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Statement of Limitations

During the stages of the Netball New South Wales (NNSW) Competitions and Events Framework Review completed thus far, McLaughlin Sports Consultancy (MSC) has collected and analysed evidence relating to the current relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework and its delivery.

MSC has completed all aspects of the Review with the degree of skill, care and diligence always exercised while performing services of this nature. As when undertaking any project of this nature, it is impossible to collect and analyse all potentially relevant evidence, from all potentially relevant sources, whilst working within both the scope and budgetary constraints of the project.

MSC takes no responsibility for the completeness or form of any subsequent copies of this Report.

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Executive Summary

This Report highlights a series of recommendations to come from McLaughlin Sports Consultancy’s undertaking of an independent review of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework between March and August 2017. MSC has followed the agreed Review methodology, as outlined below.

Phase 1 – Project Initiation

Milestone 1: Project Owner Meeting (9th March 2017)

Teleconference with the project owner (e.g. NNSW CEO and General Manager Sport Development) to confirm the project scope and methodology details, as well as to discuss the purpose and make-up of the Project Reference Group (PRG).

Milestone 2: Project Reference Group (PRG) Meeting #1 (26th March 2017)

Face-to-face PRG meeting to clarify the background and objectives of the project, clarify the role of MSC and the PRG, confirm the project methodology and mindset, confirm the expectations of the PRG members and for Mike McLaughlin to seek input / guidance in relation to specific project related matters.

Phase 2 – Research

Milestone 3: Document and Data Review – Strategic Context (April 2017)

A broad suite of documents such as those listed below (and others as required) will be reviewed.

- Netball Australia Strategic Plan, Participation Plan, Facilities Policy, Competition Framework and other relevant planning documents
- NNSW Strategic Plan, Participation Plan, High Performance Plan, etc.
- National and NSW Sport and Recreation megatrends and participation trends (general and netball specific)
- A broad suite of NNSW membership / participation data such as that listed below (and others as required) will be reviewed.

✓ Historical data: total, per Region, per Association
✓ Current data: total, per Region, per Association
✓ Competition verses social / junior program participation data
✓ Netball Australia membership and participation growth targets
✓ NNSW membership and participation growth targets
✓ Play.Sport.Australia data

- Detailed review of the Netball Australia / NNSW player pathways documentation.
- Detailed review of all NNSW competition related documentation / information, including structures, schedules, financials, statistics regarding participation, previous Competition Framework reviews, competition frameworks in other Netball SSOs and in other sports, plus other information as required / guided by the PRG.
- Development, distribution and analysis of a series of specifically designed e-Surveys (e.g. NNSW Member Associations, Clubs, providers of non-affiliated competitions / events, coaches, officials, players, parents of junior players and others as required), relating specifically to the current design and delivery of the NNSW Competition Framework.

Milestone 5: Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper (4th July 2017)

Development of a detailed Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper based on all evidence collected to date.

Milestone 6: Project Reference Group (PRG) Meeting #2 (11th July 2017)

This face-to-face meeting will allow the PRG and MSC to discuss the findings and opportunities identified and how this may influence future stages of the project.

Phase 3 – Stakeholder Consultation

Milestone 7: Face-to-Face Interviews and Focus Group Sessions (17th - 20th July 2017)

Preparation and facilitation of up to 30 x face-to-face interviews and 3 x face-to-face focus group sessions at Netball Central, with representatives of key stakeholder groups (as guided by the PRG).

Milestone 8: Telephone Interviews (25th - 27th July 2017)

Facilitation of up to 30 x telephone interviews with representatives of key stakeholder groups (as guided by the PRG).

Milestone 9: Consultation Findings and Opportunities Summary Paper (9th August 2017)

Development of a Findings and Opportunities Summary Paper, based on the evidence collected and analysed via the consultation phase of the project – i.e. interviews and focus group sessions.

Milestone 10: Project Reference Group (PRG) Teleconference # 3 (14th August 2017)

This teleconference meeting will allow the PRG and MSC to discuss the findings and opportunities identified via the consultation phase of the project and how these may influence the design of The Strategy and the NNSW Competition Framework Recommendations Report.
Phase 4 – Reporting


This report will ensure that the NNSW Competition Framework receives sufficient focus within the project, allowing NNSW to identify and implement Competition Framework specific recommendations, which will not be included as recommendations within the “Netball in NSW” Facilities Strategy.


This face-to-face meeting will allow the PRG and MSC to discuss the nature of the draft NNSW Competition Framework Recommendations Report. MSC will respond to PRG questions will be able to identify any areas within the document that may require alteration.


