

INTRODUCTION

AUSTRALIAN POOL LIFE SAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS

ABOUT ROYAL LIFE SAVING

Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) is a national peak body for drowning prevention, with a key focus on research, health promotion, policy development & advocacy, lifting safety standards, promoting appropriate risk management, delivering first aid and water safety education and training, and promoting safe aquatic participation. Royal Life Saving has an extensive track record across domains such as research, safety campaigning, swimming, water safety and lifesaving education, advocacy and training, and developing resources and guidance on the safe operations of aquatic facilities.

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RLSSA ACCEPTANCE AND RELEASE NOTICE

This handbook is a managed document. For identification of amendments, each section or document contains an issue date, number and a page number. Changes will only be issued as a complete replacement document.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Royal Life Saving Society – Australia thanks the many individuals who helped in the development and review of the RLSSA Sport and Competition Handbook. In particular, the RLSSA acknowledges the following individuals for their contribution to the February 2026 Edition of this Handbook:

- Rozlynn Grey (NSW), NSC Officials Representative, Handbook Review Panel
- Joanne Teagle (VIC), APLSC Chief Referee, Handbook Review Panel
- Jeannie Baxter-Reid (QLD), NSC Coach Representative, Handbook Review Panel
- Eric Smith (WA), RLSSA Senior Official, Handbook Review Panel
- Brione Rundle, (SA) APLSC SERC-O
- Mary Collins (VIC), APLSC CPR Co-ordinator
- Anni Gardiner (VIC), ILS & RLS Commonwealth Handbook Committees
- Brooke Cherfils, National Manager – Lifesaving Development
- RJ Houston, General Manager – Capability & Industry

REVIEW OF RLSSA SPORT AND COMPETITION HANDBOOK

A review of the RLSSA Sport and Competition Handbook (the Handbook) and event rules must be conducted by a Review Panel appointed by the National Sport Committee (NSC) after the publication of an updated International Life Saving Federation (ILS) Competition Rulebook or the release of any ILS bulletins. For up-to date ILS sport information see: <https://www.ilsf.org/lifesaving-sport/rules/>.

A Handbook review may also be undertaken after each Australian Pool Life Saving Championships to incorporate decisions from the NSC, the RLSSA CEO (or authorised representative) and approved recommendations made by Key Officials and participants.

Changes to the Handbook and update bulletins will be published by the RLSSA National Office at least 6 months prior to the commencement of APLSC where practicable.

APPLICATION

The event rules in this Handbook align with the current 2025 ILS Competition Rule Book which came into effect in September 2025. If there are any discrepancies in this Handbook and the current edition of the ILS Competition Handbook the latter will take precedence.

Note: Changes are extensive for this review cycle. As such, only the ILS changes have been highlighted in yellow. The majority of the changes occur in the **Introduction, Sections 1, 2, 3,** and the **Appendices**. Event rule updates are located in **Sections 4** and **8** noting 2 new ILS events have been added.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the RLSSA Sport and Competition Handbook (the Handbook) is to provide a framework for the conduct of RLSSA Australian Pool Life Saving Championships (APLSC) setting out details of the competition, its events and associated administration. States, clubs and other affiliated organisations may also use this Handbook as the guiding document when conducting pool lifesaving competitions within their jurisdictions. These organisations may modify events to suit their local needs; however, in order to claim records, the meet and events must be delivered in accordance with the event rules and conditions set out in the Handbook.

The Handbook is composed of three (3) parts and associated appendices:

PART 1 - Introduction

PART 2 - Sections 1, 2 and 3 - The APLSC Operational Manual

PART 3 - Sections 4 to 9 – General RLSSA Event Procedures and Rules (Handbook Rules)

Each section within the 3 parts can be applied individually or concurrently with other sections.

A. RLSSA SPORT

Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) is a national peak body for drowning prevention, with a key focus on research, health promotion, policy development & advocacy, lifting safety standards, promoting appropriate risk management, delivering first aid and water safety education and training, and promoting safe aquatic participation. Royal Life Saving has an extensive track record across domains such as research, safety campaigning, swimming, water safety and lifesaving education, advocacy and training, and developing resources and guidance on the safe operations of aquatic facilities.

RLSSA also champions participation in swimming & lifesaving activities as vehicles to increase health, wellbeing fitness and individual and community resilience.

RLSSA has been a major player in the development and contribution to the sport of pool lifesaving, encouraging participation, in any capacity, as a vehicle for skill and leadership development as well as promoting lifesaving skills and capacity within the general community.

A.1 AIMS

The aims of the RLSSA Pool Lifesaving include the following:

- Encourage members and stakeholders to use and improve swimming and lifesaving skills in a competitive environment.
- Increase awareness in the wider community of Royal Life Saving and pool lifesaving.
- Promote opportunities for members and stakeholders to share life saving techniques, skills and understandings.
- Use pool lifesaving as a means to promote and increase participation in water safety and drowning prevention.
- Demonstrate RLSSA proven ability as a leader in water safety, Life Saving, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) instruction and drowning prevention.

