

Rescuers thanked



BEACHY ESCAPE: Andrew De Leon, 17, fourth from left, who almost drowned in the Pumicestone Passage at Caloundra, stays on to enjoy his end-of-school break with his mates.

ANNE-LOUISE BROWN

PHOTOS: CADE MOONEY/CM1871

Dad says schoolie son has learnt his lesson

The parents of a Sydney schoolie who almost drowned at Bulcock Beach Wednesday paid tribute to their son's rescuers yesterday.

Ernie and Patricia De Leon, the parents of 17-year-old Andrew De Leon, rushed to the Coast on Wednesday after being told their son had been pulled unconscious from Pumicestone Passage.

Yesterday, they met some of the people responsible for saving their son's life. Andrew was very shocked when I

was phoned by a police officer who told me Andrew had been pulled from the water unconscious and blue," Mr De Leon said. "We are very grateful to the people who helped our son.

"I don't think he will underestimate the ocean again. He has learned his lesson."

Andrew and a group of friends travelled to the Coast for Schoolies Week.

About 10am on Wednesday, when attempting to swim across the passage, Andrew ran into trouble.

He was helped to shore by Brisbane dad Michael O'Rourke, quickly revived and taken to Nambour General Hospital, where he stayed overnight.

Andrew and his friends plan to stay on the Coast until tomorrow, when they will drive home to Sydney.

"I'm feeling a lot better now and I intend staying on," Andrew said.

"Everything happened so quickly and I'm just really thankful and grateful to all the people who helped me."



GRATEFUL: Andrew De Leon with his mum and dad, Patricia and Ernie.

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No jail time ordered for sex assault

MAROOCHYDORE man Robert Darryl Tanner was yesterday sentenced to nine months in jail for sexual assault.

On July 19, 2008, Tanner, 31, entered a room where two women were having sex. He felt under the other woman's underwear.