



# A Sport and Recreation Game Plan for Surf Life Saving Australia

February 2016

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Executive Summary

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*Surf Sport. A series of physical activities that generates enjoyment, passion and emotion. A connection to something bigger than yourself. It's about friendships, comradery and belonging. A channel to set and achieve goals both individually and as a team. An opportunity to strive for excellence.*

*But sport and recreation is so much more than this. It's about growing leaders as role models and inspiring the next generation. It helps people overcome the obstacles in their lives, whether they be physical, mental, social, or other problems, knowing they can set goals and overcome challenges. In a time of sedentary lifestyles where physical activity in the general population wains, surf sport and surf lifesaving recreation activities offer the community a means to stay healthy and active. Sport and recreation helps save lives, builds better communities and creates great Australians.*

This statement synthesises our member views from the past three months. It captures what sport and recreation is about. But what is its role in modern surf lifesaving? We set out to answer this question through an in-depth study. This has not been a review focussed on the delivery of the annual Australian Surf Life Saving Championships, rather, a much more holistic review of sport and recreation with clearly articulated requirements and scope outlined in the project terms of reference as endorsed by SLSA's Board of Directors (appendix A).

We set out to answer questions such as what are the drivers and barriers to sport and recreation in surf lifesaving? Are we realising its potential for our organisation, and surf lifesaving's potential in the sport and recreation space? Is surf lifesaving staying relevant to members and to the public? How can we engineer a membership pipeline that engages both existing lifesavers, new lifesavers, and nurtures them into outstanding lifesavers?

This report presents our answers. We need to act if sport and recreation is to motivate and excite people in the surf lifesaving community. New dimensions are required if it is to develop capable lifesavers for the long term.

A contemporary role for sport and recreation in surf lifesaving will not appear overnight. It will take our concerted and aligned effort at club, branch, state and national levels.

This report challenges us to consider what it will take to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and to make the changes needed. We recognise that a balance is required between creating a cultural shift that is radical enough to modernise our organisation yet incremental enough to avoid alienating our long standing members

We know you will engage with its ideas and evidence, and help us make this family more powerful, enjoyable and relevant than ever.

*National Sport and Recreation Review Project Team:*

**Dr Dean Dudley**

**Peter Sciberras**

**Nigel Taylor**

**Craig Smith-Gander**

**Andrew Buhk**

**Merrilee Barnes**

**Nathan Hight**

## Executive Summary

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### The case for a new approach to sport and recreation in Surf Life Saving

Since the first surf belt and reel appeared on Sydney beaches in 1907, surf sports and Surf Life Saving (SLS) have been respected across the nation. They are irreplaceable and indivisible siblings in the one Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) family, each with proud traditions, cultures and actions. That family has never been stronger, drawing on over 169,000 <sup>1</sup>Australian adults and children to enrich our coastal communities and, most importantly, save lives.

While saving lives has always been the primary objective of SLSA, throughout its history, it's focus on how it effectively achieves that objective has evolved to take advantage of the opportunities and mitigate the risks of the day. Over the last 20 years, SLSA has re-positioned its focus away from being a sporting organisation that delivered beach safety, to a more humanitarian focussed organisation that holds sporting events. The shift in focus has met the need to protect a population with great access and poor preparation for coastline risks.

Over the same 20-year period, the proportion of life savers who participate in surf sport has fallen by 60%. In 2014/2015, there were 8,606<sup>2</sup> rescues by volunteer surf life savers on Australian beaches. Of these, only 21% involved motorised equipment such as a RWC or IRB, and 79% were made by lifesavers with no gear, or with just a board or a rescue tube. Almost 6,800 <sup>3</sup>people were saved by the physical surf competence of our life savers. The possibility or even the perception that surf life savers are not surf competent is incompatible with our organisational identity.

### The strategic link

In its most recent strategic plan, SLSA therefore saw surf sport as one element among many within "Goal 2: Develop our People":

- 2.1 Provide and promote the opportunities and pathways in SLS to motivate our members
- 2.4 Develop our participation initiatives including surf sports
- 2.5 Provide opportunities for our members to participate in activities through ILS

Surf sport must stay as a strong part of the SLSA mix.

The question for this review has been: How can we develop and leverage surf sport and surf lifesaving recreation to help Surf Life Saving (SLS) save lives on our coasts?