Based on the information gathered via project milestones completed thus far (refer above), this Report provides a number of recommendations to the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Review Project Reference Group and the NNSW Board, which, if implemented, will assist NNSW to achieve the planned objectives of the Review, as listed below:

“To scope the opportunities to improve the structure of the NNSW Competition Framework (i.e. competitions governed by NNSW) to ensure the greatest efficiencies, whilst optimally supporting current and future members and the NNSW player, coach and official development pathways”.
Preliminary Findings and Opportunities

The NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Review methodology involved MSC’s development of a Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper and a Consultation Findings and Opportunities Paper, both of which present an extensive list of evidence-based findings and opportunities, which have been considered by MSC when crafting the recommendations presented in this Report. It is strongly recommended that the Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper and Consultation Findings and Opportunities Paper be read and understood in their entirety, prior to consuming this Recommendations Report.

Recommendations

The Recommendations section of this Report presents 13 x evidence-based recommendations, aligned with the Review objectives. Recommendations are presented in 6 Recommendation Focus Areas, as per Figure 1, below.

Figure 1 – Recommendation Focus Areas
Recommendations Summary

**RECOMMENDATION 1.1:** NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Purpose Statement.

**RECOMMENDATION 2.1:** Aligning the structure of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework with the Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.1:** NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Structure.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.2:** NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Business Case.

**RECOMMENDATION 3.3:** NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Annual Calendar.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.1:** NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Governance Model.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.2:** Updated NNSW Competition / Event Rules.

**RECOMMENDATION 4.3:** NNSW Competition / Event Management Guidelines.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.1:** Netball in NSW – Whole of Sport Competitions and Events Calendar.

**RECOMMENDATION 5.2:** Association Competition and Event Management Guidelines.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.1:** NNSW Competitions Human Resource Roles.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.2:** NNSW Events Human Resource Roles.

**RECOMMENDATION 6.3:** NNSW Events Support Staff.
Recommendations

Recommendation Focus Area 1 – Purpose
What should the purpose of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework be?

RECOMMENDATION 1.1 – NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Purpose Statement

The core purpose of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework should be “to provide a sport industry leading competition pathway, which meets the participation motivations and development needs of all players, coaches and officials participating in netball at local, regional and state levels in NSW”.

Rationale –

With the exception of the Premier League, there is a lack of clarity surrounding the core purpose of the overall NNSW Competitions and Events Framework and each of the competitions / events within it.

Throughout the Review consultation process, when asked what they wanted in relation to the Netball NSW Competitions and Events Framework, the most common stakeholder responses were:

☑  A clear competition pathway for all players, coaches and officials;
☑  Each competition / event within the framework to have a clearly defined purpose;
☑  Opportunities for regional and metro players, coaches and officials;
☑  Clear talent identification systems in place, which are linked to the Competitions and Events Framework; and
☑  Competitions / events designed to promote and grow the game.

The structure of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework cannot be decided until the purpose of the Framework is clearly articulated and agreed upon – i.e. form follows function! Following this principle, the precise structure of each competition / event to be included within the Framework cannot be decided until the purpose of each competition / event is clear.
Recommendation Focus Area 2 – Pathways
What influence should the NA National Player Pathway Framework have on the design of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework?

RECOMMENDATION 2.1 – Aligning the structure of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework with the Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework

Each competition / event within NNSW Competitions and Events Framework must clearly align with a specific element/s of the NA National Player Pathway Framework (which is under development at the time of writing) and competition / event overlap, or duplication should be minimised.

Note: The recommended structure of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework and its alignment with the NA National Player Pathway Framework, is outlined in Recommendation Focus Area 3 – Priority Competitions and Tournaments, within this Recommendations Report.

Rationale –

The sport of Netball in Australia does not currently have a comprehensive National Player Pathway Framework in place, to practically guide and support the development of players (and coaches / officials) in various participation streams and in various stages of development within the pathway. There are examples of resources developed by Netball Australia, designed to support the development of players in certain stages of development (e.g. Dare to Develop a Diamond and Develop a Diamond) however, although they appear to be well-designed and intentioned, their impact is unknown. These resources also fail to incorporate “competition” as a key element of the Daily Performance Environment mix for netballers.

Through discussions with key Netball Australia (NA) Pathway personnel, it is apparent that NA is currently in the process of developing a National Player Pathway Framework, in line with best practice guidelines developed for National Sporting Organisations by the Australian Sports Commission. It is understood that this project will be completed by late 2017 and this is an exciting piece of news for netball in this country. This National Player Pathway Framework should have a profound impact on the final design of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework.
Although the precise nature of the National Player Pathway Framework cannot be pre-empted at this time, what is known is that it will be built around the FTEM Model identified in Figure 2, below.

**Figure 2 – FTEM Model Outline**

Best practice NSO and SSO competition and event frameworks are designed to align with and compliment well developed player, coach and official development pathways / frameworks. Access to competitions / events which suit the development needs of players, coaches and officials at specific phases of development, is a critical element of a sport’s offering, at all levels of the player pathway.

