

## The Auckland Fire Brigade 1874-2024 Project

### The 1970s Decade Part 1 (1970-1971)

The 1970s decade would have to be accorded the most progressive and exciting period in the history of the Auckland Fire Brigade. To do it justice the decade has been split into 5 parts each of 2 years.

Shorter working hours, a doubling of the brigade Establishment, a new Training Centre, new training programmes, new operational procedures, new appliances and equipment, new fire stations (in new locations) and strong united leadership came together to forge the Brigade into a first-class firefighting unit.

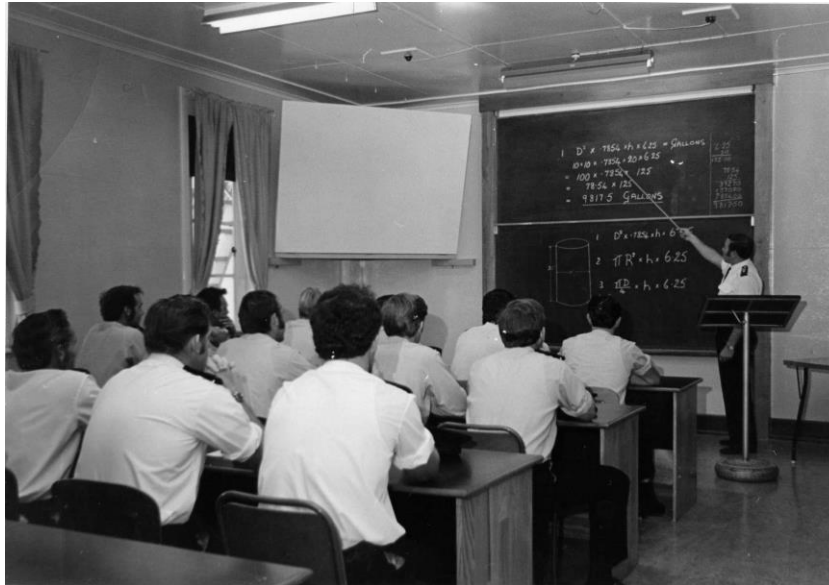
31 International/Darley Heavy pumping appliances were commissioned, plus an International Snorkel in the decade. This new technology propelled the brigade into a new operational era.



Fire call/incidents have been presented in graphical form to cover the whole decade to enable the reader to get a complete perspective on the operational business of the brigade. In the words of Allan Bruce in his book 'Into the Line of Fire', (2003), *The Tumultuous Years of New Zealand Fire Brigades*, Auckland is Burning!, Chapter 27, page 194. To quote; "It is a statement of the bleeding obvious to suggest that fire has absolutely no respect for political dramas, and in the first two years of the 1970s the AMFB was inundated with a series of emergencies to well and truly prove the point. Auckland Burning is a dramatic title, I know, but even the old timers on our staff could not recall a period in which there were so many outbreaks, and it is doubtful if there has been such a frequency since." I tend to agree with Allan.

In 1970 Deputy Chief Fire Officer AW Bruce embarked on an overseas scholarship to study overseas brigades. He visited Brisbane, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. His study showed that the New Zealand Fire Service was way behind International Brigades best practice. He brought back with him ideas and templates of operational procedures that were implemented in the Auckland Brigade (and later Nationally).

Allan knew that education and training was going to play a big part in the brigade's future. He introduced study groups on duty. These started at the Auckland Polytechnic and later were held at City Fire Station. The only stipulation he had was that if accepted for the study group, individuals were required to attend on their off-duty time also. Subjects included chemistry, physics and hydraulics.



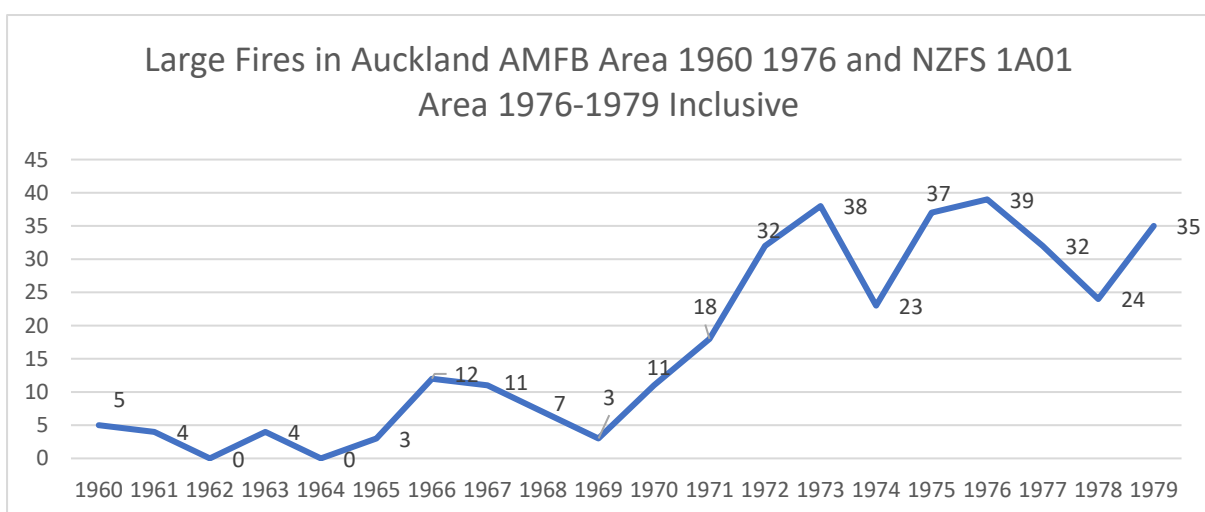
SSO (Training) Ted Campbell instructing on hydraulics early 1970s in the City Fire Station Lecture Room

Auckland was in a building boom in the 1970s. 15 factories were being built every year. Industrial growth was occurring in Penrose and further south.

