HERVEY BAY SURF LIFESAVING CLUB
MEMBER PROTECTION POLICY

Document Control and Approval	
Approved by HBSLSC Board on	17 August 2026
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Version	1.0
Related documents	Statement of Commitment to Child Safety; Child Safe Code of Conduct; Child Safe Risk Management Plan; Complaints Reporting Policy

1. PURPOSE

1.1 Hervey Bay Surf Lifesaving Club (HBSLSC) is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all members and providing a safe environment for those participating in its surf lifesaving activities and programs.

1.2 The Club is also committed to ensuring that everyone involved in SLS is treated with respect and dignity and is protected from Abuse, Bullying, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Victimisation, and Vilification.

1.3 As part of the community, Club personnel commit to actively encouraging behaviour that promotes a supportive and nurturing environment and contributes to HBSLSC's mission of saving lives, creating great Australians and building better communities.

1.4 This Policy aims to assist HBSLSC in upholding its core values and create a safe, fair, and inclusive environment for everyone associated with the Club.

1.5 This Policy sets out the standards of behaviour expected of those involved in SLS, as well as behaviours that are not acceptable (Prohibited Conduct), and to ensure that all Club personnel are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

1.6 This Policy should be read in conjunction with:

- SLSA Policy 6.04 Child Safe;
- SLSA Child Safe Commitment Statement;
- SLSA Policy 6.05A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement
- HBSLSC Child Safe Policy;
- HBSLSC Child Safe Code of Conduct;
- HBSLSC Statement of Commitment to Child Safety; and

- HBSLSC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Policy applies to all Club personnel and continues to apply to a person after they have ceased involvement with HBSLSC if disciplinary action against that person has commenced.

2.2 If a person reports a breach of this Policy, against someone who is no longer a Member, that matter may proceed if (and when) the person is a Member at a later date and the Complaint is accepted under SLSA Policy 6.06 Complaints Resolution.

2.3 The following is not within the scope of this Policy:

- where an interaction, including a social media interaction, occurs between one or more people and has no connection with SLS, such as two Club members arguing at a shopping centre or exchanging abusive social media messages with no direct link to SLS.
- where Prohibited Conduct occurs in contravention of this Policy, any subsequent conduct, or interaction(s) that, whilst related to the original Prohibited Conduct, no longer directly relates to SLS (even where such conduct or interaction(s) would otherwise be Prohibited Conduct). For example, where a Club Member allegedly breaches this Policy by physically assaulting another Member at an event, but then the personal grievance(s) between those two individuals spills into issues not directly related to SLS, such as social media abuse.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 The following words have the corresponding meaning in this Policy:

Activity means any surf lifesaving activity, program, service, competition, event, or activity (including training and patrols), whether on a one-off basis or as part of a season, which is sanctioned or organised by HBSLSC.

Abuse means any type of behaviour (including physical, emotional/psychological, sexual, and inappropriate use of power and/or process) that has caused, is causing or is likely to cause harm to a person's wellbeing, whether in-person or online.

Bullying means a person or group of people repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions, or the inappropriate use of power, against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their wellbeing, whether in-person or online.

Club personnel means any of the following persons involved in HBSLSC, its programs or activities:

- member;
- life member;
- participant;
- employee;

- contractor;
- volunteer;
- persons appointed or elected to the Club's board, committee and sub-committees; and
- support personnel.

Code of Conduct outlines what is, and what is not, acceptable behaviour or practice.

Complaints Resolution Policy means the policy adopted by SLSA for the handling and resolution of allegations regarding Prohibited Conduct.

Contractor means any person or organisation engaged to provide services for, or on behalf of, HBSLSC. This includes agents, advisers, and subcontractors of HBSLSC and employees, officers, volunteers, and agents of a Contractor or subcontractor.

Discrimination includes both direct and indirect discrimination (either in-person or online) which have the following meaning:

- 'Direct discrimination' occurs where, because a person has a Protected Characteristic, they are treated less favourably than a person without that characteristic would be treated in the same or similar circumstances.
- 'Indirect discrimination' occurs where a practice, rule, requirement, or condition that applies to everyone disadvantages people with a Protected Characteristic and the practice, rule, requirement, or condition is not reasonable in the circumstances.

Employee means a person employed by HBSLSC.

Harassment means any type of behaviour towards a person that they do not want and that is offensive, abusive, belittling or threatening and is reasonably likely to cause harm to the person who is the subject of the harassment whether in-person or online.

