

Western Australian
**Sport Development
Pathways Strategy**

Published by the Department of Creative Industries,
Tourism and Sport (CITS), Western Australia,
August 2026.

Any representation, statement, opinion, or advice
expressed or implied in this publication is made in
good faith and on the basis that the government, its
employees and agents are not liable for any damage or
loss whatsoever which may occur as a result of action
taken or not taken, as the case may be, in respect
of any representation, statement, opinion or advice
referred to herein.

This document has been designed and written to
make it accessible to as many people as possible.
Copies of this publication are available in alternative
formats upon request.

Acknowledgement of country and peoples

CITS acknowledges the Aboriginal people throughout
Western Australia as the Traditional Owners and
Custodians of the lands, waters and communities in
which we operate. CITS is committed to developing
strong working relationships with Aboriginal people and
is proud to celebrate the cultural diversity, strength and
resilience of Aboriginal people, and is deeply grateful
for the contributions they make to the State of Western
Australia. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal people
and their cultures and to Elders past and present.

Ngalang kwerl CITS, ngalak Aboriginal boodja-k warniny
wer nyininy. Ngalak kaaditj bandang Aboriginal moort
nijda marawar koomba koort boodja-k nyininy, yeyi baal
kwerl Western Australia. Koorra, yeyi, boordakan, nidja
Aboriginal boodja wer kep, kalyakoorl. Ngalak djinang
noonan moorditj nagolak wer kaadadjiny, ngalang
koort baal moorart. Ngalak koodakarn ngalang dandjoo
warniny. Ngalak kaadatj bandang Aboriginal bridiya nidja
nyininy wer boodja-k kaaradjiny.

© State of Western Australia. All rights reserved.

Front cover image courtesy of Volleyball WA.

Back cover image courtesy of Triathlon WA.



Image courtesy of Paddle WA.

Contents

Executive summary	4
What are development pathways?	8
WA sport landscape stakeholders	9
Strategy framework	10
WA Sport Development Pathways Strategy: Implementation	11
WA Sport Development Pathways Strategy: Summary	12
Strategic cycle	13
Horizon 1 strategic priorities and initiatives	14
Holistic system design and development	15
Capability and capacity	17
Leadership and stakeholder engagement	20
System alignment	22
Horizon 1 Timeline	24
Definitions	25
References	27

Executive summary

Introduction

The Western Australian Sport Development Pathways Strategy's (strategy) vision is to support WA State sporting associations (SSA) to create environments where athletes, coaches and officials are provided with every opportunity to develop and achieve.

The Department of Creative Industries, Tourism and Sport (CITS) recognises the strategy as a vital initiative focused on sustaining the representation of Western Australians (WA) on the national and international sporting stage.

It is critical to the WA sport sector that there are increased sporting opportunities for community participants to progress through quality development pathways and into high-performance environments.

The creation of positive development environments and experiences will ensure increased opportunities for emerging talent within development pathways. The strategy will bridge the gap from community to high-performance sport through increased knowledge, systems and structures in SSAs.

Sector consultation

The strategy was developed through an extensive and ongoing consultation period that included surveys, workshops and forums with SSAs. Further stakeholder engagement included the Western Australian Institute of Sport (WAIS), Regional Academies of Sport, SportWest, VenuesWest, NSW Office of Sport, Australian Sports Commission (ASC), Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), Paralympics Australia, and multiple national and international experts.

Image courtesy of Netball WA.



Sector challenges and gaps

The consultation provided further clarity on the profile and demands on SSAs. With the 3 primary elements of the sporting system being:

- community participation
- development pathways
- high performance.

SSAs are primarily responsible for community participation and development pathways. This represents a broad and extensive workload, with SSAs consistently challenged in how they anticipate and adapt to the needs of a dynamic sector.

Consistent and problematic challenges are present in relation to development pathways in the following areas:

- organisational capacity
- volunteer time and availability
- financial resources
- stakeholder engagement
- adoption of athlete development frameworks
- research and evidence informed practices
- program reviews and learnings
- strategic and operational planning
- detailed parent support
- sports science and sports medicine insights.

Western Australian Sport Development Pathways Strategy

In acknowledging this demand on SSAs, CITS has created the strategy to support SSAs in their efforts to elevate development pathway practices and provide a progressive link between community participation and high-performance sport.

Through the activation of the strategy, CITS will:

- Support SSAs to provide quality development environments and experiences for athletes, coaches and officials.
- Equip volunteers with the skills and confidence to advance their knowledge and provide them with quality experiences.
- Enable SSAs to establish strategies and practices to advance development pathway effectiveness, increasing retention and progression.
- Encourage a cohesive sporting system to align club, state and national bodies.
- Create development pathway resources for SSAs and parents to educate and inform on key areas of interest.

Strategic outcomes

The outcomes of the strategy are identified at the individual, organisational (SSA) and sector level. CITS's focus is on supporting the achievement of organisational level outcomes, from which individual and sector level outcomes will result.

