LOWER NORTH COAST BRANCH

ANNUAL REPORT 2025 - 2026

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Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Inc.
Major Sponsors

We thank our Major Sponsor Newcastle Permanent Building Society for their ongoing support and commitment to Surf Life Saving in the Lower North Coast Branch.

For over 15 years, Newcastle Permanent Building Society has been the official banking and financial institution of SLSLNC and major partner of the junior section of our activities including, Male & Female Junior Lifesaver of the Year Awards, 13-14 Youth Development Camp, Branch Championships, Junior Surf Carnivals and Awards of Excellence.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mid Coast Council sponsorship of Surf Life Saving includes annual grants for lifesaving equipment to each surf club and the maintenance of clubs and surrounding beach areas.

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NSW GOVERNMENT

The NSW Government has provided significant support to Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast, including; 1 million dollars for the rebuilding of Forster SLSC, Ongoing support to surf clubs via the NSW Govt. Facilities Grant and Community Building Partnership Grants along with support via the SLSNSW Lifesaving Equipment Grants to purchase core lifesaving equipment annually.

AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The Federal Government continues to support Surf Life Saving with each of the 6 Lower North Coast Surf Life Saving Clubs receiving $5,000 annually to assist with the purchase of vital lifesaving equipment.

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast recognises DHL as a National Partner of Surf Life Saving for their significant sponsorship, enabling uniforms to be provided free of charge to our patrolling lifesavers.

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast acknowledges Surf Life Saving NSW and the Surf Life Saving Foundation for conducting fundraising on behalf of the branch and its clubs.

Thanks also to the generous support from the general public and individual donors who have provided invaluable financial support for the purchase of important rescue equipment making it possible for the training of our lifesavers.

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch acknowledges the support of Telstra a national partner of Surf Life Saving Australia providing support to SurfGuard and SurfCom across the SMS network.

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch acknowledges the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal (FRRR) for the funds received under the Strengthening Rural Communities – Prepare & Recover Round 20 grant funding. This grant allowed us to upgrade our branch vehicle.

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Inc.
National Sponsors

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Inc.
State Sponsors

Your local club

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NOTICE
Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch
2025/2026 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch will be held on Saturday 8 August 2026 at Cape Hawke Surf Club at 4.00 pm

As listed in the Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Constitution the following minimum business will be dealt with at the Meeting:

1. **Attendance** of members, apologies and delegates.

2. **Minutes** of the last Annual General Meeting held 12 July 2025 at Forster Surf Club to be adopted.

3. **Affiliation** of Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch with Surf Life Saving New South Wales and Surf Life Saving Australia.

4. **Annual Report** for the 2025-2026 season be presented for adoption by Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch.

5. **Financial Statements** for the 2025-2026 season be presented for adoption by Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch.

6. **Nominations Received for Board Positions** for the 2026-2027 season.

a.	President	Bernadette Nicholson
b.	Director of Administration	Peter McErlain
c.	Director of Finance	Jim Tyrpenou
d.	Director of Life Saving	Dr Bruce White
e.	Director of Surf Sports	Jeff Horn
f.	Director of Youth and Members Services	No Nominations
g.	Director of Education	Scott Graham

7. **Notice of Motion** consideration of any motions for which due notice has been received. Nil received.

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Inc.
Office Bearers 2025-2026

Role	Name	Position held details
President	Bernadette Nicholson	Elected at AGM 12/07/2025
Director of Administration	Dr Bruce White	Elected at AGM 12/07/2025
Director of Finance	James (Jim) Tyrpenou	Elected at AGM 12/07/2025
Director of Lifesaving	Peter McErlain	Elected at AGM 12/07/2025
Director of Surf Sports	Jeff Horn	Elected at AGM 12/07/2025
Director of Education	Scott Graham	Elected at AGM 12/07/2025
Director of Member Services		
Branch Registrar	Bernadette Nicholson	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Officials Liaison Officer	Kellie Connolly	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Gear Steward	Roger Duggan	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Finance Officer	Julie Wilcox	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Medical Advisor	Dr James Wills	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Legal Advisor	John Vaughan	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Auditor	Rhonda Futterleib	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025
Rescue Services Officer	Dr Bruce White	Appointed at AGM 12/07/2025

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Inc.
Patrons 2025-2026:

Federal Member for Lyne Ms. Alison Penfold

State Member for Myall Lakes Mrs. Tanya Thompson

Mayor of MidCoast Council Ms. Claire Pontin

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast Branch Inc.
Life Members 2025-2026

Colin Haigh *

Arthur Lunnon*

Arthur Whyte-Butler*

Bill Eady * OAM

Brian Wilcox

Clive Higgins

Doug Ferguson * OAM

Eddie Godwin

Frank Catt*

Fred Atkins

Graeme Doig

Ian Everingham

Ivor Elliott*

Jim Tyrpenou

John Edstsein OAM

John Staples*

Judy Spicer *

Julie Wilcox

Malcolm Flew

Mark Fisher

Michael Keegan

Peter Squire

Phil Spicer

Phillip Whitaker

Ralph Plummer*

Rodney Chapman

Roger Duggan

Terry Aldridge

Tony Summers

Victor Rushby*

(*Denotes deceased)

Lower North Coast Branch Awards of Excellence

Branch Awards of Excellence was held on 11 July 2026 at Cape Hawke SLS Club

Acknowledgment was given to the Junior Life Savers of the Year, Tallow Eady from Crowdy Head SLSC and Daniel Reid from Forster SLSC before the official proceedings started.

The following Awards were presented:

Young Surf Life Saver of the Year	Chelsie Lyons Pacific Palms SLSC
Life Saver of the Year	Greg Randall Forster SLSC
Patrol Captain of the Year	Wayne Barry Cape Hawke SLSC
Youth Athlete of the Year	Aria Tritico Cape Hawke SLSC
Masters Athlete of the Year	Kim Winter Pacific Palms SLSC
Surf Sports Team of the Year	Forster IRB Team Forster SLSC
Rookie Official of the Year	Linda Forrester Cape Hawke SLSC
Branch Official of the Year	Jeff Horn Cape Hawke SLSC
Trainer of the Year	Darren Bourke Crowdy Head SLSC
Assessor of the Year	Scott Graham Cape Hawke SLSC
Facilitator of the Year	Scott Graham Cape Hawke SLSC
Administrator of the Year	Sienna Elmer Crowdy Head SLSC
Club Member of the Year	Ron Hartley Forster SLSC
Youth Volunteer of the Year	Evie East Cape Hawke SLSC
Community Engagement of the Year	Community Water Safety Team Forster SLSC
Support Operations Member of the Year	Dr Jim Wills Forster SLSC
President's Award	Mauricio Cobra Siqueria Blackhead SLSC
President's Award	Scott Graham Cape Hawke SLSC
Club of the Year	Crowdy Head SLSC

SLSLNC Trainers, Assessors and Facilitators (TAF's)

