



RESCUE OF THE MONTH



**REAL
GROOVY**



April 2008 Whangarei Heads Volunteer Surf Lifesaving Patrol

Lifeguards involved: *Teresa Hill, Jessica Robinson, Reuben Kake, Hazel Buchanan.*
Rookies: *Zac Whitsitt and John Michael Hicks*

Saturday 5th April was a cold and overcast day the swell conditions were 1-2 metres and building through the afternoon on an incoming tide. During the Patrol Captain's briefing the identified hazards currently present at the beach were discussed and operational processes were put in place to counter any incidents that may arise during the day's patrol. Public numbers both in and out of the water were unusually low for the day.

At approximately 2.46pm Reuben Kake who was on flag duty with Hazel Buchanan saw a surfer raise his arm in the rip running from the hole in the middle of the beach. This was some 50m north of the designated flagged area. Reuben immediately grabbed his tube and fins, sprinted to the rip and entered the water. Hazel, a recently qualified lifeguard followed as a back-up swimmer.

Three lifeguards who were swimming out the back of the flagged area saw Reuben and Hazel enter the water and responded with Teresa Hill (Deputy Patrol Captain) immediately returning to the beach to take over control of the flagged area. Rob Howes (Patrol Captain) and Jessica Robinson swam parallel to the beach towards the now shouting surfer.

Sue Howes (Patrol Support) was positioned on the clubhouse deck with good vision of both the flagged area and incident. She immediately tasked the two patrolling Rookies Zac Whitsitt and John Michael Hicks to assist with communications and the rescue vehicle.

The two tube swimmers Reuben and Hazel arrived at the surfer with Jessica and Rob and a quick assessment suggested that,

the surfer was going into shock. Hazel removed the surfer's leg rope and Reuben clipped him into his tube and with support from Jessica towed the surfer back into the beach.

Rob returned to the beach on the surfboard and was met by the two Rookies who asked what was needed; he told them to ask Teresa to prepare the Oxygen for the patient. Jessica assisted the patient to the rescue vehicle so that they were out of the wind, placed him in a comfortable position, covered with a thermal blanket and fitted the Oxygen mask. Meanwhile, Rookie John Michael had gone up to the clubhouse to collect a backup cylinder.

Reuben and Hazel returned to patrolling the flagged area and Teresa who now took on the role of scribe recording information. The patient was monitored on the beach until he was considered stable and then escorted to the clubhouse for a warm shower, final assessment and release to his friends.

Although not a dramatic rescue, the success of this rescue was threefold. The threats at the beach were discussed at the start of patrol briefing and therefore all patrolling members were primed and aware of the potential areas of risk. Secondly, every member of the patrol had designated 'buddies' and roles should an incident occur; this was inclusive of the Rookies who proved to be valuable assets. And thirdly, very little instruction was required as each individual dealt with their specified role in a proficient manner.

As Rookie John Michael Hicks said at the end of patrol whilst still buzzing after his involvement; "Rob talked about this happening today and we all did exactly what he said we should."