### Methodology

In 2014 SLSA undertook initial investigations to consider member attitudes and perceptions of surf sports and recreational activities in SLS. Over 1,000 surf lifesaving members and a general public sample size of 1,500 responded to research in 2014. As a result of these initial investigations and having received a discussion paper summing up the findings of this initial study at its meeting in February 2015, the Board of Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) authorised a national review of sport and

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<sup>1</sup> Source: 2014/14 SLSA Annual Report

<sup>2</sup> Source: 2014/14 SLSA Annual Report

<sup>3</sup> Source: 2014/15 SLSA Annual Report

recreation in surf lifesaving to be undertaken with the following objectives confirmed in the project terms of reference:

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. 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.

Following workshops with state sport directors, state and national management and national sport advisors, we designed a mix of quantitative and qualitative research, drawing data and insights from:

1. a survey of 2,276 SLSA members and non-members
2. 118 interviews with members and external stakeholders of SLS sport and recreation
3. 19 workshops across the country to gather input from members, and
4. a written submission process.

The SLSA team delivered a workshop in each state/territory except Tasmania (cancelled due to a lack of participant registrations), to present the SLSA research, present the operational concepts, seek new ideas and concepts, and gain feedback on their priorities. Our proposed recommendations and model for surf sport were then presented to 60 Surf Life Saving leaders from across Australia at the SLSA National Sport Summit on 21/22 November 2015, and summit participants offered their feedback over a two-day series of workshops. The research, independent thinking and multi-level feedback underpin the themes and priorities reflected in this report.

### **A game plan for change**

As a result of our investigation, we propose there are four components to enabling both sport and recreational participants to flourish as members of SLSA and therefore strengthen the physical competence of surf life savers around Australia:

- A. Reset surf sports as the competitive edge of SLS as being a sporting community that raises the SLSA profile, inspires young athletes to achieve, and is supported by the broader SLS community as a pinnacle of surf based athleticism.
- B. Launch recreational memberships to attract less competitive 'coastal lifestylers'<sup>4</sup> and families, with supporting professional programs for primary and secondary schools and for fitness programs of all communities and ages, and a range of potential coastline activities.
- C. Re-package, re-energise and present surf sport and recreation to members and the public with user driven and engaging modern digital media and information technology platforms.
- D. Develop and reinforce the SLSA culture as one that celebrates the diverse capacities, ambitions and skills that make for strong surf communities and safe beaches.

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<sup>4</sup> 'Coastal Lifestylers' is a market segmentation term used to describe individuals (either existing members of SLS or potential members) who enjoy undertaking physical activities in the coastal environment.

This report sets out how our review came to these conclusions: the reasons for our sport and recreational game plan, details of its four components, and suggested plans for getting these initiatives under way.

## **A. Reset surf sport as our competitive edge**

### **Reconnect with our sportspeople**

Most SLS clubs have members that participate in surf sport, and nationally between 20 and 25% of our 42,956 patrolling surf lifesavers<sup>5</sup> do so. However, as surf sport participants progress to the elite levels, as a result of a fragmented delivery model, they become more disconnected from the SLS community base.

New initiatives have been well received by members, including the “Summer of Surf” of consistent TV-quality club-level racing for 24+ weeks, and the recently reformed Interstate Championship, a short-course, high-impact racing format, streamed live on the internet. These initiatives also align with findings of sport and recreation market and mega-trends studies commissioned recently by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).

There is a strong perception among the competitive surf sports participants that others see surf sports as a reward for past SLS efforts, rather than a strategic enabler for the broader objectives of SLS. There is a strong perception<sup>6</sup> that the range of pre-requisites in order to participate is too extensive and one of the central reasons for reduction in surf sport participation rates (see Figure 2, page 19).

Many surf sport participants also feel the broader SLS community doesn’t value the role of sport in SLS, and so does not leverage its potential. They are aware that any surplus generated through SLS surf sports programs are treated as SLS general revenue and not retained within the surf sport system.

The fragmented administration of surf sport, both within and beyond SLSA, also reduces the available investment to “grow the game” and the capacity of each state entity to deliver surf sport products. There is a significant opportunity cost of each component of the existing surf sports pathway operating in isolation when compared against other major sporting models, such as National Rugby League or Australian Rugby, who effectively leverage currently fragmented broadcast properties to build awareness of their respective game at a grassroots level, connecting all levels of the pathway.

