

# **THE UFBA LEGISLATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

## **PRESENTATION TO THE 2005 UFBA CONFERENCE**

**Presented by: Merv Gaskin (Chairman)**

### **PRESENTATION**

#### **Introduction**

Mr President, Mr Norman Preston, Ms Felicity Steele, Guests, and Delegates

Mr Preston has outlined for you the reasons why the Department of Internal Affairs has received a government mandate to develop completely new legislation for the delivery of Fire and Rescue services.

The UFBA Executive has appointed a committee, called the Legislative Review Committee to monitor the proposals and respond on behalf of Volunteer fire brigades and volunteer fire fighters both urban and rural.

Today I will outline for you the Legislative Review Committee's favoured option and the principles which the committee believes the new legislation must encompass.

Before I do that I will outline for you the make up of the committee.

#### **The Committee**

The UFBA Executive appointed a Committee soon (2) Committee membership

### **POWER POINT**

(1) Opening header

after the Conference in 2004. That Committee initially comprised the following persons:

with a line flipping up with each members name when mentioned

- President: David McFarlane, who is Chief Fire Officer of the Renwick Fire District;
- Senior Vice-President: Brian Schimanski, who is Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the Pleasant Point Fire District;
- Life Honorary Member Sandy Lawson, who is a member of the Wellington Operational Support Unit; and
- Legal Advisor Merv Gaskin (as Chairman), who is Chief Fire Officer of the Silverstream Fire District.

Shortly before the Department of Internal Affairs produced their first discussion document the Committee proposed to the UFBA Executive that the Executive should add a number of other persons to the Committee in order to encapsulate a wide range of views, to bring together a diversity of skills, and to ensure a wide representation both geographically and in respect of different types of volunteer fire brigades. The additional people appointed to the Committee by the UFBA Executive are these:

(3) THE COMMITTEE

- A wide range of views
- A diversity of skills
- Wide representation

- Past President and Media Advisor Graham Booth who is Chief Fire Officer of the Laingholm Fire District;
- Past-President Alan Burgess, who is Chief Fire Officer of the Ashburton Fire District;
- Ric Carlyon, who is a Station Officer with the

(4) Put up existing 4 names and then flick up other names line by line

Auckland Fire Police Unit, and who has extensive experience of dealing with legislative review and government review bodies;

- Past President Alan Cockburn, who is the recently retired Chief Fire Officer of the New Brighton Fire District;
- Finance Advisor Gary Denton, who is Chief Fire Officer of the Tawa Fire District;
- Rob Hands, who is Chief Fire Officer of Geraldine and Principal Rural Fire Officer for South Canterbury Rural Fire District.
- Life Honorary member and former Presidential Advocate Peter Lockery, who is retired Chief Fire Officer of the Tawa Fire District;
- Graeme Spiers, who is Deputy Chief Fire Officer of the Feilding Fire District.

### **The First Issue**

In the presentation by Mr Preston he *stated / left out* (5) Heading and The consultation partners names that the Discussion document states there are consultation partners in preparation of the legislation. The consultation partners specified are local government because it has the major rural fire responsibility and role, and the Fire Service Commission as the party primarily responsible for urban fire. In light of the significance that new legislation will have upon the whole fire fighting community the Legislative Review Committee is of the firm view that the UFBA should also be a consultation partner at this level with the DIA alongside the Fire Service Commission and Local

Government.

**Options for the Structure of Fire & Rescue service governance**

(6) Heading and flip up bullets one by one

In December 2004 the first discussion document was published, with a closing date for submissions of 31 March 2005. The enlarged Legislative Review Committee has met both in December last year and January of this year to address the issues raised and to commence preparing a submission on behalf of the UFBA in response to the DIA.

*As stated by Mr Preston in his presentation* The DIA discussion paper outlines three possible alternative models for a basis of proposed legislation. Those models are known as:

- Option 1 – a national model;
- Option 2 – a modified status quo model;
- Option 3 – a national regional model.

All three are possible models for the governance of fire and rescue services in New Zealand. It is the Legislative Review Committee’s view that all three models are very much “bare bones” models, but that it is crucial to ensure that the correct bare bones are put in place in order that the future of fire and rescue services is fleshed out and then clothed as well as possible.

**Option 1 – a national model**

(7) Heading and diagram

This model is very simple. The Minister, advised by the DIA, would appoint a board, to be called the “New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board” who would

then appoint a “Chief Executive Officer”.

