



Newsletter July 2007 Edition No:14

Welcome to the new NZ LandSAR Newsletter

Business Manager's column

Since the last newsletter two months ago there has been much activity.

I particularly want to make special mention of the contribution played by Phil Whitelaw, whose role as National Field Officer ceases at the end of this month. Phil took up the role of National Field Officer in March 2006, after many years of meritorious service to the organisation by John Tristram. Phil has done a wonderful job administering the national organisation through the business review period and has been of great assistance to me. Many of you have written saying how much you have appreciated him. To mark Phil's departure there will be a special farewell at Police national headquarters in Wellington.

Phil's departure marks the end of LandSAR NZ having an office at Police national headquarters and the changeover to our new offices at 276 Lambton Quay in Wellington.

I also wish to introduce Joanna Leighton Jones, who has recently taken up the position of Office Manager and my PA. Joanna is an experienced office manager in national charitable organisations and will be taking over Phil's role as editor of our newsletter.

We will very shortly be announcing the two new Field Support Officers. We asked only those involved in SAR to apply and had a large number of high quality applications for the positions. I want to thank all those who applied.

I am pleased to announce that in the 2007/08 financial year an additional \$50,000 has been allocated in the budget for "refresher" training. Refresher training updates training received in previous training courses. We will be advising all regions, districts and groups of criteria to access this financial support.

If the dog handling and underground groups are excluded, the \$50,000 for refresher training effectively doubles the training budget from last year.

On 16th June a meeting was held in Wellington attended by NZ LandSAR Board Members, the chairs of all the seven NZ LandSAR regions, Andrew Pealing and Colin Daniell as chairs of the Dog Handlers and Underground national groups, the chair of the new SAR Advisory Board, Lloyd Matheson, and Roger Barrowclough.

At this meeting we outlined forward strategy and planning for the organisation and most importantly received feedback and useful suggestions. It was a very positive meeting and enabled me to personally meet all the regional chairs, who play such an important role in our organisation. Since then I have given a number of presentations to SAR groups around the country, most recently to the Midland Region at their AGM on 17th July.

We have been engaged in a wide round of consultation with all regions, districts and groups

over the new NZ LandSAR Logo, which will be officially released when the new website goes live. This is scheduled for mid-August.

The new SAR Advisory Group, which takes over the functions of the former Communications, Training and Specialist sub-committees, is holding its first meeting in Wellington on 21st & 22nd July. The SAR Advisory Group will provide, through a single forum, the national office the requisite technical and strategic advice this organisation needs to prioritise projects and ensure that our mission and vision is being fulfilled.

I can announce the Annual General Meeting will be held at the Brentwood Hotel in Wellington on Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th September. The AGM notice will be forwarded to you all on 27th July.

Departure of National Field Officer Phil Whitelaw



Phil Whitelaw joined SAR about 1971 and spent the next 4 years being a team member, a Field Controller and an advisor (for the last 15 years) in the Wellington area. He has been involved in some key searches. Currently, he is the Chairman of the Wellington Search and Rescue Trust.

Phil retired from active SAR late in 2005 only to be brought back in March 2006 as the part time National Field Officer. This appointment was to keep the ball rolling during the interim period between John Tristram's retirement and the formation of the new look LandSAR NZ which is comprised of a Board of Directors, a Business Manager and North and South Island Field Support Officers. The new entity has moved its base from Police National Headquarters to offices on Lambton Quay, Wellington.

So, with the changeover being complete, the job is done. It is with deep appreciation that we say thank you Phil for your faithful service and guiding hand during the transition.

EDITORS NOTE

This edition of the newsletter has been compiled partly by me and partly by Joanna Leighton Jones who will be the new editor.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who assisted me with items for the newsletter and to everyone who helped me to fit into and understand the complexities of being a part time National Field Officer. Thanks for your patience when things took a little longer to get done than they normally might have.