A well aligned player, coach and official pathway model and competitions / events framework, will also ensure that players, coaches and officials are engaging in the right amount of competition, at the right time. In many cases, players may have multiple coaches at the same time, all of whom “want their team to win” and therefore want the best players to train with and play in “their” team. A best practice National Player Pathway Framework and its support resources can provide clear guidance to coaches, parents, players, performance services staff and administrators, so that holistic player development remains the central focus at all times; and players, along with those who support them are not cannibalised and burnt out.
The intended outcomes of a National Player Pathway Framework for netball should include:

- A unified whole of sport pathway that provides maximum opportunity to increase participation numbers, the level of interest in netball and the quality of players;
- NA player, coach and official development programs and competition frameworks that are best practice and not merely the outcome of accumulated tradition;
- A verifiably sound framework to guide critical decision-making, planning, and allocation of resources at national and state levels; and
- Cohesion within the sport’s membership through a transparent and credible player development framework, effective communication and high quality support resources for coaches, players, officials, parents of junior players, performance services staff and administrators.

Competition (and the training that prepares players for it) is a key element of the daily performance environment of netballers in each phase of development and within each participation stream within the soon to be developed NA National Player Pathway Framework. To ensure the type and amount of competition players are involved with aligns with their development needs and participation motivations, each element of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework needs to align with a specific element/s of the NA National Player Pathway Framework.

**Recommendation Focus Area 3 – Priority Competitions and Events** within this Recommendations Report includes multiple recommendations relating to the proposed structure of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework. However, the structure of the Framework will need to be reviewed after the release of the NA National Player Pathway Framework.

**Note:** The NNSW Talent Development and High Performance System Review is currently underway – it will be completed in April 2018 (i.e. 4 months after the proposed release of the NA National Player Pathway Framework). This timing will allow the NNSW Talent Development and High Performance System Review to include detailed recommendations relating to the precise nature of the optimal NNSW Competitions and Events Framework.
Recommendation Focus Area 3 – Priority Competitions and Events

Which Competitions / Events should be prioritised to ensure the sustainable achievement of the Framework’s purpose?

RECOMMENDATION 3.1 – NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Structure

The NNSW Competitions and Events Framework should include the following:

1. Schools Cup (current format)
2. State Age Championships (amended format)
3. Youth State Championships (new event)
4. Metro League (current format)
5. Regional League (amended format)
6. State Cup (amended format)
7. Premier League (current format)
8. State Masters Challenge (new event)
9. FAST5 Summer Series (new competition)
10. Identified Special Events of Significance (new events)

It is important to note that the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework, should not attempt to be all things to all people. It needs to play a clear role within the broader local, regional, state and national affiliated (and non-affiliated) netball landscape.

 Affiliated Netball Landscape -

Broader Netball Landscape –
Rationale –

Schools Cup (current format):

The Netball NSW Schools Cup provides NSW primary and secondary school students with the opportunity to enjoy netball in an inclusive and enjoyable environment. The Schools Cup is available to male and female students from Public, Independent and Catholic school systems in Years 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. Now moving into its sixth year, the Netball NSW Schools Cup has grown from 3,000 participants in the inaugural year, to over 11,000 participants in 2017!

Key elements to the success of the competition include:

- Girls, boys and mixed divisions;
- Competitive and non-competitive divisions.

The Schools Cup and its ongoing growth, will form a critical element of the NNSW Schools Strategy and future growth in junior participation throughout NSW.

Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:

Participation stream – Active Lifestyle

Stage/s of development – F1 (basic movement foundations) and F2 (extension / refinement of movement foundations)

State Age Championships (amended format):

The State Age Championships is seen by the majority of NNSW stakeholders as a key element of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework; and a very significant element of the NNSW membership value proposition for Associations.

However, a significant point of stakeholder concern relating to the effectiveness of the State Age Championships is that, due to its size in recent years, it has needed to be hosted at 3 - 4 venues, which creates major logistical and financial issues for Associations and their members (particularly regional Associations). For example, a regional Association who travels to participate in the State Age Championships may have teams in 4 different divisions, which are being delivered at 4 different venues (in and around Sydney), requiring multiple buses, accommodation venues, etc.

The current event format includes 4 x age categories (under 12s, 13s, 14s and 15s) and 4 divisions (Division 1, 2, 3 and 4) in each age category.

It is recommended that the format of the State Age Championships be altered, to allow it to be delivered at 2 large venues (e.g. Divisions 1 and 2 at a venue and Divisions 3 and 4 at another) over 3-4 days. To facilitate this, it is recommended that the State Age Championships include under 12s, 13s and 14s (not under 15s – Refer to proposed Youth State Championships outlined below).
One of the key strengths of the Stage Age Championships is the high level of involvement from teams representing regional and remote Associations. As such, it is also recommended that NNSW investigate the feasibility of implementing a Regional Association Subsidy Initiative, whereby Sydney based Associations and Associations close to Sydney, who are entering teams in the event, pay a slightly higher entry fee to subsidise the entry fees of teams representing regional and remote Associations.

Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:

**Participation stream – Sport**

**Stage/s of development – F2 (extension / refinement of movement foundations) and F3 (sport specific commitment or competition)**

**Youth State Championships (new event):**

The current State Championships event has a 50 year history and was originally designed to be the flagship event within the NNSW talent pathway – the best players would attend and the standard of competition was the highest on offer in the state. However, over time, the nature of this event has changed for various reasons (e.g. the introduction of the Premier League and Metro League; the fact that the State Championships are held on outdoor courts and elite / high level players and their coaches don’t like playing lots of games on this surface; the fact that whilst the under 17s division is still popular, the under 21s and opens divisions’ popularity has decreased significantly in recent years; and others).

The current State Championships event involves teams representing their respective Associations in under 17s, under 21s and opens age categories (females only), in multiple divisions, depending on the number of team entries; and in many respects, in its current form, this is a participation event, as opposed to a talent / performance focused event.

It is also notable that the State Championships event does not include an under 19s age division, which creates a gap in the talent development pathway for regional players in this critical age bracket. **Note:** Talented Sydney / Central Coast based players in the under 19 age bracket can access competitions such as Metro League, State Cup and even Premier League.

It is recommended that the State Championships be discontinued and that it be replaced with the Youth State Championships event, the format of which is to include teams representing their respective **Regions** (not Associations) in the under 15s, 17s and 19s **age categories** (1 division per age category only).

The event will therefore involve 3 teams per Region for Regions 2-8 and it is recommended that 5 teams be selected to participate from the Sydney Metro Region – Region 1, e.g., Metro North, Metro South West, Metro East, Metro West (**Note:** These catchments align with NSW School Sport regions) and an invitational team. Therefore, the event will include a total of 36 teams – 12 per age category).
This event will form a **critical** element of the NNSW talent development system / pathway and should form the **key element of the NSW under 17s and 19s state team selection process**. Due to the “performance” nature of the event, it is recommended that it be held in an appropriate indoor facility (e.g. Genea Netball Centre).

It is recommended that NNSW provide any necessary support to Regions to assist them to effectively facilitate the regional selection events for the under 15s, 17s and 19s teams to participate in the Youth State Championships.

**Note** – NNSW will also need to give careful consideration to how the **under 15** element of the Youth State Championships interacts with the NNSW Academies programs to ensure player welfare is appropriately managed.

**Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:**

- **Participation streams** – Sport and Sport Excellence
- **Stage/s of development** – **T1** (Demonstration of Potential) and **T2** (Talent Verification)

**Metro League (current format):**

The Metro League is one of the premier netball competitions in New South Wales, offering week in and week out competition for many of the state’s talented players (16 years and older), coaches, officials and administrators and involves the **open age category only**.

In 2017, 60 teams representing their respective Associations contested the Metro League, with the competition being divided into 6 divisions of 10 teams per division. The weekly competition was held across 3 nights, with teams contesting 18 rounds plus finals.

A key purpose of the Metro League is to provide a pathway opportunity for players hoping to be selected to play in the Premier League and State under 17 and 19 teams.

**Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:**

- **Participation streams** – Sport and Sport Excellence
- **Stage/s of development** – **F3** (sport specific commitment or competition), **T1** (Demonstration of Potential) and **T2** (Talent Verification)

**Regional League (amended format):**

The Regional League is the premier netball competition in NNSW Regions 2 - 8. The current event format has Associations coming together within their respective region to compete in multiple divisions (depending on the number of entries), in the 17s and under and Open age categories.
The Metro League and Regional League offer the opportunity for winning teams to qualify for the State Cup (refer below) – i.e. the top 17 teams from the Metro League competition and the Association Open age category team that wins each of the seven (7) Regional League competitions, qualify for the State Cup. **Note:** The State Cup is an Opens division competition only.

Due to the recommended inclusion of the Youth State Championships Event into the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework (refer above), which includes the under 15s, 17s and 19s age categories, and given the State Cup only includes the Opens age category, it is recommended that the format of the Regional League be amended to **only include the Opens age category.** This involves the discontinuation of the 17 and under age category in the Regional League.

**Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:**

**Participation streams – Sport and Sport Excellence**

**Stage/s of development –** F3 (sport specific commitment or competition), T1 (Demonstration of Potential) and T2 (Talent Verification)

**State Cup (amended format):**

The NNSW State Cup brings the best Association teams from both regional and metro NSW together. It was established to determine the State’s best Association in the **Opens age category.**

Winning teams from Regional League Competitions are invited to compete against the top teams from the season’s Metro League. **Note:** currently, a maximum of 24 teams participate in the event – i.e. the winning teams from each of the 7 regional leagues plus the top 17 teams from the Metro League. While the competition crowns the State Champion Association, the highest ranked Regional Association at the conclusion of the weekend is declared the Inter-Regional State champion. The State Cup is generally played at Genea Netball Centre.

