



Australian Fencing
High Performance Plan
2012-2024

Vision and Mission

The Mission

The mission of the Australian Fencing Federation (AFF) is to promote the sport of Fencing in Australia. The mission of the High Performance Plan (HPP) within the AFF is to develop pathways and enabling mechanisms to allow fencers to achieve international success.

The Vision

It is a goal of the AFF to make Australia one of the acknowledged Fencing powers in the world. A well-constructed and appropriately resourced High Performance Plan can help the AFF to achieve that vision.

Introduction and Background

In 2010, the Australian Fencing Federation launched its High Performance Plan 2010-2012 and the concept of the Australian Fencing Team (the “National Team” across all age categories) as the vehicle for developing Australian Fencing into an international fencing power. Part of these plans involved creating ‘Pathways to Success’ and organisational structures to support progressing Australian Fencing towards these goals.

Two years on, Australian Fencing is as always facing the bleak reality of being a sport for which there is minimal funding available for athletes, coaches or organisational support, in an increasingly competitive international arena, and in which the funding and performance gaps between Australia and our closest rivals are expanding rather than narrowing. Former ‘minnow’ fencing nations are now recruiting international coaches and fully or partially funding athletes to train and compete. We have seen countries such as Senegal, Tunisia and Egypt emerge as international medallists and with numerous athletes across the weapons ranked in the top 50 in the world in a relatively short period. We have also seen former power house fencing nations such as Hungary and France struggle in some weapons as fencing becomes a truly global sport; and America, China and Korea realise their potential as dominant forces across weapons and age groups.

The take home message from this is through funding, planning and bringing the appropriate resources to bear on athlete development, countries can make significant inroads into international fencing in a matter of years.

However, the flip side of this message is that Australian Fencing does not have the same funding and resource opportunities that our competitors do. We are on an uneven playing field, without even factoring in the geographic limitations we face both within Australia and our distance from international competition and training opportunities.

As such, Australian Fencing requires a High Performance Plan that brings out the absolute best from our athletes, coaches and officials, with our current resources and recognising these limitations. We must work hard to create a cohesive, comprehensive training environment within Australia, as well as creating opportunities for our athletes to gain the most from their experiences overseas. We can achieve this through:

- Forging partnerships with other countries in the Asia zone for training camps and competitions;
- Developing relationships with clubs or teams in Europe to provide a training base for our athletes when they are competing overseas;
- Bringing international fencers and coaches to Australia to share their skills and knowledge; and
- Developing high quality training and competition opportunities on Australian soil.

From Individual to Team

The High Performance Plan 2012-2024 recognises that in order to achieve success, Australian Fencing must shift from its previously individualised approach to international competition and high performance and move to a team approach, involving the full commitment of athletes, personal coaches, assistant national coaches and national coaches, as well as the High Performance personnel. Australian Fencing cannot continue to dilute its impact by having individual approaches to training and development. It must recognise that in order for us to compete against other countries who are better resourced and whose athletes may do nothing other than train, we need to ensure that every minute and every dollar Australian fencers spend on fencing is valuable.

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Underpinning the High Performance Plan is the development of individual High Performance Training Programs for athletes who are on the Australian Fencing Team and Australian Fencing Squad. These plans are created through consultation with the athlete, their personal coach, the National Coach and High Performance Manager and within the guidelines of the core principles of the AFT & AFS Model, providing benchmarks for training sessions (sport specific and non-sport specific), individual lessons, squads, camps and competitions. This is not a 'one size fits all' approach, but rather provides the basis for which an individual fencer's training and development can be structured. The National Coach and High Performance Manager are provided with discretion to individualise training programs, where required, to ensure athletes are supported in meeting their commitments as an elite sports person. It recognises the pressures and challenges Australian fencers experience and works to support the athletes to bring the best out of them as athletes.

Australian fencers make significant sacrifices to pursue their elite sporting dreams. It is incumbent on the AFF to provide a High Performance Plan that engenders the full commitment and trust of our elite athletes and their coaches, and recognises the challenges our athletes face on a daily basis. The HPP 2012-2024 must give confidence that through a unified and single-minded purpose, Australian Fencing can achieve international success. It must also deliver the message that individualistic approaches will not gain long-term success for Australian Fencing and will only serve to weaken and undermine the long-term plans of our sport's development.

