



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
AREC's new Brand	4
Meet the Team	5
Rally of Auckland	6
AREC Administration	9
Health, Safety & Wellbeing	9
Greenhithe Safety Expo	10
LandSAR Comm Committee	10

Cover:

Bob Holt ZL1BBZ at the Rally of Auckland - proud that his new mobile station works with less than 1.5 showing of the SWR meter. He spent nearly two weeks experimenting to get it working that well – using a welder, drill press, stainless steel plate, weld rods, barrel connections for a PL259 antenna plug.

Photo – Peter Henderson, ZL1PJH



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Chief Executive Comment

I was abruptly reminded that the year is fast coming to an end. Not by looking at the calendar to find a space for an important meeting, but by hearing Christmas carols in the shopping mall! It seems that the decorations go up earlier every year.

Back to AREC, this has been another month with plenty of things going on. As we have reported in earlier issues of *AREC.info*, Ministry of Transport (through the Search & Rescue Secretariat) have made a significant amount of money available to us to help develop our organisation for the future. Having the money allocated, and actually receiving it our bank account are two separate things.

Management Roles

You may have picked up that several senior roles have changed titles. National Director is now Chief Executive Officer and the Deputy National Director North and South roles have become Regional Manager North and South respectively. This was done to align our roles with those of other SAR sector organisations (such as LandSAR, Coastguard, Surf Lifesaving etc.)

Information Technology

Over recent months, we have made significant progress to develop our information technology strategy into requirements documents and business cases which are used to support our proposals to Ministry to release funds. We are fortunate to have John Murphy ZL2XJ as our project coordinator, heavily supported by Felix Five, our contract business analyst.

Recently retired, John used to do this for a living – we are fortunate to have access to his skills and his time.

Felix Five is no stranger to AREC. In fact, he worked closely with me to write the business case that secured the Ministry funding. While he is not a “radio person”, he is passionate about getting the right outcomes and seeing technology used to its full potential. In that respect, he is like us.

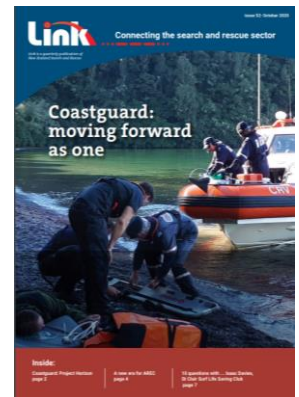
The new Microsoft 365 environment (and arec.nz e-mail addresses), and the financial and membership systems which are well underway, are examples of this.

NZ SAR – Link Magazine

Link is the quarterly magazine of New Zealand Search & Rescue. The October issue included an article on AREC which has received some good feedback from other sector members.

The short article provides a really good overview of our organisation, talks about our history and our plans for the future.

You can find this issue at <https://nzsar.govt.nz/assets/Downloadable-Files/NZSAR-LINK-52-2020-For-Website.pdf>



AREC Branding

Finally, you will read elsewhere in this issue that we are moving in a new direction in relation to our branding.

Having a distinctive brand that resonates both with our members and partners was what we strived to achieve, I hope you agree that we nailed it.

Don, ZL2TYR

Chief Executive Officer, AREC



New Branding for AREC

“Having a distinctive brand is important, both for members and our partners” opens AREC Chief Executive Officer, Don Roberston ZL2TYR.

For the last few months, AREC has been working with a Wellington design agency to develop new branding. “Most of our partners have no idea what AREC actually means, most say our initials as a word (A-REC) so we thought that was an opportunity to simplify our brand” Don explains.

“Some of our long-term members we consulted with during this process, weren’t keen to move away from the red diamond, and for good reason. The diamond is well accepted as the international symbol of Amateur Radio and the red ribbon made it uniquely AREC. Unfortunately, we found that our partners, new Amateurs, and others outside of our organisation, did not recognise the logo for what it meant to us.”



Despite the need to change, our history is very important and we have no intention of losing the connection to our roots. While our traditional logo won’t be used in our material, it will have a place when acknowledging long-serving members.

The link to NZART is important. “AREC remains a part of NZART and we want to celebrate that” adds Don. To that end, a version of the logo that includes both the AREC logo and the NZART diamond has been developed.

