



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 most months (except January).



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Cover: AREC Administrator Annalise Mokalei-Smith created this fun Christmas graphic featuring the AREC National team!



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<https://arec.nz/arec-officers/>

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Hi all and Seasons Greetings!

Firstly, welcome to the December issue of the AREC Newsletter.

AREC Member Hub

Member Hub is how we are branding the AREC Friendly Manager membership system – this will be part of our suite of IT systems currently being implemented.

You will see a button to login towards the top right of the arec.nz page.

A reminder that we need all members to sign-up to the online system by 31 December 2022 please. Only those signed up to Member Hub will be issued with new ID cards.

If you have misplaced your link, you can go to arec.nz, click “Join AREC” and there is a “Join Now” button halfway down the page.

If you have any problems, let Annalise know – membership@arec.nz

Another reminder that Annalise needs updated photos for the new ID card run, can you please send these through.

And your last reminder to pay your NZART annual membership fee which is a requirement to be a member of AREC.

NZSAR Awards

Nominations close of the 31st of January 2023 for the next NZSAR awards. If you know of anyone you thinks deserves to be nominated, please get in contact with your Regional Manager.

Beautiful, wild, unpredictable: Be AdventureSmart in Aotearoa

This is the title of a new video from NZ Search and Rescue about keeping safe in the outdoors. It is a good watch and I recommend it for anyone who is new to the outdoors [Beautiful, wild, unpredictable: Be AdventureSmart in Aotearoa](#)

Major upgrade to Wellington maritime radio coverage

The latest NZSAR Link magazine includes an article on a collaboration between Wellington Coastguard and AREC to install a new VHF maritime repeater which significantly improves coverage – link here [Major upgrade to Wellington maritime radio coverage » NZSAR](#)

Online Training Courses Available

AREC members signed up to the Member Hub now have access to a growing number of AREC training courses online. These can be accessed by signing into the Member Hub and click on the Competency Star and then click on “Login to Online Learning”.

Future Funding Approved

I am pleased to announce approved Government funding for AREC covering the 2023 – 2025 financial years. The funding provides not only ongoing continued support but additional support for a small number of increased paid staff, an increase in volunteer expense reimbursement and CPI increases. This approval provides certainty of funding through to mid-2025 and enable the continued building of AREC capability including training and a volunteer recruitment campaign. Lookout for more on this in the New Year.

What a year it has been

Tip toeing around Covid-19 which delayed some activities we managed to complete the round of leaders training, implemented the financial system, membership system, online learning management system including the integration with the member hub, completed a number of training courses, completed the volunteer survey, secured future funding, completed branded indoor and outdoor banners, car magnetic signage, updated the volunteer strategy continued to support SAROPs and SAREXs and many other activities too numerous to record here.



**Members
Login**

Finally, I would like to wish all of you, and your families, the best of wishes for the festive season. We have achieved a lot this year across AREC – and we could not have done it without you.

Until next month, stay safe.

Don, ZL2TYR

Chief Executive Officer, AREC



2022 SAREX SEASON

Towards the end of each year, Police run their District Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX). These annual events include participation from across the SAR sector.

Southern Districts SAREX

By Lindsey Ross ZL4KS

The 2022 Southern District SAREX was held on Saturday 12th November at the Borland lodge, in the shadow of the power pylons carrying electricity from the Manapouri power station and on the doorstep of the Fiordland National Park.



Southland AREC supported the exercise scenario where a school pupil was separated from their group in dense bush.

Sadly, the new portable repeater was not available as it had not been fully commissioned, but the old faithful unit served us admirably as they have done so for the last 30 years. The operation was a success with the missing person being located safe and well by the Teams and AREC providing reliable radio communications back to base.



Above: Brendon ZL4BDS using SAR Track to record radio messages and keep tabs on the location of the teams.



Above: Daniel Erickson ZL4DE captivating his audience with tuition on the WanderSearch equipment.
Above Right: Constable Reuben Boniface and Southland LSAR Chairman Stephen Parry install the portable repeater



Previous page: Sergeant Ian Martin, Glyn ZL4GN and Brendon ZL4BMC chew the fat by the Southland AREC Communications Van

