

IGNITE

Te Hiringa o te Tangata | Issue 35 | August 2025

**WELCOMING
MEGAN STIFFLER**

**TE MAIKUKU O MĀHIUKA:
TESTING OUR CAPACITY TO RESPOND**

**OUR STRATEGIC
DIRECTION**



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 motu who dedicate themselves to protecting life, the environment, and property in their communities.

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

Contributions to Ignite

Contributions to be considered for publication are welcome and may be submitted to: strategiccomms@fireandemergency.nz





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-  **Kia tika** | We do the right thing
-  **Manaakitanga** | We serve and support
-  **Whanaungatanga** | We are better together
-  **Auahatanga** | We strive to improve



Kia ora koutou

Haere mai and welcome to the August issue of Ignite, Fire and Emergency's pānui.

It's hard to believe we're already over halfway through the year. The first six months have been busy across all parts of the organisation. And there will be no let-up in the second half as Tā Mātou Ahunga Rautaki Our Strategic Direction 2025–2030 (Our Strategic Direction) took effect from 1 July and we begin bringing it to life through our Strategic Implementation Programme.

This issue of Ignite highlights some of the mahi underway this year. It's great to see two important projects focused on the safety of our frontline people – gas detection and decontamination – have finished up. There's a wrap-up about those projects in our regular 'What's happening with...' section on page 20. You'll also see updates about Exercise Maikuku, the Volunteer Leader Conferences, and a focus on work underway in Ngā Tai ki te Puku. We also profile our ComCen operators.

The Ignite Team also had a chance to sit down with our new Deputy Chief Executive Service Delivery Operations and Deputy National Commander, Megan Stiffler. Megan comes to us after extensive experience on the trucks in Australia, as well as corporate experience in the emergency services and private sectors. She was involved in the Christchurch Earthquake response as part of an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team deployed from Australia, and represented Australia at the 2024 World Fire Congress. If you want to get to know her a bit better and hear about the experience she brings to Fire and Emergency, I encourage you to read the interview on page 7, it's a cracker. Welcome Megan, it's great to have you as part of our Fire and Emergency whānau. And I think it could be the Warriors year too!

Megan has joined us at an exciting time. We are responding to our ever evolving operational environment and the new challenges coming our way with a sharp and targeted strategy for the next five years. Our Strategic Direction sets out where we will focus our efforts so we can make



the greatest difference to Aotearoa New Zealand, our people, and our organisation. It will have an impact on our planning and the way we invest in and deliver our mahi.

I recently heard a great analogy for Our Strategic Direction that helps put its importance into perspective.

We've all been to the supermarket and may have put a few extra things in our shopping cart that we might not usually buy. With the cost of living changing, and the price of groceries going up, we are likely being more cautious about the extras we put in that shopping cart so we make sure we can afford the basics that will feed our whānau. Fire and Emergency is like that shopping cart. We are being asked to do a lot within the same budget so we must prioritise what we do and focus on the basics to make sure we can support our communities. Our Strategic Direction is like our shopping list. It will help us make those choices and ensure we can do everything we need to do for the communities we serve, while staying within our means.

That's quite a simplified explanation, but I think it's helpful. Each of us has a part to play in delivering the Strategic Direction to support communities and in making sure Fire and Emergency is sustainable now and into the future.

As always, thanks for your mahi and thanks for reading. I hope you enjoy this issue of Ignite.

Noho ora mai

Kerry Gregory
Tumu Whakarae | Chief Executive
Toihau a-Motu | National Commander



Read Our
Strategic
Direction

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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER DELIVERING FOR COMMUNITIES: THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Brooke van Velden — Minister of Internal Affairs



The wonderful team at Paihia Fire Station

Maintaining a strong, effective, and efficient national fire service is a priority for me as the Minister of Internal Affairs. I have been clear that I expect Fire and Emergency to deliver for communities in New Zealand in a way that is sustainable and impactful. I am pleased to acknowledge the new strategic direction that came into effect on 1 July this year.

The organisation's refreshed purpose – serving communities together – aligns with my expectations that Fire and Emergency, communities, and partner agencies and organisations will take a networked approach and share responsibility for managing the risk of fire and enabling recovery once emergencies have occurred.

I am particularly pleased to see Fire and Emergency's focus on being an effective regulator. This is an area where Fire and

Emergency has significant obligations to the public both to educate about fire safety and good fire behaviours and to enforce regulations around fire permits, evacuation procedures, and evacuation schemes. Making an impact in this area will go a long way to preventing unwanted fires and reducing harm from fire.

The strategy's focus on outcomes and the impacts Fire and Emergency will have across five focus areas over the next five years will,

I believe, ensure the organisation stays focused on what will make the most difference to communities in New Zealand, your people, and the organisation. It will also mean levy payers and taxpayers can be assured Fire and Emergency is making sound decisions about resourcing and investment.

I look forward to seeing your progress against the ambitious plan you have set yourselves for the next five years.

THE STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

The Strategic Implementation Programme is a five-year change programme to put our strategy into action.

Rather than delivering the work directly, the programme follows a decentralised model, supporting branches to lead their initiatives. The programme team is there to provide guidance, maintain oversight, track progress, share key updates, and help you navigate changes as they arise.

When we launched the programme, we introduced three overlapping phases of change.

Phase 1. Aligning the organisation

Ensuring teams and structures are aligned to our strategic priorities with the right capabilities in place.

Phase 2. Improving performance

Implementing new systems and ways of working to help us deliver on the strategy more effectively.

Phase 3. Strengthening our service

Building on progress, developing new processes, and adopting tools that help us serve communities better, laying the foundations for what comes after 2030.

Because these phases aren't strictly sequential, some initiatives from one phase may begin while another phase is still underway.

Between now and the end of the year, you'll see initiatives focused on both **Phase 1:**

Aligning the organisation and Phase 2: Improving our performance. In practical terms, this means some teams and structures will be realigned to better support our priorities, and new processes or systems will be introduced to help us work more effectively.

At the end of the day, our current model isn't sustainable for the future, so we must focus on being able to deliver on what matters most: serving communities together, fewer unwanted fires and reduced harm to people, property, and the environment. The Programme will help us collectively achieve our Strategic Direction which we launched on 1 July. You can access the document through the QR code below.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

You will be involved. We know the best solutions come from working together. That's why you can expect:

- opportunities to shape future changes that impact you
- honest, open communication throughout the process
- clear, relevant information shared with those impacted
- genuine opportunity to give feedback before decisions are made
- your input to be carefully considered.



STAYING INVOLVED AND INFORMED VIA THE PORTAL PAGE

We've created a dedicated Strategic Implementation Programme Portal page, which we'll keep updated. This page acts as the "one source of truth" for all updates.

You can find background information on why this work is needed below.

You can also register for the next monthly CE Town Hall, an open, 30-minute session hosted on Microsoft Teams where you can hear directly from leadership, ask questions, and stay connected. Recordings and Q&A summaries will be available for those who can't attend live.



Visit the Strategic Implementation Programme page on the Portal



SUPPORT FOR YOU AND YOUR TEAM

If you have concerns, start by speaking with your manager. There are also several support options available:

- Peer support network
- Kāpehu coaching through Speak Safe @ Fair Way
- Vitae 24/7 counselling
- Wellbeing resources on the Portal.

We talk a lot about culture, and for good reason. Now, more than ever, it's important that we honour the trust our communities place in us by living our values every day. That means looking out for each other, being inclusive, showing respect, uplifting those around us, and focusing on the future by finding ways to make things better.

The way we act, together, must be the foundation for how we move through this change to build a stronger, more sustainable Fire and Emergency.

HELPING CANADA IN THEIR TIME OF NEED

Two deployments left Aotearoa New Zealand in July to assist with more than 500 fires raging through multiple provinces in Canada.

In early July, Fire and Emergency received a formal request from the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre for international support to aid their ongoing response to severe wildfires around the country.

Canada's domestic resources are fully committed, meaning they need to engage international support. There are over 1300 international firefighters in Canada from countries including New Zealand, Australia, USA, Mexico, and Chile. This is the second highest number of international firefighters in Canadian history.

Alpha, the first New Zealand deployment, departed on 9 July. The team was made up of a seven-person specialist Incident Management Team (IMT) including an Incident Commander, Operations Sections Chief, Planning Sections Chief, Logistics Section Chief, Safety Officer and two Division Supervisors.



Using hand tools to dig out hotspots, cut fallen branches, clear access tracks and escape routes, mop up, and all the other jobs associated with fighting large-scale fires.

