

## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
• Foreword	<b>1</b>
• Purpose	<b>2</b>
• Vision	<b>2</b>
• Values	<b>3</b>
• Parameters	<b>3</b>
• Who we are	<b>4</b>
• Who benefits from our services	<b>5</b>
• Our region	<b>6</b>
• Concept of operations	<b>7</b>
• Issues	<b>8</b>
• NZSAR Council goals	<b>10</b>
• NZSAR governance	<b>12</b>

## Foreword

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

Search and rescue is a resource intensive sector with over 11,000 people involved as well as many hundreds of vessels, aircraft and vehicles. SAR agencies across New Zealand have equipped themselves with the assets and equipment that allows them to carry out their task as efficiently and safely as possible. But it is the skill and dedication of our people that makes our search and rescue sector world class.

It is imperative that the NZSAR sector is aligned, coherent and cohesive so we can quickly, effectively and economically respond to the needs of New Zealanders in distress. Organisations, agencies and individuals will continue to improve, collaborate, work alongside each other and build stronger relationships as they increase their understanding of the various roles, and how this sector fits together as a community.

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

*Martin Matthews*  
Chair  
NZSAR Council



## Purpose

NZSAR will provide effective search and rescue services for people in distress throughout New Zealand's search and rescue region in order to save lives.

## Vision

To find and rescue people in distress using New Zealand's community of search and rescue resources, expertise and services.

## Values

The New Zealand search and rescue community will:

- be *proficient* at search and rescue;
- encourage open and effective *communication*;
- *collaborate* and *co-operate* between individuals, teams and organisations;
- *learn* from our individual and collective experiences;
- be *efficient* in the use of scarce resources;
- recognise the *dedication, courage* and *commitment* of the people who make up our sector.

## Parameters

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



## Who we are

Over 11,000 SAR trained people are directly involved in the NZSAR sector with a further 1500 working in support of them. People from all over New Zealand, and all walks of life, are involved in NZSAR.

Non paid volunteer professionals make up 90% of the sector. New Zealand has one of the highest rates of volunteer involvement in SAR in the world.

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

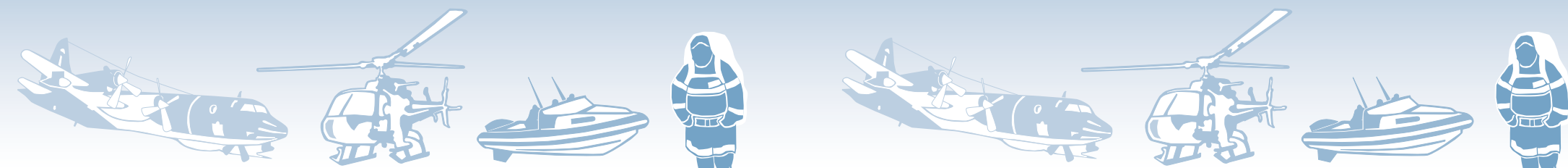
SAR coordinating authorities have access to over 250 vehicles, over 70 aircraft and nearly 345 vessels, all made available by partner SAR agencies. In addition, they can call upon many other assets of opportunity as the need arises.

## Who benefits from our services

Nearly 3000 people are assisted by the NZSAR sector every year. Many of these people owe their lives to the dedication and skill of the people who make up the sector.

Searches and rescues take place for a wide variety of people in all kinds of places throughout the region and occasionally beyond. People in distress may be from international air or sea-going traffic in remote oceanic areas, domestic commercial air and coastal traffic, or New Zealand's general aviation traffic. They can also be people undertaking recreational pursuits in the rugged terrain, inland waterways or lakes of New Zealand, or in the coastal waters of any of the Pacific Island nations within the NZSRR.

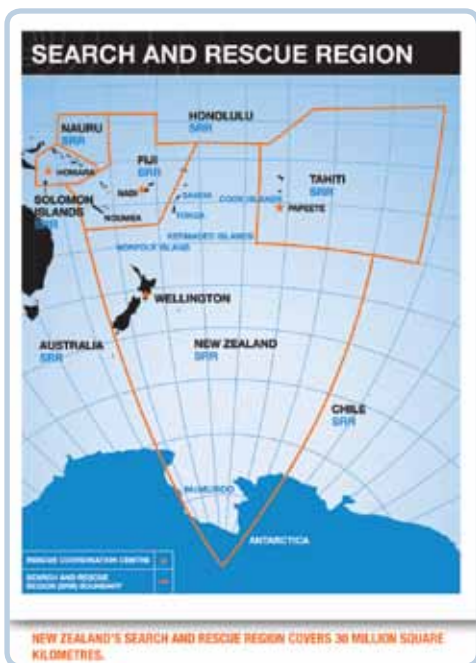
While New Zealanders make up the great majority of those assisted, visitors to our country and region can also expect an effective SAR response should the need arise.