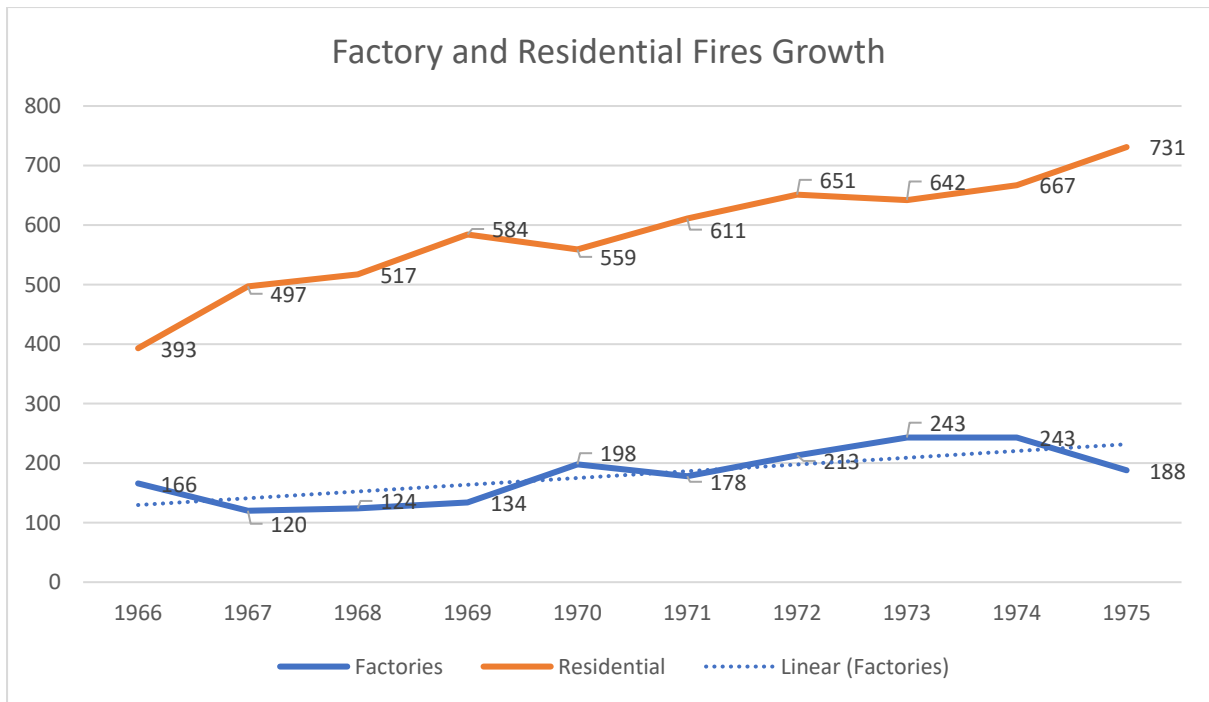
Large fires in buildings (manufacturing, warehousing, storage, commercial, schools etc), where extinguishment couldn't be handled by the first response attendance and required reinforcements to be called, suddenly spiked dramatically in Auckland in 1971. From an average of 5.4 per year for the previous 11 years large fires rose to 18 in 1971, 32 in 1972, 38 in 1973, 23 in 1974, 37 in 1975, 39 in 1976, 32 in 1977, 24 in 1978 and 35 in 1979, an average of just under 31 per year for the 9-year period.

1960-1970 Average	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1971-1979 Average
5.4	18	32	38	23	37	39	32	24	35	30.8

Table Source: Auckland is Burning; A Study of Large Fires in Auckland 1960-1979, David M. Neil 2022.



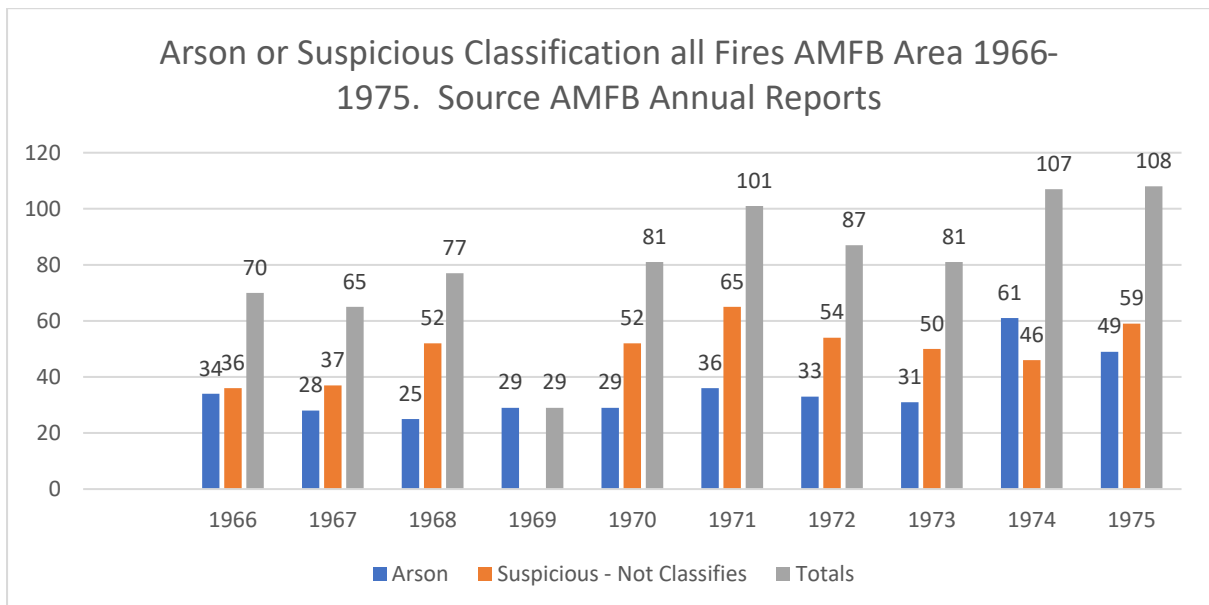
Source: Auckland is Burning; A Study of Large Fires in Auckland 1960-1979, David M. Neil 2022.



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Fatal Fires also showed a sharp increase.

Arson was also a large contributor to the increase of fires. Convictions for the crime were few due to the lack of coordination between the Fire Brigade, Police and Forensic Science.



Source: Auckland is Burning; A Study of Large Fires in Auckland 1960-1979, David M. Neil 2022.

January 17, 1970, late afternoon, Saturday, USA Vice President Spiro Agnew in NZ on a three-day visit, stayed in Hotel Inter-Continental, Princes Street and Waterloo Quadrant. Visit attracted large anti-Vietnam War demonstrations. Brigade received private fire alarm call to hotel, proved to be malicious false alarm. Some said Brigade attended to assist Police in crowd control. All appliances had left the scene within eight minutes. An unexploded dynamite bomb was found outside the

hotel. There were many radical protests against NZ's involvement in the Vietnam War, several incidents damaged property.

February 2 1970, Monday, 56-hour week, 3 shift system introduced, green, red and blue watches, two-day shifts, two-night shifts, two days off, 100 new and additional Firemen recruited and trained. Replaced 84-hour 2 shift system, 24 hours on, 24 hours off. Executive Third Officers [was to be Assistant Deputy Chief Fire Officers, renamed Divisional Officers one year later] appointed [not advertised, one Senior Station Officer turned it down], Auckland Brigade split into two Divisions based at Headquarters [Ron Neary, David Woodward and Barry Radovan] and Otahuhu [Terry Miller, Jack Kerr and Noel Glen]. Chief Lloyd [LF] Wilson, DCFO Allan [AW] Bruce, Ron [RH] Neary was reappointed to his old Third Officer role one year later, January 1974 David Woodward appointed Senior Divisional Officer [new title for old Fourth Officer]. Locally shift pattern changed mid-1971 to 24hrs on and 48hrs off but reverted to 2-2-2 in early 1972 to enable 2-2-4 shift system to be negotiated. Day shift started 08:00, night shift 18:00. Routine work hours, weekdays 08:00 to 17:00, 18:00 to 21:00, 07:00 to 08:00. Saturday 08:00 to 12:00, 18:00 to 20:00, 07:00 to 08:00. Sunday 08:00 to 09:00, 18:00 to 19:00, 07:00 to 08:00.

The AMFB had 15 fire stations in 1970 that grew to 21 in 1979 under No 1A Area Auckland.

