

The insiders' magazine  
for fire services

# IGNITE

TE HIRINGA O TE TANGATA

ISSUE 4 – Winter 2017



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**Ignite is the official quarterly magazine for fire services in New Zealand.**

**Te Hiringa o te Tangata – To have drive, zest, determination. To have heart and soul.**

*Ignite* represents the voices of the men and women across the country who dedicate themselves to protecting life and property in their communities.

It is produced by the New Zealand Fire Service Communications Team, National Headquarters, Level 12, 80 The Terrace, Wellington.

#### **Contributions to Ignite**

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Photos need to be at least 1MB.

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# BIGGEST FIRE STRIDE WITH PRIDE





The Fire Service was a big hit with the crowds at Auckland Pride Parade with our first official presence in 16 years. Thirty-two people marched alongside our rainbow decorated Spartan truck.

Career and volunteer firefighters, area management, business services, IT, NHQ and Fire Service family and friends marched side-by-side. All Fire Service personnel who marched said they were there because it is important for us to show support for, and be a part of all the communities we serve. Also, because it was a fun event to attend! "My boss asked me to be a part of it and I was like 'hell yeah!'," said Pride-mobile driver David Rose, SFF Papatoetoe Fire Station.

Rochelle Martin, SSO Onehunga Station kick-started the event. "All other emergency services are involved in Pride. And for myself, it's important we are here. The time is right and there

has been a shift in thinking. Although this wasn't the first time the NZFS has been in the parade, it was the first time organising it for Tobi and I. We started by getting support from our region management. The parade organisers gave some ideas and I made contact with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services."

For those who missed out this year, don't worry, this is the start of a brand new tradition. "I support the whole idea, it's our first time here but not the last," said Quin Webster, SSO Takapuna Station.

If you are interested in being involved next year, get in touch with Rochelle. "We have a great platform that we can launch from now, and we can open the opportunity up to more of the organisation."

***"We've got to realise the world's changed, and we have to be a part of the community. We're playing catch up a little bit but it's good we are here tonight."***

*Gavin Travers, National ComCens & Medical Response Manager.*

***"Nice to see the organisation is moving on."***

*Barry Fox, SSO Auckland City Station*



**Remember to share your stories by emailing the team at [ignite@fire.org.nz](mailto:ignite@fire.org.nz)**

# NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

## GRADUATE INTERVIEWS

### Masi Patafilo, 27.

Stationed at Kilbirnie Fire Station.

**Why the fire service?** My main motivation was my family. We had all taken jobs to pay the bills but none of us really enjoyed our work at all. I wanted to be the cycle-breaker. I wanted to be that guy who would wake up and look forward to going to work. Hopefully this inspires my six brothers to find out what they love doing and I'm secretly hoping at least one of them joins the service too.

**Challenges/Successes?** Being away from family was probably the most challenging but I appreciated all the small things and always kept in mind that the distance was temporary. I definitely made the most of the free food and hotel living which helped ease the pain.

**You were recently made a Matai Chief in Samoa – how was it to be given that honour? Has being a firefighter impacted your community in any way?** Yeah it definitely was an honour and I was surprised to be put forward because of my age and that I have older brothers. The naming ceremony (saofa'i) was right before I started the course, so I literally landed in Wellington in the morning and flew out the same day to Rotorua. I feel like having such a prestigious and respected job has meant my extended family take me more seriously.

**Transition into new team?** The transition has been really easy. I'm working with some highly experienced firefighters with well over 30 years in the service, who have all welcomed me in to their crew. I'm very lucky to be under SO Moffy, Greg and Paul's guidance. I feel I can gain a lot of knowledge from them and they're always encouraging me to better myself and focus on the books.

**Future goals?** It's hard to say exactly where I want to go with my career at this point but certainly over the next five years or so I really want to keep gaining experience and try and get through the ranks to SFF. Who knows what I'll do from there, but that's what I love about the service; your learning opportunities aren't limited and you can always work towards something.

### Jason Coleman, 37.

Stationed at West Harbour Fire Station.

**Why the fire service?** The Fire Service allows me to have a good work/life balance. I like the fact that every day is different; that every job will be different. The Fire Service is a job where my family can be proud of who I work for and what I have achieved.

**You fell and fractured your leg, and then came back 12 months later to complete the training? How did you feel at the time of the accident and what made you persevere to complete the training a year later?** My fall was pretty bad. I broke my femur. At the time of the accident when I was in the building waiting for the ambos, all I remember thinking about was my wife and kids (and the pain was the worst pain I've ever experienced). Once I had my operation, I was lying on my bed at Rotorua hospital feeling really gutted because I couldn't continue my course and graduate as a firefighter with my mates who I had become great friends with. I was off for about nine months and attended the Jan 2017 course.

This job, being a firefighter, was something I have wanted to do for years. All the hard work I'd put in to getting into NTC wasn't going to just end. I knew I had a job so I kept busy at home studying my course books and as soon as I was able to walk without crutches I was straight into light duties at Takapuna Station. Rochelle from the injury management team, who looked after me through this whole process, was awesome.

**Transition into new team?** The two days of station induction we do before we hit the stations for duty were fantastic. That gave me more confidence knowing what to expect to a point on my first day. Getting to know my area, how the boss likes to do things has also been good. The more jobs I attend, the more experience I get.

**Future goals?** My main goal is to get through my QF, SF stages of the fire service and maybe my SO. I'll look at reevaluating at that point.

# BRANDING

After months of passionate negotiation from over 160 urban and rural personnel, the new identity for Fire and Emergency New Zealand was unveiled in May.

From July 1st, the new identity will incorporate the historic gold SERVIMUS star, representing the traditional values of Service, Efficiency, Resourcefulness, Valour, Integrity, Mobility, Unity and Strength. Within the star lies the urban axe and rural Pulaski tool.

Protected by the silver fern and a chequered Battenburg pattern, we remain dedicated to Whakaratonga Iwi – Serving our People.



## NEW APPOINTEES

### Rhys Jones

As previous Chief of Defence Force, along with his inherent understanding of both career and volunteer forces, Rhys comes to us with instrumental experience, skills and character to lead us forward with Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

### Paul McGill

Having served 37 years with the New Zealand Fire Service, you can say Paul is quite well-known throughout our business. He will move from Chief Executive and National Commander to National Commander Urban.

### Kevin O'Connor

Starting with us in 2014 as the National Rural Fire Officer and leading the National Rural Fire Authority, Kevin brings his already vast rural experience with us and the Department of Conservation to become the new National Manager Rural.



