

Volunteerism Strategy Six-month Progress Report

Report 2: December 2020 – May 2021



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Foreword

Whakapuakitanga

Fire brigades have been at the heart of New Zealand communities for more than 150 years. In that time, our services have remained vital to our communities but our role and the types of emergencies we respond to have changed.

Volunteers currently make up over 80 percent of our people. They work alongside career firefighters, and are supported by trainers, support staff, leadership teams and a huge range of others right across the organisation.

Volunteers bring more than their skills and numbers: they bring their strengths and awareness of the risks and needs of their communities into the way we work. Fire and Emergency volunteers, alongside our career firefighters, work to fight fires and respond to medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, weather events and natural disasters. We ask them to take time out from their families, their jobs, and their lives to help keep our communities safe.

To ensure we do all we can to support our volunteers, the establishment of Fire and Emergency New Zealand in 2017 required us to communicate directly with volunteers and include their perspectives in all key aspects of our work and decision-making. This is recognised in our legislation, which highlights the need for us to better recognise and support our volunteers and improve the environment in which they work.

In 2019, Fire and Emergency formalised how we would meet that requirement in our first Volunteerism Strategy: Enabling sustainable volunteerism – Te Wakatipu i te tūāotanga. This recognises the key role of volunteers in the community and to our organisation, outlining our volunteerism priorities and the key shifts we are working towards. Implementing the Strategy will ensure we have a thriving and unified volunteer workforce that feels valued, safe and supported, and will help to ensure our organisation is deeply connected to New Zealand communities.

This document is the second six-monthly report on our

progress against the Volunteerism Strategy. It builds on the first report, and shows how we're working to improve how we plan, design and monitor our progress to drive greater accountability and use what we learn to continue to embed volunteerism in how we work.

It is pleasing to see how much we've achieved to support volunteering and volunteerism. Our progress in the last six months was achieved with support from across our whole organisation, with different parts of the business doing their part to make it easier to be a volunteer and build the inclusive culture we want.

COVID-19 continues to complicate our operating environment and impact our people. Our volunteers have adapted well to the new ways of working in response to COVID-19.

COVID-19 has also created new opportunities for Fire and Emergency to work more closely with sector partners such as the New Zealand Police and St John. We know that many of our volunteers also volunteer for other emergency services. Together, we've been looking at how we might make it easier for volunteers. We're exploring ways:

- we could recognise common skills and knowledge without the need for reassessment by each organisation
- to jointly respond to challenges created by spontaneous volunteering when significant emergencies occur.

This report demonstrates our deep and ongoing commitment to supporting our volunteers to ensure that we continue to have a sustainable and thriving volunteer base.



Rhys Jones,
Chief Executive







Introduction

Kupu whakataki

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Volunteerism Strategy notes that *“Volunteers remain vital to the fabric of New Zealand’s society. Volunteerism is fundamental to our country’s ability to provide effective and affordable services, and to build strong, resilient communities. Our organisation is no exception.*

While building safe, resilient communities will always be our focus, the benefits of a strong volunteer culture extend well beyond our organisation. Volunteering contributes more broadly to a healthy, inclusive society in which people have the opportunity to make a difference. Volunteering connects us all, strengthens our sense of belonging and builds stronger communities and societies.”

The Volunteerism Strategy was approved in 2019. Since its approval we’ve been working hard behind the scenes to ensure that volunteerism is embedded in the organisation. A lot of this work is invisible to volunteers as it has been building and strengthening the foundations needed to make volunteerism a key part of our planning and decision-making processes.

There is a lot to celebrate in the last six months, with more to come. We hope you are as excited about the future as we are.

About this report

This report sets out our organisation’s progress against the Fire and Emergency Volunteerism Strategy (2019–2029) between December 2020 and May 2021. In addition to providing information about the things we have started, delivered and ongoing activity, it:

- summarises the logic that guides our investment decisions to implement the strategy
- reports on the initiatives that are under way to embed volunteerism practices into our decision-making processes and to attract, develop, and support volunteers to make volunteering easier
- signals future work that will help our organisation achieve its business goals and better outcomes for volunteers.

This is the second report. The first was published in December 2020, and covered the period June to November 2020.

Terminology

The terms ‘volunteer’, ‘volunteering’ and ‘volunteerism’ are used throughout this document.

- **Volunteer** and **volunteering** relate to work given of one’s free will, not by employment, for the common good or benefit of others. Inherent in the term ‘volunteering’ is the mutual benefit to individuals, organisations and communities.
- **Volunteerism** is the culture and practice of promoting, supporting and valuing volunteers and volunteering within an organisation.

Achieving outcomes for Fire and Emergency and communities

Te whakatutuki i ngā mahi mā Te Ratonga Ahi
me ngā Ohotata i Aotearoa me ngā hapori

Implementing the strategy

Our Volunteerism Strategy sets out our approach and priorities to enable sustainable volunteerism by 2029. Our work to implement the strategy brings it to life. It ensures that decision-makers hear the voice of our volunteers, and delivers real-world changes that make volunteering easier.

Our Volunteerism Portfolio helps us to balance the changes needed to achieve outcomes sought by our organisation, volunteers, their families, employers and communities. The diagram opposite demonstrates how implementing our Volunteerism Strategy improves outcomes for volunteers, the broader workforce, and for the organisation. This helps the organisation achieve its objectives in communities across New Zealand.

Volunteerism Portfolio

We are managing the implementation of the Volunteerism Strategy using a portfolio organised into five work streams. The portfolio supports a whole of organisation approach to drive outcomes and changes.

Work streams help us to group and coordinate our work. They help us to:

- recognise and manage common links between initiatives, and design and implement them so that they build on each other and amplify the benefits they generate
- make sure that our change programme is balanced and that it has a sufficiently broad focus
- support more effective data collection and monitoring and evaluation activities. These build our evidence base, allowing us to make evidence-based investment decisions.

The Volunteerism Portfolio doesn't exist in isolation. It depends on and supports a range of other initiatives and business-as-usual activities that have significant impact for volunteers but are being managed through other portfolios.

