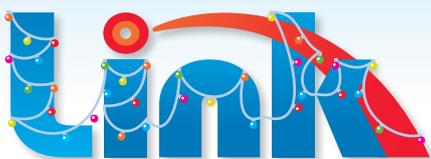


NZSAR



CONNECTING THE SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTOR

POLICE - LINK

RCCNZ - LINK

NEWS

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN: FUTURE TRENDS AND THEIR IMPACT ON SAR

As part of our aim to provide effective search and rescue services throughout New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region, NZSAR has commissioned an environmental scan.

The scan explored the potential effect of external trends on the demand for, and supply of, SAR services and capability, focusing on six key areas: demography, technology, economy, politics, legislation and the environment. The scan also looks at a range of internal factors that may affect our ability to provide services and in particular, the drivers of funding, volunteering and training.

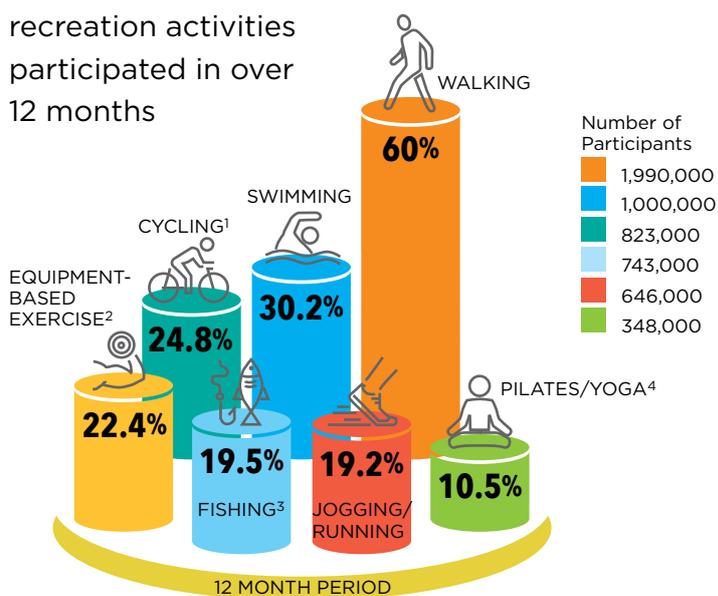
The scan suggests that the underlying or 'normal' demand for SAR services will likely continue to stay steady (or grow) in the short-term (next five years). Upward pressure from demand is likely to come from multiple sources, including:

- population growth
- more wandering activity as a result of population ageing (a significant driver)
- increased numbers of tourists, particularly those venturing into the outdoors unprepared - with more in the 'shoulder seasons' and more going into less travelled locations
- continued growth in people spending time outdoors unprepared
- extreme weather events or flooding caused by climate change.

Longer-term the scan highlights demographic trends (with the exception of ageing) that are mitigating against demand growth. For example, an increase in sedentary behaviour, increased diversity, changing recreation patterns and increased inequality, are all likely to dampen participation in the outdoors. Growth in technology is also likely to continue making our lives safer - such as the rise of automated systems in both the air and water that remove the risk of human error.

The scan also suggests that there are multiple risks that may have an impact on the sector in the next five years.

Popular sport and recreation activities participated in over 12 months



1. Cycling includes mountain biking and cycling
2. Equipment-based exercises includes the use of exercycles, treadmills, weights at home or at the gym
3. Fishing includes fresh water and marine fishing
4. Pilates includes any activity done at home or at the gym

"In particular, we see potential for the number of volunteers to decline undermining response capacity and capability; for there to be increased demand due to the effects of climate change and ageing (increased wandering); and the ever-present possibility of a high profile response failure."

The draft environmental scan was workshoped at the recent NZSAR Council - Consultative Committee meeting. This meeting considered a number of questions relating to the scan, including:

- Do you agree that population growth, tourism and ageing will all increase demand for search and rescue services?
- What more could the SAR sector do to make best use of emerging technology (e.g. AI, drones and robots, augmented reality) and data?
- How prepared is the SAR sector for major tests of its service model's resilience (e.g. extreme weather leading to many simultaneous alerts)?

