



# **WATER POLO AUSTRALIA PERFORMANCE PATHWAYS ROAD SHOW**

**December 2023 – March 2024**



## Acknowledgement of Country

Water Polo Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognise the ongoing connection to lands, waters and communities.

We pay our respects to the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to Elders past, present and emerging.



# Presentation Content

1. The “Big Picture” - Performance Pathways (PP) Sport in Australia – Key Stakeholders in Sport in Australia and Water Polo in Australia
2. WPA National Strategic Framework including National Performance Framework
3. Funding Structure for WPA in HP and PP
4. The Athlete Development Journey within WPA, what does this mean for YOU!!
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  3. Key Changes in NAGP
5. Pathways in NOT Linear
6. The Importance of Clubs in the Success of Australian Teams
7. What you should see coming from WPA
8. Questions



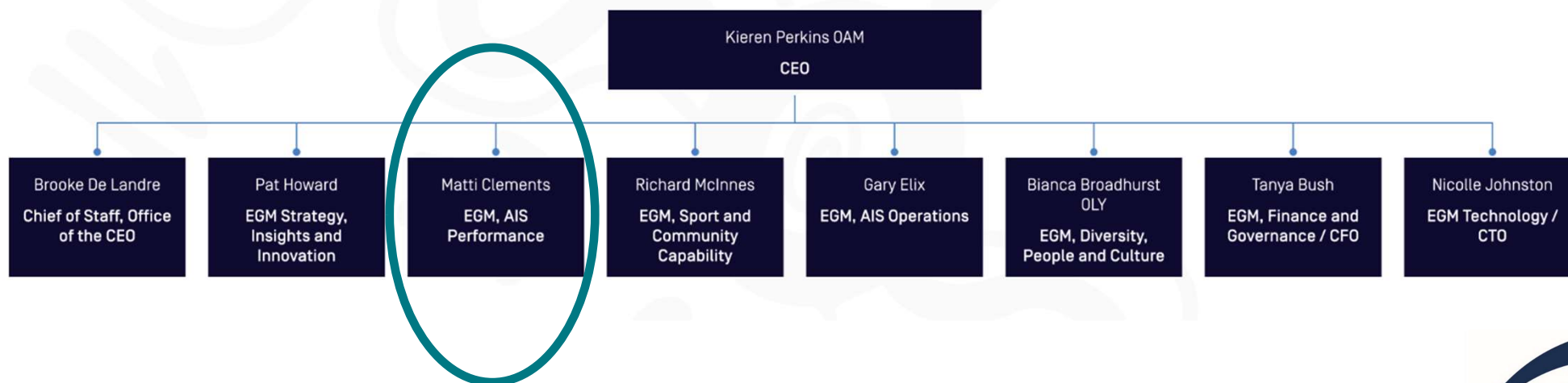
# The “Big Picture” - Performance Pathways (PP) Sport in Australia

## Key Stakeholders in Sport in Australia and Water Polo in Australia

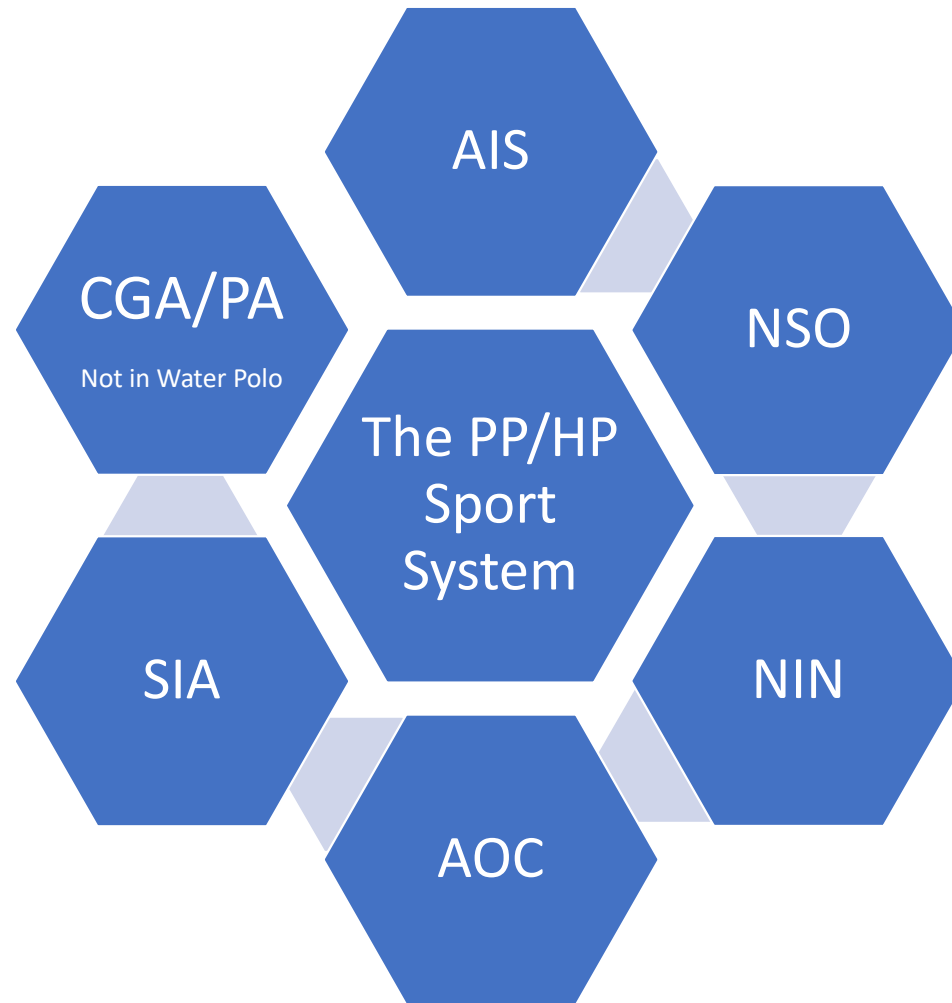


# Australian Sports Commission

## ORGANISATIONAL CHART



# Key Stakeholders in Sport in Australia



## The National Sporting Organisations



For example:

