



Avoca Beach Dawn Service. We pay our respects.

ANZAC Day

It was a beautiful morning, and a large crowd of locals came together for the occasion to commemorate as a community. A big thank you to those who volunteered their time and expertise to make it such a heartfelt and successful service, especially the set-up team. The hiring of a professional to operate the sound system proved to be a key factor in the success of the ceremony and huge thanks go to Marj and Con Ryan for making this possible with their sponsorship.

Our local schools, Avoca Public and Kincumber High, made exceptional contributions and many thanks must go to their teachers. The future is in good hands.

To cap it all off, our hard-working BBQ team raised \$1863, which has gone straight to Legacy for the families of men and women who have lost their lives or their health by serving our country.

Steve Fortey



The young and the old. The Avoca Beach Public School choir sang magnificently, and a big crowd turned out once again for 99 year old Jack Bartlett later on in Chapman Crescent.



Bill Mitchell addresses the crowd. (Photos by David Benson)

Jane Gillings: the Art of Living

By Michael Troy

Artist Jane Gillings stands out among local surfers as she masters the long-forgotten art of riding a surf mat. This humble inflatable of 1960s fame symbolizes, for Jane, what art should be all about.

“Fun, engaging and bringing old things back to life.”

Jane is a much-loved member of the Avoca community, and her friends describe her as having the energy of a 12-year-old boy... even though she happily admits her real age is a little north of 55. She is hard to keep up with as a regular ocean swimmer with the Avoca Lizards, surfer, skateboarder, and full-time artist and educator.

Jane has been making regular appearances with her brother David, onshore and incognito, with a puppet show that literally pops up around Avoca at the beachfront and at the markets.



Puppets at the markets



Jane with Juan and his masterpiece

Something to love about puppet shows is that in an age where virtually all entertainment is delivered via a screen of some sort, it's a true in-your-face live show, with the possibility of gritty and unpredictable audience interaction. It's a return to how all entertainment used to be. Children in the audience have the same rapt attention to our shows they might normally bestow upon any screen offering. The difference, of course, is that they can actively participate.

“Our most popular characters are the chippie loving seagulls, one with a hook in its mouth and the other with a balloon around its neck. The idea is to help kids understand the dangers of marine pollution on wildlife in a funny, engaging way.” says Jane. “I like the fact I can't be seen, but we've also found that when we let them have a go with our puppets after the show

even shy kids can suddenly lose themselves in a character.”

Jane and David have busker's licenses for their free public performances and are also available for parties or even perform for a more mature audience if requested.

In 30 years as an artist and sculptor, Jane describes her career as eclectic. She specialises in bringing old things some would describe as rubbish, back as art. Jane says she had an “I can do this” epiphany the first time she was accepted into Sculpture by the Sea in Sydney where she has now exhibited 12 times.

In 2009 Jane was lured up to Avoca from Sydney at the invitation of the Five Lands Walk committee to exhibit work in the Ephemera Beachside Sculpture Exhibition on Avoca Beach.

“I loved it so much... the community, the surf... I'd always dreamed of living by the beach” and made it her mission to find her way back to live.

Since she and husband Len moved here in 2013, Jane has created an art studio beneath her Avoca home where she teaches local school kids and adults in what she describes as a ‘people's shed.’

One of Jane's installations can be seen at the Avoca Like Minds café where she has created clouds on the ceiling from discarded milk bottles... which has the added bonus of reducing noise in the busy cafe. She also created a series of guerrilla artworks at the “Welcome to Avoca” sign up near the Bowling Club.

Jane Gillings is a key part of the Avoca art scene which really shines during the 5 Lands Walk when visitors to the event can witness the talents of all the artists living on the Central Coast.

For the puppets: www.professorbeazley.com and Jane is found at jane.gillings.com



Jane with Chloe and Harriet



Jane's welcome wave

An ANZAC STORY

It's hard to imagine they were children once, but Bill and brothers John and Jim along with sister Judy were the products of Jack and Nancee Mitchell. Jack was in the RAAF and saw service in and over New Guinea, when Japanese forces were sweeping all before them, heading south toward Australia.



