



Autumn 2025

GUARDIAN'S VOICE



SLSFOUNDATION.COM.AU

IN THIS ISSUE:

02

THANK YOU TO OUR
HEROES IN RED
AND YELLOW

03

YOUR TRUST HELPS MAKE
US AUSTRALIA'S SECOND
MOST TRUSTED CHARITY

04-05

SURF LIFE
SAVING'S CENTRE
OF EXCELLENCE

06

FORREST BEACH SLSC:
A SMALL SLSC, WITH
A BIG HEART

07

SLSA COASTAL SAFETY
BRIEF: UNPATROLLED
BEACHES

Back Cover

WRITE YOUR WILL
FOR FREE

THANK YOU TO OUR HEROES IN RED AND YELLOW FOR THEIR SELFLESS DEDICATION TO OUR LIFESAVING MISSION THIS SUMMER

As the patrol season comes to an end across much of Australia, we would like to extend our deep gratitude to our volunteer surf lifesavers on the sand, and to you, our dedicated Guardian of the Surf.

While our volunteers have been watching over beachgoers, your support has been quietly powering everything they do; from training, to equipment, to lifesaving patrols and rescue efforts. Because of your commitment, they were ready when it mattered most.

Over the busy summer period, our heroes in red and yellow **saved the lives of 5,522 people**. That is **5,522 people returned home** to their loved ones safely and given a second chance at life. Volunteer surf lifesavers also provided over **45,555 First Aid treatments** and made over **1.3 million preventative actions** – an incredible number that demonstrates the vital work they do on our beaches and out in our communities, when prevention can mean a tragedy avoided. Their actions and selfless dedication to their lifesaving mission, ensures we can enjoy that great Aussie tradition of a day spent at the beach.

These aren't just numbers. They're people — children, parents, grandparents — all brought safely home because someone like you stood behind them.

While patrols may be winding down in the south, our volunteer surf lifesavers in the north, including Broome, the Northern Territory, and Far North Queensland, are just getting started. Your regular giving helps ensure they too, are prepared for the season ahead.

Tragically, 51 lives were still lost to coastal drowning, all at unpatrolled locations or outside the flags. Whilst this is a 22% decrease in drownings from last summer, every life lost is a future cut short and a family and community grieving the loss of a loved one.

Every life lost is one too many, and that is why your ongoing support is so vital.

Your committed support ensures we can plan ahead. We can train and equip more volunteer surf lifesavers. We can build smarter, safer systems that protect people before danger arises.

J. Brennan



JOHN BRENNAN OAM

HEAD OF FUNDRAISING AND COMMERCIAL
Surf Life Saving Foundation
Surf Life Saving Australia

YOUR TRUST HELPS MAKE US AUSTRALIA'S SECOND MOST TRUSTED CHARITY



Thanks to your continued support, Surf Life Saving Australia has been named the second most trusted charity in the country — a reflection of the values you stand behind every time you give.

Since 1907, Surf Life Saving has been saving lives and building stronger, safer communities across Australia. But this recent recognition isn't just about what we do — it's about you.

It's about the trust you place in us, the belief you show in our mission, and the lifesaving impact your support makes possible.

In the 2024 Charity and Not-for-Profit RepTrak study, Surf Life Saving Australia achieved a record-high reputation score of 94.2; driven by deep emotional connection, consistent service, and the confidence people like you have in the work we do.



The Charity RepTrak study measures trust in Australian Charities through three key lenses:

- 1 Think:** How well an organisation delivers on key areas like service, innovation, and leadership.
- 2 Feel:** The level of admiration, trust, and respect people have for an organisation.
- 3 Do:** How likely people are to support, donate, or recommend an organisation.

Because of you, more people than ever feel connected to our mission and inspired to act.

SLSA's reputation growth was driven by emotional connection, showing that the Australian population not only see our lifesaving efforts but deeply believe in them.

Here's what stood out:

Lifesaving at the heart

Our mission to keep people safe resonates strongly, reinforcing why your support is so critical.

A trusted presence in the community

67% of Australians are familiar with SLSA, an increase from previous years, thanks to your advocacy and awareness.

Service and citizenship lead the way

Our strongest reputation drivers were delivering essential services (94.2) and making a meaningful contribution to society (94.8), areas made possible by your generosity.

Your support keeps SLSA crisis-proof, respected, and leading in safety and education. This recognition isn't just a reflection of SLSA, it's a reflection of the collective effort of our donors, volunteers, and supporters.

Your generosity allows us to:

Train and equip volunteer surf lifesavers

Every donation helps ensure our volunteers have the skills and gear needed to respond in emergencies.

Expand community safety programs

From First Aid training to disaster response, your support strengthens our ability to educate and protect.

Innovate for the future

New technology, training methods, and safety initiatives keep our lifesaving efforts at the highest standard.

