

# BEYOND THE BREAK

**Randwick's  
Surf Rescue 30**

Newsletter of the  
Randwick Offshore  
Rescue Boat Service



## LIVING BEYOND YOUR COMFORT ZONE ...

### Sydney Branch Surf Life Saving's Rescue of the Year

Recently, I read an article in my son's school newsletter which posed the question "Why push for change when things are okay as they are?" In other words, for many of us life in the comfort zone suits them just fine. Why do many of us prefer to stay in our comfort zone?

This question resonated with me as I reflected upon a rescue last season at Lurline Bay involving Brad Taylor (Skipper, Garie SLSC), Karl Solomonson (Driver, Maroubra SLSC), Matt Spooner (Crew, Coogee SLSC) and Jeome Dillion Baker (Crew, Coogee SLSC). The seas on the day were quite extraordinary. I know this because I was hunkering down on a wind blown Maroubra Beach at a nipper surf carnival at the time watching my son competing where the majority of water events had been called off due to the rapidly deteriorating surf conditions. With the temperature hovering around 15 degrees, the seas were a solid 8 - 10 foot face of water and the power of the waves could be felt on the beach with continual bass like pounding of the surf; and the sea spray stinging the eyes. Beyond the surf zone was a bubbling cauldron of rips and wave crests.

As I sat on the beach I saw our yellow craft fly past Maroubra and I overheard someone nearby to where I was squatting remarking - "Gee, those guys are game!."

I guess, instinctively I knew; after all I know all the crew members well enough as mates to realise that unless there was a rescue tasking they would not be chancing their luck "out-the-back" on a day like this.

What I didn't know at this stage was that at this very moment there was a man fighting for his life off the rocks at Lurline Bay. The man had been fishing on a ledge some 10 feet above the water when a rogue wave caused him to lose his footing and he tumbled in. For him there was no way out with the seas relentlessly battering the cliffs sending spray and sea mist hundreds of feet into the air. When Surf Rescue 30 arrived on scene, they had difficulty even locating the distressed fisherman - as he was under water longer than he was above it. Our crews knew from experience to cast their eyes skywards to the cliff tops. Police and members of the public on the cliff tops were frantically signalling - where he was last sighted.



#### **Motley Crew**

from left to right - Chris Dolman (Driver), Brad Taylor (Skipper), Cato (Driver) and Serge Vegh (Skipper) enjoy the Taste of Coogee Gala night in support of Surf Rescue 30. Note young Brad in a bow tie! More details of this great fund raiser inside

## Rescue of the year (Cont'd)

Our crews had already donned their 3-5 mm customised wetsuits and were wearing hi-viz Gath Helmets for head protection. One of our youngest crew members, after consulting with the Skipper, left the safety of the vessel with fins, mask and snorkel and rescue tube and swam in the general direction of the patient. The patient was in the surf zone and it was simply too dangerous for the craft to get in that close to the rocks. It took him some time to locate the patient, who at this stage was in a dire situation - succumbing to the seas and now spending far more time beneath the raging seas than above them. Our crew secured the patient in the rescue tube and swam him back to the craft. Once on board the craft, the awaiting crews had defibrillator and oxy viva at the ready. The patient was in a bad way - vomiting a bright mixture of blood and water onto the Kevlacat's sunshine yellow deck- but at least he was alive. Crews worked on stabilising him before he was ferried back to Maroubra beach and awaiting paramedics. The paramedics assessed him and worked to stabilise him for almost an hour before transporting him to hospital.

We never heard from this fellow again. I sometimes have caught myself asking: did he have a family? - a wife? a son? a daughter?

What were his dreams and aspirations? Did he realise how close to death he came that day?

Turning back to that initial question I posed at the start of this article - there can be no doubt this crew demonstrated the essence of living beyond their comfort zones. This crew were prepared to push their personal boundaries using their surf lifesaving skills and training and the solidarity and security that comes from working as part of a close knit team and looking after each other as mates. This crew displayed the key traits of loyalty, integrity, faith and tradition - all key qualities of leaders in surf lifesaving. In doing so they achieved the extraordinary and saved another human being's life and in the process hopefully helped salvage a family's dreams; even if this family never realised this. For this they deserved the accolade of 2014 Sydney Branch Rescue of the Year - so well done! Just as importantly these types of rescues demonstrate the Surf Life Saving Vision of having an agile, fit for purpose 365 x 24 rescue ability relevant to the communities in which we fly the flag.

