



# Statement of Intent

2014 - 2018



## OUR PEOPLE



**1,700** Career Firefighters

**8,300** Urban Volunteers

**3,500** Rural Volunteers

## OUR NETWORK



**79** Career Stations

**360** Volunteer Stations

**187** Rural Fire Forces

## OUR GOALS

*Protection of people, property and the environment - by providing a prompt and efficient response to fires and other emergencies.*



*Fire safe behaviour and practice through proactive public education and rural fire coordination.*



*Resilient communities - by preparing for and responding to a broad range of non-fire emergencies in collaboration with other agencies.*



## OUR IMPACT

**70,907**  
incidents attended

In 2012 - 13, an increase of 4% on 2011 - 12. This included:

**5,434**  
structure  
fires

↓ Decreased

**5,323**  
vegetation  
fires

↕ Remains Static

**6,740**  
medical  
emergencies

↑ Increased

**4,564**  
motor vehicle  
accidents

↓ Decreased

**3,233**  
hazards  
materials

↕ Remains Static

**443,800**



direct contacts were made to provide fire safety education and prevention advice.

**94%**



trust and confidence rating, as measured using an independent survey of the public, covering a range of public sector organisations.

# Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b>	4
<b>PART ONE: FIRE SERVICE'S STRATEGIC INTENTIONS &amp; CURRENT PRIORITIES</b>	5
Where are we going?	5
The role of volunteers	5
Prioritisation - What are we doing in the next four years?	7
Key Programmes	8
Expected progress against the six priority areas	11
Fire Service 6 priority areas	12
<b>PART TWO: ROLE AND MEASUREMENTS</b>	14
What does the Fire Service do and how does it measure its performance	14
Risks	16
Resourcing	17
Prevention	17
<b>PART THREE: OPERATING ENVIRONMENT</b>	18
Statutory Framework	19
Rural	20
Environmental factors	21
Medium term trends	21
Recent events	22
<b>PART FOUR: ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH</b>	23
Organisational Health	23
People	23
Stakeholders	24
Assets	24
<b>GLOSSARY</b>	24



## FOREWORD

On behalf of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission, I am pleased to introduce this Statement of Intent. It outlines the new vision for the Fire Service and lays out an ambitious body of work for the next few years.

From the Chief Executive and throughout all levels of the organisation, there is a strong focus on safety which I commend. Firefighting is a job that puts people in harms way and as an organisation we must do everything we can to minimise the risk our people face. We are investing heavily in a wide range of training courses and initiatives to further develop safety practices and operational command and control. These are important steps in growing an effective culture of safety in the Fire Service.

I, along with all Fire Service Commissioners, welcome the importance placed on volunteers in this document. The Fire Service is largely an organisation of volunteers and the country depends on their commitment. The Statement of Intent includes a major programme focused on volunteer sustainability. Equally, it gives a commitment to ensuring that Fire Service processes are designed for volunteers as well as career firefighters.

There are a number of critical issues facing the Fire Service which could potentially prevent it realising some of its objectives. There is the ongoing issue of financial sustainability. The Fire Service is funded by insurance levies and is committed to ensuring it delivers the outputs the Government and public expects of it without seeking an increase in the rate of levy.

This commitment is made more difficult by the exploitation of loopholes in levy legislation (especially by the commercial sector) that are being used to avoid levies that fairly should be paid to meet the costs of protecting the insurers from risks. The Commission has alerted the Government to the necessity of addressing this matter through a legislative and regulatory response.

It will be noted that the Fire Service holds significant reserves. These reserves are essential; they are held for three specific reasons. First, the reserves will meet the cost of the response to major emergencies (such as the response to the Christchurch earthquakes) that cannot be forecast in annual budgets. Second, to accumulate sufficient funds to meet the rebuild of fire stations across New Zealand necessitated by the requirements of the new seismic standards. Finally, to cover the fluctuations in levy funding flows.

As the National Rural Fire Authority, the Commission also has responsibility for co-ordinating and leading the rural fire sector. Its core strategy has been to promote the amalgamation of many individual rural fire authorities (RFAs) into larger enlarged rural fire districts (ERFDs). Through encouraging voluntary mergers, the number of RFAs has been successfully reduced from 121 to 57. This has made the sector easier to manage and substantially reduced the amount of bureaucracy.

However, in a number of places the remaining amalgamations are now being held up by the resistance of a handful of RFAs. Given the Commission does not have the power to mandate the process, there is now a risk that the full benefits of ERFD amalgamation will not be achieved without regulatory intervention.

Looking ahead, I am confident in the direction the Fire Service is taking and in its ability to deliver on its commitments.

Signed on behalf of the New Zealand Fire Service Commission.



**Rt Hon Wyatt Creech**

Chairperson

13 June 2014



**David McFarlane**

Deputy Chairperson

13 June 2014

## PART ONE: FIRE SERVICE STRATEGIC INTENTIONS & CURRENT PRIORITIES

### Where are we going?

This is the first Statement of Intent aligned to the Fire Service's new vision, "Leading integrated fire and emergency services for a safer New Zealand". The vision summarises our objective for the work programme that will take us to 2020.

In recent years, the Fire Service has invested heavily in its physical assets and these are now comparable with any Fire Service in the world. The new vision focuses on our people and how we do our work.

The vision is reinforced by a number of core commitments to be delivered by 2020. In some places, these are about building on current good work. In others, achieving the vision will require a significant change in how things are done.

This Statement of Intent takes us from 2014 until 2018 and will deliver tangible improvements in key areas. It will also lay the foundations for the remainder of the work programme that will take us to our 2020 objective. This work will drive further progress against the Fire Service's two outcomes, 'Prepared Citizens' and 'Effective Response'.



### The role of volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of the Fire Service. About 80% of operational firefighters are volunteers and many parts of the country are almost exclusively reliant on volunteer fire brigades.

Every component of the vision must work as well for volunteers as for career firefighters. Both parts of the workforce are equally important.

