

# NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE



New Zealand Search and  
Rescue Council

# annual report 2018-2019



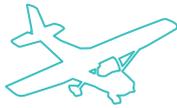
Marine



Land



Aviation



Coordination +  
Support



# CONTENTS

CHAIR'S REPORT	1
WHO WE ARE	2
WHAT WE DO	3
WHAT WE ACHIEVE	4
WHAT IT COSTS	5
WHERE WE DO IT	6
WHAT WE USE	8
OUR STRATEGY	9
A NEW WAY AHEAD	10
SAR VOLUNTEERS	14
TRAINING	16
SAR EXERCISES	18
CELEBRATING SUCCESS	20
SUPPORTING WELLBEING IN OUR PEOPLE	24
IMPORTANCE OF PREVENTION	25
SAR IN THE WIDER REGION	26
SECRETARIAT'S REPORT	27
GOVERNANCE	28
OUR SECTOR	29

# CHAIR'S REPORT



**Imagine a cold winter's evening – the wind is howling and the rain is streaming down the windows. You've just stoked up the fire, the table is set and you're about to sit down for a family meal when your phone rings. It's the local search and rescue coordinator. A solo trapper has not emerged from the bush and it's been hours since he was expected to return. The Police are pulling together an Incident Management Team and your specialist skills as an experienced SAR volunteer are needed. Now.**

It takes a special kind of person to voluntarily surrender the comforts of home to respond to distress calls like these. Yet New Zealand has one of the highest rates of volunteer search and rescue involvement in the world. LandSAR, Surf Life Saving, Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (AREC) and Coastguard all rely heavily on volunteer commitment as do many other search and rescue organisations throughout the country.

The following pages will not only give you an appreciation of the size and complexity of this sector but also demonstrate the immense value we place on the large number of people involved.

Our frontline SAR people sacrifice time with friends and family, often in the worst weather, to search for complete strangers who find themselves in dangerous predicaments. They also spend a huge amount of time training, so that when that call for help arrives, they know exactly what to do and have the residual fitness to do it. And let's not forget the host of dedicated back-office SAR people whose support and organisational skills make this work possible.

This year, the Council engaged Volunteering New Zealand to take stock of these incredible people, undeniably our most valuable resource. The study confirmed that we have one of the highest rates of volunteer involvement in search and rescue worldwide. We're weaving the findings into our strategic processes in our step by step approach to continuous improvement. You can read more about our Volunteer Study on page 16.

In the context of better supporting our volunteer base, one of the key pieces of work this year has been the development

of New Zealand's first all-encompassing set of Search and Rescue Guidelines. These are a new resource for the sector, providing a single point of reference and guidance for conducting search and rescue operations in New Zealand. After an initial bedding-down phase, we expect the Guidelines will help facilitate an integrated approach to SAR operational practice.

As I write this piece, the news media is presenting some pretty harrowing statistics on the state of our country's mental health. The Council is very aware of the heightened exposure our people have to traumatic events – not only undesirable outcomes, but the nature of a search along with tasking pressures and situational urgency can have a big impact on mental health. During the year we commissioned two separate pieces of work to offer more support in this area – a resource on post-traumatic stress, including where and when to seek help, together with guidance on fatigue management. The wellbeing of SAR people is essential to ensure they are in the best position and health to help others.

So please take a moment to truly appreciate the commitment of search and rescue people as you flick through this report. We are an intrepid nation – but at times, when we have possibly been a little too adventurous, we can all take comfort from the fact that these wonderful people have our backs.

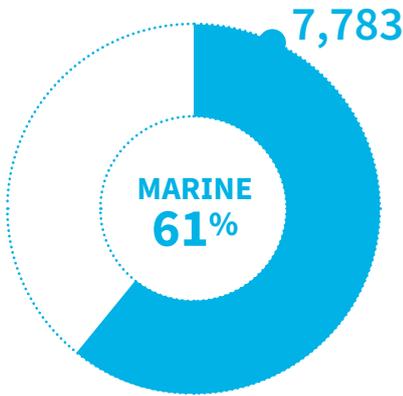
I am proud to be involved with this sector and hope you will enjoy reading more about it.

Peter Mersi  
Chair  
NZSAR Council

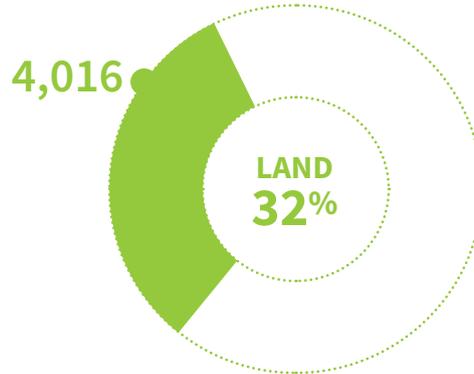
# WHO WE ARE

People in the NZ SAR sector

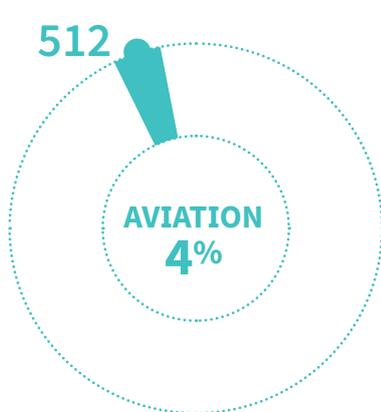
12,686 people are involved in the New Zealand SAR sector



Coastguard NZ  
Surf Life Saving NZ  
Dunedin Marine SAR



Amateur Radio Emergency Communications,  
Antarctica NZ, Department of Conservation,  
LandSAR: Alpine Cliff Rescue, Cave SAR,  
SAR Dogs, Tracking



Coastguard Air Patrol, NZ Defence Force,  
Emergency Medical Service Helicopters



Antarctica Unit Incident Command,  
Maritime Operations Centre  
NZ Police, RCCNZ,  
Organisation Support, Training

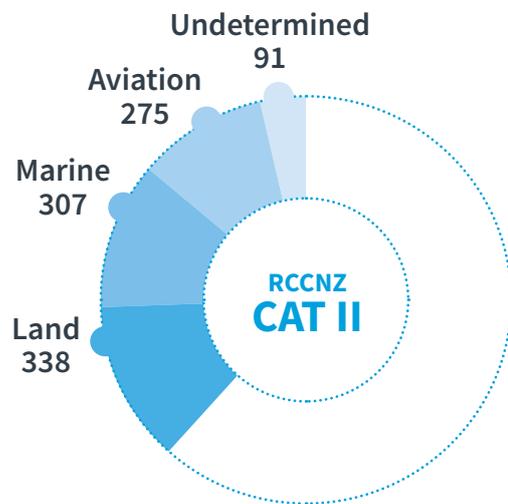
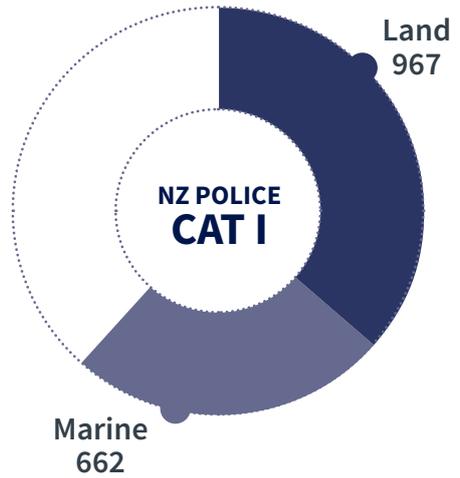
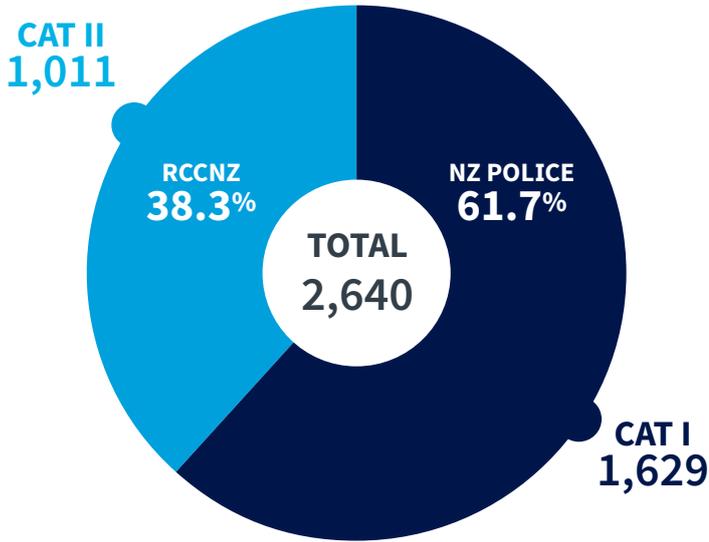
**VOLUNTEERS** make up 95% of the people providing operational SAR response.



# WHAT WE DO

## SAR incidents in 2018-19

Category I and II search and rescue operations 2018-19



### COORDINATING AUTHORITIES

The two coordinating authorities responsible for search and rescue operations throughout New Zealand are the New Zealand Police Category I and Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) Category II.

3% paid full time      2% paid part time



*New Zealand has one of the highest rates of volunteer SAR involvement in the world.*



# WHAT WE ACHIEVE

1,823 people were at risk during 2018-19



562 million dollars in social costs was averted by saving 144 lives.  
Benefit cost ratio 20:1

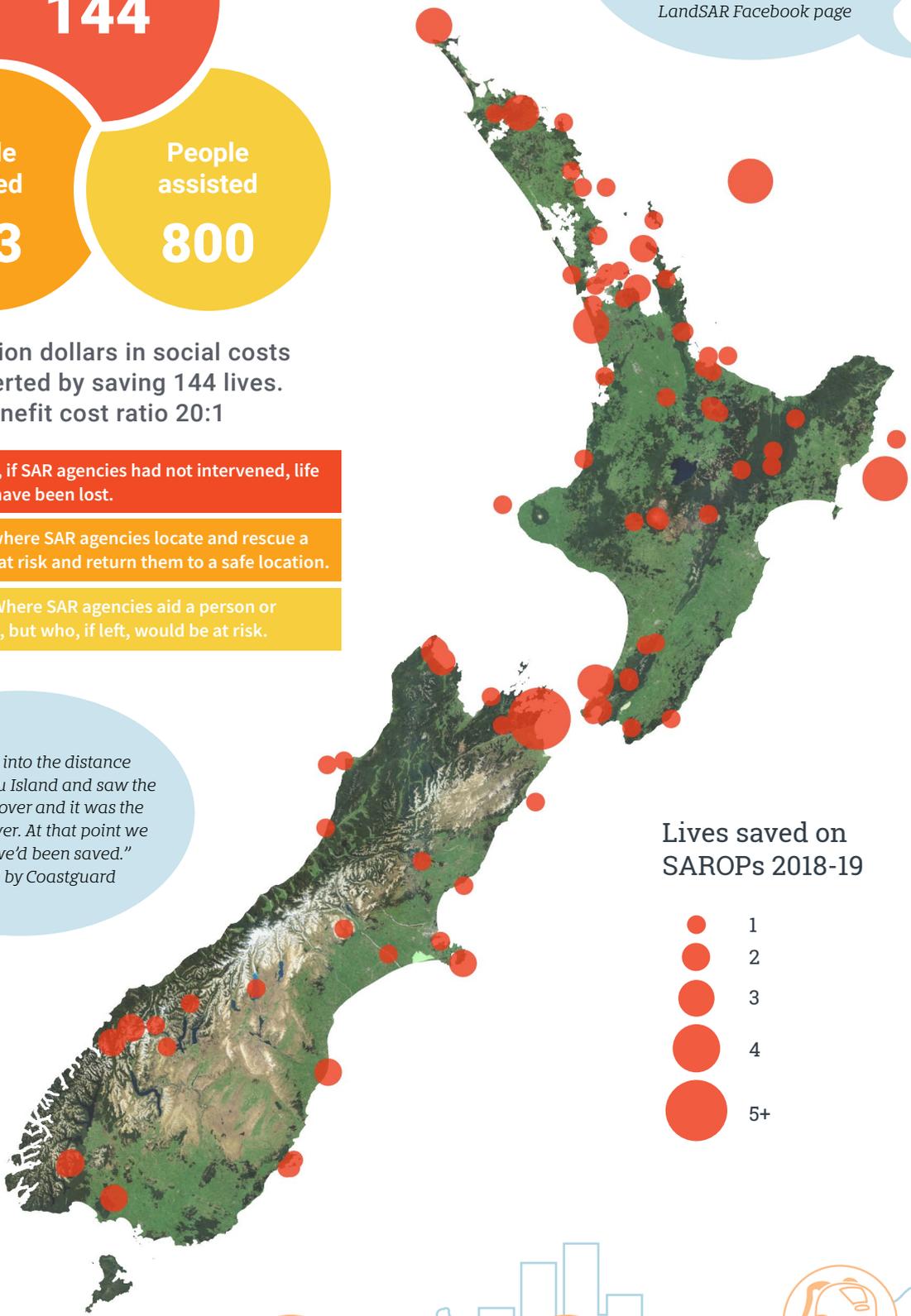
Life saved: where, if SAR agencies had not intervened, life would definitely have been lost.