Appointments from 1 July 2017: Paul McGill (National Commander Urban), Rhys Jones (Chief Executive) and Kevin O'Connor (National Manager Rural)



# AFI PASEFIKA FIREFIGHTERS GROUP

Working closely with Pacific Island communities to deliver fire safety messages is the driving force behind the Afi Pasefika group. We need to ensure we build a network to support our culture and Pasefika firefighters within the fire services.

Operational Capability Manager, Pauga Esitone Pauga (better known as Esi) says “we realised we needed to do something when Senior Station Officer, Sulu Devoe, was asked to assist with a fire safety presentation at a Samoan congregation church. Church plays a major role in the lives of Pasefika people and is a well-recognised way to reach our people.” Esi is Matai Alii (High Chief) in Samoan culture, and there are other other Matai in the group. “Afi Pasefika is elevated, respected and recognised within the Samoan Community because we have the Matai structure and operate within the Matai protocol,” says Esi. The Fire Safety Officer gave his speech and asked if there were any questions. Nobody said a word. Sulu then stood up and introduced himself in Samoan. When he asked if there were any questions, every hand went up. An hour and a half later he was still there.

“This highlighted that talking to our people in their own language delivers the messages a lot better.” He says that Nelson Mandela described it best

when he said “if you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.”

Esi is Samoan and has been in the New Zealand Fire Service since 1981. Esi is a qualified fire engineer and has worked in the Fire Engineering Unit.



The experience has been invaluable as he believes that operational firefighting requires a sound knowledge of fire behaviour, fire dynamic and fire safety systems in buildings. Operational firefighting and fire engineering complement one another as he's seen in his previous role as National

Operations Advisor Infrastructure. It helps keep firefighters and our communities safe.

Previously a Senior Station Officer in Auckland, Esi helped lead the Afi Pasefika group before taking on his new role. When he joined as a fresh faced rookie there were only four other Pasefika firefighters in Auckland. At the start of his career, Esi found when Fire Investigators would go into homes after fires some of the Pasefika people would be shy, respectfully afraid of authority or reluctant to talk and give out information.

“At first we had the idea to form a group, to just get out and deliver fire safety messages to Pacific Island Communities. I was concerned because there were only five of us; later reduced to three due to retirement and there was a lot of work that needed to be done”, says Esi.

Working with the Auckland Fire Safety Department at the time, we translated fire safety videos, spoke on radio talkback and appeared on television programmes to reach Pasefika communities. Although commonly used, we weren't measuring how successful our efforts were, but the number of fire deaths of Pacific Islanders were starting to decrease. “We still had the problem – only four of us and an increasing Pacific Island population in Auckland,” says Esi.



**HALL OF FLAME**  
Personal profiles and stories



**Share your story**

*Do you have a story to share?  
We're looking to profile our people who  
have shown innovation or achieved  
something that will inspire others.  
Send your story to [ignite@fire.org.nz](mailto:ignite@fire.org.nz)*



"Around this time I was involved in the HR process scoping what a firefighter should be. I thought this would be a great opportunity to recruit more Pacific Island firefighters. I looked at why our people wouldn't want to join the fire services. Predominantly, it just needed a change in attitude. My parents, and many others in the Pacific Island community, want their sons and daughters to be lawyers, doctors, accountants - I wasn't going to be one of those! If you don't do that you are pushed into the military or the Police. There is a perception that being a firefighter is more dangerous than being a police officer. When I told my mother I had joined the Fire Service she went all quiet."

The Afi Pasefika group largely focused on targeting schools to push the fire services as a potential career path; encouraging future generations of Pasefika people. Esi strongly believes that the best advertisement is the firefighters themselves; they know what the job is like, they have their own stories and can be a familiar face to help new people coming through the process.

The Auckland Pacific Island Firefighters Group was established in April 2005, following the largest intake of Pasefika firefighters in 2004. The group is diverse, representing various ethnicities including Samoans, Tongans, Fijians, Tuvalu and Niueans. "We find our Polynesian recruits help gel the recruits together. It is nice to know we have a special attribute to offer as well as being able to help our communities," says Esi.

The biggest events on the Afi Pasefika calendar are the PolyFest and Pasefika festivals each year. With crowds often reaching 80,000 people, crews have their hands full entertaining and educating the visitors with fire safety messages. The Afi Pasefika group also ensures various fire safety brochures are printed in a variety of Pacific Island languages to reach the communities they work in, putting an emphasis on speaking to them in their own language.

Esi says the Afi Pasefika group is open to all firefighters who are passionate about helping promote fire safety amongst the Pacific community. As more Pacific Island firefighters join the fire services, there is now potential for other groups to start up around the country and carry out similar work in their local communities.

Afi Pasefika is now a significant support network for Pacific Island firefighters. "We are family and community motivated and we wanted to take care of that. I think that has been the success of Afi Pasefika in Auckland. We socialise with our families outside of work and also support each other. Once a year we try and have a social event including all the fanau, the aigas. In our first year of entering the Auckland Touch Rugby competition we had two teams and our main team won that year. It was the only year we won, but we always make sure we have fun together," says Esi.

With nearly fifty members in the Auckland group now, Esi looks at the future of Afi Pasefika.

***"It is great that the Afi Pasefika group is growing and we are getting people that are passionate to help our communities because the need is still there."***

The intention has always been to develop Afi Pasefika as a national resource, therefore the next group to start up is in Wellington. The momentum is picking up and feeding off the energy from the Auckland group. "We would also love to get involved with Rural as well. I would like to tap into that resource and have them included and support them as well within Afi Pasefika."

"Afi Pasefika is now a big part of our lives in the NZFS. The highlight for me is seeing the growth of Afi Pasefika and seeing the development of Pasefika firefighters as they progress through their career; it's all for the betterment of our people and communities. We quite often get asked why Afi Pasefika is so successful; everyone seems so happy. I say it's because we are tapping into the family values we were taught while growing up. The good thing is we are open to everybody. The only condition is you have to do the work when we need you to."



# WCEP

## already making a difference

The new policies and procedures introduced by the Workplace Carcinogen Exposure (WCEP) team are starting to be embedded across the country. During the response to one of the biggest fires in recent history, crews from across Canterbury used the Air Purifying Respirator (APR) while dealing with the Port Hills fires in February.



Have your say...  
[ignite@fire.org.nz](mailto:ignite@fire.org.nz)

One of the brigades that played a part in dealing with the Port Hills fires was Rangiora, with both 761 and 7611 attending the incident for three days. Rangiora SFF Jamie Smith arrived on scene in the early hours of the February 15th.

"I got there about 5:30am and our crew was immediately tasked with preventing the fire spreading up the ridge and into unburnt gorse at the base of a stand of pine trees in proximity to three houses up near Worsleys Rd. It was during this task that I had the first chance to wear an APR."

