2007 is the centenary year of Surf Life Saving Australia, the national organisation for surf lifesaving.

Centenaries are a good time to look at an event and find out not only about that event itself — in this case surf lifesaving — but also about the broader historical and social context in which it fits. In other words, by looking at surf lifesaving we can learn a lot about Australia's past, its present and even perhaps its future.

The National Museum of Australia has prepared an exhibition on the centenary of organised surf lifesaving in Australia that will tour Australia during 2007 and 2008.

This unit is designed to help students explore the ideas raised in the exhibition. Even for those students who cannot visit the exhibition, it will provide them with resources and ideas that can help to explore aspects of Australian social history through a study of decades.

### Activity 1
What do you know about surf lifesavers and lifesaving?

### Activity 2
What is your image of surf lifesavers and lifesaving?

### Activity 3
Why have surf lifesavers? The geography of the beach

### Activity 4
Being a historian (1) — Which was the first volunteer surf lifesaving club?

### Activity 5
Surf lifesaving and beach culture — Exploring change through decades

### Activity 6
Understanding the concept of change through developments in surf lifesaving technology

### Activity 7
Understanding society — Volunteering

### Activity 8
Being a historian (2) — Investigating the Cronulla riots of 2005

### Activity 9
Sharing the Sands competition

As you work through the unit you will occasionally see these boxes:

**IN THE EXHIBITION**

Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition. What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?

The venues and dates of the exhibition are:

**Sydney**
Australian National Maritime Museum
8 March – 29 April 2007

**Brisbane**
Queensland Museum
May – August 2007

**Adelaide**
South Australian Maritime Museum
September – November 2007

**Perth**
Western Australian Museum
December 2007 – March 2008

Each box includes an object on display in the Between The Flags exhibition. Write your answer to the questions in the box.

If you cannot visit the exhibition you can find out the answer at WEBSITE ADDRESS TO COME

But first — let’s see what lifesaving facts you know.
Here are some questions about lifesaving. See how much you know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A beach is defined as an area of sand that is above high tide and is at least how long?</td>
<td>A 10 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 20 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 100 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 1000 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When did organised surf lifesaving start in Australia?</td>
<td>A 1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Approximately how many beaches are there in Australia?</td>
<td>A 11000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 15000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 23000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 36000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How many visits to the beach are made by Australians each year?</td>
<td>A 5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 20 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 50 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 80 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What percentage of Australians live within 50 kilometres of the beach?</td>
<td>A 60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How many rescues have been carried out by lifesavers over the last century?</td>
<td>A 125000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 320000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 500000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 650000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How many surf lifesaving members were there in 2006?</td>
<td>A 81000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 113000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 119000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 125000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. How many people did lifesavers save from death by drowning in 2006?</td>
<td>A 187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is the length of Australia's coastline?</td>
<td>A 22000 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 29000 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 36000 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 45000 km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Most lifesaving bravery awards have been given for saving people from what danger?</td>
<td>A Rips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Sharks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Sinking boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D Rocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. When was the first ironman event held in Australia?</td>
<td>A 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 1972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. When were women first accepted as surf lifesaving club members?</td>
<td>A 1928</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B 1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D 1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. What do lifesavers understand by a ‘nipper’?</td>
<td>A A crab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B A tight-fitting swimsuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C A child member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D A person who resists while being saved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Which was Australia's first official surf lifesaving club?</td>
<td>A Bondi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B Bronte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C Manly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D North Bondi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you work through the unit you will be able to find the answers to these questions. They are marked ☐.
Activity 2

What is your image of surf lifesavers and lifesaving?

On the previous page we tested your factual knowledge about some aspects of lifesaving. Now we go a bit further.

Each of you has an image of lifesavers and lifesaving.

1. Imagine that you have been asked to write a description of lifesavers and lifesaving that you would give to an overseas visitor to Australia. You only have 100 words for this statement.

   In the box opposite jot down the key points you would include in your description.

2. Now share your description with the rest of the class. Add any new ideas to the summary box.

   You will be asked to come back again at the end of this unit to write your final statement about lifesaving and lifesavers. You should keep adding ideas to the summary box as you work through the unit.

   People’s image of surf lifesaving is influenced by many factors, including how they see it represented in pictures and photographs over time.

3. Here are some illustrations of Australian surf lifesaving. Look at them and decide in each case:

   - who is shown
   - where they are located
   - what they are doing
   - what the context or setting is
   - how the people are presented
   - why the image might have been created
   - what image or message it gives about lifesaving and lifesavers.

   **Summary:** Lifesavers and Lifesaving

   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________
   ___________________________________________

   **Source A** Promotional poster for the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge 1932

   **Source B** Cartoon by Nicholson

© National Museum of Australia and Ryebuck Media Pty Ltd 2007
SOURCE C Photographs of aspects of surf lifesavers and lifesaving

Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition. What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?

IN THE EXHIBITION

Did any of these images surprise you and challenge your existing image of surf lifesavers and lifesaving? Explain why, or why not.

You may want to add some new points to the summary description box you are developing above.
Surf lifesavers exist because Australians love the beach, and because some beach-related activities are dangerous.

Look at this cartoon by Nicholson, depicting Australians and the beach, and answer the questions that follow.

1. Describe the different beach-related activities that you see in this cartoon.

2. Add as many activities as you can that could have also been depicted here.

3. An estimated 85 per cent of Australians live within 50 kilometres of a beach. Research and prepare a report on your local beach OR, as a class, select at least one beach from each state and territory, and prepare reports on them that compare and contrast different beaches around Australia.

For each report use these headings:

- The name and location of the beach
- The main features or characteristics of the beach
- How it is used by the community
- Its environmental state
- Any conservation measures that have been implemented or are needed
- The name and club colours of the nearest surf lifesaving club (colour these on the sketch of the cap)

Here is a list of the types of incidents for which bravery awards have been given to lifesavers who saved or tried to save people in these situations:

- shark attack
- caught in rips
- washed off rocks
- capsized boats
- other

The event for which most awards are given involves rips. What is a rip?

4. Look at these images of a rip, and write your explanation.


http://www.seagrant.umn.edu/rip/
Currents most typically form at low spots or breaks in sandbars, and also near structures such as jetties and piers. Rip currents can be very narrow or extend in widths to hundreds of yards. The seaward pull of rip currents varies: sometimes the rip current ends just beyond the line of breaking waves, but sometimes rip currents continue to pull hundreds of yards offshore.

Look for any of these clues to see if there is a rip:
- a channel of churning, choppy water
- an area having a notable difference in water color
- a line of foam, seaweed, or debris moving steadily seaward
- a break in the incoming wave pattern.

Imagine that you have been asked to create a sign warning beach users about rips. In designing the sign you need to consider such elements as:
- what information to include
- readability of the sign
- the main message you want to convey
- the nature and type of illustration
- the audience
- The location of the sign
- the size of the warning

Use the following information about rips, and how to escape them, to help you formulate your own sign. Below are some examples of existing designs that might help you with your own ideas.

- Never swim alone.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don’t go out!
- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards.
- If caught in a rip current, remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly. Don’t fight the current. Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, wave your arms, and yell for help.
- If you see someone in trouble, get help from a lifeguard. If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call 000. Throw the rip current victim something that floats and yell instructions on how to escape. Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.
RIP CURRENT MYTH

A rip current is a horizontal current. Rip currents do not pull people under the water — they pull people away from shore. Drownings occur when people pulled offshore are unable to keep themselves afloat and swim to shore. This may be due to any combination of fear, panic, exhaustion, or lack of swimming skills.

### Always swim near a lifeguard

**RIP CURRENT CLUES**

- Water appears calmer
- Difference in water colors
- Foam, objects, or debris moving away from the shore

### What to do if caught in a rip current:

- Stay calm, don’t swim against the current.
- Swim and call for help.
- Swim sideways across the current (parallel to shore) until you are out of the rip and can swim or tread water in the shallows or calm water near you.

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**In the Exhibition**

Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition. What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?
ACTIVITY 4 Being a historian (1) — Which was the first volunteer surf lifesaving club?

A study of Australian lifesaving gives us a chance to discover the answer to an unresolved question: Which was Australia’s first official lifesaving club? The candidates are:

- Bondi Surf Bathers’ Life Saving Club
- Bronte Surf Life Saving Club
- Manly Life Saving Club
- North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club

Here is your chance to be a historian: look at the evidence, critically analyse it, and decide which club the evidence best supports. Follow the numbered stages to make your decision.

1. A historian thinks about the problem first, and works out what sort of evidence might exist. So that’s your first task: brainstorm as a group or class to decide what evidence might be available to help establish which of the four candidates came first, and where you might find that evidence.

2. You cannot go searching for it in this instance, so we have brought it together for you. Look at this summary of existing evidence, and decide how, if at all, each piece refers to one or more of the four candidates. Remember that a historian has to critically examine the evidence, and not just accept it on face value. Two examples have been done to help you.

EVIDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Sign above the entrance to Bondi Surf Life Saving Club says that in 1906 it was formed as Australia’s first Surf Life Saving Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>In Manly, in 1902, the ‘decency’ laws that made it illegal for people to swim in the sea in daylight hours were first broken. A man was arrested for swimming during the day. The law was repealed soon afterwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A sign above the Bronte Beach clubhouse reads: Established 1903 — the World’s First Surf Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Manly Life Saving Club has a pocket badge showing the club name above a surf-reel, and the date 1903.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Bronte member Jon Donohoe grew up at Bronte beach and heard stories as a boy that Bronte was founded in 1903.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The surf-reel was invented in 1907.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>In 1902 laws prohibiting public bathing during daylight hours were repealed for Sydney beaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>On Boxing Day, 1902, there was a drowning at Bronte beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>A letter from 1931 signed by the President of Surf Life Saving Australia states that the Bronte club was formed in 1903.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Waverley council minutes first mention the Bondi club on 12 March 1907 with this entry: '[Letter from] Bondi Surf Bathers’ Life Saving Club, notifying formation of the club to encourage the use of life saving methods and arrange for classes to be held’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>An article in an East Sydney newspaper in February 1907 refers to Bondi lifesavers on the beach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The rule book for North Bondi Surf Life Saving Club says: “Established at North Bondi Beach January 1907”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Manly council minutes have an entry in March 1903 in which the Manly Life Saving Society asks for the council to place flags on the ocean beach denoting the dangerous spots and also suggesting a line of posts to hold rescue equipment. Life Saving Societies were like fire brigades — they did not patrol beaches but helped to rescue people if they were summoned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Bronte Surf Life Saving Club’s first letter to the Waverley council announcing its formation was received on 13 April 1907.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>A newspaper report shows that the Manly Life Saving Club was formed at a meeting on 8 August 1907.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Official records show that the Bondi Surf and Social Club was formed in February 1907.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some additional comments that may influence your decision:

