

Lifeguard volunteers grow their surf skills

By LEIGHTON KEITH

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TARANAKI surf lifeguards dusted off their wetsuits and donned their fins for a weekend of training in New Plymouth.

It is the first time the region's volunteer lifeguards have been able to do the six-week Intermediate Lifeguard Programme without leaving the area.

Co-ordinator Andrew Cronin said the programme gave lifeguards valuable experience.

"It's giving them the skills to go on to the national lifeguard school," Mr Cronin said.

During the six weeks the lifeguards have spent 16 hours doing first aid, gained 10 hours practical experience in an IRB and spent about 16 hours learning rescue techniques.

"It has been great, they've been getting amongst it," the Surf Life Saving New Zealand national



Surf's up: Lifeguard Campbell Begg leaps off a rock at New Plymouth's Back Beach while BJ Monk, left, and Nick Arnold watch on.

Photo: CAMERON BURNELL

service award winner said. Mr Cronin said there had been a gap in the training available in the region and the programme was important for the region's lifeguards development.

Funding from Shell Todd Oil Services had made running the

training possible. Surf Life Saving Taranaki's Sue McMaster said the training would come in handy when the summer patrols started at the end of this month.

"It is a great start to the season," Ms McMaster said.

She said the Stos funding

would help local lifeguards gain extra qualifications and competence.

Stos general manager Rob Jager was at the beach watching the lifeguards go through their paces.

Mr Jager said the company

recognised the valuable role the lifeguards played keeping swimmers safe at beaches.

"It is wonderful to be involved," he said.

Stos would be looking to establish an ongoing relationship with SLST, he said.