

# KwaZulu-Natal

The KwaZulu-Natal Fire Protection Association (KZNFFPA) is the recognised provincial umbrella fire protection association for the province. It offers aerial fire-fighting support (Firestop) to corporate and private forestry growers in the KZN Midlands and is responsible for the camera detection network currently operated by Alasia Marketing (Firehawk) in Currys Post.

## THE FUTURE

KZNFFPA, in association with its affiliated FPA's, the Working on Fire programme, other fire agencies and relevant Government departments, will become the overall co-ordinating structure in terms of the National Veld & Forest Fire Act (NVFFA) serve and safeguard the communities, and protect the property & resources of rural KwaZulu-Natal.

KZNFFPA will be the voice of integrated veld & forest fire management in KZN - for the benefit of the broader communities it is required to serve in terms of its NVFFA obligations. KZNFFPA will play a pivotal role in providing authoritative advice and information on all aspects of veld & forest fire safety and management through a range of services it and its strategic partners can offer, to forestry, commercial agriculture and the community at large.

KZNFFPA is a not-for-profit association governed by an adopted Constitution, managed by an executive committee, operations committee, and run by a permanent staff compliment in its Currys Post-based provincial office. KZNFFPA is representative of all FPA's and their members which in turn are made up of the majority of landowner categories within the province.



# Fire Protection Association

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS to date

### Aerial

KZNFFPA together with Sappi as a member, have upgraded the Riverdale airfield at an overall cost of R0.5 million. This has allowed for the permanent placement of two Single Engine Air Tankers (SEATS), a spotter aircraft and one of the Working on Fire national helicopter resources at the airfield. This has proven to be a positive move with increased utilisation of aerial fire fighting resources to surrounding landowners.

It became necessary to review airfield constraints during bad weather days in the south-western area near Bulwer. A local farmer and member of the local FPA has offered his airfield to KZNFFPA for use during the fire season. Basic infrastructure to support the aerial fire fighting resource was established and once again this has made a huge impact on the ability of the aircraft to manage fires from this new airfield.

A full financial and contract review was undertaken, the end result ensuring that flying rates were reduced between 8-10%, and membership contributions in terms of the aviation budget were limited to a lower than CPI increment. KZNFFPA is working on a provincial aerial support programme which will hopefully bring costs down further and improve effectiveness and efficiency of aircraft deployment and use within the province.

## Communication & reporting

All spotter aircraft have been equipped with new improved headsets to ensure better clarity with communications, especially ground to air. The aircraft also have GoPro camera's monitoring all aerial fire fighting operations. The footage of these fires now forms part of the fire report

submitted by the pilot to KZNFFPA management and the member impacted by the fire. The footage will also assist with post mortem discussions and facilitate improvement in terms of co-ordinated ground and air support at fires. The reporting format for all pilots has also been reviewed with more detail provided.

KZNFFPA will assess the effectiveness of digital radio within the province and ensure that any switch from analogue to digital radio networks is in the interest of all current analogue radio users, is a seamless transition and that a change over offers a medium- to long-term benefit for current users.

## Standard operating procedures

A full review of all standard operating procedures has been undertaken to ensure that KZNFFPA works within a very definitive and structured environment. A number of new standard operating procedures and policy documents have also been compiled to ensure effective and efficient management practices.

## Executive committee

Representation includes all landowner categories - corporate and private timber, government, commercial agriculture and general landowners.

## Operations committee

The operations committee has adopted a terms of reference to ensure that all committee members are able to participate in a collaborative and meaningful manner in turn ensuring the landowner/member benefits from the committee discussions and activities.

*(Courtesy: Bobby Hoole, Chairman KZNFFPA Operations Committee)*

## BACKGROUND

In 1954 the Midlands FPA was established and some 30 years later, became known as the KZN Fire Protection Association and began to provide aerial fire fighting support services to the forestry industry in the KZN Midlands incorporating areas to the north of the Karkloof Shatton airfield, spreading northwards through to Greytown and to the south through to Harding / Weza. The aerial service became known as Firestop.