The Commission's intent is that every part of the vision applies to all of the Fire Service's people, volunteer and career.

# VISION 2020

## “ Leading integrated fire and emergency services for a safer New Zealand ”

Te Manatū o ngā ratonga ohotata kia haumaru ake ai a Aotearoa

### LEADING

#### People who strive for excellence

*'We have skilled and effective people where and when we need them'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Be able to demonstrate that our performance is equal to, or better than, any fire and emergency service in the world
- Have a ready supply of skilled and inspiring leaders, supported by high-quality development programmes

#### Agile

*'We will recognise when we need to change things and do so promptly'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Work with communities to anticipate their changing needs
- Adapt our processes and approaches smoothly and rapidly when change is required

#### Improved decision-making

*'We will make better decisions'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Have embedded risk-based management into how we do business

### INTEGRATED

#### Effective partnerships

*'We improve how we work with our emergency service partners'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Work with our partners to eliminate duplication of services
- Have seamless working relationships with other emergency services
- Have strong relationships with international emergency services

#### Unified

*'We work together'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- See all our rural, urban, career and volunteer people working seamlessly together
- Work collectively towards common solutions where everyone who should be involved is appropriately engaged
- Have connected systems and processes so that users only need to provide the same piece of information once

#### Consistent

*'We deliver a seamless service to all New Zealanders'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Deliver high standards of service using the same risk-based approach and processes throughout the country

### FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

#### Excellence in incident management

*'We are recognised for our excellence in incident management'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Ensure that across all ranks and support people effective incident management is embedded in everything we do
- Have seamless working relationships with our emergency service partners on incident management protocols and procedures

#### Supporting the front line

*'We will focus on our frontline responsibilities'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Optimise our processes and tools to help people do their job more effectively
- Listen and respond to frontline needs and innovation in a consistent way

#### Wide range of incidents

*'We will perform well at a wide range of incidents'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Ensure that we have the right mix of trained skills in the right places to respond to a wide range of fire and non-fire emergencies

### SAFER NEW ZEALAND

#### Risk reduction

*'We will make our communities safer'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Have reduced the rate of fire deaths in our vulnerable communities
- Improve how we support communities to manage their risk

#### Safer homes and workplaces

*'We will reduce the number of injuries to our people and the New Zealand public'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Have significantly reduced the number of serious injuries and harm to our people
- Be demonstrating zero tolerance to bullying, harassment and other harmful behaviours in our workplaces
- Have reduced the number of serious injuries in our communities

#### Community-based

*'We work in partnership with our communities and other emergency partners'*

##### By 2020 we will:

- Work effectively with our communities to reduce the number of incidents and improve our response to them
- Have a clear understanding of our role in communities and what is most important to them
- Work collaboratively with volunteer communities to support their brigades

## Prioritisation - What are we doing in the next four years?

The vision contains a number of objectives to be achieved over the next six years. The SOI outlines what work has been prioritised for the next four years.

The core priority for the organisation is safety - for the public and firefighters. Some recent events, including the Christchurch earthquakes, have highlighted areas where the Fire Service can improve how it manages emergency incidents. A comprehensive programme is underway to address both technical incident management and leadership skills.

The Fire Service already manages a wide range of risks professionally and effectively. The current work programme builds on that expertise and improves it where required to ensure New Zealand's firefighters are as prepared as they can be for the risks they must inevitably manage.

Enhancement of these skills will help embed a culture of safety throughout the Fire Service

**Figure 1: Fire Service six priorities**



Each priority is described in more detail below. In many cases the priorities are inter-connected. The better our people are trained and prepared the safer they will be, and the better and safer our response will be to the public.

- **Safety** – Safety is the number one priority for the Fire Service. The tragedies of events such as the Pike River Coal Mine explosion show what can happen when effective safety management is undermined. Given the nature of the job and the risk it entails, the Fire Service needs to be the very best it can be in safety management. Its people deserve no less. Safety is about more than systems and processes. It is also about building a strong safety culture where everyone takes responsibility for their own, and their colleagues' safety and wellbeing.

- **People** – The Fire Service is facing a retirement bubble with many senior leaders likely to retire in the next few years. It must manage their replacement by effective succession planning. Initiatives are also underway to identify and develop succeeding generations of leaders throughout the organisation. People at all levels will also get more training. In particular, as the number of serious fires reduces, it is becoming harder for firefighters to get operational experience. As a result, there is more need for effective, realistic, high-quality training.
- **Integration**– Being integrated means that everyone involved in successfully managing an emergency understands their role and works well together. Externally, this includes ensuring that we have the right relationships and processes in place with emergency service partners. Internally, it means ensuring we have seamless working practices between rural and urban services and career and volunteer firefighters. The National Rural Fire Authority is leading the process of amalgamating individual rural fire authorities into larger enlarged rural fire districts. To date the number of administrative bodies involved in rural fire has more than halved. Although there is some way to go still, this work is steadily making collaboration easier and lowering the administrative burden in the rural fire sector.
- **Incident Management** – Effective incident management ensures firefighters safely and effectively resolve incidents. Training and development will be delivered to officers at all levels of the organisation to refresh and develop incident management skills. A major programme is underway to improve incident management and leadership at all levels of the organisation.
- **Medical response** – The number of medical calls attended by the Fire Service continues to grow. It is therefore essential that crews are appropriately trained, equipped and prepared to deal with these incidents. This priority includes the provision of more specialist training where needed as well as equipping every frontline appliance with defibrillators. Fire and ambulance services are working together to better support critical medical interventions, particularly cardiac and respiratory arrest. This is a significant improvement in operational capability which international evidence suggests will lead to more lives saved.
- **Risk reduction and prevention** – risk reduction is at the heart of the Fire Service's legislation. The organisation invests heavily in high profile social marketing campaigns that have successfully raised the public's awareness of the risk of fire. It is now time to review this work and find out which methods have been most successful. The findings will guide future programmes to ensure that the maximum return on the Commission's investment is achieved.

