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SUNSHINE COAST EXTRA

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Big step for smallest club

ITHACA-Bulcock Beach surf lifesaving club will have its new patrol tower officially opened today by club patron Mrs Joan Sheldon, MLA for Caloundra. It's a big day because the club's patrol will add the recently designated bathing reserve at Golden Beach's Fraser Park, on the northern side of Gemini Resort to its duties at Pumicestone Passage, from the Caloundra Bar to Military Jetty.

There's good reason for the rejoicing. Ithaca-Bulcock has virtually doubled its patrol activities without any direct government financial assistance. "In an age when even large licensed clubs are having problems maintaining their current life-saving services, Ithaca's efforts are a triumph for what is arguably the smallest club in Queensland," said local historian John Rayner.

"It's also a direct reflection of the support the club has received from sponsors Pelican Waters, business houses, community groups and local residents." It's arguably the smallest life-saving club in Queensland, but what lacks in size it makes up for in history and local enthusiasm. The club arrived on the Sunshine Coast from the Ithaca Pool, in Brisbane's Caxton Street, in 1957 after an eight-year association with folks from Bulcock Beach.

Ithaca was originally an all-women club and its first clubhouse was a tent.

When that folded the women moved into an old house near the site of the present Caloundra Coast Guard headquarters. In 1967, the club admitted male members and men and women alternated weekend patrols before moving house to the Bulcock Beach boatshed. In 1973, Landsborough Shire Council agreed to mixed patrols providing a chaperone was always present!

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