Strategic Review of Sport and Active Recreation within Surf Life Saving

Background:

In 2015 sport and active recreation in surf lifesaving (known as Surf Sports and/or Sport Participation) is at a crossroads. The traditional "surf carnival" at the club and regional level, based on multi discipline events being conducted simultaneously on a single beach at a leisurely pace over a whole day, are now the exception rather than the rule. This has been the case for 20 years at least. Increasingly, specialised single discipline events, especially for surf boats and surf skis, are the norm and are meeting some of the member's demands.

Additionally, members are competing in private sector offerings such as distance paddling, open water swimming and stand up board paddling. The surf clubs, with some major exceptions such as Manly and Freshwater on the Australia Day weekend, at the very basic level have simply stopped hosting the club carnival due to lack of demand, preferring specialised surf sports events if they host any sports events at all.

The weekly club competition on a Sunday morning is rapidly disappearing in its traditional form, with only 42% of all surf clubs conducting a surf race on a Sunday (unpublished data from 2007 Club Survey conducted by Dick Bignold, SLSA Chair Surf Sports). The weekly handicap surf swim is a thing of the past in the surf club.

The facts are surf sports has not changed significantly for nearly 70 years with the single exception of the creation of the Iron Man Series in the 1980s (originally a borrowed concept from the USA Lifeguards and now a legal trademark of another sport) . The surf sports model post World War 2 has remained with a series of short duration events delivered as a "carnival" allowing members to compete to keep fit for surf lifesaving. This was the original concept in 1907 and although many of the novelty beach based events have gone, the array of water and beach based events evolved to the current model by the start of World War 2. We have persevered with the “one size fits all surf carnival”, adjusted competition to accommodate women as equals, and along the way introduced IRB and pool competition (both of which are small niche products for a small number of members).

While the evolution of surf sports is internally focused and can be controlled by SLSA, the external situation has changed dramatically affecting both members and the public. The sport landscape and society demands of sport and recreation organisations in Australia has been radically altered in the form of mega-trends resulting from modernisation, commercialisation and globalisation. These mega-trends, expected to drive the 'big picture' of sport and recreation in Australia for the next 30 years, can be summarised as follows:

- **From Extreme to Mainstream**: Lifestyle, adventure and alternative sports are becoming popular with Australians particularly young Australians, with participation being driven by widespread exposure through digital media.
- **More than Sport**: There is an increased focus on the broader benefits derived from participation in sport, including physical and mental benefits, crime prevention and social inclusion.
- **Everybody’s Game**: The types of sports Aussies are likely to play will shift as demographics, including cultural landscapes, change. There are indicators Australians are embracing sport in older age resulting in the need for sport to cater for senior citizens to participate in sport.
- **New Wealth New Talent**: Population growth in developing countries, specifically Asia, increases athlete competition within the sport landscape. This may result in emerging new sporting markets for television, social media, sports equipment, services and events.
- **Tracksuits to Business Suits**: Market forces are likely to put pressure on sport in the future drawing athletes away from sports which have lower salary bases. In addition, the administration of sport may transition from community based organisations to corporate structures as they face increased accountability.

SLS has seen a significant re-positioning of itself in the marketplace over the past 20 years. In 1995 SLSA was positioned as a lifestyle organisation, with surf sport and its sportspeople as the shop window, which promoted safety on our beaches. In 2015, SLS is positioned as a humanitarian organisation with saving lives as the shop window. This shift has seen significant government and community recognition and growth of the SLS brand. The long term risk of such a move, highlighted by the reduction of informal club based recreation, is maintaining the fundamental importance of physical fitness and surf zone water competence. It remains unchallenged that SLS requires its lifesaving workforce to be highly capable in the water to deliver on SLSA’s core business of saving lives.

Therefore, the purpose of this review of sport and active recreation in surf life saving is to 1) understand the impacts of recent society level studies (ASC Mega-Trends and Market Segmentation) on SLSA’s approach to provision of such products and services, 2) to understand the attitudes, perceptions and requirements of SLSA’s members and the public in terms of SLSA’s sport and recreation pathways and products, and 3) to propose recommended reforms to the SLSA sport and recreation system that will position SLSA as a sustainable organisation, capable of saving lives and delivering member satisfaction in sport and recreation for the foreseeable future.
### Terms of Reference:

Delivery of a comprehensive report that addresses the following:

1. Understand the impacts of recent society level studies (ASC Mega-Trends and Market Segmentation) on SLSA’s approach to provision of sport and recreation products and services
2. Understand the attitudes, perceptions and requirements of SLSA’s members and the public in terms of SLSA’s sport and recreation pathway and product offering
3. Propose recommended reforms to the SLSA sport and recreation system that will position SLSA as a sustainable organisation, capable of saving lives and delivering member satisfaction in sport and recreation for the foreseeable future.

### In Scope

- Delivery against SLS2020 Strategic Plan
- Whole sport pathway (organised sport) (club and representational pathway)
- Recreational pathway (organised activities)
- SLS sport in schools including school-club link opportunities and pathway.
- Culture of sport and recreation with SLS (unorganised sport / activities)
- Nationally delivered/governed event products (both member and public facing products)
- Amateur and professional sporting / recreational products (carnival formats and cost models)
- Professional Ironman Series (KNG Series)
- Junior Sport (Nippers / Cadets) through to Masters (full participation lifecycle)
- All sport disciplines (both existing and potential)
- Commercialisation opportunities of current and potential sporting / recreational products
- Competition eligibility (policy 5.4)
- Use of SLS equipment (policy 1.02)
- Sport information technology considerations
- IT Considerations
- Financial impact on members, clubs, branches, states and SLSA

### Out of Scope

- Construct and delivery of Australian SLS Championships (subject to contracts until 2022) and other national championship events (IRB) *(note: SLS Pool Championships is currently under review and thus will be included ‘in scope’).*
- Non-owned (by SLSA) event properties (this does not preclude potential for partnerships of joint venture delivery models being considered as ‘in scope’).
- ‘Micro’ matters (discipline specific rule changes, entry fees etc)
- International level high performance (i.e. national team program)

### Consultation:

In executing the review process and drafting the final report, the project team is required to consult the following stakeholders using a range of engagement options including face to face meetings, telephone/online meetings, workshops and surveys:

- SLS Membership
- SLS State Entities – including a minimum of 5 appointed state representatives from each state (more from larger membership bases)
- Executive Management Group (State CEO’s)
- SLSA Board of Directors
- External sport and recreation industry experts including other NSO’s
- Australian Sports Commission
- General Public

The project team will develop a process and activity timeline which will be communicated to the above stakeholders prior to the review commencing which will provide visibility of the review process from the outset.

### Composition:

The project team will consist of (voting by consensus):

- Nathan Hight (Chair, Project Manager)
- Nigel Taylor, EMG endorsed representative (Executive Management Group Champion)
- Craig Smith-Gander, SLSA Director (Board Champion)
- Andrew Buhk
- Geoff Howes, Deputy General Manager – Participation, Australian Sports Commission (ASC)
- 1 x independent, external sport/recreation product development professional (TBC)
- 1 x independent, school sport sector expert (TBC)
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<td>1 x independent sports marketing industry expert (TBC)</td>
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<td>McKinsey &amp; Co Consultants</td>
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<td>SLSA Sport Manager (secretariat)</td>
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The project team, on approval by the SLSA CEO, may co-opt specific skills that may be required and become known during the course of the review activities.

| Appointed By: | SLSA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) |
| Reports to: | SLSA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) |
| Report due: | 31 December 2015 |