

NZSAR

New Zealand Search
and Rescue Council



TOKELAU
VANUATU
NEW CALEDONIA
FIJI
SAMOA
AMERICAN SAMOA
NIUE
TONGA
COOK IS
FRENCH POLYNESIA
NORFOLK IS

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE REGION



ANTARCTICA

SCOTT BASE

Awards 2017

Gold Award

The NZSAR Gold Award for Operational Activity is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2017.

Steve Orr – St John

Joe Adam

Mandy Jackson

For the rescue of a person from the Whanganui River on 8 May 2017

In the early evening of 6 May 2017, the Taranaki Community Rescue Helicopter was tasked to investigate a SPOT beacon activation near the Tieke Kainga campsite in a remote area of Whanganui National Park.

On arrival, an adult male was located with life-threatening vital signs. Intensive Care Paramedic Steve Orr attended the patient and prepared him for air transport.

However, due to low cloud the flight was aborted. With advice that conditions were unlikely to change in the short-term an alternative plan was required.



The patient was critically unwell and there were limited supplies of portable oxygen. A decision was made to use the jetboat of Joe Adam and Mandy Jackson, who operate the nearby Bridge to Nowhere Lodge. A plan was developed for Joe and Mandy to make a night trip in their jet boat to ferry the patient to the nearest road end at Pipiriki.

Using torch light, and armed with extensive local knowledge of the river, Joe and Mandy safely navigated the jet boat downstream. Throughout the journey, Steve continually monitored the patient in difficult conditions – during the 40-minute trip, supplies of portable oxygen were exhausted.

The jet boat was met by a road ambulance, with Steve hand ventilating the patient for the entire two-hour journey back to Whanganui Hospital.

Without medical intervention, it is highly unlikely the patient would have survived the night. The persistence, teamwork, evaluation of options and lateral thinking of the team, led by Steve Orr, enabled the patient to be transported to life-saving care. The patient was admitted to ICU and discharged three days later.

Without the efforts of Steve Orr, Joe Adam and Mandy Jackson, the patient would not have safely reached hospital in a timely fashion, leading to a positive outcome.

Gold Award

The NZSAR Gold Award for Support Activity is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Dave St John – Coastguard Marlborough For his services to Coastguard and Coastguard Marlborough

Dave St John is an invaluable member of Coastguard Marlborough and a fundamental part of its team. His many contributions include being one of Coastguard Marlborough's training officers, a Regional Coastguard Instructor (RCI), the unit Operations Officer, a Committee Member, and sharing media liaison duties.

As a Coastguard Boating Education tutor, Dave's focus is on-water training, and in addition to training his own Coastguard crew, he also helps train other Coastguard Rescue Vessel users such as St John, Fire and Emergency, and LandSAR.



In the past 12 months, he has dedicated 515 hours to Coastguard, including 95 hours on the rescue vessel, 205 on training, 150 on community events, and 65 hours on maintenance.

When Coastguard Marlborough took possession of their new high-speed marine ambulance rescue vessel, Bluebridge Rescue, it was apparent that a new training programme was required. Dave produced the Standard Operating Procedure and safety information for the new vessel, trained all Masters and crew with a specific focus on high speed operations and using the ambulance bay, and inducted and trained crew from other emergency agencies. He also works hard to foster teamwork and cooperation – and not just within Coastguard. Dave has helped build good working relationships with St John, New Zealand Police, the Harbourmaster, LandSAR and Fire and Emergency, creating a strong, collaborative and efficient search and rescue presence in the Marlborough Sounds. In addition, he is the organiser of the 'Round the Resorts' – an annual visit to resorts and accommodation houses in the Marlborough Sounds to give staff safety advice to help prepare them for the summer season.

With one of the highest responses to callouts out of any of the Masters, along with his positive attitude and fostering of good morale amongst the team, Dave is a proud and valued member of Coastguard and a huge asset to the Marlborough region.

Certificate of Achievement

The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement for Operational Activity are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2017.

Methven LandSAR

For the rescue of a tramper from 13 Mile Bush on 2 April 2017

On 2 April, one member of a tramping party badly injured his ankle while walking to the top of Big Ben Range near 13 Mile Bush in Canterbury.

Via cell phone the party contacted Ambulance to request medical assistance for the injured person. A helicopter was tasked to assist but could not get to them due to low cloud and bad weather. The job was handed to Police who tasked a search and rescue team from Methven LandSAR to extract the patient by stretcher to a position where St John could attend.



