

# Enabling sustainable volunteerism

Te whakatoitū i te tūaotanga



## Volunteerism Strategy 2019–2029

Te huinga hūkihūki mo te rautaki tuaotanga



Fire and Emergency New Zealand must take reasonable steps -

# TO **RECOGNISE, RESPECT** AND **PROMOTE VOLUNTEERS**





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# Foreword

## Whakapuakitanga

### We are pleased to introduce our Volunteerism Strategy – **Enabling sustainable volunteerism** **Te whakatoitū i te tūaotanga**

Fire brigades have been at the heart of New Zealand communities for more than 150 years. Over that time the role of firefighting and emergency management has changed, but the critical importance of volunteers to fire and emergency management, to community resilience and to our organisation and its predecessors has not.

Currently, volunteers make up 85 per cent of our personnel, and provide essential services across the country – in particular, coverage outside of our major cities.

Our volunteers bring far more than their skills and numbers. Volunteers are, in many ways, one of our key links in our partnership with New Zealand. Our volunteers are a very visible expression of a community's commitment to its wellbeing and safety. Our volunteers bring their strengths and an awareness of the risks and needs of their communities into the way we work, supporting our responsibility to create safe communities and strengthen community resilience.

There are many benefits to serving and working with a community by volunteering with Fire and Emergency New Zealand. These include camaraderie, the opportunity to make a difference in the community and the associated personal and professional development. However, our volunteer model is coming under pressure. There are greater calls on our volunteers' time, and on the goodwill and capacity of their families and employers.

At the same time, all our people are operating in an increasingly complex environment. Changing weather has led to significant increases in wildfires, flooding and landslips. There are increasing demands to respond to a wide range of non-fire emergencies, such as motor vehicle accidents, medical incidents, hazardous substance emergencies, and natural disasters.

We need to make it easier to volunteer with us. We need to truly value and recognise volunteers and the vital role of our volunteers' employers and families. We need to understand our volunteers' motivation, and see our work through

a volunteer lens so that we strengthen our support for our volunteers and build capabilities and arrangements that enable sustainable volunteerism.

This Volunteerism Strategy acknowledges the central role of volunteers to Fire and Emergency and affirms our commitment to them and volunteerism. This strategy has a focus on sustaining our core functions and signals a future with a broader range of roles that our volunteers can choose. It recognises the shared responsibility of all our leaders, and the vital role our career personnel play in supporting our volunteers. It also acknowledges the opportunities and challenges ahead and sets out our intent to build a future where volunteers, volunteerism and Fire and Emergency will thrive in the years to come.

We thank the many volunteers, their associations and other personnel who have helped develop this Volunteerism Strategy. Your wider perspectives and insights have ensured this strategy sets us up for long-term success.



**Hon. Paul Swain**  
Chair



**Rhys Jones**  
Chief Executive



*OUR  
VOLUNTEERS* **BRING FAR MORE**  
*THAN THEIR SKILLS AND NUMBERS*

Volunteers are, in many ways, one of our key links  
in our partnership with New Zealand



# Introduction

## Kupu whakataki

### About this document

#### Purpose

This document sets out Fire and Emergency New Zealand's Volunteerism Strategy: Enabling sustainable volunteerism – Te whakatoitū i te tūaotanga (our strategy).

It explains why a strong volunteering culture and an effective model for volunteerism are critical for effective fire and emergency services in this country.

The document is divided into the following sections:

- **Our operating environment** – the changes affecting volunteerism in New Zealand's fire and emergency services, and what this means for us in developing our strategy.
- **Priorities and key shifts** – the three priorities we will advance in response to our changing environment. It includes the core volunteerism principles we have committed to, which will underpin everything we do. For each priority we explain why it matters, what success will look like and the shifts we will make towards achieving it over the next decade.

The terms volunteer, volunteering and volunteerism are used throughout this document.

- **Volunteer and volunteering** relate to work given of one's free will, not by employment, for the common good or benefit of others. Inherent in the term volunteering is the mutual benefit to individuals, organisations and communities.
- **Volunteerism** is the culture and practice of promoting, supporting and valuing volunteers and volunteering by an organisation.

#### Supporting strategies

Completed strategies and how they support our Volunteerism Strategy are set out at Appendix 1.

## The need for a Volunteerism Strategy

### Proud history

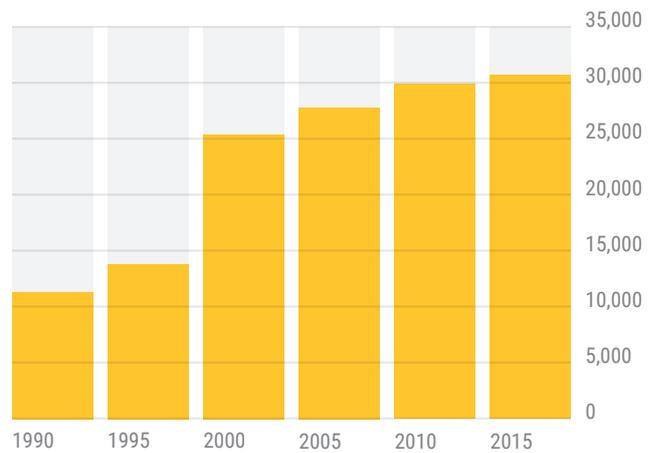
New Zealand has long been served by volunteer brigades and fire forces. From our first volunteer fire services in the 1850s, the history of firefighting in this country has reflected the international evolution to a mix of career and volunteer personnel. Our people are a passionate and committed group, whether they are urban or rural, career or volunteer. They all play a key role in our work to protect people, property and the environment. Volunteers still make up the majority of our workforce, but a number of changes are putting our volunteer model under pressure.<sup>1</sup>

Volunteers are vital to the fabric of New Zealand's society. Volunteerism is fundamental to our country's ability to provide effective and affordable services and build strong, resilient communities. Our organisation is no exception.

