

APRIL 2015: KARIAOTAHİ SLSC



# RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

NATIONAL WINNER

*In it for life*

**Date: Monday April 6, 2015**

**Location: Kariaotahi Beach south of the Waikato River**

**Lifeguards involved: Guy Hornblow, Dean Lawrence, Tara Coe, Aaron Coe, Shannon Benterman, Mike Lawrence, James Burton, Julie Burton, Rick Schreuder, Ben Coers, Lee Coers, Jim Coe and Cameron McKenzie**

Just after 8pm on April 6, Kariaotahi Call Out Squad supervisor Guy Hornblow heard an 'all stations broadcast' on the local Coastguard radio channel, advising of an overdue vessel in the Waikato River bar area. He made contact with SurfCom to offer the assistance of the club's Call Out Squad.

Half an hour later, the squad was activated and advised to assemble at the club to undertake a land based search of the shoreline from the clubhouse to the Waikato River mouth. Within minutes of being paged, the lifeguards began arriving at the club and started preparing their gear for the night's land-based activities. Dean Lawrence assumed the role of Patrol Captain and fully briefed the crew of the first rescue vehicle that was to be dispatched.

Tara Coe, Aaron Coe, Shannon Benterman and Guy Hornblow departed in the first rescue vehicle. As they proceeded down the coast, a number of items of interest were located. As they were collected, a GPS position was recorded and radioed back to Mike Lawrence at the club who was plotting the locations along with the search team's current location.

On arrival at the river mouth, a large wooden whitebait stand was found floating in the shallows on the edge of the river. With two Coastguard rescue vessels searching on the water and an incoming tide that would submerge the object, lifeguards made the decision to remove the hazard by attaching the vehicle's winch to the object and winching it onto the bank of the river.

Meanwhile, the second rescue vehicle was fully briefed at the club and dispatched, crewed by James Burton, Julie Burton and Rick Schreuder, to meet up with the first vehicle. Both crews worked together to undertake a search along the bank of the river, then northwards along the beach towards the surf club. A detailed search was undertaken and a number of items were spotted in the shallows under spotlight along with footprints spotted along the beach. A thorough situation report was provided back to the club every 10 minutes.

Back at the club, Ben Coers, Lee Coers, Jim Coe and Cameron McKenzie readied the IRBs for night marine operations should they be required to assist the police and rescue helicopters that were searching in the surf line and further out to sea. A risk assessment had been completed and it was deemed safe to launch an IRB if a confirmed target was located.

At 1am, the lifeguards were stood down after searching 10.4km of coastline. All recovered items were brought back to the club, photographed and sent for assessment. Although the result was unsuccessful, the lifeguards used great skill in a challenging environment while working as part of a multiagency response.