For various reasons, not all of the top 17 Metro League teams always choose to compete in the State Cup, which in some ways “waters down” the nature of the event. It is therefore recommended that NNSW consider limiting the number of Metro League Teams invited to compete in the State Cup to the top 7 teams. Note – if 1 or more of the top 7 Metro League teams choose not to participate in the State Cup, the next top team/s would be invited. **Based on the aforementioned the State Cup would incorporate a total of 14 teams (7 regional and 7 metro).**

**Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:**

**Participation streams – Sport and Sport Excellence**

**Stage/s of development –** F3 (sport specific commitment or competition), T1 (Demonstration of Potential) and T2 (Talent Verification)
Premier League (current format):

Unveiled by Netball NSW in July 2015, the Netball NSW Premier League (NNSWPL) is a competition designed to attract the best current and emerging talent within NSW. Its key purpose is to be the premier netball competition in New South Wales that provides the best opportunities for performance/high performance netballers. The competition offers a local, performance platform for Sydney area based players, coaches, officials and administrators, and provides bridging opportunities for players, coaches and officials into the Australian Netball League (ANL) and Suncorp Super Netball (SSN) competition.

The broader objectives of the Premier League include:

- To provide an elite pathway for developing players, coaches, officials and administrators throughout NSW in an effort to increase the depth and quality of these persons at the elite level within NNSW;
- To create a seamless link in the high performance pathway between Metro League, NNSWPL, national underpinning programs, the ANL and SSN;
- To encourage formalised partnerships between Licensees and Associations to ensure longevity of the Licensee and a grassroots pathway;
- To develop and implement a financially sustainable competition that will increase commercial and sponsorship opportunities for the sport, competitions and teams;
- To raise and enhance the profile of netball across NSW through increased media and promotional opportunities;
- To enhance the reputation of the sport in the community; and
- To increase the engagement of fans and enhance the connection with the wider NSW netball community.

The Competition consists of 2 divisions – Open Division and Under 20 Division. For the 2016 and 2017 Seasons, each division included 8 teams. The rules of the competition state that the Premier League Commission may increase the number of teams per division for subsequent seasons. Each of the 8 Licensees are required to submit a team for each division of the competition and only 1 team will be permitted in each division of the competition, per Licensee.

The Premier League is played between May and September at the Genea Netball Centre.

Clearly this new competition fills an important gap in the NNSW player, coach and official pathway and the quality of the competition in its first couple of years has been excellent. Although this is the case, it is recommended that NNSW consider raising the age of the under 20s division by a year, to under 21s or 23s. This will provide Premier League players who would otherwise need to leave the competition when they turn 20 (who are not playing in the Australian Netball League (ANL), or the Suncorp Super Netball (SSN) Competition) with an extra year of very high quality coaching and competition, which will assist their progression into ANL / SSN. The under 21 age category will also align with the Netball Australia national under 21 team age bracket.
Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:

**Participation stream – Sport Excellence**

**Stage/s of development** – T1 (Demonstration of Potential), T2 (Talent Verification), T3 (Practicing and Achieving) and T4 (Breakthrough and Reward)

**State Masters Challenge (new event):**

The current State Championships – Masters event involves over 35s and over 40s women’s divisions. In 2017, 9 teams representing their respective Associations, contested the over 35’s and 7 teams contested the over 40’s divisions. The event is held over 2 days and in 2017 it was delivered at the Genea Netball Centre.

The current Social Masters event includes 4 divisions, i.e. over 35s social, over 40s social, over 35s competitive and over 40s competitive.

The duplication of physical, financial and human resources required to manage 2 separate events, which align with the same elements of the National Player Pathway Framework, is not an effective use of NNSW resources.

It is recommended that the current “State Championships – Masters” and “Social Masters” events be combined to become the NNSW State Masters Challenge. This event will include 4 divisions – over 35s social, over 40s social, over 35s competitive and over 40s competitive. It is recommended this “participation” event be open to teams representing Associations, as well as teams not affiliated with a NSW Association.

Ideally the event should be held at a single venue which has access to both a suitable indoor facility and a suitable outdoor facility, over 2-4 days, depending on the size of the event.

Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:

**Participation streams – Active Lifestyle and Sport**

**Stage/s of development** – F2 (extension / refinement of movement foundations) and F3 (sport specific commitment or competition)

**FAST5 Summer Series (new competition):**

The current Night Inter-District competition is an open age competition incorporating 10 divisions (i.e. Divisions 1 - 10). In 2017 the competition was played over 3 nights a week from October to December at the Genea Netball Centre.

This competition is held in summer (i.e. the netball off-season), which plays / should play an important role in the welfare of players, coaches, officials and administrators at all levels of the
pathway, in that it should provide an opportunity for people to freshen up / recover after their involvement in what (for many) is a long winter season.

Participating teams represent their respective Associations and many Associations use the competition as a training activity for their representative teams and another participation opportunity for other teams within their Association who have played in their Association’s winter competition.

Many current NNSW affiliated players also play other forms of netball (e.g. indoor netball, mixed netball, etc.) during the summer and appear to enjoy the differing nature of these game formats, whilst still enjoying the fact that they are playing netball – often in a more fun / social environment.

