



IGNITE

TE HIRINGA O TE TANGATA

ISSUE 18 / SUMMER 2020 / RAUMATI 2020

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Ignite is the official magazine for Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

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

Ignite represents the voices of the people across the country who dedicate themselves to protecting life, the environment and property in their communities.

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Contributions to Ignite

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KIA ORA KOUTOU

In this final issue of Ignite for 2020, I want to thank you for your dedication and commitment to keeping New Zealand safe during what has been a challenging year.

A key feature for all of us has been COVID-19. It has had a huge impact on the way we work, and on our family and social lives. I am very proud of the way you have adapted quickly to the measures we have put in place to keep you and your communities safe as New Zealand has moved up and down the alert levels.

Throughout the year we have continued our focus on making our organisation a safe, respectful and inclusive place for all our people to work. We're building on the progress we've already made and remain committed to having the right processes in place to deal with bullying and harassment, and on developing a strong culture where this behaviour doesn't happen in the first place.

Part of having a strong culture involves celebrating and supporting our diversity, for example, through our Afi Pasefika network. Read about the network's support for an injured colleague earlier this year on page 13.

Another focus this year has been implementing the design of our unified organisation. I acknowledge the stress that delays to this process have put on people. Since the Employment Court decision, we have focused on progressing next steps. Our absolute priority is to move forward as quickly as we can to provide certainty and clarity. I'd like to thank everyone for their patience, understanding and commitment over this time.

Last month's floods in Napier and October's wildfire at Lake Ōhau are reminders of how our climate is changing and that these events will likely become more frequent. They reinforce why Fire and Emergency was created and show the benefits of working closely with our emergency service partners and other organisations. You can read more about our response to both events in this issue of Ignite on pages 7 and 8.

The weather forecast and how it impacts fire danger is a key part of this summer's wildfire prevention campaign. Our new fire danger tool, on page 12, will give the public clear guidance on whether they can light a fire or not in their area, and if they need a permit. It will help the public to make good decisions and reduce the risk of unwanted fires this summer.

To those of you rostered or on call over the festive period, thank you for continuing to make sure we stay safe. I hope everyone finds some time to recharge and spend time with friends and family over the summer.

Once again, thank you all for your contribution to your communities and to Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

**Noro ora mai
Rhys Jones, Chief Executive**



UNIFIED UNIFORM PROJECT UPDATE

We're on track to complete all the National Wearer Trials for our proposed unified uniform garments by February 2021.

Paul Turner, Business Owner of the Unified Uniform Project says the trials are a big step forward in developing a single working dress uniform for our people that is safe, practical, and recognisable by the public.

"The feedback that we receive from the trial participants will help improve the comfort, fit and

function of the uniforms and enable the final designs to be approved for the first phase of manufacturing. Before manufacturing starts, a sizing exercise for the garments – the polo shirt, short sleeved shirt and the level 1 trousers – will be carried out so we can make sure our people receive garments in the correct size."

For questions or more information, please email unified.uniform@fireandemergency.nz

FIREFIGHTERS LEAD INITIATIVE FOR PID TRAINING

A firefighter-led initiative will see improved resources for photoionization detector training and skills maintenance.

The photoionization detector (PID) is a tool used to screen people and areas for the presence of potentially hazardous gases. It can play an important role in firefighter and public safety and, like any tool, must be used correctly and at the right time. Firefighters have told us that learning to use the PIDs is very technical and difficult and they don't feel properly equipped to use them.

To change this, we're improving the resources for PID training and skill maintenance. The first step is a series of modules for Learning Station to help firefighters and officers develop and re-fresh their PID knowledge, so training time with the PID can focus on practical skills.

This work grew out of a proposal from Wellington PID trainer Clark Townsley and has been undertaken as a firefighter-led initiative. The structure and content of the modules have been designed by firefighters to meet firefighter needs,

with technical (Trudy Geoghegan) and learning (Raylene Munro) support from our teams at NHQ.

