

**JULY 2022**



**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).**



## Contents:

Chief Executive Comment	3
DIP Flat Police SAR Training	4
Rally of Whangarei	6
Volunteer Week Presentation	7
Alan Campkin ZL1TUQ	
AREC Training Survey	8
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	10

**Cover:** Alan Campkin ZL1TUQ (right) receives his National Volunteer Week certificate of appreciation from AREC Northern Region Manager Andy Brill, ZL1COP.



The full AREC Contact List, including District Managers and Group leaders is here:  
<https://arec.nz/arec-officers/>

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## National Volunteer Week

New Zealand recently celebrated National Volunteer Week Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu, this was designed to bring attention and recognition to the tireless work that volunteers do across Aotearoa. Most of what happens in AREC is done by volunteers, and I would like to say “thank you” for everything that you do for and on behalf of AREC. It is very much appreciated.



Several certificates of appreciation were handed out during the week, including to Daniel Erichson ZL4DE from AREC Regional Manager, South Lindsey Ross ZL4KS (left) and Soren Low ZL1SKL from AREC Regional Manager North Andrew Brill ZL1COP (right).

See also the presentation to Alan Campkin, ZL1TUQ on Page 7.



## AREC Membership System

I am delighted to let you know the new AREC Membership system called Friendly Manager is being rolled out. Initial roll out to the National Managers has been completed successfully. A phased roll out to all AREC District is now underway. Thanks to John Murphy for his work in getting the system ready to go. Keep an eye out for your invite to register into the new system soon.



## Culverdon Search

NZ Police have published an interesting article in their Ten-One magazine on a recent search in North Canterbury.

This article talks about the partnerships between Police, FENZ, LandSAR and AREC as well as featuring a photo of Steve Davis ZL2UCX (left).

The full article can be found here <https://www.police.govt.nz/news/ten-one-magazine/many-hands-make-light-work>

## AREC Awards & Recognition

A reminder to get your nominations in for the AREC Awards & Recognition in. The closing date has been extended to 9 August 2022. See the AREC website page <https://arec.nz/arec-awards/> for details of the awards and how to nominate someone. Contact Annalise at [admin@arec.nz](mailto:admin@arec.nz) for more information.

## Video & Conference Equipment

AREC now has some video and conference equipment which will be used to create training courses, record events, create marketing material and enable streaming of live conferences and training. We need some members who may be interested to assist with the setup, production and post-production editing including providing conference support.

This will enable a library of events, training, presentations to be establish via the new Learning Management system Bracken. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Annalise at [admin@arec.nz](mailto:admin@arec.nz)

Until next month, stay safe.

*Don, ZL2TYR*

Chief Executive Officer, AREC



# Dip Flat Police SAR Training

**Shaun Crabb ZL4SCR**

***AREC assist Police at their annual National Search & Rescue training course at Dip Flat, the RNZAF training facility in Marlborough. Shaun Crabb from Marlborough AREC fills us in with photos from Paul Rennie ZL2RE.***

Word of the day – Propagation (and not the horticultural meaning) is something I learnt whilst assisting Paul Rennie ZL2RE (Marlborough), Steve Davis ZL2UCX and Ian MacPherson ZL3TAO (Christchurch) with communications at the recent Police National SAR Course Held early May at Dip Flat in Marlborough. For those of you who do not know where that is, it's in the Rainbow Valley approx. 17km (10 mile in old money) up the valley from SH63 near St Arnaud.

Paul and I left Blenheim on Saturday and headed up the valley at a Gentleman's pace and arrived at Dip flat about 90 minutes later. Paul had procured the Marlborough CD comms truck for the week, which we set up once we arrived at the designated location which was at the Northern end of the air strip, against the tree line. The reason for this was to allow numerous aircraft to land at any given time.

We proceeded to set up the HF Dipoles for the comms that we were going to monitor and record into SARTrack, so that field teams could report in and their respective locations be monitored. We were able assisted in setting up by Jono Sands and Matt Ellingham from LandSAR. Matt was on site to talk about the LRDR system (Long Range Digital Radio) to the course attendees.

The Christchurch AREC comms truck was primarily there to run SARTrack and deal with all comms issues. We had good weather all week apart from Sunday, but hey skins waterproof, and we were inside our respective set up vehicles (toasty).

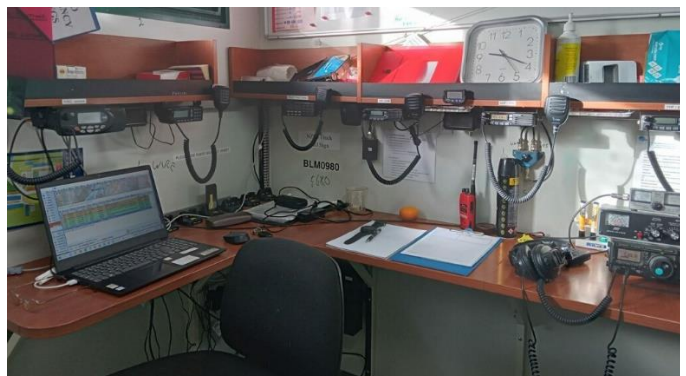
The primary comms plan was compiled by Steve Davis and three repeaters were set up as per Steve's plan on the Tuesday as part of team tasking, there was one linking repeater set up in between the two other repeaters. In this terrain this was not going to provide 100% coverage. As the field activity proceeded it was evident, and the teams found that as briefed, there would be gaps in the VHF comms, and they would need to make extensive use of HF for comms with Dip Flat Base.



***Above:** Shaun Crabb ZL4SCR operating from the Marlborough Civil Defence truck.*



***Above Left:** This is the Marlborough Emergency Management Communications Unit that is generously made available to AREC for SAR and community events.*



***Above Right:** One of the two operating positions showing radios covering multiple bands and services as well as the SARTrack laptop. A Wi-Fi network is set up to link the two vehicles with IMT.*

During the day teams were on VHF channel(s) and HF during the night, and as a backup plan during the day. There was one team up the Paske river who had to use HF throughout the two day field exercise. At 3pm each day Geoff Chapman ZL3PX ( Christchurch) would call up on HF 5680 to let us know on signal strength at his end in Christchurch and any other information he could pass on to us. On one occasion another team had to relay messages to another team by VHF as they could not receive messages by HF or directly via the repeaters due to the team being in a shadow zone.

Teams were using Police handheld radios for VHF and PoSAR HF radios.

During the Sunday exercise it was noted that one team set their HF aerial up running across the slope rather than following the contours, this was evident when they tried to contact Dip Flat base, and no signal was received from them. This was because the team was in a bowl which was on the opposite side of the ridge from Dip Flat base so they had to revert to the VHF to send in the sitrep.

As the training exercise proceeded the SARTrack comms log began to fill up quickly with team locations and any clues found, this enabled the search plan to be updated as necessary by the IMT, and any new instructions to be delivered over the radio to the respective team(s).

Teams were picked up either by the NZDF NH90 helicopter or by 4x4 vehicle and returned to base by midday on the Thursday where teams were debriefed.

For me it was a good learning experience as I had only obtained my amateur Radio license in 2021 and joined AREC in September 2021. I had attended the SAR Management course in June 2021, and joining AREC was the next step for me as it allowed me to understand better the technical side of setting up effective comms for the field teams, plus net working with other course attendees.



*Above: Police and NZDF teams pose for the course photo with the RNZAF NH90.*

### **Interested in being part of the AREC Dip Flat Team?**

*The annual Police SAR training at Dip Flat is a great opportunity to learn about the lead role Police play in Search & Rescue, as well as actively participating as part of the AREC Communications team. Here you will learn about VHF and HF SAR communication, portable and link repeaters as well as SARTrack and communications protocols.*

*Look out for an invitation to apply which is published in AREC.info early in each calendar year.*

# Rally of Whangarei

Photos: Andy Brill, ZL1COP

This years International Rally of Whangarei was held from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of May. Friday was the official opening and special stage in Whangarei, Saturday's course was north of Whangarei and Sunday was South. Close to 40 AREC members from Northland and Auckland provided communications for the event.



Above: Sean Lin ZL1LMT recording and calling car numbers back to Rally Base in Whangarei.