Individual	Organisational	Sector
• A healthier relationship with sport and their experiences. • Athletes, coaches and officials with greater ownership, understanding and accountability. • More informed parents with greater decision-making ability. • More skilled athletes, coaches and officials. • Athletes, coaches and officials who have improved sport development opportunities and experiences.	• Greater discipline specific knowledge and understanding. • Improved development of specific strategies. • Sector leading coach and official education and development support. • Increased awareness of research and evidence informed practices. • Improved program review and learning processes. • Increased sector engagement.	• Enhanced and expanded range of programs and services delivered to all people living in regional and remote areas. • Ensure a community with a strong sense of physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing. • Expanded pipeline from community level-participation to high-performance sport. • A vibrant, and robust sector with growth in retention and new culturally diverse participants.

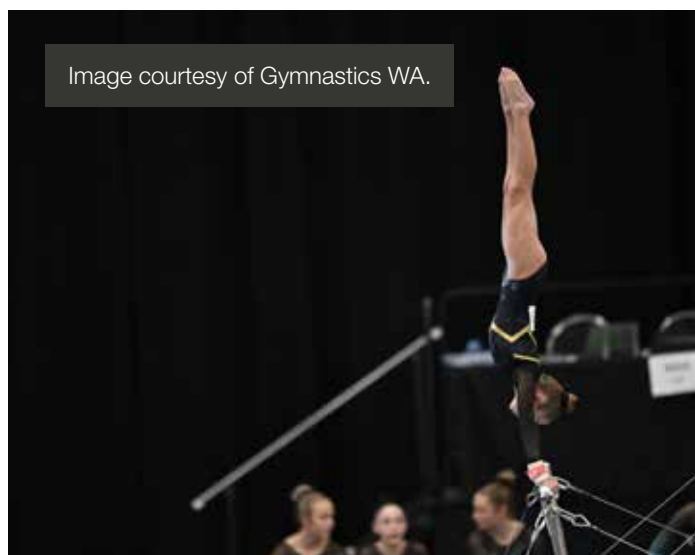
Future direction and strategic initiatives

CITS has established the strategy over 3 structured horizons.

1. Horizon 1: Identify and adapt 2026 – 2028
2. Horizon 2: Substantiate and evolve 2029 – 2031
3. Horizon 3: Elevate and transform 2032 and beyond

The strategy starts with a foundation based on current evidence and will be responsive to emerging information driven by an active approach to evaluation and assessment, further informing Horizon 2 and 3.

The strategy is built on 4 strategic priorities. These priorities contain a total of 12 strategic initiatives to be activated.



These initiatives will enable CITS to effectively provide enhanced system leadership to SSAs for development pathways and continue to support and lead the sector more broadly. The priorities and initiatives are:

1. Holistic system design and development

- 1.1 Cross-jurisdictional partnerships
- 1.2 Purposeful investment
- 1.3 Holistic coaching and officiating

2. Capability and capacity

- 2.1 SSA pathway health check
- 2.2 Development guidelines and athletic development
- 2.3 Organisational and system learning

3. Leadership and stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 Sector learning and engagement
- 3.2 Research and evidence-based practices
- 3.3 Technology informed practices

4. System alignment

- 4.1 SSA and Regional Athlete Support Program (RASP) engagement
- 4.2 Alignment with WAIS
- 4.3 Coordinated system support

CITS will positively support and impact the sector in a progressive and ongoing manner. This will be achieved through supporting SSAs to identify, understand and implement advanced development pathway knowledge and practices, optimising elevated environments and experiences. This will result in a more informed and cohesive sector that identifies and leverages the strengths, roles and responsibilities of all within the sporting system.

What are development pathways?

Development Pathways, also referred to as talent development pathways or talent development environments, provide the appropriate conditions for youth athletes to realise their full sporting potential¹. The quality of the talent development environment is important to long-term success, highlighting the need to understand how to actively create these environments².

Development pathways can consist of varying environments and phases, including:

- club development programs and academies
- representative and performance development pathways
- talent development pathways
- other sport specific structures.

High performers will emerge when 'environments are advanced to enrich an individual's sport development experience'. This extends beyond their technical and tactical development to include holistic development, health, wellbeing and psychosocial development³.

The profile underpinning an athlete's sporting development, progression and attainment of elite performance is multi-dimensional⁴. In prioritising learning and development ahead of performance outcomes, development pathways positively exhibit the below traits⁵:

- culture of learning and improvement
- person-centred approach
- open, accessible and inclusive
- alignment and coherence across the pathway
- balance of challenge and support
- focus on holistic development
- adaptive to individual needs
- focus on long term development.

Beyond improved sporting performances, effective development pathways are reflected by a healthy, engaged and robust sporting system, where athletes are provided every opportunity to develop and achieve in the pursuit of their sporting ambitions.



