

SLSNZ Flood & River Rescue Project Membership Update 2023

Surf Life Saving New Zealand Inc. (SLSNZ) is the national association representing 74 Surf Life Saving Clubs in New Zealand. The purpose of SLSNZ is: "To save lives by protecting communities through our people", and our vision is that "no one drowns on our coastline".

Over the years, this commitment to save lives and the growing acceptance from the community of our lifeguards' capability have seen them involved in saving lives in areas our founding members may have never foreseen. One such area in which SLSNZ and its members have become increasingly engaged is emergency response in fresh moving water, such as in rivers and floods.



Tararua SAR Squad undertaking RSE Evacuation from Pakowhai 14/2/2023



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Flood and River Search & Rescue Emergencies

Population growth and urban expansion have impacted SLSNZ SAR's response to this Moving Freshwater space. The effect has seen a three-fold impact on our SAR Squads.

1. With SLSNZ's stagnant growth in clubs, fewer lifeguards per capita exist. With the growing divide caused by the constant population growth, those lifeguards will be required more than ever to respond to this increased frequency of accidents around the Moving Freshwater. More Humans around Urban Waterways increases accidents.
2. Since 2014, SLSNZ SAR Squads have increasingly relied upon by the Police in SAR operations around water. Our transportable capability and high level of adaptability have seen our Squads become the "go-to agency" for low-land river searches and rescues. In the 2022-2023 Reporting period, our Squads have been deployed in over seven significant flood events. Over two hundred and fifty lifeguards have operated in these flood events, spending over two and a half thousand operational hours assisting the affected communities.
3. Severer weather events causing flash floods and widespread extensive area floodwater inundation have increased dramatically.



Napier Cyclone Gabriel Evacuations 14/02/2023

In the flood environment! SLSNZ is a victim of its success. The operational need for the country has exceeded the country and SLSNZ's ability to develop an appropriate infrastructure to support the demand. Our crews' skills and operational competence in flood deployments have set our SAR Squads up as the 'go-to guys' in flood rescue from boats.

At the forefront of these challenges is the necessity to keep our lifeguards safe while they put themselves forward to help those in need.

SLSNZ nationally has 250 Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRBs). It has a wealth of annually refreshed SAR IRB Crews; this refresher process covers Crew operations within the surf zone and covers emergency first aid to pre-hospital emergency care and emergency radio

communications. Yet the refresher process has no material for operating in the river or flood environment.

With the increased frequency and intensity of global warming-related flood emergencies, SLSNZ believes we need to prepare for future flood events that require a large-scale response with appropriately resourced and trained flood recovery Squads.

Simply instructing SLSNZ SAR Squads that they cannot respond won't work! It sets up the organisation to fail on many grounds:

1. Volunteers will always go to save a life before administrative rules to protect that life!
2. The loss of trust and relationship between the SAR Squad and SLSNZ would be massive because SLSNZ has placed them in an impossible position.
3. Reputational loss and trust between the SAR Squad and other rescue services in their community; if they were to say NO to saving a life in an area, they would have done so in the past.
4. SLSNZ is aware of a nationwide knowledge gap in the safe operation of SAR Squads within flood zones. However, the gap between international best practices is not too far to reach and certainly not insurmountable, and we can not ignore this!
5. Current practice has some rescue crews (not just Surf) operating with inappropriate clothing, such as Fire Uniforms, Wetsuits, and below-standard buoyancy PFD, if worn at all.
6. The widespread uncontrollable contamination in urban and rural flood environments allows the current practices to continue, so our people are at risk.
7. Past experiences from overseas can prevent us from making the same mistakes in the future. Adverse outcomes are scattered throughout history from flood events, and if we fail to respond to how our counterparts overseas have, we will only fall into the same traps they have.

NZSAR training Investment 2022-2023

SLSNZ requested NZSAR to recognise the need to include appropriate river/flood-related training in its NZSAR training budget. NZSAR responded by funding three River rescue Technician courses in 2023 and four flood boat crew courses. The challenges for Flood training mimic those for Low Land River Search and Rescue. The training and specialist equipment are all the same in the training space.

SLSNZ Received investment for

Investment in regions to ensure the SAR Squads are appropriately trained for Flood and River Search and Rescue response safely.

Flood Training Courses.

There are two strands of training. Three courses make up the flood training curriculum. This year's investment was for the "Swift Water Rescue Technicians course", only a prerequisite for all in-water flood/river rescue boat crew operations from boats.

