

**Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual abuse**


**STATEMENT OF MELISSA JANE KING  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SURF LIFE SAVING AUSTRALIA LTD**

I, Melissa Jane King of 789 Botany Road, Roseberry in the State of New South Wales, Chief Executive Officer of Surf Life Saving Australia Ltd (**SLSA**), declare as follows:

1. This statement (**Statement**) made by me accurately sets out the evidence that I am prepared to give to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (**Royal Commission**). My Statement is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I make this Statement, unless the contrary appears, from personal knowledge. Where I state matters on the basis of information provided to me, I believe such information to be true.
2. In relation to the documents referred to in this Statement, as requested in the notice to furnish a statement dated 10 February 2016 sent to SLSA by the Royal Commission (**Notice**), documents that are referred to in this response are done so by reference to the identifying number allocated by the Royal Commission.

**Background to Melissa King**

3. As above, I am the current Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**) of SLSA. I have been the CEO of SLSA since July 2015. Prior to becoming CEO, I was employed by SLSA as General Manager of Communications and Business Development. I was employed by SLSA in that role in July 2013.
4. Prior to joining SLSA, I worked in business development, marketing and communications as Group Manager for Corporate Partnerships for the Sydney Opera House Trust.
5. I hold the following qualifications:
  - (a) Bachelor of Arts;
  - (b) Graduate Certificate in Arts Management; and
  - (c) Masters of Business Administration in Marketing and International Business.

  
Melissa Jane King

  
Witness

NSW JP 212049

6. I have held the following positions:
- (a) July 2015- current: CEO, SLSA;
  - (b) July 2013- July 2015: General Manager, Communications and Business Development, SLSA; and
  - (c) January 2008 - June 2013: Group Manager, Corporate Partnerships, Sydney Opera House Trust.

#### Introduction to statement


7. SLSA remains firmly committed to assisting, where it can and as required, the Royal Commission as it sets about completing its important task. It is also worthwhile noting that SLSA has previously provided information to the Royal Commission, including submitting a response to the Notice to Produce which was issued to SLSA on 21 May 2015 (**SLSA.0004.001.0027**). SLSA's initial submission (**Initial Submission**) (**SLSA.0005.001.0005**) was filed on 4 June 2015 and was accompanied by the provision of approximately 2,000 documents.
8. Before providing the formal response to the items set out in the Notice, I, on behalf of SLSA, take this opportunity to reconfirm SLSA's commitment to ensuring that people within the surf life saving movement, particularly children, can participate within a safe environment. The introduction of the SLSA Member Protection Policy (**MPP**), (**SLSA.0004.001.0032**) encapsulates SLSA policy position and it is useful restating:

*"Surf Life Saving Australia Limited, including subsidiary companies and affiliated clubs, branches and states, is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all its members and is dedicated to providing a safe environment for those participating in surf life saving activities.*

*Surf lifesavers are nurtured in an environment that values safety, trust, respect, caring and responsibility. This environment encourages acceptance, confidence and risk taking. For surf lifers to venture into challenging waters in times of distress, they need to have faith and trust in themselves and in the people around them.*

*The motivation for surf lifesavers to give freely of their time is to be found in surf life saving environments that value;*

  
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 Melissa Jane King

  
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 Witness James Cameron  
 NSW JP 212049

- (a) *safety and support*
- (b) *caring and camaraderie*
- (c) *trust and teamwork*
- (d) *respect and responsibility*
- (e) *As part of the surf lifesaving community, each individual makes a commitment to actively encourage behaviours that promote a supportive and nurturing environment and contribute to our core purpose: "To save lives, create great Australians and build better communities".*

### **Matters referred to in the Notice**

9. Below I set out my response to each of the matters the Royal Commission listed in Annexure A to the Notice. For ease of reference, I have addressed the matters in the same order, using the same (or similar) headings.

