

# NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Rapu Whakarauora Aotearoa



**Minutes of Meeting**  
**NZSAR Council Meeting**  
**9:30 to 11:30am, Thursday 9 December 2021**  
**3 Queens Wharf**

## Present

Name	Agency
Michael Bassett-Foss (Chair)	Independent Council Member
Tusha Penny	NZ Police
Jason Ross	NZ Police
Anthony Blythen	NZDF
Nigel Clifford	MNZ
Ian Duncan	FENZ
Don Bogie	DOC
Natasha Rave	MoT
Mike Hill	CAA

## In attendance

Name	Agency
Justin Allan	MNZ/RCCNZ
Bev Driscoll	MoT
Duncan Ferner	NZSAR
Andrew Greig	NZSAR
Wendy Harrison (minutes)	NZSAR
Rhett Emery	NZSAR
Daryl Bloomfield	NZSAR
Matt Wheble	NZSAR
Bridget Hesketh	NZSAR
Tania Seward	NZSAR
Evan Hughes	NZSAR

## 1. Welcome and Interests Register

Michael Bassett-Foss (acting Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees. Regarding the Interests Register, Michael noted he is now assisting Bev Driscoll with the Recreational Safety and SAR Sector Review.

## 2. Apologies

Name	Agency
Peter Mersi	MoT
Bruce Parkes	DOC
Keith Manch	CAA
Kirstie Hewlett	MNZ
Bronwyn Turley	MoT

### 3. Minutes of Meeting 16 September 2021

Minutes from the previous meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

### 4. Matters arising from previous meeting

#	Item	Actions & Decisions	Responsibility	Actions Taken/Status
10	<b>Nationally Significant SAREX Planning for 2022/23</b>	<b>Action:</b> The Secretariat is to scope and prepare a business case for a nationally significant SAREX.	Andrew Greig	See item 9.
13.	<b>SARdonyx data-sharing MOU</b>	<b>Action:</b> Police and the Secretariat will update the SARdonyx data-sharing MOU and recirculate to all parties for approval.	NZ Police & Andrew Greig	With Police for signing.

### 5. Director's Report

Duncan Ferner updated the Council on some key points in the report.

It was noted in paragraph seven, COVID-19 Matters, there has been lots of action around COVID-19 with supporting agencies around vaccine mandates. This mandate does not include volunteer agencies.

Surf Life Saving is the most impacted by this as they are managing surf patrols while being locked down particularly in Auckland.

There is real pressure on the SAR sector with COVID-19, and it will be interesting to see how it goes under the traffic light system.

There is a reduction of capacity in some areas, as agencies have diverted considerable levels of capacity towards COVID-19 matters.

The following are a few key meetings and engagements:

- The Multiagency workshop was held in November. This workshop was also part of the induction of the DSARACs. Looking to repeat the workshop next year.
- We anticipate running further Rauora exercises. The most recent was in Rotorua in November.
- The NZSAR Aviation workshop will be run in March next year and anticipate up to 80 attendees to be at this two-day workshop.

- The Volunteer Engagement Survey will be held next year. This is in the procurement stage and volunteers will be able to respond between January and May 2022.
- Working on the future of SARdonyx. The current contract with Beca ends in June 2023.
- There is a project around SAR Sustainability/Carbon footprint. COVID-19 is impacting agencies taking on new projects.
- Support will be provided to allow NZ Police to engage a business analyst.
- Meeting with FENZ, NEMA around water rescue matters.
- Aviation is evolving at pace and likely to impact the SAR sector.
- Staffing – Matt Wheble has joined the Secretariat as a senior advisor. Matt had been with the NZ Police.
- Given her knowledge and expertise and financial skills, Bridget Hesketh is now sharing time with Bev in the Recreational Safety and SAR Review.

Tusha Penny had a query around a calendar of exercises that had been discussed in previous meetings. Duncan advised that dates are still to be confirmed regarding Rauora exercises.

**Action:**

- *The Secretariat is to provide the Council with a calendar of significant exercises.*

Michael queried the relevance of SOG meetings especially when no one turned up last time. It was presumed everyone was satisfied with the papers so there was no need for people to attend the meeting.

**5a. SLA and MOU Investment Report**

Organisations are talking more about the benefits being derived from this investment – service delivery is being positively impacted despite the implementation struggles.

