

# WAR OFF WATER : THE AUSTRALIAN SURF LIFE SAVING ASSOCIATION AND THE BEACH

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**The tradition of the beach is not yet understood or accepted in intellectual terms, although it is instinctively endorsed by the vast majority of Australians. Australians are the only people who live with their beaches all the time, even in winter. (Geoffrey Dutton)<sup>1</sup>**

The Surf Life Saving Association of Australia (SLSAA) provides an important sociological case study of the formation and development of a voluntary sporting organisation under conditions of social change and the commercialisation of social contracts. The SLSAA is important for four reasons. First, it has made a significant contribution to the production and reproduction of the twentieth century body - the slim, muscular, tanned and self-disciplined body. Second, it is at the centre of a continuing struggle for the control of the beach - a critical social space in the Australian culture. Third, in striving to control the beach, the SLSAA pursues a contradictory policy. The Association defines itself as a humanitarian aquatic safety service but the *raison d' être* of most lifesavers is competitive sport. The recent establishment of two professional ironman grand prix circuits reinforces this contradiction. Fourth, the SLSAA confronts the forces of commercialism and associated demands of professionalism on two fronts - as a safety service and a sport. These four conditions are explained and analysed as part of an overdue critique of the orthodox history of the SLSAA.

## **The Development of Surfbathing and the Origins of the Lifesaving Association**

The accepted histories of Australian surfbathing all begin with the functionalist assumption that surfbathing is a 'natural' human activity: bathing is synonymous with fine weather, sunshine, warm ocean water and golden beaches. According to Margan and Finney, for example, 'it was only a matter of time before the Australian ... took the plunge'.<sup>2</sup> But there is nothing natural about surfbathing. On the contrary, in many congenial climates bathing in public is taboo.<sup>3</sup> While climate and weather influence surfbathing, the principal determinant is the cultural view of the representation of the body in public.

If we are to understand the development of surfbathing in Australia we must begin by examining the social constraints imposed on the representation of the body in public and then analyse the transformation of that representation. There is a popular myth in the surf lifesaving movement that this transformation was the result of the rebellious activities of an anti-authority subculture of surfbathers.<sup>4</sup> However the surfbathers did not challenge authority in any fundamental sense. I will argue that the process of transformation was the outcome of a debate within the Australian petite-bourgeoisie over morality. Surfbathing played a significant role in that debate and also contributed to the reconstruction of the body and the economic development of the foreshore as a site of leisure.

In eighteenth century England, medical practitioners alerted the aristocracy to the health giving and therapeutic properties of cold water bathing. Under aristocratic patronage, the petite-bourgeoisie adopted bathing as a healthy pastime and developed it as a sport (viz., swimming).<sup>5</sup> During the nineteenth century, evangelically inspired groups campaigned against what they deemed morally offensive and socially subversive behaviour - including exposing the body to public view during bathing.<sup>6</sup> By confining bathing to enclosed baths (fresh and sea water), and from horse drawn bathing machines (sea water), public display could be controlled and restricted. These values were transported to Australia where official ordinances controlled the presentation of the body in public.<sup>7</sup> In 1838, for example, the New

South Wales (NSW) government prohibited bathing in waters exposed to public view between six am and eight pm.<sup>8</sup>

At the turn of the century, these restrictions engendered a conflict between, on the one side, petite-bourgeois moralists and, on the other side, elements of the bourgeoisie and economically and socially ambitious petite-bourgeoisie. Among the bourgeoisie, self-assured and indifferent to the gaze of others,<sup>9</sup> promenading and open bathing had become social pleasures. Various groups of petite-bourgeoisie, including health faddists, physicians, physical educators, utopians and propertied elements, sought control of public places, such as beaches, for their own financial and social interests. In 1901 and 1902, a struggle began in NSW to extend public bathing to daylight hours. Moralists argued that daylight bathing was a threat to public decency and order. In 1901, for example, James Wilson complained in the NSW Legislative Council of 'men in an absolute state of nudity' at the public baths in the Domain. Such public exhibitions of indecency, he exclaimed, were intolerable.<sup>10</sup> The NSW Local Authorities Act empowered municipal councils to determine local laws for bathers. Manly and Randwick imposed an eight am curfew while Waverley permitted bathing at Little Coogee (now Clovelly) at all hours provided bathers were 'properly and becomingly clad'. Waverley council even built changing sheds for male and female bathers.<sup>11</sup> The police, however, continued to prosecute bathers under Section 77 of the Police Offences Act.<sup>12</sup>

In October 1902, William Gocher, proprietor and editor of *The Manly and North Sydney Daily*, advertised his intention to defy the law and bathe during daylight hours at Manly. Gocher's aim was to force the issue by providing a test court case. On three consecutive Sundays he bathed at midday in a neck-to-knee costume. On approaching and leaving the water he wore a mackintosh over his costume. Police Inspector-General Fosbery declined to prosecute Gocher. Fosbery's decision to use his discretion on this matter becomes clearer if we examine a similar incident and the accompanying police report. In November 1902, Waverley council requested Fosbery to prosecute naked bathers who ran along the beach and who 'appear to take great delight in this somewhat distusing [sic] habit, to the annoyance of residents and others'.<sup>13</sup> Two constables

went to Bondi Beach where they recorded the names and addresses of fifteen bathers, two of whom wore neck-to-knee bathing costumes and the remainder 'small trunks'. In their report, however, the police noted that all the bathers were 'respectable men and residents of the district'. They did not observe any bathers naked or undressing in public view. The investigation revealed further that the complaints of indecency emanated from Mr Farmer, the lessee of Bondi baths. Farmer paid the council £150 per annum and according to the police was 'annoyed at seeing so many people enjoying a free bath'.<sup>14</sup> Fosbery thus concluded that:

...so long as bathers wore suitable costume and public decency is not outraged, I am unable to see that a practice permitted for so many years should be stopped. Indeed, I do not suppose that the magistrates would inflict penalties for any breach of the Act...Unless, therefore, I receive instructions from the government to the contrary, I do not see my way to take action beyond instructing the police that decency is to be observed.<sup>15</sup>

Daylight bathing thus became a legal practice, although the struggle for control over the beach, and in particular the regulation of the body there, had just begun.

Most petite-bourgeoisie adopted utilitarian attitudes towards the beach; surfbathing was seen to produce youthful, attractive and healthy bodies. As *The Australian Star* put it, 'the brown skinned specimens of manhood' who spend their weekends at the beach are 'a sight worth looking at'.<sup>16</sup> Amid the growing awareness of germ theory, urban squalor and bubonic plague, surfbathing was also held to be a healthy tonic. A 'science' of bathing developed to legitimise the pastime.

We are an open air people and in these days when the 'return-to-nature' theory is looked upon with increasing favour, the getting of as much sunshine and fresh air as possible is coming to be looked upon as a moral duty. Sand, surf, sunshine and the free winds of heaven make up the prescription which is confidently recommended as a sort of universal medicine ... This, if not the elixir of life, must surely be part of it, and is certain to tone up the

system and lengthen the life. It is plain that he who wishes for a royal road to health and happiness should take the first step to it by getting sunburnt, it is well understood that a well-browned skin is much healthier than a white one. So the sun-worshipper looks with pity upon his pallid brother as one who stupidly neglects a most evident good, and, in fact one who falls short somehow in the standard of true manliness.<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, surfbathing was also expounded against the inevitability of war. A W Relph, a founding member of the Manly Surf Club (MSC) said that surfbathing produced a 'fine healthy race of men, quite equal to their brothers who live outback in the bush and open air of the country', and that:

when Australia needs them, as some day no doubt she will, these men, trained athletes, tanned with the sun on the beaches, strong and brawny with the buffeting in the surf, will be well fitted to take up their trust and do duty for their country.<sup>18</sup>

Moralists decried surfbathing for undermining public decency and hence public order and replied with determination to protect 'the common standards of propriety that prevail amongst civilised nations'.<sup>19</sup> They directed their attention to bathers' costumes, sunbathing, and mixed bathing. Complaints inundated newspapers. 'A mother of girls' said that the 'heaps of sprawling men and lads, naked, but for a nondescript rag around their middle' at Balmoral beach had forced her to leave. The so-called bathing costumes, she said, 'might put an aboriginal to shame' and should be met with a good flogging!<sup>20</sup> 'Daily dipper' warned sunbathers that if they wanted to 'put themselves on the same level as dogs - well, blood will out!'<sup>21</sup> The councils reacted and passed by-laws regulating swimwear. Initially, bathers had to cover the body from neck-to-knee.<sup>22</sup> Later it became compulsory for men to wear trunks of dark material over the neck-to-knee costume and women a tunic, also of dark material, to the knee.<sup>23</sup>

Social reformers criticised these restrictions for undermining the benefits of surfbathing. R D Meagher, a member of the Legislative Council, said if surfbathing was to have a 'salutary affect

on skin, nerves, and tissue' then salt water and sunlight must be in contact with the body. More important, Meagher accused the moralists of failing to acknowledge the new, independent, Australian:

Where is Mrs Grundy going to stop? Our Australian girls no longer consider it good to wear pale and uninteresting complexions like the heroine of the 'Young Ladies' Journal', but are devotees to Old Sol and Neptune - these bronze Venuses, with ozone in their nostrils, and vitality in their constitutions, are to be the robust mothers of the vigorous race which is to hold white Australia against all comers.<sup>24</sup>

In this debate we can identify two antagonistic moralities - an old morality and a new morality. At the centre of the old morality is '*a fear of pleasure and a relation to the body made up of reserve, modesty and restraint*'. The new morality combines pleasure with, *inter alia*, the search for self-expression, bodily expression, and the cult of personal health.<sup>25</sup> Surfbathing, and the associated revealing presentation of the body, became the symbol of the new morality.

In October 1907, Manly, Randwick and Waverley councils moved to reconcile the two moralities. The councils held a joint meeting with the Local Government Branch of the Public Works Department and drafted a new set of beach ordinances. The costume would:

cover the body from the neck to the bend of the knee; and be of such material as not to disclose the colour of the skin [and] . . . shall consist of complete combinations, *together with a tunic worn over the combinations*, both covering the body from the neck to the knee, and the tunic shall have sleeves reaching to at least half way from the shoulder to the elbow.

Prohibitions in the draft ordinances included males and females mixing on the beaches, undressing and dressing in public view, 'loitering on the beach clad only in bathing costume', and sunbathing (except in special enclosures). Bathers in costume would be required to take the most direct route between the dressing pavilions and the water.<sup>26</sup> The mayor of Waverley, Alderman R G Watkins, defended the proposals.

You can say that we are determined to reserve public decency and I wish all the letters could be published that I have received the last few weeks from public men and clergy thanking me for my efforts...<sup>27</sup>

The reference in the draft to a 'tunic' was interpreted as a 'skirt' and provoked protests. Demonstrations were held at Manly, Coogee and Bondi beaches. At Bondi, some 250 bathers donned skirts of various descriptions and marched along the beach. *The Evening News* filed a particularly interesting account of the protest.

The manner in which the spectators, men and women alike, joined in the humour of the thing was evidence of the popularity of the surfbathers, while at the same time the onlookers were afforded an object lesson which plainly indicated the absurdity of the skirt idea as applied to men.

The utmost good humour prevailed on the beach. There were repeated cries of 'Are we downhearted?' and 'Will you wear the skirt?' to all of which came a deafening 'No'. Then someone sang out, 'Well, let us laugh'. But this was unnecessary, for the spectators, as in fact everybody on the beach, processionists included, were already laughing to their hearts content. They had entered earnestly into the humour of the thing, but, at the same time, they were there to heap such ridicule on the skirt ordinance as would successfully kill it for all time.<sup>28</sup>

Seven months later the beach ordinances were promulgated without reference to the 'tunic'.<sup>29</sup>

Laughter is a potent strategy of resistance. Willis describes it as a strategy 'to defeat boredom and fear, to overcome hardship and problems - as a way out of almost anything'.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Bakhtin cites a passage from *The Night Watches* (a work which he describes as a remarkable example of Romantic grotesque) in which the anonymous narrator captures the strength of laughter as follows:

Is there upon earth a more potent means than laughter to resist the mockeries of the world and of fate? The most powerful enemy experiences terror at the sight of this

satirical mask, the misfortune itself retreats before me if I dare laugh at it.<sup>31</sup>

Pressure to relax repressive controls over the body also stemmed from economic considerations. The municipal councils initially opposed financial help for surfbathers. In 1905, when the mayor of Waverley submitted a motion to council to provide funds for dressing accommodation for surfbathers, several aldermen objected since the local authorities 'did not derive any revenue from the bathers' and that 'increasing the attractiveness of surfbathing . . . would depreciate the value of the municipal baths'.<sup>32</sup> Local ratepayers echoed these sentiments.<sup>33</sup> Some suggested charging surfbathers a fee, the revenue from which could be used to finance dressing and lifesaving facilities.<sup>34</sup> But support came from other property owners, land speculators and a myriad of small businesspersons such as food, transport, souvenir and entertainment vendors, who welcomed the commercial opportunities afforded by surfbathing. 'But for prudishness and false modesty', wrote one correspondent, 'the waves breaking on the sands might have been rolling sovereigns into the pockets'.<sup>35</sup> These groups saw surfbathing as integral to foreshore development and progress. They argued that surfbathing made the boroughs popular, and that 'money spent on surfbathing accommodation would be money well spent'.<sup>36</sup> In 1907, Frank Donovan, the founding president of the MSC, attributed population growth and increases in property values, housing rents and rates in the Manly area to surfbathing.<sup>37</sup>

The lack of facilities, such as dressing rooms, showers, safety equipment and lifeguards, forced surfbathers to form their own clubs. The clubs, which were financed by members' subscriptions,<sup>38</sup> were given permission to build clubhouses on the beaches under the auspices of providing a public service. Membership was keenly sought, not out of any humanitarian desire to serve the public, but to use the facilities. Not surprisingly, then, the first clubs were popularly called 'dressing shed syndicates'.<sup>39</sup> It was not until 1907 that the first surfbathing clubs were formally constituted. At a public meeting to launch the MSC in July, Donovan urged surfbathers to 'get up and do something to put upon a first rate footing a glorious form of sport'.

