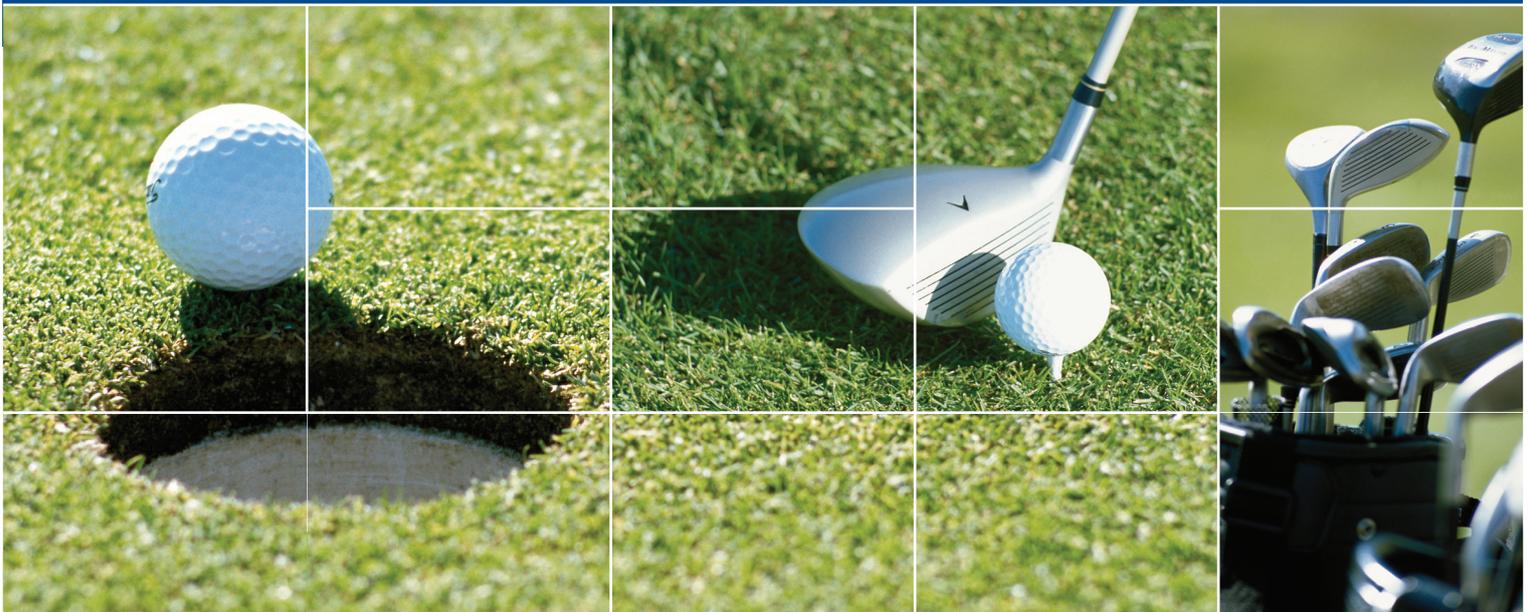




Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# HIGH PERFORMANCE PATHWAY REVIEW



AUSTRALIAN GOLF

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## Overall key findings

### Aim and objective of the high performance pathway in Australian golf

The first objective of the review was to clearly define the overall aim of the high performance pathway for Australian golf.

**Aim:           The development of internationally successful golfers**

To this end, the macro summary of all the recommendations contained in this report is the key objective for the high performance pathway in Australian golf.

**Objective:   For the golf industry in Australia to work together to deliver a coordinated pathway of player development from elite junior, through elite amateur, rookie professional to internationally successful elite professional golfers**

### Definitions

Elite junior:           State junior squad level players

Elite amateur:        Players at the level of state and national senior squads and teams

Rookie professional: Players in their first four years as a professional

Elite professionals:  Internationally successful professionals, winning on the major tours (US PGA, LPGA and European Tour) and thus ranked in the top 100 in the world professional rankings



# Executive summary

## Introduction

Early in 2006, an eight-year process came to an end when the Australian Golf Union (AGU) and Women's Golf Australia (WGA) amalgamated to form Golf Australia. Tony Hallam, formerly a partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers was appointed as the new chief executive officer to lead the organisation forward. Golf Australia is now the national sporting organisation for golf that the Australian Sport Commission (ASC) recognises for any national funding and support.

The professional golf bodies in Australia – the Professional Golfers' Association of Australia (PGA), the PGA Tour of Australasia (PGA Tour) and Australian Ladies Professional Golf (ALPG) – welcomed the establishment of the new body and have committed to be actively engaged in creating a 'one-golf' approach in Australia. The three golf professional bodies represent memberships comprising tournament professionals, club professionals and accredited golf coaches who make their living from involvement in the golf industry. The professional bodies are primarily funded by membership subscriptions and commercial relationships.

The ASC was heavily involved in the amalgamation process and has an active interest in the successful future of the sport. The ASC's expertise and independence in conducting high performance reviews was seen as an important and timely step in uniting the golf industry and setting the pathway for elite player development for the future.

The terms of reference for this review are at Appendix A.

## Golf background

Golf is one of the few sports remaining with a clear amateur/professional delineation. Up until very recently it also had a clear male/female delineation. Both these factors have dictated the development of the sport and the programs in place for athlete and coach development.

Overall, golf in Australia has enjoyed great success. Australia is generally considered the number two or three nation in both men's and women's golf, with a consistent number of players highly ranked in amateur and professional competitions world wide. Factors contributing to golf's success include a large number of golf courses around the country of varied style, good climate, a large player base, a culture of success, good coaches with international experience, a strong tournament structure and linked development pathway (men), good institute programs in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, and strong support at state level.

A declining player base at club level, especially among juniors and women, along with strong growth of the game in Europe and Asia (and continued strength in the United States) threaten our future success. With the exception of Karrie Webb, Australian players have not won a Major or been ranked number one for many years, and despite large numbers of young Australian players turning professional each year, many are struggling with the transition, not making a sustainable living and are being lost to the sport.

The big challenge for golf in Australia is to use the opportunity created and optimise the amalgamation of the men's and women's bodies, duplicating this at state level, with the result being a successful combination of programs to better utilise available resources while still catering for different needs and issues. Involvement of the professional bodies alongside amateur ones is considered essential in enabling a fully integrated and optimised athlete development pathway.

The national high performance programs have been set up within the limitations of strict amateur/professional rules, strict club rules, male and female separation and limited resources. The beginning of change in all of these areas, with the amalgamation acting as a catalyst, has created a real opportunity to make some significant changes for the future and to lead the world in doing so.

The time is opportune for development of a clear, coordinated and cohesive, whole-of-golf athlete and coach development pathway transcending traditional male/female, amateur/professional boundaries.

