



Thursday 19 March 2020

Dear Members,

Surf Life Saving South Australia (SLSSA) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our members. As such, we are working closely with and constantly monitoring communications from Government and SA Health on our response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The SLSSA Board convened a meeting on Wednesday 17 March 2020 to continue to discuss the developing situation, the impact on the organisation and what measures we need to implement to ensure our members are kept safe and informed.

The novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak represents a significant risk to the community, inclusive of our membership, and preventative measures must be put in place to lessen the impact wherever possible. It is imperative that we continue to review our operational practices to ensure that we meet the changing nature of this crisis.

I want to again re-iterate what I have emphasised in previous communications, we are a community based organisation who exists to save lives and build sustainable, healthy communities. Therefore, we must ensure we are not contributing to the spread of COVID -19 as a socially responsible organisation which cares for and about people. This must guide our thinking at all times and will help us make the right decisions through the many grey areas that we are all navigating together.

Yesterday's announcement from the Federal Government further tightens restrictions and shows the serious nature of this pandemic. For the latest updates, information and advice please visit one of the following;

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+topics+a+-+z/novel+coronavirus>

The SLSSA Board endorsed the following policies and guidelines to ensure we protect our members, staff, clients and the general public. This situation is continually evolving and SLSSA will review, amend and implement new actions as required based on information and guidance provided by the authorities.

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Donations \$2 and over are tax deductible

1. Lifesaving and Emergency Response

Club Based Patrols

In the interests of community safety and wellbeing and ensuring we still live our vision of “zero preventable deaths in South Australian waters”, we are committed to continuing beach, water and aerial patrols until the completion of the Easter long-weekend. However, to mitigate risk the Board have endorsed the following recommendations to come into effect immediately;

- April “stand-by” Patrol requirements will be brought forward (this allows Clubs to have minimum patrolling members on the beach and minimum equipment). Clubs are still expected to erect Patrol flags and meet the duration and time requirements as set out in Club Patrol Agreements.
- SLSSA recommends that any patrol member who is unable (due to self-isolation, illness or obligation as a carer) or does not feel comfortable attending patrol, should not be penalised.
- We encourage Clubs to foster social distancing and stagger patrolling members, through setting up more roving and outpost patrols and generally limit the number of members patrolling at any one place at any one time.

Emergency Operations Group

Our Emergency Operations Group will also remain available both proactively and reactively. We will be utilising assets and people in a way that supports Club based patrols and recognised public hotspots whilst ensuring we minimise any risk to these members. Some of these initiatives will be;

- JRB Patrols will have a limit placed on the number of people that can be in the boat at any one time.
- RWC’s will be utilised more often at more locations due to their ability to be operated solo.
- More drones will be flown more often to support club operations.
- We will have limits and contingencies in place for SurfCom including remote capability.

Recommended actions for Patrols dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19

- Use issued PPE as per existing protocols with all patients.
- If a patient exhibits flu like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing) and/or if it is established that the patient has a high temperature over 38 degrees, ensure that the patient is not in any immediate danger, withdraw from activities immediately and notify your Patrol Captain.
- Patrol Captains should notify SurfCom on 13SURF and follow instructions for patient and patrol members. DO NOT broadcast information regarding suspected cases of people with COVID-19 over the radio network.
- DO NOT treat suspected persons with COVID-19 in Surf Club First Aid rooms or other areas of the Club, unless there is a dedicated room and the surf lifesaver is wearing appropriate PPE.
- Patrolling Members who have been directly exposed to confirmed COVID-19 cases should thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water and follow existing SOPs, then self-isolate and seek medical attention.

2. Surf Sports Events

SLSSA Surf Sports Events

The SLSSA Board has endorsed that we deliver no Surf Sports events until at least 1 July 2020. This includes;

- The Junior and Senior Championships which have been previously suspended.
- The IRB Carnivals and IRB State Championship set to be delivered through May – July.
- The Pool Rescue Carnivals and Pool Rescue State Championship set to be delivered through May - July.

Please Note: Although the Pool Rescue and IRB State Championships are scheduled for early July their close proximity to the banned timeline would make preparation and planning by athletes, coaches and events staff unfair and unrealistic.

- Any and all SLSSA organised surf sports events and activities such as high performance training sessions.

Club Based Surf Sports Events

Even events that may not attract in excess of 500+ participants (currently banned by Federal Government), SLSSA still strongly recommend you postpone any club based events or activities until advised otherwise.

3. Meetings, Functions, Presentation Nights

SLSSA Events and Activities

The SLSSA Board has endorsed that SLSSA will not be conducting non-essential face to face meetings, functions or gatherings until at least 1 July 2020 regardless of their size. This does not preclude meetings and the like from occurring, but they will not be facilitated face to face. This will include;

- The planned State Council Meeting (Board elections) for May 20 will be conducted remotely.
- The planned Trainers and Assessors Conference (June) has been postponed.
- All Board and Advisory Committee Meetings will be conducted remotely.

