

## THE NEW ZEALAND BRAVERY MEDAL (N.Z.B.M.)

### Peter Alexander HANNE

Date of action: 5 October 2008

Date of award: 2 April 2011

#### *Citation*

Late at night on 5 October 2008 a truck driver was driving north from Gisborne when his 23-tonne vehicle and trailer jack-knifed and ran off the edge of the road in the Waioeka Gorge, south of Opotiki. The vehicle ended up on its side, with the trailer unit hanging precariously at a 45-degree angle and the cab dangling underneath it a metre above the Waioeka River. The entire unit was in danger of sliding into the water. The driver was trapped in the cab and had sustained broken ribs. Eyewitnesses describe the truck as being in a very precarious position and the top of the cab was starting to split due to pressure from the trailer unit immediately above it.

Mr Peter Hanne, aged 18 years, who lived nearby, was alerted to the incident by a passing motorist and immediately went to the scene. He climbed three metres down from the road to reach the crash site. He crawled under and through the wreckage and up to the driver's window, which he smashed with a wheel brace and assisted the driver from the cab and up the river bank to safety.

Throughout the rescue there were sounds of creaking and groaning metal from the truck as it continued to move. At one stage the driver thought it was going to topple into the water. Had it done so, Mr Hanne would have been crushed and both he and the driver would probably have lost their lives.

Peter Hanne could have watched and waited for emergency services to arrive; however, he displayed bravery and disregard for his own safety in going to the immediate assistance of the trapped driver. As the truck was moving throughout the rescue attempt, he could not be sure that there was enough time to effect a rescue and that he would emerge from the attempt unharmed.