Since the report was completed the Ministry of Transport has approved the release of the contingency funding for SLSNZ's National Digital Radio Network and Operations and Communications Room initiative.

The Project Plans for both the Comms Room and the SAR App have now been agreed and implementation is under way.

The release of this funding is seen by Surf as a significant moment in their history.

#### *5b. SAR Sector Update*

The Council was provided a summary report of the SAR sector based on reports provided to the Consultative Committee on 17 August 2021.

#### *5c. SAR Quarterly Operational Activity Report*

The quarterly activity was typical for the quarter. SAROP numbers are down due to COVID-19 lockdown from August to end of level 4 lockdown. One thing to note was the high number of volunteer hours in the quarter, but this was largely due to a extensive search in the Waikato area.

### **6. NZSAR risk discussion – SAR Technology & COVID**

#### *SAR Technology*

The sector has been engaged regarding SAR technology, specifically into the SAR telecommunications. The first Innovation in Technology Forum took place in November 2021.

Tusha noted that there is considerable appetite by Treasury to align investments in government communications technology. The SAR sector would benefit by engaging with the Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) project.

The Council noted that the proposed nationally significant SAREX potentially offers an opportunity for communications technology to be tested and validated prior to any funding bid.

#### **Actions:**

- *The Secretariat will update the risk matrix to include reference to wider communications technology matters.*
- *Tusha will give the Secretariat the details of a contact for the Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) project for the NZSAR Secretariat to follow up.*

Nigel mentioned that technological inter-operability should be encouraged. He also commended the Forum should focus on practical solutions. Nigel also noted that information may be able to be shared broadly with other information more restricted depending on security classification, need etc.

## COVID

Draft updates have been proposed to the COVID risk description and assessment for Council consideration.

Nigel noted that the COVID environment is highly dynamic, one thing to note is the latest regulation has provided capacity for SAR to continue the best it can in terms of specific clauses and exemptions. So this risk is being relatively well managed and worth keeping on the risk register because it is unclear what is going happen in the future.

Tusha asked about the volunteer base if they are vaccinated or not? The Council noted that this was an individual agency responsibility but that they all had comprehensive COVID policies and plans.

Justin said there are indications that we should be looking at a busy summer season with COVID in the community creating possible tensions. Dealing with COVID patients are a concern due to their potential impact on responders and facilities.

Tusha noted the need to keep the COVID risk and discussion active and to the fore given its potential for impact on service delivery and on SAR agencies more generally.

### **Actions:**

- *Consult with Consultative Committee members further around COVID risks in particular, the risk to operational response capability due to COVID exposure / infection / isolation.*
- *The Secretariat will collate and then share all SAR agency COVID policies/risks with SAR agencies.*

## **7. NZSAR Budget Reforecast 2021-2024**

The Council reviewed the budget reforecast for the departmental budgets managed by the Secretariat. The Council was briefed on the strong likelihood that significant funds would be requested to be transferred into the next FY due to COVID impacts.

Provision has been made to support the SAR Managers course as there is doubt that the Royal New Zealand Police College can host it in 2022. Tusha said that she would take this up within Police and advise.

### **Actions**

*Tusha will find out if the RNZPC is available to host the SAR Managers course in 2022.*

**Decision:**

*The Council:*

- **approved** the NZSAR Secretariat reforecast for the remainder of the 2021-2022 financial year.
- **approved** the NZSAR Secretariat high-level budgets for 2022-23 and 2023-24.
- **approved** the NZSAR training budget for 2022 and 2023.

**8. SAR FED Funding extension**

The current three-year FED funding cycle finishes at the end of June 2023.

Though some of the funding is on-going, some of it is time limited and the intention when the last decisions were made was not to have a funding round until the recommendations from the Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue Review were available to inform the investment applications from organisations.

Given Review recommendations won't be ready until June 2023 the funding round that would have been undertaken in 2022 is being modified.

Work is underway with the Ministry of Transport to ensure the organisations that would have been bidding for additional FED investment remain sustainable in the meantime.

This will affect all the NGO's, the Secretariat and Maritime NZ, DOC and the Police. The proposal is to extend the current FED funding cycle by two years through to June 2025.

Organisations will be able to apply for additional investment in line with three high-level parameters:

- general/baseline/salary funding – continuation at present levels as already appropriated with consideration of either a blanket adjustment or a specific request supported by a 'business case'
- investments in the previous round limited by ministerial decisions will be revisited and consideration given to the need for investment e.g. operating expenditure for capital projects that are now operating was not funded
- time limited investments in line with what applied for will not be extended e.g. a three-year fundraising programme or a qualifications redesign project.

