

# fire NZ 2026

CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION  
[WWW.FIRENZ.ORG](http://WWW.FIRENZ.ORG)

## DELEGATES PROSPECTUS

VERSION 1.0

**TE PAE, CHRISTCHURCH**  
TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> - THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2026



THE FORUM OF FIRE PROTECTION, FIRE SAFETY AND FIRE ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS

# The Partners.



## FPANZ

The Fire Protection Association NZ is the primary organisation which represents the fire protection industry in New Zealand.

The Association liaises closely with relevant government departments and ministries and, has strong links with other building related associations. The Association has been operating now for 50 years, and has grown significantly by representing more and more companies and organisations that work in the fire protection industry.

Our membership base includes businesses that are involved in fire alarm manufacturing, fire alarm services, fire protection sprinkler industry, evacuation consultants, fire equipment distributors, insurance companies, fire engineers, Fire and Emergency New Zealand and Territorial Authorities.



## IFE

The Institution of Fire Engineers New Zealand Branch is part of an international learned body which was founded in 1918 and incorporated in New Zealand in 1924 with the following main objectives:

- To promote, encourage and improve the science and practice of fire engineering, fire prevention and fire extinction, and all operations and expedients connected therewith.
- To give an impulse to ideas likely to be useful in connection with, or in relation to such science and practice to the members of the Institution and community at large.

Membership of the IFE is drawn from a large cross section of the community, all with a common interest in fire engineering. Examples of organisations that members belong are Fire and Emergency NZ, Airport Rescue Fire Service, Rural Fire Service, the Insurance Industry, the Building Industry, the Fire Protection Industry, Fire Engineering Consultants and organisations tasked with emergency incident management.



## SFPE

The New Zealand Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers is the primary organisation representing the fire engineering professionals of New Zealand.

SFPE NZ is a technical group of Engineering NZ for matters of Fire Engineering.

The purpose of the SFPE is to advance the science and practice of fire protection engineering and its allied fields, to maintain a high ethical standard among its members, to develop fire protection engineering guidelines and standards and to foster fire protection engineering education.

In accomplishing this purpose, SFPE NZ has engaged in activities that are educational, scientific, charitable or promote the practice of fire protection engineering since 1994.

SFPE NZ members include representatives of all sectors of the fire protection industry with an interest in the development, application and promotion of scientific and engineering methods to reduce the risks of unwanted fires.



# Welcome.

**FireNZ is the annual forum for Fire Protection and Fire Engineering professionals.**

**FireNZ 2026 will be held in Christchurch, New Zealand 8th – 10th September 2026.**

The conference is once again presented by the Fire Protection Association of New Zealand, the Society of Fire Protection Engineers NZ Chapter, and the Institution of Fire Engineers New Zealand Branch.

Our annual FireNZ national conference has established a reputation as the premier fire industry event for keeping abreast of advancements in all aspects of fire safety in New Zealand.

FireNZ provides a comprehensive national forum for fire industry professionals. It draws delegates from countries throughout the Pacific and keynote speakers from around the world.

The conference programme is designed to provide insight and learning, to extend current thoughts on the various presentation topics, and to provide robust debate around key industry issues. FireNZ delegates are industry professionals with a strong interest in the latest developments across fire protection and related products and services.

**The conference will provide information for, amongst others:**

- Fire Protection Contractors
- Fire Consultants
- Fire Engineers
- Architects
- Building Surveyors
- Property Developers
- Distributors and Installers
- Insurance Professionals
- Fire Equipment Manufacturers
- Fire Survey Personnel
- Regulatory Authorities
- Territorial Authorities
- Fire Risk-Management Personnel
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand Operational and Volunteer Personnel
- Property and Facilities Managers
- System Designers HVAC/ Fire

Venue: Te Pae Conference Centre, Christchurch



**IF YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN FIRE SAFETY, YOU SHOULD ATTEND.**

THE FORUM OF FIRE PROTECTION, FIRE SAFETY AND FIRE ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS

# The Sponsors.



We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the Sponsors for this year's conference and exhibition.



## BOSS Passive Fire

– Gold Sponsor

At BOSS Fire, we specialise in cutting edge passive fire protection systems that simplify compliance and raise safety standards across residential and commercial construction.

