

SurfLIFE

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SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES



Flood Relief and a Major Rescue for Lifesavers

Surf clubs and volunteers didn't hesitate to answer the call to assist with flood relief efforts when parts of NSW were battered by storms and rivers exceeded the major flood levels with an intensity that had not been seen in a generation.

Over an 8-day period, Surf Life Saving worked alongside other emergency services to perform evacuations and assist with getting critical supplies to stranded residents. In summary:

- › 49 SLS services responded
- › 164 volunteers responded (to both operations and rescues)
- › SLSNSW State Operations Centre (SOC) was open extended hours
- › SOC staff increased by 30% and a dedicated Flood Liaison Officer was rostered on
- › Multiple assets were tasked, including Duty Officers/Fwd Commander, Liaison Officer Helicopter, all terrain vehicles, powercraft, inflatable rescue boats and admin support
- › Tasking included SES Liaison, aircraft coordination, evacuation, flood rescue, essential services transport, re-supply and damage assessment
- › Operations were conducted from 19 March to 27 March
- › Assisted Western Sydney Area, Mid North Coast Port Macquarie-Hastings Region, Lower North Coast
- › Strike Teams launched for out of area taskings from Sydney, Far North Coast, Sydney Northern Beaches and Central Coast clubs
- › Volunteers and paid staff worked together (UAV Service, Australian Lifeguard Service and SLSNSW Clubs/Support Operations volunteers)

A brave rescue in extremely hazardous conditions that potentially saved the lives of five people during the floods in March has been awarded SLSNSW Rescue of the Month.

On 23 March 2021, volunteer surf lifesavers Richard Nicholas and Courtney Date from Bondi Surf Bathers Life Saving Club were tasked to the Colo River in response to the evacuation orders. Their inflatable rescue boat (IRB) was responding along with Marine Rescue NSW and SES vessels.

inside the upturned boat.

Hearing the distress call “rescue, rescue, rescue” over the radio, SES volunteers and the Bondi SBLSC IRB crewed by Richard Nicholas and Courtney Date raced to the location on the river to assist. For Courtney, his first time responding to a real-life emergency would catch him off guard.

“We saw the upturned boat with the two guys just sitting on top of it. They looked fine, it wasn’t until we got to them that it became a bit more serious pretty quickly,” said Courtney Date.

Courtney and the SES volunteer entered the water. “We dived under the boat a couple of times, it was pitch black, you couldn’t see anything. After the second time, I definitely thought, I can’t do that again,” said Courtney.

The pair made numerous attempts to enter the upturned hull by diving under the black water, while the boat continued to be washed downstream. The two adult evacuees removed their lifejackets and managed to get out from under the submerged boat.

“The father of the children was screaming, ‘save my kids’ as I pulled him in to the boat,” said Richard. “Once I had them both in the boat, it was difficult keeping the IRB under control, with both parents panicking.”

The rescuers eventually managed to reach inside the hull and pulled one of the trapped children out by the legs. “It was an incredible feat by Courtney and Max to pull someone down under the water, and then be able to pull them free of the boat,” said Richard.

The second child was then pushed down into the water by the remaining Marine Rescue crew member trapped inside as Courtney pulled the child out from underneath the submerged hull. He managed to swim out from under the hull while the two children were hauled into rescue boats.

The success of the rescue in the extremely hazardous and difficult conditions came down to the swift, decisive and courageous actions of Courtney Date and Richard Nicholas’ ability to safely control the IRB in the fast-moving flood waters.

“Working with the SES guys was great, they are very organised, very strategic in the way they work. We tend to be more reactive, if something happens in the water we are used to running out and fixing it,” said Courtney.

Without Courtney and Richard’s skills and bravery and their ability to work together with their emergency services counterparts, this incident may well have resulted in multiple fatalities.

“My initial thought was, I really don’t want to find five people dead today.”

The weather was poor with heavy rain and deteriorating visibility. The rivers were in full flood with the swift water running dangerously fast. Hazardous debris including trees downed power poles and other large items such as cars added to the degree of difficulty for rescue crews.

