



Forest & Rural Fires Association of New Zealand.

Chairman's Report AGM 2009

5th August 2009

Welcome to "Forest & Rural Fires Association of New Zealand" Annual General Meeting 2009.

The past year has been a very sad one for New Zealand fire fighters,

The death of Ray Barrett, Controller of Hicks Bay VRFF and Barry Keen, Willowby VRFF. These men were stalwarts' of their communities and have left a large gap that will take years to fill.

We must remember our fellow Fire Service Fire Fighter Derek Lovell who lost his life at the Tamahere Cool store fire last April.

The passing of long serving FRFANZ member, Committee Member Bill McCabe.

Off shore there have been over 46 Forest Fire Fighter deaths during the past year, 19 during the 2008 North American season and already 9 for 2009, 13 in Chile February, Spain 5 and Turkey 2 last month.

I now ask that we stand for a moments silence as a respect to these fallen hero's.

2008/09 Fire Season

Our 2008/2009 year was one of interesting events, short periods of drought, a couple a days of extreme temperatures on the East Coast, a cool February, early Autumn and very long cold winter.

There were the usual small number of vegetation fires occurring around the country with a couple of large ones in East Coast, Nelson and Southland.

Across the Tasman our Australian friends were battling devastating bush fires in Victoria and Floods in NSW and Queensland.

A Deployment to California in July 2008 was earlier that normal and it appeared the USA season has started with vengeance and could be an extremely long season, however the rest of the US didn't experience the same extreme conditions there fore not requiring outside assistance and our deployment returned after their 30 day period.

In Australian Victoria as we all know had a complete disaster with a great loss of live on Black Saturday.

New Zealand sent over two deployments of fire fighters and Operational staff totaling over a 100 personal.

FRFANZ sent condolence to our Victorian freinds.



Conference

Fire & Rescue Service Industry Training Organization (FRSITO) are again our major Conference sponsor and we thank them for their generosity.

I ask that you repay them by attending their first Conference this October, the “FRSITO Australasian Emergency Management Training Conference 2009” in Rotorua.

Regional Rural Fire Committee

I attended the Regional Rural Fire Committee Chairpersons Conference in June as an observer.

There were 18 remits and several presentations, several will be presented and our conference over the next two days.

I found the conference well worth the time and I hope FRFANZ will be invited in future years.

Department of Internal Affairs review

After several unsettling years with Labour’s Minister of Internal Affairs wishing to merge Fire Services, the new National Minister Dr Worth announced the Fire Services review was a non event and he wished to support and build moral with rural sector who had been unsettled under the previous Ministers plans.

Gavin Wallace and myself visited the Minister late January to introduce him to FRFANZ. We found him to be very approachable and listened to our presentation.

He vision was for larger and more professional driven Rural Fire Districts and asked for support from FRFANZ.

He stated he would support further FRFANZ Study Tours for Volunteer Rural Fire Force members in future years and believed they had positive returns.

The Minister asked FRFANZ for nominations for the Fire Service Commission and we put forward two names

- Kerry Elem, ex NZ Forest Owners and Forest Manager Selwyn Plantation Board.
- Tim King, Chairman Waimea Rural Fire Authority, Deputy Mayor Tasman District Council and Member of NRFA Advisory Committee.

Unfortunately Dr Worth has departed office and it appears the new Minister Nathan Guy is following a similar direction. We will know later this morning.

NZFSC: When the NZ Fire Service Commission offered UFBA registered Rural Fire Forces NRFA Grant Assistance to attend the UFBA Conference our members were outraged FRFANZ instructed the Secretary to write to NRFA outlining the unfairness of this action. A second letter was later sent direct to the Fire Service Commission.

The result is NRFA Grant Assistance is now available for all Registered VRFF to attend the FRFANZ Conference, their Conference.

As Chairman I would like to thank the Commission for there generous assistance.



Web Site

Gavin Wallace our Web page editor puts an incredible amount of time in scrounging news for the site. He needs your input to keep the web page current and news worthy.

Several people have sent a brief on their Fire Districts and Rural Fire Forces. We encourage more of you all to do the same.