But perhaps more importantly, and relevantly, this type of rescue tasking has always been part of our Group's DNA and it's what makes us unique: *Surf Rescue 30 - Safer Oceans, Safer Beaches, Safer Lives.*

## WELL DONE



Off the cliffs of  
"the Bra"

### Our Crewie awards

We recently held our annual crew get together down at the Coogee Bay Hotel. It was a terrific night - as usual. Well done to Brett Phillips who was awarded the 2013/14 Crew of the Year. Brett only gained his crew award this year, yet he plunged right into it; and the Captain's Award went to Chris Dolman. Chris is an "old salt" and always just seemed to be there to help out or offer a sounding board for new and old members. Well deserved Chris!

# RANDWICK SURF RESCUE 30 WAS A STAR ATTRACTION



## The Taste of Coogee Foodie Fair and Gala Night

There's an old saying "a community is like a ship - everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm". Well, earlier this season this was true, quite literally, for Surf Rescue 30 with our craft showcasing to the Randwick community surf lifesaving 'up and close and personal' at the Taste of Coogee Festival at Dunningham Reserve on famous Coogee Beach. Check out the photos - and these were snapped during the quieter moments. The weather was terrific and the crowds came out to play; enjoy terrific food; and entertainment - read us here! Children and parents alike clambered all over the craft for a gold coin donation - frankly it was often quite hard to tell who was having more fun - the mums and dads; or the kids!

We had many comments like: "Wow - we see you guys off the coast all time, so this is who you are and what you do" and "She's big up close" and my personal favorite, a father to his young son - "This is what you will be doing one day when you finish Nippers". Yep, there's

nothing quite like getting up close and personal to build respect and understanding. On the day the craft raised close to \$1000 in gold coin donations alone.

"One day  
this will be  
you ..."

The "taster" to the main event was the Gala Night hosted by Coogee Bay Hotel and the Coogee Chamber of Commerce. With a Great Gatsby theme - it was an absolute corker of a night - great food thanks to the CBH, Campari's' and Italian beers and wine. The auction was a hit with signed rugby league footie jumpers; holidays; a 1960's fully restored original pink Vespa; dinners; spas; and an experience on Surf Rescue 30 for a day complete with a lifesaver's brekkie all up for grabs. And it was capped off with a cabaret and great music with a Great Gatsby Jazz and vocal band! The Gala night raised over \$5,000 for the Group. Thanks to all those who attended and a special thanks to Kylie, Bernadette, BJ and Aiden for organising this stellar and most memorable fundraising event!

### QUICK HITS



### RAFFLES

**Fundraising continues**  
This year our Thursday night raffles down at the CBH continued. 30 mins is all it takes and the money goes straight to our bottom line and we have a quiet ale afterwards and chew the fat.

### BEERS OF THE WORLD

**Feel like sinking some suds after patrol...**  
and chewing the fat with mates ... sample some of the strangest beers of the world for a gold coin without leaving Malabar. For those not getting their daily fruit intake - try a belgium beer with fruit added! OK Jarrod, as our most worldly travelled crew member it's beers of the not coins of the world - it's driving our Treasurer crazy!

### WHO SAID THAT?

**Guess who said this ...**  
"Wow, we've got some terrific new equipment on the craft since last season...  
Guys, what's this new piece of fandangled equipment?" (as s/he pull out a new chamois in its case from the Skipper's glove box). Fair dinkum, what a muppet!!

## CAPTAIN'S CORNER



### Prace says...

Once again another season has come and gone - where's 2014/2015 gone?

As highlighted in other sections of this newsletter our members have had their skills tested in performing some major rescues as well as carrying out minor rescues, first aids and preventive actions. All of which are as important as each other.

We are a small team with a big work load - not only patrolling but doing all the behind the scenes tasks that make it possible for the boat to be on the water and rescue ready 24/7.

The Callout team were kept busy this season with a number of after hours taskings coming in at all hours and I thank our Callout team for making that extra effort in attending these taskings.

The Group's Executive has worked hard this year in leading the group in each of their roles and working towards making goals reality which at times has been challenging, and I thank you all for your hard work.

I would like to thank everyone for their hard work this season especially those who have done above and beyond what is expected because it is you guys that provide the spirit that this group thrives on and as the old saying goes "many hands make like work."