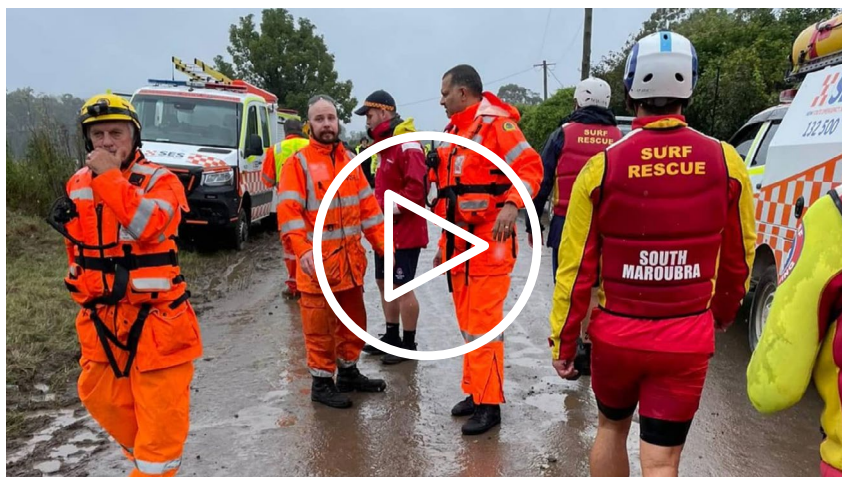
At around 1pm, a Marine Rescue NSW vessel and its crew of three were evacuating two adults and two small children when it became caught on a cable that pulled the vessel onto its side in the swift water, quickly filling it with water and capsizing the boat. Two crew members were thrown into the water and managed to hold onto the hull. The other crew member and the four evacuees remained trapped

“To tell the truth, my initial thought was, I really don’t want to find five people dead today.”

The SES crew used their craft to try and prevent the Marine Rescue Vessel being washed away with the five persons inside while Courtney jumped from the IRB into the water to attempt to rescue the trapped victims.

“I said to Courtney, mate, you’re gonna have to try and get underneath the boat,” said Richard Nicholas. “While it’s not something you train for, we kind of both know what we had to do.”

The water was cold and moving quickly, visibility was low and there was debris all around. Despite this,



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Dine & Discover NSW has been extended to 31 August 2021.

Your local club



International Water Safety Day: Babar's Story



International Water Safety Day is 15 May each year. This year Surf Life Saving NSW launched Babar's Story to mark the annual day of water safety awareness. The video takes viewers on a coastal experience shared by many visitors to the beach. The journey, in this case, is undertaken by a family from a culturally and linguistically diverse community. Babar's story aims to teach communities that beach safety starts at home.

Babar's story is not a tragic one, instead it's a common story that will resonate with many of our multicultural communities. For many families who come to Australia for a better life, the coast and our amazing beaches are some of the most fascinating aspects of Australian life, something we encourage our communities to get involved in and enjoy.

Babar reached out to SLSNSW following an incident at Seal Rocks on the lower north coast of NSW, where he struggled against the large swell. While Babar and his family enjoyed trips to the beach almost every weekend, the family never truly considered the dangers and risks associated with the ocean.

After Babar managed to escape the water at the unpatrolled beach, he decided that he needed to do more to protect his family from a similar situation. Babar now understands the importance of planning and preparation to ensure a safe day at the beach for himself and his family and has joined us to help spread the vital message that we cannot take our safety for granted - Beach safety starts at home.

More videos and other multicultural resources are being developed by the SLSNSW Community Education Team. To enquire about community education please contact the team at educationevents@surflifesaving.com.au.

Four NSW Lifesavers Honoured

Congratulations to four volunteers, recognised for their contribution to Surf Life Saving in the Queen's Birthday honours list.

SLSNSW Board member Tony Waller OAM has been recognised for his contribution to Surf Life Saving and the community. The decorated Fire and Rescue Superintendent, Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter crewman and Governor of Coogee SLSC is a former NSW Surf Lifesaver of the Year and has been patrolling and educating volunteers for more than 40 years.

Fairy Meadow SLSC life member Lawrence Bond has received an OAM for services to Surf Life Saving after an amazing 60 years plus on patrol.

Brian Gee OAM from The Entrance SLSC has been recognised for more than 50 years of service to Surf Life Saving and rugby league.

