

We recognise that FENZ is under the government spotlight and acknowledge the constraints that they are under currently. Of course, this has led to ever increasing scrutiny of the UFBA's monthly reporting and budget requests to FENZ. As you can imagine, this increased workload from FENZ and required changes to audit methodology, has led to a large increase in work for our small, but very busy management team. Both organisations are doing their best to support volunteerism in our sector in what are truly tough times.

#### Key points:

- The Association recorded an operating loss of (\$144,193) compared to an operating surplus of \$106,865 recorded in the previous year.
- The loss was due in the main to reduced FENZ operational funding down now to 70% of our operational costs and costs associated with our investment in sector issues such as member welfare issues.
- Management and the Board are working to identify positive financial initiatives to return the Association to a balanced budget in the near future.
- Our financial position remains strong, with \$1.2 million of cash and term deposits. On the positive side I note that we have a slight increase in interest on our bank funds compared to last year. During the year, the association acted to take a longer-term view and placed \$400,000 with Craigs Investment Partners in a diversified investment portfolio, similar to that of the Benevolent Fund. The purpose of this move is to ensure we retain, and improve, our long-term financial strength.
- This is the first year the UFBA was required to prepare a statement of service performance which discloses several key performance measures, including a record 247 25-year Gold Stars awarded to members. This current year is on track to possibly exceed this number. The service report was a requirement of the auditors who want us to be aware of the closer scrutiny that charitable trusts such as ours, are under.
- Increasing scrutiny by both FENZ and auditors have added significantly to the workload of our small but very busy management team as noted earlier.
- The Audit and Risk committee, along with the UFBA management team, understand the importance of retaining a positive cashflow position by carrying out an internal review and we have made recommendations to the board to consider, designed to protect our established equity. Please be assured we "get it", we are focussed on improving the financial result leading into 2024.
- It was pleasing to see the auditors have again issued an unqualified audit opinion with no audit issues identified.

I want to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the invaluable work done by Stephen, our Finance and Membership Services Manager, and also that of my Audit and Risk Committee members. Your professionalism and focus during our regular meetings ensure the UFBA is protecting its members, our staff, and our reputation. We continue to try and achieve the very best services and outcomes for our members.

As the financial statements have been circulated, the meeting was opened up to questions about the 2022/23 Financial Report.

***The following questions were raised from the floor:***

**1. UFBA Life Honorary Member, Sandy Lawson asked:**

I see in the accounts here are two funds that are capped for a particular use of the funds. I see that one receives interest and the other one doesn't. Why, and what is going to be done in the future to ensure that it does so in the future?

**Director Thomson replied:**

Thank you for your question this will be taken to the UFBA accountant, and we will look into this and get back to you.

**2. Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate. CFO Mike Kelly asked:**

The concern is how dependent is the UFBA on FENZ's for its funding? Three to four months ago we were in a position that chefs were told that they were not welcome at our own organisation's conference as FENZ did not want us, that did not go down so well. The UFBA is our representative organisation for volunteer firefighters, and it is who we have, and it is all that we have got. For our employer to be controlling the funding and therefore the scale and scope of our representation of organisation is a system that does not give us any fairness or any equity in terms of representation with other paid employees of FENZ. I would like to know what can be done to change that? In my view FENZ should be providing money on behalf of each firefighter represented by the UFBA and that is where the funding is coming from, thereby making the UFBA truly our representative organisation with no strings attached by FENZ.

**Director Thomson replied:**

Thank you for our question: Aware that at the early stages of organising this conference there was certainly an intent of bring younger members through. The way that it was communicated was not exactly what was intended by either FENZ or the UFBA. You will note that fairly soon after that there was some fairly quick messaging came out and we saw from very minimal uptake for the reasons that you stated; that we have arrived at this stage. Fair cop probably more so for FENZ but from our side in a lack of information to them, about what we are trying to achieve. We want to talk about succession because look around the room there is a lot of grey hairs. That was a genuine mistake. In terms of the funding you can be assured that the CEO and the Board are constantly in the FENZ building. The Chair has outlined today that we are here, we are "Firefighting New Zealand". We cover 92% of the land. There has always been funding coming through from the Fire Service and I do not see that they want to change that. I can see why they do not want to fund our AGM because this is the UFBA's AGM.

**Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, SFO Mike Kelly responded:**

I'm suggesting that the UFBA needs more funding, not less. That funding whether it comes from FENZ or whoever, is done to put us on a fair and equitable position with FECA, PSA, PFU, all of whom have had announcements from FENZ that they have had settlements and reached agreements. I want to see the model change so that you are not standing here in however long it takes to change, that FENZ are cutting our funding. FENZ are demanding us to account for what services are delivered. At the end of the day I am asking you to deliver for the 12,000 of us.

**Director Thomson replied:**

Your points are well founded. You can guarantee that those discussions have been had.

**3. Past President Bryan Stanley asked:**

In the operating payments in the Financial Statements there is an outgoing payment of \$92,117 – Fire and Emergency prepayment of the Covid Fund. Can you expand on what that is?

**CEO B Butzbach replied:**

Thank you for your question. Quite often FENZ would support the Benevolent Fund with a contribution on occasion like the Christchurch quake, Kaikoura and so on. The provided some funds during Covid. That was the balance left over as it wasn't all distributed, and the agreement was that we would give it back. Which we did.

**Past President Bryan Stanley responded:**

I thought they were grants which we would not need to give back.

**The Chair addressed the delegation:**

Rest assured that the Audit & Risk Committee does keep a very close eye on things and that the sorts of discussions that have been raised are at the forefront of a lot of the Committee's deliberations. As to how we get the funding we need, what the alternative sources might be and how we press the case the best we can.

***Membership Advisory Panel Annual Report***

President Amber Hollis as Chair of the Membership Advisory Panel spoke to the Membership Advisory Panel Annual Report

The UFBA Membership Advisory Panel aka the MAP, I Chair the panel and enjoy leading and working with the team, Vice President Warren Maslin. Past President Mike Allan and co-opted Past President James Walker, and we are supported by Jane Davies from the UFBA office. Thank you, Jane, for your administrative support this year and managing the application process when we have advertised for representation.

There has been a lot of work in 2023 with a lot of working groups being re-established or new groups being set up. The Map has been using the UFBA network to supply the right people for the working groups. This process isn't always easy due to the calibre of members applying and generally only having one position to be filled. We don't like having to say sorry to people when we only have one position, so we are offering applicants a support role to be a sounding board to the lead if needed. If you miss out on one group, keep an eye out as there's always something else coming up. We thank everyone for putting themselves forward and wanting to be part of the bigger picture. We also help members raise important issues with the UFBA management and the Board and FENZ for consideration or consultation. Acting as a liaison.

Panel members are a first point of reference for consultation, consideration and also a sounding board for proposed recommendations. Members can raise matters directly with panel members. Not every matter that comes to the Map has been raised through the official document, sometimes it is just a conversation that needs to be escalated, actioned, addressed or followed up. It about using the network. If the panel member feels it to be necessary, they may request the official documentation be completed as this will help support the case being put forward to UFBA or FENZ.

The MAP is proactive in monitoring Fire and Emergency topics, working parties and groups to make sure our members are adequately represented. Your voice is important to help affect change. An example of this was the Co responders Laps time – I believe once this notice hit the portal within half an hour conversations had been had and concerns were escalated to the UFBA and FENZ. Followed a few weeks later by a complete 360 on the notice. We also have the ability to take concerns to the right people, another example of work this year, was a submission from the Hawkes Bay Sub around the meals at incidents policy, as chair I send to my Region manager contact, who presented to his pairs at the Region Mangers Meeting, and they agreed the policy needed updating and has been escalated to the policy owner for work. This wouldn't have happened without the submission.

We encourage you to put forward your own ideas or topics for the MAP to review and assist with. We can't support if we don't know, so reach out, even if it's a phone call to a MAP member in the first instant.

***Benevolent Fund Annual Report***

The Fund's Chairman Past President Alan Cockburn spoke to the Benevolent Fund Annual Report

***The following question was raised from the floor:***

**1. UFBA Life Honorary Member, Sandy Lawson asked**

To you Mr Chairman and your fellow Trustees, I thank you for your service. My question relates to the \$92,000 that has already been raised. I understand quite rightly that the \$92,000 was given to the Benevolent Fund to spend on a particular purpose and that some of it was not spent, and therefore it should be returned. That was fine. What I didn't see and what I would have expected to see that when Cyclone Gabrielle arrived that that money perhaps even more, was not given back or extended to the Benevolent Fund by FENZ so that they could distribute it. And I am very disappointed that FENZ hasn't found it appropriate to do something like giving money to the Benevolent Fund so it can be distributed to their members, our members. And I say that I am very disappointed that firstly FENZ did not return the \$92,000 and then give us some more.