As Saturday's event was north of Whangarei, a 2M STSP repeater was sited near Ruapekapeka. This was the primary repeater, with Whangarei 665 (to the south) as the secondary. On the Sunday, the Brynderwyn 560 repeater provided good coverage across most of the area – although on both days some creativity with antennas was required to get the best signal into the repeaters!



Andy Brill ZL1COP set up on a foggy first day. Luckily it wasn't long before the sun came out.



Handy paper plates stapled to fence posts helped operators get to the right position.

# Volunteer Week Presentation

**Andy Brill ZL1COP**

National Volunteer Week Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu honours the collective energies and mana of all volunteers in Aotearoa. They grow our people, open minds, open hearts and create joy.

Volunteer **Alan Campkin, ZL1TUQ** has provided sterling service to Auckland District AREC over many years. Although not able to take part in many regular AREC activities due to personal circumstances Alan has been a mainstay of the weekly HF and VHF radio checks which AREC volunteers conduct for Auckland Emergency Management.

These checks ensure the ability to the Auckland Emergency Coordination Centre to maintain radio communications with community response organisations and key lifeline agencies throughout the Auckland District in the event of a Civil Emergency. Alan has activated the North Shore Comms Base at Sunnynook without fail every Wednesday morning since time immemorial.

He has ensured that the AREC obligations to AEM and their partner agencies have been consistently complied with, and that AEM have received value for money for their annual financial grant to us. In addition to his efforts for AREC Alan has also undertaken valuable work for the North Shore Amateur Radio community as a whole by acting as a regular tutor for the Ham Cram license courses run by branch 29, and he has been instrumental in setting up a well-equipped electronics workshop for use by branch and AREC members at the North Shore Comms Base.

Alan has been a quiet and unassuming background worker for AREC and his efforts are much appreciated. He is a shining example of the fact that AREC holds a place everyone, not just those who are called out on the front line of SAR or Civil Defence.



*Above: Alan Campkin ZL1TUQ (right) receives his National Volunteer Week certificate of appreciation from AREC Northern Region Manager Andy Brill, ZL1COP*

*members at the North Shore Comms Base.*



## Videographers Wanted!

*AREC would like to hear from anyone who is interested in helping record and/or edit video content for publicity and training purposes.*

*Contact Annalise at  
[admin@arec.nz](mailto:admin@arec.nz)*

Thank you to the 204 respondents to the recent AREC Training Survey. These responses have provided some good insights into our members capabilities and training areas to focus on.

Okay, what did we learn:

## General Stuff

- We had a response rate of about 2/3 of our membership; not a bad result but we don't have information for 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of our people
- About 1/3 of respondents were LandSAR members, and well over half have an NZQA National Student Number
- Everyone had internet access and a home e-mail address, only one respondent not having a mobile phone
- Only a very small number did not have a computer, and most were confident using the keyboard

## Deployment

- The majority of members were interested in supporting Civil Defence (88%), followed by Search & Rescue (84%), Sporting and Community Events (73%) and WanderSearch (52%)
- 88% of members were comfortable working from Home Base, another Base or in a mobile situation, 33% could work under adverse conditions

## Competency

- There was a good spread of current competency responses, all the way from newly licensed through to supervisory levels with most wanting to learn new skills
- There were very strong responses in the technical questions (knowledge of radio operation, message handling, power, Amateur HF, VHF, UHF, antennas etc.) People organisation and leadership, VSAT, GPS and navigation and computer networking were areas where many members rated themselves low.
- Only a small number of members hold a related NZQA standard (such as CIMS or Marine radio certificate)
- Over half of respondents held a current First Aid qualification

## Comments

There were a number of comments that provided further insights. The flavour of some of these included:

- Work and family commitments mean that some members aren't able to devote as much time to AREC (upskilling and responding) as they would like
- A number said they found practical training and field exercises the most enjoyable and engaging way of learning new skills
- There is interest in learning more about third-party systems that Civil Defence and other use, and providing support to those organisations
- Some older members commented on their mobility becoming limited, and some (presumably) younger members were concerned that older members are pushing themselves and might need to consider stepping-back from some field roles

## So what next?

I just want to say another thank you to all who responded. This survey provided a number of insights and gave some clear direction as to where we need to focus our efforts. We have set-up a small Training Working Group (Steve Davis, Andy Brill, Soren Low, Karl Hunt, Lindsay Eunson, Richard Smart and John Murphy) to work through and develop a training framework and content we can rollout to our members.