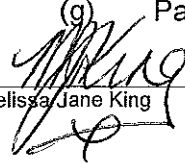
### **Background**

#### **Children participating in Surf Life Saving Activities**

10. As at or about February 2016, there are a total of 77,473 members of SLSA who are 18 years of age or under (**Child Members**). They form slightly less than 50% of the total membership of SLSA (which as at the same date is 161,811). For completeness, I note that SLSA's 2014-15 annual report states that they have 169,633 members.

#### **Percentages of participation across relevant categories**

11. The 77,743 Child Members can be broken down further into the following sub-categories of SLSA membership:
- (a) Active Members: 9,506
  - (b) Associate Members: 403
  - (c) Award Members: 76
  - (d) Cadet Members: 7,760
  - (e) General Members: 219
  - (f) Junior Activity Members: 58,154
  - (g) Past Active Members: 4

  
Melissa Jane King

  
Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049 3

12. As can be seen from the above statistics, the majority of the Child Members are "Junior Activity Members" (commonly referred to within SLSA as "Nippers"). The document outlining these statistics has been provided to the Royal Commission and is **SLSA.0004.001.0023**.

**Current policies, practices and procedures**

**The relationships and governance frameworks between SLSA and the following entities in respect of the development and implementation of current policies in relation to child protection:**

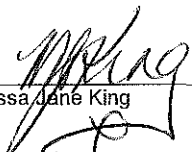
***Australian Sports Commission***

13. It is a condition of funding from the Australian Sports Commission (**ASC**) for sports in Australia to adopt a Member Protection Policy. SLSA has had a member protection policy in place since 1999 (at the time titled "member safety and wellbeing policy"). Accordingly, the ASC plays a major role in ensuring sports adopt the appropriate policies regarding child protection.
14. The ASC publishes a template MPP, which sports are required to adopt. The ASC's template contains considerable material regarding protection of children and screening of those who will be in positions to work with children.
15. The funding agreement between SLSA and ASC (**Funding Agreement**) (**SLSA.0005.001.0099**) sets out how the parties are to work together to further in the interests of surf life saving and the funds to be contributed by the ASC to SLSA.
16. The ASC, through the Funding Agreement, sets a minimum standard in relation to policies that SLSA is required to comply with. The ASC reviews SLSA's performance against these standards annually when considering the level of funding to provide to SLSA.

***Member Associations and their governing bodies:***

17. The Initial Submission outlined information related to the federated structure of SLSA, the state member associations and affiliated clubs. We reiterate SLSA's governance structure as follows:

- (i) SLSA has as its members the state and territory surf lifesaving associations (referred to as **State Centres**);

  
Melissa Jane King

  
Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

- (ii) the State Centres have as their members either branches (commonly referred to in other sports as regions or associations) and/or affiliated clubs;
  - (iii) depending on whether branches exist (which might depend on the size of the state and the number of clubs affiliated to it), those bodies will generally have affiliated clubs as their members;
  - (iv) Affiliated clubs then have individuals as their members.
18. Through this federated structure, the constitution, regulations and by-laws of SLSA apply down and bind the members below (so cascading down the line, the members below are bound to comply with the constitution, regulations and by-laws of the bodies above it). It should be noted that every individual member of SLSA is required to sign a membership form annually under which they agree to be bound by SLSA's Constitution, rules and regulations.
19. Accordingly, any SLSA policies implemented will bind members within the framework as a result of the above structure. This includes the current policies (outlined below, in section 4) which relate to child protection.

***Affiliated clubs and organisations:***

20. Under the federated governance structure outlined above, affiliated clubs will be bound by SLSA policies by virtue of their membership of the applicable State Centre and branch if relevant.
21. The SLSA Grievance Policy (**Grievance Policy**) (**SLSA.0004.001.0061**), outlines how member grievances are handled from SLSA through to State Centres and clubs. The Grievance Policy aims to provide for confidential and impartial resolution of grievances at the local level, where possible. Accordingly, only grievances that have progressed up the SLSA structure (due to gravity or not being resolved at club/State Centre level) reach SLSA.

