



CONNECTING THE SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTOR

NEWS

NEW ZEALAND'S SEARCH AND RESCUE GUIDELINES

In 2016 the NZSAR Council provided the mandate to develop a single point of reference for the New Zealand SAR sector – New Zealand's Search and Rescue Guidelines.

This is a significant project that will gather together all the information and material that forms the New Zealand Search and Rescue doctrine, procedures and processes. It will create one reference point for each and every participant in the SAR sector, covering planning, process, training, procedure and execution within the New Zealand context.

The background to the project is that SAR in New Zealand has developed significantly and this has resulted in SAR organisations developing and documenting a wide range of guidelines, manuals, training material and SAR processes for their own use.

The objective is to create and maintain an agreed, unified and documented set of guidelines which are a point of reference for the conduct of the New Zealand SAR sector.

The project to develop the Guidelines will involve sector-wide support and engagement. It is scheduled for completion in early 2019. ●



SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS RENEWED

Joint Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with Coastguard, LandSAR, and Surf Life Saving have been extended for a further three years. The SLAs provide a level of funding certainty for the voluntary organisations, and confidence for the Coordinating Authorities that these agencies are available to conduct and support SAR activities when requested. The SLA with the Mountain Safety Council for the provision of the New Zealand Avalanche Advisory service has also been extended.

As a result of an independent review of the agreements, both Coastguard and LandSAR have increases in their funding levels. Part of the increased funding is to assist both organisations' ongoing fundraising efforts to ensure their medium-term sustainability. LandSAR will also receive additional funding targeted at management support for its Safety Management System, Competency & Training, and Relationships & Fundraising.

In addition, LandSAR will receive funding to provide national leadership and coordination for the continued implementation of the Partnership Framework – Safer Walking (Wander) SAR. The funding will help LandSAR provide management support to the Wander SAR sector, support national and regional wander stakeholder reference group meetings, and also ensure the continued and secure supply of Wander SAR equipment for New Zealand. ●

FAMILY LIAISON

A new video recently posted on START – the library of SAR knowledge and experience for SAR people – is designed to highlight the importance of the role of the Family Liaison in SAR operations.

It is a case study about the search for Carissa Avison – who went missing in January 2017. Her body was found twenty one days later.

Although the outcome of the search was tragic, the video was produced with the support of the family, Police and local community to show the value of building good relationships with families in the course of SAR operations. It is also designed to be used as a training aid.

Constable Bridget Suckling, who is part of the Auckland search and rescue squad, was the Family Liaison for the search for Carissa. She says the role involves being a conduit for information about the SAR operation to family. In the video, she talks about building trust and respect with the family, and being prepared to go the extra mile.

Carissa’s mother and family members are also interviewed and give their views on the search and the level of information they were wanting during the course of the SAR operation.

The video also highlights the need to maintain positive involvement and engagement with the community. “The community want to get involved; it’s their community, it’s one of their members,” says Sergeant Dene Duthie, Auckland SAR coordinator.

Another sensitive aspect covered in the video is search suspension – how the decision is made and how that is communicated to family members.

The case study also highlights the need to maintain ongoing relationships between the Family Liaison officer and the family when new information about the search becomes available, plus the cultural sensitivities that need to be factored into the retrieval of bodies.



The 16 minute video can be found on START – the library of SAR knowledge and experience for SAR people. ●

<http://nzsar.govt.nz/Knowledge-Training/START/SAR-Coordination/Family-Liaison>

WHAT ELSE IS NEW ON START?



SAR in Antarctica:

A video of the International Maritime Organisation in the polar region.

Avalanche Awareness:

Links to videos on RECCO^R SAR Technology.

SAR Resources Database:

Reference document for using the NZSAR Resource Website.

CIMS Training and CIMS 2nd Edition:

Short summary of the changes made in this edition.



ORDER OF MERIT FOR NZSAR COUNCIL MEMBER

Congratulations to David Comber who was presented with NZ Order of Merit for services to Search and Rescue at Government House at the end of August. David has been involved with Search and Rescue in Taupo since 1983.

He is a senior advisor and search manager for LandSAR Taupo and has been involved with hundreds of searches, many of them as Operations Manager. From 2006 to 2011 he was a member of the New Zealand LandSAR Board. He has represented LandSAR on the Mountain Safety Council and was appointed to the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council in 2016.

AVALANCHE WORKSHOP

Around 40 people attended an avalanche SAR workshop, organised by the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) on behalf of NZSAR, in Christchurch in early June. It coincided with MSC's Southern Hemisphere Alpine Conference (SHAC), which was also held in the city.