## **Recommendations**

- 1** *That Golf Australia enters into a memorandum of understanding with the three professional bodies, setting out roles, responsibilities and contributions to the athlete pathway and overall high performance program.*
- 2** *That Golf Australia actively engages the input and support of all state and professional bodies for a single coordinated national high performance pathway.*
- 3** *That Golf Australia, in close collaboration with and support from the three professional bodies, drives the strategic implementation of the high performance program.*
- 4** *That Golf Australia and the three professional bodies jointly promote the concept of 'Our golfers' to break down the barriers that currently delineate the parts of the sport and athlete pathways.*
- 5** *That a national technical director (or head coach) be appointed by Golf Australia to lead the high performance program nationally and internationally, from elite junior to elite professional ranks.*
- 6** *That the national technical director has the following attributes:*
  - *respect within the golfing industry, preferably as a high-level coach*
  - *strong vision and ability to think strategically 'big picture', be innovative, strong yet flexible*
  - *strong leadership skills, to coordinate and lead the high performance program, including the ability to lead a high performance team of people with complementary skills*
  - *excellent communication skills, including the ability to work inclusively with all athletes and coaches within and external to the pathway*
  - *strong technical and tactical knowledge of the game*

- *preferably limited ongoing coaching of individual players so as not to create any conflicts of interest*
  - *time and energy to devote to the athletes, coaches and the continual evolution of the program*
  - *able to create trust and neutrality*
  - *broad experience in the industry, both domestically and internationally.*
- 7 *That Golf Australia, in conjunction with the national technical director and with strategic input from the professional bodies, establish a high performance unit comprised of the following minimum number of positions to oversee the delivery of the elite pathway: high performance/operations manager, Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) technical director, national development manager.*
  - 8 *That the nationally coordinated athlete pathway is developed as depicted in Diagram 1.0.*
  - 9 *That players be individually case-managed from elite junior level to elite professional ranks, within a national framework set around a national high performance program and overseen by the national technical director and their team.*
  - 10 *That Golf Australia works with the WA Institute of Sport to establish a golf program to fill a gap in the development pathway in Western Australia. This should also be considered longer term for South Australia.*
  - 11 *That a feasibility study be conducted to look into the possibility of establishing overseas hubs (initially a US base), as well as tapping into the AIS European Training Centre, for the international component of the high performance pathway.*
  - 12 *That the national technical director should lead a review of existing programs and funding by various bodies, creating a national development framework with a core curriculum of skills to be delivered through the high performance program, and setting benchmark standards of development and entry into high performance pathway programs.*
  - 13 *That a state and national camps program be developed as the key delivery mechanism of the national development framework.*
  - 14 *That the AIS program be repositioned as the pinnacle program of the high performance pathway, and include both elite amateur and rookie professionals as scholarship holders.*
  - 15 *That a consultative group, which includes the professional bodies and possibly some rookie and touring professional players, should help evolve the national development framework and include modules and real-life scenarios on all aspects of being a professional player.*
  - 16 *That further research is conducted into the statistics of success and drop-out rates on turning professional. The results of such research will further define what is needed within the high performance program.*

- 17 *That the national development framework form the basis of introducing young players to career possibilities associated with, and outside of, golf.*
- 18 *That golf proactively supports players in pursuing education options alongside their playing commitments, and that an audit of existing programs be conducted leading to alliances with educational bodies both here and in the United States (college system).*
- 19 *That the tournament structure be reviewed by Golf Australia and the professional bodies to assist in optimising the high performance plan, looking to set standards based on merit.*
- 20 *That the coaching pathway be reviewed in conjunction with Golf Australia, the PGA and ASC to further optimise its alignment and integration with the athlete pathway.*
- 21 *That consideration be given to different coaching streams and specialty options, as well as continuing education needs of specialist coaches.*
- 22 *That the PGA lead and work with Golf Australia and other key stakeholders to create a high performance coaches forum and/or leadership group for sharing ideas and ongoing development.*
- 23 *That a nationally driven review panel be set up to create the 'give back' culture in golf.*
- 24 *That selection policies be reviewed in line with ASC best practice principles.*
- 25 *That the function of the Moonah facility be reviewed as a centre of excellence to support the national high performance pathway and be the home of national camps, rather than a full-time AIS complex.*

## The review process

The review began in early February 2006 with meetings between the ASC and Golf Australia. Background information on the sport was gathered, along with formal support from the professional bodies and the state bodies. An announcement was made about the review to the golf industry on 14 March along with an open invitation to complete a questionnaire or make a submission. Emails were sent directly to over 150 names provided by state and national bodies, as key stakeholders in the review. In addition, a separate questionnaire was sent to the four national bodies, 11 state bodies and four institute programs, to assess the roles of the various organisations.

Between 17 March and 7 April, 43 face-to-face interviews were conducted (by the same independent ASC representative) with over 60 interviewees involved. Numerous telephone conversations also occurred. In total, 63 written submissions were received, including 12 golf organisation questionnaires. During this process views were obtained from a wide range of stakeholders including players (amateur and professional), coaches, managers, sports medicine staff, team captains, sponsors, selectors, administrators, several of the golf foundations and golf media.

On 19 and 20 April, a two-day High Performance Advisory Panel was conducted in Melbourne. The panel, chaired by the chief executive officer of the ASC, Mark Peters, consisted of a balanced and diverse group of 22 people from within and outside of golf (list of attendees is at Appendix B). The aim of the High Performance Advisory Panel was to discuss the findings of the background information, interviews and written submissions and to suggest strategies for the future of the high performance pathway in Australian golf. The input from key high performance people from outside of golf was invaluable to the process (these included Craig Tiley, Director – Player Development, Tennis Australia; Alan Thompson, Head Coach, Australian Swimming; Bill Davoren, National Performance Director, Triathlon Australia; Ken Norris, former head of the ACT Academy of Sport and the National Elite Sports Council). Following the High Performance Advisory Panel, all the information from the review was collated into this report, with recommendations for the future direction of the high performance pathway in Australian golf.



## Outcomes and recommendations

### Leadership of the high performance program

In the past there has been no clear national leadership of a high performance program due to the existence of two amateur and three professional national bodies. The golf industry has had many, effectively independent, contributors to the athlete pathway – various national and state bodies, as well as independent organisations, coaches and academies. Most are running good programs and making strong contributions; however, there has been no one entity providing national coordination, common direction or focus on best practices.

The result has been an athlete/coach pathway that is not clear or optimal, and is sometimes confusing to the athletes. Although diversity of programs in the industry is a real strength, lack of coordination and communication has resulted in both overlapping and missing components. There is a need to better identify, clarify and align the coach pathway to the athlete pathway and better optimise the use of resources.

While the amalgamation of the two amateur bodies to form Golf Australia is a positive step for golf, the ideal is for all of the main golfing bodies to become one body, initially in behaviour, if not in structure. The roles, responsibilities and contributions of each stakeholder need to be clearly defined and agreed on. This can most effectively be done by a single controlling entity, with the input and buy-in of the various stakeholders. There is a need for clear leadership of a cohesive, coordinated high performance program, with clear and communicated aims, objectives and strategies for the sport as a whole.