Even among those who haven't yet donated, trust in Surf Life Saving remains high. But those who support us regularly — like you — feel a deeper connection to the lives being saved. And that connection strengthens everything we do.

Your belief in us helps us save precious lives and keep our Australian beaches safer. While this ranking is a proud moment, we know trust is built, not given.

That's why we remain committed to:

- Sharing the impact of your generosity so you can see the difference you make.
- Honouring your legacy with integrity and care.
- Continuing to lead in coastal safety, training and innovation.

Thank you for being a vital part of this story. Your generosity gives Surf Life Saving strength, purpose, and the trust of the country.

SURF LIFE SAVING'S CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



Advancing the Flood and Swift Water Rescue capabilities of volunteer surf lifesavers across the country

The impact of Surf Life Saving and the training of our volunteer surf lifesavers extends away from the beach and out into the community. At times of emergency, like flood, fire and other natural disasters, volunteer surf lifesavers play an important role in assisting with rescue and recovery operations alongside other emergency services.

In August 2023, Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) and Surf Life Saving Tasmania (SLST) announced the establishment of a National Centre of Excellence in Tasmania to further advance the Flood and Swift Water Rescue capabilities of volunteer surf lifesavers right across the country.

Background

The catalyst to this was a fire emergency in Tasmania in 2016. Whilst a massive rain event helped put out the fires, the consequence was mass flooding across the State. This led to identifying a shortfall in the State's ability to respond to flood water emergencies – and what followed was the conception of a vital training facility for flood and swift water rescue, Surf Life Saving Tasmania's Centre of Excellence.

The Centre of Excellence is an invaluable resource, proudly training emergency service personnel, including volunteer surf lifesavers from Tasmania and around Australia, in critical flood and swift water rescue techniques. A significant investment into international best practice training, resources, and research, means the Centre of Excellence has been recognised by emergency services, governments and even internationally as an example of best practice.

Impact on Communities

The Centre's ability to deliver courses related to flood and swift water rescue not only upskills volunteer surf lifesavers but has a real-life impact when Surf Life Saving is called upon to assist with an emergency response. This desperately needed skillset is critical to assisting communities around the country in times of emergency.

How Your Support Helps

The Centre of Excellence plays a critical role in training volunteer surf lifesavers to be ready to act in times of flood and swift water rescue, providing an enormously valuable resource to communities across Australia.

This would not be possible without your help. The Centre of Excellence is currently funded from Surf Life Saving Foundation fundraising, with \$150,000 per year committed over five years. The remainder of the funding has come from donations and grants.





What role do donations play in this project, and how can you make the biggest impact?

Donations have been critical in the establishment of the Centre of Excellence, funding over 60% of the Centre to date.

Your donation is invaluable in making a significant difference in key areas. This includes funds to provide the additional training to skill volunteer surf lifesavers to be able to respond to flood events, keeping the same communities and States safe both on and off the beach.

How are donor contributions used specifically?

Training

The cost for training volunteer surf lifesavers for flood and swift water teams is approximately \$1,000 for a Flood Boat Operator and another \$2,500 for a Swift Water Boat Operator. This does not include transport to Tasmania and other training locations, meals and accommodation.

Equipment:

- PPE – approximately \$2,000 per kit which includes a drysuit/flood protection suit, life jacket, helmet, boots, gloves, throw bag, head torch.
- Rescue equipment – approximately \$10,000 for core rescue equipment including technical rescue kits, wading poles, ropes, rescue rafts, modifying SLS IRB's, aquatic stretchers, trailers.

Research

Gap research for safe use of rescue vessels in flood waters and water speed.

A desperate race against the clock to save a man's life...



In one of the most remote parts of the Franklin River, two volunteer surf lifesavers, trained at the Centre, raced against the clock to save a man's life. They were prepared, equipped, and ready because of supporters who believed in this vision.

And one day, that supporter will be you.

Thank you for helping shape the future of Surf Life Saving on the beach, in floodwaters, and everywhere help is needed most.

WANT TO READ MORE?

To discover more lifesaving stories, scan the QR code.



FORREST BEACH SLSC: A SMALL SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB, WITH A BIG HEART



February 2025. A severe weather warning was issued across northern Queensland as wild storms battered the area, bringing torrential downpours and flash flooding that threatened to destroy homes, businesses, and properties. Residents of Forrest Beach were given a chilling warning – the flooding would be “potentially life-threatening”.

With flood waters rising, the small settlement faced a terrifying ordeal – cut off from its main centre, Ingham, and food, fuel, and other essential services for four to five days. For a small community with a significant population of elderly people and people with medical conditions needing support, the situation was catastrophic.

Facing disaster head-first, Forrest Beach SLSC acted; its members banding together without hesitation to help wherever they were needed – from essential service assistance to disaster coordination. The Club had equipment at hand – radios, Side by Side Vehicles (SSVs), an Inflatable Rescue Boat (IRB) and a BBQ.

But most importantly, it had committed volunteers with a community at heart.