At the core of the opportunity cost outlined above is the lack of commercialisation of surf sport as a means of financing the growth of the sport in Australia. Where there are loyal and committed long term commercial partners involved, such as Kellogg’s Nutri-Grain, such partnerships appear isolated into only the specific product being sponsored, rather than working with partners to leverage their investment across SLSA’s cradle to grave suite of products.

### **Build an interconnected surf sport pathway from nippers to the elite**

Enormous numbers of children start in our nippers and juniors programs. Many metropolitan clubs are at capacity and are turning potential nippers away. Yet there is also a large drop-out from SLS in the teenage years. To overcome these issue, there is as yet no real national, strategic, cohesive model to attract, retain and motivate people in surf sports. A model is needed that allows easier access to surf sport, retains members in the ‘breakthrough age’ of 12-17 years, offers meaningful weekly

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<sup>5</sup> Source: 2014/2015 SLSA Annual Report

<sup>6</sup> Source: Stakeholder interviews carried out between August 2015 – October 2015

competition, and inspires young athletes to strive for excellence across the spectrum of surf sport disciplines.

## **B. Sustain and expand SLS with recreational membership**

### **Launch recreational memberships in SLS**

Currently, many people are active in coastal recreation pursuits, but do not have access to the community and facilities that SLS offers. For every person interested in becoming a patrolling member of our SLS clubs, there are almost three who are interested in being a recreational member, and another three interested in being a social or associate member<sup>7</sup>. A coherent approach to capturing the coastal recreation space would attract many willing, non-traditional members to the SLS fold. Their ocean activities are very similar to those already involved in the SLS community, but not (or no longer) in surf sport<sup>8</sup>.

For example, many clubs already organise ocean swims, though very few effectively leverage the opportunity to capture participant information, conduct ocean swim clinics, and convert participants into members. There are many paddlers (stand-up, ocean ski etc) who are former lifesavers, unable to commit to being full members but having a wealth of knowledge that they could contribute if SLS could cater for their needs. Alternative national sporting organisations such as Canoe Racing Australia and Surfing Australia are actively competing for the attention of the coastal recreation consumer, a domain once held by SLS. It is important for SLS to compete for this consumer because of the level of inherent physical competence and environmental knowledge they bring to the lifesaving workforce.

There is also no systematic way of giving the “nipper parent” access to beach or ocean skills programs, other than for them to become full members. Finally, a host of new coastal activities such as ‘coasteering’ may, over time, also join the offers of recreational membership to meet the contemporary needs of existing and potential members.

All of these activities involve surf expertise that may be as relevant to developing surf lifesaving skills and participation as is surf sport, and very few see surf sport as the best option for being ‘surf fit’ for lifesaving purposes<sup>9</sup>.

### **Develop surf lifesaving recreation programs for members and others**

A strong program of surf lifesaving recreation for existing and new members could be developed, and then be tailored and offered to non-member groups, in part to attract them into membership.

The review recognised that we offer no structured program for SLS members who want to enjoy physical activity in or at the surf, but not in the traditional surf-sport sense. Many SLS members are active in the surf, though not in traditional surf sports: see Figure 8. Many of these members still want a sense of structure, challenge and community in their surf activities. In particular, we have no structured programs for members over 65 years, despite this ‘baby boomer’ age group being the largest in the general population forecasts both now and over the next 20 years<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Source: *Developing Surf Sports. Repucom (2015)*

<sup>8</sup> Source: *Developing Surf Sports. Repucom (2015)*

<sup>9</sup> Source: *Developing Surf Sports. Repucom (2015)*

<sup>10</sup> Source: *Population Projections 1997 – 2051. Australian Bureau of Statistics*

Currently there are no nationally-packaged, locally-delivered programs for primary or secondary schools. Here is a clear opportunity to build upon nippers, with the second highest levels of junior sport participation public awareness, and use surf sports athletes to help deliver the programs and increase the profile for SLS – as occurs in Australia’s winter football codes. Some surf lifesaving clubs have developed local programs that can be offered through or in concert with other fitness groups (gyms, running groups etc) to give their stakeholders some variety in their training.

### **Overcome concerns**

While many clubs see the attraction of recreational members and programs, they are unsure it is a direction they should be heading. Clubs that offer local beach fitness sessions feel they have to “keep under the radar”, as they are not sure if they are permitted to cater for these groups under SLSA or their state SLS entity existing policy and regulation structures. Others are concerned that recreational members and programs will be a burden on existing volunteers. How also, will existing members respond to this new membership group? In the absence of a clear strategy for identifying and targeting the desired recreational market, these concerns will continue. But a clear strategy to get involved with SLS would address such concerns and allow clubs to make their own informed decisions with regard to how they can stay relevant in the eyes of their members and community.

