



WHAKARATONGA IWI

FIRE
EMERGENCY

NEW ZEALAND

AFTER FIRE IMPACTS ON COMMUNITY IN NEW ZEALAND

Skylight and Allen & Clarke

June 2018

Fire and Emergency NZ's interaction with fire victims typically ends when we roll up our hoses and depart the scene. However, extinguishment is only the start of someone's recovery from fire. There is significant emotional trauma, practical difficulties and financial and cultural implications that are experienced by victims of structural fire that are not well understood. This qualitative research project collected data on people's experiences of residential fires and the types of support services used.



Fire and Emergency New Zealand Research Report Number 162

ISBN Number 978-1-92-728725-5

ISSN Number 2703-1705

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After fire impacts on community in New Zealand

A research report for Fire and Emergency New Zealand

May 2018

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Skylight is a national not-for-profit trust that works by enabling children, their families and whānau to navigate through times of trauma, loss, and grief by building resilient individuals and communities. A committed and experienced Board of Trustees guide the services and activities, with the organisation led by Chief Executive Heather Henare. We have over twenty years' experience in developing resources, delivering programmes, training professionals, and helping people to heal from loss, grief, and trauma. One of our key strategic drivers is to deliver a sustainable, effective service. We seek to grow community reach and diversity by developing strong partnerships and networks, and provide support through Skylight's Resilience Hub. Skylight's mission is to provide the *right help* at the *right time* in the *right way*.

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SUGGESTED CITATION:

Skylight Trust (2018). *After Fire impacts on community in New Zealand: A research report for Fire and Emergency New Zealand*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Skylight Trust and *Allen + Clarke* would like to thank all of those who supported this research, particularly those who shared their very personal experiences of fire, and generously giving their time.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the result of a qualitative research study commissioned by Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire and Emergency). Fire and Emergency has noted that their involvement with victims/survivors of fires generally ends when they roll up their hoses and depart the scene of a fire. However, for many victims/survivors, that moment is only the beginning of the recovery journey from fire. The aim of the research was to gain an understanding of the challenges faced by those who experience the devastating effects of fire in their journey of recovery and to help Fire and Emergency New Zealand understand how they can use that information to inform their role in supporting communities.

The purpose of the study was to explore four research objectives, namely:

- to gather information about what is known on after fire impacts internationally;
- to find examples of fire services doing work in providing after fire support internationally;
- to gather information on the roles of Fire and Emergency and other agencies working in post-fire support in New Zealand; and,
- to understand after fire impacts in New Zealand.

A qualitative, mixed-method approach was used to answer the following research questions, which included a targeted literature review and stakeholder engagement in the form of individual interviews with a three-stage data collection approach (covering Fire Investigators, victims/survivors and support organisations).

To address the research objectives a targeted literature review and key informant engagement was conducted to explore the first two key research questions, as follows:

- What is known about after fire impacts internationally?
- Are there relevant examples of fire services doing work in this area internationally?

For the stakeholder interviews the key overarching research questions were:

- What are the roles of Fire and Emergency and other agencies in supporting those who have experienced a fire? (formal support)
- What are the after fire impacts on individuals, families/whānau and communities?
- What are the after fire needs of individuals, families/whānau and communities?

Additional supplementary questions were asked about:

- Whether any other support was provided, e.g. by family/whānau, friends, neighbours, community organisations (informal support)
- Whether/how impacts may differ (e.g. by gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, location) and over time (short, medium and longer term).

WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT POST-FIRE IMPACTS INTERNATIONALLY?

The literature included in the targeted literature review identified several types of impacts experienced by individuals, families/whānau and communities affected by fires. The types of impacts vary widely, and are dependent on many variables including the type of fire, the level of resource loss, and other factors such as personal injury, loss of a loved one or pet, or individual characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and level of social support. It is recognised that children can be especially affected, and these effects may vary by developmental stage. The strongest predictor of trauma is the level of resource loss (however, this was not the case for our sample). It is also suggested that the experience of residential fire (as opposed to other types of fires or natural disasters) has an isolating effect that can cause higher levels of distress. There is a paucity of literature on the long-term effects, but the studies that did examine longer-term effects suggest that the psychological and emotional impacts of fire can last a long time.

ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF FIRE SERVICES UNDERTAKING WORK IN THIS AREA INTERNATIONALLY?

The targeted literature review did not identify any examples of well-established national-level after fire support programmes provided by fire services. However, some examples of regional programmes were found. These examples included the following:

- In the United States, a practice model was developed partnering Social Work students with two Arizona fire departments to provide crisis support in Crisis Response Teams.
- A programme in Virginia, US was developed to assist children in recovery from fire related trauma and now addresses parents and children affected by trauma.
- The Kent Fire Service in the United Kingdom (UK) is developing a customer journey centred three-stage model of service and support which focuses on 1.) safety and security (prevention), 2.) practical support (at and immediately after a fire event), and 3.) longer-term emotional and community empowerment support.
- Also in the UK, the Greater Manchester Fire Service and Salford University have partnered in an ongoing operational research project in which researchers partner with Fire Service staff to provide follow-up and conduct interviews with victims/survivors of fire, the content of which are then used to improve prevention efforts and Fire Service service delivery on an ongoing basis.

WHAT ARE THE ROLES OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY AND OTHER AGENCIES WORKING IN THIS AREA IN NEW ZEALAND?

The main organisations identified as being involved in after fire support in New Zealand are Fire and Emergency, Victim Support, Housing New Zealand, Salvation Army, Work and Income New Zealand, and insurance companies.

The ongoing contact that Fire and Emergency has with victims/survivors of fire in New Zealand is almost exclusively by Fire Investigators, who only attend a small minority of fires (those in which the origin or cause is unclear). The principal function of the Fire Investigator role is to determine cause and origin. Some Fire Investigators see their role as extending beyond that into providing post-fire support to victims/survivors, and some do not. The experiences of the victims/survivors with Fire Investigators ranged from very positive and supportive, to negative and suspicious.

Victim Support is a nationwide organisation which provides practical and emotional support to victims/survivors of fire. According to a Victim Support representative, they are able to provide much of the practical support after a fire that victims/survivors described needing; however, neither the Fire Investigators nor victims/survivors interviewed were aware that Victim Support was able to provide these services. Victim Support services were offered to some of the victims/survivors interviewed, but these services were declined in each case.

Housing New Zealand, the provider of state housing in New Zealand, is involved in after fire support when the fire involves a Housing New Zealand property. Their role is to provide or arrange immediate emergency accommodation for the tenants, followed by timely repair or relocation. Victims'/participants' experiences with Housing New Zealand varied from timely, appropriate response to lack of response.

Salvation Army is able to provide practical and psychosocial/pastoral care to victims/survivors of fire. The support available depends on the location and the goods on hand at the time of the event. Salvation Army was not mentioned as a source of support by the victims/survivors interviewed.

Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) is a source of financial support for victims of fire. Engagement with the organisation by the victims/survivors interviewed was not always clear. Some may not have accessed WINZ support due to lack of awareness of their entitlement, some may have received support, and some support received was not what was needed.

Insurance companies play an important role in after fire recovery. In general, the feedback from participants who were insured was that their first contact, often with a broker or assessor, was excellent. The ensuing claims were generally paid out, and the challenge that victims/survivors faced was the difficulty with the details of the claims process as well as sometimes protracted timelines for pay out.

Iwi and other kaupapa Māori health and social service providers provide after fire support in some areas of New Zealand. The extent of the support and areas in which it is provided is unclear from this study.

WHAT ARE THE POST-FIRE IMPACTS IN NEW ZEALAND?

Post fire impacts can be understood based on timing: instant (at the scene), immediate (1-7 days), short- to medium-term (1-12 months), and long-term (12+ months). The main instant reaction was shock, including numbness or blankness, and impairment of basic functioning and decision-making abilities. Related to this were trauma, and re-triggering of previous trauma. In the immediate term after the fire, shock and decision-making impairment often continue, and grief (at loss of belongings or pets) and stress (financial and emotional) often set in. In the short- to medium-term, participants described the sense that the fire could have been worse, trauma symptoms, and a loss of sense of place or familiarity of home, and guilt associated with losing the whānau home. In the medium- to long-term, many of the previous impacts may continue and emotional trauma symptoms such as grief, anxiety, and hypervigilance were described, as well as continued stress due to the insurance process. Long-term effects also described were a sense of gratitude, sense of priorities and empathy, and not dwelling or moving on. Factors affecting impacts on participants were gender, culture/recent migrant status, age, and socioeconomic status.

The after fire needs of victims/survivors were also explored. In the urgent/immediate timeframe, victims/survivors' needs included safety, communication/information, emergency accommodation, expression of concern (such as being asked, Are you OK?), and guidance (i.e. someone to help tell them where to go, whom to call, and what to do – and in what order). In the short-term, the areas of need described were mainly practical, and included emergency accommodation, other essentials such as food and clothing, and money for replacements for the above. In the medium-term, needs generally fell into the categories of practical support (such as replacement of belongings and rebuilding/relocation), advocacy (such as a person or agency to help them to know what is on offer and access the support available to them), and emotional support. In the longer-term, there was a stronger focus on psychological and emotional support needs, including grief/trauma counselling or support groups, as well as a need to regain normality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From these results, the following 23 recommendations were developed.

Recommendation 1: Fire and Emergency could consider expanding their practical support at the scene of a fire, e.g. perhaps explore opportunities to provide or facilitate access to immediate shelter to victims/survivors at the time of the fire

Recommendation 2: Ensure that all victims/survivors are clearly communicated with at the time of a fire event, asked whether they are OK, and provided with appropriate information, particularly during follow-up, as well as connected with relevant contacts

Recommendation 3: Explore opportunities to formalise immediate access to essential social services, such as Work and Income New Zealand or Māori providers – potentially through memoranda of understanding on the appropriate protocol

Recommendation 4: Consider using this report to initiate discussions with insurance providers on opportunities to improve communication and engagement with victims/survivors

Recommendation 5: Consider implementing a clear, systematic follow-up protocol to contact victims/survivors to ask: a) Are you OK?, b) How did we do?, and c) whether they need anything further from Fire and Emergency; and potentially refer to specialist support services

Recommendation 6: Consider developing some guidance for Fire and Emergency personnel about how fires are categorised and the need for an empathetic response to relatively ‘minor fires’

Recommendation 7: Explore the options for ensuring a dedicated individual/role is available to provide initial guidance and advice at the scene of a fire and for immediate follow-up. This role could be performed by e.g. a trained Social Worker, or Fire and Emergency staff could be trained in trauma-informed practice

Recommendation 8: Consider clarifying the role of Victim Support, kaupapa Māori health and social service organisations, and/or other support agencies to provide trauma-informed after fire support for those affected by fire

Recommendation 9: Review the protocol for when to provide the ‘After the Fire’ booklet (to ensure victims/survivors are engaged with it)

Recommendation 10: Consider adding some more information to the booklet/resource on the roles of support agencies (e.g. Victim Support), possibly tailored to geographic location

Recommendation 11: Consider reviewing the booklet/resource to ensure it is appropriate for Māori through production of a Te Reo Māori version

Recommendation 12: Consider translation of the booklet/resource into other languages

Recommendation 13: Consider including in the booklet/resource a specific timeline on when to begin tasks, and information on how long to expect particular processes to take

Recommendation 14: Consider including in the booklet/resource a trauma-informed section on what symptoms victims/survivors may experience and suggestions/resources for coping with them

Recommendation 15: Consider providing an online/mobile-and web-enabled version of the booklet/resource, perhaps linked to other New Zealand-based trauma-informed online resources for victims/survivors of trauma

Recommendation 16: Explore possible utilisation of technology (e.g. tablets and QR codes/other) for tracking incidents and accessing post-incident support

Recommendation 17: Consider working toward an expanded understanding of the role of Fire and Emergency staff members, possibly Fire Investigators and/or other support staff, to include providing after fire support to those affected by fire. This may include a culture shift of Fire and Emergency as an organisation to include support of victims/survivors as part of its mandate

Recommendation 18: Consider training in trauma-informed practice for Fire and Emergency staff

Recommendation 19: Explore options for developing or facilitating access to a specialist support service tailored to those who have experienced a fire

Recommendation 20: Consider opportunities to establish/re-establish a national/regional forum and network for Fire Investigators to support learning, collaboration and networking

Recommendation 21: Consider recognising skills such as cultural competency among Fire and Emergency work force, perhaps in rural and ethnically diverse regions, and providing opportunities to share those good practices among the wider Fire and Emergency work force

Recommendation 22: Explore opportunities to develop a research-based approach/partnerships to support the development of an after fire support programme

Recommendation 23: Future research is recommended to explore the specific after fire impacts for Māori in New Zealand

1. INTRODUCTION

Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire and Emergency) identified after fire impacts as a research priority for the 2017/18 contestable research funding round. Skylight Trust and *Allen + Clarke* were selected to conduct research by Fire and Emergency.

Fire and Emergency's interaction with fire victims/survivors typically ends when they roll up their hoses and depart the scene. However, extinguishment is only the start of someone's recovery from fire. Quite apart from the physical impacts of fires, there are significant emotional trauma, practical difficulties and financial and cultural implications that are experienced by victims/survivors of fire that are not well understood.

Very little is known about the after-fire impacts of fires on individuals, families/whānau, or communities nationally or internationally, particularly with regards to residential fires. Similarly, little is known about the extent to which the victims/survivors of fire seek and receive support to recover from fires (through informal or formal channels), or how long it takes to recover from a fire experience, or whether fire affects different people and communities differently.

