

*Discussion Document only – Not Auckland Fire Region Policy*  
**A PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE THE PAID DISTRICTS OF AUCKLAND CITY  
EAST AND CENTRAL AUCKLAND**

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this paper is to promote discussion on a proposal to amalgamate the two paid Auckland Fire Districts of Auckland City East and Auckland City Central into one, and to consult with those staff affected by this proposal.

**2. Introduction**

Since my return to the Auckland Fire Region I have visited many staff including volunteers, paid stations and watches, CFO/DCFOs and support staff within the region. These visits have provided an opportunity for me to discuss many issues with staff at all levels and to form a view of what works well within the Region and what areas could benefit from change or improvement.

One of the most noticeable changes that has occurred in the time I have been away is the creation of 5 contiguous Fire Districts within the Region which are largely staffed by paid personnel. This structure, which has now been in place for approximately 8 years provided a sound platform for what has been the stabilization of the region after the somewhat less successful split into 13 Districts following the 1995 restructure. While benefits have been derived from this structure there have also been a number of less favourable outcomes.

**3. Current Structure**

It is quite noticeable how isolated each district has become and how different many of our standing operational and administrative processes have developed within the greater Auckland Brigade. Everything from standard appliance responses to differing levels of financial delegation within the region is apparent.

With regard to staff issues transferring across District boundaries is difficult within the current transfer policy limiting firefighters ability to gain operational experience in a range of areas such as specialist appliance crewing & operations and departmental work. Overtime is currently allocated to Firefighters within District boundaries, which also has the effect of limiting the exposure of Firefighters and Officers to colleagues in neighboring Districts not only from a networking point of view but also from a team building perspective also.

Training opportunities are limited with potential Officers unable to gain exposure to different environments and mentoring opportunities from different Officers. This is particularly apparent in Officer promotion interviews. There are also feelings of isolation by many staff within the Districts as a silo effect prevails between the operations of each District. More recruits, combined with the current overtime and transfer policies further reinforce the feeling of isolation.

The homegrown Policies and Procedures that have developed within Districts indicate large differences in cultures and operating systems across District boundaries.

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Of the five current Fire Districts the ACE Fire District is the most artificially created with no natural boundaries or logical division points. These points are accentuated by:

- not having any natural T/A affiliation of its own.
- No natural District HQ
- Only one specialist appliance, (Eilerslie 277)
- Few staff living within the district.
- And due to the high incidence of newer staff posted to the District over the past few years there is a high number of staff looking for inter-district transfers to enhance their experience levels.

To overcome the majority of issues outlined above more flexibility is needed to be able to give staff the ability to move around the greater Auckland Brigade and to gain from the unique opportunities that a Metropolitan brigade of this size offers.

When considering these aspects however, Region and District management must be mindful of the fact that many staff have gone to great lengths to be stationed closer to home due to the traffic congestion now experienced on the greater Auckland area and therefore any policies or procedures introduced to allow greater flexibility to move staff must be balanced with the ability to protect staffs wish to work close to where they reside.

Initiatives such as changing the start/finish times of Auckland staff to enable them to travel outside of peak travel times could be considered however these measures would clearly need to be the subject of extensive consultation with staff and their representatives.

#### **4. Proposed Structure**

To address the concerns raised above in a comprehensive manner the most logical solution would be to create one Fire District within the Region and sectorise it into zones or other such geographic divisions. This would then see current CFOs and DCFOs made responsible for Zones or Sectors within the greater district and give the flexibility needed to manage the brigade effectively. At this time however this is seen to be unachievable as there would be considerable political, industrial and legislative issues to address and overcome. For these reasons a more limited approach is then considered.

Due to the factors above it is proposed to amalgamate the Ace Fire District and the Central Auckland Fire District together. The proposed amalgamation will overcome many of the weaknesses outlined above and yet maintain responsibility and authority as close to the point of service delivery as possible.

Combining these two Districts together in their current form would create inequities in the span of control for CFO's therefore it is proposed that a review of current stations per district be undertaken at the same time. This proposal suggests the following stations be attached to each Fire District.

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<b>North Shore</b>	<b>Auckland Central</b>	<b>Waitakere</b>	<b>Manukau</b>
Takapuna	Parnell	Henderson	Papatoetoe
Birkenhead	Ponsonby	Glen Eden	Otahuhu
Devonport	Auckland City	Avondale	Otara
Albany	St Heliers	(Waitemata) Y	Papakura
East Coast Bays (Silverdale ) Y	Mt Wellington	(Titirangi) Y	Manurewa
	Ellerslie	TeAtatu <small>When complete</small>	Howick
	Remuera	Mt Roskill	Mangere
	Balmoral		Onehunga

**5. Amalgamation Issues:**

The amalgamation of any two boundaries raises organisational issues and the proposal above will be no different. Outlined below are the issues that will need to be considered and actions taken if the amalgamation is to proceed.

CFO and DCFO – ACE District positions

Considerations:

Currently the Auckland Region has 11 Senior Operational Uniformed Management positions at CFO and DCFO level, 10 of these are assigned to the 5 paid Fire Districts and 1 is assigned to Region as the Chief Fire Safety Officer. It is considered at this time that all of these positions are necessary to maintain an effective on call response structure for Command and Control purposes and to handle the large administrative workload associated with the running of the paid districts within a Metropolitan brigade.

While the above proposal would see the CFO and DCFO of ACE District displaced it is considered that these positions would be more effectively utilised at Region level to support the remaining Districts, as is the case with the Fire Safety position.

There are a number of areas that would benefit from the dedicated positions and it is proposed that an Operational Support Department be established which will oversee the following functions:

- The completion and maintenance of the Regions Tactical Plans.
- The development, review and updating of all local procedures.
- Oversight of the Incident Command Unit and data and staff familiarization of both.
- In conjunction with the CFO's the review of response zones and their boundaries and associated beatlists
- Provision of advice on firefighting water supplies and water risk classifications for buildings and developments.
- In conjunction with CFO's oversight of the Brigades operational readiness and capability on behalf of the Region Commander. (Training Exercises and Audits).
- Frontline Officer Development, training and mentoring.
- Oversight and coordination of staff rosters.

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Other issues that would need to be consulted on and worked through would be:

- District Boundary realignment and the stations allocated to each Fire District.
- Personnel station location and placement. (Staff are referred to the Transfers, Notification of Vacancies and Appointment Policy 5.6.3 which states “*where the Fire Service extends a Districts boundary, the Fire Service and the NZPFU may need to agree certain protections to ensure that employees are not required to transfer to stations beyond a reasonable commuting distance from their previous District boundaries.*”)
- The span of control created for the CFO’s and DCFO’s as a result of any realignment or amalgamation of District boundaries. (This will need to be discussed with individual CFO’s and the CFO & DCFO Society.)
- Realignment of station and District business plans.
- The strategic location and number of Senior Station Officers within the Auckland Districts to ensure adequate coverage is maintained for command and control purposes.

Required actions:

Please read the discussion document above.

Provide any feedback and comments to Auckland Region HQ by Friday May 26<sup>th</sup> 2006,

Attention: Fire Region Commander.  
District Amalgamation Feedback

Steve Turek  
28<sup>th</sup> April 2006