

SurfLIFE

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SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

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Global History Made In Dramatic UAV Rescue

Lennox Head on the state's Far North Coast was the unlikely scene of a historic rescue in January when an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) and Rescue Pod were deployed in action for the first time, unleashing global interest in the application of this exciting technology.

Lifeguards from the Australian Lifeguard Service (ALS) were preparing for a training session to familiarise themselves with the UAV equipment on 18 January. The UAV operations form a key part of an arrangement between the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) and Surf Life Saving NSW, as part of the government's \$16 million shark mitigation strategy. During pilot familiarisation, a call came through concerning two distressed swimmers.

The two men were swimming in powerful surf conditions approximately a kilometre north of the patrolled area when a member of the public noticed that they were having difficulty in the large swell.

ALS Lifeguard Supervisor Jai Sheridan, the 2017 NSW Lifeguard of the Year, was piloting the UAV at the time. He immediately responded and was able to locate the swimmers within minutes of the initial alert.

In a world first real life situation, he dropped the self-inflating rescue pod to the swimmers, who were able to cling onto it and make their own way to shore where they were met by lifeguards from Lennox Head, who had raced to the scene to assist.

The pair were fortunately unharmed from their ordeal apart from showing signs of fatigue.

"The UAV certainly proved itself as an amazingly efficient piece of lifesaving equipment and a delight to fly," said Jai Sheridan.

"I was able to launch it, fly it to the location, and drop the pod all in about one to two minutes. On a normal day that would have taken our lifeguards a few minutes longer to reach the swimmers," he said.

Footage from the rescue would ultimately be shared around the world, attracting attention from media outlets in the USA, UK, and across Asia providing a unique opportunity to highlight both this new technology and the work of NSW lifesavers and lifeguards on a global scale.

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To view the UAV rescue, visit
<http://bit.ly/UAVRescue>



35

Drowning Spike Concerns Lifesavers

Despite a fall in total drownings in NSW waters this summer, a 50% increase in coastal fatalities is causing concern for those in the lifesaving community.

In the three months from December through to February, 36 people drowned in NSW with 21 of those recorded in coastal waters. This was a significant spike from the 14 that occurred in the corresponding period during the 2016/17 season.

Unfortunately that trend continued into autumn with a number of incidents raising the total number to 35, which is above last year's number and is just below the ten-year average of 37.

As we move into the cooler months which are peak-season for rock fishers, there has been a renewed push from the lifesaving community around the importance of lifejackets.

SLSNSW CEO Steven Pearce has praised the efforts of the thousands of members for their contribution in keeping beaches safe during a busy period.

"Our volunteers have done an amazing job this summer, rescuing more than 2200 people from the surf and preventing thousands more from getting into trouble in the first place," said SLSNSW CEO Steven Pearce.

"Most drownings have occurred at unpatrolled locations and a key message as we move deeper into autumn is to keep yourself and your family safe, by swimming between the red and yellow flags," he said.

Nauru Lifeguards On Australian Tour

Lifeguards from the tiny island nation of Nauru have been expanding their skills and knowledge on Australian beaches, joining lifesavers and lifeguards for extensive training as they prepare for the task of safely guarding their own beaches.

Last November four lifeguards jetted into Australia for an 11-day-program during which they patrolled Elouera Beach with both volunteer lifesavers and council lifeguards, had a stint at Cronulla Beach on patrol, observed a Nippers training session, completed jet ski training sessions, and participated in a number of theory courses designed to upskill them.

The delegation was the third of its type to visit Australia and has been hugely successful in developing a professional culture for the lifeguards of Nauru.

Surf Life Saving NSW Academy Support Officer Steve Allan, who oversaw the visit, said a highlight of the program has been the rapid development in the skills of the touring lifeguards.

"I think they have gained confidence over the course of the program and they've learned so much that they can take back to the other lifeguards at home," said Steve Allan.

"The lifeguards did everything we asked of them and were keen to learn as much as a possible. By all accounts the feedback we have been getting is extremely positive and we're grateful for all the support we have been getting from within the lifesaving community."





Exciting Carnival Closes Nipper Program

It wasn't quite the beach, but the state's most innovative and unique Nippers club recently signed off on a successful fifth season with a lifesaving carnival every bit as fun as their coastal peers as they gathered at Sydney's Wet'n'Wild theme park to celebrate the end of their summer.

Established as an opportunity for children living in Western Sydney to have access to the same beach education opportunities as their coastal based peers, the Wet'n'Wild Sydney Nippers Club closely mirrors the popular Nippers program.

Parents, many of who are themselves former Nippers, value the program because of the confidence it gives their children around the water.