"Although we were operating from the safety of a long concrete driveway, the smoke was so thick that we could not see the helicopters working just above us. The APRs allowed us to move freely and quickly without the bulk of breathing apparatus (BA) and stay in the defensive position for close on two hours before the threat was dealt with."

APRs were introduced to ensure firefighters had access to respiratory protection where breathing apparatus was either not available, or impractical. Jamie goes on to say, "Had we been wearing BA, it would have required a number of cylinder changes and of course, extra physical drain."

"While we have received a lot of positive feedback on the APRs, the breathing resistance created by the filtering material still needs to be acknowledged. It is important to ensure crews are rested and rotated wherever possible, so that they do not become too fatigued."

"The Port Hills are not the Canterbury Plains. They are steep!" said Jamie. "At one stage we had to move our delivery quickly and uphill and I felt I was going to suck the canister inside out. What was very noticeable was the difference when we changed to a new cartridge after the eight-hour period. It became very obvious that the filter had worked as it should have and left me wondering just how much I would have inhaled had I not been wearing it. Once the new ones were changed over there was an instant improvement to the amount of air traveling through."

***"I have worn BA at vegetation fires before and frankly it was always a last resort due to the weight and movement restrictions. The APRs made all the difference with the ability to move freely and for an extended period of time."***

Rangiora Chief Fire Officer, Hamish Peter, also sees the benefit of the new equipment and procedures for managing carcinogen exposure and acknowledges that with any new safety initiative there will be a period of adjustment. "There have been the odd occasions where old habits come through, but our brigade all understand the importance of why we need to change how we operate. Not only are we now routinely using the APRs but, just as importantly, we are following post fire decontamination procedures to keep our appliances and station clean and healthy."



# Prostate Cancer – Get the Check!

One piece of advice Foxton Volunteer Station Officer Ian Petersen would like to pass on to others, is to go to your doctor and get checked for prostate cancer. Just get the blood test, don't be afraid.

Late last year, Ian was diagnosed with prostate cancer after a seemingly innocent trip to the doctor to investigate a high blood pressure reading. It was picked up at a routine Fire Service health check and Ian was advised to see his GP to get it further checked out.

"I'm 54, don't smoke, don't drink, work on a building site, pretty fit, pretty healthy, with no symptoms. I thought I was doing ok. Then all of a sudden, cancer. Cancer doesn't care who it picks up."

Ian underwent surgery in January this year with an expected six to eight weeks recovery time.

"Because it was caught early, I had a better chance of beating it and I don't have to have any further treatment. And the funny thing was I couldn't even say the word 'cancer' until I got the all clear, then I was quite happy to talk about it."

Ian has since gone on to do a speaking tour at other brigades throughout the Manawatu Area; sharing his story and encouraging others to take advantage of the health checks, to go home and encourage family members to get checked. His driving force was the fact that only six of his own brigade members had bothered to do the health checks.

"If I was one of those guys, I wouldn't have found out that I had high blood pressure and I would've just carried on. I could have gone on for another 2-3 years without any signs or symptoms. But by then it might have been too late.

"Speaking at brigades has given others courage to tell their stories and share experiences. The more people I can talk to about this, the better."

Ian wants to continue speaking with people and is hoping to talk with certified builders in his age bracket next, to tell them they need to go get a health check and not be afraid of it.



## SYMPTOMS OF PROSTATE CANCER

**Men with early prostate cancer are unlikely to have any symptoms, as these only occur when the cancer is large enough to put pressure on the urethra (the tube that drains urine from the bladder).**

In men over the age of 50, the prostate gland often gets larger due to a non-cancerous condition called benign prostatic hyperplasia or hypertrophy (BPH).

The symptoms of both benign enlargement of the prostate gland and malignant tumours (cancer) are similar and can include any of the following:

**A**

difficulty passing urine

**B**

passing urine more frequently than usual, especially at night

**C**

pain when passing urine

**D**

blood in the urine (this is not common).

If you have any of these symptoms it's important to get them checked by your doctor. But remember, most enlargements of the prostate are not cancer.





# THE CHRISTCHURCH JUSTICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES PRECINCT



[top] The Port Hills fire viewed from the CJESP on 14 February. The centre will be a New Zealand first and will provide a dedicated operational control centre for emergency service agencies to manage local events. It will have the capacity to handle regional and national emergency incidents.  
© Snowgrass solutions

[left] View from corner Durham and Lichfield Streets – a design of the completed CJESP.

**The Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct (CJESP) is on track for hand-over, with the Justice Building due by 30 June 2017, and the Emergency Services Building by 14 July 2017.**

Led by the Ministry of Justice, the CJESP is the largest multi-agency government co-location project in New Zealand's history. It will bring together all justice and emergency services in a purpose-built government precinct.

For Fire and Emergency NZ, this means co-location of the Region 4 personnel and functions and the Southern ComCen, alongside colleagues from Police, St John, CDEM, and Corrections.

Agencies will move into their new locations at different times in late 2017. Planning for the fit-outs and the coordination of agency moves is well underway.

A date for the soon to be Fire and Emergency NZ personnel to move into the CJESP is still to be confirmed. The focus is to ensure the quality of the build, and attention to detail, meets the high expectations of tenants and the general public of New Zealand.



# UPDATE:

## The Christchurch Station Rebuild Programme

It's been all go in the Rebuild Programme with many developments kicking off in early 2017. In February we celebrated the completion of Lyttelton Station, a significant milestone. The property team is also celebrating the main builds of Anzac, Sockburn, and Spreydon underway. It's fair to say there is a lot going on!

The 18th of February saw the official opening of Lyttelton station. The ceremony commenced with a karakia, followed by the official ribbon cutting and speeches from Hon. Paul Swain and an array of other speakers. Around 100 guests attended the event including past and present brigade members, MPs, and the Deputy Mayor of Christchurch, Andrew Turner.

We hope the brigades are settling in well to their brand new station and enjoying that magnificent view!

### What else is happening?

- Construction has advanced well at Spreydon (Addington). Exterior cladding is almost complete and the interior lining work is underway. The station is due for completion in August 2017.
- Land improvements for the new Anzac station are complete and the main build has begun. Career and Volunteer crews are anticipated to be in their new station March 2018.
- Land improvements are complete at Sockburn and the main build is underway.
- Woolston land improvements are in motion and enabling services work is complete.
- Progress is going well for Redwood with architectural and structural detailed design underway.



- There are lots of moving parts in the works for City Station. Size and design concepts are in discussion.
- Land has been acquired for Sumner Station.
- Ilam is progressing well with work underway to identify a confirmed site.
- For Kaiapoi, five potential sites have been shortlisted with architectural and location plans being drafted.
- An architect has been appointed for Brooklands and the design developments are underway.

