



IGNITE

TE HIRINGA O TE TANGATA

ISSUE 25 / SPRING 2022 / TAKURUA 2022

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Acknowledging tangata
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Senior Firefighter

PEAK 14

Meet our new
Service Delivery leaders



Ignite is the official magazine for Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

**Te Hiringa o te Tangata –
To have drive, zest, determination.
To have heart and soul.**

Ignite represents the voices of the people across the country who dedicate themselves to protecting life, the environment and property in their communities.

It is produced by the Fire and Emergency Communications Team, National Headquarters, Update to Spark Central, 42–52 Willis Street, Wellington 6011.

Contributions to Ignite

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Photos need to be at least 1MB.

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KIA ORA KOUTOU

Aotearoa New Zealand reached a significant milestone in its COVID-19 response with the end of the COVID-19 Protection Framework (CPF) in September and an end to our own CPFs.

It has been a challenging two and a half years for our organisation, and throughout we showed our resilience, and our dedication to serve Aotearoa shone through. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the mahi from across Fire and Emergency to keep our people and communities safe, whether in a formal role in the Districts and Regions, supporting the SDCC, CCMG or CMT as well as those who have contributed as part of day-to-day work.

In this edition of Ignite, you'll see my five focus areas as Chief Executive highlighted through stories of your mahi.

Stronger alignment is a focus seen in the introduction to our new Service Delivery branches and their respective DCEs, Russell Wood and Steph Rotarangi, on pages 14 and 15. These two leaders in our organisation have a key role to play in establishing our future way of working and leading our Service Delivery branches through a period of change, which will help ensure we are best placed to serve our communities for many years to come.

On pages 4, 10, 11 and 13 you'll read about efforts to improve the health, safety, wellbeing and people support. This includes advice and tools to keep our firefighters safe on the frontline, alongside a book, *The Wolf Was Not Sleeping*, aimed at assisting children of firefighters to cope with feelings of anxiety when their parent goes to work.

Pages 4, 8 and 19 highlight some of our training and development efforts, including recent celebrations of Te Wiki o te Reo Māori, Māori Language Week, as detailed on page 9. You'll hear more about our new Kaupapa Māori and Cultural Communities Branch from its new DCE, Piki Thomas, in the summer edition of Ignite.

Finally, our intelligence driven decision making was on show through our participation in the AFAC conference, as outlined on page 17. This conference is important to us as an organisation as the lessons we learn from other emergency organisations can be incredibly useful when applied to our own ways of working.

Ngā manaakitanga,

**Kerry Gregory,
Tumu Whakarae Chief Executive**



NEW VOLVO ALL-WHEEL DRIVE TICKS ALL THE BOXES

A new prototype truck has been described by Fire and Emergency Trainer Ross Whetton as 'one of the best I have seen'.

The prototype Volvo Euro 6 all-wheel drive Type 1 appliance is being trialled at National Park. Ross is training the local volunteer brigade on driving the new appliance and operating the new pump control system. He says it is a 'very nice truck to drive'.

'I have been around this organisation a long time, and this has to be one of the best I have seen. The truck can go into low ratio four-wheel drive so it can better climb and descend steep gradients on low traction terrain. These features will be useful in places like ski-field access roads and sandy environments. It is also built with more ground clearance to provide a higher wading depth through water.

'The pump is an automatic governor pump system which is easy to operate'.

Chief Fire Officer at National Park Marilla Swift says her brigade is 'really grateful to have the appliance' for the next three months before it heads north to Ahipara.

'So far, due to warmer weather, we haven't been able to take it on snow but on the tar seal and gravel, it feels great. Driving up the mountain

road, it has the power to maintain an appropriate response speed.

'Coming down the road, the truck can maintain very slow speed with almost no foot braking, which is really reassuring in slippery conditions. It's nice to know that we can adjust rear, central and front diff-locks from inside the cab if needed and rear and central while moving. This means we can respond with the press of a button if we start to feel any slippage.

'Another great feature for the mountain road is the uphill assist, which stops the truck rolling back while you move from brake to accelerator on a steep hill, allowing for a nice slow and controlled hill start'.

Marilla says the Bruce Road access to Iwikau Village at the northern bottom side of Mt Ruapehu is at its most treacherous overnight and restricted to vehicles with chains or 4WD for approximately one out of four days between June and October.

'Having a modern all-wheel drive vehicle will make responding to this area much easier and safer whatever time of day or night'.

Response Capability National Advisor Keith Pedley has been involved with sourcing the new appliance and says it passed all the acceptance testing with no major issues.

'As it is a prototype appliance, the brigades that trial it will give feedback on its operational capability. We are trialling this with a view to providing an appliance to best match the specific risks and environment found in some parts of the country'.

Fleet Vehicle Development Engineer Bruce Crosbie says Fleet is 'particularly proud' of the Volvo appliance.

'The Volvo is a very nice chassis to build on, with many features that are desirable for a fire appliance. These include the drivability – it is very sure-footed both on the open road and on tight winding terrain, along with great handling on gravel roads.

'The cab is very roomy particularly in the rear, and the doors are robust with solid hinges that open up to 90 degrees to the cab. It is a very well-balanced fire appliance'.



