

Athletics NZ High Performance (ANZ-HP) 2020 Tokyo Strategic Approach

Prelude

This *ANZ-HP 2020 Tokyo Strategic Approach* document was drafted in April-June 2016 prior to the 2016 Rio OGs to incorporate the thinking and learnings of how the programme had progressed since the 2012 London OGs without the influence, emotive or otherwise, of the outcomes at the 2016 Rio OGs. The April-June drafting was constructed through a series of workshops to capture the input of key stakeholders and ANZ-HP Staff. This work was then shared with the contributors to validate the integrity of the document.

The document has been revised since the 2016 Rio OGs to encompass our new learnings from the Games. The main contributors to the revision process were the HPD in consultation with 2016 RIO OGs/PGs staff, coaches and athletes (i.e. debrief discussions and observations throughout both games).

Generally, the post-Games adjustments strengthened, re-affirmed or clarified the thinking that was contained in the pre-Games version. This would seemingly reflect the evolution and maturity of the programme and the capability of the people driving it.

The 2016 Rio Olympic Games were NZs greatest ever Olympics in the sport of Athletics. NZ has never had 4 medal winners in Athletics at an Olympic Games before!

The 2016 Rio Paralympic Games were also NZs best ever in Athletics. The 9 medal haul by 6 athletes in Rio was 1 medal short of the 10 medal haul by 5 athletes at the 2000 Sydney Paralympic Games. However, there were 74 more Athletics medal events available in Sydney (234) than Rio (160).

We have shown that with committed, passionate people we can consistently win multiple medals.

Looking Back – Key Learnings

Based on the annual HPSNZ NSO performance review process and campaign pre-brief / de-brief process as well as feedback from the ANZ-HP network, the following key learnings help to inform future High Performance strategies:

Athlete Characteristics/Components for Success

- At our *ANZ-HP 2020 Tokyo Strategic Approach* planning meetings in April 2016 “What are we looking for when we identify HP athletes?” was, once again, a key topic. The challenge being “where do we focus our resources?”
- These discussions have culminated in the identification of the following “fundamental elements” (i.e. athlete characteristic, support requirements and the like) that we believe to be critical in order for an athlete to maximise their development and the likelihood of international success:

| Fundamental Element | Description |
|----------------------------|---|
| Physical Skills | Athletes must develop and show the physical potential and ability needed to achieve high performance success in their chosen event. |
| Mental Skills | Athletes must develop the mental skills, behaviours and processes to function optimally when dealing with the challenges of training and competition. |
| Life Skills | Athletes must develop the life skills to effectively support the demands of training and life whilst preparing for life after sport. |
| Environment | An effective environment provides the right experiences, challenge and support to maximise an athlete’s ongoing development. |

- This thinking was consolidated by the performances of the “Big 4” in Rio (i.e. Valerie, Tom, Eliza and Nick) in that they all clearly demonstrate these characteristics/components. They all have well organised tight teams, good relationships with their coach and optimal training environments.
- During the 2017-2020 period ANZ-HP intends to:
 - ✓ Focus athlete support (including para-athletes) resources such as our pre-carding programme, Performance Potential Squad (PPS), and Carding towards athletes that demonstrate these “4 Fundamental Elements” or are committed to enhance them;
 - ✓ Be vigilant with this approach and only Card athletes that demonstrate these “4 Fundamental Elements”;
 - ✓ Implement a PPS selection process targeting athletes that demonstrate the “4 Fundamental Elements “or are committed to enhance them; and
 - ✓ Only advance athletes from the PPS to Carding once we are convinced they address these “4 Fundamental Elements’ regardless of performance.
 - ✓ Hold 15-20 emerging athletes in the PPS until we believe they are ready for Carding or we are convinced they will not be able to make that transition. Consequently we will need to provide APS support to the PPS squad as well as Carded athletes in the 2017-2020 cycle.
 - ✓ If possible have APS Service Providers available to work with selected PPS athletes as we try to support, educate and develop to level where they can be Carded. We need to have identified Service Providers attached to our sport not just to work with our Carded Athletes.

