

SurfLIFE

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SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES



Member for Tweed Geoff Provest, Minister for Emergency Services Steph Cooke, FNC Lifeguard Manager Scott McCartney and Lifesaving Operations Officer Terry Barber

BEACON OF SAFETY

for North Kingscliff

Locals and holiday makers at one of the state's very popular coastal locations, Kingscliff in the Tweed, will be able to swim a little safer with new lifesaving technology installed for use in emergencies, unveiled on Tuesday 3 May by the NSW Minister for Emergency Services, Steph Cooke and Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Emergency Services and Member for Tweed, Geoff Provest.

The Emergency Response Beacon (ERB) is now in place at the popular North Kingscliff beach location, one of 22 new generation units which will be rolled out at key drowning hotspots this year, as part of the NSW Government's \$16 million commitment across four years to Surf Life Saving NSW.

The devices are being installed at identified high risk locations, many of which are unpatrolled by lifesavers or lifeguards. With a popular caravan park right there and the nearest patrol about 800m away at the Cudgen Headland SLSC, with the press of a button, a member of the public can be connected to the Surf Life Saving State Operations Centre (SOC) for immediate assistance.

Mr Provest said each beacon is being installed at high-risk locations, many of which are unpatrolled by lifesavers or lifeguards.

"With a popular caravan park just metres away and the nearest patrolled section of beach about 800 metres away at the Cudgen Headland, members of the public can now

be immediately connected to the SLSNSW State Operations Centre by clicking a button on the beacon," Mr Provest said.

"This will give locals and visitors some extra peace of mind that help is available if they get into trouble while enjoying the water at North Kingscliff."

President of Surf Life Saving NSW, George Shales said the organisation is always looking for new ways to keep NSW beachgoers safer through enhanced technology.

"The ERB will give visitors at unpatrolled beaches a link to lifesaving services during emergencies, where every second can mean the difference between life and death," said Mr Shales.

The ERB uses the latest mobile technology to communicate between the SOC and the person on the beach and the SOC operator can quickly gather important information, issue instructions or provide reassurance in an emergency situation.

A camera fitted to the ERB can be remotely monitored by the SOC to provide operators with situational awareness of the incident. Surf Life Saving can then respond using a wide range of Support Operations assets, including jetskis, inflatable rescue boats, volunteer callout teams from surf clubs, lifeguards, or helicopter or drone services.

The upgrade in technology provided by the NSW Government's enhanced rescue funding means the new units are solar-powered, can be permanently fixed in position and are easy to install in remote or difficult to access locations. Flashing lights on top of the beacon act as a visual indicator to lifesavers or members of the public that the unit has been activated.

"It is technology like this that we are proud to see rolling out, to ensure beach users across NSW are as safe as possible. This beacon will give residents and visitors some extra peace of mind that help is available if they get into trouble," said Minister Cooke.

North Kingscliff was identified as a hotspot location for the new beacon after numerous emergency callouts that lifesavers and lifeguards have responded to as the local population in the area continues to grow and holiday makers seek out the beautiful Tweed beaches. A limited lifeguard service is provided at North Kingscliff during the summer and autumn school holidays, but it is unpatrolled for the remainder of the year.

"Unfortunately lifesavers and lifeguards can't be everywhere at once, so these emergency beacons are about expanding the reach and making every effort to protect swimmers at unpatrolled locations," said Minister Cooke.

Duo recognised as Masters Legends in Sport Hall of Fame

Queenscliff SLSC's Michael Gedz and Bondi SBLSC's Dori Miller have been recognised for their outstanding contributions to surf sports, inducted into the SLSA Hall of Fame as Masters Legends earlier this year.

The pair were formally announced during a special ceremony at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships on the Gold Coast on Tuesday 5 April, at the conclusion of the 29th Masters Championships – first held at Aussies in 1993 and not running in 2020.

The award recognises Masters competitors, individuals or teams, over the age of 35 years who have achieved exceptional results over a sustained period in designated Masters competition and have done so in events and Masters age categories that have had a high level of competitiveness.

Michael said the recognition was better than anything he'd received in the past.

"It's the best award I've ever had, it beats everything," he said.