"My daughter's confidence has grown so much around the water through the program. I too have also learnt so many things about the beach that will help keep my family safe. We will be looking into joining a surf club next season because this program has shown us how worthwhile Nippers is," said Nathan Wakefield.

During the 2017/18 season over 150 youngsters aged from 8 to 13 participated in the program over 16 Sundays. They learned new skills, made new friends, and participated in the season ending carnival which included sprints, flags, and water races at the iconic theme park.

Thanks to the successful partnership between Surf Life Saving NSW and Wet'n'Wild Sydney, more than 400 children have been able to participate over the last five years.



Visit our Wet'n'Wild Nippers page
<http://bit.ly/WetnWildNippers>



Rookie Lifesaver Lends A Hand

Helping people is at the core of everything our volunteers do and recently one young lifesaver on the Far North Coast demonstrated how it's done.

On an extremely hot Saturday in March, 14-year-old Riley Green from Ballina Lighthouse-Lismore SLSC had just begun his afternoon on patrol when he was approached by two elderly women requiring assistance.

As it turned out one of the women was an avid fan of the beach but had not been able to visit for over a year after undergoing double knee surgery.

Sensing her nervousness about returning to the beach, and despite being one of the more inexperienced members on duty that day, Riley immediately offered to escort the woman down to the water.

Patrol Captain Richie Miles said the kind gesture was typical of the type of kid Riley is.

"A lot of teenagers would be too self-conscious to do something like this. Riley is a great kid and immediately put his hand up to help," he said.

Eyes On The Future

Surf Life Saving NSW is looking to an exciting future after launching a new Strategic Plan.

The three year plan takes the organisation through to 2021, and is being rolled out to all clubs and branches across the state. The plan outlines the vision for the organisation moving forward and is built around six key pillars and a number of priority objectives.

Coming at a time when there are numerous challenges for the not-for-profit sector, it sets out how we can improve the experience of Surf Life Saving for our members, embrace new technology, and position the organisation at the forefront of beach safety and aquatic rescue into the future.

NSW President David Murray said the release of the plan was the culmination of a significant effort to canvas views from as many people as possible, from within and outside Surf Life Saving. In all, more than 1500 people contributed to the final blueprint.

"In creating the Strategic Plan we spoke to many stakeholders from across the movement and as a result we are well placed to implement the priority objectives and actions into the future, building on over a hundred years of history," said Mr Murray.



To view the Strategic Plan, visit
<http://bit.ly/SLSNSWStrategicPlan>

Surf Safety Message On The Move

A shared concern that safety messages were reaching the widest possible audience led Transport for NSW and SLSNSW to enter into a unique partnership in early 2018.

As a result, surf safety messages reached around a million people as they transited through some of Sydney's largest public transport hubs each day with a special focus on international visitors.

Large posters were prominently displayed in buses on routes to the Eastern Suburbs while the messages were translated into nine different languages and displayed on digital screens at major stations including Central, Bondi Junction, Town Hall, Wynyard, Chatswood and Martin Place.

Surf Life Saving NSW Operations Manager Phil Ayres said it was extremely important for the organisation to support this public awareness campaign.

"Many people use public transport to get to the beach and to have these visible safety tips is incredibly valuable, especially for our international visitors and those from non-English speaking backgrounds," said Mr Ayres.

"As surf lifesavers, our fundamental concern is for everyone to enjoy their day at the beach safely, and any initiative that gets information to those that might not necessarily be familiar with our coastline is one worth pursuing."

Surf Life Saving NSW would like to acknowledge the support of Transport for NSW in assisting with the delivery of this messaging.



Life's A Beach For International Students

Over 7000 international students gearing up for their first year of study on Australian soil benefited from a crash course on beach safety with surf lifesavers invited to attend the traditional "O Week" ceremonies throughout February and March.

It's a particularly poignant project given that in recent summers there have been several high profile drownings of international visitors including a tragic double drowning of two young Nepalese students at Maroubra in February last year.

Surf Life Saving NSW delivered 24 presentations at 18 unique locations for the following academic institutions;

- University of NSW
- University of Technology Sydney
- Sydney University
- Notre Dame University
- Western Sydney University
- University of Wollongong
- Southern Cross University (Hotel School)
- Macquarie University
- ELICOS College
- TafeNSW

The program follows on from the successful "O Week" workshops from 2017 and has pleasingly enjoyed rapid growth.

Surf Life Saving NSW Community Education Manager Joanne Massey said the presentations reinforce Surf Life Saving's commitment to reach new audiences and ensure that everyone, regardless of their cultural background, can experience the best the beach has to offer safely.



