



Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	2026-27 Australian Ocean and Beach Open and Youth Interstate Championships Entry Circular
Document ID:	Circular 26/26-27
Audience:	State/Territory Surf Sport Managers, Directors, Club Secretaries, Branches, State/Territory CEO's Sport Standing Committee
From:	Sport
Date:	22 September 2026
Summary:	This Circular contains the relevant details for entering the Australian Open and Youth Interstate Surf Life Saving Championships, Friday 8 January 2027 at Newcastle Beach

SUMMARY

This Circular should be used as reference information by all State/Territory centres and Championship Officials appointed to the event.

All medal & trophy presentations for the 2026/27 Australian Open and Youth Ocean and Beach Interstate Championships will occur at the conclusion of racing on Friday 8th January 2027, once the point score is checked and confirmed.

Gear and equipment insurance are the responsibility of the individual competitor or State team management. Surf Life Saving Australia will not accept responsibility for loss, damage or theft of equipment.

EVENT COMMUNICATION

Communication about this event will be directly to State Sport Managers and nominated Team Managers via email and Whatsapp.

TEAM TRAVEL, EQUIPMENT & DRESS

- States will be responsible for the selection of their representative teams and making arrangements for travel and accommodation.
- States are also responsible for making the appropriate arrangements regarding equipment, outfitting and so on for their teams.
- A shirt, shorts, headwear, costume and competition cap are the recommended uniform for each team.
- SLSA will provide an athlete 'Hi-Vis' lycra singlet for each athlete. It is compulsory that these singlets be worn in each event.

TEAM COMPOSITION / SIZE

- The 2026/27 SLSA Australian Open and Youth Interstate Championships will hold Open and Youth events.
- The overall Open and Youth Interstate champions will be the team with highest cumulative points for the Open and Youth and divisions combined.
- Each Open Team will consist of a maximum of 5 male and 5 female competitors, Each Youth Team will consist of 5 male and 5 female competitors. Total Team size: 20
- Competitors must compete for the whole of the Championships in either the Open or Youth Competition. They are **not permitted to compete outside of their chosen division**.
- All competitors must have their appropriate division (Open (O) or Youth (Y)) clearly marked on their arms in black waterproof marker.
- Team managers and/or state staff are to nominate their team, category and configuration, via the Team Configuration spreadsheet, to Surf Life Saving Australia by **Wednesday 16th December 2026**.



Note 1: To be eligible for an Open State team a member must be a minimum age of 15 years on or before midnight 30 September 2026 (i.e. Under 17 age group) and hold a proficient SLSA Bronze Medallion / Cert II in Public Safety. Each Open State team will consist of a maximum of 5 male and 5 female competitive members from either the U17, U19 or Open age categories (a total of 10 team members).

Note 2: To be eligible for a Youth State team a member must be a minimum age of 15 years on or before the 30 September 2026 (i.e. Under 17 age group and hold a proficient SLSA Bronze Medallion / Cert II in Public Safety). Each Youth State team will consist of a maximum of 5 male and 5 female competitive members from the U17 age category **only** (a total of 10 team members).

TEAM MANAGEMENT

For event management purposes, SLSA will recognise six (6) team management officials for each team. The positions to be recognised are:

- Manager (2)
- Coach (2)
- Chaperone (2)

TEAM SELECTION

- States/Territories are responsible for the selection of their teams.
- States/Territories are permitted to select "State of Bronze Medallion Origin" athletes based on where the member first gained their Bronze Medallion Award OR select for the State/Territory on the basis of where the member's current club is (if the member wishes to be selected). SLSA will complete an audit of each team to ensure all teams comply with these rules.
- All team selections and individual event allocations will need to be received by SLSA no later than close of business (AEDT) Wednesday 16 December 2026. **Entries must be complete via team sheets.**

Note 1: "Current club and State" - this means the club and State in which the member currently has his/her competitive rights.

Note 2: It is the member's choice whether they wish to be considered for selection by their "State of Bronze Medallion Origin" or their "Current State of Membership".

TEAM SHEETS

- Team managers are required to complete the team entries via the event configuration template (Excel spreadsheet) and send to SLSA no later than COB, **Wednesday, 16 December 2026.**

Note 1: Changes after this date will only be permitted subject to injury or other unforeseen circumstances. No changes to any team entries shall be permitted once the first event has commenced although teams may substitute within the team as required. Evidence **MUST** be provided in the form of a medical certificate or relevant documentation.