**Chairman of the Benevolent Fund, Alan Cockburn replied:**

I appreciate that. I will explain the situation with the \$92,000. We saw Covid coming, we knew that there was going to be a massive shutdown. We knew that people were going to be locked out of their jobs. We opened a dialogue through the Board and CEO with FENZ saying this could have a huge impact on our volunteer firefighters. We had representatives in every region looking for people who were in distress. But during Covid we had very few claims because the Government put in all sorts of support. We didn't spend the money because it was not needed. The understanding was that the money was only for Covid. The message received via the CEO was that FENZ were not forthcoming with any support for those affected by Cyclone Gabrielle.

The Fund had reserves, which is what they are there for, and we just carried on and did what we had to do. We should not be beholding to FENZ every time the weather sneezes. We have to plan ourselves and we have things in place now to be looking at additional funding streams to boost our reserves so that we can just carry on confidentiality with our own reserves and look after our own people. I don't think we need to be overly concerned about it. I think it woke us up a wee bit. We were lucky when Dame Margaret was Chair of the Board and the Christchurch earthquakes she just came up and said, "*go for it and we will give you the money.*" I think times have changed.

***Approval of Annual Report and Financial Statements***

**MOTION:** That the Annual Report and Financial Statements have been received, considered and approved for 2021/22 in accordance with UFBA Constitution 6.1 (b)(ii).

**Moved:** DCFO Fred Clarkson, Rakaia Volunteer Fire Brigade  
**Seconded:** SFF Matt Lovich, Kawakawa Volunteer Fire Brigade

Let it be shown in the minutes that the Annual Report and Financial Statements are reviewed, considered and approved by the membership.

The motion was **CARRIED**.

***Appointment of UFBA Patron***

**MOTION:** That Dave McFarlane be appointed as UFBA Patron for a further 12 months in accordance with UFBA Constitution 6.1(b)(vii).

**Moved:** UFBA Board  
**Seconded:** CFO Russell Anderson, Alexandra Volunteer Fire Brigade

Let it be shown in the minutes that Dave McFarlane is appointed by the membership as UFBA Patron for the next 12 months.

The Motion was **CARRIED** by acclamation.

### ***The Patron addressed the delegation.***

UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne, UFBA President, Members of the Board, Distinguished Guests, Delegates & Observers, UFBA Staff, Ladies & Gentlemen

I continue to be very impressed with the amount of work the UFBA undertakes on behalf of its members. With the amalgamation of urban and rural brigades and the establishment of FENZ, the UFBA has become a much larger operation, that serves brigades with diverse backgrounds and issues. None of the old issues have gone away, and new issues have emerged which has broadened its focus and increased the workload, requiring the UFBA to become nimbler in how it delivers its services to member brigades. All of this when money is in short supply!

Maintaining services to member brigades with increasing cost pressures cannot be sustained indefinitely, and ongoing funding is looming large as potentially the biggest issue facing the UFBA Board. Unless adequate funding can be obtained, it will impact UFBA operations going forward. The work of the UFBA is a vital component in sustaining the volunteer workforce and making sure that the fire and emergency reform agenda, that is, placing NZ Communities and their volunteers at the heart of the organisation, is achieved as designed and intended by the government. The incoming government has already sent strong signals about introducing austerity measures across government agencies. FENZ as a Crown Entity will almost certainly be subject to these measures along with the big Ministries. The UFBA must continually and visibly add value to its members and key stakeholders to attract the funding it needs to operate effectively. The UFBA membership has an important role in this as well. To tell your story to the decision-makers and raise awareness of your critical role. We must speak with a united presence and voice to be influential.

There remains a lot of work to be done in the area of equity. We are all part of one big team. We all receive the same training. A previous national Commander, the late Mike Hall once told me that the only difference between a crew of paid firefighters and a crew of volunteer firefighters was that one crew is paid and the other isn't.

In addition to the training provided by FENZ, volunteers bring a vast array of knowledge, skills and experience, gained through their paid vocations, that can be applied to a variety of emergency incidents. How then can volunteer firefighters be given more opportunities to be part of task forces? How can volunteers receive specialist training to prepare them for more weather-related emergencies? How can FENZ and the UFBA support achieving a more unified, broad based emergency service?

