



CONNECTING THE SEARCH AND RESCUE SECTOR

NEWS

NZSAR has released a comprehensive summary of the common themes recorded during the evaluations of SAREXs (search and rescue exercises).

SAREXs continue to deliver real value, both to SAR people's skill set and to the effectiveness of SAR operations. NZSAR publishes regional SAREX reports on our website (<http://nzsar.org.nz/Resources/SAREX-Reports>) to allow wider dissemination and sharing of information and lessons. In an effort to learn from and build on individual SAREXs, NZSAR's NSSP Coordinator Rhett Emery has mined over 20 SAREX evaluations from the past four years, and collated the common observations and lessons learned to produce a three-page summary.

Rhett says while individual SAREXs provide feedback to those participating, there has been a gap in sharing what is being learnt. "As I reviewed these evaluations, a number of common threads emerged, whether it be tips like making information visible through the use of a whiteboard, or how to handle patient care. This summary can act as a resource during the development of SAREXs to help with self-measurement - checking you are doing these things, or not doing them as the case may be."

The common themes have been divided into Land, Marine, Rogaine and Avalanche SAREXs. Rhett has also collated issues frequently arising at Incident Management level, Incident Control Point and general themes.

"SAREXs are such a valuable tool. They require a fair amount of commitment, particularly from volunteers, so it is incumbent that others leverage off the knowledge we gain to ensure the sector becomes more efficient. It's about us all continuously learning."



COMMON THEMES ACROSS SAREXs IDENTIFIED

Multi-agency SAREXs provide opportunities for personnel to work alongside each other in an exercise setting. They are valued and appreciated by participants.

You can find Rhett's summary of common themes at www.nzsar.org.nz - under Resources in the **Sarex Reports** section. ●

A sample of the common themes Rhett identified during his review of SAREX evaluations include:

- Use a mix of experienced and new personnel, and/or have an experienced person(s) as an advisor. (IMT)
- Be aware that SAREXs often highlight issues relating to communication, particularly when a variety of assets are utilised. (Marine)
- Ensure all teams arrive at a training or real event with adequate medical equipment to attend injured parties and transport them from the site. (Avalanche)



Dallas Reedy (only survivor of the *Easy Rider* tragedy) with Rhys Ferguson (young Coastguard Bluff volunteer who spotted Dallas in the water after 18 hours) on the new boat at the launch in Bluff

In the aftermath of New Zealand's worst maritime disaster since the *Wahine*, the Bluff community came together to buy a Coastguard vessel. They needed to raise \$1.2 million dollars - and they did it, using a mix of professional know-how and a number of dedicated volunteers.

Around midnight on the 14th of March 2012 the fishing boat *Easy Rider* was hit by a rogue wave and swamped off the northern tip of Stewart Island. There were nine people on board, including a seven-year-old boy and Dallas Reedy, the only survivor. Dallas was pulled from the sea by Coastguard Bluff volunteers 18 hours after the boat rolled and sank.

This incident, which followed many other search and rescue operations on the wild waters of Foveaux Strait, sparked a call for something to be done to prevent further deaths. Coastguard Bluff did have a vessel but it had proved to be inadequate - it was smaller than those used by many of the local commercial fishing operators. It was also old and had a limited range during an extended search and rescue operation.

Organisations across the search and rescue sector are constantly needing to fundraise for the vital equipment and infrastructure costs that support them to be effective. Coastguard New Zealand's Head of Marketing and Fundraising Jo Cowie says although capital fundraising campaigns differ in size, as does the

capacity to raise those funds within the local community, key factors to their success is the passion and drive of volunteer fundraising committees. And their ability to work effectively to leverage funds both locally and nationally.

One of the first things fundraiser Dominique Leeming (who was Coastguard New Zealand's Capital Campaign Manager at the time) did was to set up an independent committee charged with raising the \$1.2 million. Local businessman Jon Turnbull volunteered to chair that committee.

"I was looking for something to do that would have a real impact for the community. Dominique had already done a feasibility study and put together a compelling submission, which served us extremely well right throughout the campaign. We treated it like a business case: we looked for the skills required and then approached local people who fitted the bill. I had the dream team - nothing was ever a problem. They had influence, connections, dedication and commitment."

It was a massive undertaking, so the committee broke the goal down into bite size chunks.

"The premise being: if we take care of the little things the big will take care of itself. So we did little things like collate a donors list and link the committee members with connections to these people. We broke the

target down into monthly amounts and had a visual thermometer that was updated at each meeting. We held a lot of meetings and did a lot of talking to community leaders, and to anyone that would listen. Everyone was prepared to help in some shape or form, mainly again because the submission was compelling."

