

NZSAR

New Zealand Search
and Rescue



Volunteer Study

**An overview of the voluntary segment of the
New Zealand SAR sector**

A report to the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

Prepared by the New Zealand Search and Rescue Secretariat
July 2010

Executive Summary

The search and rescue (SAR) sector in New Zealand relies heavily on volunteers for the delivery of search and rescue services. An estimated 11,010 people are involved in the New Zealand SAR sector, of whom 9,980 (91%) are volunteers. Of 13 countries surveyed for benchmarking purposes, New Zealand had the highest level of volunteer involvement in SAR.

This study is intended to enable informed decision making, and to inform the strategic processes of the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council, and the voluntary SAR organisations in New Zealand.

The summary of the findings of the five sections of the study are:

Demographics – an analysis of the demographic make up of volunteers in the SAR sector.

The New Zealand SAR sector is heavily reliant on males, two thirds of whom are aged over 40 years. The exception to this is Surf Life Saving NZ, which has a significant amount of younger and female volunteers.

Employment demographics of volunteers in some local areas can have an adverse impact on the capacity of voluntary agencies to respond to incidents during working hours.

Impact – an analysis of the impact that volunteers have on the SAR sector.

Volunteers provided 549,785 hours of their time during the 2009/2010 financial year. Only 5% of this time was spent in direct support of category 1 and 2 search and rescue operations.

Motivation – a review of why volunteers join and remain in the SAR sector.

Volunteers in the New Zealand SAR sector are primarily motivated by a public good/altruistic behaviour. It is noted that the consumption motivation is very important with training and retention issues.

Common issues – an investigation into areas of concern that are common across the SAR sector.

The main issue relates to the use of the volunteers' time in training and non-SAR activities. Relationship issues between government agencies and voluntary organisations have been steadily improving over the last two years. There are some local issues relating to costs, recruitment, and retention.

One key finding is that the NZ Police considers appointing a full time SAR Coordinator in each of the ten Police SAR Districts.

Linkages – identifying the linkages that exist with the wider New Zealand voluntary sector.

The existing linkages with OCVS and VNZ should be maintained at the national level. No additional linkages for the sector were identified.

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Introduction

The New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) sector is heavily reliant on the use of volunteers. The 2009 NZSAR stocktake found that there were 11,010 SAR trained personnel involved in the sector, and 9,980 of these people were unpaid volunteers. This equates to 91% of the sector. This is illustrated in table and figure 1.

It is noted that the number for paid full time people in the sector includes around 250 Police staff. While these members of the sector are paid in their Policing capacity, it is usual that the SAR activities they undertake are on top of their general policing duties.

Paid Full Time	Paid Part Time	Not Paid
581	449	9,980

Table 1

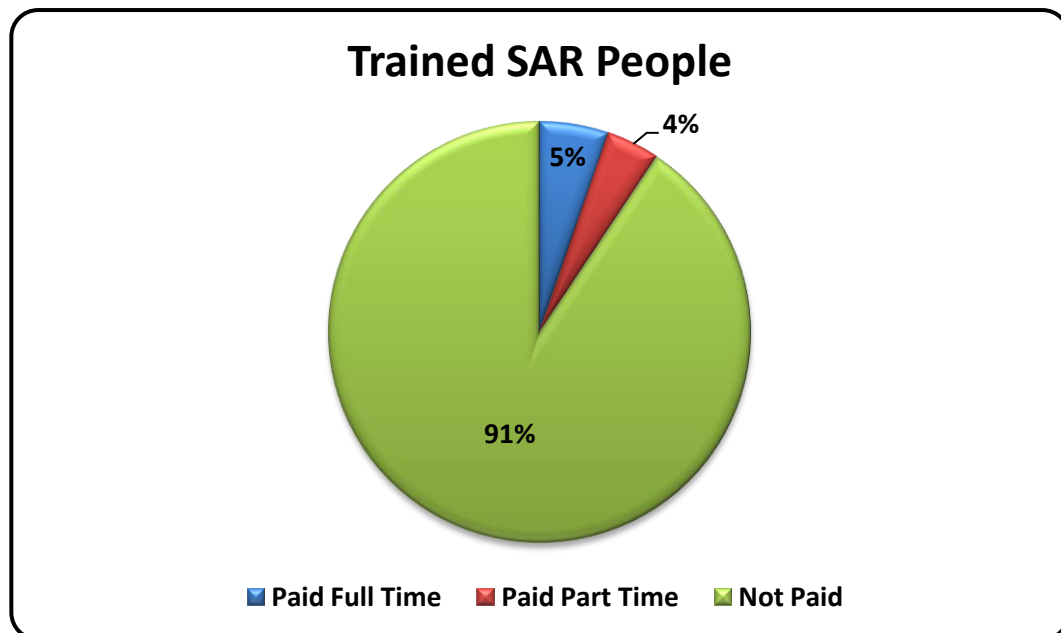


Figure 1 the high ratio of volunteers in the New Zealand SAR sector

One of the strategic goals of the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council is *to maximize the potential of SAR people*. This study provides an overview of the voluntary segment of the New Zealand SAR sector, in order to give effect to this goal.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to provide support to the Council and the Consultative Committee by enabling informed decision making, and informing the strategic processes of the Council and the voluntary SAR organisations.

This study is designed to be descriptive in nature with comparative analyses and recommendations made only where appropriate.

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this study were to examine the following aspects of voluntarism within the New Zealand SAR sector:

1. The demographic make up (age, gender, qualifications, employment status etc) of volunteers in the SAR sector. This will be placed into context with current demographic trends in New Zealand, and the challenges this could place on the sector.
2. The impact of volunteers in the SAR sector by identifying any common trends in terms of activities undertaken and hours of time volunteered across the sector, including the reliance of volunteers in SAROPs, training, governance, fund raising, etc.
3. The reasons for volunteering in the SAR sector, including why people join a SAR voluntary organisation, why they stay with an organisation, and why they may leave an organisation.
4. Identifying any common issues of concern that may exist across voluntary organisations in the SAR sector.
5. Identifying linkages that SAR sector voluntary organisations have with New Zealand's voluntary support organisations (i.e. Office for the Community & Voluntary Sector, NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations etc), and identifying any linkages that could be established.

Glossary

The following acronyms are used throughout this study.

AREC	– Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
CNZ	– Coastguard New Zealand
FRSITO	– Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation
MCDEM	– Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management
NZSAR	– New Zealand Search and Rescue
RCCNZ	– Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand
SAR	– Search and Rescue
SAROP	– Search and Rescue Operation
SLSNZ	– Surf Life Saving New Zealand

Acknowledgements

The New Zealand SAR sector as a whole has been very supportive of this study.

The author wishes to thank all those people who engaged with him in preparing this study. This includes all those people who made time for interviews, responded to emails and phone calls, and provided data.

1. Demographics

The four major voluntary agencies involved in the SAR sector have provided basic demographic data about the make up of the volunteers in their respective organisations. The information provided relates to the gender and age of their volunteers only. The agencies do not collect data relating to qualifications and employment status of their volunteers at a national level. It is important to note that no personal data about the volunteers was provided to the NZSAR Secretariat.

It has been noted by some of the voluntary agencies that they have improved their recording of this basic demographic data at the national level over the last two years. While the information supplied did not specify the gender and age for all the volunteers in each organisation, it was of an adequate level (over 50% completion¹) to provide a useful overview of the demographic make up of the New Zealand SAR sector.

This section of the study will analyse different aspects of the demographic make up of the volunteers in the SAR sector. These will be placed into the context of demographic trends in the wider New Zealand population².

Gender

Volunteers in the New Zealand SAR sector are predominately male. The only organisation that has a significant proportion of female volunteers in the sector is Surf Life Saving NZ. The proportions of males and females across the four main voluntary organisations are listed in table 2, and compared in the chart in figure 2. The sector total is weighted correctly to take into account the total numbers of volunteers in each organisation. By comparison, the national proportion in the New Zealand populace is 49% male and 51% female.

Of the search and rescue activity that utilises volunteer involvement, the majority is carried out by LandSAR and Coastguard. For these two organisations the proportions total 82% male and 18% female.

	LandSAR	CNZ	AREC	SLSNZ	Sector
Male	80%	85%	94%	61%	76%
Female	20%	15%	6%	39%	24%

Table 2

¹ Apart from AREC – the data used was taken from a representative sample of AREC respondents to a SARINZ study.