February 2 1970, Monday, Southern Executive Third Officers [one year later renamed Divisional Officers] located at Otahuhu Station, Albion Road. Took over two rear ground floor bedrooms as office and accommodation. Later moved to house on the yard before moving to new Manukau Station. House later Communications Dept after they moved from Headquarters. Workshops used another house off the yard opposite.

February 1970, with the change of duty hours, staff in married quarters had to eat and sleep on station when on duty, including Third Officers [one year later renamed Divisional Officers]. Rent increased. EO's [Executive Officers] married quarters [tied accommodation] continued until 1995 restructure. EO's had to live in Quarters until aged 55, a bone of contention. In 1995 all tied accommodation sold off.

April 1 1970, Wednesday, Municipal Corporation Act required the Fire Service to inspect all boarding houses, guest houses, private hotels, rooming houses, motels, residential clubs, hostels and apartment houses. Auckland Fire Prevention Department establishment increased by five, now eight FPO's. The new Act required fire egress upgrades at Headquarters top floor north wing, and upper floors at Mt Albert, Mt Roskill and Onehunga Stations. In 1975 Department renamed Fire Safety.

The Fire Safety (Evacuation of Buildings) Regulations came into effect on 16 April 1970.

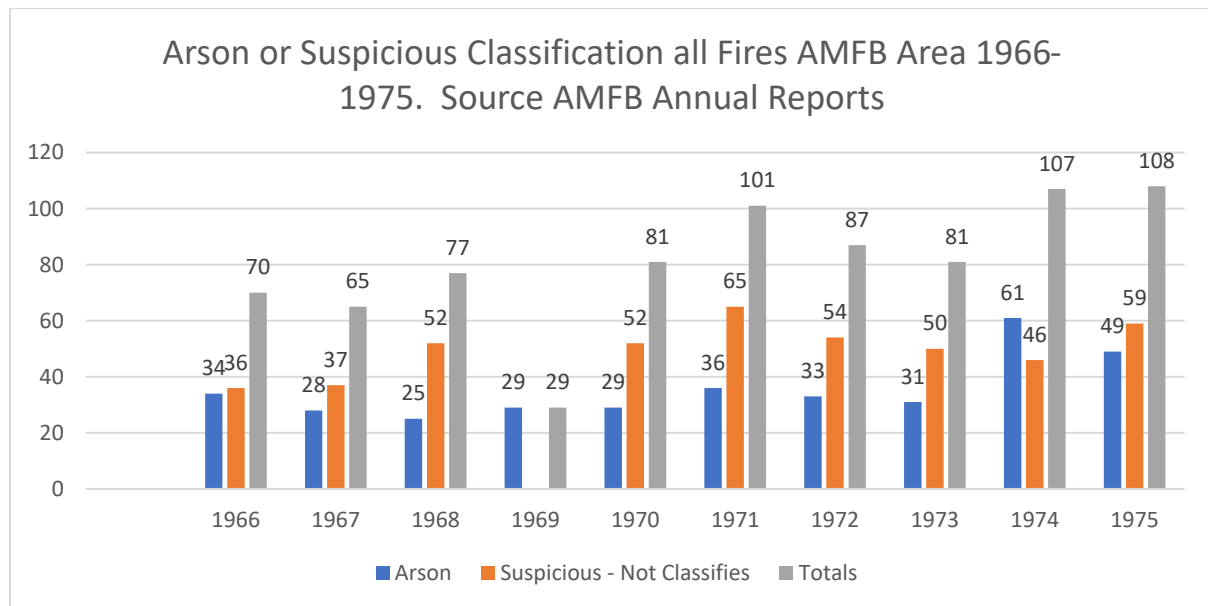
On Thursday September 17 1970, Mt Eden Station, Valley Road and Sherbourne Road, closed and crew relocated to Mt Albert Station. Mt Albert then had two pumps. Station had opened October 1924, sold back to Mt Eden Borough Council and used as offices and store. Mt Eden BC amalgamated with Auckland City in 1989. In 2016 old station converted into high quality flats.

March 8 1971, Monday, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Allan [AW] Bruce submitted his report after his Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board scholarship. He highlighted training in New Zealand did not compare favourably with overseas training. "It is evident that we must improve considerably. It must surely be known that a Fireman is no longer a glorified water squirter." He spent eight weeks visiting Brisbane, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. The Fire Board agreed

to give priority to additional facilities at Mt Wellington and approved appointment of a Senior Station Officer as Officer in Charge of Brigade Training,

April 24 1971, Saturday, Auckland City Council celebrated their Centennial. Brigade participated in an hour-long Centennial Parade down Queen Street in drizzly rain.

Monday July 12 to Friday July 16 1971, Detective Inspector Peter [PM] Gentry, Auckland Police, conducted a national, one week, arson investigation course attended by thirty-two Policemen. Auckland MFB provided technical and practical assistance. July 22 to 26 1968, Police had run a similar one-week course in Auckland. Arson was becoming a problem and cooperation between Police, Fire and Forensics was necessary.



On Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 1971, "Alarms and Alerts" replaced "Make Pumps" mobilising system for fires and non-fire special services. First alarm was 3P plus specialist appliances is selected zones, second alarm +3P, ET, SNK, HL, third alarm +3P, TTL, BAT, ST, fourth alarm +3P, fifth alarm+3P, total 15P. About 1986 the "Green, Yellow and Red Alert" procedure for non-fire special services abolished and all incidents used the "Greater Alarm" procedure. About 2002 responses reduced in line with national standardisation. Introduced at same time were K Code messages to reduce radio and recording time. Arrival messages were K55 special service, K66 vegetation etc, K77 nothing showing, K88 building fire appears small, K99 building well involved. Also modified to suit national standardisation, genesis is still obvious.

The Greater Alarm System of 'Making up' Resources Introduced 4th September 1971 (Replaced Make Pumps System)						
	First Alarm	Second Alarm	Third Alarm	Fourth Alarm	Fifth Alarm	Totals
Pumping Appliances	3	+ 3	+ 3	+ 3	+ 3	15
Special Appliances	TTL	ET	TTL			
	SNK	SNK	BAT			
	FT	HL	ST			
			CT			
Firefighters	12	33	47	59	71	

## Legend

Turntable Ladder 100-125' (TTL)
Snorkel (SNK) 65'
Hose Layer (HL)
Emergency Tender (ET)
Breathing Apparatus Tender (BAT)
Canteen (CT)
Salvage Tender (ST)

On October 6, 1971 a new fire station was opened in Mangere (88 Bader Drive). Coupled with Mt Wellington this station played an important part in recruit training to meet the new shorter working hours (56 hr week in 1970 and 42 hr week in 1972).

On Wednesday December 8 1971, Fire Board negotiating representatives made an offer of a 40-hour week on a national basis during negotiations in Wellington. Firemen in Auckland, Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Timaru and Dunedin working 56-hour on three shifts. Rest of the country worked 72 hours a week. In return Firemen agreed to waive any award increase in wages. The workers' negotiators had accepted the offer, Local Branches held meetings to get staff approval.

