



# Australia's **Winning Edge**

2012-2022

Our game plan for moving from  
world class to **world best**

*In partnership with Australia's  
High Performance Network*



## **Australia's high performance is about:**

- » *consistent and sustainable success for Australian athletes and teams on the world stage*
- » *greater levels of accountability for performance results*
- » *improved governance structures and contemporary reporting and monitoring of performance*
- » *engaging, uniting, inspiring and motivating all Australians.*

# Winning the next race

Australia’s international sporting reputation is formidable. We are respected for what our athletes have achieved and the broad range of sports in which we have succeeded. Watch any major sporting event and invariably there is an Aussie in the mix.

Australia’s international sporting achievements by our men and women over the past 30 years have been impressive: Olympic and Paralympic champions too many to name; the America’s Cup; the Tour de France; Rugby and Cricket World Cups; world champions on bikes, in boats, on skis, jumping things, throwing things, swimming in pools and surfing in oceans; in summer or winter, indoor or outdoor sports; up mountains, around race-tracks and down half-pipes; throwing, kicking, netting and hitting balls of all shapes and sizes. Our many successes are a credit to all involved in them.

But the world is changing. International competition is intensifying and improving all the time. Many other nations have now replicated our innovations, tapped into our expertise and made strategic investments, and as a result have become strong competitors in international sport. This is true of developed and developing nations alike.

In any area of human endeavour, there is one truism — past success is no guarantee of future performance.

Our Olympic performance peaked nearly a decade ago. Since Athens in 2004 our place in the upper echelons of medal-winning nations has drifted downwards (see chart 1). The London Games provided clear signs that even in sports where we have had great success, there are new and re-emerging competitive challenges.

Notwithstanding swimming’s extraordinary result in Beijing in 2008 (20 medals with 6 golds), our overall relative Olympic position has been trending downwards since the Sydney Games.

Key statistics give us a true sense of the challenge:

- >> Australia is winning less gold medals
- >> Australia is winning less medals
- >> We are achieving less top-eight placings
- >> Our conversion of top-eight placings into medals is below the average of the top 15 nations at the Games.

The other measure of sustained success — annual world champions — tells a similar story and extends beyond Olympic sports. There is a trend downwards in priority sports, with 2012 likely to be the lowest result in the last 12 years (see chart 2).

This should not diminish the great achievements by athletes over the past decade. Nor should it deflate our potential future champions, in whom we have enormous belief. We have a pool of extraordinary talent that is ready to step up, and world-leading high performance expertise from coaching to nutrition to sports medicine.

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) believes that Australians want, indeed expect, us to respond to this new environment — to retain our pre-eminent position in world sport and not lower our expectations. To achieve this, the Australian high performance sport sector will need to do things smarter and better, without calling on the Australian Government for additional funding given general economic pressures. *Australia’s Winning Edge* sets out the plan and proposed actions to this end. Like any plan, it has to start with clear goals.