PERSONAL PROTECTION AGAINST CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide exposure can pose an immediate danger or add up over years to create long-term health issues.

With the increasing understanding of carbon monoxide toxicity and firefighter safety, we have trialled and ordered personal CO monitors called Tangos. These are small, portable, and long-life for personal protection against CO at wildfire incidents. They will monitor CO levels at two-second intervals and continuously log data every ten seconds.

These robust units will be part of normal kit when attending wildfires. A similar device will also become available for the built environment, which will monitor CO as well as additional gases that aren't encountered in a wildfire.

Once the CO monitors arrive, the kits will be distributed to each District. They include a rugged, flight-ready case containing 25 x Tango monitors plus an allocation board, which can be deployed by your District Incident Management Teams.

To learn more, visit the online Learning Station and enter 'Tango' into the search. The learning modules provide an overview of the Tango TX1 personal monitor and the importance of monitoring CO at wildfire events. There is also a video on how the device works.

In the meantime, remember to work upwind and stay out of the smoke whenever possible.

There is more on the gas monitors and the Gas Detection Project on the Portal.



WORKING WITH OUR YOUNG FARMERS ON FIRE SAFETY

Fire and Emergency has always been a big part of rural communities. This relationship became even closer when New Zealand Young Farmers asked Fire and Emergency to provide competitive fire safety modules for the hotly contested 2022 FMG Junior Young Farmers and Agrikids Regional Finals.

Tom Ronaldson, Senior Engagement and Education Specialist in our National Community Readiness and Recovery Directorate, said Fire and Emergency was delighted to accept as it was 'a fantastic opportunity to engage with future leaders in the agriculture sector, to increase their knowledge of fire safety and how to look after people, property, and the environment'.

Nine Fire and Emergency District teams attended seven events across the country.

Following our successful participation in the Regional Finals, Fire and Emergency was then asked to contribute fire safety modules to the FMG Young Farmer of the Year Grand Final, which was held in Whāngarei in early July.

Tom said modules were developed for Agrikids, Junior Young Farmer of the Year, and Young Farmer of the Year.

'These tested contestants' abilities on building a portable dam out of everyday items (Young Farmer of the Year), assembling a water vessel to transport water from one barrel to another (Junior Young Farmer of the Year), and a kids combat challenge that included running a hose out 20 metres, carrying a hose up two flights of stairs, and dragging a weighted sled ten metres (Agrikids).

'Building a portable dam is a common activity run by Fire and Emergency regional trainers and volunteer brigades to test people's ability to think on their feet.



'This too was a resounding success. At the awards evening following the Grand Final, the majority of the Agrikids contestants said ours was their favourite event.'

Tom would also like to say a massive thank you to the teams who attended the event.

'Without the help of our amazing District teams we would not have been able to deliver this event and have such a positive response from the competitors. To the Northland team and everyone who came up, thank you.'

BOOSTING INTER AGENCY COLLABORATION IN EMERGENCIES

Fire and Emergency joined a range of organisations and agencies in a National Emergency Management Agencies (NEMA) Capability Display at Sky Stadium in June.

The event was designed to increase the understanding of cross agency operational capabilities in Wellington, effectively operating as either a pop-up coordination centre or staging area in response to a significant emergency.

Brett Locker, Group Manager for Wellington Central, said it was a great opportunity to get a first-hand look at the collective skills and processes available when large emergencies strike.

'It's essential for us to work together and share insights so we respond effectively to meet everyone's needs – doing it once and doing it right, with no doubling up,' Brett said.

One of the key presentations was the Rapid Damage Assessment Workshop, delivered by Fire and Emergency alongside Wellington City Council. Our team outlined the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) assessment processes, procedures and capabilities, showing how they could also be utilised by other agencies to create better situational awareness in an emergency.

'It's vital we keep on exploring ways to work more closely together to support communities in times of emergency. It's an important part of the ongoing work and preparation we're doing with the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office, which includes the recent addition of a satellite USAR cache into the Wellington District,' Brett said.



FROM THE FLAMES TO THE GAMES

In July, career firefighter Ella Fotu swapped her protective gear for a basketball jersey as she headed to Birmingham to represent New Zealand at the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Fotu competed in New Zealand's very first Commonwealth Games 3X3 basketball team, and she describes how she felt heading into the games.

'To experience something like the Commonwealth Games was such a privilege and a dream, but also the team and I wanted to bring our best performance so there were nerves there,' says Ella.

Although Fotu wasn't keen on the 25-hour flight to the United Kingdom, she was able to squeeze in some pre-tournament sightseeing, and eventually met her fellow Kiwi athletes. For Fotu, being a part of 'Team New Zealand' was a nothing short of a dream come true.

'The feeling was insane; I was so excited. It's something I have strived for and so to have put the work in and to have accomplished it ... I am grateful and a little proud!'

Proud is an understatement. Her team finished fourth, narrowly missing out on a medal with a 15-12 loss against Australia in the bronze medal match.