Our urban and rural volunteer brigades and fire forces, supported by their families and employers, are often the only local emergency service responding to a growing variety of incidents.<sup>2</sup> Without these volunteers, many communities would be left without a timely emergency response. Volunteer brigades and fire forces are also part of the fabric of their community. They are therefore central to our organisation's ability to be engaged with communities so that we can understand local strengths, risks and needs in order to strengthen resilience.

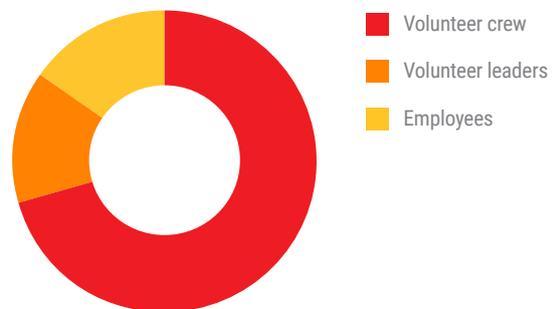
While building safe, resilient communities will always be our focus, the benefits of a strong volunteer culture extend well beyond our organisation. Volunteering contributes more broadly to a healthy, inclusive society in which people have the opportunity to make a difference. Volunteering connects us all, strengthens our sense of belonging and builds stronger communities and societies.<sup>3</sup>

Incidents attended by volunteer personnel



In 2017/18 Fire and Emergency New Zealand volunteers were the first in attendance at 31,254 incidents, compared with 11,463 incidents in 1990/91, a growth of 173%.

Proportion of volunteer personnel



Of the approximately 13,000 firefighters, approximately 11,000 (85%) of them are volunteers, and of those volunteers approximately 1,850 are volunteer leaders of crews or stations (December 2018).

<sup>1</sup> Of the approximately 13,000 firefighters, approximately 11,000 (85 per cent) of them are volunteers, and of those volunteers approximately 1,850 are volunteer leaders of crews or stations (December 2018).

<sup>2</sup> For example, in 2017/18 Fire and Emergency New Zealand volunteers were the first in attendance at 31,254 incidents, compared with 11,463 incidents in 1990/91, a growth of 173 per cent.

<sup>3</sup> The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement (Volunteering Australia) 2015.





### **Bright future**

A key driver of the Government's reform programme, and the decision to establish a single fire and emergency organisation, was to ensure we preserve this proud history by providing better support for our volunteers and a sustainable future for volunteerism. The spirit of these objectives is enshrined in the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 (the Act), and the Government has also provided increased funding to support volunteers.

The success of our new organisation will continue to rely on the professionalism and expertise of both career personnel and volunteers, increasingly working alongside each other in a bonded and collaborative relationship. Career operational and support personnel will play an increasingly vital role in supporting volunteers to respond to our broader range of emergencies. Our trained and equipped volunteers will give wider support at emergencies through broader and more flexible choices of volunteer roles.

Recognising, respecting and promoting the contribution of volunteers is everyone's responsibility at Fire and Emergency. We therefore focus not only on volunteers, but also on volunteerism. For volunteerism to thrive, our organisation needs to have a strong and healthy volunteering model. This includes having personnel who actively champion and support volunteers and volunteerism and having sufficient numbers of trained and equipped volunteers to enable us to meet the service delivery needs of our communities.

We now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build Fire and Emergency in a way that values and embeds all forms of volunteering and volunteerism. Work that is underway includes a major focus on creating the systems, policies, processes and culture to achieve this.

Our aim is that volunteers are motivated to serve their communities through Fire and Emergency and that their families and employers feel recognised and supported by us. By doing this we will help create safer communities that share responsibility for emergency risk and hazard management, and build community resilience.

Many of these changes will also benefit career operational and non-operational personnel. The changes will provide new opportunities to develop professionally and broaden careers. The changes will also provide stronger organisational leadership and support and broaden capabilities in teams that respond to emergency situations.

## How our Volunteerism Strategy will serve and strengthen our services and our communities

Our changing operating environment, along with our new organisational mandate, means we need to evolve our volunteer model.<sup>4</sup>

This Volunteerism Strategy is the foundation for the work we will do to enable sustainable volunteerism. It sets out how, over the next decade, we intend to recognise, respect and promote the contribution of volunteers and of their families and employers. It will provide a pathway to provide broader ways to volunteer and to encourage, maintain and strengthen volunteerism, while building a new approach to community resilience. This strategy extends and builds on changes made when our organisation was first established, such as choice of free independent advocacy and support services to volunteers. The strategy has also been informed by what we learned from a set of initiatives that were co-designed with volunteers and that we progressed as an immediate priority in our organisation's first year.

