



**SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES**



Establishing a Support Operation

Issue: 4

1st September 2015

This Guide to Establishing a Support Operation outlines Surf Life Saving New South Wales policies and procedures in relation to 'Support Operations' and addresses some requirements including business plans and financial viability.

The guide is distributed in accordance with the procedures contained within the SLSNSW Standard Operating Procedures (Lifesaving Services) which have been reviewed and approved for distribution by:



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1. Introduction

Purpose

To provide a consistent structure/process for the application, establishment and integration of Support Operations into the existing Surf Life Saving New South Wales (SLSNSW) framework.

Objectives

The objective of this document is to provide a clear structure and guidelines for establishing a new Surf Life Saving Support Operation in New South Wales that is needed by the community, has a sustainable membership structure and financially sound.

Background and Role of Support Operations

Surf Life Saving has developed and expanded from the traditional flagged areas on beaches, primarily in response to population changes and the high frequency of emergency response incidents at locations. Support Operations Units enable multiple high-risk areas to be patrolled without the overhead costs of establishing a new Surf Life Saving Club. In addition, Support Operations can provide additional support to Surf Life Saving Clubs during peak attendance and/or dangerous conditions.

Support Operations in Surf Life Saving include the following;

- Rescue Water Craft (RWC)*
- Jet Rescue Boat (JRB)*
- Offshore Rescue Boat (ORB)*
- Rigid Hull Inflatable (RIB)*
- Aerial Service (fixed wing or helicopter)
- Emergency Response Beacon
- Coastal Surveillance Camera

Within New South Wales, all Support Operations are owned, operated and managed by (or affiliated to) Branches or SLSNSW under the SLSNSW Lifesaving Services framework.

**Craft as defined in the Surf Life Saving New South Wales Standard Operating Procedures*

Definitions

Lifesaving Service Agreement – Lifesaving service delivery agreement which includes minimum season length & days of patrol, minimum hours of service and minimum personnel/qualification requirements.

Branches may set minimum requirements as extensions (in addition/above) SLSNSW minimums.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) – Operating policies/procedures/guidelines for all SLSNSW affiliated lifesaving operations (clubs/services).

Patrol Operations Manual (POM) – Specific local management/response plan developed to assist members. Each service utilises SLSNSW generic template for their Patrol Operations Manual.

References / Related Documents

- SLSNSW Constitution
- SLSNSW Lifesaving Service Agreement
- SLSNSW Standard Operating Procedures
- Patrol Operations Manual Template
- Annual SLSNSW Compliance Circular

2. Application Process

An application to establish and operate a Support Operation does not guarantee endorsement with SLSNSW.

As part of the application process, the following items should be addressed and submitted to Surf Life Saving New South Wales via the respective Branch Director of Lifesaving;

- Scope of operation
- Membership
- Equipment
- Financial Status
- Strategic Plan

The below information provides details on the information required as part of the application. SLSNSW can provide assistance in developing applications, for example developing a strategic plan and a robust financial plan. Please contact the Lifesaving Manager to discuss what support can be provided.

The information submitted will be assessed by Surf Life Saving New South Wales as outlined in Section 4 of this document. Successful applications will receive formal confirmation as outline in Section 5 of this document.

Scope of Operation

An application to establish a Support Operation should clearly outline the service type (e.g. RWC), the proposed base location and geographic range of operation. For RWCs, this should take into consideration the patrolling range and emergency response range of the RWC. Ideally this is 1-3km offshore with a patrolling range of 10-15km away from the base in each direction along the coast and up to 20km for emergency response incidents. The operational range for JRB, ORB and RIB's will be determined by the vessels registration with NSW Maritime, however an expected range based on the desired vessel configurations is required.

In addition to the operational range, an application should outline the proposed patrolling hours for the service and its emergency callout capability (out of hours). The date/time of past incidents and patrol times of other Surf Life Saving services should be considered when proposing the patrolling hours for the Support Operation.

A number of base locations should be identified and listed for further consideration. The base should provide easy access to the proposed operational area.

Membership

As with Surf Life Saving Clubs, a core membership is required to operate a Support Operation. The number of members required depends on the type of Support Operation, however the number of potential members should be identified. These members should be available to commence training immediately if the Support Operation's application is successful. As part of this, the proposed management structure of the Support Operation should be identified.

