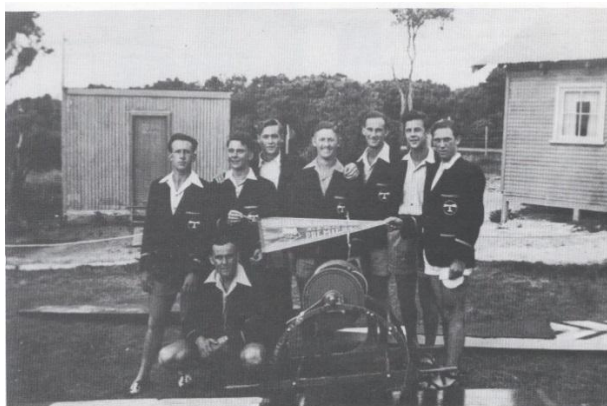


CLUB HISTORY SUMMARY – 1947 TO 2015

Formation

The in-coming post war popularity of people visiting ocean beaches was foreseen by Mr. Jack Meehan, who was the Secretary and Senior Instructor of the Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club. He and another member of the Williamstown Club, Mr. Bill Tyrell, who was the Chief Instructor, saw the need to establish a Surf Life Saving Club at Point Lonsdale. The experience and training gained in a surf environment partly motivated this idea, as it would benefit the Williamstown Club with the experience that the members gained in the surf.



Our R&R team 1947 – 1948

Back, L to R: Don Negus, John Urquhart, Sid Wookey, Les Higham, Ron Hodgson, Brian O'Brien, Alan Love

Kneeling: Alan Drydle

(Alan Love and Alan Drydle were not members of the team)

Les Higham was the first Club Captain

Photo courtesy Eric McGee

In 1946, the Williamstown Swimming and Life Saving Club wrote to the Borough of Queenscliffe, suggesting that there was a need to establish a Surf Life Saving Club at Point Lonsdale.

In March of 1947 the Club's first premises, at the request of the Progress Association, was the Seabrook Memorial, adjacent to the 'Step's Beach' at Point Lonsdale.

In 1964, the current Clubrooms were officially opened. Major alterations were made in the period between 1993 and 1996 and in December of 1996, the Glaneuse Bar was officially opened.

In 1982, the Surf Rescue Base was officially opened at the Back Beach.

The other major development in the formation of the Club was the establishment of the Junior Activities (Nippers) Program in 1967, by Lonsdale legends John Turner and Harry Windmill. This was the first such program in Victoria.



During 2001 a major works program commenced at the Surf Rescue Base to add additional storage, training and meeting facilities, to upgrade the current facilities and to add public toilet amenities. In January of 2007, this building was officially named the HC Windmill Back Beach Base in recognition of nearly 60 years of service to the Club by the late Harry Windmill.

Lonsdale members at the official opening of the H. C. Windmill Back Beach Base

Photo courtesy Tony Baenziger

The Club's Building Committee, led by Bruce Smith and Graeme Frankpitt completed this major project and it was officially opened in January 2002. In the same year the Building Committee oversaw another major project, which was to build a brand new facility at the Santa Casa Beach Queenscliff, to support the Nipper program and for the Professional Lifeguard Outpost, located there. The Santa Casa Surf Rescue Base was officially opened in March 2003.

The Club was awarded the Life Saving Victoria Awards of Excellence Club of the Year 2005 Award. This was due to its broad range of activities that assisted to ensure a safer beach and aquatic environment for the community and the areas highlighted included Lifesaving, Aquatic Sport, Youth and Leadership Development, Administration and Community Service achievements.

The Club's Lifesaving Emergency Response Team (LERT) was formed in 2007, the second club in Victoria to do so. LERT has been able to provide a huge amount of training and skill development for many members of the Club through both training programs and callouts to assist emergency services. A major highlight for LERT was the presentation of a major award in July 2013. We received one of the highest awards - the Outstanding Achievement of the Year Award.

During Season 2008 / 2009 the Club undertook its largest and most expensive building works on the Clubrooms site since the building was built.