## Key Programmes

The Fire Service has begun a very large programme of work to achieve its vision for 2020. This includes a range of specific projects as well as people's usual activities. The tables below summarise three of the most important current programmes and their expected benefits. These are the Incident Management, Leadership and Volunteer Sustainability Programmes.

While there is a lot of other work underway, these programmes are the most important in terms of improving safety, enabling change through developing the organisation's leadership and supporting volunteers.



## Key Programme: Incident Management

### Rationale

Effective incident management is an essential part of making sure that safety is well managed during emergencies. Recent events, including the Christchurch earthquakes, have highlighted some areas where the Fire Service could improve its management of emergency incidents.

### Programme summary

The incident management programme has two phases. The first phase is to provide additional practical training in incident management for officers throughout the Fire Service. This will help ensure skills are current and that processes are commonly understood and applied nationally.

The second phase will ensure that the training officers receive is reinforced by and embedded into national processes and standard operating procedures. Together these phases will ensure that officers are trained according to best practice and that operational procedures are all aligned to this approach.

### Deliverables and benefits to date

All senior leaders have completed Australasian Strategic Command Training in Sydney.

All Executive Officers have attended a five-day command and control course at the National Training Centre.

### Deliverables for 2014-2018

- Level 1 Tactical Command course for Volunteer Officers
- Level 2 Tactical Command course to all career Station Officers and Senior Station Officers (continuing through to 2018)
- Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) function and Hazmat Command course to all Executive Officers
- Strategic Command course to Executive Officers

## Key Programme: Leadership

### Rationale

- To grow leadership and management capability at all levels across the Fire Service;
- To align leadership and management capability with organisational need (now and in the future);
- To ensure managers have the skills necessary to manage effectively in a challenging and changing environment.
- To focus every manager development opportunity on meeting the future capability needed within the Fire Service
- To ensure the Fire Service has available to it a sufficient pool of future leaders to meet its workforce needs

### Programme summary

**Level One: Selection and Induction** - This first level focuses on ensuring the Fire Service can attract sufficient levels of appropriately skilled managers to meet its future needs, and involves a structured induction process for all new managers

**Level Two: Core Leadership and Management Skills Development** - This level ensures all managers have the core management and leadership skills necessary to be an effective manager and leader within the Fire Service. The Level Two programme focuses on the provision of core management and leadership skills to all managers.

**Level Three: Broadening Ability** - The third level is centred on broadening the capability of managers outside of their core 'technical' area and base skills, and identifying potential for further development into more senior positions. The Level Three programme focuses on extending the management and leadership capability in those managers with potential for future advancement

**Level Four: Targeted Development** - The fourth level develops our organisational capability at the most senior levels. It will involve individualised, targeted development programmes for high potential individuals.

### Deliverables and benefits to date

- Refresher training for officers developed
- Executive Officer Career Board delivered

### Deliverables for 2014-2018

- Induction programme and approach for new leaders developed
- Enhanced appointment process for Executive Officers implemented
- Non-operational career boards delivered
- Induction for volunteer Chief Fire Officers
- Annual performance development and support reviews for volunteer Chief Fire Officers

## Key Programme: Volunteer Sustainability

### Rationale

New Zealanders depend on volunteers to provide fire and emergency cover across much of the country. For the most part, volunteer brigades are well staffed. However, some communities have had difficulties attracting enough volunteers. This both makes it hard for the brigade to meet the demands of their community and places a very high burden on those firefighters who are volunteering.

### Programme summary

- The Volunteer Sustainability programme is a holistic programme intended to support volunteerism throughout the Fire Service and in particular those brigades that need assistance.
- The programme is wide-ranging to reflect the varying reasons why a community may need support. This may range from helping a recruitment drive to providing additional support to serving brigade members.

### Deliverables and benefits to date

- New region and area structures in place with a focus and responsibility to support the frontline
- Increased number of volunteer support officers more equitably spread across the country
- Enhanced Volunteer Support Officer training course – improving the level of service delivered to volunteer brigades
- Volunteer Dashboard – providing easily understood performance information to make it easier for volunteer officers to manage their brigades

### Deliverables for 2014-2018

- Volunteer availability system – piloting a mobilisation system for volunteers that takes into account the individual circumstances of brigade members, e.g. not mobilising members who are unavailable
- Finalised community engagement tools and material rolled out
- Employer recognition proposals implemented
- Implementation of support plans for top 20 at-risk brigades
- CFO annual performance review, support and development discussions
- CFO/DCFO Induction and toolkit

### Expected progress against the six priority areas

The table below provides a summary of the objectives and activity against all six priority areas. It summarises what activity will be undertaken and how performance can be measured.

This information gives a broad picture of the scope and intent of the Fire Service's current priorities.

