11 July 2018

Ernst & Young (EY) High Performance Talent Pathways Project - NSW Office of Sport, Foreword and Disclaimer

In 2016 the NSW Office of Sport (OoS) commissioned Ernst & Young (EY) to complete a review of the high performance pathway landscape in NSW. The consultation and review process resulted in the production of a report which suggested a series of recommendations for consideration by the OoS.

The OoS wish to highlight that the report published here is reflective of a point in time and is dated May 2017. Therefore, at the time of report publishing it is acknowledged that significant change has occurred both at the national and state system level.

The OoS also wish to highlight that as the report was based upon a sample of sector participant consultations and case studies, the information contained within the report is at times incomplete in nature and the terminology and language used for sector description throughout is not consistent. In addition, the report may not be considered comprehensive in terms of local, national and international sporting policy and strategy understanding. Finally, the EY report was not intended to fully illustrate the detail of organisational partnerships, programs, structures and key responsibilities. It does however provide useful insights from which to build a NSW High Performance Pathway Strategy.

Bearing these considerations in mind, the recommendations made by EY within the report will be considered, alongside expert research and comprehensive sector consultation as one of various insights in the development of a NSW High Performance Pathway Strategy. The aim of this project will be to develop a strategy that will lead to more NSW sporting success and NSW being a valued partner in Australia’s international sporting success as outlined as a strategic focus within the NSW Office of Sport Strategic Plan 2018-2022.
NSW Office of Sport
High Performance Talent Pathways Project – Final Report (Stages 1 to 3)
May 2017
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Executive summary

Introduction

The NSW Office of Sport (OoS) has established a reform plan that involves a number of projects to ensure it connects stakeholders, system partners, funding, information and initiatives as effectively as possible across sport and active recreation in NSW. One of its actions is to work with key system partners to understand their contribution to NSW’s high performance pathways. This project has been driven by findings from 2014 Independent Review of the National Institute Network. The Review of the National Institute Network revealed there was a lack of clarity across high performance pathways in NSW. Furthermore, institutes and academies have created their own processes and timing for planning and investment decisions regarding sports and athletes supported resulting in a lack of cohesion. As the impacts of poorly defined high performance pathways are far reaching, limiting the significant flow-on benefits arising from Australian international success and high performance sports (e.g. tourism and wider economic benefits), OoS would like to drive improved High Performance outcomes in NSW.

OoS engaged EY to review the current state of high performance talent pathways in NSW. This project aims to:

► Understand, the purpose, drivers and value of high performance pathways in NSW
► Identify and define the roles of key system partners along the pathway.

The current state review has been used to inform:

► A definition of what ‘success’ looks like
► Development of strategies to achieve ‘success’.

This report (Stages 1 to 3) aims to address each of the above in greater detail and summarise the current state of talent pathways in NSW.

The recommendations have been based on system partner consultation, our sector knowledge and the key issues that have emerged over the course of the project. The recommendations were developed to address the gaps within the high performance talent pathway with the aim of improving the environment for NSW athletes to succeed and progress through the pathway leveraging the skills and resources of the relevant system partners.
Key findings

Consultations with key system partners identified:

- Most system partners understood their roles and responsibilities
- Coaches were identified as the most important system enablers
- System partner roles and responsibilities must be connected with those of NSO’s and SSO’s
- Currently some system partners are not aligned with NSO’s and SSO’s
- System partners have varying levels of connectivity and cohesion across talent pathways
- Athletes With Disabilities pathways below the elite level are not well defined
- There are few competition and development options for athletes aged between 18 and 23
- Talent transfer is an important consideration for all sports
- Most system partners are open to knowledge sharing and collaborating with each other
- There is a lack of effective communication between some system partners
- Upskilling coaches at all stages has the opportunity to improve the talent pathway
- Duplication in the talent can lead to confusion among system partners and athletes

As shown in Figure 1, the Project findings are diverse. This reflects the various individuals consulted and their perspectives, as well as the distinct differences in the sports reviewed. Findings from the consultations are detailed in Section 2. System partners expressed a need for greater strategic leadership from OoS across the sports sector. It was largely believed that the OoS could be most effective in an influencing and ‘leading’ role, bringing the key stakeholders together to navigate through issues and assist in developing solutions where possible. A more detailed explanation of this potential role for the OoS is found in the recommendation sections of this report.

Figure 1 and Table 1 summarise some of the key findings arising from the consultations held across the following project areas:

- System partner roles and responsibilities
- Athlete feedback log
Key success drivers and best practice case studies (AFL, Swimming Australia, Rowing New Zealand)

- SWOT analysis.

Figure 1 provides a more detailed understanding of the relationship between the success drivers and the talent pathway.

**System partner roles and responsibilities**
- Most system partners have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities
- Coaches were identified as the most important system partner in an athletes development
- Some system partner roles and responsibilities are not aligned with those described by NSOs and SSOs, with various levels of connectivity and cohesion
- System partners have varying levels of connectivity and cohesion across talent pathways

**Athlete feedback log**
- AWD pathways below the elite level are not well-defined and in some sports there are no pre-elite athletes
- There are often few competition and development options for athletes aged between 18 and 23 who are not identified for senior national representation
- Talent transfer is an important consideration for all sports

**Success drivers and best practice**
- Consultations with the AIS and NSWIS identified several pathway success drivers – for example technology and measurement and multidimensional athlete development
- These success drivers were reflected in three best practice case studies – for example both the AFL and Swimming Australia use technology and measurement extensively in their talent pathway
- Rowing NZ stressed the importance of multidimensional athlete development

**Key findings**

**SWOT analysis**
- Strength – most system partners are open to knowledge sharing and collaborating with each other
- Weakness – there is a lack of effective communication between some system partners
- Opportunities – upskilling coaches at all stages to better understand the talent pathway
- Threats – Some duplication in talent pathways leading to confusion
Key findings - Eight critical drivers for success across the talent pathway

As part of our analysis, 8 critical drivers for success across the high performance pathways were identified. The significance and degree of impact each of these factors played in the overall success of the high performance pathway varied across the sports reviewed in detail in this report. Below is a table that outlines, the relationship between driver and pathway.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driver</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Relationship to Pathway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defined and Understandable Pathway</td>
<td>Identified as the most important success driver, a clear and defined pathway aim enables all system partners to carry out their roles and responsibilities throughout all stages.</td>
<td>A successful pathway is one in which system partner involvement (e.g. Regional academies and Sporting High Schools) is explicit, establishing clear responsibilities for each system partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Resources</td>
<td>Financial and Non-Financial resources play a key role in providing support for all system partners. These resources enable athletes to gain the most out of their development at each stage.</td>
<td>Adequate resources enable sports to most appropriately and efficiently allocate funding and human capital to as many stages along the pathway as possible. Sports with limited financial and human resources are under increased pressure to operate more efficiently and may require more strategic support from agencies such as the OoS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent Processes</td>
<td>Clear processes and information sharing across all stages create an environment in which all system partners are working in a cooperative spirit. This creates a pathway in which talent selection and feedback is communicated clearly and a culture of continuous improvement can be realised.</td>
<td>It could be expected that individual sports will benefit through shared learning, experiences and their own sector knowledge. Despite the diverse nature of the sports reviewed, a number of accepted performance principles could be shared that should lead to increased trust and cooperation amongst the sector. Clear processes and knowledge sharing can contribute to increased innovation in areas including sports science and use of new technologies. This view is shared by NSO’s, athletes and respected sport academics such as Professor Kevin Norton (Professor of Exercise Science, University of South Australia).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective HR Management</td>
<td>Effective human resource management incorporates the efficient use of a paid and volunteer workforce. Due to a lack of finances, sports may have to leverage an experienced volunteer workforce to achieve their goals.</td>
<td>Due to the reliance on volunteers, sports should implement processes to ensure volunteers are adequately trained and adhere to the practices required for effective program delivery this may also provide incentive for volunteers to stay. Effective use of volunteers can often fill gaps in the pathway where there is an inadequate number of paid staff. Done effectively, this may allow for financial resources to be directed to other areas of the pathway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods for Transitioning Pre-Elite to Elite</td>
<td>Mechanisms designed to transition athletes from the Talent stage to the Elite stage are crucial for ensuring athletes can cope with the change in demand, both physically and mentally.</td>
<td>Appropriate paths, competition and identification of promising talent creates a more seamless transition from pre-elite to elite. These mechanisms implemented in the talent stages are designed to identify the physical and mental state of the athlete before they progress to the elite stages. Careful management of both the physical and mental wellbeing of the athlete must be a priority for all system partners at each stage of the process. If this is not done, it can lead to injury, poor performance, fatigue and dropout rates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Athlete Development</td>
<td>Rather than focussing solely on match day performance, sports must identify that athletes mature at different stages and focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that can also be a signal for success.</td>
<td>A more holistic approach can identify key indicators of performance in athletes whilst acknowledging that they mature at different stages. By assessing an athlete across a range of criteria, sports can identify talent early despite the fact that they may not have fully matured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and Measurement</td>
<td>The use of technology throughout the pathway allows all system partners to track and monitor the physical and mental wellbeing of athletes. This information can then be communicated to all system</td>
<td>Technology is playing an increasing role in the development of an athlete. The use of this technology is not limited to a single stage in the pathway but should be accessed and analysed at each stage to reduce burnout, benchmark performance and set an appropriate course for future development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driver | Description | Relationship to Pathway
---|---|---
partners to monitor an athlete’s workload and performance. | | 
Strong Competition Pathways | Strong competition across the pathway will help to identify talent more easily and create a more competitive environment which becomes critical at the elite and mastery stage. | Strong competition pathways can better prepare athletes for the transition to elite representation, assist with talent identification via monitoring best performance and may reduce athlete drop out at later pre-elite stages (i.e. T3/T4) as the athlete begins to experience the attraction of high performance competition.

Following this process, we evaluated the success of each of the sports talent pathways within the context of the 8 success factors (i.e. how well did they appear to be addressing the eight success factors identified). This analysis appears in section 2.2.2 of the report.

**Key recommendations**

Based on the majority of stakeholder feedback and our experience, it is recommended that OoS focus on taking a more ‘influencing’ role by providing more strategic leadership across talent pathways and the sports sector in NSW. Five potential initiatives have been identified to assist OoS in providing more strategic leadership (part of this process will involve identifying who is best placed to undertake delivering certain aspects of the recommendations):

1. Coordinate knowledge sharing and best practice implementation – for example through conferences, key note speaking engagements by domestic and international leaders, developing and providing best practice examples of good practice to sports via OoS and webinars.

2. Promote more effective communication between system partners – for example between Regional Academies of Sport, State Sporting High Schools and Universities by adopting a leadership role bringing the parties together and ensuring ongoing dialogue takes place. Rowing NSW have solid engagement with the top university clubs such as UTS and Sydney University and relies heavily on these institutions to support the FTEM model all the way through to E1. However breakdowns in communication and streamlining of processes do occur resulting in disconnect between club, state and Rowing Australia KPI’s for example. It was believed that some of these issues could be better managed if the OoS were to actively take on the ‘influencing’ role and provide independent guidance where possible.

3. Act as a key influencer between system partners such as universities and State Sporting High Schools who often need the gravitas of the OoS in order to be heard and have the comfort of having a powerful influencer ‘in their corner’. This influencing role may also result in assisting in achieving potential improvements in operating efficiencies and cost savings that could be realised by establishing strategic partnerships between Universities, private schools with premium facilities and some under resourced SSO’s. The OoS can also use their influence in the sporting environment to facilitate solutions between system partners when issues arise.

4. Investigate the upskilling coaches – for example through development of core (consistent, best practice) coaching principles and resources that are accessible to all coaches in all sports.

5. Conduct a state-wide capabilities and facilities audit – examining capabilities from clubs through to SSOs and facilities from local community facilities to elite stadia. Some sports indicated that there were not enough adequate facilities (at a suitable standard) to service the needs of athletes in their respective pathways. Whilst Netball acknowledged that there were a significant number of outside asphalt courts across the state that were suitable for the recreational player, there is a noticeable lack of indoor courts with the right surfaces for the pre – elite to elite players. By having a clearer understanding of exactly what is required from an indoor court perspective and accurately identifying the gaps, a strategy can be developed to address these issues and provide solutions.
6. Develop a robust NSW high performance strategy that considers the FTEM model and other successful elements of the existing high performance operating environment in close collaboration with the AIS and NSWIS.

Section 4 details each of the identified recommendations.

Table 2 Relationship between recommendations and pathway gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations and Findings</th>
<th>Defined and understandable pathway aim</th>
<th>Adequate resources</th>
<th>Transparent processes</th>
<th>Effective HR management</th>
<th>Transitioning pre-elite athletes to elite</th>
<th>Multidimensional athlete development</th>
<th>Technology and measurement</th>
<th>Strong competition pathways</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating knowledge sharing and best practice implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promoting effective communication between system partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Act as a key influencer between system partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assist in upskilling of coaches</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct a state-wide capabilities and facilities audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop and deliver a NSW High Performance Strategy</td>
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1.1 Coordinating knowledge sharing and best practice implementation

We believe that the most appropriate system partners to take carriage of this initiative are the AIS and NSWIS due to the highly technical (sports) nature of the majority of material that is to be collected, collated and disseminated.

The implementation of this recommendation should therefore be led by the AIS and NSWIS, with the OoS playing a secondary role.

We suggest that the AIS and NSWIS:

- Liaise with the relevant technical and coaching staff across sports in order to ensure the right content is being collected for the portal discussed below
- Leverage the international relationships “owned and managed” by AIS and NSWIS in order to collect best practice global content and key note speakers where possible
- Run workshops for sports and administrators across topics such as strength and conditioning, nutrition, recovery and other technical related sports topics

We suggest that in its supporting role the OoS:

- Assists in developing the online portal and ensuring all content is easily accessed and understood. The online portal is discussed further in Section 3 below
- Ensures that all sports are engaged and given fair and reasonable access to planned activities such as the workshops to be held by the AIS and NSWIS and ensuring that the better resourced sports not currently funded by Winning Edge or NSWIS also contribute to knowledge sharing and best practice
- Provides a dedicated resource from the OoS Sport Development Group to manage and coordinate content flows

It is expected that the OoS occupy a secondary role alongside the SSO from each particular sport and oversee the development of a bespoke online portal which will serve as a repository for various content housed across multiple modules.

1.2 Promoting effective communication between system partners

The OoS can play a key leadership role in promoting more effective communication between system partners.

This role is best suited to be delivered by the OoS due to the leadership and coordinating role that system partners believed the agency should perform as well as the fact that the OoS can function strategically with all of the system partners and operate as an unbiased advisor when required. In this leadership role, it is anticipated that the OoS provide an ongoing, open line of communication for system partners to access the office if and when they need assistance in matters and activities such as:

- Strategy
- The provision of independent advice in respect of any conflicts that may arise between system partners
- Offering introductions to relevant government agencies that system partners need to build relationships with in order to meet their objectives
- Conducting large scale forums involving all sports (the frequency and content of which would be discussed with the relevant system partners)
- Hosting a number of smaller scale forums and workshops for specific sports and ‘like tiers’ within sports leading to valuable intelligence sharing
- Providing regular content on sporting success stories both domestically and internationally. These may include best practice case studies and interviews with leading sports coaches
- Developing a matrix of different activities and diary of events that could be housed on the portal
• Acting as a bridge between system partners for example between sporting high schools and regional academies (who at times have missed opportunities to share information and resources that may have led to greater performance outcomes) have not fully exploited the benefits of sharing simply because no one was overseeing and encouraging this to happen
• The provision of an interactive multi-functional online portal

The benefits of the OoS taking on this role include:
• Generating significant value add to system partners who will now see the benefits of operating in an open and collegiate manner sharing valuable operational and technical information across sports
• System partners could be expected to operate more cooperatively across the different tiers within the pathway and sport in general
• Expected scale efficiencies, minimised duplication and improved on field performance as a result of reducing the siloed thinking and historic suspicion amongst some system partners

Features and benefits of the online portal

The OoS could become the owner of an interactive, multi-faceted, online high performance portal. This bespoke online portal could serve as a repository for:

• Case studies into best practice high performance methods and approaches domestically and from around the world
• An online community with a chat room for system partners to communicate together in real time in large or small groups from multiple locations simultaneously
• Videos of technical tutorials for coaches and athletes
• Various modules of content that may include features on nutrition, recovery, technique, marketing and media

It is envisaged that each of these modules located within the bespoke OoS High Performance portal could have content that is a blend of:

• Text
• Graphics
• Video

The exact type of content would depend on the nature of the topic covered supplied by the AIS, NSWIS and leading experts within each sport and the industry as a whole such as top level exercise physiologists.

The consolidation of current knowledge and processes are activities that should be managed by a nominated team member within the Sport Development Group.

From a human resource and funding perspective, this recommendation should be relatively straightforward to implement given that the user friendly, interactive portal produced by a third party will allow for quick and easy uploading of information.

Based on previous experience managing portals of this size and complexity, it is expected that the “shared guardians” of the portal (NSWIS and OoS) may be required to provide one resource to manage the flow of material and updated on a regular basis.
Anticipated Human capital and funding required;

- Current staff member from OoS and NSWIS (shared role) to manage the portal on a part time basis in conjunction with other their roles
- Approximately $60,000 – 75,000 to build portal and provide initial staff training as well as ongoing support

For more insight on the online portal please refer to Section 3.

1.3 Act as a key influencer between system partners

The most critical role of the OoS is to act as a key influencer to all system partners. The importance of the OoS being able to bring parties together on a regular basis in both a structured and unstructured way is of key significance and there has been a feeling amongst some system partners that this function has been lacking across the sector.

The OoS has a key role to play here due to the fact they can confidently act as an independent, unbiased agency that is not motivated by any single agenda or solitary organisation such as a sport competing for funds and resources with other sports. This level of independence means that the OoS can provide insight and leadership as well as possible resolution to various issues that may not be solved between system partners alone.

While this role is the most important it is also the least tangible. There are few if any key actions that will guarantee that the OoS can act as a key influencer; success as a key influencer is as much about how the OoS goes about undertaking its role, as it is about the role itself.

For this influencing role to function at the optimal level the OoS must ensure the following:

- The OoS is viewed by system partners and other relevant bodies as the most appropriate body to act as key influencer in both a private and public context for sport within NSW
- The OoS can articulate clearly and succinctly its value proposition to the other system partners (i.e. how it can help them), but also what it needs from those system partners in order for it to be able to deliver this value (i.e. what they can do to ensure the OoS can succeed)
- There is a shared understanding of, and respect for, the roles, and the boundaries of those roles, of each system partner
- An environment of trust and openness is expected and encouraged by the OoS of all system partners and the office itself
- Solid relationships with all system partners are built and nurtured over time
- The OoS is seen to someone who is prepared to ‘step in’ and facilitating fixing problems that arise between system partners

Central to the success of this recommendation is the importance of the OoS’ ability to positively influence the right bodies by genuinely adding value where required. At the same time, it will be critically important to have the support and advocacy of both the AIS and NSWIS promoting its initiatives and decisions. Consultations with the AIS and NSWIS along with other system partners revealed a lack of clarity regarding the OoS’ role in the high performance talent pathway. Whilst the role of the OoS is not as clear as it could be, the implementation of the six key recommendations should create an opportunity to take on a more strategic position in the development of an athlete.

The AIS believe the ideal role of the OoS is to create a link between sports and NSWIS as well as overseeing sport infrastructure in NSW. By working with NSWIS and the AIS to develop an online portal, the OoS can establish a direct link between all system partners. This initiative will demonstrate the OoS’ role in engaging all system partners throughout the talent pathway as well as nurturing and enhancing existing connections. The online portal will also highlight the
OoS’ commitment to the development of a high performance athlete by providing a platform to enhance the knowledge and skills of system partners involved in the talent pathway.

The OoS can continue to position themselves in a strategic role by:

1. Detailing the findings from the facilities audit

Once completed, the OoS will have a much clearer picture as to the level and detail of additional sport infrastructure in NSW. By addressing the infrastructure needs of NSW sports, the OoS will be viewed as having a key role in establishing the future physical environment of the high performance pathway, greatly assisting the development of an athlete and his or her associated parties.

2. Delivering a high performance strategy

By providing a tailored high performance strategy for NSW athletes, the OoS will be able to play a crucial role in the development of an athlete, both directly and indirectly. Leveraging the online portal to provide access to resources and a complete capacities and facilities audit, the OoS will be able to design a program, with input from other stakeholders that meets the specific needs of NSW athlete and the resources available.

The OoS can be directly involved in the development of a new strategy by collaborating with key system partners such as AIS and NSWIS to develop a strategic pathway for NSW athletes to reach the elite levels and alignment with the Australia’s Winning Edge strategy.

A series of key observations were made by systems partners in relation to the OoS taking on a role as key influencer that included;

- The idea of the OoS taking on the strategic leadership role that includes coordinating and overseeing major initiatives was widely well received
- A central requirement of the OoS taking on this role was the importance of regular communication via formal (workshops) and informal (online community portal) channels
- The OoS dedicating the right level of human resource and investment possibly in the form of a “system partner liaison manager”
- A commitment by the OoS to provide regular updates to system partners
- Recognising the importance and contribution that the AIS and NSWIS can make in supporting the OoS and jointly influencing system partners

1.4 Investigate the scope of work required to better upskill high performance coaches

The AIS and NSWIS should lead the implementation of this recommendation because they:

- Have the requisite technical knowledge and experience in relation to best practice coaching methods and communicating these methods in the right language to those who will benefit most e.g. athletes, coaches at different levels, parents
- Have established relationships with domestic and international networks of best practice coaching personal
- Are best placed to upskill coaches from a practical and public facing perspective as they are the most logical system partner to do so
- Due to the fact that the AIS has a huge body of material available and make it accessible to some of the systems partners currently (online), they remain the most logical ‘owners’ of this recommendation in close cooperation with the OoS who would be managing and uploading material to the portal.
The role of the OoS in respect of this recommendation is to:

- Upload and update content on the online portal
- Work closely with the AIS and NSWIS to ensure new and innovative content is flowing through
- Ensure that all sports and system partners across the talent pathway are afforded fair representation and access to these online resources

Coaching and technical staff arguably play the most critical role in the talent pathway and potentially have the biggest impact on the successful development of the athlete both on and off the field of play. The adherence to consistent curriculum and methods that are easily communicated, understood and implemented is a key driver of the more successfully managed talent pathways and subsequently the right resources must be devoted to ensuring this is possible.

These shared learnings and methods can be housed on the OoS portal and easily accessed by coaches and technical staff, as well as athletes and parents who may require the most up to date data and insight on topics such as sports recovery, self-training methods (athletes in remote areas), nutrition and sports psychology. Coaches at all levels should be encouraged to contribute material to the portal via an online community that they can register and log in to on a frequent basis.

From a cost perspective, this should be easily contained as the online content mentioned above could be added to the portal as an integrated module and emanate from a range of different sources who are encouraged to share their expertise online. It would be expected that there may be occasional updates to the portal required which would be charged at a nominal rate by the site builders.

1.5 Conduct a state-wide facilities and capabilities audit

The OoS could take a lead role in undertaking a state-wide facilities and capabilities audit. We believe the primary responsibility of undertaking the following two reviews should be undertaken by the OoS because:

- It can conduct these reviews with the required level of independence and not be compromised by any individual sport bias
- As key influencers of any potential change to the current state, the OoS can sit above the system partners who may each have their own agendas and priorities that may not align with the overall strategy
- As primary authors and guardians of the overall high performance, the OoS will be fully aware of each element and subsequently should be able to forecast any major concerns requiring consideration before individual system partners

It is expected that the reviews will involve the following:

(a) Facilities audit – conducting a state wide facilities audit is of critical importance. Various system partners identified gaps in facilities, i.e. lack of available for some sports and underutilisation of others. We recommend that a facilities audit commences in the next few months and could take up to six months to complete. It should cover the following areas of investigation and analysis (number of sports to be agreed upon);
- Number of facilities by sport
- Location of facilities
- What the facilities actually provide
- Age and general condition of facilities
- Ownership of facilities – club, private, government
- Utilisation of facilities

(b) **Capabilities review** – undertake a review of the capabilities and resources of the sports within the context of delivering high performance. This will assist the OoS in identifying capability gaps and help to determine the level of investment across these sports to achieve high performance outcomes.