Enjoy the off season and I look forward to next season ,and for those in training, let's make a date in August for some winter training and assessments.

Cheers,  
*Prace.*

## Four Rescued Off a rock shelf at Yena Gap, Kurnell following a boating accident

*"Courage is being scared to death... and saddling up anyway"* - John Wayne

Four people were rescued earlier this year after their boat washed on to rocks on Saturday at Kurnell.

Emergency services were called to Cape Solander at around 3pm on 8 November after reports a boat had run aground. Surf Rescue 30 was tasked by SurfCom following a call to the Surf Rescue emergency number. At the time Surf Rescue 30 was off Bronte and there were reports of rough weather on its way with a solid nor-easter of 30 knots and a rising swell.

A police rescue helicopter which had responded to the incident spotted an upturned fishing boat washed up on the rocks at Yena Gap South of the entrance of Botany Bay.

When Surf Rescue 30 arrived, in attendance were NSW Maritime, Marine Rescue NSW and Polair had landed on a rock platform at the bottom of the cliffs about 250 metres away. Young Matt Harrison (Coogee SLSC) was prepped with 5mm wetsuit, booties, Gath Helmet and waterproof radio. The tide was low and on the turn and the seas had whipped up and rock access was tricky. A risk assessment was carried out and it was decided Mattie would go. Years of mis-spent youth on Coogee's rock platforms provided invaluable training for Mattie for this moment. We discussed entry and extraction points with Mattie and the Randwick Lifeguard on the jett

ski and Matt was off. He made getting onto the rock platform look easy!

Once on the platform, Matt worked closely with the Polair crewman. On the stricken vessel was a male skipper and three females - the youngest being about 10! Matt remained with the Skipper and a female patient whilst the Polair rescue crewman escorted the young girl and her mother to Polair Helicopter which had landed upon the rock platform. Time was tight with a rising tide and deteriorating sea conditions. Matt had to do some swift talking to coax the female patient from the stricken vessel which was perched on the rock platform and being tossed about on the rocks like a piece of flotsam.

When Polair returned for the last two patients the wind had increased and with the turbulence round the cliff base it took Polair four attempts to land on the rock platform. Mattie escorted the last two of the vessels crew to the awaiting helicopter. This had all the hallmarks of a tragedy and how the vessel managed not to capsize was a miracle. What distinguished us from all the other services in attendance was our ability to place a crew on the rocks and remain in contact with all the services

This comment was posted on social media, presumably by one of the patients rescued:

*Thank u to all those involved in our rescue. We are all very appreciative. No matter how big or courageous or skilled u are, when unforeseen circumstances arise then unfortunately u become powerless. Thanks again to all involved.*

How true. Fortunately, our crews excel when confronted by unforeseen circumstances. There's an old saying that "when you are down to your last chance it had better be a good one" and thankfully on this day the crew of this stricken vessel was blessed with a mixture of



## News

### General Boat maintenance

The craft has been down to Hunt's Marine several times this season with Karl and his service team doing their best to ensure we're in tip top shape - lets face it in conditions like those mentioned in this newsletter we don't get 2nd chances. The engines have received a major service (after some injector issues) and the superstructure needed some TLC after a close encounter with some low hanging branches on Fishermans Road (Tip for happy campers # 1 - when driving down Fishermans Road at Malabar with the boat under tow-drive up the middle of the road to avoid the trees). The trailer brakes have been serviced so we'll continue to stop with confidence. Reminder to Skippers to report breakages and issues in the log and then give Captain Gary a "bell" to let him know so we can make arrangements to get things fixed/replaced quickly. Finally, the last few weeks of the season has seen some issues with the 4WD with some corrosion issues pulling us off line. We ask all crews to hose the underside of the 4WD using the hose in the fishos skids shed when it is pulled from the water at Malabar it only takes a few minutes and it will assist keep the 4WD in tip top shape.

Finally on the last day of the season, the boat developed some steering issues - timely to begin our winter maintenance.

### Base Spring Clean

Gary has been busy doing some interior re-modelling around the shed - primarily to move the office out of the Kitchen/bathroom/shower area. The desk is now in the main base

area and houses all our comms as well - base radios, portables, mobile etc.. Please keep this area free of rubbish and personal items. If you want to store keys and wallets the large cabinet in the kitchen is the perfect place for this.

