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# Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue Inc.

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“Working to provide the best rescue capability possible in the aquatic environment in and around Otago”

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## Organisation Profile

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## Who is Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue?

Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue Inc is a body that oversees and coordinates all marine search and rescue operations on behalf of the New Zealand Police.

Dunedin MSAR is a not for profit organisation that is made up of interested, trained and capable volunteer individuals and representatives from many organisations, all with suitable abilities and knowledge of the marine emergency environment.

**Our legal Status** – Dunedin MSAR was incorporated in 1995, is registered with Inland Revenue (No. 55 517 053) as a Charitable Trust (not registered for GST), and Charities Commission No. CC39178.

In October 2014, Dunedin Marine Search and Rescues' prestigious Water Rescue Squad will turn 20 years old. This squad is the longest running air sea rescue squad in New Zealand and is highly recognised for the standards they have set and all the work they do to save lives, each year.

## What does Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue do?

The purpose of Dunedin MSAR is to work as volunteers with the NZ Police to advise, coordinate and conduct inshore search and rescue operations as directed.

In the 12 months to July 2013, Dunedin MSAR were called to assist those reported to be in distress 51 times, assisting 54 people at 28 different locations and all within a radius of 150 nautical miles from Dunedin.

Dunedin MSAR undertakes training across all areas to ensure members are suitably qualified for the role and able to work from a common theme. A number of Dunedin MSAR members also work with the Coastguard Boating Education organisation (CBES) to provide boating education to the general public.

### Our aims are:

- To save lives when people are in trouble in the aquatic environment within Otago (lakes, sea and rivers)
- To assist the New Zealand Police with specialist assistance and guidance in the marine environment
- To assist with control and coordination of marine search and rescue incidents

Our procedures and practices are directed and controlled through the New Zealand Police and the Police Act 2008 to "Maintain Public Safety" and in some cases when called upon, respond under the Maritime Transport Act 1994, for major search and rescue operations.



## Evaluation

We evaluate ourselves very critically through post incident reports, debriefing and discussion of the incident and/or training process. Maritime and aviation requirements where applicable are also maintained. Where technology has shown to be beneficial to a safer and faster response or care to those in distress every effort is employed to implement it. These include alert pagers, portable radios, cell phone, texting, the use of already trained specialists such as Surf Life Saving and our air sea rescue unit. Dunedin MSAR's executive committee also meets bi-monthly to review and evaluate all admin and financial aspects.

### Our strengths:

- Working under the control of the Police in assisting people in distress
- A healthy relationship with Helicopters Otago and the Otago Rescue Trust
- Our key members include more than one current foundation members (1971) while a number of our other management team having over 30 year's active experience. Our team also includes long serving Police SAR members.
- A very healthy relationship between these people has developed through working together over hundreds of emergency incidents

### Our weakness is also part of our strengths:

- Long serving and ageing members and the gap to our new members
- The decline in people willing to fully partake in the organisation and function of voluntary search and rescue
- The philosophy of why one should willingly risk personal life, put aside recreation time including the inconvenient response periods created by those in distress plus the use of private equipment.
- All our members are search and rescue active and leave little provision for administration plus funding tasks such as sausage sizzles thus putting a heavy strain on the limited volunteer force.
- The apathy of the public and government towards the costs associated with rescuing those in distress and the volunteer time involved.
- The lack of financial offerings towards appreciation or just the value one demonstrates of their life after being rescued.

## Do we have competition to provide this service?

Dunedin Police consider Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue as their first response provider. Our air sea rescue team together with the Otago Rescue Helicopter can be argued to be the only fully trained civilian volunteer air sea rescue unit internationally. The water temp at an average of only 15 deg Celsius dictates a person in the water usually requires a quick response to survive. Our capability of more than 150 nautical miles from Dunedin in just over 1 hour with two rescue swimmers and paramedics in a flying ambulance exceeds that of other SAR providers. Situations and locations do dictate other types and methods of response which Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue have the capacity to recommend to Police and directly provide or coordinate as appropriate.



## **Our current financial position**

Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue have two repositories of funds, each with tagged purposes.

Being a non subscription funded organisation, together with little discretionary donation income, leaves little room to financially maneuver.

Account one is an investment account of \$19,205.79. These are tagged funds arising from traceable donations etc that have been given with guide lines. This fund is tagged as an "insurance" policy. The nature of our existence towards cover for equipment loss, burglary or personal Insurance has continually proven to be worthless and not financially possible to maintain. This fund means in the event of a major loss or personal difficulty; we may regain an operational level or give some comfort for our members.

Account two is a cheque and interest bearing facility. These funds are tagged to allow us to:

1. Maintain an administration and essential funding for 12 months should no income is forthcoming.
2. Cover any unforeseen cost over runs from planned purchases
3. Give the ability to refund out of pocket expenses immediately to volunteers until official funding is received. (This process can take some months)

Our members are all volunteers from nautical organisations who already contribute monetary and personal input to their own group, they cannot also be expected to put themselves at risk and fund a volunteer unit whose job is primarily to assist those in distress.