² Information used for comparative purposes is taken from data tables and reports by Statistics New Zealand – see www.statistics.govt.nz for more information.

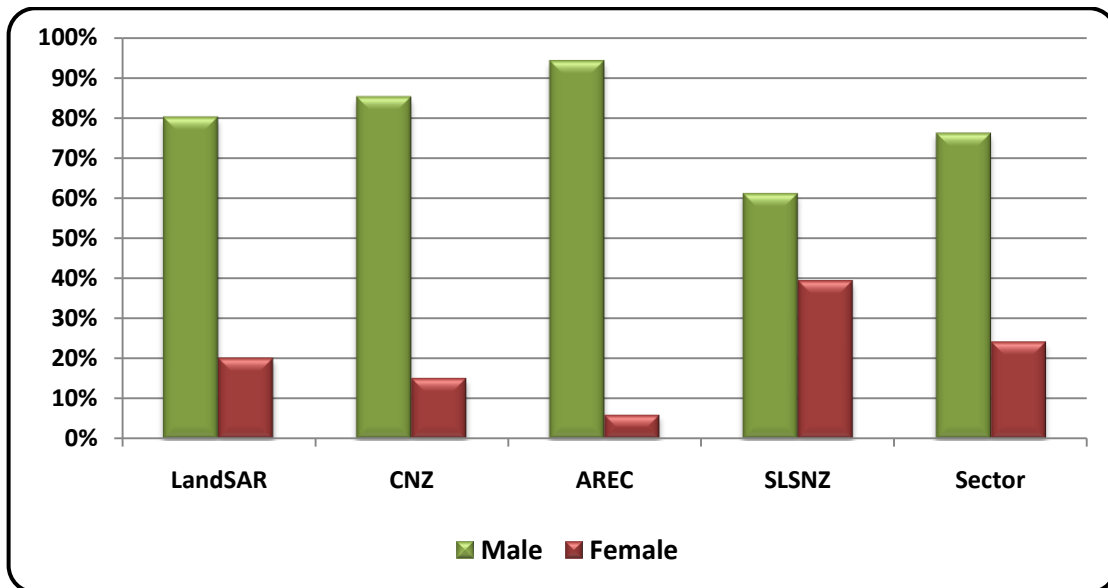


Figure 2 the SAR sector has a very high percentage of male volunteers

As a comparison, the “Promoting Generosity Project – How do New Zealanders Give?”³ led by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) shows that the highest proportion of volunteering in New Zealand comes from females across the 30-49 age groups. Their level of volunteering is at 50% of the available demographic. The New Zealand SAR sector has an under representation of female volunteers actively engaged as members of the various voluntary agencies.

Age

The data supplied by the voluntary agencies includes a breakdown of the ages of their volunteers. This has been tabulated below in age brackets of ten years⁴. For comparison purposes, the New Zealand national populace data is also included. The results are shown in table and figure 3.

Age	NZ	LandSAR	CNZ	AREC	SLSNZ
<20	29%	2%	4%	0%	54%
20-29	13%	12%	10%	0%	23%
30-39	14%	21%	19%	6%	23%
40-49	15%	27%	24%	15%	
50-59	12%	24%	23%	19%	
60+	17%	14%	20%	59%	

Table 3

³ See www.ocvs.govt.nz for more information – data taken from the 2008 update, published 29 October 2009

⁴ The data supplied by SLSNZ was broken down into <20, 20-29, and 30+ only.

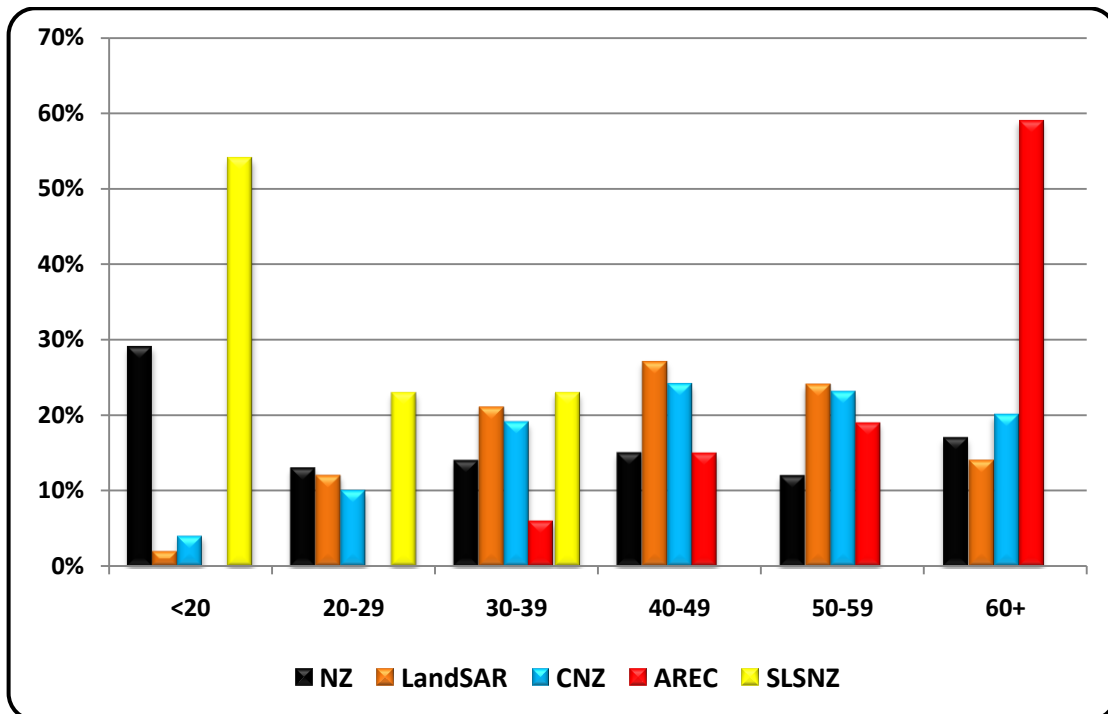


Figure 3 the percentage of volunteers in each age bracket compared to the national population

There are two spikes at each end of the age spectrum. Surf Life Saving New Zealand is heavily reliant on volunteers that are under 20 years of age, and AREC is heavily reliant on volunteers over 60 years of age. It should be noted that the data used for SLSNZ only includes trained surf life guards and not members of the junior club programmes. The data sample used for AREC was small in size when compared to the number of members of the organisation.

Only 2% of LandSAR and 4% of Coastguard volunteers fall into the age group of less than 20 years. However this age group includes 29% of New Zealand's national population. As it is generally the common practice not to use volunteers under the age of 18 years for SAR activity, it would be more useful to remove the less than 20 years age group for comparative analysis purposes.

The resultant data allows for a more accurate comparison between the age distribution of the New Zealand populace that is of the appropriate volunteering age⁵, and the make up of the voluntary agencies. The national data has been recalculated to the correct weightings after having removed the 29% of the population under 20 years of age. This is listed in table 4.

Age	NZ	LandSAR	CNZ	AREC	SLSNZ
20-29	18%	12%	10%	0%	23%
30-39	20%	21%	19%	6%	23%
40-49	21%	27%	24%	15%	
50-59	17%	24%	23%	19%	
60+	24%	14%	20%	59%	

Table 4

⁵ Excluding 18 and 19 year olds.