Note 2: In the event of an athlete withdrawing from a team. Team Management must

- a) Gain approval from the Competition Committee to replace the withdrawn team member (contact SLSA who will send to Competition Committee Chair)
- b) Ensure the new team member complies with the rules set out above under Team Selection



TIMETABLE OF EVENTS

This is a proposed timetable of events that is subject to change if weather, surf or other unforeseen circumstances arise. All attempts will be made to advise Team Management ASAP in the event of any amendments.

Ocean	Beach	Competitors per state/territory	Timing
Warm Up from 7.45am Opening Ceremony 8:30AM Marshalling 8.50AM			
Youth Surf Race Male		2 competitors	09:00
Youth Surf Race Female		2 competitors	
Open Surf Race Male		2 competitors	09:10
Open Surf Race Female		2 competitors	
Youth Board Race Male		2 competitors	09:20
Youth Board Race Female		2 competitors	
Open Board Race Male		2 competitors	09:30
Open Board Race Female		2 competitors	
Youth Surf Ski Race Male		2 competitors	09:40
Youth Surf Ski Race Female		2 competitors	
Open Surf Ski Race Male		2 competitors	09:50
Open Surf Ski Race Female		2 competitors	
	Youth Beach Sprint Male	1 competitor	10:00
	Youth Beach Sprint Female	1 competitor	
	Open Beach Sprint Male	1 competitor	10:10
	Open Beach Sprint Female	1 competitor	
Youth Ironman		2 competitors	10:20
Youth Ironwoman		2 competitors	
Open Ironman		2 competitors	10:40
Open Ironwoman		2 competitors	
	Youth Mixed Beach Relay	1 team (2 male & 2 female)	11:10
	Open Mixed Beach Relay	1 team (2 male & 2 female)	11:20
Youth Mixed Surf Teams Race		1 team (2 male & 2 female)	11:30
Open Mixed Surf Teams Race		1 team (2 male & 2 female)	11:50
Youth Mixed 4 Person Board Relay		1 team (2 male & 2 female)	12:10
Open Mixed 4 Person Board Relay		1 team (2 male & 2 female)	12:30
Youth Mixed 4 Person Surf Ski Relay		1 team (2 male & 2 female)	12:50
Open Mixed 4 Person Surf Ski Relay		1 team (2 male & 2 female)	13:10
	Youth Beach Flags Male	1 competitor	13:30
	Youth Beach Flags Female	1 competitor	
	Open Beach Flags Male	1 competitor	13:50
	Open Beach Flags Female	1 competitor	
Youth M Shape 8 person Mixed Team Relay	Run, Swim, Swim, Board, Board, Ski, Ski, Run	1 team (4 male & 4 female)	14:10
Open M Shape 8 person Mixed Team Relay	Run, Swim, Swim, Board, Board, Ski, Ski, Run	1 team (4 male & 4 female)	14:30
Presentation and Medal Ceremony			3:00PM



Note: The SLSA Interstate Championships Competition Committee reserves the right to add or delete any events on the day of competition if safety, weather conditions, programming or for other any other warranted conditions/reasons.

EVENT CONDITIONS

- The general competitive conditions, as detailed in the current edition of the SLSA Surf Sports Manual and any subsequent Bulletins, shall apply to the conduct of all events except where amended by these Championship rules.
- The primary amendments are:
 - Water Courses: All individual and team water events will be conducted around the buoy courses set for the individual legs of the Ironman/Ironwoman events. The buoy courses are as per the Shaw and Partners Ironman and Ironwoman Series.
 - Water Event Starts: Unless otherwise advised, all water events shall be started on the beach approximately 15 metres from the water's edge (run start). Craft will be placed in front of the start line and as close as practicable to the water's edge. Handlers are not required for the start of events except for the Ski events where at the Competition Committee's discretion, Handlers may be utilised to hold the craft in the water to avoid the dragging/carrying of skis into the water.
 - Water Event Finishes: Unless otherwise advised, all water events shall finish as per the Ironman/woman races (run finish). Craft and paddles may be abandoned after rounding the last turning buoy of the swim course. Handlers are to remove craft and paddles from the course.

Change Over Area and Tagging for Relay Style Events:

In all relay style events the Referee will designate a Changeover Area that will commence 5 metres before the finish arch (southern side) and finish at the arch. The incoming athlete will run from the water's edge around the southern turning flag towards the finish arch. In the Changeover Area a tag must take place between the incoming competitor and the outgoing competitor. The tag can take place on any part of the body. Any breach of the Changeover Rule may result in disqualification.