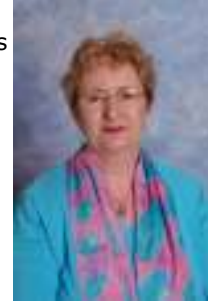
The new look organisation is now up to speed and this is where I slip out the side door, as it were.

It's been great working with you all and I leave knowing that LandSAR NZ's heart is beating strongly, moving forward into a new era.

Phil Whitelaw

New Office Manager

The Business Manager New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (Inc.), Mr. Rob Arlidge, has announced the appointment of Mrs. Joanna Leighton Jones as Office Manager for New Zealand Land Search and Rescue (Inc.).



Joanna comes to the organisation with extensive experience in Office Management /Executive Assistant positions within the not for profit sector, with her most recent roles being Office Manager for the National Missions Office of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, and School Administrator for Samuel Marsden Collegiate School, Whitby campus.

Joanna sees herself as a people person and a keen communicator who is committed to the purposes and ideals of LandSAR NZ and is looking forward to being part of the organisation.

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LandSAR NZ Information Release: SAR Advisory Group

The Business Manager is pleased to announce the establishment of the SAR Advisory Group, which will be the primary forum for applying expertise on SAR to questions of capability and coverage across New Zealand. Their input will help define the direction of LandSAR NZ and shape the support to be provided by the national organisation to operational SAR units.

The SAR Advisory Group will advise the Business Manager & Board on what projects to develop SAR capability and coverage should be supported and funded.

Full information on the role can be found in the terms of reference which will be subject to review to ensure the results and efficiencies needed.

The members of the SAR Advisory Group are:

Lloyd Matheson (Chair)

Lloyd is based in Te Anau. He is a former senior Police Sergeant and is Civil Defence Sector Manager at Te Anau. He has had a long involvement in SAR and has completed both national land and marine SAR management courses, the Police SAR NCO course, Air Observers National SAR Course, National SAR course Dip Flat, Avalanche Awareness Course, and Armed Defenders Course and CIMS Talford Training course. He has been a qualified police dog handler. Currently Lloyd works for Southern Lakes Helicopters.

Colin Daniell

Aged 39 and has been involved with Cave SAR in Tasman for 9 years. Chair of the LandSAR NZ Underground Subcommittee 2005-07. Colin is active in Cave SAR operationally from team leader thru to management team roles. He is also a member of the Christchurch ACR team.

Colin is a believer in resourcing tasks with the correct people, equipment and information to allow them to achieve their goals effectively and efficiently. He is involved in a large range of

wilderness activities both above and below ground.

Gary Dickson

Gary, originally from Christchurch, is an internationally and NZ qualified professional mountain guide and has been living in Wanaka since 2000, managing his own mountain and ski guiding company with his wife Iris, Alpinism & Ski Ltd. He is also working as assessor/instructor for NZMGA/UIAGM. His involvement with SAR Wanaka started in 2000 and before that, during the 9 years or so he was based in Mt Cook, he was always involved in any SAR there (with DoC) when he was available. The last few years in Mt Cook village he was chief guide for Alpine Guides Mt Cook; he's also got the Lincoln University diploma to be a parks manager.

Matthew Dodd

At 39 Matt hopes he is old enough not to be a greenhorn but young enough to be in the field for a few years yet. He started his SAR involvement in Christchurch in 1991 and was lucky enough to move into the Tasman region in 2000. Matt has been an operational Land SAR search dog handler, a national search dog assessor and an adviser to IMTs on search dog deployment. He has also helped to lead the development of USAR search dogs nationally as the President of the USAR Search Dog Association for three years. Matt has had a strong involvement with urban search and incident management through his work setting up and leading a 24 person Civil Defence emergency response team in Nelson. Outside of SAR, Matt works as in IT as a consultant and project manager with a background in software development.

Dave Erson

Aged 43 and has been involved with SAR in Auckland for 22 years. Chair of the LandSAR NZ Specialist Subcommittee 2005-07 and is Deputy Regional Representative for Northern Region (Region 1). Dave is active in all roles operationally from team member to SAR manager. He has been part of the leadership/management team for Auckland SAR and over the past 10 years has been proactive and successful in developing strategies for Auckland SAR to be a long term robust sustainable resource.