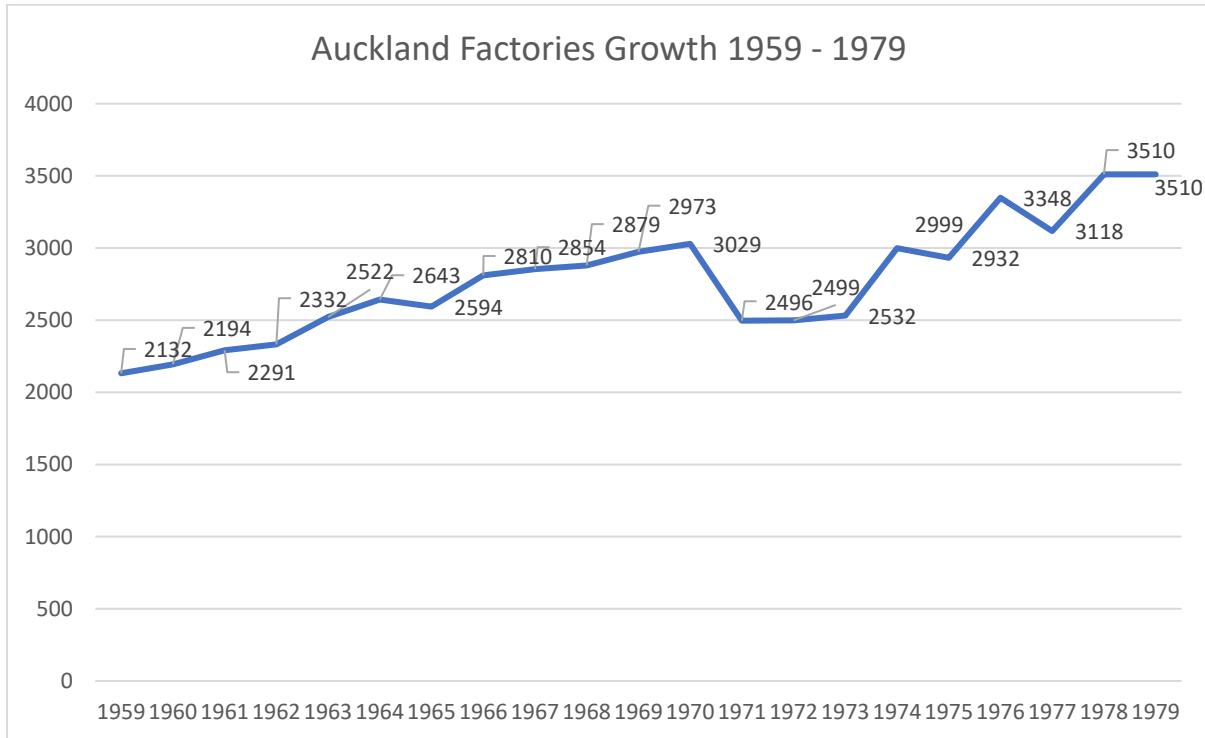
About 1971 until about 1973, vehicle maintenance contracted out to International Harvester, Great South Road, Penrose. Vehicle maintenance returned to Brigade when new Workshops opened in 1973 at Otahuhu. From about 1982 the "white fleet" [all cars and vans] were serviced by the brand franchise workshops.

Many thanks again to Cliff Mears who has tirelessly recorded the AFB history from log books, Fire Board Reports, Newspaper Cuttings and other sources making our job so much easier.

## The Auckland Fire Brigade 1874-2024 Project

### The 1970s Decade Part 2 (1972-1973)

Auckland factory growth, after a slowdown between the end of the 1960s and 1972 began to grow again.



Source: Auckland is Burning; A Study of Large Fires in Auckland 1960-1979, David M. Neil 2022.

In early 1972, Headquarters recreation room immediately above the appliance room was fitted out for senior officers and office staff, including pay office. First floor general office was cleared for the new Controlroom. Ground floor south wing, from yard side, Works Office [off appliance room], Equipment Officer, Divisional Officer, Water Office, Officers Office, Divisional Officer Purchasing, Staff Officer [by stairs]. Off appliance room, old Third Officer's office [south side] Headquarters Watchroom and old Fourth Officer's office [north side] Headquarters Senior Station Officer's office.

On March 31 1972, mid-afternoon, Friday, bottom Kirk Street, Kingsland - Arch Hill, a young boy was missing in flooded pit. Senior Station Officer Gordon [GBH] Henshaw, wearing BA, attempted to rescue the boy from flooded construction hole. Body found on his second dive about 5m from end. Mt Albert's International and Commer pumps drafted to waste to empty hole. Ambulance and Police attended; Henshaw awarded Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board Citation for Bravery.

On 1 April 1972 the 42-hour week, 4 shift system was introduced. [Blue, Green, Red, and new Brown Watch] introduced - 2-day shifts, 2-night shifts, 4 days off. Replaced 56-hour 3 shift system which was introduced in February 1970. Staff "unofficially" changed and worked a 56hr three shift system from mid-1971 to 24hrs on and 48hrs off, but had to revert to 2-2-2 in early 1972 to enable the 2-2-4 shift system to be negotiated with the Fire Boards. Day shift started 08:00, night shift 18:00. Routine work hours, weekdays 08:00 to 17:00, 18:00 to 21:00, 07:00 to 08:00. Saturday 08:00 to 12:00, 18:00 to 20:00, 07:00 to 08:00. Sunday 08:00 to 09:00, 18:00 to 19:00, 07:00 to 08:00.

The Manual of Operations was issued to all Stations [black vinyl folders] in 1972. Deputy Chief Fire Officer Allan Bruce brought template back after tour of overseas Brigades, and was mostly written by Divisional Officers, covering both operational procedures at incidents and general duties. Replaced in 1982 with the Manual of Operations and Station Procedures Manuals [black hard folders]. They were replaced in the 1990's with manuals [red] issued by National Headquarters.

June 6 1972, Tuesday, the Local Government Commission's latest final scheme for the Auckland local government area was published. It incorporated a new fire authority for the western districts, Henderson, Herald Island-Whenuapai, Titirangi and Glen Eden. It also recommended Howick be incorporated into Manukau City. Did not happen.

August 16 1972, Wednesday, new two bay volunteer station at 2 Bell Road, corner Beachlands Road, Beachlands officially opened by Lloyd Elsmore, Mayor Manukau City. Built at a cost of \$11,891.37. Modified in succeeding years. Replaced Council building in Wakelin Road, opposite shops.

On Monday September 25 1972, the new Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board Controlroom was officially opened. It occupied the first-floor south wing, Headquarters, Pitt Street [old General Office space], cost \$63,349, staffed by four people on each of four watches. City Station had one of those four Operators rostered to its own Watchroom located in the front office [the first 1944 Watchroom, then Deputy Chief and Third Officer's offices] on the appliance room. It lasted about two years, slowed City responses. June 1975, new Vigilant Mark Ten fire alarm receiving equipment started to be installed, later replaced by Vigilant Mark Twelve system. Double doors cut into the yard side wall to lift equipment in and out. January 1989, Controlroom moved across the yard to top floor Region Building.

