

Name: **Ryan Bothma** | Applying for: **Secretary, Central Branch** | Contact: **027 324 3388** | [ryan.bothma@fireandemergency.nz](mailto:ryan.bothma@fireandemergency.nz)

What an exciting few weeks in New Zealand. We find ourselves as one of the first countries to look like we have eliminated the Covid-19 virus, rugby is playing out in empty stadiums and now – election time for NZPFU. I am therefore writing this email to seek your support in my selection as Secretary of the Central branch of the NZPFU. My hope is this statement will give you a better understanding of my background, drivers and why I am deserving of your vote.

## **Background**

My name is Ryan Bothma and I have been with the fire service (now FENZ) for nearly 10 years. I qualified as an officer early last year, just a few months after welcoming my first child Harriet into the world. I am currently a senior firefighter on Red Watch, Newtown Station in Wellington and I have previously been stationed at Brooklyn, Porirua and Johnsonville. I also have wider connections across the central region – having grown up in Whanganui, gone to university in Palmerston North and my partner lived in Gisborne before moving to Wellington.

## **Relevant Experience**

I have been on the Wellington local committee for the past 8 years and during this time I have been involved in all aspects of our local, from assisting local committee members with their matters to working on individual projects that have had reach nationally. Currently I hold the PPE, station preference and PCA portfolios for the Wellington local union and I also assist in training at the weekend bootcamps for individuals who want to join FENZ.

## **Why I want the Role**

I originally got involved with the NZPFU as I believe there is strength in unity and wanted to use my abilities and knowledge to help shape and maintain the organisation. I was told when recruited that this is the best job in the world, and I want to make sure that holds true.

I have since realised that, unfortunately, we at local level are governed by those above us, and too often our voice is lost. I have become increasingly frustrated by a lack of transparency and consultation in major decisions such as how our organisation is run, how PPE and equipment / vehicles are procured and managed, how career staff are managed in terms of leave, sick leave etc and a general feeling of decisions being made behind closed doors by people who are not always best placed to make those decisions.

As many of you will know, my passion is PPE (well also the Sharks) but in the context of this election, PPE! I have spent much of this year working with several members, as well as with Area Management to draft a policy for alternative PPE as members have a right to expect gear that is fit for purpose and people are getting injured. Whilst I am proud of the traction we are getting, one of the main reasons I am running for the central branch is so that I have a stronger mandate to effect change.

## **What will I look to achieve as Secretary**

### ***A Strategic Approach***

If elected as your secretary, I will make it my primary purpose to create a strategic approach to how the local and central branches work together. I will work closely with each individual local to open a clear and transparent dialogue for assessing what the needs of the locals are and how best we can approach them together.

### ***Good Communication***

I will be the link between your locals and the national committee to cover what we, as NZPFU members have as priorities be it PPE, fleet, or any other pressing issues. I am wanting to make improvements to how information is communicated between members at a local, branch and national level and using the resources, our members, to assist wherever we can to provide a more knowledgeable and practical solution.

### ***Policy Changes***

We still have PPE that is unsafe to wearers. Over the past 7 years I have been working on various PPE related issues, starting with the F10 helmet and most recently the inability of FENZ to have supply alternate PPE. Whilst all issues have been case filed, evidenced, and raised at a local level, we are still struggling to get change and that is just not good enough. The current process needs review and I believe with the right approach, we can have a much louder voice at a national level to finally have this resolved.

Yet I am not a one trick pony. PPE is just one of many policy issues that need to be considered and I will ensure they get the attention they deserve.

## **Conclusion**

We need firefighter driven policy, not civilian driven policy without operational consultation. We also need action, not talk. I have the energy and drive to be your representative and ensure we achieve both.

I believe now is a time for us as a branch to look to the future, get our collective voices heard singing the same song, and shape the NZPFU as we need it to be for the next chapter. Times are not changing, they have changed, and we need a unified and open branch to shape our future as career firefighters. We need to be more creative when entering negotiations, blending the drive and ability of the branch with the balanced skills and knowledge of our locals helping to ensuring we can put forward well-structured arguments, and accurate, sound cases.

If elected I will stand by every statement I have made and be open to any questions or queries you may have. I do not have all the answers, but I will listen and do know together as a branch we can find them out. I hope I can count on your vote but please contact me on my details above if you would like to know anything else before the election and you make your decision.