Coastguard Bluff President Andy Johnson was a member of the campaign committee and says the sea conditions during the *Easy Rider* incident were at the top end of what the old boat could handle. "Any rougher and we would not have deployed and, in turn, never found Dallas. It was such a close run thing as he was at the end of his ability to survive when he was found. That was when I knew we had to do something."

He agrees the professional nature of the campaign was key to their success. "The fact that we'd done our homework helped, but so did the mutual respect between the committee and the Coastguard volunteers, which meant everyone played to their strengths."

Andy, who was the conduit between the various Coastguard boards, says accountability was a top priority. "It doesn't matter whether it is us needing a new vessel or LandSAR requiring GPS units, these are community assets so ensuring that you are prudent is vital."

WELCOME!

Another factor working in their favour was having the local media on board. An editorial by The Southland Times editor Fred Tulett began by posing this question to the Southland community:

“Is there a stretch of water anywhere in New Zealand more in need of a fit-for-purpose Coastguard vessel than Foveaux Strait?” Once the campaign was underway the paper also ran many stories about fundraising events and progress updates.

Andy says the vessel has already proved its worth, as they have been involved in a number of operations further afield, which previously would have been handled by the local fishing fleet or helicopters. “We can now get to Stewart Island in half an hour. Before, we wouldn’t even attempt it; it would have been unthinkable.”

Jon can pinpoint the moment he truly understood the impact this new vessel would have on the Bluff community.

“I took the old, smaller Coastguard boat out to welcome in our new vessel, Bluff Rescue. The winds were only about 20 knots and the boat was moving about, but when I stepped onto Bluff Rescue it was a steady platform. These Coastguard volunteers had dedicated themselves to saving lives in the old vessel in conditions many times worse than that – so it became abundantly clear that Bluff Rescue would enable them to be so much more effective, go further, be safer and inevitably save lives. The community can be proud of a good job done well.” ●



Dave Comber

The NZSAR Council, Consultative Committee and Secretariat have all recently welcomed Dave Comber to a newly appointed position on the NZSAR Council. Dave will represent the non-governmental elements of the SAR sector.

In addition to Dave’s very extensive SAR experience, he brings considerable leadership, managerial and governance experience to the Council. As an RNZAF pilot, he flew many SAR missions in New Zealand coastal and South Pacific regions and qualified as an Air Directing Officer for the RCC. He is a senior member of Taupo LandSAR Incident Management Team (IMT) and was an inaugural board member of LandSAR. Prior to his retirement, Dave was on the management team of Contact Energy’s Wairakei (geothermal) Power Station, responsible for emergency and civil defence planning. He also spent a summer season at Scott Base where he was a member of the US/NZ Antarctic Joint Search and Rescue Committee (JSARC) as well as part of their Incident Management Team.

Dave is fully aligned with the NZSAR goals and values, and we value his energy and insight. He is looking forward to meeting and working with the NGO SAR agencies, developing effective dialogue to facilitate learning from our individual and collective experiences.



Steve Caldwell

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome LandSAR’s new Chief Executive Steve Caldwell.

Steve comes to LandSAR with a wealth of experience in the NGO and voluntary sectors. Most recently, he was the Chief Executive of the New Zealand Guidelines Group, a key organisation at the forefront of government efforts to improve health care delivery in New Zealand through the development and implementation of best practice ‘evidence based’ guidelines for health practitioners.

Prior to this Steve was the CEO of the New Zealand Council of Victim Support Groups, an organisation with a strong affinity to LandSAR, both in terms of its large volunteer network and its close working relationship with Police.

Steve also has considerable experience in international disaster relief. As the Chief Executive of Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, Steve was involved in the relief efforts of some of the worst natural and man-made disasters of the late 20th century, including the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the 1998 Aitape tsunami in Papua New Guinea.

INSIGHTS

- **Set up an independent committee to run big campaigns**
- **Fill the committee positions with people who have connections and expertise necessary for fundraising**
- **Note that the calibre and energy of the team is paramount**
- **Ensure that the Unit and the independent committee work cooperatively to leverage opportunities**
- **Do the background work – make a compelling case**
- **Involve as many community leaders and influencers as possible**
- **Engage with the local community**

Congratulations!

NZSAR would like to congratulate SAR people recognised in the New Year’s Honours list:

Mr Antony John Groome, Feilding, for services to Search and Rescue.

