

**Surf Life Saving Queensland Magazine**  
ISSUE EIGHT



Queensland

# SHORELINE

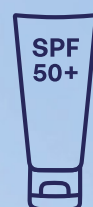


# Reduce your risk of developing skin cancer with the 5 S's.

Make sure you're doing all five in combination when you're outdoors:



**Slip**  
on sun  
protective clothing



**Slop**  
on SPF50 or  
SPF50+ sunscreen



**Slap**  
on a broad  
brimmed hat



**Seek**  
shade



**Slide**  
on sunglasses

SLSQ acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout our State and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

This is a Surf Life Saving Queensland publication. If you would like to contribute or advertise please contact [marketing@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:marketing@lifesaving.com.au)

6	PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
8	CEO'S MESSAGE
10	HOW FORREST BEACH LIFESAVERS PROTECTED THEIR COMMUNITY
12	THE PERFECT SCORE: GREG TOMAN
16	THREE GENERATION OF DEDICATION: THE OSBORNE FAMILY AT TUGUN SLSC
18	FROM JAPAN TO AUSTRALIA: THE SISTER CLUB RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHENING GLOBAL TIES
22	FROM NIPPER PARENT TO STATE OPERATIONS SUPPORT ADVISOR: SCOTT BURGESS
26	BRINGING CULTURE TO THE COAST: THE STORY BEHIND SLSQ'S INDIGENOUS ARTWORK
28	RON POLLARD'S: 60 YEAR JOURNEY ON THE BEACH
30	STRENGTH IN SUPPORT: THE PEER SUPPORT NETWORK AT SURF LIFE SAVING QLD
34	SLSQ DRIVING GENDER EQUITY IN LIFESAVING
36	SECOND MOST TRUSTED CHARITY IN AUSTRALIA
40	BLS SUPPORTING CLUBS ACROSS SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND
44	MAKING WAVES WITH DATA: HOW SURF LIFE SAVING CAN USE INSIGHTS TO IMPROVE
48	DECOMPRESSING AFTER A BUSY PATROL PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LIFESAVERS' MENTAL HEALTH
50	IT'S OFFICIAL: AUSTRALIA'S OCEAN SURFACE WAS THE HOTTEST ON RECORD IN 2024

CHARLIZE  
ZMUDA

BRIBIE ISLAND SLSC  
2007-2025

We pay our respects to a beloved member of our red and yellow family. We will honour her memory as we continue our commitment to protecting and supporting one another

Once a lifesaver, always a lifesaver.



Queensland



# PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

As we move through 2025, I want to acknowledge the dedication and resilience of our Members over the past few months. From a busy summer on our beaches to the significant weather events that have impacted our state, your commitment to keeping Queenslanders safe has been unwavering.

This summer has not been without heartbreak, and our entire surf lifesaving community continues to mourn the loss of Charlyze Zmuda, a young and passionate lifesaver taken far too soon. Charlyze embodied the very best of our movement—dedicated, energetic, and deeply committed to keeping others safe in the water. The outpouring of support from Clubs across Queensland has been a testament to the strength of our community, and I know this has meant a great deal to her family, friends, and fellow lifesavers. As we remember Charlyze, we also reaffirm our commitment to safety, education, and supporting one another, both on and off the beach.

We are also proud to have recently announced a new partnership with Multicultural Australia. This collaboration will help us engage more effectively

with culturally and linguistically diverse communities, ensuring that surf lifesaving can become more inclusive and accessible for all Queenslanders. By fostering education and awareness, we hope to empower more people to develop vital water safety skills and join our movement.

Queensland has faced some extreme weather over the past few months, with floods in North Queensland and Tropical Cyclone Alfred impacting South-East Queensland and particularly some of our Club's infrastructure. Many of our Members have been involved in the response, both on the frontline and behind the scenes, assisting their communities in times of need. To those who have given their time and energy—thank you. Your dedication extends far beyond the beach, and we are incredibly grateful.

As Easter approaches, I hope you all take the opportunity to recharge and spend time with family and friends. Thank you once again for your commitment to saving lives and strengthening our surf lifesaving community.

Together, we will continue to protect and serve our community while fostering growth, inclusivity, and excellence.

**GERARD O'BRIEN**

**PRESIDENT,**  
Surf Life Saving Queensland



SURF  
QLD



# CEO'S MESSAGE

As we continue through 2025, I am incredibly proud of the dedication, resilience, and passion displayed by our Members across Queensland. From lifesaving efforts in extreme weather conditions to breaking barriers and fostering global connections, our community continues to make a profound impact.

In the wake of the floods in North Queensland, we saw true leadership from members like 15-year-old Jett Reid of Forrest Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Despite his own training for the State Championships being disrupted, Jett stepped up to help his community in its time of need. His commitment to service is a testament to the strength of the lifesaving spirit.

We also celebrate Greg Toman, who made history at the 2025 Surf Rescue Championships with a perfect score in the 60+ category. A lifelong lifesaver and professional firefighter, Greg's achievements showcase the dedication and perseverance that define our movement.

Beyond our borders, our lifesaving connections extend internationally. The Sister Club Agreement

between Kaike Lifesaving Club (Japan) and Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club has strengthened over the years, fostering cultural exchange and shared lifesaving knowledge. Their recent visit to celebrate Surfers Paradise SLSC's centenary highlights the global reach and camaraderie of our movement.

Closer to home, we are making significant strides in gender equity and inclusion. Our International Women's Week event and Gender Equity Plan are driving meaningful change, ensuring more opportunities for women and girls in surf lifesaving. We also continue to embrace and honour Indigenous culture through the creation of a powerful Indigenous artwork, which represents the deep connection between First Nations communities, the ocean, and lifesaving.

These stories remind us why we do what we do. Surf Life Saving Queensland is more than a lifesaving organisation—it is a community built on service, connection, and progress. Thank you to every volunteer, Member, and partner who contributes to making our movement stronger every day.

SLSQ is more than a lifesaving organisation - it is a community built on service, connection, and progress.

DAVE WHIMPEY

CEO,  
Surf Life Saving Queensland



# SAVING LIVES BEYOND THE SHORELINE HOW FORREST BEACH LIFESAVERS PROTECTED THEIR COMMUNITY

In the wake of the recent devastating floods that swept through the North Queensland region, the Forrest Beach Surf Life Saving Club and its dedicated members, including 15-year-old Jett Reid, proved that heroes don't always wear capes—they wear red and yellow uniforms and bring an unwavering sense of responsibility.

Junior Club Captain, Jett Reid had his preparation for the State Championships disrupted due to the flooding in the North Barrier region in February. Finding himself at the heart of the community's recovery efforts, Jett demonstrated tremendous leadership and resilience in the face of adversity.

Alongside some of his teammates, Jett took on the crucial task of welfare checks, heading into areas hit hardest by the floodwaters. With some streets battling waist-high water, Jett and his fellow lifesavers set out to ensure that everyone was safe, particularly the elderly, who were most at risk.

In one instance, they discovered two elderly people trapped in their home by the rising waters. Promptly and calmly, they used their IRB (Inflatable Rescue Boat) to rescue them, guiding the individuals to safety.

"Just knowing that we were able to help someone—and potentially help save their life—made all the difference," Jett said.

The floods left behind a trail of destruction, with debris, fallen trees, and branches from local creeks washed up on the beaches. As the community began to rebuild, Jett and his fellow junior lifesavers didn't just help with rescues; they rolled up their sleeves and got to work cleaning up the mess. Logs and branches

littered the beaches, but they worked together, removing the debris and helping restore some normalcy to their beloved coastline.

Throughout this experience, Jett was quick to discover that "it's about staying calm, making quick decisions, and helping those who need it most."

The community spirit didn't stop at rescues and clean-ups. Following the effects of the floods, the Forrest Beach Surf Life Saving Club

organised a barbeque to bring everyone together to reconnect, share stories, and offer support as the area slowly returned to normal. It was a moment

of unity and reflection, a chance for the lifesavers and residents to take a breath after weeks of hardship.

As Jett looked back on the weeks that had passed, he reflected on the power of community and the bond forged during such trying times. Although the State Championships were cancelled due to Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, the true victory for Jett and his fellow lifesavers was in the lives they touched and the impact they had on their community.

The floods may have left behind devastation, but they also revealed the strength, resilience, and compassion of the Forrest Beach community—proving that in times of crisis, true lifesavers rise to the occasion. Jett's experience was not one of missed competitions or unfulfilled ambitions—it was a story of selflessness, leadership, and the deep pride that comes from knowing you've made a difference when it matters most.