The property team would like to thank all of the crews in the Rebuild Programme for their continued support and patience.

For more information, please email [CHCHProperty@fire.org.nz](mailto:CHCHProperty@fire.org.nz)







# FIGHTING THE FLOODS

**Have your say...**  
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Looking at the bone-dry hills and fields of the Upper North Island in summer, it seemed impossible that Autumn would bring a series of floods and storms. After a dry summer, the rain and storms hit many areas hard. Brigades worked hard to keep residents safe and manage evacuations, often being the main and closest responders in their community. In the Coromandel, volunteer brigades deployed across the Peninsula to evacuate low-lying areas during Cyclone Cook. In the Bay of Plenty, Edgecumbe suffered the worst of the flooding, with USAR deploying to assist local brigades.

The tropical storm dubbed “Tasman Tempest” hit in March followed by two cyclones in April; Debbie and Cook. Throughout these weather events, brigades responded to a range of weather-related calls, local and regional coordination centres were stood up, and Communication Centres put on extra staff to help field the larger volume of phone calls. While Cook was

not as devastating as anticipated, the preparation we and our emergency partners made was welcomed by the public, and completely necessary if the worst had happened.

Auckland largely escaped Cyclone Cook, but areas such as New Lynn had a lot of flooding during Cyclone Debbie and Tasman Tempest. Auckland crews evacuated a Kohimarama apartment block and a school camp in Hurunui. Beachlands Volunteer Brigade checked in on one enterprising community member taking the opportunity to paddleboard in their backyard!

In Whangamata, Assistant Area Manager, Bay of Plenty Coast, Kevin Cowper praises the work of brigade family members who came into the station to prepare food and refreshments so the crews could come in for a meal before heading back out in to the field. We know such actions are common across our communities, so a big thank you to them too for their support.

## IN NUMBERS



### **Tasman Tempest**

*7–12 March 2017*

**Total – 602 incidents**

**Northland 43 NAT events**

**Auckland 482 NAT events**

**Waikato 60 NAT events**

**Bay of Plenty 17 NAT events**



### **Cyclone Debbie**

*4–8 April 2017*

**Total – 384 incidents**

**Northland 2 NAT events**

**Auckland 216 NAT events**

**Waikato 64 NAT events**

**Bay of Plenty 102 NAT events**



### **Cyclone Cook**

*13–14 April 2017*

**Total – 648 incidents**

**Northland 6**

**Auckland 61 NAT events**

**East Waikato/ Waikato 136 NAT events**

**Bay of Plenty 202 NAT events**

**Gisborne/Hawkes Bay 237 NAT events**

**Wellington 6 NAT events**

**The Port Hills fires were one of the biggest and most complex in New Zealand's history. With complex terrain, in an urban and rural setting and fierce weather conditions, it required firefighting on a number of fronts including land and air attack.**

To put the size and scale of the fire in context, the Port Hills fires burnt through 1,645 hectares, or about 1,600 rugby fields. Last year 3,507ha were burnt across the whole of New Zealand by a total of 4,582 rural fires.

Cordons were in place for a number of days. The fire response was maintained for several weeks with multiple crews working on priority hot spots across the fire ground.

Sixty-six days after the fires started, they were declared officially extinguished.

# PORT

Originally two large fires merged in to one inferno destroying homes and land on the outskirts of the city. Tragically, helicopter pilot and former SAS soldier, David Steven Askin, died when his helicopter went down while fighting the blaze.

At its peak, the fire had 100,000 kilowatts of energy, the equivalent of three atom bombs. Eleven homes were lost and much of the Port Hills landscape and recreational areas scorched.

## Christchurch spirit

The famous Cantabrian spirit shone throughout the fires. "It's funny, we always say we are so busy but when this sort of thing happens, everyone is there," summed up Andrew Norris, Chief Fire Officer, Governor's Bay Volunteer Fire Brigade and Communication Centre and Blue Watch Shift Manager, Southern Communication Manager, about how his community pulled together. Tuesday to Friday, the Governor's Bay community fed the brigade and families throughout the day. "There was so much food, they even sent some of it up the hill to other urban and rural firefighters. Employers and families are such vital support for volunteer brigades."

Throughout the city, "There were so many offers of help and support it was overwhelming" said Rhonda McNicol, Business Services Area 21. More FM put on a barbecue; families dropped off baking, moving poems from their children, or just called into say thank you.





## Remembering 2011

During the Port Hills fires, the unveiling of the Earthquake Memorial was a reminder of what Christchurch has been through. For Rhonda, the memorial was tough in terms of memories, "it just brings it all back. I remember one night I slept underneath a tree in Latimer Square – just wherever I could."

Andrew Norris was on shift during the worst of the Feb 2011 Earthquake too. Organising two helicopters for the Tuesday afternoon of the Port Hills fires brought back memories of arranging a helicopter for the CTV building. For Christchurch there is now a sense of "when," not "if": "just one of those things, it's when's the next one? Where will it be? We're living it."

However, there are opportunities ahead, and Dave Stackhouse, Area Manager Christchurch, says there is a positive outlook for Christchurch with new stations being built around the city.

Steve Turek, Fire Region Manager - Region 4, says the Christchurch Justice and Emergency Services Precinct brings together all services in one purpose-built, leading-edge precinct in central Christchurch. Fire and Emergency New Zealand staff, including Region 4 support staff and functions, ComCen and Rural will be located in the Emergency Services Building with Police, St John, CDEM, and Corrections. This will help provide better public services through innovation and new ways of collaborating.

# HILLS



### **"Fire tornado" – Richard McNamara, Principal Rural Fire Officer**

I was in a helicopter doing air attack work when I saw and heard the 50 metre "fire tornado." I thought, 'my God'. In big Australian bush fires, I have seen some fire tornados, but they were much smaller and transparent and nowhere close to this scale. To create something

like that requires very high energies and the right environmental conditions – the net effect of the terrain, the fuels igniting and the weather – strong winds with low humidity. It became almost a visceral phenomenon of the power of a wildfire in full flight.

### **Emergency Operation Centre – Karl Paterson, Southern Communication Centre Manager**

Our Communication Centre people have a versatile set of skills we can contribute in big emergencies, and we have had some practice in Christchurch! We now send a ComCen person to Region Co-ordination Centres which establishes a link and knowledge of what to do with information when it comes in, experience answering phone calls and radio work from the incident ground. Enquiries can come from left field but we have a

good feel for filtering and prioritising information.

ComCen staff were embedded at the Emergency Operation Centre in Rolleston where all agencies were located throughout the fire. Steve Turek said, the Emergency Operation Centre was critical for maintaining effective collaboration between agencies.





