

# Bay's heroes bag NZ awards

By Vainoana Tapaleao and Harrison Christian  
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The country's top unsung heroes have been named winners of the Pride of New Zealand Awards — and two of them are from Hawke's Bay.

Seven people from around New Zealand received the gongs — honouring bravery and heroism, community spirit, lifetime achievement, environmental ambassadorship, emergency services and fundraiser of the year — at a glitzy event at the Auckland War Memorial Museum last night.

Wade Kelly, of Hastings, was the national winner of the Bravery/Heroism Award for saving four people at Wainarama Beach last year.

Mr Kelly paddled out into choppy surf on his longboard when Anton Randall and his wife Kirsty, 10-year-old son Josh, and Josh's friend Jamie Nichols, 12, were caught in a rip, and kept a cool head throughout their 45-minute rescue.

Mr Randall, who nominated the surfer for the award, told *Hawke's Bay Today* Mr Kelly was "well-justified" in winning it.

"We just wanted to recognise him for what he did. I'm very grateful. He's made a huge difference in our lives — he's a really important part of our family."

Also from the region is Mahia environmentalist Kathleen Mato, who was recognised as the overall winner of the Environmental Award for her work during the past four years in protecting and improving the water quality in the Whangarei catchment area.

The Whangarei Catchment Management Group was sparked up in 2010 in Mahia as local concerns about wastewater ponds polluting the mouth of the



**WINNER:** Wade Kelly receiving his New Zealand Pride Award from Sir Peter Leitch last night.  
PHOTO/JASON DORRDAY

manage land and water in the catchment and also co-ordinate environmental work and education in the community.

National finalists in the awards from Hawke's Bay were the Swannell Family (Community Spirit Award), of Napier, for running a mobile soup kitchen for the homeless in Clive Square, Hai Tong Too (Lifetime Achievement), Napier, for being a key advocate for minority groups, and Colin Anderson (Fundraiser of the Year), Palmerston North and formerly Dannevirke, who raised over \$17,000 cycling for CanTeen.

The other winners announced at last night's ceremony were Maera Maki-Anderson, Murupara, hon-

ore Fire Service. Thi Puanaki received the lifetime achievement accolade for her 40-year work in promoting kapa haka, and the community spirit award was given to Julie King, who runs the Tokoroa Love Soup. The People's Choice Award, sponsored by TSB Bank, went to Upper North Island regional finalist Greg Brownson. The 63-year-old, of Auckland, has been a crew member of the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Trust for more than 30 years.

More than 10,000 votes were received for the People's Choice Award via the website, and judges said Mr Brownson won by a huge margin.

At the ceremony last night, Kivi muso Dave Dobbyn welcomed guests with a stirring rendition of

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## The winners

- Bravery & Heroism: **Wade Kelly, Hastings**
- Community Spirit: Julie King, Tokoroa
- Emergency Services: Maera Maki-Anderson, Murupara.
- Environment: **Kathleen Mato, Mahia**
- Fundraiser of the year: Tony Scott, Auckland
- Lifetime Achievement: Thi Puanaki, Northland
- TSB Bank People's Choice: Greg Brownson, Auckland.

Celebrity judges Mad Butcher Sir Peter Leitch, former news anchor Judy Bailey, Silver Fern Marna Tutaha and radio host Polly Gillespie presented a number of awards and judge VC holder Willie Apiata gave a video greeting. The awards, in association with the *New*

## Wairoa victim dies

By Harrison Christian and Sam Hurley  
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A Hawke's Bay farmer has described finding an unresponsive man who spent a night in a wrecked ute 30m down a bank near Wairoa and later died in hospital.

Neil Maurice Christie, 59, died in Waikato Hospital on Tuesday night after his vehicle crashed on SH36 near Lake Waikaremoana on Saturday night.

He was a farm manager from the small northern Hawke's Bay settlement of Ohuka, northwest of Wairoa.

Northern Hawke's Bay farmer Ray Westcott, found Mr Christie near his wrecked ute about 70m off Lake Rd on Sunday morning while jogging about 22km west of Frasertown.

The crumpled vehicle had been lying there through the night, obscured from the view of passing motorists, but Mr Westcott, who lives about 1km from the crash site, spotted the exposed metal from the edge of the roadside bank.

"His car was brightly coloured — it was silver and the silver caught the corner of my eye."

He climbed down to find Mr Christie lying unconscious and "pretty badly beaten up" beside his vehicle, which had come to rest about 15m from a swollen river.

"He was totally unresponsive. I don't think he had much longer to last, down