



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

A review of the Australian bowls high performance program and pathways



July 2009
Jackie Fairweather
Senior Sports Consultant
Innovation and Best Practice Unit
Australian Sports Commission

The Australian Sports Commission is the Australian Government body responsible for developing and funding Australian sport through the implementation of the Government's sport policy, Building Australian Communities through Sport. It was established in 1985 and operates under the *Australian Sports Commission Act 1989*. The Commission's national leadership role is achieved through seven operational areas: Australian Institute of Sport, Sport Performance and Development, National Sports Programs, Community Sport, Corporate Services, Commercial and Facilities, and Finance. The Australian Sports Commission forms part of the Health and Ageing portfolio.

For general enquiries:

Tel: (02) 6214 1111

Fax: (02) 6251 2680

Email: asc@ausport.gov.au

Website: ausport.gov.au

© Australian Sports Commission 2009

This work is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without prior written permission from the Australian Sports Commission. Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction should be addressed to copyright@ausport.gov.au

Table of contents

Table of contents	1
Executive summary	2
1. Background and the review process.....	6
2. Introduction	7
3. Findings and recommendations.....	9
3.1 The high performance system	9
3.1.1 Introduction	9
3.1.2 Leadership and direction	10
<i>Recommendation 1 - leadership</i>	12
3.1.3 Culture	13
<i>Recommendation 2 - culture</i>	14
3.1.4 Communication	15
<i>Recommendation 3 - communication</i>	15
3.2 Athlete development.....	17
3.2.1 National high performance program	17
<i>Recommendation 4 – case management</i>	19
<i>Recommendation 5 – open and transparent environment</i>	19
3.2.2 Silver Tier	19
<i>Recommendation 6 – Draft Camps and Silver Tier</i>	20
3.2.3 State programs, junior and under 25 development	21
<i>Recommendation 7 – national forum for STA development programs</i>	23
<i>Recommendation 8 – improved governance processes</i>	24
<i>Recommendation 9 –world event for under 25</i>	24
3.2.4 National player development framework	24
<i>Recommendation 10 – national player development framework</i>	25
Summary of the athlete development pathway	25
3.3 Coach development	26
<i>Recommendation 11 – coach network</i>	27
<i>Recommendation 12 – informing coach education</i>	27
Summary of the coach development pathway	28
3.4 Competition	29
<i>Recommendation 13 – aligning competition and athlete pathways</i>	30
Summary of the competition pathway	31
3.5 Selection.....	32
<i>Recommendation 14 – national selection forum</i>	33
Appendix A: Framework and terms of reference	34
Appendix B: Bowls Australia high performance program and pathway review questionnaire	36
Appendix C: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis	39
Appendix D: Program logic summary table	40
Appendix F - BWA High Performance Development Pathway	41

Executive summary

The Bowls Australia high performance program has progressed significantly since the 2003 High Performance Advisory Panel review, with the majority of recommendations successfully implemented at the national level. There is now a Bowls Australia led and managed high performance program in place that has achieved major cultural change and noticeably improved international results.

Progress has been made in the areas of sport science and sport medicine with fitness and skills testing protocols implemented, resulting in a culture and attitude of a team of ‘athletes’ rather than ‘bowlers’ at national team level. A national ‘Grand Prix’ series is in place providing addition competition opportunities that are more closely aligned to international competition format. There have also been a raft of good plans, policies and processes put in place by the high performance team, significantly lifting the standard and professionalism of the national program.

At the state/territory level some progress has been made with junior squads now existing in every state in addition to senior squads. A few states also have Under 25 or development squads, with some making advancement towards a structured state high performance program. There are a small, but growing number of high performance coaches around the states.

While, there is a clear structure and strategy with regards the national program, there is still not a true national high performance system. Despite preliminary efforts of the states/territories, the athlete development pathway is not well developed or consistent below the national squad level. Although there are the beginnings of a ground swell of acceptance of the principles of the new high performance culture, there is not yet a collective understanding, commitment to, or agreement of what the athlete development pathway should involve nor clarity around relative aims, roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

While the traditional style of bowls forms a good base for the competition pathway, despite the introduction of the Grand Prix Series, the competition pathway is still not aligned and complimentary to the needs of the athlete pathway and desired high performance objectives. Competition formats and structures vary widely from state to state making a clear national pathway very difficult.

The third pillar of a national high performance system, the coaching pathway, is in the very early stages of evolution in bowls. High performance coaching in bowls is still an evident weakness in terms of supporting elite athlete development.

Apart from financial resources, the biggest impediment to the evolution of the high performance system facing bowls in Australia is the fact that the national program and each of the states/territories are largely working in isolation from each other. Resources in general are not being maximised because of the lack of engagement and buy-in of stakeholders across the system, including the states/territories, coaches and even the athletes. Even though it was not within the scope of this review it was clearly evident that the governance and decision making processes in place at State/Territory level is stifling the progress of national high performance system development in bowls.

The recommendations contained within this review centre largely around leadership of the national system involving communication and promoting understanding and collective responsibility and buy-in to high performance programs and pathways by all relevant stakeholders. Key points are the need for:

- National leadership, direction and clarification of roles, responsibilities and expectations;
- Communication and ‘selling’ the high performance story including connecting with the broader bowls community;
- Openness and transparency in plans, policies and communications;
- National forums and networks for sharing of best practice and engendering collective buy-in and ownership of the national system;
- Clear identification of pathway needs (athlete, coach and competition);
- A case managed approach to athlete development;
- The establishment of an underpinning pathway at state/territory level;
- Both innovation and national consistency in competition formats and structures
- Reform and modernisation in governance and decision making at STA level.

Bowls is a relatively immature sport internationally in terms of its high performance culture and practices. The program implemented by Bowls Australia in the last five years has set the standard for high performance bowls programs around the world, however other nations are also increasing their efforts and investments into their programs and pathways. If Bowls Australia can evolve what has been initiated over the last five years with the national high performance program, and harness the resources of the sport nationally using the following recommendations, then Australia should continue to be world leading in both the performances of the elite athletes and the evolution and popularity of the game in general.

The recommendations resulting from the findings of the review are as follows:

Recommendation 1

Bowls Australia lead, in partnership with the STAs, a process of national buy-in and engagement to review and articulate the strategy, structure and objectives of achieving a truly national high performance system.

