



AREC.info is the newsletter of Amateur Radio Emergency Communications, the public service arm of the New Zealand Association of Radio Transmitters. AREC.info is published monthly (except January).



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Cover:

Members of North Shore Branch 29 AREC attended a community day at Snell's Beach and talked to members of the public about Amateur radio, and their role in emergency communication.



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Hi everyone, and welcome to the March newsletter. It has been another busy month with plenty going on in AREC and the wider SAR sector.

2020 Annual Report

I would like to introduce our 2020 Annual Report which is published in this issue. Like many organisations, our Annual Report is a summary of our activities and serves both as a look-back for us, but also helps us consolidate what we have been doing for others. This is particularly important for the Ministry of Transport SAR Secretariat (our primary source of funding) but is also very important for our partners including LandSAR Civil Defence, Coastguard and Surf Lifesaving with whom we have strong local relationships (including local funding in some circumstances).

Just one point to note – when I talk to groups about our report, many say that the Branch Activity Summary doesn't reflect their full participation. This data comes straight from the online returns completed by Group Leaders; in short – if you don't complete the return, we can't record your data. So, a request to Group Leaders to remember to complete the return – if you need help (or don't know where to do it), your District Manager will be able to help you out.

Out & About within AREC and the SAR Sector

I had the pleasure of visiting AREC groups at New Plymouth, Whanganui and Palmerston North in February. I always enjoy meeting with our people – and particularly like hearing your feedback about our journey and what we could do differently. This is an important part of my role so please reach out if you have any questions or ideas.

John Murphy and I attended the NZSAR Police SAR Coordinators meeting last week where all the Police NZ SAR Coordinators attended. This is a great chance to catch-up with those Police officers who make a great difference in coordinating SAR operations throughout the country.

AREC Matters

I am pleased to announce that the AREC ID Cards are mostly printed and I was pleased to hand these out to Branch 42 and 74 members recently. The rest are being couriered to Group Leaders shortly.

Work continues on the volunteer strategy for AREC and we have had several meetings with other organisations that are heavily reliant on volunteers to learn from each other. This is a priority area for us.

We are making some really good progress as we work towards implementing new membership and finance systems. Our existing systems are very manual and are well overdue for an upgrade!

It was great to participate with the local Wellington District AREC members in preparing and delivering a major multi-sport event called the Porirua Grand Traverse in late March. This saw 34 AREC members out in the field providing safety and coordination for the event. More on this in the next issue.

Safer Walking Website

LandSAR have launched a new website describing their Safer Walking Initiative. This is about helping those who are at risk of getting lost when walking. It has some really good ideas, and also features the WanderSearch technology.

Check out <https://saferwalking.nz> and <https://wandersearch.nz> for more information. Until next month, 73's for now.

Don, ZL2TYR

Chief Executive Officer, AREC



What a year 2020 was. Covid-19 impacted AREC like everyone else. The SAR sector banded together and convinced the Government to restrict recreational activity during lockdown to avoid putting SAR responders at risk. Nevertheless, some SAROPs were conducted with AREC members taking appropriate protective precautions.

AREC continues transitioning from a fully volunteer agency to one with a funded management and delivery structure. A significant number of activities and projects have been defined and ramped up over the year.

AREC has continued to implement the leadership structure with several changes occurring within the National Officers roles during 2020:

- **David Wilkins ZL1MR**, vacated the Deputy Director role and took up the new partly paid contract position of Health & Safety Advisor
- **Andy Brill ZL1COP**, was appointed to the Deputy Director role now renamed as Regional Manager North (a voluntary role)
- **Lindsey Ross ZL2KS**, continues as the newly renamed Regional Manager South (a voluntary role).
- **John Murphy ZL2XJ**, was appointed to the partly paid contractor role of Project Coordinator, and the role of District Manager Wellington. John also is project manager for the IT systems projects.
- **Gareth Bradshaw ZL3VP**, retired as Treasurer and was awarded a long service medal and made a life membership of AREC for his long years of service at national/group level and as Treasurer
- **Evan Sayer** took up the part paid contractor role of AREC Treasure
- **NZART** was contracted to provide AREC Administration-as-a-Service which have been professionally delivered by Debby Morgan ZL2DL and latterly joined by Annalise Moakley-Smith as Assistant Administrator.
- **Steve Davis ZL2UCX** was appointed to the partly paid contractor role as National Training Advisor
- **Don Robertson ZL2TYR** National Director was confirmed in a full-time employee of NZART role with a recent role name change to Chief Executive Officer reporting to the NZART Council.