Mr Bernard James Rush, Whanganui, for services to the New Zealand Fire Service and Urban Search and Rescue.



Paul Rennie doing the paper work - photographs by Terry Stevens

Keas chewing power chords is just one of the challenges AREC's Paul Rennie faces out in the field. As an AREC section leader at the Marlborough unit he works alongside the Police SAR On Scene Coordinator and the Incident Management Team (IMT) during operations.

It's a specialist role, he says, that requires a solid understanding of radios, repeaters and frequencies.

"Before the searching begins I ensure that the teams have the radio equipment they require and that they are all on the correct channel. I also know what local permanent radio repeaters there are to be used. If there aren't any suitable, and it seems the search is going to escalate, I get in a helicopter and fly to a suitable hill to install a portable SAR repeater and very large battery. For the duration of the incident I am at the Emergency Operations Centre where I coordinate with the IMT."

He's been on numerous searches and body carries, and he's been placed in high country - such as the Lewis Pass by the Airforce Iroquois helicopter to install a VHF repeater. As a result, he has a lot of stories to tell.

A recent one that springs to mind happened last July. Illustrating not only the variety of tasks AREC personnel undertake, but also reaffirming to Paul the importance of team work, this story involves everyone taking responsibility for a successful outcome during a search.

"Two young day walkers had got lost. They had walked through a waterfall becoming very wet and cold, and they needed rescuing. We determined their location via their cell phone using MobileLocate - but that was only job half done.

"We had to keep in constant contact with them to keep their morale up - all the while climbing up steep hills to rescue them! The operation required excellent comms. Having left the police station at 8pm we climbed through the night, reaching them around 1 o'clock the following morning. Meanwhile, one of the other AREC volunteers had offered to go to the carpark at the bottom of the track to activate a repeater there that would give us better comms. On his arrival he noticed a vehicle parked there. He called in its registration number and the Police were able to establish the owner, who in turn had loaned the car to the missing party. Hugely important operation intel."

The AREC team's careful log keeping and local knowledge were highlighted as being of great importance during the 11-hour operation.

Paul has been involved with AREC for nearly 40 years and says one of the issues facing the organisation is attracting young people into SAR and amateur radio. "We need to change the perception that we are a bunch of oldies. We are very experienced Amateur Radio Operators who are



And sorting team radios

capable of operating radios under extreme conditions whilst giving our best to the coordinating authority and supporting our community, be it civil defence, rural fire or Police. We are self-trained, but are very willing to pass on our expertise to whoever wants to learn."

Only days away from retiring, Paul heaps praise on his employer Marlborough Lines which has been very supportive. "The company gave me paid time off for any SAR activity, sometimes five days at a time. And, of course, my family have always been behind me, understanding when I have had to do things like leave home on New Year's Eve and not return for four days."

He's witnessed great advances in mechanics and technology, such as the arrival of the new Air Force NH90 helicopter, demonstrated at a recent SAREX at Lake Rotoiti.

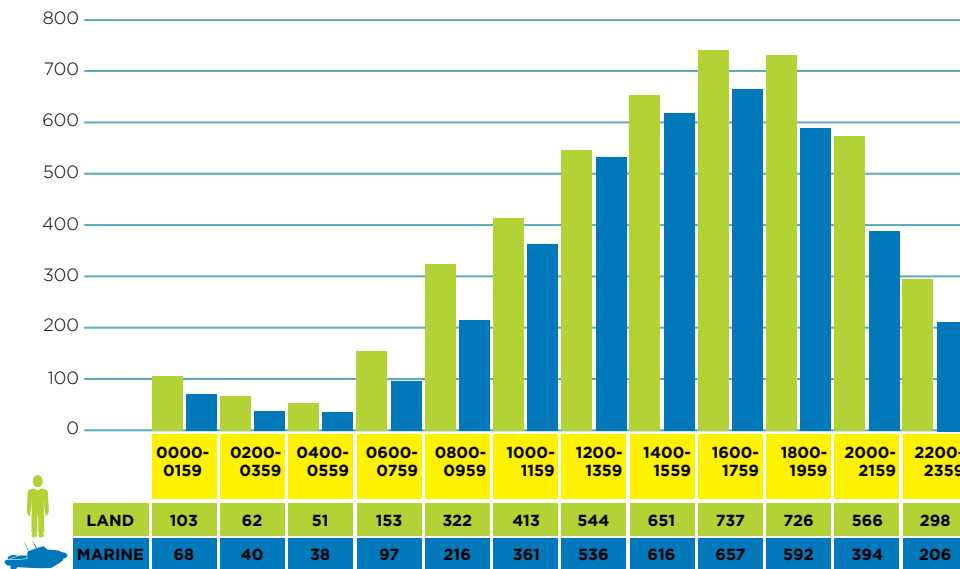
"Technology is certainly impacting on SAR with the use of computers, satellite phones, GPS, digital communications in the field, and the list goes on. But high frequency will always be there to use." ●

STATS ATTACK

WHEN IS SAR CALLED OUT?