**A** Tony Coates, Secretary of Bronte Surf Life Saving Club:

> ‘I don’t understand the principles of primary and secondary evidence that these professional types put on it. Back in 1903, when this club started, I can well imagine the people that were starting it weren’t taking records and putting aside information in the knowledge that it was primary evidence!’

**B** Professor Ed Jaggard, official Surf Life Saving Club historian:

> ‘There’s no doubt that the first club appeared on a Sydney beach. There’s no doubt, probably, that the club appeared somewhere between 1903 and 1907, and by 1907 there were at least half a dozen of them.’

### YOUR CONCLUSION:

I conclude that the first Surf Life Saving Club was _____________ and it was formed in ____________. The most persuasive evidence to support this conclusion is: _____________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________________

---

**IN THE EXHIBITION**

Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition. What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRONTE</th>
<th>MANLY</th>
<th>NORTH BONDI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This suggests that people would now start swimming in the surf, and might need rescuing there.

---

ACTIVITY 5 Surf lifesaving and beach culture — exploring change through decades

We like to think of Australians as being tied to the beach — but this is only a relatively recent trait. Until 1902 Australians could not legally swim at the beach during daylight hours!

However, Australians have claimed the beach in the last 100 years.

Your task is to prepare a decade-by-decade snapshot of Australians and the beach, and see how life has changed over time.

For some decades, especially the 1950s onwards, you will be able to use interviews to help you gather information and ideas.

Draw up a single page for each decade. Cover as many of the aspects below as you can, and include some illustrations from the decade.

Here is a sample page (for the 1940s), including the aspects you should investigate and report on:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade:</th>
<th>1900</th>
<th>1910</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who went to the beach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When they went</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they did</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they wore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How they behaved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What special aspects of beach culture are associated with the time — such as language, music, style, equipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role and place of women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to the environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some key images</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are some resources that might help you:

SOURCE B 100 years of surf lifesaving: an overview

As the popularity of ‘surf bathing’ increased in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, so did the drowning deaths at Australian beaches. In response, bathing enthusiasts began to organise themselves to provide lifesaving equipment and training. Groups and clubs sprang up around the country, some driven by local councils; some affiliated with the Royal Life Saving or Humane societies. As safety increased, so did the numbers of bathers and, correspondingly, the need for more people to safeguard the beaches and provide better facilities for the growing number of clubs. The New South Wales Surf Bathing Association was formed in 1907 and by 1923 had become the Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA). Groups from all over Australia became affiliates, and rescue methods for Australian conditions developed rapidly. Now known as Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), in 2007 it celebrates 100 years of surf lifesaving in Australia.

From the earliest days, surf clubs held surf lifesaving competitions, promoted the sporting benefits of membership and the skills of lifesavers, and demonstrated techniques and equipment. Surf carnivals attracted the public and grew into large, spectacular public events, often with thousands of spectators. Carnival events included surf and belt races, beach sprints, rescue and resuscitation, surfboat races, novelty events and colourful military style march-pasts. The competitions attracted both membership and sponsors, and began to carve a place in the national psyche. Carnivals became huge showcase events, staged to mark major celebrations like the sesquicentenary of Australia, the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and royal visits. In 1956, during the Melbourne Olympic Games, over 70,000 spectators watched the international surf carnival at Torquay in Victoria.

The lifesaver began to supersede other mythic figures such as the digger and the bush pioneer. Meanwhile, women were largely excluded from surf lifesaving throughout most of the twentieth century. Given the opportunity, women demonstrated their ability, often meeting the training requirements and bronze medal standards, but were still ineligible for the award. Considered weak and unsuited for patrol work, training requirements and bronze medallion standards, but were still ineligible for the award. Considered weak and unsuited for patrol work, they were entitled only to associate membership and were usually responsible for fundraising and social events.

Broad social change during the 1960s and 1970s made an impact on surf lifesaving on a variety of fronts. Traditional values were being questioned, and clashes between surfers and lifesavers, growing professionalism in sport, diminishing volunteer numbers and increasing financial burdens all brought considerable pressure to bear on the organisation at local and national levels. Some forecast the demise of the movement but a raft of changes in the 1970s and 1980s boosted membership, revived both the sport and community support for surf lifesaving and increased media interest. Women were admitted to full membership in 1980 and today make up 43 per cent of members. The Nippers program recruited pre-teens and shifted the lifesaving culture towards more family participation. Technological advances brought changes to rescue methods that highlighted individual skills and diminished the need for large-scale team work. The ironman events, introduced in the 1960s, began attracting considerable prize money and became professional in the 1980s. The changes were, for a time at least, a mixed blessing for surf lifesaving.