Fire and Emergency regularly deploys internationally to help our overseas colleagues in their time of need. And our contribution is appreciated. The Canadian High Commissioner sent a letter of thanks to our Minister. Fire and Emergency social media posts were extremely well received by Canadian residents reinforcing how welcome this assistance is.

Deployments not only aid our international community but provide our kiwi firefighters with crucial skills and experience that they can bring back to Aotearoa New Zealand and employ during our wildfire season.

A second deployment, Bravo, departed five days later and consisted of a 43-person taskforce including an agency representative, two taskforce leaders and eight five-person arduous firefighting crews.

This contingent was an inter-agency collaboration containing a mix of Fire and Emergency, Department of Conservation and forestry company personnel, as well as a New Plymouth District Council representative.

Both Alpha and Bravo were based in Cross Lake, Manitoba, an eight-hour drive north of Winnipeg.

After arriving in country, the IMT team was straight into the mahi, managing several fires alongside a small number of Canadian personnel from the Manitoba Wildfire Service.

As an arduous firefighter team, Bravo's mahi was tough, physical work on the fireground.



HE MIHI MATAKUIKUI KI A MEGAN STIFFLER,
TŌ TĀTOU TUMU WHAKARAE TUARUA HOU
O NGĀ TUKUNGA RATONGA

A WARM WELCOME TO MEGAN STIFFLER OUR NEW DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY OPERATIONS



Megan joined Fire and Emergency on 28 April this year and comes to us from Fire and Rescue New South Wales (FRNSW), where she was the Deputy Commissioner Strategic Capability.

Ignite: Megan, welcome to Fire and Emergency (and Aotearoa New Zealand!). Thank you for sitting down with us today. Can you talk us through your career path and how you got to this point?

Megan: How I became a firefighter is poignant for me. As firefighters who interact with the community, knowing 'why' we join is critical because there are times where it's tough and if you know your why, it helps you through and builds resilience.

My background is in insurance and I was working as an executive in a large insurance company when a tsunami hit Banda Aceh in South East Asia. I remember sitting at my desk in a beautiful office thinking "I really want to help the world at this time of devastation" but I had no skills that would add real value. That sat heavy with me for a while and I decided I wanted to provide service, which wasn't going to be in my corporate role, so I became a firefighter.

Seven years after I made that decision, I was being flown into Christchurch after the earthquakes in the back of the C-17, with a skill set that mattered in an emergency. I remember sitting in that plane thinking "wow, I've now got a skill set that adds value" and I was able to help the people of Christchurch in a time of crisis.

Ignite: As part of that response, you were in the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) Team. Can you tell us about your role?

Megan: I was part of the Urban Search and Rescue Incident Management Team, so my business skills came in handy during high level incident management, taking all the critical data available and using it to narrow down priorities, which is an important part of any response and helps those on the tools.

Ignite: What were some of your earliest challenges?

Megan: I was only the 20th woman firefighter to join the Queensland Fire and Emergency Service. There were 19 women before me who had started the challenge of 'gee, our facilities don't really suit a diverse workforce'. The challenge for me was that I didn't want to be a diversity hire. I really wanted to be a good firefighter, so I'm very conscious of being good at my trade. I think that was what I focused on, which cleared a lot of the challenges for me because I wasn't paying attention to other things, other than being good at what I do.

At the same time, I felt a responsibility to call out behaviour that was inappropriate and that might have been because I was a mature age woman coming into the workforce, not someone straight out of school. The challenge for me was finding a respectful way to hold people accountable for their behaviour if I felt it was unjust or uncomfortable.



Megan Stiffler attending the 2024 World Fire Congress in Washington, DC, USA

‘I want us to be a place where we welcome everyone. If you’re different it doesn’t matter, you add value.’

I’ve been blessed with the people I have worked with. There have been some really good people since I’ve joined the fire service and I think we can lose sight that we’ve got a common goal of being here, which is service. Sometimes we lose our way because we’re focusing on other things that are important to us as individuals but collectively, if we just keep remembering we’re here to serve our community, a lot of those challenges dissipate.

Ignite: What are some of the key lessons you’ve taken from all the challenges that you’ve tackled in the past?

Megan: Diversity matters. When I was in Christchurch there were 73 people in our team, and I was the only female operational person. Every male on my watch found time to have coffee with me one-on-one because they could be more vulnerable with me than they could with someone who looked like them. It really stood out to me that diversity in the workforce, whether it’s your gender, country of origin, or different experience in work, is important. It’s a powerful tool for us, as a collective.

Another big lesson for me is how valuable my business skills have been. We have to understand that our core business is as a response agency, but we’re also a big business. You know most fire services in Australasia are billion-dollar businesses and that takes a lot of skill to make sure you’ve got enough money and it’s being spent effectively. We must remember our purpose, but understand there’s a whole machine that sits behind operations that helps us turn out, so that was another big lesson for me that I’ve noticed over the years.

Ignite: What are you most proud of in your career so far?

Megan: My leadership style has stayed true to who I am. A lot of my role models within the fire service are six-foot men with broad shoulders. If I had tried to mimic their leadership style, it wouldn’t have been authentic and it just wouldn’t have worked. So, I think navigating who I am as a leader within the fire service, owning a different style of leadership and recognising there is strength in its difference, is important to me.

I’m also proud that I am genuinely present and listen to people. I have a philosophy that everyone deserves 10 minutes of your time and most of the great things I’ve been a part of haven’t been my ideas. I’ve listened to a great idea, worked out how I can enable it to happen, and then hopped out of the way so someone smarter than me can deliver it. So, I think my ability to be present in conversations is something I’m proud of and it has paid dividends time and time again.

There is also what I’ve achieved on the ground. In 2011, I was a senior firefighter, just coming up to become a station officer. In an eight-week period, I was in Toowoomba for our inland tsunami, where lives were lost after a big rain event. I then went to Brisbane for a massive flood. I was on the last plane into Townsville for the largest cyclone to cross the Australian coast. And then I responded to Christchurch. I was really proud I could add value in those four major events, at that level, and it still forms who I am today.

More recently, I was selected by Australia to be one of two reps to go to the 2024 World Fire Congress. I wasn’t a Commissioner, (I was a Deputy Commissioner) but I was chosen by the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) because I could add value on that world stage and represent Australia, so that was another pretty big achievement.

‘... I think we can lose sight that we’ve got a common goal of being here, which is service.’

Ignite: What are some of your early observations about Fire and Emergency?

Megan: First of all, I’ve got a really good feel about who we are as a group of people. I’ve met people all throughout this organisation who want me to succeed, so they’re giving me information and helping guide me. A good example is people making sure I had my uniform on day one, so I was ready to roll. I think that’s a really good indicator of our culture.

I’m already seeing pockets of excellence. I’m an observer, so I sit, watch, and then ask questions. There have been a few things where I think ‘that’s what good looks like’

‘I think success is people feeling comfortable raising issues and solutions of a better way and knowing I will listen and enable those better solutions.’ Deputy Chief Executive, Service Delivery Operations, Megan Stiffler

and part of my challenge over the next few months will be saying ‘okay, over there is what good looks like, over here is a bit wobbly, so how can I apply what worked there to help lift this area?’ It’s really encouraging to see.

Like every fire service there are areas of growth, areas that we can improve and areas that we’re going to be challenged on. I think smart business is being as efficient as possible. I think there are a lot of areas we can focus on so we can provide stability for our workforce: our volunteers, our career firefighters, our ComCen operators and our administrative support personnel.

Ignite: What are some of your key focus areas for the next few months?

Megan: Number one, safety. I want us, as a workforce, to serve our community within our training, within our equipment capability, and within our own capability. I don’t want us risking ourselves to do things we’re not trained in or don’t have fit-for-purpose equipment for. We can’t rescue anyone if we become the person needing to be rescued. I can’t think of a thing we do in response that isn’t impacted by a safety decision and raising our awareness of the Safe Person Concept will be part of my focus.

I want us to be a place where we welcome everyone. If you’re different, it doesn’t matter, you add value. If you are not behaving how you normally do, how can we check on why that is and check on your mental health and wellbeing. I want us to be a place where we can be ourselves at work and not be judged, so everyone feels welcome.

The other thing is I’ve seen what good looks like in both Queensland and New South Wales. If I see something that isn’t working for us, I’ve got two other reference points that I can lean on. I can ask if we’ve tried things in different ways, to see what is better and safer for our people. Some of it will be, some of it won’t, but part of my job is just raising awareness that people do things differently.

‘Part of my goal as a leader is I’m consistent in my decision-making, so people trust me and even if they don’t like some of my decisions, they’ll know I’ve been measured and I’m consistent.’

Ignite: Last question, how will you measure success in your role?

