

SurfLIFE

ISSUE 42 – April 2020



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

AUSSIE LIFESAVERS *share* Surf Rescue know-how with Thai Lifeguards

A team of Australian Surf Life Saving trainers recently travelled to Phuket in Thailand to run lifeguard, junior lifesaver and water safety training programs for local lifeguards.



The week-long training program was run by Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) through the Australian Lifeguard Service (ALS) and was supported by the Australian Consulate-General in Phuket, the Phuket Lifeguard Service and the Phuket Hotels Association. It was hosted by the Phuket Lifeguard Service and its founder Khun Vitanya Chuayuan.

Forty-two Thai lifeguards received training in pool and ocean rescue skills and 54 high school students received training in personal water safety and rescue.

Australian Consul-General Matthew Barclay and Deputy Governor of Phuket and Mayor of Patong said the bond between Australian and Thai lifeguards was very strong.

“I am looking forward to more skills exchanges between lifeguards from Phuket and Australia in the future,” said Consul-General Matthew Barclay.

Australian Lifeguard Service’s international training program coordinator, Steve Allan, from the NSW South Coast, said that the week provided the opportunity for Australian trainers to work with local Thai trainers to facilitate ongoing, localised training.

“Through the ALS’s ‘train the trainer’ approach, local Thai trainers delivered high-quality instruction to eager trainees, strengthening the ongoing working relationships with surf lifesavers in Phuket,” said Steve Allen.



A closing ceremony, hosted by the Australian Consulate-General in Phuket and the Phuket Lifeguard Service, was held to celebrate the end of a very successful training program and to promote the ongoing future collaboration of Thai organisations and agencies towards a common goal of coastal risk management, water safety and drowning prevention. It also recognised the efforts of Australian Lifeguard Service trainers from SLSNSW who spent the week in Phuket training their local counterparts.

The closing ceremony was attended by the Deputy Governor of Phuket, Mayor of Patong, Commissioner of the Dept of Education, Consular representatives from Australia, France, Chile and Brazil, Patong Police Department Disaster Management team, Patong Municipal Council members, Phuket Hotels Association

and the Phuket Chamber of Commerce.

Training program coordinator David Field said the event was an opportunity to present the second edition of the Thai Lifesaving Manual. The manual was adapted and translated from Surf Life Saving Australia’s Public Safety Training Manual.

A Thai-language version of a children’s book which promotes water safety was also launched at the event. The book, Pirate Kim: Let’s Go Swim by Thu-Trang Tran, was published with support from the Australian Government’s Direct Aid Program.

Two highlights of the ceremony were Australian trainer, Lachlan Field’s demonstration of the capabilities of SLSNSW’s UAV (drone) technology and a demonstration by Thai trainees of a fast-paced rescue scenario to showcase their new skills and knowledge.

Forty-two Thai lifeguards received training in pool and ocean rescue skills and 54 high school students received training in personal water safety and rescue.

Trailblazers march to celebrate

WOMEN IN SURF LIFE SAVING

On International Women's Day on Sunday 8 March 2020, some of Surf Life Saving's pioneering women formed a 'Colour Party' and led the official March Past at the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships at Swansea Belmont SLSC. They marched to recognise the contribution women have made to the Surf Life Saving movement throughout its 113-year history.





The first female surf lifesavers began patrolling in 1980, when Surf Life Saving Australia awarded women completing training with their Bronze Medallions. While this year marks the 40th anniversary of women's formal participation as active surf lifesavers, the involvement of women in Surf Life Saving began well before 1980. Women have had an active role in the movement since its inception – including those who served as surf lifesavers during WWII and were awarded their Bronze Medallions retrospectively just a couple of years ago.

The All Female Colour Party at the March Past at the 2020 State Championships, on International Women's Day, was first of many activities planned to celebrate the achievements of women during this, the 40th anniversary year. A group of Surf Life Saving's most outstanding current and pioneering women marched in the event on Sunday morning at Blacksmiths Beach.

Jenny Kenny, from Cudgen Headland on the NSW Far North Coast, who was among the first women to achieve their Bronze Medallions in 1980, marched in the parade. She has volunteered continuously for almost 40 years and the same week it was announced that she was one of five people nationally (three of them are women) to be awarded Life Membership of Surf Life Saving Australia. This is a significant achievement and a rare honour that only 296 people have ever achieved. Jenny continues to be a trailblazer for women's involvement in Surf Life Saving, with her appointment to the most senior official position at the 2020 NSW Championships, Carnival Referee.

"The women in the March Past ranged in age from 14 to 80, which I think was fabulous. It was a really good representative team of people that have been involved in all different levels of the organisation over that time and have done some fabulous, fabulous work," said Jenny Kenny.

"Celebrating 40 years of women in Surf Life Saving, it was wonderful to share it with a group of women that have contributed so much."

Photo left: The International Women's Day Colour Party - NSW 2020 State Championships March Past

Passionate surf lifesaver Cathy Cole, from Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club, was also among the women marching as part of the International Women's Day Colour Party. She was instrumental in researching and locating Terrigal's wartime female lifesavers. Then in 2017 she coordinated the First Female Lifesavers recognition event, where women who were wartime lifesavers were presented with their Bronze Medallions by the Governor General.

"Celebrating 40 years of women in Surf Life Saving, it was wonderful to share it with a group of women that have contributed so much," said Cathy Cole.

"It's so fabulous to see women so totally involved now in every aspect of Surf Life Saving - and welcomed and appreciated. This hasn't always been the case - but certainly is now," she said.

Also joining the International Women's Day Colour Party and marching at last weekend's State Championships was; Julie Farmer, from Cooks Hill; Kerry Clancy from Sawtell; Ula Dalton from Caves Beach; Jenny Drury from South Curl Curl; Kerry Armstrong Smith from Umina; Shannon Fox from Wollongong City, Maureen Worth from North Narrabeen, Robyn Carr from Ocean Beach and Brittany Banks from North Bondi

March Past are a traditional event at surf sports carnivals. Teams march in formation on the sand, carrying traditional Surf Life Saving 'rescue reels' - accompanied by a bagpipe band. Colour Parties form part of the March Past event, their history stemming from the military tradition where servicepeople and volunteers marched carrying flags. It's one of the more unusual surf carnival events but one of the most spectacular and colourful.

Surf Life Saving NSW recently launched an initiative to identify pioneering women in the Surf Life Saving movement who drove change and paved the way for all women to become active surf lifesavers. The role women have played in keeping beachgoers safe throughout SLSNSW's 113-year history, will be celebrated throughout 2020 - the 40th anniversary year.

