Wollongong’s Longest Serving Active Lifeguard.

An East Coast Low sits just off Wollongong, ominously reflecting the mood of those who realise it’s the end of an era for that region. After 37 years of loyal service, the King of Sandon Point, Terry Hagan, will be ‘pulling the pins’ for the last time at 5:00pm this Friday, 24th of April 2015.

A passionate and hard union man, Terry has witnessed the many changes that lifeguarding has undergone over the years, humbly beginning his duties from a quasi rock cave at Scarborough beach in 1978, to finally witnessing his beloved Sandon Point surf club renovated to accommodate the needs of the future. All the time, Terry remained the same, a legend, and in 2011 was justly named the Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard of the Year.

Terry’s holistic approach to lifeguarding enabled him to save thousands of lives, but as professionals, we only care about the number of lives we’ve lost. In 37 years of service, not a single life was lost under Terry’s care. What an amazing and enviable achievement!!

The key to Terry’s success is his hilariously honest, moral and inspirational character. Terry has passionately taught the skills and importance of water safety to thousands using his loveable character, and in affect, saved all their lives without even needing to get wet. Terry is committed to and understands the importance of proactive work and his legacy will live on through all those who have learnt from him. Like the proverb says... “Give a man a fish, he’ll have food for a day. Teach a man to fish and he’ll have food for life”, and Terry seems to be able to change peoples lives for the better in most every case.

On a personal level, I have Terry to thank for the treasure that is my full-time lifeguard job. Terry fought hard and well to make permanent positions available to junior staff, as he believed in keeping lifeguarding a career and therefore keeping experience within the ranks. With a permanent job we can begin to comfortably progress with our own lives, so in retrospect, I owe my life to Terry Hagan.

So as a member of APOLA, a Wollongong City Council lifeguard and local resident, I speak on behalf of all, to wish you well in your retirement Terry, and to thank you for your 37 years of outstanding loyalty and service to Australian Life Guarding. Feet up mate, you’ve earned it!

-Chanan Clark
John Boyle leads the Wollongong team to a 2nd successful Relay Swim.

At 6am on the 7th of December, Matthew Waite dove into the waters of Stanwell Park to kick off the 2nd Annual Grand Pacific Swim Relay. The GPS is a 26km relay format swim from Stanwell Park Beach to North Wollongong, undertaken by various lifeguards of Wollongong City Council, with each leg averaging a distance of 2km.

The event was master minded by veteran lifeguard John Boyle and is aimed to lift the profile of council lifeguards to the public, by show casing the skills, fitness and equipment the service has to offer. The event would not of run so smoothly without the expert leadership of John Boyle, the dedication of a handful of guards who volunteered their time and skills for the whole day and also, all swimmers in the relay.

Wollongong City Council managers played a huge role in lending 3 jet skis and two paddle boards for the days event, and for assisting at the finish line. Last but not least, APOLA was monumental in providing insurance for the swim.

For the second year in a row, the event faced a strong 6ft plus north cyclone swell, which tested the skills of the jet ski shuttle drivers, particularly with the 6am start. Fortunately the start was at 6am, for John Boyle immediately noticed a public swimmer in distress as they were swept into the southern cliffs of Stanwell Park beach. John, in a moment of pure skill and serendipity was able to rescue the patient and avert tragedy. John Boyle- ever the professional and another life saved without any notice.

From there the day unfolded smoothly and the whole relay was completed in under 6.5 hours. The event received coverage in print, television and radio media and showed a substantial jump in achievement from the inaugural event, which in itself had been a huge success.

So thank you to the following guards for making the day such a success.

A great result for a sound investment...

For almost over a week now, NSW has been battered by some of the worst weather to have hit the coast in over a decade. Deemed a “Category 2” cyclone by weather experts, the low pressure system used winds of up to 182km/hr to hurl 15ft plus seas and torrential rain at our door steps, resulting in 3 deaths and the destruction of property. The beach fronts copped it the hardest, with enough sand being blown through the coastal streets for it to resemble an Arabian-esque landscape, yet through it all, one unassuming Bondi brave emerged victoriously unscathed. Bondi’s Northern Tower!

Introduced to Australia by Ken Holloway, who had seen the potential that these Hawaiian style towers could have on our beaches, they have quickly gained popularity throughout the nation. Bondi became the first council to adopt one of these semi-mobile towers at the north end of their famous beach, instantly proving itself to be a highly affective viewing shelter for guards working in all types of elements. Locally, it is also renown for trapping junior lifeguards within its clutches, however that’s another story for another time!

With 15ft seas, winds in excess of 100km/h and an over-night high tide grasping at it’s heels, Bondi’s Northern Tower remained upright and true, an impressive display of strength and vigilance for its final test as an adequate lifeguard tower. With Western Australian councils having recently purchased some of these observation towers, no doubt they’ll be thrilled to see that their investment has proved to be sound and will hopefully attract the attention of councils who require the needs of a semi permanent observation room.

