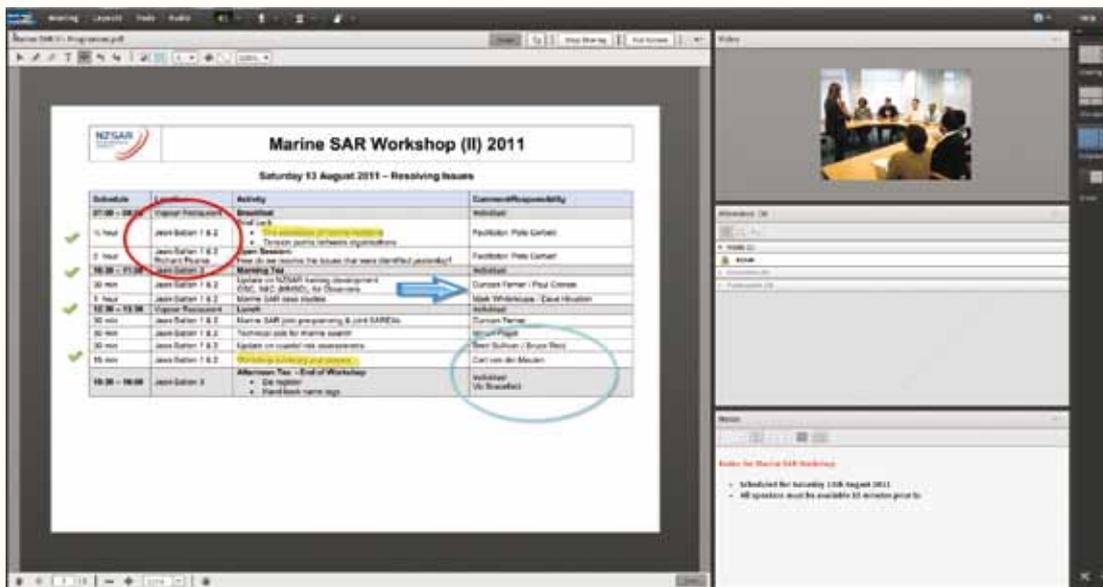




Connecting the Search and Rescue Sector

news

NZSAR Unveils Its New Virtual Meeting Room



NZSAR is to introduce a new online shared meeting space – or virtual meeting room. Called SAR-NET it is set to change the way we share information: enabling SAR people from across the sector to meet with others online, saving time spent travelling and attending out of town meetings.

Using Adobe Connect™ as its platform, SAR-NET offers secure online meeting room facilities such as taking meeting notes on screen and whiteboards, plus audio, video and photographic images. All of this can be accessed by meeting attendees from their computer, laptop or tablet.

Andrew Tarr, the Director of I.T. Rescue Solutions, who developed SAR-NET, says it provides great opportunities for people to work more effectively – whether they're at the headquarters, in transit or on scene.

“One of my favourite features is the ability to easily share what is on the screen in front of you. A picture is worth a thousand words. Imagine showing someone a picture of, say, a ridge line rather than having to describe it. This will more effectively increase people’s understanding and allow everyone to work better together.”

Andrew points out SAR-NET can be used in many different ways by many different people.

“You can use it to hold your regular meetings or one-off meetings, for either training or as a status board providing live updates.”

NZSAR Secretariat Manager Duncan Ferner has been working with SAR-NET for the last six months and says it has huge potential as a collaborative tool. He envisages a deeper involvement in key SAR decisions from a wider group of SAR People.

“This allows us to call on the best advice from all over the country – and the world. So, regardless of whether the experts live in Timaru, Kerikeri or Scotland we can call them up on SAR-NET and work with them as if they are physically in the room with us.”

He says the initial usage will be non-operational, “but if it is as successful as we hope it will be, we will explore ways to use it operationally.”

SAR-NET will become available to SAR organisations from September 2012.

Social Media – Like It or Not

LinkedIn to Facebook so you can like your friend who tweets about YouTube ?

Like it or not social media is now part of how we communicate. There's well in excess of two million Facebook users in New Zealand alone. Organisations that embrace social media are using it to increase their profile, tell their stories, pass on advice and safety tips, and successfully raise funds for their organisation.