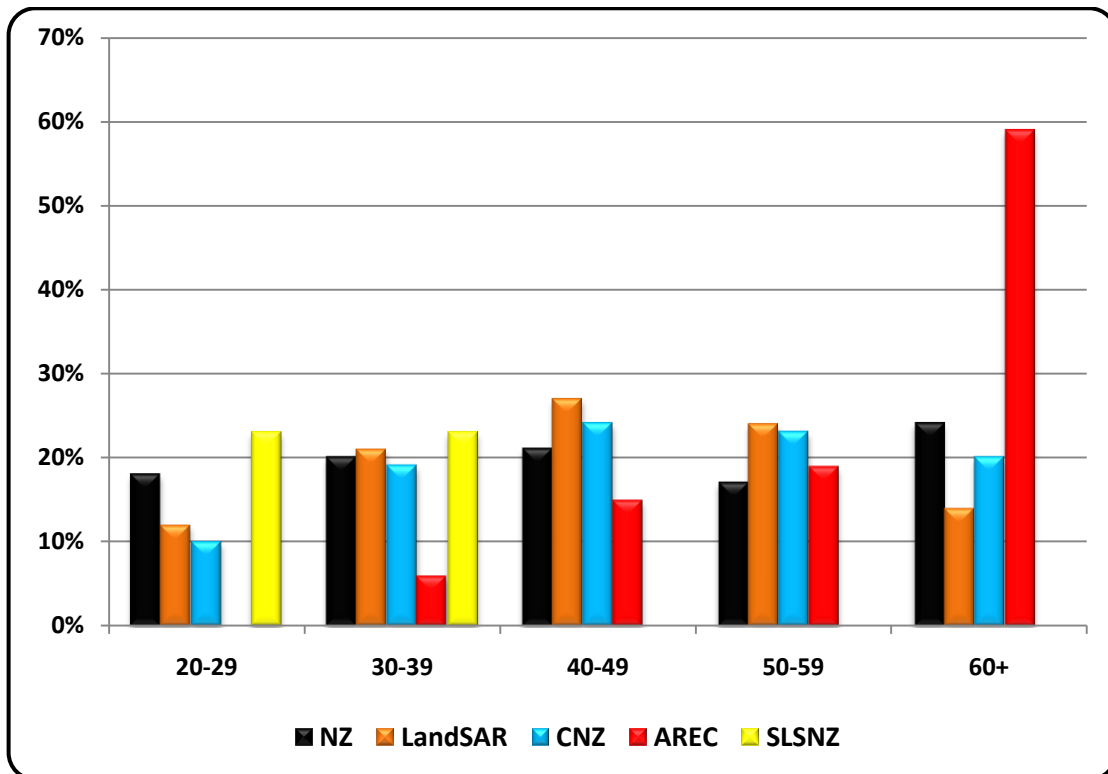


Figure 4 the percentage of volunteers in each age bracket when compared to the national population that is of volunteering age (20+)

In general, figure 4 shows that for each age group, there is not a large imbalance between the proportions of volunteers and the general populace. The main exception is for AREC in the 60+ age bracket, where there is a significant over-representation of this age group within the voluntary agency. The second exception is the under representation of volunteers in the 20-29 age group in most of the voluntary agencies (excepting SLSNZ).

Comments made during interviews indicate that the current age structure across the sector is appropriate. Some comments have been made about the need to encourage younger people to become volunteers in the sector. However there have been more comments made about the need for people who are going to volunteer for the sector to have an appropriate level of maturity and life skills. One example provided was of a young volunteer who located a deceased person on his first SAR operation. He was not able to deal with the impact this had on him and is no longer a volunteer.

This needs to be considered alongside New Zealand's aging population. By 2031, one in five New Zealander's will be aged 65+, compared to one in eight now. The median age of New Zealand's population will be 37 in 2011, 39 in 2021, 41 in 2031 and 43 in 2041.

Table and figure 5 illustrate the trends of the aging population. They show the percentage of the volunteering age population in each group, at the start of each decade for the next three decades. The current proportions of the Coastguard and LandSAR volunteers are included for comparative purposes.

	2011	2021	2031	2041	CNZ & LandSAR
20-29	18%	18%	16%	16%	11%
30-39	20%	18%	17%	16%	20%
40-49	21%	16%	17%	16%	26%
50-59	17%	18%	14%	16%	24%
60+	24%	32%	37%	38%	17%

Table 5

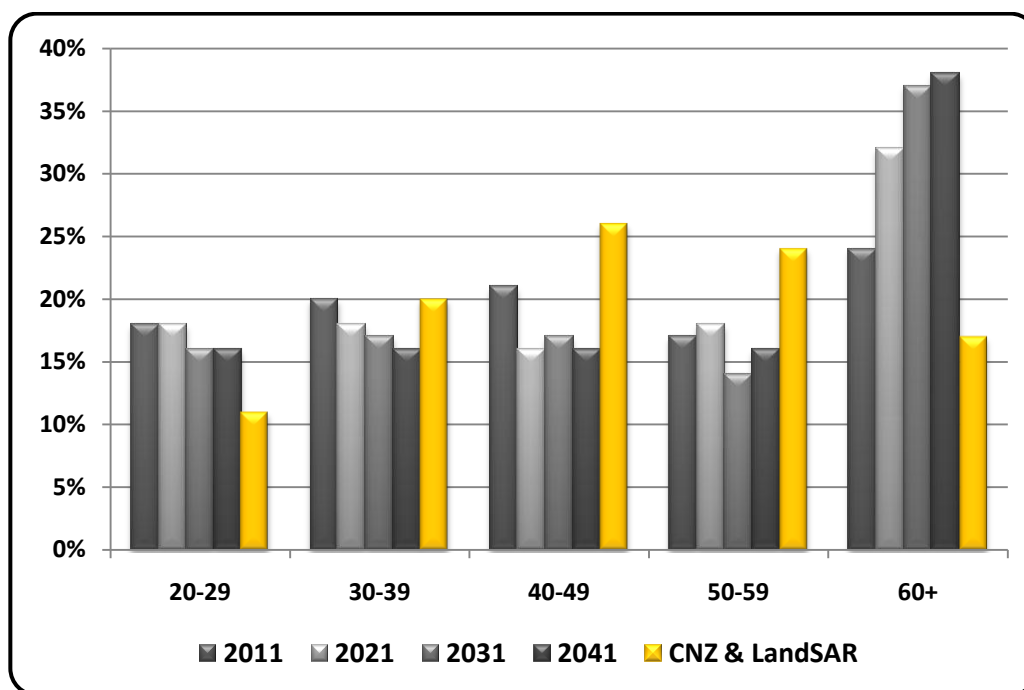


Figure 5 note the significant increase in the portion of the population aged over 60

There will be pressure on people in the 40 – 59 year age groups to actively engage in SAR voluntary activities as the overall population of New Zealand ages. Not only will the proportions of these age groups decrease with time, they will also face pressure from the demands that the aging population will place on New Zealand society.

Employment Status

While no national level data on volunteers' employment status was collected or provided by the various voluntary agencies, the FRSITO study⁶ noted the following points. In general the employment status of volunteers across the emergency services sector (this study includes Coastguard and LandSAR in this definition) has an over representation of self-employed people, shift workers, and others who have flexible work patterns.

In particular it noted that Coastguard contains a level of retired people. This is indicated from the data that shows 20% of Coastguard volunteers are over 60

⁶ NZIER study conducted for FRSITO July 2008 *Volunteer Related Training in Emergency Services – Improving Training Outcomes*

years of age. It also noted that for LandSAR the employment status of the volunteers was closely related to the areas they volunteer in (farmers and hunters in rural areas, with some professionals in urban areas).

However, it should be noted that the SWOT analysis (pages 21-23) has highlighted a weakness that available volunteer numbers can come under pressure during standard working hours. This shows that a significant portion of volunteers in the SAR sector are in full time paid employment.

Some of the comments provided relating to the employment impact on volunteers are included here.

“Numbers in a big searches during the week days but we have always have enough to cope”

“In large scale events, time required from volunteers can put pressure on employers, especially self employed members”

“Unavailability sometimes due to work/family commitments (but you get that with cops also)”

“Some employment issues - Few and far between but issues with time off on the second day can be a constraint”

In all cases where this has been mentioned, the Coordinating Authorities have still been able to conduct the SAROP with the help of the available volunteers.

Geographic Distribution

Volunteers in the New Zealand SAR sector are located throughout New Zealand. There are two aspects that relate to the location of effective local SAR organisations. One of these is having a local population that can support an organisation, and the second is that organisations should only exist where there is a need for SAR services. Historically local SAR groups, whether land, marine, or surf based, have formed where there has been an identified need by the local community. The locations of marine and land based rescue assets and the locations of voluntary groups are shown in the two maps on pages 13 & 14 (figures 7 & 8).

There are urban and rural issues across the general population of New Zealand that can impact on local SAR voluntary agencies. Population data from Statistics NZ shows that 53% of New Zealand’s population live in the four main urban areas of Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch. The data also shows that 72% of the population live in the 16 areas of New Zealand that are classified as urban. By 2031 it is estimated that 38% of the population will live in Auckland.

