

## **NATIONAL FORUM 27 APRIL 2017**

### **ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS SENT IN BY TEXT.**

#### **PEOPLE AND CHANGE**

**Q: Will current NZFS employees have the opportunity to apply for new roles**

A: Yes, where roles are being advertised publicly.

**Q: How will the discrepancies between pay scales be addressed?**

A: This is something that will be reviewed during the integration years. During the first year, the organisation will design its operating model, this will inform organisational structure, roles and any equivalent considerations regarding job sizes and reward structures.

**Q: What happens to the leadership of auxiliary brigades. Do they become stand alone and have a Chief Fire Officer?**

A: No change on Day One. During the first year of the new organisation, work will start on the operating model for Fire and Emergency New Zealand, this will help to inform the organisational structure for a unified organisation.

**Q: The additional roles Kevin O'Connor mentioned, are they fixed term (2 years) or permanent positions?**

A: The new rural regional leadership roles are fixed for two years. Other new roles for Fire and Emergency New Zealand will be permanent unless there is a specific reason for them to be temporary in nature.

**Q: Regarding notices of authorised personnel - we currently recruit 1000 urban volunteers per annum. How often do these notices need to be updated?**

A: We are creating a mechanism to ensure that people are appropriately authorised and that this system copes with turnover, resignations and name changes.

**Q: Is the Board open minded about the size of the new organization? NZFS is currently very lean to the point of being ineffective in some aspects. Will we grow the number of FTE (full time equivalent) to more effective numbers as the new working model evolves?**

A:

In the short term, we need to determine what it is that we need first. It's about having people and capability in the places they are needed. Work done in the first year on the operating model (for a unified organisation) will help to determine this as well. What we do know is there will be more people to support volunteers and frontline staff. The Board is open-minded about what will be required, and new money has been granted to strengthen the organisation.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**Q: Health & Safety. A very big area. Are you confident both rural and urban can enter day one, safely?**

A: We agree; it is a big area. Nothing is more important than our people. The Board has approved a health, safety and wellbeing direction, set out in a strategy document, that will help us meet our duty of care in both rural and urban so that our people return safely. This has been developed with the support of a sizeable working party of rural and urban fire services people, unions and associations, and health and safety specialists and detailed planning is underway. More information will be available in this area during the next two months.

**Q: Will there be an option for private (non-FENZ) prosecutions as exists in Health & Safety at Work Act?**

A: Pending further clarification.

## **COMMAND AND CONTROL**

**Q: There will be 'egos' on day one. Will command and control reasonably minimise the risk?**

A: The purpose of the interim command and control policy for Day One is to provide clarity on who is in control of an incident (particularly where that may be in conflict). The policy however won't stop people behaving poorly, the management response that follows should help to address this over time. Working together to co-design the interim command and control arrangements has helped to ensure that we minimise any egotistical thinking.

**Q: How will the new structure smooth over the issues experienced in Christchurch? Will the structure have associated command levels?**

A: The independent review of the Port Hills fire (and other similar reviews) will help Fire and Emergency NZ to assess areas of improvement for collaboration on incidents between urban and rural fire and other emergency services. This will be taken into consideration when working on the operating model for a unified organisation during the integration years.

**Q: Will urban rank structures continue. What will happen with rural rank structures? How the organisation becomes more unified in future years will be informed by the both the local risks and needs**

A: Urban rank structures will continue after Day One. There are no rank structures in rural. This is one of the areas that will be worked through as we develop the operating model for a unified organisation during the integration years.

## **INDUSTRY BRIGADES**

**Q: Will there be any room to create rural industrial brigades within urban volunteer brigades that are now being called out to fight forest and vegetation fires outside their boundaries?**

A: Pending further clarity from the submitter.

## **OPERATIONS - GENERAL**

**Q: Day time manning and response is a serious issue in certain areas. What will FENZ provide employers so they release their employees?**

A: We understand that this is a very real issue for some employers around the country. We have been provided a significant amount of money to provide better support for volunteers, this includes what support could be provided to employers of volunteers to ease this type of strain. This is something that is a priority for the integration years.

**Q: Has there been any progress on forestry contractors/companies becoming industrial brigades?**

A: The transition team have been engaging with forestry organisations around New Zealand to establish a working relationship between forestry and Fire and Emergency New Zealand. At this point, few have indicated interest in establishing an Industry Brigade. Our goal is to maintain strong operational relationships with forestry.

## **INFRINGEMENT NOTICES**

**Q: With no infringement notices or process being introduced until 1 July 18, and no more cost recovery, no more council responsibility, how are we going to control those that do not want to comply? Are we not leaving ourselves open for problems in the 12 months until the infringement process is introduced?**

A: A prosecutions policy will be developed and in place for Day One. While we won't have infringement regulations in place, we are able to prosecute recidivist offenders if it is appropriate to do so. We would welcome any suggestions as to how Fire and Emergency New Zealand might encourage voluntary compliance between 1 July 2017 and 1 July 2018.

## **BY-LAWS PERMITS**

**Q: How will fire permits be issued in "urban" areas? Is there an expectation that Rural RFO will issue these as part of their role? Is this part of the National Fire Permit system?**

A: It depends on the existing by-laws that are in place currently and what changes, if any, are made by the Territorial Local Authority (TLA). The transition team will be discussing this with TLAs in due course.

**Q: Will the fire permitting system be linked to ComCen to reduce unnecessary calls and keep volunteers at their place of work?**

A: Some do this now. It will be the subject of further discussion during the integration years.

## **LEGISLATION**

**Q: Section 12, additional functions states water rescues and animal rescues where we currently are not the lead agency. Does this change with the Bill; if not does this leave it open for the future?**

A: The Bill doesn't change lead agency arrangements. It legitimises the role we undertake now, provides personal protection against liability, and creates the opportunity to work with the existing lead agencies so that we can collectively work together to formalise arrangements relating to these events.

## TECHNOLOGY QUESTIONS

**Q: Are you comfortable and confident telecommunication support exists for rural fire in rural isolated locations?**

A: Support for telecommunication will be provided through an 0800 number and handled by a skilled telecommunication support team from day one of the new organisation.

**Q: Will the ICT infrastructure be up and running for Voluntary Rural Fire Forces's (VRFFs) on day one and will they be installed in the depots?**

A: An upgraded VRFF infrastructure will be rolled out over the integration years. Permanent rural staff transferring will receive new technology for Day One (e.g. Laptop)

## ORGANISATION

**Q: Has the new structure being named "Fire and Emergency Service" with a view to the new structure taking over the ambulance service and civil defence?**

A: No. The new organisation is to be called Fire and Emergency New Zealand. The use of the word "emergency" in the name is recognition of the broader work that fire services perform in communities.

## GENERAL

**Q: 99% of today's discussions has focused on all frontline operations, rural and urban, I understand that this focuses on day 1, however there is again very little provided/spoken on the value of fire prevention, education, promotion, fire investigation. How does and when will the Board better address or notify to all in NZFS/FENZ of these roles importance at the likes of these and all other forums?**

A: The Board is clear that a greater focus and investment on risk reduction is an area of focus moving forward. The Integration (Phase 2) Blueprint Plan, the Safer New Zealand Strategy and the work of risk reduction technical and advisory groups will all contribute to improving our focus on reduction.