

SurfLIFE

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SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

SUCCESS

at Australian Pride in Sport Awards



Chairman of Lifesavers with Pride and North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club member, Gary Driscoll, recently won the Out Role Model of the Year Award at the 2020 Australian Pride in Sport Awards for his role in promoting Surf Life Saving as a safe, inclusive and welcoming movement.



First held in 2018, the Australian Pride in Sport Awards is the only celebration dedicated solely to recognising exceptional efforts in making sport more inclusive of LGBTIQ people. It is run by Pride in Sport, the national not-for-profit sporting inclusion program spearheaded by Australia's largest LGBTIQ health organisation, ACON.

The Out Role Model of the Year Award, which Gary Driscoll won, recognises a participant of a sport from the LGBTIQ community who leads by example to demonstrate that sport is a place where people can feel welcome, included and safe – and be proud to be part of it. Previous award nominees include tennis player Casey Dellacqua.

"This year Lifesavers with Pride was nominated for two awards, the Out Role Model of the Year Award and the Inclusive Initiative Award for our 'Proud Beaches' campaign. Both nominations are really recognition for the work our organisation is doing as a whole – not just the work I do," Gary Driscoll said.

"Being nominated for both awards is terrific recognition for what we're doing. It gives more gravity and profile for our activities," he said.

After completing his Bronze Medallion at North Bondi SLSC in 2007, Gary Driscoll joined Lifesavers with Pride and has been a champion of change in the Surf Life Saving movement.

This year, Lifesavers with Pride was invited to be the 'Principal Float' in the Sydney Mardi Gras which reflects the organisation's increasing profile and prominence in the community and their success in driving change and raising awareness of the importance of inclusivity.

"I don't want anyone who is LGBTIQ to look at Surf Life Saving and think that the movement isn't safe and inclusive," Gary said.

"Surf Life Saving will only be truly diverse and inclusive when its members accurately reflect the diversity of people that are coming to the beach," Gary said.

Lifesavers with Pride was established to promote lifesaving among the LGBTIQ community. Since its inception, Lifesavers with Pride has risen from 70 members to over 1,300 members across Australia.

Gary Driscoll says that Lifesavers with Pride helps to ensure Surf Life Saving continues to be an organisation that is inclusive and progressive for LGBTIQ members and a place where new LGBTIQ members can be themselves and feel welcome.

"We want everyone to be a part of Surf Life Saving. Everyone is welcome to be themselves. We're proud, safe and inclusive," Gary said.

Lifesavers with Pride runs the Proud Beaches Scholarships program which helps LGBTIQ people around Australia overcome the financial cost involved in completing Bronze Medallion training to become a lifesaver. They also run the Proud Beaches campaign which makes promotional resources, such as posters, available to Surf Life Saving clubs nationally.

Surf Life Saving NSW congratulates Gary Driscoll for winning the Out Role Model of the Year Award at the Australian Pride in Sport Awards 2020.

“We want everyone to be a part of Surf Life Saving. Everyone is welcome to be themselves. We're proud, safe and inclusive.”

NAIDOC



NAIDOC Week celebrations are held around the country each year to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The week is celebrated not just in our Indigenous communities but also in increasing number of government agencies, community organisations, local councils, workplaces, schools and sporting groups.

To celebrate NAIDOC Week in November, Surf Life Saving NSW spoke with Callan Nickerson who is a proud Yaegl man and a leader in the Surf Life Saving Movement.

How did you become involved in Surf Life Saving?

Where I live is a small community, a small suburb called Stockton, which is just on the northern side of Newcastle. And being such a small community on a peninsula, and a beachside suburb, it was pretty much inevitable that I got wound up and involved on the beach.

And most kids in Stockton, in one way or another, find themselves involved with the club through their lifetime, through Nippers or as they get older. Because the beach is on a peninsula, surrounded by water, it's important that we need some level of education and awareness about the surf and the beach environment. That was one key factor.

The other thing is that my dad had a long involvement with the club before I did. He went through Nippers and into cadets and was part of the club for a while so that's what sparked my interest.

What roles do you have within the Stockton Surf Life Saving Club?

I'm the President of the Club and that's a role I've had for about nine years. But I've had breaks during that time and had other roles - essentially in Surf Sports and surf boat rowing.

What do you enjoy most about Surf Life Saving?

I enjoy the sense of giving back that I get from knowing that I'm giving back to the community. That's what probably I get most from my involvement.

What do you do when you're not Surf Life Saving?

Professionally, I work for the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) which is an Australian Federal Government organisation, you're probably familiar with. Previously it was Prime Minister and Cabinet (PMC) and before that FACSIA. Essentially, it's the Federal Government's department of Indigenous Affairs.

I'm an Engagement Officer and I work with Indigenous Communities administering government funding to improve the livelihood and outcomes for Indigenous people in the area.

You have Aboriginal heritage on your Mother's side of your family. Can you tell us about her cultural background?

I was born and raised here where we are now in Stockton. And my Grandfather was born on the Clarence River around Yamba and Maclean. He was actually born on an island called Ugundahi Island and grew up

C W E E K

around that area and then was taken from his parents, as part of the Stolen Generation, to Cherbourg Mission in Queensland and then came back down to Newcastle when he was 18.

He came to Stockton, and like so many men of his generation, he was part of the Aboriginal Boxing Tent that toured Australia, to make a living. And through his travels with the Boxing Tent he landed in Stockton where he met my Grandmother who is a non-Aboriginal woman. And then they got married and had four kids - the youngest of which was my mum.

My Grandfather was a Yaegl man. Yaegl is a small Nation inside the Bundjalung Nation. You can find it on the Australian Indigenous Nations map. The Yaegl Nation is a bit like the ACT – being a small territory inside NSW.