***Any other relevant international, national or state peak bodies:***

22. The Initial Submission outlined the international framework under which SLSA operates, including SLSA's membership of the International Life Saving Federation (ILS). ILS is the international federation responsible for governing life saving around the world.

Melissa Jane King

Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

5

23. ILS does not have its own member protection policy or child protection policy. ILS does however have two policies which refer to "ethics". These policies are the "Lifesaving and Ethics" and "Code of Ethical Principles". The Lifesaving and Ethics policy contains a position statement that ILS totally rejects sexual harassment.

**The current policies, procedures and practices applied by SLSA in relation to child protecting, including:**

*Documents and Policies*

24. SLSA has a number of documents and policies in place relating to child protection. A majority, if not all, of these documents were provided to the Royal Commission as part of the Initial Submissions. Documents currently applied by SLSA in relation to child protection are as follows:

**SLSA Regulations (SLSA.0004.001.0066)** - The SLSA regulations outline disciplinary and judicial matters and procedures. The SLSA Regulations do not specifically detail handling child abuse allegations as this is outlined and dealt with in the Member Protection Policy.

**SLSA Member Protection Policy (MPP)** - The MPP provides guidelines on what to do if a person suspects child abuse and the procedure for addressing allegations. The MPP also includes child protection and working with under 18 members policy statements. From our searches, it is apparent that SLSA was one of the first sporting organisations to develop and adopt this document. As mentioned above, it is now a condition of funding from the ASC for sports in Australia to adopt a member protection policy.

**SLSA Grievance Policy (Grievance Policy)** - The Grievance Policy sets out the guidelines for an individual to follow when seeking to resolve a grievance related to SLSA. The process involves an SLSA appointed "grievance handler" and is to be read in conjunction with, and refers to, the MPP.

**SLSA Youth Policy (Youth Policy) (SLSA.0004.001.0056)** - The Youth Policy is another policy which seeks to operate in concert with the MPP, and which aims to ensure young people's experience in SLSA activities are positive. The Youth Policy relates to education, services and guidelines all designed to protect and support SLSA's young participants and ensure a quality surf life saving experience. The Youth Policy acknowledges and

Melissa Jane King

Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

requires compliance with other child-protection policies of SLSA, including the MPP.

**SLSA Dealing with Police Investigations, Criminal Charges, Guilty Pleas and/or Convictions Policy (Criminal Policy) (SLSA.0004.001.0013)** - The Criminal Policy seeks to protect its members, including children, and reinforce its "zero tolerance" to inappropriate behaviour. The Criminal Policy directs all Surf Life Saving Clubs, Branches, State Centres on how to deal effectively with the situation when a member is subject to police investigations or charges.

**SLSA Use of Social Media Policy (Social Media Policy) (SLSA.0004.001.0020)** - The Social Media Policy outlines guiding principles for members to use when using social media in a capacity related to surf life saving. The Social Media Policy requires consideration of others and is generally in place to ensure that people are not mistreated in any manner via social media related to surf life saving. Cyber-bullying is a prominent issue for children of this generation. The Social Media Policy seeks to address this by protecting children members of SLSA from untoward conduct online.

**SLSA Photography Policy (Photo Policy) (SLSA.0004.001.0001)** - The Photo Policy outlines the circumstances where surf life saving related photography should be limited or not permitted. The Photo Policy outlines the circumstances in which taking inappropriate photographs can be a criminal offence, particularly in relation to children. SLSA clearly seeks to prevent any inappropriate photos relating to children, even where they are not necessarily illegal (but may be otherwise offensive or inappropriate).

**SLSA Workplace Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy (Harassment Policy) (SLSA.0004.001.0008)** - The Harassment Policy outlines the position of state and federal laws on workplace harassment, bullying and discrimination and seeks to ensure staff comply with those laws. The Harassment Policy seeks to ensure that these negative behaviours, including sexual harassment, do not occur.

