

Background to project	
Where has this project come from?	<p>Following the December 2022 independent review of Fire and Emergency’s culture and complaint handling practices, 20 recommendations were made to improve our culture.</p> <p>5 key themes came from these recommendations, one of them is ‘Strong and accountable leadership’, which this project falls under.</p>
What did the recommendation for this project say?	<p><i>“All new Chief Fire Officer appointments should be for a term of five years, with rights of renewal. Renewal should be subject to a review that considers past performance including role modelling the desired culture, leadership, and people management”</i></p>
So, this project is only for Chief Fire Officers?	<p>No. As a unified organisation we recognise that our volunteer brigade leaders are more than just the CFO role encompassing the Built and Natural environments.</p> <p>We are using the term of volunteer brigade leader as a collective when referring to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Fire Officers, Controllers, Brigade Officer in Charge (OIC) <p>We are using the term deputy volunteer brigade leader as a collective when referring to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deputy Chief Fire Officers, Deputy Controllers, Brigade 2nd in Charge (2IC)
Why was this recommended?	<p>Previous reports have indicated that there are some areas of leadership within FENZ that need improvement. This recommendation addresses the issue with, in some situations, the lack of support and development that has been offered to our volunteer brigade leaders in the past.</p> <p>This also allows our leaders the opportunity to take on a role knowing that there is no expectation that they must stay in that position for the duration of their time with FENZ.</p>
What does the project aim to achieve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support and develop volunteer brigade leaders and their deputies through a collaborative, structured process. - Brigade Leaders will work with Group Managers to identify areas for growth, ensuring the process is not top-down. - Leadership roles are flexible, allowing members to step down without long-term commitment. - Succession planning will be encouraged, and leaders will receive clear guidance on their roles and connections within the organisation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group Managers will be provided with a well-defined process to work with leaders, reducing the likelihood of issues and ensuring brigades and their communities benefit from effective leadership.
Who was consulted regarding this?	<p>From 30 April to 26 May 2024, we opened consultation to gather feedback on these proposed processes as well as general feedback. We're grateful to everyone who contributed their thoughts, especially our volunteers, who made up 87% of individual submissions.</p> <p>The majority of the feedback we received was positive, with most respondents, including volunteer brigade leaders, expressing support for the proposed five-year term and development programme.</p>
When will these processes come into effect?	Starting November 1, 2024, any volunteer brigade leader appointed will be on a five-year renewable term.

About the Support and Development Plans

What is an annual support and development plan?	<p>An annual support and development plan is a collaborative process where each brigade leader works with their Group Manager to create or review a personalised plan that outlines the support mechanisms and development opportunities available to them.</p> <p>This plan ensures brigade leaders have access to the necessary resources, training, and development opportunities to enhance their leadership skills and focus on areas they wish to improve. It also clarifies the expectations and responsibilities of their leadership role.</p> <p>Additionally, the annual plan provides a structured opportunity for both the brigade leader and the Group Manager to reflect on the overall health and progress of the brigade, fostering ongoing development and addressing any emerging needs.</p>
---	--

About the 5-year term

How will the 5-year term work?	<p>At the end of a 5-year term, the volunteer brigade leader (or deputy) and Group Manager (GM) will meet to review performance, considering relevant data and brigade feedback.</p> <p>If the leader wishes to continue in their role, and has the support of the brigade, the GM must provide the necessary support for their renewal.</p>
--------------------------------	--

	<p>If the leader decides not to continue, or if the GM determines (after a thorough review of all the data/information) a change may be needed, the next steps will be discussed. Every effort will be made to enable renewal; this process is not aimed at replacing leaders unless absolutely necessary.</p>
<p>Who will the 5-year term (and Support and Development plans) apply to?</p>	<p>The process will apply to newly appointed volunteer brigade leaders and deputies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chief Fire Officer, Controller, Brigade Officer in Charge, - Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Deputy Controller and Brigade 2IC.
<p>Will brigade leaders be involved in the processes for their deputies?</p>	<p>Yes, when a deputy volunteer brigade leader role becomes available, the brigade leader will have the opportunity to be a part of all processes related to that role – recruitment, support and development, and renewal.</p>
<p>What happens if we are in the middle of appointing a volunteer brigade leader when these processes come into effect?</p>	<p>Existing processes will be followed for this appointment. However, the leader may wish to opt-in to the new processes after the “go live” date.</p>
<p>Why are existing volunteer brigade leaders not included and can they opt into the process?</p>	<p>When our current leaders took on their roles, it was with an open term – to be fair to those parties we won’t change the terms and conditions they are currently operating under. However, starting in early 2025, we will introduce a phased opt-in process for any existing leaders who wish to participate.</p>
<p>Why is the term 5 years?</p>	<p>A 5-year term provides sufficient time for a brigade leader to grow and develop within their role, allowing them to fully take ownership of their responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to the brigade. This term offers a balance between giving leaders enough time to make a positive impact without the pressure of feeling locked into the role indefinitely.</p> <p>Moreover, the 5-year period encourages leaders to explore other opportunities within Fire and Emergency, knowing their leadership tenure is not permanent. It is important to emphasise that the term includes a right of renewal, ensuring that if the volunteer brigade leader wishes to continue and the brigade is performing well, functioning smoothly, and meeting its objectives, they can be reappointed for another term.</p>

