

DECEMBER 2013: PALMERSTON NORTH SLSC



CENTRAL WINNER



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

In it for life

Date/time: Saturday 14 December 2013 at 4.00pm
Location: Himatangi Beach
Lifeguards involved: Alex Dickson, Elizabeth Baty, Margot Mackay, Linda Beazley, Lisa Lu, Mitchell Langtry, Hugh Dickson and Bo Lin

The day started out with a bit of wind and rough water on December 14 which turned out to be a busy day for lifeguards at Himatangi Beach.

The conditions slowly deteriorated throughout the afternoon and as low tide approached, the beach became more and more dangerous with an increasing number of strong currents, rips and holes developing.

At around 2.00pm, a sailor with a small craft entered the water, got into difficulty and required assistance. Having had issues with boarding, he struggled out and drifted down the back of the flags.

Unfortunately, he misinterpreted the increasingly messy conditions. Having ended up sideways to the waves, he rolled his vessel and became separated from it.

At this point, lifeguard Mitchell Langtry entered the water to assist the man in the water back to shore. Fellow lifeguards Bo Lin and Margot Mackay secured the boat. The man then returned to shore and left with his boat with no medical treatment.

Later that afternoon around 4.00pm, about an hour after low tide, lifeguards spotted some hands in the air. About 30 metres from shore and 20 metres from a sand bar, a group of children were moving out over their heads.

As distressed parents began to call for help, two lifeguards (Alex Dickson and Elizabeth Baty) entered the water with

rescue tubes to secure the group of children.

Lifeguard Margot Mackay, who was taking a break in the surf, also swam from the bar towards the swimmers in difficulty. No more than 30 seconds passed between the hand going up and the patients being secured.

A total of four children were brought back to the beach. The eldest of the boys (16) was exhausted from holding the youngest (12) out of the water. He was carried from the water and then first aid officer Linda Beazley administered oxygen.

He was responsive and alert but had trouble breathing. He was also vomiting on-and-off as a result of the water he had swallowed. The younger of the boys, once back on the beach, initially appeared to be OK, but after a few minutes he started to struggle with his breathing. He became increasingly uncomfortable going into what might be described as respiratory distress. Oxygen was also administered.

The rest of the group was examined and returned to their parents. Emergency services were notified the moment the condition of the patients had been established.

With the wind picking up and the weather conditions deteriorating, the decision was made to get the two boys receiving attention off the beach and transported back to the clubhouse to wait for assistance from the Himatangi volunteer fire service,

the first responders and the ambulance.

The younger of the boys was still struggling with his breathing. Linda Beazley along with personnel from the volunteer fire service did a great job looking after the patient until the ambulance arrived.

Both boys were taken to hospital where they spent a night under observation.

Because of the number of lifeguards attending to the two boys, the flags were pulled down and the beach closed for swimming.

The Patrol Captain remained calm throughout doing an excellent job co-ordinating the rescue, the emergency services, shifting the boys from the beach to the clubhouse, while still looking after swimmers in the water before closing the beach.



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