

2025/26 Australian Life Saving Team

Selection Guideline - *Towards the 2026 Life Saving World Championships*

SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA LIMITED (SLSA) and ROYAL LIFE SAVING SOCIETY AUSTRALIA (RLSSA)

1. PURPOSE

This Selection Guideline seeks to provide a clear guideline around how Australian Teams will be selected for Teams during the 25/26 Campaign. The Selection Guideline will encompass the structure around selection of the Australian Life Saving and Youth Lifesaving World Championships Team which is founded on Team members having the capacity to contribute to Australia's success in the 2026 Lifesaving World Championships.

2. KEY DEFINITIONS

2025/26 Campaign:	The identified period following the previous Lifesaving World Championships and leading into the next – 2026 Lifesaving World Championships.
Australian Life Saving Team (ALT):	Team selected to represent Australia at a nominated tour (athletes must be born in 2010 or later to be considered for eligibility).
Australian Youth Life Saving Team (AYLT):	Team selected to represent Australia at a nominated tour. Lifesaving World Championships (<i>athletes must be born between 01/01/2008 – 31/12/2010 for AYLT eligibility</i>).
Australian Representative Team:	Both 'capped and uncapped' team selected to represent Australia in an international competition.
Australian Pathway Teams:	Uncapped team selected to represent Australia based on developing and preparing the athletes for the 2026 ILS Lifesaving World Championships and beyond.
Collaborative Panel:	The Panel is made up of SLSA/RLSSA Operational Staff Members. The Panel provides governance to the appointment and selection process.
2025/26 Selection Panel:	The Panel made up of a convenor along with two panel members: each of SLSA/RLSSA will have one nominated representative on the Selection Panel. The Open National Coach, Youth National Coach and Coaching Team (where applicable and as required) will also sit on the Selection Panel in an advisory capacity only and will not have voting rights.
National Open Coach:	Appointed Open coach for the duration of the 2025/26 Campaign.

National Youth Coach:	Appointed Youth coach for the duration of the 2025/26 Campaign.
Coaching Team:	All Coaches (including Discipline Coaches) assigned to the team for specific event/tour during the 2025/26 Campaign.
Management Team:	Managers (inc. Assistant Managers) assigned to the team for specific event/tour during the 2025/26 Campaign.
Individual Athlete Performance Plan (IAPP):	Written agreement between the National Open Coach and each team member setting out planning expectations, behaviours, accountabilities, performance goals and athlete benefits (including training environment support).

3. SELECTION CRITERIA

To be eligible for consideration for selection athletes must:

- (a) be an Australian citizen and permanently residing and training in Australia for an affiliated club
- (b) be in good standing with SLSA and/or RLSSA as applicable
- (c) be a current financial member of an SLSA and/or an RLSSA affiliated club and hold a current SLSA Bronze Medallion and/or current RLSSA Bronze Medallion or equivalent Life Saving award
- (d) be proficient and have maintained relevant state, club-based requirements for competition patrol hours to be eligible for selection (not relevant for RLSSA tour)
- (e) complete all required team documentation and eLearning courses and requirements in the communicated timeframe
- (f) for eligibility to the AYLT, be born between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2011 at the time of the World Championships in 2026
- (g) have competed in the relevant Australian Championship event (unless extenuating circumstances are communicated to, and approved in writing by, the SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager, RLSSA National Manager – Lifesaving Development (for RLSSA tours) or National Open or Youth Coach). If extenuating circumstances are communicated, they will be shared with the Selection Panel for consideration:
 - a. Aussies – Ocean and beach athletes
 - b. Australian Pool Rescue – Pool athletes
 - c. Australian Pool Life Saving Championships – Pool athletes (required for RLSSA team and recommended for all pool athletes).
- (h) declare any current/potential injury or condition which may impair, inhibit or prevent the athlete's performance
- (i) if selected (or otherwise requested), attend all relevant camps and workshops associated with their selection as per the athlete's IAPP. Failure to do so without reasonable cause may result in their removal from the Team. Applications for reasonable cause must be submitted to the National Open/Youth Coach, SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager or RLSSA National Manager – Lifesaving Development (tour dependant) for consideration and;
- (j) meet such other requirements as SLSA/RLSSA reasonably require from time to time.

