

**APRIL 2016: MURIWAI VLS**



NATIONAL WINNER



# RESCUE OF THE MONTH

## RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

*In it for life*

**Date: April 16, 2016**

**Location: Muriwai Beach**

**Lifeguards involved: Danny Tenheuver and Lisa McCallum**

On Saturday April 16, as several hundred people were enjoying Muriwai Beach, a group of surfers were dragged out in a rip.

Many swimmers were in the inshore surf zone and a number of experienced surfers were catching rides along the beach but a group of experienced surfers weren't so lucky. They were trying to catch waves about 100m north of the flagged patrol area where the surf was 1.5 to 2m high, powerful and crashing.

A rip that had troubled the beach all summer was beginning to work, and the novice surfers were dragged in to it and quickly taken further out to sea. Despite attempting to paddle out of the rip, the group lacked the skills and strength, and ended up in a large surf zone. One girl quickly became distressed and was unable to stay on her board. She was being overwhelmed by the waves; was panicking and swallowing large amounts of water.

The situation was observed by lifeguards near the flags and in the tower. Vice Patrol Captain Danny Tenheuver and a rookie lifeguard responded in an IRB, using the rip to negotiate the surf, to quickly get to the patient who was in an exhausted and distressed state.

Once back at the beach, Danny (a professional first aid instructor) assessed the patient as being Status 3 and needing constant monitoring, so she was moved to the first aid room.

Meanwhile, on the beach, the heavy dumping surf had claimed two more victims. A male surfer suffered a heavy blow to his head from his own board and was assisted from the water and placed under lifeguard care with suspected concussion. Shortly after, a female surfer received a very serious laceration to her face requiring extensive first aid.

After 90 minutes, the first patient was declared well enough to leave the beach, accompanied by friends, for a doctor's assessment. The male concussion patient and the female with the facial laceration were also both taken by friends for further medical treatment.

It's highly likely that the surfer would have either drowned or come close to if it wasn't for the lifeguards being on duty that day- and they weren't supposed to be. The patrol season officially ended at Easter but with summer showing little sign of abating, above-average water temperatures and strong visitor numbers at Muriwai Beach, lifeguards decided to extend their patrols season by an additional three weeks; finishing on Sunday April 17. That decision ensured the three patients received the prompt emergency medical care they required.

The lifeguards demonstrated a well-coordinated approach to managing the three successive incidents that day with skeleton crew. It's highly likely the rescued surfer would have drowned if it wasn't for the lifeguards patrolling that day.