Late 1972 new aluminised "silver" nomex firefighting bunker coats started to be introduced replacing recently introduced hyperlon tunics which tended to melt. Each nomex bunker coat cost \$110. Were replaced mid-1990 by short lived, hot to wear, "yellow PVC tunic and over trousers".

October 20 1972, Friday, new Fire Services Act 1972, introduced and came into effect on Sunday, April 1 1973.

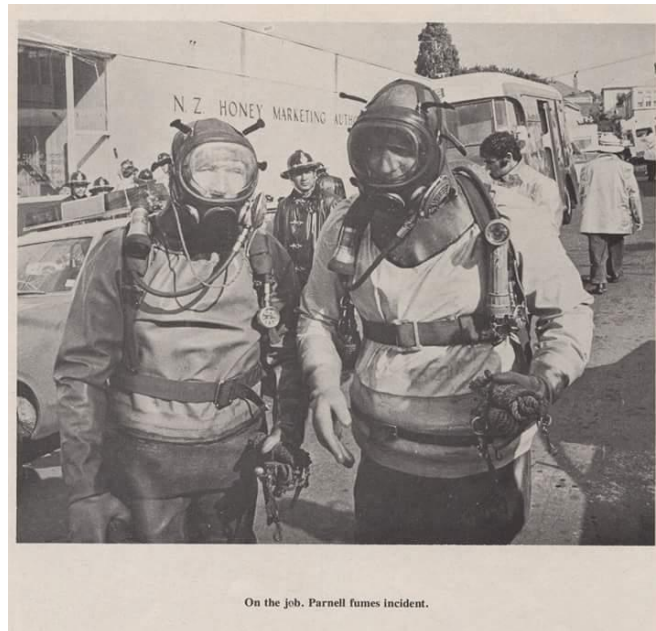
1973, Auckland MFB budget was \$3,020,483, 404 permanent staff, 177 volunteer staff and 32 ancillary staff.

January 31 1973, 17:00, Wednesday, applications for Auckland MFB Fourth Officer closed. Applications were invited from suitably qualified persons for the position of Fourth Officer to the Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board. Terms and conditions of appointment will be in accordance with the New Zealand Executive Fire Officers' Industrial Agreement. Applicants are required to have had extensive operational fire experience. possess a sound technical knowledge of fire engineering, administration and fire prevention, and it will be an advantage to be the holder of a Diploma of the Institution of Fire Engineers. A three-bedroom flat at Headquarters will be provided. Full details should be shown in the application form FSC13 which may be obtained from the undersigned with whom applications will close at 5 pm on Wednesday, January 31 1973. Rex [RJW] Levis, Secretary. Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board, Pitt Street. Auckland 1. David Woodward was reappointed to his old position which was done away with when the three-shift system started, rank renamed Senior Divisional Officer.

February 27 1973, 09:15, Tuesday, Parnell pump, running call, fumes from leaking drums on back articulated truck, on empty section, Earle and Churton Streets, Parnell. Afternoon February 26 1973 MV Good Navigator had discharged storm damaged drums, some were leaking merphos, a



organophosphate cotton defoliant for Australia. AHB Dangerous Goods Store refused the truck entry, truck stopped a few times, at Winstone on The Strand and below Parnell Station, all became contaminated sites. Very busy day, regional mobilisation. About 6,000 people evacuated from lower Parnell, 643 people treated at Auckland Hospital, including 41 firemen. Incident lasted three weeks and involved five main sites. Remaining merphos buried at Meola Road tip. Known as 'Parnell pong'. FPO [Fire Prevention Officer] Stuart Withiel [SW] Thomas soon appointed first TLO [Technical Liaison Officer]. Commission of Inquiry held.



The February 27 1973 Commission of Inquiry Report recommended that Area ESCC [Emergency Services Coordinating Committee] be formed, chaired by Police. Members from Police, Fire, Ambulance, the Military and Civil Defence. The subcommittee was the HSTLC [Hazardous Substances Technical Liaison Committee], chaired by NZFS, comprised the technical expert groups. As of 2023, each of the Three Auckland Districts have regular 111 Club meetings (Police, Fire, St John). (The HSTLC model finished in 2018 and has been replaced with the Hazardous Substance Local Coordination Committee (HSLCC) model. The Coordinating Executive Group under the Civil Defence Act (Police, Fire and St John are members) was established in 2008 and operates across the region, chaired by the CE of the Auckland Council.

April 1 1973, Sunday, Jack [JK] Hunn appointed Chairman of Fire Service Council, replacing Earle [Henry Lipman E] Perryman. Perryman was Deputy Director of Internal Affairs. Hunn had chaired Sprott House Inquiry and had earlier proposed a national fire service. He soon became first Chairman of new New Zealand Fire Service.

April 30 1973, Monday, Ken [KG] Heley appointed Chairman of Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board, replaced Harold [HE] Watts.

About mid-1973, Headquarters quarters block 12 to 15, facing onto the yard, demolished to extend yard for parking and drill purposes. The demolition contractor under estimated the amount of steel and thickness of concrete, had extreme difficulty demolishing the block, went bankrupt. Three other blocks quarters demolished August 1986.

July 23 1973, Monday, new Mt Wellington Training Centre lecture and service building opened by Sir Jack [JK] Hunn, Chairman, Fire Service Council. Also present were Chief Fire Service Officer Bill [WJ]

Henderson and his Deputy, Sam [SB] Irvine [ex Auckland]. Service honours presented during parade, followed by display. New one floor, concrete block building included two lecture rooms, BA maintenance room, office, ablutions, and mess room. Building started early November 1972. Building just beside rear of station and directly behind the two houses, entry off yard. Later (1995) far house occupied as Auckland City East management office and other house by Training as accommodation.

September 1973, first time in peacetime, two-woman Miss Vanessa Beattie and Mrs Noeline Davis started in Auckland MFB Controlroom, uniformed but non-operational staff. Women had staffed Station Watchrooms and Brigade Controlroom during WW2.

October 1973, Orere Point Fire Party formed operating out of a shed in the camping ground. Personnel trained by Auckland MFB Officers and Firemen. Ric Canty first Officer in Charge, equipment trailer towed by private cars.

October 22 1973, Monday, Brigade Workshops opened at Albion Road, behind Otahuhu Fire Station. Replaced Workshops at Headquarters. Bob Scott first Workshop Supervisor at Otahuhu, later John White.

November 12 1973, Monday, third Brigade visit, inspection and display of firefighting techniques for the Governor General, Sir Denis Blundell, Mt Wellington Training Centre, Mt Wellington. First was December 19 1942.

Late 1973, Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board approved employing station cleaners, on short hours, to free up time for operational crews to do more operational planning and readiness activities. The 1995 Cummings restructure made them redundant, never replaced. Firefighters clean their own station again.

Many thanks again to Cliff Mears who has tirelessly recorded the AFB history from log books, Fire Board Reports, Newspaper Cuttings and other sources making our job so much easier.