The UFBA's push to retain the independence of volunteer brigades continues. Without their community identity, the strength and commitment of brigades and ongoing community support is unlikely to be as strong as in the present. Earlier this year, FENZ agreed to work with the UFBA on a new brigade engagement model, including a revision of the brigade model rules and operating plans relative to local risk. This is a large project, being led by the UFBA, which affects all volunteer fire brigades. I look forward to hearing updates as it progresses. I am pleased to hear the meeting between our Board and the FENZ Board was finally able to go ahead and confirm our working relationship. There is still much work to be done here, and I know this great association will continue advocating for the interests of its members.

In closing I would like to say I consider it a privilege to serve as your patron and thank you for re-electing me to the position. I welcome the opportunity to continue to serve the UFBA and add value to the organisation.

### ***UFBA and Benevolent Fund Subscription Fees***

**MOTION:** That the UFBA membership and UFBA Benevolent Fund subscription fees will remain unchanged.

**Moved:** Rural Firefighter, Ryan Anderson, Blenheim Voluntary Rural Fire Force

**Seconded:** Past President/Operational Support Ian Lindsay, Browns Volunteer Fire Brigade

### **Motion One**

#### **Increase UFBA Benevolent Fund Subscription Fees**

Mover: The United Fire Brigades' Association Board

Seconder: Wyndham Volunteer Fire Brigade

#### **MOTION:**

- a) In accordance with clause 4.8(a) of the UFBA Constitution, it is proposed that the annual contribution to the UFBA Benevolent Fund be increased from \$5.00 per brigade member to \$8.00 per brigade member per annum, and this is to come into effect with the Fire and Emergency New Zealand grant payable in January 2024.
- b) That the annual contribution to the Benevolent Fund is deducted quarterly from members' brigade grants commencing with the grant payable in January 2024.

Chairman of the Benevolent Fund and Past President Alan Burgess addressed the delegation

The Chair opened the Motion for discussion.

#### **The UFBA Chair read the pre-submitted question from Ravensbourne Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, SFF Kate Kersten**

Will FENZ be increasing the grant amount they give to Brigades to compensate us putting more money towards the Benevolent Fund?

#### **Chairman of the Benevolent Fund Alan Burgess replied:**

We do not have a direct line of association with FENZ in so far as funding grants are concerned. The one thing that you may be aware of is that there was earlier in the year, I think, a 7% increase to grants so that's certainly a help. I absolutely agree with the sentiment that comes from the question is that one of the things that the UFBA should be doing as an organisation is working at keeping those grants well up. We have all seen the increase in wages within FENZ, I think that we are deserving of exactly the same thing

There was no further discussion.

*The Delegation voted by a show of voting cards. This was overseen and verified by independent auditors Grant Thornton.*

**MOTION:** Let it be shown in the minutes that this motion has now been accepted as per the voting of the delegation.

The motion was **CARRIED**

### **CEO Update**

*Chief Executive Bill Butzbach addressed the delegation.*

E te Rangatira koutou ko ngā kaipatuahi, kua huihui mai nei, tēnā koutou.

E mihi ana ki ngā tāngata whenua o tēnei rohe.

E mahi ana au ki UFBA. He Kaiwhakahaere matua ahau (a-ho).

Ko Bill Butzbach ahau. Nō Te Whānau ā Apanui raua ko (rawa-co) Whakatōhea ahau.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

Can I firstly acknowledge the existing leaders and emerging leaders we have here today and the contributions you have made in many ways to the UFBA over its 145-year existence. Can I also acknowledge your nominated representatives-the UFBA board for setting clear direction and for supporting the UFBA staff team so well, all on a voluntary basis.

I appreciate this great opportunity to show you how the UFBA are working with you and for you and what we need from you to achieve our collective goals because together we can activate some much-needed changes in our critically important sector.

1. Now, we want to get you recognised for firefighter cancers. We want you to be recognised for psychological trauma. We want volunteers to be recognised equally with paid employees under ACC. The UFBA has proposed legislative changes to benefit ALL firefighters. While all firefighters are covered for accidents while undertaking FENZ duties, volunteers are not covered for gradual process workplace injury and illness. The UFBA is pushing hard to get this anomaly changed. Volunteers have a special role in emergency management within NZ and volunteer firefighters are the only volunteers engaged in fulltime unpaid work by a Crown Agency. The precedent is already set for this recognition in the FENZ Act.

So, our first step has been to get a foot in the door. To get firefighting related illnesses and injuries recognised in law. MBIE called for submissions to amend schedule 2 of the Act which sets out occupational diseases. We made a significant submission, and we await feedback from government. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank those members who helped us develop the submission,

The second step is to get FENZ volunteers recognised for cover. We had a good relationship with the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Barbara Edmonds, and we are aware the incoming government is sympathetic to our proposals. We have a team of experts working on a briefing paper for the new incoming Ministers, so they know who we are and what we stand for.

