



Swell Mamas Rachel and Lucy enjoy the surf off Sandy Point.

Swell Mamas' expand to Sandy Point

MOTHERS of Preschoolers (MOPS) from the Corner Inlet communities are gearing up for a fun-filled six-week program with the Swell Mamas.

Swell Mamas is a surfing support program that sprung up two years ago in Inverloch under the Bass Coast Board Riders Club.

The initial vision was to create an opportunity for women to surf in a supportive and child friendly environment.

Swell Mamas has engaged over 100 women and their children since inception and has provided financial support to 18 women to complete their Surf Life Saving Bronze Medallion.

Eight of these went on to complete their Level 1 in Surf Coaching with Surfing Victoria.

Participants have ranged from the very young, to women in their 70's.

"The community interest in Swell Mamas has been fantastic," says Swell Mamas facilitator, Lucy Cousens.

"Surfing is a huge part of my life and it is so wonderful to be able share this with others."

Like the sister program in Inverloch, Swell MOPS is free and equipment can be provided at no cost if the participants don't have their own.

"The success of this program, as with the Inverloch Swell Mamas, has been underpinned by the support we have received from local businesses, government and Surfing Victoria, in particular," says co-facilitator, Geraldine Archibald.

"Our program is about access and improving the skills and confidence of women, in a fun, stress free environment.

"It's about bringing your children to the beach with you, having a play and having a surf.

"It doesn't matter if you've never surfed in your life before - everyone can have a go."

Shianne Murray, of the South Gippsland Hospital, initiated the development of the Swell MOPS program.

"We were funded by the Bendigo Bank and YMCA SPLASH to develop an active lifestyle program that involved mentoring, buddying up and supporting women with preschool aged children," she explains.

"There were obvious synergies in what Swell Mamas were doing in Inverloch and what we wanted to do.

"What I love about Swell Mamas is that they build skills and community connection."

Swell Mamas will draw on a range of their Bass Coast participants to support the Sandy Point program.

"One of our mums does the website for us, and others assist on a roster basis with the program facilitation of (now) both programs. Swell Mamas is a team effort," says Lucy.

And it's not too late to come on board this free program.

The group meet for the next five Friday mornings at 10.30am at the Sandy Point Café for a cuppa first, and then head off for a surf directly across the road from the cafe by 11am.

Participants can register to participate in Swell MOPS by phoning Chris at the South Gippsland Hospital on 5683 9780 or with Lucy at the Swell Mamas website www.swellmamas.org.au.



Beautiful weather brought mamas from Fish Creek, Sandy Point, Foster, Yanakie and surrounds to join in the new 6-week Swell Mamas MOPS program at Sandy Point. The mamas meet at 10.30am on Fridays at the Sandy Point General Store.