



Shaping our future

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Fire and Emergency New Zealand is changing to become a connected and responsive national fire and emergency service that better serves our communities. The Operating Model will guide what we will do, how we will do it and the way we will work.

Our new organisation has a strong foundation of passionate, committed and skilled people across the career, volunteer and non-operational spectrum. In lots of ways we do a great job now and we want to maintain the trust and confidence our communities have in us.

However, as well as improving what we do well now, we can explore new ways of working that will better meet the changing risks and needs of our communities.

At the end of last year, about 40 people from across the organisation (including representatives from unions and associations) got together to identify the key features of our proposed Operating Model.

There are ten key features of our Operating Model:

- Building the risks and needs of communities into the way that we work
- Unifying our service delivery
- Developing a shared and inclusive identity that celebrates our diversity
- Enabling sustainable volunteerism
- Partnering with key sector groups and organisations to jointly deliver co-ordinated services
- Collaboratively reducing risk, the impacts to people, property and the environment
- Being a fit-for-purpose organisation
- Creating a strategic national organisation
- Ensuring appropriate needs-based investment across the organisation
- Becoming intelligence led; technology enabled.

As we design how we'll deliver these key features, we want feedback from as many people as possible about them.

We encourage you to discuss your ideas with your colleagues and managers and you can also provide feedback by emailing myvoice@fireandemergency.nz

We'll formally consult with all personnel, and with unions and associations, once we've developed the proposed Operating Model. This consultation will start as soon as possible after July 2018.

More information about the Operating Model work is available on the Portal Integration pages.

www.portal.fireandemergency.nz/projects-and-programmes/integration-phase/workstreams/integrated-organisation-and-operating-model/



From the top

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the first edition of the Fire and Emergency NZ Update for 2018. Each month this update will bring you news and stories from around our organisation, as well as integration progress.

Urban and rural crews have been kept busy since our last edition responding to a number of large fires, floods and other incidents this summer.

These incidents have demonstrated the difference Fire and Emergency is already making in terms of our ability to pull many different functions together into one cohesive team- so well done to everyone involved in the response, coordination, and advance preparation that contributed to the successful resolution of these incidents.

This Update features stories on the key features our organisation will have in the future (the Operating Model), an update on the pilot Local Advisory Committee (LAC) in Hawke's Bay, and an update on the challenges of responding to a large vegetation fire in one of New Zealand's most remote locations – the Chatham Islands.

If you have questions or feedback about any of these stories, you can email the team at myvoice@fireandemergency.nz or me directly at ce@fireandemergency.nz

Thanks,

Rhys

The Makara crew, post-containment



Achievements and awards

27 January 2018- John Schroeder- 50 year medal

Congratulations and thank you for your outstanding commitment to your community.

Let us know if you or your teams have won any awards or received any special recognition from your local community. Contact us at MyVoice@fireandemergency.nz or share it with us on Facebook.

Hawke's Bay LAC trial starts and upcoming public consultation on LAC boundaries

It is our job to engage with our communities so we can understand, and meet, their risks and need. We'll be establishing Local Advisory Committees (LACs) from mid-2018 onwards to supplement the knowledge and networks we already have in each region.

A three month trail to fine tune how we will design and run LACs has just started in the Hawke's Bay. The trial, which runs until May, will help us better understand what skills and knowledge LAC members should have, how the committees should be structured, how they work with our organisation, and how we can incorporate local input into our planning processes. The trial builds on what we learnt from the two pilots held in the Greater Auckland and Mid-South Canterbury regions over the past 18 months.

The seven people appointed to be on the Hawke's Bay trial committee have experience and knowledge of land use, health and welfare, local government, iwi, commerce, management and emergency response in the Hawke's Bay. With their collective knowledge of local issues, and their networks of contacts, their advice will help inform our local and national planning.

Responsibility for the governance, management, or operational control of local fire forces, personnel, resources, and budget lies with Fire and Emergency NZ.

Local Advisory Committees will be established nationally after the Board confirms the number and areas each will cover. This is expected to be mid-2018. Public consultation on establishing Local Advisory Committee boundaries is planned to start in April, and run for about six weeks. Remember that LAC boundaries are not operational boundaries – which we use to organise and manage ourselves internally.

In the lead-up to the consultation on LAC boundaries, we will provide you, unions and associations, and key groups such as other fire and emergency services, with more information and we encourage everyone who is interested to make a submission.

Check out the LAC pages on the Portal and our website for biographies of the trial committee members. Also, keep an eye on our Facebook pages over the next few weeks for alerts about the LAC consultation process.

