

Fire and Emergency New Zealand

Questions & Answers

Late last year the FENZ Transition Project team received a well-considered and extensive list of questions from Angela Fisher, Region 3 Business Services Manager. The following are Angela's questions and our answers.

There are also more Q&As on our project website, www.fenzproject.co.nz, for further review. Please use the Your Voice contact page, also on this website, if you have any further enquiries.

Branding

1. *Why do we need to rebrand?*

Bringing 40 urban and rural fire services under one umbrella will create a new organisation – Fire and Emergency New Zealand. It's not simply a case of rural fire services coming into the New Zealand Fire Service; we are creating a brand new entity. It's important to recognise all these organisations and their heritage, while creating a single identity for the future.

2. *What are the timeframes around new uniform?*

Uniforms will not change on Day One of Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Any changes to branding on uniforms will be brought in over time to ensure we get the most out of existing uniforms.

3. *Will there be any identifiable difference on the fire ground between rural and non-rural firefighters?*

How the uniform is updated to incorporate the new branding is still to be worked through after Day One. The use of badging or colour coding to signify rural and non-rural firefighters has been raised in several of the staff identity engagement sessions. No doubt the Fire and Emergency New Zealand working group that will be formed to work on uniform design will identify the opportunities (after Day One).

4. *How will you incorporate the crown into the FENZ badge/logo?*

This is an interesting question. So far all the identity concepts put forward by our design agency have been designed with the ability to accommodate the crown. Fire and Emergency New Zealand will be a Crown Entity which means the new brand does not require the crown. However, the importance of the crown in our identity has been tested in our public focus groups and our engagement sessions and so far has been varied. In our next concept testing with our people and the public in April we will again test the importance of the crown in the new identity and provide a recommendation to the Board.

5. *What will fund the re-branding?*

The engagement and design work for the new identity is funded by the Transition Project.

Levy

6. *Has FENZ thought about the public backlash of financial levy changes?*

The Board carefully considered the levy rate about which it publicly consulted last year. The decision on the levy rate is however a matter for the Government.

7. *Can Volunteers be considered for reduced insurance levies?*

The Board is discussing a number of options for Day One to provide an enhanced range of support for volunteers across a range of areas. The Transition Project team is working with stakeholders, including the United Fire Brigades Association (UFBA), on a volunteer strategy which will clarify these sorts of questions in future, and more will come as a result of these discussions. We understand, from research, that volunteers are motivated by a variety of factors and there are differing opinions about cash payments and insurance subsidies. Any options will be developed with stakeholders to provide the best solution for volunteers as part of Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

8. *Can employers of volunteers be considered for reduced fire insurance levies?*

Levy exemptions can only be set under regulations made by the Government. The Department of Internal Affairs consulted publicly last year on levy exemptions. The proposals did not include an exemption or partial exemption for volunteers; rather they focused on changes to the types of property currently exempt from the levy.

9. *Can levy reductions be offered for volunteers who live in rural areas and compliant with firefighting water supply regulations?*

As noted above, levy exemptions are set by the Government following public consultation by the Department of Internal Affairs. The exemption suggested did not form part of the recent consultation by the Department.

10. *Which buildings will be exempt from paying the levy?*

We are awaiting decisions by the Government on levy exemptions to be made under regulations, so we don't know at this stage what buildings might be exempt.

11. *Who will be exempt from paying levy insurance?*

As noted above, we are waiting for Government decisions on exemptions to be made under regulations.

Long Duration Events

12. *How do we rotate volunteers for long duration jobs, such as rural fires – bearing in mind Employer's needs and wages?*

Rotation of volunteers for long duration jobs, such as rural fires, is likely to continue as it currently does beyond Day One.

13. *Will volunteer employers be compensated for an exhausted firefighter having to be stood down due to Health & Safety if they are expected to attend long duration fire calls?*

The procedures for rotation and rest of volunteers attending long duration fires should be managed effectively, so that the need to stand people down due to physical 'exhaustion' should be able to be anticipated and addressed in most situations. Within each brigade or force, where individual employment situations are well known, every effort is made to accommodate these when turning out a crew.

Where a volunteer firefighter may need normal recovery time (such as time to sleep after being up all night) that will impact on their employment, we are reliant on the goodwill and community support focus of their employers to allow for this time.

Although financial reimbursement of employers is not being considered as a support option for volunteers at this time, the Employer Recognition Programme is always looking for ideas on how we can improve support to employers and self-employed volunteers who support the organisation so effectively. The Programme is currently managed through the NZFS People and Capability Team.