### Wayne Hamilton, SFF St Albans Fire Station

We were up on Summit Road near Dyers Pass with a “grandstand view” of the fire. It was hard yards walking up and down the near vertical hills at Worsley Spur with the heat and the smoke – one of the crew’s pedometer recorded 28km. Volunteers from around Canterbury working flat out with us – then back to their jobs the next day.

I have been deployed to wild fires in the US, Canada and Australia and I’m a helicopter crewman too so could help liaise with air ops. Just a couple of months before I was choppering up to Kaikoura to help out there so it’s been a full on couple of months in Canterbury.

### Supporting the Troops – Rhonda McNicol

Wednesday I loaded up the truck with food and drove around the fire ground making sure people were eating. An army marches on its tummy – it seems little but it’s really important.

Along with Business Services for Area 21, I am a Health and Safety Rep, USAR logistics and FAIP practitioner. I care

about this place and know it well so can sense when and what support our people need. We are incredibly lucky we work for an organisation that takes care of their people. I have spent 16 years in Fire Service - I think they’ll carry me out in a box! I love being able to help the community and make a difference.



### Looking Ahead Together – Nick Rayner, Governors Bay Volunteer Brigade

We had been up all night again fighting the fire, when another call came through at 6am Thursday because the fire had reignited below Sugarloaf. By this point many of us had been up Tuesday and Wednesday night fighting the fires, but there was a sense we were starting to win the battle on the Governor’s Bay side. Here Steve and George are taking

a moment to look down on Adventure Park before getting back into protecting Sugarloaf.

Governor’s Bay is a joint urban and rural volunteer fire brigade so we are used to training and working together: chucking an arm around a mate just felt like a natural thing to do at this point.



## FACEBOOK COMMENTS

*"Thank you to all the amazing firefighters, police, ambos, drs and nurses and everyone else in Chch and HB who are leaving their families to protect our country and to their families thank you for letting them leave you to fight xx"*

*"To all the firefighters, stop for just a second and stand tall. That feeling you have is several hundred thousand Cantabrians patting you on the back with gratitude. Huge respect for what you do & I could say thank you a thousand times but it would never feel enough. Keep up the good hard work, stay strong & get some well-deserved rest when you can."*

*"Long after the trees grow back, the homes get rebuilt and the city moves on, you firemen and helicopter pilots will be forever etched in our memories, even when people stop talking about it all your hard work will NOT be forgotten. THANK YOU TO YOU ALL AND YOUR FAMILIES FOR LETTING US BORROW YOU FOR A WHILE xx"*

## Review

**"All of us as a family are interested in how we can do better – and same around the country," Dave Stackhouse**

New Zealand Fire Service and the two Rural Fire Authorities involved in leading the response to the fire will conduct a joint operational review into the Port Hills Fire. The review will focus on the response to the fire and key lessons for how we carry out our duties and serve our communities in the future.

Image: Martin Hunter Star.Kiwi



# Hawke's Bay Fires

Hastings district has just experienced the busiest fire season on record. Stretching local resources to capacity, and beyond, with urban, rural and volunteer brigades all feeling the pressure.

Hastings District Principal Rural Fire Officer, Trevor Mitchell said "It was an unusual fire season with the catalyst being a combination of a winter drought followed by a wet spring with lots of growth. Stock numbers were low, so as summer progressed the amount of available fuel in the rural environment was higher than normal. Add to that a hot windy summer and the result is nearly 600ha burnt during the fire season, compared to a normal season of around 10 or 11 ha".

"This year's fire season wasn't a drought as it had been the year before, but fire indices and fuel loadings were extreme".

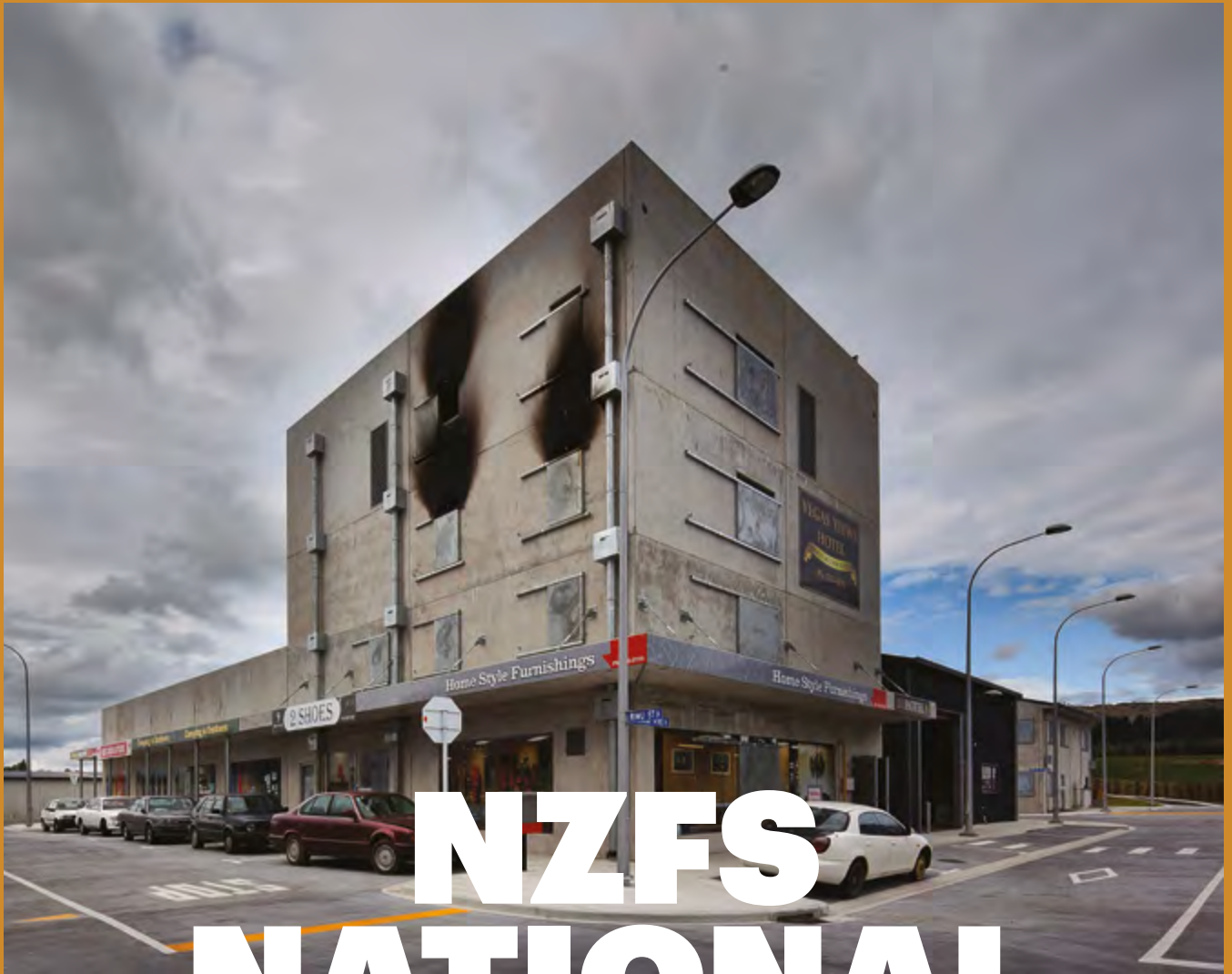
During a particularly busy period in February, two national rural crews and a National Incident Management Team were in place to relieve already tired personnel when the call came in for yet another fire. This one at Waimarama Rd, Hastings. The fire quickly escalated to a fifth alarm, destroying one house, threatening several others and forcing evacuations. Further additional resources were brought in from around the region including task forces from Wellington, Whanganui and Manawatu, rural crews and helicopters from Taranaki to Auckland. Defence Force rural units were also brought in from Linton and Waikouaiti to assist.