Fire safety is critical, but often complex. We remove that complexity with intuitive, high-performance products that reduce on-site risk, lower labour costs, and ensure code compliance. Designed by experts with trade and engineering backgrounds with decades of experience 'on the tools', we understand the entire build process; from specification to final sign-off.

In an industry weighed down by legacy products and rigid systems, we innovate to make passive fire protection easier, faster, and more reliable. Our purpose: Make it easier to build cost-effective, safer places to live.



## Winstone Wallboards (GIB)

– Gold Sponsor

Passive fire safety isn't just about a product; it's about system performance. We love our GIB® products, but they alone don't deliver performance. Every component of a building assembly works in concert to produce the outcome that protects lives and meets compliance requirements. That is the value we're committed to delivering for our customers, and that is what we design, test, and stand behind. Our technical support and regularly updated technical literature means the latest building system solutions are always in your hands. Making your job easier, without ever compromising safety of the public, is what drives everything we do. Let's keep building safer together.





## Pertronic

### – Coffee Cart Sponsor

Pertronic Automatic Fire Alarm Systems – New Zealand made & New Zealand supported

Pertronic Industries Ltd, based in Lower Hutt, Wellington, designs, manufacturers, and markets fire alarm systems and exports to Australia and the USA.

Pertronic sells its fire detection equipment to accredited fire system installers and provides expert assistance through its technical services teams.

It invests over 10% of its total turnover in research and development, and its 35+ teams' skills range across software and hardware development.

The company's flagship F220 analogue addressable fire panel is widely recognised as being Australasia's favourite because of its simplicity of setup and programming, and easy configuration and firmware upgrades.





## BRANZ

– Silver Sponsor

BRANZ delivers practical, independent building research and testing for a better built environment in Aotearoa New Zealand. We turn building science into practical tools, testing and guidance the sector can trust. This work supports the sector to create more affordable, resilient, sustainable and higher-quality buildings for all New Zealanders.



## Bondor

– Silver Sponsor

Bondor NZ is an established manufacturer and installer of fire rated and non-combustible insulated panel systems.

We specialise in the construction of commercial chillers, cool stores, freezers and all buildings that require a temperature-controlled environment - above or below zero degrees.

We are an industry leader in the construction and fit out of hygiene sensitive environments, clean rooms, laboratories and food processing facilities.



## Zone Architectural Products

– Silver Sponsor

Zone Architectural Products unite a selection of global and local brands for the NZ Construction market. Over the last 20 years we have successfully delivered on a number of high-profile projects across Australasia. Our specialist range includes seismic fire barriers, fire rated paint systems for internal wall linings and external timber cladding, structural steel intumescent and SFRM systems. With a long history in specialist coating systems, Zone's expert advice has been sought after in the industry for decades and we are proud to be a part of the FPANZ community. Zone strives to bring the latest global technologies to NZ with a focus on sustainable solutions including our FireZone Vanguard, a 100% natural non-toxic fire retardant for timber substrates suitable for external use, which is 100% biodegradable at end of life with no adverse environmental impact.

In conjunction with Proline Protective Coatings NZ we are now also representing the Steelmaster range of intumescent systems from Jotun for structural steel complete with approved Jotun primers and topcoats.





## Abodo Wood Ltd.

– Bronze Sponsor

Abodo® New Growth Feature Timbers / At Abodo, we're transforming timber design with sustainable, innovative, rapidly renewable alternatives that supersede old growth timbers. We've redefined what's possible with timber by combining sustainable sourcing with advanced technology. Formed in 2001 by the Gudsell family, Abodo remains a New Zealand-owned, family business that stands for something. From elegant internal feature timber walls to high performance exterior cladding, our range is built to last – and crafted to protect what matters most. Our latest innovation is Vaaro® cladding and internal lining achieving both Type A and Group 1-S.