The Chief Executive Officer would be appointed by the Board, and be responsible to the Board as the administrative head. The DIA discussion document states that operationally the Chief Executive Officer would need to divide the country into management areas, but the management areas would not be specified within the legislation. The Committee assumes from that statement that there would be an obligation upon the Chief Executive Officer to divide the country into management areas. That of course may be two areas, or any number of areas greater than that.

The DIA states that the Board as governor would “need” to consider a number of major factors in exercising its governance powers. The Committee has assumed that the reference there to “need” would be translated into legislation as “required”. The three major factors specified are these:

- the need to maintain and encourage volunteers
  - the need to fully utilise the paid fire-fighter corps
  - the need to take into account community and local government views.
- (8) bullets

This model provides very wide powers for the Chief Executive Officer under the Board to run the fire and rescue services in whatever way he or she wishes to do.

### **Option 2 – a modified status quo model**

If this model were adopted the Minister would again appoint a New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board and retain the DIA as advisor. The same structure that is

(9) Heading and diagram

anticipated for the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board in Option 1 would be applicable for Option 2. The National Rural Advisory Committee which currently advises the New Zealand Fire Service Commission on rural issues would become a statutory advisory committee to the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board. The Board would be able to, but would not be required to, appoint regional rural fire committees to act as coordinating bodies for fire authorities. The Board would appoint a Chief Executive Officer who would be required to appoint a National Rural Fire Officer, a National Director of Operations, and Chief Fire Officer. The Legislative Review Committee at first glance wondered why the reference was to a Chief Fire Officer singular and not Chief Fire Officers plural. In the DIA statements that supported this model, it referred again to the role of the Chief Fire Officer and then to Regional Commanders. Whilst this model may appear to preserve the current District Chief Fire Officer model, the Committee is of the view that the context in which the term is used, and with the singular nature of the term, that the reference is solely to a National Chief Fire Officer. It is proposed that in this model there would be a need to clarify geographical responsibilities and fire authorities would be responsible for all fires in their areas. Rural fire forces would not only fight vegetation fires. The fire authorities, however, would not deal with non-fire emergencies such as road accidents, because they would be within the domain of the Fire and Rescue Board.

**Option 3 – a national regional model.**

This option would give all functions to the Fire and Rescue Board, which would deliver many of its core functions regionally. The regions would be consistent with existing regional council boundaries. Whilst fire safety and research might be a national responsibility, preventing and suppressing fires, and attending to non-fire emergencies would be organised and delivered regionally. (10) Heading and diagram

As with Option 1, the DIA would continue to advise the Minister, to whom the Fire and Rescue Board would report. The Board would appoint a Chief Executive Officer who would appoint a National Director of Operations and there would be Regional Directors of Operations to deal with matters regionally. It is proposed that there would be an advisory board made up of farmer, forestry, property owner, local government, and Department of Conservation interests. That advisory board would be advisory to the Regional Director of Operations. In this model it is anticipated that each Regional Director would be required to consult with the local advisory board on issues such as land management, community support, and volunteer involvement.

**The Legislative Review Committee Response** (11) Heading

Before I go further, I reiterate to you that the model that I will outline is the present preferred model of the Legislative Review Committee. The views of the Committee may be modified, either in part or in whole, following the break-out sessions of this Conference on Tuesday. Submissions on the DIA discussion document must be delivered by 31 March

2005. There was never sufficient time for the Committee to provide an introductory session only to this Conference, to hear your views, and then to start forming a submission. The Committee has been forced by the timeframe to already commence consideration and deliberations and form a preliminary view.

You will recall that during last year, the UFBA sought input to this process through an invitation to all member brigades by way of a flyer that was sent out by the then Executive Director. Before the Committee responded to the DIA with the matters of principle essential for volunteer fire fighters in the new legislation, the Committee reviewed the submissions received and considered them fully. The Committee thanks those who took time, either personally or through their Brigade, to forward submissions.

The Committee is conscious that the UFBA represents a wide constituency. The Committee has consulted and sought views as widely as possible. Your input on Tuesday is keenly sought.

**Option 1 – a national model**

(12) Repeat (7)

The Legislative Review Committee does not favour Option 1.

Option 1 does not provide certainty that there would be any influence, either regionally or locally in the decision-making of the Chief Executive Officer as to the delivery of fire and rescue services in each

community and locality. The Fire Service currently has a statement which is written on the side of many of its vehicles which states:

“Working with communities to protect what they value”. (13) the 2 statements

The Committee believes that with this model that there would be a subtle, but significant, change in that the Fire and Rescue Board would have to write:

“Working for communities to protect what they value”.

