

# NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE

Rapu Whakarauora Aotearoa

## NZSAR Consultative Committee Minutes

Tuesday, 14 May 2024, 9.30am – 12.00pm  
3 Queens Wharf, Wellington and MS Teams

### Present

Name	Agency
Andy Greig (Chair)	NZSAR
Rob Hewitt	
Carl McOnie	LandSAR
Lea Smith	NZ Police
Chanel Meads	
Meryl Jupp	DOC
Callum Gillespie	CNZ
Brendan Comerford	MOC
Daniel McGowan	YSAR
Ben Flight	AMSA
George Loomes	DOC
Kate Weinberg	RCCNZ
Liz Smith	NEMA
Mike Daisley	MSC
Richard Milner	Aviation NZ

Name	Agency
Duncan Ferner	NZSAR
Don Robertson	AREC
Allan Mundy	SLSNZ
Craig Rendel	NZ Police
Andy Kent	SLSNZ
Gavin Walker	WSC
Scott Cordwell	NZDF
Ken Cooper	FENZ
David Waters	Ambulance NZ
Gavin Lawrence	YSAR
Jake Robinson	St Johns Air Desk
Kathryn Steel	Te Whatu Ora
Lucas Vetter	MoT
Dan Clearwater	Contractor

### In attendance

Name	Agency
Matt Mintrom	NZSAR
Aimee Flanagan	NZSAR
Matt Wheble	NZSAR

Name	Agency
Wendy Harrison	NZSAR
Bridget Hesketh	NZSAR
Tania Seward	NZSAR

Name	Agency
Penny Salmon	NZSAR

Name	Agency

## Apologies

Name	Agency
Steve Campbell	YSAR
Daniel Gerrard	Water Safety
Steve Fisher	SLSNZ

Name	Agency
Brendan Nally	FENZ
Daniel Gillis	AMSA

## 1. Welcome

Andrew Greig opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

## 2. Minutes of meeting on Tuesday, 13 February 2024

The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## 3. Matters arising

The Risk Matrix has been sent to the NZSAR Council.

## 4. Summary of actions from previous meetings

#	Item	Actions	Responsibility	Actions taken/ Status
6.	NZSAR Risk Matrix – Cohesive & Effective SAR Training	<b>Action:</b> Duncan to update the risk treatments B, D and E and feed this back to the Consultative Committee before sending to NZSAR Council.	Duncan Ferner	Sent to NZSAR Council

## 5. Sector Updates

Agencies provided brief sector updates.

### Ambulance NZ

Ambulance NZ will cease to exist from the end of this month. It has merged with the Council of Ambulance Authorities, which is the Australasian Association, which David Waters also leads.

Continue to work on the revision of the Aeromedical Air Search and Rescue standard, which is progressing well. Have retained a SAR component in the standard.

The main Aeromedical Conference has been brought to New Zealand this year in September – this is the only big aeromedical conference in this part of the world.

### **AMSA**

There hasn't been any update for the operating model design. Still working through a number of workshops so there was an integration workshop recently to try and pull together all the other workshops.

The Response Centre is moving to a new location around July.

### **Antarctic NZ**

Antarctic NZ have had no SAR callouts in 2024 so far. As they enter winter and daylight disappears for six weeks, they continue to support science from the relative safety of Scott Base.

Antarctic NZ continue a program of SAR training with their American colleagues at McMurdo. Together they form JASRT (Joint Antarctica Search and Rescue Team) and would expect to support one another in the event of an incident.

### **AREC**

Training has continued across the country for members and included is a 'hamcram', which is a weekend of helping people get through the examination and the radio operator certificate. This has been successful and has rolled onto a growth in membership. This has led to reactivating groups around the country and regional managers are getting on board.

Working on a planning tool for groups similar to Land Search and Rescue. Should be able to get detailed data on all the readiness and status of members and groups around the country.

The AREC annual conference will be held at King's birthday weekend in Christchurch.

### **Aviation NZ**

The helicopter association is working with CAA regarding hover entries and exits and definitions.

The aviation industry is concerned with the FENZ intention to increase levies, which will have a significant effect on expenses.

### **CAA**

No report provided.

### **Coastguard**

April was a standard month seasonally in terms of activity on the water. There were 24 SAROPs and 199 Coastguard operations including two people rescued on the Manukau Bar, which was a joint effort with Police and Westpac helicopter.

Overall organisation is in good shape, although still have the West Coast out of action for the foreseeable future.

Coastguard is changing their brand. This is about moving away from being seen as an authority to being more approachable.

