

# Surf LIFE

ISSUE 58 - April 2024



**7 Years  
of Inclusive  
Champs**

HIGHLIGHTS ON  
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SURF LIFE SAVING  
NEW SOUTH WALES

# NEW CRAFT

## *Offshore Rescue Boat Launched in Sydney*

It holds a revered place in Surf Life Saving's history, and now Sydney beaches and the coastline from Botany to Bondi will continue to be patrolled by Surf Rescue 30's new offshore rescue boat, with the launch of the City of Randwick IV on 10 February.

The Hon Matt Thistlethwaite, Member for Kingsford Smith, joined more than 80 of SR30's friends and supporters and the President of SLSNSW Peter Agnew ESM to christen the new vessel. It was celebrated by crew past and present, including founding member of the jet boat operation at Malabar in 1968, Andy Tuite, who built the original shed where the base still stands today.

Surf Rescue 30 has transformed the base into the Sydney Branch Support Operations hub, centralising operations with two SLSNSW Support Operations jetskis, Duty Officers and the original Surf Rescue 30 Offshore Rescue Boat.

The new vessel is a 2400 Series Fibreglass Noosa Cat with twin 150hp Yamaha Engines and has a cruising operational range of more than 10 hours. It normally operates with a coxswain, driver and one or two rescue swimmers.

The vessel is owned by primary sponsor Randwick City Council, in an arrangement which is now 30 years old and has supplied the previous three offshore rescue boats.

The callsign "Surf Rescue 30" dates back to the summer of 1969, when a group of volunteer lifesavers saw the need for a specialised, stable craft that could operate around the rocky coastline and deep coastal bays in the Randwick area.

The new vessel is equipped with the latest radar and search and rescue imaging and mapping systems, safety gear and radio communications capability. It carries a variety of retrieval and paramedical lifesaving equipment including oxygen, defibs, trauma first aid and rescue gear.

The crew are all highly experienced and trained surf lifesavers and between them, the SR30 skippers have given almost 300 years of service to Surf Life Saving.

President of SLSNSW Peter Agnew said he was pleased that the members of SR30 would continue to keep people safe along Sydney's coastline.

"After an incredible 55 years, it's great to see the community and council

support for the service is still strong and that these dedicated volunteers have a new, highly capable and well-equipped vessel from which to operate."



### **SURF RESCUE 30 SKIPPERS**

Brad Taylor ESM  
Jake McDonald  
Jedd Goggins  
Doug Lucas  
Steven Chesher  
Tresne Chesher ESM  
Karl Solomonson OAM  
Richard Lissenden ESM  
Clive Stiff



# FOR NSW

## *Jetski Statewide Rollout for Public Safety*

Surf Life Saving NSW has an additional 14 jetskis positioned along the coast to protect and save lives into the future.



### NEW RWC LOCATIONS

Brunswick Heads  
Nambucca  
Scotts Head  
Black Head  
Pacific Palms  
Hunter – Port Stephens and Lake Macquarie  
The Lakes  
Dee Why  
Freshwater  
Malabar  
Coledale  
Windang  
Tuross Beach  
Tathra

The latest rollout of new craft is part of a NSW Government funded increase to capability that will see 67 new Rescue Water Craft (RWC) in service over the next four years.

Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib was joined by Member for Coogee Dr Marjorie O'Neill and Federal Member for Kingsford Smith Matt Thistlethwaite to see some of the RWCs in action at Malabar, operated by two of Sydney Branch's highly skilled female drivers.

The delivery of the new craft is timely with the surge in numbers of people visiting beaches across NSW. Volunteers have rescued more than 650 people since 23 December and there have sadly been eight coastal drownings so far this summer.

Accounting for roughly 13 per cent of rescues conducted by SLSNSW volunteers last year, RWCs play a key role in keeping people safe. Their versatility and maneuverability, particularly in the surf zone and around rock platforms makes them a

vital component of SLSNSW's Support Operations role.

The new RWCs will replace some of the current fleet, ensuring standardisation across NSW and providing safe, modern craft for volunteer operators.

