



2007 Year
of the Surf
Lifesaver

Surf lifesaving - serious fun!

Have you ever thought about being a lifesaver?

Surf lifesavers have been keeping Australia's beaches safe for a century. And while the image that most people have of a surf lifesaver is a super-fit, bronzed 'Aussie', you don't have to be an Olympic-class swimmer to help us make our beaches safer.

Surf Life Saving is open to everyone, no matter your age, your gender, your cultural background or even your swimming ability. There is a role for everyone in Surf Life Saving!

What does being a surf lifesaver involve?

There are around 35,000 trained surf lifesavers around Australia keeping our beaches safe. They do this by patrolling for a half-day on weekends and public holidays, normally every three to four weeks during the swimming and surfing season (which varies depending on where you are in Australia).

When you are on patrol, you will be involved in everything from giving information to members of the public, looking after lost children, providing first aid, and of course, rescuing swimmers in trouble. It's been estimated that if not for our surf lifesavers, nearly 500 people would

die in the surf each year, so you can see that it really is a unique community service.



How do I become a surf lifesaver?



The basic qualification for a practicing surf lifesaver is the Surf Life Saving Bronze Medallion – this is different to the one you might have done at school, which involved swimming pool skills. To be eligible to train for your Bronze Medallion you must be at least 15 years old and you'll be asked to swim 400 metres in less than nine minutes. Once this has been completed, surf clubs provide qualified instructors who will train you to the level of a proficient surf lifesaver.

At the completion of your training, which will take a couple of months, your physical fitness will be tested again by a Run-Swim-Run (200m for each part) which has to be completed in under eight minutes. You will also be examined on theory, basic resuscitation and first aid and participate in a simulated rescue situation using a rescue board and tube. **All these skills combine to train you to be an effective member of a patrol team.**



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Are there any other ways I can be a lifesaver without doing a Bronze Medallion?

Yes. Surf Life Saving offers a wide range of awards to its members and the community. For example, by gaining basic awards in radio operations, you can assist with patrol observation and communication duties without having to perform

water-based rescues. You could also be involved in looking after Nippers on a Sunday morning, become a Surf Sports coach or official, or even help out in the club office. **There is a role for everyone in Surf Life Saving.**

What if I'm less than 15 years old?

You can obtain a Surf Rescue Certificate from the age of 13. Before you begin you must be able to swim 200m in five minutes or less, which is pretty easy for people with a reasonable swimming ability.

The award will train you in basic rescue skills, first aid and resuscitation, plus some stuff about safety and surf awareness. With this certificate, you will be able to help patrol your local beach.

What about 'Nippers'?

If you are looking for a way to educate and entertain your children during the summer season then why don't you join them up in 'Nippers'. The Nippers Program is for children aged between seven and 13 years and provides basic surf skills, as well as keeping them fit and healthy. It's a fantastic way to make them confident in and around the water.



www.slsa.com.au

Want to find out more?

Get in touch with your local surf club to find out how you can get involved. You can check out www.slsa.com.au for contact details for clubs, however as many don't have full-time administrators, it's probably easiest to visit their website or just say hello to a surf lifesaver on the beach.

How else can I help?

Not everyone has time to become involved in club life, but there are other ways you can help become a lifesaver:

1. Make a donation or become a regular supporter by contacting the Surf Life Saving Foundation on 1800 642 925.
2. Always swim between the red and yellow flags when you go to the beach. The life you save will be your own!