Person rescued: where SAR agencies locate and rescue a person or people at risk and return them to a safe location.

Person assisted: Where SAR agencies aid a person or people at low risk, but who, if left, would be at risk.

*"I take my hat off to you all for the recovery of those lost, found and sought. The beloved mountains of NZ would be a lot more perilous if it were not for the voluntary efforts of our Search & Rescue teams." – LandSAR Facebook page*

*"We looked into the distance towards Kawau Island and saw the boat coming over and it was the best feeling ever. At that point we knew that we'd been saved."  
– rescued by Coastguard*

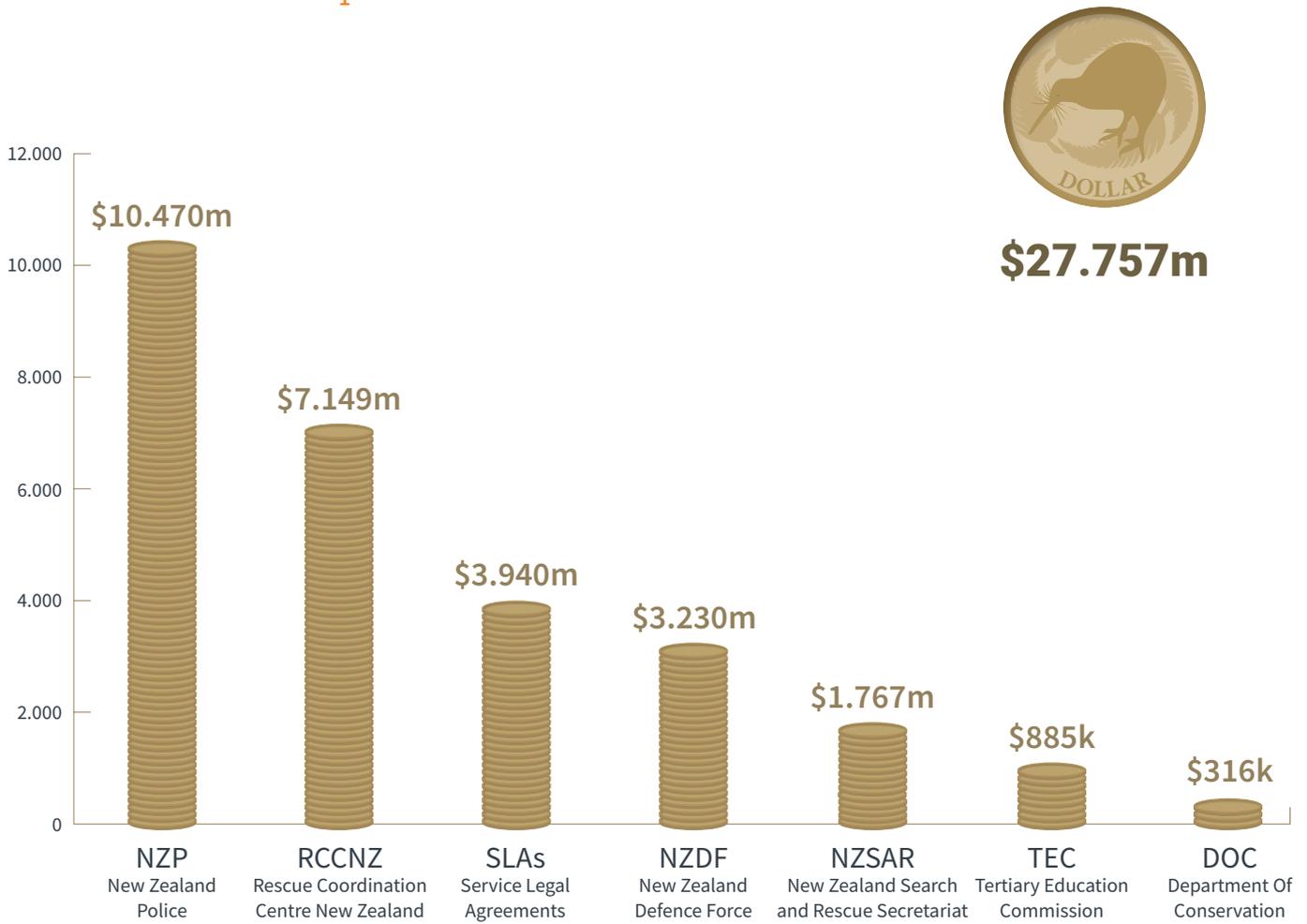


Lives saved on SAROPs 2018-19



# WHAT IT COSTS

Government expenditure on SAR 2018-19



NZSAR estimates that New Zealand averted \$562 million in social costs as a result of the 144 lives that were saved. The social cost of a premature fatality is measured using the Ministry of Transport’s Value of Statistical Life formula. It includes intangible costs such as emotional costs to family and friends. The intangible benefit-to-cost ratio is estimated to be approximately 20:1 and can in part be attributed to the continual financial efficiency and operational effectiveness of the sector.

Fuel excise duties paid by recreational boat users funded the NZSAR Secretariat, the five Service Level Agreements and some elements of the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand’s (RCCNZ) activities.

The total cost of SAR to the Government varies year on year, as operational costs change according to the number, length and type of SAR operations. Significant overhead and capital costs are not fully represented, as it is difficult for some organisations to capture this information. The SAR system responded to a total of 226 fatalities during the year.

*“We can always say we’re busy, in our own lives, but if we all say that, then none of those organisations we want will be there for us when we need them.” – Cam Burrow, St Clair Surf Life Saving Club*



# WHERE WE DO IT

## New Zealand Cat I and II SAROPs 2018-19

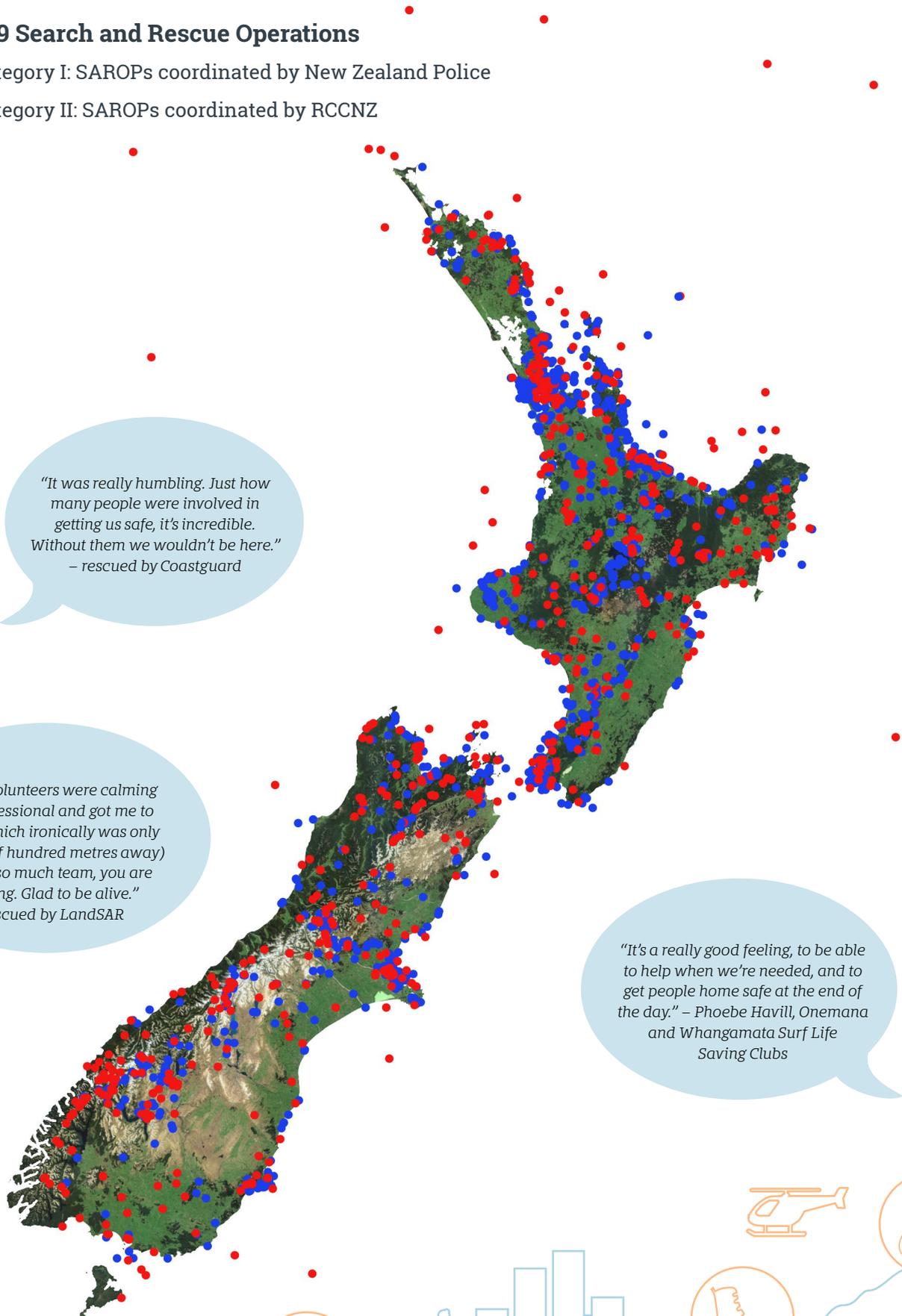
### 2018-19 Search and Rescue Operations

- Category I: SAROPs coordinated by New Zealand Police
- Category II: SAROPs coordinated by RCCNZ

