

 NEWS



Award Winners with Tim Macindoe

NZSAR AWARDS

“To see and hear of people like yourselves risking life and limb to help perfect strangers is very humbling and embodies all that is great with humanity and our country.”

With those simple but heartfelt words Hon Tim Macindoe, Associate Minister of Transport, welcomed the wider SAR community to the NZSAR Awards at the Banquet Hall in Parliament in May.

The awards ceremony was the Minister’s first speaking engagement in the new portfolio and he regarded it as a privilege to be recognising the commitment and dedication of all those in search and rescue who go out in hazardous environments and extreme conditions to help those in need.

“I can only wonder at how many family and social events you have had to postpone or miss as you answer that call to help.”

He also paid tribute to the countless hours put in by all in the sector to ensure they are able to carry out their roles safely and effectively.

“I can only wonder at how many family and social events you have had to postpone or miss as you answer that call to help.”

Gold Award winners Ray Burge, from Coastguard Northern Region, and Ian Coard, from Coastguard Riverton, were quick to acknowledge the support of both their teams and their families in their acceptance speeches.

Ray, who received his Gold Operational Award for the rescue of two swimmers, said that the unsung work of Coastguard staff and volunteers, along with the

support of his family, also needed to be recognised. That sentiment was echoed by Ian Coard who acknowledged the invaluable support of his wife: “Without her, I couldn’t do what I do.”

Nicola Hockley from Coastguard Canterbury, who received a Certificate of Achievement for her dedication to Coastguard search and rescue, spoke for many on the night when she acknowledged the importance of the team.

“I’m acutely aware that I stand here as the result of the passion and commitment of my predecessors and my contemporaries. I am grateful to learn and be challenged – and to reinvest my learning and my time by saving lives.”

GOLD AWARD

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

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 2016.



Ray Burge from Coastguard Northern Region

For the rescue of two swimmers from Waiomanu Beach, Auckland on 11 December 2016

Off duty Coastguard Operations Manager Ray Burge battled heavy seas with challenging 25 knot winds and a 1.5 metre swell to rescue a man – and then helped locate the man’s partner and direct a Coastguard vessel to her.

Ray performed this heroic act of bravery and life-saving actions safely and effectively. Without doubt, Ray’s actions saved two people from drowning.

SUPPORT ACTIVITY

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 over an extended period.



Ian Coard from Coastguard Riverton

For his services to Coastguard and Coastguard Riverton

Ian Coard has been a Coastguard volunteer for 29 years. He has held numerous leadership roles for the Riverton Unit: currently he’s a board member, its Safety Officer, its SAR Coordinator, and a Coastguard Boating Education Tutor for Boatmaster and Marine VHF training. He also holds the Coastguard ISC Senior Master qualification. He has served on the Coastguard New Zealand Board, including the role of National President from 2007 to 2010. He constantly makes himself available and fully commits to the challenges of Coastguard work.

CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT

OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY

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 2016.



**Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team
The Helicopter Line, Glentanner Park**

For their efforts in five challenging operations during November and December 2016.

The Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team with The Helicopter Line successfully saved the lives of four mountaineers, plus another with a medical issue – all in an eight-week period.

The award also recognises the dedication of a number of the Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team and helicopter crew that were involved in two of these demanding operations – within 24 hours of each other. In addition to this, the award recognises the crucial role of the Rescue Coordination Centre staff.



3 Squadron RNZAF

For the rescue of two people from Archway Rocks, Wharariki Beach on 17 February 2016

Two tourists were stranded in appalling weather. Winds up to 50 knots, heavy rain, thunderstorms and a cloud base reducing to 300ft meant other helicopters were unable to respond.

The combination of a capable helicopter operated by a very capable crew saved the lives of the two tourists, who would not have survived due to the conditions and no other feasible means of rescue.



Mike Hawthorne
Ben Watson
Mike Lydiard
From LandSAR Hawke's Bay

Charles Beetham (Pilot)
Brett How (Crewman)
From Hawke's Bay Helicopter Rescue Trust

Jarrad Whittaker
Wayne Steed
From New Zealand Police SAR

For the rescue of two trampers from the Ruahine Ranges on 5 & 6 October 2016

The trampers activated their personal locator beacon after they were hit by a sudden deterioration in weather. The rescue team tramped for seven hours in the dark to locate the couple.

The survival of the two trampers would have been significantly compromised without the professional skills, teamwork, perseverance and courage of the rescue team. The skill and courage of the helicopter crew in challenging flying conditions facilitated a safe recovery.



Amalgamated Helicopters NZ Ltd
For the rescue of a trumper from the Tararua Ranges on 25 April 2016

A trumper, who had fallen and sustained a compound broken leg, activated his personal locator beacon.

