

# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION GUIDE



Queensland



## Welcome to the **Member Recruitment & Retention Guide**

Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) is built on the dedication of thousands of volunteers who give their time and skills to keep our beaches safe. Strong and engaged club memberships are the foundation of our success, ensuring we continue to deliver lifesaving services while fostering a vibrant and inclusive community.

This guide has been developed to support SLSQ clubs in attracting new members and retaining existing ones. Whether your club is looking to recruit more volunteers, retain junior members as they transition into active lifesavers, or engage with the broader community, this resource provides practical strategies and proven approaches to help you succeed.



# The Importance of Recruitment and Retention

Recruiting new members is essential to maintaining a sustainable club and ensuring a strong volunteer base. Equally important is retaining and engaging current members, fostering their growth within the club, and creating a sense of belonging that encourages long-term involvement.

Successful recruitment and retention efforts help build:

- A strong and resilient volunteer base
- A welcoming and inclusive club culture
- Greater opportunities for skill development and leadership
- Stronger community connections and support





# Key Challenges and Opportunities

While recruitment and retention present challenges, they also offer exciting opportunities for clubs to innovate, connect with their local communities, and develop future leaders. Common challenges include:

- Retaining teenagers as they transition from Nippers to active members
- Encouraging long-term commitment from volunteers
- Balancing club operational needs with member availability
- Attracting members from diverse backgrounds

By implementing the strategies outlined in this guide, clubs can overcome these challenges and create a thriving, engaged membership base.

## What This Guide Covers

This guide provides a structured approach to membership growth, covering:

**1. Understanding Membership in Surf Life Saving** An overview of membership types and why people join.

**2. Recruitment Strategies** How to attract new members using targeted approaches.

**3. Retention Strategies** Building a strong club culture and keeping members engaged.

**4. Overcoming Common Challenges** Practical solutions for common retention issues.

**5. Case Studies & Success Stories** Real-world examples of clubs excelling in recruitment and retention.

**6. Tools & Resources** Templates, toolkits, and additional support from SLSQ.

# Understanding Your Club's Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Before developing a recruitment strategy, it's important for clubs to evaluate their Unique Selling Proposition (USP). A club's USP defines what makes it stand out and why people should choose to join. Understanding this helps in targeting the right members and crafting compelling messages to attract them.

## 1. Assess What Makes Your Club Unique

- Does your club have a strong social culture?
- Are there exceptional training or development opportunities?
- Does your club have a strong history or a unique location?
- What success stories can be highlighted?

## 2. Identify What Members Value

- Conduct informal discussions or surveys to understand why current members joined and what they enjoy most.
- Look at retention patterns—what keeps members engaged?

## 3. Understand Community Needs

- Consider how your club serves the local community beyond patrolling, such as education programs or local partnerships.
- Identify key demographics in your area and what might attract them to your club.

## 4. Clarify Your Message

- Once you have identified key strengths, refine your messaging to emphasise them in recruitment campaigns.
- Develop a short, clear statement that captures what makes your club special and why people should get involved.



## 5. Using Your USP to Shape Recruitment Strategies

A well-defined USP helps guide recruitment by ensuring:

- Marketing materials highlight the most appealing aspects of the club.
- Targeted campaigns attract the right people who will engage with the club long-term.
- Recruitment efforts remain consistent with the club's values and strengths.

By taking time to evaluate and refine your USP, your club can develop a stronger, more strategic approach to recruitment, ensuring long-term growth and sustainability.

# Recruitment Strategies

## Target Audience

Effective recruitment begins with understanding who is most likely to join and how best to reach them. Key target audiences include:

- **Nippers and Their Families** – Encouraging family involvement can lead to long-term membership retention.
- **Teenagers and Young Adults** – Providing pathways from Nippers to active patrolling members keeps them engaged.
- **Parents and Guardians** – Many parents are keen to contribute and can take on vital support roles.
- **Adults Returning to the Movement** – Former lifesavers may wish to re-engage in volunteer or leadership roles.
- **Multicultural Communities** – Increasing diversity enhances club culture and strengthens community connections.
- **Corporate and Community Partnerships** – Engaging local businesses can help attract new members through sponsorship and workplace programs.

