

## You're saving lives at sea - thank you!

**You were there with us when Coastguard Tauranga rescued a solo sailor. Here's his story.**

Paul Christenson had been sailing alone before; he considered himself an experienced mariner. He was sailing to his wife Michelle when his steering failed, 70km off the coast of Tauranga. Paul was stranded alone on his yacht and completely at the mercy of the ferocious, relentless sea.

Paul recalled how the sea tossed his nine-metre yacht Windsong about: "It was nasty. It wasn't just a big swell. The water was ugly." He triggered his rescue beacon.

Coastguard volunteers left shore at 11.30pm, keeping in contact with Paul via VHF radio. His wife Michelle, who heard Paul was in trouble, came onto the radio too: "Paul, I don't care about the boat ... but I can't live without you..."

On board the Coastguard vessel *TECT Rescue* was skipper Chris Phillips. He recalled: "Paul was by himself and had been battling big seas for some time. He was just physically drained. I've dealt with some gnarly seas over the years; these were pretty bad."

After many hours motoring out to his yacht, they finally pulled alongside. The crew put their searchlights on and called out to Paul to leap aboard. "One of our crew leaned over and held his body, and he jumped across."

They made it back to Tauranga harbour at 6am, twelve exhausting hours after Paul had first raised the alarm. "When I see my wife, I want to hold her very tightly," Paul said.

**Your support for Coastguard gave Paul a second chance. Today, Paul and his wife are living the next chapter of their lives in Dunedin. If it wasn't for your support, their story might have had a tragic ending. Thank you for supporting Coastguard.**



Paul was in big trouble, adrift in angry seas.



Thank you for bringing this lost sailor home safely.

Photo: SunLive

## Find us on Facebook!



**Coastguard New Zealand is on Facebook - so find our page and give us a like!**

You'll keep up to date with all Coastguard events, hear about the amazing things volunteers do on a daily basis, and see some fantastic photos and videos.

Just head to [www.facebook.com/coastguardnewz](http://www.facebook.com/coastguardnewz) and click the like button at the top left hand side, and you'll be on board in no time!



You can also find us online by visiting our website at [www.coastguard.nz](http://www.coastguard.nz)



## Right place, right time: Coastguard hero Ray Burge saves two swimmers

**On a Sunday evening, off-duty Coastguard Operations Manager Ray Burge was out for a coastal drive with his family. Their peaceful evening took a dramatic turn as Ray spotted a man in the water frantically waving his arms and calling out for help.**

Ray leapt out of the car and ran down to the beach. He came across three distraught and crying children who told Ray that their mum was in trouble in the water, and their dad went in to save her. Now their dad was struggling too.

Ray knew he needed to act fast. He called Coastguard for back-up, leapt into the water and started swimming.

Battling heavy seas, the dad had drifted 200 metres from shore when Ray reached him. Fierce winds made the sea churn and massive waves towered above them both. The man was panicking and fighting to keep his head above water. Ray tried his best to calm him down and held his chin above water to begin the challenging swim back to shore.

It took all the strength Ray had to hold the man with one arm and swim back.

At long last, Ray saw the beach. He staggered to the shore with the man in his arms, and gently laid him on the sand in the recovery position. The man had swallowed a lot of water and was not in a good way.

Ray knew that mum was still out to sea. He saw Coastguard Maraetai approaching and told them where he thought she might be. Losing no time, they leapt into action, and in the distance Ray watched as they pulled her from the water, weak but alive.



Ray risked his life to rescue two swimmers.

It had been a huge ordeal, and when they were finally reunited mum, dad and the kids held each other very tightly.

For Ray and everyone at Coastguard, dropping everything to help someone in trouble is a way of life. Thanks to your incredible support they have the resources they need to be on call 24/7.