Former president of Cooks Hill SLSC and Redhead SLSC member Peter Kilmurray has received an OAM for his contribution to Surf Life Saving. The long-term Board member of the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter service has patrolled at various clubs since joining in 1964, including Wauchope Bonny Hills, Bronte, Dixon Park, Shoalhaven Heads, Cooks Hill and Redhead.

SLSNSW President George Shales OAM congratulated the recipients and thanked them for their service to Surf Life Saving.

"We are extremely grateful for the contribution these members have made to our movement over such a long time. They are deserving of this recognition at the highest level and it is great to see the community acknowledge their commitment to protecting and saving lives."

Surf Life Saving Clubs Receive Funding Boost



Twenty-nine Surf Life Saving Clubs in NSW will share in \$3.5 million worth of support for facilities improvements and capital works through the Surf Club Facility Grant Program, announced by the NSW Treasurer Dominic Perrottet and Minister for Sport Natalie Ward.

In addition, the Treasurer announced a further \$4 million in funding to support the upgrade, restoration and construction of Surf Life Saving facilities as part of the 2021-22 NSW Budget.

The NSW Treasurer said the Surf Club Facility Program is vital to help keep NSW communities active and safe.

“The NSW Government recognises the critical role Surf Life Saving Clubs play, protecting people who use our world-class beaches,” Mr Perrottet said.

“We are pleased to deliver \$4 million of funding in the NSW Budget to ensure NSW Surf Life Saving facilities are fit-for-purpose and clubs can continue to keep people safe.”

The announcement came off the back of \$3.5 million being awarded to 29 clubs through the 2020/21 program. Grants to clubs were between \$30,000 - \$350,000.

“These grants will help to increase participation across NSW by creating inclusive and accessible Surf Life Saving facilities,” said the new Minister for Sport, Natalie Ward.

“I congratulate all the successful applicants in this year’s program.”

Highlights of the 2020/21 program include:

- › \$300,689 to Warriewood SLSC for resurfacing works and redirection of public walkway and beach access.

- › \$302,406 to Redhead SLSC for upgrades to the club’s observation area, radio room and first aid room.
- › \$223,687 to Cabarita SLSC for upgrades to the club, including a new training room.

President of Surf Life Saving NSW, George Shales OAM, said safe, accessible and secure rescue facilities across the state remain a top priority for the organisation.

“Surf Life Saving Clubs are often the hub of communities and our volunteer lifesavers require access to fit-for-purpose facilities so they can focus on saving lives. The funding will allow significant upgrades to surf club facilities to improve access for our 75,000 members,” said George Shales.

Further information about the Surf Club Facility Program, including the list of recipients visit: <https://sport.nsw.gov.au/clubs/grants/SCFP>

Watch the announcement of funding here <https://youtu.be/hk9EVkalhdc>

DID YOU KNOW...



SLSNSW donated
170,152 containers
and also...



saved **247,822**
litres of water during
the 2020/21 season

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you can donate
your eligible
containers*





Registered clubs recognised for contributions to communities

Proud partner of Surf Life Saving NSW, ClubsNSW celebrated the contributions of registered clubs from across the state in May at the 2021 Clubs & Community Awards.

After overcoming the toughest 18 months in the history of registered clubs, winners and finalists were acknowledged for the support that they provide to their local communities across nine categories. The first award of the evening, Fostering Grassroots Sport, which recognises the encouragement of sport within the community was awarded to The Sutherland District Trade Union Club (Tradies) for their support of Elouera SLSC through the Surf Awareness Clinic.

Tradies General Manager, Jason McMaster said they were proud to be recognised amongst the strong mix of registered Clubs in NSW who all work to do good in their local communities.

"We are extremely grateful to Elouera SLSC for nominating us in this category for our support of Elouera and the Surf Awareness Clinic over the past 24 years. There are a lot of registered clubs in NSW doing great things in their communities and we're very proud to have been recognised for our contribution."

Since 1982, the Surf Awareness Clinic week-long program has educated children 7-12 years old in surf safety including identifying rips, currents and swell types, and basic skills for CPR, first aid and sun safety. Each year, more than 100 Elouera SLSC lifesavers join Tradies directors and volunteer their time to run the program which has trained more than 11,000 participants.