What does your Aboriginality mean to you?

Well, it means a great deal.

It is something obviously that I carry with me all the time and I'm very, you know, I'm very aware of it and it really defines me as a human.

I've told people before, there are a couple of things that define me as a human; that's my identity and my family background - and my connection to my family and the place where I live. And they're obviously the things that I couldn't do without.

I'm a proud Aboriginal man and I'm proud to live on Aboriginal lands that belong to the Worimi people. But my family ancestry, my blood connection, is from further up the north coast in the lands of the Yaegl people.

I was born and raised here in Newcastle but like so many Aboriginal

families, we experienced the wrath of many different, early government policies that moved us around.

My family has such a strong connection to the ocean, hence my involvement with Surf Life Saving. And our growing up around here, that had to be the case one way or another.

My Aboriginality is something that defines me I would say.

NAIDOC Week is a week where Australians celebrate the achievements of First Australians. Can you tell us how you will be celebrating?

I think NAIDOC Week for me is a chance to celebrate all the strong and positive things that are happening around the country and in our communities between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people - but it's also a chance to reflect on that relationship.

But it's also a chance to reflect on where that relationship is now and where it has been in the past. And where it needs to be in the future.

Those are probably the three key things, the three elements for me for NAIDOC Week.

When it comes to reconciliation, how might the Surf Life Saving movement take a leadership approach to increasing links with local Indigenous people at a state and community/club level?

I think that especially on a local level, if we take that local context first, I think that we can figure out what can be applied at a higher level from that point.

And for me, from a local level, I think there are 129 Surf Life Saving Clubs in New South Wales that sit on a beach that was at some point an important part, most likely for a particular Aboriginal community, an important part of the way they lived. And they were custodians of that beach.

And the very deliberate connection between Aboriginal communities, traditional Aboriginal communities from just a few hundred years ago, or dating back to thousands of years ago, as custodians of that beach and that surf environment - and now here we are as surf lifesavers now.

There's a very strong connection there in my view. That the 129 Surf Clubs across New South Wales are very much the custodians of that space on that beach.

You know Aboriginal communities and people relied on that beach and the beach environment for a whole range of things - for somewhere to live, as a source of food and that sort of thing. And you know, we do the same now. We rely on our beaches and our oceans as a place to live and a place to relax and to connect to. So, there's a very close connection there.

I think keeping that in mind, it lays a strong foundation at a local level to reconcile their purpose with local Aboriginal communities, to work together and build a relationship. I think that can be easily driven from a level above, from Surf Life Saving NSW.

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HERO NIPPER

wins award for rip rescue

An incredible rescue by 11-year-old Nipper Lachie Muldrock won the Surf Life Saving NSW Rescue of the Month Award for September.

It was the first week of the school holidays and Lachie Muldrock was enjoying an early morning surf at Umina Beach with his father and uncle. Lachie, who is a keen competitor in Nippers carnivals, was getting in some practice on his much-loved race board. At around 7.30am, he noticed two young boys caught in a rip screaming for help.

Lachie's Nippers training kicked in when he saw the two boys in the rip. They were fully clothed, 150 metres from the shore and struggling to stay above the water. Without hesitation, he paddled over to help.

His uncle, Josh Savage, who had also noticed the boys in trouble, wasn't far behind.

"I just saw the kids screaming for help and drifting out in the rip. So, I paddled straight over to them and I told one of them to get on my board. He fell off so I grabbed his legs and helped him get back on," Lachie Muldrock said.

Reuben Muldrock, Lachie's father, said that when he first saw the boys in the rip, it took him some time to work out what was going on, but that Lachie recognised immediately that the boys needed assistance.

"He just went straight over. He's a strong paddler, much faster than me, so he got to the boys really quickly. The boys were exhausted and in real trouble. They were 'climbing the ladder'. They'd had it," Reuben Muldrock said.



While Lachie got the younger of the two boys on his race board and started paddling him in, his uncle Josh put the older boy on his surfboard and followed Lachie back to the beach.

"I paddled the boy back in beside the rip. It was a bit tricky, but I was lucky to catch a small wave which made it easier," Lachie Muldrock said.

The boys' parents, who were on the beach but some distance away at the time of the incident, were unaware that their children were in the water and in trouble.

"The kids' parents were up the beach playing frisbee and were visibly shocked when they saw us assisting their kids out of the water and up the beach after the rescue," said Reuben. "The parents didn't speak English very well so there were some communication difficulties, but we strongly encouraged them to get some medical attention for the boys. They'd swallowed a lot of water and were very pale," Reuben said.

It is not known exactly how the boys, aged 9 and 11, ended up in the water fully clothed.

"We think the boys must have been wading in the shallow water on the shoreline when one of them fell into a hole and then got sucked into the rip. The other boy must have dived in after him to help," Reuben Muldrock said.

Lachie Muldrock has been a Nipper at Umina SLSC since he was five. He's a keen surf sports competitor in water events - including the Board Rescue, Board Relay, Taplin and Iron Man.

"Basically, Lachie's Nippers board training instantly kicked in when he saw the boys in trouble. He just did what he does in competition in the board rescue events," Reuben Muldrock said.

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We are excited to announce the relaunch
of the *Clubs & Community Awards* program
– an opportunity to celebrate the innovative
and collaborative relationships clubs have built
with their communities and local groups.

TELL US YOUR STORY

Submissions Open Until 22 January 2021

Encompassing all activities and initiatives from March 2019 to December 2020.

clubsandcommunity.com



For more information, email events@clubsnsw.com.au
or call 02 9268 3045.

