

# Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	Women's Mentoring Program Cohort 8 – August 2026
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Audience:	All members
From:	Sandi Davis, Member Development Coordinator
Date:	25 May 2026
Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nominations for mentors and mentees <b>close Sunday 21 June 2026</b></li> <li>National Women's Mentoring Program – Cohort 8 <b>commencing 25 August 2026</b></li> </ul>

## History and purpose of the Women's Mentoring Program

The SLSA Women's Mentoring Program (the Program) empowers women across Surf Life Saving (SLS) to grow in confidence, strengthen leadership capability, expand networks, and support one another to thrive within the movement.

Whether participants are stepping into leadership for the first time or looking to further develop their influence and impact, the Program provides a supportive environment to learn, connect, and grow alongside like-minded women from across Australia.

SLSA recognises the importance of building a diverse and inclusive organisation, including increasing the number of women in leadership roles nationally. The Program was established to create more deliberate pathways for women to access leadership development, visibility, mentoring, and meaningful connections across the movement.

The Program supports women in both their volunteer and professional roles, while contributing to SLSA's 2030 Strategic Priorities by building a stronger and more gender diverse leadership pipeline that better reflects both our nation (51% women) and our movement (45% women).

Launched on 1 July 2020 as part of the 40-year celebration of women in SLS, the Program has now supported more than 250 mentors and mentees from across Australia.

## What is the Women's Mentoring Program?

The SLSA Women's Mentoring Program is a 12-month online initiative for members aged 16 and above. Each mentee is paired with a mentor from another state or territory, encouraging diverse perspectives, shared experiences, and national connections.

The 2026 Program will commence on 25 August 2026. Throughout the year, mentors and mentees will meet regularly online to discuss goals, leadership challenges, personal growth, and professional development.

The mentoring relationship is mentee-led, with mentees encouraged to take ownership of their development by organising meetings, identifying goals, and guiding conversations based on what is most valuable to them.

In addition to one-on-one mentoring, participants will take part in five one-hour online workshops delivered by SLSA throughout the Program. These workshops are designed to support personal and professional growth and connection. All sessions will be recorded for participants that are unable to attend live.

## Why Apply?

The Women's Mentoring Program provides participants with the opportunity to:

- Build confidence, leadership capability, and communication skills
- Connect with experienced and inspiring women from across Australia
- Expand professional and volunteer networks within Surf Life Saving
- Explore personal and professional goals in a supportive environment
- Gain new perspectives, insights, and leadership tools
- Strengthen their sense of belonging and connection within the movement
- Become part of an ongoing community of women supporting women in leadership

## What it means to be a Mentee

A mentee plays an active role in establishing the direction of their mentoring journey and identifying what they want to achieve through the Program.

The primary goal of the mentoring process is to support the mentee in exploring their broad career and personal development goals and establishing a plan to achieve them.

To make the most of the experience, mentees are expected to:

- Clearly communicate their goals and aspirations to the mentor
- Commit dedicated time and energy to the mentoring relationship, remain flexible with scheduling, and honour all agreed meeting times
- Organise meetings, prepare and guide discussion topics (available online resources can assist with this)
- Be open to feedback, reflection, and new perspectives
- Maintain honesty about challenges and areas for growth

This proactive engagement ensures a productive and meaningful mentoring experience. The minimum age to be a mentee is 16 years.

## What it means to be a mentor

Mentors play an important role in supporting and inspiring the next generation of women leaders within SLS. Through sharing experiences, offering perspective, and creating space for reflection and growth, mentors help build confidence and capability across the movement while also strengthening their own leadership and coaching skills.

Mentors support mentees by:

- Offering fresh perspectives
- Encouraging reflection and problem solving
- Acting as a sounding board for ideas and challenges
- Sharing relevant experiences and learnings
- Helping mentees identify opportunities for personal and professional development.

Who should apply:

- Individuals who have held different roles or leadership positions within their club, workplace or community.
- Experience gained both within and outside SLS is valued
- Diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives are encouraged, as they enrich the mentoring experience

Mentoring is also an opportunity to:

- Give back to the movement and support future leaders
- Build meaningful national connections
- Re-energise engagement within SLS.
- Strengthen coaching, communication and leadership capability
- Access the opportunity to complete the TAEDEL414 Mentor in the Workplace unit as part of the program.