Name	Club
Jim Wills	Forster
Ross Blowers	Taree Old Bar
Stuart Small	Pacific Palms
Gary Curtis	Cape Hawke
Jane Lynch	Taree Old Bar
Suzanne Gerrish	Taree Old Bar
Scott Graham	Cape Hawke
Dave Ellis ESM	Pacific Palms
Ian Everingham	Taree Old Bar
Janne Moran	Pacific Palms
Leigh Croker	Black Head
Darren Moses	Taree Old Bar
Adam Eady	Crowdy Head
Nathan de Rooy	Cape Hawke
Richard Ellery	Cape Hawke
Peter McErlain	Black Head
Jerrad Allen	Pacific Palms
Graeme Moses	Taree Old Bar
Ric Brennan	Forster
Brendan Pieschel	Crowdy Head
Darren Bourke	Crowdy Head
Mauricio Siqueira Cobra	Black Head
John Dingle	Pacific Palms
Reece Dodds	Cape Hawke
Karen Rands	Cape Hawke
Ben Forrester	Cape Hawk

Joanne Cooper	Cape Hawke

Mission & Values

Our mission and vision align with the requirements of Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast to serve as a leading authority in aquatic rescue situations and to expand our role as a community provider within a broader context. With a substantial membership base reflecting the diversity of the community, we possess the capacity and motivation to 'Build better communities' through our partnerships.

Our values are consistent with the esteemed reputation we hold in the community as an organization committed to delivering the highest level of service. Therefore, our values encapsulate this commitment to ensure that we consistently lead in service and uphold an exemplary reputation within the broader community.

Our values are CORE to our operations and belief in our community. Our values represent Collaboration, Openness, Respect and Empowerment. It is through our values that we reach out to our community and visitors to our region in an endeavour to improve their awareness, safety, and resilience in difficult situations.

Lower North Coast Branch

President's Report

Bernadette Nicholson

Another season successfully completed with no loss of life between the flags.

On behalf of the Branch Executive, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the
volunteers for the hours dedicated to keeping the locals and visitors safe on our beaches.

I would like to thank all for their support during the season – branch executive members, club presidents, club executives and all other members who make my position as President much
easier.

A huge thank you to Amanda Schubert for taking on Administrative Assistant during Sara's maternity leave she kept the Branch ticking along and her willingness to learn new tasks and accomplish them at a very high level. I am pleased to announce that Amanda will remain in this role for 2026-2027 season.

Our patrolling hours for the season totaled 18,448 hours. Over 151,000 locals and visitors enjoyed our beautiful beaches, we performed 1287 preventative actions, successfully completed 25 rescues and 121 First aid incidents.

During the season 3 x Matrice 4 UAV's were purchased, we are in the process of training over 60 UAV personnel from our volunteer base to be able to utilise these as part of our normal patrolling. If you have an interest in learning this award please forward me an email.

Bernadette Nicholson
President
Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast.

SLSLNC Director of Lifesaving Report:

Peter McErlain

The 2025/26 Surf Lifesaving season has highlighted the unwavering commitment, resilience, and professionalism of our members and affiliated clubs. We gratefully acknowledge the outstanding contributions made by all individuals involved, whose dedication remains central to upholding the highest standards of community service and beach safety.

Season Challenges and Response

This season presented a dynamic and ever-changing landscape, requiring our teams to adapt quickly and take proactive measures. Our members met these challenges head-on, demonstrating exceptional diligence across critical lifesaving operations. These included regular beach patrols, ongoing skills development sessions, and integrated training with our partners. Through these collective efforts, we maintained robust coverage throughout our region and ensured a rapid response capability for any incidents that arose.

Tragedies and Compassion

While we celebrate the successes of the season, we also acknowledge the solemn moments when tragedies occurred on our coastline. We extend our sincere condolences to the families affected and commend the professionalism of our first responders. Their compassion and expertise were evident in every incident, providing support and reassurance during difficult times.

Operational Innovations and Achievements

This season, our clubs logged significant patrol hours, resulting in:
Rescues: 25
First Aids: 121
Preventative Actions: 1,287

Most of our club's patrol hours will remain the same as per the last two seasons and will include the new Anzac Day public holiday which was announced by the NSW Government earlier this year.

Shark bite kits have already been distributed to numerous unpatrolled beaches across the Branch. As this report is being written, more Shark Bite kits are being delivered to each club within the Branch. These kits will be installed in a highly visible location at each surf club and will be accessible to the community around the clock.

Rescue Services

Our Rescue Services teams, including Duty Officers and Rescue Watercraft (RWC) units, undertook extensive operational duties throughout the season. Their responsibilities encompassed coordinating emergency responses, supporting member welfare, and managing local incidents, often in demanding conditions. The acquisition of new RWC assets from SLSNSW has further expanded our capacity for rapid intervention.

UAV Operations

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) were successfully deployed at all of our beaches this season. These UAVs provided enhanced surveillance and safety during peak periods. Our UAV training initiatives attracted strong participation, demonstrating our commitment to technological advancement and skill development. This is backed-up by the Branch purchasing three of the Executive DJI Matrice 4T drones. SLSNSW is providing a large amount of time and assets into UAV operations, and our Branch has actively made UAV operations more accessible and appealing, as well as upskilling current personnel.

Recognition and Appreciation

Rescue of the Month

The season saw numerous nominations for the Rescue of the Month award, highlighting the outstanding efforts and achievements of our members. We encourage all clubs to continue submitting nominations throughout the year to foster a culture of recognition and motivation.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the members of our clubs for their steadfast dedication to our mission and the communities we serve. Your ongoing commitment is instrumental to our Branch's continued success and the safety of our beaches.

Peter McErlain APM
Director of Lifesaving

Director of Education Report

Scott Graham

Another year of surf lifesaving has flown by and within that the education team has been feverishly working on up skilling our life savers. Our team of Trainers, Assessors and Facilitators (TAFs) have been working tirelessly within our clubs to make sure we are bolstering and bringing forward new recruits in all of our life saving awards i.e. Bronze Medallion, SRC, IRB crew and driver, first aid, SMAR, Patrol captains award and the list goes on. So, as you can see everyone has been very busy. This season we have gained four new TAFs and I would like to welcome them on board.

Also this year I have been trying something a little bit new which seems to be working well, and that is holding courses out of season mid-week for the non-water activity awards. The feedback I have been getting is positive so that is something that I will carry on into the future.

I would like to thank all of my TAFs for their support throughout the season, education is a very big portfolio to take care of and it would not be possible without the outstanding job that my TAFs do to back me up during the year so thank you to all of you. I would also like to thank all of the CTOs that have taken part in the club collaboration program whereby members from other clubs can go and train and gain awards with their club and vice versa. That has helped a lot through the season and made it easy for candidates to be able to make award dates.

371 Bronze Medallion Proficiencies
168 IRB crew Proficiencies
101 IRB Driver Proficiencies
129 ART proficiencies
32 Patrol Captain Proficiencies

As well as running other courses such as First Aid, IRB Driver and Crew, Silver Medallion Aquatic Rescue, Silver Medallion Patrol Captains award, Bronze Medallion and SRC courses and not to forget RWC.