## **The Auckland Fire Brigade 1874-2024 Project**

### **The 1970s Decade Part 3 (1974-1975)**

1974. As part of AW Bruce's 'Two Pump Strike Fore Plan', Mt Albert and Mt Eden site were combined at Balmoral Road, built March 1974. Avondale and Pt Chevalier site was Avondale, rebuilt July 1985. Remuera and St Heliers site was St Johns Road, three properties, east side, near Gerrard Way, St Johns. Onehunga and Mt Roskill site was three properties, Mt Albert Road, south side, near Erson Avenue, Royal Oak. Last two never built. Quicker arrival of first pump became more important than two arriving later, about 94% fires extinguished with one high pressure delivery or less at the time. October 2003, new station location plan, response time based, published. New sites for Papatoetoe [Papatoetoe] built 2003, Manurewa [Manukau] built 2003, Mt Roskill built 2009, Te Atatu built 2011, Takapuna built 2013, Grey Lynn [Ponsonby] built 2016, East Coast Bays built 2021 and Henderson (section purchased 2022 in Swanson Rd near intersection with Great North Road). No building activity at the Henderson site as of August 2023.

Early 1974, the Auckland MFB Controlroom, Pitt Street managed 1,402 PFA [private fire alarms] and 900 SFA [street fire alarm] boxes. Highest concentration of the SFAs were in Remuera which coincidentally had the highest concentration of residential telephones.

January 1 1974, Tuesday, New Years Honours List. Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service [QFSM] to Chief Fire Officer Lloyd [LF] Wilson, Auckland Metropolitan Fire Brigade.

February 6 1975, Wednesday, Auckland and North Shore Fire Brigades Union and the Canterbury Fire Brigades Union submitted a request to the Urban Fire Authorities' Association for a separate award for their members. Their Firemen attended ten times the number of calls that Firemen in smaller centres such as Gisborne and Hamilton attend. With the exception of Divisional Officers, Firemen in both areas were on the same rate of pay. Did not happen.

March 18 1974, Monday, new three double bay, one floor station, 209 Balmoral Road, through to Dunbar Road, near Eldon Road, occupied, two pumps. Architect Richard G Hillary, built with dormitory bedroom for crew, separate bedroom for two Officers. Replaced Mt Albert, New North Road, Kingsland. June 2019 closed for a few months while having major earthquake upgrade improvements, crew to Avondale.

May 18 1974, Saturday morning, fine weather, Auckland Metropolitan Fire Brigade centennial parade held down Queen Street featuring examples of nearly every period type of equipment. Display held over the weekend at Western Springs [MOTAT]. Agreed 1874 was year when Fire Brigades consolidated and progressed as one under Superintendent John Hughes. In 1973 the Fire Board recorded "The first organised municipal Fire Service in Auckland was instituted by resolution of Auckland City Council on 1st June 1874 when the Auckland City Council took responsibility for the arrangements hitherto conducted by Insurance Companies and a private firm. The organisation that was instituted by the Auckland City Council at that time subsequently became the Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board. It had been considered fitting that some sort of celebration should be held and a subcommittee set up to consider a program of events".



Parade down Queen Street to celebrate 100 years of Municipal Firefighting in Auckland



A display of old firefighting apparatus was held at Western Springs

June 15 1974, 14:30, Saturday, the 'water polo' rugby test, sold out crowd although 10,000 stayed away, Scotland's only test, Eden Park, Auckland. Auckland lashed with 75mm of rain, parts of Eden Park were a lake. Brigade pumping the worst and largest 'lakes' from behind try lines. Game started

on time, Brigade continued pumping, portable pumps, low level strainers, ejector pumps. All Blacks beat Scotland 24-0, four converted tries, luckily nobody drowned.

August 1, 1974, Thursday, the Act to establish the Fire Service Commission came into effect. The Fire Service Council was abolished. The Commission was charged to Nationalise the 277 local authority Fire Brigades and their 450 Stations. The Act also introduced a restriction on the public use of the words Fire Engineer. Henry May was Labour Minister of Internal Affairs, an ex Petone volunteer Fireman. Move opposed by some Volunteer Brigades, including Petone. The three Commission members appointed were Jack [JK] Hunn [later Sir], chairman, he was chairman of the Fire Service Council; Bill [WJ] Henderson, Chief Fire Officer Wellington; and Frank [FA] Hardy, Chief Fire Officer, Christchurch. Hardy replaced as CFO by Brian [BF] Hyland who started in Auckland MFB. Secretary was Bill [WA Glue] from Wellington.

September 14 1974, Saturday, new Kawakawa Bay VFB formed by Auckland MFB, new two bay station built at 6 Banks Road, Kawakawa Bay. Station officially opened by Ken Heley, Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board Chairman. First Senior Station Officer Bob Spick. 1955 Dennis F8, registered EZ1890, first appliance. September 14 2020, station demolished, then rebuilt. Temporarily relocated to local farmer's barn. April 10 2021 reoccupied, Saturday April 17 2021 officially opened by Hon Jan Tinetti, Minister Internal Affairs, same day and after Pokeno.

December 23 1974, Monday, Auckland MFB commissioned new and additional RT channel on Mt Otau, Clevedon, radio channel two, 99B. This transmitter provided coverage of the southern sectors of the Fire District. In the Controlroom it was Fire Southern. Channel one [111B on Mt Eden] was the main Fire Control channel and RT's always left on this and changed only when in poor coverage areas out south. Channel three was the Alarms and Admin channel 107B on Quinns Road, Waiatarua, later used as the turnout channel. The coded message K37 [change to channel 1], K37-2 [change to channel 2] and K37-3 [change to channel 3] started.

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## The Auckland Fire Brigade 1874-2024 Project

### The 1970s Decade Part 4 (1976-1977)

Early 1975, Driving Courses introduced for prospective drivers, and soon after a refresher course for existing drivers. Courses soon settled into four consecutive days. Defensive driving courses for all staff run on night shifts. Driving instructors' initial course was at NZ Army Camp, conducted by Corps of Engineers, Waiouru.



Sample Attendance Certificate issued to all Driving Instructors

The Fire Board commented

About 1975, American disaster movie *Towering Inferno* released around the world. A few months later Green Watch participated in a demonstration using a Billy Pugh Rescue Net, Divisional Officer Terry Miller, SFMs Andy Clarkson and Owen Fausett were lifted by helicopter off the top of the twenty-two level Air NZ building, Quay Street and Queen Street, lowered onto a nearby wharf. Brigade crews watched movie in many sittings at a small theatre in Eden Terrace. Movie was a fire on 81st level of new 138 level building, explosion destroys stairwells, last-ditch strategy blows up water tanks atop the Tower with plastic explosives, water rushes through the building extinguishing the flames.

January 9 1975, 08:00, Wednesday, Christchurch MFB went on total strike and walked out the front doors. Military Firefighters called in to provide fire response, Volunteers only responded in their normal patch. Strike ended 18:00, January 10 1975. Auckland Union had withdrawn very late from a total walkout strike. In the dying days of the Fire Service Council and Fire Boards, nationally, Unions sought pay parity with Police which was rejected by the Industrial Commission.