As opposed to offering “more of the same” during the summer period, NNSW and Associations / Clubs need to consider how they can offer new, flexible, fast and fun participation opportunities which meet the changing needs and wants of current and future netball consumers. Netball Australia has developed the FAST5 product, yet this game format has not filtered down from the elite / international version to community participation.

It is recommended that the Night Inter-District competition be discontinued and that a new FAST5 Summer Series be established, the format of which is to include the following categories, across multiple divisions (depending on registrations):

- Under 17s (female, mixed and potentially men’s netball)
- Opens (female, mixed and potentially men’s netball)

The competition should be played at the Genea Netball Centre.

It is envisaged that the popularity of the competition will not only ensure its sustainability and be an important enabler within NNSW’s Participation Growth Strategy, but it will also encourage affiliated NNSW Associations to delivery FAST5 competitions at the local level throughout all regions of NSW.

**Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:**

Participation streams – Active Lifestyle and Sport

Stage/s of development – F2 (extension / refinement of movement foundations) and F3 (sport specific commitment or competition)

**Special Events of Significance (new events):**

Currently included within the NNSW Competitions Framework, is the Oceania Netball Cup. This 1-day event is delivered in February and is designed to be a social and fun event, open to all abilities, with a party atmosphere. Netball NSW encourages friends and family members to create teams, or Clubs / Associations to enter teams as a pre-season warm up event.
The event includes various off-court activities, e.g. face painting, kids’ activities, music, food, etc. Teams are encouraged to be creative with their uniforms and to dress up in Pacific colours.

Divisions include: 12/U Mixed, 15U, 18U, Open Ladies and Open Mixed. 24 teams participated in the 2017 event.

Although the event is named the Oceania Cup and teams are encouraged to wear “Pacific colours”, the purpose of the event is unclear and if there is a purpose involving inclusion of people from a Pacific Island background and/or their transition into affiliated netball, it is very unclear if the event is achieving these purposes.

It is recommended that following the delivery of the 2018 Oceania Netball Cup (already committed to by NNSW), that NNSW make a strategic decision every 2 years, relating to the staging of a biennial “special event of significance”, whose primary purpose is inclusion and which is to be governed and managed by NNSW. NNSW should use evidence such as current and projected demographic data relating to the ethnic and religious backgrounds of the NSW community per LGA and per NNSW Association (which NNSW already has collected); and other available information, to decide the specific purpose, target audience and structure of each biennial special event.

It is recommended that each biennial special event be hosted at a NNSW Association venue, the location of which suits the specific nature / purpose of each event.

Note: Following the delivery of each special event, it is recommended that NNSW provide the host Association with support resources and mentoring, to encourage them to deliver the event under their own stream, in following years. This approach will encourage multiple types of inclusion events to be delivered across NSW in local areas of need, by local Associations, in a self-sustainable manner and will increase the capacity and membership / participation numbers of Associations in the process.

Alignment with Netball Australia National Player Pathway Framework:

- **Participation streams** – Active Lifestyle and Sport
- **Stage/s of development** – TBC, based on each event
RECOMMENDATION 3.2 – NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Business Case

Following the NNSW Board / Council endorsement of recommended changes to the current NNSW Competitions and Events Framework, a business case associated with each competition / event will need to be developed to ensure the effective, efficient and sustainable delivery of the Framework.

Rationale –

NNSW’s financial statements demonstrate the only competition within the current Framework which turns a profit for the organisation is the Premier League – all other competitions / events incur significant financial losses to NNSW. Although the allocation of funds by a State Sporting Organisation to competitions and events under its governance is standard practice, it is also standard practice for such organisations to ensure their investment in their Competitions and Events Framework is both effective and sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION 3.3 – NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Annual Calendar

Following the NNSW Board / Council endorsement of recommended changes to the current NNSW Competitions and Events Framework, an integrated competitions and events calendar is to be developed. This calendar should optimise the achievement of the Competitions and Events Framework’s purpose – i.e. “to provide a sport industry leading competition pathway which meets the participation motivations and development needs of all players, coaches and officials participating in Netball at local, regional and state levels in NSW”; as well as ensuring the effective management of the human and financial sustainability of the Framework.

Rationale –

If any structural changes to the current NNSW Competitions and Events Framework contained within this Report are endorsed by NNSW, an integrated competitions and events calendar will need to be developed on an annual basis.

The development of the annual calendar should have at the centre of its design, the welfare of players, coaches, officials, parents of junior players, Club / Association volunteers and NNSW staff; and should involve all key stakeholder groups (i.e. NNSW, Associations, Clubs, etc.).

Note: Through discussions with key Netball Australia (NA) Pathway personnel, it is apparent that NA’s Suncorp Super Netball and Australian Netball League competitions are being aligned as of 2018, which could impact on the NNSW Premier League, due to these competitions’ dates overlapping. This information will need to be verified and considered in relation to this recommendation.
Recommendation Focus Area 4 – Policies and Procedures
Which policies and procedures should be developed by NNSW to support the effective management and delivery of competitions and events within the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework?