For more information on surveyor towers, contact Ken Holloway: 0422 889 813
Jersey UK Lifeguard Reunion.

Just a reminder of the Jersey Lifeguard Reunion which runs from May 1st to May 3rd 2015 being organised by Mark Scully around the Newcastle region. Mark has put in an incredible amount of time and effort into the organisation of this reunion and has succeeded in securing well over 100 lifeguards and their partners and its set to be a blast.

For those of you who are still unsure about information regarding the times and location of each days activity, please contact Mark for updates.

Contact: Mark Scully. markoceanman@hotmail.com 0429 034 936

Annual APOLA Lifeguard Conference.

This years Annual Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard Conference will be held at the BreakFree Aanuka Beach Resort, Diggers Beach, Coffs Harbour NSW.

**Wednesday 29th of April - Thursday 30th of April.**

**Day 1** of the Conference begins at 7am with water events, and will include lunch breaks, AGM, award recertification, trade displays, keynote presentations and conclude with the Surfing and Championships Presentation Dinner which starts at 7pm.

**Day 2** of the Conference begins at 9am with breakfast and the day consists of mainly presentations and workshops, concluding with the APOLA Meritorious and Outstanding Service Awards Dinner which begins at 7pm.

For bookings, please contact the BreakFree Aanuka Beach Resort on 02 6652 7555 and request the APOLA Conference Rate.

Further Details can be obtained from John Andrews: info@apola.asn.au or 0408 855 267
Juliana Bahr-Thomson...

The 26th of February would of been one of the toughest days in Juliana’s life. In an incredible test of will and endurance, Juliana succeeded in battling a constant head wind for over 45km on the first leg of her epic solo paddle for Motor Neurone Disease from Newcastle to Bondi.

Juliana spent over 13hrs in the water that day, dealing with sharks and bluebottle stings and the ever present demons of the mind telling her to quit. However, through sheer perseverance and strength, the Newcastle guard managed not only complete that day’s challenge, but back it up for a further 3 days to successfully complete her goal to paddle from Newcastle to Bondi. In the process, Juliana managed to raise $8,000 for Surf Rider Foundation and Motor Neurone Disease and represent professional lifeguards in the most admirable of lights. Well done Julz!!!

The Newy Boys!

8 Professional lifeguards from Newcastle City Council came up with the original concept to paddle from Blacksmiths Beach to Bondi to raise money and awareness for Motor Neurone Disease. Absolute legends, who as shown above, did enough to inspire Juliana to take on her own version of fundraiser, and together this group of professional lifeguards will pool their raised funds to help prevent the horrible disease.

The boys battled through plagues of bluebottles and negotiated through the 16 plus sharks they sighted to finish the event on Sunday 22nd of March to a cheering crowd and a well deserved hot shower and tunnel up the beach. The whole community got behind their fantastic effort and the boys have managed to raise $14,000 for their cause with the donation window still open. Congratulations to the boys on honourably representing professional lifeguards and using their skills to help those less fortunate. Well Done!!!

Donate at: https://give.everydayhero.com/au/paddle4mnd
City of Innovation...

Rescue Boards, Radios, 4WD’s, The Current APOLA Logo, The Bondi Challenge, Sponsorship, Surf Education, The Surf Life Saving Manual, Lifeguard Exchange Programs and the 800 meters in 14 minutes are just some of the innovations which lifeguards from Wollongong City Council have played a crucial role in developing.

Wollongong was at the forefront of turning lifeguarding from a part-time job into a full time career with the likes of ‘Butch’ Baker, Dan Meehan, Greg Fettell and Steve Clark leading the charge in the above innovations.

Wollongong is also responsible for bringing professional life guarding into existence by employing Les Clark as a guard in 1912, and 3 out of 4 of the last Australian Professional Lifeguard of the Year Awards have gone to Wollongong City Council Lifeguards. An impressive history to say the least!

The future looks bright for the service too, as they’ve introduced technologies such as emergency beacons, QR code scanners and a growing social media page with weekly surf updates and lifeguard biographies.

The first lifeguard, a history of progressive lifeguards, the longest serving active guard, and a current service containing national SLS gold medalists and professional surfers, Wollongong really has got it all covered!

If you would like to represent your council in future editions, please send any relevant pictures and information to: Chanan Clark, APOLA National Information Services Co-Ordinator, 0423 715 140 chananclark@outlook.com

Wollongong’s Bio

* 42km Area from Stanwell Park to Windang
* 17 Full Time Staff, 60+ Casual Staff
* 1 Year Round Beach + 16 Seasonal Beaches
* 5 4WD’s, 4 Jet skis & 7 ATV’s
* Australia’s Oldest Lifeguard Service
* First Service to Implement QR Scanner Codes on Beach Walkway Signs for Beach Info