

Connecting the Search and Rescue Sector

news

NZSAR Awards



NZSAR Award Ceremony held at Parliament

Helicopter crews, Defence Force personnel, Surf Lifesavers, LandSAR volunteers, Police, committed, passionate and long-serving individuals – and a dog – were amongst those honoured at the NZSAR Award Ceremony held at Parliament in April.

The Hon. Nathan Guy, Associate Minister of Transport, hosted the evening and acknowledged the contribution, “dedication, bravery, and selflessness” of SAR people across New Zealand.

“Search and rescue work is demanding and draining. The hours can be long and variable, the work dangerous and the events traumatic. Rescue teams often put their own safety at risk to help complete strangers.

“Despite the risks, over 12,000 New Zealanders are involved in more than 2,000 search and rescue incidents every year. What’s more, 90 per cent of these people are volunteers, giving New Zealand search and rescue one of the highest rates of volunteer involvement in the world. This is something New Zealand should be very proud of.”

Mr Guy used the examples of Coastguard and LandSAR to note the level of commitment SAR requires.

“During the last financial year Coastguard and LandSAR volunteers were involved in nearly 800 search and rescue operations. That’s almost 18,000 hours of volunteer time. These are impressive numbers, but what’s even more impressive is that every hour at the front line equates to 10 hours of preparation and training.”

Mr Guy presented the prestigious Gold award and five Certificates of Achievement to “some remarkable New Zealanders who have done incredible things, helping people in real trouble.”

Gold Award

This is awarded for the most significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2009.

For a Rescue at Patea, carried out on the 11th of February 2009.



Hon. Nathan Guy presenting the Gold Award to Noel Watson, David Manduell and Murray Chong, (Rob Berry absent) from the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust

This Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust crew was called to assist Michael Mugeridge who had been thrown from a boat while it was crossing the Patea Bar. Michael was washed along the coast eventually coming ashore on rocks at the base of a 30 metre cliff. He was exhausted and unable to move, and was being pounded by two metre waves. Those large pounding waves made it impossible for a rescue vessel to get to him from the sea.

The helicopter arrived and quickly located Michael. It was a dangerous situation – the base of the cliff was undercut and Michael was hard up against the cliff face. This meant that the helicopter could not lower the winch directly to him.

Paramedic Rob Berry was winched into the surf as close to Michael as possible.

The winch operator, Noel Watson, had to time Rob’s descent into the surf so that he arrived between waves and wasn’t washed away himself.

The Pilot David Manduell had to keep the helicopter steady against the wind and close into the cliff.

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NZSAR awards continued

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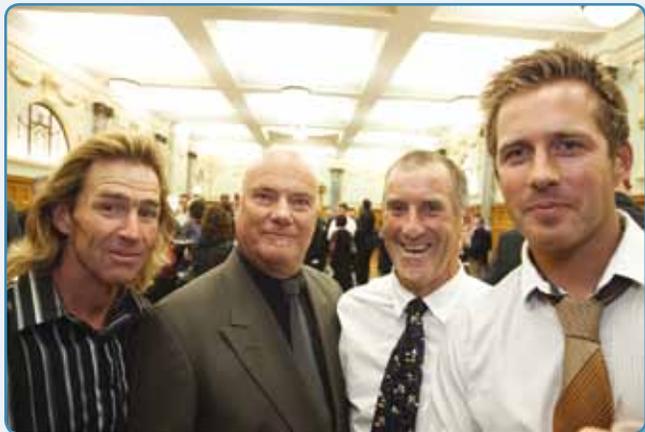
Crewman Murray Chong recorded the rescue on the helicopter's cameras.

Rob reached Michael, placed him in a rescue nappy, got him out from under the overhang and into the open, and then the two of them were winched back to the helicopter. The helicopter flew to nearby farmland where Michael was stabilised, before being transferred to Taranaki Base Hospital.

Certificates of Achievement

These are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region, either during 2009, or over an extended period.

For a Rescue at Mangawhai Heads on the 1st of March 2009.



Murray Dix, Dave McNeish, Peter McInnes, Zane Baker from the Mangawhai Heads Volunteer Lifeguard Service

At 4 o'clock in the morning the Mangawhai Heads Volunteer Lifeguards, Zane Baker, Peter McInnes and Dave McNeish, were woken by Police and told that a vessel with two people on board had hit rocks and was sinking. The boat was close to rocks, in dangerous 3 metre surf, and it was dark.