For Fotu, teamwork is crucial. Since 2020, Ella has been juggling both being a member of her brigade at Birkenhead Station, and her professional Tauhihi Basketball Aotearoa team, Mainland Pouākai – and it can be gruelling at times.

'I definitely have to keep on top of it, it takes organising ahead of time. There's a lot of straight from work to basketball and vice versa but really I'm just grateful to be able to do both,' says Ella.

Her organisation skills were put to the test when Fotu came back from Birmingham. She had just a couple of weeks to prepare for her next basketball pursuit, finishing the national basketball league (five-on-five) season for the Pouākai.

'It's the first year of the league and there's a lot of talent,' says Ella. The Pouākai team managed to make the semi-finals before falling to eventual champions, the Tokomanawa Queens.

'We did well,' Fotu said.

The 26-year-old says managing both lives couldn't be done without the support of her brigade.

'My crew help me out, I'm just so thankful for all the support – from everyone'.

Ella decided this is the path she wanted to take after watching her older brother, professional basketball player Isaac Fotu, apply to play for an American college basketball team in 2011.

'After seeing him apply, I decided that's what I also wanted to do, and focused on that'.

Fotu's focus and determination on her journey have been unwavering, and she has advice for firefighters wanting to pursue a similar path.

'I've had a lot of support from Fire and Emergency to be able to continue my basketball in the time I've been here. Every situation is different, but as sports careers are pretty time limited – I say go for it!'



ACKNOWLEDGING TANGATA WHENUA DURING A FIRE

This April saw the return of devastating fire to the Awarua–Waituna Wetland, located east of Bluff. This is the third time a large-scale bush fire has ravaged the area since 1986, with the last one destroying 1,400 hectares in 2005.

Similarities between all three fires are clear with the presence of bog and peat restricting ground access, and densely populated manuka fuelling the spread. However, one important difference during April's operations was the key involvement of local iwi.

The Awarua–Waituna Wetlands are interconnected with the local rūnaka (iwi authority) as there are many urupā (burial grounds) and wāhi tapu (sacred sites) where their tipuna (ancestors) are buried. Kaiwhakahaere (Chairperson) for Te Rūnaka o Awarua, Dean Whaanga said the difference in their involvement between the 2005 fire and the April fire was huge.

'We were engaged right from the beginning. I received a call shortly after the fire started and was asked if there were any sites of cultural significance that Fire and Emergency should be aware of'.

Representatives from Te Rūnaka o Awarua were then invited to the fireground to observe the team debrief as well as being able to go up in a helicopter to see the scope of the operations across the 1,350-hectare fireground.

'Being able to meet the firefighters on the ground made us feel like we were a part of it. The area is so special to us and we wanted to acknowledge the firefighters who were putting their lives at risk to save our whenua kanohi ki te kanohi, face to face'.

Dean said they received daily updates on the progress of the fire, and he was given the opportunity to speak to the media about the cultural significance of the land. Reflecting on the communication his rūnaka has received during previous fires, Dean said, 'We were being acknowledged as tangata whenua. Nothing like this has happened before.'



STEPPING UP TO SENIOR FIREFIGHTER

The latest Senior Firefighters Qualification Course was held in July at the Nelson Fire Station, with 12 firefighters from around the country taking the next important step towards a key leadership position.

Matt Rutherford, Senior Officer at Auckland City and lead trainer on the course, said it's an important opportunity for firefighters to get a feel for the tools and skills required for the position.

'Senior Firefighter is a very proud position to achieve and holds a great deal of mana as they become a key support for Senior Officers and the link between SOs and firefighters.

'It's the first time firefighters are introduced to components of leadership, learning how to develop a leader's mindset and skills over the time they're with us,' he said.

The 10-day course includes time in the classroom, on station and out in the field, as well as a weekend off exploring the stunning Nelson region.

Wade McKinnon, Qualified Firefighter from Auckland City, was part of the July course.

'We had a great bunch of people, and everyone bought in to what we needed to achieve. Right from the start, the instructors made it clear it was our course. It wasn't about

telling us what to do and when, but about sharing the information so we could make it happen.

'They gave us great tools for bringing different personalities together and ways to genuinely build trust and buy-in. The whole course is about equipping you to take on responsibility, understanding what you can do at that rank and the critical support and leadership you can offer,' he said.

The Senior Firefighters Qualification course isn't compulsory, but all Qualified Firefighters are encouraged to apply and take the next move towards a highly respected leadership position.

For more information, please contact National Fire Fighter Development Mike Williams mike.williams@fireandemergency.nz



CELEBRATING TE WIKI O TE REO MĀORI

'Mā te rongō, ka mōhio, Mā te mōhio, ka mārama, Mā te mārama, ka mātau, Mā te mātau, ka ora.'

'From listening comes knowledge,
from knowledge comes understanding,
From understanding comes wisdom,
from wisdom comes wellbeing.'

In order to become the culturally capable organisation that Aotearoa New Zealand expects us to be, we need to improve our knowledge and use of te reo Māori. Te Wiki o te Reo Māori, Māori Language Week, is an initiative by Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (Māori Language Commission) and is an opportunity each year for us all to take time and prioritise learning more about te reo Māori.