**Thank you so much for being there for our people so they can save lives at sea.**



**Patrick Holmes**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Coastguard New Zealand

## Thank you so much for helping our heroes save lives at sea!

**Royal New Zealand Coastguard Inc is the charity saving lives at sea**  
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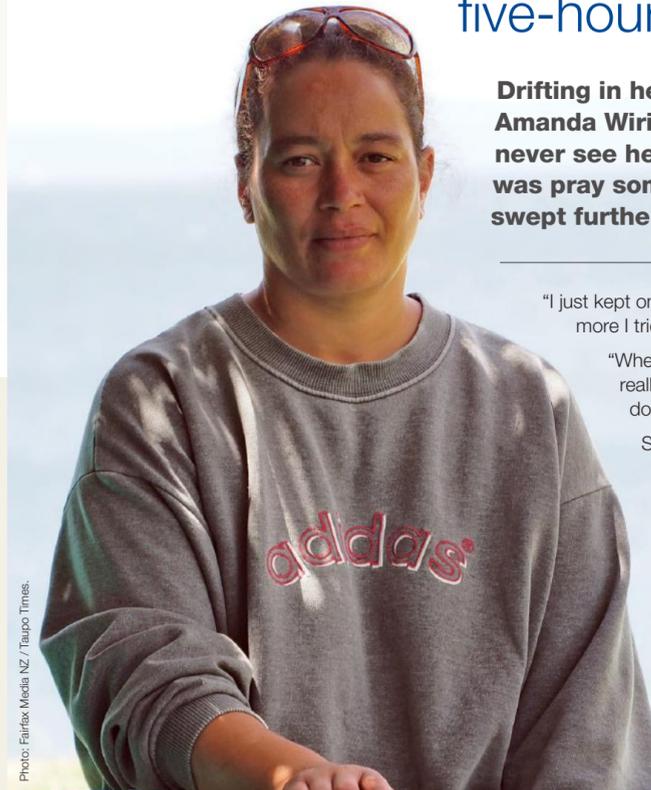
Find out how  
**your support saved lives at sea over summer!**

# SOCS

Coastguard Supporter Newsletter | Autumn 2017

## Your support reunited a mum with her family after a terrifying five-hour ordeal on the lake

**Drifting in her kayak for nearly five hours, Amanda Wirihana-Tawake thought she would never see her children again. All she could do was pray someone would find her as she was swept further into the dark waters of Lake Taupo.**



"I just kept on going and going and going," said Amanda. "The more I tried to come in, the further the shore was getting away."

"When it got dark I was so scared and the waves were really big. I couldn't see land. I knew the only thing I could do was stay in the kayak."

She was also all alone in the immensity of Lake Taupo.

"I cried out for help but there was no one on the lake - not another boat in sight."

**"I was just so grateful for everything Coastguard did for me and what they do for the community. I just want to say thank you to everyone who helped."**

Alone in the darkness, Amanda thought she would never see her children again.

What happened next?  
**SEE INSIDE...**

# Your donations fund searchlights that saved a man's life

For an insight into how your donations save lives at sea, take a moment to imagine gazing out across the jagged, white-tipped waves of the Manukau Harbour.

With a notorious history of shipwrecks and capsizes, it's a treacherous place in the calmest weather. But when the wind's up there's a fine line between life and death.

A 34-year-old man found out how tenuous our grip on life can be when he headed out to set some fishing nets late one January evening. His dinghy was suddenly capsized and he was thrown into the water. With no way to get back to his boat, he was reported missing by his distraught wife shortly before midnight.

Twelve Coastguard volunteers, in three Coastguard rescue boats, headed out to find him.

They painstakingly searched in grid patterns across the sea, looking where the tides and currents might have carried him.

Searching for a lone man, in rough seas, in the dark, in the wide expanse of the Manukau Harbour took all the training and endurance of the rescue crews. You can imagine how taxing it is to be searching for hours in the darkness, imagining your eyes and ears are playing tricks on you.

It wasn't until 4am, after four gruelling hours, that Coastguard Papakura's searchlight picked out two small beams of light reflecting from the lost man's lifejacket.



Skipper Rod Frost (in blue) and Coastguard Papakura's fantastic crew.

"He's a very lucky man," said Coastguard skipper Rod Frost. "Although we were searching much of the night we only spotted him when our searchlights picked up the reflective strips on his lifejacket."

The rescued man was also wearing a wetsuit, which kept his core temperature up high enough to prevent him from slipping into an unconscious state and oblivion.

The crew pulled him carefully out of the water and into one of the rescue vessels. He was so, so cold, suffering from severe hypothermia and drifting in and out of consciousness. Disorientated, he was helped onto a waiting ambulance. Our crews returned home and many had to go to work the next day, exhausted after an all-night rescue mission but very satisfied they had brought the man safely home to his family.

It's thanks to your donations that our crews have the training and gear they need to search all night for those lost at sea. Thank you for your very kind support.

Thanks to you, our crews search the sea for Kiwis in trouble.

