

Surf Life Saving Queensland Magazine

ISSUE NINE



Queensland

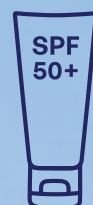
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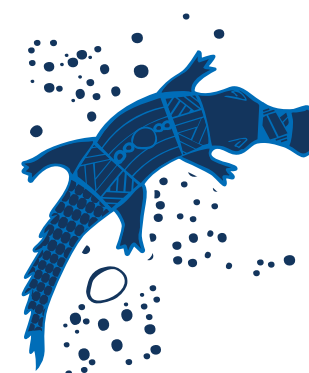


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SLSQ acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout our State and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.



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PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

As the 2024/25 volunteer patrol season has come to a close across five of our six regions, I want to extend my thanks to every single member who has given their time and energy to protect all visitors to our beaches.

What a season it has been: our incredible volunteer lifesavers performed 1,052 rescues, administered 14,657 first aid treatments, and took 109,760 preventative actions to keep beachgoers safe.

These numbers reflect a massive contribution — and while they highlight the scale of our efforts, they don’t fully capture the lives changed and communities supported by your service. Tragically, we also recorded 12 fatal drownings this season — all outside patrolled areas — reminding us of why our presence

remains so vital, and why our message continues to be to swim between the red and yellow flags.

Your work during the peak periods — including the recent string of long weekends — has been exceptional. I hope you have a chance to rest and reflect on the impact of your work.

Meanwhile, our North Queensland lifesavers have kicked off their patrol season — and we wish you all the best as you continue this important work through the cooler months. Your commitment ensures our tropical beaches remain safe.

To every Member, thank you for your service, your passion, and your ongoing support of our mission. We look forward to seeing you again next season.

Thank you for your service, your passion, and your ongoing support of our mission. We look forward to seeing you again next season.

GERARD O’BRIEN

PRESIDENT,
Surf Life Saving Queensland



CEO'S MESSAGE

As the 2024/25 volunteer patrol season wraps up across most of Queensland, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to every single one of our volunteers. Your commitment to keeping our beaches safe is what underpins Surf Life Saving Queensland's mission — especially to those in South East Queensland for another demanding summer, and to our North Queensland lifesavers who continue to patrol through the cooler months.

This season has been a powerful reminder of the impact our movement has across all levels — from celebrating 100 years of lifesaving at Tugun SLSC, to marking a decade of Seahorse Nippers at North Burleigh, where children with disabilities have had the chance to enjoy the beach in a safe and welcoming environment.

In Far North Queensland, the Abegowrie Camp created meaningful connections between First

Nations youth, culture, and lifesaving — strengthening pathways and building community resilience for lasting impact.

We also saw Queensland athletes shine at the 2025 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, with thrilling performances, historic wins, and emotional milestones. From rising stars like Jasmine Raywood and Ethan Callaghan to legends like Ali Day and Georgia Fitzsimmons, it was a powerful display of skill, spirit, and surf club pride.

As always, the success of our season — from the beach to the podium — is thanks to the volunteers, officials, clubs, and communities who make it possible. Your time, energy and heart are what keep our movement strong.

Thank you for another extraordinary season.

This season has been a powerful reminder of the impact our movement has across all levels.

DAVE WHIMPEY
CEO,
Surf Life Saving Queensland



TUGUN SLSC:



OF SERVICE, SPIRIT AND SURF

In 1925, a small group of surf lifesavers pitched tents behind the Tugun pub and patrolled the beach with little more than grit, determination, and a reel, line, and belt. Today, Tugun Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) celebrates a century of service — a testament to the people who have kept its spirit alive across generations.

Craig Williams, Tugun SLSC's Centenary Committee Chair and Club Patron, says reaching the 100-year milestone is a moment for celebration, but also reflection.

"Clubs are about people. It's the members — past and present — that we honour," he said. "From the founding members, to the Windsor Australian Rules Football players who kept the club afloat in the 1930s, to those who enlisted during World War II and members like Dane Hurst who recently competed at the Invictus Games — it's the generations of commitment that make Tugun what it is."

A Century of Change

Much has changed since Tugun's first official patrol on 26 January 1925. In the early days, members were almost exclusively men, largely from Brisbane, travelling by train or hitchhiking down the coast. Accommodation was rudimentary — canvas tents behind the pub — and surf rescue techniques relied purely on physical strength and ocean skills.

Fast forward 100 years, and Tugun boasts hundreds of members, many living locally on the Gold Coast. Today's patrols are made up of skilled and qualified members — from IRB drivers and drone operators to first aid officers — all sun-safe, child-safe, and professionally trained.

But as Williams notes, some things have remained constant.

"Basic surf skills are still the heart of what we do. Patrolling Tugun Beach, keeping the public safe — that's timeless."



Tugun's Major Milestones

Tugun's century has been marked by many proud achievements:

- **1925:** Affiliation with the Point Danger Branch and first official patrol.
- **1931:** First members qualify for their Bronze Medallions.
- **1934:** First clubhouse opened by the Governor of Queensland.
- **1964:** Original clubhouse destroyed by fire; a new brick clubhouse opened two years later.
- **1967:** Tugun Nippers Association established.
- **1988:** Tugun Surf Life Saving Club opens Queensland's first Supporters Club with a full liquor license — revolutionising surf club funding models and setting the standard for future club operations.
- **1991:** First Australian Gold Medal win.
- **2002:** Tugun's golden year — 13 Australian titles, including the Open Male Taplin, Ironman, and Surfboat.

Tugun has also contributed significantly beyond the beach, with members involved in the helicopter and jet boat rescue services and representing Australia at World Championships and even the Olympics, with Ken Wallace winning gold at the 2008 Beijing Games.

Moments That Stand Out

Tugun's beach has largely been a safe haven, but a few notable rescues stand out. In the 1970s, members helped rescue the occupants of a light plane that ditched into the surf. In 2018, lifesavers Roger Dibden, Brett Butel, and Chris Bindy performed a dramatic CPR rescue on an unresponsive swimmer — an act recognised with a Citation of Merit.

And sometimes, the club's influence has gone far beyond a single rescue. In the 1980s, a young boy rescued from the surf, Robert Barger, would go on to become Deputy Club Captain — a powerful reminder of surf lifesaving's impact on lives.

A Legacy of Camaraderie and Equality

For Williams, the true heart of Tugun SLSC is its camaraderie and egalitarianism.

"Whether you're an Australian Champion or a nipper BBQ coordinator, the respect is the same," he said. "That's the spirit of Tugun."

Among his many fond memories, Williams singles out 2002 as a standout year, when Tugun conquered the Australian Championships with record-breaking performances across multiple disciplines. But equally meaningful were quieter moments — like two surfboat crews winning gold at the Aussies in 2014, then returning home to patrol the beach the very next weekend.

Honouring the Centenary

Tugun SLSC has marked its centenary with a series of celebrations:

- A **Community Fun Day** on 26 January, featuring lifesaving demonstrations, inflatable water slides, a visit from the Westpac Helicopter, and a sold-out luncheon.
- The **Tugun Centenary Gala Dinner** in August, where the 100 most influential members — the "Tugun Centurions" — will be formally recognised.
- A commemorative **Centenary Book** capturing the rich tapestry of Tugun's history, characters, and contributions.

While some events, like the 2025 Youth Championships, were impacted by Cyclone Alfred, Williams says the spirit of celebration has been undiminished.

The Next 100 Years

Looking ahead, Williams believes the future of Tugun SLSC will rest in the hands of the next generation.

"We have a strong group of young members coming through. They're Tugun to the core," he said.

But he acknowledges that the club will need to adapt — becoming more engaged with its members, embracing technology, and creating new opportunities.

