



Guardians
of the Surf

Summer 2026

GUARDIAN'S VOICE



[SLSFOUNDATION.COM.AU](https://www.slsfoundation.com.au)

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THANK YOU FOR BEING AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR LIFESAVING MISSION

As we enter the first months of a new year, I wanted to reconnect, and, most importantly, say thank you. As a Guardian of the Surf and valued member of our Surf Life Saving community, your presence is felt across our Australian beaches and communities in every patrol, every future safeguarded, and every family reunited with their loved ones.

It's been another busy summer on our beaches, and while our heroes in red and yellow patrolled the sand watching over beachgoers, you stood beside them, the strength of your support felt in every patrol and every rescue. Month after month, you help fund essential training, maintain critical lifesaving equipment, and support patrols and rescue operations, ensuring our volunteer surf lifesavers are always ready to act when it matters most.

Thanks to your unwavering commitment to our lifesaving mission, thousands of lives have been saved and countless more tragedies have been prevented from occurring over the past year.



Each person rescued is somebody's loved one – a grandparent, mother, son, daughter, best friend – and all made it home safely because supporters like you are there, season after season to make sure they do.

Tragically, over the past year there were still precious lives lost to coastal drowning, all at unpatrolled locations or outside the red and yellow flags. As we know, even one life lost is one too many. That's why your continued support this year is so critical to our mission.

Your regular giving allows us to plan with confidence. It enables us to train and equip more volunteer surf lifesavers, strengthen prevention programs, and invest in smarter,

safer systems that protect people before danger arises. Your ongoing support helps ensure more beachgoers return home safely from the beach, now and into the future. Together, we can turn the tide on coastal drowning.

J. Brennan



JOHN BRENNAN OAM

HEAD OF FUNDRAISING AND COMMERCIAL
Surf Life Saving Australia



2025 - A MILESTONE YEAR FOR SURF LIFE SAVING

The iconic red and yellow has represented protection and courage on our coastlines for over a century, and last year marked an incredible milestone in the history of Surf Life Saving, with our membership surpassing **200,000 members** across 316 affiliated Surf Life Saving Clubs nationwide. Our members are the heartbeat of our organisation, and reaching this milestone reflects the enduring strength of our movement and the immense footprint Surf Life Saving has across the nation. It is an achievement we are immensely proud of.

A lifesaving commitment to serve their communities

Driven by a shared mission to save lives and serve their communities, almost **50,000 volunteer surf lifesavers** dedicated more than **1.4 million hours** of their own time to patrol our beaches over the past year. During that time, they saved the lives of **8,207 people**, returning them safely to their loved ones, performed **over 2 million preventative actions**, and administered over **65,000 first aid treatments**. Their selfless commitment helps ensure that everyone who enjoys our coastlines has the chance to return home safely. As a Guardian of the Surf, you are an important part of this mission, helping make our lifesaving work possible – and we thank you.

You can view more key statistics from the 2024/25 National Coastal Safety Report, by visiting https://issuu.com/surflifesavingaustralia/docs/slsa_ncsr_2025 and read more about our volunteer surf lifesavers on page 7 of this newsletter.

\$433,123 raised for Surf Life Saving

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Ampol Foundation for the incredible **\$433,123 raised** through in-store fundraising at Ampol Foodary locations across the country over November 2025.

This extraordinary act of generosity represents more than a donation; it is a powerful show of trust from communities nationwide in our heroes in red and yellow who stand watch over our beaches every day. Donations will equip volunteers with the advanced skills needed to save lives, including coastal and remote rescue capabilities, emergency response training, and flood and swift-water rescue techniques, ensuring teams are prepared for emergencies across Australia. Together, we are helping save lives and protect those visiting our coastlines.

✓ STOP 🛑

- Before you enter the water
- Wear a lifejacket when boating, rock fishing or paddling

✓ LOOK 👁️

- For the red and yellow flags, if they're on the beach swim between them
- For signs and warnings about the sea
- At the conditions and weather forecast
- For rip currents and other dangers
- Always supervise children in, on and around water

✓ STAY ALIVE ❤️

- Assess the conditions based on your own ability
- If it's unsafe, don't swim
- Don't go alone
- Avoid alcohol and drugs around water

STOP ✓ LOOK ✓ STAY ALIVE ✓

Complete the online Beach Passport for basic training and education on water safety, and visit beachsafe.org.au to find a patrolled beach and for latest safety advice.



KINGSTON BEACH SLSC

Building community, leadership and resilience in extraordinary circumstances

Thirteen kilometres south of Hobart, Kingston Beach Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) stands as one of the southernmost surf life saving clubs in Australia. Established in 2009, the club exemplifies the impactful role surf life saving clubs play in their communities.

