

2026/27 SLSNSW PRE-SEASON INFORMATION PACK



SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES



Introduction

The Surf Life Saving NSW Pre-season Information Pack focuses on:



Changes to policies
or procedures



Links to key reference
material to review prior
to the season



Key tasks to complete
before the season starts



Key dates to be aware of

The information is divided into the following sections and aimed at:

Club Management

Directors of
Administration,
Presidents &
Treasurers

Lifesaving

Club Captains
& Directors of
Lifesaving

Education

Chief Training
Officers &
Directors of
Education

Surf Sports

Directors of
Surf Sports

Membership

Directors of
Member Services
& Junior Activity
Chairs

Information for all

SurfGuard Updates

SurfGuard is undergoing a major update as part of SLSA's **Core Systems Rewrite**, designed to improve usability, reliability and the long-term sustainability of the platform. Rather than one large system change, new functionality will be introduced progressively through a series of releases between **April 2026 and June 2027**, with improvements across member management, awards, patrols, assets, incidents and other core SurfGuard functions. As new functionality becomes available, SLSNSW will provide users with updates and guidance to support the transition. Release dates are subject to change. View the current [Release Schedule](#).

Executive Training Calendar

SLSNSW delivers a range of online sessions throughout the season designed to support members of club management

teams. We recommend that all new club and branch officers attend the **Club Management Induction** in August, and that all new and existing officers attend the **Optimising Board Performance session** in October.

Register via the [Club Executive Training Schedule](#).

Child Safe Awareness Course for Patrol Members

Surf Life Saving NSW is committed to the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person who takes part in our activities, programs, events or services.

As part of our commitment, all patrolling members over the age of 18 along with those in the following roles, are required to complete the online SLS Child Safe Awareness (18 years+) course:

- Club and Branch officers
- MPIOs and Complaints Managers
- Age Managers
- Coaches and Officials
- Trainers, Assessors and Facilitators

Club Management

Key Changes

- Clubs registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) no longer require a separate NSW **Charitable Fundraising Number (CFN)**. To continue fundraising, clubs must maintain their ACNC registration and comply with the 16 National Fundraising Principles (see **Relevant Links** section).
- The approach to financial distributions aligned to **Annual Club & Branch Compliance** has changed. Clubs should review the updated circular to understand the new distribution model and compliance deadlines. Financial distributions have increased to **up to \$10,000**, with the full distribution (including a **\$2,000 compliance bonus**) available to clubs that meet both Phase 1 and Phase 2 requirements by the required deadlines.
- Clubs can access and download their current **Certificate of Currency** through the Marsh Club Portal (see **Relevant Links** section). If your club does not have its login details, your Branch Administration Officer can provide your Club ID to help you access the portal.

Reminders

- There is a **12-month access limit to SurfGuard** for all users. SurfGuard users not verified by clubs as part of the Annual Club & Branch Compliance process will be deactivated on 14 September 2026.
- SLSNSW delivers **Club Executive workshops** throughout the year, with topics including youth engagement, optimising board performance, marketing and finance. We encourage all new club and branch officers to attend the Club Management Induction, and recommend both new and existing officers participate in Optimising Board Performance.
- If your club adopts or amends its constitution, remember to notify **NSW Fair Trading, the ACNC, and SLSNSW**. This includes lodging an A6 form with NSW Fair Trading, updating your details through the ACNC Charity Portal, and providing your Branch Administration Officer with a copy of your updated constitution.

Relevant Links

[Club Executive Calendar](#) – Tasks Resources and Workshops – for training sessions aimed at club and branch officers together with an annual calendar of essential tasks and related resources to assist with day-to-day club management and compliance.

[Annual Compliance Circular](#) – for information on the requirements that all clubs and branches must meet to be compliant for the 2026/27 season and to ensure access to state funding distributions.

[Marsh Club Portal](#) – for access to the portal to download club Certificates of Currency.

[Club Guide](#) – for information related to the management of SLS Clubs, relevant for all members of the Club Management Team.

[IT Guidelines for Pre and Post Season](#) – a guide for IT and SurfGuard related tasks for the start and close of season.

[IT Systems Access \(Form 49\)](#) – to access the online form used to provide members with access to SurfGuard or the Sport Event Management System (SEMS).