Murray Dix was called in from home to assist. He assessed the information and prepared the Club's offshore rescue craft – which he launched by himself in the dark. He then picked up Zane and Peter. Dave remained in the clubhouse to manage the communications.

Using the rescue craft's spotlights, the lifeguards showed exceptional rescue boat skills in challenging surf conditions to negotiate the dangerous bar entrance and locate the stricken vessel. They found it right on the edge of the surf zone, and perilously close to the rocks. The lifeguards worked fast and furiously to rescue the occupants of the sinking boat. They then attached a line to tow it offshore away from the white water and the rocks.

The Westpac rescue helicopter arrived and assisted the rescue by lighting the area with its nite-sun search light. After about 30 minutes the Coastguard vessel from Whangarei arrived and took over towing the stricken vessel. The three surf lifeguards negotiated their way back to shore and transferred their patients to waiting emergency services. The two patients were assessed and although they were very shaken and cold they were not injured.

For the recovery of Irina Yun, in November 2009.



Hon. Nathan Guy presents the Certificate of Achievement to Dave Krehic and his search dog Stig

Dave Krehic and his search dog Stig had been involved on the last day of the original search for Irina Yun who went missing in December 2008. Her pack had been found in the Dart River but nothing else was found at the time and the search was called off.

Dave wanted to bring closure to the family so he undertook some research that lead him to focus on a difficult area of the Dart River that had not been covered on foot in the original search. It was dangerous terrain to search, as the river is tightly confined and runs steeply down through large boulders.

After a risk assessment and consulting with local Police SAR coordinators, Dave put together a team of specialists; two white water specialists, Andy Peddle and Mat McLeod, and an alpine cliff rescue expert, Massa Sato. Helicopter transport was also essential – for safety. Dave paid for that himself.

In an extraordinary display of teamwork and great effort – following all possible safety procedures but still putting themselves at considerable risk – the team methodically searched downstream into the gorge. They had to abseil in certain places in order to search the area thoroughly. This included harnessing up Stig. On the second day, they found some personal equipment before Stig indicated an area of interest. It was here that the team found the remains of Irina's body. 11 months after Irina went missing Dave, Stig and the team were able to bring some level of comfort to her family.

NZSAR awards continued

For services, leadership and dedication to Alpine Search and Rescue in New Zealand.



Don Bogie from the Department of Conservation

Don was recognised for his long service, contribution and commitment, particularly to the DOC Alpine Rescue Team based at Aoraki-Mt Cook.

Don started as a mountaineer with the DOC team at Aoraki in the summer of 1978/79. He has been involved in numerous high profile rescues, including the Ingles and Doule rescue from high on Aoraki - Mt Cook.

Don “built” the search and rescue operation in the Aoraki-Mt Cook National Park and his experience and advice is highly valued by all the staff there. Don also knows quite a bit about avalanches. He has advised a number of DOC areas on avalanche risk and mitigation in the South Island High Country, information that is vital to the safety of people working there. He has been instrumental in getting a modern, science-based system for avalanche risk accepted across New Zealand.

Don is often at the forefront of technical knowledge, and is constantly inspiring the Aoraki-Mt Cook team to be the ‘benchmark’ of alpine rescue in this country.

NZSAR Awards

Do you know of an organisation, group or individual who should to be acknowledged by their search and rescue peers?

What about someone who has dedicated hours of their time to your organisation or those involved in a courageous rescue or difficult search – do they deserve national recognition?

The NZSAR Awards celebrate the success and effort of people who work or volunteer their time and skills in the field of search and rescue in New Zealand’s Search and Rescue Region.

There are two awards:

1. The NZSAR Gold Award honours the person, group or organisation that has made the **most significant** contribution to search and rescue.
2. The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement are awarded for an **important** contribution. More than one NZSAR Certificate can be awarded each year.

For services, leadership and dedication to Search and Rescue in New Zealand.



Ross Gordon from the Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand

You may recognise Ross from the TV series “The Missing” in which he played a ‘leading role’ last year. In part this is why Ross received his certificate – that TV series illustrated his capability and depth of experience, and because of Ross’s passion and ability to engage and teach, it also increased the general public’s understanding of the science behind search and rescue.

Ross’s involvement with search and rescue goes back 40 years when he joined the Levin Waiopahu Tramping Club and became a SAR member. In the last 15 years Ross has brought search technology in New Zealand to a new dimension, raising the bar of expertise applied to SAR. He was instrumental in setting up training in rescue techniques, and has made a significant impact on SAR Volunteers through improving their skill levels.