With resources fully committed a State of Local Emergency Declaration was made for Hastings district.

The Waimarama Rd fire eventually burnt a total area of 165 hectares, which included 58 hectares of forest and 107 hectares of grassland. A large forestry block of pine trees was saved and no accidents were reported after individuals were working in extreme conditions for long periods.

It was a huge effort from everyone. A thank you barbecue was hosted by Havelock North Volunteer Fire Brigade after the busy season concluded.





# NZFS NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE

Built 10 years ago, NTC is still regarded as one of the best in Australasia, training more than 1,500 firefighters each year.



Manager of Firefighter Development, Alan Cleator, has been involved with this facility since the initial development stages. "At the start of the process we looked at training facilities overseas to see the types of things they had done. We wanted to design a facility here that had everything we needed to provide a practical learning environment and improve the training of our firefighters," said Alan.

The purpose built centre is host to a range of technology and equipment to train firefighters in a controlled environment while trying to reflect realistic experiences. As Training Programmes & NTC Manager Ian Pickard says, "NTC is the busiest station in New Zealand."

The facility was built in two stages. Stage one was completed in 2006; the extension of stage two was completed three years ago. These further developments to improve the technologies onsite meant firefighters no longer needed to go to White Island in Queensland for aspects of their training. "People now come from around the world to visit our facilities and see what we have done. They call ours a world class facility," Alan said.

During the design and build of NTC, careful consideration was given to the impact the facility would have on the environment, particularly with so much water being used to extinguish the fires during exercises. A sustainable water system was created where the water drains into a pool and is then recycled for the next time it is needed. A smoke burner is also used to re-burn smoke at 800°C into the air to reduce air pollution.



NTC looks like a small town with roads, buildings, a train track, mock petrol stations and mechanic shops. There are 11 sites, with more than 30 ignition points that are operated with a control panel. The gas props and buildings can be set on fire and filled with smoke for scenario training exercises. Whether this is a gas burn, a wood fire, an explosion at a petrol station, or a high rise building, these all help train firefighters to expect the unexpected. These facilities are not only used by the fire service. "St John Ambulance and Red Cross use the facilities, the Police also use it for riot training sometimes too," says Senior Trainer Mike Thomson.

The centre has other facilities such as the administration block, computer suites and lecture rooms for the non-practical side of the training programme. Currently in construction is the addition of a command unit. "This new unit, once finished, will be great for NTC. We will no longer need to rely on portable units; it is going to make the tactical command courses a lot smoother," Manager Officer Development, Colin Russell, says.

NTC can hold multiple courses at any one time. Although this can become a little cramped the team at NTC love it. It is hands on and instead of people having to go overseas for training we have the facilities here for them.



Plans for further developments at NTC are restricted by the current location. Spreading out isn't an option as it is surrounded by buildings and other businesses. However, Alan says, "We have thought something similar to this facility in the South Island would be good. It would free up some resources at NTC and also reduce travel time for a lot of people."





Drone footage

assessments of more than 400 homes, while also helping the residents to enter safely and retrieve possessions.”

“We also provided high resolution photos and drone video footage to undertake orthomosaic mapping – stitching the photos together to form a larger image. This information helped produce a rough 3D model of Edgecumbe to better understand the level of damage to the township.”

## USAR – A Leading Edge

As Cyclone Cook loomed towards the top of the North Island in early April, our Urban Search and Rescue team (USAR) was proactively working behind the scenes to assess the potential and likely damage. Coordination plans were being put in place to deploy and help the people of Edgecumbe, who were hit the hardest by the carnage.

After already suffering devastating effects from flooding a week earlier, Edgecumbe was in the wake of strife. With major risks of more flooding, and wind gusts over 100km per hour, the town was top of USAR's mind.

The team's initial role was to coordinate and provide the process for conducting rapid damage assessments, via infield data collection. The team also leveraged off the learnings from USAR's recent deployment to Kaikoura, and utilised the new National Disaster

Assessment model which has been developed across Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) agencies. This was supported by the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft systems, also known as 'drones.' These provided a concise and innovative approach which, when combined with USAR skill sets, provided key information back to partner agencies and enhanced the efficiency of recovery for the people of Edgecumbe.

With the Northern team being held in place, due to the possible impact Cyclone Cook could have had on the Pacific, the deployed team consisted of staff from the Central team as well as staff from Tauranga, Hamilton and Auckland.

Area Commander and National USAR Manager, Jeff Maunder, said, “The USAR team was deployed to do rapid

***“It was a great opportunity to provide support to NZFS operations, to the local communities, as well as working together with councils and the NZ response teams.”***

*Jeff Maunder*

It's important to point out that there were also a number of others who dedicated their time and efforts to helping the Edgecumbe community.

Family members and those of neighbouring brigades provided catering for the first few days, not just for brigade members but for other agency responders as well. Ngaruawahia volunteers came over with their canteen unit and fed hundreds of people over a number of days.

Times of strife like these highlight how well we can all band together!

Well done and thank you to USAR and everyone else who lent a helping hand.





# THE MOBILITY PROJECT

Over the next four years, the Information & Communications Technology (ICT) team, with the feedback of firefighters, is rolling out a project that will make our front-line response more effective, our administrative processes more efficient and our organisation more agile. The Mobility Project will become what emergency response looks like for our future.

Mobility is exactly what it says – it will help us be more mobile on the frontline. The team is currently developing a system network that stores all of our information in one place – a 'data hub'. Whether you are accessing from a desktop computer in the office or from a mobile device on the go, the data hub gives personnel access to the information they might need for the job, whenever and wherever they may need it.

