

# NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Rapu Whakarauora Aotearoa



## NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE (NZSAR) AWARDS

### About the NZSAR Awards

Searching for, and rescuing people is a complex, often difficult task that occurs in all kinds of weather and usually in demanding locations. The people who work or volunteer their time and skills in this area, and those that support them, often receive little public recognition for the feats they achieve, and the sustained effort they put in to accomplish these tasks. The New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council has established the NZSAR Awards as an annual national award programme to recognise worthy achievements in the field of search and rescue (SAR) in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

While some specific acts of SAR heroism or conspicuous service have drawn honours from the Royal New Zealand Honours system, and others have received awards from their own organisations, such recognition often does not reach the public or others involved in the wider SAR community. The NZSAR Awards give formal and public recognition to those involved in SAR in New Zealand. They are primarily intended for those people, groups, or organisations that have made important contributions to SAR in New Zealand and deserve recognition at a national level.

They also raise community awareness about the efforts of volunteers and paid personnel in the SAR sector and celebrate their success. The NZSAR Awards are judged and presented annually by the NZSAR Council.

### Categories of Activity

There are two categories of SAR related activity covered by the NZSAR Awards:

- **Operational Activity.** This category is for nominations relating to a specific SAR operation(s) that have occurred during the year.
- **Support Activity.** This category is for nominations that do not relate to specific SAR operation(s) but to the wider range of SAR related activities (for example training, prevention, and long-service).

### Levels of Recognition

There are two levels of recognition for each category in the NZSAR Awards programme:

#### New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Awards.

Commencing in 1999, this annual award honours the person, group or organisation that has made a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year or over a sustained period. It was renamed as the NZSAR Gold Award in 2008.

## **New Zealand Search and Rescue Certificates of Achievement.**

Commencing in 2008, the certificate is awarded to people, groups or organisations that have made an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year or over a sustained period.

### **Number of Awards**

**NZSAR Gold Award:** no more than one Gold Award for Operational Activity, and no more than one Gold Award for Support Activity, can be presented each year.

**NZSAR Certificate of Achievement:** no more than four Certificates of Achievement for Operational Activity and no more than four Certificates of Achievement for Support Activity, can be presented in each year.

If, in the opinion of the NZSAR Council, there is no nomination of sufficiently high standard to qualify, a decision may be made not to present a Gold Award or Certificate for any given year.

The NZSAR Council can, at its discretion, grant additional Awards.

### **Criteria & Eligibility**

The key criterion for the NZSAR Awards is that the nominations are for ‘those that have made a significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during that year or over a sustained period’.

In addition, the following items of criteria and eligibility apply to the NZSAR Awards:

- Any type of contribution to SAR in the NZ Search and Rescue Region shall be considered for nominating an individual, group, or organisation for the NZSAR awards.
- The nominee(s) must have performed outstanding work in the field of SAR above and beyond routine work and service.
- Individuals, groups, and entire organisations are eligible for NZSAR Awards.
- The contribution may be for a particular incident(s) during the previous year, or for a sustained effort over a period of time.
- NZSAR Awards may be granted posthumously.
- If an individual, group, or organisation has been nominated for an NZSAR Award in the past, whether or not they received an award or certificate, substantial new information must be presented for the NZSAR Council to consider this nomination. The NZSAR Secretariat can provide confidential advice about whether a nomination has been submitted previously.
- An individual who has previously received an NZ Royal Honour for a particular incident or service cannot be considered for recognition by the NZSAR Council award programme for that same contribution.

- The information contained in the nomination is the basis for the evaluation, so it must be complete and fully justify the nomination. The NZSAR Council will not routinely contact the nominator or seek any supplementary information.
- Nominations for the Operational Activity category need to fulfil the following two criteria:
  - The operation(s) must be coordinated, or overseen, by one of the two recognised coordinating authorities.
  - The operation(s) must have occurred during the year for which the awards are being presented.

## **Process**

To be considered for the Gold Award or the Certificate for the year ended 31 December, a nomination must be prepared and forwarded to the NZSAR Secretariat no later than 31 January the following year. This nomination is to be submitted by an individual or organisation in the belief that the nominee has fulfilled the criteria and eligibility requirements outlined in this policy.

A non-conflicted sub-committee of the NZSAR Consultative Committee will review all the nominations for the year and make recommendations to the NZSAR Council about who should be considered for recognition. The NZSAR Council will then consider the recommendations and decide who will be the recipients. The NZSAR Secretariat will manage this process.

Judging of the nominations will be on the basis of information contained in the nomination form and supporting documentation. The decision of the NZSAR Council will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.

- The NZSAR Council is the selection panel.
- References may be checked upon receipt of nomination.

Nominations may only be withdrawn by the original nominator and/or their agency. Concerns about a nomination, raised by a third party, should be sent in writing to the NZSAR Secretariat. This correspondence will be passed to the Awards panel for their consideration.

- The NZSAR Secretariat will manage the nomination and awards process.
- A non-conflicted sub-committee of the NZSAR Consultative Committee will rank the eligible nominations and provide advice to the NZSAR Council.
- The nominations will then be considered by the NZSAR Council who will make the final and incontestable decision regarding recipients.
- The NZSAR Secretariat will notify the Gold Award and Certificate recipients and all nominators once the NZSAR Council has made its decision.
- NZSAR Gold Award and Certificate recipients' identification will be officially announced at an awards ceremony arranged by the NZSAR Secretariat.

- The NZSAR Secretariat will provide news releases on the Gold Award and Certificate recipients to the appropriate media.