To date these have included:

- establishing roles to support volunteer recruitment and training support
- coaching, mentoring and leadership development
- flexible regional and local training courses
- streamlined reimbursement and payment processes
- support to reduce administrative workloads
- financial management training and support
- increased direct support resources
- innovative approach to engagement and hearing the volunteer voice.

Our initiatives will extend to include strengthened recognition of, and support for, employers and families.

## How we developed our Volunteerism Strategy

This strategy has been developed from a rich source of emergency and volunteer sector research, and internal research and evidence informed by data and good practice standards for organisations with volunteers. This strategy is designed to deliver the intentions of the government reform, and give effect to the provisions of the Act.<sup>5</sup>

We have also drawn on the expertise of our people to shape our approach to volunteerism so that it will work effectively for many years to come. The foundations for this strategy have been co-designed with hundreds of Fire and Emergency people and have been tested and validated more widely, including with our unions and associations. It incorporates two key outputs from those processes:

- Volunteerism Principles that underpin everything we do as an organisation
- Volunteerism Outcome Areas that we will use to monitor our achievements.

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<sup>4,5</sup> See Our operating environment, on page 10.



## The intent for the Volunteerism Strategy is that:

We have a thriving and unified volunteer workforce that feels valued, safe and supported. Our volunteers come from all walks of life and can choose from a broad and flexible range of roles that include, but are not solely, firefighting. Volunteers will operate in ways tailored to the needs of communities, from different locations and with different time commitments, but all will use their skills and life experiences to serve and strengthen our communities and our organisation.

Volunteers will help ensure our organisation is deeply connected to New Zealand's communities, so we are turned to with confidence in times of crisis, and for help to reduce risk and to prepare for, and recover quickly from, emergencies.



# Our operating environment

## Te ao mahi e noho nei tātou

Volunteering in Fire and Emergency is facing a range of challenges. We are experiencing rapid changes in weather patterns, demographics and social trends.

New Zealanders are also expecting more of us and the volume and range of incidents we respond to has grown. Together this makes the environment we operate in more complex and puts greater demands on all our Fire and Emergency personnel, with particular time and effort impacts on volunteers.

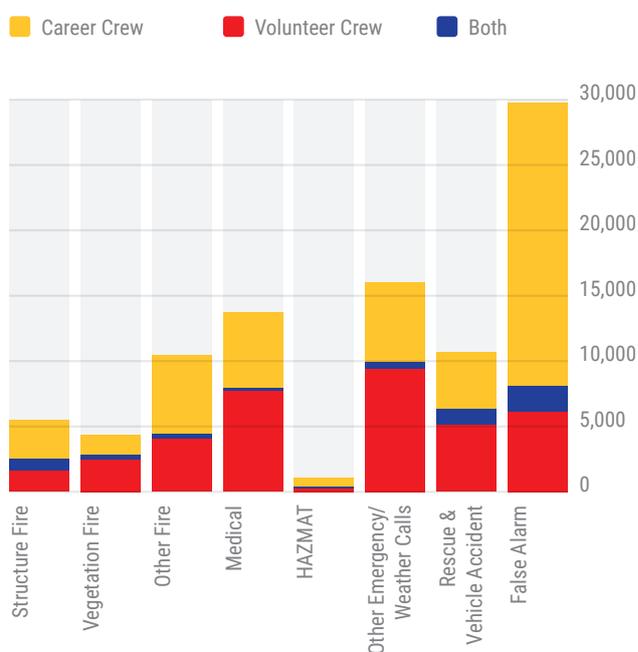
### Changing nature of fire and emergency response

New Zealand is experiencing an increase in emergencies as a result of climate change. Wildfires are bigger and causing more damage. There is an increasing need to respond to a wide range of non-fire emergencies, where we often coordinate with and assist other emergency services. We have seen an increase in significant flooding and landslips, as storms increase in frequency and strength. In recent years, Fire and Emergency has also been central to the response to major earthquakes.

Other non-fire emergencies include responding to motor vehicle accidents, medical co-response, technical rescues, hazardous substance incidents and incidents at sea.<sup>6</sup> International cooperation between fire and emergency services has grown and New Zealand's firefighters provide reciprocal assistance in Australia, North America and the Pacific Islands.

This changing context requires us to develop a broader and more flexible range of skills and capabilities across personnel and assets to ensure we are able to respond effectively. Regulatory requirements have also increased, including our commitment to meeting the new safety, health and wellbeing standards introduced by the Health and Safety at Work Act 2015. These apply to all our workforce, both employees and volunteers.

2017-18 incident types attended



In 2017/18, Fire and Emergency responded to 5,032 structural fire incidents and 23,745 rescue, emergency or medical incidents.

<sup>6</sup> In 2017/18, Fire and Emergency New Zealand responded to 5,032 structural fire incidents and 23,745 rescue, emergency or medical incidents.