Recommendation 2

The high performance culture is redefined to focus on the desired goals, values, attitudes and practices necessary to achieve the national system outcomes of continuous improvement and excellence for each individual and the team as a whole.

Recommendation 3

Bowls Australia and the STAs collaborate on the development of a communication strategy to promote the high performance program and pathways to the wider bowls community.

Recommendation 4

A system of case management be implemented for all national squad athletes, including working with athletes to develop individual plans and optimise daily training environment as well as work/study/home life factors.

Recommendation 5

The high performance team develop an open and transparent environment with regards planning, policies and expectations, working with athletes to ensure the right balance between consistency and flexibility for both individuals and the team as a whole.

Recommendation 6

Continue and expand the Draft Camp and Silver Tier concepts, using them to link with STA programs, expose athletes and coaches to the national coaches, culture and program, and guide the development of selected Silver Tier athletes.

- a) Aim for one Draft Camp per year per STA (or a workable compromise to combine and alternate smaller states).
- b) Develop an enhanced program with agreed levels of support and input between Bowls Australia and STAs for each Silver Tier athlete.

Recommendation 7

Bowls Australia bring the relevant people together from each STA annually for a national development workshop to define roles and responsibilities, share and model best practice, as well as gaining commitment and buy-in for state junior, U25 and senior squads with appropriate coaching and high performance leadership positions in place.

Recommendation 8

Bowls Australia lead, with the assistance of the ASC and State Departments of Sport and Recreation, the exploration of opportunities to bring about governance change, education and modernisation in the State and Territory Associations.

Recommendation 9

Bowls Australia put a proposal to the World Bowls body for a World Championship event for the Under 25 age group (or similar) to enhance the pathway for younger bowlers.

Recommendation 10

In the longer term, expand the fitness standards and skills testing protocol into a nationally driven and coordinated player development framework that is relevant and applicable to athletes at all stages of the bowls high performance pathway.

Recommendation 11

Bowls Australia and the STAs work in partnership to form an inclusive network of coaches who work with or are interested in high performance. The group should be led by the national coaches and high performance manager and provide:

- sharing of ideas and experience through formal and informal networking;
- opportunities to be involved in national and Draft camps, gaining hands on experience alongside national coaches;
- a high performance coach network with commitment to state squad coaches in each state/territory;

This will result in the development of a high performance coaching culture and pathway throughout the system.

Recommendation 12

Use the high performance coach network and the development of high performance coaches, to gather knowledge on the specific requirements of Bowls high performance coaches and inform the development of the high performance level of the National Coach Accreditation Scheme.

Recommendation 13

Bowls Australia and the STAs review the Australian high performance competition pathway, through a detailed assessment process, to achieve:

- a) appropriate competitions for the purposes of: development, selection, preparation and publicity of athletes;
- b) national consistency in conducting State/Territory ‘Open’ Championships, feeding into an Australian Open final;

- c) broadening the appeal of the game through the exploration and development of different competition formats, while not losing the invaluable history and roots of bowls in Australia;
- d) identification of the best use of resources across the system to achieve these desired outcomes.

Recommendation 14

Bowls Australia convene a national selection forum to discuss, inform, educate and share philosophies, policies and best practice for athlete selection. This should form the beginning of ongoing communication, information sharing, education and up skilling of all selectors – national and state.

1. Background and the review process

In late 2003, Bowls Australia was one of several sports chosen to be part of an Australian Sports Commission (ASC) process called the “High Performance Advisory Panel”. The aim of this process was to review and facilitate the improvement of high performance programs of targeted sports. The resulting report for Bowls led to a number of key changes in the Bowls Australia high performance system, including the employment of dedicated high performance staff and a more formal and accountable approach to preparing athletes for high performance success.

In 2008 the ASC conducted a quadrennial review and planning process with all funded sports. As a result of this process it was considered timely by both Bowls Australia and the ASC to review the effectiveness of the high performance system implemented since the 2003 report. The aim of this review process being to evaluate and assess the current high performance program, and to develop recommendations for the evolution of the Bowls high performance program and pathway structure into the future.

It was agreed that the ASC would conduct an independent review with the purpose:

To assess and define the national high performance pathway needs for Bowls, including gaining national consistency and the alignment of programs and contributions (financial, personnel, facilities, infrastructure and governance) across underpinning programs, all towards the common goal of National Program success.

The full framework and terms of reference for the review are attached at Appendix A.

The review began in April 2009 with background information gathered on the sport, including Bowls Australia plans, programs, budgets, results and other relevant high performance program information.

On 8 April 2009 an announcement was made about the review to the key stakeholders: the state and territory associations (STAs), Australian Commonwealth Games Association (ACGA), Bowls Australia Board and high performance staff. The next day a similar announcement along with the Terms of Reference and a review Questionnaire (Appendix B) were placed on the Bowls Australia website. It was requested that all STAs also put the information on their websites, with the aim of informing as many stakeholders as possible and inviting input through the questionnaire. The STAs chose not to do so.

The review methodology included collecting questionnaire responses and consultations with key stakeholders (face-to-face where possible), leading to gap analysis and program logic modelling. (A Program Logic summary is attached at Appendix D)

Between 21 April and 2 May 2009, 63 interviews were conducted with 67 stakeholders, plus one group meeting, across every state and territory. Interviewees were nominated and arranged by each of the STAs and confidential interviews were conducted by the ASC's independent reviewer. The majority of interviews were face-to-face, with 14 conducted by phone. In total there were 39 written submissions from the questionnaire process. Ten of these were from people not interviewed. Those interviewed included the Executive Officers from every state except Tasmania, players, coaches, administrators, board members, selectors and other committee members.

A strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis of the current high performance pathway was compiled from stakeholder consultations, questionnaires and information gathered during the review process. This SWOT analysis is at Appendix C and was used in the writing of the report as a background for forming recommendations.

2. Introduction

The origins of lawn bowls have been traced back to the 13th Century and earlier. The game was entrenched in the British Isles from around this time, with the game's historic records starting in the 14th Century. The first recorded game of lawn bowls in Australia was in 1845 in Tasmania.

In Australia bowls currently has almost 250,000 members with estimates of at least double that number again as 'social' or casual bowlers. Indications from surveys such as Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) and Sweeney, are that participation is increasing but membership is decreasing. According to the summer 2008/09 Sweeney report, bowls enjoyed peak interest and membership in 2004, with a decline since that time. According to both Sweeney and Bowls Australia membership statistics, 65% of bowls members are male and approximately 80% are over 50 years of age. There is however a growing trend for younger players (16-29 years) to participate. A 2007 Bowls Australia National Club Survey reported approximately 3000 members who are under 18 years of age.