Photo courtesy Matthew Ponsford



Photo courtesy Tony Baenziger

A new purpose designed and built Storage, Maintenance and Training facility, replaced the small shed at the rear of our grounds. This allowed for storage of Aquatic Sports equipment and for the Club's new Lifesaving Emergency Response Team (LERT) to have a suitable storage area with quick access to the road. The facility was officially opened in June 2009.

Season 2010 / 2011 was marred by an unexpected challenge, when the back beach base ramp was damaged by winter storms. Despite our best efforts to have it repaired prior to the start of the season, this did not eventuate, and our patrolling members battled admirably under very trying conditions to maintain effective patrols with limited and less than satisfactory access to the beach. After many delays, a ramp was eventually installed and despite numerous reservations from various community groups, the ramp proved to be satisfactory for the Club's needs.



Photo courtesy Tony Baenziger



Photo courtesy Mandy Grbac

Surf Rescue

Since formation in 1947, there have been 1,743 officially recorded rescues, by volunteer surf life savers and paid lifeguards at Point Lonsdale, during rostered patrols. This figure includes Queenscliff which has been patrolled by paid lifeguards since the 1999 / 2000 season. The Rescue Statistics include rescues performed by the Lifesaving Emergency Response Team, but does not include rescues performed out of the normal patrol area, at times other than patrol periods, by members as part of other surf rescue services or rescues which have not been officially recorded. If these were all added, the figure would be several hundred higher. Thousands of First Aid cases have been performed, and many more thousands of rescues have been prevented, by the advice and warnings given to beach users.

Over the years, there has been a large development in the type of equipment utilised by Surf Rescue Patrols. In the early days, the Reel, Line and Belt were the primary piece of rescue equipment. In time, the Surf Boat was introduced, so too was the Rescue Board. Today, the Rescue Tube, Inflatable Rescue Boat and Rescue Board are the primary pieces of rescue equipment, supported by the Club's All Terrain Vehicle. The days of equipment such as the Eve Rocker are long gone, with modern oxygen resuscitation, defibrillators and advanced first aid equipment being used. Modern two way radio equipment is used for patrol communication and for liaison with other Clubs, Life Saving Victoria and other Rescue Services.

There have been many significant rescues performed by members of the club and a number of bravery awards given to Point Lonsdale members for their heroic efforts. Some of the major rescues have been:

- In March of 1953, a mass rescue alarm was raised by the Lonsdale Lighthouse keeper.
- While members competed at a Surf Carnival at Ocean Grove in 1955, the alarm was raised from Queenscliff, for a group of swimmers in trouble and a team was sent to rescue those who got into difficulty. After the delay in reaching the scene, one person was found and resuscitated, while the other was lost.
- In November of 1968, two swimmers got into difficulty, while swimming at the Surf Beach. Conditions were unfavourable and surf life savers had earlier closed the beach, due to the unsafe conditions. Many lifesavers were involved in a very dangerous and prolonged rescue. Two lifesavers, Barry Watt and Bob Luce swam out with the Belt attached, but were unable to reach the pair. A surf board was used by another lifesaver, Rob Anderson, but he was also unable to reach the pair, who ended up being washed up unconscious on the reef, at the beach at the end of Fellows Road. One was successfully resuscitated and the other was not.
- In 1983, two members, Alan Joyce and David Ponsford who were on duty in the Surf Life Saving Offshore Rescue Boat, were called to a SCUBA diving rescue at Queenscliff. The young female

diver had collapsed after several dives. She was unconscious, had no pulse or breathing and would have died, except for the efforts of these two members. She was successfully resuscitated and fortunately made a full recovery.

- Two significant rescues took place in 2013. On 19th January a young male member of the public was caught in the rip and was struggling quite badly. Sam Storch, a very confident and competent board rider, took his own initiative and went out to rescue the swimmer in the rip. Two other members later assisted with a board and tube. For his first ever patrol and rescue Sam did a fantastic job. On 14th April, Karlene Lang was badly injured when her boogie board broke on a sandbar. She was left face down in shallow water with more waves breaking over her when Eliza Francis, Caleb Whitley and George Hurley went to her rescue. Karlene could not move her arms or legs and if not for their quick thinking, Karlene would have been in serious trouble. She was placed in a neck brace and on a spinal board and transported to Geelong hospital.
- On 20th February 2015, two Dutch tourists succumbed to the strong currents in the escalator. Rob Constance, Peter Reinbach, Bruce Hay and Ian McKenzie performed the rescue.
- On 21st March 2015, members carried out an excellent rescue. Will Macafee (16 years of age) and Victor Hurley (60+) together rescued a 32 year old male body-boarder was in trouble in the notorious escalator. Navigating 2.5m surf, Victor and Will carried out the combined rescue effort on a Surf Rescue Board and Surf Rescue Tube. An outstanding rescue effort by both these lifesaving volunteers.

Aquatic Sports

The Point Lonsdale Club has had a long and distinguished history in Surf Life Saving Competition. In the first season, competitors attended every Surf Carnival that was conducted along the Victoria coast. In the first Australian Championships attended by the Club in 1948, a Rescue and Resuscitation team (the first ever from Victoria) represented the club at Manly. The successful competition areas in the early years were those of Rescue and Resuscitation, Surf Swimming and the March Past.



Point Lonsdale was the first Victorian club to receive a place in the Australian Titles, when Harrow Morgan gained an equal third place in the Junior Belt Race Title. Since formation, there have been over 90 Victorian Titles won in these areas. Harrow represented Victoria at National Titles from 1949 to 1958.

Photo courtesy Harry Windmill

Point Lonsdale was the first Victorian (and in fact the first club outside of NSW) to win a Senior Men's Surf Boat title at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships. The first of three titles was won in the 1964 / 1965 season at Scarborough, Western Australia.

Photo courtesy John Turner



The second title was won at Dee Why, New South Wales in the 1974 / 1975 season. The record making third title was won in 1975 / 1976 at Clifton Beach in Tasmania. In recent times, the success has continued at the Australian Championships.

The boat crew at Dee Why, 1975 - Peter Grant, Bob Luce, Lance Hately, Gary McKellar and Rex Dale

Photo courtesy Rex Dale

At the 1994 / 1995 Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, an Invitational Women's Surf Boat race was conducted, which was won by Point Lonsdale. The following season, the race was cancelled due to unsafe conditions. In the 1996 / 1997 season, the Australian Titles were conducted at Kurrawa, Queensland. The Ladies crew won the first Senior Women's Boat Race title, which is now a regular event at the national championships

Photo courtesy Life Saving Victoria - The Ladies Boat crew winning at the Australian Titles at Kurrawa 1997.



Sue Chapman-Popa, Jody Dobson, Steve Blewett, Mandy Loftus-Hills, Anna McFarlane

The other major success area was that of the Ironman. Our most successful individual competitor and one of the most successful Victorian competitors has been Steve McBean. Steve's biggest achievement was that of coming second in the first Coolangatta Gold event, which propelled the Ironman event into the popular series that it is today.

Photo courtesy Rex Dale





Photo courtesy Aussies in Action

At the 2001 Australian IRB Championships conducted at Scarborough Western Australia the Club enjoyed success in two events and were placed 11th in Australia. In the Surf Rescue Event, the team of Matt Culka, Chris Abbot and Alison Harrington were placed first. In the Rescue Tube Event, the team of Matt Culka, Rob Andronaco and Angela Collins were placed fifth.

The IRB Championships at Scarborough in 2001

Matt Culka - Driver, Alison Harrington - Patient, Chris Abbot - Crewman

The Victorian Titles at Ocean Grove in 2015 were terrific for our Club members.

After many years without a great deal of success, our small core of enthusiastic competitors “had a go” and did very well. In particular we congratulate Justine Cain, who won silver in the 2km beach sprint.

Photo courtesy Mattias Baenziger