The urgency of these reviews will naturally be dependent on the strategic priorities of the OoS however it is recommended that this project be undertaken within 2017 and early 2018 given its important role in planning for future expenditure across capital and human resources. The non-sensitive results of the audit may be housed within a separate module on the OoS portal.

Anticipated costs for the exercise subject to scope are expected to fall within a range of $200k – 250k and require approximately six months to complete. As there will be two different audits one based on facilities and the other based on capabilities, with some mutually exclusive stakeholders being interviewed, a detailed scoping document will be required to be developed and signed off by the OoS.

### 1.6 Deliver a NSW High Performance strategy

The OoS could take a joint lead role when developing a high performance strategy as they are ultimately the key influencers of sport in NSW.

The key roles of the OoS across this recommendation are to:

- Coordinate and communicate with all contributors to the strategy such as system partners, government agencies, potentially media
- Overall project manage the strategy
- Facilitate the delivery of the strategy working in tandem with the AIS, NSWIS, sports and major government owned sport venues and taking the lead role in communicating the new strategy to internal and external stakeholders

Other system partners will:

- Provide the sporting technical input and knowledge where appropriate
- Assist in the human resource function by making recommendations on the best personal structures and individuals to recruit

This recommendation is the natural progression of the previous five recommendations and will culminate in a clearly understood and easily communicated high performance strategy that considers the FTEM model and the input of system partners. Whilst we have identified that the OoS will take the lead role in the process, some of the system partners will also occupy an active role alongside the OoS.
Due to the fact that the FTEM model is in place and is widely regarded as an effective high performance talent pathway framework both in Australian and abroad, it will be important to ensure that any new HP strategy does not dilute the FTEM approach or detract from the results the model has achieved. Whilst the OoS may wish to lead this exercise, it will be critical to heavily involve the relevant technical staff at the AIS, NSWIS, NSOs and SSOs in order to draw from their experience and deep sector knowledge as well as practical experience with the FTEM model in the field. In the interests of reducing duplication and resource wastage.

Building on the capabilities and facilities audit, as well as prior expert knowledge, the OoS will be in a position to deliver a high performance strategy to specifically develop NSW athletes. By developing a bespoke strategy, the OoS will be able to implement an initiative that takes into account the specific demands and challenges faced by NSW athletes that may not be addressed by the national FTEM model. To successfully implement such a strategy, the OoS must collaborate with all system partners to ensure the pathway will incorporate all stages and key personnel throughout the athlete’s journey. Most importantly the OoS must work closely with the AIS to ensure the goals of the NSW strategy mirror the goals of the national strategy (Australia’s Winning Edge), allowing athletes to transition seamlessly to the mastery stage.

Furthermore, the OoS must work closely with NSWIS as they may be the key system partner responsible for ensuring all sports are implementing the strategy. This may involve significant human and financial resources in order to establish and monitor the pathway until NSWIS have adequate resources to be in a position to take full responsibility. The implementation of a NSW High Performance Strategy can greatly enhance the talent pathway, however, significant planning and consideration is required. As a result, to develop and deliver such a strategy would require a separate body of work.

A mixed methodology would be recommended that involves detailed stakeholder consultation and in-depth international best practice benchmarking. The associated costs for such an exercise would be expected to be with the range of $70,000 – 90,000.
1. Introduction

Key Messages:
- OoS is the central agency for connecting stakeholders, funding, information and projects across the sport and active recreation sector in NSW
- The AIS’ FTEM model aims to assist sports in establishing ‘better practice’ talent pathways by implementing processes that are consistent with FTEM
- Numerous consultations have been undertaken during the project including, NSOs, SSOs, Regional Academies of Sport, elite coaches, and current and former elite athletes

1.1 Background and context

Following Australia’s disappointing performance at the 2012 London Olympics, Australia’s high performance network developed a national high performance sport policy framework, Australia’s Winning Edge 2012 - 2022 (AWE). AWE was a game plan for moving from world class to world’s best. As a response to this new environment and to retain our pre-eminent position in world sport, the Australian high performance sport sector needs to do things smarter and better.

The AIS updated its High Performance Strategy in early 2017 to lead and enable a united high performance system with the vision to create national pride and inspiration through international sporting success. System success would be defined in terms of Australians consistently winning medals and major international events, our sporting champions being a positive influence on the community, and the HP system being recognised as world leading.

The successful delivery of sporting programs in Australia from grass roots through to high performance are well documented. Australia prides itself on fielding national and international individuals and teams that have been provided with the best level of care, training and access to programs that furnish them with the greatest chance to achieve their goals and generate positive outcomes for the nation as a whole.

The journey that athletes travel on from grassroots to high performance can be a long, challenging, and expensive one. The athlete comes into contact with hundreds of interested parties and key system partners over their lifetime and their success will be underpinned by how well these relationships are managed and the connection they make with the critical systems around them. It will also be determined by how successfully this system and partners function collectively to support the athlete. This environment has become all the more complex in recent years due to the number of diverse system partners that an athlete must interact with and be fully conscious of both on and off the running track, tennis court or swimming pool.

Factors such as the explosion of social media, pressing sports integrity issues and the introduction and application of new and innovative training methods can all play the minds of the high performance athlete and their operating environment. With this in mind, significant strategy and planning as well as robust processes must be developed to ensure that our athletes can achieve the best and undertake this journey with appropriate support.

National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) are key to the success of the high performance system. An alignment of the objectives and operations of these organisations should ensure consistent processes (e.g. athlete management and evaluation) and provide the best chance for the athlete to succeed. Due to the dynamic nature of elite sport, Australia must regularly review, evaluate and revise programs to move from world class to world’s best.
1.2 The FTEM model and role of the AIS and NSWIS in its successful delivery

The FTEM model was developed by the AIS and aims to assist sports to establish ‘better practice’ talent identification and development pathways that are aligned to key drivers of success. The model combines theoretical research with the AIS’s practical high performance sport experience. Figure 2 provides an overview of the FTEM model.

1.2.1 Brief overview of the FTEM model (Role and perspective of the AIS and NSWIS)

The role of both the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS) are critical to the success of high performance sport in NSW. Each of these agencies play a pivotal role in developing and supporting the delivery of high performance programs within their jurisdictional scope and as such it is important to gain an understanding of their individual perspectives of the current high performance talent pathways.

1.2.2 AIS

The AIS has the role of leading national system level strategies which no other body is naturally position to do. The key strategic objective of successfully leveraging a well-structured HPTP in order to enable our athletes to not only compete on the world stage but win on the world stage, forms the foundation of the AWE strategy.

NSW Office of Sport
High Performance Talent Pathway – Final Report
One of the agencies key activities underpinning this strategic objective is to build evidence based sporting capability via the delivery of the key elements identified by the FTEM model across all AIS and ASC supported sports.

The AIS team behind the development of the FTEM model, drew from world’s best practice HPTP examples and, as creators of the platform, are highly invested in ensuring that FTEM is successfully implemented across Australian sport by focusing on ‘doing a better job of engaging staff within sports to develop the pre-elite stage’ of the performance pathway.

This promotion of FTEM and the AIS’s commitment to the principles of this innovative platform can perhaps best be observed by the shifting strategy of most major sports who now acknowledge that, a greater number of more successful elite athletes will be produced if children are encouraged to take part in as many sports and physical activities as possible over the F3 – T1 stage. The AIS view is supported by the sports consulted during this study, building the case that greater gains are made when a young athlete trials multiple sports up to the age of 15 and then begins to sharpen their focus and narrow down their choices.

This theory is a dramatic departure from conventional thought where sporting organisations encouraged young athletes to focus one sport in isolation and not become ‘distracted’ by ‘conflicting’ pursuits.

With so many stakeholders involved at various stages throughout the athletes ‘performance life cycle’, a high degree of bridging and facilitating is required between each stage and the AIS see one of its key functions as providing that dynamic support function to sports.

In order for improved pathways to be implemented successfully, the AIS are working with sports to encourage them at both the national and state (via NSWIS) levels to prioritise and better define what is missing as well as determining what is critical in respect of their HPTP program within the context of FTEM. This is a complex and multi-faceted activity given athletes require different levels of support, infrastructure and resources across the entire talent pathway life cycle.

With a complex system such as the HPTP comes the risk of gaps emerging and some areas that should be prioritised but are not being given the requisite attention they should be afforded. Of particular concern to the AIS were the potential gaps emerging between T1 – T4 of FTEM where the athlete really begins their high performance journey. After demonstrating evidence of potential talent, training increases and follows a much more structured format, requiring significant funding either from with the family (pathway supporters) or via other means, most commonly sponsorship and government support. Coupled with this is an increase in pressure to succeed on a regular basis against ever improving competition.

Naturally, with this increased intensity comes the risk of burn out, injury, psychological pressures, drain on finances and a reasonable chance of simple overloading.

### 1.2.2.1 NSO Pathway Healthcheck

With these threats to success present, the AIS have seen the need to develop a program to minimise this risk and ensure (to the best of their ability) that FTEM functions as it should.

As a result and in concert with the FTEM model, the AIS have developed the ‘NSO Pathway Healthcheck’. This tool is an online questionnaire which provides an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a sports pathway program based on the below 12 key criteria with questions closely linked to the FTEM modules:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic approach</th>
<th>Research and Innovation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning, review and evaluation</td>
<td>Quality of Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and training</td>
<td>Market Share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Alignment</td>
<td>Coach Focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSW Office of Sport

High Performance Talent Pathway – Final Report
This assists sports perform important self-examination on a regular basis, helps them align more closely to FTEM and generates strategic thinking. Furthermore, sports that complete the questionnaire have access to increased resources in the form of NSO information packs. To date, 23 sports (varying in size and scope) have completed the NSO Pathway Healthcheck.

This service that complements the FTEM model serves as a valuable tool and demonstrates the AIS’s clear and active intention to assist sports in adoption of FTEM and its ongoing maintenance.

1.2.2.2 My Sporting Journey Questionnaire

The wellbeing of the athlete and careful monitoring of their progression from both a physical and physiological perspective are of the highest priority to the AIS and the introduction of the “My Sporting Journey Questionnaire” has been designed to inform both sport and athlete over the course of their sporting careers.

This online survey with 1000 athletes from Olympics, Paralympic and professional sporting bodies/codes has informed NSO, ASC and the AIS in areas of;

- Participation strategy
- Pre–elite and HP strategy formulation
- NSO reviews
- Stakeholder education plans and partnership engagement
- Personal excellence strategies
- University sport strategies and initiatives

All of this is based on the voice of the athletes who are best placed to make these observations and provide this form of feedback to sports administrators with the view to continually improving processes.

Two further initiatives have been developed by the AIS as part of their Direct Action Program. These are the myAISbasecamp (online educational content targeted at regional academies and NSO’s to assist in the development, retention and education of the pre–elite athlete) and direct AIS assistance to sports to self-regulate their operations by facilitating athlete and coach education, provision of analytics and individual athlete assessment and intervention where required.

These programs have been precipitated by the belief of the AIS that to date, there has been poor system alignment across the HPTP, poor communication and information retention and poor coordination of the established and critical HP drivers. A shift to more evidenced based pathways delivery through FTEM is aimed at remedying these shortfalls.

Over the course of the project consultation with the AIS, the agency acknowledged that FTEM was ‘still in it’s infancy’ and it is very much a case of ‘sports picking it up and implementing the modules to varying degrees’ however they have indicated that they are working hard to link the framework and strategy to tailor to individual sports operate whilst maintaining a broad HP curriculum for sports who are not resourced well enough to develop their own.
1.2.2.3 Challenges for the AIS and FTEM

A number of challenges that face the AIS and the subsequent widespread acceptance of FTEM results from the following key factors;

1. The traditional heavy reliance on volunteers who ‘have always done things this way’ can impact upon the ability of an organisation to adopt innovation and change.

2. The difficulty that sports have had in adapting to changing populations as well as they could have and have not adequately catered for the reduction in kids “free play” habits in recent years.

3. As athletes mature (both physically and psychologically) at different stages, it may be difficult to transfer some of the FTEM methodologies between sports. Whilst swimmers and gymnasts peak relatively young, as early as their teens, equestrians and rowers tend to reach elite levels far later. So much so that Australia’s oldest athlete in Rio was female equestrian Sue Hearn aged 60.

It is the belief of the AIS that overcoming this hurdle will be achieved by innovative, dynamic integrated coaches who will work closely with the sport and more specifically with their state bodies to customise coaching approaches to each module within FTEM.

The AIS continue to undertake a significant body of work around education and communication in order to assist sports in clearly defining their pathways however there is a feeling across some sports that there has been a disconnect between NSO and SSO and more work needs to be done in order to create better alignment.

1.2.2.4 Role of the Office of Sport NSW - AIS perspective

The AIS believe that it is the role of government to clearly define where the OoS sits within this sports / high performance structure. The agency posed the question of whether the Office remains as a head of recreational initiatives, facilities management or in fact plays a role in high performance. Are they to oversee sports facilities, academies, infrastructure or general sports participation? The surfacing of these questions illustrates the degree of uncertainty amongst some sports and also applies to the role of the OoS.

Coupled with this initial question was the matter of where NSWIS sits with the OoS.

It could be posed that the ideal function of the OoS was to create the link between sports and NSWIS as well as overseeing sports infrastructure in NSW. As they are involved in the funding of SSO’s, it was believed they should take carriage of the development of critical sports legislation for example in areas of sports wagering, safety in motorsports and horseracing and the shooting and firearms space. This may even extend to the management of sports integrity issues for NSW SSO’s creating a logical tie in with the sports legislation function.

1.2.3 NSWIS

An equally integral part of the success of high performance across New South Wales sport is the role NSWIS plays and importantly how system partners view the role of NSWIS. In broad terms, the key function of NSWIS is to support Australian athletes (in particular NSW athletes) to become the world’s best. This world’s best mindset extends to athlete performance and progression; coaching; the daily training environment, including performance services, camps, equipment and facilities; competition; research and innovation.

The high performance centre and Olympic training facility is based and Sydney Olympic Park with the office receiving 75% of its funding from the NSW Government and the remaining 25% per cent from sponsors and various partners spread across different investment tiers.

As part of this focus on performance of athletes, the Institute has developed a performance centred culture.
NSWIS works together with targeted national and state sporting organisations through valued partnerships to deliver programs to nationally agreed and categorised athletes.

In June 2016, NSWIS announced the increase in the number of sports and athletes they would be supporting over the 2017 – 20 period that now includes:

- Athletics
- Basketball
- Canoe Slalom
- Canoe Sprint
- Cycling
- Diving
- Netball
- Rowing
- Sailing – new sport
- Swimming
- Triathlon – new sport
- Winter sports
In addition to the above listed support, NSWIS provide direct scholarships to athletes from sports that may not be listed, additional resources for para integration and equity through a partnership with the Australian Paralympic Committee and campaign projects for smaller, less funded sports such as shooting, softball and taekwondo.

That same year (2016), NSWIS was awarded an increase in funding of $2 million per year ($8 million over 4 years) that has enabled them to increase support to high performance programs with sport partners. The Institute has a clearly defined and easily understood Sport Inclusion Model that forms the basis of funding and support of sports and athletes within the state where positive performance impact can be made.

NSWIS look for partnerships with sports and athletes where “we can make a difference and positively impact performance” with the key to success being the ability to remain flexible and adaptable.

From a HPTP delivery perspective, NSWIS adopts FTEM and promotes this amongst NSW sports but indicated that the model is still in ‘early days’ and will take time to fully resonate and be adopted by sports at all levels in a complete sense.

From a NSW perspective, in the eyes of NSWIS, the level of support required and adherence to FTEM varies from sport to sport based on the sports capacity and current state of resources.

NSWIS offered rowing as a good example of where they believed FTEM was not understood at the club level where the HP athlete trains. There was a feeling that rowers understood their own pathway in their own language, however the language being used nationally in the FTEM model is different to the language being used nationally for athlete categorisation which creates confusion for all stakeholders.

It was believed by NSWIS that the seamless and successful implementation of FTEM will be more difficult for smaller, under resourced sports that are now required to adopt this HP model in addition to all of the other day to day functions of their business. Many SSO’s are often moving from one ‘fire fight’ to the next and don’t have the capacity for long term strategic planning.

That said, NSWIS acknowledged that some sports may find it relatively easy to implement FTEM due to the lack of complexity of their sport and less onerous governance requirements.

NSWIS stressed the importance of engaging with the NSO’s across this process from the beginning as it was critical that the FTEM model was openly endorsed by each sport in a three way, highly collaborative manner involving the NSO, SSO and NSWIS.
1.2.3.1 Role of the Office of Sport NSW - NSWIS perspective

NSWIS believed that there was a genuine role for OoS to perform a strategic function working in tandem with the relevant sport and government bodies to secure greater funding. A key focus of the Office should be to uncover and develop any opportunities that contribute towards freeing up more money for state sporting organisations and infrastructure to support sport participation, talent and pathways and high performance outcomes.

Across a number of sports consulted, there was an underlying uncertainty as to the exact role of the OoS within NSWIS with a view that many employees within NSWIS would be unsure what the Office is intended to do and deliver. It was believed that this could be remedied by improved communication and regular status updates by the Office.

One of the most important drivers of sustainable success within NSWIS from their own perspective was the need to continue to be as collaborative as possible amongst both NSO’s and SSO’s and create systems that encouraged well structured, open information sharing rather than relying on well established relationships which could change at any point.

The fact that NSW had the lowest per capita investment in sport in the country was of major concern to NSWIS that needed immediate attention and the possible assistance from the OoS to sport to secure funds and improve this situation.

1.3 Scope and objectives

This Project has three fundamental objectives:

1. To review the current high performance systems in place

2. Engage with stakeholders to ensure they are heard and fully represented

3. Identify gaps and opportunities that could create greater success for high performance athletes across the talent pathway.

These objectives will lead to greater understanding of the following:

► The purpose, drivers and value of high performance talent pathways

► Definition of “what success looks like”

► Strategies to achieve “success”

► Roles of system partners

► Identify the current state (incorporating any gaps that may be evident within each sport pathway) and suggested improvements based on evidence.

1.4 Structure of the Stage 3 report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

► Section 2 summarises the key findings from consultations with system partners
Section 3 provides an overview of the implications for OoS from the consultations and identification of problems and or gaps in each sports system based on evidence.

Section 4 details the provision of possible solutions and recommendations for OoS.

Appendix A provides a detailed overview of the FTEM model.

Appendix B details the operating environments of the sports consulted.

Appendix C provides a complete list of system partners consulted.

Appendix D contains the project management and stakeholder engagement plan.

Appendix E provides an overview of system partner roles and responsibilities by sport.

Appendix F details the best practice case studies.

Appendix G provides an overview of the best practice case studies pathway.

Appendix H details the athlete feedback log.

1.5 Consultations

Figure 4 summarises the consultations performed in each stage of the Project. Appendix C provides a detailed list of consultations Appendix D contains the final project management and stakeholder engagement plan.
Stage Two
► Eight sports
  ► Cricket NSW
  ► Cycling NSW
  ► Hockey NSW
  ► Netball NSW
  ► Rowing NSW
  ► Australian Sailing
  ► Swimming NSW
  ► Tennis Australia
► NSWIS
► AIS

Stage Three
► Three NSOs
► Two elite coaches
► Three best practice case studies
► Two private schools
► Six current and past athletes
► Five regional academies
► Two grassroots program managers
► Two State Sporting High Schools
► Sport NSW
► Australian Uni Sports
2. Key findings

NSOs and SSOs successfully identified a clear talent pathway from grassroots through to elite representation and were considered ‘owners’ of the pathway. The degree of ‘ownership’ between NSO and SSO varied amongst sports evaluated. This was based largely on who in practice delivered the pathway. For example, Tennis Australia operates within a highly centralised model and is the clear owner of the talent pathway evidenced by the recruitment and management of the coaches through to the centrally developed curriculum and player evaluation methods.

- Each system partner has distinct roles and responsibilities, in order to minimise duplication across the talent pathway. The roles of these system partners are critical for the success of the athlete and they often must commit significant time and in some cases funding (parents) over the life of the athlete’s journey.
- Many of the pathway gaps identified by NSOs and SSOs may be addressed by upskilling coaches across sports at all stages of the talent pathway.
- System partners are most effective when they are clearly included in the talent pathway, have a defined role and understand the roles of the other system partners around them.
- Careful consideration of the athlete’s mental and physical wellbeing must be considered at every stage of the pathway in order to avoid burnout and injury issues. The importance of regular and open communication with the athlete’s parents/guardians (particularly at the early stage of the pathway) is critical to ensure their welfare and the state of their physical and mental state are carefully monitored. The AFL ‘Smartabase’ system successfully manages this phase of the athlete’s journey.
- Balancing the delivery of high performance programs between the school systems accepted curriculum versus the SSO or NSO’s talent pathway must be carefully managed. Each of these system partners may have a role to play at various stages however the roles need to be clearly defined in order to avoid duplication and potential conflict between the partners.

High functioning pathways are largely driven by:
- Clear top-down communication and engagement from the NSO
- Consistent collaboration and cohesion across the pathway i.e. each system partner understands their roles and responsibilities as well as the next steps in the pathway.
- Multi-dimensional athlete data collection and analysis – AFL, Tennis Australia and Swimming Australia.
- Access to and integration with highly effective sports science, medicine and psychology specialists.

2.1 Overview

This section outlines the key findings from the consultations with sports organisations (i.e. NSOs and SSOs) and system partners (e.g. State Sporting High Schools and Regional Academies). The remainder of this section is structured as follows:

- Findings from stage two consultations – including the 8 recognised pathway success drivers, system partner roles and responsibilities, current state of NSW talent pathways, and understanding and implementing the FTEM model.
- Findings from stage three consultations – including athlete feedback log, system partner roles and responsibilities register, and three case studies that demonstrate examples of best practice talent pathway strategy and program delivery.
2.2 Findings from Stage Two consultations

The purpose of the stage two consultations is to review and clarify the current high performance offering in NSW and more broadly Australia within the context of AWE and the FTEM model. This review examined the following eight sports:

1. Cricket
2. Cycling
3. Hockey
4. Netball
5. Rowing
6. Sailing
7. Swimming
8. Tennis.

In addition to the eight sports listed above, The AIS and the NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) were also consulted.

The sections below outline the findings from these consultations relating to:

► Current talent pathways operating environment
► Pathway success drivers
► System partner roles and responsibilities
► Current state of NSW talent pathways
► Understanding and implementing the FTEM model.

2.2.1 Current talent pathway operating environment

The sports consulted operate across a spectrum of centralised and decentralised environments in respect of operations, strategy, funding and human resources. The table below provides a high level summary of the current environment. Based on the consultations, it was revealed that greater centralisation generally reflected:

► Greater alignment between NSO and SSO objectives
► Greater clarity and cohesion across the talent pathway
► Consistency of coaching curriculum and methods
Hockey NSW, Cycling NSW and Cricket NSW all operate in relatively decentralised environments with NSOs being involved in player development between the T3 and E1 stages. The funding and resourcing levels of these sports varied:

- **Cricket NSW** indicated they have a well-resourced talent pathway incorporating financial and human resources, including a dedicated high performance department that supports athletes between the T1 and E1 stages.
- **Hockey NSW** employ 22 full-time staff to support their pathway from grassroots through to T4.
- **Rowing NSW** and HNSW work closely with NSWIS to deliver the AAP (Athlete Acceleration Program) in line with the Australia’s Winning Edge platform. The state body also develops and distributes useful communications to parents and tries to constructively engage across all areas of the FTEM model.
- **Cycling NSW** indicated that they rely on volunteers and regional academies to develop athletes between T2 and T4 stages of the pathway. Unlike the larger, better-funded sports (with greater centralisation) such as tennis, cycling have limited financial and human resources. In order to provide for the best outcomes possible, they employ a part-time development manager and heavily rely on the volunteer network for support.