BeachSafe Keeps Public COVID Safe

Surf Life Saving NSW is working with councils and lifeguard services to deliver real time, relevant information related to COVID restrictions, where they may affect the status of popular beaches and waterway locations this summer.

Enhancements to the BeachSafe website and app aim to keep the public updated with a new feature, displaying alerts where beaches are

nearing, or have reached capacity and where restrictions to access may apply.

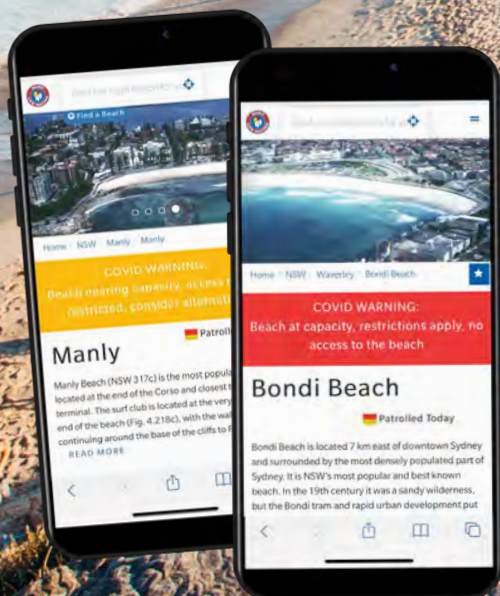
“Ideally we’d like people to be able to check before they leave home, if their favourite beach is getting crowded and suggest that they perhaps consider other options or delay their trip,” said SLSNSW CEO Steve Pearce.

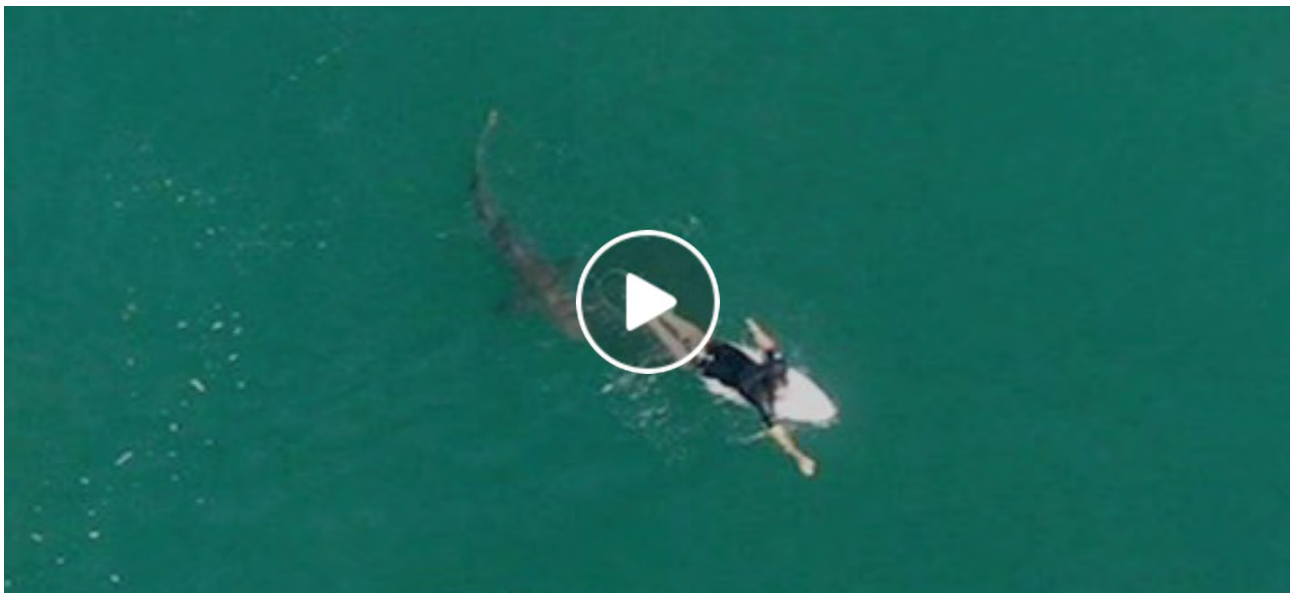
The national BeachSafe website and app can now display alerts at the request of councils or National Parks service to assist in the management of crowds or where an area has restricted access due to COVID concerns.

“By working with coastal councils, Surf Life Saving NSW can assist to disseminate this information and have it available to the public through BeachSafe. We hope to provide a helpful resource to the public and assist authorities to manage overcrowding this summer,” said Steve Pearce.

The message this summer is:

- Help Keep Our Beaches Open
- Check beachsafe.org.au for COVID beach updates





Pro Surfer Warned of Shark by Drone

On 7 October, World championship tour surfer Matt Wilkinson had a close encounter with a shark while surfing at Sharpes Beach, Ballina.

The welcome arrival of a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) overhead alerted Matt via a warning over the speaker, at the same time a 1.5m white shark surfaced just behind him.

The amazing vision captured by the UAV, operated by Surf Life Saving NSW on behalf of the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI), stunned the operator with the speed at which the shark appeared on his screen during a routine surveillance flight.

The former pro surfer said he was aware the drone was overhead and heard the warning but was still shocked to encounter the shark at such close range.

The event was another lucky escape for Wilkinson, who competed in the heat just before Mick Fanning

experienced his encounter with a large white shark at J-Bay in South Africa in 2015.

"I was surfing out the back at Sharpes Beach and just cruising on my own and I heard a splash and a noise and looked around and couldn't see anything," said Wilkinson. "Then the drone came down and told me that there was a dangerous shark in the area, return to the beach."