The club's welcoming and community-focused nature has fast become its personality and culture, and with its people-first approach and emphasis on building connections and belonging, Kingston Beach SLSC ensures there is a place for everyone in Surf Life Saving.

"Essentially, we've had a short life but a very fast evolution," says Club President, Danielle Campbell. "We're growing fast and now have 430 members, 70 active patrolling members, and 190 nippers."

Challenges and Resilience

Kingston Beach SLSC operates under extraordinary and challenging conditions, including no physical clubhouse. Instead, the club operates out of two sheds, one to hold their Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRBs), and one to house patrol gear and nipper equipment. The lack of a clubhouse means the club has limited facilities including no running hot water and creates the enormous challenge of no physical presence to aid with additional fundraising or provide a physical hub for members and the community.



"It's an interesting characteristic of our club," says Danielle. "We decided that we wouldn't let that define us. We're proud of the fact that we can operate without four walls and a roof. We have a strong culture and the resilience within our club is a big part of how we can offer so much to the community."

Without a physical hub to unite members, the club relies on intentional culture, relationship building, and human connection to build and maintain morale, belonging, and retention. It has established itself as an indispensable community asset, playing a vital role in ensuring safety, wellbeing, and belonging in the local community with an impact that stretches well beyond the beach.



Community Engagement, Services, and Programs

1. Lifesaving Services



The club's core function is to protect beachgoers. The dedicated team of volunteers patrol the beach, respond to emergencies, and provide water safety education across the region. Their efforts are crucial in preventing drownings and other water-related incidents, not just at popular Kingston Beach, but throughout the southwest of Tasmania, where families, young people, international students, and migrants form a large part of the beachgoing community; many with limited swimming or water safety skills.

"We had a rescue this year where three young men got into trouble very quickly, they completely underestimated the conditions," Danielle recounts. "We had quite a young patrol that day, and our younger members responded immediately and saved their lives."

Beyond the beach, the club has also been called in to support bushfire evacuation efforts. While they didn't have to act in the end, the situation gave members a real insight into the expanding role of surf life saving clubs in disaster response, prompting scenario training to prepare members for future emergency situations.

2. Nipper Program



The club proudly runs one of Tasmania's largest Nipper programs, hosting 190 nippers between the ages of five and thirteen-years-old every Sunday morning between November and March.

3. Starfish Nippers Program



The club also runs a Starfish Nippers program, providing children with disabilities and additional needs the opportunity to build confidence in the water while developing vital surf safety skills, in a fun and inclusive environment.

4. Silver Salties



Empowerment and individual aspirations play a key role in Kingston Beach SLSC's Silver Salties Program, where older community members are supported to achieve their own personal goals, whether that is to reconnect with the ocean, regain water confidence, or engage socially.

5. A focus on youth leadership and empowerment



The youth of today are the future of Surf Life Saving, and Kingston Beach SLSC places a strong focus on youth development and retention.

"Our youth are such an important part of our club and future," says Danielle. "We realised to keep them at the club we needed to empower and involve our youth beyond lifesaving services."

The club's extensive Youth Leadership Program provides leadership pathways for members aged thirteen years and up. Designed to nurture young leaders who can contribute positively to society, the program equips young adults with leadership skills, community service values, and confidence.

6. Outreach programs for migrant communities



Recognising the need for inclusive water safety education and community connection, and conscious of the discomfort that can come with a parent not having the personal water safety and swimming skills to engage their child in swimming lessons, the club works closely with migrant communities and international students.

"We're proactive about providing support," says Danielle. "Prevention techniques are just as important as standing on the beach waiting for someone to get in trouble."

One way the club engages with migrant communities is by actively going to trusted community spaces such as health centres and playgroups, to engage with families in a space that is comfortable and safe for them.

This article has been abridged from the original case study which was carried out as part of SLSC's Disaster Resilience and Community Preparedness Project. You can read the full case study on SLSC's website here: Case Study: <https://sls.com.au/case-study-kingston-beach-slsc/?highlight=kingston%20beach%20slsc>



RED & YELLOW DAY

4 MARCH 2026



WEAR THE COLOURS. FLY THE FLAGS.

When you back the surf lifesavers, you can help save lives too.

redandyellowday.org.au

There are two colours every Australian knows to look for on the beach. Two flags that offer a place for everyone. The red and yellow. They mark a line in the sand that stands for one thing: saving lives.

