



Shona Lorigan
Organisation for the Rescue and Research of Cetaceans in Australia
(ORRCA)

Upon receiving the NSW Wildlife Council grant, an order was placed with Phillips Racing Pty Ltd, who produce Phillips sails. They produced 20 large black mesh slings with alloy handles which ORRCA collected on Tuesday March 13, 2018. These lightweight and flexible slings will be used by ORRCA members in seven different locations along the NSW coastline.

The slings have been forwarded to key locations along the NSW coastline in preparation for whale and dolphin strandings. These slings will always remain the property of ORRCA and therefore, if the volunteer members leave the organisation, they will be moved to another volunteer to ensure they will always be used for whale and dolphin rescue and rehabilitation.

A set of three slings has remained with the grant recipient Shona Lorigan in Sydney's Northern suburbs. During ORRCA's training season from February through to May in 2018, the slings were used to train new volunteers at three training dates; March 24, 2018 in Port Stephens, April 21, 2018 in Kurnell and April 29, 2018 in Byron Bay. The final 8 Slings were given to ORRCA's Vice President Leesa Pratt on May 15, 2018 to complete their distribution to Port Macquarie, Wollongong and the Central Coast. The final distribution of the 20 slings is as follows:

- 1) Byron Bay 3 slings
- 2) Port Macquarie 3 slings
- 3) Port Stephens 3 slings
- 4) Central Coast 2 slings
- 5) Sydney North 3 slings
- 6) Sydney South 3 slings
- 7) Wollongong 3 slings



Presentation of the Slings to David Dettman (Newcastle/Port Stephens) And Tiffany Lee (Byron Bay)



The slings were used at a neonate Humpback whale stranding in the Illawarra area on July 5, 2018. Just as described in the grant application, the slings arrived at the site with the first ORRCA volunteers who arrived. The slings were used to safely stabilise the young whale as it was being buffeted in the whitewash and pushed against the rocks, before the large heavy whale sling arrived with National Parks and Wildlife to move the whale further up the beach.



Photo Credit: Michelle Toms ORRCA

Benefits of the Grant for ORRCA

Though whale and dolphin incidents can occur at any time throughout the year, the ORRCA team is busiest during the winter months and thus our training season is completed over the warmer summer months and finished by May to ensure our team is ready. The slings were produced in time for the 2018 training season and enabled ORRCA 's 2018 Senior trainers Shona Lorigan and Ronny Ling to train new members and key ORRCA personnel to receive their slings by mid-May.



The slings are lightweight, easy to carry and extremely flexible as the number of slings used is increased or decreased depending on the size of the animal. They are used only to move the animals a short distance. There are considerable safety risks faced by ORRCA members when moving such large heavy animals as whales and dolphins. Specialised equipment is needed to ensure this is completed with safety of personnel as a priority. Having a range of proper equipment and a range of key equipment spread out over a range of locations will allow ORRCA to respond faster and keep our members safe. Through the NSW Wildlife Grant, the ORRCA team has been able to both increase the volume of available slings as well as spread it over a much larger area of coastline. This will have an enormous benefit for ORRCA's ability to respond to incidents and a much-improved outcome for the whales and dolphins we care for.



Slings in Use Photo Credit Leigh Mansfield ORRCA



Byron Bay Training – members practice using the whale/dolphin slings