**"IT'S IN MOMENTS LIKE THESE THAT YOU REALISE HOW MUCH YOUR TRAINING AND EXPERIENCES IN SURF LIFESAVING CAN PREPARE YOU FOR LIFE'S UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES."**





# THE PERFECT SCORE

**GREG TOMAN**

12

## **GREG TOMAN HAS MADE HIS MARK IN THE WORLD OF SURF LIFE SAVING.**

Competing in the male 60+ category, Greg recently made history by achieving a perfect score at the 2025 Surf Rescue Championships, held at Dicky Beach. His journey, however, is larger than a series of victories. With decades of experience as a professional firefighter and a devoted lifesaver, Greg's story is one of passion, perseverance, and a strong commitment to the community. His dedication to excellence both in and out of the water serves as an inspiration to lifesavers of all ages.

### **SAVING LIVES ON AND OFF THE BEACH:**

Greg's involvement in surf lifesaving began early and was inspired by his parents, who were both active Members in the sport. His father rowed surf boats for Byron Bay SLSC, while his mother was a part of the first female March Past team for Ballina & Lismore SLSC.

Growing up at Byron Bay, he was immersed in the surf club culture, eventually earning his Bronze Medallion in 1980 and beginning his own journey in surf boat rowing. Over the years, Greg has represented multiple Clubs, from Byron Bay to Queenscliff and North Steyne, before finally settling at Mooloolaba SLSC, where he currently competes and patrols.

Gregs commitment to public safety goes well beyond Surf Lifesaving. He has served as a full-time firefighter with Queensland Fire & Rescue for 27 years, dedicating his career to protecting lives and ensuring the safety of others.

### **EVOLVING TRAINING METHODS:**

In the world of competing in Surf Lifesaving, Greg acknowledges that his approach to training has changed significantly over the years.

## **"I NEED TO TRAIN SMARTER, WORKING ON QUALITY OVER QUANTITY, AS WELL AS VARIETY"**

His rigorous weekly schedule currently includes 3 reformer Pilates sessions, 2-3 ski sessions, 2 board, 1 sprint, 2-3 swim sessions, and even dedicating time for 1-2 patient assessment and CPR sessions.

As believer in continuous improvement, Greg reflects on Einstein's words: 'If you do the same thing over and over again, you cannot expect a different outcome.' By following this, he "allocated some training sessions to improving my technical skill in ski and board paddling under the guidance of Clint Robinson. You are never too old to learn new skills!"

### **2025 SURF RESCUE CHAMPS**

Greg's recent success at the Surf Rescue Championships is even more remarkable considering that this was only his second year competing in the Champion Lifesaver event. Previously, the Masters Surf Rescue Champs clashed with other competitions, but when the schedule changed, Greg seized the opportunity to challenge himself. His first attempt in 2024 was a learning experience which was made more difficult by battling a respiratory illness. Finishing just 3.25 points away from second place, he returned in 2025 with renewed determination—and the results From the Champion Lifesaver event speak for themselves.

The Champion Lifesaver event tests competitors across three major components: Live Patient Assessment & CPR, a 40-question Theory Test, and a series of water and beach races. Greg believes "you need to show the same level of commitment to training for each discipline as you would for other surf sport disciplines – including the theory test!"

13



Achieving a perfect 120-point score was a surprise even to Greg, who attributes his success to meticulous preparation and guidance from his coach, Corey Linton. This result has never been achieved before and requires precision, endurance, and a deep understanding of Surf Lifesaving principles.

Despite his outstanding preparation, Greg did not expect to walk away with a perfect score.

**“I HAVE ALWAYS FOCUSED ON DOING MY BEST AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING,” HE REFLECTS. “TO ACHIEVE FULL POINTS ACROSS ALL COMPONENTS IN A SINGLE EVENT WAS BEYOND WHAT I IMAGINED.”**

This historic accomplishment cements his legacy as one of the most dedicated and skilled lifesavers in the sport.

#### REFLECTIONS AND FUTURE ASPIRATIONS

Despite being relatively new to the Surf Rescue competition, Greg has witnessed significant changes in Surf Sports. While the number of older competitors has grown, he notes that opportunities for them to compete are diminishing. Nevertheless, his love for team events has brought him some of his proudest moments, including winning a gold medal in the 50-59yrs Men's Double Ski event at the 2023 Aussies with Fergus Liddle and a silver medal in Board Rescue at the 2024 Aussies with Mark Higgison.

Although achieving a perfect score in the Champion Lifesaver event stands out as his proudest achievement—one he is still coming to terms with.

Looking ahead, Greg hopes to give back to the Surf Life Saving community by mentoring the next generation.

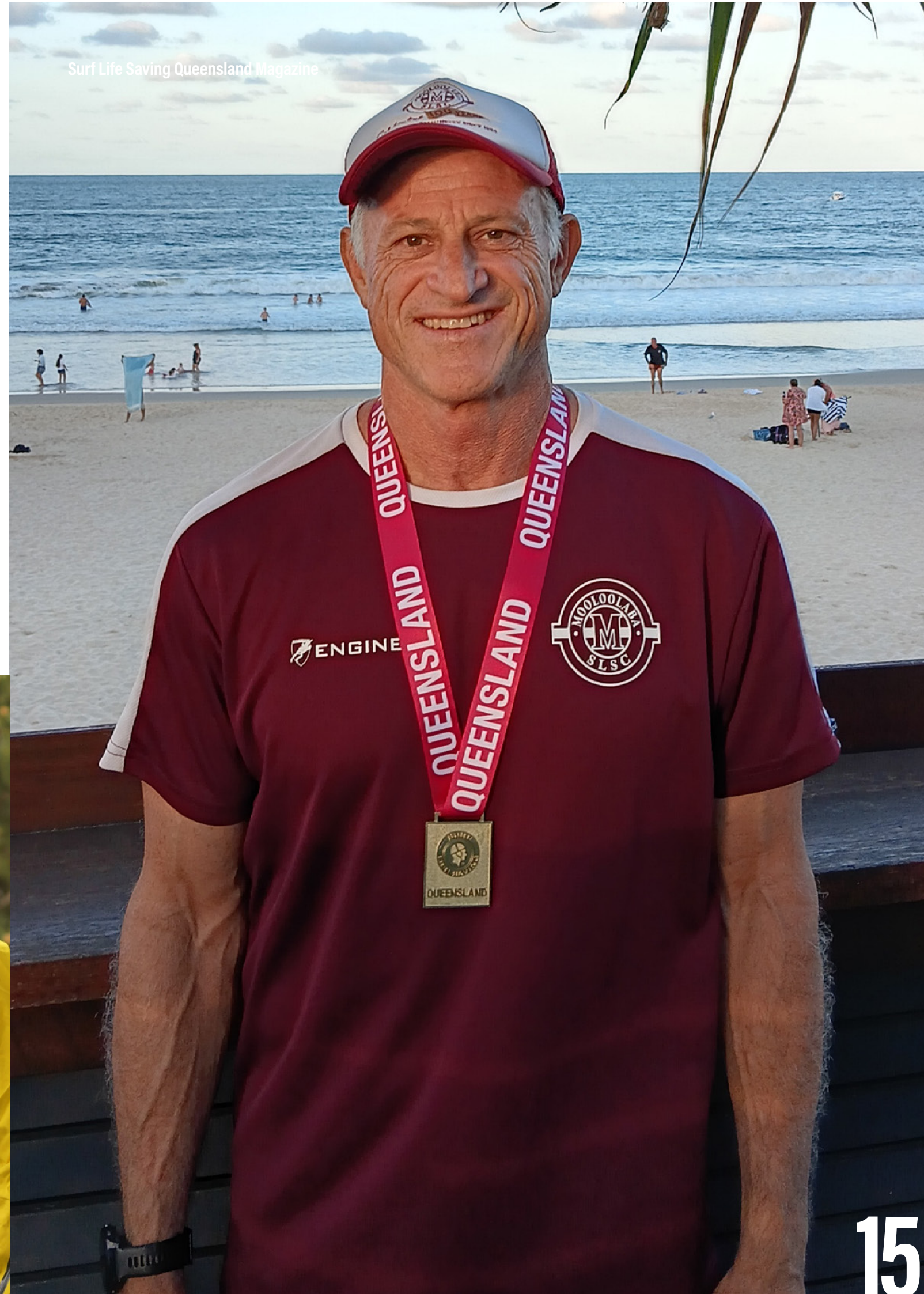
**“I want to pay forward the friendship, support, and encouragement I've received over the last 27 years.”**

#### MESSAGE TO FUTURE LIFESAVERS

For those considering a future in Surf Lifesaving, our champion lifesaver offers these words of wisdom:

“Being a first responder (paid or unpaid) puts you in a unique position to influence the outcome of people's lives. From giving timely advice, intervening early to prevent an injury or incident, responding to an incident safely & efficiently, providing appropriate initial medical care, providing support to family & friends, these are just some of the many pathways we have to positively influence the outcomes of people's lives. We should not take this for granted and we should strive to provide the best level of service that we can. This requires a commitment to learning all aspects of being a lifesaver and a dedication to maintaining a high level of competence through regular training.”

