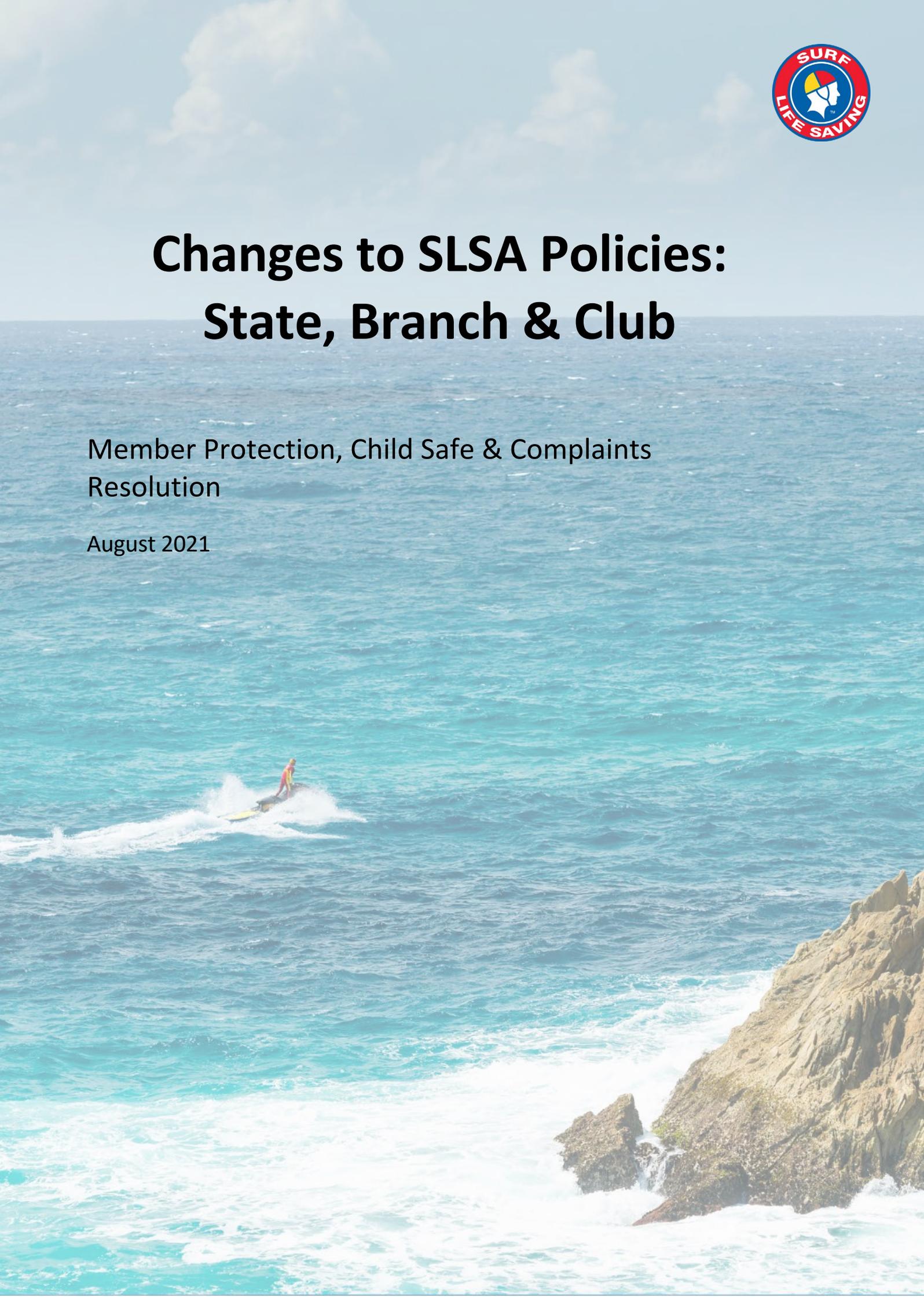




Changes to SLSA Policies: State, Branch & Club

Member Protection, Child Safe & Complaints
Resolution

August 2021



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1 CHANGES TO SLSA POLICIES

1.1 Why is SLSA making changes to the Member Protection Policy?

The Australian Government has passed legislation to enact a new department called Sport Integrity Australia (SIA). Through communication with Sport Australia and SIA it was apparent that there was a strong desire for Surf Life Saving along with other sporting organisations to separate Member Protection Policies into three separate areas: Member Protection; Child Safe; and Complaints & Grievances. Previously, the SLSA Member Protection Policy included these areas in a single policy.