Image courtesy of Paddle WA.

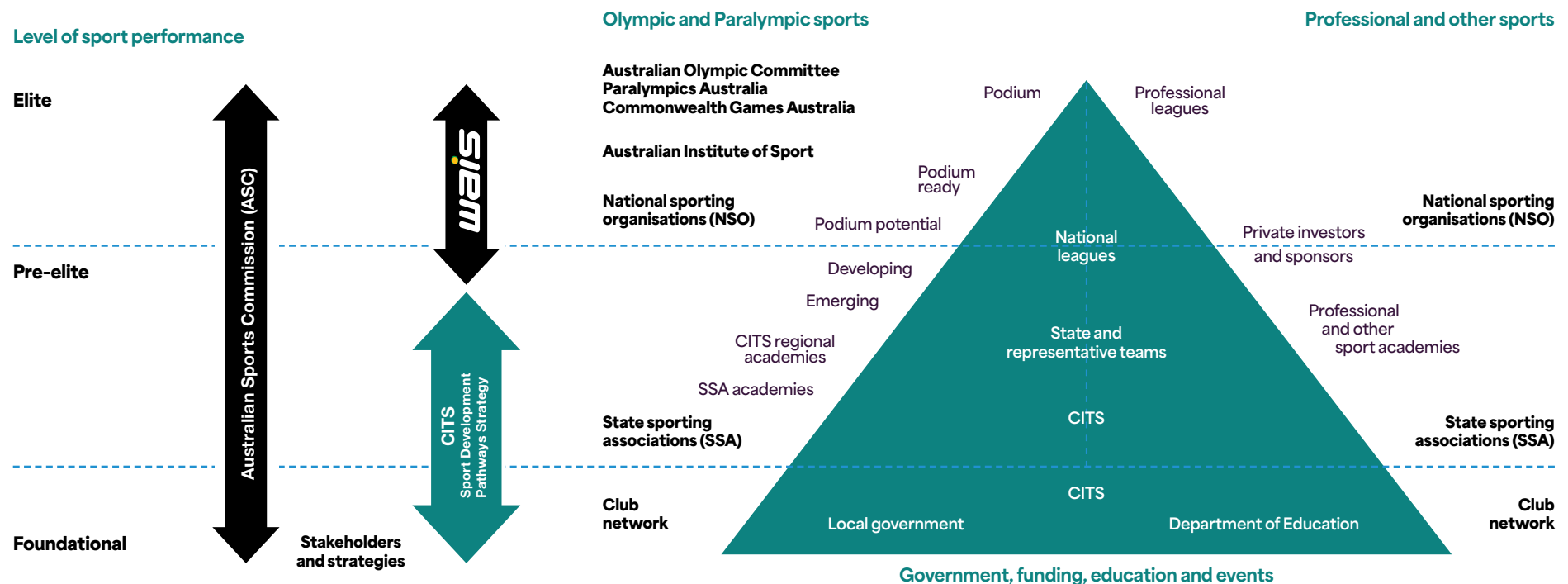
WA sport landscape stakeholders

The WA sport landscape stakeholder map (Figure 1) characterises the 3 key macro levels of the sport continuum – foundational (grass roots participation), pre-elite (development) and elite (high performance). The continuum is viewed from the perspective of governance, funding, events and direct service support. The positioning of the strategy is identified by the blue arrow on the left of the image.

CITS provides funding and support to organisations across the whole sport continuum, including to WAIS, regional academies of sport and SSAs. It also funds the development of sports infrastructure at all levels of the performance continuum.

WAIS is an integral service provider supporting national high-performance target outcomes through its supported Olympics and Paralympic sport programs, and direct support of categorised athletes (i.e. emerging, developing, podium potential, podium ready, podium) that are formally recognised by their respective national sporting organisation⁶.

Figure 1: WA sport landscape stakeholder map



Model adapted with permissions from NSW Office of Sport, Future Champions, Pathways to Sporting Success

Strategy framework

The framework below shows the enablers necessary to support the activation of the strategic priorities and initiatives identified in the strategy. These are focused on the holistic development pathway element of the sport sector structure. Through these enablers and initiatives, CITS will lead and support the WA sport sector in its effort to maximise the sporting experience for the community.

