

## 04-21-2019 Russ and Andrew Powell - Australia – Lifesavers – Accident – Attempted Rescue

### Father And Son Die After Lifesaving Boat Capsizes While Rescuing Tourist Near 12 Apostles

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-04-21/two-lifesavers-drown-attempting-to-rescue-man-off-port-campbell/11034392>

Sat 20 Apr 2019

A father and son who were volunteer lifesavers from Port Campbell, in western Victoria, have drowned after being thrown into rough surf while trying to save an international tourist.



**A helicopter rescues the tourist and one lifesaver from the water**

The other man was airlifted to the Alfred Hospital where he is in a serious but stable condition.

In an emotional press conference Surf Lifesaving Victoria president Paul James called the pair heroes.

"It's just terrible, it's heartbreaking," he said.

"I understand the boat was operating in a two-metre swell, so a very high swell, and we know that it is very treacherous down there and not the place to be swimming.

"These brave people, these heroes, have gone out to try and help."

Ross Powell, 71, and his son Andrew, 32, died during the rescue of a 30-year-old man who police said was wading at the mouth of the Sherbrook River when he got into difficulty on Sunday morning.

Police said the six-metre rigid hull rescue boat was swamped in heavy surf conditions throwing three men into the water.

An emergency helicopter winched two men to safety — the man in the water and one of the rescuers, who was seriously injured.

The man who got into trouble was taken to hospital in a stable condition.

#### **Key points:**

- ◆ The tourist was wading near the mouth of a local river when he got into difficulty.
- ◆ Three people in the rescue boat were dumped into the water in rough conditions.
- ◆ Two people, including the swimmer and another rescuer, were winched to safety.

Mr James said the "highly experienced" volunteers were long-term members of the Port Campbell Surf Lifesaving club.



**Police said there were signs warning tourist about the dangers of swimming at the Sherbrook River.(ABC News: Sian Johnson)**

"The loss of these two lives is a tragedy and I know I speak on behalf of all Victorian agencies when I say our thoughts are with the family, the friends and community of Port Campbell," acting Emergency Management Commissioner Stephanie Rotarangi said.

Victoria Police are investigating how the deaths occurred and will prepare a report for the coroner.

"Clearly it's a very tight-knit community, Port Campbell, and unfortunately it's a tragic set of circumstances," Senior Sergeant Brett Jackson said.

"I'm sure it's something that's really going to hit the community hard and unfortunately, it's just an event that should never have occurred."

Senior Sergeant Jackson said there were signs warning of rough surf and strong rips where the man went swimming.

## Rescuers 'very brave'

Ian and Lisette McCauley were on holiday at Port Campbell when they watched as one of the men was winched to safety by an Ambulance Victoria helicopter.

"We watched ... the chap being lowered down into the water while the helicopter hovered over the water and near the cliffs which is a professional bit of flying by the helicopter pilot," Mr McCauley told the ABC.

"Then the rescuer dropped into the water again, in turbulent conditions and very close to the cliff, where there was quite heavy swell breaking.

"He swam to the person and then the two were lifted into the helicopter."

Mr McCauley praised the professionalism of the rescuers.

"Certainly the person who was in the water rescuing the person was very, very brave," he said.

"We hope [it] shows the professionalism of the pilot at Ambulance Victoria and the bravery of the person who was lowered into the water, for probably the second time to grab someone out of there."



**Surf Lifesaving officials said the pair were wearing their full personal protection gear when they went to rescue the swimmer.  
(Facebook: Craig Lands Holsteins)**

## Australian Father And Son Lifesavers Drown In Tourist Rescue Bid

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-48015753>

22 April 2019

A father and son who were volunteer lifesavers have drowned while trying to rescue a tourist swept out to sea off the Australian state of Victoria.

The boat carrying Ross Powell, 71, and his son Andrew, 32, overturned as they tried to reach the man near limestone stacks known as the Twelve Apostles.

The 30-year-old tourist was winched to safety by a rescue helicopter along with a third lifesaver from the boat.

Australian PM Scott Morrison paid tribute to the Powells.



"Surf lifesavers are selfless and brave," he said on Twitter.

"We thank them all for their service and extend our deepest sympathies to Ross and Andrew's family and friends."



**The Twelve Apostles are a popular attraction in the rugged Port Campbell National Park, Victoria**

The incident has shocked the tourist town of Port Campbell, south-west of Melbourne, where the men were experienced members of the local surf lifesaving club. Floral tributes have been left at the club and flags there are flying at half mast, Australian media reported.

The tourist, who has not been named, was said to have got into difficulties while wading at the mouth of the Sherbrook River.

The lifesaving team set off in their boat but it flipped over in the rough surf, local officials said.

Andrew Powell's partner, Amber Griffiths, described the father and son as "two of the most beautiful people to ever exist - always putting others first".

The rescued lifesaver is in a serious condition in hospital, Australian media reported. The tourist suffered hypothermia and is in a stable condition.

## 'Hero' Lifesaver Who Drowned Saving Tourist Was Expecting First Baby

<https://au.news.yahoo.com/hero-lifesaver-who-drowned-saving-tourist-was-expected-first-baby-051516112.html>

22 April 2019

A volunteer [surf lifesaver who was killed alongside his father](#) while rescuing a tourist was to become a father for the first time in August.

Dairy farmers Ross Powell, 71, and his son Andrew Powell, 32, died trying to rescue a 30-year-old man at Sherbrook River, near Port Campbell in Victoria on Sunday morning at about 10.40am.

A third rescuer and the tourist were winched to safety by an emergency helicopter, but the father and son duo died at the scene.

The small tight-knit community of Port Campbell was in mourning following their death, with Andrew's partner, Amber Griffiths, sharing her heartbreak to Facebook.



**Dairy farmers Andy Powell, 32, and Ross Powell, 72, who were also volunteer lifesavers, died trying to rescue a man at Port Campbell on Sunday. Source: Facebook/ Team Navy ASRL**

"Today (Sunday) we lost two of the most beautiful people to ever exist - always putting others first," she wrote.

"The love of my life, light of my life, father of my baby girl. My heart is broken. I miss you Andrew Powell."

Andrew was the youngest of five siblings and was awarded Young Farmer of the Year in 2017 - he was proud to have followed in his father's farming footsteps.

He played an active role in all aspects of the surf club and joined the State Emergency Service aged 16.



**The father-son duo drowned after their boat flipped trying to help a tourist who landed in trouble after wading into waters off Victoria's Great Ocean Road. Source: Nine News**



In a statement released by the family, Ross was described as "a cherished husband to Val, a dedicated father to Brett, Natalie, Dale, Kerryn and Andy, and dearly loved brother to Marea".

"He was very much loved and respected by many. Andrew (Andy) was always by his dad's side and a beloved partner to Amber, son and brother.

"We will miss our beautiful, big-hearted Andy and were so proud of the person he was – gentle, compassionate, loving and selfless – like his father. We are heartbroken."

Ross was awarded a Certificate of Merit and Royal Humane Society Bravery Award after the rescue of two people near Loch Ard Gorge on Easter Sunday 1980.

His sister, Marea, described Ross as "the most wonderful brother" and her "rock".

"My two children loved and idolised their uncle and loved their cousin Andy. Ross and Andy will forever live in our hearts," she said.

[Life Saving Victoria president Paul James wept as the rescuers were "highly experienced and long-serving members"](#) of the club, describing them as heroes.

"We know it is very treacherous down there and not a place to be swimming at all," he told reporters on Sunday.

"These brave people, these heroes, have gone out to try to help."

The incident will be investigated and a report prepared for the coroner.