CAPABILITY - WHAT WE DO

In order to deliver a professional water safety service to the estimated 7 million people that visit the beach every year, Surf Life Saving NSW needs the appropriate gear and equipment, as well as the training structures in place to develop our member’s skills.

The membership of Surf Life Saving NSW encompasses a broad spectrum of the community with 72,000 members registered in the 2015/16 season. Of these, 21,000 are currently involved in patrols while the rest is comprised of Nippers and other members who contribute to the successful functioning of the surf lifesaving movement. Our volunteers play a significant and ongoing role in our ability to provide a surf lifesaving service during the patrol season of September through to April each year and this is reflected in the 848,014 volunteer hours they contributed last season.

It costs approximately $60,000 to purchase the required gear and equipment to establish patrolling service from start-up. This equates to approximately $13,000 per year for each club when the lifespan of equipment is taken into consideration.

The NSW coastline is over 1,700 kilometres in length with in excess of 800 accessible beaches as well as at least 300 rock platforms for people to enjoy. This is a huge and challenging area for surf lifesavers to cover but our assets are strategically placed to ensure strong coverage in the most heavily frequented areas. Some of this is by tradition with a number of our clubs dating back to the early years of the 20th century, while others have emerged in response to a growing community need. For example Salt SLSC was established in 2004 when the Salt/Casuarina Beach area became heavily developed.

2015/16 MEMBERSHIP HEAT MAP

Surf Life Saving NSW’s membership in 2015/16 was 72,670. 48% (n=35,006) of surf lifesavers are members of clubs within the Sydney Metropolitan Area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLSNSW AWARDS</th>
<th>AWARDS DELIVERED</th>
<th>PROFICIENT MEMBERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Resuscitation</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>4,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide First Aid</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>3,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silver Medallion Beach</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>3,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB Driver</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>2,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRB Crew</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>4,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bronze Medallion</td>
<td>2,904</td>
<td>13,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surf Rescue Certificate</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE VALUE OF SLSNSW TO THE COMMUNITY

2014/15 REPORT

FOR EVERY $1 INVESTED, $46 IS RETURNED

$1.9 BILLION VALUE OF LIVES SAVED & INJURIES PREVENTED

22% OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

78% PATROLLING NSW BEACHES

848,014 VOLUNTEER HOURS 2015/16
ASSET RANGES HEAT MAP

ASSET RANGES
- Surf Life Saving Club (5km)
- Rescue Water Craft (15km)
- Jet Rescue Boat (20km)
- Offshore Boat Rescue (30km)

260 KM

Figure 23

ASSET RANGE MAP
Surf Life Saving consists of 129 Clubs, 35 Rescue Water Crafts, 2 Jet Rescue Boats and 1 Offshore Rescue Boat.
IMPACT OF SHARKS ON SLSNSW

Following increased sightings and shark encounters in 2015, there were heightened demands on our surf lifesaving services out of our patrolling season. As our patrolling season didn’t start until Saturday, 19th September (start of NSW school holidays) there was a considerable drain on volunteer resources over the winter break, which is typically the quieter time of year for surf lifesavers. This resulted in increased callouts to our Surf Emergency Response System.

In the Far North Coast area between July and the end of September 2015, our Surf Emergency Response System received 53 shark related callouts in comparison with the corresponding period of 2014 where there were just 4 calls through the system. This is an incredible surge of 1,225%. The callouts had a significant impact on support services such as Rescue Water Crafts and Jet Rescue Boats as well as increased expenses for NSW clubs. There has also been more demands on surf lifesavers and other SLSNSW personnel to respond to escalating enquiries from both the media and general public.

Figure 24

5 YEAR SHARK SIGHTINGS
Over the past 5 years the number of shark sightings in NSW has increased with 324 sightings in 2015/16.

CASE STUDY - SEASON OF SHARKS

There are many theories about why the summer of 2015/16 will always be remembered for the large shark presence off the NSW coast. Some believe it is a natural migration pattern and others put it down to a plentiful food supply in the warmer waters.

While science seeks to understand, there is little doubt that those surf lifesavers on the frontline played an important part in reassuring their community but their efforts took a toll on both the volunteers and their equipment.

Rescuers unite in joint effort
While the vast majority of sightings occurred on the Far North Coast, surf lifesavers from across the state participated in operations. In July 2015 the Northern Region Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service and a Duty Officer assisted other emergency responders to help save the life a male body boarder at Lighthouse Beach, Ballina, after he was mauled by a Great White.

Surf lifesavers were involved in clearing the water after suspected sightings, assisting Councils and Police in closing beaches and also assisting in providing first aid treatment after shark encounters.

It was a heavy workload for our volunteers. Between July 2015 and June 2016 there were 324 sightings state-wide that surf lifesavers were tasked to attend as well as eight reported shark attacks and one fatality in February 2015.