Surflife ISUE 37 - September 2018



Surf Life Saving and SES Volunteers Join Forces

SLSNSW and the NSW State Emergency Service (SES) are teaming up to give volunteers new pathways and better protect communities in emergencies and natural disasters.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) will deliver a great operational capability boost and deliver benefits for members of both organisations.

Surf Life Saving volunteers have in the past provided flood rescue support in various parts of NSW and our IRB operators are acknowledged as experts in white water operations.

It's a win-win for both organisations, with many surf lifesavers interested in getting involved in flood emergency management and response and the SES keen to engage the support of skilled IRB operators and access specialised equipment such as drones.

Some of the benefits for Surf Life Saving includes:

- Greater recognition of the exceptional skills of our lifesavers
- Enhanced profile for the organisation as a key player within emergency services
- Additional opportunities for members to support their communities
- Enhanced training and additional resourcing for volunteers
- Another pathway for members wanting to be trained as IRB drivers and crew which will enhance our patrolling capacity.

In return, the SES will support surf lifesavers in the areas of member welfare and critical incident support throughout the state.

SLSNSW will seek expressions of interest from the membership to establish strategic flood response trained teams to be activated if required, when disaster strikes.



Lifesavers on the Move

Lifesavers will be sporting some fancy new wheels this summer, thanks to a generous partnership with new national sponsor Holden.

Off-road support vehicles will be used by Surf Life Saving branches to assist with emergency callouts, transporting rescue equipment and delivering education programs within the community.

Branded with a distinctive red and yellow livery and kitted out with the latest safety equipment, the Holden vehicles are ready to respond to incidents and emergencies.

Southern Lifesavers Receive National Award

The determined effort of a group of Far South Coast surf lifesavers to go to the aid of a capsized vessel at Moruya has been recognised with both the National Rescue of the Month Award, and the NSW Rescue of the Year at the Awards of Excellence.

The award was presented to the Far South Coast Support Operations crew which consisted of members from Broulee Surfers, Moruya and Batemans Bay clubs.

This was a highly skilled callout team with many years of experience and rescues under their belt, which was extremely fortunate as this incident demanded all of their skills.

The incident unfolded in the early morning of 24 March after a small vessel capsized while trying to negotiate the notorious Moruya River bar in challenging conditions.

Emergency responders including the surf lifesavers were able to pull multiple people out of the water during an extensive rescue operation, but tragically a 13-year-old girl was unable to be revived.

Andrew Edmunds, who operated the jet ski that day, said it was a humbling, but bittersweet experience to receive the award.

"Nobody gets into Surf Life Saving for the awards or for the recognition, and it was not something any of us sought. It's been a difficult few months."

Mr Edmunds also praised the efforts of all the responders who he said played an important role in keeping the situation under control.

"The members of the public, the paramedics, police, and everyone involved did an amazing job and deserve recognition for their role. These rescues do not happen in isolation," he said.





Drownings Up, Lifesavers on Alert

Surf Lifesavers are preparing for what could be a very hot, challenging summer. The focus on beach safety has been brought into sharp focus with the recent release of the NSW Coastal Safety Report for 2017/18 which highlights a number of worrying trends.

NSW again accounted for a significant percentage of coastal drownings after 39 people lost their lives during 2017/18.

In NSW the most at-risk groups are men (89% of total drownings), swimmers aged 20-29 and rock fishers between the ages of 40 and 45.

While the fatalities are overwhelmingly male, there was a spike in the number of women who drowned last season with seven deaths recorded.

A continuing concern for surf lifesavers is that almost two thirds of fatal incidents occurred less than 1km from a lifesaving service but outside the patrolled area.

Almost half of the coastal drownings this season occurred between the hours of 12pm and 6pm. This statistic is also concerning as it suggests that the message about swimming at a patrolled location may not be getting through.

The report makes for some sobering reading and reinforces the importance of the contribution lifesavers make on the beach each year.



To view the Coastal Safety Report, visit surflifesaving.com.au/reports



A team of lifeguards from the Australian Lifeguard Service (ALS) gained a first-hand look at the intense training professional helicopter crews put themselves through in order to save lives on the state's beaches.