Dave looks forward to the challenge of the SARAG and assisting with making national strategies and practices relevant to operational personnel across the country. He has always been active in wilderness activities, which he enjoys sharing with his two sons.

Chris Flood

Police Sergeant with 31 yrs in the job and based in Wairoa. Became involved in SAR 20 years ago when told he was going to be doing it. Had great teachers from within Wairoa Search and Rescue. Has completed all courses pertaining to Coordinators position. There are just over 100 active members in Wairoa SAR. Biggest search in Wairoa lasted 10 days with 120-125 persons in the field per day and they found him fit and well. Has represented the region on several occasions to LandSAR NZ meetings.

Keith Morfett

Aged 51 and arrived in NZ from England in 1988. Chair of Tasman Region SAR since 2005, member of Hokitika SAR since 1994. Keith became involved in SAR management due to a series of white water kayaking incidents in difficult back country gorges. He is an active member of Tasman SAR's incident management team and has attended SAR operations up and down the coast and across the Tasman region normally as planning and intelligence manager.

Keith is a strong believer in intelligence-led and evidence-based SAR; having operational SAR positions filled with the best available people regardless of occupation, age or gender; and an open democratic LandSAR NZ that recognizes, nurtures, develops and utilizes our member's skills.

His current passions are tramping and fly-fishing.

Barry Shepherd

Currently officer in charge of the Taupo Area Police SAR Squad. Barry joined the Police in

1976, worked in Auckland and Kawerau, then transferred to Taupo in 1983. He took over the Police SAR portfolio at Taupo in 1986 and been involved in increasing degrees since then.

Barry has been awarded the Police Silver Merit Award in 1990, QSM in 1997, NZ Special Service Medal (Asian Tsunami) 2005 and NZ Operational Service Medal in 2006.

Leisure activities include mountain and road biking, sea kayaking, tramping and some climbing. Crewman of local rescue helicopter since 1990. Member of Police National DVI Team.

Sherp Tucker

SAR Coordinator for the Tasman Region since 2001 and received District Commander's Commendation for SAR activities. Past member of LandSAR NZ's Training sub-committee. Past member of Tai Poutini Polytechnic Programme Advisory Committee for SAR programmes and courses. Sherp is well known through New Zealand for his SAR involvement and has continually offered help and support for innovative or specialist help within the SAR environment. Examples include his formation of the Swift Water Rescue Team based in Hokitika, the development of a radio direction finding tracking device and registration system for Alzheimer and Autistic sufferers; establishment of a trained aerial observation resource for the Tasman region and instituted and managed the establishment of joint marine and land management teams.

Jenny Visser

Has been involved with LandSAR NZ since University days as part of the Victoria University Tramping Club SAR Team. After graduating from Medical School and returning to Wellington she became involved in first aid training for Police and lay SAR team members. Along with Dr Fiona Clendon became a medical adviser to Wellington Land SAR in the early 90s and continues that role today (assisting in first aid training, providing medical advice/back-up during searches and advising on local SAR medical policy). She has a strong interest in medicine for the outdoors (both practical and academic), convening and teaching a Wilderness Medicine course for Otago University via the Wellington School of Medicine. Her interests include tramping, mountain biking and orienteering. She is hoping that this appointment will help consolidate the role of the SAR Medical Adviser, she the appointment of SAR Advisers in all regions and formalise medical input into National SAR policies where appropriate.

Ray Walker

Whakatane SAR Coordinator since 1994 and since November 2006 Region 2 (Midland region) representative on the LandSAR NZ Council. Ray has been involved with Whakatane LandSAR NZ for a continuous period of 26 years, since 1981. During these Search and Rescue years he has had experience of all positions within SAR at a local level from team member through to search controller.

Ray has been extensively hunting and tramping throughout the Urewera Ranges since 1970 and to a lesser extent the Raukumara and Kaimanawa Ranges since 1994. He looks forward to being able to contribute to the new SAR structure.