We are members of FRFANZ because we have the same interests and like to hear about what's happening in some one else's patch, so send Gavin half a page from your area and be surprised by the knowledge you receive in return.

One of the regular features is the upgrading of the Rural Fire Fleet helped by the continued supply of new Rural Appliances by the NRFA. 36 to date.

Its encouraging to see Local Authorities, Rural Fire Authorities and Volunteers units working together to achieve this.

FRFANZ Clothing

Clothing issues developed during the year with the manufacture not being able to source the same type of material as in the past, your Secretary has been working with the supplier to find a similar product.

After many years of debating rural clothing standards for Rural Fire Fighters NRFA have endorsed the FRFANZ uniform with their shoulder patches. If your local Fire Authority wishes to have shoulder patches other than NRFA approved then a request to FRFANZ Committee is needed as they are trademarked.

A letter explaining protocol will be sent out with all clothing purchases.

FRFANZ Clothing can be purchased by contacting the Secretary or ordered through the web site.

PEOPLE

Bob Mutch: Many of you will remember Bob Mutch guest speaker at the 1993 Conference in Nelson. His presentation was on Fire Fighter Safety.

In 2008 Bob's received the International Association of Wildland Fire Safety Award for his contributions to wildland fire safety over the past 38 years.

A letter of congratulations was sent.

National Diplomas: During the past 12 months, Te Arohanui Cook and Rachael Thorp completed their "National Diploma in Fire & Rescue Services (Vegetation Management) Level 5" congratulations' to you both well done you join a select band of Rural Fire personnel.

Membership: 29 individuals 15 VRFF's and 2 companies have been removed from the membership list. This could be though individual members joining through their VRFF or



Fire Authority., several have moved overseas and a couple of VRFF's have changed to NZFS Brigades.

Only two of the VRFF's belong to the UFBA

2008 Wajax Competitions

My thanks to all those members who put in so much time and effort in organizing and participating in the 2008 Wajax competitions in Blenheim.

As referee I had my share of disagreements to sort out but a thoroughly enjoyable day was had by all,

FRSITO sponsored vests were used and helped identify each judge.

FRSITO allocated \$3,000.00 to assist a team from each Region to travel to the National Wajax Competitions along with \$3,000.00 from FRFANZ.

This travel assistance was greatly appreciated by those teams who received it.

This travel assistance is available towards 2009 teams travel costs.

On behalf of FRFANZ and its members I would like to thank FRSITO for their generous sponsorship and support on the day.

The Committee would like to introduce a third run to the competitions rather than running two events the same, If you have any ideas please let the committee know.

I trust you will all be in Rotorua this November for the 2009 competitions.

FRFANZ Study Grants

FRFANZ has arranged three Volunteers Rural Fire Force tours over the last six years Queensland, NSW/ACT and Western Australia.

Of the 36 participants 29 were volunteers.

These study tours were subsidized by a Grant from the past Minister of Internal Affairs Hr George Hawkins.

FRFANZ have funding for individual members to travel and those wishing to do so need to apply in writing with a case to the committee.

Timaru Organizing Committee

Thank to the Timaru Organizing Committee, Liz , Robbie, the Timaru DC, and all the support staff for their driving force behind this conference.



FRFANZ Management Committee held five meetings throughout the year and I would like to thank the delegates and their employers for their time.

- Te Arohanui Cook
- Don Scott
- PhilWishnowsky
- Mark Donaldson
- Elton Smith
- Kirby MacLeod
- Stuart Anderson,
- Gavin Wallace thanks for the devotion to the web site. Its 20 years of since Gavin produced the first “Rural Fire Fighter” for FRFANZ.
- Morrie Geenty for his dedication as Secretary and Treasurer.
2009 is Morrie’s 21st year as your loyal Secretary and 16th as Treasurer.
- Pat Townsey not a committee member but behind the scenes she is the receiving point for FRFANZ business plus all the typing and handling of our correspondence.

And finally thank you all for attending this morning and the next two or three days, with out you we won’t be able to hold these conferences.

I move “My report to the 2009 AGM be accepted”.

Doug Ashford
Chairman
FRFANZ