**SLSA Workplace Code of Conduct (Code) (SLSA.0004.001.0011)** - The Code applies to SLSA staff and sets out minimum standards of behaviour for SLSA staff. The Code generally reiterates obligations relating to behaviour

Melissa Jane King

Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

which have been covered in other SLSA documents (Harassment Policy, Youth Policy, MPP, etc). The Code provides that disciplinary consequences may apply against those who breach its terms.

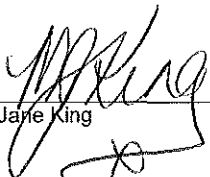
**SLSA Age Managers Guide (Age Guide) (SLSA.0005.001.0043)** - The Age Guide is a detailed document which outlines the duties and requirements of Age Managers. SLSA also conducts an "Age Managers Course" for those who are seeking to become Age Managers at a Surf Life Saving Club. The Age Manager is responsible for caring and wellbeing of junior lifesavers at their club. They have an important role in guiding and protecting child members of SLSA. Accordingly, the Age Guide reiterates the policies outlined above and stresses the importance of complying with them to protect child members of SLSA. When people are completing the Age Managers Course they are required to complete an "Age Managers Workbook" to demonstrate competency with the course materials (and their awareness of relevant policies and how to behave to protect children under their care) which allows satisfactory completion of the course.


**SLSA Working With Children Check Register (WWCC Register) (SLSA.0004.001.0384)** - The WWCC Register is maintained by SLSA and is a mechanism by which SLSA ensure its staff are complying with the Working With Children Checks (**WWCC**) requirements contained in the *Child Protection (Working With Children) Act 2012* (NSW). The WWCC Register is a simple spreadsheet covering all SLSA staff and outlining the status and other relevant details of their WWCC.

**Miscellaneous** - Through conducting the search for documentation in response to the Notice To Produce, SLSA sourced additional documentation relating to protection of children initiatives. These documents were provided to the Royal Commission with the Initial Submission.

*Practices and procedures*

**SLSA volunteers** - Volunteers must be surf life saving members and are required to complete a Member Declaration Form (**SLSA.0004.001.0382**) as stipulated by their SLS state/territory and club membership requirements.

  
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NSW JP 212049



**Staff Induction Procedures-** As part of induction process for new SLSA staff members, they are required to complete the Induction Checklist (SLSA.0004.001.0317). This checklist outlines all of SLSA's policies and procedures that are provided and explained to new SLSA staff as part of their induction process. The Induction Checklist covers (amongst others) the MPP, Constitution and Regulations and the Staff Handbook. This induction procedure ensures that new staff members are made aware of SLSA's policies and procedures and the emphasis that SLSA places on appropriate behaviours and protection of children.

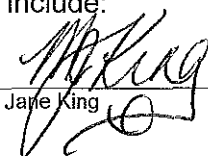
**Working With Children Check Requirements** - All SLSA employees are required to have completed a working with children check before they can begin their employment with SLSA. This is monitored by the WWCC Register which is maintained by SLSA. Further, under the MPP WWCC are required to be conducted for all employees and volunteers at State Centres, branches and surf life saving clubs.

**Child safe audit-** SLSA has recently undergone an organisation wide (SLSA, states, branches, clubs) child safe practices audit, facilitated by the Australian Childhood Foundation (ACF). At the completion of that audit, in February 2016, ACF provided SLSA with their report titled "Surf Life Saving Australia - Recommendations for the Safeguarding of Children and Young People" (Recommendations) (SLSA.0004.001.0268). The SLSA Board considered and endorsed the Recommendations in February 2016. On that basis, SLSA will be implementing systemic changes based on the Recommendations. The SLSA Board identified which particular Recommendations require immediate action and have taken steps in relation to those. The implementation plan and timelines for the other Recommendations is to be determined by the Safeguarding Children and Young Project Committee, which was created following the Recommendations.