M Shape 8 person Mixed Team Relay:

Fixed order of run, swim, swim, board, board, ski, ski, run. To be run as per the rules outlined in the current edition of the Surf Sports Manual. The event will be conducted over an M Shape Course with each water competitor to complete $\frac{1}{2}$ of the M shape course. However, if conditions dictate the event may revert to a traditional course. The Referee will confirm details at the Team Manager meeting.

Note 1: All Beach events shall be the standard courses and distances.

Mixed Board Relay Race and Mixed Surf Ski Relay Race

- (a) The Mixed Surf Board and Surf Ski Relay events comprise of 4 competitors (2 male and 2 female). States/Territories may decide the order that their team members compete in.
- (b) Team members may use the same craft. No member of a team shall be permitted to complete more than one leg of a race.
- (c) A competitor not competing in a leg of the race can become a craft handler. Alternatively, another team member may be a handler.
- (d) Control of craft - A competitor can lose control or contact with their craft on the way out, provided they regain the craft, paddle around all buoys required and round the last course buoy in contact with the craft. A competitor must paddle their surf ski (including paddle) or board (as applicable) around the last course buoy and shall not be disqualified if they lose control or contact with their craft after the last course buoy on the return journey.

Note 2: The beach positions are reversed for the first and second craft legs to assist with fairness of event conduct

COMPETITION EQUIPMENT & SPECIFICATIONS

- Each team shall be responsible for the provision of their own equipment including boards, skis, paddles, rescue tubes and fins.



- All equipment used in competition is to comply with SLSA specifications.
- Random scrutineering of equipment may occur during the 2026/27 SLSA Open and Youth Interstate Championships.

PROTESTS

In the event of a protest by a competitor there will be no right of appeal as the Referee's decision, in consultation with the Deputy Referee shall be final.

In dealing with the protest – the Referee has the discretion to **(but not obligated to)**:

- Speak to any further person he/she believes is appropriate and /or
- View any video or broadcast footage that may assist in his/her decision.

All Placings are deemed final upon the Referee declaring the results as confirmed. No protest can be lodged after the confirmation of the results.

LIVEHEATS & DRAWS

- SLSA will be utilising LiveHeats wristbands for the marshalling and recording process. All competitors who have an existing LiveHeats wristband are to bring these wristbands.
- All results and draws will be posted on liveheats.com/slsa/
- All draws will be random and drawn through LiveHeats
- One draw for the order of the legs for the Ironman, Ironwoman and Taplin Relay events will be undertaken at the Team Manager's briefing.
- The referee will undertake any other ballots required on the beach on the day of the competition.

COMPETITION BRIEFINGS

- A briefing for team managers and key officials will be conducted by the Event Referee the morning of competition. The location of the briefings shall be in the main competition area or as announced
- States/Territories should have a minimum of one and maximum of three personnel attend the briefing.

POINTS SCORE

- The State/Territory with the highest aggregate points earned in the Open and Youth divisions combined, will be the Australian Open and Youth Interstate Champions.
- All competing teams are eligible to earn placing points and trophies.
- Points shall be allocated on a 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, basis for the positions 1st – 6th for each Open, and Youth event contested. Nil points will be earned in the case of a Did not Start (DNS), disqualification or Did not Finish (DNF) result.
- If an Interstate event has less than six teams competing, points will only be allocated for the quantity of teams competing (i.e. only NSW, QLD, VIC, WA competing, points to be allocated on a 4, 3, 2, 1 basis for the positions 1st – 4th).
- Dead heats in events shall be declared as such with teams sharing the placing points for the placing attained, e.g. equal 3rd, each team receives third place points and the next team receives 5th place points.
- In team events (Surf Ski Relay, Surf Board Relay, Beach Relay, Surf Teams Race) points shall be allocated as specified above.
- In individual events the results of 1st competitor and 2nd competitor from each team are added to determine finishing position, effectively making all events 'team' events. To determine winners in each event the State/Territory with the highest aggregate points in an event shall be the winner and receive the first place points. If the total aggregate points result in a dead heat between States/Territory then the State/Territory that has both team members finish in front of the other team competitors (i.e. as per the surf teams races) will be declared the winner e.g. if team one finishes 1st and 6th and team two finishes 2nd and 5th, both receive the same placing points. Then team two would be awarded the higher placing because their second competitor finished in front of team one's second competitor.



Note 1: To determine the aggregate points the first State/Territory competitor to cross the line in an event will receive maximum points, the second competitor 1 point less than first and so on down to 1 point. The points are then aggregated, and the 6 to 1 points* allocated to the point score.

