
NZLSAR News

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CONTENTS:

Progress Report from Business Manager

Field Support Positions

SAR Mongolian style

Landsar Contact list

Whilst it may seem generally quiet in Search and Rescue at present I can assure you that there are a tremendous amount of things going on, SAR Nationally is being re invigorated with the introduction of the Board and new Business Manager. Setting up of stand alone offices at Level 2, 276 Lambton Quay, Wellington, and , in time, the incorporation of the various functions to the new offices in down town Wellington. Our Business manager Rob Arlidge will be issuing regular updates on the various things that will be happening keeping everyone in the loop, as it were.

Phil Whitelaw Editor

Progress Report from the Business Manager

I want to thank all members of New Zealand Land Search & Rescue Inc. who I have personally met for their warm welcome and I look forward over the next few months to meet many more of you. I am proud to be working for this organisation, where there is so much genuine and positive passion for search and rescue and saving people's lives.

As the new Business Manager for New Zealand Land Search & Rescue I am busy carrying out the strategic plan and putting in place the requisite resources, processes, and policies to service your resource and training needs at a new level of performance and lift the visibility and positioning of our organisation.

We are engaging, and will continue to engage, with all regions, groups and individuals within New Zealand Land Search & Rescue. I'm keen to ensure that this national office is in touch with all members and the grassroots of our organisation. This is particularly important as there are many regional and district differences in the country and we need to clearly work to regional priorities and needs.

To ensure that the national office is in close communication with everyone involved in LandSAR, we are initially appointing two Field Support Officers – the first of four we will be appointing - one in each island, to work directly with

all groups and regions to ensure resource and training needs, suited to particular needs, are being met. It is the Board's clear intention to employ two more Field Support Officers, so there are two in each island, as soon as sustainable funding for these positions becomes available.

The two initial Field Support Officer positions are being currently advertised and we are at this stage only seeking applications from LandSAR members, who are working in the field and understand the organisation and its needs. I urge all members of LandSAR, who are interested in these career opportunities with LandSAR, to express their interest. The job descriptions are on our website.

Over the next few months you will see a number of forward developments. Among these, we will be presenting a new logo that retains the LandSAR brand. The website is being completely re-developed as our prime communication vehicle and we will be providing each group with its own web-pages, which we can maintain and update. A new web-based information system is being set up to enable the organisation and all regions and groups to have accurate up-to-date information on the organisation and its operations, to readily obtain resources and communicate efficiently and effectively across and within the organisation. A new national funding strategy has been developed to ensure we will be adequately financially resourced, and ensure that it fits and does not conflict with local fundraising efforts and applications.

I can report the following progress has been made:

National Office

A new LandSAR national office has been established in Wellington. The facilities of the office are available to all members and the contact details are:

Rob Arlidge
Business Manager
New Zealand Land Search & Rescue Inc
Level 2, 276 Lambton Quay
P O Box 12-081
Wellington
Ph: 04 473 6108
Fax: 04 473 6109
Email: rob.arlidge@landsar.org.nz or info@landsar.org.nz

Staffing

We have employed Jason Tweedie (Jason.tweedie@landsar.org.nz) on a 3 month fixed term contract until 30 June 2007 to assist with the establishment of the web-based information system. Jason is currently contacting LandSAR groups to obtain up-to-date membership information and discuss each group's website requirements.

In addition to the appointment of the two Field Support Officers, we will also be shortly announcing the appointment of a Website Editor/PA to administer the new website and assist with the management of the national office.

Website Re-development and Information Based Information System

To establish a robust sustainable membership database system suited to our organisation and to redevelop the website to provide us with a professional unified image, we have contracted the web design house, Data Torque Ltd of Wellington to deliver a web based information system. This incorporates a complete redesign and redevelopment of the LandSAR website and an online membership database. Data Torque Ltd was chosen as their ZEUS online relational database has been especially developed for the online management and collection of training & event data for sporting organisations. It therefore has direct applicability to LandSAR, where we have similar needs for the management and collection of training & incident data.

