

Chairman's report 2013

Welcome to the "Forest & Rural Fires Association of New Zealand" Annual General Meeting 2013.

Start by reviewing the 2012/13 Fire Season

Looking back the 2012/13 fire season was one that we will remember for a long time.

An extreme summer that extended well into what we know as autumn, with extreme droughts covering the North Island and most of the South Island even the West Coast applied for drought relief.

At the world wildfire conference in 2011 it was predicted that summers & winters would be longer and spring & autumn shorter, is this what's happening global?

Seasonal fire fighting teams or Rapid Attack Crews were deployed to Great Barrier Island, Wairarapa and Northland with overseas deployments to Tasmania (first ever) and Victoria Australia.

In my first chairman's report back in 2006 I had written,

- The 2005/06 summer was one of the windiest I could recall with along with low rainfall.
- Major Wildfires in Northland, Wairarapa, Marlborough & Southland,
- May being one of the wettest with Floods in the lower North Island.
- Snowfalls throughout Otago, Canterbury and Central North Islands

Not much has changes in fact most years we have droughts & floods & snowfalls, training to adapt to these extreme weather events is our challenge.

After Eight years in the chair and many more on the management committee I have decided to step aside to let new and younger blood take over.

During my time I have been involved with four Study tours to Australia visiting four states. A total of 47 volunteers were hosted by emergency services on these tours Queensland 2003, New South Wales & Australian Capital Territories 2005, Western Australia 2008 & Tasmania 2010.

These tours were supported and funded by a grant from the Minister of Internal Affairs.

During my time a in the chair I've seen six Ministers, George Hawkins who instigated these study tours, Rick Barker, Dr Gerald Worth, Nathan Guy, Amy Adams & Chris Tremain.

Two NZ Fire Service CEO's Mike Hall & Paul Baxter of the NZFS and changes to all five members of NZ Fire Service Commission.

I feel that after eight years it's time to step down, management in organisations and business need to change to keep organisations vitalised.

We have excellent people keen to put their names forward for the committee replacing members who have been on the committee for many years.

Scoping the future of FRFANZ

At last year's conference Annemarie Desmond the consultant hired to review FRFANZ's future interviewed several industry related people.

The majority were very positive and Bob Francis NZFS Commission suggested we present our findings to the full Commission plus requesting finance to assist with the scoping project through a paid part time administrator.

Annemarie, Kevin Ihaka (Project leader) and myself meet with the commission and NRFO, although they were impressed with our presentation they were firm in their decision they would not be offering any funding.

This was a huge disappointment considering the money invested by the NZFS Commission in other NZ Fire Associations UFBA and NZFS Institute of Engineers tens of thousands of dollars per annum.

Commission Chairman Wyatt Creech recommended we do the presentation to the NRFA Advisory Committee which I did in March. The main benefit was explaining to advisory members who FRFANZ is and what we are here for.

“The aim of FRFANZ (as stated in our constitution) is to improve and promote the effectiveness of rural fire operations in NZ”.

We are struggling to achieve this if the Commission’s representative don’t see value in attending our committee meetings.

FRFANZ although representing some 3,000 members majority volunteers, don’t even get invited the annual Rural Fire Districts chairpersons conference.

FRFANZ Committee

Five committee meetings were held during the year. At each meeting we invite the NZFS Commission to send a representative along to update us on what’s new.

We have had no representatives turn up during the last year which is extremely disappointing.

Finances

With our annual financial turnover exceeding the GST threshold it was recommended FRFANZ be GST registered. This is underway and we have also moved to internet banking and purchased the accounting system MYOB.

With the launch of Helen Beagleholes book “Fire in The Hill” FRFANZ purchased 100 books at 40% of recommended retail price. Sixty have been sold at end of June.

Other

Committee members sent Submissions and/or attended meetings for the following,

- NRFA draft Position Descriptions for CIMS teams
- NZ Fire Services Review
- Minister of Education supporting Emqual becoming a standards setting body
- Minister of Education Review of funding for Emergency Management Volunteer Training.
- Attendance at the Emqual AGM
- NRFA Advisory committee (scoping project)
- NZFS Commission special meeting (scoping project)

Competitions

Financial support was given to Lake Coleridge VRFF to hold the Canterbury Regional Wajax competitions. Teams from outside Canterbury were invited to participate as part of our support package.

With the dwindling number of teams registering for the National Wajax competitions we changed the date from November to March with Wainuiomata VRFF offering to be the host. This didn't have the desired effect with very poor interest shown.

Due to the low number of registrations Wainuiomata committee cancelled the event two weeks out. There were several teams preparing to attend but hadn't bothered registering they lodged complaints but are not prepared to assist with planning or notify the organisation in advance.

At this stage we have no interest for Nationals in 2013 and I thank Phill for taking on the task of collecting the trophies.

Services to members & thanks to Committee.

- Gavin Wallace: continues to sell Bar's & medals and has designed a 50 year medal after enquires from members. Gavin updates the website with regular happenings so if you have any news let him know.

Thanks Gavin for the years of dedication you have put in. Gavin is stepping down this year.

- Morrie Geenty: (co-opted) has continued handling the clothing sales.
- Isabella Clark-Mulchers: Secretary/treasurer she coordinates all correspondence, accounts & minutes while trying to keep up with her day job.
- Kevin Ihaka: Project leader FRFANZ direction into the future.
- Elton Smith: 2013 Queenstown Conference liaison.
- Bruce Kitto: Submission co-ordinator.
- Dave Jack: Training & unit standards reviews. Dave is stepping down thanks Dave for the valuable work over the years.
- Phill Wishnowsky: National Competitions trophies coordinator.
- Don Scott: submissions
- Mark Boere: NZFS Liaison.
- Lance Johnston: submissions and VRFF's liaison.
- Te Aroha Cook: FRFANZ member on Emqual Board.

2013 Conference

Thanks to NZFS Commission for the grant assistance to VRFF members. This takes financial pressure of individuals and is an incentive for them to attend the Conference.

With registrations approaching 180 this is well above our record of 164 in Dunedin 2011.

A very special thank you to Sue, Gordon, Mike, Jamie, the Conference Committee and those many hard working individuals behind the scene, we know from Invercargill in 2005 that your Conference will take some beating.

I move "My report to the 2013 AGM be accepted"

Doug Ashford

Chairman

FRFANZ.