Illegal Drug means any substance listed under Schedule 9 and 10 of the current Commonwealth Poisons Standard, as well as any substance listed in Schedule 1 of the Criminal Code Regulations 2019 (Cth), as well as those substances howsoever proscribed under relevant state or territory legislation, as amended from time to time.

Member means a member of HBSLSC.

Policy means this Member Protection Policy.

Prohibited Conduct means the conduct proscribed in clause 3.2 and described in clause 3.3 of this Policy.

Protected Characteristic means:

- age;
- disability;
- race or ethnicity;
- sex or gender identity;
- sexual orientation; or

- religion.

Sexual Misconduct means:

- sexual harassment, which is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would anticipate the possibility that the person being harassed would feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated; and
- behaviour that may constitute a sexual offence that is unlawful.

SLS means surf lifesaving.

SLSA means Surf Life Saving Australia.

SLSQ means Surf Life Saving Queensland.

SLS Reporting System means the online system used to submit a Complaint and accessed at http://complaints.sls.com.au/.

Victimisation means subjecting a person, or threatening to subject a person, either in person or online, to any unfair treatment because the person has made, or intends to pursue their right to make, a complaint, report, or lawful disclosure, including under applicable legislation or this Policy, or for supporting another person to take such action.

Vilification means a public act, conduct or behaviour, either in-person or online, that incites hatred, serious contempt for, or revulsion or severe ridicule of, a person or group of people because of a Protected Characteristic they hold, as covered by applicable legislation.

Volunteer means any person engaged by HBSLSC in any capacity who is not otherwise an Employee or Contractor, including parents or carers that volunteer, directors, office holders, coaches, officials, administrators and team and support personnel.

3.2 Prohibited Conduct

A person breaches this Policy if they, either alone or with another person, engage in any of the following conduct against one or more people in-person, online or by any other means of communication:

- Abuse;
- Bullying;
- Harassment;
- Sexual Misconduct;
- Discrimination;
- Victimisation; or
- Vilification.

3.3 Examples of Prohibited Conduct

Abuse is behaviour of a nature and level of seriousness which includes, but is not

limited to:

- physical abuse and assault including hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, destroying property, deprivation of food, water, or rest, forced feeding, unreasonable physical restraint, spitting at another person, biting, or otherwise putting a person at unreasonable risk of physical harm, except where any physical contact is consistent with the rules of the sport and accepted and reasonable behaviour within the Activity when undertaking that Activity;
- sexual abuse including rape and assault, using sexually degrading insults (either in-person or online), forced sex or sexual acts, deliberately causing pain during sex, unwanted touching or exposure to pornography, sexual jokes (either in-person or online), using sex to coerce compliance; or
- emotional/psychological abuse (either in-person or online), such as repeated and intentional embarrassment in public, unreasonably preventing or excluding someone from participating in SLS activities, stalking, humiliation, or intimidation, repeated or severe insults, name calling, criticism, swearing and humiliation, repeated attacks on someone's intelligence, homophobic, biphobic and transphobic comments, body shaming, or aggressive yelling.

Bullying is behaviour of a nature and level of seriousness which includes, but is not limited to, repeatedly:

- keeping someone out of a group (either in-person or online);
- making rude gestures, using inappropriate or derogatory names, being rude, constantly negative and teasing (either in-person or online);
- spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone either in-person or online (e.g. using their social media account to post messages as if it were them);
- harassing someone (either in-person or online) based on a Protected Characteristic such as age, race or ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or a disability;
- intentionally and repeatedly hurting someone physically; or
- taking advantage of any power over someone else (either in-person or online) but does not include legitimate and reasonable:
- management action;
- management processes;
- disciplinary action; or
- allocation of activities in compliance with agreed systems.

Harassment is behaviour of a nature and level of seriousness which includes, but is not limited to:

- telling insulting jokes and/or making derogatory comments about racial groups or people of diverse genders and sexualities (either in-person or online);
- sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages or other electronic communications;
- displaying racially offensive or pornographic images or screen savers;
- making derogatory comments or taunts about someone’s race, disability, sexual

- orientation, gender identity or gender expression, either in-person or online;
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including their sex life, either
- in-person or online;
- intentionally stalking someone (either in-person or online); or
- intentionally disclosing (either in-person or online) the transgender identity or sexual orientation of someone without consent;
- sexual harassment or any of the above conduct in the workplace by employers, co-workers, and other workplace participants;

Sexual Misconduct is behaviour including, but not limited to:

- unwelcome touching;
- suggestive comments or jokes (either in-person or online);
- showing or sharing sexually explicit images or pictures (either in-person or online);
- unwanted invitations to go out on dates (either in-person or online);
- requests for sexual intercourse (either in-person or online);
- intrusive questions about a person's private life or body (either in-person or online);
- unnecessary familiarity, such as deliberately brushing up against a person;
- insults or taunts based on sex or gender identity (either in-person or online);
- sexually explicit physical contact;
- sending sexually explicit or suggestive emails, texts, or other electronic/social media messages;
- displaying pornographic images or screen savers;
- asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including their sex life, either
- in-person or online; and
- criminal offences such as rape, indecent or sexual assault, sexual penetration, or relationship with a child under the age of 16 and possession of child pornography.