RECOMMENDATION 4.1 – NNSW Competitions and Events Framework Governance Model
All structural and operational elements of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework to be governed by the NNSW Board.

Rationale –

It is apparent, based on the current NNSW governance model (i.e. a Council and a Board) that the role / responsibility of deciding the nature of certain elements of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework (e.g. State Championships, Night Inter-Districts and State Age Championships) rests with the NNSW Council.

Due to the critical importance of the governance of the future NNSW Competitions and Events Framework, the issue of governance requires visibility within this Report. Contemporary good practice sport governance principles do not endorse a governance structure featuring both a board and another body, whereby this other body (usually called a Council) assumes some board functions.

In order for NNSW to have the organisational agility to meet the ever changing demands of netball consumers (as it relates to competitions and events in this case), it must look at streamlining its governance structures and procedures.

Endorsement of this recommendation will require NNSW constitutional change and as such, it may be pertinent for NNSW to undertake a full review of all elements of its current constitution as part of this process.

RECOMMENDATION 4.2 – Updated NNSW Competition / Event Rules
NNSW to update / develop the rules associated with all competitions and events within the proposed NNSW Competitions and Events Framework, as necessary.

Rationale –

If any structural changes to the Competitions and Events Framework contained within this Report are endorsed by NNSW, all rules associated with identified competitions / events will need to be updated / developed to ensure currency.
RECOMMENDATION 4.3 – NNSW Competition / Event Management Guidelines

NNSW to develop a suite of comprehensive, yet user-friendly competition / event management resources to ensure the effective, consistent, safe and sustainable delivery of all NNSW governed competitions and events.

Note: These resources will include position descriptions associated with the key roles of Event General Manager (new role), Venue Coordinator (previously referred to as Head of Venue), Event Supervisor (previously referred to as Competitions Supervisor) and other roles including (but not limited to):

- Umpire allocator
- Results coordinator
- Risk management officer
- Communications officer

Rationale –

Although some very simple operational documents are in place in relation to the roles and responsibilities of NNSW staff during specific NNSW Competitions Framework events, the effectiveness of these documents is somewhat questionable. An opportunity exists for the development of a substantial NNSW Competitions and Events Framework – Management Manual / Resource, designed to guide the safe, effective and efficient NNSW and host Association management of each event / competition.
RECOMMENDATION 5.1 – Netball in NSW – Whole of Sport Competitions and Events Calendar

NNSW to play a leadership role in the development of a holistically aligned “Netball in NSW Annual Competition and Events Calendar”.

Rationale –

The NNSW Competitions and Events Framework outlined in Recommendation 3.1 focuses on competitions and events governed and resourced by NNSW and how these align with the NA National Player Pathway Framework (currently under development). What the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework does not include (and rightly so) are netball competitions and events which sit outside of its jurisdiction, including (but not limited to) those listed below:

→ NSW primary schools netball competitions and events (public, catholic, independent);
→ NSW secondary schools netball competitions and events (public, catholic, independent);
→ NSW and national university netball competitions and events;
→ Indoor netball NSW and Australia competitions and events; and
→ Men’s Netball NSW competitions and events.

With the welfare of netball players as the driving force (noting that on many occasions, the same players are participating in numerous competitions and events), Netball NSW has the opportunity to work openly and positively with other key organisations / agencies in NSW who govern and manage netball competitions and events of significance. This collaboration should attempt to design and implement an annual competitions / events calendar, which encourages growth in participation and optimal player, coach and official development at all stages of the Netball Australia National Player Pathway.

RECOMMENDATION 5.2 – Association Competition and Event Management Guidelines

NNSW to develop a user-friendly Association Competition / Event Management resource to assist Associations to deliver effective, consistent, safe and sustainable local competitions and events.

Rationale –

The quality, efficiency and sustainability of locally delivered competitions and events in NSW (i.e. those sitting outside of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework) is critical if netball is to grow and flourish across NSW into the future. At a time when some Clubs and Associations are questioning the value proposition attached with NNSW membership, the opportunity exists for NNSW to provide yet another valuable member service, via the provision of contemporary, user-friendly, web-based Club / Association Competition and Event Management resources. Note: These resources are in addition to the NNSW Associations and Club Assistance pack, currently available.
Recommendation Focus Area 6 – People

Which Netball NSW human resource structures and systems are needed to optimise the future delivery and management of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework?

RECOMMENDATION 6.1 – NNSW Competitions Human Resource Roles

The role of managing “competitions” within the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework (i.e. as per those listed below) is to be the responsibility of the NNSW Competitions Manager and Competitions and Pathways Coordinator. The position descriptions for these roles (and any future roles sitting within this operational area) need to be updated, as required, to reflect this responsibility.

