

## Connecting the Search and Rescue Sector

### news

#### Pukehina Surf Rescue Wins New Zealand Search and Rescue Gold Award

Initiative and quick thinking saved five lives during an extraordinary rescue by three surf lifeguards off Pukehina beach in January last year. Their skill and bravery that day has also earned them the NZSAR award for making a **most significant** contribution to search and rescue in New Zealand.

The rescue took place after a 6.1m scorpion vessel overturned in rough conditions while attempting to cross the notorious Pukehina Bar. The boat's driver managed to cling on to the boat but four others, including two children, were trapped under the upturned boat.

Working in 1.5 metre swells head lifeguard, Lilah Foote, alongside colleague, Rebekah Gee, (the third guard, Briar Macken, monitored the situation from the beach and maintained radio contact) got to the stricken vessel and immediately realised the gravity of the situation they faced. After diving numerous times under the boat (barely able to see) they eventually ascertained the people had fallen into, and were trapped, in the cabin. It was determined that the lifeguards, and that of the trapped people, may face great harm if they tried to remove the people while the boat was still upside down.

So the lifeguards, with the help of the driver and two bystanders, decided to turn the boat side-on to the waves to make it easier to raise the edge. They were getting hit by waves at all angles, making it very difficult to maintain a stable position in the water, and they had mounting concern for the trapped individuals. Time was critical. Once the vessel was positioned side-on to the waves, the call was made to lift one side of the boat on the next wave. Everyone positioned themselves ready to lift. As the wave hit, the boat was lifted high enough to get a visual of the trapped people. Lilah and the driver instantly dragged the fear stricken patients clear of the boat. They had been trapped for 20 minutes.

The incident lasted 1.5 hours from the time the vessel rolled until the patients were transported to the Tauranga Hospital by ambulance. The NZSAR Council said they showed exemplary bravery and dedication in a perilous rescue, which almost certainly saved four lives.

#### Operation Brewer Receives NZSAR Certificate of Achievement

Operation Brewer involved the rescue of Dr Michael Brewer from the Middle Earth Caving System in Takaka. He was 3 km inside the caving system with head injuries, a fractured pelvis and ribs, as a result of a rock fall. The certificate is awarded to people, groups or organisations that have made an **important contribution** to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region. This rescue was rare in the number of individuals and groups that needed to coordinate. It was lead by Police who required coordination of:

- a national response from members of the Speleological Society
- LandSAR New Zealand members
- Fire Brigade staff
- Army personnel.

The operation lasted 70 hours, with 29 hours of stretcher carrying, to extract Dr Brewer, utilising 98 personnel. The rescue was extraordinary in the technical skill and effort required to bring Dr Brewer safely through 3 kilometres of caving system with constricted space, artificial lighting and michie phone communications, with the injuries that he had sustained. The NZSAR Council said this difficult rescue was particularly complex and involved a large number of specialist techniques. The Council also noted that its eventual successful outcome was achieved in a remarkably short time.

These two national awards are decided by the NZSAR council; the **NZSAR Gold Award** can be awarded to a person, group or organisation that has made the **most significant contribution** to search and rescue in the NZSRR, and the **NZSAR Certificate of Achievement** can be awarded to a person, group or organisation that has made a **significant contribution** to search and rescue in the NZSRR. More than one NZSAR Certificate can be awarded each year. Nominations for the 2008 awards are now open and will close on October 31.

### news continued

## Possible Funding Source for Search and Rescue

The Land Transport Management Amendment Bill could see a portion of the fuel excise duty paid by recreational boats being used for search and rescue purposes. This clause received overwhelming support during the submissions process.

The Transport and Industrial Relations Parliamentary Select Committee, which is hearing submissions on a number of changes to the Bill, received 10 written submissions specifically on this issue. All submissions supported the relevant clause in the Bill. A number of NZSAR Consultative Committee members also presented supportive oral submissions. The next step is for the Bill to be re-presented back to Parliament, with the committee's recommendation, in line with Parliamentary procedure.

## New National Map Series to be Launched

***Land Information New Zealand (LINZ) will launch a new 1:50,000 map series in September 2009: Topo50.***

Robyn Nicholl, Product and Service Owner at LINZ, says, "For the first time, LINZ will release an entire series of more than 450 maps, at once. The previous NZMS260 series was produced over a 20-year period."

Emergency services will switch their 111 systems to the new projection and use the new maps from September 2009. This gives extra impetus to the public, and those agencies who deal with emergency services to use the new series.