Day 1 Blueprint

14. Blueprint states “Respond to any other situation if FENZ has the capability to assist” – where do you draw the line for volunteers?

Having the capability to assist means having the training and experience to do the job safely. This is the case now, and won't change once Fire and Emergency New Zealand is established. Health and safety is always going to be the most important aspect of any decision about who does what. Information and training to develop or confirm the necessary capability and skills, and the support needed in terms of leadership, PPE and equipment will be considered as part of the process in preparing volunteers to undertake any new emergency response activities.

Boundaries/Locations

15. How will FENZ consult with the public on boundaries when we have so many already i.e. Police, Ambulance etc.?

While the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill requires the Board to consider the boundaries of other relevant services when setting boundaries for local advisory committees, this is just one consideration. The Board also has to consider the efficiency and effectiveness of fire and emergency services in the local area, and the local risk profile. The Board must endeavour to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the committees and the ability of the committees to represent relevant communities.

The transition team is working on options for local advisory committee boundaries for the Board to consider for the required consultation. The consultation will take place sometime after Day One. This is being informed by the transition team's engagement with stakeholders (including other emergency services) on pilot local committees in Greater Auckland and Mid-South Canterbury.

The Department of Internal Affairs has consulted on regulations for local advisory committees, and proposes that regulations will be made for 1 July 2018. The Board will need to comply with any relevant requirements of these regulations when establishing and running the local committees. (These regulations are expected to be in place from 1 July 2018.)

16. Will there be a review of station locations?

No decisions have been made about any station locations. This will be addressed in the integration phase (2017-2020). Station locations will be considered using the National Risk and Resource Allocation model and take into account community risks and needs, and the views of

communities (for example, through Local Advisory Committees), our people, associations and unions, and other stakeholders.

17. Will smaller stations be amalgamated with larger stations in their area?

No decisions have yet been made about amalgamating stations. Any changes will be addressed in the integration phase. Any changes to locations will be on the basis of the National Risk and Resource Allocation model, and take into account the risks and needs of communities, and views of our people, associations and unions, and other stakeholders.

18. What impact will FENZ have on the replacement of our station?

As above no decisions have been made about station locations. It is possible that some amalgamations will occur further down the track but any consideration of this is some way off. Having said that, there are many examples across New Zealand where this is occurring now.

The senior leadership of Fire and Emergency New Zealand will need to look at the current replacement programme, and take into account the seismic strengthening programme, health and safety considerations, any station amalgamations, and the availability of funding. These variables may have impact on the current replacement programme, but any related outcomes are not yet known.

Training

19. Where is training heading regarding technical rescues?

This is something that will be addressed in the integration phase (2017-2020) as the Transition Project is focused on what is new and essential for 1 July 2017. All current urban and rural operations training will continue on Day One and any changes will be made by Fire and Emergency New Zealand after July 1.

20. Will rural firefighters be trained to work at structure fires?

Again, this will be something to be addressed in the integration phase (2017-2020).

Volunteer brigades

21. Will agreements be put in place for all volunteers similar to those for CFO and DCFO?

We are still exploring options with volunteers and their associations (eg. the United Fire Brigades Association) and Forest and Rural Fire Association New Zealand (FRFANZ)) to work on the types of agreements and documents that will be required from 1 July 2017.

22. How do we protect our assets?

Fire and Emergency New Zealand will not be taking away any assets which are currently serving the community. Please see the [Assets fact sheet](#) on the fenzproject.co.nz website for more information.

23. What will the increase in volunteer support look like?

Improving support to volunteers is a medium to long term piece of work with the aim of further developing and maintaining the engaged and capable volunteer workforce required for the future. This work will take a strategic approach to how Fire and Emergency New Zealand engages, develops, implements and maintains a sustainable volunteer workforce. In the short

term the Transition Project is actively working with volunteers and a range of people who support volunteers (eg. regional administrators, training, Volunteer Support Officers) to develop and implement a small number of practical meaningful initiatives for Day One. These initiatives will be focused on making it easier to volunteer and providing appropriate support for volunteers to perform their role.

24. Will we still be known as ??? Volunteer Fire Brigade?

You will still be known as a Volunteer Fire Brigade – this will not change on Day One.

25. What incentives are being considered to attract and retain volunteers e.g. medical insurance/ gym membership etc?

A small number of initiatives that will result in improved support to volunteers are being developed for 1 July 2017. Longer-term, the development of a Fire and Emergency New Zealand Volunteer Strategy in 2017 will look at a number of ways to support, attract and retain volunteers.