As a search expert Ross has been called in to provide management advice on prolonged searches, such as the Erceg helicopter search. Ross has also put pen to paper – he’s had input into “The Land Search and Rescue Manual” as well as other national and international publications. Ross has raised the profile of New Zealand Search and Rescue internationally and has gained a respected reputation in other countries, as well as our own.

Although Ross is a staff member of the Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand, a lot of what he does is done on a voluntary basis. This includes his role as a volunteer in the Methven SAR Management Team.

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These awards are valuable not only for the contribution they acknowledge but also for raising community awareness about the efforts SAR people go to in this often complex and difficult work.

Go to www.nzsar.org.nz. You will find more information about the awards along with details on the simple nominations process.

Nominations for the 2010 awards close on 31 January 2011.

NZSAR awards continued

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For Operation All Whites on the 10th of October 2009.



Hon. Nathan Guy, Bruce Irvine (NZ Police), Jill O'Donnell (AREC Taranaki), Jeff Rawson (Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue), Mike Johns (Taranaki LandSAR), Flt. Lt Dan Pezaro (3 Squadron RNZAF)

Late on the afternoon of 10 October, two brothers tramping on Mt Taranaki got into difficulty in the snow conditions. They managed to send a couple of text messages; one saying they needed an ambulance, and another which helped narrow the search area to within a 90 minute walk from Lake Dive Hut.

An advance team made up of three Alpine Cliff Rescue specialists, a LandSAR volunteer paramedic and a Police SAR squad member set out in search of them, with another party following. They searched in severe weather conditions and darkness, which made it difficult to locate the missing trampers. However, about five hours after the alarm was raised, a searcher spotted a shoe in the snow. The team followed the shoeless tracks and finally found the two brothers huddled in bush just off the track. They were hypothermic and confused, but they were only 10 minutes from Lake Dive Hutt, where they were taken to receive medical treatment from the paramedic, and wait to be evacuated off the mountain.

An Air Force Iroquois Helicopter was needed to evacuate the brothers. The crew flew in tough weather conditions using their night vision goggles. It was too dangerous to land the Iroquois at the hut at night, so the crew, using great skill, winched the two brothers out and flew them to Taranaki Base Hospital.

The pair's core body temperatures were so low they would have been dead by morning without the help of their rescuers, who later described the conditions as amongst the coldest they had ever experienced on the mountain.

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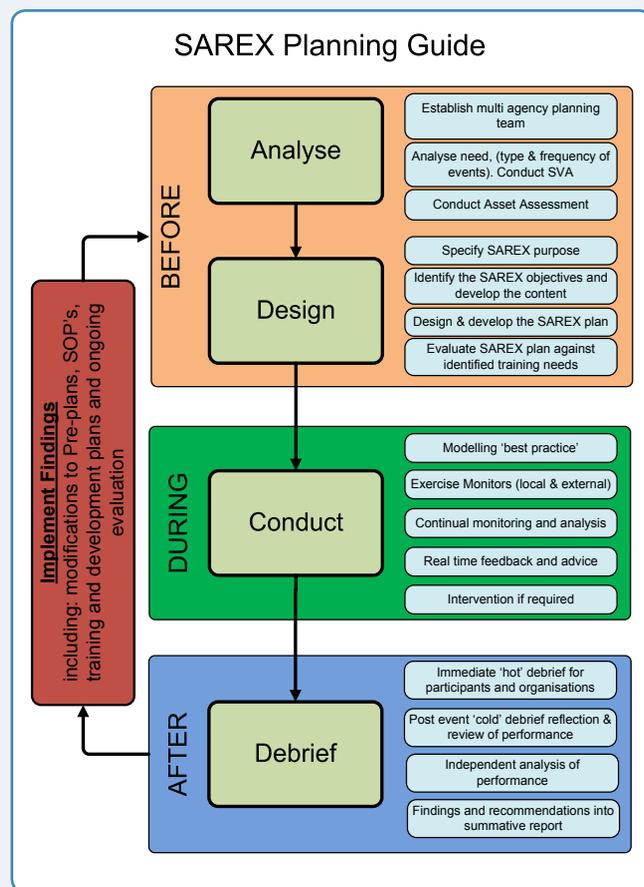
SAREX Guidelines Approved

The NZSAR Council has approved a set of search and rescue exercise (SAREX) guidelines for the SAR sector to use as a template when developing, running and debriefing our exercises.