Analysis of SAR activity in New Zealand (category 1 activity) shows that 17% of operations occur in Auckland and 43% in the Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, and Christchurch regions. This shows that there is a greater need for voluntary SAR organisations outside the areas that most of New Zealand’s population lives in.

Another issue is the significant spike in the numbers of young people in the 18-24 year age bracket that are moving into the main urban areas (moving out of the independent urban and rural areas). People that are moving into rural areas (classified as having a high urban influence) are typically family groups with adults in 35 – 45 age bracket and who have children. This is illustrated in figure 6 which is taken from Statistics NZ.

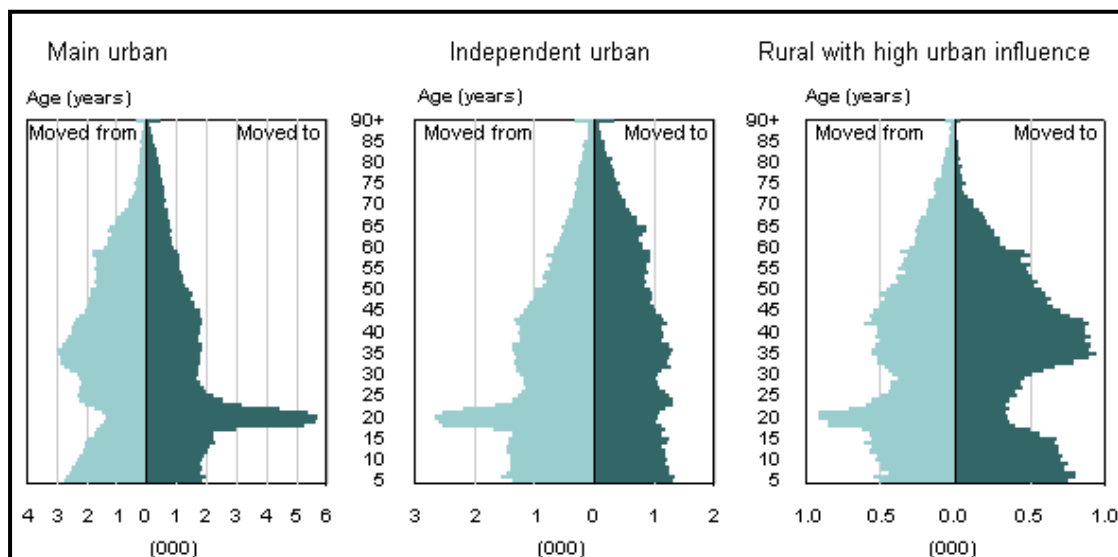


Figure 6 Note the spike in the 18-24 age bracket that is moving into the main urban areas

Comments provided during interviews have indicated that the main urban areas do have strong and generally large, or oversubscribed, volunteer groups. Other strong groups are located in areas where there is a significant amount of SAR activity; notable examples are the Tasman District and Wanaka. Volunteer groups that face issues caused by population problems are generally in the smaller rural population areas with low levels of SAR activity.

The map on page 15 (figure 9) shows the locations of Category 1 SAROPs that occurred from 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009. This shows that there are areas of New Zealand that have high levels of search and rescue activity. Notable areas are Auckland, Wellington (the Tararua Ranges in particular), Tasman, the Central Plateau, and the Southern Alps (Mt Cook, and the Wanaka – Queenstown region). Detailed GIS maps of category 1 SAR activity from 2005-2009 for each of the ten Police SAR Districts are available from the NZSAR website⁷.

Overall, there is generally a good correlation between where SAR activity occurs, and where SAR organisations have established local groups. One area which was commented on as having a lack of organised volunteer resources is the Wairarapa Coast. Any incidents that occur off the coast require the assistance of ad hoc volunteers (vessels of opportunity) rather than using assets from organised voluntary agencies.

⁷ See www.nzsar.org.nz

This highlights one of the challenges that face the SAR sector in rural and low population areas. It can be difficult to maintain an effective local SAR organisation in a low population area, which has only a few SAR incidents each year.

Observations

One thing to note from the demographics is the low level of females and people in the 20 – 29 age bracket who are volunteers in the sector. These two groups could be targeted by the sector when there is a need to recruit at the local level.

Local groups need to be aware of their ability to respond to incidents that occur during work hours, as opposed to outside work hours. The capacity of local volunteer groups to respond in these two different situations needs to be communicated clearly to the local coordinating authority.

SLSNZ volunteers are the most involved in the younger age brackets. There may be a natural progression for SLSNZ volunteers to become CNZ volunteers in later life.



Land Search and Rescue Assets

Land SAR New Zealand

- Northern Region Land SAR personnel: 106
3 Units located within the region
- Midland Region Land SAR personnel: 504
13 Units located within the region
- Eastern Region Land SAR personnel: 229
3 Units located within the region
- Central Region Land SAR personnel: 458
9 Units located within the region
- Tasman Region Land SAR personnel: 463
13 Units located within the region
- Canterbury Region Land SAR personnel: 396
10 Units located within the region
- Southern Region Land SAR personnel: 529
11 Units located within the region

Alpine Cliff Rescue Teams

- ⊕ Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation
SAR personnel: 35
- ⊕ Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue
SAR personnel: 36
- ⊕ Christchurch Alpine Cliff Rescue
SAR personnel: 62
- ⊕ Aoraki/Mt Cook ACR (DOC)
SAR personnel: 10
- ⊕ Tasman ACR
SAR personnel: 28
- ⊕ Wanaka ACR
SAR personnel: 19
- ⊕ Southland ACR
SAR personnel: 40
- ⊕ Wakatipu ACR
SAR personnel: 16

Cave SAR

- ⊕ Northland: 9
- ⊕ Auckland: 20
- ⊕ Hamilton/Waikato: 25
- ⊕ Manawatu: 15
- ⊕ Wellington: 15
- ⊕ Nelson: 50
- ⊕ West Coast: 27
- ⊕ Canterbury: 24
- ⊕ Southland: 6

