



# New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**New Zealand Search and Rescue Council**  
**1 – 3pm Wednesday 8 March 2017**  
**RCCNZ, Avalon TV and Film Studio**  
**41 Percy Cameron Street, Avalon, Lower Hutt**

**Present:**

Peter Mersi – MoT (Chair)  
Brigadier John Boswell – NZDF  
Mike Rusbatch - NZ Police  
Graeme Harris – CAA  
Keith Manch – MNZ  
Dave Comber – Independent Member

**In Attendance:**

Paul Craven – RCCNZ  
Rachel Roberts NZSAR  
Duncan Ferner – NZSAR  
Rhett Emery - NZSAR  
Peter Baird – NZ Police  
Chris Scahill – NZ Police  
Carl van der Meulen – NZSAR  
Lauren James – Minute taker

**1 Welcome**

Peter Mersi opened the meeting by welcoming attendees.

**2. Apologies**

There were no apologies.

**3. Minutes of Meeting held 21 September 2016**

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

#### 4. Actions Arising from Previous Meeting

##### NZSAR Council Action and Responsibility Table - Meeting of 21 September 2016

Item		Actions & Decisions	Responsibility
7.	<b>NZSAR Risk Matrix</b>	The Secretariat is to further <b>update</b> the Council's Risk Matrix by removing the COSPAS SARSAT failure Risk, and updating the Health and Safety and SAR technology risks.	Secretariat  Refer agenda item 11
8.	<b>2017-2020 PLA Funding</b>	The Council <b>noted</b> the MoT PLA funding brief and agreed to an NZSAR Council cover letter for the final briefing note to joint Ministers.	Completed
9.a	<b>Coronial Inquiry – Search for Fiona Wills</b>	The Council <b>approved</b> recommendations 1.1 to 12.	Secretariat In process
9.b	<b>Land Communications Framework</b>	The Council <b>approved</b> the report and directed the Secretariat to work with agencies to address the recommendations.	Secretariat  Refer agenda item 16
9.c	<b>NZ Inc Recreational Safety Framework</b>	The Council <b>accepted</b> the report and <b>invited</b> the Secretariat to develop a set of actions which would best contribute to the outcomes the Council is seeking.	Secretariat  In process
11.f	<b>Attendance record at Council and Consultative Committee Meetings</b>	The Council <b>agreed</b> that the attendance tables for the Council and Consultative Committee will not be included in the 2015/2016 Annual Report.	Actioned

#### 5. SLA Monitoring Report for the October – December 2016 Quarter

All updates have been received. A comparison of the monitoring period July to September 2016 with the same quarter for the previous year showed more SAROPS in 2016 than in the previous year. The number of lives saved during the quarter was 21 compared to 35 the previous year whilst the number of people rescued was 143 exceeding the 2015 total of 96. During the July to September quarter 2,199 Coastguard volunteers responded to 219 non-SAR related calls for assistance.

The total figures for October to December 2016 were down compared to the figures for the same quarter in 2015. This could be a result of less people engaged in recreational pursuits because of weather conditions. RCCNZ saved 14 people during the quarter compared to 40 people saved the previous year which came

from one incident. Coastguard are unable to extract from their reporting the volunteer data relating to the Kaikoura earthquake.

**Outcome:** The Council **noted** the SLA Monitoring Report.

## **6. Sector Update**

Coastguard have, for the first time, produced consolidated accounts for their financial reporting, as part of new requirements from the XRB. Coastguard's auditor had decided the agency had sufficient control over its organisation to be able to produce consolidated accounts. Neither Surf Life Saving nor LandSAR were deemed to have sufficient control over their organisation and the auditor recommended that they not be required to produce consolidated accounts. The Charities web site provides all the information but some groups might not register as a charity.

Air Force News reports the NH90 is now able to operate on to ships. Brig Boswell outlined that such operations were currently restricted to HMNZS Canterbury, at anchor in calm conditions only.

Mountain Safety Council reports there have been five recorded avalanches during the winter but no fatalities.