More information is available on the SLSNSW Celebrating Women in Surf Life Saving website.

"It's so fabulous to see women so totally involved now in every aspect of Surf Life Saving - and welcomed and appreciated."





Margaret Osborn takes the belt in a training rescue swim at Manly. Others in the team are (from left) J. Smith, G. Dalbor and E. Jozic.

GIRLS JUMP AT A CHANCE TO SAVE LIVES

Drowning swimmers aren't fussy whether a man or a woman comes to their rescue, says would-be lifesaver Margaret Osborn. Just as long as someone comes, she says.

There's a good chance that Margaret and some of her girl friends will soon play an active



Kim and Kath... making tea isn't their cuppa.

Kim and Kath want to be iron girls



OUR LIFESAVER GIRLS ARE BRONZED OFF

TWO young girls who dreamed of becoming Australia's first women lifesavers have seen their hopes shattered.

It's men only if you're drowning

By PAUL MANN

The girls wish Mr Ian Byrne, laid out. "It's all because of a few old dinosaurs who want to see lifeguarding as the last fortress of male supremacy to fall to the women."

But the cast of these girls are better than some have seen (what and their hair have been given the SIAA because...)

the boys why can't I get the same recognition as them?"

Mr Farranger said no matter what the girls had achieved the men only rule would stand.

Mr Spitzer said: "We would be quite happy to have the girls as assistants... there are no objections from us but we have to do what the..."

the boys why can't I get the same recognition as them?"

Added Kim's father: "The whole thing is ridiculous, the girls will have to struggle with the lines. Besides, they need more members. They're waiting about at many and women's societies might be put the list"

that is or any other members of the SIAA a male or national level were being hard-headed. He said the SIAA committee is studying the question of women membership. But he also admitted that it could be as long as it takes for a decision is made. "Meanwhile the 'men only' rule will apply" he said.

The last word came...

SLNSW Archives:
A selection of photos and newspaper articles from the 1980s featuring some of Surf Life Saving's pioneering women.

Aussie Lifesavers Support **NEW Gaza Surf Club**

The Palestinian territory of Gaza isn't well known for its beaches. Its association with the Australian Surf Life Saving movement, however, dates back to World War II and two Gazan surf lifesavers are determined to set up a new Gaza Beach Surf Lifesaving Club - with the assistance of North Steyne SLSC in Manly and the Gaza Surf Project.

Gaza is a city ringed by fortifications. It runs regularly without power, has few cinemas or sporting clubs and a handful of parks where children can play. However, Gaza has a 45km stretch of beach on the Mediterranean Sea which offers its residents one of the few places they can relax, swim and socialise.

Hasan Alhabil is one of a handful of lifeguards who were employed by the municipality to patrol Gaza beach - after drownings on the beach reached an horrific 44 during one particularly bad summer.

Thanks to the work of the Gaza lifeguards, the average number of drownings is now down to seven a year. However, Hasan and fellow lifesaver Mohammed Saleh are determined to reduce the number of fatalities on the beach even further.

"We want to build a lifesaving club of our own, for Gazans, to keep people safe. Even though the sea is more gentle in Gaza than in Australia, unfortunately,

still many people drown because they cannot swim safely," Hasan told the Guardian in a recent interview.

Last month, Hasan Alhabil and Mohammed Saleh were in Sydney as guests of the Gaza Surf Project and North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club, training to be Gaza's first qualified lifesavers. They aim to return to Palestine to establish its first surf club: The Gaza Beach Surf Lifesaving Club.

The Sydney-based Northern Beaches Committee for Palestine group, organised and funded the Gaza Surf Project. It took nearly four years for them to take the project from concept to reality. They held fundraising events to pay for airfares for Saleh and Alhabil and then began the complex process of arranging visas and passage out of Gaza, through Egypt, to Australia.

In addition to gaining surf lifesaving skills, Saleh and Alhabil are passionate about replicating the strong





community culture that exists within Australian surf clubs and also Surf Life Saving's successful Nippers program - to encourage and train the next generation of Gazan lifesavers.

"I want children in Gaza to learn to enjoy the beach and to be safe when they swim. I want to establish a program like Nippers to teach children about lifesaving," Saleh said in an interview with the Guardian.

"We want to re-create a system like [that] here in Australia, that involves the whole society. Everyone working together to make it a safe place to share," Saleh said.

In a territory with 60% youth unemployment, a surf club can serve as a place of community and an outlet for physical activity is important for young Palestinians.

Hasan Alhabil, a former refugee, was taught to swim by an older brother, and as a teenager became one of a handful of lifeguards employed by the municipality to patrol Gaza beach.

"The beach is all we have, it's the only recreation, the only entertainment for the Gazan people," Alhabil says. "But even there we have problems. Because there is no electricity and power often, raw sewage is pushed into the sea. So that means there is less space where it is safe for people to swim.

"Here in Australia, the beach is very safe, it's very clean and well-organised. The facilities you have here, we don't have in Gaza."

Saleh and Alhabil spent last

month with North Steyne SLSC, on Sydney's Manly Beach. They completed their Bronze Medallion and Surf Rescue Certificates - the fundamental Australian lifesaving qualifications. They also met with several other clubs to learn about establishing Nippers programs.

The president of the North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club, Chris Gibbs Stewart, says it was an important project to support and the club plans to continue assisting Saleh and Alhabil to establish the Gaza Beach Surf Lifesaving Club.

"Lifesaving is, of course, about keeping people safe on the beach, but it's about more than that, it's about building a community, building a sense of family. We are trying to teach that culture we have here," said Chris.

"We want to stay in contact and keep providing support, whether that is sending

over equipment or training materials, or sending people over there to assist. We want to plant the seed that becomes the Gaza Beach Surf Lifesaving club."

Now that Saleh and Hasan's surf lifesaving training is complete and they have returned home to Gaza, the Northern Beaches Committee for Palestine is now turning its attention to fundraising for equipment and facilities for the new Gaza Beach Surf Club.

"We'd like to be able to fund the purchase of a caravan so club members have a place to change and a patrol tent for the beach. We'd also like to arrange for Australian Surf Life Saving training materials

to be translated from English into Arabic," said Sonja Sedmak from the Gaza Surf Project.

As Australian surf lifesavers know, surf clubs are important and vibrant community hubs and have a culture of support and inclusivity. Surf Life Saving NSW wishes Saleh and Alhabil well with their project to replicate the successful Australian Surf Life Saving Club model in Gaza.