"Jet skis are the backbone of our Support Operations response capability, especially away from patrolled locations and in search and

rescue situations," said SLSNSW CEO Steve Pearce.

"It's great to see our operator numbers expanding and in particular more female jet ski drivers coming on board."

There are approximately 300 trained RWC operators in NSW, around 75 are female.



# Australia Day Honours List

## *Recognises Valued NSW Lifesavers*

**Congratulations to the Surf Life Saving NSW members who were recognised on the 2024 Australia Day Honours list.**

Peter 'Cuz' Kirkwood from Maroubra has been awarded an AM for significant service to Surf Life Saving. An esteemed coach and mentor, Cuz has had a profound impact on surf sports and lifesaving both nationally and overseas.

Among those receiving OAMs for services to Surf Life Saving were SLSNSW board member Kerry Clancy from Sawtell, the first female Branch president in NSW and a staunch supporter of youth development, both as a teacher and a lifesaving volunteer.

Michele Bootes from Pambula SLSC, a life member of the Far South Coast Branch and a pioneer of inclusive programs, was recognised for her many years of service to the training and education space, while Cathy Cole from Terrigal SLSC, who has been a fierce advocate for recognising the contributions of women in the history of our movement, was also recognised.

SLSNSW life member, Warren Lupica from Shelly Beach SLSC – a former club president and current Patron and historian, was also recognised with an OAM after nearly six decades as a volunteer on the Central Coast.

Rita Taylor, club historian and life member of Garie SLSC, former swim star and Bronte SLSC President, Warren Riley, and Arthur McCarroll, former president of North Steyne SLSC and a Sydney Northern Beaches Branch Life Member, were all also awarded an OAM for their service.

Kate Munro, a long service member of North Steyne SLSC, received an OAM

for her dedication and commitment to youth services, while the late Brian Green, who was a member of various clubs on the northern beaches, and Robert Johnson from Bermagui SLSC also received OAMs for their service to other areas.

In addition, two SLSNSW members, Brian Wilcox and Andrew McKellar, have been awarded the prestigious Emergency Service Medal.

The Emergency Service Medal acknowledges distinguished service by members of emergency services across Australia, and people who are involved in emergency management, training or education.

Established in 1999, all state emergency services and voluntary emergency organisations are eligible for the award. Last year was the first year SLSNSW members were eligible for the award.

Brian has been a patrolling member of Forster SLSC on the state's Lower North Coast for three decades and an invaluable contributor to all levels of lifesaving in that time. His dedication to lifesaving and after-hours rescue efforts have already been recognised previously with both the National Medal and national Emergency Medal.

He previously served as Deputy President of Surf Life Saving NSW, as well as Acting President, he was the Lower North Coast Branch President and has held a variety of Assessor and Training roles – ones which have contributed to the development of the region's future lifesavers.

Andrew, meanwhile, is a veteran of 20 years at Elouera SLSC and continues to serve as a key frontline emergency responder, contributing heavily to lifesaving efforts in the Bate Bay and more broadly across the state, where he has been part of SLSNSW's flood and bushfire responses.



**ANDREW MCKELLAR**



**BRIAN WILCOX**

His technical expertise and organisational focus ensures his club, where he serves as Director of Lifesaving, as well as Sydney Branch and also SLSNSW are prepared to respond to emergencies as they arise. In his roles on the Branch and NSW Lifesaving Standing Committees, he confirms his dedication to developing exceptional lifesavers.

"On behalf of the Surf Life Saving NSW Board, I would like to congratulate all those who received Australia Day Honours," SLSNSW President, Peter Agnew ESM said.

"We are delighted by the number of people who received awards from within the ranks of the Surf Life Saving movement.

"We are extremely fortunate to have people of such high calibre working hard to keep NSW beaches and coastal waterways safe."

# Lifesaving Future Bright

## AS NSW SHOWCASES YOUNG TALENT

An impressive group of the state's brightest young lifesavers is preparing to come together on the Northern Beaches once again this April for the Ingenia Holiday Parks Junior Lifesaver of the Year (JLOTY) program – Surf Life Saving NSW's flagship youth development program.

