



3rd - RESCUE OF THE MONTH

Recognising Outstanding Rescues

JANUARY: Ocean Beach Kiwi SLSC



DATE: 6 January, 2019

LOCATION: Ocean Beach, Hawkes Bay

SURF LIFEGUARDS: Mitch Jackson, Chris Mellors, Thomas Kay, Jonty Ebbett-Watt, Ben Doggett, Zethan Bennett, Adam Akuhaka, Lars Benson, Will Henderson, Rosie Bates

On 6 January, Ocean Beach was packed with beachgoers, making it a busy day for the surf lifeguards on patrol at the popular Hawkes Bay beach. With hundreds of people enjoying the 1.8-2.0 metre surf, surf lifeguards had to be vigilant on keeping a close watch on them.

That's when they noticed two swimmers had drifted south outside of the large flagged area, where about 250 people were swimming at the time in front of an additional 800 people on the beach.

The two swimmers were trying but struggling to make their way back to shore there was a large surf and a deep hole had formed along the entire length of the beach. The two swimmers then raised their hands. The tower guards had been watching them and already had two surf lifeguards ready at the water's edge.

Jonty and Thomas were immediately sent out with tubes to assist them and upon reaching them, they found the swimmers were exhausted and clipped them in to their tubes. At this point three other swimmers had also drifted into the same area and had also come into difficulty in the large 2m surf and upon seeing the guards also raised their hands. The lifeguards reassured the three swimmers that an IRB was on its way and to stay calm.

An IRB was dispatched and picked up the two patients in tubes and returned them to the shore.

The two lifeguards with tubes remained with the three swimmers and provided flotation until the IRB returned and collected the remaining swimmers and returned them all to the shore.

While this mass rescue took place, the surf was still quite large and congested, so the remaining six surf lifeguards had to be vigilant and remain watching the flagged area to ensure no one else got into difficulty.

Ultimately the swimmers all got back to shore, needed no medical assistance and were left in grateful and stable condition. Although, due to the fatigue of the swimmers, and their position in the deep hole mixed with an incoming tide, there is no doubt that the five rescued people would have been in serious trouble or at risk of drowning without the intervention of these lifeguards.

Undoubtedly, these surf lifeguards saved five lives that day while ensuring the safety of over 1,000 others at the same time.



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