## What it means to be a volunteer

Our volunteers give their time and service for their community's safety, first and foremost. The primary motivations for becoming a Fire and Emergency New Zealand volunteer include serving the community, making a difference to lives in the community, meeting new people, making new friends and developing skills.<sup>7</sup>

While the role of a volunteer firefighter is rewarding, it is also challenging. Fire and emergency services across the world place great training demands on their volunteers. Our volunteers require high levels of professionalism and broad skills. The dangers volunteers face, the trust they need to place in each other and the emotionally challenging incidents they attend also add pressure in a rapidly changing environment.

Our volunteers are not only responders to emergencies. Volunteers also work with their communities to create a safer environment and build resilience so that when emergencies do happen, our communities are better prepared and recover faster.

For our volunteers, the changing nature of fire and emergency response has required an even greater time commitment and has increased calls on the goodwill and capacity of volunteers' families and employers. Some incidents, medical call-outs in particular, have meant greater psychological impact for our volunteers. These increased demands are putting our volunteer model under pressure.

Despite this, in many parts of the country the volunteer brigades and fire forces are thriving and are already starting to expand roles within their membership. However, in other parts of New Zealand the pressures on our volunteers are showing – services are facing significant challenges, including insufficient numbers, variable leadership and low morale. Our volunteers are older than the average general population and there is also a relatively high turnover of female volunteers and volunteers under 35.<sup>8</sup> This places a greater burden on experienced volunteers to orient and train new recruits, and requires us to consider the sustainability of our volunteer workforce.

<sup>7</sup> De Haas R (2011) Volunteer Sustainability. New Zealand Fire Service Commission. Available from the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Library.

<sup>8</sup> Fire and Emergency New Zealand PSE system data 2011–18.



## Our volunteer statistics at a glance

**44 YEARS**  
Average age



**Gender mix**  
83% Male, 17% Female

**10 YEARS**  
Average length of service

**44%**  
Of our personnel have served less than 5 years



**OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE OLDER THAN THE AVERAGE GENERAL POPULATION**



There is also a relatively high turnover of female volunteers and volunteers under 35 years of age



## The creation of Fire and Emergency New Zealand

### Fire services reviews

Two reviews of the fire services, carried out between 2012 and 2015, considered the significant changes in the country's fire and emergency environment over the last 40 years and the type of fire and emergency services needed in New Zealand for the future.<sup>9</sup>

The reviews identified some key areas of focus relevant to volunteers and volunteerism in our fire and emergency services:

- changing expectations, including the expanding range of non-fire emergencies to respond to, the high degree of professionalism expected and a greater focus on health and safety
- better support for the workforce, particularly in recruiting, developing, retaining and supporting volunteers
- more consistent leadership, better coordinated support for all volunteers, their employers and their families, and better coordination between fire services
- the need to address volunteer shortages in some parts of the country, particularly in small communities
- continued improvement to address differences in organisational culture that could generate operational issues and grievances
- increased investment, including in volunteerism, to address past under-investment (the levy model also needs to align costs to risks and needs).

In response, the Government decided to reform the way fire and emergency services were funded and delivered by establishing a new single organisation, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, under a new Act. Volunteer support and sustaining volunteerism are core to this reform, and the Government has required our new organisation to actively provide for sustainability of the fire services' volunteer base. This is enshrined in our legislation.

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Fire Review Panel 2012 (the Swain Report) and the Fire Services Review, established in 2014 in response to the Swain Report, and other matters outside the Fire Review Panel's original Terms of Reference.

## Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 (the Act) recognises the importance of communities and our volunteer and career personnel alike. It requires our organisation to strengthen our engagement with communities and provide equitable recognition of career and volunteer personnel by aligning duties and rights such as consultation, equal opportunities and dispute resolution.

The Act combines urban and rural fire and emergency services into a single, unified fire and emergency services organisation for New Zealand, with the mandate to provide a wide range of services for communities.

The Act places strong emphasis on the critical role that communities play in supporting fire and emergency services. This includes providing volunteers and contributing knowledge of the needs and risks each community faces.

The Act supports this role through the establishment of Local Advisory Committees to advise the Board.

Central to the Act is a framework for supporting volunteers, based on modern volunteer principles. In order to provide improved support for volunteers, the Act brought volunteers into a direct relationship with the organisation. This relationship is one of engagement not employment, and one which honours volunteers' primary connection to their local brigade or fire force. It recognises the role that volunteers have in building community safety and resilience and working with communities to reduce risk and prepare for and recover quickly from emergencies.

The Act sets out our organisation's duty to recognise, respect and promote the contribution of volunteers. It further requires Fire and Emergency to:

- consult with volunteers on matters that affect them
- develop policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain and strengthen the capability of volunteers
- provide volunteers with independent advocacy and support services at no charge to the volunteer
- extend its duty to be a 'good employer' to volunteers.

## Funding

The Government directed that a priority for our new organisation is to fund structures and support programmes to deliver better support for volunteers, families and employers. As targeted investment, this recognises the contribution of our volunteers, while not detracting from the support given to the career workforce.

The Government expects this investment will enable:

- greater capacity for support, such as administration, and leadership and management development
- volunteer management that will recognise and value volunteers and help ensure volunteers' views are heard by the organisation
- increased training and safety, health and wellbeing support
- increased recognition of the families and employers of volunteers.