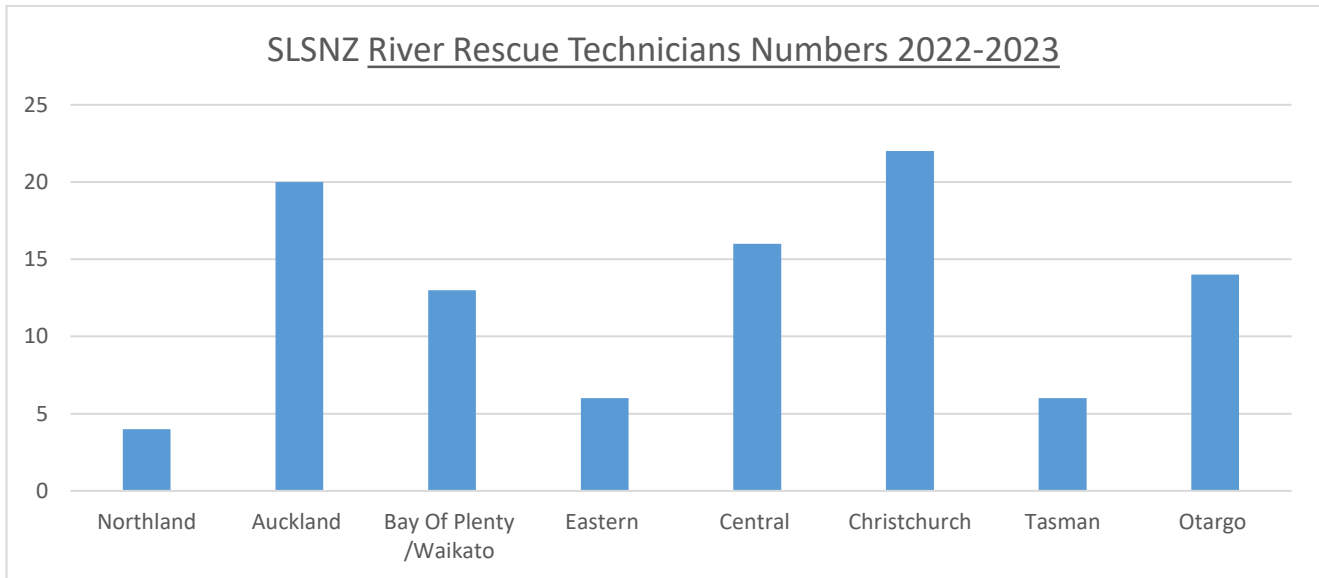
As a direct effect of the funding from NZSAR, three Swift Water Rescue Technician courses were held throughout the country.

River Rescue Technicians Courses June 2022 to June 30 2023

The Training geographical spread included club members from the Far North, Auckland, Coromandel, Bay Of Plenty, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Manawatu, Wellington, Bulla, Nelson West Coast Christchurch and Dunedin.

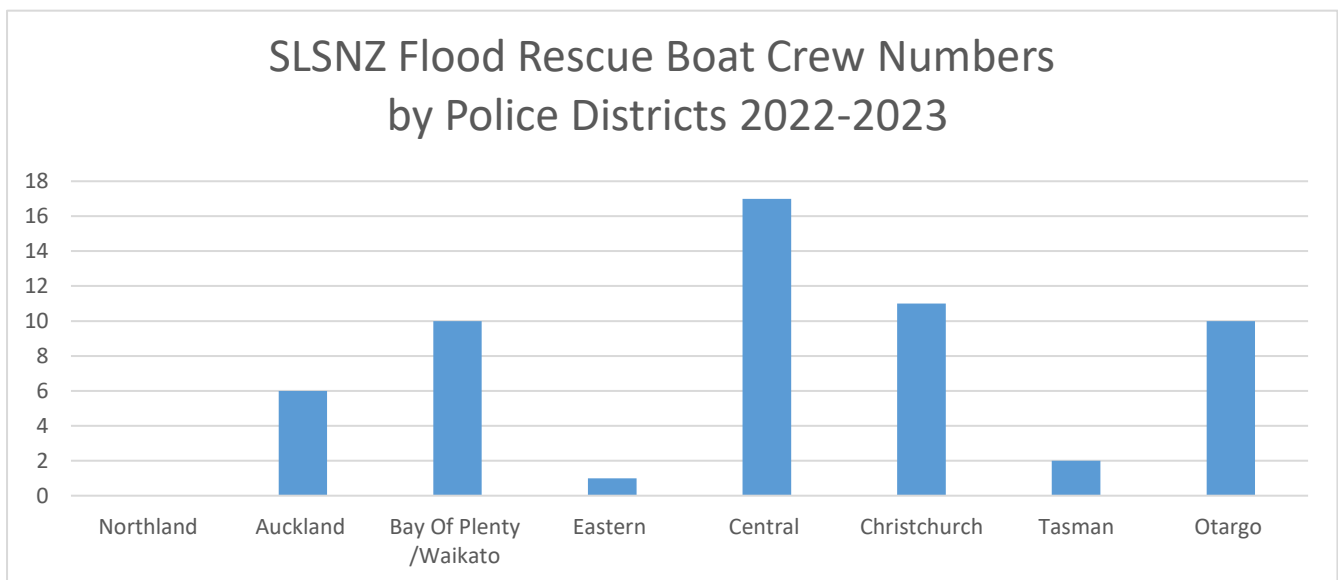
This spread has begun to develop a wide distribution of specialists who will now progress onto the Flood/River Rescue Boat training planned for the 2022-2023 season.