"Tugun has always been fiercely local — if it didn't happen between Flat Rock, the pub, and the highway, it didn't matter," he joked. "But to thrive for another 100 years, we need to think bigger, while always honouring where we came from."

In every ripple of the surf, in every patrol flag planted on the beach, the legacy of 100 years lives on — and Tugun SLSC looks forward to shaping the waves of the next century.

WHO IS CRAIG WILLIAMS

When you think of Tugun Surf Life Saving Club, there's one name that stands tall among the club's 100-year history — Craig Williams. A Life Member, long-time leader, and part of the organising committee for Tugun's centenary celebrations, Craig's name is synonymous with dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to surf life saving.

From Rowing to Rescue: The Beginning of a Lifelong Journey

Craig first joined Tugun SLSC in 1981, at a time when he was chasing a dream of making the Queensland Under-21 Rugby Union team. Seeking a way to stay fit over the summer, a friend suggested he take up surf boat rowing. Little did he know that this decision would mark the start of a lifelong bond with the club and the lifesaving movement.

Although the rugby dreams didn't eventuate, Craig quickly found a home at Tugun. The camaraderie, the spirit, and the simple but powerful mission of keeping people safe on the beach resonated with him — and it's a commitment he has maintained for over four decades.

A Passion for People and Patrols

Craig's surf lifesaving career is defined not just by his service on the sand, but by his deep love for the Tugun community. He speaks fondly of the "egalitarianism" at the club — where Australian champions, nipper volunteers, IRB drivers, and patrol members are all held in equal esteem, bound by the same pride in the Green, Gold and White.

Over the years, Craig has seen it all — from memorable patrol moments to historic carnival victories, yet for Craig, the real pride comes not from medals, but from the everyday heroes: the patrol members who show up rain, hail or shine; the teenagers who grow into leaders; and the lifesaving skills that quite literally change lives.

A Leader in Every Sense

Craig's contribution to Tugun SLSC extends well beyond the beach. Over the years, he has worn countless hats — Club Secretary, Committee member, mentor, strategist, historian — but perhaps his most important role has been as a custodian of Tugun's values and culture.

As part of the Organising Committee for the club's 100-year celebrations, Craig led a once-in-a-generation effort to honour Tugun's past and inspire its future. His deep dive into the club's rich history unearthed forgotten heroes, legendary moments, and the incredible stories of the men and women who built Tugun from tents behind a pub into the powerhouse it is today.

A Life Member, A Lifelong Advocate

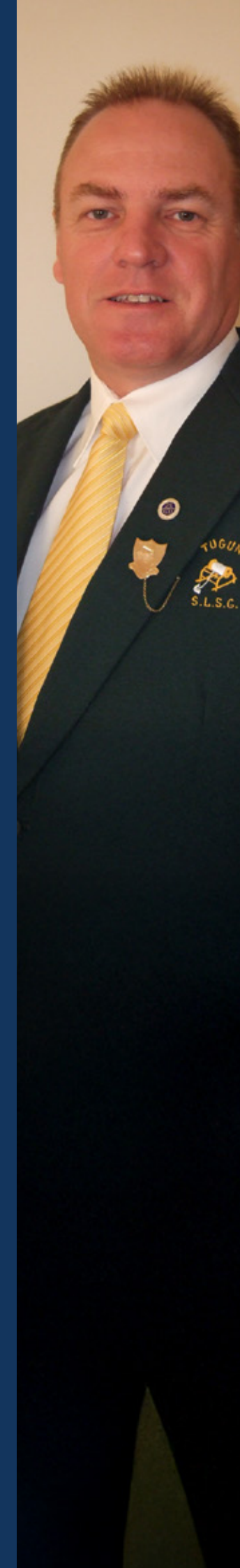
Receiving Life Membership with Surf Life Saving Australia is one of the highest honours a surf lifesaver can receive — a recognition of exceptional and sustained service. For Craig, it is both an acknowledgement of his past contributions and a motivator for future stewardship.

He remains passionate about guiding Tugun into its next century — recognising the importance of evolving to meet modern challenges while staying true to the core values of surf lifesaving: service, skill, and community spirit.

A True Tugun Legend

There's no doubt that Craig Williams embodies the very best of Tugun SLSC. His story is a reminder that surf life saving is about more than flags and patrol hours — it's about connection, commitment, and leaving the beach, the club, and the community better than you found them.

As Tugun looks ahead to its next 100 years, it does so standing on the shoulders of giants like Craig — lifesavers whose service, heart and vision have shaped the club's soul.



FROM SERVICE TO SURF: THE POWERFUL LINK BETWEEN MILITARY VETERANS AND SURF LIFE SAVING



At Dicky Beach, Patrol 4 took on a special meaning on ANZAC weekend as veterans within the club were invited to come together for a morning on the beach followed by a casual lunch at the clubhouse.

The turnout was fantastic, and it served as a powerful reminder of the deep connection between military service and Surf Life Saving.

WO2 Nathan Tolman, CSM (Retired), shared his personal journey from Defence to the surf:

"When I left Defence in 2022, I set out to seek that connection and completed my Bronze Medallion just prior to my separation from Army in 2021. Joining a surf club has honestly been one of the best things I've done since leaving the Army.

It gave me back a real sense of purpose, structure, and belonging — things I didn't even realise I was missing so much. Being part of a team again, working towards a shared goal, and serving the community, especially around the ocean, really helped with my identity after leaving Defence."

Both communities share a foundation of values in mateship, commitment,

courage and service to others. Whether it's responding to an emergency on the shoreline or in a remote location overseas, the mindset remains the same: look after your mates, step up when it matters, and always be ready.

Veterans bring with them not just experience, but a quiet confidence and calm under pressure that naturally translates to the surf environment. From patrols to training, their presence strengthens the club. At the same time, surf lifesaving offers them a renewed sense of purpose, connection, and community — something many veterans seek after leaving the Defence Force.

The success of the recent Patrol 4 gathering shows how valuable these shared experiences can be, and how Surf Life Saving can continue to grow by embracing and engaging our veteran members across Queensland. It's not just about giving back — it's about belonging, being part of a team again, and finding meaning in service on the sand.

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the veterans who joined us. Your contribution matters — and your example inspires others.





SHANE URBAN'S JOURNEY: BUILDING SAFER BEACHES AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Shane Urban has dedicated much of his life to surf lifesaving, shaping the safety of Noosa Shire beaches while fostering a strong sense of community. A long-time Coolum Beach resident, Shane's lifesaving journey began in 1978 as a nipper at Bribie Island Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC), and today, he serves as the SLS coordinator for the region. Shane fondly recalls childhood Sundays at Kings Beach and Happy Valley with his parents and brother, country music star Keith Urban (who is married to Nicole Kidman).

"The most vivid memory is spending regular Sunday mornings on a picnic blanket with Mum, Dad, and Keith under the casuarina trees at Kings Beach and Happy Valley after a car trek from Brisbane via the Big Pineapple,"

"Then being the first one in the car to see the Big Pineapple and getting first choice of one of the HUGE parfaits!"

A particularly defining experience was being rescued at Bulcock Beach after being caught on the wrong side of a fast-flowing outgoing tide.

"That may have been the spark that ignited my love of surf lifesaving," he said. "As a young pool swimmer and track runner, I saw nippers and lifesaving as a pathway to combine my love of both sports and spending time at the beach," Shane said.

His passion for the surf was reignited years later when his eldest child joined Coolum Beach Nippers. From that moment, his involvement deepened, spanning 21 years as an active member of Coolum Beach SLSC.

Shane's role involves supporting volunteer

lifesavers and ensuring the safety of swimmers across the Sunshine Coast, from Rainbow Beach to Redcliffe. He also works with Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) to engage volunteers and enhance lifesaving operations statewide.