Targeted Event Groups

- Targeted Event Groups ensure prioritisation of limited resources that enable development of coaches and athletes that can have the greatest performance impact.
- It is crucial for the programme to retain capacity to support high potential individuals that emerge in a Non-Targeted Event Group.
- Rigorous athlete carding and selection criteria support a targeted approach.

Focus on Coaching

- Employing/contracting coaches dedicated to the HP programme and athletes has had a significant positive impact on performance.
- Coach development strategies (e.g. PCQ, CAP, and CCLP) establish standards and create an environment of continuous improvement.
- Coach capability to lead campaigns and develop/implement quality campaign plans is a critical element for preparing for and enabling world-class performance.

Culture & Collaboration

- A growing belief that purposeful collaboration can be our competitive advantage as demonstrated by our Rio results.
- Team cohesion between athletes, coaches and support staff is critical.
- Proactive engagement and associated support with overseas based athletes and coaches contributes to performance and team cohesion.

Right People

- With the right people working together we can enable athletes to be fully prepared to compete and win on the world stage.

Resources

- It takes significant and targeted long-term investment into people, time and facilities to make a difference.

Flexibility leading into and at Pinnacle Events

- Similar to Canada, our thinking has evolved away from “compulsory” pre-entry camps. We believe that for “some” athletes this can run interference with their “usual” preparation/regimes.
- We have moved towards an approach where we manage this on a case-by-case basis, particularly with our Campaign Athletes (i.e. our Level 1 and 2 Athletes).
- We will still provide pre-entry camps for a majority of our athletes as this is the most cost-effective way for providing medical and logistical support. Some athletes also “thrive” on the “team” aspect of the pre-camp and it can be very effective for athlete and staff morale if managed well. Pre-camps aids in ensuring our culture is embedded with our athletes.

Current State

In April 2016 key stakeholders completed a SWOT analysis in order to identify and prioritise internal strengths and weaknesses of the ANZ-HP Programme as well as the potential external opportunities and threats for the programme. The high-level outcomes of the SWOT analysis are outlined in the following diagram.



The outcomes of the SWOT analysis, along with key learnings from the current and previous cycles, have been used to inform the strategic direction and priorities for the ANZ-HP Programme. This includes consideration of what strengths should be leveraged to realise opportunities and/or minimise threats as well as the weaknesses that must be addressed to realise opportunities and/or minimise threats as we work towards achieving our new strategies.

Looking Forward – Mission & Vision

ANZ-HP PROGRAMME MISSION - What are we doing and why are we doing it?

“We maximise the potential for NZ athletes to achieve inspirational performances at pinnacle events”

Our mission emphasises that NZ athletes performing and achieving podium results at targeted IAAF and IPC Athletics international pinnacle events provides inspiration for our Athletics NZ team and community, and all New Zealanders. We believe that inspiration translates into more kiwis engaging in athletic pursuits. We’re clear that as an HP programme our work is to maximise the potential of athletes to perform on the world stage when it matters most.

ANZ-HP PROGRAMME VISION - What is our aspirational view of the future?

“A highly respected, multi-medal winning team driven by a world-leading programme”

We aspire to provide a world-leading high performance programme for athletes and para-athletes with the potential to perform and achieve international podium results and to do so in a manner that upholds the integrity of our sport. ‘Team’ is an important concept for our programme because we believe that partnership and collaboration is our competitive advantage and must be actively leveraged.

ANZ-HP PROGRAMME PHILOSOPHY – What are the foundations of our HP programme?

We actively seek out performance improvement and world-class outcomes as a key driver of the programme. We expect our coaches to effectively lead campaigns and support staff in the best interests of the athletes and para-athletes, whilst developing athlete resilience.

ANZ-HP PROGRAMME VALUES - What are the key behaviours we will demonstrate?