SLSA is committed to maintaining up to date and contemporary governance in line with industry standards. To ensure that our policies reflect best practice in the sector, three separate policies have been developed to replace the previous SLSA Member Protection Policy. The intent of the changes is to make all three policies more concise and ultimately easier to understand.

1.2 What are the changes?

The SLSA Member Protection Policy has been separated into three separate policies. There is also a Child Safe Commitment relating to the Child Safe Policy and an Inclusion and Diversity Statement.

1. Child Safe Policy (SLSA Policy 6.04)

The new Child Safe Policy includes the Child Safe Code of Conduct that sets out the expected standards of behaviour relating to Children and Young People (under 18s) (CYP) in Surf Life Saving (SLS).

2. Child Safe Commitment

The Child Safe Commitment affirms the position of the SLSA Board in relation to creating a Child Safe environment in SLS where CYP are safe from abuse and neglect.

3. Member Protection Policy (SLSA Policy 6.05)

The new Member Protection Policy is a simplified document that focuses on the Member Code of Conduct and expected standards of behaviour of members.

4. Inclusion & Diversity Statement

The Inclusion & Diversity Statement affirms the position of the SLSA Board in relation to creating a Child Safe environment for all members of SLS.

5. Complaint Resolution Policy (SLSA Policy 6.06)

The Reporting and Complaints Guideline that formed part of the previous Member Protection Policy has been replaced by a standalone Complaint Resolution Policy. The new policy outlines clear steps for complainants, respondents and complaint handlers where complaints arise.

These policies were developed in consultation with State Centres and have been discussed and approved by both each State centre by their CEO's and the SLSA Board which comprise of each State President.

1.3 Who do I contact with questions?

SLSA is happy to assist clubs and members with questions that arise out of these changes. We encourage you to reach out to your State Centre in the first instance with any enquiries; however, you can contact the team at SLSA by email: integrity@slsa.asn.au.

A close-up, low-angle shot of a yellow surfboard. The word 'REScue' is printed in a large, stylized, pinkish-red font on the side of the board. The background is a bright, sunny beach scene with a clear blue sky, a sandy shore, and a few people in the distance. The overall tone is bright and positive.

PART A
CHILD SAFE POLICY

1 POLICY 6.04 – CHILD SAFE

The new Child Safe Policy includes the Child Safe Code of Conduct that sets out the expected standards of behaviour relating to Children and Young People (under 18s) (CYP) in SLS.

The Child Safe Code of Conduct covers the following areas:

- Positive guidance and discipline;
- Adhering to professional role boundaries;
- Uniform;
- Use of language and tone of voice;
- Supervision;
- Use of electronic or online communications;
- Giving gifts;
- Photographs of CYP;
- Physical contact with CYP;
- Overnight stays and sleeping arrangements;
- Change room arrangements;
- Use of possession or supply of alcohol or drugs; and
- Transporting CYP.

Another key area covered in the policy is the recruitment and screening of volunteers and employees to ensure appropriate people are engaged in positions that involve working with CYP.

2 CHILD SAFE RESOURCES

To aid clubs to comply with the Child Safe Policy, there is an accompanying guidebook which is available on the [SLS Child Safe Website](#) or on [Members Area](#).

The resources have been updated to align with the new Child Safe Policy and are guided by the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

3 CHILD SAFE COMMITMENT

The SLSA Board endorsed this commitment to keeping CYP safe from abuse and neglect. Everyone in SLS, from Board to Executives to Staff and Volunteers, is responsible to:

- protect CYP from all forms of abuse, bullying and exploitation by our people;
- be alert to incidents of CYP abuse and neglect occurring outside of surf lifesaving that may have an impact on the CYP involved in our programs and activities;
- provide CYP with information, support and reporting processes; and
- create and maintain a child safe culture that is understood, endorsed and put into action by all the individuals who work for, volunteer or access our programs and services.

All people within SLS, regardless of role or level of responsibility, must act to keep CYP safe from such harm. They do this by adopting the practices and behaviour we have set as our standard when carrying out their roles, and reporting any concerning behaviours or reasonable belief of abuse or neglect of which they become aware to a Person in Position of Authority and/or to external authorities responsible for child protection or to Police, regardless of whether that abuse is being perpetrated by volunteers or employees within SLS, or by those outside SLS including those from the CYP's family, extended family, their family's extended network or strangers.

