

JANUARY 2015: TARANAKI CALLOUT SQUAD



SURF LIFE SAVING  
NEW ZEALAND



# RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

NATIONAL WINNER

*In it for life*

**Date: January 19, 2015**

**Location: Back Beach/New Plymouth**

**Lifeguards involved: Adam Fraser (rescue swimmer), Brad McCormack (IRB driver), Myken Hurley (comms) and Nick Arnold (IRB crew)**

Head Regional Lifeguard Scott Busing received a call at Fitzroy at 5.30pm from an East End junior lifeguard that her friends were stranded on Seagull Rock due to a quick change in weather conditions after visiting the lagoon. Six patients were facing large swells reaching 10 feet with six foot breaking waves wrapping around the rock. They could only be seen from the top of Paritutu Rock.

It was clear to Scott that this would require the immediate response of the Taranaki Rescue Squad so he informed the junior lifeguard to call the police which would initiate the squad's response. Scott then called Adam Fraser and informed him of the situation. Police Search and Rescue (SAR) Sergeant Wayne Rollands called Brad McCormack via the Surf Rescue callout phone, activating the squad's deployment.

Scott put an IRB on stand-by at Fitzroy with himself and Todd Velvin as back up if required. Brad called Adam and Myken Hurley to respond to the Rescue Shed ("Red Shed") at Port Taranaki. Scott then informed Regional Lifeguard Supervisor Nick Arnold of the incident and he proceeded to Back Beach to provide assistance.

Adam and Brad tasked an IRB out of the Red Shed, launching from Port Taranaki, heading towards the scene, with Myken driving via road to the base of Paritutu Rock, to join Police and co-ordinate scene and rescue response. Adam and Brad arrived on scene 12 minutes after police tasking, having negotiated large swells. The IRB circled the area to assess the scene and create a rescue plan. Given the challenging conditions, it was decided that a rescue swimmer should be deployed into the rough water as close as possible to the rocks, as it was unsafe for the IRB to get too close.

Upon reaching the patients, Adam assessed them for injuries and checked their wellbeing; they were all uninjured but scared and starting to get cold. Adam reassured the patients they would get to safety and briefed them around how the rescue plan would be executed.

The crew decided to swim one patient at a time off the front side of Seagull Rock, into Shark Alley between sets, and tow them to clear water where the awaiting IRB would carry out single pickups. Once two patients were safely in the IRB, they would be returned to shore for further assessment by Myken. During the rescue operation, the conditions were assessed to ensure that it was safe for Adam, as the rescue swimmer, to jump in to the water and so that Brad could maneuver the IRB in the large swells to conduct the pickups.

The same procedure was carried out, against deteriorating conditions and fading light, until all six patients were safely rescued. Just before 6.30pm, all patients and crew were safely on the shore of Back Beach and the patients were undergoing assessments by Myken and the police.

Had the patients tried to return to shore unaided, it is highly likely the outcome could have been fatal.