"I'm humbled, I've been on cloud nine since they rang me – it's overwhelming."

Since commencing Masters competition in 1997, Michael has been a prolific winner in the Beach events arena.

Overall, he has won 32 gold medals and 13 other podium finishes, with 16 of these golds being first placings in either Beach Sprint or Beach Flags. In the last 10 Championships alone, he has won his age group in the Beach Sprint nine times.



At World Lifesaving Championship level since 1998 (35-39 years) he has been successful in winning 10 individual gold medals at six world championships including four other podium finishes.

Dori, meanwhile, commenced Masters competition in 2011 – winning the 40-44 Female Surf Race. Since then, she has been undefeated in each of her age categories for that event; winning 11 consecutive Surf Race titles. At the past three Championships, Dori has won 18 gold medals, including three consecutive Ocean Swim wins.

Dori has also excelled in Australian Masters Pool competition, winning various events since 2011 including at the World Lifesaving Championships. At the 2018 Worlds in Adelaide, she had seven first placings and two other podium finishes.

"I came to Australia in 2009, joined the surf club a year later and did my Bronze in 2010," she said.

"A lot of it is I like to keep fit. I like to swim, I need to swim just to basically stay sane.

"Sometimes I set goals, whether it's a particular race or something longer, but beyond that is having teammates and friends who do it with you."

Masters competitors play an integral part in the sport arena, through their dedication to Surf Life Saving and competitiveness and fitness to maintain a healthy lifestyle and play a key role within their clubs.

It's those structures that both reflect on as crucial reasons for their love of surf sports.

"You have to find something you love to do," Dori said.

"When you're younger you don't think long term but having something that you're good at that you enjoy to do, that can carry you through later in life."

"The club, the support, the sport, without that it's nothing. You can win the medals on your own but without all this it's nothing," added Michael.

Centenary Celebrations

for Historic North Coast Club



The fabric of any surf club is built by the people who call it home, or so believes Bellinger Valley North Beach SLSC President, Steve Steward.

It helps, he says, when you have “a nice vibe”, but it’s even more important for the vast majority – if not all – to be strong-willed, dedicated, passionate members.

It’s a three-pronged archetype that can describe the club’s entire active membership at present; the perfect team to patrol the beach and represent the region with distinction.

So, when the small north coast club, a short drive south of bigger markets in Sawtell and, further north, Coffs Harbour, celebrated its centenary in April, Steve was just as proud reflecting on the present as he was the past.

“We’re a very dedicated bunch,” he said.

“We have a small number of patrols which means more time on the beach, so we need to be.

“We cover each other. We’ve got a great bunch of people, a nice vibe, no meatheads who upset the balance, we’re all strong heads – everyone is pretty casual and we get on well.

“Our branch and our clubs work together. Sawtell has a lot of members and they don’t mind coming down to help when we need it. It’s what it’s all about.”

Clubs working together for the bigger picture – as it should be – is a vital part of the Surf Life Saving movement. It cultivates character and allows for nights like Bellinger Valley North Beach’s 100-year anniversary celebrations to be particularly sweet.

“It was a great night, certainly,” Steve said.

“The special thing was we were able to bring together the community that makes up the club now, people who have been around short and long term, and also some of the old timers.

“It makes you cast your mind back to how it was back then. Things were so different with equipment and training; things have changed so much.

“Then you see the photos and they’re full of these big, strong fellas. The beach was like a gathering place back then, everyone knew everyone.

“It meant a lot to everyone who was there to celebrate those who came before us.”

In part thanks to those solid foundations, Bellinger Valley North Beach is currently in the middle of one of its most positive periods in recent memory, in and out of the water.

Through connection to the community, the club is a true hive of activity.

“The club, as they do, has gone through ups and downs but we’re in a really good spot at the moment,” he said.

“It’s a small town, our one, so basically there’s us, the corner shop and the bowling club, so we are always expanding our services.

“We have an active gym, host a lot of functions and activities, and we have prime position to use the river, so we see a lot of paddling.

“Physically, the positioning of where we are is quite unique and magical and the club and its members are definitely an important part of that.”



