

Haumaru Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai | Volunteer Plan

August 2023

Not Government Policy



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government

**Tē tōia, tē haumatia |
Nothing can be achieved
without a plan, workforce,
and way of doing things**

Acknowledgements

The development of the *Haumarū Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai – Volunteer Plan* would not have been possible without the thoughtful and generous contributions of people from many organisations. We would like to acknowledge in particular members of Amateur Radio Emergency Communications, Coastguard New Zealand, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, New Zealand Land Search and Rescue, Surf Life Saving New Zealand, Youth Search and Rescue, and marae and hapori across Te-Ika-a-Māui whose input greatly shaped our work. We thank you for your time, consideration, and valuable assistance. We also thank you for supporting the safety and wellbeing of all those who spend time connecting, recreating, and operating in New Zealand's outdoors.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summary

In New Zealand, recreational safety and search and rescue services are provided by a broad workforce – both paid and volunteer professionals from a range of government and non-government organisations (NGOs).

Working together, the organisations deliver a pipeline of safety services to support the wellbeing of people connecting, recreating and operating in New Zealand's outdoors and the wider New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Volunteers play a critical role in the Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue System (the System), and make up a significant part of the System's frontline capability. Ninety-one percent of the personnel who deliver frontline safety and search and rescue services are volunteers.

New Zealand receives considerable value from this highly trained and skilled volunteer network which saves lives daily. A capable and sustainable volunteer workforce is vital to support the wellbeing of New Zealanders and visitors, and compliance with our international obligations.

The System's volunteers provide their time to support people recreating in the outdoors, to give back to their local communities, to connect with others, and to be part of a community with a shared interest. They are passionate and committed to the cause, and the organisations that support them work hard to ensure that their volunteers have what they need to not only operate but thrive.

We know there are changes and challenges facing volunteers meaning it is becoming increasingly more difficult for people to volunteer their time. Within the System, there are a range of issues that are putting pressure on the long-term sustainability of the volunteer model underpinning the System. They include:

- high volunteer turnover
- recruitment gaps
- heavy workloads
- a monocultural and aging workforce
- ad hoc reimbursements for expenses incurred while volunteering
- no or limited recognition and appreciation of the contributions of volunteers' support networks, and
- insufficient and inequitable funding for training.

The *Haumarū Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai – Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue – Review* (the Review) proposes a new approach to support the volunteer network, guided by a new Volunteer Strategy. This approach is called the *Haumarū Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai – Volunteer Plan* (the Plan).

This Plan provides a roadmap to support the volunteers involved in delivering frontline safety and search and rescue services across the System. This will ensure the volunteer network is robust, recognised, and agile in a changing world.

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The Plan includes a range of initiatives to:

- support an enabling environment to better attract and retain volunteers
- recognise volunteers' needs and contributions
- enable volunteers to flourish, and
- increase volunteer safety and the safety of those they assist.

The Plan is underpinned by several guiding principles that have informed the development of the initiatives. It aligns with and supports the Review's broader recommendations to ensure the System is able to meet current and future demands so that people can recreate safely in the outdoors: *Haumarū Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai – supporting safer recreation from the mountains to the sea.*

The Volunteer Strategy is applicable to all volunteers across the System. However the Plan focuses on formal volunteers delivering frontline safety and search and rescue services through:

- Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
- Coastguard New Zealand
- New Zealand Land Search and Rescue
- Surf Life Saving New Zealand.¹

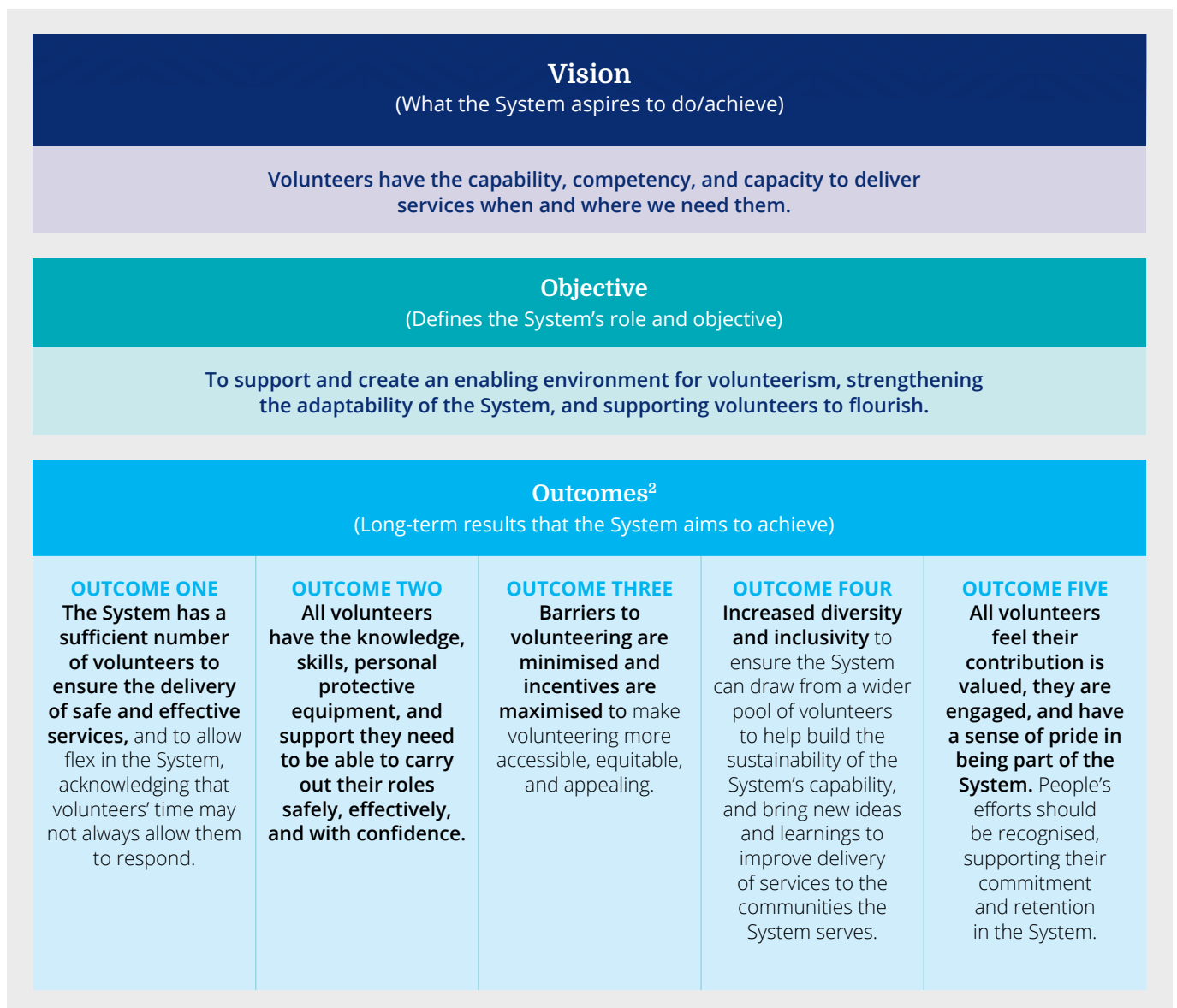
The role of marae/hapori and informal volunteers more generally continues to be a growing area of focus for the System. Work to consider ways to support, enhance, and celebrate the efforts of marae/hapori and informal volunteers, as well as volunteers in small community organisations, should continue in tandem.



1. In this Plan, they are collectively referred to as the NGOs.

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The Volunteer Strategy



2. The Outcomes are numbered for ease of reference – it does not indicate any order of priority.

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Principles and initiatives to support the Volunteer Strategy

Principles	Initiatives
<p>Volunteers need to be supported in their work; organising and supporting volunteers requires resources.</p>	<p>Organisational support for volunteers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding should be provided to functions within the NGOs that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – directly support volunteers in their roles – support compliance and health, safety, and wellbeing – support capability and development. • Funding should be provided for the NGOs to employ kaihautū, cultural, and/or diversity advisor(s). • A System-wide youth engagement and development strategy should be developed.
<p>Volunteers should not be expected to personally incur financial costs when volunteering.</p>	<p>A universal and consistent approach to cost reimbursements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a minimum, reimbursements for travel and accommodation associated with search and rescue operations should be consistently applied. • Other reimbursement options for example, dependent care, medical costs where appropriate (e.g., skin cancer checks), loss of wages, and koha, should also be investigated and costed for further consideration, recognising that this will involve more complex policy development and require more time to implement. <p>A universal and consistent approach to the provision of personal protective equipment/gear/uniforms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding should be provided to ensure that all volunteers have or have access to the right and sufficient basic personal protective equipment/gear/uniforms. • The System should be guided by the NGOs to determine what basic personal protective equipment/gear/uniforms is required.
<p>The System is dependent on volunteer support networks, both formal and informal. These contributions need to be recognised.</p>	<p>Community engagement and recognition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding should be provided to support the NGOs to recognise their volunteer support networks (e.g., whānau, employers). • The System should explore ways to recognise and support all contributions in this System, including those of informal volunteers.
<p>Access to training should be equitable and transparent.</p>	<p>A systematic and System-wide approach to funding for training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All training should be centrally funded through government, with the System developing a funding policy for training to inform decision-making, and include parameters around the division and prioritisation of funding if funding is limited.
<p>The System should be assured that training is effective and effectively provided.</p>	<p>System leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The System should develop a quality assurance policy to provide assurance at the System level that the NGOs' training is effective and effectively provided. • The System should develop a working relationship with the Workforce Development Councils to explore opportunities for harnessing their expertise.