## Hallmark Group

– Bronze Sponsor

Hallmark Group is a leading New Zealand manufacturer of performance doorsets, trusted on some of the country's most significant commercial, healthcare, education, accommodation and residential projects. Working alongside architects, contractors and developers, Hallmark delivers complete door solutions backed by technical expertise, project management support and proven performance. Hallmark is a specialist in certified fire and smoke doorsets, offering solutions rated up to 240 minutes and manufactured to meet NZBC and NZS 4520 requirements. Through its Every Door. One Partner. approach, Hallmark provides a single, accountable source for fire rated, and performance doorsets, combining compliance, durability and reliability to deliver high-performance solutions for demanding environments across New Zealand



**WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK ALL OF THE SPONSORS  
FOR THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION**



# Conference Programme Format

## DAY ONE

TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

8.00am – 12:00pm  
Offsite Tours

12.00pm – 1.30pm  
FireNZ 2026 Launch/  
Tradeshow Opening

12.00pm – 6.30pm  
Tradeshow Hall Open

1.30pm – 5.00pm  
FireNZ  
Plenary Sessions

5.30pm – 6.30pm  
Welcome Reception

## DAY TWO

WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

7.00am – 7.00pm  
Tradeshow Hall Open

8.30am – 5.30pm  
FireNZ  
Plenary Sessions

9.00am – 5.30pm  
Technical/  
Product Sessions

5.30pm – 10.30pm  
Drinks Reception  
& Awards Dinner

## DAY THREE

THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

8.00am – 1.30pm  
Tradeshow Hall Open

9.00am – 3.00pm  
FireNZ  
Plenary Sessions

9.00am – 3.00pm  
Technical/  
Product Sessions

3.00pm  
Conference Close

*\*Times subject to change*



Upon registration you will receive an invitation to download our conference app where details of the presentations will be shared. Any amendments to this program will be available on the conference app.

## PROGRAMME: DAY ONE

Tuesday 8th September

Time	Stream 1	Product Showcase	Site Visit OFFSITE
6.00am	EHS/Exhibitor Pack In		
8.30am			
9.00am			
9.30am			Te Kaha
9.45am			
10.00am			
10.15am			Te Kaha
10.30am			
11.00am			
11.15am			Te Kaha
12.00pm – 1.15pm	Registration & Trade Show opens / Lunch		
1.15pm	Opening by Event MC Opening address by FPA, IFE, SFPE Presidents		
1.30pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Adam Lynch</b>		
2.10pm	<b>SPEAKER: George Hare</b>		
2.35pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Emma Sutcliffe</b>		
3.05pm – 3.50pm	Afternoon Tea		
3.50pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Abhishek Chhabra</b>		
4.30pm	<b>SPEAKER: Vivien Ye</b>		
4.50pm	<b>SPEAKER: Mayank Shrivastava</b>		
5.05pm	<b>SPEAKERS: Xiang Zhou</b>		
5.20pm	<b>SPEAKER: Natasha Leniston-Bagnall</b>		
5.35pm	Conference Close / Recap		
5.35pm – 6.35pm	Drinks and Canapes		
7.00pm – 10.30pm	FireNZ Presidents Club <i>by invitation only</i>		

*Please note that the speakers and topics are correct at the time of publication but are subject to change if required*

## PROGRAMME: DAY TWO

Wednesday 9th September

Time	Stream 1	Product Showcase
7.00am – 8.00am	Registration & Trade Show opens	
8.25am	Opening by Event MC	
8.30am	<b>Construction Fire Safety - a discussion</b>	
9.25am	<b>SPEAKER: Marnix Kelderman</b>	
9.50am	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Gavin Freeman</b>	
10.35am – 11.20am	Morning Tea	
11.20am	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr Linus Lim</b>	
12.05pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr Claire Benson</b>	
12.45pm – 1.30pm	Lunch	
1.30pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Adam Lynch</b>	
2.10pm	<b>SPEAKER: Nadine Fargier</b>	
2.25pm	<b>SPEAKER: Darren Aitken et al</b>	
3.05pm – 3.50pm	Afternoon Tea	
3.50pm	<b>SPEAKER: Cameron Douglas</b>	
4.25pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Emma Sutcliffe</b>	
5.00pm	<b>SPEAKER: Charles Boyce</b>	
5.25pm	Conference Close / Recap	
5.35pm	Drinks and Canapes	
7.00pm	GALA DINNER	
	Close of Day Two	