Figure 2: Strategy framework

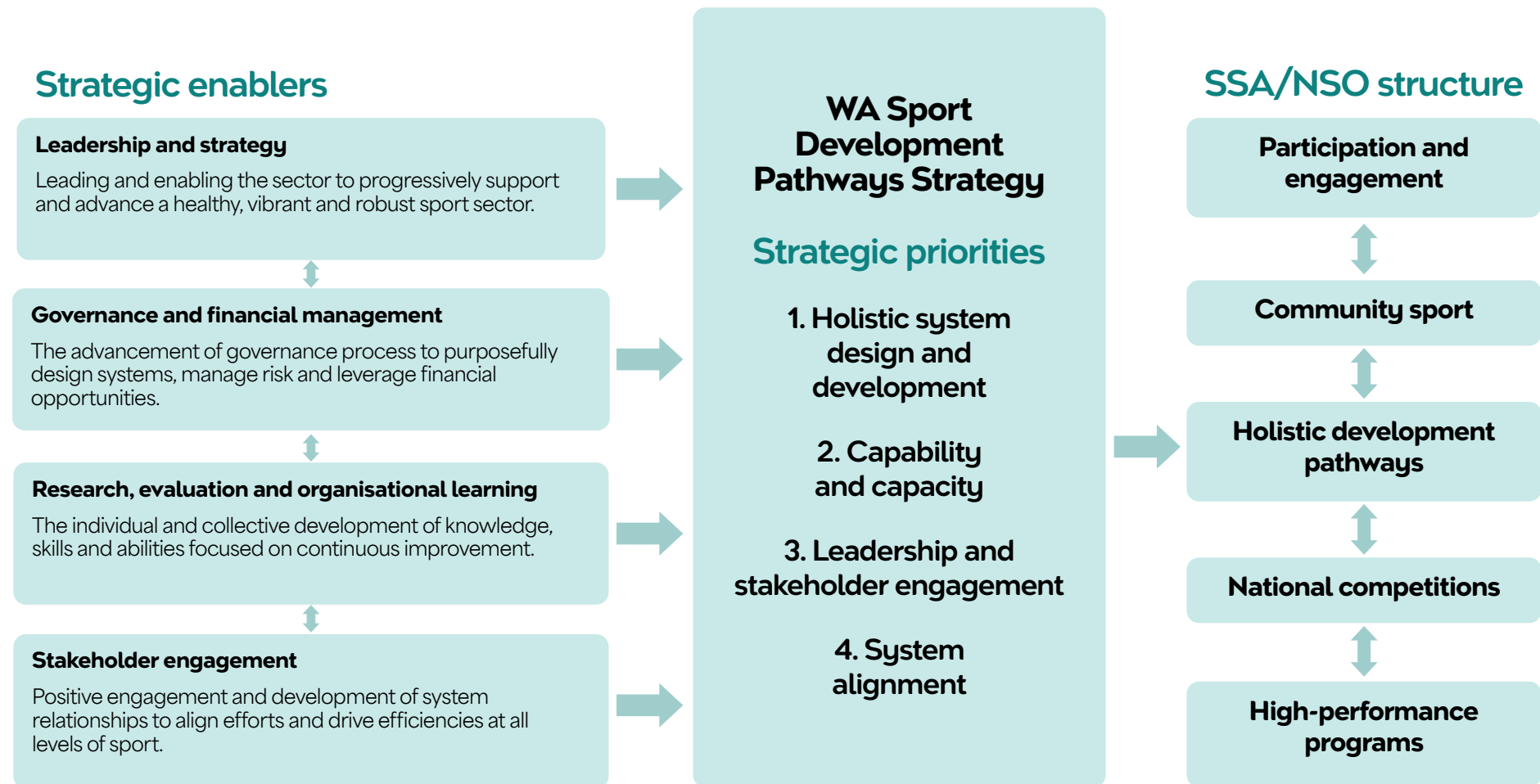


Image courtesy of Diving WA.



Western Australian **Sport Development Pathways Strategy: Implementation**

WA Sport Development Pathways Strategy: Summary

Vision	Western Australian State sporting associations create environments where athletes, coaches and officials are provided with every opportunity to develop and achieve.
Mission	Partnering to advance developmental excellence for Western Australia's sporting future.

Strategic priorities			
Holistic system design and development	Capability and capacity	Leadership and stakeholder engagement	System alignment
Enabling SSAs to purposefully design and implement holistic development pathways.	Identifying, collating and presenting development pathway research and resources to continually support sector best practice.	Actively leading and partnering with stakeholders in the state and national sporting ecosystem to support a cohesive sporting system.	The purposeful design of initiatives to support cohesive system functionality at state and national level.

Strategic enablers			
Leadership and strategy	Governance and financial management	Research, evaluation and organisational learning	Stakeholder engagement

Strategic outcomes	
Individual – Stakeholder centred practices that enable greater understanding, ownership and agency in pursuit of their sporting ambitions.	
Organisational – A more cohesive sector, represented by greater evidence-based practices, system relationships and program learnings.	
Sector – An expanded pipeline from community to high-performance sport, and a vibrant and robust sector with a strong sense of wellbeing.	

Strategic cycle

The fundamental purpose of development pathways is grounded in the desire for individuals to develop and achieve. The strategy recognises this and strives to support SSAs in ethically and responsibly maximising the sporting experience at every opportunity and with every interaction. The compounding effect of these interactions presents an invaluable investment in supporting an athlete's, coach's and official's progression. These horizons have been established with a purposeful approach, ensuring foundational knowledge, practices and behaviours are in place and can be progressively advanced.

