

**APRIL 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).**



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## Cover:

AREC's Health, Safety & Wellbeing advisor David Wilkins ZL1MR at a recent Auckland LandSAR training night. Dave has set his ute up as a mobile AREC base, with cellular modem, battery power, VHF, UHF and HF radios, awning to provide weather protection as well as folding table and chairs.



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## Surveys

You will see in this issue, a note about the two surveys that are about to get underway:

### AREC Volunteer Survey

I spoke in this column last month about the AREC Volunteer Survey which is expected to go live in the last weekend of April. All AREC members will receive a link and are encouraged to complete it please. The information we learn from your feedback is vital to help us move AREC forward.

Similar surveys are taking place across the SAR sector. If you are also a member of LandSAR, Surf Lifesaving or Coastguard, you may be asked to complete one in respect to that organisation.

### KPMG AREC Health, Safety & Wellbeing Survey

Another survey, specific to Health, Safety & Wellbeing is about to be run by KPMG. This is different in that only about a dozen of our members will be approached from those who are active SAR responders. This will be an interactive session via MS Teams.

### Training Survey

While we are on the subject, I would like to thank the 204 AREC members who completed the recent training survey. Steve Davis, AREC Training Advisor said, "there was an excellent cross-section of responses which showed a willingness to learn new skills to be able to better support AREC and our partner agencies into the future."

## National Emergency Management Agency

AREC have been asked to join with NZSAR secretariat in discussions with the National Emergency Management Agency in relation to their programme to update the Civil Defence and Emergency Management Act and highlight the assistance that the SAR sector agencies and AREC are able to provide during a civil defence emergency.

Andy Brill, AREC Regional Manager North has sought feedback from District Managers and Group Leaders asking what relationships our groups have with your local civil defence organisation, community response groups, NZ response teams or any other groups involved in CDEM related activities in your area. Can any group leaders who have not provided feedback to Andy please do so.

As an aside, it was interesting to note that 180 of the 206 respondents to our training survey said they wished to support Civil Defence in their communities.

## Auckland Training Weekend

This will be the last of our regional training weekends and is scheduled to take place on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 June at Papakura Radio Club, 1 Great South Road, Papakura. We will be having a National Manager's meeting on Friday 10 June and will be hosting a Beer 'n Pizza meet and greet that night from 5.30pm for anyone who would like to swing by.

The training weekend is open to all AREC members and will follow the format used in other areas (as reported previously in *AREC.info*)

## NZ SAR Awards

This year's NZ SAR awards will be presented on Tuesday 17 May at Government House, Wellington and will be live streamed on NZ SAR's YouTube channel from around 5.15pm. Ray Harkness ZL2RAY is a recipient this year and it is great to see him recognised for his service and dedication to SAR in New Zealand.

The You Tube link is

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC95b2-BKJMt5Z991uA4RcZQ>

Finally, I have just returned from a spot of annual leave where I have been able to get a bit of painting done around the house!

Until next month, stay safe.

*Don, ZL2TYR*

Chief Executive Officer, AREC





## Volunteer survey 2022

Tena koutou katoa,

Yes, it's us again, asking you to fill out yet another survey!

We all know, surveys are not the most exciting things to do, but we need your input to contribute in defining information AREC captures in shaping the future of our organisation.

Over the weekend, we will be sending you a link to the AREC survey, where we ask if you could please share your thoughts, ambitions for AREC, and experiences with us.

All information that you send us will be completely confidential!

To entice you to fill out the survey, we will have prizes up for grabs for the AREC groups that have the highest response rates.

There will be one winner per week (over the three weeks the survey is open). Winners of these prizes will be announced on the AREC Facebook page. The overall winner of a DMR handheld radio will go to the group with the most surveys returned. This too will be announced on the Facebook page.

If you need any assistance with the survey, please contact admin who will be delighted to hear from you.

Remember - **YOUR FEEDBACK HELPS SHAPE THE FUTURE OF AREC.**



# AREC

***Brendan ZL4BDS and Daniel ZL4DE assisted Police Search & Rescue with communications at Milford Sound for a missing 21-year-old tramper in late March.***



*Above: Search Base showing SARTrack in use on the big screen.*

*Above right: The new cellphone tower behind the Fire station at Milford Sound.*

The tramper had gone for a day walk on the 28th March, but did not return. Police, LandSAR, Wakatipu Alpine Cliff Rescue and Wanaka Canyon SAR, conducted a search and sadly located the missing man's body near the Giant Gate Falls at Lake Ada on Wednesday 30th March.