Twelve ALS lifeguard supervisors from across NSW visited the Aeromedical Crewing Excellence (ACE) facility at Bankstown Airport along with Duty Operations Officers from Surf Life Saving NSW.

Creating strong relationships between emergency services is a top priority for the ALS and Surf Life Saving ahead of the peak summer season when millions of visitors head to the coast.

"It was a great opportunity for us to see the different types of training that both the flight and medical crews have to go through in order to reach such high standards," said ALS Northern Beaches Lifeguard Supervisor Brad Woodward.

The ACE Training Centre is a world class aviation and aeromedical training facility operated by Air Ambulance contractor, Toll. Using high fidelity simulation and virtual reality training technology, the facility offers emergency services personnel the chance to experience what it's really like to be stranded at sea in storm conditions or winched into a chopper during rescue operations. In the pool, winds of up to 30 knots and a swell of up to a metre can be simulated.

Do Something Day Focus on Water Safety

In July, Club Marconi in Sydney's west became the setting for a Family Fun Day for more than 50 people driven by a desire to learn more about beach safety ahead of Your Local Club's Do Something Day Campaign.

The venue was chosen specifically because of its geographic location in the heartland of Western Sydney which sadly is a blackspot area for coastal drownings. In a sobering statistic, over the last decade nearly 100 people who call the region home have drowned while visiting the coast.

SLSNSW has been working hard to address these alarming numbers in recent years by working with schools and conducting community education programs to help spread safety messages. The most at risk age is typically males aged between 15-34.

Some of the key topics presented included the beach safety messages of knowing your environment, swimming at a patrolled location, and the role of lifesavers and lifeguards. Participants were also taught about the importance of identifying rip currents, the signs they should look for, and how to escape from a rip if they do get into difficulty.



Tragedy Inspires Generous Lifesaving Gift

Out of the tragedy of the drowning of a young father in January, a family has donated vital rescue and first aid equipment to a small Illawarra surf club in the hope that lives can be saved in the future.

When Nhan Lam was retrieved from the water at the unpatrolled MM Beach near Port Kembla and sadly died later in hospital, a fundraising page was set up to support Mr Lam's wife and their three young children.

The family pledged half of the proceeds to Surf Life Saving NSW and recently handed over two new surf rescue boards and a public access defibrillator to Port Kembla SLSC. Additional funds will be used to establish a scholarship in

Nhan Lam's honour to support the training of future local lifesavers.

A lot of people who do drown, know how to swim and are confident. It just goes to show that swimming skills alone can't prevent you from drowning

Handing over the lifesaving equipment to Port Kembla SLSC, Nhan's brother-in-law Hung Doan said the family was still in total shock that Nhan had drowned as he was young, fit and a good swimmer. He grew up in a coastal village in Vietnam and had always been comfortable around water.

"A lot of people who do drown, know how to swim and are confident. It just goes to show that swimming skills alone can't prevent you from drowning," said Hung Doan.

> "Tragedy isn't the sort of thing you think about when you're taking your kids out for a nice day at the beach." Despite struggling with the loss of their loved one,

Nhan Lam and his young family had travelled to the beach from their

home in south-western Sydney on an extremely hot Sunday 7 January to cool off. Port Kembla's main beach car park was full so they drove a few minutes north to the less crowded, but unpatrolled, MM Beach.

Nhan was swimming on his own when he got into difficulty. A member of the public was able to pull him from the water as emergency services including surf lifesavers rushed to the scene.

He was taken to hospital in a critical condition where he sadly passed away two days later.

Nhan Lam was the third person to drown that weekend in the Illawarra/South Coast area, capping a tragic period for the families affected and the local community. Nhan's family are advocating for better education around the importance of swimming at patrolled locations.

"It's easy to forget about the safety precautions. Drowning just takes a split second and then it's too late."

The donated lifesaving equipment was gratefully received by Port Kembla SLSC and will be put to good use this summer.