By the 1990s, SLSA had begun to grow again and had developed a strong family culture. Today, surf lifesaving continues to evolve while also maintaining strong links with tradition. With almost half its membership under the age of 25, the future looks promising. SLSA is working to broaden its links with cultural groups that traditionally have not been involved in surf lifesaving. Events such as the surfboard and belt races and the march-past are still contested alongside modern events such as tube rescues and inflatable rescue boat (IRB) rescues. Surf lifesaving’s national championships are the largest annual sporting event in the southern hemisphere. Arguably more significant is the fact that, in the past 100 years, Australia’s surf lifesavers have saved more than 500,000 lives. An independent study in 2005 calculated that in that year alone, Australia’s surf lifesavers prevented 485 beach drowning deaths and saved 313 people from permanent incapacitation. In 2006, SLSA had more than 113,000 members, of all ages, in 304 clubs across Australia.

SOURCE C An extract from Puberty Blues

Puberty Blues is a 1979 novel about the ‘coming of age’ of two teenage girls in 1970s Cronulla.

When we were thirteen, the coolest things to do were the things your parents wouldn’t let you do. Things like have sex, smoke cigarettes, nick off from school, go to the drive-in, take drugs, and go to the beach.

The beach was the centre of our world. Rain, snow, hail, a two-hour wait at the bus stop, or being grounded, nothing could keep us from the surf. Us little surfie chicks, chirping our way down on the train. Hundreds of us in little white shirts, short-sleeved jumpers, thongs and straight-legged Levis covering little black bikinis. We flocked to the beach. Cheep. Cheep.

There were three main sections of Cronulla Beach — South Cronulla, North Cronulla and Greenhills. Everyone was trying to make it to Greenhills. That’s where the top surfie gang hung out — the prettiest girls from school and the best surfers on the beach. The bad surf-board riders on their ‘L’ plates, the Italian family groups and the ‘uncool’ kids from Bankstown (Bankies), swarmed to South Cronulla — Dickheadland. That’s where it all began. We were dickheads.

Kathy Lette & Gabrielle Carey, Puberty Blues, Picador, Sydney, 1979/2002, pp. 1–2

ACTIVITY 2 What is your image of surf lifesavers and lifesaving?

- What does this extract suggest to you about the beach and identity?
- What does it suggest about peer pressure?
- How might this be similar and different to the youth culture you are a part of today?
SOURCE D Some images of the beach

1900s

Como Beach, WA, 1915
State Library of Western Australia

1910s

Australian Beach Pattern, Charles Meere, 1940
Art Gallery of New South Wales

1920s

Tweed River Regional Museum

1930s

Surf Life Saving Australia

1940s

Australian Beach Pattern, Charles Meere, 1940
Art Gallery of New South Wales

1950s

No pic supplied

1960s

No pic supplied

1970s

Manly Beach, National Archives of Australia

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and Ryebuck Media Pty Ltd 2007
Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition. What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?

IN THE EXHIBITION

Look at the images in chronological order and comment on these aspects:

- Who is included?
- Describe the people.
- What activities are they engaged in?
- How does this image compare to the images of the previous decade?
- What images or messages are being given?
- What does this image tell you about change over time and the Australian beach?

SOURCE E An extract from a Wikipedia article on Beach Culture:

Regular surfers who live near to a good surf break are often territorial, hence the expression ‘locals only’; or as the 1980s rock group The Surf Punks put it, ‘my beach, my wave, my girl, so f____ you!’.

The expression ‘Surf Nazi’ appeared in the 1980s to describe territorial and authoritarian surfers. Localism is expressed when surfers are involved in verbal or physical threats or abuse to deter people from surfing at certain surf spots. This is backed by the belief that fewer people equals more waves per surfer.

- How are the attitudes expressed here similar to those in Puberty Blues?
- How could you test if those attitudes were widespread and typical at the time?
- How could you test if they still exist today?

Here are some popular representations of surf culture over time. You should try to compare some of these and include questions about them in any interviews.

SOURCE F Surfing in popular culture

Films
The Endless Summer
Big Wednesday
Blue Hawaii
Gidget
Point Break

Music
‘Surfin’ USA’
‘Wedding cake island’
‘Surfer girl’
‘Surf city’
‘Surfer Joe’
‘My blonde-headed stompie wompie real gone surfer boy’
‘Fun fun fun’
‘Bomboa’
‘Wipe out’

Language
goofy-foot
baggies
hang five (or ten)
boogie board
tube
wipeout

Fashions
Billabong
Rip Curl
Quicksilver

Magazines
Tracks
Surfing World
Wave Action Surf Magazine
Surfer Magazine
Surfer’s Journal

