



Under 16 Girls - Central Coast Premiers



## First Grade Premiers. The Premiership Drought is Broken

Avoca Beach are once again at the top of Central Coast Rugby after taking out the 1st grade premiership in a nail-biting grand-final at Industree Group Stadium on 23rd September, a fantastic effort from the players and debutant young coaches Mitch Jacob and Jake McPhee.

Our Sharks secured victory when a long range try started and finished off by fullback Kye Tancred gave the Sharks a 17-16 lead. This was then defended in a very tense final five minutes. It has been a long 10 year wait for 1st grade premiership success for Avoca Beach and a large part of our amazing community was on hand to witness and share in the celebrations. The presence of this support was considered a key influence in getting our team over the line.

A huge congratulations also to the under 16 girls' team (pictured at the top) who started the day off with a bang by also winning their premiership match in the morning. These victories have capped a memorable year for the Sharks with some other highlights including:

Five junior and our Senior Women's and Men's 1st grade teams competing on grand final day.

All our senior teams played deep into the semi-finals.

Our junior teams were again dominant, being crowned junior club champions.

Numerous players (too many to mention) reaching local, NSW Country and State representative honours.

Sharni Waters being crowned Central Coast Rugby Women's player of the year for the second year running.

Alex Halls being crowned Central Coast Rugby Men's representative player of the year.

Lachlan Thomas winner of Central Coast Rugby Colts representative best forward.

President Brandan Slape emphasised that the club takes great pride in being part of the wonderful Avoca Beach community and appreciates all the support provided throughout the year from our incredibly generous sponsors without whom, he says, the club would not have the success that it enjoys.

# Central Coast 1st Grade Premiers 2023



Alex Halls



Matt Anderson



Tom Murphy



Players' Long service awards



Girls Rugby. Grand Finalists Celebrate

## ABC President's Report

The Avoca Beach community continually amazes. This issue features two memorable sporting achievements. The front page says it all when it comes to our Central Coast Rugby Premiership winners.

Few us were able to witness the five Avoca Beach Kayak Club members on the Australian team at the World Kayak Championships. They were held in Germany against very best on offer. Our little club did exceptionally well, see page 9 for details.

This issue also proudly celebrates the achievements and contributions of just some of our local residents who help make this a remarkable place to live. Stuart Braga, Iain McGuire, the Surf Club, our board riders, the Scouts, the Bowling Club and our quiet achievers in the Red Cross. Makes you feel good!

Finally, a huge thank you to the committee of the Avoca Beach Community Association, who work tirelessly on our behalf on a wide range of matters in the best interests of our thriving community.

Steve Fortey.

**Editorial credits: Steve Fortey: Editor | Michael Scobie: Advertising**

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

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# Avoca Beach Surf Lifesaving Club

Once again, we see the red and yellow flags being flown. This marks the start of what is expected to be a very busy beach season.

Avoca SLSC has 14 patrols that will Patrol the Beach until the end of the April School holidays 2024. Our Patrol members will complete about 45 volunteer hours each over the season, with many more contributing hours in other roles for the Surf Club.

We also have a volunteer Drone program running on our beach over most weekends and paid operators over the busy holiday periods. The drones are flown from the Shark Tower to allow us to be within regulations with CASA and to fly safely.

Everyone is reminded to ensure they swim between the flags, as we all know the rip beside the rock pool can be extremely dangerous. It is most important that we swim between the flags.



Ready for a big season



The future looks good.

Our Patrols started the long weekend with some summer holiday-like crowds on the beach.

Our Trainers of Education for the Club have been spending many hours upskilling new Lifesavers and for those out there in our community, it's never too late to get involved. You will learn many new skills in and out of the water and meet some great community-minded people.

Our Surf Sports teams are already on the beach training hard for the season ahead. We at Avoca are very lucky with some extremely talented athletes and coaches. From our nipper programs, craft competitors and boat rowers we have some talented and dedicated members keen to test their skills in all types of conditions on the water.

We are lucky to have close ties with the Kayak and Rugby Clubs as we have a good cross over of members involved in each of these clubs.

As you may have noticed the Club has had some extensive renovations inside and outside of the Club over the winter months. The Club is looking great with these renovations, including new cladding and repairs to the roof, new storage areas around the back of the Club, allowing us to remove the old ugly looking shipping container. Inside saw some major upgrades to our Kitchen, bathrooms, foyers, stairwells, Clubroom and Office. We also have some great new staff and "The Surf Club, Avoca Beach Club, Restaurant and Bar" is the place for everyone to share a drink and some dinner with friends while sitting out on the deck overlooking one of the best views of our beach. We hope to get to see you all down there enjoying themselves in a great community building.

If you're interested in joining the club scan the following QR code for access to our membership portal. All members receive 10% of every purchase in "The Surf Club Avoca Beach".

See you on the beach, ensure you stay safe when swimming or surfing.

Stuart Harvey  
President, Avoca Beach SLSC



# Council Capers

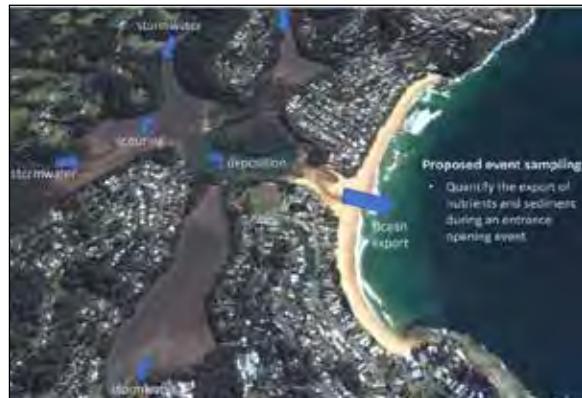
## Lagoon Management

The phase of monitoring and technical studies of Avoca Lagoon has stretched longer than expected. Frustratingly, this has delayed capacity for the community to work with Council on framing an action plan.

The delay has been caused by the need to carry out a specific set of studies during and after a Lagoon opening event. Exceptionally low rainfall in 2023 has kept the Lagoon below full.

In the latest annual State-wide monitoring program, our Lagoon scored a dismal 'D' score for water quality. So, effective remediation is sorely needed for this long-standing poor record.

On 14 September, acting on scientific advice, Council opened the entrance discharging the Lagoon water. The salinity in the Lagoon had increased to a level preventing the breeding cycle of the endangered green and golden bell frog population located in the Bareena wetland. It also provided a means to reduce the population of fish predating on the tadpoles.



Nutrient flows at Lagoon opening

Council plans to be ready by about early 2024 to start engaging with our community on framing an action plan, based on the technical findings; with its completion by mid-2024.

(Photos courtesy Central Coast Council)

## Council Projects in Avoca Beach

In June, Council adopted its Operational Plan for 2023-24 which includes a range of projects funded and forecast for Avoca Beach. ABCA had provided a submission and, pleasingly, most of our points received a positive response.

**Roads.** Funds are allocated for resurfacing of the bottom section of Cape Three Points Road in 2024-25.

**Shared Pathway.** Design work on a shared pathway along Avoca Drive parallel to the Lagoon will take place during this and the next financial year. Council has committed to community consultation on the design; and ABCA has written in response urging this commence early to address basics like start/end points and crossings.

**Landslip.** Council has been interacting with the State Government over funding to stabilise the collapsed cliff face adjacent to the southern end of the retail strip. Hopefully this leads to engagement of a works contractor about April.

**Water Supply.** Contracting has commenced for construction of a new, replacement water main under the Lagoon to North Avoca to overcome risks of mains breakage.

**Sewer.** Planning is underway to rectify storm damage and make more resilient to storms the sewer infrastructure on the north near the entrance. This will have benefits in avoiding sewage pollution of the Lagoon and sewer service reliability.

The Avoca Beach sewer inspection and remediation project continues.

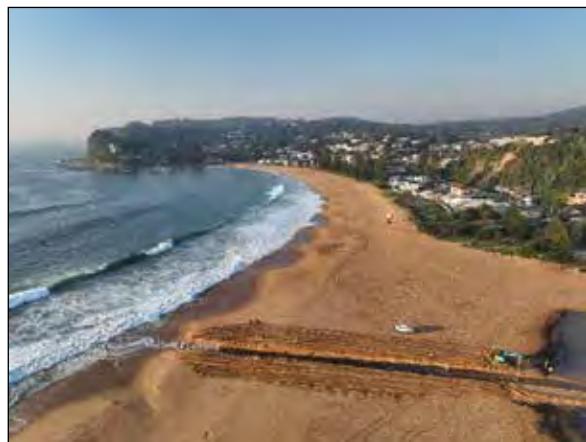
**South End Park.** The next phase of construction of the drainage works is scheduled for March to June 2024, extending the underground box culverts to near the intersection adjacent to the theatre.