We will need your help to engage with local politicians though, to go and speak to them. Every opportunity you have, go and speak to them and help them realise this massive gap and flawed ACC system New Zealand has. The UFBA Management can't do this alone, we need you to activate local relationships and we can support you by giving you a brief through the brigade reps on how to do this.

2. Another one of our strategic projects is revising the Volunteer brigade engagement model. This is the current agreement you have with directly with FENZ to help you respond to your community. At the heart of the new arrangements will be to recognise that while volunteers are legally FENZ personnel, they are also members of independent community based brigades. And that this identity must be maintained in order to maintain community support for the work of FENZ. In the recent roadshow undertaken by Peter and I it was really clear that brigades wished to maintain their community identity. The theme of last year's conference was connection. We have kept this theme front of mind since and we have prioritised improving our connections at national, provincial and local level.

Our advocacy and support team have been working hard for you. We have been involved in 130 new cases for the past financial year. The cases are becoming very complex and challenging. We have a dedicated team throughout the country who are trained, skilled and qualified to support individuals and brigades. If you need support, reach out to the team.

In the last quarter we have established a brigade rep network that now totals 595 out 600ish. This is just the beginning, Keeping the network alive and active is a priority for UFBA management. The word from the reps is that the forums must be practical and active and genuine. To that end we are hosting bi-monthly online meetings by region. We've had two so far and 32 issues have been raised, discussed, communicated and FENZ are working with us in a coordinated way to address the issues raised.

3. Throughout the 2022/23 financial year we have engaged with over 10,000 of you, whether you have attended a service honours function, come to us for advocacy, participated in our challenges as a competitor, official or spectator cheering on your brigade, attended Provincial meetings with the UFBA, joined one of our learning and development courses,

4. Our team have been busy, we are full swing with challenges. These events are generating high public engagement and media interest. We are delivering these skills-based events that help us be better firefighters. Using our skills in a safe and competitive environment with support and camaraderie.
5. The Provincials are so important to us, they feed directly into the UFBA, and we greatly appreciate their input. Although Provincials are entities in their own right, we need to work in close partnership with each other. That's why we have refreshed the MoU with the executives of the Provincials, so that we can better collaborate on these important matters.

As you can see, there are so many ways you can help and be active in the UFBA. Thank you we couldn't do it without you, the UFBA is a membership driven organisation – and now we need you to activate your Brigade and demonstrate the strength that we have.

Can I finish by talking about the power of our unity. Unity is about:

- strength in numbers
- shared goals
- support and solidarity
- diversity and inclusion
- amplified impact
- problem solving
- resilience

By coming together, individuals can achieve great things and create positive change in their communities, organisations and the world at large

Kia kaha, kia Kotahi ra. Our strength is our unity.

### **General Business**

*General Business questions were received by electronic means and items were raised from the floor.*

#### **1. Pre-submitted Question from: Past President, James Walker**

I have been asked to submit the following question regarding Brigade Grants, with the increase in price of service medals and bars coming, due to the rising prices in commodities, which will become a financial burden on most brigades, is it possible that the brigade grants could be or should be increased somewhat to offset the cost increase of these medals and bars? One would imagine that FENZ won't just increase the brigade grants without us fighting for the increase, so can we ask that the UFBA go and advocate on our behalf to get this increase.

#### **UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

We absolutely understand the importance of those Brigade grants to supporting the work of those individual brigades particularly given the cost-of-service honours functions and the medals etc so we will certainly be continuing to advocate to FENZ for those grants to be increased to reflect the overall increase in your costs. That discussion is an ongoing one but is an important one. The UFBA will follow up with you separately. Rest assured that is something that we have taken on board, we are aware of, and we are working towards a solution.

#### **2. Pre-submitted Question from: Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, Rural Firefighter Lou Bird**

With the AGM now being held separately from the annual conference, it is appropriate to consider again the question of AGM quorum. Porangahau would like consideration of using sub-associations as the means of AGM representation for brigades. Such a move would hopefully stimulate greater involvement of individual brigades in their sub-associations.



**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

As I indicated in my opening speech, we are looking at ways that we may need to do the AGM differently. If we move to an online format, then obviously the question of the quorum which has come up in recent AGMs will need to be reconsidered to ensure we get maximum participation. As I said in my speech any changes will be fully communicated with the members before we proceed to implement them.