Fire and Emergency is interested in understanding the experiences and challenges of those who have experienced a residential fire, so that Fire and Emergency staff and volunteers can help meet the support needs of the victims/survivors, and others in the community, more effectively.

This research report aims to provide practical insights to assist Fire and Emergency to address the after fire support needs of individuals and communities, and provide insights to other organisations involved in after fire support. The knowledge gained from the research will contribute to recruitment, training and leadership within Fire and Emergency.

The research findings are also intended to help address a key research gap in national and international literature.

1.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of the study was to explore four research objectives, namely:

- to gather information about what is known on after fire impacts internationally;
- to find examples of fire services doing work in providing after fire support internationally;
- to gather information on the roles of Fire and Emergency and other agencies working in post-fire support in New Zealand; and,
- to understand after fire impacts in New Zealand.

The primary focus of the research is on accidental residential fires, their impacts, and the after fire support provided and needed. Wildfires, school fires and other types of fires were considered outside the scope of this research.

1.2 BACKGROUND

On 1 July 2017 the New Zealand Fire Service, the National Rural Fire Authority, 12 Enlarged Rural Fire districts and 26 rural fire authorities were amalgamated into one organisation. Fire and Emergency now has more than 14,000 people from 40 separate organisations.

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Blueprint 2017-20 sets out the priorities and activities required to integrate the rural and urban systems, processes and tools, to build a single organisation and lay the foundation for unification. The Fire and Emergency Risk Reduction Team aims to:

- engage communities to identify and provide services that are appropriate to community risks and needs, in order to help build more resilient communities and reduce the consequences of emergencies
- deliver effective community risk reduction activities to prevent unwanted fires and provide guidance on fire risk reduction and prevention.

An important aspect of building resilient communities is to better understand the after fire impacts and needs of communities, so Fire and Emergency and other support organisations can better help communities both prevent fire and recover as quickly as possible.

1.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To address the research objectives a focused literature review and key informant engagement was conducted to explore the first two key research questions, as follows:

- What is known about after fire impacts internationally?
- Are there relevant examples of fire services doing work in this area internationally?

For the stakeholder interviews the key overarching research questions were:

- What are the roles of Fire and Emergency and other agencies in supporting those who have experienced a fire? (formal support)
- What are the after fire impacts on individuals, families/whānau and communities?
- What are the after fire needs of individuals, families/whānau and communities?

Additional key supplementary questions were asked about:

- Whether any other support was provided, e.g. by family/whānau, friends, neighbours, community organisations (informal support)
- Whether/how impacts may differ (e.g. by gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, location) and over time (short, medium and longer term).

The complete lists of questions are provided in the interview guides included in Appendices 1-3.

2. METHODOLOGY

The review employed a qualitative mixed-methods approach drawing on a focused literature review and stakeholder engagement approaches (individual interviews).

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The research team conducted a focused literature review (a maximum of 25 documents) of existing Fire and Emergency literature and searching a range of online databases.

Grey literature was also assessed via searching key websites and through contact with key international informants.

2.2 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

The stakeholder engagement was conducted in accordance with ethical standards.¹ Potential participants were provided with clear information on the nature of the study, which included acknowledging that the topic could be distressing in some cases, as it could reopen memories of a difficult time. Skylight, as a specialist in providing support for those experiencing grief, loss and trauma offered support if it was required.

Individual telephone/video (using Zoom) interviews were conducted with Fire and Emergency Fire Investigators, people directly affected by residential fires, and identified support agencies. Three international key informants were also contacted as part of the literature review phase.

Fire Investigators were identified by Fire and Emergency and contact details provided to the research team. Support agencies were identified through Fire and Emergency input and data gathered in the interviews with Fire Investigators and victims/survivors. Where possible, Fire and Emergency provided the research team with contact information. Where Fire and Emergency did not have a contact within a relevant agency, the research team utilised other sources to contact the agency, and the agency selected the individual to participate in the research. Key informants were identified and referred by Fire and Emergency.

For the victim/survivor interviews, the timeframe that had elapsed since the fires was between three months and two years. Most were about six months prior to the interview.

To protect the confidentiality of potential participants, Fire and Emergency was required to make the first contact with victims/survivors directly, to ask whether they would agree to participate in the research. Fire and Emergency used their database to identify potential participants. Fires that were non-residential, included fatalities/serious injury, or under suspicious circumstances were excluded.

¹ *Allen + Clarke*, research partner is a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Evaluation Association (ANZEA) and adheres to the Evaluation Standards for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Initially, contact was attempted via post, with a letter sent by Fire and Emergency to the address on file. The first mailing was targeted at specific geographical areas deemed to be feasible to travel for in-person interviews, but yielded only three responses. A larger sample size was sought by extending the timeframe and broadening geographical reach to nationwide, and the interview format changed to remote (telephone/video call).

The second mailing yielded only two responses, so an alternate approach was devised, of direct telephone outreach by Fire and Emergency. The response to this contact method was much better, with all but one person initially contacted agreeing to take part in the study. Seventeen people initially agreed to participate. Of these, one did not answer any further attempts at contact, and two more scheduled/rescheduled interviews multiple times but did not in the end connect for their interviews. This yielded a first round victim/survivor sample size of 14. It was noted by Fire and Emergency staff that the stakeholder engagement was a learning opportunity for the organisation in how they collect data and use their internal database.

It was also noted that while many residential fires in New Zealand affect Māori, the first round of sampling did not reach Māori. A second round of sampling was undertaken to ensure representation of Māori in the study sample. Eight potential participants were identified by Fire and Emergency. Each one was contacted a minimum of three times (via telephone and text message). Of these eight people, four responded and scheduled interviews. One of these interviews was interrupted and the person did not respond to subsequent contact attempts. This resulted in three participants identified as Māori taking part in the study. The final total number of participants in the research was 17.

Table 1: Interviews

Interviews	Organisation	Number
Fire Investigators	Fire and Emergency	4
Agencies*	Victim Support	1
	Housing NZ	1
	Salvation Army	1
Victims/survivors	N/A	17

*The Insurance Council was contacted for an interview, however did not progress to a full interview as their current role does not extend to overseeing after fire support policy (addressed by individual insurance companies).

Table 2: Victim/survivor demographics

Attribute	Value	Number
Gender	Female	8
	Male	9
Geographic location	Urban	9
	Rural	8
Ethnicity/background	Recent migrant (last five years)/international student	2
	Identified as Māori*	3

*Ethnicity was not recorded in the initial sample but three interviews were conducted which were identified as Māori; see Methodology section.

Strengths and limitations

Strengths

The breadth and quality of the stakeholder engagement, in terms of the general diversity of the stakeholders and their experiences, and their willingness to share their experiences to assist the research is a strength of the study. Victims/survivors were spoken to from across the country (including urban and rural locations), a range of socio-economic backgrounds, ethnically diverse backgrounds, and included two international students. Another strength was that the research on after fire impacts (including trauma) was led by an organisation that specialises in trauma-informed support.

Limitations

We were unable to directly reach some organisations that have a role in supporting those affected by fire. The Insurance Council of New Zealand (ICANZ) was also contacted but they advised that their role is focused on large-scale events and as such they do not have a role in after fire support for individual residential fires; therefore, they are not included in the study results. More direct engagement with individual insurance companies may have helped provide more information on this aspect, however that was not possible within the timeframe for the project. This is something that could be looked at in more depth through individual discussions between Fire and Emergency and insurance providers. A contact for an interview within Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ) was also not able to be established.

Recruitment challenges

The approach to sampling recruitment was modified during the course of the research due to challenges in reaching the target sample. Additionally, because the first round of sampling didn't include Māori participants, a second round of sampling became necessary. A limitation to this second round of sampling was the high rate of non-participation as only three of the eight identified potential participants responded to the invitation to take part in the study.

2.3 ANALYSIS

Qualitative data from the interviews was transcribed, coded and thematic analysis used to identify specific themes relevant to each research objective. These data were synthesised with the findings from the literature review.

A results session was held with Fire and Emergency to discuss the emerging findings, themes, and implications. The session helped further refine the findings and analysis.

3. KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from the research are presented in the following two sections. Firstly, the findings of the literature are presented, followed by the results of the stakeholder engagement.

3.1 WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT AFTER FIRE IMPACTS INTERNATIONALLY: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section presents the findings of a targeted literature search and review of published and grey literature [utilising Mendeley, ProSearch, Fire and Emergency's library and Wellington City Library, and searching selected websites].

An important focus for the literature search was on residential fires, but fires with significant community impact were also included. Literature focusing solely on macro-economic impacts (such as the total cost of fires to society) rather than the psychological/emotional/cultural impacts and personal financial impacts and fire-fighters or other support personnel (as opposed to victims/survivors and communities) were excluded, along with research on wildfires, as these topics have been a focus of research to date.

In general, there is very little published literature into the after-fire impacts of fire on communities either in New Zealand or internationally. No published literature was identified regarding after-fire impacts specifically on Māori. The majority of the literature sourced is from the United Kingdom and the United States.

The aim of this literature review was to identify up to 25 published/grey literature items to inform the project. The overarching topics searched for included:

- The impacts of fire, including psychological, social, financial, practical, and cultural of residential fires on communities, both urban and rural
- Impacts of fire on different groups
- The roles of the fire service and other agencies in responding to residential fires, including their role in the recovery process
- Examples of good practice internationally in after fire response to residential fires.

Background and context - Understanding the impacts of fire on communities

There were 5,044 structural fires attended by Fire and Emergency in 2016/17 (Fire and Emergency New Zealand, 2017). On average, there have been 18 fatalities per year in residential fires that were deemed to be avoidable. According to New Zealand's Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), there were 1,788 claims for fire-related injuries in 2016/17 (Accident Compensation Corporation, 2017), although unreported injuries are likely to be much higher. Māori are especially affected by residential fires in New Zealand, with higher rates of fire injuries/fatalities (Hoskins, Simith, & Santolo, 2001; Research International, 2010). It is estimated in the United Kingdom that the fire service only attends about 70 percent of all domestic fires.²

Impacts of fires

There are several types of impacts experienced by individuals, families/whānau and communities affected by fires. The types of impacts vary depending on the type of fire, the level of resource loss, and other factors such as personal injury, injury or loss of a loved one or pet, and developmental stage of children and adolescents (Jones et al., 2012).

The New Zealand based literature on the after fire impacts on communities is limited to the economic impacts, and is therefore outside the scope of this research project. There is also a lack of up-to-date fire statistics and research related to the impacts of fires on Māori. As such, for the purposes of this literature review, we did not find relevant literature based in New Zealand.

The literature review has identified some key insights under the main overarching topics, which are summarised below.

What is known about after fire impacts internationally?

The literature identifies a wide range of common psychological and emotional impacts including grief, loss, trauma, heightened fear and anxiety, shame, guilt, embarrassment and blame.

Clark and Smith have reported on the key findings from their domestic (residential) after fire incident research programme (see Section 3.2 for more in this research programme). Their findings showed common psychological and emotional impacts including heightened fear and anxiety, or in other cases, particularly after a less severe incident, victims/survivors of fire experienced shame or embarrassment. People described their actions as "silly" or "foolish", of having made a mistake and being "taught a lesson". Fire victims/survivors may experience delayed emotional impact, which may be accompanied by unwelcome memories, heightened fear and anxiety, and emotional reactions described by victims/survivors as "paranoia" (Clark & Smith, 2015, p. 98). Conditions commonly described in the literature include post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, panic disorder, and phobia.

² Personal communication with David Wales, Kent Fire Service, 2017.

An experience of residential fire may create a cycle of “cumulative and recurring trauma” associated with a constellation of interrelated factors including evacuation, separation of family/whānau members, replacement of belongings, relocation, and multiple cyclical losses of resources posing challenges to recovery:

“an initial loss of resources makes it more difficult to obtain later resources and... the initial loss may lead to later losses of resources... As a result, resource loss may affect resilience through losses immediately following the fire, as well as losses later realized. In addition, this loss may be pervasive in its effects, potentially leading to increased psychopathology and decreased levels of competence” (Goel et al., 2014, p. 543)

The literature indicates that there are differing perceptions of what constitutes a real fire. “It is important to remain aware that ‘fires’ means different things to different people. When providing post incident or prevention advice, it is important to recognise that individuals may have very different ideas about what constitutes a ‘real fire’” (Clark & Smith, 2015, p. 101). For some a relatively significant fire (in terms of size) may not be perceived as that significant, whereas for others a minor fire can be perceived as very significant and have a range of flow-on impacts. This is an important consideration when thinking about severity of fire and psychological impact and support needs.

Another area of perception of fire is identified by Clarke and Smith is a sense that residential fire is unpredictable, accidental, “just something that happens out of everybody’s control.” “Describing fire-related incidents as ‘out of the blue’ and accidental can be understood as an attempt by participants to distance themselves from their incident and, in particular, to absolve themselves of any responsibility over what has happened”. This perspective is a challenge to the direction of fire and rescue service policy over the last two decades with its emphasis on prevention (Clark & Smith, 2015, p. 99).

Level of resource loss is the strongest predictor of trauma

The main predictor of distress after a fire appears to be the level of resource loss (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017): “Resource loss has repeatedly been found to be the strongest predictor of post-disaster adjustment for children” (Goel et al, 2014, p. 538; Immel, Jones & Smith, 2014). “Fire victims also experience a large-scale loss of resources, including personal (i.e., free time, energy) and property loss. This loss of resources may lead to negative mental health outcomes such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression” (Goel et al., 2014, p.537). Further, initial loss of resources may lead to later losses of resources compounding impacts: “potentially leading to increased psychopathology and decreased levels of competence” (Goel et al., 2014, p. 543).