The Branch Team of TAF's has accomplished these new awards.

40 SRC
36 Bronze
40 First aid (apply first aid)
8 IRB drivers
13 IRB crew
11 RWC operators
7 Patrol captains

We have also gained a few more Facilitators in various awards and I would like to say welcome to the team and congratulations on a great effort in gaining your facilitator award.
In closing I would like to thank the LNC Board for all of their support throughout the year and of course this would not be possible without a big thank you to all of the members in the branch that have participated in the education space this season.

Best Regards,
The entire Lower North Coast Education Team.

Director of Surf Sports Report

Jeff Horn

Local Carnivals 2025 –

- Local events held –
    - Weekend of Surf **(Forster SLSC – 4th & 5th of October)**
      Congratulations to Forster SLSC who held another well-run carnival over the October long weekend. The carnival numbers grew again this year with reports of 790 competitors in attendance. The carnival was attended in great spirits and some excellent competition skills were displayed.
    - Champion Life Saver **(Pacific Palms SLSC – 15th of November 2025**
      Congratulations to Pacific Palms SLSC who held the Champion Lifesaver event on Saturday the 15th of November. All competitors that attended this event thoroughly enjoyed the concept and quick event list. Palms will be looking to continue this event next year.

We used both carnivals to carry out practical Official assessments for some new award applications.

LNC Branch Championships 2026 -

- Venue Cape Hawke SLSC
    - Date held – Saturday the 7th of February 2026

Thank you to all that helped make the 2026 Lower North Coast Branch Championships successful.

The support from all six clubs ensured we gave our community members and competitors a highly competitive and spirited experience. We had a few little issues to overcome throughout the day, but most reports are that an enjoyable and safe day was had.

Extended thanks were sent to all clubs (Sports Directors and Presidents) thanking their

Officials, Water Safety, Work Partys, Parents, Carers and general support who filled the requirements of competition.

Final Point scores are below.

Clubs **Junior Point score**	
Cape Hawke	375
Crowdy Head	266.5
Black Head	237
Forster	105
Pacific Palms	75.5
Taree Old Bar	25

Senior Point Score	
Cape Hawke	149
Black Head	135
Crowdy Head	79
Forster	6
Pacific Palms	6
Taree Old Bar	6

Overall Point Score	
Cape Hawke	524
Black Head	372
Crowdy Head	345.5
Forster	111
Pacific Palms	81.5
Taree Old Bar	31

Next Branch Championships - General discussion on where to hold branch next year. Crowdy happy to nominate for next year. Mixed Board relay to be considered in next year's event block. Potential Board Rescue?

Officials

Surf Lifesaving Australia has announced that the Youth Officials Award is now active. This initiative allows young members, 13 years and older, to become accredited surf sport officials, and can officiate at either youth carnivals (Core Officials) or at all age carnivals (Technical Officials). I distributed this out to all club Surf Sports Directors.

I have processed the following LNC Branch officials for their awards throughout the season. Thank you for your support.

- Natalie Kelly - Tech Official
- Laura Thurtell - Tech Official
- Andrew Quadrio - Core Official
- Kellie Connolly – Senior Official
- Michael Kippax – Technical Official
- Jerrad Allen – Senior Official

In Training

- Ash Stewart (Crowdy)
- Damon Jones (Crowdy)

Coaches

I encouraged **ALL** clubs to review their coaches to ensure expiring awards are managed, and invite members to obtain the coaches award to boost club numbers.

Interbranch Team

I shared with all clubs to prioritise whether any club competitors are interested in nominating for the 2026 Lower North coast Interbranch Team. There was no positive expression of interest from any club competitors for selection in the 2026 team. Teams are made up of Beach and Water events and cater for U/12's to U/17's (potentially also moving to U/19's). Coaches, Managers will also fit into these nominations. Cape Hawke SLSC is working towards a winter training program with intentions. This may start other club interest to build a Interbranch training program for the future.

Live Heats

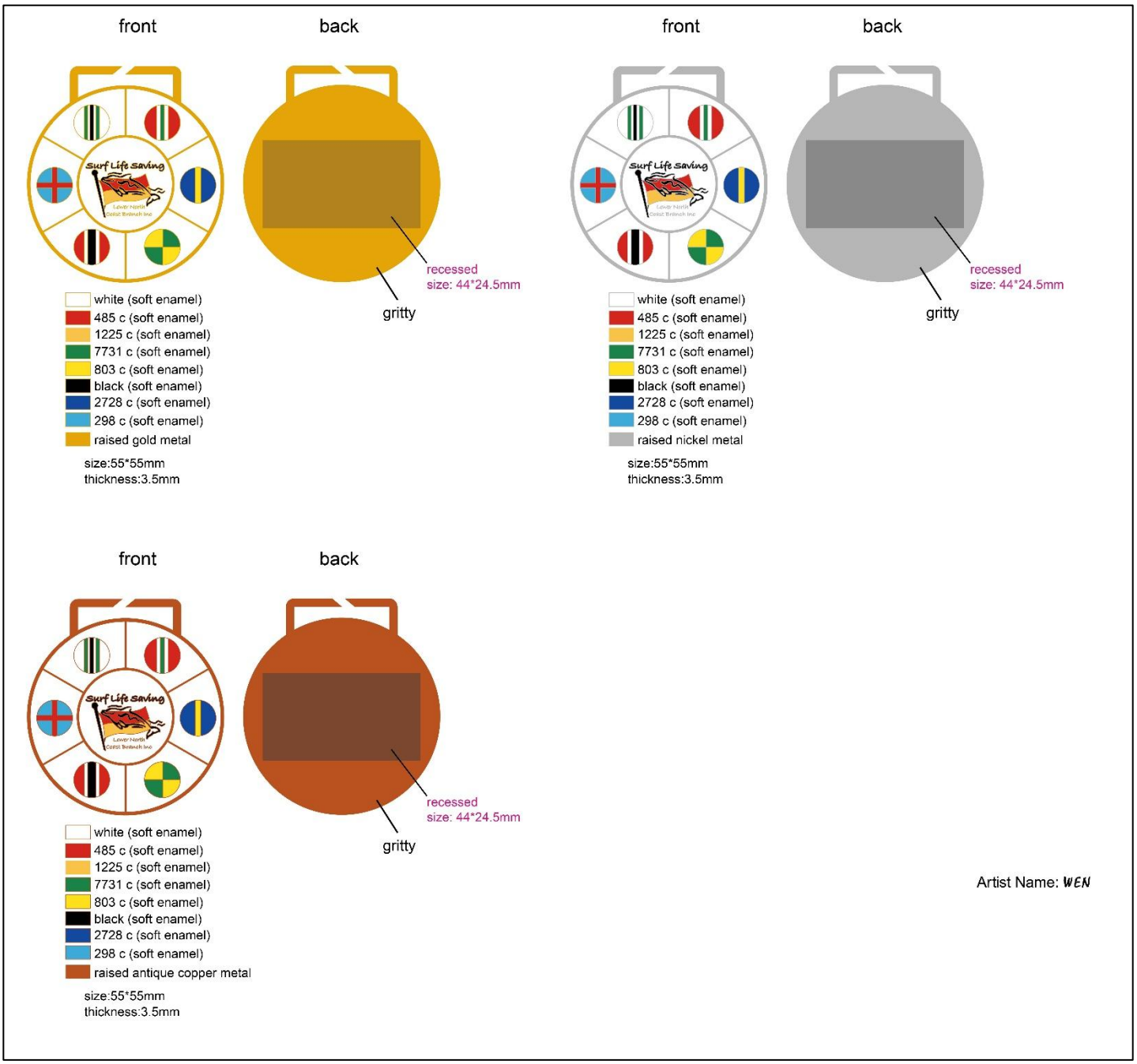
I think everyone experienced some frustrations and key learnings whilst navigating through the introduction and use of Live Heats throughout the 2025 and 2026 seasons. I feel that with more exposure and use the system is becoming a little more user friendly. The key for clubs is to set up Team Managers for entry purposes.