The lack of facilities, he said, was the result of surfbathers' failure to organise and of council neglect.<sup>40</sup>

Less than one month after the formation of the MSC, Manly council adopted plans to build a bathing house to include dressing rooms, showers, toilets, and sunbathing and refreshment facilities. However when the council said that it would charge surfbathers to use the structure, the MSC and ratepayers protested. They argued that dressing accommodation was a government responsibility and necessary to ensure public decency. The question of finance was referred to the Minister for Lands who agreed to contribute to the building on a pound-for-pound basis with the council up to £200.<sup>41</sup> Donovan welcomed the decision but warned that, 'whatever the council has done so far, it has been forced to do' and suggested that £500 per annum was a more appropriate amount.<sup>42</sup> As the beach became an increasingly popular site for petite-bourgeoisie recreation, and as competition for tourists grew, the councils saw merit in investing in foreshore development. In 1907, Manly and Coogee battled for the title of Sydney's favourite seaside resort. Randwick council initiated a programme of improvements at Coogee which included a new dressing shed with a concrete floor and fresh water, lighting for night bathers, a network of footpaths, bandstand, kiosks, and picnic tables and chairs. A spate of speculative building near the beach in mid-1907 allegedly encouraged the council's programme.

In October 1907, the surfbathing clubs formed an umbrella association, the Surf Bathing Association of New South Wales (SBANSW) to lobby the government for official recognition of the sport.<sup>44</sup> The class structure and aims of SBANSW ensured that its members were among the most conservative of the Australian petite-bourgeoisie - equally as conservative as the moralists whom they opposed.<sup>45</sup> At the formation of the MSC, for example, Frank Donovan recommended that the 'officers and committee should be men of some standing'. Of the initial six hundred members, half were 'leading citizens' and the remainder young men trained as lifesavers.<sup>46</sup> Among the principal aims of SBANSW was the provision of rules for the proper conduct of surfbathers.

The social base of SBANSW ensured its official sanction. In 1911 the NSW government appointed a Surf Bathing Committee

(SBC) to examine the sport. John Lord, the president of SBANSW, was appointed chairman of the four man investigation which included Charles Paterson, Lord's successor as president of SBANSW.<sup>48</sup> The SBC described surfbathing as a 'clean and healthful pastime' with considerable commercial benefits, but it warned that the lack of suitable dressing accommodation would hinder 'commercial prosperity, and the increase in land and rental values which surfing brings in its train'. The SBC recommended the provision of good dressing accommodation, the initial cost of which would be provided by either private enterprise or government loans to councils, and repaid by charges levied on bathers. Free accommodation, it said, should be kept to a minimum.<sup>49</sup> The SBC said surfbathers should also pay for the accommodation and equipment used by the bathing clubs and recommended strict controls on club members to eliminate the dressing shed syndicate mentality. It said that only men holding the surf medallion of SBANSW, or a proficiency award of the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS), should be admitted into the clubs. Without these qualifications, prospective members should be classified as 'probationers' and denied 'club privileges ... until they earn full membership, and with it full privileges of the ... clubrooms'.<sup>50</sup> Under the heading, *Controlling the Public*, the SBC recommended that councils appoint members of bathing clubs as beach inspectors.

By choosing the older and more responsible members [the councils] will secure the aid of men who will use their authority with moderation and discretion for the good of the public, and for the advancement of surfbathing.

The SBC supported the existing by-laws against sunbathing, which it defined as 'loitering on the beach clad only in bathing costume'. It described as 'objectionable', persons in bathing costumes mixing with the general public, and said that it was 'desirable' for bathers to walk from the dressing pavilions to the water by the most direct route.<sup>51</sup> Not surprisingly, the government accepted virtually all the SBC's recommendations<sup>52</sup> and SBANSW increased its control over NSW's beaches.

The development of surfbathing provides a classic example of what Foucault identified as the transformation of the 'disciplinary

society', that is, the transformation of a society founded on repressive forms of discipline to one founded on creating and satisfying new desires.<sup>53</sup> Surfbathing contributed to this process by transforming the sporting body - the slim, muscular, and tanned body - into the 'normal' body and making it an object of desire. Hargreaves argues that encouraging people to satisfy their desire for sporting bodies has a paradoxical effect of expanding the system of public visibility. Public visibility, he suggests, is a form of surveillance which 'constitutes a ... relentless authority diffused through social space'. In other words, 'freely' chosen forms of enjoyment, such as surfbathing, encourage 'meticulous work on persons' bodies at the instigation of subjects themselves'. In doing so they extend the public gaze by making individuals more visible to each other. This contributes to an expanded system of discipline and control as individuals seek to satisfy their desire for normality.<sup>54</sup>

Culture determines our views of the body. In western society the desired body form has been transformed over the past century. Public display at the beach has contributed to this transformation but it has produced a particularly narrow and oppressive view of the body. Interestingly, public awareness of the dangers posed to health by the sun and ultra-violet light and environmental pollution has resulted in a noticeable decline in the popularity of the beach and a gradual shift in the presentation of the body. As one teenager said recently:

You lie around the beach, you get burned. You go in the water, you stink. So your skin is pink and your hair stinks. You might as well have smooth white skin and fresh smelling hair.<sup>55</sup>

These changes are also reflected in the SLSAA's 1989/90 Annual Report. The front cover features a watchful, but otherwise inactive, lifesaver standing on the beach dressed in a long sleeve top and sheltered by a broad rimmed hat. George Ryley Scott was correct when he warned over fifty years ago that the future of public bathing is not assured.<sup>56</sup>

## The Lifesaver/Athlete Contradiction

According to the SBC, the object of SBANSW was 'to advance the sport and pastime of surfbathing'. This was entirely consistent with the twin principles of the newly emerging doctrine of athleticism - muscular development and moral endeavour. The surfbathing clubs fostered a distinctive muscular dimension based on military organisation, discipline, precision and drills. Moral endeavour was encouraged, first, through sporting competitions between the clubs. These emphasised amateur ideals - downgrading victory as a goal, self-restraint, masking of enthusiasm in victory and disappointment in defeat, the equalisation of game chances, voluntary compliance with the rules, and a chivalrous attitude towards opponents.<sup>57</sup> But it was the volunteer rescue service which expressed best the clubs' notion of moral endeavour.