A seminal U.S. study describes a broad range of fire-related losses experienced, their diverse emotional reactions, and attempts to ascribe meaning to these losses, and relates how the complex sequelae of home fires continue to compromise the multiple dimensions of their lives. “Feelings of fear, relief, discouragement, anger, rejection, isolation, frustration, the perception of lost dreams, and even thankfulness are themes found in their vivid comments” (Keane, Brennan, & Pickett, 2000, p. 264).

Isolation as a result of residential fire can cause higher levels of distress

Other papers describe the mental health consequences in different but related ways. The isolation resulting from a residential fire (e.g. due to having to move away from a neighbourhood, or community) in particular might lead to greater levels of psychological distress (Bernstein 1990, as cited in Jones et al., 2012; Keane, Brennan & Pickett, 2000).

Impacts can vary by individual, by age, ethnicity, level of social support

Keane, Brennan & Pickett found “those needing help were more likely to be women with children younger than age 18 living in their household, have low-income status, less education, and to have already received services from church groups” (Keane, Brennan & Pickett, 2000, p. 263).

Impacts can affect the whole family/whānau; “The fire likely led to resource loss for the entire family, not just the individual child. The family may not have been able to provide adequate or appropriate social support to their children due to the negative outcomes in their own lives” (Goel et al., 2014, pp. 543-4).

Older people can be particularly affected and may also not get help because they are reluctant to tell others – possibly due to feelings of shame and embarrassment, and fear of losing their independence (Clark & Smith, 2015).

There is conflicting evidence in the literature about the roles of ethnicity and social support. Some studies have shown a protective effect of African American ethnicity, while others did not show an effect (Goel et al., 2014). Some studies found the role of social support to be a protective factor, but others showed no effect (Goel et al., 2014; Immel et al., 2014).

Children can be especially affected

In terms of children and adolescents, impacts vary depending on developmental stage, as “older children exhibited higher levels of resilience as compared to younger children” (Goel et al., 2014, p. 540). A predictor of trauma in children is how frightening the experience of the fire was (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017). Jones et al. conceptualize children’s experiences of residential fire into five main themes (four negative and one positive): (1) vivid description (including a psychological phenomenon of highly vivid memories of impactful experiences called “flashbulb memories”); (2) fear, trauma, and overwhelming emotions, including PTSD-related symptoms; (3) physical injury (their own and others’); (4) losses (including family/whānau pets, which was associated with guilt, important belongings, homes and familiar surroundings, and friends due to moving to a new place); (5) gains/benefits such as new relationships, strengthened family/whānau bonds, new appreciation for homes/families/whānau, and support of communities (Jones et al., 2012).

After fire recovery needs vary, but can be categorized as practical, psychological/spiritual, and other

Keane, Brennan & Pickett categorised the self-identified needs of fire survivors into three areas: 1) specific tangible and social service assistance (practical support); 2) psychological and spiritual support, and; 3) nonspecific assistance (Keane, Brennan & Pickett, 2000).

The most common types of tangible needs were housing and financial. These included housing repair; financial assistance, including help with outstanding bills and budgeting; fire recovery information;

household items, clothing, food; legal services for disputes associated with the fire; employment; insurance intervention; and miscellaneous services.

Within psychological and spiritual needs nonspecific emotional or psychological service support was required to help with distress due to loss, disappointment, and a sense of general disorganization. Other areas of expressed need included group support, specific psychological services, specific professional intervention, and spiritual counselling. Although the number of requests for spiritual counselling was low, more than one third of respondents had already received this type of support.

“Although most [participants] were interested in services for their children, few could specify the specific services that would be most helpful” (Keane, Brennan & Pickett, 2000, p. 273).

Jones et al. recommend “the need for crisis intervention follow-up in addition to material help for [these] families. The help most of the participants described receiving was physical, help with the basic needs; however, they also identified many emotional and psychological needs in their responses. These needs could easily be overlooked in the rush to meet basic physical needs. Crisis intervention can be invaluable to the well-being of children and their families” (Jones et. Al, 2012, p. 936).

Goel et al. state that based on their results, the most important thing was “the significant relationship between loss and resilience and the need for limiting to the loss of resources. “By increasing one’s resources, whether through social programs, fire safety education or better construction of homes, one may be buffered from the full effects of experiencing a traumatic event” (Goel et al., 2014, p. 544).

Psychological/emotional impacts can last a long time

“The emotional impact often did not come to the surface until after the incident had occurred” (Clark & Smith, 2015, p. 98).

Two studies which have looked at longer-term effects in larger fire disasters do point to the potentially long-lasting psychological impacts of fires. Schneider et al. (2012) investigated the long-term effects of a large fire on its survivors underscored the “overwhelming impact” of non-physical (emotional) trauma on long-term outcomes. Lundin and Jansson completed a 25-year follow-up of the 1978 hotel fire in Boras, Sweden and concluded that experiencing a fire can have long-term psychological effects (Lundin & Jansson, 2007). Their study involved a self-assessment of adolescent and young adults who had survived a hotel fire disaster 25 years before. The results showed low levels of psychiatric illness; a low level of traumatic stress symptoms; more than 50 percent of participants stated that the fire had a determining effect on their lives; 21 percent of respondents indicated that the fire still had an impact on their daily lives, leading to the conclusion that “a traumatizing experience (such as a fire disaster) still had a small effect on psychological health in a long-term perspective” (Lundin & Jansson, 2007, p. 479).

3.2 EXAMPLES OF FIRE SERVICES UNDERTAKING WORK IN THIS AREA INTERNATIONALLY

The targeted literature review did not identify any well-established national-level after fire support initiatives provided by fire services in New Zealand or internationally, although fire services in the US, UK and Australia are organised differently to New Zealand and some examples of local or regional initiatives were found. Referring to the U.S., according to Keane, Brennan & Pickett (2000) the typology of after fire impacts identified for residential fires points to the enormous need for effective programmes to assist survivors to adjust to after fire devastation and distress. Aside from rehabilitative programmes for burn victims, such programs are not often in place. Although short-term programmes such as those available through the U.S. Red Cross provide immediate aid and shelter, little is available to provide the ongoing assistance needed for lengthy postfire adjustment. It is noted that existing mental health services usually do not have the resources to provide preventative mental health services to fire survivors and others who do not fit the typical profile of those obviously mentally ill. Further, although some services are available to meet needs, their delivery is often uncoordinated and victims/survivors of fires “did not know of available services or how to gain access to them” (Keane, Brennan & Pickett, 2000, p. 277).

Commenting on the United Kingdom context Clarke and Smith stated that “unlike victims of crime, there is no national psychological or emotional support service for people that have experienced a fire. The interviews have revealed powerful accounts of the emotional impact that experiencing a fire can have including shame, anxiety, fear and stress. This raises the question of whether there is a need in both local and national service delivery for an emotional support service tailored to people that have experienced a fire incident” (Clark & Smith, 2015, p. 101).

Examples of after fire support programmes

Despite the apparent lack of after fire support programmes and services in many areas, there are some examples of regional programmes found in published and grey literature.

United States

An innovative social work practice model was trialled and reported on in Phoenix and Glendale Arizona Fire Departments (Cacciatore et al, 2011). Social work students were utilised to provide crisis support in Crisis Response Teams. Initially designed to support the firefighters themselves, the programme places social workers within fire departments to aid in critical events and with the “compassion fatigue” that can develop in first responders. The social workers’ role has evolved over time to “address the needs of customers served by the fire department, both at the scene and during the post-intervention period.” The programme typically supports whole families. It is considered that timely crisis intervention may be effective in preventing a variety of long-term difficulties for both adults and children who have experienced severely traumatic events. The researchers noted that “for a relatively small investment of resources, fire departments in other communities can replicate the model described here using

professionally trained social workers and volunteers to address the needs of both first responders and community members experiencing crises and traumatic events” (Cacciatore et al, 2011, p. 87).

Another US-based example of an agency/programme working in this area is the R.E.A.C.T. (Recovery Effort After Child Trauma) programme. Growing out of “a research project focused exclusively on how children cope with trauma associated with house fires”, the programme was formed “to ensure that all children have assistance in recovery from a fire related trauma”, which has now expanded and “the REACT team now addresses the needs of parents and children affected by multiple forms of crisis and trauma” (Recovery Effort After Child Trauma, n.d.).

United Kingdom

Both through the literature review and personal contact via Fire and Emergency, two examples were identified in the United Kingdom of fire services working to provide after fire support services.

Kent Fire Service

The Kent Fire service is developing a three-stage model of service/support:

1. Safety and security (prevention)
2. Practical (at and immediately after a fire event)
3. Longer-term – emotional, community empowerment (medium to longer-term after fire event support)

The approach puts the needs of those impacted by fire at the heart of service provision and has been designed using ‘customer journey mapping’. This model is aiming to reorient the service over time away from meeting the needs of the fire service to identify and meet the needs of the ‘customer’ and build the service around those needs. This redesigning of the service requires a longer-term culture and ‘mindset’ shift within the service to envision after fire support as an integral part of the role of the fire service. The Kent Fire Service is working to enable this culture shift by using a co-design approach that directly integrates the experience and needs of those who have been affected by fire.

Currently the model has progressed to including a visit from the fire service the day after a fire event and the Kent Fire Service is working on a broader culture shift that would facilitate moving to the ‘ideal’ model, which would incorporate a two-stage follow-up.

Key informant: David Wales, Customer Experience Manager, Kent Fire & Rescue Service

Greater Manchester Fire Service/Salford University

Greater Manchester Fire Service have entered an ongoing partnership with Salford University on a participatory operational (action) research project. The pilot involves the Fire Service call handler connecting those who have experienced a fire to a Fire Service Community Safety Officer (CSA) trained in interview techniques by University of Salford research staff. The CSA would conduct the interviews. Victims/survivors of residential fires were interviewed about what may have caused their fire, what could have prevented it, and how it may have influenced their understanding of fire risk.

The multiple aims of the project are to upskill Fire and Rescue Service staff and capturing a bank of ‘real life’ vignettes for Fire Service use that captures insights that feed into improving fire service delivery.

The pilot research has identified a number of programme delivery implications to date including:

- Talking about fires and near misses may reduce risk
- Support for people that have experienced fire
- Communicating causes of incidents
- Home Safety Check as 2-way conversation
- Representation of fires
- Rethinking “get out and stay out” message.

The benefits of the approach:

This partnership approach identifies the potential of the fire service to partner with a research institution for mutual benefit. The university brings research skills capability and capacity that can help the fire service build a sustainable evidence base to both gain practical insights to trial, improve and target operational service delivery. The university also gains direct access to an important real-world issue to apply its research expertise and in turn help build the skills, knowledge and reputation of their research staff.

Key informant: Dr Andrew Clark, Reader in Sociology, School of Health and Society University of Salford

Online and printed published after fire support information

Many countries and authorities have produced online resources and printed resources that provide information on practical and psychological/emotional support. Fire and Emergency's *After the Fire* booklet is well presented and provides similar core content to most of the other resources reviewed. Some do provide more detailed range of information in particular aspects (e.g. health and emotional support, financial matters).

The Kent Fire and Rescue Service website (www.kent.fire-uk.org) for example includes a strong focus on health, including emotional support after a fire incident, and direct links to counselling services). The U.S. Red Cross document provides more detailed information on looking after pets, replacing vital documents and recovering money. The Northern Ireland resource provides more detailed information on cleaning up after a fire (and a flood).

Table 3: Examples of 'after fire' resources provided to victims/survivors of fires

Country	Organisation	Title	Content/Pages
New Zealand	Fire and Emergency New Zealand	After the fire, flood or natural disaster. What to do next...	After a fire or other emergency At the scene Your reaction Fire prevention After a flood or natural disaster Restoring property from fire damage (14 pages)
United States	U.S Fire Administration	After the Fire: Returning to Normal	Vital Information FAQs on Fire Service Role What to do next Who to contact First days of recovery (steps) Checklist of Next Steps (6 pages)
United States	Red Cross	Picking Up the Pieces After a Fire	Immediately After Recovering emotionally Helping Pets Checking Your Home Recovering Financially Vital Documents and who to contact to replace Rebuilding (12 pages)

3.3 INFORMATION ON THE ROLES OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND AND OTHER AGENCIES WORKING ON AFTER-FIRE IMPACTS IN NEW ZEALAND

The third objective of the research project was to identify the roles of other agencies working in after fire impacts in New Zealand.

What are the roles of agencies working in this area in New Zealand?

The answer to this question was sought through interviews with three key stakeholder groups: Fire Investigators, victims/survivors, and support organisations. Fire Investigators and other organisations were asked targeted questions to identify understanding of Fire and Emergency's roles and/or the roles of other organisations (primarily social services) in supporting the after fire needs of people who have experienced a fire. The full interview guides are provided in the Appendix.

Fire Investigators

“We’re there to find out how, where and why the fire started – but we’re also there to provide support. It’s all very well to investigate the fire and walk away, but we need to provide them with some help.”
– Fire Investigator

Of the four Fire Investigators interviewed, all stated that the core role of a Fire Investigator is to determine the origin and cause of the fire. They indicated that in this area their role is clear and that they are well trained and supported by Fire and Emergency. When asked about a support role, most stated that it is not Fire and Emergency's role to provide after fire support; however, from the approaches and practices they described it was clear that they often do provide such support. All of the Fire Investigators appeared very aware and empathetic to the situation of fire victims/survivors, and all but one described ways in which they provide practical and/or emotional support to victims/survivors.