Thanks to Clark, Michael Johnston, Regan Blogg and Kirk Solomon for their contribution. Clark was nominated for the Te Upoko Celebrating Success Awards for leading this work.

The new modules include videos, case studies, games and interactive versions of the PID so firefighters can practise tasks like changing the settings. There's also a module to help officers understand when the PID could be useful to them and how to use it at an incident.

The new modules will be available on Learning Station in the new year.

The next step is to develop resources for the PID trainers to make it easier for them to deliver interesting, practical and relevant training.



ACCESS TO ISOLATED COMMUNITIES

An honest and open conversation can go a long way towards building trust and long-lasting relationships. It's an approach that's helped Kereama Katu to be welcomed into isolated communities to help provide fire safety support.

Kereama is part of Fire and Emergency's Kaupapa Māori Liaison team, and visits communities to provide fire safety support and advice. It's important work as these communities are often located in regions where access to this information is limited.

This is the approach Kereama took when reaching out to the Ihumātao community which had occupied land near Mangere since 2016.

"Trust is a big thing for Māori communities when it comes to building strong relationships or partnerships," explains Kereama.

"In terms of engaging with our Māori communities, it's done through kanohi ki te kanohi or face to face communication, and that's sitting down having a cup of tea and building those relationships, and trust."

This tikanga-based approach creates a space for open and meaningful kōrero, which has been successful when reaching a community like Ihumātao.

"Sitting down and meeting with whānau from Ihumātao to provide fire safety support for them was really important. It was very rewarding for me to be part of the connection between the organisation and this vulnerable community."

Pania Newton, a representative from Ihumātao says they were very grateful to receive support from Kereama and the whānau at Fire and Emergency.

"Their holistic approach to supporting whānau was resonating and we feel so much safer on our whenua now and are encouraged to pursue our aspirations to improve our whānau wellbeing."

For Kereama, sustaining those relationships and providing reassurance they can call on the Kaupapa Māori team at any time, benefits his fire safety visits.

"Our approach is always to follow their lead and guidance, which means we listen and learn as much as we educate."



Pania Newton and young friend Leonye Keegan-Witehira Wehi. Courtesy of Stuff.



Kereama Katu, Pou Takawaenga Māori.

A PASSION FOR FIREFIGHTING

Even after 53 years of fighting fires, Dennis Alexander is still as passionate about his job as ever.

The 72-year-old recently retired, and will now dedicate more time to his museum in Eltham, which is stocked with a lifetime of firefighting artefacts and memorabilia.

Dennis was a career firefighter in different parts of the North Island for more than 40 years, before joining the Eltham volunteer brigade in semi-retirement. "It's been an enjoyable career," Dennis says. "Every day is different in the brigade."

A final hurrah was held for him last month, where local fire volunteers came to help him pour concrete to extend the museum, which he started creating about five years ago.

The museum features thousands of model fire trucks, memorabilia and every uniform he's ever had – including his first at age 16.

Alexander's father and grandfather were both part of the Thames brigade. "It's sort of in my blood, a bit," he says. "It becomes a part of life really."

Eltham's current Chief Fire Officer, Dave Waite, has great respect for Dennis. "He was good for practical training with volunteers and helped many over his years in Eltham alone."

Dennis encourages people to visit his museum. You can call 021 207 9544 to arrange a viewing. Photos courtesy of Stuff.



A 'REAL GENTLEMAN' CELEBRATES 60 YEARS OF SERVICE

Sixty years ago, a 23-year-old earthmoving contractor got to know "a few guys" at the East Coast Bays Fire Brigade. They invited him to join.

In September, Brian Vincent, now brigade support at the Opunake Fire Brigade, became just the third person since the formation of Fire and Emergency New Zealand to complete 60 years of service as a volunteer firefighter.

Brian's career took him from Auckland's North Shore to his hometown of Rahotu – to work in his father-in-law's garage – to Opunake where he worked as a contractor on Taranaki's big oil and gas projects. Each time he and his wife Maureen shifted; he joined the local brigade. "I just liked the idea of it, the comradeship," he says. "I still enjoy it."