We will work with the Ministry to finalise the parameters.

It is planned to start engagement with agencies regarding possible investment extensions in February next year and conclude by the end of April allowing time for

the Ministry to consider the collated material and to invite Ministers to advise their decision by mid-November so SLA's and MOU's can be updated and the agency plans prepared in time for the year beginning 1 July 2023.

**Actions:**

*The Council noted:*

- a. that the 2020-2023 Service Level Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding for FED funding terminate on 30 June 2023.*
- b. the consideration of new investment applications is being delayed because of the Review.*
- c. that draft funding parameters have been developed to ensure agencies remain sustainable until the Review is completed.*
- d. that in line with criteria developed, current funding will be extended for two years, with the next full funding round covering the period 2025-2028.*

**9. Nationally Significant SAREX scope**

In September 2021, Council instructed the Secretariat to scope a possible nationally significant search and rescue exercise. Mark Constable, from Maelstrom Consulting, was engaged by the Secretariat to undertake the scoping work, and he attended this Council meeting.

This proposal about a possible nationally significant search and rescue exercise initially commenced in 2009. In 2016, Council adopted the proposal, and the Rauora exercises started. In 2019, Council placed a request to the Ministry of Transport for funding for a nationally significant search and rescue exercise.

A nationally significant search and rescue event is on the NZSAR Council risk matrix. One of the treatments under the risk matrix is to hold a nationally significant search and rescue exercise.

The scoping document for a nationally significant search and rescue exercise was presented to Council.

Nigel said that he appreciated the work done, but there were some real challenges undertaking such an exercise. A significant exercise is supported, but he wanted changes made to the scoping document before MNZ would give the go-ahead. He supported the phased concept.

Tusha said that Police are really stretched with big things happening across the country now. Totally supports doing the exercise and the phased concept, but she wanted more detail of the scope considered before police supported this exercise.

Mike said there are issues sharing information across agencies. CAA would want Air New Zealand involved if an aircraft scenario was considered. He was supportive of a phased approach.

Justin said to apply caution about the Council taking on the national security system, and the Council needs to manage its own SAR agencies.

Anthony said if the exercise is about correcting the ODESC system, we will spend days fighting the system and not doing SAR. He indicated that Defence has got an exercise coming up and didn't want the two things becoming reliant on each other.

Natasha agreed with a meeting early next year to revisit the scope.

### **Actions:**

*The NZSAR Secretariat:*

- *is to arrange a pre-planning meeting early next year with MNZ, Police, MOT, and CAA.*
- *will work with MOT to move funding through to future years as appropriate.*

Mark Constable's work on this document was acknowledged.

## **10. Recreational Safety and SAR Sector Review**

Bev updated the Council and advised the Minister will consider the papers further and some advice will be put to him about the drivers of the review.

Mindful for the need to get final feedback of the review and hopeful the review will continue in its current guise. There are about eight Ministers involved with touch points in the sector.

Bev gave her thanks to agencies who provided constructive feedback on the terms and reference.

An advisory group has been set up and the first meeting will be on 17 December.

The work programme will be discussed at the Advisory group meeting and Bev will circulate to the NZSAR Council as well.

## **11. Youth SAR correspondence**

Duncan spoke to YSAR engagement. The NZSAR Council/Secretariat is not well placed to have a direct relationship with YSAR and has no funding line to support them. Should YSAR be under LandSAR or another SAR entity?

From a Police perspective Tusha believes YSAR has potential and sees it as an exciting opportunity. Tusha and Michael will, on behalf of the Council, reach out to the CEO of YSAR to find out more about their programme and intent.



The Council noted that, according to Police rules, youth can't be employed/utilised operationally for SAR until they are 18.

**Decision:**

The proposed draft letter is not to be sent to YSAR.

**Action:**

*On behalf of the Council, Tusha and Michael will talk to the CEO of YSAR to explore possibilities and discuss it at a subsequent Council Meeting.*

**12. NZSAR Channels Review**

Tania advised an external consultant had been employed to review NZSAR's existing communication channels, including the quarterly Link magazine, Annual Report and website. Tania thanked Council members Ian Duncan (FENZ) and Michael Bassett-Foss (Independent) for their input.