## Land Use Planning – Zoning

Although up-to-date land use zoning was applied to much of the Central Coast through the 2022 Local Environment Plan, this was not done for the so-called Deferred Lands which have planning provisions decades out-of-date.

These lands are characterised by rural-residential, hobby farms and conservation lifestyle blocks. In Avoca Beach there are properties in the southern region (interfacing Copacabana and Kincumber) and either side of the Scenic Highway (Picketts Valley) which are in this circumstance.

Council has put on public exhibition a proposal for new zoning of these lands (with associated objectives and development limitations). Affected property owners and others interested may wish to make submissions before the 8 November deadline.



Lagoon opening September 2023



Tadpole protection pond when Lagoon open

An extra benefit of the opening was it allowed commencement of the technical study to assess flows of nutrients into and out the Lagoon.

# Residents in Action

## Dune Care: Taking care of the dunes at Avoca Beach

Dunes provide a natural protection for the town from inundation by waves during storms. They also 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.

The Avoca Dune Care group is waging a war on introduced weeds in the dunes - Asparagus Fern, Lantana and Bitou Bush being foremost amongst these. We are presently tackling the Asparagus Fern on the foreshore near the old Shark Tower.

Volunteers meet at 8am on the 3rd Friday of each month in the carpark near said Shark Tower, and we generally wind things up at around 11am. Everyone is welcome to come along – no experience necessary. Bring a hat, sunscreen and water, wear long sleeves and pants for the sun, and closed shoes or boots. Gloves and tools are provided but feel free to bring your own. Most useful is a serrated knife (similar to gyprock handsaw), secateurs, garden fork and spade.

Our organiser is Janet Aitchison, and work sessions are also attended by a Landcare Officer from Central Coast Council who directs the group's work and ensures we comply with Health and Safety procedures.

Check out the group's Facebook page, or contact Janet Aitchison directly at ([ja43024@gmail.com](mailto:ja43024@gmail.com)) for more information or to indicate your interest.



Dune Care in action

# Community Campaign for the Pathway along Cape Three Points Road

The momentum of the campaign has continued over the last month. On Tuesday September 26, approximately 30 residents turned out to walk the route with our Federal Member, Dr Gordon Reid, to see firsthand how a pathway is critically needed for resident safety.

Dr Reid highlighted how the community MUST continue to write to him regarding the safety issues and dangers experienced when walking along this 'pathless' section from Cabbage Tree Avenue to Cullens Road. The volume of letters is key to 'getting the ball rolling' with accessing federal funding.

Please continue to write to [gordon.reid.MP@aph.gov.au](mailto:gordon.reid.MP@aph.gov.au)

On Saturday September 30, residents walked with our State Member, Adam Crouch, along the same route, with one even experiencing a trip on the way! Mr Crouch vowed to find out whether the proposed pathway was on Council's strategic plan for pathways and to encourage Council to investigate the need for a pathway based on traffic studies of flow and speed. He felt there was a strong case in favour of a path based on the number of high school students alighting from buses and walking the route; the increased traffic flow from the completed upgrade of Ridgeway Road; and the muddy, slippery conditions for walkers after rain. Mr Crouch agreed to follow up with Busways to determine the numbers of students affected. Again, the strongest advice was for residents, particularly high school students, to WRITE to him about the safety issues including near misses and other mishaps.

[terrigal@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:terrigal@parliament.nsw.gov.au)



Gordon Reid meets with Residents.

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## Avoca Beach Red Cross: Over 60 Years of Supporting Local Central Coast Charities

Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement work to improve health, prevent disease and reduce suffering within communities. They do this in a variety of areas: disaster recovery and relief, and by assisting migrants seeking asylum and those within the justice system. Providing lifegiving blood and plasma is also an aim, as is supporting our First Nations people and supporting and empowering people who are experiencing homelessness and have fallen through the gaps.

The Avoca Beach Red Cross Club was established in March 1960. The club had 36 members at that time. Today there are 34 active members, and we would like a few more!

Anyone can belong to a Red Cross Club, we have several men at Avoca and it's not exclusive to the Avoca community either. At present we hold fund raising events for four locally selected charities. These are:

The NG Central School at Kariong is a special assistance school for young people who need a more flexible approach to learning. It has around 50 students from all over the Central Coast.

Mary Macs Place at Woy Woy a local organisation who supply meals and assistance to those who are isolated, lonely and often homeless in our community.

Central Coast Kids in Need support the well-being of seriously ill children and their families on the Central Coast.