National Commander Kerry Gregory, who met Brian during the Board's recent visit to Opunake, says Brian typifies firefighters. "He is passionate, driven, and dedicated to making his community more resilient."



National Commander Kerry Gregory with Brian Vincent.

In early December, the Opunake brigade marked Brian's service at a special celebration. Opunake Chief Fire Officer Craig Dingle describes him as a "real gentleman" who is firmly part of the brigade. "He still attends most training nights and, when there is an incident, comes to the station to record details of the callout."

So, after 60 years of service is Brian planning his retirement? It doesn't sound like it. "I can't think of anything else I'll be doing." His advice for anyone thinking about becoming a volunteer firefighter is simple: "Join the brigade. You will enjoy it."



BOARD VISIT TO TARANAKI

In late November, Fire and Emergency's Board, our Chief Executive Rhys Jones and members of our Executive Leadership Team, visited fire stations across the Taranaki region including New Plymouth, Ngamotu, Hawera, Kahi, Opunake and Oakura.

The visit was a great opportunity to see and hear first-hand what's working well, and where we can do better.

"What was really good to see was the positive interaction between career and volunteer firefighters and progress towards integration of urban and rural capability, Rhys said.

"What we've seen makes us confident we're in a strong position to serve and protect Taranaki communities, now and into the future."

One highlight was congratulating Brian Vincent on 60 years' service. Brian is a much-respected Brigade Support member at Opunake Volunteer Fire Station, where he has also served as a firefighter and Operational Support (read Brian's profile on page 5).

NAPIER FLOODING A ONE-IN-250-YEAR EVENT

In early November, record-breaking rain and flooding plunged Napier into a state of emergency.

That rainfall included a remarkable 54mm in one hour between 5-6pm on 10 November, the heaviest hour of rain in 25 years.

The downpour caused landslips and major power outages, and left people trapped in cars. By Tuesday morning, much of the city centre was under water.

Fire and Emergency Area Manager Ken Cooper says 14 urban and rural crews were soon responding to more than 150 calls for assistance, mostly from people in the city centre.

Ken says those crews immediately attended to badly flooded homes and also relocated some elderly residents from their homes to stay with relatives.

The next day, as the rain eased, multi-agency teams made up of personnel and volunteers from Red Cross, Civil Defence, Fire and Emergency's Urban Search and Rescue, Napier City Council and Hawke's Bay DHB Public Health began visiting the most severely impacted areas, checking on people's well-being and welfare.

As the water receded, flood recovery assessment teams set to work.

"Of those 383 assessments, 67 houses were found to be not habitable. 22 of them were significantly damaged," Ken said.

The flooding has been described as a one-in-250-year event. At its peak, over 3,000 homes were without power.



ROLE OF KEEPING THE PUBLIC INFORMED CRITICAL

The fire that ripped through Lake Ōhau in early October was one of the most significant fire events in our recent history. The devastating fire swept across the Mackenzie Basin destroying nearly 50 homes. It required a large-scale response from multiple crews and appliances and received significant media interest.

Throughout the emergency, our National Communications and Engagement team alongside regional PIMs Sally Chesterfield, Kerri Pring, Michele Poole, Bevan Findlay, and Isaia Piho provided the public and media with up to date information. They issued critical safety information to people nearby and updates on the fire, as well as managing media requests and facilitating press conferences and ministerial visits.

Our National Communications and Engagement team as well as several of our people from the regions undertake training in Coordinated Incident Management Systems and Public Information Management throughout the year, to help them prepare for major incidents like this.

Jess Chaplin and Adam Walker, our two senior media advisors in the National Communications and Engagement team, were deployed to Lake Ōhau as Public Information Officers (PIM), managing media interest and ensuring safety advice reached everyone affected.

