

FIRE AND EMERGENCY
NEW ZEALAND

Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

2024 – 2034



POIPOIA TE KĀKANO KIA PŪAWAI



NURTURE THE SEED AND IT WILL BLOSSOM

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Foreword

Kupu Whakataki

Tēnā koutou,

I am proud to present our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, another significant step toward making Fire and Emergency New Zealand a place where everyone truly belongs.

Our people are our greatest asset. Each of you brings unique skills, life experiences, perspectives, and cultures that strengthen our organisation. For me, creating an inclusive environment means more than just increasing diversity; it's about ensuring that everyone who works or volunteers with us feels genuinely accepted, valued, and celebrated. When each person experiences a true sense of belonging, we create an environment where everyone can contribute their best to serve our many communities of Aotearoa New Zealand.

In affirming our organisation's commitment to Māori as tangata whenua and supporting the Crown's obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi, our dedication to diversity and inclusion empower us to be better equipped to more effectively serve all communities. These communities encompass the vibrant diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand embracing LGBTQIA+ individuals, neurodivergent people, those with disabilities, and all identities that enrich our cultural landscape through their unique perspectives, experiences and contributions.

This Strategy outlines why diversity and inclusion are important, what we aim to achieve, and the system level actions we will take.

It's supported by our Diversity and Inclusion Framework which guides the implementation of this strategy, and our Diversity and Inclusion Plan, which details the work to be done. All three documents guide us on this journey and work to create a holistic and realistic approach to this mahi.

It's part of everyone's role at Fire and Emergency to contribute to creating an inclusive and supportive culture and I encourage each of you to read this Strategy and reflect on how you can actively improve the diversity and inclusion within our organisation. Let's all work together to build an organisation that will serve all communities across Aotearoa with the respect they deserve.

Ngā mihi,

Kerry Gregory
Chief Executive Officer



Background

He kōrero whakamārama

Our aspiration is that Fire and Emergency New Zealand is a place where our people feel they belong; one that is safe, positive, and inclusive. We want all our people to feel supported and enabled to thrive, so collectively we can deliver service to our communities and to each other.

Our diversity should be celebrated. We all bring something unique to Fire and Emergency and it's our differences that make us stronger and more resilient.

Being a diverse and inclusive organisation also means we can better support all our communities, helping them to mitigate risks, increase their resilience, and keep them safe.

This comprehensive Diversity and Inclusion Strategy is intended to guide Fire and Emergency through this mahi over the next decade by:

- ➔ Helping to deliver our ambitions under Eke Taumata, working to create a safe, positive, and inclusive organisation for all our people.
- ➔ Ensuring we are aware of potential barriers that may prevent growth of diversity and inclusion within Fire and Emergency New Zealand.
- ➔ Providing clarity on decisions we need to make, and investments required to improve our people's experiences.

This Strategy covers a 10-year period, and outlines where we want Fire and Emergency to be by 2034, and four system level shifts that will help us get there. Our Strategy may evolve over this 10-year period as our maturity builds, opportunities are identified, and diversity and inclusion are increasingly seen as part of business as usual.

The work completed under this Strategy compliments our commitment to merit-based appointments, by ensuring that all individuals, regardless of background, have equal opportunities when demonstrating their skills and abilities.

We would like to thank the large number of people across Fire and Emergency who have contributed to the thinking in this Strategy, including sharing their experiences and aspirations for our organisation. We also acknowledge the support of our AFAC partners, and other agencies in the New Zealand public service, who have shared insights and research to help us build this Strategy.

Our current state

Tō mātou āhua ināianeī

The challenge

Historically, our frontline personnel has been primarily male dominated and made up of people from New Zealand European backgrounds.

Since 2019, Fire and Emergency has undergone two independent reviews of its culture which have both highlighted the lack of diversity and inclusive practices as a risk to all personnel.

As we consider the future of our organisation, we need to ensure our organisation is safe, positive and inclusive for all. This will help us attract and retain our people, as well as to serve our increasingly diverse communities.

Our data

Our people data helps us understand the challenges outlined above. Since 2022, we have seen minimal changes in our demographics across the organisation.

For career firefighters, the changes have been particularly slow. In June 2022, there were 91 female career firefighters. In June 2024, there were 94.

In June 2022, there were 1,684 female volunteer firefighters. That number rose to 1,859 female volunteer firefighters in June 2024. Although those statistics are more positive, they are still lagging behind the overall New Zealand workforce.

The number of our career Māori and Pasefika firefighters has stagnated. In June 2022, there were 235 Māori and 96 Pasefika career firefighters. Two years later, in June 2024, there were 238 and 97, respectively.