The flipside to this new and exciting medium, though, comes under the guise of over-enthusiastic information sharing that can be particularly harmful during a SAR operation. It is really important that families of victims find out the fate of their loved one from an appropriate person – not via a social networking site. In a few recent examples, sensitive information about active SAROPs was posted on these sites – and then immediately reported in the news media, which now use social media as key sources of information.

"Information is readily available and very transparent with social media," says Dan Walraven, a social media consultant from Ideas Shop. "While we encourage people to tell others about the great work they do, everyone needs to know what is and isn't appropriate to share with others on social media – or elsewhere.

"Everyone is using social media and can easily re-share anything, and therein lies its biggest risk; you can't treat a conversation in social media like a conversation in your living room. You have to treat it like speaking in a public place with media present at all times."

St John has responded to the popularity of social media by both embracing it as a communication tool and setting out some very clear parameters in a social media policy. Their policy is underpinned by a set of principles:

- **Scrutiny** Will your comment withstand scrutiny by your colleagues, managers, media and members of the community?
- **Ethical** Is your comment ethical and consistent with St John policies, procedures and processes? Does your post align with our Core Values?
- **Lawful** Is your comment lawful in regard to relevant legislation and St John policies and procedures?
- **Fairness** Is your comment fair on St John, your colleagues and the wider community?

NZSAR is working with SAR agencies to assist them to develop their own social media policies.



<http://www.facebook.com/StJohnNewZealand>

Dan says this is a good idea as policies give team members a clear reference for what is and isn't acceptable. "Often the use of social media will be impulsive, and we don't fully think through what we might be saying. A social media policy goes a long way in protecting team members and organisations from creating difficult situations (e.g. the release of sensitive information) where something inappropriate is said.

"The key is planning and taking the time to build an audience, like any other channel. Organisations that successfully use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other channels all invest in planning their activity, because there isn't much control once you publish something online and planning is the best way to manage that." As Dan observes, Social media is a great communication tool when used properly. "Imagine footage (approved!) of someone whose life you've just saved up on YouTube – priceless." ●

Bruce Reid to Head IMRF

Former Coastguard Chief Executive Bruce Reid is to take up the CEO role at the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) this month.

The IMRF is a non-governmental organisation that brings maritime SAR agencies from across the world together to share their lifesaving ideas, technologies and experience with the aim of saving more lives.

"The organisation is an essential cog in the search and rescue machine, providing the overarching link for maritime SAR groups across the globe," says Bruce. "With the tightening of economies in members' home countries there is an even more important role for the IMRF to play: communicating information between members to help reduce duplication of effort and spread best practice." ●

SAR in action

Engagement = Effectiveness

Last month Don MacDonald took part in a mock flood exercise that involved a number of SAR agencies from across the region – a normal activity underlying an effective relationship that has already paid dividends. As the Section Leader for Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC) North Canterbury, Don knows only too well the importance of having good connections in place well before they are tested in an emergency situation.

Don was part of a team that played a crucial part in providing vital communication during the first 12 hours after the 22 February 2011 earthquake, in particular at Hagley Park. He says it came about because of an existing relationship:

“It’s a great example of the value of knowing the people before the event. Our Deputy National Director, Geoff Chapman, had an on-going relationship with Wayne Rissman from Christchurch Civil Defence (CD). Geoff got in touch with him and asked what we could do to help.

“Wayne said there was a problem at Hagley Park and asked us to get our mobile unit down there ‘now’. When we got there we found that CD had no communications from the site at all; cell phones, etc., were of course useless.”

The tent city that had been erected for the Ellerslie Flower show at Hagley Park had been taken over, becoming an emergency welfare centre in order to cope with the large number of people displaced from the Central Business District. Eventually over 600 people ended up in the Hagley Centre for the two days that it operated.

“There were all sorts of communication and welfare issues that needed to be sorted out in that first 12 hours, in terms of numbers and what was needed. On top of this we had many dignitaries, who’d been at conferences, and tourists taking shelter there, who all needed urgent assistance. Our communications between the Emergency Operations Centre and other sites was crucial.”

North Canterbury AREC has been attending regional meetings, participating in exercises, such as the recent mock flood, and generally keeping in touch with Waimakariri Civil Defence for well over 10 years.

Brennan Wiremu, the Waimakariri Emergency Management Advisor, places great weight on engaging with organisations like AREC.