The strategy starts with a foundation based on current evidence and will be responsive to emerging information driven by an active approach to evaluation and assessment. The direction for Horizon 2 and 3 will be determined by the evaluation findings conducted through Horizon 1.

Horizon 1	Horizon 2	Horizon 3
2026 - 2028	2029 - 2031	2032 and beyond
Identify and adapt	Substantiate and evolve	Elevate and transform
CITS will work with SSAs to strengthen foundations upon which future bespoke and unique practices can evolve. This is inclusive of drawing upon existing best practices associated with quality development pathways, evolving strategic direction and ensuring a cohesive sporting system.	An environment where new learnings, practices and behaviours are embedded and advanced. These characteristics are recognised community wide and further an individual's agency in their development.	The sector reflects a dynamic environment where evidence and research-informed practices are the norm. Development environments are nurturing and supportive, and positively challenge individuals in their development.

Horizon 1 strategic priorities and initiatives

The 12 strategic initiatives below represent the intention of CITS to provide system leadership across the WA sports sector, effectively supporting and facilitating the advancement of SSA development pathway knowledge and practices. These are detailed further in the following pages.

Holistic system design and development for purposeful system design	Capability and capacity for evidence informed practices	Leadership and stakeholder engagement for harnessing ecosystem knowledge	System alignment for a seamless sporting system
Initiative 1 Establish cross-jurisdictional partnerships to share sector leading resources.	Initiative 4 Facilitation of SSAs completion of a pathway health check.	Initiative 7 Creation and delivery of sector learning and collaboration workshops.	Initiative 10 Support SSAs to increase service provision to the regions and advance RASP capabilities.
Initiative 2 Facilitation of SSA developmental strategies and activities through targeted funding support.	Initiative 5 Communication of development guidelines, and the exploration of long-term athletic development practices.	Initiative 8 Establish strong partnerships and connections with the university sector to bolster innovative SSA practices.	Initiative 11 Work closely with WAIS to ensure development pathways support effective transitions to high performance.
Initiative 3 Promote and support the introduction and presence of the modern approach to coaching and officiating with existing NSO pathways.	Initiative 6 Establish organisational and system learnings behaviours across the sector and share practices and learnings.	Initiative 9 Explore a statewide athlete management system to enhance data capture and reporting on SSA pathway activity.	Initiative 12 Establish relationships with SSAs and NSOs to ensure the identification and coordinated provision of support for athletes, coaches and officials.

Holistic system design and development

Enabling SSAs to purposefully design and implement holistic development pathways.

Initiatives		
Initiative 1: Cross-jurisdictional partnerships	Initiative 2: Purposeful investment	Initiative 3: Holistic coaching and officiating
Intent		
The importance of holistic system design and development creates an individual centred approach in which the requirements of the athlete, coach or official are prioritised and appropriate support is provided at the right time and in the right manner. Beyond the purely technical and tactical, the capacity of the SSA is developed to provide appropriate support from a wellbeing, psychosocial, progressively challenging, and learning and growth perspective. The foundation is established where strategic and operational practices can be explored and expanded upon. CITS will support SSAs with greater tools and resources, and expert guidance. The desire with all actions is that they are sustainable and transformational, with a long term, deliberate and patient approach supported by CITS.		
Horizon 1: Identify and adapt		
Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 1: Cross-jurisdictional partnerships Research across the national sporting system to determine resources that have been developed and are in place. Establish agreements with system partners to share resources. Establish a national working group to determine future work initiatives.	There is consistency in resources and materials communicated and shared nationally. The quality of information communicated is of a high standard, enabling CITS and SSAs to pursue comprehensive best practice, i.e. the creation of development frameworks. The national sporting ecosystem is strengthened through connecting and engaging for the overall betterment of development pathways, with future content creation requirements identified.	An understanding and adoption of the complementary resources that exist nationwide with agreements in place. SSAs report a positive benefit from the presence of these resources and have adopted them into their practices. SSAs adoption of shared resources to advance their practices, i.e. Foundations, Talent, Elite and Mastery (FTEM).

Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 2: Purposeful investment Identify investment for SSAs to advance their development pathways and operational activities. Create grant guidelines that facilitate support development pathway activity. Review existing grant programs to avoid duplication and confusion. Administer and evaluate grant programs to ensure they are appropriate and effective for SSAs.	SSAs develop and/or evolve their development pathway strategies and practices for athletes, coaches and officials. Funding is used to support new activity that advances SSA practices towards sustainable and elevated operational practices. Subject matter experts are engaged to assist as required, especially in the areas of holistic athletic development, health, wellbeing and psychosocial development. CITS works collaboratively with SSAs to support their strategic development as required.	SSA development pathway strategies are developed or improved. SSAs report and present to the sector on new practices as a result of funding support. SSAs and CITS report positively on relationship development and engagement. Subject matter expert detail is incorporated into the sport development blueprint.
Initiative 3: Holistic coaching and officiating To support the SSAs to advance their modern approach to coaching and officiating through WA in partnership with NSOs. Engage with SSAs to promote this activity and leverage existing ASC and NSO activity that is in place. Support SSAs to evolve practices to positively impact clubs and associations.	SSAs are engaged with the adoption of online and in-person education. SSAs engage in NSO and ASC train the trainer sessions as delivered to support the ongoing local delivery of holistic coach and official development. Existing NSO programs are delivered in WA, with NSO support of SSAs. Both metro and regional areas are serviced.	Level of collaborative NSO and SSA activity through WA. Number of SSAs who engage in the ASC programming and seek to have train the trainer sessions developed for their sport. Engagement and satisfaction with education, development and training programs is captured and reported.

Capability and capacity

Identifying, collating and presenting development pathway research and resources to continually support sector best practice.

Initiatives		
Initiative 4: SSA pathway health check	Initiative 5: Development guidelines and athletic development	Initiative 6: Organisational and system learning
Intent		
Supporting the advancement of SSA capability and capacity to enable them to evolve development pathway practices is a priority for CITS. This will be achieved by CITS adopting a consultative approach that is determined in accordance with SSA and NSO engagement. SSAs will identify areas where they require support and to partner with CITS. CITS will facilitate capability development to support healthy sporting experiences, program review and learning to capture program outcomes and enhance future initiatives.		
Horizon 1: Identify and adapt		
Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 4: SSA pathway health check Work with SSAs to conduct a pathway health check to establish a benchmark of operations. Work with SSAs to analyse findings and identify strategic and operational strengths and opportunities. Provide support to SSAs, in conjunction with their NSO, to identify future practices and directions to address findings.	SSAs and CITS develop a shared understanding of the sports development pathway activity. Opportunities and challenges are identified and addressed in strategy development to determine support required. NSOs and WAIS are involved in discussions that enable a vertically integrated awareness of an SSAs status and support required.	Number of sports that complete the health check. Analysis of results to identify trends, opportunities and challenges across the sector.

Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 5: Development guidelines and athletic development Research the academic literature to seek an understanding of existing development pathway guidelines that may exist. Connect and engage with sector experts to shape guidelines specific to the Australian sporting culture and environment. Create and communicate detail regarding guidelines and how they positively support SSA practices. Research and investigate long term athletic development programs (LTADP) in Australia and internationally to gauge the potential to introduce these to WA. Engage with SSAs to promote the importance of LTADP and understand how these can be implemented across development pathway environments and earlier through clubs.	Evidence and expert-informed development pathway guidelines are developed and communicated to SSAs. Sport specific engagement occurs based upon the knowledge obtained from health checks and the specificity of the guidelines to each sport. A more thorough understanding of LTADPs that exist with an appreciation for how these programs are being delivered. Greater clarity on athletic development and its correlation with (early) sport specialisation and multi-sport athletes. Progressive SSA engagement on the topic of LTADPs and how they believe these can be explored to benefit their programs and wider membership. Inclusive of associated coaching and parental development.	Development pathway guidelines are developed and communicated. Guidelines are built into SSA strategies. SSAs report that the guidelines help in shaping strategy development and communication with members. Specificity of information relating to LTADPs with a documented position on their application in WA. Connection with subject matter experts to provide examples of best practice where LTADPs are in place.
Initiative 6: Organisational and system learning Engage with SSAs and understand current program review and evaluation processes. Connect with cross-jurisdictional partners to see if any review and evaluation processes exist. Evolve known learning organisational models and Plan-Do-Review mechanisms.	Support for SSAs exist in order to evaluate development pathway strategies. Plan-Do-Review (or similar) structures are created to review program efficacy and encourage continual reflection and adaptation. Athlete, coach and official development plans are created, with mentors in place where feasible.	SSAs and CITS work collaboratively on development pathway strategic evaluations. Micro program review mechanisms have been developed, with evidence of learnings captured and implemented. Development plans created and in place.



Image courtesy of Water Polo WA.

Leadership and stakeholder engagement

Harnessing the rich capabilities across the national sporting ecosystem to elevate development focused understanding and practices.

