



Date:	27 March 2020		
To:	Club Presidents, Secretaries, All members	From:	SLSNT Board
Matter:	Coronavirus Update		

Surf Life Saving Northern Territory (SLSNT) is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of our members. As such, we are working closely with SLSA and constantly monitoring communications from both the NT and Federal Government on our response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The SLSNT Board convened a meeting on Thursday 26 March 2020 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. These meetings will be on a fortnightly basis until further notice.

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.

We are a community based organisation who exists to save lives, create great Australians and build better 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.

The latest 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:

- Secure NT (<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/>)
 - Sports & Clubs (<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/sports-and-clubs>)
 - Events & Gatherings (<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/gatherings>)
- Australian Government, Department of Health (<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>)

The SLSNT 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 the SLSNT Board will review, amend and implement new actions as required based on information and guidance provided by the authorities.

1. Lifesaving and Emergency Response

SLSNT Search and Rescue Team

The SLSNT Board has endorsed the Search and Rescue Team to remain on standby, able to assist the Water Police, but only for life-threatening situations.

In the event of a callout that utilises Lifesaver 1, the skipper will be responsible for selecting the appropriate number of crew to assist whilst considering the social distancing guidelines. There will always be a minimum of two on board but more may be taken if the situation demands.

Members of the SAR team that are considered a high risk in regards to the coronavirus are encouraged to get in touch with SLSNT so we can manage your involvement through this crisis.

Where possible RWC's will be the preferred response vessel as they are able to be operated solo.

Wet Season Lifesaving Patrol

The SLSNT Board endorsed the suspension of the remaining wet season lifesaver patrols, effective immediately.

This decision was made to assist eliminating the spread of COVID-19 – the presence of a patrol service could be viewed as encouraging people to congregate at local surf spots where they are not observing all social distancing measures and hygiene practices.

Club Lifesaving

Club Patrols

All club patrols are suspended UFN. When advised by Federal or NT Government that restrictions are to be relaxed or removed we will notify clubs.

If a situation arises when a member is required to render first aid here are some recommended Precautions while providing treatment

General

- During “danger to self” checks, if feasible ask the patient or people accompanying the patient if they have travelled to identified areas in the last two months and if so, increase PPE, minimise number of Lifesavers involved in the treatment and isolate the patient until paramedics arrive.
- Lifesavers who have been directly exposed to a confirmed Coronavirus case must immediately:
 - Thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water
 - Isolate themselves from others at the location, and
 - Once released by Duty Officer, depart the location, self-isolate and seek medical attention

Gloves

- When treating a first aid casualty, Lifesavers must wear gloves, when available, regardless of how minor the interaction may be. Upon conclusion of treatment, Lifesavers are to remove gloves as described in the following YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S4gyNAsPCbU>.
- Dispose of the gloves in a ziplock bag and discard the bag in a rubbish bin at the end of the patrol or as soon as possible. Immediately after disposing of the gloves, Lifesavers are to wash their hands with soap and fresh running water, making a concerted effort not to touch the taps with their clean hands. This can be achieved by using paper towel to turn the tap.
- Patrol Captains are reminded to check for the availability of sufficient quantities PPE prior to each patrol

CPR

- Continue to apply normal protocols and use of PPE as per existing protocols with all patients.
- If a Lifesaver is not confident they are adequately protected from a patient that requires resuscitation, then consider the application of compression only CPR. Mouth-mouth, mouth-nose and mouth-mask should be avoided.

- Based on the availability of skillset (ART-Aid or ARTC) and equipment, Lifesavers should then move from compression only CPR to using the bag-valve mask at compression rates of 30:2 with oxygen. This is considered preferable to ensure delivery of oxygen while avoiding mouth-mouth, mouth-nose, or mouth-mask. Regular gear checks before, during and after patrol is a requirement of current procedures.

2. Surf Sports Events

SLSNT Surf Sports Events

The SLSNT Board has endorsed the cancellation of all Surf Sports events this season. This includes:

- The Beach & Paddle Series,
- Darwin Beach Fest (previously known as Beach Week),
- Coaching visits by Julian Norton-Smith,
- The NT Championships, Mindil Beach.