The feedback from the workshop is being integrated into a final report and will be used as a basis to develop strategies, plans, operational responses and risk management approaches that factor in those trends for the coming years. ●

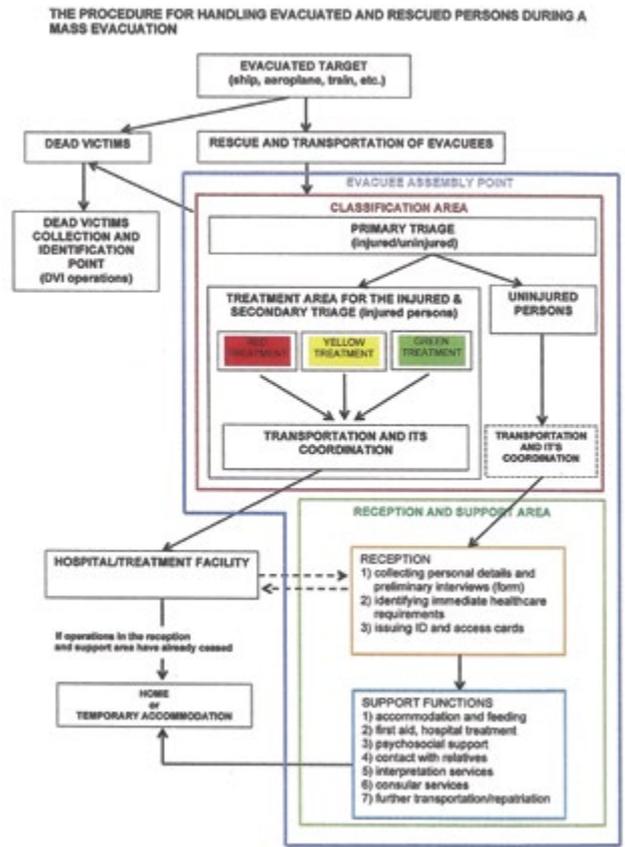
RECONCILIATION WORKSHOP

International experience shows that one of the biggest challenges in responding to a mass rescue event is accounting for all the people who are in distress – this is often called reconciliation.

When the Italian cruise ship Costa Concordia sank off the coast of Tuscany in January 2012, the process of reconciliation for the over 3,000 passengers and 1,000 crew took three days to complete.

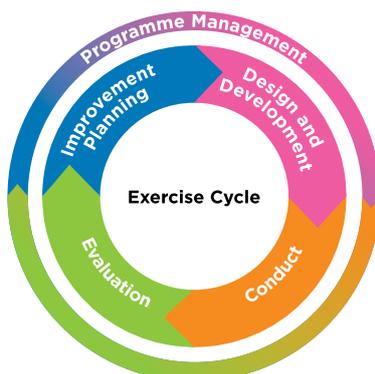
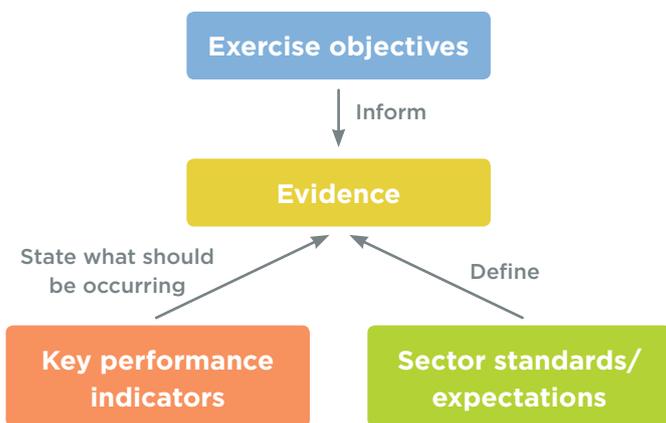
The International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) has identified three problems that responders can face in reconciliation during a mass rescue incident. The first is knowing, *for sure*, how many people were originally at risk. The second is (conversely) putting too much effort into reconciliation and counting at the early stages of a response, when the effort still needs to be focused on those people who are still in distress. The third is the risk of complacency if responders have an over-reliance on head-counting alone.