Held from 24-26 April at The Collaroy Centre, JLOTY provides a platform to assist young lifesavers in growing their networks, establishing lasting connections and building knowledge through fun and interactive activities.

The JLOTY program brings together all 22 of the Junior Lifesavers of the Year, nominated and awarded at Branch level. At the end of the program, male and female overall NSW Junior Lifesavers of the Year winners are named.

The three-day camp is built around skill development, where the budding young lifesavers will work with like-minded volunteers to build a greater awareness of opportunities and individual abilities in the membership.

"It was very nerve-racking, but it was also chill. You learn very quickly that everyone there with you is deserving of the title as well," 2023 co-NSW Lifesaver of the Year, Kaylah Broadhead of Nobbys SLSC said.

"We got to really learn and understand where everybody comes from and what they do, and it was a big part of our development," said fellow NSW winner, Coogee SLSC's Calum Reiter.

Ingenia Holiday Parks is once again on board as Naming Rights partner of the JLOTY program, with Executive

General Manager of Tourism, Matt Young stating the East Coast holiday park operator was proud to be supporting our future leaders.

"We are extremely proud to support the Junior Lifesaver of the Year program again in its 34th year to recognise the next generation of volunteer lifesavers and lifeguards," he said.

"It is truly inspiring to watch these

kids actively ensuring the safety of our beaches and communities, especially knowing that many of our holiday park guests go swimming at the beach.

"These junior lifesavers make Australia a better place, and we are grateful"

The Ingenia Holiday Parks Junior Lifesavers of the Year will be awarded at a presentation on 26 April – livestreamed on Facebook.

### 2024 FINALISTS

FAR NORTH COAST – **Kayden Muller**, Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore SLSC

FAR NORTH COAST – **Abigail Matthews**, Lennox Head-Alstonville SLSC

NORTH COAST – **James Freeman**, Bellinger Valley-North Beach SLSC

NORTH COAST – **Lily-Mei Wong**, Woolgoolga SLSC

MID NORTH COAST – **Cooper Walmsley**, Hat Head SLSC

MID NORTH COAST – **Sienna Ward**, Hat Head SLSC

LOWER NORTH COAST – **Blake Stewart**, Crowdy Head SLSC

LOWER NORTH COAST – **Calista Elmer**, Crowdy Head SLSC

HUNTER – **Max Mietzel**, Newcastle SLSC

HUNTER – **Abbey Keighran**, Tea Gardens Hawks Nest SLSC

CENTRAL COAST – **Seamus Devenish Meares**, Wamberal SLSC

CENTRAL COAST – **Remy Avis**, North Avoca SLSC

SYDNEY NORTHERN BEACHES – **Louis Stapf-Giannakis**, Freshwater SLSC

SYDNEY NORTHERN BEACHES – **Riley Atkinson**, Mona Vale SLSC

SYDNEY – **Jack Castles**, Bondi SBLSC

SYDNEY – **Ebony Springall**, North Cronulla SLSC

ILLAWARRA – **Audrey Steffan**, Scarborough Wombarra SLSC

ILLAWARRA – **William Papandreas**, Helensburgh-Stanwell Park SLSC

SOUTH COAST – **Archie Weir**, Kiama Downs SLSC

SOUTH COAST – **Poppy Nelson**, Kiama SLSC

FAR SOUTH COAST – **Maxim Savchencko-Ray**, Bermagui SLSC

FAR SOUTH COAST – **Zara Hall**, Moruya SLSC





# Warilla Goes Back-to-Back at Country Champs

In the potential beginning of a new dynasty – Warilla-Barrack Point SLSC took out the 2024 Oakberry Acai NSW Country Champions for the second straight year in January.

The South Coast club did it comfortably in the end, a means of victory more familiar to Cudgen Headland SLSC who may well have been in a battle for second since the starters gun fired to open proceedings on day one.

As the host club and defending champions, Warilla was strong in numbers, support and ultimately, surf skills, showcasing a thorough and comprehensive training program benefitting them heavily across the age groups and event categories.