Lifesavers Learn From Kiwi Experts

A group of dedicated surf lifesavers returned from New Zealand recently where they participated in the annual Lifesaving Exchange Program, training alongside some of New Zealand's finest lifeguards.

Eighteen-year-old Lewis Warne (Cudgen Headland SLSC), and 21-year-old Hamish Christie (Long Reef SLSC), were selected as the representatives for the New Zealand tour after impressing at the City/Country Exchange Program held earlier this year.

Additionally Nixy Krite and Damien Woods from South Maroubra were selected to further their skills as facilitators and joined the two participants on the trip.

Throughout the program the touring lifesavers visited emergency services outfits, local surf clubs, and participated in extensive rescue and scenario training, including working on rocks and in caves.

The lifesavers involved returned with a lifetime of memories and new skills that they can take back to their clubs.

"My highlight of the New Zealand trip had to be all the rock and cave work we did. Living in Northern NSW we don't practice any rock work so to be given the opportunity to do this in big swell with some of the most knowledgeable lifeguards in the world was a privilege, and by far the highlight of the trip," said Lewis Warne.

Hamish Christie also found the cave work challenging but rewarding.

"I think the best part of the experience was that I was able to feel confident that even though I was completely out

of my comfort zone I was able to push through it and get through the challenge of the cave," he said.

Facilitator Damien Woods enjoyed working with the New Zealand lifesavers, saying it motivated him to encourage his club's younger members to take on leadership roles within the movement.

"The New Zealand professional lifeguards and volunteers take the role very seriously and have a lot of pride in what they do. Listening to younger members discuss how their peers respect what they do with their clubs is

Listening to younger members discuss how their peers respect what they do with their clubs is really positive, and is inspiring for us to take back to our clubs

really positive, and is inspiring for us to take back to our clubs," he said.

Nixy Krite agreed

the program had inspired her to share her new skills and knowledge with lifesavers around the state.

"As a facilitator on this program I was pushed out of my comfort zone and put in some tricky situations that allowed me to recognise my strengths and opportunities for growth as not only a facilitator but as a lifesaver generally.

"I am hoping to continue to share my skills with our future leaders across the state and help them become the best they can be," she said.

The New Zealand Exchange Tour was hosted at Bethells Beach Auckland in March 2018.

James De Vries, Shelly Beach SLSC
with Dana and Phil Bird



Moment To Savour For Young Surf Sport Stars

Two of the highlights of the program at the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships are undoubtedly the U19 Swim and U19 Board events as it is an opportunity to honour the memory of two fantastic lifesavers.

The Saxon Bird Memorial Trophy which honours the memory of the late Queenscliff athlete is presented to the winner of the swim race, while first past the post in the Board event takes home the Jacob Lollback trophy in memory of the late Yamba star.

Fittingly the races are always fiercely contested but there is also a sense of poignancy in them as the athletes know what they are racing for.

For the second straight year James De Vries (Shelly Beach) took home the Saxon Bird trophy after being crowned the best U19 swimmer in the state. He finished just ahead of Bailey Johns (Avoca Beach), and Isaac Smith (Newport) and was presented his trophy by the Bird family who were on hand to watch the race.



Christopher King, Elouera SLSC

Elouera's Christopher King took out the U19 board race with Hayden Copping (Redhead), and Ben Highfield (North Cronulla) joining him on the podium.

"It is wonderful that we are able to honour the memory of both Saxon Bird and Jacob Lollback each sport season with these two perpetual trophies," said NSW Surf Sport Manager Rob Pidgeon.

"The U19 competitors regard both these races as the pinnacle of their State program and are always conscious of performing with the sportsmanship befitting the legacy of the fallen lifesavers.

"I would like to congratulate both James and Christopher for their performances while also acknowledging the rest of the field who did so much to make it a memorable event," he said.



Major Champs Cap Off Successful Summer

It's been a busy and exciting summer for surf sports with thousands of athletes, officials, and spectators enjoying extremely successful campaigns at a club, branch, and state level.

In February, the Country Championships were held at South West Rocks for a third straight year.

Cudgen Headland dominated the point-score defending their title as Country NSW's most successful club and finishing ahead of Sawtell, and Byron Bay.

During the NSW Championships held at Blacksmiths Beach in March over 6000 competitors aged from 9 to 70+ competed for over 400 medals.

At the Age Championships Elouera ended Manly's long-time winning streak to claim overall honours ahead of Newport and Cooks Hill.

Bondi Surf Bathers regained the Masters title downing their beach rivals North Bondi and Redhead.

In the competition-ending Open Division, Newport was too strong as they took home their 5th consecutive title ahead of Manly and Wanda.