Our series of Rauora mass rescue exercises have highlighted reconciliation as an area that needs systemic improvement. So far there have been six different systems or processes used. In early November, the Secretariat held a workshop to consider international good practice for reconciliation. The workshop reviewed current work by the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM) and New Zealand Police for the inquiry, registration, and needs assessment processes of the Welfare function in a Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) led response. It sought to identify what information various agencies need to know from a reconciliation process (i.e. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade will want to know about the nationalities of people involved), and clarify the roles and responsibilities of various agencies in a reconciliation system (i.e. ambulance services will conduct triage at the landing areas).



An example of a reconciliation system from Finland

The workshop also looked to provide clear guidance for a reconciliation system and the processes to be included in Mass Rescue Operation (MRO) Readiness & Response Plans. ●



EXERCISE EVALUATION TRAINING COURSE

On 25 November, the first one-day SAR training course on Exercise Evaluation was run in Wellington with 21 people from across the country attending.

Exercise evaluation provides important feedback to exercise coordinators and the evaluation reports can also identify key lessons that can be shared across the sector. Evaluation ‘closes the circle’ in the Exercise Cycle. The new course provides a national pool of people trained in the principles of evaluation methodology – people who are able to evaluate SAR exercises with a consistent approach.

While the training course itself is only one day, the trainees will be undertaking their assessment through the evaluation of an actual exercise early in 2018. This will require them to put into practice what they have learnt.

Course attendees are nominated by their agency as people experienced in running exercises, who are prepared to undertake evaluations in the future. One of the key messages delivered in training is that evaluation is an evidence-based activity. The course focused on techniques to gather appropriate evidence for the purpose of evaluation. As one course attendee commented, “knowing what to look for is so important, as this provides the evidence to back up the feedback provided to the exercise controller.” ●

What is it?

Project SARdonyx is a joint project to create a cloud based Search and Rescue Operational Information System. The project is funded by the NZSAR Council and directly involves the NZSAR Secretariat, RCCNZ, Police and LandSAR.

OK – so what’s that exactly?

It is an information system that will replace the Police P130 forms for land and marine, along with the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCCNZ) and Land Search and Rescue’s (LandSAR) post SAR operation information collection and reporting systems.

Why?

There are a variety of reasons. At the moment, it is very difficult to get an ‘all-of-SAR’ understanding of our sector as different pieces of data are collected by different agencies in different ways. We’re collecting some data that isn’t being used and not collecting data that we want to use. The current systems are also using dated technology which needs to be replaced.

What will it mean to me?

For most people in the sector – it won’t mean much at all. For the coordinating authorities and LandSAR leaders, it will mean a different post operation data capture system. The new form will be cloud-based, and while much of the basics will be the same, it will collect some different SAR data elements. Good form design is a critical part of this project so we will be engaging closely with the sector to ensure we get this right. For Coastguard (CNZ) and Surf Life Saving (SLSNZ) – we’ll be engaging later to explore options to include their operational information into the new system.

What will it do (for me)?

When complete, the SARdonyx joint information system will give decision-makers (and anyone else who is interested) good quality ‘all-of-SAR’ information about our operations including the use of resources, outcomes and effect, costs, locations, and the type. It will be used in support of SAR prevention and to better understand the kinds of people who end up needing SAR services. The system will be able to generate a variety of bespoke reports for leaders and decision-makers across the sector. We will also include a web-based interface to allow access to a more basic set of information. SARdonyx will also help with lost person behaviour research.

When will it be running?

The target is to have the new system operating by mid-2018. ●

SARTRACK MOU

NZSAR has committed to supporting SARTrack incident management software through the provision of a local server and a supporting Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

SARTrack was developed in New Zealand for land-based search operations and was made freely available by the developer Bart Kindt for SAR. LandSAR groups around the country are becoming increasingly aware of SARTrack and its capabilities to support Incident Management Teams (IMT) during SAR operations. The commitment to SARTrack by NZSAR follows consideration of the capabilities of a number of incident management programmes.

The Memorandum of Understanding establishes and promotes collaborative working relationships between the search and rescue sector and the SARTrack developer for using, supporting and maintaining the SARTrack software for New Zealand purposes. Parties to the MoU are SARTrack Limited, Police, RCCNZ, LandSAR and NZSAR. LandSAR is supporting the training of people, across the districts, who will be able to provide guidance on the set-up, maintenance and use of the software. These people will also be able to deliver support to those operating SARTrack during operations. Training courses for IMT personnel will be provided as part of the SAR (ACE) training calendar in 2018. ●

WELCOME LEANNE GORDON



Leanne Gordon is the new Office Manager with NZSAR. She has a background in a range of office management roles in the private sector, including public relations companies and the telecommunications industry.