#### The new series will:

- use the New Zealand Geodetic Datum 2000 and the New Zealand Transverse Mercator 2000 projection
- be available for sale to the public in September 2009 (at which point the current NZMS260 maps will no longer be sold)
- be more compatible with modern navigational systems such as GPS
- be more easily updateable than in the past

The new series will provide the same detailed and accurate representation at the 1:50,000 scale as LINZ's current 260 series.

Robyn says "While the geographic features portrayed on the Topo50 map series are the same as those on the 260 series, the coordinates of these features will change."

Each individual new Topo50 map will cover a different area to the NZMS260 map due to the change to an A1 portrait format.

Although the geographic data remains the same, some areas covered by Topo50 maps will have been updated as part of LINZ's regular maintenance cycle. Prior to launch in September 2009, LINZ will make information available showing the currency of the data on all maps. In its development of the Topo50 maps, LINZ has introduced technology that will reduce the time required to update and produce new Topo50 map editions.

Robyn says that although the release of the maps is still some time off, LINZ is going out to stakeholders now, so that they can consider the new series in terms of their own GIS projects or services.

"We know that a number of organisations are in the process of making the transition or have already moved their systems to NZTM2000, which is great. For those who haven't, we want to encourage them to use the same mapping information as emergency services use."

For more information, or to receive regular updates, email Robyn Nicholl on [newmapseries@linz.govt.nz](mailto:newmapseries@linz.govt.nz) or visit the LINZ website: [www.linz.govt.nz](http://www.linz.govt.nz)

#### Example of a Topo50 map sheet



The Topo50 maps are easily distinguishable from the current NZMS260 series maps. They feature the green and orange branding, are printed in A1 portrait format and have new sheet numbering (see the example shown).

## Catching up with Coastguard



Coastguard's 2,500 volunteers have been very busy over the summer and not only on the water. They have sold a record 130 thousand of their lottery tickets. The proceeds of this, together with localised trusts and grants, will allow Coastguard to introduce some of the biggest technological changes of the past 15 years. Alongside this, a \$4 million grant from Lotteries could see 10 replacement Coastguard vessels in use later this year.

These important technological advances are making a real difference to New Zealand Coastguard's work, as well as the boaties. Coastguard NZ's Chief Executive, Bruce Reid, says NowCasting is a great example of this. "It's one of the most exciting tools Coastguard has introduced into the leisure boating sector for the past 15 years and 70% of the country's waterways are covered by the NowCasting system on marine VHF radio". (Coverage will increase to 80% in the next few months.)

Recreational boaties can now access up-to-the-minute weather conditions, forecasting, tides and weather warnings. The system takes the information from Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) and the MetService. "So if you've rolled into an area of the Hauraki Gulf, you just log onto the appropriate channel of the VHF, and it will give you minute by minute conditions and forecasts for the area you're fishing in."

### Real Time Tracking

At the time of going to print, Coastguard is just a month away from implementing another major piece of technology, Real Time Tracking, which uses global positioning satellite to track searches and assist crews from shore. Bruce says the satellite sends information on a search vessel location back to the control room every ten seconds.

"It means if there are several boats searching, their tracks can be overlaid so the incident controller can identify gaps and send a vessel back to check areas that might have been missed.

They're likely to be battling high seas, and they're busy looking over the side to see if there's a person in the water. The shore based incident controller can take over the job of analysing where they should be, which should free up at least one pair of eyes on board.

If we've got four people on the boat, one steering and three searching, we'll be more successful." The screen can also be switched over to the Police and Maritime NZ.

In time, with more information gathered on their volunteers, Bruce hopes Real Time Tracking will tag individual boats, and identify the crews' key competencies. "If you have someone with a medical background and you have an option of sending two boats, you pick the one that has the right skill set on it."

Bruce says Real Time Tracking costs \$140,000 to install on each vessel, and \$30,000 in operating costs.

### Funding

Coastguard's biggest challenge now is to identify sustainable funding, which would allow strategic planning and not force volunteers to continuously fundraise.

"These people put in over 250,000 man hours a year. Our crews must be thoroughly trained and competent in rough seas and strong winds before they can head out on the boat, because we tend to head out when other people won't. Fundraising is another added pressure when their time could be better spent."



They are looking for a major corporate sponsor to relieve this pressure, as well as the outcome of changes to the Land Transport Management Bill (see page 2 story), to relieve this pressure.

