

It's a

RAP

Edition 1

Shared Learning

Understanding the significance of Welcome to and Acknowledgement of Country

Honouring Shared History

An 1847 rescue; a legacy of bravery and custodianship



Fastest on Sand

Where culture, competition and communities united

Flying the Flags

Start of the patrol season demonstrates the power of unity



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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this update may contain names and/or images of deceased persons



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, beaches, skies, and waterways where we deliver our lifesaving services. We honour their enduring connection to Country, which has sustained and inspired their culture, stories, and practices for millennia. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, recognising their strength, resilience, and contributions to our shared future.



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Welcome...

to the first edition of 'It's a RAP', Surf Life Saving Queensland's (SLSQ) quarterly update dedicated to keeping our members, stakeholders, and interested parties informed on our journey towards reconciliation. It is designed to provide regular updates on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement across the organisation, celebrating our progress while highlighting upcoming opportunities for involvement.

'It's a RAP' will offer insights into SLSQ's work with First Nations peoples and communities through our As One framework and SLSQ's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), allowing you to stay connected with the initiatives, events, and programs that contribute to building trust, fostering inclusivity, and expanding participation. But don't just observe – join the journey! See how you can be involved below.

Our intent is to build stronger clubs and partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, enhancing cultural recognition within SLSQ, whilst encouraging greater participation and membership. This update will provide a valuable tool to help you stay informed and engaged in our collaborative reconciliation efforts. By fostering ongoing dialogue and understanding, we can move forward together to create a more inclusive and vibrant future for Surf Life Saving in Queensland.





Raising of the **Flags**

The weekend of September 14th marked the start of the 2024/2025 volunteer patrol season for most of Queensland, with many clubs participating in the 'Raising of the Flags' ceremony. This historic event merged a century-old tradition with a significant step toward reconciliation, as the Australian, Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander flags were raised alongside the iconic red and yellow flags of our movement. This symbolic act represented our shared commitment to protecting Queensland's coastlines and waterways, whilst recognising the Custodianship of First Nations peoples in this responsibility.



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The Sunshine Coast kicked off on the 13th as they heralded in the start of the volunteer patrol season with a moving ceremony on the shores of the Kabi Kabi Nation at stunning Mooloolaba Beach, with members and dignitaries in attendance.



At North Burleigh, the Surf Rescue Helicopter whirred overhead as they lowered the flags to the waiting IRB who brought them to shore. As they were reverently raised, participants were welcomed onto Country by Uncle John Graham, a Kombumerri Elder, saltwater man of the Gold Coast and part of the wider Yugambah Language Group.



In the north, on the beautiful shores of Magentic Island / Yunbenun, Arcadian SLSC played host to the first North Barrier Branch carnival of the season and raised the flags with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members from across the branch including Forest Beach SLSC.



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In Bundaburra, or Bundaberg as we refer to it, following a moving Welcome by Uncle Raymond Broome, Taribelang Bunda Elder, he said, "it's great to see us all coming together as one strong community".



And in the south, Coolangatta SLSC, proudly displayed their acknowledgement signage that now adorns their patrol trailer as they raised the flags and were Welcomed onto Country in recognition of the commencement of season 2024/2025.



The Port Douglas, Ellis Beach and Mission Beach SLSCs of the North Queensland Branch led the journey in March, at the start of their season, and whilst it rained heavily on the day, the powerful statement and unifying effect was undampened.

Across the nation, the raising of the red and yellow flags stands as a symbol of safety, vigilance, and the tireless commitment of our surf lifesavers. This year, throughout Queensland, the inclusion of the Australian, Aboriginal, and Torres Strait Islander flags added a new layer of meaning, representing SLSQ's dedication to acknowledging First Nations peoples, fostering inclusion, and advancing reconciliation. It also serves as a reminder of our shared histories and the collective responsibility we bear in protecting our beaches, waterways, and all those who enjoy them.



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Indigenous Round - Fastest on Sand

On Saturday, May 11, 2024, Surf Life Saving North Queensland hosted the inaugural Indigenous Round of the Fastest on Sand at Yorkey's Knob, Yirrganydji Saltwater Djabugay Country. This event was more than a competition—it was a day of unity, learning, and celebration, showcasing the power of coming together.

