

Annual Report 2016-17





From the Chair

Welcome to the New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Council's 2016-2017 Annual Report. The past twelve months have been my first full year as Chair of the NZSAR Council and I am consistently impressed by the dedication, commitment and selfless courage of the many thousands of people who make up our sector. The breadth and scope of our responsibilities are immense given the vast size of our search and rescue region, and the challenges that New Zealand terrain and weather provide to us.

Search and rescue (SAR) plays a vital role in ensuring New Zealanders and guests to our country are able to enjoy our outdoor environment with confidence. In the past year 1,757 people were saved, rescued or assisted as a result of SAR operations. For every one of these people, there is a story that may involve uncertainty, alarm, worry, risk and heroism. Partners, families, workplaces and communities can all be affected by the one SAR operation. While a small number of these operations end in tragedy, the vast majority wind up with people located and recovered. As this happens without much fanfare or publicity, I'm confident that those we find and rescue, along with their families and friends, are grateful for the dedication of our search and rescue teams.

In order to support and guide all the organisations and people who make up our sector, the NZSAR Council, NZSAR Consultative Committee and NZSAR Secretariat need a deep understanding of SAR in all parts of our SAR Region. A sound evidence base and close attention to our ever-changing operating environment creates a reliable platform that enables us all to make informed and timely decisions.

The past year saw a significant commitment by Government to increase funding to the SAR sector. This will flow through to SAR agencies via our Joint Service Level Agreements and a range of initiatives directed by the NZSAR Council. The Rescue Coordination Centre has also been funded to improve its capacity and to support SAR prevention work in the South Pacific. The Council has refreshed and updated its strategic plan that now projects out to 2020, as well as the Operational Framework for the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region (NZSRR) – a key document that outlines the overall development, coordination and improvement of search and rescue services within the NZSRR.

On behalf of the NZSAR Council, I would like to pay respect to the thousands of highly skilled individuals, unpaid or paid, who make up our sector. They tirelessly turnout for SAR operations in all kinds of weather and conditions. They also participate in joint SAR exercises and individual training to acquire or hone their skills. They maintain complex machinery and undertake a whole range of back-office administrative tasks. They do all this in order to be ready, when called upon, to find people in distress and return them to a place of safety. They do all this to save lives.

I am very proud to be involved in this sector and I trust you will enjoy reading more about it and our work in this report.

Peter Mersi
Chair
New Zealand Search and Rescue Council



From the Secretariat

It has been rewarding to see delivery of a number of major projects important to New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) over the 2016-2017 year. Some of the highlights are a new strategy, a revised operational framework, renegotiated Joint Service Level Agreements, approval for new (and additional) funding, a health and safety workshop, new SAR training courses, the establishment of a SAR Telecommunications Working Group-Land, plus the delivery of four walk-level mass rescue desktop exercises. The lowlight for the Secretariat was probably the November 2016 Kaikoura earthquake, which forced us out of our offices and separated us (forever) from all our documents and files.

We have also made significant progress with a wide range of other projects. Our long-held desire to establish a new operational data system has started. Much of the effort so far has centred on preparing a SAR data standard and designing the procurement process. When complete, in late 2018, Project SARdonyx will deliver streamlined operational data capture and much improved information output.

As always, we put a lot of effort into SAR training. We established and analysed two separate SAR (ACE) Student Surveys (one each for 2015 and 2016). These surveys provide sound evidence that SAR students are receiving good quality SAR training, suitable for the tasks they are required to undertake. The surveys also pinpoint areas to improve such as course administration.

We completed the development of two new SAR courses – Marine SAR Technical and Air Observers. Pilot courses were conducted for each and they are now part of the training mix. Both courses also have a substantial online component located in the START SAR knowledge library on the NZSAR website.

The year saw the SAR & Aviation Engagement Framework developed and accepted. This is one of the important building blocks to our comprehensive SAR assurance programme. The annual SAR Case Study Seminar has become a feature of the year. One of the major issues identified at this year's seminar was the challenge of conducting effective family liaison during SAR operations. As a result, we commissioned a short family liaison video (available on START) as a resource for reference and training.

Part of our role is to support and enable SAR organisations to work towards achieving our stated goals. We supported two workshops during the year: an Avalanche SAR Workshop, organised by the New Zealand Mountain Safety Council and run alongside the Southern Hemisphere Alpine Conference, and the Rescue Coordination Centre-led Seventh Pacific Regional SAR Workshop, held in Auckland. We also undertook numerous small projects over the course of the year. An example is the Air Ambulance SAR letter of agreement. This document is a formal agreement between SAR Coordinating Authorities and Emergency Ambulance Services, which defines our respective areas of responsibility for search and rescue and patient recovery.

The New Zealand Search and Rescue (NZSAR) Secretariat, comprised of Carl van der Meulen, Rhett Emery and myself, were greatly assisted over the year by the direction and encouragement of the NZSAR Council and the active support of the NZSAR Consultative Committee. The leadership, guidance and direction we get from these two governance bodies is immense and essential for us to perform our role on behalf of the sector.

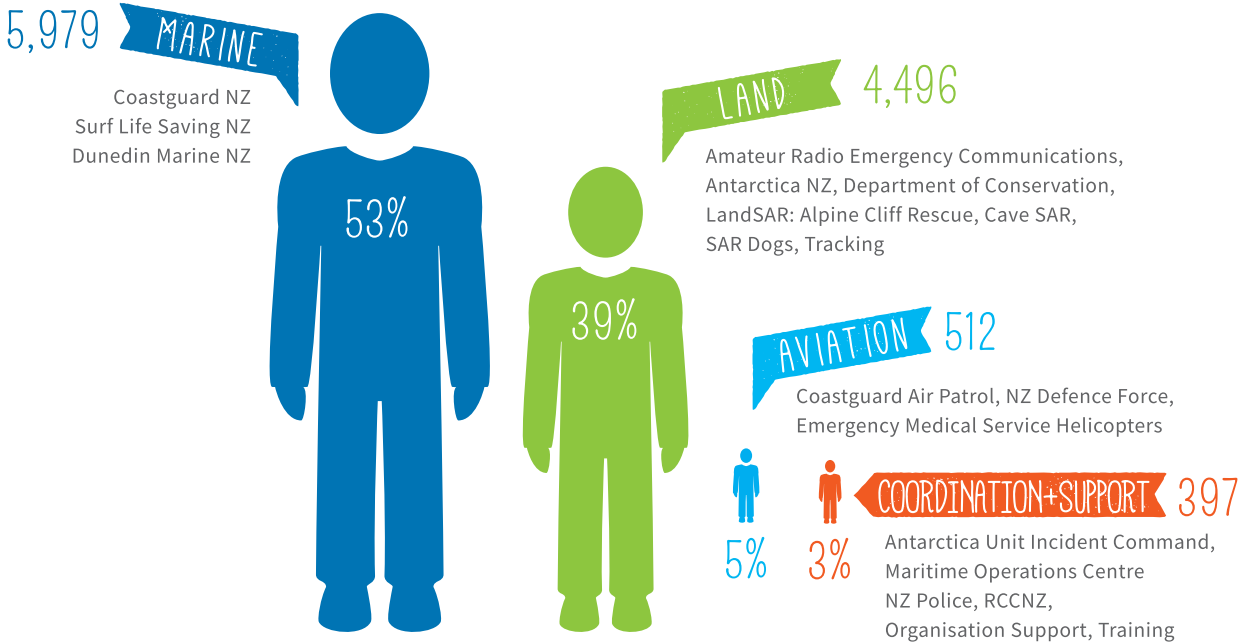
We are also very grateful for the huge amount of assistance we have received from a wide range of SAR experts and contractors around the country. The National Search and Rescue Support Programme relies heavily on the participation, goodwill and hard work by a huge range of SAR people and organisations throughout the sector. Search and rescue is truly a team effort and we owe a large debt of gratitude to the many people and organisations that have assisted us over the past year.

Thank you
Duncan Ferner
Secretariat Manager
New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

WHO WE ARE

People in the NZ SAR Sector

11,384 People are directly involved in the New Zealand SAR sector.



Volunteers

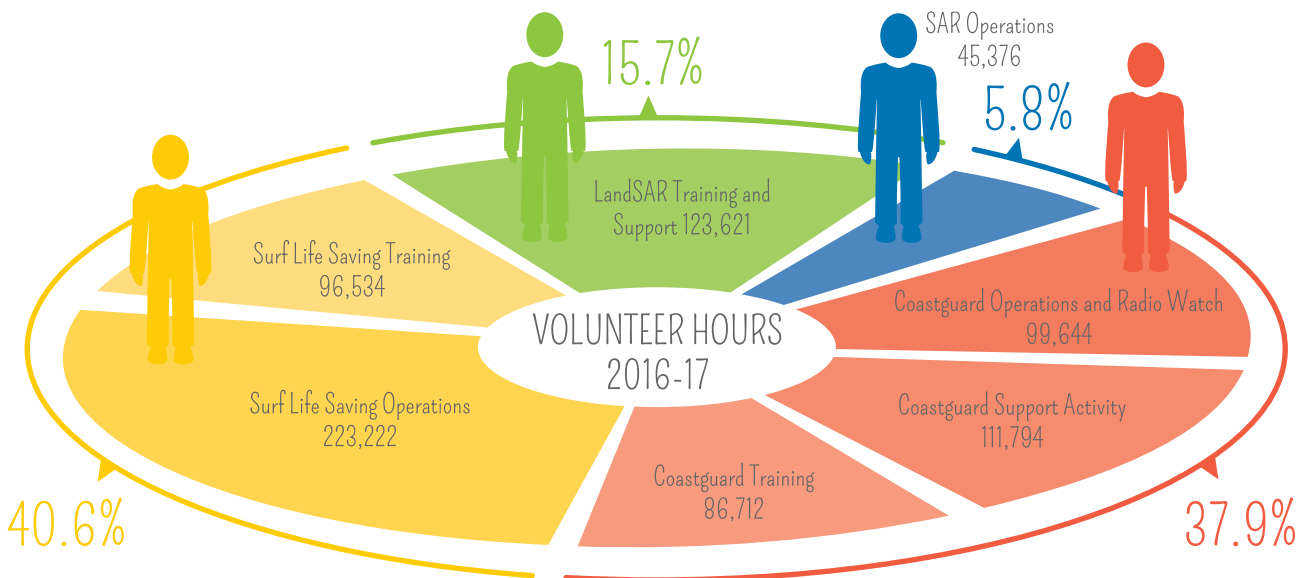
Volunteers make up 94% of the people providing operational SAR response.