Three Olympic Cycles

The most important thing to note about this High Performance Plan is its duration – three Olympic cycles. In 2012, it was the first time since Australian Fencing entered the Olympic arena in 1952 that we have not qualified any athlete for the Olympic Games. This, while devastating for many, is the wake-up call Australian Fencing needed. We need to plan for the future, and that means developing an elite sporting mentality and a belief in our capacity to achieve home-grown success in international competition. As such, the High Performance Plan 2012-2024 sets out to achieve major outcomes and progress for each of the three Olympiads it encompasses:

1st Olympiad: 2012-2016

Focuses on developing, implementing and consolidating the structures and programs required to lead Australian Fencing towards international success; and improving performance in the Asian Zone (see High Performance Program Annual Plans 2012-2016).

2nd Olympiad: 2016-2020

Focuses on achieving a continuous flow of new generations of fencers through established pathways across age groups, weapons and competition categories; achieving consistent high performance in the Asian Zone; and improving performance in World-level events (see High Performance Program Annual Plans 2016-2020).

3rd Olympiad: 2021-2024

Focuses on achieving a depth of competitiveness across Asian and World-level events and age groups, including Asian Championships, World championships and Olympic Games; high performance across the weapons; and evidence of a proven model of athlete development (see High Performance Program Annual Plans 2020-2024).

Our Focus

What we know is that the average age of an Olympian is between 26-28 years, across the different weapon groups. This means that for realisation of Australian Fencing's ultimate goal – our first ever Olympic medal – we need to be focussing on a core group of young athletes who we will develop over three Olympic cycles. As with all sports, and particularly ones with little to no funding, we will have to deal with attrition. This means Australian

Fencing must engage and retain a broad base of young athletes, and continue to draw in emerging talent to ensure the pool of young fencers is large, the push to reach the top is strong, and the capacity to train and compete effectively on home soil is realised. While our older athletes will certainly still be supported on their journeys, the primary focus of the High Performance Plan 2012-2024 is development and retention of young and emerging talent. Australian Fencing needs to ensure there are appropriate (and many) pathways to ensure our young athletes develop at an appropriate rate for their age and ability, remain engaged and enthralled by the sport and feel inspired to make the sacrifices required to achieve international success.

Our future currently rests with a group of 10-18 year olds, for whom we must provide the passion, encouragement and skills to develop into elite fencers. Our challenge: These young athletes are being asked to choose between a poorly funded, minority sport and potentially far better funded and more popular sports such as swimming, football and cricket. As such, we owe them a system that inspires and earns their confidence and commitment, and provides them with the best possible opportunities to achieve their dreams and aspirations.

Supporting Structures

The AFF recognises that in order to achieve high performance, the mechanisms of the organisation must also be operating at maximum efficiency. The AFF will continue to work to enhance its efficiency and organisational effectiveness; to improve coach recruitment and coach education through national coaching programs; and to recruit and train referees for domestic and international competitions. Coaching and refereeing are seen as critical supports to achieving high performance in Australian Fencing – reinforcing international standards and creating a training and competitive environment within Australia that mirrors international norms.

The AFF will continue to work towards establishing effective partnerships with Sports Science, Sports Medicine, Institutes of Sport and the Australian Sports Commission to provide our elite athletes with the support, information and access to resources available to assist them in their training, preparation, recovery, rehabilitation and injury prevention.

International Competitive Analysis and Action Plan

Critical Success Factors

- Commit to a clearly articulated and properly budgeted 4-year financial program from the AFF for all weapons;
- Develop and implement a new all-weapon High Performance Program;
- Amend the Selection Policy to ensure alignment with the HP Plan;
- Continue provision of funds and award by contract the positions of High Performance Manager (and associated HP staff), National Weapons Coaches and National Coaching Director;
- Recruit, retain and develop world-class coaches to support fencers in the HPP;
- Develop high quality referees to ensure international norms are applied in Australian competitions;
- In partnership with the states, create Assistant National Coaching positions for all weapons and award by contract;
- Develop high level training camps and competitions within Australia;
- Organise and promote international training and competition tours across different age groups and skill levels to provide appropriate opportunities for athletes to develop in international competitions;
- Develop pathways for athletes of all age levels and skills to develop their international competitive experience and results; and
- Continue to support the attendance of full Australian teams at designated competitions and the World Championships.