**ENCOURAGE, MAINTAIN AND STRENGTHEN  
THE CAPABILITY OF VOLUNTEERS**

## Responding to the broader volunteering landscape

To be effective, these changes need to be undertaken in ways that also respond to key features of the wider social and demographic landscape for volunteering in New Zealand, which are described below.

Each of these present opportunities and pressures for our traditional volunteering model and for our volunteers. To meet these opportunities, we need new and innovative approaches.

### Changing nature of communities

Migration to cities and larger towns is increasing, particularly by younger people. By 2033, four million people are expected to live in the main urban areas, and 289,000 are expected to live in secondary urban areas.<sup>10</sup> This trend has already adversely affected our volunteer numbers in some small towns and communities.

Urban populations are also becoming more transient, with less connection to place-based communities and stronger connections to online communities, which can impact on motivations to volunteer.

As with other developed nations, the rate of building fires has fallen in recent years due to improved building standards and fire protection measures. However, the increased population density in New Zealand cities and towns increases the need for rapid response to limit the harm from the fires that do occur. Social trends and population density have led to residential growth in some urban fringe areas changing wildfire exposure risks.<sup>11</sup>

Our communities are diverse and the needs and challenges facing one community may be different from the next. Communities understand their particular strengths, risks and needs. It is crucial they have a strong voice in planning and preparing for the risk in their area and informing local decisions.

### An ageing population

The number of people aged 85 or older is expected to triple in the next 30 years.<sup>12</sup> An ageing population will require greater community support and will likely continue the upward trend in medical emergencies. Medical work is already our second highest incident response type after false alarms.

It is estimated that 18–28 per cent of the general New Zealand workforce will be aged 65 or older by 2038.<sup>13</sup> The average age of our volunteers is already older than the general population.<sup>14</sup> We must therefore be able to offer and promote volunteer roles that appeal to and can be performed by a wider age group so that we can sustain our service delivery.

### The changing profile of New Zealand

We are becoming more ethnically diverse and, while our workforce predominantly identifies as New Zealand European, there are growing expectations that organisations reflect the communities they serve.<sup>15</sup> However, we struggle to attract new migrants and only 17 per cent of our volunteers are female. We want to change this by promoting volunteering opportunities that attract people from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences.

To deliver our services, we must have strong relationships with all demographic groups and provide targeted services to those communities and groups at greater risk.

### The role of Māori

Māori are significant land and forest owners and play an increasingly important role in managing these key resources. They are also important community leaders with influence in helping prevent fires and other emergencies. As such they are key partners in our communities. We have a commitment to support the Crown in its Treaty of Waitangi responsibilities by working with tangata whenua to contribute to a safer environment for Māori.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics NZ, Subnational Population Projections: 2013(base)–2043

<sup>11</sup> Australasian Journal of Disaster and Trauma Studies, Volume 22, December 2018

<sup>12</sup> Statistics NZ, Subnational Population Projections: 2013(base)–2043

<sup>13</sup> Statistics NZ.

<sup>14</sup> At the national level, the median age of the general population (half the population is younger, and half older, than this age) is projected to increase from 37 years in 2013 to 43 years in 2043 (Statistics NZ). The average age of our volunteers in 2017 is 45.

<sup>15</sup> In 2038, 20 per cent of New Zealanders are expected to identify as Māori, 21 per cent as Asian, 11 per cent as Pacific and 66 per cent as Pākehā (Statistics NZ). These statistics include people who identify with more than one ethnicity.

## Changing work-life patterns and nature of volunteering

The total number of volunteer hours across New Zealand has decreased as a result of other demands on people's time.<sup>16</sup> Reasons include an increase in double-income households, more families where childcare and domestic duties are shared, and increasing responsibilities such as caring for older relatives. People have many options on how they spend their free time and have a wider choice of ways to volunteer.

Research shows that across New Zealand motivations for volunteering are consistent. They include service to the community, social connection, feeling productive and self-development.<sup>17</sup> However, levels of interest in different forms of volunteering have changed with an increase in casual and short-term volunteering. This includes volunteering models such as episodic volunteering (specific events), corporate and skills-based volunteering, digital (or virtual) volunteering and spontaneous volunteering (helping in an emergency).<sup>18</sup>



<sup>16</sup> The total number of volunteer hours fell by 42 per cent between 2004 and 2013 (Statistics NZ Non-profit Institutions Satellite Account).

<sup>17</sup> Motivation for volunteering (Civil Defence) [www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/volunteering-resources/Motivation-for-volunteering-researched.pdf](http://www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/volunteering-resources/Motivation-for-volunteering-researched.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> The State of the World's Volunteering Report 2016 [www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/state-of-volunteering/](http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/state-of-volunteering/)

## What this means for our future

He aha ngā hua mō ngā rā kei te heke mai

This operating environment highlights the importance of continuing to value volunteers and recognise their unique contributions. We need to strengthen our leadership and connections with our volunteers across all roles in the organisation, provide broader and more flexible ways for people to volunteer and increase tailored support.

To succeed, our strategy will require the commitment and effort of all our people and be reflected in all our systems, processes and behaviours.