## Our region

New Zealand's Search and Rescue Region covers over 37 million square kilometres of ocean and includes relatively small, isolated land masses that extend from latitude five degrees south to the Antarctic continent and are bounded by the 163E and the 131W meridians of longitude.

While New Zealand has a relatively small landmass by world standards, we have a low population with large tracts of very difficult terrain and highly changeable weather. Years of experience have shown us that it is very easy to get lost or injured in the New Zealand wilderness and very difficult to find people when they do get lost or injured.



## Concept of operations

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

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

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



## Issues

New Zealand's search and rescue sector operates in a complex and evolving environment, characterised by scarce resources, technological change, increasing public expectations and a heavy reliance on the voluntary sector. While no response system can be rendered fail-safe, a number of current issues facing the SAR sector can be addressed effectively. NZSAR aims to provide an affordable, effective and sustainable SAR system available for all New Zealanders and guests to New Zealand, and its Pacific nations, within the NZSRR.

- **Coordination and cooperation** The coordination of SAR incidents is a complex and demanding task, often conducted under extreme time pressure. It needs to be undertaken utilising local knowledge (when appropriate), quickly and effectively, in a wide variety of circumstances, in order to minimise the possibility of lives being lost. Active cooperation between all people involved in SAR is essential to ensure positive SAR outcomes.
- **Volunteers** Volunteers are the cornerstone of New Zealand's search and rescue system representing 90% of the people who make up the sector. SAR volunteers provide tens of thousands of hours of their time each year preparing for, or conducting, SAR operations. It is vital that these volunteers are recruited and retained as well as being trained, organised, equipped and appreciated.

- **Capacity and availability** The coordinating agencies are heavily reliant on partner SAR agencies for the provision of SAR resources. These SAR agencies need predictability in terms of both capacity and availability of resources. It is also important that the resources they provide are appropriate for SAR tasks and that their people are appropriately trained for SAR operations.
- **Training** Training, practice and familiarity leads to competence, confidence and trust, which are vital components of an effective SAR system. Individual, team and multi agency training and exercises, as well as familiarity with common procedures and SAR systems, are necessary for an effective, cooperative SAR system.
- **Search and rescue demand**

The demand for, and complexity of, SAR is likely to increase. A sustained increase in the number and capability of both pleasure boats and recreational aircraft is likely to be matched by a corresponding increase in SAR incidents. Additionally, New Zealand's aging population is likely to lead to an increase in lost person searches due to Alzheimer's and related dementias. Increased 406MHz distress beacon ownership, particularly of personal locator beacons, will also alter both demand and response for SAR.





## NZSAR Council goals

The NZSAR Council adopts these goals in order to lead the combined efforts of New Zealand's search and rescue sector to meet the purpose and vision of this plan.

- **To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of New Zealand's SAR sector**

With high public expectations of SAR success, and limited resources, it is important that the sector works hard to improve both its effectiveness and efficiency. To realise this, we will continue to improve our understanding of ourselves, our relationship with other SAR agencies, our operations, and the risks to the sector. We will use this information to develop our organisations, improve our ability to work together using common procedures, and reduce the risks facing the sector.

- **To achieve a culture of "one SAR body"**

Search and rescue works best when the sector works together. The sector is diverse, made up of thousands of people performing many different roles in a number of organisations. In order to achieve an effective culture of being "one SAR body", the sector will enhance its internal and external communications and better coordinate its standards, training and activity.

- **To promote continuous improvement**

The NZSAR Council will adapt to the ever changing environment and challenges it faces by making continuous improvements to its organisations, training and operations. This will be achieved through information sharing, showcasing good practices, promoting innovation and effective monitoring of the sector.