AREC operated from the Milford Sound Fire Station, the ESB57 portable SAR repeater was deployed via helicopter and situated near Sheerdown.



Above: FENZ portable UHF repeater.

## KPMG Survey of AREC members

NZSAR has engaged KPMG to carry out a survey of SAR partner groups and members in respect to Health, Safety and Wellbeing. The survey will cover AREC, LandSAR, Coastguard, and Surf Life Saving NZ. This means that in the next few weeks KPMG will be contacting some managers and members of AREC via email. If you spot an email from KPMG in your Junk email it is likely genuine and not a spoof. However, be cautious if you are uncertain.

The survey will be conducted using Microsoft Teams (similar to Zoom and other conferencing software). You do not need to download any special software as you can participate over a browser interface. You will need to have a microphone and headset/speakers (built into most laptops) and a headset can easily be added to a desktop type computer. You do not need to have a camera but that can be helpful if you have one.

If you are approached by KPMG and do not feel confident using MS Teams then contact your Group Leader or District Manager for assistance. They may be able to run a test meeting to ensure you are comfortable logging in and operating the software.

If you have any questions, please contact your AREC District or Regional Manager.

**Steve Davis ZL2UCX, AREC Training Coordinator brings us this update.**

Through our associations with NZSAR and LandSAR, AREC members have the opportunity to attend various courses which help us deliver to the SAR sector.

While things have been a bit disrupted with Covid etc we are hoping that things are now improving, and courses are more likely to go ahead as scheduled. The following courses are available through our partners over the next few months.

Below is a list of courses available over the next few months.



## TPP/NZSAR Multi-Agency

7-8 May	CIMS4	Christchurch
7-8 May	CIMS4	Auckland
14-15 May	Leadership (SAR Context)	Auckland
21-22 May	CIMS4	Rotorua
11-12 Jun	CIMS4	Bay of Plenty

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

7-8 May	SARTrack User	Bay of Plenty
7-8 May	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Whangamata
7-8 May	Outdoor First Aid	North Otago
14-15 May	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Reefton
14-15 May	Outdoor First Aid	Hawkes Bay
14-15 May	Outdoor First Aid	Mid Canterbury
28-29 May	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Horowhenua
29 May	IMT and SARTrack ex	Whangamata
11-12 Jun	Searching Suburban Environments (useful for WanderSearch responders)	Cromwell

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

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 three weeks before course date, but sometimes we can get additions a little after the close-off.

There is also the SAR Managers Course, available to someone that has completed CIMS4, Manage the Initial response and Extended Search Planning and has good IMT experience. This is aimed at a wider IMT role than just Comms and will be based around real search scenarios, so will only suit someone working closely with the SAR IMT at the Ops/Planning/Intel manager levels. The dates are 20 Jun-23 Jun and it will be held at the Police College. Expressions of interest directly to [training@arec.nz](mailto:training@arec.nz) if you have the pre-requisites.

# Wright Hill & Ruskin Road

Steve Jepson ZL2SJ

Those familiar with Wellington's geography will know how challenging it is to provide region-wide radio coverage. However, to members of the city's Amateur Radio clubs, this also creates a challenge and a great opportunity to experiment with different technologies and frequencies. Steve Jepson ZL2SJ shares some recent projects of the Wellington VHF group.

## Wright Hill



The Wright Hill site is situated to the west of the city and has an excellent outlook towards the city and across to the Hutt Valley. The site includes an AREC EE196 VHF dual-mode DMR and analogue repeater for Search & Rescue as well as being the home of the Wellington 9725 ZL-TRBO DMR repeater.

For sometime, there has been a deterioration of the Microwave Dish at Wright Hill - especially the mounting hardware. Just prior to Easter the original Ubiquiti Bullet M5 (5 GHz band) outdoor unit failed completely. Wright Hill receives its internet connection from our site on Colonial Knob.



It was now time to replace with a modern NanoStation, as seen in the middle section of the antenna pipe. This uses some clever software to adjust for the best performance over a variety of signal conditions. Ray ZL2RAY and Steve ZL2SJ identified the fault on the Saturday prior to Easter and John ZL4JY and Steve ZL2SJ returned on Sunday to remove the old hardware and dish and replaced them with the new Nano station. We are now back to performance even better than we had before on the old larger dish!

