



NEW SOUTH  
WALES

# RESCUE OF THE MONTH

— FEBRUARY 2019 —

**Club:** North Cronulla SLSC

**Lifesavers involved:** Patrol Team 7

A mass rescue of any kind is a big operation for a patrol to manage. On 17 February 40 people fell victim to being swept off a sandbar suddenly at North Cronulla. In a single moment what seemed like a perfect day at the beach could have ended in tragedy.

Conditions were moderate with waves up to 1.25 metres, up the beach at Elouera the Australian Surf Rowers League (ASRL) surfboat finals were underway.

Just before 2pm conditions changed. The tide turned and began to rise, shifting the sand and forcing 40 swimmers from the safety of the sand bank into a fast-moving rip current taking them out of their depth and into panic.

Almost immediately, the patrol tower responded and alerted the North Cronulla SLSC patrol and Sutherland Shire Council Lifeguards. A mass rescue was underway. The red and yellow flags were dropped to indicate a closed beach while 12 rescue boards, six swimmers with rescue tubes, an Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) and jetski made their way out to the group.

Surrounding surf clubs raced to assist with an additional two IRBs, the Sydney Branch Support Operations jetski and with the two Lifeguard jetskis.

All assets worked together seamlessly to ferry swimmers to shore as three vehicles arrived from Elouera along with six additional surf lifesavers and lifeguards for backup.

Back on the beach, patrol members assisted the patients, reassuring them and providing additional support as required. Witnesses mentioned the beach was strangely silent with all eyes fixed on the water.

Within 15 minutes the team were returning the final patients to the beach, many spent time personally thanking their rescuers.

The patrol estimated that up to 2000 beach-goers were on the beach at North Cronulla at the time of the rescue. They were witness to one of the biggest, collaborative mass rescues conducted by Surf Life Saving.

The rescue was so successful in its response that not a single injury was recorded.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Director of Lifesaving  
Stuart Harvey

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

President of Surf Life Saving NSW  
David Murray