The number of lives saved raised the question of whether enough information is communicated to funding agencies to demonstrate the value of their financial support. LandSAR, Coastguard and to a lesser degree Surf Life Saving use the MOT 'value of life' model when telling their story. Previously, NZSAR has engaged with Foundation North, ARAFB, Lotteries and Combined NZ Community Trusts to outline the benefits of funding SAR agencies. The Secretariat will do so again in 2017/18

Coastguard volunteer hours totalled 618 in the first quarter and increased to 4,098 in the second quarter including hours for the Kaikoura earthquake. LandSAR volunteers provided 1,494 hours support to the earthquake response.

The sector update report was noted.

## **7. NZSAR Strategy 2017-2020**

The Strategic Plan combined workshop scheduled for 22 November was cancelled because of the Kaikoura earthquake. The updated Strategic Plan was discussed in detail.

### **NZSAR Outcomes**

Council noted that though prevention is listed as one of the four goals it is not explicit in the outcomes. The document was viewed as very rescue orientated.

## **NZSAR Values**

Council discussed the wording of two of the four values “*Providing service to our communities*” and “*Respecting individuals, teams and organisations*” and whether they should be expanded to include a value set.

## **Our Region**

The map will be updated.

## **Concept of operations**

*The sector prepares for nationally significant search and rescue events in the region by developing and practising integrated multi-agency responses supported by shared policies and plans.*

Duncan explained that the previous wording had referred to “mass rescue incidents” with no reference to a distinctive search. The term “mass rescue” had troubled the Consultative Committee and the common view was this becomes a significant event. The event could be something well within SAR capabilities but becomes significant because a well-known person or celebrity is involved. A nationally significant event could be a large cruise liner in Milford Sound. The focus is on mass rescue.

## **NZSAR Council Risks**

### *Nationally Significant Search and Rescue Event*

The leadership coordination for a significant event is set down in the Operational Framework (refer to item 9 of agenda). With some events the formal governance structure takes over the overall coordination responsibility. If it is an avalanche or aircraft a different organisation has responsibility. A cruise ship with international passengers would trigger the national security system. Council discussed whether there should be commentary on the increased demand on SAR services because of the greying population demographic eg dementia. An increased demand on SAR services may create a risk because the sector is unable to meet the demand. New Zealand is seen as an international tourist location and some cruise ships offer more adventure type cruising in the Antarctic creating more risk.

Council agreed that the increase and change in demand on SAR services be considered for inclusion as an identified risk.

## **NZSAR Council Goals**

All four Council goals had been updated particularly in respect of SAR prevention.

Concern was expressed at the lack of commentary around measuring the robustness of the SAR system. What is missing is a clear linkage around innovation logic and how it is measured. The NSSP does have some linkages and some of the data will be picked up but that is around sector performance not

around funding. The Secretariat reports quarterly on the NSSP and this information could be included at every Council meeting but it is not a robust system. Duncan suggested perhaps a workshop, at a high level, to assess the standard being achieved, a light touch self-assessment of progress.

### **NZSAR Work Plan 2017-2020**

Work plan elements will change from year to year as a result of Council guidance. Significant investment into NZSAR has allowed for ten planned projects and an estimate of the time for each project has been included. Duncan suggested the Work Plan could be printed as a separate handout whilst the electronic version could be updated regularly. The previous Strategic Plan had a print run of about 200.

### **NZSAR Roles**

Previously this section was included in “Key Definitions”. A brief description of the roles of NZSAR Council, NZSAR Consultative Committee and NZSAR Secretariat has been added.

**Action:** The Secretariat is to further **update** the Strategic Plan, incorporate the changes discussed and recirculate out of session for approval.

## **8. Terms of Reference**

Council considered the three Terms of Reference each of which has been aligned with the Council’s objectives. Monitoring of SAR capability was raised with the suggestion that more effort be directed to that aspect. Duncan pointed out that whilst Council’s role is to provide the monitoring the Secretariat implements measures to build capability.

