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**MEDIA RELEASE: Neighbourhood Support New Zealand Signs Relationship Agreement with Fire and Emergency New Zealand**

19 October 2020

*For immediate release*

Our communities were made even safer today with the signing of a Relationship Agreement between Neighbourhood Support New Zealand and Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

“We have seen more neighbourhoods having to prepare for and recover from fire emergencies recently, and with summer fire season beginning, greater collaboration between our two organisations is both timely and important,” says Tess Casey, CEO of Neighbourhood Support New Zealand.

The agreement, which was signed by Neighbourhood Support New Zealand Board Chair, Louise Grevel, and Fire and Emergency New Zealand Chief Executive, Rhys Jones, sets out the guiding principles, goals, and approach to working together. Representatives from both organisations gathered in Wellington to celebrate the occasion.

With both organisations having a strong interest in community safety and resilience, the agreement was a natural next step to take to work more collaboratively to better serve New Zealanders.

“Many of our Members already have great partnerships with firefighters and stations and this agreement helps to foster and support those local relationships at the national-level. It will help us work together to increase fire safety and prevention actions and advice in our communities.” says Tess Casey.

Rhys Jones, Chief Executive of Fire and Emergency New Zealand says, “We often turn to those around us in times of crisis and need. Strong and resilient communities can stand and respond to emergencies together as well as help each other to recover from emergencies faster – just as we’ve seen in the recent Lake Ōhau fires where the community were the real heroes.

“Neighbourhood Support continues to have a crucial role in preparing our communities to deal with emergencies and natural disasters. Having the opportunity to work more closely together and extend this to Neighbourhood Support’s network of 220,000 households is invaluable,” says Rhys.

The 3 key shared goals of the agreement are:

1. Enhanced safety and wellbeing of our personnel and our communities

2. More effective service delivery

3. Improved technical co-operation

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To learn more about both organisations including how you can be better prepared for a fire or emergency, visit: [www.neighbourhoodsupport.co.nz](http://www.neighbourhoodsupport.co.nz) | [www.fireandemergency.nz/](http://www.fireandemergency.nz/)

**Ends**

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**About Neighbourhood Support New Zealand**

Neighbourhood Support is a nationwide community led movement that brings people and neighbourhoods together to create safe, resilient and connected communities. Over 220,000 households are part of our growing network. We work alongside NZ Police and other partners to equip neighbourhoods to improve safety, be prepared for emergencies and support one another so that our communities are great places to live.

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**About Fire and Emergency New Zealand**

Fire and Emergency New Zealand is New Zealand's main firefighting and emergency services body. Fire and Emergency was formally established on 1 July 2017, after the New Zealand Fire Service, the National Rural Fire Authority, and 38 rural fire districts and territorial authorities amalgamated to form one new organisation. It has nationwide responsibility for fire safety, firefighting, hazardous substance incident response, vehicle extrication and urban search and rescue.

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