Volunteerism Strategy Six-month Progress Report

Report 1: June–November 2020

FIRE EMERGENCY
NEW ZEALAND
WHAKARATONGA IWI

Contents

Foreword
He Tīmatanga Kōrero

Fire brigades have been at the heart of New Zealand communities for more than 150 years. In that time, the importance of our services has remained vital to our communities but our role and the types of emergencies we respond to has changed.

Volunteers currently make up over 80 per cent of our people. They work alongside career firefighters, and are supported by trainers, support staff, leadership teams and a huge range of others right across the organisation.

Volunteers bring more than their skills and numbers; they bring their strengths and awareness of the risks and needs of their communities into the way we work. Fire and Emergency volunteers, alongside our career firefighters, work to fight fires and respond to medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, weather events and natural disasters. We ask them to take time out from their families, their jobs and their lives to help keep our communities safe.

To ensure we do all we can to support our volunteers, the establishment of Fire and Emergency New Zealand in 2017 required us to communicate directly with volunteers and include their perspectives in all key aspects of our work and decision making. This is recognised in our legislation, which highlights the need for us to better recognise and support our volunteers and improve the environment in which they work.

In 2019, Fire and Emergency formalised how we would meet that requirement in our first Volunteerism Strategy: Enabling sustainable volunteerism - Te whakatoitū i te tūaotanga. This recognises the key role of volunteers in the community and to our organisation, outlining our volunteerism priorities and the key shifts we are working towards. Implementing the Strategy will ensure we have a thriving and unified volunteer workforce that feels valued, safe and supported and will help to ensure our organisation is deeply connected to New Zealand communities.

This document is the first six-monthly report of our progress against the Volunteerism Strategy. It is a significant step that will help us better focus and improve our efforts to support volunteers and volunteerism. It highlights areas of success, where we need to do more, and how we can continue to learn and improve our practice.

The report also recognises the challenges of 2020 for Fire and Emergency, for our people, for New Zealand and for our work. The impact of COVID-19 has meant that our volunteers, like all of our people, have had to quickly adapt to new ways of working, including how they train and respond. We should all be proud of the way we have individually risen to this challenge and the way we have done this as an organisation.

Over this last year, we have also seen the continuing devastating impacts of our changing climate, both domestically and abroad. A number of our career and volunteer people made the trip across the Tasman to support the Australian bush fire response and many more attended a range of climate-related events closer to home.

This report is an important milestone for Fire and Emergency. I hope you enjoy reading about the progress we have made in helping to ensure our organisation has a sustainable and thriving volunteer base.

Rhys Jones,
Chief Executive

Executive summary
Tuhinga Whakarāpopoto

Fire and Emergency New Zealand's People Strategy is underpinned by a core understanding that *nothing is more important than our people*, and reflected in our whakataukī *He waka eke noa* – Everyone in one canoe, with no exception. This progress report focuses on our work to better support our people who volunteer with us, and to develop an inclusive environment that enables volunteerism to thrive.

This is the first six-monthly report to track Fire and Emergency's progress against our Volunteerism Strategy.

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 (the Act) recognises the essential role our volunteers play in providing New Zealand's fire and emergency services. In line with the Act, we at Fire and Emergency have committed to an active, integrated and inclusive approach to supporting and enabling volunteers.

Our Volunteerism Strategy (2019) sets out how over the next 10 years, we will build an effective, engaged, resilient and sustainable volunteer workforce for the benefit of the communities we serve by:

- making it easier to be a volunteer, including increasing recognition for families, whānau and employers of volunteers

- building an organisational culture that recognises we are better together and embraces volunteerism as essential to our success into the future

- enabling a more sustainable operating model by broadening and developing more flexible ways to volunteer.

This initial 'scene-setting' report covers from 1 June to 30 November 2020 and provides a starting point from which we will track our progress and evolve our understanding. This and other reporting is part of a broader implementation of the Volunteerism Strategy's Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, which helps us to effectively track activities and increasingly, our progress against outcomes.

This report provides:

- a snapshot of our current volunteer workforce

- key Fire and Emergency volunteer trends

- transparency into key pieces of work and intended areas for future focus, aligned with the Volunteerism Strategy's 10 outcome areas:

  - **Leadership and management:** Leaders and managers actively demonstrate the organisation's commitment to volunteers and community-based volunteerism

  - **Commitment to volunteers:** Volunteers are consulted with and included in planning and decisions

  - **Attraction, selection and recruitment:** There are enough skilled and motivated volunteers who reflect their communities and meet its needs, now and into the future

  - **Support and development:** Volunteers receive ongoing development and support in a manner that respects their individuality and meets community fire and emergency needs

  - **Community involvement:** Effective local relationships exist through volunteer presence in the community

  - **Volunteer recognition:** Volunteers, employers and families feel appreciated, respected and supported

  - **Safety, health and wellbeing:** Volunteers' safety, health and wellbeing is proactively supported and equitably resourced

  - **Volunteer roles:** Volunteer roles and progression pathways reflect community needs and respect volunteer choice

  - **Positive local volunteer environments:** Local brigades are positive, resilient and connected

  - **Quality management and continuous improvement:** The organisation monitors, reviews and strives to continually improve how it supports volunteers and community-based volunteerism

The approach to this report

This is the first six-month report to track Fire and Emergency's progress against our Volunteerism Strategy. It focuses on the key work activities and intended next steps to better support our volunteers and to develop an inclusive environment that embraces volunteerism.

Being transparent about our progress against the Volunteerism Strategy's outcomes is part of our active commitment to supporting volunteers and enabling volunteerism[1].

Our approach to reporting against the Volunteerism Strategy is in line with our values:

- We do the right thing – Kia Tika.
- We strive to improve – Auahatanga.

It reflects our organisation's volunteerism principles:

- We demonstrate openness, transparency and fairness.
- We identify, share and grow what works for volunteers.

This report provides a starting point from which we will track our progress and evolve our understanding. As we learn more, what we report on will evolve. Reporting is part of a broader implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to help us effectively track activities and, increasingly, our progress against outcomes. This will be useful for demonstrating value and system-level progress against the Strategy, and enabling improved intelligence-led, evidence-based decision-making.

This initial 'scene-setting' report covers the six-month period 1 June to 30 November 2020 and provides:

- a snapshot of our current volunteer workforce
- key Fire and Emergency volunteer trends
- transparency into key pieces of work as they align with outcome areas
- insight into key activities that help embed the volunteerism principles and build a culture of volunteerism

The report should be read and understood as part of a wider reporting framework, which includes:

- a quarterly report on volunteerism activities, providing assurance on progress to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT)
- monthly reports to the Volunteerism Governance Group, enabling trends to be identified and addressed early, providing reassurance that inputs are in place and activities are being undertaken as required
- Fire and Emergency's quarterly and annual reports
- ad hoc and special reports.

Background
Tāhuhu Kōreo

Fire and Emergency people are in hundreds of communities around the country. They not only respond to emergencies, but also provide a wide range of services and assist our country to be more connected and resilient.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 in relation to volunteers

A key purpose of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017, which established Fire and Emergency, is to require and enable improved support for volunteers[2]. The Act recognises the importance of volunteers to emergency services, and that Fire and Emergency requires a more active, integrated and inclusive approach to supporting and enabling volunteers.

Fire and Emergency's duty in relation to volunteers, as outlined in the legislation, includes:

- recognising, respecting, and promoting volunteers' contributions

- involving volunteers' perspectives in relevant decision-making;

- developing policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain, and strengthen the capability of Fire and Emergency volunteers[3].

The Act also requires Fire and Emergency to:

- establish arrangements where all volunteers can communicate directly with Fire and Emergency management[4]

- with respect to Fire and Emergency volunteers, fulfil the duties of a 'good employer' as set out in the Crown Entities Act 2004

- give volunteers free access to independent advocacy and support services.

The Act also required us to establish Local Advisory Committees (LACs) to influence and advise us; their mandate including the stipulation: 'to consider and promote the interests of the local areas FENZ volunteers'[5].

Fire and Emergency's strategic context

The Volunteerism Strategy contributes to Fire and Emergency's overarching National Strategy 2019–2045 priorities and 10-Year Plan 2020-2030. The Volunteerism Strategy supports, and is supported by, a network of strategies and associated activities, including:

- the People Strategy

- workforce planning and workforce capability planning

- the Leadership Development Framework

- the Respect and Inclusion Strategy and the Positive Workplace Programme

- service delivery and business operations planning

- the Risk Reduction Strategy.

Volunteerism Strategy

In June 2019, we released our Volunteerism Strategy (the Strategy), which lays out the organisation's commitment to volunteerism. It sets the direction for a 10-year work programme to strengthen organisational resilience and performance through improved volunteer support, enhanced workforce capability, and a stronger organisational culture of volunteerism.

The Strategy sets out how we will build an effective, engaged, resilient and sustainable volunteer workforce for the benefit of the communities we serve by:

- making it easier to be a volunteer, including increasing recognition for families, whānau and employers of volunteers
- building an organisational culture that recognises we are better together and embraces volunteerism as essential to our success into the future
- enabling a more sustainable operating model by broadening and developing more flexible ways to volunteer.

