

BETWEEN THE FLAGS

January 2025



HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU AND WELCOME TO OUR FIRST BETWEEN THE FLAGS ISSUE OF 2025.

It has been a busy start to the new year, with some huge successes on our beaches; none of which would be possible without your generosity. Thank you for your ongoing, loyal support.

Last month some of New Zealand's top lifeguards honed their advanced lifesaving skills on the water and in the classroom at the National Lifeguard School intensive training event at Mt Maunganui.

For four days, the 19 lifeguards participated in advanced rock rescue training, specialised Inflatable Rescue Boat driving skills and the latest critical care first aid techniques. They took part in simulated search and rescue scenarios so they could put their

training and new skills into practice in a controlled environment.

Those skills were utilised immediately when one of the candidates, Lily Tongue from United North Piha, saved a life at the notorious Piha beach while she was on duty the day after returning home from the school. One of the instructors, Dan Short, who was off duty and on the beach relaxing, said he saw the rescue kick off and jumped into action to support the team. When he got into the patrol tower he saw the patient's head disappear under the water while the team were on their way.

"Lily and her team got there just in time and a person's life was saved. Had the team got to the patient any

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Had the team got to the patient any later there could have been a very different outcome

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later there could have been a very different outcome," said Dan. National Education Manager, Belinda Slement said that most of the lifeguards will be patrolling beaches in senior roles this summer and will undoubtedly contribute to saving and preserving life in their communities.

"We know one hundred percent that the skills and techniques the candidates are taught on this training school directly contribute to saving lives around New Zealand."

Choose a lifeguarded beach and swim between the flags.

We patrol 92 beaches during summer – from Ahipara to Oreti.

CALL 0800 33 55 66 TO DONATE TODAY



The team heading back to base after the dolphin was safely back in deep water. From left: Maaika Duncan, Jonny Hogben, Emily Sterk and Elisha Kemp walking. In the IRB, driver Paul Gager and crew Sophie Hoexum, as well as other helpful volunteers involved in the rescue.

OTAGO LIFESAVERS SWAPPED BEACH PATROL FOR DOLPHIN RESCUE AFTER BEING ALERTED TO THE ANIMAL TRAPPED IN THE SHALLOWS OF AN ESTUARY.

Earlier this month it was all hands on deck as members of the public, Department of Conservation (DOC) staff, surf lifeguards and Dive Otago pitched in to help a stranded dolphin out of Blueskin Bay near Waitati.

It was a normal patrol day on Warrington Beach for lifeguard Maaika Duncan until she found out about the stranded dolphin.

The dolphin was discovered about 50 metres offshore in the large estuary behind Warrington Surf Life Saving Club on the first Sunday in 2025.

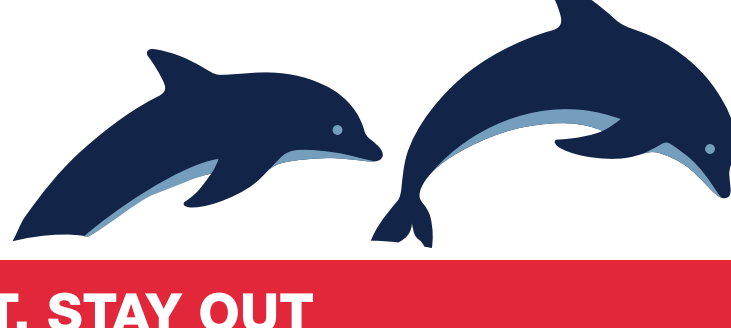
Maaika and two other surf lifeguards headed over to help, arriving to find a number of people, some fully clothed, already in the water.

"They had managed to float the dolphin, basically they were then ... floating, carrying it out towards deeper water," Maaika said.

The volunteers were using what looked like a blanket as a makeshift sling while the lifeguards joined in, supporting its tail with towels, she said. It was not an easy task.

