Minutes

Nelson-Tasman Local Advisory Committee Meeting

Date: Monday 13 October 2025 **Time:** 9:45am – 2.50pm

Venue: Nelson Fire Station

Present:

Richard Kempthorne	LAC Chair
Shane Graham	LAC Deputy Chair
Jennifer Beatson	LAC Member
Tony Lewis	LAC Member
Te Naihi Wilson	LAC Member
Ali Boswijk	LAC Member

In Attendance:

Amit Prasad (online 10-11:30)	Fire and Emergency Board member
Grant Haywood	District Manager, Nelson/Marlborough
Steve Trigg	Community Risk Manager
Michelle Bartlett (online)	Senior Advisor, Local Advisory Committees

Apologies:

Brad Mosby	Region Manager Te Ihu
Fiona Wilson	LAC Member

Welcome

The meeting opened with a karakia by the Deputy Chair, followed by a welcome from the new Chair.

Committee operations

Apologies were received from the Region Manager and an LAC member. The Interest Register was reviewed, and updates will be made by the Senior Advisor. The previous minutes were confirmed, and the action log was reviewed:

- Timing for the combined LAC meeting with Marlborough LAC is still to be confirmed. The Chair has been in contact with Marlborough's Chair and they have agreed, but it has been a challenge to find a time that suits both committees. Considering a combined LAC meeting potentially in Rai Valley in March 2026.
- District Manager (DM) actions still in progress
- Senior Advisor to provide a contact to the Nelson/Tasman LAC for United Fire Brigades Association

Update from the Chair

The Chair's update was provided by the former Chair who attended LAC Chairs' Hui in Wellington on July 17th. The Chairs' Hui was a great opportunity to connect with other LAC Chairs from around the country and to listen to other LACs' processes. The more established LACs appear to have a clear rhythm, and consistency with reporting. Themes that emerged from the combined reports include volunteerism recognition, training and culture, community risks and opportunities including access to data, relationships with Māori and learning from disasters and with culture change including organisational restructure and inclusion by design.

The LAC decided it is timely to review their stakeholder engagement approach as their engagement could be more targeted.

Firefighting Water Supply Code of Practice Consultation: National consultation is underway on the firefighting water supply code of practice, which is aiming for uniform adoption across all New Zealand councils. Current requirements vary by district and shared water supplies and domestic sprinkler systems are identified as cost-effective solutions. An LAC member will be a Nelson/Tasman LACs representative for the consultation process.

Discussion around role of LAC with Board member

LACs provide community connections and engage with their communities to inform advice back to Fire and Emergency. This is set out in the Fire and Emergency Act 2017. The Fire and Emergency Board and organisation are working to strengthen the feedback loop by Board members attending LAC meetings, through events such as the LAC Chairs' Forum on 5 November and through LAC Chairs attending board meetings and LAC reporting. LAC members shared being overwhelmed by the amount of information received through induction, and onboarding, but have since refined this understanding of their roles by leveraging their networking and connections to reach their communities, and to recognise any gaps and how we can work to address these. It was understood that the LAC members are there to represent their communities' views, so they are there to listen, reflect, analyse and then report back insights to Fire and Emergency.

Some discussion around challenges with Fire and Emergency's SharePoint useability and accessibility. The Senior Advisor advised that Fire and Emergency has just completed a procurement process for a dedicated Board Management tool that will be used by both the Fire and Emergency Board and the LACs. This new tool will be in place for use by LACs by the next round of meetings in February 2026.

Kaupapa Māori Deputy Chief Executive (DCE) role

LAC members discussed this recent development that has come out of the first phase of Strategic Implementation Plan. The Kaupapa Māori DCE role has now been disestablished and new role of a Kaupapa Māori Strategic Advisor to the Chief Executive to provide advice across the business. Concerns were raised about the impact on Māori partnerships and engagement, with the eight iwi at the top of Te Waipounamu that Fire and Emergency had been working on an agreement with. The Māori Advisory Roopu have written to the Chief Executive with some concerns around these changes seeking clarification from the Board Chair and the Chief Executive about these changes. The Board member shared that while this is an operational matter, the thinking behind this change is that Fire and Emergency's Māori strategy is becoming business as usual.

Review of Engagement Plan

The Nelson-Tasman LAC Stakeholder Engagement plan was reviewed and refined for engagement for 2025-26. Portfolio allocations were reviewed and confirmed.

District Manager Update

Strategic Implementation Programme and Organisational Restructure: Phase one of the restructure has been completed with new a branch structure and leadership changes. Fire and Emergency is facing a $30-40 million funding deficit due to reduced insurance levy income. Phases two-five of the restructure will now be combined and anticipated to be out for consultation in November with final decisions expected in December 2025. The restructure is causing planning disruption and uncertainty across the organisation.

Future Operating Capability: Modelling work to be completed by December with a workshop scheduled for early December 2025. LAC input is likely to be required for modelling work; consultation timing is still to be confirmed.

Industrial Action: The NZ Professional Firefighters Union issued a strike notice with one-hour walkouts and visible action including marking fire trucks and not wearing uniform. Volunteer brigades will be providing operational coverage. The Union focus is on underinvestment in fleet, equipment and staffing levels and pay increases. Career firefighter numbers are unchanged since the mid-1990s in some areas. The union are seeking increased paid firefighters particularly for Nelson and Richmond.

Community Risk Management (CRM) update:

Residential Fire Safety: Current focus is on smoke alarm compliance, two means of escape, and expired alarm replacement. Further public education is needed on checking alarm expiry dates.