Bowls Australia estimates that approximately 46,500 athletes form the 'available talent pool' for the high performance pathway – these being the athletes who have the potential to play representative bowls at their district/zone, through to state, national and international level.

The modern history of international level 'high performance' bowls competition centres around the Commonwealth Games, with bowls having been a core sport since 1930. World Championships are relatively recent with the first held in Australia in 1966 and thereafter every four years. It is only since 2008 that men and women's World Championships have been held together, as a result of amalgamation of men's and women's bowls organisations around the world.

Other major international events have commenced even more recently: World Indoor, 1979; World Champion of Champions, 2003; World Cup, 2005. The growing number of international standard events reflects the growing stature, professionalism and international competitiveness in lawn bowls.

Australia has a proud history at the international level having won 32 medals at the Commonwealth Games – third highest behind England and New Zealand, each with 34 medals. At World Championship level Australia is the second most successful nation behind New Zealand with 13 medals to New Zealand's 16. Apart from the British nations and New Zealand there is growing competitiveness in bowls from countries such as Malaysia, South Africa, Canada and Hong Kong. To stay at the forefront on international competition it is essential that the Australian high performance system continue to remain cutting edge, innovative and pursue continuous improvement.

In light of the increasing international competitiveness of lawn bowls and the fact that the ASC is the major funder of the Bowls Australian high performance program (with investment also from the ACGA), in 2003 bowls was selected to be part of the ASC's "High Performance Advisory Panel" (HPAP) process. This review process, completed in December 2003, resulted in a report with recommendations that formed the blue print for the future of the High Performance Program.

The key recommendations and changes to come out of the 2003 HPAP included:

- A nationally driven high performance structure. This has led to the employment of and leadership from a High Performance Manager and National Head Coach.

- The driving of a ‘High Performance Culture’ in bowls, encompassing a culture of excellence and the attitude and understanding of what it takes to be an elite athlete in modern high performance sport. Since 2003 there has been a significant and transformational shift towards a culture of excellence in daily training for elite and aspiring elite athletes in bowls.
- A need for the sport to invest in high performance including accessing resources from the bowls community, clubs, states and members. Recommendations included obtaining ‘buy-in’ and resource support from the clubs, states and members. A small amount of additional funding was obtained from the ASC; Bowls Australia resources have been allocated to achieve high performance outcomes; however to date there has been limited buy-in and subsequent investment by states, clubs and members.
- A competition structure more closely aligned to the format and demands of key international competitions. This led to the establishment of the Grand Prix Series. A club Vs club model was suggested in the report, however the model that was introduced simply involves clubs as hosts of the events.
- A coach development system, including strategies for recruiting, developing and retaining good coaches. The aim of which was to provide quality high performance coaching access to aspiring and elite athletes. This is still in the very early stages of development and the coach pathway was identified as an issue in the 2008 planning and review process.
- The use of sport science and sports medicine to service, support and enhance player development and enable Australian athletes to be ‘cutting edge’. The resulting engagement of sport science staff has given bowls ‘culture changing’ exposure to sport science and medicine as a performance optimisation strategy.
- A more targeted selection process, using relevant competitions (the Grand Prix Series) and selection protocols including results, physical skills, mental skills and team work. This has led to changes in Bowls Australia selection policies and processes, but selection is still not well understood beyond the high performance program and there is room for improvement in transparency and clarity of the selection process at all levels.

The results of Australian teams have improved markedly since the 2003 review, including Australia producing the best performance by any team in the history of the Commonwealth Games at Melbourne in 2006 (5 medals, 3 gold). After the 2008 World Championships, Australia was confirmed as the number one nation in women’s and number two in men’s rankings.

The findings and recommendations that follow take into account:

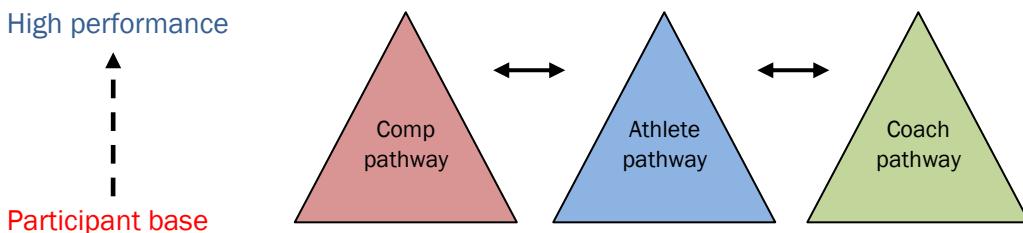
- the direction suggested by the 2003 HPAP report;
- an analysis of what has been achieved since that review;
- as well as findings from the current review process.

3. Findings and recommendations

3.1 The high performance system

3.1.1 Introduction

The high performance system in Australian Bowls is still in the early stages of evolution relative to Australia's higher profile and more mature sports. The major elements of athlete, competition and coach pathways are not yet complete or aligned to each other.



The traditional pathway for athletes to represent Australia is through a hierarchical representative 'Pennant'/'Sides' competition structure. Apart from the competition hierarchy itself, and a network of volunteer selectors at each competition level (club, district, state and national), there is no real coordinated 'athlete development system' about this pathway. Further, the format of Pennant style play is different to that of most international competitions; and the strategy and style of the game is also reportedly quite different at international level as compared to club, regional or even state level. So while this traditional competition structure certainly has a role to play, it is not a complete athlete development pathway in itself.

Since the 2003 HPAP report the national high performance program, including the national squad and team, has become a lot more formalised and focused on optimising athlete development. The recent establishment of the 'Silver Tier' squad has expanded the upper end of the athlete pathway, however below this the pathway is less defined. All states and territories now have junior squads in some form, but there is little consistency and minimal resources for these programs. A few STAs have Under 25 squads and there is a national team for both junior and U25, but the pathway is not yet 'systematic' below the national level.

There has also been expansion of the competition pathway, with the introduction of the Grand Prix Series which is conducted using a competition format more akin to that used in major international competitions such as the Commonwealth Games. The Grand Prix Series provides another opportunity for aspiring national level athletes to be identified and become part of the high performance program.

