

## **NZSAR Awards**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to the New Zealand Search and Rescue Awards. I am Martin Matthews, Secretary for Transport and Chair of the New Zealand Search and Rescue Council.

The Council is responsible for national level co-ordination of the agencies involved in search and rescue. Our aim is to support an effective and proficient search and rescue system, with sound communication, co-ordination and collaboration across the sector. We have been fortunate over the last two years to have funding to support improved capabilities in the sector. That funding has supported a number of search and rescue organisations and one of the particular initiatives we are currently working on – the curriculum for search and rescue training.

This will bring together what we already have and fill gaps where they exist.

Tonight, however is about the remarkable achievements of our search and rescue people – many of whom are volunteers, giving up their evenings and weekends to train, retrain and then play critical roles in helping save peoples lives. These are our often unsung heroes doing critical, sometimes dangerous and remarkable things. To talk more of these people, and to announce our award winners, I invite the Minister of Transport, Steven Joyce, to address you.