## Effective Recruitment Tactics

This guide provides a structured approach to membership growth, covering:

### 1. Digital and Social Media Campaigns

A strong online presence is essential for recruitment. Consider:

- Running targeted social media ads promoting membership opportunities.
- Showcasing member stories to highlight the benefits of joining.
- Creating engaging video content demonstrating club activities and community impact.

### 2. Community Engagement & School Programs

Building connections with local schools and community groups can help introduce new families to Surf Life Saving. Strategies include:

- Running school presentations and water safety workshops.
- Offering 'Come and Try' sessions for students and parents.
- Establishing partnerships with youth organisations to promote involvement.

### 3. Club Open Days & 'Come and Try' Sessions

Hosting open days allows potential members to experience club life firsthand. Tips for a successful event:

- Offer interactive activities such as rescue demonstrations and beach safety talks.
- Provide opportunities to meet current members and learn about different club roles.
- Ensure a welcoming atmosphere with clear information on how to join.

### 4. Word of Mouth & Member Referrals

Encouraging current members to promote the club can be one of the most effective recruitment tools. Clubs can:

- Introduce referral incentives, such as discounted fees or club merchandise.
- Ask members to share their experiences on social media.
- Promote a culture where members actively invite friends and family to get involved.

### 5. Media & Public Relations Strategies

Gaining media coverage helps increase awareness and interest in club membership.

Consider:

- Issuing media releases about club achievements and upcoming events.
- Partnering with local radio and online media to promote recruitment drives.
- Showcasing club success stories through interviews and testimonials.

### 6. Incentives for New Members

Offering small incentives can help encourage sign-ups. Ideas include:

- Waived or reduced membership fees for first-time members.
- Welcome packs with club merchandise.
- Discounts from local businesses associated with the club.

By implementing these strategies, clubs can attract a diverse range of new members, ensuring a strong and sustainable volunteer base for the future of Surf Life Saving Queensland.



# Retention Strategies: Keeping Members Engaged and Committed

Retaining members is just as important as recruiting them. A successful retention strategy ensures members feel valued, engaged, and motivated to continue their involvement with the club.

## 1. Successful Onboarding and Welcoming Culture

First impressions matter. A well-structured onboarding process helps new members feel connected from day one.

- Assign mentors or buddies to new members to help them integrate.
- Provide clear information on club expectations, training opportunities, and pathways for involvement.
- Organise welcome events and social gatherings to foster connections.
- Ensure new members understand the club's values and how they can contribute.

## 2. Recognising and Valuing Members

Acknowledging the efforts of members fosters a sense of belonging and encourages continued involvement.

- Celebrate milestones such as years of service and achievements.
- Introduce 'Member of the Month' or similar recognition programs.
- Use social media and newsletters to highlight member contributions.
- Personalised thank-you messages from leadership can go a long way in showing appreciation.

### 3. Creating Meaningful Engagement Opportunities

Keeping members engaged means providing opportunities that align with their interests and strengths.

- Offer leadership pathways and training opportunities to support skill development.
- Provide flexible involvement options for members with varying availability.
- Encourage members to take on different roles within the club to prevent burnout and keep them motivated.

### 4. Fostering a Strong Social Culture

A vibrant club culture strengthens retention by creating an enjoyable and inclusive environment.

- Host regular social events, club dinners, or informal meetups.
- Encourage teamwork through club-wide challenges and friendly competitions.
- Create a culture where all members feel welcomed, heard, and included.

### 5. Maintaining Clear Communication

Keeping members informed helps them stay engaged and aware of opportunities.

- Use multiple communication channels (emails, social media, in-person meetings) to share updates.
- Provide a clear and accessible member handbook or online information.
- Seek regular feedback from members to understand their needs and make improvements accordingly.

