

JANUARY 2016: EVENT LIFEGUARDS – CAPITAL CLASSIC



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW ZEALAND

NATIONAL WINNER



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

In it for life

Date: 31 January 2016

Location: Freyberg Beach, Wellington

Lifeguards involved: Event Lifeguards Louise Brett, Anna McDonnell, Ben Teusse, Abby Palmer, Ben Flynn, Jack Malin, Elizabeth Bunckenburg and Brent Harvey

On January 31, 20 lifeguards on paddleboards and in IRBs were providing event safety for the Capital Classic Ocean Swim in Wellington.

A 72 year-old male competitor was completing the 3.3km swim and was approximately 30 metres from exiting the water at the finishing point when lifeguards Louise Brett and Elizabeth Bunckenburg witnessed him face down in the water. They immediately paddled over to him and got him onto the front of a rescue board and signalled to the closest IRB for assistance. He was unresponsive and not breathing.

The Maranui IRB (Anna McDonnell and Ben Teusse) arrived on scene to help retrieve the patient. Crewman coordinator Ben Teusse jumped into the water to help move him from the board to the IRB. A number of other competitors had stopped to assist and some of them were holding the IRB which made it difficult to manoeuvre at times. However, the pick-up was executed quickly and effectively. Once in the boat, Louise gave the patient two rescue breaths and began compressions. The IRB proceeded to the emergency rendezvous point on Freyberg Beach.

Meanwhile, Ben Flynn was coordinating the on-water resources, ensuring that there were sufficient lifeguarding resources to cover the rest of the swim.

Fellow water safety coordinator Brent Harvey was coordinating with St John and clearing the beach for the incoming IRB. Lifeguards removed the patient from the IRB as soon as it the shore and he was carried approximately five meters up the beach. As this was the finishing area, there were around 1,000 members of public on the beach.

Brent commenced compressions and Worser Bay lifeguard Jack Malin set up the bag mask with assistance from St John who also set up the defibrillator. Lyall Bay lifeguard Abby Palmer arrived onshore to offer assistance; she is a qualified nurse and assisted with getting a line into the patient and monitoring his condition. Brent was then relieved from compressions by St John and he retrieved oxygen and blankets (for privacy) from the ambulance.

The patient started breathing on his own and slowly regained consciousness. He expelled a significant amount of water and was able to talk to the paramedics and lifeguards. He continued to be monitored and oxygen administered.

St John handed over to Wellington Free Ambulance and the patient was taken to Wellington Hospital where he recovered.

Numerous members of the public, including lifeguards from other clubs, approached lifeguards throughout the remainder of the event to congratulate them on their response efforts.

Ben and Brent were proud to work with such a professional group of lifeguards, many who were younger, less experienced guards. They agreed that the way in which the lifeguards represented SLSNZ and their clubs embodied Surf Life Savings core values which were humbling to witness.

It is unlikely that the patient would have survived if it wasn't for the lifeguards' quick actions and CPR experience.