The Volunteerism Portfolio helps us to ensure we apply a volunteerism lens when designing and delivering these activities and initiatives. Other initiatives that our Volunteerism Portfolio depends on and supports include:

- Positive Workplace Culture Programme
- Hiwa-i-te-rangi (Māori Outcomes Programme)
- National Women's Advisory Committees (NWAC) and Regional Women's Advisory Networks (RWAN)
- Workforce planning
- Safety, Health and Wellbeing
- Behaviour and Conduct Office
- Implementation of our Service Delivery Model
- Research.

The portfolio work streams are now ready to develop and implement a roadmap for future work. This will highlight how each work stream works with other parts of the organisation to develop and implement assistance, systems and solutions towards the volunteerism strategy goals.

Volunteerism Outcomes and Impacts

Community Impact

Effective, efficient and resilient community-based volunteer services.

Stronger more resilient communities.

Organisational Outcomes

Improved capability to prepare for emergencies, anticipate and reduce risks, respond quickly, efficiently and effectively in a changing environment, and support communities to recover from significant events.

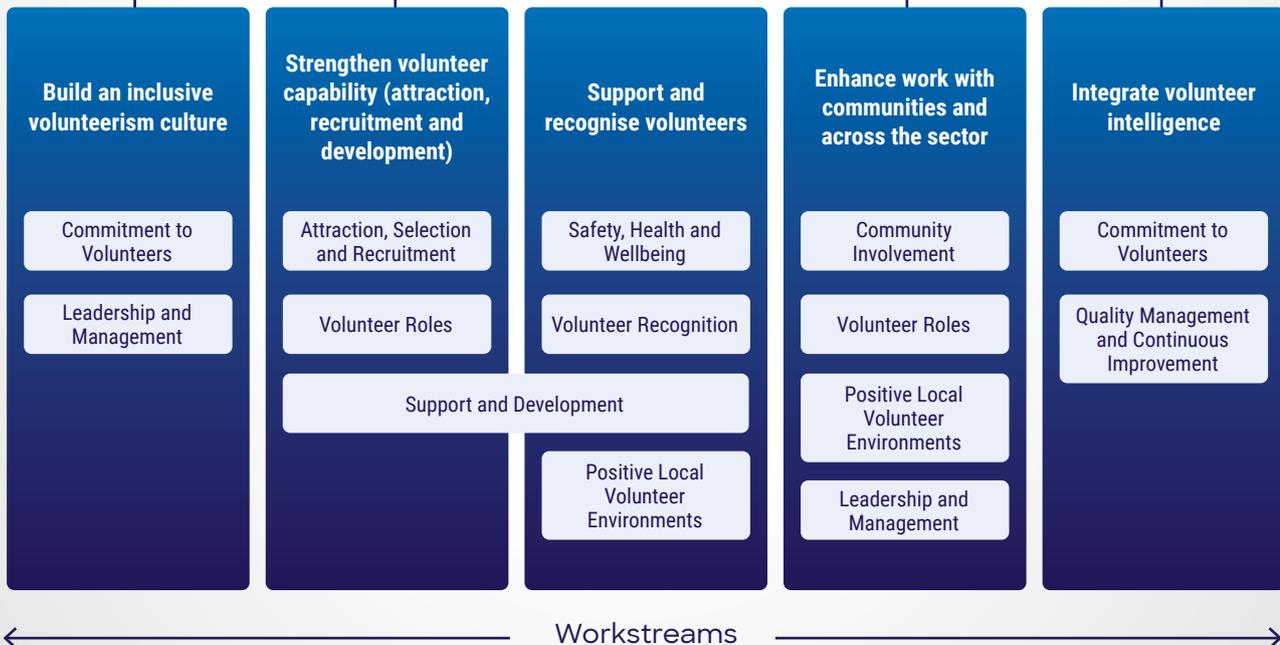
An effective, resilient and engaged volunteer workforce working collaboratively within Fire and Emergency and across the emergency sector to serve our communities.

An inclusive organisation that values volunteers and volunteerism.

The right mix of engaged volunteers with the right skills and support to meet community needs.

Volunteerism strategy and implementation

Volunteerism portfolio



Strengthening our evidence base

Te whakapakari i tō mātou tūāpapa taunakitanga

Our 10-year business plan identifies intelligence-led, evidence-based decisions as a priority area for the organisation. It includes building good systems and a strong information culture so we have access to accurate and timely data, information, and communications technology (ICT), and knowledge and insight to help us make evidence-based decisions.

Building our evidence base is an important area of improvement to help us better grow and support volunteerism and volunteers. In addition to specific initiatives to better understand volunteer experiences and needs, we will use key performance indicators to help us understand how well our volunteering system is working, and to measure the impacts from implementing our Volunteerism Strategy.

Intelligence-led, evidence-based decisions

We have begun to scope the work needed to strengthen current state data, and to implement the systems and processes we need to establish a reliable evidence base to support better decision-making. It will take time to complete this work, as we need to carefully consider the business requirements and how measurement will impact volunteers.

Some aspects of this work will support fulfilling the Fire and Emergency 10-year plan to improve our business and operational intelligence capabilities. This includes supporting ICT changes we may need to collect and analyse data about volunteers, volunteering and volunteerism.

Research to build our knowledge

Research is one of the ways we will expand our knowledge and evidence base. We are researching the following areas:

- Volunteer recognition research will improve our understanding of good practice, and what recognition means to our volunteers.
- Volunteer experiences longitudinal study is building our understanding of how volunteers' early year experiences impact on their wellbeing, intention to stay and satisfaction in the volunteer role.

In the next decade, we aim to improve our ICT infrastructure so we have:

- improved data, information, knowledge and intelligence that we create, use and share
- a credible evidence base to support decision-making at all levels in our organisation
- better information and knowledge management practices and tools
- increased skill sets to use and manage data, information, knowledge and intelligence well
- better tools to help us analyse and understand what's driving our service demands and organisational performance
- shared learnings, information and knowledge with our emergency sector partners to achieve shared outcomes.

Fire and Emergency 10-year plan, page 30

Performance Measurement Framework

The Fire and Emergency Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) drives our approach to monitoring progress and measuring our performance. Volunteerism initiatives contribute to all five of the organisation's strategic priorities:

- Growing our people
- Building resilient communities
- Intelligence-led, evidence-based decisions
- Collaboration, partnerships, and influence
- Keeping pace with change.

