



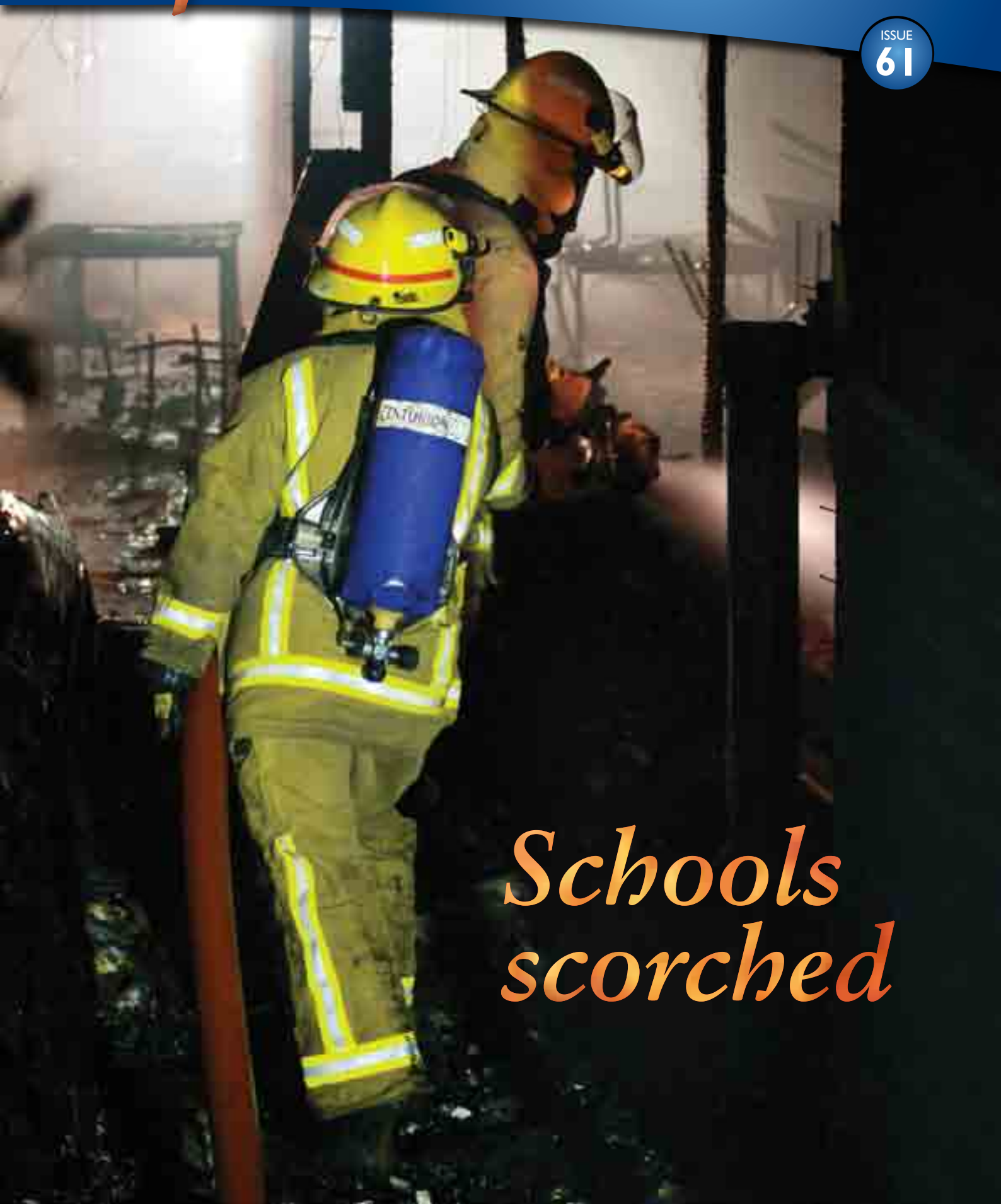
August 2010

# fire & rescue

The New Zealand Fire Service Magazine

ISSUE

61



## *Schools scorched*

Fire & Rescue is the flagship publication of the New Zealand Fire Service.