Greg Toman's journey is a testament to dedication, adaptability, and the lifelong pursuit of excellence in Surf Lifesaving. His achievements continue to inspire both his peers and the next generation of lifesavers.







# THREE GENERATIONS OF DEDICATION: THE OSBORNE FAMILY AT TUGUN SLSC

Derek Osborne fondly recalls the family's deep-rooted connection with Tugun SLSC, spanning over four decades. **"We joined Tugun SLSC in 1982,"** Derek reminisces. **"It's been a cornerstone of our family life ever since."**

Surf Life Saving Queensland Magazine

## FAMILY DYNAMICS AT THE CLUB

The Osborne family thrives at Tugun SLSC, with each member playing a vital role. Sophie, aged 9, is an enthusiastic nipper, while Kale (13), Franky (86), and Derek (51) contribute as dedicated age managers. Franky has been a Member of the Club for 43 years, and has proudly been an age manager of the under 6s "the torpedoes" for almost 40 of those years.

## A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Franky's journey at Tugun SLSC is adorned with achievements—a testament to his unwavering dedication. "I've seen generations grow, winning silver at a national level and coaching have been highlights, but the real reward is seeing former nippers return with their own children."

Franky was also awarded a life membership of nippers four years ago, "he claims to be retiring from the age managers role this year but has been heard to be saying this for the last thirty years," Derek states.

"He plans to stay involved with the Club as long as he can. He is not a man who wants accolades for any of his achievements as he does it for the love, comradery and the family involvement that Tugun SLSC brings to the community."

## PASSING ON THE TORCH

Derek Osborne, known fondly as Dekka, has embraced the Club since childhood.

"I started as a nipper at 8 and have been involved for most of my life. Competing in sprints, flags and surfboat rowing and have been fortunate to win gold at a Branch level."

**"WHAT I LOVE MOST IS THE FAMILY FEEL AND INVOLVEMENT AT THE CLUB. I MOST LOOK FORWARD TO SUNDAY MORNINGS HELPING TO MANAGE THE UNDER 6S AND 7S THROUGH THEIR ACTIVITIES, ITS ENJOYABLE TO WATCH THEM PROGRESS AND BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE ON THE BEACH AND WATER."**

## EMBRACING TRADITION AND COMMUNITY

For the Osbornes, Tugun SLSC is more than a Club—it's a community hub where bonds are forged across generations.

"It's about love, camaraderie, and giving back," Derek emphasises. "Watching Kale and Sophie grow within these shores, alongside their peers, is immensely rewarding."

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SURF LIFE SAVING

Born and bred on the Gold Coast, Derek stresses the importance of surf life saving for coastal communities.

"Growing up on the Gold Coast, I believe it's essential for families to join a Surf Life Saving Club with their children at some point. It's a fantastic organisation that teaches vital life skills, surf awareness, and ocean knowledge—something I see as crucial for those living near the coast."

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As the Osborne family continues to flourish at Tugun SLSC, their story epitomises the essence of surf lifesaving. "It's a privilege to see our traditions upheld," Derek concludes. "We're grateful for the friendships and memories made here."





# FROM JAPAN TO AUSTRALIA: THE SISTER CLUB RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHENING GLOBAL TIES BETWEEN KAIKE LSC & SURFERS PARADISE SLSC

Since the Sister Club Agreement was signed in 2004, the connection between the Japanese Kaike Lifesaving Club and Surfers Paradise Surf Life Saving Club has become a really special international partnership. Over the years, it's led to an exchange of lifesaving tips, cultural experiences, and lifelong friendships between the two Clubs. Recently, the Keiki SLC visited Surfers to help celebrate the Club's Century Year. During their trip, they really bonded, working together and sharing knowledge, especially around the "red and yellow surf rescue principle," which helps build goodwill and prosperity between the Clubs. To learn more about this amazing collaboration, we chatted with Mandy Hurst from the Kaike Sub-committee at Surfers Paradise SLSC, who shared some insights on the recent trip to Australia and why it's so important to swap lifesaving techniques.

## An Evolving Partnership

Over the past two decades, the Sister Club relationship has strengthened, with a second generation of members now involved. Mandy mentions that "both teams were somewhat nervous but excited to travel overseas and visit.

Over the past two decades, the Sister Club relationship has strengthened, with a second generation of members now involved. Mandy mentions that "both teams were somewhat nervous but excited to travel overseas and visit. However, the warm friendships developed over the last 20 years have allowed for a continued exchange of ideas and relationships that endure between visits." This strong connection has enabled both Clubs to refine their lifesaving techniques, drawing from each other's experiences and unique beach environments.

## Sharing Lifesaving and Cultural Lessons

The collaboration between Kaike LSC and Surfers Paradise SLSC has led to the sharing of key cultural and lifesaving lessons. Mandy notes that Japan's lifesaving techniques have closely aligned with Australia's, thanks to the Japan Lifesaving Association's longstanding alliance with Surf Life Saving Australia. "Our members have been amazed when visiting the unique beaches of Kaike. They are protected by tsunami walls and overlooked by Mount Daisen in the distance. They experience snow on the beaches in winter, while their summers resemble those on the Gold Coast," she explains.

Mandy also mentions that "Surfers Paradise SLSC has been fortunate to have many Japanese Members over the years who live, study and/ or work on the Gold Coast. We also have large numbers of Japanese tourists. Being able to communicate with these visitors, or at least understand their aquatic habits, has assisted our patrols immensely."

The Clubs also took part in important cultural traditions, such as Kaike's season-opening ceremony, led by Shinto priests who bless the beach and its members. "It's

a moving ceremony, and we are honoured to be included alongside dignitaries, emergency service directors, business supporters, and sponsors," Mandy says.

## A Milestone Visit to Australia

The recent visit by Kaike LSC members to Surfers Paradise was particularly significant as it was their first since 2019. Mandy highlights the importance of their presence during Surfers Paradise's centenary year:

"Kaike LSC honoured Surfers Paradise SLSC with this visit. Their previous trip was in February 2020, just before COVID. Our members have undertaken three independent visits in the intervening years—we are always keen to be a part of the Kaike community."

The visit featured joint training sessions with elite beach and water athletes, giving Kaike's members an invaluable opportunity to observe and participate in advanced training. The Kaike team, known for their strength in beach events and triathlons, were particularly impressed by the Shaw and Partners Iron Series event. "The unrelenting format of the competition showcased the fitness and endurance of the athletes. The Kaike LSC members were amazed that competitors still take part in voluntary patrols for their Clubs," Mandy shares.

## Lessons from the Surf

During their patrol experience, Kaike LSC members encountered the challenging surf conditions at Surfers Paradise, which included strong sweeps and flash rips. "Kaike experiences large beach crowds too, but their visitors seem easier to organise and keep within the swimming zones. They were surprised that so many people in Australia swim outside of the patrolled area," Mandy observes.

## An Exchange with Global Impact

Among the many highlights of the visit was welcoming Toya Kuchita back to Surfers Paradise. He had first visited as an eight-year-old with his twin sister and father, Tom, who had been a key figure in the Sister Club relationship before his passing.





communities, and create friendships that last a lifetime.

We want to say a huge thank you to the Keike SLC for travelling to Australia and strengthening the bond with Surfers Paradise SLSC. If the opportunity is presented to your Club, please consider it as it will become an asset to your Members.

## formed through lifesaving are lifelong."

For other surf Clubs considering international partnerships, Mandy highlights "the unique community that lifesaving provides is only enhanced when extended internationally. Through language and cultural barriers, we find a common goal that creates lifelong friendships. Our Sister Club relationship has now passed through two generations of lifesavers, families, and friends. The opportunity to share knowledge and passion for lifesaving has mutual benefits for both Kaike and Surfers Paradise."