"I got to the shore feeling a bit weird and the lifeguards showed me the footage and I realised how close it came without knowing it was there. It looks like it's going for my leg and it's changed its mind."

"I feel grateful and pretty weird at the same time but happy it decided not to go me. When I saw the footage I saw the similarities, like I had a yellow leg rope on and Mick's board was yellow is what I was thinking about when I came in. I called my wife because I didn't want her to see the footage before I saw it. She doesn't want me surfing for a couple of days now."

UAVs proved vital only a few weeks before when a large shark was spotted near competitors at the Tweed Coast Pro World Surf League event at Cabarita. The event start was postponed until the area was clear and safe for competition to commence.

UAVs are flown by Surf Life Saving NSW every day of the school holidays at beaches in Ballina, just some of the 34 beaches funded for drone flights from the NSW Government's \$8 million 2020/21 NSW Shark Program and many other coastal LGAs to assist lifesavers and lifeguards protect swimmers and surfers from a range of hazards, including marine creatures.

Following the incident, the beach was evacuated until the following day.

"It's nice to know the drones go up and down the beach and can see what we can't and it makes you feel more comfortable. It makes other people aware that there are sharks out there but usually with no intention. It's nice to know if there's a big one around you can just come in and let them go by," said Wilkinson.

"I've been surfing with sharks my whole life and I understand they're there and know enough about them to know they have not too much interest in humans. I'm just glad today the shark reconsidered at the last second," said Wilkinson.

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TOP LIFESAVERS

thanked at NSW Parliament House

A select group of the state's top volunteer surf lifesavers, wearing their iconic red and yellow patrol uniforms, were welcomed by NSW MPs at Parliament House in November to celebrate Surf Life Saving NSW Volunteer Recognition Day.

On Thursday 12 November, Surf Life Saving NSW Volunteer Recognition Day brought together political leaders and award-winning volunteer surf lifesavers of all ages, in an informal setting at NSW Parliament House, to celebrate the dedication and achievement of the state's 75,000 volunteer surf lifesavers leading into summer 2020.

Hosted by the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, The Hon. David Elliott MP, the event was an opportunity for NSW politicians to thank Surf Life Saving volunteers

personally for the work they do in protecting lives along the coastline. It was also an opportunity to recognise the bi-partisan government support Surf Life Saving NSW enjoys and to acknowledge the commitment the organisation has to coastal safety.

Elected representatives spanning the political spectrum had an opportunity to speak to volunteer lifesavers from diverse generations and backgrounds, including Surf Lifesaver of the Year, Tony Worton (Camden Haven SLSC), Youth Lifesaver of the Year winner, Kai Darwin (Umina SLSC), Youth Volunteer of the Year, Trae Hare-Boyd (North Steyne SLSC) and both Junior Lifesavers of the Year, Chloe Carr (Bungan Beach SLSC) and Kale Puata (North Avoca).

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, David Elliott, said that he was thrilled the SLSNSW Volunteer

Recognition Day at Parliament House allowed politicians from across the state to engage with volunteer surf lifesavers.

"We're very grateful that Surf Life Saving NSW served us so well during last summer, particularly during the bushfires," Minister Elliott said.

"This coming summer our volunteer surf lifesavers will be even more important because we know that most of the domestic tourism destinations are going to be full. Australians will be making up for the COVID winter lockdown and really taking advantage of the summer break," said Minister Elliott.

In what's becoming tradition, an inflatable rescue boat (IRB) was installed in the level nine courtyard of NSW Parliament House to highlight the role this pivotal piece of lifesaving



equipment has played in saving lives on Australian beaches over the past 50 years.

Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving Chairperson Melinda Pavey, Minister for Water, Property and Housing was among the MPs who attended the event along with Andrew Constance, Member for Bega and Minister for Transport and Roads.

Minister Constance was one of the thousands of people who sheltered at Batemans Bay SLSC during the January Bushfires that engulfed much of the NSW Far South Coast.

"The best thing about Volunteer Recognition Day is that you have politicians from across the political divide here in a bipartisan way, loving Surf Life Saving," said Minister Andrew Constance.

"Just having the confidence and the calmness of the surf lifesavers made a world of difference to keeping thousands of people safe on a beach as we took the full brunt of the firestorm. So, for me, I'll never forget that care, that love, that support that's shown by the Surf Life Saving movement towards their communities.

"It's every day of the week that lives are being saved by the Surf Life Saving movement and with people coming away to the regions, for goodness sake please swim between the flags," he said.

Surf Life Saving NSW CEO, Steven Pearce said that the annual Volunteer Recognition Day event at NSW Parliament House was a huge success, with MPs enjoying the opportunity to meet some of the state's top surf lifesavers.

"Surf Life Saving NSW Volunteer Recognition Day is a great opportunity for our surf lifesavers to meet with our political leaders and to celebrate the bi-partisan support we enjoy from parliamentarians across the political spectrum for our vision of zero preventable deaths on the NSW coastline," said Steven Pearce.

Following the Surf Life Saving Day event, the youngest surf lifesaver at the event, Abi, who is a Nipper, was invited to meet NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian with Minister David Elliott and CEO of Surf Life Saving NSW, Steven Pearce.

Surf Life Saving NSW Board Members also attended the Volunteer Recognition Day event including Director of Lifesaving, Joel Wiseman, Director of Membership Kerry Clancy and Director of Director of Education, Anthony Waller.

DROWNING SCHOOLIE SAVED IN BRAVE RESCUE

“I didn’t think anyone
was coming.”



Lachlan Arnold says it chills him to the bone to recall those words, spoken by the teenage girl lying on the beach waiting for the Ambulance to arrive.