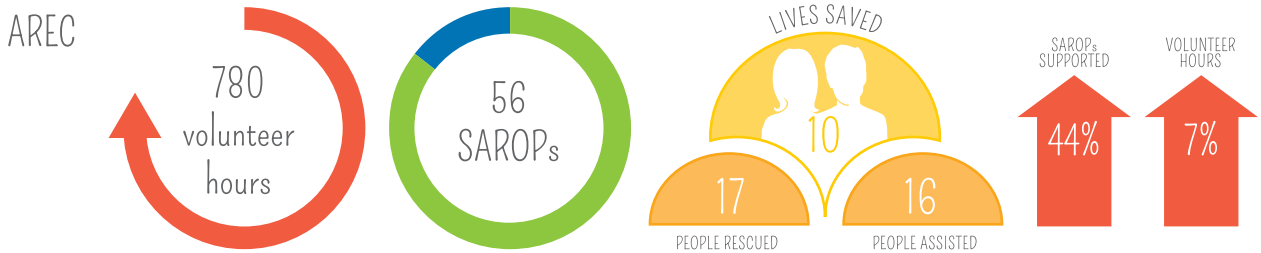
NEW ZEALAND HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST RATES OF VOLUNTEER SAR INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD.

The NGOs Support

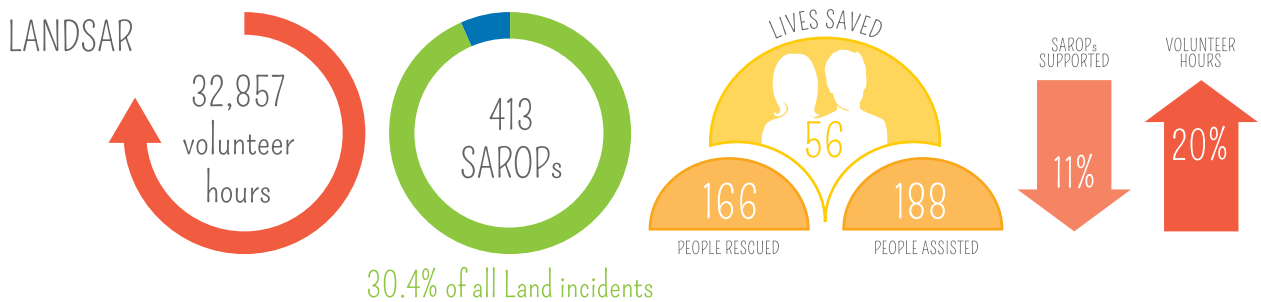
Volunteers provided a total of 786,903 hours of their time supporting the SAR sector. However, only 5.8% of that time is spent directly supporting search and rescue operations (SAROPs). Coastguard and Surf Life Saving volunteers provided 322,866 hours conducting non-SAR operational activity (patrols and radio watch). 418,661 hours of the volunteers' time was spent in training, administration, fund-raising, and other support activities.



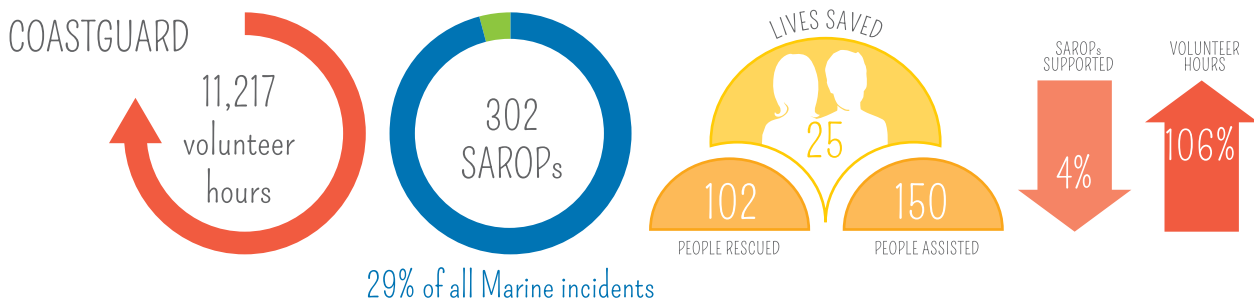
The four SLA partners provided a total of 44,822 volunteer hours in direct operational assistance to the SAR Coordinating Authorities during SAR Operations in 2016-17. This is an increase of 31% compared to the previous year.



AREC provided 780 volunteer hours in support of 56 SAROPs (48 land, 8 marine), resulting in 10 lives saved, 17 people rescued, and 16 people assisted. Compared to the previous year, SAROPs supported increased by 44% and volunteer hours increased by 7%.



LandSAR provided 32,857 volunteer hours in support of 413 SAROPs (386 land, 27 marine), resulting in 56 lives saved, 166 people rescued, and 188 people assisted. LandSAR provided support to 30.4% of all land incidents. Compared to the previous year, SAROPs supported decreased by 11% and volunteer hours increased by 20%.



Coastguard provided 11,217 volunteer hours in support of 302 SAROPs (290 marine, 12 land), resulting in 25 lives saved, 102 people rescued, and 150 people assisted. Coastguard provided support to 29% of all marine incidents. Compared to the previous year, SAROPs decreased by 4% and volunteer hours increased by 106%.

SNAPSHOT

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the SAR sector in New Zealand

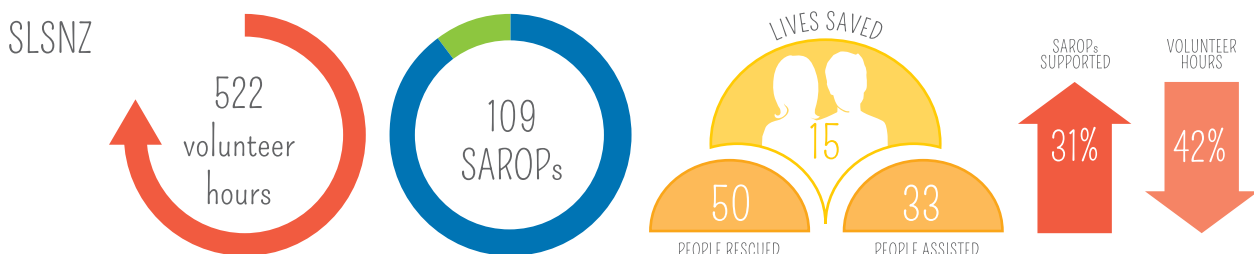
“After a lifetime of boating I felt like I had something to contribute which could help keep other people safe and enjoying boating as much as I do.”

Murray Paul is a volunteer at Coastguard Kaikoura. He is typical of the large number of volunteers across the SAR sector who selflessly dedicate themselves in the service of their community.

Murray is a self-employed builder and a skipper on the rescue vessel. He says he joined the local Coastguard unit back in 2005 to give something back to the community.

One of Murray’s most memorable operations was the rescue of the four people from the yacht Marguerite which was believed to have hit a whale in June 2010. The Coastguard crew battled heavy seas and high winds to bring the yacht crew back to Kaikoura. For the rescue, Murray and his crew were awarded NZSAR Certificates of Achievement.

Aside from the satisfaction of being involved in successful rescues, Murray enjoys the friendships he has made while volunteering. He says he feels lucky to have a professional crew that he trusts entirely. While he and the other volunteers chalk up a lot of hours in training, on maintenance and fundraising, he says it is great to get recognised for the work they do.