International Competitive Analysis, as at 1st May 2012

In developing the High Performance Plan 2012-2024, it is necessary to take stock of Australian Fencing's current international standings. As indicated above, this is the first time in our history that Australia has failed to qualify any athletes for the Olympics. Below is a summary of our international results and the general state of play for each weapon over the past 12 months, as at the end of the qualifying period for the 2012 London Olympics. Comparisons to other Asian countries and their results have been included to provide benchmarking and realistic indicators of the results required to achieve Olympic selection and international results in the future.

Olympic qualification can be achieved through World Rankings (team and individual) or Asian Zone qualification (individual). All these pathways require significant amounts of travelling to compete in events and to gain rankings points, as well as experience and form.

Our greatest challenge continues to be that we are competing against fully and partially funded athletes and teams, with a far greater pool of resources to draw on in order to achieve high performance. Our athletes must pay their own way to events, and pay for their training and equipment. They must balance work and study commitments alongside their training commitments. As a result, we have far fewer incentives to offer our athletes to pursue international success. Wherever possible, we need to find ways in which to support our athletes training and preparation costs, and their travel and competition costs.

Men's Sabre

World Rankings – Team

Europe continues to dominate the top 10 on World Rankings (with USA 7th and Canada 10th). Our Asian counterparts are ranked 11th (China), 12th (Korea), 15th (Hong Kong), 19th (Iran), 21st (Japan) and 28th (Kazakhstan). Australia is ranked 34th, with only Congo, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Singapore, Indonesia and Azerbaijan below.

World Rankings – Individual

Country	Team Rank	Number in Top 10	Number in Top 50	Number in Top 100	Number in Top 150	Number in Top 200
China	11		2	2		
Korea	12	2	2			
Hong Kong	15				2	
Japan	21				2	2
Australia	34				1	1

Top Ranked Australian – James Walsh (132nd)

- Asian Zonals – 5th
- Asian Championships 2012 – top 16
- World Championships 2011 – top 64
- World Cups 2011/12 – 4 events, 92nd, 101st, 138th, 167th

Asian Championships

Team Results: 8/10 (Beat Chinese Taipei 45-42, lost to Korea 45-13, lost to Malaysia 45-35)

Individual Results: Walsh 15th (3V), Jaccard 31st (2V), Scudds DNQ (1V), Fox DNQ (0V)

Emerging countries: Iran (3 top 16s, 1 top 32), Kazakhstan (4 top 32s), Hong Kong, Malaysia and Chinese Taipei

Cadet & Junior World Championships

Juniors: Leonhard 79/109, Rowley DNQ 102/109; Cadets: Rowley 59/79.

Women's Sabre

World Rankings – Team

The top 10 of women's sabre is a mix of European and Asian countries and the USA. Asian zone countries are ranked 5th (China), 9th (Korea), 11th (Kazakhstan), 13th (Hong Kong), 15th (Japan) and 20th (Singapore). Australia is ranked 24th, with Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam the Asian countries below Australia in ranking.

World Rankings – Individual

Country	Team Rank	Number in Top 10	Number in Top 50	Number in Top 100	Number in Top 150	Number in Top 200
China	5	2	2			
Korea	9	1	3			
Kazakhstan	11		1	1	1	
Hong Kong	13				3	
Japan	15		1	1	1	
Australia	24				1	1

Top Ranked Australian – Alex Carroll (106th)

- Asian Zonals – 6th
- Asian Championships 2012 – top 32
- World Championships 2011 – 93rd
- World Cups 2011/12 – 6 events, 39th, 79th, 93rd, 128th, 129th, 143rd

Asian Championships

Team Results: 9/9 (lost to Vietnam 45-29)

Individual Results: Auty 23rd (3V), Carroll 24th (2V), Andre 32nd (1V), Brooks DNQ (1V)