## Fire Service 6 short-term priority areas

PRIORITY	OBJECTIVE	ACTIVITY	INDICATORS OF SUCCESS
<b>Safety</b>	To embed a culture of safety which supports both operational risks as well as the overall welfare of the Fire Service's people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of suite of safety and wellbeing performance measures at organisational, business unit, region, area, station, watch and individual levels</li> <li>• Implementation of new Safety and Wellbeing Manual as key tool to aid national consistency</li> <li>• Review and refresh harassment and bullying policies, tools and resources</li> <li>• Manager workshops - Safety and Wellbeing obligations and responsibilities</li> <li>• Implementation of Absence Management Framework</li> <li>• Review of welfare support programmes</li> </ul>	<p>For Safety and Incident Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total injury frequency rate</li> <li>• Rate of lost time workplace injuries.</li> <li>• Decrease in the number of injuries requiring more than 7 days off work</li> </ul>
<b>Incident Management</b>	Ensure that officers receive refresher training and that all operational procedures are consistent with that training	<p>Command and control training delivered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive officers</li> <li>• Frontline officers (career and volunteer)</li> </ul>	
<b>Integration and rural coordination</b>	To improve how the Fire Service works with its emergency service partners, and increase the uptake of Enlarged Rural Fire Districts (ERFDs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of stakeholder engagement plan.</li> <li>• Ongoing work to encourage amalgamation of rural fire authorities by the National Rural Fire Authority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions developed from annual stakeholder survey</li> <li>• Increased percentage of the country covered by ERFDs</li> </ul>
<b>Medical Response</b>	Ensure the Fire Service is adequately trained and equipped to effectively respond to the growth in medical calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of medical training as required (including advanced training in some areas)</li> <li>• Equipping all frontline appliances with defibrillators</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defibrillators installed in all frontline appliances</li> <li>• Number of medical emergencies attended (for information)</li> </ul>
<b>Risk reduction and prevention</b>	Identify which programmes are most effective and focus expenditure on these areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete a review of existing programmes and their estimated return on investment</li> <li>• Ongoing delivery of existing programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public awareness targets met</li> <li>• Review complete</li> </ul>
<b>People</b>	Provide improved support and training for Fire Service leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop programmes to improve leadership</li> <li>• Career Boards identify future leaders for development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of employees with active development plans in place</li> </ul>



Ensure that the current retirement bubble of senior officers does not affect the organisation's performance.

- opportunities & support
- Provide better incentives for junior officers to qualify for the next rank

- Number of firefighters qualified to the next rank

## PART TWO: ROLE AND MEASUREMENTS

### What does the Fire Service do and how does it measure its performance

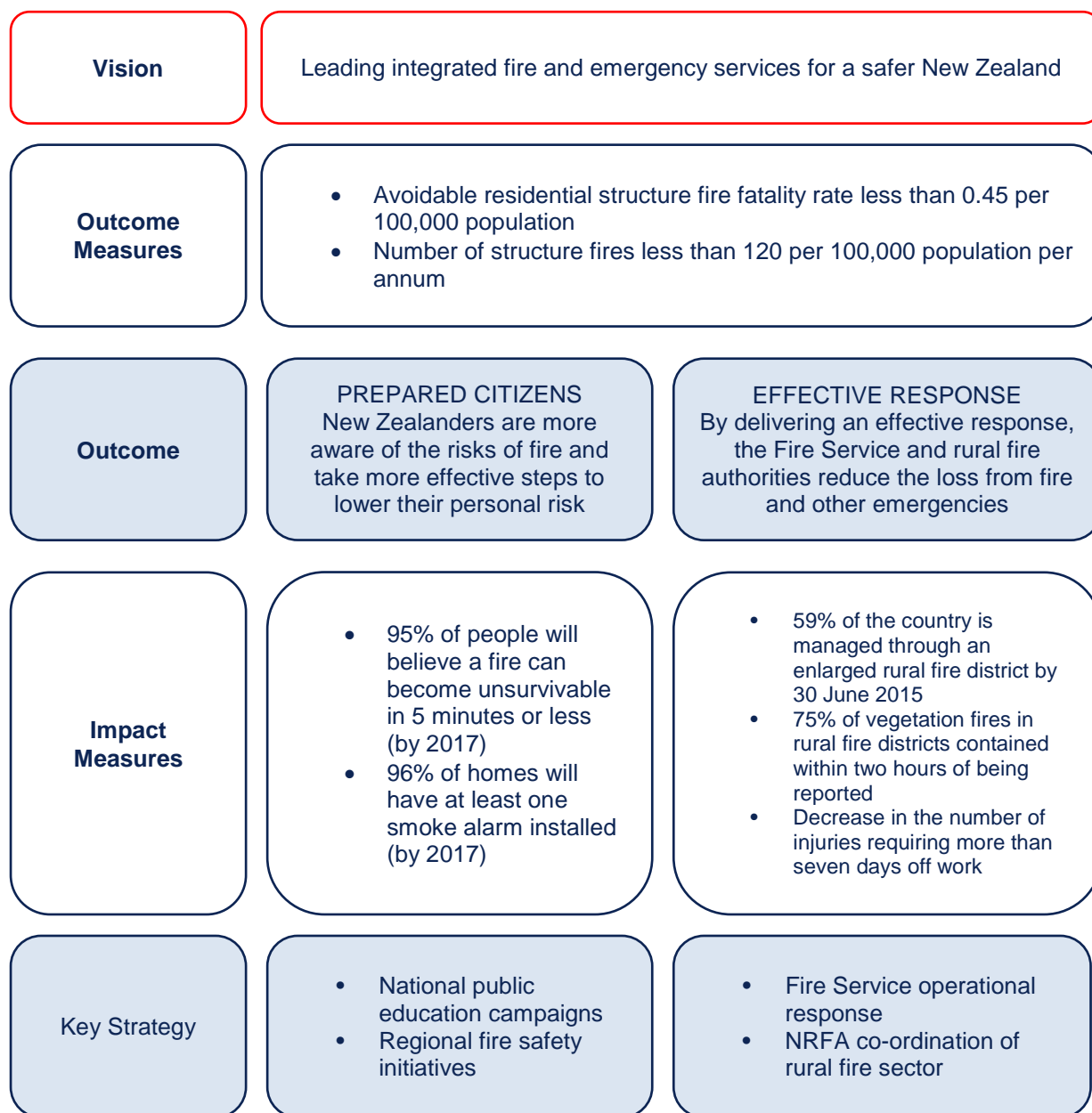
The range of functions carried out by the Fire Service can broadly be divided into actions taken before an emergency and those taken in response to an emergency. Reduction and Readiness activities directly support the Prepared Citizens outcome and include all of the Fire Service's fire safety activity. Response and Recovery activities include the actual response to fire and non-fire emergencies.