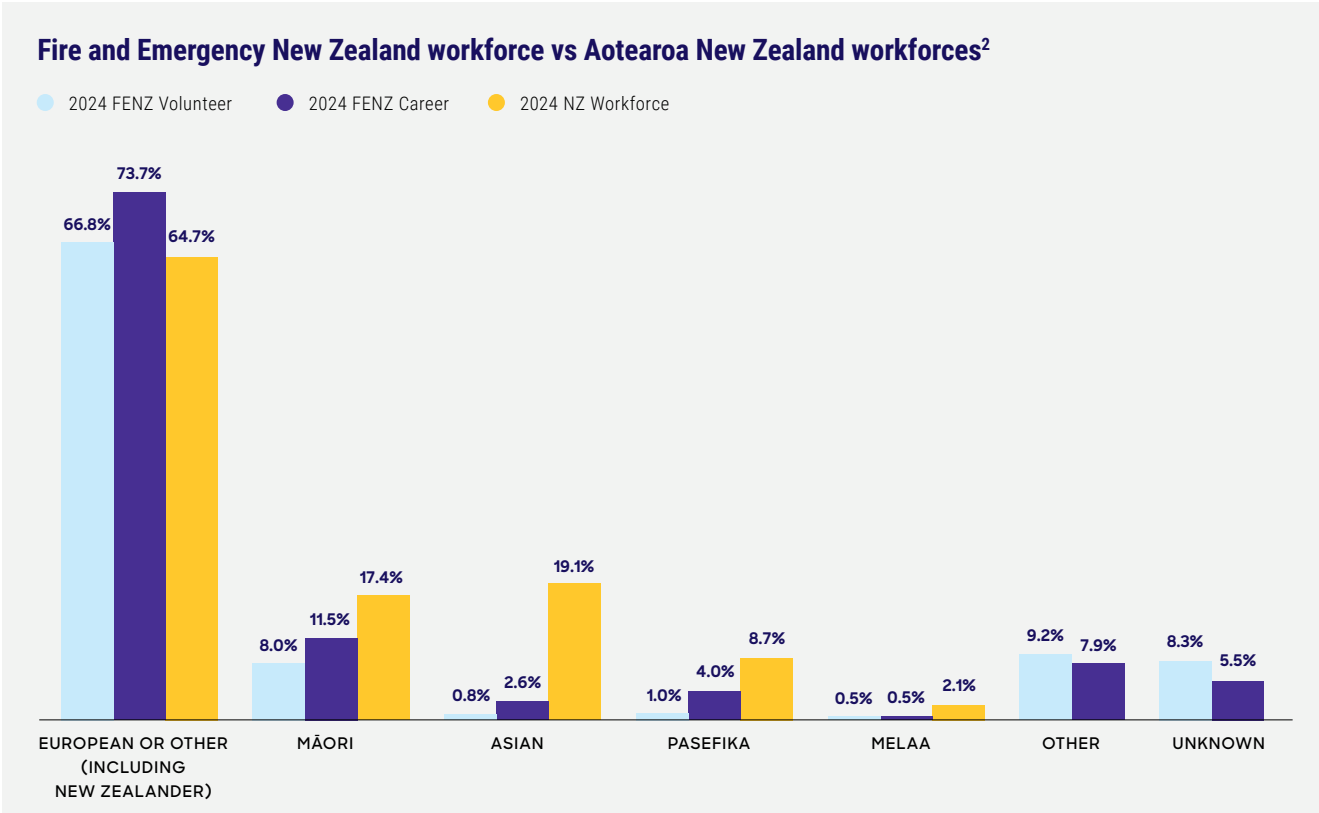
The full organisation data is provided below.

Fire and Emergency workforce demographics

Demographic	June 2022	June 2023	June 2024
Male	80.2%	79.6%	78.8%
Female	19.8%	20.4%	21.2%
European	74.2%	74.0%	72.0%
Māori	12.4%	12.4%	12.2%
Pasefika	3.9%	4.0%	4.1%
Asian	2.8%	2.7%	2.7%
MELAA ¹	0.6%	0.5%	0.6%
Other ethnicity	8.4%	8.3%	8.5%
Unknown	3.6%	3.7%	5.8%

1 MELAA refers to Middle Eastern, Latin American, and African.

The graph below compares Fire and Emergency’s workforce demographics with the Aotearoa New Zealand workforce. As a general view, both our volunteer and employee workforce, when compared to the wider Aotearoa New Zealand workforce, is overrepresented in Europeans and males, and underrepresented in all other demographic categories.

