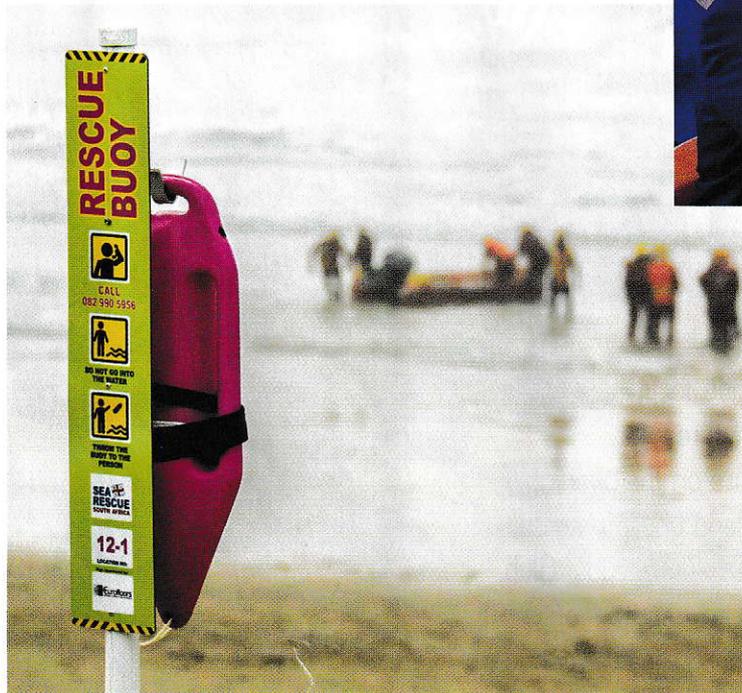




Sponsor of the award Julian Longson [left] of Pole Star with the NSRI's Andrew Ingram.



NSRI PINK RESCUE BUOYS WIN INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

THE NSRI'S PINK Rescue Buoy won the 2018 International Maritime Rescue Federation (IMRF) award for Innovation & Technology at a prestigious gala dinner in Norway on 8 November 2018.

NSRI Head of Drowning Prevention Andrew Ingram was present at the ceremony as a guest of IMRF to receive the award. He was then also invited to present the South African-born campaign at IMRF Europe's annual meeting.

Journalist and author Gordon Dryden once said, 'An idea is a new combination of old elements.' The Pink Rescue Buoy project is exactly that. There is a clear pattern where

people are drowning because of a lack of flotation. The typical scenario is that someone is in difficulty in the water and a well-meaning bystander goes in to help. Tragically the 'helper' is the person who may be most likely to drown.

Flotation devices on beaches were a common sight when life rings used to be placed at the water's edge at beaches, swimming pools and canals. But this practice died out. Concerned about the rate of drowning, NSRI stepped forward to initiate a series of preventative campaigns through a new unit headed by Andrew. Rescues worldwide use torpedo buoy flotation, and these buoys are affordable and

effective. The idea was to then make these available as public rescue devices.

Theft was raised as the biggest challenge when presenting the idea. The concept of a unique colour coupled with the need for them to be highly visible in the surf resulted in the signature luminous pink.

Known drowning hot spots were identified, sponsors were found and a pilot project was launched.

Twelve months later we have more than 300 installations around the country, and although theft has hovered between eight and 18 percent, most importantly, 25 lives have been saved.

The next step is to make this pervasive across all beaches and beside all water bodies. Through partnerships and community buy-in this is possible.

'It is a great honour for our team, which has worked on the Pink Rescue Buoy project over the past year, to be recognised by the IMRF,' said Andrew. 'The spotlight is now firmly on public rescue devices and effective rip current education. We hope that this combination will help to reduce rip current and failed peer rescue drownings around the globe.'

In 2017, the NSRI education programme presented in schools was an IMRF award finalist in the category Outstanding Team Contribution.