Before		After	
Reduction	Readiness	Response	Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public safety education to lower the incidence of rural and urban fires</li> <li>Providing advice on building designs and fire safety for commercial premises</li> <li>Manage the Contestable Research Fund to improve knowledge of fire safety and emergency management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public safety education to improve public's behaviour if a fire occurs</li> <li>Providing advice on building designs and fire safety for commercial premises</li> <li>Training &amp; skills maintenance by firefighters for fire and non-fire emergencies</li> <li>Planning and risk evaluation – identifying high risk premises</li> <li>Site visits – familiarising crews with high risk premises they may attend</li> <li>Providing leadership and support to rural fire authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responding to emergencies</li> <li>Stabilising potentially dangerous situations (e.g. hazardous materials incidents)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carrying out debriefs after incidents</li> <li>Conducting fire investigation if required</li> </ul>

The split between preparation and response is mirrored in the Fire Service's outcomes framework. The Fire Service has two outcomes. First, it seeks to lower the incidence of fire through its high profile social marketing campaigns and community fire prevention initiatives. The second outcome is to deliver an effective response when required. This is a broad outcome and reflects the wide range of incidents the Fire Service responds to.

Unlike previous years, the rural and urban fire sectors are captured within the same Effective Response outcome. This reflects the theme of greater integration in the vision. Rural and urban fires are not distinct events but are in many cases managed co-operatively by the Fire Service and rural fire authorities, especially during the initial response.

**Figure 2: Fire Service Outcomes Framework**



The outcome level measures of reducing fire fatalities and the incidence of fire are the result both of effective response and preparation.

The Fire Service can reliably measure against the first outcome of “prepared citizens”. Fire safety activity is recorded and the quality of individual campaigns is assessed annually. This activity is a direct influencer of the impact measures under prepared citizens which show public attitudes and behaviours regarding fire safety. Improved performance here, such as fitting more smoke alarms, will help reduce the incidence and consequence of fire.

It is more difficult to measure the effectiveness of the Fire Service's response to incidents. The Fire Service attends a wide range of incidents and is often only part of the picture. For instance, after a motor vehicle crash the Fire Service may perform initial first aid and release a trapped person from the wreckage. During this time the casualty will likely be treated on the scene by paramedics before being taken to hospital for further treatment. It is practically impossible to separate the specific impact of the Fire Service alone at these incidents.

The number of firefighter injuries is measured as a proxy for whether incidents are being effectively managed and procedures followed. Following procedures should result both in a reduction of injuries (which can be measured easily) and quality outcomes at the incident (which cannot).

The increase in Enlarged Rural Fire Districts is measured as this is a central strategy in the Commission's objective to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of rural fire management. It is an indicator of the progress being made to improve the co-ordination of the rural fire sector.

## Risks

Risks are those factors that may prevent the Fire Service achieving its outcomes. The risks facing the Fire Service have changed slightly over recent years. The labour environment is more positive thanks to a new collaborative approach being taken by the NZPFU and the Fire Service. The key risks facing the organisation mirror the priority areas of safety and incident management. Further details of the organisation's response to these risks have been provided in section A.

Risk	Mitigation
<b>If Health and Safety processes are not followed then firefighters may be injured or killed</b>	The Organisational Leadership Team has identified command and control issues as the most likely cause of injury. In addition to these technical skills, the Fire Service recognises the strong part individual behaviour has in workplace safety. A large programme of work is underway to lift capability in this area (see page 8). All health and safety systems are being reviewed to ensure that they actively support the development of an effective safety culture in the Fire Service.
<b>If command and control competencies are not embedded then we may underperform at major incidents.</b>	All Executive Officers have attended a five day refresher incident management course. This will be followed in 2014/15 by additional incident management training for a range of roles.
<b>If the organisation cannot attract enough skilled volunteers then the quality of services delivered in some rural areas may be affected</b>	The Volunteer Sustainability Programme is underway to support the small number of brigades that need active assistance in recruitment. The programme also aims to improve length of service by better aligning some Fire Service processes to the needs of volunteers.
<b>If the organisation does not manage personal information effectively then it may release individuals' personal information without their permission</b>	A number of technical improvements have been made to levy data systems (the area of most concern) to reduce the likelihood of a breach. Individual staff training will be developed in 2014/2015 to ensure staff understand their obligations relating to personal information.



## Resourcing

The Commission needs to make sure all New Zealanders receive good standards of fire cover and that it allocates its resources where risk is greatest. In practice this means that career stations and specialist equipment tend to be located in cities and smaller rural areas have volunteer brigades.

The National Service Delivery Guidelines ensure agreed minimum standards of fire cover are maintained. These include indicative response times for volunteer and career crews and set the parameters for decisions regarding the location of fire stations, selection of appliances and crewing arrangements.

The guidelines support a nationally consistent approach to resource allocation. This means New Zealanders living in communities facing similar risks can expect to receive similar standards of cover from the Fire Service.