[Member Wellbeing](#) – for information on the wellbeing support available to members, including the Member Assistance Program (MAP).

[Office of the Children's Guardian](#) – to access the portal to verify Working with Children Checks before the details are entered into SurfGuard.

[National Fundraising Principles](#) – to view the 16 nationally agreed rules on charitable fundraising conduct.

Key Tasks

- ☐ Complete annual compliance requirements as outlined in the above circular.
- ☐ Access the Executive Calendar and encourage club management team members to access online workshops.



Key Dates

- SLSNSW Awards of Excellence – Saturday 22 August 2026 (Hyatt Regency, Sydney)
- Insurance Renewal Declaration Deadline – Thursday 27 August 2026
- Compliance Part 1 Deadline – Friday 11 September 2026
- Compliance Part 2 Deadline – Friday 30 October 2026

Lifesaving

Key Changes

- Following issues experienced with the **SLS Operations App** last season, SLSA is developing a new interim app to support patrol operations this season. Review the [current FAQs](#). Further information will be shared with users as soon as it becomes available.
- To align with the **additional ANZAC Day public holiday** and maintain consistent community safety outcomes, patrol services will be extended to Monday 26 April 2027.
- SLSNSW, in partnership with Qantas, will issue all patrolling members in NSW with a **new patrol shirt** this season. Members are asked to return all previous unwanted patrol shirts at their first patrol so they can be responsibly recycled, helping keep outdated uniforms off the beach and out of landfill.
- A range of **Lifesaving Skills Development and Advanced IRB Skills Development Programs** will be delivered throughout the season to support member development and strengthen operational capability. A calendar of programs will be released soon.
- Clubs will soon be able to record **club-owned UAVs as Gear and Equipment** in SurfGuard. Once available, clubs will be asked to register all club-owned UAVs using this functionality. Further guidance will be provided when the functionality is released.
- The **Rescue Services application form** is now available on the SLSNSW website and will also be used for the re-endorsement of Rescue Services members (see **Relevant Links** section).

Reminders

- With the migration of the SLSNSW radio network from analogue to digital almost complete, all **radios must be reprogrammed** before the start of season (see **Relevant Links** section).
- The **"SCAN" channel** has been removed from all radios following an identified issue, reducing the risk of communications from SurfCom being missed.
- All radios now have access to **all branch networks**, allowing them to be operated across NSW wherever network coverage is available.
- All patrol members aged 18 years+ are required to complete the **SLS Child Safe Awareness (18 years+)** course.

Patrol members under 18 years are encouraged to complete the SLS Child Safe Awareness (13-17 years) course.

- All **club vehicles** (including ATVs, SSVs, tractors and 4WDs) must be appropriately registered. Where a vehicle is **conditionally registered**, clubs should ensure the approved area of operation is broad enough to cover all locations where the vehicle may reasonably be used, including surrounding beaches, parks, pathways, car parks, neighbouring clubs and incident response locations. Operating an unregistered vehicle, or operating outside the approved registration area, may affect insurance coverage.
- Club UAV operations conducted in accordance with the PSSOPs are covered for public liability under the SLS Group Policy. To ensure this coverage applies, **all club-owned UAVs must be included on the club's annual Insurance Declaration**. UAVs purchased after the annual declaration must be advised to Marsh. Clubs are also encouraged to consider additional coverage for damage, loss or theft of UAVs and associated equipment (e.g. batteries, controllers and chargers). Marsh can provide quotations on request.
- **Incident reporting and gear and equipment inspections** can be completed through the new interim Operations app, reducing paperwork and integrating directly with SurfGuard. All member injuries must also be reported to the State Operations Centre. Branch Inspectors must be registered in SurfGuard to access inspection functionality. Contact Hamish Jones (hjones@surflifesaving.com.au) to arrange access.
- The **Rescue of the Month** award aims to recognise excellence in lifesaving and service delivery, measured against industry best practice and operating procedures. Clubs are encouraged to nominate their members for this award.

Relevant Links

- [Reprogramming Radios](#) – to access Circular 3967 which outlines arrangements for clubs to have their radios reprogrammed.
- [Public Safety Standard Operating Procedures \(SOPs\)](#) – the guidelines established by SLSNSW to ensure safe, consistent and effective operations across various lifesaving activities.