Water Polo Australia

Squash Australia

Archery Australia

Swimming Australia

Hockey Australia

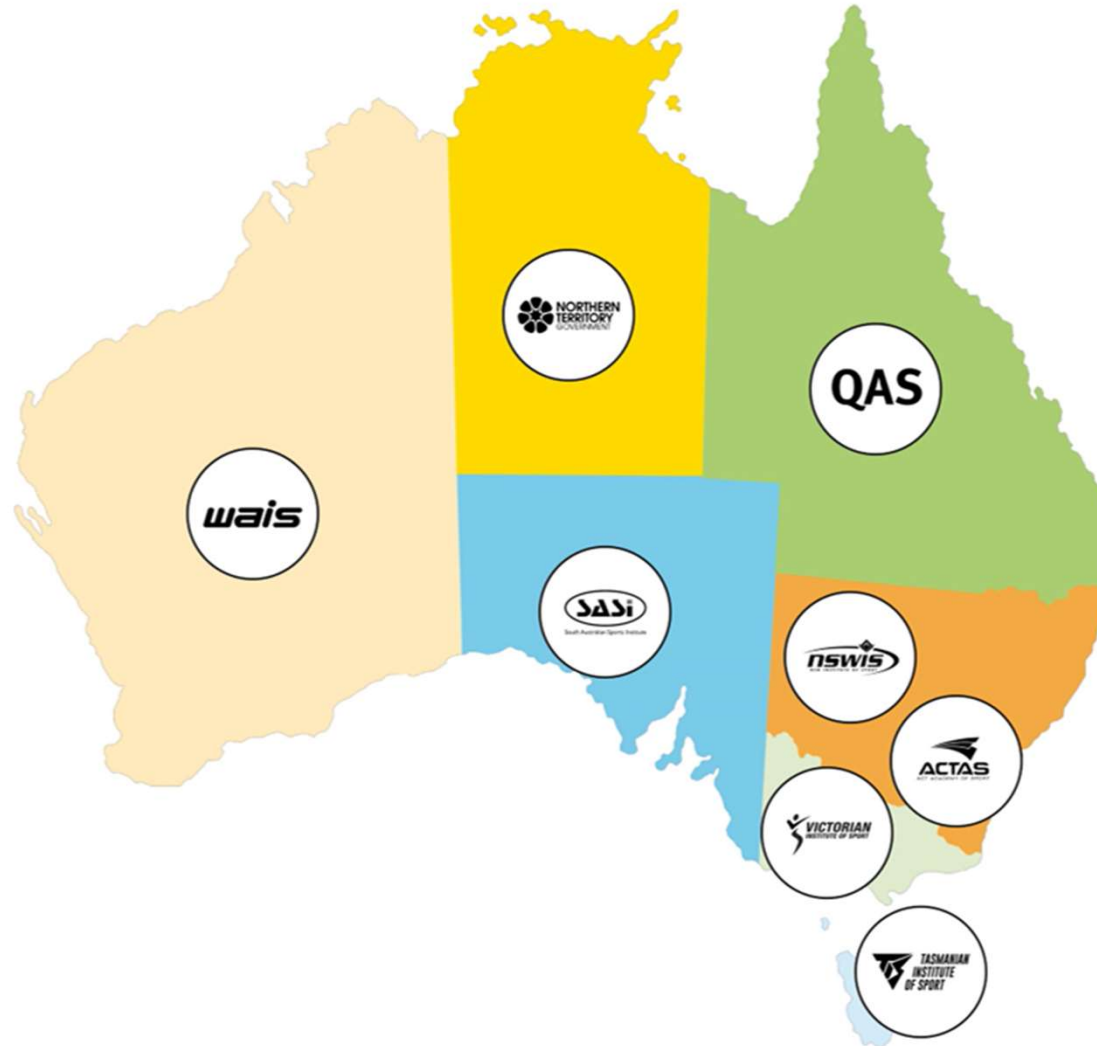
Australian Sailing

Athletics Australia

Volleyball Australia



# The National Institute Network

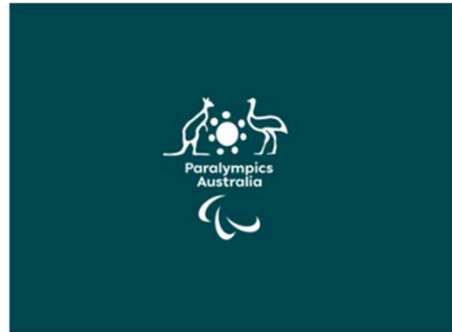


## The Games Partners



### **Australian Olympic Committee**

Develops, promotes and protects the Olympic Movement in Australia



### **Paralympics Australia**

Assists Australians with disabilities compete at the Summer & Winter Paralympic Games.



### **Commonwealth Games Australia**

Works with high performance sports to ensure best preparation for a Commonwealth Games.



## The role of the Australian Institute of Sport

- 1 Allocates funding to each sport to achieve their high performance goals

in fact . . . In 2022, the AIS invested over \$155 million directly into 33 national sports
- 2 Provides direct Athlete Income Support (dAIS) grants to many high level athletes

. . . these grants assist athletes with the ongoing costs of performing at the top level
- 3 Creates system-wide services, research and solutions that enhance performance

this includes . . . the Mental Health Referral Network and the Win Well pledge



# Performance Pathway – Categorisation (more detail later)

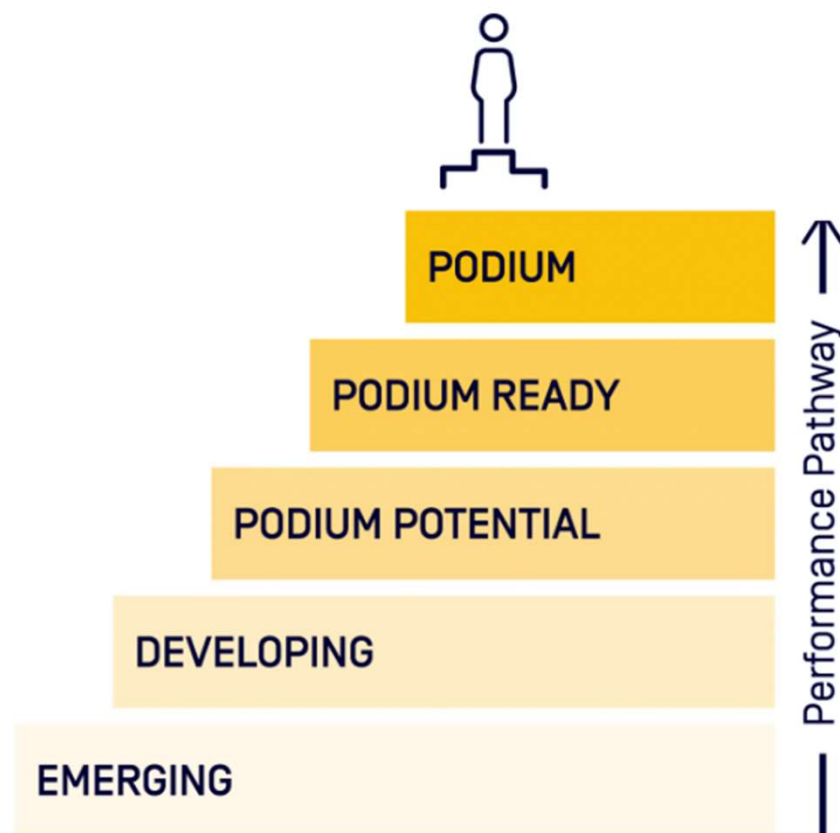
## Performance Pathway

All sports have a Performance Pathway made up of five (5) categories, for their high level athletes.

The pathway starts at the **emerging** level and progress towards **podium**.

Each sport has it's own set of sport-specific criteria for each categorisation level.

Each level represents the different funding, support and resources that the sport invests.



# WPA National Strategic Framework including National Performance Framework



# NATIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

## FIVE STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

To achieve our Vision we will UNITE to deliver our five integrated Strategic Elements. Participants, Clubs and Sustainability are at the heart of our decision making.



# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

	EMPOWER	DEVELOP	PLAY	PERFORM	PROSPER
<b>Clubs &amp; Associations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Club Operation Plan</li> <li>• Live the Values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a positive participant experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a positive participant experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local rep teams</li> <li>• Club Development Programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local partnerships</li> <li>• Local community engagement</li> <li>• Enhance participant base</li> </ul>
<b>SSO's</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSO Operation Plan</li> <li>• Empower Clubs</li> <li>• Lead by example</li> <li>• Live the values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support &amp; lead the development of coaches, referees, paid and unpaid staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Competitions</li> <li>• State Teams, Coaches and Referees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Development Programs for players, coaches &amp; referees</li> <li>• State Championships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State government</li> <li>• State School Sport</li> <li>• State based partners, sponsors</li> </ul>
<b>NSO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NSO Operation Plan</li> <li>• Lead National Strategy</li> <li>• Empower &amp; support States &amp; Clubs</li> <li>• Lead by example</li> <li>• Live the values</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the development of coaches, referees, paid and unpaid staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Competitions Calendar &amp; framework</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National programs for players, coaches and referees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal government</li> <li>• Sport Australia and AIS</li> <li>• NIN network</li> <li>• AOC</li> <li>• FINA</li> <li>• National partners and sponsors</li> </ul>



# NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

## PURPOSE

- To identify, develop and optimise Australia's best Talent to excel on the International stage, in a manner that optimises the involvement of key stakeholders and inspires future generations to follow.