Jess said the first thing she did when she arrived at Twizel was to hop into a car with the Waitaki Mayor to witness the extent of the damage to the village.

"I was shocked at the level of devastation and amazed no lives had been lost."

"The Incident Controller felt well supported and appreciated having the media off his back! The media were happy and appreciative of what we could do for them," Jess said.

Adam said when he arrived in Twizel to relieve Jess, there was a sense of calm at the IMT.

"The fire was under control and processes well set up within the management team."

Adam was based with the Incident Management Team at Twizel Fire Station, but when he visited the village, the sheer scale of the devastation was a shock.

"Seeing one house perfectly fine and the one next to it nothing but a pile of rubble was unbelievable. I'll keep that as a memory of the fire and its impact."

Sally said for the PIM role to be successful, it draws on a wide diversity of skills, from managing media and forming trusted relationships with stakeholders to understanding social media.

"I feel fortunate to have worked with such talented people who all used their unique skills to help the Ōhau community during this difficult time to keep New Zealand informed of the tragedy while considering the needs of the residents."



LAKE ŌHAU PHOTOS

The Lake Ōhau blaze destroyed 48 buildings and burnt through 5,040 hectares of land. About 90 people were forced to sleep away from their homes after 53 homes were destroyed. High winds made the response effort difficult. Crews from Canterbury, Otago and Southland responded. Here are some photos from the incident.



Photos courtesy of Ned Dawson, Taare Parekura, Jess Chaplin.

BUSINESS OPERATIONS MANAGERS AT THE HEART OF STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

We're proud to welcome five new Business Operations Manager (BOMs) to Fire and Emergency. These are new regional roles within the Services Delivery Branch, and as part of the Region Leadership Teams, they'll offer strategic support to Regional Managers.

BOMs will support service delivery by ensuring a two-way flow of information between Region Leadership Teams, Finance and Business Operations (FABO), Organisation Strategy and Capability Development (OSCD) and Office of the Chief Executive (OCE) branches at National Headquarters.

They'll also help Region Managers to build cases for operational change and enhancement, ensuring resources are in place to continue serving the needs of our communities. Working with regional teams, they'll also assess local infrastructure and ways to deal with projected risks, climate change, population changes, and commercial and residential development.

Meet our new Business Operations Managers



SONYA KAHN
NGĀ TAI KI TE PUKU

Sonya joins us after 14 years at Comvita, where she was General Manager Operations and previously Human Resource Manager. She has significant experience in strategy development, implementation, team leadership and is a qualified transformative coach. Boogie boarding, skiing and gardening keep her fit and relaxed.



ZELDA JORDAN
TE KEI

Zelda is returning to us after 14 months working for IDEA Services as Area Manager in Otago. She's a highly regarded specialist in strategy development, team leadership, and project management. She enjoys keeping fit, walking nature trails and spending time with her two busy teenage boys.



PAMELA DAWSON
TE IHU

Pamela joins us after three years with Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, as Southern Regional Manager. Pamela has strong financial acumen, strategic planning skills, team leadership and stakeholder engagement expertise. She enjoys boating on the Southern Lakes, loves model trains and supports Autism NZ bowling.



JACOB DAVIES
TE ŪPOKO

Returning home from Scotland, Jacob joins us after four and a half years working as National Manager for the Royal Lifeboat Institute. He's highly experienced in strategy development and implementation, team management, complex negotiations and financial management. Of Te Āti Awa descent, Jacob's a keen surf lifesaver and coaches high-performance sport.



NATALIE MORRIS
TE HIKU

Natalie joins us after six years with Auckland International Airport as Projects and Performance Manager. She brings recognised programme and financial management, leadership, strategy development and implementation experience gained in specialised and complex multi-stakeholder environments. Natalie enjoys travelling and getting outdoors – camping, hiking and skiing.