Chart 1: Australian Olympic Performance 2000-2012

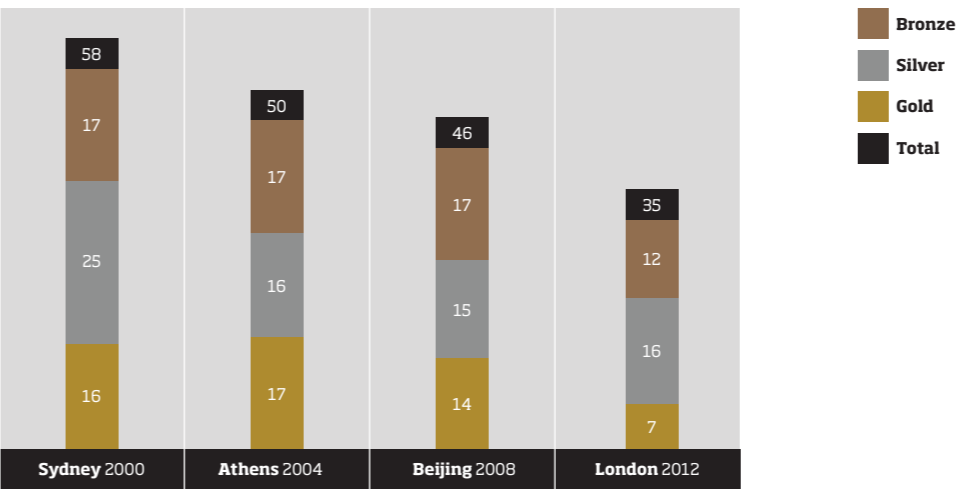
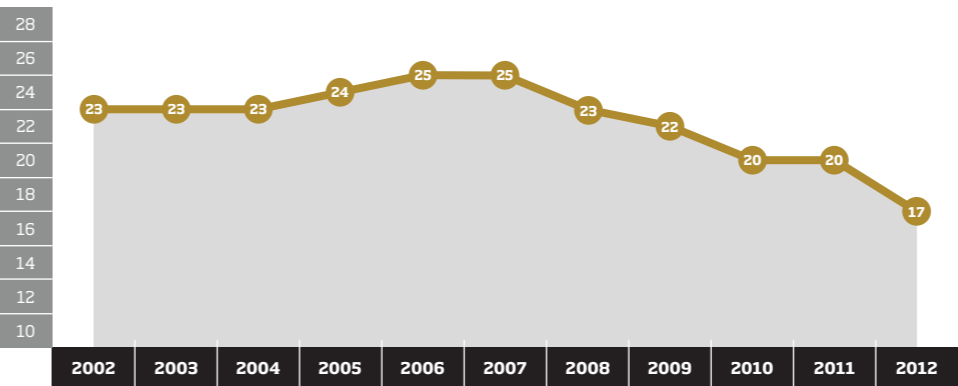


Chart 2: Number of Australian world champions in priority sports 2002-2012 (Rolling three year average)



## Why international sporting success matters

High performance success is not only good for our athletes and our sense of national pride, it also contributes to other important Government objectives in areas such as participation, economic development, health and education.

While *Australia’s Winning Edge* is focused on high performance sport, the connection this has to grassroots participation is well established. Participation will continue to be a key focus area for Australian, state and territory governments.

# Australia’s 2012–2022 performance targets

Goals for major international competitions in priority sports will be used to assess the effectiveness of Australia’s high performance system. The following goals are aligned with the Australian Olympic Committee, Australian Paralympic Committee and Australian Commonwealth Games Association. They reflect the individual ambitions of sports, with an overlay from the ASC and State Institutes and Academies of Sport.



# The game plan

Australia’s Winning Edge is a collaborative effort led by the ASC with key partners in the sport sector, and builds on the National Sport and Active Recreation Policy Framework (the Policy Framework) and National Institute System Intergovernmental Agreement.

The following priorities, agreed through the Policy Framework, focus on what is needed to achieve Australia’s Winning Edge.

- >> **Investing for success:** Investment is targeted to achieve the greatest chance of international success.
- >> **Planning to perform:** Planning and review processes are contemporary and provide for elevated accountability across the sector.
- >> **The right support:** High performance athletes have the right support at the right time along their pathway to international success.
- >> **Good governance and capability:** High performance sports and sector partners have the structure, workforce and leadership capacity to develop successful programs to achieve competitive results and to spend taxpayer funding effectively.
- >> **Evidence-based decisions:** High performance sports and sector partners have a valid and robust evidence base on which to develop winning high performance programs.

# Achieving Australia's Winning Edge

## Investing for success

The driving principle behind our investment approach to high performance sport is to ensure that the resources available are positioned to support Australia's most talented athletes. It is equally important that we strive to have a strong and sustainable high performance sector to ensure Australia continues to deliver success into the future.

A set of transparent investment principles coupled with an approach that aligns performance investment with outcomes will be at the heart of *Australia's Winning Edge*.

Investments will be prioritised to sports that demonstrate the greatest chance of short, medium and long-term success. Decisions will be based on credible evidence that takes into account recent performances and future potential, along with understanding the systems that will drive performance outcomes.

Investing for success means:

- » **restore and grow** — investing to ensure we continue to **restore and grow** our position in those sports where we have a record of achieving success

- » **enhancing and securing** — investing in **prospective sports** where the performance evidence suggests that while Australia may have had limited success in the past, there is an opportunity to achieve greater success aligned to our performance aspirations in the future
- » **supporting and accelerating** — investing in **emerging sports** that demonstrate Australia has a reasonable prospect of achieving future success.