"Our partnership with Elouera is one of the longest running in Tradies history and the effort their volunteers put into the Surf Awareness Clinic each year is truly phenomenal," said Jason.

Elouera SLSC President David Kowald nominated Tradies as a show of appreciation for their support and was pleased to enrich the partnership between the two organisations.

"To be able to give something significant like this back to our major sponsor really helps strengthen the relationship".

Along the coast of NSW, registered clubs provide invaluable support to numerous Surf Life Saving Clubs.

ClubsNSW CEO Josh Landis said that despite the challenges faced over recent times, registered clubs never stopped supporting worthy causes in their communities.

"Clubs have continued to go above and beyond to support their members and the wider community."

RESCUES UP

as NSW lifesavers lower the flags

Sunday 25 April marked the final day of volunteer patrols for 2020/21 season for NSW surf lifesavers.

Data has revealed that volunteer lifesavers and lifeguards from the Australian Lifeguard Service performed 3,750 rescues since the season began in September 2020. That is 564 more rescues than the previous season, despite COVID-19 lockdowns.

Emergency callouts for critical incidents state-wide were also up by 177 on the previous season to 776.

In total, volunteer surf lifesavers contributed more than 671,234 hours on patrol during the season.

This year has also seen an increase in the qualification of new lifesavers. Last year saw 22,343 lifesavers complete their annual theory skills maintenance proficiencies online, in comparison to 12,374 the previous season.

The absence of our iconic red and yellow flags and lifesavers on the beaches doesn't mean our volunteers clock off. Between April and September last year, our teams responded to 183 incidents.

Not only do lifesavers keep the beach-going public safe on the weekends, but each of the 129 clubs also has in place an out-of-hours callout team which responds to incidents and plays an integral role in assisting other emergency services.



Beyond the beaches the Surf Life Saving NSW Support Operations teams are activated for critical incidents and include highly skilled duty officers, IRBs, offshore rescue boats, RWC (jetskis) and drones which work with club callout teams, the SLSNSW Support Operations Centre and other emergency services.

SLSNSW Director of Lifesaving Joel Wiseman said he couldn't be more proud of the membership this season after another testing year and stepping up to assist when their communities needed them no matter what.

"This year our members have exemplified what it means to be an emergency service as they were called to move outside of our traditional red and yellow flags. Their response, teamwork and support were incredible. Despite another somewhat disrupted season they stood up and continued to uphold our tradition of keeping people safe and assisting when required. Their value as individuals and clubs within our communities is indisputable," said Wiseman.

776
Emergency Callouts

3,750
Rescues

671,234
Volunteer Hours

School Drone Program Targets Girls In Science

Surf Life Saving NSW's Australian UAV Service (AUAVS) in partnership with She Maps has launched a drone program for school students in Years 5-9 in NSW and the ACT, with a focus on getting more girls involved in engineering and technology.

The 2.5 hour program covers the She Maps Classroom Drone Essentials Course, highlighting STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) opportunities to school students and showing them how drone technology can be utilised to support problem solving, digital storytelling and technological development. The program also addresses challenging social issues such as unconscious bias, particularly toward females in STEM.

Surf Life Saving NSW UAV educators deliver the program on-site during school hours which covers not only the opportunities available to students within Surf Life Saving such as beach surveillance, shark management and event safety but also off the beach uses in mapping, 3D modelling and surveying.

The program gives students real-world experience using state-of-the-art technology. In the session they become geospatial scientists where they explore applications of drone technology through the safety of microdrones.

They explore hands-on applications of drone technology, learn about drone safety and how to use coding to automate missions and have the chance to manually fly drones under the supervision of professional pilots.

She Maps Co-Founder and Education Director Dr Karen Joyce said she was excited about the impact the program would have in schools with the Surf Life Saving NSW Australian UAV Service partnership.

"To be able to partner with Surf Life Saving to scale our impact into more schools across NSW and the ACT is

fantastic," said Dr Joyce. "The Surf Life Saving brand is synonymous with caring for our community and innovation, so we couldn't be prouder to be taking this journey with the team," she said.

SLSNSW UAV pilot Yasmin Zaman is studying engineering at University and has taken up the opportunity to become a course presenter and talk to kids about her passion for STEM.