***"The point is, our professional volunteers' ability to save lives and educate boaties is directly related to funding we receive".***

### Have your say and receive a free boating safety pack!

Maritime New Zealand is looking at ways to improve their online recreational boating safety information. They are conducting an online survey to get your views; [www.maritimenz.govt.nz](http://www.maritimenz.govt.nz) and [www.stayontop.org.nz](http://www.stayontop.org.nz) have access to the survey on their home pages. Simply complete the survey and receive a free boat safety pack.

If you have any questions about the recreational boating safety online project, email:

[shona.brown@maritimenz.govt.nz](mailto:shona.brown@maritimenz.govt.nz)

## beacons update

While the spring, summer and autumn seasons are always busy ones for search and rescue, it is also the time that people buy and update their equipment. The distress radio beacons national campaign takes advantage of this by focusing its media and advertising effort over this period. Hopefully, you will have noticed the advertisements in magazines and/or on the internet.

In addition to the new range of brochures aligned along marine, land and air lines, the [www.beacons.org.nz](http://www.beacons.org.nz) website has been completely redesigned to improve accessibility. The amount of material has been considerably enhanced to take into account our need to get across key information to the public.

Individuals can now register their beacons with RCCNZ via an online system within this website. A mail-out to all aircraft owners took place earlier in the year. The deadline for New Zealand registered aircraft to change to 406MHz ELTs is fast approaching – 1 July 2008.

## calendar

- **NZSAR Council 2007 Awards: 10 April 2008**
- **Budget 2008: 22 May 2008**
- **Combined meeting of the NZSAR Council and the NZSAR Consultative Committee: 28 May 2008**
- **Antarctica New Zealand Conference: 1 – 2 July in Wellington**
- **Coastguard New Zealand Conference: 12 – 14 September in Wellington**
- **LandSAR New Zealand Conference: 21 – 23 November, Massey University, Palmerston North**

## useful website links

<http://www.nzsar.org.nz> New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

<http://www.nzcoastguard.org.nz> New Zealand Coastguard

<http://www.antarcticanz.govt.nz> Antarctica New Zealand

<http://www.landsar.org.nz> LandSAR New Zealand

<http://www.beacons.org.nz> Information on switching to 406 distress beacons and online registrations

The newsletter is available as a pdf, visit the NZSAR website:  
[www.nzsar.org.nz](http://www.nzsar.org.nz)

To view the pdf and access the hyperlinks you will require Adobe Acrobat Reader version 7 or above. A free download is available at:

 [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readerstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readerstep2.html)

If you encounter problems with the pdf it may be the security/firewall set up on your computer.

## from Duncan's desk

Communication is at the very basis of what we do in the search and rescue sector. Ensuring that the left foot knows where the right foot is heading is essential and this holds true from the grassroots through to the strategists and policymakers. With this in mind, the NZSAR Secretariat spent the past few months delivering information to you via Link (this is our 2nd edition) and the inaugural NZSAR Annual Report. The Annual Report discusses the NZSAR environment, the challenges we face at a strategic level and includes a number of measures and statistics that explain who we are and the work we do. You can download this report at [www.nzsar.org.nz](http://www.nzsar.org.nz)



Considerable work has also gone into attempting to secure sustainable resources for the NZSAR sector. The Land Transport Management Amendment Bill has a proposed clause which could use a portion of the fuel excise duty (that recreational boat users pay whenever they refuel their vessels) to support search and rescue. This Bill had its first reading in Parliament and a number of interested groups made submissions to the Select Committee. Work is now being done to fine-tune the Bill. Once that is complete, Parliament will consider it for a second time.

It is NZSAR Awards time – an opportunity to celebrate the committed and skilled people our sector is privileged to attract. This year's winners are no exception. Their bravery, skills, teamwork and commitment to saving lives is inspirational (their stories are on the cover of this Link). The awards will be presented on April 10 by Hon Annette King, Minister of Transport and Police at Parliament. April 10 is a significant day for the search and rescue community, being the 40th anniversary of the Wahine disaster. In addition to presenting the NZSAR Awards, the International Maritime Organisation Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea will be re-presented as the recipient was unable to attend the original awards ceremony in Britain.

I would also like to note the contribution Alan Thompson has made to our sector in his role as Chair of the NZSAR Council. He has resigned as Chief Executive and Secretary for Transport to take up a position in Australia.

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