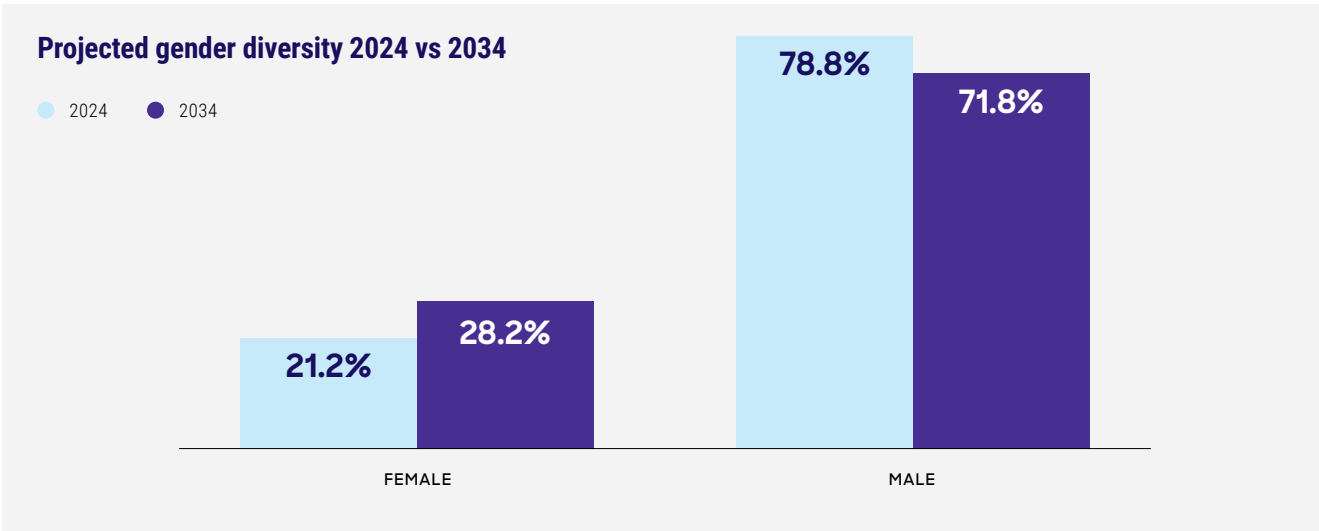


Data modelling

Data modelling was completed in June 2024 to understand what the future demographics of Fire and Emergency could be in ten years’ time (2034) if no interventions or changes to processes were introduced.

Gender

The graph below shows how our gender diversity may change between 2024 and 2034.



² The comparison is only for those in the 18 - 64 age range, due to the Statistics NZ classifications. We do not expect that the demographics for our workforce above 64 years’ of age would impact this overall picture.

This modelling suggests that, if no changes are made to Fire and Emergency’s people processes over the next 10 years, Fire and Emergency could expect a growth of 8% across our female workforce.

If we assume this projected growth is evenly spread across all roles in the organisation, we would expect to have 125 female career firefighters and 2515 female Volunteer firefighters by 2034. These are both considerably below the projected New Zealand workforce demographics.

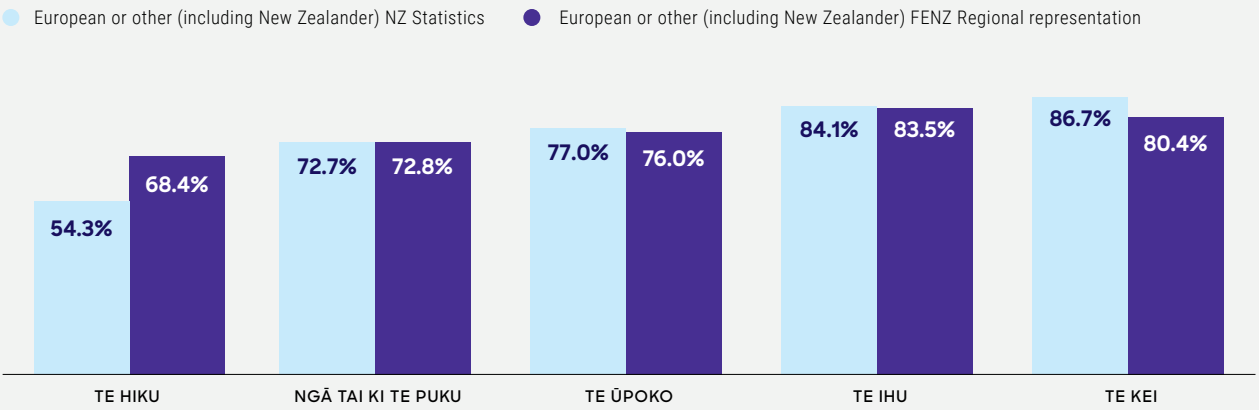
Please see the Appendix for a further gender breakdown.

