

Sunday, 5 December 2021

HUNTER NIPPERS SEASON OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED WITH NEW, THREE-YEAR SUPPORT DEAL

There was cause for extra celebration at the launch of this year's Hunter Nippers season on Sunday, with news of more support from Newcastle Permanent for the region's future life savers.

At the event, hosted by Cooks Hill Surf Lifesaving Club, Newcastle Permanent CEO Bernadette Inglis and Hunter Surf Life Saving (SLS) CEO Rhonda Scruton signed a new three-year sponsorship agreement.

Ms Scruton said the funding will help provide equipment and training to protect beachgoers and assist with the recruitment, training and retention of junior surf lifesavers.

She said Newcastle Permanent's support for Hunter Surf Life Saving, which this summer hits 40 years, has been invaluable in training and developing future life savers.

"Our four-decade long partnership with Newcastle Permanent has given our region's young people vital skills in and out of the water, and no doubt saved countless lives," Ms Scruton said.

"Nippers also gives young people personal development, leadership and team work skills," she said.

"It takes a lot of funding and resources to provide surf life saving services and programs like Nippers, so our ongoing partnership with Newcastle Permanent is vital."

Ms Inglis said volunteer life savers do an incredible job and are fundamental to the fabric of the community.

"As a proud customer-owned organisation, supporting and contributing to local communities that support us, is part of who we are today and into the future," Ms Inglis said.

"It's wonderful that local families invest their time to support their children to learn lifelong surf safety skills, and a lot of these children will grow and take on roles to keep our community safe while we enjoy a day at the beach in years to come.

"It's an honour to have supported 140,000 local children to participate in Nippers over our 40 year partnership with Hunter Surf Life Saving," she said.

Joining in to officially launch the season was Hunter Youth Surf Lifesaver of the Year and Newcastle Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) member, Riley Petherbridge.

The 18 year-old Macquarie College student joined Newcastle SLSC in January 2019, completing his Bronze Medallion that year and his Silver Medallion in 2020. He volunteers more than 100 hours a year doing patrols, helps out at Nippers, and also volunteered with the Hunter surf life saving team that assisted with the Upper Hunter floods last month.

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Media Release



Mr Petherbridge said his mum Melissa was a Nipper and surf life saver and many of his family are involved in surf life saving.

"Nippers is such an important program that needs community support and funding because it teaches kids surf safety," Mr Petherbridge said.

"It also is the training ground for future surf life savers who help keep everyone safe at the beach," he said.

"A Nipper can advise an entire group about the safest way to use the surf. One trained nipper or lifesaver has the ability to save many lives."

More than 2,900 Hunter young people aged five to 13 are registered this year across 13 Hunter SLS clubs from Catherine Hill Bay to Tea Garden Hawks Nest. Nippers learn lifesaving and CPR, as well as surf safety, awareness, and rescue skills while completing fun surf sport activities such as catching waves, board paddling, beach sprints and flags.

Every year, Newcastle Permanent invests almost \$1.5 million into local communities through its partnerships, employee donations, volunteering and fundraising programs. This includes support for every surf life saving club from the Central Coast to the Queensland border.

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