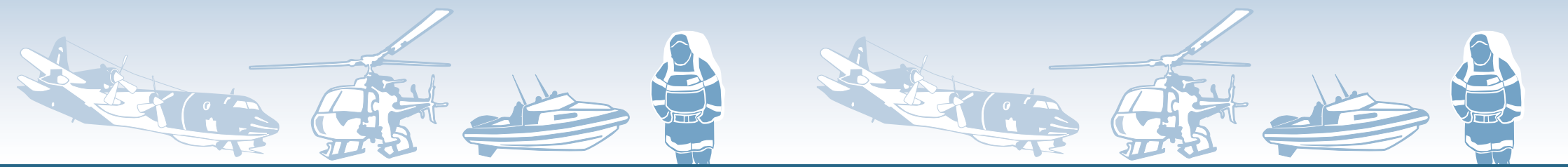
- **To maximise the potential of SAR people**

People are at the heart of New Zealand's search and rescue sector. We need a better understanding of who our SAR people are and what they need to succeed. We will support and promote the work our people do as we assist SAR organisations to manage, recruit and retain our SAR people.

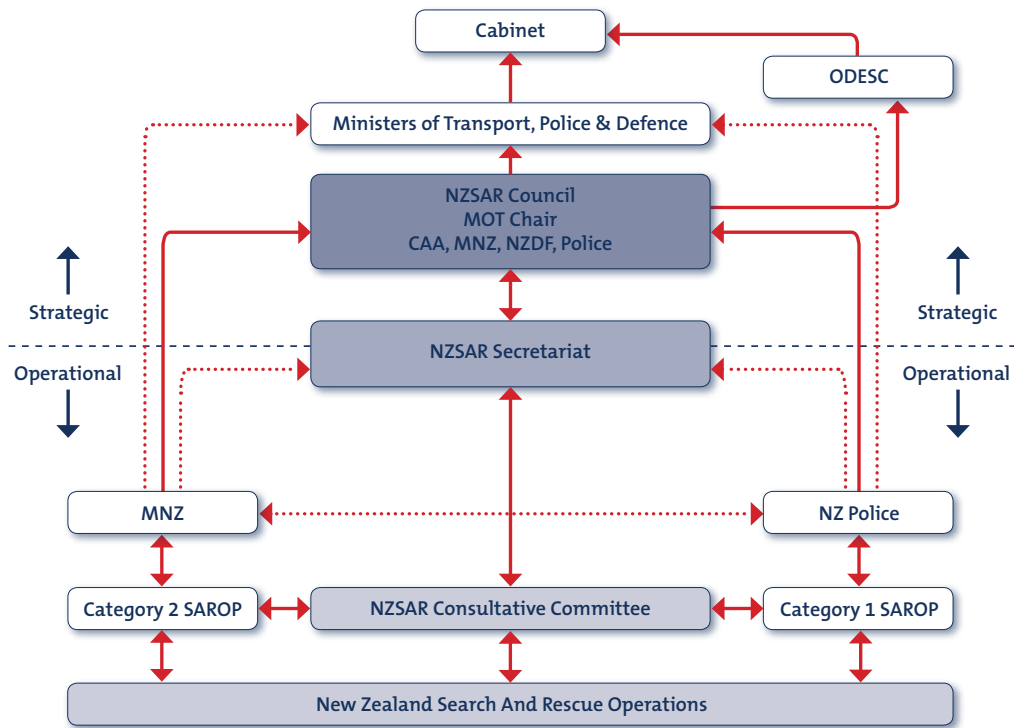
- **To support SAR preventative strategies**

The NZSAR Council, together with dedicated specialist organisations and groups, has an important role to play in helping prevent the need for search and rescue responses. The Council will inform, support, contribute to and, when required, coordinate or lead preventative strategies and actions for individuals, groups and organisations that should lessen the likelihood of them needing search and rescue services.

Prevention involves individual, collective and organisational behaviour that minimises the risk of injury or loss of life. SAR organisations are not primarily responsible for preventative strategies, but we must play an active role in initiatives that minimise the need for our services where we can. This may include a mix of information, education, advice, influencing environmental factors, assessing risk, imparting skills, recommending appropriate equipment and regulation.



## NZSAR governance



SAROP: Search and Rescue Operations  
 CAA: Civil Aviation Authority  
 MNZ: Maritime New Zealand  
 ODESC: Officials Committee for Domestic and External Security Coordination  
 NZDF: New Zealand Defence Force

## Notes

**New Zealand Search and Rescue Council**  
**NZSAR Secretariat**  
**Level 6 Novell House**  
**89 The Terrace**  
**Wellington**  
**[www.nzsar.org.nz](http://www.nzsar.org.nz)**