Pilot Jason Diedrichs landed as close as he could to the injured man, while crew member Jamie Hansen was able to drag the injured trumper to the helicopter. Jason's attention to risk, as well as both his and Jamie's extensive working knowledge of the area, provided the only option of getting the injured trumper out of the area in a timely manner.



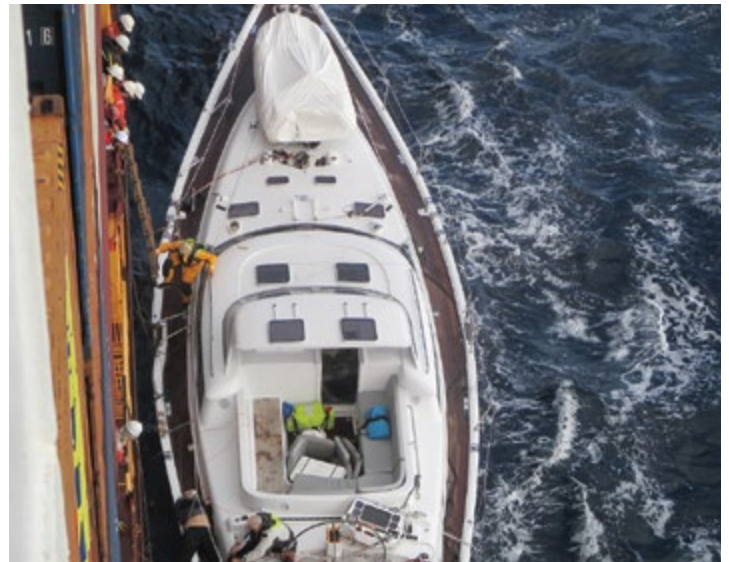
Aspiring Helicopters
Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust
Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue

For the rescue of two climbers from Mt Aspiring on 21 December 2016

Aspiring Helicopters and the Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue (ACR) responded to a spot beacon activation in the Mt Aspiring area.

The team quickly located two badly injured climbers who had fallen approximately 800 metres, sustaining severe injuries. The ACR team requested the assistance of the Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust in Dunedin with an advanced paramedic on board.

This award recognises the exceptional skill levels of everyone involved and the excellent communication, sound decision-making and outstanding coordination between the teams.



5 Squadron RNZAF
Captain Shashi Prakash, MV Southern Lily

For the rescue of three people from the yacht Platino on 13 and 14 June 2016

An RNZAF Orion responded to a distress beacon from a stricken yacht 300 nautical miles northwest of New Zealand. The yacht had been dismasted and was taking on water. The three surviving crew members were evacuated in extreme weather by the container ship Southern Lily, which steamed for 14 hours to reach the stricken yacht.

In extremely difficult circumstances this rescue relied on communication, planning and commitment by all those involved.

Jeremy Johnston
Michael Johns
From Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue
Vaughan Smith
Peter Lawn
From New Zealand Police SAR
Grant Smith
Andy Cronin

From the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust
For the rescue of three people from Mt Taranaki on
11 September 2016

Three overseas climbers made a 111 call from the eastern side of Mt Taranaki and reported being hit by an avalanche.

Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust with Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue (TACR) and Police SAR responded and winched rescuers onto the mountainside. All three climbers were eventually flown from the scene.

The rescue of the three climbers was a high risk and dynamic rescue. The team work and expertise of all the rescuers involved ensured the rescue was carried out quickly and as safely as possible in dangerous circumstances. Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust's pilot and crewman also played an integral role.

CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT

SUPPORT ACTIVITY

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, either during 2016 or over an extended period.



Ray Bellringer

From Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team
For his commitment and services to search and rescue

Ray Bellringer has been involved in search and rescue for 45 years, beginning as a front-line searcher in Taranaki in 1971. His involvement today focuses on active roles with the Incident Management Team at Aoraki/Mt Cook and as a first responder as a rescue-qualified paramedic.

Ray uses and shares his field experience in planning and directing many significant search and rescue operations across the wider Aoraki/ Mt Cook region.



Nicola Hockley from Coastguard Canterbury

For her dedication to Coastguard and search and rescue

Since joining Coastguard Canterbury in 2009, Nicola Hockley has been involved in nearly every area of the organisation. She has a number of qualifications, is a Master on her Coastguard vessel and a regular Skipper on weekend patrol and training exercises. She is also an instructor for the Regional Coastguard and NZSAR SAR Leadership course.

Nicola serves on the National Board, Southern Region Board and Coastguard Canterbury Board, where she has been President since 2015.

Elton Ngawhika from Coastguard Rotorua Lakes

For his commitment to Coastguard and search and rescue

Elton Ngawhika is a Master at Coastguard Rotorua Lakes. In the past 12 months alone he has dedicated 574 hours to training and 700 hours to operational activities. Elton is also the Unit Training Officer, often acting as a mentor to his crew.