### **a. NZSAR Council**

The Council TOR now included reference to the Cabinet minute establishing the NZSAR Council. There was also mention of the Joint Service Level Agreements in the Objectives section and the Membership and composition of Council has been updated to include the non-government Independent Member. The Reporting and Accountabilities section had also been reworked.

**Decision:** The Council **approved** the NZSAR Council Terms of Reference.

### **b. Consultative Committee**

Some minor changes had been made to the Consultative Committee TOR. Aviation Industry Association is now Aviation New Zealand and the TOR will be amended to reflect the name change. The footnote on page 2 to be removed.

**Action:** The Council **approved** the NZSAR Consultative Committee Terms of Reference subject to amending the name of Aviation New Zealand and removing the footnote on page 2.

### c. Secretariat

Significant changes have been made to the Secretariat TOR including an expanded Objectives section.

**Decision:** The Council **approved** the NZSAR Secretariat Terms of Reference.

## 9. Operational Framework for the NZSAR

Council was briefed on the updated Operational Framework document. This is a significant rewrite of the original 2011 document and is the peak operational document for the SAR sector. Material has been sourced from different international conventions including the *International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue Manual* (IAMSAR Manual), USA National SAR Plan, as well as the NSS handbook, New Zealand's *Coordinated Incident Management System* (CIMS) and other relevant SAR operational documentation. The Framework takes the approach of turning practice into theory.

NZSAR Manual of SAR Doctrine is a placeholder name for the current piece of work resulting from the Wills Coronial Inquiry.

The elements of the Framework brought to the Councils attention included:

### Part One: Introduction

- Guiding principles include:
  - All actions are to be in the best interest of persons in distress.
  - Unless required by law or by previous agreement, SAR services provided to persons in danger or distress will be without subsequent cost-recovery from the person(s) assisted.
- Terminology and definitions used throughout the Framework will be as consistent as possible with usage in pertinent international conventions and the IAMSAR manual.

### Part Two: Legal and National Frameworks

- Addition of section on NZ National Security System

### Part Three: New Zealand SAR System

- Expansion of NSS structure
- Updated as per the updated TORs
- Addition of NZSAR Working Groups

### Part Four: Search and Rescue Region

- Explanation of Pacific Islands and Antarctica

- International Support
- SAR Agreements

#### Part Five: Responsibilities for SAR Operations

- The overseas convention of using Roman numerals has been adopted when referring to the two categories of SAR operations.
- Coordinating Authorities definitions includes an explanation for Antarctic SAR coordination.
- Incidents when the National Security System might get involved.

#### Part Six: SAR Operating Procedures

- Much of this section has been taken from IAMSAR and adjusted to make it applicable to land operations.
- Search suspension:
  - Independent search review required prior to suspension
  - Approval to suspend section now includes a table (see below) listing the category, type of operation and the relevant suspension approval authority.

Type of Operation	Search Suspension Approval Authority
Any Category 1 search	Police District Commander
Category 2 aeronautical search	Director Civil Aviation Authority
Category 2 land search	Director Maritime New Zealand
Category 2 maritime search	Director Maritime New Zealand

#### Part Seven: Supporting SAR services

- Training – shows training happens within agencies, and multi-agency
- Exercising – shows all agencies have a role in exercising
- SAR Assurance may have an impact which could create more work for agencies.

#### Appendix A:

The Council noted that reference to the Defence Act should be included in the list of legislation.

The Council noted that the list of reasons for search suspension made no reference to safety issues. Duncan advised that if a safety issue arose a search would probably be paused not suspended. The goal is always to save a person in distress and their survivability is taken into consideration when making the

decision to suspend. Financial cost is not a consideration when determining search suspension.

**Action:** The Council **approved** the Operational Framework subject to the various amendments discussed.

## 10. NZSAR Awards

Rhett reported that 39 nominations had been received: 16 for operational activity and 23 for support activity. A non-conflicted sub-group of the NZSAR Consultative Committee met and reviewed the submissions and have provided advice to the NZSAR Council (see separate paper).

