

Waverley Council Lifeguards : 10 fast facts



Bill Willis, Aub Laidlaw and Brian Davidson



Lifeguards 2008/2009 Summer Session

In 2013 the Waverley Council Lifeguard service celebrated its centenary. Here are 10 fast facts about our Lifeguards.

1. The need for a permanent Lifeguard on Bondi Beach was first suggested to Waverley Council by Bondi Surf Bathers' Lifesaving Club in November 1907.
2. The first Lifeguard appointed was Dennis ('Dinny') Brown, a Bronte resident who started his solo patrol of Bondi in December 1913. Patrols on Bronte and Tamarama commenced soon afterward.
3. The most dramatic day for rescues on any of Waverley's beaches was 6 February 1938, known as 'Black Sunday', when on Bondi Beach approximately 250 swimmers required assistance, 150 were rescued, 60 suffered near drowning, 35 brought to shore unconscious and five drowned.
4. At the beginning of each day the Lifeguards carry out an assessment of the surf conditions including surf size, tide, wind direction and the location of rips and sandbanks. Based on this assessment sets of flags are erected in the safest swimming zones and their position is monitored throughout the day.
5. It is claimed that the first female honorary Beach Inspectors (Lifeguards) in NSW were appointed in December, 1971. They were Margery Keeble, Marilyn Myers and Robin Carroll, all members of Bondi Amateur Swimming Club. In 2006 Waverley Council employed its first full-time female Lifeguard when Brooke Cassell came to Waverley after 10 years as a Lifeguard for Wyong Council.
6. The first portable observation device owned by Waverley Council was a high ladder installed on Bondi Beach in 1928. Part of its popularity was that it could quickly be taken down by one man and moved to any section of the beach as needed. The current Bondi Lifeguard tower replaced an earlier 1975 observation tower which had been built courtesy of a Lions Club donation. At Tamarama the Lifeguards have a distinctive round tower on the beach and at Bronte the Lifeguard room faces the promenade at the bottom of the Bronte Surf Life Saving Club building.

7. Lifeguards used to be known as Beach Inspectors and Beach Inspectors were colloquially called 'Beachies'. Members of surf life saving clubs were frequently nicknamed 'Clubbies'.

8. Today Waverley Council Lifeguards patrol Waverley's three beaches – Bondi, Bronte and Tamarama. Bondi Beach every day of the year and Bronte and Tamarama beaches over the **summer swimming season**. There are free-standing Lifeguard towers on Bondi and Tamarama beaches. At Bronte there is a Lifeguard room underneath the Bronte Surf Life Saving Club.

9. You can see the Waverley Council Lifeguards in action on your TV screen in the Logie-award winning television show *Bondi Rescue*, now filming its 8th season.

10. In 2013 a total of 36 Lifeguards were employed over the summer season. Their status can be permanent, seasonal, temporary part-time or casual; currently there are also two trainee Lifeguards undergoing assessment. Most of these Lifeguards work as summer casuals, only eight are full-time Waverley Council employees.

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