Emerging countries: Kazakhstan (3rd, 1 top 16, 1 top 32), Vietnam (1 top 16, 1 top 32), Taipei (1 top 16, 1 top 32)

Cadet & Junior World Championships

Juniors: Simpson 76/79, Barnard 79/79; Cadets: Barnard 39/66, Simpson 65/66

Summary of Sabre

Sabre has the lowest participation out of the three weapons in Australia, however significant inroads have been made to develop a larger group of junior sabreurs in several states. Further encouragement of growth is required to expand the depth of talent. It should be noted that in a relatively short time of working with the new National Sabre Coach (Antonio Signorello), James Walsh has achieved a top 64 in the Senior World Championships, which was a first for Australian men's sabre in 20 years.

Men's Foil

World Rankings – Team

The top 10 of men's foil is a mix of European and Asian countries and the USA and Egypt. Asian zone countries are ranked 2nd (China), 5th (Japan), 8th (Korea), 14th (Hong Kong), 21st (Iran), 26th (Singapore), 27th (Kazakhstan), 29th (Thailand), 34th (Qatar), 36th (Indonesia). Australia is ranked 37th, with Jordan, Malaysia, Croatia, Ireland, Colombia and Cuba the only countries below on rankings.

World Rankings – Individual

Country	Team Rank	Number in Top 10	Number in Top 50	Number in Top 100	Number in Top 150	Number in Top 200
China	2	1	3	3		
Japan	5		3	4		
Korea	8	1	2	1		
Hong Kong	14			2	2	
Australia	37					

(Australia has no fencers ranked in the top 350 in the world)

Top Ranked Australian – Marek Jamrozy (362nd)

- Asian Zonals – 5th
- Asian Championships 2012 – top 32
- World Championships 2011 – 115th
- World Cups 2011/12 – 8 events, 77th, 115th, 119th, 145th, 164th, 152nd, 169th, 186th

Asian Championships

Team Results: 7/8 (Lost to China 45-8, lost to Singapore 45-28, beat Iran 45-44)

Individual Results: Jamrozy 31st (2V), Jones 33rd (3V), Hart DNQ (1V)

Emerging countries: Hong Kong (1 top 8, 2 top 16), Singapore (2 top 16, 1 top 32), Iran (3 top 32), Kazakhstan (2 top 32)

Cadet & Junior World Championships

Juniors: Donald 84/122, Webber 102/122 (DNQ), Douglas 112/122 (DNQ); Cadets: Reynolds 41/91, Douglas 41/91, Webber 49/91

Women's Foil

World Rankings – Team

The top 10 of women's foil is a mix of European and Asian countries and the USA and Canada. Asian zone countries are ranked 3rd (Korea), 9th (Japan), 11th (China), 16th (Singapore), 17th (Hong Kong), 23rd (Indonesia), 26th (Vietnam), 28th (Thailand). Australia is ranked 30th, with Qatar, Bulgaria and Kazakhstan the only companies below Australia on rankings.

World Rankings – Individual

Country	Team Rank	Number in Top 10	Number in Top 50	Number in Top 100	Number in Top 150	Number in Top 200
Korea	3	1	4	2		
Japan	9		2	5		
China	11		4	4		
Singapore	16				1	2
Australia	30					

(Australia has no fencers ranked in the top 250 in the world)

Top Ranked Australian – Lishan Sung (No senior ranking for 2011/12)

- Asian Zonals – 8th
- Asian Championships 2012 – top 32
- World Championships 2011 – DNC
- World Cups 2011/12 – DNC

Asian Championships

Team Results: Not available.

Individual Results: Sung 26th (1V), Bonney-Millet 30th (1V), Daniel 32nd (1V) DNQ, Mangion 37th (0V) DNQ

Emerging countries: Hong Kong (1 top 16, 3 top 32), Vietnam (1 top 16, 2 stop 32)

Cadet & Junior World Championships

Juniors: Marotta 65/92, Sung 90/92 (DNQ); Cadets: Sung 28/77

Summary of Foil

Several senior foilists are at the end of their careers and now have new talent emerging and what promises to be some extremely competitive National Championships across U15, U17, U20 and U23 age groups in the future. In 2012, some excellent results were achieved in European events by our young fencers. Concerns are that there are very few females in foil, and particular those training and competing at an elite level.