It is produced by Media, Promotions and Communications, National Headquarters, Level 9, 80 The Terrace, Wellington.

*Front cover:* Firefighters attend a fire at Mangere East Primary School, Auckland, New Zealand, Monday, June 07, 2010. Photo: NZPA

*Back cover:* Just off the assembly line, a Type 4 proudly wears the new Fire Service fleet colours.

## Contributions to Fire & Rescue

We welcome ideas for articles, news and events that would be of interest to other Fire Service staff and volunteers. Draft articles and photos (pictures need to be at least 1MB) can be emailed to [fire.rescue@fire.org.nz](mailto:fire.rescue@fire.org.nz) or contact the editor Karlum Lattimore on 04 496 3702.

Post written material and photos, or photo CDs to:  
Fire & Rescue magazine,  
PO Box 2133, Wellington.  
(These will be returned on request.)

Fire & Rescue is online at:

[www.fire.org.nz](http://www.fire.org.nz)

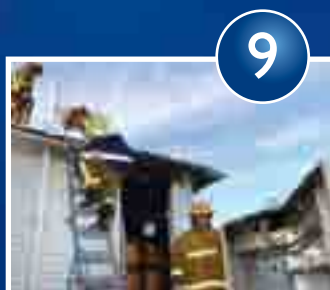
New Zealand Government

ISSN: 1176-6670

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# Air support

*The Aoraki/Mt Cook industrial brigade recently joined forces with volunteers from Twizel, Tekapo, Fairlie and Omarama brigades to test their response plan for a large fire at the Hermitage Hotel. The plan includes flying in replacement crews with BA from Tekapo and uses appliances from Aoraki/Mt Cook, Tekapo and Twizel.*

After the exercise.

A major fire at the iconic Hermitage Hotel would have a massive impact on local livelihoods and the region's tourism industry.

"The nearest brigade is Twizel which is about 45 minutes at least away. Tekapo is even further so flying in firefighters with BA would provide quicker support to the 14 BA-trained firefighters in our industrial brigade," said the Officer in Charge of the industrial brigade and local Department of Conservation Manager, Richard McNamara. The industrial brigade is managed by DOC and made up largely of DOC staff and people from local businesses.

It was the first time the four brigades had held a joint exercise at Mt Cook. Under the exercise scenario there was a major fire on the ninth floor of the hotel with people reported missing in smoke-filled tunnels beneath the building. The exercise tested the hotel's evacuation procedures and the brigades' search and rescue skills, as well as their ability to respond crews by air. Senior officers from the participating brigades were also given a workout on incident management team techniques.

Richard McNamara said: "One of the key points of the plan we wanted to trial was flying in four firefighters with their BA gear from Tekapo. Using the local tourist airline, Air Safaris, they took just 30 minutes from the time the siren went to arrival at Mt Cook."

He said the hotel's managers were grateful for the chance to see all the systems in action and to see everything work so successfully.

"As an industrial brigade it is important we keep our competency and currency up, given the level of risk in such a remote location. It's reassuring to know that we could manage a large-scale event if we had to," he said.

South Canterbury Area Manager Paul Henderson, who took part in the exercise, said it was an outstanding success and he hopes to repeat it every two years or so. "The Hermitage Hotel is in a fairly unique situation as it provides sleeping accommodation for a large number of people in a very isolated area. Flying in the crews proved the value of using aircraft to provide faster support.



Tekapo volunteer Murray Cox prepares to board the plane to Mt Cook.

"I come from the UK where it is almost always possible to get 20 appliances in attendance within 20 minutes. So it was a bit of an eye opener to encounter such a large risk in such an isolated place. As a result, staff in the South Canterbury area have been working hard to improve the cooperation and liaison between ourselves and the industrial brigade and this exercise was the culmination of that."

Paul wondered if there were other places in New Zealand, such as Milford Sound, where a similar arrangement may be useful.

