

From the President



January 2012

From left to right: John Restuccia, Tony Haven, Richie Lytham & Dick Bignold



Welcome

Welcome to 2012. While it's hard to believe it's actually summer at the moment, it appears most clubs are working overtime to protect beachgoers and holiday makers. Despite our best efforts, there have been five coastal drownings since Christmas Eve, a real tragedy and a sad reminder of the dangers of swimming at unpatrolled locations.

Tony Haven
President, SLSNSW

Editor's Note

We would like to congratulate President Tony Haven on receiving an Outstanding Community Service Award from Warringah Council as part of their Australia Day Citizenship celebrations.

This is a well deserved recognition of Tony's contribution to Surf Life Saving over many years.

Spike in rescues

Across the board, volunteers have performed a huge number of rescues and preventative actions over the holiday period. Christmas/New Year break coincided with more than a week of dangerous surf – a treacherous combination which saw our volunteers on high alert. More than 2600 rescues have been recorded since Christmas Eve – 300 more than the same period last year.

I want to personally thank all clubs, support operations and members for their vigilance

13SURF Update

The huge workload over Christmas/New Year certainly tested the capacity of the new State Operations Centre and both the paid staff and volunteers manning the Surfcom and the 13SURF networks did a tremendous job. 13SURF callouts were up substantially, with a total of 100 calls for assistance received between 12 December 2011 and 27 January 2012. All our State and Branch Duty Officers should be congratulated for their rapid responses to callouts, averting many potentially tragic incidents.

and sacrifice of time away from their families over the Christmas break. On peak days on some busy city beaches, lifesavers were recording upwards of 60 rescues a day – an extraordinary result. Many patrol teams also put in extra hours, extending patrols into the early evening on beaches packed with thousands of swimmers.



The success of the 13SURF system continues to grow with Surf Life Saving NSW recently being presented with a National SAR award, recognising the contribution the system is making in preventing drownings.

Emergency Services media partnerships



Over the summer period we have forged partnerships with both NSW Police and Ambulance to conduct joint public awareness campaigns in the media. SLSNSW and Police launched the Play Safe, Stay Safe campaign prior to Christmas, to encourage people to take care around the water. A big spike in near drownings and rescues brought us together with NSW Ambulance in a media push to alert the public to potential drowning risks. We also worked with the SES to highlight the dangers and precautions to take in the event of a Tsunami. We'll continue to nurture these relationships with the aim of cementing Surf Life Saving into the Emergency Services space.

Blackspot funding

We are currently finalising several submissions for funding under the NSW Government's \$2million program targeting blackspots. Our main focus for funding is around uniform Surf Education initiatives and Coastal Risk Assessment programs.

Australia Day incidents

Bad weather throughout most of the state on Australia Day meant that beach attendances were well down on what is traditionally one of the busiest days of the year for volunteers. Despite this, patrol teams still clocked up almost 90 rescues and the Emergency Response System was tasked to respond to six incidents throughout the state.



Image courtesy Soul Arch

2012 Allphones NSW Championships

Excitement is building for the State Champs, despite the ever-changing beach conditions at Kingscliff. Continual erosion has taken its toll and conducting a successful championships is going to require some additional logistics support and a patient attitude from everyone, including competitors and officials. The Surf Sports team has just returned from

a final site visit and is reporting that more of the beach has been washed away in this week's torrential rain. I'm assured that contingency plans in place will ensure competition will go ahead and Tweed council is very supportive and will do what it can to help make the event a success.



Image: Reyne, Coffs Harbour SLSC. Winner U8 Flags

Country Champs success

South West Rocks SLSC managed to pull off yet another hugely successful Stramit Country Championships recently and it's great that we're back there next year for four in a row. Rod McDonagh and his team must almost be capable of running this event in their sleep now, a factor the State Championships venue selection panel will no doubt take into account in their assessment of the SWR host nomination for 2013-15. Congratulations to all the competitors and to the Byron Bay team for another big win in the overall pointscore.

State venue selection

The panel has now visited each of the bid venues for State Champs 2013-15, meeting with clubs, council representatives, chambers of commerce and assessing beach conditions and facilities in each location. A decision will be announced at the State Titles.



Surf club grants

Clubs who have applied for funding in for the Surf Club Facility Program will be contacted as soon as we receive notification from the Department. We have been told this should be around the end of February.

Virgin Australia Partnership

We have just announced Virgin Australia as the official airline of Surf Life Saving. The airline will be airing in-flight surf safety promotions and advertising to domestic and international travellers with the aim of preventing drownings. A rebate scheme which will reduce the cost of travel to the organisation is also in the pipeline.

Interstate Champions

What a great effort from our State team winning back the Alan Whelpton AO trophy and totally dominating the Interstate Championships last weekend in Sydney. The team won on all fronts, in the pool, on the beach and in the surf.

It was a great reward for a whole of team effort, including the coaches and managers.



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