

SurfLIFE

ISSUE 48 – September 2021

DRONES
on duty at 50 beaches

*Annual
Awards*

**HONOUR TOP
VOLUNTEERS**

**AMAZING
OFF-SEASON
RESCUES**



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

AOE

2021 SLSNSW Awards of Excellence

Surf Life Saving NSW's Awards of Excellence is over for another year, with the night laying the foundation, as it always does, for the state's network of volunteers to be celebrated.

While part of the spectacle of the annual event was put on hold as COVID-19 restrictions limited the ability to bring the Surf Life Saving community together, a stunning

Facebook premiere on the last Saturday in August was capped by a momentous first, with the Surf Lifesaver of the Year and Volunteer of the Year coming from the same club.

Umina SLSC's Paul Sharpe and Harold Marshall took out two of the night's top honours, following hot on the heels of a group of The Lakes SLSC Nippers and off duty members claiming the Rescue of the Year accolade for their club – the third major award for Central Coast Branch.

President of Surf Life Saving NSW George Shales OAM said the nominees were outstanding this year and that judging panels had their work cut out for them.

"With a membership of more than 75,000 in NSW, we have no shortage of amazing volunteers we need to recognise and it is extremely difficult to choose just a handful of people who have gone above and beyond in the last season," said George Shales.

Capping off the Central Coast's winning streak, Darren Moore from Ocean Beach SLSC was awarded the Presidents Medal for his outstanding contribution over many years. Darren's

work at club level was acknowledged along with the skills and experience he brings to bear as the volunteer responsible for keeping thousands of competitors safe at the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships in recent years.

Earlier in the evening, Sydney Branch was awarded the Branch of the Year on the back of its all-round strength in lifesaving, governance, education and junior activities, and Helensburgh-Stanwell Park SLSC, in the Illawarra Branch, was named NSW Club of the Year.

It was to be Umina SLSC's night, however, as Paul and Harold's tireless and outstanding contribution to the delivery of services for the Peninsula-based club saw them make history.

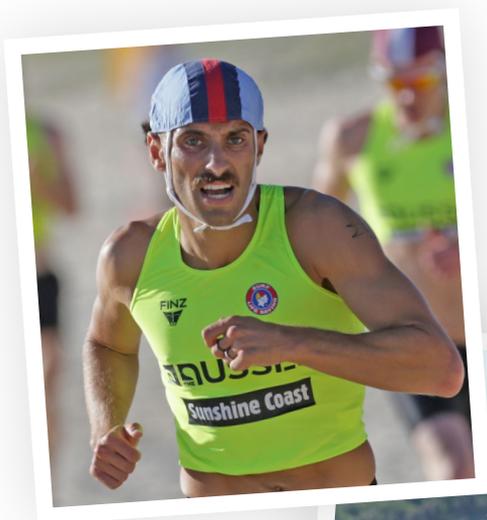
"I'm very excited, it's an honour and I'm humbled," Paul said.

"You don't do what you do for the recognition, you do it for your community.

"We give a lot back to the community and the community gives a lot to us. We are a family club, and everything that comes through to us goes back to the community."

Members and Clubs from the Far North Coast down to the Far South





Coast tuned in to see who would take home the coveted state awards.

Surf Life Saving NSW President, George Shales said the virtual awards presentation was a great success and, while a number of worthy winners were announced, it was a great occasion to recognise the collective efforts of volunteers across the state.

“There’s no doubt we’ve had a tough season,” he said.

“What tonight articulated though, is the success despite the difficulty of the pandemic.

“Having the ability to provide the public with the opportunity to visit the beaches throughout last summer was a great success, and when I look at the results achieved by Surf Life Saving NSW, I’m really proud.”

Many of the NSW award winners proceed through as finalists for national recognition at the Surf Life Saving Australia Awards of Excellence in November.

“Congratulations to all of the nominees and the winners at the 2021 Awards of Excellence. As your proud partner, Your local club are so proud to support, recognise and celebrate your achievements. Surf Life Saving NSW clubs and their volunteers place a strong emphasis on service to the community just like ClubsNSW local clubs”