Luckily for the young schoolie from Taree, Lachlan and his son Max happened to be on the unpatrolled Boomerang Beach that day and had the courage and the skills to save her life, reaching the drowning girl with just seconds to spare.

Max Arnold is just 16 years-old but has been involved with his local surf club since he was a six-year old Nipper and is a member of North Avalon Surfriders Association. Completing his Bronze Medallion just a year ago, he has been actively patrolling at Avalon Beach, yet his deep understanding of the ocean and ability to act quickly under pressure is a tribute to himself, his club and his family.

On Thursday 26 November Max and his dad Lachie were surfing and enjoying the sunshine at the southern end of Boomerang Beach on the NSW lower-north coast. The beach is a popular tourist destination – even more so in 2020 with traditional schoolies destinations out of reach due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Lachlan recalls the beach being busy that day with people on the sand and in the water right along the unpatrolled 1500m stretch.

“We were sitting on the beach and this young guy came running up yelling, ‘my girlfriend has been pulled out in a rip, can you help?’”.

When the boy pointed out his girlfriend, Lachlan was shocked to see she was over 150 metres from shore. In the rough conditions, the boyfriend recognised he was unable to help by attempting to rescue her himself.

"We watched as he ran towards us, asking people if they could help as he made his way down the beach," said Lachlan "but no one he asked could help."

Lachlan and Max were staying at a house just a couple of hundred metres from where they were sitting on the beach. Immediately Max ran up to the house to grab a foam surfboard. A strong swimmer and surf lifesaver himself, Lachlan began to swim out towards the girl.

"Max and I got to the girl at about the same time. I was holding her up in the water and she was gone. She was probably 30 seconds from going under," said Lachlan. "She was in the worst condition I'd ever seen anyone out in the water."

Max had done an incredible job to sprint to get the board and complete the long paddle out so quickly to meet his dad. The pair were able to get the girl onto the board and Lachlan began paddling the girl back to shore while Max swam alongside.

"Miraculously we caught this wave that took us all the way to the beach – it really was the magic wave and the most welcome one I've ever caught," recalls Lachlan.

Back on shore, the girl was completely exhausted so Max and Lachlan carried her up the beach where they called an Ambulance and performed checks of her condition.

"She could barely talk," said Lachlan "and she said to me when she got her breath back, that she felt like she was breathing water."

The proud dad said he had complete confidence in his young son throughout the rescue effort. "He knew exactly what to do and when to do it. He's only 16 and he was just so calm and just having done his Bronze Medallion, it's amazing."

Lachlan said the surf life saving training and the family's love of the ocean meant he wasn't once worried for his son's safety. "Max paddled out on the board and the surf was rough, but I didn't once think he couldn't do it," he said.

"I know he's a strong swimmer and a good lifesaver. He's done all the right training. I think it's a really powerful thing that I was able to bring the girl in on the board and not have to worry about him still out there."

A proud dad himself, Dave Roberts has been Max's Nippers Age Manager since Under 6s at Avalon Beach SLSC and has been part of his journey right through the surf club. He says it was quite emotional and very humbling knowing the skills and knowledge he and fellow trainer Bernadette Mckay have imparted to Max have given a family back their daughter.

"It was amazing hearing about the successful rescue by Max and Lachie, we're all very proud and got goose

bumps hearing the story," said Dave. "Bernie and I realised all the hours and years we've put into developing these kids has paid off."

"When Max was a young kid he wasn't that strong in the water, but years in Nippers with a group of now life-long mates, he's turned into a really strong waterman on all craft, just like his dad. He's so competent out there and it's no surprise he was able to handle this rescue like he did with maturity beyond his years."

Post the dramatic rescue, Lachlan Arnold has quietly contemplated just how valuable his family's involvement in surf life saving has been.

"I think spending much of our lives at the beach just paid off," he said. "It's not just about patrolling between the red and yellow flags, it's lifesavers on holidays like us, who can be there to help when it's needed – on or off the beach."

It also brought home to Lachlan with a thump, how easy it is for people to get into serious strife at unpatrolled locations.

"Along with there being no one around who had the skills to help, there was no access to a defibrillator or oxygen because the nearest surf club is a beach away to the north."

"You don't have to go too far to realise that there is no one to help."

"It's not just about patrolling between the red and yellow flags, it's lifesavers on holidays like us, who can be there to help when it's needed – on or off the beach."

Proud partner

CLUBS NSW

renews long-term partnership

ClubsNSW have extended their proud partnership with Surf Life Saving NSW for a further three years under the Your local club branding.

ClubsNSW Chairman, Dr George Peponis OAM, MBBS and CEO, Josh Landis, joined Surf Life Saving NSW President, George Shales OAM and CEO, Steve Pearce AFSM to announce the extension to the partnership on Thursday 20 November at North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club.

In what will be the eighth-consecutive year of the partnership, SLSNSW President George Shales OAM said that the value and support that ClubsNSW provides Surf Life Saving NSW's 129 surf clubs and 76,000 members cannot be understated.

"Our clubs rely on the support of their local clubs, to provide the funding and resources to allow their surf clubs and members to do the things they do best - save lives on their beaches and develop great Australians through our training, sport and junior activities programs," George Shales said.

"SLSNSW prides itself on authentic and supportive relationships, and the relationship we have built with ClubsNSW over the past seven years has been one of trust and mutual respect. The renewal of our partnership just reinforces what a formidable team we are and what this delivers for our members and the community," he said.

Since the partnership was established in 2013, ClubsNSW has provided

crucial support that enables Surf Life Saving NSW to deliver a range of initiatives beyond its role as an emergency service.