As our portfolio management practice matures, we will work to establish strong links between the PMF and the indicators we use to measure our progress towards bringing volunteerism to life.

We currently have a range of volunteer measures that we report on and use for decision making, including those that reflect:

- General trends in our volunteer workforce
- Volunteer capability, training and progression
- Volunteer service provision in communities
- Volunteer engagement

We are working to evolve the set of KPI's that we use.

Example key performance indicators

Our Volunteerism Portfolio provides the framework we will use to measure our progress towards achieving the outcomes and priorities identified in the Volunteerism Strategy. Below are examples of current and potential measures:

| Portfolio work stream | Example indicators |
|---|--|
| Build a strong volunteerism culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for volunteers to contribute and to be heard on matters that affect them • Evidence that our volunteering principles are embedded in key policies • Evidence that our organisational structure has embedded the volunteering principles in role accountabilities and position descriptions |
| Build the volunteer capability pipeline (attraction, recruitment, and development) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new recruits • Average length of service • Active versus inactive volunteers • Number of volunteer exits • Brigade rank and role progression • Changes in diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) • The number of leadership development courses available to and attended by current and future volunteer leaders • The availability of flexible ways to volunteer (roles, training etc). • The impact of our training programmes on volunteers skills and their progression at work |
| Support and recognise volunteers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigade rank and role progression • Changes in diversity (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) • Brigade development plan status • Training participation and achievement • Ratio of support personnel and activities (VSOs, VLDMs etc) • Volunteer perceptions • Reimbursements • Service awards • Family recognition/event participation • Positive news stories about volunteering with Fire and Emergency • Greater use of social media to highlight the value of volunteering. |
| Work with communities and across the sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer recognition programmes • Advice from local advisory committees (LACs) on what local volunteers need. |
| Integrate volunteer intelligence and insights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer participation in research and consultation. |

We will report further on progress to build our evidence base in future reports.

Key activities - December 2020 to May 2021

Ngā nohe matua - Tihema 2020 ki Mei 2021

As part of the commitment we made in the Volunteerism Strategy, we are monitoring our organisational progress to implement this strategy.

We published the first progress report in November 2020. In it, we noted that: *"This report provides a starting point from which we will track our progress and evolve our understanding. As we learn more, what we report on will evolve."*

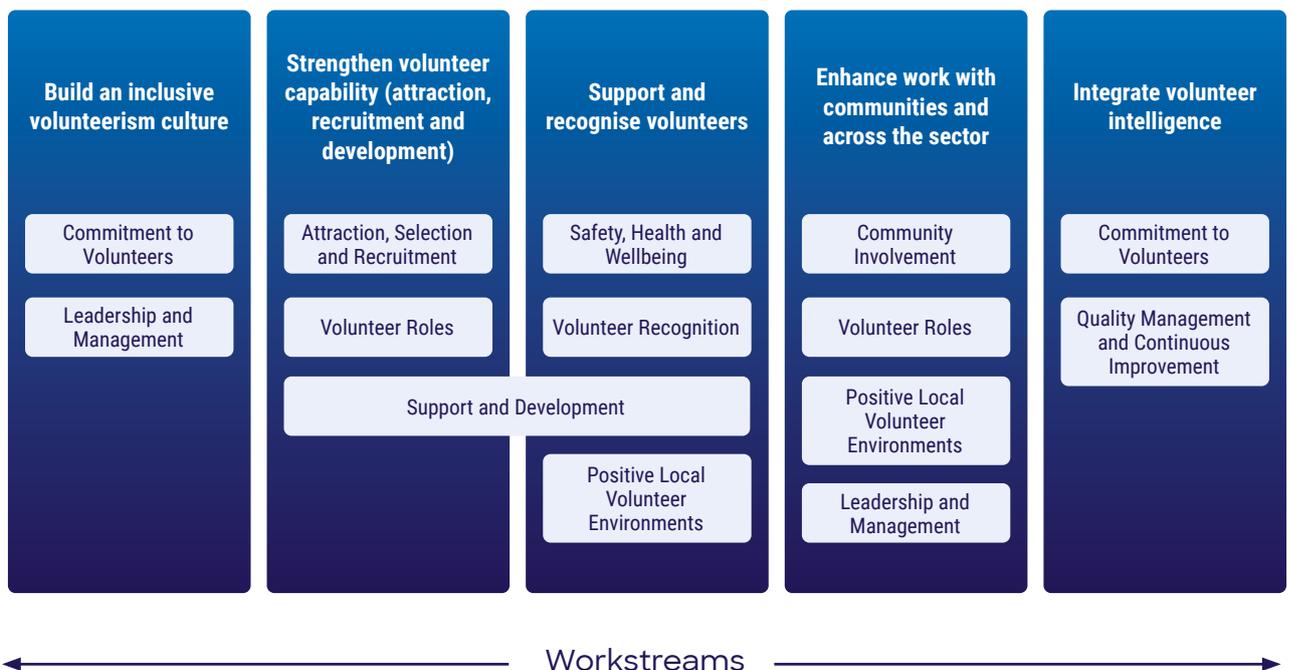
In the previous report, we reported activities' progress against the volunteerism outcome areas. We have changed the way we are grouping our achievements to align with:

- the work streams we're putting in place to plan, design and oversee them
- the key enablers that underpin all of our work to grow and embed volunteerism in everything we do.

The diagram below shows how the volunteerism outcome areas map to the five Volunteerism Portfolio work streams.

Note: Some outcome areas map to more than one portfolio work stream.

Volunteerism portfolio



Volunteerism outcome areas

The volunteerism outcome areas were informed by research and evidence, and co-designed with volunteers.



Commitment to Volunteers

The organisation consults with and includes volunteers in its planning and decisions.



Safety, Health and Wellbeing

Volunteers' safety, health and wellbeing are proactively supported and equitably resourced.



Leadership and Management

Leaders and managers actively demonstrate the organisation's commitment to volunteers and community-based volunteerism.



Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers, their employers and families feel appreciated, recognised and supported.



Community Involvement

Effective local relationships exist through volunteer presence in the community.



Volunteer Roles

Volunteer roles and progression pathways reflect community needs and respect volunteer choice.



Attraction, Selection and Recruitment

There are enough skilled and motivated volunteers who reflect their communities and meet their needs, now and into the future.



