


The New Zealand Search and Rescue Strategic Plan

2017-2020





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Foreword

The New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council provides strategic leadership and direction to the many organisations that make up New Zealand's Search and Rescue sector. The sector aims to provide effective search and rescue services throughout New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region (NZSRR).

Search and Rescue (SAR) is a resource intensive sector with over 12,000 operational people involved as well as many hundreds of vessels, aircraft and vehicles. SAR agencies across New Zealand have equipped themselves with the assets and equipment that allows them to carry out their task as efficiently and safely as possible. But it is the skill and dedication of our people that makes our search and rescue sector world class.

It is imperative that the SAR sector is aligned, coherent and cohesive so we can quickly, effectively and efficiently respond to the needs of New Zealanders in distress.

New Zealanders have high expectations of us and we are determined to meet our full potential. Organisations, agencies and individuals will continue to improve, collaborate, to work alongside each other, building stronger relationships and grow their understanding of the various roles and how the sector fits together.

This plan will help us achieve our goals. I urge all people who make up New Zealand's search and rescue community to not only read this plan, but to assist in making this plan happen.

Peter Mersi
Chair
NZSAR Council

NZSAR 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.

NZSAR Vision

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

The New Zealand Search and Rescue community will seek to reduce the need for our services by promoting recreational safety knowledge. We will be proficient at providing search and rescue services and efficient in the use of scarce resources. We will also learn from our individual and collective experiences and recognise the dedication, courage and commitment of the people who make up our sector.

NZSAR Values

The person in need of our services is our focus. We want to prevent incidents from occurring but if they do, we work to minimise harm and provide assistance to those in distress. As a sector, we:

- have a strong **community service** ethic;
- **communicate and engage** openly and effectively;
- **collaborate and cooperate** between individuals, teams and organisations; and,
- **respect** individuals, teams and organisations.

Parameters

This plan does not alter or abrogate any participant organisations' SAR responsibilities as defined by statutes, executive orders or international agreements.



Who We Are

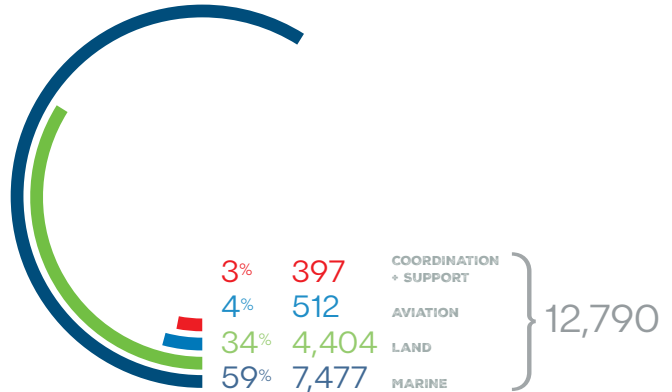
Over 12,000 operational SAR people are directly involved in the New Zealand SAR sector with a further 400 working in support of them. People from all over New Zealand and all walks of life are involved in search and rescue.

Non paid volunteer professionals make up around 95% of the sector. New Zealand has one of the highest rates of volunteer involvement in SAR in the world.

In addition, our sector occasionally draws upon the considerable latent SAR capacity that is resident within a variety of government agencies.

SAR partner agencies make 240 4WD vehicles, 52 aircraft and over 350 vessels available to SAR coordinating authorities for operations. In addition, many other assets of opportunity can be called upon as the need arises.

People in the SAR Sector





MARINE

- Coastguard NZ
- Dunedin Marine SAR
- Surf Life Saving NZ



LAND

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



AVIATION

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



COORDINATION + SUPPORT

- Antarctic Unified Incident Command
- Maritime Operations Centre
- NZ Police
- RCCNZ
- Organisation Support
- Training

Who Benefits From Our Services?

Approximately 2,000 people are assisted by the SAR sector every year. Many of these people owe their lives to the dedication and skill of the people who make up the sector.