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## PROGRAMME: DAY THREE

Thursday 10th September

Time	Stream 1	Product Showcase
7.30am – 8.30am	Registration & Trade Show opens	
8.55am	Opening by Event MC	
9.00am	<b>SPEAKERS: Darren Aitken/Darin Millar</b>	
9.25am	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Gavin Freeman</b>	
9.50am	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: James Lake</b>	
10.35am – 11.10am	Morning Tea	
11.00am – 12.20pm	<b>KEYNOTE COUCH SESSION</b> <i>Panel TBA</i>	
	Formal Conference Closing Address	
12.20pm – 1.15pm	Lunch	
1.30pm	Trade Show closes	
1.15pm	<b>KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Dr Linus Lim</b>	
1.45pm	<b>SPEAKER: Dr Aatif Ali Khan</b>	
2.10pm	<b>SPEAKER: Samuel Aguiar</b>	
2.35pm	<b>SPEAKER: Morteza Taghizadeh</b>	
3.00pm	Conference Closes	

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# International & Keynote Speakers

We wish to acknowledge and thank all of the Speakers for this year's conference and exhibition.



## Abhishek Chhabra

Director International Initiatives, Firestop Contractors International Association

Presentation Title: **Architecting Trust: Harnessing the ISO 17000 “Toolbox” and FCIA’s DIIM™ Framework for New Zealand’s Passive Fire Future**

Abhishek Chhabra is an assurance industry expert with over 20 years of experience in conformity assessment across sectors including consumer electronics, machinery, and construction. He possesses deep expertise in international compliance standards from North America, Europe, Britain, ISO, and India.

A passionate advocate for passive fire protection (PFP), Abhishek has worked extensively with Testing, Inspection, and Certification (TIC) bodies to ensure the fire safety compliance of building materials and installations. He is dedicated to educating the fire safety ecosystem including His influence extends to global standards development; he has contributed to the development of standards for BIS (India), SASO (Saudi Arabia), UL (USA), and the UAE Fire and Life Safety Code of Practice. Notably, he contributed to the UK government’s “Independent Review of the Construction Product Testing Regime.”

Currently, Abhishek represents the Firestop Contractors International Association (FCIA) and the National Fireproofing Contractors Association (NFCA), spearheading global awareness of PFP practices.

Beyond fire safety, he empowers professionals through tic.guru, offering specialized educational courses and bespoke consulting for the assurance industry. He also hosts the “Masterclass in Assurance Industry” on Udemy. Throughout his career, Abhishek has remained committed to bridging the gap between technical regulations and their practical implementation to enhance global safety and quality.



## James Lake

Director of Training, International Fire Suppression Alliance

Presentation Title: **Fire Sprinkler Protection for Carparks - The Impact of hazard Classification Changes and Evolving Challenges**

As the *Director of Training* for IFSA Mr. Lake oversees the development and delivery of IFSA training programs and presentations. He has over 40 years of experience in fire protection including code enforcement in Vestal, NY USA, industry representation at the National Fire Sprinkler Association, codes and standards administration at the National Fire Protection Association and manufacturing at Viking Corporation.

Mr. Lake holds a bachelor's degree in Fire Prevention Administration and a master's degree in education. He has developed and delivered technical presentations and training seminars on numerous topics related to fire protection to large and small groups throughout the United States and around the world.

## Adam W. Lynch

Lieutenant at Engine 250/HazMat Tech Unit 250 of FDNY at New York City Fire Department

Presentation Title: **Lithium-Ion Battery Fires: Evolving Tactics and Trends**

Lieutenant Adam W. Lynch is currently assigned to Engine 250 of the FDNY, which is also Brooklyn's Hazardous Materials Technician Unit. He has 20 years of experience with the FDNY with previous assignments including Ladder 11 (Alphabet City/Lower East Side/East Village of Manhattan) as a firefighter, and Division 3 (Midtown Manhattan to Harlem) as a Lieutenant.

As the FDNY HazMat Operations Tech 1 Coordinator, he was responsible for the implementation of training and certification of 1500 firefighters and officers assigned to Special Operations Command Ladders (now relabeled as HazMat Support ladders) to the HazMat Operations Level. He is a regular instructor at the FDNY Fire Academy, tasked with facilitating both the initial and refresher training of Chemical Protective Clothing units, Decontamination Engines, Hazmat Support Ladders, Green Energy Emergency Ops, Foam Ops, as well as HazMat Technician 2.

