

FEBRUARY 2014: TITAHI BAY SLSC



CENTRAL WINNER



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

In it for life

Date/time: Saturday 22 February 2014 at 6.00pm
Location: Titahi Bay
Lifeguards involved: Wil McDowell, Nick Boyd, Jono Boyd, Dean Ellis, Jordan Te Paa, Danny McDowell, Peter Gubb, Angus Hermansson, Ken MacIver, Nick Mulcahy

Just before 6pm on February 22, the Titahi Bay Open Men's Boat Crew was in the early stages of a training session when an unfortunate incident occurred.

Crewmen Nick Boyd, Jono Boyd, Jordan Te Paa, Dean Ellis and sweep Wil McDowell were situated around halfway between Titahi Bay SLSC and the southern end of the beach when they were part-way into their set and heading straight out to sea.

At the same time, a kite surfer was surfing 50 metres off shore from north to south, parallel to the beach. He initially appeared to attempt to cut in front of the surf boat as it was heading out to sea. However, when he was in front of the boat, around 20 metres away, it appeared he wasn't going to make it and he appeared to try and turn back towards the north.

At the same time, Wil called for his crew to stop rowing in an effort to enable the kite surfer to pass in front of their boat. However, when the kite surfer attempted to turn, he lost control and fell off his board.

He was subsequently blown towards the surf boat by strong winds and made contact with the right hand side and front of the boat. This was witnessed by bystander and club member Angus Hermansson from his house directly across from the incident location. He headed

straight down to the beach to assist.

Upon impact, the kite surfer went under the water and when he resurfaced, he said his legs were broken. Wil and Jordan immediately dived into the water and carried him back to shore.

Nick and Dean took the surf boat safely to land and retrieved the kite surfer's gear that had been unclipped, to remove any potential hazard from the water. At the same time, Danny McDowell who was walking along the beach, retrieved the First Response bag from Titahi Bay SLSC to assist.

Nick used Angus' cell phone to call the emergency services and Ken MacIver, a trained paramedic who was surfing nearby at the time, arrived at the scene and took control of incident management. He used scissors from the First Response bag to cut the wetsuit off the man's legs, which revealed serious leg injuries.

Oxygen was set up, but not used, as the patient was conscious, breathing freely and helping to provide further information on his injuries as well as contact details for his partner.

Peter Gubb, who had been out surfing, retrieved a pillow and additional blankets. The kite surfer was immobilised and towels and blankets were used to stabilise his legs in a comfortable position.

Upon talking with the kite surfer, it

was established that he was a local resident. Angus called the kite surfer's partner and a member of the public, Willy McMahon, went to the kite surfer's residence to bring her to the scene where she was comforted by lifeguards and members of the public.

Everyone involved in the incident continued to reassure the kite surfer while they waited for the ambulance which arrived around 20 minutes later. Danny met the ambulance at the southern end of the beach and directed it towards the scene.

Ambulance staff took over incident management and administered pain relief to the patient. Lifeguards assisted with the movement of the kite surfer as he was transferred into the ambulance and taken off to hospital, with his partner.

Patrol Captain Nick Mulcahy held a debriefing with all those involved and counselling was offered.

The incident was an unfortunate accident but the surf boat crew responded efficiently and effectively, showing a high level of professionalism in very difficult circumstances. The victim sustained serious leg injuries, but damages and risk of further complications were minimised by the efficient response.