That change of that one word highlights that this model is a model that authorises the Chief Executive Officer and maybe his or her national staff sitting in a Wellington high rise building to determine what is best in your local community. It is a top-down model only providing centralised power.

The Legislative Review Committee notes that there is no forum for any input as to governance from the community, or from the fire-fighters who are delivering this service, whether career or volunteer.

The Committee is of the view that fire service management would be seen as distant and isolated from the reality of the services that are being provided, and in the event that the Chief Executive Officer and the staff at the higher levels of the organisation were even prepared to listen to a particular community’s concerns, if they do not meet those concerns they will be rightly or wrongly labelled as dictators who have no knowledge of and are disinterested in that community or in the real delivery of fire and rescue services. The Committee

considers this model would embed a culture of “them and us” with the “them” being the Chief Executive Officer.

The difficulty with a national model such as this is that it requires each community to fit standardised parameters. It requires that every semi-rural community of say, 1,200-1,500 population to be the same, and to require the same resources as each other in order to meet the same national pre-determined risk in that community. National models rolled out into the community based upon assumptions will not cope with community differences.

**Option 2 – a modified status quo model**

(14) Repeat (9)

The Legislative Review Committee does not favour this approach.

One of the many drivers for the proposition that new legislation should be enacted is the issue of inequities perceived between rural fire and urban fire. The Committee is of the view that if there is to be new legislation, the new legislation should provide for a single fire and rescue Service.

The Committee is conscious that a call for a single fully-integrated Fire Service has been repeated at the UFBA Conferences on numerous occasions in recent years. The distinction between rural and volunteer should go, yet this model seeks to preserve that distinction, with separate rural and urban reporting.

The model does address the distinction in fire-fighting to some extent, making the responsibility for structure fires that of the Principal Rural Fire Officer for rural fire districts.

There would be clarity in respect of the issue relating to whether or not the Act provides territorial coverage or fire-type coverage. It would be territorial.

The intention is that this Act, however, should not be seen simply as an Act to provide for fire services, but for fire and other emergency services, and in particular to capture road crash rescue.

In this model it is proposed that although rural fire may attend to all kinds of fires within the rural district, other kinds of emergencies, including road crash rescue, may sit with other brigades, presumably from other fire districts. Having said that, the DIA paper does say that some rural fire forces may be able separately to do non-fire emergency work, including road crash rescue.

This model will not resolve a two-tier distinction in respect of fire service delivery. The complaint from the rural sector which the DIA claims is one of the drivers for the new legislation of an inadequate level of resources in the rural sector will not be addressed by continuing with distinct rural fire-fighting.

In considering this model, the Committee has established not only the thoughts of urban fire personnel, but also those from the rural sector. The Committee understands that a number of rural territorial local authorities may prefer this option. The Committee does not represent local authorities, but does represent the rural fire-fighters who currently operate in territorial authority brigades. The Committee has been led to understand that rural fire-fighters do not wish to see this model proceed, which would continue a distinction between rural and urban fire brigades.

**Option 3 – a national regional model**

(15) Repeat (10)

The Legislative Review Committee does not favour this model, at least in its present form.

The Committee is of the view that this model comes nearest to how the governance of the fire and rescue services should be specified within new legislation.

The Committee's proposal is for a modified Option 3. The differences with the modified option are:

(16) The two diagrams side by side current option 3 and our proposal

- The advisory board moves from beneath the Regional Director of Operations to beside the Regional Director of Operations; and
- Provides a further category beneath the Regional Director of Operations of Chief Fire Officers and local community fire districts.

With the modified Option 3 model, the Legislative Review Committee believes that there is a model that gives hope for a potential breakdown of the barriers between career, volunteer, and rural providers of fire and rescue services.

Looking at each part of the modified Option 3 model in detail, this is the Committee's proposal for a submission:

- That it is appropriate for the DIA to continue to be advisor to the Minister. (17) Show diagram of modified option 3 only
- That the Minister should be a Minister of Emergency Services, as opposed to the Minister of Internal Affairs.

The wide mandate of the DIA creates a catch-all basket, dealing with a whole range of issues in the community, that perhaps in themselves are not significant enough to have a Minister appointed. The DIA deals with everything from boat ramp permits at Lake Taupo, passport control, importation of internet pornography, and the Fire Service.