Megan: I want people to trust my process. There will be times I make decisions that aren’t popular, I know that. I want people to know I’m measured when I make a decision, and I always explain why I made that decision. Part of my goal as a leader is to be consistent in my decision-making, so people trust me and even if they don’t like some of my decisions, they’ll know I’ve been measured and I’m consistent.

I think success is people feeling comfortable raising issues and solutions of a better way and knowing I will listen and enable those better solutions.

Success for me is delivering as part of my role in the leadership team, especially with Our Strategic Direction. Most of our workforce sits within my branch and we have a huge influence on the success of Our Strategic Direction and our service to communities. Part of this is people knowing that no matter what their role is, we are all pushing in the same direction to make a successful business. We’ll have the trust of the government, our Board and our Chief Executive.

And lastly, success for me is a healthy, safe workplace. A place that people enjoy coming to and one where we all feel welcome – even us Aussies.

Ignite: Thank you so much for your time today, Megan. That was an insightful chat, and we wish you the best of luck in your new role.

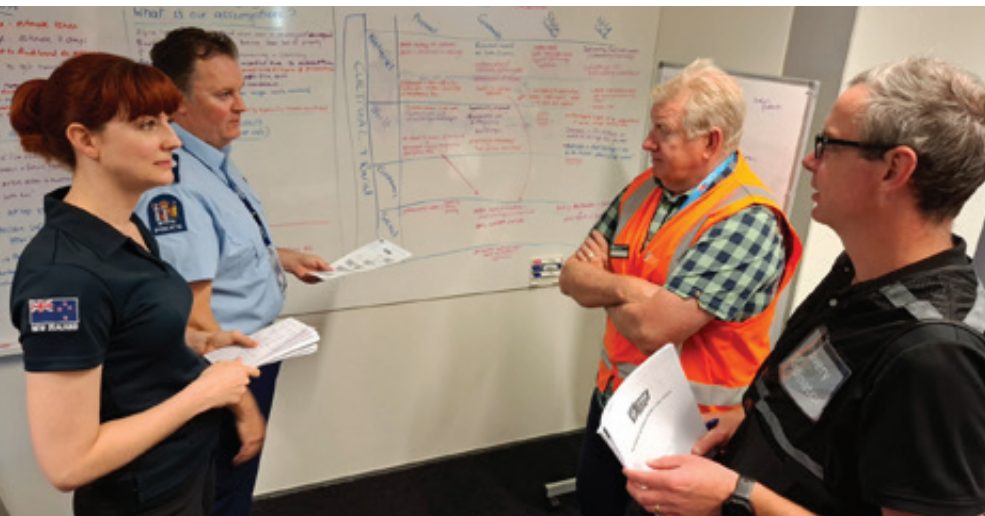
Megan Stiffler at Te Ūpoko RHQ for Pink Shirt Day morning tea.



TE MAIKUKU O MĀHUIKA: TE WHAKAMĀTAU I TŌ MĀTOU RAUKAHA KI TE URUPARE KI NGĀ AITUĀ NUI MAHA

TE MAIKUKU O MĀHUIKA: TESTING OUR CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO MULTIPLE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Damaged main power lines resulting in power outages to the entirety of Northland, mass evacuations, the closure of an international airport, multiple homes and buildings damaged or destroyed, and a fatality.



'Approximately 200 personnel participated in the exercise, including around 150 from Fire and Emergency. They operated across the two IMTs, Regional Coordination Centres (RCCs) in Auckland and Dunedin, and the National Coordination Centre (NCC) in Wellington. The NCC hosted over 30 staff, including representatives from six external agencies, demonstrating strong interagency collaboration.

Jamie said the exercise started on 13 May with a District-level response that quickly escalated to a Region-level and had cascaded to national coordination by the end of the day with both RCCs and the NCC fully activated.

The exercise ended with a debrief and partial operations on 15 May. The conclusion of the exercise was on 23 July with a Watch Group meeting at DPMC.

These were some of the scenarios facing our people involved in Exercise Maikuku in May.

Fire and Emergency led Exercise Maikuku (an abbreviation of Te Maikuku o Māhuika), a nationwide simulation designed to test our capacity to respond to simultaneous large-scale incidents. The Exercise was part of the National Exercise Programme (NEP) chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC). The NEP builds capability across government through a coordinated series of interagency readiness activities that support the resilience of our national security system

Exercise Maikuku was based on long duration wildfires occurring concurrently in Queenstown and Riverhead (north of

Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland). The scenario was complex, involving significant impacts at both local and national levels. It tested arrangements for a multi-agency response nationwide, with Incident Management Teams (IMTs) based in Queenstown and Whenuapai.

Wildfire Management Specialist, Jamie Cowan, who led the exercise, said six key objectives guided the exercise.

'These included leading and supporting a coordinated interagency response, integrating early recovery planning, maintaining situational awareness to support a common operating picture, and effectively managing public information to ensure confidence and clear communication.

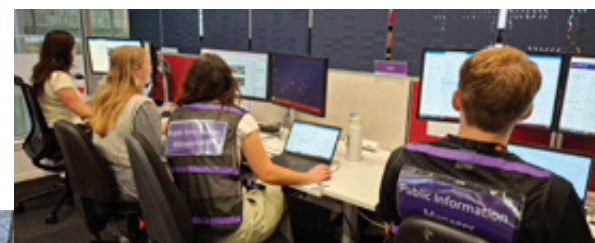
While each Region holds at least one simulation exercise (SIMEX) a year, they are usually geared to develop and exercise the Region's own incident management response capability. Exercise Maikuku provided the first opportunity in several years to thoroughly test all of Fire and Emergency's coordination processes over an extended period in the response to multiple large wildfires.

The Operational Assurance Team observed and debriefed the exercise in every location and will produce a comprehensive report and recommendations. These findings will contribute to long-term improvements within Fire and Emergency and will feed directly into a high-level all-of-government tabletop exercise being managed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet later in the year.

Jamie said he wanted to thank all the participants for taking part.

'This was a complex incident that required a lot of hard work from all the participants, facilitators and mentors, your efforts are to be commended! And thank you to managers for releasing their people to participate in this exercise.' Wildfire Management Specialist, Jamie Cowan

If you would like to learn more about the exercise or how to be involved in the future, please contact your Region's RCC, or the NCC, if you're based in National Headquarters.



E HIAHIA ANA KOE KI TE HONO MAI KI NGĀ TUKUNGA PATU AHINIWHĀ I TE AO?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN UP FOR INTERNATIONAL WILDFIRE DEPLOYMENTS?

International deployments are a great way to increase the knowledge, experience, currency, and confidence of New Zealand firefighters in managing large wildfires and supporting the international firefighting community.



Senior Advisor Deployments, Claire Brown

Our international partners have high standards that our deployed personnel must meet. We need people who are flexible, able to cope with hard work and long hours, both mentally and physically, and have significant vegetation firefighting experience. We find this capability within Aotearoa New Zealand through Fire and Emergency, the Department of Conservation, forestry companies, the New Zealand Defence Force, and contracting personnel.

Claire Brown is our Senior Advisor Deployments in the Response Capability Team and she is responsible for:

- Developing and implementing an integrated approach to all Fire and Emergency deployments
- Designing and developing frameworks, policies, systems, and planning for our deployments
- Coordinating the preparation for, and management of, Aotearoa New Zealand's response to international deployments.

Claire says she would love to see more of our people – including wāhine – signing up for international deployments.

On deployment, you'll gain:

- Greater understanding of ground crew operations, including tactics, safety, and communication needs

- First-hand experience with wildfire behaviour and fire environments in diverse landscapes
- Exposure to large-scale incident management structures, often with significant aviation firefighting components
- Insight into how air and ground resources are coordinated in real-time, enhancing your understanding of aviation integration
- Valuable networks and learning opportunities from experienced aviation and incident management professionals around the world.

If you're passionate about wildland firefighting, eager to learn, and keen to step up, an international deployment could be the ideal next step. International deployments offer a different landscape and perspective on firefighting roles.

