

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome Club patron; Life Members; active, associate and junior surf members; Board colleagues, Committee Members, sponsors; friends and supporters of the Whangamata Surf Lifesaving Club to our 72nd Annual AGM.

I am very happy to be presenting the 2020/21 President's report to so many of you in-person. As you all may remember, last year was a socially-distanced AGM, while our end-of-season awards function was via a pre-recorded video streamed on Facebook!

The Club has navigated COVID19 well. We had a great summer.

The cancellation of the last day of Oceans and the National surf sport competitions were probably the largest COVID19 related disappointments for some of our members. I think we all felt for those athletes and their supporters who put in so much training and preparation over summer and had banked some great results leading up to the national-level competitions.

COVID19 also saw several lifeguard development and recruitment activities curtailed over the off-season – although we still ran our annual camp and qualified a number of new lifeguards over Labour Weekend. We also (after many cancelled exams) qualified a number of new IRB drivers in early 2021.

Apart from this, all of our core programs (lifeguarding; junior surf; and sport) were delivered over the season. Our financial position remains very strong – with key funders; sponsors and friends of the Club all continuing to provide support. We also benefited from the 1st year of partial Government funding of our life-guarding activities.

Lisa will cover off our financial position in a bit more detail in her update as Finance director.

It is important for me to re-iterate on behalf of the Board that the Club's resilience over the last 12 months is due in no small part to the relationships and financial and operational stewardship fostered by previous Boards' and members over a number of years.

2020/2021 Highlights

From my perspective a few of the 2020/2021 highlights were:

- Over 5000 hours of patrol hours – with over 30 rescues. What more can I say? Thanks to all our wonderful lifeguards who patrolled over the season.
- A highly visible; professional; engaged; cohesive regional lifeguard team on the beach over the core Xmas period. This team was predominantly our own club members- with some wonderful visitors from other clubs. I am proud to point out that the team was 60:40 women and led by a female head-guard. A strong reflection of the membership make-up of SLSNZ as a whole. Thanks for your leadership Phoebe and Matt.
- Another great junior surf season – lots of smiles and fun - Thanks Grace and your coaching team.
- Another strong Oceans performance for the club – punching above our weight again. Also, a growing senior sports team pumping out some impressive performances. Motorboaters keeping the wins coming. I'm always inspired by watching the training being put in by our athletes. Great stuff.
- Great Club and community turn-out and engagement at our annual Club "Whanga Week" events – such as a harbour swim; beach run; collection – and the highly successful quiz night. Good financial outcomes for the Club as well. Thanks to all involved, particularly those that

gave time to our annual door-knock (and the Rodger family re the quiz). Keen to build on these successes.

- The great vibe (and member connections) created by the club bar “with the best view in town” being open all summer – serving up cold drinks and great pizzas in town. Thanks Craig and team.

Max will no doubt add a bit more colour in his report - while a number of individual and team contributions will be recognised in awards session this evening.

This has been my first full year as your Club President. It is fair to say that there are a many more moving parts to the Club than I appreciated! However, I have been able to draw on the support and guidance from my fellow Board members; Committee members; the Club Manager and from former board members and other senior members of the Club. There have been some learnings for me. As I have said before, there is no lack of passion out there for this place – the Club remains in good heart. Thanks to you all.

Looking Forward – 2021/22

During 2021-2022 the Board will continue to work with our Committees and wider stakeholders on ensuring a focus on sustainability and on-going innovation in the way we fund; resource; succession plan and deliver our core inter-linked programs of lifeguarding; surf sports/boats and junior surf.

This focus is directly derived from the Club’s stated purpose; strategic plan and values.

Our current strategic plan has guided us well over the last 3 years and a “re-fresh” session will be planned for the middle of the year. Looking forward to engaging as many of you as we can in that activity.