At left, you can see the old dish. On the right, you can just see the new Nano station near the boom of the bottom VHF folded dipole.



Above: The view from Wright Hill, across the city towards the Hutt Valley.

## Ruskin Road



Situated north of the city, towards Johnsonville, Ruskin Road has recently been made available to the Wellington VHF group. This site holds promise as a possible 5.8GHz linking site due to its central location.

Dave ZL2DSH , Ray ZL2RAY, Ian ZL2HUT, Steve ZL2SJ were tasked with identifying and testing existing coax feeders from pole top to the equipment hut .



*Right: Steve ZL2SJ and Dave ZL2DSH disconnect the feeder cable from the now unused microwave link from the previous user of the site.*

*On a later trip the dish will be removed and replaced with some VHF Group antennas.*

*Special thanks to Dave ZL2DSH for the use of the bucket truck, it makes antenna work so much easier and quicker! Plus the views are outstanding!*

*Below: View from the site, looking south over the city.*



## Health, Safety & Wellbeing

*David Wilkins ZL1MR*

Hi everyone.

The Covid-19 situation is settling down with the peak of infections seemingly now over in most parts of the country. It will be quite a while before the infection levels drop markedly and we end up with what is known as an endemic disease. In other words, we will be living with this and other variants of the Coronavirus basically forever. Government announcements continue to be made about the traffic lights and other settings so if anything, significant crops up another AREC HSW bulletin will be released.

### **Covid 19 is not the first or the last pandemic**

An interesting parallel to our current problem is the Asiatic or Eurasian 'flu' pandemic of 1889 to 1890 with recurrences in 1891 & 1892, the northern winter of 1893-4, and early 1895. So, what we have been going through is not that unusual when looked at on a larger time-scale. For more information see – [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1889%E2%80%931890\\_pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1889%E2%80%931890_pandemic).

It is interesting that it was described as possibly caused by an influenza strain (what we now call the flu). Later scholars think it may have been Coronavirus OC43 based on the symptomatic evidence being so similar to our current pandemic.

An interesting observation is that whilst the common cold is caused by any one of up to 200 or so viruses one of them is OC43. That would mean that the virus that caused the 1889 pandemic is still with us but we are so tolerant, or the virus has evolved to be so weak, that we just live with it and get on with life. You can read a bit more about the common cold here - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common\\_cold](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_cold) and OC43 here - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human\\_coronavirus\\_OC43](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_coronavirus_OC43).

Either way the Russian pandemic killed a lot of people worldwide (similar ratio to the CV-19 outbreak). Despite the outbreak being 130+ years ago, transport via rail and sea was surprisingly rapid and the virus was present across the whole northern hemisphere within 4 months.

### **Future pandemics – have we learned anything?**

I wonder why as a species we didn't really have a good plan when it came to the next pandemic, or did we? After all New Zealand has performed the best in the world in regard to our low death rate and high level of immunisation. As for now, pat yourself on the back for a job well done – so far.

### **Winter is coming**

And with winter comes the seasonal cold that I've already mentioned, plus the additional chance of getting influenza! Yikes – I think the world is trying to kill us or am I a bit slow and have only realised this far too late in life?

Best estimates are that around 500 New Zealanders die from influenza a year but lots of deaths are described by way of the comorbidity profile e.g., death listed as a heart attack or circulatory condition when the actual primary cause was influenza exacerbated by the comorbidity factor. An in-brief explanation can be found here - <https://www.otago.ac.nz/otagomagazine/issue45/inbrief/otago664450.html>.

So the lesson here is to get your seasonal flu jab. They are currently available at your local Doctor's clinic and some pharmacies. You will likely have to book an appointment with the practice nurse or the pharmacy so best not to wing it.

### **Avoiding colds and the flu**

Let's keep safe, avoid those pesky germs, and if you have a sniffle stay at home. If you have to go out be nice to those around you and wear a mask. Also don't forget to do the basics: maintain physical distance from others if you have a sniffle or they could have, wash your hands regularly and/or use alcohol hand wash if there is no water around, and avoid rubbing your eyes or touching your face if you are out and about.

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.