As Naming Rights Sponsor of the most anticipated surf sports event of the year, the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships, and Supporting Sponsor of the NSW Country Championships, ClubsNSW provides the opportunity for more than 7,000 competitors to demonstrate their highly trained lifesaving skills and participate in an active, healthy lifestyle.

Meanwhile in the Community Education portfolio, ClubsNSW are a supporting partner of the Beach to Bush program which educates primary school students on beach



President, George Shales OAM and CEO Steven Pearce AFSM of Surf Life Saving NSW present CEO, Josh Landis and Chairman, George Peponis of ClubsNSW with a framed cap to mark the partnership renewal

safety. Last year, 94 percent of students who participated in the Beach to Bush program could identify the safest place to swim at the beach as between the flags, a 17 percent increase from those surveyed prior to the program.

ClubsNSW CEO, Josh Landis recognised that both local clubs and surf clubs exist to give back to the community and the extension to the partnership is important in continuing that support.

"Under the 'Your local club' banner, ClubsNSW is extremely proud to partner with Surf Life Saving NSW for three more years," said ClubsNSW CEO Josh Landis.

"Our association aims to put the interests of clubs and their

communities first — an objective which perfectly aligns with the mission of surf clubs across the state.

"We look forward to supporting the surf lifesavers and communities of NSW for years to come, and further strengthening this truly unique partnership," Mr Landis said.

On a local level, the ClubGRANTS program has provided vital funding to Surf Clubs that last year alone provided vital rescue and training equipment including nipper boards, IRBs (inflatable rescue boat), IRB engines and defibrillators.

Surf Life Saving NSW CEO, Steven Pearce, said that in a year which has been plagued with uncertainty and change due to COVID-19, the renewal

of the major partnership between ClubsNSW and Surf Life Saving NSW, for the eighth year is great news for SLSNSW and the membership.

"We are immensely proud of this partnership. This has been a great example of a natural synergy, with both our organisations sharing the same values, support for community collaboration and development and both are icons in the NSW community," Steven Pearce said.

"Surf Life Saving NSW would not be able to perform our role without ClubsNSW support and we are delighted that the relationship will continue and flourish," he said.



Lifesavers Bush Bash to Keep Kids Safe in the Surf

In November, a record number of volunteer surf lifesavers went bush to deliver important beach and water safety lessons to thousands of NSW primary school students in Surf Life Saving NSW's flagship Beach to Bush education program.

Over 8,600 school children attended one of the more unusual lessons on the school calendar when the 27th annual Beach to Bush program toured rural and regional towns including Wagga Wagga, Temora, Coonamble, Bowral, Scone and Jerilderie.

With COVID-19 travel restrictions limiting interstate and overseas travel, more families are heading to the NSW coastline for holidays. With summer fast approaching, it was the ideal time to educate children about beach safety.

For many children, attending the Beach to Bush classes was their first interaction with a surf lifesaver in an iconic red and yellow patrol uniform. Some have never actually been to the coast or swum in the ocean, let alone learnt about beach rips and dangerous marine species.

Over the past 27 years, over 255,000 primary school-aged students have benefited from the Beach to Bush program delivered by dedicated, volunteer surf lifesavers.

The coastal safety program is carefully designed by SLSNSW educators to ensure the lesson content is age-appropriate. Children attending the program learn about the role of surf lifesavers, why they should always swim between the flags, how to spot a rip current, what to do if you get into trouble at the beach and the different types of marine life that can be found along the coast. The program also includes information about water safety on inland waterways such as lakes, rivers and dams.

It is Surf Life Saving NSW's vision that every student has access to important coastal safety information – regardless of the size of their school. The smallest school the lifesavers visited, Avoca Public School, has just five pupils. At the other end of the spectrum is St Thomas Aquinas Primary School in Bowral which has 366 students who also enjoyed a Beach to Bush class.

The NSW Government (through the Deputy Premier's Discretionary Fund) and Your local club provided financial support for the Beach to Bush program.

ClubsNSW CEO Josh Landis said that the club industry is enormously proud of its long and close association with Surf Life Saving NSW - especially their support of the Beach to Bush educational program.

"Given the current travel restrictions, we will see many children from regional areas flocking to the coast with their families for the summer holidays, so the message of beach safety remains an important one. Your local club is proud to support the Beach to Bush program in its 27th year," Mr Landis said.

"In what has been an extremely challenging year for us all, the continued service and dedication of surf life savers in our state is recognised and appreciated now more than ever," he said.

Julia Kiss, Community Education Manager at SLSNSW, said that the organisation has ambitions to grow the Beach to Bush program.

"Following the success of Beach to Bush over the past 27 years, we expanded the program in 2020 with the aim of bringing coastal education to more students and schools in remote and rural communities," said Julia Kiss.

Surf Life Saving NSW Beach to Bush spokesperson Jenni Clarke said the



program is a wonderful opportunity for volunteer lifesavers to share their knowledge and passion for beach safety with children in rural and remote areas.

“Sharing our passion for the beach and the coastline with children, regardless of their location, is an important part of our strategy to educate and keep the beachgoing public safe,” said Jenni Clarke.

“With more people than ever heading to the NSW coastline, Beach to Bush is becoming more important and we know it is something that both the school children and our volunteer surf lifesavers look forward to taking part in each year.

“Our volunteer lifesavers are often the first contact these children have with a real surf lifesaver and they consider it a big responsibility,” Jenni Clarke concluded.

The Beach to Bush program is supported by lead sponsor, the Deputy Premier and the NSW Government as well as supporting sponsor Your local club. It is the largest and most innovative surf safety education program in Australia, having reached more than 255,000 primary school students since it began in 1994.