The graph below shows the time of the day when a SAR operation has been activated over the last five years (for Category 1 incidents only). You will see that the patterns for both land and marine incidents are very similar. Almost half (47%) of all SAR activations occur in the six hours between 2.00 and 8.00pm - or as one member of the sector told NZSAR's Carl van der Meulen,

"SAR call outs happen just when you've lit the barbeque, or launched the boat, or arrived at the restaurant..."



AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND SEARCH AND RESCUE CONFERENCE PROGRAMME RELEASED

1 June 2016, Jupiters Gold Coast

As the only trans-Tasman multi-sector SAR event, the 2016 Australian and New Zealand Search and Rescue Conference (ANZSAR) will provide an opportunity to share new and upcoming concepts, techniques and information.

ANZSAR aims to provide a platform for leading practitioners to discuss challenges, experiences and development under the theme of 'Land, Sea and Air'. Its four defining topics include: Technology and Operations; Training; Organisation, and; SAR Stakeholders.

The programme has just been released - you can download it and register online at: www.sar.anzdm.com.au

The conference also has a major prize draw: one lucky Conference Delegate will win a Phantom 3 Professional Quadcopter.

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CALENDAR

SAREXs and SAR training see:

<http://nzsar.org.nz/Calendar/Events>

Exercise Rauora Auckland: 31 March 2016

**ANZSAR Conference, Gold Coast:
1 June 2016**

NZSAR Council Meeting, Wellington: June 9

**Consultative Committee meeting and
NZSAR Awards Ceremony, Wellington:
May 24**

WEBSITES

New Zealand Search and Rescue Council.
This newsletter is available as a PDF on
this website:
www.nzsar.org.nz

**Safety information and tips for the public
planning outdoor activities:**
www.adventuresmart.org.nz

**Information about 406 Beacons, including
where to purchase, rent and register a
distress beacon: www.beacons.org.nz**

AREC: www.nzart.org.nz/arec/

**Health and safety at work Act 2015:
www.business.govt.nz/worksafe/hswa**

DUNCAN'S DESK



El Nino certainly brought us a long, hot summer. It's been a bit of a two-edged sword, however, as while the good weather has encouraged people to get out and do things, we have also seen a big increase in preventable drownings and other SAR incidents. One of the NZSAR Council's goals is to 'reduce the demand for SAR services'. We've been working for a number of years with a whole range of agencies, some in our sector and some not, to achieve this goal. Regrettably, the results so far are mixed.

The numbers of land-based SAR incidents vary from year to year but have remained remarkably similar over time. We are seeing a slight reduction in marine SAR incidents; however, we have also seen a significant increase in boating related drowning incidents in recent years. Overall, and at a collective level, 'we' haven't made much progress towards the goal of reducing the demand for SAR services - yet.

With this in mind, the Council has commissioned a piece of work to develop a 'New Zealand Inc. Recreational Safety Framework'. This project will take a very broad and inclusive look at who's doing what, what's working well, what can be improved, what gaps exist and what role we SAR people might have.

Health and safety is also topical at the moment. I've mentioned it before and

I know a lot of work has already been done to improve our performance in this area. The new Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) comes into effect on 4 April this year. While the Act is new, the fundamentals stay the same, with a few things for us to consider and adapt to. A recent discussion at the NZSAR Council raised a few points worth sharing:

- From the point of view of the Act, when we're undertaking search and rescue, we're 'at work' irrespective of whether we are paid or not.
- For reasonably foreseeable situations, we are expected to work together ahead of time to sort things out, have the conversations and reach agreements about how we will work together and keep ourselves safe.
- For unforeseeable situations, we are expected to undertake dynamic risk assessments, use our best judgement and make reasonable and justifiable decisions in the context of the situation.
- Given the nature of our sector, for many SAR situations we are likely to experience multiple and overlapping 'persons in control of the business or undertaking' (PCBU).
- As a sector, we have a very good health and safety record and we are doing the right things to adapt and improve.

