SURF SPORTS RE-IMAGINED

2022 - 2025

SURF LIFE SAVING

NEW SOUTH WALES

FOREWORD

On behalf of Surf Lifesaving SLSNSW, we are delighted to introduce our Surf Sports Strategy, **'*Surf Sports Re–Imagined.*'**

Our strategic plan has been developed with input from you, the Membership and has included extensive consultation, workshops, research, and member surveys, alongside input from previously commissioned sports reviews. This process has highlighted both a need to re – imagine surf sports and an optimism about our sport's sustainable future.

'Surf Sports Re–Imagined 22 – 25' gives surf sports a strong purpose both within Surf Life Saving and as a community sport. This strategy is a commitment to positioning surf sports as an enabler to other Surf Life Saving functions and to 'inspire anyone to join the movement.'

Our vision, supported by our four strategic pillars, is to see Surf Sports become NSW's first choice coastal sport & recreation pursuit – delivering brilliant participant experiences.

By addressing the purpose of surf sports within the Surf Life Saving movement,we've highlighted our unique competitive advantage – the beach!

We hope you share our optimism for the future of surf sports and we're looking forward to working together to ensure our vision becomes a reality.

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SLSNSW

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A NEED FOR CHANGE

Surf Life Saving NSW is one of the most iconic volunteer organisations in Australia, with over 76,000 Members across 129 clubs. 'Surf Sports Re – Imagined' acknowledges our history, strong community footing and those that have dedicated themselves to ensuring our greatest asset, the beach, is a safe place for all to enjoy.

Traditionally, Surf Sports has been seen by the community as a means for active patrolling members to maintain their skills and fitness, whilst providing competitive opportunities through carnivals. The purpose of this strategy is to reinvigorate the surf sport experience, grow participation and ensure surf sports becomes a key enabler for club membership growth and retention.

It has become clear that SLSNSW needs a dedicated surf sports strategy to ensure we remain competitive in an increasingly robust sport & active recreation marketplace. The number of sporting passions Australians have today has increased fourfold in the last 10 years. The proliferation of digital technologies, the accessibility of global content and increasing quality of sport and entertainment products means consumers are now allocating finite disposable time and money across a great number of interests. This diversification of sporting interests amongst the population, particularly children and youth presents a threat to the relevancy of Surf Sports.

The impact of COVID19 has accelerated a societal shift away from structured, competitive sport to more participant friendly, social offerings. Furthermore, there has been rapid advancements in the way in which sport is administrated and commercialised across the sector, particularly within community sport. Surf Life Saving must accept we are a player within the sport & entertainment industry and adapt accordingly.

Despite an iconic entry level program, the fact remains that nipper programs have endured flat participation over the last 10 years despite aggregate population growth of 15% and the membership experiences participant churn rates of 90% as nippers move into life saving activities. Similarly, we've seen flat participation trends in competitor entries to both Country and State Surf Life Saving Championships. At the same time, other traditional sports and recreation activities have exploded in both popularity and participation.

Throughout the strategy development process, it became evidently clear that broader Surf Life Saving NSW success is heavily influenced by the success of surf sports. A defined and articulated strategy has the capacity to ensure surf sports remains a clear enabler for our movement. Growing our membership through sport means more patrol hours, a diverse and inclusive membership, more rescue ready personnel, and greater sponsorship revenue.

A clear focus on growing our sport, reducing barriers to entry for new and existing members, delivering exceptional participant experiences and conceptualizing new and innovative ways to deliver our product will help ensure a prosperous future and safer coastlines.

THE PLAN

Our strategy is built around four key pillars which underpin and support our vision of Surf Sports becoming NSW's first choice coastal sport and recreational pursuit.

The plan has addressed sports purpose within the movement. No longer a competitive reward to members, but a repositioning of Surf Sports to 'inspire anyone to join the movement.' To do this, we must understand who our current and future participants are and deliver contemporary sport experiences that excite and build communities. We must also ensure our sports sustainable future in a hyper – competitive industry through investing in technology, upskilling our volunteers and ensuring products attract and grow commercial revenue. The plan articulates a need to explore alternative delivery and governance frameworks to enable our vision to become a reality.

