

Improving Search and Rescue Outcomes Through Interagency Collaboration and Training

A Review of SAR Training in New Zealand

Reviewed for the NZSAR Council
by Ted Preston
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Executive Summary

In New Zealand, Search and Rescue (SAR) is undertaken by thousands of people who are members of organisations dedicated to 'finding lost people and bringing them home'. This report acknowledges that the SAR community is made up of expert organisations with experienced and skilled members, and that SAR in New Zealand is a highly valued and generally successful activity, with 2705 people being assisted in the 2007/2008 year.

In recent times, however, a few events have exposed inadequacies in interagency collaboration and cooperation. This review identifies the key issue as the likelihood of a SAR operation (SAROP) being unsuccessful because of deficiencies in planned cooperation and incident management, and the associated shortfall in working relationships. Consequently this report promotes training activities to improve collective inter-agency operations, based on:

- the NZSAR Council's strategic goal of 'one SAR body';
- confirmation that the Coordinated Incident Management System (CIMS) and the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) manual are at the heart of interagency SAR operating procedures;
- the expertise of the SAR community;
- the widely-espoused intention to improve collaboration through better relationships and integrated systems and processes;
- authority, leadership and decision-making in a collaborative culture;
- a more informed understanding of training needs and motivations in the SAR setting; and
- the management of the complexity, stress and demands of a SAR operation.

The good news is that the problems and issues appear to be well known, and there is evidence that the leaders in the SAR community are actively seeking more effective interagency performance. They appreciate the governance role of the NZSAR Council in setting the overarching direction, policy and strategy for the sector, and value the coordinating and advisory role of the NZSAR Secretariat. Within that context this report makes several recommendations designed to build a training framework of benefit to the organisations in the SAR community and, in the end, to support the ultimate SAR goal.

The foundations of the recommended training framework are:

- joint SAR exercises (SAREXs) using CIMS/IAMSAR;
- development of the **NZSAR Training Core Curriculum**, under the auspices of the NZSAR Council and facilitated by the NZSAR Secretariat; and
- formation of the **Training Advisory Panel**, comprising respected SAR specialists from across the sector nominated by members of the NZSAR Consultative Committee.

The purpose of these initiatives is to enhance training arrangements that already exist and to address training gaps, so that a college of progressive thinking about SAR, backed up by a core curriculum of courses, can provide the sector's leaders with a coherent platform of expertise and good practice for use in their organisations.

The report concludes with a set of recommendations for consideration by the NZSAR Council.

Introduction

In New Zealand, Search and Rescue (SAR) is undertaken by thousands of people who are members of organisations dedicated to ‘finding lost people and bringing them home’. The major participants in this community are organisations that have structures, resources, clear purposes and policies and procedures that are well managed. They are expert in what they do.

They are successful - they save lives. Their members, whether paid or unpaid, are skilled, experienced and dedicated. They offer their time and effort to help strangers and, sometimes, take considerable risks to do so.

The majority of search and rescue operations (SAROPs) are concluded quickly – the general view is that about 90% of rescues succeed within 12 hours. Even so, sometimes SAR operations become complicated in terms of environment, time or scale. Usually the operation has escalated to the point where several agencies are involved and where organisational demands are complex. Consequently, any inadequacies in interagency collaboration and cooperation, in asset availability and deployment, or in management and judgement, can have tragic results, not only for the lost persons and their families but also for the searchers and their colleagues. One of the ways of meeting the demand for interagency collaboration is through investment in well-structured and integrated joint training. That is the subject of this report.

This report arises from a review of SAR-related training, commissioned by the NZSAR Council, managed by the NZSAR Secretariat and undertaken by a contracted reviewer. The reviewer used structured interviews, workshops, discussion, documentation and web study as the basis for collecting information and advice from nominated SAR organisations (such as the members of the NZSAR Consultative Committee) and individuals.¹

The review summarized the current nature and state of individual and collective training in the SAR community, and identified strengths, deficiencies and gaps. It also identified the sector’s desired future directions for individual and collective training, and investigated aspects of accreditation and standards setting. As a result, this report recommends a comprehensive training framework for adoption throughout New Zealand’s SAR sector.

A consistent but simple theme emerged from the review and consequently pervades this report. It is widely, perhaps universally, acknowledged across the SAR sector that the prime area of deficiency, and therefore the target for improvement, is the inter-relation of parties while engaged in SAR activity. While there are direct training implications for improving SAROP outcomes there are, first, some fundamental requirements for organisations to better communicate, share their expertise and resources, plan and train together and commit to working together with goodwill.

¹ See Appendix 1 – Contributors

Part 1 - The training platform

Across the SAR community the current training approach is predominantly organisation-centred, i.e. each organisation, through its strategic or management plan, has assigned resources to train its people to contribute to their organisation's purpose. Individual experience and expertise is highly valued and development programmes and courses are largely knowledge, skill and competency based. Most organisations have some form of in-house training resources and look to (or endorse) other providers where that is sensible and feasible - there is a great deal of choice of both providers and courses.

That is good practice, as far as it goes.

The shortfall lies in the multi-organisational setting. Joint SAR exercise (SAREX) and incident management courses are designed to promote coherent and consistent inter-agency activity, but use of, access to and productivity from these programmes is patchy. This is mainly because organisations arrange their own training and/or choose their providers, many of whom are in competition and therefore offer 'points of difference' and customization to their clients. While choice is valued there is a risk of division, albeit small, and a question of confidence (again, albeit small) when differently trained people meet in a stressful situation.

Across the sector there is a need for training activities to address interagency familiarity and collaboration (i.e. building relationships) not only to bring

more coherence and confidence to both providers and clients but, in the end, to support the ultimate SAR goal.

Expert organisations, but ...

One of the recurring messages received during the review is the confidence expressed by people about their own organisation. Senior managers in particular spoke positively, usually with considerable pride, about their organisation and its contribution to the SAR effort.

They have every right to do so. Insofar as this review addressed the training approaches of the main players in New Zealand SAR it is the reviewer's opinion that those organisations have the necessary structures, strategies, resources and policies to develop and train their people for the purposes of their organisation. There are variations in organisational performance but there is enough evidence in standard operating procedures, training manuals and programmes to indicate that significant investment is made in staff and member development.

But there is a negative side to this expression of confidence. During the interviews and discussions most people spoke well of their counterparts in SAR but also spoke of historical issues and difficulties in their relationships. Some elaborated with stories of how particular people or groups in (usually) SAROP or SAREX situations created difficulties and tensions, leaving feelings of disengagement and demotivation amongst potential contributors.

The problem is anecdotally described using terms like ‘mismanagement and poor judgement arising from lack of experience’; ‘the pressure of authority to lead’; ‘not knowing about or respecting others’ expertise’; ‘inadequate communication and planning’, ‘personalities and egos clash’; and the like. There is acknowledgement of the overall stress that goes with the complexity of the SAR event but, in general terms, the problem is defined as *the likelihood of a SAROP being unsuccessful because of deficiencies in planned cooperation and incident management*.

In this context the reference to ‘incident management’ is usually a proxy for particular ‘SAR coordinators’, given the pattern of stories related to the reviewer. While many of these anecdotes reflect negatively on individuals they also confirm an understanding that incident management can be very complex and often beyond the capability of individuals. It has to also be said that the reviewer was told of SAR coordinators who are highly respected and admired by their SAR associates. So, while the general message usually begins as one of frustration (at perceived lack of engagement for advice and contribution), it almost always concludes with a positive view that goodwill, good communication and respect for each others’ skills and abilities is an achievable solution.