Junior Lifesavers of the Year Named

Jayden Matthews of Lennox Head Alstonville SLSC and Briella Gyler-Dial of Caves Beach SLSC were announced as the Ingenia Holiday Parks Junior Lifesavers of the Year after three days of team building and leadership development on Sydney's Northern Beaches in April.

GM of Tourism at Ingenia Holiday Parks, Matt Young, with Jayden and Briella.



Formally recognised during a presentation ceremony, Jayden and Briella were two in a group of 22 eager youngsters who came from each of the 11 branches across NSW, having been acknowledged themselves as Junior Lifesavers of the Year for their region.

Knowing well that they were privileged to be among a very worthy group, all of whom could have been named as winners, the pair were thrilled.

“It was unexpected at first but then once I got it, I actually thought this was incredible to win,” Jayden said.

“It’s nice to be recognised. Everyone here should be recognised but the fact that out of everyone I was chosen is amazing,” Briella added.

A fiercely loyal patrolling member from the Far North Coast, Jayden has been involved in the movement since he was seven and cites his involvement in the Surf Life Saving community as a factor in building his character and confidence.

Judges noted he places a strong value on knowledge and understanding, constantly seeking out ways to grow his own. From First Aid to his SRC and Surf Sports to patrolling, Jayden seeks to inspire those around him with his attitude, just as he has been inspired by Surf Life Savers who have come before him – Ironman legend Ali Day is among his heroes.

“He’s just a good sport,” Jayden said.

“He’s a clubbie as well as a competitor, he does his patrol hours, he’s just a really good person.

“I really look up to him and I try to take the stuff that he does well and apply it.”

Briella, meanwhile, has nearly a decade of club experience, having been involved in the Hunter Branch from a young age. She understands the value of passing down experience to the next generation, having loved

seeing older Nippers lend a hand with her age group in her early years, wanting nothing more than to be like them.

The panel noticed her actions speak the loudest, giving back exactly what she valued most as a young Nipper – she has assisted two Age Managers over three years in delivering the Nipper program, guiding them as they learn about beach safety and building their confidence in the ocean.

“In my eyes it’s really important to inspire the next generation, to show them that you can remain involved at your surf club as you get older,” she said.

“I like helping them to become more confident in their abilities.”

The Junior Lifesaver of the Year Program brings together each of the two NSW Branch winners for a three-day camp focussed on team building and leadership development.

At the end of the camp, two participants are selected as the Surf Life Saving NSW Junior Lifesavers of the Year.

“I really enjoyed some of the pathways sessions and I’m going to take back such good experiences to my club,” Briella said.

“Great team building skills and all the friendships I’ve made I’ll definitely take back with me.”

“We learned new skills we can use in Surf Life Saving in the future and we learnt that there are many opportunities,” Jayden added.

“Surf Life Saving is my life – getting these opportunities is a dream to me.”

Matt Young, General Manager of Tourism for Naming Rights Partner, Ingenia Holiday Parks, said being involved in a program now in its 32nd year gave them great pride.

“For us being partnered with Surf Life Saving NSW and the Junior Lifesaver of the Year Program, it’s really important as most of our parks are along the coastline and we want to keep our guests and our team safe,” he said.

“It’s almost like a responsibility; our guests and our team are interacting with the surf at all times. This is the next generation of everyday heroes.”



BRIGHT FUTURE

For Young NSW Athletes

The future of Surf Sports in NSW is bright after the state's most talented junior athletes brought home a bevy of medals – many gold – from the Youth titles at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships.

North Curl Curl and Redhead SLSCs lead the way as more than 1,400 athletes hit the sand and surf on the in April.

For the Northern Beaches club, Zara Kasprovicz and Luke Higgs crossed the line first in the U14 Female and Male Ironperson, while Zara grabbed a second gold medal in the U14 Female Surf Race, with clubmate Pipi Te Pania coming in third.

For her part, Pipi took out the U14 Female Board Race before the girls joined Dominique Melbourn, who had earlier won the U15 Female Surf Race, to bring further success for North Curl Curl in the U14 & U15 Female Surf Teams. The Male U13 & U14 team was also victorious.

