



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

Date/time: 19:30 Monday 31 December 2012
Location: Sunset Beach, Port Waikato
Lifeguards involved: Joanne Hobson, Shane Edwards, Mark Edwards and Harry Hobson

In it for life

As off duty volunteer Lifeguards were preparing their evening meals on New Year's Eve, an incident was beginning to take place north of the rescue tower within the largest rip tide on the beach.

A 41 year-old father and his two young children had entered the calmer waters of the rip tide at Sunset beach with their body boards. They were then swept out to the western extremes of the rip.

Their screams for help were heard by a member of the public on the beach who ran to the surf club to alert the members. Harry Hobson, a 14 year-old Surf Lifeguard proceeded to the rescue area with a rescue tube and fins. On the way to the incident, he sliced his foot open on the severely eroded cliff face of the beach. Despite this, he carried on.

A second Lifeguard, Mark Edwards, headed out with a rescue board, rescue tube and fins. He paddled out and took hold of the two young girls. The oldest girl was passed to Harry and was clipped into the rescue tube. The second girl was kept safe on the rescue board. Meanwhile, Shane Edwards and Joanne Hobson were setting up the IRB. Shane launched into the rip tide and drove solo out through one meter dumping surf to pick up the father. He was then taken onto the boat and assessed. The boat moved on to take the girls

from the board and the tube with the three of them being returned to shore.

The rescue took 15 minutes from the time of the call out to the rescue being completed. It is believed that the patients had been in the water for around an hour prior to them getting into trouble. By way of explanation from the father, he had instructed his daughters to go out further into the rip tide for what he believed to be better surf. His lack of surf knowledge resulted in the three of them needing to be rescued.

Once the three patients were brought back to the beach, Joanne assessed the girls and they were treated for moderate hypothermia in the club's first aid room where they continued to be monitored. The father reluctantly accompanied the Lifeguards to the first aid facilities and went into shock. He was treated by Joanne and Shane. He started to hyperventilate, was agitated and was very distraught when he began to realise the seriousness of the rescue that had just taken place. He was also hypothermic at 33.3 degrees. Lifeguards administered oxygen therapy and applied thermal blankets to bring his body temperature back up. Due to his condition the Lifeguards decided to call St Johns ambulance. The ambulance arrived at 8.45pm when his temperature had increased slightly but it

was still well below the average. He was monitored for another 30 minutes before he was allowed to leave with his family.

The rescue required advanced technical skills, particularly in the area of the solo IRB drive in a heavy dumping shore break and with the post incident patient assessment and treatment. Had the Lifeguards not been there, the outcome could have been very different.



RECOGNISING
OUTSTANDING
RESCUES