SLSA POLICY

6.20 Social Media

Title:	Social Media
Document Number:	6.20
Last Review Date:	May 2026
Next Review Date:	June 2027
Responsible Portfolio:	Public Affairs
Authority:	This Policy is made under clause 39 of the SLSA Constitution. It is binding on all Members of SLSA and is to be interpreted in accordance with the SLSA Constitution.

1 PURPOSE

This policy is intended to provide Surf Life Saving Australia's (SLSA) staff, Members and volunteers with a framework to guide their use of social media in a manner that is consistent with the organisation's mission.

This policy applies to all parties (staff, members and volunteers). SLSA expects its staff, Members and volunteers to use social media in accordance with this policy.

This policy only applies to staff in State Centres, Branches or Clubs where those Surf Life Saving (**SLS**) entities do not have an existing social media policy. Where an SLS entity does not have an existing social media policy, it may choose to elect that this Policy applies to its employees.

SLS exists to save lives, create great Australians and build better communities. Communications and representations made by and within the SLS community should reflect this mission.

2 DEFINITION

Social media is the collective of online communications channels which may be structured around or in conjunction with community-based input. These channels will generally allow users to participate in an online community which may or may not reflect an offline community through online collaboration, content sharing/viewing, and chat functions.

Social media channels can include but are not limited to:

a. Social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Google +;

b. Video and photo sharing sites such as YouTube, Pinterest, Snapchat, Instagram, TikTok, and Vimeo;

c. Blogs, including personal and corporate blogs such as Wordpress accounts;

d. Comments left on blogs hosted by media outlets e.g. smh.com.au;

e. Micro-blogging sites such as Twitter;

f. Wiki's and online collaborations;

g. Forums, discussion boards and groups such as Whirlpool;

h. Online multiplayer gaming platforms such as Fortnite;

i. Instant messaging including SMS, WhatsApp, WeChat and iMessage;

j. Online dating sites such as Tinder, Bumble and RSVP;

k. Podcast and vodcast sites;

l. Geo-spacial tagging such as Foursquare; and

m. Livestreaming sites and apps such as Twitch and Periscope.

3 SCOPE

This Policy applies to SLSA staff, Members, and volunteers who represent SLSA, both in Australia and overseas. This includes, as far as practicable, suppliers, partners and contractors (in this Policy **Social Media Users**).

Due to the unique nature of SLS 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 as its representatives.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with SLSA's Member Protection policy and code of conduct.

As noted above, this Policy does not apply to staff of State Centres, Branches or Clubs in their capacity as staff of those entities, and where those entities have an existing social media policy. Where the staff of State Centres, Branches or Clubs are also members of SLSA, this policy will apply to those persons in their capacity as members of SLSA.

4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE

For official and personal users of social media

Whenever Social Media Users are interacting on social media, in a professional or personal context, the following guiding principles should be considered and applied at all times. Social Media Users should be mindful of their posts and comments and must ensure that they are not defamatory or disparaging of any person, SLSA or affiliated SLS Entities, in any way. Social Media Users take full responsibility for their behaviour and release and indemnify SLSA and SLS Entities from any liability arising from any claim or action including but not only in defamation resulting from social media comments or posts by the Social Media User.

Please note SLSA staff are also bound by the SLSA Code of Conduct, and Members are also bound by the Member Protection Policy.

A Social Media User must:

a. Not criticise SLSA, sponsors, athletes, other organisations and their employees, volunteers or supporters, SLSA or its State Centres, Branches or Clubs;

b. Not harass, bully, abuse or intimidate or display any other form of inappropriate behaviour as per the SLSA Member Protection Policy (in particular clause 7.7 Cyber Bullying);

c. Not post content that is obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, offensive, aggressive, abusive, profane, hateful, racist, pornographic, sexist, sexually explicit, that infringes on copyright, constitutes a contempt of court, breaches a Court suppression order, or is otherwise unlawful;

d. Not exploit platforms to seduce, groom or inappropriately engage with Children;

e. Not defame any other person or entity;

f. Not do anything that breaches their terms of employment or membership;

g. Respond to others' opinions respectfully and acknowledge and correct mistakes promptly;

h. Ensure that all information is accurate, not misleading and complies with all relevant laws, policies and terms of use;

i. Only disclose and discuss approved and publicly available information and content (including videos, audio and images);

j. Adhere to terms and use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as SLSA policies;

k. Not post content that might otherwise cause damage to the reputation of SLSA or bring it into disrepute;

l. Disclose conflicts of interest to appropriate persons in relevant circumstances where able;

m. Not directly express a political affiliation on an official account or a personal account clearly associated with SLS activities;

n. Not upload information of a confidential nature, especially in regard to SLSA's services or Members;

o. Comply with all relevant laws including but not only privacy and defamation laws and laws relating to use and publication of intellectual property; and

p. Subject to SLSA policies and otherwise the consent of SLSA not use any SLSA intellectual property or imagery;

q. Not use SLSA IP in relation to any paid or unpaid promotion or endorsement of products or commercial entities including in kind services or gifts; unless in agreement with SLSA.