Additionally, all District Manager roles have been filled and all active AREC Group Leader roles (note name change from Sections to Groups) have now been filled. The AREC membership list has been updated. Most of the national roles now have job descriptions in place. AREC Officers list is published on the AREC website arec.info.

The management team meets every month via a Zoom video conference and increased number of face-to-face meetings are being held around the country utilising the additional funding provided for this purpose.

My thanks go to the management team for their assistance during the year.

AREC Rules update

The AREC Rules (Regulations under the NZART Constitution) are currently undergoing a revision to bring them into line with the AREC structural and governance changes. These will be circulated once final draft is completed.

Funding & NZSAR Joint Service Level Agreement (SLA)

AREC was advised in April 2020 that the triennial business case submitted for increased funding from \$65,000pa to over \$400,000pa was successful. The new funding covered the government financial years 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023.

This funding is a major milestone in AREC's evolution and enables the transition from a fully volunteer agency to one with a funded management and delivery structure. This decision kick-started significant work to negotiate a new joint service level agreement (SLA) between NZSAR, and the New Zealand Police and Maritime NZ – Regional Coordination Centre (RCC) the coordinating Authorities. Having successfully negotiated the SLA work was started on defining 16 initiatives in project plans and budgets for approval by NZSAR to enable the funding to flow. This proved a major challenge for the AREC management team, and I am pleased to report, that at the time of writing nearly all initiatives have been completed and approved.

The annual letter of Intent (LOI) was negotiated between NZSAR and AREC that covers the focus and funding for the 2020-2021 financial year.

Along with the increased funding comes a significant increase in reporting on progress and spend on the initiatives/projects to NZSAR.

NZART/AREC Emergency Funds Charitable Trust (AREC Trust)

As part of the renewal of the 3-year service level agreement (SLA) with NZSAR was a requirement to revisit and strengthen the AREC Trust governance. An enhanced governance structure and process was created with a subsequent revision of the trust deed. Incorporation of the trust was recommended to reduce the risk to the Trust Board and AREC members. The NZART AREC EMERGENCY FUNDS CHARITABLE TRUST was incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 on 5 February 2021. The new governance arrangements will now be implemented with an increase in Board members from 3 to 5. Applications for the two new board member roles will be called in due course.

As the NZSAR Service Level Agreement (SLA) is with the AREC Trust a memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been agreed between NZART AREC and the AREC Trust to deliver the SLA services in accordance and on behalf of the AREC Trust.

In the review of the Trust governance, it was discovered that the NZART constitution was silent on the AREC Trust. The Trust is owned by NZART and therefore to rectify this an amendment to section 9 of the NZART constitution has been drafted for presentation as a remit to the NZART AGM on 5 June 2021.

AREC Initiatives

Information Systems

We have now implemented Microsoft 365 charity licensing. To date this has rolled out to the National and District Managers. This will continue rolling out to all Group leaders during 2021. SharePoint 365 has been used temporarily to hold and update the AREC member list. SharePoint is also been used to hold and update the AREC asset inventory. A physical inventory stocktake of the assets was completed.

Online Membership and Finance systems project has been started with a full analysis of requirements for NZART and AREC completed. A request for proposal was conducted and after the responses were evaluated, recommendations for preferred software and vendors has been prepared for approval. It is expected that these two systems will be implemented by mid-2021.

A preferred online Learning Management System has been recommended to enable the creation, storage, and access to AREC training and assessments. This will be rolled out after the membership system is implemented.

Other Initiatives

- A refresh of the AREC Strategy is underway
- Volunteer (member) strategy and action plan is nearly completed
- Training Strategy, competency framework and plans are close to completion
- Health & Safety strategy, policy, process, and training plans are well underway
- A range of Innovation & Technology and projects are underway
- New AREC brand has been designed and is now being progressively rolled out
- New Membership ID Cards have been designed and the blank cards printed using the new AREC branding and at time of writing are ready for printing with members details and photos using the newly purchased card printer
- AREC newsletter published monthly sent to all members, thanks to Soren Low ZL1SKL for editing a quality production. These are also accessible on the AREC website arec.info
- A range of AREC branded personal protective equipment and clothing has been designed and is ready to be distributed to AREC members.

The above initiatives are expected to be rolled out over the next few months.