Indeed, Warilla would finish the weekend with almost 200 individual and team medals and 152 points clear of the chasing pack – a far cry from the two years previous where a handful of points; a dropped baton or an unlucky run of waves, was the difference.

A significant fight back on the final day was enough to instil some confidence in Cudgen that next year could produce a different result, but for now, it appears Warilla on their home patch is a fearsome prospect that will prove difficult to beat.

“I saw grown men down on that beach with a couple of little tears in the eyes, it means that much to our Life Members and this club to go back-to-back,” Warilla-Barrack Point Head Coach, Kirk Allen said.

“We’re a really tight club and this whole week has been really something special.”

“Now we’ve got to back it up and do it all again next year,” Assistant Coach, Damien Sheedy added.

As they did last year, Warilla closed

out the day with a win in the Open Male Taplin Relay, managing to come in first and second place in the event. Bailey Krstevski picked up a win in the Open Male Iron, bringing an end to Oliver Sharpe’s two-year reign as champion, and Claire Spicknall and Nicole Sims finished ahead of a group of four Cudgen competitors in the Open Female Iron.

“My gosh, it was so hard,” Claire said right after her win.

“I’m an U17 and I didn’t do too well in my own Iron but to step up and win here is so much more special.”

Yamba SLSC completed the podium, improving on last year’s result in the process, while surprise packets, Broulee Surfers SLSC – benefitting certainly from the shorter travel time but also from an improved training program – finished in fourth place.

“We’ve just started to pick up our training a lot more and it’s all gone really good,” said Rosie McPartland of Broulee, just moments after finishing a close second in the U15 Female Iron.

“I came fourth last year and I really wanted to be on the podium this year.”

Byron Bay SLSC, Woolgoolga SLSC, and Black Head SLSC finished fifth, sixth and seventh on the overall point score – the latter benefitting from an excellent final day from U19 competitor, Izaak Boag. The teen won the Single Ski and finished second in the Iron.

Mollymook SLSC capitalised on local knowledge to finish in eighth position, largely carried by results earlier in the program but in a Sunday highlight, Christian Ireland in the U17 category was very unfortunate not to finish with a gold medal in the Single Ski.

Port Macquarie SLSC and Gerringong SLSC closed out the top 10 which, in an illustration of just how dominant Warilla’s win ended up being, was nearly tighter in the point score between third and tenth than it was between first and second.

**» FULL RESULTS**



# Numbers Up In Surf Boat State Titles

Exciting racing and some challenging conditions gave surf boat crews from across the state the chance to showcase their hard work and amazing skills over the last three days of competition at the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships, proudly presented by Your local club and hosted by Queenscliff and North Steyne SLSCs in March.

Competitor numbers increased this year, with almost 250 crews entered across all age divisions, including Masters.

The major uplift in crews taking to the waves at Sydney's Manly Beach were seen in the Under 19 male and female divisions; great news for the future of this demanding but exhilarating sport.

"It was a great three days of racing, with a testing surf for all crews to manage. The standard of competition continues to increase with extremely close finishes in most divisions," said referee Greg Heard.

"It was also great to see a number of crews from clubs that had been absent for a few years, make a return and be competitive. Sunday, finals day had some of the best racing and provided a great spectacle for everyone on the beach."

After a few upsets in the quarter and semi-finals saw some of the race favourites knocked out early, there

were some nail-biting finishes when it came down to the final eight races on Sunday.

The first gold medal fell to Queenscliff's Reserve Male crew, followed by the Batemans Bay Banshees in the Reserve Female final and pretty much all of Manly heard them whelp with joy and relief on the shore.

Batemans Bay was certainly flying the flag for the far south coast clubs, with all four crews through to the finals.

Palm Beach SLSC won the U23 and U19 Female, and South Curl Curl SLSC won the U23 and U19 Male.

In the Open Male, Queenscliff would come up trumps again with sweep, Damien Daley alongside Connor Hopkins, Christopher Cunningham-Reid, James Molloy, and Zac Von Appen. In the 100th year of the

club, the emotions were high as they crossed the line before being awarded gold in the final event of the Championships.