A Disaster Hub was set up at the Forrest Beach Takeaway; a communication point for information and to record problems members of the community were facing. Skillsets were matched with the volunteer-base and community services, business and locals were contacted or came forward offering to help the emergency effort.

Young volunteer surf lifesavers played a vital role, using their lifesaving training and other skillsets to help in any way they could.

There were no doctors at Forrest Beach and one paramedic only. A health response team was coordinated by a Forrest Beach SLSC patrol member who is also a nurse. This included home visits, welfare checks and consultations at the Disaster Hub and medical centre. The health coordination effort was significant, and without the early set up would have resulted in several adverse outcomes.

But the support didn't stop once the flood waters receded. A Community Recovery BBQ was hosted by the Club – a collaborative effort between the Club, the local Progress Association, and the CWA. It provided a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together, debrief, and celebrate the tireless efforts and contributions of our volunteers during the flood. It was a reminder of the strength and resilience within the community.

Forrest Beach SLSC is a small rural Club run solely by volunteers. As demonstrated by their quick and selfless efforts to help their community in a time of crisis, the volunteer surf lifesavers have the needs of the local community at heart.

When you give regularly, you do more than support beach patrols. You create the foundation for community resilience. You ensure that even the smallest clubs, like Forrest Beach, can rise to meet moments of crisis.

Thank you for being a Guardian of the Surf – and a guardian of so many lives, in so many ways.

Your kindness in supporting Surf Life Saving, means you become part of these stories – a silent hero behind every safe return, every child hugged tighter, every life saved. With your support we can shape countless more stories like this; **moments of quiet heroism, made possible by our shared mission.**





SLSA COASTAL SAFETY BRIEF: UNPATROLLED BEACHES

Over the last 10 years*, 630 people have fatally drowned on unpatrolled beaches across Australia. Behind that number are precious lives that ended too soon. Sons, fathers, daughters, friends; many of them unaware of the dangers in our oceans.

The data paints a clear picture:

630 DROWNING DEATHS AT UNPATROLLED BEACHES DURING THE 10-YEAR PERIOD

85% MALE

59% WHILE SWIMMING OR WADING

36% DUE TO RIP CURRENTS

25% OUTSIDE OF PATROLLED HOURS OR AWAY FROM SUPERVISED AREAS ON A PATROLLED BEACH

60% OCCURRED GREATER THAN 1KM FROM AN SLS SERVICE

66% OCCURRED AT BEACHES THAT ARE NEVER PATROLLED

It's a sobering reminder that the safest place to swim is always between the red and yellow flags, and how vitally important it is that we can continue our lifesaving mission, working together to protect beachgoers and prevent tragedies from occurring.

As a Guardian of the Surf, your generosity helps us take meaningful action — not just when rescues are needed, but before danger strikes. Through our shared vision we can:

- Extend lifesaving services to more high-risk coastal locations.
- Train and equip new generations or surf lifesavers.
- Continue research that guides smarter safety decisions.
- Deliver education campaigns that change behaviour before danger strikes.

Safety tips from SLS Australia

Coastal locations can present dangers, some that you can see and some that you can't. When visiting a beach, always remember to **Stop, Look, Stay Alive**.

Whether for yourself, your family, or those you care about, always follow these simple steps:

STOP before you enter the water

LOOK for red and yellow flags, signs, rips and conditions

STAY ALIVE by swimming to your ability, never going alone, and brushing up on safety knowledge with the Beach Passport

You can also find your nearest patrolled beach by visiting beachsafe.org.au or downloading the **Beachsafe App**.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DO?

Every time a family chooses a patrolled beach...Every time someone learns how to spot a rip...Every time a volunteer responds to an emergency...Your generosity is there — quietly, powerfully, and life-savingly present. *Your commitment as a Guardian of the Surf is changing lives — and saving them.*



*2014–2024

Your impact is felt in every rescue. Every safe return. Every moment on the sand.

As a Guardian of the Surf, your support has helped us plan, prepare, and save lives with confidence.

If you ever choose to extend your impact through a gift in your Will, you will be helping ensure that our Surf Life Saving mission continues for generations to come; protecting tomorrow's beachgoers just as we do today.

We'd love to support you, too.

With Surf Life Saving you can

Write your Will
for free

We're pleased to offer **free access to Will-writing services**, so you can create or update your Will with ease and peace of mind.



Visit slsfoundation.com.au/article/free-will or scan the QR Code to find out more.



**Thank you for all that you do and the impact you
make on the lives of so many.**

Together, we're building a safer future.



**Guardians
of the Surf**

SLSFOUNDATION.COM.AU



190 Montpelier Rd, Bowen Hills, QLD 4006



1800 642 925



GPO Box 9950, IN YOUR CAPITAL CITY

ACN: 159 849 591

ABN: 47 945 812 553



slsfundraising



@slsfoundation



@SLSaustralia