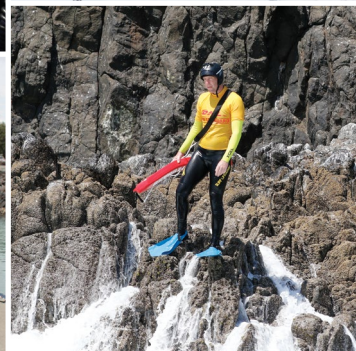
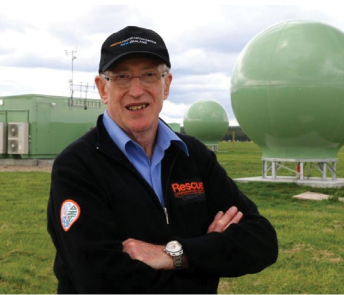




2018 Awards



Gold award

The NZSAR Gold Award for Operational Activity is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2018.

Whanganui Surf Life Saving Club

For the rescue of two stranded swimmers from Kai Iwi Beach, Whanganui on 18 February 2018

It was midday on 18 February when Police asked Whanganui Surf Life Saving Club to deploy a search team from Kai Iwi Beach. Two swimmers – a father and his teenage daughter – were reported missing and it was feared they had been swept out to sea.

Within minutes, the first surf life saving crew (Laura O’Keeffe and Alex Forlong) were on the water in an Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB). On land, lifeguards Kaya Dobbie and Matthew Newell set up a command centre in a nearby watch tower.



The swimmers were located quickly – on a very slippery ledge, 3 metres up Mowhanau cliffs, trying to escape punishing waves.

Laura manoeuvred the IRB close enough for Alex to attempt to swim to the pair. But the storm surf forced her against the rocks and she injured her hand.

Laura took Alex back to shore and picked up lifeguards Clarissa Nowak and Sophie Couper.

An attempt was made to winch the swimmers by helicopter, but it was considered too risky in the weather conditions. The probability of falling rocks also ruled out an extraction by ropes. It was decided that the only rescue option was by IRB.

Once Laura had carefully positioned the IRB, Clarissa swam between huge swells and clambered up to reach the pair. She administered first aid on the girl, who she suspected had a fractured ankle. Clarissa was joined by senior lifeguard Phil Gilmore. Between them, they manoeuvred the girl down the cliffs, and safely transferred her to Laura and Sophie in the IRB.

Clarissa and Phil used the second IRB to rescue the father, who was unharmed.

The lifeguards involved in this two-hour operation demonstrated courage and skill for this rescue.

Gold award

The NZSAR Gold Award for Support Activity is awarded for a very significant contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Blake McDavitt

Ruapehu Alpine Rescue Organisation

For his service and commitment to search and rescue

Blake McDavitt has a passion for the outdoors. He has devoted more than 23 years of volunteer work to Search and Rescue (SAR) services in New Zealand and further afield in Antarctica.

Having joined Turangi Land Search and Rescue in 1994, Blake has taken on key leadership and advisory roles over the years. He is currently the Training Officer for this group and a well-respected Team Leader and technical SAR specialist for Ruapehu Alpine Cliff Rescue.



Blake's wide range of skills, knowledge and abilities in the SAR arena see him frequently sought out as the "go-to guy" for specialist knowledge. When Land Search and Rescue NZ established an advisory group on best practice for SAR in the back country, Blake – in the company of experts in swift water rescue, alpine cliff rescue, cave and avalanche rescue – was unanimously voted to be its leader. Blake continues to perform this role today.

Under Blake's guidance, the Back Country Technical Rescue Advisory Group (BTRAG) has gone from strength to strength. One notable achievement of the group was writing the Human Longline Guidelines, which were adopted nationally and endorsed by the Civil Aviation Authority.

In 2003 and again in 2006, Blake led the New Zealand Search and Rescue team based in Antarctica. Last year he was seconded back to Antarctica for a 3-month period.

Blake is also highly regarded by Whanganui Police, who say that he is always the first person they call for sound advice on all aspects of SAR, especially alpine cliff rescue.

Blake is described as a quiet, unassuming leader with outstanding commitment, engagement, skill, knowledge and teaching abilities.

Certificate of achievement

The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement for Operational Activity are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region during 2018.

