

Why delivering accredited training helps to save lives on NSW beaches

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Surf Life Saving New South Wales (SLSNSW) is the state's major water safety and rescue organisation, and with over 70,000 members is one of the largest volunteer movements in the state. With over 5000 people rescued last year and more than 100,000 preventative actions performed, the role of surf lifesavers in NSW is essential to saving lives.

SLSNSW have been certified as a Registered Training Organisation, delivering Certificate II, III and IV in Public Safety under the banner of the Australian Life Saving Academy NSW, including a number of Health Training Package Units of Competency.

The primary focus of the Australian Life Saving Academy NSW is to provide high quality, cost efficient vocational education and training for our members, employees and commercial clients.

Why do enterprises become Registered Training Organisations?

SLSNSW encourages and supports their volunteers to complete formal training, which directly contributes to its ongoing viability, ensures we are in line with best practice and can gain the edge over other volunteer competitors. In particular, the benefits of SLSNSW's commitment to support volunteers attain qualifications:

1. Enhances our performance by recognising, valuing and better drawing upon the skills and knowledge of our volunteers
2. Fosters a strong and vibrant organisational culture by improving morale
3. Encourages the standardisation of training and development of our volunteers
4. Increases the attractiveness of our organisation to prospective volunteers

What does this mean in expanding the Australian Skills Base?

Formal training for volunteers has begun to assume special importance, both as a requirement of the volunteering role and as a motivation to volunteer. A trainer of volunteers not only facilitates competency strengthening but also contributes to motivating volunteers by helping them to achieve and maintain satisfaction in their roles.

We also invest in our members by encouraging them to upgrade their skills, educating them in the requirements of compliance, using them as mentors for aspiring trainers and assessors, and recognising their excellence through our annual state and national awards program.

We believe that a volunteer who is competent in their role, and recognised for their competence, will have more of a reason to continue to volunteer than one which is under stress because of lack of understanding and skills. At SLSNSW, we make the most of what our volunteers know and this has obvious benefits for both the volunteers and our organisation.

The six key steps to integrated and aligned Registered Training Organisation operations.

References

National Volunteer Skills Centre, Volunteering Australia 2008. What every volunteer needs: a mix of information, training and education.

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