No matter what your role is at Fire and Emergency, your mahi has an impact on the communities we serve. Whether you're working on your pronunciation or your understanding of te reo Māori words and sentences, this knowledge will improve the way you serve and connect with Māori.

This year, Te Wiki o te Reo Māori ran from 12 to 16 September, and our Kaupapa Māori and Cultural Communities Branch supported us with access to online learning modules and downloadable resources. The 'Kawhe me te Kōrero', 'Coffee and Conversation' online classes returned this year after the success of last year's pilot and more than 200 people signed up.

While Te Wiki o te Reo Māori only runs for a week, we are all encouraged to continue our education regardless of where we're starting from. By searching 'Te Wiki o te Reo Māori' on the Portal, you can still access the learning modules and resources as well as find information on the Dr Sir John Te Ahikaia Turei Grant, which provides financial support for our people to start or further their studies of te reo Māori.

Kia kaha te reo Māori – Let's make the Māori language strong!

RECOGNITION FOR TRANS-TASMAN EFFORT

During the summer of 2019/20, enormous bushfires engulfed Australia's east coast, burning through approximately 143,000 square kilometres, destroying more than 3,000 buildings, and claiming the lives of at least 34 people.

Over that summer, a 208-strong Fire and Emergency contingent, which included 58 firefighters from the Department of Conservation and a number of forestry companies, travelled to Australia to help with the response. They worked many long, hot hours in extremely challenging conditions and the Australian Government has now recognised their outstanding mahi with the Australian National Emergency Medal, with Bushfires 19/20 Clasp.

'To all those who were involved, thank you. We're very proud of your "mahi to help our trans-Tasman neighbours during that devastating bushfire season,'

Fire and Emergency Chief Executive Kerry Gregory commented.

Members of New Zealand Defence Force and several New Zealand companies that deployed separately have also been awarded this medal.

The National Emergency Medal is awarded by the Australian Government for sustained or significant service during national emergencies in Australia. It has a clasp for each event to indicate the specific national emergency. The medal has been awarded for five emergencies, the first being the 2009 Victorian Bushfires. This is the first time people from Fire and Emergency have been awarded the medal.





SPECIAL JUDGES' COMMENDATION FOR THE WOLF WAS NOT SLEEPING

A children's book written for New Zealand emergency responders' children and whānau has been honoured with a special judges' commendation at this year's Safeguard Awards.

The awards are run by Safeguard magazine and celebrate excellence in New Zealand workplace health, safety and wellbeing space.

The Wolf Was Not Sleeping by Avril McDonald was published in 2020 for the children of Kiwi firefighters. It was later customised for other emergency responders in New Zealand and has now been published internationally.

The story was written to address anxieties that children might have about a family member's role as an emergency responder, and to strengthen their pride in having

whānau involved in an emergency response role.

Te Kei Welfare Officer Kris Kennett came up with the concept for the book after attending the funeral of a friend and workmate who had taken his own life. 'I asked myself the simple question: could we do more to support our families? And I felt that the answer was: Yes'.

The children's book provides a way for whānau to initiate conversations with children about how an emergency responder's role affects them and other family members.

Thanks to the support of the NZ Firefighters Welfare Society and Fire and Emergency, 9,000 free copies were distributed to our people across the country. Copies are still available at many stations, while it is also available to buy online via Amazon and other book outlets.

Since the book was published, staff surveyed from Fire and Emergency, Police and St John have all commented on the value of *The Wolf Was Not Sleeping* for their families.

The book is now also published for emergency responders' families in Canada, the UK and the US.

AIR NEW ZEALAND PROUDLY EMPLOYS FIRE AND EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS

Every day, businesses and organisations across New Zealand help to keep us all safe by supporting their employees to drop everything and respond in the event of an emergency.

Air New Zealand employs several Fire and Emergency volunteers across the country. Halue Tulafono works as an aircraft terminal coordinator at Queenstown Airport. He's also been a volunteer firefighter at the Frankton Volunteer Fire Brigade for eight years.

Tom Fitzgerald is a regional pilot and joined the Spencerville Volunteer Fire Brigade as a volunteer firefighter two years ago. Both Halue and Tom became volunteers after their Air New Zealand workmates encouraged them to join.

'I would hear the sirens when I was at work and then my workmates who volunteered for the brigade encouraged me to join. There's now three of us that work for Air New Zealand and volunteer at Frankton. Being from Tuvalu, I also want to encourage other young Pacific Islanders to volunteer' says Halue.

Employers play a large role in supporting their volunteers, not only to be able to attend incidents, but also attend training and learn the skills required to respond.

'My manager has been supportive of me volunteering from day one. They worked my shifts and flights around so that I could attend Tuesday night training at the brigade, and they gave me time off at very short notice to attend my recruit course for a week,' says Tom.

Both Halue and Tom say that being a volunteer has provided them with helpful skills that they can use in the workplace.

'We learn medical co-response in the brigade. At work one day, a guy tripped walking up the stairs and because of my training I was able to help. I ended up waiting with him until the ambulance arrived,' says Halue.

