



**2007 Year  
of the Surf  
Lifesaver**

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# 100 Years of Heroes

## The development of surf lifesaving technologies

The 1970s were an important period in the transition of surf lifesaving equipment used on Australia's beaches. The iconic belt and reel, which had been in use since March 1907, was finally phased out at the end of the 1970s, and was replaced

by a range of modern alternatives. The decade saw the testing and adoption of inflatable rescue boats (IRBs), rescue water craft (RWCs or 'wave-runners') and rescue helicopters, as well as the introduction of the rescue tube, for use in surf rescues.

Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Expired Air Resuscitation (EAR), the standard resuscitation methods used today, were introduced following the first International Convention on Lifesaving Techniques held in Sydney in 1960.



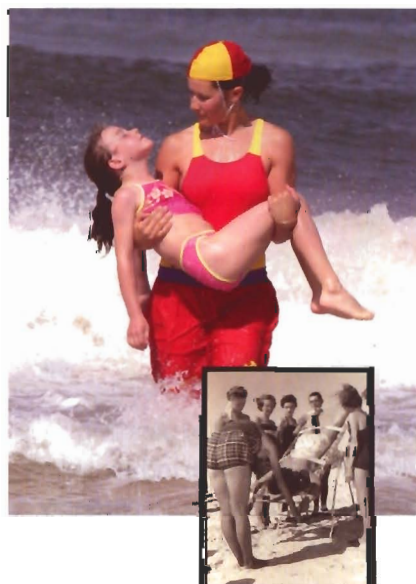
### Did you know?

Within surf lifesaving lore it is believed that pioneering aviator Charles Kingsford Smith was the first person to be rescued by a surf reel. While it is true that a young Charlie Smith nearly drowned at Bondi in 1906, the surf reel had not yet been invented.

## The changing face of the surf lifesaver

In 1980 females were allowed to become full patrolling members of surf lifesaving for the very first time. Many women passed their Bronze Medallion exam throughout Australia in the early 1980s, and they now make up more than 41 per cent of SLSA members. This has been one of the most fundamental changes in the movement's history.

And today, reflecting the changing face of Australian society, surf lifesavers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities help keep our beaches safe.



### Did you know?

Juniors have always been involved in surf life saving clubs, but it wasn't until 1973 that the National Junior Association of Surf Life Saving was formed. This organisation of the 'Nipper' movement, not only increased their numbers but in turn brought more females into the movement -- both as mothers of Nippers, and as 'Nipperettes' themselves.



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**FACT SHEET 1**

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## Why Surf Life Saving?



At the beginning of the twentieth century, daytime swimming was allowed at Sydney's beaches for the first time. What was called 'surf bathing' quickly became a very popular activity, but sadly led to

many drownings as inexperienced swimmers got into trouble in the surf. In a response to this, in 1907 groups of regular surf bathers began to form surf life saving clubs, to help protect those less capable swimmers from the dangers of the surf.

On 18 October 1907 members of these clubs formed the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales (SBANSW), to represent the needs and interests of surf bathers to local authorities. As surf lifesaving spread up and down the east coast of Australia, and as clubs emerged as far away as Western Australia,

it became clear that the Association should represent clubs nation-wide. Therefore, in 1923 its name was changed to the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia, and in 1991, it was changed again to Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA).

### *Did you know?*

2007 marks the Centenary of Surf Life Saving in Australia. To recognise this milestone the Australian Government declared 2007 to be the Year of the Surf Lifesaver.

## The origins of the red and yellow flags

Flags and signs have always been used to signify either safe or dangerous areas to swim, but it wasn't until the 1930s that the red and yellow colours came to represent Surf Life Saving in Australia.

In 1935, red and yellow replaced the blue and white flags which had been used in the 1920s to mark safe bathing areas, although the colours were divided diagonally, unlike the horizontal red and yellow used today. Four years later, in 1939, Surf Life



Saving decided that all patrolling members should wear red and yellow quartered caps to make them easily identifiable to the public. The red

and yellow caps are still proudly worn by around 35,000 active surf lifesavers today.

### *Did you know?*

The red and yellow colours found their way into surf life saving clubs from the international code of naval signals, in which the sign for 'man overboard' is a square divided diagonally between red and yellow.