If you would like more information on how you can support the Gaza Surf Project, please contact Sonja Sedmack on 0405 843 306.

The photographs in this article are courtesy of photographer Mike Bowers and Guardian Australia.

"Lifesaving is, of course, about keeping people safe on the beach, but it's about more than that, it's about building a community, building a sense of family."



HEARTSINE 350P SURF CLUB OFFER

Call now to buy a Defibrillator

Heartsine 350P Semi-Automatic Defibrillator

Features

- ✓ Highest protection against - dust, sand and water - IP56
- ✓ Portable & Lightweight
- ✓ Simple maintenance battery & pad pack, four year shelf life
- ✓ Endorsed by SLSA as featured in the gear & equipment list

Free Extras included:

- ✓ AED Cabinet
- ✓ Premium Prep Kit
- ✓ AED Signage
- ✓ CPR Chart
- ✓ Free Shipping



NOW
\$1,695
SAVE \$765!

For more information or to order, contact Karle Codd
02 9471 8021 | kcodd@surflifesaving.com.au

LIFESAVERS TAKE TO THE SKIES

Surf Life Saving NSW has had a long association with aviation over its 112-year history – operating both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters for search and rescue and marine creature surveillance. Now a new breed of ‘dry lifesaver’ is being trained to use unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) technology to help keep beachgoers safe on the NSW coastline.



In 2018 Surf Life Saving NSW became a gazetted emergency service organisation. Volunteers can be asked to respond to calls for assistance alongside police, ambulance and other emergency service organisations.

To enhance its capability, SLSNSW has established an extensive Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) program to assist with beach safety, coastal surveillance, surf sports event management and search and rescue. UAVs, or drones as they're more commonly known, have quickly become an integral part of Surf Life Saving operations.

In December 2018, Surf Life Saving Australia partnered with Westpac to launch the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Drone Program. This saw 35 drones take to the skies across the NSW coastline as part of Australia's first comprehensive approach to search and rescue using innovative drone technology.



The Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Drones are used by surf lifesavers and lifeguards to support rescue operations along Australia's coastline and assist with critical response surveillance during emergencies.

In addition to search and rescue operations, SLSNSW has partnered with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) for marine creature surveillance and operates 30 UAVs through this partnership. An additional 25 training UAVs will be added to the SLSNSW fleet during 2020.

UAVs are now used extensively in surf lifesaving patrols. The UAVs used are in the sub-2kg category and incorporate a high-definition camera and loudspeaker. Operating in almost 50 locations, SLSNSW

currently has almost 70 drones working constantly along the NSW coastline.

"We initially introduced drones as a tool to complement all our other assets and resources. With the increase in technology, they're becoming an essential part of our search and rescue operations," said Paul Hardy, UAV Operations Coordinator and Chief Remote Pilot.

With over 70 drones in the air along the NSW coastline, keeping track of their exact location can be challenging. SLSNSW employs a number of flight tracking technologies

including AVCRM (a cloud-based regulatory and compliance portal for all UAV operations) and AIRDATA (a cloud-based system to provide additional visibility to the UAV team on flight compliance and aircraft diagnostics) - which is used to track and log all flights.

Surf Life Saving operates in both the Commercial Excluded and Remote Operators Certificate (ReOC) categories and has advanced RePL trained pilots in many locations. It adheres to all the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) safety requirements.

"With the increase in technology, [drones are] becoming an essential part of our search and rescue operations"

Lifesavers with

PRIDE

push the float out

March 2020 was a huge month for Lifesavers with Pride (LWP). The group was announced as the “Principal Float” in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and LWP helped to forge a new partnership between Surf Life Saving Australia and ACON Health’s Pride in Sport Program.



Photo: Stuart Humphries

Gary Driscoll, Chair of Lifesavers with Pride, said that after 15 years of participation in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, they were delighted to have been asked to be Principal Float.

“We’ve won awards for our participation in Mardi Gras in the past – including ‘Best Float’ and ‘Best Choreography’ but this year the event organisers asked us to be principal float - which was a huge coup and a reflection of the hard work of the committee,” said Gary Driscoll.

“There were 190 floats in the parade - and we are scheduled half-way through. When we got to Taylor Square, the parade stopped for us and we turned our whole routine sideways and performed our routine from beginning to end on the spot, for the TV cameras, judges and dignitaries,” he said.

Surf Life Saving NSW CEO, Steven Pearce, who marched with Lifesavers with Pride at this year’s Mardi Gras, said that LWP’s involvement in Mardi Gras played an important role in promoting the welcoming, inclusive and progressive attitude that exists in the Surf Life Saving movement.

“This was the second time I marched in the Mardi Gras with Lifesavers With Pride. They do a terrific job in promoting inclusiveness within our movement and in communicating surf safety messaging in the LGBTI community. I couldn’t have been prouder to have marched with them again this year,” said Steven Pearce.

President of Surf Life Saving NSW, George Shales, who also marched in the year’s Mardi Gras parade, said that it demonstrates Surf Life Saving is for everyone.

“When it comes to drowning, the ocean doesn’t discriminate - so neither should we. Beaches and surf clubs should be inclusive spaces where everyone feels welcome,” said George Shales.

Gary Driscoll said that Lifesavers With Pride had been working closely with Surf Life Saving Australia to create a more inclusive, progressive and welcoming Surf Life Saving culture for the LGBTQ+ community – including the new partnership with ACON Health.

“ACON Health’s Pride in Sport Program is the only sporting inclusion program specifically designed to assist national and state sporting organisations and clubs with the inclusion of sexuality and gender diverse employees, participants, coaches, volunteers and spectators,” said Gary Driscoll.

“The new partnership with the ACON Health Pride in Sport Program will help Surf Life Saving organisations across Australia to develop inclusiveness policies, set targets and be ranked on a national index,” he said.



RIPPER NIPPER

saves four lives!

Fourteen-year-old Nipper, Clayton Schilg was awarded Rescue of the Month for a rescue he performed in January 2020 which saved the lives of four people caught in a strong rip on unpatrolled Wooyung Beach.



Clayton and his family, who are from Brisbane, were holidaying at Wooyung Beach on the New South Wales Far North Coast on Thursday 9 January when the incident occurred.

At 2pm a group of holidaymakers from Victoria had decided to go for a swim at the unpatrolled beach. They got stuck in a strong rip and were getting swept out to sea when Clayton heard them shouting for assistance.