NSW Surf Sports State Calendar – 2026/2027 Seasons (Major Carnivals)

- NSW Interbranch Champs Caves Beach – 28th & 29th of November 2026
- NSW Country Championships South West Rocks 22nd to 24th of January 2027
- NSW Lifesaving Championships Caves Beach – 27th & 28th of February 2027 or 4th to 7th of March 2027
- NSW Age Championships Swansea Belmont – 4th to 7th of March 2027
- NSW Masters Championships Swansea Belmont – 10th & 11th of March 2027
- NSW Open Championships Swansea Belmont – 12th to 14th of March 2027
- Aussies Youth Championships Sunshine Coast – 10th & 11th of April 2027
- Aussies Masters Championships Sunshine Coast – 12th & 13th of April 2027
- Aussies Open Championships Sunshine Coast – 14th to 18th of April 2027

Lower North Coast Branch Championships Medals

It has been agreed that new medals for next years Branch Champs should be introduced after many years of the old style. Below are the new concepts for consideration.



I would like to thank the Branch committee for their support in my first year of the Surf Sports position.

Regards,

Jeff Horn
Director of Surf Sports
Lower North Coast Branch

President's Report - Crowdy Head SLSC

Adam Eady

It has been another successful and productive year for Crowdy Head Surf Life Saving Club, thanks to the dedication and commitment of our members, volunteers, and committee.

Nippers Program.

Our Nippers program has had an outstanding season, with over 140 active Nippers participating. This is a fantastic achievement for the club and reflects the strong community support behind the program.

A huge effort went into delivering such a successful season, particularly from our water safety team and age managers, whose commitment ensured the safety and development of all participants.

Special recognition must go to Mary and the entire Nippers leadership team for their organisation, enthusiasm, and leadership throughout the season. Congratulations to everyone involved on a great year.

Patrols & Lifesaving

I would like to sincerely thank all our patrolling members for their time, dedication, and service throughout the season — your efforts are very much appreciated and are the backbone of our club.

A special thank you to Damo for stepping into the role of Director of Lifesaving. You have done an outstanding job this year, and your leadership has been invaluable in maintaining our high standards of beach safety.

Education

Our Director of Education, Darren, has been exceptional this year in delivering training and development opportunities.

Thanks to his efforts, many of our members have gained a wide range of qualifications, strengthening both individual skills and the overall capability of our club. Thank you, Darren, for your continued commitment to member development.

Surf Sports

A big thank you to Ash, Director of Surf Sports, for running training sessions each Sunday morning. Your consistency and dedication have provided great opportunities for members to improve their skills and stay actively involved in the club.

Committee Recognition

I would like to acknowledge and thank our hardworking committee members, who operate tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the club running smoothly:

- Neolie Eady – Director of Member Services
- Sienna Elmer – Director of Administration
- Jim Tyrpenou – Director of Finance
- Des Augey – Deputy President

Your efforts are greatly appreciated and do not go unnoticed.

Club Developments & Achievements

This has been a highly productive year for the club, with several key achievements:

- Completion of the new car park, improving access and facilities for members and visitors
- Installation of a drone-in-a-box system, along with paid drone operators during the off-season, enhancing our rescue capability
- Securing a grant to upgrade toilet and shower facilities, a significant improvement for club amenities

A special thank you to Katherine Miller for her work in securing this important grant — your efforts will have a lasting impact on the club.

Overall, it has been a fantastic year for Crowdy Head Surf Life Saving Club. The continued growth, development, and success of the club are a direct result of the dedication and passion of our members and volunteers.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed — we look forward to another great season ahead.

Adam Eady
President
Crowdy Head SLSC.

President's Report – Taree Old Bar SLSC

TAREE OLD BAR SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

President's Report – Season 2025/2026

As President of Taree Old Bar Surf Life Saving Club, it is with genuine pride and deep gratitude that I write the following report. The 2025/2026 season has been one of stability, superb teamwork, and strengthening the many bonds that hold our club and community together. It wasn't a big year defined by dramatic change, it was defined by people showing up, supporting each other, and continuing the quiet yet powerful work that keeps our beaches safe, welcoming, and thriving.

Membership & Patrol Growth

Our membership remained stable this season, providing a strong and reliable base for patrol operations. We continued with six patrol teams, including our dedicated Ladies Patrol, whose presence remains a point of pride and inspiration as the most attended patrol we have.

Across the season, our patrol teams collectively completed over 2,642 hours of service, a testament to the commitment and professionalism of our volunteers. These hours represent early mornings, tough conditions, teamwork, and countless moments of quiet vigilance that the public rarely sees but always benefit from.

Operationally, our members demonstrated exceptional dedication. A multi-agency search during in the season highlighted the skill, coordination, and calm professionalism of our team. Deploying RWC, IRB and Duty Officers to the scene. Thankfully resulting in no lives lost.
It was one of those moments where training, teamwork and heart all came together, and our members shone.

We also saw strong participation in swiftwater training and requalifications, ensuring our readiness for inland water emergencies.

Multiple members contributed to the Lower North Coast SAREX, reinforcing our club's reputation for capability and reliability across the region.

Emergency Response & Deployments

While thankfully this season did not bring the large-scale deployments of previous years, our operational readiness remained high. Our members continued to support branch and state operations, stepping up whenever needed.

Some moments remind us that surf lifesaving is far more than flags on the beach, it is a commitment to protecting our community wherever and whenever we are needed.

Nippers

You really can't beat the sight of nippers on the beach, and this year was no exception. Our numbers remained consistent, and the enthusiasm of our young members continues to be one of the great joys of the season.

We did, however, face challenges in recruiting new age managers and other volunteers. Despite this, our dedicated team delivered a safe, fun, and engaging program every week. Their commitment ensured that every child who came to the beach walked away with new skills, new confidence, and a love for the ocean.

A highlight once again was our annual interclub day with Crowdy Head SLSC. This tradition continues to be one of the most uplifting days of the season, always full of smiles, friendly competition, and the kind of camaraderie that reminds us why we do what we do.