Volunteerism Strategy outcome areas

The Volunteerism Strategy identified 10 outcome areas where organisational progress is monitored against the Strategy. These were informed by research and evidence, and were then tested, shaped and validated for our context by more than 400 of our volunteers and paid personnel. The volunteerism outcome areas are:

1. **Leadership and management:** Leaders and managers actively demonstrate the organisation's commitment to volunteers and community-based volunteerism
2. **Commitment to volunteers:** Volunteers are consulted with and included in planning and decisions
3. **Attraction, selection and recruitment:** There are enough skilled and motivated volunteers who reflect their communities and meet its needs, now and into the future
4. **Support and development:** Volunteers receive ongoing development and support in a manner that respects their individuality and meets community fire and emergency needs
5. **Community involvement:** Effective local relationships exist through volunteer presence in the community
6. **Volunteer recognition:** Volunteers, employers and families feel appreciated, respected and supported
7. **Safety, health and wellbeing:** Volunteers' safety, health and wellbeing is proactively supported and equitably resourced
8. **Volunteer roles:** Volunteer roles and progression pathways reflect community needs and respect volunteer choice
9. **Positive local volunteer environments:** Local brigades are positive, resilient and connected
10. **Quality management and continuous improvement:** The organisation monitors, reviews and strives to continually improve how it supports volunteers and community-based volunteerism.

Another key component of the Volunteerism Strategy is the volunteerism principles. While the volunteerism outcome areas show us **what** we are striving to achieve, the volunteerism principles guide us on **how** to achieve them.

Volunteerism principles
Ngā mātāpono o te tūaotanga

Our organisational values and volunteerism principles underpin everything we do at Fire and Emergency.

The volunteerism principles guide our everyday work and our decisions and actions.

Our Volunteerism Principles:

To enable and sustain volunteerism, we will:

- appreciate that volunteering is always a matter of choice
- make it easier to be a volunteer
- identify, share and grow what works for volunteers
- recognise volunteers, their employers and families, as well as their contributions.

To respect and involve volunteers, we will:

- involve volunteer perspectives in decision-making
- demonstrate openness, transparency and fairness
- operate with trust and respect.

To serve and strengthen volunteerism in communities, we will:

- be responsive to local needs
- be inclusive and embrace difference
- build an environment that enables volunteerism to thrive.

Fire and Emergency volunteers

This section provides an overview of the volunteering component of our workforce. First, we briefly outline the broader New Zealand volunteering and Fire and Emergency workforce context. We then describe the distribution and make-up of our volunteer workforce, including at different points along the volunteer life cycle.

For this first report, we provide baseline data from which we can monitor, report, further explore and act upon changes to the volunteer component of our workforce. As we track our volunteers over time, we expect to capture workforce trends as they emerge, have new and more nuanced data-driven insights, and be able to improve our volunteerism evidence base for organisational decision-making.

While some measures will remain consistent, others will evolve to keep pace with our understanding, lines of enquiry and progress against the Volunteerism Strategy. Over time, our activities will reap results, and we will increasingly shift our focus from activities and outputs to workforce and organisational outcomes and, ultimately, to community impacts.

Fire and Emergency volunteers as part of the New Zealand voluntary sector

In 2018, 49.8 percent of New Zealanders aged 15 years or older reported that they had volunteered in the previous month[6]. Of those who volunteered, 28.2 percent volunteered through an organisation. While the proportion of New Zealanders volunteering is relatively high compared with other countries, Volunteering New Zealand's State of volunteering report (2020) found that the number of people volunteering through an organisation has dropped significantly since 2016.

A Statistics NZ survey conducted in 2013 found that while the total number of volunteers has increased by 21% between 2004-2013, the total number of volunteering hours has decreased by 42%[7]. While there might be a slight rebound, this overall trend follows similar trends overseas[8].

Fire and Emergency does not currently track its total volunteering hours, but anecdotal feedback from volunteers suggests that people have less free time to contribute to Fire and Emergency.

Fire and Emergency volunteers have things in common with the broader volunteering community, e.g. similar reported motivations for volunteering. However, the make-up of our volunteer workforce also differs notably. For example, our volunteers tend to:

- be male − 80 percent of our volunteers are male, compared with around 38 percent of the general volunteering population[9]

- be less ethnically diverse

- volunteer for longer with our organisation than volunteers at other organisations.

In general, our volunteers tend to carry a higher level of responsibility, as they work to fight fires and respond to medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, weather events and natural disasters. The level of training and professionalism required of volunteer firefighters, the potential dangers they face, the trust they place in other volunteers, the unpredictable time requirements, and the emotionally challenging incidents they attend all make being a Fire and Emergency volunteer a unique voluntary role.

Fire and Emergency volunteers as part of the Fire and Emergency workforce

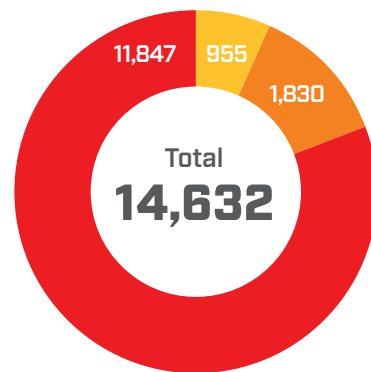● Volunteer   ● Career firefighters   ● Management & support

11,847   955   1,830

Total
14,632

Diagram 1.

Diagram 1 shows the make-up of our Fire and Emergency workforce by workforce type. Volunteers make up 81 percent of the total workforce[10,11] and around 87 percent of our operational personnel.

Average age across fire and emergency workforce

● Volunteer   ● Career firefighters   ● Management & support

45   45   47

Diagram 2.

Diagram 2 shows the average ages of different parts of our workforce. The average age of volunteers and career personnel is 45 years. This is two years younger than that of our management and support personnel.
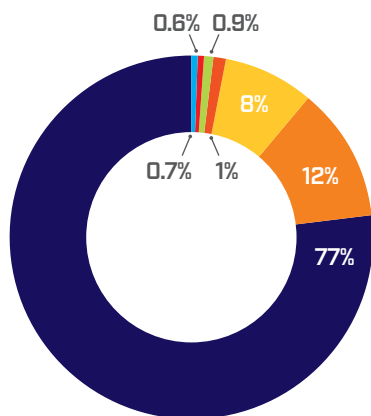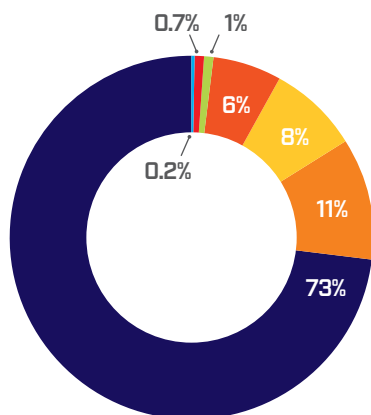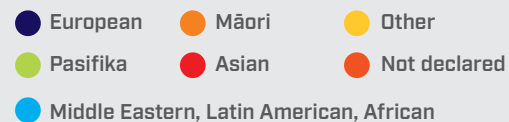
Entire workforce

0.6% 0.9%
8%
0.7% 1%
12%
77%

Diagram 3a.

19.5%	80.5%
Female	Male

Diagram 4a.

Volunteers

0.7% 1%
6%
8%
0.2%
11%
73%

Diagram 3b.

19.6%	80.4%
Female	Male

Diagram 4b.

Ethnic make-up of our Fire and Emergency workforce and our volunteers

- ● European
- ● Māori
- ● Other
- ● Pasifika
- ● Asian
- ● Not declared
- ● Middle Eastern, Latin American, African

Diagrams 3a and 3b indicates that our volunteers are slightly less ethnically diverse than our total workforce. However, our volunteer component has the same proportion of Māori personnel as the total workforce (8 percent), and a similar low proportion of volunteers and total population who identify as Pasifika, Asian and Middle Eastern, Latin American and African.

As at 19 November 2020 over three-quarters of our volunteers are designated as European (total number 9,355) whereas 12 percent of volunteers (1,476 people) did not declare their ethnicity[12].

We face the ongoing challenge of having volunteer fire brigades whose make-up better reflects that of their communities. This is also true of the wider organisation.
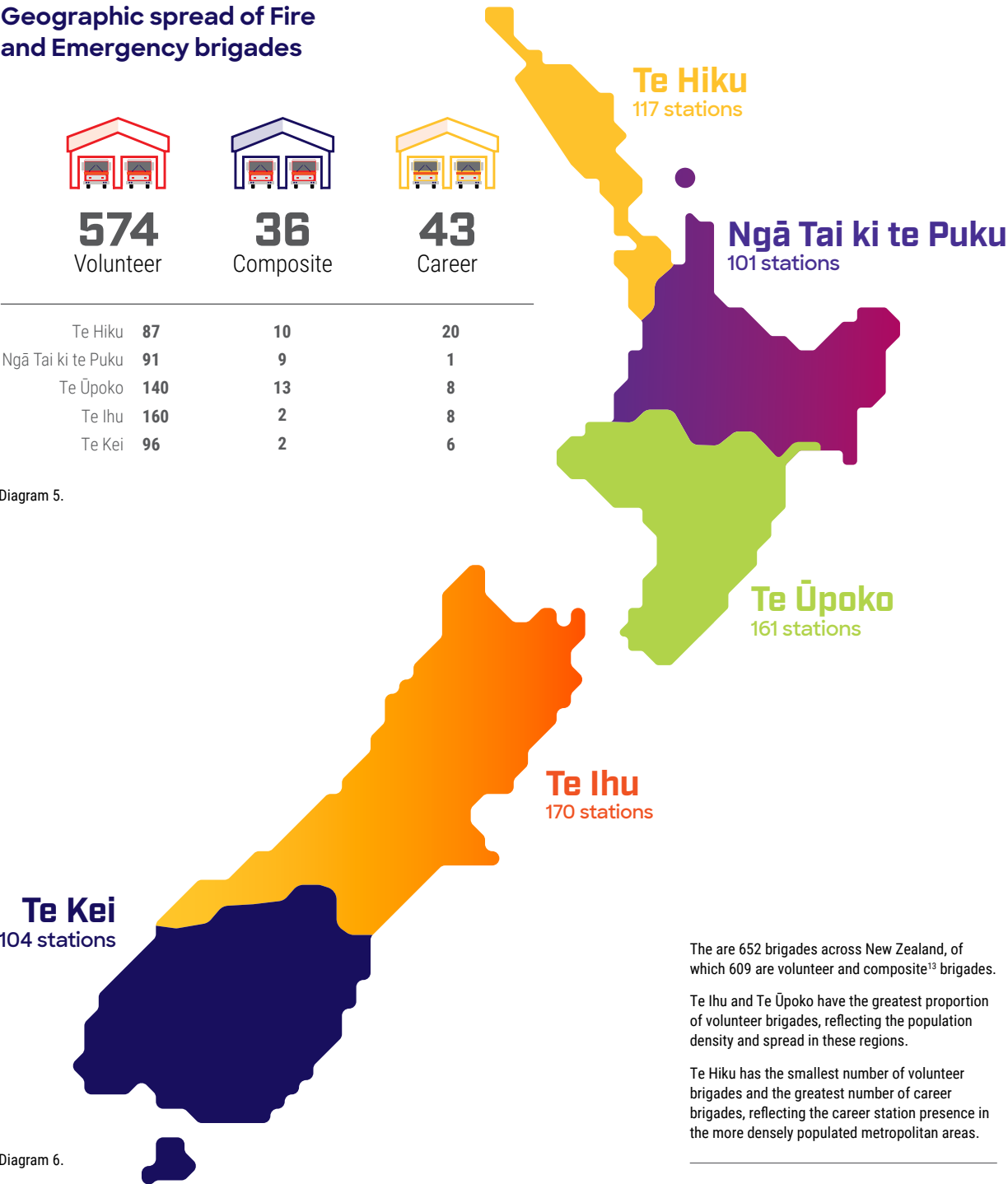
Gender ratio by whole workforce and volunteer components

