



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 73rd Annual AGM.

It's great to be chairing this year's AGM to so many of you in-person - and not needing to worry about social distancing; zoom connections and on-line voting mechanics. I must say that looking back to the start of this season I wasn't sure what was going to happen!

To keep our Club Manager Andrea on her toes, I'm going to change things around a bit and ask Lisa Marvin and Matt Millwood to present their finance and Club Captain's reports before my Club President Report.

The 2021/2022 Season

Thanks Matt and Lisa and to all those individuals and teams called out in your reports. Also, a big thanks to you both for your significant personal contribution to the season and the Club.

As you have heard, the Club is in good heart and in a healthy financial position. Our annual operational asset replacement plan is also tracking well – with new Vikings this year (thanks Manco); another roll-over of the jet-ski and the outright purchase of the patrol utility vehicle at the end of its lease (along with the usual replacement of smaller items such as tubes; radios, etc). We are also in the process of replacing the beach ramp decking.

The Club navigated COVID19 well, and we have had a terrific summer at a number of levels. The biggest disappointment was again felt by our Surf Sport athletes – with national competitions cancelled for a second year running. That said, our athletes showed impressive resilience; kept training hard and participated in the alternate events with great passion and commitment.

A few weeks ago, Andrea and I had a season de-brief with SLSNZ Eastern Region. It was pretty special to hear them conclude that Whangamata SLSC “set the standard” in the region. This was not only a reference to our life-guarding performance (paid and voluntary) over a busy; surf filled; windy; and hot summer. They also called out the way that our qualified guards across our programs (junior surf coaches; senior sport athletes; ECOS) worked together to back-up our core guard team when required.

The key numbers are worth repeating again, over 5700 patrol hours; 32 rescues; 109 people assisted to safety. It's also worth noting is that our RWC (jet-ski) program really came of age this season and was a critical asset in enabling a quick response through consistent large swell over summer. Thanks to Ray Stark for sponsoring the establishment of this program; and Nathan Hight championing that arrangement. (More about him later)

I know we are all a bit over COVID, but it was (unfortunately) a key challenge this season. From my perspective, I think it is important to call out some of things we collectively achieved; faced into and

solved to ensure all our core programs and events could happen – in an ever changing regulatory and public health environment. In my view, the 2021-22 season was great testament to the Club's cohesion; resilience; shared values and commitment to what we do and our beach-going community.

- We put a volunteer lifeguard patrol on the beach every weekend from Labour Day to this Easter week-end; and a regional guard team every weekday over the peak summer weeks. This involved a huge effort from our “Level 2” located guards early in the season (with Auckland locked down). Our Level 2 team also made sure lifeguard development continued during this time where folks could get to the Club. Additionally, our wider member development team used lock-down mechanisms (zoom) to prepare some Auckland members for their life-guard exam. As always, our ECOS team also operated continuously throughout the entire year.
- We used a SLSNZ exemption under the COVID lock-down rules to permanently re-locate our two surf sport coaches (both experienced guards; and Auckland based) to support our volunteers and to enable pre-season coaching to start-up for our surf sport athletes.
- We were the first mover across SLSNZ on mandating vaccination of lifeguards; junior surf and sport coaches. This meant that our programs could run effectively (and get started when we wanted them to) under different “settings”, but also ensured the well-being of our members/program participants - based on the public health advice and recommendations applying at the time. Not once did a member indicate we simply “cancel” summer.
- We used the vaccination related pathways under the “Traffic Light” regime to ensure we could get good numbers from the wider community at our Harbour Swim; Breach Run; Quiz night events; and put on the Coromandel Cup. We also ran a successful “social distanced” collection which both engaged the community and was financially successful.

I want to thank my fellow Board members for the way we approached these difficult decisions; our operational Committees for their feedback and implementation of Club policies; and all our members for their support/understanding as we worked through COVID.

..... Non-Covid stuff and Looking Forward

Looking at the “Looking Forward” section my report from last year, I am also pleased to say that there were quite a few other things we managed to move forward on this year (albeit some remain work-in-progress due to other priorities that emerged).

Strategic Re-fresh: In July a highly engaged group of members came together to look at the strategic plan that has guided us well over the last 3 years. We also talked about some of the key goals of our committees (many of which were put in place) and some ideas about how we could further enhance club culture and engagement. As a group we re-confirmed our existing focus on sustainability and on-going innovation in the way we fund; resource; succession plan and deliver our core inter-linked programs. A key outstanding action on the Board is to re-cast the language and visualisation of our strategic priorities in a way that better resonates with the wider membership.

Member Development: This year our lifeguards obtained 132 new qualifications – including a number of new guards; new IRB drivers and RWC operators. An outstanding effort by those members and the life-guard Committee in a challenging off-season environment. While new guard numbers were up (including several locals – thanks Nathan – more about him later), recruitment is always something a Club with our geographical and demographic profile must focus on. Looking

forward to working more closely with the Committee on a longer-term plan and perhaps refreshing some historic models/partnerships that served us well in the past.

Peak Weekend patrols/Regional program: This year we had members of our paid life-guard team support weekend patrols over peak. This was a great success for all involved; and will be further refined next season. Our largely Club member resourced regional guard team remains a key lifeguard retention, engagement, and development pathway. SLSNZ ER has agreed to committing to this hybrid model for the foreseeable future, and we are working with them on improving their guard assessment process (which we use as our baseline) and solving the funding gap between what we think is a suitable program and the funding provided by the Regional Council. A gap that we and other clubs in the Coromandel meet from our own resources.

Junior Surf re-fresh/pre-oceans: Junior surf continues its offering with shorter-sessions for little-ones and a re-vamped cadet and rookie program with dedicated coaches (nothing like a uniform to keep the older kids). Our pre-Oceans (Pathways) program was also a big success with 29 participants over the season, enabling 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 lifeguard.

Surf Sports: This season saw the implementation of the 2021/2022 plan the Sport Committee presented to the Board early in the season dealing with coaching; program structure; funding and equipment needs. There was strong support and rationale for additional investment this growing program and life-guard pathway. The hard work put in by our athletes all summer is a feature of club life and an inspiration for many – whether they be emerging nippers or guards working on their fitness. The huge effort of parents to facilitate our athletes attending competitions should also be acknowledged. A key challenge (and opportunity) for 2022/23 will be re-building the coaching team following Tom Lowe's move to Mairangi Bay and the Blackfins coaching teams. We will all miss Tom whose contribution will be recognised in multiple forums and ways over the next 24 hours. That said, we are also happy to see his hard work over many years being rewarded. This is the 3rd example of a Whangamata coach go onto bigger things, reflecting the high regard in the surf community for our program and the athletes we develop. All the best Tom.

The Club House

I have had a few comments about the condition of our Club house over the season etc and want to update you on our plans. Earlier this year we received an independent report "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). We also reviewed the historic seismic assessment of the main club house (a quasi-public building) against the latest regulations and are working on a formal assessment and related strengthening advice.

In view of the increasing scope of building related activity, the Board took the view that both the remediation and strengthening work should be combined into a wider renovation project to set us up for the future.

Following a member survey in July, a design concept has been developed to enhance our patrol operation areas on the 1st and mezzanine floors of the Club (including the tower) and provide improved access/amenity for members and public. The latter taking the form of a more public-facing reception/administration area and additional training/meeting spaces. Internal refurbishment of the main club house (and aspects of the accommodation block) is also under consideration as part of the project.

We have recently received funding of nearly \$100,000 from the SLSNZ capital fund to take our concept the next level of design and obtain seismic and associated engineering advice. This updated design will be shared with the membership later in the year. Following a fundraising phase, also this year (with a dedicated building related website and program), we are looking commence construction around this time next year and look to the complete the activity by November 2023.

Board Member and Life Member, Bryan Black, will be mobilising a building committee to work with him to co-ordinate building relating thinking and activities on behalf of the Board. Bryan has undertaken a similar role in respect of several the recent major upgrades to the Club. We are very appreciative to have his skills (and wider network) made available to assist us.

This is a significant undertaking, and Bryan, the Committee and the Board will be seeking the assistance of the membership on aspects of the project as it progresses. Once the website and contact details go live, please feel free to submit ideas to Bryan and the Committee – particularly re fundraising! Alternate ideas on our current project names of “Renovate” or “Transform” are also welcome! Watch out for regular updates on the project as it moves forward.

Copies of the concept drawings; and the high-level project timeline will be available at the end of the meeting, as will our architect Bruce Scott (no relation) to answer any immediate questions from members who are here at the AGM.

Thanks

These reports simply can't cover everything people have done across the Club. Put simply, nothing would happen without our membership giving their time and energy across all facets of the Club some paid; mostly voluntary. So, again, thanks to my fellow Board members; Committee members; Life members; associate members; lifeguards; the ECOS 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 want to particularly mention our sponsors, some of whom have been supporters of the club for many years such as Beach Hop, Whangamata Real Estate, Manco, Trust Waikato, NZCT and Lion. All our sponsors are detailed on the side of the surf club and on the boards in the annex and main clubrooms. A sizable chunk of our more recent event and/or program specific sponsors have also maintained their support for the Club throughout the economic challenges of the last few years – a big thanks to them.

My final mention goes to Andrea (our club manager) – ably supported by Rachel - for holding the many components of the Club together during another challenging year and standing up a new website. Thanks.

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

Gavin Scott

Club President

Whangamata Surf Lifesaving Club Inc.