## **C. Modernise our digital media and information platforms**

### **Make the most of digital media**

Through digital media, organisations can use apps like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and so on as well as central websites to engage with members and the public through their smartphones, tablets, computers and televisions. Though there are risks involved in using digital media with young audiences, these risks are managed more and more effectively, as the public accepts that this is just the way young people now communicate.

SLSA is not yet using digital media effectively. One strong reason to do so is that it experiences its highest rate of membership drop-out between 12 and 17 years – and these are the very people who most consume and engage with their sport through digital means. National sporting bodies such as Cricket Australia, Australian Football League, National Rugby League and Australian Rugby Union are all using the digital space well, and are winning the battle for youth attention.

There is no reason to think that the use of digital media to engage with both lifesavers and surf sport participants would diminish SLSA’s market position as a humanitarian organisation and charity. Indeed, the use of surf sport personalities may help drive home this message to the public.

### **Drive better IT platforms to serve our core and new activities**

A modern technology backbone is needed to run any contemporary member organisation. The SLSA Board has recently commissioned a national review of its IT strategy. Decisions flowing from that review must support effective IT support for:

- the national member database
- member communication
- on-beach event delivery (finish line technologies, automated marshalling and result recording)
- member and public events, including promotions, entries, results and participant engagement
- financial transactions relating to sport and recreation
- sport and recreation education and training courses

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## D. Develop and reinforce a unified SLSA purpose and culture

### **Reinforce the mutual benefits of the humanitarian, sport and learning & development siblings, internally and externally**

Most members understand and support that the SLSA is a humanitarian organisation with the goal of reducing coastal drowning. However, that is not why most members have joined: they have done so for fun, a sense of belonging, personal challenge, and fitness. Members therefore believe that their governing bodies could engage with them more on these drivers rather than on the public messaging on saving lives and making donations.

This lack of alignment has developed for many years, so that SLS's operational areas of coastal safety, sport and learning & development have seemingly competed against each other to be the most 'popular' sibling in an unruly family. A modern community organisation with that level of internal competition and confusion about their roles in the organisational strategy is unlikely to serve its members well, or to attract public support and sponsorship.

There is a clear case for a unified SLS family with strong siblings who help each other, and who acknowledge that mutual benefit.

### **Bridge the humanitarian-sport divide**

A cohesive and agile organisation needs its purpose and strategy to be agreed and pursued by all of its members. While there is tension across all the operational arms of SLS, of the relationships between the humanitarian, sporting and educational siblings in the SLS family, the division between the humanitarian and sporting arms most risks our capacity to set and pursue our purpose and strategy. This thinking is in contrast to the ideals of values-based sport promoted by the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee which places sport at the service of humanity<sup>11</sup>. Specific actions must be taken to help bridge that divide, and to reinforce our unified purpose and strategy. As shown above, there is more mutual ground that is typically celebrated, and this mutual ground should be exploited to bridge the humanitarian-sport divide.

Surf sport has a strategically critical role in developing the physical competence and confidence needed for saving lives in an inherently dangerous environment. However, there is a perception<sup>12</sup> among those engaged through this review who believe that the risks of surf sport 'distracts and detracts' from SLS's drowning prevention purpose. A balance must be reached, with sport safety prioritised so that the risks are as low as reasonably practicable (noting there will always be risks), and surf skills are extended by exposure to different surf conditions. Without this balance, a critical mass of surf lifesavers will be unable to perform rescues in the very surf conditions they are most needed, threatening the long-term relevance of SLS in the community.

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<sup>11</sup> Source: United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2015). *International Charter of Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport*. UNESCO Press: Paris, and;

*International Olympic Committee (2015). Olympic Charter in force as from 2 August 2015 Fundamentals Principles of Olympism*. IOC Press: Lausanne

<sup>12</sup> Source: Stakeholder interviews carried out between August 2015 – October 2015 and in the report "Developing Surf Sports – Final Report" compiled by Repucom (2015).



The humanitarian-sport divide exists because the mind-sets and behaviours of the SLS community do not yet adequately reflect their mutual benefits, and a balanced approach to SLS. These mind-sets and behaviours – some call it the culture of our movement – must change.