Two Fire Investigators stated that support is outside their role, but in practice they do provide support. One said that it is part of the role of Fire Investigators to provide support to victims/survivors as well, noting that it's both a responsibility and an opportunity for Fire Investigators to leverage their experience and authority (and the position of Fire and Emergency as the 'most trusted' organisation among the general public) to help provide guidance. Another Fire Investigator said that the role involves determining origin and cause and that a support role would not be feasible, advisable or expected to extend beyond this. The

common barrier to 'doing more' mentioned by the Fire Investigators was lack of resources, noting that they struggle to do the 'core' job.

The form of the support provided ranged across the different respondents. Support was described as tailored or dependent on the needs of the victims/survivors, where they may be in the shock or grief process, as well as other factors including socioeconomic status and cultural considerations. Examples described included practical help such as lists of what to do and whom to contact, giving victims/survivors small tasks, such as finding a precious belonging if safe to do so, and even one example of a Fire Investigator personally escorting victims/survivors to Salvation Army for further support. They also

included psychological/emotional support including a ‘speech’ introducing victims/survivors to effects of grief and loss and suggesting self-care strategies (and strategically made within the hearing of Fire and Emergency crew members to build awareness within the Fire and Emergency workforce). Fire Investigators indicated that they had not received training for this part of their role, and that these tools, strategies and approaches had generally been developed themselves as opposed to provided by Fire and Emergency. Most indicated that they would find it useful to receive recommendations around best practices and tools from other Fire Investigators and would welcome a chance to share their own.

One suggestion was to utilise technology in a way that would streamline Fire and Emergency information collection and tracking, as well as provide a seamless avenue for the victims/survivors to access support. It was suggested to generate an identification code, such as a QR code, specific to each incident and tie tracking of the incident to this code. The code could then be provided to the victims/survivors (via mobile phone at the scene, provided to a family/whānau member or support person, or via email if unavailable); to internal Fire and Emergency departments and entities (i.e. Business Support Unit); and to other support organisations such as WINZ, Housing NZ, or others (thereby also ensuring that referrals are genuine as they are generated by Fire and Emergency).

In terms of referrals and other partnerships, Fire Investigators often work with other agencies, but the approach taken is not formalised or consistent across New Zealand. The agencies with which they partner, and the degree of involvement or partnership, depend on the resources available in different communities. Fire Investigators indicated that they are in large part left to form their own relationships with other support organisations, and these relationships may not be formalised and change over time.

One challenge to partnership with other social service agencies is that other agencies often are not designed as first responders at the scene, and do not share the sense of urgency to participate in the immediate response required in an emergency situation. A need was described for a strong link with a support organisation that shares the sense of urgency, as in a situation such as being turned out of their homes in the middle of the night, victims/survivors have “nowhere to get anybody to help”.

Victim Support was the support organisation mentioned most often by Fire Investigators, and the role of Victim Support was described in varying ways. One Fire Investigator indicated that Victim Support was not the appropriate agency for referrals, as Victim Support is only for victims of crime. The belief was also expressed that a referral to Victim Support may only be made by Police. Another described that in his experience, Victim Support’s response was often delayed and ineffectual. None of the Fire Investigators described consistent and effective referrals to Victim Support.

Other support organisations mentioned by Fire Investigators were Salvation Army, Red Cross, churches, and insurance companies. It was indicated that insurance agents/brokers/assessors (i.e. first contacts) often respond quickly to fires and provide significant practical support.

Overall, it was indicated that support agencies do exist nationwide, but it is extremely varied by community as to which organisations are active and what type and quality of support are available.

“Our role is looking to find out what caused the fire -- people know this -- they’re not asking for support or referrals.”
– Fire Investigator

Support Organisations

Through key informant interviews with Fire Investigators and victims/survivors, a list of organisations potentially involved with after fire support in New Zealand was developed. The research team was unable to obtain an interview with Work and Income New Zealand, but conducted telephone interviews with three organisations: Victim Support, Housing New Zealand, Salvation Army.

Victim Support

Victim Support indicated that the referrals they receive are from the Police, and not generally from Fire and Emergency; however, their 24/7 contact service is an open portal to which anyone can refer, and they would welcome referrals from Fire and Emergency: “it would be great if they referred”.

For residential fire, Victim Support’s usual referral process, which operates 24 hours a day, is through Police telephoning the 24/7 contact service. The referral is allocated to a Support Worker, who circles back directly with the Police or goes directly to the scene.

Victim Support indicated that they are akin to emergency services or paramedics, in that they are among the first responders at the scene, and then follow up by referring to specialists in each area, depending on the individual needs of the victim/survivor or family/whānau. Once Victim Support receive a referral, they provide emotional and practical support. The support model Victim Support follows is a strength-based empowerment model, in which “we’re there as support and we allow them to tell their story”.

“We provide to the victims of fire emotional and practical support.”
– Victim Support

Of note is that the process described above applies to non-suspicious fires. It was commented that if the fire is deemed arson, the same support process is unable to be accessed through the same funding stream. Victim Support can still provide a support worker and is normally able to fill the other emergency support needs, but is required to do so through other funding sources for the activities.

Victim Support indicated that in terms of other organisations involved in after fire support, they collaborate with Work and Income, Ministry for Children Oranga Tamariki (MCOT) formerly Child, Youth and Family (CYF), District Health Boards, and other health providers, for example.

Housing New Zealand

Housing New Zealand (Housing NZ) is another organisation highly involved in after fire support. Their response is also through a 24/7 telephone service. The referral process described for Housing NZ is that when Fire and Emergency staff at the scene find out that the home is a Housing NZ property, they immediately call the 24/7 contact centre to describe the situation and indicate whether the tenants require relocation. A Housing NZ staff member will visit the scene if it is during business hours (due to health and safety concerns, they no longer visit in person outside of business hours). Housing NZ will then arrange temporary accommodation for the tenants, followed by timely repair or relocation as required by the situation.

Housing NZ noted that their organisation is moving toward “wraparound services” for their tenants, a shift in perspective to better meet the needs of high need tenants. Organisations and agencies with which

Housing NZ communicates and partners for this wraparound service delivery may include Corrections, MSD, and community groups. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Fire and Emergency was in progress at the time of the interview [at the time of writing, this MoU has now been signed by both parties].

Salvation Army

Salvation Army provides psychosocial/pastoral care to victims/survivors of fire. Their referrals are most often received from Victim Support. Salvation Army provides fire victims/survivors with practical and emotional support based on the availability of resources in the location at the time; “the help we’re able to provide is based on what we’ve got at the time”. Types of support provided by Salvation Army include temporary accommodation; replacement goods, clothing, and furniture; trauma counselling if available in the location, and advocacy such as with WINZ, counselling referrals, health needs, and Housing NZ.

Victims/Survivors

Victims/survivors of fire were asked about support they may have received, at the time of the fire and after the incident. They were asked the sources of support, the types of support received, and what was or was not helpful to them.

At the Scene

At the time of the fire, the main source of formal support described by participants was Fire and Emergency staff. Most participants indicated that the response by Fire and Emergency to the fire itself was timely and well-managed. One exception was a participant who felt that the volunteer brigade that responded to the fire at her whānau home could have been more effective with more resources and/or training. This participant described the brigade having trouble moving hoses and sourcing water, stating “I just remember them calling out, ‘Water on! Water on!’ but there was no water in the tank.” A partial exception was a victim/survivor who described concern that the crew did not move quickly enough; however, this observation was qualified by the recognition that there were probably health and safety reasons for this. One respondent, who had experienced two separate fires, one involving a career crew fire service and the other a volunteer fire brigade stated that “Put side by side, I couldn’t tell the difference”. Participants described good communication, with multiple accounts of a “head honcho” or “boss” making a point to interact and communicate with them. One participant described the volunteer fire fighters having an understanding of what was valuable – both financially and emotionally/culturally – and making a particular effort to save those items. This participant described the brigade saving expensive furniture and taonga (treasured possessions) such as the tokotoko (walking stick) which had belonged to her husband. Victims/survivors had not always received any printed information or brochure/booklet at the scene (such as the ‘After the Fire’ booklet).

“Put side by side,
I couldn’t tell the
difference.”
[Comparing
professional vs
volunteer
brigades]
– ‘Phil’,
victim/survivor

In addition to Fire and Emergency, Police were mentioned by two participants, one with a positive experience and one with a negative experience. No other organisations or agencies were mentioned by participants.

Four participants reported receiving no support at the time of the fire from any source.

After the Fire

After the fire, informal sources were the main sources of support. Family/whānau was mentioned by the largest number of participants (11), followed by community (7), then cultural sources including iwi providers (4). Church/religious, Givealittle³, landlord, media, property manager, schools/universities were next on the list; and lastly employer, friends, and neighbours.

Table 4: Sources of informal support after the fire

Source of Support	Number
Family/whānau	11
Community	7
Cultural	4
Neighbours	4
Church/Religious	2
GiveaLittle	2
Landlord	2
Media	2
Property Manager	2
Schools/Universities	2
Employer	1

³ Givealittle is an online fundraising platform for all of New Zealand, founded in 2008 and acquired by Spark Foundation in 2012.

In terms of formal support after the fire, contact with Fire and Emergency was mostly with Fire Investigators. Five participants described their after fire contacts with Fire Investigators as generally positive, seven described interactions as generally negative, three were neutral, and two participants described no contact. While there was recognition in most cases that the Fire Investigator's focus was mainly on finding out what happened, there were also descriptions of both lack of communication/support, and of Fire Investigators providing extra information or support (for example taking a victim/survivor directly to the Salvation Army for assistance). Other formal agencies or organisations mentioned by participants as having involvement after the fire were Work and Income New Zealand (WINZ), Housing NZ, local councils (regional and city), iwi health provider, insurance brokers, insurance companies, and Victim Support. Red Cross and Salvation Army were not mentioned by participants.

“The insurance assessor was great, but the overall process was long and painful.”

– ‘Christine’, victim/survivor

Work and Income New Zealand was mentioned neutrally several times, once from a positive perspective of WINZ providing replacement goods and helping arrange housing, and once from a negative experience of WINZ response being inappropriate to the situation (i.e. replacing car seats when the vehicle had been destroyed in the fire). Two participants referenced strict eligibility criteria for accessing financial help from WINZ. Participants described one positive and one negative experience with Housing NZ. Councils were mentioned by four people, all with negative experiences with the council not being responsive and/or not taking responsibility for what was seen as a public hazard. Insurance brokers and insurance assessors were most often described as the first contact with insurance companies, and most often mentioned as an initial positive source of support. By contrast, dealings with the insurance company after that were most often described as causing increased stress. The stress of the insurance process fell largely into two categories: concern that the insurance claim may not be paid out, and delays in claims payments which thereby delayed replacement of goods and repairs or rebuilding of homes damaged or lost in the fire.

Victim Support was offered to at least four participants, but all of them declined Victim Support's services. Two of those having declined Victim Support's services indicated that they appreciated the offer of help, but did not need the type of support that Victim Support provided; “It was good to be offered help, even if we declined”. One participant was neutral, and one participant felt that Victim Support's help was not the right fit; “she was too ‘doom and gloom’ for us... in fact, my husband nearly threw her off the property”.

3.4 AFTER FIRE IMPACTS IN NEW ZEALAND

The victims/survivors interviewed were asked about the impacts (psychological, emotional, practical, cultural, financial or other) that they have experienced from their experience of fire, as well as what needs they may have.

What are after fire *impacts* on individuals, families/whānau and communities?

The after fire impacts described by victims/survivors can be categorized in terms of Instant (reactions at the scene), Immediate (1-7 days), Short-term (0-3 months), Medium-term (3-12 months) and Longer-term (12+ months).

Instant (at the scene)

In terms of reactions to the fire at the scene of the event, the one mentioned most often by participants was shock. Various elements of shock were described, such as confusion, “it was all a blur”, a sense of surreality, being “in crisis mode”, numbness or blankness.

This state was mentioned by 9 victims/survivors, some of them multiple times for a total of 16 mentions.

“I went straight into shock – the level of my shock was quite amazing to me.”

– ‘Maureen’, victim/survivor

There were multiple sub-themes related to the state of shock and the attendant experiences or effects. Several victims/survivors (4) talked at length about their decision-making abilities being impaired. This state was described as beginning at the time of the fire and continuing into the immediate and short-term timeframes. Two described being unable to accomplish basic tasks -- specifically, both had been unable to dial their mobile phones to call emergency services. A sense of ineffability and powerlessness was also described by one victim/survivor; “And to stand there -- watch it grow and grow -- standing there watching it burn, words can’t explain it -- what do you say? What do you do?... During the fire, it’s ‘Oh my god, I can’t do anything!’ After the fire, it’s ‘Oh my god, I wish I could’ve done more.’”

The second most common theme in the victims’/survivors’ descriptions of their experiences of fire was fear. Five victims/survivors mentioned this type of experience, such as “It was like living in a nightmare.”

Several sub themes were described that relate to the above. Several participants described experiencing trauma -- again both at the time of the fire and extending into the short-term, long-term, and beyond. Some continue to experience trauma after-effects, one year after their fire event.

Several participants mentioned the fire re-triggering previous traumas, or childhood fire traumas being “sort of activated as a result of this fire” (‘Maureen’, victim/survivor).

“They are spectators at a show they can’t remember buying a ticket for, let alone actually wanting to see.”

– Fire Investigator

“You just get into a state of blankness I suppose.”

