

# RESCUE OF THE YEAR - TATHRA SLSC

The rescue of a 19 year old Tathra man in March by members of the Far South Coast Emergency Callout Team was recently awarded the SLSNSW Rescue of the Year.

The man was fishing with two other 18 year old men from Tathra at Wapengo Lagoon, five kms north of Tanja, when their boat overturned crossing the bar at Bithery Inlet.

Two of the men made it to shore on their own, but the third man remained unaccounted for and rescuers held grave fears for his wellbeing as none of the men had lifejackets or flotation devices.

Tathra Surf Lifesaver Tony Rettke and his 16 year old son Jordan responded to the scene by car and immediately raced into the messy two metre surf with just rescue tubes searching for the missing man.

Fellow club member Maree Bolton was on the scene with resuscitation equipment and surveyed the area from land while Scott Meaker and Geoff Bolton responded from Tathra Surf Club in an inflatable rescue boat (IRB).

Lifesavers searched for the man for around 30 minutes. Eventually they heard his cries for help in the vicinity of where Tony and Jordan were swimming. The man was rescued by the IRB before being transferred to hospital by the NSW Ambulance Rescue Helicopter.

He was taken to Bega hospital in a serious condition suffering severe hypothermia.

Far South Coast SLS Duty Officer Andrew Edmunds, commended the lifesavers' actions.

"What we have seen here is an incredible selfless act of

bravery by all members involved in the rescue, which quite remarkably averted tragedy.

"The odds were stacked against him, given the remoteness of the location, being more than 45 minutes from the nearest surf club compounded by the dangerous conditions and lack of flotation devices.

"The Tathra members deserve recognition and congratulations for their swift actions, and their ongoing commitment to community safety."

A number of the lifesavers involved in the rescue were directly involved in the Tathra Wharf tragedy in 2009 and received Meritorious Awards then for their actions.

The lifesavers involved in this rescue will also be nominated for Meritorious Awards for bravery.



From Left to Right: Scott Meaker, Maree Boulton, Geoff Boulton, Jordan Rettke & Tony Rettke

# GENEROUS DONOR COMES TO CLUB'S RESCUE



Bellinger Valley-North Beach SLSC has taken possession of its new Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) using funds generously donated by the Mamma Lena and Dino Gustin Foundation.

The club was presented with a cheque for \$12,000 at the NSW Parliament House late last year to purchase much-needed new rescue equipment to support the vital work of its volunteers.

The new IRB will greatly enhance the rescue capabilities of the small north coast club, allowing surf lifesavers to expand the length of beach patrolled and increase the frequency of patrols to provide greater protection for the community.

"The impact the new IRB will have on the club will be huge," says Bellinger Valley-North Beach SLSC President Steve Webb.

When presenting the cheque last year, the Foundation's Rosalba Gustin said it was heartbreaking to think that volunteer surf lifesavers who give up their time on weekends to ensure the safety of beachgoers still had to fight for funding for vital resources and safety equipment.

The funding from the Mamma Lena and Dino Gustin Foundation means the club will be able to continue performing its essential lifesaving service.