Presentations at the workshop included updates on advanced medical care for avalanche victims. There was also a focus on the importance of establishing and maintaining local relationships between Police, LandSAR volunteers, and ski field staff to ensure a fast and effective response for all alpine incidents.

The workshop featured practical demonstrations on advances in probing techniques, updates on using detection equipment, and a sand table refresher on searching and flagging an avalanche site.

Workshop participants were introduced to four scenarios, using volunteers or medical dummies, to simulate victims of avalanche incidents. Participants were split into teams and rotated through each scenario to practice using the updated medical flowcharts.

Nathan Watson, MSC's Partnerships Manager, says the workshop was well timed. "Offering the avalanche SAR workshop alongside the full Alpine Conference was a great way to maximise learning opportunities and provide a broad range of conference content to a diverse group of alpine professionals."

Many of the attendees at the SAR workshop also participated in SHAC.



"Events like the SAR workshop and SHAC help to maintain strong partnerships and add to effective collaboration. It's also a great opportunity to share with and learn from a great bunch of people."



The conference runs every second winter and presents a unique opportunity for alpine professionals from across New Zealand to connect with local and international guests and stay up-to-date on topics including snow science, climate change and the effect on our alpine environments, risk management, plus the latest research and industry developments.

"It's a small sector, and everyone knows each other well, but for the majority of the time everyone is spread across somewhat remote locations," says Nathan. "Events like the SAR workshop and SHAC help to maintain strong partnerships and add to effective collaboration. It's also a great opportunity to share with and learn from a great bunch of people."

Another avalanche SAR workshop is planned to run alongside the next SHAC conference, which is scheduled for 2019. ●

STATS ATTACK

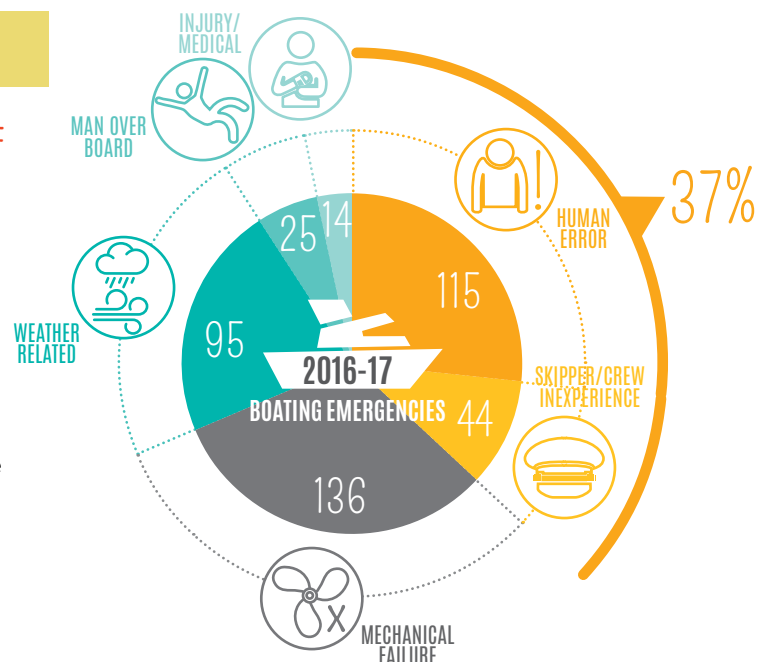
WHAT ARE THE COMMON CAUSES OF BOATING EMERGENCIES?

The main causes of boating-related emergencies leading to Category 1 SAR incidents in 2016/17 were the result of either mechanical failure, human error or inexperience.

Almost a third (32%) of incidents were the result of some sort of mechanical failure – however incidents caused by human error or inexperienced skipper or crew account for 37% of all incidents.

These statistics are a good reminder, as we head towards the start of the recreational boating season, to encourage family members, friends, or colleagues to follow the safety advice of the Boating Safety Code – Know Before You Go.

<https://www.adventuresmart.org.nz/boating-adventures/>



WELCOME STEVE ROSS - ASSURANCE COORDINATOR



Steve Ross is the new Assurance Coordinator at NZSAR. His role is to provide assurance to the NZSAR Council on the level of capabilities that the SAR sector holds – to enable safe and effective SAR responses. Key to this will be developing and establishing a SAR assurance system and framework.