NNSW Competitions –

→ Metro League
→ Regional League
→ Premier League
→ FAST5 Summer Series

Rationale –

Clarity needs to exist in relation to what a NNSW “competition” is, verses what a NNSW “event” is and which NNSW staff roles have responsibilities attached to each of these elements of the Framework. For the purpose of this recommendation, a competition involves one game being played per week, per team, over multiple weeks (e.g. 12 weeks), whereas an event involves multiple games being played per team, per day for multiple, consecutive days (e.g. 4 games per day over 3 days).

Within the current NNSW staffing structure, there are staff within various departments / units who play a role in the management of key events / competitions (e.g. Venue Operations staff, GM Sport Development, Association Development Manager, Event Manager, Event Coordinator, Communications staff, Competitions Manager, Competitions Pathway Coordinator, Volunteer Workforce Manager, Community Engagement Manager, Participation Manager, Regional Development and Pathways Manager, Development Officers ... and others).

Improved clarity and efficiency of NNSW’s human resource investment in the delivery of identified competitions is required. The workload of NNSW staff, as it relates to the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework and the involvement of NNSW event staff in national competitions (i.e. Suncorp Super Netball, Australian Netball League, etc.) and the sustainability and efficiency of this workload needs to be considered moving forward.
RECOMMENDATION 6.2 – NNSW Events Human Resource Roles

The role of managing "events" within the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework (i.e. as per those listed below) is to be the responsibility of the NNSW Events Manager and Events Coordinator. The position description of these roles (and any future roles sitting within this operational area – refer to Recommendation 6.3) need to be updated, as required, to reflect this responsibility.

NNSW Events –

- Schools Cup
- State Age Championships
- Youth State Championships
- State Cup
- State Masters Challenge
- Identified Special Events of Significance

Rationale –

As per Recommendation 6.1.

RECOMMENDATION 6.3 – NNSW Events Support Staff

NNSW to form partnerships with NSW universities to facilitate the ongoing appointment an agreed number of sport management interns annually, to undertake work placement programs with NNSW in the lead-up to, during and immediately after identified major events.

Rationale –

Sourcing a number of suitably skilled interns would reduce the workload of NNSW “non-event / competition” staff (e.g. General Manager Sport Development, Volunteer Workforce Manager, Community Engagement Manager, Participation Manager, Regional Development and Pathways Manager, Association Development Manager; and others) and more optimally support NNSW competitions and events staff in their delivery of NNSW events.

Managing the sustainable workload of NNSW staff is a key element in the retention of quality people within the NNSW staffing structure. Event management interns could contribute significantly to the delivery of quality NNSW events. They may also present as future potential NNSW employees. This strategy will provide NNSW with an economical way to bolster its events workforce, on a rolling basis. It will also play a key role in NNSW’s human legacy activities.
Where to From Here?

To assist NNSW to implement recommendations within this Report which the organisation endorses, it is suggested that the following process (or one similar) be implemented.

1. The NNSW Competitions Framework Review Project Reference Group (PRG) to work together to develop a **PRG Review Position Statement** in September 2017. In essence, this Position Statement will outline to the NNSW Board and Council, which recommendations the PRG endorses (and why) and the level of priority the PRG places on these recommendations. The process will also allow the PRG to identify which recommendations it does not endorse (and why).

McLaughlin Sports Consultancy (MSC) will provide the PRG with a user-friendly tool to assist them in this process.

2. The PRG to present its Position Statement to the NNSW Board in October 2017.

3. Based on the Board’s response, make any necessary changes to the PRG Position Statement – i.e. this will now become the **Board Position Statement**.

4. Based on the Board’s Position Statement, the PRG to work together to develop a **Post Review Action Plan**. This Action Plan will outline when each endorsed recommendation will be implemented, what will need to be done, who will do the work and potentially allocate financial resources to each action. Note – depending on how many recommendations are endorsed by the PRG and the NNSW Board, it is envisaged that the Post Review Action Plan will have a timeframe of 2018 – 2021.

5. NNSW to present the outcomes of the Review process, to the NNSW Council in November 2017.

6. NNSW staff and Board to work with the NNSW Council as necessary in order to have recommendations endorsed and to develop a **Final Position Statement**.

7. The NNSW Board to endorse the Final Position Statement at its December 2017 Board Meeting for presentation to March 2018 Council Meeting.

McLaughlin Sports Consultancy is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing success of the NNSW Competitions and Events Framework, through the completion of the Review and looks forward to seeing NNSW’s successful implementation of endorsed recommendations.

MSC would like to thank the many stakeholders who gave of their time and energy to share a wide range of views and experiences in an attempt to provide relevance to the process at all times, with special mention going to the following members of the PRG:
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nikki Horton</td>
<td>NNSW - General Manager Sport Development</td>
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<td>Lauren Woods</td>
<td>NNSW - General Manager Stakeholder Relations</td>
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<td>Kristian Whitaker</td>
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Mike McLaughlin

30th August 2017