“You will notice we now have a Te Reo Maori translation in our full logo” comments Don, “this is common for most organisations these days and simply reflects the diversity we enjoy in Aotearoa”. Moving forward, AREC seeks to create an organisation that reflects the community we work within, a move which is well overdue.

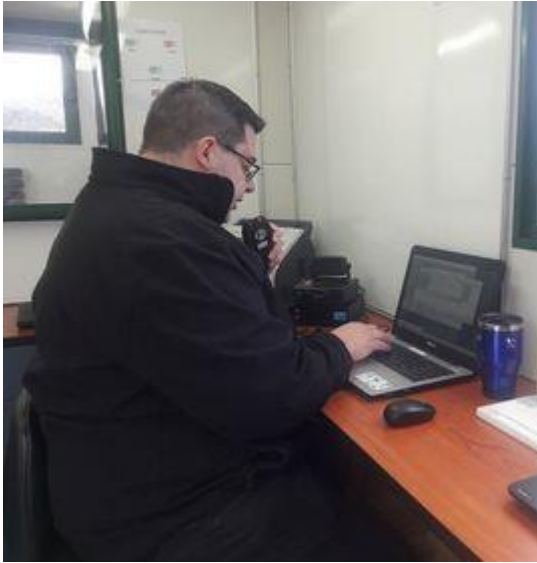
“We have worked with a cross section of AREC members, partner agencies and others to develop the new branding” says Don. “I’d like to thank everyone who has had input for their forthright feedback.”

The new brand will be pushed out in our internal and external materials, as well as ID cards, uniform and PPE items.



Meet the Team

This column is to introduce you to the real AREC, that is the individuals that share a common interest and passion that make up our organisation.



This month we feature Daniel Erickson ZL4DE, our Deputy Southland Manager.

“Radio was introduced to me by Neville Checketts ZL4OX who was one of my Boys Brigade leaders. Neville gave us lessons on radio communication using Icom IC2A's” explains Daniel. “I was hooked one night when he brought the International AREC truck along to show us through it.”

“I remember at a Boys Brigade camp being responsible to run the HF sked each night from Skippers Canyon in Queenstown, using the TR105 set. This led to me joining the Invercargill Civil Defence Rescue Squad in 2005 aged 17! From there I was introduced to AREC. After going along to assist AREC at a few SAREX's, I sat my ham ticket in 2007.”

Daniel's interest helped guide him into the communications industry where we worked in technical roles with both Woosh Wireless and Downer NZ. “Having had experience in both Amateur and commercial radio helps me work with the SAR and Civil Defence sectors – most of the people we deal with see radio as a tool. They're not interested in the bells and whistles – they just want something that they can pick up and have the confidence it will work” he says. We have a small team in Southland who work hard behind the scenes to make this a reality for the people we work with – knowing we are available when the balloon goes up goes a long way to being seen as a key partner”

Recently Daniel has joined the Radio Frequency Users on New Zealand (RFUANZ) committee on behalf of AREC. “Having Daniel, with his commercial background and Amateur focus has provides a unique insight to the group” says AREC Chief Executive Officer Don Robertson.



Daniel Erickson ZL4DE on drone duty at a recent Southland SAR operation.



On Saturday 14 November 2020, AREC members from across Auckland provided communications for the City of Auckland Rally. This event comprised the stages that were planned for the World Rally Championship event, both north and east of the city. It included stages in the Kaipara Hills, Puhoi and Riverhead Forest.

By Richard Gamble ZL1BNQ



Bruce ZL1ATV and Graeme ZL1GMB on the Puhoi rally stage. Photo: Graeme Barton ZL1GMB.



Richard ZL1BNQ (pictured) and David ZL1DK were the base operators for the day. Communications took place on two STSP repeaters, a VHF repeater sited temporarily near Moirs Hill, linked to the UHF repeater in the Hunua ranges. Photo: David Karrash ZL1DK.



Ben Thomassen and Gavin Haycock from Tauranga racing their Subaru WRX Sti along Tahekeroa Road. Photo: Troy Marsden

As both the International Rally of New Zealand and Rally of Whangarei events were cancelled earlier this year, a one-day event was organised around four stages run twice north of Auckland and one on a custom-made rally track on a 300-acre farm south east of Auckland 15th November.

As this was to run under international rules 5km points were deployed within the stages, nine were required overall.