"If this equipment can save just one person, that's another family that doesn't have to go through what we've gone through," said Hung Doan.

To view the full story, visit: surflifesaving.com.au/news Your local club is a proud supporter of Surf Life Saving NSW and wishes all volunteer surf lifesavers a safe summer ahead



Find a club near you. www.yourlocalclub.com.au







Lifesaving Legend Hangs Up Cap

Beachgoers at Bilgola on Sydney's Northern Beaches were fortunate enough to be part of history recently as Australia's oldest active lifesaver bade farewell to his patrol for the final time.

Bruce Robertson OAM was just 12 years old when he pulled on the famous red and yellow cap for the first time at Mona Vale, and 76 years later he takes it off after a lifetime devoted to the service of not only his local community but of Sydney as a whole.

The Sydney beaches that Robertson began patrolling in the pre-war years were very different to today.

For a start, in 1942, there was a genuine fear in the community that Australia would be invaded during World War Two.

To protect against the enemy, barbed wire and concrete bollards were a constant site on beaches across Sydney, and as Robertson recalls, he spent more time dealing with injuries from that than any incident that happened in the surf.

Due to a shortage of men in the area, a young Robertson was pressed into service much earlier than otherwise would have been the case and along with a close friend, was a willing participant in the scheme to achieve their bronze before they were legally allowed to do so. That friend would go onto a brilliant career on the silver screen becoming familiar to audiences around the world as the actor Rod Taylor.

Later in life, Bruce would become the chairman of Taronga

Zoo, and had a fulfilling career outside Surf Life Saving.

On his final day as a patrolling lifesaver, Bilgola SLSC members came together to

recognise him in a special way by launching an inflatable rescue boat (IRB) named in his honour.

SLSA President, Graham Ford also presented him with a pin in recognition of his service to International Lifesaving as well as his 70 year SLSA service pin.

"Celebrating Bruce's nearly 76 years in surf life saving was a wonderful way to reflect on the impact he has had both at our club, Bilgola SLSC but also the wider SLS community. His experience and knowledge has been shared with generations of lifesavers," said President of Bilgola SLSC Romilly Madew.

"Seeing his smile when we launched the IRB named after him, then watching him out in the IRB and coming into shore was a joy. He was so thrilled and overwhelmed."

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Ernie Williams, Geoff Provest MP and Andrew Chubb

First Aid for Fingal Community

The Tweed's beaches are one of the great natural assets of the region, but tragedies in recent years including at least three coastal drownings have cast a shadow over this beautiful coastline.

In June almost 40 members of the local community took part in an interactive session called the "First on Scene - First Aid in an Aquatic Environment" course at Fingal Rovers SLSC in an effort to give locals some tools to assist in an emergency situation if needed.

This community initiative supported by both the NSW Government and Surf Life Saving NSW is one of several strategies to give members of the community an insight into the ways they can contribute to helping keep beach visitors safe.

With an emphasis on a message that anyone, anywhere could be a lifesaver, the focus of the program was to help train people in immediate first aid basics if they were to be first on-scene.

It was also an opportunity to inform the community about the role of volunteer surf lifesavers and introduce the attendees to the facilities of the club.

Other topics covered throughout the session included how to perform basic CPR, use a defibrillator, assess a situation, and how to communicate details of an incident to emergency responders.

"It was a highly worthwhile day and helped us deliver on our goal of making the community more aware of the type of work we do on the beach and how they can assist us in an emergency," said Andrew Chubb, one of the club trainers involved in delivering the information session.

The course was delivered by professional and experienced trainers from the Australian Lifesaving Academy.

National Honour for Central Coast Lifesavers

Determination and dedication to rescue a stranded caver at Snapper Point in June has earned a team of Central Coast surf lifesavers the prestigious National Rescue of the Month Award, presented at Parliament House in Canberra.

Lifesavers from clubs including Terrigal, Shelly Beach, The Lakes, Toowoon Bay, and The Entrance, were recognised for a rescue conducted in June. An emergency call for assistance went out when a man became stranded, cut-off by a rising tide while exploring Snapper Cave near Frazer Park.