Squadron Leader Jack Mitchell and his wife Corporal Nancee Mitchell. The Beaufort Bomber.

Typically, this is not a story about Jack himself, who flew 43 long range bombing missions, but of a good mate of his and his heroic deeds in 1942. His mate was Squadron-Leader Owen Price, who flew aircraft known as Beaufort Bombers. Jack wanted this story told.

After Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and the bombing of Darwin (over 50 times) in February 1942 there was a desperation to halt the Japanese push south towards Australia. Orders given in haste may have been catastrophic at times.

The order given on the night of October 9th was to attack a formidable fleet of ships in Japanese held Simpson Harbour, Rabaul, on the island of New Britain. Knowing the danger of such a risky mission, Owen Price convinced his superiors not to risk the whole squadron and instead took this low-level flying task on with minimal support, fearing the loss of too many men. He led a flight of just three torpedo-carrying Beaufort bombers.

In Simpson Harbour at the time there were eight Japanese cruisers, fourteen destroyers and several merchant ships. It was well fortified with anti-aircraft guns. Price knew that success in his mission was against the odds, and to have any chance he would have to come in low and fly by the light of a three-quarter moon between the natural defences of the volcanic peaks and hills of the New Guinea Highlands. In the distance were violent lightning and thunderstorms, but visibility over the targets was good.

Price came in from the north-west over the Harbour where the ships were anchored in lines along the eastern shore. Immediately the harbour became alive with 'Ack-Ack' anti-aircraft guns. Price flew down the edge of the harbour and swung back around to launch his attack with great coolness

and tremendous daring in the face of the terrible Ack-Ack. It would have been miraculous if he survived the gunfire at point blank range, but undaunted he pressed on with his attack, getting his torpedo away before he went down, crashing into the superstructure of a Japanese cruiser. All four of his crew members also perished.

A newspaper report from November of that year quotes Air Commodore J Hewitt, who saw the action from a supporting plane: "Squadron Leader Price showed exceptional flying brilliance and courage, his attack was one of the most gallant in the annals of the RAAF." Hewitt also witnessed the explosions that most likely put two Japanese ships out of action.

By showing his superiors the folly of such low-level tactics S/L Price forced a change in approach that undoubtedly saved many lives.



The hills and seas of New Guinea were the scenes of many great battles and stories of heroic deeds by Australian servicemen, this story of Owen Price and his brave crew is but one.

Steve Fortey (with thanks to Bill Mitchell and family)

**Squadron Leader Jack Mitchell.
An Avoca resident.**

President's Report

It was pointed out to me recently by someone very close to me that this publication seems to be lacking when it comes to the arts. Which is a bit tragic when you look at all the talented creatives that live in our community. Fair point. So, in this issue we begin looking at the Avoca Beach Art World, something we will make a regular feature.

All the best. Steve Fortey

Editorial credits:

Steve Fortey: Editor | Michael Scobie: Advertising

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Send to avocabeachca@gmail.com

Also if you'd like to contribute to the newsletter, get in touch.

Avoca Beach Art World

Janet Hoyer Cobb

Janet considers herself truly blessed to live at Avoca, enjoying her passion for the ocean and creating artwork. Over the years Janet has pursued studies, gaining diplomas at Julian Ashton and with Graham Inson (Sydney). She explored figurative expression through sculpture at the Rhok Académie (Brussels, Belgium) and more recently with Tom Bass in Sydney.

Janet has been greatly influenced by European museums and galleries after studying figurative works in major collections for 3 years while living, painting and travelling throughout Europe. With artworks in collections worldwide, Janet has gained recognition and many awards in a variety of media and has exhibited internationally as well as Australia. As a member of Portrait Artists Australia, Janet's portrait



of "Thelma" was selected to be part of an exhibition of Australian Portrait artists at the Australian Embassy in Washington DC. In Europe Janet was an inaugural member of 'Art Perspectives International', established in Brussels.

When not spending time in the ocean Janet can be found exploring textures in the bush or painting and conducting individual classes at her studio in Hillside Road.