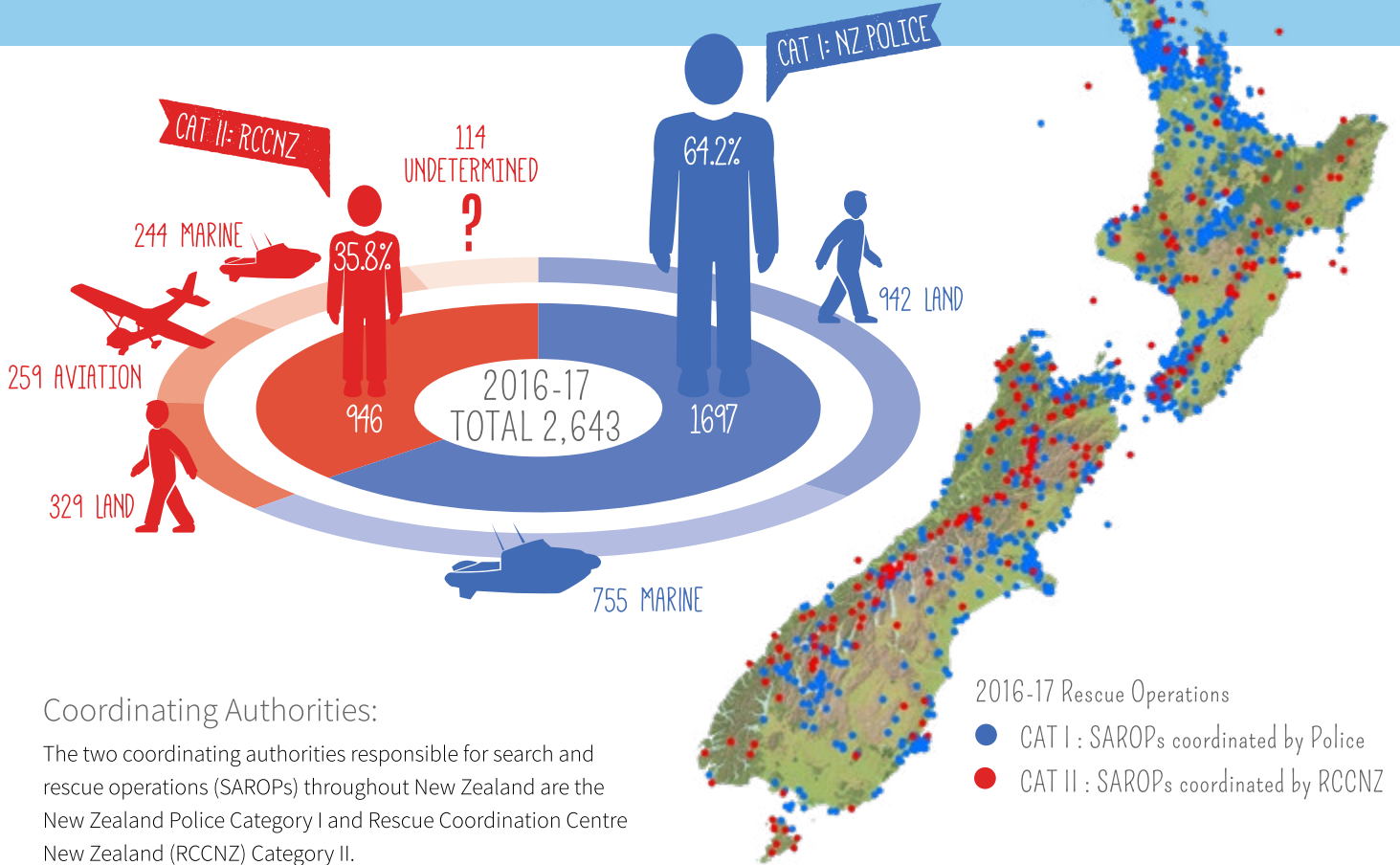


Surf Life Saving New Zealand provided 522 volunteer hours in support of 109 SAROPs (11 land, 98 marine), resulting in 15 lives saved, 50 people rescued, and 33 people assisted. Compared to the previous year, SAROPs supported increased by 31% and volunteer hours decreased by 42%.

WHAT WE DO

SAR Incidents in 2016-17

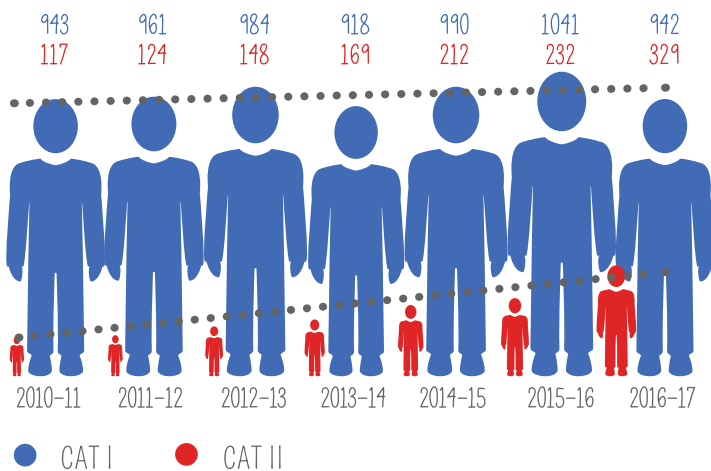
Category I and II search and rescue operations 2016-17



Coordinating Authorities:

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

CAT II land incidents steadily increasing



SNAPSHOT

More CAT II SAROPs on Land

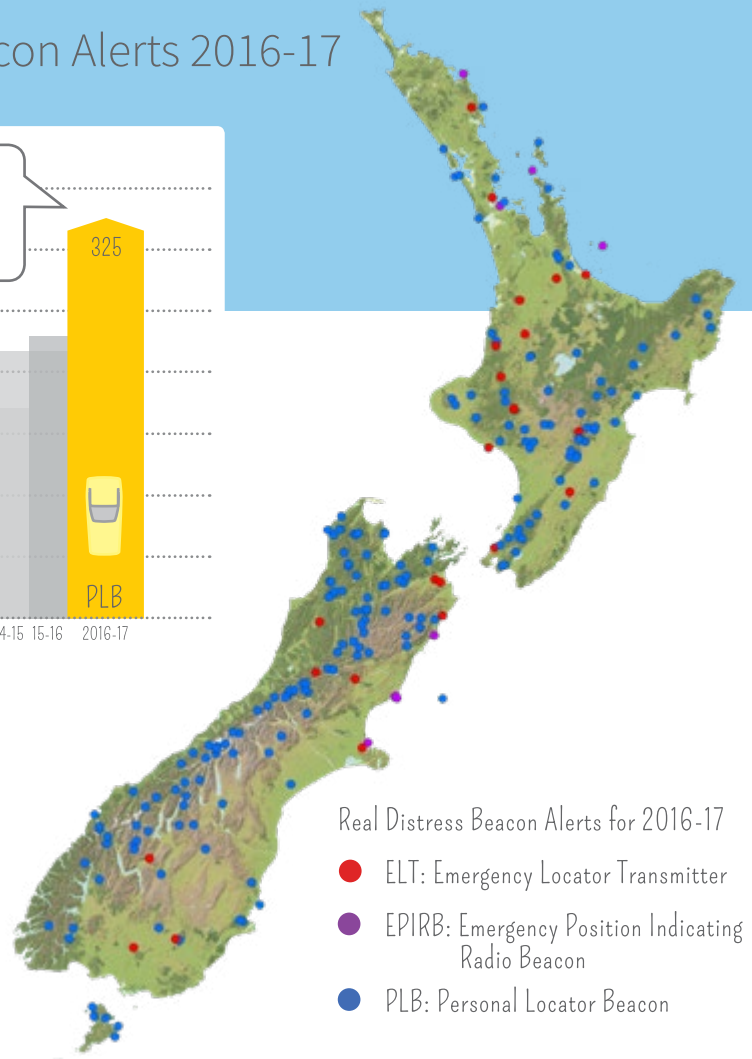
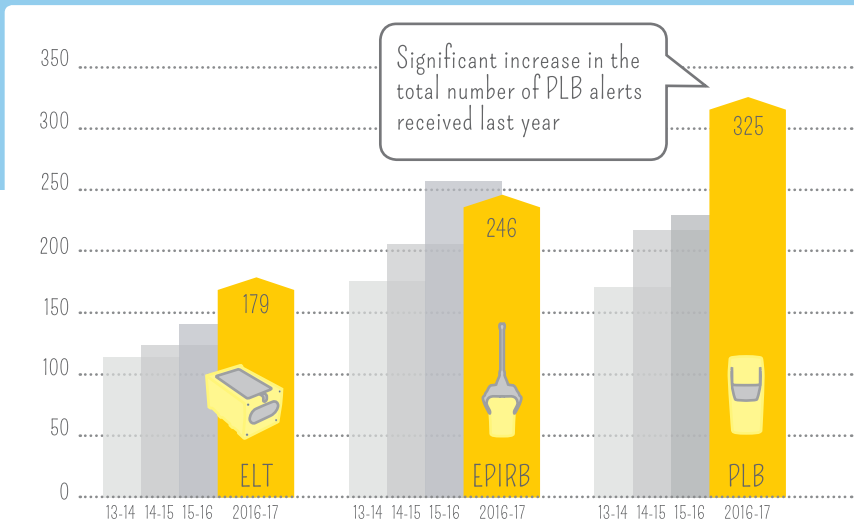
There are an increasing number of Category II search and rescue operations (SAROPs). The past few years' data shows that the rise is largely on land, and driven by an upsurge in the use of personal locator beacons (PLBs).

There are nearly 70,000 distress beacons registered in New Zealand – with the vast majority being PLBs. This number continues to grow as PLBs become more affordable and as prevention messaging takes hold. We are seeing more people heading into the outdoors, bush, mountains, ice – and even on the water – with a PLB as their preferred means of communicating distress.

We expect to see the number of Category II land-based SAROPs continue to increase over the next few years.

Beacons

Distress Beacon Alerts 2016-17



Real Distress Beacon Alerts for 2016-17

- ELT: Emergency Locator Transmitter
- EPIRB: Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon
- PLB: Personal Locator Beacon

SNAPSHOT



Auckland kayaker Tim Muhundan bought his first personal locator beacon (PLB) in 2012. He says the purchase followed his first-hand experience of a fellow kayaker using a PLB to call for help during a trip on the Whanganui River. One of the party dislocated his shoulder in an area of the river with steep access and no cell phone coverage. Fortunately, two other kayakers had PLBs and were able to summon help.