Men's Épée

World Rankings – Team

The top 10 of men's individual épée involves 9 different countries and as a weapon appears to be the most diverse across its top 25, with all 4 zones represented. The top 10 of men's team épée includes a mixture of European, Asian and American zone countries. Asian zone countries are ranked 4th (Korea), 8th (China), 15th (Kazakhstan), 16th (Kyrgyzstan), 17th (Japan), 20th (Iran), 22nd (Hong Kong). Australia is ranked 28th out of 55 countries, with nine other countries from the Asian zone below them.

World Rankings – Individual

Country	Team Rank	Number in Top 10	Number in Top 50	Number in Top 100	Number in Top 150	Number in Top 200
Korea	4	1	3			
China	8	1	4			
Kazakhstan	15	1	1	2		
Kyrgyzstan	16			2	1	
Japan	17			3		
Australia	28			1		2

Top Ranked Australian – Seamus Robinson 89th

- Asian Zonals – 7th
- Asian Championships 2012 – 36th
- World Championships 2011 – top 32
- World Cups 2011/12 – DNC

Asian Championships

Team Results: 5/15 (Beat Indonesia 45-41, Lost to Korea 45-32, beat Chinese Taipei 45-42, beat Iran 45-43)

Individual Results: Austen 24th (4V), Robinson 36th (4V) Lewis 38th (3V), Downes 46th (2V)

Emerging countries: Kazakhstan (2nd, 3 top 32), Singapore (1 top 8, 2 top 32), Uzbekistan (1 top 8, 1 top 16, 1 top 32), Iran (1 top 16, 2 top 32).

Cadet & Junior World Championships

Juniors: Mayall-Vandervelde 55/150 , Snell 109/ 150, Alchin 133/150; Cadets: Mayall-Vandervelde 55/107

Women's Épée

World Rankings – Team

The top 10 of women's team épée includes a mixture of European and Asian countries and the USA. Asian zone countries are ranked 2nd (China), 5th (Korea), 15th (Japan), 16th (Hong Kong), 22nd (Chinese Taipei), 23rd (Kazakhstan), 25th (Kyrgyzstan). Australia is ranked 31st out of 50 countries, with eight other countries from the Asian zone below them.

World Rankings – Individual

Country	Team Rank	Number in Top 10	Number in Top 50	Number in Top 100	Number in Top 150	Number in Top 200
China	2	1	5	1		
Korea	5	1	4			
Japan	15			2	1	
Hong Kong	16			3		
Australia	31			1	1	2

Top Ranked Australian – Evelyn Halls 90th

- Asian Zonals – 3rd
- Asian Championships 2012 – top 16
- World Championships 2011 – 68th
- World Cups 2011/12 – 3 events, 39th, 88th, 93rd

Asian Championships

Team Results: 7/10 (beat Vietnam 45-27, lost to China 45-33, beat Chinese Taipei 45/42)

Individual Results: Sher 10th (5V), Halls 12th (4V), Wilks (1V) DNQ, (Ryan (0V) DNQ

Emerging countries: Chinese Taipei (1 top 8, 2 top 32), Kyrgyzstan (1 top 16, 3 top 32), Hong Kong (1 top 16, 3 top 32).

Cadet & Junior World Championships

Juniors: Sher 11/114, Hagget 90/114 , Hughes 111/114; Cadets: Hughes 42/88, Devereaux 74/88.

Summary of Epée

The épée group consists of the most internationally experienced fencers, several of whom have been competing internationally since the mid-1990s. These fencers are nearing the end of their careers. However, due to the previous focus of the AFF on épée development for the past two decades, there continue to be generations of épéeists competing across age groups in international events, with some very promising results in cadet and junior categories.

International Goals

Primary

- To be competitive at benchmark international events.
- To achieve podium finishes in selected international competitions.