A team of 10 people from Methven LandSAR headed in at about 1500hrs, reaching the injured party in a steep gully at about 1945hrs. In their attempt to move downhill, they found themselves in thick bush and scrub best described as tiger country. Due to darkness, the steep terrain and slippery ground conditions, a decision was made to wait until daylight to carry the tramper out.

At first light Methven LandSAR began the stretcher carry back to Bush Stream Hut. Stretcher carrying is a difficult undertaking, even in ideal conditions – in this case it meant a carry through thick scrub, over steep ground, in rain and slippery conditions. Additional LandSAR members were sent in to assist with the stretcher carry and relieve those becoming fatigued. The team eventually made it back out to the Bush Stream Hut late in the morning.

Methven's LandSAR are commended for their risk management, their decision making and can-do attitude.

Certificate of Achievement

SLSNZ Otago Search and Rescue Squad For the rescue of 9 people from Taieri River flood waters on 21 July 2017

Close to midnight on 21 July, Otago's Surf Life Saving SAR team responded to multiple 111 calls from people trapped on the roof of a 4WD vehicle, during severe flooding on the Taieri Plains near Mosgiel. The vehicle had been swept down the river into a large stand of poplar trees and a fence.

Club members James Coombes, Isaac Davies, Matthew Bradley, Max Corboy, Alan Todd, Michael Trembath, Rhys McAlevey, Seth McPhee, Stefan Brown and Scott Weatherall responded with two IRBs and swift water rescue equipment.



On arrival at the scene, the team assessed the situation. Communications in the area were challenging with minimal cellular and VHF radio communications and launching was deemed too dangerous to access the patients, who were approximately 500m away. The team made a 40-minute detour in darkness, through challenging floodwaters and washed-out roads, to find a safe launching place for their IRBs.

Upon finding a suitable location, an IRB was launched and the patients rescued two at a time. A second IRB remained on rescue standby in case it was required. Conditions were hazardous for the IRB crews, operating in fast-flowing floodwaters between trees and submerged objects, in the dark with pouring rain. One patient had to be towed by a rescue swimmer against the current to the waiting IRB.

Remaining team members on shore assisted the patients to a waiting army Unimog, where they were assessed by ambulance and rescue helicopter paramedics. All victims were successfully rescued and returned to a place of safety.

This was a complex rescue that was made even more challenging by darkness, rising floodwaters and difficult communications.

Without the direct intervention of the lifeguards and other emergency services working together these persons may well have drowned.

Certificate of Achievement

The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement for Support Activity are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

John Thompson Coastguard Waimakariri-Ashley

For his commitment and services to search and rescue

John Thompson has been a committed volunteer at Coastguard Waimakariri-Ashley since 2006. He has been the unit's President since 2015, as well as a board member and the SAR Coordinator. Through his work with Coastguard, John dedicates well over a thousand volunteer hours a year.



In the 2010 Canterbury earthquake, Coastguard Waimakariri-Ashley's headquarters were damaged beyond repair. The crew had to relocate their rescue vessel 2km away, adding 15 minutes to their response time. They knew if they wanted to carry on with their lifesaving work it was time for a new building.

John was on the building committee for six years during which time he supported David Johnson, who project managed the rebuild. After many years of painstaking hard work and determination, John and the other members of Coastguard Waimakariri-Ashley opened their new building in April 2017. During this time John also prepared the manuals necessary to place the unit's rescue vessel into Maritime New Zealand's Maritime Operator Safety System.

As his unit's President, John is highly respected by other volunteers for his outstanding contribution and willingness to support his team. He is also active in promoting Coastguard with young people, mentoring them to reach their full potential, benefitting both Coastguard and the community. His energetic and passionate persona is infectious and he makes volunteers feel valued and supported, appreciating any contribution they make.

Certificate of Achievement

David Pontin
SLSNZ

**For his commitment and services
to search and rescue**

Along with his 20 years of service as a surf lifeguard, patrol captain and senior leader, David Pontin is recognised as an outstanding educator. His ability to pass on his skills and mentor lifeguards was recognised by the movement in 2007, when he was awarded the New Zealand Surf Lifeguard of the Year.



At a club level, David helps instruct new lifeguards, IRB operators and crew, emerging senior lifeguards and mentors instructional teams. He is a long-time member of the Capital Coast Callout Squad and also an instructor and patrol captain facilitator for the Central Region, passing on his experiences and skills to the next generation of leaders.