“The value of the PLB was a real eye-opener. You press a button and you get help. There were no other options in that situation.”

These days Tim always carries a PLB in an easily accessible waterproof pouch inside the front pocket of his lifejacket. He says he has it with him for peace of mind when he is solo paddling, and as part of the risk management plan when he is out with a group.

In recent years, he has been with kayaking groups that have used beacons twice – in both cases for a medical evacuation from remote areas.

“For me, a PLB is an important part of my kit. It gives SAR my exact position (via RCCNZ), a homing signal for the helicopter, and a strobe – minimising the time to find me in the water. And one day it might also save my life – how much value to put on that?”

SNAPSHOT

MEOSAR Delivering Accuracy and Speed

Improvements to the international satellite-based distress alerting system with the recent introduction of MEOSAR (using medium-altitude earth orbiting satellites) continues to show value by providing faster detection times and increased accuracy over the current system.

The current system, which uses LEOSAR (using low-altitude earth orbiting satellites) and GEOSAR (using geo-stationary satellites), was expanded in 2015-2016 when the MEOSAR system receiving station was built and activated. This six-antenna array in the middle of the North Island is part of a linked system with Australia, which has a ground station in Western Australia. Due to the increased altitude and additional satellites, we are seeing almost instant beacon activation detection and increased accuracy. The altitude also provides greater detections as the low-altitude satellites sometimes struggled to detect beacons due to ‘terrain masking’ by the New Zealand geography.

The faster detection times are very important as SAR assets can be deployed sooner, often taking advantage of daylight or weather conditions. The LEOSAR system will be decommissioned at the end of December 2017; however, no changes are required by beacon owners. It is vitally important that we continue to ensure that beacon owners register their beacons with RCCNZ and keep their contact details up to date.

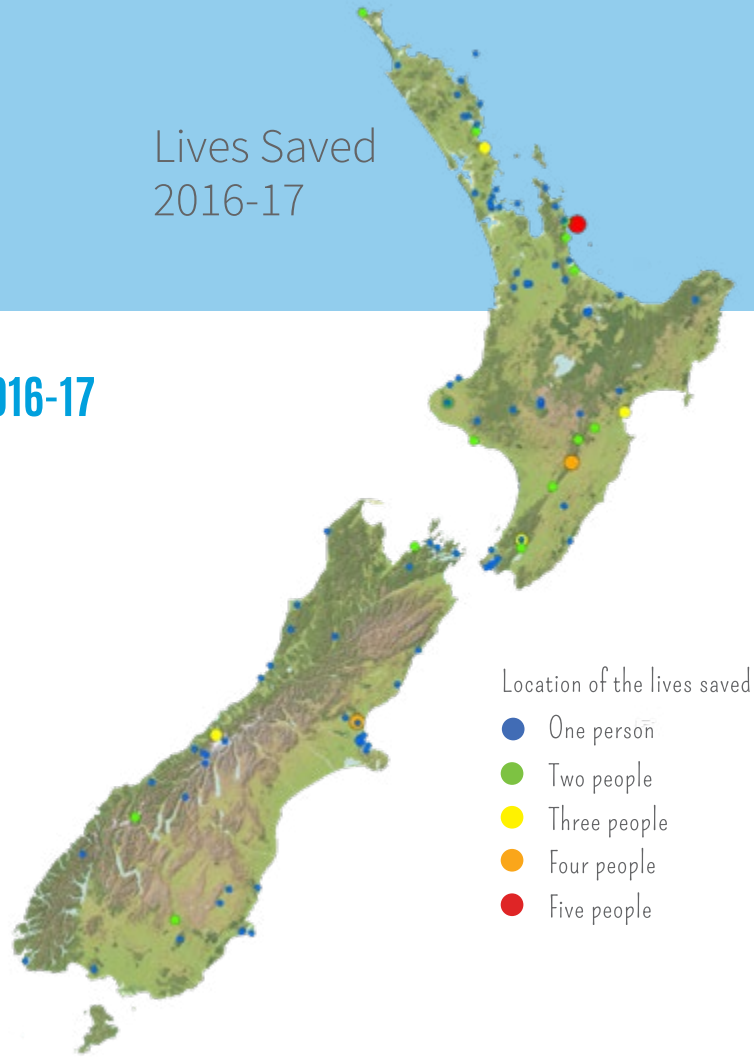
WHAT WE ACHIEVE

Lives Saved 2016-17

1923 People Were At Risk During 2016-17



597 million dollars in social costs was averted by saving 160 lives
cost benefit ratio: 28:1



Definitions

- **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.



NZSAR estimates that New Zealand averted \$597 million in social costs as a result of the 160 lives that were saved. The social cost of a premature fatality is measured using the Ministry of Transport's Value of Statistical Life formula (VOSL). It includes intangible costs such as emotional costs to family and friends. The intangible benefit-to-cost ratio is estimated to be approximately 28:1 and can in part be attributed to the continual financial efficiency and operational effectiveness of the sector. Of the approximate \$21.201m in Government investment, \$5.663m was sourced from the fuel excise duties paid by recreational boat users. This 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 166 fatalities during the year.

WHERE WE DO IT & WHAT WE USE



SNAPSHOT

Pacific Rescue

Each year New Zealand is involved in search and rescues in the Pacific, both within our SAR region and outside it. Here is just one story from the many rescues.

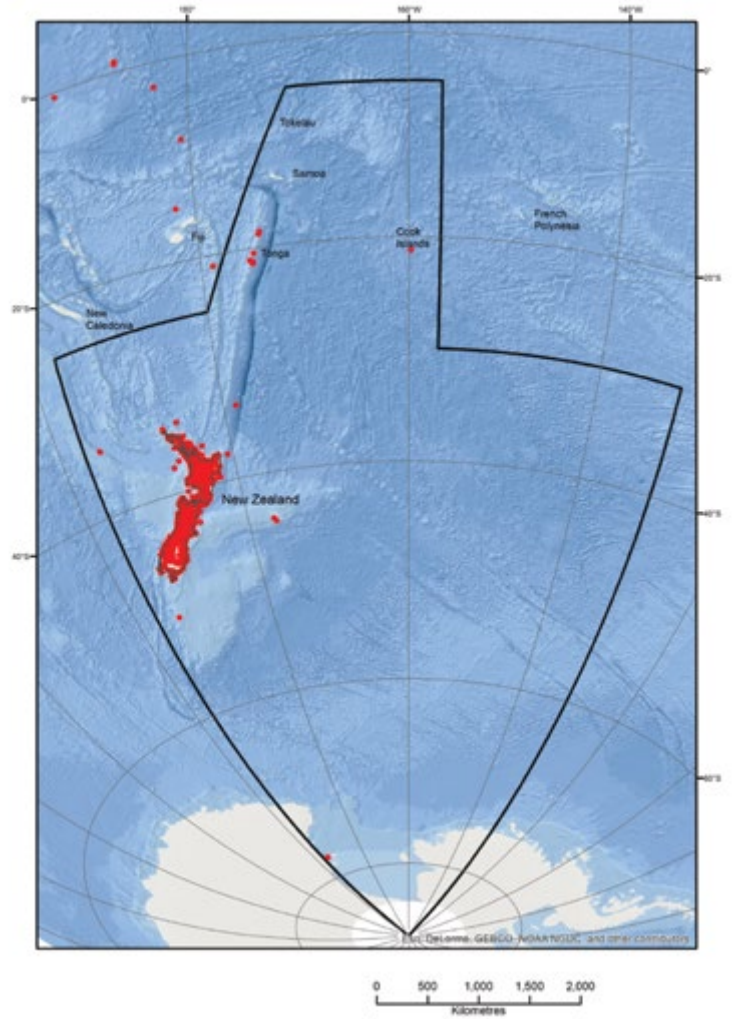
In June 2017, four Wellington sailors were stranded on a 19 metre yacht southeast of Suva after running aground on a reef late at night, in difficult sea conditions.

The occupants of the yacht, who were heading to the Fijian capital, activated their Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and were eventually able to make their way from the stricken vessel to a nearby atoll.


A New Zealand Air Force P-3K2 Orion was dispatched by the Rescue Coordination Centre in Wellington and found the yacht 400 kilometres southeast of the Fijian capital.

The Orion's crew contacted the Fijian Navy who was able to deliver the crew safely to Suva.

NZ SAR Rescue Region



58%
of recreation
boats that required
SAR support were
5m or less in length.



