



Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	Women's Mentoring Program Cohort 7 – August 2025
Document ID:	Circular 72/24-25
Audience:	All club members
From:	Sandi Davis, Member Development Coordinator
Date:	26 May 2025
Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominations for mentors and mentees close Sunday 6 July 2025 National Women's Mentoring Program – Cohort 7 commencing 19 August 2025

What is the Women's Mentoring Program?

SLSA embraces the importance of a diverse and inclusive organisation, including gender equality, and seeks to increase the number of women who hold leadership roles within SLS nationally. The Women's Mentoring Program (the Program) supports and empowers courageous and skilled women within SLS, to strengthen leadership skills, and develop the next generation of leaders to position SLS for the future.

It was recognised that a more deliberate focus was required to support the identification and development of emerging leaders within SLS to ensure there is visibility and support of women ready for leadership positions, so they can use their potential to make a difference to our organisation.

The Program promotes women within SLS, facilitates empowerment, develops leadership skills which can be applied to paid roles inside and outside of SLS, volunteer activities and everyday life. The Program fosters ongoing supported pathways of personal and professional development, networking opportunities and a sense of community. Each mentee is selected based on demonstrated leadership abilities and their potential and willingness to develop further in this area and move into leadership positions within SLS.

The Program supports Surf Life Saving Australia's 2025 Strategic Plan and our Mission to "save lives, create great Australians and build better communities" by developing a more capable and gender diverse leadership pipeline so our organisation can better reflect the demographics of our nation (51% identify as female) and movement (45% identify as female).

The Program was first launched as part of our 2020 celebrations to recognise the 40-year milestone of women in SLS on 1 July 2020, kicking off with 20 Mentees and 20 Mentors. We have now had more than 200 Mentors and Mentees involved with the Program. For Cohort 3 we wanted to grow the Program and invited women aged 16+ to join. This was a great success, and we have continued to do this since then.

What it means to be a Mentee

Role & Responsibilities

A mentee is responsible for establishing the direction of their mentoring journey. The primary goal of the mentoring process is to support the mentee in determining their broad career and personal development goals and establishing a plan to achieve them.

The mentee plays an active role in managing the mentoring relationship, including scheduling meetings and setting the agenda. To make the most of the mentoring experience, a mentee is expected to:

- Clearly understand and articulate their goals and aspirations to the mentor
- Commit dedicated time to the mentoring process, remain flexible with scheduling, and honor all agreed meeting times
- Prepare discussion topics in advance for each meeting (available online resources can assist with this)
- Respond to mentor feedback in a timely and thoughtful manner
- Maintain honesty about challenges and areas for growth
- Strike an appropriate balance between the personal and professional aspects of the relationship

This proactive engagement ensures a productive and meaningful mentoring experience. The minimum age to be a mentee is 16 years of old.

What are the Benefits?

- Build confidence, capability and interpersonal relationship skills.

- Be supported to take control of your leadership capability and capacity by being provided an opportunity to learn skills, increase knowledge and enhance support networks.
- Life engagement of our female members, providing networking and ongoing support groups, increasing sense of belonging.

What it means to be a Mentor

Role & Responsibilities

A mentor provides a mentee with fresh perspectives, supports exploration of different options or approaches, challenges existing thinking, and encourages the development of self-owned solutions.

Mentoring is a mentee-driven process. The mentor does not set the agenda but is guided by what is important to the mentee. While the relationship remains professional, understanding the mentee's personal context—such as their motivations and external influences—enhances the ability to provide meaningful support.

Mentors may help identify development areas, such as gaps in skills like public speaking, delegation, or team management. Serving as a trusted sounding board, the mentor reflects observations, offers feedback based on experience, and suggests opportunities for skill-building.

Effective mentors actively listen, ask thoughtful questions, and share relevant experiences. This approach empowers mentees to take ownership of their careers, gain clarity on goal setting, and navigate key decisions as they progress to the next level.

Mentors who hold or have held a variety of roles within their club or workplace are encouraged to apply. Leadership experience gained outside of SLS is also considered during the application process. Mentors may bring experience from within SLS and/or from external roles, industries, or communities. Diverse perspectives are highly valued and contribute significantly to a richer and more impactful experience.

What are the Benefits?

- Opportunity to be part of a legacy, give back and pass on personal and professional learnings, increasing their self-worth.
- Enhance interpersonal and professional skills increasing personal value to the organisation and re-energising engagement with SLS.
- Strengthen coaching and leadership skills and gain insights into issues faced by members and the community from diverse backgrounds.