Ethnicity

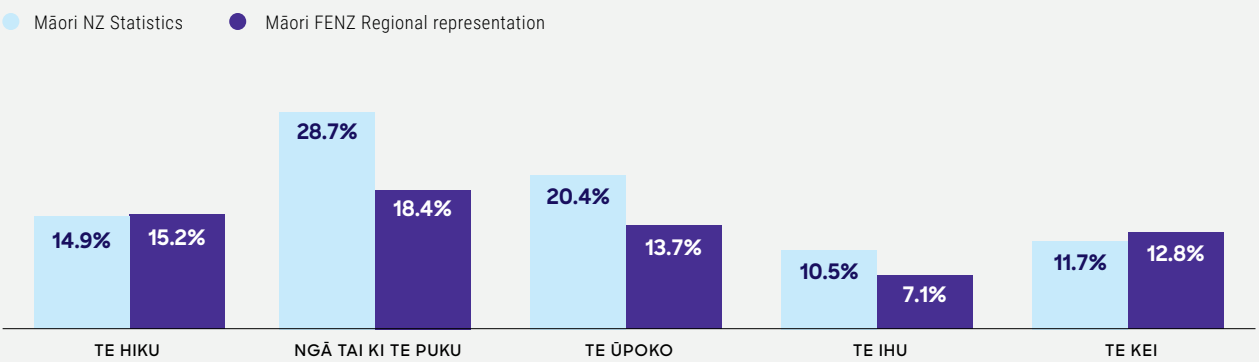
Further analysis was completed to understand if there were any regional differences in projected workforce demographics, noting that we would expect the diversity of the overall workforce to change at different rates across the country.

These graphs show projections of the main four ethnicities mapped across the five Fire and Emergency regions. The bars compare the estimated Fire and Emergency workforce, compared to the full New Zealand workforce. Again, these models have been developed based on Fire and Emergency making no changes to its processes and systems.

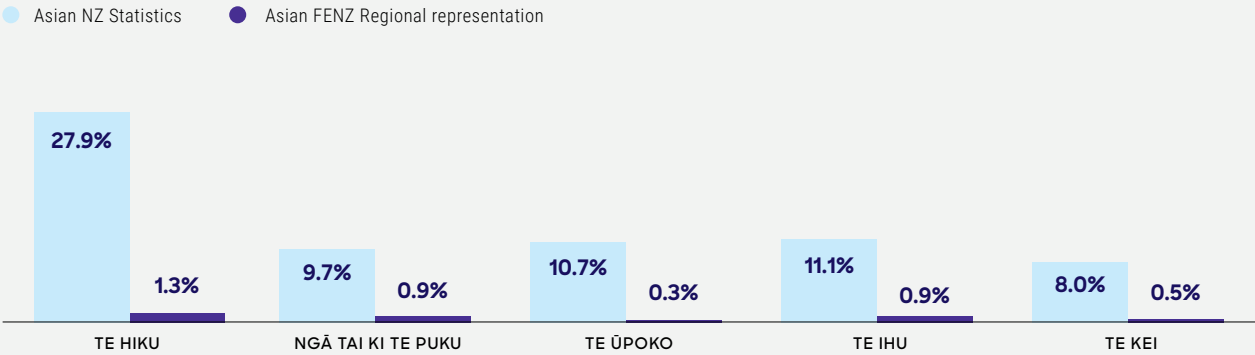
Ethnic diversity by region for European or other (2034)



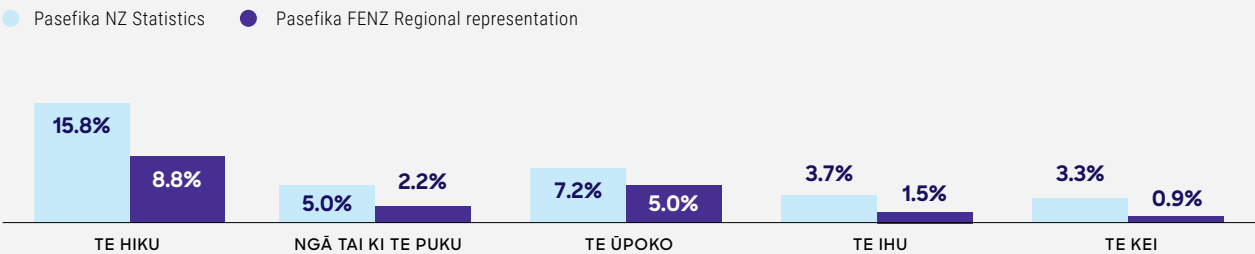
Ethnic diversity by region for Māori (2034)



Ethnic diversity by region for Asian peoples (2034)



Ethnic diversity by region for Pasefika (2034)



These graphs tell us that without any intervention or change, we will remain underrepresented by diverse ethnicities in all regions. These gaps are particularly stark in the Asian and Pasefika workforce.