LIFE-SAVING RESPONSE AT MT MAUNGANUI

Green Watch Station Officer Roger Pickett has been on the job for 47 years and attended a lot of emergencies, but never something so close to home as an incident last year. Based at Mt. Maunganui fire station, Roger responded to a cardiac arrest at a local golf course. On arrival he saw it was a good friend he'd been on a cruise with just weeks earlier.

Years before, Roger had been best man at the wedding of Ian and Karen Pickard, National Manager People and Workforce Capability and Human Resources Manager at Fire and Emergency respectively. The unconscious man on the golf course, desperately in need of CPR was Karen's father John.

"Because I had a personal relationship with John, I was taken aback a little bit. He was basically flatlined and his chances didn't look that flash when we initially arrived," Roger says.

Incidents involving cardiac arrest can often be fatal. Thankfully, another player at the course was proficient in CPR, and when Roger's crew arrived an AED had been sourced from the clubhouse.

Fellow Green Watch members Bruce Martin-Hendrie, Chris Russell and Kiley Kanohi quickly took control of the situation, taking over CPR from the ambulance crew. Roger called Karen and Ian and John's wife Dawn, keeping them informed

of John's progress as he was moved to Tauranga hospital and began stabilising.

Karen initially feared the worst, but previous experience working in ComCen told her to find facts before jumping to any conclusion.

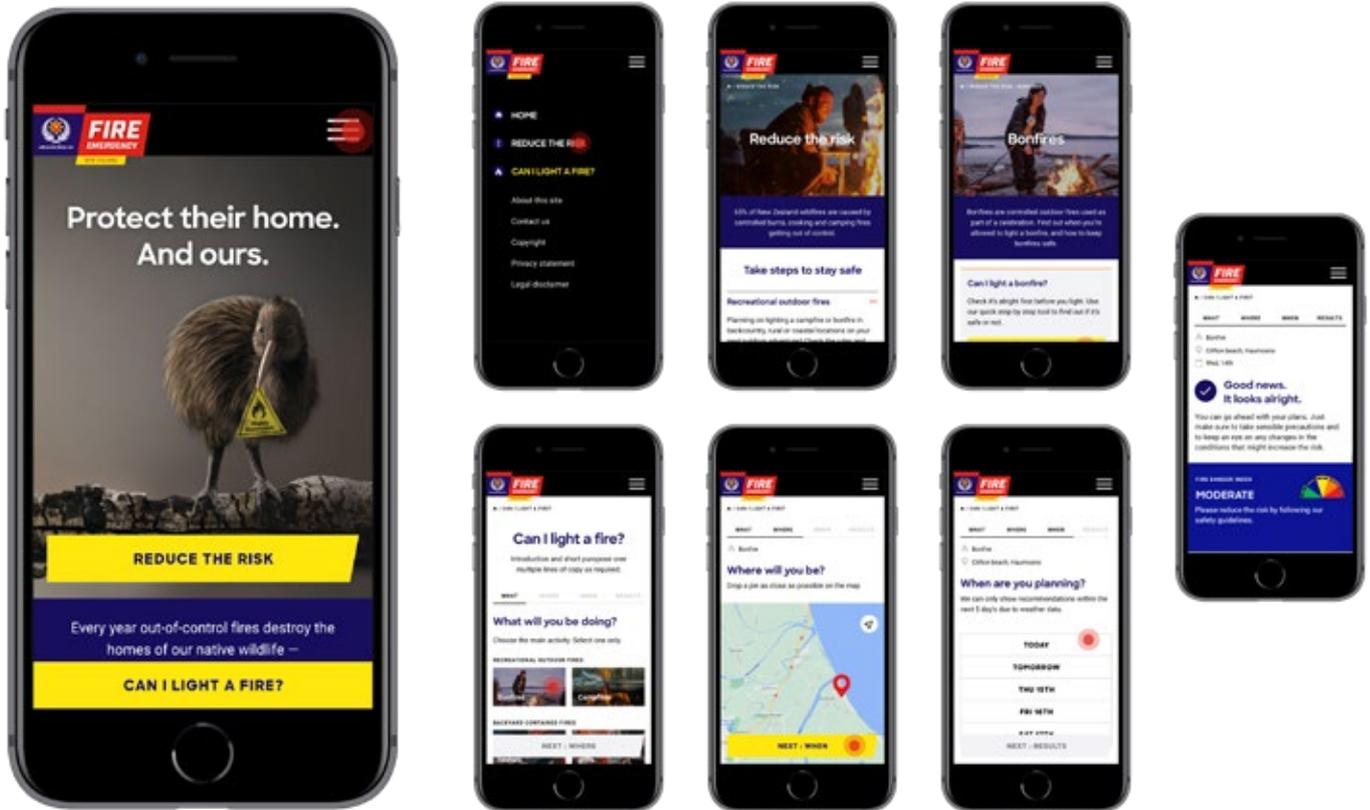
"When I talked to Roger, he was very honest about how things were. It was really comforting knowing someone who loved Dad was with him," Karen says.

