

Wednesday, 16 January 2008

MOVING BEYOND THE FLAGS - MAKING OUR BEACHES SAFER

Four new all-purpose terrain vehicles will start patrolling South Australian beaches this week as part of the Surf Life Saving SA's initiative to make beaches safer.

Costing \$20,000 each, the vehicles have been purchased as part of Surf Life Saving SA's initiative "*Moving beyond the flags*" and were commissioned today by Emergency Services Minister Carmel Zollo.

The vehicles, jointly funded by the State Government, Emergency Management Australia and the Surf Life Saving SA, will make beaches safer for the community by providing increased surveillance to heavily frequented beaches.

Minister Carmel Zollo says the new vehicles will significantly enhance the work of our surf life saving clubs.

"Our life savers perform an important role and this government is happy to assist and contribute to the development of Surf Life Saving in this State," the Minister says.

"Last year, the *Year of the Surf Life Saver*, we also presented Surf Life Saving SA (SLSSA) with a jet ski to expand that particular fleet.

"Traditionally lifesavers have patrolled between safety flags, undertaking roving patrols outside these areas on an irregular basis.

"These vehicles and jet skis really do give the valuable work they do a whole new dimension."

SLSSA General Manager Elaine Farmer says the vehicles will be allocated to the State Lifeguard Service based at Glenelg, and the Clubs of South Port, Port Noarlunga and Aldinga Beach.

"The State Lifeguard Service will use its vehicle to provide constant surveillance during the week," Ms Farmer says.

"On weekends the vehicle will be used by the Glenelg Club, with an outpost at the Broadway on weekends and public holidays.

"The South Port Club will establish its all terrain vehicle outpost at the mouth of the Onkaparinga River.

"The Port Noarlunga Club will establish its outpost mid way between South Port and Port Noarlunga servicing high traffic areas.

"The club at Aldinga Bay will cover the northern end of Aldinga Beach, catering for the growing population in the Aldinga Bay area."

“These vehicles, along with other equipment such as the jet skis, are an example of how surf life saving is evolving,” says the Minister.

“Since coming to office, the Rann Government has provided more than \$7 million to Surf Life Saving South Australia (SLSSA), including \$3.75 million to redevelop clubs at Christies Beach, Somerton, North Haven and Brighton.

“In addition, a \$140,000 grant allows SLSSA to extend its weekend shark patrol service to cover public holidays and special events.”

The Government is also spending **\$172,000** for UniSA to operate weekday patrols over the entire summer.