In addition, an SLSA Staff Member must:

r. Ensure that comments, posts, and responses from official SLSA accounts are true and accurate;

s. Not conduct a private business through SLSA's social media presence;

t. Ensure that comments, posts, and responses from official SLSA accounts are true and accurate and link to online references and original source materials directly.

5 USE OF SLSA TRADEMARK ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Refer to the SLSA Intellectual Property Policy 6.01.

When using social media for professional or personal pursuits, all SLSA Members must respect the SLSA brand and follow the SLSA Policies to ensure SLSA's Intellectual Property and its relationships with sponsor and stakeholders are not compromised and that the organisation is not brought into disrepute.

In specific reference to social media:

a. Partners or sponsors of State SLS entities may not imply association with SLS as a national movement (i.e. referring to themselves as 'proudly supporting Surf Life Saving Australia', 'SLSA' or 'supporting Surf Life Saving.'). If their association is with a State entity rather than the national entity, they may only refer to the State body (i.e. "Supporting Surf Life Saving New South Wales" for example).

b. Generalised products or services, social media accounts/domain names associated with SLSA are to be used to represent these services/products/brands on a national scale only and the relevant registrations of these accounts established by National Office only.

6 USE OF PHOTOGRAPHY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

6.1 Refer to SLSA Policy 6.21 - Photography, Digital Recording & Images

In summary, photos or video that may be interpreted as offensive, obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, bullying, discriminatory, hateful, racist or sexist must not be used in any way. SLSA reserves the right to remove any inappropriate images from official SLSA sites.

You must adhere to copyright legislation at all times. If a photo or video does not belong to SLSA, permission should be obtained, and appropriate recognition be given upon posting the content.

You should seek the consent of any individual before publishing a photo or video containing their image or that of their personal property. If photos or video includes a minor, consent must be provided by a parent or legal guardian.

Use of any official SLS photo or video content on a personal social media account, without approval or authorisation is strictly prohibited.

7 PERMISSIONS

SLSA may create social media accounts to engage with their members, supporters and general public. Any account which represents SLSA must be authorised and approved by SLSA Management. The account should identify itself as an official account representing SLSA.

8 PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WHEN YOU CAN BE IDENTIFIED AS A SLSA MEMBER

Personal use can be defined as the use of non-official SLSA social media accounts where the person can be identified as a SLSA Member.

Personal use is a matter for an individual user, however, individuals will be accountable for the consequences of their actions on social media if such actions contravene this policy and will be disciplined according to the policies and codes of conduct of SLSA and their individual employment or volunteer agreements.

9 NAMED AFFILIATIONS

Accounts (be it a blog, webpage, twitter account, Facebook page etc) that are not official, but are set up by employees, volunteers or supporters of SLSA for personal reasons can have an affiliation to the organisation, so long as the following is undertaken:

a. It should not have the affiliation with SLSA as the primary identifier; and

b. It should include a prominent disclaimer that the opinions of the user are their own and do not represent those of SLSA.

For example a staff member might include a bio similar to this:

"Likes apples and fishing, interested in politics and the news, works for SLSA, opinions expressed are my own and not to be taken as an endorsement or representing the views of SLSA".

10 POLICY BREACH

Misuse of social media can have serious consequences for SLSA, and consequently that misuse can have serious consequences in terms of disciplinary action for Social Media Users under this policy.

SLSA is responsible for ensuring adherence to the Social Media Policy by Social Media Users included in this policy.

SLSA staff and volunteers must adhere to the Terms of Use of the relevant social media platform/website, as well as SLSA policies and their own organisations policies and legislative requirements. In the event of breach and/or serious misconduct disciplinary action may be commenced under the relevant rules and/or other contract(s).

SLSA encourages all Members to report any use of Social Media which is perceived to have breached this policy. If you believe there has been a breach of this policy, please report and submit details of the alleged breach by going to complaints.sls.com.au.