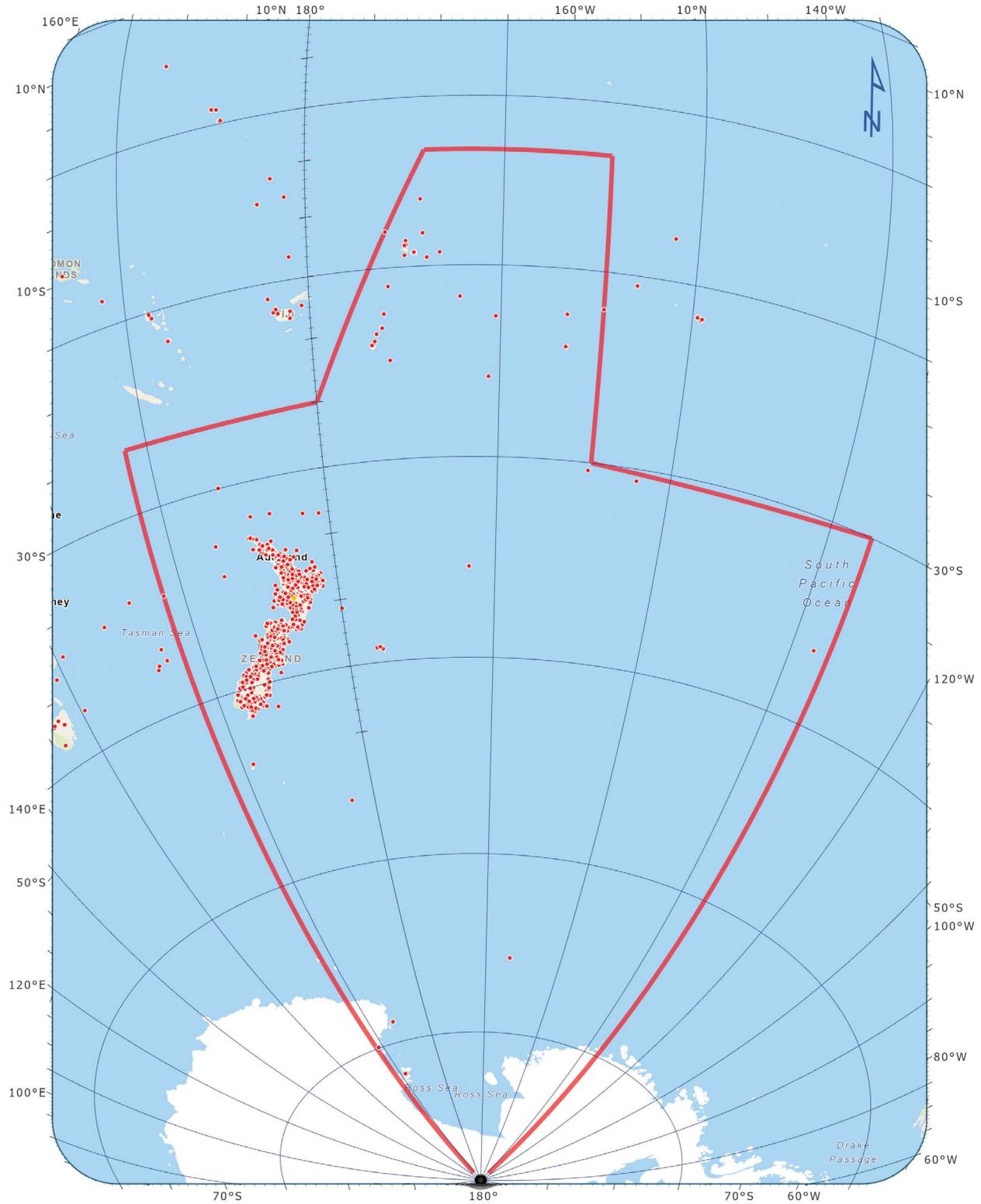
*"It was really humbling. Just how many people were involved in getting us safe, it's incredible. Without them we wouldn't be here."  
– rescued by Coastguard*

*"These volunteers were calming and professional and got me to safety (which ironically was only a couple of hundred metres away) Thanks so much team, you are amazing. Glad to be alive."  
– rescued by LANDSAR*

*"It's a really good feeling, to be able to help when we're needed, and to get people home safe at the end of the day."  
– Phoebe Havill, Onemana and Whangamata Surf Life Saving Clubs*



# NZ's Search and Rescue Region



● SAR Incident      — NZ's search and rescue region



# WHAT WE USE

Antarctica Scott Base



Auckland & Wellington International Airports



Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust



Coastguard New Zealand Units



LandSAR New Zealand Groups



New Zealand Defence Force



Milford Emergency Response Team



New Zealand Police



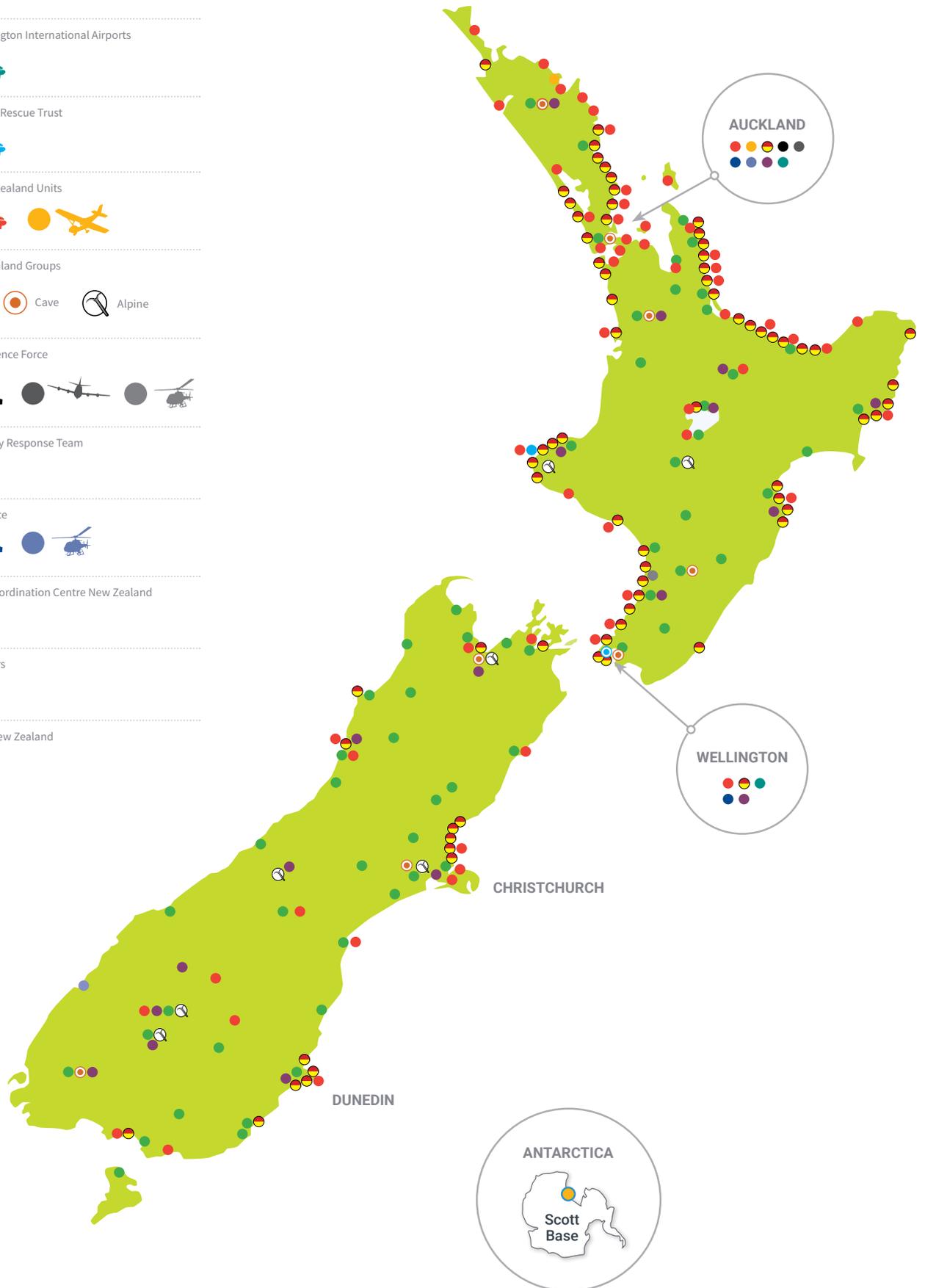
RCCNZ Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand



Rescue Helicopters



Surf Life Saving New Zealand



# OUR STRATEGY

## OUTCOME

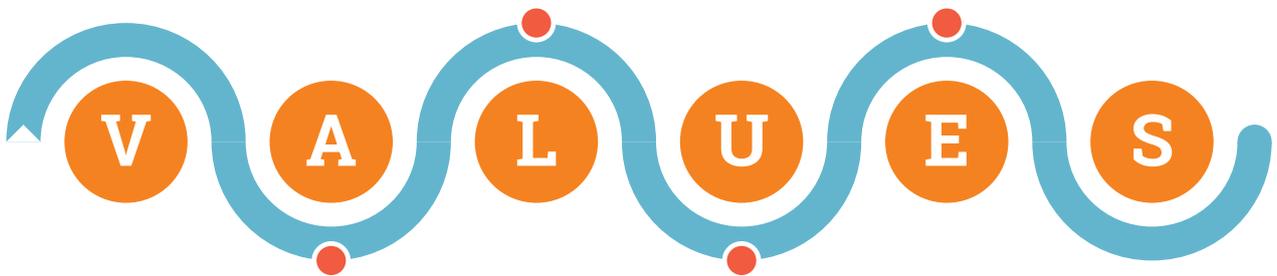
NZSAR will ensure New Zealand has effective search and rescue services for people in distress throughout New Zealand’s search and rescue region in order to save lives.

## VISION

A cohesive community of capable people in sustainable organisations, finding and rescuing people in distress, operating collaboratively within a robust SAR system.

have a strong **community service ethic**

**communicate and engage openly and effectively**



**collaborate and cooperate between individuals, teams and organisations**

**respect individuals, teams and organisations**



### A robust and integrated SAR system

We seek a collective, cross sector culture of being “one SAR body” within an integrated SAR sector. Our policies, processes, procedures and documentation will be coherent, aligned and support effective, efficient and safe SAR practice. We will undertake SAR activity cooperatively and learn from our experiences. We will continue to improve our understanding of the SAR Sector, our performance, our people, our operations and external influences so that we can improve our services, strengthen our resilience and mitigate our risks. We will also promote and support SAR innovations and showcase good practice.



### Efficient and sustainable SAR organisations

We seek high performing, efficient and sustainable SAR organisations with adequate, secure funding. Our capabilities will be fit-for-purpose, appropriately located and adequate to address known SAR needs. We will make affordable, evidence based investment decisions supported by good quality information. We will adapt our organisations and arrangements in response to changes in our environment and ensure we continue to deliver effective SAR services throughout the NZSRR.



### Capable SAR people

We seek to maximise the potential of our SAR people. We will work to ensure our people have access to appropriate training and ensure we conduct SAR activities safely. We will collectively coordinate our standards, training, exercises and documentation. Knowledge will be shared without restriction and we will learn from each other. We will also recognise and celebrate the dedication, courage and commitment of our people.



### SAR Prevention

We seek an informed, responsible, adequately equipped and appropriately skilled public who are able to either avoid distress situations or survive them should they occur. A large number of organisations have a role to play with SAR prevention. Collectively, we will enhance personal responsibility through information, education, regulation, investigation and enforcement. We will collaborate with, inform, and contribute to partner organisations and when required, enable, coordinate or lead public focussed SAR preventative strategies and actions in order to reduce the number and/or the severity of SAR incidents within the NZSRR.

## A NEW WAY AHEAD

# SARdonyx

JOINT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

The launch of SARdonyx on 6 May 2019 has delivered a central, joint data collection and intelligence system for the search and rescue sector in New Zealand.

SARdonyx is the collaboration between four different organisations – New Zealand Search and Rescue, New Zealand Police, Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) and LandSAR. It replaces the post-incident data capturing systems used by NZ Police and RCCNZ, the two coordinating SAR authorities. Developed over a two-year period, this single repository is based on an agreed data standard, which ensures all information is captured in the same way when search and rescue operations are completed.

### Robust analysis

The data entered into SARdonyx will be used for statistical reporting and analysis of incidents to help provide more effective search and rescue capabilities in future. As more and more data is collected over time, the sector will begin to benefit from the sophisticated reporting functions on offer, including the ability to tailor analytics according to the information needs of each organisation or group. For example, by changing selection criteria in a SAR Outcomes report, it is possible to be very specific about location, resources used and dates. This information can be exported to preset reports with a click of a button.

When it comes to researching our target audience for the prevention of search and rescue incidents, SARdonyx will become a powerful tool. The analysis of information about rescued persons, such as nationality, age and location of incidents, will inform NZSAR's prevention work to the extent that we know what safety messages to communicate and to whom.

Longer term it is envisaged that SARdonyx will be able to identify changing patterns in social activities that lead to SAR incidents, and demographics that may have an impact on SAR needs and resources.

### Data capture

SARdonyx data entry screens are intuitive, eliminating the need to navigate through a series of prompts that are not relevant to the user. SARdonyx is a smart tool that filters the information it requests, based on the answers the user has given previously. This is a useful function for users to complete their reports in a time efficient manner.

The system validates the data as each field is completed and has a variety of built-in help text, making it easy to use.

### Data migration

Data from SAR incidents since 2010/11 has been migrated into SARdonyx – however, this is limited to the data fields that map directly to the new common data standard. NZSAR maintains a separate data store of all historic SAR data dating back to the 2010/11 financial year so that it can be used for analysis if required.

### Training

Earlier this year, Beca provided SARdonyx training for a number of people from NZSAR, NZ Police, RCCNZ and LandSAR before the system went live. These sessions were supplemented by internal staff training within each organisation.

