

Club Captain Insights: The Reality of Leading a Surf Club



Overview

Being Club Captain isn't just about patrols and radios – it's about people, planning and patience. Eliza Dreves shares what she's learned on the job at Metropolitan Caloundra SLSC.

1 The Reality of the Role

- **You're not alone.** The Club Captain isn't expected to do it all. Surround yourself with good people and delegate.
- **Clarity is key.** Members need to know what your role is, how decisions are made, and how they can get involved.
- **Be a people leader.** Eliza checks in on patrols, runs group chats, and makes sure people feel supported and included.
- **It's emotional too.** From managing incidents to celebrating wins, Club Captains deal with highs and lows – have a support network.

2 Juggling Work, Life & Club

- **It's not a 9–5 role.** Eliza balances full-time work with club duties – sometimes replying to emails at 10pm.
- **Ask for help.** From her retired dad doing gear audits to uni students chipping in – don't be afraid to lean on your network.
- **Set boundaries.** Volunteers aren't always available – and that's okay. Set realistic expectations for communication.

3 Delegation is Survival

- **You don't have to do it all.** If someone has an idea, ask them to lead it!
- **Share ownership.** Giving members autonomy helps them grow – and might uncover future leaders.
- **Succession starts now.** Passion leads to leadership when people are empowered early.

4

Motivating All Ages

- **From teens to retirees.** Clubs are full of diverse people – give them flexible ways to contribute.
- **Meet people where they are.** Some just want to patrol. Others want to lead. Support both.
- **Use experience wisely.** Encourage older members to mentor, and younger ones to bring fresh energy.

5

Advice for New Leaders

- **Back yourself.** You won't have all the answers, but you'll figure it out.
- **Learn before you lead.** Don't try to change everything in year one – observe, listen and build trust.
- **Test ideas.** Just because it's your passion doesn't mean it fits right now.
- **Think long-term.** Big goals (like Club of the Year) take seasons of planning.
- **“Not yet” > “No.”** Respect ideas, even if you can't action them straight away.

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