- [Patrol Operations Manual \(POM\)](#) – the template that clubs complete outlining club-specific communication protocols, hazard and risk management plans, beach management strategies, and emergency operations plans.
- [Lifesaving Skills Development Programs](#) – for more information on the Lifesaving Development Programs, dates, locations and how to register.
- [Rescue Services Applications & Re-endorsements](#) – to access the Rescue Services Application Procedure and application form to become or to be re-endorsed as a Rescue Services member (Rescue Services includes Offshore Rescue Boats (ORBs), Rescue Watercraft (RWC), and Duty Officers).
- [Annual Compliance Circular](#) – for information on the requirements that all clubs and branches must meet to be compliant for the 2026/27 season and to ensure access to state funding distributions.
- [Gear and Equipment Inspection Program](#) – to access the circular explaining this program which ensures all SLS patrols have sufficient equipment to meet their Lifesaving Service Agreement requirements, and that gear and equipment details are accurately recorded in SurfGuard.
- [Gear & Equipment and Vessel Registrations](#) – for information on gear and equipment requirements leading into the 2026/27 season and on how to register, sell or dispose of Surf Rescue vessels.
- [Rescue of the Month](#) – for information on how to nominate members for the Rescue of the Month.
- [Critical Incident Support](#) – for information related to the critical incident support procedures, including short guides for members, families and friends.
- [Skills Maintenance webpage](#) – to access the SLSNSW Skills Maintenance Circular for the 2026/27 patrol season and other supporting resources.
- [Local SAREX Toolkit](#) – A practical, ready-to-use set of resources to help clubs plan and deliver Search and Rescue Exercises (SAREX).

Lifesaving *(Continued)*

Key Tasks

- ☐ Reprogram all radios (see Circular 3967).
- ☐ Plan patrol roster (using Lifesaving Service Agreement).
- ☐ Update and Provide a copy of the Patrol Operations Manual (POM) to all patrols.
- ☐ Complete gear and equipment inspections, attaching Defective Equipment Tags as required.
- ☐ Update the Emergency Call Out Team mailing group in SurfGuard.
- ☐ Register new Surf Rescue vessels, along with any existing vessels which are not on SurfGuard.
- ☐ Manage the sale or disposal of Surf Rescue vessels in line with requirements.
- ☐ Ensure Rescue Services members re-endorse using the online form before 31 December 2026.

Key Dates

- SLSNSW Awards of Excellence – Saturday 22 August 2026 (Hyatt Regency, Sydney)
- Club gear and equipment inspection deadline – Friday 11 September 2026
- Emergency call out team members entered into SurfGuard – Friday 11 September 2026
- Patrol season starts – Saturday 26 September 2026
- Patrol season ends – Monday 26 April 2027



Education

Key Changes

The opportunity to discuss the below key changes in more detail will be available to all Trainers, Assessors, Facilitators (TAFs) and Chief Training Officers (CTOs) at the upcoming branch pre-season meetings. They will also be presented in the online pre-season module which will be released late July/early August. Completion of the online module is a requirement for annual TAF re-endorsement.

Key changes to be communicated include:

- The focus of **skills maintenance** for SRC and Bronze Medallion this season includes:
 - board rescues (SRC & Bronze Medallion)
 - spinal management, orthopaedic injuries and cardiac conditions (Bronze Medallion only)
 - tourniquet familiarisation (Bronze Medallion) following the roll out of Trauma Kits to clubs last season
- A new **Skills Maintenance Tracker** is available this season to help clubs monitor who has completed skills maintenance and who still needs to do so. The tracker uses data from a custom SurfGuard report and provides an easy-to-read, colour-coded report. Feedback from clubs this season will inform the development of a Power BI dashboard planned for next season. The Skills Maintenance Tracker and supporting instructions are available in the Skills Maintenance Information Booklet (pages 14-15), accessed via the SLS Members Hub Document Library.
- The **Resuscitation [AID] (HLTAID001)** and **Advanced Resuscitation Techniques [AID] (HLTAID007)** awards can no longer be made proficient. Members wishing to remain current must hold the Resuscitation (HLTAID009) and/or Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (HLTAID015) award.
- SLSNSW is working with **RWC TAFs** to better support the consistency of the delivery and assessment of RWC training through the delivery of RWC TAF PD workshops. Outcomes from these workshops, alongside new engagement opportunities for those who could not attend, will be communicated in the coming weeks.
- To improve the member experience of accessing First Aid training via the volunteer-delivered model, the **First Aid Theory Assessment** is now integrated

into the SLS eLearning platform, removing the need for paper-based theory assessments and manual marking.