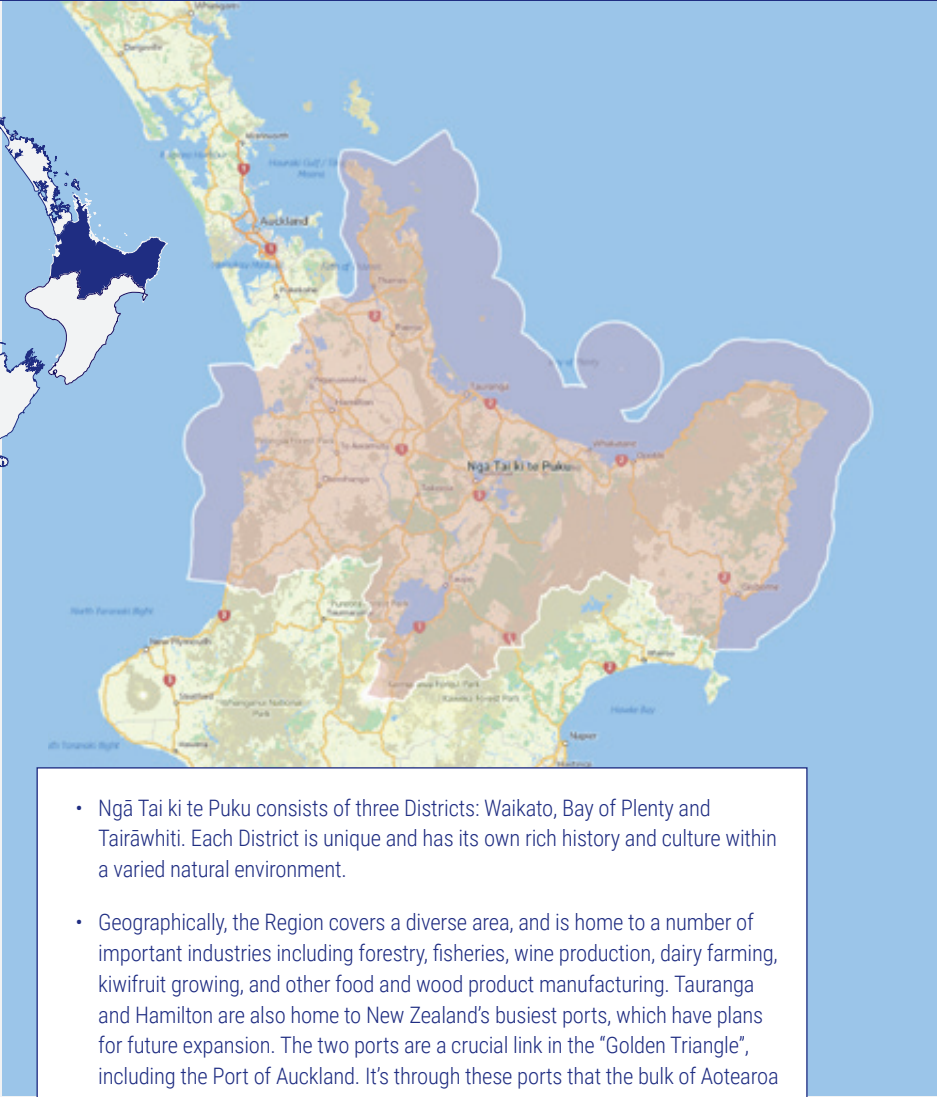
For more information, contact your region deployment coordinator. Search 'region deployment coordinators' on the Portal.

'These deployments provide the opportunity to gain so much experience that our people can then bring back to Aotearoa New Zealand.' Senior Advisor Deployments, Claire Brown

ARONGA Ā-ROHE:
REGION FOCUS:
**NGĀ TAI KI
TE PUKU**



‘Nau mai haere mai ki te Ngā Tai ki te Puku! Our Region stretches from the Coromandel Peninsula in the North to Tūrangi in the South, Kawhia in the West and Tikitiki in the East. Ngā Tai ki te Puku covers a very large and diverse landscape containing several important areas of primary production. We’re also home to a vast array of other key industries including tourism, which makes a significant contribution to the local economy and poses its own unique challenges. I hope this snapshot of our Region gives you an insight into our beautiful whenua we are lucky to call home.’



- Ngā Tai ki te Puku consists of three Districts: Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Tairāwhiti. Each District is unique and has its own rich history and culture within a varied natural environment.
- Geographically, the Region covers a diverse area, and is home to a number of important industries including forestry, fisheries, wine production, dairy farming, kiwifruit growing, and other food and wood product manufacturing. Tauranga and Hamilton are also home to New Zealand’s busiest ports, which have plans for future expansion. The two ports are a crucial link in the “Golden Triangle”, including the Port of Auckland. It’s through these ports that the bulk of Aotearoa New Zealand’s imports and exports are processed, with the Port of Tauranga the busiest in the motu. As these industries continue to grow, it’s important that our strategies to mitigate any risk arising from them keeps pace with this change.
- The Region is home to many natural hazards, which we have seen the impacts of over the last few years. We have also seen the effects of severe weather events, such as Cyclone Gabrielle which had devastating effects in coastal communities throughout Tairāwhiti and the Coromandel, the impacts of which will be felt for many years to come. The Region is also home to the active Taupo Volcanic Zone (TVZ), spanning from the mountains of Tongariro National Park to Whakaari/White Island. We are also vulnerable to the Hikurangi Subduction Zone off the coast of Tairāwhiti. It’s crucial that our long-term planning ensures we are prepared to respond to these types of events in the future.
- With a population of over 880,000, the Region is experiencing some of the highest population growth across the motu, particularly in the urban areas of Tauranga and Hamilton.
 - This population is diverse in age and ethnicity, with Māori making up 27% of the population, compared to the national average of 16.5%.
 - All three Districts have experienced growth in their population over the age of 65 since 2018.
- Ngā Tai ki te Puku is home to three career stations, seven composite brigades and 92 volunteer brigades. These are crewed by 243 career firefighters and 2,080 volunteers.



Above: Workshop participants

TE MAHI NGĀTAHI KI TE KAWE I NGĀ KARERE
HAUMARU AHI KI NGĀ TAI KI TE PUKU
**WORKING TOGETHER TO
DELIVER FIRE SAFETY MESSAGES
IN NGĀ TAI KI TE PUKU**

There was plenty of whanaungatanga on display at a community engagement and resource workshop held at our National Training Centre in April.

The Community Readiness and Recovery (CRR) Advisors in Ngā Tai ki te Puku form a small team – eight, across the Region – and, with growing community needs, they were keen to try and build capability across brigades to strengthen community engagement and fire safety education to help them spread the word.

Senior Community Readiness and Recovery Advisor, Tangonui Kingi, from the Bay of Plenty and one of the organisers of the workshop, said the CRR Team wanted to support brigades in delivering localised fire safety messaging by providing practical training and tools that could be taken back into their communities, while also building a network of personnel who can support one another in this important mahi.

‘We asked for Expressions of Interest to attend the workshop and 20 volunteers from across the Region were selected, representing a wide spread of brigades from the Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Tairāwhiti Districts.

‘This workshop has reignited my resolve in helping my community ... I now know what resources are out there and how we can make a real difference.’
Participant in community engagement and resource workshop

‘Over the two days, participants engaged in a range of presentations, from group discussions, and hands-on learning, including understanding the CRR and Risk Reduction roles, to using Kitchen Fire Demonstrators and planning safe community events.’

It was not, however, just about the team presenting to the volunteers. Tangonui said that interaction went both ways.



Learning about the escape maze. Senior Community Readiness and Recovery Advisor, Tangonui Kingi, is to the right of the maze.

‘When we sent out the Expressions of Interest, we pointed out that we would be wanting to hear their ideas on what really makes a difference for them when engaging with their communities. It was also about them sharing stories on what success looks like in their Districts.

‘One of the main contributors to the success of the workshop was the resources we had available to us. We could do ‘show and tell’ on what each could do, for example, using the Kitchen Fire Demonstrator and The Escape Maze – a tool we use to teach our year one and two kids to help reinforce the message “Get Down, Get Low, Get Out, Fast!”. It was not just about using presentations and images.

‘Another successful result from the workshop was a challenge put to the participants. We asked them to brainstorm how they might collectively work as a group in supporting each other. We said to them that we needed their help and how could we achieve that.’

Tangonui said the result was a closed Facebook page set up by the group so they can take more ownership in helping themselves and maintain momentum as a collective to participate and find solutions for effective community engagement and education.



TE TIAKI I NGĀ WHĀNAU O TE TAIRĀWHITI I TE AHI KEEPING OUR WHĀNAU FIRE SAFE IN TAIRĀWHITI

“Mā te mahi tahi ka ora ai te whānau,
te hapū, te hāpori, te iwi hoki.”

By working together, we will thrive —
as families, as communities, as people.

Earlier this year, the Community Readiness and Recovery (CRR) Team in Tairāwhiti, working alongside the Pou Takawaenga Māori | Māori Liaison Officer, has been out in the community sharing important home fire safety kōrero supported by Ngāti Porou Oranga Kaimahi.