Context



CONTEXT

Approach

1. Te Manatū Waka Ministry of Transport completed a review of the recreational safety and the search and rescue systems in August 2023. The purpose of the *Haumarū Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai – Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue – Review* (the Review) was to:
 - assess the health and performance of the systems, and
 - ensure they are fit for purpose and able to meet current and future needs.
2. Through the Review, the circumstances and settings needed to support a sustainable pipeline of recreational safety and search and rescue services across the systems (the System) were assessed.
3. A key area of focus within the Review was the network of volunteers from:
 - Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC),
 - Coastguard New Zealand (Coastguard NZ),
 - New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (Land Search and Rescue), and
 - Surf Life Saving New Zealand (Surf Life Saving).
4. The volunteers within these non-government organisations (NGOs) comprise 91 percent of the workforce delivering frontline safety and search and rescue services. This has remained consistent for over a decade.³ It is estimated that New Zealand has one of the highest rates of search and rescue volunteer involvement in the world.
5. We sought to understand the experience of these volunteers, and the changes and challenges that are evident for them and the NGOs that support them. A comprehensive research and engagement programme informed the work of the Review. This included semi-structured interviews with:
 - volunteers and staff from the NGOs
 - the NZ Police (the Police) and Maritime New Zealand⁴
 - the New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Secretariat⁵, and
 - a range of other stakeholders and interested parties.⁶
6. This research and engagement combined was pivotal to the Review and has given rise to the new Volunteer Strategy (the Strategy) and its implementation through the *Haumarū Tāngata Ki Uta Ki Tai – Volunteer Plan* (the Plan); the content of which was thoroughly tested and shaped through the Review Advisory Group.⁷

3. Ross Miller, 'A brief history of search and rescue', *Wilderness*, July 2011, <https://www.wildernessmag.co.nz/brief-history-search-rescue/>.

4. NZ Police and the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand of Maritime New Zealand are responsible for coordinating search and rescue operations, which includes tasking frontline delivery organisations (i.e., the NGOs).

5. For more information on the NZSAR Secretariat see: <https://nzsar.govt.nz/governance/nzsar-secretariat/>.

6. Other stakeholders and interested parties include Fire and Emergency New Zealand, Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, Youth Search and Rescue, the National Emergency Management Agency, St John, and the New Zealand Red Cross. The Review's Kaihautū also undertook a series of discussions and surveys with volunteers and paid staff in the System, and hapori who identify as Māori to understand their views and perspectives of the System.

7. The Review Advisory Group comprised representatives from the NZSAR Secretariat, Te Manatū Waka, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, the Department of Conservation, Maritime New Zealand, Coastguard NZ, Surf Life Saving, Land Search and Rescue, Water Safety New Zealand, the Mountain Safety Council, the Civil Aviation Authority, and the Police.

CONTEXT

Purpose of the Plan

7. This Plan has been developed to guide the System in implementing the Strategy that seeks to ensure New Zealand has the right number of skilled frontline safety and search and rescue professionals in the right place at the right time. The Plan defines a set of principles that informed the development of initiatives to sustain and improve volunteer capability and capacity, and to better support the ongoing delivery of critical safety services for the long-term.
8. Te Manatū Waka, once it has established its System stewardship role, will be the kaitiaki for the Strategy and the Plan. It will work with the NGOs and a range of other organisations to bring the Plan to life. In the interim, funding for the initiatives identified here should be considered in the next Fuel Excise Duty (FED) funding round.
9. Over the longer-term, the System will need to stay alert to the escalation of identified and/or new trends that may create further pressure on the sustainability of the volunteer model. For example, the trend towards short-term volunteering may mean fewer people complete training for higher skilled roles. In this context, options to pivot further into paid service delivery in parts of the System might need to be explored to fill volunteer recruitment gaps and support efficiency.



Volunteering in the System



VOLUNTEERING IN THE SYSTEM

Frontline safety and search and rescue volunteers in focus

10. People living in New Zealand, and those who visit, love to get outdoors. They enjoy a range of activities in, on and around the water, exploring tracks and trails, gathering kai, and climbing mountainous terrain.
11. These outdoor environments can be full of fun and adventure, but they can also present risks. People need ready access to information, tools, and education to help them keep safe. There is a wide range of organisations, clubs, and groups who provide this support.
12. Sometimes things go amiss and when that happens, New Zealand's frontline safety and search and rescue services are there to assist. These vital safety services are provided by various government organisations and NGOs with paid and volunteer personnel.
13. The System utilises a sizeable volunteer workforce in the delivery of frontline safety and search and rescue services. **Approximately 10,000 generous, dedicated volunteers give their time and expertise to support the safety and wellbeing of people in the outdoors.**⁸ This is comparable to the number of volunteers engaged by Fire and Emergency New Zealand (Fire and Emergency)⁹, many of whom also volunteer in this System. And it is close behind the entire Police workforce of approximately 13,000.
14. In 2021-22, the NGOs contributed 24,394 people hours to search and rescue operations. This amounted to 42 percent of the total hours spent on operations.
15. In that year, the System's frontline safety and search and rescue personnel were collectively involved in:
 - over 3,200 incidents
 - saving 150 lives
 - rescuing 715 people, and assisting another 799 people
 - averting \$660 million in social costs to New Zealand.¹⁰
16. Yet this is only part of the picture of what volunteers contribute.
17. Volunteers in this System operate in complex environments and fulfil a range of different roles across the land, water, and air. This includes being:
 - a Technical, Field, or Base Member, or a Group or Unit Leader for AREC
 - a Deckhand, Qualified Crew, Senior Crew, or Master in one of Coastguard NZ's rescue vessel crews, or a member of their communications, incident management, or air patrol crew
 - a wilderness, cave, urban, canyon, river, cliff face, or dog Field Team Member or Leader, or an Incident Management Team Member for Land Search and Rescue
 - a Surf Lifeguard or Patrol Captain, an Inflatable Rescue Boat Driver, SAR (search and rescue) Coordinator or Senior SAR Member for Surf Life Saving.

8. There are 11,225 people who deliver frontline safety and search and rescue services in New Zealand. Five percent of those are full-time employees and another four percent are part-time employees (New Zealand Search and Rescue, *Annual Report 2021-22*, p. 10). AREC reports having 350 trained volunteers (80 of whom are involved in search and rescue operations). Coastguard NZ has approximately 2,000 active/trained/operational volunteers. Land Search and Rescue has approximately 2,700 operational members (with an additional 800-odd non-operational members). Surf Life Saving has approximately 4,400 qualified volunteer lifeguards and a further 7,000 members (plus 8,000 members under the age of 14) who are training to be lifeguards and/or perform other volunteer roles to support the lifeguarding part of the organisation (e.g., run clubs and junior sports programmes, train, officiate, and maintain facilities).

9. Fire and Emergency's 11,000 volunteers make up 85 percent of its total firefighters (approximately 13,000). See Fire and Emergency, 'Enabling Sustainable Volunteerism: Volunteer Strategy, 2019-2029', p. 4.

10. New Zealand Search and Rescue, *Annual Report 2021-22*, pp. 4, 5, 10. Social costs calculated using the pre-2021 bases for the Value of Statistical Life.