STRATEGY OVERVIEW
2022 - 2025

OUR PURPOSE

Inspire anyone to join the movement

VISION

Become NSW's first choice coastal sport
& recreation pursuit, & industry leader
in volunteer & participation satisfaction

PARTICIPATION

To be measured & growing
(aggregate 20% year on
year) by 2025

PATHWAYS

Inspire & provide opportunity
for all participants, coaches &
officials

GOVERNANCE

Develop people &
governance structures
which are purpose driven

SUSTAINABILITY

Surf Sports becomes
self-sustainable & can invest
in people & products

STRATEGIC BEHAVIOURS

Make data driven decisions

Always look to innovate

Deliver great experiences

SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

PARTICIPATION

1.1 Define what constitutes a Surf Sports participant & measure of participants across the ecosystem annually	1.2 Promote branch level training opportunities to allow members interested in competition to access coaches locally if not available at club level
1. SLSNSW to set a clear definition of what constitutes a Surf Sports participant (age groups captured, type of events participated in, and a clear boundary of what a participant is, and what a participant is not) 2. Define the method to measure participation, how this data will be captured and who is responsible for collecting the data 3. SLSNSW to measure participation based on the determined definition across the whole network for the 2022/23 season, and track participation growth / decline against this number moving forward	1. Assess which clubs / branches would be willing to implement training at the branch level 2. Identify a structure for which club hosts "branch" training and whether this is done on a rotation basis 3. Test with some designated branches whether this is effective in improving the participant experience, access to coaching and driving a greater Surf Sports community
1.3 Improve carnival & event schedules to create flexibility. Ensure compelling, fun & engaging experiences for participants	1.4 Identify how barriers to entry can be made more flexible, including patrol hours, bronze medallion & craft access
1. Develop a uniform structure and format for carnival and event days across all age groups 2. Develop other event formats which are compelling fun and engaging 3. Determine where efficiencies can be found in the current event day format 4. Identify any opportunities to streamline event days and make carnivals shorter 5. Implement a tiered event day structure whereby participants are only required to attend for their age group / ability level	1. Identify and prioritise the top barriers to entry preventing participants from joining, or returning to Surf Sports 2. Understand how more flexible approaches to award requirements can be implemented 3. Consider how the cost structure of craft and equipment can be supported by clubs and branches

PATHWAYS

2.1 Introduce a clear pathway from U13's through the older age groups	2.2 Ensure that competition experiences are appropriately & adequately supplied at each stage across the pathway
1. Introduce a social pathway for participants who want to participate for non-competitive reasons to provide direction for those who want to compete socially 2. Define the Nipper product 3. Map a clear pathway from cadets onwards 4. Consider messaging approaches which currently promote U14's as an exit and end point within the pathway 5. Introduce program offerings delivered at the club level 6. Develop teams and non-traditional formats to keep the non-performance competitors engaged and involved	1. Understand what the optimal competition product looks like across each age group 2. Ensure consistent event day competition experience across all age groups, abilities and competition types (e.g. Fast Five, team days etc) 3. Test and refine with a sample set of clubs and branches new event day structures and their broader feasibility 4. Clearly communicate to branches and clubs the new competition types across each stage of the pathway, with appropriate support
2.3 Ensure adequate & appropriate coaching resources (human & physical) to support the participant pathway in all clubs / branches	2.4 Reframe Surf Sports as a key 'enabler' across the SLSNSW pathway to further access opportunities within the movement
1. Carry out an audit on number of actual active coaches in each club and branch 2. Identify what a quality coaching program for Surf Sports looks like and how coaching resources can support the participant pathway across all clubs / branches 3. Establish a clear training program across the state (which combines theory and practical training) to be completed by all levels 4. Map out the pathway from a social coach, through to an elite level coach and what training & practical experience is required to progress through each milestone along the pathway	1. Identify the best pathway end-to-end structure for a Surf Sports participant (i.e. one structured pathway, or split into Performance and Participant) 2. Determine what milestones are required at each stage of the pathway, and in order to progress 3. Understand and acknowledge Surf Sports role in the overall SLS ecosystem 4. Review how the existing Surf Sports pathway can feed into opportunities within the overall Surf Lifesaving movement (i.e. how Surf Sports participants can become the lifesavers, volunteers and officials of the future)

