

Emergency Services Announcement - Questions and Answers

SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES



Does this make SLSNSW a government agency?

No. SLSNSW's identity and status as a Not For Profit organisation remains unchanged.

Does this mean that government can now direct our business?

No. The naming of SLSNSW within the SERM Act does not change any current arrangements/reporting that we have with the NSW Government.

Does this mean the NSW Police now directs our operations?

There is no change in how we support and cooperate with the NSW Police Force. Currently the Marine Area Command (MAC) tasks our organisation to coastal emergencies outside of patrolled locations, and this will remain in place.

SLSNSW will remain exempt from rescue accreditation requirements and that an exemption from the requirement to notify police of incidents that only require or are likely to require Surf Life Saving has been included in the Act. This is consistent with existing arrangements.

Will SLSNSW be expected to respond to other emergency incidents?

Currently SLSNSW provides significant support and response to coastal emergencies and incidents both during business hours and after hours 24/7 in many locations. We do this through our State Operations Centre, Support Operations and Club Callout Teams.

We now have the opportunity to formally support other emergency services in areas of response that previously we may have engaged in on an adhoc basis. As an example, we may in future offer assistance to the NSW SES in flood rescue operations utilising our IRB skills and rescue capability, as well as our emerging UAV capability.

Do I have to participate in these other emergency incidents?

No. We will start to develop areas of additional emergency response capability in various parts of the state and Branches, where and as required. It is anticipated that we will then call for expressions of interest as an 'opt in' for members to be involved in additional training and resourcing, which will allow them to be tasked to other emergency support operations beyond the flags.

We remain volunteer surf lifesavers. However, we are now are in a position to provide our members many more opportunities to enhance their skills, increase recognition for what they do and allow additional professional development opportunities.

Why did SLSNSW decide to be acknowledged as an emergency service?

There is no other organisation that has the capability, skill and training to protect people along the NSW coastline, a role that our lifesavers have been providing for more than 110 years. It is entirely appropriate that our members and the organisation, be recognised for what we do.

As the majority of drownings occur away from patrolled locations or outside patrol hours, SLSNSW has developed a strong Support Operations capability to respond. This is an area that we will continue to expand and resource to ensure additional support is available both to our patrolling members, the community and other emergency services.

Surf Life Saving New South Wales

3 Narabang Way Belrose | PO Box 307 Belrose NSW 2085 Australia

T +61 2 9471 8000 F +61 2 9471 8001 E info@surflifesaving.com.au

Fundraising Authority No. CFN11033 ABN: 93 827 748 379

www.surflifesaving.com.au

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The recognition as an emergency service enhances our relevance as a key lifesaving organisation moving into the future and ensures our sustainability with greater support from government and the public.

It is a strategy to further engage our existing membership and potentially attract new members to our Surf Life Saving Clubs.

Is SLSNSW the only Surf Life Saving organisation now recognised as an emergency service?

No. In fact SLSNSW is one of the last state-based Surf Life Saving bodies to be recognised as an emergency service.

Does this mean we will receive more funding from government?

Now as an acknowledged emergency service, where and when we are requested to support other organisations outside of our core role as surf lifesavers, we will be requesting additional resources to facilitate this.

What are some of the other advantages and opportunities that will now be open to SLSNSW as a result of this recognition?

There are numerous other advantages that will be derived from this recognition, including;

- Enhanced relevance and sustainability
- Enhanced resourcing for frontline operations
- More effective collaboration and integration with other emergency services we currently support
- Opportunities for greater and more diverse training for our members that is outside of the traditional lifesaving environment
- SLSNSW may nominate representation for emergency management and rescue management committees at district and local levels if operating in the relevant area
- SLSNSW volunteers called to assist in an emergency may benefit from employment protection provisions under the SERM Act
- The SLSNSW insignia, uniform and authority of a SLSNSW lifesaver will be protected by law (eg from impersonation or misuse)
- There is an express requirement that RFS, SES and FRNSW maintain effective liaison with SLSNSW, as an Emergency Services Organisation (ESO)
- Enhanced positioning, profiling and presence for SLSNSW
- Enhanced security of tenure and operations of our surf club

Are we able to install red/blue lights on our Support Operations vehicles?

The NSW Rescue Policy currently prohibits any organisation utilising red and blue lights unless they have been endorsed as an accredited rescue agency. Currently SLSNSW is neither recognised nor accredited within the NSW Rescue Policy.

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Who is in charge at major or multi-agency incidents?

The Police remain the lead agency and incident controller at major incidents and emergencies. This position has not changed.

As a patrolling member with my local surf club, how will this impact me?

As a patrolling member, this change will have no real impact on you unless you wish to become more involved in Support Operations or assist in other areas of emergency management response. You can choose whether or not to do this through your club or branch.

Will this mean an increased workload for volunteers at smaller clubs and branches?

Unless you want to become more involved in Support Operations, or wish to become involved in other areas of potential emergency management response operations, this recognition should have no impact on your volunteer workload on the beach.

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