The area is a notorious blackspot for drownings and the powerful conditions, along with the rapidly fading light, presented a huge challenge for the emergency responders.

The 30-year-old-patient endured an uncomfortable hour or so as he faced the reality that there was no way for him to exit the cave without assistance.

Luckily he had decided to wear a lifejacket that day, which proved to be very useful during the rescue effort.

David Smith (Jetski operator) and Paul Dowdell (swimmer) were able to launch a jetski from Frazer Beach in an operation which was later described as "hazardous".

When they arrived at the cave, the pair realised that the swell was too large to attempt a landing of the Jetski, so Paul swam into the cave to reach the stranded explorer.

Paul could see that the man was close to hypothermia but was essentially uninjured and keen to make his escape.

After they both made the short swim out of the cave, the patient was transported back to shore on the Jetski where he was assessed by paramedics and given a clean bill of health.

"We've got a fantastic rescue team here on the Central Coast and it certainly makes the job out on the water easier knowing that you have that support back on the beach," said David Smith.

"The conditions were certainly fairly tricky on the day with a strong swell, but the patient made the right decision by electing to wait it out after he got stranded."



Surf Lifesavers Paul Dowdell and David Smith with SLSNSW CEO Steven Pearce AFSM

Lifesavers Unite at State Conference

NEW SOUTH WALES

More than 350 surf lifesavers from around the state gathered in Sydney in July for the first state-wide forum in six years.

The Minister for Emergency Services the Hon Troy Grant MP opened the successful forum, the underlying theme for which was "Member Centred. Community Focussed." Major issues were explored including member welfare, culture-change and embracing technology across the organisation this summer and well into the future.

Conference participants heard from experts and inspirational speakers on how to create an engaging culture and some steps to help attract and retain skilled volunteers.

A number of small clubs who have successfully turned their fortunes around in terms of growing membership and engagement shared some of their secrets. Tathra, Pambula and Camden Haven SLSCs spoke about the unique challenges faced by smaller clubs and their ever-changing communities.

Member-focussed workshops gave delegates the chance to share experiences and exchange best-practice tips on a range of topics, from attracting funding, to child protection and building an inclusive environment.

SLSNSW CEO Steven Pearce AFSM with the Hon Troy Grant MP

An important topic discussed which has wider implications for the movement was how to improve the mental wellbeing of lifesavers. With frontline volunteers increasingly exposed to stressful and traumatic emergency situations, support for members involved in lifesaving operations will be a big focus in future.

"Like other organisations, Surf Life Saving is facing many challenges and this conference was a fantastic opportunity for us to set out priorities and look strategically at where we want to be," said SLSNSW CEO Steven Pearce.

"We unveiled our new three-year strategic plan and it was wonderful to sense the enthusiasm and momentum everyone has for the new season," he concluded.



View all the highlights from the 2018 State Conference at youtube.com/surflifesavingnsw

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10c for every container will help us save lives.



To find your nearest donation station or for more information go to: surflifesaving.com.au/community-programs









Surfers and Lifesavers Bury the Hatchet

For the first time since surfing's boom in popularity in the 1960s, leaders of Surf Life Saving NSW and Surfing NSW have reached an agreement between the two state bodies. Increased cooperation, strong developmental pathways for athletes, and shared industry knowledge are just some of the many benefits for Australia's coastal communities.

A Memorandum of Understanding heralds a new era of cooperation, such as lifeguards and lifesaving assets provided to increase safety at Surfing NSW competitions, and First Aid Training for the surfers' organisation.

Surfing NSW is assisting with accredited judges at the NSW Board Riding Championships, and both organisations will cross promote events and development opportunities for their members.

"We are delighted to officially sign this MOU with Surfing NSW and look forward to our relationship continuing to grow," said SLSNSW President David Murray.

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"We're coming together to make our beaches safer. We'll be bringing to life combined initiatives like our Surfers Rescue 24/7 water safety program - providing CPR and board rescue techniques to surfers. SLSNSW has helped with the growth of this program that is now engaging and empowering surfers along the entire NSW coastline to help out when there are no lifeguards or patrols available."