Lt. Lynch has also delivered classes across the United States as a lead instructor with Hazard 3 as well as being a featured speaker at the International Association of Fire Chiefs HazMat Conference in Baltimore, MD, the Delaware Emergency Mgmt. HazMat Conference, Oregon State Fire Marshall HazMat Conference and the HazMat Instructors Conference (HMIC) in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Prior to joining the FDNY, he was a science teacher for the New York City Department of Education. He is a graduate of Fairfield University in Fairfield, CT with a Double B.A. in Politics and American Studies.



## Gavin Freeman

Commissioner, Fire Rescue Victoria

Gavin Freeman AFSM is the Fire Rescue Commissioner. Gavin joined FRV in 2020 from the Country Fire Authority (CFA), where he served as the Deputy Chief Officer and Executive Director for Community Service Delivery.

Gavin joined the CFA in 2017 from Tasmania where he built his career with the Tasmania Fire Service for 32 years, including seven years as Deputy Chief and Chief Officer.

Gavin previously acted as CFA's Chief Executive Officer/Chief Officer and has undertaken the role of Victorian State Response Controller since 2017, including during the damaging 2019-20 bushfire season and is a Certified Strategic Commander under AFAC's Emergency Management Professionalisation Scheme.

During his time with CFA, Gavin was instrumental in the delivery of major projects such as Emergency Medical Response (EMR), road crash rescue support and the integration of wellbeing services into operations.

Gavin completed a master's degree in emergency management in 2010. He also holds a Graduate Diploma in Executive Leadership, an Advanced Diploma of Firefighting (Management) and is a Fellow of the Institute of Fire Engineers. He is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. In 2025, Gavin was awarded a Fellowship by the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) Victoria in recognition of his outstanding contribution to public administration and the Victorian community.

Gavin received a National Emergency Medal in 2013, Australian Fire Service Medal in 2011 and a National Medal in 2010.



## Claire Benson

Executive Director, IFE New Zealand

Presentation Title: **Systems in Sync - Fire and Fire Protection Engineering for Hazardous Substances**

Claire has over 20 years of experience working with fire safety, hazardous materials and risk management, and has a PhD in Chemical Engineering. In her role as a Senior Process Engineer at Beca she specialises in industrial risk analysis and chemical safety solutions. Claire has worked on projects in research and development, education, in-house and now consultancy roles, and thrives simplifying complex information and systems for both technical and non-technical audiences. She has provided expertise to projects across the world including the UK, EU-wide, USA, New Zealand, Fiji, and Australia. She is passionate about advancing safety through good engineering to help make the environment a safer place.



## Linus Lim

Principal, Holmes

Linus is a Principal at Holmes who specialises in structural fire engineering for steel, concrete, and timber structures. He has over 20 years of international project experience in projects across Australia, New Zealand, the USA, UK, and Singapore. His role entails developing structural fire engineering design strategies for buildings and performance based alternative solutions, working closely with approval authorities and design teams. Linus completed his Doctorate on membrane action and compressive axial restraint in concrete floor systems under fire, and his Masters on the stability of slender concrete walls under fire.

At Holmes, Linus has been involved in a wide range of projects, including developing solutions for technically complex projects and also involved in projects requiring extensive project management. He leads a specialist team of structural fire engineers, working on projects involving response of different types of buildings and structures under fire exposure. Linus also serves on the Australia and New Zealand standards committee for the structural fire design of steel and composite structures.



## Emma Sutcliffe

CEO, EV FireSafe

Presentation Titles: **Extinguished or Escalating? Risks of Delayed and Secondary Thermal Runaway in EVs.**  
**Identifying Battery Fire Hazards in a Post-Natural Disaster Environment**

Emma Sutcliffe is the CEO of EV FireSafe, an internationally recognized Australian company at the forefront of research, consulting, training and response to electric vehicle battery fires. She's an operational firefighter and previously worked as a journalist and an EV charging and conversion specialist. EV FireSafe's research work is funded by the Australian Department of Defence.

Connect with Emma at [emma@evfiresafe.com](mailto:emma@evfiresafe.com) & LinkedIn.