Note 2: If a State/Territory only has one competitor in an event, or if a competitor is disqualified or does not complete the event, the State/Territory may still earn placing points based on the satisfactory completion of the race by one competitor e.g. 10+0=10 points. The aggregated placing points are then used to determine the points allocated to the team's point score.

TROPHIES AND PRESENTATIONS

- Teams will be competing for the Open and Youth Ocean & Beach Interstate Trophy
- Teams placing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the above mentioned interstate point score shall receive Australian Interstate Championship medallions for all team members.

Alan B Whelpton AO Perpetual Shield

- The point score for this Shield shall be determined by the overall placing result recorded by States/Territories in each of the Interstate Championships. In this regard States/Territories shall be allocated points on a 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, basis for their relative 1st – 7th placing in each Interstate Championship (Ocean, Boat, Pool, IRB) no matter how many states compete in the event. The State/Territory with the highest aggregate of points shall be declared winner of the Shield.
- The Ocean/Beach Interstate point scores for Open, Youth and Pathway events shall be combined to determine the overall Ocean/Beach Interstate Champion for the purpose of the Alan B Whelpton AO Perpetual Shield. This will not be determined until after the completion of the Pathway event in April 2027
- In the event of tied points, a count back of best overall results in the four championships (Ocean, Boat, Pool, IRB) will determine the winning State/Territory (that is, number of 1st overall placings. If still equal, number of 2nd placings and so on until a winner is declared). If this method cannot separate States/Territories, joint winners will be declared.
- The 2026/27 Alan B Whelpton AO Perpetual Shield will be recognised at the 2027 Pool Rescue Championships

SPONSORSHIP

- In the event of States/Territories/individuals having conflicting sponsorship with the event sponsor, the SLSA Sponsorship Policy 6.28 must be adhered to.
- SLSA will provide lycras for the event, which will be handed out at the Team Manager Briefing

SLSA CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

- SLSA expects that all members involved in competition will co-operate to ensure a positive public image and to participate in a spirit of goodwill and sportsmanship.
- The SLSA Code of Conduct, Competing Unfairly and Abuse/Inappropriate clauses etc. are contained in the current edition of the [SLSA Surf Sports Manual](#) and any subsequent Bulletins.
- Any incidents or behaviour likely to cause embarrassment or damage to the reputation and/or image of lifesaving competition will be managed as prescribed in the current edition of SLSA's Rules, Surf Sports Manual and any subsequent Bulletins.

MEDIA STATEMENTS

- States/Territories shall be permitted to promote the event and or their State/Territory team within their own state (subject to SLSA approval). However, no competitor, Team Manager, official or spokesperson for a State/Territory, shall make media statements that could bring the Interstate Championships, its sponsor, or officials, into controversy. Such statements shall be deemed to be a breach of SLSA discipline and may be dealt with accordingly.
- Complaints regarding the organisation of the championship, or any other matters, should be directed through the appropriate SLSA channels, and will be dealt with by the responsible section, or officers. Such official complaints will be acknowledged.



THEFT

- Any person/s found stealing signage or any equipment owned by Surf Life Saving Australia, the hosting authority, states or another individual may be immediately reported to police and that person/s be brought before a SLSA Disciplinary Committee.
- Please note that automatic disqualification of the team from the Championship may occur if any member is found guilty of theft.

COMPETITION MANIPULATION

- The SLSA National Policy on Competition Manipulation covers all SLS Events that are conducted by SLSA, State Centres, Branches and Clubs including special events, conducted by third parties sanctioned by an SLS entity and any event, competition or series connected with Surf Lifesaving. Please refer to Policy Document 5.11 for further details.

ANTI- DOPING EDUCATION

- Surf Life Saving Australia supports the Australian Government, the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Olympic Committee, and Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) in their efforts to eradicate the use of drugs in sport. SLSA has published an anti-doping policy, which will be adhered to for this event.
- Please be aware that random drug testing could take place during the Interstate Championships.
- It is highly recommended each team member (including management and staff) complete the SIA online e-learning program (Anti-Doping Fundamentals) to ensure all personnel are aware of contemporary issues pertaining to anti-doping. The link to access this e-learning program is: <https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au/> Further to this, it is highly recommended that each team, under the direction of the management, undergo at least one anti-doping education and awareness activity as a group.
- It is recommended each team member (including management and staff) utilise the SIA [Check Your Substances](#) reference site, or phone 1300 027 232.