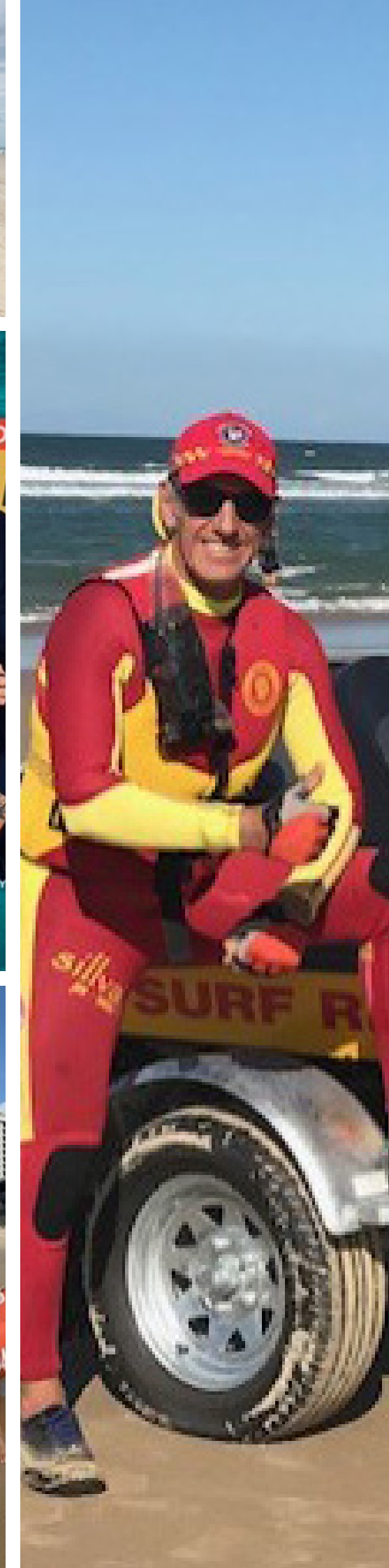
For Shane, the most rewarding aspect of his work is the ability to make tangible improvements in his community. This includes helping to facilitate improvements for the local community and the primary school through his involvement with the Coolum State School P&C, and the beach at Coolum through his involvement with the SLSC. One of his proudest moments was patrolling the beach alongside his children Riley and Jessica after they earned their patrol awards.

"I couldn't have been prouder," he said. Similarly, seeing his partner Madelin and her children Leo and Emily involved in the SLSC reinforced his belief in the power of community service. Another unforgettable moment came during a dramatic IRB rescue.

"I remember the dinner-plate-size eyes of the dad as he came into the boat, followed by the wave of relief knowing they were both safe," he recalled. "That sense of knowing you just made a critical change for the better is a flood of intrinsic reward that can't be explained."

For those looking to contribute to their community, Shane offers simple advice: "Decide what matters to you and look for those already championing the cause. Listen to good mentors and then wade in to help make a difference. Give back and be grateful. Have a strong work ethic and always strive for a positive attitude."

"It may not happen overnight, but the world needs quiet champions. It's not about you, it's about the result, but enjoy the journey."



A DECADE OF INCLUSION: CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF SEAHORSE NIPPERS AT NORTH BURLEIGH

Ten years ago, North Burleigh Surf Life Saving Club launched a pilot program that would go on to shape the lives of dozens of young people and their families. Inspired by an inclusive Nippers initiative at Noosa SLSC, several passionate members of North Burleigh saw an opportunity to bring something similar to their own community — and with plenty of heart and a year of behind-the-scenes work, the Seahorse Nippers program was born.



Debbie Hazelwood, one of the program's key founders, was instrumental in shaping those early days. Her vision and commitment helped turn a concept into a carefully designed model that received the Club's backing — and once that first pilot session ran, the response was overwhelmingly positive.

"What began as a small pilot has grown into something truly special," says Mel Vearing, a long-time volunteer and one of the program's driving forces over the past decade. "This milestone reminds us just how far we've come."

Originally designed to give children with disabilities the chance to enjoy the beach and learn basic surf skills at their own pace, Seahorse Nippers has evolved into so much more. Today, it's a structured, confidence-building program where participants develop water skills, build friendships, and experience the true spirit of surf lifesaving — with one-on-one support and modified equipment that ensures every child can participate safely and comfortably.

"We still run many of the same activities as the traditional Nippers program," says Mel, "but they're thoughtfully adapted to suit each child's abilities. The goal is always to create a fun, safe environment where everyone can thrive."

What makes Seahorse Nippers different isn't just what happens on the beach — it's the deep connections built between volunteers, families, and participants. Some children have been part of the program since day one, and Mel has seen first-hand how much it's meant to them.

"The impact is huge. The kids grow in confidence, they learn valuable beach safety skills, and they feel part of something. Their families feel supported too — they find community here."

The 10-year celebration brought the broader inclusive sports community together, including guests from the Gold Coast Titans Leagueability team and Gold Coast Recreation and Sport. "It was such an inspiring day," Mel reflects. "It showed how far we've come and how important it is to provide these kinds of opportunities. You could really feel the pride and the connection."

Looking ahead, Mel hopes to see the program continue to grow, reaching even more families and building on its strong foundations. "We want to keep improving the experience for every child, keep developing our volunteers and resources, and ensure this program remains sustainable into the future. I'd love for Seahorse Nippers to always be a shining example of what true inclusion looks like in surf lifesaving."

Here's to 10 incredible years — and to the many more waves of joy, progress and community spirit to come.

My daughter Marley has been coming for two seasons now and we really love all the volunteers and the effort they go to—even including the siblings is great. The kids love it, they have such a good time and are really well looked after. We can actually step back and relax a bit!"

- Angela, Seahorse Nippers Parent



BEHIND EVERY RESCUE THE ROLE OF THE: CTO IN SURF LIFE SAVING

In every Surf Life Saving Club across Queensland, there are heroes working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure our beaches are not only safe but that our members and lifesavers are equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond in any emergency.

But behind every skilled lifesaver is someone who trained them — and often, that someone is the Chief Training Officer (CTO).

At Rainbow Beach SLSC, that role is proudly held by Justin Schooth, a member whose journey is the very definition of grassroots commitment turned leadership.

Early Days in Surf Lifesaving

“I started like many as an enthusiastic nipper parent,” Justin shares, “then the rollercoaster kicked off — age manager, Bronze Medallion, IRB Crew and Driver, First Aid, Advanced CPR, then Patrol Captain, all within a few short years.”

His dedication saw him climb rapidly through both operational and administrative roles: Surf Sports Officer, Gear & Equipment Officer, and eventually, two years as Club President.

His whole family has come along for the ride.

“My wife Vicki rapidly ascended to the role of JAC, and I’ve had the privilege of training my three daughters to become lifesavers. My middle daughter Sophie even became a qualified lifeguard. After 15 years of service, Vicki and I were both bestowed life membership at the end of last season — an honour neither of us felt worthy of, given the giants of SLSQ that line our club’s life members wall.”

Transitioning into CTO

Six years ago, Justin stepped into the role of CTO — not because he sought it out, but because the club needed someone.

“Our previous CTO stepped down, and like many small clubs, there wasn’t a line of

volunteers for the job. The Club President tapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘you’re up.’ There was no decision to be made — I was it.”

BUT what exactly does a CTO do?

In many clubs, especially smaller ones, it’s not just coordinating training. It’s delivering it. “We have a very small training team — me and our club’s hard-working president, Shane Handy. So, I plan, organise, and deliver most of our training, whether that’s skills maintenance, aquatic rescue awards, powercraft, or emergency care. On top of that, I do a full patrol load as one of our Patrol Captains, usually 90 to 100+ hours per season.”