SLSA and its member organisations comprise an organisation involving CYP. SLSA operates across Australia and engages CYP through our programs and activities. SLSA takes seriously its responsibility to deliver a safe, fair and inclusive environment for CYP involved in SLS. We promote equity, respect and diversity by:

- actively anticipating CYP's diverse circumstances and responding effectively to those with additional vulnerabilities;
- providing all CYP access to information, support and reporting processes;
- empowering CYP by giving them a voice and encouraging them to speak up on decisions that affect them;
- creating a fun and positive environment for CYP to be involved in; and
- paying attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander CYP, CYP with a disability, CYP who identify as LGBTIQ and CYP from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

The extended SLSA Commitment to Child Safe and supporting resources can be found on our Child Safe Website <http://sls.com.au/childsafes>.

4 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4.1 General

Does this policy only apply to people that are around CYP?

No. This Policy binds everyone who is involved in SLS, including but not only:

- a. persons appointed or elected to boards, committees and sub-committees;
- b. volunteers;
- c. all Members;
- d. support personnel; and
- e. any other person involved in SLS, including but not limited to participants, parents, guardians, spectators, sponsors and licensees and other contracted parties to the full extent possible.

What is the Child Safe Code of Conduct?

The Child Safe Code of Conduct sets out the expected standards of behaviour relating to CYP in SLS. It includes details on general behaviour as well as specific areas of importance.

I have a reasonable belief that a CYP is being abused / neglected, what should I do?

Anyone who suspects, on reasonable grounds, that a CYP is at risk of or is experiencing neglect or physical, sexual or emotional abuse should report it via <http://reporting.sls.com.au>. If you believe a CYP is in immediate danger, please call Police on 000 without delay prior to submitting a report.

Can I use electronic or online communications with CYP?

Section 4.6 of the Child Safe Policy outlines advice on communication with CYP. To put it simply, any communication should have the express permission of the parent/guardian of the CYP prior to communicating. The CYP's parent/guardian should also be included, where possible, in any electronic communication, including but not limited to, Facebook groups, WhatsApp messaging and emails.

Can I take photographs of CYP?

Section 4.8 of the Policy provides advice in regard to photographs of CYP as well as providing guidelines from Sport Australia which SLSA follows.

Can I transport CYP who I am not the parent/guardian of?

As addressed under section 4.13 of the policy, CYP are to be transported only in circumstances that are directly related to the delivery of SLS programs/activities. A CYP's parent/guardian must provide prior written approval to the SLS Entity (Club) this includes granting permission for another parent/guardian to pick up their CYP.

4.2 Working with Children Check (WWCC) Requirements

What is a Working with Children Check?

Section 5.3 of the policy discusses what Working with Children Checks are as well as Working with Vulnerable People and criminal history assessments. Simply put, a WWCC involves checking a person's criminal history and, in some jurisdictions, disciplinary information to determine their suitability to engage in CYP-related work and activities.

Do I need a WWCC??

At section 5.3 of the policy you will find a table that sets out the relevant legislation for each jurisdiction as well as the responsible Child Safe office in each state or Territory.

I'm a parent member in Western Australia with a CYP who is a member of the same SLS Club; do I need to get a WWCC?

No, for parent members who reside in Western Australia, with a CYP who is a member of the same SLS Club, the legislation currently states that there is an exemption. However, when a program takes place overnight then you must obtain a WWCC.

At Section 5.3 of the policy you will find a table that sets out the relevant legislation for each jurisdiction as well as the responsible Child Safe office in each state or Territory. If you have specific questions it is best to contact the relevant Child Safe Office in your jurisdiction.

4.3 Recruitment & Screening of Volunteers & Employees

What steps are covered under this section of the policy?

The Policy outlines eleven (11) steps, these are:

- Advertising positions;
- Meeting/Interviews;
- Checks for Suitability to Volunteer/Work with CYP;
- International Criminal History Record Checks;
- Monitoring Compliance with Checks for Suitability to Volunteer/Work with CYP;
- Identity Checks for Paid Positions;
- Undertaking Reference Checks;
- Parent Volunteers;
- External Provider's including contractors and consultants;
- Minors who volunteer or work with CYP; and
- Records and Documentation.

4.4 Reporting

I suspect a CYP is in harm, what should I do? Should I contact the Police?

If criminal activity has occurred or if you believe a CYP is at immediate risk of harm or danger, contact the Police (call 000) to report the matter prior to submitting a report through the SLS Reporting System.