Please feel free to get in touch, [training@arec.nz](mailto:training@arec.nz) or give me a call on 027 436 1796.

# AREC Training – Upcoming Courses

## TPP/NZSAR Multi-Agency

6-7 Aug	CIMS4	Wellington
12-14 Aug	Manage the Initial Response	Christchurch
27-28 Aug	CIMS4	Tauranga
9-11 Sep	Manage the Initial Response	Whanganui

The TPP courses are aimed at members that are working as a Comms Unit leader or above, so preference will be given to Deputy Group Leaders and above, or those specifically nominated.

## LandSAR

6-7 Aug	Outdoor First Aid	South Canterbury
13-14 Aug	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Invercargill
13 Aug	IMT Refresher	Palmerston North
4 Sep	IMT Refresher	Kerikeri
10-11 Sep	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Oxford
10-11 Sep	Outdoor First Aid	Taranaki
17 Sep	GPS and RCOM Refresher	Whanganui
17-18 Sep	Outdoor First Aid	Cromwell
24 Sep	SARTrack Refresher	Marlborough
24-25 Sep	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Cambridge
1-2 Oct	IMT Refresher	Christchurch
1-2 Oct	Outdoor First Aid	Clutha

Due to funding systems AREC places may be limited on some of the LandSAR courses.

Note that you cannot take a course a second time, and you need to have done the original course to be eligible for a Refresher course. We have a limited budget for travel etc, so preference will be given to those that are local to the courses, but there is provision for some support for travel, and accommodation if needed. For all applications for these courses, please apply via your Group Leader or District Manager, and they will pass on applications to [training@arec.nz](mailto:training@arec.nz)

Note that normally course enrolments close 3 weeks before course date, but sometimes we can get additions a little after the close-off.

For those that have access, staged access is being rolled out first to Group Leaders/Deputies and above and will be available to Group members over the next little while, Training information for upcoming courses is also on the Training Academy Hub of the AREC SharePoint Intranet - <https://arecnz.sharepoint.com/sites/Academy>

## AREC Newsletter – Call for articles!

***We are always on the lookout for material for the AREC Newsletter. Short articles on AREC activities or items which may be of interest to members are always welcome, preferably accompanied by a few photos.***

***Please send submissions to [newsletter@arec.nz](mailto:newsletter@arec.nz)***

## AREC Photo Archive!

***We also need photos of AREC members that we can use on our social media pages and in training materials. If you have any photos you are able to share, please send these to [admin@arec.nz](mailto:admin@arec.nz)***

## **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

As mentioned in the previous newsletter I am hopeful we will have signed a contract with a service provider to ensure the Wellbeing of our members.

Just a reminder, whilst we are volunteers not employees, under the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015 volunteers are what is known as 'deemed employees'. That means whilst we don't get paid for what we do, we should get the support any employee would normally get in paid employment.

Obviously this is a major problem for AREC as we have limited funding. NZSAR understand the problem as coordinator across the SAR sector so have provided us with a budgeted amount to provide this type of service for our members.

So why does an EAP provider exist?

We all know that in most circumstances we can function fairly well. The occasional curve ball comes our way but we manage to navigate around those sorts of surprises. However now and then circumstances and sometimes our choices conspire against us. We find ourselves facing real problems that can arise at the strangest of times.

A typical example could be you have a good job and a steady income so you buy a house. A pandemic comes along, you lose our overtime income, but can still cope though it is difficult. Then the company you are working for downsizes. Even though you have been there for three years you are one of the newest employees so find ourselves without a job. This leads to all sorts of strain on your thinking and you start to dwell on financial matters. What happens then if the car breaks down, the dog gets run over, or a close friend or relation dies? How are you feeling now? Your brain keeps twirling and you wonder if you can sleep as you struggle to deal with the financial problems as well as your swirling emotional state. How can you solve your issues?

Possibly the events above do not happen. Instead you are simply volunteering as an AREC member to support a search. You are out back operating the radios and hear the search teams have found a body and they are returning to base. You continue to call back the other search teams and once that is sorted you get up to grab a cup of tea.

