

# The Geraldine News

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## GVFB shows last year was no fluke



Geraldine's Volunteer Fire Brigade road rescue team finished second in the 2017 Australasian Rescue Challenge held in Hamilton. Photos: UFBA/ARRO.

Geraldine Volunteer Fire Brigade's champion road rescue team has finished a close second to Whitianga in the 2017 Australasian Rescue Challenge.

This event, won by Geraldine in 2016, was held in Hamilton from 20-23 July and included ten teams from Australia, one from Hong Kong and nine from New Zealand. The Geraldine team was understandably unsure about whether to go back and try to defend their title.

"It was a bit of a toss-up," says team leader Graeme Mould. "Our performance at the South Island event leading up to the Australasians wasn't good enough to get a funded place so we had to pay our own way. That was a bit tough because we're all saving to get to the worlds in Romania. We decided to go – even though our second medic Travis couldn't make it because of other commitments. We sort of felt obliged to return the trophy and we thought it could turn out to be very good training for the worlds. It was well worth the effort; in fact, it was gold."

The Geraldine team was allowed to use a ring-in to temporarily replace Travis and they were pleased to get the services of Jodie Rainsford from the Wanaka VFB. They knew of Jodie's skills through having competed with the Wanaka VFB in other events.

Jodie is a fire service medic just as Travis is and she says she was "stoked" to be asked to go to Hamilton to assist the Geraldine team.

"It was fantastic. I learned a huge amount



to bring back to my brigade, from competing and from the workshops and symposiums that went on around the event. The Wanaka brigade members were pretty impressed when I came home with the silver medal. As I said at the prizegiving in Hamilton, a shift to Geraldine is not out of the question for me."

Although they were not placed first, second or third in any of the phases of the competition – called controlled, entrapped, time critical, and trauma challenge – the Geraldine team's consistency across all the disciplines saw them finish second overall.

"We got two 4ths and a 6th place and that put us just behind the Whitianga VFB team,"

says Graeme. "They've been a team for about 15 years and have never won it before. Our success proves that last year was no fluke. It's a huge confidence boost heading into the worlds."

When *The Geraldine News* spoke to Graeme, he had just received communication from the Australasian Road Rescue Organisation who run the competitions.

"The letter said that our second place entitles us to compete at next year's world championships in South Africa. We're not making any decisions about that until after we get back from Romania."

Neil Wilson



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