Searches and rescues take place for a wide variety of people in all kinds of places throughout the region and occasionally beyond. People in distress may be from international air or sea-going traffic in remote oceanic areas or from domestic commercial air and coastal traffic.

They can also be part of New Zealand's general aviation community or people undertaking recreational pursuits in our skies, across the rugged terrain, inland waterways and lakes or in the coastal waters of the Pacific Island nations within the Search and Rescue Region.

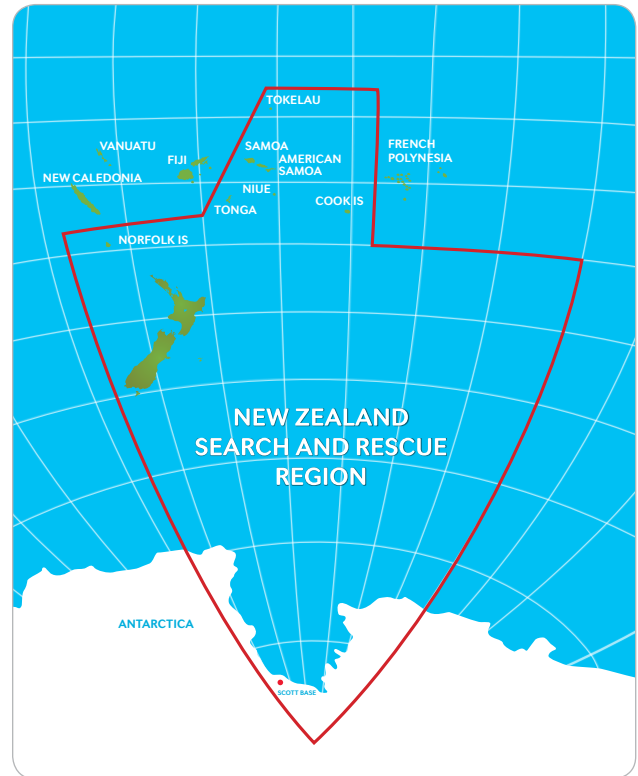
While New Zealanders make up the great majority of those assisted, visitors to our country and our region can also expect an effective SAR response should the need arise.

Our Region

New Zealand's search and rescue region covers over 37 million square kilometres of ocean and relatively small, isolated land masses extending from latitude five degrees south to the Antarctic continent and bounded by the 163E and the 131W meridians of longitude.

While New Zealand has a relatively small landmass by world standards, we have a low population and large tracts of very difficult terrain and highly changeable weather.

Years of experience has shown us that it is very easy to get lost or injured in the New Zealand wilderness and very difficult to find people when that happens.



Concept of Operations

The New Zealand search and rescue sector supplies effective search and rescue services throughout the NZSRR by providing:

- two SAR coordinating authorities able to coordinate land, sea and air SAR operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- appropriately located and trained, land, sea and air search and rescue teams and assets available to conduct SAR operations on request by the coordinating authorities; and,
- long range SAR assets able to conduct operations throughout the NZSRR and in support of neighbouring SAR regions.

The sector functions using trained personnel that are a mix of volunteers, partly paid and fully paid people and using equipment appropriate for the task.

Search and rescue is an integrated component of New Zealand’s wider emergency management framework. We use resilient, self-reliant communities and adopt the Government’s “4Rs” approach to emergency response risk management: reduction, readiness, response, and recovery.



The sector prepares for nationally significant search and rescue events in the region by developing and practising integrated multi-agency responses supported by shared policies and plans.

In situations of complex, significant (in respect to resources and people involved), long term or high profile incidents, the National Security System may activate and co-ordinate part or all of the response.

NZSAR Council Risks

New Zealand's search and rescue sector operates in a complex and evolving environment characterised by scarce resources, technological change, increased public expectations and a heavy reliance on the voluntary sector.

While no response system can be rendered fail-safe, a number of current risks facing the SAR sector can be addressed effectively. New Zealand's SAR sector aims to provide an affordable, effective and sustainable SAR system available for all New Zealanders and guests to New Zealand and Pacific nations within the NZSRR.

