

Monday, 6 February 2023

2023 NEWCASTLE PERMANENT HUNTER JUNIOR LIFESAVERS OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

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

Kaylah Broadhead from Nobbys Surf Life Saving Club (SLSC) and Gabe Widseth from Redhead SLSC took out the respective honours.

Mark Colless, Chief Financial Officer at Newcastle Permanent and a member of the panel who selected this year's winners, said SLSCs are true assets to the community as he presented the awards.

"Our SLSCs not only ensure everyday Aussies are safe at the beach, they're helping to mould and shape the next generation of exceptional young people," said Mr Colless.

"Kaylah and Gabe are already contributing to their clubs and communities.

"They've both earned their surf rescue certificates, so are already going out on patrol, and are both keen to further their education and help promote more youth involvement in surf lifesaving. They are two exceptional young people and very worthy of this recognition."

Hunter Branch President, Henry Scruton ESM, said Kaylah and Gabe were evidence the future of surf lifesaving is in good hands.

"Our clubs and community should feel extremely proud of Kaylah and Gabe," said Mr Scruton.

"We're always keen for more youth members and we hope these two wonderful members inspire young surf lifesavers across our branches.

"We are also grateful for the continued support of Newcastle Permanent, our partners in the Hunter for more than 40 years."

Kaylah, 13, has been involved in surf lifesaving for four years, during which time she has shown unwavering dedication and enthusiasm. Having made a recent trip to the State Operations Centre in Sydney, Kaylah is interested in one day becoming a SurfCom operator, helping to link surf lifesaving with emergency services.

Gabe, also 13, has been participating in surf lifesaving since he was just six years old. It would appear saltwater is in his genes, with his sister, Andie, having been named Hunter Junior Lifesaver of the Year in 2021, while their dad, Paul, is a lifesaver at Redhead SLSC. Gabe also plays rugby and cricket, and treads the boards at Young People's Theatre.

"People like Kaylah and Gabe perform a critical duty to keep us all safe as we enjoy the Aussie summer," said Mr Scruton, who was awarded the Emergency Services Medal in the 2023 Australia Day Honours.

Media Release



“We have conducted 36,000 patrolling hours across our membership this summer, making 59 rescues and helping keep safe the estimated 495,000 people who have been to our beaches.”

The Hunter Branch has 13 SLSCs, from Catherine Hill Bay to Tea Gardens Hawks Nest, each of which nominate a female and male for the award. The winners are judged on their written application and an interview with the judges.

“I should also mention that Kaylah and Gabe staved off some serious competition – all the nominees for the 2023 award were exceptional candidates who can hold their heads up high,” said Mr Colless.

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