



RESCUE OF THE MONTH



CLUB: Titahi Bay SLSC
**SURF LIFEGUARDS: J'Adoube Elkington
& Mac van den Heuval**

It was the end of Titahi Bay SLSC's annual Lifeguard Refresher and sea conditions were challenging, to say the least. A large swell was rolling in with a high spring tide starting to turn and a strong north-westerly onshore wind.

Surf Lifeguards J'Adoube Elkington and Mac van den Heuval were using an inflatable rescue boat (IRB) to collect swim buoys as they packed up for the day.

Suddenly, they spotted a member of the public running towards them from the north end of the beach, waving his arms and gesturing to the north.

They dropped the buoy and swiftly navigated the IRB to the north end of the beach, where they could see a group of people from the local fishing club waving and pointing towards a group of three fully-clothed adolescent girls struggling at the head of a permanent – and notorious – rip.

Elkington drove to the first two girls. As they pulled these two aboard, however, van den Heuval saw the third girl lose consciousness, slip beneath the water and drift rapidly away from the IRB.

Without any time to grab a rescue tube (which

would have meant taking his eyes off the submerged girl), van den Heuval immediately jumped from the IRB into the rip and swam to the third girl to secure her while Elkington pulled the other two into the IRB and navigated back to van den Heuval and the third girl.

Van den Heuval's rapid response was critical in this instance; it's likely that his decision to put himself at risk by entering a dangerous patch of water without a rescue tube made the difference between life and death for this patient. The rip was moving at the pace of a fast-running river and, with the girl already unresponsive and underwater, it's likely she was seconds away from disappearing.

With all three patients carefully positioned aboard the IRB, Elkington and van den Heuval transported them to the clubhouse. Several other Surf Lifeguards were on-hand to administer first aid to the girls while they waited for ambulance officers to arrive.

This rescue happened outside of patrol season. It was an extremely lucky coincidence that Surf Lifeguards were actively training at the time and that an IRB was in the water when the incident occurred. Without the alignment of these events, the outcome would likely have been tragic.

In it for life