The NZSAR Council maintains an active risk register. Risks that are currently subject to mitigation activities are:

- **SAR Information.** The sector needs reliable information based upon sound data in order to identify strategic changes, risks and opportunities and improved decision making.
- **SAR Funding.** The sector experiences funding sufficiency and volatility risks which can inhibit long term planning, investment and degrade sector effectiveness.
- **Cohesive SAR Training.** Training and doctrinal variances can impact on sector collaboration; degrade inter agency cohesion; create incompatible processes, systems and expectations that contribute to deficient SAR services, inefficiencies and potentially avoidable loss of life.
- **Volunteerism.** Risks exist around volunteer recruitment, retention and training.

- **Recreational Knowledge and Equipment.** The public frequently do not take adequate responsibility for their own safety through poor planning, insufficient preparation, unsound decision making or inadequate equipment.
- **Nationally Significant Search and Rescue Event.** Certain search and/or rescue events may overwhelm normal SAR capabilities and may trigger the involvement of the National Security System. Such incidents may require considerable resources to resolve; involve significant numbers of people and/or fatalities; attract substantial domestic and international attention; introduce reputational risks to SAR agencies and New Zealand.
- **Health and Safety.** Risks exist around the injury or fatality of SAR people in the conduct of their duties.
- **SAR Expectations.** Risks exist around unsound or unrealistic expectations of the SAR sector by the public as well as senior policy and decision makers.
- **SAR Technology.** The SAR community may not know of, or be able to access, technologies that have the capacity to significantly increase SAR effectiveness.
- **SAR Demand.** Change in SAR demand may be caused by shifts to New Zealand's demographic profile, urban spread, tourism growth, climate change, or changed recreational pursuits. There may also be changes in risk appetite and requests for assistance.

NZSAR Council Goals

The NZSAR Council seeks to shape and lead the combined efforts of our search and rescue sector by attaining these goals:



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

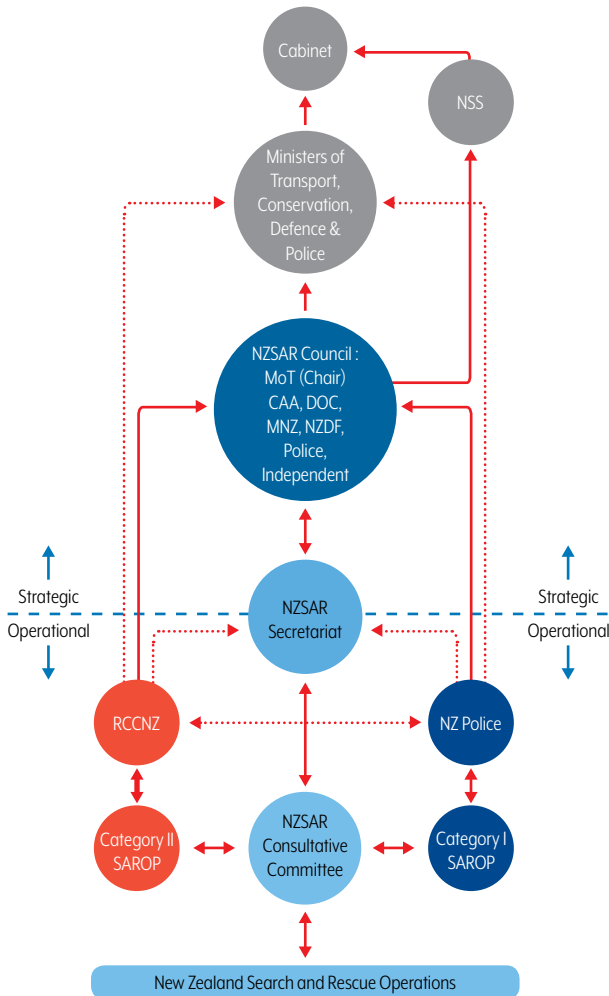
We seek an informed, responsible, adequately equipped and appropriately skilled public who are able to either avoid distress situations or survive them should they occur. A large number of organisations have a role to play with SAR prevention. Collectively, we will enhance personal responsibility through 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.