Infringements

26. How do we identify people who are not paying insurance on their properties?

Our levy team will continue to monitor and audit the payment of levies on contracts of fire insurance to give help ensure the correct amount of levy is being paid.

When the new levy provisions in the Bill are in force, Fire and Emergency New Zealand will have greater powers to get information relevant to the assessment of levy.

It is important to note, there is no requirement for people to insure their property. The legislation just requires that people pay a levy if they have certain types of insurance on property.

27. Who will monitor and issue infringements?

There will not be any infringements provisions in force on Day One. These require regulations, which the Department of Internal Affairs will publicly consult on. We understand these regulations will be in force for 1 July 2018.

While we will need to see the content of the regulations to know more, it is likely infringements will only be issued at a managerial level. People within brigades will not be required to carry out enforcement activities; their focus will still be safety and response.

Funding

28. How will the social grant work?

Existing urban brigades will continue to receive brigade grants as before. Rural fire forces will receive an equivalent grant. The calculation of the grant, and how it will be administered, is being developed.

29. Will we need to change names on bank accounts?

Not at this stage. If any decisions are made to change names, volunteer brigades and voluntary rural fire forces will be informed.

30. Do we have a say on how the new money is spent?

Fire and Emergency NZ is committed to providing opportunities for volunteers to have a say on decisions that affect them. One of the draft Fire and Emergency NZ volunteer principles is ensuring the volunteer voice is included in all our work, and this will include providing opportunities for volunteers to have a say such as joining working groups and responding to surveys. We will also continue to engage with volunteer associations as the volunteer support strategy is developed.

A 'Volunteer Working Group' has been established representing the voice of volunteers and volunteer leaders. The working group consists of 46 rural and urban volunteers from across the country who have put their hands up to help design and develop initiatives to better support volunteers. They met at the end of February for the first time at a workshop to progress this work, and will continue to meet on a regular basis, following the amalgamation of the new organisation on 1 July, to assist with the roll-out of more volunteer support initiatives over the next three years.

31. Will rural firefighters be paid?

On 1 July 2017, all Rural volunteers will be brought into Fire and Emergency New Zealand on the same arrangements they are currently on, with no change to their current payments.

32. Will they phase out payments for rural firefighters? If so, how?

As part of the integration phase (2017-2020), work will be undertaken to better understand and review all reimbursement and payment arrangements for volunteers. The work will be carried out with volunteers and their representatives and will need to be aligned with the wider approach to recognition of volunteers, their employers and their families. The aim of this work will be to better support all volunteers and create an environment where it is easier to volunteer.

33. Is the \$23Mill paid annually, or as a one-off?

Annually. The allocation is \$14.5 million in 2017/18, rising to \$23 million by 2019/20.

34. What are we looking at \$\$-wise per year going forward?

\$14.5 million in 17/18, growing to \$23 million per year from 2019/20.

35. Where does funding sit and who approves helicopter responses to rural fires?

With the exception of Defence areas and public conservation land, Fire and Emergency New Zealand will fund the use of aircraft at rural fires. Fire and Emergency New Zealand Authorised Officers will be able to approve the use of aircraft responding to rural fires.

36. As 1/3 of the NZ population lives in Auckland, will 1/3 of the FENZ funding go up there?

No. Funding is based on a number of factors of which population is just one.

37. Will volunteer brigade grants be increased in line with increased workload?

Brigade grants will be reviewed as part of developing the volunteer strategy. There could be increases depending on the outcome of this review.

Volunteer Consultation

38. Is there still an opportunity to have our say?

A 'Volunteer Working Group' has been established representing the voice of volunteers and volunteer leaders. The working group consists of 46 rural and urban volunteers from across the country who have put their hands up to help design and develop initiatives to better support volunteers. They met at the end of February for the first time at a workshop to progress this work, and will continue to meet on a regular basis, following the amalgamation of the new organization on 1 July, to assist with the roll-out of more volunteer support initiatives over the next three years.

A 'Volunteer Support Management Working Group' including Area Managers and Principal Rural Fire Officer representatives from each regional area has also been established. This group will provide advice, input and feedback both to the Transition team and to the new organisation on a regular basis – providing operational and volunteer support management perspectives. This group met for the first time in late March and will continue to meet post Day One.

The New Zealand Fire Service Volunteer Resilience Team is also working on other initiatives aimed at improving support for families, and more resources for employee recognition and volunteer leadership development.