## Planning to perform

Subject to performance, funding will be ongoing and not limited to four-year cycles. It will be subject to a robust annual performance review through agreed goals and benchmarked against world's best practice.

The Annual Sport Performance Review will provide an opportunity to align the investment thinking and decisions of all partners, and apply objective criteria across all sports and jurisdictions. Individual sports and system partners will be provided with high performance planning support as part of achieving sustainable success.

**Sector partners, including sports, have a shared responsibility to deliver performance outcomes and all will be accountable for their roles in delivering success.**

## The right support

Providing the necessary support to Australia's current high performers as well as emerging podium potential athletes is central to achieving international success. Our ambition is to ensure that athletes have the right support at the right time along their pathway.

Delivering tangible support direct to athletes to enable a commitment to pursue sporting excellence is a priority.

## Good governance and capability to deliver

The high performance sector recognises the importance of achieving sustainable sporting success. Key to this are the people, the systems and a culture of excellence.

Confidence in the leadership capacity and capability of sports — particularly in relation to management, governance, internal controls and business systems — is acknowledged as being critical. Sports will be required to demonstrate good leadership, governance and administration as part of the annual investment and review process.

Important areas of capability will include:

- » athlete pathways
- » high performance coaching
- » leadership and governance
- » performance services and systems.

National support programs in these areas will be based on world's best practice and developed to address identified national themes.

## Evidence-based decisions

A requirement across sport will be the need to make decisions based on clear performance evidence.

The application of an evidence-based approach supported by quality analysis will flow through in the following areas:

- » investment decision making
- » performance planning, analysis and accountability
- » resourcing and projects in the applied research and innovation domain.

An applied research and innovation agenda will provide a robust evidence base for the ongoing development and resourcing of the system. This will assist with the validation of investment as well as support world-leading program design, delivery and evaluation.

This approach will also contribute to the development and growth of collaborative relationships between the sports sector and leading research and technology institutions.



# Priority actions

Achieving Australia's performance targets within existing resources is possible. The challenge is to do things differently and more efficiently. For its part, the ASC will pursue the following actions to deliver *Australia's Winning Edge*:

- 1

**Introduce a sharper, more robust national funding and accountability model**
  - >> New investment principles
  - >> Funding linked directly to *Australia's Winning Edge* targets and milestones
  - >> Sports held accountable for the funding they receive and the effectiveness with which they spend it
  - >> New annual *Australia's Winning Edge: State of Sports* report
- 2

**Help sports reduce costs/complexity and grow their capacity**
  - >> Require sports to demonstrate best practice governance and administration relevant to a sport's circumstances
  - >> Identify opportunities for shared services to create efficiencies and reduce costs for sports
  - >> Increase commercial revenue and philanthropic investment utilising the Australian Sports Foundation
- 3

**Invest dividends from efficiencies into three key areas**

(a) Better direct support for athletes
  - >> Grow Direct Athlete Support (DAS) to globally competitive levels over time
  - >> Change classification structure for DAS, linked to *Australia's Winning Edge*

(b) Greater investment in coaches and high performance personnel
  - >> Establish a new cross-sport Centre for Performance Coaching and Leadership
  - >> Create a competitive funding pool for sports to promote innovative initiatives to attract/retain/develop coaching/high performance personnel

(c) Renewed focus on unearthing and nurturing Australia's talent
  - >> Conduct annual 'Sports Draft' and 'Second Chance' programs for Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports

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**Refocus the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) to grow its role as Australia's national high performance agency**
  - >> Sharper focus on true podium potential athletes
  - >> AIS to be responsible for all high performance funding within the ASC
  - >> Empower sports to determine optimal high performance program delivery by transitioning from AIS direct program delivery by the end of 2013
  - >> Focus on: Strategy/Investment + Athlete/Sport Services + Research/Innovation

>> Develop niche-sport talent initiatives (for example, combat sports, target sports, acrobatic sports)

>> Explore opportunities for women in high performance sport, dedicated national sporting organisation (NSO) pathway managers, and talent enrichment team for pre-elite athletes

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# Understanding high performance sport in Australia

The high performance sector comprises many organisations working together to support our athletes to achieve continued sporting success for Australia. Each organisation has a critical role to play to ensure Australia continues to excel on the world’s sporting stage. The organisations and their roles can be summarised as:

## Australian Institute of Sport

**Their role:** The AIS is Australia’s strategic high performance sport agency with responsibility and accountability for leading the delivery of Australia’s international sporting success.