April 2 1975, Wednesday, Glen Eden BC wrote to Auckland MFB seeking to join Auckland MFB. Chief Fire Officer Laurie Mathews had advised Glen Eden BC that with the local growth, Brigade had problems raising a crew during work hours. Nationalisation was gathering pace, all parties agreed to a letter of contract, Auckland provided automatic response cover and delayed integration. Stationkeeper[s] on Black Watch, appointed later, day manning, problem arose during a 1983 fatal house fire, crew off station at lunch, conditions and day staff numbers changed. Late 1981 new station built in Glenview Road, corner Waikumete Road, near Railway line, Glen Eden, full paid crew appointed.

July 4 1975, Friday, Henderson BC wrote to Auckland MFB seeking to join Auckland MFB. Henderson VFB had three Stationkeepers since 1971, Black Watch, day manning station to provide immediate response, Third Officer Brian Edwards, Tony Scott and Chris Harrop. NZFS nationalisation was gathering pace, all parties agreed to a letter of contract, Auckland provided automatic response cover and delayed integration until after nationalisation on April 1 1976.

September 20 1975, Saturday, new Clevedon Volunteer FB formed. January 31 1976 new two bay station opened on the Clevedon Kawakawa Road, near Wairoa Bridge. First Officer in Charge was SSO Midgely. Dennis F8 first appliance, fleet No32, registration EZ1865. This was first standalone VFB that Auckland MFB started from new.

November 21 1975, about 07:00, Friday, Station Officer Paul Naish Edwards [31] died at work, Blue Watch, Fire Headquarters, Pitt Street, of cerebral meningitis after feeling a little unwell for a few days. Served with 161 Battery, NZ Army in Vietnam 1967 - 1969. Re-joined AMFB, promoted to Station Officer in 1975. He stayed in bed at 06:45 rising bell, earlier declined medical help, Officers checked him soon after 07:00 parade but found him dead. Paul was engaged to Jenny Beattie [later Jenny Hayes] who worked in the Brigade's general office. Paul created the 'Edwards Stitch' for securing a patient to a short ladder.

December 8 1975, Monday, Otara Station, 341 East Tamaki Road, corner Springs Road, Otara, became operational. New three double bay, single floor station, front and rear appliance access. Additional station and additional crew to provide cover to the rapidly growing area of East Tamaki. Architect Richard G Hillary, builder Merv Allison. Wednesday, July 28 1976, officially opened by Allan Hight, long time Minister of Internal Affairs and MP for Remuera.

1975 Mid-seventies, Brigade often pumped from wharf side hydrants to fill ships holds after unloading phosphates from Nauru, water was in very short supply there. Usually, two pumps pumped for about thirty-six hours, one pump was often a Dennis F12 which just kept running.

March 31 1976, Wednesday, outgoing Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board members were Ken [KG] Heley Chairman [1973 - 1976], Harold [HE] Watts, Charlie [CWR] Large, Jonathon [JR] Firth, IJ Kelly, RAG Wicks, JR Ryan, LJ Robinson, JL Larson, MT Kirkpatrick and George [GC] Carlisle [Men's Representative]. Rex [RJW] Levis Secretary.

April 1 1976, Thursday, New Zealand and therefore the Fire Service changed from imperial measurements to metric. Training began about a year before and intensified closer to the time. A 35-foot wooden ajax ladder became a 10.6 metre wooden ajax ladder, 500 gallon per minute pump became a 38 litre per second pump, later changed to litres per minute, and so on. April 1 1975 New Zealand also metricated road speed limits, 50 mph became 80 km/h, the 30-mph urban speed limit became 50 km/h. Signage initially included "km/h" to distinguish them from imperial mph speed limits, that was dropped in 1987. The Fire Service College embarked on a conversion programme to update all documents from Imperial to Metric.

April 1 1976, Thursday, Nationalised Fire Service [NZFS] became effective. The Fire Service Act 1975, assent given September 19 1975, "an Act to establish the New Zealand Fire Service and consolidate and amend the law relating to the life and property from fire and certain other emergencies". Drafted when Labour Party were in late term of Government, the incoming National Government introduced it unchanged. Replaced by Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017.

The Nationalisation of the New Zealand Fire Services had to wait for 28 years, having been recommended in the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Balantynes Fire in 1947 (report completed in 1948).

Quote: A Commission of Enquiry was held that produced a damning report on the state of New Zealand Fire Brigades. Matters relating to fire safety and building codes produced 5 recommendations.

- That the Means of Egress Code be made compulsory throughout New Zealand.
- Immediate installation of fire-prevention devices and alarms.
- That evacuation drill be compulsory.
- That the New Zealand Standards Institute be given facilities to complete its Fire Prevention and By-law within six months, and that it be made to apply throughout New Zealand within three months of its coming into force.
- That the fire brigade be instituted as one service throughout New Zealand, and brought under the control of Commissioners. That a scheme of instruction, examination, classification, and promotion be instituted. That a superannuation scheme be set up for members of fire brigades and their salaries adjusted.

**Source: (Allan Bruce, (2009), *Into the Line of Fire, The Tumultuous Years of New Zealand Fire Brigades from 1947-2009*, Chapter 4, page 33).**

April 1 1976, Thursday, Lloyd [LF] Wilson appointed first Region Commander, No1 Region, [Auckland]. Retired Friday, May 13 1977 to North Bay, Kawau Island. Tuesday, Born November 16 1920 at the first Pitt Street Station, son of Superintendent Bill [WL] Wilson. Lloyd joined the AMFB on May 13 1937 as an 18-year-old Watchroom Attendant, He lived most of his life on a Fire Station, old Pitt Street, new Pitt Street, Mt Eden and Ellerslie. Completed exactly forty years' service.

April 1 1976, Thursday, Deputy Chief Fire Officer AW [Allan] Bruce appointed Auckland Chief Fire Officer and Area Commander [Auckland]. May 1977 appointed Region Commander, March 3 1982 moved to Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service in Adelaide from where he retired in 1989.

April 1 1976, Thursday, Third Officer Ron [RA] Neary promoted to Deputy Chief Fire Officer. Ron retired late 1977 to Omokaroa, replaced by Third Officer Dave Woodward. Dave replaced as Senior Divisional Officer by Bob [RAM] Baillie, Divisional Officer North Shore. In the 1977 changes, Terry [TV] Miller promoted to Senior Divisional Officer, albeit some dispute over living in Quarters.

April 1 1976, 10:00, Thursday, hand over parade and display, Headquarters yard, Pitt Street, Blue Watch. Change from local authority control AMFB [Auckland Metropolitan Fire Board] to NZFS [New Zealand Fire Service]. Eden MP Aussie [AG] Malcolm, Auckland Mayor Sir Dove-Myer [MD] Robinson, Ken [KG] Heley [last AMFB Chairman], Jolyon [JR] Firth [Deputy AMFB Chairman], Bill [WJ] Henderson NZFS Commissioner, new Auckland Regional Commander Lloyd [LF] Wilson, Chief Fire Officer Allan [AW] Bruce, Auckland Senior Officers and others. Display managed by Divisional Officer Shaun O'Neill, who refused to salute the mayor, much to the annoyance of some Senior Officers. Saluting was not done in Auckland. It was a feature in the Wellington Brigade under Bill Henderson's tenure as CFO.





Front cover of Firefighter Magazine June 1976. Display held at Pitt St to mark National Fire Service.