The SAR Advisory Board will meet quarterly one month prior to each Board Meeting. The Terms of reference for this group are available from the National office.

For further information please contact either Rob Arlidge, Business Manager (rob.arlidge@landsar.org.nz) or Joanna Leighton Jones, Office Manager (joanna.lj@landsar.org.nz) or phone the LandSAR NZ National Office – 04 473 6108

2007 Travel Awards

The New Zealand LandSAR Board has recently approved a \$6,000 Travel Award to John Twizell of Hamilton and Debbie Robertson of Taupo to attend the SARScene Conference in Vancouver, Canada in October 2007.

John and Debbie will be giving a formal presentation to the SARScene conference which the NZ LandSAR Board has received a copy of, and will be repeating their presentation at the next LandSAR NZ Conference (scheduled for late 2008).

This year the award has been approved based upon a recommendation from the Training Subcommittee. In future years, these travel awards will be made on recommendations forwarded to the Board by the regional Chairs. Details and application forms will be posted on the new website.

Roger Bates M.N.Z.M.

It sometimes seems the main criterion for a New Zealand honour is endurance in community service – is the candidate still there after thirty, forty or fifty years? Perhaps that's a cynic's view, but it is genuinely pleasing to see Roger Bates admitted to the NZ Order of Merit in the New Year's honours with the citation "for services to search and rescue". Endurance, yes; but Roger deserves this for leadership and innovation through the past five decades of SAR.

In the 60's he helped introduce the Austrian steel cable and winch equipment which became the mainstay of the first 20 years of national high angle rescue capability. Roger led the enthusiastic Wellington face rescue team, one of seven around the country developing at a technical level not previously seen here. He was also a regular member of Bill Bridges group training U.S. teams in Antarctica.

As Adviser in Wellington through the 70's Roger was involved in many big operations, including the 1979 Erebus recovery in which he was an advisor to Police HQ. Meanwhile his climbing continued, especially in Peru and Europe. Already one of the first to climb all of NZ's 10,000 footers, he converted to metric and got up more three thousand metre peaks.

In the 80's Roger chaired the FMC SAR committee (forerunner of NZ Land SAR Boards and committees), developing a SAR national training for advisers and field controllers. The 90's saw him move to Turangi and become a SAR adviser there, still showing his endurance with two circuits of Lake Taupo in the annual bike ride!

Roger now chairs the SARINZ Trust, owner of SARINZ Ltd, which is raising SAR training to new levels of quality and availability. He still advises Turangi SAR and worked at HQ in the massive Erceg search.

And he's still not all that old!

Tom Clarkson (Chairman, SARINZ)

Notifying and Alerting SAR Personnel Using TXT messaging

Wellington LandSAR has traditionally operated a telephone based system to alert SAR members to an operation and request personnel to respond. In the event of an operation, the HQ staff (i.e. Logistics) phones a Group Contact person and briefs them. In turn, the Group contact phones their list of personnel and then calls back the HQ to advise numbers available. The HQ then phones the Group Contact to request a response. And so on, the phone calls go back and forward!

This telephone system has served Wellington SAR well over the years but is time consuming and subject to difficulties and delays. The early stage of an operation is a busy one for HQ staff and the multitude of phone calls required impacts other key HQ tasks.

We have looked at how technology might assist with our communications. Alphanumeric pagers were not considered to be cost justified due to the low call out rate and there are issues with personnel remembering to carry a pager. As the majority of SAR personnel had cell phones it was decided to undertake a trial of the use of TXT messaging. The benefits were:

- Statistically, the odds are quite good SAR personnel have their cell phone with them.
- TXTing doesn't require the phone to be answered.
- If the phone is switched off or temporarily out of coverage, the message will still arrive when the phone is returned to service.
- Within a few minutes of an operation commencing a significant percentage of SAR personnel can be placed on alert.
- Personnel can TXT a reply advising their availability to assist with planning.
- Subsequent phone calls or TXT messages could then focus on available personnel.
- The need to have a conversation with individual personnel is minimised.

