

# MEDIA RELEASE

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### NEW YEARS SURF WARNING

**With temperatures set to soar over the next few days, surf lifesavers and lifeguards are asking people to use their common sense when taking to the beach over the New Year period.**

Each year hundreds of people under the effects of alcohol or drugs take to the water, many after dark, and get themselves into potentially grave danger. Matt Rodwell, Surf Life Saving NSW Operations Manager, says that people need to stay smart when celebrating while also looking out for their friends and family.

"Unfortunately drug use and excessive alcohol consumption is a characteristic of some New Year's celebrations which often have hazardous consequences," said Rodwell. "Combine these factors with swimming in the surf, particularly after dark, and it adds up to an extremely dangerous situation which we're urging the public to avoid this New Year's Eve."

Surf lifesavers often have to deal with the outcome of the night before on New Year's Day, and are encouraging members of the public to look after themselves if they take to the beach on the first day of 2011. There have been relatively few drownings in NSW over recent months and Surf Life Saving NSW hopes to see this trend continue.

"We're hoping the message is starting to get through to people – only swim at patrolled beaches between the red and yellow flags," says Rodwell.

"Our public education campaigns focusing on dangers such as rip currents are hopefully having an impact. We've been paying particular attention to major holiday locations up and down the coast, distributing surf safety material in a variety of languages to accommodation providers, camp grounds and youth hostels."

New Years Day is often the busiest beach day of the year and with predicted high temperatures, lifesavers and lifeguards will be on full alert to protect the hundreds of thousands of beachgoers expected.

"Members of the public can always approach lifesavers if they're unsure about conditions, and if you do get in trouble, stay calm, raise your hand and signal for help."

**Byron Bay ( Main Beach ) on the Far North Coast will have extended coverage from the Australian Lifeguard Service with two lifeguards on patrol from 7.00 PM until 2.00 AM New Years Eve.**

Ends.

For comment and radio interviews please telephone Matt Rodwell on 0408 872 118.

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For further information, and photo opportunity please contact ;



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