In her first three weeks Leanne has hit the ground running, attending mass rescue exercises in the Tasman and Auckland Police districts. Her role for the two table top exercises was largely observational – finding out how all the areas fit together and seeing how each agency tracks what is happening.

Leanne says she really enjoyed meeting local SAR agencies during the exercises and learning how each organisation works together. “It has been really interesting seeing how each part of the sector operates and what systems they have in place to identify what assets are available and what the capabilities are.” She adds that she has been struck by the dedication of the many volunteers in the SAR sector. “They are really passionate about what they do. I think there are stronger relationships in this environment than in the other workplaces I’ve been in.”

Leanne has really enjoyed joining the small, tight-knit team at NZSAR. “They’re a good group and have been really welcoming.” She says going away on two exercises within the first few weeks has been a really good way to get to know people and has helped to put faces to names within the wider sector. She has also found time for a visit to RCCNZ. “It is fascinating to have a look at what they do and the area they cover.”

Apart from attending the mass rescue exercises, Leanne’s focus for the first few weeks has been getting to know the processes and learning how NZSAR operates.

An early challenge since joining the NZSAR team has been learning the large number of acronyms that seem to pervade the sector. She says her immediate goal is to get a better understanding of what they all mean. “I’m considering putting together a glossary.”

Leanne says she has had little first-hand experience of the SAR sector prior to joining the team at NZSAR, but she adds she has a partner who is keen on the outdoors – especially mountain biking. “He loves anything with two wheels. I keep on expecting him to need rescuing at some point – but fortunately not so far.”

WELCOME TO POLICE LINK –
FOCUSING ON THE WORK OF POLICE
SAR, ITS POLICIES AND PEOPLE.

SAR IN ACTION

PAPANUI POINT SEARCH

On 24 September 2017, a Waikato fisherman left home after a late shift at work and travelled to Papanui Point, a popular fishing spot about 8 kilometres south of Raglan on the west coast of the North Island. The coastline is rugged with cliffs and rocky outcrops.

The fisherman arrived at the point just after midnight and fished through the night and into the morning. During the morning he was joined by several others fishing on and around the rocks.

The weather during the night and following morning was showery, with strong winds. The sea was choppy with a 2.5 metre swell.

Late in the morning one of the other fishermen saw a pair of shoes floating in the water, adjacent to a fishing rod. They then saw a person semi submerged in the water, who later disappeared under the waves.

Waikato District Police SAR Coordinator Sergeant Vincent Ranger says the search for the fisherman was started soon after the report that he had been washed off the rocks.

Resources activated during that initial search effort included the Raglan Coastguard unit, with one Coastguard rescue vessel and two jet skis, the Westpac Rescue Helicopter, and the Coastguard Northern Region Air Patrol unit.

Sergeant Ranger says a fisherman being swept off the rocks on that stretch of coast is relatively common. In the last 40 years, 20 fishermen have lost their lives fishing off Papanui Point. He says local Coastguard units train regularly for these kinds of rescues and have amassed a lot of local knowledge in respect of currents and eddies – along with the effect weather patterns have on searching for those swept out to sea.

“Anywhere on our west coast of the Waikato we have swells that roll in from a long way. When they come in they are very powerful. Coastguard is training pretty much every week for these kinds of events. We are also lucky with the Raglan unit that we have local personnel who have a very good understanding of local conditions.”



“Family liaison is really important. A key part of search management is keeping the family involved and in touch with the processes we go through.”

Along with the expertise of the local Coastguard units, Sergeant Ranger says the other key element in a search like this is the maintenance of strong relationships between Police and the Coastguard Northern Region operations. “The relationship has to be pretty strong between the local unit, operations centre and our incident controllers based in Hamilton. There is a lot of work that we do maintaining the relationship between the Police and the Coastguard operations centre – and the Police and the Coastguard units – to make sure things work in the event of the activation of a search.”

Searching by land and air continued for the next three weeks, concentrating on the area south of Papanui Point where it was more than likely any evidence would be washed ashore. However, no further evidence was located. The circumstances of the incident have since been referred to the Coroner.