Steve comes to the SAR sector from Police National Headquarters. His last position was as a shift commander in the National Command and Coordination Centre – although he started his Police career many years earlier at Wellington Central Police Station. Steve's been a motorcycle patrol officer, worked on the Diplomatic Protection Squad and has been part of the road policing and driver trainer team at the Royal New Zealand Police College in Wellington. He has also worked in the Central Communications Service Centre where he spent several years as team leader and acting shift commander.

Prior to joining the Police, Steve worked as a ski instructor in California, where he had his first inauspicious contact with the SAR sector.

"I attended my first SAREX as a Red Cross volunteer – although my main memory of that was spending the whole day in a caravan making soup."

Aside from looking after the assurance programme, Steve has several other projects in his sights – including implementing the Aviation Engagement Framework. He will also take over as facilitator for the Strategic Health and Safety Committee and run the Search & Rescue Telecommunications Working Group (Land).

Steve says he was wondering how long it would take for his Police nickname to follow him to NZSAR – day one his new colleagues asked if he preferred to be known as Steve or "Salty". "I guess that reveals the close relationships that NZSAR has developed with the SAR sector agencies."

THE AVIATION ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The Aviation Engagement Framework has been developed to address the issues and challenges with the relationships between aviation providers, coordinating authorities and NZSAR. A report completed at the end of last year identified three key areas:

- inconsistent approaches to search and rescue operations (SAROPS)
- gaps in assurance
- challenges for effective relationships at functional and operational levels.

At present, the Coordinating Authorities have an incomplete understanding of the equipment available to aviation operators, and to what level certifications are in place.

Another challenge identified is that although the NZSAR resources database holds a great deal of useful information, it does not contain details regarding safety systems, compliance with standards and personal qualifications, or competencies.

There is also currently no aviation equivalent of the Joint Service Level Agreements that are held between the Coordinating Authorities and SAR organisations.

Opportunities to support the framework are likely to arise with the National Ambulance Sector Office (NASO), which is developing a new operating model for air ambulance services. The new model is being co-designed by the air ambulance sector, DHBs, the wider health sector and other agencies, including the SAR sector. With approximately 6% of air ambulance services relating to SAROPS, NZSAR and the Coordinating Authorities continue to be a part of this process and will be contributing at several technical and operational workshops held in September. ●

INTERNATIONAL MASS RESCUE OPERATIONS CONFERENCE



In June this year Duncan Ferner, NZSAR Secretariat Manager and Paul Craven, RCCNZ's Deputy Manager (Operations) attended the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) Mass Rescue Operations conference in Gothenburg, Sweden. The conference attracted SAR practitioners from all over the world – with 140 delegates from 25 countries. Chief Executive Officer at the IMRF is New Zealander Bruce Reid, who is former CEO for Coastguard NZ.

The aim of the conference was to emphasise the importance of maritime mass rescue operation planning and to fill gaps in search and rescue (SAR) response capability. Duncan Ferner says although mass rescues at sea are low probability events, the risks and challenges are extremely high – hence the need for the NZSAR sector to participate fully in the planning and preparedness for them, which was the conference's focus. He adds that need was reinforced by the exercises taking place in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

"Our own Rauora II mass rescue exercises indicate that we are on the right track by ensuring we have sound plans and can get the right people together to practice them."

The conference started with a practical exercise involving more than 200 people and 20 rescue boats tasked with locating 70 injured or unresponsive people scattered across local islets.

The remainder of the three-day conference used 'real world' case studies to focus on rescue, coordination, communication and planning in a practical manner.

Immediately after the IMRF conference there was a mass rescue operations course for senior emergency planning

officers. This was attended by Paul Craven. The aim of this course was to study mass rescues in depth to help prepare detailed plans to improve home country capability.

Both the conference and the course reinforced for the New Zealand delegates the message from the speakers that if you have focussed on the possibilities beforehand, and prepared as best you can, your response will be significantly improved and you will save more lives. ●

SAR IN ACTION

TAEIRI PLAINS

Water rescues performed by lifeguards are usually restricted to beach or coastal areas, but in July this year members of Otago's Surf Life Saving (SLS) SAR team were called to a rescue during severe flooding on the Taieri Plains near Mosgiel.

A vehicle had been swept away by rising flood waters between Mosgiel and Outram. A second vehicle at the scene had attempted to assist and was also caught up in the flooding. One of the occupants rang 111 close to midnight with flood waters rising around their stranded vehicles.