Any matter relating to the abuse or suspected abuse of CYP, under the age of 18, must be reported through the SLS Reporting System, by visiting <http://reporting.sls.com.au>.

How do I report a concern or incident relating to a CYP and what do I do if I think a member has breached the policy?

For any policy breach, a report can be made through the SLS Reporting System, by visiting <http://reporting.sls.com.au>.

Should I share my concerns and reports with others?

Your concerns and reports should not be shared due to confidentiality, yet you can choose to speak with the club Member Protection Information Officer.

This person can provide information about the rights, responsibilities and options available to you throughout the complaints and reporting process.

Should I approach the CYP about my concerns?

No, report concerns through the online reporting system or MPIO who will look into the report and contact the relevant parties. However, call the police if you believe a CYP is at immediate risk of harm or danger.

Who can I contact if I am having troubles reporting?

In the first instance you should go to your SLS Entity/Club MPIO, who will be able to assist. The SLSA Team are available if you are having difficulties and the MPIO or other Person in Position of Authority (PPA) at your club is not able to assist your enquiry.

5 APPENDIX A – CLUB CONTACTS

CLUB CONTACTS: CHILD SAFE REPORTING

Responding to Child Safe Concerns and Allegations

SLS is committed to keeping Children and Young People safe at all times. At your Club, you have several people you can confidentially speak to regarding a concern around Child Safe Reporting and the welfare of Children and Young People. These are:

CLUB MPIO (Member Protection Information Officer)	
CLUB Member Welfare Officer	
CLUB PPA (Person in Position of Authority)	

If a criminal activity has occurred or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm or danger, CALL THE POLICE 000.





**PART B
MEMBER PROTECTION
POLICY**

1 POLICY 6.05 – MEMBER PROTECTION

The new Member Protection Policy is a simplified document that focuses on the Member Code of Conduct and expected standards of behaviour of members.

The document sets out the rationale behind the policy, outlining the intent to uphold the core values of SLS and create a safe, fair and inclusive environment for everyone associated with Surf Lifesaving.

All SLS members are bound by the Member Protection Policy, and acknowledge this when joining and via the annual renewal process. Where there are breaches of the policy, members and SLS Entities (clubs) are entitled to raise the matter by lodging online at <http://complaints.sls.com.au>.

2 MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Member Code of Conduct outlines the behaviour expected of, and by, Members and persons involved in, and interactions between, all such persons in the SLS community.

The Code should be followed at all times and by all Members and all people involved in any way with SLS.

The Member Code of Conduct detailed in the Member Protection Policy covers the following areas:

- General Code of Conduct;
- Sexual misconduct and relationships;
- Use, possession or supply of alcohol or drugs;
- Pregnancy;
- Gender identity;
- Smoke free environment;
- Cyber Bullying; and
- Social networking platforms.

All SLS Entities will promote and monitor this Policy to the fullest extent possible with the assistance of their members.

Surf Life Saving is the largest volunteer organisation in the country. We deliver a unique and inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated. We actively listen to our volunteers and the broader community, and we promote progressive values and innovative thinking. Our sense of 'belonging' binds us together and helps to create great Australians and build better and more resilient communities. The ocean doesn't discriminate and neither does Surf Life Saving.

The SLSA Board has endorsed the Inclusion & Diversity Statement to create a safe inclusive ecosystem where we promote equity, respect and diversity.

A wide-angle photograph of a beach scene. In the foreground, a sandy beach curves from the bottom left towards the right. The ocean is in the middle ground, with a line of surfers on their boards waiting for waves. The surfers are wearing colorful wetsuits, mostly in shades of pink, purple, and blue. The waves are breaking gently onto the shore. In the background, the horizon is visible with some buildings on the left and a mountain range in the distance under a bright blue sky filled with scattered white clouds.

PART C COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION POLICY

1 POLICY 6.06 – COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

SLSA and all other SLS Entities strive to provide the best possible delivery of SLS activities, programs, services and events. SLS Entities recognise that from time-to-time, issues may arise that require assistance or support to resolve.

Everyone involved in SLS is encouraged to voice concerns that they may have at any point regarding the safety, health, welfare, behaviour or conduct of Members and associated persons or organisations.

The new Complaints Resolution Policy provides guidance for Complainants, Respondents and Complaint Managers where complaints arise. The Policy and its procedures seek to provide clear processes:

- in addressing a disclosure, incident, observation or complaint, whether they relate to Members or a Person in Position of Authority (PPA); and
- to potential Complainants, Respondents, Members and PPA when dealing with a complaint or disciplinary matter.