**Include mutual benefit in representing the surf lifesaving movement to the public**

Currently, the presentation of surf lifesaving to the public focuses heavily on its life saving. For example, the page on ‘What we do’ on our website highlights our role in saving, protecting and promoting life, but does not mention surf sport or recreation. The page ‘Who we are’ similarly states that we are “Australia’s major water safety, drowning prevention and rescue authority” and continues into our patrol, education, safety campaign and community activities, with no mention of surf sport.

However, we believe that the public would readily recognise and appreciate the significant role of sport and recreation in enabling surf life-saving. SLS could better present the role of surf sport in saving lives, building better communities and creating great Australians. The benefits that surf sport brings to life saving competence is presented above. To these should be added the physical and mental health benefits of surf sport and recreation. Participation provides a platform to set and attain goals, to a sense of identify and belonging, to the values of team work, respect, discipline and dedication. All these are associated with surf lifesavers, and can be promoted in both surf sport and surf lifesaving as siblings in the one family.

## Consolidated list of recommendations

**Game Plan A** –Reset surf sports as the competitive edge of SLS, a sporting community that raises the SLSA profile, inspires young athletes and supports and is supported by the broader SLS community.

**To reconnect our surf sport athletes to the broader SLS community, to help inspire young athletes, stimulate greater surf sport participation and raise the SLSA profile, we should:**

1. Review SLSA policy 5.04 to simplify access to surf sport competition, with lifesaving qualifications (i.e. bronze medallion) retained but the definition of “service commitment” be broadened to allow clubs and athletes flexibility in what arrangements suit them best to promote surf sport participation whilst maintaining the compliancy of club lifesaving agreements.
2. Develop a surf sport commercialisation model that effectively leverages SLSA’s cradle to grave surf sport properties, including nippers and school programs, to attract a family of commercial partners willing to invest in surf sports nationally.
3. Work with existing partners to reconnect the existing Ironman / Ironwoman series into Surf Life Saving’s mainstream, through partnering with platforms such as “Summer of Surf” that deliver a stronger broadcast proposition, higher profile for the sport and connect elite ironman racing directly with the surf sport pathway.
4. Implement a promotional program through surf sport television and digital media platforms to reinforce the role the surf environment and surf sport plays in developing surf lifesavers and use such channels to promote SLSA’s suite of surf sport partners and products publicly. This may be an extension to existing elite pathways such as the professional Ironman and Ironwoman series.

**To build a surf sport pathway to bring young athletes through from nippers to elite performance and to increase the number of lifesavers with strong water skills, we should:**

5. Develop a strategic, cohesive model (complimented by recommendation 2) to attract, retain and motivate people in surf sports, particularly through the ‘breakout age’ of 12-17 years, with components that include:
  - a. Recruit high profile surf sports athletes centrally to support the grassroots organisation as ambassadors and delivery agents for nipper clinics and public promotion of surf sports and surf lifesaving.
  - b. A national coach development program which develops leadership and capability of club coaches, with support from SLS administration, performance coaches and elite athletes.
  - c. Develop a modified sport product “Super Surf Events” for use by clubs, branches and state entities which provide a range of surf sport event formats between 2-3 hours. This includes full development of event brand, operating model, detailed templates, budgets, planning tools that will support maximum alignment across Australia.
  - d. Extending partnerships with private providers to deliver components of the surf sport pathway, for example by expanding the “Summer of Surf Sport” initiative, to present surf sports in a modern format and provide an enhanced performance pathway for surf sport athletes.
  - e. Retaining capable people in the surf sport system by targeting and investing in retiring surf sport athletes to take on coaching, management, administration and officiating roles in surf sport.

**Drive the implementation of that model with:**

6. A surf sport review implementation steering group of appropriately skilled people (surf sport, sport management and business acumen) to flesh out, test and implement the model, while business-as-usual activities continue under the existing system of advisors and staff; and
7. A role responsible for participation in SLSA senior management, with the expertise to oversee and implement participation programs (schools, nippers, recreation pathways).

**Game Plan B** – Launch recreational memberships to attract less competitive ‘coastal lifestylers’ and families, with supporting professional programs for primary and secondary schools and for over 65 years and fitness groups, and a range of potential coastline activities.