On the subject of the shed renos to bring us out of the 1960's - your executive is continuing to pursue options in an effort to secure funding for this project. That said you will now have all noticed the front roller doors are all motorised and a new security door has been installed at the base entrance which will buy us some time whilst we work with all stakeholders.

### Thank you

Thank you to Surf Lifesaving NSW for their donation to the Group to assist with the running of the craft this season. Additionally we'd like to thank both Surf Lifesaving NSW and Sydney Branch for their dollar for dollar grant to allow the Group to purchase new Digital Base Radios, Patrol Uniforms for 2016 and new lifejackets which will be water activated - the latter being a vital and more comfortable piece of safety equipment that gives our crew added peace of mind when patrolling.

Whilst on the subject of thanking supporters, a special mention should go to Koppers, who very kindly donated funds to be used to procure a universal defibrillator with pediatric capability. As we all know, and highlighted by recent reports, child drownings are on the increase so this will be a vital piece of equipment for us going forward. This new equipment further extends our rescue capabilities so thanks for the support.

## VALE KEN BLAKIE



### It is with a heavy heart that the Group's executive learned of the recent passing of Ken Blakie

When I joined JRB 3, the predecessor to Surf Rescue 30, back in the early 80's with George Shales and Karl Solomonson, Ken was somewhat of a legend - larger than life. Ken was the Captain of the Group and a member of Maroubra SLSC. I can still remember the launch of the KJ Quinn - a 23 foot Mutimer hull Jet Rescue Boat powered by a whopping 260 hp V8 Chevy motor. The Mutimer hull replaced the Smith hull and its bulbous bow was based on a whale was designed to float and right itself after a capsize, something we "tested" at Maroubra in 15 foot swells! Ken's skills handling JRB 3 in a 10 foot surf at Maroubra and Bondi were phenomenal - he was certainly one of the best jet boat drivers around saving many lives. As a mentor to young members such as myself and George Shales he was truly exceptional.

Ken held the Group together at the time we had little money and few crew. In many ways, his passion for the Group was infectious and what is clear now, all these years later, is that he developed a sound succession plan to ensure the Group was sustainable well into the future. Ken passed the baton across as Captain a few years before we retired JRB 3 and transitioned to the cats. His impact was such that his passing inspired a *Friends of JRB 3* Group on Facebook - wow, some of those photos and names are a blast from the past! Check out the rollover at Maroubra! Great memories and a great tribute.

Ken's legacy and the values he showcased live on today in Surf Rescue 30: the surf continues to roll long after the ride is over.



# TWO PEOPLE DIE

## and a third patient rescued after their boat capsized off Kurnell

Not a month after the rescue referred to on page 4 and tragedy strikes on our coast. In what can only be described as sheer folly, in massive seas three fisherman found themselves at the mercy of huge seas after their small fishing vessel capsized after being hit by what was described as a rogue wave and hurled onto the rocks off Kurnell where it quickly broke up.

When we arrived Westpac Lifesaver and the air ambulance were on scene. Westpac transported the two men to shore where they were later pronounced dead. Meanwhile, our rescue Crew, James "the mallee bull" Caterson, prepared to enter the water following a risk assessment to render assistance to the sole survivor on the rock. Cato was transported to a potential entry point by the Randwick Lifeguards on the back of their jetski. Cato tried three times to scale the rocks- but the conditions were simply too trying and he made the decision to abandon the rescue. Let's face it, those of us who know Cato know that if he could not get up, then there was next to "none and buckley's" chance of anyone getting up on those rocks.

The swells on the day were huge - and it was absolutely unbelievable that anyone would venture out in these conditions and it begged belief that none of the vessel's occupants were wearing a lifejacket.

Speaking to Cato after the rescue he said it "was crazy stuff mate ... - it's amazing people go

to sea and do not dress for safety. Lifejackets buy time so if you wear nothing else wear a life jacket - after all life vests float, we don't!". Wise words Cato!

### Winter Maintenance Schedule

As we cruise towards the end of the season its been a mixed bag weather in Sydney - *Stomagedon* followed by the last remnants of Autumn - check out this photo of Lurline Bay during the recent storms - an area

where we have conducted many rescues over the years and the location for the rescue mentioned in page 1 of this newsletter - these cliffs are at least 50 feet high with multi million dollar homes perched on top!