As this extraordinary partnership continues to evolve, it stands as a testament to the power of lifesaving to bridge cultures, strengthen

## Looking Ahead: Strengthening Global Ties

Surfers Paradise SLSC is planning its next official tour to Japan in July 2026, with an emphasis on Nipper and Junior Member involvement. Mandy highlights the value of these experiences:

- ① **The global lifesaving family is such a unique one. Being welcomed into another country's community makes your trip so much more meaningful. The bonds**

## ① Welcoming Toya as an adult was very special. He paid tribute to his father's commitment to this relationship"

The ongoing exchanges between the two Clubs have enhanced global lifesaving techniques and beach safety. Mandy explains that "anything that encourages an exchange of ideas, resources, and techniques in the aquatic environment benefits both our Members and the public."



# FROM NIPPER PARENT TO STATE OPERATIONS SUPPORT ADVISOR: SCOTT BURGESS' LIFESAVING JOURNEY

Scott Burgess' journey into the heart of Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) began like many others - as a parent getting involved in the local nipper program at Tallebudgera SLSC by doing his bronze medallion. Little did he know that this initial step would lead him into a Club Captain role and then a pivotal role within the organisation.

"Within three years of patrolling, I was recruited into Operations Support. The opportunities and varied specialised roles within Operations Support saw me experience things and offered me friendships that staying Club based would never have given me. To experience a dusk patrol on New Years Eve into midnight is an experience I will never forget. I became the State Operations Advisor after a few seasons as a Director of Lifesaving Point Danger Branch, when the seat became vacant and there was a need for someone to take Operations Support further."

## LEADING OPERATIONS SUPPORT: SCOTT'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the State Operations Support Advisor, Scott Burgess leads a dedicated team overseeing critical aspects of SLSQ's operational framework.

"My role is to guide our state operational support panel," Scott explains, "which encompasses everything outside the flags and Clubs — from wave runners and duty officers to RPAS and state communication volunteers."

## EVOLUTION OF OPERATIONS SUPPORT: SHAPING SLSQ'S OPERATIONAL LANDSCAPE

Scott reflects on the evolution of Operations Support, which merged various independent services under one umbrella.

"Initially, Heli services, jet boats, and Surfcom operated independently," he notes. "George Hill and Kevin Dunn created Operations Support to support the Clubs between the flags. Bringing these three services under the one group quickly saw wave runners

and duty officers created. Subsequently this group has grown to include RPAS, emergency call outs, and night operations. There are so many Life Members of SLSQ that have been instrumental to Operations Support."

## GOALS AND INITIATIVES: ADVANCING OPERATIONS SUPPORT'S MISSION

"Our current focus spans growth, diversity, and skill enhancement," Scott outlines. "We're expanding into northern branches and disaster management, aiming for more diverse leadership and membership roles."

"Recent initiatives include launching Wave Runner Operators in Townsville, enhancing RPAS capabilities, and standardising training across roles."

## COLLABORATION AND CHALLENGES: FORTIFYING SLSQ'S OPERATIONAL FRONT

Scott emphasises Operations Support's collaborative approach with local Clubs and regional committees to mitigate region-specific risks.

"Whether tackling high surf or navigating crocodiles and cyclones, customisation and collaboration are key," he remarks. Challenges such as member retention and adapting to modern volunteer expectations drive Scott's vision, "Member retention and growth is still a priority, Operations Support offers pathways to our members especially the younger ones to gain skills and experience they may not receive at the local club. This can see them offer valuable skills to future employers."

## TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION: PIONEERING SAFETY MEASURES

"Technology plays a pivotal role in enhancing our effectiveness," Scott asserts.

"From the implementation of the GWN to AI-driven drones, we're advancing towards real-time coastal monitoring and response. We are currently working on building ICEMS into our services where we have direct tasking



from QAS and QPS. Exciting times ahead, what a great time to be a lifesaver."

#### ENSURING SAFETY: OPERATIONS SUPPORT'S COMMITMENT

"Our goal is zero preventable deaths," Scott affirms. "Our local Operations Support teams are regularly completing extra patrols in addition to their rostered Club patrols to ensure the goal of zero preventable deaths in our waters. Our members are doing this to support the Clubs and ensure we cover the gaps."

#### FUTURE VISION: SCOTT'S ASPIRATIONS FOR OPERATIONS SUPPORT

Scott Burgess looks ahead with optimism and purpose. "I aspire to leave Operations Support in a better place than when I entered the role," he shares. "Empowering our members with streamlined training and embracing new technologies like RPAS and AI is paramount." His vision includes passing the torch to a new generation of leading lifesavers with the ability to bring the members and our organisation more diversified into the next generation of technology.

Scott Burgess exemplifies dedication and innovation within SLSQ's Operations Support, driving initiatives that safeguard lives and propel Surf Life Saving into a dynamic future.



**P/360**  
PERFORM/THREESIXTY

PROUDLY SUPPORTING

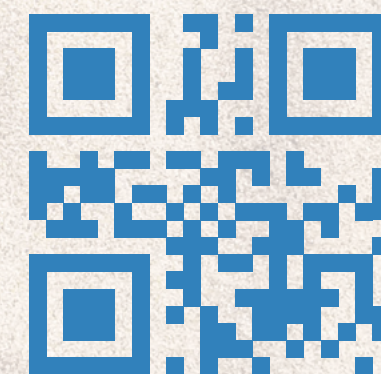
# SURF LIFESAVING THROUGH THE



## ENJOY TWO WEEKS FREE TRAINING

As a valued member of SLSQ, you're eligible for a special 2 Week Free Pass to train at Perform 360.

**BOOK YOUR 2 WEEK FREE PASS NOW AND FIND OUT MORE**



## OUR SPONSORS

INFRAVISORY



place  
design  
group.



IPS  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
PROJECT SOLUTIONS

McGrath

COEN  
COMPOSITE WOOD



pelci

promech

Elwyn



# BRINGING CULTURE TO THE COAST: THE STORY BEHIND SLSQ'S INDIGENOUS ARTWORK



Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) is proud to celebrate a new Indigenous artwork that beautifully symbolises the unity of cultures and communities in caring for the environment. This vibrant piece created by First Nations artists Darius Sloan-Pearson and Christopher Ketchup of Forest Beach Surf Life Saving Club and St Teresa's Catholic College, Abergowrie, brings together a reflection of the ocean's power, the importance of community, and the role surf lifesaving plays in bringing people together.

## THE MEANING BEHIND THE ARTWORK

The artwork symbolises the unity of lifesaving clubs across Queensland, reflecting how they come together for events, training, and patrols while staying deeply connected to the coastline and ocean. At the centre of the piece is a yarning circle, representing the gatherings and shared experiences within both the Indigenous and lifesaving communities.

Throughout the artwork, Darius and Chris incorporated elements that represent ocean currents, marine life, and personal cultural totems:

- Turtle (Totem) – “This turtle is my totem,” Darius explained. “It’s a big symbol for me because it looks after me. It’s a good feeling to have it in the artwork.”
- Octopus (Malo) – “The octopus represents my family from Eastern Island,” Darius said. “It looks after the island and all the reefs around it.”
- Ripples & Currents – “The manta rays are like the birds of the ocean, gliding through the water,” Darius shared. “Every sea creature leaves ripples behind—just like we do in the places and people around us.”

Chris also spoke about how lifesaving themes were incorporated: “I used the lifesaving colours—red, yellow, and blue—in the background to show the connection between lifesavers and the ocean. The design represents how Clubs are spread along the coast but are all part of the same community.”



## A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

The artwork was a true collaboration—not just in creativity but also in logistics. Since Darius and Chris live in different locations, they had to send the physical piece of art back and forth to complete it together.

**“We worked on the design sketches first, thinking about what would best represent both lifesaving and Indigenous culture”**

“Then we took time choosing colours, making sure they matched the meaning behind each part of the piece.”

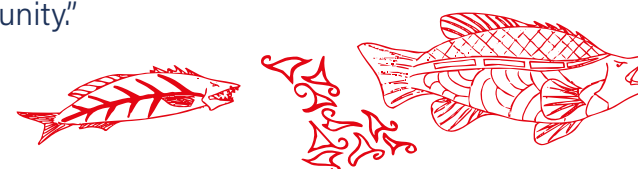
Darius added: “We couldn’t work on it together in the same place, so it had to be sent over to Chris on his island, where he did his part, then sent back to me to finish.”

## A LASTING LEGACY

This commissioned artwork is more than just a painting—it’s a celebration of culture, community, and connection to the ocean. It reflects the spirit of lifesaving while honouring the deep ties Indigenous communities have to the coastline where every symbol in the artwork is deeply rooted in the traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Christopher and Darius’s distinctive drawing styles, unique to Queensland’s First Nations artists, have been passed down through generations. Through the guidance of their elders, they have learned the importance of caring for the land and water, and they embrace their role in educating others about the profound connection and responsibility they hold as First Nations people.

