

FSC LIFESAVING

MONTHLY UPDATE - DECEMBER 2018



UAVs are in the air

Tathra and Pambula SLSCs have launched their UAV operations to a great response from the public. Operations are going smoothly so far and the UAV pilots are enjoying their time in the air. I'd like to thank the pilots for taking on the task with such enthusiasm and the new "UAV Rooms" at Tathra and Pambula look great.

I'd particularly like to thank Matt Alterator (Tathra) and Greg and Connor Leayr (Pambula) who have taken on the roles of UAV Captains at their respective clubs. It's always tough to lead a pilot project so I appreciate your patience, enthusiasm and great insights into how things could be tweaked for improvement.



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We also had our Branch Duty Officer team take the training this past weekend with a goal of being able to deploy the UAVs during emergency call outs for search purposes. We'll also make the Duty Officer UAVs available for Branch Carnivals to do a sweep of the water at different times during the day.

PROFILE OF THE MONTH

Batemans Bay Double Rescue

On Christmas Day the Batemans Bay patrol team was nearing the end of their shift when teens Angus and Lexus Knight went in to the water for a body surf. It wasn't long before they noticed two swimmers in trouble outside the flags at the northern end of the beach.

They quickly swam over the assist and one man was already face down in the water while the other was panicking at the situation. Angus rolled the one man face up while Lexus went to assist the other man. They were helped by a member of the public who gave his foam board to use as a flotation device.

In the meantime another teen patroller, Sam Reedy, had noticed what was happening and grabbed a rescue board to assist. While the teens made their way to shore with the two men, patrollers on the beach were arriving with the O2 and first aid kits and the defibrillator.

Patrol Captain, Col Knight, said it was clear it was a bad situation and one man was completely non-responsive and barely breathing when he arrived.

They treated the non-responsive man with oxygen and placed him in the recovery position where after a couple of minutes he began to vomit up water. The man was responsive when the Ambulance arrived and was taken to Moruya hospital before being airlifted to Canberra for treatment. It was an outstanding effort by all involved, well done team!



CALL OUTS FOR DECEMBER

A busy month for our teams

Batemans Bay, Broulee and Pambula SLSC's carried the call out load for December and did some outstanding work along the way. Every call out is a chance to learn and refine our responses and one thing that stood out in December was communication challenges at times. Experience across the Branch this season has shown us that relying on texts and phone calls to share information during call outs is impacting our ability to respond quickly and to the right location.

As further information becomes available during call outs we need a quick and efficient way to connect with each other so everyone involved can see where the others on their team are and what their ETA is. As a result, most clubs have introduced WhatsApp (or are in the process). Not only does this help call out team members stay in contact but it helps keep the Duty Officers in the loop as well, which is critical as information changes.

Thanks to the Club Captains and call out team members who have been so responsive to continually improve by making changes to the way we do things along the way.

Batemans Bay SLSC

A male in his 30's decided to swim home across the bay around 9:30 pm on the 2nd December. When his girlfriend still hadn't seen him arrive on the other side by 10:30 pm police were called. While we don't do water operations at night, we were asked to provide a team to perform a shoreline search overnight and possibly prep for a full search at first light. Thankfully for the team the man was found exhausted on the beach (yes, he made it to other side!) and we were stood down before we had to pull everyone out of bed. Thanks to Anthony Bellette who I did have to wake to task as Duty Officer before the stand down.

DECEMBER CALL OUTS continued ...

Broulee Surfers SLSC

The Broulee support ops team was kept on their toes during December with two call outs and a patrol standby for the RWC to assist in a rescue at Tuross.

The first call was on the 7th for two kayakers washed on to rocks in Tomakin in strong winds. The team responded quickly and had the IRB ready to launch when another IRB arrived. In a stroke of luck, an IRB Driver and Crewie from Batemans Bay were already at the clubhouse and ready to go when the call came through. As they arrived the kayakers had managed to make their way to the waters edge with the help of members of the public and the team did a welfare check before returning to the club. It was a great effort by members of both clubs.

Broulee was on deck again on the 28th for an overturned boat with 3 people in the water. Darren Browning had the RWC on the water within minutes of arriving and we were also lucky to have Peter Louttit out on the water fishing. He recognised the situation and made his way over to help in his own boat and all 3 on board were helped from the water by onlookers. Peter McKay and Chris Smithers were called into action launching the IRB to potentially assist with towing the boat and Natalie Browning helped Darren with the RWC as they were called on to stay at the scene for some time, waiting for water police arrive. Anthony Bellette and Andrew Mizzi shared the Duty Officer role and thanks to all for their time, skill and quick response.

Pambula SLSC

The team at Pambula dodged a call out in the middle of their massive hail storm on 16th December with a swimmer in distress about 400m off Merimbula campground. Don Hay was tasked as the Duty Officer but a stand-down call came in as the team was being paged as the person had managed to make it to shore.

They weren't so lucky on the 28th when the team was called to an overturned boat in the Pambula River mouth at around 7:45 am. The first IRB hit the water within 9 minutes of the page which was an outstanding response time. They arrived at the river mouth to see 4 people in the water and quickly called in the 2nd IRB. It turned out some of those in the water were locals who had jumped in to assist and had already helped 2 people to shore on the northern side. The IRBs helped one of the boaters from the water and then retrieved the other two from the northern side to transport them to the waiting ambulance. Don Hay did a thoroughly professional job as Duty Officer and 10 others were part of the response including Chris Briggs, Matt Harvey, Emma Prowse, Simon Byrne, Steve Hodgson, Frank Davey, Andrew Holt, Andrew Love, Liam O'Neill and Gavin Granger.

Great work to the entire team for such a quick and professional response.

LIFESAVING SKILLS IN ACTION ... LITERALLY

Young Broulee member saves a woman's life

In another show of great composure and skill by our younger members, teenage Broulee Surfers SLSC patroller and Interbranch team member, Alec Radford, put the skills he's learned through his years in SLS to brilliant use in saving the life of a woman at Moruya in December.

Alec was at work at the Moruya Pool as a lifeguard when somebody ran into the pool to let them know a woman had collapsed at the nearby markets.

He grabbed the oxygen kit and defibrillator and went to assist. Alec quickly realised she needed the defib applied and he had already delivered a shock by the time paramedics arrived.

Alec's quick thinking saved the woman's life and he said the skills he's learned over the past several years through surf life saving helped a lot in staying calm under pressure and knowing what to do. Incredible work, Alec. We're all proud of you!