- New accredited courses will be added to the **SLS Assessing App** this season, starting with IRB Crew, followed by SMPC, IRB Driver and ART.
- **Matched grant funding** is available to help clubs purchase tablets for use with the SLS Assessing App.
- Clubs that did not access or fully utilise the **Lifesaving CPR Equipment Grant** funding last season can do so this season to support the ongoing delivery of **Lifesaving CPR**.

Reminders

- SLSNSW continues to provide a centralised **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** service for SLS awards, units of competency, qualifications and in-depth proficiencies. The service supports returning members and those with existing skills or qualifications, while reducing the workload on volunteer TAFs. Clubs are encouraged to refer eligible members to the service (see **Relevant Links** section).
- **Fully subsidised First Aid training** (delivered by the SLS First Aid Training and Services [FATAS]) continues to be available for new ART award holders and First Aid, ART and Bronze Medallion TAFs. Contact the Training & Education Team to find out more.
- **Individual and group training sessions** continue to be available for first-time users of the SLS Assessing App, and those wanting a refresher.
- **Working with Children Checks** are required for TAFs who volunteer (or are likely to volunteer) with members under the age of 18 for more than 5 days in a calendar year.

Relevant Links

- [SLSNSW TAF Re-endorsement webpage](#) – to access information specific to TAF re-endorsement for the 2026/27 season.
- [SLSNSW Education SOPs](#) – Education procedures.
- [Skills Maintenance webpage](#) – to access the SLSNSW Skills Maintenance Circular and other supporting resources.
- [Co-Delivery](#) – to access resources to support the co-delivery process, including the Co-Delivery: Quick Reference Guide.

- [Become a Trainer, Assessor, Facilitator webpage](#) – to learn more about becoming a TAF.
- [SLS Training Resources webpage](#) – for members and TAFs to access the latest training and SLS course resources.
- [SLS Hub](#) – to access the SLS Document Library and eLearning platform.
- [SLSNSW Assessing App webpage](#) – to learn about the Assessing App and book an individual or group training session.
- [RPL Service](#) – to access information about the centralised RPL service.
- [Lifesaving CPR Equipment Grant 2026/27](#)
- [Education Tablet Grant 2026/27](#)

Key Tasks

- ☐ Assist TAFs to ensure currency in the latest HLTAID units of competency (CPR annually, First Aid and Advanced Resuscitation every three years).
- ☐ Support TAFs to complete the SLSNSW TAF pre-season online module (available in early August 2026) and then complete the online re-endorsement/re-appointment form.
- ☐ Ensure TAFs and patrolling members complete skills maintenance before 31/12/2026.
- ☐ Work with Branch Directors of Education to ensure that appropriate supervision is in place for all assessments and that supervisory activities are recorded through the Record of Supervision Form.
- ☐ Add/update the appropriate 'Endorsed Delegate' award to endorsed delegates for skills maintenance in SurfGuard for your club.

Key Dates

- Training Officer Certificate courses – quarterly intakes
- Assessor and Facilitator courses – intakes as required
- Branch Education Pre-Season Meetings – Aug/Sept 2026
- SLSNSW Awards of Excellence – Saturday 22 August 2026 (Hyatt Regency, Sydney)



Surf Sports

Key Changes

- The nomination and appointment process for officials for the 2027 Surf Life Saving State Championships has changed. Club quotas have been communicated. See [memo](#) for further information.