Current policy does not explicitly state any limit on the number of certificates that can be awarded in each category each year. The Council seeks to maintain a sufficient standard of worthy achievements or important contributions made to ensure that the awards are valued and discussed the possibility of setting a cap on the number of certificates awarded.

Many of the nominations were from Coastguard and Council discussed whether it would be acceptable to articulate a higher threshold on the nominations to be submitted, placing some constraints on the organisations. The Council questioned whether the panel had identified any areas which could be strengthened. Rachel reported that she had noted applications which should not have been submitted. A lot of time has been spent on assessing them and it was noted there was a lack of nominations from LandSAR, Surf Life Saving and Aviation. The subcommittee has tried to achieve a much more equitable system considering the number of nominations received.

Council accepted the sub committee's recommendations and decided to consider the issue further after the ceremony has taken place. The cost of organising the event was around \$30,000. Approval is being sought from the Minister of Transport to use Parliament Grand Hall for the presentation.

The awards subcommittee is to be thanked for its work.

**Decision:** The Council **agreed** with the 2016 NZSAR Award recommendations of the subcommittee.

## 11. NZSAR Risks

The Council discussed the updated Risk Matrix in detail.

- Risk 2017/01 SAR Information – likelihood to be changed from certain to possible.
- Risk 2017/03 Cohesive and effective SAR Training – to be reworded to include assurance around competence and capability.

- Risk 2017/06 Nationally Significant Search and Rescue Event has been reworded.
- Risk 2016/7 COSPAS SARSAT has been removed.
- Risk 2017/08 Health and Safety Treatment Option A has been amended.

The H&S Committee is in the process of developing guidelines for the assurance of non-SLA SAR assets used on a regular basis. For instance, Wanaka Jet Boat, would be a PCBU perhaps unwittingly taken on without understanding their responsibility. The committee is also working with agency H&S teams.

- Risk 2017/10 SAR Technology has been amended to include a treatment leading to the identification of incident management team support software.

In discussing the status of each risk treatment Duncan suggested he provide information at the next Council meeting on the way the work is happening and the work which is not planned.

**Action:** The Secretariat is to further **update** the Council's Risk Matrix.

Duncan reported he had written to the Superintendent of the Central Police District expressing concern about the decision to disestablish the Central Police District Search and Rescue Coordinator position. The decision had been reached after an internal review. This was the second similar submission he has written in the last six months and the issue appears to be a trend. A formal reply from Central District had been received.

## **12. AIR AMBULANCE / SAR Letter of Agreement**

Duncan briefed the Council on the Joint Letter of Agreement between the six agencies. The agreement is patient/customer centric and includes agreed protocols, coordinating authority responsibilities, activation of distress alerting devices as well as a commitment to education. The key element is the coordinating decision diagram on page 6. The Council was comfortable with the intent of the Agreement and will keep a watching brief around the relative inter-reliance between the supply agencies and other boundary restrictions which can be a problem.

**Decision:** The Council **noted** the Joint Letter of Agreement.

## **13. FENZ and SAR**

The Council considered the report on NZSAR engagement with FENZ and noted the two organisations intend to discuss and document a common understanding of roles, information sharing arrangements and capabilities.

The Council discussed whether there was any value in formally inviting FENZ as a member or observer on Council and decided to revisit this suggestion in 12 months. The organisation was undergoing enormous change and would need time to complete their transition with the legislation taking effect from 1 July. More recently they have been attending the Consultative Committee meetings after a gap of about five years.

**Decision:** The Council **noted** that FENZ and NZSAR will discuss and document a common understanding of roles, information sharing arrangements and capabilities.

#### **14. 2017-2020 Work Programme**

##### **a. Significant NZSAR initiatives**

The three-year Service Level Agreements (SLAs) are due to be renewed and each SLA partner requires their lawyer to review their Agreement. Last time the decision was made that the Ministry of Transport lawyer would be the lead lawyer and the process would be smoother if Council agreed to adopt the same method this year. The objective is to keep the process manageable and efficient. The Agreements would be reviewed by the MOT lawyer and a note to that effect would be attached to each one.