# Guest Speakers



Please note that the speakers and topics are correct at the time of publication but are subject to change if required

## Samuel Caloba Aguiar

Codes & Approvals Manager, Hilti New Zealand

Presentation Title: **Fire-Stopping Standards in NZ: Comparing EN 1366 and AS1530.4 Frameworks**

Samuel Caloba Aguiar is a structural engineer and Codes & Approvals Manager at Hilti New Zealand, based in Auckland. He leads technical approvals and regulatory engagement for anchoring and passive fire protection systems, working closely with designers, fire engineers, regulators, and industry bodies.

Samuel is a strong advocate for holistic fire protection performance, encouraging consideration of attributes such as structural movement, seismic response, durability, sustainability, constructability and acoustics alongside fire resistance. His work supports the elevation of fire protection from a compliance exercise to an integrated building performance discipline.

He is actively involved in industry education, standards development, and regulatory discussions, with a particular focus on enabling informed adoption of international best practices where appropriate, while ensuring alignment with NZ's regulatory framework and construction environment.

Samuel regularly presents at conferences and webinars, sharing practical, evidence-based insights to support better fire engineering outcomes across the built environment.



## Charles Boyce

Presentation Title: **Passive Fire Compliance for Modular Construction**

Charles Boyce is the passive fire + compliance manager for Jensen Hughes with over 10 years of experience in the construction industry. Specialising in passive fire protection, waterproofing, and modular construction, he works across the project lifecycle to deliver innovative, cost-effective engineering solutions.

Charles has extensive experience across diverse sectors and a deep understanding of Australian building regulations, including compliance pathways for modern methods of construction (MMC). He is passionate about partnering with clients onsite to provide practical, proactive guidance that ensures compliance while optimising design outcomes.

Known for his collaborative and pragmatic approach, Charles works closely with architects, developers, builders, and installers to create solutions that meet code requirements, enhance design flexibility, and minimise long-term maintenance.

## Cameron Douglas

Structural Fire Engineer, PTL | Structural & Fire

Presentation Title: **Design Methodology for Timber Columns Exposed to Real Fires – A Thesis Summary**

Cameron is a Structural Fire Engineer and a graduate from the University of Canterbury (BE(Hons)). Since joining PTL, he has been working towards a Master of Engineering in Fire Engineering (MEFE) part-time. He has a strong interest in numerical analysis of structural mechanics and the behaviour of construction materials, including steel, concrete, timber, and hybrid systems, with a focus on supporting structural design and performance optimisation under a range of conditions.

For his master's research, Cameron analysed the behaviour of timber columns exposed to realistic fire scenarios, which have been shown to remain susceptible to buckling even after a fire appears to be extinguished. The outcome of this work is a design methodology to assist engineers in assessing timber columns following fire exposure.



## Nadine Fargier

Senior Consultant Engineer, FM

Presentation Title: **Lithium-Ion Battery Energy Storage Systems: What the Testing Really Tells Us**

French-trained mechanical engineer with 25 years of experience in the electrical industry, I built a strong technical foundation in complex industrial environments before discovering risk engineering — a space where engineering judgment, experience, and practicality truly matter. I eventually found my professional home at FM, drawn by an environment where strong technical skills are genuinely valued, and where research, testing, and engineering fundamentals shape real decisions on site. Over time, I have come to deeply appreciate how FM's science-based approach enables practical, defensible outcomes — focused on prevention, resilience, and ultimately doing the right thing for the client. Nothing is more rewarding to me than leaving a site knowing the next loss is less likely and the risk is genuinely better managed, not just documented.

Born and bred in France, I moved to Mexico in 2008 and then to New Zealand in 2014. These international experiences have shaped my adaptability, cultural awareness, and hands-on mindset in the field. I see myself as a lifelong learner, continually gaining perspective through site visits and conversations. I believe the best outcomes come from listening, collaboration, and applying knowledge with purpose.

Married for 25 years, I am the proud mother of two adult kids (20 and 23). Outside of work, I recharge through CrossFit, experimenting with arts and crafts, and exploring New Zealand in my campervan — all with the same curiosity I bring to my work.