What will the Program Entail?

- **Mentee-Driven Development:**
Mentees are responsible for establishing the direction they wish to take during the mentoring process. The primary aim is to support mentees in identifying broad career and personal development goals and creating a plan to achieve them.
- **Ownership of the Relationship:**
Mentees are expected to take a proactive role in shaping their relationship with their mentor, including arranging meetings and setting the agenda to make the most of the time together.
- **Flexible Meeting Structure:**
Mentoring meetings may take various forms. The mentee and mentor should agree on the frequency, duration, and regularity of meetings. Sessions typically last between 1 to 2 hours, and it is recommended to meet every 4 to 6 weeks.
- **Remote Connection:**
As all matches are based in different states, meetings will be conducted via phone, FaceTime, or Zoom/Teams. Ongoing communication through text or email between meetings is also encouraged.
- **Training and Program Support:**
Prior to the start of the mentoring relationship, initial training will be provided for both mentees and mentors. This training will introduce the McCarthy Mentoring online platform, which offers guidance and resources to support participants throughout the Program.
- **Workshops for Growth:**
Six online workshops will be hosted by SLSA over the course of the Program. These sessions are designed to foster both personal and professional development. Workshops are typically 1 hour in duration and are held in the evening from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM AEST.



- **Community and Connection:**

Participants will become part of an inspiring support network of like-minded women, offering ongoing encouragement and shared experiences throughout the mentoring journey.

How to Apply

Supporting Documentation

The following items must be uploaded to the Women's Mentoring Program Application Form, before it can be submitted:

- A current CV or resume.
- A photo of yourself

Note: Club, Branch, and State endorsement is not required to apply for the SLSA Women's Mentoring Program.

Program Sponsor (Required for Mentee's only)

All mentees are required to nominate a sponsor when completing the application form. The sponsor should be a trusted individual from the mentee's personal or professional circle who can serve as an accountability partner. This person will be expected to check in regularly with the mentee, provide support throughout their journey, and help ensure continued engagement. Sponsors will also receive periodic updates and will be notified if the mentee becomes inactive or unresponsive.

Application Form

Click the following link to access the application form: [SLSA WMP Cohort 7 Application Form*](#)

**Note: The minimum age to be a mentee is 16 years old*

What	When
Applications Close	Sunday, 6 July 2025
Successful Applicants notified before	Friday, 1 August 2025
Program Launch (Online)	Tuesday, 19 August 2025
Mentors and Mentees Announced	Tuesday, 19 August 2025
Mentor and Mentee Workshop 1 (Online)	Wednesday, 24 September 2025
Program Reviews and Workshops	Quarterly from September

Testimonials

"The opportunity to be involved in the WMP has been invaluable. I have connected with some truly inspiring people who have helped me lift my eyes up above the day to day in my local club and stay connected to the broader vision and SLSA community. It has been extremely motivating and engaging." – Mentee Cohort 5

"The SLSA WMP has allowed me to develop the skills that I needed as a leader to step up and become a Board Director. The program was useful not only for my SLS roles but also my work roles. My mentor has become a close friend and I consider her part of my family now." – Mentee Cohort 5

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my role as a Mentor with the SLSA WMP. I was nervous that I might not meet my mentee's expectations as a mentor but from our first call we built a strong rapport. This has been a mutually beneficial program where we have learnt from each other, shared challenges and leveraged our collective experience to try something new. It was also great to get insight into how other clubs operate in other states." – Mentor Cohort 6

"The SLSA WMP has been a fantastic experience. Through insightful workshops, networking opportunities, endless support and chatting with like-minded women, we have developed invaluable friendships, knowledge about lifesaving across the country and an opportunity to share our own experiences and assist each other to gain confidence and excel in our lifesaving endeavors. This program not only empowers women but also fosters a strong sense of community. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to grow and be a part of it." – Mentor Cohort 5

Still unsure about joining the WMP? Don't just take our word for it—hear from two of our inspiring alumni:

- [Leonie Newey, Williamstown SLSC](#) (Cohort 4 mentee & Cohort 5 mentor)
- [Leesa Equid, Swanbourne Nedlands SLSC](#) (Cohort 1 & Cohort 6 mentor)

Further Information

If you have any questions, concerns or feedback regarding the Women's Mentoring Program, please contact Sandi Davis – sandi.davis@sls.com.au.