



Surf Life Saving Australia – Circular 68/25-26)

Title:	National Leaders' Masterclass 2026
Document ID:	Circular 68/25-26
Audience:	Members aged 30+ years, from a range of different backgrounds, interests and focus areas within SLS.
From:	Learning & Development
Date:	14 April 2026
Summary:	Applications are now open for the National Leaders' Masterclass 2026, taking place from 22 – 26 July at Adelaide University. Multicultural and Indigenous Scholarships are also available for eligible members. Applications Close: Sunday, 17 May 2026.

What is National Leaders' Masterclass?

The National Leaders' Masterclass (Masterclass) is an annual leadership development program for members aged 30+ who currently hold a senior leadership role within Surf Life Saving (SLS). Participants come from a diverse range of clubs, roles and backgrounds across the movement.

In late 2017, SLSA formed a strategic partnership with the University of South Australia, (now Adelaide University), to support the delivery of Masterclass. The program is delivered in collaboration with Adelaide University, with participants also having the opportunity to explore further graduate study pathways following completion of Masterclass.

Masterclass is designed to develop strategic thinking capabilities and strengthen leadership effectiveness within clubs, workplaces, and the broader SLS movement. Participants will be challenged intellectually and equipped with practical tools to lead, influence, and drive change.

The program also fosters strong national networks, connecting like-minded members who are passionate about contributing to the future of Surf Life Saving and advancing SLSA's 2030 Strategic Priorities.

Benefits of Masterclass

Participants will gain:

- Enhanced leadership capability, with a focus on strategy and strategic thinking.
- Greater awareness of responsibilities and accountabilities within SLS.
- Improved understanding of leadership challenges and broader societal issues.
- Increased ability to think and operate at a strategic level.
- Opportunities to network and collaborate with members from across Australia.
- Exposure to Surf Life Saving at a national level.
- Ongoing connection through the SLSA Leaders' Alumni network.

When and Where

Where: Adelaide University, Adelaide SA

When: Wednesday 22 July – Sunday 26 July 2026

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Be at least 30 years of age as of 22 July 2026
- Be a current financial member of an SLSA affiliated Surf Life Saving Club
- Demonstrate leadership experience (preferably within SLS)
- Currently hold a senior leadership role within SLS
- Show a strong desire to influence the future direction of the organisation.



Participant Selection

- Approximately 24 participants will be selected nationally
- There is no state/territory allocation
- Selection is based on merit and suitability for the program

Clubs are encouraged to nominate one applicant who demonstrates strong engagement and leadership potential.

All applicants must be endorsed by their club, branch (where applicable) and state/territory. Please note that endorsement does not guarantee selection. The final decision remains with SLSA.

Ideal Applicant Profile

We are seeking individuals who are:

- Courageous and innovative thinkers
- Enthusiastic and committed to learning
- Dedicated to SLS long term
- Emerging influencers within their club
- Team orientated and collaborative
- Highly motivated and self-aware

Participant Fee

Masterclass is predominately funded by SLSA as part of *building the national leaders of the future* fund. The participant fee is:

- \$950 (including GST) if the individual is flying to Adelaide
- \$500 (including GST) if the individual is arranging their own travel by car, bus or train.

This fee covers tuition, flights (where applicable), meals, ground transport and accommodation.

Full attendance is required for all participants at all sessions. Accommodation and parking will also be provided for Adelaide-based participants.

Applicants who meet the criteria are encouraged to apply. Many clubs and/or states/territory assist with the fee, however, applicants should discuss this with the relevant contact, before applying.

Multicultural and Indigenous Scholarships

To support diversity within the movement, SLSA is offering two Scholarship opportunities to members from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) backgrounds to take part in Masterclass 2026. Successful applicants will receive full funding (no participant fee).

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Identify as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) (CALD) or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)
- Meet all standard Masterclass eligibility requirements
- Demonstrate leadership potential and desire to positively influence their community.

Impact

These scholarships aim to:

- Support emerging leaders from diverse communities
- Build confidence, skills, and leadership pathways
- Strengthen connections between SLS and the communities it serves
- Develop future role models within multicultural and Indigenous communities.



How to Apply

Supporting Documentation

Applicants must upload:

- Club and Branch (if applicable) endorsement form. This form can be found on the last page of this circular ([click here](#)), or it can be downloaded separately from the SLS Hub ([click here](#)).
- A current CV or resume.

Application Form

Click the following link to access the application form: [2026 National Leaders' Masterclass Application form*](#)

**Select 'Yes' on Page 2 if you would like to apply for the Multicultural and Indigenous Scholarship.*

State/Territory Endorsement

Once submitted, applications will automatically be forwarded to the relevant State/Territory for endorsement.

Key Dates

What	When
Applications Close	17 May 2026
State/territory centre recommendations to SLSA	22 May 2026
Successful applicants notified	5 June 2026
National Leaders' Masterclass	22 – 26 July 2026

Testimonials

“Fantastic opportunity, incredibly interesting content, valuable insight into evaluation/reform/implementation strategic direction and most importantly spending time with dedicated, passionate and generous club members from across the country.”

“This course was so much more than I could have imagined. I love the new friends I have and the knowledge I have gained and revised. With my love and passion for SLS, I can really see myself as a future leader in the movement and look forward to using programs like this one to further develop my array of skills and relationships.”

“Despite being in Lifesaving for over 40 years, I found the Masterclass to be an eye-opening experience with likeminded people who all are trying to do the same thing...save lives. The skills which this course has given us are first class. I have sat on many Boards, run my own large commercial contracting businesses, and been involved in committees for many years, but the learnings and skills we have gained through Masterclass were mind blowing! I just wish we had this opportunity to be able to make it available to every Lifesaving Leader.”

“The program has increased my confidence to implement change within the club and has motivated me to take the lead on new initiatives. With a stronger understanding of strategic thinking and leadership, I feel better equipped to drive meaningful projects that align with the club's long-term goals.”

“All round an extraordinary experience. I was not aware how much I could learn in such a small time and how much that would affect my day-to-day efficiency. Having the learning embedded in the Surf Life Saving environment made it extraordinarily useful for my volunteer work but it also expanded my understanding in all areas of my life.”



Club & Branch Endorsement Form Template

The following form can also be downloaded from the SLS Hub ([click here](#)).

Club Endorsement

Club Name:

Club Contact

Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date:

Comments:

Branch Endorsement (where applicable)

Branch Name:

Branch Contact

Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date:

Comments: