

Good morning Whanga Fam

Here we are at the end of another cracking season right here at the best beach in the world. I think the standout marker of this season in comparison to last, is the existence of actual facilities to be patrolling out of. Those containers were great, and we did make it work, but boy was it nice to not be spending half your day confined to a 5x3 metre box, cooking all our food in an air frier on the floor.

The completion of the building is a pretty defining success of the past year, but there have been plenty more wins that have made me just so proud to be a part of this club.

Lifeguarding

I will start this by running through our patrol stats for this season. This season, we saw a total of 79 guards don the red and yellows and put in the work on the front line in between the flags.

In total, between our volunteer and paid guards, we patrolled for 4645 hours. 25 people required a rescue that likely saved their life, and 53 people were assisted from dangerous situations that likely would have otherwise worsened and become life threatening if not for the interventions of our lifeguards. On top of this, 12 major first aids requiring ambulance support were carried out, and a further 36 minor first aids were performed. 5 searches were carried out, around 7500 people were impacted by the preventative actions of our guards. Those are some pretty serious numbers, so I would like to extend an enormous and heartfelt thank you to everyone that got stuck in and put in that work that really is so vital to our community.

We also qualified 8 new guards this season – welcome to the club Mack, Georgia, Averie, Josh, Kristopher, Harvey, Henry, and Alyssa. Epic to see some of you already out there sitting your crewpersons exam tomorrow.

The service provided on the beach and the training that enables this service is made possible by the efforts of the Lifesaving Committee. This behind-the-scenes work goes year round, and the Club simply not run without it. Thank you to Tom Lowe, Mia Turner, Julius Bell, Lily Taylor, Daniel Lewis, and Danielle Ellery. An extra big thank you to Brianna Norris, who has chaired this committee for the past few years and is will now be stepping down. Bre, it has been such a privilege to work so closely with you.

I also want to thank our Regional Guard team, led by Julius Bell and Lily Taylor, who once again stepped up and represented the club with the professionalism and extraordinary skillset that continues to earn Whangamatā SLSC the name as one of the best in the business. In particular, I want to call out the mammoth day the team faced on New Years Day, dealing with 18 patients, 12 of whom were involved in major incidents. Many of these incidents occurred simultaneously at different locations along the beach. The feedback following this was incredible, with SLSNZ formally writing to commend the calibre of lifesaving currently operating on our beach, noting the composure and professionalism shown by the team on the beach that day was nothing short of excellent.

We have also had our guards repping the club on the national stage in this space. As Phoebe Havill steps away after 4 years as a National Lifeguard School Instructor, we have had Max Jones selected for a 3 year tenure, keeping the Whanga representation strong.

Our SAR Squad also proved invaluable this season, not only making themselves available to respond to incidents year round, at any time of day, but also jumping in and bolstering patrols when their expertise was needed. Thank you SAR Squad.

## Sport

It is often said that our Surf Sports team punches well above their weight, and this season was no exception. Nationals was held down in Ohope, and once again we finished within the top 10 Clubs in the country. Along the way we picked up 10 medals, which included a national champion title for Finn Freemantle in the u17 Board Race.

This is huge from our small team of 14 athletes, and is reflective of the tireless effort they put in year round. A massive thank you to coach Moritz Padrutt who has put in enormous time and passion to get everyone performing at their best.

We have also had significant success on the global stage.

We've also just had some of our athletes competing over the ditch at Aussies, where they were up against more than 7000 athletes. We had 3 medal winners here - Madi Kidd picked up 2 gold and 2 bronze, Alyssa Tapper with a gold, and Izzy Milne a silver and a bronze.

Madi Kidd was also crowned Surf Lifesaving New Zealand's Sportsperson of the year at the National Awards of Excellence, and made history as the first ever female Black Fins captain, when she led this team to success in the German Cup. Not only did we have a Whanga clubbie Captaining this team, but it was also coached by our very own Tom Lowe.

This level of excellence is truly phenomenal.

An exciting development in the Club over the last year has been the establishment of an IRB racing team, coached by Paul Phillips. This team travelled around the North Island competing in Regional and National events, and put in some great races. Really excited to see what this team continue to achieve in this space.

I also want to give a shoutout to our beloved Motorboaters, who did a clean sweep at Nationals, winning both Long and Short course in the Surf Boats. Although not able to race under our cap this season, they're still our boys and we're so proud of them.

And as is the case with all areas of the Club, none of this would have been possible without the massive efforts of the Committee. Nova Robinson, Sarah Freemantle, Jodi Milne, Alistair Luke, and Woody Robinson – you are all absolute superstars.

## J surf

This year we had 198 Junior Surf nippers come through the Club, which is up about 50% from last year. This is such an important area of the Club, as it allows a succession pathway for our future lifeguards. Our coaching team, lead by Patrick Scott, ensured everyone who turned up learnt something, and more importantly – had fun. We also ran another successful Coro Cup, which saw us host around 200 nippers from the Coromandel.

The programme's success this year is remarkable considering we started the season without a Junior Surf Committee. Jono, Shan and Gavin, thank you so much for stepping up and taking the reins in J Surf's hour of need. I'm sure you're all very excited to see such a healthy list of nominees for this committee in the coming season.

#### Comms

One of the best things about being Club Captain is that I often get to receive positive feedback from the community and wider organisation about things our Club is doing well. There is perhaps no area of the Club that is more frequently commented on than the quality of our social media channels, and promo campaigns. The professionalism of this content is frankly pretty amazing for a volunteer institution, and all thanks is owed to the dedication and expertise of our Communications Committee Chair Phoebe Havill, and Luke Smith.

Thank you, Phoebe, for all your hard work here over the years. As you step down this season, the gap you leave will be keenly felt.

#### General thanks

As I step away from Club Captain, I have a couple of thanks that I would like to pass on. Firstly – to my fellow Board members – Gavin Scott, Mandy Rodger, Pete Gilbert, Jono Morgan, Bryan Black, and Lisa Marvin. I feel so grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside you all and learn from such a deep pool of expertise.

Dide – I don't know where the club would be without you. I don't think the general Club population realises how much time and passion you put into this role. You are constantly going above and beyond, and the Club is so much better for it.

And finally, to the Club as a whole. It would not be possible for me to articulate how much this Club means to me. For the people I've met and the experiences I've had here – I am forever indebted. From the bottom of my heart – thank you. It has been my honour to carry the torch.

Yours in Surf,

Grace Westenberg

Club Captain 2024 – 2026