The club also brought home gold medals in the U13 & U14 Male Cameron Relay and the U13 & U14 Female Board Rescue.

Meanwhile, the Hunter also had much to celebrate with Redhead's Kane Edwards taking out the prestigious U15 Male Ironperson, and in doing so etching his name on the memorial Matthew Barclay Trophy.

In the team events, Redhead were too strong in the U14 & U15 Male and Female Board Relay, as well as the U14 & U15 Male Cameron Relay – the last of which not least due to another strong effort from Kane and teammates Brodie Wright and Brodie Macadam after a sprint finish to beat Maroochydhore.

Adding to the region's success was Cooks Hill, with Alexander Walker taking individual gold in the U15 Male Board Race after finishing second in the Surf Race, while the club's U13 & U14 Male Board Rescue team also had a win.

Swansea Belmont had teams success in the U13 & U14 Female Board Relay and the U14 & U15 Female 2 x 1km Beach Run Relay.

North Cronulla flew the flag highest for the Sydney-based clubs, with gold in the U13 Female Beach Flags for Kaitlyn Williams and a pair of medals for Kobe Sorensen in the U15 Male Beach Flags and Sprint.



Sari McKee also finished first for North Cronulla in the U15 Female 2km Beach Run in a race that saw five other NSW clubs – Umina, Warilla Barrack Point, Wanda, North Bondi and Cudgen Headland – finish in the top six.

Of note, as well, was the fantastic finish in the U14 Male Beach Flags which saw Joshua Ballard of South Maroubra edge out Umina competitor Anwar El-Kurdi for the win. Wanda's U14 & U15 Female Board Rescue win was also a special moment on the final day.

In other events, Milton Stepanovski and Isabella Evans will leave the Gold Coast with Wollongong City's first national gold medals in some time, while Coffs Harbour's Quinn Evans, Gerringong's Miller Siasat, Terrigal's Hayden McGregor and Guy Ormond of Queenscliff each won an individual gold.



