

Behind every big fire is an even bigger clean up job for Totalcare Services.

Cleaning up in Albany

When Wendy Cocks heard on the news about a big fire in Hastings she kept an ear out for the phone.

Sure enough, at 5am the day after the VJ fire a call came to say a ute-load of dirty, contaminated level 2s was making its way north to Albany.

Wendy is part of the five-strong team at Totalcare who cleans, repairs and replaces level 2s for the Fire Service.

Their efforts ensured that the Hawke's Bay firefighters who toiled to put out the VJ fire had something to wear to the next call-out.

In one of its busiest days ever, Totalcare received 75 sets of protective clothing that Sunday, some so covered in oily chemicals that they cannot be used again.

They all had to be washed twice before staff, who don medical bibs and gloves before handling the most contaminated clothing, could use their bare hands to move the gear.

The mountain of discarded jackets and trousers in Totalcare's "out-tray" is a testament to the level 2s that didn't make it. Some will be used for training, but some were still oily to the touch a month after the fire and will never see service again.



Picture: Dean Tremi