The ANZ-HP programme and the behaviours of the ANZ-HP team are aligned to the core values of Athletics NZ, acknowledging that we need to make tough decisions that align to and support the ANZ-HP programme strategic priorities and the best interests of Athletics. Our behaviours are:

- Integrity driven
- Responsive
- Connected
- Achievement focused

Looking Forward – Strategic Priorities

In assessing what will best enable us to fulfil the ANZ-HP Vision, as well as considering our key learnings and the current state analysis, we have identified the following five (5) strategic priorities for the ANZ-HP Programme for the 2020 Olympic/Paralympic cycle:

- 1) Targeted Event Group Strategy
- 2) Develop and Implement an HP Athlete Development Strategy
- 3) Leverage campaign planning best practices and learnings
- 4) Develop an integrated HP coach development programme
- 5) Integrated Para Athletics programme

Strategic Priority 1 – Targeted Event Group Strategy

With multiple events (47 Olympics and 160 Paralympics) under the Athletics umbrella, purposeful athlete development requires allocation of resources where they can have the greatest impact. Our learnings/research indicate that by taking a targeted event group approach ANZ-HP can achieve a greater return on investment and long-term sustainable performances on the world stage. A targeted approach enables the programme to ensure that the appropriate coaching and performance support services are made available to athletes within the best possible daily training environment and facilities as well as access to appropriate international competitions.

To continue the growth of our programme we will maximise the opportunity to leverage learnings and our developing Intellectual Property (IP) from our targeted event groups in a manner that provides competitive advantage for specific HP campaigns. We will take a collaborative approach to this work in order to:

- Gain clarity on what our intellectual property and competitive advantage is.
- Use technology to capture, store and share key data and other IP.
- Develop opportunities for athletes to train together in a squad environment with the right coaching support and aligned with a suitable Performance Training Environment (i.e. facilities, support staff and the like).

How do we plan to focus on the three targeted event groups and their sustainability?

- A lead coach for each targeted event group will be appointed.
- The lead coach will facilitate the:
 - Development a *2020 Event Group Strategic Approach* aligned with over-arching ANZ-HP *2020 Tokyo Strategic Approach* and the *Athletics NZ 2020 Coach Education Approach*;
 - Development of an annual *Event Group Plan* aligned with their respective *2020 Event Group Strategic Approach*); and
 - Delivery of their respective annual *Event Group Plan's*.
- More funding across the event group budgets in order to promote collaboration in NZ and overseas as well as exposing athletes to performance training environments.

Priority Event Group – Throws:

Based on our relative domestic strengths and international opportunities, throwing events will be our priority targeted event group for the 2020 Olympic/Paralympic cycle. We anticipate multiple-medal winning opportunities in throwing events at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics/Paralympics and targeting resources in this event group will enable us to realise these opportunities as well as prepare world-class athletes for the 2024 Olympic/Paralympic cycle. Our goal is to be recognised at the 2024 Olympics/Paralympics as the number one throws nation in the world.

This will be achieved through initiatives such as the:

- Retaining the current ANZ-HP Throws Lead Coach
- Appointing an assistant Throws Coach (part-time) based in Christchurch

- Retaining or recruiting 4 additional ANZ-HP Throws Coaches (Part or Full time to be determined)
- Establishing an “ANZ-HP Home of Throwing” preferably at Bruce Pulman Park in South Auckland. We have developed a detailed proposal for the establishment of a purpose built Throws Performance Training Environment (i.e. coaching support and throwing facility). The proposed site will provide:
 - ✓ A level purpose built throwing field;
 - ✓ Capacity to throw from indoors and/or outdoors;
 - ✓ Proximity to Auckland airport;
 - ✓ Accommodation options at Bruce Pulman Lodge for camps and visiting athletes;
 - ✓ Proximity to Hamilton/Waikato; and
 - ✓ Proximity to Polynesian communities (i.e. trying to create and cater for a new talent source).
- Liaising with site developers to ensure that the new Christchurch athletics facility at Nga Puna Wai, which is due to be completed by December 2017, provides a world class Throws Performance Training Environment including a:
 - ✓ Canopy for the Throws Field (i.e. for training in inclement or sunny conditions); and
 - ✓ S&C facility/shed in the immediate proximity of the “new” track and throwing field.

Note: Although is a proposal for a S&C gym at Metro Sports this will not be completed until 2020. Consequently we will need a gym on site at Nga Puna Wai.