The operating environments of Rowing NSW, Swimming NSW and Netball NSW, incorporate clear roles for the SSO and NSO. These sports have varying levels of financial and human resources supporting their talent pathways. For example:

- **Rowing NSW** indicated they employ few staff to support their pathway due to the highly qualified and experienced private school and club coaches. Research indicated that this is where the majority of the talent came from, well-funded and highly resourced elite private schools and the handful of well-funded, successful clubs who benefit from having good coaches, support from their rowing alumni and a reputation for success built over many years.
- **Swimming NSW** employ four full-time staff to manage their pathway, these individuals focus on coach development and mentoring, to improve outcomes across the talent pathway.
- **In addition Swimming NSW** employ a high performance committee that focusses on; maximising medal outcomes at all Australian Championships and overseeing a number of activities that include the delivery of the development pathway and associated programs, ensuring the successful delivery of the coach development framework, the running of training camps, ensuring the right competition pathways are in place for state swimmers and accessing research and innovative coaching methods in order to gain a competitive advantage.
- **Netball NSW** employ some staff to support and develop athletes at the T3 stage, but rely on competition pathways and the association network at the T1 and T2 stages.
- **The sport is reasonably centralised with the SSO significantly involved in the talent pathway from an early stage coupled with good support from the regional academies. As early as the T3 stage NSWIS provide support to the athlete with the best players being selected for the state team and hopefully progressing to the Diamonds under the control of the NSO.**

- **Tennis Australia** and **Australian Sailing** take responsibility for most of an athlete’s development along the high performance talent pathway. For example:
- **Tennis Australia** indicated they play a major role in the development and high performance development of a player from the T1 phase of the FTEM model and employ a number of staff to support player development including a NSW Talent Development Manager and a pool of five coaches to service NSW-based professionals.
- **Tennis Australia** view Tennis NSW as enabling athlete development by performing facilities management, running competitions and encouraging grassroots participation.
- **Australian Sailing** stated they have undergone a restructure and are consolidating their state-based talent pathways into one, cohesive national pathway.
- **Although tennis and sailing operate in similarly centralised environments, tennis indicated that they have significant human and financial resources to support each stage of their talent pathway. Unlike Tennis Australia, Australian Sailing indicated that they rely on ASC funding and NSWIS human resources to support their talent pathway.**
### 2.2.1.1 Most centralised model - Tennis

The most centralised sport, reviewed was tennis, as a result of Tennis Australia taking a lead role in the identification and development of the player at an early stage in the pathway. It is important to note that of the 8 sports reviewed, tennis was the best resourced and funded largely due to the share in revenue the player development and pathways department benefit from via the Australian Open and Road to the Australian Open series owned by TA.

From as early as 8 years of age, the best young players will be working with a talent development manager and playing in some competitions run by Tennis NSW. At this early identification stage, the NSO is already supporting the athlete to attend camps and training nights hosted by Tennis NSW that follow the national curriculum.

Between the ages of 9 – 12 the young player is participating in Tennis Australia’s “Project Talent” delivered by TA coaches, to TA approved and consistent curriculum working closely with the NSW Coach and Talent Development manager.

TNSW assist with providing courts, the education of the parents and offering educational and sports science information sessions all utilising the central resource of TA and their approved methods.

Beyond the age of 12, the promising player enters into one of TA’s National Academies with the ultimate objective of creating Grand Slam champions. The services offered by these NSO led institutions are well funded and highly equipped with the right level of infrastructure and nationally accredited HP coaches. At this stage of their career, the player will enter into an intensified training program via TA two to three times a week as well as continuing to work with their own coaches on a regular basis.

Like many single athlete focussed sports (not team based), the costs for athlete development (training, travel, wellbeing) in tennis (from even the early days) can be hugely expensive and places parents under significant financial pressure. TA understand this and have been in the fortunate position to, (where possible) fund the promising juniors in these cost areas, relieving some of the pressures on the athlete’s parents.

Whilst there are always pros and cons to a centralised versus de-centralised model, the highly structured, well-funded and consistent approach TA deliver across the talent pathways program would appear to be working with encouraging levels of Australian boys and girls (9) ranked in the top 100.

TA indicated that this degree of co-ordination across coaching staff and delivery of consistent curriculum made it easier to identify talent at an early age and manage player data and progress through a central point.

Whilst it was recognised that the centralised model was effective for well-funded and resourced sports such as tennis, the hybrid model of the decentralised and centralised approach of Swimming NSW could also be considered effective. The decision as to which model to adopt will be effected by a number of factors that may include, the level of funding and resources available to pay for centralised coaches and creation of centralised curriculum, capability of volunteer staff to act in the coaching / mentoring roles and the strength and influence of the SSO in ‘owning’ and delivering programs along the pathway. This can be evidenced by Cricket NSW who indicated they have a well-resourced talent pathway incorporating financial and human resources and a dedicated high performance sport operating under the decentralised model.

Cycling NSW, operate on a very modest budget and do not receive funding from Cycling Australia. This state governing body indicated that they are deeply engaged with the regional academies and rely on the RA’s to provide the interim step between high performing, identified athletes competing in state wide competitions through to those who receive NSWIS scholarships. CNSW advised that they benefit from the assistance of NSWIS in delivering a more cohesive
pathway than they could deliver themselves. With this in mind, a greater degree of centralisation could be expected to generate more favourable outcomes for cycling.

2.2.1.2 Sporting infrastructure across the talent pathway

Sport infrastructure:

Sport infrastructure is another key component of talent pathways. Most sports consulted indicated that there is a lack of suitable infrastructure for high performance sport whilst others identified accessibility to infrastructure as an issue for their talent pathway, including:

- Netball NSW indicated that there is a lack of indoor facilities with the right playing surfaces.
- Swimming NSW indicated there is a lack of integrated facilities for high performance athletes, such as indoor 50 metre pools with physiotherapy and strength and conditioning services located onsite.
- Hockey NSW indicated there is a lack of synthetic pitches in metropolitan Sydney.
- Rowing NSW believed that there is difficulty accessing the Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC) due to other events at the site such as triathlon and open water swimming.

The provision of the right level of sporting infrastructure is a critical component of a talent pathways operating environment and the quality of facilities and infrastructure varied across the eight sports reviewed. Many of the stakeholders consulted commented on the adverse impact, lack of the right facilities and infrastructure had on their programs.

Whilst, Netball NSW acknowledged that there were a reasonable number of outdoor asphalt courts for the recreational player, there was a significant shortage of indoor courts with the right surface for the high performance athletes to train and compete on.

Hockey NSW indicated they also struggle with limited facilities citing a lack of synthetic pitches in metro Sydney. Currently there are around 14 synthetic pitches in metro Sydney and over 50 synthetic pitches across regional NSW. This uneven dispersion of facilities has driven a facilities audit conducted by HNSW and a subsequent long term plan aimed at assisting venue operators and owners to develop business cases to better manage and maintain their facilities keep them operating at the right standards.

Swimming mirrored this concern in respect of the lack of adequate high performance facilities, in particular a gap in the supply of 50 metre pools with built in or at the very least nearby access to gyms, recovery facilities, physio’s and nutritional experts.

To further add to this problem the majority of well-equipped swimming facilities that were suitable for the high performance environment were based in Sydney forcing regional based athletes to travel significant distances and in some cases be away from their home environments for extended periods of time.

Compounding this limited availability issue for Swimming NSW is the disconnect between the pool operator and high performance coach and athlete. The pool operator is a critical stakeholder in the process as they manage access to the pools, gyms and in some cases additional professional services such as physio’s. From a commercial perspective, the pool operator wants to have a high volume turnover of patrons (predominantly school groups) coming through the venue.

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and subsequently needs as many swimming lanes available as possible. This can often conflict with the needs of the high performance squads who require lanes exclusively for their use and are made up of very low numbers. Swimming NSW is aligned and committed to the FTEM model of delivery however it was noted that it was difficult at times to operate in the most effective manner when so many key stakeholders had differing priorities.

Tennis was arguably the sport that could be considered reasonably satisfied with the current level of facilities they have at their disposal and whilst more courts will also improve the opportunities to increase interest in the game and subsequently continue to feed the talent pipeline, they understand that they are better resourced than many other sports within NSW.

This genuine lack of facilities across a number of sports making it more difficult to deliver, manage and continually evaluate the pathways programs requires further attention and one of the key report recommendations suggests conducting a state-wide capabilities and facilities audit in order to identify gaps and prioritise a range of potential solutions. More detail is provide within the recommendations section of the report.

A summary of each sport’s operating environment appears in Appendix B on individual placemats.

2.2.2 Pathway success drivers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Success Drivers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► Eight pathway success drivers were identified through research and consultation with a range of sporting bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► Strengths and gaps were identified for each sport in relation to the drivers and summarised below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► From the best practice case studies researched, the AFL has achieved the greatest success by implementing a pathway that incorporates all 8 success drivers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Desktop research and consultations with the AIS and NSWIS identified several pathway success drivers. Figure 5 summarises the identified pathway success drivers.
As shown in Figure 5, pathway success is driven by several factors. Some of these factors overlap, for example adequate resources, and technology and management. The most important success driver is having a defined and understandable pathway aim. A defined and clearly understood and communicated pathway aim enables stronger communication with system partners and assigning of clear roles and responsibilities to system partners. This success driver also contributes to connectivity and cohesion across system partners in the talent pathway.

Another success driver is multidimensional athlete development. The use of transparent processes that are clearly understood by all and supported by technology and measurement can assist in multidimensional athlete development, as technology and measurement allows for physical, sporting and psychological information to collected and monitored. Transparent processes allow for all system partners to understand their role in the talent pathway as well as gaining greater insight from one another, further improving an athlete’s chance of progressing to the elite levels. Successful pathways have robust, established methods to transition pre-elite athletes to elite athletes. This is typically the most important transition in the pathway with athletes requiring a range of support, including:

- Sports psychology
- Strength and conditioning
- Physiotherapy
- Financial

Strong pre-elite competition pathways can better prepare athletes for the transition to elite representation. Strong competition pathways also assist with talent identification and may reduce athlete drop out at later pre-elite stages (i.e. T3/T4). It was also interesting to note that the school of thought in relation to early development of athletes has shifted significantly. Sector specialists now recommend introducing the young athlete to as many different sports as possible at an early age that results in their overall skills and capabilities developing at a far quicker rate than in the instances where athletes were confined to just one sport.
Table 3 Strengths and gaps in existing pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Driver</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Strengths/Gaps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Defined and Understandable Pathway Aim</td>
<td>Identified as the most important success driver, a clear and defined pathway aim enables all system partners to carry out their roles and responsibilities throughout all stages.</td>
<td>Strength: AFL has established a pathway for each stakeholder across each stage. By doing so, the AFL has implemented a pathway that all stakeholders, including athletes, can understand and know what is required to progress to the next stage. Strength: Cricket NSW, similarly to AFL, has implemented a pathway that clearly defines the goals from the foundation levels of Milo Cricket to the elite levels of the NSW Blues. Gap: Tennis have claimed that there are too many pathways and it is unclear how they interrelate, for example, it is unclear if winning a state tournament will result in talent progression. This means that athletes and stakeholders are unclear of what the next stage is and how to achieve success at the next level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology and Measurement</td>
<td>The use of technology throughout the pathway allows all system partners to track and monitor the physical and mental wellbeing of athletes. This information can then be communicated to all system partners to monitor an athlete’s workload and performance.</td>
<td>Strength: AFL’s ‘Smartabase’ is an example of how technology can improve an athlete’s development by communicating key metrics across all system partners. By doing so these partners can monitor an athlete’s workload, progress and create benchmarks. This allows all system partners to have access to an athlete’s workload and implement strategies to reduce athlete burnout. Strength: Cricket NSW leverages Cricket Australia’s Player Management System which requires athletes from the T2 stage to enter data against key metrics. This can then be accessed by system partners to monitor athlete performance and remotely monitor development in regional areas. Gap: Most sports lack the use of technology when monitoring athlete development due to costs to set up such systems and adequate staff to manage the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective HR Management</td>
<td>Effective human resource management incorporates the efficient use of a paid and volunteer workforce. Due to a lack of finances, sports may have to leverage an experienced volunteer workforce to achieve their goals across various stages of the talent pathway.</td>
<td>Strength: Swimming Australia is well resourced allowing them to monitor basic athlete progress as well as hire additional resources to manage high performance areas such as sports science, nutrition and psychology. Strength: Netball NSW’s well-resourced pathway, similar to Swimming Australia, allows them to dedicate the right staffing to maintain athlete health by accessing services such as physiotherapy and strength and conditioning coaches. Gap: Cycling NSW has identified a lack of human resources, in particular, a lack of development officers at the Foundation level to improve growth in youth athletes. To combat this, Cycling NSW relies heavily on volunteers throughout the Foundation and Talent stages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multidimensional Athlete Development</td>
<td>Rather than focusing solely on match day performance, sports need to acknowledge that athletes mature at different stages and focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that can also be a signal for success.</td>
<td>Strength: The AFL understands the need to provide a multidimensional development of athletes. This is seen through the draft process by requiring athletes to undertake psychological testing and not relying simply on physical performance. Furthermore, athletes are required to record details of their mental wellbeing, as well as physical performance through the Smartabase system on a highly regular basis. Strength: Previously talent was identified solely on match day performance, however, Cricket NSW now identifies talent based on a range of criteria including natural talent, athleticism, competitive nature and mental strength. Furthermore development of athletes focuses on mental, tactical, technical and physical skills. Gap: Australian Sailing identified sports psychology as a gap in their pathway when developing high performance athletes and acknowledged that this would be a real plus given the tough mental demands sailing draws upon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong Competition Pathways</td>
<td>Strong competition across the pathway will help to identify talent more easily and create a more competitive environment which becomes critical at the elite and mastery stage.</td>
<td>Strength: The AFL has implemented high level competitions across all stages of the pathway. From the Talent level to Elite the AFL recognises the need to create a competitive environment to continually develop players competitive and match day skills by using representative, state and national competitions. The AFL has achieved this by establishing U14, U16 and U16 higher competition championships during the talent stage and the NEAFL for elite athletes not ready for the AFL. Gap: After age 18 Hockey NSW only provides opportunities for players to compete in state/national championships resulting in player frustration. This also makes it more difficult to identify late emerging talent in the hockey pathway as players’ dropout.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Strengths/Gaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate Resources</td>
<td>Financial and Non-Financial resources play a key role in providing support for all system partners. These resources enable athletes to gain the most out of their development at each stage.</td>
<td>Strength: Rowing NZ receives substantial funding ($10.5m in 2015) to enhance all stages of the rowing pathway. As a result, Rowing NZ can develop their athletes from the foundation level whilst still dedicating a large proportion of funds to the Elite stages. Strength: Swimming Australia receive annual federal government funding as well as investment from corporate sponsors. This high level of funding allows Swimming Australia to provide additional support to all system partners across the pathway. Gap: Cycling NSW receives no funding from Cycling Australia however it does receive in-kind donations. Although they receive these donations it does not fund areas that they believe need addressing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparent Processes</td>
<td>Clear processes and information sharing across all stages create an environment in which all system partners are working in a cooperative spirit. This creates a pathway in which talent selection and feedback is communicated clearly and a culture of continuous improvement can be realised.</td>
<td>Strength: Rowing NZ has established connections with key system partners to enable clear communication. Rowing NZ regularly communicate with parents to inform them of different opportunities they provide. The sport also employs a manager whose role is work with clubs and schools, and is responsible for overseeing competitions and development of officials. Strength: The AFL encourages all clubs to pass high performance information onto players and coaches, and to ensure information is shared between system partners to avoid partners operating in 'silos'. Gaps: Tennis has identified that pathway progression is not clearly communicated with parents making it difficult for them to understand the pathway. Furthermore the centralised model possibly isolates some system partners, particularly coaches who may prefer to use their own teaching methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods for Transitioning Pre-Elite Athletes to Elite</td>
<td>Mechanisms designed to transition athletes from the Talent stage to the Elite stage are crucial for ensuring athletes can cope with the change in demand, both physically and mentally.</td>
<td>Strength: The AFL’s implementation of the Draft Process addresses issues that arise when making the transition from pre-elite to elite. The Draft allows teams to select players that they believe are ready for the transition and assist the athlete in a structured process. Those athletes that require further development are added to the Rookie List or the North East Australian Football League. Strength: Rowing NSW’s highly experienced coaching staff have been identified as key to transitioning athletes through these stages. The experience and knowledge of the coaches involved assist athletes when transitioning by providing the knowledge and support necessary to make a successful transition. Gaps: Australian Sailing highlighted the difficulty in transitioning athletes to senior elite. This is due to a lack of human and financial resources available to assist athletes in this costly sport.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2.2.1 AFL Best Practice Case Study

Based on these success drivers and in-depth consultation with the most relevant high performance stakeholders with in the sport, it was revealed that the AFL performed best across the 8 factors amongst the 11 sports reviewed. AFL was a clear example of a best practice pathway by the way they applied the drivers of success at all stages. From the Mastery stage to the Foundation stage, AFL has clearly defined the pathway that athletes must progress through, from Auskick to the ultimate goal of making the AFL team list. AFL has implemented this pathway not only for athletes but all system partners, enabling partners to carry out their roles and responsibilities to effectively develop an athlete. Across the pathway the AFL has established competitions and academies, such as the Under 14 Championships, targeting the highest performing athletes at each stage, creating a highly competitive environment for athletes to compete and develop at the level they require. Once progressing through the competitive environment of the talent stage, the AFL has established...
a mechanism for transitioning athletes into the Elite and Mastery stages through the draft process by selecting those players who demonstrate the most potential for achieving success. This enables athletes to easily be selected to the next stage of the pathway reducing the amount of athlete dropout.

The AFL has also identified the need for multidimensional development of athletes. During the AFL Draft Combine, athletes are assessed not only on their physical ability but on their mental state. This is done through psychometric testing such as 15FO+ and VMI tests which assess the athletes interpersonal values, extrinsic factors and intrinsic could to identify those athletes who can perform both physically and mentally. This is enhanced by the AFL’s use of technology, in particular, their use of the ‘Smartabase’ system. Smartabase is a mobile application that allows key stakeholders, including athletes, medical staff, coaches, talent identification staff, to access (with restrictions) an athlete’s profile that includes testing results (performance), wellbeing metrics (input by athlete), training loads, medial assessment (physical, psychological etc.). This allows all system partners to assess the progress of the athlete, identify areas that need development and monitor workload to avoid burnout. Furthermore, the AFL is developing an agreement with Schools to manage the maximum workload of talented athletes in school sport, effectively minimising athlete burnout. This level of communication has created a pathway where no silos exist and all system partners across the stages work together to ensure athletes from each stage have the best opportunity to progress further. The communication between system partners allows the AFL to effectively manage their human resources by ensuring there is no duplication between stages and that all key stakeholders know their roles and responsibilities. Overall the AFL is an example of how a sport can effectively manage their pathway by adopting the key drivers identified to achieve success.

2.2.2.2 Practical application of the 8 Success Drivers

To minimise the gaps in performance pathways, sports should map their talent pathway in alignment with the 8 key success drivers as is the case with the AFL. In doing so, individual sports will be in the best position to maximise the amount of athletes that transition from the foundation to elite levels.

It is believed by NSWIS that the seamless and successful implementation of the FTEM pathway may be more difficult for smaller, under resourced sports as they are often only able to move from one spot fire to the next rather than operate strategically. Although this is a difficult challenge to overcome, sports with less resources must focus on key drivers that can help reduce pathway gaps. One such way is to ensure all human resources are managed effectively to assist across all stages. This could involve increasing the knowledge of coaches from the Foundation level to Elite levels, providing opportunities for experienced volunteers in areas such as physio and nutrition, and minimising duplication across stages so that resources are not wasted. Effective human resource management can allow these sports to redirect their limited resources to other areas of the pathway where gaps exist.

Furthermore, by engaging with NSO’s, SSO’s can leverage NSO’s resources when implementing their pathway, as seen by one of Cycling Australia’s coach’s on secondment to NSWIS. By leveraging these resources, SSO’s may better align their pathway aim to that of the NSO. This could benefit the SSO by establishing a clear pathway that is easily understood and creates clarity round the relationship between the SSO and NSO.

Australian Sailing, although well-resourced, has identified a lack of sports psychology capabilities when developing their high performance athletes and therefore appears to use a one-dimensional approach. Using a holistic approach can be beneficial to sports as it allows them to identify talent across the pathway even though athlete may not have fully matured. A holistic approach also allows sports to identify those athletes who can deal with the mental demands of the elite and mastery level, and provide training to those who may not quite be there yet. The AFL has overcome this issue by identifying the need for multidimensional development of athletes and have used technology to monitor metrics such as player wellbeing by using psychometric testing.

Sports such as Rowing NSW and Hockey NSW have identified a lack of strong competition for older athletes. This has led to player frustration and athlete dropout, making it difficult to identify late emerging talent. To avoid this, the AFL and Swimming Australia have created a strong competitive environment across the pathway and continue do so for older athletes who have not yet progressed to the elite stage. The use of the AFL’s development league and Swimming Australia’s Youth Transition Program have allowed these sports to identify those athletes who have potential to succeed but aren’t ready for the
elite stage. By establishing these competitions and programs, AFL and Swimming Australia have allowed athletes to progress through the later stages of the pathway reducing athlete dropout rates.

A large number of sports identified a lack of communication as a gap in their talent pathway. This can be a serious threat to the success of the pathway if the system partners do not know their roles and responsibilities. To avoid this, the AFL has encouraged system partners to share all information necessary regarding an athlete. This is achieved through the use of technology by recording an athlete’s development, both mentally and physically, and providing system partners access to this data. This enables system partners to identify if an athlete is ready to progress to the next stage or requires further development in the current stage.

Sports also identified a lack of pathway understanding by coaches involved in the transitions process from foundation to pre-elite. This has caused ineffective and inconsistent coaching styles across the earlier stages of the pathway resulting in a slower transition for athletes between these stages, deferring their growth and duplicating areas of the pathway that should have been addressed in the foundation stage. Rowing NZ has identified this issue by regularly communicating with all system partners to ensure all are working cooperatively and have access to information about the pathway. Through regular communication with system partners, particularly parents and coaches in the foundation stage, sports can help create a clear process that can be implemented consistently in the transition from foundation to pre-elite.

2.2.3 Roles and responsibilities map

Talent pathways may be delivered directly by the NSO or SSO – for example Tennis Australia is responsible for all talent development beyond the T2 stage of the talent pathway. The pathway may also be delivered by numerous system partners, as is the case of netball, rowing and cycling. Some system partners are common across sports consulted – for example parents, Regional Academies of Sport and NSWIS. Figure 7 provides a general overview of the roles and responsibilities of system partners at different stages of the talent pathway.

Appendix E provides detailed roles and responsibilities maps for each of the sports consulted.
As shown in Figure 7, there are numerous system partners involved in an athlete’s journey along the talent pathway. Due to this, it is important that the pathway is well designed, communicated, delivered and aligned with each system partner understanding of:

- The overall aims and objectives of the talent pathway
- Their roles and responsibilities in the talent pathway
- How their role fits within the broader talent pathway
- The roles of the other talent pathway system partners
- The next steps in the talent pathway

These issues were tested with system partners during the second stage of consultations. Section 2.3 outlines the findings of the second stage of consultations.
2.2.4 Current state of talent pathways in NSW

All sports consulted identified a clear talent pathway from grassroots participation to elite national representation. Most sports consulted indicated they use the AIS’s FTEM model to map their talent pathway or at the very least, a closely matched version of this applying slightly different terminology. Whilst varying degrees of cohesion existed across the talent pathway, some gaps across the pathway were observed.

Figure 8 summarises some of the pathway gaps identified by the eight NSOs or SSOs consulted.

