

Stoked! Surfboard lost in Tasmania turns up 2,700km away in Queensland

Level: Advanced

1 Warmer

- a. In pairs, think of all the rivers, oceans or seas near you.
- b. If you dropped something that could float into one of these rivers, oceans or seas, where might it end up? Think about which direction the water flows, underwater tides and potential obstacles.

2 Key words

- a. Find words in the article that match the definitions below.

1. sea creatures that stick firmly to objects in the sea _____ (para 2)
2. be able to understand something or to solve a problem _____
(para 4)
3. a type of colour that is very bright and reflects light _____ (para 6)
4. the parts on some surfboards that you put your feet through _____
(para 6)
5. something that you keep as proof of an achievement that you are proud of
_____ (para 7)
6. large waves in the sea _____ (para 7)
7. a scientist who studies everything to do with the sea _____
(para 8)
8. a strong movement of water in one direction _____ (para 9)
9. a crash or fall off a surfboard _____ (para 13)
10. wishing you still had something that you used to have _____
(para 14)
11. a light, hard substance used for making objects such as containers and boats
_____ (para 17)
12. something that is not smooth and has lots of raised parts on it
_____ (para 17)
13. survive being harmed or destroyed by something _____ (para 17)

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14. found someone or something by asking questions and getting information

_____ (para 19)

15. covering and protecting something with a sheet of plastic containing bubbles

_____ (para 20)

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. A strong _____ swept their boat out to sea.

2. She was _____ seeing her friends at the weekends.

3. The bunker is designed to _____ a nuclear blast.

4. It wasn't easy to _____ the connection between the two events.

5. They couldn't find him at first but they finally _____ him to a small mountain village in Sicily.

6. The hunter hung the huge boar head on the wall as a _____.

7. High-vis jackets worn by security personnel are usually _____ yellow or orange.

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Board belonging to big-wave surfer Danny Griffiths believed to have made the journey via New Zealand

Naaman Zhou

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- 1 An Australian surfer has found a surfboard he lost in 2017 after it floated at sea for thousands of kilometres, from the bottom of Australia to the top – potentially via New Zealand.
- 2 Danny Griffiths, a big-wave surfer, lost his favourite board after he crashed off a wave at the very southern tip of Tasmania. It was found, covered in barnacles, by two brothers near Townsville in north Queensland, more than 2,700km away.
- 3 Griffiths said the brothers had held on to the board for years, until recently, when their parents took a trip to Tasmania and told local residents about the rare find, who realized that it belonged to him.
- 4 “Their parents were caravanning around Tasmania and got talking to a couple of local surfers on the west coast about their sons’ finding a surfboard while they were fishing,” he told *Guardian Australia*. “The local surfers – as Tasmania is a pretty small state – all know each other. It only took a few surfers to figure out it was mine. They sent me some photos to piece it all together.”
- 5 Griffiths said he recognized the board because it was a distinctive bright green and made by a small Tasmanian manufacturer who specialized in big-wave boards. The Queensland brothers are now preparing the board to be mailed back to him.
- 6 “Even with the barnacles on it, I knew straight away,” he said. “All my big-wave tow boards are straight fluorescent green, and there are not that many big-wave surfers around Australia. Everyone puts their straps on differently. And the logo on it is from a small surfboard shaper here in Tasmania.
- 7 “I think the brothers hung it on their wall for the past two years, as a trophy. They don’t surf. It’s not the type of surfboard that a general surfer can use. It’s built for one thing and one thing only – that’s the biggest swells possible.”
- 8 Edward Doddridge, an oceanographer from the Institute for Marine and Antarctic Studies, told ABC Tasmania, where the story first appeared, that the board could not have travelled up the Australian east coast but rather “must have gone the long way round” via New Zealand.
- 9 “The big current that comes along the east Australian coast goes north to south, which means this board must have come some other way,” he told the ABC. “It must have gone east from Tasmania and then north up through the middle of the Pacific Ocean and then come back in towards the Australian coast.
- 10 “New Zealand seems like the only possible way for it to get from Tasmania to Queensland. It’s very unlikely to have gone straight up the east coast of Australia.”
- 11 Griffiths said he had lost the board in 2017 when he was surfing huge swells at Pedra Branca, a remote island 27km south of Tasmania’s coast.
- 12 “The right weather conditions to surf there only come every two or three years,” he said. “You’re on a boat for a long time before you even get out there.
- 13 “The whole day was going pretty well; we got some pretty big waves. On my last wave, I fell off and had a wipeout. When I came up and was saved by the jet ski, I couldn’t see it again. We lost it. We all talked about it, wondered where it is, wondered what could have happened.”
- 14 Griffiths said he had been missing the board for years and no new ones could compare.
- 15 “Two weeks ago, we were back down there for the first time in nearly two years,” he said. “We were down there all talking about it, wondering what happened to the surfboard. I got a few waves on my new one, but I was saying, ‘Nah, I don’t really like it. The old one used to go so much better.’”
- 16 He said the big-wave board’s construction had probably helped it survive the journey north.
- 17 “They are built very strong and are very heavy – up to 15 to 20kg just for one. The amount of fibreglass on them means they are really, really strong. It’s pretty much built like a rocket, to be able to punch through bumpy water and withstand high speeds. Possibly that’s why it’s still in one piece.”

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- 18 Experts had told him the barnacles could have given a clue as to where the board had been, Griffiths said, but the brothers in Queensland had washed them all off.
- 19 “They were saying they could have traced its journey by looking at what barnacles grew on it from different parts of the ocean. But they had pressure cleaned it and taken all the barnacles off.
- 20 “They said it’s still rock solid, no holes or anything – hopefully it’s still useable. The guys are, as we are speaking, bubble wrapping it and getting it ready to be sent. Hopefully, in a week’s time, it should be here.”

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3 Comprehension check

Find the information in the article to answer these questions.

1. Where did Danny Griffiths lose the board and how?
2. Where did the board turn up again? Which route did it probably take to get there and why?
3. Who found the board and what did they do with it?
4. What are the circumstances and coincidences that have led to the board's imminent return?
5. Give details of three things that allowed Danny Griffiths to recognize the board and be sure it was his.
6. How does Danny feel about the imminent return of his board and why?

4 Synonyms

a. Read the headline again. Which do you think is the correct definition of the informal adjective *stoked*?

1. relieved but slightly annoyed
2. very happy and excited
3. amazing and almost unbelievable

b. Complete the sentences with the correct form of *lose* or *forget*.

1. I've _____ where I parked my car in the airport car park.
2. My grandfather _____ the key to the chest many years ago, and no one has been able to open it since then.

c. Read the following sentence. Does *mislay* have a similar meaning to *lose* or *forget*?

*I seem to have **mislaid** my car keys. I had them just a moment ago, so they can't be far away.*

d. What are the differences between these three words (*lose*, *mislay*, *forget*)? In which situation would you use each one? Write example sentences of your own for each word.

5 Discussion

- Have you, or has someone you know, ever lost anything that turned up somewhere unexpected?
- Have you ever found anything belonging to someone else in an unexpected place?
- How would or could you report, search for or request help to look for a lost item that you would dearly love to get back?

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6 In your own words

Research and retell stories from the news, and from fiction, about items that:

- were lost at sea or in rivers
- and drifted or floated a long way before being reunited with their owners.

Research ocean currents:

- Which are the fastest, strongest, longest, most dangerous, most powerful, most important, etc. and why?
- How do they inter-relate with and influence other natural systems?