



## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025**

# **CANDIDATE PROFILES**

(no Motions have been submitted for the 2025 AGM)



# **BOARD DIRECTOR VACANCIES**

**TWO POSITIONS  
FOUR CANDIDATES**

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY SURNAME:

**KAYE AHSAM  
HOWARD COLE  
STEVE SMITH  
TOM THOMSON**

**KAYE AHSAM**

Kia ora, Bula, Ni Hao  
Ko Te Whau te maunga,  
Ko Manawai te roto,  
Ko Kerikeri tōku kāinga ināianeī, engari I tipu aku au I Kaitaia, ā, nō Whiti ahau I whānau mai,  
Ko Kaye Ahsam tōku ingoa.

Greetings, Te Whau and Manawai are the hill and lake where I now call home in Kerikeri but I grew up in Kaitaia and I was born in Fiji, and my name is Kaye Ahsam.

I began my journey as a volunteer firefighter in Kaitaia in 2005. In 2017, I transitioned into the role of Volunteer Support Officer, and I am currently seconded as the Manager of Women’s Development until February 2026. My team also supports our other People Lead Networks (PLNs), working to strengthen inclusion and representation across FENZ.

I have been privileged to be one of the inaugural UFBA board interns - an experience I would highly recommend. It has provided me with valuable knowledge and insight into governance and the responsibilities of a board director that has now equipped me to contribute effectively from day one.

If I was elected as a board director I would like to help ensure that the UFBA continue to:

- Enhance advocacy support to all members,
- Provide the events you all love to participate in,
- Build on the collaborative relationship with FENZ ensuring all stakeholders keep volunteerism at the heart of decisions.



I am driven by wanting to serve and support not only you, but also the communities you continue to serve tirelessly every day. I am motivated by the vision of an emergency service that reflects the diverse needs of our population and is prepared for factors such as climate change and advanced technology.

I am committed to respectfully challenging conventional thinking and helping shape the strategic direction of the UFBA to ensure that we are 100% able to support you to respond to tomorrow. I invite you to bring me your insights, solutions, thoughts, feelings and ideas and if I am successful, I will endeavour to bring those voices to the board room.

As the saying goes “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best time is now” so my aim is to be a director who plants wisely today so our organisation can flourish in the future.

# CANDIDATE PROFILE: **BOARD DIRECTOR**

## HOWARD COLE

I am standing for re-election to the UFBA Board to continue building on the progress we have made together over the past three years. Since joining the Board, I have been proud to contribute to several positive outcomes, including:

- Returning UFBA's finances to a profitable and sustainable footing.
- Continuing the establishment of Tangata Matatau, which is reconnecting forestry companies, rural stakeholders, and contractors, delivering its second successful national conference in July this year.
- Establishing regular, face-to-face Board meetings with the FENZ Board and Executive Leadership Team, strengthening collaboration and accountability.
- Bringing national attention to the inequalities in ACC funding between volunteers and paid staff, advocating strongly on behalf of our volunteer members.
- Supporting effective conflict resolution, helping to rebuild trust and unity across our organisation.

These achievements are part of the wider journey of change that began with the merger of FRFANZ and UFBA, where I have been committed to ensuring that the voices of all firefighters are heard and valued.

I bring a governance style of leadership that encourages inclusion, transparency, and collaboration. My experience as a founding member and Chief Fire Officer of the Maramarua Volunteer Fire Brigade has given me deep insight into both rural and urban firefighting. In recognition of my service, I was honoured to receive the Queen's Service Medal in 2018 and to represent New Zealand at the AFAC Memorial Day in Australia that same year.



Under my leadership, the Maramarua Brigade has evolved into an all-environment specialist brigade, strengthening capability across both natural and built environments. I continue to actively attend large-scale incidents, and I value the collaboration and positive feedback our brigade receives from the community and peers alike.

Outside of firefighting, I manage a successful dairy farming business and am fortunate to have the support of my family and employees, enabling me to dedicate significant time to national and local initiatives.

If re-elected, I will remain fully committed to working with fellow Board members to further strengthen the UFBA, ensuring it remains a first-class organisation that advocates for, supports, and unites all its members. I would be honoured to have your vote.

## STEVE SMITH

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I'm Steve Smith and, in short, I love what we do as firefighters and I believe in what the UFBA stands for (and what it does for us). I would consider it an honour, if elected, to represent the members and our region on the Board. Here's a little about me, both personally and in relation to firefighting.

