



National Headquarters

Level 12
80 The Terrace
PO Box 2133
Wellington
New Zealand

Phone +64 4 496 3600

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Harwood Wilson

By email: fyi-request-20243-47465844@requests.fyi.org.nz

Tēnā koe Harwood

Information Request – Ward Volunteer Fire Brigade

I refer to your official information request dated 16 August 2022 where you have requested information regarding the Ward Volunteer Fire Brigade.

In accordance with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982 (“OIA”), please find below a response to your request.

For context the Ward Brigade and the Flaxbourne Brigade were next to each other (one was urban, and one was rural).

1. The reason for a number of recent degradations in resources amongst rural townships (I do not mean rural brigades, just rural towns), despite the risk of wild fire being reported as increasing.

The Ward/Flaxbourne communities wildfire capability has increased with the arrival of the new medium double cab appliance, replacing Ward 281 and the Flaxbourne 4WD Toyota Ute. They have retained their medium 4WD appliance, that is used for response on the State Highway and to access remote properties and narrow farm tracks in the area.

2. The reason for the closure / merger at this station.

Prior to the Ward Volunteer Fire Brigade combining with the Flaxbourne Volunteer Fire Brigade, the Ward Volunteer Brigade had low membership. This has been caused by two key factors. Firstly the Ward Brigade was unexpectedly without a Chief Fire Officer and the 2016 Kaikoura earthquake impacted the Ward village significantly, with several residents moving out of the community. The brigade membership for the 18 months before the amalgamation had been sitting

at four fire fighters, with one Senior Firefighter. The brigade has responded short crewed to over 80% of the call outs for the past five years.

3. The reason for the removal of urban resources on a major State Highway at this station.

With the Ward Brigade merging with the Flaxbourne Brigade, Ward's urban appliance was removed. It was replaced with a new fit for purpose larger rural appliance. This appliance has off-road capability, more water and is fit for purpose for the risks in the area such as the state highway. For all significant events or those that require specialist urban equipment, the neighbouring brigade in Seddon can respond. Seddon is an urban brigade with a specialist rescue tender.

4. The volunteer crew numbers per year, over the last 5 years for the Ward and Flaxbourne Brigades.

Find below the volunteer crew numbers per year, over the last five years for the Ward and Flaxbourne Brigades.

Date	Flaxbourne Voluntary Rural Fire Force	Ward Volunteer Fire Brigade	Total	Notes
30-Jun-18	12	8	20	
30-Jun-19	11	14	25	
30-Jun-20	12	8	20	
30-Jun-21	16	0	16	Merged with Ward VFB
30-Jun-22	15	0	15	

5. What capacity will the Flaxbourne Brigade have to respond to rescue calls on the State Highway and will they be turned out to these calls.

The Flaxbourne Volunteer Brigade has been responding to incidents in Ward for five years. They are trained for medical co responses and motor vehicle crash pump appliance support. This is including appropriate equipment for first arriving appliances at motor vehicle crashes. The neighbouring towns of Seddon and Kaikoura have specialist rescue appliances.

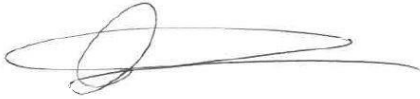
6. Does FENZ consider it safe to remove a urban resource from this station given that the southern neighbouring urban resources on this state highway are 100km apart.

The appliance has not moved, the specialist pump rescue tender appliance has always been in Seddon and Kaikoura.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman of this decision. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Note also that this response (with your personal details removed) may be published on the Fire and Emergency website.

Nāku noa nā



Julia McCook-Weir
Manager, Information Requests