Thinking quickly, Clayton grabbed a nearby surfboard

and headed into the surf to provide assistance.

There were five swimmers in the group caught in the rip. One man in particular was struggling to stay above the water.

When Clayton reached the man, who was panicking, he tried to grab Clayton and inadvertently pulled him under the water. Clayton's surf lifesaving training had prepared him to deal with this situation and he was able to free himself.

"One of the guys was in a bad way so I put him on top of the board," Clayton said in an interview with the Tweed Daily News.

"Then I got two to hang onto either side of the board while I pulled it from the front and another man, the brother of the guy on the board, hung onto my waist."

Clayton helped four of the men to shore on the board.

"I knew if I got past the dumpers, I would be fine and catch the white wash," Clayton said.

“They weren’t kicking, they were all really tired. I was trying to control the nose from the front of the board and push the nose down into the waves so it didn’t flip everyone off. The board was so heavy I couldn’t catch the waves in.”

Clayton estimated he spent five minutes negotiating the waves and the strong rip current.

One of the Victorian men, 28-year-old holidaymaker Ben Jeffrey, had ingested water and was in a bad way. Clayton put him in the recovery position and a registered nurse staying at the caravan park helped keep him conscious.

Ben Jeffrey later told Clayton that before he was rescued he was so exhausted he was ‘within a minute’ of giving up.

SLSNSW Far North Coast Duty Officer, Jimmy Keough said that Clayton’s response was remarkable.

“For a junior lifesaver to have the initiative to respond to a large group of people in distress in that way is remarkable,” Jimmy Keough said.

“For him to voluntarily put himself in that situation, but also have the skills and ability to manage it so competently, is outstanding for himself and Surf Life Saving for the training and the skills they give junior lifesavers,” he said.

NSW Ambulance was tasked to assist after a member of the public called triple-zero (000). Jimmy Keough said that Surf Life Saving NSW helped get ambulance four-wheel-drive vehicles onto the beach.

Paramedics stabilised Mr Jeffrey and he was taken to Tweed Heads District Hospital for observation.

The Geelong couple were on their way back from a holiday on the Gold Coast when they visited a friend at the local caravan park and decided to swim at the unpatrolled beach.

“We mistakenly thought it was safe because of the amount of people at the beach,” Ms Campbell said in an interview with the Tweed Daily News.

“Time slowed down for me as I watched Clayton bring them back in.

“Ben says he only had another minute in him. He said he had given up, laid on his back and looked at the sky and thought

it looked nice. I think 30 more seconds and he had enough,” she said.

Clayton, who is a Nipper, gives credit to his Surf Life Saving Club for teaching him with his lifesaving skills.

“The Tweed Heads Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Club gave me these lifesaving skills when I completed my Surf Rescue Certificate and did rescue scenarios,” Clayton said.

“I recommend everyone who has the chance to join their local SLSC. I couldn’t have done it without them,” he said.

Surf Life Saving NSW congratulates Clayton on his remarkable rescue which saved the lives of four people and his Rescue of the Month Award.

“For him to voluntarily put himself in that situation, but also have the skills and ability to manage it so competently, is outstanding for himself and Surf Life Saving for the training and the skills they give junior lifesavers”



THE DAY THE APOCALYPSE CAME TO BATEMANS BAY

New Year's Eve 2019 was shaping up to be a busy summer's day at Malua Bay on the NSW Far South Coast. The forecast was for hot weather and holidaymakers were preparing to hit the beach to cool off.

Bateman's Bay Surf Life Saving Club volunteers couldn't have anticipated the bushfires that would ravage their community that day and the pivotal role they would play in saving thousands of lives.

By 10am bushfires were bearing down on Malua Bay and thousands of people, pets and livestock were seeking refuge on the beach. The surf club had become an evacuation centre and volunteer surf lifesavers had mobilised a response team.

Bateman's Bay Club Captain Anthony Bellette said the first warning he got about the unfolding disaster was a text message from Emergency Services telling residents to evacuate to the beach and seek shelter there.

"I had a look at the wind direction and it was then that I thought this could get real. It was at that point that I sent a message to our callout team asking for them to come to the club because I thought we could become an evacuation point," said Anthony

"Straight away we had cars pulling up to the surf club. We had too many cars in the car park so we distributed high-vis vests and club radios and started trying to control the traffic. Soon we had hundreds of cars overflowing into the park opposite the club.

"I sent a message to some clubbies who were on their way and asked them to get food and water for 500 people. They said 'how do we cater for 500 people?' I said we're going to need everything! We're going to need nappies, baby wipes – everything!



“As more people started arriving, we ushered them into the club. We printed registration forms and by the end of the day we had 1,270 people registered and accounted for as safe.

“The smoke started to get thick before the fires arrived and people started having respiratory problems. I put the call in to the local chemist requesting Ventolin puffers. They said take 10 and bring back what you don’t use.

“As spot fires started approaching we could see the houses across the bay lighting up. I spoke to the team and we decided that the surf club might not be the safest place to stay. So we moved everyone down onto the beach. All the guys did an awesome job getting people down there and keeping them calm.

“We organised our buggy to collect people in the streets who couldn’t get to the club – elderly people. We had the police jump in the buggy with

us and tell people to evacuate who were trying to defend their homes with hoses.

“We had 12 clubbies helping us on the day. We made an announcement asking for help and other volunteers jumped on board to help including three nurses and a doctor.

“We had to evacuate a guy having severe respiratory problems. We got him into a police car and a club member

“The bravery, confidence and kindness of each and every Surf Life Saving member on that day was extraordinary”

accompanied him all the way to the hospital while giving him oxygen therapy.

“At 10pm we established an overnight rostering system. Our members slept for three hours then came back on duty for three hours. We even had two people rostered on the roof spotting fires.

“The next morning when we woke up the local butcher brought 50kgs of meat and we got the BBQ started up and

began cooking! Everyone was given breakfast.”

Stories from the community are now starting to emerge about the calm, professional leadership displayed by Batemans Bay Surf Life Saving Club members as they responded to the bushfire crisis.

