

**Thirroul Surf Life Saving Club**

# **Strategic Plan 2025**

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**Thirroul**

**Surf Life Saving Club** est.1907



## Our Vision

*The future we want*

**A Club that people want to part of,  
to keep the beach safe for all**

*Helping achieve SLSNSW vision of:  
“Zero preventable deaths on NSW beaches”*

## Our Focus Areas

*What we will focus on to help achieve our vision*

### SAVE LIVES THROUGH STRONG PATROLS

- **We Save Lives:** That's why we're here
- **Flexibility:** Adapt to members lifestyles
- **Numbers:** Adjust based on risk factors
- **Make it Easy:** Minimise admin burden
- **Training:** Invest in trainers and assessors

#### Goals:

- ✓ Zero preventable deaths
- ✓ 100 patrollers across 8 full patrols
- ✓ All Patrols have full award coverage
- ✓ All SRCs have a mentor

### DEVELOP & SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE

- **Share:** Spread the load of running the Club
- **Succession:** Mentoring and fresh ideas
- **Accessibility:** Promote non-patrol roles
- **Collaborate:** Diverse people, one club & fun
- **Nurture Athletes:** Surf Sporting for all

#### Goals:

- ✓ Fill all open club positions
- ✓ Increase non-patrollers in support roles
- ✓ Increase whole of club events
- ✓ Increase number of competitors

### SUSTAIN OUR MOVEMENT

- **Membership:** 100 Active & 200 Juniors
- **Retention:** Juniors & youth as next lifesaver
- **Assets:** More members need better facilities
- **Growth Priority:** Stabilise, not grow
- **Improve Comms:** clear, timely information

#### Goals:

- ✓ 10% of juniors progress to SRC
- ✓ 100% of SRC progress to Bronze
- ✓ 10% nipper parents to Bronze
- ✓ Publish monthly newsletter

### STRATEGIC ENABLERS

- **Finances:** Strong finances and systems
- **Fill Key Roles:** Sponsorship and fundraising
- **Transparency:** Clear income and expenses
- **Assets:** Care for facilities like they're yours
- **Future:** A strategic plan for the building

#### Goals:

- ✓ One new sponsor per season
- ✓ At least one facilities grant a season
- ✓ Agreed budget and key purchase list
- ✓ Assets refreshed based on asset register



# BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Committee initiated the development of a Strategic Plan to guide the Club over the next few seasons.

## The process included:

- **Member Input:** Following the SLSNSW recommended process, members provided input, coordinated by the Thirroul SLSC Board.
- **Member Survey:** Conducted in March 2024, seeking feedback on strengths, areas for improvement, and new initiatives. Thirty members responded, and a summary was shared at the AGM and more broadly.
- **Workshops:**
  1. **November 2024:** Expanded on survey responses with 16 members participating.
  2. **April 2025:** Prioritised strategies from consultations with 15 members participating.
- **Draft Strategic Plan:** Developed for member distribution and AGM discussion.

## Key Observations

- ♥ **Great Club:** Zero deaths on Thirroul beach while patrolling.
- ⬆ **Increased Beach Visitors:** More visitors, but with less surf awareness.
- ⬇ **Declining Volunteerism:** Need to address the decline in volunteer numbers.
- ✖ **Limited Activities:** Need for more activities "outside the flags."
- 👤 **Aging Active Members:** Retain Juniors, Youth, and parents to sustain patrolling numbers.
- ⬇ **Trainer Shortage:** Insufficient trainers and assessors, which is unsustainable.
- ! **Common Challenges:** These issues are common across most SLS Clubs.

## Monitoring Progress

The key output is this Strategic Plan which outlines focus areas, strategies, and actions to improve the Club over the next three years. Progress will be monitored and reported through:

- **Board Meetings:** Regular agenda item for review and discussion.
- **Annual Review:** Measures and targets reviewed annually.
- **Annual Report:** Summary of progress included.

## Beyond 2028 – Challenges & Opportunities

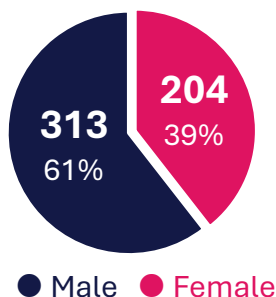
**Club Infrastructure:** Growth is limited by current facility space. Significant redevelopment of the Club House is needed, requiring DA approvals and funding.

**Changing Technologies:** Increased reliance on UAVs (drones) and Jet Skis will impact training, trainer availability, and equipment storage.

**Changing Demographics:** Higher populations near the beach (e.g., Appin and Wilton) will increase beach users with potentially low surf knowledge or swimming skills. Strategies are needed to manage this issue.

## Membership Breakdown

**517  
Members**



**104 Patrolling Members (20%)**

33 71

**195 Junior Members (38%)**

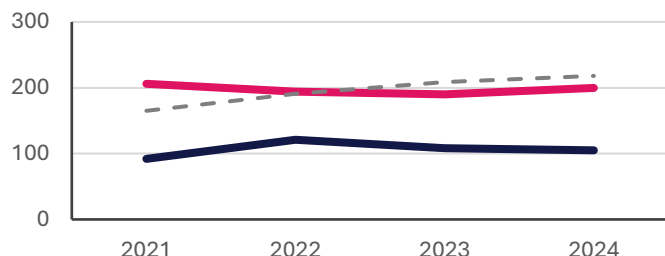
83 112

**188 Associate Members (36%)**

82 106

**30 Honorary / Life members (6%)** 6 24

## Membership Trends



**Patrollers** stable at about 100



**Juniors** stable at about 200

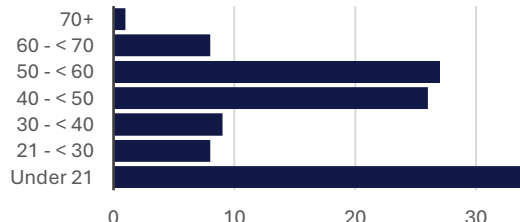


**Others** slight growth at over 200  
– includes **Nipper Parents, Associates & Life Members**

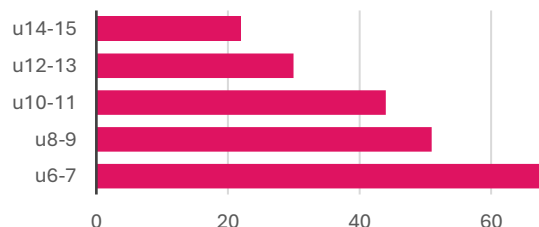
## Age Breakdown



**Strong numbers of young patrollers**  
**50% of patrollers are 40-60 years old**



**Strong numbers of young nippers**  
**70% of nippers drop out from U6 to U15**



## Patrol Stats



**296 Preventative Actions**



**22 Rescues**



**37 First Aid**



**8 Patrols**

## Awards

*Skilled & stable, but ageing patrols*



**138 Bronze Medallions**



**46 IRB Drivers**



**18 Advanced Resuscitation**



**38 Silver Medallions**



**60 IRB Crew**

## Education



**3 trainers**



**1 assessor**



**1 facilitator**

*More educators needed*

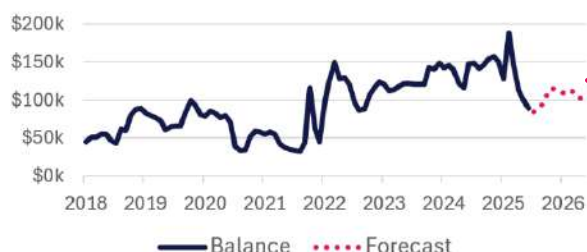


**3 coaches**



**5 officials**

## Finance Summary



### Money In (\$125k)

**\$60k Hall**

**\$40k Regos**

**\$35k Grants**

**\$25k Other**

### Money Out (\$115k)

**\$40k SLISA**

**\$30k Solar**

**\$25k IRB**

**\$20k Other**



## Our Vision

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to keep the beach safe for all**

*Helping achieve SLSNSW vision of:  
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## FOCUS AREA 1 – SAVE LIVES THROUGH STRONG PATROLS

**Mission:** We save lives. That’s why we’re here. There has never been, and we aim to ensure there never is, a preventable death at Thirroul beach while we are on patrol.

**Flexibility:** Maintain flexible patrol schedules to keep patrollers engaged, particularly those with other responsibilities such as shift workers and parents of young children

**Numbers:** Adjust patrol size based on risk factors such as conditions and seasonal timing. We don't always need 10 people on patrol, but during peak times like public holidays and sunny days in school holidays we do.

**Make it easy:** Make being an active member as simple as possible by minimising the time patrollers spend on administrative tasks.