Throughout the search contact was kept with the family. “Family liaison is really important,” says Sergeant Ranger. “A key part of search management is keeping the family involved and in touch with the processes we go through. They need to understand what we can and can’t do.”

He says a common theme in deaths from this particular coastline can be linked to fishermen climbing down to the water’s edge to retrieve caught fish and being washed off the rocks by the swell.

He adds that none of those who have died off Papanui Point were wearing lifejackets. “While a lifejacket would not prevent injuries by being bashed against the rocks, it would certainly keep anybody afloat as they drifted away in the current.” He says a lot of work has gone into national campaigns to encourage people to put on a lifejacket when they are boating. He believes rock fishermen should also be encouraged to use them. “Lifejackets would have saved the bulk of these lives. It is the difference between coming home and not coming home.” ●

POLICE AND RCCNZ TARARUA PLB ALERT

While personal locator beacons (PLBs) may be taking some of the “search” out of Search and Rescue, the successful rescue of a US tramper highlights the large amount of time, resources and management that need to be deployed to get someone back to a place of safety.

In May RCCNZ was notified of a beacon activation near the Otaki River within the Tararua Forest Park. The PLB was registered in the United States of America and had been activated between Nichols Hut and Mt Crawford Hut along the Te Araroa trail. Over the next 10 minutes RCCNZ made contact with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – the USA beacon database holder – which spoke with the next of kin who advised that the beacon owner was an experienced tramper on a four-day solo tramp “in the mountains north of Wellington”.

At the same time as information was coming in about the tramper, discussions were taking place with pilot Jason Diedrichs of Amalgamated Helicopters in Masterton. He was north of the beacon location, but reported that the weather at higher altitude was bad. Contact by the RCCNZ’s Search and Rescue Officers (SAROs) with Police SAR and LandSAR ascertained that the PLB activation location was close to 10 hours walk from the road end, but that this could be shortened if land crews could be flown closer. The Philips SAR Trust, which operates six rescue helicopters from its base in Palmerston North, was also contacted to see if they could access from the north.

Within 90 minutes of the beacon activation, Amalgamated Helicopters was able to fly close to the area, but the location of the tramper was covered in cloud. The LandSAR team was activated with a plan to fly them to the Waitawae Hut, about five hours walk from the beacon location. However, flooding on side streams posed a safety risk to LandSAR members so a decision was made to wait for a break in the weather.

Later in the afternoon the Philips SAR Trust helicopter was tasked to fly LandSAR team members to the ridge below the tramper, to drop them off and see if an extraction was possible. Weather and other factors again delayed the insertion of the LandSAR team until closer to 5pm, meaning team members needed to make preparations to overnight in the bush.

While ground and air assets were being deployed RCCNZ was receiving regular beacon alerts via the MEOSAR system, updating the family in the USA, and carrying out further contingency planning for the following daylight activities.

By 8pm the tramper had been located and the rescue team were moving him to a suitable camp at a lower altitude with a pick-up position being reported for the morning.

The following morning the weather cleared allowing the Palmerston North based helicopter to be tasked and it was successful in uplifting the beacon owner and LandSAR teams. The tramper was delivered to Police at the road end and driven back to Levin.

Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) Manager Mike Hill says the operation shows once again the advantage of a distress beacon in helping SAR teams locate exactly where people are. “If we had had a call two or three days later from a worried relative alerting us to a missing tramper, our search area would have been huge.” But he adds that this incident shows that even if searchers do know where people are there can still be a number of challenges involved in a rescue. “The log for this rescue runs to 27 pages, with various decisions, contingency plans and communications running over a number of days.”

Senior Sergeant Jo Holden, Training and Development Coordinator for Search and Rescue at Police National Headquarters, says without the PLB activation this incident had the potential to be a multi-day search. “If all we had was a phone call from a concerned family member on the other side of the world we would need to go through a whole lot more investigation first before we could identify where to start searching. It would have taken some time to pick up the ‘bread crumb trail’ of where the person had been and where they intended to go. A beacon activation, on the other hand, means that we can narrow the search area down significantly to get help to the person in need reasonably quickly.”