He is an invaluable asset to Coastguard Rotorua Lakes and is admired for giving 100% of his energy into his unit over the past nine years.

John Taylor from LandSAR Wanaka

For his commitment to LandSAR training and search and rescue

John Taylor has been a key contributor to LandSAR Wanaka since he joined in 1982.

John has occupied senior operational roles, served as Wanaka Committee Chairman, Group Secretary, Southern Regional Chairman, and was LandSAR NZ's Southern Region Delegate for five years.

But it is as the group's Training Officer where John's commitment stands out. Southern LandSAR members would not have the level of access to SAR training that they have enjoyed in recent times if it were not for John's personal commitment.

Pete Woodward from Coastguard Kapiti

For his dedication and fundraising for Coastguard Kapiti

Pete Woodward is the Radio Operator and Fundraising Officer at Coastguard Kapiti, where he has been a member since 2006.

Pete is the main point of contact on shore during incidents and is always there for training and callouts - no matter what time of day or night it is.

He is recognised as a dedicated, passionate and resourceful member of his team. He has helped to significantly raise the profile of his unit within the local community and remains a crucial member of his Coastguard family. ●

The NZSAR Council and Secretariat congratulates all our 2016 winners. You can read the full NZSAR awards citations on our website: nzsar.govt.nz/awards.

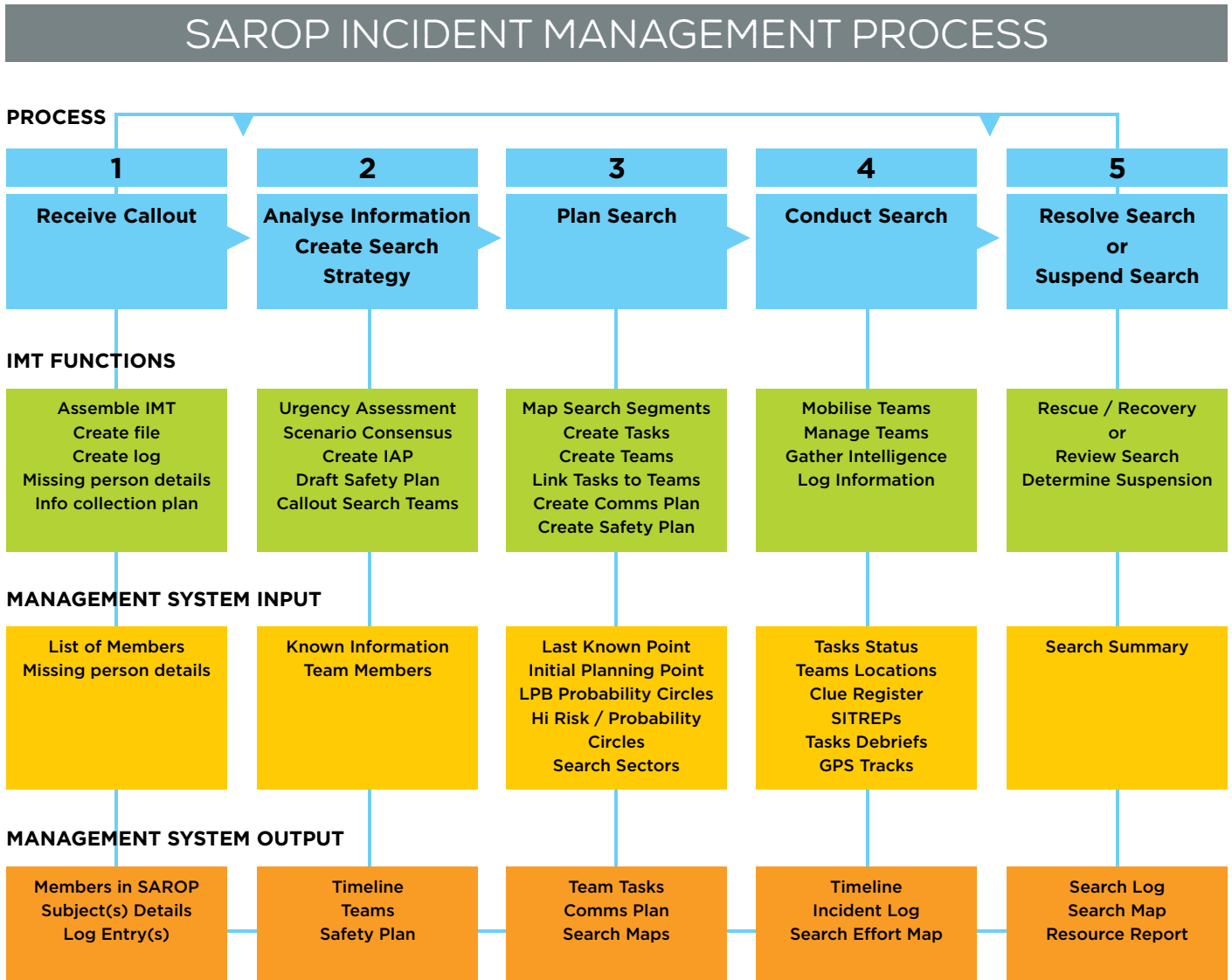
IMT SUPPORT UPDATE

As SAR people are well aware, SAR operations vary in their complexity and time. They can require managing multiple assets and resources over a number of days. Currently, different Police Districts use a variety of processes and systems to support an Incident Management Team (IMT). NZSAR is undertaking a project to explore a system that could support the requirements of all IMTs across the country.