Community

Beyond the sand, our clubhouse continues to grow as a vibrant community space. Sunday Sippers has cemented its reputation as one of the best ways to spend a cruisy afternoon in Old Bar with tunes by the beach, families relaxing together, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere created by our incredible bar and clubhouse crew.

This season also saw significant improvements to our facilities thanks to multiple successful grants, including:

- Complete balustrade upgrades
- New emergency callout lockers
- A brand-new Thundercat IRB, proudly named *The Tim Hillier*

These upgrades strengthen both our operational capability and the safety and usability of our clubhouse.

Our gym continues to be a standout success also. A reliable source of revenue, a hub of member engagement, and a powerful recruitment tool. This year we received an extraordinary gift: a generous donation of equipment from iGym Taree. Their support has elevated our training space and reinforced the strong community partnerships we are fortunate to have.

Award Winners

Our annual Presentation Day celebrated the exceptional efforts of our members:

- Doug Ferguson Memorial – Club Person of the Year: Joe Dunn
- Male Club Member of the Year: Patrick Moses
- Female Club Member of the Year: Amy Dyer
- Jeff Vandenbergh Memorial
  Junior Club Member of the Year: Matilda Dunn & Indigo Franc
- Patrol Member of the Year: Adam Franc
- Grant Armstrong Memorial – Volunteer of the Year: Alan Lewis
- Male Nipper of the Year (13+): Asher Hunt

We are also incredibly proud of our members being nominated for Lower North Coast Branch Awards:

- Alan Lewis – Volunteer of the Year
- Kristy Franc – Administrator of the Year
- Jess Cooke – Age Manager of the Year
- Patrick Moses – Surf Lifesaver of the Year
- Jane Lynch – Patrol Captain of the Year
- Patrick Moses – Support Operations Member
- Ross Blowers – Trainer of the Year

These nominations reflect not only individual excellence but the strength, culture, and teamwork of our club.

Training & Development

Upskilling remained a steady focus this season. We achieved the successful completion of another bronze squad, new duty officers and many operational awards and requalification's.

This ongoing development ensures our club remains capable, confident, and ready for whatever challenges arise.

Gratitude & Looking Ahead

This season was about team building, stability, and strengthening our

foundations. It was a year where people quietly supported one another, stepped up when needed, and kept the club moving forward with steady hands and full hearts.

To every member, thank you. Your commitment, your energy, and your willingness to give your time make this club what it is.

To our Executive Committee comprising of:

Joe Dunn
Pat Moses
Nev Finch
Cara Chard
Amy Dyer
Chelsea Green
Suz Gerrish

your leadership and teamwork have been invaluable.

We are stable. We are strong. And we are ready for what comes next. Together, we will continue to grow, support our community, and uphold all that make Taree Old Bar Surf Life Saving Club such a special place.

Michael Cameron
President
Taree Old Bar Surf Life Saving Club

President's Report – Forster SLSC

MISSION

To keep Forster Beach safe for the public to enjoy with a commitment to protecting and saving life.

It is crucial that we keep our mission at the top of our agenda and to that end I thank those members who contributed to attaining 4,268 Patrol Hours courtesy of our 7 patrol teams.

We gained new patrolling members mainly from Nipper parents during the season and they were very enthusiastic. We need to retain our existing patrolling members to ensure that we do not overburden our members by having to do too much.

Find a friend and get them involved.

We acknowledge the amount of time our members contributed to the UAV program, Support Operations Emergency, call out teams that were required out of hours and duty officers that continue to give their time.

Our Chief Instructor (Jim Wills) and Ric Brennan again provided skills to our members to provide effective patrols on Main Beach. I would like to see more of our team become trainers and eventually assessors as you gain a great deal of satisfaction passing on knowledge.

Building Fundraising

Thank you to the Building Fundraising Committee ably led by Wayne Lever and the committee. Naturally many others were involved in activities that raised funds and of course businesses that donated prizes.

- Lakes and Ocean Raffles
- Donors
- Big Fins
- Trivia Night

We will continue to raise funds to complete the fit-out the various areas.

Club Lifesaving Fundraising

- Professionals Weekend of Surf
- Dorsal Club2 Club Swim
- NSW Triathlon Club Championships
- Beaches 5's Rugby
- Forster Running Festival

Nippers

Thank you to all the Age Managers and water safety that help make Nippers happen each week. This year it was pleasing to see greater parent involvement especially in regards gaining of SRC and Bonze Awards.

Associates

Showing how you can be active and get involved with the Club and having some fun. We look forward to more people joining the club and making a difference. Plenty of opportunities to assist the club with events, maintenance, carnivals and lots of other things to supporting our lifesaving presence.

This year we instigated the Associate Member of the Year award with Wendy Fahey and Wayne Gooley recognized for the efforts they undertake to support our club.

Federal Government

Beach Safety Equipment Fund

NSW Government

Surf Club Facility Grant
Club Life Saving Equipment Grant

Midcoast Council

Donations program

Federal Government Beach Safety Equipment Fund – thankyou for the following Lifesaving Equipment

- Mercury IRB Motor
- 2 Bennett Soft Rescue Boards
- First Aid Kit
- Patrol Hats

Gordon Godwin Club Persons of the Year

Ryan Crompton and Cathy Quinn Club Persons of the Year with Tanya Thompson

My thanks, to the committee, especially the executive of Forster SLSC, Bruce Higgs, Dr Jim Wills, Laura Thurtel, Nova Grosvenor, Karen Kelly and Beth Lee. They all do an amazing job and your efforts and support over the season is greatly appreciated.

Lastly, I thank all club members (especially my wife Cathy), sponsors including major sponsor **Forster Bowling Club** for their contribution to our club which has been greatly appreciated and of course supporters in the wider community for assisting us to keep Forster Surf Club on the beach and meeting the community's needs.

John Quinn
President
FORSTER SLSC

President's Report – Cape Hawke SLSC

This season the club continued on it's growth trajectory across all membership areas. This can be attributed to the success of the pathways program developed in our Strategic Plan three years ago, supported by the efforts of our leadership team to continue the welcoming nature and 'can do' spirit we pride ourselves with. In this time membership has grown by 28%, giving a strong base to provide our vital role of keeping One Mile Beach safe for the community and visitors alike.

Statistics for the season include: 120 Active patrollers, 12 rescues, 598 preventative actions, 14 First Aid cases, 5 responses by the Emergency Call Out Team, public beach attendance of 31,794, and 3,913 volunteer hours performed. Total club membership was 551, including 215 juniors, and 162 associate members. A total of 831 education awards originated from the club.

A focus for the club has been the initiative to engage, educate and connect with the beach going community to strengthen safety, build meaningful relationships, and extend lifesaving knowledge beyond the surf club. A highlight of the initiative was the Community Education Day, where club members delivered interactive demonstrations on CPR, AED use, shark bite kits, and beach safety. Participants also explored lifesaving equipment including IRBs and jet skis, creating a memorable experience for children and adults alike. This practical approach transforms safety education from a passive activity into an engaging community experience.

