



DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION

DEI STRATEGY 2024-2027



Queensland

LIFESAVING WITHOUT LIMITS

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MESSAGE FROM THE SLSQ BOARD AND CEO

Surf Life Saving Queensland acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of our lands and waterways. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We also extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

This plan is endorsed by the Surf Life Saving Queensland Board and represents our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

**DEI Strategy
2024-2027**

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Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) is proud to present our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy 2024-2027 where we acknowledge and understand the significance of promoting DEI to create a welcoming culture across our diverse organisation. Surf lifesaving is built on strong traditions that we celebrate whilst focusing on growth and development for the future. With 56.5% of Queensland's projected population growth coming from net overseas migration, it is important for Queensland Surf Life Saving Clubs to reflect the communities we serve into the future. We are ready to challenge ourselves and ensure that diversity is at the core of everything we do.

At SLSQ, we are committed to providing equitable opportunities and addressing systemic change in our organisation to support sustainable growth. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 is a result of SLSQ's commitment to ensuring we are providing equitable opportunities, reducing inequalities and providing a safe and welcoming environment for all in our life saving community.

This plan should be read in conjunction with the [SLSQ Strategic Plan 2024-2027](#). On behalf of the Board, I am confident that through our DEI strategic pillars of Leadership, Community Engagement and Sustainability coupled with our values of Integrity, Innovation, Safety, Trust, Community and Respect, we at SLSQ will make significant progress in creating a culture that is truly inclusive.

Our organisation is underrepresented in the following diverse groups: First Nations People; females in leadership positions; LGBTQIA+; CALD communities; and people living with disability. We are committed to closing these gaps and continuous improvement in the DEI space.

This document serves as a starting point in our journey towards fostering inclusivity and equity within Surf Life Saving Queensland. We invite co-creation by seeking input from both our membership and underrepresented communities to ensure its accuracy and effectiveness.

SLSQ's Board and Executives look forward to leading this Strategy, advocating for change and fostering a culture of unity and belonging.

Dave Whippey | Chief Executive Officer



BACKGROUND



SLSQ is proud of our long history of protecting Queensland beaches and serving the community. The first volunteer Surf Life Saving Club in Australia emerged in 1907 at Bondi Beach and several others followed soon after. In Queensland, the first volunteer patrols were conducted at Greenmount Beach in 1911 and the Club, now Tweed Heads and Coolangatta SLSC, formalised the same year. Since then, 57 additional Surf Lifesaving Clubs have formed along the Queensland coastline. A women's auxiliary was started in most Clubs at their inception to help support the Club in their activities. However, it wasn't until 1980 that women were officially accepted as Members. This change unleashed a positive revolution for the movement and we are now proud that in Queensland nearly 50% of our membership are female.

As outlined in this strategy document, there are numerous opportunities for SLSQ to pursue positive change.

Built on tradition, forged out of passion and focussed on the future, at SLSQ we are committed to saving lives and providing a welcoming and safe environment for all.



KEY FOCUS AREAS

Our priority communities:



LGBTQIA+ community



Women and girls in
leadership positions



People with a disability through
increased membership engagement
and improvements to beach
accessibility



Culturally and linguistically
diverse people



Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander Peoples

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What does Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mean to SLSQ?

To promote sustainable outcomes, we aim to ensure that our initiatives are volunteer led and professionally managed. Fostering change by amplifying existing initiatives and sharing best practices will help in creating a respectful, equitable and inclusive community.

For clarity, we offer definitions of what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion mean:

DIVERSITY

Qualities and characteristics that make each of us unique.

EQUITY

Recognition that we do not all start at the same access level and to intentionally cultivate opportunities for historically underrepresented groups.

INCLUSION

Known as the DEI glue, inclusion is providing access by removing barriers and exclusionary practices that prevent individuals from participating.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

OUR LANDSCAPE



12.9M

FEMALES IN AUSTRALIA REPRESENTING OVER HALF THE COUNTRY'S POPULATION

Female membership at SLSQ is now 46%. However, females in Club leadership roles stands at <33%, including just 11% of Club Presidents. Our challenge is to accelerate the transition to greater parity.



20%

OF QUEENSLANDERS ARE BORN OVERSEAS FROM MORE THAN 220 COUNTRIES

However, in a recent study by SLSQ, only 9% of our Members are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is the gap we aim to close.



1 IN 5

AUSTRALIANS LIVE WITH A DISABILITY

Over 150,000 Queenslanders have a severe disability and require help or assistance with selfcare, mobility or communication needs.
17.9% of Queenslanders have a disability.
We must take best practice from Clubs and amplify this across our membership, sport and lifesaving.