DRONES KEEPING SYDNEY'S BEACHES AND PARKS COVID-SAFE

In November, Surf Life Saving NSW CEO, Steven Pearce and Northern Beaches Council Mayor, Michael Regan officially announced a new agreement between the two organisations to monitor some of Sydney's most popular beaches and parks over summer using UAV (drone) technology.



Surf Life Saving NSW UAV pilots are now monitoring Sydney's Northern Beaches and parks from the air and sending real-time attendance information to Council officials to help ensure beaches can stay open and COVID-safe.

The partnership between Surf Life Saving NSW and Northern Beaches Council has been formed ahead of what is anticipated to be one of the busiest summers on record on Sydney's beaches. With COVID-19 travel restrictions in place and overseas and interstate beach holidays perhaps not an option, holidaymakers are expected to flock to NSW beaches in greater numbers than ever.

In an attempt to ensure beaches can stay open during peak summer weekend and school holiday periods, Northern Beaches Council staff and surf lifesavers are working closely together to monitor numbers and provide up-to-the-minute information to the beach-going public so they can avoid beaches nearing COVID-safe capacity. High-resolution images taken by UAVs are sent to Council and the new SLSNSW State Operations Centre where beach attendance data is recorded.

This data is providing a bigger picture of overall beach attendances. Locations nearing capacity or where access is restricted can be viewed using the Beachsafe website and Beachsafe App.

Northern Beaches Council Mayor, Michael Regan said Council had sought the partnership with SLSNSW to increase the chances of beaches and parks across the Northern Beaches staying COVID-safe and open through the summer.

"This partnership is a critical part of our summer COVID safety operations," Mayor Regan said.

"Our aim is to keep our popular beaches and parks open so locals and visitors alike can enjoy them to the full this summer.

"Using this real-time data we can even more effectively manage our public spaces and reduce the COVID risk to beachgoers."

Surf Life Saving NSW CEO Steven Pearce said that the partnership was a great example of the way Northern Beaches Council and Surf Life Saving NSW are innovating to keep beaches and public spaces open during summer and most importantly, the Northern Beaches community COVID-safe.

"Drones have become an indispensable tool in Surf Life Saving operations. In addition to providing important beach attendance information to councils and police who make beach access decisions, our UAVs are used for marine creature surveillance, search and rescue operations and spot beach hazards such as rips," Steven Pearce said.

"We've been working with councils on smart ways to keep beaches open this summer ahead of what's going to be a massive season on the NSW coastline. Nobody, least of all surf lifesavers, wants to close beaches, so the more information we can give people about beach attendance, ahead of them arriving on the sand to find it nearing COVID-safe attendance limits, the better.

"Thanks to our UAV technology and the Beachsafe website and app, beachgoers can easily identify less crowded beaches before they leave home with the tap of a button on their mobile phone," he said.

The trial of the new UAV beach and park UAV surveillance service began on Saturday 14 November at 25 Northern Beaches Council beach and park locations.



BE A LIFE SAVER AND RECYCLE

Surf Life Saving NSW's partner Envirobank is an operator in the NSW Government Container Deposit Scheme (CDS). By providing Surf Life Saving NSW clubs the opportunity to collect refundable containers, the partnership aims to raise awareness about the importance of recycling and caring for the environment, whilst raising funds for community education programs and vital rescue training and equipment.

Each year, more than 160 million bottles and cans become litter in NSW. By learning about the positive impacts of recycling and changing our habits, this number can be reduced.

In the last three years since the partnership began, more than 30 surf clubs in NSW have joined the initiative and together collected more than 747,842 containers. This equates to a saving of 92 tonnes of carbon dioxide, 341 GW of energy, 659,000 litres of water and 201 cubic metres of landfill.

During National Recycling Week from Monday 9 November to Friday 13 November 2020, schools were invited to increase their recycling awareness and participate in collecting containers to be recycled in support of Surf Life Saving NSW.



Staff, students and their families were given Envirobank collection bags to place around the school and take home to collect refundable containers in. At the end of the week, Envirobank visited the schools to collect the bags and tallied the containers. In just one week, ten schools collected 7,758 containers raising over \$700.

To encourage community support, Envirobank host 'pop up' collections where members of the public are invited to visit their local surf club and donate their containers.

By pledging their containers, schools, local eateries, pubs and clubs can also have their returns donated to their local surf club. This form of fundraising provides a solution to many businesses' recycling needs whilst supporting a community service.

Throughout the partnership, Surf Life Saving Clubs registered with Envirobank, have invested the funds they have raised towards purchasing essential rescue equipment such as nipper boards and a new IRB engine. The recycling of eligible containers not only keeps local waterways and the ocean clean, it has assisted in ensuring surf clubs remain rescue ready.

Did you know that 100 refundable containers can equip a lifesaver with a patrol whistle?

A donation of 500 refundable containers can purchase a patrol team a first aid kit.

If your surf club, school, local eatery or community group collected 2,000 refundable containers each month for one year, this would fund the cost of a defibrillator.

To find out when the next 'pop up' collection is happening in your area so that you can donate your refundable cans and bottles, head to the Surf Life Saving NSW Website.

If your surf club or local business is interested in joining the Envirobank initiative, please contact Surf Life Saving NSW [here](#).



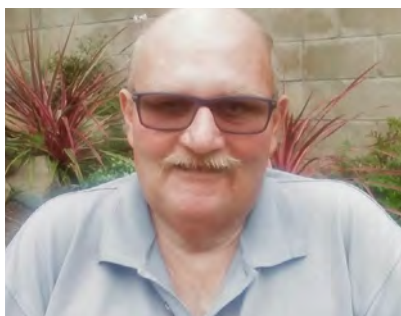
Surf Life Saving NSW Announces **NEW LIFE MEMBERS**

At the Surf Life Saving NSW Annual General Meeting held on Friday 6 November, two long-serving volunteer surf lifesavers were elevated to the distinguished position of NSW Life Member.