The full website capability will be rolled out in two or three phases with the first phase at the end of June. This will incorporate the membership database, e-shop, e-library, online newsletter publishing capability and many other enhanced features. Members can be assured that their membership information will not be used for non-SAR purposes. Members will have access to the full website, but not members of the public.

We will be contacting each group within LandSAR to discuss your website requirements over coming weeks. Each group is offered their own pages and for those with current active websites we can provide a series of options.

The new website will go live in July.

Funding Strategy

A particular focus of my role is to grow and diversity our current funding base. A draft funding strategy has been developed and we soon will be seeking to engage with potential commercial sponsors, who wish to support the goals and work of our organisation.

We have already commenced applications to the many sources of grants in NZ for not-for-profit organisations. To expedite funding application administration we have engaged on contract, Wendy Walker (wendy.walker@landsar.org.nz), to assist the processing of national office applications.

On 16th June the Board and I will be meeting with the chairs of each of our seven regions and others holding national office in LandSAR.

I'm looking forward to the challenges ahead and welcome contact from anyone involved in LandSAR

FIELD SUPPORT OFFICERS

APPLICATIONS FOR TWO POSITIONS SOUGHT FROM NZ LAND SEARCH & RESCUE MEMBERS

The Business Manager of New Zealand Land Search & Rescue, Rob Arlidge, announced today that applications were being sought from members of LandSAR groups for two new permanent Field Officer positions.

Both of these positions are to be filled by active LandSAR members, who wish to develop their careers in the Search and Rescue industry. One of the positions will have responsibility for servicing and liaising with all LandSAR regions & groups in the North Island, and the other position for servicing and liaising with all LandSAR regions & groups in the South Island.

Upon appointment the Field Support Officers will not be involved in operations as part of their employment. However LandSAR will release them to participate in operations as volunteers. The Field Support Officers will have high visibility within the Search & Rescue community. They will provide the key link between the national office and every region, group and individual member.

Applicants will not have to move house to take up the position, but instead will be equipped to operate from their home base.

Please note it is our intention to employ two more Field Support Officers, so there are two in each island, as soon as sustainable funding for these positions becomes available. The territorial responsibility for the two positions we are now advertising will halve when these two other positions are filled.

All those interested are urged to apply for the positions.

For a copy of the Job Descriptions – www.landsar.org.nz

To apply for the positions send a copy of your CV with covering letter to:

Applications close at 5pm on 31st May 2007

Rob Arlidge
Business Manager
New Zealand Land Search & Rescue Inc.
P O Box 12-081
Wellington

For further Information contact Rob Arlidge, Business Manager, New Zealand Land Search & Rescue Inc. – rob.arlidge@landsar.org.nz Ph: 04 473 6108 or 0274 404 854

Search and Rescue Mongolian style

On a lighter side I was involved in a SAR situation while Operating a Hunting Safari overseas a few years ago and thought I would commit it to paper.

A few years ago I took a winter hunting safari to Mongolia (stupid thing to do). It was mid afternoon in late November as we arrived at this herdsman's Ger, (Mongolian mobile home), in the northern part of the Uvs province in the far west of Mongolia, right up next to the Siberian border. The family came out to greet us, we stayed on our horses while Enkbar, our guide/interpreter got down and spoke to them. They seemed somewhat anxious and a long conversation ensued. Enkbar then came to me and explained that 2 children had gone missing aged five and six. They were very concerned as there was only 3 hours daylight left, and then the temperature would plummet from minus 20c to minus 35c. He told us we would have to stay and help. Others had heard of the problem and began to arrive to help also.

I explained that I had a Search and Rescue background in NZ and would be pleased to do what we could. That was a waste of time, as they didn't understand what Search and Rescue was. We were 4 New Zealanders, 2 having SAR experience, but they were pleased to have our help so we tried to get them organized instead of everyone doing there own thing.