**Training:** To stay strong, we need our own in-house trainers and assessors for key awards.

### 1.1. Sustain strength, numbers, competence of patrols

- Encourage more flexible patrolling across all patrols based on risk
- Maintain minimum and balance of skills, experience, and awards across patrols
- Support new patrollers, including providing new SRC/ BM kits & “buddies”
- At least 3 SRC patrol together; mentors offered to help develop skills, enjoy patrol & navigate systems

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Zero preventable deaths
- ✓ Minimum patrol numbers: 100 patrollers across 8 full patrols
- ✓ Minimum patrol capabilities: each patrol with 2x (BBM, IRB-D&C, ART) and 4 paddlers
- ✓ All SRCs offered patrols with at least 2 other SRCs, plus a “mentor” each

### 1.2. Train & maintain competence of new & current lifesavers

- Facilitate more members becoming Trainers and Assessors, including promoting Education pathways (for at least SRC/ BM, IRB, also ideally ART & First Aid)
- Ease of access to Awards & proficiencies (SRC/BM, IRBC/D, ART, First Aid) – schedule, advertise, co-run IRB/ BM
- Support Patrol Captains including with resources to help build 'inhouse' surf & team skills (e.g. “how to” scenarios & other training within & across patrol teams)

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Increase numbers of Trainers/ Assessors to achieve then maintain minimums of: 3 SRC/ Bronze, 2 IRBC/D, 2 ART
- ✓ Set & meet targets for new BM, IRBC/D, ART, BBM each year



## FOCUS AREA 2 – DEVELOP & SUPPORT OUR PEOPLE

**Share:** We need to spread the load and share the love of running the Club.

**Succession:** Some turn-over is good to avoid burnout and bring in fresh ideas. However, we also need some continuity, with mentoring and succession planning.

**Accessibility:** There are lots of important non-patrol jobs such as clubhouse maintenance, clean ups and data entry, and we have keen members, so we need to promote match keen members to the jobs to be done.

**Collaborate:** We need to embrace a culture of collaboration and integration across all ages and areas within the Club. It's more fun. It recognises that our "superpower" lies in the fact we come from different places, have different strengths and different motivations, but we all are part of one Club.

**Nurture Athletes:** We need to nurture our athletes. Our Surf Sports culture is not just about competition - it's about the whole culture of encouraging everyone to be on the beach and out in the water" Surf Sporting" - Nippers to Masters, swimming, body surfing, board paddling, on skis, in the IRB, and running!

### 2.1. Share roles to sustain volunteering

- Review and update roles and individual tasks – manageable role descriptions with "how-to-guides"
- Promote volunteer network doing non-patrol tasks, e.g. maintain clubhouse, stats, entries etc.
- Consider hir of part-time administrator for trial period
- Professional talent acquisition within Club e.g. marketing, training

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Increase members active in key roles
- ✓ Increase volunteers (non-patrol) in support roles
- ✓ Decrease members active in more than 2 positions

### 2.2. Work & play together

- Schedule & organise whole Club regular social Club events
- Schedule & organise mixed age/ gender SS team events, including annual Club Champs
- Involve patrollers with Nippers e.g. Annual Nippers Fun Day, patrol orientation, fun "taster" activities (e.g. IRB)

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Number of scheduled "whole club" activities & events held
- ✓ Combined Junior/Senior Club Champs

### 2.3. Increase focus on Surf Sports and "Surf Sporting" (SS)

- Maintain appropriate ratio of general & discipline-specific Coaches & Water Safety to participants, by promoting education pathways (and or seeking external collaborators)
- Develop structured/ scheduled coaching activities (coordinated) across disciplines (starting with Juniors/ Youth) – including surf swim, board, IRB, beach
- Maintain & support regular informal Masters SS training
- Develop SS Academy (Youth focus) with sponsorship, merchandise, & Long-Term Athlete Development model

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Numbers of participants (Jnrs, Youth, IRB, Masters)
- ✓ Ratios of Coaches to participants (Jnrs, Youth, IRB)
- ✓ Ratios of qualified Water Safety to participants (SS training and events, also Nippers Sundays)



## FOCUS AREA 3 – SUSTAIN OUR MOVEMENT

**Membership:** We have fairly stable membership numbers, including 100 Active and 200 Junior members

**Retention:** To sustain our patrols at current levels, we need to focus on member retention, and supporting and enabling Juniors, Youth and parents to become active lifesavers (i.e. rather than a focus on active recruitment of new members).