The strength, history and emotional attachment for the majority of bowlers to the traditional Pennant style of competition, means it will probably always have a strong role to play in the development of high performance bowlers. However the challenge for the future is how to retain this valuable competition and all it means within bowls, while at the same time achieving the objectives of the high performance program (medals at Commonwealth and World level). The Grand Prix system obviously attempts to do this, but there is not yet national consensus on the best way to develop athletes in parallel with appropriate competition experiences.

The coach pathway is the least developed of all three elements. The history and culture of bowls is that coaches generally teach the basic skills to new players. There is very little understanding or culture of high performance coaching. Certainly there is no alignment of coach and athlete pathways as the majority of athletes are not coached as they develop, nor are they coached within the competition context. This is changing somewhat with the introduction of junior squads and coaches attached to many of these. The coaches are also beginning to appreciate the tactical, physical and psychological side of coaching in addition to the technical. A new National Coach Accreditation Scheme for coaches is imminent for bowls, and while there have been challenges finalising this, it is anticipated that it will improve the knowledge, competence and credibility of coaches within bowls.

In summary there is still significant work ahead for Bowls to develop a complete high performance system, with aligned athlete, coach and competition pathways from junior/entry level right through to Australian representation. There have been significant steps taken since the 2003 HPAP report and Bowls Australia, along with the STAs are headed in the right direction. Additionally there are some very passionate people involved. What is needed for the future is the leadership from Bowls Australia to bring the sport together, with the buy-in, commitment and broader ownership by the STAs in defining, articulating and implementing a truly national high performance system.

[Note: Bowls WA have recently articulated their version of the system in their new High Performance Plan, which depicts the current and planned elements of the system at both national and state level (see Appendix E)].

3.1.2 Leadership and direction

“Leadership is the ability to **mobilise others to deliver results that create value.**”¹

Good leadership is the key to any good organisation, system or program. The 2003 Bowls HPAP report called for a “...nationally driven and directed HP program that integrates BA, States and Club resources.” While good operational leadership has been put in place, resulting in good outcomes driven by quality plans, programs and the setting of clear standards and benchmarks for the national high performance program, the national leadership, engagement and integration of states and clubs has not yet been achieved.

Since 2003 Bowls Australia have employed a High Performance Manager to lead the planning, processes and operation of the high performance program, as well as a full-time National Head Coach and a part-time National Assistant Coach to lead the technical direction of High Performance and work with the athletes on optimising their potential. The current high performance team also includes a High Performance Coordinator.

There has generally been good progress in the strategy, structure, planning, policies and processes for the national high performance program including (but not limited to):

- Setting expectations for a firm and definite culture of excellence in physical, technical and mental preparation;
- Setting benchmarks and minimum standards for the above;
- Establishing the parameters of the program including ethos, commitment required, player manual, code of conduct;

¹ RogenSi 2009 <http://www.rogensi.com/>

- Revised national selection processes and policies;
- Planning and preparation for international competitions;
- The establishment of the Grand Prix Series, with continual fine-tuning to meet the needs of athletes, host clubs, states and TV;
- Development of Draft Camps and a Silver Tier squad with a view to providing a pathway and further opportunities for those athletes trying to bridge the gap between state representation and the national squad/team;
- A culture of coaching for national squad members and teams which has in turn, permeated to a growing acceptance of high performance coaching around the states, especially at junior level.
- Preliminary identification of coaches with the potential to support the high performance program nationally;
- Establishment of sport science involvement.

While there are a lot of things working well at the national program level, with the progress widely acknowledged, any strategies, structures and systems at national level are largely isolated from the states. There is a significant disconnect leading to frustration from both sides. Bowls Australia are frustrated that the STAs are not interested and/or investing enough into state high performance programs to support the national pathway. And the STAs feel they get little opportunity to contribute to the system. They have minimal input, receive insufficient information and the communication received is perceived to be mostly ‘telling’ them what to do, rather than engaging them and valuing their ideas and the efforts they are making. In short there is a lack of communication, consensus and mutual respect. Neither are blameless in this situation and it is essential that both Bowls Australia and the STAs take responsibility together for building a high performance system to ensure sustainable international success.

The benefit of gaining widespread buy-in and engagement of stakeholders in the vision and direction is substantial. A recent study by consulting group Hewitt Associates² found that for businesses to achieve double digit returns they needed at least 75% ‘employee engagement’ levels. If people feel part of something and that they have ownership of it, they are much more likely to work hard to achieve the desired outcomes.

There is clearly a need for Bowls Australia’s High Performance Program to lead, connect with and engage the relevant stakeholders within the sport that contribute to the high performance pathway and system as a whole. This starts with the STAs, but also includes clubs and athletes, as well as any other partners that may potentially contribute to successful outcomes. A number of the recommendations within this report will centre around building engagement, buy-in, consensus and alignment between stakeholders.

The key elements of program leadership required to achieve optimal outcomes are³:

- **Leadership style** = Communication + Behaviour
- **Infrastructure** = Strategy, structure, plans + competencies measurement + policies and processes.

Both leadership and infrastructure are essential and together create the cultural expectations that influence thinking and behaviour, that in turn impact on individual performances, leading to optimal outcomes.

² www.hewittassociates.com

³ RogenSi

The high performance team has spent much of the last five years attending to the infrastructure and less time on leadership style. This is largely understandable as the 2003 report was principally focused on the operational aspects of setting up a quality high performance program. This has been achieved, with a considerable culture/attitude change towards high performance, by a completely new high performance team, with limited resources, essentially from scratch. The focus has been inward and on operational aspects within the program rather than pure leadership of the system.

The exceptional performances of the athletes in a sport have the power to create a sense of pride and to bring the sport together. This has not yet been capitalised upon in bowls by either Bowls Australia or the STAs. In fact the rapid changes that the high performance culture has brought to the sport, has led to some division as is often the case when long established norms are challenged. In order to achieve the significant change the high performance team has necessarily taken the hard line, resulting in a feeling that changes have been imposed and even dictated. The consequence of this is that there not a sense of leading a clear vision for the sport and bringing people along as a positive and engaged part of that vision.

The Bowls Australia high performance team has established a program infrastructure that is producing results at the highest level but in order to continue to produce returns on this early investment, it must now lead to engage the buy-in, resources and support of the broader bowls community. Leadership that can **mobilise others** will result in a more complete and aligned system, better use of available resources to support that system, and ultimately the delivery of **results** that **create value for the sport as a whole**.