The rescue service fulfilled an even more important function for the surfbathing clubs; it was critical to public and government acceptance. The surfbathing clubs were not universally welcomed at the beach. Municipal councils, swimming clubs and the RLSS all challenged SBANSW.<sup>58</sup> At Manly, for example, the Manly Life Saving Society manned the rescue equipment and patrolled in the summer of 1903/04. The first surf clubs approached the RLSS with a view to affiliation but Anthony Hendry, the society's president, dismissed them.<sup>59</sup> The problem for the surfbathing clubs was to define their sphere of organisational autonomy. SBANSW took over the control of all the surf clubs, their competitions, exhibitions and tests, but the control of sport was insufficient to provide the association with autonomy at the beach. The control of public space by sporting clubs is not a unique problem but the nature of the beach, which encourages a broad diversity of social interests, accentuated surfbathers' problems. The best way for the surf clubs to define their autonomy was to promote themselves as humanitarian organisations. Thus, while the clubs were formed as sporting organisations, SBANSW suddenly redefined its 'sole aim' as 'the promotion of lifesaving in the surf'!<sup>60</sup> Critical to this redefinition was SBANSW's *assumption* of the 'duty of care' for surfbathers. But if control over lifesaving facilities legitimised the surf clubs' presence at the beach, it

also introduced an unresolved contradiction: is the lifesaving association a sporting body or an aquatic safety service?

SBANSW's development as a humanitarian organisation was strengthened in 1920 by a change of name to the Surf Life Saving Association of NSW. In 1923 the NSW association became a national body.<sup>61</sup> This strategy was successful: in 1922, two years after becoming a lifesaving association, it received its first annual subsidy of £200 from the NSW government. Over the next two decades, the SLSAA strove to reinforce its self-imposed responsibility. First, it highlighted rescues undertaken by lifesavers. In 1925 the SLSAA noted on the cover of its annual report that a total of 12,000 lives had been saved since its foundation in 1907. This figure was a guesstimate - the first year that the association compiled accurate statistics was 1923 (647 rescues). And, of course, a rescue does not necessarily translate into a life saved.<sup>62</sup> In 1932, the association adopted the motto 'Vigilance and Service' and in 1940 it boasted, for the first of many times, that no lives had been lost at beaches patrolled by lifesavers during the previous season. The humanitarian policy improved the SLSAA's public status and increased government support.<sup>63</sup> State and federal governments have supported the SLSAA because they are well aware of the cost effectiveness of voluntary organisations, but by the 1980s the duty of care responsibility has become a double edged sword exposing the SLSAA to costly public liability litigation.<sup>64</sup>

Contrary to the direction taken by other sporting organisations, the SLSAA assigned priority to moral endeavour over physical development as a strategy to ensure organisational autonomy on, and control over, the beach. Since the late 1930s, the SLSAA has rejected the tag of sporting organisation.

We are in a peculiar position of being a body formed primarily and principally with the humanitarian object of rendering safe the healthy and invigorating pastime of surfbathing, and at the same time we are able, by means of competition in our various phases of activity, to introduce into our work a very definite sporting spirit which greatly benefits our Association work and our relations with the general public.<sup>65</sup>

Three points need to be made about this conceptualisation. First, sporting competition has always been, and remains, critical to the SLSAA in attracting members, raising monies and enticing sponsorship. As Jeff Brady, president of the Stockton Club (NSW), points out: 'competition is deadly serious - it means money and club survival'.<sup>66</sup> It is not surprising to learn then, that most clubs spend more money on competition equipment than rescue facilities. The Association deliberately fosters the sporting image of the lifesaver and its carnivals are grand extravaganzas. For example, the number of athletes competing in the annual Australian championships is more than twice that competing in the Commonwealth Games.<sup>67</sup> The sporting prowess of the SLSAA is also reflected in the fact that over one hundred lifesavers have been selected in Australian Olympic Games teams.

Second, while competition officially provides members with the means to practise and develop lifesaving skills, the reality is that there is little relationship between the two. Many of the so-called lifesaving skills demonstrated at the carnivals are now superfluous or rarely used. Obvious examples are the wooden surf boat and the reel. Both have been superseded by the inflatable rescue boat (IRB).<sup>68</sup> In those rare circumstances where a reel may be of use, say in large seas and when the IRB is manned by an inexperienced crew, most lifesavers would probably call the rescue helicopter!<sup>69</sup> Rescue equipment is designed for stability and is slow and cumbersome; competition equipment is specialised and modified for speed. Racing skis, for example, are unstable craft and could not support a drowning person in a rescue. Even the IRBs are mounted with finely tuned engines for competition. Third, the SLSAA's National Council (its ruling body) uses sport as an instrument to discipline clubs. One club president said that it 'is common for the National Council to threaten clubs with withdrawing their right to participate in competitions in order to bring them into line'.<sup>70</sup>

The National Council claims that humanitarian ideals inspire Association members. There is no evidence to support this view. Michael Porra, a former lifesaver who was instrumental in the formation of the rebel ironman circuit, argues that 'the overwhelming number of rank and file members regard sport as the *raison d' être*':

The clubs are so professional about their sport - they pay their competitors, they engage coaches, they consult sports specialists; they are mad about sport. Sport is the main topic at committee meetings - they discuss the progress of their kids' training. ... saving lives really is an afterthought. Having discussed the sport someone may mention, 'oh yes, and this year we saved eight lives'.<sup>71</sup>

The term afterthought is apt. In listing the highlights of 1989/90 in the association's annual report, Alan Whelpton, president of the SLSAA, describes three sporting events before belatedly mentioning the lifesaving patrols. Ironically, even the national executive director of the SLSAA, notes that it was the excitement of competition which first attracted him to lifesaving.<sup>72</sup> Empirical evidence supports Porra's view that 'only a tiny minority of members regard [saving lives] as their primary motivation'. In a study of the lifesaving associations of Australia and New Zealand, Pearson reported that less than five percent of respondents (N = 497) gave humanitarian reasons for joining lifesaving clubs. So small was this category that Pearson included it under the heading 'miscellaneous'.<sup>73</sup> He found that the main reasons for joining were exercise, health and fitness (26.4%), cathartic/compensatory (24.5%), and social experience and affiliation (18.3%).<sup>74</sup>

Humanitarianism is insufficient to attract new members and retain old members. As Brady reminds us, 'the reality of patrolling is that it is dreary and boring and often done in adverse weather'. Moreover, he said that most dangerous situations can be avoided by simply marking out safe bathing areas or by closing the beach.<sup>75</sup> Brian Eva, president of the Portsea club (Victoria), similarly concluded that voluntary organisations, especially those relying on the labours of youth, must offer tangible material rewards.<sup>76</sup>

Notwithstanding all this evidence to the contrary, the humanitarian label remains the SLSAA's principal strategy to preserve its tenuous autonomy and occupancy of the beach. The Association competes with rival organisations in the provision of aquatic safety services including the police, fire brigade, coastguard, the RLSS, professional lifeguards, and various emergency services

including national and state parks' rescue services. Many councils and shires employ professional lifeguards during the week and volunteers assume duty only on the weekends.