A further highlight has been the addition of a new gym and storage space to the Lifesaving Shed, made possible by a Surf Club Facility Grant from the NSW Government and allocated fundraising by our club. The expansion of the lifesaving gear and equipment storage room and the new gymnasium will benefit patrolling members, youth, and the local community by enhancing safety, enabling more efficient patrols, and supporting fitness and wellbeing for all members.

In lifesaving the education team has been very active, gaining three new Training Officers and two new Facilitators, which will bolster the training capability of the club. Of note is the addition of six new UAV (drone) pilots, providing valuable support to patrols, Nipper activities and our Emergency Call Out Team. This will supplement the Dept. of Primary Industries shark surveillance drone program, which has been effective in supporting beach patrol operations. In further efforts to reduce drowning, the lifesaving team has been successful in obtaining a Community and Cultural Development funding grant from Midcoast Council to place rescue tubes in secure containers on access tracks to One Mile and Burgess beaches.

In Surf Sports the club was highly successful in winning the Lower North Coast Branch

Championships in the Juniors, Seniors, and overall club categories. We sent one of our largest teams in many years to the Country Championships, where there were also many successes, and our Open Female surf boat team finished strongly in the North Coast Boat Series. The enthusiasm in surf sports has been supported by parents and members stepping up to gain four new Officials and six new coaching positions.

Our Youth development program was kicked off by a Pathways Forum at the beginning of the season, led by our Junior Captains and youth leaders. This activity was aimed at increasing the retention of our young members by showcasing the many options available to them within the lifesaving education program. Our Nippers enrolments continue to grow, well over the 200 mark, while eight new Age Manager positions were added to the existing large team.

Of particular note was Life member John Hahn receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for services to surf life saving and the community. John was a foundation member of the club and has been President, Club Captain, Patrol Captain, Club member of the Year, IRB racing team member. He has had a similar depth of involvement with the Lions Club of Forster Tuncurry, as well as being Citizen of the Year for the Local Government Area.

We are very fortunate to have the diligent and assured leadership of our Board of Directors Ian Reynolds, Richard Ellery, Greg Brown, Jeff Horn and Ben Forrester, supported by our reliable Management Committee to serve the community and our enthusiastic members. Our focus in the upcoming new season will be on consolidating our initiatives to engage, educate and connect with the local beach going community, and to embed our expanded training, coaching and officials teams into our strategic planning.

I thank our local partners Newcastle Permanent, Forster Bowling Club Group, JR Richards and Sons, Midcoast Council, the Lions Club of Forster Tuncurry, Baker's Delight, Pacific Blue Metal Forster, Great Lakes Slasher Hire, The Professionals, and Regional Financial Solutions for their ongoing support and valuable contributions to our mission of saving lives in the One Mile Beach and adjacent local area, creating great Australians and contributing to building a better local community.

The ongoing success and strength of our club is made possible by the tremendous enthusiasm and commitment by all of our amazing volunteers. I thank you all.

Gary Curtis
President
Cape Hawk SLSC

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President's Report - Pacific Palms SLSC

Thank you to our Gold Sponsors

This season, the Pacific Palms Surf Life Saving Club (PPSLSC) continued to do what we do best- that is, keep our local waterways safe and provide education and training to people within our community. Thank you to both our patrolling members, TAFS, and the clubs who visited over the summer holidays and Easter period to help us continue to do this.

We held our annual Rock to Rock Ocean Swim which is now in its 26th year. What makes this a special event is the professionalism, friendliness and helpfulness that our club members and the community bring to the event.

We also continued to make upgrades to our building and equipment. These improvements ensure we can continue to deliver the services that we provide to members, the community and visitors to the region.

Running a surf club relies on input from a lot of people. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of the club in one way or another this season. Of note is the awarding of the Honour Service Award to Ian Sercombe. Ian has been a member of the club for over 15 years and his involvement during that time has been significant including nippers JAC, building design and project management, sponsorship, 15 years patrolling and coordinating the development of the patrol roster. Ian goes about his work in an unassuming way and without any fuss or fanfare. He is also someone who contributes heavily in other parts of our community. Well done Ian, we are very fortunate to have you as a member of PPSLSC.

Heading into season 2026-27, some of our areas of focus will be:

- Leveraging off the Club Capability Program run by SLSNSW
- Succession planning – identifying people to take on Board and Committee roles in the future
- UAV rollout
- Running a major fundraiser
- Member attraction and retention.

Paul Martin
President
Pacific Palms SLSC

President's Report -Black Head SLSC Report

This season has marked a welcome return to the traditional Black Head SLSC spirit. After several turbulent years, the sense of unity, pride, and community involvement has clearly strengthened, and this year's Awards Night reflected that renewed energy. The strong turnout demonstrated the commitment of our members, and it was a pleasure to celebrate the achievements of so many dedicated individuals. A particularly memorable moment was the presentation of the National Medal to long-time member Michael Elliott by our local federal member, Allison Penfold. Several other members also received their National Medals this season, including Noelene Young, Kim and Peter Gollan, Paul Kremer, Bruce White, Terry Aldridge and Paul McWhirter each recognised for their service and contribution.

The season began with our three-day celebration marking the club's 100-year milestone. The festivities opened with a luncheon for Life Members, Honour Blazer recipients, club directors and their partners. The official celebration on Saturday welcomed several distinguished guests, including Federal Member Allison Penfold, State Member Tanya Thompson, Mid Coast Councillor Jeremy Miller, SLSLNC President Bernadette Nicholson, and the Wingham Pipe Band, whose presence added a ceremonial touch to the occasion.

Throughout the season, our volunteers continued to uphold the club's proud record of no lives lost during patrol hours. Their commitment to beach safety remains the foundation of our service to the community. The Lions Club of Hallidays Point once again proved to be invaluable supporters, contributing to major annual events including the New Year's Eve fireworks, the ANZAC Day morning service breakfast and the Australia Day breakfast.

This season also marked the end of an era for our outgoing bar managers, Terry Aldridge, Ron Bridges and John Hannigan, whose years of service have been instrumental in the bar's success. Their efforts have generated significant revenue that has supported the club's growth and helped create the welcoming venue we enjoy today. Our gratitude extends to the small but dedicated group of volunteers who staff the bar during Sunday Sippers, Summer Sippers and fundraising events. Their contribution ensures the continued success of these important social gatherings.

A wide range of social and fundraising events brought enjoyment to members, guests and holidaymakers throughout the year. Summer Bingo, Family Trivia, Breakfasts on the Balcony, the Nippers Hawaiian Disc, and the New Year's Eve Members Night were all made possible through the hard work of volunteers. Many individuals contributed their time and energy and several deserve special recognition for their consistent support, including Terry and Lee Aldridge, Ron and Liz Bridges, Bronwyn New, Anthony Neil, Eddie and Kellie Connolly, Nigel Pegrum, Brek Muir, Graham Studd, John Edstein, Carmel and Michael Bartlett, Ian and Emma Marshall, Stuart and Ingrid Horsburgh and David Gollan

Turning to lifesaving operations, we would like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of all patrolling members throughout the 2026 season. Their professionalism, teamwork, and commitment ensured that the flagged area at Black Head Beach remained safe, with zero lives lost. Despite challenges such as fluctuating member availability and changing beach conditions, all rostered patrols were filled. Strong leadership from Patrol Captains and Vice-Captains, along with proactive engagement with beachgoers, contributed to a smooth and effective season.