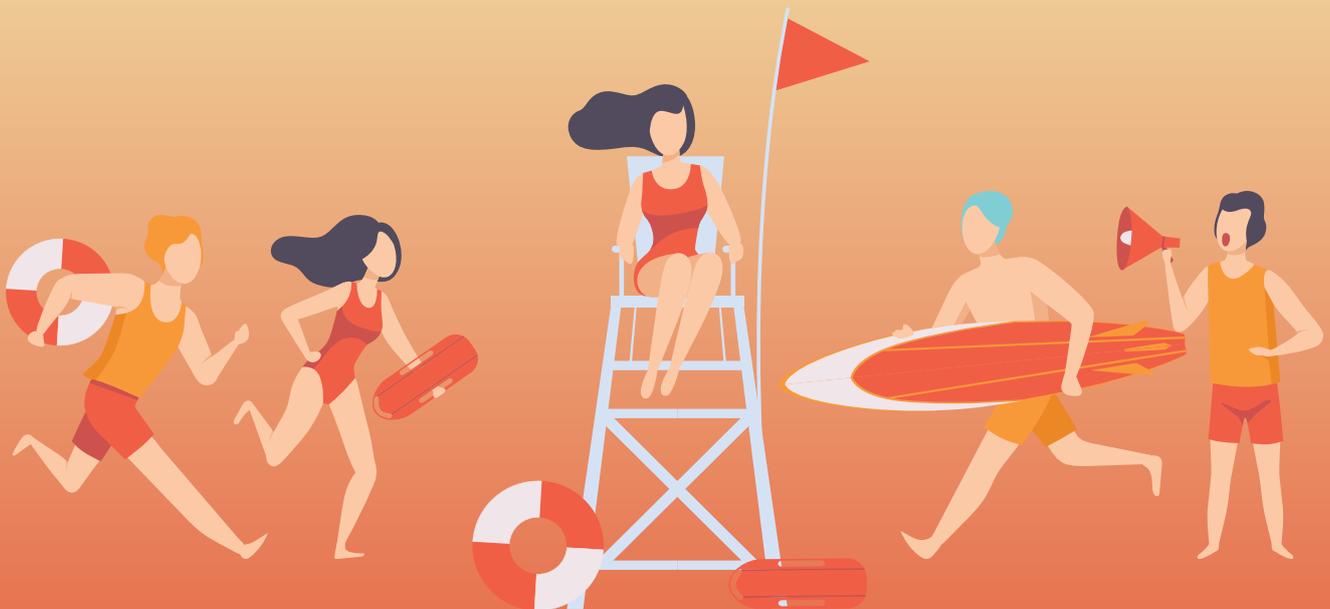


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Action-packed Series

Headlines Return of IRB Premiership



A slew of excellent results for all competing clubs on the final weekend of the Sharkskin NSW Inflatable Rescue Boat Premiership at Ocean Beach shone a spotlight on the importance of the event as a method of upskilling while the iconic red and yellow flags are down over winter.

IRB racers descended on the state's Central Coast on June 25 and 26 for Round 4 of the series – the final round before State Championships in July.

The IRB Premiership had previously held rounds at Terrigal, Bulli and Broulee during the 2022 series.

While competitive, the Premiership acts as an opportunity for drivers and crews to develop and hone vital rescue skills in simulated scenarios under pressure.

Ocean Beach IRB Captain, Jason Smith said events like this are imperative for volunteer lifesavers.

“We talk about what’s a safe driver and what’s a competent driver,” he said.

“Everyone is a safe driver who passes their IRB licence but it’s these sorts of tournaments that show the competent drivers,

the ones who will go out in big swell when the conditions are not desirable and rescue people.

“This is what it’s all about, developing those skills.”

Premiership heavyweights Kiama Downs continued to flex their muscles, winning nine finals. Notably, the South Coast club took out every U23 event, underpinning their hopes that they continue to be a dominant force for years to come.

In the Rookie Mass Rescue – a race with the youngest drivers and combined crew in the format – Avalon Beach showed the future is bright on the Northern Beaches, finishing ahead of Newport and host club Ocean Beach.

Illawarra club Helensburgh Stanwell Park, who had taken out each of the first three Rookie Mass Rescue finals in Terrigal, Bulli and Broulee, didn’t field a team.

North Cronulla and Terrigal continued their tight tussle in the Open Female events – Terrigal took out the Teams

Rescue, North Cronulla the Surf Rescue, and the pair went one, two in the Open Female Mass Rescue, edged by the Sydney-based club.

Thirroul showed their strength in the 45+ category, with a win in the Surf Rescue headlining a bag of firsts and seconds, while South Maroubra maintained their streak of winning at least one event at each Premiership leg, taking out the 45+ Mixed Teams Rescue.

While his club couldn’t pick up any victories on the day, Jason said the way the event had come together on his home beach – a result of local clubs working together – was victory enough for him.

“We relied on Umina for some equipment, and everyone from all sides of our club pitched in to make this happen,” he said.

“From our Nippers to older competitors, everyone has helped wherever they can to make sure we have very little work to do to be able to compete.”

Full results and final point scores will be announced at the NSW Sharkskin IRB Championship, set to be held at South West Rocks on the weekend of 8-10 July.



[IRB Round 2](#)



[IRB Round 3](#)



[IRB Round 4](#)

All Eyes On Event Safety



The Australian Uncrewed Aerial Vehicle Service (AUAVS) has been particularly busy over the June quarter, providing coastal and marine surveillance and event safety across the state.

Aerial surveillance is a crucial aspect of the modern safety landscape at our beaches, providing an eye in the sky for everyone from competitors to beachgoers.

Speaking at the Sharkskin NSW IRB Premiership Round 4 at Ocean Beach, AUAVS Pilot, Jay Davidson spoke highly of the importance of drones along the coastline.

“We’re here for event safety, it’s an eye in the sky keeping an eye on competitors, crews and everybody in the boats, just keeping everybody safe,”

“Shark surveillance is the majority. We’ll be over the competition all day keeping an eye on everything.

“It’s just enjoyable – it’s an excellent opportunity, it’s great fun, and you help to keep fellow beachgoers safe.”

