



COOKS HILL

LIFE SAVING & SURF CLUB

PO Box 3262
Merewether, NSW 2291

Memorial Drive
Bar Beach NSW 2300

Tel: (02) 4925 2828
ABN: 17 023 819 760

CLUB SUMMARY

Quick Facts

Founded: 1911

Members: +1300 (+240 Active Patrol, +650 Juniors). Largest Club in regional NSW

Age Range: 5 to 85

Programs Delivered

- Beach Patrol - +10,000 person hours annually
- Junior Surf Education (Nippers) - +600 youth participants, +120 volunteers +3500 volunteer hours
- Surf Lifesaving Competition - +150 participants, +100,000 training hours per year, +3000 volunteer hours. State and National achievements including State Junior Champions
- **"Same Waves"** - youth program for physically and intellectually disabled youth
- **"Welcome to the Beach"** Migrant & Refugee program aimed at introducing participants to the surf and Australian culture. Includes familiarization with police and other government entities
- **Wheelchair Access** – access programs for wheelchair bound members of the public facilitated through Club provided equipment and volunteers

Other Community Use of Facility

- Bar Beach Breakfast Swim Club
- Country Womens' Association
- Hunter Melanoma Foundation
- Kinesiology Lab
- Bar Beach Board Riders
- Public First Aid Courses
- Private Functions

Total Annual Individual Visits - +30,000



Cooks Hill SLSC Impact



The community program helping young migrants and refugees learn to navigate Newcastle's iconic beaches

Simon McCarthy - November 29 2020

<https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/7032544/the-community-program-helping-young-migrants-and-refugees-learn-to-navigate-newcastles-iconic-beaches/>

Khadiija Ahmadi learned to swim with the "Welcome to the Beach" program, after her family emigrated to Australia from Afghanistan in 2014. She has attended the program each of the past five years.

"The first time (I came to the beach) was really scary for me," she recalled at Bar Beach on Saturday afternoon.

The year after she arrived, she attended a beach safety course put together by the Diocese of Maitland's Catholic Care Refugee Program. There, with the help of John Sandy, a refugee himself who now supports migrant families in Newcastle, Khadiija was introduced to the beach and taught to swim. She returned to the program each summer for the next five years. On Saturday, she was one of the most confident in the water. "It feels great to come to the beach," she said. "I can swim with my mates. It's really fun."

The beach safety program, aptly called "Welcome to the Beach", teaches young migrants and refugees how to navigate the beaches safely - where to swim and when to stay out of the water, who to approach to ask for help, and how to navigate Australia's beach culture.



Same Waves surf program for people with a disability embraces differences

Liz Clarkson - 17 February, 2016 <https://www.abc.net.au/local/stories/2016/02/16/4407457.htm>



Amelia Mulgrave is legally blind and can not walk yet. She also has epilepsy but that does not stop her enjoying the beach and life.

Amelia's mum, Jane Mulgrave said as soon as her daughter has her lifesaving cap on, she feels a part of the surf club.

"Sometimes it's a concern when you come to something like this that the children will be isolated; but they're not, they're included and it's a beautiful thing," she said.

Amelia has many volunteers to help her in the water.

"They carry her in from the beach chair... They've got the lifesaving rescue tube and they can put that around her and clip it and she can sit in it like a chair or she can lay in it," Ms Mulgrave said.

Cooks Hill cleans up in national Surf Life Saving

Rebecca Riddle - November 10, 2021

[Cooks Hill cleans up in national Surf Life Saving awards - Newcastle Weekly](#)

The Bar Beach-based club was the most successful NSW club on the night, taking out the Community Education Program of the Year category for its Welcome to the Beach initiative, while young Nipper, Mia Campbell was honoured with a Meritorious Award for the brave rescue of her father at her local beach in May.

Following on from the NSW awards night in late August, the national event offered many award category winners the chance to receive recognition across the country, including several NSW volunteers who were recognised for their outstanding service to the community throughout the 2020-21 season.

Thousands from within the country's Surf Life Saving community tuned in to the virtual event, streamed on Facebook following the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 restrictions in various states.

Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club was also recognised for its Welcome to the Beach Program.

Welcome to the Beach program.

The program, now in its sixth year, has proven enormously popular within newly settled Australian immigrant and refugee families, with many of those attending having never set foot on a beach before, let alone entered the water. The program aims to assist those denied a love of the ocean due to the location of their country of origin, or cultural beliefs and customs.