Justin is now Rainbow Beach’s longest-serving CTO, and his experience is both wide and hands-on.

“In my case, the CTO role is very operational. You need to be proficient in all the basic SLS awards — Bronze, IRB Crew and Driver, RWC, First Aid, Advanced CPR — not just for patrolling, but to deliver training. And because I’ve stayed on the beach doing the job, I can deliver quality training based on real-world, up-to-date experience. You just can’t do that from inside a ‘training bubble.’

What’s Required

To deliver training, CTOs must also hold a Certificate IV in Training and Assessment and be familiar with platforms like aXcelerate to navigate the Surf Life Saving training world. But technical skills aren’t enough.

“It helps to have great people skills and build networks within and outside of your club. I certainly couldn’t carry out this role successfully without the network of like-minded CTOs we have in the Sunshine Coast Branch — big shout out to Dana Craven — and the assistance of our branch and SLSQ training staff.”

The influence of a CTO goes beyond just course delivery.



“Most of the time, I’m the first contact our new members have with the club. If I can give them a great experience and deliver meaningful training, then we win. There’s nothing better than hearing that the training actually worked — or seeing a young member we trained go on to become a lifeguard, firefighter, paramedic, nurse, soldier, or police officer. We’ve helped launch so many career paths.”

Behind every capable patrol member, every composed emergency response, and every life saved, there’s someone who made sure they were ready. More often than not, that someone is the Chief Training Officer. Rainbow is lucky enough to have Justin Schooth — a dedicated mentor, passionate volunteer, and quiet force behind the next generation of lifesavers.



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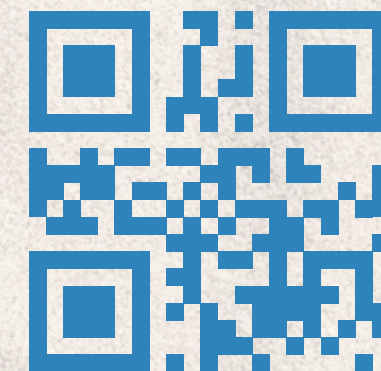
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NEW BEGINNINGS IN THE WATER: EMPOWERING CAIRNS' NEWEST AUSTRALIANS

In March this year, a group of students from Cairns TAFE's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) gathered beside the Cairns Lagoon. For many, it was their first time near the ocean. They listened intently as surf lifesavers spoke about safety signs, supervision, and stingers — words and warnings that could one day save a life.

What began as a simple awareness session quickly grew into something more: a bridge between cultures, a pathway to confidence, and a shining example of how surf lifesaving can empower entire communities — even far from the breaking surf.

Planting the Seed

Karen, Surf Life Saving Queensland's Membership and Community Awareness Coordinator for North Queensland, was there from the beginning.

"It started with a basic talk about the Lagoon's safety features," she said. "Just the essentials — where to find help, how to supervise kids, when the Lagoon opens."

But the students had questions. Lots of them.

"They wanted to know about crocodiles, stingers, what the flags mean, whether the ocean is always dangerous. It was clear they wanted — and needed — more than just the basics."

That curiosity led to a follow-up classroom session at Cairns TAFE using SLSQ's On the Same Wave program, designed specifically for culturally and linguistically diverse communities. From there, the students returned to the Lagoon — this time, not just to listen, but to learn hands-on.

Wading Into Confidence

For some, it was the first time they'd ever dipped a toe in the water.

"We had students who wouldn't go past the steps," Karen said. "But they were engaged, they watched everything, they asked questions. By the end, some were learning how to float using body boards or watching rescue demonstrations."

The session wasn't a swimming lesson — it was an invitation. An introduction to Queensland's outdoor lifestyle, to water safety, and to a new sense of possibility.

"We taught them how to use a board, how to throw a rescue rope, even how to signal for help," Karen said. "It was about giving them

knowledge and confidence — especially as parents."

Understanding the Risks

Many of the students came from landlocked countries or places without a beach-going culture. In North Queensland, where swimming can happen 12 months a year — in pools, rivers, creeks and oceans — that lack of familiarity can be dangerous.

"Knowing how to stay within your depth, how to safely enter and exit the water, how to find a safe beach using Beachsafe — it's life-changing knowledge," Karen said. "And because many of the AMEP students are parents, they're also thinking about how to protect their children."

Translated resources and videos in multiple languages were also shared, helping break down language barriers.

Positive Feedback, Real Impact

The students' feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Many said they felt more confident visiting the beach or the Lagoon. Others were surprised by how many safety features were available — and how welcoming the lifesaving community was.

"They were really grateful," Karen said. "We're hopeful we can do it again next term."

More Than a One-Off

While the TAFE partnership was a highlight, it wasn't an isolated event. The North Queensland team has a strong history of engaging with underrepresented communities.

Last year, they hosted students from Mutitjulu School in the Northern Territory — a remote Indigenous community near Uluru — for a surf skills program on Green Island. For many of the children, it was their first time in saltwater.

"They learned to wade, bodyboard, and dolphin dive," Karen said. "They were fearless — and absolutely loved it."

The team also ran a six-week surf skills course through the Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, giving a group of 12 young people vital aquatic knowledge and a taste of surf lifesaving.

Supported by Volunteers, Powered by Passion

Programs like these don't happen in isolation. Behind the scenes, dedicated volunteers, surf club members, and community partners play a vital role in bringing water safety education to life.

Karen wasn't alone in delivering the program — she was supported by her passionate Community Awareness (CA) team: Mia Buls, Debra Mullins, Hannah Bissett, and Anastasia Wynberg, who delivered an engaging Lifeguard presentation. Their knowledge, energy and connection with the students helped make the experience not only educational but memorable.

"One of our Cairns SLSC volunteers helped connect us with Mutitjulu School," Karen said. "That kind of local connection is what makes this work."

And the message to all participants is clear: there's a place for you in surf lifesaving.

"We always encourage them to consider joining a club," Karen added. "It's not just about learning to swim — it's about belonging, contributing, and becoming part of the community."

The Bigger Picture

For Karen, initiatives like this are about much more than water safety.

"We're here to support SLSQ's vision of zero preventable deaths in Queensland public waters. That means reaching out to every group, every family, every new Queenslanders. The earlier we can educate, the safer our communities become."

It's not just about throwing a rescue rope or understanding the flag colours — though those are vital skills. It's about giving people the confidence to enjoy their new home safely, and the knowledge to keep their loved ones safe too.

Looking Ahead

Karen hopes to secure funding to continue these sessions — and to expand them.

"We want these programs to remain free for students," she said. "Because every person who understands our waterways is one step closer to a safer Queensland."





AUSTRALIAN
SURF LIFE SAVING
CHAMPIONSHIPS

A CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE AGES

The 2025 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships will go down in history as one of the most thrilling, emotional, and record-breaking editions of the iconic event, as thousands flocked to North Kirra Beach to witness champions rise, legacies solidified, and future stars burst onto the scene. From historic performances to emotional retirements and photo finishes, this year's Aussies truly had it all.



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Raywood & Callaghan Crowned Carnival Standouts

Leading the charge for the next generation were Burleigh Heads Mowbray Park's Jasmine Raywood and Ethan Callaghan, named the Competitors of the Carnival after extraordinary individual campaigns.

Raywood, already making waves in the Shaw and Partners Iron Series and sprint kayaking, walked away with an astonishing six gold, two silver, and two bronze medals across U19 and Open events, proving she's a force to be reckoned with on multiple fronts.

"The ski race is my favourite," Raywood said, grinning after her tenth medal. "To win in these conditions, against girls who've been in the Iron Series already... it's just amazing."