For a snapshot of SARdonyx, watch the short training videos available on our website:

[www.nzsar.govt.nz/Knowledge-Training/START/SARdonyx](http://www.nzsar.govt.nz/Knowledge-Training/START/SARdonyx)

## Documented guidelines

**New Zealand's Search and Rescue Guidelines provide the SAR sector with a single point of reference for conducting search and rescue operations.**

Developed over the last two years, this new online resource sets out broad criteria and guiding principles for search and rescue, rather than detailed operational procedure. The guidelines supplement our existing strategic documents – the NZSAR Strategic Plan and the Operational Framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Content for the guidelines was drawn from a range of existing search and rescue documents, with additional input from subject matter experts within New Zealand's SAR sector. They are consistent with the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual and the New Zealand Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS). Key sections are based on the five stages of a search and rescue operation: awareness; initial action; planning; operations; and conclusion.

Each section is written in plain, easy to follow English – using expanding text and hyperlinks to minimise scrolling.



They are designed for ease of access from a computer, tablet or smartphone – making them a handy go-to from the control room or out in the field.

In practice, we expect the guidelines may serve as prompts during an operation. For example, an Incident Controller who is considering suspending an operation could refer to the relevant section to check that all the steps are covered.

Further material and references will be added as they are imbedded into SAR operational practice. The Guidelines, Forms and Templates Management Group will consider updates and additions to the guidelines to ensure they remain relevant to the SAR sector.

**NZ's SAR Guidelines are available on the NZSAR website: [www.nzsar-resources.govt.nz/guidelines](http://www.nzsar-resources.govt.nz/guidelines)**



# Marine Search – Category I Police

Example of the SAR process



AWARENESS

INITIAL ACTION



# Aviation Search – Category II RCCNZ

Example of the SAR process

Accident  
Investigation Team



Search Aircraft



Coastguard



Rescue

**SARdonyx**

JOINT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

Post Operation  
Report

Search Units  
Return

PLANNING



OPERATION



CONCLUSION



Officer (SARO)  
Rescue



Search and Rescue  
Helicopter



Rescue

Search Units  
Return

Post Operation  
Report

**SARdonyx**

JOINT SEARCH AND RESCUE OPERATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

# SAR VOLUNTEERS

## Learning more about our volunteers

**The Volunteer Study for NZSAR 2019, commissioned by New Zealand Search and Rescue and carried out by Volunteering New Zealand, looks at the numbers, gender, age and ethnicity of our volunteers – and identifies opportunities to better support and resource them. With the last study of its kind carried out in 2010, we needed a fresh understanding of the makeup of the sector to inform our strategic processes – particularly goals 2 and 3 of the NZSAR Strategy: Efficient and sustainable SAR organisations and Capable SAR people (see page 11 for more).**

The study captured feedback from volunteers involved in Coastguard NZ (with a 32% response rate), Land Search and Rescue NZ (17%), Surf Lifesaving NZ (17%) and Amateur Radio Emergency Communications (20%).

Over 12,600 people are involved in search and rescue (SAR) in NZ; and more than 95% are volunteers. This is one of the highest rates of volunteer SAR involvement in the world. Our volunteers tend to be men (76%), NZ European and in late middle-age or older. The exception to this trend is Surf Lifesaving NZ, which has a majority of volunteers under the age of 20 and the highest proportion of female volunteers (43%) in the sector.

This demographic composition hasn't changed much for search and rescue over the last eight years, which is at odds with the demographic changes in New Zealand's population over the same period. According to Volunteering NZ, workforce capacity and succession risks are heightened by the age profile of volunteers within LandSAR, Coastguard NZ and AREC (Amateur Radio Emergency Communications). There was a modest 4% increase in female SAR volunteers since the 2010 study, prompting Volunteering NZ to suggest the sector has an opportunity to be more welcoming to women and provide meaningful, inclusive roles. It was evident too that we needed to engage better with Māori and Pacific populations, as well as recent and second-generation migrants.

The NZSAR Council is addressing this imbalance by taking on board the report's recommendations around diversity and strategic workforce planning.

*“Being part of an organisation that not only values search and rescue but volunteer safety, training, support, crew bonding between all unit members, and being part of one massive family”*

*(Volunteer comment regarding strengths of the SAR sector, Volunteer Study for NZSAR 2019)*

The study found an increase in collaboration across the sector since 2010, with many examples of agencies working together to ensure the safety of their communities. Among these examples were Coastguard, Surf Lifesaving NZ and the Maritime Operations Centre combining forces to develop a shared national digital communications platform; and Coastguard representatives sitting on the committee of LandSAR Wanaka.

Volunteering NZ found that the ethos of voluntary service was highly visible throughout the SAR sector. Motivations to volunteer are primarily based on wanting to do the right thing.

Some additional challenges for NZSAR that emerged from the study included:

- a general need for further investment to support volunteer workforces
- a need to find meaningful opportunities for volunteers in shorter-term roles while maintaining a core of volunteers prepared to make a longer-term commitment.

A copy of the Volunteer Study for NZSAR 2019, is available on the New Zealand Search and Rescue website.



## Volunteer snapshots

### Meet Liz Maloney, Coastguard Wellington



Shaun's colleagues at Coastguard took Liz and her children out on the water as a special tribute to their former crewman.

**Liz has a special relationship with Coastguard that extends well past her three-years as Treasurer of the Wellington unit.**

Her late husband Shaun was a valued volunteer crew member for many years – and very passionate about it too.

“Shaun’s love of the water and being around other people who had the same passion meant he always came home from his duty days in a happy mood. He was a person who liked to help others and Coastguard allowed him to do that, while doing something he loved. He also appreciated the opportunity to receive all the training to be a responsible boatie.”

When Shaun suddenly passed away four years ago, Liz decided to keep the family’s connection with Coastguard going.

“I went back to university to study and while I was starting out I saw that Coastguard Wellington was looking for a Treasurer. I knew what a great group of people they were, so thought to myself – why not? It was such a good opportunity to honour Shaun’s memory and for the kids to still have that link to their Dad.”

Liz spends about 10 to 20 hours a month “doing the books” for Wellington Coastguard, and a little more at the end of each financial year.

“I’ve learned a lot from this role; and it’s something I can do when it suits me. It also complements my study really well,” says Liz, who has nearly finished her Bachelor of Commerce at Victoria University – a double major in accounting and information systems.

“I like what Coastguard does and what it stands for. It is always rewarding to be able to give back in some way.”

### Meet Seanoa Isaac, LandSAR Wairarapa



Fully kitted out and ready to go.

Photo courtesy of  
Emma Brown,  
Wairarapa Times-Age

**Greytown Dad and businessman Seanoa Isaac still considers himself “one of the juniors” at Wairarapa LandSAR, where he has volunteered for the last two and a half years.**

Seanoa, age 40, has participated in about 10 search and rescue operations, mostly in the Tararua ranges, where his outdoor skills have been thoroughly put to the test.

It was Seanoa’s experience serving with the New Zealand Defence Force and his passion for mountain running that first introduced him to LandSAR. While competing in the Tararua Mountain Race, he saw many LandSAR volunteers stationed at critical points along the ridge, all of whom were giving up their time for the enjoyment and safety of others. Seanoa thought: “this sounds a bit like me” and in January 2017, he committed to joining Wairarapa LandSAR. He hasn’t looked back since.

Seanoa remembers his first callout was an eye opener. “It was a big experience going into the SAR base for the first time and seeing how things were run,” he says. “I was part of a six-man team: one of three volunteers, one police dog handler and two paramedics. We set out in pretty difficult conditions, up to Dundas Ridge in the Northern Tararuas to search for an elderly trumper. He was part way through a multi-day hike and had simply run out of steam, so set off his PLB (Personal Locator Beacon). We found him within 24 hours, huddled in a wet sleeping bag and mildly hypothermic. The bad weather had set in and we couldn’t get a chopper up. So we walked him out.”

Seanoa has enjoyed giving back to the community through LandSAR and also broadening his own experience by regularly attending SAR skills training days.

“I’m lucky,” he says. “When the callouts come, there’s often pressure on my wife to find childcare at the last minute for our two kids. But she’s pretty understanding. The SAR base is good at keeping partners informed of expected return times.”

# TRAINING

## Skills acquisition training

A change in funding arrangements for search and rescue training came into effect in April this year, replacing the former Adult Community Education funding. Government funding is now provided directly to NZSAR to purchase the delivery of training courses for SAR personnel nationwide.

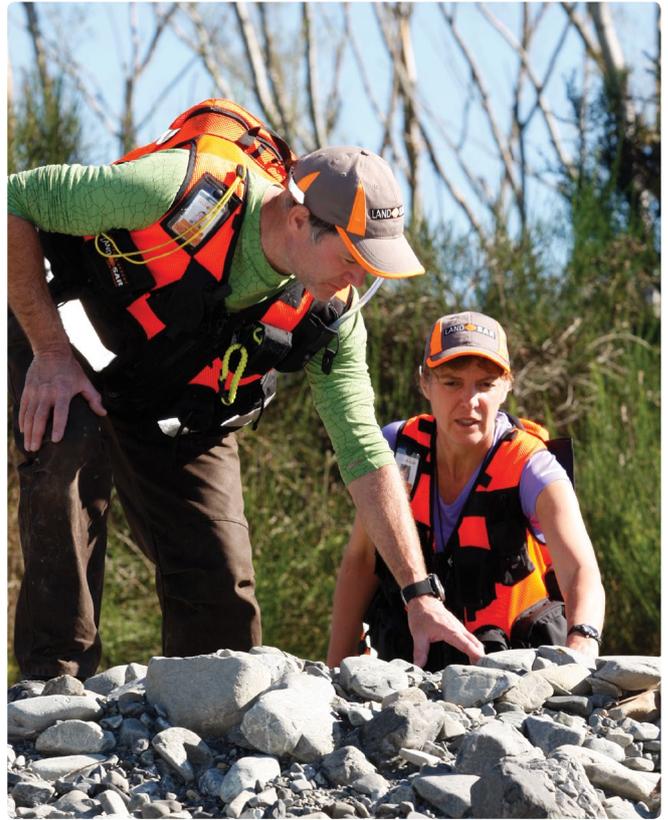
Contracts are in place with two providers:

- New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (LandSAR) – for the delivery of courses aimed primarily at LandSAR members and LandSAR competencies
- Tai Poutini Polytechnic – for the delivery of multi-agency and SAR management courses.

Ensuring our people continue to have access to fees-free training is essential to operating safely and effectively together.

Courses are delivered regionally around the country to meet training demand.

In the 2018 calendar year, 109 courses were delivered to approximately 1,408 participants. These students were independently surveyed, with the following results.



## Course content, skills and competencies

We received very positive feedback from participants on the relevance and appropriateness of course skills and competencies, and the applicability of course content to SAR activity.

95% agreed the last course taught them skills very relevant to the tasks they do for SAR.

90% agreed they feel confident they can now use those skills in an operation.

The skills taught  
(rated 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree')

*The course taught me skills very relevant to the tasks I do for SAR.*



*I feel confident I can now use those skills in an operation.*



■ SAR Land Training (54 people)   ■ SAR Multiagency Training (85 people)   ■ Total (239 people)



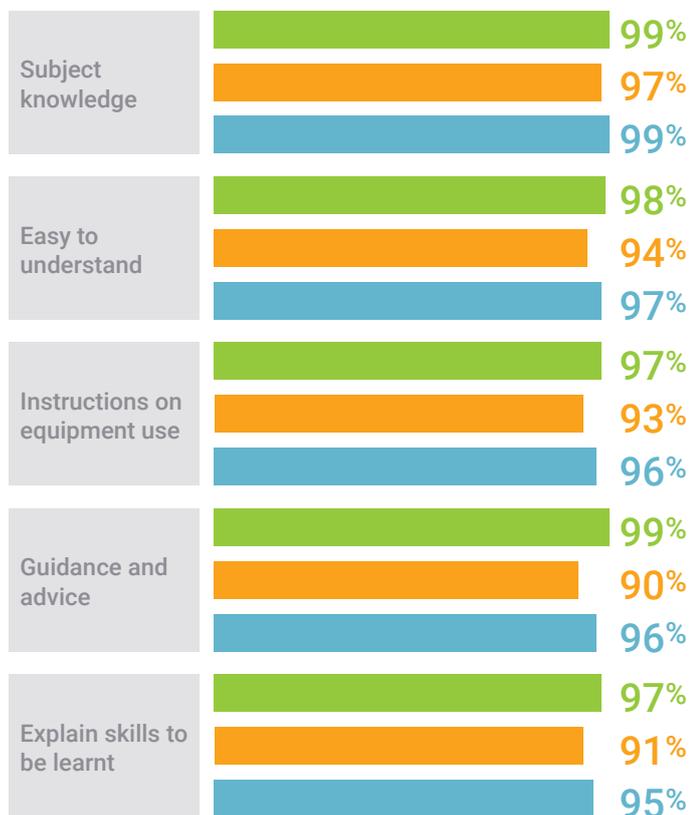
## Quality of tuition

Feedback on course tutors was consistently outstanding. The ratings ranged from 95% positive for explaining skills to be learnt to 99% for tutors' subject knowledge.