## OBJECTIVES

- To develop and refine the Australian Way which describes the attitude, culture and style of play, that affords Australian teams a competitive advantage against the leading International teams and to ensure it is imbedded in programs across Australia.
- To develop and continually refine the understanding of the characteristics of successful performers and utilise this information to inform the talent identification and development processes for players, coaches and referees at all levels.
- To implement a thorough, affordable, collaborative National Age Group Program to optimise the development of identified players, coaches and referees with the attributes to produce sustainable and successful International performances
- To effectively integrate all elements of the Performance system that contribute to the development of successful National senior teams.



# NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The National Performance Framework (NPF) seeks to integrate all of the key stakeholders in the Performance system within Australian Water Polo to ensure that collectively the system produces exceptional outcomes and maximises the limited resources available.

**Those key components are:**

- 
1. Australian Water Polo (AWL) League Teams
  2. Clubs
  3. The National Institute Network (NIN)
  4. Water Polo Australia's National Programs (Senior and Age Group)
  5. State Association Development Programs and State Teams



# NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK



# NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

## Strategic Initiatives

- 1. Identify:**  
Find the Talent most likely to progress
- 2. Develop:**  
Create an environment that enables development and retention of Talent
- 3. Manage:**  
Holistically equip the Talent with skills and attributes to succeed Internationally
- 4. Perform:**  
Deliver International success and inspire future generations

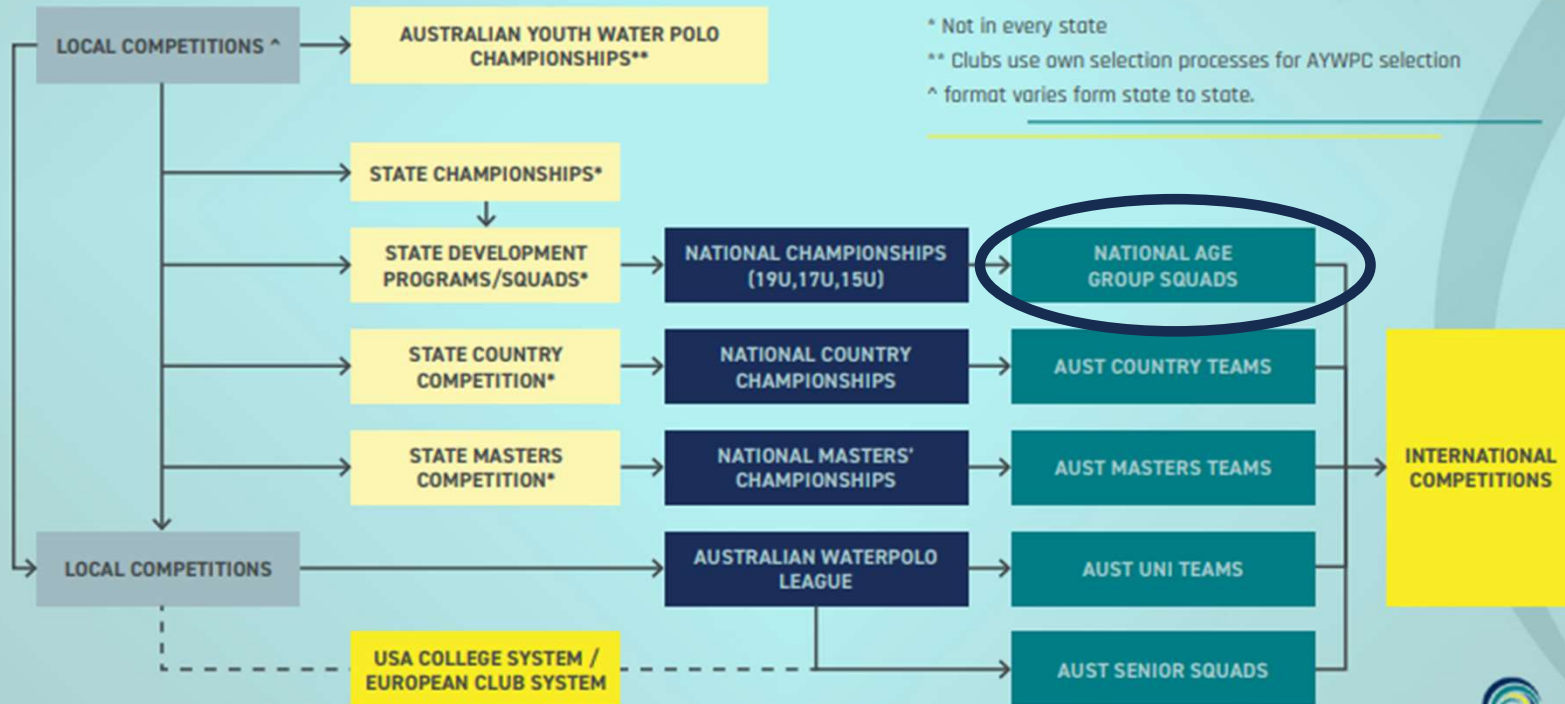
## Supporting Systems

- A. Identification and selection systems
- B. National competition framework
- C. Performance support services



# WATER POLO AUSTRALIA TALENT FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW

COMPETITION FRAMEWORK FOR TALENT DEVELOPMENT  
(PLAYERS, COACHES, REFEREES)



\* Not in every state

\*\* Clubs use own selection processes for AYWPC selection

^ format varies form state to state.



# Funding Structure for WPA in HP and PP



## Funding Structure for WPA in HP and PP

- AIS fund sports based on performance at Senior Bench Mark Events (BME)
- Stingers are funded as a HP program as they are ranked in the top 8
- Sharks are not funded as a HP program as they are ranked outside the top 8
- Female PP funding therefore used for PP including NAGP
- Male PP goes to Sharks as PP program and therefore no funding for the NAGP



# The Athlete Development Journey within WPA ... What does this mean for you!!



## Purpose of the NAGP

- The purpose of the NAGP is to identify, support and develop athletes in preparation for the relevant international age group events but also to best prepare them to compete for selection in future National senior teams.
- To support this purpose WPA have repositioned the NAGP under the guidance of the National Performance Unit (NPU) effectively aligning the NAGP program to the senior National team programs. This allows for direct coaching input and program design by the National head Coaches/Coaching Directors.



# NAGP Guiding Principles

- **Performance and Potential:** Identify and select athletes, coaches and officials through the lenses of **current performance and likelihood of future success.**
- **Challenge and Support:** Structure and deliver programs that reflect the commitment required for success, with the **appropriate level and types of support** to ensure athletes, coaches and officials do not burn out.
- **Holistic Development:** Structure programs to support the development of athletes, coaches and officials as a **person, player and performer, in that order.**
- **Reflect and Respect:** Prepare and deliver carefully considered 2 year programs that **reflect and respect the role and time spent in National, State and Club** programs, as well as the sequential nature of the respective NAGP programs (16&U → 18&U → 20&U).
- **Communication:** Ensure **communication channels** clearly reflect and value the contribution of all stakeholders.



# Performance v Potential Matrix - NAGP



## Biology and Ability

- Early maturing athletes will often dominate age group sport but don't develop the other skills to succeed as adults.
- Selectors need to look beyond physical maturity to ensure players have the characteristics to succeed when physical maturity events out.



