

# THE Manly Daily

## Lost boogie boarder 'lucky to be alive'

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A BOOGIE boarder lost off South Curl Curl on Wednesday night sparked a three-hour search by helicopters, water police and lifesavers before he reached the shore under his own steam.

A rescue expert said the 19-year-old man had made many mistakes but did make one correct decision that saved his life he swam away from the rocks.

The Harbord man entered the water at the southern end of the beach just after 7pm with a boogie board but without flippers or a wetsuit.

He was quickly caught in a rip and was washed close to the rocks south of South Curl Curl pool. A local man alerted to the man's plight grabbed his surfboard and searched for the boogie boarder in the dark but could not find him.

Caught in the strong current sweeping along the rocks, the board rider allowed himself to be swept around to Freshwater, where he paddled ashore.

Surf Life Saving Northern Beaches rescue director Richard Andjelkovic said rescue services initially thought they were searching for two men.

The Westpac Lifesaver and NRMA Careflight helicopters searched the area with spotlights while a water police launch searched further offshore.

Members of South Curl Curl SLSC searched the water for about 90 minutes in the difficult conditions, while members of Freshwater SLSC searched the rocks between the two beaches.

The Warringah surf rescue base was reactivated to co-ordinate the air search for the man.

After the man's boogie board was found wedged under rocks south of the pool, Mr Andjelkovic said he considered extending the search to Freshwater and even Manly but about 10.15pm the man landed on the beach after more than three hours in the water.

After abandoning his boogie board he had swum out and then north before finally making his way ashore. Mr Andjelkovic said the man was lucky to be alive.

"He did a lot of silly things but he also did the right thing by swimming out and not trying to climb the rocks," he said.

"He should have stayed with his boogie board it's far easier to see someone from the air when they are with a flotation device than it is to see a head in the water, especially at night." The man was taken to Manly Hospital suffering from exhaustion.

\* A kite surfer was rescued by lifesavers at Collaroy on Tuesday night after he was blown out to sea by strong winds.

Members of Collaroy SLSC who were training at the time launched an IRB and brought the man and his board safely to the shore.