The first phase of the project documented the processes and functions of the search management process - from receiving

the callout, through the search strategy and planning, to conducting and resolving the search. Overarching criteria were developed and then used to identify a system that can support most aspects of the IMT processes.

In the next phase of the project we are working to determine this system's wider capability to provide support, manage updates and ensure stability as well as comply with Government standards. We expect to advise Districts on the suitability of this system later this year. ●



NZSAR AWARDS

Do you know an organisation, a group, or an individual who you think should be acknowledged for their contribution to search and rescue?

For more information about the NZSAR Awards and the simple nomination process go to our website: nzsar.govt.nz.

The 2017 Award nominations close 31 January 2018.





COASTGUARD WAIMAKARIRI-ASHLEY BACK IN BUSINESS

It has been a long wait for Coastguard Waimakariri-Ashley to move into their new centre but the process of rebuilding from the wreckage of the Canterbury earthquake has been a humbling experience for all those involved.

When the 7.1 magnitude earthquake hit Canterbury in 2010 Coastguard Waimakariri's Maritime Rescue Centre on the banks of the Kaiapoi was a mess. President and SAR Controller John Thompson says the foundations were wrecked and the building was leaning by more than three degrees. Plus, after every major aftershock the building seemed to lean a bit more.

Aside from trying to come up with temporary structural engineering, which could stabilise the building, one of the early challenges was simply getting the rescue vessel out of the boatshed. "How do you push a nearly 3 tonne boat out of a boatshed which is now facing uphill?"

John says months of soul searching followed the earthquake. "We were asking ourselves can we afford to rebuild - where do we get the money from? It was pretty drastic."

While the centre was temporarily rehoused 15 minutes away, the team decided they should rebuild and set about working out how they were going to fundraise.

They were able to secure significant donations from the Lion Foundation, Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust, Trust Aoraki Ltd, Pub Charity Ltd, Lions Clubs International, and several other organisations which John says set the rebuilding scheme in motion. "Once we got the ball rolling it was quite amazing where the support came from. We had people turning up with donations, materials, services and facilities. We even got donations from other Coastguard units."



John says the decision to rebuild on the same site was relatively straight forward. "It is the most accessible place. We can launch our vessel within 10 minutes of the pagers going off."

But securing funding was just the start of the challenges. Three building contractors went into receivership or liquidation during the construction of the new centre - the last while there was still a significant amount of work to be done. "It was our darkest hour. It was far from finished."

The new building was opened on 22 April, 2017 and sits at the end of the new wharf development. The facility has been built with the local community in mind so it has been designed to be multi-use. Local groups without clubrooms of their own have also been invited to use the facility. "Because a large portion of the money came from the local community we wanted them to share in what we have built."

John says the lesson of the whole rebuilding project was the strong community support that Coastguard has. "You might think you're up against a brick wall and it can all become demoralising - and then little chinks of light start shining through as people chip in and help. Next thing you know, it has become a searchlight showing the way ahead. It really worked out well." ●

HIGH TECH TO THE RESCUE?

Author Douglas Adams once remarked that the word “technology” describes something that does not work yet. While that comment was clearly made with tongue firmly in cheek, it does sound a note of sensible caution with which many in the search and rescue sector approach the fast-moving technological world. Not everything that looks good in a brochure ends up being genuinely useful. Here’s a snapshot of existing and emerging SAR technology across some of the SAR sector.

LANDSAR

In early 2016 Mike Ambrose, Group Support Officer at LandSAR Lower South Island, was part of a working group looking at operational tools and devices. The group was tasked with looking at the range of known operational tools and devices currently used in the SAR context to aid the search effort. The idea was to cast the net to look at tools which were not well known or fully adopted. The working group listed five tools: UAVs, live tracking, Wandatrak, handheld radio direction finding for PLB signals, and MobileLocate.

Mike says technology is fast-moving which offers a range of challenges for those in the sector. “You want to adopt these things as soon as they are effective, but you don’t want to waste scarce resources on being the guinea pigs. We are aware that much bigger organisations than us are doing the research internationally. We don’t mind learning the lessons from them.”

