

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

Minister for Emergency Services



Wednesday, 8 November 2023

FLAGS UP FOR THIS SUMMER'S LIFESAVING PATROL SEASON

Victorians are being urged to brush up on their water safety skills as the weather warms up, with this weekend marking the official start of lifesaving patrols around the state.

Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes joined Life Saving Victoria (LSV) volunteers today at the newly redeveloped Mentone Life Saving Club to urge Victorians to stay safe by the water this summer.

With the declared El Niño weather pattern bringing warmer temperatures, authorities are preparing for a busy summer period with more people expected to hit the beaches to cool off.

From Saturday 11 November, thousands of dedicated Victorian lifesavers and lifeguards will be on duty along the state's bay and coastal lifesaving clubs, providing full patrol services to safeguard the community at more than 60 locations.

Victorian beachgoers will also be supported from the air this season, with the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service patrolling Victoria's busy coastline between Wilsons Prom and Apollo Bay assisting in search and rescue operations and shark patrols.

As well as swimming between the flags, people are encouraged to never swim alone, familiarise themselves with the conditions and assess risks before entering the water.

Last summer, LSV lifesavers and lifeguards completed more than 256,000 patrol hours, performed 674 rescues, 11,000 first aids, 88 helicopter responses and more than 300,000 preventative actions to help keep beachgoers safe.

Despite these enormous efforts, 32 people tragically lost their lives in Victorian waters during last year's patrol season.

The Government is helping to keep Victorians safe around water, with funding in this year's Budget to support LSV's critical lifesaving services, including support for volunteer and paid lifeguards, rescue jet ski operations and developing and maintaining the Safer Pools Code of Practice.

Funding has also been provided to support the redevelopment and upgrade of LSV facilities at Bancoora, Port Melbourne and Mentone.

Lifesaving patrols will run until 25 April 2024 at most locations across Victoria. To find your nearest patrolled location, please visit beachsafe.org.au.

Quote attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"I urge anyone visiting Victoria's beautiful waterways this summer to put their safety first – our volunteers work hard to protect everyone around water but they need everyone to do their bit too."

Quote attributable to Member for Mordialloc Tim Richardson

"Mentone is a popular place for those looking to enjoy a day at the beach – the redeveloped lifesaving club will support our volunteer lifesavers and help locals and visitors alike get home safely."

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Quote attributable to Life Saving Victoria General Manager Lifesaving Services Liam Krige

“Last summer, Victoria experienced its highest festive drowning period in 18 years – a trend we do not want to see repeated this year, so we implore you to swim between the red and yellow flags at a patrolled location wherever possible.”