As only one or two of those rescued make donations to the organisation, Dunedin MSAR is almost entirely dependent on funding opportunities.

The Government, Police and Rescue Coordination Center New Zealand do not contribute to administration or training costs nor do they charge those rescued because of the fear people in distress will be reluctant to call for assistance thus making their distress situation worse and more hazardous for the volunteer rescuers.



## Our project

Every year, Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue requires approximately \$20,000 to ensure we can continue to provide life saving services in the Otago marine environment.

All money raised goes towards;

- Volunteer training – both in house and from external training suppliers including Helicopter Underwater Escape Training, Pre Hospital Emergency Care first aid, winch training, Coordinated Incident Management training
- Specialised rescue and personal protective equipment including rescue harnesses, wet suits, personal locator beacons, safety helmets, swim fins, radio communications etc.
- Volunteer out of pocket expenses which include fuel vouchers for use of personal vehicles, food expenses
- Administration costs including post box fee, printing, stationary, and computer fees, accounting/auditor fees etc.

Dunedin MSAR is very fortunate to have the support from Helicopters Otago and the Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust who donate a significant amount of money and time towards crew resource management training, winching and helicopter safety training plus helicopter flight time for in-air training.

Most people don't know who Dunedin MSAR is until after they require our services. Much of the community expects that when they are in trouble, someone will come to their aid. When a boat runs into difficulty on the Taieri Bar or a kayaker goes missing in the Clutha River, are there trained rescuers' there to help...?

## Where does Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue operate?

Dunedin MSAR will respond to any marine incident throughout the lower half of the South Island. The most frequent areas include:

- Otago Harbour
- Coastal Otago
- Taieri River
- Clutha River
- Otago lakes to the Haast coast
- And as far south as Stewart Island and the treacherous Foveaux Strait



## **The people of Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue**

As like most not for profit organisations, Dunedin MSAR relies solely on the efforts of volunteers, particularly specialists from:

- Surf Life Saving
- Sailing and yacht clubs
- Fishing clubs
- Local commercial fishermen
- Police volunteers
- Amateur Radio (AREC)
- Other marine communication teams
- Search and rescue interested individuals

## **The history of Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue**

In September 1971, the Dunedin Police formed Dunedin Marine Search and Rescue to advise and assist them on all matters of inshore marine search and rescue. The organisation has always been forward thinking and in the late 1970s, recognised the need for a faster and efficient rescue system due to low water temperatures, changeable sea and weather conditions. The helicopter, with its versatility, was the obvious choice and helicopter scoop nets were purchased. Shortly after, alert pagers and portable radios were added.

Then in 1994, noting the increase in swimming, surfing and boating at remote locations, Dunedin MSAR formed their highly trained volunteer air sea rescue response unit, the Water Rescue Squad, which works alongside the Otago Rescue Helicopter. This dedicated group is highly trained and qualified in pre-hospital emergency care, surf rescue, swift water rescue and helicopter search skills. As this activity is based from helicopters, all squad members must be trained and equipped to meet Civil Aviation requirements, the ACC act, Crew Resource Management (CRM) and other operational standards including advanced swimming skills and volunteer codes.

HeliOtago sponsor helicopter training flight time but all other training and equipment, must be supplied by Dunedin MSAR. Changing regulations and expectations has massively increased our infrastructure and operating expenses, but has certainly contributed to many lives saved that otherwise may have been lost.



## Letters of endorsement

Also contained in this profile are letters of endorsement from various organisations which Dunedin MSAR work closely with:

- Dunedin Police – Inspector Alistair Dickie
- NZ SAR Secretariat Manager – Duncan Ferner
- Surf Life Saving New Zealand Southern Regional Manager – Stu Bryce
- Heli Otago Manager – Graeme Gale

## Our referees for external judgment

Mr. Doug Third  
Otago Territory Manager  
St. John Ambulance

Mr. Graeme Gale  
Manager and Chief Pilot  
Helicopters Otago & Otago Rescue Helicopter Trust  
(03) 489 7322

Inspector Alistair Dickie  
Operations Manager, Southern District  
NZ Police

## For more details please contact:

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Secretary & Marine SAR Adviser to NZ Police  
Dunedin MSAR  
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Mr. Donald Peat  
Chairman & SAR on call Duty Officer  
Dunedin MSAR & NZ Police SAR  
021 191 5086

Miss Allison Wallace  
Treasurer and Funding Coordinator  
Dunedin MSAR  
027 384 8671

Thank you in advance for your support. We look forward to working with you to provide the best rescue capability possible in the aquatic environment in and around Otago.