Diagram 4a and 4b indicates gender split for both the whole workforce and for our volunteers.

Partly because of the numbers of volunteers relative to other personnel, our overall workforce gender ratio is similar to the volunteer workforce gender ratio.

Of our frontline personnel, the proportion of female volunteers (20 percent) is significantly more than that of the career workforce (6 percent). Numbers of female volunteers and career firefighters have increased significantly since Fire and Emergency was established.

Geographic spread of Fire and Emergency brigades

	574 Volunteer	**36** Composite	**43** Career
Te Hiku	87	10	20
Ngā Tai ki te Puku	91	9	1
Te Ūpoko	140	13	8
Te Ihu	160	2	8
Te Kei	96	2	6

Diagram 5.

Te Hiku
117 stations

Ngā Tai ki te Puku
101 stations

Te Ūpoko
161 stations

Te Ihu
170 stations

Te Kei
104 stations

Diagram 6.

The are 652 brigades across New Zealand, of which 609 are volunteer and composite[13] brigades.

Te Ihu and Te Ūpoko have the greatest proportion of volunteer brigades, reflecting the population density and spread in these regions.

Te Hiku has the smallest number of volunteer brigades and the greatest number of career brigades, reflecting the career station presence in the more densely populated metropolitan areas.
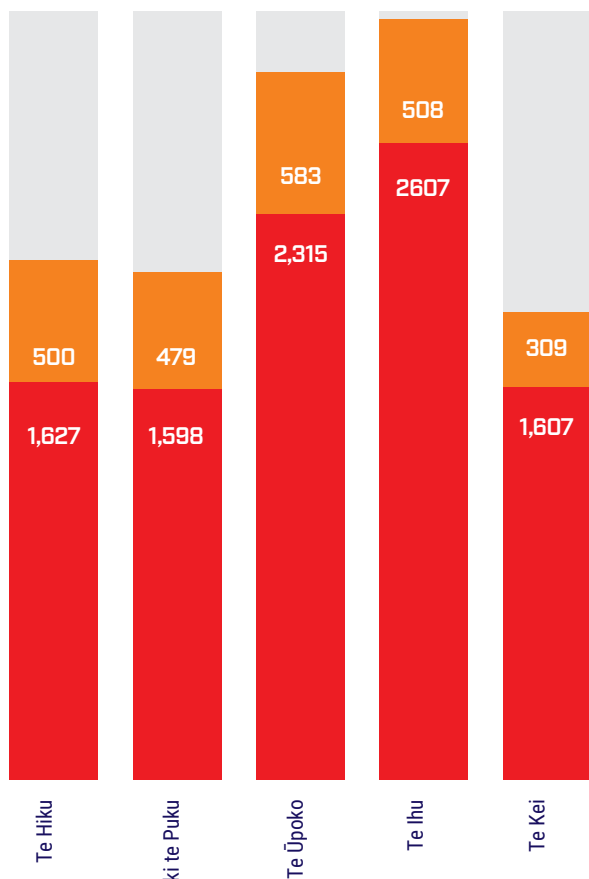
Diagram 7.

Number of volunteers by region and gender

🔴 Male　　🟠 Female

The graph on the left shows the distribution across the regions of our volunteers by gender[14]. In the following diagrams in this section, we have counted volunteers by their positions rather than headcount.

Note: We only started collecting data on gender diverse personnel in June 2020, and the number are low enough to make them identifiable, so we have not included them in the graphs.

Diagram 8.

Number of volunteers by year

Diagram 8 shows that since Fire and Emergency was established in July 2017, the total number of volunteers has increased, with the number of new volunteers increasingly exceeding the number of leavers each year. As noted previously, the proportion of female volunteers is also increasing.

In November 2020, there were 1,266 more volunteers than when Fire and Emergency was established, a total increase of 12 percent. We are working to better understand the reasons for this increase and its distribution.

The arrival of COVID-19 in New Zealand led to a sharp decline in new volunteer recruits during periods of community transmission. At this stage, it appears recruit numbers have rebounded to around the same level as before COVID-19. However, it is unclear what impact COVID-19 has had on leaver numbers, total net volunteer numbers for the year, volunteer numbers in different brigades and communities, and volunteering hours and activity.

We are considering doing more work to understand and monitor volunteering hours.
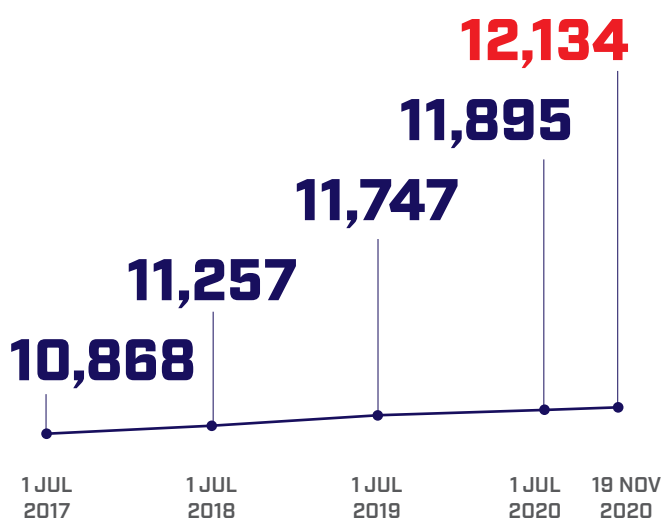
Fire and Emergency volunteer turnover rate since our establishment

The annual national and regional volunteer turnover rates since the establishment of Fire and Emergency have been relatively stable[15]. Table 1 shows the breakdown of turnover percentage rates.

Region	17/18	18/19	19/20
Te Hiku	12%	12%	12%
Ngā Tai ki te Puku	12%	10%	10%
Te Ūpoko	9%	10%	10%
Te Ihu	8%	10%	9%
Te Kei	9%	8%	8%
National	10%	10%	10%

Table 1.

Fire and Emergency volunteer profile[16]

🔴 Male   🟠 Female

Diagram 9 shows the numbers of numbers of male and female volunteers for each role. The largest percentage of females in the role of brigade support (63 percent), followed by operational support (34 percent). The graph also indicates that females are least represented in appointed firefighter roles.
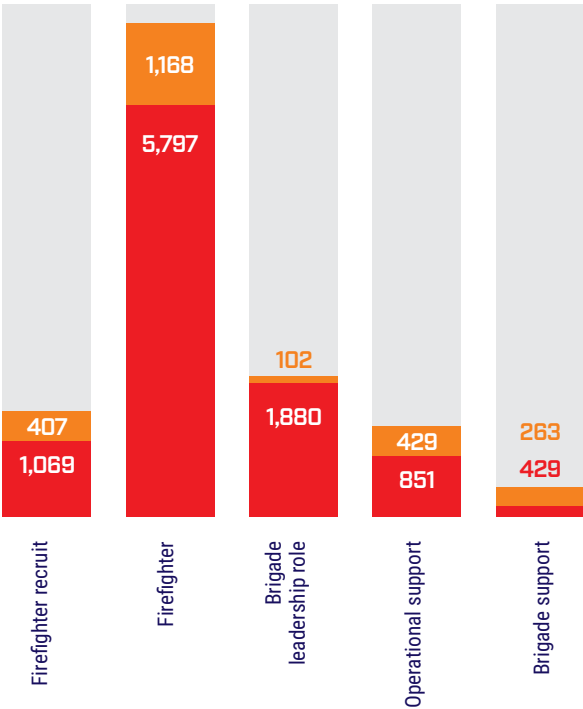

Diagram 9.