As to the role of the Sub-associations the technical problem is that Sub-Associations, like Provincial associations, are associate members of the UFBA and are not enrolled members of the UFBA. Having said that I think that there is scope for the UFBA to be looking to host regional gathering. Again we have been talking about this internally. It may become a more formal part of our business in the future.

We put these issues out there today because we want there to be discussion. It is not a question of the Board deciding what the format of the meetings will be for the future. We want to engage in discussion with you, get your feedback and then make decisions that we all feel comfortable with. Quorum, format, venue are all part of that. We encourage you to all participate in those discussions and feed us back your responses as you reach them.

It is good to hear members are being future focus and taking quorum into consideration. We encourage the membership to let us know your thoughts

**3. Pre-submitted Question from: Wairau Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, Recruit Rural Firefighter Tyler McComb**

Had a couple of queries from brigade members regarding required attendance with respect to musters. We understand the need to maintain a good level of attendance at musters and training nights, however, the feedback or the question was around times that people volunteer outside of training nights for the brigade and if this was somehow transferable and recorded as attendance. For example, if someone couldn't make training but came in to complete their scheduled checks, then this would be recorded as their volunteer time.

**UFBA Board Director Prendergast replied:**

Thank you, Tyler, for your question. This is a good question and considering the need for more flexibility in our modern busy lives, it needs more thought and consultation also with the membership. UFBA Management have taken this on board and will action to work with Fire and Emergency, asking them to better inform the membership with suggestions on how to manage these issues. This is more of an operational question.

**4. Pre-submitted Question from: Kuaotunu Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, Rural Firefighter David Wright**

The Kuaotunu Volunteer Fire Brigade has asked whether there could be some form of recognition for Past Fire Chiefs. Maybe in the form of a special epaulette. Reason - There are many ex-Fire Chiefs who still give service to their respective brigades, they have great experience to give to all members and we feel that recognition is warranted.

**UFBA Board Director Prendergast replied:**

Thank you, David, for your question. If I may focus this question to Rank Identification as a whole. Yesterday I spoke with a Senior Manager of Fire and Emergency New Zealand and again spoke to another two Senior Managers today. Again this is an operational matter for Fire and Emergency not something the UFBA or the Board can manage.

This has been acknowledged. Our disapproval on how long this has taken, there have been a lot of delays for the rank structure and identification. We have passed your personal suggestion for them to consider at the same time. We will continue to push for this matter as we always do, as we advocate for you the membership.

**5. Pre-submitted Question from: Rahoitu Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, CFO Paul Mundt**

[Referring to COVID-19 restrictions/mandate] This is for all firefighters paid and volunteers and any others employed by FENZ, we were never given an apology for standing our ground, some did leave for good and some returned but never I am sorry and very pleased to have you back, as we all know now it makes no

different to anyone, we did lose good people because FENZ sided with St Johns and did not want us near them, but FENZ did not once care about the others, a massive apology to all that said NO, maybe backpay for the ones that had to lose houses and family because of it.

As a large union, the UFBA did nothing to help any firefighters, The UFBA is supposed to work for us, not FENZ. FENZ and the UFBA should never be mates, they should be working partners

**UFBA Board Director Cole replied:**

Thank you, for the question. The UFBA contracted one of our members to lead our COVID-19 response, supporting members in many aspects that may have affected them. We also established a UFBA reference group made up of about 30 other members with knowledge, subject matter expertise, and commitment to informing our advice to FENZ on behalf of the membership. Through this reference group, our two reps on the FENZ covid-19 response group were able to provide FENZ with informed, insightful, and constructive advice, to support their decision-making. The UFBA has a professional and mature working relationship with FENZ. We work together to support our members and respect what are our differing views from time to time.

**6. Pre-submitted Question from: Spencerville Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, Operational Support Simon Lyford**

Can you please explain why the dates (3rd 4th & 5th November) for this year's UFBA AGM and Conference/Hui were selected? This weekend is also Guy Fawkes and historically it has been a busy weekend for brigades all over the country. Notwithstanding, since the removal of the sale of skyrockets has reduce a number of events historically experienced due to fireworks, there have still been a number of related incidents like bonfires etc. Moving forward, could the AGM and Conference/Hui be held late winter or in spring when the fire season is "normally" quieter, and flights and accommodation are surely cheaper as well. I am assuming that not having the AGM and Hui over Guy Fawkes weekend may have meant there would have been more interest from brigades to respond to the AGM. Sending members away to such events (for some brigades) does drastically reduce their response capabilities.

