

JANUARY 2016: TAIRUA SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW ZEALAND



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

EASTERN WINNER

In it for life

Date: 6 January 2016

Location: Tairua Beach

Lifeguards involved: Matt Kerr, Laura Stephens, Gareth Lynch

On January 6, lifeguards at Tairua were alerted to three people in difficulty at the Northern end of the beach, approximately one kilometre from the surf club.

Lifeguards assessed the situation through binoculars from the tower and saw the three swimmers fighting in a rip, trying to return to shore. At this point, they were 40 metres off shore in two metre surf that was extremely unsafe.

Two lifeguards launched the IRB and proceeded to the Northern end of the beach to find five people in the water. Two members of the public had entered the water to offer assistance.

The lifeguards assessed the situation and spotted the patient that was in most difficulty; a 16 year-old male was struggling to stay afloat would have likely gone under the water within another 20 seconds.

Lifeguards picked him up first and decided to return him to shore immediately given his condition. As they made their way back, they drove past a second patient that was also caught in the rip.

As they were so close, they picked up and continued promptly to shore to assist the first patient who was semi-conscious but had swallowed a lot of water.

As the boat returned to the shore, the IRB driver grabbed his fins (which he had taken in the boat) and a rescue tube and swam out to assist the other patients. He performed a tube rescue on another patient and instructed the remaining swimmers to take the safest way back to shore.

Meanwhile, the IRB crew assessed the 16 year-old patient who was only responsive to pain. Further assistance was called for and another lifeguard arrived on scene with necessary medical supplies.

Upon further assessment, the lifeguards called for an ambulance due to risk of secondary drowning. The patient had vomited up salt water and they administered oxygen and continued to monitor his vital signs until the ambulance arrived.

He was transported to hospital via ambulance and the other two patients were assessed and left the beach in a stable condition.

If it wasn't for the lifeguards who responded quickly and called for backup, the outcome would have been far worse and potentially had a much different outcome.