Volunteer average age by role

Diagram 10 shows the average age of volunteers by role. The average age of volunteers in operational support and brigade support roles is more than 10 years older than that of our volunteer firefighters.
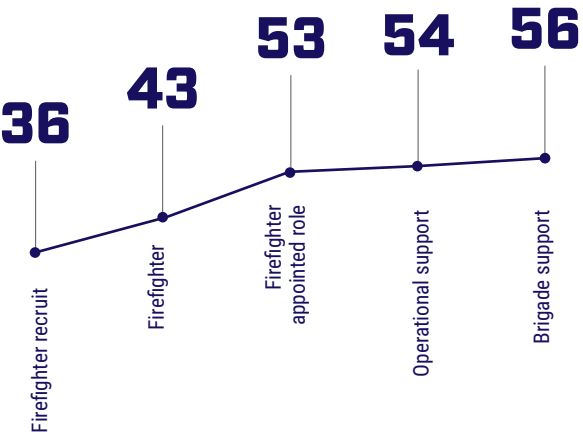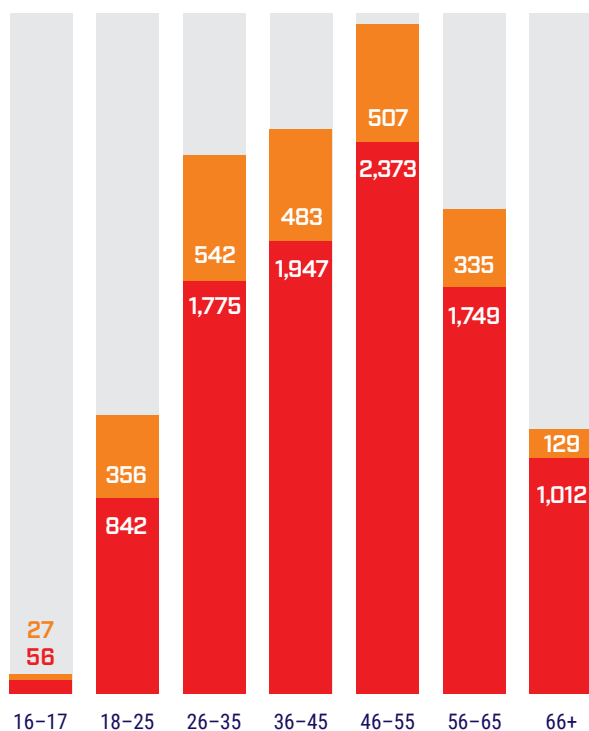

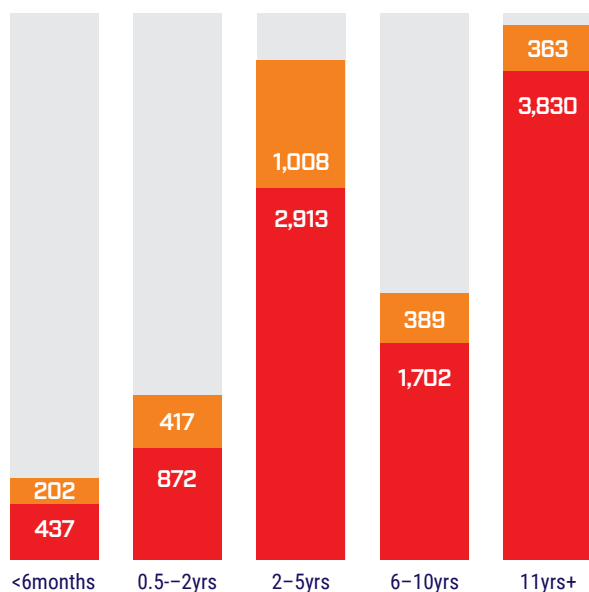Diagram 10

Diagram 11

Diagram 12

Diagram 13

Number of volunteers by age and gender

● Male   ● Female

Sixty-three percent of our volunteers are aged between 26 and 55 years, with an average age of 45 years.

While only 20 percent of volunteers are female, there are more females in our younger volunteering population.

Volunteer length of service[17]

● <6months   ● 0.5–2yrs   ● 2–5yrs
● 6–10yrs   ● 11yrs+

Currently our volunteers serve an average of 10 years, and over a third (35 percent) of our volunteers have over 11 years' experience.

Just under half (48 percent) of the current volunteer workforce have fewer than six years' experience. Five percent of leave in their first six months of volunteering.

Number of volunteers by length of service and gender

● Male   ● Female

An increasing number of our newer volunteers are female. Of those who have volunteered for under two years, 32 percent are female, while females make up 9 percent of those who have volunteered for more than 11 years. This may show that female volunteers don't stay as long, or it may reflect the lower number of females being recruited at the time they joined.

We are currently conducting a longitudinal piece of research that explores factors that impact on the volunteer experience during a volunteers first five years. We expect this research to give insights into factors that impact on volunteer retention and decisions to leave.

Key activities relating to volunteerism outcome areas

As part of our commitment made in the Volunteerism Strategy, we are monitoring our organisational progress against the Fire and Emergency Volunteerism outcome areas. These outcome areas were informed by research and evidence. They align with volunteering sector guidelines and were developed with hundreds of our Fire and Emergency volunteers and employees.

1. Leadership and management

Leaders and managers demonstrate the organisation's commitment to volunteers and community–based volunteerism.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

- Effective leadership that demonstrates and enables an inclusive workplace, where people feel valued, understand each other's contribution, and have effective cross-workforce relations.

- Leaders at all levels demonstrate the volunteerism principles in their work and ensure they are embedded into organisational practices.

- Leaders drive improved support for volunteers and help lead ongoing organisational change towards sustainable, community-based volunteering.

- Effective management that ensures the necessary systems, processes, policies and procedures are in place and used to enable an inclusive culture that embraces volunteerism; and accountability.

This outcome area helps ensure that:

- We develop inclusive leaders at all levels to embed a culture of volunteerism.

- Our leaders are committed to, and invest in, appropriate resources (funding, people, time, effort, functions) so we can:
  - keep improving how we support volunteers, our culture and our volunteering model
  - track how well we are doing this

- Our systems, processes, policies and procedures reflect and enable our commitment to volunteerism and volunteers.

- We have built effective relationships with, and are accountable to, external agencies, to enable cohesive support and services that align with the volunteerism principles and objectives.

- We hold ourselves to account for the way we support volunteers and strengthen community-based volunteerism.

Activities from June to November:

Developing inclusive leaders at all levels

- The ELT signed off the organisation's Leadership Development Framework, which lays the foundation for developing all of our leaders to drive an inclusive and effective leadership culture. We are currently implementing the Framework.

- We finalised five inclusive leadership development modules and trained facilitators from different parts of the organisation (both career and volunteer) to run them.

- We ran a suite of positive workplace culture leadership development workshops with leaders (both career and volunteer) from across the country at different levels. This included the ELT participating in a positive workplace culture inclusive leadership workshop.

Leaders investing in strong foundations

Structures and roles

- We announced the new Service Delivery branch structure and ways of working. All new Service Delivery leadership roles include accountabilities for building an inclusive culture and volunteerism, including ensuring all decision-making takes into account the 10 key principles of volunteerism.

  Note: The collective accountabilities include:
  - ensuring the organisation, through its ways of working, systems, processes and decision-making, takes into account and respects the diversity of contributions from all components of our workforce
  - leading ongoing change to establish and maintain a unified organisation founded on a respectful and inclusive culture
  - ensuring all decision-making takes into account the 10 key principles of volunteerism

- promoting and achieving organisational cohesion through fostering a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration and organisational learning

- ensuring that the work environment rewards positive behaviour and is safe and free of unwanted behaviour, including any form of bullying and harassment.

- We designed and finalised the new District Manager and Group Manager positions with specific volunteerism-related accountabilities and person specifications.

Notes:

The District Manager accountabilities include:

- leading, developing and communicating the District's strategic direction to all staff and volunteers to achieve cohesiveness and engagement

- ensuring the District effectively and efficiently implements the relevant components of the Volunteerism Strategy.

The District Manager's person specifications include:

- they understand the principles of volunteerism

- experience in developing and maintaining culture of inclusion and diversity

- leading and managing teams with volunteers

- an ability to establish credibility with volunteers.

The Group Manager's specific accountabilities for supporting volunteers include:

- working closely with volunteer leaders (Chief Fire Officers and Controllers) to build their capability to lead and manage their brigades

- leading, managing and championing the implementation of the relevant Service Delivery components of the Volunteerism Strategy with all personnel

- ensuring brigade support functions are aligned with the intent of the Volunteerism Strategy

- ensuring brigade support is functioning at the appropriate level to meet organisational requirements

- ensuring brigade support functions are delivered consistently and effectively across all volunteer brigades

- leading and managing team activity that strengthens connections and engagement between employees, volunteers and contractors

- gathering and evaluating feedback on volunteer support to ensure it enables volunteers to serve their communities' needs

- managing volunteer logistical and administrative support (e.g. employer recognition and family/whānau support) to ensure it is efficient, effective and meeting the needs of individual brigades.

- We stood up the new People Branch Leadership Team, putting in place the new People Branch leadership roles with collective accountabilities for building an inclusive culture.

These include:

- demonstrating strong and inclusive leadership

- ensuring the organisation, through its ways of working, systems, processes and decision-making, takes into account and respects the diversity of contributions from all components of the workforce

- leading ongoing change to establish and maintain a unified organisation founded on a respectful and inclusive culture

- supporting the unified development, deployment and maintenance of Fire and Emergency's operational capability

- leading by example and modelling positive behaviour, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, collaboration and organisational learning

- ensuring that the work environment rewards positive behaviour and is safe and free of unwanted behaviour, including any form of bullying and harassment.

- We established the new Chief Advisor Volunteerism role as part of the People Branch Leadership Team in July 2020. It is designed to provide dedicated volunteerism thought-leadership and strategic advice, help drive the organisation's implementation of the Volunteerism Strategy, and track our progress against it.