– ‘Simon’, victim/survivor

Immediate (1-7 days)

The state of shock as it relates to impaired decision-making as described above at the scene of the fire event, is described as continuing into the immediate time frame of the days following the fire. Participants describe the ensuing days as continuing to be “a bit of a blur”, up to approximately one week after the fire. They indicated that this state of impairment was particularly difficult as in the time immediately following the fire, they were also required to make many decisions as they proceeded with the tasks necessary to move forward after the event.

“It’s all a bit foggy now.”

– ‘Laura’,
victim/survivor

Almost all participants focused on the administrative tasks that were required during the time period immediately following their fire event. In this time period there were many descriptions of a feeling of being unmoored -- of a lack of knowing what to expect due to the experience of fire being a very rare and unexpected event. There were several descriptions of a need for someone to guide them through, and also conceptions expressed of a roadmap or “process document” to gain a sense of what must be done and when.

“That was one of the hardest things, going back into the house with my daughter. The worst noise I’ve ever heard was when she found her cat.”

– ‘Simon’,
victim/survivor

Grief at fire losses of belongings and pets was also a strong theme in this period. Compound grief was also described by three participants, whose loss of belongings came not long after the loss of a loved one. Facing one loss on top of another one, or compound grief, can cause grief that is more intense than the grief of either loss taken separately, increasing the need for support. For many participants, the grieving period extended past the immediate timeframe into the short-, medium-, and even long-term periods following the fire event.

Some participants described a sense of being unacknowledged and unsupported, and a lack of caring and reassurance from authorities. These experiences immediately following the fire event for those participants set the tone for much of the rest of their recovery journey. A related experience was blame, anger and frustration at authorities or other entities at how the situation was handled. On the other side of the experience were equal numbers of descriptions of gratitude for support received, a sense of connectedness, and a sense of being lucky.

“I’m one of the lucky ones – and I know it.”

– ‘Simon’,
victim/survivor
whose home
and pets were
lost to fire

Stress related to insurance was a large theme beginning in the immediate aftermath and for some continuing up to a year after the event. Financial stress in general was another strong theme. The exact content of the financial stress varied widely and ranged from being stranded at the scene with no wallet or access to cash, to the cost of replacing essentials and paying for emergency accommodation; from covering costs while awaiting insurance pay-out, to doing without items that were uninsured, to paying double car payments on an uninsured car destroyed by the fire and the replacement vehicle.

Guilt and shame (whakamā) were mentioned by two participants. One was in the context of losing the whānau home and the effects of that loss on the wider whānau and community. The other was due to being the cause of the fire, stating “It WAS my fault. And that’s something I need to come to terms with. It’s an accident – it was a stupid, stupid accident – and I wear that”.

Table 5: Immediate effects

Effect	Number of Participants	Number of Mentions
Shock	9	16
Grief, Compound Grief	9	10
Gratitude/Relief	9	15
Insurance Stress	8	14
Frustration/Blame	8	16
Financial Stress	7	9
Unsupported	6	21
Guilt, Shame/Whakamā	2	2

Short- to Medium-Term

The themes expressed beginning in the short- to medium-term included the sense that the fire could have been worse, trauma symptoms, blame from others due to losing whānau home, and loss of a sense of place or the comfort and familiarity of home.

“It’s just STUFF.”
 – ‘Christine’,
 victim/survivor

A strong theme expressed by many participants after the most immediate time frame was a sense that the fire could have been worse. There were two opposite meanings expressed behind this statement: relief/gratitude, and anxiety. For some, there was relief and a sense of being fortunate. In some cases this was due to the fire being contained as quickly as it was, therefore causing less damage than it might have. In other cases, the participants expressed gratitude and relief that despite losses of homes, belongings and pets, the lives of their family/whānau were not lost. There were two exceptions to the sense that the fire could have been worse. Both of these were victims/survivors who felt that their rural volunteer brigade could have prevented some of the losses or damage if they had responded more quickly or had more resources at their disposal. Several participants expressed the sense of gaining perspective on what is important in life. The opposite side of this was the expression

“What’s important is life.”
 – ‘Simon’,
 victim/survivor

“It’s not quite fear, but uncertainty. Now I know: we have fires in fuse boxes.”
 – ‘Tom’,
 victim/survivor

of fear of disaster narrowly averted, and the recognition gained that the disaster is possible: “Another few minutes, and my house could have been gone, too” (participant who witnessed neighbour’s house burn to the ground).

Trauma symptoms during this period included anxiety, for some participants related to insomnia, other symptoms such as a loss of confidence, and increased caution in some cases further developing into hypervigilance. In one case the anxiety had progressed to a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

A specific type of sense of loss which impacted participants beginning in this period was a loss of a sense of place, or the discomfort of loss of familiar surroundings, comfort zone, or sense of home. This was especially strong in a participant who lost the home which had contained important taonga (treasured possessions) that had belonged to her husband. It was also a recurring and strong theme for the participant who lost the whānau home, and whose elderly uncle was displaced from not only his whānau home but his community. The sense of loss of home was also described as being particularly important to children.

Medium- to Long-Term

Many of the impacts described above begin in the immediate or short-term and continue into the medium- or long-term time frame. In contrast to the literature (which indicated resource loss as the strongest predictor of trauma), for participants in this study the severity of the impacts and the length of time they were experienced did not necessarily correlate to the severity of the fire as categorized by level of destruction (i.e. in some cases a ‘minor’ fire still caused significant trauma). The two main themes described for this time period were trauma symptoms (both physical and psychological) and a change in perception of life.

Trauma related symptoms such as grief, anxiety, and hypervigilance were described as continuing in some cases more than a year after the event. The cases of insomnia described, however, abated after the first few months. The effects of a loss of place or home continued and worsened in some cases, until the insurance claim was paid out and repairs or rebuilding was complete. In several cases, compound traumas of loss of belongings, relocations, loss of a sense of home, missing local friends and stress of loss of routine were experienced by the family/whānau for a year or more for this process to complete.

On the positive side of impacts experienced by participants, in addition to the sense of gratitude discussed above -- both for support received, and for precious belongings or lives being preserved -- participants also expressed empathy for others affected by their own fire, other fires, or disasters in general, and the sense that their family/whānau had been brought closer by the experience (specifically, living in tight quarters of temporary accommodation).

Finally, in the medium- to long-term, some participants described a sense of not dwelling on the experience and moving on.

“We’re doing
really good
now.”

– ‘Dean’,
victim/survivor

Table 6: After fire impacts over different timeframes

Immediate	Short-term (0-3 months)	Medium –term (3 to 12 months)	Longer-term
Shock, Panic, Confusion, Blankness, All a Blur, Surreal, Powerlessness	Sadness, Grief Loss, Guilt, Shame/Whakamā, Heartbreak	“Like living in a nightmare” Want to return to “normal” Want to get back into own home Slowly getting back to normal over time	“Want to return to normal” Child expressing anger, blaming parent Empathy for others Wanting to share story to help others Life settling down
Doing stupid things, Difficulty making decisions	Stress (especially related to insurance concerns) Anxiousness, Loss of confidence Triggered childhood trauma Needing reassurance	Health effects, “Mentally-disturbed” Trauma PTSD Being okay – then (thoughts) triggered	“All good” now
	More cautious, hyper-vigilant	Recovery period delayed/protracted by insurance issues	
	Loss of sense of place, miss old friends		
	Sense of gratitude, lucky		
	“Brought us closer together”, more tolerant		

Differing impacts on different groups

The factors mentioned by participants as affecting the level of impact of the fire were gender, culture/recent migrant status, age, and socioeconomic status.

“Men take things differently. My husband and son didn’t mind anything so long as there was food on the table... I’m probably more sensitive than the menfolk here.”

**– ‘Laura’,
victim/survivor**

Three participants described differing impacts of their fires based on gender. Two of these were male, one female. All three described the impact being larger on the female than on the males in their household.

Two respondents described increased negative impacts of their fire event due to being relatively new migrants to New Zealand, and therefore lacking a support network in terms of family/whānau, friends and community. In one case, the larger negative impact was also balanced with the positive support aspect of a response from the community of people from their home country. In the other case, the participant reported receiving no support and instead experienced an increased sense of isolation.

Two respondents described differential impacts based on age. The first of these was the impact on children. Both the intensity of grief as well as anger/blame of the parent for something over which they had no control were described. The second age-related impact related to effects of the fires on elderly family/whānau members. One victim/survivor described the process of an older spouse affected by Alzheimer’s being placed in residential care on a timeline that was accelerated due to the fire event. Another participant described that due to the fire of the whānau home in which she and her elderly uncle lived, she was no longer able to look after him. The two were separated and other relatives were required to take over his care, displacing him from his whānau home and community.

Lastly, socioeconomic status was a factor that affected the impacts for two participants. One was uninsured and unable to replace belongings lost to fire. Additionally, the fire exacerbated the family’s/whānau financial situation by creating a ‘poverty trap’ in which they were liable for continuing payments on a destroyed vehicle while also necessitating a second car loan to replace the vehicle destroyed by fire, resulting in a doubled monthly car payment. By contrast, one participant described that her high socioeconomic status and community standing increased the help she received and decreased the negative impacts the fire had on her. Concern was expressed that many community members had lower resource levels and would not recover as easily should a fire affect them.

Table 7: Factors influencing impacts of fires

Factor	Number
Gender	3
Migrants	2
Age: Children	1
Age: Elderly	2
Socioeconomic Status	2

What are the after fire *needs* of individuals, families/whānau and communities?

Urgent/Immediate

In the urgent/emergency timeframe, needs expressed by participants are safety, communication and information, emergency accommodation, guidance (i.e. someone to help tell them where to go and what to do now), and expression of concern (such as being asked, Are you OK?).

In terms of safety, the concerns were mostly around the need for a safe location to go to get away from the fire, and specifically to shelter children from witnessing the fire event. One participant was stranded and left to sleep in his car. Another described an unsafe situation of not being allowed to leave the scene of the fire to check on her children, who were in the home of an unknown neighbour during the event.

Of greater significance in terms of the number of participants describing the need, was the need for communication and information from Fire and Emergency at the time of the fire. Participants expressed the need to know what was happening, and to know what they were meant to do next.

An important theme expressed by participants was the need for acknowledgement and expression of concern. This need was described as being important both at the time of the fire and in the ensuing timeframe afterward. Some participants described never having their involvement acknowledged by authorities, i.e. a tenant whose landlord was involved with the follow-up, and a neighbour who was evacuated but never received communication beyond the event. Participants described the need for someone to ask them if they are OK – both at the scene and afterward.

“It would have been nice if someone had asked me if I was OK.”
– ‘Steven’,
victim/survivor

In the immediate period of one day to 1-2 weeks following the fire, participants’ expressions of need centre around themes of practical needs, guidance, and other communication and information.

“If you take those day-to-day things off people’s shoulders, it gives them time for the emotional journey.”

**– ‘Christine’,
victim/survivor**

For the time period immediately following the fire event, the area of need most expressed by participants was practical needs. The most common practical need expressed was emergency accommodation (7), followed by other essentials such as food and clothing (6); money for emergency replacements of the above (4).

Aside from these practical concerns, central to many of the participants’ expressions of needs was for guidance and other communication and information. The need for guidance was a very strong theme. Seven different respondents mentioned the need for guidance, several of them in various ways and multiple times, for a total of 18 mentions of a need for help to guide them through the moment of the fire, and the ensuing days. The need for guidance in the form of a person was stated as beginning at

the scene, with the other types beginning the following day. The need for guidance was the strongest in the immediate time frame after the fire, and extended into the short-term and in some cases the medium-term time frames after the fire. The types of guidance needed were a person (6 respondents, 10 mentions); a written guide, checklist or process document (3 respondents, 4 mentions); and a timeline for what to expect after the fire (2 respondents, 2 mentions).

The need for other communication and information was also well-represented in the participants’ accounts. The most common type of information needed was to know the cause of the fire (6). Information about tenants’ rights was also mentioned (1). Several participants mentioned the need for acknowledgement, reassurance, and empathy, including being asked if they were OK after the fire incident. Several participants mentioned these various sub-themes repeatedly, for a total of 25 mentions, making this a very strong theme. The general need for communication, from all areas, was also strong. Insurance companies (3), Housing NZ (2), and other sources (3) were mentioned, as was the need for a letter from Fire and Emergency (1).

Short- to Medium-Term

Beyond the urgent needs of the immediate timeframe, the needs described by the victims/survivors generally fell into practical support, advocacy, and emotional support.

Many of the themes around practical support in the short- to medium-term and often continuing into the long-term centred around housing. Participants expressed needing timely repair of property, relocation, and rebuilding. These themes were related to the strong theme of insurance: the need for insurance pay-out in a timely fashion, as well as clear communication from insurance companies and an indication of the timeline for the insurance process.

Other practical needs included money to replace destroyed belongings, sometimes in the form of support from Work and Income New Zealand, support from their local Council, or iwi and/or Māori providers, as well as advocacy, or a person/agency to help them to know what is on offer and access the various forms of support that may be available to them.

Emotional support as a general category was mentioned by five participants as being important during this period.

Medium- to Long-Term

In the medium to long-term timeframe after the fire, participants’ descriptions of their needs turn toward the psychological and emotional as well as the practical. The specific needs expressed in terms of emotional support included grief/trauma counselling, specifically for victims/survivors of fire (2); general trauma support (2); and a support group for people having experienced fire (1). Three participants specified that they had no need for psychological or emotional support.