To summarize, it seems that the problems and issues are well known (although still unresolved at the present time) but it is positive that, through the course of this review, it was common for the reviewer to be told that ‘That’s all in the past and we’ve now got a much better relationship’.

Training in the SAR context

There is a mountain of material published about training but, in the reviewer’s opinion, a few elements stand out as far as SAR is concerned. As stated, the present approach to training is organisation-centred and competency-based, and there is no better foundation for effective multi-organisational performance than good practice in its component parts. It is therefore helpful to consider the SAR community as a complex organisation made up of well-performing centres of expertise².

Generally speaking, complex organisations demand a larger and more differentiated scope and scale of training attention. They recognize that:

- While component parts usually provide a specialist and therefore focused contribution the overarching purpose of the sum of the parts (i.e. the collective) must be well understood by everyone – hence the production of mission and vision statements, of strategic plans and policies.
- Complex organisations are often ‘distributed’ in structure and location, and therefore considerable effort is put into standardisation – of *systems and processes* (e.g. having compatible technology and standard operating procedures); of *ways of communicating* (through common terminology and reporting); of *ways of looking after their people* (through appointment, development and reward systems) and, in the end, of *delivery systems* that connect to, and benefit clients and other users.

² This does not mean that each organisation is as ‘expert’ as it would like to be – that goal is its own business, but part of that ‘expertness’ will relate to how it functions with others.

- Effective and efficient administration and management is important, but the inspirational factor is leadership of the sort that encourages people to make judgements and decisions with the confidence that comes from knowing that they are well-prepared and supported.
- The appointment of the right person to fit the job and its setting is an organisational responsibility. While there are practical difficulties to do that it is imperative that people who are required to lead, or manage, or work with others have the attributes for those roles. Training for management is as important as training for production or delivery.
- Planning, performance and evaluation are integrated processes, with evaluation being an investment that checks on the performance of the systems and people in the organisation, relative to the organisation's purpose. Evaluation leads to confirmation of good practice and also to the identification of need for change, both of which inform the review of operating procedures and the analysis of training needs.

The point of describing the SAR community as a 'complex organisation' is to identify a significant difference relative to organisations such as large state agencies or commercial corporations – they have some form of head office or HQ where executive managers set the path of the organisation through mission and goal statements, strategic plans, organisational design, policy settings, resource provision, training requirements and so on. The keywords for this might be direction setting, performance clarification and integration.

Historically New Zealand's SAR sector has operated as a community of independent organisations, albeit with some well-formed partnerships and arrangements. Recently, though, the NZSAR Council, the NZSAR Secretariat and the NZSAR Consultative Committee have been established with Terms of Reference that describe their contribution to the wider SAR effort. The Terms of Reference for the Council include the statement that:

... The Council is responsible for the provision of national level strategic governance to New Zealand search and rescue [but] it does not have a role in the coordination or execution of search and rescue operations at the functional operational or tactical levels. ... The Council is supported by the NZSAR Secretariat and the NZSAR Consultative Committee. The Secretariat provides the Council with support services, policy advice and implements agreed measures to effectively coordinate strategic SAR in New Zealand. The Consultative Committee is a forum for all New Zealand based SAR stakeholders. The Committee provides advice to the Council and informs the strategic decision making process.

In effect, the SAR community now has an organisational umbrella available to its members. Through the Council, the Secretariat and the Consultative Committee they have access to links, information, ideas and strategies that are intended to benefit the collective SAR effort in New Zealand and with our international associates. Appendix 3 describes the roles in chart form.

Looking forward, insofar as training is concerned, the SAR community will benefit from the continuation of each organisation's good practices and programmes and from attention being applied to training for managers, especially those involved

in interagency activities. In addition, there are benefits to be had from some centralised initiatives, such as a proposal for a SAR training core curriculum (discussed elsewhere in this report) to be developed under the auspices of the NZSAR Council.

Finally, it must not be overlooked that the SAROP environment can be very stressful. In situations that require decision-making under duress people react in a variety of ways. But, essentially, they do what they have been 'told' to do, or what they 'know', which may be that they take actions that are inadequate in a fast-moving situation, or they revert to what has worked in a previous (though different) situation. The body of research into behaviour under stress agrees that deep-seated understanding, sometimes known as 'over learning' and 'automatic behaviour', is the condition that is the goal of reinforced experiential training³. This level of individual response should be supported by backup systems, access to input from other people (for guidance and training), and 'space' for review and reconsideration of changing information.

Boosting interagency training

As stated, this review concludes that to improve SAR outcomes in New Zealand the most productive point of attention is the inter-relation of parties engaged in a SAROP. That is, after all, where all the efforts of all the participants come to the

³ Reference several academic papers on 'decision-making under stress'. 'Sources of Power', a book by Gary Klein (MIT Press 1999), is based on observations of people (fire commanders, fighter pilots, paramedics and others) who make split-second decisions on the job, under real life constraints like time pressure, high stakes, personal responsibility and shifting conditions. Klein developed the Recognition Primed Decision model used by the US Marines and Army.

ultimate focus. So, if we accept that the SAR community is made up of dedicated experts, both at the organisational and membership level, then any dysfunctions with tragic outcomes are unacceptable.

This is, essentially, a leadership challenge.

Right now, important leadership decisions and actions are indicating progress. It is significant that authoritative senior positions in NZ Police, the Rescue Coordination Centre NZ (RCCNZ), Coastguard NZ, and LandSAR have recently been filled with experienced managers who bring a fresh point of view to the discussions with their longer-serving counterparts. They are looking at ways to take their organisations forward and are participating in the conversation about working in a culture of collaboration. Memoranda of Understanding and Service Level Agreements are documenting the desired accord, and leaders are asserting that those words of agreement will be put into practice.

These discussions and agreements, along with the strategic coordination offered by the NZSAR Secretariat, will be influential, not only in making changes in their respective organisations but also in re-shaping the ways in which they operate with their SAR partners and associates. The style and attitude adopted by managers will express and model what is required from staff and members, and when that translates into business-as-usual collaborative behaviour with other members of the community then most of the historical dysfunctions will be negated.

A sustained expression of leadership expectation and modelling will set the foundation for training strategies and programmes, but training will not stick if

trainees do not see the connection between them and their organisation's ways of operating. 'Walk the talk' is the appropriate slogan.

A staircase of training activities

- **Each organisation** in the SAR community should continue to develop its own CIMS/IAMSAR based training approach⁴, in much the same way as is currently being done, reflecting their own needs and circumstances and being delivered in relevant and practical ways. In addition, training programmes should address how the organisation, unit and each individual will develop their ability to communicate, share expertise and resources, plan and train together and to evaluate the effectiveness of that relationship with their associates.
- **Inter-agency training activities** should continue to focus on the traditional SAREX. As a simulation of an expected SAROP it is likely to be the most productive form of experiential training, enabling people from various parts of the sector to meet, plan, practice, review and evaluate in an environment where time and stress can be controlled.

⁴ In this report the term CIMS/IAMSAR is used to indicate their complementarity. While the principles and processes of CIMS and IAMSAR are fundamentally similar there are differences in terminology. That is not seen as a problem, nor does it require major attention but incident managers, at least, should be acquainted with both terminologies.