The AUAVS has serviced the following events, programs and emergency callouts over the past three months:

- Autumn Department of Primary Industries Program (NSW Government)
- Hill 60 Search and Rescue (tasked by NSW Police)
- NSWSES Spatial Data Field Testing
- Extension of DPI Program for Sydney to June 30 (NSW Government)
- Sydney Weekender Feature
- Port Stephens Surf Festival (Surfing NSW)
- NSW Longboard Titles (Surfing NSW)
- Gold Coast Pro (World Surf League)
- Sharkskin NSW IRB Premiership Rounds 1-4 (SLSNSW)
- Sydney Surf Pro (World Surf League)
- Iluka SAR (tasked by NSW Police)
- NSW Surfmasters Titles (Surfing NSW)
- Woonona SAR (tasked by NSW Police)
- NSW Bodyboard State Titles (Surfing NSW)



[Learn to fly UAVs](#)

Multicultural Short Film Series Targets Reduced Drownings

The day that changed Amr Sheiba's perspective on rock fishing in Australia lives as vividly in his mind as though it happened yesterday.

The Egyptian expat grew up around water and fishing before moving to Australia, but familiarity, as he soon found out, didn't mean he was equipped to deal with the unique and sometimes treacherous ocean conditions in his new homeland.

"I went fishing with my friends, we didn't have much planning," he recalled.

"When we arrived, it was really windy, but when the wind settled we decided to cast our line.

"I caught a fish and I wanted to talk about it with my friends. I turned around, and that was my mistake.

"At that moment, a big wave, maybe three metres, took me over and threw me maybe six to eight metres on the rocks. At that moment I was really scared about hitting my head.

"I was lucky that day I didn't lose my life."



Jeremy Fernandez interviews Amr Sheiba at SLSNSW's Multicultural Drowning Prevention Short Film Launch at Canterbury Leagues Club.

As luck would have it, Amr has allowed his dance with destiny to be a lesson – not just for his local community, but for the benefit of tens of thousands of rock fishers across NSW.

"Back home we didn't really think much about safety, so we didn't have life jackets," he said.

"Here, you need to be more careful, do your homework, read the waves, the swell, don't go alone, and also go at the right time, during the day, wearing a life jacket.

"It will save your life."

Amr's story was featured in a premiere short film event hosted by Surf Life Saving NSW on Monday 20 June at Canterbury Leagues Club, attended by more than 200 members of Sydney's diverse communities.

The Multicultural Drowning Prevention Short Film Launch showcased five unique, personal stories – three of which are already available on the Beach and Coastal Safety Resource Hub, and two, including Amr's, were screened publicly for the first time on Monday night.

Statistics show that multicultural communities are the most at risk of drowning on our coastline. Tragically, rock fishing deaths have increased in NSW over the last year, with nine people losing their lives.

Surf Life Saving NSW has been working on the series for several years, thanks to NSW Government funding support targeting drowning prevention among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. Surf Life Saving's Community Education team was first inspired to explore innovative ways to reach this large, multicultural demographic in 2020.

The film premiere brought together representatives from multicultural, migrant and refugee groups from across the state to focus attention on the challenges, barriers and opportunities that exist to improve water safety education among diverse

communities. Also attending were the NSW Minister for Multiculturalism Mark Courie and Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience Steph Cooke.

"This series of short films features the voices of real people from our diverse, cultural communities, to share personal and common experiences of the beach and water with others within their own communities," said Surf Life Saving NSW CEO Steve Pearce.

"We understand the vital importance in involving and empowering our communities in educating themselves and appreciate the place that story

telling has across many cultures and we've been able to create meaningful, relevant and relatable stories. These stories will form part of a broader campaign and will be promoted across our communities and networks in multiple languages.

"We hope that these stories will support our multicultural communities to be safer on our beaches and coastlines and to understand how simple actions can keep them and their families safe.



Tony Rettke as he is awarded his ESM at Parliament House in Canberra.

Medal is Great but People Mean More

Far South Coast Branch President and Tathra SLSC member Tony Rettke loves Surf Life Saving. Plain and simple.

So, when you ask him what brings him back every year, he's as matter of fact as if you asked him to add two and two.

"I would think the answer for everybody, well it should be, is the enjoyment you get from the company of everyone involved," he says, simply.