Former Australian Wallaby and Bronte Surf Life Saving Club member, Al Baxter was among those who sought shelter at

Batemans Bay surf club. He and his wife Anna and their two children spent the night at Malua Bay after being

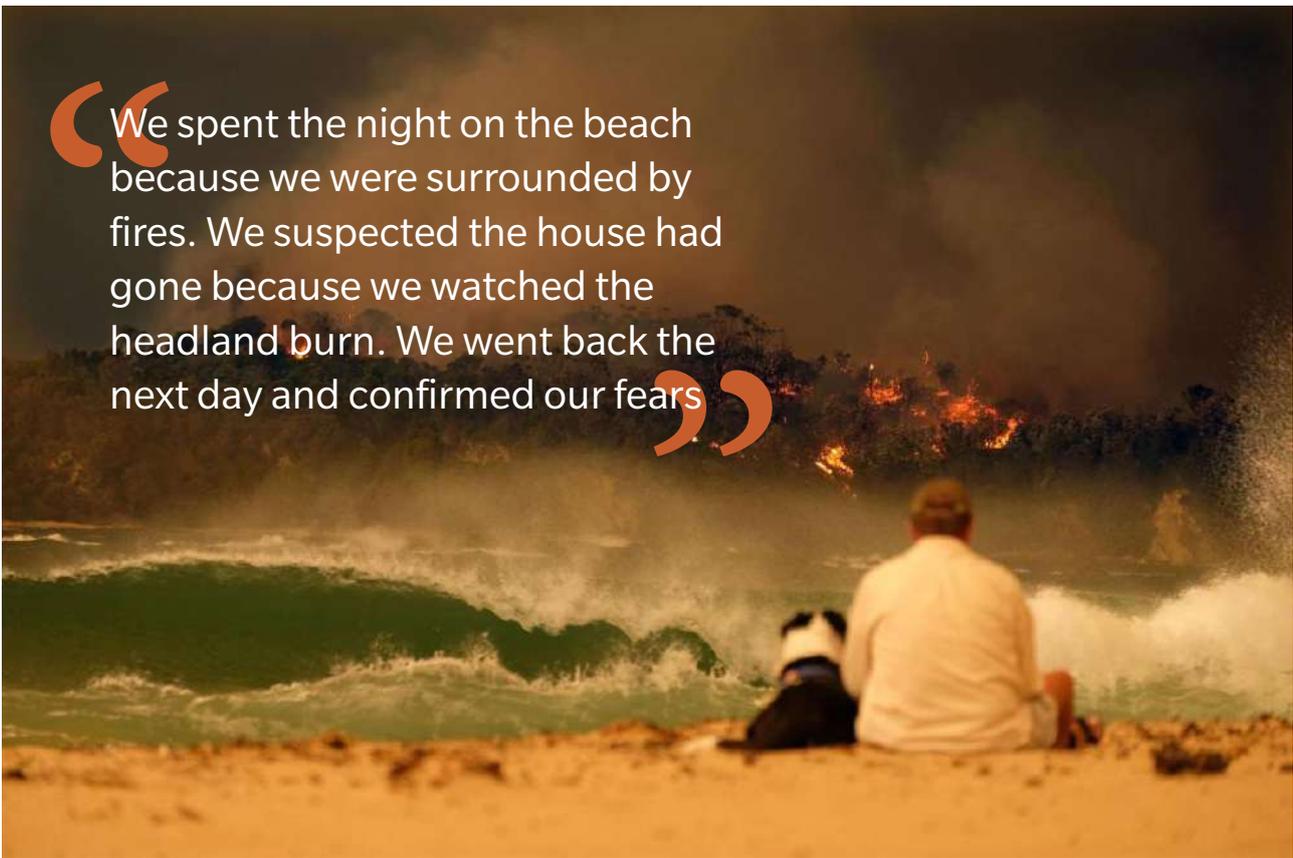
evacuated from their beach house nearby.

“We got to the beach about 7am but by 10am we could hear the rumbling of the fire coming from the back of the beach. That was really scary. And we had burning hot ash and a burning hot draft hit us,” said Al Baxter on the ABC’s Drum program.

Due to widespread power outages, mobile phone communications in the area were lost during the bushfires.



Photos: Alex Coppel



“We spent the night on the beach because we were surrounded by fires. We suspected the house had gone because we watched the headland burn. We went back the next day and confirmed our fears”

“It’s really disquieting. You just take for granted power and phones and things like that. We were texting friends, family and neighbours telling them that we were okay and then suddenly when you don’t have the ability to do that anymore you realise that things are more serious than you first thought,” said Baxter.

Al Baxter said that the Rural Fire Service couldn’t actually access Malua Bay when the fire front hit and by the time they did, their fireground radio network had gone down. He praised the Batemans Bay lifesavers for keeping everyone informed using Club Captain, Anthony Bellette’s personal satellite phone.

“I can’t say how fantastic they were. They kept us informed all day. They had the only

communications there. They had contact with the major surf rescue people so they could tell us what was happening.

“When the embers hit the surf club they were there dousing it down. Then on the beach they were walking around checking that people were okay. They were just fantastic.

“We spent the night on the beach because we were surrounded by fires. We suspected the house had gone because we watched the headland burn. We went back the next day and confirmed our fears,” Baxter said.

Former police officer Kim Mallett, who was a first responder during the Canberra bushfires in 2003, praised Anthony Bellette and his team’s response.

“The gravity of the situation over those 24 to 36 hours was not lost on me. There is no doubt his actions and that of his team saved hundreds of lives.

“The entire team that was on duty that day are a credit to SLSNSW. From coordinating volunteers to applying first aid, comforting those who were in a state of panic and emotional, providing food, communicating and fighting the fire to protect our new safe haven in the club,” said Kim Mallett.

“I am acutely aware that the location was never intended to be an evacuation centre, nor were they resourced to be able to support the number of people who influxed the area. With this limited capability they still did everything they could to ensure we had water, food, shelter and protection.

“They should all be commended for their efforts, and SLSNSW should be proud of the people they have representing their organisation. Whilst not entirely related to water safety, they certainly executed the organisation’s mission to save lives,” she said.

Jess Williams, whose family owns a holiday house at Rosedale, had friends staying with her when the fire front hit the area. They were evacuated to Malua Bay, thinking they would only be there for a few short hours. They ended up staying for more than 24 hours.

“The bravery, confidence and kindness of each and every Surf Life Saving member on that day was extraordinary,” she said

“They took care of over 2,000 people who fled to Malua Bay as a safe place. It was not an evacuation point but the only safe place we could get to.

“In addition to the people sheltering, there were also horses, dogs, birds, reptiles and cats.

“The surf lifesavers asked if there was anything they could get us and said we are safe and we should try and sleep. They said they would watch over all of us and if things changed, they would let us know. The fires were burning all night around Malua Bay.