Support and Development

Volunteers receive ongoing development and support in a manner that respects their individuality and meets community fire and emergency needs.



Quality Management and Continuous Improvement

The organisation monitors, reviews and strives to continually improve how it supports volunteers and community-based volunteerism.



Positive Local Environments

Local volunteer brigade environments are well led, positive and resilient

Build an inclusive volunteerism culture



Commitment to volunteers



Leadership and management

What we're working towards

- We all recognise that volunteers are a key component of the Fire and Emergency workforce.
- We engage with volunteers on matters that affect them.
- We embed volunteerism principles into our systems, policies, processes, structures and practices.
- We're an inclusive organisation that values volunteers and volunteerism.

What we've achieved

Commitment to volunteers – leadership and management

We continued work to implement our organisational structure and embed volunteerism accountabilities into new job roles. In April, we made decisions on the following positions:

- We announced **District Manager and Group Manager appointments**. These key roles in Regions require the appointees to understand, lead and manage teams in a way that establishes greater credibility with volunteers and improves the support.
- **New People Service Manager roles**
We consulted on and announced decisions on five People Services Manager roles based in Regions. Once appointed, these people will have a key role supporting delivery of the Volunteerism Strategy in the Regions by ensuring plans align with the Volunteerism Strategy.
- **Volunteer Leadership Development roles**
We consulted on and announced decisions to improve the focus of leadership development roles. We will establish five permanent Senior Advisor – Volunteer Leadership Development positions, one for each Region, to improve support for volunteer leaders and future volunteer leaders

Designing a new volunteer engagement model

We completed a current state analysis of contractual relationships between volunteer brigades and Fire and Emergency. This will inform future thinking about our Volunteer Engagement Model – a foundation for sustainable volunteering.



Case study: Women’s Advisory catches up with the Minister

In mid-March, our National Women’s Advisory Committee (NWAC) was hosted by the Minister of Internal Affairs the Hon. Jan Tinetti at Parliament. They shared their stories, and spoke about some of the challenges faced by women in Fire and Emergency and the work we’re doing to support our wāhine. The Minister wanted to meet the members of the NWAC, who are made up of career and volunteer women from all five Regions. The morning tea enabled attendees to discuss solutions to challenges, activities achieved to support and develop wāhine, and to share some highlights and insights from around the country.

“Although the make-up of women in operational roles at Fire and Emergency is low, the number of female volunteers is on the rise with women now representing 20 percent. Women can support each other by being better connected with one another, such as learning who is in local surrounding brigades and what talents they all bring to the organisation. This will enable them

to build on their strengths and open up conversations with others.” – Rachael Utumapu, Manager Women’s Development.

The Regional Women Advisory Networks (RWANs) are closely connected to our women on the ground, their regional leaders and our National Women’s Development team. Their insights are influencing our priorities in creating an inclusive workplace culture and, more specifically, helping to establish priorities for improving the recruitment, retention and development of women across the organisation.

“As an organisation we are so demographically and geographically diverse; the membership on both the National Women’s Advisory Committee and RWAN committees from our female volunteers is a really good representation of the diversity of our members from around the country. We really value the contribution they bring to the groups.” – Rachael Utumapu, Manager Women’s Development.



Case Study: Pilot: Volunteer Touchstone Group – Commitment to volunteers and using volunteer insights

Involving volunteers' voices in our decisions

A pilot to involve volunteer perspectives and voices in organisational decision-making is under way. We've invited volunteers from across the country to be part of the Volunteer Touchstone Group.

As part of the pilot, the Group has discussed reward and recognition initiatives for volunteers, and how the Group operates. Eighteen volunteers were involved in providing qualitative responses to how well the current activities recognised volunteers, what they thought was highly valued, and where there were spaces for improvement.

"As volunteers who give up time to provide a service to the community, we would be best placed to provide suitable feedback as to what basically helps or hinders us during our volunteering time." – Volunteer attendee

We intend the Volunteer Touchstone Group to complement other methods of consultation or input from relevant associations. The next stage is evaluation and if this is successful, establishing the Group on a permanent basis.

"I found it to be a great way to have a say and discuss matters with like-minded people. If there was something I felt could make things a little easier to volunteer, there is a forum to voice those ideas." – Volunteer Attendee

Inclusive culture/embedding the volunteerism principles and organisational values

Permanent Behaviour and Conduct Office (BCO)

The interim Behaviour and Conduct Office has been overseeing and coordinating complaints about bullying and harassment since March 2020. Organisation-wide consultation on the proposed scope and functions of a permanent Behaviour and Conduct Office began on 3 December 2020 and closed on 28 January 2021.

We shared the decision to proceed with a permanent Behaviour and Conduct Office with our people in April 2021.

The BCO will be a self-contained team accountable for proactively setting standards, providing education and capturing data to prevent unwanted behaviour. It will also manage complaints to address unwanted behaviour and work with individuals to restore positive working relationships following a complaint, including facilitation support for brigades to hold crucial, but often difficult, conversations.

We engaged widely to ensure the future complaints process is timely, transparent, trusted, fair, and consistently applied across our entire workforce, including our volunteers. The permanent Behaviour and Conduct Office will assist us in building a culture where people are safe, welcome and included.

Involving volunteers in decision-making

Volunteer brigades are involved in trialling the Magirus appliance bought from Europe to get their feedback on possible features for future Type 1 and 2 appliances, both of which are predominantly used by volunteer brigades.

The Magirus appliance has previously been trialled at Woodville, and having completed its trial at Kaitaia is now being sent to Rolleston for trial and feedback.

Tracking our progress

In November 2020, we published our first public report on our progress to implement the Volunteerism Strategy. We also made a supporting video available to share progress with volunteers in a format that is easy to engage with.

What's next

Fire and Emergency will:

- develop a Volunteerism Portfolio three-year implementation plan with key milestones by June 2022
- build our knowledge to support evidence-based decision-making and broaden the organisation's understanding of what matters to our volunteers
- continue work to develop our volunteer engagement model.



Strengthen volunteer capability (attraction, recruitment and development)



Attraction, selection
and recruitment



Volunteer roles



Support and
development

What we're working towards

- Developing the volunteer workforce's capability and its change readiness
- Skilled and engaged volunteers progressing through roles
- New volunteers entering the workforce, and the right mix of engaged volunteers with the right skills and support and roles to meet community needs.