Antarctica Scott Base



Auckland & Wellington International Airports



Cape Egmont Sea Rescue Trust



Coastguard New Zealand Units



LandSAR New Zealand Groups



Surf Life Saving New Zealand Clubs



Milford Emergency Response Team



New Zealand Defence Force



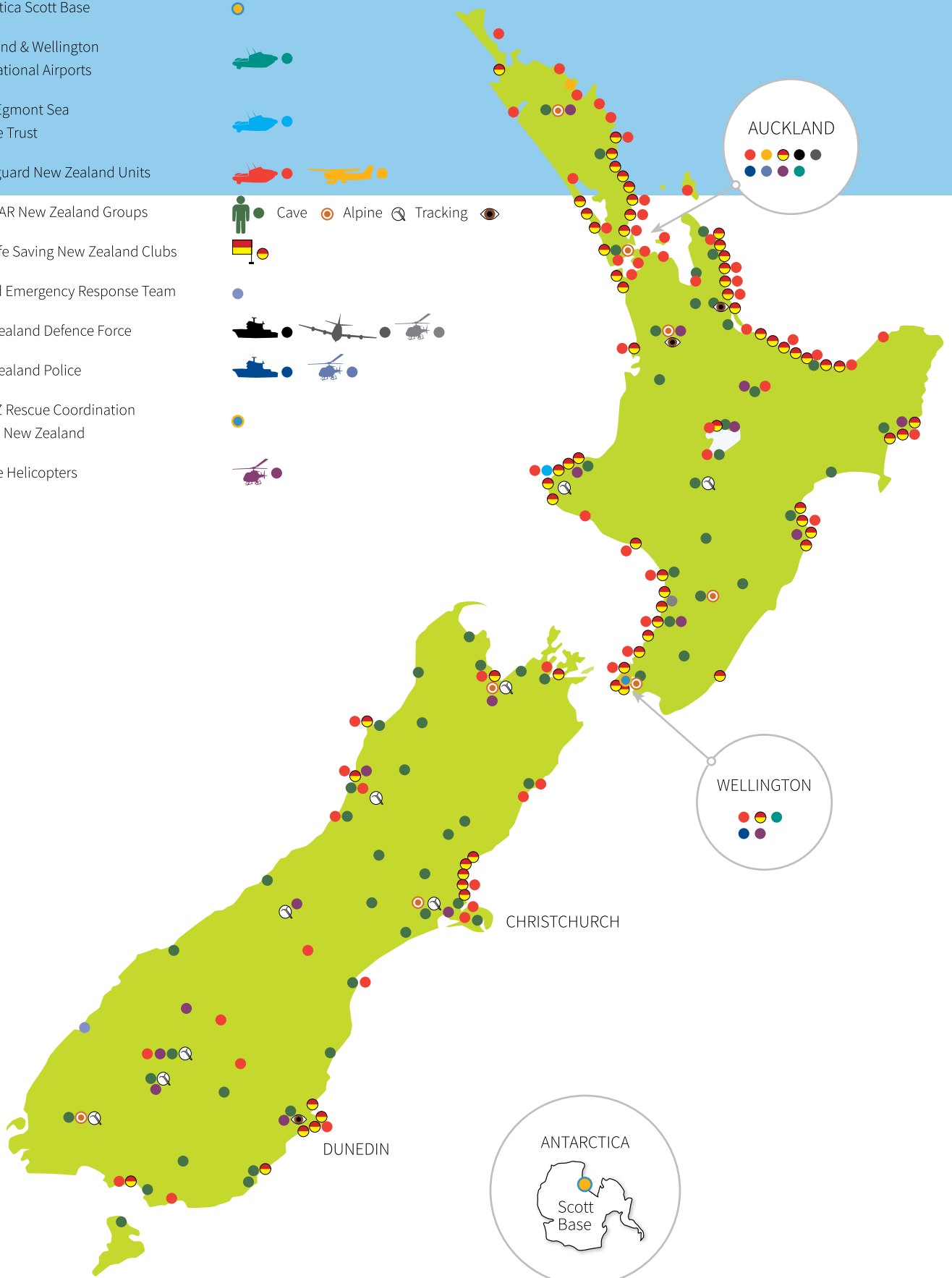
New Zealand Police



RCCNZ Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand



Rescue Helicopters



AUCKLAND



WELLINGTON



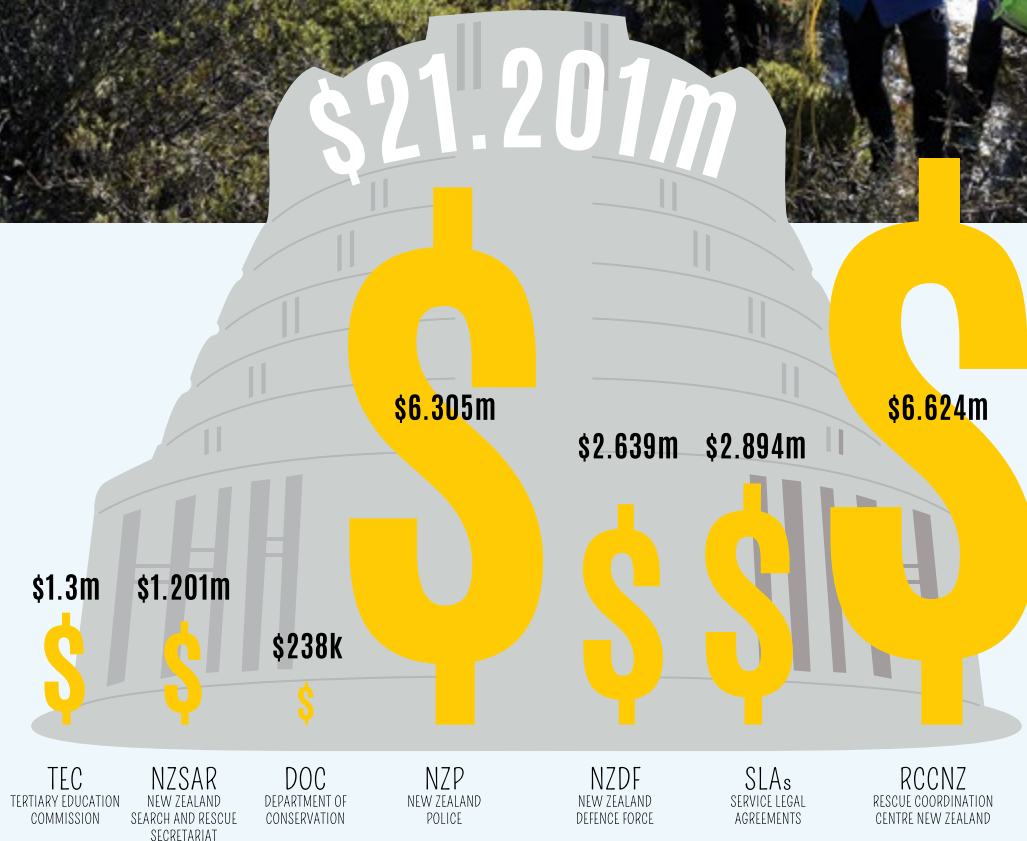
CHRISTCHURCH

DUNEDIN

ANTARCTICA

Scott Base

Government Expenditure on SAR 2016-17



There was at least one SAR incident each day during the 2016-17 year. The three busiest days of the year were:



Strategy

Values

- A strong community service ethic
- Communicate and engage openly and effectively
- Collaborate and cooperate between individuals, teams and organisations
- Respect individuals, teams and organisations



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.



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 New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.



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.

Supporting SAR

NZSAR supports and enables a wide range of organisations to help us realise our strategic goals. We undertook numerous projects during the year – here’s a snapshot of just some of our collective achievements.



SAREXs

Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREXs) are a valuable and highly regarded aspect of SAR training. The NZSAR Council recognises the importance of SAREXs and provides funding support to each Police District to assist in the planning and evaluation of their SAREXs.

Multi-agency SAREXs provide an opportunity for personnel from SAR agencies to work alongside each other in an exercise setting. Evaluation of exercises provides feedback to those involved and offers improvements for the benefit of the whole sector. Exercise reports are published on the NZSAR website. The following illustrate some of the SAREXs supported by the NZSAR Council during the year.

Scolly

This multi-agency marine exercise took place in the Bay of Plenty in October 2016. The scenario started with an alert from a boat owner about missing divers near Motiti Island. The exercise involved Police, Coastguard, and Surf Life Saving. The objectives were to: test the activation of a Marine SAR response; test the ability of the different agencies to coordinate, formulate, and document an incident action plan; and, test the deployment of multi-agency on-water SAR resources.

The exercise achieved its aim of locating and rescuing the missing persons within a suitable timeframe. The different agencies worked well together to achieve the exercise objectives.

The evaluation identified the need to fully resource the incident management team (IMT) with people familiar with the required roles and responsibilities – including dedicated personnel to record planning decisions. The exercise also identified an issue of effectively communicating with a Surf IRB when it is travelling at speed, which has been noted for any future SAR operations that may take place in the area.

Big Glory

This SAREX took place on Stewart Island in October 2016 with the aim of testing planning, operations, logistics, and field team search methods in a remote, isolated location.

The exercise involved Police and LandSAR teams, supported by AREC, searching a remote part of Stewart Island for a missing hunter. The scenario was based on the cold case of a hunter who went missing in Big Glory Bay in 1991. The SAREX involved more than 70 Police and LandSAR volunteers, and put 40 searchers in the field.

The operation was also an opportunity to test the search management tool SARTrack.

Unfortunately, the search teams failed to find any trace of the missing hunter. The exercise provided valuable feedback about communication issues and some of the technical challenges associated with remote location searches. The evaluation report noted the need to ensure that field teams maintain at least one form of communication with the IMT at all times, including overnight. While SARTrack provided clear, visual information for the IMT, it was noted that it also requires additional resourcing of people with the relevant technical skills to operate the programme.

Whanganui National Park

The activation of a personal locator beacon (PLB) on the Mangapurua track was the scenario used in this SAREX in the Whanganui National Park.

In many cases this scenario would involve a helicopter rescue coordinated by RCCNZ, but for the purposes of this exercise the weather was represented as unsuitable for a helicopter, so the response was 'handed over' to Police. Response teams needed to use commercial jet boat operators to transport personnel and equipment. Rescuers had to find a family group and recover two "injured" cyclists who had fallen 30 metres below the track in the park.

The search involved Police, Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation, the New Zealand Fire Service (now called Fire and Emergency New Zealand), the Department of Conservation, and Whanganui River Adventures (a local jet boat operator).