“Each and every member of that Surf Life Saving Club needs to be acknowledged for their incredible dedication to saving lives,” said Jess Williams.

After the Bushfires had passed, Batemans Bay Surf Life Saving Club began operating as a

community hub to provide assistance to local residents. Anthony Bellette and his team of lifesavers continued to work to support people who’d lost everything in the bushfires.

Anthony said that they opened the Batemans Bay club to the community. They had people in their kitchens cooking food and baking scones. They handed out groceries and people used their facilities to shower.

Mobile phone networks were down so NBN Co set up a free wireless network at the club so people could contact friends and family. The club also had power boards so people could charge their phones and run their laptops.

Steven Pearce, CEO of Surf Life Saving NSW, praised the efforts of the Batemans Bay surf lifesavers.

“Anthony Bellette and his team’s efforts in responding to the bushfire emergency was nothing short of extraordinary. They were calm under pressure and mobilised the limited resources available to them to protect the lives of thousands of people,” said Steven Pearce.

“We’re enormously proud of the team at Batemans Bay – their response during the bushfire emergency and their continuing efforts in supporting the community in the aftermath,” he concluded.



Off duty lifesavers **HEROES** *in Bronte rescue*



A mass rescue that was described as incredible and heroic, has won lifesavers James and Kirsty McLennan a Rescue of the Month Award for saving the lives of nine people who were caught in the notorious Bronte Beach rip and swept hundreds of metres out to sea.

The award-winning rescue occurred at 7.45pm on Saturday 1 February. James McLennan, who is Club Captain at Bronte Surf Life Saving Club, and his wife Kirsty were relaxing at their home at Bronte beach. The sun was going down and light was fading fast.

James noticed a large group of people caught in the notorious Bronte Beach rip. They were in considerable distress and were being swept quickly out to sea. Thinking quickly, he ran to Bronte SLSC to grab a rescue board.

“As I ran down, I could hear a lot of screaming and yelling coming from the beach. I could see at least six people in trouble, so I had to get a board and get straight into the water. I simply didn’t have time to call Triple-Zero. So, as I was running to the beach, I sent a message to our Board and Surf Skills Group on ‘WhatsApp’ requesting assistance,” James said.

James grabbed a rescue board from the surf club but before diving into the water, asked two bystanders to call Triple-Zero and request Ambulance assistance. He paddled out through the rip to rescue the swimmers who were now more than 250 metres from the beach. Being a surf sports athlete and strong board paddler, he reached the group of struggling swimmers within minutes.

“The conditions were pretty nasty. It was choppy and there was a lot of moving water around. There was a strong north-east wind blowing which made paddling out more difficult,” James said.

“It was the most incredible rescue I’ve ever heard of. It was full-on heroic. James’ efforts that day saved the lives of nine people – without doubt. Those guys are just so lucky James was on the beach that night. He deserves a bravery award.”

James’ wife Kirsty, who had followed James to the beach, also grabbed a rescue board from the club and dived into the rip. So did several other off-duty surf lifesavers and two off-duty Waverly Council Lifeguards who had seen James’ request for assistance via the ‘WhatsApp’ message. They arrived a short time later to assist.

On call Duty officer Matt Evans arrived at Bronte Beach 15 minutes after being tasked by Police. He quickly realised the scale of the incident and requested the Toll Ambulance Rescue Helicopter attend to assist with the search and rescue in the fading light. He also confirmed that NSW Ambulance paramedics were on the way to assist.

After James reached the swimmers caught in the rip, he realised there were actually nine people in the group – not the six he first thought. He began coordinating Kirsty and the other lifesavers to return the swimmers, one at a time, to the beach.

“One guy was in a particularly bad way. He had ingested a lot of water and was drifting in and out of consciousness. He was frothing at the mouth and I had to clear his airway several times while I was paddling him back to the beach on my board,” James said.

The 20-year-old man was returned to the beach and given first-aid oxygen treatment by James and a team of Bronte lifesavers. NSW Ambulance paramedics arrived a short time later and he was taken to hospital for observation. Another man was treated for shock at the scene.

All nine of the swimmers that were rescued from the rip by surf lifesavers were brought back safely to Bronte beach for assessment and treatment.

Matt Spooner, Support Operations Manager, Sydney Branch, at Surf Life Saving NSW said that James McLennan’s rescue was heroic.

“It was the most incredible rescue I’ve ever heard of. It was full-on heroic. James’ efforts that day saved the lives of nine people – without doubt,” said Matt Spooner.

“Those guys are just so lucky James was on the beach that night. He deserves a bravery award,” he said.

Matt Spooner said the rescue was incredibly well coordinated between the multiple emergency service organisations that responded. He also said that the rescue highlighted the dangers of swimming outside patrol hours and at night.

James says that the successful rescue was a team effort and gives credit to all Bronte Surf Life Saving Club members and Waverly Council Lifeguards who assisted on the day. He also credits the focused rescue board training provided by the club.

James and Kirsty McLennan were awarded SLSNSW Rescue of the Month for February 2020.



James and Kirsty McLennan

SURFING THE NET

to save lives

Visitors to NSW beaches now have real-time safety information at their fingertips with the rollout of a trial of free Beach WiFi technology.



The NSW Government has provided funding for Surf Life Saving to trial ways to enhance the safety of the public on our beaches and reduce the rate of coastal drownings each year in NSW.

“By funding this initiative, we are giving our volunteer lifesavers the tools they need to keep people safe on the beach this summer,” said the Minister for Emergency Services, David Elliott.

Surf Life Saving NSW President George Shales has no doubt the technology has the potential to save lives. “The WiFi trial will give beachgoers, including people from non-English speaking backgrounds, access to vital safety information when and where they need it most.”

The technology is initially being trailed at four locations in



NSW: Byron Bay, Bronte, North Cronulla and Nth Wollongong. Similar trials are underway on Queensland beaches.

The WiFi signal is targeted within an area of around 100 metres, which is designed to attract people to the safer area of the beach, between the red and yellow flags. The WiFi units will be positioned on the beach by lifesavers or at some locations on weekdays by lifeguards. Prominent signage will tell beachgoers that WiFi is available and how to login.

Once connected, the home screen features easy to understand safety tips and links to more information on beach safety such as how to spot a rip current. Users can select this information to be displayed in five languages other than English, including Chinese, Arabic and Hindi.

The technology also allows Patrol Captains or lifeguards to push real-time safety alerts to beachgoers about current hazards, including bluebottles,

sharks, rips or beach closures due to dangerous surf conditions. These are pre-translated into other languages.