> Newport SLSC's elite academy head coach and international surf journalist Nick Carroll said, "everyone's heard about the bad blood between surf

lifesavers and surfers, but lesser known is that both have been cooperating for years now. There's the mythology and the reality, and the reality is that surf clubs can do with really great surfers on their side during an incident. It's in the club's best interest to upskill surfers and help them out because when there's no one else on the scene, they can save lives."

With the agreement now firmly in place and a strong bond between the two organisations, lifesavers and surfers will be riding the same waves for many years to come.

ook relationship continuing to grow

"It's a wonderful chance for our two organisations to share knowledge and introduce members to a diverse range of new opportunities.

"At the end of the day we both share the same passion for the ocean and many of our members are keen surfers when they are not volunteering on patrol," he said.

Surfing NSW Chair John O'Neill says he's excited for this partnership to come to fruition.

SURF ATHLETES Geal WINTER BLUES

As the curtain fell on the summer surf sport season the spotlight shifted to the winter competitions. With Championship events in Inflatable Rescue Boat, Pool Rescue, and an overseas tour, there was no shortage of action over the cooler months.

The coming of spring means surf sport athletes are training hard for the summer season ahead and with the Lifesaving World Championships coming to Australia in November, it's shaping up to be another bumper season.

Caves Beach Claims IRB Premiership

A blistering performance at the final round of racing in June was enough for Caves Beach SLSC to claim the 2018 NSW Sharkskin Inflatable Rescue Boat Premiership on their home beach, ending a six-year-reign of dominance by Kiama Downs SLSC.

Frontrunners from the opening meet of the season, the Hunter club held off their south coast rivals with a number of impressive displays, while the team from Terrigal emerged from the chasing pack to secure third place on the podium.

"It is very special to win this on our home beach. Kiama Downs are an exceptional team and we've had a lot of great races over the years," said Scott Bryant, Caves Beach IRB Coach and Team Manager.

"We lost a lot of competitors and spent many years rebuilding. I thought it was perhaps a year too soon for them but they've done incredibly well. To win it with my mates' kids and my own as well is pretty special."



Kiama Downs Seals State Crown

Kiama Downs put the disappointment of losing the Sharkskin IRB Premiership Series title behind them in spectacular fashion as they raced to their third successive State Championship crown at South West Rocks.

The powerhouse south coast club almost left it too late, only taking the lead on the final race of the day and finishing just six points clear of Caves Beach. South Maroubra rounded out the podium in third position.

Kiama Downs' Team Manager Steve Strong was ecstatic at the victory.

"I'm absolutely stoked with the win as we didn't think we would have enough competitors to really have a crack at it this season," he said.







Japanese Victory for NSW Young Guns

Strong performances from a young trio of highly talented NSW athletes helped the Australian Lifesaving Team to its 11th consecutive Sanyo Bussan Cup title in Japan in June.

Umina's Jemma Smith, Max Brooks (Newport), and Redhead's Daniel Collins were in red-hot form as the Aussies did enough to power home ahead of New Zealand and Japan at the eight-team invitational event at Momochi Beach.

The Australians have dominated this annual event in a way few others have ever managed.

Adding international flavour to the event, Great Britain, South Africa, Hong Kong, and the United States were all represented with the travelling contingent keen to assess their performances ahead of the World Championships to be staged in South Australia later this year.

Surf Lifesavers Dive in

NEW SOUTH

Over 400 athletes competed for the 165 medals on offer at the 2018 NSW Pool Rescue Championships held at Woy Woy in July.

In recent seasons there has been an increased focus on encouraging clubs to consider entering the Pool Rescue Championships as a means to keep fit over the winter months, and this tactic has proved to be successful with a significant increase in competitors with over 25 NSW surf clubs taking to the start-line in the final tally of 33.

This year the Under 11 age group was introduced for the first time.

NSW Surf Sports Officer Chiara Nowland said it was an impressive weekend of racing.