Early planning was made by placing one of the Auckland STSP VHF repeaters up at Moirs Hill a high point just south of Warkworth which was basically in the middle of the stages. A drive through the stages to take pictures of the placement of these 5km points found that a couple were marginal into the repeater. A test at the proposed headquarters at Kumeu would also be marginal to the repeater as well, plans were made to crossband from a high point in the Riverhead Forest in case it was needed and also the AREC Accessor unit sited in the Hunua Ranges would be linked through to UHF as well.

On the day of set up it was found that with a high gain vertical antenna that the signal was okay to and from the repeater.



Soren ZL1SKL enjoying the sun. In the box is a Tait TM8260 VHF/UHF radio with 18Ah battery and charger – the coax ran to a 3m collapsible window-washing pole with dual-band whip on the top, tied against a fence post.

The nine radio operators at the 5km points had used high gain antennas and the radio network was all setup.

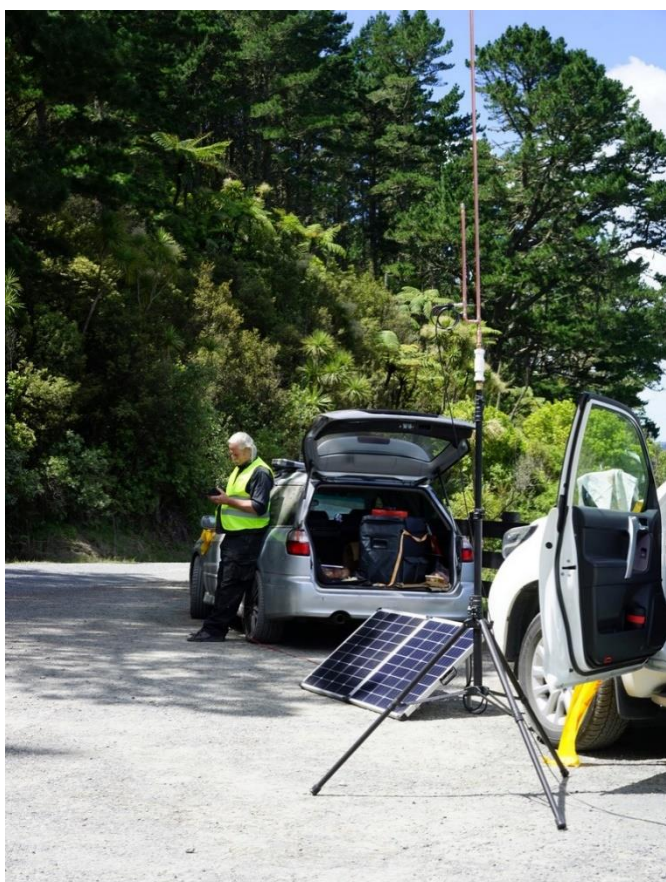


All was ok until later in the morning a commercial radio station was heard through the repeater, at first it was thought someone was causing interference but no, it turned out to be cross modulation from a site close by, the interference came and went all day but we managed work through it.

The only incident during the day was the deployment of the Red Flag in the middle of the third stage to stop the first car from proceeding, the reason for the flag was that the taping crew had not finished and were still in the stage. The stage was cancelled. The Clerk of Course was very happy at the speed of making the flag deployment happen in time.

The safety tracking information from the stages was good and management were happy with our results. Just over five hundred safety information messages were passed during the day of the event.

Left: Alec ZL1HAZ comfortably set-up with his TM9300 VHF radio, 7Ah battery and home-brew 2m flowerpot antenna.



Ian Clifford ZL1IRC waiting for the action to begin. Note the copper Slim-Jim antenna in the foreground.
Photo: John Baxendale ZL1CD



David Karrash ZL1DK enjoying operating base.
Photo: Richard Gamble ZL1BNQ

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, Safety & Wellbeing

David Wilkins, ZL1MR



At a recent AREC meeting, one of our members reflected on a recent event where they saw spectators getting a bit close to the action – “what should I have done?” he asked.

What a great question! As Amateur radio operators, we tend to dedicate our training to the technical skills we need to develop. What band, what antenna, how high, how much power etc. But the question was a valid one. In this case, our member was at a remote location without the direct support of event officials.