April 1 1976. Thursday, Auckland No1 Fire Region Secretary was Peter Wilson, an ex-Bank of New Zealand Manager and one time volunteer at Helensville. Peter had replaced Fire Board Secretary Rex [RJW] Levis who retired. The Assistant Region Secretary was Hugh Wright who became a Volunteer Fireman at Manly.

July 1 1976, Thursday, Fire Service crossed axes badge or insignia replaced by Phoenix. A very controversial change that fired up much opposition. In 1980 the Phoenix on its own was replaced with the Phoenix inside fern leaves. Cap badges replaced at same time, again made by Mayer and Toye, Wellington. In Greek mythology, a phoenix is a long-lived bird that cyclically regenerates or is otherwise born again.

December 16 1976, Thursday, Fire Safety staff integrated into Determination No1, previously had own Determination or industrial working contract. Rank titles changed to same as operational staff. Hugh [HEG] Henderson, Principal Fire Safety Officer became Divisional Officer [Fire Safety], Senior Fire Safety Officers became Senior Station Offices and Fire Safety Officer became Station Officer. In 1975 Department had name changed from Fire Prevention Dept.

April 27 1977, 14:30, Wednesday, function to mark the retirement of Fire Force Commander Lloyd [LF] Wilson QFSM, FIFE, Regional Commander No1 Region, Auckland. Function at Mt Wellington Training Centre. Attended by Sir Jack [JK] Hunn, CMG, Chairman, NZ Fire Service, and Bill [WJ] Henderson, OBE, QFSM, FIFE, National Commander, NZFS. Service Honours included 25-year Gold Stars to Third Officer Dave Woodward, SSO's Terry [ATF] Gibbons and Phil [PG] Elmore. Citations to Divisional Officer Shaun [SP] O'Neill and SFM Dave [DR] Boyd. Demonstration of Brigade's capability was followed by afternoon tea.

May 13 1977, Friday, Allan [AW] Bruce appointed Regional Commander, Auckland, replacing Lloyd [LF] Wilson QFSM. Bruce was Area Commander [1A] and Chief Fire Officer [1A01] Auckland. March 3 1982 moved to CFO and CE South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service in Adelaide. Retired north

to Noosa Heads, March 7 2015 died together with wife Ann, in a two-vehicle road traffic accident.  
May 1 1982 replaced as Regional Commander by Brian [BS] Armstrong.

July 4 1977, Monday, KJ Everson appointed Auckland CFO and Area Commander 1A Auckland. Kerry joined AMFB in March 1956 rising to Senior Station Officer, later Chief Fire Officer Hawera, Gisborne, Hamilton. May 1984 appointed Regional Commander, No6 Region, Dunedin, later Regional Commander Wellington, National Commander, retired 1996 to Torquay near Melbourne before moving north to Sunshine Coast where he later died. Replaced as Area Commander Auckland by Bob [RG] Sampson, Chief Executive Officer, National Headquarters.

October 28 1977, Friday, Officer helmet rank markings changed. Senior Station Officers now two 12.5 mm white bands on black helmet, from one 25mm white band. Station Officers reduced from two 12.5mm white bands to one 12.5mm white band on black helmet.

Many thanks again to Cliff Mears who has tirelessly recorded the AFB history from log books, Fire Board Reports, Newspaper Cuttings and other sources making our job so much easier.

## The Auckland Fire Brigade 1874-2024 Project

### The 1970s Decade Part 5 (1978-1979)

During 1978, newly appointed Chairman of Fire Service Commission, Rear Admiral Ted [EC] Thorne, made formal visit to Auckland. A parade, inspection and demonstration held at Mt Wellington Training Centre. Large line up of appliances and staff.

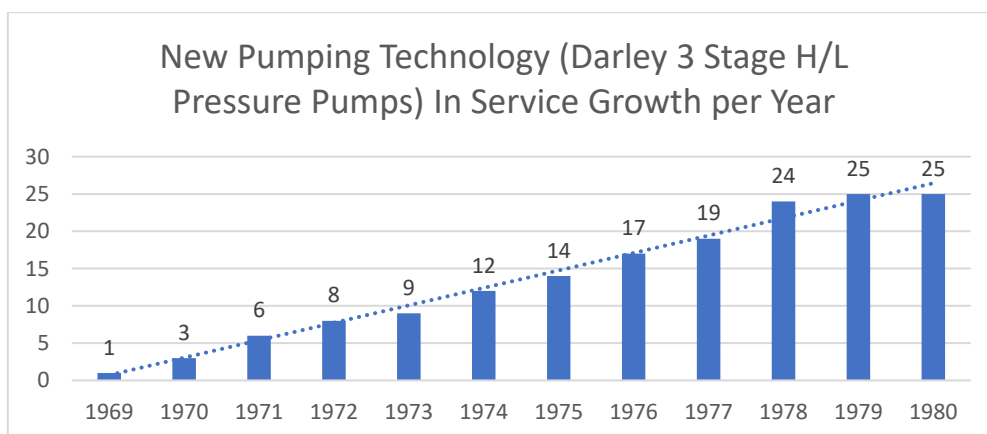
April 1 1979, Sunday, The Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977 came into force. "An Act to consolidate and amend the law relating to the safeguarding of life and property by the prevention, detection, control, restriction, suppression and extinction of fire in forest and rural areas and other areas of vegetation". Administered by the Fire Service Commission through the National Rural Fire Officer. Legislation stretched beyond what was intended. Replaced by Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017.

April 24 1979, Tuesday, three Auckland Fireman went missing on a fishing trip, Firth of Thames. They were Murray Graham Harris [24] Volunteer at Manurewa; Gordon Colin Upton [21] permanent at Otara Station; and Peter Frederick Bradley [23], Volunteer at Papatoetoe. They had launched their aluminium dinghy about 17:00 and were to return about 20:00 with a catch of snapper. Police search began at dawn, at 07:16 a light aircraft spotted the upturned dinghy 8km off Kaiuaa, several Firemen searched in their own boats. Within a few hours searchers had found two life jackets, one at Thornton Bay on Coromandel Peninsula, the other near Pakatoa Island. There was no sign of the three men. Three trees were planted outside Papatoetoe Station, St George Street and Mahon Place as a memorial.

July 1 1979, Sunday, Command boundary changed, Ellerslie and Onehunga Stations became part of Central Command, moved from Southern Command.

July 30 1979, Monday, national carless days introduced to reduce fuel consumption during the oil shocks of the late 1970's. Drivers selected one day in week not to drive, each car displayed a coloured sticker on front windscreen, fixed middle top alongside registration sticker. Sticker noted the day car could not be used, an exempt sticker also available, Firemen exempt. Maximum fine was \$400.

1979, Waitemata [now West Harbour], Station 67, new two standard bays, one floor station built, with steel hose and drill tower, 21 Hobsonville Road, near North West Motorway, West Harbour. Architect Richard G Hillary. Waitemata VFB, replaced Herald Island Station, closed. Had many Chief Fire Officers, in early years managed by Henderson VFB for short time.



Source: Auckland is Burning; A Study of Large Fires in Auckland 1960-1979, David M. Neil 2022.