LandSAR Methven

Otago Rescue Helicopter

South Canterbury Police SAR Squad

For the rescue of an injured walker from Little Mt Peel/Huatekerekere, on 3 June 2018

The Otago Rescue Helicopter was alerted to a situation on 3 June on Little Mt Peel, at the edge of the Canterbury Plains. A woman had slipped and fractured her lower leg, approximately 1100 metres up the remote walking track.

Low cloud and deteriorating winter conditions made a recovery by air virtually impossible, but pilot Clayton Girven manoeuvred close enough to offload one paramedic (Craig Didham) to begin medical care. Despite the challenging weather, Clayton also managed to deliver three members of a police search and rescue team within 500 metres of the injured tramper.



Members of Methven LandSAR were waiting for deployment nearby, but the weather had closed in to the point that Clayton was unable to land, or winch this team.

Paramedic Craig stabilised the tramper's leg injury and, with the assistance of the police search and rescue team, began the arduous task of stretcher-carrying her down the hill. It was very cold and the risk of hypothermia setting in was high. Craig managed the care of his patient throughout the stretcher carry and placed her wellbeing above anything else.

Meanwhile, Methven LandSAR team members, supported by Timaru LandSAR members, headed up Little Mt Peel on foot to support the stretcher carry down the hill.

The 11-hour rescue concluded around midnight. The injured tramper was carried almost 4km, without incident, down a dark, steep and slippery walking track.

Without the expert piloting skills and medical capability of the Otago Rescue Helicopter team, combined with the efforts of the land teams, this rescue would have been significantly longer and more painful for the injured tramper.

Certificate of achievement

Coastguard Auckland

For the rescue of an injured yachtsman near Waiheke Island on 3 March 2018

While cleaning up below deck, a solo yachtie accidentally connected two exposed wires, engulfing himself and the area in flames. Although burnt, the skipper managed to reach his fire extinguisher, put out the fire and make a distress call. Instinctively, he crawled into the shower and sat, huddled in a duvet, under the water until help arrived.



Two Coastguard rescue vessels launched into the night, battling choppy sea conditions. Within 20 minutes, they had reached the badly damaged yacht. Coastguard volunteer Chris Griggs boarded the yacht to find the skipper was in intense pain, with significant burns to his lower body. Because of the severity of the burns, he had lost layers of skin and was suffering from hypothermia.

A plan was formulated to transfer the skipper to the nearest landing point (Kennedy Point) and meet with an ambulance and the Westpac Rescue Helicopter.

Chris recognised the danger of trying to man-handle the skipper, as his skin was in danger of sloughing off. He administered pain relief, enabling the man to climb out of his boat and onto the Coastguard vessel for evacuation. The patient's burns were wrapped, which minimised the damage to his body.

After taking the rescued yachtie to the helicopter, the Coastguard team returned to the damaged yacht with firefighters to dampen any hot spots.

All volunteers involved in the rescue brought their skills to a stressful situation where time really counted, preventing further injury to the victim and giving him the best possible chance of survival and recovery.

Certificate of achievement

**LandSAR Wanaka
Southern Lakes Helicopters
Aspiring Helicopters
Wanaka Police SAR squad
Aoraki/Mt Cook Alpine Rescue Team**

**For the rescue of a climber from the
Bonar Glacier, Mt Aspiring/Tititea,
31 July – 3 August 2018**

On 30 July, a lone climber became lost in deteriorating weather on Bonar Glacier, Mount Aspiring/Tititea. He built a snow cave to shelter for the night and attempted to find his way back to the nearby hut the next morning. But extreme white-out conditions made that impossible.



At about midday he activated his SPOT device and RCCNZ was alerted. Sub-zero temperatures, strong wind, low cloud and high avalanche risk prevented the Wanaka Alpine Cliff Rescue (ACR) team from flying into the area to begin the search and retrieval. Over the next three days, multiple helicopter rescues were attempted by Aspiring Helicopters, Southern Lakes Helicopters, Wanaka and Aoraki/Mt Cook ACR teams but each time they were beaten back by the adverse conditions. Finally, on 2 August, a break in the weather enabled two rescue helicopters to access the glacier, locate the climber and drop off four ACR team members to assist.

The climber was dehydrated, exhausted and had slight frostbite. The ACR team provided warm clothing, food and drink and stayed overnight with him in the snow, ice and wind. The next day, three rescue helicopters were poised to seize an opening in the weather for a snatch and grab rescue. An opportunity came late in the day and the climber and his rescuers were uplifted from the mountain.