*State-developed documents*

25. The Recommendations detail many instances where one or more of the State Centres has a particular document in place that SLSA does not. The Recommendations suggest SLSA draw on (or replicate the document at national level). Relevantly, those state-based documents on various child-protection topics include:

Melissa Jaye King



Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

### **Commitment to safeguarding children and young people**

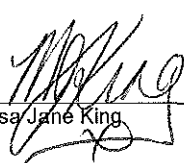
- (A) SLSQ: Statement of commitment template (for clubs)  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0192**)

### **Clear roles and responsibilities**

- (A) SLSNSW: SLS Code of Conduct (**SLSA.0004.001.0336**);
- (B) SLSQ: Codes of Conduct specified for various member roles  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0180**);
- (C) SLSQ: Social Media and Online Communications Policy  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0387**);
- (D) SLSQ: Photography Policy and associated Parent Consent forms (**SLSA.0004.001.0399**);
- (E) SLSQ: Chaperoning and Supervision of Minors policy  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0334**);
- (F) SLSSA: Code of Conduct Policy (**SLSA.0004.001.0338**);
- (G) SLST: Staff Handbook (**SLSA.0004.001.0193**)

### **Recruitment and screening**

- (A) SLSNSW: Child Protection and the NSW WWCC  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0181**);
- (B) SLSNSW: Member Protection Declaration  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0267**);
- (C) SLSNSW: Recruitment and Selection Policy  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0405**);
- (D) SLSNSW: Recruitment and Retention Guide 2014  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0318**);
- (E) SLSQ: Interview Questions and Reference Checks  
(**SLSA.0004.001.0385**);

  
Melissa Jane King

  
Witness

NSW JP 212049

- (F) SLSQ: Blue Card Screening Policy (**SLSA.0004.001.0392**);
- (G) SLSQ: Screening checklists for volunteer co-ordinators (**SLSA.0004.001.0178**);
- (H) SLSQ: How to do a screening report from surf/guard (**SLSA.0004.001.0174**);
- (I) SLSQ: Employee files checklist (**SLSA.0004.001.0316**);
- (J) SLSQ: Child and youth strategy document (**SLSA.0004.001.0547**);
- (K) SLSSA: National police certificate process and FAQ (**SLSA.0004.001.0402**);
- (L) SLST: Member services guide (**SLSA.0004.001.0341**);
- (M) SLSWA: Member screening policy (**SLSA.0004.001.0369**).

#### **Personnel induction and training**

- (A) SLSNSW: Induction policy (**SLSA.0004.001.0409**);
- (B) SLSQ: Induction Program Ideas and Checklist Template (**SLSA.0004.001.0515**);
- (C) SLSSA: Nipper safe training (**SLSA.0005.001.0019**);
- (D) SLSSA: Keeping children safe in recreation and sport (**SLSA.0004.001.0516**);

#### **Involving children and parents**

- (A) SLSSA: Club noticeboard template (**SLSA.0004.001.0505**);
- (B) SLSSA: Nipper safe information sheet (**SLSA.0004.001.0512**);

#### **Child abuse reports and allegations**

- (A) SLSQ: Receiving and reporting disclosures of suspicions of harm policy (**SLSA.0004.001.0508**);

Melissa Jane King

Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP. 212049

11

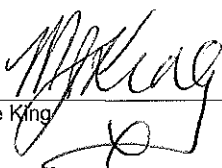
- (B) SLSQ: Dealing with police investigations policy  
(SLSA.0004.001.0540);
- (C) SLSQ: Flow charts for dealing and reporting with a youth protection complaint/disclosure (SLSA.0004.001.0554);
- (D) SLSQ: Incident Report Form- Member Harm  
(SLSA.0004.001.0412);
- (E) SLSSA: Implementation of a Club Reporting Officer  
(SLSA.0005.001.0003);
- (F) SLSSA: Child safe environments, reporting child abuse and neglect presentation and course, delivered by Government of South Australia (SLSA.0004.001.0418);

#### **Supporting a child safe culture**

- (A) SLSQ: Child and youth risk management strategy action plan  
(SLSA.0004.001.0547);
- (B) SLSQ: Club risk management plan for activities and events  
(SLSA.0004.001.0551);
- (C) SLSSA: Implementation of the child safe officer role  
(SLSA.0005.001.0001);
- (D) SLSSA: Club support officer role, with responsibilities to review and have oversight over member protection policy requirements and nipper safe program (SLSA.0004.001.0414);
- (E) SLSSA: Member protection compliance chart  
(SLSA.0004.001.0514)

26. All of these documents have been provided to the Royal Commission. The presence of such a suite of relevant documents at State Centre level seeks to demonstrate that SLSA's emphasis on child protection has been received and addressed at state-level and highlights how the prevention of such abuse is an organisation-wide effort which cannot be managed solely by SLSA.

Melissa Jane King



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James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

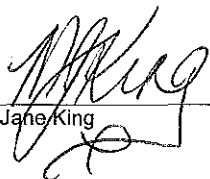
***the prevention of child sexual abuse, including screening of volunteers and employees:***

27. In relation to the prevention of child sexual abuse, the MPP is the most relevant SLSA policy. Section 7 of the MPP contains SLSA's position statement on child protection. This includes identification of risks, codes of behaviours and screening of employees and volunteers.
28. The MPP requires WWCC to be conducted for all employees and volunteers. Further to this, the State Centre in Victoria requires every member of its affiliated clubs in the State to have a WWCC.
29. The MPP also seeks to give special protection to children by placing higher obligations on those who work with SLSA members under the age of 18.


***receiving and handling complaints of child sexual abuse:***

30. Both the SLSA Regulations and MPP also deal with the receiving and handling of complaints regarding child sexual abuse. Judicial, appeals and discipline procedures can be found in section 5 of the SLSA Regulations. This section provides the guidelines for how a complaint will be heard internally (e.g. the rules governing the SLSA disciplinary panel, etc.).
31. The Grievance Handling Procedure contained in the MPP outlines the steps that an SLSA member should follow in the event of a complaint of child sexual abuse. The MPP contains detailed steps and includes requirements to report the allegations to police and/or government child protection agency. According to the MPP, the allegation must be reported to the CEO of the relevant State Centre. This gives effect to the fact that the State Centre, not SLSA, will have responsibility for the general handling of the complaint. The State Centre makes decisions in relation to interim action, support for victims, and internal handling and investigation of the complaint going forward. Investigation can be either criminal (conducted by police), child protection (conducted by child protection authority) or disciplinary (conducted by SLSA)
32. The SLSA Grievance Policy also could be applied in this context however, due to the gravity of any incident relating to child protection, it is more likely that the MPP and SLSA Regulations will be the documents under which disciplinary or other action is taken.

Melissa Jane King



Witness

 James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

**conduct of any internal investigations:**

33. Both the SLSA Regulations and MPP outlined above also relate to the conduct of internal investigations by SLSA.
34. Section 5 of the SLSA Regulations guides the conduct of any internal investigations. The investigation is to be conducted by the "Judiciary Committee" - the same panel which hears any complaint if it progresses to a hearing under the SLSA Regulations.
35. SLSA have appointed a trained integrity officer who is responsible for the conduct of internal investigations. The integrity officer travels with all national SLSA teams to both domestic and international competitions. The competitions that the integrity officer attends internationally include the German Cup, International Lifesaving Championships, Sanyo Cup, and Trans-Tasman Test.

**any reporting or referral of such matters to public agencies:**


36. As noted above, the Grievance Handling Procedure in MPP dictates when SLSA, or the relevant State Centre must consider referring a complaint or allegation onto the police or the appropriate child protection agency.

**access to information, referral and support services offered to complainants of child sexual abuse, including adult complainants:**

37. Under step 3 of the Grievance Handling Procedure in the MPP, the State Centre CEO is required to consider the kind of support that the alleged victim (and the parents of the victim) should have access to and refer them accordingly.