A decision on the August Presidents Forum and Awards of Excellence will be determined at a later date.

Club Events and Activities

The Federal Government yesterday banned all non-essential indoor gatherings of more than 100 people.

- The SLSSA Board strongly recommends that Club presentation and awards functions and club social events should be postponed, even if under 100 participants.

It is suggested that opportunities like Facebook Live still be utilised to celebrate, award and promote award winners.

SLSSA will work to be able to offer advice and assistance to Clubs looking to host AGM's and Meetings remotely.

4. Training and Assessment (Education)

The SLSSA Board discussed the level of risk pertaining to our training and assessment. It was noted through this discussion that many elements of our training and assessment carry risk or may result in situations that are difficult to eliminate and contrary to the Federal Government advice. In particular, we focussed on the close proximity required with member education, including things like resuscitation, spinal boards and the sharing of equipment such as radios. The philosophy of this training is focussed on working as a team in performing rescues, first aid, resuscitation and the like and so this is contrary to current advice around hygiene and social distancing. As a result, the Board has endorsed the following;

SLSSA Club Based Training and Assessment (Education)

- SLSSA will not be conducting any face to face training or assessments for our members until at least 1 July 2020, this includes the two bulk Bronze Assessments scheduled for March and April.

Club Based Training and Assessment (Education)

- Clubs are strongly encouraged to cease all face to face member award training and assessments.

We encourage Clubs to explore alternate training opportunities such as online and through technologies.

Community and Commercial Programs

- SLSSA has ceased and postponed the delivery of all community based programs.
- SLSSA has ceased organising and co-ordinating all public courses at Surf Central.

5. Other Club Based Activities

These events and activities are going to have to be governed and reviewed by each individual Club on a case by case basis. Areas such as fundraising, gym usage, and high risk areas such as bathrooms and kitchen areas as well as venue hire, functions and social gatherings of people less than 100 will need to be strictly managed by Clubs, with appropriate hygiene and social distancing practices in place.

Any activity that could expose members to increased risk of exposure to COVID-19, where Government advice cannot be strictly met or managed, should be postponed.

6. Surf Central

As has been previously communicated to Clubs, SLSSA has a range of activations in place to try to protect members, staff and more broadly the general public. At this time some of these activations, which have been endorsed by the SLSSA Board include;

- SLSSA has determined to cease all international and interstate travel for staff. So in simple terms, staff will not be travelling to any work related meetings, events or similar until further notice.

- SLSSA has determined to cease all non-essential face-to-face meetings for its staff. This includes staff attending any conferences, workshops or similar.
- SLSSA's Surf Central external doors will remain locked at all times. Access to the building will be for SLSSA staff only. In doing so we are going to be stopping uninvited or unexpected people from entering the building. We will cancel, postpone or facilitate future meetings over the phone or via alternative arrangements until further notice.
- We are staggering our workforce and their hours to minimise the risk of transmission and to eliminate a single point of failure within our business. This means some staff, some of the time will be working from home.
- All of our staff group will be fully enabled to work from home or remote locations should it be needed, so that our service to you is not adversely diminished.
- We have in place alternative communication strategies, to ensure our team remain connected and available should they be needed.

7. Protecting Our Most Vulnerable Members

Advice from SA Health and the Federal Government, supported by the new measures put in place, is that those most at risk from COVID-19 are the elderly and people with existing health issues. SLSSA strongly encourages all clubs to implement risk management strategies to limit the potential impact on our older members and members with current health issues by implementing social distancing and isolation practices as advised by SA Health and the Federal Government. This is a time for lifesavers to support our at-risk members.

8. General Safety Message

For further advice on COVID-19 please visit State and Federal Government Health agencies through the links provided on page 1. If in doubt, the below are a good starting point to assist;

- Pay attention to hand hygiene. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially before eating, and avoid touching your face
- Practice cough etiquette by coughing or sneezing into your elbow or using a tissue. Dispose of the tissue into a bin and then wash your hands afterwards
- Avoid close contact with others, such as touching, shaking hands, hugging and kissing
- Regularly wipe down surfaces
- Face masks are not recommended for use by members of the public, although anyone who wants to be cautious can of course choose to wear one
- If you feel unwell and develop a fever or shortness of breath, a cough, sore throat or respiratory illness do not come to work, surf club, patrols or events and contact your doctor.

Take care and please look out for and after each other.

Kind regards,



Damien Marangon
Chief Executive Officer
Surf Life Saving SA