

## HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

THURSDAY 03<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2016

### SURF LIFE SAVING SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**Mr PEDERICK ( Hammond ) ( 12:01 ):** I congratulate the member for Bright on this excellent motion:

That this house acknowledges the incredible work of Surf Life Saving South Australia and its 20 clubs around the state's precious coastline, and in particular—

- (a) the time spent patrolling our beaches throughout the 2015-16 and 2016-17 surf lifesaving seasons;
- (b) the commitment to serving coastline communities; and
- (c) the ongoing efforts to ensure our beaches are safe for South Australian families.

I, along with other members of this house, cannot say enough about Surf Life Saving, the many lives they save and the safe practices they put in place to get people to swim between the flags. I am amazed that when you are at a beach, whether it is in South Australia or interstate, there are always people who tend to drift off from the flags. If they want to stay safe and be under the direct, watchful eye of those very valuable people, our surf lifesavers, they need to swim between the flags.

I just want to talk about the Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club, which has only been around since 2010. I would like to acknowledge everyone there, including club captain, David Reynolds. Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club offers beach patrols from October through to the end of March, and training is provided in the following areas: bronze surf lifesaving medallion, surf rescue certificate, radio operator training, first aid, advanced resuscitation, spinal management, surf rescue, inflatable rescue boat crew and driver training, and much more.

In 2015, along with other clubs, Goolwa were the recipients of a \$5,000 grant as part of the commonwealth's Beach Safety Equipment Fund. The total grant will equate to \$25,000 spread over five years. I also note that the Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club are in the process of upgrading their club facilities, which will be great to see going into the future. I understand a new state-of-the-art facility will be built behind Bombora cafe as part of a redevelopment plan that is being worked though with Alexandrina Council, and it will complement their lookout facility near the car park.

I certainly commend the work of the Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club, as Goolwa is a dangerous beach. Swimmers are strongly urged not to swim beyond the first line of breakers as the currents are extremely strong. I have not been out there for a little while, but back in the summer of 2009 my boys and I were swimming at the beach and the next thing I knew, due to the undercurrents, I had one fly past my right so I grabbed him, and the other one went past on the left. If I had three kids, I would have been in strife, because I was hanging on to two of them. It can certainly be an issue. They were only nine and six years old at the time, so it was a valuable lesson in what can happen with those undercurrents.

Sadly, we see so many people get caught who do not understand the rips and undercurrents, especially around the South Coast. There have been some terrible tragedies over time, when people have not taken heed or have just not realised that they need to take heed of the conditions at our various beaches. Certainly take notice of the signage, and acknowledge the fact that water can be a very dangerous place, and

not just if you are swimming. There is also the potential for shark attacks and that kind of thing. I congratulate everyone involved in Surf Life Saving SA and more broadly, who take time to look after their community.

Surf lifesaving first commenced in Sydney in 1907, and it has come a long way since then. The first club in South Australia was founded at Henley in 1925, and in 2014 Adelaide won the contract to host the Lifesaving World Championships in 2018. This is an event that is known to be the largest lifesaving event in the world, and 2018 is certainly set to be the biggest. In regard to people looking for information about how to manage swimming in the surf and to get some lifesaving tips, they can go to the Surf Life Saving website, which can provide those tips. I encourage potential swimmers to look first for information such as how to spot a rip and how to survive a rip.

Between 1 July 2014 and 30 June 2015 271 people drowned in Australian waterways. This number would have been far higher without the fantastic work of our lifesavers. I guess that is the biggest challenge for all of us, to try to get that number down to zero. That might be a near impossible task, but that number would have been far greater if it were not for the valuable contribution of all these volunteers right across the state and the nation in helping their fellow swimmers, and people who are essentially going down to the water to have a good time. The last thing you want is to have a tragedy.

I salute everyone involved in surf lifesaving and commend all the work they do. It is absolutely valuable work, as all voluntary work is. We could not afford to pay them for the things they do to keep our community safe. I commend this excellent motion from the member for Bright.