



SURF LIFE SAVING
QUEENSLAND

SAFE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS ROADMAP





SLSQ RESPONSE TO THE SAFE AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS CLUB REVIEW (SEPTEMBER 2021)

Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) is committed to creating safe and respectful environments that promote positive experiences for all. In June 2021, the SLSQ Board of Directors (the Board) commissioned an independent review focused on member experiences within Surf Life Saving Clubs throughout Queensland.

To enable SLSQ to deliver safe and respectful environments for all, the Board recognised that it was essential to ensure safe and respectful approaches are in place for the prevention and handling of issues such as bullying, harassment, discrimination, and child safety.

SLSQ has a commitment to ‘always place the safety and welfare of children and youth above all other considerations.’

This commitment must extend to all members and visitors when it comes to responding to inappropriate behaviours.

Suiko Consulting was appointed to conduct the review and received input from around 1,000 stakeholders through a range of formats, including an online anonymous member survey, regional forums, youth focus groups, one-on-one interviews and written submissions. Responses were from a broad range of surf lifesavers of all ages, including, but not limited to, current and former Club Presidents, Captains, parents, officials and volunteers.

The findings from the review identified a number of matters that SLSQ will address in an ongoing program to modernise. This will be underpinned by educational and development opportunities for our members. In short, the review highlighted:

- The organisation currently has extensive materials on safeguarding children and dealing with inappropriate behaviours, however it identified that it would be beneficial for members if there was a cohesive single source of truth, for members to access information easily.
- The organisation should continue to work on diversity and inclusion as there is a perception that Clubs have a male dominated culture.
- There needs to be a clear and easy pathway to report and handle complaints.
- There was no evidence of overt discrimination or sexual abuse, systemic or otherwise, identified during the review, however, some inappropriate behaviour was reported. As such, there is a need to build greater awareness and provide further education in this area.

The review also highlighted numerous positives aspects of this iconic organisation, including that many Clubs have cultures that create a sense of belonging, community and pride in their surf lifesaving family. SLSQ will use these examples to develop ‘best practice’ models so this positive culture can be emulated in all Queensland Clubs.

The SLSQ Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 has a number of objectives relevant to the Suiko review and we are well positioned to implement and enhance safe and respectful environment by delivering:

- A culture which emphasises the safety and well-being of all who engage with SLSQ.
- SLSQ for Life – Generational cross over and recognition of the importance of our juniors as the next generation lifesavers.
- Establish and rollout a diversity and inclusion, safety and wellbeing program for volunteers and team members.

We believe the work completed to date on safety and respect within our Clubs is a positive step forward in continuous improvement for Surf Life Saving. In doing so, we wish to thank those who gave their time to share their experiences and to acknowledge how our past has shaped our present culture.

In continuing this journey, SLSQ recognises there are some incidences of unacceptable behaviour in our past and by listening and learning from our shared experiences, SLSQ commits to action that will deliver transformative change.

SLSQ is acutely aware of the current climate and community expectations around the issues of sexual harassment, discrimination and bullying, heightened through pervasive use of social media. We are accelerating measures to protect, prevent and reflect modern expectations in this regard. We need to continue to deal with inappropriate behaviour by taking all reasonable steps to ensure everyone's safety.

Effort and additional resources are needed to enhance and enable a culture of safe and respectful environments to grow, to prevent and respond to issues of inappropriate behaviour. We all have a vital role in creating safe spaces.

This will be achieved by expediting risk-based processes and systems that support members, staff and visitors, whilst providing leaders with the confidence to achieve safe and respectful environments.

While continuing on this journey, we are focused on:

- Allocating necessary resources to bring forward programs and new initiatives to drive cultural change.
- An absolute commitment to implementing a framework that seeks to prevent inappropriate behaviours.
- Establishing mechanisms to consult, cooperate and coordinate activities to reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviours.
- Providing management, staff and members with training, education and information on the identification of behaviour that might be interpreted as inappropriate, ensuring effective response strategies and reporting processes are in place for their prevention.
- Utilising governance mechanisms (including measuring, monitoring and reporting) to provide executive, member and stakeholders oversight of the controls in place to prevent inappropriate behaviours.
- Ensuring timely and effective responses to, and reporting of, inappropriate behaviours.

SLSQ has agreed in full to all Suiko's recommendations from its independent review. In responding to the review recommendations outlined below SLSQ's response reflects our core values of; leadership, trust, teamwork, community, safety and respect.

We acknowledge that more can be done to build safe and respectful environments – incremental change is not enough. The Board accepts that strong leadership and resources are now required at all levels to ensure that the recommendations are successfully implemented.

SLSQ's Roadmap to Safer and Respectful Environments will provide clear guidance on how to prevent and address inappropriate behaviours by delivering to Clubs the necessary ingredients to drive cultural change.

SUIKO FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Finding	Recommendation	SLSQ Response
1. Strong lifesaving connection	Foster and promote the lifesaving culture (and purpose)	SLSQ will continue to build on the family orientated nature of our Clubs through an annual PULSE (cultural) survey to benchmark Club performance.
2. Inconsistencies and inaccessibility in Policy Framework	Simplify the SARE Policy Framework	The SARE Program will create a single source of truth to improve accessibility, identify, encourage and promote appropriate behaviours, removing inconsistency and duplication.
3. Poor governance	Implement a Club Health Check, which sets minimum expectations and standards across governance and SARE	Club Health Checks are an important guide to understanding how effective Clubs are in managing safe and respectful environments and we will undertake periodic assessments to measure performance.
4. Bullying Culture	Maintain a zero-tolerance stance for bullying, harassment and abuse	SLSQ will strengthen policies, education and training materials that reflect more clearly our zero-tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and abuse.
5. Lack of diversity and inclusion	Develop specific programs and initiatives targeting youth, multicultural communities and females	SLSQ will develop an Affirmative Action Strategy and adopt targets aligned to Queensland government affirmative action measures.
6. Improve child safety	Implement the Child Safe Framework, including the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations	SLSQ will refresh policies, education and training materials aligned to the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations.
7. Dissatisfaction with complaints handling process	Improve the implementation and promotion of the complaints handling process	SLSQ will update our reporting and complaints handling systems, policies and processes to facilitate and promote the identification and reporting of inappropriate behaviours.

The attached roadmap provides a broad timeline of when SLSQ will implement the Suiko review recommendations. Surf Life Saving Queensland will provide their members with quarterly updates on their progress of Suiko's recommendations.



ROADMAP TO SAFER AND RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS

