

WINTER 2014: MURIWAI LS



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

NATIONAL WINNER

In it for life

Date: Monday 29 September 2014 at 1:30-4:00pm

Location: Muriwai

Lifeguards involved: Peter Baltus, Lincoln Baltus, Tane Moore, Mark Goodheuw, Tai Kahn

The week started off as any other for Tai Kahn in the Surf Life Saving Northern Region office until it was interrupted by the incident alarm from the Operations Room. Tai responded and it was immediately clear that the incident would require a primary response from Surf Life Saving in order to prevent the loss of life.

A member of the public had called Police stating that he was at the Muriwai Gannet Colony and could hear someone yelling for help. He couldn't see anyone; only a surfboard being tossed around in the surging seas below. Tai instructed the Duty Officer to activate the Muriwai Callout Squad and Police tasked the 'Eagle' helicopter. The rescue helicopter was also tasked and a lifeguard was requested on board, so Tai promptly joined the crew.

Meanwhile, Muriwai lifeguards Peter Baltus, Lincoln Baltus, Tane Moore and Mark Goodheuw responded to the callout. Tane and Mark readied and launched an IRB while Peter and Lincoln ran around the rocks to the edge of 'Flat Rock.' Lincoln took up a vantage point and assumed command of the rescue operation.

Although the lifeguards had reached the location, they couldn't see the surfer as the conditions were too large and rough to safely take the IRB in to search. The decision was made to send Peter into the water with a rescue tube to look for the patient.

Peter jumped off from Flat Rock into the churning water and started making his way towards the larger cave at the base of the cliff. As he swam, Peter passed the smaller caves and found the teenage surfer clinging to a boulder. As Tai was flying out in the rescue helicopter, Peter was battling the waves, currents and rocks trying to reach the surfer, all the while reassuring the patient that help was there.

The rescue helicopter hovered above, assessing, and Tai saw Peter get bowled by a large set of waves and washed across the rocks. It was clear Tai was needed in the water so the helicopter communicated with the IRB crew, dropping him into deeper water to be collected by the IRB. Once in the water, Tai swam towards the patient, under direction from Lincoln who was on Flat Rock, and located the patient battling waves towards the back of the cave.

The first attempt to get him on to the rock face failed and just as Tai was about to explain to the patient that he would need to jump towards him, a large set of waves rolled through and the patient jumped just before he was washed off. He was spat out of the cave, around 20 metres away.

Tai quickly reached him and secured him in a rescue tube, swimming him towards the rocks where Peter was waiting. Once out of the water, they assessed the patient and then communicated the next move with the IRB crew. With challenging conditions, there was only enough space to undertake single pickups. Tai jumped back into the water with the patient and the IRB quickly drove in to pick up the patient.

Getting swept back out to sea, Tai climbed onto the Maori Bay side of Sugar Loaf. The IRB came back to collect him and he was returned to the beach before the IRB returned to pick up Peter. Back on land, the patient was assessed by the medic and then flown to Auckland Hospital. Within hours, Tai was back at his desk to continue his day.