

ATHLETICS AUSTRALIA

NATIONAL ATHLETE SUPPORT STRUCTURE (NASS)

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

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

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

Aims of High Performance program and NASS

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

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

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

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

NASS Emerging and Development levels are the initial steps on this pathway to Podium success and are specifically aimed to provide the best support and DTE for a coach/athlete to assist their performance enhancement, planning and programming to achieve these aims.

Benefits of NASS

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

The utilisation of these high performance resources is focused on each coach/athlete's 'Gap to Podium' plan – what and how the system will support the achievement of these targeted areas. The 'Gap to Podium' plan will be established by the coach/athlete and their State Performance Coach, Head Coach and/or Paralympic Program Manager, and Performance Service Staff, with input from the NIN.

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

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

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

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

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

Athlete Eligibility

The eligibility requirements for NASS include that the athlete, at all material times:

- satisfies all relevant eligibility and nationality rules of International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF), International Olympic Committee (IOC), World Para Athletics (WPA) and Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF);
- holds an Australian citizenship at the time of invitation to the NASS and throughout the NASS year and be eligible and committed to represent Australia (or on a committed path to Australian citizenship to be eligible to represent Australia);
- is a registered member of Athletics Australia through their Member Association;
- in the case of Para-athletes, holds an international WPA classification of "Review" or "Confirmed" status;
- complies with all relevant AA and AIS policies including (but not limited to) relevant Codes of Conduct, Team Agreements, Polices and Rules;
- complies with all applicable anti-doping requirements of ASADA, IAAF, WPA, AOC, APC, CGA, AA and the AIS.

Performance Criteria

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

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

The Performance Criteria and Performance levels have been established for the Able Body program and are outlined in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. The calculation method for these Performance Standards is articulated in each Appendix.

Performance levels have not been established for the Para program and selection on to NASS is purely on discretion of the Selectors based on the guidance in this Policy. This is also the position with the Emerging level of the Able Body NASS program.

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

A single PB performance will be considered, however the range of an athlete's best performances of the season will also be a factor for the Selectors, as this may be a closer representation of the repeatable level of performance for an athlete.

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

NASS Selectors, Selection Meetings and Selections

The NASS Selectors will be appointed by the CEO of Athletics Australia from time-to-time and will include the Head of Performance and Coaching, Head of High Performance Systems, Head Coach, Paralympic Program Manager and the Athletics Pathways Manager.

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

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

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

Appeals

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

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

For the avoidance of doubt:

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

Maintenance and Progression of Level

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

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

Progression will normally be shown through the improvement of their PB in line with their event's relevant performance projection. Progression may also be shown through the successful utilisation of performance services and the HP resources of AA and NIN.

The retention or exit of an athlete who does not show improvement in line with these performance progressions will be at the absolute discretion of the Selectors; an athlete's State Performance Advisor will provide specific detail on an athlete's circumstances for the Selectors consideration. An athlete may also be retained on NASS, but at a lower level, if the Selectors believe the athlete can still achieve the Goals and the aims of NASS, however this will be a very rarely exercised discretion.

Athletes may be considered for selection on to NASS regardless of whether they have previously been exited from NASS, or if it is the first time they are being considered; their selection will be based on whether the NASS Selectors believe they can achieve the aims of the NASS program and assist with the Goals. An athlete who has been placed on the Medical level may be returned onto NASS at any time, normally at the level of NASS they were at prior to being placed on Medical.

Relays

AA is committed to relay teams who AA believe could assist achieving the Goals and the aims of NASS. The NASS Selectors will determine at selection meeting if a specific relay event can be targeted to achieve the aims of NASS and will normally be placed on Podium Potential level of NASS. If this is determined to be the case, athletes will then be selected on to NASS for a relevant Relay program.

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

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

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

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

Review of NASS Structure

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

APPENDIX 1

NASS is split into two main programs:

Enhanced NASS This program is targeted at athletes with the most realistic chance to meet the Goals and aims of the NASS program; now or in the future. The athletes and their coaches in these categories of NASS receive Performance Support through their State Performance Advisor and their NIN performance servicing staff.

Squad NASS This program includes the Commonwealth & non OG/PG World Championships Gold, Development and Emerging levels of NASS. These athletes and their coaches receive Performance Support through their State Performance Advisor and their NIN performance servicing staff.

Int. Team NASS This program is targeted at athletes who do not meet the membership criteria of the Enhanced NASS program but who, nevertheless, are selected to represent Australia in major global Championships. Membership (and timeframe of Membership) of Team NASS is subject to the capacity of the relevant NIN to provide this program and will likely vary from Championship to Championship.

The **Podium Benchmark** events are the **Olympic Games, IAAF World Athletics Championships, Paralympic Games** and **World Para Athletics World Championships**.

Selectors Criteria

	AA Category	Criteria for the Selectors to consider		
ENHANCED	Gold	Athletes with the realistic capacity to win a Gold medal at the next Podium Benchmark Event , having won a Gold medal at the most recent Podium Benchmark Event .		
	Medal	Athletes with the realistic capacity to win a Silver or Bronze medal at the next Podium Benchmark Event , having won a Silver or Bronze medal at the most recent Podium Benchmark Event .		
	Podium Ready	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Medal level within two years , having finished Fourth to eighth place at the most recent Podium Benchmark Event .		-2 Years
	Podium Potential	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Podium Ready level in an individual event within two years and have achieved the Podium Potential performance level.		-4 Years

SQUAD	Commonwealth & non OG/PG World Championships Gold	Athletes who do not satisfy the criteria above but who have the realistic capacity to win a gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games or 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships or 2019 Para Athletics World Championships in non-Olympic/Paralympic events.
	Development	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Podium Potential level in an individual event within two years .
	Emerging	Athletes with the realistic capacity to reach the Podium Potential level in an individual event within four years .
	Medical	Athletes already selected on NASS that have suffered an illness or injury who the selectors believe can still meet the Goals and aims of the program. Athletes may continue to receive medical support to return to competition.
INTERNATIONAL TEAM		Athletes selected to represent Australia in identified senior and junior championships.

APPENDIX 2

Individual Performance Levels

Performance Levels have been established for the Able Body program to assist selection at the Development and Podium Potential levels but have not been established for the Emerging level, nor for any level of the Para program.

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

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

Explanation of Performance Levels

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

MEN

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

WOMEN

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

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

MEN

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

WOMEN

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