These sessions, held at Te Tini o Porou and the Ruatoria Fire Station, focused on the basics that make a big difference: installing and maintaining smoke alarms, creating fire escape plans, and safely using everyday household appliances. It was also a great opportunity to talk with whānau about how to prepare for emergencies and what to do if a fire breaks out.

This mahi highlights the value of strong community partnerships. Collaborating with Ngāti Porou Oranga Kaimahi and Pou Takawaenga Māori not only helps Fire and Emergency reach whānau in a meaningful way, but it also plays a big part in building resilience and raising fire safety awareness across the Region.

‘By teaming up with trusted local organisations already doing the mahi, we can reach whānau who might otherwise be missed’, says Senior Advisor Community Readiness and Recovery, Antony Ruru.

‘Everyone matters. Everyone deserves a safe home.’

It’s team efforts like these that help strengthen and protect the communities Fire and Emergency is so proud to serve.

The CRR Team is looking forward to continuing this important mahi across Tairāwhiti to reach and support as many people as possible.

‘We’re committed to making sure fire safety messages reach every corner – one home visit at a time’, says Antony.

TEKAU MA RUA HAORA TE PIKINGA O MAUAO MAUNGA KI TE KOHI PŪTEA 12-HOUR FUNDRAISER CLIMB AT MAUAO MOUNT MAUNGANUI

Fire and Emergency is proud to recognise the firefighters who took on the incredible 12-hour Mauao Mount Maunganui climb to raise funds for Leukaemia & Blood Cancer New Zealand. This challenge isn’t for the faint-hearted – it involved climbing in full operational kit, including Level 2 PPE and Breathing Apparatus, to mirror the real-life conditions they face in emergencies.

It’s as much a mental test as it is a physical one, with firefighters pushing through fatigue and discomfort to support a cause that hits close to home for many. The event also welcomed the wider community, with family-friendly activities and the chance to donate and show support.

Special recognition goes to Zhané de Mey, James Bedford, Kate Thompson, Campbell Black, Monica McDowell, and the Mount Maunganui volunteers who tackled the Mauao challenge alongside their family and friends.



Mount Maunganui volunteers
who took on the challenge

Zhané, James, Campbell, and Monica also completed the gruelling Firefighter Sky Tower Challenge at the end of May.

This massive annual challenge sees firefighters climb 51 flights of stairs wearing 25kg of gear to raise even more funds for Leukaemia & Blood Cancer New Zealand.

Their commitment, preparation, and sheer determination are a fantastic example of the spirit we see across the organisation.

These events do more than raise funds – they bring brigades and communities together, strengthen bonds, and remind us of all the power of backing a good cause. There’s no doubt Zhané, James, Campbell, and Monica were cheered on for every step of the 328 metre climb to the top of the Sky Tower.



KA WHAKAORA TE OPE HAUMARU WAI I NGĀ PĀHIHI I TE WĀ O NGĀ WAIPUKE I WHAKATŪ-TAI O AORERE WATER TEAM RESCUES STRANDED PASSENGERS AMID NELSON-TASMAN FLOODING

Our Specialist Water Rescue Team lived up to their name when they ‘came to the rescue’ during a deluge of rain in the Nelson-Tasman region.

At the request of the Nelson District Manager, the team was pre-deployed from Christchurch in anticipation of the bad weather approaching the Region. For these Rai Valley residents, they were glad to see them coming.

A car with two passengers stalled in deep water in Whangamoa and, as happens in small towns, the stricken passengers happened to be neighbours of Rai Valley Chief Fire Officer, Nigel Patterson, who was first on the scene.

‘I was able to keep the passengers safe and calm as support from multiple brigades arrived. We were able to stabilise the car in the floodwaters by anchoring it to a tree, as water levels continued to rise quickly. We then waited for the Specialist Water Rescue Team to arrive from Nelson.’

Once the specialist team arrived, they evacuated the trapped passengers, getting them to safety through the rising and quickening flood waters.

Station Officer at Anzac Station and Officer in Charge of the rescue, Anthony Earl, said the event showed the value of having a Specialist Water Rescue Team pre-deployed.

‘The volunteers did a great job in securing the passengers of the vehicle, but removal of the passengers would have been hazardous and difficult without the Specialist Water Rescue Team.

Ka pai tō mahi to our Nelson Station crew, and the volunteer crews of Hira Volunteer Rural Fire Force, Rai Valley Volunteer Fire Brigade, and Havelock Volunteer Fire Brigade.

‘Because the team was pre-deployed, it meant that Fire and Emergency was able to immediately provide the appropriate resources to support the responding brigades at this incident.’
Station Officer, Anthony Earl



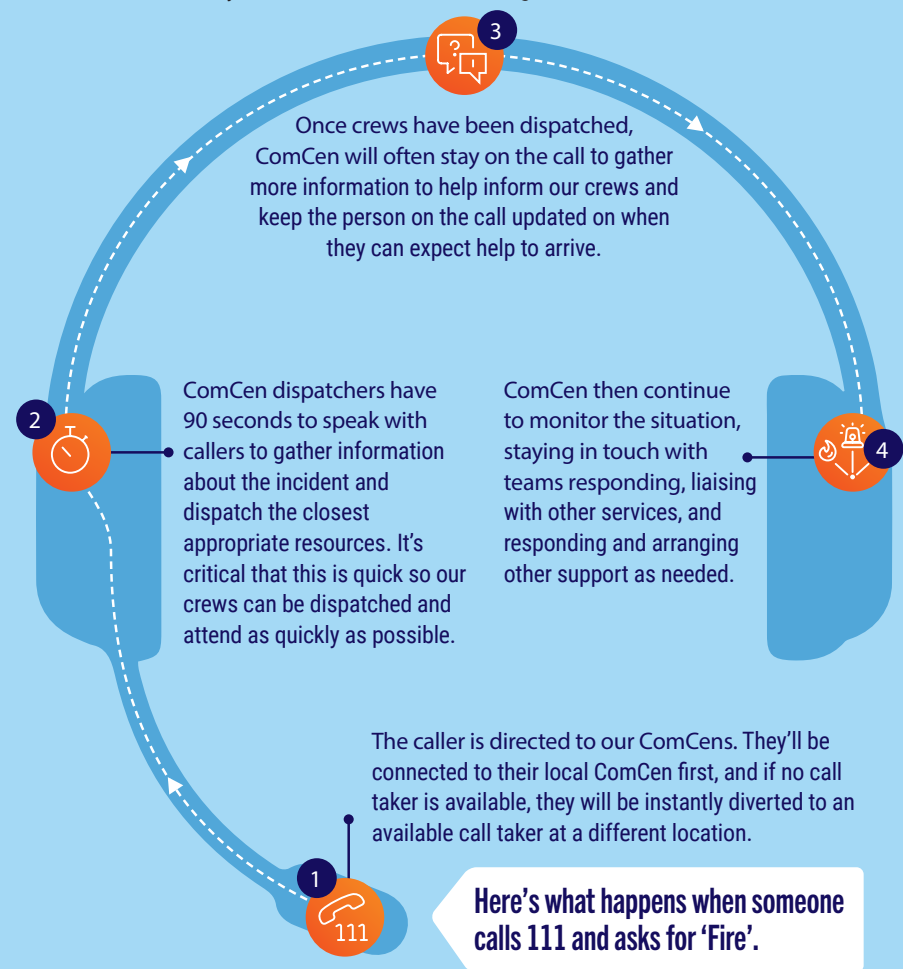
KĀHUA TĪMA: TE WHAKAUTU I TE KARANGA

TEAM PROFILE: ANSWERING THE CALL

When people call for help, our Communication Centres (ComCens) answer 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They are a calm voice over the phone gathering critical information and dispatching help when people need it most.

Our ComCen personnel are an essential link with to communities we serve.

We have three ComCens co-located with other agencies in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch. They cover the entire motu, including the Chatham Islands.



COMCEN BY THE NUMBERS

 **20,000**
calls in an average month

This means personnel answer a call about every two minutes.

During significant events this increases, for example, during Cyclone Gabrielle

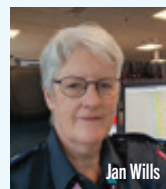
 **1,700** calls in 24 hours

Statistics from audited figures Annual Report 2024



ComCen personnel work 12-hour shifts and use the same coloured watch system as our paid firefighters. It's a fast-paced job where no two days are the same.

Jan Wills is one of the Operations Managers at Central ComCen and has served in ComCen for 36.5 years. Jan has worked in all three ComCens and filled every role from trainee to Centre Manager. We asked Jan what appeals to her about working in this fast-paced and critical service.



What drew you to the role?

I was leaving the New Zealand Defence Force after nearly nine years in the Royal New Zealand Navy and having been a volunteer firefighter for seven years, the control room operator role (as it was then) sounded like a good fit for me.