The exercise began with a real beacon activation (using an RCCNZ test beacon), which enabled RCCNZ to test the new MEOSAR system. RCCNZ staff then handed control over to Police in line with established processes. Those involved in the exercise said it was a giant step towards enhancing recreational safety in the Whanganui National Park.



208

land incidents
occurred in
alpine terrain.

This exercise tested the response plan for a very plausible scenario. The evaluation report noted that a more detailed plan outlining the roles and responsibilities of IMT personnel would be helpful, including a safety plan.

Also noted was the need to ensure IMT computers are regularly maintained to ensure updates are installed in advance of a SAR operation.

Exercise Series - Rauora II

This is the second series of exercises being conducted around the country to test the arrangements for responding to an incident that may require the rescue of a large number of people – known as a mass rescue operation (MRO).

An MRO is one that involves the need for immediate assistance to large numbers of persons in distress, to such a level that capabilities normally available to search and rescue authorities are inadequate.

The scenario for these exercises involve a cruise ship with over 3,000 people on board that has caught fire and will ultimately need to be evacuated.

The exercises are delivered using a dynamic simulation to control the scenario. Each exercise involves approximately 50 people from a range of agencies, including Police, NZSAR, RCCNZ, New Zealand Defence Force, local and regional Civil Defence groups, St John Ambulance, Fire and Emergency New Zealand, and a range of other local and national agencies.

17 incidents
involved incorrectly
disposed distress
beacons at landfills.



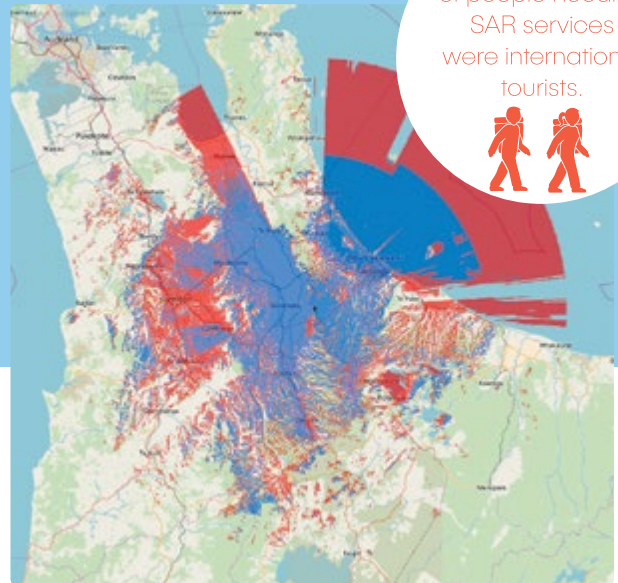


Telecommunications Working Group

The SAR Telecommunications Working Group-Land (STWG-L) is a technical group set up following a review of the radio equipment used by organisations that carry out land-based search and rescue in New Zealand.

The purpose of the group is to ensure more effective and sustainable communications among everyone involved in land-based operations. It is charged with making any changes deemed necessary to ensure SAR communications are reliable, ubiquitous and available to support the safety and effectiveness of search teams in land-based SAR operations.

The STWG-L is made up of participants from SAR agencies including (photo above) NZSAR, Police, LandSAR and AREC, along with non-core agencies such as DOC, RCCNZ, New Zealand Defence Force, Surf Life Saving New Zealand, Coastguard New Zealand, Civil Defence, Maritime New Zealand, Mountain Radio Service and Fire and Emergency New Zealand.



VHF REPEATER COVERAGE - TE WERAITI

The 2016 review offered recommendations for improving the availability and effectiveness of 2-way radio as a critical component of SAR activities. It confirmed that 2-way High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) radio are essential for SAR operations – noting that despite the domination of cellular communications, land-based SAROPs often take place in remote locations where cellular coverage is limited or non-existent.

The working group has held a series of meetings beginning in January 2017. A recent focus is on developing a VHF handheld portable radio national channel plan, as well as gathering information about fixed VHF repeaters that are used by SAR and made available in the NZSAR resources database.

SAR Prevention

NZSAR works with a number of SAR agencies, and other organisations with an interest in keeping people safe, to promote consistent recreational activity safety messages to both the New Zealand public and visitors to New Zealand.

The intent is to encourage people to enjoy recreational opportunities, but to also take responsibility for their own safety.

SAR Prevention Framework

A simple, nationally led framework, was developed for all stakeholders to use to complement existing environment specific strategies, such as the 'Water Safety Sector Strategy 2020'. The framework was developed to support decision making, prioritisation, and inter agency coordination. NZSAR is now structuring a number of initiatives based on the Framework that: enable a greater collective understanding of the prevention activities underway across New Zealand; add to existing research of recreators' behaviour; and, connect and support effective prevention responses. NZSAR's role is to facilitate access to the information, education and activities regardless of where people are recreating. Safer recreation environments equals a reduced demand for SAR services.



Providing adventurers with advice and tips to keep themselves safe goes some way to reducing the demand for search and rescue services. This is the premise for our involvement with www.adventuresmart.org.nz – New Zealand's go-to online portal for outdoor, water, and boating safety information about all adventures in, on, or above land and water.

AdventureSmart is also the only place you will find the Water, Boating, and Outdoor Safety Codes, now in 18 different languages.

International tourists are a priority – top countries visiting AdventureSmart are Australia, UK, USA, Germany, France, Netherlands, China, Russia, Canada, Singapore, and India. Visits from most of these countries are continuing to increase.

AdventureSmart has:

- 18 Safety Code Languages
- 100+ Website Language Options
- 30,000 + Website Visitors



PAC-SAR group photo

Pacific Search and Rescue

For the past two years, the Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) has proudly represented New Zealand as chair of the Pacific Community-sponsored Pacific Islands Search and Rescue-Steering Committee (PACSAR-SC). This dedicated committee is a collective of five nations – Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, and the USA. The committee meets regularly and has search and rescue (SAR) oversight and direction-setting responsibilities for the wider Pacific region.

RCCNZ Training Manager Kevin Banaghan says, during their tenure as chair, the Steering Committee developed a strategic plan (2016-2021). “It agreed our priorities with a focus on the four pillars of effective SAR: responsible SAR governance, efficient SAR coordination, effective SAR response, and SAR prevention.”

The strategic plan was launched at the Seventh Pacific Regional SAR Workshop, held in Auckland in May. The workshop is a cornerstone of a wider work programme led by the Steering Committee. Around 100 delegates from 22 countries were present in Auckland, along with key industry partners including the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), international technology company McMurdo, Kordia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the NZSAR Secretariat, New Zealand Police, and the International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF).



RCCNZ staff with the Tongan Police Search

“In many cases the courses have become the cornerstone to SAR training and maritime safety in each of these Pacific Island countries.”

Pacific Training Courses

With the support of Maritime New Zealand (MNZ) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), RCCNZ has made enormous inroads into improving SAR coordination and response across the South Pacific region. Initiatives include conducting short tailormade SAR training courses in various Pacific Islands such as Niue, Tonga, Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Cook Islands. In 2018 the RCCNZ are planning a visit to Tokelau.



Rescue boats Alotolu & Amolua

RCCNZ Manager Mike Hill says the training courses have been very well supported and have had a positive impact. “In many cases the courses have become the cornerstone to SAR training and maritime safety in each of these Pacific Island countries.”

RCCNZ believes SAR coordination throughout the South Pacific will be improved, and more successful outcomes can be achieved through this cooperative approach using uniform procedures to build search and rescue capability.

The training programme is enhancing national SAR capability through the implementation of national and international SAR training, technologies, and resourcing initiatives. It’s enabling appropriately trained coordinating staff who can gather information, plan a response, coordinate activity within a search area, and monitor and document the response. There’s also a component which involves gathering lessons learnt so that the SAR system may be improved.

Celebrating Success



NZSAR Awards

“To see and hear of people like yourselves risking life and limb to help perfect strangers is very humbling and embodies all that is great with humanity and our country.”

With those simple but heartfelt words Hon Tim Macindoe, Associate Minister of Transport, welcomed the wider SAR community to the NZSAR Awards at the Banquet Hall in Parliament in May.

The awards ceremony was the Minister’s first speaking engagement in the new portfolio and he regarded it as a privilege to be recognising the commitment and dedication of all those in search and rescue who go out in hazardous environments and extreme conditions to help those in need.

He also paid tribute to the countless hours put in by all in the sector to ensure they are able to carry out their roles safely and effectively.

“I can only wonder at how many family and social events you have had to postpone or miss as you answer that call to help.”

Gold Award winners Ray Burge, from Coastguard Northern Region, and Ian Coard, from Coastguard Riverton, were quick

to acknowledge the support of both their teams and their families in their acceptance speeches.

Ray, who received his Gold Operational Award for the rescue of two swimmers, said that the unsung work of Coastguard staff and volunteers, along with the support of his family, also needed to be recognised. That sentiment was echoed by Ian Coard who acknowledged the invaluable support of his wife: “Without her, I couldn’t do what I do.”

Nicola Hockley from Coastguard Canterbury, who received a Certificate of Achievement for her dedication to Coastguard search and rescue, spoke for many on the night when she acknowledged the importance of the team.

“I’m acutely aware that I stand here as the result of the passion and commitment of my predecessors and my contemporaries. I am grateful to learn and be challenged – and to reinvest my learning and my time by saving lives.”

Gold Awards

Operational Activity

Is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2016.