*The whole approach of the tutors is great, and the calibre of their knowledge is just amazing.*

*Knowing we perform a vital role in the community, working as a team with the other LandSAR members and working alongside the SAR Police.*

**Tutors**  
(rated 'Excellent' or Good')



## The best thing about SAR training

When asked to identify the best thing about training in search and rescue, students selected:

- Learning from experienced tutors **85%**
- Learning new skills **83%**
- Being ready to assist in operations **79%**
- Working as a team **74%**
- Gaining confidence **63%**

*The enjoyment of meeting up with people from different LandSAR groups for various training courses and swapping stories from each other's regions, which boosts our enthusiasm for what we stand for.*

■ SAR Land Training (155 people)   ■ SAR Multiagency Training (85 people)   ■ Total (240 people)

# SAR EXERCISES



Each Police District in New Zealand is required to conduct one Land and one Marine Search and Rescue Exercise annually. These exercises (known as SAREXs), are important multi-agency training activities. They enable people to meet, plan, practice, review and evaluate without the tension of a live search and rescue operation.

This year, NZSAR provided financial support to 15 SAREXs, including three significant SAREXs – a North Island avalanche exercise, a South Island avalanche exercise and a national cave exercise (featured below). Overall support amounted to over \$100,000.

The following two reports provide good examples of the scale of these exercises and the benefits of carrying them out.

## Deep cave rescue

**New Zealand's largest ever cave search and rescue training exercise (SAREX) took place from 26 February – 3 March 2019 in the Ellis Basin cave system, Nelson.**

The event attracted over 100 cavers from New Zealand and Australia, as well as Police and LandSAR teams. It was the ninth event of its kind, run this time with financial support from New Zealand Search and Rescue. These exercises are run every three years to test cave rescue capability.

### The scenario

Police were notified of a caver, trapped approximately 300 metres deep, who had suffered multiple injuries after a fall. A full-scale cave search and rescue was launched, with cave teams tasked to locate the injured man, stabilise and safely transport him in a stretcher to the surface.

### Preparation

An advance team pre-rigged the search area in the cave and fixed ropes, to simulate those left by the missing party. This set the scene for a small group of experienced cavers to weave their way down eight pitches underground, where they waited to be rescued.

### Response

Sergeant Malcolm York, head of Tasman Police Search and Rescue and Incident Controller for the SAREX said the cavers arrived at different times from different regions.

“Reid Helicopters flew everyone up to the area – cave rescuers, surface support personnel and tonnes of gear. This in itself was a logistical challenge, so ensuring we had the right people as air controllers was crucial.”

Before the flying in was completed, a ‘hasty’ team was deployed into the cave to conduct an initial search. The missing party was found around four hours later and a medical team dispatched to assist. What followed was approximately 48 hours of highly skilled team work, taken in shifts, to evacuate the patient and all caving personnel without incident.

Cave Search and Rescue Adviser John Patterson said the exercise provided all parties with the opportunity to collaboratively test their knowledge, skills and equipment. For example, the latest communication technology – the cave-link radio communication system (which transmits text messages through rock) – was tested at depth, with successful results.

“Once the search team had located the injured caver, they were able to use the radio’s text system to send very precise

information about his location, the nature of his injuries and the type of assistance required. These messages were transmitted up to the entrance team within 4 hours of entering the cave.”

Communication using a more traditional Michie phone took about 12 hours longer.

Cave rescue teams were also able to trial new, lightweight hauling techniques using 10mm ropes instead of the 11mm used in previous years.

The patient emerged at about 6pm on Saturday 2 March, approximately 6 hours ahead of the expected schedule. Helicopters arrived the following day to transport the cavers back to civilisation.

## Synchrony in the south

**On 17 November 2018, about 90 search and rescue personnel took part in a training exercise at Makarora, a small community at the tip of Lake Wanaka. The scenario they faced required land and marine SAR agencies to work closely together – some for the first time – in a remote area with limited communications.**

### Setting the scene

At 7am that morning, a concerned father called Police after spotting an empty river kayak in Lake Wanaka. His son was among a party of five white-water kayakers who had been dropped into the upper Wilkin River the previous day. Their intention was to paddle down the river and camp at Boundary Creek, where they had arranged to be picked up. But when the father arrived at the rendezvous point at 6.30am, the kayakers were nowhere to be seen.

### Response

Police were quick to deploy Wanaka Lakes Coastguard, who found two empty kayaks in the lake and one survivor at Craigieburn Hut. Two separate Incident Management Teams (IMTs) were established – one at Makarora School and a second at the Coastguard base in Wanaka to co-ordinate the on-lake response.

Although many of the IMT members had not worked together before, evaluators said they gelled quickly. Less experienced members were mentored by seasoned SAR managers, allowing knowledge to be shared in a controlled environment.

Information from the initial lake search was communicated to the Makarora IMT via phone and Dropbox, which made it possible to plan the land phase of the operation.



By 11.30am, all LandSAR teams were deployed by a local jet boat company up the river, followed closely behind by a specialised river rescue team. The local knowledge of these teams in an area with a history of SAR incidents saw them competently find two of the missing men and eventually led to the retrieval of a ‘body’ from the river.

Meanwhile, two further searches of the lake took place, with assistance from Lake Hawea Marine when the Coastguard vessel was called away. Another ‘body’ was recovered from the lake.

Constable Philip Vink of Wanaka Police, who planned the exercise, says he was pleased with the way it played out. “We wanted to trigger a co-ordinated inter-agency response in a realistic setting,” he said. “It was a good opportunity for the IMTs and the field teams to further develop their skills and while it did highlight some improvements we can make to future operations, overall everyone worked well together.”

# CELEBRATING SUCCESS

The annual New Zealand Search and Rescue Awards, held at Parliament on 1 May, honoured many humble kiwis for their significant contributions to search and rescue.

Minister of Transport, Hon Phil Twyford, acknowledged the recipients' dedication to helping others, their focus on safety and their willingness to place the wellbeing of others above their own.

*"There is also an outstanding display of teamwork. From operating the radio and coordinating the response, to piloting and crewing the rescue vessel, every member has a vital role to play," he said.*

*"The work you do can be measured in the most important currencies - as lives saved, injuries prevented, and families reunited."*

## Gold Award – operational activity

Whanganui Surf Life Saving Club

For the rescue of two stranded swimmers from Kai Iwi Beach, Whanganui on 18 February 2018.



It was midday on 18 February when two swimmers – a father and his teenage daughter – were reported missing from Kai Iwi Beach. It was feared they had been swept out to sea. Within minutes, the first surf life saving crew (Laura O’Keeffe and Alex Forlong) were on the water in an Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB).

The swimmers were located quickly – on a very slippery ledge, 3 metres up Mowhanau cliffs, trying to escape punishing waves. Laura manoeuvred the IRB close enough for Alex to attempt to swim to the pair. But the storm surf forced her against the rocks and she injured her hand. Laura took Alex back to shore and picked up lifeguards Clarissa Nowak and Sophie Couper.

Once Laura had carefully positioned the IRB, Clarissa swam between huge swells and clambered up to reach the pair. She administered first aid on the girl, who she suspected had a fractured ankle. Clarissa was joined by senior lifeguard Phil Gilmore. Between them, they manoeuvred the girl down the cliffs, and safely transferred her to the IRB. Clarissa and Phil used the second IRB to rescue the father, who was unharmed.

## Gold Award – support activity

Blake McDavitt, Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation

For his service and commitment to search and rescue.



Blake McDavitt has a passion for the outdoors. He has devoted more than 23 years of volunteer work to Search and Rescue (SAR) services in New Zealand and further afield in Antarctica. Having joined Turangi Land Search and Rescue in 1994, Blake has taken on key leadership and advisory roles over the years. He is

currently the Training Officer for this group and a well-respected Team Leader and technical SAR specialist for Ruapehu Alpine Cliff Rescue.

Blake is frequently sought out as the “go-to guy” for specialist SAR knowledge. When LandSAR established an advisory group on best practice in the back country, Blake – in the company of experts in swift water rescue, alpine cliff rescue, cave and avalanche rescue – was unanimously voted to be its leader. One notable achievement of the group, under Blake’s guidance, was writing the Human Longline Guidelines, which were adopted nationally and endorsed by the Civil Aviation Authority.

In 2003 and again in 2006, Blake led the New Zealand Search and Rescue team based in Antarctica. Last year he was seconded back to Antarctica for a 3-month period.

Blake is also highly regarded by Whanganui Police, who say that he is always the first person they call for sound advice on all aspects of SAR, especially alpine cliff rescue.

## Certificates of Achievement – operational activity



LandSAR Methven  
Otago Rescue Helicopter  
South Canterbury Police SAR Squad

**For the rescue of an injured walker from Little Mt Peel/Huatekereke, on 3 June 2018.**

The Otago Rescue Helicopter was alerted to a situation where a woman had slipped and fractured her lower leg, approximately 1100 metres up a remote walking track. Despite deteriorating winter conditions, pilot Clayton Girven was able to offload paramedic Craig Didham and three members of a Police search and rescue team within 500 metres of the injured tramp.

Craig stabilised the tramp's leg and, with the assistance of Police SAR, began the arduous task of stretcher-carrying her down the hill. LandSAR teams from Methven and Timaru headed up Little Mt Peel on foot to support the 4km journey. The 11-hour rescue concluded around midnight.



Coastguard Auckland  
**For the rescue of an injured yachtsman near Waiheke Island on 3 March 2018.**

While cleaning up below deck, a yachting accidentally connected two exposed wires, engulfing himself and his vessel in flames.

Two Coastguard rescue vessels battled choppy sea conditions to reach the badly damaged yacht. Coastguard volunteer Chris Griggs found the skipper in intense pain, with significant burns to his lower body. He had lost layers of skin and was suffering from hypothermia. Chris administered pain relief, enabling the man to climb out of his boat and onto the Coastguard vessel for evacuation. The patient's burns were wrapped, which minimised the damage to his body.

Coastguard transferred the skipper to the nearest landing point to meet with an ambulance and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.



LandSAR Wanaka  
Southern Lakes Helicopters  
Aspiring Helicopters  
Wanaka Police SAR squad  
Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team

**For the rescue of a climber from the Bonar Glacier, Mt Aspiring/Tititea, 31 July – 3 August 2018.**

A lone climber became lost in deteriorating weather on Bonar Glacier, Mount Aspiring/Tititea.

Sub-zero temperatures, strong wind, low cloud and high avalanche risk prevented the Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue (ACR) team from flying into the area. Over the next three days, multiple helicopter rescues were attempted but each time they were beaten back by the adverse conditions.

Finally, on 2 August, a break in the weather enabled two rescue helicopters to access the glacier, locate the climber and drop off four ACR team members to assist. The climber was dehydrated, exhausted and had slight frostbite. The ACR team provided warm clothing, food and drink and stayed overnight with him in the snow, ice and wind. An opportunity came the next day for a helicopter to make a snatch and grab rescue.



Phoebe Havill  
Callum Fulton  
Andrew Earl-Peacock  
Andrew Hodgson  
Whangamata Surf Life Saving Club

**For the rescue of three stranded kayakers from Whenuakura Island, Whangamata on 20 November 2018.**

The owner of a kayak company raised the alarm when three rental kayakers had been out for several hours and not returned. The Whangamata Callout Squad headed straight out to Whenuakura Island, a donut shaped island where water surges through a narrow entrance – popular with, yet dangerous for kayakers.

The swell was too large for the IRB's to enter the channel, so Phoebe Havill and Callum Fulton swam in with helmets, tube and fins. They negotiated submerged rocks and fought strong currents to reach and safely extract the trio: a mother and her two daughters.