Across the year, members completed 3,195 patrol hours, supported by 79 active patrolling members. Approximately 15,817 people visited the beach during patrol hours. Patrol teams responded to one rescue, 29 first aid treatments, and 197 preventative actions, demonstrating the importance of early intervention and strong patrol presence. Many members stepped into new or unfamiliar roles, strengthening our operational capability and ensuring the continued success of our lifesaving service.

The 2025/26 season welcomed Emma Marshall as Junior Activities Coordinator, with thanks to Adam Heathcote for his leadership in previous years. The program saw strong engagement, with 132 Nippers registering across all age groups, including many new families. New initiatives such as enhanced surf education, "Nipper of the Week," and a points-based awards system added structure and excitement to Sunday mornings.

Age Managers and U15/U16 cadets again provided outstanding guidance, with Ben Trautsch recognised as Age Manager of the Year. Parent involvement also grew, with eight parents completing their Bronze Medallion and joining the club's patrol ranks. Highlights included hosting Nippers at the LNC Branch Championships at Cape Hawke, celebrating the club's 100-year milestone with a beachside Nippers party, and seeing 12 Nippers proudly carry the Australian flag at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service. The season concluded with a full clubhouse for Awards Day, reflecting the strong family-focused culture of the program.

Emma will return in 2026/27 with a committed team. The program continues to welcome more helpers across water safety, BBQ duty, set-up, pack-up and Age Managing. The club looks forward to another vibrant and community-driven season ahead.

Black Head SLSC

Surf Life Saving Lower North Coast 2025–26 Patrol Season

Executive Summary

During the 2025–26 patrol season, Lower North Coast surf lifesavers supported nearly 151,000 beach visits across six clubs. Volunteers performed 25 rescues, treated 121 first aid cases, and carried out hundreds of preventative actions. Despite frequent rips, variable surf conditions and marine stinger activity, effective prevention strategies ensured safe beach use across the region.

Key Statistics

Beach visits supported	**~151,000**
Rescues	25
First aid cases	121
Prevention actions	447
Rip currents identified	1,900+

SLS Lower North Coast Branch - Keeping Our Beaches Safe

During the 2025-26 patrol season, volunteer surf lifesavers across the Lower North Coast played a vital role in keeping the community safe, managing high beach visitation, responding to incidents, and proactively preventing emergencies before they occurred.

Across six surf lifesaving clubs — **Black Head, Cape Hawke, Crowdy Head, Forster, Pacific Palms, and Taree Old Bar** — patrols supported **almost 151,000 beach visits**, delivered extensive preventative actions, and performed numerous rescues and first-aid interventions during a season marked by frequent rips, variable surf conditions, and periodic marine stinger activity.

Beach Visitation & Conditions

Peak visitation closely aligned with weekends, school holidays and public holidays, placing increased demand on patrol resources during those periods.

- **Total recorded beach attendance** (patrolled beaches): ~151,000 people
- Highest visitation beaches:
  - **Forster beach:** ~60,800 visits
  - **One Mile beach:** ~31,800 visits
  - **Elizabeth beach:** ~26,700 visits

Lifesaving Outcomes

25 rescues were performed across the branch, predominantly involving swimmers. Clubs with the highest number of rescues:

- Cape Hawke: 12
- Taree Old Bar: 6
- Crowdy Head: 3

Most rescues involved **swimmers**, with a high proportion occurring **outside the flagged swimming area**, reinforcing the importance of ongoing community education around swimming between the flags. Rescue boards were the most frequently used rescue asset, supported by IRB and rescue tube responses when required.

Christmas Day Patrol Taree Old Bar Dec 2025

Large Surf and crowd – Jan 2026

Bennetts Head Call-Out SAR – Jan 2025

3 day SAR Operation in Wallis Lake – Mar 2025

LNC Representatives ANZAC Day Service – April 2026

Black Head SLSC “Flags Down” Apr2026

First Aid & Medical Response

- **121 first-aid cases** were treated by patrol members across the season.
- The most common injuries included:
  - Minor marine stings
  - Cuts and abrasions
  - Minor wounds and soft-tissue injuries
- A small number of incidents required ambulance attendance or ongoing medical follow-up, demonstrating the critical role lifesavers play as first responders.

Prevention: Avoiding Emergencies Before They Happen

Preventing incidents remained a core focus of patrol operations.

- Total **preventative actions recorded:** 447 direct preventions
- Additional actions included:
  - Warnings and advice to swimmers and beach users
  - Watercraft management
  - Erection of warning signage
  - Public safety messaging and engagement

Pacific Palms and Cape Hawke both recorded particularly high numbers of preventions, reflecting proactive lifesaving approaches in areas with persistent hazards such as rips, surf exposure and stinger presence.

Environmental Conditions

Weather:

Predominantly fine or overcast across the season, with only limited patrol disruption from storms or rain.

Wave types:

- Spilling waves were most common (~75%), generally considered safer for swimming.
- Plunging and surging waves occurred regularly, particularly on exposed beaches, increasing rip strength and swimmer risk.

Wave heights:

- Most patrols recorded wave heights of 0.5–1.5m, however higher surf (>1.5m) occurred during a number of patrols, particularly in summer months.

Rips:

- Over 1,900 rips were recorded across the branch — an ongoing and significant hazard for beachgoers.
- Marine stingers were also a consistent seasonal feature, most notably at Pacific Palms, where bluebottle activity resulted in stings, preventions and closures.

Safety Hot-Spots & Observations

The recorded "Rip" data from each volunteer patrol's statistics does not show numeric details for individual clubs. However, by correlating it with other data sets, we can confidently pinpoint beaches that are likely hotspots. Rip activity was especially common where large wave heights and strong currents were more frequently observed by surf lifesaving clubs — Cape Hawke, Pacific Palms, and Taree Old Bar were notable examples. These conditions contributed directly to **increased prevention efforts and rescue demands** at these sites.

Key Risk Areas

- **One Mile Beach:**
  - Highest rescue count in the branch.
  - Frequent rips and higher exposure conditions.
  - Many rescues occurred outside flagged zones, highlighting the need for continued public education.

- **Elizabeth Beach:**
  - Notable marine stinger activity, including bluebottles.
  - Highest number of stinger-related preventions and closures across the branch.
  - Benefits from early-warning systems and preventative signage.
  -

- **Old Bar Beach:**
  - Higher rescue and first-aid demand relative to overall visitation.
  - Variable surf conditions and rip activity contribute to risk profile.

- **Forster:**
  - Highest beach visitation but comparatively low rescue and first-aid rates, which is in-line with the tourism-focused campaigning by Mid Coast Council highlighting Forster Main beach as a generally safer beach environment than other LNC Branch locations such as One Mile or Old Bar beaches.
  - This high visitation indicates the importance of effective patrol management and strong compliance with flagged swimming areas.

