

DEMENTIA WANDERER'S ACCOUNT FOR 9% OF LOST PEOPLE IN NZ

There are 40,746 people with dementia in New Zealand, with an estimated 12,333 new cases per year and that figure is predicted to grow to 74,821 by the year 2026.¹

There is an average of 714 land SAR incidents per year in which 732 people require emergency service organisations to mount search and rescue operations. The health and injury costs of these incidents is \$116 million per year, approx \$160,000 per person sought.²

People with Dementia/Alzheimer's account for approximately 9% of all missing subjects.³ This figure can reasonably be expected to increase as the population ages. In recent years, the high profile media coverage of fatal cases has further highlighted the incidence of wandering.

In addition to the financial costs, there are also human costs to wandering. These include fatality and trauma to the subject, emotional stress, cost and inconvenience to the caregivers and family, and demands on emergency services such as the Police, Ambulance and New Zealand Land Search and Rescue.

PROBLEM

The problem facing New Zealand is that it does not appear to have any nationally coordinated programme (unlike parts of the USA and Canada) that targets reducing incidences of wandering.

SARINZ POSITION

SARINZ is a specialist search and rescue training, research and development organisation. SARINZ personnel are actively involved in search and rescue and often assist or train first responders to more effectively respond to wandering. From this position, we consider that despite some successful local initiatives, wandering response procedures in New Zealand are varied and reactive. SARINZ is working with key agencies to develop an education programme combating these issues.

OPPORTUNITY

In response to an impromptu opportunity to engage with international Alzheimer's / Dementia / Search and Rescue specialist Robert Koester (who is in New Zealand between 1st to 6th August), the Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand Trust (SARINZ Trust) is hosting a book launch and cocktail reception on Tuesday 5th August.

¹ Economic Impact of Dementia in New Zealand 2008

² LandSAR sponsored report: *An Economic Assessment of the Voluntary Land Search and Rescue Sector in New Zealand*, November 2007

³ NZ Missing Person Behaviour statistics 2007

This is the international launch of Mr Koester's latest book for search and rescue practitioners – entitled "**Lost Person Behaviour – A Search and Rescue Guide on Where to Look – for Land, Air and Water**" and is a prelude to Mr Koester's 2009 New Zealand based research activities.

New Zealanders have been instrumental in developing the book. SARINZ personnel have provided subject matter expertise and data from New Zealand's SAR operations underpin the practical and theoretical nature of the research and book. This is as much a celebration of a book as recognising the international status afforded to New Zealand's search and rescue community. Even the cover is from New Zealand!

During the evening Mr Koester will outline the need for a research and development programme to better equip those responsible for caring and/or searching for Dementia-Alzheimer's wanderers. Items to be considered/covered during his presentation include:

- Using effective and efficient search methods by emergency services to maximise the probability of early recovery.
- Preventative training for home caregivers and rest home staff.

This event will bring together land, water and air search and rescue agencies, dementia agencies and SAR practitioners from throughout New Zealand and is proudly sponsored by the Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand Trust ([SARINZ Trust](#)).

ENDS

Attached is Robert Koester's media profile. Media are invited to attend the evening or meet with Mr Koester during his visit. For further information please contact David Shearer, General Manager, SARINZ. dave@sarinz.com, mobile: 027 20 48 161. DDI 03 359 7669 extn 2



BACKGROUND of SARINZ

The Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand (SARINZ) is an international centre of search and rescue (SAR) excellence. Its sole purpose is to support SAR in its efforts to save lives in back country, rural, urban, coastal or workplace environs.

The purposes of SARINZ are to further the education of the public of NZ in matters related to search and rescue and provide education, training and assessment for the purposes of developing and retaining an internationally credible, effective and efficient search capability and rescue capability throughout NZ.

The not-for-profit Trust and operating Company were established in 2003 to provide for the above purposes and undertake, promote and support research and development relating to SAR. The company is 100% owned by the Trust and serves as the vehicle to accomplish the Trusts' objectives. Since 2003, SARINZ has produced and delivered in excess of 350 courses to more than 5000 SAR practitioners in NZ, Antarctica and Australia.

SARINZ is New Zealand's only specialist search and rescue training, research and development organisation. For further information go to www.sarinz.com