What's kept you in it?

The ability to make a difference for both the public and our people in Fire and Emergency, and the variety of incidents we attend – every day is different.

What's the biggest change you've noticed over your time working in ComCen?

Going from 19 control rooms when I started to the three ComCens we have today, and of course the massive improvements in technology.

Most memorable incident?

Too many to mention just one, but the standouts – for very different reasons – the Manukau petrol tanker fire in 1990 and the brave actions of everyone at that incident, the Christchurch earthquakes and Cyclone Gabrielle calls. Then there was the Silver Fern railcar crash just north of Waiouru in 1981, which resulted in me becoming a volunteer firefighter, which you could say started it all!



Team members from across Fire and Emergency put five types of lay flat hose to the test at Palmerston North Station in May.

There were representatives from Equipment and Logistics (E&L), hose subject matter experts, Procurement, and our unions and associations.

The hose involved was 25mm, 38mm, 45mm, 70mm, and 90mm. They were measured and weighed, and tested for pressure, friction loss, kinking, and abrasion. The team also applied hose patches to see how well they accepted or reacted to our hose repairing standards. A motorised hose flaking machine was also put into action.

National Manager Equipment and Logistics, Charlie Lott, said these formal evaluations and field trials are done so the E&L team can be as confident as possible about putting the hose out for operational trialling and evaluation before buying in any quantity.

'We do these formal operational equipment evaluations and trials to ensure we get the best possible equipment into the hands of our frontline firefighters, at the best cost.

'Where possible, we involve operational firefighters in the selection of our equipment

early in the procurement and introduction into service process, because we know they will be expected to use that equipment on a day-to-day basis, and they need to be confident that their gear performs to expectations.'

Manager Equipment and Logistics Operations, Don McErlich, said the team involved in the trials delivered an exceptionally high-quality assessment of the hose products offered, both practically and technically.

'Deciding to upgrade from the 38mm to the 45mm x 30m quick-connect lined vegetation hose will drastically reduce friction loss for forestry supply hose lines.

'Adopting the motorised hose flaking machine has revolutionised the speed of preparing vegetation hose, outperforming any other current system. More than 50 lengths of vegetation hose were required to be reflaked multiple times, and each one took just a few minutes to prepare. So, this will be great news for all frontline firefighters.'

United Fire Brigades' Association advocate, David Lattimore, was involved in the trials and

said the design and process for the day had been 'very, very good'.

'This is the third hose trial I have been involved in and it was really well run. Anyone using the hose should feel confident that the hose that goes out for trialling has been selected by the most robust standards.'

Senior Firefighter, Greg Lee, from Whanganui Station and representing the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union at the testing, said he was pleased to see good and thorough evidence-based testing of the hose 'to ensure the best product for firefighters going forward.'

Rounding out the participants were Wendy Thompson and Emer Beatson from our Procurement Team. Their mahi focuses on maintaining a robust process and ensuring trial outcomes are thoroughly documented.

'The collaboration and active engagement of participants played a key role in achieving the best possible results from the trial.' Procurement Specialist, Wendy Thompson

Hose being pressure tested



NGĀ HUI KAIĀRAHI TŪAO 2025 VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES 2025

During April and May, our Regions hosted their volunteer leaders for our biennial Volunteer Leadership Conferences (VLCs).



'The VLC provides a valuable opportunity for our volunteer brigade leaders to unite, strengthen connections, and gain insights they can take back and share with their brigades.'
Region Manager, Te Kei (Acting), Phil Marsh

The conferences are an opportunity for our volunteer leaders to come together, catch up on what's happening across Fire and Emergency, connect with our leadership teams, network with their colleagues, and learn skills that support them in their role.

The theme for this year's conferences was 'Leading with Purpose. Together We Thrive'. During each conference, participants heard from speakers or participated in workshops and sessions that focused on effective leadership, continuous improvement, volunteerism, and culture.

Feedback was positive from all five conferences. Participants appreciated

the effort put into each programme, with organisers placing our volunteer leaders and their needs at the heart of planning.

'Te Ihu VLC was full of opportunities to connect, learn, and gain valuable tools to support ongoing leadership development. Almost all of our 171 Te Ihu volunteer and composite brigades were represented by 260 brigade leaders. Thank you to those who made the event possible and, equally, to the brigade leaders for making the time to attend.'

Region Manager, Te Ihu, Brad Mosby

'When leaders take the time to listen and respond with purpose, you get something as grounded and impactful as Te Hiku's conference.'

District Manager, Te Tai Tokerau Northland, Wipari Henwood

'Te Hiku's Volunteer Leadership Conference embodied 'Leading with Purpose. Together We Thrive' with powerful kōrero, connection,



and moments of growth. Its brilliance lay in its unwavering commitment to purpose-driven leadership and collective strength. The conference wasn't just inspiring, it was proof that unity and purpose create unstoppable momentum.'

People Business Partner, Te Hiku, Laure Chisaka

It is always a privilege to participate in the Ngā Tai ki te Puku conference – a key event that recognises and supports the critical role of our volunteer firefighters. Their commitment and contribution remain central to the strength and resilience of our brigades and the communities they serve.

This year's conference was well-organised and purposeful. It offered a valuable platform for brigade leaders to engage in professional development, exchange ideas, and build stronger networks. The workshops, keynote sessions, and group discussions were focused and relevant, providing practical insights and reinforcing shared goals across the Region.

Thank you to all our volunteers who made the effort to attend, balancing their time between their personal, professional, and community responsibilities. Your engagement is appreciated and reflects your ongoing commitment to improving our collective capability. Sincere thanks also to the facilitators and presenters who contributed their knowledge and experience, and to the Ngā Tai ki te Puku organising team for delivering a well-executed and meaningful event.

"Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi." With your food basket and mine, the people will thrive.

Region Manager, Ngā Tai ki te Puku, David Guard

'The theme of this conference, 'Leading with Purpose. Together We Thrive,' will remain at the forefront of everything we do moving forward. I have no doubt that the knowledge, insights, and stories you've shared here will serve as a foundation for even greater achievements in the future.'

Region Manager, Te Ūpoko, Bruce Stubbs



Ngā mihi nui to everyone who was a part of the conferences and special thanks to those who worked hard to make these a huge success.



E AHA ANA TE... WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH...

Tango TX1 Campaign Kits ready for distribution at the Bridge Hill fire.



MĀ NUI WHAKAPETO NGOI KA NUI NGĀ HUA PAERONGO
HAUREHU ME TE WHAKAWĀTEA TĀHAWA

HARD MAHI ACHIEVES GREAT RESULTS IN GAS DETECTION AND DECONTAMINATION

In June our Gas Detection Project moved into business as usual and our Decontamination Project closed. The people who worked on them achieved some amazing results.

GAS DETECTION

The Gas Detection Project (the Project) was set up to understand the level of exposure to hazardous gases that our firefighters are subjected to, across a variety of roles.

Operational Engagement and Change Manager on the Project, Cam Grylls, said that over the last two years, the Project has delivered Ventis Pro5 personal gas monitor (PGM) equipment and training to 51 of our fire stations across the motu, with a further rollout to 38 stations and the National

Training Centre being completed as the Project closed out.

'The data was validated through observation during two separate Firefighter Behaviour Studies, one in the built environment and one in the natural environment. The Behaviour Studies involved an Occupational Hygienist spending time on shift at several fire stations across the country, and then on the fireground at two long duration wildfire events. This enabled them to observe the use of the PGMs



'The use of the PGMs and the data gathered has provided valuable insights into the risks our firefighters may be exposed to while responding to incidents or investigating the cause.'

including start of shift checks, attachment to PPE, and tasks being undertaken by personnel when an alarm activated.'

Cam said everyone involved in the Project was pleased with what has been achieved with support from the working group and District-based trainers, and the positive impact that this is having on health and safety for our frontline firefighters.

'As well as equipping many of our people in Fire and Emergency with gas detection capability, we achieved several other milestones.

'We replaced end-of-life PGMs for up to 100 Specialist Fire Investigators. We trialled personal gas detection capability and analysed exposures in the natural environment, and we increased our Hazmat capability through the rollout of the MultiRAE Lite Blue detectors to detect Chlorine and Ammonia (one per District).

'We presented options for consideration on the future of personal gas monitoring in both the built and natural environment to the organisation, which resulted in an additional rollout of PGMs in the built environment. Consideration is being given to the options provided for the natural environment.'