NZSAR Work Plan 2017 – 2020

In addition to the extensive array of new initiatives and usual business activity conducted by the agencies that comprise the New Zealand SAR sector, the NZSAR Council has modest resources at its disposal to effect its goals and minimise the identified risks. The Council’s National SAR Support Programme (NSSP) is approved annually by the Council and operated by the NZSAR Secretariat. It comprises projects and programmes of SAR support activity including: workshops and seminars, information and technology, documentation, exercises, research, reviews, prevention, training development and the operation of NZSAR Secretariat.

In addition to the annual NSSP, the table below outlines the significant NZSAR initiatives planned for the 2017 – 2020 period.

Significant NZSAR Initiatives 2017 – 2020	2017				2018				2019			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Establish New System for SAR Operational Information	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Establish SAR Sector Performance, Verification and Reporting	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Redevelop 5 x Joint Service Level Agreements	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Develop and Implement SAR IMTEX Programme	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Redevelop AdventureSmart & SAR Prevention Strategies	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Support Major Transport Incident (MTI/MRO) Exercise	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Establish Agreed SAR Sector Doctrinal Material	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Implement Land Communications Recommendations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Implement Aviation Framework Recommendations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Implement Recreational Safety Framework Recommendations	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■



NZSAR Roles:

NZSAR Council: Provides national level strategic governance and leadership to the New Zealand Search and Rescue (SAR) sector.

NZSAR Consultative Committee: Provides a national forum for all New Zealand SAR stakeholders, including voluntary groups.

NZSAR Secretariat: Provides the New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council with information, support services and advice. It also provides sector leadership and implements measures to effect strong strategic coordination of New Zealand's search and rescue sector.

- CAA: Civil Aviation Authority
- DOC: Department of Conservation
- MNZ: Maritime New Zealand
- MoT: Ministry of Transport
- NZDF: New Zealand Defence Force
- NSS: National Security System
- RCCNZ: Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand
- SAROP: Search and Rescue Operations

Key Definitions

Category I SAROP: A SAROP coordinated at the local level; including land operations, subterranean operations, river, lake and inland waterway operations and close-to-shore marine operations.

Category II SAROP: A SAROP coordinated at the national level; including operations associated with missing aircraft or aircraft in distress and off-shore marine operations within the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region. Category II SAROPS typically require the use of national or international resources, and may involve coordination with other states.

CIMS: The Coordinated Incident Management System is a New Zealand framework to systematically manage emergency/SAR incidents.

Coordinating Authority: The Coordinating Authority is the agency or body responsible for the overall conduct of the Search and Rescue Operation. The Coordinating Authority will lead and manage the operation. New Zealand Police and the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand are the recognised Coordinating Authorities in New Zealand. Only SAROPs conducted by the coordinating authorities are recorded as SAR events.

IAMSAR: International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue is an international model, prepared jointly by the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International

Maritime Organisation, for setting standards and for coordinating responses to marine and aviation SAR events.

SAR: Search and Rescue is the activity of locating and recovering persons either in distress, potential distress or missing, and delivering them to a place of safety.

SAROP: A Search and Rescue Operation is an operation undertaken by a Coordinating Authority to locate and retrieve persons missing or in distress. The intention of the operation is to save lives, prevent or minimise injuries and remove persons from situations of peril by locating the persons, providing for initial medical care or other needs and then delivering them to a place of safety.

Search and Rescue Region (SRR). An area of defined dimensions, associated with a rescue coordination centre, within which search and rescue services are provided.

Search and Rescue Service. The performance of distress monitoring, communication, coordination, and search and rescue functions, including provision of medical advice, initial medical assistance, or medical evacuation, through the use of public and private resources, including cooperating aircraft, vessels, and other craft and installations.

If you would like to know more about the NZSAR Council and Secretariat's work visit <http://nzsar.govt.nz>



OUR SECTOR