To support this, we are committed to the following principles co-designed with our volunteers and employees. These will guide the decisions and actions of Fire and Emergency, which we will be held accountable to.

## PRINCIPLES CO-DESIGNED WITH OUR VOLUNTEERS AND EMPLOYEES



# VOLUNTEERISM PRINCIPLES

## NGĀ MĀTĀPONO O TE TŪAOTANGA

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### 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.



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### To respect and involve volunteers, we will:

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



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### 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.**





OUR VOLUNTEERS GIVE THEIR TIME AND SERVICE  
FOR THEIR **COMMUNITY'S SAFETY**

# Priorities and key shifts

## Ngā whakaarotau rautaki me ōna panonitanga

Our Volunteerism Strategy is grounded in the spirit of the reform and reflects our duties under the Act. It will guide all decisions and actions that affect volunteers and volunteerism.

This strategy sets out an ambitious but practical plan that will involve all our people. It is based on our current knowledge of our operating environment and on budget and is likely to be updated as we learn from experience. However, our communities can rely on us to support volunteers and volunteerism so that we continue to deliver fire and emergency services for all New Zealanders, now and in the future.

This strategy gives effect to our Volunteerism Principles and is comprised of:

- three priorities, and the key shifts we need to make to achieve them
- enablers, some being delivered through other strategies, that will help deliver these shifts.

Some changes will be evolutionary, building on our strengths and of course correcting things when needed. Other changes will progress as we build our new capability, capacity and culture. As we make our changes, we will be mindful to protect the relationship between our volunteer brigades and their communities. We will also continue to work closely with our people, unions and associations, as well as other partners and stakeholders, to design and deliver these changes.

This strategy is a key milestone that advances the organisational strategy and is both supported by and integrated with a network of related strategies, some of which are still to be developed.

These include strategies for:

- people and workforce
- information management
- research
- diversity and inclusion.

The Volunteerism Strategy has also informed the development of our operating model, so that our structure, roles and functions support its delivery.

# Contributing different skills and experiences

## From all walks of life beyond firefighting

It is also about broadening the ways people from all walks of life can volunteer for us, **beyond firefighting**



# BEYOND FIREFIGHTING

# Priority 1: Broader and more flexible ways to volunteer

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.

Some roles could also be performed remotely, including by people with specific technical expertise (for example, in Geographic Information Systems), or by people who want to retain a connection to a community they no longer live in.

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## Why does this matter?

- Our new organisational mandate means we need to broaden our skills, and we can do this partly by being more flexible in the ways people can volunteer for us.
- This will make it easier and more attractive for people to volunteer, and increase the variety of people who are able to offer their time and skills.

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## What does success look like?

- There are enough skilled, motivated and supported volunteers engaged with our organisation.
- Brigades and fire forces are connected with their diverse communities.
- We have a whole-of-organisation volunteerism model that provides roles and progression pathways. These reflect local community needs and respect volunteers' choices and time. This includes broader and more flexible volunteer roles to enable more people to contribute.
- We have a more diverse volunteer workforce.
- All our people feel recognised, understand the value of volunteers and work in a unified workforce.
- We have volunteers from all walks of life, contributing different skills and experiences to a wide variety of roles.
- We have an engaged workforce and an inclusive workforce environment.

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## Key shifts

- Broaden the ways people can contribute when volunteering for Fire and Emergency. Provide attractive opportunities outside of fire and emergency response that use the variety of skills and life experiences that volunteers bring, and are not necessarily located at brigades, fire forces and stations.
- Design roles for volunteers with busy lives, by offering flexibility and choice as to how, and how much, they volunteer. This could include:
  - teams using their existing skills for incidents, such as medical call-outs
  - corporate volunteers who utilise paid leave and skills from their work role, such as communications and IT
  - community volunteers supporting families of firefighters with activities, such as childcare
  - spontaneous volunteers who assist in severe weather events
  - episodic volunteers who assist seasonally, such as in summer tourist areas.
- Grow a shared identity and an inclusive culture that:
  - promotes a supportive environment
  - recognises and values the importance of our diverse workforce
  - takes a proactive approach to foster the strength of employees and volunteers working and training together.

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## Key enablers

- Embed Volunteerism Principles throughout Fire and Emergency, including a code that sets out the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and our organisation.
- Develop new approaches to attract, welcome, train and make use of a diverse range of volunteers.
- Provide varied entry and progression pathways.
- Provide flexible approaches to training and skill recognition.
- Develop modular standards to better match volunteer skills to the risks and needs of communities.

# Thriving together in local communities

Volunteers are fundamental to ensuring we provide a high level of service to all communities



**VALUED**

## Priority 2: Thriving volunteerism

This priority is about building a model for volunteerism across our entire organisation that improves decision making and makes it easier to attract and support volunteers, their families and their employers.

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**Why does this matter?**

- Fire and Emergency volunteers are fundamental to ensuring we provide a high level of service to all communities. Volunteers are motivated to join and remain when they are well led, when their families and employers feel they are making a difference, and are appreciated, recognised and supported.