You get home, have dinner watch a bit of TV then head off to bed but all you can see when you close your eyes is the body bag! You finally drop off to sleep but the next night something similar happens and you get images of a body bag everytime you see a black rubbish bag or something similar! You think maybe you need some help in coping with this strange turn of events.

In both scenarios you need some help but who do you turn to?

This is where EAP service providers come into play. They are staffed with counsellors and psychologists and provide a call centre solution so you can talk through your issue, be guided by a professional and find a way out of the situation your brain has got you into. If necessary they will even refer you to a local counsellor or psychologist, a lawyer, a budget advisor, or some combination of support services for on-going support.

All calls are confidential and AREC will never know who has called or what the problems have been. More information on the AREC EAP service will be provided when the provider is confirmed. So look forward to an announcement in the near future with contact details.

AREC and NZSAR want to make sure your wellbeing is looked after, and that as a volunteer you receive as much support as if you were an employee. In the meantime if you are employed and feel you need some help maybe your current employer already has an EAP type service provider. If they do give them a call. Alternatively if you are also a member of LandSAR you can call their EAP provider, details at the bottom of the weekly email Newsletter from the LandSAR CEO.

## **Covid 19 – some important new information!**

Before you roll your eyes and stop reading there are some changes afoot with this virus. Like all good viruses, SARS-CoV-2 is constantly evolving in response to random changes in its structure. First we had the 'wild' Wuhan strain, followed by Delta, then Omicron which has a series of cousins all of around the same virulence but of slightly different structures.

The Omicron BA.2.12.1 (let's call it BA3) strain was dominant in the USA, and BA.4 and BA.5 were dominant in South Africa. They have been moving quickly to take over as the predominant strains.

NZ MoH appear to be concerned about BA.5 so it looks like some travellers from South Africa have brought over some gifts for New Zealanders now the borders are open. Current arrivals in New Zealand with Covid are well over 50% affected by BA5 and the wider New Zealand population will likely be over 50% BA5 by the time you read this Newsletter.

The problem is that having caught CV-19 previously may no longer be protective against the new variants. I anecdotally know of people who were vaccinated, caught Covid in March and then caught it again in May or June. You may also know of cases like that.

So it looks like our vaccination effectiveness, whilst still protective against significant illness, may be dropping as the new variants start to 'escape' the protection afforded by vaccination or previous infection. In addition acquired immunity from a previous infection is also dropping rapidly due to the more infective nature of BA5.

I suspect a new vaccine may be required for the northern winter and in the longer term we may end up with changes to vaccines and annual booster shots required just like the influenza vaccination.

If you think Omicron BA5 is relatively harmless think again. Of the around 12 reported deaths each day who die 'with Covid' around 75% of them actually died because they 'had Covid'. In other words around 8 wouldn't have died if they didn't have Covid. Yes most of them also had significant co-morbidities but this is where the vaccination helps. Get boosted and the chances of ending up in hospital with Covid are much reduced.

Current advice is: If you can get the second booster; Keep wearing a tight fitting N95 or FP2 mask when out and about and you think you may get into contact with people who could be infected; Maintain good hand hygiene; and Follow the advice from the Ministry of Health websites.

In regard to masks, airborne micro-droplets containing CV-19 are so infective that gaps around the edges of a mask will allow those particles in. That is why you need a well-fitting higher-grade mask if you want to go out and mingle closely with strangers.

I wear a medical grade mask when walking close to the public, in Supermarkets, on public transport, and when in my role as an ambulance officer. So far I haven't caught Covid even though I have sat in close proximity to several Covid positive patients as I treated them on the way to hospital.

As always, if you have any questions, want to report any issues or incidents, or simply want to discuss Health Safety or Wellbeing matters just send an email to [HSW@arec.nz](mailto:HSW@arec.nz).

Keep well and we can all look forward to AREC announcing the contact details of our new EAP provider.

Any issues, incidents or accidents please report them to [HSW@arec.nz](mailto:HSW@arec.nz).

If you want any clarification about the contents of this article or anything else related to Health, Safety and Wellbeing just drop a line.

*David Wilkins ZL1MR*  
AREC Health & Safety Advisor



### 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.