In the training context it means that CIMS courses should point out that IAMSAR uses terms like Search and Rescue Mission Coordinator (SMC – the official temporarily assigned to coordinate response to an actual or apparent distress situation), and On-Scene Coordinator (OSC – a person designated to coordinate SAR operations within a specified area).

Likewise IAMSAR users should be aware of the CIMS terminology.

Given that foundation, building training activities that are effective is relatively straightforward, starting from each organisation and flowing through partnerships to some form of national cohesion.

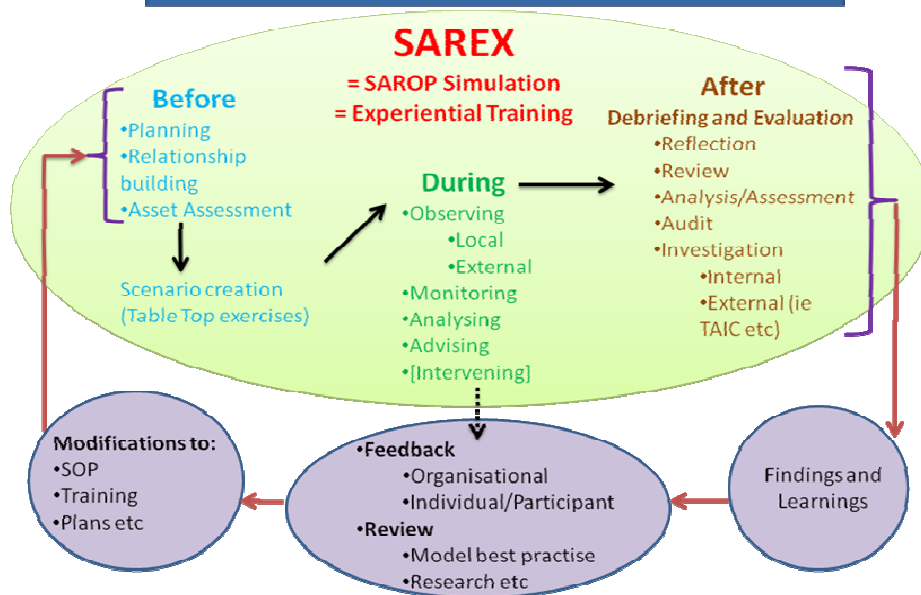
SAREXs come in all shapes and sizes. While there will be the occasional major exercise involving several regions most will have a local focus. Even a structured discussion or a 'tabletop scenario' between two or three local SAR people can be a SAREX. Whatever the size and scope, the managers of the exercise should assign plenty of resources (i.e. time and the right people) to the planning and evaluative phases. It is recognized that, for volunteers in particular, time devoted to debriefing/evaluating is seen as less important than the SAROP/SAREX itself. That may be so, but good planning and subsequent evaluation adds great value to the training effect, and to the preparation of the next event.

An experienced SAROP manager stated that 'There is no SAR event that local SAR people cannot envisage.' If that is so, there is no training approach that cannot be envisaged – put simply, the requirements are that:

- the right people get together;
- they pool their knowledge and views;
- they identify the foreseeable likely scenarios and risks;
- they select the most likely for attention;
- they assess resource/asset availability and accessibility; and
- they proceed to plan the management of each predicted event.

This is common practice in well managed SAREXs where good relationships and cooperative planning are at the heart of the activity.

SAR Exercise – Interagency or Joint Training



A recommendation arising from this part of the review reflects that:

- the SAREX remains the cornerstone of interagency training;
- the quality (i.e. the training effect) of the exercise will be significantly improved if more attention is given to the (pre-) planning stage⁵, and to the post-op evaluations;
- there is a direct feedback link from evaluation (learnings) to confirmations of good practice but also to improvements to be made to future planning and training activities; and

⁵ Some SAR people refer to planning before a SAREX/SAROP as 'pre-planning' to differentiate it from the immediacy of tactical planning undertaken at the beginning of a SAR event.

- there is value in building in activities of evaluation to be undertaken by well-prepared moderators and referees during the exercise. In some circumstances these evaluators should come from outside the group that planned the SAREX – refer to the proposal for a Training Advisory Panel.

A widely expressed opinion of SAR practitioners is that *local* SAREXs are the most cost effective and productive. For planning, training and debriefing purposes a local or district interagency approach is seen to have its merits because:

- SAR organisations are located where their needs are greatest (reflecting environmental factors, where people live or play and the history of SAR events) and these are usually at specific locations;
- Local SAR people know their environment, get to know each other, appreciate each others' contributions and, when the relationship is satisfactory, communicate and cooperate well;
- Local SAR people best know the areas of vulnerability in their territory and in their capacity to respond;
- NZ Police management and resourcing is district based so, because of NZ Police's SAR coordinating authority, formal and informal SAR groups and committees are naturally formed;
- NZ Police District HQs (and other SAR agency district units) oversee and support local offices and outposts; and
- RCCNZ is developing liaison roles with SAR district networks around NZ.

Inter-district and inter-regional training events are also necessary, but if the local groups work well then the collective effort has a good basis for also working well.

- **National and customized training programmes** already support the needs of SAR organisations. Foundation courses in SAROP/incident management are provided by several organisations, mainly for their own people but also for associates, and there is a plethora of courses offered by providers such as SARINZ, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, *et al.*

In response to a pattern of comments that suggest the training resource is scattered, patchy and often competitive this review recommends the addition of a central/national resource in two parts. The first is to develop the concept of a **NZSAR training core curriculum**, a strategic level platform under the ownership of the NZSAR Council. With a focus on CIMS/IAMSAR incident management it would bring together the essence of several existing courses and be facilitated (initially at least) by the NZSAR Secretariat.

The second is the facilitation, also by the SAR Secretariat, of a **Training Advisory Panel**.⁶ This is not intended to be a permanent fixture but rather a list of experienced and respected SAR specialists from across the sector - from academic, trainer, management or practitioner sources. These nominated Panel members would be available to undertake advisory roles for organisations, for mentoring decision makers, to be SAREX advisors and analysts, to be ambassadors and use their international links, and to bring information and insights to issues or future directions for SAR.⁷

The purpose of these two initiatives is to enhance arrangements that already exist *ad hoc* so that a college of progressive thinking about SAR, backed up by a core curriculum of courses, can provide the sector's leaders with a platform of expertise and good practice that they can use as they wish in their organisations. There are elements of credibility and cohesion in this proposal which may, in due course, lead

⁶ See Part 3 - Observations and Elaboration

⁷ The issue of dementia is a case in point. It would be useful to have a SAR-specific view on the implications of dementia/wandering and what it means for the sector. This could be a project and training would play a part in the response.

to sustainable developments regarding standardisation and accreditation. It is likely that the training providers (e.g. SARINZ) will welcome the proposal and see innovative applications to benefit their clients and the sector as a whole.

Part 2 - An Integrated Framework for NZSAR Training

The NZSAR Council's Strategic Goal 2 (2008) is to *achieve a culture of 'one SAR body'*. As a contribution to that goal this review recommends the use of a sector-wide integrated training framework.

The **primary goal** (i.e. an overarching goal that reflects the stated purpose of every organisation in the sector) is proposed as follows -

Through a cohesive interagency training framework, develop the people and organisations in New Zealand's SAR community so that their personal and collective efforts serve the best interests of those who are lost and/or need to be rescued.