The review confirmed that while NZSAR had good visibility among some parts of the SAR sector, grass-roots volunteers were less likely to understand who we are.

The Channels review made three high-level recommendations for NZSAR:

- Develop a digital strategy for existing channels
- Repurpose content between print and digital channels, and
- Develop electronic newsletters.

**13. Noting Table - SAR training and exercise update**

This has gone well but haven't delivered all courses though. SAREXs have been affected by COVID, some have been cancelled and/or postponed. The postponed SAREX's can be rescheduled for delivery until June 2022.

**14. Noting Table - NZSAR 2020/2021 Workplan Update**

The NZSAR 2020/21 Workplan has been affected by COVID restrictions, sector capacity issues, staffing vacancies within the NZSAR Secretariat and the start of the busy summer period..

**15. Noting Table - Beacons Marketing Update**

This campaign is underway, and was agreed to repeat last year's digital marketing campaign. This is going well. Some creative elements of the campaign have been retired earlier than planned as they generated unrelated controversy and required additional moderation.

**16. Noting Table – SAR Reviews Register**

Recent reviews have been undertaken into:

- Management of spontaneous volunteers, and
- Category/Search Suspension.

## 17. General Business

There was no general business.

Michael closed the meeting and wished everyone well for Christmas.

### Next Meetings:

15 March, 7 June, 8 September and 13 December

### Action, Decision, Noting and Responsibility Table

#	Item	Actions, Decisions and Noting	Responsibility	Actions Taken/Status
5.	<b>Directors Report</b>	<b>Action:</b> Provide the Council with a calendar of significant exercises.	Duncan Ferner	See Directors report
6.	<b>NZSAR risk discussion – SAR Technology/ COVID</b>	<b>Actions:</b> <u>SAR Technology</u> Update the risk matrix to include reference to wider communications technology matters.	Duncan Ferner	Complete
		Give the Secretariat the details of a contact for the Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) project for the NZSAR Secretariat to follow up.	Tusha Penny	Complete
		<u>COVID</u> <b>Action:</b> Consult with Consultative Committee further around COVID risk and there is an appropriate COVID risk lens.	Duncan Ferner	Ongoing

#	Item	Actions & Decisions	Responsibility	Actions Taken/Status
		<b>Action:</b> Share all SAR agency COVID policies / risks to each SAR agencies.	Duncan Ferner	Complete / ongoing
7.	<b>NZSAR Budget Reforecast 2021 – 2024</b>	<p><b>Action:</b> Find out if the RNZPC is available to host the SAR Managers course in 2022.</p>	Tusha Penny	Complete
		<p><b>Decisions:</b> The Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>approved</b> the NZSAR Secretariat reforecast for the remainder of the 2021-2022 financial year.</li> <li>○ <b>approved</b> the NZSAR Secretariat high-level budgets for 2022-23 and 2023-24.</li> <li>○ <b>approved</b> the NZSAR training budget for 2022 and 2023.</li> </ul>	Duncan Ferner	NFA
8.	<b>SAR FED Funding Extension</b>	<p><b>Noting:</b> The Council <b>noted:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. that the 2020-2023 Service Level Agreements and Memoranda of Understanding for FED funding terminate on 30 June 2023.</li> <li>b. the consideration of new investment applications is being delayed because of the Review.</li> <li>c. that draft funding parameters have been developed to ensure agencies remain sustainable until the Review is completed.</li> <li>d. that in line with criteria developed, current funding will be extended for two years, with the next full funding round covering the period 2025-2028.</li> </ol>	Duncan Ferner	NFA

#	Item	Actions & Decisions	Responsibility	Actions Taken/Status
9.	<b>Nationally Significant SAREX scope</b>	<b>Actions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange a pre-planning meeting early next year (2022) with MNZ, Police, MOT, and CAA.</li> <li>• Work with MOT to move funding through to future years</li> </ul>	Andy Greig	Complete
			Duncan Ferner	Complete
11.	<b>Youth SAR correspondence</b>	<b>Decision:</b> The proposed draft letter is not to be sent to YSAR.	Duncan Ferner	NFA
		<b>Action:</b> On behalf of the Council, Tusha and Michael will talk to the CEO of YSAR to explore possibilities and discuss it at a subsequent Council Meeting.	Tusha Penny & Michael Bassett-Foss	