

Developing our youth – Securing our future

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Summary

Unlike many youth and community organisations in Australia, SLSA currently has a strong and growing membership base that exceeds 112,500 (2006 figures). Of these members, 37,496 (33.3%) are junior activities members (children aged 13 years or under), with almost 50% of SLSA's membership under the age of 18.

This session will look at the growth in the involvement of young people in surf life saving and the importance of developing and nurturing young members in order to maintain their involvement. In particular, the session will address the following programs that SLSA have developed that address the needs of youth.

National Youth Policy: This policy articulates the importance of developing and nurturing young surf lifesavers to ensure they have a safe and supportive experience within the organisation. This policy also includes a developmental framework that provides members with a variety of pathways within SLSA.

Age Managers Course: This program has been developed to educate the 'instructors' and 'mentors' of junior activities members.

Surf Education Program: A program designed to provide a basis for training programs conducted by clubs for junior activities members.

Youth Forums: These programs are delivered from time to time both nationally and on a regional basis and provide surf lifesavers between the ages of 14 and 17 with an opportunity to discuss their views on the opportunities and issues facing young surf lifesavers.

Learning Outcomes

1. To gain knowledge of programs through which young people can be involved in lifesaving.
2. To understand the need for a developmental approach to lifesaving education based on appropriate levels of maturation of children and youth.
3. To understand how young people can be engaged and empowered to play an active role within lifesaving organisations.

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