But common sense saved the day. Our member decided that the right thing was to ask them (politely) to stand back a few meters. As it turned out, our spectator friends decided to do this without intervention – but it was great to see that both parties assessed the risk, and took (or were prepared to take) the right action.

The reason I bring this up is that our member spent a lot of time thinking about what he could have done, what he should have done – but also thinking about what might have happened if he didn't do anything and an accident were to have happened.

This is really just common sense; looking after the safety of others who may not be aware of what might be happening in regard to the rally that was about to start.

If you are organising an event for AREC, think about what non-radio things might happen and give members guidance on what to do or who to ask. There is no such thing as a dumb question.

Always think about our HSW mantra: **STOP, THINK, PLAN and COMMUNICATE, ACT.**

A reminder that I am here to help you work through any AREC related HSW issues you have, personally or as a group. I can be contacted at HSW@arec.nz or by phone at 021 185 7903.

AREC Health, Safety & Welfare – Injuries, Incidents & Issues Reporting

AREC has an obligation to deliver a competent, efficient, and safe and effective service to our partner agencies. We all want to avoid injury and damage whilst delivering that service. However occasionally things happen through oversight, changing circumstances or ‘Acts of God’. In addition, we can also spot near misses where we narrowly avoided a problem and can use that as a warning to ensure we avoid any future problems.

Until such time as we get a national reporting database system in place can you please report any injuries, incidents and issues to: HSW@arec.nz.

When sending a report please answer the following questions:

What is/was the issue? What have you done about it? What do you think we ought to do next?

On Saturday morning, 14 November, AREC took part in a combined Safety Expo in the North Shore, Auckland suburb of Greenhithe.

The expo, held at the Greenhithe Community Hall, was a joint effort between the Greenhithe Community Resilience Group and the Tauhinu Sea Scout troop. It included displays from Fire and Emergency NZ, NZ Police, the neighborhood support group, AREC and other organisations involved in emergency preparedness.

The programme included CPR training, a pancake breakfast for the Scouts, and various amusements for both kids and adults. The safety expo celebrated the publication of Greenhithe's new community response plan entitled [A Resilient Greenhithe](#)



Andy ZL1COP and Dennis ZL1TAY set up an AREC station at the hall and demonstrated emergency communications with other community response groups in the Auckland region. Scouts were able to try their hand using radio with UHF PRS handhelds while they waited their turn for the CPR training, and a link was established using the ESB interagency liaison channel with the community constables patrol car allowing visitors to the police display to talk to the AREC display.



Above: Andy ZL1COP educating Scouts on radio.

Visitors to the display were able to monitor the comms for the Auckland City Rally which was taking place at the same time via the 6825 STSP repeater.

AREC equipment in use for the event included 6 Motorola PRS Handheld radios, the Branch 29 new "Go Kit" comprising an Icom ID5100 VHF/UHF radio, Tait T2020 ESB band and Tait 8200 high band UHF radios in a pelican case. An AREC TM9300 handheld was used for comms with the police vehicle, and a portable repeater on the interagency channel was also part of the display.

At the conclusion of the event Dennis ZL1TAY was presented with a trophy recognising his many years of service to the Greenhithe Community Resilience Group.

Many thanks to Darryl ZL1TCI and Kevin ZL1KG at the Laingholm Community Emergency Response Group, and Margaret from the Mahurangi East CRG at Snells Beach for giving up their time to activate their CRG stations and provide someone for the visitors to talk to.

Right: Dennis ZL1TAY received his award for long service with the Greenhithe group.



LandSAR Communications

Soren Low ZL1SKL

I attended the LandSAR Communications Consultative Committee meeting towards the end of November. This group includes representatives from across LandSAR, and AREC National Director Don Robertson and myself also attend.

LandSAR VHF Codeplug: Version 6.0 has now been approved for release. This includes some changes to the sequence of the LandSAR "root file", change from 30 to 15mins for SARTrack positioning data, and general updates to regional zones where required.

Long Distance HF Radio: LandSAR are experimenting with a LRDR network. This will comprise of a number of base stations with automatic link establishment technology that can be accessed through a press-to-talk over cellular (PTTOC) application. Field deployable units will be used to crosslink local VHF into the HF network – through the PTTOC, communication to the field will be available from (almost) anywhere.

Other items discussed included SARTrack, radio procurements for the financial year and the satellite technology used by some groups.

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.