

**FLYING THE FLAG** | Our national day

# Surf hero honoured

## Service recognised at Australia Day awards ceremony

A LIFESAVING veteran who saved a kite surfer's life on the notorious Caloundra Bar on Boxing Day has been recognised with a Fisher Community Australia Day Award.

Robbie Schwartz was named Fisher Citizen of the Year for his 20 years' service as a lifesaver, at the Fisher Community Australia Day Awards hosted by Member for Fisher Peter Slipper.

"I feel very honoured and humbled that I received the award. It is really special that people have recognised what I have done in the community," Mr Schwartz said.

Mr Slipper said Mr Schwartz was one of 42 local voluntary community workers and groups who were recognised for their efforts at the 13th annual Fisher Community Australia Day Awards.

"Robbie works hard, he is enthusiastic, he's made a very positive difference to public safety and is an inspiration to those around him," Mr Slipper said.

Mr Schwartz has served at both the Kings Beach and Caloundra City surf life saving clubs, having served in that time as patrol captain, gear steward, radio operator,



**RECOGNITION:** Member for Fisher, Peter Slipper, with Inge Slipper and Fisher Citizen of the Year Robbie Schwartz.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

first aid officer, and particularly as a trainer for younger members.

His skills were put to good use on Boxing Day last year when he was involved in what he described as the most challenging rescue of his career, when he faced wild weather, massive waves and treacherous seas on the Caloundra Bar to rescue a kite surfer who was entangled, ex-

hausted and in great danger.

"He was wrapped up and entangled in his kite, and had to be untangled between waves," Mr Schwartz said. "It really was touch and go for a minute. It just gives me goose bumps to think about it and read the report into the incident."

Mr Schwartz has since had coffee with the kitesurfer, who admitted

he was extremely exhausted and unsure how much longer he could last, but had been given the "gift of life" as a result of the rescue.

The annual Fisher Community Australia Day Awards were established by Mr Slipper in 2000 to recognise those who volunteer their own time to make their community a better place to live.