

2021 Auckland Local Secretary's Report

2021 has been another year for the history books with several Covid-19 Alert level changes throughout the year locking us into station bubbles. Currently we are still suffering the impacts of Delta, locked into an Alert Level 3, step 1. We all look forward to the time when the station bubbles can be relaxed and we are free to work at other fire stations around Auckland and catch up with some mates.

Unfortunately for now the end is still some way off, and restrictions designed to protect our people remain in effect. The Local continues to regularly meet virtually with the District Managers to review our current policies and procedures, ensuring that they are still fit for purpose and updated to reflect the latest Ministry of Health recommendations.

Fire and Emergency has recently stood up Tranche 2, which has resulted in a unified Fire and Emergency service. Here in Auckland we are now made up of three districts comprising Waitemata, Auckland Central and Counties-Manukau, led by District Managers, supported by Group Managers.

The Local congratulates those career Senior Station Officers that have been recently promoted into several Group Manager positions throughout Tamaki-Makaurau. We look forward to working together in an open and productive manner, consulting on the many issues that are sure to arise in the coming years. Hopefully, once Alert Level restrictions allow, we can meet and greet in a more social setting.

With the expiry of the Collective Contract, Fire and Emergency and the Union are currently in the middle of bargaining. Many of the issues and remits that have been raised by members at past AGMs over the years have been formed into a list of claims that have been presented to Fire and Emergency. These claims have all been thoroughly drafted, researched and presented as a series of comprehensive collective claims.

Unfortunately, the bargaining process has been severely impacted by Covid, with all meetings now having to take place in a virtual setting. The inability to lock in times, and those times that are locked in restricted to two-hour blocks, has frustrated the process. In the spirit of good faith bargaining, the Union is continuing to push Fire and Emergency for more and longer bargaining sessions to help speed the process up. As we find out more information we will endeavour to keep members updated.

The Union hired its first Organiser this year, Jonathan Ring, who has taken up a lot of the individual cases that regularly come across the various Locals' desks. We look forward to being able to introduce the Auckland members to Jonathan once Alert Level restrictions allow. Jonathan, along with Wattie, has both been instrumental in presenting the Union's list of claims to Fire and Emergency during the bargaining sessions.

Next year in May are the Local Elections for the Committee, where all positions, President, Vice-President, Secretary and 10 committee members are up for contention. A Local is only as strong as its collective membership and we strongly encourage member participation. If you think that you have something to offer the Local and you want to be a strong advocate for NZPFU members, consider putting your hand up to stand in next year's elections.

There are still many issues on the table that need resolving; from Fleet, Equipment, PPE, Station Rebuilds, resourcing, staffing, all of which are priority issues. Unfortunately, many cannot be resolved at the drop of a hat, and all require extensive consultation and engagement. The membership can be assured that the Local continues to advocate strongly for the membership as a whole, Firefighters, Dispatchers, Trainers, Risk Advisors and more, on a daily basis.

With Christmas not too far in the future, we shall soon be saying goodbye, and good riddance to 2021 the year of Delta. Here is to 2022, a year of hope; hope for the end of Covid; hope for productive collective bargaining; hope for all NZPFU members and hope for a truly unified Fire and Emergency Service.