As shown in Figure 8, NSOs and SSOs consulted identified a number of pathway gaps across some of the pathway success drivers shown in Figure 8. Many of these pathway gaps, such as the inability of small rowing clubs to develop talent beyond the T2 stage, can be addressed by improving coach development processes as well as incentivising coaches to stay on for the “athletes journey” and upskilling coaches at all stages of the pathway. This will be achieved by working more closely with the coaches and ensuring they feel they have a genuine role to play as the athlete progresses. Smaller sports that do not have the capability or capacity for coach development opportunities would likely benefit from upskilling coaches across all sports as a result of being able to
benchmark methods against the best coaches. Upskilling coaches may also improve pathway understanding as coaches are often responsible for communicating the pathway to other system partners, such as athletes and parents.

Both hockey and tennis experienced a similar gap in relation to their systems inability to adequately identify late developing athletes. Whilst it was acknowledged that the bulk of talent is identified at a young age, there have been cases where high potential athletes have been discovered in more mature stages of lifecycle and therefore a more complete ‘talent net’ needs to be developed for these sports.

Overall, NSOs and SSOs identified different pathway gaps, reflecting considerable differences between the eight sports consulted. However, many of the gaps identified can be addressed by providing greater coach development opportunities and upskilling coaches across the pathway. This is likely to have positive outcomes throughout the sports sector and may assist in attracting and retaining talented coaches.

2.2.5 Understanding and implementing the FTEM model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The AIS, NSWIS and implementing FTEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>► The AIS are working with sports at the national and state level to identify gaps in their pathway and assist them to implement FTEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► To support implementation of FTEM, the AIS developed the NSO Pathway Healthcheck; an online questionnaire providing an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of a talent pathway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► NSWIS indicated that smaller, less resourced sports are likely to require more support to implement FTEM than those with greater resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>► NSWIS are also working with NSOs and SSOs to implement FTEM through existing relationships with these stakeholders</td>
</tr>
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</table>

The eight sports examined varied in their understanding and implementation of the FTEM model. Most indicated they are aware of the FTEM model and had an understanding of it. Seven of the eight sports examined have implemented the FTEM model and mapped their development activities against the FTEM model to varying extents. Australian Sailing indicated that they are mapping their talent pathway against the FTEM model with AIS support. Implementing the FTEM model also includes developing multidimensional talent identification and development criteria – for example including psychological testing or learning styles when identifying and developing talent. Swimming Australia implemented a range of assessment criteria collected throughout the talent development stage to track athlete development and inform future selection decisions beyond just competition results.

Sports identified implementation challenges with the FTEM model. Rowing NSW suggested that this is due to the different language used by various system partners who deliver the pathway. Hockey Australia identified similar implementation issues, and added that this is influenced by the volume of volunteers delivering the hockey pathway. Cycling NSW also stated that they use the FTEM model but are unsure of how well it is understood or implemented at the club level. However, Netball NSW indicated that due to the strength of their relationships with each of the system partners, the model is implemented well.

Netball has implemented the FTEM model well. However, there is less focus on holistic athlete development compared to other sports – for example swimming and rowing. This is also true of hockey and cricket where most talent progression and selection decisions are determined by match day performance. Cycling and sailing indicated that they are increasingly looking at the whole athlete when making selection decisions. A former multiple Olympic gold medallist rower and coach stressed the importance of this holistic development for all sports and indicated that the results with his sport of rowing would be considerably better if the sport were to adopt this approach.
Overall, the degree of understanding and implementation of the FTEM model varied across the sports eight sports examined in detail.

2.3 Findings from Stage Three consultations
Stage Three consultations aimed to test and refine the findings from Stage Two with a broader range of system partners – for example athletes, regional academies, state sporting high schools and coaches. This section presents the findings of the Stage Three consultations through:

► The athlete feedback log
► System partners roles and responsibilities register and an examination of cohesion and connectivity of system partners across talent pathways
► Three best practice case studies:
  ► AFL
  ► Rowing NZ
  ► Swimming Australia.

2.3.1 Athlete feedback log
The athlete feedback log documents the experience of current and former elite athletes at each stage of the talent pathway. Athletes for consultation were recruited via two sources:

1. NSWIS contacted a number of athletes and invited them to participate in the high performance project. Athletes approached were from a range of sports and stages in the athlete pathway. Some of these athletes then self-nominated following the invitation from NSWIS

2. EY sourced some athletes for consultation through our existing direct industry relationships.

Table 4 outlines the athletes consulted in developing the athlete feedback log. The athletes shown in Table 4 provided varied feedback about their experience of talent development and identification, the transition to elite senior representation, and overall pathway strengths and weaknesses.
Feedback provided by athletes varied. However, some common discussion points emerged.

All athletes consulted commented on the importance of competitive pre-elite training and high quality competition opportunities (i.e. at the T3/T4 to E1 stage). Athletes identified this common gap as a time when they are likely to fall off the talent pathway because the gap for some sports between talent and elite is substantial. For example, athletes who do not immediately make senior Australian teams find that there are sometimes limited alternative backup opportunities or support. This is particularly relevant for sports with school-centric pathways – such as rugby union and for sports with a longer lead time to reach peak performance – such as track cycling and equestrian. Structured alternate opportunities and support may also assist in reducing drop out of pre-elite or elite athletes at this stage as well as identifying later maturing athletes.

Coaches are key to an athlete’s personal and technical development. All athletes consulted commented on coaching and the coaching relationship. Coaches may be required to perform many different roles, including talent identification, mentoring and provide psychological support. Unfortunately, coaches may not always have the right skills to fulfill these different roles or know where to access resources to develop these skills. It is also important that coaches are somewhat accountable for athlete performance – possibly via the establishment of a set of KPIs or metrics. The rowers consulted specifically identified this disconnect between coach and athlete accountability. Increasing coach accountability may also ensure alignment between athlete, coach, and NSO and SSO objectives. It may also increase parental confidence that their child is in ‘safe hands’.

The consultations with Athletes with a Disability (AWD) revealed that the pathways below the elite levels for AWDs are not well developed. Possibly weakening AWD pathway outcomes in the long term. For example, in para-rowing and para-sailing there are no pre-elite athletes to replace the current elite level athletes when they retire. Other issues identified by the AWDs include:

- Talent identification and development is often left to clubs with minimal involvement from the SSO or NSO until late in the pre-elite stage
- There are too few NSW pre-elite competitions or training camps opportunities
- There are too few opportunities for pre-elite AWDs to connect with other AWDs or able-bodied athletes
- Equipment is a key challenge for AWDs and the initial costs of participation may reduce the future level of participation

AWDs indicated that once in the SSO or NSO system they receive significant support from their respective SSO and NSO which was a huge help. For example, Australian Sailing assists with access to clothing and equipment as well as transport costs. Both AWDs identified further opportunities to explore talent transfer in AWD pathways and able-bodied pathways. This was due to the success of their own talent transfer experiences.
Figure 9 summarises the key points of athlete feedback received. Appendix H provides a detailed athlete feedback log.

**Figure 9 Summary of athlete feedback received**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Athlete feedback</th>
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</table>
| Talent identification | - The open trials and competition referral pathways for netball are very effective – the continued success of the Australian Diamonds suggests that the best talent is being identified  
- Talent identification in rowing is poorly done as rowing do not approach athletes from beyond school and club rowing programs  
- Talent transfer is a valuable focus for the sports industry as a whole – two of the athletes consulted had transferred to their current sport and performed successfully at the highest level |
| Talent development | - “NSWIS was critical in building an athlete and building a person” – however this relationship can be challenging for regionally based athletes  
- Regional academies of sport broaden athlete horizons about the day to day life of an athlete and provide important off-field support services (e.g. nutrition, sports psychology)  
- Increasing use of technology and monitoring (e.g. Athlete Management Systems (AMS) or Smartabase) is improving management of athlete load and tracking athlete development – previously this may not have been considered and athletes ‘were flogged to death and burnt out’ |
| Transition to elite senior representation | - “Transitioning to elite senior representation can be challenging as this it not a full time environment”  
- Athletes who do not immediately progress to elite senior representation find that there are limited alternative back up opportunities or support – particularly in sports with school-centric pathways (e.g. rowing) or longer peak performance lead times (e.g. track cycling)  
- Coaches are key to an athlete’s technical and personal development. Coaches may not always have the right skill set or access to the right resources/knowledge to provide holistic athlete development |
| Strengths and weaknesses | - Pathways are more successful when they were clear, supported by experienced coaches, provided both on and off-field support, and had well-structured opportunities (i.e. academies, state representative opportunities) and competitions  
- There is a gap between resources that are available to athletes (e.g. education, life skills development) and athletes accessing these resources. This may be due to:  
  - A lack of awareness of what resources are available or who to speak to in order to access resources  
  - Coaches or other system partners may not encourage athletes to access resources  
- Most AWD pathways are not well developed below the elite level – this may lead to poor pathway outcomes in the long term |
2.3.2 System partner roles register

Table 5 outlines system partner roles across sports based on the consultations conducted in stages two and three. Table 5 outlines general system partner roles and these roles may vary across different sports. The below outlines the roles and responsibilities of system partners in each of the eight sports examined in detail.

Table 5 System partner roles register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System partner</th>
<th>Role</th>
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</table>
| Clubs and associations             | ► Clubs and associations may take on a number of roles from: providing participation opportunities (commencing at grass roots entry point) for all ages and skill levels, skills development, talent identification and talent development  
► Clubs and associations provide a link between grassroots coaches, parents and the broader talent pathway  
► The club environment continues to be significant throughout the pathway in some sports (e.g. rowing, hockey) |
| Performance services (e.g. sports science) | ► Support safe and sustainable talent development programs from around the T2/T3 stages onwards  
► Provide some assistance in talent identification (e.g. psychological profiling and physiological screening) |
| Regional academies of sport        | ► Provide multidimensional support for regional athletes between the T1/T2 and T4 stages  
► Provide opportunities for coach development (e.g. FIFO mentor coaches at North Coast Regional Academy) |
| State sporting high schools        | ► Operate between the T2 and E1 stages of the pathway  
► Provide a one-shop stop for athlete development programs (e.g. education, strength and conditioning and physio). This resolves some issues around travel, logistics and timing and focuses on education |
| Private schools                    | ► Private schools play varying roles depending on the sport, ultimately their role is to encourage participation and recreational competition to generate health and wellbeing outcomes  
► Private schools also provide the necessary educational support for students performing at the elite level (e.g. the Pathways HSC program)  
► Private schools are heavily focused on recruiting high performing athletes in order to increase overall enrolments and positively market the school |
| NSWIS                              | ► Provide multidimensional athlete support at the T4/E1 stages and beyond – typically ‘Podium’ and Podium Potential’ athletes  
► Operate programs with NSOs and SSOs to deliver agreed performance objectives (e.g. provide selective support for the daily training environment to achieve success at designated pathway events) |
| AIS                                | ► Support NSOs and SSOs to implement the FTEM framework  
► Support performance services, coaches and other system partners by providing access to cutting edge sports science methodologies and practitioners as well as international best practice case studies from their global network of colleagues and institutions |
| NSO                                | ► Implement the talent pathway by communication clear roles and responsibilities to each system partner  
► Support and manage athletes at the E1 to M stages of the pathway |
| SSO                                | ► Support NSO implementation of the pathway by working with other system partners to encourage cohesion and connectivity to feed the national pipeline  
► Encourage long term participation in sport and assist the clubs in generating memberships |

Table 6 System supporter roles register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pathway Supporters</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Coaches            | ► Coaches are the most important system enabler in an athlete’s development  
► Coaches form an important component of the athlete’s daily training environment and often take on a wider range of duties particularly when the athlete is young and operating in an “away from home” environment (e.g. life coach, case manager, mentor, mental management and to a certain extent, parenting) |
| Parents            | ► Parents are a crucial part of the talent pathway and are a supporter at every stage of the talent pathway and athlete development  
► Parents may provide financial and logistical support for athletes and provide a coaching role in some sports particularly in individual sports (e.g. cycling, tennis) |
As shown in Table, each system partner plays a different role. When the pathway is operating effectively, the roles of system partners operating at the same stages of the talent pathway should be complementary rather than duplicative. As is the case with the Regional Academies of Sport and State Sporting High Schools or NSWIS and NSOs. All system partners acknowledged the importance of coaches and parents at all stages of athlete development. System partners also stated that a key role of the NSO is to clearly communicate the talent pathway and the roles and responsibilities of other system partners. The SSO has a role in supporting this communication from NSO and encouraging cohesion and connectivity between state-based system partners to optimise outcomes for the national talent pathway and ultimately feed the top end funnel. Some SSOs also have a role in encouraging participation and growing memberships, for example Swimming NSW and Netball NSW oversee the club membership function.

System partners indicated that their performance services (including physiotherapy, strength and conditioning and sports psychology) are important in delivering safe and sustainable pathways. For example, ensuring the athletes are doing the most appropriate training loads for their age, maturity, and development stage. NSWIS is key in delivering many of these services to identified athletes and contributing to the smooth transition of athletes to the elite and mastery stages of the talent pathway. System partners believed that the AIS plays a less direct role in athlete development than it has done previously. The AIS now largely assists NSOs to develop and implement their talent pathway, as evidenced with Australian Sailing. The AIS also supports performance services and coaches by providing access to cutting edge sports science methodologies, for example the FTEM model.

Overall the roles and responsibilities register presented in Table 2, suggests that there is minimal duplication across the talent pathways with some system partners having distinct roles and responsibilities and others providing complementary pathway offerings.

2.3.2.1 Cohesion and connectivity across the pathway

Based on the consultations conducted, the level of cohesion and connectivity between system partners was assessed. System partners were also assessed on how well defined their role is in the talent pathway as well as their understanding of the talent pathway. Shows the cohesion and connectivity of system partners, as well as their role definition and pathway understanding. Figure 10 provides a general overview only and it is expected that there may be degrees of variation across different sports.
Figure 10 System partner cohesion and connectivity across the pathway

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System partner</th>
<th>Defined role in pathway</th>
<th>Understanding of pathway</th>
<th>Connectivity with other system partners</th>
<th>Cohesion with other system partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club coaches</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs and associations</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOs</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSOs</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Academies of Sport</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private schools</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Sporting High Schools</td>
<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSWIS</td>
<td>●</td>
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<td>●</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Minimal - Some - High level - Detailed
As shown in Figure 10, NSO’s have the most clearly defined role in a talent pathway, while parents and state sporting high schools have no clearly defined role in talent pathways. NSOs are likely to have the most clearly defined role in talent pathways as they are responsible for developing the talent pathway. State Sporting High Schools believed that they do not currently have a defined role in the talent pathway and indicated they would increase their role. As a result, some programs at State Sporting High Schools are run with professional sporting clubs, for example Endeavour Sports High Schools AFL program.

which is delivered in partnership with the Sydney Swans. Furthermore, many of the programs at Westfield’s Sports High are developed in isolation from the NSO and SSO. The isolation of State Sporting High Schools means that State Sporting High Schools are not used as effectively as possible from an infrastructure and human resource perspective. A range of system partners including NSO pathway managers and Regional Academies of Sport indicated that while parents are critical to talent pathways, parents have no clearly defined role. Subsequently, parents also tend to have a limited understanding of the talent pathway.

Similarly to parents and State Sporting High Schools, a number of system partners believed that club coaches, clubs and associations only have limited understanding of the talent pathway. This threatens the overall success of talent pathways as clubs and associations constitute the first steps in the talent
pathway. Some system partners also believed the private schools have some understanding of the pathway. This is due to the disconnection between private school objectives (increasing enrolments) and long-term athlete development. As an example, private schools aim to win the inter-schools competition (with the strategic aim of increasing enrolments over time) even if this results in lower athlete engagement. This is more problematic for sports with a school-centric pathway such as rowing and rugby union. Regional Academies of Sport have a detailed understanding of the talent pathway as their role is clearly defined by the NSO responsible for the talent pathway. Similarly, NSWIS and the AIS have a detailed understanding of the pathway as they are contribute to pathway development.

Most system partners have a degree of connectivity with the other system partners. For example, Regional Academies of Sport have a high level of connectivity with NSWIS. However, both could benefit from greater connectivity as this may better prepare athletes who transition from Regional Academies of Sport to NSWIS supported operations. Regional Academies of Sport could also benefit from knowledge sharing arrangements with NSWIS to better align their programs with NSWIS. Clubs and associations have detailed connectivity with other system partners, as clubs and associations are key to referring talent to the next step of the pathway. Parents also have detailed connectivity with other system partners through the day to day contact with other system partners such as coaches and physiotherapists. As State Sporting High Schools do not have a clearly defined role in the talent pathway, they only have some connectivity with the other system partners, instead forming specific partnerships with professional sporting clubs.

Cohesion between system partners varies. For example, Regional Academies of Sport and State Sporting High Schools operate at the same talent pathway intervals but do not work together. Similarly, private schools tend to operate in isolation to the rest of the talent pathway, rather than working cohesively with other system partners. This may be due to the high standard of facilities and capabilities at private schools, not needing to partner with anyone. As well as the objectives of private schools being to increase enrolments and raise the profile and brand equity of the school. NSWIS and the AIS work cohesively with most of the other system partners to contribute to overall talent pathway outcomes. For example, all NSWIS programs are delivered under tripartite agreements with the specific NSO and SSO. Parents also work cohesively with other system partners as they are highly involved in supporting the work of these system partners. A case in point being the fact that parents provide much of the nutrition and logistically support for pre-elite athletes.

Improved pathway education and communication may improve connectivity and cohesion between system partners. It is envisaged that sport specific processes could be communicated to all system partners to provide greater clarity in roles and an understanding of the broader pathway. Cohesion and connectivity could be improved by promoting knowledge sharing and encouraging system partners to view their roles as complementary. Improving pathway education and communication could improve pathway outcomes in the long term.

2.3.3 Best practice case studies

To explore the pathways of other AWE classified sports, a non-AWE sport and an international example three case studies have been developed. These three sporting bodies were identified as best practice due to their success in demonstrating their application of the eight key success drivers. Case studies were selected through consultation with the AIS, NSWIS, OoS and Sport NZ. Table 7 shows the selected sports for the case studies. The key attributes of the best practice case studies talent identification and development pathway can be found in Appendix F.
When analysing the three best practice case studies a number of positive elements emerged that were consistent across all three. These included:

- A structured junior program that helps identify talent as early as possible, keeping the young athlete engaged and motivated to remain in the sport.
- Structured competition environment that offers high level (in the case of Rowing NZ juniors, U21’s, U23’s and Swimming Australia – Pan Pacs) interstate and international exposure to competition.
- High degree of open communication between key system partners such as parents and coaches. The AFL actively encourages all clubs to pass high performance data to players and coaches and operates a “non silo” approach to high performance in keeping with Professor Norton’s theories.

System partners have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Examples include:

- Clubs and secondary schools in New Zealand are responsible for developing the foundation skills required for selection into and RPC.
- AFL under 16 and under 18 state-based academies are responsible for providing an elite football environment with a focus on individual development.
- Swimming Australia uses NSWIS as a ‘Podium Centre’, providing support for AWE categorised athletes.
- Well defined systems and processes around the tracking and evaluating of the athlete.

Consultation with these sports revealed the importance of embracing technology where possible to improve the athlete’s performance along the pathway and also the need to keep up with the speed of the technology on offer.

The AFL have implemented innovative athlete data collection and monitoring systems and processes. This is done through the Smartabase system. Smartabase allows athletes to record their quality of sleep, soreness, training loads, test results and physical and psychological wellbeing via a mobile app. Recorded data can be accessed by the athlete, medical staff, coaches and some talent identification staff. This data can be used to benchmark athletes against similar player types – for example, inside midfielders. The collected data is also used to inform decisions about future athlete progression and selection. Swimming Australia has also developed an Athlete Management System (AMS) storing information collected from all state-based development squad participants. Like AFL, Swimming Australia use AMS in the pre-elite stage of the pathway onwards. Figure 11 provides examples of the specific data collected and stored in AMS as well as some of the benefits from using the collected data. As shown in Figure 11, a key benefit of systematic data collection at the talent identification stage is a baseline of data to track individual athlete development against. Data also allows for the development of appropriate training programs for different learning styles and strategies to reduce injury susceptibility.

With injury problems, player fatigue and psychological burnout all being a part of high performance professional sport today, regular in-depth analysis of the athletes physical and mental state can help to prevent the types of injuries that sidelined players only a few years ago.
Although Rowing NZ does not explicitly use athlete data collection and analysis as part of its talent pathway, they have clearly defined selection criteria that must be met for selection into a Regional Performance Centre (RPC) which is necessary to progress along the Rowing NZ pathway. Rowing NZ have specified ERGO and on-water results guiding selection to a RPC.

All three sports identified the need for a holistic and multidimensional approach to athlete development. The AFL achieves this through their ‘Smartabase’ by tracking the well-being of their athletes as well as conducting psychometric testing during the Draft Process. Rowing NZ monitors athlete attitude and behaviour through a High Performance Athlete Development Manager. Outcomes from attitude and behaviour monitoring are then used to inform future progression and selection decisions. This approach works well for Rowing NZ due to the small size of their organisation and open trial processes used for RPC selection. Similarly, Swimming Australia uses a range of assessment protocols at the state and national camps which test both swimming skills and psychological skills such as mental toughness.
AFL and Swimming Australia are well-resourced from a financial and human resource perspective. This enables these sports to address all gaps in the pathway as they arise and to act before they become critical issues. Rowing NZ, although well-resourced financially, operates with a smaller human resource base. Rowing NZ employs four high performance staff and four coaches who implement the pathway. Whilst quite different from the AFL and Swimming Australia, the Rowing NZ model highlights the potential gains from having a well-managed, but limited human capital resource base.

Each of these best practice sports also provided athletes with a high level of competition that is differentiated from normal club competition. By providing higher level competitions such as state, national and in the case of Rowing NZ and Swimming Australia, international competitions, athletes can develop their skills against their peers. Having these strong competitions throughout the pathway also enable a smoother transition to the elite stages where they will face a higher level of competition. The AFL further assists athletes transitioning to the elite stage through the draft process, creating a ‘seamless’ transition to the AFL main draw. Strong competitions in the later stages can also reduce the amount of athlete dropout as athletes are able to continue to progress though the stages and remaining motivated and engaged.
3. Implications and recommendations

### Key Messages:

- There are opportunities to better leverage universities in terms of facilities (sports infrastructure), human resources and transitioning elite juniors to elite seniors.
- Inconsistent and poor quality coaching delivery represents a threat to the success of talent pathways.
- There are a range of opportunities for OoS to play a strategic role in NSW talent pathways and across the sector, for example; influencing and coaching system partners (e.g. State Sporting High Schools) to work more closely with NSOs and SSOs (e.g. assisting with knowledge sharing and best practice implementation).

### 3.1 Overview

This section outlines the key findings from the SWOT analysis and makes strategic recommendations for the role OoS in NSW talent pathways.

