

Connecting the Search and Rescue Sector

news

NZSAR Awards

Bravery, skill, innovation and 55 years of voluntary commitment, were attributes recognised and celebrated at the NZSAR Awards Ceremony held in Parliament in May.

The 2008 NZSAR Gold Award for the most significant contribution to SAR was presented to John McLellan, from North Otago Search and Rescue, for long standing service to marine search and rescue.



John has been a key player in marine search and rescue in North Otago since September 1953. The most significant of John's many contributions to our sector is funding his own marine radio station. John and his wife Pauline have spent many hours every day monitoring both marine VHF and HF channels.

In fact John, who travelled to Wellington to accept the Gold Award, said it was the first time in "God knows how many years I haven't had my handheld radios with me in my back pocket."

A hint at John's motivation for such commitment came during his acceptance speech. "Whatever technology is used, you will never beat the voice of a radio operator. That voice on the end of the radio, when you are miles out to sea in darkness experiencing rough conditions, is worth its weight in gold."

Murray Double, who was rescued from his stricken boat, is testament to John's value. "It was not just John's voice on the radio that was so helpful, but also the utterly competent way that he addressed the physical and emotional state of a bedraggled shipwreck victim. He's a person who goes out of his way to help others, for no other reason than they needed help."

Help was certainly on the agenda on 27 July 2008 when the Youthtown Trust Rescue helicopter was asked to recover four people on board the fishing vessel San Cuvier.

Arriving at the scene in terrible weather conditions, the team located two of the crew at the bottom of a vertical rock cliff, in tight ravines. The steep rock face made it too difficult for winching, so Advanced Paramedic Graeme Harvey was lowered on a 70 metre long line to recover both survivors.

Tragically, the other two members of the fishing vessel did not survive the incident. After a heroic attempt to recover both bodies, and a close call for Graeme Harvey who was struck by a large wave, the team managed to recover one of the deceased.



The crew (Advanced Paramedic Graeme Harvey, pilots John Funnell and Hendry de Waal, crewman Senior Constable Barry Shepherd) were awarded the NZSAR Certificate of Achievement for an important contribution to SAR. Presenting their award, Minister for Transport Hon Steven Joyce acknowledged the skill and bravery displayed by these four men. "They had to fly in very difficult conditions, rescue people in rugged terrain, and call on their specialist search and rescue skills."

Graeme's nine week old daughter Kaitlin slept through the whole ceremony. She has already been on the receiving end of his skills and bravery, having been delivered by him at home in the bathroom in what was a fast, unplanned homebirth.

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Kevin O'Sullivan, from Coastguard Northern Region, received the second NZSAR Certificate of Achievement for Innovation in Marine Search and Rescue.

During his 35 years of service to Coastguard, Kevin has instigated and delivered a number of initiatives. He is acknowledged as the 'father' and leading promoter of the continuous weather NowCasting service, which is currently being rolled out nationwide.

NowCasting broadcasts a continuous weather forecast and relevant safety information. It has been acknowledged as one of the greatest assets and services that Coastguard provides.



Brent Neilson, David Waters, Colonel Kevin Arlidge



Duncan Ferner, John Yaldwyn, Jeff Sayer, Nigel Clifford, John Funnell



Anne Breekveldt and Nathan Snell



Colleague John Cowan, who accepted the award from the Minister on Kevin's behalf, reminded those gathered of the importance of people like Kevin who carry out the less 'sexy' end of search and rescue. "What we do is build fences at the top of the cliff. We equip people with information. Tens of thousands of boaties use the service every year – a number of whom may not be alive today if it were not for the service."

NZSAR Awards

Do you know of an organisation, group or individual who should be acknowledged by their search and rescue peers?

What about someone who has dedicated hours of their time to your organisation or those involved in a courageous rescue or difficult search – do they deserve national recognition?

The NZSAR Awards celebrate the success and effort of people who work or volunteer their time and skills in the field of search and rescue in New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region.

There are two awards:

1. The NZSAR Gold Award honours the person, group or organisation that has made the most significant contribution to search and rescue.
2. The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement are awarded for an important contribution. More than one NZSAR Certificate can be awarded each year.

These awards are valuable not only for the contribution they acknowledge but also for raising community awareness about the efforts SAR people go to in this often complex and difficult work.