Thanks to all those involved in the above initiatives and particularly to John Murphy for not only co-ordinating all the project developments, but also holding the roles of Wellington District Manager and project managing the IT systems projects.

LandSAR

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been established to promote collaborative working relationships between LandSAR and AREC to work together on matters related to Land Search and Rescue Information Communication Technology (ICT) and offer advice to each other on matters related to the same.

LandSAR has a funded national programme to promote safer walking and this is where the Wander Search activities are coordinated. AREC has participated as a member of the LandSAR National Safer Walking Stakeholder Reference Group and continue to deliver wander Search services on request.

NZ Police

AREC was invited by NZ Police to participate in the SAR portable repeater replacement project to replace the aging repeaters. AREC provided advice and guidance on the repeater specification considering the newer technology now available. AREC participated during the project including, the evaluation panel and conducting the Lab and Field testing of the preferred replacement repeaters. Thanks go to John Yaldwyn for conducting the lab testing.

AREC Activity Report 2020

Based on the submitted AREC activity reports the following two tables show a summary for 2020. The first table shows the total SAR activities for the year. The second table shows all activities by active Branch for the year.

AREC Annual Search and Rescue Operations (SAROPS) Activity Summary reported for 2020.

Event Type	Summary Category	12 Month 2020	12 Month 2019
1	Category 1 (Land) SAROPS	44	52
1	Category 2 (Marine) SAROPS		
	Volunteers used during SAROPS	91	108
	Volunteer hours during SAROPS	854	1288
	People at Risk	45	59
	Lives Saved	4	9
	Lives Rescued	13	21
	Lives Assisted	10	15
	Perished	1	14
	Not Located	17	13
2	SAR Training	39	52
5	SAR WanderSearch	21	
10	SAR Non Op Support	9	3
8	SAR Meetings & Forums	12	23
Total	All SAR Activities	1160	1657

The above tables show a reduction in SAR activity from 2019. This is mainly due to the Covid-19 lockdowns and reduced number of people going missing and/or needing to be rescued.

AREC Annual Branch Activity Summary reported for 2020 (All Activities)

Branch #	Branch Name	# Activities	# Operators	Person Hrs
02	Auckland			
05	Christchurch	80	418	1083
08	East Southland	14	22	304.5
13	Hasting-Havelock North			
20	Manawatu	20	53	384.7
22	Marlborough	5	9	111.3
23	Marton	4	6	30.5
26	Nelson	48	50	40.25
27	New Plymouth	2	6	106.25
29	North Shore	50	174	383.25
30	Otago	6	23	110.75
35	Balclutha	3	23	98
37	Southland	12	34	366.5
42	Titahi Bay	1	3	6
46	Wairarapa	5	5	147.5
49	Westland	2	6	34.5
51	Eastern BOP	8	15	215.5
63	Upper Hutt			
64	North Otago-Oamaru			
65	Papakura	11	30	211
68	North Canterbury	14	14	65
69	Kapiti	6	6	13.5
74	Wellington VHF Group	1	2	130
88	Tauranga ECG	14	40	287.65
TOTALS	Active Branches 20	306	943	4129.65

There was an overall reduction of activity compared to 2019, most likely due to the Covid-19 impacts see below.

2019	TOTALS	Active Branches 22	323	902	5,772.09
2020	TOTALS	Active Branches 20	306	943	4129.65

Congratulations to the Christchurch AREC group 05 has recorded the highest number of activities, operators used, and person hour of effort provided.

Looking at the above branch numbers yet again it is apparent that not all activities are being logged by Branches. Therefore, District Managers and Group/Section Leaders have some work to do to ensure that all Activities are logged.

Thanks to Ross Pedder ZL2UAC for the ongoing compiling of the statistics.

Thanks go to AREC members who without your dedication and commitment AREC would not be able to provide the services for SAR and public events.

In conclusion there are many members and others, too numerous to detail here, that I would like to thank for their dedication and passion and help during the year.

Don Robertson
AREC Chief Executive Officer
ZL2TYR/ZK6EX

Southern Region SAREX



Above: Southern District Manager Lindsay ZL4LC giving the comms brief

The Southern Region SAREX took place on the weekend of 21st and 22nd November at the Catlins in South Otago. This was an excellent opportunity for AREC members from across the region to come and work together. The setup took place on the Friday afternoon and with the Air Force NH90 helicopter arriving, everyone that arrived early got a chance to do some training with it. This involved learning the process of getting on and off as well as being winched down to the ground as it hovered.