TV shows
Hawaii Five-O
The OC
Surf Girls

No pic supplied

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**ACTIVITY 6 Understanding the concept of change through changes in surf lifesaving technology**

History involves a study of change — the Between the Flags exhibition should help us understand the concept of change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of the change</th>
<th>Comments about change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONAL EQUIPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial equipment was the lifesaver buoy, attached to a rope that was tied to a fixed point. This was difficult to use in the surf. In 1907 some Bondi members invested in the torpedo buoy. It was a bit less than a metre long, and made from canvas filled and stiffened with kapok. It had four rope handles on the side, and was attached to a rope held by a belt around the rescuer. It could support the rescuer and up to four people. At the same time the reel was being developed. The rescuer wore a cork belt, with a line attached to it, which was fed out from a reel. This required a team to feed out line to the beltman, and then haul him and the rescued person back to shore. Rope also changed: from hemp (which rotted quickly), to cotton, waxed cotton, cotton and nylon, nylon and finally today’s terylene. The design of the belt changed: to canvas with cork floats, then no floats, then silk, then nylon. A problem existed where the beltman could be trapped underwater by the line snagging on rocks or being dragged down by seaweed. A safety device was developed in 1924 following the death of a lifesaver unable to release the belt, but this was ignored by the SLSA until the deaths of two beltmen in 1950, due to kelp fouling the line and pulling them under.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Try this exercise.  
1 Here are a number of changes that may have occurred in your life recently. Tick the box for those that have happened recently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A new hairstyle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A new hair colour</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change in your family situation (such as a birth, or a marriage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change of school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change of subjects studied at school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change of residence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change in friends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change in boyfriend/girlfriend</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change in your favourite musician</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A change in your style of clothes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Now think about the meaning of those changes:
- Were some voluntary, and others forced?
- Were some permanent, and others temporary?
- Were some good, and others bad?
- Were some substantial, and others trivial?

Write the word that describes the nature of the change in the third column. For example, if I have changed my hairstyle, I might write ‘trivial’ or ‘temporary’ or ‘voluntary’; or I might write ‘substantial’ (if it makes me feel better about myself), or ‘permanent’ if I intend this to be my style from now on, or ‘forced’ if, for example, my school made me change it.

You may end up with several words beside each change, including many other aspects of the concept of change that are not included in the dot points above.

What you have done is to start to understand the concept of change, what it really means.

3 Now look at these changes in the lifesaving technology. Write down any features of change that it illustrates for you.

**HOW HAS SURF LIFESAVING CHANGED OVER TIME?**
### Nature of the change

**PERSONAL EQUIPMENT (continued)**

A rescue buoy (tube) made of flexible foam was demonstrated by American lifesavers in 1956 (this is the type of float used in *Baywatch*). The lifesaver would race to the victim, throw the tube, then swim back towing the rescued person. It eliminated the need for reels and reel teams. Because the organising bodies would have had to revise their whole carnival organisation so no change was made for 30 years.

### Comments about change

**RESUSCITATION METHODS**

Lifesavers followed a strict process. The first method was the Schafer method. The patient was put face down, the lifesaver straddled the patient’s back, and applied pressure to the small of the patient’s back to expel water.

In the 1940s the SLSA approved the Eve Rocker. The patient was strapped to a stretcher, and the method involved first tilting the head down at a 45 degree angle for a few seconds, then tilting the feet down. This pattern continued for several minutes to expel any water from the lungs. This practice was abandoned in the 1960s.

A new resuscitation method, the Holger Nielsen, replaced the Schafer principles in 1952. The lifesaver now knelt at the patient’s head, facing his or her feet, and applied pressure to the back.

There were minor variations to this method until it was replaced by the expired air resuscitation (EAR) method in 1960. This is better known as ‘mouth-to-mouth’. Teaching aids were soon developed to help new members learn the method.

### CLOTHING

The design of costumes has changed over time, but there have also been developments in protection. Surf lifesavers in Queensland started wearing pantyhose to protect themselves against box jellyfish stings (there have been 63 documented fatal stings since 2000), followed by nylon/lycra protective suits.

### WATERCRAFT

**Surfboats, powered craft and rubber duckies**

In 1907 the first surfboat was a modified whaler-built boat, with two pointed ends. Manned by three or four oarsmen, it had trouble with the rough surf conditions. This was soon modified to create greater buoyancy, and room for three (and later four) rowers and a sweep oar at the back.

In the 1940s the design was altered again to a tuck stern (squared off back). This is the basic design still used today.

Then came the powered boat. Boats with outboard motors were not suitable for surf rescue, but in the 1960s the first inboard-engined boats appeared. This was improved by the jet engine boats, which are powered by jets and not a propellor.

In the 1960s there was also a move to inflatable rescue boats (IRB) – or ‘rubber duckies’. The key moment came in 1970 when an IRB, a jet rescue boat, a surfboat and a belted swimmer raced to rescue swimmers 150 metres offshore. The IRB returned to shore with its swimmers before the others had even reached theirs.

