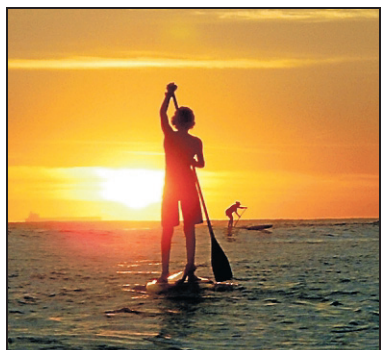


Secondary entry #4: Tuggerah Lakes Secondary College, Tumby Umbi



TLSC  
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Campus

## THE GUM TREE



Inspiring the next Australian champion, Toby takes time to train others. *Picture: Clayton Kane*

## Paddling his way around the planet

By CLAYTON KANE

TOBY Cracknell, hailing from Avoca, is Australia's champion in the world of Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP). Toby works as a lifeguard for Gosford City Council part of the year, and then he travels the world to compete in the SUP circuit races. He has been to Japan, Mexico, America, Nicaragua and Hawaii for SUP events.

Training is hard but fun for Toby and he also finds time to train a local group of paddlers. You may not think that surfing is training but it is for Toby. Toby also does cross fit training to work on his fitness levels, as this is a big requirement for the distance racing.

This hardwork and determination led to Toby winning the Australian Championships.

There are three types of SUP boards, surfing, racing, and cruising. Toby competes in surfing and he is very successful, but Toby has been most successful in the Battle Of the Paddle (BOP). The BOP is an M shaped course, which runs in and out of the surf break.

Before SUP Toby was a triathlete and he had won many events, until he suffered an injury. This injury resulted in Toby being unable to compete in triathlon and taking up SUP. This successful transition into paddle boarding was obviously a great decision for Toby, who is now the Australian Champion.

By JARROD CHISHOLM

TERRIGAL Beach and The Haven are popular tourist destinations for various leisurely activities such as swimming, surfing and fishing. Yet, few people actually know what's going on underneath the water.

Ten years ago seeing a grey nurse shark around Terrigal Haven was extremely rare. Now, grey nurse sightings are a regular occurrence.

Until recently, Terrigal Dive Shop owner Les Graham had seen only one in the last 30 years. "Local animal species becoming endangered is a big problem in today's growing society. In the case of the grey nurse; pollution, over fishing and shark culling have been the main factors contributing to the decline of shark numbers, both within the region and the increase of endangered marine species around the world," Mr Graham said.

The grey nurse sharks were mistaken to be man-eaters and were thought to be responsible for the string of shark attacks on Sydney's beaches during the 1950s, '60s and '70s. Because of this they were killed at every opportunity, which led to the dramatic drop in the numbers of sharks.

The grey nurse is a highly protected species and currently the fine for harming one can be up to \$220,000. Even though they were declared a protected species in



The protected grey nurse colony at Terrigal's Haven has become a favourite site for local swimmers.

*Picture: Sally Turner*

1984, it has taken some time for their population to recover.

The main reason for this is the shark's bizarre reproductive biology, where they usually produce only two pups per litter.

Ocean swimmers and local divers used to be afraid of grey nurse sharks when swimming in The Haven. "Now they go swimming wanting to see them," jokes

Mr Graham.

Increased knowledge about the sharks and their critically endangered situation have led to members of the public becoming friendly, less threatened and more intrigued about the sharks.

People usually only know the most dangerous species of shark such as a great white or a bull shark, and because of this, grey

nurse sharks are often mistaken for a big, scary man-eater.

Mr Graham believes the Terrigal Beach shark alarm goes off roughly once a month and nine times out of 10 it is because of a grey nurse shark.

So next time you're snorkelling and you happen to stumble upon a grey nurse, don't swim away or feel threatened, just stay there and admire the labrador of the sea.



Noah Moon, training hard to become a professional skater. *Picture: Dylan Page*

## Kickflips over new skate park

By ZOE BOLTON-WOOD

BY July 2016 the recreational hub at Bateau Bay known as EDSACC will welcome a new skate park, one of the biggest in the region.

The park will be designed to suit all abilities from beginners to advanced skaters hoping to sharpen their competition skills.

Champion junior skater Noah Moon thinks having a

place to train and compete closer to home will be beneficial in helping him reach his goal of becoming a professional skater. "I just hope council take the opportunity to design a park that is suitable for competitions to be held there," Noah said.

"The community have been asking for a regional skate facility for years, and now we have the money in the budget to make it hap-

pen," said Wyong Shire's Mayor Doug Eaton OAM.

"I am so pumped for this to happen," said Jai Cotterill, 16, of Killarney Vale. "I'm looking forward to seeing how it turns out. For a skate park of this size to be developed here on the Central Coast is really amazing."

Located next to public transport and easily accessible, it will hopefully bring more visitors to the region.



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