



# SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA POLICY STATEMENT USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

**POLICY  
NUMBER  
6.20  
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## 1.0 Purpose

Social media (*see 2.0 below for definition*) offers the opportunity for people to gather in online communities of shared interest and create, share or consume content. As a member-based organisation, Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) recognises the benefits of social media as an important tool of engagement and enrichment for its members.

SLSA, its state centres, branches and clubs have long histories and are highly respected organisations. It is important that Surf Life Saving's reputation is not tarnished by anyone using social media tools inappropriately, particularly in relation to any content that might reference the organisation.

When someone clearly identifies their association with Surf Life Saving (SLS), and/or discusses their involvement in the organisation in this type of forum, they are expected to behave and express themselves appropriately, and in ways that are consistent with SLSA's stated values and policies.

This policy aims to provide some guiding principles to follow when using social media. This policy does **not** apply to the personal use of social media platforms by SLSA members or staff where the SLSA member or staff makes no reference to SLSA or related issues.

## 2.0 Scope

This policy applies to SLSA members, staff or any individual representing themselves or passing themselves off as being a member of SLSA.

This policy covers all forms of social media. Social media includes, but is not limited to, such activities as:

- Maintaining a profile page on social or business networking sites (such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Shutterfly, Twitter or MySpace);
- Content sharing include Flickr (photo sharing) and YouTube (video sharing);
- Commenting on blogs for personal or business reasons;
- Leaving product or service reviews on retailer sites, or customer review sites;
- Taking part in online votes and polls;
- Taking part in conversations on public and private web forums (message boards); or
- Editing a Wikipedia page.

The intent of this policy is to include anything posted online where information is shared that might affect members, colleagues, clients, sponsors or Surf Life Saving as an organisation.

### **3.0 Guiding Principles**

- 3.1 The web is not anonymous. SLSA members and staff should assume that everything they write can be traced back to them.
- 3.2 Due to the unique nature of Surf Life Saving in Australia, the boundaries between a member's profession, volunteer time and social life can often be blurred. It is therefore essential that members make a clear distinction between what they do in a professional capacity and what they do, think or say in their capacity as a volunteer for SLSA. SLSA considers all members of SLSA are its representatives.
- 3.3 Honesty is always the best policy, especially online. It is important that SLSA members think of the web as a permanent record of online actions and opinions.
- 3.4 When using the Internet for professional or personal pursuits, all members must respect the SLSA brand and follow the guidelines in place to ensure SLSA's intellectual property or its relationships with sponsors and stakeholders is not compromised (see 5.0 below), or the organisation is brought into disrepute.

### **4.0 Usage**

- 4.1 For SLSA members and staff using social media, such use:
  - Must not contain, or link to, libellous, defamatory or harassing content. This also applies to the use of illustrations or nicknames;
  - Must not comment on, or publish, information that is confidential or in any way sensitive to SLSA, its affiliates, partners or sponsors; and
  - Must not bring the organisation or surf lifesaving into disrepute.

For SLSA staff using social media, such use:

- Must not interfere with work commitments.

- 4.2 Furthermore, SLSA members and staff may not use the SLSA brand (see 5.0 below) to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause or political candidate; and it must be abundantly clear to all readers that any and all opinion shared are those of the individual, and do not represent or reflect the views of SLSA.

### **5.0 Branding and Intellectual Property (IP)**

It is important that any trademarks belonging to SLSA or any state centre, branch or club are not used in personal social media applications, except where such use can be considered incidental – (where incidental is taken to mean “*happening in subordinate conjunction with something else.*”). Trademarks include:

- Club, branch and SLSA logos;
- The “Life of the Beach”, “Whatever it Takes” or any other associated slogans;
- Images depicting surf lifesaving volunteers, staff and/or equipment, except with the permission of those individuals;
- Other SLSA imagery including the red and yellow flags, the SLSA red and yellow caps or the official SLSA red and yellow patrol uniforms.

### **6.0 Official Surf Life Saving (SLS) blogs, social pages and online forums**

When creating a new website, social networking page or forum for staff/club member use, care should be taken to ensure the appropriate person at a club/branch/state level has given written consent to create the page or forum.

Similarly, appropriate permissions must be obtained for the use of logos or images. Images of minor children may not be replicated on any site without the written permission of the child's parent and/or guardian.

For official SLSA blogs, social pages and online forums:

- Posts must not contain, nor link to, pornographic or indecent content;
- Some hosted sites may sell the right to advertise on their sites through 'pop up' content which may be of a questionable nature. This type of hosted site should not be used for online forums or social pages as the nature of the 'pop up' content cannot be controlled;
- SLSA employees must not use SLSA online pages to promote personal projects; and
- All materials published or used must respect the copyright of third parties.

## **7.0 Consideration towards others when using social networking sites**

Social networking sites allow photographs, videos and comments to be shared with thousands of other users. SLSA members and staff must recognise that it may not be appropriate to share photographs, videos and comments in this way. For example, there may be an expectation that photographs taken at a private SLS event will not appear publicly on the Internet. In certain situations, SLSA members or staff could potentially breach the privacy act or inadvertently make SLSA liable for breach of copyright.

SLSA members or staff should be considerate to others in such circumstance and should not post information when they have been asked not to or consent has not been sought and given. They must also remove information about another person if that person asks them to do so.

7.1 Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about SLSA members or staff online.

## **8.0 Breach of Policy**

8.1 SLSA, its state centres, branches and clubs continually monitor online activity in relation to the organisation and its members. Detected breaches of this policy should be reported to SLSA.

8.2 If detected, a breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action from SLSA. A breach of this policy may also amount to breaches of other SLSA policies. This may involve a verbal or written warning or in serious cases, termination of your employment or engagement with SLSA. SLSA members may be disciplined in accordance with SLSA disciplinary regulations.

## **9.0 Consultation or Advice**

This policy has been developed to provide guidance for SLSA members and staff in a new area of social interaction. SLSA members or staff who are unsure of their rights, liabilities or actions online and seek clarification, should contact the SLSA Communications Department.