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18. As well, the tasks and activities that volunteers undertake are broad and difficult to reflect in their entirety, but can generally be categorised as:
- prevention:
 - towing broken-down vessels back to shore, keeping the occupants safe and preventing vessels from getting into further trouble
 - patrolling flagged patrol areas at beaches or general roaming patrol offering water safety messages.
 - search and rescue:
 - participating in multi-day search and rescue operations in remote bush or mountainous terrain alongside the Police, FENZ, and helicopter operators
 - maintaining technical radio equipment or deploying it for search and rescue operations in remote areas.
 - training:
 - undertaking formal ‘classroom’ training
 - participating in regular training events at their club/unit/group to ensure their skills are current
 - participating in local collective exercising and multi-organisational search and rescue exercise training over a weekend
 - providing instruction to their fellow volunteers
 - assessing learners’ skills development
 - moderating assessments.
 - organisational support/administration:
 - being a Board or Committee Member for a club/unit/group or involved with administrative and team functions for the local organisation
 - fundraising for gear, travel, and capital works such as vessels and buildings
 - providing logistical support at search and rescue operations/exercises
 - participating in periodic working bees at clubhouses and maintaining gear
 - providing services for sporting or other recreational events
 - providing wellbeing/mentor support.¹¹
19. Volunteers in the System often refer to volunteering as being in their blood and ‘for life’. This is evident in that:
- over a third of them give their time to more than one voluntary organisation, and
 - 10 percent have volunteered in the System for over 30 years.¹²
20. We know as well that these volunteers work hard to prioritise volunteering alongside their other commitments, as:
- 50 percent are in full-time employment
 - 15 percent are self employed
 - 13 percent are retired
 - 9 percent are students
 - 9 percent work part-time, and
 - the remaining are full-time parents, unpaid carers, beneficiaries, and ‘other’.
21. The System’s volunteers commit themselves to the NGOs for many reasons but primarily to give back to their local communities, to connect with others, and to be part of a community with a shared interest.
22. Many have longstanding family connections with the NGOs. They are from, and operate within communities as members of clubs/groups/units across the country within the NGOs. As such, they see themselves primarily as local community volunteers, though they are part of something bigger.

11. These provide just some examples of the types of prevention, search and rescue, training, and operational support activities that volunteers perform. Land Search and Rescue reported its people volunteered 100,345 hours in 2021-22. For Coastguard NZ, its people volunteered 261,000 hours. Surf Life Saving’s total regional operations amounted to 228,839 hours. See: <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/67297849/coastguard-new-zealand-performance-report>; <https://www.surflifesaving.org.nz/about-us/key-documents/annual-reports>; <https://www.landsar.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Land-Search-and-Rescue-New-Zealand-Annual-Report-20212022.pdf>.

12. New Zealand Search and Rescue, Volunteer Engagement Survey, 2022.

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23. Often these volunteers progress their training and career pathways to join the Police, Fire and Emergency, ambulance services, and other healthcare and education providers, fuelling a pipeline of critical services in our communities.

Trends in volunteering

The broader volunteer sector

24. Volunteering is an essential element of civil society. It supports people's mental health and wellbeing, builds communities and networks, and provides opportunities to gain and refine skills and perspectives. New Zealanders contribute a total of around 159 million hours of formal volunteer labour each year, with an estimated economic value of \$4 billion.¹³ With significant and statistically discernible positive impacts on wellbeing and social cohesion, the Government now recognises volunteering as an official indicator of New Zealanders' individual and collective wellbeing.¹⁴
25. However, research into volunteerism indicates that volunteering is changing, both nationally and internationally. That is presenting opportunities and pressures for volunteer organisations and their volunteers.
26. Many voluntary organisations report challenges in recruiting and retaining volunteers, linked in part to an increasing preference for episodic, project-based/short-term volunteering as work, financial, and family pressures build. People increasingly feel they have less free/spare time and more options for how they spend the free time they do have.

27. As a result, many voluntary organisations are facing succession risks, and observing an aging volunteer workforce as they struggle to attract younger people and those who reflect the full diversity of New Zealand.¹⁵

The NGOs in this System

28. The NGOs in this System have been operating in New Zealand in various forms for over or close to a century. They represent a long history of community volunteerism and embody many of the values and beliefs that New Zealanders respect:
- whanaungatanga and civic responsibility
 - kindness and generosity
 - diligence
 - kaitiakitanga, and
 - connection with the natural environment.
29. The flexibility of the volunteer model makes it a practical fit for the NGOs and the System more broadly. As the demand for frontline safety and search and rescue services is sporadic/random and seasonally driven, a large full-time staff to deliver services spanning the length of the country is not pragmatic or economical.
30. However, the System is witnessing comparable trends with the wider volunteer sector. Numbers of Land Search and Rescue and Surf Life Saving volunteers have broadly remained consistent over the last 10 years, but this is alongside growing demand for and scope of their services and high volunteer turnover.

13. Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, 'Volunteering Statistics', 2021, <https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/research/volunteering-statistics-nz/>.

14. The Treasury's Living Standards Framework Dashboard tracks three indicators and measures related to volunteering, including volunteering, involvement in the community by youth, and non-profit operating surplus. See The Treasury's website for more information: <https://lsfdashboard.treasury.govt.nz/wellbeing/>.

15. Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, *State of Volunteering Report*, 2020, p. 6. See also Ministry of Social Development, *The Social Report 2016*, <https://socialreport.msd.govt.nz/leisure-and-recreation/satisfaction-with-leisure-time.html>.

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31. Each of the NGOs has reported that recruitment in the regions is particularly difficult, and some are experiencing considerable recruitment gaps/volunteer shortages.
32. Volunteering in this System is often considered a long-term commitment because of the amount of training required and importance of building experience which can then be applied to operations and passed on to newer recruits. However, high churn rates in some of the NGOs suggest that the idea of a long-term commitment is becoming less tenable, and that the volunteer lifecycle is reducing in length.
33. This follows a similar pattern to people's employment expectations – i.e., rather than being in a job for life, people increasingly 'job-hop'.¹⁶
34. The 2022 NZSAR Volunteer Engagement Survey showed that 46 percent of respondents had been volunteering in the System for five years or less.¹⁷
35. We note too that 90 percent of survey respondents were European/Pākehā, 66 percent were male, and only 18 percent of volunteers were under the age of 30.¹⁸ This make-up of volunteers poses some succession risks in the System as monocultural organisations recruit from a smaller pool of volunteers and have difficulty retaining those from diverse backgrounds.¹⁹
- Those who do not 'fit the mould' do not see such organisations as being of and for them.
36. The proportion of young people in the System is of particular concern as data suggests that people who volunteer in their younger years are more likely to volunteer later in life.²⁰
37. We have heard anecdotal evidence of this too. Many of the current volunteers in the System began volunteering in their youth, and from there became 'lifers' – despite having to step back from their responsibilities for a time to focus on their family and/or work commitments. This suggests that recruiting and training younger personnel needs to be viewed as a critical long-term investment strategy.²¹
38. There is a large, strong base of volunteers who are committed to their volunteering efforts²², and we understand that interest in volunteering for the NGOs is high in more populated, urban parts of the country.
39. However, we are seeing shifts in the way people want to volunteer and the way people want to enjoy the outdoors, meaning that some services are already having to change. For example, Surf Life Saving now provides paid and volunteer lifeguard services to ensure service levels align with lifestyle changes and people going to beaches at different times.²³ The System will need to continue to adapt to meet the changing needs of the people it supports – both volunteers and the public.

16. See for instance Deborah Wilson, 'One Job for Life ... Really?', LinkedIn, 2019, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/one-job-life-really-deborah-wilson>.

17. New Zealand Search and Rescue, Volunteer Engagement Survey, 2022.

18. 60 percent were aged between 40 and 69, and an additional 10 percent were aged 70 or over. We note as well that the under 19-year-olds (8 percent) were most likely members of Surf Life Saving (New Zealand Search and Rescue, Volunteer Engagement Survey, 2022).

19. Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, *Volunteer Study for New Zealand Search and Rescue*, 2019, p. 5.

20. See for example Jinho Kim and Kerem Morgul, 'Long-Term Consequences of Youth Volunteering: Voluntary Versus Involuntary Service', *Social Science Research*, 2017, pp. 3, 17.

21. New Zealand Search and Rescue, *Environmental Scan*, 2022, p. 17.

22. 72 percent report being 'very likely' to continue to volunteer (New Zealand Search and Rescue, Volunteer Engagement Survey, 2022).

23. Surf Life Saving currently employs roughly 350 seasonal paid lifeguards, drawn from its volunteer ranks and supplemented by overseas lifeguards. This brings with it some additional demands on regional staff to support seasonal recruitment, onboarding, training, and supervision.

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What the System told us

40. We spoke to a considerable number of volunteers, and paid staff, across the System to understand what it is like to be a frontline safety and search and rescue volunteer. We sought to understand what drives the volunteers, and what challenges they face in their roles. It was evident that the volunteers and staff who support them are deeply passionate and committed to the NGOs and the services they provide; they give and invest a lot of themselves in their organisations.

41. Through this engagement, we have built a clear view of the key areas of fulfilment and frustration for the System's volunteers, as well as some of the broader volunteer workforce issues at the System level.
42. There was clear consistency in the issues and themes raised across the System. Building on the trends identified in the previous section, we have summarised the key (volunteer) workforce strengths and challenges within the System.

Strengths

- **'He tangata, he tangata, he tangata'**²⁴: people join and stay in their organisations for 'the people', for the camaraderie. The NGOs with their clubs/units/groups are communities that provide people with a sense of belonging and a means to contribute to the lives of others.
- **Appealing**: while people generally join to connect with others, there are a lot of different reasons why they do sign up and a lot of great reasons to be part of these organisations. People talked about it being fun, exciting, interesting, providing opportunities for problem solving, a good way to balance out an office job and enjoy the outdoors. There are a host of interesting activities, tasks, and roles to be involved in, and therefore ability to appeal to a range of recruits.