Discrimination is differential treatment (either in-person or online) based on a personal characteristic, but not limited to:

- age;
- disability;
- race or ethnicity (including skin colour, nationality, or migrant status);
- sex (including pregnancy, marital or relationship status, family responsibilities, breastfeeding, intersex status, or gender identity); and
- sexual orientation; or
- religion.

Victimisation is behaviour including, but not limited to:

- dismissal of a person or disadvantage to their involvement in SLS because they have or intend to make a complaint;

- exclusion of a person from a SLS activity because they were a witness to Prohibited Conduct; or
- failure to select an individual on merit because they have supported another person in lodging a complaint.

Vilification is behaviour including, but not limited to:

- speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating (either in-person or online) about a person's sex or gender identity, race or religion in a way that could make other people dislike, hate, or ridicule them;
- publishing claims that a racial or religious group is involved in serious crimes without any evidence in support;
- repeated and/or serious verbal or physical abuse (either in-person or online) about a Protected Characteristic of another person;
- encouraging violence against people (either in-person or online) who belong to a particular sex or gender identity, race, or religion, or damaging their property; or
- encouraging people to hate a racial or religious group using flyers, stickers, posters, a speech, or publication, or using websites, social media applications or email.

4. REPORTING BREACHES OF POLICY

Breaches of Policy

4.1 Club personnel are required to comply with this Policy.

4.2 Failure to comply with this Policy is a breach and will result in disciplinary action in accordance with SLS rules and policies.

4.3 It is a breach of this Policy if any Club personnel does anything contrary to this Policy, including but not limited to:

- breaching the Code of Conduct in this Policy;
- bringing SLSA or any other SLS entity into disrepute, or acting in a manner likely to bring them into disrepute;
- failing to follow the SLSA or HBSLSC Child Safe Policies;
- discriminating against, harassing, or bullying (either in-person or online) any person;
- victimising another person for making or supporting a complaint;
- engaging in an inappropriate intimate relationship with a person they supervise or have influence, authority, or power over;
- verbally or physically assaulting another person, intimidating another person, or creating a hostile environment within the sport;
- disclosing to any unauthorised person or organisation any information that is of a private, confidential, or privileged nature;
- making a complaint that they know is not made in good faith or is mischievous, vexatious, or knowingly untrue;
- failing to comply with a sanction imposed after a finding that the individual or

organisation has breached this, Policy;

- failing to comply with the requirements set out in a Club membership form, including the requirement to disclose any criminal charges and/or convictions that arise at any time whilst a member of an SLS Entity (Policy 6.16 Criminal Convictions); and
- failing to comply with a direction given to the individual or organisation as part of a disciplinary process.

Complaints

4.4 HBSLSC is committed to proper complaint handling under the Club's Reporting Policy and SLSA Policy 6.06 Complaints Resolution, and must deal with complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential way.

4.5 Every Member has the right to make a complaint in relation to matters concerning a breach of this Policy and/or other relevant SLSA/SLSQ policies.

4.6 Such complaints must:

- not be untrue, vexatious, malicious, or improper; and
- be properly made and made in good faith; and
- be directly related to a matter involving or concerning an SLS Entity or members.

4.7 The Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) is the first point of contact in HBSLSC for any Member with a concern or complaint and assists by providing information and guidance on rights, responsibilities and options within the complaint resolution process.

4.8 The MPIO does not:

- manage any aspect of the complaint process, including not doing any of the following:
  - assessing if a complaint meets the required thresholds for 'prohibited conduct'
  - under a relevant policy;
  - making a judgment about whether an allegation brought forward is vexatious (knowingly false or untrue);
  - conducting a risk assessment about threats to safety or temporarily standing down individuals complained about;
  - conducting any form of investigation;
  - acting as a panel member on a tribunal hearing;
  - applying or communicating sanctions to a respondent to a complaint;
- advocate on behalf of any involved party during investigations or hearings;
- share or discuss complaint information with anyone other than the complainant, relevant authorities, or people responsible for managing the complaint;
- provide any form of legal counsel or advice; or
- mediate any sort of complaint or personal grievance.