When considering athletes for potential selection to an Australian Life Saving Team and any other Australian Representative Teams (including Australian Youth Life Saving Team), the Selection Panel may (but is not obliged to) consider:

- (a) performances in all age categories at the following events where applicable:
 - i. 2025/26 SLSA Australian Surf Life Saving Championships and 2025/26 SLSA Australian Surf Life Saving Youth Championships (as applicable);
 - ii. 2025/26 SLSA and/or RLSSA respective State Championships;
 - iii. 2024/25/26 SLSA and/or RLSSA National Pool Life Saving Championships;
 - iv. 2025 RLSS Commonwealth Lifesaving Championships
 - v. 2024 Life Saving World Championships;
 - vi. 2024/25 World Ocean Series
 - vii. 2024/25 International Life Saving Events including and not limited to, German Cup/Orange Cup, International Surf Rescue Challenge.
 - viii. In recognition of the nature of the World Lifesaving Championships, the Selection Panel may consider performances at additional approved swimming meets, including State, National and International Championship events.
 - ix. Athletes residing internationally may seek permission to submit results/times via video footage or by official time (provided by automated timing at an approved event). Any requests to provide video submissions must be provided in writing to the National Open/Youth Coach, SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager or RLSSA National Manager – Lifesaving Development (tour dependant) and approved by the Selection Panel and endorsed by the Collaborative Panel. All footage will be reviewed by the National Open/Youth Coach (and Coaching Team where appropriate), along with the Selection Panel. Any athlete communications must be direct with the National Open/Youth Coach.
- (b) Ocean/Beach event ability as assessed at approved events/training sessions or trials as agreed to by the National Open/Youth Coach and the Selection Panel.
- (c) Pool Lifesaving event ability as assessed at approved events/training sessions or trials as agreed to by the National Open/Youth Coach and the Selection Panel.
- (d) Demonstrated and/or potential ability to work collaboratively as a part of the team, including the Coaching Team, Management Team, SLSA/RLSSA Staff, team officials and other team members.
- (e) Current level of skill and physical capacity required for the nature of the event that is being selected.
- (f) Any current /potential injury or condition which may impair, inhibit or prevent the athlete's performance to the requisite level.
- (g) The potential of the athlete to successfully achieve the objectives of this Guideline and of SLSA and/or RLSSA under their respective Constitutions.
- (h) Specific criteria and conditions applicable to any event or competition as outlined in ALT Circulars.
- (i) Any other factor that may be considered relevant in the circumstances by the Selection Panel.

If selected, athletes must meet agreed benchmarks in their IAPP and positively contribute to the culture and benchmark aspirations of the team.

If selected, athletes must undertake, and complete anti-doping and Sport Integrity courses as outlined in the Team Agreement and requirements outlined in the Team Induction by the required timeframe. Failure to do so will result in the removal from the Team.

No particular selection criterion above need be considered nor shall any criterion be weighted more or less significantly by reason only of the order in which that criterion appears in this Guideline. The Selection Panel may consider none, some or all of the criteria in exercising its absolute discretion and may also require athletes to participate in a trial event (as appropriate). Athletes expressly acknowledge the Selection Panel's discretion.

In considering any criterion, the Selection Panel may in its discretion give weight to extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may include but are not limited to injury, personal bereavement or talent transfer situations from applicable sports. There is no obligation to consider any extenuating circumstances.

Athletes may be added to the 2025/26 Team at any time at the discretion of the Selection Panel.

4. SELECTION PROCESS

The Collaborative Panel is authorised, and responsible for, the formation of the Selection Panel.