- **Skills development**: the System provides opportunities for unique skills development. Volunteers receive training, generally speaking, at no cost. Not only does this feed their skills within the System, the skills they learn also support their personal and professional development. The life-saving skills volunteers learn in this System means such skills are better integrated within communities. For example, they can apply their skills to non-search and rescue events like sudden medical emergencies or disaster response.²⁵
- **Business improvement**: the System and NGOs are committed to and know their people. The NGOs understand the importance of their volunteers and, along with the NZSAR Secretariat, have been giving a lot of thought to ways to better support them. Recently, they have made concerted efforts to adapt and provide for the volunteers' distinct needs.

24. This refers to the whakatauki: He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! He tangata! He tangata! (What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people! It is people!).

25. See for instance, 'Cyclone Gabrielle: Surf lifesavers use kneeboards to help rescue people from rooftops in Hawke's Bay', *Stuff*, 24 February 2023, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/131313832/cyclone-gabrielle-surf-lifesavers-use-kneeboards-to-help-rescue-people-from-rooftops-in-hawkes-bay?cid=app-android>.

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Challenges

- **Workloads:** both paid staff and volunteers are under a lot of pressure. They feel stretched and stressed by the volume of work they undertake, especially as the scope of work of the NGOs increases. Widening the scope of work without additional people and resource, risks further increasing the pressure on people and burning them out/making them leave; this then further increases the workload issue for those who remain. A lot of the workload pressure that people feel comes down to the number of paid staff the NGOs have to support their significant volunteer bases.
- **Cultural norms and practices:** the largely monocultural make-up of volunteers has resulted in a culture in some parts of the System that is not always welcoming to women, young people, and ethnic minorities. The prevalence of the 'old boys' club' (e.g., restricted opportunities, patterns of exclusionary and patronising behaviour) makes some people feel like they have to 'fight their way in'. This presents a barrier to increased diversity and therefore to the sustainability of the volunteer model.
- **Recognition and appreciation:** the System largely treats volunteering as an individualistic activity – performed by an individual who donates their time and other resources. In reality, it takes a community – volunteers' families and employers also make sacrifices, allowances, and contributions, providing support to the System's volunteers so that they can fulfil their volunteering commitments. There are 'moments missed' both by volunteers and their families.²⁶ This is not well recognised in the System.
- **Reimbursements:** volunteering can be an expensive activity and costs are increasing. Anecdotal evidence suggests that volunteers in this System can spend anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand dollars (and as much as \$10,000) per year to support their volunteering role. Some expenses include travel costs to attend training, club/unit/group meetings, and search and rescue operations; associated medical costs; having to purchase their own personal protective equipment and uniforms; having to take time off work to attend training and operations, frequently using their annual/sick leave for volunteering activities. The NGOs have limited funding to reimburse their volunteers in any significant way. Therefore, reimbursements tend to be ad hoc.
- **Funding for training:** funding for training is insufficient and inequitable, and without this being resolved, the level of services provided by the NGOs may need to be reduced; more funding is required to support the ongoing provision of high-quality training and therefore capable, competent volunteers who can deliver the full range of services required.
- **System-level assurance of quality training and providers:** each of the NGOs has its own systems and processes in place for ensuring the quality of the training they deliver. However, at the System level, there is limited visibility or clear expectations set around the NGOs as training providers. This puts some strain on interagency assurance that operational search and rescue capability is fit for purpose.

26. Some examples include having to constrain weekend and other leisure activities around training requirements; planning family holidays around System demands; forgoing the use of a family car for extended periods so a family member can travel to operations or training; preparing food and supporting other relief functions during operations; having to manage household routines and childcare alone because a family member has been called out to an operation.

VOLUNTEERING IN THE SYSTEM

43. We note as well that despite the immense value the frontline safety and search and rescue volunteers provide, unfortunately, their work and contributions generally go unnoticed, especially in comparison to adjacent systems which tend to be more visible in communities.²⁷ Volunteers in this System often work alongside volunteers from the Emergency Management and Civil Defence systems – for instance, in the response to Cyclone Gabrielle. Yet, the recognition and support that frontline safety and search and rescue volunteers receive at the System level is not commensurate to that provided to other volunteer workforces providing frontline safety responses in New Zealand.

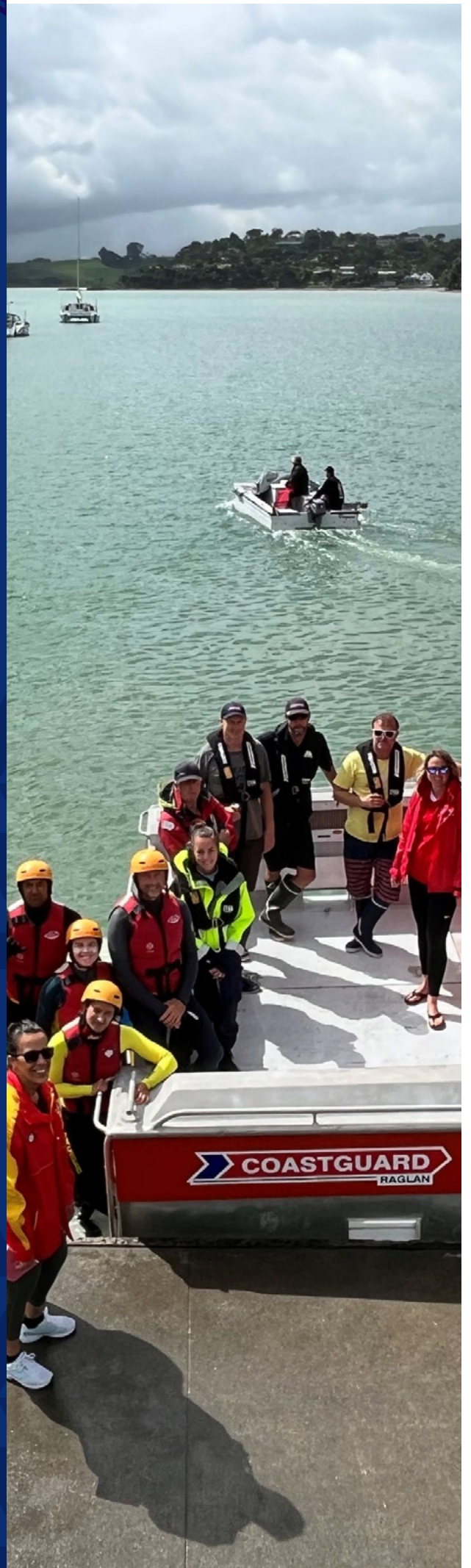
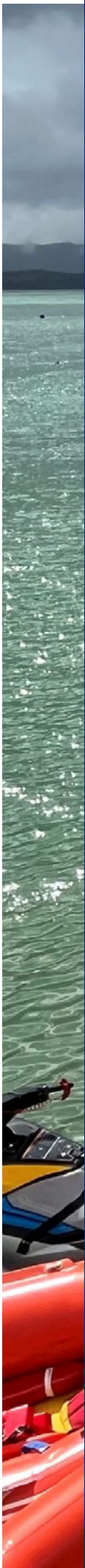
44. These trends, strengths, and challenges highlight the importance of valuing volunteers and recognising their contributions to sustain the ongoing health of the System.

45. Volunteering is a choice, and the NGOs work hard to support their volunteers, but they do so with limited resources. Given the tremendous benefit and value that New Zealand gets from these volunteers, more support is necessary to respond to the challenges and fortify volunteerism in this System.

46. Opportunities to remove the barriers that exist and ensure that volunteering in the System is an appealing, positive, and fulfilling pursuit for a diverse workforce need to be pursued with vigour. This Plan provides a roadmap to do this, to ensure that the System’s volunteers are appropriately valued and recognised for the critical lifesaving services they provide.

27. It has often been reflected to us that unlike the emergency services which have a very visible presence in communities because they have easily identifiable vehicles, sirens, headquarters, etc., the work of the NGOs tends to fly under the radar.

The Strategy



THE STRATEGY

Vision, objective, and outcomes

47. Creating an enabling environment and removing barriers is at the heart of this new approach. A positive and proactive approach to inclusion, equity, diversity, and accessibility must be taken by the System to ensure the long-term viability of its volunteer workforce.

48. While the volunteers delivering frontline safety and search and rescue services are the focus of this Plan, the Strategy is equally applicable to all volunteers across the System (i.e., volunteers in small community organisations delivering recreational safety services).

