



Surf Life Saving Australia - Circular

Title:	SLSA Meritorious Awards 2024.25 Season
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Audience:	Clubs, Lifesaving Services, State & Territory centres, Australian Lifeguard Services
From:	Coastal Safety
Date:	10 December 2024
Subject:	Meritorious Awards Recognition Process
Summary:	This circular identifies the recognition process and award criteria for the SLSA Meritorious Awards.

BACKGROUND

Surf lifesavers and lifeguards provide an essential service to communities throughout Australia, performing many exceptional rescues and providing first aid in emergency situations, which are over and above normal duties. These actions showcase excellence in lifesaving training, skills and procedures, which deserve special recognition.

Meritorious Awards are awarded to affiliated clubs and/or their members, and/or the public for outstanding deeds of bravery performed during lifesaving operations of SLSA (during and outside of designated patrol hours).

It is important to note that the SLSA Meritorious Awards aim to recognise excellence in lifesaving and service delivery, measured against industry best practice and operating procedures. It is not to encourage unnecessary risk, neglect safety considerations or Standard Operating Procedures.

Previous programs including the SLSA Rescue Medal are no longer conducted nationally, and members, clubs and states are encouraged to nominate persons for recognition through the Meritorious Awards system.

AWARD CATEGORIES

Outlined below is a list of categories which will be considered by the SLSA Meritorious Awards Committee for each nomination received.

Individual Meritorious Awards

- **Silver Medallion**
Very high level of risk to rescuer, combined with optimal application of skills and supporting systems. Outcome for patient/s without rescue attempt would have resulted in definite fatality.
- **Bronze Medallion**
High level of risk to rescuer, combined with very good application of skills and supporting systems. Outcome for patient/s without rescue attempt would have resulted in a high chance of a fatality.
- **Certificate of Merit**
Moderate level of risk to rescuer, combined with good application of skills and supporting systems. Outcome for patient/s without rescue attempt would have resulted in serious injury or possible fatality.



Group or Club Meritorious Awards

The group or club award is issued for rescues of exceptional merit, in which a group of members are involved and where no individuals can be singled out for an award.

- **Certificate of Merit with Silver Medallion insert**
Very high level of risk to rescuer, combined with optimal application of skills and supporting systems. Outcome for patient/s without rescue attempt would have resulted in definite fatality.
- **Certificate of Merit with Bronze Medallion insert**
High level of risk to rescuer, combined with very good application of skills and supporting systems. Outcome for patient/s without rescue attempt would have resulted in a high chance of a fatality.
- **Certificate of Merit**
Moderate level of risk to rescuer, combined with good application of skills and supporting systems. Outcome for patient/s without rescue attempt would have resulted in serious injury or possible fatality.

NOMINATION PROCESS

All nominations must be submitted using the [SLSA Meritorious Awards Nomination Form](#) before **1 August 2025**.

Selection Process

The SLSA Meritorious Awards Committee shall be determined by the SLSA Board appointed Chair - Lifesaving, with the Manager Coastal Safety as Executive Officer to this Committee. The committee will review all applications and determine their merit against the award categories.

The selection of award recipient(s) is final and there will be no correspondence entered into.

Successful nominations will be notified prior to Award of Excellence 2025.

NOMINATION GUIDELINES

Eligibility

- Rescues, first aids (or other lifesaving actions) conducted during or outside of patrol hours, year round, on or off the beach. These should be considered above that of "business as usual".
- The eligibility period of when an incident occurred is not restricted (*e.g. an incident that occurred more than 10 years ago can be nominated and considered*).
- All nominations are to be submitted via the [SLSA Meritorious Awards Nomination Form](#) before 1 August 2025.
- Late nominations will not be eligible for the Meritorious Awards in this period however, will go into the process for the following period. This does not preclude a Branch or State/Territory independently recognising the person/group.
- SLSA and the States/Territory reserve the right to promote details of rescues and the nominated rescuer(s) internally and externally in promotion of SLS services/clubs/members.
- Nomination for the Meritorious Awards serve as agreement to the conditions as stated above.

Supporting Documentation

The SLSA Meritorious Award nomination **will be** the primary source of information. Nomination forms for other awards **will not** be accepted as supporting documentation.

The following documentation should be provided with the nomination:



- Incident Report Log
- Supporting statements (e.g. Police, Ambulance, Public Witness statements)
- Information or reports of rescues from media agencies
- Copy of the patrol log (where applicable)

Criteria

The following areas form the basis of evaluating each nomination:

- Application of Skills and Resource Utilisation
- Response to situation, what was done and how this went beyond “business as usual”
- Environmental Conditions
- Any bravery or other aspects of notation

FURTHER INFORMATION

For questions relating to SLSA Meritorious Awards, please contact:

Coastal Safety Team via lifesaving@sls.com.au