Callaghan was equally dominant, bagging seven medals including three gold, and setting the tone early with a thrilling win in the U19 Male Board final.

"I'm not really good at sprint finishes," he laughed. "But today, I pulled one out of the bag."

Georgia Fitzsimmons Makes History - And Bows Out a Legend

Northcliffe's Georgia Fitzsimmons etched her name in Australian surf sports history, becoming the first Ironwoman to win four national Ironwoman titles—surpassing the legendary Karla Gilbert.

In what was her final competitive race, Fitzsimmons produced a textbook performance, leading from the start and riding a perfectly timed wave to gold.

"I'm just speechless," she said through tears. "To go out this way... four titles, and to finish on a wave like that—it was meant to be."

Her remarkable career not only cements

her as one of the sport's greats but leaves behind a legacy that will inspire generations of Ironwomen to come.

Northcliffe teammate Naomi Scott also made history, becoming the first woman to win all four individual Aussies titles – Board, Swim, Ski, and Ironwoman – with her board win completing the collection.

Ali Day: Still the King

34-year-old Ali Day proved why he's still at the top, claiming his fourth Ironman crown in dominant fashion. The Surfers Paradise star, fresh off a record 10th Coolangatta Gold title, was untouchable.

"To be mentioned with guys like Shannon Eckstein and Zane Holmes... that's really special," Day said. "And yes, I'll be back next year."

Olympians Dominate the Ski

The Open Men's Ski Final was an Olympic reunion, with Jackson Collins, Riley Fitzsimmons, and Jean van der Westhuyzen finishing 1-2-3 in a nail-biting photo finish.

"All three of us on the podium again—it's like a flashback to Paris," Collins said. "It shows just how powerful this surf lifesaving pathway really is."

A Week to Remember

From rising stars to seasoned legends, the 2025 Championships had it all—thrilling races, proud club colours, and that unmistakable surf club spirit. It was the kind of weekend that reminds you why surf lifesaving is more than just a sport; it's a community, a tradition, and a whole lot of fun.

And if what we saw this year is anything to go by, the future of our beaches isn't just in safe hands—it's in passionate, capable, and seriously impressive ones.

FULL THROTTLE: PREPARING FOR A BIG SEASON OF IRB RACING



When most people think of Surf Life Saving, they picture sunny beaches and the red-and-yellow flags. But out beyond the flags, the Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) plays a crucial role. Fast, agile, and built for tough conditions, IRBs are a key part of both our rescue operations and our competitive lifesaving sport.

First introduced to Australian beaches in the early 1970s, IRBs revolutionised surf rescue. Designed to operate in tricky surf conditions, these lightweight, high-speed boats allow lifesavers to reach swimmers in distress far quicker than ever before. In addition to their rescue role, IRBs have evolved into a fiercely competitive sport. IRB racing simulates real-life rescue scenarios at high speed, testing a team's skills, strategy, and nerves under pressure.

As the 2025 IRB season is approaching, crews across the country are gearing up for what promises to be another action-packed year.

We sat down with two key members of the Broadbeach IRB team: captain and competitor, Paul Ryan and coach Nathan Fife, to dive deeper into the factors behind their achievements and how their passion for both competition and lifesaving has shaped their remarkable performances.

A Family Club with a Competitive Edge

For coach Nathan Fife, the success of the Broadbeach team goes beyond just physical skill. "We're a proud family club where support, respect, and teamwork come first," he explains. "That foundation creates a positive environment where athletes of all levels feel encouraged to push themselves and grow."

What really sets Broadbeach apart from other clubs is the club's balance between competitiveness and support. "We train hard, hold each other to high standards, but we also back each other every step of the way. That sense of unity fuels our performance — we're not just racing for ourselves; we're racing for our teammates and for the Broadbeach name."

Refining Skills and Preparing for Every Challenge

This year, Broadbeach has focused on adapting to the latest rule changes in IRB racing. Nathan emphasizes, "We've spent time breaking down the new regulations and incorporating them into our training. It's all about ensuring smooth transitions and smarter racing." But it's not just about rules; their training also extends to increased

fitness levels and equipment optimization. "We've extended the duration and intensity of our fitness programs to build greater endurance and resilience across the team," he says. "IRB racing is demanding, and we want our athletes to be physically and mentally ready to perform under pressure."

Of course, when it comes to lifesaving, the skills honed on the racetrack translate directly to real-life situations. Nathan recalls a powerful example where the team's racing experience helped them navigate a major incident: "During a critical search and rescue operation, the team instinctively operated with precision, navigating the surf, managing the patient, and making rapid decisions under pressure. The seamless transition from racing to rescue was a testament to the real-world impact of our training."

A Strong Foundation, Built Over Time

Paul Ryan, a longstanding member and captain of the of Broadbeach team, has seen firsthand the growth of the club. "I've been part of the club since I was 8 years old," he reflects. "Back then, we were lucky to crack the top 10. Now, we've won the Ocean Roar point score three years in a row." Paul's personal journey mirrors the club's evolution, from a small, tight-knit

group to a force to be reckoned with on the competition circuit. "We're a small club — no pokies, no fancy restaurant — just heart and hard work. IRB racing means everything to us," he says proudly.

Mental and Physical Preparation

For Paul, mental preparation has always been a challenge in the high-pressure world of IRB racing. "Shaking off a bad race or a poor finish used to be hard," he admits. "But this season, I've pushed myself mentally harder than I ever have before." His focus on mental toughness has brought a significant shift in his mindset. "I truly believe in myself now, which is a huge change for me," he shares.

Physically, Paul's commitment has never been stronger. "I've never trained this hard for a season," he says, reflecting on the intense fitness sessions led by club trainer Chantel. "At first, I thought I might spew, but now I feel so ready, just excited to get to Round 1 and hear the gun go off."

Words of Wisdom for Rookies

For those just starting their IRB journey, Paul offers simple but powerful advice: focus on your own race.

"Don't get caught up in what's going on around you," he says.

"When I first started driving, I'd have a small fumble, hear other motors starting, and it would spiral into a large fumble. Or I'd look at who I was racing and try to guess where I'd place — before I'd even hit the line."

Letting go of that mindset was a turning point. Now, Paul races for himself, his crew, and his team — and urges new racers to back themselves and lean on the belief others have in them.

"Just give it everything you've got. That's all anyone can ask."

The Future of Broadbeach IRB Racing

As the sport continues to evolve, Broadbeach's commitment to its athletes like Paul remains constant. Nathan emphasizes the importance of keeping up with the changes in equipment, safety protocols, and race formats. "Our coaching team is always collaborating to keep our training fresh and aligned with the latest developments in the sport," he says. But beyond the physical and tactical aspects, Broadbeach is also focused on developing the next generation of lifesavers and leaders. "We invest in our younger members, giving them time in the boat, meaningful support, and the confidence to grow," says Nathan. "It's about setting the club up for long-term success."

The future of IRB racing looks brighter than ever, with teams like Broadbeach honouring teamwork, resilience, and community. With their eyes on the next competition and beyond, Paul, Nathan, and the Broadbeach IRB team are a testament to the power of dedication, both on and off the water.

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Queensland



BUILDING LIFESAVING SKILLS AND STRONGER CONNECTIONS AT ABERGOWRIE CAMP

Earlier this month, Forrest Beach SLSC proudly hosted a dedicated group of five students and two chaperones from St Teresa's College, Abergowrie, for an intensive five-day lifesaving camp. All five students are current Bronze Medallion holders and patrolling members of Forrest Beach SLSC, and this camp provided them with a unique opportunity to further develop their skills and deepen their connection to the movement.