## **DOC**

DOC are continuing with their upgrade of training of staff around the country on visitor hazard management and their site control plan exercise. There are a number of visitor safety investigations underway.

Work continues on cycle tracks, working with other entities who have mountain biking standards.

The damaged visitor counter network is finally getting fixed up after a few glitches of computer upgrades. This should mean next year will have some usable data on the number of visitors our DOC tracks.

The Aoraki SAR team has had 17 deployments this year including two days on which three operations were tasked and each day around 60 percent of the operations have occurred in the National Park.

The team has been working to develop the rescue day for the Southern Hemisphere Alpine Conference (SHAC).

## **DOC – Aoraki Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team**

There has been a return of international visitors which has placed renewed pressure on regional operations across the department. The DOC SAR team has had 17 deployments this year including two days on which three operations were tasked and each day around 60 percent of the operations have occurred in the National Park. Four operations were conducted in collaboration with helicopter EMS operators including two in which RCCNZ utilised their dual tasking model quite effectively. Statistics have shown an increase outside of the MOU with Police.

FED funding has been utilised to increase service delivery and capacity for response and have undertaken training groups of volunteers including the Christchurch team in February and North Island groups out of National Park in April. Simulated winch training has been undertaken with Garden City Helicopters in Christchurch and discussed standardisation between them and Otago for South Island response.

Some basic flatwater rescue training has been undertaken to develop a capability to respond in the glacial lakes which is a positive development given the increase in activity and SAROPs that are related to those bodies of water.

The team has been working to develop the rescue day for the Southern Hemisphere Alpine Conference.

The Southern Lake region has seen some tensions between volunteer ACR, Wanaka and Heli Otago relating to the suitability of platforms and communication difficulties in the field. It has been made clear the intention to continue engaging directly with stakeholders on this matter.

## **DOC – Land Safety Forum**

The Land Safety Forum is hitting its strides now. There has been good engagement but one point to note is that the hunting sector engagement has dropped off sights and that's due to the increased demands from the new hunting and fishing portfolio.

## **FENZ**

Urban Search and Rescue undertakes its reclassification – this is happening at the end of May and happens every five years.

After the anniversary of the floods and Cyclone Gabrielle, the Fire Emergency Review was released. There are a number of key findings around urban search and rescue and specialised water rescue teams. Some corrective action recommendations have come out about how FENZ operates.

Have specialist water rescue capability and six teams are now established around New Zealand and go operational on 1 July officially.

Renewing line rescue capability and currently have 80 teams around the county that can perform high angle winch rescue but are going to review that down to 40.

## **Land Search and Rescue**

There were 400 search operations this financial year and 65,000 volunteer hours. Training programmes are well and truly up and running.

Have been able to provide nationally more equipment out to groups than ever before.

The health and safety audit is occurring, which should give confidence throughout that health and safety systems that are in play.

## **MOC/Kordia**

Operationally has been slightly busier than this time last year.

Have been concentrating on the platform replacement and network in general. It is quite a major refresh of equipment and assessment of different suppliers.

The solar storm that hit in May affected HF communications and looked like it knocked out about 50 percent of signals particularly in the lower frequency bands.

## **Ministry of Transport**

Nothing significant to report.

## **Mountain Safety Council**

There is a big chunk of communications and marketing work occurring. Duck season is pretty much over. The Roar is coming to an end. The winter campaign starts in terms of not just backcountry skiing but backcountry snow sport activity. Outside of the ski fields the campaign focuses around elements of other activities that can continue on during the winter.

The Avalanche Advisory is fully spun up and back up to full staff. There was a time where the team was down an alpine advisor for a long period of time.

Adventure Voice – about to go live with its first survey, this is wrapped around a research panel which is being built up and there is about 1500 participants within that at the moment.

## **NEMA**

The government inquiry into the North Island Weather Events has been released. The government decided the existing Emergency Management bill wouldn't proceed

any further through the parliamentary process and the Emergency Management and Recovery Minister intends to introduce a new bill this term with more significant changes to the Emergency Management system. There is more information on the NEMA website.

The national exercise programme this year is *Ru Whenua* which aims to improve New Zealand's ability to respond to and recover from a significant Alpine Fault earthquake. To test the planning arrangements there are three days of exercise activities 12 June, 26 June and 10 July. There is more information on the NEMA website.

The NEMA office has moved from the TSB building on Lambton Quay to Kate Shepherd Place in the old Environment House.

The New Zealand Response volunteer teams have now completed the national accreditation process which has been a big project over the last two years. The national accreditation process is going to be reviewed and updates will be made.

### **New Zealand Defence Force**

The Navy is unable to provide a duty SAP platform at eight hours notice to move from 1 July to 30 August. It will be a 24-hour status to move.