It is now 17 months since John's cardiac arrest, and he is back playing golf three times a week. He's understandably very grateful his good mate Roger was there to help.

"Although I have no recollection of what happened, the fast response from the Mt Maunganui crew saved my life. Not many come back from where I was at, so I'm extremely fortunate and have the support from a wonderful family. Life is good!" says John.



Photo: from left, Ian Pickard, Karen Pickard, Dad (John Bowman), Mum (Dawn Bowman), Margaret Pickett (Roger's wife), Megan Pickett (Rog & Marg's daughter), Roger Pickett, Zen and Luca who are Roger's grandkids



NEW TOOL IN TIME FOR FIRE SEASON ANSWERS THE QUESTION – CAN I LIGHT A FIRE?

A key element in this summer’s wildfire prevention campaign is the recently launched fire danger tool, now ready for public use as we get closer to the peak of wildfire season.

The tool is a ‘one-stop-shop’ offering a user-friendly solution to the most commonly searched question on checkitalright.nz – can I light a wildfire?

National Manager Community Readiness and Recovery Steve Turek says, “People will have access to live fire danger and fire season status based on where they are and what kind of fire type or activity they’ve planned, like lighting a campfire or operating farming machinery. They’ll be given clear guidance on whether they can light a fire or not, and whether a permit is needed based on the local fire danger level.

“We collaborated with our regional campaign working group on the development, and they provided invaluable insights which helped drive key functions of the fire danger tool,” says Steve.

Information on the tool also provides people with actions to take to help reduce the risk of unwanted fire based on what they’re planning.

Early next year, the tool will use NIWA’s 5-day fire danger forecast to guide the public on the best day for their planned fire or activity and even recommend a postponement day with a lower danger level. Users can also sign-up to receive a text reminder to revisit checkitalright.nz on the day of their planned fire and activity, for the latest information.

The summer wildfire prevention campaign is currently running on TV, radio, print publications, digital, social and outdoor advertising. Native birds have once again starred as the campaign’s ‘spokespeople’, as a motivation for everyone to keep natural habitats safe.

Visit www.checkitalright.nz to check-out the new fire danger tool.

AFI PASEFIKA SUPPORTS INJURED FIREFIGHTER

Founded in 2003, the Afi Pasefika firefighters' network has grown in strength and support from year to year, and now has over 80 members in Fire and Emergency. Earlier this year, their unity and goodwill were put into action when helping a seriously injured firefighter from America Samoa, during his rehabilitation in New Zealand.

That firefighter was Tinei Fonoigafo (Tai), seriously injured in a tragic road accident in January, where two of his colleagues were sadly killed.

Tai was in the back of the fire truck with another firefighter, whom he shielded from full impact, essentially saving his life. He received serious spinal injuries and was airlifted to Burwood Spinal Unit in Christchurch. As soon as the Afi Pasefika team were made aware of Tai's plight, they mobilised support in Christchurch and with their members around the country.