An easy-to-follow procedure of the complaints process from start to finish is outlined in **Appendix A**.

2 LEVELS OF COMPLAINT

Complaints are submitted by lodging them online through the SLS Complaint System, this is outlined in Clause 4.1.a of the policy and in accompanying resources and flow charts. Depending on the nature of a complaint it can be lodged to a club, branch, state or national as explained in the table below:

Club or Branch	General Complaints including bullying, harassment dissatisfaction with decisions, member to member matters.
Branch or State	Branch or State-related complaints or inter-club matters.
State and/or SLSA	All Child Safe related matters, allegations of Sexual Misconduct or any Serious Criminal Conduct or breach of Policy 6.16
SLSA	National related complaints or inter-State matters

3 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

3.1 General

What should I do before I lodge a complaint?

Before you lodge a formal complaint, have you:

- attempted to speak to and resolve your grievance/complaint with the Respondent?
- discussed your grievance/complaint with your SLS Entity Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO)?

If no, you are encouraged to attempt the above before lodging a complaint under the policy. If yes, and you have not been able to resolve your complaint or grievance, please lodge through the Online Reporting System. A process for a Complaint is outlined in [Appendix A](#).

I have a complaint involving a fellow member from my club, where do I lodge my complaint?

Please contact your club Complaints Manager. You will find a printout of [Appendix B](#) within your club which will outline the relevant MPIO and Complaints Manager. Complaints should be lodged using the online system and following the steps by visiting <http://complaints.sls.com.au>.

How long will it take to achieve a resolution for my complaint?

The policy sets out timeframes that the Complaints Manager should follow. These are set out in various sections throughout however it is dependent on the process that is undertaken to resolve the complaint under Clause 7.

Should I talk to other club members about my complaint?

If you feel the need to disclose the matter to a close contact within the club to discuss your concerns and for support then that would be appropriate, however telling multiple members as a form of gossip or to cause harm to the respondent of the claim is not acceptable. If your complaint relates to a respondent being harmful to members of the club, then the complaints manager and club will take all the necessary actions to keep members safe.

Should I speak externally to a lawyer, or the police about my complaint?

There is nothing within the policy that precludes you from speaking to a lawyer, however the processes outlined in the policy, particularly a judiciary hearing, explicitly prohibit lawyers from attending and representing parties. The SLS complaints system is not a judicial adversarial system, therefore complaints aren't handled in the same manner as the courts. If you believe any criminal activity has occurred, you should contact the police as the appropriate authority.

Are my family and I welcome at the club whilst my complaint is being resolved?

Yes of course. Unless a provisional action has been enforced suspending you or your family from the club, you are welcome to attend your club. SLS prides itself on being a community hub.

3.2 Reporting

Will my complaint remain confidential?

The policy at Clause 3.4 sets out the requirements for confidentiality. All complaints will be kept confidential by all parties involved including the SLS Entity. This section does outline when disclosure of a complaint will occur although there is a set of approved purposes only.

Who can I contact if I am having troubles lodging my complaint?

In the first instance you should go to your Club Complaint Manager, who will be able to assist. The SLSA Team are available if you are having difficulties and the complaints manager at your club is not able to assist your enquiry.

Will you be able to tell me the outcome of my Complaint?

Clause 10 of the policy outlines the outcome and finalisation process. For information of the notification of an outcome please read clause 10.1.

Can I make an anonymous complaint?

The online complaints system does allow for anonymous lodgement however, you will not be alerted to any progress on the matter or be notified of the outcome.

Can I make a complaint on behalf of another person?

As mentioned above, it is possible to make a complaint that is anonymous, so yes you could do this on behalf of another person; however, you should consider that the person may not wish for a complaint to be raised, so instead if you feel you want to lodge a complaint, perhaps speak to the affected member and get them to lodge.

Parents and guardians are able to make complaints on behalf of the CYP.

A person is a member of the public, not a SLS Member, can they make a complaint under this process?

The policy is an internal Surf Life Saving policy. For complaints against a SLS member where they believe a children or young person is in harm, or a matter which is criminal in nature, then they must use the correct authority being the Police.

