

# Tips for preparing an AFAC25 abstract

## What is the AFAC25 theme?

The AFAC25 theme this year is: ***From local to global: leveraging systems, capability and connection.***

More detail on the theme can be found on the following pages:

- <https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/notices-news-and-events/news/afac25-call-for-abstracts/>
- <https://www.afaconference.com.au/>

## What is the purpose of an abstract?

Abstracts are used by AFAC organisers to understand the value of your work and to determine whether it is appropriate for the event and audience.

The purpose of an abstract is therefore to summarise the work that you want to present in a way that is brief, clear, and intriguing. You want to engage the reader and communicate the importance of your work.

An abstract can be considered your *'audition'* for the conference, and if accepted, can be considered your *'advertisement'* in the conference programme.

## What should I include in an abstract?

- clear, descriptive title that sparks interest
- context / background and value of the work
- aim/s, research question/s or issue/s the work sought to answer
- methodology
- key results or findings
- conclusion/s and significance

## Is there a word limit?

Abstracts must be no longer than 300 words in total, excluding title.

## What are some tips for writing an abstract?

- Review previous AFAC abstracts to see exemplars and generate ideas
- Seek feedback from your colleagues, both those involved in the work and not
- Thorough proofreading
- Ensure a clear linkage to the conference theme
- Highlight the novelty of your work
- Leave out unnecessary detail – keep to the 300-word limit

## Important dates

6-17 January	Draft and iterate abstract
	Abstracts must be reviewed and signed off by your National Manager, the Chief Advisor of your branch, and your Deputy Chief Executive
17 January	Internal FENZ abstract submissions close end of day <a href="mailto:AFAC.Conference@fireandemergency.nz">AFAC.Conference@fireandemergency.nz</a>
28 January	ELT review abstract submissions
4 February	Abstracts due to AFAC
Mid-April	AFAC advise FENZ of successful abstracts
May-July	Design posters and presentations + ELT endorsement

## Key contacts

- For additional guidance about what to include in your abstract, what AFAC is like, to be put in touch with someone from last year's conference from your branch, and for **submitting your final abstract**: [AFAC.Conference@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:AFAC.Conference@fireandemergency.nz)
- For help drafting your abstract: [research@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:research@fireandemergency.nz)

## Example posters



## Example abstracts

### *Lithium-ion batteries: Warning people about the fires hiding in plain sight*

The whole world is grappling with how to handle and minimise the risk of lithium-ion battery fires. While Fire and Emergency New Zealand don't have a lot of data on the incidence of lithium-ion battery fires in New Zealand, we knew we couldn't afford to wait to take action to educate the New Zealand public.

With a strong track record of disruptive behaviour change campaigns, we used our audience insights to make a start. When people think lithium-ion battery devices, they don't think fire. Most fire sources involve flames or heat and so are inherently associated with risk of fire. We knew this

association with fire was something we needed to establish. Our eye-catching campaign leveraged the well-established visual language of warning labels to build awareness of the fire risk of charging lithium-ion battery devices. The campaign achieved almost 10 times the impressions forecast, starting countless conversations, and most importantly, is already shifting perceptions and behaviours among the public.

The campaign was a collaborative effort, bringing together many parts of Fire and Emergency New Zealand to pool and build knowledge and is only the start of the journey.

This presentation serves to provide a case study that other Fire Authorities can learn from and leverage in dealing with this growing danger.

### ***Risking it all through innovation***

Fire and Emergency New Zealand has reset its organisational risk management landscape to enable us as an organisation to work together to solve our risk challenges.

Developed over the last two years our new landscape now allows us to:

- Widen our narrow view of risks and ensure we focus on areas that truly matter to our organisation;
- Collaborate, learn, and share information to remove risk barriers;
- Provide structure and boundaries for how we as an organisation identify, analyse, mitigate, manage, treat and monitor risks; and
- Foster better cross organisational discussions on mitigations, treatments, and ownership.

Being the first in the New Zealand public sector to take this approach, our focus has included implementing innovative and thought-driven risk management approaches to identify and raise the overall risk maturity of the organisation.

This presentation will walk the audience through the set-up of our organisational risk landscape and demonstrate how we have used risk management A3s to enable collaboration, learning and sharing of risk information across our organisation to lift its overall risk management maturity.

### ***Building diverse and inclusive teams through a unified leadership development approach***

For Fire and Emergency New Zealand to achieve its strategic goals it needs effective leadership at all levels of the organisation - leaders who are capable of building diverse and inclusive teams where people are safe, supported, and respected.

Fire and Emergency introduced a comprehensive Leadership Development Framework in 2021, and since then has been designing and implementing leadership programmes aligned with this framework.

This presentation will outline the initiatives underway at the first two levels of leadership – Lead Self and Lead Teams:

- The focus for Lead Self is for individuals to grow their understanding of themselves and how their actions impact on others.
- At Lead Teams level, leaders continue to build their self-awareness as well as developing their communication skills and learning how to build a high performing team.