**Working together:** The AIS works in partnership NSOs, state institutes and academies of sport (SIS/SAS) and other sport partners to deliver international sporting success. The AIS partners with NSOs to position high performance investment in order to support coaches and athletes to deliver Australia’s collective ambitions. This involves providing expertise in athlete preparation, performance science and medicine, innovation, coach and leadership development, performance strategy and planning, pathway support and athlete career and education.

The AIS also works closely with the SIS/SAS to develop systematic national support for NSOs to deliver the daily training environment for Australia’s elite athletes.

## State institutes and academies of sport

**Their role:** The SIS/SAS, together with the AIS, form Australia’s National Institute Network. The SIS/SAS provide high performance services and support in partnership with NSOs in their respective state and territory jurisdictions with a view to delivering high quality daily training environments for athletes and teams with podium potential.

**Working together:** In partnership with NSOs and the AIS, the SIS/SAS provide expert services and resources to complement NSO performance programs in the areas of performance science, medicine, coaching and athlete career and education.

## Peak bodies

**Who:** The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC), Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) and Australian Commonwealth Games Association (ACGA)

**Their role:** The AOC, APC and ACGA support sports to access significant international competitions, including the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and Commonwealth Games. In addition, the APC manages high performance programs for several sports, provides direct funding to national federations and other high performance sector partners, and delivers programs that value add to this investment.

**Working together:** A representative from each of the peak bodies is included as a non-voting member of the National Elite Sports Council. The National Elite Sports Council provides a focal point for communication, issues management and national program coordination across the high performance network.

## Sports

**Who:** National sporting organisations

**Their role:** NSOs are central to Australia’s high performance system and are responsible for delivering high performance sport programs. They create environments that support coaches, athletes and teams to perform at their best for national and international competition. In addition, they nurture and identify Australia’s next generation of athletes, providing the right support at the right time to ensure Australia continues to achieve international sporting success.

**Working together:** NSOs work with all partners across the high performance system. They engage and invest in the SIS/SAS to create the right daily training environment for athletes, and utilise state-of-the-art facilities and leading technical expertise in sports science and sports medicine. NSOs also partner with peak bodies to prepare athletes for major international competitions and work with governments to invest in the right areas and ensure the sustainability of sport.

## Government

**Who:** Australian Sports Commission, Office for Sport and state departments of sport and recreation

**Their role:** The ASC administers the Australian Government’s investment in sport, including funding to NSOs, the National Institute Network and the APC. Additional support is provided by state departments of sport and recreation.

**Working together:** Governments play a significant role in helping set the direction of sport in Australia. Government representatives from each state, the Office for Sport and the ASC form part of the Committee of Australian Sport and Recreation Officials (CASRO). Over the past two years CASRO has moved to deliver a nationally aligned and collaborative approach for sport by the development of the Policy Framework. The Policy Framework provides a new shared direction for sport which guides the development of policies, strategies and programs by governments and identifies priority areas of cooperation of which international performance is one.

## Commercial and community

**Who:** Private providers, universities, sport technology companies and sponsors

**Their role:** To provide expertise, products, facilities, advice and funding to assist athletes and sports to compete on the world stage.

**Working together:** Athletes, sports and sports institutes rely on partnerships with a wide variety of experts to gain *Australia’s Winning Edge*. Without this support and engagement, performance will be compromised. The high performance sector must work closely with these organisations to pursue innovative approaches, and to gain access to facilities and funding that are consistent with a sport’s high performance plan. For example, promoting and commercialising sports innovation through avenues such as the Australian Sports Technology Network will help build our competitive advantage, translating into high performance results.

# High performance sport in Australia





Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission



AUSTRALIAN  
INSTITUTE OF SPORT



AUSTRALIAN  
OLYMPIC  
COMMITTEE



AUSTRALIAN  
PARALYMPIC  
COMMITTEE



South Australian Sports Institute



NSW INSTITUTE OF SPORT



ACT ACADEMY OF SPORT



Northern  
Territory  
Government



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