Targeted Event Group – Middle Distance:

NZ has a proud history in middle-distance events that can be leveraged to produce results on the world stage. The HP programme will support targeted athletes competing at a world-class level in middle distance events during the 2020 Olympic/Paralympic cycle as well as identify and prepare athletes for the 2024 cycle.

A key enabler will be to facilitate collaborative coaching environments within NZ for leading athletes/squad and their coaches to promote cooperation focused on developing domestic campaign teams. This will be achieved through initiatives such as the:

- Re-scoping of the 2 existing distance coaching roles to ensure that in addition to personal coaching of identified athletes that they have a clear focus on:
 - ✓ Creating a national collaborative approach to coaching; and
 - ✓ Influencing the planning and campaign plans of NZ based PPS and Carded athletes;
- Introducing a new management structure for these 2 distance coaching roles to improve the support provided to them and their adherence to all aspects of their roles;
- Implementing a distance squad HPAD framework;
- Implementing of an Altitude strategy;
- Providing a NZ based athletes opportunities to train together regularly;
- Coordinating collaborative camps (e.g. Hanmer camp, Wellington Summer Training Base, Rotorua);
- Supporting performance training environments in NZ (e.g. the Wellington Summer Training base)
- Supporting performance training environments overseas (e.g. Flagstaff or St Moritz, etc)
- Providing targeted or structured support for athletes touring overseas; and
- Greater PhD support for Gareth Sandford to enhance athlete testing and knowledge edge.

We will continue to build and nurture relationships with overseas based athletes and coaches.

Targeted Event Group – Pole-vault:

Over the last 3 years we have nurtured a pole vault programme that is accelerating the development of several young athletes to an international standard. Based on the technical attributes of this event and significant local athlete advancement, we see an opportunity to create a truly world-leading domestic development programme in this event capable of continuing to produce medal winning performances at Tokyo 2020 and beyond.

This will be achieved through initiatives such as the:

- Retaining the current ANZ-HP Pole-vault Lead Coach
- Appointing an assistant Pole-vault Coach (part-time) based at AUT Millennium
- Mentoring NZ coaches to increase the expertise in regional centres with PV facilities
- Liaising with site developers to ensure that the proposed reconfiguration of the AUT-Millennium multi-purpose hall provides a world class Pole-vault Performance Training Environment. Details can be provided if required, but entails an extension of the existing Hall to accommodate full-length run-up Pole-Vault training
- Consolidating ownership and management of the Pole-Vault assets required to ensure the sustainability of the ANZ-HP Pole-Vault Performance Training Environment at AUT-Millennium
- Purchasing new Poles and Equipment (i.e. full second set plus big poles for the senior men) over 4 years
- Purchasing a portable run-up for competition and training
- Purchasing of outdoor PV Mats to allow training in the opposite/final direction
- Establishing an outdoor Gymnastics area with sails/canopy

“Other” Event Group Opportunities:

The HP programme will retain capacity and be open to supporting individuals that emerge in non-targeted events (i.e. Race-walks, Sprints & Relays, Hurdles, Jumps and Combined Events) that have the capability or demonstrated potential to perform at top 8 international standards. These opportunities will be managed on a case-by-case basis and integrated into the HP programme and team where appropriate.

This will be achieved by retaining or recruiting some coaches for “Other” Event Groups (mixture of part-time and/or full-time coach/es).

Strategic Priority 2 – Develop and implement a *HP Athlete Development (HPAD) Strategic Approach*

With a full-time HPAD Leader now established in our programme we will develop and implement an *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach*. Athletics NZ will build greater sustainability within its HP programme. The *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach* will proactively identify and develop athletes with the potential to perform on the world stage in 5-8 years. The *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach* will be aligned to our targeted event group strategy and leverage other initiatives such as Pathway to Podium (P2P), PPS, and dedicated talent ID projects. The strategy will also reflect our beliefs in a coach-led approach and the importance of maximising athlete resilience.

The *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach* will define a selection approach which will provide a clear understanding of the performance, and additional criteria, required for emerging athletes to be included into our ANZ-HPAD support programmes (i.e. P2P and PPS).