### **NZ Police**

The annual engagement visits have been delivered to nine Police districts, which have proved worthwhile with good feedback. There are DSARAC vacancies in Central and Wellington, which are being recruited for currently.

Equipment trials have been held for a Police SAR uniform. The trial finished in April. Assessment of the items is now being undertaken to determine final recommendations.

There is ongoing work to enhance the training system for SAR operators – this will see the development of an advanced on scene coordinator course to better prepare multiagency command and coordination for SAR. In addition, Police are developing an annual recertification for operational members to provide further assurance internally and externally.

Working with Air Desk tidying up Standard Operating Procedures for Police and RCCNZ to reduce delays. Police and RCCNZ have offered to carry out training with the Air Desk team to improve efficiencies. However, Air Desk have declined this proposal. Police and RCCNZ are looking at other options to better engage with Air Desk for SAR outcomes.

Had good conversations with Land Search and Rescue around the current guidelines and practice for search and rescue and where that sits within the training space.

Ongoing conversations to develop enhanced process for Planning, Reconciliation and Flood safety. Police and FENZ are communicating regarding how the emergency management sector intersects with the SAR sector.

## **RCCNZ**

A SARO course commences in June with three candidates who should graduate in September.

The SAR Aviation Standard final draft is under development and expected to be circulated by end of June.

First SARO attendance at FENZ aviation training camp completed. This purpose is to further build interoperability.

Building up for Exercise Ru Whenua (from a national SAR and Maritime response perspective).

Completed debrief process for Bay of Plenty FV *Pacific Challenger* person overboard incident.

Final stages of contract renegotiation with Kordia continuing. Still awaiting final decisions from Minister's around section 9 funding.

## **St Johns Air Desk (not updated from SOG paper)**

There have been 75 search and rescue taskings this month. Assets are being deployed appropriately and working with RCCNZ for cat 2 responses.

## **Surf Life Saving**

The Chief Executive Office has released the new strategy which is a departure from previous strategies. This is all-encompassing for the organisation, not just for staff but all members.

The SAR Summit was held last month, and the theme reflected on some of the operations that have occurred recently. Reached out to Land Search and Rescue to see how to pack light. During that exercise, looked at running multiple beach heads through into an IMT to stress test the radio network.

Continuing the development on building the radio network and increasing digital coverage, which is important as it how assets are tracked.

In the final stages of developing SAR Squad deployment app. This includes health and safety recording deployment times to scene as well as incident management information.

There is a push to get people doing flood boat training and other training around the county is the local SAR squad training.

## **Water Safety NZ**

Drowning fatalities continue to be much lower than at any time over the last decade and are about 25 percent lower than this time last year. There have been 30 fatalities with four still missing. Principally, changes are much lower in the river space and people randomly falling into water.

Have seen more delivery of training to at risk populations whilst tightening of money coming in from local authorities and central government. Charitable trusts and others are funding quite a bit of prevention activity for the at-risk populations and that is setting the community partners that WSNZ work with up better than they have been for a while.

The focus is essentially around three key drivers for the coming year. This is driving down risk at black spots. The second greatest risk by proportion of the population are Asian New Zealanders also gathering kai. There is work to prepare the next generation, that is, primary school kids and a behaviour change specialist has joined the team and working with the sector to shift how kiwis interact with water.

Working with Police around flood watering rising and general awareness of the danger of flood waters.

World Drowning Day is in July. The focus for the sector is around a message called float. It is the recognition that the thing everyone does in the water when something goes wrong unexpectedly. Very few are calm enough to float by themselves.

### **Te Whatu Ora and National Ambulance Sector Office**

The ageing fleet of the air ambulance helicopters is a big concern. They have the oldest fleet of air ambulance helicopters in the Western world and getting closer to having significant risk of unplanned retirement of these machines.

Working with Police and RCCNZ around training with Air Desk.

### **YSAR**

National Field Days Visibility – YSAR has a stand in the Emergency Services section at the National Agricultural Field Days, alongside St Johns, FENZ, Defence Cadets, Emergency Management, and NZ Red Cross.

The Youth Development Forum is now postponed to September. Intention is to be along the lines of review action points, sector reports on succession planning through youth, diversity challenges, collaboration and opportunities across SAR and EM.

### **NZSAR Secretariat**

The NZSAR Awards will be held next Tuesday.

Duncan met with Minister Doocey who is interested in getting out and about and visiting organisations.

The Varian public sector reputation index for the first time have included search and rescue in the list of agencies that have been explored in the public domain and the report is coming out next week.