David was appointed to the National Lifesaving Committee (NLC) in 2012 where he served for five years. He held the education portfolio and was responsible for writing an educational philosophy for the organisation. This philosophy now drives all course development in the organisation.

David also led the review of the IRB crewperson qualification, and over a two-year period he developed a curriculum and method of delivery that suited all clubs and the national body.

For nine years he was a National Lifeguard School instructor, training and developing SLSNZ's elite level lifeguards in skills such as helicopter operations, rock rescues and search and rescue. He is also a veteran member of the National Event Lifeguard Squad, providing an on-water lifeguarding service at SLSNZ competitions.

David's ability and passion to pass on his skills makes him truly exceptional in the SLSNZ movement.

Certificate of Achievement

**Jeff Sayer
AREC**

**For his commitment and services
to search and rescue**

Jeff Sayer has given 54 years of unbroken service to search and rescue in New Zealand through his volunteer work in both communications and aeronautical search and rescue.

From an initial role as a radio operator in a large search in 1959, Jeff has gone on to become a leading figure in SAR communications in Wairarapa and Wellington regional groups, and also at a national level.



Jeff has been a key person behind many of the communications developments in the Wellington and Wairarapa districts. In the late 1970s, Jeff negotiated for AREC to take over an HF radio aerial at the Masterton Aerodrome, which became a major part of the local SAR communications network and is still in use today. He also established a SAR communications base at Wellington Central Police Station and was the driving force behind the establishment of radio repeaters on four Wellington high points to enable VHF communications with searchers in the field.

Jeff has been a member of the Wairarapa SAR Committee and an Air Search Adviser to Wairarapa SAR since the 1970s. In 1988 Jeff was made a life member of Wairarapa AREC. As well as his volunteer work, Jeff helped raise funds for a VHF network to enable communication during searches.

In 2002, Jeff was appointed as the National Director of AREC, and worked hard to obtain funding for a major programme of updating HF, VHF and air band radios used for SAR around the country. He was a strong supporter of the roll out of the DMR digital radio technology for AREC and LandSAR.

Jeff has been the AREC representative on the NZSAR Consultative Committee since 2004. He was instrumental in setting up the arrangements for AREC to receive SLA funding from the NZSAR Council, and has also represented AREC in many sector-wide forums and workshops during this time.

He retired from the position of National Director in December 2017.

Certificate of Achievement

Pete Corbett LandSAR

For his commitment and services to search and rescue

Pete Corbett got involved in LandSAR in the mid-1980s and has been a passionate volunteer in the search and rescue sector ever since. In the mid-1990s he joined the Southland Alpine Cliff Rescue (ACR), while working as a police officer, and later became part of the Wanaka ACR team following a move there. In 2005 he moved to Christchurch where he acted as the SAR Advisor to Police in Canterbury, and was also active in the LandSAR response to the Christchurch earthquakes. He has since held various positions in LandSAR, including National Operations Manager and Group Support Manager, and is currently the Training and Development Manager.



Pete's impact on LandSAR management systems has been significant. He has championed important projects for the organisation, including instigating a coordinated national Incident Management Training Exercise (IMTEX) programme and the New Zealand Land Search and Rescue Response Guidelines.

He has systemised the gathering and processing of information, resulting in a number of practical tools to help those managing searches. Many of the processes Pete developed are now embodied in current SAR course instructional materials, both nationally and internationally.

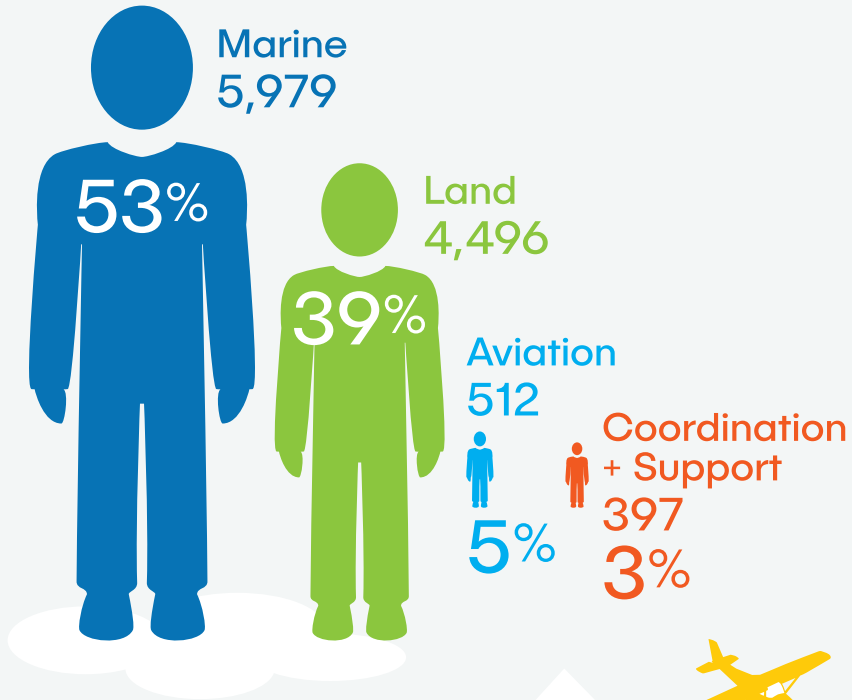
Pete managed the development of the Backcountry Avalanche Advisory Signage, now commonplace on all ski fields.