Josh Landis, ClubsNSW CEO

WINNERS

Education Awards

Trainer of the Year

Tim Pittolo, Terrigal SLSC

Assessor of the Year

Phillip Carter, Maroubra SLSC

Facilitator of the Year

Doug Hawkins, Coogee SLSC

Community Education Program of the Year

Welcome to the Beach Program, Cooks Hill SLSC

Membership Awards

Administrator of the Year

Ian Latham, Wauchope-Bonny Hills SLSC

Youth Volunteer of the Year

Imogen Barham, Clovelly SLSC

Services Team of the Year

Maroon & White Silver Salties, Wollongong City SLSC

Innovation of the Year

Learn to Surf Program, Sandon Point SLSC

Surf Sports Awards

Official of the Year

Ken Sellers, The Entrance SLSC

Coach of the Year

Mick Lang, Tacking Point SLSC

Surf Sports Team of the Year

Open 6 Person R&R, Freshwater SLSC

Youth Athlete of the Year

Lily Finati, North Bondi SLSC

Dominique Melbourn, North Curl Curl SLSC

Masters Athlete of the Year

Scott Thomson, North Bondi SLSC

Athlete of the Year

Ali Najem, Wanda SLSC

Lifesaving Awards

Lifeguard of the Year

Amber Whipple, Byron

Youth Surf Lifesaver of the Year

Liam Drake, Ocean Beach SLSC

Patrol Captain of the Year

Michael Pontefract, Evans Head Casino SLSC

Support Operations Member of the Year

Garry Meredith, Evans Head Casino SLSC

Rescue of the Year

The Lakes SLSC, Central Coast

Overall Awards

Presidents Medal

Darren Moore, Ocean Beach SLSC

Branch of the Year

Sydney Branch

Club of the Year

Helensburgh-Stanwell Park SLSC

Volunteer of the Year

Harold Marshall, Umina SLSC

Surf Lifesaver of the Year

Paul Sharpe, Umina SLSC

NEW REPORT OFFERS

Beach Safety Warning

The 2021 NSW Coastal Safety Report, released in September by Surf Life Saving NSW, has highlighted the need for hyper-vigilance on our beaches, with a spike in coastal visitation expected following large-scale lockdowns.



These concerns come off the back of a sharp rise in coastal drowning figures nationally – up by 20% overall in 2020-21.

Further analysis is required in NSW to establish any firm trends regarding lockdowns and the link to an increased risk of drowning deaths. However, the preliminary findings are concerning ahead of summer where, if state borders remain closed and international travel restrictions in place, high numbers of people are expected to visit the coastline.

“Once NSW reaches its vaccination targets and restrictions ease, many people are going to flock to our beaches after being stuck at home for so long,” Surf Life Saving NSW Director of Lifesaving, Joel Wiseman said following the Report’s release.

“What’s troubling is that the statistics show that following periods of lockdown, we experience a higher number of drowning deaths. Most of these are at unpatrolled locations.

“This comes down to a number of factors, from families seeking more remote and less crowded locations to swim, to the reduced access to swimming lessons and water safety education that comes with being locked down.

“Even the exhaustion of working from home, home-schooling and increased time in confined spaces can lead to complacency when supervising children around water.”

The annual NSW Coastal Safety Report provides a comprehensive summary and analysis of community perceptions, activities on the coast, coastal and ocean drowning deaths and related fatalities.

In the 12 months from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, a total of 88 lives were lost on the NSW coastline with 45 of those classified as coastal drownings. This is above the average of 42 drowning deaths annually.

Males are alarmingly overrepresented, accounting for 93% of all coastal drowning deaths – and interestingly, men in their 60s represented the highest proportion of drownings (20% of the total). People who were swimming or wading accounted for 22% of drowning deaths in 2020/21, rock fishing accounted for one in every five deaths, while boating accidents (nearly a third of all drowning deaths in the previous year) represented 16% of all deaths.

Over the 2020/21 season, surf lifesavers and Australian Lifeguard Service lifeguards rescued 3,768 people in NSW and volunteers spent a total of 663,000 hours on patrol.

The report has also analysed data from key danger periods such as long weekends, where, when various factors coincide, the increased risk can be likened to a bushfire emergency.

For example, over the Australia Day long weekend in January, surf lifesavers and lifeguards rescued 815 people over a four-day period, which accounted for 22% of all rescues recorded in the entire year (3,768 rescues). Another 2,467 people were treated for injuries or medical complaints (21% of the 2020/21 season) and the Surf Emergency Response System was activated 26 times, resulting in seven lives saved.

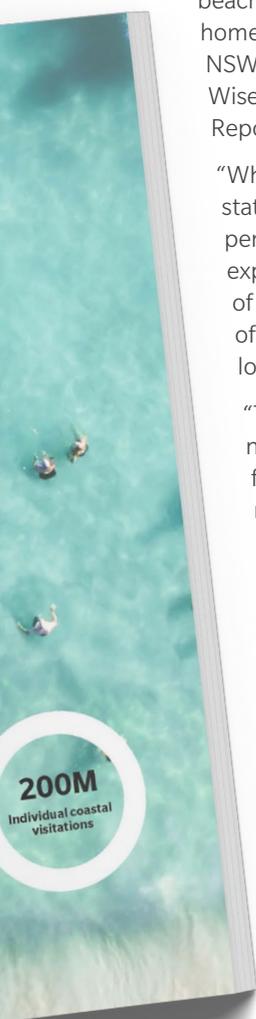
The SLSNSW research team hopes that by being able to predict these high-risk periods in advance, Surf Life Saving services and resources can be allocated to locations or at times they will be most effective.

Also leading out of lockdown and into summer, Surf Life Saving NSW will be looking at water safety campaigns and measures to reinforce to people the need to swim at patrolled beaches and to brush up on swimming skills that may have lapsed during the long COVID-19 winter.