“The relationship with AREC is a partnership, and like all the other partnerships we have with various emergency response agencies, it is absolutely critical. They help us to better understand what each other’s needs are, and what they are likely to be, when push comes to shove.”



AREC set up in Hagley Park

Brennan counsels that working effectively together goes much deeper than signing a piece of paper saying you will work closely. “It is not worth anything unless you take the time to develop a close rapport and bond, because building that relationship will lead to a faster response, a more collaborative response, which is more informed and, therefore, more effective.”

Pocketed around the country are other AREC units working closely with their local Civil Defence offices. Jeff Sayer, the National Director for AREC, says it should be more wide-spread.

“As Brennan points out, our organisations have so much to offer each other that building relationships makes total sense, especially when it comes to the crunch – as it did in Christchurch. But, as with any relationship, it is dependent on the individuals involved, and this makes it difficult to be consistent throughout the country. This new engagement policy¹, signed by MCDEM and NZSAR, is a good first step – as long as people act on it. Good not only for AREC but also for other SAR organisations that could make a real difference to Civil Defence when the next major emergency strikes.” ●

1

The NZSAR Council recently endorsed a paper titled ‘Enhancing Search and Rescue Sector Cooperation with the Civil Defence & Emergency Management Sector’. The paper contains a model of how enhancements to the existing relationships between the two sectors will be achieved. The paper can be found at www.nzsar.org.nz.

New Zealand is holding the World's First Nationwide ShakeOut Campaign

At 9:26am on 26 September 2012 (9:26-26:9) ShakeOut aims to have 1 million people do the "Drop, Cover and Hold" earthquake drill.

The 9:26-26:9 earthquake drill is the focal point of New Zealand ShakeOut because it is a clear, simple action that people can take to help prepare themselves for an earthquake. Participating in this first step of action in the event of an earthquake also provides a great opportunity for people to look at their preparedness in more detail.

The drill is supported by a dedicated New Zealand ShakeOut website. The website is where individuals, families, community groups and organisations can sign up to participate and get information. It also includes a whole range of resources that you can use to help promote the campaign. You get to it from www.getthru.govt.nz

There is also a Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/NzGetThru>, Twitter account <http://twitter.com/nzgetthru>, paid radio, TV and online advertising, and other promotional activity.

Crucial to the success of New Zealand ShakeOut is organisations and people joining and encouraging others to be involved. To help that happen, the campaign is working with businesses, schools, central and local government agencies and other organisations. ●

Have you got your organisation organised?

It's easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Sign up now – go to www.getthru.govt.nz (it takes only two minutes).
2. Spread the word (share with friends, family and workmates via word of mouth, Facebook, Twitter, email and other methods).
3. Do the Drop, Cover and Hold drill on 9:26-26:9.



Health and Safety

NZSAR recently commissioned a study of health and safety matters for our SAR sector. The focus of the study was at the organisational level with an emphasis on understanding the responsibilities of SAR organisations for health and safety issues. A sample group of SAR organisations were interviewed and a high-level review of their health and safety management systems was also completed.

Both the NZSAR Consultative Committee and NZSAR Council have had the opportunity to consider the study, and both groups have accepted the study's key recommendations. It was very encouraging that the study found evidence of good health and safety management practices in the sample SAR organisations. Several recommendations were also made for us to consider in order to improve our overall health and safety performance.

The next steps will involve NZSAR working with the two coordination authorities and SAR providing agencies to implement the study's recommendations. There is a strong commitment by everyone involved to work together to ensure we are consistent, efficient and minimising the impact on SAR people. This work will take some time, but it is important that, as a sector, we meet the relevant health and safety management system standards. ●

www.adventuresmart.org.nz

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Tips and advice to keep you safe

Land Snow Water Boating Air

"Be AdventureSmart"

Get Ready, Get Outdoors
ADVENTURE smart
www.adventuresmart.org.nz

international observation



A mix of old and new capabilities. Horse and rider alongside a Coastguard Seahawk helicopter. Equine SAR is strong in the states – a significant part of the programme was taken up by courses for horses.

Out of Washington

Fritz van Rooden, LandSAR’s Acting National Training Coordinator, recently attended the Washington State SAR Conference and says New Zealand has a lot in common with our overseas counterparts.

“I saw a lot of similarities in the way we operate and the issues we face. A good example is Washington State SAR, which has recently developed its core competencies. LandSAR is in the middle of developing our own core competencies, for which I am the Project Manager, so it was a valuable opportunity to be able to have discussions and share ideas with those involved in their version.”