## Certificates of Achievement – support activity



**Rodney Bracefield**  
Rescue Coordination  
Centre New Zealand

**For his service to search and rescue in New Zealand.**

Rodney Bracefield's involvement in search and rescue (SAR) spans 45 years. He has made a huge contribution to the development of information management tools that are critical to the success of SAR operations.

Rodney played a key part in restructuring the NRCC into the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) and has also project managed the new distress beacon database.

In 1988, Rodney became involved with the Cospas-Sarsat, the international satellite system for SAR in New Zealand. He helped implement the installation of the Low Earth Orbit ground station in 1991 and later, the Geostationary ground station. When Cospas-Sarsat began developing the Medium-altitude Earth Orbiting Satellite System, Rodney helped to plan two new ground stations in New Zealand and Australia.



**Adam Fraser**  
Surf Life Saving  
New Zealand – Taranaki

**For his service to Surf Life Saving and search and rescue.**

Adam Fraser has been heavily involved in the Taranaki Surf Life Saving Club since qualifying as a lifeguard 25 years ago. He is currently serving his seventh year as SAR Co-ordinator of the Club's emergency after-hours callout squad and also volunteers for the squad as a Duty Officer.

Adam's knowledge and passion for SAR were recognised by his appointment as Mentor, then Instructor at the National Lifeguard School. This is the highest qualification and level of lifeguard training in New Zealand. As well as spending many unlogged hours developing and training the callout squad, Adam also volunteers as a marine swimmer for the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter.



**Jo Norgrove**  
Coastguard Auckland

**For her service to Coastguard and search and rescue.**

Joanne Norgrove has volunteered for Coastguard since 2006. She is a Senior Master on all three of Coastguard Auckland's rescue vessels. Last year she clocked up a staggering 600 operational hours on the rescue vessels, in addition to teaching and assessing training modules around the Northern Region.

As a Regional Coastguard Instructor, Jo gives her time freely to train, assess and develop the crew at Coastguard Auckland – and members of the public too. Jo draws on her extensive knowledge of boating as a tutor for the 'Suddenly in Charge' course – a safety course designed for women who wish to have more knowledge and confidence on the family boat if something goes wrong.



**Coastguard New Zealand**

**For the Old4New Coastguard Lifejacket Upgrade campaign.**

**Pictured: Sue Tucker, Old4New Community Ambassador**

The Old4New Coastguard Lifejacket Upgrade campaign encourages boaties to trade-in their old, damaged or worn lifejackets for a discount on a brand new, fit-for-purpose lifejacket. The Old4New van travels the length of New Zealand, visiting boat ramps and communities to ensure that more boaties are given the opportunity to keep themselves safe on the water.

In the summer of 2017-18, the campaign saw over 3,500 lifejackets traded in across the country. Over 70% were discarded because they were obsolete or had unacceptable levels of damage. Over 300 lifejackets that fell into the "no longer fit" category were near new and fully compliant, so were sent to in-need communities across Auckland and the Pacific Islands.

## Special awards



Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat

**Pictured: Steven Lett, Chief Executive**

**For an important contribution to international search and rescue, and for ensuring the provision of the global Cospas-Sarsat distress system.**

Cospas-Sarsat is a satellite system that provides free alerts, with reliable location data, of people in distress anywhere on the globe. In 2018 alone, beacon alerts received via Cospas-Sarsat saved 74 lives and assisted 118 people in New Zealand.

The system is administered internationally by the Secretariat based in Canada. The work of the Secretariat ensures that the system continues to perform – having a significant impact on saving lives of the lost, missing and injured throughout the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region and worldwide. Their small team liaises with SAR and technical specialists from participating countries, composes reports, tests and approves new beacons, updates training materials and provides contributions to other international meetings and standard setting organisations.



Terry Blumhardt  
Sarah Cate  
Cliff Jones  
LandSAR Turangi

**For an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region – the rescue of two boys from the Tongariro Alpine Crossing on 19 October 2016.**

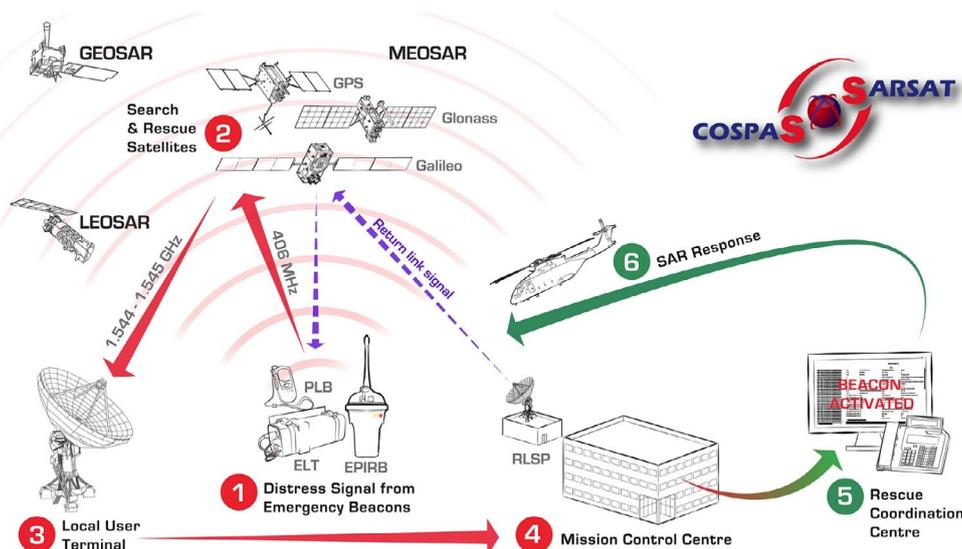
Two teenage boys dialled 111 when they found themselves on a sheer mountain face in strong winds, extreme cold and poor visibility.

Police contacted the mountain guides to assist, three of whom were on Tongariro, but on different sides. While Terry Blumhardt set out on his own from one direction, Sarah Cate and Cliff Jones climbed up to the south crater from the other.

Terry found the boys perched in a very high, precarious position. By digging a trench through the snow and ice, he got them down safely and used a Z sack to provide shelter. Both boys were showing signs of hypothermia. When Sarah and Cliff arrived, they put more clothing on the boys and got them to their feet. By continuously nudging their legs forward, they made slow progress down the mountain until they could evacuate by helicopter.

Award citations can be read in full at [www.nzsar.govt.nz/NZSAR-Awards](http://www.nzsar.govt.nz/NZSAR-Awards)

### Wire Frame



# SUPPORTING THE WELLBEING OF OUR PEOPLE

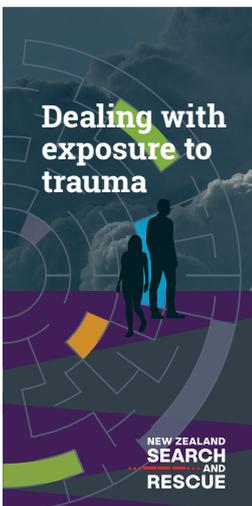
*“By looking after your mental wellbeing, you will be in the best position and health to help others.”*

*Dealing with exposure to trauma*

*Photographer Don Geddes*

The success of search and rescue operations hinges not only on the capability of those doing the searching and rescuing, but also their general wellbeing. NZSAR has funded two pieces of work this year aimed at helping our people to take care of their mental and physical health.

## Dealing with exposure to trauma



“In search and rescue activities, there can be an incorrect belief that SAR personnel have to be mentally strong and heroic and cannot be seen to be impacted physically or mentally by the search and rescue/recovery. The unique challenge of working in search and rescue can be difficult to talk about – and this can also make you isolated from family and friends and others.”

This is an excerpt from NZSAR’s new resource *Dealing with exposure to trauma*, which was produced to

help people recognise that their mental health may have been affected by exposure to trauma, and access support services if they wish.

Repeated exposure to traumatic events, emotionally charged search and rescue incidents, recovery operations, or working in hours outside the norm can all have an impact on mental health.

The resource looks at the reasons why it is important to seek help if you are exposed to trauma. It also suggests how search and rescue personnel can ensure they are best

prepared for traumatic events, outlines how to support a colleague in distress, and points readers to additional resources and organisations that may help.

A generic version of *Dealing with exposure to trauma*, is available on the NZSAR website, however content was also modified for our various search and rescue agencies to reflect the processes they have in place for trauma support.

## Fatigue guidance

An NZSAR fatigue management workshop held in October 2018 prompted the development of fatigue guidance for the search and rescue sector.

This guidance will address how best to manage fatigue in a search and rescue context. We expect it will be used as a tool for decision-makers when assembling search and rescue teams, i.e. should volunteers be involved in an incident at night when they may already be worn out from a long day at work? How do incident controllers detect fatigue and address it when most of us adopt the antipodean ‘she’ll be right’ attitude?

Content reflects some of the recommendations made by participants at the fatigue management workshop, including a strong preference that guidance should be simple, accessible and cover all levels within an organisation.

The fatigue guidance has been agreed by the Strategic Health & Safety Committee, and will be published by the end of the 2019 calendar year.

# IMPORTANCE OF SAR SAFETY MESSAGING

**SAR Prevention is one of NZSAR’s four strategic goals and as such is an important focus for search and rescue in New Zealand.**

New Zealand has a strong emphasis on self-responsibility in the outdoors. This makes it the ideal environment to demonstrate that if people prepare themselves well, they may not only prevent something going wrong, but avert more serious consequences if they do find themselves in trouble – achieving a better SAR outcome.

In 2018, NZSAR commissioned its first sector-wide investigation into prevention-related activities in New Zealand. Right now, findings and information are being collected and analysed using the ‘BePA Model’. This model was developed in New Zealand to map prevention and preparedness-related activities in the sector – and in 2020, the first report using the model will be released. We will use this report process to monitor the long-term impact of initiatives delivered by the sector, and the influence they are having on SAR in the New Zealand recreational landscape over time.

One important prevention-related platform provided by NZSAR is the AdventureSmart website. Redeveloped and

launched at the end of 2018, the AdventureSmart resource is a tool in the NZSAR ‘prevention toolbelt’ that connects recreationalists to helpful safety resources using an online directory format. There are links to important information guides, apps, videos and other online tools that are created and maintained by the wider New Zealand SAR sector. The sector-wide Safety Codes (Boating, Water and Outdoor) anchor AdventureSmart, and are supported by practical tips and links, as well as featuring translated copies of the Codes in many languages.

We look forward to continuing to encourage the use of AdventureSmart to promote important, relevant safety information and messages. NZSAR will continue to enhance the AdventureSmart directory, working with government agencies and NGOs who also have a role in supporting the message to all outdoor recreationalists to be appropriately prepared before undertaking activities in New Zealand’s great outdoors, to prevent and reduce the risk of harm.



## Fishing on-shore, rock fishing and wading

LEARN MORE AT:

- [Water Safety Code](#)
- [Diving Safety Guide](#)
- [River Safety Guide](#)
- [Beach Safety Information](#)
- [Find a Beach](#)

Fishing by the water carries with it the potential to fall or be swept in by moving currents or large waves. Make sure you follow the [Water Safety Code](#) and understand the dangers of the specific environment that you are fishing in, such as the often unexpectedly strong currents in some rivers or potentially large waves that could sweep over rocks by the ocean. Make sure you understand the basics of staying afloat in the water by contacting [Water Safety New Zealand](#).

### Key contacts for on-shore, rock fishing and wading:

- [Fish and Game New Zealand](#) - regional and legal information about fishing in New Zealand including fishing licences, regional by-laws, visitor permits and backcountry fishing.
- [New Zealand Sport Fishing](#) - fishing regulations, sustainability information and events.
- [Water Safety New Zealand](#) - key information about water safety and rock fishing safety advice.
- [New Zealand Underwater Association](#) - if you intend to go snorkelling or diving to fish, get training through the New Zealand Underwater Association and find out best practice and understand the laws when diving.
- [Surf Life Saving](#) - provides a national lifeguard service on selected beaches on behalf of central and regional government.