Thelma. Artworks can be viewed at Hoyercobb.com

Jiri Kripac

You might have encountered Jiri standing on his head in the middle of Avoca Beach, or know him as the band leader at regular jazz functions, including the renowned jazz nights at the Avoca Beach Pizzeria.

Jiri is one of those annoyingly talented, creative people that is also known for his clever and unique sculptures. Unsurprisingly, a lot of his works have a musical theme, and many an old piano has found a new life in a strange, discombobulated form.

Jiri's personality is reflected in his art, it's different, it's fun and it has an eternal optimism.

When I asked Jiri for a few words, here's what he had to say:

"I never thought that music and art would give me so much pleasure in my past 80 years. Throughout everything music and art prevailed. If I was smarter, I wouldn't choose so



many arty-farty disciplines and concentrate on just one, then perhaps I could say 'Picasso, watch out!' My life in itself is a success, and art is the vehicle to get me there."

Ann J. Parker

Ann Parker, whose work has appeared on several occasions in Australian Artist Magazine, is an award-winning artist and a teacher with over 25 years' experience and holds an Associate Dip. Fine Arts.

As well as conducting various workshops throughout the year Ann is currently developing an online tutorial 'LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING - Painting' with the aim of providing a broad understanding of painting techniques, materials and tools.

Working with a diverse range of mediums, Ann describes herself as a 'Restless Painter' she has a passion for experimentation and a love of a wide variety of genre. Because of this her concepts and painting style are governed entirely by what inspires her at any given moment.

Ann's 'Restless Painter Studio' is located at the rear of her home in Avoca Beach. This area, with its abundance of birdlife



and diverse Landscapes, provides Ann with endless inspiration.

Ann says: "I love to share, and I am more than happy to have people visit my studio and pick my brain".

website www.annjparker.com

Helen Cunningham

Helen's artworks represent her passion and love of colour, design and photography. With a background in interior decorating, colour and design as well as fashion, she has immersed herself in many different genres of art, including miniatures, botanical, portraits in oils, printmaking and finally watercolour. For seven years she painted miniatures of Australian Wildflowers for an international market through Australian Image in the Rocks.

Helen draws her inspiration from her local environment, including the many fabulous birds (her models) who frequent her deck on a daily basis, and also from her photography when travelling with fellow artists to Asia, Morocco, Spain, France and Italy.

Helen has twice been a finalist in the Gosford Art Prize, exhibits with the Central Coast Art Society, Ku-ring-gai Art Society, The Coastal Artists Group, 5 Lands Annual Exhibition during the winter solstice, Pacific Palms and many other exhibitions.

During Covid, Helen took the opportunity to return to printmaking with gusto, having loved it in the past, and is now printing most days. She will be doing an exhibition in this medium on 9th to 15th June at the Gosford Art Gallery with a local group called "Eclectic."



Margaret Fortey



Recognised for her unique techniques of painting on silk, Margaret has discovered a challenging, but very effective way of bringing to life the brilliant colours, deep reflections, and subtleness of the Australian landscape.

In a world often pre-occupied with materialism and 'belongings', it is Margaret's desire to reawaken in people an awareness of the simple beauty of our natural surroundings, and the pleasures and rewards that come from it. Gathering inspiration from the idyllic environment in which she lives and from her travels, she prefers to create her own images rather than duplicate actual places.

Margaret's paintings have sold exceptionally well in a variety of exhibitions and galleries across Australia. Her paintings on silk are also popular internationally. As a regular winner of the People's Choice award, she was invited to exhibit in the Regional Gallery's 50th birthday celebrations.

Margaret also likes to paint figurative and abstract works, using oils and acrylics. Her etchings enable her to make social comments on matters close to her heart. Margaret is available in her studio by appointment – 0414 551 940.

Willemina Villari



For the last 15 years Willemina Villari has called Avoca Beach home. A visual artist, very much affected by her surroundings, our ocean, and the bush. With her desire to explore the possibilities of working with a variety of materials she creates works on paper or board using mixed media as well as making sculptural pieces. A major award winner, her sculptures have been featured in the iconic "Sculptures By the Sea" exhibition several times.

