

# Update from the Board



**1 July 2016**

Hi everyone

In exactly a year's time, Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) will formally come into operation. It's a good reminder we've got a lot to do in a relatively short time.

Our transition team is well under way with planning for that day. The team has moved into new office space on the ground floor of the New Zealand Fire Service HQ in Wellington. Its interim head is Joanna Collinge and we're hoping to announce a permanent Transition Director very shortly. The team will be focused on the successful establishment of FENZ. They've been selected for their sector knowledge and skills like asset or project management needed to deliver a job of this size. The team has about a dozen members right now, and that number will grow as momentum builds over the coming months.

## Stakeholder day

Next Thursday (7 July) the Board will host a stakeholder day in Wellington. Up to 160 people representing stakeholder organisations will meet to hear what progress has been made and what's planned ahead. We will use the opportunity to present a transition roadmap, the work programme and how people can be involved in the process. We're putting a lot of effort into this event because we want you involved in helping design the new organisation and how it will work for the benefit of all New Zealanders. We have a much greater chance of ensuring a smooth transition with your participation and input.

## Legislative update

Legislation to establish FENZ was introduced to Parliament yesterday and is expected to have its first reading next week. It will provide the legal framework needed to merge 40 organisations – more than 600 fire brigades and forces, 12,500 volunteers and 2,000 paid staff – into a single organisation. All New Zealanders will be able to have their say on the Bill when the Government Administration Committee calls for submissions. We'll let you know when that happens. Remember this is a parliamentary process, not a Board one.

## Transition Committee

Last week the Committee met to review the work programme across the areas of people, assets, technology, organisation process and design, and change management among others. More details will come out during next week's stakeholder day. The committee also looked at a programme of nationwide stakeholder meetings. This will include opportunities for brigades and volunteer rural fire forces to contribute their ideas over the next year.



## Board meeting

In response to feedback from sector groups, the Board has agreed the Transition Committee will be made up of three Board members and the Chief Executive. It has decided not have independent members on the Committee, but will seek advice from expert advisors from time to time. It also approved the 2016-17 capital works programme, most of which will go on property spending and fleet purchases.

As part of establishing FENZ, the Board is working on the new fire levy rate, which will take effect from 1 July next year. The current levy rate hasn't changed in eight years. There must now be public consultation on the rate. It's complex and uncharted territory, but by taking a direct and upfront approach, we are confident of navigating our way through this process without any hitches.

The Board also met NZPFU representatives. These meetings with key union and sector stakeholders are, as already indicated, critical to ensure we're on the right track in leading up to the establishment of FENZ.

## Looking ahead

This is going to be a busy period for all of us. There will be further updates on the stakeholder day, the legislative process and public consultation on the levy rate. We look forward to working with you on the exciting opportunities for everyone involved in the fire and emergency sector on behalf of our communities.

Regards,



**Paul Swain**

New Zealand Fire Service Board Chair