“The statistics reinforce the need for us to push surf safety messages throughout our communities. While our volunteer lifesaving and paid lifeguard services continue to be the cornerstone of our service delivery across NSW, we must also invest in community education programs,” Joel said.

“I have to admit that we are very concerned about the increased risk of drowning incidents because people may lack the swimming skills or fitness necessary to enjoy the water safely, particularly children who may have missed out on vital swimming lessons.

“Programs like Nippers will be so important to help kids get their confidence back and develop skills in the surf, once we get out of lockdown.”



Olympic Dream

for 'mini McKeon'

24 May – a perfectly normal day among many in a calendar year, but one on which, nearly two decades apart, a current and future Australian swimming champion was born.

Young South Maroubra SLSC sensation, Mia Hoo would love nothing more than to follow in the footsteps of her hero, Emma McKeon. They already share a birthday and a Surf Life Saving Club, and if results in junior competition are anything to go by, they may well share in a collection of Olympic Gold medals down the track.

"I've always been around the water. I love surf events and I love being in the pool," Mia said.

It's a love borne from early exposure and cultivated by enjoyment and success.

Mia's mother, Rebecca, said it was always a given her children would learn how to swim. Little did she know that what started as an educational experience would blossom into a burning passion.

"She has always been a water kid," she mused.

"We had a plunge pool where we used to live and she could dive to the bottom and pick up things before she could walk!

"When we decided to get our children involved in Nippers, we ended up joining South Maroubra as they're one of the only surf clubs in the Eastern Suburbs with a rock pool.

"Until you're in under 8/9s you're really only on the sand, but they can learn in the rock pool from under 6s there.

"There was no way you could take her to the beach on a Sunday and not have her in the water, she loved the water too much."

South Maroubra SLSC is the surf club famously founded by Rick McKeon – the grandfather of Emma.

The McKeon family has strong ties to the surf club, and a lot of Emma's success, most recently collecting a staggering haul of seven medals at the Tokyo 2021 Olympic Games earlier this year, can be attributed to her training and development through the club.

Now the latest beneficiary of those development pathways, Mia is excelling in both the ocean and the pool.

"Mia's pretty strong in all of her events in the pool, but at present breaststroke is more exceptional than anything else," Rebecca said.

"And then for Nippers, while over the last year we have had a lot of events cancelled, in the four or five carnivals that did go ahead she won all but one of her water events."

While Mia is destined, surely, for great success, she isn't letting any of it go to her head. Despite her tremendous results and growing list of achievements in the water, she's still a kind and caring kid.

When the announcement was made that Brisbane would host the 2032 Olympic Games, Mia's face shone with excitement. Not because she could now aim to compete at a home Olympics, but because if she qualified, her nan, who can no longer fly, would be able to drive to her events and see her in person.

"I really want her to be able to watch me," she said.



NEW SEASON BEGINS

As lifesavers return to the beach

The first patrol of the new season took place on Saturday, 18 September, as thousands of volunteer lifesavers from up and down the NSW coastline returned to the beach.



Ahead of a summer where high coastal visitation is expected following large-scale lockdowns, state border closures and international travel restrictions, Surf Life Saving NSW President, George Shales OAM said volunteers are well prepared to provide a safe environment for beachgoers.

“NSW is blessed to have beautiful beaches, with many of them patrolled by Surf Life Saving NSW volunteers and our 129 clubs,” he said.

“We have invested significantly over time in member education and training to upskill our members and ensure our beaches are as safe as they can be, but we are also imploring the public to know their limits and to avoid placing themselves or their families in harm’s way unnecessarily.”

The NSW and National Coastal Safety Reports released in the weeks leading up to the season detailed an alarming increase in drownings in Australia, including some findings around a spike in incidents and drownings that have occurred following the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.

“Our real fear is that the risk of coastal drownings will increase coming into summer, as restrictions ease and people flock to the coast for recreation or holidays,” Mr Shales added.

Like last year, there will be some significant challenges for lifesavers this season, with volunteers in metropolitan and many parts of regional NSW beginning the season under Covid-19 restrictions.

Across the state, surf clubs are prepared and safety measures are in place to protect volunteers, including a large scale rollout of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the form of face masks, gloves, eye protection and sanitiser. Modified training, first aid and CPR procedures are also in place, and it has been recommended to clubs to reduce the number of lifesavers on patrol for the

time being, to keep members as safe as possible.

“The safety of our members is paramount, however we are concerned that if lifesavers are not present on our beaches, lives will be lost,” Mr Shales said.

“While it’s not an ideal start to the season in many ways, we are confident the measures we have in place will enable lifesavers to continue to provide frontline beach safety services safely.”

While volunteer lifesavers will not be tasked with enforcing social distancing, Surf Life Saving NSW will be assisting authorities and coastal councils to provide real-time information on overall beach attendance and help coordinate beach closures if required.

UAVs will also be available to be used to estimate numbers of people on beaches and identify other hazards to the public if requested.