Reminders

- All competitors will be utilising **Live Heats** at branch carnivals and all state events. All competitors at these events will require a Live Heats wrist band to compete. Additional wristbands can be purchased via shop@sls.com.au
- All Branch level carnivals and above must be advised to the State Operations Centre (SOC@surflifesaving.com.au) **in advance of the carnival date** (i.e. type, age groups, expected numbers).
- Branch and Local Carnival Safety & Emergency Management Coordinators **must sign on/off with the State Operations Centre using call sign 'Carnival & [Location]'** for all carnivals and events they are overseeing. This protocol extends to all Special Events a club may be involved with.
- **Special Events** (any activity which is not specifically described in the Surf Sports manual (SSM) e.g. ocean swims, water safety/first aid for sports/ community events run by other organisations etc.) may only proceed if approved as a Special Event. The level and type of insurance coverage and/or limitations will be advised as part of the approval process.
- **Working with Children Checks** are required for coaches and officials who volunteer (or are likely to volunteer) with members under the age of 18 for more than 5 days in a calendar year. The [WWCC requirement flowchart](#) has been updated to provide more clarity around water safety members and their need to complete a WWCC.
- Coaches and Officials are required to have completed the online SLS **Child Safe Awareness (18 years +) course**. This requirement will be checked by SLSNSW during the reaccreditation process.
- All coaching and official **re-accreditation documentation** is to be sent to ssaccreditations@surflifesaving.com.au.

- SLSNSW are running Surf Sports Workshops to help clubs establish Surf Sports Programs and also upskill and accredit coaches and officials. See **Key Dates** section below. If you are interested, please email surfsports@surflifesaving.com.au.

Relevant Links

- [Surf Sports Weekly](#) – subscribe to the weekly electronic newsletter for all sport-related information, including SLSNSW and SLSA Sport Circulars and Memos.
- [Surf Sports Manual](#) – to access the online Surf Sports Manual.
- [Surf Sports Event Calendar](#) – the SLSNSW Sports Team and Branch Directors of Surf Sport are progressing on a state-wide surf sport calendar. We hope to publicise the 2026/27 SLSNSW Surf Sports Calendar in the coming weeks.
- [Live Heats Device Guide](#) – to access hardware requirements for the implementation of Live Heats technology to improve your club and branch carnival on-beach experience.
- [SLSA Live Heats Entry System](#) – to access user guides, webinars & FAQs for individual entries, team entries, event organisers & club management.
- [SLSA IT Helpdesk](#) – to access SurfGuard User Guides and log a support ticket.
- [Special Event Application Form](#) – to access the application forms for 'member only' and 'public involvement' Special Events. See 'Club Management' section above for further information about Special Events. Approval must be provided by your branch and by SLSNSW prior to engaging in any Special Events to ensure that insurance coverage is in place.
- [Officials](#) and [Coaches Reaccreditation Forms](#) – to access the reaccreditation forms.
- [SLSNSW Junior Activity Manual](#) – for information about competition eligibility requirements for juniors.

Key Tasks

- ☐ Ensure your club's officials and coaches accreditation is up to date if their accreditation period is ending on 31 December 2026 (see **Relevant Links** section).
- ☐ Ensure members' awards, proficiencies and patrol hours are updated in SurfGuard by 31 December relevant to their age group to compete.
- ☐ Ensure your branch has procured the relevant hardware to utilise the Live Heats platform (see **Relevant Links** section).
- ☐ Ensure your branch has an adequate supply of Live Heats wristbands prior to the start of the season (see **Reminders** section).
- ☐ Ensure your club's competitors have a Live Heats wrist band allocated to them.
- ☐ Encourage key personnel to subscribe to Surf Sports Weekly to keep up to date with all sport-related information (see **Relevant Links** section).



Key Dates

- Surf Sports Workshop – 8-9 August 2026 (Warilla Barrack Point)
- Surf Sports Workshop – 15-16 August 2026 (Tacking Point)
- SLSNSW Awards of Excellence – Saturday 22 August 2026 (Hyatt Regency, Sydney)
- Surf Sports Workshop – 12-13 September (Narooma)
- SLSNSW Interbranch Championships – 28-29 November 2026 (Caves Beach)
- SLSNSW Country Championships – 22-24 January 2027 (South West Rocks)
- SLSNSW Surf Lifesaving State Championships – 27 February-14 March 2027 (Swansea Belmont/ Caves Beach)
- SLSNSW Metropolitan/ Regional & Interseries Boat Championships – 20-21 March 2027 (Ocean Beach)