### *Recommendations*

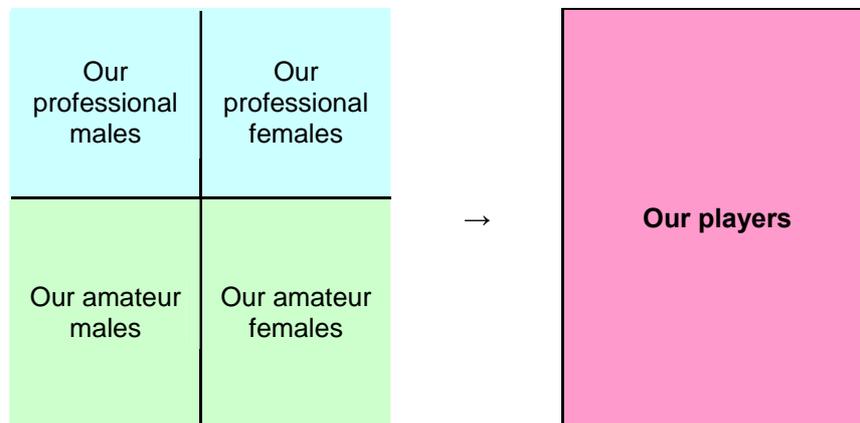
- 1** *That Golf Australia enters into a memorandum of understanding with the three professional bodies, setting out roles, responsibilities and contributions to the athlete pathway and overall high performance program.*
- 2** *That Golf Australia actively engages the input and support of all state and professional bodies, for a single coordinated national high performance pathway.*
- 3** *That Golf Australia, in close collaboration with and support from the three professional bodies, drives the strategic implementation of the high performance program.*

## Culture shift in 'ownership'

Currently players are 'owned' by various stakeholders within the pathway (coaches, states, amateur bodies, professional bodies, etc.). All parts of the pathway should have a value-adding role, be included in developing the framework, and gain ownership and pride by delivering the elite pathway for the betterment of the sport and its players.

### *Recommendation*

- 4 That Golf Australia and the three professional bodies jointly promote the concept of 'Our golfers' to break down the barriers that currently delineate the parts of the sport and athlete pathways.***



## **Delivery of the national high performance program**

Currently the women's program has a (part-time) head coach; however, the men's program has operated without one in the past. Neither program has clear leadership from a single point of decision-making.

For many athletes there are multiple layers of coaches as they progress through the pathway (home, state, institute, AIS, national coaches), but these layers have not been coordinated to produce the best integrated support for the athlete. Indications are that there have been times when conflicting and alternative views have led to confusion for the athlete.

### **Recommendations**

- 5** *That a national technical director (or head coach) be appointed by Golf Australia to lead the high performance program nationally and internationally, from elite junior to elite professional ranks.*

*Note: The title 'national technical director' is suggested as the best description of the role. Equivalent roles in other sports are also titled 'head coach' or 'national performance director'. The semantics of the title depends on the perceptions within the sport and what is needed in order to create the optimal culture, structure and perception.*

- 6** *That the national technical director has the following attributes:*
- *respect within the golfing industry, preferably as a high-level coach*
  - *strong vision and ability to think strategically 'big picture', be innovative, strong yet flexible*
  - *strong leadership skills, to coordinate and lead the high performance program, including the ability to lead a high performance team of people with complementary skills*
  - *excellent communication skills, including the ability to work inclusively with all athletes and coaches within and external to the pathway*
  - *strong technical and tactical knowledge of the game*
  - *preferably limited ongoing coaching of individual players so as not to create any conflicts of interest*
  - *time and energy to devote to the athletes, coaches and the continual evolution of the program*
  - *able to create trust and neutrality*
  - *broad experience in the industry, both domestically and internationally.*

*As a result of the amalgamation of the two amateur golf bodies, there is a unique opportunity to restructure the leadership of the high performance pathway to ensure that optimal use of resources and program focus occurs.*

Staffing structures and skill sets need to be able to respond to change and the ever-increasing demands of high performance sport. It is important that whoever assumes leadership of the program through the national technical director's role should have considerable input into the structure and appointment of the support team.

***Recommendation***

***7 That Golf Australia, in conjunction with the national technical director and with strategic input from the professional bodies, establish a high performance unit comprised of the following minimum number of positions to oversee the delivery of the elite pathway:***

- High performance/operations manager – this role is designed to complement the strengths of the national technical director to look after the management and operations of the high performance program throughout the elite athlete pathway***
- AIS technical director – the leader of the AIS program will work closely with the national technical director on the delivery of the high performance program and also take care of the logistics of the program***
- National development manager – although outside the scope of this high performance review, it is worth noting that an integral part of the success of the high performance program is the underpinning programs. National leadership of the development level of the sport is essential and has a strategic link to the high performance team.***

## Structure of the elite athlete pathway

As stated previously the lack of clarity, coordination and communication of the athlete development pathway across the industry does not create an optimum model. With the opportunity created from the amalgamation of the male and female bodies, coordination and integration of the many existing programs is essential to ensure program focus and optimal use of resources. There is a need to incorporate and acknowledge male/female and amateur/professional nuances, but remove the divisions between them.

The existing structure has lacked the capacity to support top amateur players in the essential transition phase while turning professional. The amateur bodies that put a lot of time and resources into the athletes at amateur level have had either no capacity or desire to support them once they have turned professional. The sport's huge cultural divide between amateur and professional has also meant that there is little, if any, contact or communication between professional players and their amateur roots, which has been a negative for both the athletes and the organisations that developed them.

In addition to financial support at the early professional level, key components such as elite coaching and sports science and sports medicine have been missing until such time as an individual professional player can afford to pay for such services directly. There is now an opportunity to explore with confidence a support program for the best rookie professionals and even for established professional players based overseas, on a user-pays basis.