Fritz adds there are differences as well: “Unlike us they tend to use horses a lot in SAROPs. But one of the most significant issues that they still face is their lack of a single unified SAR organisation or coordinating authority, as they have differing County, State and Federal jurisdictions, which can lead to operational issues. Similarly, they have a multitude of volunteer SAR entities and training providers creating varying degrees of capability and ‘best practice’.

“We are fortunate to be operating in an environment where we have the NZSAR ‘One SAR’ approach, working operationally with only two coordinating authorities, and where all land-based volunteers come under one LandSAR umbrella.”

The conference offered a wide range of classes to help with more effective and efficient search and rescue practices. Fritz found the most pertinent of these to be the SAROP management and organisation management topics, such as improving volunteer professionalism, recruitment and retention.

“It would appear that the desire to enhance the professional nature of volunteers in SAR is not just a Kiwi objective. One key point I picked up was the important role the ‘law enforcement authorities’ play in setting these expectations. In New Zealand we have these expectations formally articulated in agreements between the coordinating authorities and the volunteer SAR organisations.”

Fritz believes one of the great benefits of attending conferences like these is all the incidental connections and conversations that take place outside the sessions.

“Being able to discuss challenges, issues and possible solutions from different perspectives gives a greater insight into what was formally on offer and has left me with plenty of ideas and initiatives.

“Some of these are sure to be incorporated as we continue to develop the way we conduct operations and manage our organisation, as well as contribute to the continuous improvement of the wider SAR sector.” ●

SAR insight

Searching For Someone Who Keeps On Walking

About 11pm on Saturday 16 June Police received a call about a missing trumper, Ronnie Fong, in the Hunua Ranges. The call came from his brother who was waiting to pick him up. His brother received a text from Ronnie at 3:30pm stating he was running late.

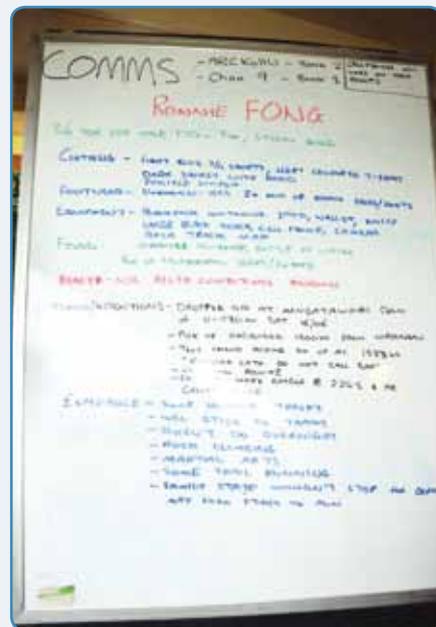
Police helicopter Eagle, Auckland Police SAR and Auckland Council Rangers were deployed, concentrating on the likely tracks he would have taken. Ronnie gave a start and finish point, but no indication of the tracks he was intending to take.

Ronnie had left late morning on his walk with an intention to complete the tramp in four hours (walking it would take at least seven). He had been known to run some of his other walks. Information also led the search team to believe that Ronnie was only lightly clothed and had minimal food.

The weather was fine and clear with temperatures during the night dropping to below -3 degrees.

Finding no sign overnight, Auckland LandSAR and the Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust's Westpac Rescue Helicopter was called in on Sunday to help with the search.

During the day the temperature rose a little and rain was on the way. Search areas concentrated on river ways, where hunters are known to go, and the kilometres of possum bait lines leading off the tracks.



In conjunction with the search, a lot of effort was going into finding out more about Ronnie by interviewing family and friends. A large media campaign got underway to try to locate other trampers in the area at the time.

However, by the end of Sunday no clues had been found.

Additional resources were called in, including more Auckland Regional Council Rangers, Hamilton Police SAR, many Waikato SAR groups, 3 Squadron RNZAF and the RNZAF Civil Defence Emergency Response group, based out of Whenuapai. There were now more than 80 personnel involved.

During this time Ronnie's family was re-interviewed several times and a picture was starting to develop. The team now had an idea that if lost Ronnie would attempt to backtrack and find his own way out, making the job for the searchers and managers harder.



