



Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	Female Mentoring Program
Document ID:	Circular 65/19-20
Audience:	All club members
From:	Pamela Simon, Learning and Development Manager
Date:	13th May 2020
Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Female Mentoring Program.Call for nominations for mentors and mentees from membership. Due Monday 15th June.

Introduction

SLSA embraces the importance of a diverse and inclusive organisation, including gender equality, and seeks to increase the number of female members who hold leadership roles within SLS nationally. The Female Mentoring Program (The Program) aims to support and encourage confident, strong and skilled female representation within SLS, to strengthen leadership skills, and identify, and develop the next generation of female leaders to position SLS for the future.

A more deliberate focus is required to support the identification and development of emerging female leaders within SLS to ensure there is visibility and support of women ready for leadership positions, so they can fully utilise their potential to make a difference to our organisation.

In 1980, women were permitted to become full members of SLS, and forty years on the gender imbalance at an upper level is still heavily dominated by men (especially Boards, Presidents, and Club Captains).

The Program will promote women within SLS, facilitating empowerment, support and leadership skills which can be applied to their paid roles inside and outside of SLS, volunteer activities and everyday life. The Program will promote ongoing supported pathways of personal and professional development as well as networking opportunities. Each mentee will be selected based on demonstrated leadership abilities and their potential and willingness to develop further in this area and move into leadership positions.

Strategic Alignment

The Program supports Surf Life Saving 2025 Strategic Plan and our Mission to “save lives, create great Australians and build better communities” by developing a more capable and gender diverse leadership pipeline so our organisation can better reflect the demographics of our nation (50.2% female) and movement (45%female).

The Program is part of our 2020 plans to recognise and celebrate the 40-year milestone of women in SLS (1 July 2020 launch). The success of the Program will be evident through an increase in females in SLS leadership roles to 40% over the next decade. Currently 20.6% of females hold senior leadership roles at a national, State, Club and SLSA level, despite women making up 45% of members and 48% of Nippers.

To lead the change, our existing volunteer leaders, both male and female, are best placed to ensure gender diversity remains a focus until the agreed target is met.

Benefits of a female mentoring program for Surf Life Saving

Currently only 20.6% of senior leadership roles within SLS (Boards, Presidents, and Club Captains) are held by females. Across SLS Clubs in Australia, only 15.8% of Club Presidents and 20.5% Club Captains are female.

Research shows that having a better gender balance in leadership and Board roles increases performance of organisations.

We know visible role models also make a positive difference (“you can’t be what you can’t see”) and recognising that historically women have not been thought of as leaders helps us to understand the societal norms which must be overcome. By increasing the visibility of and supporting women in senior leadership roles in SLS, it will show young women and girls that it is possible to contribute at the highest levels of our movement and will inspire them to set high aspirations for themselves.



Feedback from the National Leadership College over the last few years has indicated that while we provide opportunities for female talent to develop, there are barriers that are challenging their ability to fully participate in leadership roles within SLS.

What is the Program?

The 3 key elements of the Program are:

1. **Mentoring** – develop a mentoring program for 20 participants (Year 1), building to 40 participants per annum, matching mentees with mentors to build skills, provide guidance and expand support networks for mentees;
2. **Research** – to better understand the barriers and to develop appropriate solutions (adapting as required), measure progress, develop a SLS Diversity Commitment; and
3. **Sponsorship** – currently men hold the majority of leadership roles and are well placed to support and promote women into senior leadership roles.

What are the individual benefits?

For the Mentee:

- Build confidence, capability and interpersonal relationship skills
- Supports them to take control of their own leadership capability and capacity by providing an opportunity to learn skills and behaviours and enhance their support networks
- Life engagement of our female members, providing networking and ongoing support groups, increasing their sense of belonging.

For the Mentor:

- Opportunity to be part of a legacy, give back and pass on personal and professional learnings, increasing their self-worth
- Enhance interpersonal and professional skills increasing personal value to the organisation and re-energising their engagement with SLS
- Strengthen coaching and leadership skills and gain insights into issues faced by members and the community from diverse backgrounds

For the Sponsors:

- Opportunity to be part of a legacy, give back and ensure gender equity is embedded in SLS
- Enhance interpersonal and professional skills increasing personal value to the organisation and re-energising their engagement with SLS
- Gain insights into issues faced by members and the community from diverse backgrounds

Program Timeline

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| • Mentee and mentor nominations due | 15 June 2020 |
| • Mentor/mentee interviews matching | 19-26 June 2020 |
| • Program Launch (online) | 1 July 2020 |
| • Announce Mentors and Mentees | 1 July 2020 |
| • Mentor and Mentee Workshop/s (online) | August/September 2020 |
| • Research Workshop/s | October/November 2020 |
| • Allies connection | Quarterly from July 2020 |
| • Mentee Program reviews | Quarterly from July 2020 |

Where can I nominate for The Program?

Mentor expression of interest form [click here](#)

Mentee expression of interest form [click here](#)

Please note that the closing date for nominations is **Monday 15th June 2020**.

Further information

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback regarding the Female Mentoring Program, please contact Pamela Simon at education@slsa.asn.au.