Share the Dignity is a women's charity that supports those fleeing domestic violence or doing it tough by distributing women's period products.

Last financial year with the very generous help of the Avoca Community including our local businesses, we raised approximately \$8000.

New Members are always welcome! We meet every third Monday 10.00am at The Avoca Beach Surf Lifesaving Club. Our meetings often include interesting Guest Speakers. So come on down and join us in a cuppa and some delicious morning tea, fun and fellowship.

For more information please contact Sandra 0487752153 or Jan 0437250034 and look for us on Facebook - Avoca Red Cross.



## Spotlight on Locals

### Eighty years at Avoca Beach. Stuart Braga OAM

Stuart Braga, a long-time resident of Avoca Beach, was recently awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday Honours for service to education administration and to community history.



Stuart with grandchildren

Stuart has been coming to Avoca Beach since 1943 when his parents brought their family here each January. In those days no-one could drive from Sydney as few people had cars and petrol was strictly rationed. No one had fridges; the ice man came only once a week. The picture theatre had not been built, so there was only one amenity – the beach. Not a bad amenity

for a Sydney suburban family! It was safe too, as the Surf Club was always on duty in the daylight hours in summer. Founded in 1929 and now approaching its centenary, the Club maintained patrols throughout World War II despite the acute shortage of manpower with nearly a million Australians in the armed forces.

In 1983 Stuart and his wife Patricia had the opportunity to purchase a lakeside property which they still own. Stuart feels that without the peace and calm of Avoca Beach he could never have handled a busy career in Sydney and many writing projects. Briefly, as an educational administrator, Stuart was Senior Master of Trinity Grammar School and was President of the Teachers' Guild of NSW. He was Chair of the Awards Committee of the Australian College of Educators. He is a Fellow and Life Member of both organisations.

On leaving education, he turned to community history. Most of his ten books were researched in Sydney and Canberra but written here at Avoca Beach. They include 'Anzac Doctor', a biography of Sir Neville Howse, Australia's first Victoria Cross winner, and 'Kokoda Commander', honouring General A.S. ('Tubby') Allen, who led the Aussie forces on the Kokoda Trail in 1942.

Stuart says that the Honours List contains the names of many people whose service to Australia has been massive, so he is very touched that he is included.

# Avoca Beach Junior Board Riders

## Memories of the Early Days

We asked Bob Lloyd to tell us about the foundation days of the Avoca Beach Junior Board Riders Club. It turns out it has a rich history. Bob was one of the driving forces behind the club in the early days. Here is his story:

"As far as I remember we had our first organised competition in March 1975, some 48 years ago.

We got a promising response to a sign on the front of the surf club, and this prompted us to have a competition on the 4th Sunday of each month for almost ten years. The results were posted on the notice board outside the surf club and created lots of interest. The Senior Board Riders followed not long after, having their first competition in April of 1976. When the juniors turned sixteen, they graduated to the Seniors.



Bryce Ellis

We made sure the juniors were enjoyed by all, introducing a handicap system that gave every competitor a chance of winning. This engendered a great team spirit. The overall improvement in competitive surfing was amazing.

It wasn't long before the club produced juniors who progressed to the Seniors and went on to become some of the best on the planet. Three World Amateur champions and three top ten world professional surfers in Bryce Ellis, Mark Sainsbury, and Shane Powell. Ross Clark-Jones went on to become the world's best big wave rider. Many others including Sam Chell were also surfing at world class standard. Of course, since those early days there have been many world class surfers doing Avoca Beach proud. A pleasing feature is the number



Shane Powell

of members from the early days who are still surfing regularly even though they are in their 50's and maybe even 60's.

Many of the juniors joined the surf club and went on to make Avoca Beach the strongest Board Riding Display Club in NSW and Australia for many years winning numerous gold, silver, and bronze medals.

Our club provided the incentive to stage the Express Annual Central Coast Schoolboys and Girls competition at Avoca Beach. It is recognised as possibly the largest surf competition ever held with over 350 contestants.

The club, along with the Seniors, was instrumental in staging the Mark Sainsbury Memorial Competition in memory of the tragic loss of the incredible 'Sanga'. Every world surfing champion was in attendance .... we had live music ... and over



Mark 'Sanga' Sainsbury

5,000 spectators came to ensure this amazing and innovative young man who invented the 'floater' would never be forgotten -- and he hasn't.