The SLSAA's occupation of the beach remains contentious with state and federal government departments, particularly the various parks' services, and municipal and shire councils, which are reluctant to cede jurisdiction over the foreshore. Environmental and social concerns exacerbate this issue. When the South Curl Curl club (Sydney) opened in 1937 it was proudly described as 'standing in bold contrast against its surroundings' and as a 'tower high above the wide beach' which 'gives the impression of a mighty fortress with the beach and surf under its submission'. The 'two graceful columns at the main front entrance' give the building 'a classic touch'.<sup>77</sup> Today, the notion of environmental conquest is an anachronism and South Curl Curl is an eyesore. It, like most SLSAA clubhouses, is built on an unstable primary dune which is contrary to sound coastal management. Whatever *rescue* equipment the clubs need close at hand should be stored in small environmentally compatible bunkers. Ostentatious clubhouses - which may include sleeping accommodation and kitchens, ancillary sporting facilities such as squash and tennis courts and gymnasiums, entertainment halls, kiosks and car parks - often provided with financial help from governments and councils, are also seen as exclusive, elitist and alienating.<sup>78</sup> While the National Council and some clubs are acutely aware of these issues, they fear that relocating their clubhouses to the foreshore hinterland will threaten the recruitment and retention of members.

Deep divisions exist between the National Council and member clubs. The National Council has developed as a professional bureaucracy administering a multi-million dollar budget while the clubs remain structured around a volunteer system of administration. A bureaucracy of professional officers is essential to manage the SLSAA's expansion into a commercial safety service (as Staunton puts it, 'you can't run a helicopter rescue service on chook raffles'). Recent studies have examined the transformation of voluntary sporting clubs into professional bureaucracies and mistakenly assumed that bureaucratisation is a 'natural' and evolutionary development.<sup>79</sup> The SLSAA's decision to develop commercial safety

services including a helicopter rescue service, patrols at private resorts and hotels, monitoring beach pollution, certification of aquatic safety standards, education programmes in schools, and so on, was a deliberate strategy against competing safety services, but the localised and volunteer structures of the clubs limit their opportunities for commercialisation. The undemocratic structure of the National Council and its policies and its record of poor communication with the clubs have generated distrust, suspicion and animosity and have alienated the sporting base. Tensions between the National Council and clubs recently surfaced with the formation of a rebel ironman circuit, an event which further exacerbates the athlete/lifesaver contradiction.

### **The Ironman and Professionalism in Lifesaving Sport**

The ironman event was introduced to Australian lifesavers during a tour of the United States in 1965. The following year the event was modified and incorporated into the Australian championships. Today, the ironman is a multi-disciplined race involving a 500 metre surf ski paddle, 400 metre board paddle and a 300 metre swim with a 40 metre sprint between each section. The ironman quickly became the SLSAA's glamour sporting event and immediately attracted corporate sponsorship.<sup>80</sup>

However it was not until the mid-1980s that the event's commercial potential was fully recognised. This followed *The Coolangatta Gold*, a film based on a 42 kilometre ironman (run, swim, ski) between Surfers Paradise and Coolangatta (Queensland) and the title of Australia's champion ironman. Produced by Michael Edgely, the film featured Australia's best known ironman Grant Kenny as the champion who stood between Adam Lucas (Colin Freils) and the ironman title with all its glory and financial rewards.<sup>81</sup> In real life Kenny won four consecutive Australian ironman titles (1980-83). The movie was a box office failure, but the race, staged especially for the film in January 1984, drew excited media and public attention. Over 100,000 people watched the event live with 70,000 people congregating at the starting/finishing line. The competitors,

marshals and judges were all members of the lifesaving fraternity, and local surf lifesaving clubs provided the rescue service.

In January 1985 a second Coolangatta Gold race was held to coincide with the release of the film. The event was organised by the SLSAA and sponsored by Kellogg which had just begun an official relationship with the SLSAA. The first Coolangatta Gold alerted the National Council to entrepreneurs capitalising on the image of lifesaving and the National Council felt the event should be brought under its control.<sup>82</sup> Kellogg welcomed the ironman concept as a perfect marketing tool for its Nutri-Grain breakfast cereal. The humanitarian and 'wholesome' images of lifesaving fit neatly with Kellogg's desire to portray itself as a socially responsible corporation. Chris McCleod, the marketing manager at Kellogg, describes *The Coolangatta Gold* as a 'ninety minute advertisement for Kellogg'.<sup>83</sup> McCleod is referring here to what Miller calls 'subliminal inducements'. The subliminal, or oblique, effect of the Kellogg's name which appears in the race scenes in *The Coolangatta Gold* arises 'from the rich and pleasant welter of associations' that glamorise the Kellogg's brand.<sup>84</sup> For example, the competing lifesavers, the embodiments of Australian health and masculinity, run powerfully and gracefully across golden sweeping beaches past Kellogg's banners, crash through the surf on boards bearing Kellogg's Nutri-Grain in bold lettering, and paddle swiftly and smoothly across the deep blue ocean on Kellogg's sponsored skis.

During the summer of 1985/86 endurance ironman events were held at Bondi (sponsored by Foster's Lager) and Glenelg (Kellogg's Nutri-Grain). In mid-1986 the idea of a grand prix ironman circuit was first mooted and at the beginning of the 1986/87 summer a circuit of six endurance events, varying between 15 and 19 kilometres, and concluding with an 'Ironman Gold' over 42 kilometres, was launched. The SLSAA and Kellogg both claim to have created and to own the circuit. Irrespective of which party conceived the idea, the circuit, like the development of the commercial safety service, was partly a reaction to external commercial forces. Neither the National Council nor Kellogg welcomed professional sport. From the National Council's perspective, professionalism negates its status as a safety service and reduces the legitimacy of financial aid from the

government. Kellogg similarly views professionalism as the antithesis of the humanitarian and amateur ideals of lifesaving. If the National Council could not ignore the pressures of commercialism, it had to at least deny the (illusionary) excesses of professional sport. In McCleod's words, 'we did not want to be seen to be making lifesavers millionaires'.