Go to www.nzsar.org.nz. You will find more information about the awards along with details on the simple nominations process.

Nominations for the 2009 awards close on 31 December.

SAR in action – how DOC is managing risk

Do you want your mountains with or without handrails?

By Mike Davies

New Zealanders have always been active in the outdoors. We tramp, climb mountains, ski, kayak, and generally make the most of the country's fantastic outdoor recreation opportunities. This type of outdoor activity is also a major draw-card for visitors - and their tourism dollars.

Outdoor recreation always contains an element of risk. While risk can be managed, it is not possible to predict all hazards and create a totally risk-free experience. And would we want that anyway? The potential for, or perception of, risk is an integral component of the outdoor experience. A positive experience of risk is what provides the challenge and gives the sense of accomplishment.

Managing risk is vitally important for the Department of Conservation because of the large numbers of people visiting public conservation land annually. For us, the challenge is to find the right balance between the negative and positive aspects of risk.

The Department's Visitor Risk Policy guides the way we manage risk. We are also developing an overall Visitor Risk Management System for DOC.

The Risk Management Context

Key factors driving the Visitor Risk Policy are:

- **We are increasingly a risk-averse society**

The outdoors is one place people can still experience risk, and the positive benefits it can have by challenging people and testing their personal boundaries and abilities.

- **Actual vs Perceived Risk**

Many visitors perceive the risk in the outdoors as low, when we know the actual risk can be high. We need to ensure the visitor's level of awareness, and consequent decision-making, is based on a firm understanding of the actual risks involved. However, we cannot eliminate risk completely - and it is not our legislative mandate or desire to do so.

- **Clear Expectations**

It is important that we clearly articulate who is responsible for what in terms of managing risk.

- **Preserving the Experience**

We believe it is important that, as far as possible, decisions around managing risks do not compromise the values and attributes sought by most visitors to the outdoors.



Managing Risk is a Shared Responsibility

The Department's Visitor Risk Management Policy clarifies our duty of care obligations to visitors for the first time. It sets out the principles of how we will assess risk in the area of visitor management and is the basis for creating an overall Visitor Risk Management System for DOC.

The Policy and its principles provide the context for managing visitor risk, which is in essence:

- DOC has legal obligations for ensuring its facilities are safely situated in accordance with the predominant type of visitor and, where possible, will take responsibility for informing visitors of hazards, the risks they present, and the level of skill and competence required to cope with those risks.
- Visitors are responsible for their own decisions regarding the risks they take; for how prepared they are for the experience they are going to have and for others in their care.

In other words, managing risk is a shared responsibility; this does not diminish an individual's responsibility for safety and decision making when they are in the outdoors.





SAR in action continued

This Policy underpins the conversation the Department wants with visitors and stakeholders on how to manage risk.

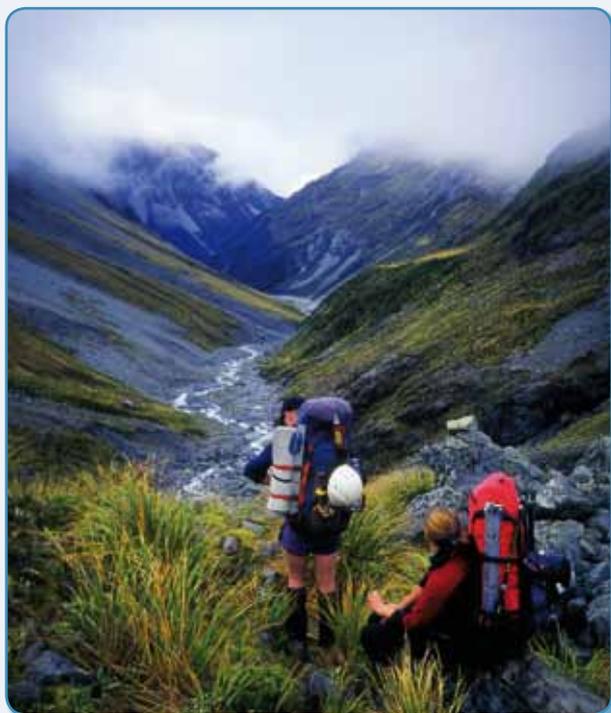
The Visitor Risk Management System

The Department is also developing a system to manage risk. Its four components are:

- Asset (facilities) management
- Visitor information
- Hazard identification and management
- Working with others on risk management – collaborative arrangements with other organisations to manage risk, e.g. Mountain Safety Council, MetService, NZ Police, etc. An example is DOC working with the Mountain Safety Council who is leading a project to identify how organisations, who have an interest in visitor risk, can work collaboratively on developing consistent safety messages.