Finally, I'd like to welcome Dave Comber to the NZSAR Council. As an independent member with vast experience from the voluntary side of the sector, I'm sure Dave will bring a very valuable viewpoint to Council deliberations.

Stay safe.

Duncan Ferner

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Link is produced by New Zealand Search and Rescue Council

www.nzsar.org.nz



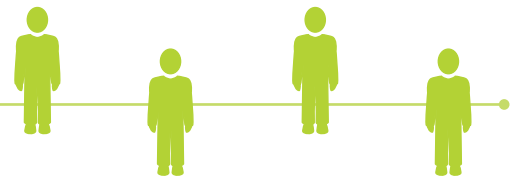
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www.beacons.org.nz

SAR (ACE) SNAPSHOT



SAR Adult and Community Education (ACE) is funding provided by the Tertiary Education Commission, coordinated by NZSAR and delivered by Tai Poutini Polytechnic. It makes training available and achievable for all SAR personnel. Courses are requested by the SAR sector and cover a myriad of disciplines, field skills, leadership and management.

SAR (ACE) Snapshot appears twice a year in Link. It canvasses the courses on offer, profiles the tutors and analyses trends and techniques.

TUTOR PROFILE



Hamish McLean

Hamish McLean: Lead Tutor - Emergency Management and Search and Rescue

For the past three years Hamish has worked as a casual tutor for EM/SAR, and is now the latest addition to TPP's full-time staff.

Following his recent move to Wanaka from Waihi Beach, Hamish received a 20 years' service plaque for 'Contribution and Service' from his previous LandSAR group in Waihi. As well as a strong history in search and rescue he comes from an education background within senior management roles.

"I believe education is key for sustainable development as it enables us to function at a higher level. I've had a lot of fun working within schools, but I always wanted to contribute to search and rescue more directly

and now I get that chance... plus living in Wanaka too - I'm living the dream!"

From a young age Hamish was immersed in search and rescue and the outdoors as his father, Max (who contributed to some of the search techniques used today), owns an adventure camp and outdoor business. Working for his father on cliffs, rivers and mountains, it's not surprising that his first 'real' job was as a ski instructor, or that four years later he represented New Zealand in alpine skiing (downhill).

"As well as meeting the amazing volunteers from all over the country, I'm meeting some very switched on and experienced professionals. I'm very lucky to be working in a sector I'm passionate about."

As Lead Tutor, Hamish's core role will be the recruitment and mentoring of tutors and liaising with experts within the sector for programme development and consistency.

COURSE PROFILE

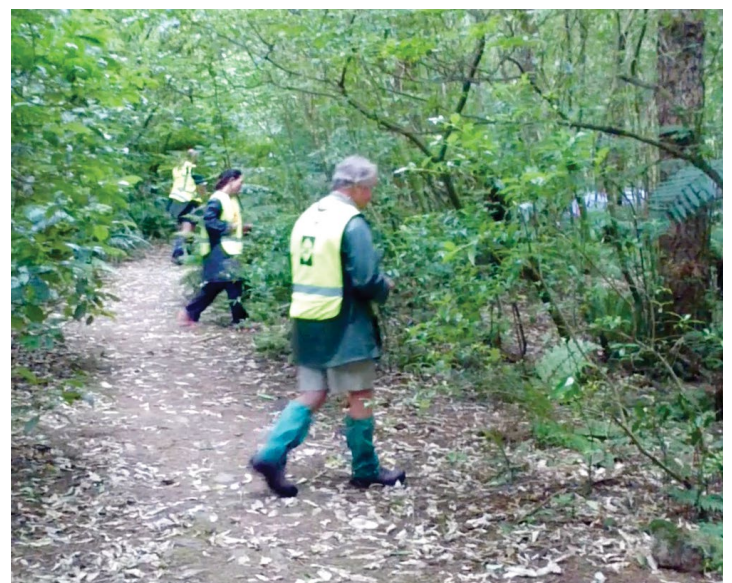
Search Techniques

Duration: two days

The course offers an overview of the skills required to be a productive member of a search team, focusing on the 'investigation' and how it underpins a search operation, and then breaking it down into techniques used in the field. This ranges from lost person behaviour and search theory concepts to systems that enhance visual skills and attractant methods.

Search Techniques is a great introductory course as the skills gained lay a solid foundation. Along with the introductory tracking course, Tracking Core Skills, the Search Techniques course is a requisite of the operational team member competency by Land Search and Rescue (currently in draft form).