# School alert

*A recent spate of school fires, many of them arson, has led to a renewed push to alert schools to the simple steps they can take to reduce their risk of fire.*

The most serious fires were at Kerikeri High School and Mangere East Primary School. In both cases several classrooms were damaged and teenagers were held responsible. Other fires included one that burned the wall of a classroom at a Nelson school, rubbish bins were set alight in two Masterton schools and playground equipment was burned in a Taradale school.

Fire Risk Management and Arson Reduction Manager Peter Wilding took advantage of the sudden focus on school fires to create a one-page leaflet that provided fire prevention advice to schools. The leaflet was sent out by the Principals' Federation to all schools in New Zealand.

"Firefighters are called out to about seven school fires a month for most of the year and this goes up to about 10 a month in October, November and December. And schools are four times more likely than other buildings to be targeted by fire-setters," he said.

While sprinklers are the best way to limit the amount of fire damage, the leaflet offers advice on simple, low-cost steps to improve fire safety and reduce the likelihood of arson.

They include keeping rubbish bins and skips well away from outside walls, installing and increasing security lights, taking action when children are seen lighting fires or when small fires are lit in and around schools.

This action would include educating all pupils about the consequences of fire. We also advise schools to confront fire-setting behaviour and to contact the Fire Awareness Intervention Programme (FAIP) 0800 FIREINFO for further advice.

The leaflet also warns schools to watch for an increase in vandalism and graffiti as this is often a precursor to fire-lighting.

The leaflet is available on FireNet under Fire Risk Management Promotions/downloadable resources, or contact Peter Wilding for a copy.



Tahunanui School Principal Paul Drummond wonders why someone would try to burn down one of his classrooms. Photo: Nelson Mail.

# Hato Pāora College leads

*An initiative to get students involved with fire safety in their school has been introduced to Hato Pāora College by Manawatu Area Commander Mitchell Brown.*



From left: Cheltenham volunteer fire brigade Station Officer Murray Casey, Hato Pāora Principal Debra Marshall-Lobb, Braydon Haimona-Young, Mitchell Brown, Cheltenham Senior Station Officer Ian Corbett and Māori Liaison Officer Te Aorangi Harrington.

As part of the Kaitiaki Ahi (Guardian of Fire) project, students are invited to take responsibility for monitoring fire risk management practices at the college and helping protect themselves and the other students. The Cheltenham volunteer brigade and Fire Service area staff also provide fire risk management advice and support on everything from evacuation drills to alarm maintenance.

The initiative arose out of discussions between Mitchell and the college Principal, Debra Marshall-Lobb. Mitchell hopes it will be copied by other Māori schools and marae throughout the county.

“It is important for people to take leadership roles when it comes to fire risk management.” He hopes to see a large number of boys apply for roles as Guardians of Fire within the school.

The project was launched at the school recently when Mitchell presented a commendation certificate to 13-year-old Braydon Haimona-Young at a school assembly.

Braydon was asleep in his dormitory at around 4.40am on Thursday 27 May when he was woken by strange noises. When he went out to investigate he found part of the building was on fire.

He woke up his dorm parent who immediately raised the alarm, evacuated the dorm, sent boys to meet the firefighters and sent other boys to evacuate the neighbouring dorm.

Everyone was accounted for and safely in the school gymnasium within 10 minutes – an evacuation described by Mitchell as ‘picture perfect’.

As well as congratulating Braydon and the other students involved, Mitchell presented the college with the first New Zealand Fire Service Kaitiaki Ahi fire helmet.

# Seamless rescue saves teen

*An almost magical mix of teamwork, skill and luck helped crews save the life of a Christchurch teenager, trapped when a container fell from a truck onto her car.*

Sockburn Senior Station Officer John Baxter said the accident happened at 7.30am just as the watches were about to change. “The crash happened virtually in front of Jeff Taylor who was on Sockburn’s Green Watch and heading into work. He phoned the Comcen and began mapping the scene for us so we could begin planning our extrication on the road.”

The young woman was crushed with severe leg and abdominal injuries while her arm was pinned against the steering wheel.