'There are also aspects to flying that have also translated nicely to volunteering, and I have learned many skills from volunteering that have been helpful at work,' says Tom.

It's important to Fire and Emergency to publicly acknowledge those who support the organisation's mahi.



Business and organisations that employ Fire and Emergency volunteers display the Proud Employer Mark on shop and vehicle windows, business cards, email signatures, websites, social media pages and stationery. It represents the collaboration between employers, volunteers, and Fire and Emergency.

More information about the programme can be found at fireandemergency.nz/employers-of-volunteers

MASKS PROVIDE VITAL PROTECTION FOR FIREFIGHTERS

The importance of wearing a P2 or N95 mask if BA isn't appropriate has been highlighted by Dr Kevin Crume from the Carcinogen Control Project.

Dr Crume, a firefighter from PN and a former cancer researcher, has been monitoring the science on firefighter cancer for over 10 years.

Firefighting has been recognised by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) as a Group 1 carcinogenic occupation. This means IARC has the position that firefighters

are exposed to numerous cancer-causing hazards, including particulates in smoke such as asbestos, when doing their normal work, and if these hazards are not controlled, firefighters have an increased risk of developing cancer.

Dr Crume says to protect their lungs and significantly reduce carcinogens from getting into their bodies, firefighters should wear a P2 or N95 mask when BA isn't appropriate.

'Every truck should have a stock of these masks. I'd recommend officers

keep a P2 cup mask in their pocket so they can reduce inhalation risks when they do a 360, or for pump operators or Entry Control Officers to wear a mask in case the wind shifts. Even handling contaminated PPE can cause particulates to waft into the air you breathe, so it's important to think about wearing a mask in a wide range of settings.'

A P2 mask is rated to block at least 94 percent of particulates, and a N95 mask will block at least 95 percent of particulates.

REDUCING THE RISK OF RENTAL FIRES IN WAIKATO

With 40 percent of fires in the Waikato happening in rental accommodation, the Waikato Community Readiness and Recovery Team has developed an innovative way to connect with hard-to-reach, at-risk tenants.

Kevin Holmes, Waikato Senior Advisor – Community Readiness and Recovery said most rental tenants, especially those in high-risk groups, were unlikely to reach out to Fire and Emergency for help.

‘We knew we had to take the initiative and seek them out, so we partnered with local rental and social housing agencies who are in regular contact with tenants.

‘The agencies visit the properties on a regular basis, doing inspections and offering support, so they’re on the ground and able to assess dangers and offer immediate fire safety advice’, said Kevin.

The Community Readiness and Recovery team will initially train eight partnership agencies to identify fire risk hazards and evidence of unsafe

behaviour. Any extreme risk properties will be referred to Fire and Emergency, with the approval of the tenant, for a full home fire safety visit.

‘The response from partner agencies has been totally positive. We already have two agreements signed and the rest are close to being finalised. This is a great way for community groups and local agencies to work together, playing to our individual strengths and supporting those who need our help.

‘We’d love to see this initiative spread around the country and we’re happy to talk to other teams about what we’re doing and who to connect with. Collaboration and education are a key part of our commitment to community readiness’, said Kevin.

WAIKATO’S PARTNER AGENCIES:

- Vision West Home Healthcare
- Link People
- Kainga Ora Waikato
- Emerge Aotearoa
- St Vincent de Paul
- IDEA Services (IHC)
- Waikato Police Prevention Team
- Migrant Settlement Centre
- K’aute Pasifika Trust, Hamilton

Twenty-six rental property management agencies in Hamilton have also been identified and will be approached for this programme.

L-R: Matt Watson (Kainga Ora), Tash Wood (Link People), Kevin Holmes (Senior Advisor Community Readiness & Recovery) and Michelle Hinton (Advisor Community Readiness & Recovery) in Hamilton.



CYCLING TO SAY ‘IT’S OK TO NOT BE OK’

First responders often deal with challenging and confronting events. In a bid to raise awareness about post-traumatic stress, a volunteer firefighter and two police officers cycled over 1,000 kilometres to spread the word that it’s OK to not be OK and reach out and talk about it.

Craig Macdonald is a Senior Firefighter in the Manly Volunteer Fire Brigade. Earlier this year, over 15 days, Craig cycled with his son Cameron Macdonald and his daughter’s partner, James Cox, from Cape Egmont to East Cape – a 1,000-km trip.

Craig said James was a colleague and friend of slain police officer, Matt Hunt, who was killed in 2020 after he and his Police partner approached a car involved in a crash in Auckland.

‘James wanted to do something to raise awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder and thought a bike ride would be a great way to do that, and that’s how the ‘It’s OK’ Ride NZ came about.

‘I have also called on Fire and Emergency support services when I “hit the wall” after a bad run. It made me realise I wasn’t bullet proof. It is OK to speak up and get help – it does make a difference’.

The original intention was to touch base with emergency responders along the way, but COVID-19 protocols put paid to that, so the trio set up a

Facebook page and Instagram account recording their experiences every day.

‘We had great engagement via Facebook and managed to talk face-to-face to a few people towards the end of the tour’.