Land SAR Search Dogs

- North Island: 4
- South Island: 15

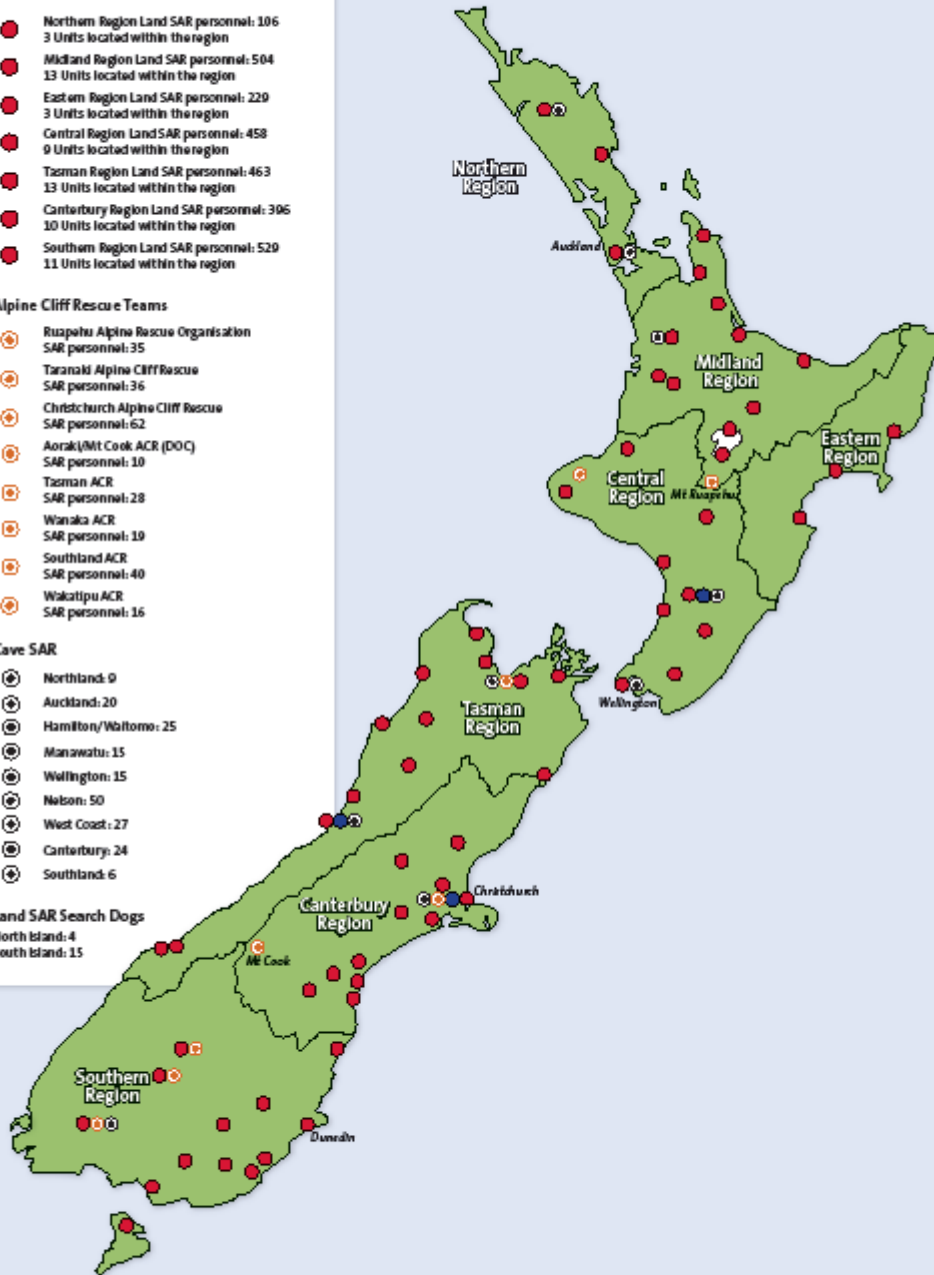


Figure 7 land based volunteer groups are spread throughout the country

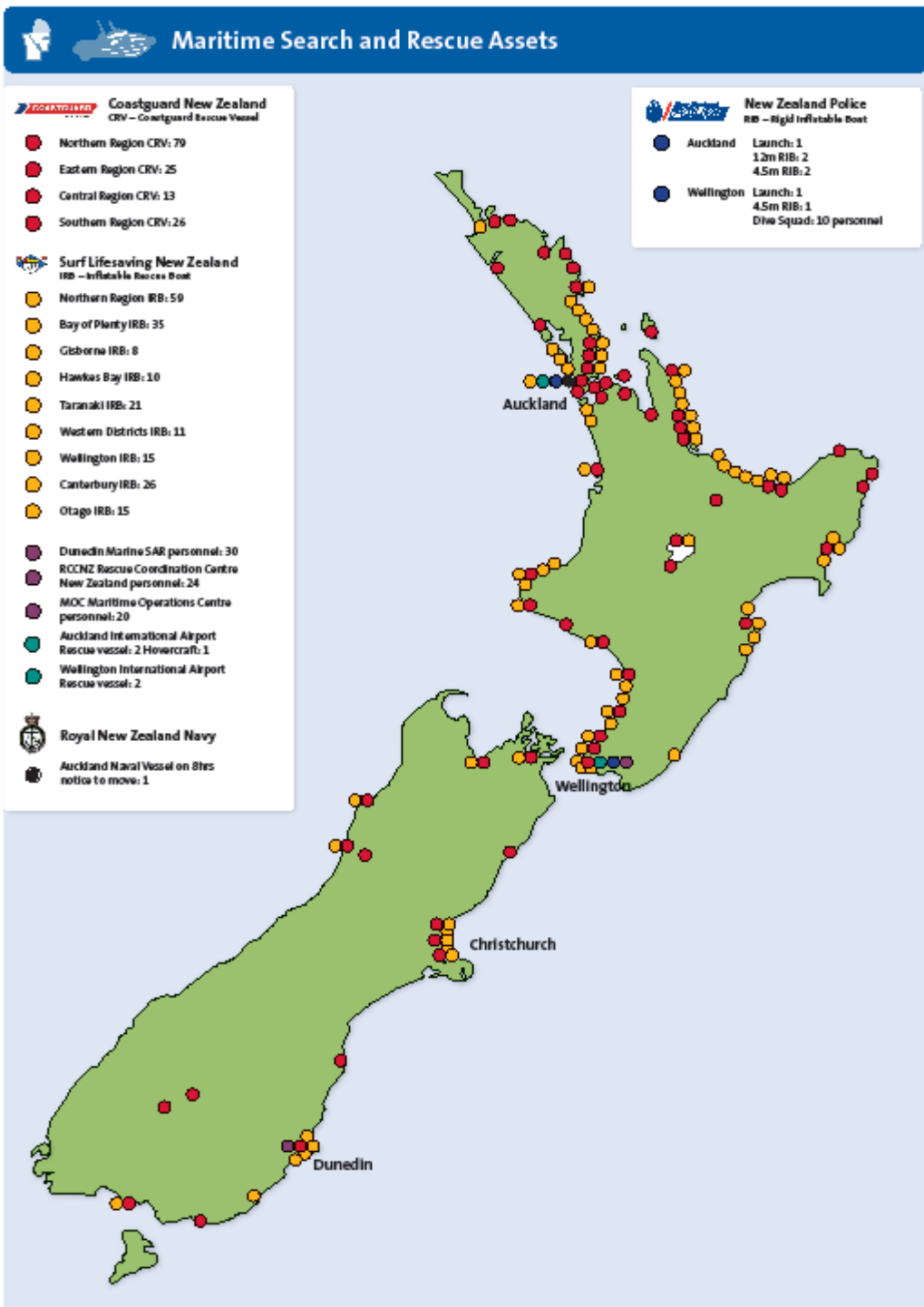


Figure 8 marine based volunteer assets as spread around the country – note the gaps on the South Island’s West Coast, and the lower East Coast of the North Island