SLSQ is honoured to showcase this piece as part of our ongoing commitment to recognising and celebrating Indigenous culture within our organisation. A huge thank you to Darius Sloan-Pearson and Christopher Ketchup for sharing their incredible talents and stories.

Stay tuned for more details on how this artwork will be incorporated into Surf Life Saving Queensland’s initiatives.





# RON POLLARD'S 60-YEAR JOURNEY ON THE BEACH



Few names in Surf Life Saving Queensland carry as much history and dedication as Ron Pollard. From his early days in the 1960s to groundbreaking contributions in marine stinger research, Ron's journey is one of commitment, resilience, and a passion for lifesaving that spans decades.

## From Pub Chat to Passionate Lifesaver

Ron's introduction to surf lifesaving came in an unexpected way. In 1960, at a pub lunch, a friend from the Cairns Surf Life Saving Club invited him to check out a training session. As a strong swimmer, Ron decided to give it a go—and he never looked back.

"At the time, there were no buildings out at Palm Cove, and just a handful of Clubs in North Queensland," Ron recalls. "It was a different world back then—no boards, no skis, and certainly no Ironman relays. Instead, we had novelty events like pillow fights, wheelbarrow races, and beach football."

## Breaking New Ground in Marine Stinger Research

One of Ron's most notable contributions to lifesaving came in the 1960s and 1970s when he was part of a pioneering group investigating the dangers of marine stingers. In 1979, he took part in an experiment alongside Dr. Jack Barnes to determine the best treatment for box jellyfish stings - a study that required Ron to experience the sting firsthand

Ron and his team also played a role in early stinger protection methods. Before the invention of modern stinger suits, lifesavers used second-hand pantyhose, donated by the public, to create makeshift full-body coverings. "We used to cut holes for our arms and legs and just hope they'd last in the water," he laughs.

## Innovation and Commitment in Lifesaving

Ron witnessed firsthand the evolution of surf lifesaving equipment. Over the years, lifesavers went from having minimal gear to introducing essential advancements like

rescue boards, skis and stinger suits – a well-remembered development was the gift of an aluminium surf boat donated by Caltex Astron to Ellis Beach.

But beyond equipment, Ron's true passion lay in the volunteer spirit of lifesaving. "The motto 'prevention is far better than a cure' has always stuck with me," he says. "Being part of a movement dedicated to vigilance and service is what kept me going."

Ron was a Member of the Board of Examiners who toured the U.S.A until 1981. The team manager was Jack McMaster AM and DFC (distinguished flying medal), who was the first administrator of surf lifesaving.

## A Lifelong Commitment to the Surf Life Saving Family

Ron's love for lifesaving wasn't just about the skills—it was about the people. "The camaraderie is something special. I've got friendships that go back 60, 70 years," he shares.

His legacy continues today through the Cairns Surf Life Saving Club, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Ron's late father, Edward Thomas Pollard, was one of the original members of the Royal Life

Saving movement in the region, and Ron is proud to see the tradition carried forward.

## Advice for Future Lifesavers

For those starting their lifesaving journey, Ron has simple but powerful advice: "It's one of the best activities you can take up. Not only are you serving the public, but you're also gaining skills, friendships, and a lifelong connection to something bigger than yourself."

Reflecting on his decades in surf lifesaving, Ron's passion for the movement remains as strong as ever. His dedication to vigilance and service has left a lasting impact, shaping the lifesaving community for generations to come.





# STRENGTH IN SUPPORT: THE PEER SUPPORT NETWORK AT SURF LIFE SAVING QUEENSLAND

For volunteer lifesavers, the beach is more than just a place of patrol—it's where they stand as first responders, ready to protect their communities. But just like paramedics, firefighters, and police officers, lifesavers face high-pressure situations that can take a toll on their mental wellbeing. That's why Surf Life Saving Queensland's (SLSQ) Peer Support Network is a vital resource, ensuring those who dedicate their time to saving lives receive the support they need to safeguard their own mental health. We spoke to our Member Experience Manager, Alex Walker, about the importance of peer support, how the network operates, and why looking after the mental wellbeing of lifesavers is just as critical as their role in protecting others.

## THE ROLE OF THE PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

A Peer Support Officer (PSO) in SLSQ is a dedicated volunteer trained to check in on Members who have been involved in critical incidents on the beach, particularly during patrols. These officers provide emotional support and guidance, helping lifesavers process and cope with the psychological impact of challenging situations.

## ORIGINS OF THE PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

The Peer Support Network was introduced in the early 2000s by Peter White, a psychologist who recognised the need for a support system tailored to volunteer lifesavers. "Peter saw firsthand the potentially traumatic effects that lifesavers could experience while serving their communities," explains Alex. "He wanted to ensure that those who dedicate themselves to saving lives also receive the care they need."

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PEER SUPPORT

Walkers' role focuses on enhancing the experience of SLSQ Members, while emphasising the increasing need for mental health support. "Our Members are at the heart of our organisation. Lifesavers are

often required to handle difficult and high-pressure situations, and we want to ensure they understand the immense value of their service while also providing them with support when they need it."

According to research from the Australian Psychological Society's Disaster Response Network, people process trauma in different ways. "Having a Peer Support Network in place means we can activate support mechanisms tailored to each individual's needs," says Walker. "It's essential that our Members know they can reach out for help—even outside of patrol hours."

## RECOGNISING WHEN SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Identifying the signs that a lifesaver may need additional support is crucial. "There are key indicators that we highlight in our training, such as difficulty sleeping, irritability, trouble concentrating at work or with family, and replaying the incident over and over," Walker explains. "Even if someone simply doesn't feel like their normal self after a difficult patrol incident, that's a sign to reach out."

## HOW THE PEER SUPPORT NETWORK WORKS

Following a critical incident, Alex explains that a structured support process is initiated:

1. **Immediate Debriefing:** A 'hot debrief' is conducted by the Patrol Captain, Club Captain, or Duty Officer, where lifesavers are briefed on the actions they took and the potential emotional impacts they might experience.
2. **Peer Support Activation:** If an incident meets certain criteria, a Peer Support Officer is assigned to follow up with those involved.
3. **Confidential Support:** The PSO reaches out to affected Members, offering a safe space for discussion and guidance, ensuring confidentiality throughout the process.



## TRAINING FOR PEER SUPPORT OFFICERS

PSOs undergo comprehensive training before stepping into their roles. "Currently, we offer face-to-face training sessions, followed by quarterly workshops that provide additional skills and insights," Walker shares. "We're also developing an online training process with Psychological First Aid training delivered by professionals. This will ensure PSOs have the tools they need to support their peers effectively."

## BREAKING THE STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH

The culture around mental health in Surf Life Saving is evolving. "The more we talk about mental wellbeing, the more we break down the stigma," Walker states. "Our goal is to create an open and supportive environment where members feel comfortable seeking help when they need it."

## STRENGTHENING THE PEER SUPPORT NETWORK

SLSQ is continuously working to improve and expand its Peer Support Network. "We've recently reviewed our program with psychologists to identify areas for enhancement," Walker says. "One major change is the implementation of a statewide roster, allowing PSOs to support Members across different

regions, removing potential conflicts or familiarity concerns."

Confidentiality remains a top priority. "All our PSOs sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure that anything shared remains private," Walker confirms.

## THE FUTURE OF PEER SUPPORT AT SLSQ

Looking ahead, Walker envisions a future where peer support extends beyond critical incidents. "We want to provide support for all aspects of a Member's journey, not just after traumatic events," he says. "Our ultimate goal is to develop a best-practice program that sets the standard for volunteer peer support networks."

## A FINAL MESSAGE TO LIFESAVERS

"If there's one thing every lifesaver should know, it's that they should be incredibly proud of the service they provide," Walker emphasises. "And even prouder of those who have trained as Peer Support Officers, extending their commitment to helping others. No one should ever feel afraid to reach out for help."

With initiatives like the Peer Support Network, Surf Life Saving Queensland is not just saving lives in the water—it's ensuring the wellbeing of those who dedicate themselves to the cause.



# AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

A NIGHT OF EXCELLENCE

# 23.08.25

*save the date*

CELEBRATING  
OUR SURF LIFE  
SAVING HEROES

THE STAR  
BRISBANE  
6PM ARRIVAL

[CLICK HERE  
TO BUY YOUR  
TICKET](#)



Queensland





# SLSQ DRIVING GENDER EQUITY IN LIFESAVING

**Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where women are supported to lead and thrive in lifesaving. As part of this commitment, SLSQ has launched its Gender Equity Plan 2024-2027, ensuring greater representation, leadership opportunities, and pathways for women in all areas of the movement.**

**“** The launch of our Gender Equity Plan is an important step forward to reflect our organisations commitment to advancing women in leadership roles. It is developed in thorough consultation with industry specialists and lived experiences of women in our organisation. To keep ourselves accountable the plan highlights targets and the collective action needed to drive real change.”

To celebrate International Women's Day, SLSQ hosted two special events dedicated to inspiring, educating, and connecting women in lifesaving: the Women in Lifesaving Workshop and a Networking Event featuring an expert panel discussion.

## **WOMEN IN LIFESAVING WORKSHOP WITH MICHELLE REDFERN**

Kicking off the weekend, participants had the opportunity to learn from one of Australia's Top 100 Women of Influence, Michelle Redfern. A highly accomplished businesswoman, Michelle has held executive leadership roles with Telstra, National Australia Bank, and Serco, and has dedicated her career to closing the gender leadership gap.

During the workshop, Michelle shared valuable insights into overcoming barriers and self-doubt, developing leadership skills and creating pathways for women in lifesaving and beyond.

Her powerful message resonated with attendees, reinforcing the importance of backing yourself, lifting others, and advocating for change in traditionally male-dominated spaces.

## **WOMEN IN LIFESAVING NETWORKING EVENT**

Following the workshop, the Women in Lifesaving Networking Event provided a platform for women and allies to connect, share experiences, and discuss the future of gender equity in lifesaving.

Attendees were inspired by an engaging panel discussion, featuring:

### **Michelle Redfern – Business Leader & Gender Equity Advocate**

Michelle's expertise in organisational diversity, leadership, and coaching provided a strong foundation for the discussion. She highlighted the importance of visibility, mentorship, and resilience in advancing women's leadership in lifesaving.

### **Paul Gibson – Chief Pilot & Advocate for Women in SLSQ**

Paul shared his 40+ years of experience in aviation and his role as a male ally in supporting women in lifesaving. Reflecting on his own personal growth, Paul emphasised the value of mentorship and creating inclusive environments where women can thrive.

### **Alyce Wood – Three-Time Olympian & Communication Specialist**

Alyce, a Tokyo 2020 gold medallist and Paris 2024 Olympian, spoke about balancing elite sport with motherhood, and the importance of advocating for women in male-dominated industries. She encouraged attendees to push boundaries, challenge stereotypes, and support the next generation of female leaders.

## **LOOKING AHEAD**

The Gender Equity Plan and events like these are just the beginning. SLSQ remains committed to creating an environment where all women feel valued and supported, to step into leadership roles—whether on the beach, in governance, or in surf sports.

A huge thank you to all the women and allies who participated, helping to build a stronger, more inclusive lifesaving movement.





# SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA

IS PROUD  
TO BE NAMED THE  
**SECOND**  
MOST  
TRUSTED  
CHARITY  
IN AUSTRALIA



Surf Life Saving Australia is proud to announce that we have been ranked Australia's second most trusted charity in the annual national Charity and Not for Profit reputation conducted by RepTrak, formerly known as the Reputation Institute.

The result saw Surf Life Saving Australia achieve a reputation score of 94.2, our highest since the tracking began in 2011 and sees an improvement of three places over the last 12 months in the scoring system that measures areas such as respect, trust, admiration and purpose.

Surf Life Saving Australia now sits statistically on par with the first placed Royal Flying Doctors Service, who have been ranked number one for all but one year since the annual Charity and Not for Profit reputation survey began.

This ranking is attributed to the meaningful contribution our organisation and Members make to local communities around Australia and SLSA President John Baker AM ESM has praised the efforts of our volunteer Members who have contributed to this outstanding result.

"Reputation and 'brand health' are key indicators of a vibrant and sustainable movement and we are both proud and humbled by this result," said Mr Baker AM ESM.

**"This report isn't just about a number or a ranking. It's about the selfless volunteers who give up their time to patrol, train and teach, and their willingness to put the safety of a stranger before that of their own."**

"Thank you to our volunteers, supporters, and partners who make this movement what it is. This achievement belongs to all of you," he added.







# JOIN THE WOMEN IN LIFESAVING NETWORK



Women make up nearly **50% of membership** within **SLSQ** but are underrepresented in leadership roles.

**Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ)** is committed to accelerating activity towards **Gender Equity** and **providing opportunities** for more **women** to take on leadership roles in life saving and to encourage male allies to advocate and **support women in our organisation**.

## WHAT IS THE WOMEN IN LIFESAVING NETWORK?

The **Women in Lifesaving Network** is a collective of women and male allies who aim to **pursue development opportunities**, take **part in events**, **provide feedback** and **help us** shape the future of **Surf Lifesaving in Queensland**.

## WHY JOIN?

- Hear about the latest **news and updates**
- Access to **events and development** opportunities
- Opportunity to provide **feedback through engagement surveys**
- Be a part of a network that **supports** in accelerating progress towards **gender equality**.

**Join Us**

For more information  
scan the QR code →



**Queensland**





# SUPPORTING CLUBS ACROSS SOUTHEAST QUEENSLAND

For many lifesavers, the beach is their second home. But what happens when a club needs extra hands to keep patrols running smoothly? That's where Brisbane Lifesaving Service (BLS) steps in. BLS provides vital support to surf clubs across Southeast Queensland, ensuring beaches remain safe while giving volunteers a flexible way to stay involved in lifesaving.

## HOW BLS SUPPORTS CLUBS

Unlike traditional surf lifesaving clubs, BLS doesn't have a single home beach. Instead, its members patrol at various locations each season, filling gaps where extra support is needed. In the 2024/25 season, BLS is assisting the following 7 clubs: Rainbow Beach SLSC, Peregrine Beach SLSC, Mudjimba SLSC, Coochiemudlo Island SLSC, Pacific SLSC, Bilinga SLSC, and Rainbow Bay SLSC.

"We work closely with Surf Life Saving Queensland & the relevant Regional Coordinators to determine which clubs need additional patrol support," said Nicole, BLS's Lifesaving Coordinator.

"Whether it's due to low membership numbers or seasonal demands, our members step in to ensure the red and yellow flags stay up and the seven clubs we support can offer their members a break, to not cause burn-out."

BLS members bring valuable skills to the clubs they assist. With training in surf awareness, first aid, and rescue techniques, they integrate seamlessly into patrol teams, providing an extra layer of safety and support.

## What Clubs Need to Know About BLS Patrols

BLS members typically commit to one patrol per month, making them a flexible and reliable resource for clubs in need. But how does a club request BLS support?

"We encourage clubs to reach out to their relevant Regional Coordinators if they

need assistance, who will discuss with BLS what support is needed and how often on their behalf" Nicole explained. "It's all about collaboration - clubs tell their Branch where they need help, and we do our best to allocate our members accordingly."

Clubs also benefit from having BLS members bring a fresh perspective and experience from patrolling at multiple locations; whether it's learning how clubs operate differently or adapting to varying surf conditions, it ensures BLS members are always enhancing their knowledge and skill set.

## The BLS Member Experience

BLS attracts a diverse group of volunteers, from experienced lifesavers looking for flexibility to newcomers eager to get involved within their community. Some members use BLS as a stepping stone before joining a surf club, while others enjoy the variety of patrolling different beaches.

"There's a real mix of people in BLS," Nicole said. "Some have been involved in lifesaving for years, while others are just starting their journey. We also have members who work FIFO or have other commitments, and BLS gives them a way to stay active in lifesaving without a full-time club commitment."

Being a service doesn't mean we don't offer the same opportunities as a club. Members can still get involved in specialist areas like rescue watercraft (RWC), communications, and even the Westpac Lifesaver Helicopter Rescue Service.

## Looking Ahead: The Future of BLS

As lifesaving continues to evolve, BLS is looking at ways to expand its impact. Nicole is keen to strengthen relationships with clubs and create more pathways for members to upskill.





**“We want to ensure BLS continues to be a strong support network for clubs,” she said. “We’re also looking at increasing opportunities for training and development, so our members can take on more specialised roles.”**

Beyond the beach, BLS plays an active role in the community, attending events such as Anaconda Club Nights, school and university expos, and emergency services showcases. This outreach helps spread awareness about lifesaving and encourages more people to get involved, even if they don’t live near the coast.

### A Lifesaving Partnership

At its core, BLS is about teamwork—supporting clubs, strengthening patrols, and ensuring Southeast Queensland beaches remain safe for everyone. For lifesavers looking for a different way to contribute, BLS provides a unique and rewarding experience.