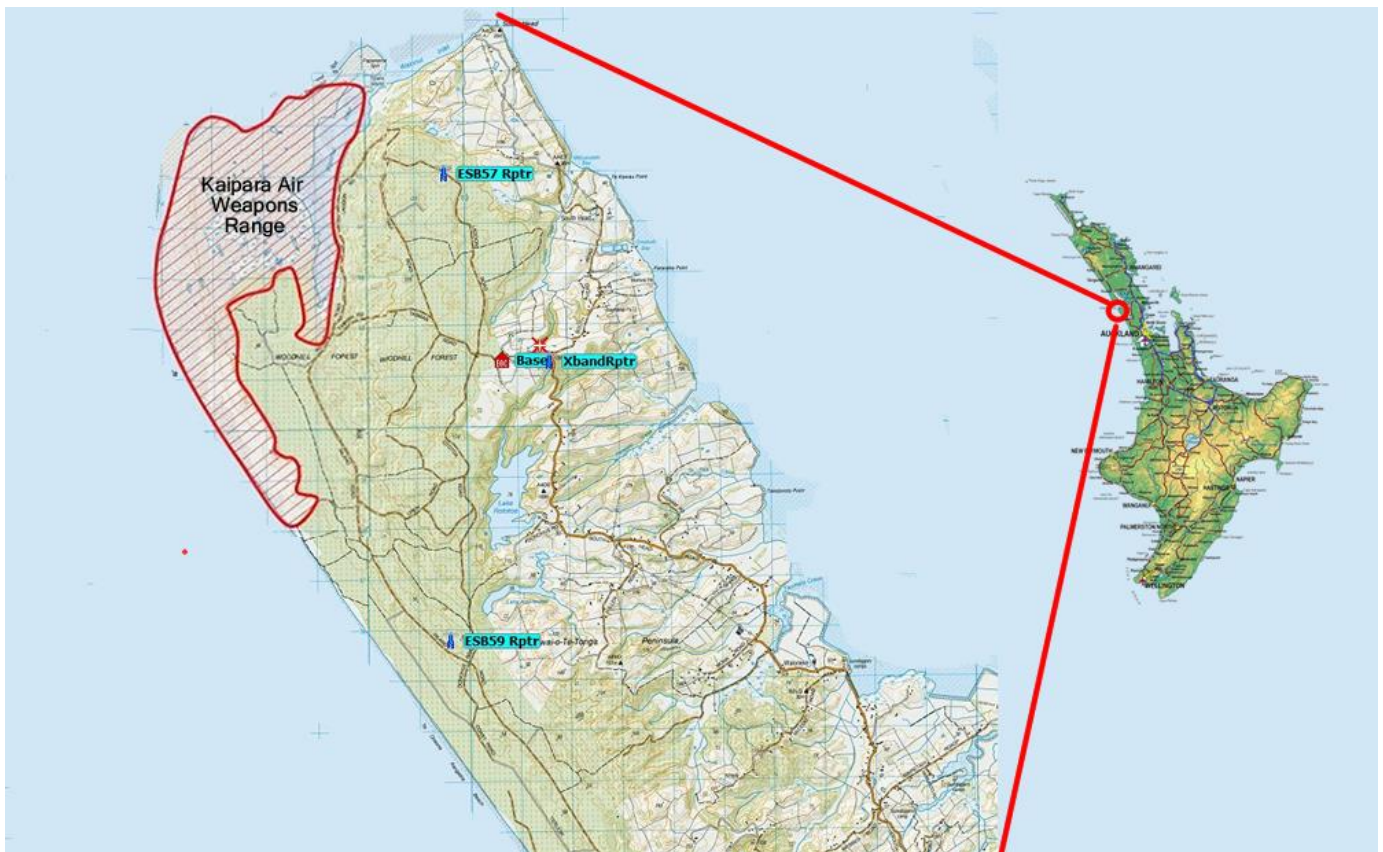
AREC CEO Don Robertson comments "SAREX are very important event in the SAR calendar. For AREC, it provides a great opportunity to get involved and work with our partners as well as using it as an opportunity to train and learn how equipment works in a real-world situation. Simply put; when communications aren't raised as a problem in the debrief, we know we are doing our job.

I want to thank everyone who was involved in the many SAREX events that happened over the last few months, your efforts are very much appreciated.

Auckland SAREX

By Andy Brill ZL1COP

Auckland District AREC members joined Police SAR squad, LandSAR, and Police Specialist Search Group drone operators for a NZ Police SAREX held in the Woodhill Forest next to the NZ Defence force Kaipara Air Weapons Range about 70 kms North West of Auckland.



The scenario for the search was that two hunters had gone into the forest by vehicle. One had fallen and broken an ankle and the other had attempted to find his way out to seek help but had become disorientated and was unable to locate his partner or vehicle.

The exercise commenced at midday Thursday 10 November with a call to the Police communications centre by the partner of the missing men. Police SAR squad completed the initial enquiries and activated the IMT. LandSAR and AREC were activated at 1:35 pm via the new LandSAR ConnectRocket text message/email app.

"Auckland Search and Rescue

SAREX SAREX SAREX Male missing in Woodhill Forest. Meet 104 Trig Rd, South Head as per your D4H start time. Comms required tonight."

Soren ZL1SKL, Terry ZL1HOG and Andy ZL1COP responded and assisted LandSAR and Police to set up the base and comms.