Sockburn Blue Watch and Harewood responded. As soon as they arrived John knew he was in for a major job and called for a second PRT (pump rescue tender)

Photo: Christchurch Press



from City Station. Additional heavy lifting equipment was also requested from the USAR (Urban Search and Rescue) base at Woolston.

“The crews that were on scene included some of the most experienced and skilled PRT guys in the Christchurch Brigade and their work at the incident was incredible. They really showed the value of our regular extrication technique training,” said John.

“As soon as we got there Jeff Taylor joined us and the Harewood crew helped with the placement and set up of air bags under the container and the car. We only had



our two 20 tonne bags as we were on a relief tender and didn't have all our rescue gear,” he said.

Christchurch set up a tirfor block for an alternative release method and laid out a second staging sheet with their hydraulic extrication equipment for use on the driver side of the vehicle.

“We wanted to get enough lift from the airbags to be able to tirfor the car from under the container and then do a normal extrication. But it was clear really quickly that the weight was just too much and the container sides started to buckle. There must have been well over 30 tonnes of wood in the container. We needed a crane.

“Usually you could expect it to take at least 40 minutes to get a crane through traffic to an accident like this but by an extraordinary piece of luck, one was on the road just a few minutes away when we called.

“The Titan crane driver was superb. We needed him to lift the container straight up and to the right without moving it even a millimeter to the left and he did it to perfection. We had already made two cuts on the car's A pillar and one on the B pillar and forced the car roof back which took off a lot of weight and made it easier for the young woman to breathe. As soon as the container was lifted we made the final cut on the driver's side and ambulance staff did a 'snatch and go'.”

John said the extrication was far from the “click and flick” he had anticipated. “But it was seamless. Police, Fire and Ambulance crews all worked extremely well together and all the different Fire crews just meshed together, got on with the job and kept looking for solutions when different issues came up.”

Christchurch Area Manager Dan Coward said: “This accident happened on one of Christchurch's classic cold mornings, in peak hour traffic and on one of our busiest main roads. The decision-making, scene management and communication with all agencies were a credit to the crews and officers who attended. It was an impressive example of comradeship, skill and our ability to adapt.”



# Winter is a fire season

*So far this winter at least two people have died and dozens of homes have been destroyed or badly damaged by fires caused by electrical overloading, clothing being dried too close to heaters, careless disposal of ash and embers and so on.*

Our in-house statistician Neil Challands has gone through the figures and discovered some interesting winter-related numbers which may help when you are talking fire safety with the public over the next few months.

Each year we are called to about 130 fires caused by overloading equipment. In general there are about eight of these a month in the summer and almost double that number in winter. It is likely high wattage heaters and electric blankets are to blame for this winter peak. The fires generally occur in the meter board, its wiring or fixtures.

Our 'metre from the heater' advice is based on sound data – each year we're called to around 60 fires caused by clothing and other combustibles being left too close to a heater. Almost all happen in winter.

We're also called to around 60 fires a year that originate in ovens and their fume extractors.



This rises by about three a month in winter compared with other seasons. This may be due to the build up of grease not being cleaned off before the family menu changed to hearty dishes needing several hours of cooking.

Poorly installed log burners result in about 40 fires per year, nearly all during winter, while electrical failures average nearly 450 calls a year. There are twice as many electrical failures in July and August than in November and December.

And finally, the perennial and persistent callouts to careless disposal of ash or embers. We get around 80 a year, almost all of them in winter. So far there have been more than 20 which have totally destroyed someone's home.



Station Officer Dave Ion (front) used the fire to talk about the safe way to dispose of hot ashes. Photo: Gisborne Herald.

# Winter warning stories

*Each year, over 25 homes are burned to the ground after the ashes of a log burner or other type of heating fire were not safely disposed of.*

Most winters, firefighters respond to around 80 fires that were ignited by hot ashes or embers and most of these fires cause significant damage.

And then there are the close calls. In Invercargill this winter, one family is still thanking their smoke alarm for waking them up to a fire on their porch – where they had stored a sack of hot ashes.