Max Corboy was the On Site Controller with the SLS Otago SAR crew on the night of the floods. He says because of the heavy flooding in the district he and his team were already in the area. Around midnight a call came alerting them to at least seven stranded people in two vehicles. "We were at the fire station trying to dry out when the 111 call-out came. We responded with the Mosgiel Fire Brigade."

The SLS SAR crew, along with two IRBs and swift water rescue equipment, went to the area but decided it was too dangerous to attempt to launch their IRBs. "We could see the vehicles about 500m down the road flashing lights back at us, but it was decided with the fire crew that there was just too much moving water."

The team decided to approach the stricken motorists from the other side of the highway. Thanks to the detailed local knowledge of the Mosgiel fire crew they were able to find a safe place to launch their boats. "The flooded vehicles were still 500 metres down the road – we could just make them out with the Mosgiel Fire Brigade's thermal imaging camera."

The Surf Life Saving team launched an IRB from a culvert with three people – a driver and crewman and a rescue swimmer – on board.

When the first IRB got to the vehicles the crew could see they had been swept into a large stand of poplar trees, creating hazardous conditions for both the crews and the occupants. Water was rising above the doors and the current was strong. "The boys had to drive up and hold power on the motor to keep themselves up against the vehicle so they could move people across. They were quite gnarly conditions."

Passengers came off the vehicles two at a time and were ferried back to the remaining SLS team and fire crew at the staging area. A second IRB was waiting on standby ready to go if the first boat got into trouble. A helicopter crew also arrived to render assistance if required.

Max says the occupants of the vehicle were lucky the IRB got to them in time. All were hypothermic and had to be assisted from the IRBs and walked down to the ambulance by the fire crew.



"The flooded vehicles were still 500 metres down the road – we could just make them out with the Mosgiel Fire Brigade's thermal imaging camera."

"There was a guy clinging up a tree with the water moving around under him. He was one of the ones you'll never forget – he was freezing and if they hadn't got to him when they did he would have been gone."

Max says it was a complex rescue made even more challenging by darkness and rising floodwaters. He adds there were a number of services there ready and willing to help. "We were lucky that we had a lot of guys with a vast range of skills that could adapt in that environment."

He says one of the keys to the successful rescue was establishing good quality communications between the boat crews and the staging area. "We had a couple of guys from the SAR team who raced up the hill and put on an emergency repeater for us. That was really key at the start. If we hadn't had comms we would have struggled big time. We had the boys down the river in the IRBs and we were relaying everything through the Fire Command unit. If we couldn't have talked to the boys on the boats the rescue wouldn't have happened."

Following the rescue the SLS crews needed to quickly evacuate as the river continued to rise.

Local police said that without the work of the lifeguards and other emergency services there is no doubt lives would have been lost. ●

DUNCAN'S DESK



The weather might be rubbish but there has been no let-up in search and rescue this winter. There have been a few large and high-profile SAR operations in recent weeks on top of our normal winter workload. The bigger SAROPs serve to highlight the need for us to have sufficient SAR capacity for large and sustained searches. The burden on everyone involved for these jobs, paid and unpaid alike, is immense.

These sorts of operations quickly exhaust local SAR groups and units and require district, regional and sometimes all-of-New-Zealand support in order to keep the searches running effectively over multiple operational periods. NZSAR supports SAR agencies

to standardise wherever possible so that individuals, teams and groups are interoperable in the performance of SAR. The set of standardised SAR forms and templates held on the NZSAR website for use by all is a good example of where we try to add value (see <http://nzsar.govt.nz/Resources/NZSAR-Forms>).

As you read on page 1 of this newsletter, we are now embarking on the next logical step by working with the sector to prepare a commonly agreed doctrinal and operational base for search and rescue in New Zealand. This is a fairly large project which will require extensive input from a wide range of experts from across New Zealand and overseas. Once completed, these 'SAR Guidelines' will be the prime reference for SAR training and operations of all types, so it is important that we get them right. We will also need an effective and simple way of keeping them up-to-date and relevant to the sector.

In recent months, the NZSAR Council signed off on the NZSAR Strategic Plan 2017 - 2020. This document, which has been extensively updated, attempts to define our collective vision, values and goals. It also outlines the Council's key identified risks and sketches out a work

plan for the next three years. While this plan is probably not casual reading for everyone, I would encourage those of you who are interested to have a look as it is a foundation document for NZSAR and the things we are trying to achieve. You can find it on our website at www.nzsar.govt.nz.