# NAGP Objectives

Within the NAGP the objectives of each program are as outlined below and will be guided by the National Performance Unit (NPU)

## 16&U NAGP

- ***Athlete Education and Induction***: Ensure that the athletes are inducted into the NAGP and understand what it takes to be an elite athlete.
- ***Fundamentals***: Work on building excellent fundamentals (technical and tactical) that align with the Australian style of play
- ***Preparation***: Prepare the athletes for their first international exposure and what is required to perform at this level



## NAGP Objectives (cont ..)

### 18&U NAGP

- ***Athlete Education and Induction***: Further the education process in all aspects of the athletes' life particular school/sport balance
- ***Build***: Build on the fundamentals, further develop the technical and tactical skills, building on 16&U experience and feedback from National, State and Club coaches
- ***Balance and Transition***: Support to maximise retention of athletes through this transition phase out of school



## NAGP Objectives (cont ...)

### 20&U NAGP

- ***Individualised Support***: Build on previous experience and specialise the learning for each athlete relevant to their stage in life (school, uni, work, etc)
- ***Transition***: Develop the tactical skills required to support the athletes' transition into Senior water polo
- ***Perform***: Increased performance focus on the 20&U team for World Aquatics events and looking to begin to compete for senior squad selection



# The performance and effectiveness of the NAGP will be evaluated through the following metrics: **IN THE FUTURE**

## Performance

- Assess performances against expectation and plans at international events for the 18&U and 20&U teams
- Number of players within the NAGP cohort who are at or above the minimum standards required on agreed metrics
- Potential to use squad averages on certain metrics to create team buy in toward common goal when training in DTE's. Set squad targets for each cohort to create some rivalry between programs.



## The performance and effectiveness of the NAGP will be evaluated through the following metrics IN THE FUTURE (cont ...)

### Progression

- Increasing the number of players who progress to play 100 AWL Games and/or remain in the sport as referees, coaches (long term study)
- Depth of talent for selection with a goal to have three players per position that selection panel feel would be capable of performing at the next level in each National 20&U and Senior teams.

### Retention

- Reducing the number of athletes who drop out/burn out of Water Polo from NAGP cohort.
- Participant feedback through annual surveys



## The performance and effectiveness of the NAGP will be evaluated through the following metrics IN THE FUTURE (cont ...)

### Interest

- The number of applications for coaching and selector roles with NAGP's
- The number of appointed coaches and selectors who reapply for the following term
- Gender balance of applications for NAGP roles



# NAGP – Daily Training Environment (DTE)

## Guiding Principles

- Athlete-centered approach with integrated inter-disciplinary support **technically and tactically led by the Head Coach**
- Training program/s based on the individual needs of players and the respective teams, reflective of WITTW and current world trends
- Development of appropriate training specificity and quality with the right balance of challenge and support

The following is a ***guide to training expectations*** for each of the different levels of categorisation.

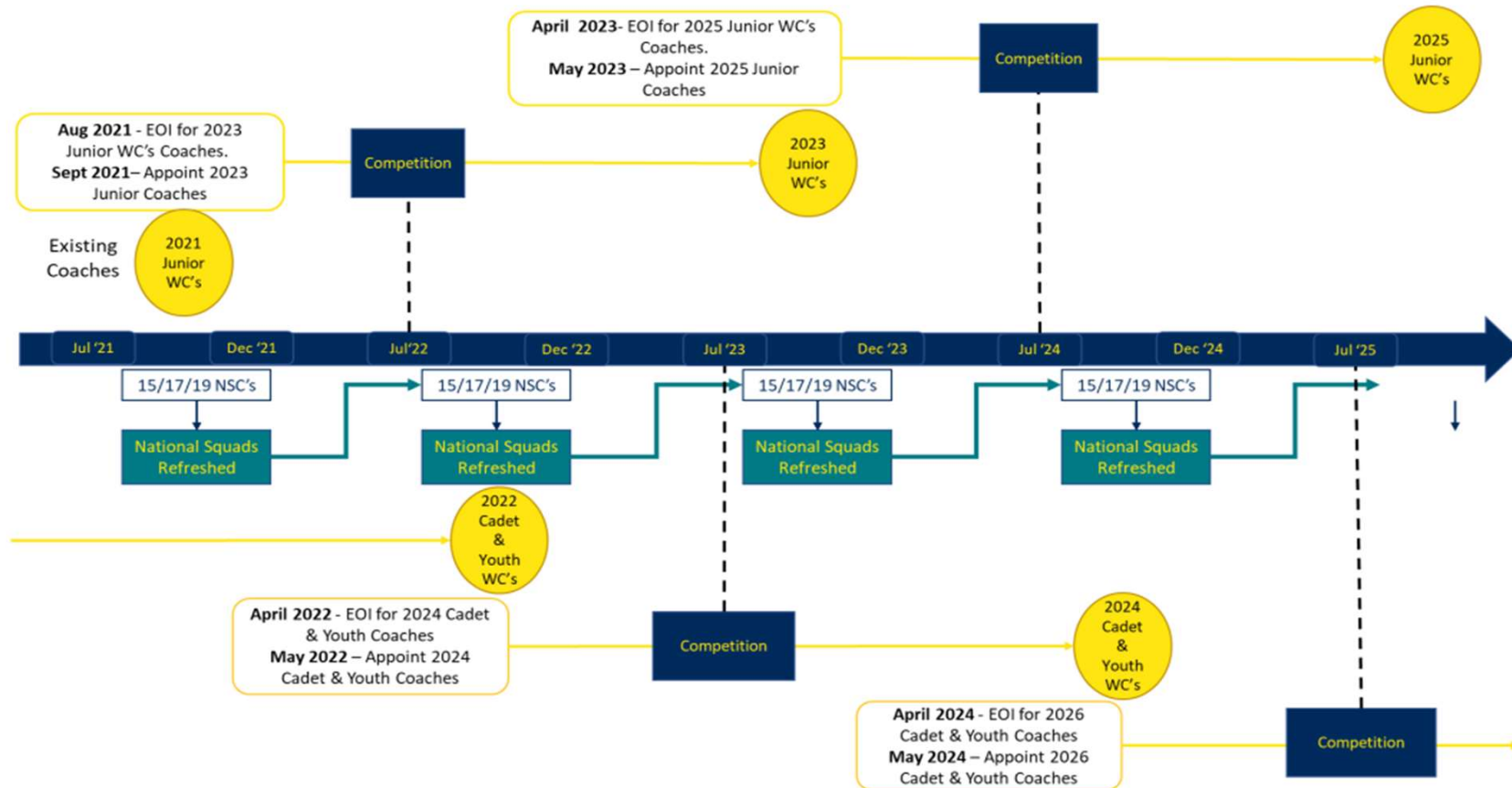
o ***Podium Potential, Podium Ready and Podium Players***: up to 22 hours total of training per week

o ***Developing and Emerging Players***: up to 16-18 hours of total training per week – (majority likely to be in senior school, University or commencing work)