**Decision:** Council **agreed** that the Ministry of Transport lawyer would examine the SLA's first and provide advice to other agency legal teams.

##### **b. Secretariat staff and operating model**

Two new positions have been approved for the Secretariat and job descriptions are being prepared. One position is for an Assurance coordinator and the second for an Office manager/administrator which would include assistance with the database once it is up and running.

#### **15. Maritime VHF change project**

All affected licences have been centralised to the ownership of Coastguard NZ. The public information campaign was very successful and recreational boat users were talking to Coastguard on the new channel on October 1. There are still a couple of sites that need tweaking but approximately 95% of the project has been completed and operating successfully. The project would have benefited from appointing a single overall manager. The project came in under budget and there is a balance of approximately \$200,000 left over. Duncan has written to MOT enquiring about utilising the surplus. Keith Manch indicated that the associated Joint Synergies project would require some funding. Peter Mersi suggested he would check on the status of the request.

#### **16. SAR Telecommunications Working Group (Land)**

The Telecommunications Working Group has been established and Terms of Reference drafted. Membership is comprised of representatives from four core agencies which will keep the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier agencies apprised of developments. The working group has yet to engage with the Whole of Government Radio Network which is understood to be moving to the emergency management aspect.

## **17. NSSP 2016/20 – update**

Some projects have been cancelled for this year due to the need to prioritise the SAR information project. Duncan reported that he is hopeful the tender documentation for the SAR IMT Project will be completed by May and tenders will be processed through June and July.

### **SARACE**

Duncan reported that in 2016 Tai Poutini Polytechnic was investigated by Deloitte (for TEC) and NZQA regarding programme delivery and TEC funding. TPP is facing financial challenges and has sought funding support from government for 2017. NZSAR is facing a greater workload and is asking TEC to alter the SAR (ACE) model due to its unworkable nature.

## **18. General Business:**

### **a. Rauora II MRO Exercises – update**

Duncan briefed the Council on the desktop Rauora Mass rescue exercises which have been held in Northland, Bay of Plenty and Southern Police Districts. The next one will be held in the Central District in Palmerston North on 16 March. The dynamic simulation process is working well. The series has identified that a single MRO plan is still urgently required.

Other issues to address:

- Incompatible IT hampers situational awareness,
- Patchy understanding/implementation of CIMS
- No common reconciliation system or process.

### **b. PacSAR Workshop**

The Council received the report on RCCNZ's role as the host of the Seventh PacSAR Workshop to be held in Auckland from 22 to 26 May 2017.

**c. H&S Award nomination**

Duncan reported that NZSAR has been recommended to nominate itself for the NZ Workplace Health and Safety Awards 2017 being held in Auckland on 31 May 2017. The entry "Impac best collaboration between PCBUs" is under **Category 7: Collaboration**.

**Proposed next meetings:**

- 10 May NZSAR Awards
- 31 May
- 13 September
- 22 November - Combined

**Meeting closed at 3.08 pm**

Peter Mersi  
Chair  
NZSAR Council

**NZSAR Council Action and Responsibility Table - Meeting of 8 March 2017**

Item	Actions & Decisions	Responsibility
7. <b>NZSAR Strategy</b>	The Secretariat is to update the Strategic Plan and circulate it out of session for approval.	Secretariat
8. <b>Terms of Reference</b>	The Secretariat is to update the NZSAR Consultative Committee Terms of Reference.	Secretariat
9. <b>Operational Framework</b>	The Secretariat is to update the Operational Framework.	Secretariat
10. <b>NZSAR Awards</b>	The Council agreed with the 2016 NZSAR Award recommendations of the sub committee.	Secretariat
11. <b>NZSAR Risk Matrix</b>	The Secretariat is to update the Council's Risk Matrix.	Secretariat
14a. <b>Significant NZSAR initiatives</b>	Council <b>agreed</b> that the Ministry of Transport lawyer would examine the SLA's first and provide advice to other agency legal teams.	Secretariat