The potential search area was about 15 km North to South and 5 km East to West, and consisted of a

mixture of mature pine forest, clear logged areas, and extensive coastal sand dunes. The search base was set up in the barracks of the NZDF Weapons Range facilities.

An area of high ground running North to South separates the search base from the coastal side of the search area. The entire area is criss-crossed with logging roads, and on weekdays these were in use by commercial logging trucks. Consequently, any vehicles operating in the forest were required to carry portable radios on the VHF logging channel as well as SAR and Police comms to avoid traffic conflicts.

Initial tests showed that VHF Comms from base into the Northern area was difficult, and a portable repeater was located at the highest accessible point to the North of base. This provided good comms at the northern end of the peninsular.

To provide coverage along the coast and to the South a second repeater was located about 5kms South of the base on the seaward side of the ridge. This repeater was accessed from the base via a UHF crossband repeater located on a high point 1km to the East. The combined repeaters provided good coverage of the entire area and no comms problems were reported by field teams.

AREC members manned the base throughout the three-day search and used both manual logging and SARTrack to keep the incident management teams updated. AREC members involved at Kaipara were Soren ZL1SKL, Terry ZL1HOG, Andy ZL1COP, Malcom ZL1MIT, David ZL1MR and Sean ZL1LMT.



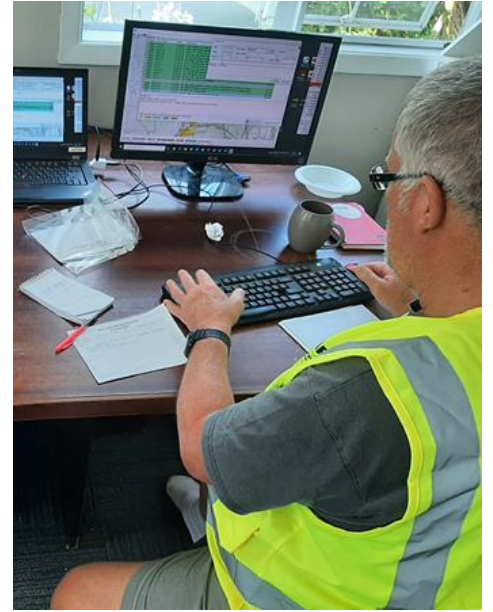
Seven LandSAR search teams were used in the operation together with drone operators from the police Specialist Search Group, LandSAR search dogs and transport and logistics teams.

Left: SAREX base with antenna poles: Left to right – WiFi access point, ESB57 VHF, UHF crossband link to ESB59 repeater. Noise from the power lines to the left prevented use of the 5Mhz HF channel back to the North Shore Group base.

Below: Soren ZL1SKL and Terry ZL1HOG working the teams and logging traffic.



By Saturday both of the 'missing hunters' had been found and a debrief on Saturday afternoon was followed by a barbeque.



Above Left: Incident Management Team members working at Base. The comms operators were through the wall in the next room.

Above Right: Malcolm ZL1MIT working SARTrack.

North Shore AREC - SAREX Exercise

By Andy Brill ZL1COP

North Shore AREC group took the opportunity to hold a communications exercise for newer members alongside the SAREX. On the Thursday evening the North Shore group were tasked with developing a communications plan to establish contact with the Kaipara SAREX base from the North Shore CDEM base in Sunnynook – distance of about 55kms, and to implement the plan on Saturday morning.

Once communications were established, they were to pass and log messages to and from the exercise.

After studying the equipment and resources available the team came up with a plan to use two Civil Defence ESB band repeaters at Glorit near Helensville, and Tamahanga North of Warkworth as primary and secondary VHF channels, and AREC HF frequency 5320 as a backup option.

The plan was put into practice on Saturday morning. Although HF was not useable due extreme noise levels from power lines immediately adjacent to the Kaipara SARBASE, a good comms link was maintained and copies of the SAR exercise traffic from the previous day was passed and logged successfully.

This exercise gave some of the less experienced members the chance to get hands on experience with planning and setting up and operating an operation. The planning session provided some excellent learnings around the importance of clearly identifying a leader, making sure everyone understands the mission, and going through a clear process to defining and considering all the factors that could affect the plan.

Participants in the North Shore exercise were:

- Alan ZL1TUQ
- Alastair ZL1NEO
- Albert ZL1LB
- Graham ZL1GMB
- Henry ZL1AAN
- Japie ZL1JJN
- John ZL1CD
- Rob ZL1EMR
- Vaughan ZL1VH

Taranaki SAREX

By Jill O'Donnell ZL2DBO

This year's Taranaki SAREX was held in the Taranaki Emergency Management Office Building in New Plymouth. The scenario was that a man and his son were overdue in the Egmont National Park.

