

ATHLETICS AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL ATHLETE SUPPORT STRUCTURE (NASS)

Athletics Australia's (AA) National Athlete Support Structure (NASS) is a system that supports Australian Athletes who have the greatest potential to achieve AA's HP Program Goals and targets at Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, World Championships and Commonwealth Games.

The NASS selection process identifies athletes and uses the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) categorisation to place each selected athlete within a nationally tiered support model. This categorisation model is then applied through AA's delivery partners – the relevant member of the National Institute Network (NIN). Under the AIS athlete categorisation model, to be prioritised for support an athlete must demonstrate potential for future success; past results are not the sole consideration, especially at the initial levels of NASS.

The Structure is built into three Streams – the Medal Stream, Pathway Stream and the Representative Stream. These Streams enable AA to identify the medal capable athletes within the current 4-year cycle, our medal capable athletes for the future cycle and our prospective senior team athletes for the coming Championships and then prioritise the resources available to support our elite athletes.

AA will review NASS selections every six months, through a NASS Selection Meeting, usually after the Australian domestic season, and after the international season/benchmark event (BME).

1. Aims of High Performance program and NASS

High Performance success is measured against our international peers and is based on selecting the best athletes and closing the gap between their performances and the podium.

The goals of AA's High Performance program (Goals) are:

- **To achieve 1-3 medals, supported by an additional 6-10 top eight places, at the Olympic Games and World Athletics (WA) World Championships in Olympic events.**
- **To achieve 4-8 gold medals, supported by an additional 16-20 silver and bronze medals, at the Paralympic Games and World Para Athletics (WPA) World Championships, in Paralympic events.**
- **To finish the top nation on the Commonwealth Games athletics medal table and win WA and WPA World Championships Gold medals in non-Olympic/non-Paralympic Events.**

The NASS program will assist to achieve these Goals by providing support to selected athletes and their coaches. AA's NASS program aims to enhance coaching and performance support systems in each selected athlete's Daily Training Environment (DTE) and provide domestic and/or international competition opportunities.

The NASS Pathway stream is the initial step on this road to Podium success and is specifically aimed to provide the best support and DTE for a coach/athlete to assist their performance enhancement, planning and programming to achieve these aims.

2. Benefits of NASS

Athletes selected to NASS will receive access to a range of resources. The hierarchy of the NASS categorisation is based on the progression outlined by the Performance Criteria provided in the Appendix. The NASS categorisation will assist in the prioritisation of AA and National Institute Network (system) (**NIN**) high performance resources.

The utilisation of these high performance resources is focused on each coach/athlete's 'Gap to Podium' plan – what and how the system will support the achievement of these targeted areas. The 'Gap to Podium' plan will be established by the coach/athlete and their State Performance Advisor and Performance Service Staff.

The 'Gap to Podium' plan will then be the basis of the coach/athlete partnership with AA and NIN and the high performance resources available through this partnership. The AA and NIN high performance resources may include:

- Facility access
- Performance services (e.g. Medicine, Physiotherapy, Strength and Conditioning, Biomechanics, Physiology, Performance Psychology, Sports Nutrition etc.)
- Competition support
- Specific testing
- Coach mentoring
- Heat acclimatisation camps
- Altitude camps
- Coach development plan support
- Engagement with Australian HP system
- Equipment support
- Research
- Financial support
- Event camp access
- Innovation availability
- Any other resources agreed from time to time between AA, the athlete and relevant partners.

These high performance resources are limited and are there solely to assist the athlete and coach to achieve future performance levels through the NASS partnership. Again, for the avoidance of doubt, the resources available to each athlete will be tailored to their 'Gap to Podium' plan.

Further, it is expected that athletes selected to NASS will engage with the system and proactively communicate with their State Performance Coach, AA and NIN member. An athlete and coach can choose not to engage with the system and/or benefit from the high performance resources of AA and/or NIN, however, should they choose not to engage, the athlete may not be selected or may be exited from the NASS program.

NASS membership has no bearing on selection for an Australian representational team. Equally selection onto an Australian representational team has no bearing on selection for NASS membership.

3. Athlete Eligibility

The eligibility requirements (**Athlete Eligibility**) for NASS include that the athlete, at all material times:

- satisfies all relevant eligibility and nationality rules of World Athletics (Formerly, International Association of Athletics Federation IAAF) (**WA**), International Olympic Committee (**IOC**), World Para Athletics (**WPA**) and Commonwealth Games Federation (**CGF**);
- holds an Australian citizenship at the time of invitation to the NASS and throughout the NASS year and be eligible and committed to represent Australia (or on a committed path to Australian citizenship to be eligible to represent Australia);
- is a registered member of Athletics Australia through their Member Association;
- in the case of Para-athletes, holds an international WPA classification of "Review" or "Confirmed" status;
- complies with all relevant AA and AIS policies including (but not limited to) relevant Codes of Conduct, Team Agreements, Policies and Rules;
- complies with all applicable anti-doping requirements of Sport Integrity Australia (**SIA**), WA, WPA, Australian Olympic Committee (**AOC**), Paralympics Australia (**PA**), Commonwealth Games Australia (**CGA**), AA and the AIS including SIA level 1 and level 2 Anti-Doping courses and Match-fixing awareness course.