<p>Vision (What the System aspires to do/achieve)</p>				
<p>Volunteers have the capability, competency, and capacity to deliver services when and where we need them.</p>				
<p>Objective (Defines the System’s role and objective)</p>				
<p>To support and create an enabling environment for volunteerism, strengthening the adaptability of the System, and supporting volunteers to flourish.</p>				
<p>Outcomes²⁸ (Long-term results that the System aims to achieve)</p>				
<p>OUTCOME ONE The System has a sufficient number of volunteers to ensure the delivery of safe and effective services, and to allow flex in the System, acknowledging that volunteers’ time may not always allow them to respond.</p>	<p>OUTCOME TWO All volunteers have the knowledge, skills, personal protective equipment, and support they need to be able to carry out their roles safely, effectively, and with confidence.</p>	<p>OUTCOME THREE Barriers to volunteering are minimised and incentives are maximised to make volunteering more accessible, equitable, and appealing.</p>	<p>OUTCOME FOUR Increased diversity and inclusivity to ensure the System can draw from a wider pool of volunteers to help build the sustainability of the System’s capability, and bring new ideas and learnings to improve delivery of services to the communities the System serves.</p>	<p>OUTCOME FIVE All volunteers feel their contribution is valued, they are engaged, and have a sense of pride in being part of the System. People’s efforts should be recognised, supporting their commitment and retention in the System.</p>

28. The Outcomes are numbered for ease of reference – it does not indicate any order of priority.

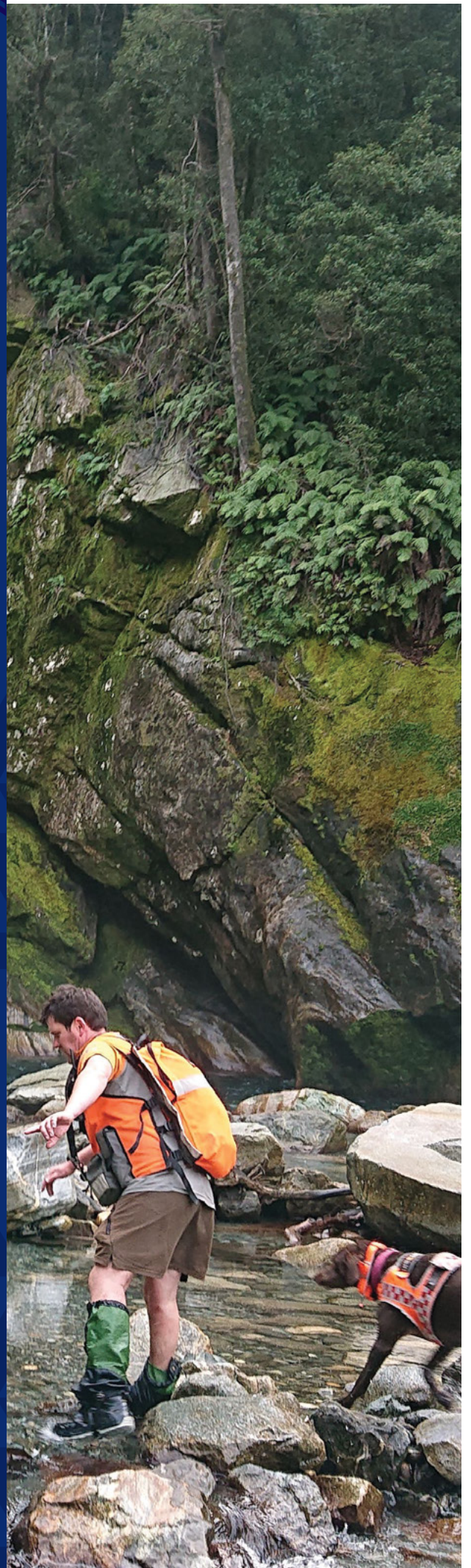
THE STRATEGY

Principles and initiatives

49. Alongside the Strategy, we have developed a set of principles and initiatives to implement the System's Strategy. Appendix One shows how the principles and initiatives link to the Outcomes sought.
50. The principles and initiatives are set out in more detail in the following sections, and highlight the true cost of volunteering in the System. They are aimed at providing consistency across the NGOs and between this System and those adjacent (e.g., emergency services), to achieve fairness and transparency. But above all, they are aimed at creating an enabling environment which fortifies the volunteers, the NGOs that support them, and the volunteer model.



The initiatives



THE INITIATIVES

Organisational support for volunteers

Volunteers need to be supported in their work; organising and supporting volunteers requires resources.

51. Volunteers need to feel empowered and respected. They deserve support and structures to ensure their experiences are positive.
52. Paid staff within the NGOs play a vital role in ensuring their volunteers have what they need to be successful and ensuring that the volunteers and the people they provide services to are kept safe. It is critical to the capability and sustainability of the System's frontline safety and search and rescue volunteers that the NGOs have sufficient paid staff to support volunteers' wellbeing and training.
53. As is well known in the volunteer sector, 'volunteering is not free to an organisation'.²⁹ Volunteers may not hold the same drivers or receive the same benefits as paid staff (i.e., wages), but they do require many of the same resources to support them.
54. The NGOs have critical functions, with associated structures and processes, that they need to perform in the fulfilment of their roles and to support their volunteers (e.g., compliance and health, safety, and wellbeing obligations; administration functions; reporting requirements, etc).
55. We consider that the ratio of paid staff-to-volunteers in the System is too low, given the size of the NGOs, the number of people they support, and the tasks they undertake.³⁰
56. Increasing staff numbers would allow volunteers (and existing employees³¹) to focus on what they signed up for – ensuring specialist staff (e.g., Human Resources) are available to run the NGOs and meet regulatory requirements, including health and wellbeing support.
57. Having more staff will help support volunteer wellbeing and retention, and provide greater opportunities to support efforts focused on, for instance, improving diversity and inclusion within the System. This will support the sustainability of the volunteer network.

29. Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, 2019, p. 5.

30. There are approximately 200 paid staff within the NGOs, supporting approximately 10,000 volunteers – a rough ratio of 1:50 across the System.

31. We note that the paid staff in the NGOs often start out as and continue to be operational volunteers within those same NGOs. The paid staff are passionate about the System and its volunteers, and frequently told us about their frustration with their own heavy workloads and the impact of that on their ability to fully support the volunteers. This has a flow-on effect to volunteers' views of the value of paid staff and the extent to which paid staff identify with and understand those on the frontline.

THE INITIATIVES

How should the System support this?

58. Functions in the NGOs which directly support volunteers should be government funded. This includes support for compliance and health, safety, and wellbeing; and volunteer capability and development. We see this as including functions such as Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Human Resources, Training Development and Delivery, and Group Support Management. These functions were identified to us as being where the greatest pressure and need is for more organisational support for volunteers.
59. We recognise there is a balance to be struck between the number of paid staff and volunteers to maintain the volunteer ethos of the NGOs. The NGOs want to be volunteer organisations supported by paid staff, not organisations of paid staff supported by volunteers. Therefore, the NGOs themselves are best placed to determine if and when functions should or should not become paid.
60. Government funding should also be available for the employment of kaihautū, cultural, and/or diversity advisors by the NGOs to support greater diversity and cultural competency in the System, as well as community engagement.
61. We acknowledge that each of the NGOs is on its own journey to develop and grow their cultural competency and community engagement.
62. Some work is already underway in the System to address gaps in these areas. However, there is an opportunity here for the System to better support their efforts to develop, drive, and embed cultural competency, diversity, and inclusion in their work.
63. The design and delivery of a System-wide youth engagement and development strategy that delivers targeted initiatives to encourage and support young people in the System should also be pursued.³²
64. The need to actively engage and develop younger people in volunteerism to ensure the sustainability of their workforces is something that organisations in adjacent systems/organisations are embracing (e.g., the National Emergency Management Agency, St John, and the New Zealand Red Cross). The System should actively look for opportunities to learn from, share with, and collaborate in such efforts.
65. It is unlikely that government funding will be able to cover every function for each NGO under the abovementioned criteria and therefore some prioritisation will be required. We acknowledge that each NGO will have different needs for organisational support depending on the size of their volunteer base, structure, etc. Therefore, the NGOs are best placed to determine which of these functions they need to prioritise.

32. We acknowledge that there is an imbalance between the number of men and women in the System as well as between age groups and ethnic groups, but consider that a critical focus on youth engagement and development will go a long way to addressing that, along with the other initiatives.

THE INITIATIVES

A universal and consistent approach to cost reimbursements

Volunteers should not be expected to personally incur financial costs when volunteering.

66. Volunteers are not a free resource for an organisation, and volunteering is not a free activity for volunteers. While volunteers willingly give their time, volunteering can involve considerable expenses.

67. A volunteer's contribution to the System is their time, and they should not also have to foot the bill for expenses incurred in a search and rescue operation, for example. Therefore, the System needs to take a more deliberate and consistent approach to cost reimbursements for expenses incurred by volunteers in the delivery of frontline safety and search and rescue services. Reimbursements need to be readily available and accessible.

68. In the wider volunteer sector, the reimbursement of expenses incurred while volunteering is accepted as good practice – most volunteer organisations in New Zealand reimburse their volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses.³³ This is true of adjacent systems and organisations whose volunteers frequently work alongside volunteers in this System.

This contrasting approach creates competition across systems and is viewed by the System's volunteers as a sign that they are not valued equally with other life-saving volunteers.