11%

OF AUSTRALIANS IDENTIFY AS LGBTQIA+

Our work with 'Lifesavers with Pride' is a great platform for more recognition of this group within our membership.



3.8%

OF AUSTRALIA'S ESTIMATED POPULATION COMPRISES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

SLSQ is committed to strengthening our relationship with First Nations Peoples and supporting shifts in organisational culture to support collaboration.

At SLSQ we acknowledge and understand the significance of promoting diversity, equity and inclusion to create a welcoming culture for our diverse staff and lifesaving community.

01.

DEVELOP AND SUPPORT

Being the largest volunteer organisation in Queensland, we need to promote our shared values, innovative thinking and resource it appropriately.

02.

GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

Embrace diversity to unlock the full potential of our organisation to ensure growth and sustainability.

03.

TO ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

Provide a welcoming and safe environment for all participating in Surf Life Saving with a focus of respecting the rights and dignity of everyone.

WHY
WE
NEED IT

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OUR COMMITMENT

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DEI STATEMENT

At Surf Life Saving Queensland, we are committed to saving lives and providing a safe environment for all. This purpose along with our values of respect and reflecting the community we serve, drives us to work towards fostering a welcoming environment within our Clubs, Branches and State organisation. We recognise every individual brings their own unique capabilities, experiences and characteristics and as an organisation we aim to closely reflect the diversity of the communities we serve and commit to providing an equitable, inclusive and safe environment for all.



DEI PRINCIPLES

- Safe environments foster a culture of growth and inclusion enabling a sense of belonging.
- Inclusivity leads to strengthening a connection to the communities we serve and to increased membership and participation.
- Systemic change with a focus on policies, procedures and practices that will lead to a sustainable future.
- Training and resources educate our community on the benefits of an inclusive lifesaving community.
- Removing barriers of unconscious biases and stereotypes to attract, retain and enable more diverse Members and volunteers.
- Collaboration with underrepresented communities and inputs from our membership base to build our plans and DEI initiatives.



DEI VISION

To promote and ensure a fair, equitable, safe and respectful environment for our lifesaving community.



DEI MOTTO

Lifesaving without Limits

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DEI STRATEGIC PILLARS

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01.

Leadership

Foster change throughout SLSQ through strong and inclusive leadership at all levels. Measure change so that our leaders are accountable.

02.

Community engagement

Create a respectful, safe and welcoming environment for all. Engage with our life saving community through inclusion and equity initiatives to increase participation across all underrepresented groups.

03.

Sustainability

Develop and review systems, procedures, policies and initiatives that take into consideration intersectionality and to enable sustainable change.

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OUR PLAN FOR SUCCESS

SLSQ's DEI Strategy focuses on our commitment to create a welcoming culture and an inclusive community which helps us increase our membership base, and protect and celebrate our communities. SLSQ has undertaken considerable research and collaboration with key stakeholders in the creation of its first ever DEI Strategy. We have relevant action and capability plans that sit beneath this strategy and these further articulate our aims whilst taking into consideration intersectionality.

These action plans include:

- **ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY**
- **GENDER EQUITY ACTION PLAN**
- **DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN**
- **FIRST NATIONS ACTION PLAN**
- **PRIDE ACTION PLAN**
- **CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) COMMUNITIES ACTION PLAN**

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DEI ENABLING PRIORITIES

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DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT

- Appropriately resourced
- Board, Executive and Senior Leadership owned
- Sustainable change through policies, mandates and procedures
- Partnerships
- Role models from best practice initiatives



BUILDING CAPABILITY

- Volunteer led and professionally managed
- Education
- Staff and volunteer training
- HR initiatives
- Community programs and initiatives
- Mentoring and networking



VISIBILITY IN ACTION

- Leverage 2024 World Championships
- SLSQ branding
- Marketing
- PR and communications
- Engaging with key industry sectors
- Celebrating diversity



MONITORING EVALUATION REPORTING

- Data driven programs and initiatives
- Year on year tracking and review
- Set targets and KPIs
- Reporting on inclusion and equity targets
- Continuing engagement and collaboration with key stakeholders

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WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

Our Membership Reflects The Diversity Of The Community We Serve

Increase In Number Of Women In Leadership Roles

Decrease In Barriers For People Living With A Disability To Engage In Lifesaving

Improvements To Beach Accessibility At Appropriate SLSC Locations Across The State

Cultivating A Sense Of Belonging Through Inclusive And Welcoming Clubs

Continued Promotion And Celebration Of Diversity

Equitable Access To Opportunities

Increase In Number Of Diverse Members In Active Lifesaving Roles

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