SAR insight



Another day had gone by and finally a clue was located – a muesli bar wrapper in the Mangatangi Stream catchment. This area had a lot of teams in it and only one clue had been found.

Day four saw a concentration of searchers in this area and late into the night one of the SAR dogs started indicating around the Mangatangi Dam. Not long after this a search team located Ronnie, cold and hungry, walking along a closed forestry road. ●

Insights

- Missing people do not always do what you want them to do.
- The actions of missing people can make it a lot harder for searchers.
- Never stop getting information. Use different people to re-interview family and friends.
- When it comes to planning and managing the search, stick to the basics: keep it simple. It will work.
- Media are good for promoting what we do, but are hard to manage at times and have their own priorities.
- And last and most importantly, to all involved, thanks for your dedication and commitment. We do make a difference to people's lives.

useful website links

www.nzsar.org.nz – New Zealand Search and Rescue Council. This newsletter is available as a PDF on this website.

www.adventuresmart.org.nz – Safety information and tips for the public planning outdoor activities as well as links to organisations with specific safety information about their chosen pursuit.

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

www.metservice.com – Comprehensive weather reports.

www.nzart.org.nz/arec/ – AREC Website

www.getthru.govt.nz – Shakeout information

calendar

SAREXs and SAR training – see

<http://searchandrescuecouncil.org.nz/nzsar-calendar>

21 - 23 September – Coastguard NZ Conference, Rotorua

26 September – Exercise Shakeout, New Zealand

7 November – NZSAR Consultative Committee Meeting, Wellington

16 - 18 November – LandSAR Conference, Taupo

21 November – NZSAR Council Meeting, Wellington

NZSAR Awards

Do you know of an organisation, group or individual who should to 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 2012 awards close on 31 January 2013.

Duncan's desk



The work of the Secretariat is based on the Government's financial year, so from a work point of view, 1 July is our New Years Day. This makes May & June important months to complete projects and July & August the time to start new ones. It is timely then to let you know what we'll be up to over the coming year.

The NZSAR Council recently approved the new National SAR Support Programme (NSSP), which outlines the work the Council wants us to do over the coming year. This involves a mix of continued activities, but also some new initiatives.

We will be continuing NZSAR support of Air Observer's courses throughout New Zealand as well as one On Scene Coordinators' course in Wellington. We will continue the development of SAR Managers' training with the support and assistance of a range of experienced SAR people. We also hope to establish a small pool of 'portable office telephones' for use during incident management team training events.

The Secretariat is working with a group of partner organisations, including Water Safety NZ, Coastguard NZ, and the Mountain Safety Council, to continue promoting the three Safety Codes as well as the AdventureSmart safety messaging portal website. We are very grateful to receive additional ACC financial support to help us with this work.

As with previous years, NZSAR will be supporting SAREXs throughout New Zealand. This funding serves to assist Police Districts to run improved and more enterprising SAREXs, which in turn supports readiness and SAR capability around New Zealand. We also plan to exercise the soon-to-be-completed Mass Rescue Operation policy sometime in 2013.



These photographs were taken at the very successful Hoist Operators workshop that was held recently at

RNZAF Base Ohakea. Over 90 people attended this workshop, including a number from across the Tasman. It was great to see this group of experienced SAR people get together in order to improve the safety and practice of SAR hoist and long-line operations. We have plans to support a Mountain Safety Council led avalanche workshop in 2013.

Alongside these projects the Secretariat is committed to implementing the recommendations of the health and safety study and bringing SAR-NET online (read more about these on pp 1 and 4). The Council has asked us to review the NSSP, provide risk management advice and establish a national framework for wander-type SAR incidents. We also plan to develop some flight tracking device guidelines for RCCNZ as well as evaluation, moderation and planning guidelines for the wider sector.

There is quite a lot there for us to get on with. We look forward to working with you over the coming months (in some cases – years) to get this work done on behalf of our search and rescue sector. ●

Duncan Ferner
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NZSAR



Avalanche SAREX held at Mount Hutt in June

Watch out for our 2011/2012 Annual Report

Filled with the usual comprehensive breakdown of statistics illustrating who we are, what we achieve and where we do it. This report will also feature articles examining how decisions made by the NZSAR Council filter through to make a real difference to Search and Rescue in New Zealand -including becoming better prepared for Avalanche SAR.