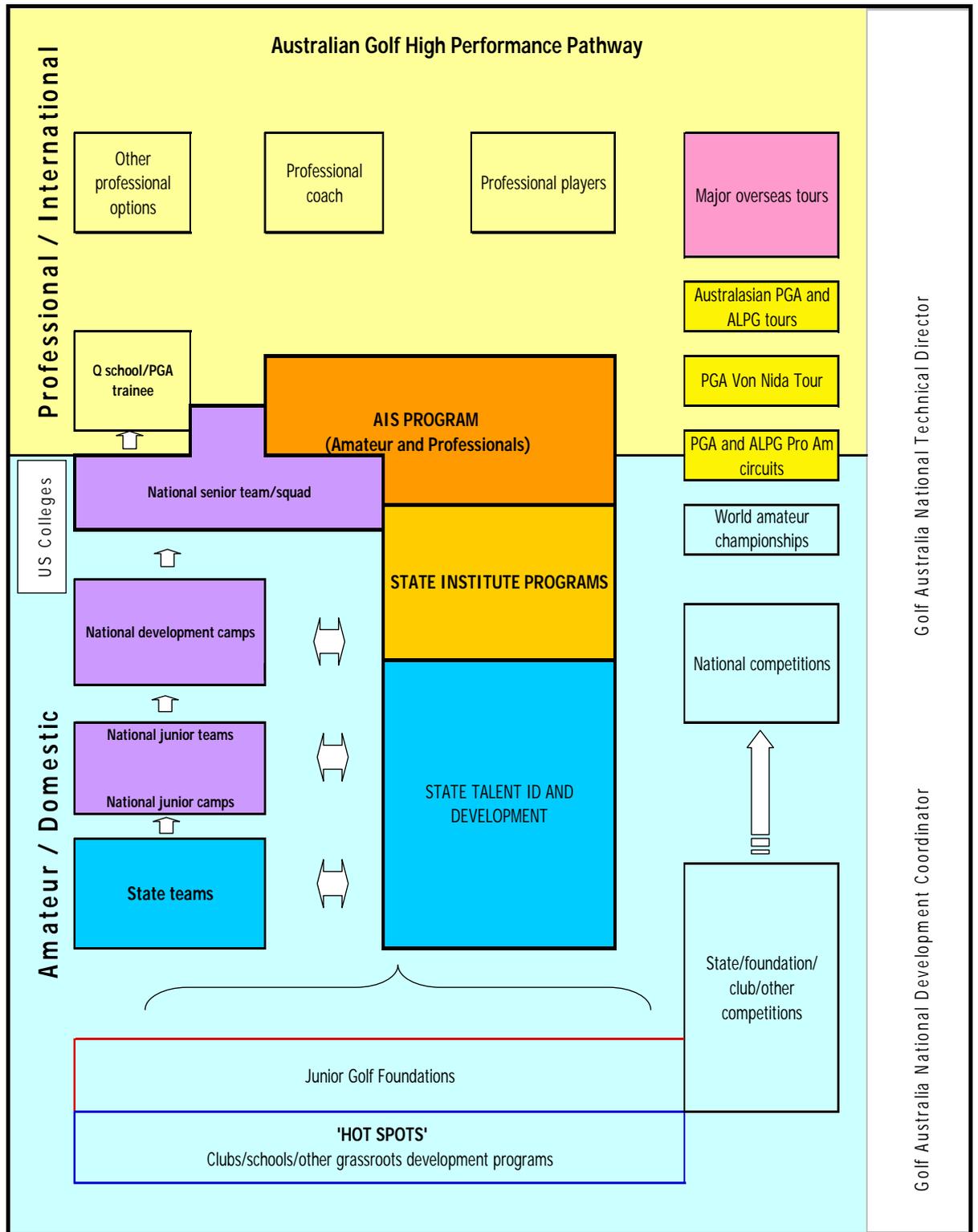
At the development level of the pathway there has been duplication and omission of resource allocation due to multiple stakeholders providing complementary opportunities, and disparity between states and regions. There is an urgent need for a national framework with clearly articulated roles and responsibilities that ensure a more complete and consistent program throughout the athlete development pathway.

Finally, the residential component of the elite pathway (AIS program) has been positioned at a relatively young age and does not provide the most appropriate environment for the majority of athletes. With the requirement to further develop the best athletes in their transition phase and to cast the net wider with a more complete and focused sub-elite pathway, it is suggested that the national level programs be more camps-focused and inclusive of primary coaches. This restructuring of the focus of the various components of the pathway should produce a much more focused and supportive environment allowing more athletes to reach their potential and more coaches to be exposed to the national program.

### **Recommendations**

- 8** *That the nationally coordinated athlete pathway is developed as depicted in Diagram 1.0.*
- 9** *That players be individually case-managed from elite junior to elite professional ranks, within a national framework set around a national high performance program and overseen by the national technical director and their team.*

Diagram 1.0: Elite athlete pathway



## Explanation of the key components of the high performance pathway

- Internationally successful players are the pinnacle of the pathway.
- The pathway also prepares players for other professional roles within the golf industry and also creates a basis for possible options outside of golf.
- The creation of a national program positioned as the bridging program of support between top amateur and rookie professional players (male and female), with a strong international component, would maximise AIS resources and expertise.
- The national senior squad is overseen by the national technical director and should contain the top male and female amateurs in Australia. National teams (male and female) are selected from this squad. (It should be possible but not probable to make national teams from outside the squad.)
- There should be a minimum of 2–3 national squad camps per year, in addition to pre-competition camps for national teams (separate male and female camps when necessary). There should be the scope for rookie professionals to be included in some of the camps.
- A national camp structure should be implemented at various levels along the pathway, with increasing levels of on and off-course skills and competencies taught through development stages. These camps would combine male and female athletes.
- A feasibility study should be conducted to look into the possibility of a US base initially, and later Asian and European hubs, for the international component of the pathway. These would be used to conduct camps and provide a home environment for athletes in the early years of their transition to professional status, and as a support base for elite professionals.
- The US college system should be used as an option for players who wish to pursue it. As per the former WGA program, support should be given in making the decision to go to the United States and which college to choose. The national technical director (and/or high performance manager) should oversee contact and monitoring of overseas-based players.
- State institute of sport/state academy of sport (SIS/SAS) programs should feed into a national–international (potentially AIS) program positioned at the amateur to professional transition. They should take the best players from the state programs and provide support, sports science and sports medicine, and technical direction. The SIS/SAS head coaches should provide leadership at state level, working with personal coaches and state-level coaches to give them access and links to the national high performance program. (The main criticism of the SIS/SAS programs from the review was the lack of any direction or support for education, with a focus only on golf.)
- The national technical director and Golf Australia work to ensure athletes in smaller states with no institute program have access to similar opportunities and support through a national camps program and direct oversight and case management by the national technical director.

- State programs work specifically with a focus group of development athletes — above the level of the foundations, but feeding into the SIS/SAS programs (or national squads where there is no SIS/SAS program). States also work to oversee foundations, regional programs and club development. More work needs to be done to understand the environment in each state, what is working well and how it should be optimised.
- Junior golf foundations become the focus of the grassroots development, working with and possibly contracted by, state bodies. Foundations work from entry level up to the point where the athletes need more specific skill development as part of the national framework.
- Underpinning the whole structure are various grassroots programs, which are nationally directed (national development manager), but coordinated by the states through the junior golf foundations. Ideally each state should be supported to have a state development coordinator.
- A ‘hot spots’ program has been suggested which would target specific clubs or regions where positive development initiatives are taking place, rather than trying to implement huge programs nationally.

**Note:** There is a lot of work already being done by Golf Australia in conjunction with the PGA on development programs, though this is outside the scope of this review.

### ***Recommendations***

- 10 That Golf Australia works with the WA Institute of Sport to establish a golf program to fill a gap in the development pathway in Western Australia. This should also be considered longer term for South Australia.***
- 11 That a feasibility study be conducted to look into the possibility of establishing overseas hubs (initially a US base), as well as tapping into the AIS European Training Centre, for the international component of the high performance pathway.***

## National development framework with core curriculum of skills

In line with best practice standards, there is need for a core curriculum to be developed into a national development framework. This would pull together many of the excellent programs already in existence around the country for various aspects of golf. It would include various levels of development in the areas of:

- technical development
- physical development (physio screenings, stretching programs, strength and condition, etc.)
- biomechanical analysis
- tactical development
- psychology, goal setting, etc.
- nutrition
- professional development – media, management, travel logistics, financial management, sponsorship, career planning
- professional scenarios – realities of professional golf.

Appropriate standards (technical, physical, sports science and sports medicine use, tactical, etc.) should be set for entry into various programs within the high performance program. Athletes should be held accountable to maintain these standards to maintain their level of support. This happens as a natural part of life as a professional player and should be implemented as part of the core curriculum, supported by coaches and program managers at each level of the high performance program.