A 'family tree' of **component goals** is a collation of the main training goals of each SAR organisation, for example –

The training goal for Coastguard NZ is to provide appropriately trained personnel (and their equipment) to deliver expert marine search and rescue services. These services will be available directly to those in need or in response to a request from a Coordinating Authority.

And another example –

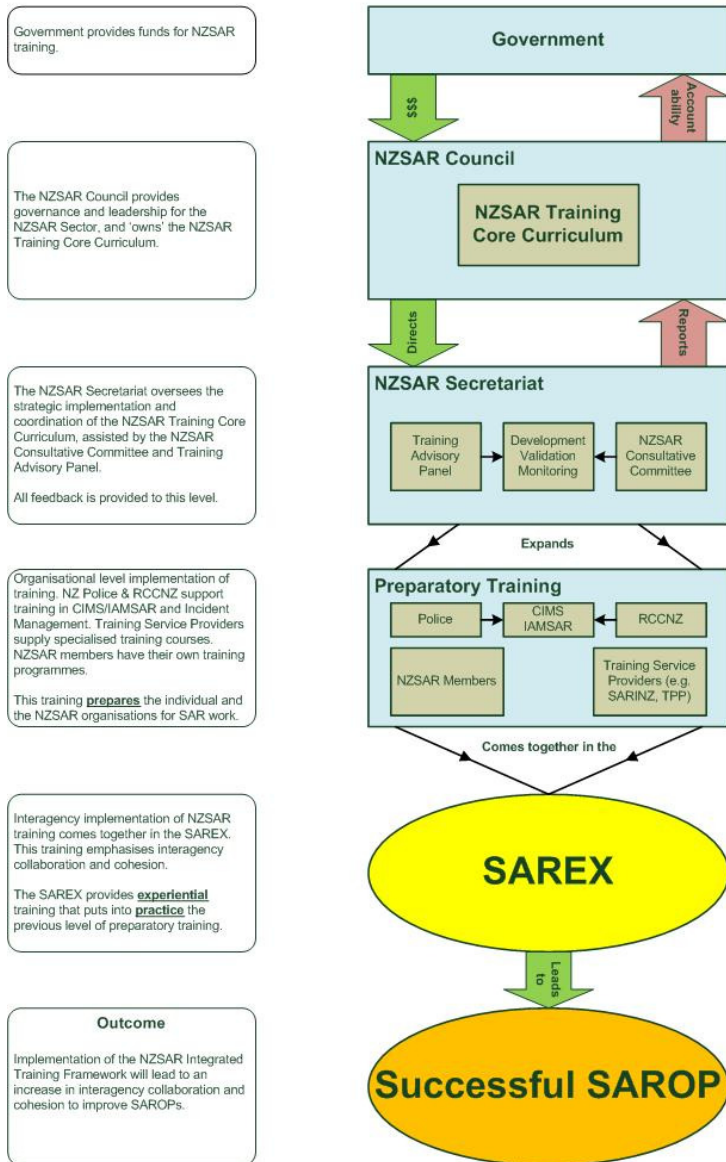
The Mountain Safety Council promotes outdoor safety and education. It does not offer direct SAR services, but hundreds of its members are SAR volunteers.

The training goal of the Mountain Safety Council is to encourage safe participation in land based outdoor recreation so that the number and/or severity of incidents, SAR response and operational activity is reduced. The SAR community often require and access MSC education through its curriculum of courses delivered by qualified instructors.

Elaboration of these **goals** leads to statements that clarify organisational **purpose** (which drives strategy and policy decisions) and the **roles** that people play to achieve that purpose. When an organisation further describes roles at a unit and personal level (as in a **job description**) it then has the basis for **performance assessment**. Consequently that prompts **system and training needs analyses** which inform investment in **training programmes**.

The next step is to locate these organisation-specific training programmes in a nation-wide **integrated framework** that includes a **core curriculum**.

NZSAR Integrated Training Framework



The NZSAR Training Core Curriculum

There are dozens of courses and other training activities offered throughout the SAR community. Every organisation has its own approach to promoting competence and development amongst its staff and members, and there are many 'public' courses designed to increase operational skills.

It is not the intention of the proposed Training Core Curriculum to interfere with any of that but, rather, to add a strategic level that overarches existing courses. The recommendation is for the NZSAR Council to approve the NZSAR Secretariat's facilitation of a core curriculum – to produce a platform that supports the development (or redevelopment) of providers' courses in a cohesive and integrated way.

The product of this facilitation is not pre-determined, although it is likely to address:

- a strategic overview;
- a selection of competencies (knowledge, skills and experience) that are generic to SAR in New Zealand;
- some first-level specification of competencies for incident management (including preparation, operational performance and evaluation);
- a summary of 'what should be taught' i.e. the curriculum;
- the links to existing courses and development activities; and
- the identification of any gaps that might remain.

It is probable that a platform such as this will prompt SAR organisations to check that they have the generic ground covered, and then to confirm the flow to their own training products. It should, first, give them confidence about what they already have in place; second, suggest some areas for development; and, third, lead to some conversations with associate organisations about connections and collective activity (especially where near-duplication or overlap is identified).

Part 3 - Observations and Elaboration

Standards and accreditation

In any complex organisation some interaction and therefore standardisation of systems and processes is desirable, and managers devote time and resources to achieve that. Standards-based training and accreditation are complementary vehicles used for that purpose. The SAR community of agencies, trusts, clubs and companies can collectively be considered to make up a complex organisation with a generic goal, but its complexity is compounded because component organisations are independent and assert their choices about all matters to do with their business.

The informative and timely research report about *Volunteer-related Training in Emergency Services* undertaken by the New Zealand Institute for Economic Research (NZIER) for the Fire and Rescue Service ITO (FRSITO) and published in July 2008, notes that *understanding motivations is vital to successfully engaging volunteers in training ... there may be tension here between the amount and type of training the organisation might want volunteers to undertake for effective service provision, and that which the volunteers themselves are prepared to undertake.*

That report records that, in the opinion of the NZIER authors, *emergency services organisations using volunteer labour face two fundamental choices:*

- *accommodate volunteers' training preferences, and/or adopt a range of other strategies to achieve the required service standards; [or]*
- *accept that service standards will vary.*

Training and accreditation is problematic in the New Zealand SAR context because approximately 90% of SAR people are volunteers who are likely to find pressure for particular training and/or accreditation a demotivator. In general, the NZIER/FRSITO report indicates that they value training that is specific to their immediate needs, and they want to be able to use that training in real situations quite soon. They do not want to spend much time on accreditation activities that they see as impositions or even threatening, and most would like to see a more engaging approach from their organisation to recognise their current competence (experience and prior learning).

Of course individual motivations will vary, and the aspirations of people (whether paid or unpaid) who see personal development in knowledge or career or status will require differing organisational arrangements.

Occasionally, in discussion relating to this review, the question arose – ‘Does the SAR community want its own Industry Training Organisation (ITO) to promote standardisation and accreditation?’ The answer has to be that, at this time, there is little appetite for it for three basic reasons – first, it is seen as another piece of machinery which organisations would be required to support (but not necessarily use); second, several ITOs, including FRSITO, the Local Government ITO and Learning State (previously known as the Public Sector ITO), already have some SAR-related content; and, third, there are issues regarding ownership and governance, i.e. power.