In launching the circuit the National Council did not consider the competitors' interests. Demanding training regimes, high media profiles, lucrative sponsorships, and marketing and management consultants, all contributed to the ironmen's self-perceptions as professional athletes. The circuit raised expectations as the ironmen were transformed overnight from amateur sportspersons into professional athletes competing in a modified triathlon. Their concern was to develop the event, build public awareness and increase the prize money. These interests accentuated tensions within the association and led to the formation of the rebel circuit. According to Porra, the ironmen were disenchanted by the National Council's philosophy of sport, concerned by the design of the circuit courses (which they said did not generate the excitement necessary to hold public attention), and dissatisfied with the prize money. The National Council dismissed these complaints to the chagrin of the athletes. Given its willingness to commercialise safety service operations, the National Council's attitude towards sport seemed perplexing. Of course, the athletes too are trapped by their position and have not taken cognizance of the athlete/lifesaver contradiction which the National Council confronts.

Porra formed a marketing company, signed ten top lifesavers and designed new circuit courses specifically for television and spectator entertainment.<sup>85</sup> Channel Ten bought the concept in its search for a summer sport to compete against Channel Nine (which has exclusive rights to Australian cricket) and Channel Seven (tennis). Yet, despite television coverage, securing sponsors remained a hurdle. Porra approached Graeme Hannan, managing director of the International Management Group and a joint company, Ironman Super Series (IMSS), was subsequently formed. Hannan suggested that IMSS sell the event to Kellogg for \$1.1 million. Notwithstanding Porra and the rebels' views of themselves as triathletes, Hannan could

not reconcile an ironman circuit independent of the lifesaving association.<sup>86</sup> Kellogg paid the SLSAA \$700,000 to sponsor the Nutri-Grain circuit which meant that IMSS was selling Kellogg 20 hours of live national television for \$400,000. The National Council was allegedly receptive to IMSS's proposal but it was apparently caboched by Kellogg which would brook no interference in what it considered to be its event.<sup>87</sup> It seems Kellogg convinced the SLSAA that IMSS would not succeed. Even after two successful seasons the belief persists among National Council staff that IMSS will fail.<sup>88</sup> Hannan correctly identifies the problem as one of self-image. 'Lifesaving', he says, 'is trapped by its own image as a sacrosanct Australian institution; like Mum and apple pie, it sees itself as something that made Australia great'.<sup>89</sup> Certainly the National Council is complacent and believes in its own infallibility. This appears to hinge on an unfounded belief that the public needs the association (See footnote 62).

IMSS subsequently secured sponsorship from Uncle Tobys. The media and the National Council immediately dubbed, incorrectly, the two circuits a 'cereal war' - a corporate war between two food corporations trying to increase their market share of breakfast cereals.<sup>90</sup> This belies the reality that the impetus for the rival circuit came, not from the sponsors, but from the lifesavers. The National Council reacted by trying to isolate IMSS and banned those SLSAA members participating in IMSS events from taking part in the SLSAA's competitions (but not, of course, from patrols!). The bans were challenged as a restraint of trade in the federal court but the case was settled outside. Among the conditions of the settlement, was an agreement by IMSS to pay the SLSAA \$30,000 to cover the provision of water safety services, manpower requirements at IMSS events, use of surf club facilities, and IRBs for the 1989/90 season.<sup>91</sup> Staunton views this condition as critical to the preservation of the SLSAA's status as Australia's premier aquatic safety service. By providing the safety service for the IMSS circuit, the National Council squashed the threat from a newly formed professional lifeguard company, Proguard, which offered its services to IMSS.<sup>92</sup> Staunton no doubt also believes that the SLSAA's presence at IMSS events

reinforces the perception that the ironmen are in the first instance lifesavers.

Will the two ironman circuits continue to co-exist? The tensions and rivalry between the National Council and IMSS are deflected partly onto those between Kellogg and Uncle Tobys. But neither company is wedded to lifesaving. Lifesaving is simply a marketing tool.<sup>93</sup> Both have the strategic flexibility to discard the ironman should they judge it no longer useful. IMSS has attracted co-sponsors, including Bollé, Daihatsu and Pepsi, and is no longer totally dependent upon Uncle Tobys. Television is a critical element in painting a prognosis. The SLSAA's circuit is not televised which limits its potential for attracting new (or replacing old?) sponsors. Although Channel Ten passed into receivership during 1990, indications are that the station will continue to televise IMSS. The federal government is committed to maintaining three commercial broadcasters, IMSS pays Channel Ten's production costs for the events, and the sponsors regard current viewer ratings (mid-teens) as acceptable for Sunday afternoons.<sup>94</sup> In the public and most media's eyes, IMSS's *War On Water* is the most credible of the two circuits, encapsulating excitement and professionalism. It is attractively packaged and, apart from Darren Mercer, has recruited Australia's top ironmen.<sup>95</sup> Club officials privately welcome IMSS. It gives lifesaving a positive public profile which assists recruitment. It has also injected money into the association and forced the National Council to review its allocation of funds to the benefit of clubs.

The two circuits will co-exist until the National Council whole-heartedly embraces professional sport. At the present conjuncture this endorsement appears unlikely. One proposal mooted by the National Council is to divide the association into separate sporting and rescue divisions. Exactly how this will resolve the lifesaver/athlete contradiction at club level is not explained. On the contrary, it may accentuate the SLSAA's problems by leaving the clubs without the resources to reward those members willing to patrol.

## Conclusion

At the turn of the twentieth century in Australia there were two competing moralities. The old morality imposed modesty and restraint on the body. The new morality sanctioned bodily expression. Surfbathers contributed to settling this debate in favour of the new morality, but surfbathers were only decisive after they had organised themselves into an association and redefined their objectives as humanitarian ideals. In so doing surfbathers hoped to point to some form of continuity between the old and new moralities.

In the morality of pleasure surfbathing is a perfectly legitimate pastime, but new social forces, particularly municipal and shire councils which want sole jurisdiction over their beaches, have forced the National Council to continue to portray the SLSAA as a humanitarian organisation. While humanitarianism initially contributed to the legitimisation of surfbathing, it became an increasing burden. It introduced into the SLSAA a contradiction between the members, most of whom see themselves as athletes, and administrators who, in their own interests, define the members as lifesavers. The IMSS is an attempt by elite sportspersons within the SLSAA to resolve this contradiction in the interests of professional sport. While IMSS reinforces narrow and oppressive petite-bourgeois views of body, it is, nonetheless, one of the few examples of sportspersons successfully organising against the bureaucratic intransigence of ruling administrators. This 'war off water' is yet to be won.

## NOTES

\*The author wishes to thank Morris Morely for his valuable comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. Geoffrey Dutton, *Sun, Sea, Surf and Sand - The Myth of the Beach* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985). pp. 6-7.
2. Frank Margan and Ben Finney, *A Pictorial History of Surfing* (Sydney: Paul Hamlyn, 1970), p. 131.
3. Ben Finney, 'Surfboarding in Oceania', *Wiener Volkerkundliche Mitteilungen*, 2, (1959), pp. 23-36.