The working group concluded that time was going to be a good natural filter for effective SAR technology. But the speed with which the technology is developed and adopted cannot be accurately predicted, as can be seen in the much greater than expected implementation of live tracking capability in the 18 months since the report.

Wandatrak was already quite mature technology when the working group convened. Mike says the wristband or pendant transmitters for people that wander are well established and proving successful. “Rather than restricting the freedom of vulnerable people, it provides the means for them to have active, independent lifestyles with a degree of safety provided.” With New Zealand’s ageing population and more



capable wearable devices, the Wander programme is a growth area for SAR and SAR prevention services.

UAVs (or drones) are still under evaluation within LandSAR. “UAVs definitely have potential but we have to tread a fine line between adopting too early, when their failings may be a distraction to SAR efforts, and missing out on capability gains that may be available right now.”

Looking ahead Mike believes the next round of advances will come in battery technology, automated sensing equipment and cheaper satellite communication access, which will offer a range of new and improved operational tools.

As well as hardware, LandSAR is also involved in working with new software. SARTrack was originally developed for the live tracking of location signals from search dogs. It was developed by Bart Kindt, a LandSAR volunteer in Central Otago, and first trialled there. Mike says the software has grown into

a comprehensive SAR information management system that is being explored by a growing number of LandSAR Groups. ●



SURF LIFE SAVING NEW ZEALAND

When it comes to surf lifesaving, Surf Life Saving New Zealand's (SLSNZ) Lifesaving Services and Education Manager Allan Mundy says the focus for technology has been in two key areas – data and communication.

Each year SLSNZ performs over fifteen hundred lifesaving rescues, forty thousand preventative actions, hundreds of thousands of safety interventions, and over 200,000 hours of beach patrols – it is a huge amount of information that needs to be recorded and stored.

The challenge they face is making sure there is national intra-operability, as operational systems are being developed that still allow regions to maintain their autonomy with vendors and manufacturers.

SLSNZ agreed on a new digital mobile radio communications system which, when fully operational, will permit all the regions to communicate and exchange voice and/or data with one another in real time.

The technology has had real benefits for capturing information. Over the last two years tablets have been rolled out to every surf club to gather critical beach patrol information in real time.

“Traditionally we filled out paper-based rescue forms,” says Allan. “Events recorded on the weekend would be entered on a Monday. That system could result in quite lengthy delays between the incident and its record being entered.”

The technology increases accuracy and provides fast information for better decision-making. It reduces administrative costs and lets members access up-to-date information.

Allan says manual data entry was never a particularly thrilling part of the work of a volunteer. “Lifeguards don't join patrols to fill in paperwork. They join patrols to keep people safe on the beach. This technology cuts down that time, so the tablets save time doing things they didn't really sign up to do.”



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He says the information gathered provides vital information for a range of functions, including predictive manning. “When volunteers are giving up their weekends to be on patrol they want to know they are being valued and valuable. We can deploy them where there's a need and stand them down when they're not required. Real time information can also tell us if a beach is getting manic and allows us to allocate or reallocate resources.”

The digital radio network has also meant new handheld devices with some valuable new features. “The digital system that we are rolling out around the country has a GPS ability, which means we know where guards are – at any point in time.” The data also gives the lifeguards the reassurance that someone is monitoring their location.

The units themselves are very versatile. “It can pretty much do what a smart phone can do. We can send maps or photographs down the line to the device. It's a really powerful system.”

Like other sectors, SLSNZ is also taking a close look at UAVs as an operation tool. Allan has seen a number of presentations about the use of the devices. He can see a number of advantages, but is cautious about their use. “The question is: do we leap in, or wait until it has been proven and the problems are ironed out? Our belief is we should wait.” ●



SAR-NET

Back in September 2012, NZSAR introduced its new online shared meeting space – or virtual meeting room. Called SAR-NET, the software was set up to enable SAR people to meet with each other online. The system uses an Adobe platform and offered secure online meeting room facilities, along with audio, video and photographs. All the meeting materials could be accessed by meeting attendees from either a computer, laptop or a tablet.

Those who developed SAR-NET saw it as providing great opportunities for people to work more effectively together and offering huge potential as a collaborative tool.

Five years on SAR-NET has found its way into the operational space. Both Coastguard and the Police Maritime Unit

in Auckland are using it as an operational log. Sergeant John Saunders, Auckland Police Maritime Unit supervisor, says the software is proving very valuable.

He says it has been in active use for over a year and is now the go-to tool for recording and managing SAR incidents.

“The biggest problem we had when we were running a SAR incident in the past was all the different logs being created without the opportunity to have one coherent picture of what was going on.” He says that by having SAR-NET they can have a common log for every incident, although it is usually confined to more serious or involved events.