What we've achieved

Attracting and recruiting volunteers

We recruited 677 volunteers between December 2020 and May 2021, an increase of 32 on the previous six-months. The recruitment process included police vetting and medical checks for candidates. We have also seen:

- 113 volunteers progress from being trainee firefighters to becoming operational firefighters
- 49 more volunteers appointed to leadership roles
- 54 more brigade support members.

The volunteer attraction programme helps brigades that are well under establishment to attract new personnel. We used the **volunteer attraction programme** to support recruitment at 14 at risk brigades between December 2020 and May 2021. The programme makes it easier for volunteer brigades and their leaders to attract and recruit new volunteers by coordinating short, impactful campaigns that require less effort. The campaigns attracted over 60 volunteers.

Ngāruawāhia held an open night in April 2021 with the support of the Volunteer Attraction Team. They received 26 expressions of interest, the most ever received for a single brigade event.

We developed a **new volunteer attraction information booklet** to provide potential volunteers with more detailed information about what it takes to volunteer. The booklet includes questions that volunteers might ask brigade leaders and volunteers when considering volunteering. It sets out the different roles, sets expectations about what's involved, and draws on what motivates people to volunteer.

We've started building a new tool to help the Volunteer Attraction Team identify brigades in need by using establishment numbers, estimated leavers and numbers of non-responses due to short crew. We will deliver the project by the end of June 2021.

Leadership Development Programmes

Formal training opportunities for leaders

Leaders need formal training opportunities to be exposed to new ideas and models, and to grow their networks inside and outside the organisation. In the last six months, we've achieved the following:

- We progressed work to develop 10 Volunteer Leadership training modules. These are due for delivery in May 2021.
- We supported four potential leaders to attend an Outward Bound course tailored to volunteers. The course helps develop self-confidence, leadership, teamwork, and reflection skills.
- Twenty volunteers participated in a Volunteer Leadership Development Programme pilot in Taranaki in May 2021. This facilitator-supported workshop increased attendee knowledge of leadership topics and their ability to share what is working and challenges affecting their brigades.
- We funded the United Fire Brigades' Association (UFBA) to deliver leadership and governance training to improve volunteer leaders' leadership and governance skills and brigade management.
- We held volunteer leader induction days and leaders' meetings in Te Ika-a-Māui (the North Island). The induction days focused on helping volunteer leaders understand their roles and enhancing their knowledge of wellbeing.

- We piloted the Adaptive Leadership Programme with volunteers. Region personnel led the pilot.
- We delivered 10 'Train the trainer' courses across all five Regions to improve confidence facilitating and delivering courses for their brigades.
- Te Kei, our southernmost region, delivered three workshops to 32 volunteers in leadership positions in local brigades and relaunched the Volunteer Leadership Development Programme in the Region. The workshops help volunteers understand their own leadership style and how to lead others.

Workforce Capability is developing our organisations Training and Development Strategy.

A significant part of the strategy focuses on our commitment to supporting volunteerism and meeting their needs. The new strategy will refresh our direction and focus, ensuring that our efforts support our Volunteerism Strategy, and that we are responding to the needs of our increasingly diverse workforce.

Mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching relationships help leaders apply formal learning to their own context. They also help leaders navigate their careers more successfully and meet the challenges of their current roles. In the last six months:

- we provided 1:1 and group coaching for 21 emerging and current leaders to grow their confidence and ability to balance the impact on their personal and brigade roles
- we provided follow-on support to Training and Progression (TAPS) Executive Officer training course participants
- Volunteer Development Managers worked with local leaders to make them aware of learning opportunities and support their ongoing development.



Case study: Targeted brigades for attraction work

COVID-19 has hit many communities and individuals hard, and the West Coast is no exception.

The rugged terrain, as well as the scenic beauty of our district, make it ideal for companies that can offer something to the tourist market. Unfortunately, COVID-19 has had a significant impact and with international tourism shut down, many businesses have suffered a significant downturn. Several tourism ventures have had to either downsize or close. All of which has been in the media.

The number of employed volunteers in our towns has reduced. We've also seen a reduction in seasonal/industry workers, which has meant that our traditional transient workforce has reduced significantly.

In Franz Josef, we've had seven volunteers leave, reducing the team to a crew of four plus one operational support member. It's a similar story with Fox Glacier

and Whataroa volunteer brigades. We've put operational arrangements in place to ensure we can continue to respond to all incidents.

With advice and support from Anna Griffiths and Maddy Hazelton from Volunteer Attraction, we have run a new campaign – including posters, billboards, leaflets and social media – targeting South Westland. Featuring local volunteers (Stacey Straight, Keegan Whitcombe and Marius Bron extended their skillset to modelling) and the local scenery, the campaign is already showing promising results with Franz Josef receiving seven enquiries, and Whataroa a further two.

We hope to continue to raise awareness with an article in the Messenger, a free paper that goes to 11,000 households coast-wide. – Hugh Trembath – VSO – West Coast.

Volunteer skills and capabilities

Training for volunteers

Between December 2020 and March 2021, 4,910 volunteers completed TAPS and specialist training courses.

Station coordinator induction

Three Station Training Coordinator induction courses were held, and 29 coordinators attended.

Peer support workshops

Volunteers participated in probationary peer support workshops. These workshops teach participants to support colleagues and provide information about how to refer them to receive care, compassion and support.

Gas detection equipment training

We gave volunteers gas detection equipment training via an online learning course and a training video. The training helps volunteers to better understand toxic products of combustion; this education reduces the risk of harm.

Training delivered by the UFBA

We funded the UFBA to deliver Professional Services (Xero) and Psychological Wellbeing courses to volunteers.

Online 'brown bag' sessions

From March to May, we invited volunteers to join an 'online brown bag' series. These informal information sessions are scheduled for lunch and dinner time and often cover specific topics such as upgrades to SMART Maps or preparing for an operational audit. Live sessions also allow volunteers to ask subject matter experts questions directly.

Preparing volunteer recruits for their NTC courses

We trained volunteer recruits on breathing apparatus (BA) protocols and procedures to prepare them for their NTC recruit course. This training improves their chance of passing the BA component of the recruits course, and identifies any additional skills training they need.