‘Our message was simple, but crucial. It’s OK to feel anger, grief or sadness. And it’s OK to accept you need to talk to someone. When you reach out and actually make an appointment to do that, you’re committed to getting something done’.

The ride was a great success and raised \$2,500 for Te Kiwi Maia, an organisation supporting first responders with physical or psychological injuries. Planning for next year’s ride in the South Island is already under way and all details will be posted on the Facebook page [@itsokridenz](#). All cyclists welcome!



The last week of September is Mental Health Awareness Week, we want to ensure all our people know what psychological support is available to them and their whānau and encourage conversations about psychological distress and injury and wellbeing within our organisation. Find out more about what support is available to you on the Portal.

GET TO KNOW
OUR NEW
NATIONAL
COMMANDER/
DCE SERVICE
DELIVERY
OPERATIONS
RUSSELL WOOD



A career in firefighting and the public service makes Russell Wood well placed to take on the role of National Commander and Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery Operations.

Russell joined what was then the New Zealand Fire Service in 1984 as a firefighter in his hometown of Auckland, after realising his studies in commerce weren't really leading to a future he was looking forward to.

'I was a bit of a sport-playing academic, but the idea of going into an office or being an accountant didn't really float my boat. I liked the idea of the challenge of being a firefighter, and the physicality of it'.

As a rookie firefighter, he responded to the ICI Chemical Fire in Mt Wellington. The incident was memorable because, unfortunately, it resulted in several firefighters being exposed to a cocktail of chemicals and a major enquiry. It ultimately led to a process to upgrade the organisation's decontamination facilities and protective clothing.

He progressed through the ranks, eventually becoming Region Manager for what is now Ngā Tai ki te Puku in 2010.

One of the projects he's most proud of is being part of the team responsible for the Hazmat Command Units, which were made available just before the 2011 Christchurch Earthquake, allowing nine of those units to be deployed around the city in its time of need.

Russell held various other leadership positions at the New Zealand Fire Service, but by 2011 had decided it was time for a change.

'I got to the point where I had to make the decision to either hang in at that level, or broaden my experience further. That's when I made the move to try something else'.

Russell moved to Maritime New Zealand about a month after the Rena oil tanker ran aground near Tauranga.

'I was responsible for setting things up from a Fire Service perspective in Tauranga, and then a month later I was at Maritime New Zealand looking at it from the lead agency managing the response'.

About four years at Maritime New Zealand was followed by just over two years as a DCE at the New Zealand Qualifications Authority before former Fire and Emergency New Zealand Chief Executive, Rhys Jones, decided to restructure his Executive Leadership Team. This saw Russell return as DCE, Organisational Strategy and Capability Development.

In his new role, Russell will be working to ensure the organisation is set up for what the future holds.

'One thing I find a real challenge is being clear on what we believe our future capability requirements are for the organisation to be successful and to adapt and respond to this changing world we're living in at the moment'.

A UNITED
SERVICE
DELIVERY
BRANCH

While both Deputy Chief Executives come to Service Delivery via different paths, their goals are the same.

Strong alignment both internally for the new Service Delivery branches, as well as with other branches and directorates, will be the key for successful stand-up of the new structure.

'We need to get this new structure up and running effectively, ensuring that we have the two Service Delivery branches aligned and engaged and have common purpose', Russell said.

'Also, we need to ensure we have good and effective cross-branch relationships. We can't be seen to be a Service Delivery island out there on our own. We can't do our mahi if we're not engaging effectively and proactively with the other branches'.

Steph commented that 'Its always important to be collaborative. We're not able to work in silos. I'm really excited about working with Russell and the rest of the Service Delivery team, as well as the Executive Leadership Team'.

Both agreed that the future holds a lot of challenges for an emergency response organisation such as Fire and Emergency, and the Service Delivery branches needed to be ready for those challenges.

'There's the impact of climate change and an increase in incidence and consequence of emergencies, including having concurrent emergencies', Steph said.

'We have to try rethink how we work together as agencies to be able to step it up another level again'.

Russell noted: 'We've got to have our eyes up and out and looking at the challenges, the demands, the investments we're going to have to make from both a capacity and capability perspective for the future'.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS:

Watch it at home or go to the venue? I tend to watch it at home.

Cats or dogs? Both have their place. I used to be a cat person, but this is the first dog I've owned.

Morning person or evening person? Morning.

Movie or book? Movie (books are Christmas holiday reading)

Coffee or tea? Coffee

City or country/rural? City.

Summer or winter? Summer.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS:

Watch it at home or go to the venue? Go to the venue

Cats or dogs? I have both, but it's dogs for me.

Morning person or evening person? Morning.

Movie or book? Book.

Coffee or tea? Tough one. Tea.

City or country/rural? City.

Summer or winter? Winter. Given my roots in rural firefighting, it's more relaxing.

GET TO KNOW OUR
NEW DCE SERVICE
DELIVERY DESIGN
STEPH ROTARANGI



Steph Rotarangi is acutely aware of the challenges facing an organisation like Fire and Emergency.

The new Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery Design has extensive experience in fire response, whether that be through her work in forestry, at the Otago Rural Fire Authority or in various emergency management roles in the Australian state of Victoria.