Avoca Beach Junior Board Riders thrived because many people pitched in and volunteered their services. Too many to name and I don't want to miss anyone. Please accept my general thank you to you all. The Junior board riders remains one of my fondest memories.

I should however mention Nirvana and McCoy Surfboards for their meaningful and prestigious support.

Bob Lloyd.

(The editor looks forward to featuring the current Avoca Beach Board Riders Club in the next issue)



Ross Clark Jones



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# Avoca Beach Scout Group – inspiring boys and girls in our community

Our local Scout group continues to provide a lot of fun, outdoor activities and self-development training and opportunities to girls and boys in our community, aged 5 to 18, as it has done for many decades.

We have very successfully restarted our Joey Scout section (ages 5-8), with recent activities including canoeing, camping, indoor rock climbing, ten pin bowling, science experiments, cooking, a local scavenger hunt to discover and learn things about our village, bicycle riding including safety and maintenance, a visit to the Avoca Beach RFS, attending local Anzac Day services, bushwalking, beach sports, indoor rock climbing, first aid and knotting.



Rock Climbing Fun



Pioneering skills



Learning Navigation

Our Cub Scouts (aged 8-11) as well as participating in many of the activities mentioned above at a higher age-appropriate

level, develop skills in pioneering, map and compass, more difficult bushwalks, and many have just returned from the NSW Cuboree camp with Cub Scouts from all over NSW.

Some of our older members (12 – 17) have just returned the adventure of a lifetime in South Korea at the World Scout Jamboree, with many thousands of scouts from all over the world, and a tour of the country as well. These large Jamborees are held in various states of Australia and overseas every few years and provide a life changing experience to learn new skills and make new friends, for the young people who participate in them. The next Australian Jamboree will be in 2025 in Maryborough, Queensland and we hope to be sending as many Avoca Beach Scouts as possible there.

Scouts youth program has an award system enabling our youth to earn badges when they reach increasing levels of proficiency in Outdoor Adventure Skills and Special Interest Areas, enabling age specific learning and development in both Scouting Skills and a wide variety of interests that each Scout can choose from to develop skills in areas that they individually wish to follow.

Avoca Beach Scout Group is very much a community supported organisation to serve the children in our community, and we are grateful for the volunteer support we receive and always welcome girls and boys to try out Scouting at no cost for a few weeks. All our leaders and supporters are volunteers, and we greatly appreciate the time and expertise they contribute towards developing life skills amongst the youth of our community.



More information is available at [www.avocabeachscouts.com.au](http://www.avocabeachscouts.com.au) or contact us at [groupleader@avocabeachscouts.com.au](mailto:groupleader@avocabeachscouts.com.au)

Welcome to

# Avoca Beach Village Church

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Sunday Worship  
11am-12noon



# Avoca Beach Kayakers impress at World Championships



Australia has just had its most successful Kayak World Sprint Championships ever, with Avoca Kayak Club paddlers to the fore. The Championships were held in Duisburg, Germany in August and finished with Avoca being able to boast of a new World Champion. Dylan Littlehales took out the crown winning the KL3 200m event in a nail-biting finish with just 2 seconds covering the entire race. He then went on to win the Olympic trial event in Paris making this a Stellar year for him. He plans later this year to compete in the Hawkesbury Classic a 111km event to raise funds for Cancer research, bit of a change for him after his usual 200m races. The World's result qualifies a spot at the Paris Olympics for Australia, AKC members Ella Beere and Riley Fitzsimmons have also qualified places for the Olympics next year, in the K4 500m events. Riley's K4 crew had a superb race missing bronze by just 0.3 of a second coming home in 4th place. The top 4 crews all finished on the same second!! Ella's team have raced well all year and after leading the race early came home strongly to finish 5th. Both crews were stroked by the AKC members. Natalia Drobot continues her fantastic years paddling, following a bronze at the Junior World Championships with a very tight 5th in the 200m K2 event. Australia's K2 pairing of Fletcher Armstrong and Jakob Hammond raced the K2 1000m event with an excellent result of 7th in the A final. Selections for the Paris Olympic teams

will be at Penrith next March at the National Championships. Anyone who fancies trying out the great sport of Kayaking should hop onto the Avoca Kayak Club website for more details.