The goal of the camp was to provide flexible, hands-on training opportunities for students from a boarding school environment—particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Over the course of the camp, the group achieved an incredible **40 awards** across vital lifesaving areas, including IRB Crew and Drivers qualifications, CPR, First Aid, Advanced Resuscitation Techniques, Marine Stinger Management, and Drone Operator certificates.

The students wasted no time after arriving on Friday afternoon, jumping straight into drone and IRB theory. Across the weekend and into the week, they tackled a packed schedule of theory sessions, practical training, and assessments. Highlights included IRB racing sessions—where the students' natural ability and enthusiasm shone—and engaging bleeding control scenarios during their first aid training.

One standout achievement was **Evandah Bann** earning his **Silver Medallion IRB Drivers Award**. As a natural leader within the

group—and the newly crowned Australian U19 Beach Sprint Champion—Evandah's success is sure to inspire his peers to continue progressing in lifesaving.

Another memorable moment was seeing the students' drone skills in action. Thanks to their quick reflexes and hand-eye coordination (honed, they admitted, through video games at boarding school), the group took to operating drones with ease and confidence.

This camp also marks another positive step in the growing relationship between **Forrest Beach SLSC and St Teresa's College**. With ongoing support and collaboration, we hope to create even more opportunities for students to get involved in the movement and pursue lifesaving and surf sports pathways.

We are incredibly proud of the boys' efforts, the knowledge they gained, and the spirit they brought to the camp. They embraced every challenge with enthusiasm and left with skills that will not only benefit them but also their communities for years to come.



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



MORE THAN THE BEACH: YOUNG MEMBERS HELPING TO SHAPE THE FUTURE OF SURF LIFE SAVING

When people think of surf life saving, they often picture the iconic red and yellow on the sand, IRBs charging through surf, or nippers racing along the shore. But what happens behind the scenes—at committee meetings, in strategic discussions, and through member-led initiatives—is just as vital to the future of the movement. And increasingly, it's young people who are stepping into those roles.

Across Australia, young voices remain underrepresented in decision-making. Even the Australian Government acknowledges this in its Engage! A strategy to include young people in the decisions we make, launched in March 2024. The strategy clearly states that while young people are passionate, active, and informed, they are too often excluded from key conversations. It sets out a commitment to reversing this by creating structured, genuine opportunities for youth to contribute to decision-making and policy development.

At Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ), efforts to include young members in shaping the future are already underway.

Will Dowd and Jesse Witt are two young lifesavers proving that leadership doesn't just happen on the sand. Both serve on SLSQ's Membership Services Committee—Will focuses on member retention, while Jesse represents youth across the state.

For Will, getting involved took a little encouragement.

"I was nervous at first," he says. "You hear 'committee' and think it's only for people with years of experience. But I was really passionate about member retention and making sure people felt supported, so I put my hand up."

Since joining, Will has had opportunities he didn't expect—like attending the Queensland Volunteering Conference, where he learned from other community organisations about how to engage and retain volunteers.

Jesse Witt, who is based at Etty Bay SLSC in Far North Queensland, joined the committee

to ensure regional voices were heard.

"Being regional, it can feel like things happen without you," Jesse says. "I wanted to represent clubs like mine and show that we've got great ideas too."

A valuable part of the committee's work is visiting clubs around the state to meet members, understand local challenges, and see club life in action.

"It's one of the best parts," Jesse adds. "Seeing firsthand what's working, what support clubs need, and connecting with members in their own environment makes a huge difference."

Behind the scenes, committee work involves more than just meetings. Members are expected to read pre-meeting briefing packs, participate in discussions, and collaborate with SLSQ staff on projects and planning.

"There's definitely a learning curve," Will admits. "But like anything in surf life saving, you learn by doing. We're supported along the way."

"We're encouraged to give input, and that input is actually taken seriously," Jesse says. "It's not just a seat at the table—it's a voice that's heard."

For young people thinking about taking on one of these roles, the fear of not being experienced enough can be a barrier. But both Will and Jesse are quick to point out that, like patrolling or jumping into an IRB for the first time, the skills come with time.

"You might feel like an imposter at first," Jesse says, "but you're not alone. Just like in patrol teams, you've got people around you who want you to succeed."

Kirstin Phillips, SLSQ's State Membership Officer, says youth representation is not only important—it's essential.

"Young people are vital to the future of surf life saving," Kirstin says. "It's not just about age or experience—it's about passion and wanting to make a difference. We all bring something

unique to the table, and we learn from each other.”

Kirstin believes the most effective committees are those that include a blend of voices and experiences. “When we combine fresh ideas with deep knowledge, we get the best of both worlds.”

Will and Jesse both encourage others to step forward.

“If you’re thinking about it—just go for it,” Will says. “You don’t have to have all the answers. You just need the passion to contribute.”

“There’s a place for everyone in surf life saving,” Jesse adds. “On the beach and beyond it.”

Whether it’s sitting on a committee, helping shape youth programs, or representing your region, there are many ways to lead and make a difference. The future of surf life saving isn’t just being patrolled—it’s being built, one voice at a time.



x



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The black range is available to the general public to purchase. The red and yellow range is approved by SLSA for use on patrol, and is exclusive to Surf Life Saving Members.

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SHAPING

TOMORROW'S

LIFESAVERS:

INSIDE THE LIFESAVING
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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Each year, Surf Life Saving Queensland's Lifesaving Development Program brings together some of the brightest and most passionate young members from across the state, offering them an intensive, hands-on learning experience that fast-tracks their lifesaving skills and deepens their commitment to the movement.

Held this year at Marcoola SLSC, the week-long live-in camp is more than just a training opportunity—it's a rite of passage for many emerging leaders in lifesaving.

"This is a flagship program that blends practical learning, leadership development, and teamwork," says Zoe Breitreutz, SLSQ's Member Development Manager. "It's designed for 16 to 20-year-old patrolling members who are ready to step up, challenge themselves, and develop into future club and community leaders."

Over the week, participants are immersed in a diverse and demanding schedule. From sunrise scenarios and advanced IRB drills to rescue simulations, the camp covers a broad spectrum of lifesaving operations and skillsets. Importantly, participants earn new qualifications, enhance their existing skills, and walk away with lifelong friendships.

"The camp is deliberately structured to push participants outside their comfort zones—in a safe and supportive way," Zoe explains. "They don't just learn technical skills; they learn how to think critically in high-pressure situations, how to communicate as part of a team, and how to mentor others. These are all attributes that strengthen our clubs from the inside out."

The value of this kind of practical training was underscored by SLSQ CEO Dave Whimpey, who visited the camp during a live simulation exercise.

"Our emerging lifesaving leaders—some of the State's most talented youth—took part in a realistic situational training exercise today at Marcoola SLSC. Supported by an incredible team of facilitators and camp supervisors, this type of training is critical. It builds confidence, sharpens skills, and prepares our members for real-life emergencies. Thank you to everyone who helped deliver such an important experience."

The immersive simulations are a standout feature of the camp, with scenarios ranging from basic first aid to high-pressure rescue operations. This realism gives participants a genuine sense of what they may face on patrol and ensures they leave more confident and capable.

One participant shared, "It's a great hands-on way to gain new qualifications to take back to your club so that you can really help out. We spend a week doing a lot of practice-based learning and upskilling. For some, it's the first time in the IRB; for others, it's about building on existing experience."

Another reflected on the IRB training: "We learn how to set up the boats and how to be the driver. It's a completely different perspective when you're in control—not something you get when you're just in the water."

The camp's diversity of experience levels is part of its strength. Participants with different



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backgrounds learn from each other as much as they do from the facilitators.

“Not to give away too much,” said one leader with a grin, “but some of the practical stuff we do ranges from simple stubbed toes to full-on rescue simulations. It makes it feel more lifelike.”

Beyond the technical learning, many participants say it’s the camaraderie and shared purpose that makes the experience so powerful.