Participants, many of whom travelled from afar, were Welcomed onto Country and invited to stand in silence—Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, Surf Life Saving members, and community members alike. Standing between the iconic red and yellow flags, they joined in solidarity. Young Aboriginal dancers from Forest Beach SLSC, and students of St Theresa's College, Abergowrie, opened the event with a powerful performance, their movements stirring the sand beneath them as they called on their ancestors to join the celebration. The group leader invited everyone to clap along with the rhythm of the didgeridoo, a moment of unity in the spirit of reconciliation.



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This event was made possible by Surf Life Saving North Queensland in partnership with Harbrow Mentoring, funded by the Queensland Government's Sport and Recreation Grant for Indigenous Engagement. It provided a platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander athletes, club members, and community members to showcase their skills, build self-confidence and pride, and inspire others. The event exemplified the strength of collaboration and the power of unity within Surf Life Saving.

The open community round welcomed participation from a diverse group of First Nations and Surf Life Saving communities. Organisations such as the Fire Project, Cairns Safer Streets, and Cairns and Yarrabah PCYCs took part, engaging community members in positive activities and strengthening their connection to Surf Life Saving.



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Event Highlights Included:

- Partnership with Aboriginal-led community organisation, Harbrow Mentoring
- Participation of 5 major community groups with 94 athletes
- 34 individual and family registrations
- 39 Surf Life Saving member athletes
- A total of 133 athletes competing across the event
- Support from families, community members, SLSQ volunteers, officials, and staff



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Following a shared lunch, Evander Bann of Forrest Beach SLSC reflected on the impact Surf Life Saving has had on his life. With his permission, we share his words:

"Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I pay my deepest respects to all Indigenous brothers and sisters, and Elders past, present, and emerging. My name is Evander Bann, and I am a Year 11 student at St Teresa's College, Abergowrie. I'm here with my Gowrie Brothers, many of whom share a story similar to mine.

My Surf Life Saving journey began in Year 9. I was a typical junior student who loved playing footy. I also found a passion for running and was selected to represent North Queensland in track for two years. With my school being near Ingham, my teacher sought a running coach nearby. My school nurse suggested Forrest Beach Surf Life Saving Club to help improve my running skills on the beach.