Initiatives		
Initiative 7: Sector learning and engagement	Initiative 8: Research and evidence-based practices	Initiative 9: Technology informed practices
Intent		
The WA sport sector will benefit from being more connected and engaged with each other. CITS will support and facilitate the sector in engaging with sports sector stakeholders and with the university sector to advance creativity and innovation. It is recognised that collectively there will be minimal advancement in development pathways if yesterday's practises are only incrementally furthered. Identification and engagement of ecosystem partners is critical, as is the adoption of technology to record, monitor, inform and advance practices and behaviours.		
Horizon 1: Identify and adapt		
Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 7: Sector learning and engagement Engage with the sector to understand the topics and insights they are seeking to gain further understanding on what can be effectively delivered through formal/informal sessions. Work with SSAs who receive development specific funding to present back to the sector on their intent, actions and learnings/outcomes from program initiatives. Seek to establish cross-sport engagement so that sports can learn from each other and further engagements.	There is an established calendar of workshops, learning series and/or sessions hosted by CITS that are informed by the sector. SSAs that received support present to the sector on their development program activities and learnings. Cross-sport collaboration has commenced amongst sports that present with similar challenges and opportunities. Host WA's first development pathway conference. The WA sport development pathway conference is hosted and attracts national and international experts to present on sector leading practices.	A learning and engagement schedule is developed. The sector reports the sessions as valuable and worthwhile of their attendance. SSAs present to the sector on their funding supported programs. Cross-sport collaboration opportunities are identified and facilitated by CITS. The conference has been hosted and attendee feedback sought. Review of intended versus actual attendance and impact of the conference.

Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 8: Research and evidence-based practices Proactively establish relationships with WA's 4 universities. Connect and facilitate engagement with universities and SSAs. Support SSAs individually or in partnership to explore research projects with the universities. CITS to engage directly with universities to advance initiatives.	A collaborative relationship with the major 4 universities is established, with an understanding of their activities and areas of interest and expertise. SSAs are connected with the universities and seek to explore and/or engage in projects to advance their operations. SSAs seek to explore these relationships to increase evidence based and research informed practices. CITS partners with universities on focused projects.	Awareness from SSAs where they believe evidence research gaps exist to support their operations. Number of SSA and university collaborations/ projects in place. CITS projects activated with universities.
Initiative 9: Technology informed practices CITS to explore an Athlete Management System (AMS)/Management Information System that is utilised by SSAs and RASP to inform and support development pathway practices and future directions.	An understanding of how SSAs will use an AMS is developed. The capacity and capability of AMS use in SSAs is understood. An understanding of how the system can be adopted in the RASP is developed.	Pricing and utilisation considerations of an AMS by SSAs and RASP are understood. Privacy, security and safety factors are considered and established. Benefits to AMS usage are identified and understood by SSAs and RASP.

System alignment

Actively leading and partnering with stakeholders in the state and national sporting ecosystem to support a cohesive sporting system.

Initiatives		
Initiative 10: SSA and RASP engagement	Initiative 11: Alignment with WAIS	Initiative 12: Coordinated system support
Intent		
Fundamental to the effective functioning and advancement of the sporting ecosystem is a purposefully aligned system. CITS will support system alignment by working with SSAs, RASP and WAIS to further an understanding of their operations and direction and ensure that domestic practices advance the ambitions of the Western Australian sport sector.		
Horizon 1: Identify and adapt		
Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 10: SSA and RASP engagement CITS internally coordinates and aligns messaging to ensure an integrated approach to RASP and SSAs. RASP staff and network support SSAs to ensure thorough regional planning and delivery. RASP and SSAs develop regular communication and reporting processes to inform program efficacy and athlete and coach development.	SSA development pathways are inclusive of regional servicing and engagement. Mechanisms are established that advance engagement with individuals into metro programs and/or promote a strong presence in regions to positively impact development environments. Communication and reporting tools are established and maintained to ensure monitoring and action of regional requirements.	Regional initiatives are contained in SSA strategies. SSA annual planning and servicing plans are agreed with RASP and are met or exceeded. Athlete, coach and official development plans are coordinated in a collaborative manner.

Initiative	Outcomes	Measures
Initiative 11: Alignment with WAIS Engage with WAIS to understand the opportunities for development pathways to support their efforts in high performance. Seek expert insights from WAIS practitioners to ensure appropriate holistic development practices are created and implemented. Support the SSA and WAIS relationship as appropriate.	SSA development pathway strategies are developed with a progressive approach to transition to WAIS/national training centres (as appropriate). SSAs develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in supporting athlete development and progression to WAIS. Athletes and families understand that transitioning to WAIS is a progressive stage as part of their overall high-performance pursuits.	SSA and WAIS engagement. Increase in holistic awareness and abilities of athletes progressing into WAIS. Clarity of communication in the sector.
Initiative 12: System coherence and cohesion Engage with SSAs and NSOs and understand the roles and responsibilities of each organisation and associated deliverables. Encourage NSO engagement in the development of the SSA development pathways strategy for athletes, coaches and officials. Include NSOs in the cross-jurisdictional resource creation and sharing exercise.	System relationships are enhanced and functional in a vertical and horizontal manner. The NSO is actively engaged with the SSA in development pathway activity and supports the domestic development of athletes, coaches and officials. SSAs are further advanced in their position to support clubs due to NSO collaboration.	To monitor the level of NSO involvement in SSA development pathway strategy development. Enhanced strategic and operational activities as a result of NSO involvement. SSA report status of relationships and support.