**Assets:** Realistically, our available assets – in terms of the Clubhouse, equipment and the people involved in running the Club and its activities – are at the limit in terms of the number of members and activities that can be supported

**Growth Priority:** Given the limits of our assets, pursuing growth in overall member numbers is therefore not a priority for this 3-year plan, but may be beyond this 3 year plan

**Improve Comms:** We need better consultation and communication, with and between members. Members need clear, timely and accessible information.

### 3.1. Focus on member retention

- Facilitate members pursuing pathways into patrols & Awards - Nippers, Youth, parents
- Value member incentives & "perks" across age groups/ interests e.g. gym, board storage
- Incentivise Nippers participation, e.g. fun, Nipper of the Week, most improved, participation
- Invest in "Youth leading youth" semi-structured program (e.g. Awards, taster IRB, camps)

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Establish baselines, set & meet targets:
- ✓ Retention rates – Nippers; Patrollers <20 yrs, Patrollers 20+ yrs
- ✓ "Conversion rates" to Patrol – Nippers; parents

### 3.2. Boost member engagement, recognition & two-way communication

- Encourage & provide opportunities for engagement in Club management & directions e.g. planning, events, meetings, teams/ working parties
- Develop/ use series of "user friendly" templates for email comms, including regular Club newsletter
- Enhance social media comms, e.g. events, training schedules, member recognition
- Visible consistent recognition & reward for achievements at state, national, world levels

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Social Media metrics
- ✓ Regular club updates to members (bi-monthly)

### 3.3. Engage with external collaborators & the community

- Proactively engage with SLSI & SLSI Clubs (& SLSNSW) to share/ leverage expertise & resources, including via participation in SLSI sub-Committees
- Improve communication to public, e.g. via social media, public notice board
- Value & develop Club as a community service, engaging with local organisations, e.g. schools, business, emergency services, sports clubs

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ SLSI committee participation
- ✓ External engagements/ events



## FOCUS AREA 4 – STRATEGIC ENABLERS

**Finances:** Our starting point is to ensure we have a good financial position and systems. We are in a sound financial position

**Fill Key Roles:** There are plenty of opportunities to improve our financial position if we can attract people to key roles such as sponsorship and fundraising.

**Transparency:** Members want to see more clearly where our income comes from and our expenditure goes to

**Assets:** Members would also like to see, and take pride in, our assets - Clubhouse, patrolling and surf sporting equipment - getting a bit more TLC

### 4.1. Align governance structures & roles to priorities

- Review & update structures to foster collaboration across manageable roles, including by supporting Sub-Committees/ teams/ working parties in priority areas
- Establish / implement processes to “succession plan”, promote, advertise, fill & support roles

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ % Board positions filled
- ✓ Active sub-committee/ teams/ working groups in priority areas, e.g. Juniors, SS

### 4.2. Ensure financial sustainability

- Prioritise and pursue opportunities for Government subsidies & grants
- Review/ update & promote Sponsorship Package, including use of merchandise for sponsors
- Pursue local business support and sponsorship - “Our Club = Our local people”
- Review and pursue opportunities for cost control/ savings - ensure “value-for-money” of expenditures, and “fitness for purpose” of fees/ prices, are maintained

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Number opportunities for Government subsidies & grants a) pursued b) obtained
- ✓ Number of sponsors, \$ value of sponsorship

### 4.3. Engage with external collaborators & the community

- Set processes for budgets & financial reports to clarify priority & fund distribution across functions
- Forward plan for IRB & other equipment for patrols & Surf Sports
- Update/ implement policies distributing funds to ensure consistency, transparency, fairness, focus
- Update/ implement policy re: subsidies to SS/ IRB competitors to support & reward participation

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Expenditure “wishlist” agreed at AGM
- ✓ Annual financial report makes clear expenditure across functions

### 4.3. Ensure facility & gear get TLC and are fit-for-purpose

- Develop/ implement policies re: member (Junior, Active, Associate) access, use & care of Clubhouse, gym, gear (patrol, Surf Sports)
- Develop/ maintain priority log of required Clubhouse enhancements
- Commence long term asset planning (at least 5-10 year horizon)

#### Measures and Targets

- ✓ Cash flow & budgets include allowances for routine maintenance/ major asset replacement