  Note: In addition to the People Branch Leadership Team's collective accountabilities, this role's accountabilities include ensuring:

  - we develop and embed a future-focused, overarching approach to volunteer resilience into our organisation's people systems

  - we listen to volunteers when we make decisions

  - we consider the volunteerism principles when developing organisational strategies.

- We have proposed for consultation a new permanent structure within the People Branch. Its purpose is to enable the Branch to better serve and support Service Delivery personnel, including volunteers. The proposal includes regional functions and positions including:

  - People Services Manager positions

  - Volunteer Development Manager positions

  - Regional HR positions

- Along with the People Branch structure proposal, we have proposed the establishment of a permanent Behaviour and Conduct Office (BCO) for consultation. The proposal includes the BCO reporting through to the Positive Workplace Culture ELT Panel for 18 months, before moving to become part of the People Branch.

  The purpose of the BCO is to resolve complaints about unwanted behaviour. It is available to all our people and members of the public. In partnership with Human Resources, the BCO manages our bullying and harassment interim complaints process, helping people to get information, get advice about their options, or raise a complaint.

Note: The proposal is for the BCO to:

- create and staff new positions

- set behaviour standards and expectations, and lead the work to educate and engage

- manage all complaints of unwanted behaviour.

- We have developed a new organisational volunteerism governance structure for feedback and approval. By developing the volunteerism governance structure, we will help track progress and embed it into the organisation.

Setting expectations and helping embed accountability

- We have developed tailored induction programmes for the new People Branch and Service Delivery leadership roles, with a focused session on the collective accountabilities and a role transitions workshop on the importance of volunteerism in our work and work expectations.

- We delivered the collective accountabilities session to the People Branch Leadership Team and to the new Regional Business Operations Managers, Response Capability, Risk Reduction and Community Readiness and Recovery leaders.

- We launched a shared Code of Behaviour and a new policy to address bullying, harassment and victimisation.

- We approved the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the Volunteerism Strategy for implementation. This framework will enable the organisation to track and report its progress against its volunteerism commitments, demonstrate transparency, and be accountable for its progress.

An example from Te Hiku:

Area Managers in two Areas have enabled volunteer leaders to run Area leadership meetings. This includes chairing meetings and creating agendas. Area teams support the meetings and answer agenda items.

This approach by local leaders aims to enable everyone to have their say and feel involved. The result has increased volunteer attendance with very positive anecdotal feedback.

Activities for future focus

- Support leaders to build an inclusive and accountable organisation where volunteerism can thrive.
  - Develop a cohesive approach to embed the volunteerism principles into key policy, planning and decision-making processes.
  - Progress the establishment of new structures and roles to enable our new ways of working and ensure the volunteerism principles are embedded throughout the transition period.
  - Implement the Leadership Development Framework.
- Establish foundational organisational arrangements and functions to help drive volunteerism.
  - Set up and embed the organisation's volunteerism governance arrangements and reporting function.

2. Commitment to volunteers

Volunteers are consulted with and included in planning and decisions.

One of the purposes of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act (2017) is to improve support for volunteers and enable them to communicate directly with Fire and Emergency[18]. We have a legislative duty to consult with our volunteers and their representative organisations on relevant organisational matters[19]. By consulting with volunteers and including volunteer perspectives in decision-making, the evidence shows[20], we will be more effective in our ability to support and develop volunteers, and in our collective pursuit of community-based outcomes[21].

"the involvement of volunteers makes the difference between organisations with a volunteer workforce being able to achieve their purpose and objectives, and not achieving them"

Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) Volunteer Inclusion Guidelines, 2020, page 7.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

Volunteers bring broader workforce intelligence and diverse views to the decision-making process. Involving them in our decisions will improve outcomes for our organisation and communities[22].

We are also seeking to:

- build a more inclusive Fire and Emergency culture that listens to its people and respects the diverse contributions from all components of the workforce
- better understand and accommodate volunteer needs and context
- improve volunteer engagement and retention (both directly and indirectly)
- increase transparency
- develop a more diverse and sustainable volunteer component[23]
- provide clear direction to our people on the organisation's position on why, when and how to include volunteer (and other workforce) perspectives in planning and decisions
- ensure we comply with the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act (2017).

This outcome area helps ensure that:

- we develop a shared understanding of, and approach to involving volunteers, volunteer perspectives and volunteer intelligence in planning and decision-making
- we embed and develop our agreed understanding into our systems, policies, processes and practices, and develop new policies
- we support and develop our people to be effective in embedding volunteer perspectives into the way we work.

Key activities from June to November:

Core business activities

We seek and consider volunteer perspectives and those of their representative bodies (such as the UFBA) as a matter of course in a range of business planning and decisions.

The following are examples of how we did this at different levels.

Senior leadership:

- The Executive Leadership Team ran a two-hour panel session for volunteers, as part of the UFBA Kōrero Webinar Discussion Panel (which replaced the annual UFBA conference due to COVID-19). They encouraged volunteers to ask questions, comment and give feedback directly to ELT members.
- We held monthly partner agency meetings to give agencies such as FRANZ and the UFBA the opportunity to represent volunteer perspectives on a range of activities.

National and Regional team:

- We conducted targeted surveys, such as the volunteer attraction and support stocktake surveys.
- Volunteers participated in various working and reference groups, such as for the employer promotions campaign.

At a local level:

- Leaders, volunteer support staff, regional trainers and others engaged directly with brigades and their leaders (e.g. quarterly leader meetings).
- National teams, such as Fleet and Property, engaged directly with brigades to help them make decisions to meet their specific needs.

Establishing strong foundations for capturing and incorporating volunteer perspectives

- We improved volunteer access and systems by connecting 305 stations through the Station Network Connectivity/Moeraki Project between June and October 2020. This work helps ensure there are effective two-way ICT communication channels between volunteers and the organisation.

- We designed and developed a volunteer advisory group pilot, the volunteer touchstone group, which will pilot, which will be made up of a range of volunteers at different life stages, with different lengths of service, roles and backgrounds. This group will give us access to volunteer perspectives and advice for planning and decision-making. We expect the touchstone group pilot to start in 2021.

- We approved the first stage of work to start to design a future model of volunteer engagement. This will begin in the new calendar year, and will involve volunteers throughout. The new model's purpose gives Fire and Emergency a direct and effective relationship with volunteers, as is required under the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017.

- Fire and Emergency members endorsed the AFAC Volunteer Inclusion Guidelines 2020.

Activities for future focus:

- Develop an organisational approach to reviewing when, where, why and how we involve volunteers, volunteer perspectives and intelligence in organisational decision-making.

Case study:

**Longitudinal research project:
Understanding the volunteer journey**

Over the last 12 months, approximately 850 volunteers took part in a longitudinal study looking at aspects of the volunteer experience. The project's aim is to explore volunteers' early experiences (in their first five years) and understand the key influences on their decisions to stay or leave the organisation.

We will use this research to develop initiatives so that we can more closely meet the expectations of new or potential volunteers, resulting in reduced attrition in the early years of volunteering. We will release results from this research at key points over the next two years.

Example: Volunteer perspectives were central to the development of the Proud Employer mark (launched in August) **and campaign** (launched in November)**.**

The Proud Employer mark was designed with input from:

- a volunteer survey where over 1,500 volunteers provided direct feedback

- small focus group sessions involving volunteer and volunteer employers.

We also invited volunteers to nominate employers and self-employed volunteers for the campaign.

3. Attraction, selection and recruitment

There are enough skilled and motivated volunteers who reflect their communities and meet their needs, now and into the future.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve

- Our approach to attracting, selecting and recruiting volunteers is strategic, supportive and integrated.

- The brigade, volunteer and potential volunteer experiences involved in attraction and recruitment activities are positive and supported by fit-for-purpose systems, policies, processes and practices that reflect the volunteerism principles.

- Attraction, selection and recruitment activities are linked to and support the organisation's local planning and evolving workforce planning and capability functions.

Example of local attraction activity in Te Hiku:

Te Hiku recently ran three attraction events because they were struggling to attract new volunteers. The attraction events were successful for the brigades that took part: around 15 new volunteers are joining the three brigades that need new members. The new national attraction function worked with local leaders, supporting them and returning a great result.

Key activities from June to November:

- We are running a project until June 2021 to establish an enduring volunteer attraction function. Between June to November 2020, the project focused on better understanding the issues brigades face and the support they would like in attracting volunteers. Around 40 percent of brigade leaders (245) completed a questionnaire on this topic, and we have used this information to design an approach to attraction that reflects their needs and experiences. The national Volunteer Attraction Team has continued to grow its knowledge of who wants to volunteer with us, and to provide a range of targeted direct attraction support and resources to all brigades.

- We recruited 645 volunteers between June and November 2020. The recruitment process includes Police vetting and medical checks for candidates and takes an average of 26 days. The Volunteer Recruitment Team continue to make improvements so that volunteer brigade leaders and candidates are well informed throughout, and the recruitment process is transparent. Improvements include:

  - redesigning the medical form to enable a more efficient response from medical centres

  - introducing emails so that volunteer applicants are advised of medical and Police vetting results as soon as they are available

  - making saline testing and medical referrals more accessible for volunteers by offering private clinics where there are public clinic delays.

Activities for future focus:

- Work with the regions, the People Experience Directorate to identify and prioritise brigades that need the most support to attract volunteers.

4. Support and development

Volunteers receive ongoing development and support in a manner that respects their needs and context.

We enable new and flexible ways of delivering Fire and Emergency community-focused services through the learning agility, adaptability and continued development and support of our people over time.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve

This outcome area seeks to provide the right mix of engaged volunteers with the right skills to meet community needs and helps to ensure that we:

- enable and equip volunteers to confidently perform their roles well
- train, develop and support volunteers in a way that reflects the volunteerism principles
- reduce barriers to greater diversity across the progression pathway
- develop varied entry and progression pathways including across and outside of Fire and Emergency
- design training and development that enables broader and more flexible volunteering roles
- provide equitable support and development that enables volunteers to be engaged and at their best
- build opportunities for continual learning into our approach to development
- recognise skills.

