

The ABCs of surf safety



Volunteer Ruby Wilson with India Trevett and Josephine Kay. Photos Emma Haas

School might have been out for the past three weeks, but many primary students have still soaked up some educating hours in the sun with the City Nippers programme from Surf Life Saving Northern Region.

Children aged from five to 11 have dressed in orange rash vests and learned what a lifeguard is, how to be sun smart, water confident, surf safety, beach aware and so much more in six-hour courses run over three days on Oneroa Beach.

The children run in and out of the water in fun but safe games, compete against each other in races and kick, kick, kick when they take to the boogie boards.

Three weeks of City Nippers courses have run on the island, the final one ending last Thursday 24 January, only made possible with the sponsorship from SeaLink which has transported the lifeguard educators and their equipment to and from the island throughout January.

The organisation's community education manager Clare Cotter said the education is important to island children as Waiheke doesn't have paid or volunteer beach patrols.

"Water safety education has been a concern on the island for a number of years." • Emma Haas



Left - Life guard Julia Tairua-Doyle is doing her third season with Surf Life Saving because she loves getting to know the children and passing on her knowledge. Right - SeaLink sponsors the programme's tickets to the island, so cars and equipment can be brought over.



Max McKubre carrying boogie boards to the beach. Aden McKubre led the sprinting races. Camilla Morrison is kick, kick, kicking away.



Racing from the shallow water to the beach is a big part of teaching the children to be water confident.



Left - Claire Armstrong pays close attention to the beach safety rules. Right - Finnian Kenyon heading to the beach on a boogie board.

Safer in the surf

On behalf of Surf Life Saving Northern Region, I'd like to thank and commend the families who supported our January beach education programme at Waiheke and made us welcome on the island.

We had a very positive response to the programme, fully justifying the investment by SLSNR, and we look forward to running similar programmes on the island next summer to help make the beach experience for children a safer one.

A big thank you as well to SeaLink who sponsored the programme on Waiheke, and helped make it all possible, by supporting our transport costs to the island. We look forward to returning to Waiheke to help more children gain the skills to enjoy the ocean confidently and safely.

**Clare Cotter, Community
Education Manager
Surf Life Saving Northern Region**

