



Media Release

Thursday 22 August 2013

SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA ANNOUNCES NEW SAFETY MEASURES

Today Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA), a peak water safety organisation, announced new measures to improve the safety of surf lifesaving competition and activities.

Since 2010 there have been significant changes to the event management of Surf Life Saving's National titles (The Aussies) to increase the safety of competitors. These changes include:

- introduction of compulsory high visibility lycra vests for all competitors;
- venue selection criteria and
- onsite risk managers to assess the suitability of competition conditions who have the authority to suspend any event on the spot.

Following consultation with members Greg Nance, CEO, SLSA announced additional safety initiatives on behalf of the Surf Life Saving Australia Board of Directors;

- All surf boat rowers and sweeps must wear helmets from 1 January 2014.
- All surf lifesavers operating inflatable rescue boats, both on patrol and in competition, must wear lifejackets from 1 October 2014
- All competitors at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships must hold the SLSA Bronze Medallion with Certificate II in Public Safety (Aquatic Rescue) from 2015.

Graham Ford, SLSA President said "the safety of our members, and the public, is first and foremost. These decisions are based on diligent research, testing and hard data, all of which is publicly available on our website and has safety at the core."

SLSA has demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement to manage risk.

"While surf lifesavers and lifeguards do everything in their power to keep the beaches safe, we cannot guarantee the beach or surf is 100 per cent safe. We are dealing with the ocean and tragically accidents or injury can occur, even in a patrolled area.

"These changes and tests are nothing new for our movement. Since 1907 we have continued to innovate, test and update our rescue equipment from the belt and reel to the inflatable rescue boat. We will continue to do this in the future." said Mr Nance.

The organisation will only introduce new safety equipment and measures that do not pose any secondary risks to our members. As a peak water safety organisation - safety is paramount for SLSA.

ENDS.