The preparation of new Joint Service Level Agreements (see the article on page 1) has also dominated much of our time in recent months. These documents support the government's investment into the four major voluntary SAR agencies. The agreements and their associated funding is intended to support 'the adequate provision of safe and competent search and rescue services for all areas of New Zealand'. For the next three-year period, this investment is in excess of \$11.9 million.

Finally, I would like to welcome Steve Ross, our new Assurance Coordinator, to the NZSAR Secretariat and to the SAR sector in general. There is a bit about Steve on page 4.

Stay safe
Duncan
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CALENDAR

SAREXs and SAR training see:

nzsar.govt.nz/Calendar/Events

Australia and New Zealand Search and Rescue Conference
23 May 2018: Star Gold Coast (formerly Jupiters), Australia
<https://sar.anzdmcc.com.au>

NZSAR Combined Council and Consultative Committee Meeting.
22 November: 1-4pm Wellington

WEBSITES

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

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

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

The new NZSAR strategic plan is posted on the NZSAR website.
nzsar.govt.nz/Publications/Strategic-Docs



Link is produced by New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

www.nzsar.govt.nz



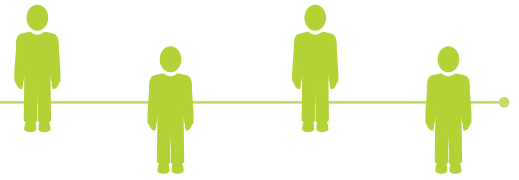
Like the Adventuresmart facebook page and contribute to it

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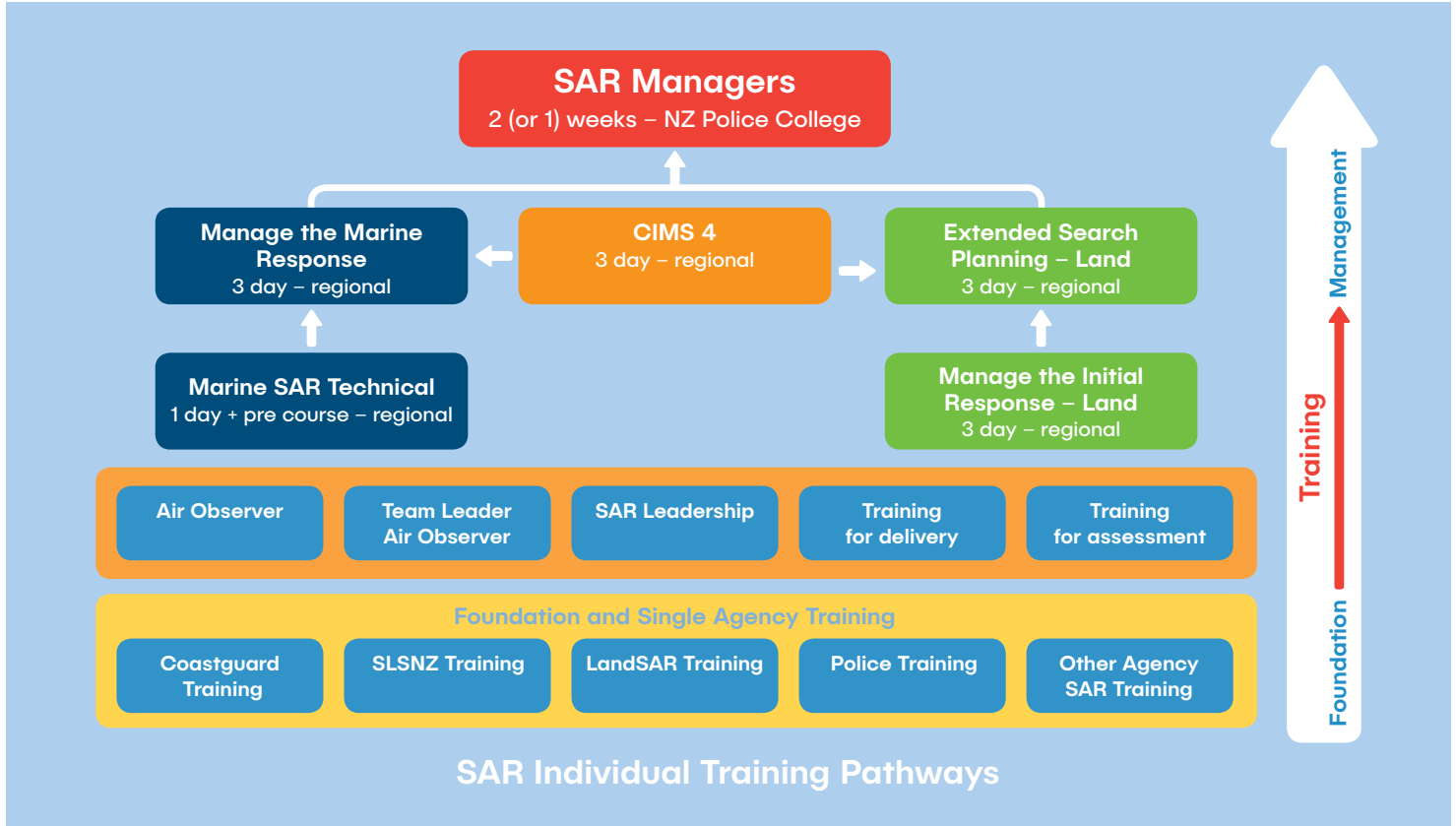
www.beacons.org.nz