Secondary

- To provide effective and efficient organization and implementation of a high performance plan within Australian Fencing
- To engage Australia's best athletes in the High Performance Plan
- To provide a structure for elite coaches to work with the AFF through the HP Plan to achieve better outcomes for Australian elite fencers
- To increase the number of elite fencers in Australia through the provision of greater opportunities
- To provide clear pathways for development from U13 fencing through to international high performance
- To provide training and development opportunities for referees
- To increase public awareness and interest in elite fencers and fencing

High Performance Plan

The “Australian Fencing Team” (AFT) & “Australian Fencing Squad” (AFS)

The High Performance Plan 2010-2012 launched the foundation concept and branding of the Australian National Fencing Team, called the “Australian Fencing Team”. The “Australian Fencing Team” is Australia’s national fencing team across all age groups, genders and weapons. It is selected at the beginning of each age group’s fencing year to prepare for and represent Australia at the benchmark international events.

As part of the review and development of the High Performance Plan 2012-2024, this foundation concept has been expanded to include a broader squad of athletes, the “Australian Fencing Squad”, who will have the benefit of working with the national coach and national team, but who are not expected to make the same commitments around international event attendance as AFT members. Accordingly, AFS members do not receive the same benefits as the AFT members, which are outlined in the AFF High Performance Program. This document will be reviewed and updated annually. A copy of the annual AFF High Performance Program is available on the AFF website.

Members of the AFT and AFS will be selected following the World Championship for their respective age category. Selection is based on national ranking, minimum benchmark ranking points, minimum benchmark performance threshold (see Selection Policy) and on acceptance by the athlete of the terms and conditions of appointment to the AFT or AFS (see Athlete Agreement).

National Coaches

The three National Coaches (one each in foil, epee and sabre) are selected according to specified criteria and their performance is measured against a set of key performance indicators. Each coach will be engaged as a contractor to the AFF for the period between Olympic Games, with their continued engagement being subject to annual review. The contracts will also be contingent upon ongoing funding being available for their respective positions. The National Coaches are responsible to the High Performance Manager.

Personal Coaches

When a fencer is selected for the AFT or AFS, if the fencer already has a coach and both wish to continue the coach/pupil relationship, the fencer’s coach will work together with the National Coach and High Performance Manager to implement the National Training Program for that fencer. The athlete, personal coach and National Coach will agree on an individualised high performance training plan that takes into account the development

needs of the athlete. The personal coach will be responsible to the relevant National Coach in implementing the individual training component of the National Training Program and the athlete and personal coach are responsible in ensuring they document and report on their activities to the National Coach and HPM.

National Coaching Director & State Coaching Directors

The National Coaching Director (NCD) is an integral part of the pathway to success. The NCD will develop, implement and coordinate the training and accreditation of fencing coaches in Australia. State Coaching Directors (SCD) will be responsible to the National Coaching Director to develop, implement and coordinate the training and accreditation of fencing coaches in their state. The NCD is selected according to specified criteria and their performance is measured against a set of key performance indicators. The NCD will be engaged as a contractor to the AFF for the period between Olympic Games with their continued engagement being subject to annual review. The contracts will also be contingent upon ongoing funding being available for the position. The SCD's will be engaged as a contractor to the AFF and their State Association for the period between Olympic Games with their continued employment being subject to annual review. The contracts will also be contingent upon ongoing funding being available for the positions.

Assistant National Coaches (State Squad Coaches)

The Assistant National Coaches for each weapon are an important component of the pathway to success. They are to be selected according to specified criteria and their performance will be measured against a set of key performance indicators. Each coach will usually also be engaged as a squad coach for a given weapon in their home State and may provide individual lessons where the National Coach or a Personal Coach is not available. Both the AFF and the respective State Association will contribute resources to training squads run by Assistant National Coaches. The State Associations will provide the venue. The Assistant Coaches are responsible to the respective National Coach (for implementation of the National Training Program) and to the High Performance Manager and State Associations (for all other matters).

High Performance Management Team: Training and Support

The formulation of the National Training Program for AFT/AFS members is the responsibility of the respective National Coaches, in close consultation with the Assistant National Coach, Personal Coach and the High Performance Manager (HPM). The High Performance Manager (HPM), High Performance Manager – Operations (HPM-O) and High Performance Manager –

Finance & Contracts (HPM-F&C) coordinate and oversee the High Performance Plan and annual High Performance Programs in areas such as support for coaches, team and individual goals, discipline, policies and coordination with the AFF Strategic and Operational Plans and Board directives. The HPM-O and HPM-F&C are responsible to the HPM. The HPM is responsible to the AFF Executive.