One of the key advantages is that all interested parties can be involved regardless of where they are. “We email them a link; they follow that link and can go into SAR-NET and see what is happening.” Another advantage is that if there is a shift handover during an ongoing operation all the incident planning and tasking is readily available. “The on-coming staff can see what is happening and who has been deployed.

It saves quite a lot of talk.”

Ray Burge, operations manager for Coastguard Northern Region, agrees and adds logging on to SAR-NET at the start of the shift is an invaluable way of getting an overview of an event. He also says an extra advantage is that all the information is time stamped, along with a record of who has entered the information. “We can look at SAR-NET and do a quick time check of key events. So if, for example, we want to know when an asset was tasked – it’s all there on the log.”

Both men say being able to add information and images during the course of an event is another key advantage. Photographs from the scene can be added as they arrive along with pictures of the target vessel, person, or assets that have been recovered. “In the past we had to rely on someone’s description; now we have one central point for all the intelligence involving an incident.” At the end of the event all the data has been captured and can become the formal document of the incident. ●

RCCNZ SAR IN ACTION

DRIFT FORECAST MODELING

In April 2017, a man fishing in the Pacific Ocean between the islands of Tongatapu and Eua phoned a family friend to say his engine had broken down on his 5m runabout.

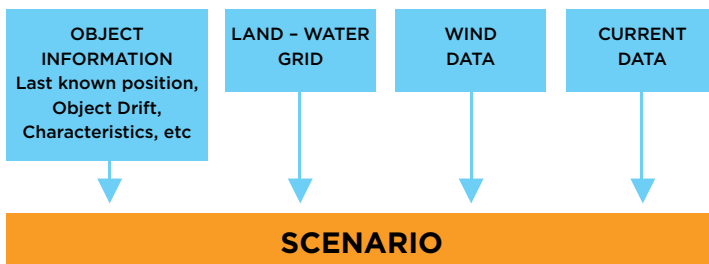
Local authorities contacted RCCNZ after being unable to find the missing fisherman or his vessel.

Looking for a 5m long boat in the vast expanse of the Pacific is clearly an expensive and time-consuming task, so the more tools that can be used to constrain the search area the better the chance of finding the missing person.

One of the tools in use by RCCNZ to assist SAR partners is SARMAP. The search and rescue mapping software was developed in the USA and has been regularly used to help locate missing persons and vessels within the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region for about ten years.

The SARMAP software uses real time tidal and wind information to model drift characteristics. It was developed by RPS ASA (Applied Science Associates) to provide predictions of the movement of drifting objects and missing persons at sea.

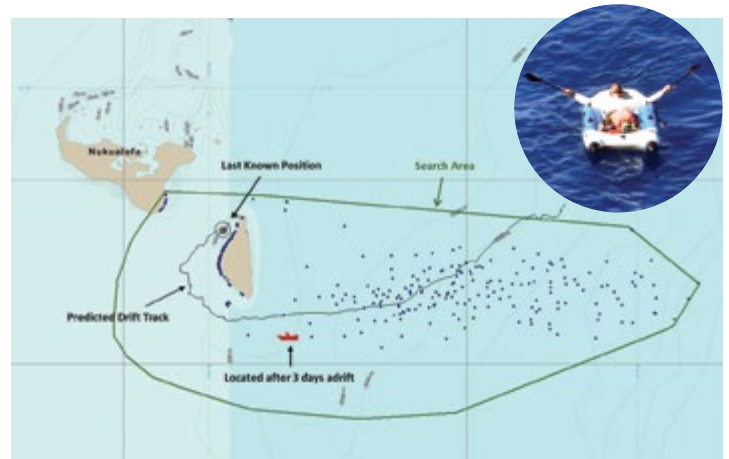
“The improvement in understanding of how objects drift has been mostly through observing specific objects actually drifting. Improvements to the accuracy of environmental data (winds and currents) is mostly due to the application of satellite technology,” says RCCNZ’s Senior Search and Rescue Officer John Ashby.



There are several components that make up the SARMAP model system. The model predicts the movement of various floating objects on the water surface. It relies on environmental data such as wind and currents, along with physical data such as the proximity of shorelines and the drift characteristics of the particular floating object.

The SARMAP predicts the search object’s trajectory and search area. It can also help set search patterns and calculate the probability of containment (POC), probability of detection (POD), and probability of success (POS). The SARMAP model may also be run in reverse using the backtrack mode to determine the potential origin of found objects.

John says backtrack is typically used when objects (upturned vessel, boating debris) are found that instigate a search for survivors. “Search coordinators need to know from where the debris has originated to establish a last known position for the survivors. Drift from this area is then calculated to determine the most likely location of the survivors.”



In the case of the missing fisherman, RCCNZ provided a SARMAP Search Area Determination model to local authorities and the New Zealand Defence Force. Three days later an RNZAF P-3K Orion aircraft was tasked to the predicted search area.