Our values

Ō mātou uara

Our values reflect what is important to all of our people and the organisation we aspire to be. Our actions and behaviours should reflect our values. They should contribute to creating a safe, positive and inclusive environment for everyone who is part of our Fire and Emergency whānau.

Each of our values underpin our diversity and inclusion paths and guide us on this journey.



Manaakitanga We serve and support

- We undertake our duties with professionalism and to the best of our abilities, focusing on the needs of our communities.
- We express kindness and respect for others, emphasising responsibility and reciprocity.
- We ensure we are representing Fire and Emergency well through our actions.



Kia tika We do the right thing

- We act with integrity and honesty.
- We take responsibility for our actions.
- We do not walk past and ignore unacceptable behaviour.



Whanaungatanga We are better together

- We treat everyone we encounter fairly, inclusively and with respect.
- We challenge actions and behaviours that don't meet our standards.
- We meet our obligation to provide a safe workplace, free from inappropriate, unacceptable, and harmful behaviours.



Auahatanga We strive to improve

- We listen, ask questions and are open to different perspectives.
- We address our own or anyone else's behaviour if it falls below the behaviours expected here.
- We own our actions and behaviours and acknowledge our mistakes.

Defining diversity and inclusion

Te tautuhi i te kanorautanga me te whai wāhitanga

Aotearoa New Zealand and our operational landscape is changing. When approaching this mahi, it's important that we all understand what we mean when we use terms like *diversity* and *inclusion*.

Diversity

Diversity is about differences. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, cultural backgrounds, ethnicity, nationality, and national origin. It also includes age, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, education, and lifestyle.

For diversity to flourish, we need an environment where all our people can complete their mahi while feeling safe and supported to be themselves, without fear of judgement. There is strength in diversity of background and thought.

Inclusion

A culture of inclusion is where our differences are valued, respected, and everyone can contribute. Inclusion is removing barriers that prevent people from being themselves and from wholeheartedly leaning into their mahi.

A key aspect of inclusion is being open to new thinking and perspectives. An inclusive organisation is one where different views are listened to and respected and where there are opportunities for multiple differing perspectives to be considered in decision making.

Evidence³ shows that increasing diversity and inclusion can bring an organisation many benefits, including:



Innovation

A wider range of perspectives, diverse experiences and different working styles often generate more varied ideas and solutions.



Problem solving and decision making

Diverse and inclusive teams make better decisions more efficiently by using a range of perspectives, experiences, and abilities to solve complex issues.



Culture and behaviour

Increased diversity results in better conduct, engagement, and positive culture throughout an organisation.



Attracting and retaining talent

Greater diversity and creating an inclusive environment help to retain existing talent and widens the pool to recruit new and sustainable talent.



Employee and volunteer experience

Higher levels of diversity and inclusion increase employee and volunteer engagement, as more people feel seen and valued by their organisation.



Creating equity and public trust

Diversity and inclusion help build trust with the diverse communities we serve.

³ A bibliography of sources is provided at the end of this document

Why is this important to Fire and Emergency?

Diversity and inclusion within an organisation help to create an environment that brings people with different experiences and backgrounds together.

Our focus on diversity and inclusion will not detract from our commitment to merit-based appointments. Rather, diversity and inclusion initiatives strengthen meritocracy by ensuring that we attract skilled people from diverse groups into opportunities who will meet our performance and qualifications expectations.

Fire and Emergency's goal is to create a safe, positive and inclusive place where all of our people can feel they belong, where they are supported and enabled to thrive, so that collectively we can deliver service to our communities and to each other.

Our work to achieve this long-term aim is called Eke Taumata which is the abbreviated version of 'Kia eke ki ngā taumata' – to aspire to greater levels. In our context we can describe our own taumata or the desired state for our workplace. 'Eke' is a verb that in our context means to climb or embark upon. Together the two words describe our active journey to our desired improved state.

To achieve our desired future culture we have four pou, or pillars, of work:

- ➔ Building trust and increasing opportunities for engagement and influence
- ➔ Strengthening our people leadership capability
- ➔ Providing a safe, positive and inclusive environment
- ➔ Raising the bar on acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour

We recognise that reaching our desired future culture will take time and will require us to align all activities and actions within our organisation. This development of this Strategy is an important milestone in this journey.

Structuring change

Te waihanga i te panonitanga

Our culture outcome

Safe, positive and inclusive environment

Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Defines what we want to achieve, why it matters and the strategic system level shifts that will help us get there.


