

Sunday 6 February 2022

2022 Newcastle Permanent Hunter Junior Surf Life Savers of the Year Announced

Two of the region's most promising young volunteers were named the female and male Newcastle Permanent Hunter Junior Surf Lifesaver of the Year today during the Hunter Branch Age Championships at Blacksmiths Beach.

Briella Gyler-Dial from Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) and Taj Horadam from Redhead SLSC took out the honours. This year, judges also awarded a High Distinction to Monique Ramplin from Merewether SLSC.

Hunter Surf Life Saving CEO Rhonda Scruton said local surf lifesaving clubs are about saving lives, creating great Australians and building stronger communities and the two young members are great examples of that in action.

"These young people are so impressive and an asset to the surf life saving movement and to the beach safety of our community," Ms Scruton said.

"Thanks to Newcastle Permanent we can recognise and encourage these young people to be future leaders of surf life saving and in the broader community," she said.

Briella is working to inspire the next generation of lifesavers. The 14-year-old Hunter Sports High School student has been a Nipper since age five. For the past three seasons she has volunteered to help age managers with younger Nippers squads each weekend and at carnivals.

She is inspired by one of her club's age managers and former Hunter Youth Surf Lifesaver of the Year Makayla Gay.

"Surf life saving is so important because lifesavers help prevent people drowning at beaches but Nippers teaches young kids and parents about water safety," Briella said.

Taj dreams of being a surf life saver and loves being with friends at the beach. The 13-year-old, from Whitebridge High, has already put his Surf Rescue Certificate skills to work beyond the beach, helping a fellow school student who fell unconscious until paramedics arrived. In last year's State Championship Age Surf Race, Taj stopped competing to help a fellow competitor who had been stung badly by a blue bottle.

Surf life saving is in the family and Taj said his dad, former Club president and current Nippers age manager, Jason, is his inspiration.

"Nippers is so important because it sets kids up to be future life savers, is fun and teaches you about volunteering and giving back to the community," Taj said.

Newcastle Permanent's Swansea branch manager Brett Freebody presented the awards and was impressed by the calibre of all of the finalists.

"Newcastle Permanent and Hunter Surf Life Saving have worked so well together for four decades because we are both committed to supporting our community," Mr Freebody said.

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Media Release



“Our surf life saving clubs and beach patrols are in good hands with the likes of Briella, Taj, Monique and our other finalists on the job,” he said.

Each of the region’s 13 surf lifesaving clubs, from Catherine Hill Bay to Tea Garden Hawks Nest, nominate a female and male for the award. The winners are judged on their written application and an interview with the judges.

In December, Newcastle Permanent extended its 40 year-long support of Hunter Surf Life Saving for another three years, which includes supporting this award. It supports all surf life saving branches from the Central Coast to the Queensland border.

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Media information: We can supply images from the Junior Lifesaver Award presentation. Craig Eardley on 0437 477 493. For media information about, and results from, the Hunter branch championships call Jenny at Hunter SLS on 4961 4533.

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