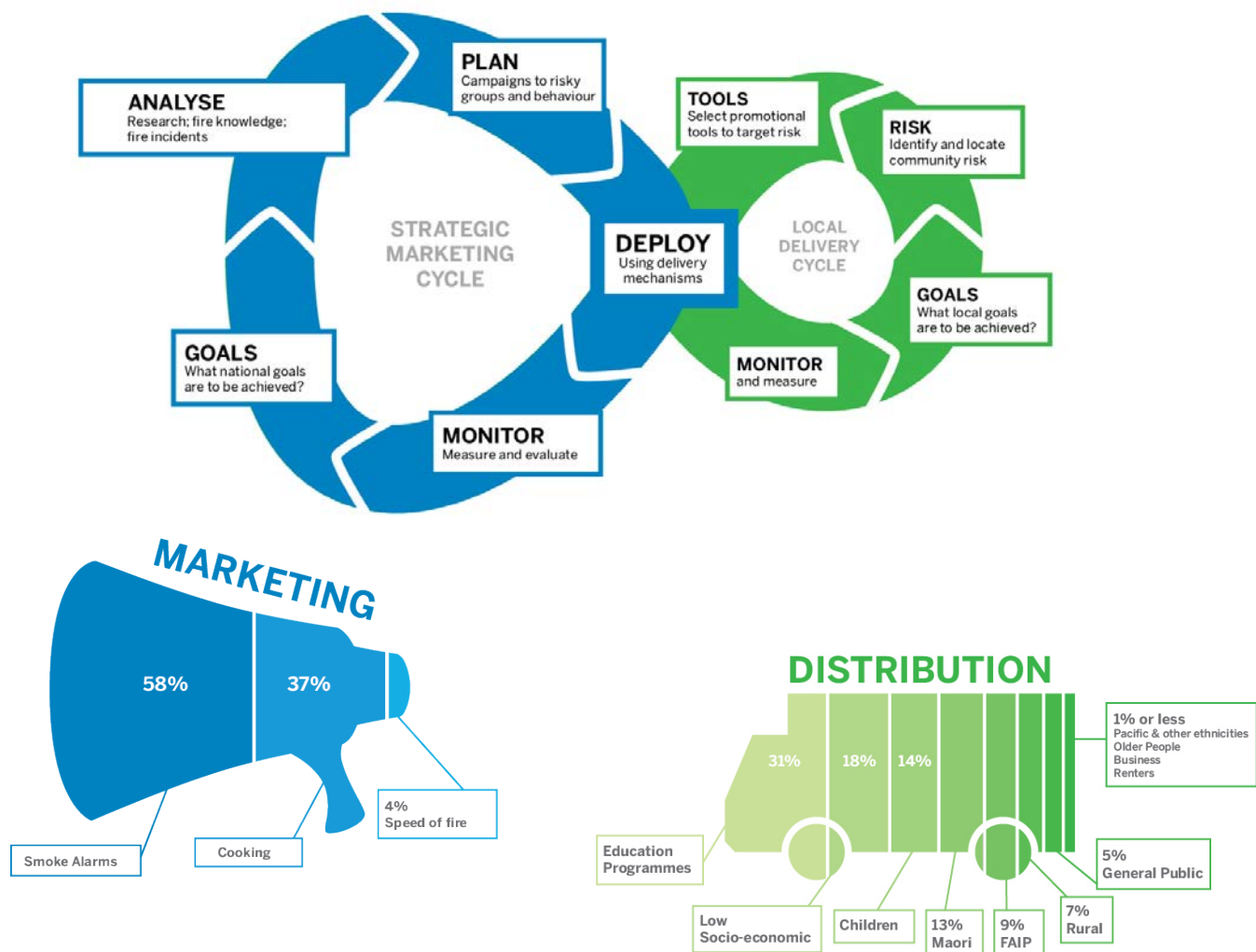
The National Risk and Resource Model uses robust statistical modelling to optimise the distribution of resources so that minimum standards are maintained across the country and the greatest weight of response is available where risks are greatest.

## Prevention

The Commission manages a balance between investing to prevent fires and ensuring a timely and adequate response to fires when they do occur.

The role of fire prevention has become increasingly important in all modern fire services and the Commission invests heavily in a wide range of public campaigns and regional initiatives.

In addition to social marketing campaigns, the Fire Service provides technical fire safety advice on new building designs to ensure they comply with fire safety requirements. The image below helps explain the range of fire prevention work undertaken by the Fire Service.



Over time, there has been a steady decline in the number of fire deaths in New Zealand. This has coincided with considerable investment in fire prevention initiatives.

These initiatives have been accompanied by a range of environmental factors which have also reduced the risk of fire, such as improved building codes, fewer open fires installed in homes, and tougher standards regarding the flammability of home furnishings.

It is hard to say how much of the reduction in fires is due to behavioural change (caused by fire prevention campaigns) and how much is due to environmental factors.

This means that it isn't possible to accurately assess the return on investment of any spend on fire prevention. There is a strong intuitive belief that these campaigns have helped reduce fire deaths and there is good evidence that they have helped change public attitudes.

One of the six current priorities is to review current public education programmes to determine which are most effective and whether there are other opportunities that should be taken. The Fire Service has already identified the communities most at risk and its fire prevention initiatives target these people. The review will therefore focus on quantifying the impact of its initiatives and on identifying whether there are more effective ways to change people's behaviour.

## **Research**

The Commission is committed to providing services that deliver value for money. To underpin this commitment it regularly contracts independent research that evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of significant programmes. Over the past decade, the Commission's Contestable Research Fund has generated a significant body of research that builds our knowledge of fire prevention and fire management.

## **PART THREE: OPERATING ENVIRONMENT**

### **Statutory Framework**

The New Zealand Fire Service Commission has accountabilities for both urban and rural fire. The Fire Service Act 1975 and the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 establish the governance, management, and operational arrangements for protecting life and property from fire in New Zealand.

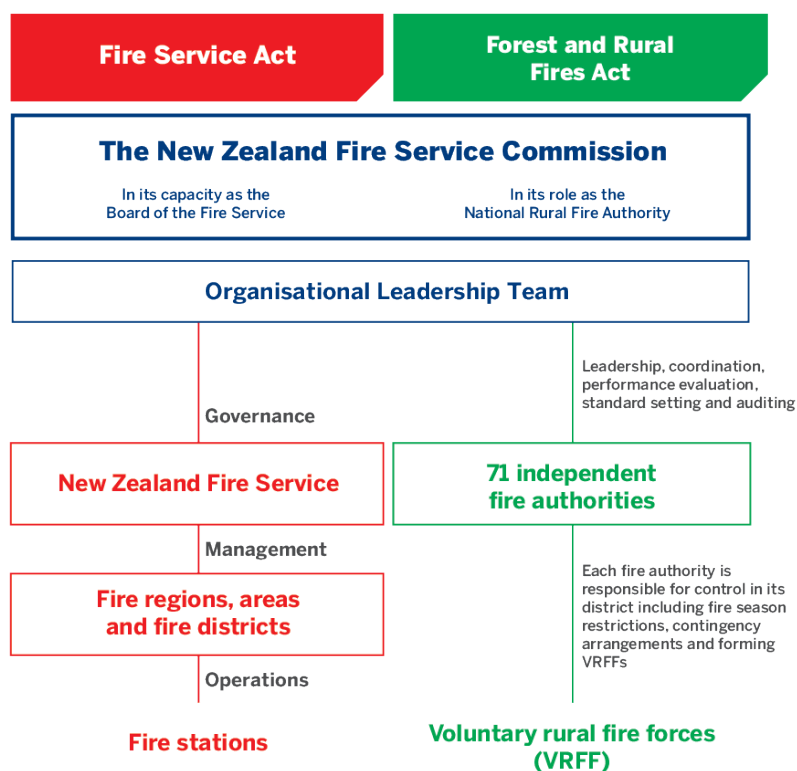
For urban fires the Commission acts as a conventional board (as described in the Crown Entities Act 2004) for the Fire Service. These arrangements are directly comparable with other Crown Agencies.