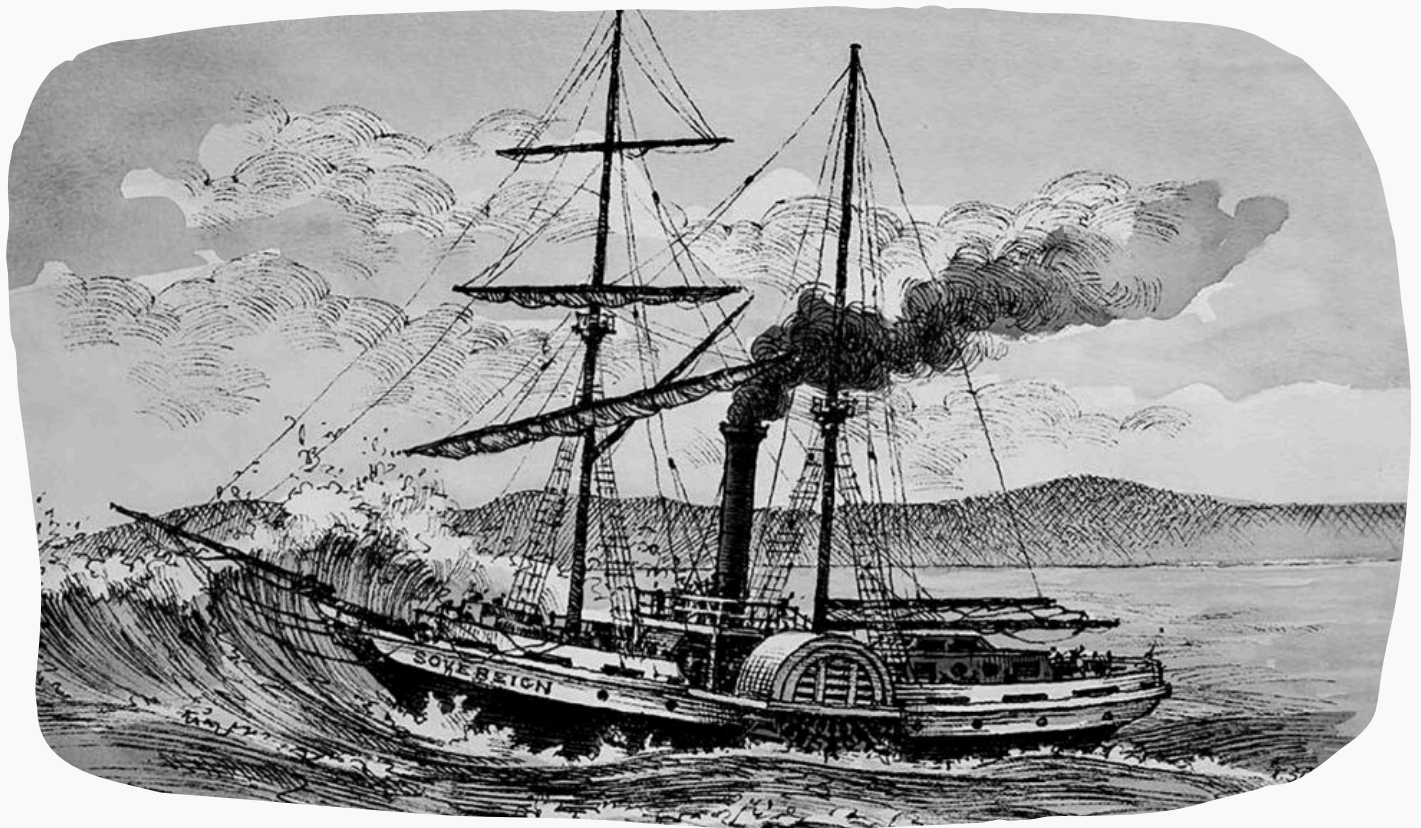
I attended my first carnival late last year and quickly realised Surf Life Saving was about more than just competing. It's about training, learning new skills, surf awareness, and being surrounded by supportive coaches and trainers. Coach Lenny has had a huge impact on me—he pushed me to strive without limitations. Without him, I wouldn't be the fastest young fella on the sand.

I've since earned my Bronze Medallion, which allows me to patrol the beaches alongside my Gowrie Brothers. We've competed at surf carnivals in North Queensland and progressed to the state and national titles. Two highlights for me were being selected for the Queensland Country and Queensland Cyclones teams, competing in beach relays, sprints, and flags. It was amazing meeting competitors from all over Australia, which shows how passionate people are about Surf Life Saving.

In such a short time, I've had so many opportunities—I've filmed with the Bondi Rescue Team and travelled the Australian coastline with Sir Chris Reid, who's inspired me to consider Surf Life Saving as a career. My advice today: give Surf Life Saving a go—you never know where it will take you. Eso."

As the races concluded, medals were awarded, and new friendships formed, the event was closed with a final performance by the Torres Strait Island dancers from Forest Beach SLSC and St Theresa's, with music and song shared by their families. The gathering had grown, filling the air with celebration. QPS officer Natasha Marshall reflected on the day in a letter of support, saying, "it was a fantastic day, filled with excitement, energy, community spirit, and smiles. The bus ride back was buzzing with children talking about how amazing the day was." We hope to build on the friendships formed, encourage ongoing participation, and increase access to similar opportunities across the state, extending the impact of this event.





Shared History: Heroic Rescue

In 1847, seven Nunukul men from North Stradbroke Island (Minjerribah) and Moreton Island (Moorgumpin) risked their lives to save ten people from the wreck of the Sovereign paddle steamer. Their "unceasing efforts" in swimming through rough waters were nothing short of heroic (Sydney Morning Herald, 29 March 1847, p. 2). Of the seven, six men—Toompani, Poonipum, Woondu, Nu-Ah-Ju, Nuggun, and Juckle Juckle—had their names recorded.

Toompani and Woondu were later recognised by the government and awarded metal gorgets, or breastplates, inscribed in acknowledgment of their bravery. In 2002, a monument was dedicated on North Stradbroke Island to honour the courage and life-saving actions of these men.

An incredible feat of heroism that reflects our shared responsibilities in the safety of those who visit our shores.