So, on one hand there is general agreement that SAR systems, processes, assets and equipment should fit together in a nationwide mechanism. In support of this view are comments about how ‘their’ (i.e. other associates’) ways don’t match ‘ours’. It is also acknowledged by some that this point of view, while indicating a degree of risk in operational functioning, is offered more as an excuse as to why ‘they’ but not ‘we’ should change.

It’s a point of view embedded in most organisations, not only those in the SAR community. When organisations have a positive view of the structures, systems and

style that they have built up, and which are seen to be successful, it is difficult to envisage and make changes to the way people think and behave.

The countervailing argument, though, is that putting the effort into improving inter-agency relations (through deliberate communication, collaboration and cooperation) will result in better performance in terms of the desired SAR outcomes – an intention stated by all participants.

Communication, collaboration and cooperation - this is the leadership challenge for all in the SAR community, but it is also the foundation on which more familiarity, complementarity and standardisation can be built. At present only a few organisations are seeking mechanisms of interagency standardisation and accreditation. However, in the medium and longer term ITOs such as FRSITO may offer services to SAR organisations that are seen as beneficial to them. That might motivate organisations to opt in on a collective basis.

For now, each organisation should continue to send the message that standardisation of systems and accreditation for use of those systems has its place. For paid staff that can be a strong and direct message. In the meantime, for those volunteers who have clearly altruistic motivations to help others, it is recommended that organisations take a light-handed approach to accreditation by looking to the natural evolution of how new SAR technology, gear and processes, etc are to be handled in interagency settings. On that basis it is likely that, in time, more people will want to take up roles that require accreditation.

Funding and Costs

The pattern for the larger SAR organisations is that training budgets are decided by senior managers (and usually signed off by CEOs) and expended according to approved plans and programmes. To that extent direct training costs are known. But the actual cost of training, if it were to be calculated, is much more. Typically training is a sunk cost and, in organisations with volunteer members, no accurate measure can be made of presented experience (i.e. prior learning) or skills or experience that members improve on their own account.

There is no doubt that training is a major investment for SAR organisations. For example, Coastguard NZ reports⁸ that 23% of total hours spent by professional volunteers are assigned to training. A rescue helicopter manager reported that it costs around \$10,000 per crew member (pilots are another matter) per year to keep them skilled to certificated requirements, and that is in a context where current government contracts are based on renting rescue helicopters and ambulance aircraft on a flying time basis – skids/wheels off, skids/wheels on – meaning that the cost of training (and compliance and equipment) rests entirely with the providers of those services and the Trusts that support them.

Another rescue helicopter operator said that his 'constant issue is money'. His estimate is that he is paid about one third of the actual cost of a rescue, and the rest (including money for training) comes from community sources like sponsors, trusts and fundraising events.

It is the reviewer's opinion, that while the matter of air SAR and ambulance services, infrastructure and costs have a training component, it is of a scale and complexity that is beyond the scope of this review and should be addressed separately.

⁸ Annual Report 2008, page 28

In terms of SAR training, the issues of funding relate to:

- the direct costs of individual training such as course fees, travel, accommodation and associated administration;
- funding the preparation and conduct of significant joint SAREXs;
- funding specific SAR activity or the development of specific skills identified as necessary for the good of the collective SAR sector; and
- the demotivating effect of SAR volunteers being asked to participate in fundraising when that activity is not what they value.

In addressing these issues it is recommended that the NZSAR Council consider the provision of resources for the preparation and conduct of significant SAREXs and for particular SAR training activity identified as necessary for the good of the collective SAR sector. The funding of most of the individual training remains the responsibility of the relevant organisation in the SAR community.

Exemplar resources

During the course of this review some excellent resources, systems and processes came to light. With the caveat that the reviewer saw just a fraction of good exemplars several are described in Appendix 2 and are worthy of attention. These examples of good practice include a training manual (Antarctica NZ), CIMS based guidelines (NZ Police and LandSAR), a critical incident report (Life Saving NZ), and a training syllabus and logbook (Coastguard NZ).

The NZIER research report about *Volunteer-related Training in Emergency Services* undertaken for FRSITO is a must-read for all managers of units that have volunteer members. It is recommended that this NZIER/FRSITO report be used as a companion piece that informs this training review.

The NZSAR Secretariat

The Secretariat is well regarded. There is support for what is being done and several suggestions were made for activities for the Secretariat to undertake – in other words the Secretariat is seen to be in the best position, rather than a single organisation, to facilitate particular projects of benefit to the sector at large. ‘Facilitate’ is the key word - it seems that the Secretariat’s ownership, on behalf of the NZSAR Council, gives a sense of ‘glue’ or cohesion to a project.

Suggestions and recommendations for the Council to consider for Secretariat facilitation are:

- Convene a *seminar of training coordinators, advisors or instructors* (i.e. those people in SAR-related organisations assigned to develop, coordinate or evaluate training in their organisations). Use of the Training Advisory Panel would be appropriate here, and one of the objectives would be to identify ready-made opportunities for standardisation.
- Facilitate *courses to improve the performance of air observers*.⁹ This was mentioned by several people and relates to a recommendation made by Paul Fitzharris in his independent 2006 review of the ZK-HTF SAR Operation. There are two parts: an initial training course to establish a pool of qualified air observers; and refresher courses after 2 years to ensure the maintenance and currency of air observer skills.
- Facilitate *activity to produce On Scene Coordinators* with the knowledge, skills and techniques required for the effective coordination at the scene of maritime and aviation SAR operations. The course is intended for pilots, captains or leaders of SAR units assisting the SAR Mission Coordinator.

⁹ It is noted that Air Observers and On-Scene Coordinators courses are underway.

- Invite organisers of *district/local SAREXs* to inform the Secretariat of the dates, purpose and nature of those exercises. In return the Secretariat would publish the collated information and any analysis that arose from it.
- Investigate the feasibility of coordinating a project on *the implications of dementia for SAR*, noting potential for linkage with the Preventive Wandering Project (recently underway with membership from Alzheimer's NZ, NZ Police, SARINZ, LandSAR, Rest Homes and the Health Education Trust).
- Collate an *asset register of SAR related knowledge* - using Training Advisory Panel members but also extending to organisations and individuals associated with research (into e.g. SAR management software, international initiatives, etc).
- Convene a meeting of representatives of the *various advisory committees* in the sector, to share their interests and directions, and to identify common ground or issues that might benefit from a collective view.
- Convene a meeting to identify the *issues (and possible solutions) regarding communications technology and systems*.¹⁰
- Convene a *meeting of SAR 'standards setting' organisations* (e.g. Fire, CAA, Ambulance NZ/St John and ITOs) to share interests, to identify any ready-made SAR related standards, modules and courses, and to indicate any useful directions for cooperation and standardisation.
- Facilitate the development of a *generic SAREX template* (guidelines or checklist) using the flow diagram in this report as a starting point.

¹⁰ Note - The replacement of the NZ Police analogue radio network with a digital network presents opportunities for improving multi-agency emergency service capability. This major project, led by NZ Police, has developed a digital emergency services network. Future development could see SAR communications (land and marine) rolled into the enhanced digital network which would ensure more consistent communications activity between SAR elements.

The Training Advisory Panel

The reviewer notes that it was common to be told of eminent and influential people in the SAR community, usually in the context of 'You should talk to X'. Sometimes there was a qualification that although that person was highly regarded the organisation that they worked for was not – a remnant of the in-group/out-group culture.