I am asking this on behalf on both the Spencerville Volunteer Fire Brigade and SouthComm's as both have been affected by this weekend.

**UFBA Board Director Sayer replied:**

Thank you, Simon, for your question. I need to assure you that we have not deliberately highjacked Guy Fawkes weekend to hold our AGM and conference. I hope that you will appreciate that we have had many factors to consider on setting a date for this conference. There has been such things as venue and speaker availability. There has been lambing and calving. There has been wildfire season and probably of most significance the end of financial year requirements including the preparation and approval of annual accounts. I trust that is enough of an answer to give you an understanding. We have heard and understand your concerns.

***The Chair opened questions to the floor.***

**7. Question from: Porirua Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, OIC SO Margaret Smith**

I have a motion from the floor members who are watching online and are present here, are quite disgusted by the fact that FENZ have reduced the funding to our organisation. Considering under Section 36 of the legislation, they have to fund the advocacy that the UFBA provide to our members. And I understand that we are in a financial situation, the whole country is but the motion from the floor is that members will stop entering SMS until FENZ refer their funding back to 2022 levels. And again, remember what Bill said strength in numbers and unity. We are 86% of fire and emergency. And we have a say if we stopped doing SMS in the same way that the career guys did. Maybe they'll listen to us. Debate is open.

**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

Thank you. Unfortunately, Margaret, though I thoroughly understand and have some considerable sympathy with your sentiments. I can't accept a motion from the floor, but I will invite discussion on the point that you've

raised. And because we do have FENZ representatives in the room. I'm sure that they will be listening to the response. I will then ask the CEO to comment.

**UFBA CEO Butzbach replied:**

Margaret, thank you for your passion and the question. It's totally understandable you should raise it. I think it's important to clear the air and to talk about things that have moved in recent times in terms of our funding arrangements. First and foremost, FENZ aren't a bucket of unending funds and there are rules about how they spend and what they spend it on. At a recent meeting of the Board. Some of the earlier decisions about reducing the core funding down to 60% are now off the table. And I'm confident that providing we as an Association and that means all of you to, we continue to show the value add and get engaged in activities that relate to all of the objectives that FENZ can fairly fund. They will fund it. I am confident that if we asked for things that add value and are consistent with the objectives of FENZ and with the objectives of the UFBA members will get funded.

**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

Thank you for the question. It is an important one and you've got a pretty clear answer, and the Board management will continue to push that, and we are trying to get to a situation where there is continuity and certainly in our funding. But as I said earlier on today, it doesn't prevent us looking to other opportunities to use some of our strengths to gain additional funding. from other sources.

**8. Question from: Kawerau Volunteer Fire Brigade and Past President Brian Stanley**

When the CEO spoke, I was delighted to hear him refer to us as belonging to Crown Entity. So the question is has the UFBA done any advocacy towards getting the crown put back on your badge? And if not, are you going to do it?

**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

The short answer to the question is no, we haven't done any advocacy on that because the matter simply hasn't been raised with us and we haven't seen it as a priority. Are we going to do it? I can't give you that assurance, but you raise it here. We will certainly have a look at the question and whether we want to take it further.

**Past President Bryan Stanley replied**

Thank you. I think it was disgusting they took the crown off our badge, and I think it needs to go back on.

**9. Question from: Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, Rural Firefighter Lou Bird**

This is an operational question regarding the use of ATRs. ATRs Canister respirators removed from appliances during the Covid period. Ostensibly to reduce cross infection. They have never been replaced. The explanation I have is that they don't filter out carbon monoxide. And now as a rural firefighter, we find ourselves in the ludicrous situation of inhaling smoke going about our duties whereas before we wouldn't be able to breathe filtered air, except for the carbon monoxide which we are inhaling anyway because we're breathing the smoke. What I would like and put to the meeting today are the other brigades around the country who share this concern and desire that ATRs are reinstated, particularly on rural fire trucks as a matter of urgency. Thank you.

**UFBA Board Director Prendergast replied:**

It is a very good question. Again it is an operational question for Fire and Emergency New Zealand. I do remind delegates these questions are very good questions and President Hollis alluded to the MAP earlier. The MAP is the perfect place for those sorts of operational questions. The AGM is traditionally about the business of United Fire Brigades Association. I applaud you to use the MAP more.