These programmes have been built with the principles of accessibility and diversity in mind. This means our content; delivery methods and cohorts are a mix of career and volunteer firefighters as well as operational and non-operational staff.

We will provide an overview of how the programmes were developed and share initial evaluation data regarding the impact for leaders and their teams. Other initiatives related to the framework will also be discussed.

### ***Embracing innovation and disruption: designing the future for our sector – Proud Employer Programme***

As with the three elements required for fire to exist (heat, oxygen, and fuel), there are three critical components for brigades to thrive – Volunteers, Family/Whānau and their Employers.

Fire and Emergency New Zealand has made a substantial investment to improve the experience and support for employers of volunteers / self-employed volunteers. Our Employer Recognition Programme has grown to include around 4,500 businesses and organisations.

In 2019, we launched our Proud Employer Mark – representing the collaboration between volunteers, their employers and Fire and Emergency. The mark is displayed publicly by employers and self-employed volunteers, and we have delivered regular campaigns – including in collaboration with larger employers Fonterra, Air New Zealand and Nestle – to increase public awareness of the mark and highlight the contribution our employers / self-employed volunteers make within the community. We provide support for Brigades to display the names of employers on community-facing signage boards outside their stations and on their appliances. The number of employer recognition events that we support with funding for the brigade continues to increase, while the launch of our regular Employer Newsletter is a direct channel for key messaging, building employers connection to Fire and Emergency.

Our latest research identifies that employers want a more active role in promoting the work their volunteers do. Results showed that nearly 70% of employers are interested in promoting Fire and Emergency messaging to the wider community.

Employers / self-employed volunteers are facing increased pressure due to global and climatic events. Local communities expect support from larger employers during natural disasters and in return there is a desire amongst rural communities to support community minded businesses.

In 2024, our priority is to provide our employers with the knowledge and opportunity to increase their involvement in the programme and to continue to build successful partnerships.

### ***Supporting our employee-led-networks to thrive***

Our communities are changing. By 2038, more than 50 percent of New Zealanders will identify as Māori, Asian or Pacific and we will speak more than 200 languages.

Increasing diversity and inclusiveness in our workforce helps us work more effectively with our communities. It also makes Fire and Emergency New Zealand a better place to work.

Employee Led Networks (ELNs) are groups of like-minded people who come together to help our people feel included, valued, and comfortable being themselves at work. Networks have existed at Fire and Emergency for years but, until recently, the organisation had never formally committed to this important mahi (work).

In 2023, Fire and Emergency published new Guidelines for our current and emerging ELNs. The Guidelines outline how the organisation can support Networks and the process for setting a new one up. The Guidelines formalise the role of our Chief Executive and wider Leadership Team in supporting our ELNs.

Along with the Guidelines, Fire and Emergency has introduced a funding model to help ELNs achieve their goals. Existing ELNs now receive \$10,000 per network and can bid for more pūtea (money) if required. Each ELN decides how they spend this funding, depending on their priorities.

Our Rainbow Network, Whiria te Tāngata, used their funding to secure a spot at the Auckland Pride Parade. Afi Pasefika hosted a leadership fono (meeting), with the Secretary for Pacific Peoples in attendance, and our Disability Network is organising an in-person hui (meeting) which caters to various accessibility needs – the first time they have done this.

The development of the Guidelines was a collaborative effort, bringing together many parts of Fire and Emergency to craft this document. Our ELT have committed to sponsoring our Networks, which increases the mana (status) and influence of our ELNs throughout the organisation.

### ***Burning Down the House: A disruptive approach to fueling fire safety***

Fire and Emergency New Zealand strives to build stronger communities while protecting what matters. A key part of our work is reducing the incidence of unwanted fires and the risk to life and property. This requires a range of interventions, including innovation and disruption to change behaviour.

In August 2023 we adapted our ability to safely conduct controlled house burns for training and education to stage a house fire live on Seven Sharp – New Zealand’s primetime news and current affairs programme. As the nation watched from the safety of their lounges, a journalist inside the property, accompanied by our firefighting teams, was able to dramatically demonstrate the dangers of lithium-ion batteries, the importance of working smoke alarms and the necessity of escape plans and safe meeting places.

Weeks of preparation by Fire and Emergency and Seven Sharp teams ensured the house, previously marked for demolition, could be burnt safely and responsibly, while delivering fire safety messages in the most effective way. Teams worked with local communities before, during and after the event to ensure there was little disruption as possible, while allowing the local community including schools and kindergartens the opportunity to experience the risk of fire first-hand.

This presentation will step through the process that made the event an outstanding success. An entire 30-minute episode dedicated to the house burn saw over 700,000 New Zealanders tune in – a record audience in this primetime slot. Further coverage followed in news segments the next day including coverage of a family who, having watched the live burn, knew how to safely evacuate their property and phone 111 when their house caught fire. Research following the event showed a four percent rise in New Zealand households having a fire escape plan. A rare example of a house burning actually saving lives.