

<b>Subject:</b> SLSQ Peer Support Procedure	<b>Department:</b> Membership Services
<b>Procedure No:</b> MSP01	<b>Version No:</b> 5
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## Purpose

Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) acknowledges the potential for traumatic incidents in its environment. This document outlines the **Peer Support Process**, offering support to members experiencing trauma during lifesaving duties or related events.

## Scope

Peer Support Officers (PSO) within Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) can offer support to members should they have experienced a traumatic incident whilst on duty or whilst performing lifesaving measures. A Peer Support Officer (PSO) is a fellow member of Surf Life Saving Queensland who has had lived experience being a patrolling member. The aim of Peer Support is to help members develop coping, problem-solving and stress management skills or to help identify when professional treatment is required. It should be noted that peer support is not a form of counselling. A PSO is there to help all members who may have been involved a traumatic incident.

The Peer Support program is a confidential process. The member's personal or identifying information may only be released if there is a perceived risk a person may cause harm to themselves or others. In this instance, immediate support from an appropriate source should be obtained. In all other situations, before any information is disclosed, permission must be obtained from the individual concerned.

A Peer Support Officer must be trained by Surf Life Saving Queensland and must attend a refresher course once every three (3) years. Peer Support Officers are recruited annually with a requirement for Club and/or Branch President to endorse their applications. To become a Peer Support Officer members must complete an Expression of Interest form.

## Definitions

- **CEO** – Chief Executive Officer
- **PC** – Patrol Captain
- **DO** – Duty Officer
- **PSO** – Peer Support Officer
- **SLSQ** – Surf Life Saving Queensland
- **SOCC** – State Operations and Communications Centre
- **Traumatic Event** - A traumatic event is an incident that causes you physical, emotional, spiritual, or psychological harm. You may feel physically threatened or extremely frightened as a result

## Roles

### SLSQ Membership Staff

- SLSQ Staff are assigned to assist, coordinate, and support the Member Welfare Advisor and PSOs.
- Manage the rostering of PSOs during patrolling season.
- Will refer to the rostered PSO if an incident occurs outside of a SOCC event.
- Will provide members requiring professional treatment with information about how to access this and initiate a Work Cover Claim if appropriate.
- Will facilitate PSO recruitment, development, and training.

### Member Welfare Advisor

- Provides leadership and advice within the Peer Support area.
- Is qualified in psychology, social work, or in welfare or health related field and have an active interest/ involvement in Peer Support activities within surf lifesaving.
- To assist in the development of guidelines on the coordination of Peer Support Program, Member Protection Information Officer, Critical Incident, Bullying Awareness and Child Safety
- Assists to coordinate recruitment of Peer Support personnel as and when required.
- Assists to coordinate assignment and availability of Peer Support personnel when necessary.

### Peer Support Officer (PSO)

- Have the option to be rostered throughout the week at designated times as per the roster for the region.
- Available to assist outside the rostered times if required, (e.g., when there is a critical incident).
- Provide support via telephone or in person to SLSQ members. Help members understand when it is important to be referred to a GP, Psychologist or Counsellor or be able to provide the support to get the member back to their duties.
- Assist members to understand the potential impact of stressful events.
- Educate members on the impacts of stressful events and provide coping strategies.
- Helping members to identify when professional treatment may be required.
- Provide educational material pertaining to possible impact of critical incidents to members.
- Offering a follow up call 14 days after the incident
- Providing confidentiality to all those who receive Peer Support, this includes any information communicated via phone or email.
- Members wishing to lodge a Work Cover claim can contact SLSQ via [volunteerwc@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:volunteerwc@lifesaving.com.au)
- Please refer to SLSQ Procedure GOV10 – Member Injury Reporting for more information.

### **Patrol Captain (PC)**

Following an incident, the Patrol Captain (PC) will ensure appropriate documentation of the incident is completed and an assessment of members' mental state made. This includes their immediate safety such as ensuring they are in a suitable condition to drive home etc.

### **Duty Officer (DO)**

The Duty Officer (DO) will work with the Patrol Captain/ Club Captain/ or those involved to provide incident particulars and will have the responsibility to make the referral for Peer Support through the State Operations and Communications Centre (SOCC). In the absence of the DO the PC will make the referral.

### **SOCC Personnel**

SOCC personnel will collect information from the DO or PC about the incident and relevant member details including names, contact and involvement in incident. If a minor is involved, SOCC will provide details on the members parental and/or caregiver contact information. SOCC personnel will then contact the rostered PSO, inform them of the incident, and provide the contact details of all members involved, including an email contact utilising Surfguard if necessary

### **Referral Process**

- **Standard Referral (via SOCC):** During patrol hours.
- **Business Hours Referral:** Call (07) 3846 8000 or email: [memberwelfare@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:memberwelfare@lifesaving.com.au)
- **Club-Based Referral Requests:** Call (07) 3846 8000 or email: [memberwelfare@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:memberwelfare@lifesaving.com.au)
- **Emergency Support:** Call 000 or Lifeline 13 11 14. Peer Support is **not** a 24/7 crisis service.