## George Hare

Fire Research Engineer, BRANZ

Presentation Title: **Is full encapsulation of mass timber sufficient?**

George started at BRANZ in the commercial fire testing team in 2016, where he undertook product testing. He moved to the Better Buildings Research team in 2018 and has since undertaken research in a number of fields, including risk-informed fire safety design, facade fire safety, mass timber and lithium-ion batteries.

George spent 2025 in Sydney, working for Fire & Rescue New South Wales as the Senior Research Officer and technical lead for the Safety of Alternative and Renewable Energy Technologies (SARET) project before returning to BRANZ in February this year.

Current research projects include, building fire risks associated with lithium-ion batteries and the potential unintended consequences of high-performance construction.

George is also involved in the commissioning of the new BRANZ Fire Lab, with three new cube furnaces, ISO 9705 & ISO 13784 test facility, two indoor BS 8414 facade fire test rigs and a 10MW large-scale calorimeter.



## Marnix Kelderman

Forensic Scientist / Fire Investigator, Forensic & Fire Investigation Ltd

Presentation Title: **Carpet Type vs Fire Risk**

Marnix Kelderman is the director of Forensic & Fire Investigation Ltd. Prior to this he has been a Forensic Scientist and a Fire Investigator (specialising in origin and cause determination) since 1991 with DSIR (Department of Scientific & Industrial Research) and the subsequent Crown Research Institute; ESR (Institute of Environmental Science and Research Ltd) in New Zealand.

Over the 35+-year period, Marnix Kelderman has gained extensive experience in the forensic examination of fire scene investigations to determine the origin and cause, crime scene examinations, burglary, theft, sexual assault, hit and run, vehicle vs vehicle investigations, homicides and other dead body investigations. These investigations were conducted on behalf of the New Zealand Police, New Zealand Fire Service, District Health Boards, Law firms, Private Investigation firms, commercial companies, the Insurance Industry and overseas law-enforcement agencies. Mr Kelderman has presented evidence as an expert witness in High Court, District Court and other courts on numerous occasions.

Mr Kelderman has coordinated and presented numerous training courses on various topics such as fire investigation, incendiary devices, crime scene examination and specific forensic analyses to the NZ Police, Scene of Crime Officers, Law firms, Fire Investigators and the fire crew of the NZ Fire Service, Fire Engineers, Private and Insurance Investigators, various technical organisations and other forensic scientists both in New Zealand and internationally.



## Dr Aatif Ali Khan

Senior Lecturer, University of Canterbury

Presentation Title: **An Open source tool for CFD-FEM modelling for structures in fire.**

Dr Aatif Ali Khan earned his PhD from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in structural fire engineering. He has provided consulting services for a number of industrial projects globally. He is a Chartered Engineer (CEng) from the Institution of Fire Engineers (UK) and International Professional Engineer [IntPE(NZ)] from Engineering New Zealand. Currently, Aatif is working as a senior lecturer at the University of Canterbury. His research interests include fire modelling, structural fire safety, use of AI and VR in smart firefighting.



## Natasha Leniston-Bagnall

Student, University of Canterbury

Presentation Title: **Strength of Woodcrete under Fire Conditions**

I am Natasha Leniston-Bagnall, I recently completed a Bachelor of Civil Engineering with a minor in Structural Engineering at the University of Canterbury. As part of my undergraduate studies, I completed research on the strength of "Woodcrete", a concrete mixture utilising wood chips as a replacement for stone aggregate, under fire conditions. I am currently studying a Master of Fire Engineering Studies at the University of Canterbury.



## Darin Millar

Fire Practice Leader, Holmes Group

Presentation Title: **Te Kaha - One Team**

Darin has been a practicing Fire Engineer since circa 1995, working on projects in New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and Spain. Current industry engagement contribution to:

- SFPE Executive
- Fire Advisory Committee - Liason between University of Canterbury and Industry bodies.



## Mayank Shrivastava

Sr. Structural Fire Engineer, HERA

Presentation Title: **Fire Resistance Assessment of Steel Columns Embedded in Two-Way Fire Rated Wall Systems**

Dr. Mayank Shrivastava is a Senior Structural & Structural Fire Engineer at HERA (Heavy Engineering Research Association of New Zealand), with more than 17 years of experience across Aotearoa and overseas. He holds a PhD in Structural Fire Engineering from the University of Canterbury.

