

The recent years of Dr Sargisson's CV include quality psychological work that serves the public interest of which her contributions to the vital work of de-mining in countries that have experienced conflicts particular example. Undisclosed landmines and other lethal remnants of war still threaten peoples' physical safety in some 60 states. Between 2003 to 2006 Dr Sargisson was employed as a research manager and behaviour analyst at GICHD (Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining) with the primary task of assessing factors that impact on the reliability of detection of mines by the dogs trained to perform this task. Her task required field work in challenging circumstances in affected countries - Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, and Tanzania. During this time Dr Sargisson was involved in developing a system for analysing quality assurance for the detection system she worked with in Angola. The system she developed is now the international standard for assessing the reliability of those detection systems. Dr Sargisson further contributed to demining, while in Tanzania to assist a PhD student, by completing a study on how weather affected the success achieved using Giant African Pouched rats to detect landmines.

Dr Sargisson has undertaken many evaluations and studies for bodies concerned with education such as Playcentre Associations across Rotorua and Western Bay of Plenty and Te Aranui Youth Trust. For the latter she evaluated an anti-drink drive expo targeting students. For Special Education she managed a research project covering 15 primary schools in the Tauranga region. She has also contributed to understanding pupils' problems that arise in their last years at primary school (Years 5 and 6). In 2014, on a Ministry of Education: Special Education grant, she trialled the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire as a means of identifying pupils at risk of disengagement and (2016-7), on a Ministry of Education grant, she evaluated a programme for at-risk Maori students - Te Mana Tikitiki – at Welcome Bay school.

Dr Sargisson has also supported organisations that seek to serve wider community interests as instanced by her studies of people who volunteered to assist with cleaning up the oil-spill from MV Rena. She also analysed and publicly reported on a large survey of community needs in the Bay of Plenty for the Acorn Foundation. Across this diverse body of work Dr Sargisson shows a commitment to utilise psychological skills and knowledge in the service of the public interest making her a deserving recipient of the Society's 2020 Public Interest Award.