

Sandra Fox

Tamarama SLSC

I came into Surf Life Saving due to my involvement in Ocean swimming, joining Tamarama in 2004 when I completed my Bronze Medallion.

I quickly took on additional responsibilities within this great, small, friendly club. Over the years I've held the roles of Patrol Captain, Vice President, Chief Training Officer and Club Captain.

In 2014 I became the first female Life Member of Tamarama SLSC which was a great honour, one I still covet very highly to this day. I also have a Club Award in my name, "Sandra Fox Woman of the Year Award".

The spirit of volunteerism is alive and well within our surf clubs and it's been a joy to see them become more inclusive over the years and evolving to thrive into the future.

The challenges faced by women in SLS are not dissimilar to those women face and have faced elsewhere - relative lack of role models, of dedicated infrastructure and programs, of support sometimes across a male dominated organisation. Happily, women are now actively welcomed into clubs and found in all leadership levels within SLS.

I have lots of stories to tell but in this context probably the recollection of meetings at firstly Club, then Branch and State level, and being either the only woman or one of only a couple of women in the room. I am glad to see there has been change there, fortunately.

The achievement of which I'm most proud is leading a training team which turned out such highly qualified and capable lifesavers to look over Tamarama which is quite a dangerous beach. Then, being the first female Life Member at Tamarama SLSC. Life Members need to be nominated, then voted up by more than 75% of the AGM attendees, so achievements and club contributions need to be significant to be recognised in this way.

Advice to incoming female lifesavers - Take up every opportunity you're interested in, as there is so much to be gained. Dig into the lifesaving community in your own club and beyond for knowledge, leadership and fun.

SLS really helps your own personal and professional growth and resilience, your leadership development and understanding of team dynamics.

And for me - my closest friends are mostly those I met through SLS, as we all had a common interest to start with.