## **Selection Considerations**

The nominations will be considered using the following guidelines and any others considered relevant by the NZSAR Council.

For ranking nominations relating to **Operational Activity**, the sub-committee should give consideration to the following factors:

- Result
- Extraordinary rescue effort
- Use of SAR techniques
- Scale of effort
- Persistence of effort
- Scale of coordination and teamwork to effect a rescue
- Environmental conditions
- Location

For ranking nominations relating to **Support Activity**, the sub-committee should give consideration to the following factors:

- SAR services
  - Changes or improvements to SAR
  - Positive impact of changes
  - Range/scope of impact
  - Fundraising
  - Years of service to SAR
  - Scale of effort
  - Leadership
  - Leadership activities
  - Number of years as SAR group/team leader
- Development of a new technique or technology
  - Introduction of SAR technique or technology
  - Success of the new technique or technology
  - Scale of effort
- Education and prevention
  - Identification of a need for a programme
  - Introduction of a successful SAR educational or prevention programme
  - Application of the programme
  - Success of the programme
  - Scale of effort

## **Preparation and Submission of Nominations**

- All nominations shall use the NZSAR Council Awards programme nomination form and follow the attached guidelines for preparing the nominations.
- Nominations for Operational Activity for the year ended 31 December shall be submitted no later than 31 January the following year.
- A nomination can be submitted by any person over the age of 18, who is familiar with the contribution of the individual or organisation being submitted.
- An individual cannot nominate himself/herself or the part of an organisation with which he or she is directly associated.
- A good nomination will use plain language to tell the NZSAR Council what the nominee has done and how the contribution has helped SAR. The outcome and the process of the contribution must be described and substantiated.
- A current biographical sketch, including dates of active participation in organisations, and any awards or honours earned by the nominee, is useful to the NZSAR Council.
- Dates and details about the nominee's work and how it has affected their community and SAR in general provide the NZSAR Council with a valuable decision-making tool.
- All nominations must be signed and seconded.

### **Nominations are to be submitted to:**

NZSAR Secretariat  
PO Box 3175  
Wellington  
New Zealand  
[info@nzsar.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzsar.govt.nz)

Nominations can also be submitted via the electronic form on the NZSAR website.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### *When was the NZSAR Council Awards programme established?*

The NZSAR Council Awards programme was introduced in 1999 to acknowledge outstanding search and rescue work by individuals, groups and organisations in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region. The programme also serves to raise awareness of SAR efforts across the country.

The structure of the awards programme was updated in 2007 to include the NZSAR Gold Award and Certificates of Achievement.

The awards were updated again in 2013 to establish the categories operational and support activity.

*Are there separate awards for paid and volunteer SAR personnel?*

No. Both the New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award and the Certificate can be awarded to either paid or volunteer SAR personnel.

*Are the awards only for lifetime achievement in SAR?*

No. Any significant contribution to SAR in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region should be considered in nominating an individual or organization for the NZSAR Councils awards programme. The nominee must have performed outstanding work in the field of SAR above and beyond routine work and service. The contribution may be in the form of sustained effort over a period of time or for a particular incident or group of incidents.

*Can organisations, groups and individuals be nominated?*

Yes.

*How many awards are given out each year?*

Usually, no more than one Gold Award for Operational Activity, and no more than one Gold Award for Support Activity, can be presented each year.

There is a limit on the number of Certificates of Achievement that can be awarded – a maximum of four in each category each year.

If, in the opinion of the NZSAR Council, there is no nomination of sufficiently high standard to qualify, a decision may be made not to present a Gold Award or Certificate for any given year.

The NZSAR Council can, at its discretion, grant additional Awards.

*Will the Gold Award and Certificates be presented each year?*

The NZSAR Council may decide on occasion not to present the Gold Award or Certificate if, in their opinion, the nominations do not warrant their presentation.

*Where can I find the names of previous recipients?*

Information about past NZSAR Award recipients can be found on the NZSAR website.

*Can a previous winner be nominated again?*

Yes. The organisation/group/person will be judged only on achievements since the previous award was received. For those who have been nominated in the past (and have not won), previous nomination information can be updated and will be considered for the present nomination.

*Can people from the same organisation be nominated?*

Yes. You may nominate as many people as you like, but please fill out separate forms for each nominee, unless you are nominating the group or organisation as a whole.

*Do I have to fill out separate forms for the Gold Award and Certificate of Achievement?*

No. All nominees are considered for both the NZSAR Gold Award and Certificates.

*Are there guidelines for preparing nominations?*

Fill out the candidate information on the application form.

Write the reasons for the nomination in the area provided and use a separate sheet if necessary. Describe in a qualitative manner:

- the nature of the candidate's contribution to SAR (achievements applying to this nomination)
- the significance of the candidate's contribution to SAR (including the importance of the contributions and the benefits resulting from them)
- the context of the contribution (including background against which the contributions were made and problems overcome)

For individuals, provide an up-to-date biographical sketch of the nominee on a separate sheet.

Fill out the nominator and seconder information on the application form. Ensure these are signed. You may include other references (with their names and contact information) to corroborate the information provided in the nomination if you wish.

Attach all relevant supporting documentation, including endorsements.

Submit the nomination to the NZSAR Secretariat by 31 January.

Details of the nomination and any supporting evidence (such as photographs, reports, letters, witness contact details etc) should be attached to the nomination form.

*Are the nominations confidential?*

Yes. We do not contact nominees unless asked to do so by the nominator. We contact the winners prior to the awards ceremony to confirm their attendance and other details.

*When do nominations close?*

Nominations close on 31 January each year.