### **Recommendations**

- 12** *That the national technical director should lead a review of existing programs and funding by various bodies, creating a national development framework with a core curriculum of skills to be delivered through the high performance program, and setting benchmark standards of development and entry into high performance pathway programs.*
- 13** *That a state and national camps program be developed as the key delivery mechanism of the national development framework.*

## Optimisation of the Australian Institute of Sport program

The AIS program is currently only catering to the needs of a very small group of athletes who are not necessarily the best athletes. It is in competition with both state and SIS/SAS programs. A residential program in a relatively remote venue for young athletes is not seen as the optimal use of the AIS capacity for the overall high performance program.

If the AIS program is to continue, it needs to be positioned where it can provide the best value-add. The existing SIS/SAS programs are currently running very well and should essentially remain the same. The reintroduction of an AIS program would assist in taking the provision of state-of-the-art sports science and sports medicine support to our best golfers to another level. A major shortcoming in the current high performance pathway is that SIS/SAS programs only exist in three states. It is highly desirable that SIS/SAS programs be established in Western Australia and South Australia and critical that mechanisms are established to ensure talented players in the ACT, Northern Territory and Tasmania are also identified and supported. This development will ensure that the AIS support is complemented in the golfers' home environment.

If an AIS program is to continue, it needs to be positioned to maximise the impact on the athletes and provide the greatest value-add, aimed at the very best amateurs and promising rookie professionals. It would be providing domestic high-end sports science, sports medicine and technical support to the players and their primary coaches, as well as support for international experience.

### ***Recommendation***

**14** *That the AIS program be repositioned as the pinnacle program of the high performance pathway, and include both elite amateur and rookie professionals as scholarship holders.*

It is suggested that an AIS program be conducted as follows:

- That the program be a pinnacle of support within the high performance pathway
- That scholarship holders be the best of the elite amateur players and the best of the rookie professionals
- That the AIS program be in partnership with Golf Australia, PGA, PGA Tour and the ALPG – a joint project with all playing their part in the development and support of the players
- That the program be run by an AIS technical director who works closely with the national technical director to support the direction of the high performance program and to lead innovation, research and technical development throughout the industry
- That the AIS technical director not be a head coach but, similar to the national technical director, work with players' coaches to further develop the coaches and add value to the player in their optimal environment
- That scholarship holders within the AIS program be case-managed by an AIS technical director

- That the AIS technical director also work closely with SIS/SAS to ensure AIS scholarship holders also have individual SIS/SAS scholarships to support them in their home environments
- That the program be camps-based, with the major camp being at an overseas base (United States), with opportunities for both amateur and professional competitions
- That the program provide support for overseas experiences in Asia and Europe as well as the United States
- That the program be set up to support players to turn professional at the appropriate time and value-add to their long-term development
- That national camps, including a possible part-residential component, be part of the program on a needs basis (possible integration with, and links to, the national squad through camps)
- That there be no cap on the amount of time in the AIS program (although, as a guide, no more than three years as a professional); rather, high standards of entry and maintenance of scholarship – only the best
- That player agreements, a code of conduct and accountability for improvement in the key areas should be firmly in place, monitored and enforced
- That the program should lead in setting standards for Australia's top athletes and coaches
- That entry is based on high levels on a range of criteria and the athlete should be invited to be part of the program through a unified consultation process of the key high performance team members working together to get the best players in the program
- That it should also be possible for top professional players to use the AIS overseas base/hub for support (technical, sports science and sports medicine, etc.), on a user-pays basis
- That the quality of the high performance program and the structure of the sport should ensure delivery of the best quality players to the AIS program
- A reimbursement program should be strongly considered as part of the program.

## **Amateur to professional transition**

The transition from amateur to professional has always been a huge contrast in terms of support. Players are very well supported at the amateur level, but once they turn professional they are largely on their own and have to work in a very different environment, and some are ill-prepared to do so.

There is a need for better support of players in making both the choice and, if appropriate, the transition between amateur and professional ranks. There needs to be better education provided to players from a young age, of both what it really takes to be a top professional player (all aspects of the profession, not just playing) and what other options there are for a player within the industry and even external to it.

An AIS/bridging program pitched at the transition between amateur and professional will help smooth this transition for the best players. However, not everyone will be able to be included in this program. The role of the national technical director and their team in overseeing the development of all the promising players will be well-placed to support and advise young players and their coaches on turning professional.

The delivery of the national development framework within the high performance program should ensure players are educated and supported from a much earlier stage, and much more thoroughly than previously, to be better prepared to make the transition to turn professional.

### ***Recommendations***

- 15** *That a consultative group, which includes the professional bodies and possibly some rookie and touring professional players, should help evolve the national development framework and include modules and real-life scenarios on all aspects of being a professional player.*
- 16** *That further research is conducted into the statistics of success and drop-out rates on turning professional. The results of such research will further define what is needed within the high performance program.*

## **Player education system**

The lack of any kind of emphasis on, or support for, player education opportunities outside of the golf industry was identified as a major issue within the high performance pathway and culture of the sport. There is concern that players who do not succeed as full-time professionals do not have wider employment options. The loss of players to the US college system is also seen as a concern to some, largely because it is not well-managed and there is no viable alternative here in Australia for effectively combining a developing golf career and higher education.

There is need for a change of culture within the sport about the need for education. Feedback indicates that within current high performance programs, education is only given cursory attention at best. Golf-focused education through the PGA is the only option presented. The national development framework could be designed to introduce players, from an early age, to all the career possibilities associated with golf (management, finance, sponsorship, media, sports science, sports medicine and coaching), as well as educating them on the realities of what it takes to be a successful elite athlete.

There is also an opportunity to create links with schools and universities, as well as Athlete and Career Education programs (at state and national institutes), to assist players to gain some form of education while pursuing their golfing dream. School of excellence programs exist at high schools around the country. There may be the same opportunities at some universities. There are many possibilities and a focus group could easily be set up, under the national development manager, to conduct an audit of existing programs and explore further options.

The former WGA model of support for the US college system should be implemented across the structure, including further exploring/expanding of possible strategic alliances with selected colleges. This should be seen as a real opportunity for some of our players, but must be case-managed and supported correctly to ensure it is a positive experience designed to add value to relevant players and the Australian high performance program aims.

### ***Recommendations***

- 17 That the national development framework form the basis of introducing young players to career possibilities associated with, and outside of, golf.***
- 18 That golf proactively supports players in pursuing education options alongside their playing commitments, and that an audit of existing programs be conducted leading to alliances with educational bodies both here and in the United States (college system).***

## Tournaments/competition

The opportunity to play quality tournaments at all levels of the athlete pathway is a major objective and, as such, should be coordinated to support the high performance program. The tournament pathway is seen as adequate for the men at all levels, but could be improved. It has been identified that the Von Nida Tour needs to be secured as an essential component of the pathway. There are currently some real inadequacies in playing opportunities for the women. The current Australian tournament structure needs to be reviewed to ensure it is optimally aligned with the athlete pathway and supports player development needs.