For rural fires the Commission acts as the National Rural Fire Authority (NRFA) which provides a co-ordinating role for New Zealand's independent fire authorities. However, the legislative accountability for rural fire management rests with the fire authorities; not with the NRFA.

This means that while the Commission is directly responsible for the governance of the Fire Service, its role for the rural fire sector is to provide coordination, standard setting and other support. The Commission also serves as the link between the rural and urban fire regimes and plays a significant role in ensuring an integrated response to fire and other emergencies.

**Figure 3: Statutory Framework**

## Rural



The figure above shows the Commission's leadership role in co-ordinating rural fire authorities. In this, it has only indirect influence and the statutory responsibility for rural fire management rests with the rural fire authorities themselves.

The Commission's main current objective is to progress the voluntary amalgamation of rural fire authorities (RFAs) into enlarged rural fire districts (ERFDs). The large number of rural fire authorities has made it difficult to provide effective oversight of the sector. Amalgamation has resulted in better collaboration, more efficient use of resources and it has reduced the administrative and bureaucratic workload involved in co-ordinating the rural fire sector.

Some small RFAs are resisting voluntary amalgamation and what they see as the loss of their independence.

In order to achieve the benefits of the enlarged rural fire districts, there may be a need within the next few years for the creation of ERFDs to be mandated when a voluntary agreement cannot be reached.

The graph below shows the expected progress towards ERFD amalgamation.

	30 June 2014	30 June 2015	30 June 2017
<b>Number of rural fire entities (RFAs + ERFDs)*</b>	57	23	18
<b>Number of ERFDs</b>	10	17	18
<b>% of land covered by ERFDs</b>	45%	59%	100%

\* Number does not include the six Defence Force fire districts or the Chatham Islands RFA



## Environmental factors

The Fire Service's operating environment is influenced by a range of short term and long term factors which could affect how services are delivered.

<b>Medium term trends</b> (requiring changes to strategic planning and resource allocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The type of incidents that the Fire Service attend is changing, e.g. non-fire emergencies are increasing</li><li>• The volume of fire incidents is declining</li><li>• New Zealand's population is changing, in particular it is moving away from rural areas and Auckland is growing rapidly</li></ul>
<b>Short-term pressures</b> (immediate impacts that need to be addressed now)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The organisation needs to finish embedding some of the recommendations arising from the Christchurch earthquakes</li><li>• A number of recent incidents have highlighted the need to reinforce operational safety</li><li>• The number of medical calls attended is growing</li></ul>

## Medium term trends

### Population Movement

New Zealand's population is becoming more urban and people are moving north, in particular to Auckland. The Fire Service's current resource allocation needs to adapt to ensure adequate levels fire and emergency cover meet these changing demographics.

The Fire Service's National Risk and Resource Model uses statistical modelling to quantify the risks within individual communities and helps determine the appropriate level of resourcing. The model underpins our decision making and ensures a nationally consistent approach to resource allocation.

### Movement in the number and type of incidents

The change in the mandate and role of the Fire Service may present opportunities to re-shape its services. In the past, the capability of each fire appliance and crew has been extended to reflect the growing variety of incidents they respond to. This has meant carrying more equipment on fire appliances, developing new training and broadening the skills of firefighters. For example, today's firefighter must be competent in the use of cutting equipment for motor vehicle crashes, rope rescue equipment for high-level rescues, decontamination equipment for hazardous material incidents and defibrillators for cardiac emergencies.

This approach maximised the utilisation of relatively expensive fire appliances and their crews. However, the role and expectations of the Fire Service have changed considerably over the last 20 years. Given these changes it may be that there are alternative business models that could provide better service and greater efficiency.

The Fire Service has commissioned a baseline review of its service delivery assumptions to determine whether there are credible opportunities to improve the way services are provided.

### Volunteerism

The Fire Service relies on a large number of committed volunteers to provide an emergency response across the country. In common with rural areas in most countries, fire services are almost entirely dependent on people volunteering in their communities.

In some more marginalised areas, particularly where populations have declined, individual brigades struggle to maintain core numbers. In general though the number of volunteer firefighters has matched the organisation's, and their communities', need.

This may not be certain in the future. The experience of many other volunteer organisations is that increasing urbanisation and changing work patterns have put real pressure on the sustainability of the volunteer workforce.

The Volunteer Sustainability Programme (detailed on page 10) is designed to support the Fire Service's current and future volunteers.

## **Recent events**

### **Christchurch**

New Zealand's firefighters provide a high quality service and regularly operate in high risk environments to protect the public they serve. Nowhere was this more clearly demonstrated than during the Christchurch earthquake in February 2011.

There were a number of significant lessons for the Fire Service that came out of Christchurch which were highlighted by independent enquiries into those events. In particular, this included some issues with strategic command and control at multi-agency incidents. This is being addressed via the Incident Management programme and includes further strategic command training for executive officers.

### **Recent serious injury/ near-hit incidents**

Similarly, some serious injury and near-hit incidents since the earthquake have shown firefighters have been exposed to unnecessary degrees of danger. This has highlighted the need to reinforce existing procedures and policies around tactical command and control, i.e. how small to medium-sized incidents are managed.