“If you’re a club looking for extra support or a lifesaver wanting a flexible way to stay involved, BLS is here to help,” Nicole said. “Together, we’re making a difference, one patrol at a time.”

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ON BLS PATROLS OR  
HOW TO REQUEST  
SUPPORT, CONTACT

[BRISBANE@LIFESAVING.COM.AU](mailto:BRISBANE@LIFESAVING.COM.AU)







# MAKING WAVES WITH DATA: HOW SURF LIFE SAVING CAN USE INSIGHTS TO IMPROVE

Surf Life Saving has always been about quick thinking, teamwork, and a deep connection to safe communities and our beautiful coastal environments. But behind the scenes, data and research can play a powerful role in keeping our beaches safer, our Clubs stronger, and our rescues more effective. The challenge isn't just collecting data—it's knowing how to use it to inform decisions that make a real impact.

## How Data and Research Helps Inform Decisions

There are a number of ways that data and research can assist in both longer term and short-term decision making:

- **Safer Patrols:** Looking at past incident reports, weather conditions, and beach attendance figures can help predict high-risk periods. If we know rip rescues spike at a certain time of day or under specific tide conditions, we can schedule more experienced lifesavers and adjust patrol locations.
- **Smarter Training:** Reviewing rescue data can highlight common challenges—whether it's improving board rescues, boosting IRB response times, or increasing first-aid confidence. Clubs can use this information to tailor training sessions, ensuring Members are well-prepared for real-world situations.
- **Stronger Clubs:** Tracking membership trends can reveal when Member engagement dips, allowing committees to introduce targeted retention strategies. For example, if new Members drop off after their first season, mentoring programs or social events might help strengthen connections and keep them involved.
- **Better Equipment Planning:** Recording the usage and condition of rescue gear helps prioritise maintenance and replacements. Data on how often radios, tubes, or defibrillators are used ensures Clubs invest in the right equipment before issues arise.

## How to Start Using Data in Your Surf Life Saving Club

It doesn't take a lot of effort to start using data to inform our decisions. We need to use the rich data we have via the following steps:

- **Capture the Right Information:** Start simple—record incidents, training attendance, patrol statistics, and Member feedback. If your Club isn't already using digital tools, consider spreadsheets or apps to keep things organised.
- **Review Trends Regularly:** Don't wait for annual reports—set up monthly or quarterly check-ins to look at key insights. Are rescues increasing in a certain area? Is Member participation declining? Spotting trends early allows for proactive adjustments.
- **Use Data to Guide Conversations:** Whether at committee meetings, patrol commencement meetings or training debriefs, bring data into discussions. Numbers combined with our personal insights can provide clarity, helping Clubs make informed decisions rather than relying on assumptions.
- **Experiment and Adapt:** Use data to test new approaches. If changing patrol times reduces incidents, or shifting training focus boosts confidence, track the results and refine strategies over time.
- **Share Insights Across the Club:** Data shouldn't be locked away—it's a tool for everyone. Keeping club governance, patrol captains, junior activity coordinators, trainers and coaches, and Members informed empowers them to contribute to better decisions.

Data and research doesn't replace experience, but it enhances our ability to make informed, proactive decisions. By using it effectively, we can create safer beaches, stronger teams, and more resilient Surf Life Saving Clubs.

Written by Dr Elissa Farrow, member of the SLSQ Research Panel and patrolling member of the Point Lookout Surf Life Saving Club on Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island).





The SLSQ Research Panel was established in 2022 to conduct research and analyse data for the SLSQ Lifesaving Committee or their appointed authority on matters relating to their operational needs. The Panel consists of researchers and lifesavers within the realm of SLSQ membership who meet regularly and then through the Chair, update the SLSQ Lifesaving Committee about Panel activities and provide updates on the research undertaken, and make evidence-based recommendations as required.



## SURF LIFE SAVING QLD CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

22 - 24

AUGUST

2025

BRISBANE

CONVENTION & EXHIBITION CENTRE

[CLICK TO BUY](#)





# DECOMPRESSING AFTER A BUSY PATROL: PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LIFESAVERS' MENTAL HEALTH

As surf life savers, we often face intense, high-pressure situations that demand our full attention. Whether it's responding to multiple incidents, ensuring the safety of beachgoers, or staying alert for long hours, it's no surprise that patrol days can leave us mentally and physically exhausted. However, it's essential to remember that while these days can be challenging, it's okay to experience these pressures. The key to maintaining long-term mental health and well-being is learning to decompress and process these demanding experiences.

Here are some practical strategies to help relax the mind after a busy patrol and take care of your mental health:

## 1. Create a Transition Ritual

After a high-stress patrol, it's important to have a ritual to mark the shift from "work mode" to personal time. This could be something simple like taking a walk on the beach, changing into comfortable clothes, or even a few minutes of deep breathing before you leave the patrol area. A small, calming act can signal to your mind that the workday has ended and it's time to switch gears.

## 2. Mindful Breathing

Mindful breathing is one of the simplest and most effective tools to relax after a stressful day. Focus on your breath, breathing deeply and slowly. Inhale for four seconds, hold for four seconds, and then exhale for four seconds. This technique helps reduce stress and clear mental fog. It's a small but powerful way to ground yourself and bring calmness to your body and mind.

## 3. Physical Relaxation

The body and mind are connected, so taking care of your body can help ease mental tension. Stretching is a great way to release the physical tension that builds up after a long shift. Gentle yoga, progressive muscle relaxation, or even just a few minutes of stretching can help restore balance. If you have access to a shower or bath, consider adding a few drops of essential oils like lavender, which has calming properties.

## 4. Debrief and Reflect

If you've dealt with a difficult or intense incident, it's crucial to give yourself space to process it. Take a moment to reflect on what happened—what went well, what could be improved, and how you're feeling about the experience. Consider having a brief debrief with a fellow lifesaver or supervisor. Talking about challenging moments can help reduce the emotional burden and allow you to release any lingering stress. Remember, processing these moments is key to long-term mental health.

## 5. Connect with Others

Social support is one of the most important aspects of maintaining mental health. After a challenging day, it can be helpful to talk to someone you trust—whether it's a fellow surf lifesaver, a family member, or a friend. Sharing your experiences can provide a sense of relief and help you feel supported. Even a simple conversation about something unrelated to patrol can be a great way to disconnect from the stresses of the day.

## 6. Engage in a Relaxing Hobby

Hobbies are an excellent way to distract the mind from work-related stress. Whether it's reading, painting, playing an instrument, or cooking, engaging in an activity that brings you joy can shift your focus away from the intensity of the patrol. These moments of relaxation can provide a much-needed mental break and allow you to recharge.

## 7. Physical Activity

Exercise is another great way to relieve stress and improve your mental well-being. After a busy day on patrol, go for a jog, swim, or even do some light strength training. Physical activity releases endorphins, which are natural mood boosters, helping you feel more relaxed and grounded. Plus, it can help you sleep better that night.

## 8. Prioritise Rest and Sleep

One of the most important aspects of mental health is getting enough rest. After a busy day on patrol, make sure you prioritize sleep. Quality sleep helps to reset your mind and body, making you better prepared for the next day. Establish a calming bedtime routine—whether it's listening to soothing music, reading a book, or practicing relaxation techniques—to signal to your body that it's time to wind down.

## 9. Eat Nourishing Foods

What you eat can have a significant impact on your mental state. After a high-stress patrol, focus on nourishing your body with healthy, balanced meals. Eating foods rich in vitamins, minerals, and protein can help restore energy levels and improve your mood. Avoid excessive caffeine or junk food, which can lead to energy crashes and impact your sleep.

## 10. Be Kind to Yourself

Finally, remind yourself that it's okay to have intense, challenging days. Being a surf life saver requires dedication, resilience, and a strong mental strength—but you are not immune to stress. It's important to be kind to yourself when things get tough. Acknowledge the hard work you've done and give yourself permission to take the time you need to recover.

Decompressing after a busy patrol is not just about relaxing in the moment—it's about taking the time to care for your mental health so you can continue doing your important work. By incorporating some of these strategies into your routine, you can help manage the pressures of patrol life, recover effectively, and ensure that you are in the best possible shape to serve your community. Remember, it's okay to have full-on days, but it's just as important to give yourself permission to decompress and recharge for the next one.





# IT'S OFFICIAL: AUSTRALIA'S OCEAN SURFACE WAS THE HOTTEST ON RECORD IN 2024

Australia's sea surface temperatures were the warmest on record last year, according to a snapshot of the nation's climate which underscores the perilous state of the world's oceans.

