



## The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Story

### Key messages – May/June 2017

*Firefighters do a great job already but their job is changing all the time. This new organisation – Fire and Emergency New Zealand – will give our firefighters the support they need to protect and help prepare their communities now and into the future.*

### ***Our firefighters do a great job but the demands on them are changing***

- Our people are highly trusted and respected, and we have a proud tradition of service stretching back over 150 years.
- New Zealanders know help is close at hand because our unique mix of career and volunteer firefighters allows us to cover the whole country.
- Career firefighters are based in the larger population centres and our volunteers, who make up 85% of our force, cover the country. They are backed by capable support and administration nationally and regionally.
- Originally firefighters just focused on fire. Now they do a whole lot more, such as responding to motor vehicle crashes, medical emergencies, hazardous materials spillages, storms, floods, earthquakes and a wide range of rescue situations.
- In addition to these extra demands and the ongoing fire risk, there are more extreme weather events, and the population is ageing and changing. This is changing the work we do and how we approach it.
- The current law, the organisations and funding have not kept up with these changes. Currently, we have 40 organisations (NZFS + Rural), that are unevenly funded and equipped, and can be difficult to coordinate.

### ***So we are updating New Zealand's fire and emergency services, how they operate and are funded***

- On 1 July, the law is changing to recognise the reality of the work our firefighters do in their communities.
- Firefighters will be funded for all this work, not just firefighting.
- We're bringing more than 14,000 people from 40 different organisations into one so everyone has equitable access to funding, equipment and the support they need to meet their community's needs.
- Everyone will transfer on their current terms and conditions.
- There will be no disruption to current services, and preventing and responding to emergencies will always be our number one priority.

### ***To build a fire and emergency service that delivers for communities, and the firefighters who serve them, now and in the future***

- On 1 July, we bring urban and rural firefighters together into Fire and Emergency New Zealand to make it easier for them to do what they do best.
- These are the biggest changes in a generation – so we're taking our time to do it right, and will work with our people, and our partners, to build the new organisation with their input over the next three years.
- From 2020, we will be a world-leading, integrated, well co-ordinated and resourced organisation delivering reliable service across the country that:
  - reduces unwanted fires
  - responds to fires and emergencies whenever and wherever they occur across the country
  - works with our communities so that they are ready and prepared for whatever comes their way
  - helps our communities recover quickly.