It's important to note that all of the technology is being built and developed for firefighters, by firefighters. Rather than hunting for information manually, frontline responders will have the relevant information right at their fingertips. The project team already has a working 'response application' for mobile devices that are up and running. In a nutshell, the application collates all the need-to-know info for each incident and conveys it as clean, clear information you can act on: the time, the address,

the classification of emergency, the appliances that have already been dispatched, etc. But this is only the starting point. From there, you can access building maps, water supply locations, site reports, street views, weather forecasting and much more – all from the tablet in the appliance. The level of detail this application provides can shave minutes off response times and, as we know, a minute can be everything.

The plan is for every appliance to be kitted out with a tablet and black box that everything runs from: a small, tidy case fitted with a high-powered computer and a solid-state drive for information.

There's a wealth of frontline experience in the team that is introducing this project. Everyone working on this is well aware that a piece of technology that is clunky, slow or difficult to use is not just useless on the frontline, but dangerous. The focus of Mobility is all about ensuring that this product is as robust and intuitive as it possibly can be. Everything is up for examination and everything is open to enhancement or re-imagination.

It's worth noting that this rollout is not intended to be a complete overhaul of the old. Rather, the idea is that we slowly but surely integrate this tech into all of our processes. Initially, firefighters and emergency responders

will have the option to choose between the tablet and working manually. The most important thing is that everyone has a go, adapts at their own pace and forms their own relationship with the tech. It's the project team's sincere hope that responders will stay open, keep providing feedback and continue collaborating on ideas that will help improve the way we do things. After all, we're all in it together.

Mobility is about so much more than just putting tablets in trucks. It's about building a mobile information ecosystem for the future. It's about equipping firefighters and responders with clear, accurate information that can be taken with them anywhere. It's about making us all faster, smarter and safer. As the technology evolves and adapts over the next few years, we will have the capabilities to evolve along with it.

For more information, please email [mobility.foundations@fire.org.nz](mailto:mobility.foundations@fire.org.nz)

# Curbing fire play early

Eleven-year-old Toby\* was caught playing with aerosol cans, lighters and burning leaves behind his house. The leaves he had lit caught fire and got hold of a nearby bush creating a larger fire, which alerted Toby's mum, Karen, to call 111.

Over 63% of all deliberately lit fires in New Zealand are started by young people under 17 years of age. Many of these fires are started by children through experimentation, fascination and a lack of understanding about the speed of fire development or the consequences of fire.

Firefighters attending the fire at Toby's house offered Karen the Fire Awareness and Intervention Programme. FAIP is a

free, consequence based, education programme delivered by trained firefighters to help children overcome unhealthy fire lighting behaviour.

When FAIP Practitioner, Eugene, arrived at the family home, Toby was shocked by the unexpected visitor at his front door. Sitting on the couch with his two brothers and Karen, it was apparent Toby did not realise the seriousness of his actions. "It was only a small bush fire," he says. Eugene pulls out a series of photos from his resource kit. "We have a whole heap of resources, but it is important to tailor them to each individual young person you are meeting with. I think these particular photos will hit hard with Toby and make him realise what he is doing has significant consequences and affects more than himself."

As Eugene shared stories and carefully selected photos of injuries caused by fire, Toby became quieter and more remorseful. By the end of the one-hour session, Eugene believes Toby had started to think about what he had been doing and realised the potential consequences of his actions. "I finish

each session by giving the young person a workbook which they need to complete. I will then come back and see Toby in two weeks' time and we go through the answers together to see what he has learnt. I truly believe FAIP helps stop the fire lighting behaviour first," Eugene says.

An in-depth study by Auckland University examined data from Police, Fire Service, Child Youth and Family and the Ministry of Education to test the effectiveness of FAIP. Their research showed that around 94 % of children that completed the FAIP program stopped lighting fires. This makes FAIP one of the most successful intervention programmes in New Zealand.

Of the 400 children that complete FAIP each year, about 80 were a result of firefighters offering the programme to parents while attending fires started by children. A useful resource is the FAIP brochure carried in compendiums on appliances. The brochure explains the programme and how to contact the fire service. People can also visit our web page, [www.fire.org.nz/faip](http://www.fire.org.nz/faip)

\*All names changed to protect privacy.





# FESTIVALS DRAWING IN THE CROWDS

February was a busy month with teams from around the country heading along to the Waitangi and Te Matatini festivals. The scorching temperatures (30+) drew in the crowds and were felt by all those attending.

The Fire Service always has a big presence at these festivals but this time there was an extra reason the crowds were drawn in; the first public trial of our new virtual reality tool – Escape My House. Those who experienced this were given a whole new perspective on the speed of fire and left feeling motivated to make an escape plan for their home.

At Waitangi, the Kitchen Fire Demonstrator, Kids' Combat Challenge, Evacuation Challenge and Escape My House were all hits throughout the day. Wipari Henwood, Acting Area Manager, Muri Whenua, believes "the fire services are the glue for a lot of these small communities. Waitangi, and events like this, are a good opportunity for us to get our messages across. Cooking is a big problem for us so the Kitchen Fire Demonstrator helps us spread safety messages as some people in rural communities are still cooking using open flames as they are far from the power source."

Te Matatini used the Wendy House alongside Escape My House to draw in the crowds. Kereama Katu, Poutakawaenga Māori, says, "the Wendy House was a terrific resource which really complemented the Escape My House virtual reality tool as they both provided the key messages and importance of having a working smoke alarm and an escape plan which included having an agreed safe meeting place." While the crowds were waiting to try the experience crews created a string game to keep them busy and engaged. This time to interact with the crowds and share fire safety messages led to a number of requests for Home Fire Safety visits from around the country.

Once again, we ran a Win an iPad mini Instagram competition, where people had the opportunity to take a photo with one of our fire safety signs and upload it. These were a hit and it was great to see members of the public engaged in our fire safety messages.

Thank you to all the staff who helped at these events; they were great days had by all.

## WELCOME BACK TO NHQ!

Following the Kaikoura earthquake, and based on advice from the building's structural engineers, our National Headquarters (NHQ) building at 80 The Terrace in Wellington was vacated as a precaution.

As further investigations took place, and remediation work occurred to strengthen the building, NHQ personnel found themselves in the position of having to work remotely for a ten-week period.

During this time, NHQ staff worked from home or stations (or other partner organisations who generously hosted teams). The Region 3 team and all stations around the Wellington region were extremely accommodating. A huge thank you to all.

Working remotely can be challenging, but our people found ways to keep business on track and the momentum going, especially as we worked towards the establishment of Fire and Emergency New Zealand, on 1 July 2017.