GOVERNANCE

3.1 Review all rules and policies & determine if they can be made more participant friendly	3.2 Develop strategic partnerships with other sports, including surfing, swimming & the RASI network
1. Surf Sports and the member portfolios to establish a rules and policies review sub-committee 2. Surf Sports to collaborate with the membership portfolio at all levels of the organisation 3. Sub-committee to meet with regular meeting cadence to review rules and policies in place across Surf Sports delivery, and actively discuss and involve other streams of SLSNSW 4. Consider piece of work to uncouple from SLSA structures in appropriate circumstances (ie the Surf Sport manual in non-championship settings) 5. Determine and prioritise which rules and policies can be amended 6. Discuss rule changes with clubs and branches to obtain feedback and determine effectiveness 6. Form a joint sub-committee of Surf Sports and Membership to enhance the whole of movement collaboration	1. Scan and review potential partners (in addition to surfing and swimming) from other sports and identify those with strongest alignment to Surf Sports 2. Identify who the key contacts are at Surfing and Swimming (and other) organisations / governing bodies 3. Collaborate with these key contacts to establish how the sports can work better together and 'share the beach' 4. SLSNSW to facilitate discussions with local clubs and branches to identify how surfers and swimmers (and others) can become SLS club members and be welcomed into the SLS movement 5. Conduct accelerated clinics for existing swim club members to learn and join the organisation as surf sports competitors
3.3 Introduce a 'structured activity framework' to provide clubs with a source of guidance for running event days	3.1 Implement delivery & management models which may exist differently than via traditional club & branch structures
1. Surf Sports to meet with other streams of SLSNSW to develop a structured activity framework for clubs and branches to better manage program delivery 2. Discuss with clubs and branches what gaps and challenges exist in their program delivery (possibly through a survey) 3. Determine best method to "data capture" to accurately represent and collect gaps in delivery satisfaction & inform decision making around allocation of appropriate resources for support 4. Establish leadership voice from SLSNSW and communicate appropriately, ensuring accurate delivery of necessary information	1. Identify potential options for delivery and management models outside of the traditional club and branch structures 2. Assess whether an alternative delivery and management model would be more effective than the traditional model, via clubs and branches in all or some areas

SUSTAINABILITY

4.1 Undertake a comprehensive data capture exercise to measure participant & volunteer experience	4.2 Explore opportunities to more specifically market Surf Sports products via web and social media
1. Undertake review of what data SLSNSW currently captures, which gaps exist and what data is required in the future to measure participant and volunteer experience 2. Invest time in developing more immediate feedback on the delivery of Surf Sports products and services (for example club based NPS scores) 3. Identify what technology / resources are required to store, capture and represent data efficiently and instantly for SLSNSW 4. SLSNSW to use data to inform future decision making	1. Continue to identify what is currently working well, what is not working well and what opportunities exist for marketing Surf Sports products via web & social media 2. Ensure SLSNSW continues to prioritise opportunities to better market Surf Sports via web and social media 3. Use internal capability or engage external party to develop structured Surf Sports web and social media marketing strategy
4.3 Reconsider the funding model which could allow for a strategic focus to be applied to development pathways	4.4 Implement technology to improve carnival experience & data capture
1. Clearly define what should define development within the SLS ecosystem 2. Outline the practical activities that should support development within the clearly defined context and create a clear development plan 3. Define the resourcing required which may include dedicated staff resources 4. Develop a position description for the roles and responsibilities that will be required to deliver on the approved development plan	1. Develop an implementation timeline for when Live Heats will be rolled out across all Surf Sports events, with clear guidance on timeframes for clubs and branches 2. Identify and assess any other forms of technology that can improve the participant experience and assist SLSNSW capture participant and membership data