Wildfire Season: La Niña forecast for the upcoming summer, similar conditions to last summer – moist rainy conditions in the northeastern areas of the North Island and drier conditions in the lower and western South Island. Currently in open fire season (second year) with no issues to date. New signage is being rolled out changing from fire danger levels to (open/restricted/prohibited) including links to "Check it's alright" website with online tool. A collaboration between Fire and Emergency and the forestry sector will support further billboard signage installation.

Commercial Regulation*:* Becoming an effective regulator has been identified as priority for Fire and Emergency in the Strategic Implementation Plan. Over 80% of buildings are currently non-compliant with evacuation plans. All buildings with more than 6 sleeping (non-family), 100+ day occupancy, or 10+ staff facilities need to have evacuation plans in place and regularly reviewed. Limited public awareness: brochures are being developed to increase awareness. Education and enforcement approach will be required with radio and print campaigns planned.

Forestry Sector Partnerships: Recent weather events caused significant forestry costs affecting fire prevention investment capacity. Forestry companies only insure harvestable crops, creating funding tension around fire response expectations. Two major companies (Tasman Pine and One Forty-One) are working with Fire and Emergency New Zealand to train their contractor crews, with potential for contractors to support large fire events (invoiced arrangement). DOC reinvesting in fire preparedness and resourcing.

Volunteer Programme: Recruitment, retention, and recognition remain ongoing challenges. Youth engagement encouraged but creates considerations around exposure to incidents. Positive organisational culture indicators with no current Fairway investigations; volunteer numbers healthy in region.

Iwi Partnerships: Working on formal agreements with iwi in Te Ihu region.

Community Resilience: "Check it's alright" website now includes community resilience plans. Committee encouraged to promote resources.

Discussion and advice on district issues

Is it good value for Fire and Emergency to work with forestry like this. Currently Fire and Emergency provide free wildfire training to forestry staff and contractors. During a large wildfire event Fire and Emergency can call on those trained staff and their employer then bills Fire and Emergency for their time.

Youth volunteers– The current age to become a volunteer is 16 years. Fire and Emergency try to resist recruiting in that younger age group as there is concern about exposing young people to traumatic events.

The District team felt they are starting to see more positive signs in our brigades around culture, would be good for LAC members to feedback from a community perspective.

Overgrown berms in rural areas. Responsibility to mow sits with Waka Kotahi and council however they have been reducing these services to reduce costs. It can be challenging for Fire and Emergency to access contact details of landowners.

The District team is keen to hear from the committee what they would like included in future District updates.

- False alarms, Volunteerism, Forestry and Wildfire are focus areas for the LAC
- Volunteerism –turnover rates
- Cost to the organisation, what is the cost to the organisation? the businesses they work for? and to the volunteer themselves? How do volunteers feel they are valued?
- Culture change – career and volunteer personnel - how do they work together?
- What are the things Fire and Emergency are doing that is improving the culture?

General Business

SharePoint Access: National LAC team is working to provide all members with SharePoint access in preparation for new Board Management application. New login guidance has been distributed. Members experiencing access issues should contact IT Support on 0800 374 843.

Community Perceptions Report (Verian): The report included in LAC meeting packs highlight four engagement types, challenges, and six principles for effective engagement.

Previous Insights Report Follow-up:

- 2024/25 Insight - Operational Review Learnings: Link to operational reviews provided in meeting pack (not previously visible to LACs)
- 2023/24 Insight - Carbon Forestry Fire Risk: Link to information and research on carbon forestry fire risk provided in meeting pack

Next Meeting Trimester two: Thursday 12 March 2026 – Rai Valley Station or Forestry site Board room Mt Richmond Estate motels and long-term accommodation

Agenda items for Trimester two

- Briefing on Draft 26-27 District Plan for consultation with LAC

Closing

The meeting closed at 2.50pm with a karakia.

Action Log

Date	Action	Responsible	Due	Status
12 October 2025	Include all Engagement reports in next meeting pack including Tonys	Senior Advisor	Next meeting	In progress
12 October 2025	Connect LAC with UFBA	Senior Advisor	13 November 2025	In progress
12 October 2025	Clearer guidance needed on engagement timing, escalation and reporting protocols including use of Whāriki and other tools	Senior Advisor	Before next meeting	In progress
12 October 2025	Explore possibility of combined LAC meeting with Marlborough – chair attempts unsuccessful	DM and Senior Advisor	February 2026	In progress
6 May	Arrange to meet with Marlborough colleagues – investigate a joint meeting	Chair	Post meeting	In progress
6 May	Provide contact details for stations to LAC members	DM	Post meeting	In progress
6 May	District Manger will invite LAC to meetings with Nelson Port around hazards substances	DM	Post meeting	In progress
13 Feb 2025	Briefing on budgets and forecasting for Nelson/Marlborough district 1-hour online meeting?	Region BOM/ DM/ LAC	T1	In progress
13 Feb 2025	Forward information on district volunteer profile (gender, age, demographic etc) and names of businesses that support FENZ by allowing volunteers to be released.	DM	In advance of T3 meeting	Completed
13 Feb 2025	Gather information on existing volunteer surveys	Senior Advisor	In advance of T3 meeting	Completed

	from National Volunteering Team and Eke Taumata team.			
13 Feb 2025	Resend FENZ Board letter of expectations to committee	Senior Advisor	Post meeting	Completed
13 Feb 2025	Email web link for Whāriki directly to members	Senior Advisor	Post meeting	Completed
13 Feb 2025	Complete draft of Nelson-Tasman Engagement Plan, including planned engagements for review	Senior Advisor	11 February	Completed