Members and their families visited Tai regularly, bringing him clothing, authentic island food and heartfelt moral support. The New Zealand Professional Firefighters' Union also gave generously, providing Tai with a phone and tablet. Christchurch firefighters also visited and supported Tai with daily visits from on-duty crews.

Tai soon began strengthening exercises in the gymnasium and pool, incredibly hard work that meant he could stand for short periods by August. He had to retrain his mind, muscles and whole body to complete even simple movements, but his determination saw him make incredible progress.

At the end of September, he was transferred to Auckland, and warmly welcomed by the Auckland Afi Pasefika group. Before he flew to the USA to continue his rehabilitation, a dinner was held for him at Remuera Fire Station, where he received a meaalofa raised from funds donated by members.

Tai was extremely grateful to Afi Pasefika, the NZPFU and everyone in Fire and Emergency who generously supported him in so many thoughtful ways.

Afi Pasifika builds connections with our Pasefika communities and the kind, caring support for one of our own, is an example of why Afi Pasifika is an essential part of Fire and Emergency.



Tai with Afi Pasifika founding member, Pauga Esitone Pauga.



Adrian Wade and Maiava Sulu Devoe from Auckland City Station present Tai with a meaalofa.

BEST OF SOCIAL MEDIA 2020

Our social media pages are a great place to check out safety advice and keep up to date with the Fire and Emergency New Zealand community. 2020 has been a big year for us and we recently reached 100k followers on our main Facebook page. Here are some of our best posts of the year to celebrate.



After 56 years' service, yesterday we said farewell to Senior Station Officer Paul Lyall at Thorndon Fire Station who walked off duty for the very last time.

Happy retirement Paul and thank you for your service! 🇺🇲



Woof! Happy International Dog Day 🐾



FACT: The plastics and synthetic materials found in modern furnishings burn faster and give off more poisonous smoke than they did 50 years ago. 🔥

Today, 3 minutes is all it takes for a fire to destroy everything you own. That's why you need to have working smoke alarms and an escape plan. It could save your life.



We know everyone loves a good duckling rescue story so here is another... 🦆

These ducklings were rescued from a drain yesterday afternoon thanks to the efforts of firefighters in Lower Hutt. 🚒

It was a bit of a stretch to reach the ducklings but we are happy to report that all ducklings were reunited with their Mama.

SNIPPETS FROM THE REGIONS

We profile some of the men and women across the country who dedicate themselves to protecting life and property every day in their communities.



Four Gisborne firefighters took on the stairs at the Firefighter Sky Tower Stair Challenge and raised \$4,300 for Leukaemia and Blood Cancer NZ, part of \$792,387.19 that was raised overall. From left to right are: Robin Sneddon (Volunteer FF), Judah Theobold (Volunteer FF), Sammy Akroyd (Volunteer FF), and Dion Wilson (Career FF).



The site for the new Greytown Volunteer Fire Station was blessed by Herewini Ammunson on behalf of local Iwi, with Fire and Emergency Board Chair Paul Swain and CE Rhys Jones also attending. From left are Pāpāwai representatives Herewini Ammunson and Gillies Baker, Greytown Chief Fire Officer Steve Meyrick, Fire and Emergency Board Chair Paul Swain and Chief Executive Rhys Jones.



Congratulations to the latest group of volunteer firefighters who just completed their recruit course. They were the first group to use our new Live Fire Training Facility at Woolston.



Central Comcen Senior Dispatcher, Toni David, received her Gold Star at an awards ceremony in early November. Toni described the Gold Star ceremony as 'a lovely occasion'.



Laingholm Volunteer Fire Brigade Deputy Chief Paul Bolton received his 50 years of service medal in early November. We congratulate Paul on his outstanding achievement.



WHAKARATONGA MVI

FIRE
EMERGENCY

NEW ZEALAND

LAST SUMMER, WE ATTENDED 1,727 PLANNED BURNS THAT WERE OUT-OF-CONTROL.

Before lighting any kind of fire, you can now
check the local fire danger at checkitsalright.nz