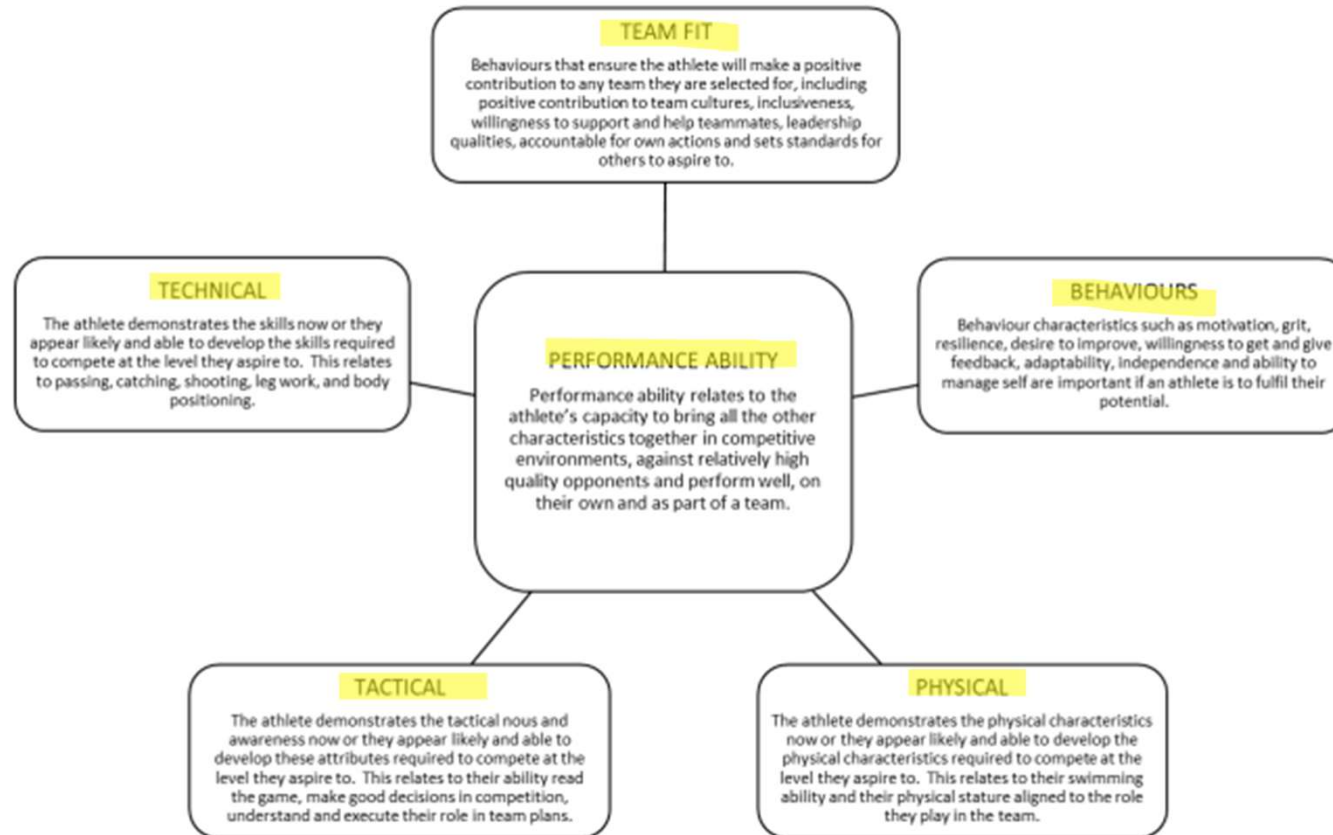
o ***Aspiring players*** who wish to progress: up to 10-12 hours of total training per week. These players are not yet categorised nationally and may still be playing other sports, as well as going to school.



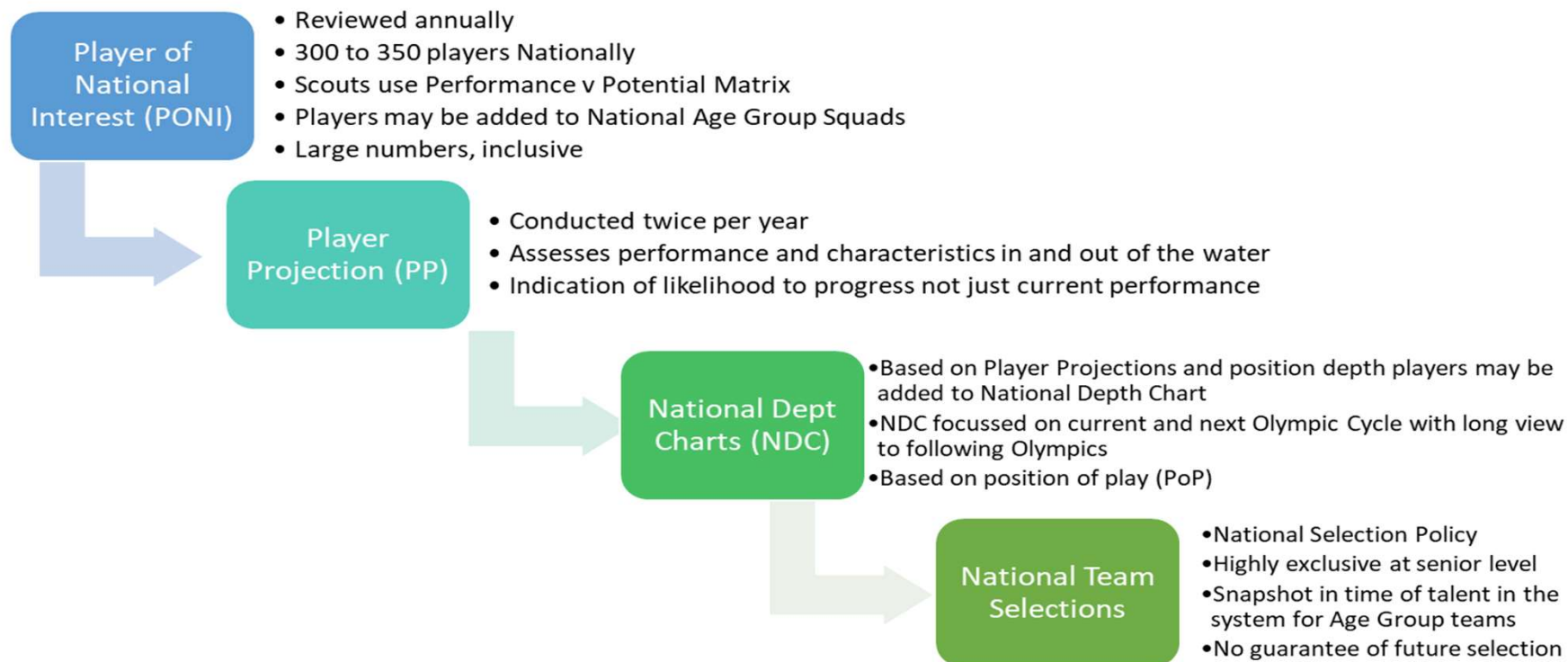
# NAGP Timeline



# NAGP Athlete Characteristics



# Identification and Selection Process



# What does this mean for 2024 NAGP Squads

Selected in 2024 Squad (Sep 2023 to Dec 2024)

- 16&U, 18&U and 20&U NAGP squads selected from respective NSC
- These athletes are part of the 2024 squad for the entire year, different athletes are invited to attend different camps / tours throughout the year
- All squad members and families will have access to online education sessions throughout the year, Ready to Perform Workshops
- Inductions will be organised for all NAGP squads, including parents
- Proposed overview of 2024 program:
  - Camps in December (after NSC)
  - Camps in January (after AYC)
  - Camps in April
  - International Tours – June/July
- All camps will incorporate education sessions (such as AWE, Nutrition, S&C, Mental Fitness) as well as the water sessions



## “Ready to Perform” Workshops NAGP Education Series



Evidence based seminars  
developed by field  
experts



Curriculum designed for  
athletes at relevant  
stages of their journey



Delivery specific to needs  
of athletes, parents and  
coaches



Topics covering the  
various areas in the  
athletes development



# TeamUp Calendar

Calendars ^

Today 1 Dec 2023 - 29 Feb 2024

Month Year Table Agenda List

Filter

COMPETITIONS

- 1.National
- ACT
- NSW
- QLD
- SA
- TAS
- VIC
- WA

GENERAL

Learning & Development

- 1.National
- ACT
- NSW
- QLD
- SA
- TAS
- VIC
- WA

PERFORMANCE

- 1.National
- ACT
- International
- NSW

Date range: Three months | Group by: Month | Details:

## December 2023

Sat 2 Dec	All day	Sydney Super League (Sydney)
	All day - Sun 3 Dec	U12s Banana Bowl (Sydney)
Fri 8 Dec	All day - Wed 13 Dec	19U Female National State Championships (AEDT)
	All day - Wed 13 Dec	19U Male National State Championships (AEDT)
Thu 14 Dec	All day - Sat 16 Dec	16&U Girls NAGP Satellite Camps (Brisbane, Sydney & Perth)
	All day - Mon 18 Dec	18&U Boys NAGP Camp (Perth)
	All day - Mon 18 Dec	18&U Girls NAGP Camp (Melbourne)

## January 2024

Fri 5 Jan	All day - Tue 16 Jan	2024 AYWPC (Brisbane)
Thu 11 Jan	All day - Mon 15 Jan	18&U Boys NAGP Camp (Brisbane)



# Categorisation

To identify *athletes* who have the *potential* to achieve Olympic Podium Success within two Olympic Cycles



