



New Zealand Search and Rescue

Search and Rescue Telecommunications Working Group (Land)

STWG(L)

Meeting Notes

Wednesday 12 September 2018, 1300hrs

Executive Board Room

James Cook Grand Chancellor Hotel

Wellington.

Present:

Stephen Ross (NZSAR) –Chair and Facilitator

Rex Aubrey (NZSAR radio consultant) -Scribe

Pete Corbett (LandSAR NZ)

Don Robertson (AREC Wellington)

Tony Hunt (NZ Police ICT)

John Lovell (Ministry of Civil Defence)

Sgt. Pete Theobald (NZ Police)

Flight Sgt. Issac Jacobs (RNZAF)

Tony Groome (LSAR NZ)

1. Welcome

Stephen opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and referred to the agenda he had prepared with Rex.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from Duncan Ferner (NZSAR), Alan Mundy (Surf Life Saving NZ), Inspector John Pine (NZ Police) and John Yaldwyn (AREC).

3. Acceptance of minutes from last workshop

Stephen asked if everyone accepted and the minutes for the previous meeting held on the 12 April 2018. The minutes were accepted by all.

4. Matters arising from last meeting (12 April 2018)

- 5 Rex arranged a special coverage maps workshop. This was conducted at the Police College with Andrew Tarr talking to the group and explaining the design of the NZSAR resources database.
- 6 Rex and Stephen attended the annual NZART conference. During that conference Stephen explained the NZSAR role and Rex demonstrated access to the NZSAR database and the voice recording option. At the end of the demonstration a 'real' search called out a number of AREC people. Rex and Stephen visited the Dunedin Central Police station and installed the VRS voice recording software, reprogrammed the Tait mobile radio and connected the radio to a computer. The SAR operation had all radio traffic recorded.
- 8 Rex continues to request updates from NZ Defence of their HF radio project. There is now a new person managing that project.
- 9 Stephen ensured all participants received a certificate of participation from NZSAR and the 'winner' was presented with a PLB donated by LandSAR.
- 10 Rex provided written feedback to LandSAR on the STWG (L) Roadshow.
- 11 John Lovell continues to carry out a nationwide audit of all Civil Defence radio equipment and provide coverage maps to the NZSAR database when they come available.
- 12 Tony Hunt arranged the loan of two TP9400 VHF handheld radios from Tait for John to carry out testing. Radios given to Don for configuring and testing.
- 13 Rex has carried out a market search of voice recording software and makes a recommendation on what product should be used. Rex to work with Tait to provide a technical modification to the TM8100 and TM9100 series of radios to enable connection to a computer for voice recording. Work completed with the VRS voice recording software chosen and AREC making connecting cable and testing.
- 14 Rex to continue to have monthly meetings with Police radio engineers.
- 15 Alan is continuing to work on providing Rex with a sample coverage map for the NZSAR database.

5. LandSAR update

Pete Corbett:

- An update on personnel changes within LandSAR for radio comms – John Woolf's contract has been terminated and we are working with AREC to agree to a SLA where they would manage and administer the channel plans and radio programming. This is not a reflection on the very good work that John has done for LandSAR over the last few years. Ian Newman is now no longer involved with radio comms due to other workloads and Pete Corbett will again manage the radio comms portfolio.
- LandSAR has an extra \$250k for radio comms this next year over and above our normal OSC allocation.
- V.4 channel has been approved to accommodate some forestry channels for Rotorua.
- Gisborne are intending to review their channel plan shortly and have indicated they will need some additional channels inserted – currently working on the Reg 13 authorities.
- LandSAR are intending to renew all their existing national Reg 13 authorities in the next month or so.
- The development a one day radio comms training course has been approved by the SARACE Governance Group – we will start working with AREC, Tait and potentially CBES shortly to get that done for delivery in 2019.

6. Annual AREC update

Don Robertson:

- An update on the reorganisation of AREC throughout the country.
- A progress update with the voice recording hardware and the testing of two Tait owned TP9400 with SARTrack was given.

Actions:

Don to continue testing the borrowed TP9400 radios with SAR track.

Don and Rex to check version 4 of the LSAR TP9300 code-plug.

7. Civil Defence update

John Lovell:

- The Government has recently released the recommendations from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) One of the implications is a more directive approach to CDEM Groups.
- Uptake of moving to digital by Groups is slow. I am aware of 4 Groups currently preparing business cases for digital. DMR is likely to be the preferred option by these Groups
- The 3rd review of CIMS is just commencing. One of the issues which I have identified is the absence of any reference to alternate communications and the need for a Communications Manager to be part of an EOC or ECC team right from the start. Review of communications, establishment of systems, nets, etc must be part of early operations planning.
- The surplus HF equipment which MCDEM had has now all been passed to AREC.
- A national list of CDEM satellite users is being developed. Iridium before the end of the year will have completed renewed and improved their network of low orbiting satellites including increasing capacity for data. The majority of Group use Iridium phone and BGan units but we need to have a better handle on other systems also being used.
- Communication planning by CDEM Groups is poor to non existent. 16 CDEM Groups and I have yet to see an adequate communications plan from any of them.
- There is little progress in the Emergency Services radio network. Reliant of government and cabinet decisions. Given the P25 digital is likely to finish in 2023 it is important that all agencies are kept informed and aware of what is being planned for Police Fire and Ambulance.