Wire is often the main element for her 3D works to make flowing drawings in space. She often works outdoors with friends trying to capture the light, mood and beauty of the natural environment, the local lagoons being one of her favourite spots.

She has met many art-loving locals who came to her workshops at her studio to create and connect with each other with a cuppa and a piece of home-baked cake.

In the last couple of winters (Covid permitting) she has been fortunate to have had a chance to go painting in Australia's Red Centre and has recently come back from an art residency near Queenstown.



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A Newly Thriving Retail Services Hub

Avocans are familiar with the well-established shop complex in "The Village." But probably less well known is the mini-hub at the centre of The Round Drive and what it offers today.

In the hands of newly arrived entrepreneurial, female owners, their three businesses have transformed what was a down-at-heel place into a vibrant set of retail services: a hairdressing salon; pet grooming; and a women's fashionwear shop. This article covers the first two.



Caleah & Co

Cass Davis, by chance, spotted the long-time empty, basic shop when walking by. Inspired to establish her first-owned hairdressing salon, she snapped up the lease. She and carpenter husband, Scott, worked feverishly to design and install a quality fitout - all achieved in a few weeks.

The business opened in October 2020 – with operations immediately challenged by the COVID scene but survived.

Cass has worked professionally as hairdresser in high-end salons for 26 years – with lengthy, extensive training - in Sydney and in the USA (NY, Chicago and Baltimore). Caleah and Co commenced with her working solo. But now she has built up a team of four part-time staff: three well experienced hairdressers and a front-of-office manager.

The salon welcomes and covers the needs of everyone – women and men. Options span: the full range of colour services, including specialization for blondes; bonded extensions (a house speciality); and on-location wedding presentation. Sustainability is a feature with only high quality organic hair products used, very important for clients with allergies to chemicals.

A strong feature is the whole feel of the salon. From the beginning Cass and Scott worked to create an ambience that is welcoming, relaxing; soft colours with beach-feel; and high quality without being pretentious. On walking through the door, the first impression is a lively, busy but calming atmosphere – client

feedback is strong on the relaxed feeling.

Cass notes that recruitment of staff has focused both on their professional qualities and, importantly, how their personalities fit with creating the right experience for clients.



Staff at Caleah and Co (Cass Davis - centre) after a busy day

As a first-time business owner, Cass notes there have been challenges and learnings – COVID restrictions, finding quality staff, and learning to delegate responsibility to staff. But now, with a strong client base established and the successful buzz of the salon bode well for its future.

Precious Pets

Entering the premises, one immediately sees this is a lively place – people bringing and taking their pets; dogs being washed, trimmed and dried; and the joy of dogs interacting.

Naomi Bridges became the new owner of Precious Pets in mid-2022 and is refreshing the business with new signage and service initiatives. Precious Pets is a long-established business. Naomi's connection started when as a school student she worked there at weekends, beginning to learn the pet grooming trade.

After leaving school, Naomi's path followed several directions, including animal studies, working in another pet grooming business and photography. When she learned the previous owner of Precious Pets was retiring, Naomi grasped the opportunity to acquire the business.

Precious Pets offers the full range of grooming services for all breeds of dogs and cats. Grooming services have on occasion been extended to bunnies, and even a ferret.



Staff (Naomi Bridges- centre) with happy dogs

Walk-in appointments (up to 11am) are accepted – in contrast to many other places.

Clients of the salon come from diverse places – Avocans, the wider Central Coast, and a sizeable number visiting from Sydney and elsewhere who find it more convenient to fit in a pet appointment here. Easy parking is a plus when bringing pets.

Naomi has 5 part-time and casual staff, all sharing a love of animals. As a first-time business owner, Naomi felt some challenges in the early days; however, with determination she now feels well on top of the role ready to continue and grow the services to all clients.