4. Performance Criteria

Performance Levels are not qualification standards whereby achieving the standard determines automatic selection on to NASS. The Performance Levels (refer to Appendix 2) are used as an initial indication for consideration and as a guide for the Selectors.

The capacity of an athlete to assist Athletics Australia to achieve the Goals will be the ultimate guide for Selectors.

The Selectors Criteria and Performance Levels (**Performance Criteria**) have been established for the Able Body program and are outlined in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The calculation method for these Performance Levels is articulated in each Appendix.

Performance Levels have not been established for the Para program and selection on to NASS is purely on discretion of the Selectors based on the guidance in this Policy. However, as a guide, the AA Selection Standards for the upcoming BME will be used to benchmark Para athletes for consideration for NASS.

All athletes who have achieved the Performance Criteria and Athlete Eligibility criteria may be nominated for selection on to NASS. In exceptional circumstances the Selectors may also consider athletes for selection who are yet to achieve the Performance Criteria or Performance Level.

A single PB performance will be considered, however the average of an athlete's best performances of the season and/or a PB/SB performance at the BME will also be a factor for the Selectors, as this is a closer representation of an athlete's performance level and capacity to achieve the AA HP goals.

For a performance to be considered it must meet all technical eligibility requirements of WA or WPA for entry into a benchmark event.

5. NASS Selectors, Selection Meetings and Selections

The NASS Selectors will be appointed by the CEO of Athletics Australia from time-to-time and will include AA High Performance staff and coaches.

It is intended that two additional non-Selectors will also attend Selection Meetings: an AIS representative, a SIS/SAS representative and another person appointed by the CEO, usually with a sporting and legal background, to act as an "Independent Observer" of the process.

Unless otherwise required, there will be two Selection Meetings per year, one after the Australian domestic season and the other after the conclusion of the international season. The absence from a Selection Meeting of one or more of the NASS Selectors or any of the other people referred to above does not invalidate any selection meeting or selection decision. In making selection decisions, the NASS Selectors can inform themselves in any way they see fit and are acting as experts.

Having regard to the guidance in this Policy and, in particular, the Goals of Athletics Australia's High Performance program and the aims of NASS, NASS Selectors will determine, at their discretion, which athletes to offer NASS places to and which level of NASS to offer to selected athletes.

6. Appeals

Only athletes who have previously been selected on to NASS may request reconsideration of the decision regarding their exit from NASS or their change of NASS level (**Request**). This Request must be put in writing to the General Manager - High Performance. In their Request, the athlete must address either or both of the following grounds for reconsideration, namely that the NASS Selectors (a) made an error of fact, or (b) failed to consider a relevant performance standard. The Request must be made within seven days of the notification to the affected athlete.

Upon receipt of a valid Request, the General Manager - High Performance will ask the Independent Observer to review the athlete's Request. Following this review, the Independent Observer may invite the NASS Selectors to reconsider their decision, or may request the NASS Selectors provide further detail to the athlete addressing their concerns and/or the reasons for the NASS Selectors' decision. The Independent Observer should provide reasons for their decision to the affected athlete and NASS Selectors.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- (a) the Independent Observer is not entitled to make or substitute selection decisions; any changes would need to be made by the NASS Selectors;
- (b) athletes are not entitled to appeal against the selection to NASS of any other athlete;
- (c) there is no further avenue of appeal.

7. Maintenance and Progression of Level – NASS Medal Stream

An athlete should show year-on-year progression towards the Goals and the aims of NASS.

From Podium Potential level and above (Medal Stream), an athlete should achieve the expected progression towards the next level on an approximately two-yearly basis; this is a clear indication an athlete is achieving the aims of NASS.

Progression will normally be shown through the improvement of their PB in line with their event's relevant performance projection. Progression may also be shown through the achievement of PB at the BME, or successful utilisation of performance services and the HP resources of AA and NIN showing progression towards closing the identified Gaps to Podium.

The retention or exit of an athlete on the Medal Stream who does not show improvement in line with these performance progressions will be at the absolute discretion of the Selectors. An athlete's State Performance Advisor will provide specific detail on an athlete for the Selectors consideration. An athlete may also be retained on the Medal Stream, but at a lower level, if the Selectors believe

the athlete can still achieve the Goals and the aims of NASS, however this will be a very rarely exercised discretion.