The missing fisherman was located by the Orion crew about 13 kilometres southeast of his home island. The crew were able to pass on information to the Tongan Navy, who dispatched a patrol boat.

John says the Orion crew did tremendously well in finding the man. “They initially searched the entire area using RADAR without success and then found him after four hours searching visually. SARMAP was instrumental in finding the man and he was found well inside the predicted search area.”

RCCNZ can supply drift models to New Zealand Police, Coastguard and other SAR partners in various formats such as Word, PowerPoint and video output including predicted search area, deployment of assets and search area coverage.

Contact the RCCNZ Operations Manager for further information: rccnz@maritime.govt.nz

Go to nzsar.govt.nz/Knowledge-Training/START/Marine-SAR/Search-Area-Determination to view an example of SARMAP in operation.

RCCNZ UPDATE

Quite a bit has been happening at RCCNZ since the last newsletter. As well as the ongoing and increasing number of Category II SAROPs (search and rescue operations), a lot of time has been devoted to the PACSAR conference that we hosted in May.

The conference delegates attended a ‘trade show’ at the Auckland Maritime Rescue Centre which showcased various safety and technology products. We also visited RNZAF’s Base at Whenuapai to look over the P3 Orion and the US Coast Guard C-130. Both US Coast Guard and RNZAF gave the delegates presentations on their capabilities – one remarkable statistic to come out of the RNZAF briefing was that only

20 per cent of their remote searches involve a beacon. That figure reinforces the need to grow the number of people who carry beacons so that we can take the 'search' out of search and rescue.

After that visit there was a SAR demonstration out on the Waitemata Harbour which showcased the US Coast Guard and Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust aircraft in action. For most of the SAR delegates getting to see a remote rescue up close is rare - so this demonstration was very valuable.

I really appreciate the support we were given from Coastguard Northern Region, Auckland Police Maritime Unit and Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust in putting on this demonstration.

The PACSAR workshop highlighted the strong international relationships at work. We had a reminder of how important those relationships are later that week when RCCNZ was notified of six overdue divers from Tonga. We were able to divert the US Coast Guard C-130 on its flight home and they managed to locate the missing Tongans at the south western corner of the Search

Area Determination that RCCNZ had prepared.

We've also been busy filling in a few job vacancies. We are in the process of hiring two additional SAROs (search and rescue officers); one vacancy is for a new role that comes out of last year's funding review and the second is from a retirement (more on that in the next issue). We also are filling the role of Planning and Capability Advisor, which is a non-operational role.

Our 12 week SARO training course will start on 7 August and will include two SAROs from Fiji. This already close relationship has been growing over the past year. Fiji plan to re-design its SAR system with pending legislation later this year, establishing a SAR Council to better align its Aviation Rescue Coordination Centre in Nadi with its Marine and Land Rescue Coordination Centres in Suva.

Another project also underway at RCCNZ is the upgrading of our beacons database. The goal is to have a database that new and existing beacon owners can access to add and edit their own

details. To check a beacon holder's details we currently have to call them. Long-term we want to be able check beacon owner's details via email and text. This project should be completed in early 2018. Around the same time, we will refresh our beacons website and publicity material. Have a look at the current website: beacons.org.nz/

The next conference on our agenda is helping to host the International Maritime Organisation/International Civil Aviation Organisation IMO/ICAO Joint Working Group (JWG). Representatives from these two UN groups will be meeting in Wellington in early October. International SAR experts will be spending a week on international SAR issues which will include any additions or amendments to the IAM (International Aviation and Maritime) SAR manual.

A reminder that our doors are open to SAR people, so if you are in the neighbourhood and would like to check out our operations room let us know. ●

Mike Hill Manager: RCCNZ & Safety Services

PACSAR WORKSHOP

The Pacific Regional SAR workshop was held in Auckland in late May.

The workshop is a cornerstone of a wider work programme led by the PACSAR Steering Committee - a collective of five nations: Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand and the United States - which was formed to build SAR capability and cooperation across the region.

RCCNZ has been chair of the PACSAR steering committee for the past two years but this is the first time they have met in New Zealand. The PACSAR steering committee is supported by the Pacific Community, an international development organisation.

Around 100 delegates from 22 countries were present in Auckland, along with key industry partners including the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), international technology company McMurdo, Kordia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the NZSAR Secretariat, New Zealand Police and the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF).

The conference launched the Pacific SAR steering committee Strategic Plan 2017-2021, which outlines the four 'pillars' of effective SAR - responsible SAR governance, efficient SAR coordination, effective SAR response and SAR prevention.

Mike Hill, Manager of RCCNZ, says he was reassured by a lot of the work that is underway right through the Pacific and reports they have already had great feedback from Pacific



Island participants at the conference. "Some have already shared their real enthusiasm for the work and the improvements they want to make. It is quite clear that we do need to gather what works well in SAR prevention across the all the Pacific countries, including New Zealand."

