



# SurfCom helps keep our beaches safe

Surf Life Saving Queensland leads the way in communication systems for coordinated beach and aquatic lifesaving services in Australia.

In recent years, SLSQ has extended its regional radio communications centre and developed 'SurfCom' – a unique radio and telecommunications network designed to help save lives on our beaches.

SurfCom is the only dedicated surf and beach surveillance and communications network in the nation, covering an area of nearly 500 kilometres in South-east Queensland.

It forms an integral part of the emergency services network, with lifesavers working closely with the Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Queensland Police, Volunteer Marine Rescue and Coast Guard.

Almost four years ago SLSQ reviewed its emergency communications on the Gold Coast due to large number of deaths in unpatrolled areas in previous years.

Working with DES, Queensland Police, Air Services Australia and the Gold Coast City Council, SLSQ implemented the state-of-the-art Zetron Acom Digital Console Switch system.

The result was a wide area UHF radio network with sites located at Burleigh, Pt Danger, Springbrook, Miami and Point Lookout on North Stradbroke Island.

A year later the same system was used to upgrade Surf Club communication systems on the Sunshine Coast.

"In 2002, with the assistance of specialist industry providers and communications

specialists, we began to develop a purpose-built, fully-integrated radio, telecommunications and IT network for the beaches in the region," SLSQ's Lifesaving Services Manager George Hill said.

"The \$350,000 project incorporates aspects of the triple zero (000) emergency response service such as touch screens and also new technology and systems suited to our needs, including a digital platform for GPS to operate."

The GPS (Global Positioning System) is used to identify the locations of personnel and equipment and to direct resources to beach and surf incidents.

The mapping system also monitors the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service, jet rescue boats and rescue watercraft while on coastal surveillance.

Lifesavers at SurfCom can also link recreational boats and marine rescue crews with emergency services dispatch centres.

The SurfCom network on the Gold Coast covers 200 kilometres from Point Lookout on North Stradbroke Island to Rainbow Bay on the New South Wales border.

On the Sunshine Coast it covers 280 kilometres from Double Island Point to Redcliffe north of Brisbane.

Most recently, SLSQ has incorporated state-of-the-art camera technology to extend surveillance patrols.

There are currently eight cameras operational on the Gold Coast and five cameras planned for implementation on the Sunshine Coast in the near future.

## Summer holiday ambulance beach callouts

QAS callouts by SurfCom for South-east Queensland Surf Life Saving Clubs Dec 1–Jan 22, with on-beach treatment and transportation via QAS.

Gold Coast	14
Sunshine Coast	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>

### Injuries/First Aid requirements:

Suspected spinal or neck injury	7
Dislocated shoulder	6
Cuts and abrasions	3
Ankle injury	2
Board/fin chop	3
Shock/Distress	1
Broken rib	1
Knocked unconscious	1
Marine sting	1
Broken collar bone	1
Broken arm	1
Injured tailbone (with bleeding)	1
Dumped in surf	1
Knocked head in surf	1
Difficulty breathing	1