69. While many volunteers see some expenses as part and parcel of volunteering, the fact that expenses are not consistently reimbursed is a source of frustration for many. It is undoubtedly also part of the reason why people of higher socio-economic status (e.g., the middle-aged and middle class) tend to volunteer with volunteer organisations more than those of lower socio-economic status.³⁴

70. Providing reimbursements is a fundamental and baseline enabler to volunteering, that links to the accessibility and inclusivity of the System. Universal and consistent reimbursements must be provided to support the sustainability of the System's volunteer capability to:

- make volunteering more financially viable for a more diverse workforce – especially considering growing economic pressures on households, and
- show greater appreciation for volunteers' contributions.

33. Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, *Volunteer rights and responsibilities*, 27 May 2022, <https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/vnz-events/volunteer-rights-and-responsibilities/>; Volunteering Australia, *The Principles of Volunteering Guide*, 2019, p. 1; Tūao Aotearoa Volunteering New Zealand, *State of Volunteering in Aotearoa New Zealand Report, 2022*, p. 9.

34. Ram Cnaan and Femida Handy, 'Towards understanding episodic volunteering', *Vrijwillkige Inzat Onderzoek*, January 2005, p. 29. Particularly for young people too, it should be acknowledged that their volunteer hours means that they are giving up financial opportunities that may help them to become more established in life (i.e., working more hours so that they can pay off their student loans faster, save for a house, or just get by) (See Sally Carlton, Sylvia Nissen, Jaclyn Phillott, Anna Sapsford and Lloyd Carpenter, "The ability to change stuff up": volunteering as a young person within established organisations', *Journal of Youth Studies*, February 2022, p. 9).

THE INITIATIVES

How should the System support this?

71. Reimbursements should be provided for:
- travel and accommodation associated with participating in search and rescue operations
 - dependent care associated with attending search and rescue operations
 - associated medical costs where appropriate (e.g., Hepatitis B vaccinations)
 - loss of wages.
72. These expenses are commonly acknowledged costs incurred by volunteers in the System and/or are costs that are reimbursed in other systems.
73. Reimbursements for accommodation and travel are available to volunteers who attend search and rescue operations through the Coordinating Authorities; the other costs listed above are not reimbursed. We understand that reimbursements may at times have been provided for damage caused to volunteers' personal protective equipment during search and rescue operations. However, we understand that there is a lack of consistency in applying these policies across the Police Districts and limited uptake of these reimbursement options as the process is seen as too difficult or sometimes little known.
74. The Coordinating Authorities should make the reimbursement process simpler for volunteers. For example, NGOs might submit one claim for each search and rescue operation which covers the accommodation and travel costs of all volunteers involved. All volunteers should be encouraged to claim reimbursements for travel and accommodation costs associated with search and rescue operations, and a consistent approach should be taken.
75. The process and parameters of the reimbursement policy should be clear and widely known. (The cost of personal protective equipment is dealt with in the following section.) We understand that the extent of reimbursements is being clarified through the most recent Joint Service Level Agreements.
76. Other reimbursements and options to lessen the financial burden on volunteers (e.g., dependent care, medical costs, loss of wages, as well as things like koha, tax breaks, and volunteer days for government employees) should be explored within the System. However, some of these are likely to have tax implications and/or require all-of-government involvement so will be longer-term goals.
77. That said, the System should consider whether and how approaches to reimbursements taken in adjacent systems might be implemented here. In future, the System should look across adjacent systems to ensure a consistent, comparable approach, acknowledging that comparability depends on the requirements of the volunteer role.

THE INITIATIVES

A universal and consistent approach to the provision of personal protective equipment/gear/uniforms

Volunteers should not be expected to personally incur financial costs when volunteering.

78. Having access to all the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)/gear/uniforms is critical to the safety of the System's volunteers (and critical to the delivery of services for those who need life-saving support).
79. PPE is also a fundamental enabler to volunteering which not only makes volunteers feel valued and recognised, it has an important role in team building and branding.
80. Volunteers should not be expected to supply their own PPE/gear/uniform and a consistent approach to providing it is critical. The cost and responsibility should not sit with the volunteers themselves.
81. There is a reasonable amount of gear that volunteers do not own that is supplied by the NGOs to enable volunteers to do their jobs. This includes the likes of:
- radios
 - fins
 - helmets
 - high visibility jackets
 - Incident Management Team vests
 - rescue tubes
 - personal flotation devices
 - inflatable rubber boats.
82. These are funded from a mix of sources: FED funding, Lottery Grants Board, and other grants.
83. However, it is well known that at present, volunteers across the System often need (or choose) to supply their own PPE/gear/uniforms, sometimes costing thousands of dollars per year. Volunteers therefore fund a large section of the System's capability. The inconsistent provision of PPE/gear/uniforms to frontline safety and search and rescue volunteers has been identified in previous reviews as needing to be resolved. It is a longstanding frustration of the System's volunteers.
84. That said, organisations are constrained in their ability to provide all the necessary PPE, and have sought government support for this in previous funding rounds with varying success.
85. This is an anomaly compared to adjacent systems and it is not appropriate, fair, or safe. It impacts upon the sustainability of the System's volunteer capability by restricting who can (afford to) volunteer and the extent to which volunteers feel valued and appreciated, and therefore motivated.

How should the System support this?

86. Government funding should be provided to ensure that all volunteers have or have access to the right and sufficient PPE/gear/uniforms to be able to perform their roles safely.
87. The NGOs are best placed to determine what and how much is needed for their volunteers, to form the basis of funding applications; the System Steward should be guided by the NGOs in such applications.
88. We acknowledge that some volunteers are prepared and sometimes eager to purchase above and beyond the basic level of good quality PPE/gear/uniforms. In such instances government funding should not apply.

THE INITIATIVES

Community engagement and recognition

The System is dependent on volunteer support networks, both formal and informal. These contributions need to be recognised.

89. Those who deliver frontline safety and search and rescue services are well aware that volunteering does not happen in a vacuum. A range of enabling factors allow them to volunteer their time and successfully deliver the services that they do. These factors include the volunteers' support networks (e.g., whānau and employers) – their korowai (cloak) of aroha (love and support) – and, at times, informal volunteers.
90. Currently, there is little discussion or recognition of volunteers' support networks – those who do not 'directly' volunteer in the System but assist frontline safety and search and rescue volunteers to get out the door and participate. This needs to change, and the System should take a more holistic view of volunteering to acknowledge its true meaning, cost, and wider enabling factors.
91. There are increasing calls on volunteers' time, and therefore on the goodwill and capacity of their families and employers. Family and work commitments are the biggest competing factors for volunteers' time³⁵, and the ability of the volunteer to do so is hugely dependent on the support of those around them. Without the support of whānau and employers, the System's volunteers would be unable to volunteer.
92. Building on existing recognition programmes to include whānau and employers, and

informal volunteers, would go a long way towards them feeling valued and motivated to continue their support of the System's volunteers, which in turn will support volunteer recruitment and retention.

How should the System support this?

93. Government funding should be available to support NGOs to recognise the contributions of volunteers' support networks. This extends to public recognition within local communities and nationally.
94. It should be for the NGOs to determine the best way to recognise and celebrate people's contributions and shape a culture of appreciation that is right for them. But further work should be undertaken across the System to explore this opportunity and define the limits of it, including within the System and systems adjacent. (For example, Land Search and Rescue and Fire and Emergency have implemented employer and whānau recognition schemes).
95. It should be an ongoing function for the System to champion the efforts and contributions of all individuals and groups, including those of informal volunteers and marae/hapori. Some exploration has already been undertaken recently to consider how to utilise spontaneous volunteers safely and effectively during search and rescue operations.³⁶ The System should continue this work. It is possible that these types of volunteers will become a more common occurrence. In addition, research on episodic and spontaneous volunteering shows that having good systems in place encourages people to continue volunteering.³⁷

35. 43 percent of respondents in the 2022 Volunteer Engagement Survey said family commitments competed with their ability to volunteer, and 29 percent said their employers' attitudes and inability to get time off work was a competing factor.

36. We note that in 2021-22, 1,403 operational people hours were provided by spontaneous volunteers. (New Zealand Search and Rescue, *Annual Report 2021-22*, p. 10). In this Plan, we view spontaneous volunteers as informal volunteers.