Training calendar for 2021/22

We published our 2021/22 training calendar. There are 257 scheduled courses available. Every fire station received a wall poster making volunteers aware of the development opportunities available to them. Some courses in the next financial year are already fully booked. The additional information has led to higher attendance from what are often at-risk brigades.

Bite-size learning pilot

As part of our approach to improving learning and development, we're running a 'bite-size learning' pilot. The pilot's purpose is to provide short (30-minute) learning packages that we can deliver to brigades. They'll cover topics such as our Code of Behaviour, values and how to be an upstander. We'll deliver them both face to face and online so we can evaluate different approaches and what works best for our people.

What's next

Fire and Emergency will:

- work with Regions to identify and prioritise brigades that need the most support to attract volunteers
- continue to implement the Leadership Development Framework as it applies to volunteers, and to develop our volunteers' skills and capabilities
- develop our Training and Development Strategy and ensure that we respond to the needs of our increasingly diverse workforce
- continue to design and implement our organisational structure, ensuring that the brigade support ecosystem is effective and meets volunteers' needs.

Support and recognise volunteers



Safety, health, and wellbeing



Volunteer recognition



Support and development

What we're working towards

- Tailored support, development and recognition activities that make it easier to be a volunteer.
- The Fire and Emergency workforce is aware of how volunteers contribute to outcomes.

What we've achieved

Recognising volunteers

Queen's Service Medal honours

The Fire and Emergency Leadership Team invited all Queen's Service Medal recipients to a luncheon hosted by the Hon. Paul Swain to recognise their awards for significant service to communities and our organisation. Award recipients included: John Bowmar, Syd Hughes, Jim Powdrill, Kevin Stechman, Bruce Thompson and David (Stuart) Jones.

Service gifts

We awarded 50-year gift plaques to seven volunteers, and 25-year gifts to 25 volunteers, recognising their service to Fire and Emergency and their communities.

Long service and good conduct medals (LSGC)

We awarded 385 LSGC medals to volunteers, recognising their service to Fire and Emergency.

Regional recognition programmes

Te Kei, our southernmost region, launched a values-based recognition programme for volunteers. The programme provides volunteers with a way to recognise each other for behaviour they see that aligns with our values. There are values-based recognition cards for day-to-day recognition and a formal awards event is held in October each year.

Celebrating success awards

We announced regional celebrating success awards for Nga Tai ki te Puku, Te Ihu and Te Hiku in December 2020. The awards recognised the achievements and commitment of personnel in each region.

Recognising great work

New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian recognised 87 volunteer personnel with Bushfire Emergency Citation Awards for their work on New South Wales bush fires. Their efforts helped save 500 homes from the fires.

Recognising the employers of volunteers

As well as recognising our volunteers, our recognition 'outcome area' also includes their employers and our self-employed volunteers.

The purpose of our new Employer Promotion Scheme is to:

- create and sustain a brand identity by introducing a 'Proud employer mark' (implemented)
- ensure employers feel recognised and are aware that Fire and Emergency values their contribution
- make the whole country aware how employers help Fire and Emergency partners with communities
- increase public support of the employer's business
- create employer goodwill, encouraging employers to support and release volunteers to attend emergencies.

There are currently 5,412 employers registered in the programme over 473 brigades.

Reviewing the impact of the employer mark

We reviewed the first year of the campaigns and results indicate that:

- 83 percent of members of the public who are aware of the employer mark think it makes a difference to their desire to support businesses that employ our volunteers
- 90 percent of New Zealand employers think it makes a positive difference to how likely they are to release volunteers to attend emergencies during work hours

Encouraging employers to display the employer mark

We began promoting our 'Proud Employer' mark in May with a series of posters displayed in 100 locations nationwide. The campaign aims to build public awareness of the branding and encourage employers to display the mark.

Employer recognition signage

We installed 44 new signs at volunteer stations to recognise the contributions of local employers.

Safety, Health and Wellbeing

Health standards

We started a project to design a health standards system in April 2021. When complete, the project will help Fire and Emergency to manage the health risks operational personnel face at work.

Psychological wellbeing

We ran 37 Psychological Wellbeing workshops, which 685 volunteers attended. We gave attendees information and resources to help them recognise when they or their colleagues need psychological support as early as possible. We told them how to access wellbeing support when they need it.

To prevent brigades being overwhelmed by too much information in one go, Volunteer Leadership Development Managers have been collaborating with Safety, Health and Wellbeing Region Advisors to schedule delivering support from Fire and Emergency teams.

SHW Advocate training

Regions delivered seven training days of Safety, Health and Wellbeing Advocate training. The training:

- increased attendees' understanding of Safety, Health and Wellbeing
- improved local practices, such as keeping meeting minutes and using the Safe@Work system
- helped personnel understand inspections and other requirements, such as the Station Management System (SMS) and Operational Skills Maintenance (OSM).

In-person support

Regional personnel carried out station visits to support volunteer leaders and Health and Safety Representatives.

Providing support information to volunteers and their families

The Manawatu Peer Support/Critical Incident and Personal Stress Support (CIPSS) Team used Microsoft Teams to directly communicate peer support and CIPSS information to 20 volunteer brigades

The Hawke's Bay Area ran in-person volunteer partner nights for all brigade members and their families. This gave families the chance to participate and get first-hand information about the support available to them.

Standards of conduct policy

We are reviewing our Standards of conduct policy. In mid-April, volunteers and UFBA representatives participated in a workshop to provide their input into the revised policy. We've also developed a draft stand-alone policy to address sexual harm, in collaboration with external subject matter experts to ensure we follow best practice. Our Respect and Inclusion Taskforce and associated subgroups will be asked for feedback on these policies.

International Firefighters' Day

On 4 May 2021 we celebrated International Firefighters' Day. We marked the day by highlighting to the public the breadth of work our firefighters do in keeping their communities safe, while also taking the opportunity to thank our firefighters for the important role they play in protecting communities every day.

We shared profiles of some of our firefighters on our website and advertised these through a series of regionally targeted Facebook posts, which gained close to 7,000 clicks to the website. We pitched these profiles to local media, and two papers published articles on local firefighters. We also successfully pitched an International Firefighters' Day quiz to news outlet Stuff: more than 9,000 people completed the quiz. We created a video sharing the stories of some of our people, focusing on their experiences and what they love about being a firefighter – this was viewed 18,000 times on Facebook, and 1,900 times on Instagram.