Our intention is to hold 15-20 emerging athletes in the PPS until we believe they are ready for Carding or we are convinced they will not be able to make that transition. We will need to provide APS support to the PPS squad as well as Carded athletes in the 2017-2020 cycle.

We would like identified Service Providers to be available to work with selected PPS athletes as we try to support, educate and develop to level where they can be Carded. We need to have Service Providers attached to our sport not just to work with our Carded Athletes.

The *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach* will also enable linkages from clubs, Athletics NZ regional youth/junior programmes and internationally based athletes (i.e. typically these would be NZ athletes recruited to USA Universities, approximately 40 per annum) into the ANZ-HP programme to better prepare potential HP athletes for the requirements of representing NZ at the elite level.

Informed Identification/Selection Process

An integral component of the *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach* will be adopting an evidence-based process to identify and/or select athletes into our ANZ-HP Athlete Support programmes based on their performances and development across the *Fundamental Elements* presented on page 2.

The *ANZ-HPAD 2020 Strategic Approach* outlines how we intend to assess and /or monitor these elements to:

- 1) Identify and select athletes into the PPS (i.e. our pre-Carding Programme)
- 2) Retain athletes in the Carded Athlete programme
- 3) Determine campaign funding priorities

Strategic Priority 3 - Leverage campaign planning best practices and learnings

We know that our campaign planning has added value to athletes' programmes in order to prepare them to perform on the international stage. We will continue to proactively leverage campaign planning best practices and learnings across the ANZ-HP programme. Coaches will lead campaign planning for their athletes and campaign plans will be peer-reviewed. This process will be led by the lead coaches across our event groups.

We will refine the current case management approach and enhance our capacity to utilise the information provided by the HPSNZ 7 Medal Winning Behaviors model (i.e. behaviours associated with medal winning campaigns at Olympic Games and World Championships).

Campaigns will be resourced based on the agreed strategies and potential of the athlete to achieve performance targets based on the outcomes of the peer-review process. A rigorous campaign event pre-brief / de-brief approach will further leverage learnings. A key enabler for this strategy will be to mature the environment where coaches are willing to share knowledge and are comfortable challenging each other and being challenged to improve athlete performance

ANZ-HP peer-reviews were introduced in 2015-2016 with Level 1 & 2 Carded Athletes. Initial observations and feedback was that this was a "good start". However, we need to increase the robustness of the process by including more event specific expertise on panels and allocating an adequate amount of time for the process (i.e. we were too rushed with our approach during 2015-2016). To maximise the effectiveness of the peer-review process we need to allocate adequate funding to ensure that the right and/or best available expertise is on the respective panels for the period/s we need them.

During the 2017-2020 cycle peer-reviews for Level 1 & 2 athletes will take place at the end of the international season (i.e. October/November) with a 6 monthly update at the end of the domestic season (i.e. April/May). For Level 3 and PPS athletes, the peer-reviews will generally be less intense (i.e. part of the education process during that stage of an athletes evolution), and would generally take place at the end of the domestic season (April/May) with a 6 monthly update at the end of the international season (i.e. October/November).

Strategic Priority 4 - Develop an integrated HP coach development programme

Dedicated HP programme coaching and coach leadership has been recognised as a key performance enabler. A key focus for the 2020 cycle will be to integrate the various components of high performance coach development in order to further enhance HP coach capability and support the priority and targeted event group strategy. The key components include the Performance Coach Qualification (PCQ) framework, the Prime Minister Scholarship Programme, HPSNZ led programmes such as Coach Accelerator (CAP) and Coach Campaign Leadership (CCLP) and will include effective linkage to the ANZ community coaching approach.

ANZ-HP will partner with Athletics NZ Community Department to secure a Coach Education Manager. The Athletics NZ Coach Education Manager would be responsible for developing an *Athletics NZ 2020 Coach Education Approach* that is aligned with our *ANZ-HP 2020 Tokyo Strategic Approach* incorporating the recently established *Athletics NZ Coach Education Framework*.