Ian Carruthers

New Avoca Beach Dune Care Group

A couple of years ago, Muzza (Graham Murray) started up a group to regenerate the dunes along the shore. Unfortunately, this didn't get off the ground because of Covid, then Muzza left Avoca and the group stopped meeting. So, this year I decided to restart the group.

Why do we need to worry about the dunes? Dunes are a natural protection for the town from inundation by waves during storms, and they protect our properties from wind and salt spray. They provide a unique ecosystem for native plants and animals that have evolved over millions of years. Plus, dunes enhance the attractiveness of the beach and the whole town.

Unfortunately, the dunes here, like in many places, have been the victims of a number of invasive weeds. These include Asparagus fern, Bitou bush, and morning glory, among many others. Without native pests to keep them in check they thrive, out-competing the native plants for water, light and nutrients, eventually displacing them altogether.

It's tempting to think that the best approach is to get a tractor, clear out all the weeds in one go and replant with native plants. But to do so risks destabilizing the dune – without the plants to hold it together the sand might disperse in the wind or get washed away in a storm, and the dunes might disappear forever.

To avoid this happening, we are using specific techniques that have been developed by dune care experts over the years. In a nutshell, the approach is to gradually remove the invasive weeds, and allow native plants to emerge in their place. This process is slow – it can take many years – but doing it this way minimizes the risk of losing the dunes.



Dune care project area

This Dune care project is under the direction of the Council since it's happening on Council-owned land. We have been assigned an experienced and knowledgeable Landcare Officer to provide technical advice and direction. We're starting with a small, manageable area between the Ficus Street car park and the shark tower. If this goes well, we'll take on the rest of the dunes over time.

Everyone is welcome to join in – no experience is necessary because we'll show you what to do. We meet on the third

Friday of each month, from 8 am to 10:30, then we go over the road to Social Junction for coffee.

We've got a Facebook group which is called Avoca and North Avoca Landcare.

Janet Aitchison

Council Capers

Lagoon Water Quality

Council has extended the timeframe for water quality measurements. A specialized investigation will take place when Council next opens the entrance sand berm to protect properties from flooding. A scientific team is on standby to be present. Then, field work will end and a technical report prepared to underpin decisions on what remedial steps should be taken.

During recent heavy rains there was serious erosion of the steep building site at the corner of Cape 3 Points Road and Yodalla Place; with sediment laden runoff entering the stormwater system and discharging into the Lagoon. The Community Association, aided by several Avocans, made strong representations to Council. This led to improved control measures at the site.



Council Operational Plan

Council put on public exhibition its draft plan of works over the next two years on which the Community Association has made a supportive submission. A good number of projects are planned in Avoca Beach including upgrading the sewer main that crosses near the Lagoon entrance – past breakages have caused major water pollution; continuation of the drainage works in South End park; and resurfacing of the lower part of Cape 3 Points Road.

Following the landslide in early 2022 at the cliff face on Avoca Drive (at the southern end of the village shops), Council has listed a major cliff stabilization project – costing over \$3 million. But that is completely dependent on securing grant funding. The Community Association has approached Council pressing for our close involvement in next steps.

Ian Carruthers

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Avoca Kayak Club. Creating waves on the national stage

Avoca Kayak Club recently travelled to Champion Lakes in Western Australia to compete at the National Kayak Championships. The fledgling club performed fantastically well, finishing as third best club in Australia. Our team, a mixture of keen juniors and more experienced competitors, amassed 21 Gold medals 15 Silver and 9 Bronze over the 5 days of intense competition. The medals were spread across 19 athletes from 5 age groups and a senior division, with the whole team scoring points towards the club championships. In very hot and trying conditions all our athletes came away with personal best times, reflecting the time and effort they have put into their training.



Dylan Littlehales



Natalia



Ella



Julian Glew

Many thanks for the hours of help, guidance and encouragement put in by their coaches Scott Cunningham, Angelica Manser, Paul Hutchinson and wild water coach Peter McIntyre. We have also to thank all our volunteer officials who give up their time at these events to make sure all runs smoothly and of course all the parents for their time and commitment to help the athletes achieve their potential.