There should be a Minister of Emergency Services who is focused upon all emergency services, of which fire and rescue services is one part. The Minister's brief would extend, to cover emergency medical services (ambulance), civil defence, and other emergencies that are outside the brief of the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board. Those additional rescue services may include mountain rescues, maritime rescues, and the

like. In time it may be appropriate for some or all of those other rescue organisations to come under the governance of the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board, and if there is a single Minister in charge of those emergency services as well as the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board, that assimilation may occur at the appropriate time, in an evolutionary manner.

The Minister of Emergency Services would in the interim be responsible for the government interface with all of those emergency services that are outside of the ambit of the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board.

- The New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board should exist directly beneath the Minister. The makeup of the board will be critical, and there should be legislated positions on the board. The Board should comprise a mixture of persons appointed in order to meet the specific skill needs, and persons appointed in a representational capacity.

The Committee proposes that the Board be made up of seven persons as follows:

- A person appointed by the Minister recognising that person's senior governance experience;
- A person appointed by the Minister recognising that person's business / financial / economic skills;

(18) bullets flipping up one by one

- A person appointed by the Minister for their senior urban fire operational experience;
- A person appointed by the Minister for their senior rural fire operational experience;
- A nominee of the UFBA;
- A person appointed to represent forest owners' associations;
- A person appointed by the Local Government Association of New Zealand;

The new legislation should provide that the two positions for senior operational experience be amalgamated into a single position after a transitional period (e.g. five years) from the commencement of the Act, when the distinctions between rural and urban fire should be minimised by virtue of having operated both within a single model for that period.

- The Committee is firmly of the opinion that the Chief Executive Officer should be a non-uniformed role, and the person should not be appointed for their skill as a uniformed operational fire-fighter. The Chief Executive Officer role, is that of the senior manager of the organisation and so requires a person who can manage and drive the governance direction of the board and deliver high levels of management. To promote a model where the roles of Chief Executive Officer and National Director of (19) Repeat 17

Operations are performed by the same person, requires a single person to undertake two distinct but very significant roles and as a result to carry a load that is too heavy. The result will be in many cases that one role or the other will not be properly performed. The person appointed as Chief Executive Officer should be appointed for their ability as a Chief Executive Officer, not their ability at fighting fires or performing other emergency rescues.

- Conversely the position of National Director of Operations should be held by a uniformed person recognised for their knowledge and performance at the highest level for a senior fire fighting role and in particular operational fire management. The role should recognise either rural or urban fire management.

The Committee considered whether the National Director of Operations role could be filled by a person from a wider group such as a person who must have senior emergency or rescue experience as an alternative to either a senior rural or urban fire management role. The Committee is of the view that at this time that is not realistic, and that the person appointed needs to be from a senior operational fire fighting role. The new legislation should specify that requirement. The National Director of Operations would be responsible to set national standards and parameters for all matters whether they be operations, safety programmes, or health and safety matters.

- The advisory board, now renamed the Regional Executive, stands next to the Regional Director of Operations. The Committee spent some time considering the correct name by which to describe this group. The Committee did not support either the term “advisory”, nor the term “board”.

The term “board” confuses the role of that group with the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board as governors of the organisation. The role of a board is to act as a governor and so there can be only one board. This group will not be providing governance in the new model.

Likewise, the term “advisory” was not favoured by the Committee. The person in management, in this case the Regional Director of Operations, would be able to too easily dismiss the advice of an advisory group. Advisory Committees smack of tokenism and are seen as being a sop to interested groups. They are better to be seen but not heard. There would always be a risk that Advisory committee members will be reduced to being used to take information back to the groups they respectively represent rather than people who will be influencing fire and rescue services delivery within the region. The group should undertake a greater role than just as an advisor’s group. An advisor is a person who is called upon when advice is sought. The Regional Executive should be in a position proactively to engage the Regional Director of

Operations and to ensure there is genuine input into regional decisions.

The principal role of the Regional Executive will, with the Regional Director of Operations, be to establish the detail of how the delivery of fire and rescue services shall be best provided for the Region. The decisions would need to be within the parameters and the standards set by the National Director of Operations. However, within that national framework the Regional Executive with the Regional Director of Operations should be responsible to plan what fire and rescue services are appropriate within that region and how those services may best be delivered.

The risks in each region will be different. For some regions, terrorism may be of significance, whereas for others forestry will have greater significance, and elsewhere the ability to undertake swift-water rescue may be a requirement. Environmental danger will differ from region to region and it is therefore essential that the Regional Executive and the Regional Director of Operations establish the needs of the region and a plan for delivery of fire and rescue services.

