

Our member profile this fortnight is Ratna Selvaratnam. Ratna joined South Narrabeen SLSC in 2011 with his son Christian. He is currently an Age Manager, a role which he enjoys as he sees each child's skills grow. He also doesn't mind taking the driver's seat of a Sunday morning when Richard is out of town to welcome Nippers and their parent.

Age managers work with Nippers between the ages of 6 and 13, to develop their surf lifesaving and sport skills, by providing fun, safe and organised nipper activities



Ratna is pictured

When did you join South Narrabeen SLSC and why?

I joined in the 2011/12 season. Christian had just turned 5 and were keen for him to build confidence in the surf, and hopefully make a positive contribution to the community through surf life saving in the future.

What are the key lessons that you've learnt from your time in South Narrabeen SLSC?

Never under-estimate the ocean (South Narra is a tough beach)!

And never under-estimate the commitment of members of this great club – whether they are patrolling members or Nipper parents.....and the Nippers themselves. Everyone's willing to lend a hand.

What's it like being an Age Manager and what do you enjoy about it?

OK - it does takes some patience and coordination.

However you're working with a great bunch of kids with amazing personalities and talents – so seeing them grow in ability and confidence is hugely satisfying. It's also great to see the friendships and bonds they form with each other – some of which I'm confident will last a lifetime.

You've been a member at South Narrabeen SLSC for over 5 years, how have things changed?

The biggest changes are really in the composition of people, as members come and go. However the Southy vibe is very consistent – friendly, easy going and supportive.

How are preparations for the 2016-2017 season going?

It's going well. Very pleased to see a good number of returning Nippers amongst my Under-11s group this season (a core group of which have been together since they started 5 years ago). Also great to see more girls join this group too. Putting more focus on water activities (boards and swims), and the kids are taking to it well.

A group of us have been running board training at 8am on Sundays, and we have had a small but very keen bunch of nippers who give it a red hot go!

What are your goals within Surf Life Saving, in particular South Narrabeen SLSC?

My main driver would be to see the current crop of Nippers stay on through to SRC, and beyond.

We get drop-outs for various reasons as we go up the age groups. However it's always great to see some of them return, and older kids join for the first time too – and we've seen both instances this season. It's never too late to join the Nippers program, and I keep talking it up wherever, whenever and to whomever who cares to listen!

I'll also need to get my fitness level up to get my Bronze Medallion – which I keep postponing!

What has been your best memory as a member of our Club?

All the Christmas and Halloween parties! But not as heart-warming as when I get to congratulate my group of the kids at Nippers presentation every year. Some of them have come such a long way from when they first started as little Under-6s.

Who is someone you admire in the Surf Life Saving movement and why?

Every member of our club! The people who rock up every Sunday (and others days at patrols and events) are not obliged to be there, but have chosen to do so and do their best. The leadership and support teams are doing a fantastic job.

Anything else you would like to add...

...more Nippers at Southy!