

# RESCUE OF THE MONTH.

SURF LIFE SAVING  
NEW SOUTH WALES



## DECEMBER 2019

**Club:** Sydney Branch RWC, Cronulla and Elouera SLSCs and Sutherland Shire Lifeguards

**Lifesavers and Lifeguards involved:** Joel Wiseman, Jackson Towns, Rupert Agnew, Hamish Agnew, Sean Bunch, Adam Watson, Mitch Keyon, Lara Hughes, Brad Mexon and Brett Richardson.

On 26 December 2019 at 3.15pm, members of the public alerted volunteer surf lifesavers at Cronulla Beach that a sailboard had been spotted floating in the water off Cronulla Point, near Shark Island, with no sailor observed in the vicinity of the board.

Cronulla lifesavers requested assistance from Surf Life Saving Sydney Support Operations to join the search for the missing sailor. Two RWCs began searching the area with the assistance of two IRBs from Cronulla and Elouera surf clubs.

They immediately established a 'line search' with each asset spaced 40 metres apart, combing the area that was determined to be the probable 'drift pattern' of the sailboarder – allowing for wind, swell and tide direction.

Concurrently, council lifeguards at Cronulla, North Cronulla, Elouera and Wanda began a visual scan of the area with binoculars. They quickly spotted a green object, suspected to be a sailboard rig, floating in the water. The lifeguards directed the Support Operations RWCs to the location where they found the missing sailboarder clinging to his sail.

The sailboarder was secured on the jetski sled and returned to shore for medical assessment by Cronulla Lifeguards. He was released without treatment.

The sailboarder was wearing a lifejacket but had been in the water for 45 minutes prior to being rescued. If it weren't for the actions of volunteer lifesavers and lifeguards, the sailboarder may have floated in the water for hours before reaching the shore.

At the time of the incident, conditions on the water were rough with significant wind chop. A strong north-east wind was blowing and swell in the area had increased quickly over the course of the afternoon.

This rescue was a seamless, coordinated response from multiple resources; lifeguards, lifesavers and support operations in response to a person in distress - with a successful outcome.

The sailboarder's board and sail were recovered by Cronulla and Elouera IRBs and returned to him after the incident.



A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Joel Wiseman'.

**Joel Wiseman**  
Director of Lifesaving  
Surf Life Saving NSW

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'George Shales'.

**George Shales**  
President  
Surf Life Saving NSW