SAR (ACE) SNAPSHOT



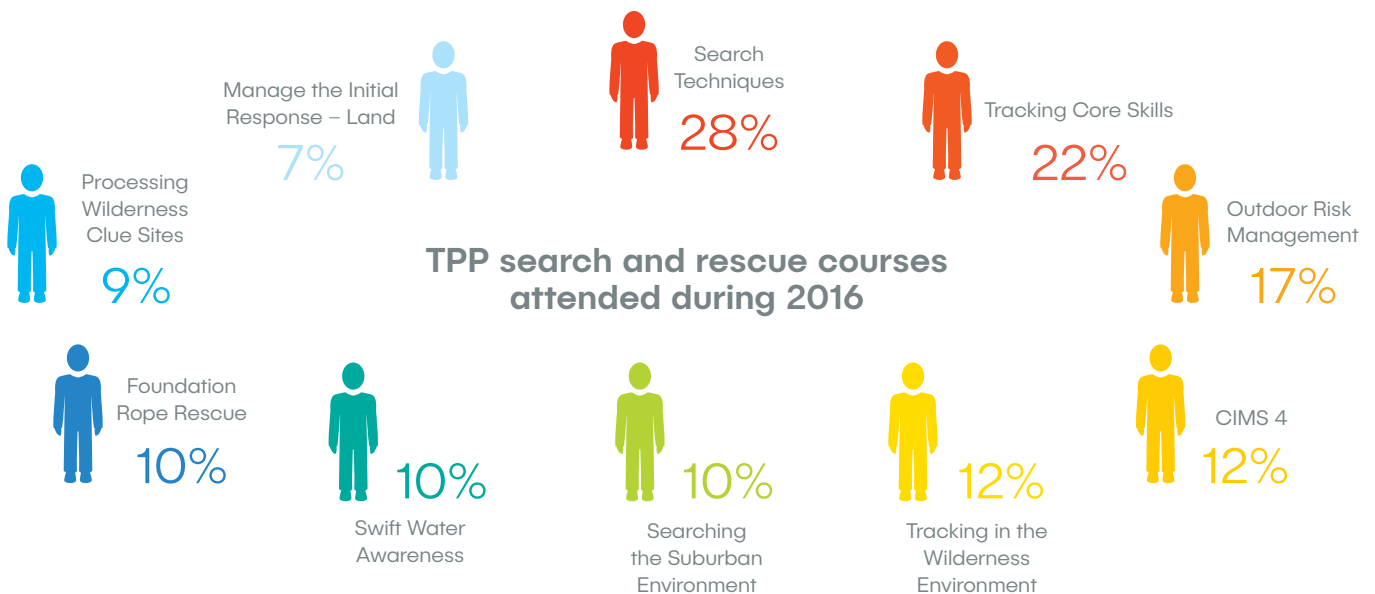
SAR Adult and Community Education (ACE) is funding provided by the Tertiary Education Commission, coordinated by NZSAR and delivered by Tai Poutini Polytechnic. It makes training available and achievable for all SAR personnel. Courses are requested by the SAR sector and cover a myriad of disciplines, field skills, leadership and management.

SAR (ACE) Snapshot appears twice a year in Link. It canvasses the courses on offer, profiles the tutors and analyses trends and techniques.



NZSAR Student Survey

In March 2017, NZSAR commissioned a second independent survey of SAR (ACE) students, repeating a survey undertaken in 2016. The results remain overall very positive and confirm that training is delivering relevant skills.





The graph shows the % of respondents who rated the tutors as excellent or good