Recommendation 1 - leadership

Bowls Australia lead, in partnership with the STAs, a process of national buy-in and engagement to review and articulate the strategy, structure and objectives of achieving a truly national high performance system.

Operational points:

- Review the high performance strategy to ensure it is not only national program focused (internal) but also focused on developing a system of high performance development, improvement and opportunities around the country (external).
- Ensure the structure of the high performance team will support the national system strategy. This will include ensuring the roles, responsibilities and skill sets of the people are clearly defined and enable the leadership required.
- Regularly engage key stakeholders (STAs, coaches, athletes and even clubs) to have input into the vision, aims and objectives of a collective national high performance system.
- Create clear, and if possible measurable, objectives towards achieving a national high performance system to which STAs, as well as the relevant clubs and athletes are engaged in and will contribute positively to.
- Focus on finding ways to connect:
 - Bowls Australia high performance program ↔ STAs ↔ Clubs;
 - Bowls Australia high performance program ↔ athletes;
 - Athletes ↔ broader bowls community.

3.1.3 Culture

The 2003 HPAP report identified that, compared to most other sports, bowls did not have an ‘elite culture’ and there was a need to create a working understanding of a ‘high performance environment’ and what is needed to optimise performance. The report was quite specific in demanding change to a holistic culture of excellence, with ‘bowlers’ becoming ‘athletes’ and it being an “opt in or opt out” proposition.

Since the 2003 report the culture change in the Bowls Australia High Performance program has been considerable but not without significant difficulty and pushback with regards the implementation, application and understanding of the change.

Culture can be defined as the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an organisation or group.

The previous culture was very social in nature and ‘elite’ bowlers were essentially undiscernible from more social bowlers in their attitudes and behaviours. They honed their game without real national direction or support and bowls performance was purely about ‘on the green competition’, largely in isolation from everything else in their lives (including lifestyle, fitness, etc). There was little if any ‘daily training environment’⁴. The new culture is centred on athletes working within a supported team environment, with a more focused and committed approach to performance. It includes attention to additional extras that add to performance such as fitness, strength, skill work, good nutrition and overall holistic preparation and excellence.

Without exception everyone interviewed as part of this review was supportive of the direction of the high performance program and the new culture of excellence. There were however two areas of noteworthy criticism of the new culture:

- The specifics of application of the required standards and the perceived lack of flexibility and understanding of the needs of each individual within the national squad program;
- The lack of access to the high performance program information and the ‘cultural’ values, standards, goals and practices for those outside of it. (This second issue will be addressed in section 3.1.4)

Certainly the key to an optimal high performance program, particularly when the program must cater for a ‘team of individuals’, is mastering the paradox of flexibility and consistency - How to achieve consistent, fair and firm program parameters and standards, while allowing the flexibility to cater for the needs of each individual. This is the challenge for the high performance leadership and the evolution for the future.

The perception of those both within the program and knowledgeable observers external to it, is that in working hard to push a very definite culture change involving high personal standards, the focus has become about the details, goals and the ‘practices’, losing sight at times of the bigger picture of shared attitudes and values – and what the practices themselves actually achieve. There is no doubt that the high performance team took a hard line on what the expected standards were because the ‘high performance culture’, and many of the auxiliary factors introduced, were so much of a change from the old culture. However, most people feel that the fitness, strength and skills testing have

⁴ ‘Daily training environment’ is an all-encompassing term that includes: provision of facilities; coaching; training sessions (group and individual); program planning and structure; and the supply and coordination of quality sports science and sports medicine (SSSM) and athlete career education services.

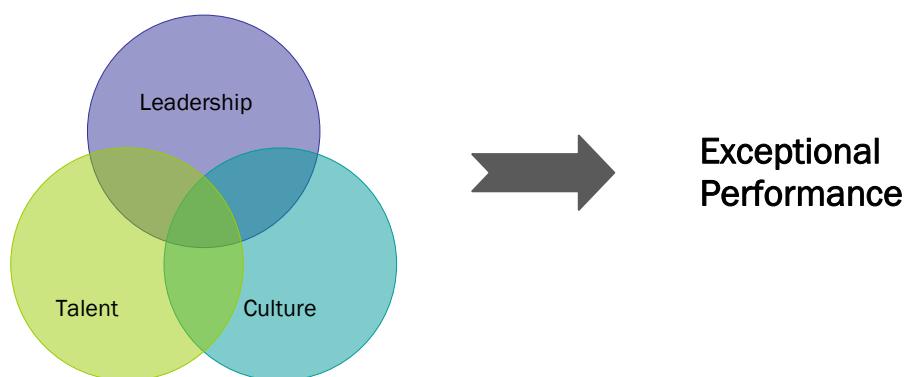
become the highest priority of the high performance team rather than the ‘icing on the cake’ of optimising performance.

Further there is a perception that the new requirements are one-size-fits-all and resulting in a homogeneous group of bowlers in the Australian squad. Part of the appeal of bowls, and certainly a crucial link between the elite and the everyday bowler, is that bowls is one of the few sports in which people of all shapes, sizes, ages and backgrounds can and do achieve at the highest level. This should be embraced and promoted, not minimised.

The subtle difference is in the focus on outcome (attitudes and values) rather than purely on the details of the practices. This does not mean doing away with the established standards, but rather having the flexibility to change the specifics for certain individuals, with *the focus on ensuring the objectives of the exercise are still met* (e.g. a set number of drills may not be appropriate for an athlete in Sydney who is playing a lot and also working etc, but there may be other ways to work with them to achieve the desired outcome of improving their skill).

The desired culture is one of continuous improvement – finding ways to put Australian bowlers ahead of the game by attending to every possible factor that could influence their performance. There is a need to step back and refocus on the big picture of the vision, aims and objectives of the high performance program, what culture is needed to achieve these, and how to apply this to give all athletes with potential their best possible chance of optimal performance.

Exceptional performance is the intersection of exceptional leadership, culture and talent:



The culture should influence the way people think, behave, develop and apply their skills. It should be a positive environment providing opportunities for optimal performance for both the individuals and the team as a whole. The culture should ultimately engender a feeling of pride in the Australian team by all members of the bowls community.

Recommendation 2 - culture

The high performance culture is redefined to focus on the desired goals, values, attitudes and practices necessary to achieve the national system outcomes of continuous improvement and excellence for each individual and the team as a whole.

