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| Title: | Volunteer Helicopter Crew Positions – South East Queensland Region (Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast) |
| Document ID: | 018.05.2025 |
| Department: | Surf Life Saving Queensland - Aviation |
| Audience: | All Members, All Clubs, All Branches, All SLSQ Officers |
| Summary: | Call for expressions of interest as volunteer helicopter rescue crew |
| Date: | 13 May 2025 |

The Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service has an exceptionally proud history since 1976 of operating effective and safe helicopter patrols across South East Queensland in support of Surf Life Saving Queensland.

The Service has a limited number of vacancies and is seeking expressions of interest from highly self-motivated, suitably qualified, and proficient surf life savers to undertake training and operational duties in the demanding and challenging role as Volunteer Rescue Crew Officers (RCOs).

Applicants should be aware that only limited vacancies are available, the selection process is highly competitive and meeting minimum criteria in no way guarantees acceptance.

Only those applications that meet all minimum requirements will be invited to any selection session.

It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that their SLS awards are current, and they are a financial and proficient member of an affiliated Surf Life Savings Club prior to applying.

Applicants considered for progression in the selection process will be required to attend an interview with a panel of senior helicopter flight crew members to ensure the minimum requirements and suitability for the role and training are met.

Final successful applications will be submitted to the Surf Life Saving Queensland's Operations Support Panel for endorsement prior to the training process commencing.

As a helicopter crew member, you will be **expected to complete at least two (2) full day rostered volunteer helicopter patrols per month**, attend training sessions, crew meetings and participate in other activities as organized by the Service. Due to the significant investment in training crew, a **minimum commitment of three (3) years is expected**, notwithstanding exceptional circumstances.

As the Service operates **continuous patrols year-round**, successful applicants must be willing to participate in a regular patrol roster which involves **full day patrols on weekends and public holidays throughout the year**. Successful applicants may also be required to participate in a rotational after hours' callout roster.

In addition to any helicopter duties, successful candidates are expected to continue to have active involvement with their Club and complete all Club obligations. It is also a SLSQ requirement that all helicopter crew remain financial and proficient member of their Surf Life Saving Club.

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Selection Process

The process involves multiple stages, with full onboarding typically occurs over a 6 to 12-month period. The intent is to commence the selection process and training in order that the successful candidates commence rostered patrols early during the 2025/26 season. Successful candidates will be required to complete the initial training phase within three months of commencement. Training is scheduled to commence in July 2025 or sooner if possible.

The stages are:

1. Applications addressing minimum criteria received and initial vetting undertaken.
2. Fitness/Operational Test Requirements assessed.
 - a. Fitness assessment.
 - b. First Aid assessment.
 - c. Resuscitation assessment.
 - d. General Surf Lifesaving theory assessment.
3. Interview.
4. Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET).
5. Trainee crew selected.
6. Emergency Breathing System (EBS) training.
7. Rescue crew training.
8. Basic ground and flight assessment.
9. Successful completion of a 12-month probation period.

(Note: Applications will be vetted at all stages)

Minimum Crew Applicant Criteria

Applicants must fulfil the following minimum requirements prior to lodging an application with the Service:

- Have an acceptable body weight, as determined by the selection panel.
- Be a current financial and proficient member of a Surf Life Saving Queensland affiliated Surf Life Saving Club.
- Have completed a minimum of three (3) years SLS beach patrol service.
- Be endorsed by their SLS Club for duties on the Helicopter Service.
- Have no limiting disabilities.
- Have an excellent record of SLS beach patrol attendance.
- Have excellent teamwork skills.
- Hold a current Working with Children Clearance (Blue Card).
- Hold current up to date and be proficient in the minimum awards as outlined below.

Following successful progression applicants must:

- Attend and pass the helicopter crew fitness test, HUET and EBS courses.
- Undertake drug and alcohol testing at commencement of training and on a random basis as required.
- Any other criteria as determined by the selection panel.

Minimum Qualifications

- Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue) (Bronze Medallion).
- Advanced Resuscitation Techniques (HLTAID015) or its successor or equivalent.
- Provide First Aid (HLTAID011) or its successor or equivalent.