## 6. Supporting Members Through Life Transitions

Life changes can impact member involvement, so providing support during transitions helps retain engagement.

- Offer flexible involvement options for students, parents, or those with changing work commitments.
- Keep in touch with past members and provide easy re-entry pathways.
- Encourage long-term involvement by offering non-patrol roles, coaching, or administrative opportunities.

By implementing these retention strategies, clubs can build a strong, committed membership base that remains engaged for years to come.



# Overcoming Common Challenges

Retention is a pressing issue for many clubs, with data showing that the statewide average retention rate for all members sits at 69%, while active membership retention is at 80%. However, nearly 50% of clubs have an active member retention rate below 75%, with almost 20% of clubs falling into the at-risk category. Addressing these trends requires a proactive and structured approach.

## 1. Addressing Volunteer Burnout

Burnout is one of the biggest factors impacting volunteer retention. Clubs can mitigate this by:

- Encouraging a balanced approach to volunteering, ensuring members don't take on too many responsibilities at once.
- Implementing structured rostering to distribute workloads fairly.
- Recognising and rewarding volunteer efforts through appreciation events and incentives.
- Providing mental health and wellbeing resources to support volunteers in their roles.

## 2. Engaging Members Beyond the Patrol Requirement

Patrolling is a key responsibility, but long-term engagement comes from offering more than just patrol duties. Clubs can:

- Provide alternative volunteer opportunities such as training, mentoring, and event management.
- Encourage social engagement through club activities, networking events, and team-building exercises.

- Offer leadership development pathways, allowing members to take on more meaningful roles within the club.
- Personalised thank-you messages from leadership can go a long way in showing appreciation.

### 3. Retaining Teenagers and Young Adults

One of the biggest retention challenges is keeping young members engaged after they transition from Nippers. Strategies to support youth retention include:

- Establishing junior leadership programs to give young members a sense of responsibility and purpose.
- Creating social events specifically for young members to build friendships and a sense of belonging.
- Providing opportunities for skill-building, such as first aid training, boat crew qualifications, and other professional development pathways.
- Ensuring that club culture remains inclusive and welcoming for all age groups.

### 5. Managing Workload Distribution Among Members

Ensuring that responsibilities are evenly distributed prevents burnout and improves overall satisfaction. Clubs can achieve this by:

- Implementing clear role descriptions so that members understand their commitments.
- Encouraging rotation of responsibilities to avoid overloading certain individuals.
- Using technology to streamline rostering, shift swaps, and communications.
- Ensuring club leaders monitor workload balance and check in with members regularly.



By addressing these key areas, clubs can build a stronger, more sustainable membership base that is engaged, valued, and motivated to contribute long-term. A strategic focus on retention will not only strengthen individual clubs but also contribute to the broader success of Surf Life Saving Queensland.



# Tools & Resources

To assist you in recruiting and retaining members, we have developed a range of tools and resources to streamline your efforts. These materials are designed to help you effectively communicate the value of joining or staying involved with Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) and ensure consistent messaging across your recruitment campaigns.

## 1. Templates for Recruitment Materials

We've created easy-to-use templates to help you craft professional recruitment materials, including:

- **Flyers** – Highlight the benefits of joining SLSQ, with space for local club details, upcoming events, and membership benefits.
- **Posters** – Eye-catching designs for use at community events, clubhouses, and schools.
- **Brochures** – A more detailed recruitment pamphlet outlining the history, values, and pathways within your club.

These templates are customisable to suit your club's branding, events, and initiatives.

[Download the templates here](#)

## 2. Social Media Toolkit

A consistent online presence is key to engaging potential new members. To make social media outreach easier, we've provided a comprehensive social media toolkit that includes:

- **Custom Club Stickers** – We're excited to offer customised stickers featuring your club's logo! These stickers are a great way to build club spirit and visibility.
- **Social Media Assets** – This includes social tiles, carousel tiles, and Facebook banners to enhance your club's online presence.
- **Email Signature** – A branded email signature to promote your club with every message you send.
- **eDM Banners** – Customised banners for your email campaigns to reinforce key messages and branding.