“I really enjoyed meeting new people and learning new skills that I can bring back to patrol. It’s those future lifesavers that I’m really passionate about. You get so much experience from this and get to work with so many amazing people.”

Zoe agrees that the ripple effect of the camp is felt long after it ends.

“These young people go back to their clubs with new skills, more confidence, and a real drive to give back. Many go on to become trainers, club officers, or even return to the camp as facilitators. It’s one of the ways we’re building a strong pipeline of leadership within lifesaving.”

Applications for the next Lifesaving Development Program will open later this year, and interested members are encouraged to speak with their clubs about nominating.

“We’re looking for passionate, committed young lifesavers who are ready to challenge themselves,” Zoe says. “This camp can change the trajectory of their lifesaving journey—and they’ll have a lot of fun along the way.”



LIFESAVING MEMBER OF THE MONTH

February Winner

Kimberley Humphreys

Coolum Beach Surf Life Saving Club

We’re proud to celebrate **Kimberley Humphreys** as our Lifesaving Member of the Month!

Now in her third season with Coolum Beach SLSC, Kimberley has made an incredible impact in a short time. In her first year alone, she achieved her **Bronze Medallion, First Aid certification, and Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (ART) qualification** — a testament to her determination and drive.

But Kimberley hasn’t stopped there. She’s actively involved as a **Surf Sports Competitor**, currently volunteers as her club’s **First Aid Officer**, and supports member development as an **endorsed delegate** for the training team.

Her positive attitude, energy, and consistent willingness to step up make her a standout example of the surf lifesaving spirit. Whether she’s on the beach, in the clubhouse, or behind the scenes, Kimberley is always giving her best — and we’re so lucky to have her as part of the lifesaving family.

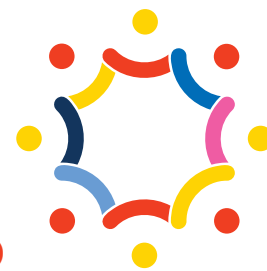
Congratulations, Kimberley, and thank you for all that you do!



Know someone like Kimberley who deserves to be recognised?

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The Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ)

Conference is back—and it's set to be one of the most energising and insightful weekends of the year for club leaders, volunteers, and members across the state.

Whether you're a club president, administrator, youth leader, assessor, or someone who simply wants to help take your club forward, the **SLSQ Conference** offers a rare and valuable opportunity to connect, learn, and be inspired by others in the movement.

Held over one action-packed weekend, the conference brings together lifesavers and surf club leaders from all corners of Queensland for a program that blends big-picture thinking with practical, real-world skills.

"We've had fantastic conferences in the past, and we're really looking to emulate that success again this year," says Zoe Bickerstaffe, SLSQ's Membership Manager. "Our goal is to make sure everyone leaves feeling inspired and equipped with new ideas to take back to their clubs."

From lifesaving operations and education to governance, grants, and youth engagement, the conference features multiple streams so participants can choose the sessions most relevant to their interests and roles. Whether you're chasing funding opportunities or looking to upskill your patrol teams, there's something for everyone.

"The sessions are practical and tailored," Zoe explains. "It's about giving our members the tools they need to succeed—whether you're running the books or training the next group of IRB drivers. Every person at the club matters, and the conference reflects that."

The weekend kicks off with a Friday night networking event—a relaxed chance to meet fellow club leaders, share experiences, and build connections that last long after the conference ends.

The Saturday and Sunday program features a packed schedule of engaging

sessions across a range of themed streams—from lifesaving and education to club operations and member engagement. One of the highlights will be our headline keynote address from a well-known Australian personality, guaranteed to bring energy, inspiration, and a few laughs.

And importantly—it's not just for the long-timers. There are dedicated sessions and opportunities for youth members, first-time attendees, and emerging leaders looking to grow their involvement.

"We want everyone to feel welcome," says Zoe.

"Whether you're a seasoned club president or a young member just starting out, there's value for you here. It's a rare opportunity to come together, learn together, and build something better for the future of lifesaving."

To make attendance even easier, SLSQ has secured special accommodation rates for delegates, helping reduce the cost of the weekend. In addition, clubs can apply for funding support through the SLSQ Sustainability Grant, which covers flights and conference tickets for up to five people per club. This is a fantastic opportunity to send a small team from your club and bring those learnings home.

"It's more than just a weekend of workshops—it's about coming together as one lifesaving community, sharing ideas, and building stronger clubs across Queensland," says Zoe.

If you're passionate about the future of your club, keen to grow your knowledge, or just want to connect with other people who share your love of lifesaving—this is your moment.

Don't miss the chance to be part of it. Talk to your club, gather your team, and make plans to attend. We'll see you there.

HOW THE SLS FOUNDATION IS BACKING CLUBS AND SAVING LIVES



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At the heart of every rescue, every beach patrol, and every training session is the unwavering support of Surf Life Saving volunteers. But behind the scenes, helping to keep that vital work going, is the Surf Life Saving fundraising business unit – the team formerly known as the Surf Life Saving Foundation.

They're the ones driving national fundraising efforts to ensure that our Clubs, volunteers, and Members have the equipment, training, and support they need to keep our beaches safe.

From charitable lotteries and donations to grants, the fundraising business unit ensures funds get where they're needed most. And that means more rescue boards, more training opportunities, stronger patrols, and safer communities.

So, what exactly does the fundraising business unit do for our Clubs?

The team coordinates national fundraising programs including Surf Life Saving Lotteries, a Grant Seeking Unit (GSU), and various philanthropic initiatives. Money raised through these programs is

distributed to state and territory centres like Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ), which then flows on to Clubs across the country.

Over the past three years alone, more than \$19.8 million has been distributed from fundraising efforts – and that's just one part of the story. Through the GSU, an additional \$25 million in grants has been secured for lifesaving entities nationwide.

That funding goes towards:

- Rescue equipment and gear
- CPR, first aid and Nipper training
- Community surf safety campaigns
- Aquatic safety research and development
- Support services like aerial patrols and communications

Support with grant applications

The Grant Seeking Unit (GSU) is one of the most practical and hands-on services for Clubs. They research funding opportunities, prepare and lodge grant applications on behalf of SLSCs, Branches and other entities.

The goal? Take the pressure off volunteers and secure funding for essential items like rescue boards, IRBs, youth development, inclusion programs and even capital works projects.

To find out more, Clubs can visit:

Grant Seeking Unit.

Lottery fundraising – made easy for Clubs

The fundraising business unit also offers an easy fundraising opportunity through Surf Life Saving Lotteries. Every Club can have their own customisable landing page to promote online lottery ticket sales. And for every ticket sold through that page, 50% of the ticket price goes straight back to the Club.

The program is designed to be low-effort, with webpages built and managed by the fundraising team. SLSCs just need to promote it to their members and communities through emails, newsletters, social media, and supporters' clubs.

"Alexandra Headland SLSC jumped on board early, and to date they've raised more than \$10,100 for their youth development

programs," said Kym Richardson, Community Fundraising Manager. "It's a great example of how Clubs can make this work for them."

Leave a legacy, honour a life, or run your own fundraiser

Another growing avenue of support is Surf Life Legacy – a bequest program allowing Members and supporters to leave a gift in their Will to their chosen Club. These donations go directly to the nominated SLSC, and SLSA even offers free online Will-writing tools for members.

And for those wanting to fundraise in memory of a loved one, personalised in-memoriam donation pages can be set up with funds directed straight to the chosen Club.

Keen to do something more hands-on? Anyone can run their own online fundraiser through <https://fundraise-for-surf.raisely.com/>.

Making a difference on the ground

Behind every funding figure is a real

story. At Forrest Beach SLSC in North Queensland, support from the GSU helped the Club send their U17 and U19 Beach Teams to major competitions across the country.