## Catch Up On All The State Champs Wraps

» AGE

» MASTERS

» OPENS

» SURFBOAT PODIUM RESULTS





# All Abilities on Show at Inclusive Surf Championships

Around 80 athletes from more than a dozen surf clubs took part in the 7th annual NSW Surf Life Saving Inclusive Championships at Queenscliff beach, with growing numbers and beaming smiles a sure sign the event was once again a big hit.

Less than a decade after the first ever Inclusive Championships was held at Swansea Belmont, the beachfront at North Steyne SLSC was packed with eager competitors, happy handlers and parents excited to see the event unfold on Sunday morning, 10 March.

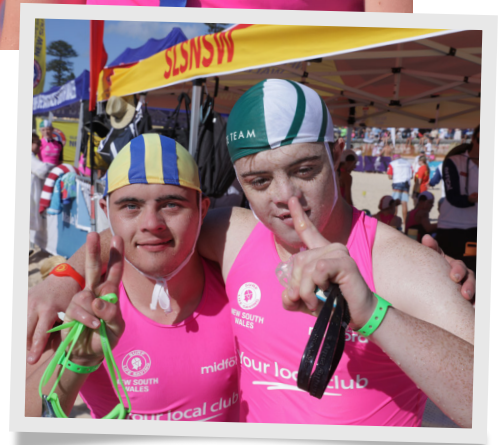
"It all sort of came about seven years ago because we noted that some of our nippers and youth members didn't have an avenue to progress in Surf Life Saving, they'd turn up to the club and there was nothing really for them," said referee Michael Wasley.

"It's an event we're all very passionate

about, we love it, and you can see just from the numbers on the beach there is a lot of support."

The event program played out much the same as the Age, Open and Masters Championships, with competitors contesting events on the beach track and in the surf. Once the race is run, athletes were awarded their medals to raucous applause on the podium.

"We have a number of people who are fiercely competitive, but I'd say the majority are here for pure enjoyment," Michael said with a smile.



"I think this year, with it being the first year there will be adaptive events at Aussies as well, it will be interesting to see the uptake and hopefully we can all build on that."

Indeed, Amy Grace Smith from Ocean Beach SLSC loved every second of the competition, and even picked up a medal to take home with her.

"I do all the events, I've been doing it for a while and I feel supported by this community and the people around me," she said.

"The next step for us is to get it out to more of the clubs," Michael added.

"A lot of clubs still don't know this exists, so the hope is the kids and adults here today go back to their clubs, with their medals, they talk about it and other people get involved from there."



# **REAL** **Bondi Rescue** *for Off Duty Lifesavers*

Surf Life Saving NSW has praised the quick thinking and excellent teamwork of a group of volunteers who leapt to the assistance of four foreign swimmers who were caught in a rip after hours at Bondi beach on Tuesday 30 January.

An Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) Racing training session became anything but just moments after the group of about 20 volunteer lifesavers had pulled the 'rubber duck' out of the water and part way up the beach, when a member of the public alerted them to an incident unfolding not far from their location at around 7.15pm.

The lifesavers from various clubs across Sydney, including Bondi SBLSC, Coogee SLSC and Elouera SLSC, reacted quickly and, despite having never patrolled or worked together before, were able to successfully rescue the four struggling swimmers and

triage them appropriately on the beach.

One swimmer was semi-conscious when pulled from the water, but following first aid delivery on the beach, no CPR was required.

It would come to light following the rescue that two of the swimmers, later understood to be Vietnamese students, had become stuck in the rip current and a further two of their friends entered the water to assist them.

Lifesavers were able to wade into the ocean to help in bringing two of them back to shore, while the other two were rescued from further out by the IRB.

Nicole Krite of Bondi SBLSC, who was running the IRB Racing training session, said she was proud of how seamlessly the rescue ran.

"Most of us had not worked together before and some of the young lifesavers had never done a rescue, but everyone just assumed a role and got it done," she said.

"I had volunteers on the beach after the event saying they didn't feel like they did much, but we all had a job, and we were all part of making sure those people go home to their families. It was a great collaborative effort.