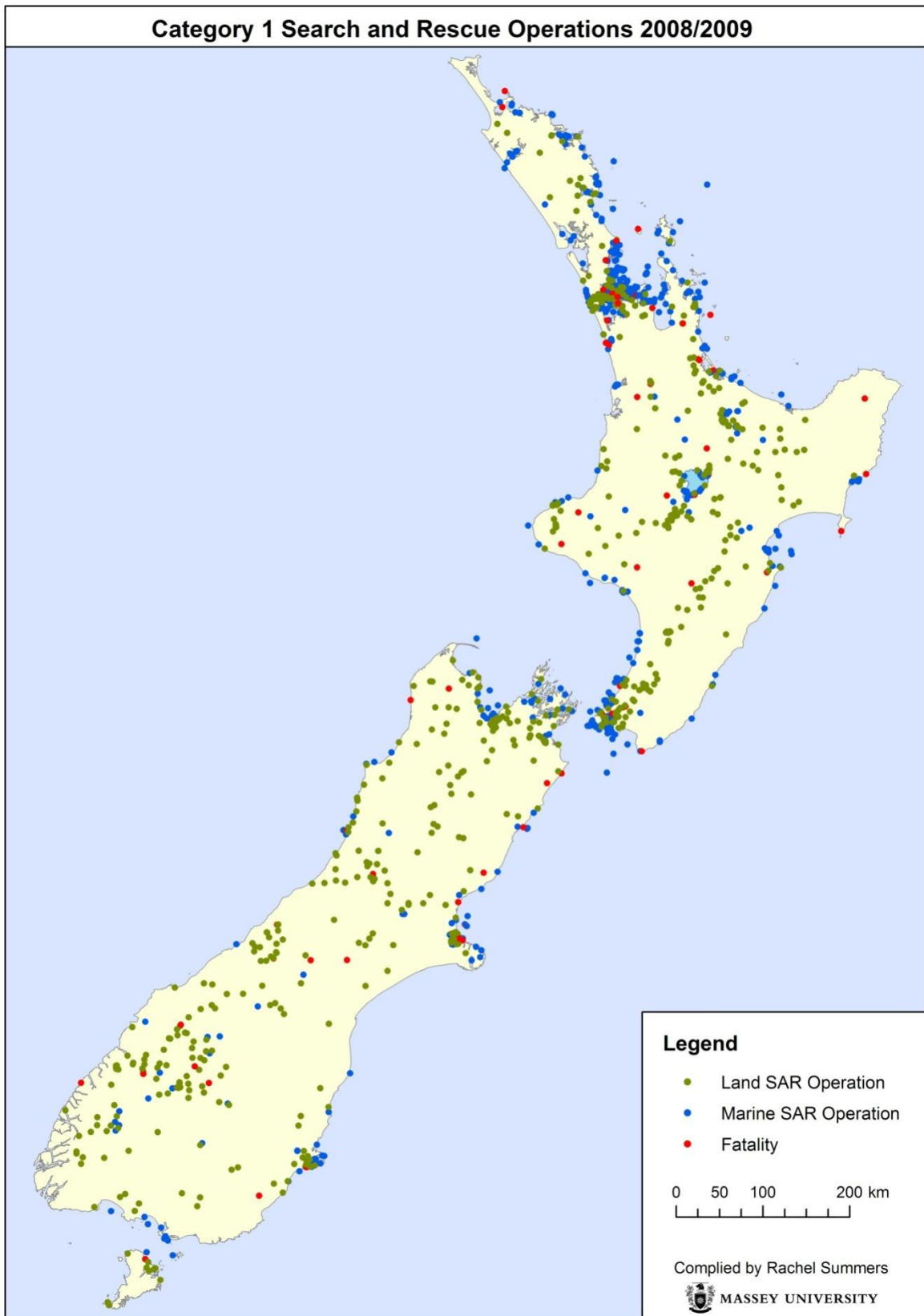


Figure 9 note the large number of incidents that occur along the spine of New Zealand, where there is a low population base of available volunteers

2. Impact of Volunteers

During the 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 financial year, volunteers from the four largest SAR voluntary agencies (AREC, CNZ, LandSAR and SLSNZ) reported that their volunteers provided a combined total of 549,785 hours of their time to the SAR sector.

SAR Operations

In total 7,232 volunteers were involved in 1,010 SAROPs, and gave 25,622 hours of their time to do so. This averages to 7.2 volunteers providing 25.4 hours of time for each SAROP that involves the use of volunteers.

Coastguard volunteers also provided 22,606 hours of volunteer time to operations that were not coordinated by the Police or RCCNZ.

Training and Administration

Volunteers were involved in 230,432 hours of training, and 124,509 hours of administration (this includes time given up for local committee meetings etc and fund raising activities).

Coastguard Specific

Coastguard volunteers also provided 30,024 hours of volunteer time to Coastguard operations that were not coordinated by the Police or RCCNZ.

Coastguard also reported 20,097 hours of maintenance activities, and 119,101 hours of radio watch.

SLSNZ

On top of these figures for search and rescue activity, it is important to note that during the year volunteers from Surf Life Saving New Zealand provided 198,829 hours in patrolling many of New Zealand's beaches. If these hours were included, the total number of volunteer hours is 741,196.

FTE

Using an FTE of 2,080 hours (40 hours @ 52 weeks) it can be determined that volunteers provided the following to the New Zealand SAR sector:

- 12.3 FTE on Category 1 and 2 SAROPs
- 14.4 FTE on Coastguard operations
- 110.8 FTE engaged in full time training
- 59.9 FTE in administration and fund raising
- 9.7 FTE on Coastguard maintenance
- 57.3 FTE on radio watch duties

This is equivalent to a total of 264.3 full time employees working for the New Zealand SAR sector during the year.

Use of Time

The chart in figure 10 shows how the volunteer hours are divided between the different activities that are necessary to undertake, and support, SAR operations.

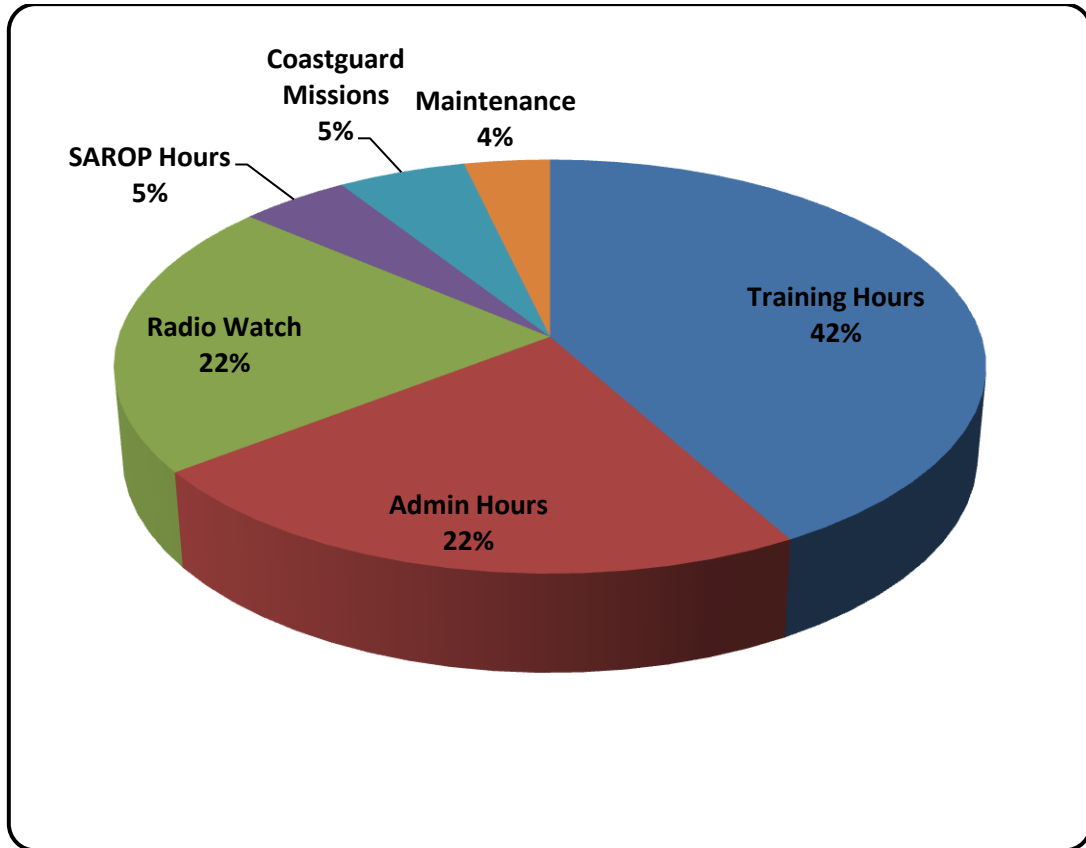


Figure 10 how the volunteers' time is spent

Only 5% of the volunteers' time is spent in carrying out search and rescue operations, with another 5% of the time spent carrying out Coastguard operations (boat tows etc). The remaining 90% of the volunteers' time is spent in preparing for and supporting SAR activities.

3. Motivations

There are various motivational reasons which will lead to people joining voluntary organisations. The FRSITO study⁸ on volunteering conducted a significant literature review on this subject. This identified three main motivations for volunteering.

The *consumption* motivation, where the volunteer gets a level of satisfaction from the voluntary activity, and includes a love of the activity itself. This motivation also includes the “warm glow” feeling of giving as a volunteer.

The *investment* motivation, where the volunteer will invest volunteer hours (usually out of available leisure time) in order to gain some form of future rewards (i.e. a level of work experience).

The *public goods/altruism* motivation, where the volunteer acts in a selfless way to benefit others.

The FRSITO study concludes that *“The ‘public goods/altruism’ motivation appears to be foremost for emergency services volunteers, who are driven by a strong sense of community.”*

Feedback received from members of the SAR sector confirms this overall finding of the FRSITO study. A common response is *“I would like someone to help me if I got into trouble.”*

It is important to note that the consumption motivation is very important when potential volunteers decide which specific SAR voluntary agency to join. People who enjoy the outdoors and back country are more likely to join a local LandSAR group, people who like the beach are more likely to join the local Surf Life Saving Club, and people who enjoy boating are more likely to join a Coastguard Unit.

There was only one response received that indicated that a very small minority of people become volunteers with an investment motivation. This related to getting Coastguard training to enhance employment opportunities on super yachts.

Retention

While the public good/altruism motive is the most important driver for becoming a volunteer, it is the consumption motivation that keeps volunteers involved in the sector. The most frequent response given as to why volunteers leave organisations is that they are not being involved in enough SAROPs. This issue will be expanded on in section 4 of this report.

⁸ From the FRSITO study July 2008. The information on motivations is taken from this report in a summary form.

