



Surf Life Saving Australia – Circular (10/26-27)

Title:	National Leadership College 2027 – Expressions of Interest
Document ID:	Circular 10/26-27
Audience:	Members 20 - 30 years - courageous and creative thinkers committed to the future of SLS
From:	Sandi Davis, SLSA Member Development Coordinator
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Summary:	Expressions of interest are open for the National Leadership College 2027, from 31 January to 6 February 2027 at Sydney Harbour YHA – The Rocks, Sydney. Multicultural and Indigenous Scholarships are available to members. Applications close: Sunday, 13th September 2026

National Leadership College

The National Leadership College (NLC) is Surf Life Saving's annual leadership development program, recognising and celebrating young leaders aged 20 to 30 from across Australia. Participants bring with them a wide variety of experiences from their clubs, roles, and SLS backgrounds. While many will have previously taken part in a state leadership program, others may join with leadership experience gained through work, study, or community involvement. The NLC is a key step in the SLS leadership pathway, helping to grow the next generation of leaders within our movement.

NLC is more than just a program, it's an exciting and transformative experience. Over the course of the week, participants will strengthen their leadership skills, expand their networks, and discover new ways to make a positive impact on Surf Life Saving. The program is designed to challenge participants intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically, creating valuable opportunities for both personal and professional growth.

Each day offers a mix of keynote speakers, interactive electives, activities, and themed challenges. Participants are paired with mentors, providing valuable guidance and ongoing opportunities for reflection and development.

A highlight of NLC is the chance to connect with passionate members from across the country. These new friendships and networks go beyond the program, opening fresh perspectives and opportunities to collaborate nationally. By sharing ideas, resources, and visions for the future, NLC participants help strengthen Surf Life Saving as a powerful and effective national movement.

SLSA Strategic Plan 2030

NLC aligns with [Surf Life Saving Australia's Strategic Plan 2030](#) by supporting the strategic priorities:

- Strategic Priority 1 - Making it easier to be a life saver
- Strategic Priority 2 - There's a place for everyone in Surf Life Saving
- Strategic Priority 3 - Make our movement more sustainable

Where and when

Where: Sydney Harbour YHA – The Rocks, 110 Cumberland Street, Sydney NSW

When: Sunday 31 January to Saturday 6 February 2027 (you must be available for the duration of the program)

What participants gain from NLC

- Gain a national perspective on Surf Life Saving
- Connect directly with SLSA leaders and role models
- Build lifelong friendships and networks across Australia
- Grow your confidence and ability to make things happen
- Discover and strengthen your unique leadership style
- Share your voice and tackle real issues in SLS
- Be inspired by industry experts and guest speakers
- Join a Leadership Alumni network for life



Who can apply

National Leadership College participants must meet the following requirements:

- Be 20 to 30 years old on 31 January 2027
- Be a current financial member of an SLSA affiliated club
- Have some previous leadership experience or training (ideally within SLS)
- Show strong potential as a future SLS leader with a drive to shape our movement's direction

Participant allocation

Approximately 24 participants will be selected for the National Leadership College. Selection is based on each applicant's alignment with the program objectives, with no set quotas by state or territory.

Clubs are encouraged to nominate one member who reflects the values of both their club and SLSA, and who demonstrates courage and a dedication to personal growth.

All participants must be endorsed by their club, branch (where applicable), and state/territory. Please note, endorsement does not guarantee acceptance, the final selection is made by SLSA.

We are looking for members who are:

- Courageous, creative thinkers
- Enthusiastic and eager to learn
- Committed to the future of SLS
- Emerging leaders within their club
- Team players
- Motivated and self-aware
- Active contributors to their club community
- Positive and inspiring role models

Participant Fee

The National Leadership College is primarily funded by Surf Life Saving Australia as part of our commitment to developing the leaders of tomorrow. Participants contribute a fee:

- \$950 (incl. GST) – for participants flying to Sydney
- \$500 (incl. GST) – for participants travelling by car (parking included), bus, or train

All tuition, flights, meals, transport, and shared accommodation are included.

We encourage anyone who meets the eligibility requirements and feels the program is right for them to apply. Many clubs, states, and territories offer financial support to help cover the participant fee, and applicants are encouraged to discuss this with their clubs/states before applying.

Multicultural and Indigenous Scholarships

As part of Surf Life Saving Australia's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion, we are proud to offer two (2) fully funded scholarships for members from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) backgrounds to participate in the National Leadership College 2027.

Successful recipients will not pay the participant fee.

Who can apply for a Scholarship?

In addition to meeting the general program eligibility requirements, scholarship applicants must:

- Identify as CALD or as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Demonstrate strong potential as a future SLS leader, with a commitment to shaping our movement's future direction and making a positive contribution to their local CALD, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community

Why is this important?

These scholarships create opportunities for emerging leaders to develop the skills and confidence needed to step into leadership roles within their communities and Surf Life Saving. By supporting role models from Indigenous and multicultural backgrounds, we help strengthen connections across communities and inspire others to see the possibilities of education, leadership, and contribution within Surf Life Saving.



Nomination Guidelines

As places are limited and the program is highly competitive; applicants will be asked to complete a short application (including a series of questions) before their SLS state/territory provides endorsement.

Supporting Documentation

A Club and Branch (if applicable) endorsement form must be uploaded to the NLC application form, before it can be submitted. The endorsement form can be downloaded separately from the SLS Hub ([click here](#)).

Application Questions

The application form includes a series of questions; however, most of the application is intentionally designed to be flexible, allowing applicants to present their experience, aspirations, and leadership journey in a format that best reflects who they are. Applicants may choose to submit either:

- A one-page written summary (only the first page will be reviewed) or
- A three-minute video submission

Applicants should address the following in their submission:

- Describe your involvement in Surf Life Saving to date, including key roles, achievements, and contributions at club, branch, state and/or national level. Please outline your current primary leadership role and any leadership positions you have held within Surf Life Saving over the past five years.
- What leadership role(s) do you aspire to hold within Surf Life Saving by 2028, and why?
- What leadership positions or experiences have you had outside of Surf Life Saving?
- What do you hope to gain from participating in the National Leadership College, and how will this support your future leadership development?
- What skills, experiences, perspectives, or qualities will you bring to the National Leadership College?

Application Form

Click the following link to access the application form: [National Leadership College Application Form*](#)

**If you would like to apply for the Multicultural and Indigenous Scholarship, you will need to select 'yes' on page 2 of the application form.*

State/Territory Endorsement

Once the application form has been submitted, it will automatically be sent to the relevant State/Territory for their endorsement.

What	When
Applications Close	13 September 2026
State/territory centre recommendations due to SLSA	18 September 2026
Successful applicants notified the week of	23 October 2026
National Leadership College	31 January - 6 February 2027

Testimonials

"The week was phenomenal, I loved how everything we learnt eventually linked together. The group was amazing, and I was honoured to be surrounded by like-minded members in the same boat as me from all over the country. I feel ready for anything now, so grateful for the opportunity and we are so fortunate to have such an amazing experience."

"I cannot begin to express my gratitude for being given this opportunity! The space that you have created for us to step into has enabled myself to grow personally but also then take those skills back to my club and I am so grateful for this."

"The experience was really challenging and self-defining. It gave us tools and resources to help reflect on who we were and who we wanted to be. I felt that every participant left empowered and motivated to use what we had learned in a positive and progressive manner."

"This was definitely one of the best weeks of my life, and easily a highlight of my Surf Life Saving journey. So thankful for this opportunity!"

Still not convinced? Check out the NLC 2026 video [here](#)

Further info contact

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