Membership

Key Changes

- SLSNSW has partnered with **The Duke of Edinburgh's Award** to recognise the volunteering, training, physical activity and leadership undertaken by members aged 13-25. Clubs interested in participating can submit an Expression of Interest and nominate a Duke of Ed Leader, with training and ongoing support provided.
- A new **Junior Activities Coordinator Course** will be available on the SLS eLearning platform in the coming months. The course covers the role of the JAC, activity planning and the delivery of safe and successful Nippers programs. Completion is required for all new Junior Activities Coordinators.
- SLSA has released a suite of resources and eLearning modules to help clubs communicate more effectively with people of all abilities and create more **inclusive beach and club environments**. Resources include communication tools, practical guidance and eight disability and inclusion eLearning modules.
- SLSA has clarified that it does not recommend the use of **high-risk aquatic play equipment** such as water trampolines and inflatable obstacle courses. Floating water mats (e.g. Lilly Pads) are included under SLSA insurance at no additional cost, provided they are used in accordance with certain conditions. See the [Junior Activities Manual](#) for more information.

Reminders

- **Peer Support Officers** continue to provide on-the-ground support following critical incidents, assisting Duty Officers with scene management, conducting well checks post-incident, and referring members to professional support services where required.
- All patrol members aged 18 years+ are required to complete the **SLS Child Safe Awareness (18 years+)** course. Patrol members under 18 years are encouraged to complete the **SLS Child Safe Awareness (13-17 years)** course.
- **Special Events** (e.g. camps, fun days, come and try etc.) may only proceed if approved as a Special Event. The level and type of insurance coverage and/or limitations will be advised as part of the approval process.

- If you experience an issue with SurfGuard, the SLS Members Hub or Nipper Admin Function, please **lodge a ticket** with the [SLSA IT Help Desk](#). Reporting issues ensures the SLSA IT Team has the information needed to investigate and resolve them. Even if you think an issue has already been reported, your ticket can help establish its impact and extent.

Relevant Links

- [SLS Members Hub](#) – to access the SLS Member Online Store, SLS Document Library and eLearning platform.
- [Member Wellbeing and Post Incident Support](#) – for information on member wellbeing and support services, post-incident support processes, and SLSNSW's Peer Support Program.
- [Workers Compensation](#) – for information and support for members who have suffered an illness or injury while performing authorised surf lifesaving activities.
- [Member Development](#) – for information about member development programs run by SLSNSW and SLSA. This page also includes information relating to member engagement opportunities, including youth engagement.
- [Member Recognition](#) – the [Member Recognition Factsheet](#) summarises the new [SLSA Recognition & Appreciation Framework](#). This page also provides information about additional recognition opportunities.
- [Junior Activities Manual](#) – provides all information relevant to Junior Activities and the delivery of the nipper program. Links and downloadable resources (position descriptions, games manuals, Junior Activity Search and Rescue Kit Guidelines) are available on the [Junior Activity webpage](#).
- [Child Safe](#) – for access to Child Safe resources including the Club Child Safe Risk Management Document and Child Safe Activity Planning Guide.
- [Working with Children Check Requirements](#) – for information on Working with Children Checks (WWCCs).
- [Office of the Children's Guardian](#) – clubs must verify all Working with Children Checks through the Employer Portal on the Office of Children's Guardian's website before the details are entered into SurfGuard.

- [Youth Engagement and Duke of Edinburgh Award](#) – access to information for Youth members, youth coordinators as well as resources to support the delivery of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

Key Tasks

- ☐ Ensure that WWCCs are verified with the Office of Children's Guardian and that verification details are recorded in SurfGuard.
- ☐ Ensure that any expired WWCCs are renewed.
- ☐ Ensure that Age Managers have completed their training (including the annual Age Manager Video) to remain current.



Key Dates

- SLSNSW Awards of Excellence – Saturday 22 August 2026 (Hyatt Regency, Sydney)
- Branch Junior Activity Pre-season meetings – August-September 2026
- EOI for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Program Pilot – 01 September 2026
- 18-25 Programs (Sydney YHA) – Dates TBC
- Junior Lifesaver of the Year Program – April 2026
- Emerging Volunteer Leader Programs – Dates TBC