**the dissemination of information between member associations (including to affiliated clubs and organisations) concerning allegations, charges and/or convictions relating to child sexual abuse:**

38. Both the SLSA Regulations and Member Protection Policy relate to the dissemination of information between the member associations relating to allegations, charges and/or convictions relating to child sexual abuse.
39. The SLSA national membership database, SurfGuard, has a field that indicates whether a member has been suspended. There is also a note section that can be used to indicate a reason for the suspension where appropriate to do so. SLSA and the State Centres have the ability to have this note section completed for an individual. This is a useful mechanism of ensuring State Centres, branches and

  
Melissa Jane King

  
Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

14

clubs are able to quickly be informed in relation to a member and their history if the need to do so arises.

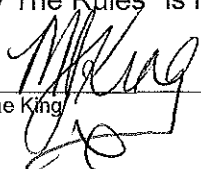
***record keeping practices:***

40. SLSA holds and maintains a grievance registry. In the grievance registry, SLSA records and documents the details of any grievances which arise Australia-wide within the surf lifesaving structure. SLSA only records the grievances that are handled by SLSA (not those that are handled at State Centre, branch or club level). Given the above gap, SLSA is considering mandating all grievances to be required to be reported to the SLSA Board (and recorded in the grievance registry). Currently, only internal SLSA staff grievances are reported to the SLSA Board.
41. The Recommendations identified SLSA's record-keeping practices as a potential area of improvement for SLSA and SLSA is therefore seeking to address this area.

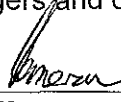
***The dissemination of child protection policies to staff, volunteers and parents within SLSA, member associations, affiliated clubs and organisations:***

42. From time to time, SLSA publish documents and distribute informative bulletins to their members titled "circulars." Circulars are utilised to disseminate the Member Protection Policy to the State/territory centres of which they then distribute to the branches (NSW/QLD) and SLS Clubs. SLSA publishes the policy on the SLSA website and on the SLSA Members Portal. A search of Member Protection circulars/bulletins on the SLSA Members Portal returned relevant publications from the following years: 1999, 2000, 2003, 2008, 2013 and 2014.
43. SLSA utilises the vehicle of promoting and referencing how to identify and handle child protection incidents and the Member Protection Policy through SLSA national education and training resources.
44. When people become members of SLSA they are provided with a copy of, and must acknowledge that they have read, the SLSA Code of Conduct. As part of the membership application, applicants are also required to agree to comply with SLSA's documentation and policies.
45. As part of their training, coaches and officials are educated regarding the MPP and the procedures and requirements of that policy. The AIS and ASC's "Play by the Rules" courses include education on similar policies. Although completion of "Play By The Rules" is not mandatory for team managers and coaches, it is recommended

Melissa Jane King



Witness

 James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

(through SLSA's education models) that they complete the course. SLSA has had 676 members completed the Play By The Rules course since 2011. The completed modules include child protection, complaints handling, member protection information officer training and harassment & discrimination.

**The promotion of child safe practices, including any assistance and/or training provided to member associations, affiliated clubs and organisations, staff, volunteers and parents:**


***to implement child safe practices:***

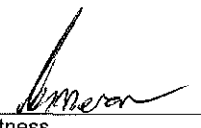
46. SLSA secured a grant through the Department of Health in May 2015 in relation to SLSA holding a 2 day Integrity Officer training course for approximately 5 SLSA staff and 2 members of each SLS State/territory. This training was held in August 2015 and included training on the handling of grievances and incidents.
47. The process under which SLSA carried out a child safe practices audit led to the publication of the Recommendations. The Recommendations demonstrate that SLSA is aware of the need to address child safety and protection as a wider community issue.
48. SLSA is now in the process of considering the Recommendations at an executive and board level and determining how best to implement the Recommendations.