The principle driving the Training Advisory Panel is that the knowledge, expertise and influence held by highly regarded people should be accessible to those who want to benefit from that knowledge. It also recognizes that training is not just a matter of courses and exercises matched to trainees' needs, but that on-job learning from an advisor or mentor can come via a single comment or a planned discussion. This is particularly the case with senior and chief executives who sometimes wish to seek alternative views from other than their day-to-day advisors.

The Panel is not intended to be an established group but rather a facility for the Council, via the Secretariat, to identify eminent SAR people who might be available to give advice:

- about training needs, designs and programmes
- as project members and planners
- as external analysts, referees or commentators in SAREXs
- as mentors
- as call-in contributors to SAROPs
- as networkers, promoters or ambassadors for SAR brands
- about international links

There may be occasions when the NZSAR Council would consider co-sponsoring eminent people (e.g. researchers, innovators or leaders) from outside the New Zealand community.

It is proposed that the schedule of Panel members would result from, initially, nominations and suggestions from the NZSAR Consultative Committee to the NZSAR Secretariat. A simple form of terms and conditions would be prepared to be the basis of the arrangements between the nominated Panel members (and their employers) and would cover matters such as leave, reimbursement and recognition.

It is also proposed that the operating principal be one of shared benefit for the Panel member, their employer, the organisation benefitting from the member's contribution and possibly the SAR community at large.

The Secretariat would require Council authority to reimburse and would accordingly report to the Council on that expenditure and the activity of the Panel.

A likely scenario

The NZSAR Secretariat is facilitating a project or task (e.g. the development of the training core curriculum) and wants the contribution of one or more Training Advisory Panel members. It may be that a full membership role in a project team is required, but it is more likely that targeted input at key points will be of most use.

Once the nature of the contribution (i.e. predicted role) is framed then the facilitator goes through the process of engagement (agreement, availability, conditions of participation, other expectations) and budgeting. A letter of understanding sets the basis for the contribution – something like the tone of a Memorandum of Understanding where the arrangement operates 'by agreement with best intentions'.

For most contributions the payment arrangements are likely to be reimbursements for direct costs (travel, accommodation, other expenses), but not wages or fees. The (leave) contribution of the Panel member's employer organisation will be acknowledged as agreed during the engagement process.

NB If a Panel member is approached for services by (say) the CEO of a SAR organisation that relationship would be direct between the two parties, and would not involve the Secretariat. In that case fees may be part of what is essentially a business arrangement. That may well be happening now – it does not need a Training Advisory Panel *per se*, but the Panel may help a manager to make an informed selection.

Part 4 – Conclusions and Recommendations

The key observations and conclusions of this report are:

We are building on success

- SAR in New Zealand is a highly valued and generally successful activity, with 2705 people being assisted in the 2007/2008 year; and
- the SAR community is made up of expert organisations with dedicated and skilled members.

But there are improvements required in collective inter-agency operations, particularly regarding:

- people and relationships
- habits and attitudes
- systems and processes
- authority, leadership and decision-making
- resources and technology; and
- the complexity, stress and demands of a SAR operation.

The SAREX is the main training lever for improving interagency SAROPs

While SAR exercises in various forms have long been the cornerstone of joint training they can be significantly improved through better planning, debriefing and evaluation. The findings of debriefings should inform modifications to operating procedures and to associated training and development activities.

The quality of the SAREX is paramount. Its purpose is to practise and improve interagency performance, and that is the incentive for people to attend. Other

‘incentives’ like helicopter rides, boating excursions, diving, hunting and fishing trips may, in fact, be seen as diversions.

The focus for improvement (with training implications) should be on interagency/joint collaboration, through each organisation:

- knowing and communicating its role and contribution
- building and reinforcing working relationships
- knowing and communicating about resources/assets
- planning and practising with other SAR organisations
- assessing its own performance and processes and how well those elements work with associates
- identifying improvements to be made; and
- developing training activities to make those improvements.

Interagency cohesion can be assisted by:

- Fostering a culture of familiarity and collaboration for ‘one SAR body’
- building a network of documented agreements (e.g. MoUs), and ensuring that the intent is put into practice
- identifying synergies in interagency activities which can be readily standardised
- drawing on individuals’ expertise, wherever they may be employed in the SAR sector (hence the Training Advisory Panel)
- promoting a training core curriculum for SAR, based on an integrated training framework
- coordinating investment in training incident managers (based on CIMS/IAMSAR)
- enhancing SAREX and SAROP evaluations to inform improvements in SAR systems and performance

Looking Forward

There is enough focus expressed by organisations' leaders, including those most recently appointed, to believe that the espoused desire for effective collaboration amongst SAR organisations will happen. Partnerships amongst agencies are in the spotlight. Leadership by senior managers is the key, and it is recognised that demand for the change in culture must be driven throughout all parts of each organisation. The coordinating role offered by the NZSAR Secretariat acting as the NZSAR Council's agent will help with cohesion and development at the collective level.

Ultimately, though, it is the goodwill and contribution of the thousands of staff and volunteers who 'bring them home'. Their organisations must do all they can to support that effort, and well-targeted training activities make a significant contribution to that support.

Recommendations

In the light of the review and this report it is recommended that the NZSAR Council:

- a) note that, generally, most SAR organisations train their people effectively in the SAR skills appropriate to their organisation's purpose;
- b) note that significant deficiencies exist in the inter-relation of parties engaged in SAR activity, due to a lack of interagency familiarity and collaboration, and variable leadership commitments;
- c) encourage all the organisations in the New Zealand SAR community to foster a consistent culture of interagency goodwill and cooperation;
- d) require the widespread use of Memoranda of Understanding (or Service Level Agreements) to formalize interagency relationships and promote collaborative activities between partners and associates;
- e) confirm that CIMS/IAMSAR is the standard operating procedure for SAR incident management and related training;
- f) endorse the proposed NZSAR integrated training framework;
- g) direct the development of a NZSAR Training Core Curriculum focusing on SAR incident management;
- h) direct the conduct of specific SAR training for the development of particular skills identified as necessary for the good of the collective SAR sector;
- i) direct the NZSAR Secretariat to facilitate a Training Advisory Panel, whose members can advise, assist and promote SAR exemplars across the SAR sector;
- j) seek NZSAR representation on the National CIMS Steering Committee;
- k) direct the programming and facilitation of significant SAREXs throughout New Zealand;
- l) consider the adoption of additional NZSAR strategic goals to:
 - i. encourage the standardisation of training within the NZSAR sector;
 - ii. establish tools (including a generic SAREX template) to enable organisers of a *district/local SAREX* to inform the sector of the dates, purpose and nature of the SAREX and any analysis arising from it;
 - iii. establish a project on the implications of dementia for SAR;
 - iv. create forums for:
 - the representatives of various *advisory committees* and *training units* in the sector, to share their interests and directions, and to identify common ground or issues (training or otherwise) that might benefit from a collective view;
 - the identification of issues and possible solutions regarding *SAR communications technology and systems*;
 - SAR '*standards setting organisations*' (e.g. Fire, Ambulance NZ /St John, CAA and relevant ITOs) to share interests, to identify any ready-made SAR-related standards, modules and courses; and to indicate any useful directions for cooperation and standardisation.

