

History of SLSA Fact File

Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) is one of Australia's most important organisations. It is a not-for-profit community organisation. All of the money earned and collected is used to keep it running.

In the 1830s it was illegal for people swim during the day. Some years later, in 1902, a man tested this law by announcing his plan to swim in October. After this, the law was removed between 1902 and 1905, and surfing, swimming and sunbathing started to become more popular.

The number of visitors to Australian beaches increased. Sadly, most visitors to the beach could not swim properly and many of them drowned.

Some people began to patrol the beach to help, and in 1906 the first Surf Bathing Association was formed at one of Australia's most famous beaches, Bondi Beach.

On October 18th, 1907, nine surf lifesaving clubs and representatives of the Royal Life Saving Society had a meeting and formed the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales.

The name was changed to Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA) in 1922, and changed again in 1991 to the current name Surf Life Saving Australia.

In 1973, the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service was started and it now operates seven days a week, 365 days a year – how amazing!



In 1980, women were allowed to become active lifesavers.

Since then, many different organisations have formed in each of the Australian states.

Visiting the beach is part of the Australian way of life. Thousands of people enjoy visiting to swim, surf, play and relax on Australian beaches. Over 630 000 people have been rescued by lifesavers in

the last 110 years. The Surf Life Saving Association of Australia is one of the most important organisations in our community.

History of Life Saving Australia Questions

1. What is Surf Life Saving Australia shortened to?

2. When was the law removed that stopped daylight swimming?

3. When did people first start to patrol the beach?

4. Where was the first Surf Bathing Association formed?

5. How many clubs formed the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales?

6. What date did they meet?

7. Which Australian bank sponsors the rescue helicopter?

8. In what year were women allowed to become active life savers?

9. How many people have been rescued by life savers since 1906?

History of Surf Life Saving Australia **Answers**

1. What is Surf Life Saving Australia shortened to?
SLSA
2. When was the law removed that stopped daylight swimming?
Between 1902 – 1905
3. When did people first start to patrol the beach?
1906
4. Where was the first Surf Bathing Association formed?
Bondi Beach
5. How many clubs formed the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales?
9
6. What date did they meet?
October 18th, 1907
7. Which Australian bank sponsors the rescue helicopter?
Westpac
8. In what year were women allowed to become active life savers?
1980
9. How many people have been rescued by life savers since 1906?
Over 630 000

History of SLSA Fact File

Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) is an Australian not-for-profit community organisation, meaning that all of the money donated, earned and collected by the organisation is used to reach its goals and keep it running.

The SLSA is Australia's most valuable service for preventing drowning, and an important coastal water safety and rescue organisation.

In the 1830s there were laws that made it illegal for people to bathe or swim during daylight hours.

Around 1900, a newspaper editor from Sydney named William Gocher challenged this law at Manly beach, by announcing his plan to swim at midday in the October of 1902.

After more people fought this law it was eventually removed between 1902 and 1905, and surfing, swimming and sunbathing started to grow in popularity.

As a result, the number of visitors to Australian beaches increased. Unfortunately most visitors to the beach were not prepared and couldn't swim properly. The number of drownings and rescues increased suddenly.

A small number of volunteers began to patrol the beach to help, and in 1906 the first Surf Bathing Association was formed at one of Australia's most famous beaches, Bondi Beach.



On October 18th, 1907, nine surf lifesaving clubs and representatives of the Royal Life Saving Society met to represent the interests of surf life savers. After this meeting the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales was formed.

This name was changed to Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA) in 1922, and changed again in 1991 to the current name Surf Life Saving Australia.

History of SLSA Fact File

In 1973 the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service was established as a basic rescue and patrol service, and it is now the largest non-profit Aviation Search and Rescue service in Australia. It now operates seven days a week, 365 days a year – how amazing!

Although women were involved in surf-lifesaving for many years, in 1980 the rules were changed to allow them to become active members.

Over time, many different organisations have formed in each of the Australian states.

Visiting the beach is part of the Australian way of life, with thousands of people enjoying visiting to swim, surf, play and relax on Australian beaches throughout the year. Since it began almost 110 years ago, over 630 000 people have been rescued by lifesavers, making The Surf Life Saving Association of Australia one of the most important organisations in our community.



