

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release



10 MARCH 2026

Coalcliff SLSC Lifeguard Challenge to support Dave Winner Foundation

Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club will host the Coalcliff SLSC Lifeguard Challenge on Sunday, 15 March 2026 at 11:00 am at Coalcliff Beach, bringing together professional lifeguards from across the NSW coastline to compete in an elite ocean endurance challenge while raising awareness for the Dave Winner Foundation.

Lifeguard teams from coastal councils stretching from Shellharbour to Palm Beach have been invited to compete in the event, which will test competitors across multiple surf lifesaving disciplines.

The event proudly supports the Dave Winner Foundation as its nominated charity partner, recognising Dave's lifelong commitment to surf lifesaving education and community training.

In 2021, Dave Winner survived a near-fatal surfing accident at Coalcliff Beach that left him a partial quadriplegic. Knocked unconscious and submerged underwater for more than three minutes, Dave's life hung in the balance until bystanders intervened and performed CPR, helping save his life.

In a remarkable twist, some of the people who performed CPR on Dave had previously been trained by him.

The experience reinforced the importance of CPR knowledge across the community and inspired Dave to establish the Dave Winner Foundation, with the goal of seeing one million Australians trained in CPR for free.

Dave said the Coalcliff Lifeguard Challenge provides a unique opportunity to showcase elite surf lifesaving skills while highlighting the importance of CPR training.

"The Coalcliff Lifeguard Challenge is a fantastic opportunity for the community to see some of Australia's best ocean athletes in action at one of the most beautiful beaches in the Illawarra," Winner said.

Coalcliff SLSC Club Captain and event coordinator Rob Deacon said the event is both an exciting sporting contest and an opportunity to highlight an important community message.

"Dave has dedicated his life to surf lifesaving education and training people with skills that save lives," Deacon said.

"Supporting the Dave Winner Foundation through this event recognises that commitment and reminds the community that CPR knowledge can truly mean the difference between life and death."

Competitors in the Lifeguard Challenge will tackle a demanding course based on the APOLA (Australian Pool and Ocean Lifeguard Association) Mission Test, designed to simulate the physical demands of professional lifeguarding.



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The course will include:

- 400m beach run
- 600m ocean swim
- 400m beach run
- 600m rescue board paddle
- 400m beach run finish

(The run component may be adjusted depending on beach conditions on the day.)

There is no limit on the number of lifeguards each council can enter, with the top three finishers from each council team contributing to their team's overall score. Both individual and team champion trophies will be awarded.


The event will be supported by full Surf Life Saving water safety resources, ensuring a safe and exciting spectacle for competitors and spectators alike.


Community members from across the Illawarra, Shoalhaven and Sutherland Shire are encouraged to come down to Coalcliff Beach to support the competitors and learn more about the important work of the Dave Winner Foundation.

Event Details

Coalcliff SLSC Lifeguard Challenge

 Coalcliff Beach

 Sunday 15 March 2026

 11:00 am start

ABOUT US


Coalcliff Surf Life Saving Club is the second most northerly surf club in the Illawarra and is known as the "Social Club." Its volunteers patrol the "Place in the Sun" throughout summer, supporting a vibrant Nippers program, Ocean Swim Club, and community events year-round—including live music at The Bombie at Coledale RSL.

Learn more at www.coalcliffslsc.com.au

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