Appendix 1

Contributors

Amateur Radio Emergency Communications

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Ambulance NZ

David Waters, Chief Executive, Wellington

Antarctica NZ

Erik Barnes, Manager Antarctic Programme, Christchurch

Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust

Greg Brownson, Helicopter Manager, Mechanics Bay¹¹, Auckland

Herby Barnes, Crew Chief, Mechanics Bay, Auckland

Aviation Industry Association

John Funnell, Chief Executive, Philips Search and Rescue Trust, Helicopter Services BOP, Taupō

Civil Aviation Authority

John Fogden, Manager Rotary Wing and Agricultural Operations, Petone

Department of Conservation

Don Bogie, Technical Support Manager, Canterbury Conservancy, Christchurch

Federation of Commercial Fishermen

Pete Dawson, CEO, Christchurch

Fire and Rescue Services ITO

Bill Robertson, National Manager, Wellington

Garden City Helicopters (Westpac Rescue)

Simon Duncan, General Manager, Christchurch

Land Search and Rescue Inc (LandSAR)

Hadyn Smith, Chief Executive, Wellington

John Scobie, Deputy Chairman, Wellington

Ian Watts, Chair, Tasman Regional SAR Committee

¹¹ Mechanics Bay, Auckland, is the site of the Marine Rescue Centre where all of the SAR agencies are located.

Maritime NZ

[See RCCNZ below]

Maritime Operations Centre

Brendan Comerford, Manager, Kordia Solutions, Avalon, Wellington

4RF Communications

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NZ Mountain Safety Council

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Christine Haru, Brand/Relationships Manager, RNZC Inc, Takapuna
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St John Ambulance

Carey Dobbs, SERT (Special Emergency Response Team) Leader, Manukau,
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Search and Rescue Institute of NZ (SARINZ)

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Carl McOnie, Training Designer, Christchurch

Surf Life Saving NZ

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Tai Poutini Polytechnic

Stu Drake, Programme Coordinator, SAR, Greymouth

Thanks

The reviewer extends his thanks and appreciation to all these people who so readily gave their time, advice and information. Almost all interviews extended for more than an hour – some, with subsequent discussions, amounted to several hours.

The Reviewer

Ted Preston is an independent contractor working in the public sector. He is an organisational analyst who undertakes reviews (usually by facilitating a structured analysis of systems and processes) and suggests ways to connect strategies and policies to delivery.

He has been self-employed for six years. Before that he was Director Development and Training, then Manager HR, in the Education Review Office and, following that, a senior advisor and project leader in the Strategic Development Branch of the State Services Commission.

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Appendix 2

Exemplars

In no particular order of importance or value they are:

- The *Antarctic Search and Rescue Instructors Training Manual* produced by Antarctica NZ

This manual reflects a cooperative approach, initiated by Antarctica NZ and facilitated by SARINZ, to ensure that Antarctica NZ, the United States Antarctic Programme, and the Australian Antarctic Division search and rescue activities are aligned through best practice standards. Starting with a set of philosophies and principles, methods are developed to meet the requirements of the Antarctic requirement. As a result equipment, its terminology and use is standardised, as is the training manual. Its format and content encourages review and improvement of processes.

The companion Modular Training Package *'increases the operational readiness of SAR teams and helps manage the seasonal turnover of staff, retention of institutional knowledge, promotion of international best practice in SAR techniques, and develops the ability to easily integrate techniques with other international Programmes'*.

- The *Search and Rescue Incident Management Guidelines* co-produced by NZ Police and LandSAR.

This booklet (available in a small, pocket-portable format) provides practices and a management structure needed to run a typical land based SAR incident using the CIMS structure. It closely follows the NZ CIMS *Teamwork in Emergency Management* publication – the 'blue book' - currently being updated by the CIMS National Steering Committee chaired by DIA/MCDEM

- The report on *Volunteer-related Training in Emergency Services* (undertaken by NZIER for FRSITO and published in July 2008)

A timely and informative report.

- *A Critical Incident Report (Karekare May 12, 2008)* compiled by Surf Life Saving Northern Region.

A clear and comprehensive template and evaluation platform.

- The *CRV Crew SAR Training Syllabus and Logbook* produced by RNZ Coastguard Inc.

This ring-binder book records a volunteer crew member's progression through the four levels of the RNZC Crew SAR Training Syllabus. It identifies training needs, provides local SAR training in line with the standard national SAR training programme, and enables crew member assessment on the basis of their SAR knowledge and ability.

Typically, each unit sets out the training goal, what the crew member's assignment is (covering knowledge/theory), the SAR tutor's role, and the assessment of practical application. On successful completion of the unit it is signed off by the training officer.

Apart from its thorough and practical approach there is little delay to its sign-off (i.e. accreditation) which appeals to trainees for its immediate recognition and setup for consequent training.

- The Executive Summary report on *Economic Impact of Dementia in New Zealand 2008*, prepared by Access Economics for the Alzheimer's NZ Charitable Trust.

While not written for SAR purposes this report is informative about this group of people who 'get lost'. It states that there are over 40,000 people in NZ with dementia today, and over 12,000 new cases are diagnosed each year. Its conclusions focus on investment, interventions and support mechanisms, but it also notes there are special needs for young people, people with challenging behaviours, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, and people living in more remote areas.

- *Survive! Remarkable Tales from the New Zealand Outdoors*, by Carl Walrond, a book published by David Bateman Ltd 2008

A selection of stories, some uplifting, some harrowing, about individuals and groups who find themselves in survival situations. The author offers comment, not intended to be scientific, on why some people survive and others don't.

- *Lost Person Behavior: A Search and Rescue Guide on Where to Look – for Land, Air and Water*, by Robert J Koester - a book published in 2008 by dbS Productions, Charlottesville USA.

A SAR practitioner and researcher, the author has New Zealand connections and this book was launched in August 2008 at a SARINZ-sponsored event in Wellington.

Formatted as a field guide and reference tool, the author says the book's purpose is 'simple: to help searchers look in the right place to find lost subjects faster.'

- A widely experienced SAR manager of paid staff produced a spreadsheet aid for individualised training programmes, budgeting and succession planning. The spreadsheet itemises each staff-member/trainee's location, specialist requirements, target qualification, units under assessment and future work required to complete qualifications and certification.

The spreadsheet has a diary-related course tracking function (for the benefit of both manager's and staff-member's preparation and leave requirements), and is also used by the manager as a succession planning tool

Attachment 1 - Summary of Report content relating to Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Summarize the current state of SAR individual and collective training noting nature, conduct, scale, strengths, deficiencies, gaps, opportunities, responsibilities and funding arrangements. Where relevant, international comparisons may be made.

Summary of report content

- Training is organisation-centred and skill-based, and conducted as most well-organized organisations would do it. Documentation (e.g. annual reports, SOPs, training manuals) reflects that and training programmes are the norm. In-house training managers or units and/or contracted advisors/providers produce programmes and courses relative to the organisation's purpose and to the resources provided to do that. Collective training is based on the SAREX – a sound approach, but better attention to purpose, participation, engagement, planning and debriefing/evaluation will improve performance.
- Strengths – Generally, training arrangements are consistent with organisational needs, geared to the knowledge and skills required by staff and voluntary members. This contributes to recognition as an 'expert' organisation.
- Deficiencies? None obvious at the organisational level, but even where working with partner organisations is mentioned the emphasis is still organisation-centred. Relationships are usually selective which is logical given the organisation-centred habit, but some relationships that should be addressed are absent (or even negative). In the past the outcome has been an unintended in-group/out-group culture resulting in poor communication and misunderstandings.
- The gap – the main gap, and the one requiring attention, is the shortfall in interagency SAROP/incident management collaboration and training.
- Opportunities exist (acknowledged to be underway) with new leadership in several influential SAR organisations building relationships with their longer-serving counterparts. The attention to dysfunctions shown up in recent SAROPs, the intent to promote a culture of collaboration, the development of a network of MoUs/SLAs and the strategic support of the NZSAR Secretariat are positive and progressive steps.

