



# Memorandum

<b>To: All SLSNSW Members</b>
<b>From: George Shales, SLSNSW President &amp; Joel Wiseman, SLSNSW Director of Lifesaving</b>
<b>Date: 27 March 2020</b>
<b>Pages: 2</b>
<b>Subject: Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) – Cessation of Volunteer Patrolling Services</b>

The Surf Life Saving New South Wales (SLSNSW) Board would like to thank all Branches, Clubs and members for your continued patience and professionalism during these difficult and unprecedented times and this situation is changing daily, if not hourly.

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020 the NSW Government directed volunteer surf lifesavers and lifeguards to close beaches when there are large numbers of people present, in order to comply with the Government's ban on mass gatherings in response to COVID-19.

On Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the Federal and NSW Governments announced further closures of services and measures to restrict social gathering that would be enforced from midnight Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, and these changes have again informed what SLSNSW patrolling measures will be. These measures are already having an effect on the community.

The SLSNSW Board convened on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to discuss the ongoing impact of COVID-19, the stricter restrictions announced by Government and in return reconsider the position SLSNSW would maintain for the remainder of the 2019/20 patrolling season.

**Effective immediately, all patrols by volunteer surf lifesavers on NSW beaches will be cancelled for the remainder of the 2019/20 season.** This unprecedented decision has been made to protect the safety and welfare of volunteer surf lifesavers from potential infection by the COVID-19 virus and to support the Government's position in discouraging large gatherings of people on beaches across NSW.

SLSNSW will attempt to maintain adequate lifesaving response capability along the NSW coastline through;

- Emergency Club Call Out Teams that are to be rescue ready for any emergency response and taskings;
- Enhanced Support Operations (inclusive of Duty Officers and Rescue Watercraft) that will provide a roving visible presence ready to respond to emergency incidents;
- Continued Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) drone surveillance operations, with UAV pilots monitoring beach conditions, marine creature activity and assisting with search and rescue operations. SLSNSW UAV operators can work alone, adhering to social distancing guidelines, while providing very effective beach and coastline surveillance; and
- The SLSNSW State Operations Centre (SurfCom) will continue to operate and coordinate all emergency responses through the SLSNSW Emergency Response System. SurfCom will also continue to provide radio and incident support to both Branch Support Operations and UAV surveillance operations.

In summary, these arrangements will be maintained until the cessation of the 2019/20 season, commencing this Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2020:

- Clubs are strongly encouraged to restrict surf club access to their members, other than Emergency Club Callout Teams, Branch Support Operations personnel who require access to clubs where equipment is stored, lifeguard services and UAV operators whom also operate from the club.
- Clubs are also requested to consult with their Branches to ensure that any Support Operation equipment housed within their clubhouse is easily accessible.

For more information about COVID-19, visit the links provided below:

- [Surf Life Saving New South Wales](#)
- [Surf Life Saving Australia](#)
- [NSW Health](#)
- [Australian Government, Department of Health](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **Do I have to patrol again this season (2019/20)?**

- No. All volunteer surf lifesaving patrols in NSW have ceased effective immediately for the remainder of the 2019/20 season.

### **What is an Emergency Callout Team?**

- All Clubs and Branches are to ensure they review their call-out teams and that equipment is 'rescue ready' if tasked for any emergency incidents. Further information regarding call-out teams can be found in SOP LS9.9 [Club/Service Callout Teams \(Emergency Response\)](#).

### **Will there be additional rescue support provided now patrols have ceased?**

- All Branches will be enhancing their Support Operations capabilities to ensure available support services inclusive of Duty Officers, Rescue Watercraft, Offshore Rescue Boats etc. will be rescue ready and deployed on water.

### **What should I do if media arrive at our beach?**

- All media enquiries are to be directed to your Club President, Branch or SLSNSW media team on 0405 203 764.