## What does the program include?

Participants will receive:

- A 12-month mentoring partnership with a member from another state or territory
- Access to five online development workshops hosted by SLSA
- Initial onboarding and mentoring training
- Resources and support through the McCarthy Mentoring online platform
- Opportunities to connect with a national network of women across Surf Life Saving
- Flexible meetings scheduled collaboratively between mentors and mentees

Mentoring meetings are typically held every 4-6 weeks and generally run for 1-2 hours, depending on the needs of each mentoring partnership. As participants are matched nationally, meetings will take place online via Zoom, Teams, Facetime or phone.

## Program Commitment

Participants should expect:

- One mentoring meeting approximately every 4–6 weeks
- Five online workshops across the 12-month Program
- Approximately 2–4 hours per month commitment

## How to apply

### Supporting documentation

The following documents must be uploaded to the Women’s Mentoring Program Application Form before submission:

- A current CV
- A recent photo of yourself

### Support person (Mentee’s only)

All mentees are required to nominate a trusted support person as part of the application process.

This person acts as an accountability partner and source of encouragement throughout the Program, helping support the mentee’s ongoing engagement and development journey. The support person will receive periodic updates from SLSA about the mentee’s progress and will be notified if the mentee becomes inactive or unresponsive.

### Participant allocation

Approximately 20 mentees and 20 mentors will be selected for the Women’s Mentoring Program Cohort 8. Selection is based on suitability for the Program, with no state or territory allocation quotas.

*Please note: Club, Branch, and State endorsement is not required for this Program.*

## Ready to Apply?

Click the following link to access the application form: [SLSA WMP Cohort 8 Application Form](#)

*Please note: the minimum age to apply as a mentee is 16 years.*

## Timeline

What	When
<b>Applications close</b>	<b>Sunday, 21 June 2026</b>
Phone interviews may be conducted with mentees and mentors	Monday, 6 – Friday, 10 July 2026
Successful applicants notified by	Friday, 31 July 2026
Program launch (online)	Tuesday, 25 August 2026
Mentors and mentees media announcement	Tuesday, 25 August 2026
Mentor and mentee workshop 1 (online)	Wednesday, 23 September 2026
Program reviews and workshops	Quarterly from September

## Testimonials

“The Program has been a valuable and empowering experience. Being supported by a mentor who understands both lifesaving and leadership, alongside real-life challenges, has helped me grow in confidence and self-belief. It has encouraged me to lead with purpose instead of pressure and this growth has come full circle at my club, where I now feel more confident and capable in supporting, guiding and positively influencing others.” – Mentee Cohort 7

“Being part of the Program has had a positive impact on me. As a young member, navigating surf club life can be challenging, but being paired with someone who has achieved roles I aspire to is inspiring. The program has helped

me balance surf and school, and having guidance from someone with experience has given me clarity, confidence, and motivation to keep working toward my goals within the surf lifesaving community.” – Mentee Cohort 7

“I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as a mentor with the SLSA WMP. I was nervous that I might not meet my mentee's expectations as a mentor but from our first call we built a strong rapport. This has been a mutually beneficial program where we have learnt from each other, shared challenges and leveraged our collective experience to try something new. It was also great to get insight into how other clubs operate in other states.” – Mentor Cohort 6

“Having the opportunity to engage with people from around Australia and help guide someone in their Surf Life Saving journey is an opportunity that is fulfilling and inspiring to my own journey.” – Mentor Cohort 7

Still unsure about joining the WMP? Don't just take our word for it—hear from some of our inspiring alumni:

- [Sarah Baldwin, Rainbow Bay SLSC & Kerry Armstrong-Smith, Umina SLSC \(Cohort 6 mentee & mentor\)](#)
- [Kimberley Humphreys, Coolum Beach SLSC & Jacinta Day, Seacliff SLSC \(Cohort 6 mentee & mentor\)](#)
- [Dianna Worrell, Noosa Heads SLSC \(Cohort 6 mentor\)](#)
- [Amy Dyer, Taree Old Bar SLSC \(Cohort 6 mentee\)](#)

### Further information

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback regarding the Women's Mentoring Program, please contact Sandi Davis – [sandi.davis@sls.com.au](mailto:sandi.davis@sls.com.au).