[Left] Te Matatini Festival 2017  
[Right] Waitangi Festival 2017







## GETTING SMART ABOUT RISKS

SMART Risks is an exciting new addition to our web-based SMART suite of tools.

The suite has been designed by our Spatial Intelligence team with input from Planning and Performance and Fire Risk Management. It uses national spatial (location-based) data and is integrated with the Station Management System (SMS).

SMART Risks overlays census mesh blocks on to the SMART Maps application to more effectively target 'At Risk' groups for Home Fire Safety activities.

The 'At Risk' groups have been defined in the Safer New Zealand Fire Risk and Prevention Plan 2015–2020 and include:

- children
- older people
- lower socio-economic
- māori and Pacific peoples
- people in rental properties

In SMART Risks, these five groups are displayed on a map to show where there is a higher or lower presence of any particular group.

Principal Advisor Fire Risk Management, Kerry Stewart, says that the opportunity SMART Risks presents is exciting. We can use the tool to target our interventions to the most at risk, those communities and people that will benefit the most out of our fire safety messages and Home Fire Safety checks.

"We are not only able to better target these groups but, by using other tools in the SMART suite, we will be able to see the impacts of these interventions," said Kerry.



## REGIONAL MANAGERS RURAL APPOINTED

Kevin O'Connor, National Rural Manager (designate) recently announced the five Regional Manager Rural positions for the new organisation, Fire and Emergency New Zealand. These five positions are new roles in which the Regional Managers Rural will work alongside the Fire Region Managers (urban) to ensure consistency of our fire response while we work towards a full integration over the next 2–3 years.

"All five appointments have considerable rural fire experience and will make an excellent contribution to how we integrate 40 urban and rural fire authorities into Fire and Emergency New Zealand," said Kevin.

The Regional Managers Rural will report to the National Manager Rural, and be responsible for the same Regions that are currently used in the New Zealand Fire Service. Principal Rural Fire Officers will report to the Region Managers Rural.

"These appointments are an exciting milestone for how Fire and Emergency New Zealand will effectively bring together urban and rural fire authorities, and ensure our communities continue to receive the same excellent service with no disruption to our day-to-day operations," said Kevin O'Connor.

### **The five Regional Managers Rural, Fire and Emergency New Zealand:**

Bryan Cartelle, Region 1

John Sutton, Region 2

Gary Lockyer, Region 3

Richard McNamara, Region 4

Mike Grant, Region 5



## NEW CALLER LOCATION SYSTEM

A new caller location system for 111 mobile phone calls that will improve public safety and help save lives has been hailed a “game-changer” for emergency services.

Since 10 May, when the public dial 111 from a mobile phone, data that helps determine the location of the handset may be sent to a Location Area Service system that will automatically generate location information, improving accuracy to find 111 callers.

The service, which uses GPS tracking and cell tower information, is only triggered when a 111 call is made. All location data is held for 60 minutes and then deleted.

Only authorised Emergency Service Providers are allowed to use this information so they can respond to the emergency as quickly as possible.

Each year, there are more than two million calls to emergency services. Last year, more than 80 per cent of those calls to 111 were made from a mobile phone.

It's still important for 111 callers to tell emergency services operators where they are but, if the caller doesn't know their exact whereabouts, the new system will automatically provide a more precise location.



## CELEBRATING SUCCESS AWARDS

Senior Firefighter Karen Muir, of Eastern Waikato's Morrinsville Volunteer Fire Brigade was nominated and awarded at the 2016 Celebrating Success Awards in the category of Risk Reduction. The ceremony was held in Mount Maunganui on 15 November where Karen was awarded first place.

Karen then went on to win the overall Supreme Award for her outstanding contributions to the New Zealand Fire Service and the community.

Fire Region Manager Ron Devlin presented the award to Karen and was extremely humbled and inspired by her story. Her lengthy career in the Fire Service, which began in the Hawke's Bay, has demonstrated her dedication and commitment to furthering community safety and wellbeing well beyond normal duties.

The nomination for her work noted Karen as someone who exemplifies the model for community enrichment. She is extremely positive and dedicated to making the community a safer place.

Her work in leading initiatives like home fire safety in retirement villages (Tasman Village), and delivering the school and pre-school Firewise programmes is noteworthy across all sectors of the community.

Karen has also made a tremendous contribution to the region community fire safety training programmes held at the National Training Centre in Rotorua. Although occupied in full-time work, Karen has for a number of years regularly offered her skills as a trainer to deliver training in a voluntary capacity.

She has significantly contributed to building the capacity and success of the Fire Service's key strategies in fire risk reduction. Karen's story is truly inspirational and the staff in Region 2 are very proud of her.

# CAUGHT ON CAMERA

Got a photo to share?  
Send it to [ignite@fire.org.nz](mailto:ignite@fire.org.nz)



## WORKING SAFELY AROUND WATER

Twelve representatives from all over the country recently participated in equipment testing in Rotorua. The aim was to trial new equipment to ensure we have the safest fit-for-purpose equipment for our operational personnel when working around water.

## NEW ZEALAND SIGN LANGUAGE WEEK 2017

May 8–14 was New Zealand Sign Language week. To celebrate, NHQ held a sign language taster class hosted by Shannon from Deaf Aotearoa. Each day we uploaded a fire safety message video in sign to our Facebook page. A big thank you to Nick Linton, Phil Faidley, Quin Webster, Bridgette Strid and Nick Mackle.





# BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE 'PHYSICAL PRE-ENTRY TEST' FILMING – MARCH 2017

In March, a production team travelled to the National Training Centre in Rotorua to film a new video demonstrating the requirements for the Physical Pre-entry Test. This new video provides advice for candidates on how to physically and mentally prepare for the test. Erin Gladstone, Hastings; Aimee Taylor, Dunedin; Jonathan Lu, Grey Lynn and Waka Petera, Napier; were put through their paces by trainer Nigel Baker and assisted by Marcus. Check out their work on the NZ Fire Service channel on YouTube.



And we're off with the first shot of the day...



Erin drags the dummy (again). Nigel moderates while Marcus guides.



Jono knows his hose while the film crew set up the shot.



Aimee raising the pulley like a pro.



Waka ready to take on the hose-drag as the film crew get ready for the action.





# WORKING TOGETHER. SAVING LIVES TOGETHER.

**Did you know The New Zealand Fire Service works together with the nearest ambulance to attend cardiac and respiratory arrest incidents?**

A fire truck is dispatched simultaneously with an ambulance. Don't be surprised if you see a firefighter at your door. They are there to save lives.

**Find out more at [www.fire.org.nz](http://www.fire.org.nz)**







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