"It just goes to show there's such great consistency of training across Sydney Branch, that members from different clubs can come together, perform a rescue and work together for the best outcome."

Jade Melvey-Lester, a member of North Bondi SLSC who was participating in the race training, said it was her first major rescue needing oxygen to be administered.

"I'm happy that everyone knew what to do and it ended as best it could," she said.

"I only recently got my (IRB) crew licence and I was glad I've gotten the extra hours up over the past few weeks in the IRB through the training, it gave me and the others that extra bit of confidence in the water.

"I think everyone snapped into rescue mode when we realised what was happening and we all supported each other."

SLSNSW CEO, Steve Pearce said that while he was proud of the volunteers and their quick reactions, it was another sage reminder to understand your limitations and avoid swimming outside of patrol hours.

"We have had many after-hours rescues across the summer and this rescue last night, while a fantastic outcome, is also very fortunate that we had lifesavers on site at the time," he said.

"Every drowning so far this summer has occurred at an unpatrolled location, outside of patrol hours or away from the red and yellow flags.

"It's so important, as a general rule but

even more so if you're not a confident swimmer, that beachgoers avoid swimming outside of patrol hours where our assets are not as readily available."



**» SEE THE GROUP IN TRAINING** 

# NEW EMERGENCY RESPONSE BEACONS

## Announced

Surf Life Saving NSW with support from the NSW Government plans to install 10 new Emergency Response Beacons (ERBs) in key coastal locations this year.

The expansion of emergency response infrastructure comes after the Minister for Emergency Services Jihad Dib convened a roundtable on coastal safety earlier this month, in response to an increase in coastal drownings over recent years.

ERBs directly connect callers to Surf Life Saving NSW's State Operations Centre, enabling the rapid deployment of lifesaving and emergency services to a potential rescue site. This can drastically reduce response times, particularly in unpatrolled or isolated areas.

"The evidence is clear – this technology works, and we know it will make a key contribution to preventing drownings on our coastline," said Minister Dib. "The beacons use technology that overcomes connectivity limitations, or 'black spots', in remote areas, providing a reliable option in an emergency."

This year, at least 10 new ERB units will be operational at the following locations, subject to Council or land manager approvals:

- Mid North Coast: Scotts Head
- Hunter: Moonee Beach
- Central Coast: Spoon Bay, Fraser Park, Forresters Beach
- Northern Beaches: Turrimetta, North Palm Beach
- Illawarra: Austinmer, Woonona, Bulli

The new beacons, which are the first of 32 to be delivered over the next four years, are part of the NSW Government's record \$23 million additional investment in Surf Life Saving NSW.

As part of this funding, the NSW Government is also delivering 67 jet skis over four years, with 14 already deployed to beaches along the state's coastline.

The roundtable held in early March considered the latest data on high risk drowning locations along the state's coastline, with the locations of the new ERBs based on this data, rescue statistics and consultation with key stakeholders.

"We are looking at enhancements to the next generation of ERBs which could include having public rescue equipment attached to the units that people could use to keep themselves safe if they attempt a rescue," said SLSNSW CEO Steve Pearce.

"It's all about using technology to improve how we respond to coastal incidents and, in the end, save more lives along the coast."



Emergency Services Minister, Jihad Dib with SLSNSW CEO, Steve Pearce at the Shelly Beach ERB in Manly.

# RECENT VIDEO *Highlights*



## *Lifesaver Drone - Outreach Program*

We headed out to Shellharbour in February to see how the Australian UAV Service is engaging with youth members of surf clubs to expose them to the world of drones.



## *A Day in the Life Setting Up State Champs*

Join Harold Marshall as he goes behind the scenes at the NSW Surf Life Saving Championships to see how the event is pulled together each morning.



## **Central Coast Lifesavers** *Visit State Ops Centre*

Surf Life Saving Central Coast's U15 Development Program members made the trip down the M1 to Belrose recently to see how the SLSNSW State Operations Centre is run.



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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 78,000 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

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

## Your local club



## 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

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