It is important that, whether you want your mountains with or without handrails, all organisations work together to ensure that risk is addressed in an appropriate way to maintain New Zealand's culture of outdoor recreation.

Mike Davies manages the Visitor Risk Management Project for the Department of Conservation. He has previously worked in emergency management for the National Rural Fire Authority and has 20 years experience, largely working in visitor management, for the Department of Conservation, New Zealand Forest Service and Department of Lands and Survey in a range of roles and locations.



news continued

Police SAR National Co-ordinator



Senior Sergeant Bruce Johnston has taken over from Geoff Logan as the Police National Co-ordinator for SAR/Disaster Victim Identification.

Bruce has 23 years experience in the Police, most recently as the National Coordinator Road Policing. He has been involved with Police SAR since 2000, one of four Incident Controllers for the Wellington Region since 2002.

Bruce has varied life experience. He's been tramping and hunting since he was a teenager. Professionally he is also a qualified Funeral Director and Embalmer, running the Wellington City Mortuary for three years, amongst other work.

He is a people person who enjoys talking and getting to know individuals. He's also passionate about SAR.

"I would like to acknowledge the considerable time and dedication of all the volunteers; and their families. Police and RCCNZ couldn't achieve our common goal of helping people in need and returning them to their families, if it weren't for each and everyone's contribution."

Integrated Training Framework

Work continues on producing an integrated training framework for the SAR sector. Key agencies and individuals are presently designing a draft core curriculum which will go through an extensive consultation process. Part of any training platform is the SAREX. The recent review of SAR training in New Zealand recommended that the SAREX remain the cornerstone of inter-agency training, where good relationships and co-operative planning are at the heart of the activity.



Download the full training review report from our website:
www.nzsar.org.nz/SARreports

New Topo50 maps in September

All emergency services, including Search and Rescue and the New Zealand Defence Force, will switch their emergency and base mapping to the new national map series, Topo50, when it is launched in September. Land Information New Zealand (LINZ), the national mapping agency for New Zealand that is making the change, recommends people use the same maps that emergency services use to prevent any confusion. This also gives extra impetus to the public to use the new map series.

There will be 446 full mainland map sheets, including approximately 40 sheets with little land cover. It will provide the same detailed and accurate representation at the 1:50,000 scale as LINZ's current NZMS260 series. While the geographic features portrayed on the Topo50 map series are the same as those on the NZMS260 series, the coordinates of these features will change. Each individual new Topo50 map will cover a different area to the NZMS260 map, due to the change to an A1 portrait format.

The new maps are more compatible with modern navigational products such as GPS. They will use the New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 (NZGD2000) and New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000 (NZTM2000) projection.

Grid coordinates, northings and eastings, will change by over 550,000m in the northing and 900,000m in the easting. This difference is sufficiently large to ensure that coordinates of either projection will not be confused.

LINZ has provided a number of tools to help this transformation:

To convert coordinates from NZMG to NZTM2000 you can use the online conversion tool at www.linz.govt.nz/coordinateconversion. This tool provides conversions between the most commonly used coordinate systems in New Zealand.

Coordinate conversion software CONCORD can also be downloaded at www.linz.govt.nz/downloadsoftware. This is a Microsoft Windows programme that can be used to convert files of coordinates from one system to another.

For any other information, check out www.linz.govt.nz/topo50. You can also register for regular email updates on launch progress by emailing newmapseries@linz.govt.nz.