4.9 The Complaints Manager is responsible for managing complaints

4.10 Complaints must be submitted in accordance with the Club's Reporting Policy or the SLSA

Complaints Resolution Policy via http://complaints.sls.com.au, as appropriate.

4.11 HBSLSC is not obliged to accept a complaint and may dismiss a complaint if it reasonably considers the complaint was not made in good faith or is mischievous, vexatious, or knowingly untrue.

Criminal matters

4.12 Any behaviour that may constitute a criminal offence must be reported to police immediately and, where connected with SLS, must also be reported to SLSA and SLSQ; SLSA Policy 6.16 Criminal Convictions applies to criminal matters involving members.

5. MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT and COMMITMENT

HBSLSC Commitment

5.1 HBSLSC will:

- provide a safe environment for relevant persons involved in SLS;
- take an inclusive approach in its activities;
- be an inclusive organisation open to all members of the community and provide a safe environment for all who choose to participate in SLS; and
- ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of members and children and young people in particular.
- provide a safe environment for Relevant Persons involved in SLS;
- take an inclusive approach in their activities;
- be an inclusive organisation dedicated to being open to all members of the community and providing a safe environment for all who choose to participate in SLS; and
- ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of their Members and CYP in particular.

5.2 In delivering on this commitment, HBSLSC will educate and inform Members of each person's responsibilities to:

- protect each other, and particularly CYP;
- create and maintain a Member and child-safe culture which is inclusive and safe; and
- understand, endorse and act on them.

Member Commitment

5.3 Members must:

- familiarise themselves with this Policy and adopt the practices and behaviour when carrying out their roles;
- comply with all relevant provisions of the Policy, including any codes of conduct and the steps for making a complaint;
- consent to the screening requirements of Club policies and Queensland Working with Children Checks (WWCC) if the Member holds or applies for a role that involves

regular unsupervised contact with a CYP;

- place the safety and welfare of CYP above other considerations;
- report any abuse or neglect of CYP which they become aware of, regardless of whether that abuse/neglect is caused by personnel within SLS, or by those outside SLS including those from the CYP's family or strangers;
- be accountable for their behaviour; and
- comply with any decisions and/or disciplinary measures imposed under or arising from Club policies.

Member Code of Conduct

5.4 The Code of Conduct in this policy should be read in conjunction with:

- the specific requirements of any role as defined in any applicable position description statement;
- relevant policies and procedure documents, including all other Club policies;
- the SLSA Complaints Resolution Policy;
- other SLSA policies and guidelines;
- all applicable Queensland laws; and
- general community expectations in relation to appropriate behaviour.

5.5 Failure to observe the Code is misconduct which may incur disciplinary action in accordance with relevant policies.

5.6 This Code of Conduct outlines the behaviour expected of, and by, Members and the SLS community, and must always be followed.

5.7 Members will:

- respect the rights, dignity and worth of others;
- be ethical, considerate, fair, courteous, and honest in all dealings with other people and organisations;
- be professional and accept responsibility for their actions;
- know and follow Club policies and those of SLSA and SLSQ;
- raise any concerns and report any breach of this Code or policies through appropriate channels;
- refrain from any Prohibited Conduct;
- provide a safe environment for the conduct of SLS activities and all those who participate;
- ensure HBSLSC is an inclusive organisation that is open to all who wish to participate in SLS regardless of age, gender, disability, cultural and linguistic background, or sexual orientation; and
- respect and protect confidential information obtained through SLS activities or services.

5.8 While on duty (patrol), involved in SLS activities/programs, or having supervision of CYP, including overnight stays, Members must not:

- use, possess or be under the influence of an illegal drug or psychoactive substance;
- use or be under the influence of alcohol;
- be incapacitated by any other legal drug such as prescription or over the counter medication;
- supply alcohol or drugs (including tobacco and vapes) to CYP.

5.9 Responsible service and consumption of alcohol must apply when a Member is off duty.

5.10 Members must adhere to all liquor licensing laws and regulations governing the service and consumption of alcohol on HBSLSC premises.

Education

5.11 HBSLSC may require Members to undertake training and education that is relevant and proportionate to their role and level of participation in SLS.

6. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed by 1 September 2027 and annually thereafter or earlier if:

- policy updates are made at SLSA or SLSQ level; or
- issues are identified during incident reviews.

NEXT REVIEW DATE

By 1 September 2027

Signed: .....

Ron Thomas
President

Date: 16.9.26