With too many coastal drownings occurring outside patrol areas, Surf Life Saving NSW hopes the technology will encourage more people to swim between the flags.

“For us, the benefits are two-fold; it’s a great way to encourage swimmers to stay between the flags, but it’s also a platform to provide live information on conditions and safety tips, particularly to international tourists in their own language,” said George Shales.

On average over the last 10 years, around 27% of drowning deaths in Australia were people born overseas. International students who are drowning are mostly from India (29.4%) and China (26.5%).

“We thank the NSW Government for its support for this new technology which we hope will play a key role in protecting both international and domestic beachgoers this summer,” said George Shales.



REDHEAD'S HERO NIPPERS

A group of young surf lifesavers from Redhead Surf Life Saving Club in the Hunter region received a Rescue of the Month Award from Surf Life Saving NSW for saving the lives of three people caught in a rip.



On 28 November 2019, Nicholas White, Lily Kennedy-Myers and Jet Hoffman were all taking part in a board training session. It had been an anything but routine training session for the group. Surf conditions were big - with five-foot swell and big rips along the beach. There was a lot of wind and chop which was making training difficult for the squad.

At the same time, around 5.30pm, local Redhead resident Neil Dalby was walking his dog on the bluff high above the beach. He had been watching the young surf lifesavers' board training session when something caught his attention.

"I saw four, young, sixteen-year-old boys run down the beach and jump into the water where there's a strong current - and they got into trouble straight away. I was waving and shouting but nobody could hear me down on the beach," said Neil Dalby.

"At the last moment, one of the boys in the board training squad must have seen what was going on and went straight out into the current to rescue the boys. He was out to them in about 10 seconds.

"By then a young girl in the squad saw what was going on and was straight out there too. She grabbed one of the guys. And then a younger kid, a little guy, paddled out to help too. Then the coach went out.

"It was a mass rescue and I was totally relieved when I saw what was going on because I couldn't do a darn thing from where I was up on the bluff. Nobody on the beach could have done a darn thing so the guys were very lucky the group was board training that day."

Nicholas White, who was part of the board training squad that day, was the first to respond when he saw the boys struggling in the rip.

"We were finishing a race and coming in when we noticed someone in trouble. So I went out on my board as quick as I could," said Nick.

I was immediately assessing the conditions and the state of the guys I was rescuing. My training kicked in so I knew exactly what to do. I've done partial rescues before but nothing major.

"The rip they were going out in was a severe rip, probably 30 metres wide, being fed by the large north-east swell coming across the beach. It was a big rip," said Nick.

"I was immediately thinking where the waves were and the quickest way I could get out to the boys in the surf. So I ran down to a slight rip to try and get out to them quicker.

"I was immediately assessing the conditions and the state of the guys I was rescuing. My training kicked in so I knew exactly what to do. I've done partial rescues before but nothing major.

"One of the boys was in quite a bit of trouble, struggling quite significantly. So he jumped on

my board and I paddled him in," Nick said.

Lily Kennedy-Myers, who was also board training that day, quickly followed Nick out to assist with the rescue.

"This was my first rescue and I was really scared when I first saw them out there. But then my confidence kicked in knowing I had done so much training for it," said Lily.

"Once I had him on my board, I was relieved because he was safe and with me. But then I had to get him in to shore and that was another challenge in itself," said Lily.

Nicholas and Lily paddled two of the boys back to shore while Jet Hoffman, who was also training,

paddled his nipper board over to assist the third boy, who was treading water.

"I paddled one of the guys out of the rip and away from the rocks. But he was a big guy and too big for my board - he would have sunk it. So I just let him hang onto it and have a rest," said Jet Hoffman.

Ray Terrill, the young lifesavers' board coach, arrived to assist Jet and help the third swimmer back to the beach. He said that the board squad responded very quickly to the situation.

"It was a situation where our kids could spot the danger early and we're extremely proud that they could see the danger developing," said Ray Terrill.

“They could see the danger the boys were getting themselves into. We’re proud our kids could assist these young men who were in trouble.

“Sadly to say, if it wasn’t for our club members going to their aid, there would have been at least one fatality that day. If not more,” said Ray Terrill.

Jet, Lily and Nick said that they have received a terrific response to their rescue.

“My parents were very excited and happy that I’d done the rescue and, well, they are still talking about it to other people,” said Jet.

“I’m very excited that I’ve just done a rescue. That’s why I do Nippers. And I’ve always had a great feeling about saving someone’s life,” said Jet.

“Winning Rescue of the Month has propelled me to go further into Surf Life Saving – going on for years to come,” said Jet.

“This was my first rescue and I was really scared when I first saw them out there. But then my confidence kicked in knowing I had done so much training for it.”

Neil Dalby, who watched the rescue from the bluff above Redhead beach, is still in awe of the mass rescue he witnessed the Redhead board squad perform that day.

“I thought these guys, who’d gotten into trouble, were very lucky that the guys were out there doing squad work,” said Neil Dalby.

“What got me was that after the rescue the coach got the squad together to debrief on what had just happened. And then boom, off they were, back down the beach doing their training again.

“You can measure the value of surf clubs to the community in

lives saved. What cost is a life? That’s the importance of it,” he said.

George Shales, President of Surf Life Saving NSW, said that the young lifesavers’ timely and efficient response to the critical incident was a credit to themselves and to the training the Redhead Surf Life Saving Club had given them.

“Thanks to their training, teamwork and skill, they saved the lives of three people. They have every right to feel enormously proud of their achievements and the Rescue of the Month Award is due recognition,” said George Shales.



LIVING ROOM LIFESAVERS

Bringing life saving CPR skills to you!

New Online CPR Training Program



Online Learning



Live Webinar



Face-to-Face

For all booking enquiries please email training@surflifesaving.com.au, contact your account manager or [click here](#) for more informaton.

HARD WORK *finally* PAYS OFF!

The very best Iron athletes in Australia lined up for one last round in the 2019/20 Nutri-Grain Iron Series at North Cronulla in February.

Lizzie Welborn (Newport SLSC) was one of the youngest ever qualifiers for the Nutri-Grain Iron Series at just 16 years old. This year she achieved a well-deserved third place in the series.

The 21 year-old university student had a tough 2018/19 season suffering glandular fever and then changing clubs, from North Bondi to Newport. Training was disrupted but the change in routine and location has proven to be a positive.

