



SURF LIFE SAVING

Guaranteeing
the future of
Surf Life Saving
May 2009



PROJECT **groundswell**

www.surflifesaving.org.nz



SURF LIFE SAVING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why Project Groundswell?

Our vision is to be New Zealand's leading aquatic essential service. The challenge we face is working out how to achieve that. The SLSNZ Board began Project Groundswell to make it happen.

SLSNZ has a proud history and the potential for a great future. In the current environment it's getting more and more difficult for us to:

- **recruit and retain good people**

Membership is growing, but turnover is high.

People are getting burnt out – trying to cope with governance, administration, fund raising and compliance – at all levels in a complex organisation.

- **raise money**

Our income is likely to drop by up to 20% in the 09/10 season.

- **achieve our objectives as an organisation**

For example: To have SLS delivering world leading services to communities

What do we want to achieve?

We want to guarantee the future of Surf Life Saving in New Zealand.

We want the public to:

- recognise, respect, support and value us
- get a consistent service from us
- be **safe in our care**.

We want our members to:

- have more fun
- have the right tools and equipment
- get the training, support and development they need
- shuffle less paper
- have more time
- be *in it for life*
- **be safe in our care**

What's happened so far?

Two years ago we decided we needed to take control of our future. Project Groundswell was established to explore the challenges we face and to come up with some solutions.

Since then we've:

- surveyed (and met with) our members, clubs and districts
- found out what the public think of us through surveys and in-depth research
- talked to others in a similar position – businesses and other service, volunteer and not-for-profit organisations
- got advice from people with relevant experience
- held workshops with key people throughout our organisation
- asked for and listened to your thoughts and ideas
- kept you informed on our progress and checked back to make sure we were getting it right
- thought long and hard about how to make SLS a sustainable organisation, meeting the needs of its members and the public.

So what have we come up with?

We've found out both what needs to change – and also what we must hold onto as an organisation.

And we've come up with a list of key challenges, and solutions to meet those challenges.

These are the challenges you identified for us. As an organisation, we must:

- Become more efficient
- Work as one organisation to provide a consistent service to our members and the public
- Stay relevant...

If we get these things right, we can meet another important challenge...

- Ensure our members have fun!

How can we meet those challenges? What are the solutions?

- Become more efficient

Currently SLS is a complex organisation. Much of the 'paper shuffling' that needs to be done is duplicated at different layers in the structure, a waste of both money and people's time. We can do better.

We propose **simplifying our organisational structure**, replacing the current 'middle' layer of Districts with an operational arm that is managed centrally.

What have you told us?

'People, people, people – the three most important things in SLS'

'Make it easier for us to do the things we like doing and take away the things we don't like doing'

'Our current structure is limiting our potential'

'Clubs shouldn't have to redesign and reinvent the wheel every time they do something. SLSNZ should ...provide the tools required'

'Centralising key services is a must'

'Fun is fundamental ... we need to create the environment and have the systems / structures to put the fun back in!'

'The status quo is not an option – there must be action/ implementation as a result of this work'

This means we can take out duplication – of governance, services, compliance requirements, decision-making – and free up members to do the things they enjoy. To do this, Clubs and members need more support.

We propose improving our systems and processes, using technology more efficiently and providing more support for Clubs. This could include developing and delivering consistent national strategies that develop our people, centralised accounting and asset management systems, easy-to-use templates and guidelines – as well as using our combined size to negotiate savings on basics like telecommunications, clothing etc.

The idea is that much of what is currently done individually by Districts will instead be done at a central level, providing strong support through a regional and local delivery arm – direct to Clubs and members.

As a result of being more efficient we will have more than **\$1 million** each year to reinvest back into the organisation, enabling our Clubs and members to get more for their money, knowing it's going where it's needed most!

We propose a team of Regional Business Managers will ensure local funding is not only retained but increased.

- [Work as one organisation to provide a consistent service to our members and the public](#)

Our multi layered structure creates boundaries – between Districts, between Clubs and Districts, between Clubs and SLSNZ and between members and the public we're here to serve. It makes it harder for us to co-operate and to operate as truly one organisation – offering the same service to our members and the public throughout the country.

