

2008 NZLGB Lifeguard of the Year



Debbie Phillips-Morgan,
Trust Waikato Raglan Surf
Life Saving Club



At the 2007 Northern Region Awards of Excellence for Surf Life Saving, Debbie made a vow to herself: "To give Raglan a boost and to ensure that we are at the top, competing equally with the bigger Clubs in the Auckland area"

One year later, we award Debbie the NZLGB Lifeguard of the Year.

An invaluable member of the Raglan Surf Life Saving Club, Debbie Phillips-Morgan played an integral role in ensuring the successful and safe operation of Lifeguarding services at one of New Zealand's busiest and most dangerous beaches.

As the Club Captain at Trust Waikato Raglan Surf Life Saving Club, Debbie proved an effective operational manager, ensuring objectives were met and high standards maintained. With a team of only 22 Lifeguards, a heavy workload was placed on Debbie and the small team of Senior Lifeguards at the Club. With such a small team, consistent quality communication and administration were required to ensure operational standards were met each weekend.

As an active Lifeguard, in the 2007/08 season Debbie completed over 162 hours of patrol at Raglan Beach. This equates to being on patrol for a full day every weekend for the entire patrol season. She also found time to train and qualify nine new Surf Lifeguards, instigate Club-based pool swimming training and gain her SLGA Instructors Certificate.

An outstanding ambassador for her Club, Debbie has also been active within the wider Surf Life Saving environment, attending all ten District Club Captain forums throughout the year and administering the District support plan for Raglan Club. This proved highly successful not only for the patrolling needs of the Club, but also in enhancing the development of junior Lifeguards.

Debbie's inspiration? "The people who are involved with Surf Life Saving are awesome.... To be able to put yourself on the line each time you go out into the water even though you don't know a single person who you may be rescuing always gets the adrenaline run on a high. The support, encouragement and the ability to be a Whanau is what keeps Raglan close to my heart.

In all areas, Debbie has bought a level of commitment and professionalism that has had a major positive influence on other Raglan members and on how they present themselves to the public.

Under Debbie's direction, Raglan achieved second place in the 2007/08 SLSNR Best Patrolled Beach Competition.

2008 BP Surf Rescue of the Year

Nathan Smith and Liam O'Toole Papamoa SLSC

Nathan was surfing on his malibu board in rough two metre surf when a member of the public began waving from the beach to get his attention. A group of swimmers further down the beach were caught in a rip.

Nathan paddled out to three girls and informed them he was a lifeguard and was there to help them get back to shore. He assisted them back to the beach and once safely back on the beach he discovered there were two more girls further out in the rip.

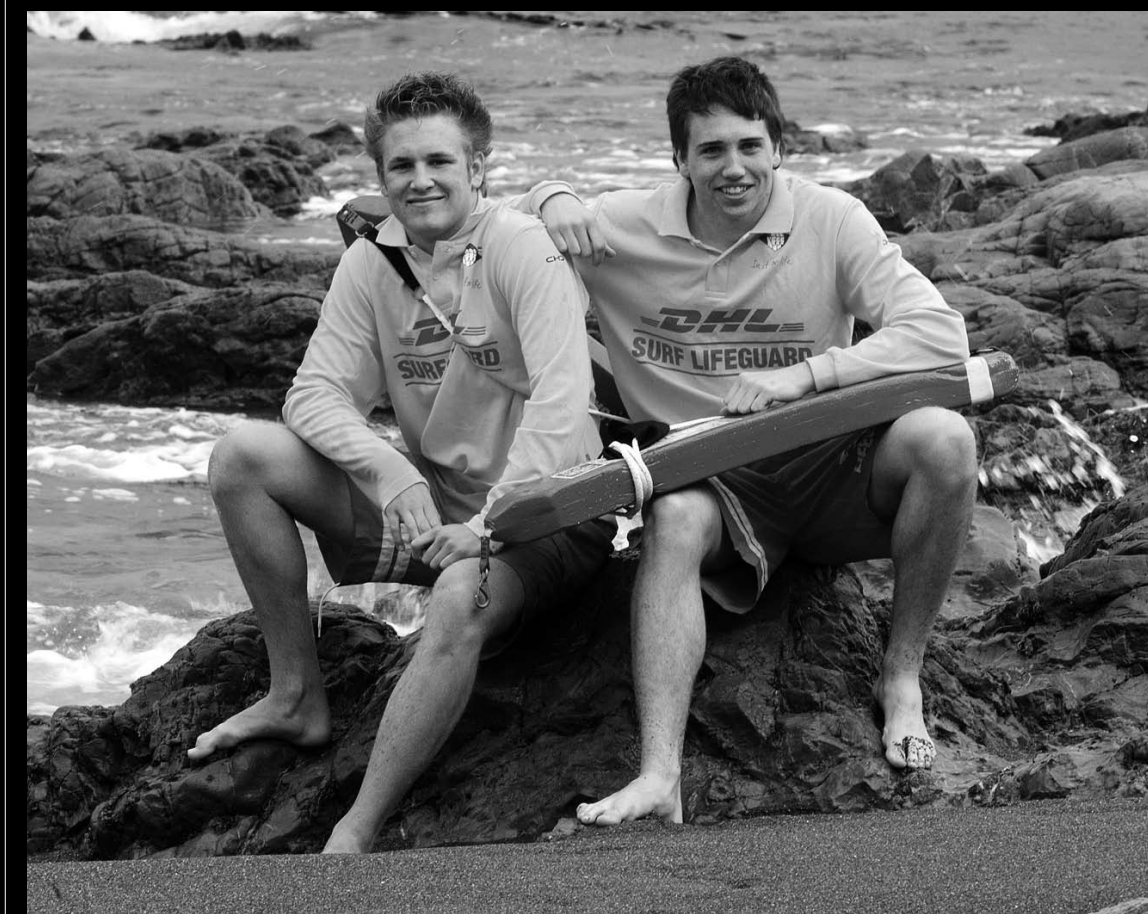
Nathan used the rip to head through the surf and spotted one female who was in severe difficulty. The girl was exhausted, spluttering and beginning to lose consciousness. Nathan managed to help her onto his board and the two returned to the beach. By the time Nathan and the girl returned to shore the Police had arrived and were able to assist with the support of those rescued.

Aware there was still another girl unaccounted for Nathan went out for the third time to search for the last swimmer. As he searched in vain for the girl, he went out beyond the break. The rough seas made it difficult for him to search, however, after nearly five minutes had passed he spotted her face down. As he paddled closer she disappeared under the water and he lost sight of her. After two waves passed over the area he again caught sight of her, this time able to grab her arm as she disappeared again. Though she was unconscious Nathan was able to position her on his board so he could paddle to shore.

Back at the beach, with the Police now able to look after those rescued, and despite having battled the surf for some time Nathan ran to the Surf Club for oxygen, First Aid equipment and any fellow Club members. Finding Liam the pair returned to the scene with the Club's quad bike and equipment to support the girls until the ambulance arrived.

The five girls survived.

The actions of these Papamoa Surf Lifeguards demonstrate the values and commitment of all Surf Lifeguards in New Zealand.



Liam O'Toole on left,
Nathan Smith on right