### 3.2 Current model SWOT analysis

Consultations with system partners resulted in the identification of a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Almost all of these can be influenced by OoS, in turn presenting an opportunity for OoS to provide strategic leadership across the sports sector and be seen as true guardians of sport in NSW. Figure 12 provides an overview of the current state SWOT analysis.
Figure 12 Current state SWOT analysis

**Strengths:**
- SSO and NSO views of system partner roles are aligned with the views of system partners (e.g. regional academies support athletes at the pre-elite stages of the talent pathways)
- The majority of system partners understand their roles and responsibilities in the talent pathway
- Some system partners have collaborative relationships (e.g. RASi and the NSW Sports High Schools Association)
- System partners aim to contribute to holistic athlete development (i.e. including nutrition, sports psychology and strength and conditioning in their programs)
- Most system partners are open to knowledge sharing and collaborating with each other e.g. Sporting High Schools with SSO’s and OoS

**Weaknesses:**
- Lack of effective communication between different system partners operating at the pre-elite level (e.g. associations and regional academies)
- Lack of effective communication between some system partners operating at different, and complementary stages of the talent pathway (e.g. NSWIS and regional academies)
- Lack of cooperation and collaboration between system partners operating at the same pathway stages (e.g. regional academies and state sports high schools)
- Coaches at the transition between foundation and pre-elite may not be sure of the pathway and therefore deliver coaching inconsistently and ineffectively
- Concern that some volunteers do not understand the talent pathway – this was discussed by both NSO/SSOs, regional academies and state sporting high schools
- Lack of high level competition opportunities for athletes aged between 18 and 23 that do not make the Australian senior team e.g. rowing and tennis

**Opportunities:**
- Better leverage university facilities (e.g. playing fields and strength and conditioning centres) and human resources (e.g. highly qualified biomechanists and student physiotherapists)
- Better leverage elite university sport to identify late developing talent and provide continuing pre-elite competition opportunities for athletes aged between 18 and 23
- Increase effective communication and knowledge sharing between system partners across all stages of the pathway and between different sports (e.g. between NSWIS and regional academies)
- Better leverage regional academies and state sports high schools by encouraging NSOs and SSOs to include them in their talent pathway – state sports high schools inclusion in the FFA pathway is producing good results
- Upskilling coaches at all stages of the pathway to better support athletes and understand the talent pathway
- OoS to coordinate and take a lead in the management of key functions such as advice and direction around commercial strategy, strategic planning and performance data sharing

**Threats:**
- Ineffective communication between system partners at the pre-elite level contributes to:
  - Athlete overload, injury and burnout
  - Misunderstanding of the next steps in the pathway
  - Dissatisfaction amongst parents who are often funding the athletes early journey
  - Ineffective communication between system partners at complementary pathway stages leading to inefficient pathways operations (e.g. athletes not progressing to the next stage of the pathway)
- There may be some duplication in the pathway (e.g. rugby league has a strong club/association network in Western Sydney and is in the Western Sydney Regional Academy and Westfields Sport High School) potentially creating uncertainty about the pathway or where the best place for the young athlete to be is
- Dropout between 18 and 23 due to a lack of high level competition for these age groups (poor motivation and lack of incentives for the athletes)

3.2.1 **Strengths**

One of the strengths identified was that system partners are open to collaborating and knowledge sharing. This provides opportunities to improve talent pathways. For example, system partners are generally receptive to the idea of greater collaboration and knowledge sharing realising that more significant gains can be made for all if the walls are broken down. OoS could strategically bring together system partners influencing them to share and benefit from each other’s experiences. It was widely regarded by those consulted that this increased collaboration and better sharing would not occur unless it was driven.

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by OoS. Coordination and leadership is required in order to illustrate the importance of knowledge sharing and set this as a future expectation. Knowledge sharing could be particularly beneficial for Regional Academies and NSWIS to better align their programs and improve the transition for athletes from Regional Academies to NSWIS. Regional Academies and State Sporting High Schools could also benefit from improving effective communication and knowledge sharing to better leverage the significant expertise in each of these system partners.

Therefore, it is recommended that the OoS conduct a series of mandatory workshops that cover a range of ‘mission critical’ topics that directly impact the sports. By demonstrating a willingness to take on a highly visible strategic leadership role via these sessions, OoS should instil a degree of confidence across the system partner network.

### 3.2.2 Threats

Ineffective communication was identified as a key threat to talent pathway success. As outlined above, improving effective communication between system partners could improve the talent pathway offering and long term outcomes. Increasing effective communication is also likely to improve pathway clarity. Increased effective communication may also reduce some of the duplication in talent pathways. Reducing duplication may result in less system partner confusion about the pathway and more efficient service delivery.

Ineffective communication can contribute to athlete overload and burnout. Reducing overload may decrease the rate of athlete dropout and increase motivation levels. Increasing high level competition opportunities for athletes at the later stages of pre-elite development should also decrease the rate of athlete dropout as they now have a tangible goal to reach on a regular basis. This could be done by encouraging NSOs to better leverage the university sports sector and provide high level competition opportunities across the pathway. There is an opportunity for OoS to better connect the university sports sector and NSOs and advocate for their inclusion in the talent pathway. Giving them a more visible ‘seat at the table’ will ultimately increase their involvement and commitment to the process and hopefully lead to better talent development outcomes as the training net is cast further.

### 3.2.3 Opportunities

Greater use of universities is an opportunity for talent pathways. For example, universities could provide another an opportunity for late developing athletes to be identified and evolve into elite athletes. This is currently being implemented in the Australian Rugby Union’s Women’s 7s by the development of the National University Sevens Series. This series is a representative-level competition that provides regular training and games for athletes who have not made the national team. Better leveraging the university sports sector enables access to the facilities and human resources of universities. Australian University Sports indicated that Australian universities manage approximately $1.7 billion in facilities that are generally underutilised. Universities also employ a number of world leading sports scientists and have a deep, inexpensive labour resource with students studying physiotherapy, nutrition, exercise physiology and psychology any of which have a desire to enter the sports sector. Accessing this human resource may reduce the extent of professional services that need to be delivered by third parties. Increasing the role of universities in talent pathways is another opportunity for OoS to perform a strategic leadership role and influence the long term outcomes of talent pathways.

### 3.2.4 Weaknesses

System partners identified varying coaching quality as a weakness in talent pathways. System partners particularly identified this as a problem at the F3/T1 stages of the talent pathway. This may be exacerbated by the number of volunteer coaches at these stages who are typically less qualified than professionals. Poor coaching may result in athletes being unsure of the next steps of the pathway. It may also hinder the progress of talented athletes along the pathway as their talents have not been correctly identified by the under skilled coach. This presents another opportunity for OoS to provide strategic leadership around coach education, curriculum development and upskilling to increase the quality of coaching delivery across the pathway and improve long term talent pathway outcomes.
In summary, there are several ways OoS could provide strategic leadership to the NSW sports sector by:

► Advocating for greater use of State Sporting High Schools and universities
► Bringing system partners together for knowledge sharing opportunities
► Promoting more effective communication between system partners
► Upskilling coaches.

OoS’ strategic leadership in these areas is likely to positively influence talent pathway outcomes in the long time, including increasing the talent pool of elite NSW athletes.

3.3 Recommended role of OoS

As indicated, there is an opportunity for OoS to take on a strategic leadership role across talent pathways and the broader sports sector in NSW by adopting an influencing position for sports to utilise. Initiatives OoS may elect to implement include:

► Coordinating knowledge sharing and best practice implementation across system partners and across sports
► Promoting effective communication between system partners
► Develop and deliver a NSW High Performance Strategy
► Influencing and coaching to NSOs and SSOs on behalf of system partners
► Assist in upskilling coaches across all sports
► Undertake a sector capabilities and facilities audit.

Figure 13 illustrates how OoS could prioritise the initiatives listed above. Initiatives have been indicatively prioritised as:

1. Ongoing initiatives – policies and processes that are expected to implemented in the near future and require routine updates
2. Fixed term initiatives – policies and processes that have a defined completion date in which results can be realised
Each of the identified strategic leadership initiatives are discussed in detail below.
4. Key Recommendations

4.1 Coordinating knowledge sharing and best practice

OoS may choose to work with other system partners such as Sport NSW and the AIS to coordinate knowledge sharing across talent pathways and system partners. Examples of how OoS could do this include:

► Promoting greater connectivity between sports, such as through conferences or workshops

► Working with the AIS to develop online, user-friendly guides for implementing best practice talent pathways – this would allow OoS to capitalise on the lessons learned by the AIS in talent pathway development and implementation

► Work with system partners for example regional academies, clubs and associations, and State Sporting High Schools to identify and remove any duplication or inefficiencies in the talent pathway.

Coordinating knowledge sharing across sports allows sports of all capabilities and capacities to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of other sports. Increasing knowledge sharing may promote a collaborative approach to international competitions such as the Commonwealth and Olympic Games. Netball could be used as an example of robust sporting governance and pathway development with AFL serving as a great example of effective use of technology and player management. Coordinating knowledge sharing is likely to increase the implementation of best practice across sports.

OoS has a number of existing relationships with SSOs, as mentioned during consultations with SSOs. Due to these existing relationships, coordinating knowledge sharing across sports is an initiative that could likely be implemented with no additional financial or human resource investment by OoS. As such, this initiative has been indicatively prioritised as a quick win.

4.2 Promoting effective communication between system partners

OoS could also work with system partners to improve effective communication between system partners. OoS could connect Regional Academies of Sport and State Sporting High Schools and encourage them to see their offerings as complementary. This was an observation made by a principal from a leading sporting high school who was consulted as part of the process. Due to OoS’ relationships with both these system partners, OoS could facilitate quarterly discussions between the nominated system partners and implement a communication KPI or metrics for these system partners. Improved effective communication between these system partners is likely to improve the program offerings at Regional Academies of Sport and State Sporting High Schools. As well as providing clarity to other system partners, such as parents, that Regional Academies of Sport and State Sporting High Schools are not mutually exclusive. This offers a further example of how OoS could identify and minimise any duplication in talent pathways and reduce the likelihood of pre-elite athlete burnout.

Similarly, OoS could facilitate more effective communication between NSWIS and Regional Academies of Sport. This is likely to:

► Improve the offering at Regional Academies of Sport by providing a more detailed understanding of NSWIS and its programs

► Improve the athlete transition from Regional Academies of Sport to NSWIS by giving athletes at Regional Academies of Sport a greater understanding of what their responsibilities will be at NSIWS prior to them progressing to the state system.
Promoting effective communication between system partners is a relatively straightforward and cost-effective way that OoS could provide strategic leadership and improve the outcomes of talent pathways in the long term. OoS also has existing relationships with many system partners, as identified through consultations with system partners in Stage Three. As such, promoting effective communication between systems partners could likely be implemented without additional financial or human resources from OoS. The most costly and time-draining activities around relationship building have luckily been well established over time.

4.3 Influencing system partners for mutually beneficial outcomes

OoS is well-placed to take on a leadership role that may involve adopting a coaching and influencing position for the sport and relevant system partners. The majority of the stakeholders indicated that they would welcome support from the OoS in this capacity and believed that there were significant benefits to be realised by working more closely with the OoS and leveraging the independent and ‘arm’s length’ advice and experience they could provide.

It is clear that the sport is the ultimate ‘owner’ of its own talent pathway and is best placed to decide which key stakeholders are included in the pathway process and considered system partners however with the right degree of well-placed influencing by the OoS, sports may benefit from partnering with some groups they may not have immediately considered as potential system partners.

A practical example of where this influencing and coaching role could be beneficial to a number of parties and contribute to the more efficient delivery of high performance talent pathways involves assisting with the direct inclusion of all State Sporting High Schools into the talent pathways system, particularly in sports where the value of State Sporting High Schools has already been proven – for example rugby league, cricket, football and AFL.

One principal at a well-respected State Sporting High School advised that up until recently, there were no strategic partnerships with professional sports with the exception of the Cronulla Sharks. This partnership had been established via the schools head coach who also had a coaching role with the Sharks and so this was a case of leveraging a personal relationship rather than part of any overarching long term strategy.

The principal’s view was that there was a valuable role the OoS could play in assisting in bringing opportunities to the schools and linking them with the right elite sports. The school in question has had a good deal of success in partnering with elite sports teams including Sydney FC and use the clubs branding, coach, curriculum and IP to attract talented players however there was a feeling even greater outcomes could be achieved with more formal support from the OoS.

One of the biggest challenges facing the State Sporting High Schools was that people did not know what they do or how they could be best leveraged within the context of high performance talent pathways. These schools indicated that they needed to assistance of the OoS in order to ‘tell the story’ and where possible promote the benefits of the system from a sporting, academic and societal perspective. State Sporting High Schools are identifying children at around the age of 11 and keeping them with their school system for six years, ensuring the child obtains a balanced sport and academic experience. “The biggest barrier to success is the fact that there are barriers… people don’t know how good a pathway these schools provide” commented one principal.

Consultations with successful State Sporting High Schools revealed that their system of balancing sporting and academic needs, overlaying the talent pathway by aligning with professional teams is a story that the OoS could share.

Furthermore, the greater inclusion of Sporting High Schools can improve communication between the system partners of the high performance pathway and the school pathway at the same time. Currently these system partners are seen as conflicting due to the demands placed on young athletes in both pathways. Greater inclusion of Sporting High Schools can assist in monitoring athlete workload and allow system partners to devise an agreement to limit the amount of athlete participation. For example, the AFL is in discussions with schools to manage athlete scholarships (worth approximately $30,000) in order to have control of athlete participation in school championships. The OoS involvement in these strategic plans may result in:
More consistent program delivery across State Sporting High Schools

Potential increase in the talent pool as students are more motivated to join the sporting high schools that are openly endorsed by OoS

Greater publicity for State Sporting High Schools and their achievements

Economies of scale for State Sporting High Schools, for example – SSOs signing a single Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with all State Sporting High Schools rather than seven individual MOUs

Free up time for State Sporting High School staff to focus on education, rather than negotiations with professional sporting clubs and SSOs.

Minimising athlete burnout and risk of injury

The OoS is also well placed to work with Australian University Sports to advocate to both NSOs and SSOs for an increased role for universities in sport and talent pathways. The AIS 'My Sporting Journey Questionnaire' which surveyed 1000 athletes and sporting bodies revealed an interest from these parties in University sport strategies and initiatives. Both system partners and athletes identified a lack of strong competition opportunities for pre-elite athletes between 18 and 23 years old. Athletes at this age who are not identified for national senior selection often have no other competition opportunities outside of their local club. Subsequently, there is a high rate of athlete drop out in this age group. Working with NSOs, SSOs, and Australian University Sports to strengthen university sport competition pathways is likely to lower the rate of pre-elite athlete drop out. As well as providing another mechanism for late maturing athletes to be identified, developed and retained. Universities have a range of generally good quality sporting facilities that are largely underutilised. Offering universities a greater role in sport and talent pathways is likely to increase accessibility to these facilities. Increased accessibility to university facilities may partially address the current shortage of sporting facilities and reduce pressure on existing local government facilities as well as be seen as a positive use of public funded infrastructure within NSW. Furthermore, universities have a largely untapped student workforce, for example trainee physiotherapists, psychologists and exercise physiologists. Similarly to facilities, greater involvement of universities in sports could provide greater access to these relatively affordable and well trained human resources. Overall, OoS’ advocacy for a greater role for universities in sport and talent pathways is likely to result in greater access to university facilities and human resources.

This initiative likely requires financial and human resource investment from OoS. It may also be more effective once existing system partners in talent pathways are communicating better with each other. For these reasons, this initiative has been indicatively prioritised as a medium term objective.

4.4 Upskilling coaches across all sports

Coaches were consistently identified as the most important system partner in an athlete’s development regardless of what stage the athlete was at. However, several system partners also identified poor quality and inconsistent coaching as a threat to talent pathways. System partners particularly identified poor quality and inconsistent coaching at the transition between foundation and pre-elite stages of athlete development. OoS could work with sports to develop a range of core coaching principles, curriculum and resources that could be shared online in a user-friendly format. These coaching principles and resources would be made available to paid as well as volunteer coaches. In developing these core principles and online resources, OoS could assist in upskilling coaches in all sports and across all stages of the talent pathway. Upskilling coaches in all sports could allow sports with lower capability and capacity levels to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of more well-resourced sports such as tennis and swimming. Pathway outcomes may also be improved due to increased quality coaching.
Although each sport implements their own training and accreditation programs, there is benefit in publishing core principles and best practice knowledge. These resources will build on the existing ASC accreditation programs by including advanced coaching skills and knowledge from all sports. Providing these resources can help create greater consistency across the pathway with each coach having access to the same information. The OoS can influence sports to take a greater role in enforcing coaches to acknowledge these resources at each stage. This may be difficult for volunteer coaches at the foundation level, however sports can use these resources when volunteers register to become a coach. Sports can also implement mandatory learning and development days during the talent and elite stages to ensure coaches are regularly accessing and applying these principles.

The AIS has acknowledged that due to that athletes developing at different stages, coaches must be dynamic and use a multidimensional approach. Further studies confirm this belief by stating a coach’s effectiveness is achieved through a combination of professional knowledge, interpersonal knowledge and intrapersonal knowledge (Bergeron MF, et al. 2015, pg 7). Upskilling coaches to use a holistic approach can enable athletes to develop the mental skills required to be successful in the elite and mastery stages.

Upskilling coaches is a strategic leadership initiative that could have substantial impacts on the talent pathway. However this is likely to require significant additional financial and human resource investment from OoS. Extensive engagement with and cooperation from all sports would be required to develop the core coaching resources – this would likely be both cost and labour intensive. Additionally, this initiative requires a good deal of sport and system partner support. Due to the additional resources as well as sport and system partner support required this initiative has been indicatively prioritised as a medium term objective.

4.5 Undertake complete sector capabilities and facilities audit

System partners exhibited different capabilities across several areas. To understand this OoS could conduct a sector-wide capabilities audit, from SSOs down to local clubs. This capabilities audit would allow OoS to understand where capability gaps exist across the sector. Areas that OoS could examine include:

► Governance structure and transparency
► Financial management
► Pathway development
► Coach development and management
► Volunteer engagement and management.

Conducting a sector-wide capabilities audit would require significant planning, financial and human resources from OoS. Therefore, it is recommended that OoS consider conducting the capabilities audit in the next three to five years. This initiative may also provide OoS an opportunity to review and understand the impact of earlier initiatives, such as coordinating knowledge sharing and assisting in upskilling coaches.

Various issues with the facilities were also identified by all sports as outlined in Section 2.2.1.2 In particular:

► Netball NSW indicated that there is a lack of indoor facilities
► Swimming NSW indicated there is a lack of integrated facilities for high performance athletes, such as indoor 50 metre pools with physiotherapy and strength and conditioning services located onsite
► Hockey NSW indicated there is a lack of synthetic pitches in metropolitan Sydney

NSW Office of Sport
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Rowing NSW believed that there is difficulty accessing the Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC) due to other events at the site such as triathlon and open water swimming.

These sports not only identified a need for new facilities but also the development and improvement of ‘smart’ infrastructure. Swimming NSW voiced their concern that the existing swimming facilities had limited and in some cases no access to high performance facilities such as gyms, physio’s and nutritional experts. Colocation of these facilities can assist sports in implementing their pathway by creating an environment to support easy access to high performance needs of all system partners.

Furthermore, swimming also identified a lack of suitable infrastructure in regional areas. As a majority of well-equipped swimming facilities were located in Sydney, this forced regional athletes to travel from their home environments at a substantial financial cost. Improving regional facilities could allow athletes to stay in their home environment reducing the burden of travel time, financial costs and disruptions to their education.

OoS could conduct a facilities audit in parallel with the capabilities audit. This facilities audit could examine all facilities from grassroots (e.g. local netball courts and ovals) to elite stadia across NSW. The audit would examine the condition of facilities and their utilisation. This information would allow OoS to collaborate with other government bodies to:

► Prioritise upgrades to facilities or construction of additional facilities
► Ensure facilities are being put to the most appropriate use
► Identify and explore opportunities to partner with universities to reduce pressure on public facilities.

Similarly to the capabilities audit, the facilities audit will require extensive financial and human resource investment by OoS over a considerable period of time. Therefore, it is recommended that OoS consider this initiative in the long term.

In summary, it is recommended that OoS takes on a greater strategic leadership role across talent pathways and in the NSW sport sector. Four complementary potential strategic leadership initiatives for OoS have been identified. These initiatives have been indicatively prioritised, as shown in Figure 17. Appendix I provides a detailed implementation plan for OoS’ strategic leadership role.

4.6 Develop and deliver a NSW High Performance Strategy

The development of a specific high performance strategy will allow athletes and coaches to continually track and adjust their performance metrics in line with the established and agreed upon targets (NSWIS and AIS). Delivering a tailored strategy aimed at addressing the needs of NSW athletes can enhance an individual’s opportunity to progress through each stage ultimately arriving at the elite to mastery levels of the pathway. Key inputs for the development and delivery of the High Performance Strategy are expected to be drawn from national and international best practice. As this recommendation requires significant planning and consideration, and was out of scope for this project, the development of such a strategy would require a separate body of work.

Appendix A Detailed overview of the FTEM model

The FTEM model separates the talent identification and development process into four macro and 10 micro stages.
Foundation

Figure 14 summarises the foundation modules of the FTEM model. Please note that modules F1 and F2 are beyond the scope of this project.

As shown in Figure 18, the foundation modules of the FTEM model rely on both informal and formal skill development and exposure to a range of physical activities. Blending formal and informal skill development acknowledges the critical role that earlier movement experiences during infancy and preschool can have on holistic development. Acknowledging the development of basic movement skills as the building blocks for more complex motor skills is a key strength of the FTEM model and increases its adoptability by sports.

Talent (pre-elite)

Figure 15 summarises the talent modules of the FTEM model.

As shown in Figure 19, the talent modules of the FTEM model involves increasing levels of formal training and external support from coaches, sports psychologists and physiotherapists. A feature of the talent modules of the FTEM model is the lack of age or time boundaries for each module. Unlike other talent pathway modules, such as; Côté’s (1999) Developmental Model of Sports Participation, the FTEM model allows for late maturation athletes to enter the talent pathway and for multiple entry points to the pathway. The FTEM model also recognises the broad range of support required for elite athlete development, such as sports psychology and strength and conditioning.

Elite and mastery

Figure 16 summarises the elite and mastery modules of the FTEM model. Please note that the E2 and M modules are outside the scope of this project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite and Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>E1 – Senior elite</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• E1 athletes in Olympic sports are categorised by representing their country at senior international level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• E1 athletes in professional sports are playing at the highest level of competition (e.g. AFL or NRL)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Figure 20, transition between the elite and mastery modules requires sustained high performance success. Defining the key differences between the elite and mastery modules can be difficult due to the variety of activities performed by athletes at this level.
Appendix B  Operating environment of sports

Case Study 1 - Tennis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Basic Movement \nFoundations</td>
<td>Enhancement \nRefinement of Movement \nFoundations</td>
<td>Demonstration of Potential \nTalent \nVerification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E2</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>E3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Sports Operating Environment**

**The Athlete's Journey**

At this stage an athlete is participating in some competitions managed by Tennis NSW (TNSW) and may be identified for selection into Project Talent. If at any age it is working with a Talent Development Manager and is receiving training. The player is generally identified by their coach and their on court results. Once identified the player attends a camp (funded by TA) and have access to two coaching nights per week with TNSW.

At this stage an athlete aged between 9 and 12 is participating in Tennis Australia’s Project Talent. This program is delivered by Tennis Australia coaches who report to the NSW Coach and Talent Development Manager. The aim of the Project Talent program is to: Identify and develop the most promising under-12 players in Australia. Track the development of Australia’s most promising 12 and under athletes. Increasing awareness of Project Talent. Develop a passionate network of private coaches specializing in the 12 and under athletes. TNSW are in the process of appointing an Operational Manager to manage the day to day activities and administration including player information nights, court hire, sports science information sessions, educational services.

At this stage an athlete aged over 14 who has had their talent identified and verified will be selected into one of Tennis Australia’s National Academies in NSW, this is based in Sydney and the aim of the National Academies is to: Offer a comprehensive tennis training program to allow athletes to meet their full potential, with the ultimate vision of producing Grand Slam Champions. Offer free coaching and training, including skill development and planning support. Assign a coach to lead the athlete’s tennis development. Provide access to National Academy facilities. Provide educational planning and support. Provide strength and conditioning programs and testing. Provide sports science and sports medicine support. Provide access to professional team management via a Tour Coach and/or Team Manager while on official Tennis Australia tours. Provide access to subsidised flights while travelling on Tennis Australia’s International Tours Program and to domestic pro crowds. At the age of 12 and over, the player enters into an intensified training program via TA 2-3 times per week plus continuing with their own private coach.

At this stage an athlete is representing Australia in Davis/Fed Cup and competing at Grand Slam events and international ATP and WTA events.

**Staffing levels**

Tennis Australia recently went through an internal realignment of staffing. The high performance structure is now split into under and over 12 with a team and an academy program for each. There is also a Talent Development Manager for each state who is responsible for oversight of the talent pathways. Tennis Australia also employ five shared resources for players at the pro-level.

Tennis NSW employs approximately 20 staff. These staff are mainly responsible for facilities management and oversight of participation, clubs and competition programs. Tennis Australia play the major role in the development and high performance management / progress of the player once they progress to E1 all the way through to M1 with TNSW taking on the role of managing facilities, venues and competitions.

