



Green Cross Australia is delighted that Surf Life Saving Queensland will join our network from this summer, with a sensational new Extreme Weather Hero that lives and breathes surf life saving and is passionate about doing their bit for climate change.

Surf Life Saving Queensland CEO Tony Scanlan understands the links between climate change and protecting Queenslanders and their magnificent beaches. Green Cross CEO Mara Bun put the following questions to Tony about this exciting new direction for the Extreme Weather Heroes program:

Q1: How concerned are you about the potential impact of climate change on Queensland's beaches and the communities who enjoy them?

As an organization that has 59 surf clubs that are located on the beachfront, climate change will have an ever increasing impact on the way that we protect lives. The effects of climate change long term could have a significant impact on surf club facilities to the extent where relocation may become necessary. Although this is not in our short term it may concern future generations. The immediate impacts of climate change are being felt through more severe storm activity, beach erosion and dangerous surf conditions. Our organisation will be at the forefront of managing these risks for the beach going public. It also places extra risks on our own members and the equipment needed to sustain our vigilance and service on and off the beach. There is also a potential cost effect in rising injury tolls and thus increasing Workcover and insurance claims.

Q2: Do you think we are prepared for the challenges ahead?

Surf Life Saving recognises the increased risk and the challenges that continued climate change has on our organisation. Currently, we have been able to manage the impacts of climate change and continue to deliver efficient beach safety. We recognize that this challenge will increase in frequency and intensity and our organization is developing the necessary measures to address this issue in the short term. Over the long term, we have yet to determine impact and necessary resources to address challenges as they arise.

Q3: How important is it to get young people involved in volunteering, and also to remain involved?

Surf Life Saving has had significant increases in our 5 – 14 year age groups in the past few years. Most of these young members are not yet able to volunteer their services on the beach but they have the potential and future to sustain a healthy organization. Any organisation needs to continually rejuvenate and encourage younger members to be engaged in all forms of volunteer activities. Surf Life Saving are currently developing plans and initiatives to help retain as many of these young members as possible. We see them as our future volunteer lifesavers and a way for our organisation to continue to deliver beach safety into the future.