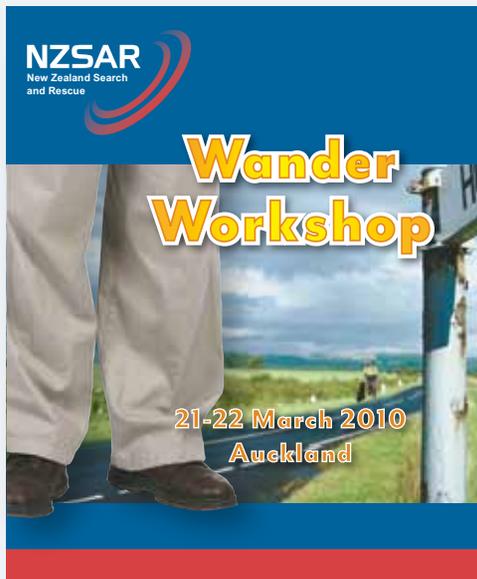
The guidelines are available to download from www.nzsar.org.nz. The aim is to provide a simple and common process for all SAR managers to use. They were developed by the Search and Rescue Institute of New Zealand (SARINZ) with widespread sector input.

The guidelines emphasise the need for managers to put effort into the design and planning of exercises in order to ensure that participants get the most out of our training opportunities.

They also seek to ensure that we follow through after our training with good quality debriefs and follow up actions so that "lessons" are captured and learnt. Please give them a go.



NZSAR Holds More Successful Workshops



Wander Workshop

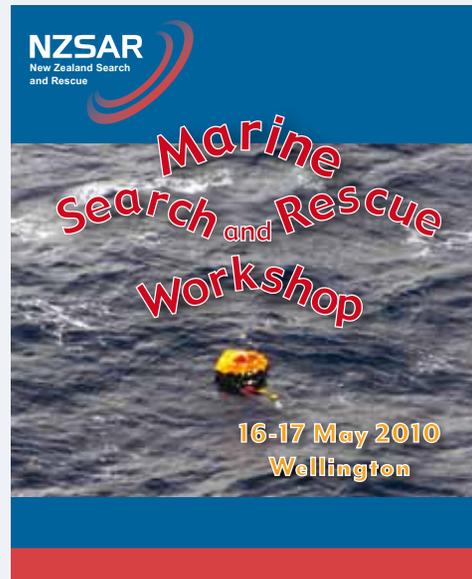
Building the collective knowledge about the behaviours of people who wander, due to some form of incapacity, was a vital part of the NZSAR Secretariat's workshop on SAR for people who wander.

In March, 42 people, including representatives from non-SAR organisations, gathered in Auckland from around the country to share ideas and improve the conduct, management, and coordination of these SAR incidents.

A wide range of topics were covered during the workshop including:

- An overview of international and national SAR research and practice
- A statistical overview of wandering from the Police database statistics
- Case studies showing current practices across New Zealand
- Non SAR perspectives from Alzheimer's NZ, Idea Services (IHC), and Autism NZ
- A workshop session on operational and training models in city and provincial environments
- An overview of SAR practices in New South Wales
- Profiling and analysis of first time wanderers
- A workshop session on technical aids in locating wanderers
- An open forum session on addressing future issues

The workshop achieved its purpose and proved to be a valuable forum for everyone who attended. It also provided a great opportunity for SAR and non-SAR organisations to work together to address some of the issues around wandering.



Marine SAR Workshop

Improving the management and coordination of marine SAR was the purpose of the marine workshop, which the NZSAR Secretariat hosted in May.

115 people attended from all around New Zealand. A wide range of topics were covered during the workshop including:

- Structure, roles and responsibilities of the two coordinating authorities
- Philosophy and practice of CIMS and IAMSAR
- Mechanics of Marine SAR operations
- CIMS roles and responsibilities including Marine SAR involving advisors and on-scene coordinators
- Organisational capability and overview for the organisations who participate in Marine SAR
- Effective management of complex (multi-organisational) SAROPs
- Night Marine SAR and case studies
- Shoreline operations
- Marine SAREX planning
- Marine SAR technology (tracking systems, IT, communications, RCCNZ)

The workshop achieved its purpose and proved to be a valuable forum for people to speak their minds, clarify issues of concern and learn from Marine SAR colleagues.

You can find reports of the workshop and the presentations at www.nzsar.org.nz under "Training and Workshops".