39. What does a 3-year consultation period look like?

The development of a long-term, organisational-wide Volunteer Strategy is expected to be finalised by the end of 2017. This will focus on strengthening and sustaining volunteer brigades for the future and include career development initiatives, training and a new approach to reward and recognition. The groups mentioned above, as well as other consultation groups including UFBA and FRANZ, will be involved in this work. There will also be a governance group providing oversight and direction on the Volunteer Strategy.

Local Committees

March 2017

40. How will local committees be chosen?

Local Advisory Committees are designed to provide advice, from a local perspective, to FENZ on fire-related risks and needs. They will provide advice on local planning, issues and the national strategy.

Local Advisory Committee members will be appointed by the Board (the name was changed to include 'Advisory' by the Parliamentary Select Committee in late 2016.) Members of the committees will need to have the right competence, experience, and willingness. (Regulations may also apply).

The Committees will not be made up of representatives from agencies – they will be made up of people who can represent communities and stakeholders' risks, needs, interests and views. They will need to act collectively in the best interests of the locality they are in.

41. How big will the boards be?

At the moment, we don't have an answer to this question as we are still developing how Local Advisory Committees will work. The Department of Internal Affairs is developing regulations that may cover the size of Local Advisory Committees. We'd expect committees to be different sizes in different areas due to the varying mix of local risks and needs.

It's currently proposed there are between 12 and 16 Local Advisory Committees around the country, but no decisions have yet been made.

42. What input, if any will brigades have?

At this point, we don't envisage direct interaction between brigades and Local Advisory Committees. However, we are still testing how Local Advisory Committees will work so this is not a final decision.

Local Advisory Committees are designed to provide advice, from a local perspective, to FENZ on fire-related risks and needs. They will provide advice on local planning, issues and the national strategy. Given that Fire and Emergency New Zealand will have its NHQ in Wellington, the Local Advisory Committees are a way of ensuring local interests and feedback is considered by the FENZ Board when they are setting national strategy and resourcing.

It's important to note that Local Advisory Committees have an advisory role only. They do not have any management, operational or governance powers or responsibilities over local brigades, stations or Voluntary Rural Fire Forces. The Board will need to support committees, and take their local advice into account for national planning.

43. What will be the role of Local Committees?

I've put the purpose from the Bill below. As you'll see, the purpose is broad and high level. That's why the Transition Project is running pilot working groups for Local Advisory Committees in Greater Auckland and (starting April) Mid-South Canterbury. These temporary groups of non-sector community stakeholders are considering the best ways to set up the committees and run them.

Local Advisory Committees are expected to be established in 2018 – after boundaries for them have been consulted on with the public (as required by the Bill).

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill, March 2017

13A Purpose and functions of local advisory committees

(1) The main purpose of local advisory committees is to provide advice, from a local perspective, to FENZ.

(2) The functions of the local advisory committees are—

(a) to undertake efficient and effective local engagement for the board; and

(b) to provide local advice to FENZ on the national strategy, local issues, and local planning; and

(c) to consider and promote the interests of the local area's FENZ volunteers; and

(d) to consider the interests of the industry brigades operating in the local area; and

(e) to consider the provisions of any current operational service agreement and memorandum of understanding that FENZ has and that is relevant to a local area in relation to which the local advisory committee has responsibilities, including—

(f) to provide regular advice on FENZ's progress in relation to its local planning.

UFBA

44. Will the UFBA still receive funding from FENZ?

Yes, Fire and Emergency New Zealand funding will be available to organisations wishing to provide free advocacy and support services, including the UFBA.

45. What will happen with the UFBA?

The only thing that has changed is UFBA is no longer referred to specifically in the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill. However, the Bill provides for funding for free advocacy and support services by Fire and Emergency New Zealand, and organisations including the UFBA, will be able to apply for that funding.

Honours & Awards

46. Will there be any change in honours and awards?

Work will need to be taken to see how the honours and awards policy can be extended across Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

Movement between roles

47. Has any thought been given to movement between volunteer/rural/career?

At this stage the Transition Project is focused on amalgamation and what is required for Day One. Work in relation to personnel moving between different parts of Fire and Emergency New Zealand would be considered as part of the organisational strategy work that will be completed after 1 July 2017.