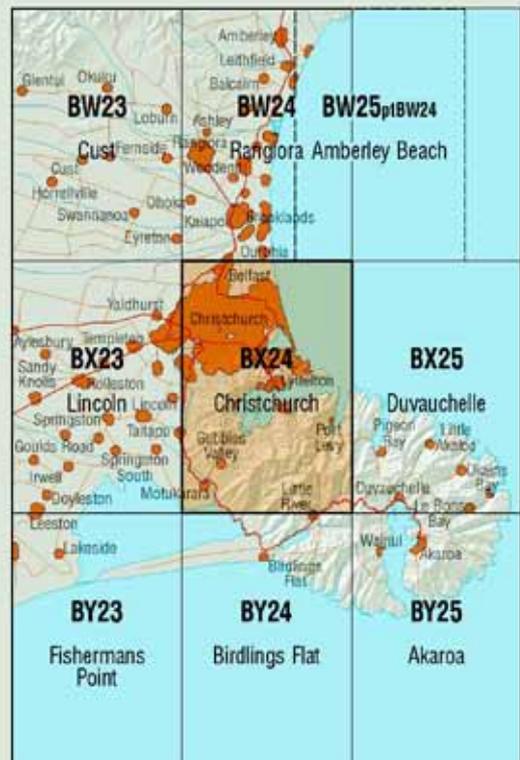
Topo50 Map

Used by New Zealand
Emergency Services

Christchurch

NZTopo50-BX24

1:50 000



Toitu te
Land whenua
Information
New Zealand



Topographic
Services

New Zealand Government

international

SAR Prevention Strategies.

British Columbia has developed a 'one-stop-shop' website: <http://www.adventuresmart.ca> to provide advice for people before they undertake a wide range of outdoor recreational activities. It is aimed to encourage people to "get informed and go outdoors". The accessibility and unity of the advice from a range of providers stands out.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM).

Ground SAR British Columbia has developed a CISM programme to assist its volunteer members when they may have been involved in some form of 'critical incident'. The link to describe this work is: http://www.nss.gc.ca/site/ss/magazine/vol17_3/articles/csim_e.asp

The concept of 'Civil Resilience'

This is in vogue in the UK. The focus of this concept is keeping the civilian infrastructure operating in time of emergency such as flood, earthquake, pandemic, terrorist incident, etc. Search and Rescue organisations have a role to play in civil resilience. The various forms of UK SAR capacity and capability is made known to the UK's Cabinet Office and they are used as appropriate during major emergencies.

calendar

NZSAR Consultative Committee – 13 August – Wellington

NZSAR Council – 26 August – Wellington

Coastguard Conference and AGM – 25-27 September – Christchurch

LandSAR NZ AGM – 26 September – Wellington

FRSITO Conference – 19-20 October – Rotorua

Water Safety New Zealand Conference – 26-27 November – Wellington

useful website links

www.nzsar.org.nz – New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

This newsletter is available as a pdf on the website

www.beacons.org.nz – 406 beacon information & online registration

www.nzfishfed.co.nz – Federation of Commercial Fisherman

www.fire.org.nz – New Zealand Fire Service

natsar.amsa.gov.au – Australia's National Search and Rescue Council

www.nss.gc.ca/site/ss/magazine/vol18_1/index_e.asp – Canada's SARSCENE Magazine

Carl's corner

It's now eight months since I started in the role as Senior Advisor in the NZSAR Secretariat – and how that time has flown!

When I started, my first task was preparing the annual statistics report for the 07/08 financial year. This was very useful, as it gave me a general overview of the sector right from the start.



Closely tied in with the statistical work is the monitoring and reporting of the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that are in place. To all of you that are involved in completing the paperwork after SAROPs – thank you. I know it's not glamorous, and it can be time consuming, but we need this data to meet our obligations for spending crown (i.e. taxpayer) monies.

From the 1st of July we are hoping that all our databases will be more aligned. This will lead to a better understanding of our sector and where our needs lie.

I am writing this column shortly after our NZSAR Awards ceremony, held at Parliament. Congratulations to those people who received awards and those of you who were nominated. These awards remind us just how well New Zealanders are served by our search and rescue personnel. It is wonderful to be able to celebrate such skill and commitment in this way.

As this financial year draws to a close, I will soon be preparing the next set of annual statistics as well as carrying on with my monitoring and reporting tasks. One major piece of work that will keep me occupied for the rest of the year is the volunteer study. I hope to talk with quite a few of you to discuss what issues our volunteer agencies are facing and how we can address them.

If you have any questions, or would like more information about the volunteer study or the statistics work (including SLA monitoring and reporting), please send me an email or, even better, give me a call.

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This column alternates with Secretariat Manager Duncan Ferner