This rescue mission was made possible by the skills, dedication and effective collaboration of all the search and rescue agencies involved, with the support and coordination of RCCNZ and Police.

Certificate of achievement

Phoebe Havill

Callum Fulton

Andrew Earl-Peacock

Andrew Hodgson

Whangamata Surf Life Saving Club

For the rescue of three stranded kayakers from Whenuakura Island, Whangamata on 20 November 2018

On 20 November, the owner of a kayak company on Whangamata Beach informed Senior Lifeguard Phoebe Havill that three rental kayakers had been out for several hours and not returned.

Phoebe alerted the Whangamata Callout Squad and local lifeguards Callum Fulton, Andrew Earl-Peacock and Andrew Hodgson came together to formulate a plan. They launched their Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRBs) and headed straight out to Whenuakura Island, which is accessed through a narrow archway, where water channels through in large swells – making it dangerous to enter and exit.



Due to the tide and strong surge breaking inside the island, it was considered too dangerous for the IRB's to enter the channel. Phoebe and Callum swam in with helmets, tube and fins. They negotiated submerged rocks and fought strong currents to reach the trio: a mother and her two daughters.

A decision was made to use a small side exit of the island, typically less exposed to surging swells. Callum assisted the first of the patients off the rocks and into the waiting IRB. But conditions changed quickly and the side exit was no longer a viable option to extract the remaining two. Phoebe and Callum decided an attempt would have to be made through the main channel.

The lifeguards secured the kayakers in rescue tubes and towed them through the surges of water in the archway, out to the waiting IRBs. The trio were returned to shore, assessed and left the beach requiring no further treatment.

The focus upon everyone's safety during the rescue meant a well-timed decision to reflect upon deteriorating conditions and alter the initial plan.

Certificate of achievement

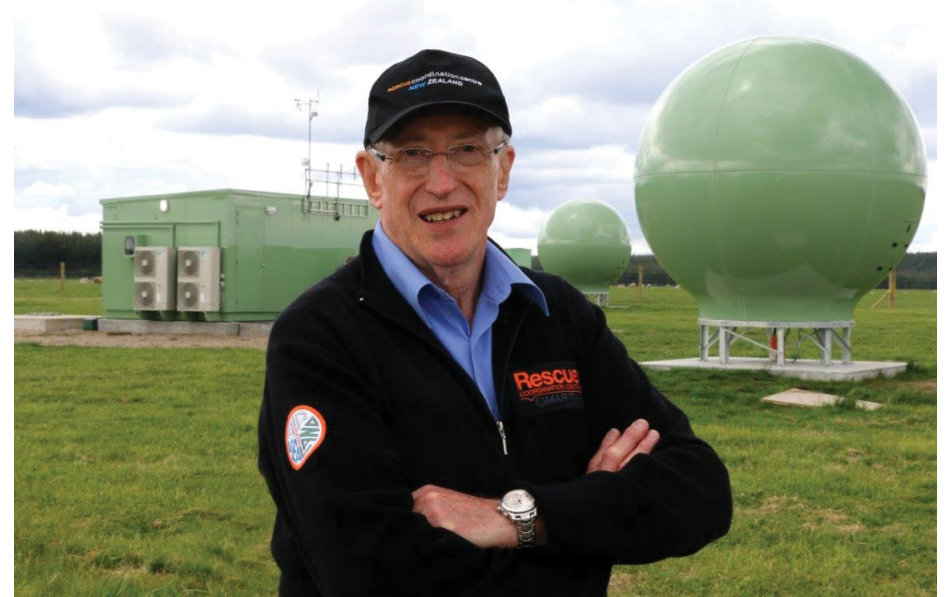
The NZSAR Certificates of Achievement for Support Activity are awarded for an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region.

Rodney Bracefield

Rescue Co-ordination Centre New Zealand

For his service to search and rescue in New Zealand

Rodney Bracefield's involvement in search and rescue (SAR) spans 45 years, beginning with the Royal New Zealand Air Force in 1974, where he worked as Air Defence Liaison Officer for the SAR sector. Since then, he has made a huge contribution to the development of information management tools that are critical to the success of SAR operations.



In 1985, Rodney joined the Civil Aviation Authority and later moved on to the National Rescue Co-ordination Centre (NRCC), where he became manager of the team. Rodney played a key part in the restructuring of the NRCC into the Rescue Co-ordination Centre New Zealand (RCCNZ) and the move to Maritime NZ.