The volunteer Surf Patrol season runs until Anzac Day 2022.



INSTINCTS

Behind Major Rescue

Jason Armbruster thanked his training when he reflected on the events of a beautiful Ballina morning in April, events that would sequentially add up and lay the platform for him to be awarded the Surf Life Saving NSW Rescue of the Month.

However, he conceded that, while training gives you the tools to know what is required in difficult situations, in the heat of the moment, you need your instincts to guide you as well.

It started as a day like any other in his tenure as a volunteer at Ballina Lighthouse and Lismore Surf Life Saving Club.

“I was enjoying my iced coffee as I usually do,” Jason chuckled.

“Everything was pretty normal, even the yacht coming in on the horizon. As it got a bit closer though and made its final approach, I noticed it was heading for a solid 1.5-2 metre swell that breaks on a sand bank.

“I just thought straight up ‘Well, this is going to be interesting.’”

It was around 9am, and Jason jumped in his car and drove down to the Ballina Marine Rescue tower at the Richmond River northern breakwall to watch it unfold.

“I was barely there two or three minutes and he had already gotten into a bit of strife,” Jason said.

“He made it over the first couple of waves but lost a lot of momentum, then the third wave got the boat pretty much side on and a man was thrown over the side by the impact.

“It was very strong - the mast of the yacht hit the water.”

While the initial impact was fierce, Jason was relieved to see the man had his life jacket on and had begun swimming towards the shore.

It was then that a second man appeared from the cabin and began making attempts to steer the yacht towards the man who had been thrown overboard.

Another set of waves came through, knocking the yacht around, and the second man was forced to jump overboard and swim towards shore.

“By this stage, though, I’d lost site of the first fella, and as I made my way back down along the wall I noticed his life jacket just floating in the water,” Jason said.

“It was then I realised we had an even bigger problem.”

Jason called Triple Zero and requested emergency assistance, but quickly advised he was ending the call as he needed to enter the water.

He picked a spot he considered safe for him to enter, and he began swimming out towards the second man.

Reaching him, the second man – a 15 year-old - had caught up to the first, an older gentleman who by this stage was struggling and looked gravely ill.

Jason assessed the patient on the spot, before proceeding with the assistance of the teen to swim the elderly gentleman into shore.

“A couple of members of the public helped me drag him up,” Jason recalled.

“By this stage I was puffing pretty hard, so I asked if any of them knew CPR. Three did, so they got a start on the older man before the emergency services arrived, which was pretty quick mind you.

“The training just dropped in – I didn’t hesitate, I didn’t think twice”

“We spent around 35 minutes working to resuscitate him, which was a fantastic effort.”

While the outcome wasn’t ideal and the older man sadly could not be revived, Jason’s quick thinking, calm demeanour and decade of experience ensured there were not multiple lives lost.

“It was probably in the hour after that I realised it was the real deal. It wasn’t my first outing, probably won’t be my last, but you’ve got to make sure you’re calm in these situations.

“I guess I’ve had experience across a number of fields with allied health and juvenile justice and mental health so when you’re in a sticky situation there and you have to think on your feet and react accordingly, I have that background to call on.

“I also think it’s important to give credit to the young fella for doing everything he could and keeping his cool.”

Coogee Members Complete **OFF-DUTY RESCUE**

Two Coogee SLSC members have proven that, even outside of their patrolling hours, lifesavers are always on duty following an important rescue in the early hours of a Sunday morning, 29 of August.

Toni Darben, 52 and Jodie King, 47 were out getting exercise with their weekly swim when they noticed a distressed woman in the water, acting quickly to ensure she would make it back to shore safely.

“It was my first rescue, and naturally my first off-duty,” Jodie said.

“I suppose it was just about going through the process that you’re taught, assessing the patient and also the conditions.

“She was extremely tired and in the break zone of very big swell, and she was stressed. Once we got her out of the break zone and assessed that she was on her own, we chatted to her to calm her down – we even tried to make a few jokes out the back.

“She was on her own and had overestimated her ability, but the surf had also picked up.”

Indeed, the choppy conditions had deterred Toni and Jodie from swimming their normal route, instead opting to do laps back and forth across the bay.

It would prove fortuitous, and so too would Toni and Jodie’s decision to stay and complete a few extra laps after their friends had stopped.

“If we hadn’t of been there I don’t know that anyone would have seen her,” Toni said.

“She was a long way from the flags.

“I think because we had the ability to assess that it was too dangerous for her to go into the beach where she was, we worked out she couldn’t get to the south, the safest thing was to wait with her and call for a lifeguard.

“Joe blow might have said yep come with me and I don’t know how that

would have ended up.”

Having helped the woman to swim to the calmer north end of the bay, lifeguards were able to assist in bringing her safely in to shore and ensuring a happy end to a story that could have gone so differently.

“Because we’re down there all the time and training all the time, we were confident we could help,” Toni said.