The Bureau of Meteorology on Thursday released its annual climate statement for 2024 – the official record of temperature, rainfall, water resources, oceans, atmosphere and notable weather.

Among its many alarming findings were that sea surface temperatures were hotter than ever around the continent last year: a whopping 0.89°C above average.

Oceans cover more than 70% of Earth's surface, and their warming is gravely concerning. It causes sea levels to rise, coral to bleach and Earth's ice sheets to melt faster. Hotter oceans also makes weather on land more extreme and damages the marine life which underpins vital ocean ecosystems.

## WHAT THE SNAPSHOT SHOWED

Australia's climate varies from year to year. That's due to natural phenomena such as the El Niño and La Niña climate drivers, as well as human-induced climate change.

The bureau confirmed 2024 was Australia's second-warmest year since national records began in 1910. The national annual average temperature was 1.46°C warmer than the long-term average (1961–90). Heatwaves struck large parts of Australia early in the year, and from September to December.

Average rainfall in Australia was 596 millimetres, 28% above the 30-year average, making last year the eighth-wettest since records began.

And annual sea surface temperatures for the Australian region were the warmest on record. Global sea surface temperatures in 2024 were also the warmest on record.

According to the bureau, Antarctic sea-ice extent was far below average, or close to record-lows, for much of the year but returned to average in December.

## WHAT CAUSED THE HOT OCEANS?

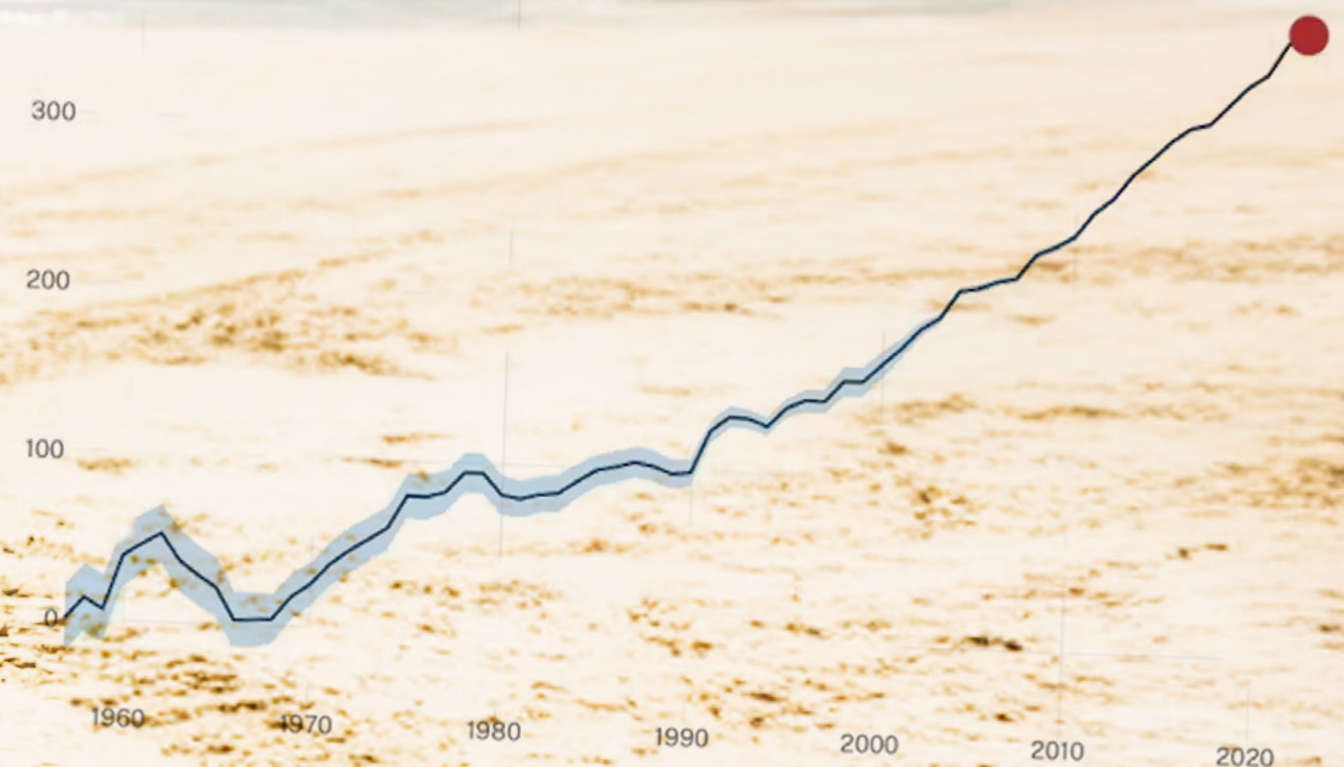
It's too early to officially attribute the ocean warming to climate change. But we do know greenhouse gas emissions are heating the Earth's atmosphere, and oceans absorb 90% of this heat.

So we can expect human-induced climate change played a big role in warming the oceans last year. But shorter-term forces are at play, too.

The rare triple-dip La Niña Australia experienced from 2020 to 2023 brought cooler water from deep in the ocean up to the surface. It was like turning on the ocean's air-conditioner.

But that pattern ended and Australia entered an El Niño in September 2023. It lasted about seven months, when the oscillation between El Niño and La Niña entered a neutral phase.

The absence of a La Niña meant cool water was no longer being churned up from the deep. Once that masking effect







disappeared, the long-term warming trend of the oceans became apparent once more.

Water can store a lot more heat than air. In fact, just the top few metres of the ocean store as much heat as Earth's entire atmosphere. Oceans take a long time to heat up and a long time to cool.

Heat at the ocean's surface eventually gets pushed deeper into the water column and spreads across Earth's surface in currents. The below chart shows how the world's oceans have heated over the past 70 years.

### **WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT OCEAN WARMING?**

Rapid warming of Earth's oceans is setting off a raft of worrying changes.

It can lead to less nutrients in surface waters, which in turn leads to fewer fish. Warmer water can also cause species to move elsewhere. This threatens the food security and livelihoods of millions of people around the world.

Recently, it was reported that tens of thousands of fish died off northwestern Australia due to a large and prolonged marine heatwave.

Warm water causes coral bleaching, as experienced on the Great Barrier Reef in recent decades. It also makes oceans more acidic, reducing the amount of calcium carbonate available for organisms to build shells and skeletons.

Warming oceans trigger sea level rise – both due to melt water from glaciers and ice sheets, and the fact seawater expands as it warms.

Hotter oceans are also linked to weather extremes, such as more intense cyclones and heavier rainfall. It's likely the high annual rainfall Australia experienced in 2024 was in part due to warmer ocean temperatures.

### **WHAT NOW?**

As long as humans keep burning fossil fuels and pumping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the oceans will keep warming.

Unfortunately, the world is not doing a good job of shifting its emissions trajectory. As the bureau pointed out in its statement, concentrations of all major long-lived greenhouse gases in the atmosphere increased last year, including carbon dioxide and methane.

Prolonged ocean warming is driving changes in weather patterns and more frequent and intense marine heatwaves. This threatens ecosystems and human livelihoods. To protect our oceans and our way of life, we must transition to clean energy sources and cut carbon emissions.

At the same time, we must urgently expand ocean observing below the ocean's surface, especially in under-studied regions, to establish crucial baseline data for measuring climate change impacts.

The time to act is now: to reduce emissions, support ocean research and help safeguard the future of our blue planet.

***Republished from The Conversation click here for the original article.***



# DO IT NOW.



## ENGINE

- CHAMPIONS CHOOSE ENGINE -

## Our Values



### INNOVATION

Continually explore cutting edge technologies and systems as we work towards our beach and Clubs of the future.



### SAFETY

Prioritise and take responsibility for safety at all levels across the organisation, both on and off the beach.



### RESPECT

Treat each other with respect, value each other's contributions, and celebrate our people who strive for excellence.



### COMMUNITY

We will not only protect the community we serve but we will reflect the community we operate within and foster a welcoming culture.



### TRUST

Ensure that trust and accountability are the cornerstone of our organisation; through open and honest communication, and by always delivering on our commitments.



### INTEGRITY

We will display the equality of honesty and having strong moral principles.





# Our Partners

## PRINCIPAL PARTNERS



## GOVERNMENT



## COMMUNITY



## BUSINESS







Queensland

This is a Surf Life Saving Queensland publication. If you would like to contribute or advertise please contact [marketing@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:marketing@lifesaving.com.au)