***to receive, investigate or refer complaints of child sexual abuse:***

49. The Recommendations have led to SLSA creating a Safeguarding Children and Young People Project Committee. This committee is responsible for the implementation of policies, procedures and practices contributing to the protection of children and young people. This Committee is responsible for promoting child safe practices within SLSA and will also further implement the Recommendations in relation to receiving, investigating and referral of complaints in relation to child sexual abuse.
50. The MPP also sets out the process through which a person can lodge a complaint of child sexual abuse and the mechanisms in place to deal with the complaint. This process includes guidelines on the investigation and/or referral of the complaint where appropriate. Further, the SLSA Board has considered the Recommendations

***to provide access to information, referral and support services to complainants:***

  
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 Melissa Jane King

 James Cameron  
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 Witness  
 NSW JP 212049



51. Attachment D of the MPP, titled Grievance Handling Procedures, outlines various steps in the process for handling allegations of child abuse. One of these steps requires the relevant State Centre CEO (and other senior management) to consider the support needs of the complainant and their family. This involves providing access to counselling, helplines and support groups.
52. Further, SLSA does have an Employee Assistance Program available to its staff which is managed and conducted through an external provider. This service is strictly confidential between the employee and the provider, with SLSA only receiving information from the provider regarding statistics about how many people have accessed the service (and not their identities). In addition, the State Centres have peer support programs in place with qualified personnel available to assist in need.

#### **Other matters**

##### **SLSA's views on:**

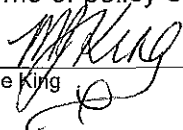
##### ***the challenges that SLSA, governing bodies, member associations, affiliated clubs and organisations may face in identifying, responding to and reporting child sexual abuse:***

53. A major challenge faced by SLSA is ensuring compliance with the policies and procedures of SLSA by all that are not under the direct control of SLSA. Due to the size of SLSA and the surf life saving entities within the federated structure as well as limited national resources, those who operate at club level are often beyond the direct supervision and control of SLSA. On that basis, SLSA is not able to monitor and ensure 100% compliance with policies at every club in Australia all of the time. Because of the nature and structure of the organisation, SLSA is required to put significant trust in those at lower levels in the organisation that they will abide by SLSA's policies at all times.
54. A difficulty which is related to that outlined above is the difficulty in ensuring that all members have read, and are aware of, the SLSA Code of Conduct and other relevant policies of SLSA.

##### ***any role for state regulation and oversight concerning child safe practices in member associations, affiliated clubs and organisations including consideration of the impact such regulation may have on them:***

55. State regulation and oversight could be used to ensure a consistent approach in terms of policy enforcement across states.

Melissa Jane King



Witness

James Cameron  
NSW JP 212049

56. Consistent regulation and oversight could allow for a national standard in these areas to be enforced equally across the country. As can be seen, the level of documentation and enforcement in this area varies across states. Having a more uniform approach should lead to consistency which should ensure more optimum outcomes and avoidance/resolution of disputes.

**Any other matter or issue SLSA wish to raise:**

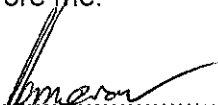
57. The Child-Safe Audit and the Recommendations made by ACF will help SLSA move forward on this matter. SLSA will be taking on board and actioning the Recommendations provided in the report.
58. Introducing the changes suggested by the Recommendations should ensure best-practice is utilised across all levels of the SLSA organisation at all times.

**Conclusion**

59. Whilst SLSA has not been able to source documentation associated to child safe practices prior to 1997, from 1997 to present it is evident that SLSA has been proactive in continuing to review the MPP, discuss and proactively look at ways to enhance child safe practices. Whilst the State Centres resume the operating role with branches and clubs, SLSA has been able to promote and educate the membership on child safe practices and the adherence of the Member Protection Policy and associated grievance/reporting procedures through national conferences, national education and training courseware/resources and regularly facilitating child safe practices agenda items at meetings with states/territories and volunteers.
60. I expect this emphasis and education to continue, particularly given SLSA's commitment to further developments based on the Recommendations.

SIGNED at Sydney  
in the State of New South Wales  
on 9 March 2016

Before me:

  
.....  
[witness to sign]

James Cameron  
.....  
[print witness name]

NSW JP 212 049

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Melissa Jane King