In particular, issues that need to be considered are:

### *For the women*

- Review the use of Pro-Ams (opportunities for involvement of more top amateurs)
- Look at the viability of adding professional women to top amateur tournaments (for example, Australian amateur), and combining state amateur and professional championships (for example, NSW amateur and open championships)
- Look to combine men and women where appropriate and/or allow some spots for women in men's tournaments (amateur and professional)
- Review with a view to raising the standards for women's tournaments at all levels – state, national and application criteria to turn professional
- Merge gender programs at development squad levels

### *For the men*

- Review the possibilities of further spots for top amateurs in professional tournaments (on merit)
- Work together to support and enhance the Von Nida Tour as well as explore the possibilities for elite amateurs to play in some of these events

### ***Recommendation***

- 19** ***That the tournament structure be reviewed by Golf Australia and the professional bodies to assist in optimising the high performance program, looking to set standards based on merit.***

## Coaching

Although the standard of professional coaching is high and currently well regulated through the PGA, the coach education pathway is disjointed and somewhat restrictive. Private coach-education courses are starting to spring up to fill certain demands within the industry, but there is a need for a consolidated approach.

The major issues for consideration are:

- current courses need to be assessed to ascertain their relevancy to the high performance program requirements
- best practice needs to be considered in relation to the provision of different coaching streams and speciality options (for example, high performance, early development, youth, women, etc.)
- there also needs to be consideration for multiple entry points into the coach pathway, for example, a great communicator, passionate person with outstanding technical understanding who does not have a low handicap (maybe from another sport)
- the AIS coaching scholarship structure needs to be reviewed and tailored to the needs of the sport (mindful of the fact that golf competes with all other sports for a limited number of these scholarships)
- there also needs to be planning for continuing education of high performance coaches throughout the high performance structure.

### **Recommendations**

- 20** *That the coaching pathway be reviewed in conjunction with Golf Australia, the PGA and ASC to further optimise its alignment and integration with the athlete pathway.*
- 21** *That consideration be given to different coaching streams and specialty options, as well as continuing education needs of specialist coaches.*
- 22** *That the PGA lead and work with Golf Australia and other key stakeholders to create a high performance coaches forum and/or leadership group for sharing ideas and ongoing development.*

## **Creating accountability and appreciation for support – the ‘give-back’ culture**

The link between professional players and the amateur side of the sport is weak. The top professionals are rarely seen in Australia and developing players have little or no access to them. In addition, the younger players (amateur and turning professional) have an expectation of support (financial) without the appropriate levels of accountability. Ways of creating a ‘give-back’ culture need to be explored.

There are many issues to be considered, including:

- The aim of the sport’s high performance program is to create successful players, why should they then be obligated to pay back?
- At what level is it possible to judge a player’s means to pay back?
- What is ‘successful’? Amount earned? Over how many years?
- How to get players who are primarily overseas-based to contribute to the Australian system.
- How to start a ‘give-back’ culture – is it retrospective?
- A scheme of lending funds to assist with turning professional, but ensuring payback.
- Paying back relies on the excellence of the system. The more they need and value it, the more likely they will be to want to give back.

### ***Recommendation***

- 23** *That a nationally driven review panel be set up to create the ‘give-back’ culture in golf.*

## **National selection processes**

National selection processes are not clear or consistent in aim or application. The men's and women's policies are very different, but there is criticism of both. Selections policies for entry into high performance programs (for example, AIS and SIS/SAS) are vague and players are not clear on what they need to do to progress through to various levels within the pathway (programs, squads and teams).

The following issues need to be considered:

- developing concise and clear policies, procedures and criteria
- communicating these policies, procedures and criteria effectively to all concerned well in advance of timelines, so that athletes clearly understand what they must do or what standards they must reach to be selected
- determining the aim and philosophy of each selection policy with a focus on the best outcome
- using appropriate persons as selectors – those with a current knowledge of the high performance aspects of the sport. The relevant head coach (or the national technical director) should be a selector in most cases
- ensuring selectors are well-educated in the process of selecting and are able to apply the selection criteria accurately, fairly, consistently and without bias
- ensuring appropriate feedback and counselling for those who are not selected.

Further detail of best-practice selection criteria is available from the ASC.

### ***Recommendation***

**24** *That selection policies be reviewed in line with ASC best-practice principles.*

## **The use of the Moonah facility**

If Moonah is no longer used as a full-time residential AIS program and there is no further need for a formal full-time residential component of the pathway, it is recommended that its function be reviewed as a centre of excellence to support the national high performance program.

There are centre of excellence models from other sports and other countries that should be examined in the set up of Moonah. This review has commenced within Golf Australia. It is recommended that Moonah has great use for the sport as a centre for national camps at all levels. The set up there could be well-used by developing players over many years as they progress through the ranks. Coach development should run in conjunction with player development, as part of camps and national initiatives.

The AIS technical director could be based at Moonah, if appropriate, but should not have any responsibility in running the facility. Moonah should be used on a needs basis for high end sports science, sports medicine and biomechanical assessment of AIS players, and even for a part-time residential component if necessary. The change is that rather than the Moonah facility being run primarily as the AIS program, this simply becomes one of the programs utilising the facility.

### ***Recommendation***

- 25** *That the function of the Moonah facility be reviewed as a centre of excellence to support the national high performance pathway and be the home of national camps, rather than a full-time AIS complex.*

## Related issues

### Grassroots, talent base and development programs

Although outside the scope of this review, grassroots, talent base and development programs are essential to underpin the high performance pathway. There is a separate review in progress focusing on a nationally coordinated approach, with specific attention to grassroots programs, school programs, golf foundations and the role of clubs. This needs to be integrated with the high performance pathway, national leadership and re-assessment of coaching pathway.

### Funding of the high performance program

Appendix D outlines the projected costings of the various levels of the proposed high performance pathway. **Note:** This is a guide only of the costs of each level of the pathway. The funding for tournaments and coaching provided by the professional bodies is not included in this table.

The pinnacle transition or bridging program (potentially the AIS program) would have a budget very similar to the previous AIS program (approximately \$475,000). The overseas component is budgeted at around \$200,000, but there are significant savings in the program no longer being full-time residential. The specific detail of the program contributions still needs to be negotiated to ascertain the level of involvement by each stakeholder.

There are additional costs in setting up state institute programs in Western Australia and South Australia. State institute program budgets given are the total program value and not indicative of the Golf Australia contribution, which would be less than half of the overall total program value.

There are also additional costs associated with national camps at junior and senior level. The overall national team, squad and camps budget is just under \$1million, but does not take into consideration any sponsorship or commercial arrangements.

It is anticipated that a more united and cohesive high performance pathway for Australian golf will lead to better commercial opportunities, leveraging off good programs and even better results. This, in turn, will enhance the resources to further improve the opportunities for the athlete pathway.

The costings provided are only meant as a guide to the various levels of investment required by Golf Australia at the different stages of the high performance pathway.



# Appendixes

- A Review of high performance pathway in Australian golf
- B High Performance Advisory Panel, Eden on the Park, Melbourne, 19–20 April 2006
- C SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis
- D Projected costings of proposed high performance pathway
- E Acronyms



## Appendix A: Review of high performance pathway in Australian golf

This review was conducted by the Australian Sports Commission in conjunction with the newly formed Golf Australia, the PGA, ALPG and PGA Tour.