International Observations

Britain's Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI): From a New Zealand perspective, the RNLI is a remarkable charitable organisation as it both very large and relatively wealthy – being a £124m per year operation. The RNLI has 235 lifeboat stations operating in both the UK and Republic of Ireland. It maintains effective relationships with two governments and has a significant fundraising component to its operation. It is intending to fit out certain lifeboats with video cameras in order to be able to provide content for TV, which they hope will generate greater support for the RNLI – especially financially. In terms of service delivery, the RNLI aims to provide SAR services out to 100nm, launch within 10 minutes of notification, and be on station out to 10nm within 30 minutes.

Large Scale: United Kingdom Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA) sponsored exercises take place regularly. They can include the rescue of over 100 individuals and involve the participation of the entire rescue chain, including ambulance and hospitals.

TREK: New South Wales Police, together with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, have developed a trip intentions system linked to the loan 406MHz beacons to improve visitor safety in their national parks.

Think before you TREK promotes the benefits of planning ahead for your bushwalking trip by using an easy to remember acronym:

- T** – Take adequate supplies of food, water, navigation and first aid equipment.
- R** – Register your planned route and tell friends and family when you expect to return.
- E** – Emergency beacons (PLBs) are available free of charge from NSW Police Force and NPWS.
- K** – Keep to your planned route and follow the map and walking trails.

The system is working well but is expensive and time intensive.

Currency. A system of maintaining and testing the currency of marine SAR controllers has been developed in Queensland. This is based on a mailed out "Currency Workbook", which is completed by the individual every two years and then assessed to ensure the individual has retained the appropriate skill to remain current as a Marine SAR coordinator.

NZSAR Documentation Study

A snapshot of the vast range of manuals, reports and other material relating to SAR is now available thanks to a study conducted for the NZSAR secretariat.

This study (available at www.nzsar.org.nz), which looked at the existing documentation and pulled that all together, also proposes a SAR documentation framework to help improve the overall coordination, cohesion and capability of the sector.

Most importantly, the study recommends that NZSAR establish an overarching strategic document that "will present a unified approach and a common understanding of SAR in this region, including national agreement around roles, responsibilities and accountabilities, protocols and standard operating procedures."

The NZSAR Council has accepted these recommendations. It is hoped this important product will be completed before the end of 2010.



SAR People Recognised in Queens Birthday Honours

Coastguard Volunteer John Bates from Taupo was awarded the Queen's Service Medal for services to search and rescue

Senior Sergeant Brian Ben also received a Queen's Service Medal for services to the New Zealand Police. Brian is Dunedin's Police SAR co-ordinator.



YSAR Volunteers at the Thames SAREX

Check out Carl's corner for more information

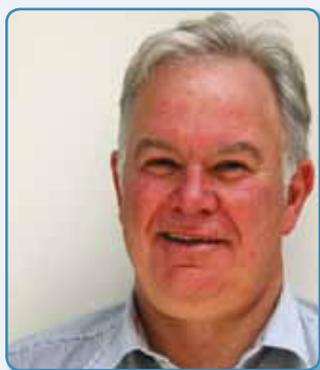


Attending to a 'no duff' incident during the Thames SAREX

Changing Places

Tai Poutini Polytechnic, a significant provider of search and rescue training, has been undergoing some changes recently.

The polytechnic has developed revised curriculum documents for its Diploma in Applied Emergency Management and the Certificate in Emergency Management, in Short Awards. They have also reorganised some of their departments. Some of you may have worked with Joe Hayes, who has had a very positive influence on the provision of SAR training over the years. Joe has resigned from Tai Poutini to pursue other interests and we wish him well in his future endeavours.



Grant Florence

Grant Florence started as Chief Executive of Surf Life Saving New Zealand in December 2009.

