

# RESCUE OF THE MONTH.

SURF LIFE SAVING  
NEW SOUTH WALES



## DECEMBER 2023

**Service:** Australian Lifeguard Service - Tweed

**Lifesavers and Lifeguards involved:** Rory MacPhail, Layna Matthews, Sven Loemker, Ashley Blake

At around 2.30PM on Christmas Day, a family of eight international tourists became caught in a rip at Durambah Beach by the Tweed River break wall.

While five were in a position to safely remove themselves from the water with appropriate direction – offered by Australian Lifeguard Service lifeguard, Layna Matthews, three had been washed out approximately 350m and were in desperate need of assistance.

Rory MacPhail, also on duty with the ALS, sprung to action and paddled out to the stranded swimmers with his rescue board, eventually securing all three on it but without much capacity to return to shore.

By now, the group was more than 400m from the shore and drifting towards the Tweed River bar. Flagging down a member of the public on a jet ski, Rory used assistance first from the

water craft and then also from Layna, who by then had paddled out herself, to begin bringing the swimmers back to shore.

With further help from Fingal Rovers SLSC volunteers, Sven Loemker and Ash Blake, who arrived by Inflatable Rescue Boat, the group was successfully brought to shore, with two requiring oxygen on the beach and one falling in and out of consciousness.

Those two were taken to hospital and remained overnight for observation but all eventually made a full recovery.

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

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Agnew'.

**Peter Agnew**  
President  
Surf Life Saving NSW