"I just didn't comprehend when they said there's a dolphin, I was thinking one of the small Hector's Dolphins that were more common ... They're around when we do some of our lifesaving events.

"But not a large Bottlenose dolphin. It was big and they're incredibly heavy. They have an incredibly powerful tail even when it wasn't actively using it."



IF IN DOUBT, STAY OUT

Waves can be bigger than they look, dangerous rip currents are hard to spot and weather conditions can be unpredictable. If you feel uncomfortable about getting into the water, stay out. It's better to be safe than sorry. Too many people get into trouble in the water because they overestimate their abilities and underestimate the conditions.



Photo Credit Elisha Kemp. This photo was taken during the last phase of the dolphin rescue as our surf lifeguards walked alongside the main channel out of the estuary entrance as far as they could safely go. The yellow pontoons are part of the inflatable sling provided by DOC.

They stuck to the sides of the estuary, wading through knee to waist deep water towards the entrance. By then, DOC staff had arrived with pontoons and a proper sling and Dive Otago offered flippers to help them swim across the channel.

They guided the dolphin out another 300 or so metres until they couldn't go any further against the turning tide and released it.

But the Bottlenose dolphin needed to be coaxed beyond the sandbar using an inflatable rescue boat and people power.

"Lots of making noise at our end to stop it from turning and coming back in the channel and eventually it did head back out to see and that's the last we've seen of it."

She was hugely relieved the dolphin rescue was a success. She had never done one before in her two years of lifeguarding, and said it was an incredible team effort from everyone involved.

"It's going to be one of those special days that you look back on because they are very rare and it's definitely not what we expected when we turned up for patrol."

This was a case of our highly-skilled surf lifeguards going beyond their normal roles to help out wherever required.

KNOW HOW TO GET HELP

If someone in the water is in trouble and surf lifeguards are on patrol, let them know. If you can't see any surf lifeguards, call 111 and ask for police.

Police have a direct line to surf lifeguards and others who can help.

CALL 0800 33 55 66 TO DONATE NOW



EXTREMELY GENEROUS DONATION

Recently, we were delighted to receive an extremely generous donation of over \$30,000 from David Yan, who was on the receiving end of our skilled and well-trained surf lifeguards.

David said "Probably not too surprising to you but I was indeed rescued a while back, maybe 10+ years at Muriwai. Was between the flags I think but a big wave carried me away, I wasn't the only one too! Stuff we learnt in school (stay calm etc) helped for sure."

This is a reminder of how important a role our school education programme plays. Students receive expert

training from our team on how to float, how to recognise rips and what to do if you get into trouble in the water.

This information is often shared with family and friends, and has saved countless lives on our beaches.

David has built a successful business, The Game Tree, buying, selling and trading in Pokemon cards. His promise is to engage in ethical business practices at all times and to treat all customers with respect.

His website pledges that his business will give back to the community, which is demonstrated by his generosity to SLSNZ.

The important work our charity does to support surf lifeguards is only made possible thanks to caring people like you. Join us and make a donation today by giving online, by mail or by direct deposit.

DONATING IS EASY:

1. **Donate by calling 0800 33 55 66.** Have your credit card handy and our helpful team will take your donation over the phone.
2. **Complete your credit card details** on the form at the bottom of the accompanying letter, then post it back to us using the Freepost envelope supplied.
3. **Visit surflifesaving.org.nz** and click "DONATE TODAY" to pay by credit card online.
4. **Pay into our bank account number** in person at any ASB Branch or (online). ASB 12-3192-0043390-01. (Use your donor number as reference, use Jan25 as code, and use your surname as particulars.)
5. **Leave us a gift in your will.** Visit our website or call **0800 33 55 66** for information.

*Donations over \$5 are tax deductible.

Call 0800 33 55 66

Find out more about saving lives between the flags by visiting surflifesaving.org.nz, emailing fundraising@surflifesaving.org.nz or simply calling 0800 33 55 66.

Make a Lifesaving Difference

PLEASE DONATE TODAY