We have a truly fabulous group of active lifeguards providing regional and volunteer patrols. As a Club we have always relied heavily on a particular age-group of volunteers; who predominantly need to travel to provide their services. This group is no different and will over time move onto the next phase of their lives and modify the nature of their contribution to the Club.

This means that lifeguard recruitment; development and engagement (across all member age groups) will remain a key focus of our lifeguard committee this year. They will, no doubt, be asking for help and contacts from the wider membership as part of this. I am also on a personal mission to qualify a few more mum’s and dads as lifeguards!

We will also be working with the Club Captain and the lifeguard committee to look at our peak patrol resourcing and see how we can better balance a largely Club member resourced regional guard team (a good thing!); with strong volunteer and week-end patrols – including member development and wider-engagement components.

Junior surf goes from strength to strength with over 250 participants in the program this summer learning to respect and enjoy the beach environment. Another successful Coromandel Cup for the Club this year as well as the now legendary disco topped off the summer. This year also saw 2 dedicated rookie coaches and a refreshed rookie program. We are looking forward to converting those youngsters to lifeguards this year and next.

For 2021-22, we are also exploring the possibilities of a stronger link between our surf sport programs and junior surf for the slightly older kids, to build on water-based skills and confidence, and provide a taste of the multiple pathways available within the club to participate and qualify to become a life-guard.

Our surf sport program has grown significantly over the last few years thanks to the hard work of Mark Robinson; the Sport Committee; team managers; involved parents – not to mention our coach Tom Lowe. There have been some terrific individual and team results over summer in competitions as well as a good contribution to lifeguarding by a number of our senior athletes. This year saw us engage an additional coach (Jack Dafur), and we look forward to working with the surf sport team as they shape up their 2021-2022 plans re coaching; program structure; funding and equipment needs.

It's also been great to see our national champion surf boat crew hitting out again this year; banking some wins and shaping up their plans for next season. There is also interest emerging in IRB racing – with the 2022 North Island Championship to be held at Whangamata!

From a financial perspective, the Club has considerable reserves, built up over many years, to ensure that key activities can continue to be offered when funding is stretched. In terms of capital expenditure for equipment, this is largely funded by grants (and some Government funding for lifeguard operational assets). Every year we look at our operational asset replacement plan to ensure our equipment is both in good condition and fit for purpose.

Our Club house is one asset that I tend to get many questions on.

We are in the process of independently “base-lining” the condition of the building (in terms of overall life span) and looking at a range of maintenance projects (painting; stair upgrades, etc). To assist the Board with these activities, from both a short-term and long-term perspective, we have engaged Life Member, Bryan Black, to co-ordinate building relating thinking and activities (both in a Board advisory and project management capacity). As many of you know, Bryan has undertaken a similar role in respect of most of the recent major upgrades to the Club. We are very appreciative to have his skills (and wider network) available to assist us. Look out for regular updates on this activity.

Thanks

Nothing would happen without our membership giving their time and energy across all facets of the Club some paid; mostly voluntary. Overall membership stood at 494 this season. So, again, thanks to all our Board members; Committee members; Life members; associate members; lifeguards; call out squad; coaches; parent helpers; gear stewards and fixers; uniform shop staff; Bar managers; pizza makers; sausage sizzlers; sport officials; instructors; examiners; mentors; handymen; sponsors; donators; friends and supporters for another great year.

I also want to specifically mention our ECOS (Emergency call-out squad). This team of very experienced, locally-based volunteer lifeguards is on call 24/7 to undertake search and rescue activities in conjunction with other emergency services when there is no patrol running (or to assist our patrols). This activity is not highly visible to club members but goes to the heart of our core purpose and what we do for the community. A big thanks to that team.

Finally, thanks (again) Andrea Paynter (our club manager) for holding the good ship together during a challenging year and doing the worrying for us when we forget things (and picking up the pieces when we do).

Looking forward to next summer already. See you on the beach.

Gavin Scott

Club President

Whangamata Surf Lifesaving Club Inc.