## Multi-day tramping/hiking

LEARN MORE AT:

- [Outdoor Safety Code](#)
- [Overnight and Multi-day Tramping Guide](#)
- [Preparing for Multi-day Tramping Journeys \(video series\)](#)
- [Hiring/Purchasing Personal Locator Beacons](#)

Make sure that you are well prepared by following the important information shown in the Outdoor Safety Code (above). New Zealand terrain is beautiful, but can be highly changeable, and the weather conditions can shift drastically and suddenly. As well as following the essential information in the Code, personal locator beacons are available to purchase or to hire, and as there is little-to-no cellphone coverage in the outdoors in New Zealand, these beacons are an important piece of safety equipment. For full details, read or print the multi-day tramping guide from the link (left) to get all of the essential information on tramping/hiking in New Zealand.

### Key Contacts for Tramping and Hiking

- [Mountain Safety Council](#) - provides significant resources relating to land-based activities around New Zealand, such as hiking, as well as practical courses, training information and preparation videos.
- [Department of Conservation](#) - managing the conservation of New Zealand’s nature, including information about walking/tramping/hiking tracks, wildlife management and hut management.
- [Walking Access Aotearoa](#) - don't let the name limit your expectations, this organisation provides maps for mountain biking, walking, tramping, cycling, horse trekking, hunting, fishing and much more.

Screen shots from the AdventureSmart website: [www.adventuresmart.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.nz)

# SAR IN THE WIDER REGION



## Missing in the Auckland Islands

**New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region spans 30 million square kilometres, which is one of the largest search and rescue areas in the world. It encompasses an enormous 12.5% of the earth's total water surface.**

The following search and rescue operation is not only a good example of one that took place further from our shores this year, but it is also a remarkable survival story. It illustrates the way in which our country's SAR agencies work together efficiently to reach a desirable outcome.

At 8.15pm on 22 April, the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) received a phone call from Sir Richard Hayes of Southern Lakes Helicopters. A helicopter from the Southern Lakes fleet was overdue on a flight to the Auckland Islands, 465 kilometres south of New Zealand. Tracking was lost and the three crew members on board were out of radio contact.

The missing helicopter had flown from Invercargill – to conduct a medical evacuation (medevac) from a fishing vessel – when it disappeared. The crew had intended to stay overnight at the DOC Hut on Enderby Island and carry out the medevac the next morning.

RCCNZ could not detect an Emergency Locator Transmitter on the missing aircraft, so tasked an RNZAF Orion to its last known position, which was just south of Enderby Island. The Orion arrived on scene soon after 1am and began conducting a radar and infra-red search. Visual searching was very limited due to low cloud and fog, but also because of restrictions around the descent of aircraft overnight. The Orion crew continued searching for seven hours, remaining in the area until they needed to refuel.

Four fishing boats in the vicinity were diverted to the search area to continue scouring the seas. One of these boats located a helicopter door floating to the south of the helicopter's last known position. As the weather cleared in the morning, another Southern Lakes helicopter – flown by Richard – and two Otago Regional Rescue Helicopters were tasked to the search.

Richard arrived at the search area about 20 minutes ahead of the Otago helicopters.

"I was prepared to stay for as long as it took," says Richard, who keeps fuel caches on the Auckland Islands specifically for search and rescue purposes. "I had enough fuel to last a week."

Southern Lakes helicopters, like most rescue helicopters, are fully kitted out with GPS, thermal imaging technology and night vision goggles, among other equipment to assist in SAR activities.

"As I turned in to make my final approach into Enderby Island, flying the route the missing aircraft had taken the night before, we saw the crew standing on the beach."

"It was hard to comprehend what we were looking at, as we'd feared the worst. In 45 years as a helicopter pilot, I'd never been involved in, nor had fellow crew members involved in an accident. It had been the longest night of my life."

As it was low tide, Richard was able to land beside his colleagues on the beach. All three men were mobile and suffered only minor injuries. Richard evacuated the men to the nearby hut in two trips, where they had warm drinks and food before departing an hour later to be assessed at Invercargill Hospital.

"When the helicopter went into the water, the crew simply didn't have time to reach the dry bag containing their emergency equipment (sat phone, beacons, flares, etc)."

"It emphasises the absolute necessity of HUET (Helicopter Underwater Emergency Training) that we do every year. Their survival training kicked in and certainly allowed them to get themselves out of the machine alive."

Richard praised the coordination of RCCNZ and the quick response from the RNZAF.

"It just shows the luxury we have of agencies that respond in such a prompt, timely manner to reach a downed aircrew," he said.

# SECRETARIAT'S REPORT

**From this annual report, you should now have a good idea of the amazing life-saving SAR work that occurs almost every day throughout New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region. While the NZSAR Secretariat has no direct operational role, we do undertake a wide range of activities which serve to enable and strengthen New Zealand's search and rescue system. We also support and facilitate the Council's SAR system leadership and governance functions.**



Over the past year we (Carl, Alita, Alannah, Rhett and for most of the year, Steve) have achieved a lot. 2018/2019 has been our busiest ever year – with our largest budget, number of projects and the highest level of expectation. I'm proud of what the team and I have delivered and I'm confident that these achievements will make a material improvement to the SAR sector. Many of those projects are ongoing and some will take several years to realise their full benefits. While much of the sector is focused on delivering operational outputs within a fairly short time, the Secretariat has the luxury of being able to take a much longer view of search and rescue to ensure the sector remains robust and fit for purpose for years to come.

Four of our major workstreams this year will have a long-term impact on the sector. We commissioned Volunteering New Zealand to take an in depth look at the state of volunteering and make recommendations to ensure our SAR volunteers continue to have the opportunity to contribute and thrive. The article on page 16 covers these reports in some detail. Many of the recommendations are under action but some will take several years to deliver as they require additional resources and collaborative action across a range of agencies. We are hugely reliant on volunteers, so it makes sense to invest in the future of volunteerism within the sector.

Another long-term project brought to its starting point is Project SARdonyx. Many years ago, the Council challenged us to provide a better information base for decision making by the Council and other leaders within the sector. The SARdonyx Joint Search and Rescue Operational Information System (see article page 12) is the sector tool developed to deliver on that challenge. While a lot of people have invested large amounts of time into SARdonyx over the past several years, we are only at the beginning. The benefits of having a comprehensive and comprehensible picture of search and rescue within our region will be gradually realised as the database grows over the next few years. The system will need some tweaks and improvements as we gain experience in its use. We'll work with Beca, our supplier, to make those improvements in the coming years.

The development of New Zealand's Search and Rescue Guidelines is the third major project delivered during the year. These guidelines (discussed in more detail on page 13) while shepherded and funded by NZSAR, are the result of a sector driven desire for unified and consistent SAR documentation. This approach is important when we are asking people from a wide variety of backgrounds to work together in difficult and potentially dangerous situations. Common, agreed and documented guidelines on how SAR people organise and approach tasks reduces risk, enhances cooperation and improves the likelihood of operational success.

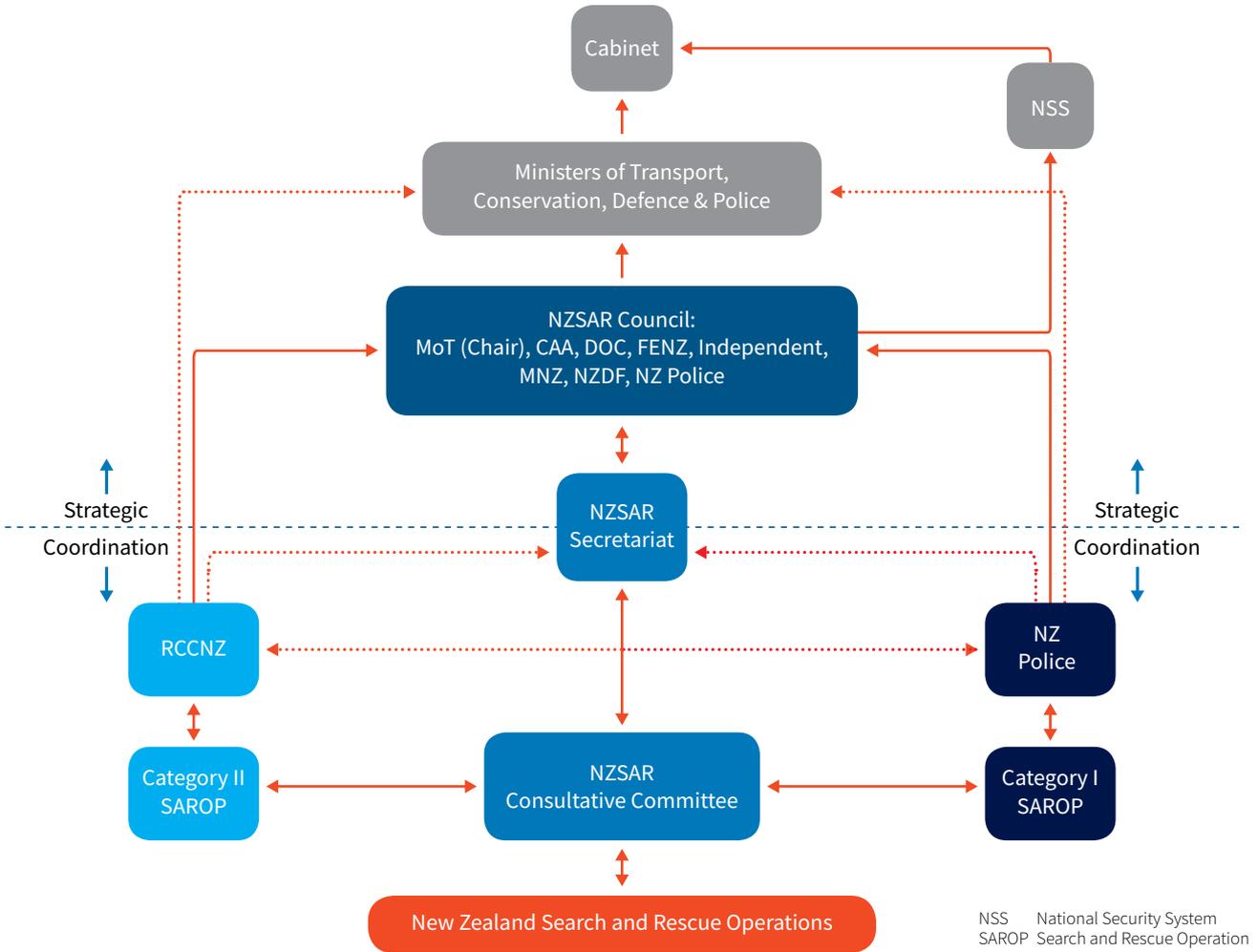
The fourth long term project involved the work to improve SAR skill acquisition training arrangements. Previous arrangements (SAR (ACE)) were complex to administer and didn't provide the requisite flexibility for cost effective training delivery of SAR skills for small groups throughout the country. We worked in partnership with the Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, the Tertiary Education Commission and the Ministry of Education to develop a new set of arrangements which has vastly improved the areas of concern. LandSAR training has been in-sourced and multi agency training is now coordinated more closely by NZSAR. These changes have not been without their challenges but we're confident we are on a sound path that should produce good training outcomes for many years to come.

We also completed a number of other projects, workshops, SAR prevention / reduction work, seminars and research during the year. Some of these are highlighted in this report but space does not allow a full account of them all. Our support of collective SAR exercises (described more on pages 20-21) is worth special note as these simulations provide very significant benefits to the sector.

The Secretariat is privileged to be part of a dynamic sector which delivers effective search and rescue services as a free public good. Thank you to everyone who has assisted us with our work over the past year.

Ngā manaakitanga  
Duncan Ferner  
Manager NZSAR Secretariat

# GOVERNANCE



## NZSAR Council

The Council’s role is to provide national strategic governance and leadership to New Zealand’s search and rescue sector.

In keeping with the Council’s high level strategic function, its membership is drawn from the chief executives (or delegated to a person from the senior executive level) of the Ministry of Transport, New Zealand Police, New Zealand Defence Force, Department of Conservation, Maritime New Zealand, Civil Aviation Authority, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, and an Independent Member.

## NZSAR Secretariat

The Council is supported by the NZSAR Secretariat. Its purpose is to provide a national forum for all New Zealand SAR stakeholders including voluntary groups. It provides the Council with support services, policy advice and implements agreed measures to effectively coordinate strategic SAR in New Zealand.