Mayank has led the design of low to mid-rise buildings, residential structures, apartment buildings and bridges, with additional experience in warehouses, multi-storey developments, and the peer review of complex projects.

At HERA, his work focuses on advancing structural and fire safety design, enabling the sustainable use of steel, and promoting circular economy solutions. His expertise in structural fire engineering includes advanced fire design, development of design methodologies, and contributions to software tools that support performance-based fire engineering practice. He works across research, consulting, membership engagement, and training, with a strong emphasis on delivering practical solutions that benefit both industry and the wider community.



## Morteza Taghizadeh

Fire Engineer, Christchurch City Council

Presentation Title: **Brief introduction of the BCA fire review during the Building Consent process and common fire RFIs - Christchurch City Council**

I hold a Master of Engineering in Fire Engineering from the University of Canterbury and am a Chartered Professional Engineer (CPEng) specialising in fire engineering. I have over eight years of professional experience delivering fire engineering services across the building sector.

My early career was spent with consulting engineering firms, where I worked on a wide range of fire engineering tasks, including performance based fire safety design and regulatory compliance assessments for commercial, residential, and public buildings.

I am currently a Fire Engineer within the Engineering Services team at Christchurch City Council, with more than three years' experience undertaking Building Consent Authority fire safety reviews. My role involves assessing fire engineering reports, calculations, and consent documentation for compliance with Building Code Clause C for new buildings under Section 17, alterations under Section 112, and changes of use under Section 115 of the Building Act 2004.

I am also involved in specialist regulatory assessments, including requests for waivers or modifications of the Building Code and evaluations of existing buildings to determine whether they are dangerous under Section 121 of the Building Act. This role provides a unique regulatory perspective on common fire safety design challenges and BCA expectations.



## Zhaoyu (Vivian) Ye

Fire Research Engineer, BRANZ

Presentation Title: **Towards Integrated Performance-Based Earthquake and Fire Assessment for Passive Fire Protection Systems: Insights from a Firestopping Sealant Case Study**

Vivian Ye is a fire researcher whose work focuses on the performance of building systems subjected to seismic and fire hazards. She completed her Bachelor of Civil Engineering with Honours (2018) and Master of Engineering Studies in Fire Engineering (2019) at the University of Canterbury. She has just submitted her PhD thesis this January, under the supervision of Associate Professor Anthony Abu.

Vivian's involvement in fire research began during her undergraduate studies. This included a 2017 summer research project supervised by Professor Charles Fleischmann on fire ventilation tactics in New Zealand and a 2018 study developing a framework for estimating energy release rates and firefighting water requirements in collaboration with Fire and Emergency New Zealand. Her final year honours project, supervised by Associate Professor Anthony Abu, investigated the influence of travelling fires on structural fire resistance.

Her doctoral research, Fire Performance of Seismically Damaged Firestopping Systems, examines how firestopping systems respond after experiencing earthquake related damage. Through material characterisation and experimental testing at small- and large-scale, her work provides evidence to support more reliable assessment of passive firestopping systems in seismic regions.

Vivian joined BRANZ in March 2026 as a Fire Research Engineer, where she continues to contribute to research supporting safer and more resilient buildings in Aotearoa New Zealand.



## Xiang Zhou

University of Canterbury

Presentation Title: **Transferable and Robust AI Modelling for Smart Firefighting Using Graph Neural Networks**

Xiang Zhou is currently a PhD candidate in Fire Engineering at the University of Canterbury, supported by the UC-CSC Joint Scholarship (University of Canterbury and China Scholarship Council). His research focuses on fire dynamics, temperature field prediction in tunnel fires, numerical simulation of building fires, and the application of artificial intelligence in fire engineering.

He has published and contributed to several academic papers, including experimental studies on temperature distribution in tunnels under longitudinal linear fire sources and numerical reconstruction models for complex building fire incidents. He is currently working on a project titled "Predictive Modelling for Firefighting Applications Using Transferable and Continually Learning AI Models," which integrates advanced machine learning techniques with fire science. His research aims to bridge theoretical innovation and practical engineering applications.





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