Senior Sergeant Holden points out that, in this particular instance, the local SAR coordinator was able to organise an experienced local LandSAR team to be ready for an afternoon deployment into the area. “The tramper had already spent two days in a hut waiting out the bad weather and decided to try to make it off the top on the third day. He lost the track and spent one night in the open before activating the beacon.”

It was dark and well into the evening when the LandSAR team located the tramper. The team stayed with the person, gave him food and warmth, and found a suitable campsite for the night in preparation for a helicopter extraction the following day.

“This incident is a good illustration of the requirement for competent, capable LandSAR teams with good local area knowledge who can be deployed quickly when weather precludes a helicopter rescue. We still need teams with a wide range of skills – who can both look after themselves and be able to look after the person in distress.”

She reinforced the need to nurture relationships to maintain the capability to assist RCCNZ in rescues like this one. “We (Police) have good relationships with LandSAR groups, and those groups are used to working with us.”

“RCCNZ remained in control of this operation, with Police and LandSAR providing assistance. The tramper had been caught out by the weather and exhausted his food supply, and was extremely grateful for all the assistance provided.” ●

NEW SARO GRADUATES

Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) 2017 Officer Training Course.

After 12 weeks in the classroom undergoing some quite intense, and at times demanding, training on SAR coordination and SAR response, the four tight-knit class mates of the 2017 Search and Rescue Officer (SARO) training course graduated in late October.

Among the graduates were two Fijian Navy personnel who had been invited to attend the course. Both Petty Officer Atunaisa Waqainabete (Waqqa) and Petty Officer Sikeli Satakala (Ziggy) say that they have really enjoyed the training and feel they are both far better equipped to meet the challenges of coordinating a SAR response when they return to take up 'SAR Coordinator' roles in the Rescue Coordination Centre Fiji.

Certificates were presented to the two Fijians and their two New Zealand classmates – Drew Coleman and Julian Tovey – at a ceremony held in Wellington on 27 October. The event was attended by Maritime NZ Director Keith Manch and the Chief of the Fijian Navy Captain Humphrey Tawake.

RCCNZ Manager Mike Hill says the course challenged the students and RCCNZ's resources. "I am very proud of the work that went into this training – not just from the students, but from all of the staff. Those who weren't directly involved were re-rostered to cover those who were."



Petty Officer Atunaisa Waqainabete is presented with his Search and Rescue Officer certificate alongside Director Keith Manch, and RCCNZ Manager Mike Hill



Petty Officer Ratu Satakala is presented his Search and Rescue Officer certificate from the Chief of Fijian Navy Captain Humphrey Tawake

"I believe that those relationships will continue to pay off for many years."

The involvement by the two Fijian naval officers came about via additional funding given to RCCNZ to reduce SAR within the Pacific – particularly to try and reduce the NZDF's SAR activity. Mike Hill says inviting personnel from Fiji was a logical step. "They have a large Search and Rescue Region and NZDF was often deployed to Kiribati – which is in the Fiji Region."

Petty Officer Waqainabete says he and fellow graduate Sikeli Satakala really appreciated the effort put in by RCCNZ. "I think Fiji will be a far safer place for international visitors and people who find themselves in peril within our search and rescue region". Petty Officer Waqainabete says the most enjoyable aspect of the training was not in the classroom. "Although the theory is very important, I particularly enjoyed the practical exercises and using SARMAP (RCCNZ's computer drift modelling tool) in order to determine a search area."

Although both men say they had a very warm welcome to New Zealand

they were looking forward to heading home to a warmer climate. "After 12 weeks in the cold of Wellington, we are really looking forward to be returning to Fiji!"

Petty Officer Satakala had an additional reason for wanting to get home quickly following the graduation ceremony. He became a father for the second time while he was on the course and was looking forward to meeting his son for the first time on his return to Fiji.

Mike Hill says having the two men attend the course in Wellington has not only helped grow SAR capability but also allowed RCCNZ to better understand the wider Fiji SAR operating environment. He adds that an additional benefit is the personal relationships that have been built between the two Fijian SAROs and the RCCNZ team over three months. "I believe that those relationships will continue to pay off for many years." ●

PACIFIC RESCUE – SUNNY DECK

A rescue carried out in 2015 had a happy postscript in mid-September 2017 when a grateful skipper paid a visit to Lower Hutt to thank his 'guardian angels' at RCCNZ and MOC.