Athletes may be considered for selection on to the Medal Stream regardless of whether they have previously been exited from NASS, or if it is the first time they are being considered. Their selection will be based on whether the NASS Selectors believe they can achieve the aims of the NASS program and consistent with the delivery of the Goals.

An athlete who has been placed on the Medical level may be returned onto NASS at any time, normally at the level of NASS they were at prior to being placed on Medical.

An athlete who has been exited from the Medal Stream may still be considered for selection on the Representative Stream.

8. NASS Pathway Stream

The aim of the Pathway Stream is to support athletes with the potential to win Senior BME medals within the next 4-8 years.

8.1. Pathway Stream Selection

Athletes eligible for selection will be identified by the relevant National Event Group Coaches, in conjunction with the NASS Selection Panel. The panel and coaches will utilise a variety of information when making selections, including:

- Current performance level
- Age
- Performance at relevant competitions
- Event Group performance trends
- Consistency of performance at major competitions
- Year-on-year upward trends in performance
- Perceived capacity to improve.
- Impairment and Classification (Para specific)
- Quality of the Daily training Environment including coaching, S&C and performance support

Athletics Australia understand that talent development is complex and non-linear, and that each event may have its own age at peak performance. As a result, there are no specific age bands for membership at the Pathway level, although it is expected that the majority of athletes will be between 18-22 years of age at their initial selection within the Able Body program. When indicated, and in line with performance data and expert coach advice, athletes who fall outside of this age band may be selected onto the Pathway Stream.

Due to the relatively wide age bands of this level of NASS, there are no specific performance standards required for entry onto the Pathway Stream. As a rough guide, for Able body athletes who are still within the Under-20 age group, or are immediately transitioning from this age group into the Open category, the Athletics Australia World Under-20 Selection Standards would typically be representative of the minimum required performance level, with holders of multiple standards demonstrating upwards performance potential likely to be considered for selection. Older athletes (i.e. primarily those aged 21 or 22) would typically be expected to be performing close to or at the standards detailed under *retention* (below).

As a general rule Para Pathway athletes will need to show they are within or progressing towards the AA "B" standards of the next BME.

Pathway Stream Retention

Ordinarily, athletes will remain on the Pathway Stream for approximately two-four years, with an expectation that, in the final two years of membership, athletes will be moving towards, or competing at, the performance standards in Appendix 2.

8.2. NASS Representative Stream

The aim of the Representative Stream is to support athletes who are highly likely to be selected on the next Senior BME team.

8.3. Representative Stream Selection

Athletes eligible for selection will be identified by utilising the WA World Rankings system (for able body athletes) and a combination of the WPA Rankings list and AA BME Selection Standards (for para athletes) along with input from the relevant National Event Group Coaches, in conjunction with the NASS Selection Panel.

Selection or non-selection for the Representative Stream has no bearing on the ultimate selection or non-selection of an athlete for future Australian Teams. Those decisions are a matter for the AA Selection Panel.

8.4. Representative NASS Retention

Athletes will be assessed by the NASS Selection Panel at each NASS Selection Meeting (every six months) to ensure that the Athlete remains in contention for selection at the next BME.

8.5. Relays

AA is committed to relay teams who AA believe could assist achieving the Goals and the aims of NASS. The NASS Selectors will determine at a selection meeting if a specific relay event can be targeted to achieve the aims of NASS and if so, which stream of NASS is selected for that relay event.

Athletes selected on to NASS for a Relay program will need to fully commit to that program, including program training camps and competition periods.

Athletes selected on to NASS for individual events may also be included into Relay programs, but their individual selection on to NASS will be solely based on their capacity to achieve the Goals and the aims of NASS in that individual event.

For the avoidance of doubt, selection for a benchmark event relay team will not be limited to those on the NASS Relay program, and normal team selection considerations will be applied.

The athletes who are part of a relay program and achieve top 8 or medal at a BME will be eligible to receive that level of NASS, the same as individual athletes, with the selectors applying the same considerations. The selectors may select any athletes to be part of that program and are not limited to those who ran at the BME.

9. Review of NASS Structure

AA will review the structure of the NASS program on an annual basis with input from the NIN and any other relevant system partners.

APPENDIX 1

NASS is split into two main programs/Streams and an additional Representative Stream:

Medal	This program is targeted at athletes with the most realistic chance to meet the Goals and aims of the NASS program; now or in the future. The athletes and their coaches in these categories of NASS receive Performance Support through their State Performance Advisor and their NIN performance servicing staff.
Pathway	This program includes the Developing and Emerging levels of NASS. These athletes and their coaches receive Performance Support through their State Performance Advisor and their NIN performance servicing staff.
Representative	This program is targeted at athletes who do not meet the membership criteria of the Medal Stream program but who, nevertheless, are likely to be selected to represent Australia in the next Senior BME. The level of support of the Representative Stream is subject to the capacity of the relevant NIN partner but at a minimum will provide track and gym (S&C) facility access, and a level of access to the NIN Physiotherapist.

