



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:

Ray Harkness ZL2RAY and Don Robertson ZL2TYR engage in bird watching while erecting a VHF antenna and the Wellington SAREX base site in November.

Photo – John Murphy, ZL2XS



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Chief Executive Comment

The end of the year is fast approaching and I want to start this month by saying “thank you” to everyone for their commitment and efforts through the year, especially given the disruptive COVID-19 lockdown and restrictions.

While it has been a challenging year that we are probably happy to see the back of, next year we will be ramping up the initiatives that have largely been in planning and getting ready for implementation. The many hours of preparing our submissions and business cases, followed by meetings with members, NZ SAR and our partners will start to bear fruit.

International Volunteers Day

Recently was International Volunteers day and I want to acknowledge all AREC members for being part of a great community service that save lives, rescues and assists people. The nature of volunteering is changing and having a group of dedicated individuals such as yourselves is what we need to carry us forward.

Kapiti News

Some of you may have seen the recent article in the *Kapiti News* featuring a photo of Neil McDonald ZL2OT operating at the Kapiti Coast District Council civil defence station.

The article gave a brief overview of Amateur radio and how operators support Civil Defence, LandSAR and other community organisations.

The full article can be found here <https://www.pressreader.com/new-zealand/kapiti-news/20201111/page/19>



Summer in the Outdoors

Outdoor recreation retailers have reported record sales as Kiwi's look to spend summer in New Zealand. Sales of tramping equipment have been very strong, and with good weather predicted, large numbers are expected to re-discover the outdoors. Unfortunately, this may also see a rise in SAR callouts – thank you to those who will be available to support.

Membership Cards

It is great to see the New Year in with our new branding. The membership cards are now designed and will be printed in January, we expect these to arrive with members during February 2021. A reminder that all AREC members need to be financial members of NZART and only financial members will therefore receive cards.



And look out for AREC training to ramp up and our new IT systems coming on stream by mid-year.

Best wishes for the festive season, happy New Year, and please stay safe out there.

Don, ZL2TYR

Chief Executive Officer, AREC

Wellington SAREX

Don Robertson ZL2TYR and John Murphy ZL2XS

This year's Wellington area SAREX took place on the weekend Friday 13th to Sunday 15th November 2020. The SAREX is an annual event, and alternates between Wellington and Wairarapa. This year it was Wellington's turn and the 15,000-hectare Akatarawa Forest between Upper Hutt and the Kapiti Coast was chosen as the venue.



The SAREX consisted of three main scenarios:

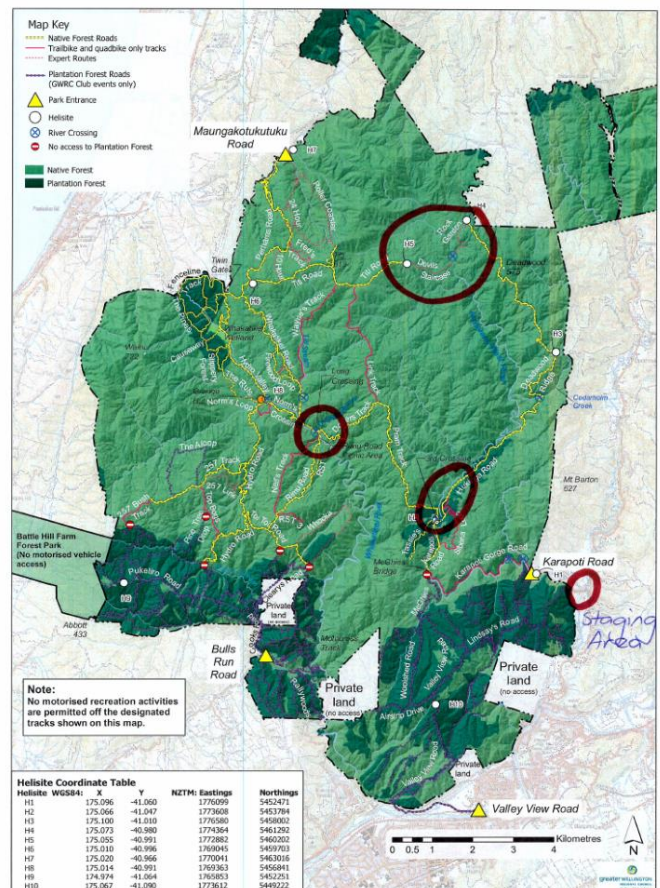
1. Three injured and missing trampers in the area of Devil's Staircase / Rock Garden
2. Three despondent persons who had parked their cars in the area of Long Crossing
3. Three hunters missing in the area of 3rd Crossing

RNZAF supplied an NH90 helicopter which was used to deploy teams and move them between scenarios. As well as Police, LandSAR, RNZAF and AREC – the SAREX was also attended by the Cross-Country Vehicle Club (CCVC) who transported groups through the forest in 4WD vehicles and Wellington Free Ambulance Rescue Squad.

Above: Members from the various groups gather for a briefing.

Right: Map of Akatarawa Forest showing the staging area (bottom right) and three scenario areas.

Akatarawa Forest Motorised Recreation Tracks 2016





Above: The staging area showing the Mobile Police Base and Upper Hutt Amateur Radio Club's communications caravan.

AREC were responsible for the communications plan. Primary communication was via two portable VHF SAR repeaters and a linking repeater. HF was also used and AREC members kept a watch on local 2M/70cm repeaters for back-channel communications. The SAREX area had limited cellphone coverage so a satellite data link was established to provide Wi-Fi internet coverage.



The opportunity was also taken to do field testing of new Police SAR repeaters which were provided by vendors involved in the current procurement. AREC is working with Police and LandSAR to evaluate the responses.



Above: Satellite equipment at Base.
Left: SAR portable (yellow) and linking (green) repeaters at the SAREX.



Above: Members of the team take a few moments to reflect on a job well done.

Below: Don Robertson, AREC CEO (back row, right) and members of Police and LandSAR teams posing in front of the RNZAF NH909 helicopter.





Since 1988, the Kepler Challenge has become an annual event that sees runners complete a 60km course along the circular Kepler Track in the Fiordland National Park. On Saturday the 5th of December 2020, Southland AREC provided communications for the event, using both commercial DMR and a portable ESB repeater. AREC used SARTrack to monitor race officials.



Previous page: Stew ZL4SGB (left) observing (or is that supervising?) Nick ZL4NB (right) in the Southland Branch 37 AREC van (below).



The Kepler Challenge is a community-run event, and is limited to 450 competitors. It attracts a mix of competitive and social participants, many of whom return year after year.

This year's fastest time was recorded by Daniel Jones who completed the course in 4:05:23.

Also held on the same day is the 27km Luxmore Grunt – this sees competitors race out as far as the Luxmore Hut (after climbing around 1,000m over 13.5km) and return to the start.

It is a very popular event – with all the places being taken in around two-minutes when registrations opened in July.

There is significant local support for the event, with an estimated 200 volunteers helping make the day a success.

AREC Administration

Debbie Morgan, ZL2DL

Members - Please send all correspondence regarding AREC matters to me at admin@arec.nz. This includes photos for your AREC membership card, cell phone numbers or e-mail address updates.

Branches – please send to this same address, all claims for subsidies. Where possible can you advise me of all AREC related claims you make/are likely to make, in a twelve-month period, so I can ensure it is correctly forecast and funds available to make the reimbursement to your branch, promptly.

Claims - It is essential that claims are made within three-months of expenditure, failure to do so, may cause considerable delay in reimbursement and sometimes may not be approved at all.

Thanks for your assistance.

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.