Ray Burge from Coastguard Northern Region

For the rescue of two swimmers from Waiomanu Beach, Auckland on 11 December 2016

Off duty Coastguard Operations Manager Ray Burge battled heavy seas with challenging 25 knot winds and a 1.5 metre swell to rescue a man – and then helped locate the man's partner and direct a Coastguard vessel to her.

Ray performed this heroic act of bravery and life-saving actions safely and effectively. Without doubt, Ray's actions saved two people from drowning.

Support Activity

Is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region over an extended period.



Ilan Coard from Coastguard Riverton

For his services to Coastguard and Coastguard Riverton

Ilan Coard has been a Coastguard volunteer for 29 years. He has held numerous leadership roles for the Riverton Unit: currently he's a board member, its Safety Officer, its SAR Coordinator, and a Coastguard Boating Education Tutor for Boatmaster and Marine VHF training. He also holds the Coastguard ISC Senior Master qualification. He has served on the Coastguard New Zealand Board, including the role of National President from 2007 to 2010. He constantly makes himself available and fully commits to the challenges of Coastguard work.

Certificates of Achievements

Operational Activity

Awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2016.



Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team

The Helicopter Line, Glentanner Park

For their efforts in five challenging operations during November and December 2016

The Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team with The Helicopter Line successfully saved the lives of four mountaineers, plus another with a medical issue – all in an eight-week period. The award also recognises the dedication of a number of the Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team and helicopter crew that were involved in two of these demanding operations – within 24 hours of each other. In addition to this, the award recognises the crucial role of the Rescue Coordination Centre staff.



3 Squadron RNZAF

For the rescue of two people from Archway Rocks, Wharariki Beach on 17 February 2016

Two tourists were stranded in appalling weather. Winds up to 50 knots, heavy rain, thunderstorms and a cloud base reducing to 300ft meant other helicopters were unable to respond.

The combination of a capable helicopter operated by a very capable crew saved the lives of the two tourists, who would not have survived due to the conditions and no other feasible means of rescue.



Amalgamated Helicopters NZ Ltd

For the rescue of a trampers from the Tararua Ranges on 25 April 2016

A trampers, who had fallen and sustained a compound broken leg, activated his personal locator beacon.

Pilot Jason Diedrichs landed as close as he could to the injured man, while crew member Jamie Hansen was able to drag the injured trampers to the helicopter. Jason's attention to risk, as well as both his and Jamie's extensive working knowledge of the area, provided the only option of getting the injured trampers out of the area in a timely manner.



**Mike Hawthorne, Ben Watson, Mike Lydiard
From LandSAR Hawke's Bay**

**Charles Beetham (Pilot), Brett How (Crewman)
From Hawke's Bay Helicopter Rescue Trust**

**Jarrad Whittaker, Wayne Steed
From New Zealand Police SAR**

For the rescue of two trampers from the Ruahine Ranges on 5 & 6 October 2016

The trampers activated their personal locator beacon after they were hit by a sudden deterioration in weather. The rescue team tramped for seven hours in the dark to locate the couple.

The survival of the two trampers would have been significantly compromised without the professional skills, teamwork, perseverance and courage of the rescue team. The skill and courage of the helicopter crew in challenging flying conditions facilitated a safe recovery.

Aspiring Helicopters, Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust, Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue

For the rescue of two climbers from Mt Aspiring on 21 December 2016

Aspiring Helicopters and the Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue (ACR) responded to a spot beacon activation in the Mt Aspiring area. The team quickly located two badly injured climbers who had fallen approximately 800m, sustaining severe injuries. The ACR team requested the assistance of the Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust in Dunedin with an advanced paramedic on board.

This award recognises the exceptional skill levels of everyone involved and the excellent communication, sound decision-making and outstanding coordination between the teams.

5 Squadron RNZAF

Captain Shashi Prakash, MV Southern Lily

For the rescue of three people from the yacht Platino on 13 and 14 June 2016

An RNZAF Orion responded to a distress beacon from a stricken yacht 300 nautical miles northwest of New Zealand. The yacht had been dismantled and was taking on water. The three surviving crew members were evacuated in extreme weather by the container ship Southern Lily, which steamed for 14 hours to reach the stricken yacht.

In extremely difficult circumstances this rescue relied on communication, planning and commitment by all those involved.



Jeremy Johnston, Michael Johns
From Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue

Vaughan Smith, Peter Lawn
From New Zealand Police SAR

Grant Smith, Andy Cronin
From the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust

**For the rescue of three people from Mt Taranaki on
 11 September 2016**

Three overseas climbers made a 111 call from the eastern side of Mt Taranaki and reported being hit by an avalanche. Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust with Taranaki Alpine Cliff Rescue (TACR) and Police SAR responded and winched rescuers onto the mountainside. All three climbers were eventually flown from the scene.

The rescue of the three climbers was a high risk and dynamic rescue. The team work and expertise of all the rescuers involved ensured the rescue was carried out quickly and as safely as possible in dangerous circumstances. Taranaki Rescue Helicopter Trust's pilot and crewman also played an integral role.

Certificates of Achievements

Support Activity

Awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region, either during 2016 or over an extended period.

Ray Bellringer

From Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team

For his commitment and services to search and rescue

Ray Bellringer has been involved in search and rescue for 45 years, beginning as a front-line searcher in Taranaki in 1971. His involvement today focuses on active roles with the Incident Management Team at Aoraki/Mt Cook and as a first responder as a rescue-qualified paramedic.

Ray uses and shares his field experience in planning and directing many significant search and rescue operations across the wider Aoraki / Mt Cook region.



Nicola Hockley from Coastguard Canterbury

For her dedication to Coastguard and search and rescue

Since joining Coastguard Canterbury in 2009, Nicola Hockley has been involved in nearly every area of the organisation. She has a number of qualifications, is a Master on her Coastguard vessel and a regular Skipper on weekend patrol and training exercises. She is also an instructor for the Regional Coastguard and NZSAR SAR Leadership course.

Nicola serves on the National Board, Southern Region Board and Coastguard Canterbury Board, where she has been President since 2015.

Elton Ngawhika from Coastguard Rotorua Lakes

For his commitment to Coastguard and search and rescue

Elton Ngawhika is a Master at Coastguard Rotorua Lakes. In the past 12 months alone he has dedicated 574 hours to training and 700 hours to operational activities. Elton is also the Unit Training Officer, often acting as a mentor to his crew.

He is an invaluable asset to Coastguard Rotorua Lakes and is admired for giving 100% of his energy into his unit over the past nine years.

John Taylor from LandSAR Wanaka

For his commitment to LandSAR training and search and rescue

John Taylor has been a key contributor to LandSAR Wanaka since he joined in 1982.

John has occupied senior operational roles, served as Wanaka Committee Chairman, Group Secretary, Southern Regional Chairman, and was LandSAR NZ's Southern Region Delegate for five years.

But it is as the group's Training Officer where John's commitment stands out. Southern LandSAR members would not have the level of access to SAR training that they have enjoyed in recent times if it were not for John's personal commitment.

Pete Woodward from Coastguard Kapiti

For his dedication and fundraising for Coastguard Kapiti

Pete Woodward is the Radio Operator and Fundraising Officer at Coastguard Kapiti, where he has been a member since 2006. Pete is the main point of contact on shore during incidents and is always there for training and callouts – no matter what time of day or night it is.

He is recognised as a dedicated, passionate and resourceful member of his team.

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 and the Civil Aviation Authority.

NZSAR Secretariat

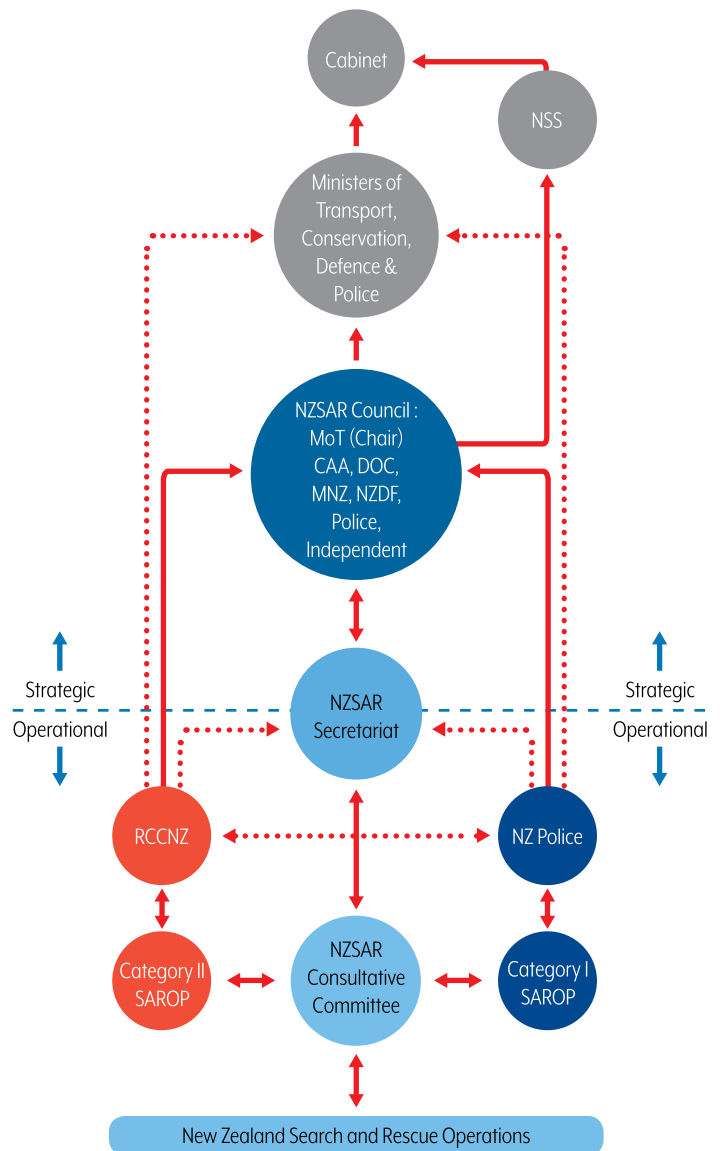
The Council is supported by the NZSAR Secretariat. Its purpose is to provide a national forum for all New Zealand SAR stakeholders including voluntary groups. It provides the Council with support services, policy advice and implements agreed measures to effectively coordinate strategic SAR in New Zealand.

