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**Recommended 'swim parallel' rip technique given short shrift by lifeguards**

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Manly MP Mike Baird, Bondi Rescue's Bruce Hopkins, Craig Riddington and Ron McKeen, president of the Australian Swimming Coaches Association, at a water safety forum at Manly Lifesaving Club. Picture: SIMON CHILLINGWORTH ~PP431508

A PICK of the state's foremost lifeguards, swim instructors and ocean experts gathered for a forum on water safety at Manly Lifesaving Club yesterday.

Lifeguards from Wyong, Wollongong and Coffs Harbour were all in attendance as well as lifesavers from Manly and North Steyne.

At the top of the agenda was Surf Life Saving Australia's controversial Swim Parallel campaign that encourages people to save themselves from a rip.

Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard Association president Greg Hackfath said people should instead be urged to stay calm and wait for assistance.

"The campaign Swim Parallel will cost lives," he said.

"And they do not like me saying that because it's a very controversial thing to say."

Mr Hackfath was backed by former ironman Craig Riddington who now runs Surf Educate Australia.

He also believed Surf Life Saving Australia's campaign is flawed.

"A lot of the surflifesavers do not support the campaign," Mr Hackfath added.