The toolkit is designed to save time while ensuring your posts reach the right audience.

[Access the Social Media Toolkit here](#)

### 3. Email and Messaging Examples

Effective communication is critical for engaging potential and current members. [Click here to access templates such as welcome emails and club handbooks.](#)

### 4. Links to SLSQ Support Programs

Surf Life Saving Queensland offers a variety of support programs to help members thrive in their lifesaving roles. Make sure to share the following links with new and existing members to guide them on their journey:

- **Member Development Programs** – Access information on leadership programs, training, and skill development opportunities available to all members. [View programs here](#)
- **Volunteer Recognition Programs** – Learn more about how we celebrate the contributions of our volunteers and the benefits of being involved. [View programs here](#)
- **Club Development Resources** – Discover tools and guides to help your club grow, including governance, financial management, and event planning. [View programs here](#)
- **Wellbeing Support Programs** – A range of initiatives to support mental health and wellbeing for members and their families. [View programs here](#)

By utilising these tools and resources, you can effectively drive recruitment and retention within your club and across Surf Life Saving Queensland.



# Conclusion & Call to Action

## 1. Summary of Key Takeaways

Recruitment and retention are essential to the continued growth and success of Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ). By focusing on creating welcoming environments, clear communication, and a strong community, you can attract new members and keep them engaged for the long term.

Here are the key strategies to remember:

- **Create a welcoming environment** – Whether online or in person, ensure potential and current members feel valued and supported.
- **Provide clear pathways** – Show new members where they can grow, develop their skills, and find their place within the organization.
- **Utilise tools and resources** – Make use of the templates, toolkits, and communication examples provided to streamline your recruitment efforts.
- **Engage with your community** – Tailor your strategies to meet the unique needs of your local community, ensuring your messaging and outreach efforts resonate with them.

## 2. Encouragement for Clubs to Tailor Strategies to Their Community

Every surf life saving club is unique, and the most effective recruitment and retention strategies will be those that align with the specific needs and characteristics of your community. Consider the following when planning your efforts:

- **Understand your community's interests and demographics** – What drives them to get involved? What types of events or initiatives are most likely to engage them?
- **Focus on local partnerships** – Collaborate with nearby organisations, schools, and businesses to increase your reach and visibility.
- **Leverage local culture** – Incorporate local values and traditions into your recruitment campaigns to foster a deeper connection with potential members.
- **Adapt for diversity and inclusion** – Ensure that your strategies are inclusive and accessible to all, fostering a diverse and equitable environment within your club.

Remember, the key is to connect with your community in a way that feels authentic and meaningful. By customising your approach, you'll build stronger and longer-lasting relationships with your members.



### 3. Where to Access Further Support from SLSQ

SLSQ is here to support you every step of the way as you implement your recruitment and retention strategies. Here's where you can access further help:

- **Member Services Team** – Reach out to our dedicated team for guidance on membership management, communications, and best practices. [membership@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:membership@lifesaving.com.au)
- **Regional Development Officers** – These experts can assist with tailored advice and hands-on support for your club's needs. Chat to your local Branch team.
- **SLSQ Training and Resources** – Explore our library of development programs, training workshops, and materials to enhance your club's operations. [View Training Resources](#)
- **Club Support Hub** – Find a range of online resources, including templates, guides, and videos to assist with recruitment and retention. [Link to Hub](#)

Don't hesitate to tap into these resources – we are committed to helping your club thrive!

### 4. Call to Action

Now is the time to take action! Start by reviewing your current recruitment and retention strategies, make use of the tools and resources available, and tailor your approach to suit the needs of your community. With the right support, your club can successfully attract and retain the passionate members who are the heart of Surf Life Saving Queensland.

Let's work together to keep our beaches safe and our clubs strong. Reach out to SLSQ today, and let's make the future of surf life saving brighter than ever.