3.1.4 Communication

It was clear throughout the review process that the broader bowls community was still coming to terms with the meaning of ‘high performance’. Many don’t understand it and don’t relate to the new high performance program culture and practices (some maybe never will). There is however a emerging group of athletes and coaches outside of the national program (in states, regions and clubs) expressing a strong desire to learn more about the culture of excellence and the fitness, strength, skills and drills of the high performance program. Indeed these elements are what most people identify as ‘high performance’ in bowls. There are a growing number, at all levels, who have an awareness of these fundamentals and would like to be shown the pathway and be given the opportunity to improve themselves and their game.

There is still a majority of the bowls membership who simply do not understand what the high performance program is all about. Their lack of understanding and resulting lack of buy-in is a negative for the high performance system and arguably for the development of the sport as a whole. When the governance and decision making processes within the sport are tied to a hierarchy of committees and long time volunteer administrators, if the bulk of the membership has no understanding or affinity with high performance, then it will continue to be very difficult to obtain commitment and investment in the high performance system by any organisation apart from the national body. Both this lack of understanding and the existence of multiple layers of governance were repeatedly identified as a major impediment to the development of the high performance programs, severely hampering decision making processes at both national and STA level.

There are obvious advantages in endeavouring to better communicate and publicise the high performance program and pathways and what it involves, however attaining penetration in communicating this message was identified as a major issue at both national and state level.

The ground swell of interest and recognition has begun and it must be capitalised on so that a wider appreciation and acceptance of high performance can be achieved. Those interested coaches and athletes should be identified, targeted, included and encouraged to realise their potential and so they then become ‘champions’ of the high performance philosophies and direction. Bowls is a sport with strong social roots. These should be capitalised upon, with the high performance story communicated by personal touch – by the coaches and the athletes themselves. The high performance story should include publicising the journey of the best athletes so people gain insight and understanding of the people, who they are, and what it takes to excel. Currently there exists some degree of resentment and misunderstanding. There is a need to reach out, connect and gain appreciation and acceptance for ‘high performance’.

Part of this communication strategy also links to stakeholder engagement. It is time for the Bowls Australia High Performance program to look outwards, rather than always inwards primarily focusing on operation and function of the national squad. It is time to consult, share and guide rather than tell, protect and expect. Information gained through the interview process suggests that this is true for the athletes in the national squad as well as for the STAs and the boarder bowls community.

Recommendation 3 - communication

Bowls Australia and the STAs collaborate on the development of a communication strategy to promote the high performance program and pathways to the wider bowls community.

Operational points:

Suggested initiatives for a communication strategy included:

- Use of internet, magazines, newsletters, camps and word of mouth;
- Communicate what high performance means, the specifics of the program and pathways so that everyone is shown the pathway to improvement;
- Identify those individual athletes, coaches, clubs etc who are interested and provide them with information and encouragement so they become ‘champions’ of high performance;
- Be inclusive with information and opportunities;
- Tell the story of the top athletes and enable people to identify and appreciate them and their journey;
- Ensure that the high performance leadership (High Performance Manager and/or national coaches), as well as the national squad athletes, are visible, approachable and ambassadors for the program;
- Ensure open and regular communication on high performance initiatives and progress between Bowls Australia and the STA’s Board and management.
- Cultivate a philosophy of consultation and face to face information gathering and sharing, finding opportunities to bring stakeholders together to share ideas.

3.2 Athlete development

3.2.1 National high performance program

Bowls in Australia is fortunate to currently have a relatively large pool of talented athletes and enjoy a dominant position in world bowls (with reportedly around 40% of the worldwide bowls population). Other nations however are increasing their investment and the sophistication of their high performance programs. As with all sports, international results are increasingly sought after because of the public and private funding and kudos they generate.

There has been much progress since the 2003 HPAP report and as mentioned above, the evidence of this progress has been born in the results. All those interviewed with a direct link to the national high performance program reported that the various program activities had resulted in an improvement in athlete performances and professionalism. In particular the peripheral extras such as attention to fitness, strength, nutrition and mental skills had enhanced on green bowling performances.

There were however several issues relating to national program and squad involvement that became prominent throughout the consultation process:

- The demands Vs the rewards of being in the national squad, including the issue of remuneration and athletes' ability to make a living;
- The perception of a one-size-fits-all model;
- Planning, communication and consultation with athletes;
- Consistency in application of rules and policies.

While there is some ability to make money from playing bowls (domestic and international tournaments; club contracts; and bowls industry employment) there are very few who can make a full time living from the game. For those living outside the financially strong bowls club areas of greater Sydney and Brisbane/Gold Coast it is virtually impossible to make bowls a full-time career. The sport is best described as 'semi-professional' for the top athletes and most if not all have to derive an income from employment within (a bowls club) or outside of the sport.

Bowls is quite unique in that athletes can arguably make more money playing outside of the national team environment than within it. Unlike in other professional and semi-profession sports where the money is made as part of the pathway (and as a result of) highest level of achievement, elite bowlers can effectively choose between the money or the medals. It is therefore important that the medals are highly valued and seen as something to aspire to and worth the effort.

There is also somewhat of a culture of 'haves and have nots' including a largely unrealistic comparison with 'other sports' and an expectation that athletes should be paid to play at the highest level. In reality bowls sits somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of all sports, with very good opportunities to be remunerated compared to many of the Olympic and Commonwealth Games sports, but under-remunerated compared to the big 'professional' sports (the four football codes, cricket, golf, tennis, etc).

Additionally there is a lack of appreciation of the limited resources of the Bowls Australia high performance program, with athletes desiring better remuneration from the program. There is even some resentment that "all the staff get paid well and we get nothing". This

stems from a lack of understanding, transparency and even buy-in regarding how the high performance program operates.

While the Bowls Australia high performance program has necessarily demanded commitment and dedication to representing and achieving excellence for Australia, there is a strong sense that there is not enough consideration or support given to each athlete and their individual work, financial and/or family situation.

Despite this, the majority of the best athletes still see representing Australia and the opportunity to win medals at the Commonwealth Games as the pinnacle of the sport. Ultimately most athletes are willing to forego other opportunities and dedicate to the national program for Australian representation, but they desire some acknowledgement of this fact. (In reality success at Commonwealth Games and World Championships is the best pathway to other more lucrative opportunities within the sport)

At the end of the day the real issue seems to be that athletes simply need to feel valued and valuable within the national squad. During the review there was feedback that sometimes individual needs are not considered and the high performance program is planned and designed purely around the desired result/outcome, with insufficient regard for the cost to and needs of each individual. It was argued that there should be a balance between national squad commitments and the home training environment, with many feeling that there are more camps than necessary and not enough thought or support given to what athletes can gain in their home daily training environment.