THE SEARCH

We assembled our resources, they consisted of 15 men (10 of whom had horses), 2 jeeps and 1 old Russian motorbike that made hard work of the snow.

We didn't have any maps, or radios or telephones and no English except for 1 interpreter who spoke broken English and talked to everyone at once. There was no Police or other authority, you just had to do it. On the good side there was no media.

Behind the Ger was a hill with a couple of hundred acres of forest on it and behind that was rolling partly forested country that led to Siberia, 30km away.



Highly trained seachers



Field Head Quarters

We now had 2 1/2 hours of daylight left. As best we could ascertain the kids had gone up through the bush face looking for something.

There was only time for one task for each man as there was no way of re-tasking them in the time frame, and no radios anyway. So we had one shot at this.

Tracking the kids through the snow was not an option as the snow was very fine (like Talc) and easily windblown covering tracks.

We suggested the horsemen to ride up through the forest, like a contact search on horses, open forest with snow on the ground, easy to see through. One jeep to the top of the hill to light a big fire on the open top to act as a beacon of light as darkness was approaching fast. Leave someone with the fire then the jeep to take off on a 4wd track that led north along the ridges. The other jeep was to do the tracks over to the south. The motorcyclist did the local tracks.

Being in a FHQ is bad enough when you are waiting for a radio call so you can keep things moving along but this was terrible. We had made our plan and if someone came up with a better idea we couldn't change it.

An hour after dark with the temperature plummeting, the various horsemen returned, and then the jeep from the north with the 2 boys. Thank god for that. They had got themselves disorientated and thought that they were on the road to home - they were heading for Siberia. As it got dark they saw the fire, turned around, headed the right way and ran into the jeep.

THE AFTERMATCH FUNCTION

Now came the hard bit. Mongolian hospitality - they have nothing, but will share whatever they have with you. Firstly, a round of fermented mares milk and a bit of a ceremony (you have to drink the drink or it's offensive). Actually it's offensive to drink if you know what I mean. Then, it's made clear that they want to top up your mare's milk bowl. As the saying goes, when in Rome, it's like a bottle of bad wine; the first glass is the worst.

While all this is going on, the women are cooking. It's clear we are staying for the night., another fermented mares milk and I can feel myself starting to slide into the fuzzy abyss.

They want to know all about us, so we tell them through our interpreter Enkbat, who, incidentally, is 2 bowls ahead of us and starting to embellish things a bit, ...a lot. We could tell - the more he talked, the more he drank and the more impressed the locals became.

At last, food. While all this was going on they barbequed a goat outside, this involves taking a freshly killed goat, disembowelling it and filling the gut cavity up with hot stones and herbs and leaving it to cook. Once cooked, they proceed to burn the hair off the goat with a blow torch, put it on a platter and bring it in to be eaten, at this point the goat looks like it didn't survive a house fire, it is then torn apart and eaten with a variety of vegetables of no known origin. This meal should be closely followed by a dose of "Imoden".

The problem in these situations is you have to go with the flow a bit so as not to offend anyone, this could risk your ears being cut off. They were wonderful people, and just pleased all turned out well and just very enthusiastic about entertaining.



Phil the horseman

After match function, Mongolian BBQ

Like I said, a bit of light reading. I guess living in the western world has its advantages in terms of an infrastructure that is in place to help those who get into trouble in the outdoors. Now these people live in the outdoors and I would have thought that they would have had some infrastructure, albeit rudimentary, to deal with these situations, but it appears not. It just seemed to me to be chaos and everyone doing own thing with no organisational control. Particularly in this harsh world, were your chances of survival are severely limited by the extreme cold and the hungry wolves.

I have to say it was interesting to be part of and to observe, it makes me feel lucky to live in an organised world.

Phil Whitelaw Editor

LANDSAR (NZ) - Contacts list

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Board					
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Regional Chairs					
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