Recognition

There were no responses received that identified a lack of recognition as being a concern for the volunteers. The common response to direct questions asking whether or not volunteers do receive recognition for their services was “we do not do it for recognition.” This confirms the findings of the FRSITO report that volunteers in the sector operate from an altruistic motive.

However it is useful to highlight a finding from the Volunteering Australia *National Survey of Volunteering Issues 09*. This found that the most significant methods of recognition that the surveyed volunteers reported as making them feel valued included ‘*Being accepted as a valuable team member*’, ‘*personal thank you*’ and ‘*having feedback about my contribution*’.

These values are particularly important to members of Generation Y (born 1980 – 1995) who will be the next main generation of volunteers. This generation is known as the ‘click and go’ generation, and as such they are used to receiving immediate feedback for their actions. One identified characteristic for this generation is that they will leave a voluntary task immediately if they are not getting rewarded.

4. Common Issues of Concern

A diverse range of sector volunteers, volunteer managers, and NZ Police provided feedback on what they have identified as being the most pressing issues, concerns and problems that face volunteering in the SAR sector.

Time

The demand on a volunteer's time is the most significant issue that is consistently raised by volunteers, volunteer managers, and partner agencies. Generally this does not relate to time commitments during SAROP activity, but since the start of the economic recession it has been noted that on some occasions the level of volunteer involvement in SAROPs have been affected by time constraints.

Training Time

The largest demand on volunteers' time is for training. This has been detailed earlier in the previous section of this report; however it is worth noting the time taken to train new volunteers to operational standards. For LandSAR, a volunteer who has reasonable outdoor skills requires approximately 50 hours of training to be at the standard required for operational activities. This includes two separate courses of 18 hours duration each. For Coastguard, a volunteer requires approximately 44 hours of training to become an operational crew member, an additional 104 hours to become a senior crew member, and an additional 123 hours to become a master crew member.

The feedback received from volunteers about training time commitments was varied. Some volunteers feel that the amount of training required is excessive for the tasks they are required to carry out. As one local volunteer manager responded *"we will always find jobs for anyone who volunteers – they can drive vehicles, help at the search base, and do containment tasks."*

However it should be noted that volunteers have responded in a positive manner to training requirements as well. A common theme about training is that *"it is important/good to know that volunteers from surrounding groups are trained to the same level as us for when we work together."* Another local volunteer management summed up the need for volunteer training as saying *"quality rather than quantity"* is more important when using volunteers on SAROPs.

It should be noted that Coastguard Units that deploy rescue vessels need to operate under the Safe Ship Management rules, and as such this has a direct bearing on training requirements for operational coastguard volunteers.

Non SAR Workloads

The other major issue of concern that relates directly to the demands on a volunteers' time is the amount of non-SAR work that is required in the sector. As mentioned in the previous section, volunteers are giving up an average of 4.9 hours of their time on administration and fund raising activities for every hour of operations.

It was noted that local groups will address the issue of non SAR workloads in different ways. Some groups have adapted to the new challenges of extra reporting, usually by identifying volunteers (that are not operational) that have good IT skills to carry out the administrative tasks. Other groups have reported that they are struggling with the extra reporting requirements. However it appears that for some of these groups it is a case of volunteers not wanting to hand over tasks to more suitable persons.

One respondent indicated it would be useful if the national organisation could provide some training that is aimed at the local leadership level, in particular around preparing financial reports.

Relationships

A good local relationship between voluntary and non-voluntary agencies is inconsistent around the country. This has been raised as an issue by volunteers in areas where they feel the relationship needs improving.

The main area of concern relates to local relationships with Police. One local group explained that all their meetings are held in the local Police Station, but they are disappointed that none of the local Police have ever attended one of their meetings. It was pointed out that the Inspector in charge of Operations for that Police District has made the effort to travel to that local community and attend a local meeting.

It is apparent from the feedback received that those areas which have strong Police leadership have better local relationships with the voluntary agencies. The response from the voluntary sector is clear that they would like to see the NZ Police appoint full time SAR Coordinators in each of the 10 Police SAR Districts.

A secondary relationship issue is the relationship between local volunteer groups and their respective national offices. However, in the few cases where this was raised, it was stressed that the local groups felt that the relationship with their national office has been improving significantly over the last two years.

Improving Relationships

When asked how relationships have improved, the various responses all indicate that there are now improved communications with either the other agencies or with the national office. This has usually been achieved by face to face communications, and by improved access to the national office via means of electronic communication. As one respondent said *“it was good to see [our Chief Executive] turn up to meet with us”*.

It is important to note that the best form of communications to improve relationships is via face to face meetings. These allow for genuine two way communications between volunteers and other agencies, or national office staff.

Firstly, it gives volunteers the chance to communicate directly with people or agencies they usually do not get the opportunity to interact with. This can demonstrate to the volunteers that their views are important, and are listened to. Care needs to be taken that the views of volunteers are not dismissed out of hand, but are dealt with in an open and transparent fashion.

Secondly, it gives the non-voluntary agency or national office staff the opportunity to explain why and how certain decisions are made. In general, volunteers are more involved in day to day decision making in their place of employment, as opposed to their involvement in the strategic direction of their voluntary organisations⁹.

Both of these reasons serve to keep the volunteers engaged and informed at the strategic level. Meeting with volunteers is also seen as an informal method of recognising the contribution that volunteers make to the sector.

Recruitment and Retention

These are issues which are not consistent around the country. Some local groups report that they are in a situation where they almost have too many volunteers, and other groups are struggling to attract enough volunteers to meet the local SAR needs. Retention of trained volunteers is generally a more significant issue than recruitment of new volunteers.

Retention of volunteers is an issue in areas that have low volumes of SAR activity. This compounds the issues listed earlier of large training and administrative workloads. By not being actively engaged in what they have volunteered for, there is no 'feel good' factor which is the basis of the consumption motivation. This can be addressed by ensuring the training activities are able to meet the consumption need (this is addressed in the FRSITO report on training in the emergency sector). It is noted that Coastguard are addressing this issue by engaging volunteers in more training activities carried out on the water.

As mentioned in the section on demographics, recruitment of new volunteers can be an issue in rural areas of the country that have low populations. The Ministry for Civil Defence and Emergency Management has recently published a guideline on community engagement¹⁰. There is some useful material in this publication, particularly the section on profiling the local community. This may assist in identifying new volunteers for the sector in areas struggling to recruit.

It is noted that large efforts have been made by Coastguard and LandSAR to address the issues that have been listed above. Significant to these are having analysis tools that can be applied to each local group or unit on an annual basis, and by developing accurate databases of their volunteers. It is recommended that the large voluntary organisations carry out an annual

⁹ Volunteering Australia *National Survey of Volunteering Issues 09* page 9

¹⁰ *Community Engagement in the CDEM Context – Best Practice Guide [BPG 4/10]* available from the MCDEM website www.civildefence.govt.nz

analysis of each local group to identify any emerging issues before they become larger problems. Local groups should also be aware that they should be contacting their regional and national offices if they are experiencing recruitment or retention problems.

Costs

There has been some feedback received from volunteers that they are not happy with the cost of volunteering in the sector. It should be noted that this has not been raised as a major issue, but it was mentioned enough to be raised in this report.

One item that was mentioned a few times was the cost and cover of insurance for volunteers. This includes cover for death and disability that may occur in their volunteer roles, the increased costs of insurance premiums for some volunteers, and in one case the refusal of an insurance company to provide mortgage repayment insurance. This issue is currently being addressed at the national level, however it is important that the volunteers are kept aware that their respective national offices are addressing this issue on their behalf.

The other item raised a few times relates to reimbursement for actual and reasonable costs incurred by volunteers. The lengthy Police system for reimbursing volunteers was specifically mentioned as being an issue. One local LandSAR group reported that they have put a procedure in place whereby they will seek the reimbursement from the Police on behalf of the volunteer, and will cover the volunteer's expenses themselves.

The last issue of cost for volunteers relates to purchasing equipment. The major organisations are now in a position to make provide personal protective equipment to volunteers. Much of this is provided by fund raising efforts at the local and national level (i.e. LGB Outdoor Safety Grants). It is important that all local groups should know what their organisation's national policy on providing equipment to volunteers is. Volunteers also need to know from the outset what equipment they will require to be effective members of operational SAR teams (either land or marine based), and how much of this they will be required to pay for themselves.