### Aim of the review

- To evaluate the effectiveness of:
  - the elite development pathway of golf in Australia
  - the aims and roles of all the various stakeholders and organisations
  - both athlete and coach development and how they inter-relate
  - both elite amateur and elite professional pathways.
- To develop recommendations for optimal use of resources and maximising opportunities for players and coaches in Australian golf into the future.

### Terms of reference for the review

- Assess the current pathway of elite development in golf in Australia.
- Identify the current **views of high performance**, as well as the **aims** and **roles** of the various stakeholders in the athlete development pathway:
  - state bodies (including foundations)
  - state institutes of sport
  - AIS
  - former WGA and AGU programs
  - PGA, PGA Tour and ALPG as representatives of the professional players.
- Examine the contribution of each of the above organisations to both athlete (amateur and professional) and coach development pathways. Determine how they inter-relate, what they have to offer golf in Australia; and make recommendations for future best use of resources.
- Seek input from players and coaches and other stakeholders on how the previous structure has worked for them and how it could be improved.
- Use interviews, written submissions and a survey to identify key issues.
- Convene a High Performance Advisory Panel, including representatives from the various golf stakeholders as well as relevant experts from sport in Australia, to examine, discuss, debate key issues and make recommendations for the future.
- Produce a report on the review and high performance advisory program with recommendations for the structure of the high performance pathway of golf for the future, including:
  - athlete pathway
  - coach pathway
  - resourcing structures
  - role definitions
  - communication and integration of the various organisations and stakeholders.

## Appendix B: High Performance Advisory Panel, Eden on the Park, Melbourne, 19–20 April 2006

**Mark Peters (Chair)** – CEO, Australian Sports Commission (ASC)

**Jackie Fairweather (Project Manager)** – ASC Senior Sports Consultant for High Performance Improvement; former AIS Triathlon head coach; former professional triathlete and elite marathon runner

**Rob Clement** – General Manager, Sport Innovation and Best Practice, ASC

**Nick Hunter** – AIS Group Sport Manager

**Craig Tiley** – Director, Player Development, Tennis Australia

**Alan Thompson** – Head Coach, Australian Swimming

**Bill Davoren** – National Performance Director, Triathlon Australia

**Ken Norris** – Former head of ACT Academy of Sport and National Elite Sports Council

**Steve Bann** – Elite golf coach, founding head coach of the Victorian Institute of Sport golf program

**Peter Knight** – Head Coach, NSW Institute of Sport program, former NSW state coaching director

**Ian Triggs** – National Women's Head Coach, coach of several professional players

**Fiona Pike** – Former ALPG professional player, current national women's selector and South Australian state coach

**Stuart Cox** – NSW Golf Association board member and state team manager and selector

**Dayle Marshall** – Former top amateur player; former executive director of Women's Golf Victoria, current Stuart Appleby Junior Golf Foundation Communications Manager

**Tony Hallam** – CEO, Golf Australia

**Max Garske** – CEO, Professional Golfers' Association of Australia

(Alternate: Phil Ayres, PGA General Manager Member Business and Services)

**Warren Sevil** – CEO, Australian Ladies Professional Golf

**Gus Seebeck** – General Manager of PGA Tour of Australasia

### Observers

**Dominic Wall** – High Performance Manager, Men's Golf

**Lorette Roberts** – High Performance Manager, Women's Golf

**Peter Murray** – PGA Senior Business Development Manager

## Appendix C: SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis

### Athlete development pathway in Australian golf

#### *Strengths*

- Golf courses – good number, quality, diversity and year-round good weather
- A history of success and a positive culture within the players of expecting success
- Network of coaches – number of Level 3 (PGA) and of high performance coaches is high
- Good programs from AGU, WGA, SIS/SAS, and some states, plus independents. A lot of competent and passionate people making strong contributions
- Good support at state and national level especially for travel and competition experience
- Good funding and support for tournaments at top amateur level (especially men)
- Variety of pathway choices to suit individual needs
- Diverse range of contributors to the pathway leading to competition, independence, flexibility and innovation. Knowledge and use of overseas ideas
- Good state institute programs – innovative and well developed
- Respect in the industry for the AIS
- Good access to courses in regional areas, with more freedom and flexibility for younger players to play

#### *Weaknesses*

- Lack of clear definition of 'high performance' for golf both within and outside of golf in Australia
- Existence of two amateur bodies has led to lack of clear aims, objectives, leadership and coordination of high performance pathway
- Lack of communication and consultation about programs from peak body. Need to examine, be aware of and coordinate all the good things happening and put them into a national framework of holistic development that includes accountability for delivery
- Historical lack of communication and cohesion between amateur and professional bodies
- No clear leader or 'go-to' person to drive a high performance program and lead athlete and coach development (that is, lots of indians, no chief)
- Male/female and amateur/professional divides
- Tournament structure determines development pathway, rather than complements it
- Low junior numbers as a percentage of club memberships compared to other countries
- Many seem to turn professional too early and 'get lost' (an average of seven years to make it on the US PGA Tour – how many do we lose in the process?)

- Lack of clear, coordinated preparation for long-term future (turning professional or otherwise and the decisions involved)
- Poor culture of education, both golf profession-specific and external to golf
- Players not appreciating the level of support they get and not being held accountable for their use of support
- Access to specific high performance coaches is ad hoc and limited to major cities and SIS/SAS programs. Other coaches 'do not know what they do not know'
- Limited ability to deliver regional support (low numbers of coaches in regional areas, limited number of regional academies, that are not coordinated as part of the system; no SIS/SAS programs outside of the big three states)
- Lack of funding and coordination for national camps to cast the net wider for younger athletes and regional athletes
- Culture of some (older, bigger) clubs and attractiveness of golf to young people

#### *Opportunities*

- More optimal use and coordination of institute programs and integration with state programs
- Optimisation of an AIS program as the pinnacle program of the high performance pathway
- Better promotion and leveraging of commercial side of golf in Australia
- Success of professional players – media and public interest
- Better links with professional players (both successful and less successful)
- Potential of better tapping into schools system
- Better use of junior golf foundations with state bodies
- Tapping into external (other sport) expertise to improve golf aims and objectives
- US college system (some see this as a threat)

#### *Threats*

- Competition for the attention of young athletes from other sports
- Decrease in available money/funding (sponsors, benefactors, etc.)
- Failure of the international game to modernise (for example, relax amateur/professional)
- Failure of the professional bodies and Golf Australia to work effectively with each other
- Lack of professional playing opportunities for women in Australia
- Loss of professional Von Nida Tour would be devastating for the men's pathway

# SWOT analysis

## Coach development pathway in Australian golf

### *Strengths*

- Technical knowledge of Australian coaches
- Group of top coaches with top-level experience and success
- Very thorough training programs for coaches through Level 2 and PGA traineeship, with a very high industry standard established and expected
- Large number of coaches in the industry, supported through the PGA
- Good communication between the state institute coaches and some of the top elite coaches
- The fact that all coaches are professional leads to high standards and some positive competition and innovation within the industry