"It was crazy stuff mate" ... the remnants of the mens' boat



During Winter Surf Rescue 30 will be going down to Splits Fibreglassing for its annual "fibreglass facial" and we're also looking at undertaking some major engine maintenance including getting to the bottom of those steering issues alluded to above. All gear will be cleaned and restocked in anticipation of next season. There will be a reconfiguration of the storage

areas with new seats installed and the new digital enabled UHF radio will be installed as well as a VHF and our temperamental skippers windscreen wiper will be replaced!. Additionally some of you will have noticed the VHF radio aerial on our new radio base tower has developed a bit of a "dog's leg". This will be replaced to ensure crystal clear reception. Winter's looking to be a busy time.

### Well done to our new crews

A big pat on the back to our new crews who recently attained their various awards. Serge Vegh, Skipper (North Bondi); Steve Denholm, Driver (Maroubra); Callum Good, Driver (Garie); Gerry Stephenson, Driver (North Bondi); Steve Denholm, Driver (Maroubra); Jed Goggin, Crew (Maroubra); Matt Evans, ORB Assessor, (Maroubra); Brett Phillips, Crew (Coogee); Molly Cox, Crew (Clovelly); Rosie Taliano, Crew (North Bondi);

Pleasingly, Jarrod our Chief Instructor and his team, has a number of trainee Skippers, Drivers and Crew in training so there should be another honour roll mention towards the start of next season. Well done!

### Save the dates

As we reach for our UGG boots a couple of events worthy of marking in your dance cards folks:

- 🕒 Sunday 21 June 2015 at 9:30 am Brekkie @ the CBH - always a great informal get together where we'll agree positions for next season, talk some "shop" and catch up generally.
- 🕒 Saturday 11 July 2015 from 7pm - Presentation Night. More details to follow up shortly.

### Quick Hits

- 🕒 Serge Vegh recently competed in his first Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race - big bucket list tick off Sergio!
- 🕒 Karl took out a bronze medal recently in the Champion Lifesaver competition held at Coogee. Rumour has it that Karl topped the theory but there was a surprise practical on reversing the 4WD which cost him valuable points!



### BEYOND THE BREAK

#### RANDWICK DISTRICT OFFSHORE RESCUE BOAT

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*safer beaches, safer coastline, safer lives*

## STOP PRESS

As we write go into print the Sydney Branch awards of excellence were held recently at the Randwick Club in Sydney's east. This is the Sydney Branch SLS equivalent of the Oscars and, once again, our members contributions featured prominently in the Lifesaving Awards for 2014/2015 capping of what has been a terrific season for our crews of which we should all be proud.

The ORB Member award went to James Catterson (Wanda) who had a sensational season as Vice Captain.

James gained his Offshore Driver's award and put in a lot of work on the craft during the course of the season and at Executive and Crew meetings was always

*Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.*

valuable contributor. James was also in lights as a crewie on several difficult rescue taskings this season.

The Sydney Branch Support Operations Group Member of the year award was taken out by Gerry Stephenson (ORB Driver, North Bondi). Gerry just seems to go on from strength-to-strength in his usual unflappable way with a good dose of dry and witty English humour thrown in (let's face it, there are not many people who can have you laughing in 3-metre swells 5 kms offshore!). As a duty officer ("Rose Bay 15") there's something calming and reassuring when you hear Gerry's dulcet tones at the other end of the UHF radio and you're in in gale force winds and big seas. He's an old school dependable surf life saver. In true Eastern suburbs style, whenever we have a tasking which requires the crews to retrieve at Rose Bay, Gerry is always quick to offer crews a latte. As a driver on Surf Rescue 30

Rosie on Surf Rescue 30!



Gerry is a typical Gen X - a thinking persons's surf lifesaver. And last, but definitely not least, Rosie Taliano, (ORB Crew, North

Bondi) did us all proud being crowned with one of the highest individual accolades of the night as U/21 2015 Sydney Branch Lifesaver of the Year. Rosie has only been with the crew a relatively short time but has always given 150%, earning her Offshore Crew Award and is currently in training for her Driver's Award. Rosie is living proof that the greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but reveal to him/her his/her own. Very well deserved Rosie!

Again, well done Cato, Gerry and Rosie, Dr Seuss would be proud!

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[www.surfrescue30.com.au](http://www.surfrescue30.com.au)

### Key Supporters:

Randwick City Council

Randwick District Executive SLS

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