Addressing Volunteer Issues

The majority of the issues discussed in this section can be addressed by having an effective volunteer induction programme in place. This has been identified from literature on volunteer issues, and confirmed in discussions with volunteers and volunteer managers during the course of this study.

Volunteers need to know what they are getting into when they join a voluntary organisation. They need to be aware of the costs they are likely to face (whether that is for petrol, travel, training costs, equipment), they need to know how much of their time will be taken up in training activities, and they need to be aware that there may be a significant period of time before they are used as operational members.

As shown in figure 10 (page 17) up to 91% of the volunteers' time is spent on non operational activities. This clearly demonstrates the volunteers' concerns about the use of their time. Over the last year the sector has started to work together in a collaborative manner on common training issues. A training review has been carried out by the NZSAR Council, and this has led to the creation of a Core Curriculum for interagency training.¹¹

Recommendations

It is recommended that the voluntary agencies continue to work in a collaborative manner with their SAR partners to improve the training requirements for the sector, and that duplication of training is reduced as much as possible.

Voluntary agencies should have an effective induction and monitoring process in place for new volunteers.

That, when required, the NZSAR Secretariat is engaged to help improve relationships between agencies at the national or local level.

That the NZ Police consider appointing a full time SAR Coordinator in each of the ten Police SAR Districts.

¹¹ Both of these documents are available for download from the NZSAR website www.nzsar.org.nz

5. Linkages

The terms for this study included identifying any linkages that the SAR sector has with New Zealand's wider voluntary support organisations, and to identify any linkages that could be established.

It quickly became apparent that some of the envisaged linkages (i.e. with the NZFVWO) were inappropriate to be established, given the vastly different activities undertaken by the SAR sector and the wider social sector.

It should be noted that a few of the managers at the national level from the SAR sector have been involved with the work being undertaken by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS) in establishing a joint community government Relationship Agreement. This has highlighted the special relationship that already exists in the New Zealand SAR sector between government agencies and SAR voluntary organisations.

One linkage that has already been established is the relationship with Volunteering New Zealand. This is both at the national level and at the local level with Volunteering Centres. These Centres can provide advice and can assist with volunteer recruitment at the local level.

Recommendations

At the National level:

A relationship is maintained between the NZSAR Secretariat and Volunteering New Zealand.

A relationship is maintained between the national offices of the major SAR voluntary agencies in the New Zealand SAR sector and Volunteering New Zealand.

That representatives from the NZSAR Secretariat and the major SAR voluntary agencies attend Volunteering New Zealand's national conferences.

A relationship is maintained between the NZSAR Secretariat and the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

A relationship is maintained between the national offices of the major SAR voluntary agencies and the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector.

At the Local level:

A relationship is maintained, at least at the regional or district level, between the various voluntary agencies in the New Zealand SAR sector and with Volunteer Centres that are affiliated to Volunteering New Zealand (i.e. Volunteering Wellington).

SWOT Analysis

The following table lists responses provided on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of using volunteers in the SAR sector. The majority of these responses were provided by members of the NZ Police.

This table is provided to give an overview of the different views that exist around the country about volunteers in the SAR sector.

Aspect	Response
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Searcher numbers, I&T total running of this sector, 1 or 2 members in our IMT group, Communications run by AREC • Our Volunteers actually run the searches, the Police Coordinators overview the Operation and offer Guidance, Money and logistical support, the Police do not have the operational ability to deal with SAR without our volunteers • Local knowledge, Expertise in Bushcraft and SAR skills • Mobilisation in the past could be slow and some have own agendas that detract from the SAR effort sometimes • Man-power with resources in field, expertise in Advisor roles and assisting with Incident management Teams, additional resources e.g.: boats, 4x4, local knowledge • Lots of expertise, local knowledge, competency and willingness to drop everything and respond to callouts • Absolute enthusiasm and motivation. A wide range of skills and experience. We get a lot of bang for our buck due to the very low level of cost associated with deploying volunteers • Local knowledge of the area, search and rescue experience, formal training is some cases EG Mountain Safety Instructors, SARINZ instructors, Amateur Radio expertise, Enthusiasm, time, themselves to assist with the various functions within a SAROP structure (IMT and field members, Radio support, administration, catering) self-reliant (assets EG radios, SAR trailer). • Enthusiasm, outdoor skills, life skills • SAR experience • Outdoor skills and local knowledge. • SAR management skills • Management support skills. • Inspiration from their dedication • well trained and equipped field and management staff • Local knowledge, Availability, Expertise, skill sets for specialists activities • Local knowledge, Bush sense, SAR skills, management skills & manpower • Man power / experience / trained skill set / enthusiasm • Diversity of skills and backgrounds • Different ethnic backgrounds working together
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numbers in a big searches during the week days but we have always have enough to cope • Searchers are not as dedicated when not deployed for operational searches • In large scale events, time required from volunteers can put pressure on employers, especially self employed members • Unavailability sometimes due to work/family commitments (but you get that with cops also) • You never know who will show up at a job. There can be a bit of a ego factor amongst some of them and it can take a long time to get anything done or to get a decision made when dealing with volunteer organisations • Another weakness of using volunteers is not know with any certainty who

	<p>will turn up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With Police staff you are certain of their level of training, with volunteers sometimes its hard to tell just how good they are • Can't always contact/get the ones I would like to use. • Sometimes hard to find enough quickly • No weaknesses • Not being able to insist on certain standards or actions for them to do. Accommodating their individual preferences • Security at police station entry exits etc. Issues with police management over volunteers driving police vehicles in some situations. Time required to process claims then follow up when they are not paid due to clerical issues • We have an older organisation, mainly made up of semi-retired people looking for something to do • Some employment issues - Few and far between but issues with time off on the second day can be a constraint
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing community awareness of both SAR activity and preventative measures that may be taken • Well developed training may provide job opportunities and introduce new concepts/technology • Provides police with the resources to get the job done and a well trained and keen group of people • It's great for the Police relationship with the community to be working so closely with volunteers on SAROPs. Wandatrak and suburban searches will provide more opportunities for differently skilled volunteers (i.e. not trampers or climbers) to get involved in SAR. Also there is now a need for more ICT type people within management teams. • Using volunteers spreads the Police SAR squad out a bit and provides further coverage. It enables the volunteers to work with Police SAR at every opportunity and builds relationships • HUGE savings to taxpayer • Fast obtaining of appropriate skills. • Continuity of knowledge. (They don't move on as often as "professionals" (Cops). • More reliable – cops can be withheld/diverted according to what their management see as "Priority" • Positive feelings for volunteers to provide a service for their communities • Sometimes a slower response time than Police SAR squad members who are working at the time • Police in most areas do not have the staff numbers and or skills to run a SAROP with out volunteer input • For Coastguard volunteers the training can be useful in getting jobs on super yachts
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As long as you have the right staff and all the checks and balances are in place I do not see threats to the use of volunteers • some have own agendas that detract from the SAR effort sometimes • Vetting and currency of vetting has been a problem in some localities as are the aspiration of those who wish to see SAR as a non-government response. Delivery through the Police is fundamental to having a coherent reporting and missing person investigation capability • Financial pressure from employers • Continuous up-skilling with training, especially in advisory and management roles are crucial to ensure future proofing, with advent of helicopter increase usage, challenge to keep interest up in field volunteers, however still crucial role as weather dictates that helicopters are not always available • no problems experienced so far • You have slightly less control over their actions and in particular what they may choose to say to the media, particularly if things end up going badly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteerism seems to be on the decline , and the will vote with their feet IE walk out if their individual needs are not being met • Diminishing number of volunteers • The issue of them suffering an injury or life threatening event on a SAROP, or being exposed to PTSD • Burnout or traumatisation • risks involved are inability for LSAR to provide sufficient numbers to support a SAR Op. Time constraints surrounding volunteers, volunteers involved with traumatic events, volunteers involved searching in relation to criminal matters no formal rank/pecking structure no clear reporting , hierarchical structure • Sub standard work • None that I'm aware of • Need to have sufficient skills base, knowledge and training standards to complete the roles allocated. If not this opens issues from OSH to Coroners court • Physical capabilities required • Some young volunteers are not getting the responsibilities they should be, and will leave the organisation • Health and fitness of people volunteering
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