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Communication from FRFANZ to Members

In July 2016, FRFANZ and the United Fire Brigade's Association (UFBA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to make sure urban and rural firefighters and personnel had a single powerful voice during the transition of 40 organisations—including the National Rural Fire Authority (NRFA) and the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS)—to Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

By working closely together over the past year, FRFANZ/UFBA have effectively represented the interests of our members during the transition to ensure the best possible outcomes.

As part of our ongoing arrangement, the UFBA has also provided administration and financial support to the FRFANZ Executive to meet the needs of our members.

The positive ongoing relationship between FRFANZ and the UFBA gives us an exceptional opportunity to build on our collective strength.

At the FRFANZ AGM in 2016, the Executive sought and gained approval from our membership to explore our relationship with UFBA further. Most specifically, by considering a joint membership model.

The FRFANZ Executive agreed at our April 2017 meeting to collaborate with the UFBA in a more formal way.

It was resolved that the Executive would bring the following motion to the FRFANZ Annual Conference 2017:

“The Executive recommend that members give the Executive power to proceed with a merger of the operations and services of FRFANZ with the UFBA. Should this proposition be accepted by the FRFANZ membership, the UFBA will consult with their membership, and if all agree, a merger will take place in early 2018.”

We realise there will be many questions as to how this merger will work. Before the new relationship can be confirmed, the proposed merger will also need to be discussed and voted on at the UFBA Annual Conference in October.

Should both memberships agree to merge, then the FRFANZ and UFBA Boards will work together to formalise this process. However, until then (and should either membership vote not to merge) there will be no change to services for both memberships.

FRFANZ and the UFBA have jointly prepared this document, so that you will better understand how this new relationship will work and the benefits it will give you as a member.

Key elements of the change (*provided the merger is confirmed*)

- A Rural Subcommittee will be set up represent and advocate for the needs of rural fire forces
- FRFANZ members will benefit from all UFBA membership services including:
 - Advocacy and support services
 - Learning and Development—Leadership and Governance Workshops, Secretaries and Treasurers Workshops and New Zealand Fire Brigades’ Institute (NZFBI) Field Days
 - Competitions and events
 - Annual Conference
 - Accident Assurance Scheme
 - Benevolent Fund
 - Regular updates on sector news including a monthly newsletter.

FRFANZ Service Honours will remain as they are now. They will not be merged into the UFBA Service Honours.

Who are the UFBA?

The United Fire Brigades’ Association of New Zealand (UFBA) serves and represents the interests of 535 fire brigades and fire forces throughout the country, comprising more than 12,000 firefighters.

UFBA members consist of volunteer, paid, urban, rural, industry and defence brigades and their personnel, with 80% being volunteers. The UFBA is the only national organisation that unites and represents fire brigades of all kinds.

See more about the UFBA and membership services at www.ufba.org.nz/about/who_we_are

Strategic Planning

With the aim of taking a collaborative approach to the activities we will focus on over the next three years, FRFANZ and UFBA have held a joint 2017 strategic planning session.

The planning session proved a constructive time to clarify the issues facing our organisations and our members, set our future direction and, most importantly, develop clear goals to meet our Vision of *Safe sustainable communities*.

To deliver advocacy and support to our emergency services members that will enable them to provide highly-skilled contributions to the health and safety of the communities they serve, we have established six key goals:

- Be Advocacy Experts
- Have a Broad Membership
- Ensure Sustainable Funding
- Be Trusted Partners
- Provide Strong Leadership
- Provide Excellence in Learning.

For more details of the principles underpinning these broad goals, see the one-page UFBA/FRFANZ Strategic Plan at www.ufba.org.nz/news/ufba_frfanz_strategic_plan

FAQs

How will the membership model work?

- Between now and 2018, there will be no change to membership. You have already subscribed to FRFANZ and until then, FRFANZ will still be your main contact
- After 2018, if the merger is agreed upon, there will be some slight changes to the membership model to ensure we can capture the unique requirements of every fire force and brigade.

Will I still be able to get FRFANZ service honours?

- Yes, the UFBA will manage FRFANZ Service Honours—they will run these alongside the UFBA Service Honours.

What about the cultural difference?

- The UFBA already has 45 rural fire forces as members, as well as Defence and industry brigades. It is a diverse membership, open and welcome to all firefighters. There may be a difference in culture, but we will make sure everyone is respected and served in a way that works for them.

Who will advocate for rurals? Do the UFBA understand us?

- Until 2018, the same people who have always advocated for you will continue to do so
- Yes, the UFBA understands rural needs—8% of their current membership comes from the rural sector
- After 2018, a subcommittee made up of rural representatives will be formed to assist with advocating in areas that specifically affect rural firefighters.

What are the benefits to me?

- A single powerful voice for all firefighters
- Better development and networking opportunities
- Well-resourced advocacy and support services
- An Accident Assurance Scheme and Benevolent Fund

How much will it cost me to join?

- There is no charge for FRFANZ members until the next UFBA subscription round is due on 1 July 2018
- Until then, your membership is covered by your FRFANZ subscription and you will benefit from the services offered by the UFBA
- We are working with Fire and Emergency New Zealand to assist with the payment of any subscriptions for the years following 1 July 2018.

What if I don't want to be part of the merger?

- You have the right to withdraw your membership. However, as it is not going to cost you anything, why not give it a try until July 2018?

I am a FRFANZ member but am not a Fire and Emergency New Zealand firefighter. Can I still be a member?

- Your membership and your FRFANZ benefits do not change before 1 July 2018. However, you will not be able to use some of the services provided by the UFBA that are only for Fire and Emergency New Zealand firefighters
- After the merger, you will be considered an Associate Member.