The 2025-26 patrol season demonstrated the continued importance of **preventative lifesaving**, experienced patrol management, and strong community engagement across the Lower North Coast.

Despite challenging surf conditions and high visitor numbers, surf lifesavers:

- Prevented hundreds of potential incidents
- Ensured tens of thousands of safe beach visits
- Responded effectively to rescues, first aid and environmental hazards

These results are a direct reflection of the commitment of volunteer lifesavers and the strength of proactive beach safety messaging throughout the region.

Patrol Operations – Photo Highlights

Cape Hawke SLSC SRC Graduates – Nov 2025

Rock extraction training One Mile beach – Nov 2025

Crowdy Head Jet Ski Familiarisation – Nov 2025

Tribute for Victims of Bondi Massacre – Dec 2025

Busy holiday crowd – One Mile beach – Dec 2025

Pacific Palms Family Patrol – Oct 2025

Cape Hawke SLSC SRC Graduates – Nov 2025

Club by Club Summary

Crowdy Head SLSC

Crowdy Head patrols managed steady visitor numbers and provided first aid and rescues when required. The club's preventative approach helped limit incidents despite variable surf conditions.

Taree Old Bar SLSC

Old Bar beach experienced higher rescue and first-aid demand relative to visitor numbers, with changing surf conditions and rip activity contributing to the risk profile.

Black Head SLSC

Black Head patrols supported thousands of beach visitors during the 2025–26 season, delivering first aid, preventative actions and public safety advice. Conditions were generally favourable, with occasional larger surf and rip activity requiring proactive management.

Forster SLSC

Forster Main beach was the **most heavily visited beach** in the branch during the season. Despite this, rescue and first-aid numbers remained relatively low, highlighting the location's safe conditions in comparison to other beaches in the LNC Branch, effective patrol operations, and sensible use of the ocean pool by beach visitors.

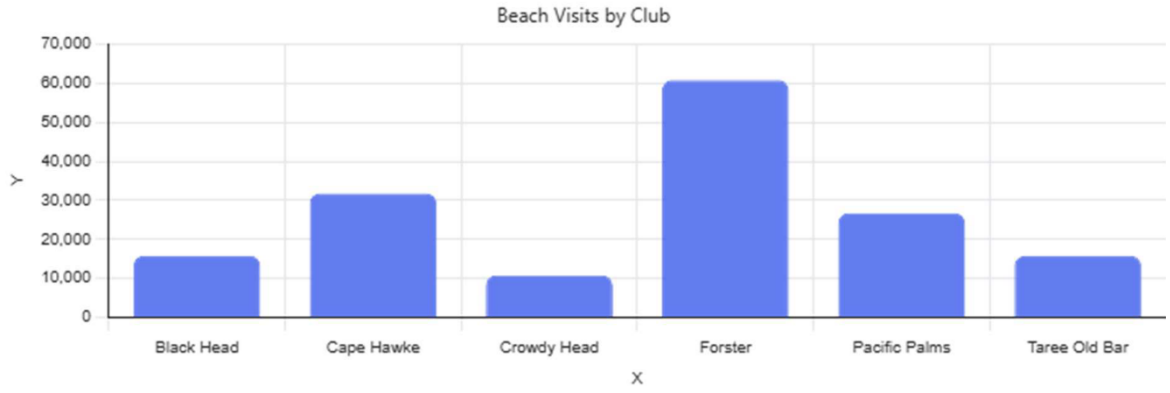
Cape Hawke SLSC

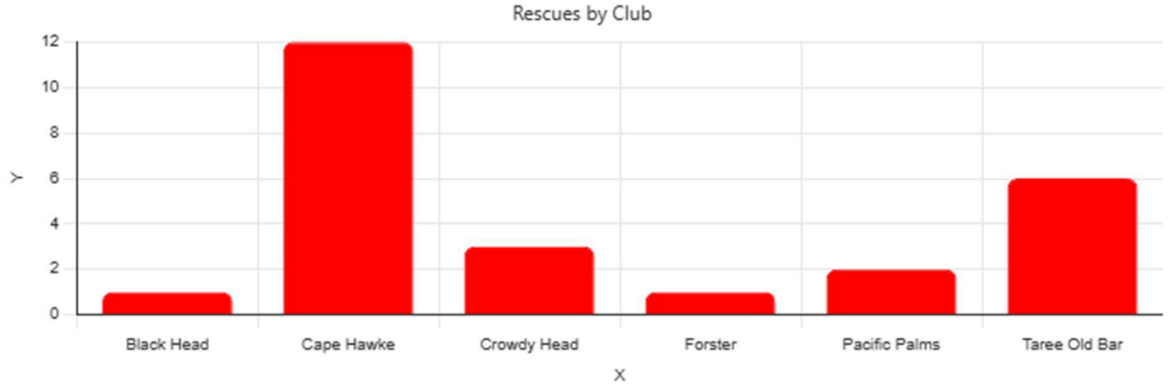
Cape Hawke recorded the **highest number of rescues** in the branch, reflecting challenging surf conditions and frequent rips at One Mile beach, both which contribute to flagging a potential water safety blackspot. Patrol members delivered a high number of preventions, reinforcing the importance good beach management and swimming between the flags – particularly considering the high visitation during peak times.

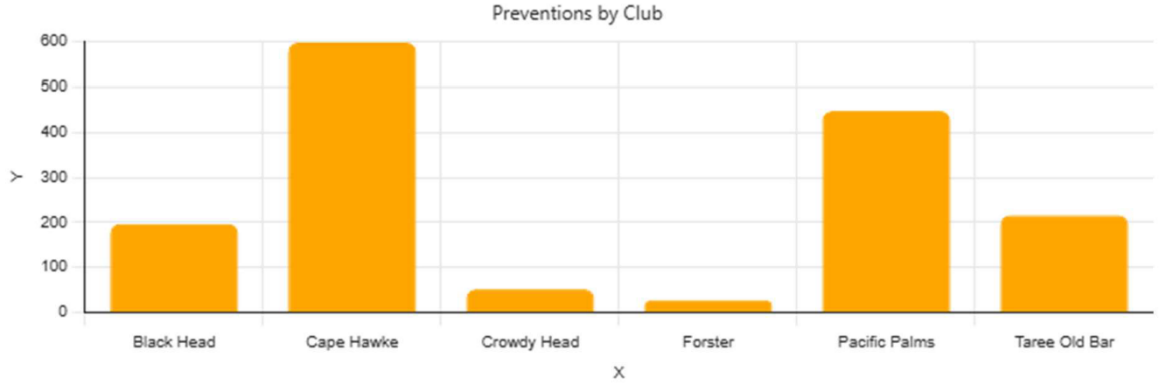
Pacific Palms SLSC

Pacific Palms patrols dealt with significant marine stinger activity, including bluebottles, resulting in stings, preventions and temporary closures. A strong focus on public warnings and signage helped minimize serious incidents.

Appendix – Club Statistics & Images







Surf Life Saving

Lower North Coast Branch Inc