

NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Rapu Whakarauora Aotearoa 

Exceptional achievements and dedicated service honoured at NZ Search and Rescue Awards

Embargoed until 6pm Tuesday 21 May 2024

On Tuesday 21 May 2024, the Hon Matt Doocey, Associate Minister for Transport will present the 2023 New Zealand Search and Rescue Awards.

These awards are presented annually in recognition of outstanding achievements within New Zealand's search and rescue region, which covers 30 million square kilometres.

Awards given in the Operations category recognise significant rescue operations that took place between 1 January and 31 December 2023.

Awards given in the Support category recognise the contributions of individuals to search and rescue in New Zealand.

Forty nominations were received for 2023, with two Gold Awards and ten Certificates of Achievement being awarded at this year's ceremony.

"The stories behind each award are humbling to read," says New Zealand Search and Rescue Secretariat Director Duncan Ferner. "Each recipient has demonstrated exceptional dedication to search and rescue. Their service and accomplishments are an inspiration to us all."

"Congratulations to all our award recipients. We are grateful for your commitment and passion for search and rescue, and the work you do to reunite missing people with their whānau and friends."

Those receiving awards are:

Gold Award – Operational

The Gold Award for Operational Activity is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2023.

Hawke's Bay SLSNZ SAR Squad

For the rescue of over 200 people from Esk Valley and Pakowhai during Cyclone Gabrielle on 14 February 2023.

Gold Award – Support

The Gold Award for Support Activity is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Senior Constable Conrad Smith

For his service and commitment to search and rescue and the Ruapehu Emergency Services Charitable Trust.

Certificates of Achievement – Operational Activity

The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement for **Operational Activity** are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2023.

Northland Land Search and Rescue
Northland Police SAR Squad
Fire and Emergency New Zealand Ti Hiku Specialist Water Rescue Team
Fire and Emergency New Zealand Urban Search and Rescue Team
Fire and Emergency New Zealand Whangārei Fire Station and support staff
Northland Plumbing and Gas

For the search for a missing teenager in Abbey Caves on 9 May 2023.

Wakatipu Land Search and Rescue – Alpine Cliff Rescue

For the rescue of two climbers from The Remarkables between 1-2 July 2023.

Rakaia Land Search and Rescue
South Canterbury Land Search and Rescue
Murray Bowden and search dog Buck

For the rescue of a missing tramp from Little Mount Peel / Huatekerekere between 26-27 December 2023.

The crew of the Amaltal Apollo
The crew of the Moana Chief
No. 40 Squadron Royal New Zealand Air Force

For the rescue of a solo sailor 50 nautical miles from Cape Kidnappers / Te Kauwae-a-Māui between 29-30 March 2023.

Northland Rescue Helicopters

For the rescue of a sailor 100 nautical miles from Kerikeri on 12 May 2023.

Certificates of Achievement – Support Activity

The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement for **Support Activity** are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Martin Balch

For his service and commitment to search and rescue in Otago.

Graeme Irvine

For his service and commitment to search and rescue in Otago.

Rob Carpenter

For his service and commitment to search and rescue and Coastguard Marlborough.

Jonathan Walmisley MBE

For his service and commitment to search and rescue and Coastguard Wānaka Lakes.

Phil Harman

For his service and commitment to search and rescue and Surf Life Saving in Hawke's Bay.

Event details

Date: Tuesday 21 May

Time: Doors open 5.30pm. Formalities and live streaming begins at 6.00pm

Venue: Grand Hall, Parliament Buildings, Wellington

The award recipients will be available for questions and photos from 5pm at the venue. Images from the ceremony can be supplied from approximately 9pm. Please contact Tania Seward to arrange this.

NB: If you wish to attend the awards ceremony please contact Tania Seward.

The event will be livestreamed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@nzsar/streams>

Media contact

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Notes to editors:

The New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council was established in 2003 to provide strategic leadership to the New Zealand search and rescue sector. We help improve the overall co-ordination, cohesion, capability and leadership of search and rescue by working alongside the key organisations and individuals providing search and rescue services throughout New Zealand. For more information see nzsar.govt.nz

NZSAR is a separate agency to New Zealand Land Search and Rescue, who provide volunteers for search and rescue operations throughout New Zealand.

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