I was born in Thames, in the north, in 1962. I'm married to Kerie and have two grown-up children — twins — one living locally and the other in Canada. I've called Blenheim home for over twenty years. Whilst firefighting is my passion, away from this I like to keep fit and have been a business mentor with a charitable trust for over 15 years. I've had a number of different businesses myself over the years, ranging from forestry to insurance broking. These days I'm retired which gives me time for positions such as this one and for my current role in our brigade.

I joined Blenheim Rural on 15 February 2016. In 2018 I was deployed to Canada. In 2023 I was appointed Chief Fire Officer of our brigade and later that same year was honoured with our Firefighter of the Year award. In early 2024 I spent a week at the Port Hills. Being a firefighter is something I have always considered to be a privilege and I remain as keen as the day I started. It doesn't matter to me whether I'm the driver, getting on a pump, taking a portaloo to a site, or simply being one part of a great crew and, at the end of it all, sipping a soft drink and reliving how we practically saved the world (!) - I love it all. Admittedly, as Chief, I get to do this a lot less than I'd like. These days I get most of my enjoyment from creating opportunities for others and seeing them take on new responsibilities. Regardless, the level of enthusiasm I feel hasn't changed in all the years I've been involved.

Our brigade was once quite insular. In recent years I've worked hard to change that by having us regularly attending hui like this; providing our two-cents worth on the Model



Rules; competing in Firefighter and Driver Challenges; getting ourselves out in our community as often as we can; participating in our local Provincial; taking part in the Sky Tower and the Memorial climbs; and attending Anzac services. I'm proud that we're now involved in all these sorts of events on a regular basis.

In summary, from the day I joined I said it's a privilege to be part of this service and that feeling is as strong today as the day I started. I'm somebody who puts their hand up and, if given the opportunity to serve on the Board and be more involved in governance, I will approach the role with pride and total commitment.



# CANDIDATE PROFILE: **BOARD DIRECTOR**

## **TOM THOMSON, ONZM**

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Kia ora everyone,

I've decided to put my hand up again for another term on the UFBA Board. I believe I've still got plenty to give - especially as we head into some pretty tough times for our sector.

Over the past few years, we've all seen the squeeze come on with FENZ funding. As Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, I asked for your support to lift subs so we could keep the lights on and keep delivering what matters to you. You backed me on that - and because of it, we've kept member services running strong: more advocacy, more honours nights, and the support brigades need to keep going. That was a win we achieved together, and I want to thank you for trusting me.

But let's be real - the pressure isn't going away. At a recent conference, the Minister made it clear that FENZ is in for more cutbacks. If they're tightening their belts, we can expect to feel it too.

That's why, as a Board, we need to be thinking ahead. We need to back our volunteers, protect our services, and make sure this organisation is set up to handle the challenges that are coming. That means building good succession plans and making sure our leadership stays strong and steady.

I'm asking for your support again, to keep standing up for brigades like yours, and to make sure UFBA stays in good shape for the future.

Ngā mihi,

Tom





# **VICE PRESIDENT VACANCY**

**ONE POSITION  
THREE CANDIDATES**

IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY SURNAME:

**DALE LINDSAY  
MATI SOI  
DUNCAN TABOR**

# CANDIDATE PROFILE: VICE PRESIDENT

## DALE LINDSAY

I joined Morrinsville brigade in 1984 at the age of 16, with no idea what I was getting into. Within 12 months the fire brigade had become a cornerstone of my life and effectively my family, as my parents left home early 1985! (when my father accepted a promotion in Tauranga).

Waterway competitions became a passion and I competed as part of various successful Morrinsville teams during my eight years there before my employment with BNZ saw me transfer to Tauranga composite brigade in 1992. In 1994 I was appointed as Branch Manager of BNZ Whitianga at the age of 26 and served three years with Whitianga Brigade until 1997, competing as a member of their waterways team.

I left BNZ in 1997, transferring to Te Puke Brigade at the same time and have served there ever since, working as a home loan consultant at NZ Home Loans for seven years, then back to BNZ as a branch manager for one year in 2004 before being appointed to the role of Mobile Mortgage manager for 10 years, leaving BNZ again in 2015 to start my own mortgage broker business, where I remain.

I am a past president of Central North Islands Fire Brigades Sub-Association, Thames Valley Goldfields Fire Brigades Sub-Association and The Auckland Provincial Fire Brigades Sub-Association, and was elected Patron of the latter in 2024.