The exercise started with a health and safety briefing by SAR Sergeant Andrew Wong Too. Following several modules held in gazebos outside, search teams were despatched.



Left: Bruce ZL3BN and Terry ZL2TNB with the comms module

Below: Radio operators Shaun ZL3SST, Dave ZL2TLF and Elton ZL3LT sharing the load!



The adult male was found later that evening, but the son was found with a previously unknown male the next morning.

A debrief followed the return of parties to base and all participants were happy with the weekend's activities.

AREC Awards & Recognition

AREC Regional Manager, South Lindsey Ross ZL4KS has been doing the rounds of his region and recognising members with service awards.



Above: Left to Right, Otago members Lindsay ZL4LDS 30+ years, Martin ZL4JH Medal Award, Stephen ZL4SLG 20+ years and Charlie ZL4CB 5+ years.



Above: North Otago members Neil ZL4SN Medal Award and 50 years, Denis ZL4DB Medal Award and 50 years, Tony ZL4AW 5 years, Gary ZL4TA 37 years, AREC Regional Manager South, Lindsey ZL4KS

Correction from Last Issue:

In our last issue, we listed the incorrect callsign and spelling for Neville in the Long Service Awards article. His correct details are as below:

ZL4OX – Neville Chcketts

Our apologies to Neville for this error.

Health, Safety & Wellbeing

David Wilkins ZL1MR

Hi Everyone,

I hope the year has treated you well, if not so good then next year must be better and something to look forward to.

Wellbeing

In previous newsletters I have mentioned how we need to look after ourselves. This is because our wellbeing allows us to volunteer and do good things for other people. It is very easy to sacrifice ourselves to the point that we can no longer function, lose interest in a topic, and need to move on. Also, occasionally life throws us a curveball that we were not expecting. This could be a health scare, a financial problem, or an issue related to what we do in AREC.

Most of the time we can easily deal with issues. But sometimes we need to face the fact that we cannot see a way forward. Often all we need to do is just talk to someone confidentially from outside our normal sphere of influence. They aren't distracted by the things that are blinding us to our own predicaments so can usually guide our thinking toward, positive, affirmative actions that will resolve or minimise our issues.

AREC has now signed a contract with an Australian-New Zealand company 'EAP Services' to provide free, professional and confidential advice and support to members: <https://www.eapservices.co.nz/>. Their services are now readily available to you via **0800 327 669** if you need some assistance when things are starting to drag you down.

How are going this week?

Wellbeing of members and family is a key consideration for AREC, if you're not doing well you need to be able to sort things out.

AREC can now provide free access to professional and confidential advice and support through EAP Services. You can contact them via 0800 327 669 or <https://www.eapservices.co.nz/request-an-appointment/> to request a confidential appointment.

Staff/contractors/volunteers will need to say they're from Amateur Radio Emergency Communications or AREC and will be asked for their name and phone number (these details remain confidential to EAP – not shared with AREC).

You can find further information about their services via the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) with the answers explained: <https://www.eapservices.co.nz/frequently-asked-questions/>. If you have a question that isn't answered, drop me an email at HSW@arec.nz and I will find an answer for you.

Activity levels

It looks like international travel is picking up again and people are moving around a lot more. This means more people heading into the outdoors and likely to need rescue or recovery. Life may get a bit busier early in 2023.

Also, it appears that our isolationist approach to keeping CV-19 under control has meant an up-tick in other transmissible diseases such as Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and Influenza (flu) as well as new, more transmissible variants of CV-19. Our case numbers are rising, and this is during the summer period!

I am still wearing an N-90 mask into supermarkets and other areas where people feel they have to go such as public transport, aeroplanes, and crowded shopping malls.

I know most people are just over the whole topic of respiratory disease so just be sensible this summer.

Christmas period

Now is the time to sit back relax and enjoy a break with family and friends we haven't seen in a while.

Take the time to re-charge your cream filled batteries and lubricate your engine with small amounts of alcohol. Just don't over-oil things.

I know we don't want to destroy our taugt-tanned and terrific looks. After all, too much cream coated cake, and trifle on Boxing Day for breakfast may damage our 6-packs (or as one wit said about her husband – his mono pack).

So, as we head into the new year, enjoy your time over summer, smell the roses, listen to the birds and the insects, and remember maybe a small bowl of trifle on Boxing Day will be okay.

As always if you have any incidents or issues to report, or ideas for improving AREC just drop me a line at HSW@arec.org.

Hopefully we will see each other sometime in 2023.

David Wilkins ZL1MR
AREC Health & Safety Advisor



AREC members have a duty of care so we must not place ourselves or others at risk in regard to Hazards. We must always plan what we are about to do.

If any change takes place regarding People, Equipment, Environment, or Process/Task (PEEP) then we need to:

STOP – THINK – PLAN – COMMUNICATE – ACT