- Responsibilities are generally well-defined (and some invite further development). The NZSAR Council's governance role is the big strategy, policy and resourcing connector, and the Secretariat's strategic and coordination role is well regarded. The NZSAR Consultative Committee is a useful network that has considerable potential to capitalize on its coverage of the sector – e.g. in support of task and project activities. NZ Police and RCCNZ, as controlling authorities of Category 1 and Category 2, are increasing their cooperation and building wider relationships. The change to the classification system has simplified matters. In the end, though, what the SAR sector organisations do, how they do it and how they train for that, is their responsibility.
- Funding is, typically, a sunk cost in each organisation. Training budgets are decided by senior managers (usually CEOs) and expended according to approved plans and programmes. It should be noted that some services, e.g. helicopter services, have their training costs met from community-raised funds. The potential benefits of increased investment in integrated communications technology/hardware is often mentioned.
- International comparisons are helpful to the extent that they endorse the investment in training. Web study and talking with knowledgeable SAR people (about Australian, Canadian and UK systems) indicate that those jurisdictions spend more (relative to NZ) mainly because they have a larger paid/unpaid staffing ratio.

NZ's 90% volunteer SAR arrangement presents its own challenges, well researched in the 2008 NZIER/FRSITO report on Volunteer-related Training in Emergency Services – compulsory reading for all managers of SAR volunteers, and very informative to this review.

Identify the SAR sector's preferred future individual and collective training state.

The pattern of responses from SAR managers is that each organisation confirms its autonomy to train as it sees fit, but also acknowledges a responsibility to work and train with SAR partners. Generally, they would like to see more coordinated leadership (not just authoritative statements) from NZ Police and RCCNZ, and any

advice, information and (generic) incident management courses would be welcomed and considered on its merit and value to each organisation.

Identify specific measures to be taken to address identified gaps and deficiencies for both individual and collective SAR training.

Recommend a comprehensive and coherent SAR training framework for NZ's SAR sector and identify any documentation that may be required to support it.

Leadership is the challenge and the key. When CEOs/managers have turned their intention to build a culture of collaboration with SAR associates into reality then an effective training platform can encompass interagency engagement. There are no shortcuts or substitutes for this – staff and members must see the desired behaviour and attitudes being modelled – otherwise the training effort is largely a waste of time and money. But, given effective leadership, role clarity and individual engagement (motivation), the training investment is almost certain to be effective.

Organisations should continue with their skill-based programmes for their own purposes but build in CIMS/IAMSAR-based modules for relationship building and collaboration. SAREXs at the **regional and local level** remain at the core of preparation for a SAROP but increased planning and post-op evaluation will inform improvements in training activities and therefore future SAR effectiveness. At the **national level** a SAR training core curriculum of CIMS/IAMSAR-based incident management courses is proposed (to be developed under the auspices of the Council), and a Training Advisory Panel of invited SAR experts (facilitated by the Secretariat) would offer up-to-date knowledge, advice, coherence and confidence to organisations' leaders. Training expertise from other sources (e.g. SARINZ, polytechnics) should continue, and they will probably see opportunities to build on the core curriculum. Some standardisation and related accreditation is a likely consequence.

The present array of documents (e.g. management and training plans, SOPs and training manuals, logbooks, MoUs, SLAs) should suffice, but specific coverage should be included regarding the training implications of communication, collaboration and cooperation in a culture of goodwill. Some of these documents already state intentions about collaboration but, in practice, it falls well short. If not already in use, a SAREX template, based on local environments, assets and personnel, together with a programme of future SAREXs, would enable participating organisations to better mesh in their own training arrangements.

Recommend a way forward on formal, external accreditation and/or recognition of the SAR training framework (as above), considering the benefits, potential risks, costs and other issues that might be involved.

Make recommendations on the effective and efficient use of NZSAR Council and other training resources available to NZ's SAR sector.

While most SAR managers agree that some form of standardisation (of systems, processes, training and qualifications) is desirable they acknowledge that currently each organisation develops and manages standards that are relevant to itself. Beyond that there is little appetite for shared standards because it is perceived that some form of external, overarching machinery would be required, and agreement about that would be difficult at this time. Any discussion about a SAR Industry Training Organisation elicits a similar response, although the Fire Rescue Service ITO amongst others already covers some of the ground. Accreditation meets resistance, particularly from volunteers, who see it as more of an imposition than a benefit.

For now, the recommendation is to pursue improvement in interagency collaboration (and look for acceptable accreditation synergies with partner organisations), to consider the training framework, the core curriculum and the Training Advisory Panel (for some standardisation) and talk with FRSITO et al about their potential with SAR. In due course a climate for external accreditation may evolve to the point where more active promotion will be positively received.

The NZSAR Council's governance role, and its members' relationship with Ministers, sets the big strategic, policy and resourcing environment for the sector. As chief (or delegated senior) executives its members direct activities in their own organisations and, as a Council, they set the directions for the SAR sector. While training *per se* is not a role for the Council, it could shape other chief/senior executive behaviour by inviting (say) Coastguard, Fire Service, Surf Life Saving and Ambulance NZ chiefs (and/or a rotation of others) to attend some Council meetings or to be engaged in particular Council business. Close proximity to the Council would give strong messages of engagement and coherence across the sector.

The NZSAR Secretariat is well regarded for its leadership in coordinating SAR strategies and projects. It should continue to do that and look to facilitate some tasks and inter-agency projects that are beyond the reach of individual organisations. With the re-confirmation of CIMS/IAMSAR as the basis of SAROP management it would be useful for the Council to be represented on the National CIMS Steering Group chaired by MCDem.

NZ Police and RCCNZ have the authority to task and pay for the services of other specialists in the SAR community. It is imperative that they are seen as the leaders that their authority implies, not only in working together when that is required but in productive relationships with SAR associates. They are in the best position to promote good practice of CIMS/IAMSAR incident management. The leadership challenge defined in this report applies particularly to these two authorities.

The NZSAR Consultative Committee draws together senior representatives of most of the organisations that make up the SAR community. The experience, skill and asset power that they represent not only gives advice and informs strategic decisions but also does the business – i.e. saves lives. This Committee (and associates outside this assembly) has the potential to provide information and expertise to task groups and project activities. The proposed Training Advisory Panel is a case in point.

There are groups and individuals in the SAR community who are not directly connected to central committees – e.g. some of the most experienced and respected SAR people are working in training providers or in other specialist roles. It would be useful to find ways to include these people in the collective SAR training and development effort.

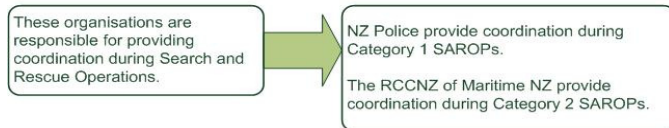
Appendix 3

An Overview of NZSAR Organisations by Roles

Governance and Strategic Direction



Coordination



Operational



Training



Prepared by the NZSAR Secretariat