4.1 National Selection Panel

- (a) The Collaborative Panel shall appoint in its sole discretion, one selector each from SLSA/RLSSA on the basis of previous national or international experience or involvement in lifesaving competitions. In addition, the Collaborative Panel shall appoint a third selector who shall act as Convenor of the Selection Panel.
- (b) The Convenor may participate in selection discussions but may only exercise a casting vote. The Convenor under the direction of the CEO of SLSA and/or the CEO of RLSSA as appropriate shall be the Australian Life Saving Team spokesperson on team selection matters.
- (c) The National Open/Youth Coach and Coaching Team (where applicable and invited) will sit with the Selection Panel. This position is an advisory role only and allows scope to discuss athlete suitability for a Team or share view on the potential athlete point accumulation capacity and team combinations via the use of an event matrix. This position does not have voting rights.
- (d) The period of appointment for the Selection Panel and the Convenor of the Selection Panel shall be for the duration of the 2025/26 Campaign.
- (e) Where a member of the Selection Panel has a conflict of interest in relation to one or more athletes that has nominated for consideration for selection, the selector must declare that interest and stand aside from the process. The Operational Staff Member of the organisation that nominated the conflicted selector has the right to appoint a proxy selector.

4.2 Notification

- (a) This Selection Guideline shall be available to all members of SLSA/RLSSA on their respective website.
- (b) Any changes to this Guideline shall be notified to State Centres/Branches in accordance with the provisions of the Constitutions, policies and procedures of SLSA/RLSSA.

- (c) SLSA/RLSSA at their discretion may give further notice of this Selection Guideline to their respective membership.

4.3 Selection Procedure

- (a) All athletes wishing to be considered for selection in the Team and Australian Representative Teams must:
- i. Nominate for the Team they wish to be considered for selection to indicate availability.
 - ii. Read and sign the Team Agreement in the indicated timeframe.

To ensure there is no misunderstanding, athletes may be selected for Talent Identification, Youth, Pathway, Development and Open Teams for representative tours who are not a member of AYLT or ALT.

- (b) The Selection Panel may from time to time in its absolute discretion select a person who is not otherwise under consideration; so long as the individual has submitted a nomination to be considered for Team selection.
- (c) The selected Team and event matrix shall be provided to the Collaborative Panel for final sign off and endorsement. If the Collaborative Panel does not agree with the execution of the selection process, it shall be referred back to the Selection Panel with feedback.

4.4 Notification of selection/non selection to Relevant Parties

- (a) Notification of selected athletes shall be provided to relevant parties in accordance with the provisions of SLSA/RLSSA's respective Constitutions and protocols. Following notification of the selected persons by SLSA/RLSSA, a joint public announcement of the selected team shall be made.
- (b) Successful athletes shall be notified of their selection as soon as reasonably practicable by the SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager or RLSSA National Office Designate.
- (c) The Selection Panel Convenor (or delegate) may meet with non-selected athletes to provide feedback on their non-selection.
- (d) The Selection Panel Convenor (or delegate) must be available to attend the first scheduled activity of the team to address the athletes in relation to matters of selection, team balance and the events that each athlete is to contest.

4.5 Removal from a selected team

- (a) Any member of a selected Team (including the Coaching Team and Management Team) is ineligible/will be withdrawn from selection of team if they:
- I. breach or fail to observe this Guideline, the SLSA and/or the RLSSA Constitutions or any relevant Regulations or policies;
 - II. breach or fail to fulfil a requirement of any SLSA or RLSSA (as applicable) integrity policy including but not only Anti-Doping Policy;
 - III. in the opinion of the Selection Panel (after having received advice from the ALT Medical Advisor or delegate medical practitioner) by reason of illness or injury, are unable to perform to the required standard or return from injury parameters as below:

- On return from injury athletes may be required to prove a 95%-100% level of fitness a minimum four (4) weeks prior to travel in which the following general markers may be considered;
 1. Normal range of motion. Compare to uninjured side if possible
 2. Decrease in acute pain to near zero
 3. Decrease in swelling to near zero
 4. Strength of the affected body part at 80-100% of opposing body part
 5. 80-100% return of balance and coordination
 6. The ability to perform normal activities/movements without negative changes to mechanics
- (b) In addition to the above, at the discretion of the National Open/Youth Coach, Medical Advisor or Selection Panel an athlete may be required to complete fitness testing at 95%-100% level, a minimum of four (4) weeks prior to travel to show requisite skills to perform at an international level. This may include but is not limited to swim time trials, craft training session, craft match race, beach training session beach/track time trial, gym-based strength testing. Testing parameters will be determined by the National Open/Youth Coach based on individual circumstances and must be completed no later than 6 weeks prior to competition.
- (c) Any member may be removed from any selected Team by the National Open Coach, in consultation with the SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager or the RLSSA National Manager – Lifesaving Development (tour dependant) and endorsed by the Selection Panel and Collaborative Panel as circumstances may require. This includes a member failing to meet the requirements of the agreed personal performance plan provided whilst given the opportunity to meet those requirements within a defined timeframe. This will also include those relating to positive contributions to the culture of the Australian Life Saving team and adherence to all Team protocols.
- (d) Any member of the Coaching Team or Management Team may also be removed by the Collaborative Panel for failing to meet the requirements as detailed in the relevant position description. Providing that the requirements within the position description had first been discussed with the member and been given the opportunity to meet those requirements within a defined timeframe.
- (e) If an athlete is to be removed from a Team, they will be notified by the Convenor of the Selection Panel following final consultation with the National Open/Youth Coach, SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager or RLSSA National Manager – Lifesaving Development (tour dependant) and the Collaborative Panel.

4.6 Athlete Injury Reporting

Any athlete suffering an injury in which will cause them to miss a period of one (1) or more weeks of training must report the injury to the National Open/Youth Coach who will liaise with the Australian Life Saving Team Medical Advisor within 48 hours of the injury occurring, via email. The ALT Medical Advisor (or delegate) will work with the athletes local treating practitioners to ensure safe and timely return from injury.

The overarching goal of the ALT Medical Advisor is to ensure athletes remain in Teams and provide support for athletes to return to 100% health as quickly as possible. This will include the support and implementation of rehabilitation plans if required. All communications and regular updates from local practitioners should be passed on to the ALT Medical Advisor to ensure clear lines of communications throughout the recovery process.

The ALT Medical Advisor will implement a rehabilitation plan in conjunction with local practitioners to set required performance benchmarks throughout recovery period. This will ensure athletes are on a set timeline to meet specific goals and targets.

If athletes are required to complete a fitness assessment or testing, all performance requirements will be directed by the National Open/Youth Coach, in consultation with Medical Advisor based on performance or event matrix.

5. APPEALS

There is no appeal against a non-selection decision made by the Selection Panel whether under this Guideline or any other SLSA/RLSSA rule or policy.

6. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

6.1 Reporting of Disciplinary Action

Where any disciplinary action is required in the lead-up to, during, or after competition a Disciplinary Action Report shall be submitted by the Team Manager to the SLSA High Performance and Pathways Manager/RLSSA National Manager – Lifesaving Development (tour dependent) to engage the Collaborative Panel as soon as practicable detailing the breach and any actions taken.

6.2 Serious Breach of Conduct

- (a) If a team member/s (including a member of the Coaching Team or Management Team) is involved in a serious breach of conduct including, but not limited to, illegal activity, actions that result in emotional, mental or physical harm to another individual, or bringing SLSA and/or RLSSA into disrepute, the individual/s is to be dealt with in accordance with the disciplinary procedures as outlined in the SLSA Constitution/Regulations and/or RLSSA Constitution/Regulation where appropriate.
- (b) Serious breaches or allegations of serious breaches of conduct must be reported to SLSA and/or RLSSA immediately.
- (c) The outcome of any such action is to be available to the National Selection Panel for consideration when selecting any future teams.