Impacts & Challenges

Currently, Australian Fencing is faced with a range of challenges that impact upon its ability to achieve high performance in international fencing. These include:

- Limited/no funding for athletes – athletes have to pay for their training and competition expenses, and balance the need to earn money and gain a degree/employment (for them to earn money) with the need to train sufficiently to justify the expenditure and sacrifice.
- When athletes are in school and university they are at their most flexible for time to train and compete (aside from exam periods and generally, Year 12), yet they have the least control over their financial situation (e.g. reliant on parents or having to work part time while studying).
- When athletes find employment, they have better income but less time available through leave to train and travel, placing pressures on their employment (e.g. extra leave, unpaid leave), financial pressures and difficulty balancing a (typically) full time work load with the necessary level of training.
- Athletes and coaches having the capacity to comply with AFT/AFS agreements and reporting procedures.
- The need to develop more camps and opportunities for training with the national team and coach.
- Addressing geographic and cost issues are the main points of difficulty for camps and squad training.
- Provision of an appropriate level and amount of competition within Australia across age groups to develop and prepare athletes for international events.
- Quality coaching and refereeing; and opportunities for coaches and referees to develop and update their skills regularly.

Future Directions & Opportunities

Australian Fencing is entering a new era of high performance, cultural change and organisational structure. In order to realise the vision and goals of the High Performance

Plan 2012-2024, a number of future directions and opportunities need to be explored and achieved. These include:

- Improving the quality and quantity of training camps, squads and competitions on Australian soil, to emulate international standards and enable competitiveness and development of elite fencers without the need to spend thousands of dollars on international tours and training.
- Coordinating international tours and developing partnerships with clubs and national teams in Asia, Europe and America to ensure when athletes travel overseas, they achieve maximum benefit from their expenditure and time.
- Creation and implementation of pathways for junior development from Club, State and National events, through to Oceania, South East Asian, Asian, American, European and World level events.
- Increasing the numbers of young participants in the sport, and ensuring they are encouraged and supported in progressing through the pathways and given ample and appropriate development opportunities and support.
- Improving coach and referee development opportunities and increasing skill levels amongst 'home-grown' coaches and referees, to better reflect international norms.
- Improving partnerships with and access to appropriate sports science and sports medicine organisations and institutes of sport.

Athlete, Coach & Official Development Pathways

In order to achieve the objectives of the HPP 2012-24, the AFF must create development pathways for athletes, coaches and referees. These three areas are all interlinked and enable Australian Fencing to create a high performance environment. The National Coaches are expected to focus on developing athletes, but they also have a critical role in liaising with the National Coaching Director and the National Officiating Director to ensure these three critical elements of the High Performance Plan are reflecting international norms and progressing according to the goals of the Annual High Performance Programs and overall HP Plan 2012-24. A key component to developing high level athletes, coaches and referees is the creation of pathways, guiding people from beginner to elite level. The HP plan 2012-24 seeks to ensure each state and territory of Australia is developing and retaining athletes, coaches and referees, and providing them with regular opportunities to update their skills and knowledge. These plans tie into the introduction of the AFT/AFS concept and training camps and coaching and refereeing clinics at AFF events.

Competition Structure

The AFF will be exploring alternative competition structures to consider ways in which Australian Fencing events can be made to be more challenging and closer to international norms. The AFF is also expanding the range of events for which ranking points can be achieved, to recognise the need for more events to carry rankings points between AFF events and Asian Championships, World Cups and World Championships. If Australian athletes are to be encouraged to progress along competitive pathways, there needs to be incentives. Appropriately weighted rankings points for Oceanic, South East Asian, Asian, American and European events and Satellite tournaments are being explored, along with expanding the allocation of points from a top 64 result in World Cups to a top 96, in recognition of the increasing difficulty and numbers of participants in these events.

Competition Pathways



HP Personnel Structure Chart

AFF HPP STAFF 2012