**Surfboard and surf ski**

In 1915 Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku demonstrated his surfboard skills in Sydney, and a new sport was born. Initially surfboards were not part of standard lifesaving equipment, and were only used if a member happened to have one at a time of crisis. In 1956 American lifesavers demonstrated their torpedo tubes, and the short, light and manoeuvrable surfboard called a ‘malibu’. A version of the malibu was quickly adopted, and by 1984 had replaced the red.

The first official surf ski was made in 1912, but was not adopted until the 1930s. The surf ski quickly ended the role of the canoe, which was common on Australian beaches until then.

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**IN THE EXHIBITION**

Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition.

What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?

[Clue: it is related to an item of lifesaving personal equipment.]
ACTIVITY 7 Understanding society — volunteering

Being a lifeguard is a voluntary activity. Why do people do it? Here are some lifeguards. Read the extracts from interviews that were recorded with them for the Between the Flags exhibition, and use them to answer the following questions.

1. What qualities do these people show?
2. Why do they do what they do?
3. How do they benefit personally?
4. How does the community benefit from their activities?

**WHY JOIN?**

Kristy: The thing that I enjoy most about lifesaving is probably the lifestyle. Living next to the beach, and going to the beach for training every single day. I think it’s also the health and well-being aspect of lifesaving that I enjoy.

Don: I had a swimming background and water polo, and I was always interested in the ocean as a very young child.

Keesha: Most of my family was involved and I wanted to build my confidence in the water.

Phil: I got sick and tired of chasing that little red ball, I thought there must be something better than that.

**PATROLS**

Don: Patrolling the beach for me really is a community service. On the out-going tide, you really have to be on your mark because as the tide goes out, it becomes very rippy, and patrolling members need to observe quite closely.

Phil: You have to be involved in patrols because that is what lifesaving is all about to start with.

Keesha: On a regular patrol day we start at about quarter to nine. We get our equipment ready, all the flags and everything and take them down to the beach. After we have set up the flags, we have to stand guard, people are moving around, and we always have to watch out to sea.

John: The equipment is the priority item to be put on the beach, and the location of your flags, obviously.

Pat: They’re always out there and it gives you much more confidence. I know, I don’t like to swim unless there is a patrol on the weekends.

**SURF CULTURE**

John: When balsa became the material of use surfing took off. A little later we had Fibregl no and all that sort of carry on and surfing music and surfing movies, etc. etc. Now as it became so popular people outside of surf clubs started buying surfboards.

Don: The reality is that many of the top surfers have come through the junior movement of surf lifesaving and have chosen to go down a particular track. A large number of surf lifesavers are very competent board riders.
John: I can recall on one occasion I was having a run between Henley and Grange jetty and I saw this guy collapse on the beach — when I ran up to him he wasn’t breathing, so obviously I got to work with the expired air method of mouth-to-mouth, and obtained help from a bystander. He called the ambulance and eventually the ambulance arrived. I am still working on this guy and they come and take the casualty away.

Don: There were three people in a rubber raft — obviously they bought it for Christmas, and I was just up the beach from where I live and going for a swim, and all of a sudden I realised there was a bit of panic going on, and I managed to get two people in initially and then back out and rescue the third one.

Kristy: When I was rescued myself, was when I was much younger and I didn’t actually realise I was in trouble until the lifesaver had swum out to get me. I was actually caught in a rip and swimming nowhere. And a lot of the rescues I have been involved in since then, have been saving people from rips. I think that is probably the most common cause of people getting into difficulty in the ocean.

Don: There have been rescues that I’ve been involved in that have not been successful, and that’s hard at the time, and I guess, that is where you rely on colleagues and people and friends within the club and family.

Phil: I’ve often felt that to encourage young people to become involved in surf lifesaving is one of the main reasons that surf lifesaving continues to operate. Every member of every club should be out there trying to recruit people, because it is not just doing the lifesaving on the beach that counts, it is doing the lifesaving off the beach.

Kristy: I began Nippers being terrified of the surf, and was up until about 12 or 13. I only ever competed in the beach events and the water events were sort of a later thing in my career.

Pat: My husband was such a keen surfer that when my two boys were born, he’d come to pick me up at the hospital and he would take the boys out of the car. One boy, one at a time, and dangle his feet in the water so that he’d be a good swimmer for North Cottesloe.

Don: The other big thrill I have had is the development of younger people in the movement — not only providing them with the skills that they need to become proficient surf lifesavers, but also developing them as people and providing with some life skills.

Keesha: I now teach younger children and nippers. I’m now helping with water safety — when people used to help me do that I was very appreciative.

John: Women have always been around the surf clubs in one function or another. But women actually coming in as members, which I think occurred around about 1980 was something a lot of males ... they had trouble handling it.

Pat: We were tolerated but not recognised. Everything we did, we did on our own, off our own bat, but North Cottesloe Surf Club was wonderful with us. They really, really did everything they could for us. We were their mainstay, they could never have managed without us.

Phil: Women, I believe, should have been full members of lifesaving many years before they became full members. It doesn’t matter who saves a person, as long as that person is rescued.

John: The tradition of boat rowing — I don’t believe there is anything else in Australia that kind of matches the sort of macho attitudes that go along with boat-rowing, however in recent years the girls are actually showing some of the guys how to do it.