Surf Life Saving Queensland

18 Manning Street
South Brisbane QLD 4101
PO Box 3747

t. +61 7 3846 8000
f. +61 7 3846 8008
w. lifesaving.com.au

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Preferred Experience

- Other awards additional to those specified above will be considered when selecting candidates.
- Current or previous experience with other Surf Life Saving Operations Support units or SAR experience will be viewed favourably.

Helicopter Crew Fitness/Operational Test Requirements

The crew fitness tests are additional to those normally associated with surf lifesaving activities. They have and will continue to be designed to ensure that all helicopter crew can demonstrate the physical endurance and strength required to carry out helicopter crew duties safely and efficiently.

As a minimum, successful trainee crew applicants who meet the above award criteria will be required to complete the Initial crew fitness test within a continuous two (2) hour period, regardless of age or gender.

1. Run 2.4 kilometres in 12 minutes on flat ground.
2. Float unassisted, fully clothed, for 12 minutes.
3. Swim 500 metres in full rescue garb which includes wetsuit, full body rescue harness and fins in 11 minutes.
4. Swim 300 metres in full rescue garb which includes wetsuit, full body rescue harness and fins within 10 minutes.
This section includes 3 x 100 metres cycles.
Each 100 metres cycle includes 50 metres swim, recover a 70 kg rescue mannequin from 2 to 4 metre depth and tow 70 kg simulated weight 50 metres.
5. 25 sit-ups.
6. 25 push-ups.
7. 25 second flex arm hang with overhand grip.

Order of assessments may vary due to facilities availability.

Interview

An applicant will be required to attend a selection interview before a panel. The applicant will also be evaluated throughout the full duration of the briefing and fitness/operational test requirements as to their suitability.

Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) and Emergency Breathing System (EBS) Training course

Applicants will be required to successfully pass a theoretical and practical course of instruction in Helicopter Underwater Escape and in Emergency Breathing System (EBS) training prior to commencing flight crew training. This course will involve practical underwater escape sequences from a training module simulating a helicopter ditching into water, with and without the aid of an emergency breathing system. The course will involve various levels of disorientation whilst underwater requiring escape sequences to be conducted from confined spaces with restricted access. Full training will be provided prior to the practical components of this course which will be conducted in a fully controlled and managed environment.

Other Requirements

All applicants must be conscious of operational factors including that rostered duty is generally from 0800 – 1700 on Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays and 0700 – 1800 during the Christmas holiday peak period. Crew will be required to be rostered for training/patrol on a Saturday or Sunday at a minimum twice in every calendar month. Crew will also be rostered on Public Holidays. New crew will be expected to be available for rostered patrols especially during Easter, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

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The Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service maintains bases on the Gold Coast at Carrara and on the Sunshine Coast at Caloundra. Face to face training may be conducted at either location dependent upon operational requirements. Trainees will be required to travel between the bases as necessary. Mid-week face to face and on-line training sessions will also be conducted.

Ongoing Crew Requirements:

To remain an active member of the crew, successful applicants will be required to:

- Remain a financial member of their SLSC Club.
- Complete an annual SLS Club Skills Maintenance by 31 December each year.
- Be endorsed annually by the Operations Support Panel.
- Maintain currency in pre-requisite SLSQ awards.
- Maintain currency in internal helicopter service awards.
- Successfully complete the Helicopter Service fitness assessment which is conducted twice a year.
- Successfully complete HUET and EBS training every two years.
- Attend regular crew meetings as and when called.
- Undertake drug and alcohol testing on a random basis as requested.
- Attend scheduled Helicopter Crew training sessions which will be in addition to rostered patrols.
- Maintain minimum rostering availability of two full days per calendar month, year-round.

Process for applying:

All applicants must complete the online "WLRHS Rescue Crew Application" via the link below.

<https://form.jotform.com/opssupport/wlrhs-rescue-crew-application>

All applications must include the additional information as detailed in the "Getting ready" section of the online form.

Applications are to be received by 9am Monday 2nd June 2025.

If you require any further information in relation to this circular, please contact the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service on (07) 5512 0200 or westpacrescue@lifesaving.com.au.

Kind Regards,

SCOTT ANDREWS
Helicopter Service Advisor
Surf Life Saving Queensland

ANDREW McNEILLY
Chief Crewperson
Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter Service

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