To ensure the long term viability of the proposed Support Operation, the application should identify a recruitment strategy that outlines where additional members can be recruited from (e.g. Clubs in the local area) and how sustainable membership levels will be retained within the proposed Support Operation. The active membership size of the surrounding Clubs should be considered as low-membership Clubs may not be able to contribute a large number of members. Support Operations personnel must retain their membership at an affiliated Surf Life Saving Club in addition to the Support Operation.

Equipment

The initial cost of obtaining all of the relevant essential equipment is often one of the biggest challenges in establishing a Support Operation. Using the document in Appendix 2, a summary of the total cost of the Support Operation should be obtained. The document assists in identifying the ongoing costs of the Support Operation on a year by year basis and considers the quantity and life expectancy of each item of equipment. In addition, the document provides an initial indication of the upfront cost involved in purchasing all of the minimum equipment and other common equipment.

Financial Status

As part of an application, a detailed 3 year financial plan should be included that outlines the foreseeable expenses of the proposed Support Operation, and the likely income streams of the proposed Support Operation. Funding for the Support Operation can be gained from a range of sources, including but not limited to, Surf Life Saving and external grants, sponsorship and fundraising. Most new Support Operations will not operate in profit, however the financial plan assists in outlining the forecasted income and expenditure of the proposed Support Operation.

The information contained in Appendix 2 will form the basis of the proposed Support Operations projected expenses for the first 3 years of operation.

Strategic Plan

A strategic plan is also required as part of the proposed Support Operations application. The strategic plan should identify the Support Operations short and long term goals and threats with a strategy in place to achieve the goals and offset the threats.

3. Assessment Process

Upon receipt of an application to establish a Support Operation, Surf Life Saving New South Wales will review the application and conduct an analysis to assist in determining the need and viability of the proposed Support Operation. In addition to review the application, the analysis will identify and assess the following parameters;

- Average AMSAMP ratings within proposed response area (using AMSAMP ratings)
- Number of beaches and rock platforms within the proposed response area (using CoastSafe data)
- Number of Surf Life Saving/Lifeguard Services within the proposed response area (using existing knowledge + CoastSafe data)
- Number of other Emergency Services (Marine Rescue NSW, Water Police etc) that can respond to the proposed response area (using CoastSafe data)
- Number of coastal drowning incidents over the past 5 years in the proposed response area (using SLSNSW coastal drowning database + National Coronial Information System database)
- Number of surf emergency response incidents (13SURF) over the past 5 years in the proposed response area (using SLSNSW surf emergency response system database)
- Maximum population capacity within the proposed response area (using Australian Bureau of Statistics data)
- Frequency that the maximum population is reached within the proposed response area (using Australian Bureau of Statistics data)
- Projected population growth within the proposed response area (using Australian Bureau of Statistics data)
- Average beach attendance figures within the proposed response area (using SurfGuard data)
- Frequency that the average beach attendance is reached within the proposed response area (using SurfGuard data)

The needs based analysis will produce two outcomes, firstly a rated scaling detailing the operational need of a new service within a specified area. Secondly, a guide of the specified areas attendance frequency and capacity.

4. Approval Process

Following a review of the proposed Support Operations application and assessment by Surf Life Saving New South Wales, the SLSNSW Director of Lifesaving, SLSNSW Powercraft Advisor and SLSNSW Lifesaving Manager will determine if the application is successful or unsuccessful and notify the proposed Support Operation and respective Branch.

A successful application will be offered 'Probationary' status through a 1 year Lifesaving Service Agreement that outlines the scope of operation for the Support Operation. The dates/times listed in the Agreement will be based on the needs analysis conducted during the Assessment Process to ensure that resources are concentrated in peak attendance locations and periods, while also ensuring that additional support from other Surf Life Saving assets is available to assist if required.

Prior to the conclusion of the 1 year Lifesaving Service Agreement, the following items should be completed;

- Annual Compliancy Requirements as outlined in the annual SLSNSW Circular
- A Patrol Operations Manual completed

A comprehensive review of the Support Operation will be conducted following the completion of the first 12 months of operation.