As already stated, it is understandable that since the 2003 report, Bowls Australia has taken the hard line in implementing culture change and asking for a much higher level of commitment and dedication to a part-time centralised program and indeed this is imperative for success. In order to take the program to an even high level, now is the time to begin case managing the athletes and work with them to construct a complimentary daily training environment that takes into consideration their broader life situation. If they are able to achieve this, the Bowls Australia high performance program will enjoy a higher level of athlete satisfaction and commitment and will also likely gain access to greater support and even resources (human and other) from the clubs, sponsors and employers who support the athletes.

By setting up a culture of partnership and continuous improvement, the high performance team can also open the door to improved input by and communication with the athletes. An enhanced environment of mutual respect, trust and openness will also help to alleviate the reported confusion and perceived lack of consistency over the application of some expectations, rules and policies.

There is some concern that the national coaches don't currently seem to have much contact with national squad athletes outside of organised squad activities. The National Head Coach in particular has multiple roles in addition to his full-time head coach role, which is limiting his ability to be fully committed to national squad athletes. This will need to change for a case managed approach to occur.

Bowls is a sport with great diversity in age, experience, background and personality of the athletes (at all levels). If the Bowls Australia high performance team can develop the leadership skills necessary to embrace this and empower each individual in the national squad by case management and a partnership towards continuous improvement, there are immeasurable benefits to be gained by all.

Recommendation 4 – case management

A system of case management be implemented for all national squad athletes, including working with athletes to develop individual plans and optimise daily training environment as well as work/study/home life factors.

Operational points:

- Case management should include individual athlete plans, where national coaches plan together with athletes (and their home coach) and identify goals, targets (skills, drills, fitness, game strategies etc), areas of concern, support needs of the athletes and how to make the most of the daily training environment for each athlete.
- There may be a need to review the workload and/or time management of the national coaches (and in particular the National Head Coach) as they don't seem to be able to put the time into athletes (or the broader system) that would be expected, outside of organised national squad events.
- Work with STAs to come to agreement/understanding regarding the development of each athlete (e.g. selection and playing positions in various teams; facilitation of athlete relocation for coaching, competition, employment or club support).
- The high performance team should also endeavour to form relationships and communicate with employers, clubs (where athletes are employed and/or have formal commitments) sponsors etc, to ensure the best possible outcomes, mutual benefits and understanding for all parties.

Recommendation 5 – open and transparent environment

The high performance team develop an open and transparent environment with regards planning, policies and expectations, working with athletes to ensure the right balance between consistency and flexibility for both individuals and the team as a whole.

Operational points:

- The high performance team consult with athletes and plan well in advance for all camps, competitions and other preparation activities to ensure best use of resources and benefit for the program.
- Include communication with STAs and relevant other high performance program partners in consultation and communication of plans, policies and expectations.
- As part of case management and a broader open and transparent performance management system for high performance team athletes and staff, consider the use of 360° assessment/feedback tools annually. This will give all parties the opportunity for continuous improvement and will enhance mutual trust and respect.

3.2.2 Silver Tier

The recent introduction of the Silver Tier squad below the national squad has been well received, but it is acknowledged that it is still in the early stages of implementation and

there is further work to do to support these athletes. It was reported that most have had minimal contact with the national coaches since their selection, with two emails being the typically mentioned quantum. The Silver Tier athletes have received information on skills, drills and fitness standards but little else in the way of direction or guidance so far.

Both Bowls Australia and the broader high performance community see this squad as recognition and encouragement for the next level of athletes below the national squad. Additional opportunities that can be provided through the evolution of this squad include:

- Link the second tier national squad with the STA programs;
- Expose this group (and their coaches) to the high performance culture;
- Expose this group to national coaches and athletes to further their development;
- Give individual attention to these athletes and case manage them to enhance their daily training environment;
- Put upwards pressure on the national squad athletes to maintain the highest standards.

Given the number of athletes in the national squad (20) and a similar number in the Silver Tier (currently 22) and the number of high performance team staff, it should be possible for some case management of the Silver Tier athletes. Of course they should not receive the same level of attention from the national coaches, but with a growing number of competent coaches around the country, certainly there should be the scope for the national coaches and High Performance Manager to facilitate and guide support for these athletes in their home environment.

A part of the Silver Tier squad concept is the national ‘Draft Camps’ held in each state/territory in order to identify Silver Tier athletes. Generally these camps were considered to be very positive with most stakeholders seeing the camps as a great way to provide incentive to athletes, bring them together, give them exposure to the national coaches and culture of the national program and give local coaches exposure to the national coaches and program. National level interest in local talent was seen as a major boost for both athletes and coaches. Most STA’s saw the Draft Camps as an opportunity to bring the high performance culture into their states and use them as leverage and impetus to boost their own high performance programs and squads.

The only negative feedback on the Draft Camps were the name of the concept (too like AFL); and the perception that having a draft camp implies that the states cannot identify athletes with national potential themselves. Despite this most felt that the Draft Camps should be as inclusive as possible rather than simply for an exclusive ‘selected’ group of athletes (and coaches).

Recommendation 6 – Draft Camps and Silver Tier

Continue and expand the Draft Camp and Silver Tier concepts, using them to link with STA programs, expose athletes and coaches to the national coaches, culture and program, and guide the development of selected Silver Tier athletes.

- c) Aim for one Draft Camp per year per STA (or a workable compromise to combine and alternate smaller states).
- d) Develop an enhanced program with agreed levels of support and input between Bowls Australia and STAs for each Silver Tier athlete.

3.2.3 State programs, junior and under 25 development

Most stakeholders interviewed agreed that operating junior and Under 25 (U25) programs should be the responsibility of the STA's. There was also consensus that the national high performance program should be providing direction and support for the development of these programs. The current perception is that Bowls Australia has little or no interest in assisting STAs to develop Junior programs, beyond their funding of the National Championships. While the relative roles and responsibilities seem generally understood, the formal articulation and commitment, within the context of a national system, is not yet solidified (Recommendation 1).