In recognition of our firefighters, Internal Affairs Minister Jan Tinetti visited our Central Fire Station in Wellington to meet the crew and learn about their work. At the station, she recorded a message thanking our people; we shared this on Facebook, where it was viewed more than 8,700 times. Our Chair, the Hon. Paul Swain, hosted a Royal Honours investiture luncheon to celebrate the success of our five award recipients. We shared messages from the Chair and CE Rhys Jones on the Portal, and sent out a special edition of our email newsletter, Fire and Emergency News, dedicated to celebrating our people for International Firefighters' Day. Some teams celebrated in the regions with their communities; for example, Hawke's Bay got involved by hosting a Chalk the Walk event.





Case study: Celebrating Success Awards Te Hiku

On 8 December 2020, two regional Celebrating Success Awards were held, celebrating all those nominated and awarded going above and beyond in their work for the organisation and the people we serve. The awards hold importance for our organisation as they enable us to call out and recognise our people's amazing work.

Categories for the awards are spread across both demonstration of our organisational values and objectives. Leadership awards were awarded to Helen Edmonds and Jerry Hohneck for demonstrating outstanding leadership and going above and beyond to support brigade positive engagement.

"I think it's imperative to recognise excellent work by our volunteers as they volunteer and commit themselves selflessly to their community and all others challenging themselves to learn and train to discover the potential in themselves whilst supporting others." – Jerry Hohneck, Rural Fire Force Controller, Springs Junction Voluntary Rural Fire Force.

Helen, nominated by her peers in the Piha brigade, was accompanied by her team to receive the award, which goes to show how supportive and encouraging they were of Helen being presented this award.

"The people i work with really are a special bunch of people and they are absolutely my second family in Piha. They are all part of the award, as they help me to do the job I do. I'm really proud of what we have achieved - the Brigade was near closure when I joined nearly 20 years ago! We've come a long way, it's teamwork and clearly a bit of alright leadership from yours truly who make it happen!" – Helen Edmonds, Chief Fire Officer, Piha Volunteer Fire Brigade

"I felt appreciated, proud and humbled in reflection of the personal and team achievements, and privileged that the recognition culminated in a success award." - Jerry Hohneck.

The awards provide an invaluable opportunity for our organisation and peers to reflect on and recognise importance and value of dedication to supporting our communities, family and colleagues.

Equipment and facilities

We're building and upgrading volunteer stations so volunteers have the facilities they need to do their work.

- We've upgraded Queenstown and Kawakawa Bay stations.
- We've opened three volunteer stations (East Coast Bays, Pōkeno and Spencerville) and started building two more and upgrading another 12.
- We've continued installing significant hazard boards at all stations so personnel and visitors are aware of on-site hazards and can manage the risks accordingly.
- We've connected over 40 more volunteer stations to the internet and the Fire and Emergency Station Network. The new connections give volunteers better access to systems and ensure there are effective two-way ICT communication channels between them and the organisation.
- We've continued work to co-locate urban and rural brigades, providing access to enhanced facilities and enabling volunteers to work more closely together to benefit their communities.

Volunteer Support Officers received and applied new glove sizing guidance on structural firefighting gloves. We developed this guidance in response to volunteer burn risks identified by Workforce Capability during a Level 2 review. This change reduces the risk of volunteers suffering a burn injury during both training and live fire incident responses.

Volunteer reimbursements

We recognise that some volunteers incur costs for the time they spend working with us. Between December and May, we:

- made 567 volunteer allowance payments to volunteers who spent the night away from whānau for training
- made 692 reimbursements to volunteers for loss of income
- provided 63 retirement gratuities for volunteers with 10 or more years of service.

In December, we paid \$300 annual volunteer reimbursement payments to 9,322 volunteers. The payment recognises the incidental expenses they incur through volunteering.

Gratuities and incident payment policy

We have appointed project teams to determine whether gratuities are equitable and to develop and apply a single nationwide policy on incident payment to all volunteers. These teams are analysing how we manage gratuities and incident payments

What's next

Fire and Emergency will:

- lead work to review our approach to volunteer recognition to identify ways to improve what we do and ensure it resonates with our volunteers
- continue work to develop and apply a single nationwide policy to all volunteers for incident payment and gratuities.

Enhance work with communities and across the sector



Community involvement



Volunteer roles



Positive local volunteer environments

What we're working towards

- Improving our engagement with communities
- An effective, resilient, and engaged volunteer workforce working collaboratively within Fire and Emergency and across the emergency sector to serve our communities.

What we've achieved

Engaging with communities

Local Advisory Committees

Each of our seven LACs are engaging with volunteers to understand volunteer perspectives in their local areas. Between December 2020 and May 2021 there were over 30 engagements between LAC members and Fire and Emergency volunteers and their representatives.

Supporting and strengthening local relationships

Our brigades continued to support local community initiatives and deepen their connection to the communities we serve. This included the following activities:

- Feilding and Levin volunteer brigades ran a successful electric blanket/winter home fire safety promotion in April 2021. They tested 135 blankets, 47 more than in 2019.
- Ashhurst Brigade members carved and installed a pare (door lintel) above the fire station entrance with the support of local iwi and the community. The shared activity increased connection between brigade members, and with the community.
- Fire and Emergency volunteers helped assemble and pack Santa sacks for 4,000 at-risk tamariki in Hawke's Bay Area.



Case study: Electric Blanket Testing

In March 2021, locals gathered to have their electric blankets tested ahead of the winter season. Fire Brigade's, Levin and Feilding, opened their station doors, encouraging the community to ensure their electric blankets were safe after being stored through summer and receive winter home fire safety advice.

At Levin Fire Station, 100 blankets were tested. Of those, 35 failed their safety test and were destroyed. This, as far as the brigade were concerned, reduced the likelihood of 35 bedroom fires and loss of lives.

The event accomplished great engagement and offered up another channel for the brigade to encourage their community to check their smoke alarms and identify safe meeting places for tamariki. Levin is a growing province and requests for home fire safety visit's has

increased drastically, far surpassing their brigade targets. *"It's important that information about fire safety and the services we provide is reinforced. These events give us an opportunity to speak directly with the community and reinforce this information for all and new members of our community"* – Peter Fox, Volunteer at Feilding Volunteer Fire Brigade.