"Working with these kids has been incredible and it's exciting being part of this program rollout and still being part of on-beach drone work," she said. "At university, I'm only one of a few women in engineering and that's why I love the idea of this program and its aim to help drive the numbers up.

"When it's accessible across the country, many more people, especially females will have the opportunity to understand how important drones and technology can be and how they play a part in the workforce and our future."

The Surf Life Saving NSW Australian UAV Service is the provider of the largest coastal drone surveillance program in the Southern Hemisphere. More than 500 experienced pilots have the capability to operate drones across NSW as well as nationally and internationally.

Each season the service provides surveillance at over 60 coastal locations for beach surveillance and shark management as part of the NSW Government's Shark Management Strategy as well as for event safety purposes.



MUM'S THE WORD *on patrol*

A small south coast surf club believes it may have something no other club has - five mother and daughter combinations on the same patrol.

Over the last few seasons the Kiama Downs SLSC mums have inspired each other to train as lifesavers and get their Bronze Medallions and they are now inspiring a new generation in their daughters who have their Surf Rescue Certificates and patrolled this season.

Naida Guy is the wife of Patrol Captain Steven (Skip) Guy and she led the charge in encouraging more women to take up lifesaving and surf competition at the club. Along with her Australian gold medals in IRB (Inflatable Rescue Boat) racing, Naida is a life member of Kiama Downs and was involved in two major mass rescues this season as IRB driver, alongside some of the other women on her patrol.

When Naida and Skip took on managing the club's Nippers program almost 10 years ago, there were no competitors other than the IRB racing team. Within two years, there were almost 50 Nippers training and regularly competing, and at least 10 women who were competing at Branch carnivals.

"When we took up IRB racing we met all these people, and I'm a big advocate for women being able to do just about anything. Both Skip and I began pushing for everyone to get their awards and just have a crack," said Naida. "I'd got so much out of Surf Life Saving through my competition and just stuff where I didn't think I'd ever be able to achieve things, and I did."

The club now boasts the most women ever and the most mums and daughters who are patrolling. Two years ago the club had the biggest group of girls who had ever gone all the way through from U6s to U14s, with seven going on to patrol.

"It wasn't a conscious effort from me to say 'I want to have a patrol just with women', it just happened that we had built an environment where we encouraged and supported women and it happened organically," said Naida.

Naida and Skip say that encouraging more women to train as lifesavers was not always easy but that there is a role for everybody.

"I would tell them, it's ok to tell us you're scared or you're not sure. We're here to support you. We don't expect you to go and do a rescue on a 100-kilogram man, but we need people to call the ambulance, and we need someone to operate the radio and we need someone to watch the flags," she said.

Naida is now working with the South Coast Branch to help develop a support program to encourage and retain women in leadership positions.

Naida and Skip's daughter, 14 year-old Macey, started Nippers in U6s and completed her Surf Rescue Certificate last season. While surf competition was her main sport, Macey and her older sister both now play a number of other sports, along with helping on patrol and with Nippers water safety at the club.

"I think it's very impressive how much mum has achieved. She's a big role model for a lot of people, and not just kids, adults too. I know a lot of people in our patrol look up to her for lots of things," said Macey.

"She stuck with it and she's very strong. She's made our club so much better."

Patrol 5 Kiama Downs - Mothers and Daughters

Naida and Macey Guy, Sally and Lilly Gazzard, Cath and Ivy Gross-Jones, Amanda and Emma Trudget, Dawn and Amelia Weatherlake. Also Melissa and Lucy Thompson and Aimee, Maddie and Ada Heald (currently Nipper members).





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Our Mission

To save lives, create great Australians and build better communities.

Summary

Surf Life Saving NSW is the state's major water safety and rescue organisation, and with over 76,000 members, is one of the largest volunteer movements in Australia.

The primary role of Surf Life Saving NSW is to save lives on our beaches, while other activities include developing our members through education, leadership and surf sports programs.

There are 129 surf clubs and 11 branches in the state which are affiliated with Surf Life Saving NSW, stretching from Fingal Rovers SLSC near Tweed Heads, to Pambula SLSC on the Far South Coast.

Contact Us

For contributions or suggestions for SurfLIFE please contact SLSNSW Media on 02 9471 8000 or media@surflifesaving.com.au

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