"It was fantastic to see everyone, from our youngest athletes at their first State Championships through to our veterans getting in and having a go. The standard is improving all the time," she said.

2018 NSW Pool Rescue Championships Club Point Score

Youth Division (Top 3)

- Terrigal SLSC 347
- Newport SLSC 177
- Bulli SLSC 114

Open Division (Top 3)

- Umina SLSC 295
- Shelly Beach SLSC 151
- Newport SLSC 112

Masters (Top 3)

- Bondi SBLSC 143
- Umina SLSC 101
- Terrigal SLSC 89

LIFESAVERS HONOURED Extravaganza

Almost 400 people attended the Surf Life Saving NSW annual Awards of Excellence, proudly supported by Port Authority of NSW, to celebrate volunteer lifesavers from around the state for their outstanding contributions in surf sport, lifesaving and rescues, education and administration.

Official guests including the Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of Surf Life Saving, the Hon. Melinda Pavey MP, herself a volunteer lifesaver, congratulated clubs throughout the state for their efforts over the 2017/18 patrol season.





Philip Holliday, Port Authority of NSW with Matt Slattery

From Top: Tegan Robertson;

New Awards

This year's Awards of Excellence recognised volunteers in three new categories.

Bellambi SLSC's Tegan Robertson was crowned the first ever Young Volunteer of the Year, Tracey Hare-Boyd (North Steyne SLSC) was judged the state's top Patrol Captain, and Patrol One from Umina SLSC capped their stellar season with the inaugural Patrol of the Year award.

"I am beyond shocked, but really happy to win this award," said Tegan Robertson after taking out the newest volunteering prize.

"With both my parents involved in the movement it meant I had no choice but to sign up as a youngster, but I am so happy that it's become part of my life because I love it and really enjoy what I do," she said.



Flood of Awards for Far South Coast

Surf Lifesavers from the Far South Coast returned home with five awards to cap what has been an extraordinary and at times challenging season.

Local lifesavers were recognised at the Awards of Excellence with wins in the Member Services, Education, and Lifesaving categories, while the Branch itself took out an overall award after being crowned the 2018 Branch of the Year.

An amazing joint effort during March's devastating fires was a recurring theme throughout the evening, with the call-out teams from Tathra, Bermagui and Pambula the proud recipients of the Services Team of the Year award.

Far South Coast Branch President Tony Rettke said winning overall Branch of the Year was a great thrill.

"This really is a great feeling for all of our lifesavers. I think what sets us apart from other branches is we don't really compete against each other as clubs, and see ourselves as part of a wider team," he said.



Tathra, Bermagui and Pambula SLSCs (Services Team of the Year)

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Cathy Cole, Volunteer of the Year

Central Coast Claims Top Awards

It's been a bumper season for the Central Coast Branch and their summer to remember ended in the best possible fashion, claiming 7 gongs at the Awards of Excellence.

Among the winners were Jemma Smith (Umina) named Young Athlete of the Year for the second season, Matthew Calbert (Ocean Beach) and Oscar Crowe (MacMasters Beach) who won the Young Lifesaver and Male Junior Lifesaver of the Year awards respectively, and Terrigal SLSC who were recognised for their initiative to ensure their first ever Female Lifesavers from the Second Word War were rightfully awarded their Bronze Medallions.

"These women for us were just pictures on the wall, and we didn't believe when we started this project that we would find any alive as they were aged well into their 90s.

"It was joyful research to understand who these women were and why they did what they did to push the glass ceiling, and it was just an honour to see it all come together," said Terrigal's Cathy Cole who was later recognised as the overall NSW Volunteer of the Year.

North Avoca's Matt Slattery ended the evening on a high as he took out the Port Authority of NSW Surf Lifesaver of the Year title.

"I think it's the Australian way to help others, and it's a privilege to be able to pass on the skills I've learned to others. Surf Life Saving is just a great organisation to be part of," Mr Slattery said.



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



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.

Surf Life Saving New South Wales

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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 Media on 02 9471 8000 or media@surflifesaving.com.au

