

MARCH 2017: FAR NORTH SURF RESCUE



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW ZEALAND



RESCUE OF THE MONTH

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING RESCUES

NATIONAL WINNER

In it for life

Date: March 9, 2017

Time: 6pm

Location: Tapotupotu Bay

Lifeguards involved: Thom Anderson (Club Captain) and Tony Walker (Vice Club Captain)

At around 6pm on March 9, lifeguards at Ahipara Surf Rescue were alerted to two divers trapped on rocks under the cliffs, west of Tapotupotu.

The men had been stranded for more than five hours, wearing only lightweight wetsuits and they were exhausted from their attempts to get back to the beach.

Dangerous conditions had prevented the Northland Rescue Helicopter, Police, Search and Rescue volunteers and Coastguard from getting to them.

Within five minutes, lifeguards Anthony Walker, Tony Walker, Thom Anderson and Kate Clarke had responded to the request to get an Inflatable Rescue Boat to the scene and were on their way from Ahipara to Tapotupotu Bay, east of Cape Reinga, around 125km away.

Once on scene, driver Thom and crewman Anthony launched the IRB in fading light, three metre swells and poor visibility but they quickly located the divers.

It was too dangerous to get the IRB close to the rocks so they faced a 100m swim out to the stranded pair.

Anthony swam to the rocks first, through pummelling waves and strong currents, to get to the men.

He secured a rescue tube around the youngest and swam him out to the IRB.

He stayed with the patient while Thom then swam out to the second man.

They got both of the men safely back to the beach before 8.30pm, just as darkness was closing in.

If it wasn't for Anthony and Thom's heroic actions, there could have possibly been two fatalities that night.