# Categorisation Criteria

National Categories	AIS National Athlete Categorisation General Criteria	WPA Specific Categorisation Description and Criteria	WPA Specific Progression Timelines
<b>PODIUM</b>	Athletes have won a medal at an Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Championships or agreed event in the previous 24 months AND must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to win a medal at the next Olympic/Paralympic Games.	Athlete must also have a Player Projection for the Primary Olympic Games Cycle of 8 or higher	No set progression timelines
<b>PODIUM READY</b>	Athletes have placed 4-8th at the most recent Olympic/Paralympic Games, World Championships or agreed event AND must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to <b>PODIUM</b> level, targeting a medal at the next Olympic /Paralympic Games.	Athlete must also have a Player Projection for the Primary Olympic Games Cycle of between 6 and 7.9	No set progression timelines
<b>PODIUM POTENTIAL</b>	Athletes will have achieved agreed performance benchmarks which, alongside international competition performances, reliably indicate their future potential for podium success. Athletes must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to at least <b>PODIUM READY</b> level within the agreed sport-specific matrix timeframes.	Athlete must have been in the National Junior (20&U) Squad of National Senior Squad in the past 24 months and have a Player Projection of between 6 and 7.9 for the Primary Olympic Games Cycle OR a Player Projection of 8 or higher for the Secondary Olympic Games Cycle.	Athletes have 4 years to progress from Podium Potential to Podium Ready
<b>DEVELOPING</b>	Athletes have progressed through a reliable national talent confirmation phase and placed within a dedicated <b>national</b> development program. Athletes must be assessed against the sport-specific matrix as being capable to progress to at least <b>PODIUM POTENTIAL</b> level within the agreed sport-specific matrix timeframes.	Athlete must have been selected in a National Junior (20&U) Squad in the past 36 months and have a Player Projection of 6 or higher for the Secondary Olympic Games Cycle OR a Player Projection of 8 or higher for the Tertiary Olympic Games Cycle.	Athletes have 4 years to progress from Developing to Podium Potential
<b>EMERGING</b>	Athletes have been identified by an NSO via a valid and reliable talent identification profiling method (agreed in advance and with future podium potential characteristics identified) and are going through a set, time-limited talent confirmation period.	Athlete must have been selected in a National Junior (20&U) Squad, National Youth (18&U) Squad or Cadet (16&U) Team in the past 24 months and have a Player Projection of 5 or higher for the Secondary Olympic Games Cycle OR a Player Projection of 8 or higher for the Tertiary Olympic Games Cycle.	Athletes have 4 years to progress from Emerging to Developing



# Key Changes in NAGP

- Coaches are appointed in 2-year cycles and will work closely with other NAGP coaches and with the National senior coaches. Coaches are in a panel and work across various age groups.
- There is a common Selection Convenor across all National Age Group selections
- Increased number of coaches involved to work across all age groups (16U, 18U and 20U)
- Network of Talent Scouts and National Selection Panel has been setup to monitor players at competitions all around Australia
- The NAGP is a holistic program to ensure the development of the person before the athlete
- Annual programs are prepared and shared before the first camp of the year to assist families with planning
- The NAGP squads for 2024 will be announced during the presentations on the final day of NSC
- WPA will further enhance the induction process for all involved in the NAGP squads
- WPA now has standardised tests and benchmarking for all players in age group



**Pathway is NOT linear!!!!**

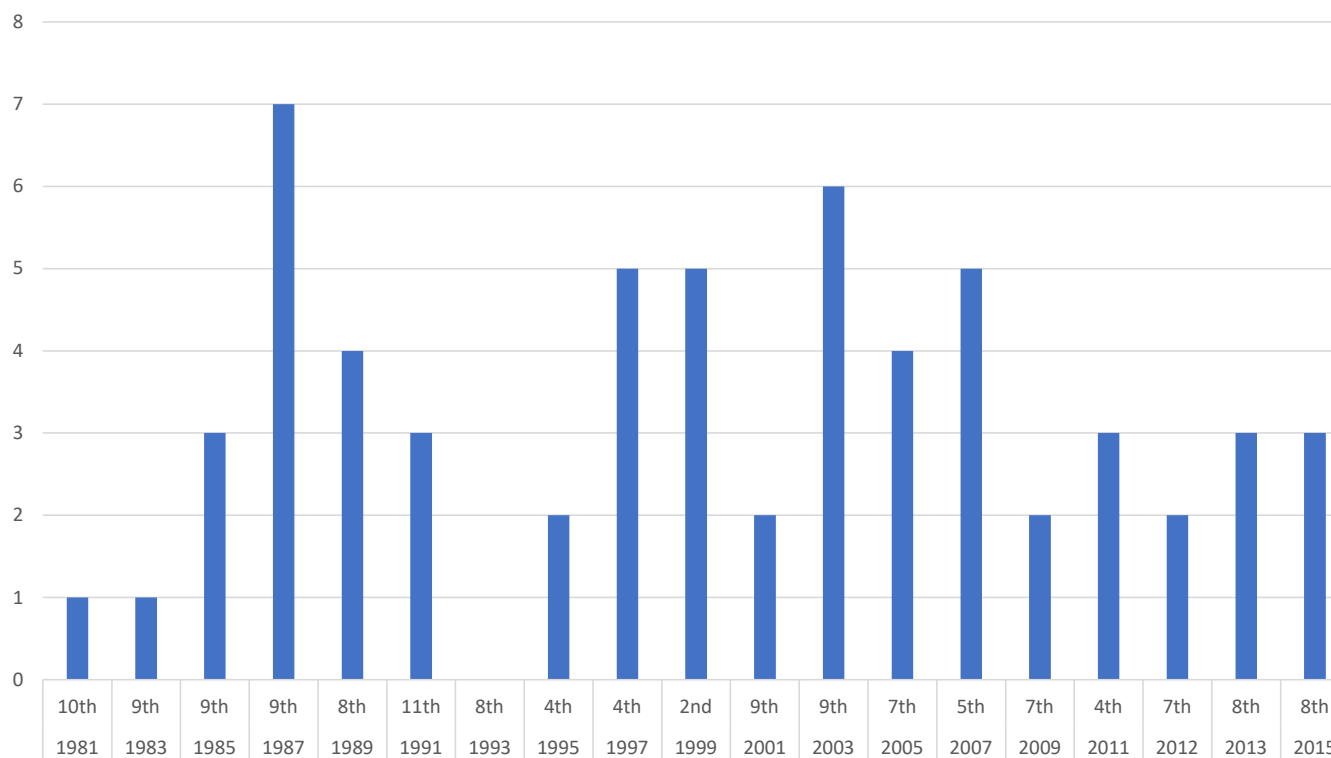
**Interesting Facts between Australian 20&U  
Representatives and Olympians**