37. Department of Internal Affairs, Minutes of Meeting, Cross-Agency Steering Group on Volunteering, 24 February 2023.

Training initiatives



TRAINING INITIATIVES

Training for frontline safety and search and rescue personnel in the NGOs³⁸

96. Training is critical to support the safe and effective delivery of frontline safety and search and rescue services, including the health, safety, and wellbeing of those delivering the services themselves. Understandably, a considerable amount of effort through the NGOs and the System itself is dedicated to the development and delivery of training to ensure that all personnel (both paid and volunteers) are capable, competent, and safe. Providing training to a large volunteer base across multiple organisations throughout the country is no mean feat.
97. Training is a major part of the volunteer experience as volunteers undertake extensive training to perform their roles and spend at least as much (but usually more) time training as they do out in the field to be operationally capable and competent.
98. Skills development and training is not limited to building and maintaining technical and operational competencies. For many volunteers, they are also coordinating, delivering, and conducting training, examinations, and assessments. A number also receive leadership and governance training to support their people both on the ground and behind the scenes.
99. Organisation-specific training is delivered within or on behalf of the NGOs and is focused on search and rescue-related knowledge, skills, and competencies relevant to each of the NGO's operational context.³⁹
100. System-level training (multiagency training) is also available to support common capabilities across the System. Multiagency training promotes alignment and supports interagency networks and greater understanding of what and how each organisation contributes. This also supports compliance with New Zealand's international obligations for search and rescue.
101. Given the significance of training to support capability and competency, and to deliver safe and effective frontline safety and search and rescue services, we have developed the following set of System-wide principles to guide the support and investment needed with regards to the NGOs' training programmes.

38. For more information on training, see the Search and Rescue Training Framework, which was developed to provide strategic guidance for search and rescue training and be referenced for training direction. It is intended to promote alignment of learning to meet the needs of individual search and rescue organisations. (<https://nzsar.govt.nz/assets/Downloadable-Files/2022-SAR-Training-Framework.pdf>.)

39. The NGOs are experts in their field and are best placed to determine organisational-specific capabilities and develop and deliver training specific to their area of expertise. This arrangement works well as volunteers respond better when trained by their own, within their own environment, and when 'on the job'. As providers of training, the NGOs are also responsible for ensuring the quality of training content, delivery, and systems to monitor and assure themselves that quality context and delivery occur.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

Training should:

- be sufficient to equip all personnel to a satisfactory level to perform their designated roles – it should be fit-for-purpose and effective and deliver a return in the form of capable people
- be delivered by those with the necessary expertise
- be provided at the System level where there are common competencies required across the System, to ensure consistency, support inter-agency collaboration, and minimise duplication of effort
- be at no cost to those receiving the training
- support the development of cultural knowledge and tikanga/understanding of te ao Māori and engagement with people from diverse backgrounds, identities, and cultures
- be quality assured (the design and delivery, theory, and practical training)
- seek to be flexible in its delivery and acknowledge that people learn and retain more if they are taught 'by their own' and in their own environment – 'on the job'
- allow personnel to keep their skills current and accommodate prior learning
- be recognised; the achievement of competencies should be acknowledged and celebrated
- deliver competencies that allow interoperability and portability of skills.

- ^{102.} Throughout our work, two key areas of concern regarding training were consistently raised:
- insufficient and inequitable funding to the NGOs for training, and
 - System-level assurance of volunteer competency.

- ^{103.} These are also the two areas of risk associated with training identified by the NZSAR Council as needing to be addressed. Therefore, it is these two issues on which we have focused our recommendations with regards to training.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

A systematic and System-wide approach to funding for training

Access to training should be equitable and transparent

- ^{104.} Training is critical to the provision of frontline safety and search and rescue services – it improves safety, increases confidence, ensures consistent standards, increases efficiency, and increases the likelihood of successful outcomes for search and rescue operations.⁴⁰ All personnel who could be involved in a search and rescue operation – both government and non-government – need to undertake relevant search and rescue training to enable them to adequately perform the role(s) they may be called upon to perform.
- ^{105.} Training is a considerable expense for the NGOs which is managed using volunteers for a large part of training delivery, assessment, and moderation. We estimate that training the NGOs' frontline safety and search and rescue personnel costs circa \$20 million per annum.
- ^{106.} The most significant challenge the NGOs have identified in relation to training is insufficient and inequitable funding from government. Fundamentally, we consider that system-level support for training should be fair, transparent, and strengthened significantly.
- ^{107.} The NGOs access funding to support their training through FED funding (directly or via the NZSAR Secretariat), the Lottery Grants Board, and fundraising activities.
- ^{108.} The NZSAR Secretariat also administers funding from the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) to support training.
- ^{109.} This funding combined is used for or contributes to:
- NGOs' training programmes (e.g., for the design and development of courses)
 - search and rescue multiagency training facilitated by the NZSAR Secretariat
 - multiagency Search and Rescue Exercises and Rauora exercises.⁴¹
- ^{110.} We acknowledge through our engagement with organisations and volunteers that NGO training resources are significantly stretched. At present, government funding covers a small portion of training costs, circa \$2.5 million per annum. We also acknowledge that funding is provided in a way that benefits some NGOs over others. This is in part because there is no transparent, measurable framework to guide decisions about where and how funding should be distributed for training.
- ^{111.} High-quality training is required to equip the necessary number of volunteers and paid personnel to a satisfactory level to perform their roles. Insufficient funding for training may limit investment and long-term planning in training, and result in a reduced level of service/operational response.

40. NZIER, *Volunteer-related training in emergency services – improving training outcomes*, Report to FRSITO, July 2008, p. 6.

41. Rauora training provides the Police and relevant external agencies an opportunity to work through strategic issues related to nationally significant search and rescue scenarios.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

How should the System support this?

112. The benefits the government and New Zealand receive from the System's frontline safety and search and rescue workforce are significant, and training to support the ongoing safe and effective delivery of frontline safety and search and rescue services is critical. Therefore, we consider that, in principle, all the NGOs' training costs should be government funded to help provide assurance that frontline safety and search and rescue services will be provided by sufficiently trained, capable, and competent personnel.
113. We acknowledge that any increase in funding is likely to be capped and therefore unable to cover all costs given the potential size and quantum. A policy to inform the allocation and prioritisation of funding for training to manage this cap should be developed to ensure a fair, consistent, and transparent approach.
114. This is consistent with the findings of the review that informed the development of the Search and Rescue Training Framework, which concluded that good governance in a training context includes 'establishing and prioritising training and planning processes for the sector as a whole'.⁴²
115. The System should articulate a funding policy for training to be reflected in the Search and Rescue Training Framework, along with the Training Principles defined above.
116. Some parameters to inform this policy are provided at Appendix Two.



42. New Zealand Search and Rescue, Search and Rescue Training Framework, 2022, p. 23.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

System leadership

The System should be assured that training is effective and effectively provided

- 117. Quality assurance is essential for planning, monitoring, and investment into training. Organisations with control of training must have systems and processes in place to ensure quality training – such systems and processes are the foundation to ensuring training supports the development of capable personnel.
- 118. The System should also have a clear view of whether the training being provided in the System is fit for purpose, and delivering an adequate supply of capable, competent personnel with appropriate training.
- 119. Each of the NGOs operates within its own independent systems to monitor its capabilities and performance. The NGOs are committed to providing quality training to develop the capability of their people and ensure that capable, competent personnel are available for search and rescue operations. But there are variations in approaches to training and quality assurance, and limited visibility of NGOs' training frameworks at the System level.⁴³ This has the potential to lead to incompatible systems and understandings, and contribute to deficient services.
- 120. To provide System-wide assurance and further manage the risks associated with training variances, the System Steward should take a stronger System-wide leadership role to set clear expectations about the effective provision of training by the NGOs.
- 121. In a world of increasing compliance and accountability, this would enhance confidence across the System in the quality of training, systems, and process as a whole and that they are working as planned; help inform steps to be taken to achieve improved services; and support a safer, more transparent, and integrated System.
- 122. Setting standards around training at the System level will further support the professionalism and credibility of the System.

43. Ibid., p. 14.

TRAINING INITIATIVES

How should the System Steward support this?

123. The System Steward should support, and seek assurance that the NGOs have:
- systems and processes in place to ensure quality training, and
 - training systems with rigour around content development and delivery, along with
 - good governance to ensure training is addressing learning needs.
124. The System Steward should specify the component parts of a quality assurance framework that it would expect to see and be reported on. This could include things like evaluations, reviews, debriefs, an internal and external audit, and a Quality Management System that documents processes, procedures, and responsibilities for achieving quality training and objectives.
125. The System Steward should also develop a quality assurance framework for the multiagency training it facilitates.
126. In addition, the System Steward should work with the NGOs and Coordinating Authorities, and potentially the New Zealand vocational framework (e.g., Workforce Development Councils (WDCs)), to set expectations around stakeholder engagement in the design, development, and evaluation of NGOs' training, particularly in relation to the Coordinating Authorities that use the services provided by them. This would strengthen partnership, collaboration, and cohesion in a training context across the System.
127. The wider vocational education system offers skills and experience, as well as systems and processes, that may be useful for the System to leverage off. For example:
- WDCs' expertise could be harnessed to support the development of a quality assurance framework for the NGOs and multiagency training
 - opportunities for the WDCs to support the System through advocacy and advice to TEC with regards to funding
 - WDC consultation with the System on relevant matters that affect its workforce (e.g., changes to first aid standards)
 - whether and how the System Steward (as a facilitator of multiagency training) could draw on the WDCs' standard setting and advice functions and expertise, perhaps through WDC representation on the Multiagency Programme Advisory Committee.

