

Fire Services Review

Discussion Document

Questions form

We would like to know what you think about the proposals in the [Fire Services Review: Discussion Document](#).

This form lists all of the questions from the Discussion Document to help with your submission.

You do not have to answer all the questions when making your submission. Just answer those questions that you want.

Once you have filled in this form you can:

- click “submit” at the bottom of the page and your submission will be sent to us; or
- save this document and email it to fireservicesreview@dia.govt.nz; or
- print this form and post it to:

Fire Services Review
Department of Internal Affairs
PO Box 805
Wellington 6140

All feedback received by the closing date of 10 July 2015 will be taken into consideration before the Government makes decisions about the required legislation and policy changes later in the year.

You can view the Discussion Document and information about the consultation process at: www.dia.govt.nz/fireservicesreview

What will happen to your submission

The Department may publish the submissions it receives and provide a summary of them on its website www.dia.govt.nz. This may include your name or the name of your group but not your contact details.

Submissions may be subject to a request to the Department under the Official Information Act 1982. Personal details can be withheld under this Act, including names and addresses. If you or your group do not want any information contained in the submission to be released, you need to make this clear in the submission and explain why. For example, you might want some information to remain confidential because it is commercially sensitive or personal. The Department will take your request into account.

When the review is completed, all documents (including submissions) will be kept by the Department. An electronic archive of this material may be available on the Department's main website (www.dia.govt.nz) for a period after the end of the review.

Contact details

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Questions from the Discussion Document

“What should our fire services look like?”

1. Are there particular areas of the fire services that are working well that you would like to tell the review about?

No Comment

2. Do you agree that these are the problems and consequences that the review needs to address?

No Comment

“Options to support our firefighters to serve our communities better”

3. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of Option 1: Enhanced status quo from your perspective?

No Comment

4. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of Option 2: Coordinated service delivery from your perspective?

No Comment

5. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of Option 3: One national service from your perspective?

No Comment

6. Which governance and support option do you prefer? (please choose one only):

- a) Option 1: Enhanced status quo
- b) Option 2: Coordinated service delivery
- c) Option 3: One national service
- d) Other (for example a mix of the options)

6.1 Why did you choose that option?

No Comment

7. Do you have ideas for what new organisations in Options 2 and 3 could be called?

No Comment

8. How do you think the governance and support options could be implemented? Please feel free to comment on any of the options from the discussion document.

No Comment

“What might help with the Commission’s fire service levy”

9. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of Funding Option 1: Insurance-based model (enhanced status quo) from your perspective?

While Funding Option 1 has the advantage of simplicity, it has the significant disadvantage of only being contributed to by who choose to take out insurance.

As an example, in the rural area there are a large number of uninsured risks which do not contribute to the levy or the cost of fighting fires associated with these risks.

10. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of Funding Option 2: Mixed funding model from your perspective?

We see that Funding Option 2 will have the significant advantage of ensuring that almost all who benefit from firefighting fund its cost.

The disadvantage is that this could be more complex to collect and administer.

11. Which funding option do you prefer? (please choose one only):

- a) Funding Option 1: Insurance-based model (enhanced status quo)
- b) Funding Option 2: Mixed funding model

11.1 Why did you choose that option?

We prefer Funding Option 2 as it aligns funding much more closely to costs:

- **Insurance levy funding building and contents fires;**
- **Government funding of medical, Police assistance, etc. activities;**
- **Crown contributions funding firefighting for uninsured Crown risks; and**
- **Motor vehicle funding to cover attendance at crashes, etc.**

While the revenue sources mentioned above and in the paper are probably sufficient for funding urban firefighting, we believe they will need to be supplemented in the rural area to cover the large number of uninsured risks which do not currently (except in the case of forestry where the RFA has the ability to levy forest owners) contribute to the cost of fighting fires associated with these risks.

To remedy this we propose that a land-area-based fire levy be introduced for all properties. This levy would ensure that:

- **all those whose property is being protected are contributing to this protection; and**
- **the amount they are contributing is related to the land-area being protected.**

We also propose that, with the introduction of this levy, the present iniquitous ability for rural fire authorities (under Section 46 of the Forest and Rural Fires Act) to bill forest owners for fighting fires on or near their land be scrapped.

12. How do you think the funding options could be implemented? Please feel free to comment on any of the funding options.

We have no comment to make on the advantages and disadvantages of funding options identified in the paper except to say that we would hope that the levies are struck in such a way that the funding is clearly aligned with the costs for the various activities.

With respect to the proposed land-area-based fire levy, we see that the simplest and best mechanism would be for it to be collected as part of the Local or Regional Authority rate. For simplicity, the same rate could be applied to all (urban and rural) properties.

General questions

13. Are there any other comments that you would like to make about the issues and proposals?

No Further Comment

14. Please let us know if you identify with any of the groups below (select all that apply):

- a) rural fire services;
- b) urban fire services;
- c) volunteer firefighter;
- d) paid/career firefighter;
- e) emergency services;
- f) community group;
- g) local authority;
- h) general public;
- i) landowner;
- j) insurance organisation;
- k) other (please specify).

The NZFFA represents the very large number of small scale forestry operations and probably fit best under the “landowner” group above.