Our Diversity and Inclusion Framework

Guides the implementation of our strategy


Our Diversity and Inclusion Plan

Tells us what needs to be done to realise the strategy and aligns with our organisational business planning


Our maturity model




Awareness
Te Kākano




Emerging
Te Pihinga



Momentum
Te Māhuri



Rhythm
Te Puāwaitanga



Thriving
Te Puāwai

Our focus areas



Cultural intelligence



Community engagement



Leadership capability



Infrastructure



Policy, data, and monitoring

Actions to create change

He mahi hei kōkiri i te panonitanga

From our data modelling, we know that we are unlikely to see a significantly more diverse or inclusive workforce over the next ten years without making system- level changes. If we continue with our current processes, change will be slow, and we will continue to be an organisation that does not accurately reflect the communities we serve.

System level shifts at Fire and Emergency

Four system level shifts have been identified that could allow Fire and Emergency to more quickly change its workforce makeup over the next ten years. Each of these shifts will take time, and span across the stages of our maturity model. The intention of these shifts will accelerate Fire and Emergency's progress in becoming a more diverse, safe, positive, and inclusive organisation.

! While improving diversity and inclusion in all parts of Fire and Emergency is important, currently the greatest challenges are in our career and then volunteer firefighter workforces. Because of this, the proposed system level shifts predominately focus on our career firefighters, with a secondary focus on our volunteer firefighters.

We do not propose any system-level shifts in the corporate part of the organisation, as the workforce makeup of these areas already closely resembles wider workforce demographics.

The four system level shifts will take time and engagement with our people. Each of these will be achieved as standalone projects that build on each other's milestones. By allocating the right resources and following standard project and change management methods, we will create clear timelines to keep the work on track and properly account for the connections between the four actions.

The shifts naturally build on each other and will be addressed in the following order:

- 1 Complete a full review of the career Firefighter recruitment lifecycle, including attraction, assessment processes, selection through to testing and implement any changes required
- 2 Develop an approach for how recruitment targets could be set and implement a workplan to introduce these.
- 3 Introduce formal development pathway plans for Frontline and Frontline Enabling personnel to ensure everyone can progress through the organisation
- 4 Consider how we can attract and recruit candidates from a variety of operational backgrounds and experiences for operational management roles.

The four system-level shifts are outlined in more detail over the next five pages. These shifts will increase the internal diversity within Fire and Emergency.

Further actions to support diversity and inclusion

Our *Diversity and Inclusion Plan* includes a longer, more comprehensive list of actions which are heavily focused on workplace aspects that will encourage both retention and inclusion.

When completed, these actions will assist Fire and Emergency to become more diverse and inclusive. These actions reflect the lived reality of our people and have been developed through research, engagements, and conversations.

Together, this Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and the Plan form a holistic, sustainable approach to diversity and inclusion which will guide Fire and Emergency over ten years.

Ā MĀTOU
KAUNEKE Ā-KAUPAE
PŪNAHA

**OUR
SYSTEM LEVEL
SHIFTS**

1

Complete a full review of the career firefighter recruitment lifecycle, including attraction, assessment processes, selection through to testing and consider a workplan to implement these changes.

Why?

Through research and engagement with our people, we know that the current career firefighter recruitment process can be a barrier for diverse groups entering into the organisation. Although numbers of diverse candidates have increased over recent years, these numbers are still small, and there are differences in how individuals from diverse backgrounds progress through the various stages of the testing process.

To create significant change in Fire and Emergency, we need to address the first barrier people will experience when aiming to enter the organisation.

A review of the full recruitment process will ensure it accurately reflects the skillset required for a modern firefighter, while maintaining the high standards of health and safety required for all those undertaking this important role. It is not intended that different recruitment standards will be created for different groups, rather we want to ensure we have a recruitment process that is modern, inclusive and fit for purpose.

What we will deliver

- ➔ A fit-for-purpose and modern recruitment process for future candidates.
- ➔ A testing process that is reflective of the responsibilities of a firefighter and free from bias.
- ➔ Testing that aligns the training completed at the National Training Centre as part of the recruit's course.
- ➔ A proposed approach for addressing training and culture barriers at the National Training Centre.

Expected results/benefits

- ➔ Our testing removes unnecessary barriers.
- ➔ The number of diverse personnel entering the organisation increases.
- ➔ Individuals have a positive experience throughout the recruitment process and Fire and Emergency is considered a positive, safe, and inclusive organisation.
- ➔ New recruits are set up for success and experience a positive transition into the organisation.

2

Develop an approach for how recruitment targets could be set and implement a workplan to introduce these.

Why?