48. Will there be an expansion in role to allow volunteers to join USAR?

There are volunteers who are currently members of the USAR team, as well as career firefighters, operational managers and external non-NZFS roles such as dog handlers, medics and engineers. Membership of USAR is based on skills and needs within the team, including the ability to function well as a unit, and maintenance of good physical and psychological health and fitness.

Carcinogen Project

49. Will the WCEP be affected by transition to FENZ?

The implementation of WCEP for current NZFS personnel will continue. As WCEP is a key way of minimising the work-related risks of absorption and inhalation of carcinogens from the products of combustion, extension of key parts of the programme across rural fire fighting activities will be considered.

Assets

50. What effect, if any, will the amalgamation have on the present appliance roll out process?

There is no change for the NZFS rollout process. In regards to rural a request has been made via the Principal Rural Fire Officers to give a high level condition report for fleet and equipment. This is to highlight any gaps in operational equipment that need to be fast tracked for early replacement.

Name

51. Where did FENZ come from?

52. Why is it not in line with other emergency services i.e. Fire & Emergency....?

53. Why was the word "Service" dropped?

Many matters were considered by Cabinet when considering the new name. These matters included:

- a name that looked different to the New Zealand Fire Service so as to signal the new organisation was just that; a new organisation
- while fire is a decreasing part of our operational responses, it is still the biggest single type of event we attend, and that needed to be reflected
- both rescue and emergency were considered, but numbers were the final deciding factor – our non-fire emergency work is a growth area; while rescues have remained pretty static
- it was considered that rescue work is part of our emergency work rather than the other way around; and
- obviously we are going to be a truly national organisation, and so the words New Zealand needed to be included.

The fact that the word 'Service' was no longer used was mostly because of the reason outlined in the first bullet point above. Having said that, there was never any thought that we do not provide a service to the communities and the public of New Zealand. We do, and will always provide that service, regardless of whether that particular word is in our new name.

Answers on the naming of FENZ are on the fenzproject.co.nz website under Toolkit/FAQs - <http://fenzproject.co.nz/faq> (see Q5).

Rural Firefighters

54. How do we get rural firefighters engaged in hazsub events?

For Day One, there is no plan (by the Transition Project) to train rural fire fighters on areas they are not currently trained on. From Day One hazardous substances reporting will be introduced but policies on Hazardous Substances are still being developed.

55. Will rural firefighters need to be training in wearing BA?

See answer above.

Branding

56. How will we be able to tell the difference between a rural and urban firefighter?

Please check the answer to question 3.

Physical fitness

57. Will rural and volunteer firefighters be required to attain same standards in PCA as career?

Work in this area will start after Day One. Detailed work will be needed to build on the high level agreement reached with operational management and unions and associations (prior to 1 July 2017) about the approach to the development of health standards. This will include assessments of physical fitness, physical health and psychological health. Clauses 28 to 31 in the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Bill will require a specific piece of work to develop and implement health standards for operational personnel.

This complex piece of work will involve working with Fire and Emergency New Zealand's senior operational managers and senior level union and association representatives to set the terms of reference and determine key aspects of developing the standards. Some of the many key questions to be addressed include: - will different roles need to meet different standards? How often will they be assessed? Who will undertake the assessments? How will information be managed? What support will be available if someone doesn't meet the standards? How long will someone be given to get up to the required standard if needed?

58. What happens to OSUs and others who cannot pass the physical?

As with the answer above, this covers two of the key questions to be considered within the large piece of work needed to establish and implement standards. What standards do different roles – including Operational Support Units – need to meet? What is the process if all or parts of the standards are not met?

Levy

59. What will the average increase in residential levies have to be to reach the \$191m to be repaid?

The New Zealand Fire Service consulted last year on a proposal to increase the rate of levy for the 2017/18 year as a result of amalgamating fire services around the country into one organisation. In that consultation, due to a combination of the additional costs, and the fact that the levy was going to be adjusted anyway as it wasn't meeting ordinary costs, we proposed to move the maximum rate of levy from \$76 to \$106 per annum, and contents from \$15.20 to \$21.20.

We didn't split these costs into what was FENZ-related and what was the element where NZFS income no longer met its expenses.

We will need to publicly consult on the rate of levy for the period when the new levy provisions in the legislation come into force. That's a bit different as there's a new levy base - which is much wider - and we are trying to set rates of residential, non-residential and motor vehicle levies to better match with their costs. The Department of Internal Affairs is also consulting on other aspects which will impact the new levy, including exemptions and levy relief. Regulations about these will need to be taken into account when the Board consults on a new levy rate. These factors are likely to result in different rates for different types of property.