

## SAR RESEARCH AIMS TO SAVE LIVES (AND MONEY)

There is an average of 714 land SAR incidents per year in which 732 people are searched for. The health and injury costs of these incidents is \$116 million per year, approx \$160,000 per person sought.<sup>1</sup> SAR operations are costly.

In addition to the obvious financial costs, there are also human costs. These include fatality and trauma to the lost person, emotional stress, cost and inconvenience to the caregivers and family, and demands on emergency services such as the Police, Ambulance and SAR agencies. As Transport Minister Annette King recently highlighted in her speech to the sector, more than 90% of the 10,000 people involved in rescue operations are volunteers.<sup>2</sup> And volunteers annually contribute a total of \$3 million or \$533 per individual to partake in SAR operations.<sup>3</sup>

In 2009, Robert J. Koester (widely regarded as the world's leading researcher of Lost Person Behaviour) is planning to be in New Zealand to undertake a variety of research projects. The Search and Rescue Institute New Zealand (SARINZ) - a specialist search and rescue training and development organisation - is facilitating this research.

The ultimate goal of the planned research is to benefit New Zealand by ensuring lost people are saved faster with less distress on the missing person and family thereby reducing the total human and financial cost to the community. Proposed research and development activities include:

### **Research**

- **Probability of Detection Experiments** – Conduct detection experiments in New Zealand's diverse topography in conjunction with New Zealand Land SAR volunteers, thereby producing correction factors and sweep width estimating tools that could be used world-wide. This research has both national and international implications.
- **Lost Person Behaviour** (the where of search and rescue)—Examine critical factors and cultural differences in lost person behaviour using the International Search & Rescue Incident Database (ISRID) and the most recent New Zealand data.

### **Development**

- **Training Programs and Training Aids** - Develop training programmes' and training aids related to the above topics with particular emphasis on lost person behaviour incorporating the development of Dementia/Alzheimer's wandering prevention and search training programme.

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<sup>1</sup> An Economic Assessment of the Voluntary Land Search and Rescue Sector in New Zealand, November 2007

<sup>2</sup> Minister of Transport Annette King, 2007 NZSAR Awards, April 2008

<sup>3</sup> LandSAR sponsored report: *An Economic Assessment of the Voluntary Land Search and Rescue Sector in New Zealand*, November 2007

- **Customised Search Research** - Opportunities include locating aircraft crash sites, Alzheimer's, Despondent's, Suicides and others.

## **Dissemination**

- The research findings will be presented at academic, governmental, SAR and SARINZ forums/courses in order to maximise the value of the research being undertaken and its findings.

In response to an impromptu opportunity to engage with Mr 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 5<sup>th</sup> August.

This event 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**”. As a prelude to the 2009 New Zealand research activities, Mr Koester will outline his 2009 research projects.

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!

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

ENDS

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Attached is Robert Koester's media profile. Media are invited to attend the evening or meet Mr Koester during his visit. For further information please contact David Shearer, General Manager SARINZ. [dave@sarinz.com](mailto: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 and research and development organisation. For further information go to [www.sarinz.com](http://www.sarinz.com)



*Helping others save lives*