

FAXED *Sylvia*

Reluctant hero dives in to save boy in drain



By DEAN GOULD

A LISMORE City Council ranger who pulled a drowning boy from a fast-flowing drain on Saturday said he would always remember the terrified look on the boy's face.

Stuart Thomson risked his own life by jumping in to grab the boy trapped by the sheer suction of water in the flooded creek in Kadina Street, Geonellabah.

"The only thing sticking out of the water were his lips and his nose," Mr Thomson said yesterday.

"Just the look on his face - he was terrified, just terrified. He was saying 'please help me, don't let me die'."

Mr Thomson was in the area responding to a call from a resident when he saw a group of boys milling around the small creek at the Kadina Street end of the Richmond Birdwing Butterfly Walk around 3pm.

He then realised they were holding the arm of a boy, aged 11 or 12, as he was being sucked into a drain pipe.

"I couldn't budge him at first. I pulled his head out of the water. I jumped in but almost got sucked under myself," the ranger said.

Mr Thomson jumped in a second time and pulled the boy with all his strength, releasing him from the deadly water trap.

"I don't know whether he would have come out the other side (of the drain) but I didn't want to let him go and risk it.

"I don't really want to make a fuss about it. It was just lucky I was there."

The boy escaped relatively unscathed, thanked Mr Thomson and then went off with his friends.

"He didn't hang around. I'm sure he hasn't told his mum yet. I don't think he was meant to be there."

■ DRAIN RESCUE: Stuart Thomson, pictured at the drain on the Field reserve, Kadina Street, Lismore where last Saturday he saved a child caught during recent heavy rain. **PICTURE: JACQUELYN WAGNER**