There was a strong theme expressed in several ways of the need for a return to normalcy. Descriptions of this referred to the importance of routine, and to reinstating a routine as soon as possible after the event. They also centred around a strong need to return home. For one family/whānau, returning to their property to live in a temporary structure (despite the destroyed structure still standing) was enough to regain the sense of ‘home’; another participant described the need to rebuild their house -- and therefore, their life -- exactly as it had been before the fire. Another way this return to normalcy was categorised was the sense of needing to move on, or not to dwell on the experience.

“The major tragedy in New Zealand today is not motor vehicle accidents – yes they have incredible effects, but – it is house fires, because of the effects across the community.”
– Fire Investigator

Table 8: After fire needs over different timeframes

Immediate	Short-term (0-3 months)	Medium-term (3-12 months)	Longer-term
Essentials: A place to go: -to shelter children from witnessing -emergency accommodation	Temporary accommodation Initiate repairs/ rebuild/ relocation	Complete repairs/ rebuild/ relocation	Complete repairs/ rebuild/ relocation (if not completed in previous stage)
Essentials: clothing, food	Find out what happened (cause of fire) Initiate insurance process + timely insurance payout Support with WINZ process, other agencies/orgs	Insurance payout Use of insurance money to replace belongings, rebuild home	Complete replacement of belongings, home rebuild
Guidance during shock period	Someone to guide through checklist, help decision-making Acknowledgement “Are you OK?”	Psychological/ emotional support if needed Grief counselling Support groups- specific to grief from fire loss	Psychological/emotional support if needed All good” now

4. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This research is of an exploratory nature, as it involved a relatively small sample of people who had directly experienced a fire, Fire Investigators, as well as key stakeholders including Fire and Emergency, and support organisations. Nevertheless, the research does provide emergent findings on the experiences, impacts and needs of a small but relatively diverse selection of New Zealanders, including Māori, New Zealand European, and other ethnicities, from urban and rural perspectives directly affected by mainly residential fires. It also incorporates perspectives from those involved in providing support, at the time and after the fire. Therefore, the research findings make a contribution to addressing the research gap in national and also international literature around the after fire impacts on individuals, families/whānau, and communities.

This research report also aims to provide practically-focused insights to assist Fire and Emergency to explore how they might address the after fire support needs of individuals and communities, and other organisations involved in after fire support. The knowledge gained from the research is intended to contribute to recruitment, training and leadership within Fire and Emergency. Appropriate support provided in the early stages after a fire event may help minimise later trauma impacts for victims/survivors.

4.1 CATEGORISING IMPACTS: PRACTICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL/EMOTIONAL NEEDS AND TIMEFRAME

The implications of the findings are presented below in two ways. Firstly, the main overarching needs and implications for after fire support are categorised as either:

1. **practical needs** (and impacts); or,
2. **psychological/emotional needs** (and impacts).

Secondly, a timeline key has been developed to indicate in the appropriate sections below the timeframes for where the needs occur and should be addressed; namely:

1. **Urgent:** during the fire incident itself
2. **Immediate needs:** later the same day, or the following day and 1-2 weeks immediately following
3. **Short-term:** zero to three months
4. **Medium-term:** three to six months; and
5. **Longer-term:** six months onwards.

Scale of the impacts and needs

The scale of the impacts and needs was not able to be quantified in this small qualitative research study, however it is reasonable to surmise that the quantum of impacts and needs across New Zealand due to accidental fire is very significant. It was pointed out by Fire Investigators that they are only involved in fires in which the cause of the fire is not readily apparent, which is only about ten percent of the residential and commercial fires attended by fire crews. Consequently, there is likely a large proportion of fires where there are a range of after fire impacts and needs that are not currently being addressed. David Wales of the Kent Fire service commented that “small fires can have life changing effects. So we need to learn more about this group [of unattended fires]... they may want reassurance and other forms of support. Either way they are customers reliant on a monopoly public service and yet they are effectively ignored.”

Practical needs

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Fire response

Fire and Emergency was acknowledged almost universally as doing an excellent job of responding quickly and professionally to putting out residential fires.

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Shelter

Some victims/survivors had a need for an initial safe, sheltered space at the fire scene, or away from the scene, as sometimes they literally have nowhere to go. Fire and Emergency may want to consider opportunities to provide or facilitate access to immediate shelter, or ensure people are quickly transferred somewhere where they are safe.

Implication/Recommendation 1: Fire and Emergency could consider expanding their practical support at the scene of a fire, e.g. perhaps explore opportunities to provide or facilitate access to immediate shelter to victims/survivors at the time of the fire

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Opportunities to improve communication and access to information:

Fire crews and Fire Investigators

Communication and support from Fire and Emergency at the scene overall is also outstanding, with clear leadership and communication with most fire victims/survivors off the fire truck. Some victims/survivors would have appreciated more communication about what was happening and also occasionally to find out more precisely what the cause of the fire was.

The information booklet ‘After the Fire’ is meant to be provided at the time of the fire (by the Fire Crew), however it appears this is not always the case. There was a view that a booklet is not sufficient in itself or that being given it at the time of the fire is not the best moment. Further, verbal advice, follow-up contacts, and direction at the time of the fire would also be helpful. This may include asking if victims/survivors have insurance, and perhaps initiating the first call to their insurance company on the victims’/survivors’ behalf, if the victim/survivor wishes. It was also noted that people are not always asked whether they are OK by Fire and Emergency services at the scene.

Implication/Recommendation 2: Ensure that all victims/survivors are clearly communicated with at the time of a fire event, asked whether they are OK, and provided with appropriate information, particularly during follow-up, as well as connected with relevant contacts (see Practical Support below)

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Opportunities to improve communication and access to information:

Social service agencies

The need for improvements in communication between social support agencies was also identified both by some key informants and victims/survivors. One suggestion was for new and existing formal memoranda of understanding with agencies such as the Ministry for Children/Oranga Tamariki and WINZ to ensure that there was a clear protocol for responding to referrals from Fire and Emergency within a specified timeframe. It is understood that such a memorandum of understanding has recently been signed between Fire and Emergency and Housing NZ, another key social service support agency for some fire victims/survivors.

Implication/Recommendation 3: Explore opportunities to formalise immediate access to essential social services, such as Work and Income New Zealand or Māori providers – potentially through memoranda of understanding on the appropriate protocol

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Opportunities to improve communication and access to information:

Insurance companies

While insurance brokers and assessors were identified as working very well in the interests of victims/survivors, the communication from the insurance company office/headquarters could be improved. A number of victims/survivors identified insurance-related stress, which could have been mitigated by more proactive, clear, and timely communication from insurance companies, particularly providing early advice about the level of cover that is likely to be awarded and an indication of where people are along the process and timeline.

Implication/Recommendation 4: Consider using this report to initiate discussions with insurance providers on opportunities to improve communication and engagement with victims/survivors

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Emergency support for financial and basic necessities

Help with emergency essentials (like food and clothing) and money to purchase basic essentials was a form of practical support identified by a number of victims/survivors. This kind of help was often provided via informal channels, family/whānau, friends, the broader community and at times insurance companies. This may be an area where general entitlements to support from Work and Income New Zealand could be clarified and communicated (e.g. for those not currently clients of WINZ), and where iwi providers may take the opportunity to support their communities.

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

The need for acknowledgment ideally as part of systematic, proactive follow-up

A number of victims/survivors and also two of the Fire Investigators identified a need for a follow-up step immediately after the fire to both proactively check-in and ask if the victims/survivors are OK, and to demonstrate an acknowledgement of a traumatic event and offer an expression of concern. A suggestion was also made that this follow-up would be an opportunity to explicitly ask “how did we do?” - reflecting a customer centred/customer satisfaction type of approach, which could record valuable feedback to fire service operations. This proactive approach and feedback loop is being gradually implemented in the Kent Fire Service after fire support model.

Implication/Recommendation 5: Consider implementing a clear, systematic follow-up protocol to contact victims/survivors to ask: a) Are you OK?, b) How did we do?, and c) whether they need anything further from Fire and Emergency; and potentially refer to specialist support services

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

The need for empathy even for ‘minor’ fires

Part of the need for acknowledgment touches on a larger issue about what is a “real” fire, and a possible need to think more about how fires are categorised both at the time of the fire, and in relation to considering potential after fire impacts, particularly emotional/psychological impacts. It was clear from the interviews that even a ‘minor’ fire - from a fire management/extinguishment point of view - could have significant traumatic consequences, for example if those victims/survivors had previous childhood trauma associated with fire, which triggered a re-occurrence of trauma. Another aspect of the need for acknowledgment and reassurance is knowing what the cause was, and for some participants the provision of clear, thorough, timely and empathetic information on the cause (and emphasising the low risk of re-occurrence) could have limited after fire trauma (i.e. anxiety/hypervigilance).

Implication/Recommendation 6: Consider developing some guidance for Fire and Emergency personnel about how fires are categorised and the need for an empathetic response to relatively ‘minor fires’

4.2 PEOPLE AND RESOURCES TO HELP ‘MOVE FORWARD’

After some early, empathetic and respectful acknowledgement of their situation, practical support was the highest priority for victims/survivors. This appears to take two forms (described in more detail below);

- 1) a **person/role** to provide help
- 2) a **process document, timeline/list** of tasks to complete (what to do when and in the right order).

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

A person/role: “Someone to hold our hand” and point us in the right direction

There was a very strong need expressed for an authoritative individual/role to be on hand both at the scene and immediately after the fire to help victims/survivors work through, prioritise and address practical needs. Many participants expressed concern because they were in a state of shock, confusion, panic and blankness that they did not know what to do and would have done things differently if they had been able to think straight. It was felt that an authoritative, experienced and independent individual, “someone to hold their hand” would be best placed to help them make the right decisions to move forward. Some participants also

commented that being given clear practical guidance on tasks to get sorted out helped address emotional impacts by providing a sense of moving forward.

There were different views on who this person might be, whether part of Fire and Emergency or an external, trauma-informed helping organisation. It was noted that Fire and Emergency could leverage their trusted and experienced position to provide this helping role. There may be potential for training/upskilling of Fire and Emergency staff in trauma-informed practice appropriate for this role.

Victim Support advised that they provide a full range of support (excluding counselling), including practical help and advocacy. However, neither victims/survivors nor Fire Investigators appeared to view Victim Support as offering this kind of practical support (even though Victim Support is listed within the 'After a Fire' booklet). Some victims/survivors were referred to Victim Support, which they all declined (usually because they thought Victim Support only provide emotional support, and they didn't think they needed that support at the time). This finding may suggest that Fire and Emergency could clarify the role of Victim Support and/or other support agencies in providing trauma-informed after fire support to those affected by a fire.

It was expressed that there are rural areas with very limited access to institutions such as hospitals, District Health Boards, or other support organisations. It may be helpful for these organisations to increase their catchment areas to provide at least telephone or remote support of some kind to populations who might otherwise fall through the cracks. In rural areas, there may be other options of organisations to fill this role; iwi organisations, other kaupapa Māori health and social service organisations, or other local entities could potentially fill this role.

Implication/Recommendation 7: Explore the options for ensuring a dedicated individual/role is available to provide initial guidance and advice at the scene of a fire and for immediate follow-up. This role could be performed by e.g. a trained Social Worker, or Fire and Emergency staff could be trained in trauma-informed practice

Implication/Recommendation 8: Consider clarifying the role and capability of Victim Support, kaupapa Māori health and social service organisations, and/or other support agencies to provide trauma-informed after fire support for those affected by fire

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

The need for a comprehensive next steps process document/resource (with a timeline), given AT the right time (and multiple times)

To supplement the support of a physical person, a number of victims/survivors identified the need for a clear physical or online document. Fire and Emergency’s ‘After a Fire’ booklet does not always appear to be offered to victims/survivors at the time of the fire, or afterwards (or may be forgotten about in the ‘blur’ of the incident, and misplaced) - yet it contains vital information to assist recovery after the fire. While the document provides the main information and lists of what to do, it could benefit from including some more detail on who provides what services (e.g. Victim Support) and clear prompts and a timeline for when to begin important practical tasks and how long to expect particular tasks/processes to take (e.g. contact from Housing NZ, Victim Support). There are a wide range of ‘after a fire’ international resources to draw on, which cover different aspects and steps to take following a fire in more detail (e.g. health, or financial support). Because support services vary by location, a New Zealand-based publication of this kind would benefit from a well-researched and regularly updated outline of the available sources of support on offer. Ideally, this would be tailored to specific geographic areas. This could also include being reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for Māori through the production of a Te Reo Māori version. It may be beneficial to translate the booklet/resource into other languages, as well.

An important consideration is *when* the victims/survivors should receive the document, given often they are not thinking clearly at the incident itself. While it may well be appropriate to provide the document/resource at the incident, it is also critical to ensure there is a follow-up opportunity to ensure they have the resource and provide it again if necessary.

A section could be included in this document/resource, developed from a trauma-informed practice perspective, of ‘what to expect’ that outlines potential grief, loss and trauma symptoms they may experience and suggestions and resources for how to cope with them. This would be a source of immediate emotional support that victims/survivors can refer back to whenever they may feel unsure/stressed etc.

Mobile/online technology can also be utilised to ensure that the relevant information can be instantly accessed online, in addition to a physical document that could easily be misplaced during and immediately after the incident.