Key activities from June to November

- We sent 645 volunteer 'welcome packs' to the homes of new volunteers. The pack provides new volunteers and their whānau with information to help them get established and have realistic expectations of what is involved.
- From July to October 2020, 7,715 volunteers attended one or more of 939 training courses. (Note: The full reporting period data was not available at time of writing.)
- The Training Business Services Team provided accessible support to hundreds of volunteers.

- We increased training flexibility and responsiveness by spreading a number of courses over multiple days or nights to make it easier for volunteers to attend.
- We launched a pilot recruitment course designed to be more accessible to volunteers. It is a four-day course (instead of seven days) and includes a virtual component that volunteers can complete from home or the station.
- We evaluated the Volunteer Development Manager (VDM) pilot in July 2020.The pilot embedded five region-based roles to strengthen volunteer leadership capability through coaching, mentoring, and assisting leaders in understanding developmental needs. The evaluation found the VDM roles fill a significant gap in the organisation. It also found that the role's scope was unclear. As a result, we have proposed changes, including establishing five permanent VDM positions.
- We launched the Volunteer Leadership Development Programme (VLDP) in Ngā Tai ki te Puku. This consists of 10 two-hour sessions for volunteer leaders to learn, discuss and grow their leadership skills. Sessions are facilitated by firefighters, career and volunteer, who have attended a 'train the trainer' course.
- Between June to October 2020, 436 volunteers completed Training and Progression (TAPS) courses. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the associated lockdown periods, all TAPS courses fell behind the expected delivery with increased wait times. Re-phased courses are now back on track and should be completed within the 2020/21 financial year.

Activities for future focus

- Build a volunteer life cycle perspective into support and development (i.e. at different stages a person advances through the organisation e.g. attraction, recruitment, induction, volunteer roles and progression and leaving).
- Implement the Leadership Development Framework as it applies to volunteers.

5. Community involvement

Effective local relationships exist through volunteer presence in the community

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

- Community-based volunteering where community is considered at the heart of the work
- Volunteers are supported as community leaders
- Volunteers are embedded in their communities increasing local knowledge, expanding networks and supporting community resilience.

Key activities from June to November

- The Leadership Development Framework was approved and we began planning its implementation. The Leadership Development Framework, which supports all our people has, as a core tenet, the principle that everyone is a leader. Implementing this framework will support and grow volunteers as community leaders.
- As well as the work Poutakawaenga/Iwi Liaison Officers do with local communities (for example, fire safety education), they actively support volunteers with cultural aspects of the work, for example, the protocol around tangihanga. This helps volunteers to be more connected to their community and reduces barriers to the work they do.
- We established Local Advisory Committees (LACs) to help shape our future in local communities. Their role is to strengthen our connection with communities and their advice will inform our planning, helping us better support communities to reduce risk, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and recover quickly.
  - In June 2020, 49 committee members were appointed to our first seven committees in Northland, Tairāwhiti, Hawke's Bay, Marlborough, Chatham Islands, West Coast and Otago.
  - The committees held their first face-to-face meetings during September where they developed work plans and stakeholder engagement plans.
  - Under the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017, LACs are required to consider and promote the interests of Fire and Emergency volunteers.

They advise the organisation and the Board, ensuring we include local perspectives. The LACs have been introduced to the Volunteerism Strategy as part of their induction and we are supporting them to engage with volunteers and their representatives.

Activities for future focus

- Understand our current information and intelligence on volunteer community involvement, including talking with volunteers.
- Connect with LACs on the shared interest in and responsibilities under legislation for to supporting volunteers.

Example

When Riki Kereopa became the Chief Fire Officer of the Manaia Volunteer Rural Fire Force in 2006, his dream was to have smoke alarms installed in every house in the Manaia turnout area. When Fire and Emergency New Zealand was formed in 2017, he submitted this idea to Area Management. During June 2020, with the support of the Waikato Rural and Eastern Waikato Area Management, his dream became a reality.

Manaia Volunteer Fire Brigade members, with the support of area staff, principally Volunteer Support Officer Shane Bromley and Waikato Rural Business Services Coordinator Leanne Cryer spent eight days in the community visiting 143 properties, installing 548 smoke alarms, and providing home fire safety advice to the occupants.

The Brigade took on and ran the project. They advertised the initiative locally and Riki even visited many residents personally to explain it.

The positive feedback has been overwhelming, including the possibility of new recruits. This project has been a great achievement for this small brigade of eight operational firefighters who say that it has brought the Brigade and community closer together.

6. Volunteer recognition

Volunteers, their employers and families feel appreciated, respected and supported

To thank our volunteers, their whānau, families and employers and keep them engaged with both their brigades and the organisation, it is important that they feel appreciated, recognised and supported by Fire and Emergency.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

- We understand, appreciate and acknowledge volunteers' contributions, value and impact in a way that resonates with them.

- Volunteers are motivated and engaged with Fire and Emergency and want to continue volunteering in their communities.

Key activities from June to November

- National Volunteer Week – the 2020 campaign saw Fire and Emergency raise awareness of our volunteer workforce and encourage the public and our staff to recognise our volunteers. The campaign centred on sharing the personal stories of volunteers in various roles and from different walks of life. Twenty-four percent of New Zealanders were aware of the campaign (according to TNS Research, September 2020) – up from 14 percent in 2019. Recognition of the extent of which volunteers make up our workforce increased, with New Zealanders believing volunteers make up 61 percent of firefighters (up from 53 percent in 2019). As part of the National Volunteer Week campaign development, 126 amazing stories on volunteers and their work were submitted with the winning submissions being used in the campaign.

- United Nations International Volunteer Day – we developed a public and internal video campaign to be released on International Volunteer Day, 5 December 2020, to recognise our volunteers and their contribution.

- Recognising our employers – enhancements to the Employer Recognition Programme include new station signage, increased funding for employer recognition events and our new Proud Employer mark and campaign.

  - Since the launch of our campaign in November, and delivery of packs to stations, we have seen 504 new employers join the programme, representing 29 percent of the overall programme growth since 2018.

  - To increase awareness and meaning, we are looking to spread use of the mark throughout the organisation. The scheme has been introduced in LAC inductions and specially designed decals have been sent to Areas and District offices to be installed on our white fleet.

FIRE
EMERGENCY
NEW ZEALAND

WHAKARATONGA IWI

BACK SOON
FIGHTING WILD FIRES

EMPLOYERS OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS ARE PART OF THE CREW

PROUD EMPLOYER OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS

HE RŌPŪ KOTAHI TĀTOU

- Regional Celebrating Success Awards – Our Celebrating Success Awards celebrate the success of Fire and Emergency teams, individuals and members of the community.

  - The awards recognise teams and individuals who have demonstrated excellence and outstanding achievement and contribution to our organisation and communities.

  - Nominations are made by our people and members of the public and formally reviewed by a nominated panel.

  - Promoting these events around the country is an important way to ensure volunteers are being recognised not only by the organisation but also in their communities.

- The Frequent Values discount platform, which participating organisations offer discounted products and services to volunteers. This initiative helps recognise volunteers for their contribution to the organisation. Following volunteer feedback we have, over the last six months, been working to increase and promote discounts.

- Volunteer Allowances and Reimbursements – Fire and Emergency recognises some costs are incurred by our volunteers for the time they spend committed to working with us. To assist with this we've created a range of allowances and reimbursements

- Between June and November:

  - we made 503 volunteer allowance payments to volunteers who spent the night away from whānau for training

  - we made 631 reimbursements to volunteers for loss of income.

  - we provided 73 gratuities for volunteers with 10 or more years of service.

Note: Volunteer allowances and reimbursements between June and November totalled around $687,200. A significant proportion of this related to incident response commitments we are contractually required to meet under pre-existing arrangements from legacy rural fire authorities.

- Work was under way to make our annual volunteer reimbursement in December directly into volunteers' bank accounts. The $300 reimbursement will be granted to 9,268 eligible volunteers. It recognises the incidental expenses they incur through volunteering.

- The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Board offers 25-year and 50-year service gifts to personnel to recognise their long-standing commitment to the organisation and communities throughout the country. In the last six months, 71 volunteers received a 25-year length of service gift.
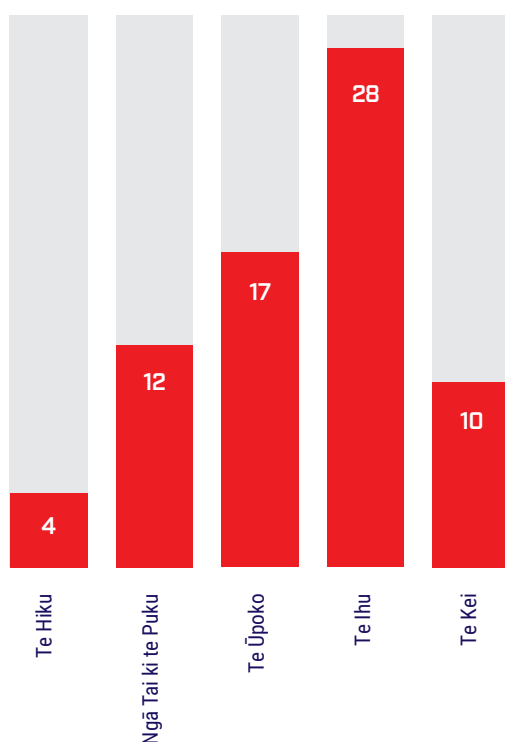
Royal honours

- In October 2020, Fire and Emergency people in Kaikoura, Ranfurly, Blackball and Taneatua were awarded the Queen's Service Medal, for their services to Fire and Emergency and their communities. Ian Walker, Ewan Mason, Allan Cox and Diane Yalden were presented with their honours by Governor-General Patsy Reddy at Government House. The Fire and Emergency Executive Leadership Team invited all Fire and Emergency recipients to a lunch in recognition of their significant service to communities and our organisation.