Mike Hill says the greatest benefit is getting everyone together to build on the strong relationships that already exist between them. "We are often phoning and emailing during SAR incidents, so it's wonderful to meet and discuss matters in person."

Mike adds that while organisations may have a Memorandum of Understanding about working together, it is the people who have the real relationships and connections. ●

For more info:

www.spc.int

maritimenz.govt.nz/about/what-we-do/safety-and-response/RCCNZ/

nzsar.govt.nz/Publications/Strategic-Docs

NZSAR webpage link to the PACSAR strategic plan

DUNCAN'S DESK



I trust you've been inspired reading the stories behind the recipients of our 2016 NZSAR Awards. It is always great to see our amazing SAR people receive national level recognition for the work, sacrifice and bravery they have displayed. We're always very conscious that a large number of potentially deserving NZSAR Award recipients may not receive the recognition they deserve. This is where you come in... we depend on nominations being sent to us. The NZSAR Awards policy and the nominations form can be found on our website nzsar.govt.nz/NZSAR-Awards/.

Technology has been the other focus of this Link. Getting the right technology

into the hands of SAR people at the right time supported by appropriate training and maintenance support is quite a challenge. There is no doubt that advances in technology have and will continue to have an immense impact upon our sector. 406MHz distress beacons are a hugely reliable and accurate way of sending a distress notification. Night vision goggles have made night time the preferred search period in some situations and can we imagine modern SAR without the helicopter? But technology changes rapidly and is often very expensive – especially when they aren't fully mature. SAR people are also very practical – not every bright and shiny thing ends up being genuinely useful. As a sector, we need to stay aware of the opportunities and possibilities that new and evolving technology offers. At the same time we have a duty to apply our limited resources only towards the things that will make a meaningful difference in rendering assistance to the lost, missing or injured.

We're grateful that the Government has agreed to a substantial increase

in funding to the Search and Rescue Sector commencing from 1 July 2017. This additional funding will allow a range of improvements including better SAR exercises, more support to the vital voluntary agencies via the Service Level Agreements, a new operational data management system, the development of a set of collectively agreed New Zealand search and rescue guidelines, and a number of other initiatives.

Stay safe

Duncan

d.ferner@nzsar.govt.nz

Queen's Birthday Honours 2017 Congratulations to:

David Comber of Taupo who became a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to Search and Rescue.

Major Charmaine Tate has been awarded the Distinguished Service Decoration for services to the New Zealand Defence Force. Charmaine is a SAR medical advisor.

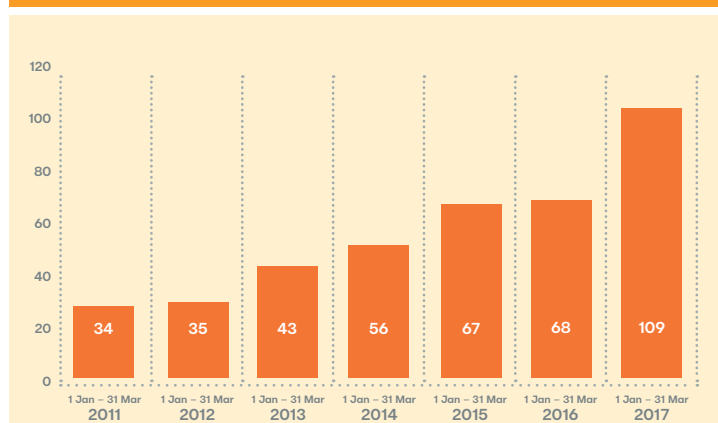
STATS ATTACK

As we can see from stories in this edition of Link, technology brings changes and challenges to the SAR sector. One area of technological change has been the updates to the distress beacon system – firstly transitioning to the digital 406MHz frequency, and now the shift to the MEOSAR system.

We have previously mentioned the significant increases in people registering PLBs, and the steady increase in the number of PLB alerts received each year, with close to a 100% increase in alerts over January to March periods from 2011 to 2015.

However, as the graph shows, since the launch of the MEOSAR system there has been a significant leap in the number of PLB alerts. Between the last two summer periods there has been a nearly 60% increase in alerts.

PLB Alerts for the Jan-Mar Quarter



CALENDAR

SAREXs and SAR training see:

nzsar.govt.nz/Calendar/Events

NZSAR Consultative Committee Meeting, 23 August 2017

WEBSITES

nzsar.govt.nz SAR sector resources and information including a PDF of this newsletter

Safety information and tips for the public planning outdoor activities: adventuresmart.org.nz

Information about 406 Beacons, including where to purchase, rent and register a distress beacon: beacons.org.nz



Link is produced by New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

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