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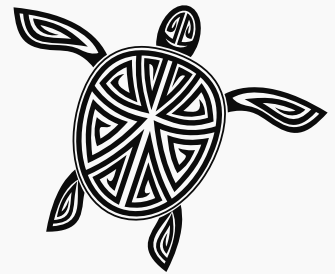
Shared Learning: Understanding **Welcome** to and **Acknowledgement** of Country



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Why Incorporate Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country?

- **Recognition and Respect:** These practices formally acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and their enduring connection to it.
- **Cultural Awareness:** They promote awareness and understanding of the history and culture of First Australians.
- **Symbolic Respect:** They symbolise respect and recognition of the importance of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories in Australia.

Understanding the origins and importance of these practices enriches their significance:

- **Welcome to Country:** An ancient tradition where First Nations people would seek permission to enter another's land. This involved ceremonies and negotiations, reflecting deep respect for the lores and customs of the land and its people. A Welcome to Country can only be delivered by Traditional Custodians, who can speak for and welcome visitors to their homelands.
- **Acknowledgement of Country:** Recognising the Traditional Custodians of the land is an ancient custom re-emerging in modern Australia. It's a way to honour the continuing relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their land. It can be delivered by Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australians.

Significance of Country

The concept of "Country" in First Nations culture goes beyond physical land. As Professor Mick Dodson explains:

"When we talk about traditional 'Country' ...we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. For Aboriginal Australians, we might mean homeland, or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map. For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the titleholders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land."





Understanding the differences:

Aspect	Welcome to Country	Acknowledgement of Country
Who Performs It	First Nations Elders or Representatives from the Custodial Clan Group of that Area	Anyone (Indigenous or non-Indigenous)
Purpose	To welcome visitors to the land and keep them in good spirits	To acknowledge Traditional Custodians of the land
Form	Can include ceremonies like singing, dancing, smoke rituals, or speeches	Typically, a speech
Timing	Delivered at the start of formal meetings (eg board/committee meetings), significant club events, and structured member or public education sessions and/or courses.	Delivered at the start of formal meetings (eg board/committee meetings), significant club events, and structured member or public education sessions and/or courses.

Making these practices part of your Surf Life Saving activities contributes to a broader movement of respect, recognition, and reconciliation.



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Did you know?

A reference tool has been researched and prepared that provides information on Traditional Custodians and Traditional Countries specific to Queensland Surf Life Saving Clubs and Surf Life Saving Queensland offices and locations. Whilst every care has been taken to provide clarity based on the available resources and discussions with Traditional Custodians, we recognise there is no single source of truth.

Traditional language and custodial lines are not defined by city or shire boundaries or may be contested, or indeed under determination and as such this information should only be used as guide; one which can be used to facilitate initial contact to further guide cultural understandings. In some instances, it may be respectful to acknowledge more than one language group or clan. Further, spelling may vary between resources based on the difference in translation and pronunciation of the English language. An example of the information you can obtain for your club or branch is shown below.

SLSC / Office Location	Country / Language Group	TO Organisation / Clan Group if known and uncontested land	Traditional Name for the Area	Notes and further Contact Details
SLSQ Offices				
SLSQ State Office: Location: South Brisbane Contact: (07) 3846 8000	Turrbal and Yuggera (Jagera)	Traditional Owners: Turrbal and Yuggera (Jagera) First Nations Organization (Turrbal): Turrbal Association Inc. Contact: (07) 3268 1400 Email: admin@turrbal.com.au First Nations Organization Yuggera (Jagera): Jagera Daran Pty Ltd Contact: Email: admin@jageradaran.com.au	Meanjin	

More information regarding the land on which your club or office operates can be obtained by contacting sjaswal@lifesaving.com.au



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Join the Journey

As we continue our journey to inclusion, recognition and engagement, we invite you to become involved:

- **RAP Working Group:** Expressions of interest for the RAP Working Group will open shortly.
- **First Nations Artist:** We are seeking an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander artist to create a commissioned artwork for SLSQ, to be featured across various platforms and assets.
- **Share Your Initiatives:** If your club or branch is working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, let us know! We'd love to hear about your initiatives and through shared learning, expand our partnerships and impact across the state.

For more information or to get involved, please reach out to Sunaina Jaswal, DEI Manager at sjaswal@lifesaving.com.au.



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