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
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Coastguard New Zealand
- Department of Conservation
- Fire and Emergency New Zealand
- LandSAR New Zealand
- Maritime New Zealand
- Maritime Operations Centre
- Ministry of Transport
- National Ambulance Sector Office
- New Zealand Defence Force
- New Zealand Mountain Safety Council
- New Zealand Police
- NZSAR Secretariat (Chair)
- Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand
- Surf Life Saving New Zealand
- Water Safety New Zealand

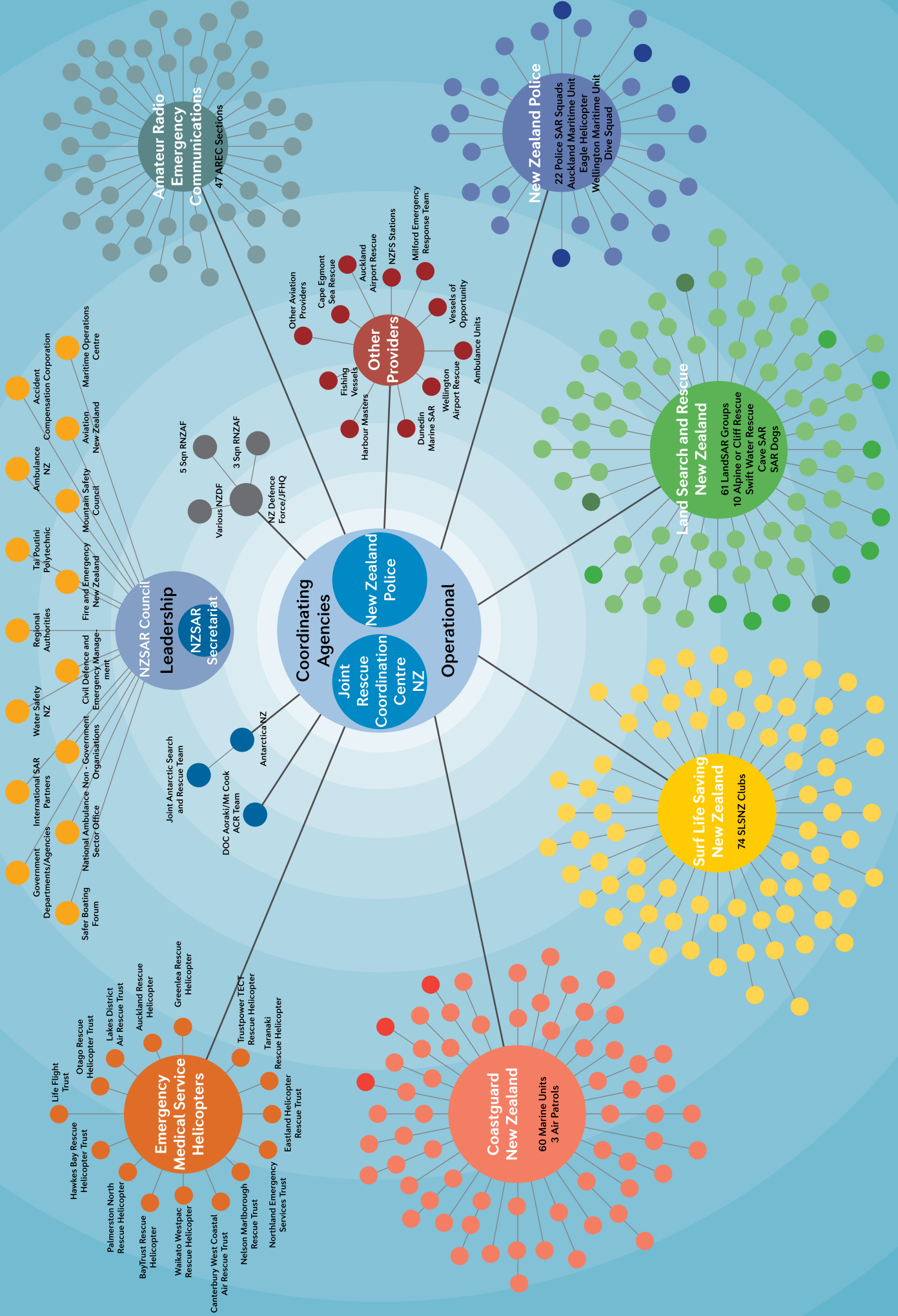
The Council, Secretariat and Consultative Committee operate cohesively to ensure their objectives are successfully delivered.

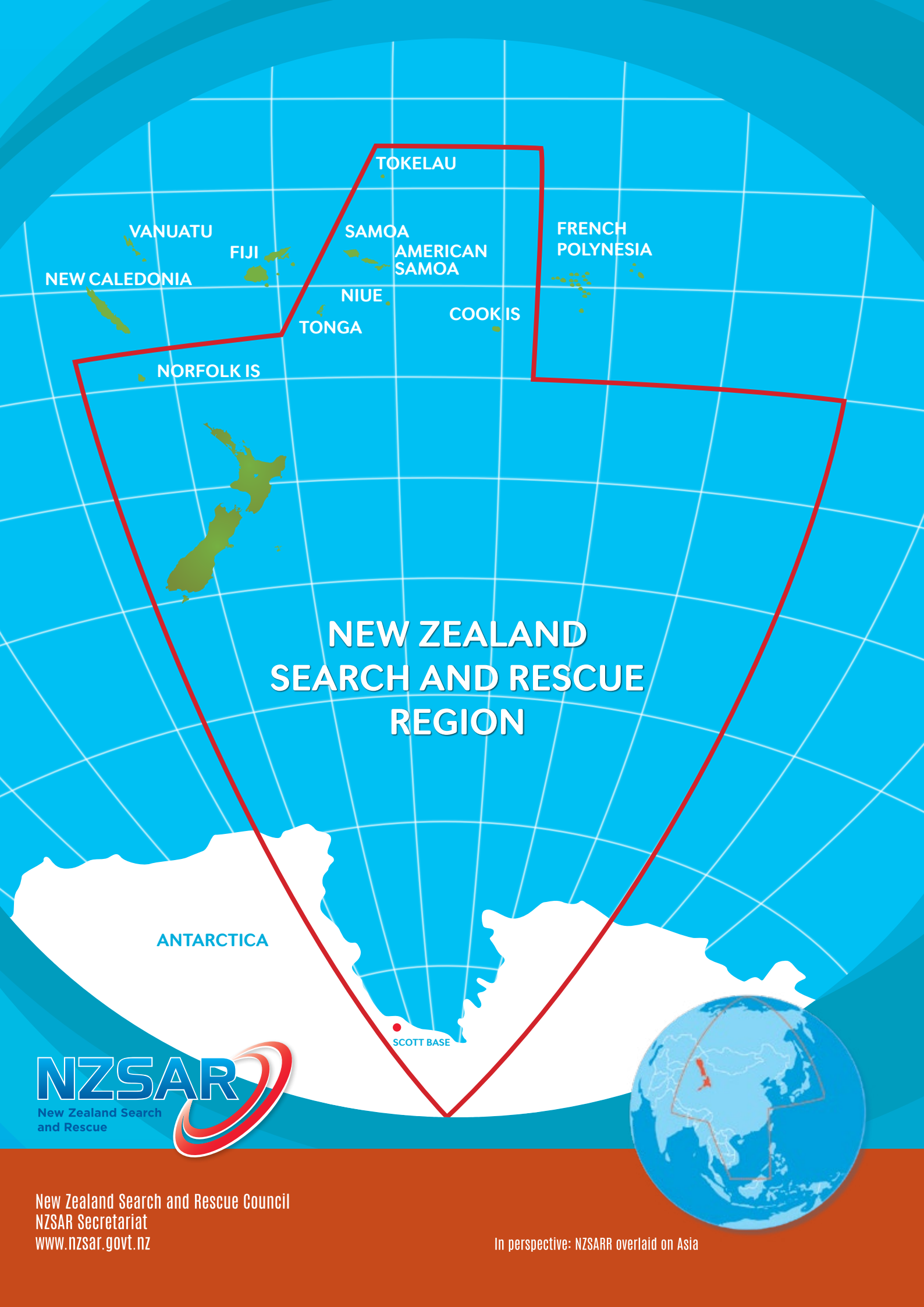


- CAA: Civil Aviation Authority
- DOC: Department of Conservation
- MNZ: Maritime New Zealand
- MoT: Ministry of Transport
- NZDF: New Zealand Defence Force
- NSS: National Security System
- RCCNZ: Rescue Coordination Centre New Zealand
- SAROP: Search and Rescue Operation

OUR SECTOR

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ANTARCTICA

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