

## **Anita Pryke (nee Bickley)**

### **Wanda SLSC Life Member**

Bronze Medallion Date 16<sup>th</sup> November 1980

My journey actually started before this time, at the age of 13. My brother joined Wanda SLSC nippers and I tagged along. I was invited by Solly Stephens to swim in the Sunday morning surf races with the boys as Solly knew I trained with these boys at Sans Souci pool with the late Ken Wilies. I was able to do this for the next couple of seasons, then the boys moved onto the senior Club.

At about 16/17 (1976-77) years old, Wanda started "Nipperettes", for the girls. We were able to keep on competing till Under 18s, as we had nowhere else to continue onto.

Two years later in 1980, at the age of twenty, I was able to do my Bronze Medallion. This was the first all girls squad Wanda put through, this consisted of Leigh Richardson, Debbie Ryan, Marion Lucas, Debbie Little, Jenny Ferry, Karen Green, Kath Lye and myself. The group of Bickley, Little, Ryan, Richardson and Lucas stayed together to become Wanda's first all girl R&R team, we were coached by Norm Jamieson. We competed at all the local carnivals plus Branch and State Titles.

Back in those early days it must be remembered there were no Female events, if you wanted to compete, then you competed in your age group against the boys.

North Bondi SLSC used to hold a Surf Carnival in January (The Johnny Walker) for many years this Carnival attracted participants from all over the country, as they always had some very good prize money and gear to give away. (see flyer attached)

On Saturday the 17<sup>th</sup> of January 1981, one of the featured events was an all female Iron woman race to be held over the same course as the men's event. This was the first time an event just for females was held in Australia. I am very proud of the fact, I was the winner.

This resulted in a lot interest, made the TV news that night and was followed by lots of printed media from all over Australia. (Please see paper clippings attached)

North Bondi held the event again the next year, where I placed 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Over the last 40 years I have always been a proficient bronze holder and I still do rostered patrols.

In my time with Wanda I have held many board positions, including President for 8 years, 2007 to 2015. I was the first Female President of Wanda and the first female President in the Bate Bay area.

I received Life Membership of Wanda SLSC in 2016, becoming Wanda's first Female Life Member.

I am also a Trainer and Assessor for Bronze, ART, and Spinal. Additionally I am an appointed Surf Sports official, officiating at local carnivals plus State and Aussie championships. At the 2019 Aussies I was awarded the "Bob Woodger Award for Best R&R Official".

For the last 15 years I have competed with Wanda's all female March Past team.

Currently hold the position as Treasurer for the Cronulla Sutherland District Council.

**26<sup>th</sup> of October 2007**

I was referenced in the Legislative Hansard and Papers by the Hon Malcolm Kerr for my becoming first Female President of a Surf Club in the Cronulla Electorate

**2008**

Honoured with being named "Woman of the Year" for the Cronulla Electorate by the then State Member of Parliament Hon Malcolm Kerr (ret) "In recognition of lifting the profile of Women and Community within the Surf Life Saving Movement."

**2010**

"Pride of Workmanship" In Recognition of contribution to the Community from the Rotary Club (Cronulla)

**2015**

I was asked by our Federal Member of Parliament Hon Scott Morrison to be a mentor and accompany 4 members from the 4 Bate Bay Surf Clubs plus 5 members from the Turkish/Australian Community from the Western Suburbs in the Electorate of the Hon Jason Clare, to Gallipoli in Turkey to Commemorate the 100 Year Anniversary of WW1. Here we retraced the footsteps of our Soldiers and visited the Battle Fields

**5<sup>th</sup> of August 2015**

NSW Legislative Hansard Papers by the Hon Mark Speakman for recognition to SLS and Community over several decades to the Cronulla and Cook Electorates.

Over the last 5 seasons I have been a part of North Cronulla's education team, in this role I was a trainer for 3 groups of Argentinean Lifeguards that travelled to Australia to do intensive courses in the Australian Awards.

**2020**

In February this year, 4 of us from North Cronulla SLSC were invited to travel to Argentina as guests of FASA Federacion Argentina de Salvamento Acuatico for meetings to assist them with their forward in both Lifesaving education and competition.

It has been an amazing fun journey in Surf Life Saving. In my time I went from not being allowed inside the Surf Club (sometimes on a Sunday afternoon)..... NO women allowed! To become a President and Life Member of Wanda SLSC.

**Anita Pryke**