## Your support reunited a mum with her family... *continued*

Amanda's partner reported her missing, and Coastguard Turangi raced out to find her. They knew she'd be terrified and had to find her fast.

Amanda was slowly losing hope. She had been on the lake for almost five hours, cloaked in darkness and struggling to keep calm.

Then, suddenly, she spotted a green boat light in the distance. She cried out for help and waved her paddle with the little strength she had left. But the boat started to head away, unable to see her.

"I was crying at that point," says Amanda. "They went past me and I shouted 'help', but they couldn't hear me and they went back the other way."

With all her strength Amanda screamed out again - and then she was overcome with relief. A bright light shone on her as the Coastguard volunteers reached her and threw her a rope. They lifted her out of the kayak and into safety.

Distraught and in shock, Amanda's hands and legs had gone numb from the cold. She said the crew were incredible at reassuring her and making her comfortable.

"I was just so grateful for everything Coastguard did for me and what they do for the community. I just want to say thank you to everyone who helped."

Amanda was reunited with her family thanks to your support and generosity in funding our volunteer crews. Thank you for saving Amanda's life.

## Twins trained and ready to save lives at sea, thanks to your support.

Tim and Ben Tomes began volunteering for Coastguard at only 16 years old when their science teacher at Rangiora High School placed a recruitment notice in the school newsletter.

Tim says he saw the notice and thought, "Yep, that's me. Looks like a good match." He roped his brother in and the two have been volunteering for Coastguard Waimakariri-Ashley ever since. They are among the youngest members in their crew, but they are also some of the most skilled. The twins are only 20 years old and hold their Masters Certificate - the second-highest qualification Coastguard volunteers train for.

Tim and Ben can be quite competitive with one another. But they love the camaraderie of Coastguard and Tim says volunteering together has strengthened their bond and built their trust in one another.

Tim says what they love most about Coastguard is having the chance to be on call to help others.

"Being on call is a cool thing, to just drop everything and go," says Tim.

It's thanks to your amazing support for Coastguard that volunteers like Tim and Ben can do what they love doing - helping save lives at sea.

Your donations give Tim and Ben the funding they need to learn life-saving skills to be rescue-ready at all times.



Your support is helping train the next generation of Coastguard volunteers.



Your donations train our volunteer radio operators, who monitor the airwaves, co-ordinate rescues, and save lives at sea.

## Coastguard radio operators raise the alarm and prevent a four-man boating tragedy

It was a close call for four boaties who were capsized and thrown into the ocean while trying to make their way over a bar.

The four men went out on their small boat *Eager Beaver* at dawn. They planned on spending the whole day fishing, and logged a bar crossing report with Coastguard as they were crossing the Kawhia Bar near Raglan.

The Coastguard team waited expectantly for the four men to radio that they were safe. But at 6:48am, 20 minutes after the initial report, the men still hadn't called. Our radio operators tried to contact the boaties through their VHF radios and cellphone. They tried again; nothing.

Knowing that the boaties were in grave danger, Coastguard sent out an all-stations alert to vessels in the area. The crew at Coastguard Raglan headed out in their rescue boat.

It turned out that two massive waves had struck the *Eager Beaver* as it crossed the bar. The first wave swamped the engine, and the second wave capsized the boat.

The fishermen had been thrown into the heaving ocean. They tossed and turned in the swell and tried desperately to make their way to the surface.

Two of the men, who were both wearing lifejackets, managed to swim to shore on the incoming tide.

Coastguard Raglan found the third man and plucked him from the ocean into the safety of their vessel.

Meanwhile, the fourth man was clinging desperately to a buoy waiting for help. He saw a boat nearby and waved frantically at them to come and get him. The men on board hurled a life ring over the side of the boat and hauled the man to safety.

With all four men accounted for, they were brought to Kawhia Harbour and were checked by paramedics. The boaties were numb from cold, and deeply shaken by what had happened.

Had Coastguard radio operators not been on red alert, the outcome could have been very different. Thanks to your support, our volunteers were there to leap into action when the boaties never called back - ultimately saving their lives.

Coastguard radio operators are unsung heroes - listening out over the vast oceans for people who need help. Please help us save lives at sea by donating to Coastguard heroes below. Thank you for your support.

Tear along dotted line and detach

**Yes, I would like to donate to Coastguard heroes today!**

Please send me information about leaving a gift in my Will to Coastguard.

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