Many of our communities are currently underrepresented at Fire and Emergency. Women comprise approximately 21.2% of personnel overall but they are only 5.5% of career firefighters and 22.4% of volunteer firefighters (as of June 2024). Equally our ethnic diversity is low and will not match the wider workforce demographics without a system change. These also, over time, help to normalise a more diverse workforce.

Transparent targets, when coupled with a review of our current recruitment processes, should assist the organisation in increasing the diversity of our personnel. This will ensure we better reflect the communities we serve.

If targets are established, they will be defined and monitored by Fire and Emergency to support our organisational priorities and help us to focus our efforts. We expect they will evolve as our organisation evolves. This is different to quotas, which are often mandated by an external body, imposed upon an organisation and set a fixed number. Fire and Emergency is not considering introducing quotas and entry standards will remain consistent and appropriate for the modern fire fighter.

What we will deliver

- An updated recruitment process that is based on merit and that is inclusive, welcoming, and safe for all candidates.
- A comprehensive implementation plan on how recruitment targets could be set and followed, which is based on research and data insights.
- A communications and education package that ensures our people understand and the benefits of recruitment targets.

Expected results/benefits

- Higher levels of representation of diverse groups, both as employees and volunteers.
- More obvious role models for others to aspire to.
- Higher levels of engagement from personnel and higher trust in the organisation.
- Improved wellbeing for our personnel
- Lower levels of unacceptable behaviour.
- Fire and Emergency is considered a fair and mature organisation that values diversity.
- Our people embrace diversity, act inclusively, and support their colleagues because it is the right thing to do.

3

Introduce formal development pathway plans for Frontline and Frontline Enabling personnel to ensure everyone can progress through the organisation.⁴

Why?

Our people deserve to understand the career pathway options available to them and to have the skills required to progress through the organisation. The current ad hoc approach to career pathway planning creates an environment in which personnel have different experiences based on their relationships with, and expectations from, their leader.

We want all our people to thrive in the organisation and have clarity about the pathways available to them to grow and develop their skills and experiences. We want training and development opportunities to be offered fairly to all our people, and for them to have clear information about what they can access and when.

Our people's experiences could be enhanced significantly through the establishment of a formal programme of career pathway planning that enables and encourages all our people to see the opportunities available.

What we will deliver

- ➔ A comprehensive career pathways framework, that provides information to all our people on the opportunities available to them and how these can be accessed.
- ➔ New methods to track and report on development conversations to ensure there is accountability across the organisation to develop our people.
- ➔ Communications to all our people informing them of the changes and providing further updates as required.
- ➔ Clear guidance for the organisation on how career and volunteer pathway conversations should occur and their responsibilities within this process.

Expected results/benefits

- ➔ Anyone in the organisation can identify development goals and understand the areas they should focus on to achieve these.
- ➔ Leaders understand the aspirations of their people, and ensure they are not overlooked when opportunities arise.
- ➔ Leaders have the tools to enhance the confidence of wāhine and other diverse personnel, encouraging and supporting them to put themselves forward for opportunities.
- ➔ Development opportunities are discussed between a leader and their team members.
- ➔ Pathways are well known, and our people are supported when transitioning between roles.

⁴ For Frontline Enabling roles, we will focus on roles which are predominantly operational.

4

Consider how we can attract and recruit candidates from a variety of operational backgrounds and experiences for operational management roles.

Why?

We know our operational landscape is changing. To be equipped to respond to these challenges, we need to ensure we have a wide range of skills, backgrounds and experiences within our operational management.

Our data tells us that our current low turnover rates and the time it takes our people to move through the organisation means it will take decades to reach a gender or ethnicity balance for senior roles in Service Delivery.

This system shift involves us considering the entry requirements for operational management roles to determine whether we can attract and recruit candidates from outside of Fire and Emergency. These potential alternative pathways, if available, would aim to provide entry points into our organisation at a senior level where the individual has the necessary capabilities to maintain the high standards of health and safety, operational readiness and leadership that is required.

Through this work, we will look to align with the Paearu Mahi programme. As the Paearu Mahi programme develops and expands, we will ensure these two pieces of important work are connected.