**Men**  
**Women**



# Link between 20&U Men WC and Male Olympians for Australia

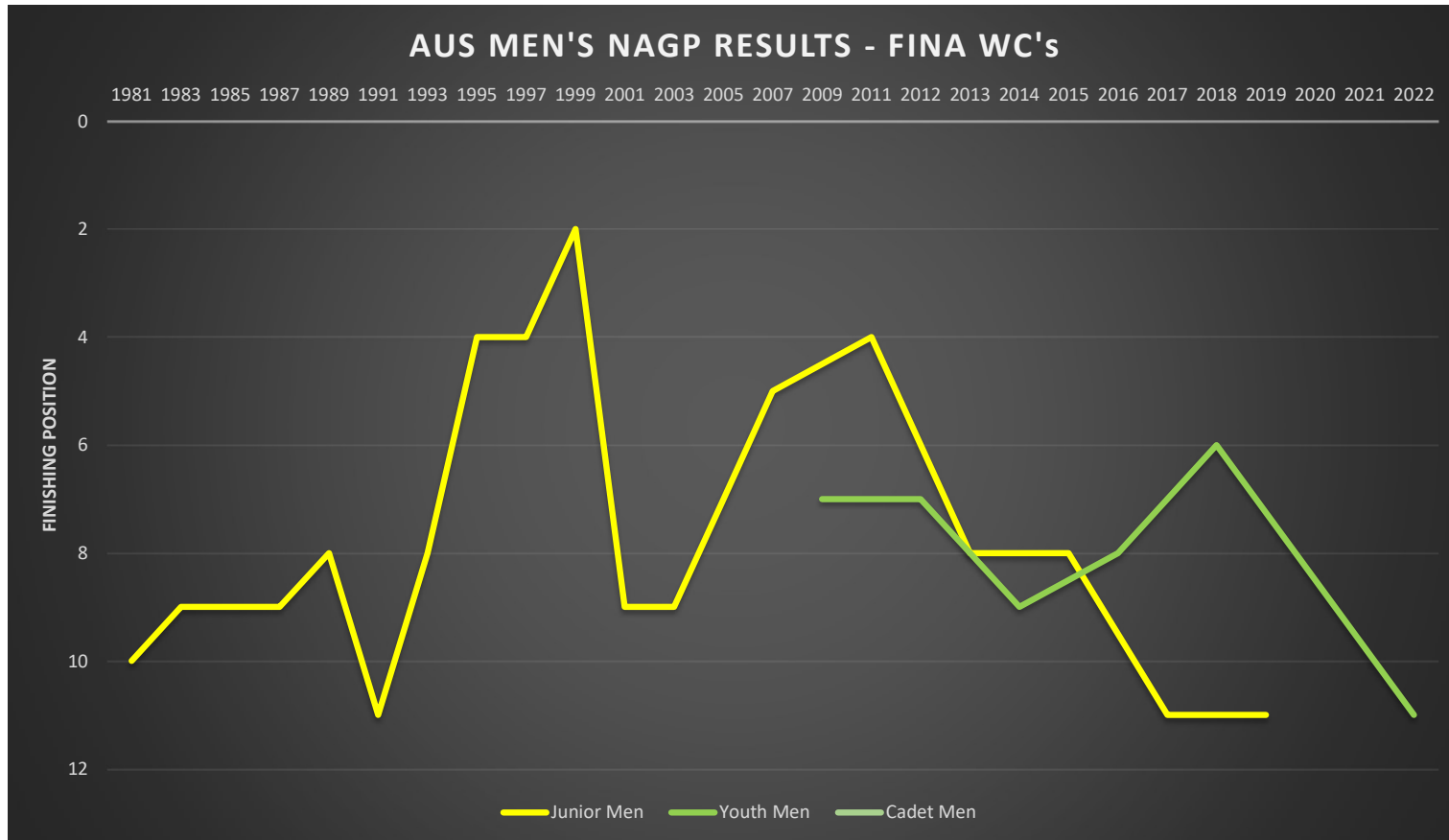
Male - Olympians who played 20&U for Aus



- 62 Olympians from 1982-2016
- Of those 44 represented Australia at 20&U WC
- 71% of Olympians DID represent Australia at 20&U WC
- 29% of Olympians DID NOT represent Australia at 20&U WC