Horizon 1 Timeline

Commencement:

Initiative	2026	2027	2028
Holistic System Design and Development			
1. Cross-jurisdictional partnerships			
2. Purposeful investment			
3. Holistic coaching and officiating			
Capability and Capacity			
4. SSA pathway health check			
5. Development principles and athletic development			
6. Organisational and system learning			
Leadership and Stakeholder Engagement			
7. Sector learning and engagement			
8. Research and evidence-based practices			
9. Technology informed practices			
System Alignment			
10. SSA and RASP engagement			
11. Alignment with WAIS			
12. Coordinated system support			

Definitions

These definitions are shared to assist with understanding the context of terminology adopted throughout the remainder of this strategy.

Term	Definition
Australian Institute of Sport (AIS)	The AIS leads and enables a united and collaborative high-performance system that supports Australian athletes to achieve international podium success.
Australian Sports Commission (ASC)	The ASC is the Australian Government agency responsible for supporting and investing in sport at all levels.
Athlete	Reference to athletes in this document includes athletes, coaches and officials.
Athlete Management System	An electronic platform that enables the capturing, storage, monitoring and reporting of athlete data to inform and support decision making.
Development	The process in which someone or something grows or changes and becomes more advanced ⁷ .
Ecosystem	A complex network of stakeholders (athletes, coaches, officials, administrators) that interact with one another across the varying levels of structures of sport.
Foundations, Talent, Elite and Mastery (FTEM)	The FTEM athlete development framework developed by the Australian Institute of Sport and the NSW Office of Sport.
High performance	The recognition of athletes who are nationally categorised and/or scholarship holders within the National Institute Network (NIN), i.e. WAIS.
Long Term Athletic Development	Habitual development of athleticism over time to improve health and fitness, enhance physical performance, reduce the relative risk of injury and develop the confidence and competence of all youth ⁸ .

Term	Definition
National Sporting Organisation (NSO) National Sporting Organisation for People with Disability (NSOD)	The organisation recognised by the ASC as the pre-eminent body for the sport it represents in Australia. Collectively referred to in the document as NSOs.
National Institute Network (NIN)	Consists of the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and the State and Territory Institutes / Academies of Sport.
Participation	Involvement in sport at the community and recreational level, either at grassroots or in a continued involvement through teenage and adult years.
Regional Athlete Support Program (RASP)	The CITS Regional Athlete Support Program assists in delivering high-quality daily training environments for talented, regionally based athletes and coaches who are part of a sport's talent development pathway.
State sporting association (SSA), State sporting association for people with disability (SSAD)	The organisation recognised by CITS as the pre-eminent body for the sport it represents in Western Australia. Collectively referred to in the document as SSAs.
Talent	Talent is positioned as innate (originating in variables present at birth), multi-dimensional (reflecting capacities from a range of cognitive, physical and psychological domains), emergent (involving interactions among different types of variables that combine multiplicatively), dynamic (evolving across development due to interactions with environments) and symbiotic (the ultimate value of an individual's talent is determined by social and cultural factors in the environment) ⁹ .
Western Australian Institute of Sport (WAIS)	WA's member of the NIN network and the pre-eminent high-performance sport organisation in WA, focussed on Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports.



Image courtesy of Golf WA.

References

¹ Examining European Talent Development Environments: Athlete, Parent and Coach Perceptions., Journal of Sports Sciences, Vol 40, pp2533-2543, B Megicks, et al. 2022.

² Compromising Talent: Issues in identifying and selecting talent in sport, Quest, Vol 70 No 1, pp48-63. J Baker, J Schorer, N Wattie, 2018.

³ Optimising long-term athletic development: An investigation of practitioners' knowledge, adherence, practices and challenges PLOS One, K Till et al. 2022.

⁴ Routledge Handbook on Talent Identification and Development, Chapter 5, How Contemporary International Perspectives have Consolidated a Best-Practice Approach for Identifying and Developing Sporting Talent. J Weissensteiner, 2016.

⁵ Applied Coaching Research Journal Vol 6. UK Coaching. Athletes as Learners: Characteristics of High-quality Learning and Development Environments, 2020.

⁶ Future Champions Pathways to Sporting Success, NSW Office of Sport. https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2021-04/future-champions-strategy-full-version_0.pdf

⁷ Cambridge Dictionary <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/development>

⁸ National strength and conditioning association position statement on Long Term Athlete Development. The journal of strength and conditioning research. Vol 30 No 6, pp1491-1509, 2016.

⁹ Is it time to retire talent from the discussions of athlete development? Routledge, J Baker, K Johnston, K Till, 2023.



Image courtesy of Volleyball WA.



PO BOX 8349
Perth Business Centre WA 6849

Email: info@cits.wa.gov.au
Website: cits.wa.gov.au