Ashes have the potential to stay hot for up to five days after being removed from the fire.

Invercargill Senior Station Officer Alan Goldsworthy said firefighters arrived to find a small fire burning on timber steps off a porch area at the rear of the house. “The fire was just starting to go up the wall and enter the house.”

Meanwhile, in Gisborne, three young women had a narrow escape when the ashes they had put in a cardboard box reignited and set fire to their house.

The laundry and roof of the Manuka Street home were badly damaged, but its occupants were not harmed, thanks to a neighbour’s quick thinking, said Station Officer Dave Ion. The tenants had cleaned out the fireplace the day before the fire and put the ashes in a cardboard box on top of the fridge in the laundry.

“The ashes smouldered, caught fire, melted the fridge and the flames went up through the walls of the laundry and into the roof space.” It was very lucky the fire was caught when it was, because once a fire reaches the roof space it can be hard to stop and spreads very quickly.”

# Flash new FireNet on its way

*The new streamlined, user-friendly Fire Service intranet will be coming to a computer near you in about three months.*

The new FireNet has been designed so that any information you're looking for should never take more than three clicks of the mouse to reach. The system is also personalised to your logon – so the pages you use the most will be automatically linked to your home page. Potentially, everyone's home page will be slightly different – reflecting their individual workloads, their preferences and the region they work in.

The system has been built to meet the specifications set out by staff from throughout the country, who have been closely involved in its planning and development.

Senior Project Manager Sam Pitchforth said the new FireNet is a slimmed-down, intuitive tool. "There were over 50,000 pages on the old intranet – most of it outdated or duplications of the same information. The new system will start with just 300 pages. Information is organised by the task it relates to, not the region,

department or some other reflection of the structure of the organisation, so it will be much easier to find."

Staff also wanted an efficient, fast search function and this has been built in.

Senior Strategic Web Designer Mark McGeady said FireNet will also be much more interactive. There will be discussion forums, blogs and lots of other ways to collaborate and pass on information. It will be 'media rich' with space made available for K99, training videos and other audiovisual resources. News items will be streamed into FireNet and an image library is being built up.

"It will also provide super-smart online forms that will allow you to work on, and track the progress of, a station's annual audit for instance," he said.

**Want more details?** The stakeholder advisory group is made up of members from around the country who are available to provide more information on the features of the new FireNet. Contact your local region business manager to find the nearest group member who can give you more details.

You can also read the FireNet Project Updates under General News on the front page of the intranet.

Any questions can be sent to [intranetredesign@fire.org.nz](mailto:intranetredesign@fire.org.nz)



# Building better communication

*Want to have your views heard? Want to know what the official position is on an issue? Look out for some new communication channels that are opening up on FireNet.*

Remember Opinion Pole? It died after a few technical issues a couple of years ago and is being resurrected under the new name Firewire. It will provide a discussion forum for all staff and volunteers on the (work-related) issues of the day. It can also be used to offer constructive feedback or ask senior managers relevant questions.

We are also making it easier to find information on some of the current hot topics. Look for the heading Command Point, under the News and Notices section on the current FireNet. If we are introducing significant new policies or practice this is the place to go to find more information on the decision-making

process and the outcome. It will also provide updates on progress. And if you have any questions, you will be able to use Firewire to get them answered or discuss issues with other personnel. As always, you can also raise questions and discuss issues directly with your manager.

Chief Executive and National Commander Mike Hall says: "Like other large, national organisations, we want effective communication with, and between, personnel at a regional and national level. Our last All Personnel Survey showed that people want better communication and we have taken notice of this. For example, the new intranet has been designed to improve the flow of

information and support much more online feedback and discussion."

Mike will also be taking advantage of the intranet to communicate directly with staff and volunteers. He plans to post occasional columns that will outline his thinking on relevant issues of the day. A link has been set up from the front page of the intranet that will connect to his 'blog'. If he hits a nerve or sparks debate, staff will be able to use Firewire for further discussion.

The Firewire discussion forum will be moderated in line with Fire Service policies on expected standards of behaviour.