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**What does success look like?**

- Volunteerism is embedded into our organisation's way of doing things, so that it is easy to be a volunteer and volunteering thrives.
- Our leaders, career firefighters and support personnel understand and appreciate the role of volunteers in our organisation's success, have a strengthened role in supporting volunteers and work closely with them.
- We champion and demonstrate our commitment to volunteering and volunteerism, and its value to our organisation, to our communities and to individual volunteers.
- Volunteers, their families and employers feel appreciated and recognised for their contribution and feel properly supported.
- Our people, wherever they work, are equipped and trained based on the risks and needs of their communities and are proactively supported in their safety, health and wellbeing.
- Volunteer-friendly practices exist across the organisation.
- Volunteers have a close connection with their leaders, are engaged with the organisation and have a voice in decisions that affect them. They contribute and receive ongoing support that respects their individuality and meets the community's fire and emergency needs.
- The organisation undertakes research, monitors, reviews and strives to continually improve how it supports volunteers and community-based volunteerism.
- We have a strong profile and good reputation for our approach to supporting volunteers and volunteerism in the volunteer and emergency sectors.

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**Key shifts**

- Develop a modular service delivery model and engagement approach that:
  - recognises and leverages off volunteers' broad skill sets
  - accommodates volunteer contributions beyond core operations
  - recognises that volunteers may be suited to more than one role within the organisation over time and that volunteering takes different forms.
- Provide support for volunteers, with volunteer-orientated systems, processes and practices tailored to local needs. This will include:
  - a level of support, such as training, based on the region and local profile
  - providing support to employers, families and volunteers to recognise and emphasise the value of their contribution
  - dedicated resource, such as administration to support volunteers, based on their specific needs and particularly in locations where volunteer numbers are under pressure
  - stronger safety, health and wellbeing support
  - capability development to assist all personnel to work more effectively with volunteers
  - a leadership framework and system that recognises the variety of skills and experience of our volunteers.

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**Key enablers**

- Relevant and meaningful recognition and reward for volunteers, their families and employers.
- A performance framework that embeds leadership performance expectations in relation to developing and maintaining connection with volunteers, supported by a comprehensive programme of leadership training for leaders of volunteers.
- An investment programme to improve how we train, equip, support and protect our people.
- Increased support for safety, health and wellbeing.
- An approach to engaging volunteers and considering their perspectives in decision making that impacts on them.
- Our use of technology to reduce administrative workload for volunteers and provide access to intelligence where needed.
- Systems for easy identification of workforce availability and their capabilities.

# All of our people working effectively together

We are proud of our team. We encourage a culture of mutual respect between all of our people



# TOGETHER

## Priority 3: Better together

This priority is about unifying the organisation through a culture of mutual respect among all of our people. This can be achieved by appreciating that our capability can only be sustained by valuing and strengthening the connections between volunteers and other personnel, and between volunteers, their communities and our organisation. It highlights the importance of all of our people working effectively together and all perspectives and voices being heard, so we are collectively responsive to the risks and needs of our communities.

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- Why does this matter?**
- By embracing differences and strengths, we will have greater collaboration between rural and urban specialists, and career and volunteer personnel. This will provide a stronger service for our communities and improve community resilience.
  - By working together more effectively to support, encourage, maintain and strengthen volunteerism we will be better able to meet the challenges we face and adapt to our changing environment.
  - Our volunteers are a vital link to our communities. A strong volunteer base helps us understand community risks, needs and strengths, and identify and provide appropriate local services.
  - By training and supporting volunteers to be leaders, we also contribute to stronger and more resilient communities.
  - As community members, our volunteers share responsibility with the community for emergency risk and hazard management. This will help create safer communities and build community resilience.
  - A more connected organisation will increase opportunities for our volunteers to share insights and experiences. This helps improve our services and also supports a stronger and more adaptable workforce.

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- What does success look like?**
- The distinctions between and within urban and rural have disappeared, utilising the best from each and recognising that one size does not fit all.
  - Communities are aware of their strengths, risks and needs and this informs the services we provide locally. Local communities benefit from the support of a national organisation, particularly in major emergencies, and the skills and experience that volunteers gain through being involved in Fire and Emergency.
  - Volunteers' perspectives are integrated into our planning and decision making.
  - Volunteers, career operational and support personnel are well connected, understand each other's needs and interests and support each other.

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- Key shifts**
- Strengthen our networks and connections with our diverse communities through interactive digital and offline communications that are a regular part of the way we work and recognise the characteristics of each community and our partnership with them.
  - Identify and develop partnerships that meet the needs of our communities, with national policy that ensures consistency and quality in the way we partner, as well as flexible models for local partnering.
  - Strengthen our connections with each other, through effective engagement that shares and harnesses the range of knowledge, experience and capability available across our organisation and the wider emergency sector.

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- Key enablers**
- Develop varied ways of communicating and engaging with volunteers, flexible to their needs.

*A STRONG VOLUNTEER BASE HELPS US UNDERSTAND*  
**COMMUNITY RISKS, NEEDS AND STRENGTHS**

# WE WILL MONITOR OUR SUCCESS AGAINST THE VOLUNTEERISM OUTCOME AREAS

The volunteerism outcome areas were informed by research and evidence, and co-designed with volunteers. They have shaped our priorities and will also inform our organisational performance framework.



## Commitment to Volunteers

The organisation consults with and includes volunteers in its planning and decisions.