Murray Vereker-Bindon and two crewmen were aboard his 15 metre yacht Sunny Deck when fire engulfed the cockpit of the vessel 150 nautical miles south of Niue back in 2015.

Although the EPIRB on the vessel was activated, it was still registered to the vessel's previous German owner – so the

initial alert went to Bremen before coming to the Rescue Coordination Centre in New Zealand.

In Wellington, RCCNZ contacted a merchant vessel MV Cap Capricorn, which was on its way from the USA to Auckland. The Capricorn diverted and picked up the yacht's crew from their liferaft.

RCCNZ Manager Mike Hill says that the visit from Mr Vereker-Bindon and his wife was a pleasant surprise for the team at RCCNZ. "Our SAR work is very rewarding, but often anonymous. A lot of work goes into international procedures and responses, but being based in Avalon, we don't always get to meet the folks that



Mr and Mrs Vereker-Bindon – owners of Sunny Deck – visiting to say thanks to the 'guardian angels' at RCCNZ and MOC.

"Our SAR work is very rewarding, but often anonymous."

we save. When we do get visits like this one it's always fascinating to hear their perspective and match it to our mental picture." ●

ICAR - IMPROVING MOUNTAIN RESCUES & SAFETY

The latest international developments, updates and technology in alpine rescue were on show in the tiny European principality of Andorra in October this year.

LandSAR's Andrew Hobman attended the 89th annual congress of the International Commission for Alpine Rescue (ICAR), which was held in the Andorran village of Soldeu, a ski resort in the heart of the Pyrenees between France and Spain. The conference was attended by over 500 rescue specialists from 90 member organisations representing 36 countries.

The prime goal of ICAR is disseminating knowledge to improve mountain rescue services and their safety. There are four commissions within the organisation – terrestrial, air rescue, avalanche rescue and alpine emergency medicine.

Andrew is a director at Avalanche New Zealand and has a background with Search and Rescue and the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council. He says the theme of this year's ICAR conference was wall rescue, but a lot of the presentations at the congress covered the full gamut of rescue techniques and technology.

One area of particular interest for New Zealand was canyon rescue, as the number of people recreating in water courses or canyons is growing around the world, and Andrew says it has also become really popular in this country – especially in the South Island. "Canyoning carries huge risks when it comes to rescues. It is a real mixture of vertical rope skills and swift water techniques – along with specifics around the canyons themselves and the hydraulics of water in confined areas."



NZ representatives Andrew Hobman and Dr Dick Price

Andrew brought back ICAR recommendations and techniques around canyon rescues which he was able to present to the Backcountry Technical Rescue Working Group – a LandSAR technical working group. Another associated presentation at the conference was on hypothermia, including the management of hypothermic victims and the triage guidelines for that.



Main conference

An area of interest for many in the sector is the advances in technology. Among those, Andrew was impressed by RECCO radar technology which can now search for reflector chips embedded in clothing or helmets using a device that is slung beneath a helicopter. He was also very interested to see innovation in anti-rotation systems for stretchers, including a small fin and rotor that can be attached to a stretcher to stop it spinning while being winched. Software developed in Canada to assist in risk assessment and decision-making was also something that caught Andrew's eye during the congress. At a practical level, ICAR has published some recommendations around the way ropes are used in rescues – moving away from a two-tension system to having both lines fully weighted. "That will mean some changes in New Zealand around training."

Along with the technology on offer Andrew says part of the aim of attending the conference was simply to stay informed and to contribute to best practice in search and rescue – and rescuer safety. "It is important that New Zealand is playing a role in the international SAR community and that we are aware of the latest recommendations and guidelines from both the international community and ICAR, and are aligning ourselves with that." ●

NZSAR AWARDS

Do you know an organisation, a group, or an individual who you think should be acknowledged for their contribution to search and rescue? There are two categories – operational activity and support activity.

More information about these two categories, the NZSAR Awards and the simple nomination process can be found on our website at: www.nzsar.govt.nz/awards.

The 2017 Awards nominations close 31 January 2018.

NZSAR Awards and Wahine 50th Commemorations

Next year's NZSAR awards ceremony will be held on 10 April and is timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the Wahine Disaster.

