

**Robert Garland**  
**Life Member awarded 15/09/2014**



The story so far...

Being given the honour of life membership in 2014 was somewhat surreal as surf lifesaving had, is and will continue to be a big part of my life. So in having this opportunity to put in my story, I will endeavour to capture that thought as there so many things I could include.

From starting off as a nipper in the late sixties, highlighted by winning a gold medal at the inaugural State Junior Championships at Burleigh Heads, to finishing a Hervey Bay patrol on sunset in late April 2016, I have always

felt this is what I wanted to be and do.

It has been an amazing journey with 36 patrol seasons so far, starting out with Palm Beach (Q) then Mackay (Q) and Dee Why (NSW) before joining Hervey Bay in 1995. My “heady” rescue days have essentially come to a close, knowing there are fitter, faster and younger “Grant Kenny’s” coming through with a greater array of skills and equipment at their disposal.

Having said that, with some 60 rescues under my belt (yes, a couple with belt and reel), I feel justly proud that with my patrol teams, we have made a real difference to so many lives. As far as competition goes, although I had two years in junior surf boat crew, after dodging a mystical brick thrown by the boat captain, I moved to surf races, rescue tube and then R&R (Rescue and Resuscitation). After a hiatus for about a decade, I returned to the swimming events in my early 40’s and have had a ball, adding board and pool rescue, into the mix. My results have never reached great heights but given the high level of competition and the prolonged training effort, coming 8<sup>th</sup> in 6-man R&R at the 1982 Australian Titles at Glenelg (SA) made a lasting memory.

I have been more than happy to have done quite well at Branch titles at Palm Beach, Dee Why and with Hervey Bay. Winning Wide Bay-Branch surf, tube and board rescue races to the roar of “Go Hervey, Go Hervey, Go Hervey Bay” has been a real inspiration, in the second half of my sporting career (lol).

I have been in positions of junior coordinator, chief instructor, vice-president, president and sponsorship officer, which I still hold.

The highlight would have to be, being able to take on the Hervey Bay president’s role in 2008-09. I was a very nervous but it was a special moment for me as I thought I would never get another crack at a “top job”, after having left Dee Why in 1987 as vice-president. This gave my life-saving story another chapter, particularly, as new skills were honed and valued friendships were forged. I urge all members to remember the core purpose of lifesaving is to save lives through vigilance and service. Keeping that in mind, have fun with it, make sure it’s what you love doing and as they say, the rest takes care of itself. I say a huge thank you to the surf lifesaving movement, over 100 years young, as it has put the life into my life membership.