The Surf Life Saving New South Wales (SLSNSW) Annual General Meeting (AGM) is held at SLSNSW headquarters in Belrose, Sydney. The event is hosted by the SLSNSW President who presents the Annual Report. Board Members attend the AGM and report on the performance and achievements of the organisation over the previous 12 months. The occasion is also used to formally announce new Life Memberships as recognition of outstanding contributions to the Surf Life Saving movement from volunteer surf lifesavers in NSW.

President of Surf Life Saving NSW, George Shales OAM, said that being awarded with a life membership is a very significant achievement.

“NSW Life Membership is a significant honour and I would like to congratulate Tony Rettke and Michael Bretherton for their achievements and acknowledge their outstanding, continuing contribution to the Surf Life Saving movement,” said SLSNSW President George Shales.



Michael Bretherton
Garie SLSC, Burning Palms SLSC

Michael Bretherton joined Garie SLSC in 1977 and Burning Palms SLSC in 1978 and he remains a member of both clubs today.

Over the past 43 years Michael has held numerous positions at a club, branch and state level and has enjoyed a myriad of achievements and awards.

Michael has, among other things, held the positions of NSW Director of Education and Branch Manager Education and has sat on various panels and committees including the Meritorious Award Committee and the Research & Development Committee.

Michael led significant change in the organisation's award structure and the introduction of VET standards. He represented NSW on the National Board of Lifesaving.

Michael has won numerous awards including NSW Assessor of the Year, SLS Sydney Facilitator of the Year, Examiner of the Year and Selection Panel Lifesaver of the Year.

At a club level, Michael has held various positions including Garie SLSC Club Captain, Deputy Club President, Chief Training Officer, Director of Administration and Club President.

[Read more »](#)



Tony Rettke
Tathra SLSC

Over the past 36 years Anthony “Tony” Rettke has proven to be a committed and dedicated surf lifesaver and leader through the roles he's held at every level. From his start as a Bronze Medallion holder to Patrol Captain, to Club President to Branch President, with myriad other roles and contributions, Tony has had an enthusiastic approach to Surf Life Saving that is infectious and makes others around him constantly strive to do their best.

Tony's thoughtful and considered approach has resulted in him being recruited to serve on numerous committees, reviews and working groups at a State level over the years. He was also part of the original facilitator panel for the introduction of Powercraft Night Operations at State level.

Tony's service extends to the success he has had in building the profile of Far South Coast Branch and Surf Life Saving as a whole. He is a frequent spokesperson on local, regional and even state media and is a very effective communicator. His natural and enthusiastic approach ensures the SLS message stands out.

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Heart Attack Victim Rescued in remote location

In October, an outdoor adventure guide and a group of students and schoolteachers he was leading were rescued in remote Kataway Bay after the guide suffered what is suspected to have been a heart attack. Thanks to the coordinated efforts of Surf Life Saving and other NSW Emergency Service agencies and the fact that the guide had a personal emergency beacon (EPIRB) with him, the group was located and transported to safety.

At approximately 4.15pm on Sunday 25 October, the newly opened Surf Life Saving NSW State Operations Centre was advised by Police that they had received a call to Triple-0 requesting assistance for a man was suffering a suspected heart attack in the remote Kataway Bay area of Myall Lakes on the NSW Lower North Coast.

Kataway Bay is not easily accessible by land or air, so NSW Police requested assistance from Surf Life Saving NSW to access the man by water.

The Pacific Palms Surf Life Saving Club Emergency Callout Team was activated and husband and wife team of Jerrad and Jeanette Allen immediately towed an inflatable rescue boat (IRB) to the Neranie Boat Ramp near Seal Rocks – the closest launch point to the suspected location of the guide and school group. They were the first to arrive at the location and were soon joined by Police and Ambulance teams.

Conditions at the time were not favourable with high winds, fog and rain squalls hampering attempts to locate the Blue Mountains Grammar School group who had been kayaking on Myall Lakes as part of an outdoor adventure camp.

Thankfully, the group's guide had taken a personal emergency locator beacon (EPIRB) with him and activated it. The group's location was immediately identified by emergency services and relayed from the SLSNSW

State Operations Centre via radio to the Pacific Palms search and rescue team in the IRB who had been searching for the group in an area nearby.

The callout team of Jerrad and Jeanette Allen soon located the school group and treated their 50-year old guide who was suffering from severe chest pain. He was stabilised, wrapped in a space blanket for warmth and transported conscious and breathing back to the Neranie Boat Ramp, some 15 minutes away, where Ambulance paramedics were waiting to provide treatment. The man was later transported to Manning Base Hospital in Taree in a stable condition.

Meanwhile, the group of school children, their teachers and their kayaks were transported from Kataway Bay back to Neranie Boat Ramp by the Pacific Palms IRB and a State Emergency Service (SES) boat. It was dark by this stage and the boats and kayaks were joined in a chain behind the SES boat which had navigation lights and was certified for night operations.

Dave Ellis from Pacific Palms SLSC, who was the Duty Officer tasked to the incident, said that the biggest challenges the search and rescue team faced was the remote location, the weather and the intermittent communications.

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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 76,000 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 Pam-bula SLSC on the Far South Coast.

Contact Us

For contributions or suggestions for Surflife please contact SLSNSW 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



SLSNSW 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.

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