# firewire

# Fire for sale

*Every three hours, there's a fire in a New Zealand home. That's around 4,000 fires a year and covers everything from minor smoke damage to a house burned to the ground. Over a quarter are caused by unattended cooking and in most cases the homes didn't have working smoke alarms. That's why the Fire Service puts so much effort into raising public awareness of the need for smoke alarms.*

*And we don't just do it on TV.*

An 'advertisement' we placed on the residential property listings page of Trade Me a couple of months ago relating to a home for sale that had no smoke alarms generated so much interest we decided to go further. We turned the advertisement into a real estate For Sale sign and installed versions of it outside twenty houses in Auckland and Wellington. One went up outside the home of NZFS Communications Manager Scott Sargentina, and the other outside the home of Porirua Station Officer Craig Gold.

"You can't get more commitment to fire safety than putting up a sign outside your home saying that it's a 'death trap'. The interest it generated was unbelievable, with many locals and neighbours stopping to read and comment on it. One person even said that, while it was an interesting shock tactic for selling our house, we should be ashamed for openly admitting to putting our kids' lives in danger," said Scott.

Craig Gold had a similar story. "My kids were teased at school because they lived in a dangerous house. Not very pleasant for them but, on the flip side, it was pleasing to hear about the number of children who knew that working smoke alarms are essential in homes."

The Fire Service is committed to reducing the annual toll of lives, injuries, lost homes and fire damage. We'll be using more and more of these outdoor opportunities to continue to ram the messages home.

Any region wanting to duplicate the idea can contact Scott for the artwork. The real estate signs themselves are cheap to make up and are easily erected.



Craig (top) and Scott put up their homes 'for sale' for a good cause.

# Reaching out to the Deaf

*If you see firefighters wagging their fingers about they may be trying to communicate in sign language rather than limbering up for a piano lesson.*



FRM Gary Beer answers questions from Deaf families after a kitchen fire demonstration with the assistance of a New Zealand Sign Language interpreter.

(\*Note: Deaf spelt with a capital D reflects the culture of the Deaf community who communicate using New Zealand Sign Language.)

Over a quarter of a million New Zealanders have significant hearing loss which poses real fire safety issues, particularly for those who remove hearing aids at night or who are Deaf\*. Fire regions are increasingly building up relationships with people from this and other disabled communities.

For instance, in Auckland, Takapuna Brown Watch Senior Station Officer Quin Webster is creating links between region staff and the Deaf and hearing impaired communities. As part of this he has arranged two Deaf awareness workshops for Auckland region staff and brought the kitchen fire demonstration to a public event held at a family fun day for the Deaf in May.

“The fun day was an excellent opportunity for us to pass on fire safe

knowledge and behaviour to a sector of the community we don’t normally see. My crew were joined by Fire Risk Managers Gary Beer and Mark Whittington and we were able to answer a lot of questions and gathered email addresses so we could pass on more information electronically.”

Some Takapuna firefighters also took part in a short sign language class as part of New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) Week in May.

“During the week, Deaf people visited workplaces to give staff a taste of what NZSL is all about. This paid off for us the next day at the fun day as some were able to sign their names, say please and thank you. If anyone ever gets the opportunity to arrange this at a station I thoroughly recommend it,” said Quin.

The Picton volunteer brigade also took part in a taster class in their area.



The photo ionisation detectors issued to fire investigation staff last year are more than paying off.

## PID success

Here, Arapawa Fire Safety Officer Colin Clemens was recently faced with a diesel ute that had been completely gutted by fire. There was some crash damage but Colin couldn’t see a point of origin.

Out comes the PID. No indicators of anything unusual until he waved it over the driver’s floor pan. He moved away some charred rubbish and the readings soared even higher. Five minutes’ work and a quick conversation with the police detective involved and a few hours later there was a confession to arson.