Paul (Pommie) Hutchison



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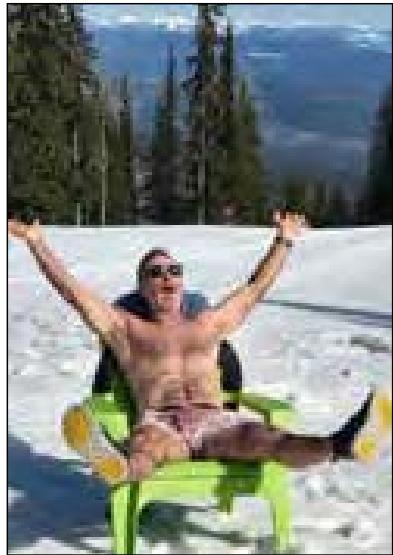
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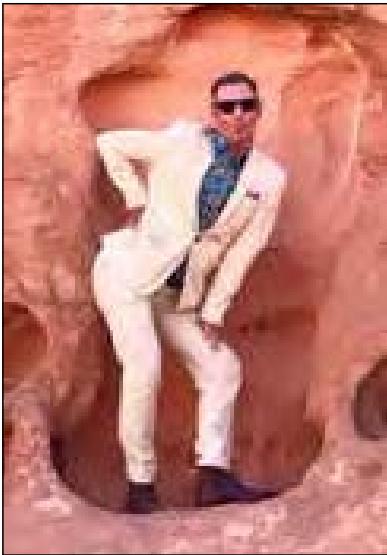
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# Spotlight on Locals – Mouse and the Mad Cow

As you might expect, there are many different and interesting characters in the Avoca Beach community. Iain McGuire (aka Mouse) is certainly one of them. Locally, Mouse is well known for his energizer bunny enthusiasm and interesting choices when ocean swimming. He is an active member of the Surf Club and works for NSW Fire and Rescue. An accomplished actor himself, Mouse also established and runs the Mad Cow Theatre for aspiring young fans of the dramatic arts.



Mouse at Play



Mouse the Showman

Mouse first started his love affair with Avoca Beach as a teenager in the 1970s, a result of his first solo hitch for a ride from his home at Gosford as a 13-year-old in 1975. He remembers that first major solo hitch hike well. "I was scared as I'd never been to Avoca. Not even on Avoca Drive. My Pommy non beach loving parents had occasionally taken me to Terrigal. Avoca felt like I was in another country!"

Mouse fell under Avoca's spell. "Avoca was so different to Terrigal. It wasn't trying to be anything, it was understated and beautiful... and the water was perfect that day, I'm sure it planted a seed to live in Avoca." His time came in 1984, buying land in Avoca as a twenty-two-year-old. "I was just starting with the then NSW Fire Brigade. The shift work appealed. Wow, I could build a home in my days off!" His young family moved into the house he designed and built in 1989. Mouse named his house Shakti, after the Hindu goddess. "Those days would have been tough for my wife, Carol. I was doing shift work in Sydney then driving straight to the land and building all my days off." Mouse is still with Fire & Rescue NSW today, based nearby at Kincumber.

With a mother who was an artist and a keen supporter of all the arts, Mouse saw many live stage shows with the Gosford Musical Society.

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Finished building the family home, he decided to audition and was cast in the musical Kiss Me Kate. A few lines, a song and a couple of dance routines and he was hooked. He immediately began training as an actor in Sydney on weekends.

Since then he has amassed hundreds of stage and several TV performances. Not to rest on his laurels he began touring Australia with ABC's Postman Pat. "This was an amazing learning experience for me. We performed such a variety of stages from The Opera House to the CWA Hall in Margaret River, to a state-of-the-art children's theatre covered in red dessert dust in Roxy Downs, South Australia." Yes, he was still a full-time firefighter at this stage, and still is.

Mouse fondly remembers his first professional gig in Baz Luhrmann's La Boheme for Opera Australia where he played five different characters. "Baz was wonderful, a joy to work, not only a visionary storyteller, but a true collaborator."

In 1997, a friend asked him to fill in teaching drama classes for six weeks. Six months later Mouse had created The Mad Cow Theatre Company. The first venues he hired to teach after school acting classes for children were Avoca Surf Club and Gosford Primary School! Incredibly, he managed to juggle the trade of acting and Mad Cow while still working as a professional firefighter in Sydney.

Mad Cow is now in its 25th year and has 14 classes with 160 students per week. "Tuition has changed dramatically", says Mouse "Kids' ability to focus without a toy fire (a screen) is disintegrating. We, as parents and leaders, aren't much better on our mobiles. We are teaching ourselves to have ADHD. Many young people who want to act now come into Mad Cow and state: "I want to be famous". My reply is: "You already are, now get to it. It's all hard work from here."

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