

A person in a black wetsuit is surfing on a wave, creating a large splash of white water. The background is a clear blue sky.

Executive Brief

Organisation: Surfing Australia
Position: Chief Executive Officer
Date: September 2025

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The Company

Surfing Australia is a National Sporting Organisation that was formed in 1963 to establish, guide and promote the development of surfing in Australia

Surfing Australia is the representative body on the International Surfing Association (ISA) of which there are 86 member countries and is recognised by the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Olympic Committee and is a member of the Water Safety Council of Australia.

Surfing underpins an important part of the Australian coastal fabric. It forms part of a lifestyle in which millions participate with a mystique in which millions more have a documented interest

The Beginnings

Surfing Australia was established to guide and promote the development of the sport in Australia. The organisation was formed in a time when surfing was not a popular past-time and in an era when there was no such thing as a surfing industry or funding to support it.

The Growth

What followed was a far more strategic approach towards the development of the sport. The framework and structure created has allowed surfing to grow both as a sport and as a lifestyle pursuit into the new millennium.

Surfing In Australia 4 year Strategic Plan - <https://surfingaustralia.com/governance#docs>

For more information please visit - <https://surfingaustralia.com/>

Position Overview

Position Title: Chief Executive Officer

Reporting: Board of Directors

Employment Type: Full-time, Permanent

POSITION PURPOSE

The Chief Executive Officer will provide strategic leadership and operational excellence to advance Australian surfing on the global stage whilst maintaining the sport's cultural authenticity and expanding participation across all demographics. The role requires balancing commercial growth opportunities with sporting excellence and community development.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership

- Develop and implement comprehensive strategic plans for Australian surfing across competitive performance, participation growth, and commercial development
- Provide visionary leadership that balances sport's traditional roots with modern commercial imperatives
- Establish clear organisational direction and ensure alignment across all stakeholder groups

High-Performance Sport Management

- Oversee elite athlete development programmes and coaching pathways
- Drive Olympic and World Championship medal success through strategic performance initiatives
- Manage relationships with high-performance centres and coaching staff
- Coordinate national team selection and competition programmes

Commercial Strategy & Revenue Generation

- Maximise revenue streams through strategic sponsorship partnerships, broadcasting rights, and event management
- Develop partnerships with tourism, lifestyle, and corporate brands aligned with surfing values
- Oversee commercial events and competition licensing arrangements
- Drive merchandising and digital revenue opportunities

Government Relations & Funding

- Build and maintain strategic relationships with government agencies and funding bodies
- Actively promote Surfing Australia to secure resources for national programmes and facility development
- Manage relationships with Australian Sports Commission and state sporting departments
- Represent Australian surfing interests in government policy discussions.

Stakeholder Management

- Unite state surfing bodies, clubs, coaches, and athletes under cohesive national strategies
- Foster strong relationships with International Surfing Association and World Surf League
- Engage effectively with surfing community, media, and industry partners
- Coordinate with Olympic committees and multi-sport organisations

Organisational Leadership

- Lead executive team and organisational culture development
- Build and maintain a positive performance-based culture and drive high employee engagement.
- Build, lead, motivate and inspire the Surfing Australia executive team to maximise profitability and deliver on short and long-term group strategic and operational plans and budgets, whilst continuing to drive the ongoing business operations.
- Ensure effective succession planning throughout the organisation and build and maintain a culture of ongoing staff development.
- Oversee risk management and compliance requirements
- Drive operational excellence and continuous improvement

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Professional Experience

- Minimum 10 years senior executive experience in sports administration, preferably at national level
- Proven track record in leading complex, multi-stakeholder organisations
- Demonstrated success in government relations and funding acquisition
- Strong commercial background with experience in sponsorship and media rights management

Industry Knowledge & Networks

- Deep understanding of international surfing landscape including WSL and ISA operations
- Authentic connection to surfing culture with established industry credibility
- Knowledge of Australian sporting system and high-performance pathways
- Understanding of Olympic sport requirements and processes

Leadership Capabilities

- Exceptional stakeholder management and relationship building skills
- Strategic thinking with proven ability to execute complex initiatives
- Strong financial acumen and commercial negotiation experience
- Excellent communication and public representation skills

Personal Attributes

- Authentic passion for surfing and commitment to sport's cultural values
- Collaborative leadership style with ability to unite diverse stakeholders
- Resilience and adaptability in dynamic, high-pressure environment
- Commitment to integrity, transparency, and ethical leadership

REPORTING & GOVERNANCE

Direct Reports: - Executive team including High-Performance Manager, Commercial Director, Operations Manager, and State Development Coordinators

Board Reporting - Monthly performance reports, quarterly strategic updates, annual comprehensive review

External Reporting - Australian Sports Commission quarterly reports, government funding acquittals, international federation requirements

REMUNERATION

Competitive executive package commensurate with experience and market standards for national sporting organisation leadership roles.