**Infrastructure**

The NSW high performance environment is delivered in Sydney, with the primary facility at Sydney Olympic park as well as multiple Tennis Australia approved facilities providing camps and competitions in support.

Pathway development is highly centralised with direction set and delivered by Tennis Australia. Tennis NSW acts more as an enabler of high performance development by:

- Providing facilities.
- Increasing grassroots participation.
- Increasing community engagement.
- Reporting to Tennis Australia.
- Identifying talent to feed into the Tennis Australia centralised model.

**Level of Funding**

The resources required for pathway and high performance development are beyond the capacity of Tennis NSW. For this reason, Tennis Australia takes a more significant role in player development earlier in the talent pathway compared to other sports. Tennis NSW are responsible for their own budget and provide some funding to regional areas.

Tennis Australia indicated that they have implemented the FTEM Model.

Tennis NSW is responsible for organisng competitions and facilitating participation that enable potential high performance athletes to be identified.

Tennis Australia is responsible for the majority of player development once a player is identified as having potential talent.

**Alignment with FTEM Model**

Out of Scope

Tennis Australia indicated that they have implemented the FTEM Model.

Tennis NSW is responsible for organisng competitions and facilitating participation that enable potential high performance athletes to be identified.

Tennis Australia is responsible for the majority of player development once a player is identified as having potential talent.

**Link between each stage**

Tennis Australia indicated that there are currently too many pathway offerings and it is unclear how these relate to each other (e.g. if you win a state tournament, what does this mean for your development/trajectory). The pathway progression needs to be more clearly communicated to parents and ultimately be acceptable to parents. Centralised model possibly isolates some stakeholders, particularly coaches. Talent identification is heavily reliant on tournaments and the Tennis Australia coaching network.

Tennis Australia does not have a bilateral relationship with the AIS. However, there is some funding exchange at a higher level. For example, Canberra has one of the best training facilities in the country, 32 courts managed by Next Generation (health club) but it is not aligned to the AIS.

NSWIS

Tennis Australia’s main interaction with NSWIS is through shared use of gym facilities.

Schools

Tennis NSW has no formal alliance with schools. The interface with schools is heavily based on relationships when a school request for Tennis NSW to review a player however the good players are generally ‘picked up’ and identified via the tournament system so very few are missed. The tournament system creates a reliable ‘safety net’ that does not miss players.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Sport Specific Commitments and / or competition</td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Extremal, Refinement of Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Demonstration of Potential</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Talent Verification</td>
<td>T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Practicing and Achieving</td>
<td>T4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Breakthrough &amp; Reward</td>
<td>E1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Senior National Representation</td>
<td>E2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Podium Success</td>
<td>M1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sustained Success at E2</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regional academies**

Regional academies receive some funding from Tennis NSW as some regional delegates are partnered with regional academies. This funding is loosely governed and there is a clear lack of structure and formula to the system. Tennis is less reliant on RA’s than other sports due to the well managed centralised system in place delivered by TA.

TNSW contributes funding to region’s across 7 locations (6 rural and 1 metro) with TNSW having a participation leader in each region. This is splintered as some align with the RA and others don’t.

Each region is offered a TA camp with some regions running a series of events (approx. 6) based on the funding they receive however the number of events and frequency is a region by region decision. The decision to run a particular event comes down the strength of the relationship.

**Universities**

Tennis Australia does not have an existing relationship with universities with regards to the athlete pathway structure. (Strong relationships are however in place for other initiatives e.g. coach development).

Pathway development is highly centralised with direction set and delivered by Tennis Australia. Tennis NSW acts more as an enabler of high performance development by:

- Providing facilities
- Increasing grassroots participation
- Increasing community engagement
- Reporting to Tennis Australia
- Identifying talent to feed into the Tennis Australia centralised model

**Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and physios)**

Tennis Australia and Tennis NSW have a close working relationship, with Tennis Australia more involved in high performance talent development than in other sports.

Tennis Australia indicated they would benefit from a knowledge sharing model facilitated by the NSW Office of Sport. In particular, this would focus on assistance with governance and operations management best practice.

**Interaction with NSO**

Tennis Australia and Tennis NSW have a close working relationship, with Tennis Australia more involved in high performance talent development than in other sports.
## Case Study 2 - Cycling

### Alignment with FTEM Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Out of Scope</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports Operating Environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Athlete's Journey</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level of funding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with FTEM Model</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alignment with FTEM Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Link between each stage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roles and Responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NSWIS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional academies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and policy)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### The Athlete's Journey

#### Cycles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>F3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
<td>International Refinement of Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Sport Specific Commitments and/or competition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Sports Operating Environment

There is high visibility of young athletes due to the relatively small size of the sport. Due to size, CyclingNSW hold regular state wide competitions. These competitions provide an opportunity to identify high performing athletes.

CyclingNSW is attempting to move away from only using race results to identify talent. The creation of the state development squad and increased role of the regional academies may facilitate this transition.

CyclingNSW has limited financial and human resources. As such they employ a part time Development Manager for ages 13 to 19 and leverage other resources like volunteers, regional academies and NSWIS.

#### Alignment with FTEM Model

CyclingNSW indicated that NSWIS facilitates a more coherent and cohesive talent pathway than they could provide alone.

CyclingNSW indicated they are deeply engaged with the regional academies and rely on the regional academies to provide an interim step for identified athletes between state wide competitions and NSWIS scholarships.

### Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and policy)

- There are a lot of parent-coaches.
- Cycling involves a lot of travel as competitions are always all the NSW or national level. Cycling relies on parents to provide all transport to and from these competitions.
- Equipment and travel costs are very high and are all paid by the parents.
- There is also a strong correlation between a parent competing at an elite level and a child competing at an elite level.
### Phases & Description

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extensional, Refinement of Movement Foundations</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>T2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Specific Commitments and / or competition</td>
<td>F3</td>
<td>T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of Potential</td>
<td>T4</td>
<td>Breakthrough &amp; Reward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talent Verification</td>
<td>Practicing and Achieving</td>
<td>Senior National Representation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Other

- Interaction with NGO

- Potential Role of the NSW Office Of Sport

  - NSW Office of Sport could act as a NSW version of the Australian Sports Commission. This could involve:
    - Actively and strategically work with sports to address their needs, recognising that each sport has different needs. However, the NSW Office of Sport has the capability to leverage best practice across all sports.
    - Provide a case management role to sports that may need extra assistance.
    - Ensure SSOs have an understanding and focus on the end goals and transitioning athletes to the elite level.

- Athlete Experience(s)

  CyclingNSW indicated that there is a lack of cohesion between NSWIS and the NSW Office of Sport and that is creating inefficient and uncoordinated operations. Or at least a perception that there is a lack of cohesion between NSWIS and the NSW Office of Sport.
## Case study 3 - Swimming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potentially to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Focus on encouraging participation and keeping kids involved in swimming. T1 involves 1-2 development days annually for 9-13 age groups.</td>
<td>Greater importance placed on the daily training environment. Creation of this environment is largely coach driven by club-level coaches. There may be a lot of movement between coaches at these levels due to &quot;grandstand effect&quot;. Many junior coaches are more focused on National Age Results than high performance. SwimmingNSW only has the resources to work with a small pool of coaches to impact on results.</td>
<td>Average age of an Olympian is 20-24 years so Tokyo Olympians are in the system now. Ideal high performance squad is 6-10 swimmers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sports Operating Environment

**The Athletes Journey**

- SwimmingNSW has 10 staff - 4 staff make up the talent pathway staff.
- There is a dwindling number of elite coaches due to: Facilities (25 v 50m pool) - Variable coaching skills - Current funding model does not invest in coaching skills development.

**Staffing levels**

- SwimmingNSW have a high performance committee, their focus is on: Maximising SwimmingNSW medal outcomes at all Australian Champs (open, age, mc, ozsw) - Overall the delivery of the SwimmingNSW Development Pathway and associated programs to ensure production and fostering of athletes who can produce high performance results for NSW and Australia.
- Oversee the delivery of SwimmingNSW Coach Development Framework and ensure education programs and support systems are in place for coaches to enable swimmers to deliver the best performance where it matters.
- Ensure SwimmingNSW has the most effective structure, people, resources and relationships to develop, lead and execute the High Performance Plan.
- Ensure the daily training environment and camps/tours offered by SwimmingNSW create and support sustainable performance.
- Ensure that SwimmingNSW offers competition pathways and opportunities to build experience and knowledge in technical, tactical and mental components of elite performance to prepare athletes to achieve podium performances.
- Use research and innovation to identify and gain a competitive advantage through knowledge, research and innovation.

**Infrastructure**

There is a lack of good quality high performance facilities (i.e. 50m pools with nearby access to gym, physio, nutrition, etc.). These facilities are typically all located in Sydney, forcing talented athletes out of the home environment. The facility owner is a critical stakeholder in the process as they manage the access to pools, gyms and in some cases professional services such as physio's. Coaches at private schools with swimming facilities can earn up to $120k per year.

**Systems & Processes**

SwimmingNSW receive $40,000 annually from the NSW Office of Sport and may get more through applications for direct grants. These grants are usually used as participation funding. SwimmingNSW may receive grant funding from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). Between $100,000 and $200,000 is received annually from Swimming Australia - a large portion of this is for participation.

**Level of funding**

SwimmingNSW and SwimmingNSW only has invested in high performance. This investment is linked to the Olympic cycle. The facility owner is a critical stakeholder in the process as they manage the access to pools, gyms and in some cases professional services such as physio's. Coaches at private schools with swimming facilities can earn up to $120k per year.

SwimmingNSW has the most effective structure, people, resources and relationships to develop, lead and execute the High Performance Plan. Oversee the delivery of SwimmingNSW Development Pathway and associated programs to ensure production and fostering of athletes who can produce high performance results for NSW and Australia.

SwimmingNSW offers competition pathways and opportunities to build experience and knowledge in technical, tactical and mental components of elite performance to prepare athletes to achieve podium performances.

### Alignment with FTEM Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>Focus on encouraging participation and keeping kids involved in swimming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>Greater importance placed on the daily training environment. Creation of this environment is largely coach driven by club-level coaches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>Ensuring the delivery of the SwimmingNSW Coach Development Framework and ensure education programs and support systems are in place for coaches to enable swimmers to deliver the best performance where it matters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Footnotes

### Phases & Description

#### Gaps
- The need for more highly trained coaches more widely spread that would greatly assist in getting the job done and allow the Regional Academies to focus on coach mentoring and help them improve their approaches rather than "snatch" the talent away from them. This approach secures more funding or why funding may be reduced.
- The level of support provided by NSWIS is determined by the number of AWE-identified athletes.
- There is a feeling that it is somewhat of a "Set and Forget" mentality.
- They could offer valuable strategic advice around how the funding could be secured and best spent for HP outcomes.

#### Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIS</th>
<th>NSWIS</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Regional Academies</th>
<th>Universities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Receives some funding from the AIS and NSWIS for identified athletes. Level of funding received is determined by the number of Australia's Winning Edge athletes.</td>
<td>SwimmingNSW has no formal relationships with the Regional Academies. The Regional Academies model does not really fit with the SwimmingNSW model. This is partially due to the additional cost of the Regional Academy training, where SwimmingNSW believes high performers should have free access to this. Further, involving the Regional Academies in the daily training environment can cause friction between club coaches and the Regional Academy coaches. Instead, SwimmingNSW will run free regional development squads for approx. three days each year. The regional development squad will be run by a coach of a higher standard than the usual club coach. Club coaches also attend regional development squads - providing an opportunity for coach mentoring and development. Each year there is a regional development program run by SNSW where a broad range of children are selected to attend with up to 30 clubs meeting at the one location for the training day. At these events SNSW will send a high quality coach to conduct some specialised training and information sessions with home coaches invited to attend.</td>
<td>There are a number of high performance coaches at private schools. These coaches have the potential to have a longer term impact on development of high performance athletes. However, it is not clear how this focus is usually on winning annual IGSSA/GPS/CAS competitions rather than long term development of high performance athletes.</td>
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<td>SwimmingNSW does not have existing formal relationships with universities. However, the swimming focus for each university is different. Many seek to balance highly profitable Learn to Swim programs with high performance programmes.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Role of the NSW Office Of Sport</th>
<th>Athlete Experience(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unknown what the new role of the office of sport is. SwimmingNSW currently have very little to do with the Office.</td>
<td>Mostly to have more highly trained coaches more widely spread that would greatly assist in getting the job done and allow the athletes to be trained in the most conducive environment possible. They should take the shape of being close to home, lots of lane space, the right support staff and taking the &quot;guilt&quot; out of the process as is the case in Qld.</td>
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<td>In an ideal situation, Office could be a partner that assist in the discussion with NSWIS and SNSW in respect of negotiating and securing more funding. There is a feeling that it is somewhat of a &quot;Set and Forget&quot; mentality. They could offer valuable strategic advice around how the funding could be secured and best spent for HP outcomes. If involved at this point, the Office could add important levels of transparency around how decisions are made that they would part of the decision process and would &quot;have a seat at the table&quot;.</td>
<td>There is a somewhat different between SwimmingNSW and SwimmingNSW with SwimmingNSW focusing more on high performance as around 85% of their funding is dedicated to high performance. SwimmingNSW have a greater focus on participation and building membership and this has been the message from many of the SSIs that they need greater financial support form SA to fund and develop the pathways at entry point (grass roots). New model is aimed at better connection between the NSD and SSDs and in the case of NSW, NSWIS with more money being invested in the talent pathway to go into coach mentoring, recruitment and development. This has been reflected in increased hires in these areas. The plan moving into Tokyo is to provide and to provide more high quality mentoring to the broadest possible group of coaches from now until the next Games.</td>
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### Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)

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### Elite

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<tr>
<td>Senior National Representation</td>
<td>Podium Success</td>
<td>Sustained Success at E2</td>
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**NSW Office of Sport**

**High Performance Talent Pathway – Final Report**
Case Study 4 - Hockey

**Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)**

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<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
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**Sports Operating Environment**

Hockey in NSW has the highest level of participation in Australia at 25% in front of Victoria at 10% so the sport is well developed in NSW and the state are seen as leaders with 30,000 registered players.

HockeyNSW’s Centre of Development (COD) program is less focused on high performance and targeted at players of varying skill levels. This program is aimed at under its through to under 15s and serves as a talent identification opportunity and provides selection opportunity for players into the under 13 and under 15 NSW teams. Under the COD players are provided 21 hours of coaching in the ‘off season’ from HockeyNSW coaches at their local club.

This program is focused on providing high quality coaching in the ‘off season’ within the players local region in order to reduce travel time and costs.

**The Athletes Journey**

HockeyNSW employs a Coach Development Consultant who is responsible for:
- Coach pathway upskilling and accreditation
- HockeyNSW also employ a Pathways Manager who is responsible for:
  - AAP and COD program design
  - HockeyNSW and HockeyAustralia high performance synergy
  - Athlete and coaching team performance
  - Regional Coaching Coordinators program
  - AAP and COD implementation
  - Regional Academy of Sport consult
  - Athlete monitoring via PFP

HockeyNSW employ nine regional coaching coordinators who administer the COD and AAP in their area and provide a link between the local community and school hockey competitions. Regional coaching coordinators report directly to HockeyNSW’s director of coaching. Four key responsibilities of the regional coaching coordinators are outlined below:

1. Recruitment - Major focus is on recruitment and retention, increasing participation and membership. Linking primary school to Associations/Clubs encouraging trials and converting participants into lifelong lovers of hockey.
2. HockeyNSW Activity - implementation of and reporting on all HockeyNSW programs. Conducting benchmark COD and AAP sessions. Delivering individuals Player Plans for all attendees. Engaging local coaches to assist with the above. Selecting and coaching State Teams if selected.
3. Coach Development - create a pool of coaches in regions that can be called upon to assist in the delivery of coaching programs. Coordinating and executing Level 1 Coaching Courses and identify individuals suitable for attendance of Regional Level 2 and State Level 3 Coaching Accreditation. Assist Association and Club Coaches with State Championship Teams where time permits.
4. Umpire and Official Consult - acts as a conduit for the delivery of Level 1 Umpire and Officials courses in collaboration with Associations. Contact the HockeyNSW Competitions and Officials Manager to organise presentations.

**Infrastructure**

HockeyNSW indicated that there are not enough synthetic pitches in metropolitan Sydney. There are approx. 14 synthetic pitches in metropolitan Sydney and over 50 synthetic pitches in regional NSW. HockeyNSW conducted a facilities audit and is currently developing a long-term plan to assist facility owners develop business causes to manage and maintain their venue and keep them up to the right standard.

HockeyNSW’s Athlete Acceleration Program (AAP) is aimed at talented athletes between the age of 16 and 18. This is traditionally where the highest attrition rate occurs and it is crucial to an athlete’s progress. The AAP provides six hours of coaching from a HockeyNSW employed coach per week and eight, eight hour days at Sydney Olympic Park over an 11 month period.

There are typically 150 athletes across both genders in the AAP.

The AAP model is centred on keeping young high performance athletes in their home environments (e.g. regional areas) for as long as possible and maintain motivation.

From the 150 athletes in the AAP, HockeyNSW and HockeyAustralia will select between 10 and 15 as ‘future’ for inclusion in HockeyAustralia programs and possible future selection into senior national teams.

**Staffing levels**

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**Alignment with FTEM Model**

HockeyNSW view the FTEM model as more about the HockeyNSW talent pathway. HockeyNSW indicated that they adhere “in principle” to the FTEM model through programs like, Hook in to HockeyNSW and HockeyAustralia, unlike the Tier 1 sports hockey operates a bottom up funding model.

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**Roles and Responsibilities**

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<tr>
<td>Regional academies</td>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and physios)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Interaction with NSO</td>
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### NSW Office of Sport

90% of young players come from the regions not cities. Hockey is a highly regionalised sport in NSW with very firm foundations across the regions. In terms of facilities there are over 50 synthetic surfaces in regional areas compared with just 14 in Greater Sydney. This is both a problem and an opportunity with less than 10% of players coming from the Sydney area. 16 RA’s in NSW have been reduced to 27 and these academies work hard to deliver and sustain the sport and are considered by HNSW as one of their key stakeholders that must work closely with to continue to feed the HP talent pathway funnel.

There are currently 9 Regional Coaching Coordinators operating throughout NSW linking the school system and local communities aimed at growing participation in each region.

HockeyNSW feel they have a close working relationship with the regional academies. The regional academies provide another option for players that were not selected for the AAP. If these players perform well at State Championships, they may be invited to participate in the AAP. The RA academy system is considered “Pre Elite” with the regional coordinators attending the RA’s to create a “safety net” to catch athletes who may have been missed.

The RA’s allow for multiple entry levels for late developers (Hockey maturation point is later than many sports, similar to rowing) however there is still only one entry point for Hockey Australia.

Universities select high performance players that have already been identified as a “future”. These athletes are likely to already be engaged in an NSWIS program.

HockeyNSW develop a lot of parent communications and try to constructively engage with parents at all points of the FTEM model.

Players who progress through FTEM beyond T4 are managed by Hockey Australia.

There are some concerns for athletes who have not been selected by the age of 16 - 22 (those who don’t get recognised or were missed at program entry level).
Case Study 5 - Cricket

Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)  

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Alignment with FTEM Model  

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Crickets NSW have a highly resourced high performance department, including:  
- 3 full time equivalent (FTE) coaches for the NSW Breakers  
- Sports science staff  
- Physiotherapy staff  
- Umpiring staff  
- Other coaching staff.

Gap  

- Crickets NSW indicated they have not been the fastest adopters of sport science but now have a highly skilled team in place. Prior to 16 years all section for development/high performance is based on gameplay.
### Roles and Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AIS</th>
<th>CricketNSW does not have any formal relationship with the AIS. However, there is a good level of knowledge sharing around experience with the FTEM model and general high performance matters.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSWIS</td>
<td>CricketNSW does not have a relationship with NSWIS as they fall outside the Australia’s Winning Edge strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>CricketNSW has some Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) in place with selected sporting high schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional academies</td>
<td>CricketNSW does not have a lot of engagement with regional academies. This is largely due to:</td>
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<td>- The regional academies somewhat compete against the cricket specific zone academies operated by CricketNSW</td>
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<td>- Their previous involvement with regional academies has been disappointing and there is a lot of variability across regional academy operations</td>
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<td>Ultimately, CricketNSW has enough resourcing in regional areas to deliver their coaching and programs. CricketNSW indicated they would be willing to engage more with regional academies if the academies offered more of a service provision model (e.g. providing access to physios or other support to regional players through the academies).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universities</td>
<td>CricketNSW does not have any formal relationships with universities. However, universities are generally willing to provide support to high performance athletes during their studies. There is also some partnering with universities in research and development. However, this is usually university-led (i.e. universities seek to investigate a topic and CricketNSW supplies the athletes).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and physios)</td>
<td>Parents - CricketNSW view the parents as a partner and key decision maker in the high performance journey.</td>
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<td>- Player Development Manager - work with players at key points on the high performance pathway (e.g. providing support to players moving to Sydney to play first class cricket)</td>
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<td>- Coaching staff - engagement with parents, players and CricketNSW. CricketNSW is highly involved in player management of high performance athletes through to the club level (e.g. to ensure young pace bowlers get enough rest NSW coach or physio calls the club coaches). CricketNSW’s High Performance Manager and his coaching staff watch club games to continue a good working relationship with clubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>CricketNSW has a good relationship with CricketAustralia and supply many elite athletes to the Australian cricket team.</td>
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<td>- 52% of males in the Australian team are from NSW</td>
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<td>- 38% of females in the Australian team are from NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interaction with NSO</td>
<td>CricketNSW receives funding from Cricket Australia. With the increase in pathway teams, this funding is being stretched to effectively and appropriately cover the high performance pathway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential Role of the NSW Office Of Sport</td>
<td>CricketNSW does not have a relationship with the NSW Office of Sport in high performance. There is some connection at the CEO/executive level. CricketNSW indicated they are open to improving their relationship with the NSW Office of Sport. The NSW Office of Sport could offer the following:</td>
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<td>- Bringing high performance coaches together from different sports to share their experiences and knowledge</td>
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<td>- Leadership for high performance courses</td>
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<td>- Research opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Athlete Experience(s)</td>
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The Athletes Journey
Rowing NSW runs the sport by delivering regattas, services and other events. The state development officers communicate with school and club coaches to strengthen the link between clubs and schools. More than any other sport reviewed, the school system is critical in feeding the talent pathway all the way through to E&M. Rowing NSW is currently lacking a talent coordinator, they are seeking to fill this role. However, this is made challenging as the highly qualified coaches at clubs can perform the talent identification role. Rather, the coordination aspect is this missing.

Stakes & Processes
Rowing NSW provides coach development and facilitate participation through regattas. Rowing NSW also provides linkages between schools and clubs in order to provide more competition and training opportunities for potential high performers.

Rowing NSW has established a joint operational group including:
- The four big rowing clubs (Sydney University, UTS and Mosman)
- Rowing NSW representatives
- NSWIS representatives
- Rowing Australia representatives.

This group meets quarterly to:
- Identify what is needed to improve the quality and quantity of athletes progressing to NTCs, including performance targets for F3 to F4 with Sydney University, Mosman, UTS, WRAS, school pathways and components of the NSW pathway program.
- Develop tailored service/development plans for centralised activities, Sydney University, Mosman, UTS, WRRAS and school pathways to maximise available resources to close performance gaps.

Rowing NSW actively communicates with competitive athletes - coaches and talent coordinators - through schools draft and talent identification through school pathways.

Rowing Australia provides funding for athletes at the National Training Centres and to the NSW pathway program.

RowingNSW indicated that they are currently unclear on what the NSW Office of Sport’s role is between good young athletes and high level of communication directly and at races. There is a lack of good regatta infrastructure. The Sydney facility is world class but can be difficult to access.