From a foundation of wishing to educate families, and in particular teenagers, on beach safety, the Cooks Hill initiative has grown into a huge success, with the club and participants much richer for their role in its delivery.



Newcastle surf club opens up beach to people with a disability

Robert Virtue with Garth Russell - 11 Feb 2016

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-02-11/newcastle-surf-club-opens-beach-to-people-with-a-disability/7159116>

Life-changing accident a catalyst for change

When an active member of the Cooks Hill Surf Club was left in a wheelchair after an accident three years ago, the club community had their eyes opened to the challenges faced by people living with a disability.

No longer could their mate easily access the sand and ocean he had once so easily bounded across and frolicked in.



"He was a very active member of the club, and we realised as a group that we had to be able to provide Gus with access to the surf club, and for that matter, the water, despite him being in a wheelchair," John Mayo from the Cooks Hill Surf Club said.

The club raised money, knocked walls out of the clubhouse and bought beach matting to be laid across the sand.

Reducing the inequality gap

Mr Mayo said he had seen many people who used the equipment overcome with joy.

"It's amazing, there's a little fellow named Ben and he's in his chair. [When] you put him in the water, it's probably the only time in his life when he's actually mobile. We throw one of those yellow rescue tubes around him, and he can float," he said.

"The joy on this little bloke's face — he loves it, and the people that take him in also love it."

New beach partnership about more than red and yellow flags

Rebecca Riddle

January 25, 2022

<https://newcastleweekly.com.au/new-beach-partnership-about-more-than-red-and-yellow-flags/>

While its primary goal is beach safety, Cooks Hill Surf Lifesaving Club is fast becoming known for its community engagement programs, with today's announcement of a partnership with the Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council adding to the fold.

... club president Michael Clancy hopes will be a long term commitment to strengthen ties with local Aboriginal people.

"Cooks Hill prides itself on our community access programs," he said.

"It's not just about red and yellow flags.

"That's the prime objective, but our surf education programs that we offer go well beyond nippers."

Newcastle Weekly



Cooks Hill Surf Club members celebrated a new partnership with Awabakal Local Aboriginal Land Council members at Bar Beach on Tuesday morning. Photo: Rebecca Riddle

WEDNESDAY MARCH 31, 2021

newcastleherald.com.au

MURDER TRIAL
JURY TOLD OF TEXTS

KNIGHTS
GREEN BACK IN LINE-UP

TSZYU V HOGAN
FIGHT NIGHT IN THE CITY

NEWCASTLE

HERALD

VOICE OF THE HUNTER

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Gus McConnell is a patrol captain for Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club. His job is about ensuring that his team of surf lifesavers can effectively manage the beach and keep people safe in and around the water. Eight years ago, he was riding his bike down Memorial Drive when a car turned in front of him. The force of the crash wrote the car off and Gus was left a quadriplegic and confined to a chair that was never designed to navigate the sand. Visiting the beach meant using a cumbersome beachgoing chair that was difficult to steer and exhausting to move, but now that's all changed. Cooks Hill Surf Life Saving Club has invested in three Freedom Trax machines that adapt Gus' chair into an all-terrain vehicle. For the first time in years, Gus can travel on the beach with full autonomy.

SIMON McCARTHY report,
another picture: P8

HMF SPOT CHECK | SUMMER 2020 & 2021

723
FREE SKIN
CHECKS

36
SUSPECTED
MELANOMAS

8
CONFIRMED
MELANOMAS



HMF SPOT CHECK

The HMF Spot Check campaign was introduced over the summer over 2020/2021.

Thanks to Funding from Novartis Pharmaceutical and The Wests Group, and the generosity of the Doctors from Newcastle Skin Check who donated their time, we were able to run 7 free skin check clinics out of the [Cooks Hill Surf Club at Bar Beach](#).

Doctors completed a total of 723 Free Skin Checks.

Found over 175 suspicious spots.

36 Suspected melanoma's

8 confirmed melanoma's in 7 patients.

By far the most impactful education program we have undertaken.

We look forward to extending the program in the future and expanding to Lake Macquarie and the Hunter.

If you are interested in supporting HMF to fund a Spot Check clinic, or would like further information please send us an [email](#).

If you'd like to keep up to date on when and where our next spot check clinic is to be held, keep an eye on our social media pages, or join our [mailing list](#).