A lot of her experience had a particular focus on the rural side of firefighting, which was fitting given she called the Central Otago town of Saint Bathans, with its permanent population of 16, home when she was growing up.

'To be fair, it's a place that's better known for its ghost than its people,' she said, in reference to the Vulcan Hotel, built in 1882, and which many people believe to be haunted.

Upon leaving Saint Bathans, she entered the forestry industry and her first day on the job in Tokoroa saw her 'straight into fire training and straight onto fire duties', she said.

'I had responsibility pretty early on for rural fire and that's where I started to find passion for it, and little did I know where it would take me'.

After studying for a PhD in cultural resilience and a stint working at the Ministry for Primary Industries, Steph joined the Otago Rural Fire Authority in 2014 as its first Principal Rural Fire Officer and Chief Executive. Two years later, Steph moved with her firefighter husband and three children to Victoria to become Chief Fire Officer at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

'It was a huge leap of faith to pack up the family and leave the Otago Rural Fire Authority,' she said.

'I'd felt for some time that if I was given the opportunity to experience the way

another fire service worked, I would take it'.

And take it she did. She went on to become Deputy Chief Fire Officer at the Victoria Country Fire Authority, where she held a predominantly urban portfolio including career firefighter recruitment, operational capability and urban growth, before taking up a secondment with Emergency Management Victoria as Deputy Commissioner for COVID Operations and Bushfire Reviews.

It proved to be an incredibly challenging but rewarding time in her career.

'In Victoria, we were just coming off the back of the 2019 Black Summer fires, straight into a Royal Commission and then the pandemic started to emerge as well. I got seconded to coordinate the State's response to the pandemic. It was at a time when the virus had got into the community and into our rest homes. People were dying, everyone was locked down.

'It really stands out for me as I was unfamiliar with health response and we were all really impacted personally and professionally'.

Steph now arrives at Fire and Emergency, via the Napier City Council, with that experience still front of mind.

'During the COVID-19 response in Victoria, we had to think about how we worked together as agencies to step it up another level again.

'The challenges we're facing [at Fire and Emergency New Zealand] are big and we need to be able to work collaboratively and to our strengths'.



GEARING UP FOR THE AP&ES GAMES IN ROTORUA

Registrations are flowing in for the 2023 Australasian Police & Emergency Services (AP&ES) Games in Rotorua next March. One past participant, Hamilton firefighter Adam O'Rourke, who went to the 2018 games in Perth, is super excited about the prospect of competing again.

'I'll never forget it. It was like a mini-Olympics with thousands of competitors, amazing opening and closing ceremonies and heaps of fun. The level of competition's really good and you get to meet so many people from Australia and New Zealand'.

With 60 sports on offer, from softball to surfing, Adam's decided to stick to football and he'll be back in goal for the team he played with and captained in 2018.

'We came fourth in Perth, so we'll be on the hunt for a medal in March. I need to get the fitness levels back up there, but it's worth it. It's like those awesome sports tournaments you'd go to at the end of high school, great sporting clashes, good times and memories you'll never forget.

'I'd encourage anyone who's into sport to get involved. It's pretty special to be able to represent Fire and Emergency as well as your country'.

The games are open to all our people – current and retired staff and volunteers. You can register at www.apes2023.co.nz and there's a 10 percent discount through to 14 November. Sports like golf, white-water rafting and surfing are expected to fill up quickly, so register soon to secure a spot in your favourite sport.



SHARING AND GAINING KNOWLEDGE AT AFAC

Fire and Emergency presented four abstracts at the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) conference in Adelaide in August.

Two oral presentations were given. The first was delivered by Community Education and Behaviour Change Manager Adrian Nacey about segmenting New Zealand communities by attitude and behaviour towards fire safety. The second was completed by Te Ao Marama Research Advisor Khanh Ton and Principal Advisor Volunteer Sustainability Ryley Webster on understanding the early journey of volunteers and career firefighters.

Adrian said it was a privilege to present on behalf of Fire and Emergency.

'Having our work showcased at AFAC has driven opportunities to learn what other agencies are doing in our space, and provided openings for future collaboration'.

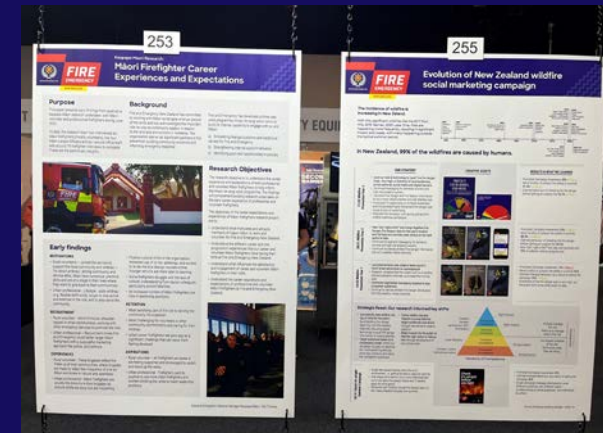
Ryley said it was good to see what other organisations were doing and that would help inform future work in volunteerism.