Implication/Recommendation 9: Review the protocol for when to provide the ‘After the Fire’ booklet (to ensure victims/survivors are engaged with it)

Implication/Recommendation 10: Consider adding some more information to the booklet/resource on the roles of support agencies (e.g. Victim Support), possibly tailored to geographic location

Implication/Recommendation 11: Consider reviewing the booklet/resource to ensure it is appropriate for Māori through production of a Te Reo Māori version

Implication/Recommendation 12: Consider translation of the booklet/resource into other languages

Implication/Recommendation 13: Consider including in the booklet/resource a specific timeline on when to begin tasks, and information on how long to expect particular processes to take

Implication/Recommendation 14: Consider including in the booklet/resource a trauma-informed section on what symptoms victims/survivors may experience and suggestions/resources for coping with them

Implication/Recommendation 15: Consider providing an online/mobile-and web-enabled version of the booklet/resource, perhaps linked to other New Zealand-based trauma-informed online resources for victims/survivors of trauma

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Use of technology (e.g. QR codes/other) for tracking of information and after fire support

A suggestion of note was to utilise technology in a way that would streamline Fire and Emergency information collection and tracking, as well as provide a seamless avenue for the victims/survivors to access support. It was suggested to generate an identification code, such as a QR code, specific to each incident and tie tracking of the incident to this code. The code could then be provided to the victims/survivors (via mobile phone at the scene, provided to a family/whānau member or support person, or via email); to internal Fire and Emergency departments and entities (i.e. Business Support Unit); and to other support organisations such as WINZ, Housing NZ, or others (thereby also ensuring that referrals are genuine as they are generated by Fire and Emergency). The QR technology ensures direct easy access to contact information for the relevant support organisations, and has the added benefit of ‘authenticating’ the ‘case’ so that social services such as WINZ will know the referral/contact is genuine.

Implication/Recommendation 16: Explore possible utilisation of technology (e.g. tablets and QR codes/other) for tracking incidents and accessing post-incident support

Urgent
Immediate
Short-term
Medium-term
Long-term

Provision of trauma-informed support (counselling/support groups/other) for those who have experienced a fire

Victims/survivors interviewed described a wide range of psychological/emotional impacts, trauma and subsequent needs. Shock, fear, powerlessness and impairment of basic functioning were instant emotional reactions that passed quickly for most, but not all. Grief, loss, and anger/frustration were fairly common and could extend into the longer-term. Financial and insurance stress were present in about half of the those interviewed and again extended into the longer-term timeframe.

While there were a wide range of emotional impacts described, the need for compassion and basic after fire support (practical and/or emotional) was a consistent theme. As not all Fire and Emergency staff interviewed saw this as part of their role, it may require a culture shift within Fire and Emergency as an organisation to work toward this expanded role for existing staff members.

A minority of the victims/survivors interviewed specified needing trauma support/counselling; however, most of the key informants (e.g. the Fire Investigators) did recognise this need. Therefore, key informants either may recognise something the individual victims/survivors don't, or misunderstand what fire victims/survivors really need. One of the victims/survivors who did recognise this need suggested having the option of group-based counselling specific to those who have experienced a fire. It was also commented, though, that sometimes people may not realise they can do with some emotional support, so there may be a level of unrecognised or undiagnosed need. One possible way to address trauma among victims/survivors may be to provide training to Fire and Emergency staff in trauma-informed practice. This training could centre on Fire Investigators, on other specific support staff roles, or could include staff across the organisation.

If a systematic specialist support service tailored to those who have experienced a fire is envisaged, there were different perspectives on who should offer this support. Options ranged from Fire and Emergency providing the service directly (a holistic/integrated approach) to a sub-contracted approach using an existing external provider, or a referral process to existing services, possibly as follows:

- a) need for support identified (possibly by a Fire and Emergency Business Unit)
- b) refer to an existing service such as Victim Support or a kaupapa Māori health and social service provider who can provide practical support, and then if the need for counselling is identified,
- c) refer to a trauma-informed counselling service.

When considering the potential options for providing counselling support, it is worth being mindful of the view that the more referral points are included in the process, the greater the risk of attrition, and people falling through the cracks.

Implication/Recommendation 17: Consider working toward an expanded understanding of the role of Fire and Emergency staff members, possibly Fire Investigators and/or other support staff, to include providing after fire support to those affected by fire. This may include a culture shift of Fire and Emergency as an organisation to include support of victims/survivors as part of its mandate

Implication/Recommendation 18: Consider training in trauma-informed practice for Fire and Emergency staff

Implication/Recommendation 19: Explore options for developing or facilitating access to a specialist support service tailored to those who have experienced a fire

Establish/re-establish a national (and regional) forum for Fire Investigators to support learning, training, and networking

Fire Investigators are clear on their formal role(s), work fairly independently in their areas, and appear well-connected and responsive to their local communities. While one Fire Investigator did not see a need to formally connect with other Fire Investigators, the other three did express an interest in having the opportunity to connect more formally with fellow professional Fire Investigators to network, share ideas, best practices, training and to collaborate – possibly through a formal network and annual, or biannual national/regional forums. There was some indication that some kind of a formal network and forums had existed in the past.

Implication/Recommendation 20: Consider opportunities to establish/re-establish a national/regional forum and network for Fire Investigators to support learning, collaboration and networking

Recognise strengths within Fire and Emergency in areas such as cultural competency and provide opportunities to share information and best practices in these areas

As the example of a fire brigade saving a victim/survivor's taonga (treasured possessions) shows, there is a cultural competency expertise that exists within the organisation, perhaps among the rural brigades, that may be shared as a good practice with others throughout Fire and Emergency. Such information sharing could possibly happen in a similar way to the Fire Investigator collaboration described above, but perhaps among the wider Fire and Emergency work force.

Implication/Recommendation 21: Consider recognising skills such as cultural competency among Fire and Emergency work force, perhaps in rural and ethnically diverse regions, and providing opportunities to share these good practices among the wider Fire and Emergency work force

Research partnership programmes/formalising customer feedback?

In a similar approach to the Kent Fire Service and Greater Manchester Fire Service/Salford University partnership, Fire and Emergency may wish to consider opportunities to develop or partner on an ongoing research and 'customer' feedback programme, possibly with multiple potential objectives including to:

- systematically gather feedback on operational service delivery
- gather 'real-time' and after fire experiences of those who have had a fire incident (over different timeframes).

This approach could help gather over time a 'bank' of direct fire experiences across a wide cross-section of the New Zealand population, which could then be analysed by socio-demographic characteristics. This bank could help identify key issues and risks that could in turn be used to help design a systematic after fire response within Fire and Emergency, and assist the Fire Research and Investigation Unit (FRIU) to further educate the public, businesses and communities on how to reduce the risks of fires. An initial step could be to pilot this kind of research-based approach in a large brigade or even a region.

Implication/Recommendation 22: Explore opportunities to develop a research-based approach/partnerships to support the development of an after fire support programme

Further explore after fire impacts and possible support sources for Māori

Māori experiences of after-fire impacts are of particular importance. Not only are Māori over-represented in rates of injury and fatality from fire in New Zealand, but as tangata whenua⁴, the Crown also has an obligation through the Treaty of Waitangi to ensure that Māori health needs are met when Māori have experienced a fire.

Although a small study, it indicated that there are differences in the after-fire impacts and needs between Māori and non-Māori. For instance, while the first group of victims/survivors presented with strong themes of frustration for not receiving support, these themes were not present in the Māori participants. The Māori sample received support primarily from informal sources such as whānau/family, rather than formal health or social organisations or services. Māori participants expressed little expectation of help from external health or social service organisations (perhaps due to experiences of broken promises or access issues in the past). This may also relate to not wanting to be seen as a victim or needy, which could speak to concepts of mana⁵ and whakamā/shame. We therefore propose that the impacts; the help that is needed or wanted; and the preferences for how, where, and when after-fire help is accepted and used may differ between Māori and non-Māori. As such, we need to understand what these differences are in order to address them.

We recommend that further research is undertaken into the after-fire impacts among Māori to ensure that the unique Māori health, social and financial needs are captured and taken into consideration when they experience a fire. This research should be conducted using appropriate, mana-enhancing research methodologies consistent with the Māori ethics guidelines⁶. We highly recommend that, at a minimum, a Māori-centred approach is used.

Implication/Recommendation 23: Future research is recommended to explore the specific after fire impacts for Māori in New Zealand

⁴ (Māori dictionary) local people, hosts, indigenous people – people born of the whenua, i.e. of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried.

⁵ (Maori dictionary) prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status, spiritual power, charisma – mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object. Mana goes hand in hand with tapu, one affecting the other. The more prestigious the event, person or object, the more it is surrounded by tapu and mana. Mana is the enduring, indestructible power of the atua and is inherited at birth, the more senior the descent, the greater the mana.

⁶

<http://www.hrc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/Te%20Ara%20Tika%20Guidelines%20for%20Maori%20Research%20Ethics.pdf>

Specific suggestions raised by victims/survivors

There were some much more specific issues raised by some people interviewed that should be recorded separately. These were mostly related to potential pre-fire, fire-risk prevention improvements and information for consideration about the Fire Research and Investigation Unit, namely providing:

- **basic emergency information** for new migrants, international students and refugees. One international student interviewed commented that they did not know which number to call for a fire emergency.
- **warnings, and/or regulations** about the flammability of some types of foam in furniture and curtains
- better information provided from insurers about whether contents insurance covers temporary accommodation
- information about the fire safety standards/requirements around the installation of **domestic switchboards (fuse boxes)** and their fire ratings.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE: VICTIMS/SURVIVORS (FIRST SAMPLE)

Interview guide: Victims of fire

Participant:

Time and date:

Location of interview:

Preliminaries

1. Explain **purpose** of the review: You are invited to be part of a research study to understand the challenges faced by families and whānau who have been affected by a fire. The findings will be used to help Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) staff and volunteers to better meet the support and recovery needs of families and whānau affected by fire, along with the broader community impacted by fire.
2. Explain **why we want them to participate**: interested in understanding their needs (e.g. help and support they need), and experiences of services/support (formal and informal) that they received during and following the fire incident. When we say services, we mean a range e.g. from Fire and Emergency NZ, WINZ, housing; counselling services, community services (e.g. Red Cross, Salvation Army), support can be from services or family, friends, neighbours – there are no right or wrong answers
3. Run through **information sheet**. Provide opportunity to ask questions., and make comments, or provide feedback if they want too.
4. Explain that they don't have to answer any questions if they don't want to. There may be some questions that might cause some distress, and to please tell us things that they **feel comfortable** doing so. There **is information about support available** if they need it.
5. Re-emphasise **confidentiality** and **voluntary** nature of the interview. Emphasise that they can stop the interview at any point.
6. Ask to complete **consent form** and check if they consent to voice recording (only for purposes of capturing information). Ask them to provide their email address only if they want a summary of the information we gather during the interview.

Background information

a	<p>Thank you for agreeing to talk to us.</p> <p>Is there anything you would like to tell us about you and/or your family before we start talking about the fire incident?</p> <p>Would you like to tell us a little bit about the fire incident you experienced?</p> <p><i>NOTE: You don't need to provide any details, and it is entirely over to you what you share with us</i></p>
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RQ1: What are the roles of services/agencies in supporting those who have experienced a fire?	
1a	<p>Can you tell us if any help was provided <u>at the time</u> of the fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If there was some assistance, what was provided and by whom? - Prompt: was there any information/assistance provided directly by the Fire & Emergency Services? If so, who from the F&ENZ provided assistance/information? And what did they provide? - Did anyone from the F&ENZ refer you to anyone else/any organisation for further assistance/help <p><i>The kinds of things we would like to hear/ask more about include: crisis support, housing/temp accom, financial, counselling</i></p>
1b	<p>Did you receive any kinds of help <u>after</u> the fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – for example from Fire & Emergency Services, other organisations and people - Did F&ENZ personnel return to visit you after the fire? If so, what was the purpose of the visit, and what assistance/information did they provide? <p><i>The kinds of things we would like to hear/ask more about include: crisis support, housing/temp accom, financial, counselling</i></p>

RQ2: What are the post-fire impacts on individuals, families and communities?	
What are the needs of individuals, families and communities?	
2a	<p>What are some of the things you think are important to help families and whānau affected by a fire?</p> <p>What kinds of help and support have you had that has been helpful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – from [this organisation], other organisations and people
2b	<p>What services weren't so helpful? Why?</p>
2c	<p>What could have been better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – the amount of support provided, who provided the support, the timeliness of the support
2d	<p>What kinds of support would have been helpful / you would have liked, that you didn't get?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – is there specific support you would have liked that you did not receive? - Are the examples of support you have heard that other people have received that you didn't and would have liked too?
2e	<p>Are there other kinds of support that you need to improve the wellbeing of yourself or your family / whānau?</p>
2f	<p>What do you think were the main barriers to needs being met for those impacted by fire?</p>
What are the post-fire impacts on individuals, families and communities?	
3a	<p>Can you describe the types of impacts that the fire has had on you and your family?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompts: this could be the psychological, social, financial, cultural and practical effects - And could be over different timeframes: i.e the time of the fire itself, immediately afterwards, or in the short, medium and longer-term - Were there different kinds of impacts on different members of your family? (e.g. by age, or ethnicity? Other?)

3b	<p>Were there other people affected by the fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt: for example, extended family, neighbours, friends? Others
3c	<p>Have different impacts lasted longer than others?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt: what kinds of impacts have continued to have an impact - Why do you think some have lasted longer than others? - Are you receiving ongoing support for any of these impacts? How helpful is this support?
<p>3. Wrap-up</p>	
4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything important that we have not asked or that you would like to tell us?
	<p>Thank you for your time!</p>

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE: VICTIMS/SURVIVORS (SECOND SAMPLE)

Participant:

Time and date:

Location of interview:

Preliminaries

Thank you for agreeing to talk to us.