In addition to the relationship between the Regional Executive and the Regional Director of Operations there should be legislated a formal relationship between each Regional Executive and the New Zealand Fire and

Rescue Board. It is appropriate that there be at least a six-monthly meeting between the New Zealand Fire and Rescue Board and a number of representatives from each Regional Executive.

This model, which takes stakeholders within the region seriously, will result in community support.

The regions are stated by the DIA as being the same as for regional council boundaries. There are 12 regional councils, 4 Unitary councils carrying out the role of the regional council in their respective locations and the Chatham Islands. Effectively there are 17 Regional Council bodies in New Zealand. There should be a regional executive for each of those regions, but it is not proposed that there will necessarily be a regional director within each region, and I will cover that when dealing with the position of Regional Director of Operations.

The makeup of the Regional Executive would be representative. The parties represented on a particular regional executive should reflect the relevant stakeholders within that region.

All Regional Executives would comprise:

- one nominee from each territorial local authority in the region;
- Volunteer fire-fighter representatives;

(20) Regional Executive members list bullets for compulsory

- a career fire-fighter representative in regions where there are career fire-fighters employed within that region.

In addition, there are a number of other stakeholders who may be called upon to provide representation on the regional executive. That will differ from region to region. The Regional Executive may include representatives from:

- Federated Farmers
- the Department of Conservation
- forest owners
- the insurance industry
- ACC
- or others.

(21) Continued add list possible members

•The Regional Director of Operations would be a person with senior operational fire fighting experience. Principal Rural Fire Officers may initially seek these positions as well as Fire Service staff. The Regional Director of Operations would implement the Regional plan developed with the Regional Executive for delivery of fire and rescue services within the region. The Regional Director of Operations would also be responsible to ensure the national standards and parameters were met. The Regional Director of Operations would outwork the Regional plan through Chief Fire Officers and local community brigades.

(22) Repeat of (17)

The Committee does not consider that there must be a separate Regional Director of Operations for each region. The current regional model within the Fire Service, for example, extending to 17 separate regional structures should not occur. Although there may be every intention that the Regional Director of Operations will work in an environment with little office support, the reality is that secretarial support will inevitably be required, and some specialist roles will develop, which should not be replicated across 17 regions. To avoid that level of bureaucracy the Committee proposes that some Regional Directors of Operations could have responsibilities in two or more regions. In that case, the delivery of services in each region, the Regional Director of Operations would work with that region's Regional Executive, even though the requirements and the plan for that region may be different from another region with for the Regional Director of Operations has responsibility.

The DIA discussion document makes clear that fire services are being delivered well at the local level. In addition, at no point within the discussion document is there any suggestion that one of the drivers for change is because there is an issue with the actual delivery of fire and rescue services other than

in ensuring statutory authority and clear territorial boundaries. There is no need for the present local delivery model or its management to be altered when it is working well and is not a driver for change to the legislation.

In item 1.4 of its discussion document, the DIA states as follows:

“The problems do not mean New Zealand is (23) This statement poor at reducing fire risk or responding to fire or other emergencies. Indeed, the cooperation and commonsense of fire managers on the ground tend to mask the problems. The country enjoys excellent coverage and a standard of service that compares well internationally. It is not a driver to change in this Act that fire services are being delivered poorly at the local level.”

There is no doubt that volunteer brigades are best led and managed by volunteers who have genuine authority and responsibility.

Rural fire uses a model of “warranted officers” as opposed to the model provided by Section 28 of the FSA, which provides the authority to the Chief Fire Officer (that is, a district Chief Fire Officer) or to the Deputy Chief Fire Officer in the absence of the Chief Fire Officer, or to the person for the time being in charge of the brigade in the absence of the Chief Fire Officer and the Deputy Chief

Fire Officer. Rural fire is envious of the FSA model, as there is considerable difficulty for rural fire if a warranted officer is not present at an incident. The lines of authority must extend to the people who are present at the incident. The Chief Fire Officer model with the statutory delegations serves the operational personnel well.

In a number of places throughout the DIA discussion document there is reference to the need to maintain and encourage volunteers. In the Forward to the document by the DIA it says this:

“Our fire management system depends heavily upon the contribution of the volunteer fire-fighters in their communities. Any changes to the legislation need to ensure their efforts are encouraged and maintained.” (24) This statement

Those sentiments are very much in line with the government’s adopted policy on volunteering. To move away from the district Chief Fire Officer model and away from the Fire District model will not encourage or maintain volunteers.