This issue may be compounded by the challenge to maintain operational competencies while the number of fires is declining. As firefighters face increasingly smaller numbers of large fires to deal with, effective training and preparation become increasingly necessary to maintain operational competence.

A number of initiatives are underway to address these issues including:

- An extensive review of the organisation's health and safety policy and procedures
- More courses in incident management at all levels of the organisation, from strategic command for executive officers to tactical command courses for more junior ranks (volunteer and career)
- Implementation of a revised training strategy to make core training more relevant, better focused and easier to access

### **Growth in medical calls**

The number of medical calls attended by the Fire Service has more than doubled in the last 10 years, with nearly 7,000 such incidents attended in 2012/13.

In response the Fire Service will increase its capability and training for medical calls and is now equipping every frontline appliance with a defibrillator. This will ensure that where the Fire Service reaches a medical emergency before an ambulance, patients experiencing cardiac or respiratory arrest will receive the appropriate, potentially live-saving intervention.

There is robust international evidence that an early CPR response results in improved survival rates. Research from Sweden suggested that adding the Fire Service as co-responders to cardiac arrests would increase survival

rates from 3.9% to 6.2%<sup>1</sup>. Given there are around 1,500 cardiac arrests each year in New Zealand a 2% improvement in survival rates will mean around 30 lives are saved every year.

The Fire Service is working with St John to further improve the way the two services work together on medical emergencies.

## **PART FOUR: ORGANISATIONAL HEALTH**

### **Organisational Health**

This section describes the key organisational issues facing the Fire Service and how these will be managed over the next four years.

### **People**

People are important in all organisations. This is especially true in emergency services where small numbers of staff are expected to respond to and manage complex, fast-moving and potentially dangerous situations. This places high demands on the Fire Service firefighters expected to manage these incidents. A number of specific people initiatives are described below which are aimed at ensuring the Fire Service continues to provide effective services.

#### **Leadership**

A long-term programme is underway to build leadership capability. This includes:

- Talent assessment and development programmes for current and future high potential leaders.
- Enhanced leadership development in training programmes for officers and executive officers
- Enhanced executive officer development programmes for volunteer officers

#### **Succession Planning**

Nearly 60% of the Fire Service's executive officers are likely to retire in the next five years. The leadership development programmes have been integrated into a succession planning framework so that future leaders are ready to step up when positions become available.

This has been supported by the new Collective Employment Agreement (and further attraction and retention initiatives for specialist operational and support roles) which have increased the incentives for firefighters to seek promotion.

#### **Volunteers**

Volunteers face the same risks and operational requirements as career firefighters and have been integrated into the operational leadership programmes described above.

There are additional challenges in maintaining volunteer fire brigades. Modern work patterns and the urbanisation of New Zealand are making it harder to find willing volunteers for all brigades.

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<sup>1</sup> Hollenberg, J, Riva. G et al. European Heart Journal 2009 (30): Dual dispatch early defibrillation in out-of-hospital cardiac arrest: the SALSA-pilot

In some places, brigades have taken effective and imaginative steps to meet this challenge. For example, some brigades have arranged crèche facilities to be staffed at the fire station during emergencies which has allowed mothers of young children to be successfully recruited.

The Fire Service is developing a number of initiatives to support volunteers including:

- Encouraging brigades to provide more flexibility in roles and structures. This allows brigades to recruit individuals who do not want to be operational firefighters but can perform a wide range of other support (e.g. administration, equipment management, human resources support).
- Streamlining the recruitment processes to facilitate the selection and induction of capable, skilled firefighters.
- Providing improved management information to volunteer brigades to help them identify and understand emerging issues (e.g. need for more drivers, succession planning)
- Providing targeted support as required for volunteer brigades experiencing difficulties with recruitment and retention

## Stakeholders

The Fire Service works in a complex stakeholder environment and is committed to raising the level of engagement and improved community outcomes that effective collaboration can deliver.

Providing an effective service requires a range of positive external relationships. The Commission is committed to consultation and open dialogue with a wide range of stakeholders. These include the United Fire Brigades Association, the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union, the Executive Fire Officers Society, the Public Service Association, Local Government New Zealand, the Ministry of Building, Innovation & Employment, and representatives from the forest and insurance industries.

In 2014/2015, the Commission will continue its long-standing programme of stakeholder meetings with a series of functions in metropolitan and regional centres. These functions provide an opportunity for the board to meet a broad range of stakeholders and partners including local government and community representatives, other emergency services, rural fire authorities and forest owners, the private fire protection industry, public agencies and voluntary groups.

## Assets

To be effective the Fire Service must provide its people with the right equipment. The Fire Service is a capital-intensive business holding more than \$500 million in property, vehicles, plant and equipment.

The work programme outlined in this document requires significant capital investment over the next five years. The Commission has decided to maintain a sufficient cash reserve to ensure that this work can proceed effectively and without delay.

**Fire Appliances** - The entire "red" fleet of over 800 appliances is managed on a whole-of-life maintenance and replacement cycle. Each class of appliance has a projected useful life based on anticipated work load, maintenance and repair cost, and obsolescence. To maximize their value, appliances are moved through the organisation as they age. –and are assigned to stations using established resource modelling. The Commission expects to take delivery of an average of 30-40 new appliances per year over the next four years.

**Fire Stations** - The Fire Service operates 437 fire stations. All fire stations are on a long term maintenance and replacement schedule. In 2014/15 and out-years the Commission will spend approximately \$24 million a year on its property portfolio. This includes rebuilding stations in Christchurch and the wider national seismic strengthening programme.



## Glossary

ERFD	Enlarged Rural Fire Districts
FAIP	Fire Awareness and Intervention Programme
NRFA	National Rural Fire Authority
RFA	Rural Fire Authority
VRFF	Volunteer Rural Fire Forces



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