A new, simplified structure will help. One that delivers to each Club the knowhow, the tools and direct support it needs to thrive. The key to this support is the **Club Support Manager (CSM)** - A locally based professional employee whose key objective is to make it *easier not harder for our Clubs*. Each CSM is backed up by Business and Lifesaving/Sport experts to effectively coordinate and deliver programmes consistently throughout the country.

We propose providing Clubs with standardised processes and templates, and increasing the level of support they can expect. As well as financial systems, this will include things like websites, IT hardware and software, branding, lifesaving and sport policies, advertising and communications.

When people join a Club, they will know that they are becoming part of **one strong organisation**; that they can go anywhere in the country and find the same support and offer the same service to the public.

- [Stay relevant](#)

Our organisation has a long proud history. Without one strong, single voice, we risk becoming less relevant – both to our members and to the public. This matters when it comes to competing both for funding, and for the valuable time of the thousands of volunteers who are the lifeblood of our Clubs and communities.

We propose ensuring that **our services are provided where they are most needed**. We will determine this need through consultation, listening to members, and looking at the evidence. We will then provide the resources needed to meet that need.

Clubs and members will have **direct contact with the National organisation**. To achieve this, the membership is grouped into 4 operational areas of equal representation. Each of the 4 areas will have three key **Advisory Committees**. A Chairman's Advisory Committee (where all Clubs will participate in Strategic matters) and Lifesaving and Sport Advisory Committees (made up of key local experts to guide decision making and development for lifesaving and sport in their local area).

Clubs will also hold the electoral and constitutional 'power' of SLSNZ to guarantee they are getting the services they require. **1 Club = 1 Vote!** Clubs can elect and fire the Board, call a SGM, change the constitution and wind up SLSNZ if they wish.

This accountability will ensure SLS remains relevant to our members.

Members will also know they are providing the service the public needs, where and when it is needed. The public will be confident that we can live up to our aim of providing New Zealand's leading aquatic essential service.

- **Ensure our members have fun**

Our Clubs thrive when members enjoy the time they devote to their Club and to serving the public. SLS is a unique organisation in that we have a dual focus – providing a vital lifesaving service to the public and a sport / competitive focus for members.

We believe that by **putting in place the proposed solutions** we will ensure our members value and enjoy their involvement with SLS.

Members will get to do more of what they enjoy and are good at – supported with tools, training, development and recognition.

All this will mean reducing membership burnout and increase our numbers.

Who benefits from these proposed changes?

Everyone.

The **public** will receive the services where they **need** them meaning they are **safer** in our care.

For the **member**, it will mean more time to do the things you want to do and less time spent on things you don't want to do. You'll get more support, have more opportunities – and have more fun.

Member development will be improved, meaning you will continue to *do better in life than non members*. Lifesaving, sport, teamwork and leadership skills learnt through SLS help you to contribute and lead 'beyond the sand' in your workplaces, homes, schools, personal lives, local communities and beyond.

A positive, involved and skilled membership means strong well supported **Clubs**, benefiting from greater support, fewer liabilities, and for the first time in a long long time a **direct** say in the affairs of the organisation.

For **SLSNZ**, the changes will make the organisation more financially sustainable, enabling us to increase the services we provide, both to members and to the public.

And for **Districts** this proposal means the most change.

District Boards, volunteers and staff have contributed immensely to the development of Surf Life Saving. More than ever we need these people to provide their support, passion and expertise to guide, shape and implement these recommendations.

New functions and roles will provide opportunities for District personnel to continue their valuable contribution to Surf Life Saving. Those contributions are vital to securing the future of Surf Life Saving.

Where to from here?

This outline of challenges and proposed solutions is a summary version of papers developed by the Solutions Group (and approved by the SLSNZ Board). There is plenty of detail behind the proposals, including role definitions, organisational structures, position descriptions, financial forecasts, analysis and endorsements.

Take some time to read the detail and get familiar with it. Meetings will be held throughout the country where we will be available to receive any questions you may have. District Chairman will meet with the SLSNZ Board on the 21st of June where the way forward will be decided.

It's an exciting time for us. We have a chance to make changes that will provide active support for our members, strengthen the Clubs, and give them a unified voice through our organisation.

Together we will preserve and grow the qualities that have made us such an effective force in the community over the past century.

We need to make changes to ensure we can remain strong over the next 100 years, and meet the needs of our members and the public.

Fulfilling our purpose.

[Preventing drowning and injury in New Zealand.](#)



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