

Reality Check – Maroubra Surfers Church

Steve Bligh

Steve Bligh (50) came to faith in Christ at age 17. He was a member of the surfing community. Fellow surfers who followed Christ explained the Bible to him and answered his questions.

Steve is married with three young adult children. He is the pioneer minister at Maroubra Surfers Church.



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Q. Please describe the group you are seeking to reach?

A. Local Maroubra surfers, their families and their networks. In addition we also seek to reach visiting surfers from other suburbs and abroad. The latter includes Japanese, Brazilians and some French surfers too.

Q. Why surfers?

A. Personal experience over a generation convinces me that few within this group know Christ (nor are they being nurtured in good local churches). Surfers comprise 14% of Australia's population according to the Sweeney Report⁶⁸.

I've been a part of the surfing community all my adult life. I immersed myself in the Christian Surfers⁶⁹ movement and I've run surf missions and had close contact with leading surfers for decades.

Q. Do you have a Core Team?

A. Yes we do – 8 at present. Our leaders are trained in Bible reading, teaching, giving their testimonies, evangelism, and management of teams and so on. The Core team are Faithful, Available, *Competent* and Teachable.

Q. Do you have a Vision for the ministry?

A. Yes. '2035 saved'. Let me explain. 2035 is Maroubra's postcode and it also a 'Bra Boy'⁷⁰ tattoo. We dream of seeing Maroubra surfers and their networks saved from death, addictions, mediocrity. Thousands saved is what we long for.

Q. You make contact with locals in culturally appropriate ways, I believe.

A. Right. We run regular coffee mornings, surfing contests, surfing coaching, surfing trips, dinners, barbeques, beach and street evangelism. We have an internet site⁷¹ and two of our members run a gym for boxing and weights.

Q. Did you begin with a 'public worship' service?

A. No way! In my opinion that would take far too much of our resources and detract from the real work of person to person mission and evangelism.

Q. So when and where do you gather to teach and train people?

⁶⁸ <http://www.sweeneyresearch.com.au/>

⁶⁹ <http://www.christiansurfers.org.au/main.html>

⁷⁰ http://www.mediaman.com.au/profiles/the_bra.html

⁷¹ <http://www.myspace.com/177308990>

A. 6.00pm on Sundays in a rumpus room for 'Grom Church'⁷² (kids, families and their friends); 7.00 pm on Mondays in a beachside café for our main Bible teaching; 7.30pm Wednesdays in a beachfront office for training leaders; 10.00am on Saturdays for evangelistic coffee mornings at a footpath café by the beach.

All up we minister to around 200 people.

Q. Who pays you, Steve?

A. Financial support comes from what we raise ourselves, from Church Army Australia and from the Diocese.

Q. Will you plant again?

A. From the outset we made it very clear to all our people that our model can be reproduced all over the world. This will mean, among other things, envisioning and training our overseas surfers.

Q. Highs and lows?

A. Seeing 'Bra Boys' and their families put their trust in Jesus and seek to live for him – that's a high. The greatest 'bummer' is seeing people without Christ self destruct.

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1. Is it clear who Steve and his team are seeking to reach?

2. From the information to hand, does this ministry appear to bearing fruit? If so, why?

3. In your opinion, what are the greatest challenges that Steve and his team face?

4. A transferable principle or idea that we might apply in or context is.....

⁷²'Grommets' are surfer kids or children of surfers.