

Circular 3950

Released 25 March 2026

NSW Pathways Academy

2026/27 NSW Pathways Academy Athlete Applications

Attention: Branch Directors, Club Presidents, Club Secretaries, Club Competition Officers, Branch Officers, Athletes.

Actioned by: Athletes wishing to gain selection in the 2026/27 NSW Pathways Academy Program

Date: 25 March 2026

Contact: Jack Neilson, Sports Development Officer
Phone: (02) 9471 8000
Email: surfsports@surflifesaving.com.au

Summary	SLSNSW is calling for athletes wishing to gain selection in the 2026/27 NSW Pathways Academy Program
Action	Please complete the online NSW Pathways Academy Athlete Application Form by 12 April 2026 .

Summary

Surf Life Saving NSW (SLSNSW) invites talented surf sports athletes aged to apply for selection in the **2026/27 NSW Pathways Academy Program**.

The NSW Pathways Academy is the **highest level of athlete development within the SLSNSW performance pathway** for emerging surf sports athletes.

The program provides selected athletes with access to:

- Development focused surf sports coaching
- Skill development camps
- Athlete education delivered by performance pathways specialists
- Athlete profiling and development support

Selected athletes will have the opportunity to participate in **skill development camps and athlete education sessions throughout the 2026/27 season**.

NOTE: To be eligible for selection in the 2026/27 intake athletes must turn 15 - 17 years of age between 1 October 2026 - 30 September 2027.

Program Overview

The NSW Pathways Academy Program provides a **professional, age-appropriate athlete development program** designed to support talented surf sports athletes as they progress through the Surf Life Saving performance pathway.

This **camp-focused athlete development program** is focused on enhancing long-term athlete development and surf sports performance across three key components:

1. Surf Sports Skill Development

Athletes will participate in surf sports skill development camps delivered by experienced discipline specific performance coaches.

These camps may include:

- Water specialisation (Surf swim, Board and Ski skills, Iron race skills)
- Beach specialisation (Beach sprint and flags skills)
- Event strategies and race tactics

2. Athlete Performance Development

Athletes will receive support in understanding and developing key aspects of athletic performance development including:

- Athlete profiling and development planning
- Strength and conditioning principles
- Injury prevention and management
- Recovery strategies

3. Athlete Education

Athletes will participate in face to face and online education sessions delivered by athlete development and performance specialists.

These sessions aim to help athletes **develop the knowledge and habits required for long-term success in sport.**

The program is designed to complement existing **club-based training and competition environments**, providing additional development opportunities to **build and strengthen the pipeline of skilled surf sports athletes across NSW.**

Academy Camps

Selected athletes will be invited to attend **NSW Pathways Academy Camps** during the program year.

These camps provide intensive skill development, athlete education, performance testing and team development opportunities.

Camp	Date	Venue
Camp 1	15-17 May 2026	Sydney Academy of Sport, Narrabeen
Camp 2	August 2026 [#]	Port Macquarie region*
Camp 3	TBC	TBC

[#] Dates TBC

*Venues are subject to change

Athlete Eligibility

To be eligible for selection in the **2026/27 NSW Pathways Academy Program**, athletes must:

- Turn **15–17 years of age between 1 October 2026 and 30 September 2027**
- Be a **current financial member of a Surf Life Saving Club**
- Hold relevant **proficiency awards**
- Demonstrate commitment to **surf sports competition and development**

Selection

Up to **50 athletes** will be selected into the **2026/27 NSW Pathways Academy Program** across the following NSW regions:

- North Coast region
- Hunter / Central Coast region
- Sydney Northern Beaches region
- Sydney region
- Illawarra & South Coast region

SLSNSW reserves the right to adjust athlete numbers across regions based on the quality and distribution of applicants.

Athletes will be selected by the **SLSNSW Pathways Academy Selection Panel**, with endorsement from the relevant **Branch Director of Surf Sports**.

Selection will consider holistic athlete assessment factors including:

- Competition Performance and Surf Sports Skill Level
- Athlete Development Potential
- Athlete Commitment, Attitude and Coach Feedback
- Multi-Discipline Capability
- NSW Pathways Academy Program Objectives and Cohort Balance

NOTE: To be eligible for selection in the 2026-27 intake athletes must turn 15-17 years of age between 1 October 2026 - 30 September 2027.

Program Levy

Athletes selected into the program will contribute a **\$500 annual levy**.

This contribution helps support the delivery of the program with SLSNSW covering all program costs including:

- Accommodation and meals at camps
- Coaching and athlete education sessions
- Athlete profiling and development activities
- Performance coaches and performance support specialists

How to Apply

Athletes wishing to apply must:

1. Familiarise themselves with the [NSW Pathways Academy Selection Guidelines](#)
2. Complete the online [NSW Pathways Academy Athlete Application Form](#)
3. Ensure their nomination is **endorsed by their Surf Life Saving Club**

After applications close, **Branch Directors of Surf Sports** will receive all nominations from their Branch and will be required to provide endorsement within **48 hours**.

Individuals **do not need to obtain Branch endorsement prior to applying**.

If a Branch does not endorse a nomination, the Branch will communicate this directly with the athlete.

Key Dates

Activity	Date
Applications open	25 March 2026
Applications close	12 April 2026
Athlete Selections confirmed	26 April 2026
Camp 1 Narrabeen	15-17 May 2026