Link between each stage
RowingNSW feels they are currently employing best practice in relation to the FTEM pathway and that it has been implemented at most clubs and fully leveraged in particular across the 4 big clubs being delivered by the top coaches who operate out of these 4 key clubs. Best practice is being implemented elsewhere:
- Employment of professional coaches.
- NSW development officer is highly experienced and qualified.
- NSWIS rowing program team.

While RNSW do use the FTEM model, it is more of a subconscious usage as there is occasional disconnect in the language used and club level KPIs may not support RowingNSW or RowingAustralia objectives.

Gaps
RowingNSW’s current interaction with the NSW Office of Sport is through various and ad-hoc management (i.e. Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC)). RowingNSW indicated that this process is currently costly and difficult to manage, as well as feeling that rowing is not being made a priority.

RowingNSW indicated that they are currently unclear on what the NSW Office of Sport’s role is and what contribution RowingNSW is expected to make towards achieving the NSW Office of Sport’s objectives. A beneficial role for the NSW Office of Sport from RowingNSW’s perspective would be to:
- Provide coaching and knowledge sharing across sports, including the General Principles of Coaching.
- Provide networking opportunities across sports.
- Provide some incentives for manufacturers to continue innovate or to partner with research institutes.

Case Study 6 - Rowing

High Performance Talent Pathway – Final Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
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<td><strong>External, Retirement movement foundations</strong></td>
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### Roles and Responsibilities

**AIS**
RowingNSW does not have a formal relationship with the AIS. However, there appears to be a good level of knowledge sharing and engagement with RowingAustralia.

**NSWIS**
NSWIS provides funding and support to those athletes nationally categorised as Emerging, Developing, Podium Potential and National Team Para.

**Schools**
Schools play a significant role across the pre-elite stage of the high performance pathway. RowingNSW generally has good relationships with the high performing schools. However, a change in school leadership may create a change in the relationship with RowingNSW.

**Regional Academies**

**Universities**
RowingNSW engages with the university-based clubs (i.e. Sydney Uni and UTS) and relies on these clubs to provide development along the FTEM model up to the T4/E1 tipping point.
RowingNSW indicated that there is some disconnect between club KPIs and RowingNSW/RowingAustralia KPIs.

**Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and welfare)**
There is an extensive role for sports science and sports medicine throughout the talent pathway in rowing, particularly biomechanics.

**Other**

**Interaction with NSO**
RowingNSW and RowingAustralia appear to have a good working relationship with clearly delineated responsibility across the talent pathway.

**Potential Role of the NSW Office Of Sport**
RowingNSW's current interaction with the NSW Office of Sport is through venues and facilities management (i.e. Sydney International Regatta Centre (SIRC)). RowingNSW indicated that this process is currently costly and difficult to manage, as well as having that rowing is not being made a priority.
RowingNSW indicated that they are currently unclear on what the NSW Office of Sport's role is and what contribution RowingNSW is expected to make towards achieving the NSW Office of Sport's objectives. A beneficial role for the NSW Office of Sport from RowingNSW's perspective would be to:
- Provide coach education and knowledge sharing across sports, including the General Principles of Coaching
- Provide networking opportunities across sports
- Provide some incentives for manufacturers to continue innovate or to partner with research institutes

**Athlete Experience(s)**

- With the athlete lifecycle for rowing having a long maturation point, it often takes years to develop to the elite and mastery levels. Most athletes spend a good deal of time in each of the FTEM modules. After the age of 21, athletes face the additional challenge of a lack of competitive regular high standard domestic competition. This gap supports the case for the development of high standard, well run regattas to be held on a regular basis in order to ensure there is enough competition time on the water.
## Case Study 7 - Sailing

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### Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)
- This stage largely relates to involvement at the club level (e.g. learning to sail, some junior competitions).
- Sailing recently merged to one national body with a similar organisational structure to "Tennis Australia". The aim of the restructure is to improve the ability of the organisation to influence and improve the development of high performance athletes. Under the new organisational structure, all grassroots and participation activities delivered through clubs are the responsibility of the General Manager of Clubs.
- Services and all talent development activities are the responsibility of the Performance Director. The Performance Director is supported by a Performance Program Manager, Personal Excellence Program Manager, and the AIS Talent Manager.
- The management and progression of athletes along the talent pathway in NSW is highly dependent on NSWIS support. During the Rio Olympic cycle, NSWIS were uninvolved in sailing and this resulted in a lower proportion of NSW Olympians in Sailing at Rio.

### Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)
- In general, there is a lack of human and financial resources to support the pathway. This has led to limited adoption of the FTEM model.
- Most facilities are held by clubs. There is an estimated $1 billion worth of infrastructure held by sailing clubs around Australia. For example:
  - Launch ramps
  - Cranes
  - Yacht clubs
- Australian Sailing has 18 Sub-States partnerships in each State, the National Training Centre (NTC) is based in Sydney at Middle Harbour Yacht Club. The NTC operates on Fly in Fly Out (FIFO) model for training days and camps.
- Unlike most other sports, sailing does not have minimum requirements for competing at State or National Championships. If you sail in a class that is offered at State or Nationals you can enter.

### Elite
- The NTC operates $16 million a year.
- The AIS offers full pathway support for the next generation of high performance athletes.
- The majority of the $16 million is covered by the AIS via a contract with Australian Sailing.
- Australian Sailing's major line item is the $7.5 million they receive from the AIS under the Australian Sailing's Winning Edge (AWE) strategy.
- The remainder of Australian Sailing's funding comes from clubs through registration and membership fees.

### Performance Pathway
- Australian Sailing has established the following gaps in their talent pathway:
  - Sports science criteria to assist in the development of high performance athletes - "competitive sailing is like running a marathon while playing chess".
  - Conversion of high performance juniors (e.g. competing at Youth Olympics or World Champs) to Olympians.
  - There is inconsistency at the F3 and T1 stages. This is largely due to a lack of resources, varying quality and delivery of coaching, lack of understanding or knowledge as to what is required to develop athletes. Generally, this stage is uncoordinated.
  - Australian Sailing have only recently employed a Development Manager.

### Roles and Responsibilities
- AIS
  - Provide funding
  - Support athletes
  - Liaise with NSWIS
- NSWIS
  - Provide funding
  - Support athletes
  - Liaise with AIS
- Schools
  - Provide facilities
  - Support athletes
- Regional academies
  - Provide coaching
  - Support athletes
- Universities
  - Provide education
  - Support athletes
- Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and physios)
  - Provide support
  - Support athletes

### Sustainable Success at E2
- Australian Sailing is currently the major funding body for sailing in NSW. This is due to Australian Sailing's lack of resources.
- Australian Sailing is the only national body with a focus on high performance sailing.
- Australian Sailing has no need to use the NSWIS gym. A re-establishment of relationships with NSWIS for the Tokyo cycle has been more productive and NSWIS are now focusing on getting necessary services (e.g. strength and conditioning and sports medicine) out to the athletes.

### Out of Scope
- Australian Sailing do not currently use the FTEM model. They are in the process of mapping their high performance pathway against the FTEM model. The current progression to high performance is age-based and based on the progression between different craft. This is somewhat due to the late maturation of high performance athletes in sailing and the relative longevity of competition at the elite/master level.

### Final Report
- Australia's Winning Edge (AWE) strategy funding arrangements.
- "competitive sailing is like running a marathon while playing chess".
### Phases & Description

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### Other

- Potential Role of the NSW Office Of Sport

Australian Sailing's new model is very similar to TennisAustralia in that it is highly centralised. The NSW arm of Australian Sailing largely enable the growth of high performance athletes by arranging competitions etc.

Currently Australian Sailing receives some funding from the NSW Office of Sport. The amount of funding received by sailing in NSW is the lowest across Australia by all measures (e.g. per capita, dollar terms) this funding has not increased since the 1990s, despite the historically good performance of NSW athletes in sailing.

Australian Sailing indicated that there appears to be a lot of internal confusion at the Office of Sport that is being reflected externally to stakeholders. As a result, Australian Sailing are unsure who are the most appropriate people in the organisation to engage with - even for day to day matters (e.g. child protection and member insurance).

NSW Office of Sport could provide greater oversight of the regional academies to increase consistency and facilitate greater engagement between the regional academies and sports. NSW Office of Sport could also offer more of a case management approach to assist sports with issues around governance and management. In the short term there is a need for the NSW Office of Sport to clarify their position to stakeholders.
## Case Study 8 - Netball

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<td>- A general manager of high performance</td>
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<td>- A full-time high coach for the NSW Swifts and Giants Netball</td>
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<td>- Contracted assistant coaches for the NSW Swifts and Giants Netball</td>
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<td>- Contractor physios, strength and conditioning coaches</td>
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<td>Netball NSW indicated that their pathway is well resourced and does not operate a user-pays model</td>
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<td>Netball NSW indicated that there is a shortage of indoor facilities as asphalt courts are not suitable for high performance. This shortage is worse in regional areas.</td>
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<td>Netball NSW rely heavily on their existing competition pathways to refer athletes along the pathway through:</td>
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<td>Netball NSW receives the lowest level of funding per capita for netball in Australia</td>
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<td>Netball NSW use a Netball Australia adapted version of the FTEM Model. However, they do not use this terminology to describe their talent pathway.</td>
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<td>In particular, their pathway is well aligned with the coach development aspects of the FTEM model.</td>
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<td>Each stage of the FTEM pathway is delineated through clear competition-based benchmarks. Netball NSW and Netball Australia rely heavily on their strong existing competition pathways to refer talent through the pathway.</td>
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<td>Netball NSW indicated that they lack the ability to monitor athlete development over time before the T3/T4 stages. This includes monitoring:</td>
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<td>Relationship with the AIS is managed at the NSO level.</td>
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<td>NSWIS provides tailored support to players identified through the national championships (e.g. U17s or U19s national championships). Support provided by NSWIS may include: Strength and conditioning - Sports psychology - Nutrition - Physiotherapy.</td>
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<td>Relationship with NSWIS is a tripartate one including: NSWIS, Netball NSW and Netball Australia.</td>
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<td>Netball NSW have extremely strong relationships with the regional academies. Netball NSW have invested heavily in their relationships with the regional academies through financial and in-kind support.</td>
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<td>Netball NSW indicated that without their relationships with the regional academies they would not be able to deliver the existing volume of regional programs at the same quality. Netball NSW have super-imposed their pathway model into the regional academies.</td>
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<td>Netball NSW has no relationships with universities around research or player development. Instead they provide some work experience opportunities to university students from selected institutes (e.g. Australian College of Physical Education (ACPE)).</td>
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<td>Netball NSW has a strong relationship with Netball Australia and deliver coaching programs on behalf of Netball Australia. The handover of athlete responsibility is at the E1 level with Netball NSW being responsible for all stages of the talent pathway from grassroots through to T4.</td>
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### Potential Role of the NSW Office of Sport

Netball NSW indicated that there is a potential role for the NSW Office of Sport in:

- Advocating for more government funding in NSW for all sports
- Offering learning and coach development opportunities (e.g., running elite coaches conferences and knowledge sharing)
- Ensuring that there is sufficient sports infrastructure to meet population projections
- Encouraging lifelong participation in sport

### Athlete Experience(s)

Opportunities

- Opportunity to consider more of the complete athlete through greater use of sports psychology and to create more opportunities for late maturing athletes.
## Appendix C  Consultations undertaken

Table 8: Consultations undertaken

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# Appendix D  Project management and stakeholder engagement plan

## Key tasks and timing

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Preliminary review discussion guide

This discussion guide represents the key issues that will be discussed in consultations with various stakeholders in key areas of responsibility from the 8 sports selected for review. This should serve as a guide for the discussion that encourages free flowing two way communication.

We will share the FTEM model with the respondent. Consultations will be approximately 60 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas for discussion with each sport</th>
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</table>
| 1. Describe your current operating environment in respect of;  
  ► The athletes journey from the module F3 through to E1 of the FTEM model  
  ► Staffing levels and key functions across the sport  
  ► Level of funding from government agencies state & federal, ASC, NSOs, SSAs, commercial partners  
  ► Infrastructure (i.e. facilities & equipment)  
  ► Systems & processes required to support the HP function (i.e. I.T., communication, Innovation, learning and development)  
  ► Para sport HP talent pathway |
| 2. Current state /status of HP talent pathways in your sport  
  ► How does your sport currently manage the HP journey for athletes from an early age through to elite level?  
  ► Does your sport utilise any international 'best practice' models in the delivery of HP, if so, what are they?  
  ► How long has your current HP model / approach been in place and how often is it reviewed, how is it reviewed? |
| 3. Key roles and responsibilities of stakeholders (within and outside) of sport  
  ► Who are the main players within your HP program and what are their roles?  
  ► What do you see the role of the parent / guardian in the HP journey of the athlete being?  
  ► Are there any roles / functions that are currently not being met and if so why not?  
  ► Describe the athletes support requirements on-field and off-field (i.e. coaching, sports science, personal excellence) |
| 4. Understanding of the FTEM Model and the level of application for your sport  
  ► How closely does your sport adhere to the FTEM model in particular across the TALENT module?  
  ► How cohesive is the link between each of these stages and do they link well together?  
  ► What are the most critical stages in the FTEM model and why?  
  ► Are there any gaps in the process, if so where and why do these gaps or failures in the system emerge?  
  ► How are these gaps / shortfalls being managed? |
| 5. Outside of the state / national HP centre what other institutions are involved in the development, implementation and ongoing delivery of HP talent pathway  
  What roles do the following play in the delivery of the HP program;  
  ► AIS  
  ► NSWIS  
  ► Schools  
  ► Universities  
  ► Regional academies. |
| 6. What is the interface between the NSO and SSO over the HP talent pathway lifecycle?  
  Which SSO in your system is operating most effectively to deliver the best HP talent pathway? Explain why and how? |
| 7. What do you think the role of the Office of Sport NSW is across the HP talent pathway process? What could it be? |
| 8. Challenges / opportunities facing the sport in respect of meeting its agreed HP outcomes into the future |
| 9. Untapped opportunities, new ways of doing things and / or efficiencies |
Methodology

Our approach to the Project has involved four stages:

3. Project Management Plan

4. Preliminary review of eight nominated sports (first round of consultations)

5. Detailed review and findings including second round of consultation

6. High Performance Talent Pathways Implementation Plan
The methodology is qualitative in nature and reflects the views and perceptions of those active in the sector across the industry. The focus is on how well the high performance pathway (through the FTEM model) is being executed. Inevitably the feedback when undertaking such an exercise across a wide range of sports and down the entire pathway is quite diverse and in some cases inconsistent. We have therefore focussed on drawing out the key themes of that feedback and ensuring wherever possible it was well-supported by examples that highlighted those themes and the research we have undertaken. Our work does not seek to question whether that program is fit for purpose or appropriate in all circumstances, although in some cases some of the feedback received went to related issues rather than execution issues *per se*.

This report brings together the findings from Stage One to Three of the Project.
Appendix E  Roles and responsibilities maps by sport

Figure 21: Cricket roles and responsibilities map

Key System Partners in FTEM Talent Identification & Development Pathway - Cricket

Individuals
- Parents
- Club Coach
- Development Coaches
- Performance Services
- Senior/National Coaches

Organisations
- Cricket NSW
- Cricket Aust
- Clubs
- Local associations
- Schools
- Sports High Schools
- Private Schools
- Regional Academies of Sport
- CNSW Zone academies
- CNSW Overage academies
- Senior NSW Representation
- Senior Australian Representation

Legend:
- Supportive Role
- Key Role
Figure 22: Cycling NSW roles and responsibilities map

Key System Partners in FTEM Talent Identification & Development Pathway - Cycling

**Individuals**
- Parents
- Club Coach
- Development Coaches
- Performance Services
- Senior/National Coaches

**Organisations**
- Cycling NSW
- Cycling Aust
- Clubs
- Schools
- Associations
  - Sports High Schools: N/A
  - Private Schools: N/A
- Regional Academies of Sport
- NSWIS
- Cycling Aust High Performance Unit
- Professional Road Cycling Teams

Legend:
- Supportive Role
- Key Role
Figure 23: Hockey NSW roles and responsibilities map
Figure 24: Netball roles and responsibilities
Figure 25: Rowing roles and responsibilities

Key System Partners in FTEM Talent Identification & Development Pathway - Rowing

Individuals
- Parents
- Club Coach
- Development Coaches
- Performance Services
- Senior/National Coaches

Organisations
- Rowing NSW
- Rowing Aust
- Clubs
- Schools
  - Sports High Schools: N/A
  - Private Schools
  - Regional Academies of Sport
- Under 21 and Under 23 National teams
- NSWIS
- Senior National team
Figure 26: Sailing roles and responsibilities

Key System Partners in FTEM Talent Identification & Development Pathway - Sailing

**Individuals**
- Parents
- Club Coach
- Development Coaches
- Performance Services
- Senior/National Coaches

**Organisations**
- Australian Sailing
- Clubs
- Schools
- State Sailing Performance Programs
- Sports High Schools
- Private Schools
- Regional Academies of Sport
- NSWIS

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**Legend:**
- Supportive Role
- Key Role
Figure 27: Swimming roles and responsibilities

Key System Partners in FTEM Talent Identification & Development Pathway - Swimming

Individuals
- Parents
- Club Coach
- Development Coaches
- Performance Services
- Senior/National Coaches

Organisations
- Swimming NSW
- Swimming Aust
- Clubs
- Regional Squads
- State Squad
- Schools
- Sports High Schools
- Private Schools
- Regional Academies of Sport
- NSWIS
- Australian Youth Team
- Australian Dolphins

Legend:
- Supportive Role
- Key Role

N/A
Figure 28: Tennis roles and responsibilities

Key System Partners in FTEM Talent Identification & Development Pathway - Tennis

**Individuals**
- Parents
- Personal Coach
- Tennis Aust Coaches
- Performance Services
- Professional Coach

**Organisations**
- Tennis NSW
- Tennis Aust
- Schools
- Sports High Schools
- Private Schools
- Regional Academies of Sport
- Country delegates
- ATP/WTA tour
- Top 20 World Ranking

**Legend:**
- Supportive Role
- Key Role
## Appendix F  Best practice case studies

### Case Study 1 - AFL

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<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
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<th>F2</th>
<th>F3</th>
<th>E1</th>
<th>T1</th>
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<th>M1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Movement</td>
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<td>Consistent with the FTEM, Athletes can be selected into the talent pathway at any stage. Involvement in prior stages (i.e. U14) is not a prerequisite for inclusion in subsequent stages (i.e. U16 or U18).</td>
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<td>U14 Championships</td>
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<td>Extensional,</td>
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<td>The AFL Regional Development Squads develop players in preparation for representing their state in the U14 Championship. This provides further opportunity for coaches and talent scouts to assess future potential of athletes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refinement</td>
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<td>U16-U18 State Academies</td>
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<td>Movement</td>
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<td>The AFL have established State Academies with the aim of providing talented players with a pathway. The State Academy program is designed to provide an elite football environment that focuses on individual player development. It is centred on the development of the person and their ability to contribute in a team environment.</td>
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<td>Commitments and /</td>
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<td>The Academies are generally divided into separate but closely aligned programs. The U16s State Academy acts as the initial introduction to a state based elite football program. The U18s State Academy is the next phase of the Academy journey. The Academy programs are designed around finding those talented young players who demonstrate or may develop the distinct attributes required to progress into State senior football and/or AFL football. Academy staff work in close partnership with State clubs to develop individual players within a team context. Involvement in the Academy program does not automatically include participation in the NAB National Championships.</td>
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<td>or competition</td>
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<td>Club Branded Academies</td>
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<td>To improve the talent pool for NSW and QLD, an academy was established for all four clubs in these states. The Academy system is designed to promote AFL in non-traditional football states and to develop a higher standard of player for both local leagues and at the elite level. The Sydney Swans affiliated academy was established in 2010. The Academy involves approximately 550 athletes (aged between 11 and 19), who participate in an elite development program, utilising approximately 60 coaches.</td>
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<td>Victoria - Multi-cultural</td>
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<td>A new initiative to be implemented by AFL over the coming years is Club Branded Academies for Victorian Clubs. The aim of these academies is to attract junior participants with diverse backgrounds. The academies to invest in specific regions to attract youngsters from diverse backgrounds and indigenous heritage to play AFL and develop elite talent within those areas.</td>
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<td>U16-18 State Championships</td>
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<td>AFL Draft Combine</td>
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<td>The transition from T3 to T4 / E1 for players on the Talent Pathway is supported by the draft combine. The combine is a Pivotal part of the talent identification process and provides an opportunity for nationally identified potential talent to demonstrate their aptitude of elite level to all 18 AFL teams. The combine focuses on identifying key high performance attributes (mental, skills and athleticism) of success to putting players through a series of established physical, medical, psychological, psychomotor tests.</td>
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<td>In total, approximately 200 U18 athletes will participate in the combine. In addition to skills and traditional medical testing, the AFL includes detailed psychometric testing in their assessment of athletes. These tests include:</td>
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<td>► 15FQ+ - a comprehensive personality assessment</td>
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<td>► VMI - assesses a players interpersonal values (approach to relationships), extrinsic factors (workplace behaviour), and intrinsic could (capacity to manage everyday problems)</td>
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<td>► The majority of future AFL players will be identified via this talent pool. National Draft</td>
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<td>The national draft is the only way in which players can become AFL players. The National draft operates as the key gateway between T4 and E1. However,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phases &amp; Description</td>
<td>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</td>
<td>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</td>
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<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Extensional, Retriment of Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Sport Specific Commitments and / or competition</td>
<td>Demonstration of Potential</td>
<td>Talent Verification</td>
<td>Practicing and Achieving</td>
<td>Breakthrough &amp; Reward</td>
<td>Senior National Representation</td>
<td>Podium Success</td>
<td>Sustained Success at E2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundations</td>
<td>Movement Foundations</td>
<td>/ or competition</td>
<td>Potential</td>
<td>Verification</td>
<td>Achieving</td>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>Representation</td>
<td>Success</td>
<td>E2</td>
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</table>

The national Under-16 championships are played annually between state and territory teams in two divisions:
- Division 1 - South Australia, Western Australia, Victorian Country, Victorian Metropolitan.
- Division 2 - New South Wales/ACT, Northern Territory, Queensland and Tasmania.

The national Under-18 championships are played annually between state and territory teams in two divisions:
- Division 1 - Victorian Country, Victorian Metropolitan, South Australia, Western Australia, Allies.
- Academy Series – Sun's, Lion's, Swans, Giants, Northern territory and Tasmania.

State testing begins at U16 and is completed periodically - Vertical Jump, Running Vertical Jump, Agility Test, 20m sprint, YO-YO IR2, three skills components.

National Team have GPS Tracking Data, which is shared with all AFL Recruiting Departments. This data supports selection on the AFL National Academies.

**National Academy**

The AFL National Academy is a program to enhance the sporting, personal, educational and vocational opportunities for selected players. The AFL Academy aims to prepare the most talented players for the step up into senior AFL Football.

Three AFL Recruiters are assigned to select squads. The AFL National Academy model is two-tiered program with Level One (25 athletes selected from the AFL Under-16 Championships) and Level Two (30 athletes selected from the U18 Championships who eligible for the next AFL Draft). Both Levels are 12-month scholarships for the young athletes. Scholarship holders remain in their home states or territories but gather for national camps and other training programs during the course of the year. Squads members at Level One are given the opportunity to represent Australia against New Zealand, while Level Two compete against a state league team before their high performance camp at the IMG Academy in Florida in January. Squads are provided with expert support from highly experienced coaches.

**State Leagues**

The AFL has supported the establishment and on-going management of State Wide competitions that provide an opportunity for talented identified athletes and "participants" to demonstrate their potential for future high performance in the AFL. Some of the clubs included in these competition are affiliated to AFL clubs.

Competitions include:
- SANFL (South Australia)
- VFL (Victoria)
- WAFL (Western Australia)
- NEAFL (Queensland / New South Wales)

Ressourcing is a key driver of success in the talent pathway. In particular, high levels of resourcing have allowed the AFL to generate additional performance data (i.e. more data out of Victoria because of full time equivalent). The AFL continues to expand its resourcing, and is currently looking to get additional resources in other states.