**To sustain and expand SLS with recreational membership and create a long term targeted approach to attracting ‘coastal lifestylers’ to Surf Life Saving, we should:**

8. Formally recognise recreational membership within the SLSA membership structure to provide clubs with a clear framework to leverage recreation opportunities if they wish to.
9. Target individuals and likely groups as potential recreational members, including:
  - a. Nipper parents (a greater level of parent commitment may also support longer tenure of children and youth members).
  - b. Entrants in ocean swim and paddling events entry process.
  - c. Existing surf lifesavers who don’t participate in surf sport.

**To develop surf recreation programs for both members and the public, we should:**

10. Develop a series of nationally-constructed but locally-delivered programs/products for SLS entities to offer to their local markets, including the business models, promotional plans, and workforce training:
  - a. a surf recreation program for non-competitive existing members
  - b. a (one beach, one pool) ‘nipper’ program for primary schools
  - c. event products for secondary schools, to give youths surf sport experience
  - d. a group fitness product for adults in existing fitness communities
  - e. a group fitness product for over 65’s with a focus on mobility outcomes
  - f. explore a role for SLS in offering emerging activities such as ‘coasteering’

**To overcome concerns and provide support to clubs to adopt recreation members SLSA should:**

11. Provide differentiated insurance for recreational members so that they can participate in craft activities and ‘have a go’ carnivals without a lifesaving qualification. The insurance offer would be benchmarked against a standard sports participation insurance package and would not extend to championship surf sport events or work-cover unless appropriate for the individual.
12. Publish a suite of case studies available to all clubs which champion existing recreational programs SLS clubs are delivering in the recreational space with good success.

**Game Plan C** – Re-package, re-energise and present surf sport and recreation to members and the public with user driven use of modern digital media and information technology platforms.

**To make better use of digital media for the SLS movement, we should:**

13. Develop a digital strategy to promote surf lifesaving and sport to relevant audiences as an attractive, exciting and rewarding sport to participate in. The strategy should:
  - a. Launch a “Surf Sports Australia” website with engaging multimedia content, and over time extend across other digital platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Periscope, Instagram, and later a digital TV channel that can stream surf events live and broadcast archive footage 24/7/365.
  - b. Use national team members and other surf sport athletes with interesting and inspirational stories on those digital platforms to communicate the values, culture and attractiveness of SLS.
  - c. Incorporate a commercialisation strategy (linked to recommendation 2) to leverage revenue from all digital assets to support expenses associated with implementation of these review recommendations.
  - d. Determine whether sports marketing expertise should become a core part of the SLSA management structure and workforce, and whether the development and maintenance of the digital assets should be contracted out to a specialist third party.

**To develop better IT platforms to serve our core and new activities, we should:**

14. Continue testing the new event management system, which may be used for public recreational events that does not have to link participant data to SurfGuard
15. Pursue the outcomes of the SLSA IT review.

**Game Plan D** – Develop and reinforce the SLSA culture as one that celebrates the diverse capacities, ambitions and skills that make for strong surf communities and safe beaches.

**Reinforce the mutual benefits of the humanitarian, sport and learning and development arms of SLS by:**

16. Redrafting the SLS strategy to make each arm an explicit and indispensable arm of the SLS movement, with mutually-supporting roles that together support the SLS purpose
17. Assign to a sub-committee of the SLSA Board the task of restoring and reinforcing the unified SLS purpose and culture
18. Develop a communications strategy that reinforces the SLS strategy and the mutual reliance of its three arms, including for example drawing on the profile and organisational expertise of athlete ambassadors, prominent lifesavers, volunteer leaders and respected administrators.

**To bridge the humanitarian-sport divide, we should:**

19. Take explicit actions for both lifesaving and surf sport participants to acknowledge and support each other’s role in the SLS community:
  - a. SLSA clearly articulating the existence and nature of that mutual benefit, the risks to it, and how those risks should be managed
  - b. Leaders within SLS reinforcing that mutual benefit through both the organisational messaging and their own behaviour, and being selected to official roles for their ability to do so

- c. Support SLSA members with programs that help ensure they are aware of how mutual benefit operates and how it translates into specific roles and operations
- d. SLSA establishing metrics to track the understanding and commitment of members to the culture and purpose of mutual benefit, and review the member recognition scheme to consider how its criteria may recognise people who demonstrate the culture and purpose of mutual benefit

**To take explicit actions to effectively communicate our identity publicly, we should:**

- 20. Audit existing public messaging to identify where there may be gaps in the representation of SLS.
- 21. Integrate sport and recreation, and learning and development messaging into public safety and fundraising campaigns (for example, using surf sports personalities to deliver safety messaging).