# A couple of minutes with... Peter Wilding



**Where are you stationed?**

Auckland Fire Region HQ

**What's your title?**

National Manager, Fire Investigation and Arson Reduction

**What's been your progression within the NZFS over the past 25 years?**

Started first as a firefighter at Onehunga then worked in most fire districts across Auckland. DCFO and Acting CFO of Waitakere (West Auckland) then East Auckland fire districts before being appointed as National Recruitment Manager. In 2008 appointed to current role.

**Family?**

Incredibly understanding wife Rachel, with Chelsea (15), Courtney (12) and Josh (8) as the support team.

**What's the one thing that sticks in your mind about the job?**

The large number of truly incredible and committed people I have the privilege of working with.

**If you could make one change to the Fire Service what would it be?**

Introduce a culture where 'going the extra mile' becomes the norm, where all our people would routinely and actively seek opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others.

**Your most embarrassing moment on the job?**

One that stands out is during a short stint in the Comcen, I turned Hikurangi vollies out to flooding in Hikurangi Street, only to be informed that this is 469km away in Whakatane. There's no Hikurangi Street in Hikurangi... of course!

**What's one thing people would be surprised to learn about you?**

I am a qualified senior umpire in netball.

**Favourite book?** The Bible.

**Favourite movie?**

The World's Fastest Indian – just love Burt's can-do attitude.

**Favourite TV show?**

Documentaries of all sorts.

**Favourite music group?** Casting Crowns.

**Favourite sport?** Fishing.

**Favourite holiday destination?**

Anywhere with my family.

**If I wasn't in the Fire Service I'd be?**

Making a difference somewhere – UN, World Vision, Police...

# 2010 Events Calendar

<p><b>September 6th</b> <b>National Trout Fishing Tournament</b> Turangi jim.prescott@fire.org.nz</p>	<p><b>September 3rd-4th</b> <b>NZFS National Rugby Tournament</b> Auckland james.hall@fire.org.nz 021 0237 4301</p>
<p><b>September 18th</b> <b>Taranaki Toughest Firefighter Around the Mountain</b> Oakura da_rielly@hotmail.com 06 752 7302</p>	<p><b>October 23rd</b> <b>Off Road Raglan Multisport Event</b> Raglan Fire Brigade dirkderuysscher@yahoo.co.nz</p>
<p><b>October 11th-15th</b> <b>National Golf Tournament</b> Whangarei Mike.Lister@fire.org.nz</p>	<p><b>October 31st to November 5th</b> <b>Australasian Fire Brigades Golf Championship</b> New Plymouth Ray.shields@fire.org.nz 07 347 2252</p>

For the latest information on Fire Service sports events go to: **Firenet/Sports/upcomingsportsevents**

## LEN DOUGHTY FELLOWSHIP

**It's time again to call for expressions of interest for the Len Doughty Fellowship.**

The Fellowship honours the memory of North Shore Chief Fire Officer Doughty who died in 1998. It allows for overseas research (up to a total of \$20,000) on a topic that will benefit the personal development of the Fellow and help the Commission achieve its strategic objectives.

The application guidelines are available from Sadie Laurenson, Executive Officer, Tel: (04) 496 3643, Email: [sadie.laurenson@fire.org.nz](mailto:sadie.laurenson@fire.org.nz)  
Applications close at the end of August.

### Previous winners:

- 1999: Allen Pidwell and Paul Baxter
- 2000: Bruce Didham
- 2001: Jon Graham
- 2002: Steve Barclay
- 2003: Colin Clemens and Peter Gallagher
- 2004: Grant Haywood
- 2005: No award made
- 2006: Adrian Brown
- 2007: (No Award given – Dr Stefan Svensson was brought to NZ to speak to the Fire Service and at IFE Conference.)
- 2008: Ed Claridge
- 2009: James Firestone

On a recent visit to Northland, National Commander Mike Hall congratulated Whangarei SFF Dave Blacklock for earning a Massey University Diploma in Emergency Management. Dave is one of a select group of 15 firefighters who, armed with this diploma, is better prepared to handle the various types of emergencies that confront the Fire Service now and in the future. Mike predicted that the NZFS will become more of an emergency and rescue service in the future, with weather events and other emergencies becoming more prevalent than fire.