### *Weaknesses*

- Limited access to real high performance coaches for many young players
- Lack of specific high performance and/or development training stream for coaches
- Existence of several different coach education pathways, all run by different bodies
- Lack of clear coaching leadership of development pathway. Existing head coaches do not have time and mandate to communicate fully with relevant coaches in the industry
- Perception from higher program coaches that communication is good with primary (home) coaches, but different view by primary coaches
- Fact that the athlete and coach pathways are not aligned and coaches do not have direct input into athlete development pathway
- Amateur bodies have had limited link or input into coach development/ education structure
- Ability of clubs to support junior/development athletes is often dependent on whether or not the club professional is interested in this area
- Lack of support (and mentoring) from the national body for club professionals interested in development athletes
- Lack of qualified coaches at regional clubs and areas
- Narrow focus of coach education and limited choices for gaining specific teaching training and credibility for this (this is especially true for women who want to teach young players)
- All coaches are in competition with each other as they are running their own business. There are different ideologies and minimal opportunities to share information and come to common understandings
- Coaching tendency to hold onto or 'own' athletes. Leads to athletes being pulled in different directions and becoming confused and frustrated

- Culture where coaches do not travel with their professional athletes unless the athletes can afford to pay them, which leads to the players not being supported as rookie professionals (when they were fully supported as amateurs)

#### *Opportunities*

- Enhanced communication in the industry (especially between PGA and Golf Australia) leading to further refinement and improvement of the coach pathway
- Strong leadership for the high performance program
- Support of the ASC in coach education and development
- Coordination and communication of all major bodies to enhance coaching pathways
- Support and ideas from overseas independent bodies/foundations/institutes, etc.
- Opportunities to get international exposure through access to top players
- Opportunities to tap into Australia's sports science and sports medicine expertise and leadership at national and international level

#### *Threats*

- Losing top coaches to overseas programs
- Top coaches spending most of their time with professional players overseas
- The lure of the dollar leading to coaches trying to find an edge and becoming more interested in gimmicks and money-making ideas than good coaching
- Coaching limited by club commitments
- Potentially excellent coaches, not able to become coaches because of the high playing standards attached
- External coaching courses (universities, foundations, academies) not being united under one peak body, causing disharmony and varied standards

# SWOT analysis

## National networks, management and coordination

### *Strengths*

- Greatly improved communication between Golf Australia and the professional bodies since the amalgamation
- The willingness of the majority of the golf community to have input and work together into the future
- Existence of very good high performance coaches to lead the system
- The existence of the Moonah facility to tap into as a potential centre of excellence
- The fact that so many people within the golf community want a more coordinated approach to high performance and player development

### *Weaknesses*

- Such a huge industry in Australia and so much to coordinate
- Mistrust and defensiveness due to past poor communication
- The fact that so many bodies have established their own programs and may find it hard to fall in line with a national structure. Need for buy-in and ownership
- Some disharmony internally within state organisations because of lack of leadership and coordination from national level
- Lack of clear leadership within the high performance structure and divided opinion about the role of/need for a head coach
- Challenge in finding the right person/people to head up the high performance program
- AIS program not being fully utilised as a resource to lead innovation and high performance benchmarks out into the rest of the industry

### *Opportunities*

- Opportunity to learn from other sports and what they have done
- Opportunity in having a CEO and president from the business world
- Support of the ASC in moving forward
- Support from the ASC in other areas such as junior/grassroots and coaching development

### *Threats*

- Failure to unite the major bodies (Golf Australia, PGA, PGA Tour and ALPG)
- Lack of sponsorship and other fundraising streams to effectively run high performance program and sport development pathways
- The best coaches/leaders not being available to lead the high performance program because they are in demand by professional players and in their coaching business

# SWOT analysis

## Use of sport science and medicine in Australian golf

### *Strengths*

- Some great people with great ideas already exist in the golf industry
- Excellent programs for assessment of players exists – technical and physical
- Availability and potential of Moonah as a high performance sports science facility
- Most states are starting to expose young players to sports science and sports medicine
- SIS/SAS programs have strong knowledge and use of sports science and sports medicine services
- Golf as an industry has very high levels of technological tools

### *Weaknesses*

- Lack of coordination and leadership of all the good ideas and programs. No forum to lead or drive various stakeholders within the industry
- No real framework of development in place to deliver consistent and continuously developing levels of sports science, sports medicine and professional development (media, finance, management, travel, etc.) to players as they move through the system
- Playing tournaments and actual playing technique as priority leading to ‘peripheral’ sports science and sports medicine services only being used when needed (cure, rather than prevention and good basis for success)
- Players entering SIS/SAS/AIS programs having varied and generally minimal exposure to sports science and sports medicine and wasting time getting up to speed on the basics
- Not having sports science and sports medicine support at national trips and camps

### *Opportunities*

- Australia leads the world in sports science and sports medicine innovation and practice
- Access to US (Southern California) Golf Institute
- Sponsors with great technology
- Innovative nature of the sport
- Set up of an Australian golf base in the United States for all players to access

### *Threats*

- Losing our top sports science and sports medicine practitioners to overseas (increasingly in demand)
- Losing good sports science and sports medicine practitioners to other sports
- Inability of golf bodies to pay for necessary services

## Appendix D: Projected costings of proposed high performance pathway

	Key components	Estimated value	
<b>High performance program</b>	Technical director	\$ 150,000	Proposed staffing structure of Golf Australia outside of existing pathway programs
	High performance manager/admin	\$ 100,000	
<b>AIS/bridging program</b>	Program technical director	\$ 100,000	8 weeks, 15 athletes
	International travel/camp	\$ 200,000	
	Domestic travel	\$ 50,000	3 camps (2 Moonah/1 Canberra) Vehicle, SSSM provision
	Domestic camps	\$ 50,000	
	Other	\$ 75,000	
<b>National senior team/squad</b>	National senior teams/squads	\$ 500,000	Male and female squads, costs of competition and training, including athlete support services
	SSSM provision	\$ 50,000	
<b>National development camps</b>	Initiatives/projects	\$ 50,000	4 camps x 20 players and coaches x \$2500
	National senior camps	\$ 200,000	
<b>National junior teams</b>	National junior camps	\$ 180,000	4 camps x 30 players and coaches x \$2000
<b>National junior camps</b>			
<b>Sub-total</b>		<b>\$1,705,000</b>	
<b>State institute programs</b>	NSW Institute of Sport	\$ 150,000	Contribution in existing arrangements should be elevated to \$150k
	Victorian Institute of Sport	\$ 150,000	
	Queensland Academy of Sport	\$ 150,000	
	New program WA	\$ 100,000	Contribution to be negotiated with new programs from those state institutes or state bodies
	New program SA	\$ 100,000	
Note: Approximately two-thirds of the funding for the SIS/SAS program is provided by the sport itself			
<b>State teams</b>	Currently funded from state resources	Existing	May be need for Golf Australia to top up through sponsorship and partnership relationships, particularly if there are gaps in the sub-elite pathway in various states. Foundations may well also need additional support to provide the desired level of service provision
State talent ID and development	Currently funded from state resources	Existing	

## Appendix E: Acronyms

AGU	Australian Golf Union
AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
ALGA	Australian Ladies Golf Association
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
PGA	Professional Golfers' Association of Australia
SIS/SAS	State institute of sport/state academy of sport
SSSM	Sports science/sports medicine
SWOT	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
WGA	Women's Golf Australia