Pete has provided a steady influence through periods of considerable organisational and political challenges within his sector. His deep knowledge of SAR, along with his leadership and ability to coordinate between the various stakeholder organisations, has steered the development of the current New Zealand search management system.

His colleagues and peers admire his resilience and professionalism, and he is regarded as an important asset to his organisation and to the New Zealand search and rescue sector.

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE 2016-17

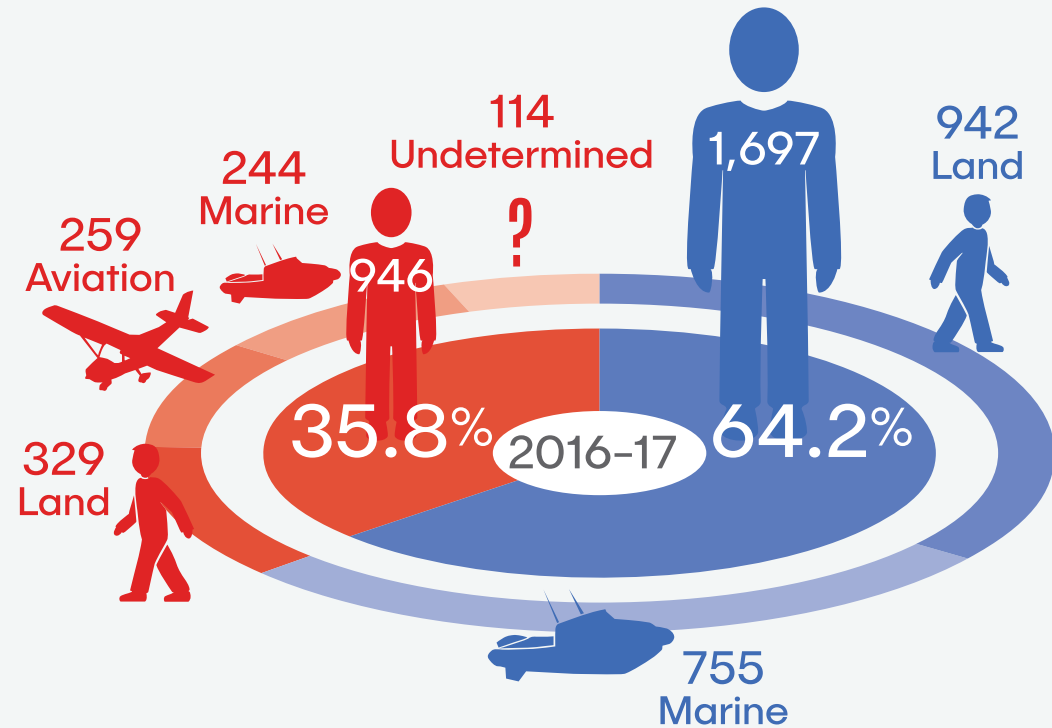
11,384 People are directly involved in the New Zealand SAR Sector



2,643 Category I and II search and rescue operations

CAT II: RCCNZ

CAT I: NZ Police





The NZSAR Council and Secretariat congratulates all our 2017 winners.

Do you know an organisation, a group, or an individual who you think should be acknowledged for their contribution to search and rescue? There are two categories – operational activity and support activity.

More information about these two categories, the NZSAR Awards and the simple nomination process can be found on our website at www.nzsar.govt.nz/awards.

The 2018 Award nominations close 31 January 2019.