PGM devices are intended to monitor a worker's breathing zone to ensure they are not being exposed to hazardous gases. At fires, this presents primarily as carbon monoxide (CO) and hydrogen cyanide (HCN) (referred to as the toxic twins), or flammable gases during a response at any incident type. Firefighters also attend medical incidents which can involve gas poisoning by CO and hydrogen sulphide (H₂S).

The 5-gas detector for use in the built environment (Ventis Pro5) detects carbon monoxide, flammable gases, hydrogen sulphide, hydrogen cyanide, and oxygen.

The single gas detector for use in the natural environment (Tango TX1) detects carbon monoxide.

DECONTAMINATION PROJECT

This project focused on defining the decontamination capabilities needed for Fire and Emergency, including low/no-water solutions for Stage 2 decontamination and warm water shower options for Stage 3. The aim was to gain insights to guide future capability considerations for our organisation.

In early 2023, project members travelled to Australia to experience and evaluate a range of decontamination techniques, equipment, and technologies used by fire services in Sydney, Adelaide, and Brisbane.

National Advisor Decontamination, Ben Colbert, said based on what they learned about the Australian fire services' capability, in particular the Queensland Fire Department, the project identified what equipment to purchase for Fire and Emergency to trial for low/no-water treatment.

'Although the equipment has been successfully used in Queensland, it was necessary to trial the equipment in our context.

'Our default practice has been to shower anyone considered contaminated, whereas modern practice is to check for contamination, use a combination of low/no-water treatments and confirm the success of the decontamination before releasing the person.

'We chose low/no-water treatments as we believed they would deliver real change earlier to those impacted by hazardous substance incidents.'

Again, over the last 18 months, a lot was achieved. Ben said that over that time the project conducted working group

trials to evaluate and refine low/no-water decontamination techniques. These were then tested in station trials between October 2024 and April 2025.

Also, during this time, the project organised three successful simulation exercises (SIMEXs). In November 2024, a SIMEX was held at Trentham Military Camp under the guidance of the Institute of Environmental Science and Research. The exercise simulated a transport accident involving a nuclear densometer and a fire at a research facility, requiring the decontamination of personnel and equipment involved in both incidents.

'We feel we have made significant progress in improving, and the thinking around how we conduct decontamination.' National Advisor Decontamination, Ben Colbert

A second SIMEX was held at Remutaka Prison earlier this year alongside the Department of Corrections. The scenario, which was a second alarm response from Fire and Emergency, involved a disorder event with non-compliant prisoners who had access to a mystery chemical. This resulted in a chemical attack on prison staff, with several prisoners and Corrections staff needing to be triaged, and some requiring decontamination.

The third and final SIMEX was held at Hawkes' Bay Regional Prison in April 2025. This involved a scenario of a chemical spill near a cell block that involved the evacuation of inmates overcome by fumes (Corrections staff were the 'actors' for this event).

A future capability report with options for consideration was presented to the organisation in June 2025.



TE WHAKANUITANGA O Ā MĀTOU KAIMAHI KI NGĀ HŌNORE ROERA

OUR PEOPLE CELEBRATED WITH ROYAL HONOURS



Royal Honours recipients: (L-R) Paul Burns, Neville Phillips, John Oliver, Harry Carter and Ian Pickard.

Five past and present Fire and Emergency personnel were presented with their Royal Honours by the Governor General, the Rt Hon Dame Cindy Kiro, at Government House in Wellington earlier this year.

Paul Burns of Prebbleton and Ian Pickard of Papamoa were made Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit and John Oliver of Ōtāne, Harry Carter of Whangārei, and Neville Phillips of Mātaura were presented with their King's Service Medals.

Following the ceremony at Government House, the recipients and their whānau attended a luncheon where they were celebrated alongside our Board Chair, Rebecca Keoghan, Executive Leadership Team, and Region and District management.

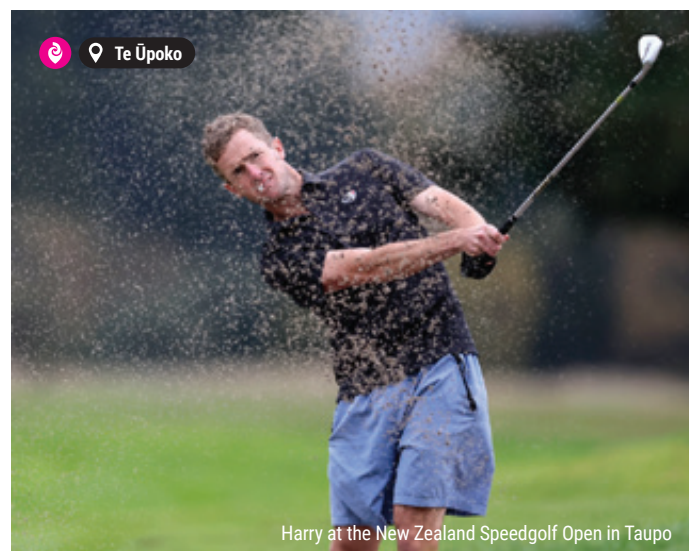
The five recipients have more than 230 years of combined service between them, and each has left an indelible mark on the communities that they serve. The contributions they have made range from mentoring international Urban Search and Rescue Teams as Paul has done, overseeing the rollout of Station Management System as Ian did and spending half a century involved in waterway competitions like Neville.

The range of community initiatives that each of the recipients have been involved in outside of Fire and Emergency are numerous and essential to the people they serve.

'This award serves as a representation of the many years of selfless and generous acts that our recipients carried out in the interest of bettering their communities, and the people in them', says Board Chair, Rebecca Keoghan.

'I am certain that their actions throughout the years and this award are a great source of pride for their whānau, friends and the brigades they have served with.'

In June, Ron Ealam, Marius Bron, Gavin Dennis, and Alan (Curly) Troon were recognised in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours list. They will receive their Honours in a ceremony in Wellington in September. The awarding of Royal Honours is a reinforcement of the inspirational calibre of those who choose to dedicate their time to Fire and Emergency, both as volunteers and paid personnel.



Harry at the New Zealand Speedgolf Open in Taupo

TE KAITINEIAHI TOA WHAKAIHUWAKA NŌ WHAKAORIORI – KOROWHA TERE

MASTERTON FIREFIGHTER TAKES OUT NATIONAL SPEEDGOLF CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE

After over a decade teeing off as a professional golfer around the world, Harry Bateman has swapped golf clubs for Level Twos. Now almost a year into his role as a Firefighter with the Masterton Fire Brigade, Harry is thriving in a job that keeps him close to home and gives him the team spirit he craved.



Harry Bateman

'I had a decent run,' Harry says, reflecting on his 11 years competing internationally in Europe, Australia, Japan, and New Zealand. But with a young family, and a desire to settle down, Harry decided it was time for a change. 'I wanted to be closer to home, and to help others. Golf is such an individual sport, and I wanted to be part of a team. The teamwork aspect of firefighting really appealed to me.'

Harry hasn't left golf behind entirely though. He's taken up speedgolf, a fast-paced combination of running and golf, where players aim to complete 18 holes in the fewest strokes and the quickest time. 'Staying fit is part of the job, and speedgolf gives me a great way to do that,' says Harry.

In April, Harry won his first national title at the New Zealand Speedgolf Open, shooting 73 in just 38 minutes and 27 seconds. He's now planning to compete in the World Speedgolf Championships in New Zealand next year and is even considering a return to the US Open in October. Good luck, Harry!

KA KOTAHI MAI NGĀ WĀHINE O TE TAI POUTIINI MŌ NGĀ WHAKANGUNGU ME TE WHAKAWHANAUNGA WEST COAST WĀHINE COME TOGETHER FOR TRAINING AND CONNECTION

After popular demand, and a specific request for warmer weather, the second West Coast Women's Training & Networking Weekend was held. It brought together 22 wāhine from across Te Ihu – from Haast to Karamea and everywhere in between.

Designed to strengthen skills, build confidence, and foster connection among wāhine in Fire and Emergency, the weekend was a great success! Many attendees came from smaller, remote brigades that don't often have access to networking and hands-on training opportunities.

The event kicked off with a meet-and-greet BBQ on Friday night, where three lucky participants won prizes. Saturday began with training in K-Codes and communications. Hato Hone St John ambulance officers then joined in for a conversation on how crews can collaborate more effectively during joint responses. Later, Westpower ran an insightful session on working safely around power lines, before attendees got hands-on with operational training alongside instructors John Ross, Rob Millner, and returning Anzac Station Firefighter Lawanda Cowan.

Sunday's focus shifted to leadership, communication, and presentation skills, led by Hamish Peter. Hamish also explored how our values intersect with personal and volunteer life. The weekend concluded with an immersive training scenario at Mines Rescue: a 'fire in a tunnel' drill that tested breathing apparatus, rescue, Mayday, and water supply operations across multiple crews. The teamwork and commitment on display were inspiring.