Introductions (including the whānau)

7. Explain **purpose** of the review: You are invited to be part of a research study to understand the challenges faced by whānau who have been affected by a fire. The findings will be used to help Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) staff and volunteers to better meet the support and recovery needs of whānau affected by fire, along with the broader community impacted by fire.
8. Explain **why we want them to participate**: interested in understanding their needs (e.g. help and support they need), and experiences of services/support (formal and informal) that they received during and following the fire incident. When we say services, we mean a range e.g. from Fire and Emergency NZ, WINZ, housing; counselling services, community services (e.g. Red Cross, Salvation Army, Māori health providers), support can be from services or family/whānau, friends, neighbours – there are no right or wrong answers
9. Run through **information and consent sheet**. Provide opportunity to ask questions and make comments or provide feedback if they want too.
10. Explain that they don't have to answer any questions if they don't want to. There may be some questions that might cause some distress, and to please tell us things that they **feel comfortable** doing so. There **is information about support available** if they need it.
11. Re-emphasise **confidentiality** and **voluntary** nature of the interview. Emphasise that they can stop the interview at any point.
12. Check if they consent to voice recording (only for purposes of capturing information). Turn on recording. Ask for verbal consent ensuring this is recorded. Ask them to provide their email or postal address so that a copy of the consent form can be sent to them (to ensure a close the loop process), along with a copy of the notes should they request a copy during the consent process.

Background information	
a	<p>Re-emphasise that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is no correct answer • we are not experts in fires or emergency help, so we may need to ask some obvious questions for clarification. <p>To start off, we need to make sure that we ask you the right questions. For us to do this, we need to know a little bit about the fire incident you experienced. Could you tell us about it?</p> <p><i>NOTE: You don't need to provide any details, and it is entirely over to you what you share with us</i></p>

RQ1: What are the roles of services/agencies in supporting those who have experienced a fire?	
1a	<p>Can you tell us if any help was provided <u>at the time</u> of the fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what was provided and by whom? - Prompt: was there any information/assistance provided directly by the Fire & Emergency Services? If so, who from the F&ENZ provided assistance/information? And what did they provide? - Did anyone from the F&ENZ refer you to anyone else/any organisation for further assistance/help <p><i>The kinds of things we would like to hear/ask more about include: crisis support, housing/temp accom, financial, counselling, Māori social and health providers, Iwi providers.</i></p>
1b	<p>Did you receive any kinds of help <u>after</u> the fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – for example from Fire & Emergency Services, other organisations and people - Did F&ENZ personnel return to visit you after the fire? If so, what was the purpose of the visit, and what assistance/information did they provide? <p><i>The kinds of things we would like to hear/ask more about include: crisis support, housing/temp accom, financial, counselling, Māori social and health providers, Iwi providers.</i></p>

RQ2: What are the post-fire impacts on individuals, families and communities?	
What are the needs of individuals, families and communities?	
2a	<p>What are some of the things you think are important to help whānau affected by a fire?</p> <p>What kinds of help and support have you had that has been helpful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – from [this organisation], other organisations and people
2b	<p>What services weren't so helpful? Why?</p>
2c	<p>What could have been better?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – the amount of support provided, who provided the support, the timeliness of the support
2d	<p>What kinds of support would have been helpful / you would have liked, that you didn't get?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt – is there specific support you would have liked that you did not receive? - Are the examples of support you have heard that other people have received that you didn't and would have liked too?
2e	<p>Are there other kinds of support that you need to improve the wellbeing of yourself or your whānau?</p>
2f	<p>What do you think were the main barriers to needs being met for those impacted by fire?</p> <p>Recap issues participants may have previously mentioned: issues around health that were hard to solve, issues with housing or accessing benefits, etc. If no issues were raised:</p> <p>What were the main barriers/challenges you experienced to getting help after the fire?</p> <p>Do you think other whānau may encounter the same barriers/challenges?</p> <p>Do you think they will find other barriers/challenges?</p> <p>If so, what do you think those barriers/challenges to getting help would be?</p>

What are the post-fire impacts on individuals, families and communities?	
3a	<p>Can you describe the types of impacts that the fire has had on you and your whānau?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompts: encourage talk about wellbeing- this could be the psychological, social, financial, cultural and practical effects - And could be over different timeframes: i.e. the time of the fire itself, immediately afterwards, or in the short, medium and longer-term - Were there different kinds of impacts on different members of your family? How did your kids/kuia/koroua/mokopuna (other family members/those living with participant at the time) handle it?
3b	<p>Were there other people affected by the fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prompt: for example, extended family, neighbours, friends? Others
3c	<p>Have different impacts lasted longer than others?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompt: what kinds of impacts have continued to have an impact - Why do you think some have lasted longer than others? - Are you receiving ongoing support for any of these impacts? How helpful is this support?
3. Wrap-up	
4a	<p>Is there anything important that we have not asked or that you would like to tell us?</p>
	Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE: FIRE INVESTIGATORS

Interview guide: Fire Investigators

Participant:

Time and date:

Location of interview:

Preliminaries

1. Explain **purpose** of the research:

You are invited to be part of a research study to understand the challenges faced by people and work places who have been affected by a fire. The findings will be used to help Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire and Emergency) to better meet the support and recovery needs of families and whānau affected by fire, along with the broader community impacted by fire.

2. Explain **why we want them to participate**:
3. Run through **information sheet**. Provide opportunity to ask questions.
4. Re-emphasise **anonymity and voluntary** nature of the interview. Their contribution can be withdrawn at their request.
5. Ask to complete **consent form** and check if they consent to voice recording (only for purposes of capturing information). Ask them to provide their email address only if they want a summary of the information we gather during the interview.

Background information

a

Can you describe your role and involvement in fire and emergency services?

- How long have you been involved?

RQ1: What are the role of Fire and Emergency and other agencies in supporting those who have experienced a fire?

1a

Please talk us through your role/interactions with victims/survivors [of home fires?] after a fire has occurred
And more broadly any involvement Fire and Emergency has with victims/survivors [of home fires?] after a fire has occurred (from your experience/understanding)..

- Prompts: Are there any formalised processes, or protocols, advice, or information you, or anyone else supplies to those affected by a fire? If so, what is this? Can you show us or describe some examples?
- In your experience does involvement vary depending on the location of the brigade? If so, in what ways?

1b

Do you feel Fire and Emergency should have more of a role..... with post-fire recovery?

- what kinds of things would you like to see Fire and Emergency doing to help with recovery from fire?
- what opportunities are there to move into the kind of roles you describe?
- what do you see as the barriers to moving into these kind of roles?

1c	<p>Do you work with/refer to other agencies/organisations to support those who have experienced a fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, which agencies do you work with? - what kind of roles and support do they provide? - are there other agencies/organisations that you think could or should be providing support to those who have experienced a fire? - what kind of roles and support could they be providing?
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RQ2: What are the post-fire impacts on individuals, families and communities?

2a	<p>From your own professional experience, what do you understand about the post-fire impacts of fires on individuals/families?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompts: this could be the psychological, social, financial, cultural and practical effects - And could be over different timeframes: i.e. the time of the fire itself, immediately afterwards, or in the short, medium and longer-term - Are there different kinds of impacts on different groups of people (e.g. by age, or ethnicity? Other? - From your perspective, have you seen different impacts on different family/whānau members (i.e. parents/adults vs. children vs. extended family)? -
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2b	<p>In your experience, what kind of needs do those impacted by fire have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are those needs? - Why are those needs important? - Prompts: are there particular needs that you commonly see? What are the range of non-material needs (i.e. emotional, psychological, cultural) that you commonly see? - What are the range of needs you have observed? - Do these needs differ depending on who has been affected? In what ways do they differ?
2c	<p>In your experience, to what extent do you think those affected by a fire have their support and recovery needs met?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompts: to a strong extent, to some extent, needs are generally not met - Perhaps another prompt here toward the non-material, if needed? - Does the meeting of needs depend on who has been affected by fire?
2d	<p>What do you think are the main barriers to needs being met for those impacted by fire?</p>
2e	<p>Does witnessing the impact of fire have any impact on you? What are those impacts?</p> <p>What support does Fire and Emergency provide you with to manage those impacts?</p> <p>Could Fire and Emergency do more help you manage these impacts? What could it do?</p>
<p>RQ3: Are there examples of fire services undertaking work in post-fire recovery internationally</p>	
3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any specific example of good practice that you are aware of internationally to help with fire recovery?

4. Wrap-up

4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you could design the ideal post-fire support and recovery system for New Zealand, what would it look like?
4b	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you could change one thing about your role in relation to post-fire support and recovery, what would it be?
4c	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there anything important that we have not asked or that you would like to tell us?
	Thank you for your time!

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE: SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Interview guide: Support Organisation

Participant:

Time and date:

Location of interview:

Preliminaries

6. Explain **purpose** of the research:

You are invited to be part of a research study to understand the challenges faced by people and communities who have been affected by a fire. The findings will be used to help Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire and Emergency) to better meet the support and recovery needs of families and whānau affected by fire, along with the broader community impacted by fire.

7. Explain **why we want them to participate**:

8. Run through **information sheet**. Provide opportunity to ask questions.

9. Re-emphasise **anonymity and voluntary** nature of the interview. Their contribution can be withdrawn at their request.

10. Ask to complete **consent form** and check if they consent to voice recording (only for purposes of capturing information). Ask them to provide their email address only if they want a summary of the information we gather during the interview.

Background information

a

Can you describe your role and involvement in your organisation?

- How long have you been involved?

RQ1: What are the role of [your organisation] in supporting those who have experienced a fire?

1a	<p>Please talk us through your organisation’s role/interactions with victims/survivors <u>at the time</u> a fire has occurred? If any..</p> <p>Do you interact with Fire and Emergency New Zealand directly when there is a fire?</p> <p>Are you aware of what role Fire and Emergency NZ has supporting those affected by a fire <u>at the time</u> of the fire incident?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prompts: Are there any formalised processes, or protocols, advice, or information you’re aware that FENZ gives to those affected by a fire? If so, what is this? Can you show us or describe some examples?- In your experience does involvement vary depending on the location (region), urban/rural)?
1b	<p>Please talk us through your organisation’s role/interactions with victims/survivors <u>after</u> a fire has occurred? If any..</p> <p>Do you interact with Fire and Emergency New Zealand directly after there is a fire?</p> <p>Are you aware of what role Fire and Emergency NZ has supporting those affected by a fire <u>after</u> the fire incident?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prompts: Are there any formalised processes, or protocols, advice, or information you, or anyone else supplies to those affected by a fire? If so, what is this? Can you show us or describe some examples? <p>In your experience does involvement vary depending on the location (region), urban/rural)?</p>
1c	<p>Do you feel <u>your organisation</u> should have more of a role BOTH at the time of a fire and with post-fire recovery?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- what kinds of things would you like to see your organisation doing to help with recovery from fire?- what opportunities are there to move into the kind of roles you describe?- what do you see as the barriers to moving into these kind of roles?

1d	<p>Do you feel <u>Fire and Emergency</u> should have more of a role BOTH at the time of a fire and with post-fire recovery?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what kinds of things would you like to see your FENZ doing to help with recovery from fire? - what opportunities are there to move into the kind of roles you describe? - what do you see as the barriers to moving into these kind of roles?
1c	<p>Do you work with/refer to other agencies/organisations to support those who have experienced a fire?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes, which agencies do you work with? - what kind of roles and support do they provide? - are there other agencies/organisations that you think could or should be providing support to those who have experienced a fire? - what kind of roles and support could they be providing?
<p>RQ2: What are the post-fire impacts on individuals, families and communities?</p>	
2a	<p>From your own professional experience, what do you understand about the post-fire impacts of fires on individuals/families?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompts: this could be the psychological, social, financial, cultural and practical effects - And could be over different timeframes: i.e. the time of the fire itself, immediately afterwards, or in the short, medium and longer-term - Are there different kinds of impacts on different groups of people (e.g. by age, or ethnicity? Other)? - From your perspective, have you seen different impacts on different family/whānau members (i.e. parents/adults vs. children vs. extended family)? -

2b	<p>In your experience, what kind of needs do those impacted by fire have?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are those needs? - Why are those needs important? - Prompts: are there particular needs that you commonly see? What are the range of non-material needs (i.e. emotional, psychological, cultural) that you commonly see? - What are the range of needs you have observed? - Do these needs differ depending on who has been affected? In what ways do they differ?
2c	<p>In your experience, to what extent do you think those affected by a fire have their support and recovery needs met?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prompts: to a strong extent, to some extent, needs are generally not met - Perhaps another prompt here toward the non-material, if needed? - Does the meeting of needs depend on who has been affected by fire?
2d	<p>What do you think are the main barriers to needs being met for those impacted by fire?</p>
2e	<p>Does witnessing the impact of fire have any impact on you? What are those impacts?</p> <p>What support does Fire and Emergency provide you with to manage those impacts?</p> <p>Could Fire and Emergency do more help you manage these impacts? What could it do?</p>
<p>RQ3: Are there examples of equivalent organisations to yours undertaking work in post-fire recovery internationally</p>	
3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any specific example of good practice that you are aware of internationally to help with fire recovery?

4. Wrap-up	
4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you could design the ideal post-fire support and recovery system for New Zealand, what would it look like?
4b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you could change one thing about your role in relation to post-fire support and recovery, what would it be?
4c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anything important that we have not asked or that you would like to tell us?
	Thank you for your time!