GLOSSARY

Glossary of terms






















	Definition
Adjacent system	A system which interacts with the Recreational Safety and Search and Rescue System – has a shared purpose/interest at a high-level, and at times a need for a level of collaboration and a sharing of people and assets in response to emergency events – but whose core function/purpose is not the provision of recreational safety and/or search and rescue services (e.g., civil defence, emergency services).
Capability	Volunteers' confidence and competence to deliver the necessary services. Aspects of a person's capability include relationships, mandate and direction, tools and work environment, time, motivation, and acquired skills and knowledge.
Coordinating Authorities	Those responsible for the management and coordination of search and rescue operations, being the NZ Police and Maritime New Zealand through the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand. (The National Antarctic Programmes are the Coordinating Authorities for some operations in Antarctica.)
Episodic volunteering	Short-term, time-limited, or irregular volunteering opportunities.
Formal volunteering	Unpaid, voluntary work that is coordinated by an organisation or institution.
Frontline safety services	Direct harm prevention activity/interventions in the outdoors including providing safety messaging 'on the ground', beach patrols, and rescuing swimmers and recreational craft users who are in immediate danger before it becomes a search and rescue operation.
Fuel Excise Duty (FED) funding	Fuel Excise Duty is a tax on petrol paid by recreational boat users. Under section 9(1) of the Land Transport Management Act 2003, the funds generated through this tax can be used to support search and rescue activities, recreational boating safety and safety awareness, and maritime safety services.
Hapori	Section of a kinship group, family, society, community.
Informal volunteering	Unpaid, voluntary work that is not coordinated by an organisation or institution; it occurs directly between individuals and communities, and therefore is sometimes referred to as 'direct volunteering'.
Kaitiaki	A person, group or being that acts as a carer, guardian, protector, and conservator.
Kaitiakitanga	Guardianship / stewardship / trusteeship.

GLOSSARY

	Definition
Learning Management System	An online system or software which is used to plan, execute, and assess a specific learning process; it is software used in eLearning programs and which helps in administration, documentation, tracking, and recording.
Non-government organisations (NGOs)	A non-profit, independent, community organisation that is not affiliated with central or local government, although they may receive financial and/or other support from government. In this Plan, 'the NGOs' refers collectively to Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC), Coastguard New Zealand (Coastguard NZ), New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (Land Search and Rescue), and Surf Life Saving New Zealand (Surf Life Saving), though there is a range of other NGOs that operate within the System to deliver recreational safety services.
Search and rescue operation	An operation undertaken by a Coordinating Authority to locate and retrieve persons missing or in distress. The intention of the operation is to save lives, prevent or minimise injuries, and remove persons from situations of peril by locating the persons, providing for initial medical care or other needs, and then delivering them to a place of safety.
Spontaneous volunteers	Individuals who volunteer to assist community members or organisations, typically on one-off occasions and in relation to large-scale and/or well-publicised events.
System	A regularly interacting or interdependent group of people and/or organisations that function together as a whole to achieve the same or similar outcomes.
Volunteer	A person who willingly offers to do something, especially for other people or an organisation, without expectation of financial gain.
Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging.

APPENDIX ONE

Appendix One: Table of strategy outcomes and the initiatives, showing what outcomes the initiatives will aim to achieve

		Outcomes				
		The System has a sufficient number of volunteers to ensure the delivery of safe and effective services, and to allow flex in the System, acknowledging that volunteers' time may not always allow them to respond.	All volunteers have the knowledge, skills, personal protective equipment, and support they need to be able to carry out their roles safely, effectively, and with confidence.	Barriers to volunteering are minimised and incentives are maximised to make volunteering more accessible, equitable, and appealing.	Increased diversity and inclusivity to ensure the System can draw from a wider pool of volunteers to help build the sustainability of the System's capability, and bring new ideas and learnings to improve delivery of services to the communities the System serves.	All volunteers feel their contribution is valued, they are engaged, and have a sense of pride in being part of the System. People's efforts should be recognised, supporting their commitment and retention in the System.
Initiatives	Organisational support for volunteers					
	Universal and consistent approach to cost reimbursements					
	Universal and consistent approach to the provision of personal protective equipment/gear/uniforms					
	Community engagement and recognition					
	A systematic and System-wide approach to funding for training					
	System leadership					

APPENDIX TWO

Appendix Two: Parameters for the System's funding policy for training

The parameters of the funding policy to inform government funding for training should include the following:

Funding pots

1. The concept of funding 'pots' for training – four in total – so that it is clear where and how funding is allocated. The four 'pots' are for: multiagency training; exercises; organisation-specific training; and an 'emergency' funding pool to help address pinch points.
2. **Multiagency training** is critical to the System since it develops common skills and operating procedures that are required by many organisations. An example is Coordinated Incident Management System training, which ensures that there is a common approach, processes and language understood by the many organisations involved in a search and rescue response. This is currently funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) through the New Zealand Search and Rescue Secretariat, and supported by the Programme Advisory Committee. There should be continued funding for multiagency training. We agree with the recommendations made in previous reviews that a policy to guide and inform decision-making regarding the prioritisation of multiagency training courses needs to be developed.
3. **Exercises are vital.** They give organisations opportunities for the practical application of skills in in-field scenarios. They test communications and compatibility to operate between organisations, and help the non-government organisations' (NGOs) personnel and Coordinating Authorities understand and test capability within other organisations. They are developed around areas where weaknesses in search and rescue response are observed. An effective search and rescue response typically requires multiple organisations to work together. There should be continued funding for exercises.
4. **Funding for organisation-specific training** should be split between the NGOs and justified by applications that are supported with evidence, analysis, and supply/demand requirements. The System should require the identification of long-term training needs (e.g., a three-year planning cycle), with an annual review and assessment of training needs and effectiveness to inform funding decisions, but also to support flexibility and the ability to identify gaps or areas of concern early and adapt accordingly.
5. **A pool of funding to address pinch points** to address capability issues that arise from time to time. Examples may include governance or similar training required for multiple organisations, specialised training where there is a new need identified due to changing compliance needs or volunteer shortages for critical roles or geographic areas. Funding should be by application based on the principles for training and justified with appropriate evidence.

APPENDIX TWO

Prioritisation of funding for organisation-specific training

6. To ensure that there is equity, consistency, and transparency in funding for organisation-specific training, the System needs to take a principled approach to decision-making and, acknowledging the likelihood of a funding cap, prioritisation of training needs is required.
7. There are three types of training in the System: baseline/foundation, specialist, and recurrency (or refresher). We recognise that all three types of training are vitally important to the System. However, at a minimum, all development and delivery costs for baseline/foundation training should be funded to ensure there is a solid base of capability. This is in line with the current approach with regards to the TEC funding.
8. We consider that the System needs to define what baseline training includes. At a high-level, we suggest that it means all training needed for new recruits to participate in a search and rescue operation. We think that this would help provide the System with a solid core or foundation of capability.
9. Recurrency training is vital to maintaining volunteers' capability and provides assurance that volunteers can keep themselves and others safe. It is also an important engagement tool. We recognise that most of the volunteer base needs recurrency training (i.e., most are not new recruits), and therefore the size and scale of recurrency training is more substantial. However, to maintain and build a sustainable System-wide base of capable, frontline personnel (which is inherent in the core principles), it is our view that funding for baseline/foundation training should be prioritised.
10. Specialist training could also be viewed as baseline/foundation training for specialist roles. But we would argue that it is not entirely akin to the training undertaken by new recruits, as we assume that it also requires a level of prerequisite training and skills. Furthermore, the need for specialist training would likely require more justification and evidence than the 'new recruit' baseline/foundation training, and therefore lends itself to a funding application process.
11. We recognise that flexibility is important in the System given the different nature and size and scale of the NGOs and services they provide. Therefore, while the preference should be to fund baseline training, we would expect that the System Steward would discuss with organisations where their priorities and training needs are and take that into consideration in developing funding agreements.
12. The System would need to periodically review how baseline training meets baseline requirements based on evidence and comparability with adjacent systems. However, it should do so with input from the NGOs, who are best placed to define what baseline training includes, since they are the experts in their areas of service.
13. In addition to funding for baseline/foundation training, funding should cover costs associated with Learning Management Systems and quality assurance processes used to determine if training meets quality standards. These needs apply across each NGO and all types of training, and are fundamental to the efficiency, efficacy, and credibility of training in the System.



Ngā Uara Te Manatū Waka Te Manatū Waka Values



WHAKAPAKARI
IMPROVING OUTCOMES



AKO
CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT



MAHI TAHI
WORKING TOGETHER



RANGĀTIRATANGA
EMPOWERING
AND LEADING



KAITIAKITANGA
GUARDIANSHIP AND
PROTECTION



WHANAUNGATANGA
COLLABORATION
AND UNITY



MANAAKITANGA
CARING FOR AND
VALUING OTHERS

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