You can see a video of these interviews, including more questions, at <http://www.nma.gov.au/exhibitions/past_exhibitions/between_the_flags/meet_the_lifesavers/>

Use this information to make a statement about the nature of volunteering. For example, you might say that these interviews suggest that volunteering is not just of benefit to the community, it also benefits the individual volunteer. See how many different statements you can develop.
ACTIVITY 8  Being a historian (2)  
— Investigating the Cronulla riots of 2005

Most of what you read in this unit is positive and uplifting.

However, on 11 December 2005 a disgraceful event occurred, which had some connection to surf lifesaving.

During the day a crowd of thousands of young Australian men and women was involved in a series of attacks on a few other Australians. That night, a mob of young Australians retaliated with violence and destruction against individuals, and property. The first mob were mainly of Anglo background; the second mob mainly of Lebanese background.

The spark for these events was an apparent attack on some lifesavers — though in your reading you will need to determine if this actually happened or was just a rumour.

1. **Your task** is to find out what happened and why, and report on this shameful day in a way that sees past crude stereotypes of both groups, and tries to reveal the truth of the events.

   Here are the specific aspects you should allocate among groups to report on:
   1. What was the immediate cause of the events
   2. What actually happened at the beach and why
   3. Who was involved
   4. Why Cronulla? The geography of the event
   5. What happened later that night and why
   6. Who was involved
   7. Role of communications
   8. Role of the media

2. When all groups have reported on their particular area of investigation, you should decide on your final conclusions, bringing all the information together to decide:
   1. What were the longer term underlying causes?
   2. Was it unique? Has there been other conflict and violence before? Was Cronulla part of a tradition, or something new?
   3. How can you promote ‘Sharing the Sands’? (See the next Activity)

**Some points to note:**

It is important that you are very careful with some of the information you will come across:

- There is some very crude language, especially in the Four Corners program.
- Beware the use of Cronulla by people with political points to make that promote their own agendas.
- Beware of ignorance and racial stereotyping in the comments you read, but don’t believe that every critical comment is necessarily a racist one (by any of the parties involved).
- Acknowledge gaps and contradictions in the evidence.
- Reference and footnote your findings, as you need to be able to support and justify all your ideas.

**References**


**A POST-CRONULLA DEVELOPMENT**

Here is a news item that appeared recently.

3. Discuss the positive developments that it shows, and explain the reasons why such developments have occurred.
CRONULLA, AUSTRALIA — It’s a sweltering day, and the beach is packed with suntanned bodies. Girls in swimsuits lounge on the sand while their boyfriends cradle surfboards.

Mecca Laalaa is the lone exception. Instead of a barely there bikini, she’s in a burqini — a top-to-toe two-piece lycra suit complete with hijab, or Islamic head covering.

Loose enough to preserve Muslim modesty, but light enough to enable swimming, the burqini, taking its name from the burqa, is at the forefront of a dramatic shift within Australia’s iconic surf lifesaving clubs.

No longer wanting to be associated only with bronzed, blue-eyed action men, Surf Life Saving Australia is attempting to better reflect the country’s multicultural mix.

Ms Laalaa is one of 24 young people of Arab descent who signed up for a 10-week surf lifesaving-training course.

‘Normally, I’d wear cotton trousers and a top but they get very heavy in the water. This meets our cultural requirements,’ she says, preparing to go out on a beach patrol. The burqini that she wears was specially designed to allow Muslim women like her to join one of the surf lifesavers clubs.

For a century, surf lifesavers have been the embodiment of Australian beach culture, as quintessential an icon as the Anzac soldier and the outback jackaroo, or cowboy. With 115,000 lifesavers patrolling the continent’s beaches and more than 300 clubs, Surf Life Saving Australia is the nation’s largest volunteer movement, its unpaid members responsible for saving more than half a million lives in the past 100 years.

But the movement has also been deeply conservative, built on a stern, militaristic tradition fostered by soldiers returning from the world wars. Until 1980, women were banned from joining.

The overhaul coincides with the 100th anniversary of the first surf club, at Sydney’s famous Bondi Beach, as well as the Year of the Lifesaver.

This initiative, aimed at diversifying the clubs, is also in response to events that shocked Australia and the world just over a year ago.

A few days before Christmas 2005, gangs of whites and ethnically Middle Eastern young people clashed around Cronulla Beach.

The fighting revealed a deep gulf between the white Australians of mainly British and Irish heritage and recent immigrants from Lebanon and other Middle Eastern countries.

The lifesaving program is a small step intended to help heal the wounds left by the Cronulla violence.

‘I was shocked by the magnitude of it, so to have a group like this training as lifesavers is of tremendous importance,’ says Jamal Rifi, the president of the community sports club from which most of the trainees were recruited. ‘It’s about counteracting the negative stereotyping of Muslims, which has been very bad over the last five years. Our greatest enemy is ignorance.’

The campaign to recruit Australians of Middle Eastern heritage has been funded by a grant of $600,000 from the federal government.

The original 24 in the group has been whittled down to 14, the dropouts realizing they were not strong enough swimmers or finding that the schedule clashed with other commitments.