On Saturday morning the NH90 was used to install the last portable repeater and at this time a weather bomb of high winds and rain came through which grounded it for the rest of the day. This also resulted in some AREC members bolting back to Invercargil for work and be on hand if needed as part of the clean up from the destructive wind.

The teams went out into the field via 4WD, braving the weather and after a few hours both missing parties were located and the management team decided to bring the teams back into base at the Tautuku Outdoor Centre as there was nothing to be achieved leaving them out in the wild weather.

This resulted in a full camp for the night with plenty of food, drink and a fun quiz. Norm ZL4NORM is the owner of the Catlins Brewery and provided plenty of clean skin bottles of beer for everyone to taste.

On Sunday morning the weather cleared and an opportunity for those that had not completed any training with the NH90 took place along with short trips around the catlins to give us all the full experience.

The radio comms was pretty successful apart from the crackling of the repeaters during the high winds which would suggest that there is some faulty/loose connections in the antenna.

Thanks to the team lead by Lindsay ZL4LC for giving up your time.

ZL4LC, ZL4KS, ZL4DE, ZL4NORM, ZL4MB, ZL4NB, ZL4BDS, ZL4CB, ZL4BMC and Stephen who is an NZART non transmitting member.

Right: Lindsey ZL4KS and Nick ZL4NB enjoying their time in the NH 90



AREC Roadshow

AREC CEO Don ZL2TYR was going to be in Dunedin on the last weekend of November, so full advantage was taken and all AREC members in the Southern District were invited to a meeting.

This meeting took place at the Otago Branch 30 club Rooms in Dunedin with 25 members in attendance from Southland, Central Otago and Dunedin. Senior Sergeant Brian Benn, Southern Region Police SAR Coordinator also joined us.

The purpose of the meeting was to meet and engage with the AREC members and give an update on happenings within AREC since the new Service Level Agreement commenced in July.



Above: Otago Branch 30 AREC Group Leader Stephen ZL4SLG chews the fat with AREC CEO Don ZL2TYR

Most notably the new AREC Logo, ID Card, PPE, Membership Categories and Membership Website projects left everyone in no doubt that AREC has turned a corner with the future looking very exciting.

Don relished the opportunity to meet everyone, so thanks to those that were able to attend.



Above Left: AREC CEO Don Robertson updating everyone with happenings within AREC National

Above Right: Don and Bart ZL4FOX discuss the AREC ID Cards and SARTrack

Below: AREC members taking in the presentation from AREC CEO Don Robertson



You never know when you may get bitten!

As you go about your day-to-day activities just remind yourself to think about your own safety and the safety of those around you or who may come along after you.

Just **Stop-Think-Plan-Communicate-Act**. Keep safe out there.

I learned from this: 'I decided to check out how effective a whip antenna was at HF from within the bush so carried my radio up a walkway around 8km from home and ran a test. Unfortunately, I was in a hurry and not thinking straight so holding the radio upright I pressed the PTT with my finger touching a metal plug without an earth or counterpoise connected. My body became the counterpoise and I got a good dose of RF right in the end of my finger with a deep penetrating RF burn. I can tell you it takes some time for an RF burn to heal so be careful out there.'



Reporting: If you have any feedback from the frontline that may help others please or have an incident, near miss or injury to report please email the details with your contact number to HSW@arec.nz

Request for Help!

Generators are regularly used at training exercises and operations to provide power to keep the lights, computers, radios and even the electric jug operating.

However, at a recent SAREX it became obvious that there was no standard operating procedure (SOP) in their use. In particular, the electrical awareness around what to plug into the generator, and what protections needed to be in place, is not well understood.

David Wilkins ZL1MR looking for some help to develop a SOP that can be applied across the SAR sector around the use of generators.

If you think you can contribute to this, please get in touch with him at HSW@arec.nz or 021 185 7903.

This is something he would like to get completed by the end of April.

Health and Safety is the responsibility of us all

Remember to:

STOP – In your mind you need to be constantly pausing and evaluating no matter the task or the location.

THINK – You need to think about what you see. Identify Hazards and associated Risk (the chance of it going wrong)

PLAN – Talk to others, compare notes, make a plan

COMMUNICATE – Brief the plan and plan to brief others as they arrive.

ACT – Execute the plan, monitor and review progress.