

Ladies and gentlemen, a true indicator of how long you have been part of Dicky Beach is whether you know Mark Paton as Mark...or the "Smear." Twenty one years ago a young Mark Paton found himself in a bus loaded with Nth Caloundra boaties, on his way to his first carnival with the club. The urban legends that surround the circumstances of this nickname, "The smear," are varied and only a select few know the true meaning of the nickname. Some of you may already have fond memories of Mark's involvement in the club; many of you have children that are Mark's lifelong friends, a vast majority of you will have children that Mark has coached, and some of you will just know him as the tall, quiet man who spends a lot of his time at Dicky Beach and the club.

Many of us share a love of this beach that we patrol. However because Mark was the full time life guard at Dicky Beach for many years he knows the beach intimately, and has spent more hours on our beach than most people here tonight. This is his beach, and he shares our pride and passion for it. Wayne Powell remembers in the mid 90s the time that they were at the Gold Coast for a carnival. The surf at Dickies had been rough all week and knowing that the seas were peaking and the tide was due to be low, Mark's instincts told him that he would be needed back at Dickys. So he and Wayne rushed back from the Gold Coast and ran onto the beach. Within half an hour, they had rescued 15-20 people. This mass rescue made the papers. He knows this beach and his years of experience enable him to predict things like this.

Mark Paton has been a constant at the Club, he has stuck with it even when his friends moved on. He has been the quiet achiever, back bone of club and plays an integral part contributing to where it is today. He has made many contributions to the club, a few include:

- Active patrolling member for 21 years and proficient every year
- in excess of 500 patrolling hours
- Club Captain 95/96, 96/97, 99/00, 03/04. He is the only member to be club captain of Norths and Dickys
- was the State High Performance Coach for three years in a row
- IRB racing for many years
- Represented Qld in the Kellogs Nutri Grain series
- 2002 Surf Lifesaving Qld Coach of the Year
- Success whilst coaching many STATE and AUSSIE Gold medallists including Perry Elliot, Alan Dunne, Rocky Crews, Paul Pearce, Paul Coleman, Tyla Mitchell, Teresa Hutton, Gavin Drew, Josh Murray, Nick Stevens, Nikki Francis.

He presently plays an active role in surf sports and youth development which keeps our young people competing and involved. In his current role of Board Coach, Mark stepped in when the club needed a coach. I'm certain that the kids and parents in Mark's squad would whole heartedly vouch for his commitment and enthusiasm in this role. And I know personally how much enjoyment he gets from training these kids. Ryan Gaylard (Rooster) saw first hand the amount of times Mark has stepped in half way through a season when people pulled out of roles. "I've seen how Mark puts the club interests before anything else. To me this is something that indicates that this life membership is long overdue. He is an extremely worthy recipient" (Ryan Gaylard).

Mark is not the office bearer role type, but instead he has been on the ground, keeping the spirit, fun and adventure alive. There are many young people whose best memories of their days in the club will involve Mark. Our first paddles out to the reef, playing "King of the Surf", swims from Kings to Dickys, mystery runs, and Freddos if you surf through the wreck!!

Gavin Drew remembers Mark, "Taking me out on the jet ski when he was lifeguarding and picking up the shark buoys, sitting up in the tower when I was about 14 for hours, making up false shark sightings stories and getting in the paper, hanging around him when Amanda and him first got together, Nutri Grain races, teaching us to surf through the wreck, setting up the beach for him when he used to open, banging on pots and pans in the dorms to wake people up, teaching us the 360 on my mal, putting soap on people's ski seats, getting pushed out of the hot showers and the swim from Kings to Dickys." Mark Paton has created memories and adventures for people in this club that no one else has done.

Being in the water is what the essence of Surf Lifesaving is all about, and Mark's membership in this club has been all about that. He has been selfless and sacrificed his time with his own family to coach and be part of the club. His best years at the Club are still to come when his own children hit an age when they can be nippers. But for now, he continues to give up his time for your children.

He is the man in the water. He is the one out there leading by action and example.