With no certainty as to when these restrictions will be lifted it was felt that SLSNT, clubs and members may not have the opportunity to adequately prepare for these events within our short season.

Club Based Surf Sports Events

As per directions from the Federal Government Community and recreation centres and social sporting activities must be closed from the 25 March 2020. A surf club is not viewed as an essential service so must be closed.

The SLSNT Board strongly advises that all NT Surf Clubs close their doors to the public until such time as they are advised by SLSNT that restrictions have been relaxed.

In addition, ALL club training (structured sessions and social), competitions and activities (e.g. nippers, board, ski Surf Boats etc) are to be suspended until such time as they are advised by SLSNT that restrictions have been relaxed.

Individuals that choose to continue their own training schedules do so based on their own risk assessment but they should use their own personal equipment. It must be noted that given the severity of what our nation is currently dealing with, members will most likely not be covered by our insurers.

I urge all club Presidents to give consideration to public perception and then make the hard calls on behalf of their members and simply close down all non essential activities until further notice. Remember Keeping people away from people is how we are going to slow the spread of this virus down.

3. Meetings & Functions

SLSNT Events and Activities

The SLSNT Board has endorsed that SLSNT 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 AGM, for 4 April will be conducted remotely.
- All Board Meetings will be conducted remotely.

The Awards of Excellence, scheduled for the 4 April 2020, have been postponed. If a suitable date cannot be found later in the year then the Awards will still be presented but in a much lower key function.

Club Events and Activities

The NT Government has set the following restrictions on gatherings:

- As a general rule you should stay home unless it is absolutely necessary that you go out.
- Going out for the basics or exercise in small groups, such as with your partner or family, is fine.
- If you do go out, make sure you keep a 1.5 metre distance between yourself and others.
- You shouldn't congregate in groups outdoors.
- In addition, any indoor gathering under 100 people must observe the one person per four square meters of space rule.

The SLSNT Board strongly recommends that until further notice, all club functions and social events should be postponed (regardless of size) and all Club AGM's and Board meetings be conducted remotely.

SLSNT is available to offer advice and assistance to Clubs looking to host AGM's and meetings remotely.

4. Training and Assessment (Education)

The SLSNT 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:

Commercial Training

SLSNT has ceased and postponed the delivery of all commercial courses including all public courses at Surf House.

SLSNT Club Based Training and Assessment (Education)

SLSNT will not conduct any face to face training or assessments for our members until at least 31 May 2020, this includes the member's proficiency session and bronze medallion course scheduled for May.

SLSNT is investigating alternate training opportunities such as online and through technologies so may have some solutions in the coming months.

Yesterday, SLSNT were notified that SLSA through the Lifesaving Advisory Committee has endorsed the following for all members:

- SLSA will make available various online courses which they encourage you to complete to assist in the retention of your skills.

- Renewal dates for CPR and First Aid which lapse between 1 March 2020 and 30 June 2020 will be extended until 31 December 2020 for SLS purposes only.
- For members in the northern regions where patrols are due to commence, SLS awards which require re-accreditation will be extended until 31 December 2020 for SLS purposes only.
- Pending further public health advice, it may be that these dates will need to be reviewed.

Club Based Training and Assessment (Education)

The SLSNT Board strongly encourages Clubs to cease all face to face member award training and assessments.

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. 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.

Areas such as fundraising 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.

6. Surf House

SLSNT 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 SLSNT Board include:

- Cancellation of all interstate travel for staff. So in simple terms, staff will not be travelling to any work related meetings, events or similar until further notice.
- Ceasing all non-essential face-to-face meetings for its staff. This includes staff attending any conferences, workshops or similar.
- SLSNT Surf House external doors will remain locked at all times. Access to the building will be for SLSNT 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 office staff are fully enabled to work from home or remote locations should it be needed.
- 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 NT 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. SLSNT 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 NT 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 NT 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.

We are sure that as Australian and Lifesavers we have the skills, guts and determination to get through this crisis but we must all play our part and not put ourselves or others at risk. Please take care and look out for and after each other.

SLSNT Board
27 March 2020