Player Educational and Welfare Manager available at each level of the pipeline e.g. (U16 and U18 drugs, how to deal with stress and anxiety to break down stigma)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
<th>Systems &amp; Processes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Out of Scope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extensional, Refinement of Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</td>
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<td>Sustained Success at E2</td>
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**Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)**
- F1
- F2
- F3

**Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)**
- T1
- T2
- T3
- T4

**Elite**
- E1
- E2
- M1

AFL is running “Smartabase” (Fusion Sports) to monitor Sleep, Quality of Sleep, Stress and Soreness (morning) and training loads etc. (right). Smartabase is also the platform used by the AFL for all coaching reports and IDPs. The AFL’s use of Smartabase in their Talent Pathway (also used by AFL clubs) is a better practice example of the potential use of available technology in the high performance landscape.

Smartabase is a mobile application that allows key stakeholders, including athletes, medical staff, coaches, talent identification staff, to access (with restrictions) an athlete’s profile. The athletes’ profile will include testing results (performance), wellbeing metrics (input by athlete), training loads, and medical assessment (physical, psychological etc.). Smartabase will allow stakeholders to benchmark athlete performance against similar player types (e.g. inside-midfielders) and enables AFL clubs to make informed decisions regarding potential future athlete performance. Playing U16 State Championships and U18 in State League Club and is mandatory for State Academy.

**Key Insights:**
- Each AFL state manager can see their state data.
- TAC Cup Coaches can see only see their players.
- Proposal with Schools to allow them to see their Players.
- Medical Data is available on a restricted basis.
- Coaching - Each player can self-report injury and evaluation of the game. Coaches can put their own reports on. Coaches will complete a recruiting report, which will go back through the state and national talent.
- State and National Tracking of players.
- All talent departments can access data from identified players. Clubs are required log each interview in the app.
- Future - build into the app (12 months off) dashboard against averages (i.e. beep test results) for each type of player.
- Recruiting forms (4 agreed forms) have been developed and input into the system.

All players have individual development plan in national Academy should have an individual development plan. Physical testing data, where they rank, national academy coach, playing attributes, and any development opportunities (e.g. swimming).

U18 Victoria - 17/18 Play to the TAC Cup Team (allowed 2-4 players that are special circumstances to ensure they don’t fall out (e.g. another sport or long term injury).

Victoria - Testing Day - this is done nationally, consist of a full physical testing, education testing (respect and responsibility, drugs) Also a coaching clinic. This data is put into a data base and shared with AFL Clubs and Talent ID.
NSW Office of Sport
High Performance Talent Pathway – Final Report

The AFL do not promote alignment with the FTEM Model, there are key learnings that they can provide insight into how better practice talent pathways can be managed:

- Consistent performance (e.g., game), philosophical and medical testing to support talent identification throughout the pathway
- Competition structures to ensure that potential elite talent is tested against each other
- Reward for success and high levels of engagement in the talent development process
- Information is shared between organisations, clubs, players, no silos between modules (this is consistent with Professor Kevin Norton). The AFL encourage all clubs to pass high performance information onto to players and coaches (high performance)
- The talent pathway is not only for players, but a pathway for coaches, administrators, S&C, Medical etc. For example, TAC Cup coaches are going into AFL Development roles.

Issues:
- Resources at lower levels - TAC Cup coaches

The AFL have developed a competition structure (U16-18 Championships) to ensure the best talent is playing against each other. They have also developed academies and support networks to support and guide young talent along the development pathway. Selection in these teams / academies demonstrate key links between each stage of the FTEM pathway.

To support consistency of assessment across all athletes, the AFL have developed a series of tests that support recruiters and coaches in assessing the future high performance potential of athletes.

The Draft combine the ultimate test for potential future AFL players and provides a key linkage between F4 and E1.

Given the commercial nature of the AFL competition, State Institute of Sport (including NSWIS and the AIS) no longer play a role in the talent development of players.

At V-Line Level (U15 or U16), schools will identify kids for scholarships. Whilst schools are a key part of the development equation, there is potential conflict of interest. Schools want players to perform in the short term to support their chances of winning interschool games and Regional Championships at each state. Whilst the AFL is interested in monitoring the workload of junior athletes for peak performance at the AFL level. This has historically caused some friction between the AFL and schools. It is the general view of the AFL that National Championships takes priority over School Championships, however schools push back on the AFL for taking talent out of the school competitions.

Recognising the need to respond to this challenge in the interest of athletes, the AFL is working on an agreement to manage scholarships (worth approx. $30k) to ensure that talented athletes are not burnt out and reduce the friction between the AFL and Schools. The AFL issues procedures for school / academy to pass the ultimate test for potential future AFL athletes.

Regional Academies in NSW play a role in the F3/T1. There are 11 independent Regional Academies of Sport across NSW that provide development programs to identified athletes. Regional Academy AFL programs provide high performance training opportunities for talented young athletes is designated regions. In partnership with AFL NSW/ACT and the GWS 'Giants' the program provides opportunities for athletes in the areas of technical skill, education and personal development, preparing athletes for the next level of elite sport representation.

Universities

 Interaction with NSO
The AFL (NSO) play a Pivotal role in the operation of the national talent pathway. The aim of this is to deliver a nationally consistent...
### Case study 2 - Rowing NZ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</th>
<th>Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)</th>
<th>Elite</th>
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<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>F2</td>
<td>T1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Extensional, Refinement of Movement Foundations</td>
<td>Sport Specific Commitments and/or competition</td>
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#### The Athletes Journey

The secondary school in NZ have strong rowing programs that provide the talent pool.

For selection into the RPCs, Rowing NZ has a selection of guidelines and standards they are looking for in erg testing and on water performance. They also monitor behaviours and attitudes in training and racing prior to selection. The High Performance Athlete Development Manager oversees the programme for athletes wishing to enter the high performance pathway. Athletes gain automatic selection into the RPCs if they are in a current elite or U23 team. Consideration is given to University, U21 and Junior athletes based on their international results. Selections from NZ Rowing have contact with the school's coaches to identify the talent and nominate athletes. The athletes can also nominate themselves for the High performance programme. Rowing New Zealand selects Elite, Development, Under 23, Under 21, Junior and Under 18 National Teams through selection camps and trials process. The Elite National Team represents New Zealand at the highest level of competition, either at the Olympic Games, World Championships or the Rowing World Cup. While the Olympics are held once every four years, the World Championships are held every year. The Rowing World Cup comprises 3 regattas held each year and overall winners are determined by points that are awarded to the top finishing boats at each event. The Under 23 National Team competes at the Under 23 World Championship regatta each year while the Under 21 National Team competes at the New Zealand V Australia Series Regatta in Australia. The Junior National Team competes at the Junior World Championships each year and the Under 18 crews from the North Island and the South Island are selected annually to compete against one another.

Every September, Rowing NZ runs RPC selection trials for athletes wishing to gain selection into our High Performance Programme. This trial is for athletes that haven't gained automatic selection. When selected they have the opportunity to participate in the "high performance rowing centres' (RPC's) these are summer based training centres where talents have a coach. It is a highly motivating and inspiring environment. There are different teams: NZ Elite; NZ Under 23; NZ Junior; Under 18 North/South Island; NZ World Univ; NZ Uni Trans-Tauman and NZ Para. The international events where Rowing NZ selects the athletes for are: Olympic Games, Senior World Championships (held each year) The Rowing World Cup series comprises three regattas held each year and overall winners are determined by points that are awarded to the top finishing boats at each event. The elite team from time to time attend events such as the Henley Royal Regatta, The U23 World Rowing Championships, The U21 Trans-Tauman competition The Junior World Rowing Championships each year. Rowing NZ sends athletes to Europe for competitions. In 2015 Rowing NZ sent approx. 191 people to 10 countries (includes: Junior, U21, U23, Elites & University)

### Staffing levels

Rowing NZ is a small organisation. There is a special team for the High Performance programme that consists of a High Performance Director, a High Performance Operations Manager, a High Performance Athlete Development Manager and 4 coaches.

Rowing NZ has four Regional Performance Centres, tasked with developing athletes capable of representing New Zealand at the World Rowing Championships and Olympic Games. Rowing NZ employs staff to run the daily operation of the four Regional Performance Centres with the support of the local RPC board. A key outcome of the RPC is the "increased quality of athletes available to the High Performance Programme". There is also a facility in Cambridge that is more focused on the Elite athletes. Rowing NZ has partnerships with support services who provide services at the Cambridge facility.

Broad Regional Performance Centre Objectives:

- The broader key objectives for these centres are as follows:
  - To develop pre-elite talent and especially the athletes expected to represent NZ during the next Olympic cycle and beyond.
  - To provide a 12 month, year on year individual athlete development program.
  - To provide a clear high performance pathway for aspiring flowers and Coaches.
  - To assist local associations within the RPC catchment area with regional development of coaches and athletes.
  - To link tertiary institutions into the sport of rowing to enable facilitation of education/career pathways AND to enable proactive monitoring/support of key athletes within institutions.

- RNZ focuses on school, university, club and para rowing in New Zealand. While the High Performance arm of the organisation looks after all the international teams representing New Zealand, from juniors through to the successful elite team.

- The primary objective of RNZ is to foster and promote the sport of rowing in New Zealand in all its forms and classifications.

- Rowing NZ doesn't have a structure program for Paralympics and they have limited resources to run such a program. Their Paralympics committee core events are cycling, swimming and athletics.

### Infrastructure

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### Systems & Processes

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# High Performance Talent Pathway

**Phases & Description**

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<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
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<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)</td>
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<td>F2</td>
<td>Extensional, Refinement of Movement Foundations</td>
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<td>F3</td>
<td>Basic Movement Foundations</td>
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<td>Podium Success</td>
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<td>E5</td>
<td>Sustained Success at E2</td>
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**Level of funding**

The Funding for 2015 ($10,535,507) was 22% higher than the funding in 2014 ($8,638,129). The higher you go on the talent pathway, the more money and support services are available for the athlete. When selected for a team, it will cost the athlete between $7,000 and $10,000 per year.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**Schools**

Rowing NZ has built relationships with schools coaching. Rowing NZ does not incentivise schools with a good rowing program, except for the fact that they get recognition. Rowing NZ developed policies to prevent that athletes go from one school to another because the Rowing programme is better. There is the New Zealand Secondary School Championships (Maadi Cup) – The regatta is the largest school sports event in New Zealand. 'Maadi Cup' is the name given to the regatta and the cup for the New Zealand Secondary Schools Boys' Under 18 Rowing Eights which is raced at the regatta.

**Universities**

Rowing NZ has a person in a role that organises two university/tertiary regattas, and the trans-Tasman NZ vs Australia University competition. They also work with the High Performance Athlete Development Manager, when considering athletes for world university games or world championships.

The New Zealand University Championships are held annually and the top prizes include The Ashes (Overall NZU Rowing Champs Winners), the Tamaki Cup (Championship Women's Eight), the Paul Griffiths Cup (Championship Women's Four), and the Heberley Shield (Championship Men's Eight). New Zealand university students have represented New Zealand at the World University Rowing Championships which are held every two years, and rowers have also raced at the Universiade (Summer University Games).

**Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and physios)**

Parents: Rowing NZ communicates with parents to keep them informed about different possibilities through camps, website, RPCs, coach development.

Clubs: Rowing NZ has a person whose role is to work with the clubs and schools and is responsible for overseeing the running of 3 major Secondary schools regattas, and one major Club championships at a club level they work with their 10 associations in the rules of racing, their two major event organisations in running of regattas, overseeing the development of officials and coaching.

Coaches: Rowing NZ provides technical advice to the coaches.
Case study 3 - Swimming Australia

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<tr>
<th>Phases &amp; Description</th>
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**The Athletes Journey**

Swimming Australia has provided a clear framework for state bodies to deliver talent identification and development pathways that support consistency across the national development pathway. The next stage in the talent pathway is selection in State Swimming Association Squads to represent their state at national meetings (T2 - T3). The Swimming National Age Championships provide an opportunity for State Squad participants and other club swimmers to compete in from of Swimming Australia’s Talent Scouts. These Talent Scouts look for male athletes over 15 years and female athletes aged 14 and over. Scouts consider (i) technical proficiency, (ii) the quartile of the year they were born and (iii) training age. Swimmers that are not currently in State Squads and are identified by Talent Scouts will be included in these programs.

**State**

From the State Squads, athletes who perform may be selected in Australia’s Youth Team run by Swimming Australia. Athletes selected in this team based on Australian Age and Open Championships (e.g. World Junior, Junior Pan Pacifics etc.) Appro. 40 of the top athletes across the state squads may be taken to international competitions.

**State TID**

Athletes selected on Junior Youth Teams will gain automatic selection on to the State TID Camps which consist of two assessment camps per year. At these camps, selected athletes will undertake a range of performance tests, anthropometry measurements, strength & Conditioning Tests and physiotherapy screening. This information is then stored in a centralised system that can be accessed be relevant parties and can be used to track athlete progression and inform future selection decisions.

**Junior Excellence Program (JX)**

The JX Program recognises, rewards and encourages junior swimmers who through their development of aquatic skills and fitness, achieve a high standard of swimming excellence. Swimmers aged 9-16 who accomplish Swimming Australia set standards qualify at Gold, Silver, Bronze of Green standard depending on their best performance(s) during the season.

Swimming Australia views the national and state initiatives as one program (consistent with the AWE strategy). The pre-elite stages of the talent pathway aim to offer progressive development by pairing the athlete with the most appropriate, available resources.

**Talent Verification**

Swimming Australia receives an annual funding contribution from the Federal Government for High Performance. In 2015/16, the equated to $8.6 million for Able bodies and $1.9 million for EAD. Swimming Australia also has strong links with several corporate sponsors (e.g. Hancock Prospecting, BHP Billiton).

**Sport Specific Commitments and / or competition**

All pre-elite programs are joint Swimming Australia/Swimming NSW programs. Swimming Australia views the national and state initiatives as one program (consistent with the AWE strategy). The pre-elite stages of the talent pathway aim to offer progressive development by pairing the athlete with the most appropriate, available resources.
## Phases & Description

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### Alignment with FTEM Model

- **Out of Scope**

### Gaps

- **Swimming Australia's pathway is aligned with the FTEM model. There are clear responsibility for each stage of the pathway (e.g. stages T1 to T4 are the responsibility of Swimming NSW). However, programs delivered at these stages are joint Swimming Australia/Swimming NSW programs.**

### Roles and Responsibilities

- **NSWIS**
  - NSWIS is a Swimming Australia ‘podium centre’ and provides sports science and sports medicine support for ‘podium’ and ‘podium potential’ AWE categorised athletes. NSWIS also provide some support at state and national camps. NSWIS may also be involved in international competitions.
  - The relationship with NSWIS is tri-partiate between NSWIS, Swimming Australia and Swimming NSW.

- **Schools**
  - Some Program Centres operate from schools - this is driven by facilities rather than relationships or swimming program at that school.

- **Regional academies**
  - No national level relationships with regional academies, previously had good relationships at the local level. However, there are no systematic arrangements in place.

- **Universities**
  - Only existing formal relationship with universities is through university swimming clubs (e.g. Sydney Uni). However, universities have good experts (e.g. biomechanists and sports scientists) and these resources are largely untapped by the individual sports.

- **Other stakeholders (e.g. parents, coaches and physios)**
  - Coaches have the most important role in developing swimming athletes, Swimming Australia also rely on coaches to manage most of the required parent communication and education. Swimming Australia acknowledged that coach education has historically been of a poor quality and expensive. There has also been a disconnection between coach education, coach experience and recognition and reward. Swimming Australia has recently re-worked their coach development programs (e.g. developing the National Coach Mentor Program) and improve coach connectivity between State Head Coaches and top coaches in each State. This aims to improve coach engagement and development - well educated coaches drive well-functioning pathways.
Appendix G  Key attributes of the best practice case studies

Case Study 1 - AFL

Key attributes of the AFL talent identification & development pathway

**The Athletes Journey**
- Structured Junior Programs
- Dual pathway programs – Talent Identified athletes and participation
- Multi-tiered entry points to High performance pathway
- Structured development programs (state, national and club affiliate (e.g. Calder Cannons and AFL)
- Representative Competitions provide opportunities to compete in quality environments across age groups (U14, U16, 18)
- The transition from T3 to T4 / E1 is delivered consistently via the draft combine. The combine is a Pivotal part of the talent identification process and provides an opportunity for nationally identified potential talent to demonstrate their aptitude of elite level all to all 19 AFL teams through a wide range of aptitude tests (physical and physiological)

**Systems & processes**
- The AFL’s use of Smartabase in their Talent Pathway (also used by AFL clubs) is a better practice example of the potential use of available technology in the high performance landscape. Smartabase is a mobile application that allows key stakeholders, including athletes, medical staff, coaches, talent identification staff, to access (with restrictions) an athlete’s profile that includes testing results (performance), wellbeing metrics (input by athlete), training loads, medial assessment (physical, psychological etc.).

**Key Stakeholders**
- Information is shared between organisations, clubs players, no silos between modules (this is consistent with Professor Kevin Norton). The AFL encourage all clubs to pass high performance information onto to players and coaches
- The structure of the pathway, and consistency in how the AFL assesses performance, including testing techniques, provides a level of clarity for all stakeholders in the pathway.
- Talent pathway is not only for players, but a pathway for coaches, administrators, S&C, Medical etc. For example, TAC Cup Coaches are going into AFL Development roles.
- Schools play a role in maintaining player engagement in AFL for future high performing athletes. The interests of schools and the AFL talent program have historically caused some friction. Recognising the need to respond to this challenge in the interest of athletes, the AFL is working on an agreement with schools to ensure that talented athletes are not burnt out. The agreement will essentially manage the maximum workload of talent identified players (e.g. training hours and number of games).
Case Study 2 - Swimming Australia

Key attributes of the Swimming Australia talent identification & development pathway

**The Athletes Journey**
- Structured Junior Program – the tiered JX Program
- Specific Elite Athlete with a Disability pathways
- Structured competition opportunities – metros, state and nationals
- State Development Days – athletes identified by Swimming Australia’s talent scouts are invited to attend 1-2 development days annually
- Selected high performers may be included in junior national teams (e.g. Junior PanPacs)
- Swimming Australia publishes detailed criteria for selection into the Australian Dolphins
- The new Youth Transition Program supports athletes who are too old for youth programs but within 2% of Australian Dolphins qualifying times.

**Systems & processes**
- All athletes who participate in the State Development Days undergo a range of testing including – physio screenings, swimming performance and skill tests, psychology and learning styles. The results of these tests are stored in an Athlete Management System (AMS) and used to track athlete development over time as well as informing future selection decisions.

**Key Stakeholders**
- Swimming Australia operates all its pre-elite (i.e. T1 to T4) programs in collaboration with their respective SSOs
- Swimming Australia’s new coach mentoring, development and education framework (e.g. National Mentor Coach Program) provides opportunities for greater coach engagement. Well-educated and highly engaged coaches drive successful pathways
- NSWIS is a Swimming Australia Centre of Excellence providing sports science and sports medicine support for ‘Podium’ and ‘Podium Potential’ categorised athletes as well as some support at state and national level camps
### Case Study 3 - Rowing New Zealand

**Key attributes of the Rowing NZ talent identification & development pathway**

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#### The Athletes Journey
- NZ secondary schools have strong rowing programs and deliver foundation rowing programs
- Single entry point to the pathway
- Rowing NZ has four Regional Performance Centres (RPC) responsible for developing athletes capable of representing NZ
- Participation in an RPC is a pre-requisite for NZ selection
- International competition opportunities are provided for juniors, U21s, U23s and university students
- RPCs assist in the transition from T4/E1 capable of representing NZ by exposing pre-elite athletes to the high performance environment before they are at the E1 stage and allowing for older, more experienced athletes to mentor those coming through the pathway

#### Systems & processes
- Rowing NZ has clearly defined ERG testing and on-water testing criteria that are required for selection into an RPC
- Once selected into an RPC athlete behaviour and attitude is closely monitored by the High Performance Athlete Development Manager – this forms a component of future selection decisions

#### Key Stakeholders
- Parents - Rowing NZ communicates with parents about the pathway and athlete possibilities through athlete camps, the Rowing NZ website, RPCs and coaches
- Coaches - Rowing NZ has a calendar of coach development opportunities including providing technical advice
- Clubs – Rowing NZ has a single staff member responsible for overseeing the club regattas and club development programs. This provides a clear point of contact
## Appendix H Athlete feedback log

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<th>Experience</th>
<th>Summary of athlete feedback</th>
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| Talent identification | ► The open trials and competition referral pathways for netball are very effective – the continued success of the Australian Diamonds suggests that the best talent is being identified  
► Talent transfer is a valuable focus for the sports industry as a whole. Consistent with other stakeholder discussions, the notion of aligning already identified talent with sports that better fit their attributes is seen as a valuable endeavour  
► There are lots of wheelchair basketball competition opportunities (e.g. through clubs and schools) allowing for a wider range of talent identification opportunities  
► Talent identification in rowing is poorly done as rowing does not seek to identify athletes from beyond the school and club rowing programs – this is particularly detrimental to the AWD program rowing program, which is heavily focused on recruiting ex-military athletes |
| Talent development    | ► Coaches are key to an athlete’s technical and holistic development – it is important for coach and athlete objectives to be aligned to maximise coach performance  
► NSWIS is the most important system partner in the talent development process – “building an athlete and building a person”  
► Regional academies provide an opportunity for pre-elite athletes to understand the day to day life of an athlete and provide skill-based development as well as broader talent development support  
► Increasing use of technology and monitoring (e.g. Athlete Management System (AMS) or Smartabase) is improving management of athlete load and tracking athlete development – previously this may not have been considered and many athletes burnt out before reaching their full potential  
► Wheelchair basketball has a robust talent development program with lots of connectivity between pre-elite and elite athletes  
► Sports with a clear talent development pathway and expectations (e.g. netball) result in a greater level of athlete engagement and athlete development |
| Transition to elite senior representation | ► The elite senior environment can be difficult to manage as it is not a full time environment and there is some churn meaning that an athlete’s role and responsibilities are not always clear  
► The AIS has stepped away from delivering some programs after the AWE changes – this has been detrimental to some athletes and means that opportunities for late developing athletes are no longer available. This was identified as a potential issue in the netball pathway  
► Financial and coaching support from NSOs is key in the transition to elite senior representation in rowing and sailing  
► Athletes at the elite level all believed very well supported by NSWIS and this was key to their continued performance at the elite level |
| Pathway strengths     | ► The netball pathway was always very clear and the next step was apparent with lots of opportunities for competition and development  
► State-based pre-elite training and competition opportunities provide good opportunities for athletes to realistically assess their progress against their peers as well as fostering greater feelings of togetherness  
► More sports are developing coach development pathways that include AWD coaching and aligning coach objectives with SSO/NSO objectives  
► Pathways are more successful when they were clear, supported by experienced coaches, provided both on and off-field support, and had well-structured opportunities (i.e. academies, state representative opportunities) and competitions.  
► The netball pathway is very clear – the next steps and requirements to meet them are well understood |
| Pathway weaknesses    | ► There is not enough support for regionally based athletes – all the best coaches are Sydney-based and do not travel often. The NSWIS relationship can also be challenging for regionally based athletes  
► There is a gap between resources that are available to athletes (e.g. education, life skills development) and athletes accessing these resources. This may be due to:  
► A lack of awareness of what resources are available or who to speak to in order to access resources  
► Coaches or other system partners may not encourage athletes to access resources  
► AWD pathways are not well developed below the elite level – this may lead to poor pathway outcomes in the long term (e.g. there are no pre-elite athletes to step up when current elite athletes retire)  
► Intensive, long-term talent development programs at the AIS can lead to athlete burnout and a lack of holistic athlete development. This is also true of some of the private school rowing programs. “It’s important to have the fun factor.” |
Experience

Summary of athlete feedback

► Coach objectives may not always align with the athlete’s long term best interests or those of the NSO/SSO
► The transition between school and club rowing can be difficult to manage and greater connectivity between schools and clubs, as well as between older and younger rowers may smooth this transition
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