About the renewal/non-renewal process

<p>What is the process to not renew a volunteer brigade leader's term?</p>	<p>If the brigade leader wishes to continue, the process will explore every option for additional support and development to help them remain in the role.</p> <p>If the leader chooses not to continue beyond the five-year term, succession planning will be prioritised. Potential future leaders within the brigade will be identified and provided with learning and development opportunities.</p> <p>For leaders leaving their position, discussions will focus on identifying a role they would like to continue within the brigade, ensuring their skills, experience, and knowledge are still utilised. We aim to retain their valuable contributions in other capacities.</p> <p>Note: This process is not about replacing leaders but ensuring they are supported and developed for the benefit of their brigade and community.</p>
<p>What happens if a brigade leader doesn't wish to renew but there is no-one to replace them?</p>	<p>There are a few options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They could continue for a shorter timeframe. • An acting role could be offered to an appropriate person. • The GM could look to develop someone else, providing the necessary support and training. • The GM could step in as Brigade Leader until such time a suitable applicant is found or are suitably developed (only for CFO & Controller roles; this is not a first option as this would increase the workload on the GM).
<p>Will the non-renewal just be the GM's decision?</p>	<p>No, there will be a process to follow, and should the GM have concerns about the volunteer brigade leader or deputy continuing, the District Manager and the Region People Business Partner become involved in the process and make the final decision.</p>

Addressing concerns

<p>What support will there be for GMs?</p>	<p>Group Managers will be supported with all aspects of the new processes, through a variety of training and support opportunities. Online briefings will be held and e-modules developed to provide guidance on the processes. 1:1 / small group support will also be provided as requested.</p>
--	---

<p>What support will there be for volunteers?</p>	<p>Volunteers will be supported via online briefing sessions and a series of e-modules.</p>
<p>Is this just a glorified way to get rid of someone the GM doesn't want?</p>	<p>No. This is designed to support and develop our volunteer brigade leaders by providing them with a structured timeframe that alleviates the pressure of feeling like they must hold the position indefinitely. If a change of leadership is necessary, the process will be transparent and follow a well-defined procedure. However, before any change is considered, every effort would be made to support and develop the current leader to ensure they have the opportunity to succeed.</p>
<p>Why not just performance management of non-performers as an option?</p>	<p>Instead of waiting for performance issues to arise, we believe that a proactive, structured support and development process will better equip volunteer brigade leaders to succeed, enjoy their roles, and have greater longevity in the position.</p> <p>By adopting a consistent 5-year approach, where brigade leaders and Group Managers work collaboratively to create a mutually agreed-upon support and development plan, we can help prevent performance problems before they occur. This approach fosters shared ownership of growth and development, rather than the Group Manager simply directing what the leader should do, reducing the likelihood of performance-related issues and the challenges that come with managing them.</p>
<p>How is this any different from what we already have in place?</p>	<p>This process will introduce a more structured approach to support and development for our volunteer brigade leaders. The key difference will be the implementation of a 5-year term, which allows leaders to take on the role without the pressure of feeling they must remain in the position indefinitely. This term-based approach will encourage growth and development while providing leaders with clarity around their tenure.</p> <p>The 5-year structure will offer several benefits, including creating clear expectations for both the brigade leader and the Group Manager, facilitating regular reviews and reflections on leadership and brigade health, and providing a transparent pathway for renewal or leadership transition if needed. This differs from the more open-ended approach currently in place and emphasises proactive development rather than reactive management.</p>
<p>Our brigade has our own system, do we have to implement this?</p>	<p>To ensure consistency throughout our organisation, this process would become the accepted approach.</p>
<p>Why would this not be open to volunteer</p>	<p>Volunteer brigade leaders are encouraged to use the support and development they receive to mentor and develop their officers, thereby enhancing leadership capability and fostering succession</p>

<p>SOs, SSOs, Crew Leaders etc?</p>	<p>planning within their brigade. This approach will empower brigade leaders to take ownership of leadership development within their teams, ensuring that knowledge and skills are passed down effectively.</p> <p>From a logistical standpoint, extending this structured support and development process to all officers would be difficult for Group Managers to manage effectively. By focusing on brigade leaders, we ensure a more sustainable and targeted approach, while allowing them the autonomy to develop leadership capacity across their teams.</p>
<p>Could we lose our volunteer brigade leaders because they don't want this?</p>	<p>We sincerely hope that won't be the case. This process is not designed to push people away from their roles. Instead, it aims to offer greater clarity, support, and development for both brigade leaders and their teams. With a clear understanding of the proposal, we believe that volunteer brigade leaders will see this as a positive change that enhances their leadership journey. The structured support and development offered through this approach is intended to help leaders succeed and grow in their roles, rather than adding undue pressure.</p>
<p>Will this just create extra work for a volunteer brigade leader on top of current expectations from FENZ?</p>	<p>We fully understand that the role of a volunteer brigade leader is already demanding, and this process is designed to be scalable based on the specific support and development needs of the leader and their brigade. There is no expectation for additional workload—just a more structured approach to ensure the right support is in place.</p> <p>In fact, the development opportunities offered could make the role easier, for example, by encouraging delegation of tasks, the creation of a management committee, or other strategies to distribute responsibilities more effectively. The goal is to streamline leadership, not add extra burden.</p>
<p>Why is this not being done for paid leaders within FENZ?</p>	<p>The employment of paid staff is subject to the Employment Relations Act. The majority of paid staff are employed in permanent positions.</p>