What we will deliver

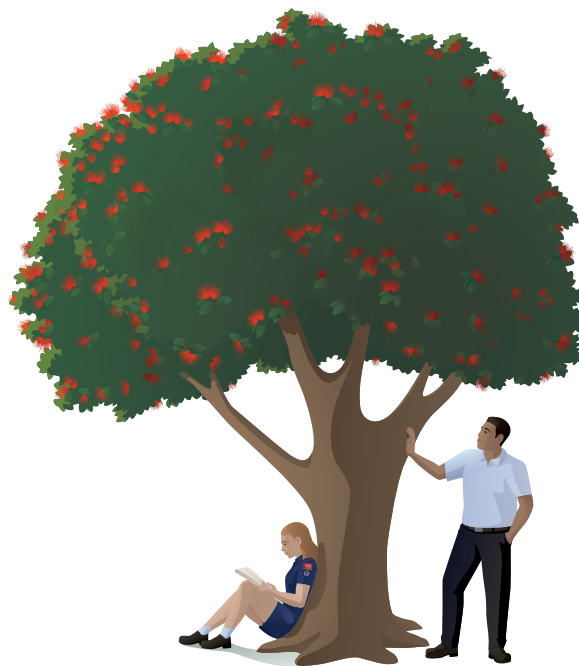
- A feasibility study of whether such alternative pathways are practical, plausible and appropriate.
- A comprehensive plan on how any opportunities identified for entry could be introduced into Service Delivery that is based on research and data insights.
- A communications and education package that ensures our people understand the opportunities of alternative pathways.
- Clear guidance and support for leaders.

Expected results/benefits

- There is more diversity of thought and experiences at senior levels of Fire and Emergency.
- Increased flexibility of entry pathways into Fire and Emergency, which in turn may provide more opportunities for diverse groups.
- Increased diversity of thought with fresh perspectives at all levels of the organisation.

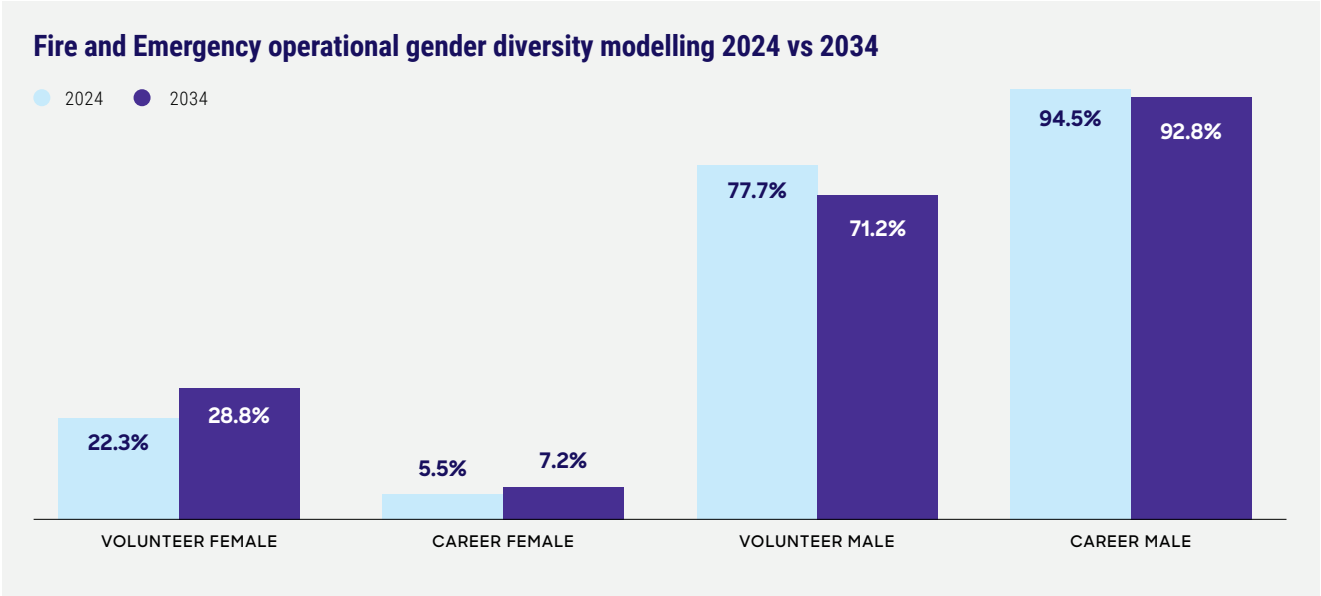
Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 2034 is more than just a document, it's a commitment to building a Fire and Emergency New Zealand where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. By embracing diversity and inclusion, we strengthen both our organisation and our ability to serve the many communities of Aotearoa New Zealand with respect. Now, it's up to all of us to turn this strategy into action.

Let's work together to make Fire and Emergency a place where everyone, regardless of background, identity, or experience, feels they belong. To take meaningful steps forward, we encourage you to also read our Diversity and Inclusion Framework and Diversity and Inclusion Plan, which outline how we will bring this Strategy to life. By working collectively, we can create a future that truly reflects the diversity of the people we serve.



Appendix

Tāpiritanga



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