Hawke's Bay Local Advisory Committee (LAC) trial committee members were appointed by the Board earlier this month.



The challenge of remoteness

While Fire and Emergency NZ often tackles fires in challenging terrain and remote locations, one of the most remote has to be the Chatham Islands. This summer's massive Makara Fire on the island has been a major logistical exercise.

The fire started in the southern part of Chatham Island on February 1. Volunteer fire fighters, DOC staff, and local contractors were the initial responders. Facing a very large fire with limited resource, our initial strategy was to protect people and property.

"With resources generally taking between two to four days to arrive on the Island, we needed to plan well ahead," said Principal Rural Fire Officer Craig Cottrill.

"The Wellington Regional Coordination Centre coordinated logistics, while the Defence Force sent a C-130 Hercules to get invaluable information about the scale and spread of the blaze, and the fire conditions."

"The Logistics Managers (Pete Walker, Kerry McSaveney and Harry Howard) had a big job coordinating supplies, each spending a week on the island and probably working the hardest out of all the IMT). They were all ably supported by Sue Stewart who was coordinating supplies from Wellington."

Two long range helicopters and 14 Rural Response Team firefighters arrived on the island the next day, allowing us to start tackling the fire directly. The fire was contained after extensive aerial attack, combined with cooler weather and rain. Helicopters also moved crews and equipment from the staging point to the fire ground each day.

"Crews have since been doing the hard work of digging out hotspots, blacking out, and containing flare-ups. We expect crews to be deployed until the end of February because the fire has burnt quite deep in places, and because the fire burnt through more than 2400 hectares."

"Lots of people have supported and helped organise the response. As well as the NZDF, we are working with the Chatham Islands Council, the Department of Conservation, Chatham Islands Air and local landowners. And of course our efforts are largely possible thanks to the support of our volunteers' employers," says Craig.



Use of helicopters likely to increase says CE

Our Chief Executive Rhys Jones recently made a flying visit to Rotorua to meet with Fire and Emergency personnel and Philips Search and Rescue Trust staff.

The Trust serve a number of communities in the central North Island, performing search and rescue and emergency air ambulance response.

Fire and Emergency crews in the Central Lakes Area have a long standing relationship the Trust which developed into the current partnership four years ago. The team has five fire crew members that are able to deploy with the helicopter.

“The fire crew member acts as the eyes for the pilot to quickly assess what is needed at an incident. This works especially well with incidents like road traffic accidents in isolated areas. This is a shining example of Fire and Emergency working in partnership with the local rescue helicopter staff,” says Rhys.

“We know there are other areas of the country, like the Hawkes Bay, where there are strong partnerships like this. The next step is to look at what is working best and how that can be applied to other parts of the country.”

Fire and Emergency is a high user of helicopter contractors, especially in rural areas. With the merger of urban and rural we are likely to see an increased use of helicopters, particularly as a way of quickly deploying crews to an emergency.

Innovative training approach in Region 2 gains real results

As part of the Volunteer Support Year One initiatives, 12 additional urban capability trainers have been recruited across the regions to provide local and flexible training activity, directly related to the needs of brigades and their communities. The first five of ten new rural capability trainers are currently also being recruited.

Region 2 are using these new trainers in an innovative way that’s resulted in a real boost in the capability of local volunteer personnel.

Region Training Coordinator Kevin Dyer explains: “The trainers have significantly boosted the Station Officer programme by running three learner support days. These days have helped prepare people for the courses, and resulted in more people achieving passes.

“The positive impact is shown by the fact that 36 personnel are due to complete the Volunteer Station Officer course by April 2018- compared to only six in between July 2016 and June 2017. Those doing the Station Officer course felt more confident prior to taking the practical, thanks to the one on one coaching from the trainers.”



All fire forces to have new IGC radios by end of the year

By December 2018, all fire forces and brigades will be on the same radio system, improving our ability to respond to fires and emergencies as one organisation.

The roll out is progressing well, with all urban brigades, other than the Chatham Islands, getting their new, portable Incident Ground Communications (IGC) radios. The roll out to rural forces has started with all Principal Rural Fire Officers (PRFOs) and Deputy Principal Rural Fire Officers (DPRFOs) getting IGC radios in December. That’s a total of 4,895 radios so far.

Response from the frontline has been positive, with the project team receiving comments such as: “The whole process was seamless” and “The training and the communication throughout the project was excellent”.

The roll out of the dual band (VHF and UHF) capable radios to individual rural fire forces will begin in April, starting with the Canterbury region due to it having the highest fire risk profile. Details of the roll out are on the project’s Portal page.