“Why wouldn’t you want to be down at the beach - I think it’s one of the best things you can do. It’s not just about doing the Surf Life Saving course, it’s a whole community.

“You know everyone, they all help out, I can’t say enough.

“I keep coming down for the friendships that I have made,” Jodie added.

“You always know someone at the beach.”





SHARK DRONE PROGRAM

Expands In NSW

More than 50 beaches will be patrolled this season and 200 UAV pilots employed to watch over swimmers and surfers through an expanded shark surveillance program in NSW.

Surf Life Saving NSW, with the support of the Department of Primary Industries, will provide UAV coverage in every coastal LGA in the state, with flights commencing the weekend of September 18 and 19 to coincide with the start of surf patrols by lifesavers and lifeguards.

The extension to this program will see over 200 pilots employed along the NSW coastline, predominantly in regional areas with these pilots expected to deliver in excess of 25,000 flights across the 50 locations. The additional 16 locations this year include popular tourist destinations on the far north and far south coasts and in the Greater Sydney region.

The cost-effective, non-invasive UAV technology has proven to be successful at keeping swimmers and surfers safe, while minimising the impact on marine life. Since the program commenced three years

ago, the public response has been overwhelmingly positive, with people reporting greater confidence entering the water at locations where UAVs are operating.

“We want to applaud the Minister for Agriculture Adam Marshall and the NSW Government for committing to do everything they can to keep people safe by boosting UAV capability and we are looking forward to playing our part in the program,” said SLSNSW President George Shales OAM.

“Alongside their primary use for shark mitigation, the UAVs are an additional tool to assist volunteer lifesavers and lifeguards identify other hazards such as rip currents, patrol outside flagged swimming areas and are an integral part of search and rescue operations.”

Drownings at unpatrolled locations were a key area of concern highlighted in the NSW Coastal Safety Report,

released less than a fortnight before this announcement.

New to the program this year will be the trialling of technology designed to extend the reach of the UAV ‘eyes in the sky’, with long range endurance flight trials which could offer the possibility of exponentially increasing the coastal area covered.

SLSNSW will also be further incorporating Artificial Intelligence technology in UAV services to complement the skill set of pilots and extend capability along the coastline.

“We’ve shown this technology is here to stay and hope that with greater coverage we can save even more lives,” said George Shales.

Umina Member Braves Choppy Conditions In Rescue Effort

Young Surf Life Saving star, Olivia Edwards showed wisdom and skill beyond her years, when she rescued a struggling swimmer on the Central Coast, using it as an opportunity to highlight the importance of understanding your limits in difficult conditions.

The 14-year-old Umina SLSC member noticed the elderly lady in distress on the morning of Thursday, 9 September and called on her experience to secure and kick the lady back in to shore.

“I’ve been swimming most mornings in lockdown to keep fit, usually with my friend, and on this day we had finished and caught a wave in but I heard a lady calling out. I could see she was struggling in a rip,” she said.

“I swam out to her, and she asked for my help, so I grabbed her under the shoulders and kicked her in to shore.

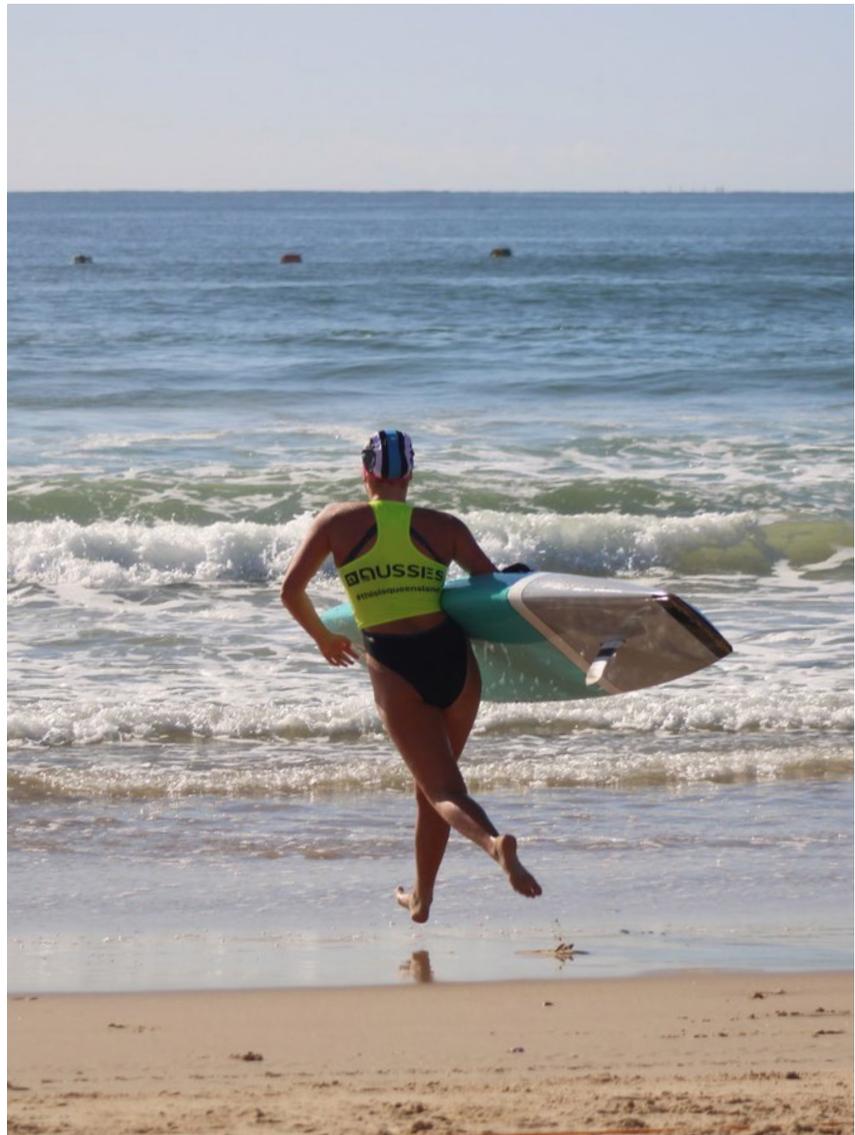
“She was probably 30 metres out, so after a bit we could stand again, and my friend was able to assist in helping me to walk her in.