A charitable trust has been formed to plan the commemoration of the disaster and support local Coastguard units in their fundraising initiatives. Plans include a dawn service on the coast at Eastbourne, a reunion for survivors, and a midday event on the Wellington waterfront. SAR organisations will be actively involved in a range of demonstrations during the day.

Chair of the Wahine 50 Charitable Trust – Lieutenant General (Retired) Rhys Jones – says the 50th commemoration will be an occasion to remember those who lost their lives and a powerful opportunity to reinforce the messages around safety and emergency response during disasters.

<http://www.wahine50.org.nz/>

DUNCAN'S DESK



The last three months of any year are always busy ones for search and rescue people, teams and agencies. Our SAR prevention messaging campaigns ramp up, equipment is checked and maintained, skills are learnt, transferred or refreshed through training events or exercises, and plans are made to ensure SAR coverage during our 'peak' season. We've also welcomed Leanne Gordon (see pg.3) to our small team. Leanne has only been with us a short while, but she is already organising us to be far more efficient.

While the Secretariat is not an operational agency, we've also experienced a hectic past few months. New Zealand's ability to respond promptly and effectively to mass rescue situations has been a focus for quite some time. To help the sector be better prepared, we ran two more multi-agency Rauora II MRO exercises in November (for the Tasman and Auckland Police Districts). These exercises have been very useful to clarify issues, evaluate

capabilities and to identify areas of systemic strength and weakness. The four key areas we have identified we need to improve on so far are: the quality and harmonisation of our plans; our ability to gain and maintain situational awareness; our familiarity with CIMS for multi-agency, multi-response incidents, and; our process for reconciling large numbers of people (i.e. people rescued versus those we still need to keep looking for – see more on this on (pg.2). Resolving these issues is taking a lot of work by people inside and outside the SAR sector, but I'm encouraged by the progress made to date.

Project SARdonyx (see article on pg.3) has been and will remain a major focus for the Secretariat. The governance group for the project includes senior representatives from LandSAR, Police, RCCNZ, NZSAR and Ministry of Transport plus some expert consultants. In recent months, this group has spent a lot of time looking at potential providers as we need to narrow them down to one by the end of 2017. This is no easy process and we're all very focused on getting this decision right.

We also have a number of other projects to benefit the SAR sector on the 'boil' at the moment. The SAR Telecommunications Working Group (Land) is making great progress. Much of their work is behind the scenes at the moment, but the impact of their work will become more apparent in the coming months. Over this summer, we will undertake three major research

projects: a SAR fatalities study; research into rescued persons, and; observed land safety behaviours. The intent of these research projects is to assist us to shape our prevention campaigns and support us to better align our SAR services with the SAR need. Meanwhile, Steve has established the foundations for the delivery of the Aviation Engagement Framework, Rhett has spent a lot of time sorting out SAR individual and collective training matters, including the new Evaluation Training Course (see pg.2), Carl has focused on delivering the service level agreements and the data standard for Project SARdonyx and I have been involved with the creation of our SAR sector environmental scan (see pg.1).

I'm always impressed by the competence, dedication and selflessness of our search and rescue people. In recent months, I've had the opportunity to attend the AGMs for the Mountain Safety Council and Coastguard NZ, along with RCCNZ's graduation ceremony for its two new Search and Rescue Officers. These organisations all represent very different parts of our diverse sector, but all bring essential skills to our collective endeavour. While each has its challenges, I was left with a strong impression that all are in good heart.

Stay safe this summer
Duncan
d.ferner@nzsar.govt.nz

CALENDAR

SAREXs and SAR training see:

nzsar.govt.nz/Calendar/Events

NZSAR Awards – nominations close 31 January 2018

www.nzsar.govt.nz/awards

Australia and New Zealand Search and Rescue Conference

Wednesday 23 May 2018: The Star, Gold Coast, Australia

<https://sar.anzdmc.com.au>

The conference is preceded by the 2018 Australian and New Zealand Disaster and Emergency Management (ANZDMC) on the 21 and 22 of May 2018

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

For information on and download of SARtrack software:
www.sartrack.co.nz

For information on ICAR: www.alpine-rescue.org

For information on the International Maritime Rescue Federation:
www.imrf.org



Link is produced by New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

www.nzsar.govt.nz



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www.beacons.org.nz