In 1988, Rodney became involved with the Cospas-Sarsat, the international satellite system for SAR in New Zealand. He helped implement the installation of the Low Earth Orbit ground station in 1991 and later, the Geostationary ground station. Five years ago, Cospas-Sarsat began developing the Medium-altitude Earth Orbiting Satellite System for SAR. Rodney worked with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and a supplier to plan and complete two new ground stations – in New Zealand and Australia – which were ready for the new generation of satellites in 2016.

Rodney represents our country at the Cospas-Sarsat meetings and looks into systems improvement issues as they arise.

He has also project managed the new New Zealand distress beacon database. Rodney is currently handling the transition of all 85,000 beacon registrations to the new system.

On top of this work, Rodney has played a significant part in training SAR officers at RCCNZ on a number of key skills, such as navigation. For many years, he has also led the Air Observers training.

Certificate of achievement

Adam Fraser

Surf Life Saving New Zealand - Taranaki

For his service to Surf Life Saving and search and rescue

Adam Fraser is a man who many consider to be at the forefront of search and rescue (SAR) in Taranaki. He has been heavily involved in the Taranaki Surf Life Saving Club since qualifying as a lifeguard 25 years ago. He is currently serving his seventh year as SAR Co-ordinator of the Club's emergency after-hours callout squad and also volunteers for the squad as a Duty Officer.



Adam's knowledge and passion for SAR were recognised by his appointment as Mentor, then Instructor at the National Lifeguard School. This is the highest qualification and level of lifeguard training in New Zealand.

As well as spending many unlogged hours developing and training the callout squad, Adam also volunteers as a marine swimmer for the Taranaki Rescue Helicopter. He is an environmental marine SAR subject matter expert and is currently training to become an NZSAR Evaluator. He is the chairman of the National Lifesaving Advisory Group, Chief Examiner for the Taranaki Region and volunteer lifeguard at the Fitzroy Surf Life Saving Club.

Over the years, Adam has also played a key role in multiple life-saving rescues – some of which have been recognised at a national level.

Adam is described by his colleagues as a person with outstanding energy. He is well respected and highly skilled at managing his team both on and off the water. He is a forward thinker, strategic planner, and inspires others to perform to the best of their ability.

Certificate of achievement

Jo Norgrove

Coastguard Auckland

For her service to Coastguard and search and rescue

Joanne Norgrove has volunteered for Coastguard since 2006. She is a Senior Master on all three of Coastguard Auckland's rescue vessels.

Last year she clocked up a staggering 600 operational hours on the rescue vessels, in addition to teaching and assessing training modules around the Northern Region. As a Regional



Coastguard Instructor, Jo gives her time freely to train, assess and develop the crew at Coastguard Auckland – and members of the public too. She has also found time to complete further study in Marine Engineering at the Maritime School.

Jo draws on her extensive knowledge of boating as a tutor for the 'Suddenly in Charge' course – a safety course designed for women who wish to have more knowledge and confidence on the family boat if something goes wrong. The course has been very well received by the public, and is an important safety initiative.

Jo is described as a committed Coastguard volunteer with a calm and collected demeanour. She delegates effectively, encourages her crew and gives them the opportunity to practice and develop skills. Jo will often step up when no other Masters are available for rostered duty. She leads by example and is trusted by her crew as their safety is always her first priority.

Jo goes beyond business as usual with her consistent contributions across her own unit and the rest of the region, and her tireless efforts over almost 13 years with Coastguard. Her personality is defined by her modest can-do attitude.

Certificate of achievement

Coastguard New Zealand

For the Old4New Coastguard Lifejacket Upgrade campaign

The Old4New Coastguard Lifejacket Upgrade campaign encourages boaters to trade-in their old, damaged or worn lifejackets for a discount on a brand new, fit-for-purpose lifejacket. The Old4New van travels the length of New Zealand, visiting boat ramps and communities to spread the safety message.

In the summer of 2017-18, the campaign saw over 3,500 lifejackets traded in across the country. The Old4New van visited 53 boat ramps and locations nationwide, covering over 9000kms. The team



shared their knowledge with the tens of thousands of people they met along the way, exemplifying Coastguard’s “safe boating” advocacy work. The publicity generated by partner agencies also helped reinforce the safe boating message.

