

6.25 Non-Political, Non-Sectarian and Organisational Neutrality

Title:	Non-Political, Non-Sectarian and Organisational Neutrality
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Responsible Portfolio:	Governance
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 sets out SLSA's position and requirements regarding political, religious, contentious and divisive matters to protect the organisation's independence, integrity, reputation, and core charitable purpose of saving lives. SLSA recognises its unique position as Australia's peak coastal safety, drowning prevention, and rescue organisation, serving diverse communities across the nation. This policy seeks to ensure SLSA maintains its focus on these essential services whilst remaining independent from political, religious, contentious and divisive matters.

The policy aims to:

- Preserve SLSA's non-partisan and independent status
- Protect SLSA's reputation, community trust and public credibility
- Ensure consistent management of political, religious, contentious and divisive matters across all levels of the organisation
- Safeguard SLSA's intellectual property from unauthorised or inappropriate use
- Maintain SLSA's independence in delivering its charitable purposes and meeting its constitutional objects.

This policy has an accompanying guideline 6.25A which will assist members and clubs in interactions with political, religious, contentious and divisive matters (**matters**).

2 SCOPE

In relation to political, religious and contentious & divisive matters the following applies:

2.1 SLS Position

- a. SLSA works with governments from time to time to further its constitutional object of SLSA striving for recognition as the authority on aquatic safety standards, qualifications, systems and management (clause 2(m) SLSA Constitution).
- b. Other than for such organisational objectives, SLSA shall be and remain strictly neutral on these matters.
- c. SLSA and Surf Life Saving Clubs (Clubs) who are a charity may only conduct activities that further its charitable purposes and should be careful not to support or oppose a particular political party or candidate as this will run the risk of being found to have a disqualifying purpose. Likewise, donations to political candidates or parties will run the risk of being found to have the purpose of supporting a particular party or candidate.

2.2 Member and Club Obligations

- a. Individual Members, Clubs, Branches or States of SLISA (in this policy **Member**) must not:
 - i. allow themselves to portray SLS as being aligned to any political or religious context where such representation may reasonably be interpreted as SLS endorsement, without express written SLISA authorisation. This does not restrict Members or Staff from attending events in their professional capacity.
 - ii. be seen to represent SLS publicly in any political or religious context, that may infer endorsement, without express written SLISA authorisation.
 - iii. use any SLS intellectual property, branding or platforms (including social) to:
 - A. promote or oppose any political party, candidate, political movement or position, religious group or belief or any particular side of a contentious and divisive matter.
 - B. endorse or criticise any political ideology, religious belief, or any particular side of a contentious and divisive matter.
 - C. suggest SLS supports or opposes any position on political, religious, contentious or divisive matters.
 - iv. make public statements or promote or advocate for positions, that could reasonably be interpreted as representing an official SLS position on matters.
 - v. display or distribute materials related to any matters at any SLS venue, activity or event.
 - vi. participate in political or religious activities in a way that could compromise the organisation's neutrality.
 - vii. when expressing personal political or religious views, use or reference any SLS related identification, including but not only:
 - A. Patrol uniforms
 - B. SLISA logos or branding
 - C. Membership titles or positions
 - D. References to being a lifesaver or SLS member
 - viii. represent or purport to represent SLS in any publication or in, on or by any form of electronic communication or medium including but not limited to television, film, radio, social media or via the internet or in any other manner.
 - ix. express an opinion or belief which supports, or tends to support, or discredits, or tends to discredit, any political movement or position or religious group or belief based on individual beliefs or on issues that do not relate to furthering the charitable purposes of SLS.
- b. Members must ensure no reasonable person could perceive their actions as representing SLS'.

2.3 Contentious & Divisive Matters

- a. SLISA recognises that from time to time certain matters may be contentious and divisive within communities. In relation to such matters:
 - i. SLS maintains a position of neutrality unless the matters directly impact water safety or surf lifesaving operations and the core strategic priorities of SLISA.
 - ii. Any public statements on contentious and divisive matters must be issued only by authorised SLISA spokespersons.

- iii. Members must refer all media enquiries about contentious and divisive matters to their relevant State Centre in the first instance.

2.4 Intellectual Property Protection

[SLSA Policy 6.01](#) strictly applies and is to be read in conjunction with this policy.

- a. All SLS intellectual property, including but not limited to:
 - i. logos, trademarks, and service marks;
 - ii. branded uniforms and equipment;
 - iii. educational materials and resources; and
 - iv. photography and digital media.may only be used for authorised SLSA activities and purposes.
- b. Any use of SLS intellectual property must:
 - i. receive prior written approval from SLSA;
 - ii. adhere to SLSA's brand guidelines and specifications;
 - iii. be used only for the approved purpose and duration; and
 - iv. not be modified or altered without explicit permission.

3 NOTIFICATION & APPROVAL PROCESS

- a. Any proposed public communication, use of SLS intellectual property or participation in events that may have implications for SLS requires:
 - i. submission of detailed documentation and proposed use or event involvement to the respective SLS entity:
 - A. Club-level requests to the respective State Centre;
 - B. Branch-level requests to the respective State Centre; and
 - C. State Centre-level requests to SLSA; and
 - D. SLSA-level requests are approved by the SLSA Board.
 - ii. submission in a timely manner prior to the intended use or event;
 - iii. written approval before proceeding; and
 - iv. clear guidelines on communication protocols.
- b. All requests relating to this policy and associated guideline must be notified through proper channels outlined in clause 3(a)(i).

4 POLICY BREACH

- a. Members should report any activity that is perceived to have breached this policy and submit details of the alleged breach at complaints.sls.com.au. If the matter is urgent or a serious breach, please email integrity@sls.com.au.
- b. Breaching this policy may result in a demand to immediately cease the unauthorised activity, disciplinary action under SLSA Regulations and Policies, withdrawal of SLSA support and resources, including intellectual property rights, and potential legal action to protect SLSA's interests. Members must comply to uphold the organisation's integrity and reputation.