

**The Rt Hon Dame Patsy Reddy, GNZM, QSO  
Governor-General of New Zealand  
NZ Search and Rescue Awards  
TSB Bank Arena, Wellington  
Tuesday 12 April, 2018**

Rau rangatira mā, e huihui nei, tēnei aku mihi māhana ki a koutou. Kia ora tātou katoa.  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, warm greetings to you all.

David and I are delighted to be there this evening. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to present these awards and to personally congratulate the recipients for their service.

I use the word service in its most noble sense – caring for others in a time of need. Every year, the thousands of New Zealanders who are involved in search and rescue offer their time and expertise to help others.

New Zealand's great outdoors offers wonderful recreational opportunities for Kiwis and visitors alike. Our mountains, lakes, rivers and bush are beautiful playgrounds and most Kiwis like to think of themselves as being a little outdoorsy.

The easy accessibility of outdoor pursuits here make us the envy of many. It's a point of pride that so many of us participate in outdoor activities like tramping, boating and climbing.

No one sets out at the beginning of the day with the intention of requiring the help of our search and rescue services. However even the most experienced and well-prepared people can find themselves in bad situations.

Changeable weather, a wrong turn, a fall, gear failure, human frailty – there are many ways of getting into trouble. It is then, when the worst happens, that New Zealand's Search and Rescue personnel are at their best. Their contribution can, in many instances, be the difference between life and death.

As a sector that encompasses so many different organisations, New Zealand Search and Rescue is an exercise in how working together increases effectiveness. What makes this even more noteworthy is that 94% of the people involved in operations are volunteers. That's hundreds of thousands of hours given willingly, generously and without charge.

It's that commitment and community service that make our search and rescue sector something to be proud of. The skill base involved is immense, the hours spent on training and building up knowledge are huge. It takes hundreds of hours to build up the competencies required and the dedication to do so should be valued by all New Zealanders.

This evening we celebrate that service. We are here to acknowledge those who have performed at a high level and gone above and beyond the call of duty. We are also here to recognise those who have made a significant contribution to the search and rescue sector.

Search and rescue is generally all about teamwork but this evening some of you will have the spotlight shone on you. It's a special moment and I'm very pleased to be here, on behalf of all New Zealanders, to thank you for your service.

Kia ora huihui tātou katoa