“By that stage she was very fatigued.”

Indeed, Olivia noted the adverse conditions for inexperienced swimmers and was quick to point out that swimmers need to be conscious of their ability and avoid taking risks when conditions aren’t ideal.

“The lady said she swam a lot of mornings but not really in those types of conditions,” Olivia said.

“It was certainly a bit windy and overcast – it made the swell big.



“I think my biggest thing was just to keep calm and not stress, that was the main thing.”

In doing just that – staying calm and composed when the situation required it – Olivia played an enormous role in preventing what could have been a terrible accident.

Even more impressive, however, is that it was her first rescue, though her actions and poise under pressure suggest otherwise.

Having been involved in Surf Life Saving for more than six years, Olivia has plenty of skills and ocean experience, but it’s competing that she loves the most.

“I think the competitiveness of everything and the people and the community, that’s what brings you back,” she said.

“I do it with a lot of friends, but I also do it for myself - it makes you feel good.”

TEEN HERO SAVES DAD

When 13-year-old Mia Campbell paddled out into the Bar Beach surf with her dad for some after-school board training one sunny Wednesday afternoon in May, she could never have guessed that the events which followed would shape her lifesaving journey and earn her the Surf Life Saving NSW Rescue of the Month award.

It was Wednesday 19 May, at around 4pm, but the Cooks Hill SLSC member remembers it like it was yesterday.

Despite her competence in the water – Mia is a previous silver medal winner in the Surf Teams event at the NSW Championships – she was just learning how to navigate the ocean on a race board with her dad, Ben.

“I had only just started on the mal the previous month,” she said.

“I caught a wave in and noticed Dad’s board washed up near the shore. I thought nothing of it and assumed he would just swim in.

“I then realised Dad wasn’t swimming in, so I decided to paddle over. As I got closer I noticed he was getting smashed by the waves and struggling to keep afloat.

“I knew then something wasn’t right as Dad is very competent in the surf.”

“When I got closer, he said ‘I need help, I can’t move my arm and I need you to rescue me. A dolphin’s hit me.’”

Indeed, Ben – a Cooks Hill SLSC senior patrolling member, club coach and recently elected Director of Surf Sports – had been in the wrong place at the wrong time, struck by a dolphin attempting to jump out of the water.

Aside from a tennis ball-sized hole in the edge of the board, the dolphin also connected heavily with Ben’s left shoulder and chest, rendering him incapacitated in the surf and struggling to stay afloat.

Without missing a beat, Mia jumped straight back into the ocean and paddled the 150m out to him, negotiating the swell and managing to get him onto the board using a technique typically reserved for unconscious patients.

“I used the board roll technique to get Dad onto the board, where you flip the board twice,” she said.

“We negotiated the breaking waves on return to shore and I made sure I told him when a wave was coming and when we were going to catch it.”

Now several months on, Ben has made a full recovery and is confident getting back into the water and helping to train the next generation of lifesavers.

As for Mia, her quick thinking and confidence in the water was awarded Rescue of the Month for May, and was crucial in avoiding a very different end result.

“At the time I was just thinking about getting Dad onto the board and safely back to shore,” she said.

“I was feeling confident, but worried about dad because he was in a lot of pain. I’m happy he’s okay.”



35 YEARS

of Dedication Recognised

On a night that recognised the unwavering commitment of four very deserving Surf Life Saving NSW volunteers, the Rotary Districts of NSW named North Bondi SLSC Life Member, Stewart Bailey as this year's winner at their annual Rotary Emergency Service Community Awards (RESCA), held online in August this year.