"It's a good feeling to do something for the community, but you're also investing in kids and juniors – showing them that it's something worth doing.

"That age group, to be hanging around with old guys like me, we hope they stick around for years because we are like their second family.

"The people, my branch team is amazing, in my own club and at State level, I enjoy everything and everyone.

"I find it's easy to knock around with people who, in their nature, are giving."

That passion for people – being around the ones with aligned values and lending a helping hand to others – is what has spurred many years of valued and tremendous service from Tony, who was recognised with the investiture of the Emergency

Service Medal at Parliament House in Canberra in May.

The medal recognises distinguished service by members of emergency services across Australia, and people who are involved in emergency management, training or education. Tony and four other members of Surf Life Saving NSW received the honour this year.

While there have been many rescues along the way, all of which contributed to his deserving nomination for the Emergency Service Medal, one still stands out in his mind.

"Probably the Tathra Wharf tragedy in 2008," he says without hesitation.

"That's the biggest one I've done, and it was with my family and another member.

"We pulled two kids and a dad from the water by the wharf in the dead of night, one of them was an 18-month-old strapped into the stroller.

"The water was thick with bluebottles and that made it even more difficult and uncomfortable.

"It was with my family, that's what made it special for me. Unfortunately they didn't make it but my family was with me the whole way as we tried to save them."

While Tony is grateful for his experiences in Surf Life Saving, and indeed the recognition that comes from the Emergency Service Medal, he believes there are more important things to focus on.

"I think you've got to be careful of making anyone appear better than anyone else, whether you're a 15-year-old 'bronzie' or a long serving president," he said.

"I appreciate the acknowledgement, someone has put the time in to write a letter and give me a wrap, but we don't do it for that.

"I never thought for a minute I'd be a life member of Surf Life Saving NSW, let alone the branch or my club.



2022 Emergency Service Medal Recipients

- Jimmy Keough - FNC Branch
- Garry Meredith - FNC Branch
- Stewart Bailey - SYD Branch
- Richard Lissenden - SYD Branch
- Tony Rettke - FSC Branch

New Face to Lead Central Coast Branch

After more than a decade in the top job, Avoca Beach's Stuart Harvey has handed over the reins of Central Coast Branch to new hands – those of North Avoca President and 2018 Australian Surf Lifesaver of the Year, Matt Slattery.



Stuart Harvey

"The main reason for moving on is to allow a new person to come in with new ideas and move us forward further," Stuart said.

"Someone out there skilled, with knowledge – someone like Matt.

"I tapped him on the shoulder a couple of years ago and said he would make a great Branch President, but at the time he told me he had more to do at North Avoca.

"So, we've been talking about some things over the past two years. He's an efficient, experienced administrator and the right person to take the Central Coast forward."

For his part, Matt – who achieved his 20-year National Patrol Service Award in 2017 – has been a previous recipient of an SLSA Meritorious Award for bravery and has held a variety of roles on the Coast including Patrol Captain at North Avoca and active Duty Officer for the Branch.

His newest hat – that of Branch President – will fit him just as nicely.

"I've had a lot of opportunities given to me over the years through participating in surf, it's an opportunity for me to give back and share my experiences and knowledge on a broader scale," Matt said.

"I'm looking forward to the new challenge as a strong branch within the state.

"The Coast has been innovators and at the forefront of many of the state's big moves – we were the first on the jet skis, the first with drones in the air, we want to keep being innovators."

Stuart has now moved back into a more active role within his home club of Avoca Beach, though he reflected fondly on his years at Branch level and what was achieved.

"The opportunity to make sure our money was stable, clubs' money was stable, we were able to get in and work with the clubs with financial audits, the legal side, ensuring clubs looked after themselves and the future – that was good," he said.

"Our lifesaving as well – zero drownings between flags, uptake of lifesaving plans between clubs – we were able to unite clubs on an even stronger level than before."

With that strong foundation in place, Matt can turn his focus to other areas.

"I'm looking forward to looking at surf sports," Matt said.

"New people bring new ideas so I'm looking forward to involving myself there.

"It's well known as well my background and heavy interest is in lifesaving. I'd like to see strength across the Coast increase in my time."