Looking ahead, the 2018/19 season promises to be bigger and better than ever for Surf Sports in NSW.

Australia will host the World Championships in Glenelg later this year while the NSW Envirobank Country Championships will move to a new venue at Kingscliff Beach.

Rounding off next summer will be the State Championships in February/March which will again be hosted by Swansea Belmont SLSC.

NSW Surf Life Saving Championship Results

Age Championships

- 1 Elouera SLSC
- 2 Newport SLSC
- 3 Cooks Hill SLSC

Masters Championships

- 1 Bondi Surf Bathers LSC
- 2 North Bondi SLSC
- 3 Redhead SLSC

Open Championships

- 1 Newport SLSC
- 2 Manly LSC
- 3 Wanda SLSC





NSW Lifesavers Win Inaugural Youth Cup

It was an Australia Day to remember for the next generation of NSW surf sport stars after the teenage team made a winning start to their representative career by taking out the inaugural Youth Pathway Cup at Sydney's Freshwater Beach.

The team was captained by Riley Dixon (Wanda SLSC), and Bella Williams (Cooks Hills SLSC) and targeted athletes who have achieved significant success despite their tender years.

Consisting of 20 athletes from the Under 14 and 15 age groups, the NSW team ended the one-day competition on 170 points across the 38 events, finishing clear of Queensland and Western Australia who rounded out the podium.

The Youth Pathway Cup is Surf Life Saving's newest representative competition and allows some of the sport's brightest prospects to test their skills against the best Australia has to offer. With all of the mainland states competing, it was the first time those selected had the opportunity to pull on the sky blue cap of their home state and do us proud

Interstate Glory As NSW Regains Title

Three years of frustration ended with NSW taking home the 2018 Interstate Title in January after a stunning performance at Moana Beach in South Australia.

The Blues took out the one-day competition over fierce rivals Queensland by just a 9 point margin, with Western Australia also standing on the podium in third.

Fielding a squad that contained both up and comers and some very experienced athletes proved to be the perfect recipe for success.

The Youth team blitzed the field to open up a 13 point margin on the Queenslanders which ultimately proved to be crucial during the tense final races.

Head coach Jim Walker said that it was impossible to single out any one performance.

"Everyone did everything we asked of them and more. That's all you can ask for as a coach. We were a champion team not a team of champions, and it is fantastic that they all got rewarded for their efforts with the overall title," he said.

In a historic first NSW sent two teams to Interstate with an Open Squad representing Country also selected.

The team enjoyed a sensational competition to finish in 4th place overall in their division with 12 athletes from outside the Hunter-Illawarra corridor selected in this inaugural squad.

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surflifesaving.com.au/community-programs



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Surf Life Saving Teams With Envirobank

Surf Life Saving NSW's commitment to cleaner beaches was reinforced earlier this summer when the organisation became one of the first not-for-profits to embrace the 'Return and Earn' Container Deposit Scheme initiative.

Enabled by a key partnership with long-standing Australian recycling innovator, Envirobank Recycling, the community is being encouraged to donate eligible drink containers to their local surf club with the 10-cent per container refund going straight to the club.

As the scheme continues to progress during 2018, more of the state's 129 surf clubs are anticipated to come on-board. Eventually, SLSNSW would love to see all surf clubs act as donation stations to not only create a steady, reliable source of income for lifesaving operations, but also aid in keeping our beaches and waterways clean and plastic free.

"For every drink container donated by a member of the public, eight cents goes directly to the local surf club where the containers are deposited. The remaining two cents will be used by Surf Life Saving NSW to fund community education programs, help train lifesavers and provide vital lifesaving and rescue equipment to our clubs," said SLSNSW CEO Steven Pearce.

The partnership between SLSNSW and Envirobank won't be limited to surf clubs. Every event that SLSNSW stages will also have a positive environmental impact with mobile collection facilities set up at major carnivals, fundraising events and other community activations. Envirobank has cemented its support for Surf Life Saving by becoming the official naming rights partner of the NSW Country Championships in 2018 and 2019.





Tathra Tackles Fire Tragedy Head On

The tenacity and resilience of surf lifesavers has been demonstrated to great effect over recent weeks, as the tiny Tathra community struggles in the aftermath of the recent devastating fires.

From the first responders who assisted with the evacuation effort, to continuing to manage a makeshift disaster recovery centre, the team from Tathra SLSC have been an enormous support to the community as they attempt to return to normal.

Tathra Club Captain Justin Gouvernet says it highlights the unique capability of Surf Life Saving to deal with emergency situations and act as the backbone of small communities when tragedies strike.

The small Far South Coast hamlet is no stranger to dealing with tragedy. In 2008 the community was rocked by the deaths of Shane O'Neill and his two infant sons in a fishing accident off Tathra Wharf and again in 2014 when Christine Armstrong was taken by a shark while swimming in the bay.

"Surf clubs really come into their own after these events," said Justin. "One of the major roles we can play is to support the community so people don't feel like they're on their own."

In the early hours of Sunday afternoon, 18 March, the Tathra surf club members were finishing their rostered patrol. Winds were gale force from the north west and there was a plume of smoke coming from that direction.

The fire jumped the Bega River 1.5km from Tathra, setting houses on fire as it tore towards the town. "It came in a

straight line towards us, really fast. The emergency services had bugger all time to warn people," said Justin.

The callout teams from the Tathra and Pambula surf clubs were contacted to help with evacuations. A number of IRBs and a jet ski headed up the river in case people needed

to be rescued via water.

Bermagui surf club became a makeshift evacuation centre to offer support to evacuated Tathra residents.

People soon began arriving at the beach to take refuge, but the thick smoke made the situation extremely difficult. Police and the RFS were telling residents to leave town and head to Bega and Bermagui.

While Justin remained to protect his home, in the lead up to the evacuation he was amazed looking down from his balcony to see people still playing lawn bowls at the club below as the fire raced towards town.

By Monday morning mop up operations began and the town was empty except for emergency services, damage assessors and news reporters. Most residents were in Bega waiting for the all clear to return. On Wednesday residents began arriving and a handful of club members swung into action, setting up the club as a recovery centre, accepting donated food and providing a venue for recovery services workers. Donations of food and clothing began to flood in.

"Surf clubs really come into their own after these events. One of the major roles we can play is to support the community so people don't feel like they're on their own."

The club's young IRB captain, Max Harris, took on the job of coordinator and as people began returning to town, they headed to the surf club to access food and other services from disaster welfare groups who were stationed there including St Vincent de Paul, Disaster Welfare, Red Cross, Salvation Army and Anglicare.

"Max did a great job, as did Loretta Chapple the Club Secretary who took over coordinating this support, making up food and toiletries packs and distributing them around town. The role these members performed was as much about looking after people's mental wellbeing as it was physical," said Justin. "Keeping people positive is vital, making them feel like they've not been left on their own."

The role the club and its members played during the emergency and continues to play, shows the value of Surf Life Saving, particularly in small coastal towns.

"Everybody pulled together and this is where the surf club worked so well. We had the cooking facilities, storage for food and equipment, including being able to store things like chainsaws, rakes and hoes in the boatshed and we had space for people to camp on the floor.

"Surf Lifesavers are also organised, competent and fit people who cope well in a crisis. As volunteers we want to contribute," said Justin.

Amazingly, while a number of club members were personally impacted by the fire and lost or sustained damage to their own homes, patrols on the beach continued as usual the following weekend as well as competitors attending the Branch Senior and Nipper carnivals at Pambula Beach.

"I think everyone wanted to be of use as well as getting back to some routine. We could also just get together as a group and talk about what had happened," said Justin.

Several weeks on as the recovery centre winds down and Tathra locals move into the rebuild phase, the club remains an important point of connection for the community with a charity still providing food, household items and clothing to residents in need.



"Our Nippers area is still being used as a grocery and clothing store and where our water safety gear normally hangs is a rack of bras," laughed Justin.

Team Rubicon are a group of defence force veterans and emergency first responders who are based at the club and using the facilities. They arrived soon after people returned to Tathra and are helping with the clean-up operation.

"Our veterans want to continue to serve," said Geoff Evans, an Afghanistan campaign vet and CEO of Team Rubicon Australia. "Our skills fit well in a disaster zone, it helps us all, your community and also our vets to transition into civilian life," he said.

"They are a great help with a 'can do' attitude and the organisational skills they bring," Justin said. "We were all gobsmacked when we learnt Team Rubicon Australia is only one year old and had borrowed money from their global organisation to come and help us in Tathra.

"From the club's perspective, it's been a strangely positive experience and most importantly, there were no deaths. We hope we don't have to deal with emergency situations but it's good to know we can when they happen."



Max Harris Power, Meagan Frazser,
Anthony Nagle and Joe Bragg

Photo Credit: Loretta Chapple (above), Max Harris (below)



To help support Tathra, visit
<http://bit.ly/TathraSLSNSWAppeal>

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.



Surf Life Saving NSW wishes to thank the following
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SLSNSW endeavours to ensure all information contained in
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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 74,000
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.

For contributions or suggestions
for *SurfLIFE* please contact SLSNSW
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