



LOCAL AND WSA DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

In August 2006, WSA sent surveys to club representatives of all Australian waveski clubs to identify the current status of the sport of waveski surfing and establish an action plan for development at “grassroots” level, particularly for junior development. While only five surveys were completed (thanks to the Coffs Harbour, Bateman’s Bay, Wollongong, Perth/West Coast and Peninsula), some useful points were made and patterns emerged. A summary of the key points is highlighted below. For further information on survey responses, please see the table of responses.

Juniors

- There are very few isolated examples of active junior waveski surfers.
- Respondents thought that if there was a demand, there would be club members willing to help by, for example, training juniors and donating skis and equipment. However, it appears that the responsibility repeatedly falls on the shoulders of volunteers who have been actively helping for years and few new volunteers are coming forward to help run club activities.
- The biggest challenge is more one of attracting juniors. Amongst the measures floated were recruitment through surf and kayaking clubs; local advertising of club and social days; and more competitions to showcase the sport.
- Transport is also an issue for juniors given the difficulty of traveling with equipment.
- There are also a number of positive initiatives worth mentioning that could be replicated by other areas. For example,
 - There are two schools in Perth that run a waveski program every year as part of their Physical Education program. While this has not yet led to any new involvement with the clubs, the program exposes 100 children to the sport.
 - The Sunshine Coast Club has run a series of club days, in which there has been active support for a number of juniors.
 - The Dee Why representative verbally advised of independent plans for initiatives for junior development.
- Essential to attracting and maintaining all members in the sport (including juniors) is running regular club and social days. About half the clubs surveyed try to have regular (monthly) get together surfs and none are conducting regular club day activities. More activity is required. For details on club contacts and club meeting dates in Australia see the WSA website www.waveskisurfingaustralia.com.

Support from WSA

Clubs and the motivated people in them are the backbone of the sport and where tangible activity takes place. WSA at a national level cannot physically run club activities in every regional area of Australia. However the national association aims to facilitate these local level activities. To this end, the surveys also asked what the WSA can most usefully (and realistically) do to help clubs. Responses included

- Provision of one membership and insurance package / fee to cover all clubs. Such a membership/insurance package was introduced in 2006 so this suggestion needs to be investigated further.

- Promote national and club events and provide club contact listing. This is currently being done on the national website so any suggestions on how to improve on this would be much appreciated.
- Development of a club to club competition program.
- Provide subsidised accommodation and prizes to juniors at interstate events.

Other WSA initiatives

Other initiatives not raised in the surveys but by WSA are:

- To provide financial incentive programs to clubs on an annual basis based on a set of criteria.
- Run a waveski surfing expo once a year in different locations
- Produce and distribute a brochure on waveski surfing for surf shops and new people in the sport, including contacts for clubs.
- A DVD on Waveski surfing that can be given to all new people buying waveski's.
- To further develop a "resource centre" on the WSA website. This is designed to make a permanent record of information currently in the heads of a few key people in the sport, and to make it accessible to a wide range of people interested in waveski surfing activities now and into the longer term future. This will assist with succession planning and provide an opportunity for new volunteers in the sport to help and contribute at a club level with minimal experience. We believe that this is an area where WSA can realistically contribute to motivated people at local levels. Amongst the items in the resource centre will be:
 - A checklist on how to start a club, i.e. bank account, insurance, club checklists from ASC resource library, equipment, defined roles, potential sponsors.
 - Contest information, i.e. how to run a contest, equipment, contest rules, draw templates, entry form templates, judging, approvals, potential sponsors
 - Junior participation – i.e. Training programs, recruitment methods, contacts with others with experience in the area.
 - Clubs and contacts database – to maintain this existing resource as a way to encourage juniors

Where to from here?

If you are a WSA member and have an opinion or are willing to assist with any of the points raised above, please contact the WSA development manager swaldron@waveskisurfingaustr.com. We would also like to hear about local activities and initiatives at your club. In the meantime:

- WSA will prioritize the ideas identified in surveys on how the WSA can help clubs, then refine and action these ideas before the Australian titles in July/August 2007.
- Go ahead with the Resource Centre for completion by July/August 2007. We will be looking for input from experienced members, and would like to contact the more experienced members for assistance.

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