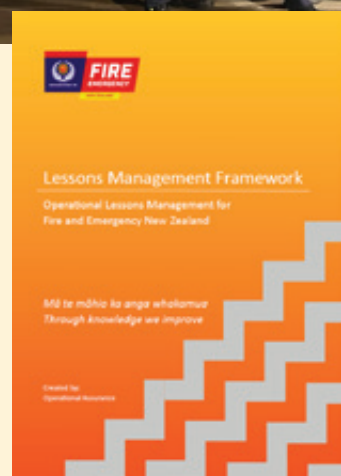
The wāhine left with new skills, deeper relationships, and a greater sense of belonging. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing gratitude for the empowering, inclusive environment.

Thanks to all who supported the event – here's to even more growth and connection next time!

For more information on the training and networking events, contact West Coast District Office, Ange Bugler. If you are interested in organising or hosting an engagement or development event please contact women@fireandemergency.nz.



Wāhine from across Te Ihu gather together on the West Coast



HE ANGA Ā-MOTU HOU MŌ TE WHAKAPAINGA
MOROKI ME NGĀ AKORANGA

NEW NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND LESSONS

Fire and Emergency recently launched our Lessons Management Framework, supported by a new Lessons Management policy and other tools for frontline personnel. This mahi strengthens our commitment to improving services and the health and safety of our frontline personnel.

'By ensuring we have a national framework for continuous improvement and lessons, we can now better demonstrate where we have learned from the past to improve operations into the future,' says Operational Assurance National Manager, Trevor Brown.

'Everyone has a role in lessons and continuous improvement. The new resources support our frontline personnel to undertake hot debriefs and After-Action Reviews, and the policy and framework outlines our approach towards analysing observations in order to generate lessons.'

We have also updated our Feederlines case study series and embedded the OILL

(observation – insight – lesson identified – lesson learned) methodology into how we conduct operational and targeted reviews.'

Is the Operational Assurance Team developing anything else?

Trevor noted that the team is developing a digital Lessons Management Field Guide to support our personnel in capturing observations and applying a lessons approach.

'In addition, we are building an Operational Assurance Database – a central repository that will house Fire and Emergency's library of lessons, along with practical field advice.

'These tools are designed to help our frontline personnel by guiding an Officer's strategy and tactics as they respond to an incident, and to support the professional development of our personnel who are looking to upskill.'

Who can support me to use it?

The team has established a network of Lessons Champions.

'The champions are the first port of call in your local area and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. They may also support our people who wish to get involved with continuous improvement and lessons management on station,' says Trevor.

Where can I access all of these resources?

Email the Operational Assurance Team: Lessons@fireandemergency.nz



TE WHAKATIPU I Ō TĀTAU KAIĀRAHI – TE TAUNGA
KI NGĀ WHAKAWHITI KŌRERO WHĒUAUA

DEVELOPING OUR LEADERS – MASTERING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

You know those discussions that you don't particularly like but need to have? Maybe you feel a bit lost in how to deal with these situations and don't know where to get support?



MDC workshop at Sumner Volunteer Fire Brigade

So often we avoid having these types of conversations and leave things to fester. Things can escalate and lead to irreparable damage. It is inevitable that leaders will face these scenarios from time to time.

'We don't respond to incidents without being properly trained, so why would we expect our leaders to have the tough conversations without any guidance?,' says Senior Advisor Leadership Development, Michel Fivet.

To help leaders with these challenges, Fire and Emergency offers opportunities to 'Master Difficult Conversations'.

Available as a standalone workshop, an online module, embedded in our Lead Teams programme and the Volunteer Executive Officers course, you can choose how to access this learning.

Feedback from the Mastering Difficult Conversations workshop:

'Very useful information. As someone who has been the victim of sexual assault, it definitely helped me remember that standing up and coming forward was the best decision and outcome for not only myself but for future members coming through, thanks.'

Anon

The topics explore our values, behaviour, communication, and conflict resolution.

'We want to give our people the confidence and skills to manage difficult conversations well, and to help them identify and address inappropriate behaviour at the earliest opportunity to stop it in its tracks,' says Michel.

'By doing these things well, leaders will be helping to create an environment that's supportive, respectful and inclusive, with good team dynamics.'

'I found the Difficult Conversation workshops to be highly beneficial, both as a personal development tool and for enhancing the capabilities of our station. It's important that we promote these conversations at all levels to create a more open and supportive environment.'

Senior Firefighter, Wigram Station, **Regan Blogg**

'A great interactive workshop that generated great discussion within our brigade. Very succinct way of getting us all on the same page in relation to Fire and Emergency values and how our own brigade and individual values aligned.'

Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Upper Moutere Volunteer Fire Brigade, **Fiona Bryan**

Fire and Emergency is building a positive culture where people feel safe so they can perform at their best – and this is one of many initiatives that is making a difference. The more people are equipped with these skills, the more confident and capable we'll be at navigating these tricky situations and the faster we'll see the culture shifting across Fire and Emergency.



Find out more

KIA MŌHIO KI TE KAWENATA WHAKATINANAHIA TE KAWENATA KNOW THE CODE LIVE THE CODE

Te Tikanga Whanonga | Our Code of Conduct describes how we should act to ensure Fire and Emergency is a place where all of us feel we belong and can thrive. The more we thrive, the stronger we are as an organisation, and the better we can support our communities and each other.

read
learn
thrive



You've got to know the Code to live the Code!

STEP
1

READ THE CODE



STEP
2

COMPLETE THE E-MODULE
(REQUIRED FOR ALL PERSONNEL)



STEP
3

CHECK YOUR
KNOWLEDGE WITH OUR
QUICK CODE QUIZ



How did you go? Need more info? Check out the tools and resources on the Portal. Search "Code of Conduct".

We're there for you when you need us, with practical hands-on help and support.

In 2024 alone, our members and their families received \$15k to help recover from the effects of a disaster.

New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society
Proudly supporting our members & their families, through the tough times and the good times.
www.firefighters.org.nz

JOIN US ONLINE TODAY

SPEAK SAFE@FAIRWAY: INVESTIGATIONS



Since it was launched just over a year ago, Speak Safe @ Fair Way has had 265 enquiries, of which 226 were complaints, resulting in 52 investigations. Investigations is an area they often get questions about, so here Speak Safe talks us through the process.

What can you investigate?

Our mandate is to investigate bullying, harassment, victimisation, sexual harm, and complex relationships that negatively impact the workplace. We triage each complaint and assess if the issues require investigation.

How does it start?

The process is initially led by the person making the complaint. Often, they might spend some time deciding, accessing supports such as Kāpehu, and bringing together supporting information first. We won't begin an investigation until they're ready.

Next, we notify Fire and Emergency and the person whom the allegation is about, explaining the process and wellbeing supports to them too.

We help everyone identify and gather information or evidence that will assist in the investigation and connect with any witnesses.

A key part of our service is impartially supporting all parties through what can be a difficult time. We manage the process in confidence, with sensitivity and at a pace they're comfortable with. We do our best to work with each person's needs.

What is the role of the investigator?

The investigator determines what did or did not happen. Once an investigation gets underway, it usually involves interviews with each person and their supporting witnesses, reviewing Fire and Emergency processes and policies, and considering evidence.

Remember the Speak Safe @ Fair Way service is free, confidential, and independent.

We explain the investigator's role and the process, scope and timeframes for each investigation within a Terms of Reference (ToR) document with input from all involved.

What happens after?

A draft report sets out the complaint, the relevant policies and codes, the evidence received and the investigator's findings. We share this, so everyone can check their account is accurately recorded.

After considering feedback, we then issue a final report, which Fire and Emergency uses to make decisions. We check in and follow up on progress.

How long does it take?

A lot of things can affect how long an investigation takes, including if it's a complex or long-standing matter, if multiple people or representatives are involved, or when people won't engage in the process.

Across the first 10 investigations completed, the average timeframe from start to finish was 129 working days, with the investigation itself taking 79 days from finalised Terms of Reference through to draft report.

We're learning and creating some efficiencies along the way, and we're also seeing issues being reported earlier, which all helps.

Get in touch:

Freephone 0800 677 697, or email speaksafe@fairwayresolution.com.

Or use the QR code to access via the webform:



fairway

kia tau
YOUR EXPERTS
IN DISPUTE
RESOLUTION

A METRE FROM THE HEATER

KEEP EVERYTHING AT A SAFE DISTANCE

SEE A FIRE BEFORE
IT STARTS

338 °C

275 °C

340 °C

15 °C