Appendix Table 1 River Rescue Technicians Courses June 2022 to June 30 2023



Flood/River Rescue Boat Crew Courses June 2022 to June 30 2023

The Flood Boat Crew Training runs over three days, consistent with overseas best practices and model from the DEFRA Flood rescue concept of operations, a three-hour online theory session covering three units (Hazards in the Flood and River environments, Hydrology and Flood Boat Operations in Swift Water). Two days are spent on the water with the crews, starting with close-quarter operation skills and followed by swift water operations on a grade three river.



National Flood Boat Instructor Training

The training program for the Instructors follows the instructor training of similar high-level learning within SLSNZ. This involves a mixture of candidate instruction of theory components and practical opportunities, training session planning and peer review. The trainee instructors participate in three assessments where they are observed teaching in all areas of the course throughout these three opportunities.

Instructor Trainees

Total 9



Flood Equipment Update

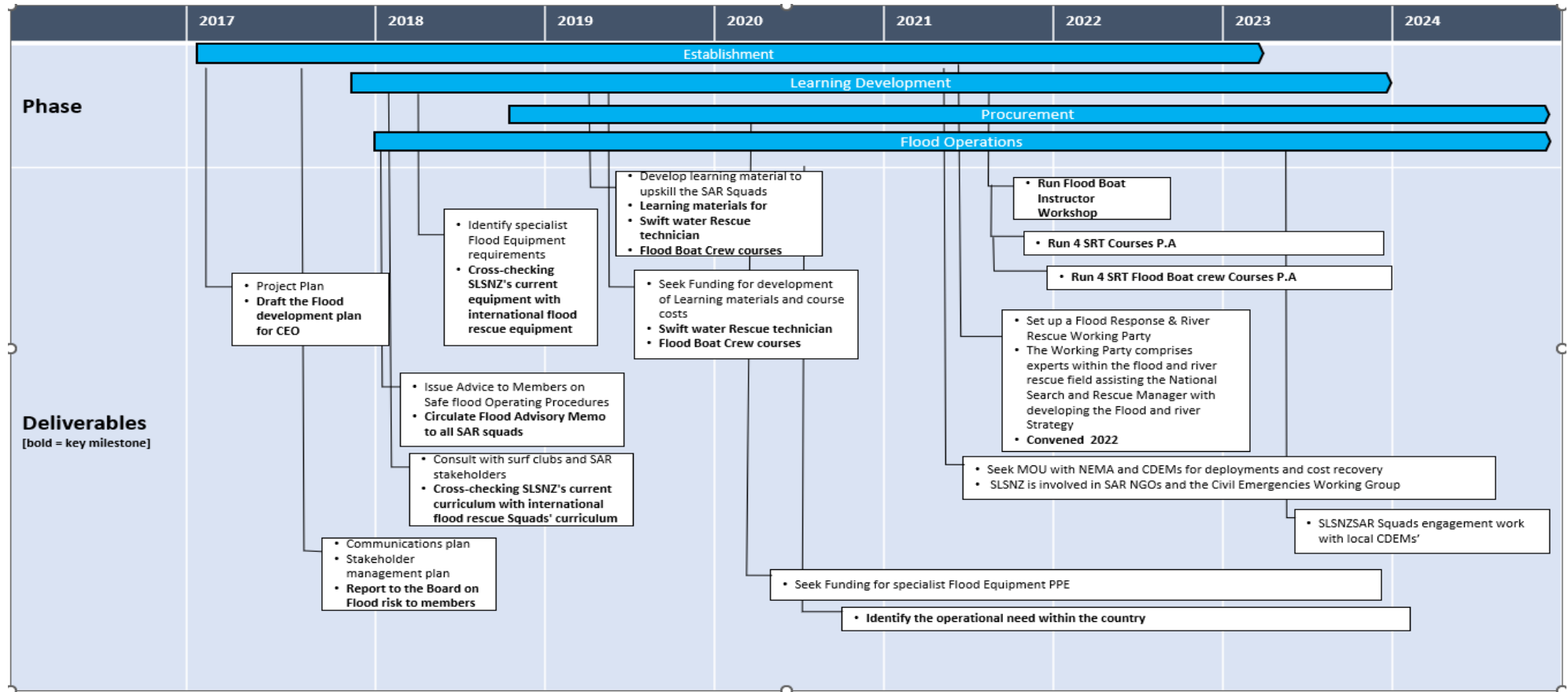
The flood equipment space is becoming more dynamic as better products become available. Fortunately, as the planet experiences more flood events, the emergency sector has been able to share its experiences and equipment manufacturers are now coming on board with more fit-for-purpose equipment aimed to meet the contamination challenges as well as the comfort and durability required for flood responders who need to use the equipment for long periods.