Activities for future focus

- Evolve our Fire and Emergency approach to reward and recognition.

- Work through reimbursement and payment arrangements for incident compensation inherited from the legacy organisations to provide a more equitable approach for our people.

"Following the publication of our organisational Strategic Priorities, we took the initiative this year to update our nomination categories to reflect them for our 2020 awards. The Celebrating Success Awards recognise excellence and outstanding achievement and contribution to Fire and Emergency and the wider community. I am incredibly proud to see the work going on across Te Ūpoko and look forward to celebrating again next year"

– Bruce Stubbs, Region Manager

Overall winners: National Park Volunteer Fire Brigade

Two of our category winners were:

Growing Our People: National Park Volunteer Fire Brigade

National Park Volunteer Fire Brigade have implemented several positive initiatives that have transformed their brigade from being 'at risk' to 'high-performing' in a relatively short time. This has occurred following a change in leadership. The initiatives include

- encouraging diversity in brigade membership
- initiating two training nights per week to accommodate working patterns of brigade members
- introducing a 'response ladder' system to give all personnel equal opportunity to respond to calls
- training online during the COVID-19 lockdown
- preparing people for courses to ensure an effective response across a wide range of incidents.

Building Resilient Communities: Hawke's Bay Recovery Team

Hawke's Bay Recovery Team's initiative provides emotional and practical support to people who have experienced a traumatic event, ensuring they have access to the right help and support following the event. This has also created an opportunity for people in the community to join Fire and Emergency in non-operational roles. The team is now 20 volunteers strong with representation across the whole of the Hawke's Bay District.

Number of Volunteer 25 year gifts by region

Region	Number
Te Hiku	4
Ngā Tai ki te Puku	12
Te Ūpoko	17
Te Ihu	28
Te Kei	10

7. Safety, health and wellbeing

Volunteers' safety, health and wellbeing is proactively supported and equitably resourced.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

Healthy, safe and well volunteers who can access support as and when required. The safety, health and wellbeing of our people, including our volunteers, is paramount.

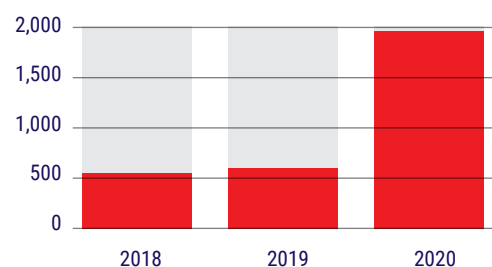*He waka eke noa – everyone in one canoe, with no exception.*

Key activities from June to November

Health and wellbeing

- Psychological wellbeing workshops – between June and November, 186 volunteers attended one of 19 psychological wellbeing workshops. The workshops were held face to face, in a range of formats to suit volunteer availability, including full-day, half-day, and large format (more than 30 people) sessions. In the last six months, our Safety, Health and Wellbeing Team and a group of operational personnel have been trained as co-presenters to help spread the messages to as many volunteers as possible.

- Supporting our volunteers through the flu season – 2020 was the third year that we offered flu vaccinations to all volunteers. This is part of expanding a range of health and psychological wellbeing support services.

- Over this year's flu season, three times the number of volunteers received flu vaccinations, compared with the previous season. This is likely due in part to: the heightened awareness around flu defence caused by COVID-19; a possible decrease in flu vaccines being administered by employment facilities because of remote working; and improved accessibility to the vaccine for volunteers. We introduced 20 new locations for volunteers to receive jabs and some brigades requested on-site vaccinations due to COVID-19.

Number of Flu Vaccines administered to Fire and Emergency Volunteers

Building a positive workplace culture

- Assisting in resolving disputes in volunteer brigades – The Behaviour and Conduct Office (BCO) is our current internal mechanism for providing support and resolving complaints about unwanted behaviour. All our people, including volunteers, and the public, can get advice and support or raise a complaint via the BCO. To develop our complaints process, the Positive Workplace Culture (PWC) team engaged with our volunteers to ask what they needed to prevent, address or deal with unwanted behaviour.

- We launched our new Policy to address bullying, harassment and victimisation on 7 August 2020. It outlines to our people:
  - how we expect them to behave
  - how to identify bullying, harassment and victimisation
  - how to stop unwanted behaviour.

- We launched our new Code of Behaviour (the Code) on 13 August 2020. We also released a guide for leaders, and a 'conversation starter guide' to support our leaders was also released to help them share the Code with their teams. The Code gives further meaning to our values by describing above the line (acceptable) or below the line (unacceptable) behaviour. Our Code and Policy are the key tools for addressing bullying and harassment of any kind in our organisation. The PWC team is now revising our Standards of Conduct Policy and Managing Misconduct Procedure, and will be seeking feedback from our people via stakeholder workshops. We're also developing a stand-alone policy to address sexual harm in partnership with specialist advisors.

- Listening to and implementing feedback – following feedback on the Respect and Inclusion pilot workshops, the PWC team created a Respect workshop and developed an Inclusive Leadership programme. They're developing a full set of resources to support this programme, including a digital toolkit, a self-assessment tool, a video and interactive case studies. They'll be engaging with leadership teams to determine a delivery plan that works best for everyone.

- In November 2019, the PWC team held a two-day Workplace Culture hui in Wellington, inviting our people from around the country to share what we need to build the best support services possible, the type of culture we aspire to be part of and identify what we can do to make it happen.
  - Based on the feedback, we held three workshops in Te Ihu before the COVID-19 lockdown. Unable to arrange further face-to-face workshops, we adapted the workshop content into online modules. We're currently seeking feedback on wellbeing and support channels, a proposed culture champions network, and an online Wellness Hub.

- The Programme continues to be sponsored by our Chief Executive and guided by the Executive Leadership Team, who are committed to developing the right processes for dealing effectively with bullying and harassment and creating a strong new culture where unwanted behaviour doesn't happen in the first place. The Programme is also advised by its Respect and Inclusion Taskforce, and its associated sub-groups, which includes volunteers and representatives from the UFBA.

- Supporting volunteers' families – As part of the work to support volunteers, Fire and Emergency supported and made available to each brigade, the New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society's children's book: The Wolf Was Not Sleeping. The book was written to soothe the anxieties of children whose parents are first responders. Fire and Emergency sent copies to stations and made it available for personnel to order at no cost. We have distributed 4,519 books in total.

Example – Building an inclusive culture and growing our cultural competency

The Te Hiku Welfare Reference Group is made up of representatives from across the organisation, including volunteers, and has St John representation. The group has produced a draft information sheet on cultural awareness to help crews engage effectively internally and with the diverse ethnic communities we work with.

Example: Safety, health and wellbeing advisors working 'without borders'

- Denis Fitzmaurice, Team Leader Safety Health & Wellbeing, Te Wai Pounamu.

"My philosophy regarding the team has always been if we ever had sufficient human resource in Te Wai Pounamu then safety health and wellbeing could operate across the South Island, using all that resource rather than Advisors sticking to 'their' Region solely. This ensures we are identifying what works for our volunteers and sharing the lessons learned within our organisation.

We now have four Advisors and one Welfare Advisor with specific geographical areas of responsibility. However, they understand wherever the need is greatest, at any particular moment, we will bring in resources to support, facilitate and advise on solutions for volunteers

Not limited to, but including:

- *organising and running volunteer Health and Safety Advocate meetings across both regions*

- *critical risk knowledge in the volunteer environment*

- *advice to managers across both regions in fortnightly team meetings, which have volunteer development representation*

- *attending quarterly district and area management leadership meetings across regions*

- *promoting and co-presenting Psychological Wellbeing Workshops*

- *assisting volunteers with referrals to counsellors and psychologists*

- *coordinating our Critical Incident and Personal Stress Support teams*

- *attending Volunteer Support Officer forums and working closely at all times across both regions*

In short, where there has been a need identified we can have some or all of our SH & W Advisors work towards a solution that can be implemented across both regions giving us greater reach into the volunteer universe."

Activities for future focus:

- Consult with volunteers and other Fire and Emergency personnel on the permanent structure and design of the BCO.

- Progress our work on developing a critical risk management framework to equip our people to better understand and manage critical risk.

- Embed our psychological wellbeing tools within all training pathways so that psychological wellbeing becomes a focus in everything that we do and the tools reach every volunteer.

8. Volunteer roles

Volunteer roles and progression pathways that reflect community needs and respect volunteer choice.

This outcome area contributes to the Volunteerism Strategy's Priority 1: Broader more flexible ways to volunteer:

This outcome area contributes to the Volunteerism Strategy's Priority 1: Broader and more flexible ways to volunteer, page 23:

This priority is about drawing on the different skills, life experiences and time commitments our volunteers can offer. It is also about broadening the ways people from all walks of life can volunteer for us, beyond firefighting. This could include new dedicated voluntary roles for emergency work, such as:

- *medical and rescue response*
- *risk reduction and community engagement*
- *administrative and logistical roles.*

This is intended to spread the effort and allow individual volunteers to better manage their time and commitment. Such roles do not necessarily require the same level of time commitment, physical fitness and training as our traditional volunteer firefighter roles, and could be undertaken by a wider variety of people within our communities who don't want to take part in active firefighting.

