

I have recently read your Day 1 Leaders Guide as released by the NZPFU. I have also been involved in a few meetings regarding command and control on day 1.

As I come to read more literature promulgated by FENZ and look at the recently passed bill I am becoming concerned about the ever increasing volunteer tone. I wonder what increased training support there will be for career staff as we will be asked to continue to go to a wide variety of incidents that we are currently under trained for. How will FENZ rectify this? It seems all the additional funding gained from efficiencies has only been ear marked for volunteers despite the fact career resources deal with the vast majority of incidents responded to.

Currently at area level we struggle to get any funding to enhance FF'er training. We struggle to get car wrecks to even practice extrication skills; you have a vast number of fire fighters who never have the chance to go to NTC for any form of continuation training or skill enhancement simply because there is not the budget to do so. Training for medical calls is woefully inadequate and we are attending more and more of them. Career resources are being continually underutilised within their areas to promote volunteer turn outs, this despite the fact that career resources, in a lot of cases, can provide a quicker response for the NZ public. Will this become a growing trend under FENZ considering the mantra "that it is now a duty for Fire and Emergency New Zealand to recognise, respect and promote the contribution of volunteers"

I already feel like a 2nd class citizen working for the NZFS as a career fire fighter and it looks like under FENZ I will become a 3rd class one.

I hope you can prove me wrong!

Thanks for your email. I thought I'd write personally to answer the questions, as it was quite complex and has taken some time to research.

In essence, I'm aware that the emphasis given on increased support for volunteers and rural fire has raised questions about what this means for career firefighters.

While there's an emphasis on strengthening support for volunteers, it's written in the legislation and we must give effect to it. It is not at the expense of career firefighters and I know you're aware how seriously we're taking the role of career firefighters and how you are and will remain an essential part of Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

The volunteer initiatives, and the investment in rural, are a direct response to the findings from the Fire Services Review that resulted in new money being given to the new organisation to address under-investment in basic needs. We are not cutting into existing budgets to fund new initiatives or roles in these areas.

Overall, there's up to \$191 million in new funding over four years, which will help strengthen Fire and Emergency New Zealand as a whole. In the first year we will be developing the target operating model for the new organisation; that is, how we go about our business across every aspect, from strategy and processes to people and capabilities, and culture. It includes the integration of urban and rural boundaries, management structures, and the operation of command and control. It's from this work that investment decisions (from new and existing money) will be targeted to

other areas of the wider organisation. The concerns you raise about training would be one of the things that would be considered. It's recognised for example, that training needs to be fit-for-purpose for the risks firefighters face, and how these risk profiles differ across New Zealand. I'm wondering, if you're specifically interested in more detail on training, whether it would be good to talk to Wayne Mackey?

We will be running two additional recruit courses on top of the three already planned in the first year as Fire and Emergency New Zealand, to help sustain the people required. The organisation is also planning another round of tactical command courses.

The amalgamation means there will be new job opportunities for career firefighters as the organisation expands. We're increasing our responsibilities in hazardous subs and water rescue, and there will be new training and support roles available. Additionally, we'll be investing more in leadership development across Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

As part of strengthening the organisation as a whole, we are investing in the services that back up the workforce, so that personnel have the support and tools they need. The under-investment in rural and in volunteer support in many cases is below the standards the career workforce have. We need to address some of these gaps, as we need to be able to respond to all of the 4.5million Kiwis and the 3.2million tourists, wherever they may be in the country.

Over the last 12 months we've actively worked with the New Zealand Professional Firefighters Union and other unions and associations (over 650 workshops or events involving over 6000 people – it's been a mammoth effort and is a commitment to doing this together). I know it will never be perfect, but I'm sure you'll agree, we're all doing our best. On that note, I wish to say thanks personally to you for your involvement. We're going to keep this up over the next three years.

Safety, health and wellbeing (SHW) will continue to be a priority. We will be focusing on building a learning culture, supported by different delivery and resourcing, with more in-field SHW support. We're also replacing AERIK with a modern, fit for purpose safety, health and wellbeing IT system that will be more accessible and easier to use. We are aiming to roll this out before Christmas, with a good head wind.

Additionally, we're improving some of the systems people use every day, starting with the SMS incident reporting module and the intranet.

I know it's going to take time to increase understanding and build relationships between urban and rural, and volunteer and career firefighters. We're only at the start of that, but the intent is that all our personnel are treated with respect and fairly – there will be no second class, let alone third class citizens. This is a leadership role that we're looking to the likes of yourself to set the foundation for. We are how we act.

Finally, the role of career firefighters in serving our communities is as vital as it is strong and you will continue to be relied on for your strengths and expertise. It's our intent to build on this.

Cheers,

David

PS: I'm looking forward to catching up on the golf course after 1 July and hope that some of the boys can join me!



David Strong

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