The grueling training regime has included first aid, radio communications, rescue drills, and fitness tests, and culminates this week in written and practical tests.

If successful, the recruits will become fully qualified surf lifesavers, entitled to wear the organization’s distinctive red and yellow caps.

The group’s trainer, Tony Coffey, says the burqini makes swimming more difficult compared with being dressed in a bikini or swimsuit. ‘It’s the biggest hurdle the girls face. But we can’t do anything about it, it’s part of the deal. They just need more intensive training.’

The new recruits will be expected to volunteer for one weekend a month, rescuing swimmers and dealing with jellyfish stings, surfing injuries, and lost children.

‘We’re breaking down social barriers,’ says Malaak Mourad, a student whose parents emigrated from Lebanon in the 1970s. ‘Most of the lifesavers are Anglo-Saxon. We’ve been getting a lot of attention from the public but I think it’s admiration more than anything negative.’

By Danielle Teutsch
courtesy The Sun Herald (NSW) 12 November 2006

IN THE EXHIBITION

Here is an object that you will see in the exhibition.

What is it and what does it help you understand about surf lifesaving?
Combine your love of the beach with your love of art and you could win $500!

If you are a primary or secondary school student or a school-aged member of a surf lifesaving club, we have a great way for you to join in the celebration of 100 years of surf lifesaving. Enter the Sharing the Sands competition!

Create an artwork or short film that reflects your vision of the beach. The beach has inspired famous Australian artists to produce works that range from Tom Robert’s Slumbering Sea, Mentone through to Max Dupain’s The Sunbather. Ask yourself, what the beach means to you: building sandcastles, volley ball, surf lifesavers, sharks, bluebottles and jellyfish, sun, sea and surf? Create an artwork that captures how Australians share the beach and how people use the beach in different ways.

To be part of the competition, your artwork must include at least one of the iconic red and yellow flags used by surf lifesavers to protect beachgoers from the dangers of the sea.

Selected artworks will be displayed at the National Museum of Australia, in Canberra, and prizes will be awarded for the winning entries.

**FIRST PRIZE:** $500 for each primary and secondary category winner.

**RUNNER-UP PRIZE:** $250 for each primary and secondary category winner.

**HOW TO ENTER**

**STEP 1:** Create a painting, print, drawing, collage, digital image, photograph, mixed media, or short digital film no longer than two minutes, ensuring you have included the red and yellow surf lifesaving flags.

**STEP 2:** Complete the entry form on the reverse of this sheet or download an entry form from the <www.nma.gov.au>, go to Education, What’s new, Between the Flags. Make sure the entry form is signed by the student and parent/guardian or teacher.

**STEP 3:** Post your artwork and completed entry form to:

SHARING THE SANDS COMPETITION
National Museum of Australia,
GPO Box 1901 Canberra ACT 2600

or hand deliver to:

National Museum of Australia
Lawson Crescent, Acton Peninsula
Canberra ACT

**CLOSING DATES**

First round: entry closes on 1 December 2007 (entries must be postmarked on or before 1 December 2007)

Second round: entry closes on 1 December 2008 (entries must be postmarked on or before 1 December 2008).

Please complete the details below and send this form with your entry to:

Sharing the Sands
Attn: Ms Helena Bezzina
Education Section
National Museum of Australia
GPO Box 1901
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Contact name: ____________________________
Address: ______________________________________
______________________________________________
Postcode: _____________ Telephone: (     ) __________________________________________
Email address: _______________________________________________________________________
Signed by parent/teacher: ________________________________________________________

PRIVACY NOTICE: Personal information supplied as part of this competition will be used for the purpose of identifying creators of entries. It will not be supplied to third parties, except for the purpose of notifying winners. Art works used as part of the exhibition will be displayed with the entrant’s name, year level and school. For further information or to correct or delete personal details please contact: education@nma.gov.au

See Terms and Conditions for all other competition requirements.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Sharing the Sands is a national competition open to any primary or secondary school student in Australia or school-aged member of a surf lifesaving club. Artwork entries must be no bigger than A3 size. Digital videos must be no longer than two minutes. Artworks must feature at least one of the red and yellow flags used by surf lifesavers to denote a safe area to swim. You may choose to make the red and yellow flag obvious or include it in an abstract or obscure way. Entries must be student-produced. No person other than the members of the group may be involved in the working of the equipment (such as props or lighting) or any aspect of the presentation. Entries may be an individual or group entry (four people maximum). Prize money is awarded per entry. The digital video must reflect your ability to use media to communicate. The entry is expected to display adequate technical proficiency. Entries will not be returned; they will be kept as part of the National Museum of Australia’s Education Collection. Senior curators and senior education officers at the National Museum of Australia will judge all entries. The criteria for judging will be based on aesthetics, technical proficiency and originality of interpretation of beach life. The winners will be announced on the National Museum of Australia website www.nma.gov.au and contacted by telephone by 21 December 2007 (First round) and 20 December 2008 (Second round). For more information contact: education@nma.gov.au or telephone the Education section on (02) 6208 5119.