**10. Question from: Southbridge Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate Operational Support, Brian Lonsdale**

I'll put this to the operational side of things. Mid Canterbury is an area that gets quite dry and summertime as some of you know, and you take a roll out, does not provide a spray out in the front. Therefore vehicles cannot be used in paddock fires, so a firefighter has to run at x miles an hour to chase the bloody thing. Has FENZ looked at a spray bar to be put on is it operational extra?

**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

We cannot answer a question for FENZ. They will be having a session tomorrow. And unlike last year where they talked and didn't answer any questions, they've assured us this year that they will allow plenty of time for questions. I know they're in the room and will have heard me just say that. I suggest you raise the question there with them.

**11. Question from: Porirua Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, OIC SO Margaret Smith**

I've been told that a point of order a motion is valid in response to the report. So just want to point that out. And I still want to come back to making sure that you keep the membership and communication with what's going on because you know, if it gets to a point where we need to stand up as a group, you know, not just have you guys having to face all that by yourselves.

My actual question today was I was wanting an update on the Model Rules.

**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

I'll give you a quick update on that. As you know, we raised last year with FENZ the question of the model rules needing to be updated. Earlier this year, as part of that list of things I referred to in my speech, FENZ agreed to do so. We are now working with them on that. And the way we're working is we've decided, rather than wait for FENZ to do something, we'll start to develop some model rules of our own, which we're in the process of doing which we can put on the table. That work is ongoing. It's not complete yet, but it is happening.

Can I just come back to the point before that you made about support and make this observation. We need your support, obviously, and one of the reasons why we put a huge emphasis this year on increasing the number of Brigade Reps from 120 to 590, which I think is 99% of our brigades, it was to provide that conduit. So there are two things that arise from that. One is having got those people in place, we have to facilitate external communication to them, and we will.

The second thing is the Brigade Reps also have to facilitate communication back. So it's a two-way challenge. We've done the hard work in terms of getting the numbers and thank you to all who responded because for a long time we were talking about Brigade Reps, and nothing was happening. You have now responded, we've got them, but we need to use that channel effectively. And I'm sure from the way you're nodding your heads. You understand that and we will make sure happens.

**12. Question from: Clevedon Volunteer Fire Brigade Delegate, CFO Mike Kelly**

It has been referred to a couple of times today with a Membership Advisory Panel. So I'd like to ask the Board just to review the Membership Advisory Panel. Seems like an awful lot of work to fall on four people and is it currently meeting the needs of the membership base. We've heard about it, it's sort of seems a little too unreachable. I'm not suggesting that it needs to change.

**UFBA Board Chair Hon Peter Dunne replied:**

I'll make a quick comment then I'll ask Outgoing President Hollis who Chairs the MAP to respond in more detail. From the Board's perspective, the MAP seems to be working pretty well. But it is a membership engagement mechanism and if the engagement is not taking place, then there are limits on what it can do.

**UFBA President Hollis replied:**

At the moment use the MAP more. There's a lot of stuff that's coming up today that is perfect for a phone call to one of the MAP members or an email through to the [map@ufba.org.nz](mailto:map@ufba.org.nz). The good thing is we have the ability to co-op people on which could come from applications for working groups. For something specialised we've also got the rest of the Board we can pull on and then network of the Past Presidents. So at the moment I'd say bring it on. I'm about to become the Immediate Past President and I'm really concerned that I need to add value to our membership. And that's where I feel in the next 12 months for my term, I can add that value

with the member's advisory panel. Chiefs and deputies can be coopted on at any stage. If there are more submissions than we can look at changing and review.

### ***Installation of Officers***

Outgoing President Hollis addressed the delegates.

Newly appointed President Maslin was presented with the Presidential chains, and then made an address to the delegates.

Past President Hollis was presented with a lapel badge and was thanked for her service to the UFBA during her term.

### ***Appointment of VP – Unopposed***

Incoming Vice President is unopposed. It is my pleasure to congratulate Jeff Manson from the Mossburn Volunteer Brigade, your new Vice President.

President Maslin presented newly appointed Vice President Jeff Manson with a lapel badge.

Vice President Manson addressed the delegation.

*UFBA Chair Hon. Peter Dunne declared the 2023 Annual General Meeting closed at 1524 hours*

### ***The closing Karakia was performed by SSO Ahron Eastall***

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga a te mea ngaro  
ki runga ki tēnā, ki tēnā o tatou  
Kia mahea te hua mākihikihi  
kia toi te kupu, toi te mana, toi te aroha, toi te Reo Māori  
kia tūturu, ka whakamaui kia tīna! Tīna!  
Hui e, Tāiki e!