The club recently launched the newest boat in their fleet, a junior K4 which will be well used on the lake in the future. Many thanks to P & K Antique Jewellery, Michael Scobie, NCS Pool Heating, Avoca Beach Dental, Bank Of Queensland, Imperial Jewels and Brierty Plumbing for their generous donations towards the boat.

Should anybody like to get involved or join the club, a beginner's session will start on Monday 1st May, contact Paul Hutchinson on 0414630012. The club will be having a well-deserved break until then. From then on you can come down to the club on the shores of Avoca Lake, Heazlett Oval on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday evenings and introduce yourself.



Huxley Luntungan



Riley Fitsimmons

We should give special mention at this point to some standout performers. Olympian Riley Fitsimmons in the open division came away with a hotly contested bronze medal in the K1 500m, a confidence booster leading into the upcoming senior World Championships in Germany. Golden girls Natalia Drobot and Ella Beere are also off to the Senior World Championships. Ella may have cemented a spot in the Australian K4 team.

Congratulations to Julian Glew in the u16 male division. After a fantastic performance at Nationals, Julian has made the Australian team for the Asia Pacific Cup in April in NZ. Huxley Luntungan (u18 male) has made the Junior National team for Wild Water Racing. He's off to the Czech Republic in mid-this year to compete at the Junior World Championships.

To cap it all off came a near faultless display from Paralympian Dylan Littlehales, who won all his events and is also off to the World Championships.



This new 4-seater will give much sought after time on the water. Thanks to the sponsors!



Avoca Beach Rugby Club playing the game they play in Heaven since 1975

Come along and join in the fun. Every Saturday we field teams from Under 6's to Senior grade throughout the season at the Sharkpool (Heazlett Park). Both male & female players are welcome

New players can contact Club President Brendan Slape on 0400 009 296 or Junior VP Julia Niness Mob 0400 548 646

The Club appreciates the continued support of all our local businesses, sponsors & supporters

See our web page <https://www.avocabeachrugby.club> or check out our Facebook page Avoca Beach Rugby Club -The Sharks

More info by email at avocasharks@gmail.com



The Aussies



The Australian Surf Lifesaving championships (“Aussies”) were held at Scarborough Beach in Western Australia.

Many keen members of the Avoca Beach Surf Lifesaving Club and their supporters made the long plane trip, some made the marathon road trip, and some even towed a surf boat all the way. Dedication.

If you’ve been down the beach over summer in the early mornings or late afternoons you will perhaps have noticed the intense training sessions put in by the swimmers, board riders and ski paddlers. And then there’s the boaties, who seem to love self-punishment.

It’s good to know it has all paid off, with some outstanding results in the toughest competition of all in the world of Surf Lifesaving. Making the final was a great achievement. Getting a medal against the country’s best – sensational.

3 gold and 1 silver was a pretty fair effort from Natalia Drobot, seen here with fellow gold medallist Ella Beere. An amazing meet.

The event that had everyone talking was the u19 Taplin relay; always exciting, this one was special. If you haven’t caught it, here’s a link: <https://fb.watch/jUaYHCYYo4/?mibextid=qC1gEa>

Here are the major results at Aussies:

Water Events



Gold- 19 Female Taplin Relay (pictured with coach Damien Benson)- Natalia Drobot (ski 1st leg), Bronte Ayres (board 2nd leg) Mia Cracknell (swim 3rd leg)

Gold- 19 Female Ski- Natalia Drobot

Gold – Open Female Double Ski- Ella Beere and Natalia Drobot

Silver- 19 Female Ski Relay- Natalia Drobot, Davara Marshall and Bronte Ayres

Bronze- Open Single Ski- Ella Beere

Masters - Gold 130 Ski Relay- Gordon Jones, Garth Hunter and Jason Barnes

Boats

Blue Pills- 180 years Surf Boats Bronze- Greg Mitchell, Duncan Smith, Nick Mezritz (not sure if that is how you spell Mez’s last name) Andrew Collins and Matt Mitchell (sweep)