Telecom's eTXT service was selected as the messaging system for the Wellington trial. A file of personnel and their cell phone numbers was uploaded to eTXT and the personnel were assigned to named eTXT groups including specialists (e.g. AREC, Dogs, Police SAR personnel, etc).

Written procedures for both the HQ team and members were developed and distributed. HQ personnel access the eTXT system from any PC workstation that can connect to the Internet. This may be at Search HQ or from a home address prior to the HQ being activated. eTXT is a web based application and it is relatively straight forward to log in, create a TXT message and select a group of personnel to send the message to. Most often this is all of the membership but may only be a selected or specialist group. TXT messages and any replies appear on a log screen with date and time.

In summary, the following is a typical sequence of operational SAR messages:

- An initial "alert" TXT may be sent to all personnel that an operation is underway and may require a response. This TXT may also seek a reply to gauge the availability of personnel. E.g.: SAR STANDBY 5YO missing in Kaitoke Waterworks. SAROP will be initiated if not found by 3pm. TXT reply if available"
- Once the operation is confirmed a further TXT is sent. E.g.: "SAR CALLOUT 5YO missing in Kaitoke Waterworks. Respond to HQ by 4pm. Overnight search kit read, cold and wet weather f'cast. TXT reply if responding with ETA"
- If the operation is cancelled where the missing party is located prior to SAR personnel arriving at the designated Staging Area, a further TXT is sent to stand down. E.g.: "SAR STAND DOWN 5YO at Kaitoke found and safe. De-brief to follow via email. Thanks."

Wellington's eTXT trial has been operating for approximately 9 months. Whilst operational activity has been relatively low during this period we have had sufficient operations to be able to

assess the use of TXTing. The following is a summary of the key benefits as identified from the trial:

- TXTing is a quick and efficient means of alerting personnel of an operation. This has enabled HQ staff to be more focused on the search planning and less burdened with phone calls.
- The system is also valuable for alerting other supporting personnel of an operation (e.g. AREC, HQ support staff, etc).
- The trial indicated around a 50% hit rate. I.e. 45 of the 90 personnel on our list are alerted by the TXT within 30 mins or so of the message being sent out. The other 50% would consist of those whose phones were off, not on them at the time, didn't hear their phone beep that there was a message, out of coverage, etc.
- Sufficient personnel for the initial phase of the search could be mobilized via eTXT without any further need to phone around, important for searches requiring a rapid response.
- Personnel can be given advance warning of a possible operation allowing time to prepare, check kit, etc in anticipation of a further TXT request to respond.
- The potential ability to further communicate with personnel responding to the Staging Area was very useful (e.g. stand down message, further info, etc).

Some issues resulting from the introduction TXTing were also identified and have been addressed in a revision of the TXTing procedures:

Personnel should be requested to only TXT a reply as the flood of responses immediately after a TXT went tied up HQ phones and personnel.

Because it is quick and easy to TXT a SAR callout there is a temptation for HQ to make that call too early (resulting in a higher percentage of "Stand down, LP located").

TXTing bypasses the functions of the Group Contact who have previously coordinated with their team members re kit, travel, etc.

No issues relating to reliability or performance of the eTXTing service were identified during the trial. It is known that there are reported instances of significant delays in TXT messages but during the trial period TXTs were delivered in 10-20secs. As expected there were reports of missed calls but it not possible to confirm if/how the call was missed. The eTXT system does provide a list of all the personnel whose cell phone acknowledges that the message was received as well as and those who didn't (e.g. the phone is off or outside coverage).

There is a cost to setup an eTXT account and a usage charge of approx 12c per TXT/member. The average cost per operation has been around \$55 (estimated at 400 eTXT messages over the period of the operation).

Wellington considers that TXTing is a reliable and efficient way to quickly communicate with SAR personnel. It does not replace telephone calling but is an aid for the HQ team to keep the majority of the membership informed re operations, to request a response as required and to receive feedback on availability.

For further information on eTXT see: www.etxt.co.nz

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