



Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopters MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, 6th August 2014

ROCK FISHERMAN WINCHED FROM OCEAN LUCKY TO BE ALIVE

A rock fisherman has been winched to safety this morning after he was swept into the ocean off Sydney's eastern beaches.

Shortly before 10.40 am, a man ran into the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter base on the northern headland of Botany Bay. The Chinese man indicated in broken English that someone had fallen into the ocean.

The helicopter base is only 200 metres away from the cliffs and the rescue helicopter was in the air in two minutes.

Ground crew who had run to the cliffs located the man some 300 metres offshore and directed the rescue chopper straight to the scene. A Rescue Crew Officer was winched into the water where he found the fisherman almost vertical in the water and very tired.

The crewman and fisherman were winched on board the helicopter and flown the short distance to the Westpac Life Saver base.

Crews treated the middle aged Chinese man for near-drowning, hypothermia and several lacerations to his body. He was stabilised and ambulance paramedics have transported him to Prince of Wales Hospital.

"This man is very lucky to be alive this morning," said Westpac Life Saver CEO, Stephen Leahy.

"His friend had common sense to raise the alarm quickly and our location made sure we were in the air very quickly."

"The man would have only been in the water for five minutes but he was already in a serious condition and his chances of surviving this ordeal were rapidly running out," said Mr Leahy.

The man was not wearing a life jacket.

At the same time, Surf Life Saving Australia was calling for the mandatory wearing of lifejackets at a national Water Safety Summit being held at Darling Harbour today.

"Even though this man was lucky today, if he was on his own and no-one had raised the alarm, I doubt he would have survived much longer without a lifejacket," Mr Leahy said.

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