



RESCUE OF THE MONTH



Club: Surf Lifesaving Kariaotahi

Location: Kariaotahi Beach

Date: Wednesday 4th May 2022

Lifeguards Involved: Bradley Walters, Taylor Harvey, Shannon Swann and Briar Lowe

On Wednesday 4th May 2022 at 3.35pm, members of the Surf Lifesaving Kariaotahi search and rescue (SAR) squad were advised that a 13-year-old girl was struggling in water at Kariaotahi Beach. Police were on scene and were going to provide additional details upon arrival.

SAR squad members reacted immediately and began heading to the beach. Surf Lifeguards Shannon Swann and Taylor Harvey arrived first, opened the club and began setting up an inflatable rescue boat (IRB). They were closely followed by Surf Lifeguard Bradley Walters who was liaising with Police on his way to the incident. He was advised that this was unfolding approximately 200m north of the Kariaotahi club.

Walters and Harvey departed from the club in all-terrain vehicle, towing an IRB, while Swann took responsibility for communications, assisted by Surf Lifeguard Briar Lowe. Walters and Harvey headed north along the beach and reached the scene, where they found family of the patient and members of the public gathering. Upon arriving, they were advised that there were now three people in trouble in the water as two bystanders had headed in to the water in an attempt to rescue the original patient.

The IRB was swiftly launched and they reached the first patient who was starting to go under the water. They pulled that person into the IRB, along with the second patient who was located nearby. The third patient was spotted out on a shallow bar with big waves so the decision was made to take the first two patients to shore and then come back for the third.

When heading back out, Walters and Harvey had to navigate through the waves to reach the third patient. That patient was brought into the IRB and returned to the beach.

At the beach, all three patients were assessed and in a stable condition. However, due to the amount of salt water swallowed, and their exhausted state, they were all advised to head to the local medical centre for assessment.

The time from receiving the original call-out page to having all three patients safely back on the shore was only 15 minutes. The ability of the Kariaotahi SAR squad to swiftly respond, execute their skills under pressure in challenging conditions, and make decisions quickly ensured three lives were saved from a dire situation.