



Is Tony on channel?

GOOLWA BEACH - Alexandrina Council will contact Prime Minister Tony Abbott and the local federal members requesting funding for a "high priority" project to upgrade to Goolwa Beach.

The upgrade would include the Goolwa Life Saving Club facilities, and is necessary for the club to keep doing its work saving lives, according to club president John Hurst.

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CALLING FOR BACKUP: Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club president John Hurst said the club may not be able to continue to operate into the future without an upgrade of its facilities.



WE NEED IT: Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club (GSLSC) president John Hurst hopes funds will be forthcoming for an upgrade to the club's facilities, so it can continue doing its important work protecting beach-goers.

'Help us help you'

By **ALICE DEMPSTER**

ALEXANDRINA - Federal funding will be requested of Prime Minister Tony Abbott for the expansion and upgrade of Goolwa Beach car park and lifesaving club facilities.

Alexandrina Council mayor Kym McHugh will write to the Prime Minister, Member for Mayo Jamie Briggs, and Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick, seeking support for the upgrades.

Goolwa Surf Life Saving Club (GSLSC) president John Hurst said the upgrades need to happen to ensure the viability of the club, which protects users of what he said is the seventh most dangerous beach in the country.

The club currently operates with an 18-metre by six-metre shed for storage, and a six-metre by three-metre first aid room.

It has been working from these premises for the past three seasons, since its establishment in 2010.

Last summer, GSLSC was involved in about four rescues, 1000 preventions, 100 first aid cases, and "a few lost kids", according to Mr Hurst.

He said these statistics indicate why upgraded facilities are so important.

"We are rated seventh and Bondi Beach is rated sixth for danger - and Bondi has paid lifesavers on all the time," he said.

If upgrades are not completed, Mr Hurst said he would be worried about the club's long-term viability.

"Our club has no showers or toilets for our members," he said.

"We've already run out of space for our equipment. The surf boat is at my house, because there's no room left in the shed.

"The issue is how long we can survive with our membership numbers?"

"They might go to other clubs with better facilities."

The 2013-14 lifesaving season has

already started for lifesaving clubs in the region, and while GSLSC has not had a head count of members yet this year, Mr Hurst said there were about 135 members recorded during last summer's season.

He said the club's main priority is to establish its junior ranks, so its future is safe within the Goolwa community.

"The population down here is increasing. The beach is increasing in popularity," he said.

"As with any club, our nipper program is the most important, because they're building the future.

"For the long-term future of GSLSC, we need to have better facilities."

The Goolwa Beach upgrade was identified as a high priority project by councillor Keith Parkes at council's November 18 meeting.

At the meeting, councillors voted for the letter to be sent and support secured so a development concept plan can be completed.