We are constantly speaking to suppliers and our international flood companions. The Flood Working Group has been trialling several solutions from the calibrations, and this feedback is discussed in the flood context within the group. I urge all Squads to keep abreast of the latest trends coming from overseas by keeping me in the loop with any purchases or plans to purchase equipment to ensure your team can get the best bang for their buck.

SLSNZ is continuing to seek funding streams for flood equipment. In the current competitive environment for funds, this work is hard going and will take some time, primarily because the required equipment sits outside the traditional Search and Rescue space. Therefore, we are working with NZSAR to readjust the parameters to include the equipment.



Moving Forward with an SLSNZ Flood Strategy



Appendix

Table 1 River Rescue Technicians Courses June 2022 to June 30 2023

Clubs / SAR Squads/Area	Total	Date
Auckland, Gisborne and the Bay Of Plenty	Total 16	2022
Wellington, Taranaki and Hawkes Bay	Total 17	2022
Tasman, West Coast,	Total 9	2023
Christchurch and Otago	Total 13	2023
Otago Southland	Total 11	2023
Female	Total 15	
Male	Total 51	
National Grand Total		66

Table 2 Flood Rescue Boat Crew Courses June 2022 to June 30 2023

Clubs / SAR Squads/Area	Total	Date
Northern Region and Eastern Region		July 16 2023
Kariaotahi Surf Lifesaving Club	Total 3	
Waihi Beach Surf Lifesaving Club	Total 3	
Mount Maunganui Lifeguard Service	Total 7	
Omanu Beach Surf Lifesaving Club	Total 6	
Papamoa Surf Lifesaving Club	Total 2	
Pukihina Surf Lifesaving Club	Total 2	
YSAR/Rescue 3 not driver	Total 1	
Instructors Training	Total 2	
Female Total 9	Total 9	
Male Total 16	Total 16	
Course Total	25	
Central Region		May 5 2023
Taranaki SAR Squad	Total 3	
Tararua SAR Squad	Total 4	
Capital Coast SAR Squad	Total 5	
Hawkes Bay SAR Squad	Total 1	
Instructors Training	Total 2	
Female	Total 1	
Male	Total 10	
Course Total	13	

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Tasman Christchurch Clubs		May 25 2023
Spencer Park SLSC	Total 4	
Buller Surf Rescue	Total 3	
Kotuku SAR	Total 1	
Waimarie SLSC	Total 2	
Taylors Mistake	Total 1	
North Beach	Total 1	
Instructors Training	Total 2	
Female	Total 3	
Male Total 11	Total 11	
Course Total	14	
Otago Christchurch Clubs		June 24 2023
Otago SAR	Total 7	
Tararua SAR	Total 1	
Sumner SLSC	Total 1	
Instructors Training	Total 2	
Female	Total 2	
Male	Total 9	
Course Total	11	
National Grand Total		63

Yours sincerely

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