

IN THE CORONER'S COURT
AT CHRISTCHURCH
I TE KŌTI KAITIROTIRO MATEWHAWHATI
KI TE ŌTAUTAHI [I TE TARI]

CSU-2019-CCH-000165 to
CSU-2019-CCH-000214;
CSU-2019-CCH-000326

UNDER

THE CORONERS ACT 2006

IN THE MATTER OF

An inquiry into the deaths
of 51 people in relation to
the 15 March 2019
Christchurch Masjid
Attacks

SUBMISSIONS AS TO SCOPE
NEW ZEALAND PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS' UNION
8 February 2021

PRESENTED FOR FILING BY:

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May it please the Court:

1. The New Zealand Professional Firefighters' Union (NZPFU) represents employees of Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) including approximately 1700 professional career firefighters throughout New Zealand as well as emergency call centre call takers and dispatchers.
2. Section 10 of the Fire and Emergency Act 2017 (the Act) sets out the principal objectives of FENZ namely to protect and preserve life, prevent or limit injury, prevent or limit damage to property and land, and to prevent or limit damage to the environment.
3. Section 11 of the Act sets out the main functions of FENZ:
 - (a) to promote fire safety, including providing guidance on the safe use of fire as a land management tool; and
 - (b) to provide fire prevention, response, and suppression services; and
 - (c) to stabilise or render safe incidents that involve hazardous substances; and
 - (d) to provide for the safety of persons and property endangered by incidents involving hazardous substances; and
 - (e) to rescue persons who are trapped as a result of transport accidents or other incidents; and
 - (f) to provide urban search and rescue services; and
 - (g) to efficiently administer this Act.

4. Section 12 of the Act sets out additional functions of FENZ to assist in certain itemised matters to the extent that FENZ has the capability and capacity to do so. Those matters are:

(a) responding to medical emergencies; and

(b) responding to maritime incidents; and

(c) performing rescues, including high angle line rescues, rescues from collapsed buildings, rescues from confined spaces, rescues from unrespirable and explosive atmospheres, swift water rescues, and animal rescues; and

(d) providing assistance at transport accidents (for example, crash scene cordoning and traffic control); and

(e) responding to severe weather-related events, natural hazard events, and disasters; and

(f) responding to incidents in which a substance other than a hazardous substance presents a risk to people, property, or the environment; and

(g) promoting safe handling, labelling, signage, storage, and transportation of hazardous substances; and

(h) responding to any other situation, if FENZ has the capability to assist; and

(i) any other function conferred on FENZ as an additional function by the Minister in accordance with section 12 of the Crown Entities Act 2004.

5. All professional career firefighters in Christchurch are trained in first aid and trained to undertake medical response as co-responders.

6. In accordance with a Memorandum of Understanding between FENZ and St John Ambulance, trained FENZ personnel co-respond to the “purple” category of priority where the incident is immediately life threatening. Due to the location and staffing of career fire stations this means that often fire crew will arrive before ambulance and commence resuscitation and act to preserve life pending the arrival of the ambulance and paramedics.
7. Christchurch’s professional career firefighters were not deployed to the Masjid An-Nur or the Linwood Islamic Centre on 15 March 2019. FENZ ordered professional career firefighters to remain locked down in station.
8. Professional career firefighters consider they would have been able to assist ambulance and other responders with locating and lifting patients, undertaking resuscitation and life preservation aid, and have assisted with transport of patients to hospital by driving ambulances enabling ambulance officers and paramedics to continue to triage and assist the patients.
9. The NZPFU supports the scope of the inquiry. The NZPFU respectfully submits amendments to the following matters listed in the Court’s 28 October 2021 Minute as to scope:

Item 20 A public examination of how the relevant first responders, namely the Police, the ambulance service, and Christchurch Hospital responded on 15 March 2019.

The NZPFU considers this issue should be extended to include an examination of whether FENZ co-responders should have been deployed.

Item 23 What caused the delay in the medial response?

The NZPFU considers this issue should be extended to include whether deployment of trained FENZ co-responders would have had an effect on the time of arrival on scene and provision of medical treatment.

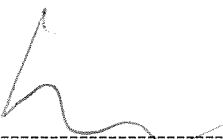
Item 26 Who triaged injured and deceased persons and how was this done?

The NZPFU submits this issue should be extended to include consideration of whether the deployment of trained FENZ co-responders would have had an impact.

Item 35 Did high activity congestion on the emergency 111 line contribute to early calls from the Linwood Islamic Centre being missed.

The NZPFU represents South Com Fire call takers and dispatchers. Fire, Police and Ambulance emergency call takers and dispatchers are co-located in the Justice Precinct in Christchurch. The NZPFU considers this issue should be extended to include whether Fire emergency call takers and dispatchers were available at the relevant time.

10. The NZPFU considers Item 39 Coordination of emergency services (which is proposed to be dealt with by an information request) should be included in scope for the inquiry and extended to ensure full consideration of whether there were adequate interagency planning and procedures, combined training and exercises for terrorist and other mass casualty incidents; whether those plans were enacted on 15 March 2019 and why FENZ personnel were not deployed.



Peter Cranney
Counsel for NZPFU
8 February 2022