

Swimming the distance for a good cause

As people from near and far flock east these school holidays for a swim at one of the many beautiful beaches along the coast of New South Wales, paramedics Harry Yandle and Andrew Selosse will be hitting the water for a good cause.

On 16 January 2021, they plan to swim 10km around North Head in Manly on the Northern Beaches of Sydney to raise awareness about drowning prevention and to also raise money for Lifeline.

“Andrew and I are both from sporting backgrounds and into fitness, so we wanted to set ourselves a challenge,” Harry said.

“We’re doing lots of training in preparation but this will be by far the longest swim we’ve done.”

Passionate about mental health, Harry said it’s important for paramedics to have a good work-life balance.

“Mental health plays a big part of what we do – not just because we often deal with patients with mental health issues, but paramedics themselves also struggle,” he said.

“We look after people for a living and a lot of time we put ourselves off to the side. When you put your mental or physical health on the backburner, that’s when people lose a lot of motivation.”

Harry said having a fitness goal like this swim has a huge impact on his mental health.

“I think I’d be a bit lost if I wasn’t able to exercise. It’s great to have something to look forward to and something to push yourself towards,” Harry said.

“It’s so hard to plan holidays or events these days with

COVID. Personally, I’ve definitely felt a lot better having this swim to look forward to.”

Harry and Andrew, who both live on the Northern Beaches and commute to Ambulance Stations near Wagga Wagga, are also passionate about water safety.

“I’ve been a lifeguard since I was 15 years old and Andrew was even younger when he started. We really want to raise awareness of coastal drownings and how easily they are to prevent.”

Andrew said the simple things, like only swimming at a patrolled beach and always swimming between the flags, are the easiest ways to prevent tragedy in the water.

“At the end of the day, the best thing you can do is to swim to your capability,” Andrew said.

“If you’re not a comfortable swimmer, swim with a friend or have someone watch out for you. Even if you’re a strong swimmer, ask a lifeguard where the rips are and always have a plan in case something goes wrong.”

In preparation for the 10km swim, Harry and Andrew are training around the clock.

“We both have a swimming pool in town, so before shift starts we do 3km in the pool and then when we’re back in Sydney on days off we do 4km ocean swims,” Andrew said.

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