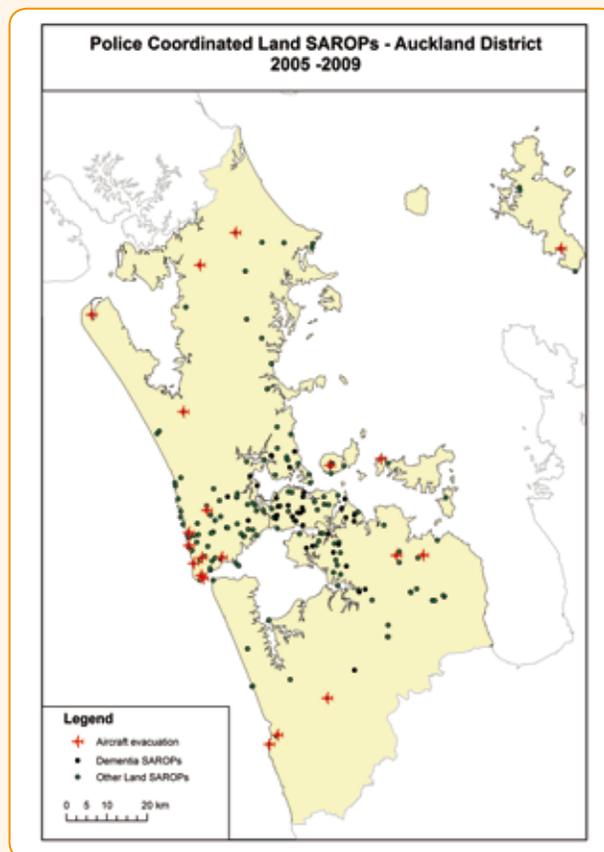
Grant has significant experience as an executive in the commercial sector in financial, management and governance roles. Parallel to this, Grant has a long history of involvement in Surf Life Saving. Firstly as a member of Fitzroy SLSC and more latterly as a long-term Chairman of Mairangi Bay SLSC and as a Director of both Surf Life Saving Northern Region and Surf Life Saving New Zealand.

The experience and background Grant brings to the role will be of great significance as the organisation embraces and implements the changes recently established under 'Project Groundswell'.

stats attack

GIS Map

The Secretariat is working with the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) team at Massey University to produce various maps such as this which assist in making robust strategic decisions for the sector. This example shows all land based incidents in the Auckland SAR District over the last four years. If you would like to know more, please contact the Secretariat.



Carl's corner



It's been a busy six months for the Secretariat since I last wrote my column and the highlight for me was the NZSAR Awards at Parliament. A lot of planning goes into making sure the event runs smoothly – many thanks to Viv Bracefield for her assistance. Apart from the Awards and

the workshops, which you can read about in this issue, I thought I'd mention some more of my personal highlights from the last six months.

At the start of the year I was in Auckland where I was able to visit Coastguard Northern Region, Auckland Maritime Police, and the Coastguard National Office. That evening I was hosted by the Coastguard Hibiscus Coast Unit. This was a training night for the Unit and they demonstrated the capabilities of their new purpose built Sealegs Rescue Vessel (pictured). This impressive vessel allows the Unit to provide a much quicker response time to incidents in their area. After the demonstration I was able to make a presentation to the members of the Unit, and to answer the many questions they had about the work and role of the Secretariat. Many thanks to Hugh Lemmon, President of Hibiscus Coast Coastguard, Skipper Tom, photographer Nikki, and all the volunteers from the Unit for hosting me.

In March I had the opportunity to observe the Waikato Police District's annual land SAREX, in the Kauaeranga Valley near Thames. Over 100 people were involved in the SAREX and from many organisations – Police, LandSAR (many groups), YSAR, AREC, St John, and RNZAF. It was an eye opener for me to see first-hand how many people are required to effectively run and support a large scale land-based search. The way that everyone worked together during the weekend, both on the SAREX and during the "no duff" SAROP that occurred, demonstrated that we are achieving in a practical sense the Council's goal of "one SAR body". (see photographs page 7)

I look forward to catching up with some of you at the Coastguard and LandSAR conferences in the spring. And finally, good luck to the All Whites in South Africa (although I will be supporting the Dutch!)

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NZSAR



Hibiscus Coast Unit's new Sealegs: It can drive a stretchered patient straight to shore.

calendar

NZSAR Consultative Committee Meeting: 21 July
NZSAR Council Meeting: 4 August
Coastguard Conference: 17 – 19 September – Taupo
Land SAR Conference: 19 – 21 November – Hokitika
SARSCENE: 27 – 28 September 2010 – Montreal Canada
Australian SAR Council Meeting: 14 – 15 October – Darwin
Rescue 2010 Conference: 22 – 24 October – Iceland

useful website links

www.nzsar.org.nz – New Zealand Search and Rescue Council
 This newsletter is available as a PDF on this website
www.beacons.org.nz – 406 beacon information and online registration
www.slsnz.org.nz – Surf Lifesaving New Zealand
<http://wakatipusar.co.nz> – Wakatipu LandSAR
<http://www.alpinesearchdogs.co.nz> – NZ Alpine Search Dogs Canterbury
<http://searchandrescuecouncil.org.nz/training-and-workshops/workshop-material> – Find reports on all the recent NZSAR workshops