I served on the organising committee for the Auckland Provincial Centennial celebrations in 2000 and have served terms as Secretary for every brigade I have been a member of. I also served 11 years on Te Puke Fairhaven Primary School Board of Trustees.

I stepped away from Provincial and UFBA events for some years to focus on family. Once our children reached age 16, I felt comfortable getting involved again and have taken a strong interest in both Provincial and UFBA conferences ever since.

Having served on three previous executive teams at both Sub-Association and Provincial level I believe I have served an apprenticeship that will serve me well for the UFBA.

I am well aware of the commitment required and feel that a UFBA Vice-President / President has an obligation to serve our organisation with pride and diligence to recognise



all those of our members who compete at challenges, have earned service honours or brigades that celebrate milestones of service to their communities.

The UFBA has evolved over the last two decades to become an influential organisation, professionally run and recognised as such by the FENZ board. Despite the role of President now being perhaps more of a figurehead it remains a crucial link between the UFBA board and our members. The best way to get a feel for what is happening “out in the trenches” is to have an executive team that turns up and engages with our membership whenever possible.

As a self-employed financial adviser I have the time and commitment required to do this, and as a firefighter with almost 41 years’ service understand exactly what it means.



# CANDIDATE PROFILE: VICE PRESIDENT

## DUNCAN TABOR

Tēnā koutou, I'm Duncan, and I am excited to be running to become your UFBA Vice President. In this nomination, I'll briefly talk about what led me to this point & why you should support me to become your 2025-2026 UFBA Vice President.

### A BIT ABOUT ME

I'm currently serving as an Operational Support Senior Firefighter with the Wellington Operational Support Unit, and I also volunteer with the Tawa Volunteer Fire Brigade. I started my journey with Fire and Emergency in 2019, with what is now Remutaka Operational Support. I joined because, like so many others across the country, I wanted to serve my community and help others in their times of need. Over the past 6 years, I have deeply enjoyed the friends, challenges, learning, opportunities, and the service that have come from my volunteering.

Outside of my volunteering, I live in Tawa – just north of Wellington - with my partner & brother. Despite about 18 years of almost trying, I have yet to lose my American accent. In my day job, I work for a private company that provides fire safety services. Last year, I became one of two UFBA Board Interns, which involved learning about the UFBA's governance level, meeting members from across the country, and advocating for positive changes. It's this last part – advocating for positive change - that makes me seek your support for the vice-presidency.

### WHY YOU SHOULD SUPPORT ME

I believe it's an exciting time of change at Fire and Emergency, and I want to ensure that there is an energetic, knowledgeable president who is able to connect membership with the UFBA.

I intend to advocate for progress, ensure members' voices are front and center, and uplift emerging leaders in the association. I believe this is important mahi, as we are facing future challenges – such as from more frequent weather events and significant natural hazards that will impact the communities we serve. I'd like to acknowledge the work many provincials have done in uplifting emerging leaders, and I intend on championing & connecting these efforts at the national level as much as possible.



My previous experience as one of the inaugural board interns will be helpful, as I understand how the board and UFBA management operate, and can work constructively to advocate for membership with this knowledge. I also strongly recommend the board internship to anyone who is interested in the opportunity.

### CONCLUSION

I hope I have you & your brigade's support for the vice-presidency, and I look forward to meeting you, advocating for your brigade, and supporting you to make an impact in your community - Ngā Mihi.

# CANDIDATE PROFILE: VICE PRESIDENT

## MATI SOI

Talofa lava, my name is Mati Soi from the Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade in Lower Hutt Wellington.

New Zealand born Samoan, Father of four, husband to a beautiful wife, love sports, die hard South Sydney Rabbitohs supporter and value the time spent with family and close friends.

Over the past 15 years serving with the Wainuiomata Volunteer Fire Brigade, I've learnt that leadership isn't about titles — it's about service, trust, and standing shoulder to shoulder with the people beside you.

I have put my name forward for Vice President because I believe every brigade — no matter its size or location — deserves a strong voice, fair support, and the tools to keep their communities safe. My vision is a UFBA that listens, learns, and leads together.

My role will be to back our President, but more importantly, to back you — the people doing the work on the ground.

There is a samoan phrase that goes

“E so'o le fau ile fau - Unity is strength”.

Our strength lies in unity — and together, we can shape a stronger future for the UFBA.

I'd be honoured to earn your trust, your vote, and the chance to serve as your Vice President.

Fa'afetai