For Peter Fox, hosting the community at the station is a hugely valuable method of delivering these messages. *"Fire station visits result in word of mouth referrals for our services and in most cases this is more beneficial than media advertising. Majority of our home fire safety visits, Hearing Assisted Technology assessments and installations of smoke alarms are as a result of these conversations with our communities."*



Case study: Kaupapa Māori

Dr Sir John Te Ahikaiata Tūrei Memorial Grant is our annual grant for personnel learning te reo Māori. Fire and Emergency New Zealand is committed to the ongoing development of our people. Enhancing their skills and knowledge benefits both the organisation and themselves. In March two of our volunteers Bradley Turner and David Pennington were awarded the grant. Both Bradley and David have enrolled in introductory te reo courses, and see the importance of building these skills to improve how they connect with the communities they serve.

Bradley is a firefighter in Te Ihu, at Motueka Volunteer Fire Brigade. The Brigade recognised the importance of building good relationships with Māori in their community, and the members have each helped create

connections with tangata whenua by hosting barbecues with iwi board members and kai mahi from Te Āwhina Marae. These occasions have enabled participants to have open discussions while getting to know each other. *"This is the first step of formal progression to make a lasting impact on our community."*

– Bradley Turner

In Te Hiku, David is a firefighter at Whananaki Rural Fire Station, which is also responsible for first response. David's community has a high Māori population, and he recognises the need to have brigade members who know tikanga and te reo Māori. *"I would like to increase my knowledge of tikanga and te reo so I can better serve my local community"* – David Pennington

Flexible brigade model

Hawke's Bay has a virtual brigade, originally formed to address a shortage of victim support services in the area. Members are non-firefighters trained to help communities recover after an event

The virtual brigade has grown significantly over the last 6 months, training 10 more recruits.

The virtual brigade was already recognised for its work supporting victims of structure fires, helping them to access support such as emergency housing and services that provide food and other necessities immediately after an incident. It recently provided welfare support during regional flooding events in the Hawke's Bay Area. We're now working with Civil Defence to explore whether we could extend the virtual brigade concept across the 4 Rs of emergency management

Gateway programme

We funded the UFBA to design an out-of-school/gateway programme to support community engagement and enhance pathways to Fire and Emergency.

Engagement across the emergency services sector

Volunteerism is evolving, and what we can ask of volunteers has changed due to:

- stringent health and safety requirements for volunteers
- changing demographics
- reduced availability because of socio-economic shifts such as increased migration to cities and larger towns.

The sector must adapt to avoid losing critical parts of its workforce due to fewer volunteers and disengagement.

Recognising the critical importance of volunteers in disaster response, the sector is exploring a shared strategy to achieve a common set of volunteering outcomes.

We know that many of our volunteers also volunteer for other emergency services. Together, we are exploring ways to make it easier to volunteer. We are considering options to:

- recognise common skills and knowledge without the need for reassessment by each organisation
- jointly respond to challenges created by spontaneous volunteering (members of the public offering practical help or donations, e.g. food) during significant emergencies.

What's next

Fire and emergency will:

- engage with LACs to understand and support volunteers in local areas
- work with our sector partners to explore ways we can work together to make volunteering easier
- consider how and when to progress modular service delivery and the flexible brigade model
- continue work to establish consistent, sector-wide standards for common training.

Integrate volunteer intelligence and insights



Quality management
and continuous
improvement



Commitment to
volunteers

What we're working towards

- Implementing, embedding and operating the Volunteerism Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- Improve organisational understanding and improvement of the Fire and Emergency volunteer experience over time by reporting across the volunteering lifecycle
- Promoting continuous improvement and innovation
- Understanding our current information and intelligence on volunteer community involvement, including talking with volunteers
- Supporting implementation of the Fire and Emergency 10-year plan to build our data, information, knowledge, and intelligence base.

What we've achieved

Research and volunteer insights

Listening to our people

We launched a people survey in March to capture the voices and opinions of all personnel as input into our priority-setting and decision-making. Initial results indicate that volunteer scores for themes such as culture, performance development, and respect and inclusion have improved from previous years.

Volunteer recognition research

We have commissioned research to understand good practice in volunteer recognition, and what recognition means to our volunteers. The findings will inform future recognition programmes and activities.

Longitudinal study

We continued to progress the three-year longitudinal study to understand how volunteers' early year experiences impact on their wellbeing, intention to stay and satisfaction in their volunteer role. To date, more than 850 volunteers have participated in the study.

Volunteer touchstone group pilot

The Volunteer Touchstone Group Pilot continued, with a hui in March; 18 volunteers took part and an evaluation was completed by the organisers. We're working to finalise the pilot and recommend next steps.

Organisational evaluation policy

We developed a whole-of-organisation evaluation policy that includes volunteerism and informs our approach to building our evidence base.

Continuous improvement

Capturing advice from LACs

We're developing a framework to integrate the flow of LAC advice across Fire and Emergency. LACs engage with communities and stakeholders to obtain local perspectives and advice on needs, risks and opportunities. These perspectives and advice inform our planning and strategy, including how we promote the interests of volunteers. The framework we are developing will help support this activity.

Support for communities of interest

We're working to establish a volunteer brigade administration support community of interest to share ideas, knowledge and information, and form connections via an inclusive network that values these roles. Once established, it will improve communication and engagement with volunteers, Districts and Regions.

New incident reporting platform

We've developed a new incident reporting application to make it easier for operational personnel to complete incident reports. Users can access the application on their mobile device, and the application has a simplified process to complete an incident report. They can also complete reports at the incident, and can upload photos directly at the scene, or on the way back to the station. This greatly reduces the time volunteers spend on administration outside of incident responses.

What's next

Fire and emergency will:

- communicate people survey results to internal business units so that they can build them into planning and decision-making across the organisation
- formally establish the Volunteerism Portfolio and the infrastructure needed to support volunteerism and the application of the Volunteerism Principles across the organisation
- embed the use of evidence that supports good volunteerism practices in decision-making
- implement and operate the Volunteerism Monitoring and Evaluation framework
- establish a new exit survey process to better understand why people leave



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