## Safety, Health and Wellbeing

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



## Attraction, Selection and Recruitment

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



## Leadership and Management

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



## Support and Development

Volunteers receive ongoing development and support in a manner that respects their individuality and meets community fire and emergency needs.



## Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers, their employers and families feel appreciated, recognised and supported.



## Community Involvement

Effective local relationships exist through volunteer presence in the community.



## Volunteer Roles

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



## Quality Management and Continuous Improvement

The organisation monitors, reviews and strives to continually improve how it supports volunteers and community-based volunteerism.



# Appendix 1

This Volunteerism Strategy is supported by a suite of related strategies, which will help advance the key shifts we need to make to deliver on the strategy.

Strategy	How this supports the Volunteerism Strategy
<p><b>Risk Reduction Strategy, and Compliance and Enforcement Strategy</b></p> <p>Our Risk Reduction Strategy recognises that risk reduction is the single most effective thing we can do in seeking to protect New Zealand’s people, property and the environment. It sets out our intent to increase our focus on identifying, preventing and mitigating risk.</p> <p>Our Compliance and Enforcement Strategy is a major component of our risk reduction activities. This strategy sets out our intention to provide clear guidance, resources and training to our personnel, partners and the public so that we work collaboratively to comply with the significant new compliance and enforcement responsibilities in our legislation.</p>	<p>Our volunteers are not only responders to emergencies. Volunteers also work with their communities to create a safer environment and to build resilience and are therefore key to our risk reduction interventions.</p> <p>The Risk Reduction Strategy and the Compliance and Enforcement Strategy support our Volunteerism Strategy by providing evidence-based risk reduction and compliance approaches, training and tools that engender the trust of communities. This supports our volunteers’ critical role to work with local partners and engage with local communities to identify their strengths, risks and needs, and to design interventions that are tailored to local risk profiles.</p> <p>They also enhance the safety, health and wellbeing of our volunteers by reducing the risks volunteers face in responding to incidents. This makes it more attractive to volunteer.</p>
<p><b>Safety, Health and Wellbeing</b></p> <p>Nothing is more important than our people. Our Safety, Health and Wellbeing Strategy sets our intention to develop a transformational safety, health and wellbeing culture – together we will effectively manage critical risks in our new and more diverse organisation. We will work to ensure that everyone goes home safe and well every time they undertake work for the organisation. This includes psychological wellbeing alongside physical safety and work-related health.</p>	<p>The Safety, Health and Wellbeing (SHW) Strategy has a focus on reducing harm and supporting recovery. This supports the intention of our Volunteerism Strategy to truly value volunteers, and to make it easier to volunteer, by providing more resources and support for volunteer’s safety, health and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Strategy also supports the priority of our Volunteerism Strategy to ensure thriving volunteerism. It will do this by developing SHW leadership so that leaders celebrate good SHW behaviour, expect high standards of themselves and others and know their personnel and how to support them. It also intends to contribute to building a learning culture that listens to and values our people. This will help ensure that volunteers have a close connection with their leaders, are engaged with the organisation and have a voice in decisions that impact on them.</p> <p>The Strategy has a focus on enhancing collaborative relationships. It will support us to work together with unions and associations and engage effectively with those we work alongside in contractor and agency relationships. This supports the Volunteerism Strategy to strengthen the connections between volunteers and other personnel, our communities and our organisation.</p>

Strategy	How this supports the Volunteerism Strategy
<p><b>Diversity and Inclusion</b></p> <p>Our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy intends to shape a culture that enables everyone to feel they can bring their whole self to work. This will help to create a unified organisation and a shared identity. It will also help to build a workforce with the broad skills needed in our new organisation and enable us to work more effectively with New Zealand's diverse communities.</p>	<p>Core to the success of our Volunteerism Strategy is to broaden the range of people who volunteer and to build a culture where volunteers and volunteerism are valued and volunteers are provided with similar recognition to career personnel.</p> <p>The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy supports this by strengthening our ability to attract and retain a more diverse volunteer workforce reflective of the diverse communities we serve and to create visible career pathways that support the development of our volunteers.</p> <p>The Volunteerism Strategy also identifies the critical role of leaders in fostering a volunteerism culture and capability. This will be supported by the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy's focus on growing behaviours that equip leaders to strengthen their connection with volunteers, help ensure volunteers' views are heard and shape a respectful and inclusive culture.</p>
<p><b>Māori Outcomes Programme</b></p> <p>This programme reflects our published commitment to work with Māori as tangata whenua. It sets out how we will build strong and productive relationships with iwi and Māori that contribute to a safer environment for Māori and for all New Zealand communities.</p>	<p>Our volunteers are part of the fabric of their community and are therefore a vital link to understanding community strengths, risks and needs and to help build community resilience.</p> <p>The Māori Outcomes Programme will support our volunteers to engage with iwi and Māori in their local communities by building cultural competence to engage with tangata whenua. This will enable volunteers to partner with iwi as community leaders and as significant and growing land and forest owners, and reduce the disproportionate risk of harm from fire for Māori through culturally tailored engagement and risk reduction programmes. It will also make it more attractive for Māori to volunteer with us.</p>



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