Tutors of this course consist of: Andy Brooke (NZ Police), Matt Tailby (NZ Police), Nick Coyne (SAR), Steve Garside (SAR), Iain Watson (SAR) and Hamish McLean (SAR).



Students use an attractant technique, 'Sound Sweep', to look for a missing person

Course calendar:

<http://tpp.ac.nz/study-options/emsar/search-and-rescue>

Suburban Search Environment

Duration: two days

The focus of this course is the complex nature of an urban search environment, and the missing person's thought process.

By far the majority of missing people in the urban environment are children or people who have an altered cognitive state. i.e. dependents, persons with dementia, persons on the autistic spectrum. This generally means they either don't know they are lost or don't want to be found, which drastically changes the way we search.

Because of the ageing population in New Zealand, this course has become really important. Field and IMT members are coming away with a better understanding of how the urban environment complicates the search area, and what techniques and systems work best for the category of missing person. It is recommended that a strong knowledge of Search Techniques be obtained before enrolling in this course.

Tutors of this course consist of: Jo Holden (NZ Police), Andy Brooke (NZ Police), Nick Coyne (SAR), Steve Garside (SAR), Iain Watson (SAR) and Hamish McLean (SAR).

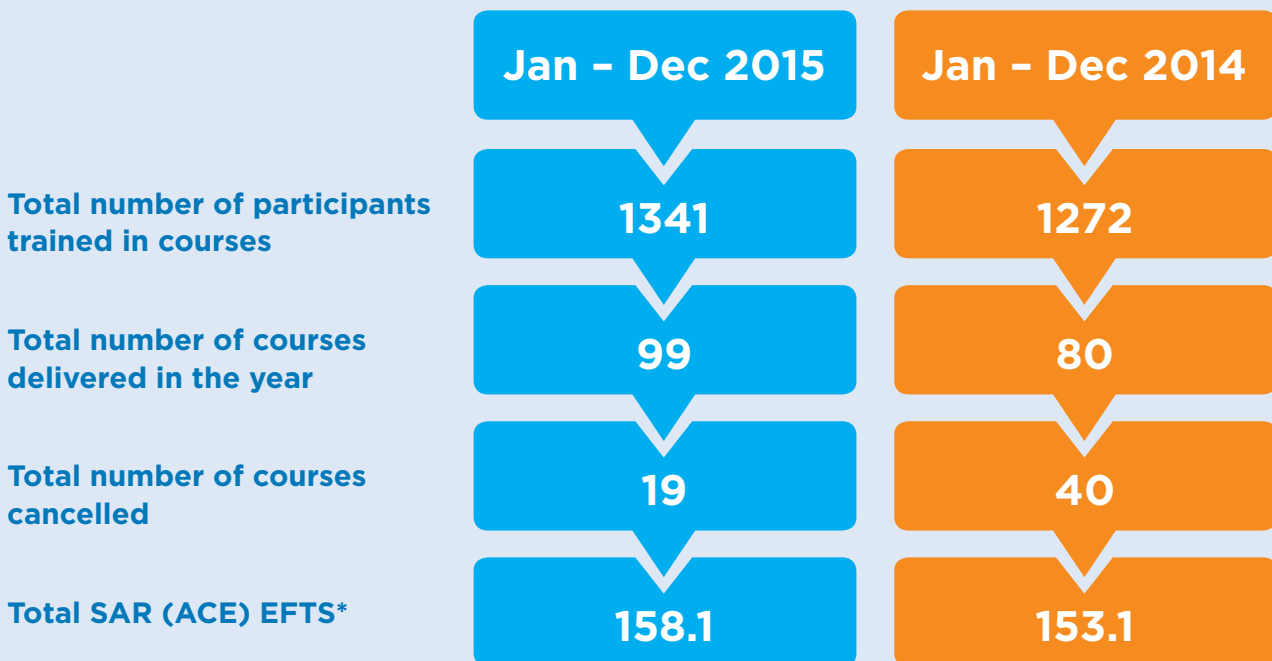


Members of the Tauranga LandSAR group discuss the relevance of clue for the item found at this location

SAR (ACE) TRAINING STATISTICS

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), through Adult Community Education (ACE), provides funding for SAR training. The funding is available only for SAR training and enables nominated SAR learners to receive fees-free SAR training. The training courses are developed by SAR subject matter experts and are delivered to SAR volunteers by SAR people.

The table below summarises training delivery in the last two years. It is pleasing to see the overall uptake and the increase in volunteers receiving training.



*EFTS = equivalent full time student