'I learned a lot about the various facets that make up the sector and different approaches to addressing the challenges we collectively face. I returned feeling inspired and energised to drive improvements and collaboration here at Fire and Emergency'.

There were also two posters presented. One was on the evolution of New Zealand wildfire social marketing campaigns, while the other was about exploring the career expectations and experiences of Māori firefighters.

Fire and Emergency also sent a contingent of personnel from different parts of the organisation to broaden our expertise and learn from the good work presented by the fire services and researchers from around Australia.

The theme of the conference was 'Connecting Communities. Creating Resilience', which aligned closely with Fire and Emergency's values.





609 STATIONS LATER, AMS ROLLOUT IS COMPLETE

The rollout of the Availability and Messaging System (AMS) to volunteer stations is complete.

The 609th and final training took place this month with the Chatham Islands Volunteer Fire Brigade, and, as with so many brigades, it should prove to be a game-changer for the most isolated part of New Zealand.

AMS delivers accurate, real-time information about the availability of volunteers to respond to fires and emergencies. It also lets them know who is responding to a request to attend an incident so we can ensure we have the right people in the right place at the right time.

Before the AMS rollout for the Chathams, calls were taken by the Wellington Communications Centre via 111 from the island. ComCen created the incident in its CAD system, then manually phoned a phone number on the island and left a message, which in turn activated the siren at the station.



Once someone heard the siren, they would respond to the station, listen to the answer phone to obtain call details, then pull together a crew.

Now with AMS, ComCen triggers the incident, just like any other brigade in the country. AMS kicks into life – every single member receives full call details instantly and can indicate their attendance, providing visibility to all other members, as well as the ComCen. AMS also triggers the siren as a backup measure.

Achieving this rollout to more than 600 volunteer stations is a great achievement for the project team. The rollout started in early 2020, but was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But what has come at the end of it is a system that has truly enabled these brigades to better serve their communities.

‘We’ve had a large numbers of similar good news stories to the Chatham Islands – brigades on the East Coast of the North Island also operated a phone tree system taking up to 20 minutes to muster a crew. AMS replaces this process in less than five seconds. This is just one example’, AMS Product Owner Nigel Lilley said.

‘To train and rollout to 609 brigades shouldn’t be underestimated. It’s been a heck of a journey. The project has truly enabled these brigades to better serve their communities. And we should all be so very proud of that’.

NEW CAREER FIRE CREW FOR LEVIN

Levin Fire Station is now home to an additional crew of career firefighters.

The new crew, made up of one officer and three firefighters, staff the station from 7am – 5.30pm, Monday – Friday.

They work alongside the Levin and Horowhenua Volunteer Fire Brigades, who continue their excellent service to the Levin community and wider Horowhenua District.

Te Ūpoko Region Manager Bruce Stubbs says he is really pleased to have the career crew on board.

‘The Levin Volunteer Fire Brigade is one of our busiest volunteer brigades – attending around 450 calls a year, with multiple fire appliances to crew’, he says.

‘They do a fantastic job, but as volunteers with day jobs, it can be challenging for these volunteers to muster crews for two fire appliances during the day.

‘We’ve been working with the Brigade since 2015 to support them, including providing assistance from career crews as needed. However, over the past few years we have realised this needed a more permanent solution.

‘We worked closely with the New Zealand Professional Firefighters’ Union and the United Fire Brigades Association on the proposal for a day shift career crew and it’s great that together we could make it happen’, he says.

The career crew was welcomed on to the station in July with a pōwhiri, station induction and the chance to meet and get to know the volunteers.



HUNTLY DOES NZ PROUD

As the only competing team from New Zealand, the Huntly Road Crash team came through by taking third place in the Controlled Rescue category of the Australian Road Rescue Challenge in Tamworth, New South Wales.

This is the second time the team has competed in the Australian challenge. The event involves multiple scenarios where teams must treat and extract patients from complex staged crashed vehicles. They’re marked on a range of competencies and scored against other competing teams.

Matthew Tregoweth, Senior Firefighter at Huntly Volunteer Fire Brigade, said the lessons they learned are invaluable.

‘Competing in Australia has proved really important for the development of the Brigade, and it’s especially beneficial for the patients we attend back home’, he said.

The competition runs over four days. The first day is a learning symposium with a range of specialist presentations. That’s followed by three days of competitive exercises with workshops in between.

‘We get to use all the latest and greatest equipment and the reps are there to answer

any questions we have. It’s a great opportunity to learn new techniques and skills’, said Matt.

The Huntly team trained every fortnight for four months to prepare for the competition – on top of normal training.

‘It’s a big commitment but it’s worth the effort. We’re serious about being the best we can be and testing ourselves against other teams, so we continually improve’.

A highlight of the competition for Matt was meeting firefighters from around Australia.

‘It’s a great chance to network, learning how other countries run their fire services, sharing what works and bringing back new ideas.

‘We’re really grateful to the UFBA and our local community and businesses for helping us get there. This sort of competition, and the skills we pick up, means everyone wins’, said Matt.

IF THERE'S A FIRE

Get down! Get low! Get out!

🔍 fireandemergency.nz/firewise

