

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award

The 2008 New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award honours the most significant contribution to Search and Rescue in New Zealand.

Presented to: John McLellan of Moeraki, a well-known and respected member of the SAR sector.

John has been a key player in marine Search and Rescue in North Otago for 55 years. It was after an incident off the Oamaru coast 55 years ago that John decided he could assist with what was then called 'Air-Sea Rescue'. The most significant of John's many contributions to the Search and Rescue sector is funding his own marine radio station.

John and his wife Pauline have spent many hours every day monitoring both marine VHF and HF channels. John was the Chairperson of North Otago Search and Rescue for many years. He was a founding member of this organisation, which replaced the local 'Air-Sea Rescue' group. John only retired from the role of Chairperson under two years ago.

Brian Benn of the Dunedin Police:

"It is always reassuring to hear his voice on the radio. We know we have the support we need when we go out on a mission and John is the local incident controller."

Graham Gale, Helicopter pilot:

"John is always clear, precise and organised. He is 100 percent dedicated to the volunteer operation - and you can rely on him 100 percent of the time."

Murray Double:

"It was not just his voice on the radio which was so helpful, but also the utterly competent way that he addressed the physical and emotional state of a bedraggled shipwreck victim... Thanks to the dedicated work of volunteers such as John, the local marine network is a tremendous help to those in need. He's a person who goes out of his way to help others, for no reason other than that they needed help."

New Zealand Search and Rescue Certificate of Achievement

Presented to: Senior Constable Barry Shepherd, Graeme Harvey, Hendry De Waal and John Funnell.

Early on Sunday 27 July 2008, the Youthtown Trust Rescue helicopter in Taupo was advised that a vessel was transmitting an emergency signal east of Opotiki. The Youthtown Trust Rescue helicopter crew - pilots John Funnell and Hendry De Waal, Senior Constable Barry Shepherd, and Advanced Paramedic Graeme Harvey, were asked to recover four people known to be onboard the fishing vessel San Cuvier.

Arriving at the scene in terrible weather conditions, the team located two of the crew at the bottom of a vertical rock cliff in tight ravines. The steep rock face made it too difficult for winching so Graeme Harvey was lowered on a 70 metre long line to

recover both survivors. Tragically the other two members of the fishing vessel did not survive the incident. After a heroic attempt to recover both bodies and a close call for Graeme Harvey who was struck by a large wave, the team managed to recover one person.

The skill and bravery displayed by these four men made this rescue was possible. They had to fly in very difficult conditions, rescue people in rugged terrain, and call on their specialist search and rescue skills. The crew had to make critical decisions under pressure, and the expertise and commitment each brought to the team served them well.

Presented to: Kevin O'Sullivan (accepted on his behalf by John Cowan)

Kevin O'Sullivan has made a significant contribution to [Coastguard New Zealand](#). His involvement with the organisation dates back at least 35 years, and he has instigated and delivered a number of initiatives during that time. Of particular note are Kevin's efforts with the Coastguard's automated weather broadcasting and the establishment of local communications. Kevin is acknowledged as the 'father' and leading promoter of the continuous weather and '[NowCasting](#)' service which is currently being rolled out nationwide.

This Now Casting service was commissioned in the Hauraki Gulf in 1983 and has been operating for 25 years. Broadcasting a continuous weather forecast and relevant safety information, it has been acknowledged as one of the greatest assets and services that Coastguard provides. Tens of thousands of boaties use the service every year - a number of whom may not be alive today if it were not for the service.