

Welcome to the 2007 AGM

It is with sadness that I have to start this report with the lost of Murray Simpson. Murray was a FRFANZ committee member who promoted the association with passion. Murray passed away suddenly on 7th July. He will be remembered by many of you from his Forest Service Days at Kaingaroa Forest, Tutor at Waiareki Institute of Technology and lately as The Principal Rural Fire Officer for Western Bay Moana Rural Fire District. He will be missed by all who worked with and was associated with his cheerful nature.

Can we have a moment's silence in memory of Murray please?

A group of Senior Forestry Fire Control Officers meet in 1986 and formed FRFANZ. It was incorporated on 2nd February 1987 making this its 21st year. It wasn't until August 1991 that FRFANZ held its first Conference replacing the Ministry of Forests fire prevention conferences, making this the 16th FRFANZ Conference.

The 2006/07 year was one of major milestones

The Fire season was shaping up to be like the summer of 2005/06 season. With several vegetation fires early spring, then the rain came in October, and stayed through until mid January. Northland is an exception with several vegetation fires causing major asset loss to forests owners.

Other big events over the past 12 months were the deployments offshore, first with 28 Rural Fire Fighters to the Northwest USA in August-September 2006. These fire fighters were tasked as Divisional Commanders and Aircraft Managers. The second deployments were to Victoria (Australia) in December and January 112 in total doing the hard yards on the fire ground.

This years Conference theme "**Wildland Fire Training for Global Co-operation**" is to capitalize on the New Zealand deployments to USA and Victoria (Australia) December 2006 January 2007. With specialist guest speakers Bob Del Monte USA, Liam Fogarty Australia; many of you will already know Liam from his time with Fire Research Institute in Rotorua and Liaison officer in the US for the Australian deployment. Liam was also liaison officer for Department of Environment & Sustainability looking after the welfare of New Zealand, Canadian and US fire fighters deployed to Victoria in December and January. Our third overseas speaker is Petteri Vuorinen a specialist from FOA a division within the United Nations. I ask that you all give these guests a very special welcome. One they will remember and want to return to with their families in future years.

These deployments while assisting our overseas friends also add strength and experience to our resources here for the future. Valuable lessons have been taught by this experience both for fire authorities and fire fighters alike. Every person going offshore is representing the New Zealand Rural Fire Community and our hosts and the general public judge the rest of us on their behaviour and comments. Each individual is an ambassador for the National Rural Fire Authority, Rural Fire Districts, Local Authorities and their home organization.

Department of Internal Affairs review

The Minister has traveled the country consulted with Fire Authorities, gathering the views of stakeholders and is now digesting the latest submissions (364) on the Fire Services Review. Its encouraging to see 18 Volunteer Rural Fire Forces, 20 Rural Fire Authorities/Committees sent in submissions as well as individual members. We wait with interest for the next move and hopefully will find out today the direction of these last submissions. The Ministers visit to the Victoria fires would have show Rural Fire Fighters at their best and it will be interesting to see what impact this trip would have on his vision. FRFANZ's submission is on our web and the Department of Internal Affairs site.

Web Site

Gavin Wallace our Web page editor was busy over the summer holidays revamping and upgrading the site. He puts an incredible amount of time in scrounging news for it. During the year several Principal Rural Fire Officers sent information on their Fire Districts and Rural Fire Forces. We encourage more of you to do the same. We are members of FRFANZ because we have the same interests and like to hear about what's happening in your patch so send Gavin half a page from your area and be surprised by the knowledge you receive in return.

People on the move.

Several key fire management people retired during the year:

Alan Flux	retired from the West Coast to part time work in Auckland
Colin Smithies	NRFA.
Allan Gamble	PRFO Thames Coromandal Rural Fire District.
Mike Rogers	DOC Nelson Marlborough Conservancy Fire Manager
Colin Michie	ex PRFO Tasman District Council

FRFANZ wish these members all the best in their retirement or new employment we all look forward to hearing of life without pagers and phone calls at all hours of the day and night.

2006 Wajax Competitions

My thanks to all those members who put in so much time and effort in organizing and participating in the 2006 Wajax competitions at Waipara North Canterbury and trust you will all be in Lower Hutt for the 2007 competitions.

Fireworks

Another November 5th behind us and once again we see and hear of damage caused to property and injuries to the public by a few who have no respect for other peoples property. With the restricted selling period to the public, people are buying and storing for future events. Many of these occasions are during the summer and have been responsible for many vegetation blazes. FRFANZ is against the selling of fireworks to the general public and support the use only at organized events.

4th International Wildland Fire Conference "Wildfire 2007" Seville Spain

Thanks to the FRFANZ travel grant I was able to attend the 4th International Wildfire Conference in Seville Spain during May 2007. Held every four years it a global forum for managers, politicians, researchers and professionals from all over the world where they can analyze key issues in forest fire prevention and control. With 1531 delegates from 88 countries and 5 continents and over 450 presentations it was a conference of true International status. New Zealand can be proud of its representation with five delegates in attendance.

During 2000 over 350 million hectares were destroyed by wildfires globally and interesting to see that the majority of presentations were singing from the same song sheet. World wide the issues are the same:

- ❑ 90% of fire is human intent, social behavior, often fire is deliberate.
- ❑ Climate change, Global warming is having major affect on vegetation growth resulting in an increasing risk of wildfires.
- ❑ Wildfires are increasing around the world in size and severity.
- ❑ Countries are increasing their rural fire management resources to meet the challenge of wildfires.
- ❑ Wildfire Prevention relies on community involvement by those who manage the land.
- ❑ Wildfire management is evolving away from single agency, single tenure models to wider landscape approaches.
- ❑ Wildfire is responsible for 20% of global emissions, 2nd leading cause of global warming.

After Spain I visited Greece where the Greece Fire Service took over responsibility for forest fire from the Greece Forest Service in 1998. Greece has a land area 130,875 km² (NZ 268,000). Total number of fires in 2000 was 14,650 with over 55,988 hectares burnt.

Greece Fire Service resources:

- ❑ 10,000 permanent and 4,000 seasonal fire fighters.
- ❑ 1,100 fire trucks and 200 support vehicles.
- ❑ 59 fixed wing and rotary aircraft.

I will cover the 4th Wildfire conference and Greece in my presentation in a paper later in the conference. But I will say from my experience New Zealand Rural Fire Management is up there with the best and well ahead of the majority.

Finally I would like to thank the committee members Te Aroha, Murray, Don, Gary and Ian for their time and support over the past year with special thanks to

Mark for his work organizing this Conference.

Stuart for his work on the membership flyer and poster.

Morrie for his dedication to the Secretary/Treasurer role.

Gavin for his devotion to news and the web site.

Also Bill McCabe who attends our meetings with updates on training.

I would like to move “my report to the 2007 AGM be accepted”.

Doug Ashford
FRFANZ Chairman