“A small club in North Queensland would be unable to support member travel of this extent without significant grant support,”

said Helen Stanton from Forrest Beach.

“We thank the GSU for their extraordinary service and their ability to connect with the aspirations of the projects they enable.”

Looking ahead - more support, less admin

Coming soon is a lottery subscription program, where supporters can sign up to

never miss a draw. Clubs will benefit from a trailing commission for the life of any subscribers who sign up via their Club's link – meaning ongoing income, without the admin.

The fundraising business unit also works hard to ensure they don't compete with local Club fundraising. Clubs can request exclusion periods for local events, and SLSA is even launching webpages to help the public identify legitimate fundraising teams.

Want to help?

[Donate Here](#)

[Buy lottery tickets](#)

Join or promote your Club's lottery fundraising page

[Connect with the GSU for help with grants](#)

For any questions or support, reach out to the fundraising team at **foundation@slsfoundation.com.au** or phone **1800 642 925**.

Together, we can keep saving lives and supporting the volunteers who make it all possible.



RIP CURRENT DEATHS STILL A CONCERN

Despite years of education and awareness campaigns, rip currents continue to claim lives on Australian beaches, with a particular risk for young men swimming at unpatrolled beaches—a trend still reflected in the latest national research.

A recently published long-term study by UNSW Sydney and Surf Life Saving Australia, analysing 20 years of data (2004–2023), found **407 rip current-related drowning deaths** across Australia. The majority of these tragic incidents occurred in **regional or remote areas (59%)**, with **85% of victims being male** and **38% aged between 20 and 34**.

For Surf Life Saving Queensland members, especially those patrolling in regional and remote communities, these findings hit close to home.

“Queensland has some of the most stunning—but also unpredictable—coastlines in the country,” says SLSQ Membership Manager Zoe Bickerstaffe. “This research reinforces how vital our work is, particularly in areas where beaches aren’t regularly patrolled. Our presence can mean the difference between life and death.”

Some progress—but the challenge remains

Encouragingly, the study showed a **small decline (18%) in male drowning deaths over the 20-year period**, attributed to more targeted messaging, including campaigns like slsa’s ‘think line’ and improved public education around spotting and avoiding rips.

However, the **overall number of rip current drowning deaths has not significantly decreased**, indicating there is still **much more work to do—particularly in reaching those who continue to swim outside the flags**.

Bystander tragedies

One of the most confronting statistics from the study is that over **15% of rip-related drowning deaths involved bystanders**, often family members, who drowned while trying to save someone else.

Dr Rob Brander, also known as “dr Rip” and a co-author of the study, emphasises the need for caution—even when instinct says otherwise.

“Even if it’s your own child in the water, you need to take a few seconds to assess the situation,” he says. “Call for help, look for a floatation device, and avoid rushing in unprepared. Panic leads to exhaustion, and often, a second tragedy.”

Prevention starts with education

While Australia’s drowning rate is lower than many countries due to our strong lifesaving network, the research reinforces the **importance of continued education**, particularly in surf safety and swimming proficiency for children and culturally diverse communities.

“We need to keep pushing beach safety messages out to new and at-risk audiences,” says Zoe. “This includes school programs, regional engagement, and working closely with multicultural communities who may be unfamiliar with beach environments.”

With **only 6% of Australia’s 11,000+ beaches patrolled during summer**, the dangers of unpatrolled swimming are clear. SLSQ is committed to continuing its proactive education, community outreach, and training efforts, but we also rely on every member—lifesaver or not—to help share these messages.

What you can do as a Queensland lifesaver



Educate your community:

Talk to beachgoers, run school and club presentations, and promote swim between the flags messaging.



Engage young men:

Use relatable stories and language to connect with this high-risk group—often confident swimmers but inexperienced in surf conditions.



Support multicultural inclusion:

Encourage local engagement, simplify safety messaging, and ensure beach education is accessible to all.

Lead by example:

Demonstrate safe beach behaviours in and out of uniform. Your influence matters.

Every rescue counts

While 407 lives were tragically lost to rip currents during the study period, **over 10,000 people were saved**, either by rescuers or through their own efforts. This includes **more than 2,400 rescued by others**—many of whom owe their lives to trained lifesavers like you.

Let's keep working together to bring those fatality numbers down, support safer decisions, and ensure **no more lives are lost to something we can help prevent**.

Your patrols, your presence, and your voice make a difference—every single day.





AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS LIFEBLOOD

THE LIFESAVING POWER OF BLOOD DONATION

Every day across Australia, thousands of people rely on donated blood for a second chance at life. Whether it's for cancer treatment, surgery, childbirth, or a road trauma, these moments of need are met only through the selfless generosity of everyday Australians who roll up their sleeves to give. Blood donation is one of the simplest ways to save lives — and for members of Surf Life Saving, it's a natural extension of the life-saving ethos that defines our movement.

Driving Australia's life-saving blood and biological donations is Lifeblood, a division of the Australian Red Cross dedicated to turning generous acts into life-changing outcomes. As Belinda Smetioukh, Media Manager at Lifeblood, explains:

"We're proud to be a world-leading health organisation, providing one of the world's safest supplies of blood, plasma, and other biological product donations, including breast milk and faecal microbiota for transplant. Our purpose is life-giving donations for life-changing outcomes."

And those outcomes are happening on a staggering scale. Currently, Australia needs around 33,000 blood donations every week — that's more than 1.7 million donations every year — to keep up with demand. And while one in three Australians will need blood or blood products in their lifetime, only one in 30 currently donates.

It's a powerful statistic that highlights both the need — and the opportunity to help.

One Donation, Three Lives

Just one blood donation can save up to three lives. It's a small effort with a massive impact. Donated blood is used in countless scenarios — from emergency care to cancer treatment — giving recipients more time with their families, more moments to cherish, and often, a second chance at life.

Lifeblood has an entire collection of inspiring stories from recipients whose lives were saved thanks to the kindness of strangers. You can explore those powerful accounts [here](#).

Surf Lifesavers: Ready to Save, On and Off the Beach

At its core, Surf Life Saving is about volunteering to protect and save lives. For Belinda, the connection to blood donation is clear:

"Blood donation is a natural extension of the spirit behind Surf Life Saving. Just like surf lifesavers volunteer to patrol beaches and rescue people in danger, blood donors step up to help strangers in critical need, often without ever knowing who they're helping. Both acts are selfless, community-minded, and vital — they're about being ready to make a difference when it matters most."

One Hour, Three Lives — Extend Your Impact

For those already committed to patrols and beach safety, giving blood offers a new way to extend that commitment.

"A blood donation is needed every 18 seconds. By donating, you're embodying the same spirit that drives you to patrol — it's about being there for others when they need you most," Belinda says.

Breaking Down the Barriers

But what stops people from donating? Belinda points to three common reasons:

- Fear of needles: Many first-timers say it's far easier than they imagined — and Lifeblood's trained professionals make the process as smooth and comfortable as possible.
- Time constraints: A full donation visit takes about an hour, and the donation itself is just 10 minutes. In that time, you could help save three lives.
- Lack of awareness: Many people simply don't realise how essential blood donations are — or how frequently they're needed.

The Takeaway: You Can Save Lives

If there's one message Belinda hopes readers take away, it's:

"Giving blood is one of the simplest, most powerful ways you can save lives — in just an hour, you could give someone more time with their family, their friends, and their future. It's a small act that creates a lifetime of impact."

So next time you're looking for a way to make a difference — whether you're on patrol or not — consider booking in for a donation. Your blood could be the reason someone gets to see another sunrise, hold a loved one again, or simply live.

Because lifesaving doesn't end on the shore.



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

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