Stewart was joined by South Coast Branch Deputy President, James Connoly, Far North Coast Emergency Services Coordinator, Jimmy Keough, and Port Macquarie Lifeguard Supervisor, James Turnham as potential winners of the Surf Life Saving NSW category. Any one of them would have been a worth recipient of the award.

With over four decades of voluntary service to emergency services with Surf Life Saving, including being one of the first Jet Rescue Boat drivers (JRB), an Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) driver and radio operator, Stewart's commitment to his community is without question.

He boasts many years of training and assessing lifesavers including Bronze Medallion, IRB, radio and helicopter crew, and has over 35 years of dedicated service to the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter, with over 1780 flight hours.

He has been a loyal operator, ambassador and advocate for the service in many roles, and was previously awarded a bravery medal from the Royal Humane Society for a rescue at Clovelly.

"I was surprised I was even nominated, and even more so when I actually won," he said.

"Your local surf club is like your extended family. There's a lot of people there who make it worthwhile.

"I enjoy it because it's unpredictable. One day could be an average day, and the next you could be getting calls every few minutes."

RESCA is the only time all Emergency Services personnel, both paid and volunteer, are recognised in a combined awards program.

It is a community-nominated Award which reflects the reputation and esteem in which the finalists are held by their local communities.





Aussie Lifesavers Support **Drowning Prevention In South Korea**

Surf Life Saving NSW's desire to expand the reach of its top-class training and educational initiatives grew stronger in September with the beginning of the second half of Phase 1 of a Lifeguard Training, Community Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Education Program in conjunction with the Korean Lifesaving Association (KLA).

Supported by grant funding from the Australia-Korea Foundation and the Federal Government, this series of vital lifesaving education and skills training sessions is being delivered in both English and Korean and has contributed to the development of new skills and employment pathways in aquatic safety, lifesaving, physical education, and tourism, while adhering to COVID-19 requirements.

To date, bilingual program resources have been developed, and seven online (videoconferencing) interactive

training and education workshops have been delivered successfully to aquatic industry personnel and the general community across South Korea.

Surf Life Saving NSW Program Coordinator, Steve Allan said that the program has effectively addressed many of the key outcomes and objectives that the funding required, including increased public awareness, partnership development and engagement.

"One of our aims is to promote Australia as a leader in aquatic safety through the development of long term, sustainable relationships with our in-country partner the Korean Lifesaving Association (KLA)," he said.

"This has been very successful so far with ongoing positive feedback being received from the KLA, attendees, translators, teachers and university principals.

"The program has already delivered measurable results to contribute to increased awareness of, and engagement in, the Australia-Korea relationship by strengthening and further developing ongoing working relationships.

"New networking opportunities have been created with the South Korean community, promoting resilience, diversity, participation, and strong, innovative leaders. These new working relationships have been established with aquatic industry organisations, numerous universities and the public."

The second half of Phase 1, being CPR Awareness & Drowning Prevention, is scheduled to be delivered in September while Phase 2 of the program – Coastal Safety Risk Assessment and Management – is already underway, having commenced in May 2021.

DHL EXPRESS

make a big splash with SLSNSW

“I just wanted to say a huge thank you. The team really enjoyed the session and it was great to see how relaxed and engaged everyone was. The discussions continued through lunch.” Sarah Osmand, DHL Express Australia

On Thursday 17th June, the DHL Express Senior Management Operations team visited North Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club to take part in the SLSNSW ‘Community Lifesavers Challenge’ Team Building with Purpose session.

This team building session couldn’t have come at a better time. Since the COVID pandemic hit our shores, the staff at DHL Express have been swamped with business as cargo traffic has spiked in this new click and deliver era of online shopping. The “phenomenally high” workload, along with the impact of lockdown and remote working have all had a direct impact on staff mental health and morale, which is why the leadership at DHL Express were keen to take preventative steps to boost the resilience of their people.

Whilst their group had done corporate volunteering in the past, this was the first time they had done anything special like this. The tour of the club along with the ‘spot the rip’ exercise and the many other group activities gave them a greater appreciation of the work SLSNSW does and respect for the professionalism and dedication of their volunteers.

The session had the desired effect of giving them a welcome break from their usual day-to-day and served to refresh and invigorate them and bring



the team closer together.

“The SLSNSW ‘Community Lifesavers Challenge’ is different from normal team building activities which don’t give the same sense of ‘purpose’. With your program we got to know the charity and learn all about the great work their volunteers do. At the same time our people had a fun time and left the session more connected than we were when we first arrived. It was the best of both worlds really” said Ben the Senior Manager of Customs and Regulatory Affairs at DHL Express Australia.

If you or someone you know is looking for a fun team building activity, please let them know about SLSNSW’s ‘Community Lifesavers’ program, which can be delivered online or in person by a professional facilitator.

For each booking, 50% of the net profit from each event which translates to at least \$500 + GST will go directly to SLSNSW. What’s more,

if the session takes place at a surf club, they will benefit from the hire fee for the use of their facilities.