## **6. NZSAR Risk Matrix – Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

The Health and Safety risk was reviewed and has only one change around attaining advice on overlapping PCBU duties.

A question was asked if a review was being done into the 888 yacht rescue. There was no review done so this was not progressed.

Coastguard asked about the risk around these events where it is community led and about making decisions on how to tackle an event without necessarily having the right resources to do the job that presents real threats to their well-being.

It was advised that the Review process is run at Council level.



## 7. Rāhui and SAR

Rob Hewitt and Chanel Meads were asked to do some work around rāhui. Chanel has done some research and prepared a paper. The paper received in the pack was a condensed version.

Rob reported one of the conversations from the hui last year was the different forms of rāhui and the misunderstanding of what rāhui is within the different organisations. Next week, there is a SAR Kaihautū hui, and this will be one of the conversations to be held. Want to make sure everyone is supported in this space, looking after staff members, and keeping them culturally safe. NZ Police have been part of this conversation as they are engaged in putting down rāhui.

Chanel thanked those involved in the interview process. Originally there was some research around what had been experienced in the water space. From a Māori perspective, it is primarily a practice around safeguarding and protecting the environment, and the safety of people, volunteers and first responders that go to the scene. There is also a cultural element and rāhui can provide that space.

The cultural element is when the search and rescue has finished, and the body has been found. Rāhui can provide space for healing to happen not only for the environment but also for the responders and volunteers. This is the feedback that has been heard, how do we cleanse, leave that work at work, and come home to families with safety. It has been found there are a lot of different ways of understanding rāhui and putting together a complexity that is going to make sense in the room.

The full process of rāhui is not fully understood. More research is needed to make sure it works for search and rescue.

There was a general discussion and there was a fear of doing it wrong and the rāhui put in place by the wrong person. Surf asked if they could open the beach when rāhui is in place. Who would be the best person to contact. It was advised that Surf would need to engage with their kaihautū. They will take the lead and support the organisation.

DOC were pleased to see this work underway. This is an opportunity to bring in organisations that are charged with managing the land and water.

Police are doing a lot of work with Māori response managers, and they better understand how and what the benefits are.

Land Search and Rescue were of the opinion that education of people is a big part and the need to educate their volunteer workforce better, so they understand the value that rāhui brings.

## 8. Local Council proposed cuts

Lea Smith advised that Northland Council are proposing to cut funding to emergency services, about \$1m to rescue helicopters, Surf and Coastguard. This could be a real risk of service delivery and whether this is something that's going to be potentially a risk.

This isn't necessarily limited to Northland, but a lot of councils around the country are considering cuts as well.

Feedback was that the Council has had submissions from the community and Council says that local government should pick this up. Auckland will continue to get funding, there is a huge community engagement but there has been the issue of inflation.

## **9. Recreational Participation**

Penny presented a paper for a framework for measuring recreational participation in New Zealand. There were three options outlined.

General discussion followed and the preferred option 3 was supported.

Feedback from the group to consider was to better recognise existing sources of information, for example visitation data from SLSNZ, and to aggregate the data that is already held by the sector agencies. There was a view that land-based participation data was much more achievable than the water-based data. It would be important to be fiscally responsible with the implementation of the framework and to be mindful that the benefits this framework would deliver is proportional to the investment made. There was caution that gaining consistency in participation across New Zealand would be difficult and likely to need a bespoke response.

### **Decision**

- The Measurement of Recreational Participation in New Zealand Framework will proceed to NZSAR Council for endorsement.

## **10. Water Safety Code**

The Water Safety code has been refreshed and has five key points. Working with the sector on how this is going to be launched officially and there will be more details to follow.

## **11. FENZ Levy**

FENZ is seeking public feedback on levies which will replace the existing levies which have been in place since 2017 when FENZ was established. Feedback needs to be in by Friday.

## **12. Noting paper – Quarterly Activity Report**

The Quarterly Activity report provided a summary of SAR activity during the third quarter of 2023/24 reporting year (1 January to 31 March 2024) and the year-to-date numbers (1 July 2023 to 31 March 2024).

## **13. Noting paper – NZSAR Secretariat Workplan 2023-24**

This paper outlined the NZSAR 2023-24 Work plan. The Secretariat remains short one FTE and one FTE is on a short-term contract.

## 14. General Business

There was no general business.

## 15. Next meeting

13 August, 12 November

## 16. Actions, decisions and noting

#	Item	Actions, decisions and noting	Responsibility
9.	Recreational Participation	<b>Decision:</b> The Measurement of Recreational Participation in New Zealand Framework will proceed to NZSAR Council for endorsement.	NZSAR