The *Athletics NZ Coach Education Framework* incorporates:

- 1) An entry level Athletics NZ Coaching course (or RPL) + Police Check = Athletics NZ Accredited Coach
- 2) Event Group coach education opportunities driven by the delivery of the annual Event Group Plans, which in turn are driven by 2017-2020 Event Group Strategic Approaches developed by our ANZ-HP Event Group Coach Leads and Coaches
- 3) Access to the PCQ for emerging coaches that we believe have the capability to support PPS or Carded athletes
- 4) Other coach education opportunities provided by the IAAF or other providers online and/or OS

We believe this approach will enable to harness one of our perceived strengths in that we are small and agile and can interact directly with our key stakeholders.

The Coach Education Manager will be responsible for:

- The roll-out of the Coach Education Framework to the Athletics NZ Membership
- Finalising the *Athletics NZ 2020 Coach Education Strategic Approach*
- Maximising the effectiveness of the PCQ
- Liaising with the emerging HP coaches to implement their Coach Development Plans generated through the PCQ
- Liaising with ANZ-HP Lead Coaches to develop *2017-2020 Event Group Strategic Approaches*
- Liaising with ANZ-HP Lead Coaches to consolidate and deliver annual Event Group Plans
- Liaising with the HPZNZ/ANZ-HP Coaching Consultant and the HPD regarding PMS applications
- CAPs applications and administration and the like

Strategic Priority 5 – Integrated Para Programme

The success at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games was based on supporting elite athlete development. That is, talented athletes were identified and supported to achieve success at an identified pinnacle event. Whilst this has produced excellent results (14 medals from 9 athletes across the 2016 Paralympics and 2017 World Championships), it is important to prepare for the future by ensuring we meet the identified challenge in front of us of not only maintaining this level of performance, but create sustainable athlete and coach development pathways that build upon this success.

We have also identified the need to cement the full integration of the programme across all Athletics New Zealand operations – this will be fully integrated by 2020 (including media, communications, competition, coach education, officiating education, integration in event activities, possible Board representation and the like). This is seen as paramount in helping generate consistency of development and ensuring the open access points for athletes and coaches into the Para Programme.

Programme Vision:

“Lead a world-class fully integrated High Performance Para programme that prepares athletes for sustainable high performance success”

In relation to ANZ-HP this means we will:

- In partnership with Paralympics NZ, facilitate:
 - an ANZ-HP Para-athlete Advisory Group
 - Coordinate HPSNZ investments reviews and submissions involving the ANZ-HP Para-Athlete programme
- Be responsible for the development and preparation of Para-athletes for the 2020 Tokyo PGs
- Be responsible for organising teams to compete at WPA World Championships and associated pre-camps
- Employ an ANZ-HP Para Athlete Lead Coach to lead Para Teams and drive the preparation processes for these teams
- Employ a Para Athlete Programme Manager based at the National Office to:
 - Liaise with Lead Coach regarding finances and logistics for Para-Teams
 - Liaise with Athletics NZ staff to enable integration in areas such as Coach Education, Officiating Education, Event Group Plans and the like
 - Liaise with Paralympics NZ staff to increase the number of nationally and internationally classified athletes (e.g. increase WPA licensed athletes from 31 to 40 by 2020 and 50 by 2024)
 - Liaise with Paralympics NZ staff regarding Talent ID and development; and
 - Allow Raylene Bates to focus on coaching and athlete preparation

Critical Success Factors

The following critical success factors will enable effective implementation of the ANZ-HP 2020 strategic priorities:

- Focusing ANZ-HP athlete support resources on athletes that demonstrate or align with the 4 *Fundamental Elements for International Success*
- Sustainable HP structure that enables delivery and retains key people
- Effective leadership of priority and targeted event groups
- Athletics New Zealand membership and governance support for the *ANZ-HP 2020 Tokyo Strategic Approach*
- HPSNZ investment and specialist resource support

Structure and Operations

For 2017-2020 we will continue to build our programme around the “right people” through professional development, empowerment and where necessary recruitment. We will ensure positions are sustainable in order to retain key people as it has been a contributing factor to our success.