



THE CENTRAL HAWKES BAY EMERGENCY SERVICES COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Secretary:
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Fire Legislation Submissions
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FIRE LEGISLATION REVIEW SUBMISSION FROM THE CENTRAL HAWKES BAY EMERGENCY SERVICES COORDINATING COMMITTEE (CHBESCC)

The above group consists of senior representatives from the following organisations:

- The Central Hawkes Bay District Council Emergency Management Office
- The Central Hawkes Bay Police
- The St John Ambulance, Central Hawkes Bay Station
- The St John Ambulance, Central Region Office
- Eastern Fire Region HQ
- Otane Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Tikokino Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Ongaonga Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Waipawa Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Waipukurau Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Ashley Clinton Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Takapau Volunteer Fire Brigade
- Porangahau Volunteer Fire Brigade
- National Rural Fire Authority, Eastern/Central North Island Manager
- Elsthorpe Volunteer Rural Fire Force
- Pourerere Volunteer Rural Fire Force

- Omakeke Volunteer Rural Fire Force
- Wallingford Volunteer Rural Fire Force
- Flemington Volunteer Rural Fire Force
- Central Hawkes Bay Health Centre (hospital)
- Telecom Civil Defence Liaison
- Central Hawkes Bay Victim Support Group.

Members meet four times a year to discuss general business and usually include a 'workshop/presentation/training' component in each meeting.

The CHBESCC has been functioning very successfully for eleven years and the services involved, in general terms, cover the area administered by the Central Hawkes Bay District Council. This is an area of 3,200 square kilometres with a total population of 12,828 (2001 census), bounded to the north by the Hastings District Council, the south by the Tararua District Council, the west by the Ruahine Ranges and the Rangitikei District Council and in the east by the Pacific Ocean.

At the last meeting of the CHBESCC on March 17, 2005, approval was given by the members for the following submission to be made.

The Committee was in agreement that one piece of legislation governing 'fire and rescue services' was an important goal. It was reiterated by members that the relationship between the current 'urban' and 'rural' fire groups in our area is excellent and very cooperative and should be enhanced by such a piece of legislation. It was also seen as important that any new legislation should give equity to all communities.

Full and meaningful community consultation over any 'changes', both positive and negative, resulting from any new legislation was a major point of discussion and it was agreed that this must be a 'given, not-negotiable' outcome of such legislation changes. Any changes must also be cost effective for communities.

It was agreed that any new legislation should be 'inclusive' rather than 'divisive'. Members wanted, as is mentioned above, the current excellent local relationships that are part of the CHBESCC to continue and that new legislation shouldn't take anything away that is currently available in a community, in other words, it can't be anything worse.

New legislation must 'sort out' some of the inequities in funding currently affecting rural people who pay three and four times for a similar service that which urban residents get from one payment to the insurance based 'fire service levy.' Resources need to be available for everybody in the (broader) community on an equal basis.

In an area like Central Hawkes Bay there is a total reliance on 'volunteers' for all aspects of 'fire' service. It was agreed that this resource was, unfortunately, fast becoming a finite one in many rural communities and such a resource needs to be carefully nurtured. It was seen as very difficult for current levels of work to be exceeded and/or increased and some form of adequate backup resourcing needs to be considered as part of any new legislation. While the members didn't have any quick fix answers to this problem, they agreed that this area was not alone in New Zealand in facing such an issue and that serious thought had to be given to answers to it.

The Committee's final point was that they expected more consultation to take place 'further down the track' to ensure that any impacts from any new legislation were positive.

The CHBESCC asked that this letter convey its thanks to the 'Review Group' for allowing it to make a submission on what was seen as an extremely important piece of legislation, especially in how any changes could affect rural communities such as ours.

Yours faithfully

Bruce A. Kitto (QSM)

Secretary

Central Hawkes Bay Emergency Services Coordinating Committee