Be sure to spread the word that the SLSNSW ‘Community Lifesavers Challenge’ is the perfect option for company teams to connect on a deeper level with their colleagues and make a difference in the community while doing so.

For more information visit the [Corporate Volunteering](#) section on the SLSNSW website.



Team Building With Purpose



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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 75,000 members, is one of the largest volunteer movements in Australia.

The primary role of Surf Life Saving NSW is to save lives on our beaches, while other activities include developing our members through education, leadership and surf sports programs.

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

Contact Us

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

Cover Photo Credit

Ryan Morgan



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

Your local club



National Partners



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

T +61 2 9471 8000 | E info@surflifesaving.com.au

3 Narabang Way Belrose NSW 2085 | PO Box 307 Belrose NSW 2085 Australia

Fundraising Authority No. CFN11033 ABN: 93 827 748 379



YOUNG LIVES SAVED

as Nipper completes first ever rescue

The fruit of Surf Life Saving training was on show on the Far North Coast in late August, as up-and-coming Nipper, Jack Keough fought bravely against a strong tide to rescue two surfers in the Richmond River.

The nine-year-old Ballina Lighthouse and Lismore SLSC member completed his first ever rescue after he noticed the pair, of no more than 12 years old, struggling against the current on their surfboards and took it on himself to guide them back to safer waters.

"I was thinking to myself 'What do I do?'," Jack recounted.

"I just remembered all my board training and swam out to them."

"One of the young girls Jack rescued was on her back when he got there. She was starting to panic," Jack's mother, Sue added.

"I saw them and knew I had to do something as I didn't want anyone to get hurt."

Having been a Nipper since Under 8s and regularly participating in bi-weekly board training over the summer, Jack was well equipped to understand the dangers of the situation. He showed his technical skill as well, in executing the rescue without any issues.

"He was with his older sister, Madison at the time," Ms Keough continued.

"Madison was on a Nipper board, one of the fibreglass ones, and Jack was on a foam surfboard.

"My kids were the only two when they first went in the water, then the two others came on surfboards, and it was obvious they weren't as confident in the water.

"Jack and Madison kept an eye on them and when they started getting pushed out by the tide, Jack switched boards with Madison and paddled over to them."

It's a fantastic ending to a story that could've been so different without Jack's efforts – efforts Sue believes are reflective of not only his training, but his choice in how he spends his free time.

"His favourite TV show to watch is Bondi Rescue," Sue said, with a smile.

"He just sits in front of the tele and watches so intently."

BRAVE TEENS

Behind Rescue Effort At Narrabeen Beach

“The dangers didn’t scare me, I was just hoping the child and father would be okay.”

These are the words of Liam Doughty – the soon to be 17-year-old who paid homage to his Nipper training in the aftermath of a fearless double rescue at Narrabeen Beach last month.

He’s no stranger to the ocean; as a talented surfer, Liam almost has saltwater running through his veins. His father confesses he practically grew up on the picturesque Narrabeen Beach, and he was a North Steyne SLSC Nipper for many years.

However, with that confidence and familiarity comes the understanding that, at times, the ocean is a treacherous place.

And just after 4.30pm on Wednesday August 11, those dangers reared their head in the worst possible way.

“My friend and I were swimming and it was my friend who first heard the commotion coming from the beach,” Liam recalled.

“At first, I didn’t know what was happening, but our first instinct was that there was a shark in the water from all the screaming so we both swam halfway to shore.

“When the screaming didn’t stop, we looked up and finally saw what they were pointing at.”

Caught in a strong rip, a father and son were fighting desperately against the current. Instincts kicked in, and Liam and his friend, Oscar acted as they believe anyone in their position would have.



“I knew that they were in trouble and obviously don’t have experience and knowledge about rips,” he said.

“We sprinted across the sandbank towards them and jumped in. Oscar got to the boy first as he wasn’t in a good state, and then I got to the father and asked if he was ok. He was panicked but said he could just manage to get in.

“I swam beside him to make sure he was ok, but once we got to the beach the immediate concern was the boy.

“Ambulances then arrived to help, and we spoke to the family and others on the beach.”

Reflecting on the incident a few days later, Liam was able to fully grasp the magnitude of what had unfolded that day and was grateful for his involvement with his local surf club as a junior which prepared him to be capable in situations just like this one.

“I called on two key skills that I learned through Nippers,” he said.

“The first being how to effectively run across a sandbank - it is very important as you can be so much quicker than just normally running.

“The other was being able to identify a rip and understanding what they do.

“Once I got to there, I saw they were both trying to swim against the rip and into shore. Knowing that its nature is to go straight out to sea, I swam across the rip towards the sandbank.

“If the rip was any stronger than it was, I would’ve allowed it to take us out, then swam across back to the sand bank.”

While the young boy was transported at the time to Northern Beaches Hospital in a stable condition for observation, Liam and Oscar’s actions ensured that both the man and his son escaped the rip with little more than a bad memory.

“My previous training definitely helped,” Liam concluded.