



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

Date/time: Wednesday 22 January 2014 at 5.00pm
Location: Orewa Estuary
Lifeguards involved: Nick Tomkins, Travis Salahub, Jamie Burnett, Mark McCarthy, James Campbell (Omaha SLSC) and Pierre Lopez (Mt Maunganui SLSC)

Just after 5pm on January 22, as lifeguard James Campbell was on observation duties in the tower, he spotted four people through his binoculars that looked to be in distress at the southern end of Orewa Beach.

After speaking to Patrol Captain Nick Tomkins on the radio, James left the club house and travelled towards them on the quad bike with the intention of swimming out to offer them assistance, if needed.

Travis Salahub went to keep watch from the club house in case support was needed, due to the number of patients involved and the location of the incident.

Through the binoculars, Travis could see the four swimmers a good distance from shore and, after a quick conversation with Nick, they enlisted the help of off-duty lifeguard Pierre Lopez to assist in beach and incident management and to launch the IRB.

When James arrived on scene by the estuary, he could see a male patient waving frantically. He waded out to him and, although he was in emotional distress, he was able to make his way out of the water.

James could see the second and third patients, so he swam out to assist them, but he couldn't see the fourth person that he had initially seen from the club. When he got to the nearest person, she informed him that she couldn't swim and she grabbed the rescue tube. James continued swimming out to sea to the next patient

who was unable to speak due to exhaustion. Travis and Nick then arrived on scene in the IRB and, on approaching James, were informed the fourth swimmer was somewhere further out to sea. They located her and she was floating face down - lifeless.

Travis exited the IRB, rolled the patient over and secured her airway. She appeared to have no signs of breathing, was grey in colour and was completely unconscious. Once she was pulled from the water into the IRB, the lifeguards headed straight back to the beach to treat her.

Pierre, who had been observing from the club, recognised the seriousness of the situation. He collected a radio and made his way down to the beach where he found Mark McCarthy and together, they drove by truck to meet the IRB with an oxygen kit.

Emergency services were then activated through the radio network.

The young girl was carried from the IRB and assessed. Whilst awaiting the setup of the equipment, they cleared and maintained her airway and she began to show signs of breathing. She was then placed on oxygen and monitored.

As Pierre, Travis and Nick took care of the unconscious girl, Mark re-launched the IRB and drove it solo to go and pick up James and the two patients he had secured with his rescue tube while attempting to get them out of the current.

Just after 5.30pm, the first ambulance arrived on scene. All of the patients were transported back

to the club and the girl who was pulled in by the IRB was quickly assessed and taken to Starship Hospital as a Status 2. She was conscious and breathing and was responsive to voice. She remained in hospital overnight on a ventilator.

When the second ambulance arrived, the other three patients were assessed by an Advanced Paramedic and taken to hospital for observation. All of these patients were Status 4.

Without the swift intervention of the lifeguards and their management of the patients, one or more lives could have easily been lost.

The Status 2 patient and her mother were extremely grateful to the lifeguards for being there that day.