4 APPENDIX A – COMPLAINTS FLOW CHART

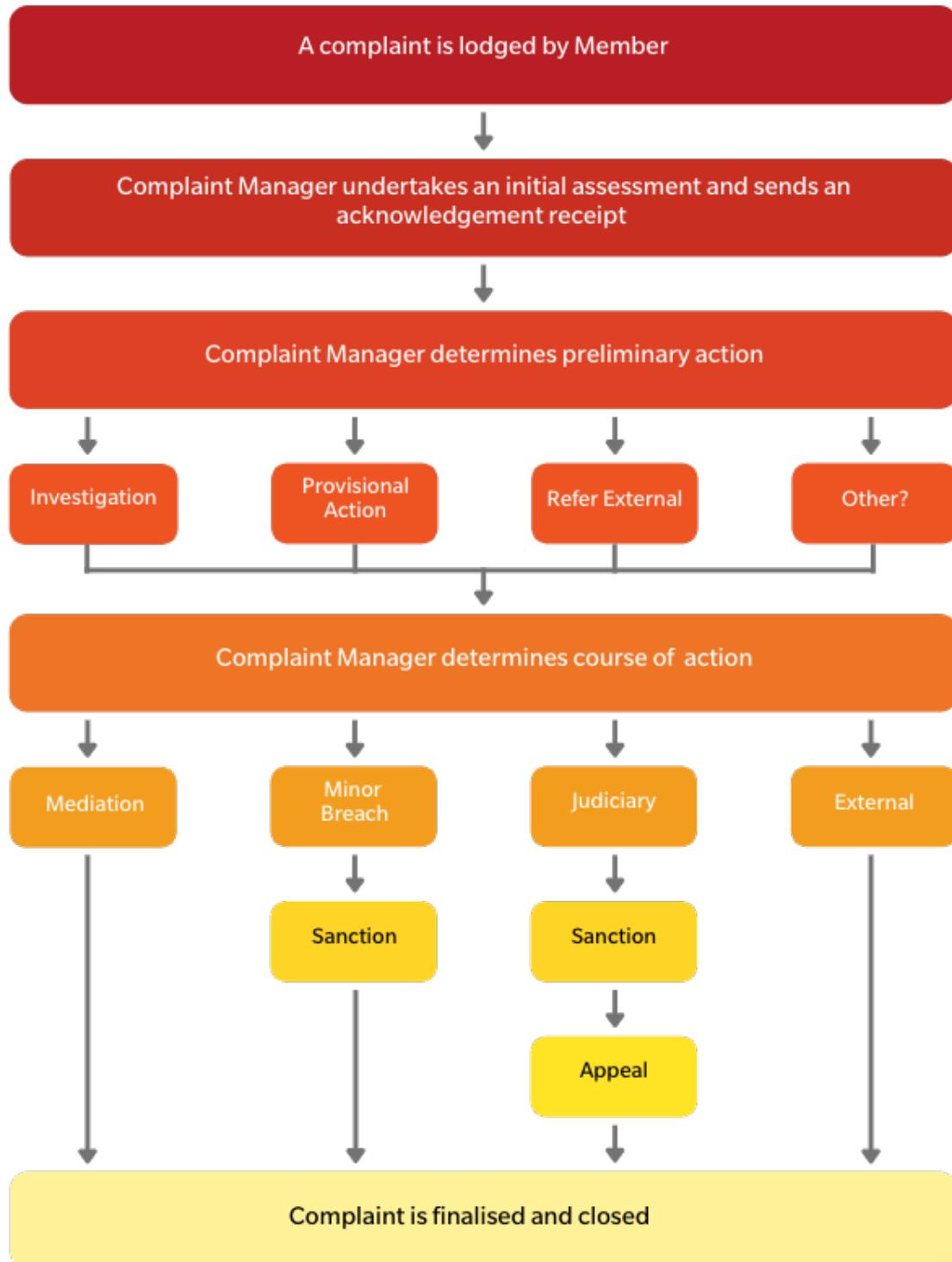
SLSA COMPLAINTS RESOLUTION

Before you lodge a formal complaint, have you:

- attempted to speak to and resolve your grievance with the Respondent?
- discussed your grievance with your SLS Entity MPIO?

If no, you are encouraged to attempt the above before lodging a complaint under the policy

If yes, and you have not been able to resolve your grievance, please follow the below procedure.



CLUB CONTACTS: COMPLAINTS

If you are having an issue at your club there are several people who you can reach out to confidentially speak to prior to lodging a formal complaint or grievance. Please speak to the following people:

CLUB MPIO (Member Protection Information Officer)	
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CLUB Complaints Manager	
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CLUB PPA (Person in Position of Authority)	
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Please lodge your complaint through the Online Reporting System by visiting
<http://complaints.sls.com.au>