## NZSAR Consultative Committee

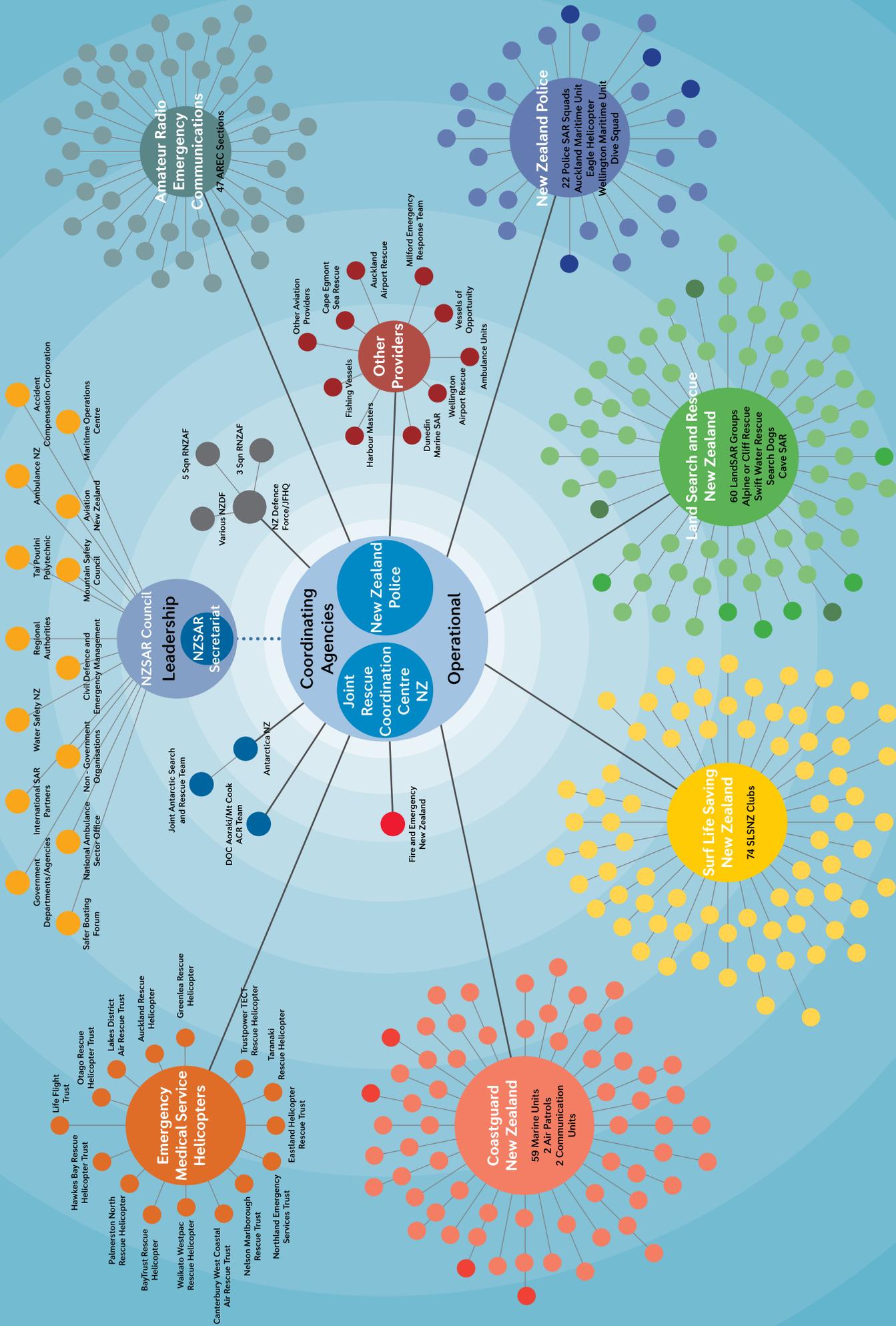
The Consultative Committee provides advice to the Council and informs the strategic decision making process. Consultative Committee members include:

- Amateur Radio Emergency Communications
- Ambulance New Zealand
- Antarctica New Zealand
- Aviation New Zealand
- (CAA) Civil Aviation Authority
- Coastguard New Zealand
- (DOC) Department of Conservation
- (FENZ) Fire and Emergency New Zealand
- LandSAR New Zealand
- (MNZ) Maritime New Zealand
- Maritime Operations Centre
- (MoT) Ministry of Transport
- National Ambulance Sector Office
- (NZDF) New Zealand Defence Force
- New Zealand Mountain Safety Council
- New Zealand Police
- NZSAR Secretariat (Chair)
- (RCCNZ) Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand
- Surf Life Saving New Zealand
- Water Safety New Zealand

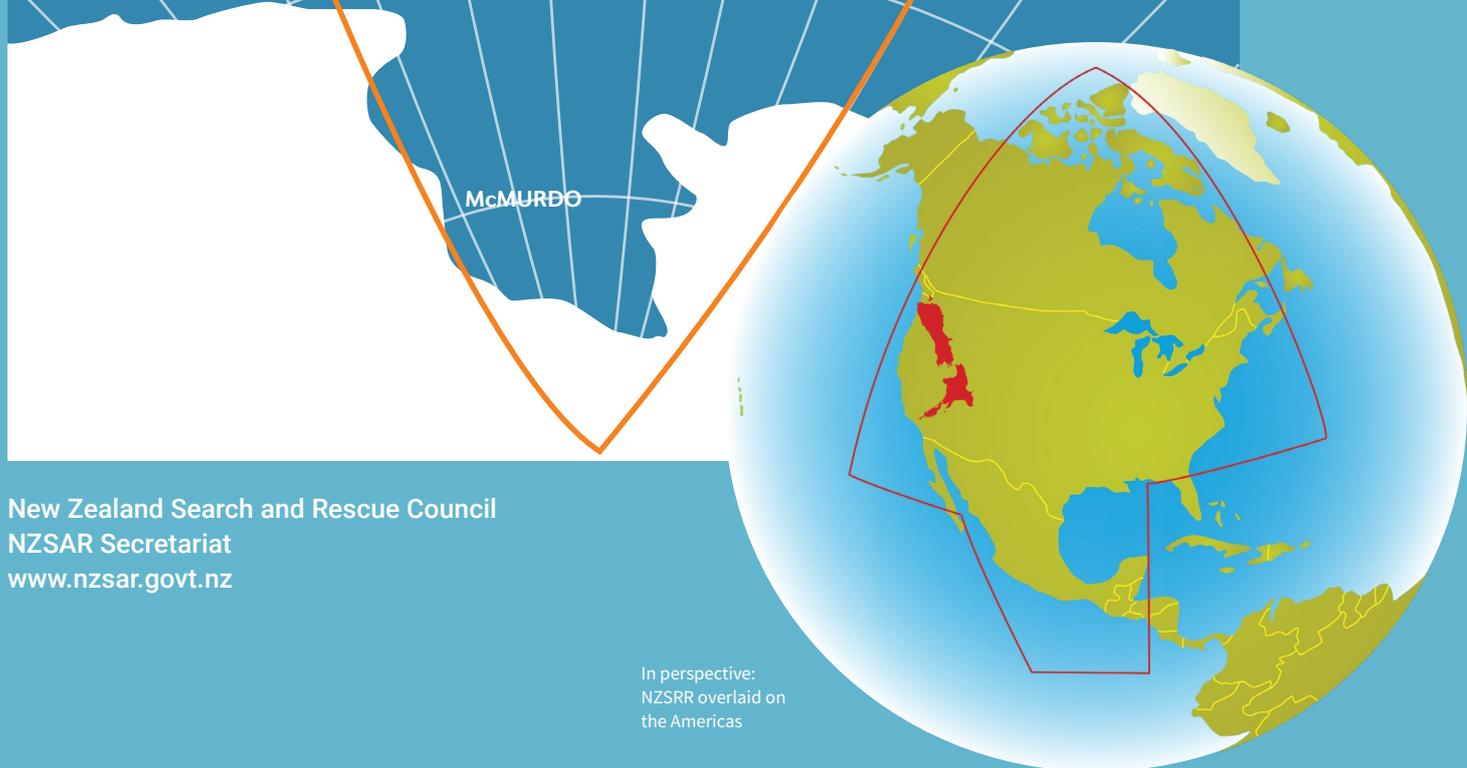
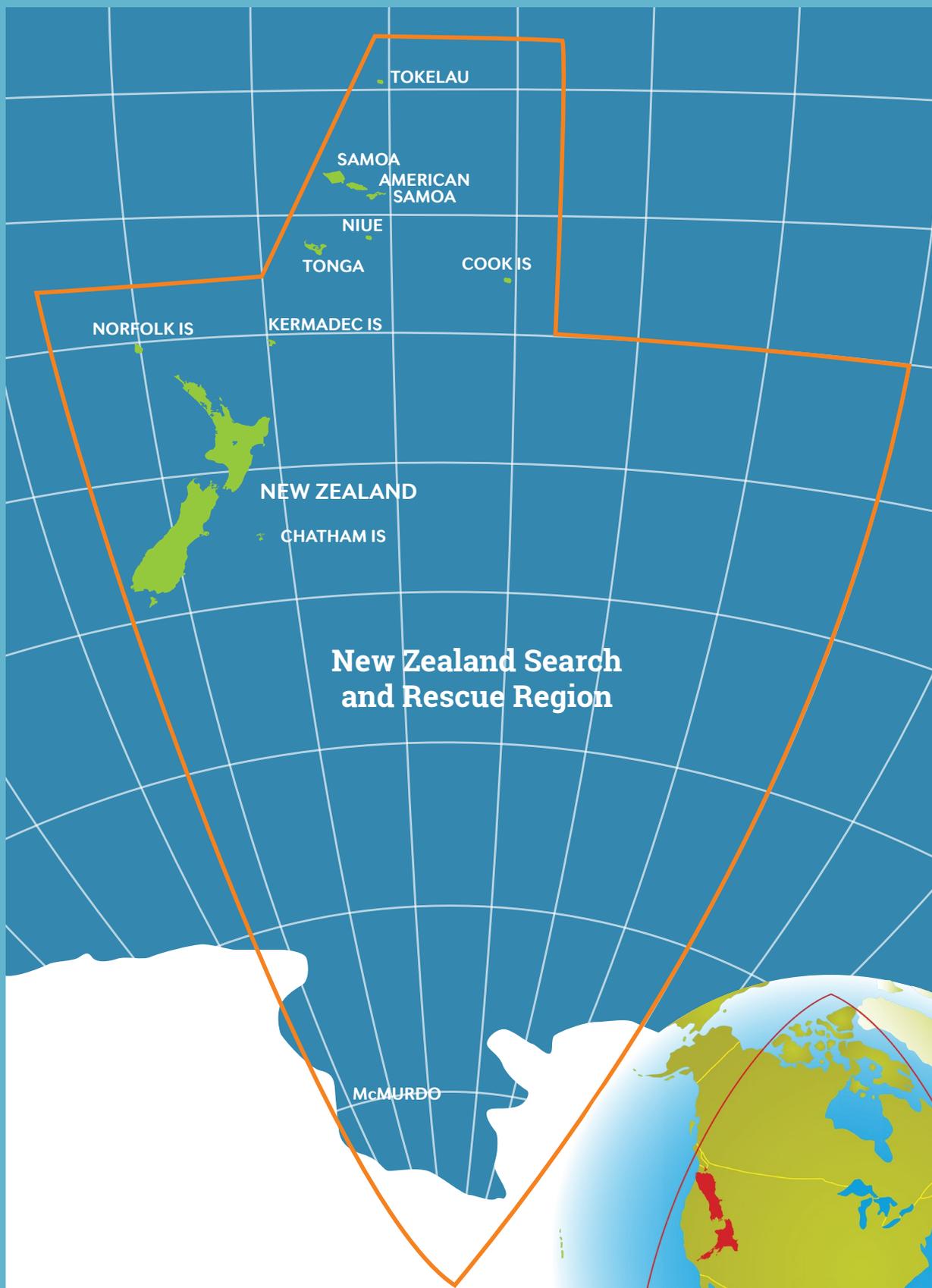
The Council, Secretariat and Consultative Committee operate cohesively to ensure their objectives are successfully delivered.

# OUR SECTOR

## Partners



# NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE



New Zealand Search and Rescue Council  
NZSAR Secretariat  
[www.nzsar.govt.nz](http://www.nzsar.govt.nz)

In perspective:  
NZSRR overlaid on  
the Americas