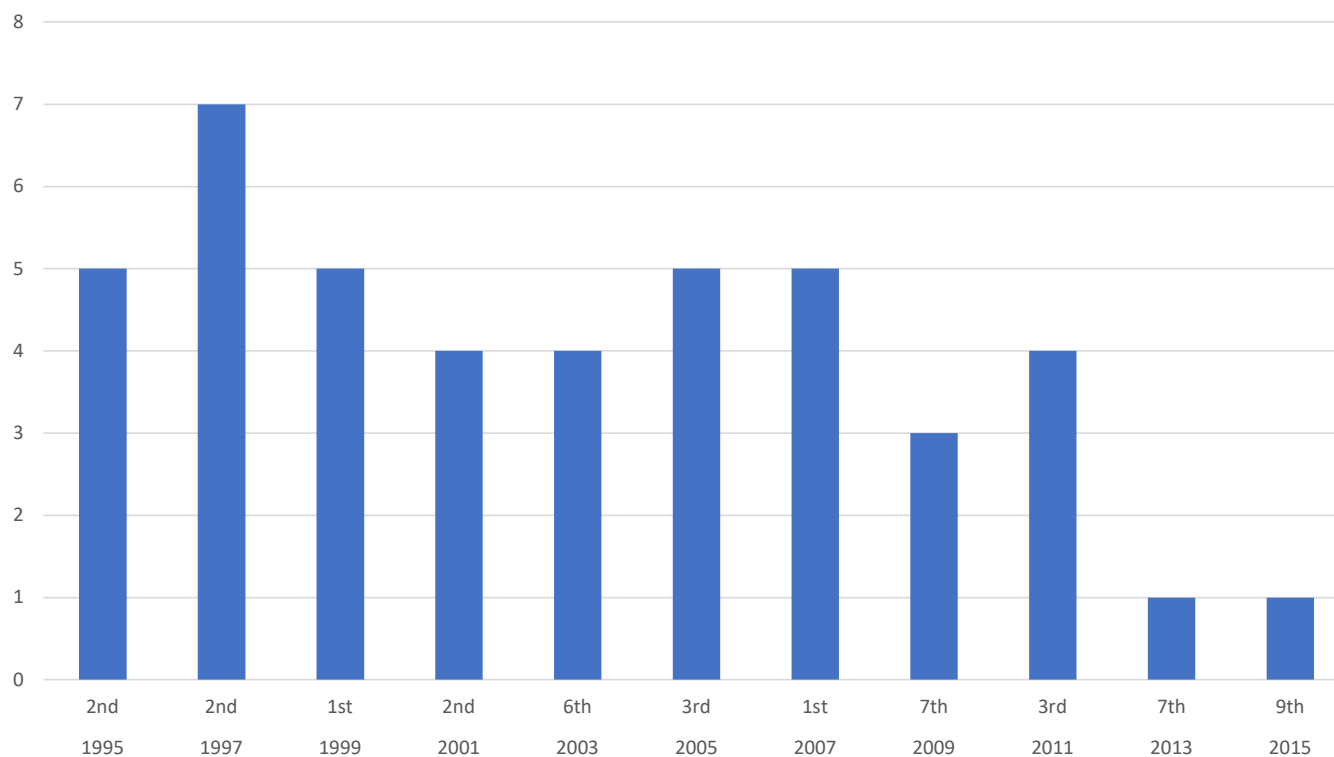


# Australian Mens NAGP Results



# Link between 20&U Women WC and Female Olympians for Australia

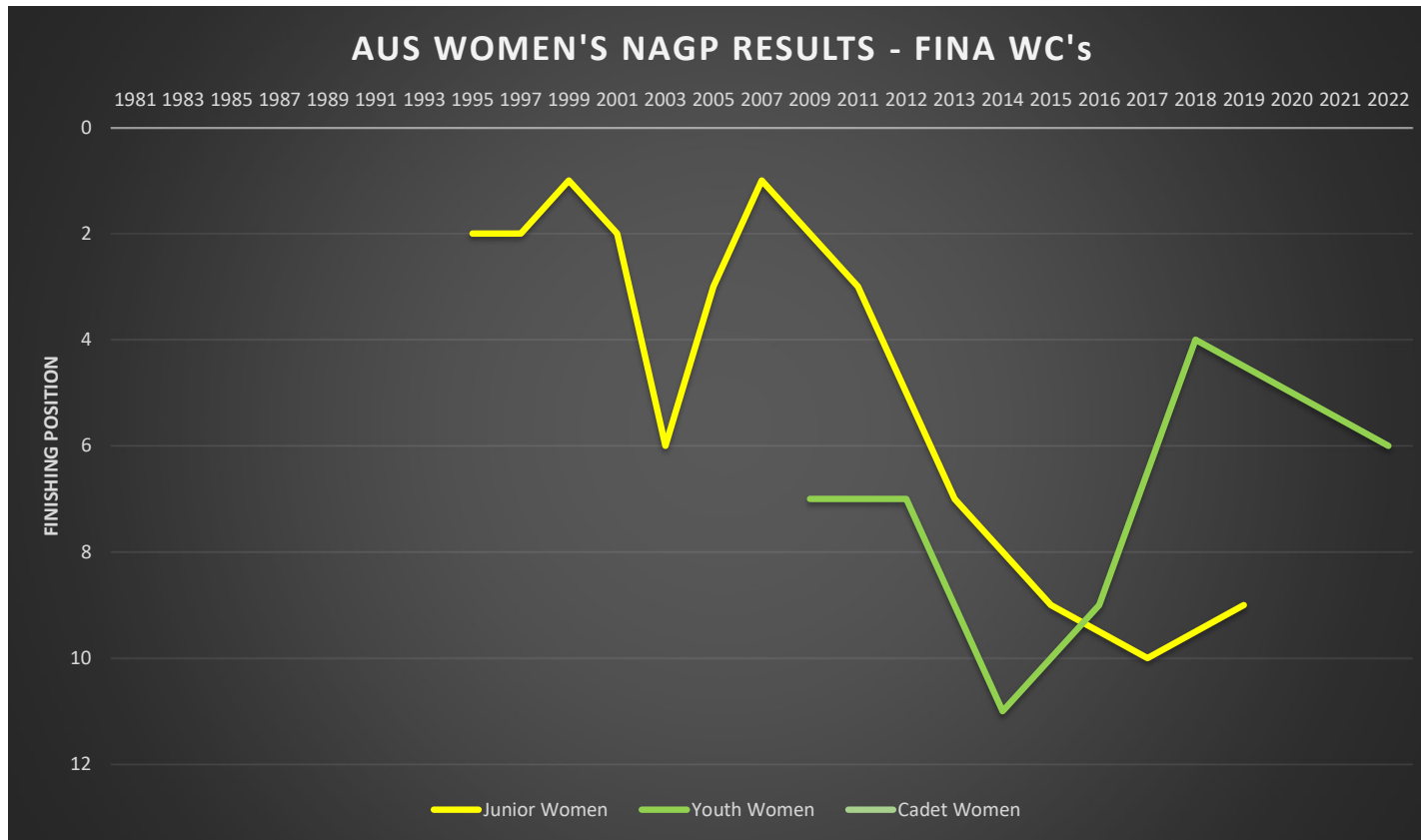
Female - Olympians who played 20&U for Aus



- 45 Olympians from 2000-2016
- Of those 26 represented Australia at 20&U WC
- 57% of Olympians DID represent Australia at 20&U WC
- 43% of Olympians DID NOT represent Australia at 20&U WC



# Australian Womens NAGP Results



## Take Aways for PP and HP not being linear

- Men - **71% of Olympians DID** represent Australia at 20&U WC
- Men - **29% of Olympians DID NOT** represent Australia at 20&U WC
- Women - **57% of Olympians DID** represent Australia at 20&U WC
- Women - **43% of Olympians DID NOT** represent Australia at 20&U WC
  
- 20&U representation is better predictors of success than 18&U and most likely 16&U
  
- Men & Women (same figures) – 2012 to 2021 – 5 x 18&U WC, 3 Olympians – **approximately 8% of Olympic team played at 18&U WC**
  
- Average age of Australian Olympic Teams:
  - Men – 27
  - Women - 26

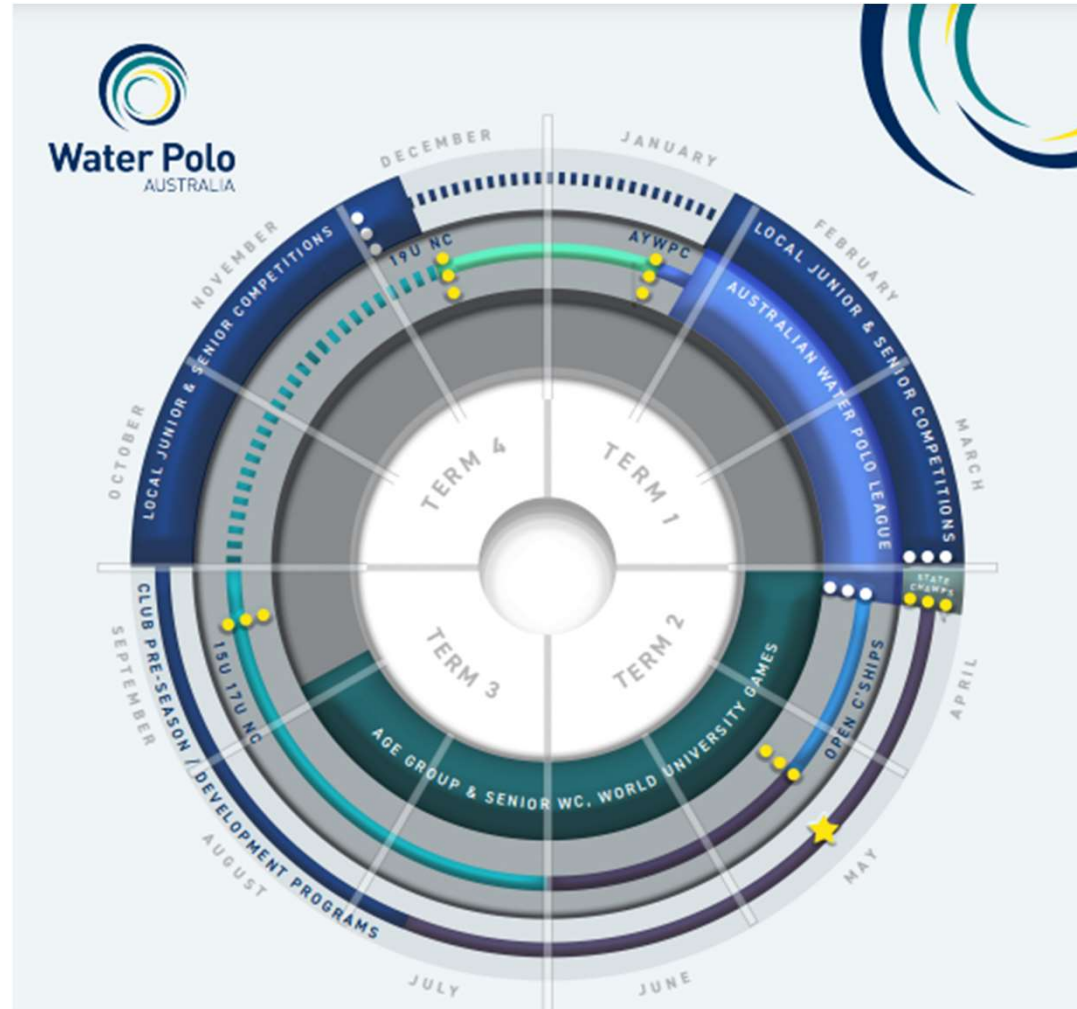




# The Importance of Clubs and States in the Success of Australian Teams



# Circular Calendar Model



# Athlete DTE Overview for the Year

## **NAGP**

- Approximately 4-5 weeks per year

## **LOCAL (Club and State)**

- Up to 47-48 weeks per year

Based on the above figures you can see how important the Club and State DTEs are.



# State Pathways and National Pathways Network

## **Nationally aligned program**

- Selection Criteria
- Philosophy
- Delivery (Coaching)
- Education

## **Pathway Leads working together**

- Sharing ideas, processes and resources
- Weekly collaboration
- Nationally directed with State delivery



## What you should see coming ...

- State Based Pathway Coordinators collaborating on National Pathways Panel
- Alignment in style of play, technical and tactical from Seniors to 20U to 18U to 16U at a national, state and club level – working party will be established
- More education for athletes, parents and coaches in all aspects of an athletes development journey
- Testing Protocols and Benchmarks for NAGP athletes



# Questions