The Old4New team encountered many people with lifejackets that were severely waterlogged, damaged, outdated or simply didn’t fit anymore. Of the 3,500 lifejackets traded in, over 70% were discarded because they were obsolete or had unacceptable levels of damage. Over 300 lifejackets that fell into the “no longer fit” category were near-new and fully compliant, so were sent to in-need communities across Auckland and the Pacific Islands.

The 2018/2019 summer period marks the third year of the Old4New Lifejacket Upgrade campaign. It has already been successful, with 1,200 lifejackets traded in to the end of December 2018. The campaign has not only ensured that more boaters are given the opportunity to keep themselves safe on the water, but also reassured many Coastguard volunteers that should a call for help come in, there are more boaters with the right equipment to keep them safe.

Special award

NZSAR is awarding two special Certificates of Achievement for important contributions to search and rescue.

Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat

For an important contribution to international search and rescue, and for ensuring the provision of the global Cospas-Sarsat distress system

COSPAS = Cosmicheskaya Sistyema Posiska Avariynyich Sudov

SARSAT = Search and Rescue Satellite Aided Tracking

Cospas-Sarsat is a satellite system that provides free alerts, with reliable location data, of people in distress anywhere on the globe. In 2018 alone, beacon alerts received via Cospas-Sarsat saved 74 lives and assisted 118 people in New Zealand.



The system is administered internationally by the Secretariat based in Canada. The work of the Secretariat ensures that the system continues to perform – having a significant impact on saving lives of the lost, missing and injured throughout the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region and worldwide.

Their small team of 11 dedicated staff liaise with SAR and technical specialists from participating countries and work above and beyond requirements. They volunteer extended hours to travel, prepare for meetings, compose reports, test and approve new beacons, update training materials and provide contributions to other international meetings and standard setting organisations.

Over the years the Secretariat has provided New Zealand with invaluable guidance with ground installations, which are essential to receiving satellite signals and reaping the full benefit of the Cospas-Sarsat system. Their assistance with the recent installation of a Medium-altitude Earth Orbiting ground station and two Geostationary ground stations north of Taupo have improved New Zealand’s SAR response times to beacon alerts set off in rugged terrain.

The devotion of the Cospas-Sarsat Secretariat to the ongoing saving of lives continues to enable a worldwide system of satellites and ground networks to be developed, helping to reduce the response time to distress situations.

Special award

Terry Blumhardt

Sarah Cate

Cliff Jones

LandSAR Turangi

For an important contribution to search and rescue in the New Zealand Search and Rescue Region – the rescue of two boys from the Tongariro Alpine Crossing on 19 October 2016

Two teenage boys dialled 111 when they became separated from their school group on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing.

The boys found themselves on a sheer mountain face in strong winds, extreme cold and poor visibility. They were too frightened to go forward or turn back. Police contacted the mountain guides to



assist, three of whom were on Tongariro, but on different sides. They knew the boys were somewhere between them on the alpine section of the Crossing.

While Terry Blumhardt set out on his own from one direction, Sarah Cate and Cliff Jones climbed up to the south crater from the other. Every 30 metres or so they had to hunch down in the strong wind gusts, as losing their footing could have been fatal.

In equally difficult conditions, Terry investigated the trail to Tongariro Peak. It was here that he found the two boys, perched in a very high, precarious position.

Terry dug a trench through the snow and ice for the boys to walk down. Once they were in a safer place, Terry used a Z sack to get the boys out of the wind and waited for help to arrive. Both boys were showing signs of hypothermia and Terry was also feeling the effects of the cold.

Sarah and Cliff arrived about 15 minutes later. They put more clothing on the boys and got them to their feet. By continuously nudging their legs forward, they made slow progress down the mountain. A shute in the terrain allowed the guides to slide the boys down part of the way. The group kept descending until they were below the worst of the weather and reached an area clear enough for helicopter evacuation.

The NZSAR Council and Secretariat congratulates all our 2018 winners.

Do you know an organisation, a group, or an individual who you think should be acknowledged for their contribution to search and rescue?

There are two categories – operational activity and support activity. More information about these two categories, the NZSAR Awards and the simple nomination process can be found on our website at www.nzsar.govt.nz/awards. The 2019 Award nominations close on 31 January 2020.



New Zealand Search and Rescue Region

McMURDO