8. Police radio engineers meeting updates

Rex reported that he has a one hour long meeting with Police Engineers every month. These meeting have proven to be worthwhile and will continue into next year.

Rex also stated that he use to have a one hour long meeting with John Woolf each month and these meetings will continue with Pete Corbet.(LSAR)

Rex also said that it would be worthwhile having a one hour meeting with Don Roberston (AREC) each month.

Actions:

Rex to continue monthly meetings with Police radio engineers. Rex to set up monthly meeting with Pete Corbett (LSAR). Rex also to set up a further meetings with Don Robertson (AREC).

AREC and Police radio engineers to get together to write TP9400 code-plug to use GPS reporting and SARTrack.

9. NZSAR resource database

Rex reported that a number of fixed VHF radio repeaters coverage maps have been sent to Keith Allan at the RCC for inclusion in the NZSAR resource database.

10. VHF portable radio channel plan

Pete reported that various SAR groups around the country are adding extra channels to be included in the radios. A new version of code-plug (V4) has been sent out for Rex and Don to review. Steve stated that the NZSAR Council is expecting us to provide a common channel plan to be used by both LSAR and Police. Steve suggested that another technical workshop should be held before the next STWG(L) meeting.

Action:

Rex to arrange for a technical working group meeting before the next STWG(L) meeting.

11 STWG(L) Roadshow

To date the road show has visited Wanganui, Dunedin, Rotorua, Tauranga and Hamilton. People representing Police SAR, LSAR, AREC, DOC, Coastguard and Surf Life Saving and Red Cross have attended to date. Rex and Steve have found the sessions to very positive with active engagement and discussions from attendees. Visits to Blenheim, Auckland, Whangarei, Gisborne and Napier are currently being arranged and should be completed before Christmas.

12 GPS tracking of 'other' radio

Tait have loaned two TP9400 APCO 25 digital trunk radios (the same radio that Police own and use for SAR) to Don Robertson of AREC. Don is evaluating the code-plug and making alterations to enable the GPS tracking feature similar to the TP9300 owned by LandSAR. After the code-plug has been tested, Don will share the alterations that are needed to be made with Police radio engineers so they can enable GPS tracking on Police SAR radios. This will then enable them to be used with the SARTrack software.

13 Voice recording

Rex and Don have evaluated and tested the VRS voice recording software. Don has redesigned the connecting cable that connects the computer using the SARTrack software to the Tait TM9100 desktop radios to also incorporate the voice recording software. Stephen to arrange a meeting with Andrew Tarr to ascertain if the SARTrack server can be used to store the recordings. Then, if agreed upon, Police and LSAR can develop user guides and policies on how the voice recordings are to be stored.

Actions:

Don to continue testing the voice recording system.

Police and LandSAR to generate a user guide and policy document for voice recording of SAR radio channels

Meeting to be arranged with Andrew Tarr to investigate if the NZSAR SARTrack Server can be used to hold voice recordings.

14 RNZAF Radios

NZ Defence HF Radio replacement project. Flight Sgt Jacobs gave the meeting an update of that project. There was some issues with the new design as it did not fulfil all of the air-force requirements

Tony Groome and Flight Sgt Issac Jacobs provide information on what SAR radio channels were programmed into the RNZAF helicopters radio system and that the aircrew had the ability to program frequencies into the radio on an ad hoc basis. Tony offered to visit Ohakea to confirm with the NH90 crews that SAR radio channels can be accessed and used.

Action:

Tony Groome to visit Ohakea to check NH90 radios used on SAR operations

15 General Business

- Tony Hunt talked about updates on the Next Generation Critical Communications (NGCC) Programme.

Tony advises that there is a link that provides updates at <http://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/programmes-and-initiatives/next-generation-critical-communications-ngcc>

- Tony Groome provided a quick description of how radios were used by fire fighters during his involvement in the 2018 California wildfires.



New Zealand Search and Rescue

Meeting ended at 15:30

Agenda Item No.	Action Point	Responsibility
6a	Don to continue testing the borrowed TP9400 radios with SAR track.	Don
6b	Don and Rex to check version 4 of the LSAR TP9300 code-plug	Don and Rex
8a	Rex to continue monthly meetings with Police radio engineers. Rex to set up monthly meeting with Pete Corbett (LSAR). Rex also to set up a further meetings with Don Robertson (AREC).	Rex
8b	AREC and Police radio engineers to get together to write TP9400 code-plug to use GPS reporting and SARTrack.	Rex, Don and Hamish
10	Rex to arrange for a technical working group meeting before the next STWG(L) meeting.	Rex
13	Don to continue testing the voice recording system.	Don
13	Police and LandSAR to generate a user guide and policy document for voice recording of SAR radio channels	John Theobald and Pete Corbett
13	Meeting to be arranged with Andrew Tarr to investigate if the NZSAR SARTrack Server can be used to hold voice recordings.	Stephen
14	Tony Groome to visit Ohakea to check NH90 radios used on SAR operations	Tony Groome