Stuart had held the Presidency for 12 years, with a heavy focus on governance laying the platform for a successful tenure which saw the region blossom under his leadership.

He has no fear that will change following the handover – Matt has been a valued member of the Surf Life Saving movement for many years and brings plenty to the table.

Q & A

with Cudgen Headland member, Layla Hutchinson



Layla with her dad Luke Hutchinson

What about your dad makes him your hero?

My dad is my hero because he always knows what to do and how to handle situations on patrol. He is the most caring and selfless person I've ever met. He loves helping people and will drop everything if you need him.

How long have you both been involved in Surf Life Saving?

My dad has been a part of Surf Life Saving since he was three years old and has been an active member since he got his SRC at 14. I joined Cudgen when I was six and recently got my SRC last year letting me start patrol.

Was your dad the reason you joined Surf Life Saving?

My mum and dad were always at the club when I was growing up and once they entered me in, I was mainly excited to see what it was like for them. My dad is definitely a big part of my love for Surf Life Saving because I was always so interested in everything he got to do and be a part of!

What is your favourite thing about Surf Life Saving?

I love competing for my club because of the thrill of being in the race, but the idea of saving someone's life is a great driving force and I definitely love patrolling with my family.

What achievements have you or your dad had through Surf Life Saving?

Being a part of Surf Life Saving for so long, my dad has done so much, but his two biggest accomplishments were getting invited to the Kelloggs Nutri-Grain tryouts, and he amazingly saved seven people from a flash rip while patrolling a beach in the Northern Territory.

For me, I got to compete in my first Aussie titles this past season and made four finals!

What is the main thing that keeps you coming back each year?

I have always loved the surf club. The people and the sense of family is amazing, and it's always felt like home.

Lastly, what is your favourite thing about patrolling with your dad?

My favourite thing is getting to watch and learn about everything he does. He always helps me to become the best I can and teaches me all about Surf Life Saving while making it so fun.





(L-R) Samuel Meyer, Vice Consul, Australian Consulate in Chennai, Steve Allan, SLSNSW International Programs and Business Coordinator, Sarah Kirlaw, The Australian Consul-General in Chennai, Ankit Waugh, CEO, iTus and Indian Rescue Academy.

Remarkable Statistic Highlights Importance of Subcontinent Partnership

A devastating drowning rate nearly 20% higher than the entirety of NSW, on a patch of coastline shorter than Mona Vale to Manly, is behind a partnership between Surf Life Saving NSW and India – focussed on increased awareness of safe swimming practices.

Surf Life Saving Services, the business arm of SLSNSW, is delivering training as part of a partnership with the Indian Rescue Academy – the product of a relationship that goes back nearly a decade through a range of projects focussed on drowning prevention.

A well-established Indian training organisation with a focus on water safety, disaster management, first aid and lifeguard training, the IRA and SLSNSW hope the partnership will increase water safety and drowning prevention capabilities across the region through training and the development of water safety standards.

SLSNSW International Programs and Business Coordinator, Steve Allan said his recent 10-day trip to India in May had many purposes – not least of which was to help address a staggering statistic.

“There’s a 14km stretch on the east coast of India, Marina Beach to Neelankarai in Chennai that over a 10-year period between 2010 and 2020 there were 580 drownings,” he said.

“In New South Wales, Australia during the same time frame, and covering over 2,137 km of coastline, there were 481 drownings.

“It shows that swimming isn’t part of the culture, therefore water safety and drowning prevention is not either.”

As part of the visit, Steve met with local government authorities including the Australian Consulate, Australian High Commission, NSW Business Chamber and the Indian Department of Fisheries at state and federal level.

“Part of the reason I was there was to audit their practices, check that the trainers are providing first aid and water safety courses to Australian standards, so we ticked that off, but we were also there to promote the value of the partnership between India and Australia,” he said.

Long term, while they don’t currently exist in the same way they do in Australia, the goal is to establish lifesaving and lifeguarding services across the many beaches of India.

“The plan now in the next six months is to get back over there and continue to build on the positive relationship and assist in establishing high-quality lifeguard and training services to help address the drowning epidemic in India,” Steve said.



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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



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

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

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