- Ensure the welfare and safety of the participants while maximizing opportunities for their personal challenge and enjoyment.

A.2 RLSSA VALUES

The conduct of all RLSSA sporting activities, including the APLSC and the decisions of the National Sports Committee, should be consistent and guided by the following RLSSA's values:

- **Compassion:** We value fairness, kindness, mutual respect and acting with empathy.
- **Courage:** We value quiet determination, bold decisions, and doing the right thing above all else.
- **Collaboration:** We value partnerships with impact, creating positive change, and solving problems with partners.
- **Community:** We value building and supporting communities with shared values, common purpose and deep commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion.

These values underpin the RLSSA Code of Ethics in [Appendix A](#) and are referenced throughout this Handbook.

A.3 RLSSA CODE OF ETHICS

RLSSA expects the highest standard of conduct from its competitors, officials and members. It is important that competition be conducted in the spirit of goodwill and sportsmanship where participants abide by, and compete within, the rules.

These expectations are reflected in The Handbook and RLSSA Policies.

In summary all those involved in RLSSA lifesaving sport will:

- Promote and encourage the spirit of goodwill and sportsmanship in the sport of pool lifesaving.
- Ensure that its rules are fair and clear for competitors, coaches, officials, and administrators.
- Make every effort to ensure that rules are applied consistently and impartially.
- Treat all members equally and fairly.
- Prioritise safety and welfare of all participants and immediately deal with, or report, any concerns.

For the RLSSA Code of Ethics and the ILS Code of Conduct please refer to Appendix A.

A.4 INCLUSION

RLSSA is an inclusive organisation and realises that sport inclusion encompasses many different options in different settings. RLSSA sporting opportunities should be available to all people. In an effort to ensure that Australia's diversity is reflected in RLSSA sport, RLSSA will endeavour to set realistic and consistent goals and objectives to achieve inclusion so that all participants:

- Feel welcome, safe and valued.
- Can participate in the role and at the level of their choice in RLSSA sports wherever possible.

RLSSA abides by the [ILS Inclusion Policy](#). Details on the RLSSA Guidelines on athletes with disabilities participating in APLSC or Pool Life Saving competition in general refer to Rule 1.13.

A.5 FILMING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

Photographs and videos may be taken during the event for promotional and archival purposes. These materials may be used on our website, social media channels, and other marketing materials.

If you do not wish to be photographed or recorded, please inform event staff upon arrival to events as registration implies consent to the use of your image and likeness in such materials.

The organisers may use video, photographic or other means, to determine or assist in the judging of competition events and/or the infringement of conditions.

Royal Life Saving reserves the right to order the removal of coverage of commercial identification in conflict with Royal Life Saving sponsorship agreements and policies.

B. NATIONAL SPORTS COMMITTEE (NSC)

The NSC operates in an advisory capacity making recommendations to RLSSA on operational matters relating to the conduct of national lifesaving sport events. It provides advice and advocacy to State and Territories in matters pertaining to pool lifesaving sport, including but not limited to grass roots participation. It also provides representative and professional development opportunities for athletes, coaches and officials.

The NSC consists of:

- An appointed representative from each RLS State and Territory Member Organisation (STMO)
- Three (3) sport representatives: a coaches' representative, an officials' representative and an athletes' representative who nominate for the positions and are appointed by a selection panel.
- The RLSSA ALT Collaborative Panel representative.
- The RLSSA International Representative to Commonwealth and the International Life Saving Federations (ILS) sporting committees.

While decisions are primarily made by consensus, should a vote be required each State and Territory representative and the 3 sport representatives on the NSC have voting rights.

The NSC may invite the APLSC Chief Referee to be an ex-officio member with no voting rights at an NSC meeting where the agenda items relate to the conduct of the APLSC.

The NSC is facilitated by the National office staff member with remit for sport.

The NSC's main roles are to:

- Support the planning and delivery of the Australian Pool Life Saving Championships (APLSC) and other national pool lifesaving competitions in partnership with RLSSA staff, members and host facilities to the ILS standard.
- Consider and act upon any recommendations made by Key APLSC officials in their reports.
- Provide representative and elite coaching opportunities to RLSSA athletes.
- Provide training, accreditation and representative opportunities to RLSSA coaches and officials.
- Inform RLSSA members of ILS and RLSS Commonwealth opportunities and developments.
- Develop strategies to develop and enhance the sport of pool lifesaving in Australia.

Under the direction of the NSC, sub-committees may be formed to make policy and/or procedural recommendations and/or to assist the National office staff member with remit for sport.

Membership of sub committees is not restricted to NSC members and may include staff, volunteers and/or stakeholders with specific knowledge, skills, abilities and experience to perform the roles and functions required.

Sub committees may include but are not limited to:

- National Selection Panel
- National Appeals Panel
- Handbook Review Panel
- Event Management Committee
- National Coaching Advisory Panel
- National Officials Advisory Panel