On March 4, 2026, Surf Life Saving Australia will launch the very first national Red & Yellow Day, a nationwide celebration of the volunteers who dedicate their time, energy, and courage to keeping Australia's beaches safe.

Red & Yellow Day invites people across Australia to show their support for surf lifesavers, the men and women who show up, season after season, in selfless service.

Because when you back the volunteer surf lifesavers on Red & Yellow Day, you can help save lives too.

How you can get involved



WEAR IT

Show your colours by dressing in red and yellow on 4th March.



FLY IT

Display the iconic flags or red and yellow colours at your school, workplace, or community event.

SUPPORT IT

Donate or host your own fundraiser.

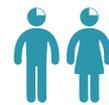


LIVE IT

Join your local Surf Life Saving Club or simply commit to swimming between the red and yellow flags.



Why It Matters



200,000+
VOLUNTEERS



8,207 RESCUES*



2.19MILLION
PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS*



65,942
FIRST AID TREATMENTS*



\$9BILLION
VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY



1,469,465
VOLUNTEER PATROL HOURS*

* In 2024/2025

By uniting in red and yellow, Australians can show surf lifesavers that they are valued, supported, and never alone in their mission.

Visit the Red & Yellow Day website here:

<https://redandyellowday.org.au/>

View more info about Red & Yellow Day here:

<https://sls.com.au/slsa-launches-first-ever-red-and-yellow-day/>



OUR HEROES IN RED AND YELLOW - THE HEART OF BEACH SAFETY

Volunteer surf lifesavers are at the very heart of beach safety as they stand watch to ensure we can enjoy time spent on our Aussie coastlines. They are parents, students, and professionals, everyday people, who give their time freely to protect others. They patrol our beaches, train tirelessly, rescue those in danger, assist in the community during times of emergency and natural disaster, deliver lifesaving first aid, and calmly respond in times of desperate need when they are needed most.

Their commitment goes beyond patrol hours. It also lies in their deep sense of responsibility to their communities and a shared purpose to keep everyone safe in the water. Volunteer surf lifesavers don't seek recognition - they serve because they care. Through their dedication, skill, and courage, countless lives are protected, and families and friends are reunited with their loved ones.



DHL Surf Lifesaver of the Year

DEREK BOWDEN

SEACLIFF SLSC, SA

In this edition of Guardian's Voice, we are pleased to feature DHL Surf Lifesaver of the Year, Derek Bowden, a member of Seacliff SLSC. Derek was recognised with this prestigious honour at SLSA's 2025 Awards of Excellence. The award recognises and rewards active members who have made an outstanding contribution to the delivery and development of surf lifesaving frontline services. Finalists for this award are nominated after being named their State's Surf Lifesaver of the Year.

Calm, capable, and committed, Derek Bawden is a respected figure at Seacliff SLSC, valued for his meticulous planning, hands-on knowledge, and dedication to keeping others safe. As a dedicated patrol member, trainer, and key figure in event water safety, Derek's impact extends across the beach, the clubhouse, and the wider South Australian lifesaving community. He plays a key role in equipment readiness, always volunteering with maintenance, refuelling and logistics to ensure that the club is always operational.

In the 2024/25 season, Derek combined operational skill with thoughtful leadership: mentoring new members, supporting multi-club activities, and sharing his experience across patrols and training. His service history includes stepping up during challenging coastal and flood conditions and contributing to State initiatives that improve preparedness and resilience.

Trusted, humble and always prepared, Derek is the teammate everyone wants. His quiet excellence and leadership skills have had an everlasting effect on his Club and the broader Surf Life Saving community.

To read more about SLSA's Awards of Excellence and those volunteer surf lifesavers who were nominated for this award, please visit <https://sls.com.au/aoe/2025-program/lifesaving-and-dhl-awards/>

A Lifesaving Legacy

to protect our beaches for generations to come

As a *Guardian of the Surf*, your support helps us plan, prepare, and save lives with confidence. Because of you, countless futures are safeguarded, people return home safely, families are reunited, and our beaches remain places of joy and security.

If you ever choose to extend your impact through a gift in your Will, you'll help ensure Surf Life Saving continues protecting beachgoers for generations to come, just as we are able to do because of your support today.

It's one of the most powerful ways to carry your legacy of compassion forward.

And because your peace of mind matters to us, we're pleased to offer...

...free access to

Will-Writing Services



making it simple to create or update your Will with confidence and ease.

Visit <https://slsfoundation.com.au/leave-a-gift-in-your-will> or scan the QR Code to find out more.



Thank for everything you do, today and every day.
Together, we're building a safer future.



Guardians
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