The first event of the series, the iconic Coolangatta Gold didn't go as planned after a solid offseason competing in South Africa and completing



the Molokai World Paddle Championships. "It wasn't the greatest start to the series," said Lizzie. "Placing 13th made me nervous going into the second round. It was definitely a blow to my confidence not getting the results I wanted to start."

She put her head down and trained hard with two weeks between events, the nerves were intense but not enough to bring her down. Training paid off at Burleigh with a second place finish. "It was amazing, an awesome feeling to get there and prove to myself that I could hold it and compete against the best," she said.

Her performance at Burleigh boosted her confidence and allowed her to maintain a consistent training regime before round three at Bulli where she backed up with another second place. "I was definitely chilled out ahead of the Bulli event and pretty happy I could get the same result just behind Lana Rogers."

Lizzie said all the competitors were sceptical about round four being held at Surfers Paradise

because of the longer run leg but it ended up being one of her favourite. "It was one of the hardest rounds but I absolutely loved it that way, and the crowd was great!," she said.

Despite loving the Surfers event she placed fourth which put the pressure back on. Lana Rogers (Noosa) had solidified her series title after the fourth round and four consecutive wins.

The final round at North Cronulla on 19 January presented Lizzie with a small but possible chance of her first podium finish in the series since qualifying.

"I had a great chance of getting second if I kept up my performance but the nerves were back with that pressure," said Lizzie. "All I had to do was beat Georgia Miller (Northcliffe) to get the points."

"I gave it my best shot," she said. And after three successful back-to-back eliminator rounds that day, she'd done it. Lizzie Welborn was on the podium with a well-earned third place behind Lana and Georgia.

“I was absolutely over the moon with third,” she said after her win. “I’m so happy to be here with Lana and Georgia.”

“Having the final round in Sydney meant all my family and friends were right there with me, it made it pretty special and I wanted to race well for them.

“The conditions made it entertaining. When you’ve got waves it’s anyone’s race. There are so many lead changes and reading the ocean comes into your strategy a lot more. It’s a massive combo of different skills and it makes it pretty exciting to race in and watch,” she said.

Manly Ironman Kendrick Louis is the 2019/20 Nutri-Grain Iron Series champion, completing the trifecta of Australian, NSW and Nutri-Grain Ironman titles and a life-long dream.

For over a decade, the Ironman has been chasing the prestigious title and admitted it was the one he wanted after coming so close each year.

Kendrick brought a secret weapon of support from one of Surf Life Saving’s most successful Ironmen this year. Olympian Ky Hurst won four Australian Ironman titles and is said to be one of the greatest swimmers the sport has ever produced. He was Kendrick’s handler and provided expert advice to the Manly athlete, giving him the winning edge he needed this year.

The pair had a rivalry that crossed over as Hurst came towards the end of his career and Louis was beginning his. In the 2012/13 series, Kendrick

came in third behind Hurst and again the following year Hurst took out fourth with Louis trailing in fifth place.

With the rivalry behind them, the mates celebrated a career pinnacle for Louis. “Kendrick has shown that with true grit and perseverance anything is achievable,” said Hurst. “Round five was a true master-class performance from Kendrick and it capped off the series for him.”

Grateful for the help of Hurst, Louis said, “He knew when it was time to go and when it was time to sit back and just having that experience in my corner today was invaluable. He kept me calm.”

A fourth place at the last round at North Cronulla was all he needed after consistent results across the series.

“I knew I’d done the work, I think when you turn up to something like this and you’re in a battle with four or five guys it’s hard to not let it get to you,” he said.

The 29-year-old used the swim legs to make his move on the field but said the waves played a huge part on the day. “It could have been anyone’s race on Sunday,” he said. “TJ Hendy and Jay Furniss set the benchmark early and they held it right the way through to the last race.”

Hard work and patience finally paid off.

“Kendrick has shown that with true grit and perseverance anything is achievable.”



STATE CHAMPS

wraps up for
2020

On finals day of the state's premier surf sport event, Newport SLSC romped home to seal the deal on an incredible seventh straight NSW Open Championships title at Swansea Belmont in March.

The 2020 NSW Surf Life Saving Championships, proudly supported by Your local club, wrapped up after a solid eight days of Junior, Masters and Opens competition at Blacksmiths Beach.

Newport SLSC won the final Opens Championships event – making it seven championship titles in a row and an unparalleled achievement. North Curl Curl SLSC came out of nowhere to claim the junior Championship and Bondi Surf Bathers LSC backed up to win the Masters overall pointscore.

The NSW Championships attracted around 6,000 competitors of all ages from across NSW - along with 600 volunteer officials and 15,000 family members and spectators.

With the cancellation of the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships in Queensland in April, the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships becomes the largest surf sport event in the country for the 2019/20 season.

With the success of this year's event and the ongoing support of the Lake Macquarie City Council, it was announced that the Championship event would return to Swansea Belmont SLSC in 2021 for the fifth consecutive year.





Thank you to all of our volunteers who keep NSW beaches safe each season!

Without your tireless efforts, we wouldn't be able to do what we do which is save lives, create great Australians, and build better communities.



Our Mission

To save lives, create great Australians and build better communities.

Summary

Surf Life Saving NSW is the state's major water safety and rescue organisation, and with over 75,000 members, is one of the largest volunteer movements in Australia. The primary role of Surf Life Saving NSW is to save lives on our beaches, while other activities include developing our members through education, leadership and surf sports programs.

There are 129 surf clubs and 11 branches in the state which are affiliated with Surf Life Saving NSW, stretching from Fingal Rovers SLSC near Tweed Heads, to Pambula SLSC on the Far South Coast.

Contact Us

For contributions or suggestions for SurfLIFE please contact SLNSW Media on 02 9471 8000 or media@surflifesaving.com.au



Surf Life Saving NSW wishes to thank the following sponsors and supporters for helping our volunteers save lives on the beaches each year.

Your local club

Cancer Institute NSW

midford SINCE 1946

SHARKSKIN™

DOLPHIN SURFCRAFT

EnergyLocals



Holden

Westpac



Dulux
Worth doing, worth Dulux.



SLNSW endeavours to ensure all information contained in *SurfLIFE* is correct and true, however accepts no responsibility for any inaccuracies or mistakes contained in the publication.

Surf Life Saving New South Wales

T +61 2 9471 8000 F +61 2 9471 8001 E info@surflifesaving.com.au
3 Narabang Way Belrose NSW 2085 | PO Box 307 Belrose NSW 2085 Australia
Fundraising Authority No. CFN11033 ABN: 93 827 748 379