History of Life Saving Australia Questions

1. What did the laws in 1830 make it illegal for people to do?

2. What was the name and profession of the man who challenged this law?

3. What happened once this law was removed?

4. What did the first surf life savers aim to do?

5. What is the role of the Westpac helicopter?

6. Prior to 1980, what was the role of women in surf lifesaving associations?

7. Which states do you think were the first, after New South Wales, to form their own surf lifesaving clubs? Why?

8. Why do you think Surf Life Saving Australia is such a valuable community organisation?

9. What do you think would happen without the support of lifesaving organisations around Australia?

History of Surf Life Saving Australia **Answers**

1. What did the laws in 1830 make it illegal for people to do?
Swim during daylight hours
2. What was the name and profession of the man who challenged this law?
William Gocher – newspaper editor
3. What happened once this law was removed?
People were able to swim during daylight hours. Visitors to the beach increased, and in turn, drownings increased.
4. What did the first surf life savers aim to do?
Help people who were inexperienced swimmers
5. What is the role of the Westpac helicopter?
To assist life savers on the beach with their rescue
6. Prior to 1980, what was the role of women in surf lifesaving associations?
Non-active members, administration, support etc.
7. Which states do you think were the first, after New South Wales, to form their own surf lifesaving clubs? Why?
States with many coastal beaches, such as Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia.
8. Why do you think Surf Life Saving Australia is such a valuable community organisation?
Answers will vary – example: It is so valuable because it protects all members of the community by helping to support and educate about beach safety.
9. What do you think would happen without the support of lifesaving organisations around Australia?
Answers will vary – example: Many more visitors to Australian beaches would drown.

History of SLSA Fact File

Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) is an Australian not-for-profit community organisation. This means that all of the money earned and collected by the organisation, or donated to it, is used to reach its goals and keep it running.

It is Australia's most valuable drowning prevention service. It is also an important coastal water safety and rescue organisation.

In the 1830s laws were introduced that made it illegal for people to bathe or swim during daylight hours.

At the turn of the century, a newspaper editor from Sydney named William Gocher challenged this law at Manly beach, by announcing his plan to swim at midday in October 1902.

Eventually, more people began to challenge this law and between 1902 and 1905 it was removed, and surfing, swimming and sunbathing started to grow in popularity.

This had an enormous impact as the number of visitors to Australian beaches increased. Unfortunately, because of the earlier laws, most visitors to the beach were not prepared for the conditions of the ocean and couldn't swim properly. As a result, the number of drownings and rescues increased suddenly.



A small number of volunteers began to patrol the beach to help and in 1906 the first Surf Bathing Association was formed at one of Australia's most famous beaches, Bondi Beach.

The following year on October 18th, nine surf lifesaving clubs and representatives of the Royal Life Saving Society met with the aim of representing the interests of surf life savers. After this meeting the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales was formed.

History of SLSA Fact File

This name was changed to Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA) in 1922, and changed again in 1991 to the current name Surf Life Saving Australia.

In 1973, the Westpac Life Saver Rescue Helicopter Service was established as a basic rescue and patrol service, which has seen it become the largest non-profit Aviation Search and Rescue service in Australia. It now operates 7 days a week, 365 days a year – how amazing!

Although women were actively involved in surf-lifesaving for many years, it wasn't until 1980 that the rules were changed to allow them to become active patrolling members.

Over time, many different organisations have formed in each of the Australian states.

Visiting the beach is part of the Australian way of life, with thousands of people enjoying visiting to swim, surf, play and relax on Australian beaches throughout the year. Since it began almost 110 years ago, over 630 000 people have been rescued by lifesavers, making The Surf Life Saving Association of Australia one of the most important organisations in our community.



History of Life Saving Australia Questions

1. What type of community organization is Surf Life Saving Australia?

2. What does this mean?

3. What did the laws introduced in the 1830s do?

4. William Gocher helped to have these laws abolished in the early 1900s. What were the positive and negative effects of this?

Positive:

Negative:

5. What year was the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales formed?

6. What types of rescue do you think the Westpac helicopter would mostly assist with?

7. What do you think about the fact that women were only allowed to become active members in 1980?

8. Why do you think Surf Life Saving Australia is such a valuable community organisation?

9. What do you think would happen without the support of lifesaving organisations around Australia?

History of Surf Life Saving Australia **Answers**

1. What type of community organization is Surf Life Saving Australia?

Not-for-profit

2. What does this mean?

All of the money earned and collected by the organisation, or donated to it, is used to reach its goals and keep it running.

3. What did the laws introduced in the 1830s do?

People were able to swim during daylight hours. Visitors to the beach increased, and in turn, drownings increased.

4. What did the first surf life savers aim to do?

Positive: More visitors flocked to the beaches to enjoy swimming, surfing, sunbathing etc.

Negative: People drowned as they were inexperienced and couldn't successfully swim in the conditions

5. What is the role of the Westpac helicopter?

1907

6. Prior to 1980, what was the role of women in surf lifesaving associations?

Answers will vary – example: large scale rescues, many people lost at sea, people too far away from the shore, capsized boats.

7. Which states do you think were the first, after New South Wales, to form their own surf lifesaving clubs? Why?

Answers will vary – example: I think it was unfair as women were unable to actively participate in surf rescues.

8. Why do you think Surf Life Saving Australia is such a valuable community organisation?

Answers will vary – example: It is valuable because it protects all members of the community by helping to support and educate about beach safety.

9. What do you think would happen without the support of lifesaving organisations around Australia?

Answers will vary – example: Without the support of lifesaving organisations, many more visitors to Australian beaches would drown.