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

- Volunteer roles are defined, meet volunteer and organisational needs and are communicated.
- We offer broader, more flexible opportunities for volunteers, while maintaining and supporting core volunteer roles.
- We develop roles for volunteers that offer choice as to how, and how much, they volunteer.
- Progression pathways recognise different ways to progress, and shift between and within the organisation.
- An environment where we prioritise volunteers and meet their needs.

Key activities from June to November

- We completed research: What it takes to attract volunteers into Fire and Emergency New Zealand in June. We are using this in our attraction approach and early work to consider developing new roles to cater to community risk and a broader range of potential volunteers.
- We funded the UFBA-led Pathways Project, which enables more brigades to get involved in youth engagement to boost thriving community volunteerism. Given the aspirations of young Kiwis and the varying capabilities and willingness of brigades to engage with young people, a broader approach is more effective than a traditional cadet scheme.
- The Pathways Project's purpose is to:
  - increase awareness among young people of the opportunity to volunteer for Fire and Emergency, and what this involves
  - build skills
  - provide a positive environment that fosters youth engagement with community and prosocial behaviours.
- We have prioritised the first stage of designing and implementing a new model of volunteer engagement and we expect it to start in the new year. The purpose of this work is to give Fire and Emergency a direct and effective relationship with volunteers, as required under the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017.
  - From the outset, this will involve volunteers, supporting a new direct relationship with them and helping build environments where volunteers are supported and volunteerism thrives.

Activities for future focus

- Progress community and brigade risk and resilience.
- Modular service delivery and progression of the flexible brigade model.

9. Positive local volunteer environments

Local brigades are positive, resilient and connected

What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

- Brigade environments are supportive and inclusive and teams are engaged.
- Brigades are connected to the broader positive and enabling Fire and Emergency volunteer network.
- Brigades are embedded into supportive, enabling and thriving local Fire and Emergency networks.

Key activities from June to November:

- Brigade health checks – between June and November, the HR managers worked with District and Area management to complete brigade health checks, providing feedback on what is working and what is not, from an internal and external (community) perspective. This ensures volunteers receive ongoing development and support.

  The review focused on internal elements such as recruitment, communication, leadership or satisfactory equipment, and external community elements, such as relationships or communication. Facilitated sessions help volunteer brigades to develop action plans for areas requiring attention and to put action plans and progress reviews in place.

Activities for future focus:

- Establish an approach as part of the volunteerism As part of the volunteerism work programme, establish an approach to capture what works for volunteers and share.
- **Note:** this is one of the volunteerism principles.

Example of a new local initiative:

The Northland officer network group established – This was initially set up so volunteers could support each other and gain operational/training ideas during COVID-19. However, it evolved over the reporting period to include a strong mentoring/coaching function.

A volunteer initiated national network, modelled on the regional network, has been set up to do the same thing and is being well used, with good conversations and ideas being shared.

10. Quality management and continuous improvement

The organisation monitors, reviews and strives to continually improve how it supports volunteers and community-based volunteerism.
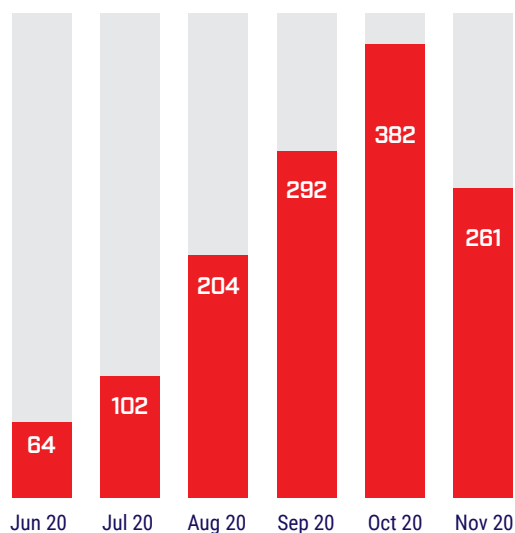
What this outcome area seeks to achieve:

The organisation has a robust way of monitoring how well we are doing with respect to volunteerism and volunteer support, and of identifying and implementing ways of improving the outcomes for volunteers, the organisation and the community. This aligns with our National Strategic Priority: intelligence-led, evidence-based decisions.

Effective volunteer involvement in any organisation results from a system of good practice, review and continuous improvement.

Volunteering Australia – National standards for volunteer involvement

Resolved ZenDesk tickets Vollydata support

Month	Value
Jun 20	64
Jul 20	102
Aug 20	204
Sep 20	292
Oct 20	382
Nov 20	261

Nov only includes 1-19 Nov

Key activities from June to November:

Volunteer Data Support and integrity

- From June to November, we resolved 1,305 data integrity inquiries. We emailed complete lists of current volunteers at each brigade to Business Service Coordinators to make our volunteer data more accurate. This aspect of our work is continuing to increase as more people become aware of the data support team.

  Key improvements:

  - Our data support team started processing rural volunteer leavers in August 2020 (previously they only covered urban volunteer leavers).

  - We adopted all rank changes in September 2020. This included a backlog of historic changes.

  - In October 2020, we checked the status of all volunteers to ensure accurate reporting.

- The Availabilty and Messaging System (AMS) is a response to volunteers' needs and makes it easier to volunteer. We rolled out AMS to 153 brigades from 1 July to November 2020, increasing the number with AMS to 400, with another 75 to be connected.

  - AMS was created in response to an identified need for accurate, real-time information about the availability of volunteers to respond to fires and emergencies. It also helped brigades know who is responding to a call, so they can ensure they have the right people in the right place at the right time. AMS also supports volunteers' support crew, their whānau, by sending them a notification when volunteers attend an incident.

Activities for future focus

- Establish the governance arrangements for the volunteerism function.

- Continue to implement the Volunteerism Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and help embed the reporting function into how we work.

- Prioritise and align our evaluation effort and measures.

- Progress the volunteer life cycle reporting and longitudinal research.

Conclusion and next steps

This is the first six-month report to track Fire and Emergency's progress against our Volunteerism Strategy. It provides a starting point from which we will track our progress, evolve our understanding and build this into our decision-making. As we learn more, what we report on will evolve.

Reporting is part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework which helps us effectively track activities and, increasingly over time, our progress against outcomes. This will be useful for demonstrating value and system-level progress against the Strategy, and enabling improved, intelligence-led, evidence-based decision-making.

This initial 'scene-setting' report covered the six-month period 1 June to 30 November 2020 and provided:

- a snapshot of our current volunteer workforce
- key Fire and Emergency volunteer trends
- transparency into key pieces of work as they align with outcome areas
- insight into key activities that help embed the volunteerism principles and build a culture of volunteerism.

As this report shows, many activities are under way, particularly to establish organisational leadership and management foundations. Putting foundational structures and functions in place is an essential part of setting the organisation up to sustain volunteerism changes, but it is not always visible on the front line.

We expect that, as we embed the new structure, we will actively enable and embed new responsibilities and ways of working. This will result in more visible change for volunteers. However, to give our future volunteers enough support, we need our whole organisation to make progress towards achieving the Volunteerism Strategy objectives.

The next public report is due at the end of June 2021. As well as activities, it will explore any gaps and introduce progress measures.

Endnotes

1. Our definition of volunteerism is: the culture and practice of promoting, supporting and valuing volunteers and volunteering by an organisation (Volunteerism Strategy, page 3).
2. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 Part 1 Subpart 1; 3(a); Fire and Emergency Act (2017) Part 1 Subpart 1; 3(c).
3. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 Part 1 Subpart 7; 36–37.
4. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 Part 1 Subpart 1; 3(c).)
5. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 Part (1) Subpart 5 (14); 2(c).
6. Statistics New Zealand (2018), cited in Volunteering New Zealand's State of volunteering report, Wellington, 2020.
7. Cited in The State of Volunteering New Zealand, 2017.
8. Presentation to Fire and Emergency NZ leaders by CE of Volunteering NZ, Scott Miller, 2017.
9. Volunteering New Zealand website.
10. In line with Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission guidelines, our volunteer count is based on head count, and our permanent and fixed term workforce (management and support) count is based on full-time equivalents (FTEs).
11. As reported in the Briefing for the Incoming Minister (BIM).
12. Ethnicity is specified at the time of recruitment. The quality of the ethnicity data provided by legacy organisations is unclear. The integrity of data transferred is only able to specify one ethnicity. These ethnicities are grouped for the purposes of reporting. For example, European includes New Zealand European, New Zealander, and those volunteers from European countries. 12 percent of volunteers have no ethnicity specified.
13. Composite station refers to any station that has a career crew and a volunteer brigade at the same place.
14. We are looking to standardise our reports of volunteers across multiple contracts. This may impact how we count in the future.
15. The current reporting method doesn't accurately capture volunteers who leave and return (rehires), who are reported as never having left.
16. We extracted data on the Volunteer Demographics Report on 19 November 2020. Starters include volunteers who began between 1 June 2020 and 19 November 2020. Leavers include volunteers who left between 1 June 2020 and 19 November 2020.
17. There are limitations to length of service calculations because of how we record rehires. This means that these reports may restate the length of service. We are planning to address this recording issue in the new year. All data is based on the Volunteer Demographics report extracted on 19 November 2020. New volunteers include volunteers who began between 1 June 2020 and 19 November 2020.
18. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 Part 1 Subpart 1; 3 Purpose (c).
19. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 Part 1 Subpart 1; 1 (b) and (c)
20. Cited in AFAC Volunteer inclusion guideline (2020). This includes academic research and collective expert knowledge of AFAC member organisations, Volunteering Australia and Volunteering New Zealand.
21. AFAC (2020) Volunteer inclusion guideline (2020).
22. This outcome area aligns with Volunteering New Zealand's best practice guidelines: "The whole organisation works to involve and recognise volunteers."
23. AFAC Volunteer Inclusion Guideline (2020)

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