Silver Tails- 200 years Surf Boats Bronze- Stan Priestley, Dan Mitchell, Paul Kendall, Steve Sharpe and Matt Mitchell (sweep)

The Yetti’s 5th Mitchell Renouf (sweep) Rose Benyon, Olivia Eurell, Grace English and Georgia Cameron




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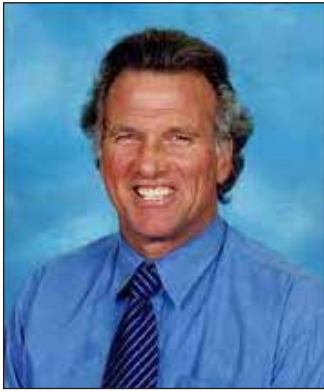


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Prestigious Honour For Local Surf Legend



Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club Life Member Murray Braund, one of Australia's most successful surf ski competitors, will be honoured later this year at the Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Awards of Excellence Gala Night. Murray will be inducted into the SLSA Hall of Fame Surf in recognition of his outstanding achievements

and contributions to surf lifesaving over 50 years. Murray is not only a champion of the surf but is a champion individual whose commitment to helping others is an inspiration to any aspiring surf competitor or sports person.

Murray is considered one of the country's finest ever surf ski paddlers and arguably the finest exponent of surf ski paddling of his generation as evidenced by his 3 World championships, 7 Australian championships, 5 Interstate championships and 13 New South Wales (NSW) championships in open surf ski and team events. He was selected to represent Australia twice and NSW on seven occasions and in recognition of his leadership and standing as an elite surf competitor, he was given the honour of captaining the Australian SLSA Trans-Tasman Team in 1982 and the NSW Interstate Team in 1974.

Joining Freshwater SLSC in 1967, Murray was not only the first competitor to win both the open single and double ski titles at the same Australian championships but went on to claim both these titles 'back-to-back' in 1972/73 & 1973/74. His double ski partner at Freshwater at that time was another topflight competitor in Greg Jarman who joined the Avoca Beach Surf Club in 1975. Murray and Greg's partnership on the surf skis developed into a lifelong friendship until Greg's sad passing in 2021.

Award for Bravery

In 1972, during a school swimming carnival held at Collaroy Ocean Baths, he rescued a young girl who had been driven by surging water into a stormwater drain that was below water level near the baths. Murray dived into the surf and on his second attempt, made his way under water into the drain and located the girl in an unconscious condition. He was then able to recover her from the drain and get her to the beach where he successfully performed mouth-to-mouth

resuscitation before she was transported to hospital for treatment. Murray was awarded the Royal Humane Society of NSW Bronze Medal for Bravery for his actions which undoubtedly saved the young girl's life.



Murray moved to the Central Coast in 1976 when he reunited with Greg Jarman at Avoca and joined the talented Mitchell brothers – Jim, John, and Bill and Brian Grace thereby establishing one of the strongest surf ski clubs in the country. Known for his sheer power and determination on the surf ski, Murray was also a master race tactician.

He was the inspiration, organiser and driving force of the highly successful Pye Australian Surf Ski Challenge, a series of marathon surf ski races. It was the longest ocean paddling race in the world at that time, was held over four days covering a distance of 260 km from Foster to Sydney Opera House.

A patrol captain who regularly attained 100% patrol efficiency, in 2000 he was awarded the Australian Sports Medal, was made a life Member of the Avoca Beach club in 2007 and in 2019/20, was awarded the SLSA 50 Year Long Service Award.

The SLSA Hall of Fame was established in 2004, some 20 years after Murray retired from elite competition, and is a who's who of surf lifesaving. The Hall of Fame would be incomplete and poorer without the induction of Murray, and he deservedly takes his long-overdue place alongside the other inductees as one of the greats of Australian surf lifesaving. Murray is the second member of the Avoca Beach club to attain this honour with Lachlan Tame being inducted in 2014.

Mark Walters and Bill Mitchell

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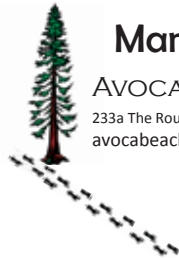
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