4. Margan and Finney, *op. cit.*; Kent Pearson, *Surfing Subcultures of Australia and New Zealand* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1979). p. 64; and, Gus Staunton, national executive director, SLSAA, interview, 12/5/90.
5. George Ryley Scott, *The Story of Baths and Bathing* (London: Werner Laurie, 1939), pp. 135-138 and 163-171.
6. John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), p. 21; and, Richard Halt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989). pp. 86-98.
7. C. Bede Maxwell, *Surf Australians Against the Sea* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1949). pp. 12-13.
8. In 1833, the NSW government passed an Act (4 William IV, No. 7) prohibiting bathing in Sydney Cove and Darling Harbour between 6 am and 8 pm. [para. 211 In 1838.2 Victoria II, No. 2 extended the ban on bathing 'near to or within view of any public wharf, quay, bridge, street, road or other place of public resort within the limits of any towns ... between the hours of six o'clock in the morning and eight in the evening.' [para. 211 In 1901, at federation, the bans on bathing in NSW were inscribed in Section 77 of the Police Offences Act, Act No. 5.
9. Mike Featherstone, 'Leisure, Symbolic Power and the Life Course', in John Home, David Jary and Alan Tomlinson (eds.), *Sport, Leisure and Social Relations* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), pp. 130-131.
10. NSW Government, *Legislative Council Debates*, 1901, col. 1708.
11. 'Bathing at Little Coogee', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (9 June 1902).
12. 'Commotion at Little Coogee', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (2 June 1902).
13. Letter, Borough of Waverley to the Inspector General of Police, 12/1 1102. Legislative Assembly, Tabled Paper 1902/884, *NSW Parliamentary Archives*.
14. Police Report, Sub-Inspector J McDonald to Superintendent N Larkins, 13/11/02. Tabled Paper 1092/884, *op.cit.*
15. Police Report, Inspector-General Fosbery to the Chief Secretary, 14/11/02. Tabled Paper 1902/884, *op. cit.*
16. 'The sun bath', *The Australian Star*, (14 October 1907).
17. 'The value of sunshine', *The Evening News* (12 October 1907). See also, 'Benefits of sea bathing', *The Australian Star* (15 October 1907).
18. A.W. Relph, 'Life saving methods', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (26 September 1908).
19. Letter to the editor from 'A mere man', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (12 February 1907).
20. Letter to the editor from 'A mother of girls', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (7 February 1907).

21. Letter to the editor from 'Daily dipper', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (1 February 1907).
22. Progress at Manly', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (21 February 1903); and 'Surf bathing at Bondi. A question of costumes', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (16 November 1905).
23. 'Surf bathing at Manly', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (21 July 1906).
24. 'The new bathing regulations. More opinions', *The Evening News*, (14 October 1907).
25. Emphasis added. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 367. See also Martha Wolfenstein, 'The Emergence of Fun Morality', in Eric Larrabee and Rolf Meyersohn (eds.), *Mass Leisure* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958), pp. 86-96.
26. Emphasis added in quote. 'Surf bathing and swimming-baths. The proposed new regulations', *The Evening News*, (14 October 1907).
27. Quoted in, 'Surf bathing - more trouble brewing', *The Australian Star*, (17 December 1907).
28. 'Surf bathers' revolt. A demonstration at Bondi', *The Evening News*, (21 October 1907).
29. Local Government Act 1906, Ordinance No. 52, Public Baths and Bathing (*NSW Government Gazette*, 14/5/08), para 3.
30. Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Westmead: Saxon House, 1977), pp. 29-30. See also, George Eisen, *Children and Play in the Holocaust: Games Among the Shadows* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), pp. 86-87.
31. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1968), p. 438.
32. 'Surf bathing at Bondi', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (25 October 1905). The council agreed, on the casting vote of the mayor, to erect bathing accommodation subject to contributions from the lands department, the railway commissioners, and the public.
33. For example, Letter to the editor from C. Anderson, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (10 January 1907). Anderson said he was opposed to the council spending ratepayers' money 'for the benefit of 50 or 60 bathers'.
34. Letter to the editor from 'Bondi Bill', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (24 January 1907).
35. Letter to the editor from 'Merman', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (24 January 1907).
36. 'Surf bathing at Bondi', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (25 October 1905).
37. 'Revolt of the surfers against municipal laws', *The Daily Telegraph*, (29 October 1907); and, 'Manly council and surf bathing', *The Manly and North Sydney Daily*, (24 October 1907).

38. The MSC charged two shillings and six pence per season and the Bondi Surf Club ten shillings. 'A complete life saving system', *The Australian Star*, (14 October 1907).
39. Surf Bathing Committee, *Report of the Surf Bathing Committee* (NSW Legislative Assembly, 14/2/12), para. 22. According to one of the first members of the MSC, the club 'was run by ... old men, who were primarily concerned with having a decent dressing place and showers. Friction grew between the old and young members, and finally the older members passed a rule that no one under 21 years of age should have a say in management.' Edward Reeve, 'The SLSA rules', *Surf in Australia*, (1 March 1937) p. 4.
40. 'Surf bathing at Manly - A club formed', *The Manly and North Sydney Daily*, (20 July 1907).
41. 'For the surfbather', *The Manly and North Sydney Daily*, (10 August 1907); and, 'Manly surf club', *The Australian Star*, (12 October 1907).
42. 'Among the breakers. The sun bath and the skirt', *The Australian Star*, (14 October 1907). See also, 'Surf bathing. Disorderly meeting at Manly', *The Australian Star*, (28 October 1907).
43. 'Manly V Coogee. A big fight on. Good time coming for surf bathers', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (18 July 1907).
44. J.R. Winders, 'Surf Life Saving in Australia' (unpublished and undated manuscript, SLSAA, National Council offices). The meeting of the executive officers of the surf and lifesaving clubs to form SBANSW was chaired by Donovan and included representatives from the Manly and Bondi Clubs, Coogee Life Saving Brigade, Bronte Surf Brigade, Tamarama Surf Club, Maroubra Surf Club, Royal Life Saving Society, New South Wales Amateur Swimming Association, United Wanderers Surf Club, and Woollahra Surf Club. Minutes of the Meeting of Executive Officers of the Surf and Life Savings Clubs, Friday 18 October 1907.
45. For a list of SLSAA's most 'distinguished' members see, Barry Galton, *Gladiators of the Surf* (Sydney: Reed, 1984). especially pp. 21-22.
46. 'The surf club', *The Manly and North Sydney Daily*, (6 August 1907).
47. 'Surf bathing. An Association formed. Protest against municipal laws', *The Australian Star*, (19 October 1907).
48. Paterson was a government tourist officer at the time. The other members were J Garlick, officer-in-charge of local government, and E M Allman, the metropolitan district engineer.
49. SBC, *op. cit.*, paras. 3-5, 138-139 and 141.
50. *ibid.*, paras. 25 and 27.
51. *ibid.*, paras. 148-149, 152, 154-155.
52. SBANSW, *Fourth Annual Report*, (1912).

53. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977); and *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).
54. John Hargreaves, 'The Body, Sport and Power Relations' in, John Home *et al.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-152.
55. 'The Apple and Pear Generation', *The Bulletin*, (15 January 1991). p. 37.
56. Scott, *op. cit.*
57. Eric Dunning and Kevin Sheard, 'The Bifurcation of Rugby Union and Rugby League: A Case Study of Organisational Conflict and Change', *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 11.2 (1976).
58. In 1907, for example, A. Olgilvy, secretary of the Manly Swimming Club, said that the councils were the proper authorities to control the beach. Only they, he said, would serve the interests of all beachgoers, not just a few surfbathers. He announced that his club would extend its lifesaving function to the ocean beach. 'Lifesaving work', he said, 'is the most important work of any swimming club.' Letter to the editor from A. Olgilvy, *The Daily Telegraph*, (22 October 1907).
59. Reeve, *op. cit.*
60. SBC, *op. cit.*, para. 54.
61. SLSAA remains dominated by NSW clubs. At present 124 (49.4%) of the 251 clubs making up SLSAA are situated in NSW and 37.4% of active members are from NSW.
62. As of 30 April 1990, SLSAA claims to have undertaken 344,670 rescues including 9,922 during 1989/90. If the annual number of rescues seems high it should be recognised that it represents just over three rescues per club per month.
63. In 1989/90 the federal government's grant to SLSAA was more than \$1m.
64. In August 1990 the NSW Supreme Court awarded \$3.869m to a surfbather against the Waverley council. The bather became a quadriplegic after being hit by a surfboard while swimming in an area forbidden to boardriders. The court found that the council's decision to reduce the number of beach inspectors on duty contributed to the accident. 'Rebecca would trade \$3.8m to walk again', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, (18 August 1990).
65. SLSAA, *Thirty Third Annual Report 1938-39*, 1940. This argument appears annually in SLSAA documents. The current official policy is to conduct competitions 'as a form of motivation and incentive for its voluntary members, and the acquiring and promoting of physical fitness and lifesaving skills'. *National Council, National Councillors Briefing*, 1989, No. 4/89, p. 4.
66. Interview, 3/7/90.

67. There were 4,300 competitors at the 1990 SLSAA championships held at North Wollongong and 1,949 competitors at the 1990 Commonwealth Games in Auckland.
68. Over 40% of rescues during 1989/90 were performed using IRBs and off-shore rescue boats compared with less than 0.5% using reels and surf boats.
69. During 1989/90 there were 1,975 helicopter responses. (Not necessarily associated with aquatic rescues).
70. The president wished to remain anonymous. Attention is drawn here to a memorandum from Gus Staunton to Charles Lyne, Victorian representative on the National Council and patron of the Portsea Club (Victoria), threatening to disaffiliate Portsea should it support the rebel ironman circuit (see below). Memorandum, 11/10/89, paras. 9 and 10.
71. Interview, 19/7/90.
72. Staunton, *op. cit.* Similarly, Whelpton describes one of his proudest achievements as coaching the McMasters Beach Club (NSW) senior and junior rescue and resuscitation teams to competition victories. Cited in, Galton, *op. cit.* p. 180.
73. Humanitarian reasons accounted for less than two percent of the total responses (N = 1,010). Respondents were allowed to give more than one reason for joining a lifesaving club. Moreover, we do not know how many lifesavers gave humanitarian reasons as their prime motivation. Pearson, *op. cit.*, p. 88 and 98.
74. *ibid.*, pp. 88.
75. Brady, *op. cit.*
76. Interview, 29/11/90. In terms of members, Portsea is Australia's largest lifesaving club.
77. 'New Surf pavilion at South Curl Curl', *Surf in Australia*, (September 1937), p. 11.
78. For a discussion of these issues see, Victorian Public Interest Research Group, *A Coastal Retreat* (Melbourne: Monash University: PIRG,1977); and, Coastal Management and Co-ordination Committee, *Policy Relating to Surf Life Saving Association Use of Coastal Crown Land* (Victoria: Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, 1987).
79. For example, Trevor Slack, 'The Bureaucratisation of a Voluntary Sport Organisation', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 20.3, (1985) pp. 145-164.
80. The first sponsor was Renault (Australia) who paid for the state champions to compete in the Australian championships, sponsored the Australian champion to the world titles and donated a car to the Australian champion's club.

81. In the film Adam was coached by his father Joe (Nick Tate) who in 1960 lost the title to Hayden Kenny, Grant's father. Hayden in fact won the inaugural Australian title in 1966.
82. Staunton, *op. cit.*; and, Ian Macleod (ed.), *Ironman* (Sydney: Horwitz Grahame Cammeray, 1987), p. 13.
83. Interview, 5/7/90.
84. Mark Crispin Miller, 'End of Story' in, Mark Crispin Miller (ed.) *Seeing Through Movies* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990), p. 190.
85. Porra argues that the appeal of the ironman stems from the frequent movement of the competitors in and out of the water.
86. Quoted in, 'Iron and Fibre', *The Sydney Morning Herald* (Good Weekend), (18 November 1989), p. 14.
87. McCleod, *op. cit.*
88. IMSS lost \$50,000 on the first season, but this was the result of unexpected costs associated with the court case (see below). This situation has now been reversed.
89. Graeme Hannan, interview 16/7/90. Journalist Philip Derriman notes that the surf lifesaving movement is 'held in such high esteem in Australia that, as someone has said, only motherhood outranks it in wholesomeness'. 'Iron and Fibre', *op. cit.*, p. 14.
90. See for example, 'Ironmen prepare for summer of "cereal war"', *The Australian*, (19 July 1989).
91. IMSS also agreed to pay SLSAA's legal costs of \$70,000. As a result of the settlement all bans were lifted. Subject to meeting qualifying criteria, all lifesavers are now technically eligible to compete in both series. Transcript of the terms of settlement.
92. Staunton, *op. cit.*
93. Uncle Tobys (video), *Marketing the Ironman* (Melbourne: Clemenger, 1990).
94. Steve Dillon, marketing sales manager, Uncle Tob's, interview 29/11/90.
95. Mercer has won all five SISAA ironman circuits (1886/87-1990/91) and two Australian championships (1987/88 and 1988/89). At the 1990 Australian championships, 12 of the 15 ironman finalists were contracted to IMSS. Mercer was eliminated in one semi-final.