Within the DIA document there are a number of references to the abolition of a fire districts model as one way to solve various problems perceived as drivers for the change to legislation.

Interestingly, none of the three models proposed preserve fire districts nor Chief Fire Officers at a district level, and it is the Committee's intention to ensure that the DIA understands that preservation of fire districts and Chief Fire Officers is an essential requirement.

### **Beyond the Options**

(25) Heading

Looking beyond the options the Committee considers that there are other matters of principle to volunteer fire-fighters which must be promoted to be included within new legislation.

The matters that were put to the DIA in correspondence last year by the original Legislative Review Committee are strongly supported by the extended Legislative Review Committee. Those principles are these:

- A recognition that the delivery of fire fighting and rescue services is provided by a fire fighting force that is primarily made up of volunteer personnel who are supplemented by paid staff, as required, in metropolitan areas.
- That the delivery of fire and rescue services into each community requires a community ownership of that community's fire brigade. The Act should provide for a close alignment between each community and its fire and rescue service.

(26) Bullets summary flipping up 1 by 1

- That local management and leadership of each fire brigade within each community is preserved providing autonomy and responsibility for each brigade within the bounds of national standards for the delivery of fire and rescue services. In that regard volunteer fire fighters are of the view that the present district model serves well in ensuring local control of the fire brigade (through the Chief Fire Officer Model). It is our view that alternatively proposed models to the District model that may be considered as a basis for the new Act must still preserve local control and autonomy through local management and leadership.

- It is necessary for there to be legislated within the new Act formal rights (including the right of representation) for volunteer fire fighters in their service relationships both with the Brigade and the National body. Paid fire fighter staff enjoy the rights of an employee through other legislation (The Employments Agreement Act) in their employment relationship in delivering fire and rescue services. The volunteer fire fighter does not have any similar rights and it is our view that the legislation should provide equivalent rights to volunteer fire fighters. There is no other legislation that provides those rights to volunteer personnel who deliver fire and rescue services. The model proposed is not unlike the changes that have been made to the Safety and Health in Employment Act which has extended the rights that only previously applied to paid staff within the existing fire service to the volunteer personnel.

•There needs to be preserved in the Act a disputes procedure for volunteer brigades or units in their relationships to other fire service bodies. At present Section 34(5) of the Fire Service Act 1975 provides a dispute resolution process for Volunteer Fire Brigades but not for other volunteer units. It is our view that all volunteer units should have a legislated dispute resolution procedure specified within the new legislation.

(27) Heading

**Your input**

Following the break-out groups on Tuesday, there may well be other principles at a philosophical level which the Committee should also pursue.

The lines of communication between the Committee and the members of this organisation are well and truly open. It is the intention of the Committee to report regularly through the *UFBA News* and through the website.

There may be correspondence sent directly to you as issues arise.

In the event that you should wish the Committee to consider any views you have concerning the proposed changes to the legislation, you should write to the UFBA Office, and the UFBA staff will ensure that the Committee is apprised of those views.

Media Advisor Graham Booth has been given the specific portfolio responsibility of communication to ensure that you can be kept fully apprised of developments as they occur, so we can receive your

inputs for consideration.

You should be aware that members of the Committee are available to meet, address and/or receive feedback from Provincial Associations, sub-Associations and any other key groups who support volunteer fire fighters. If you wish a Committee member to meet with a group please contact the Executive Director

(28) Heading

### **Going forward from the 31 March 2005 deadline**

It is expected that the whole process will result in a Bill drafted during 2006 and new legislation passed during 2007 or 2008.

The next step in the process will be a second discussion paper, which will deal with the issue of how fire and rescue services will be funded and who will be responsible for that funding. In the initial DIA presentation in May last year to the Legislative Review Committee, the DIA stated that the mandate included “a property-based funding scheme”. However, there has been some speculation as to what that may mean, and what options may be preferred. It would be unhelpful for us to traverse those matters with you prior to having a proposal from the DIA to examine.

It is possible, as matters develop, and particularly once a Bill is introduced into Parliament, that there

find totally unpalatable and intolerable. If that is the case, the Legislative Review Committee may request the UFBA Executive to call upon the volunteer fire-fighters and brigades to assist with a political response. That response for example may be to ensure that your constituent members of Parliament are made very well aware of any aspects of the Bill that cannot be accepted by volunteer fire-fighters.

That concludes this presentation. Both Mr Preston and I are happy to take questions. Are there any questions