



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Surf Lifesavers

SPEECH

Monday, 19 September 2011

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Monday, 19 September 2011 Page 195 Questioner Speaker Mr SIDEBOTTOM</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
--	---

(Braddon) (NaN.NaN pm)

Mr SIDEBOTTOM (Braddon) (20:5 2): I want to thank very much my colleague, the member for Bass, who has a lifetime of involvement in surf-lifesaving in his sporting life. He is a passionate advocate. He had a lot to do with surf-lifesaving in my electorate of Braddon—when he did not need permission to come into Braddon! On my staff, Kay Eastley is a dedicated surf-lifesaver and is an example of the many volunteers that make up seven of Tasmania's 14 clubs on the north-west coast of Tasmania in my electorate of Braddon. I want to thank each and every one of those surf-lifesavers, as my colleagues on both sides of the House have been thanking those representatives of surf-lifesaving clubs in their electorates on this motion tonight.

Australians love the water. We have been attracted to the coast for a long time—over a hundred years. We have something like a hundred million beach visitations per year, something like 11,600 beaches and 36,000 kilometres of coastline, some of the best of which are in Tasmania. Since 1907, surf-lifesaving has done everything possible to help educate our communities about water safety and also have patrolled our beaches and our coastlines—none more so than on the north-west coast of Tassie.

In Tasmania there are 14 clubs: of those, Boat Harbour, Burnie, Devonport, Penguin, Port Sorell, Somerset and Ulverstone are on the north-west coast. Just for the record, and proudly so, 99 lifesaving rescues were made last year in Tasmania, 350 first aid treatments were administered and 1,931 preventative actions were taken to avoid tragedies from happening in the first place. Those statistics are very admirable but nationwide, just as in Tasmania, there is a lot more that we need to do. Any assistance that surf-lifesaving clubs can receive from communities and from government in particular is very well used. I will demonstrate this with an example. A recent merger of offshore rescue groups has seen Surf Life Saving Tasmania grow to 15 clubs and services, and some affiliates I must add, and is now capable of delivering inland, inshore and offshore rescue services to complement existing emergency services. To complement these services a state-wide 13 SURF phone activation system has been introduced in conjunction with a radio repeater network linking all clubs and services. This has enabled

effective and efficient coordination of the state's clubs and services and 3,000 volunteers for any aquatic incidents. This future lifesaving repeater network was enabled using federal black spot funding. This three-year federal black spot drowning intervention program has contributed to a significant reduction in drowning across the nation, not just in Tassie, with figures coming down from 81 to 61 in the past two years through programs introduced by Surf Life Saving Australia.

Tasmania unfortunately has one of Australia's highest drowning rates—3.5 per 100,000 people per annum—which highlights the need for further funding for continuation of appropriate drowning intervention programs in Australia. Being an island state, we have 1,269 accessible beaches, let alone other waterways and damns, and thousands of potential drowning areas.

Finally, this summer will see the launch of a purpose-built all-weather jet rescue boat on Tasmania's north-west coast, complementing existing police vessels in Circular Head and Devonport. The vessel is capable of shallow water and large surface rescue. The craft can be launched in very adverse conditions and is a welcome addition to our beautiful yet occasionally treacherous coast. Again, I thank all those members of Surf Life Saving Australia and Surf Life Saving Tasmania for volunteering their services and doing such a marvellous job. I thank the member for Bass for his abiding interest in surf-lifesaving matters Australia-wide in this parliament and in Tasmania.