The **Benchmark Events (BME)** are the **Olympic Games, World Athletics World Championships, Paralympic Games** and **World Para Athletics World Championships**.

Selectors Criteria

MEDAL STREAM	AA Category	Criteria for the Selectors to consider
	Gold (AIS Category – Podium)	Athletes with the realistic capacity to win a Gold medal at the next Olympic / Paralympic Games , and have won a Gold medal at a Podium Benchmark Event within the previous 24 months .
	Medal (AIS Category – Podium)	Athletes with the realistic capacity to win a Silver or Bronze medal at the next Olympic / Paralympic Games , and have won a Silver or Bronze medal at a Podium Benchmark Event within the previous 24 months .
	Podium Ready	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Medal level at the next Olympic / Paralympic Games , and have finished Fourth to eighth place at the most recent Podium Benchmark Event .
	Podium Potential	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Podium Ready level within approximately two years (based on event-specific development timeframes) and have achieved the Podium Potential performance level .

PATHWAYS	Developing	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Podium Potential level within approximately two – four years , as outlined in section 8.1.
	Emerging	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Podium Potential within approximately four years , as outlined in section 8.1.

Representative	Athletes likely to be selected to represent Australia in the next Senior BME.
Medical	Athletes on the NASS Medal and Pathways Stream that have suffered an illness or injury who the selectors believe can still meet the Goals and aims of the program in the future. Athletes may continue to receive medical support to return to competition.

APPENDIX 2

Individual Performance Levels

Performance Levels have been established for the Able Body program only. Performance Levels have also not been explicitly set for entry onto the Pathway Stream – consideration for entry is outlined above.

Performance levels are not qualification standards whereby achieving the standard determines selection. Performance Levels are used to;

- Identify athletes on the consideration list for entry to the **Medal Stream** and the higher level of the **Pathway Stream** of the program. Being on the consideration list does NOT guarantee being invited onto the program.
- Guide the selection panel with respect to the retention of existing NASS members at the **Pathway and Medal Streams** of the program.
- For events where the standards are being refined the selection of NASS members will be at the discretion of the selectors. The selectors may request relevant information from senior national coaches of the event group.

Explanation of Performance Levels

Pathway Stream performance levels are based around a podium finish at the last four World University Games and are the anticipated performance level in the last two years of the Pathway Stream. Some discretion has been applied to these standards in line with the development of different events. Walks standards are being refined.

MEN

100m	200m	400m	800m	1500m	5000m	10000m
10.23	20.63	45.97	1:45.90	3:38.38	13:57.17	29:08.43
110mH	400mH	3000mSC	10km W	20kmW		
13.57	50.20	8:35.88	TBC	TBC		
HJ	LJ	TJ	PV	DEC		
2.24	8.00	16.74	5.56	7690		
SP	DT	JT	HT			
19.83	62.23	79.00	75.28			

WOMEN

100	200	400	800	1500	5000	10000
11.41	23.24	52.01	2:00.75	4:09.35	15:54.83	33:20.25
100m H	400m H	3000m SC	10km W	20km W		
13.04	55.83	9:44.62	TBC	TBC		
HJ	LJ	TJ	PV	HEP		
1.90	6.50	13.94	4.39	5916		
SP	DT	JT	HT			
17.55	59.00	58.92	70.29			

Medal Stream performance levels have been derived from the athletes who medaled at benchmark events (2008-2017), and their season's best performance 4 years prior to their medal result. Season's best performances have been averaged and weighted towards more recent benchmark events. Out of stadium standards are being refined.

MEN

100	200	400	800	1500	5000	10000
10.02	20.17	45.51	1:44.20	3:34.30	13:09.93	27:31.77
110m H	400m H	3000m SC	Mar	20km W	50 km W	
13.24	49.50	8:07.32	TBC	TBC	TBC	
HJ	LJ	TJ	PV	DEC		
2.28	8.10	17.11	5.68	8352		
SP	DT	JT	HT			
20.49	65.76	81.40	78.32			

WOMEN

100	200	400	800	1500	5000	10000
11.10	22.67	51.19	1:59.95	4:06.38	14:42.16	30:40.43
100m H	400m H	3000m SC	Mar	20km W		
12.81	54.81	9:34.72	TBC	TBC		
HJ	LJ	TJ	PV	HEP		
1.95	6.64	14.47	4.54	6237		
SP	DT	JT	HT			
19.41	64.05	63.36	72.09			