Most state level stakeholders do not feel they have a strong link with Bowls Australia's high performance programs. This is partly because it appears that although information and communication from Bowls Australia goes to the STA Executive Officers (who all purport good relationships with Bowls Australia), the communication chain breaks down soon thereafter. This needs to be acknowledged in developing a communication strategy (Recommendation 3).

Every STA now has some form of junior program as well as their senior state squads. Each state varies in terms of the structure, resourcing, coaching and opportunities for juniors, but at least the beginnings are in place. Very few states have coaches in place for all squads and only one (South Australia) has a dedicated high performance leader.

There is scant support for the U25 age group as most states struggle to form squads due to insufficient numbers in this age group (especially in the women). There needs to be a 'step up' in order to keep U25s interested in the sport. In the absence of a significant aspirational competition (international) for the U25 group, it is hard to see any momentum building for support of this age group.

Development programs for women are also an issue and vary significantly from state to state. Women make up approximately one third of the total membership of Bowls Australia and this is mirrored in the STA's. Traditionally women have played bowls separately from the men and generally compete mid-week, while the men compete on a Saturday. In some states this is changing and there is either women's competition with the men on Saturday or they have their own Saturday competition. Anecdotally the women have been slow to change their traditions, especially in the face of the changes already associated with amalgamation, and the traditional structures make it harder and less inviting for young women to break into the game.

A brief summary of each state and their squad structure follows:

Tasmania:

- Three separate regions.
- U18, U25 (men only) and Snr squads, all exists but don't get together often.
- All have Coaches/Managers, but no high performance leader/ head coach
- Limited staff: 3 day/week Executive Officer. A Silver Tier athlete is the part-time Development Officer.
- Since unification opportunities for women have improved – more competitions; Some weekend mixed events. Squads combine men and women.

Australian Capital Territory

- U18 and Senior squads (40M & 40F). Coaches for squads
- Analysis: 75% loss after U18! "Funnel gets small very quickly".

- ACT taps into NSW structure – and regional academies.
- No formal schools program, but ACT Bowls schools championships exists.
- Restricted opportunities for all but older women.

Victoria

- Not yet unified men's and women's organisations.
- Women's State squad practice 1day/month. None for men.
- Mixed pennants on Saturday.
- 32 in Women's Senior squad – going back to 24. Only two are U30.
- 24 Junior squads across the state (each with coach) Males and Females → State Junior Squads (Needs another layer as 900 junior boys into junior team of 16).
- No U25 – not enough women. Men U25 is development squad.
- Coaches for women. No state coach for men.

New South Wales

- Not yet unified men's and women's organisations.
- Men's districts → zones, different to women's districts → groups.
- Women's comp separate from men. Main comp still during the week.
- NSWIS program + regional academies. NSWIS 24 athletes. Good tiered structure.
- 20 in each state senior squad.
- Jnrs 24 W, 32 M, then select 12 M & W. 3-4 squad weekends/year. Men have Jnr coach. None for women. More comps for the men than women (extra W's camp).

Queensland

- Senior men's and women's squads.
- No U18 or U25 squads – just teams (5&5; 8&8).
- State Development Officer/ High Performance Manager is coach of all squads and teams!
- Using similar Jnr structure to Vic, but not as organised/structured.

Western Australia

- Good Jnr program, but no U25. Pathway is Jnr → Open → Over 60
- State squads 24 & 24 (senior); Jnrs 8 women and 12 men.
- Have application and trials process for state squads.
- Very talented group of U18 women, but nowhere to go after U18 – ladies pennants is mid-week, have women's Saturday Pennant but not as strong.
- Coaches in place for all open and U18 squads (developing coaches).
- HP Plan recently developed – comprehensive.

South Australia

- Started High Performance program 4-5 years ago. State HPM in place.
- Junior and 'Foundation' (1&2) squads, male and female.
- Snr squad = 16. Foundation = 25 (13M&12W). Can be in multiple squads.
- Not many juniors but working on it through Development Officer and schools.
- Identifying and developing coaches for squads.
- 2009 first year women can play Saturday with men and vice versa.

Northern Territory

- Small state and playing membership. Easy to identify talent.
- Easier for men and women together in competitions and in squads.
- Part-time Executive Officer is former national team member and is also coach/manager of state squads.

One of the biggest challenges for the STA development programs is getting their members to commit to ‘high performance’ resourcing. The governance and decision making process is such that the multiple layers of boards and committees are usually long time bowlers who don’t see the need, understand and/or relate to the new high performance concept. They see it as something the national body does and that is far removed from them. They are reluctant therefore to commit the majority members’ membership fees to a program perceived to only be of benefit to very few. Further, because of the quite complex and hierarchical voting structure and in many cases very large board/committees, the decision making process is very difficult and at best slow. Support for high performance essentially depends on the President of a STA. This is also true of support for high performance and the inclusion of younger members at Club level.

Governance is slowly changing, with some STAs seeing the need and making changes more quickly than others. As in all sports, it is important that the governance structure supports management and enables optimal delivery of the sport and programs to both:

- maximise talent and high performance results;
- and optimise the experience for all participants in the sport (including members, casual bowlers, administrators, coaches, officials, etc).

However, in a sport with such strong and worthwhile traditions, and such long serving members who provide the essential volunteer services that keep the sport running, change in governance structures will not be easy and must be handled carefully.

Apart from the governance structure and processes impeding the commitment of resources to STA development programs, there is a belief by some that there is a lack of innovative strategic thinking and decision making around developing interesting and varied playing formats to cater for changes in society and leisure patterns. This in turn is hampering the attraction and retention of younger players.

Ultimately improvement of the high performance pathways through STA level development programs for men and women, come back to leadership, communication and a consultative approach from Bowls Australia. As outlined above, this will lead to enhanced understanding and buy-in of members to the high performance program. Bowls Australia now needs to turn the difficult change process of the last five years into a positive and a benefit for the broader bowls community. As stated in the 2003 report, Bowls needs a ‘sell campaign’ for the high performance program.

It is acknowledged that communicating the high performance story and especially changing the governance structures, will take time and are medium term strategies. In the short term however, Bowls Australia must engage those who are already interested and involved in high performance, grow the ground swell and bring all for the journey all interested athletes, coaches, officials, selectors, clubs and STAs.

Recommendation 7 – national forum for STA development programs

Bowls Australia bring the relevant people together from each STA annually for a national development workshop to define roles and responsibilities, share and model best

practice, as well as gaining commitment and buy-in for state junior, U25 and senior squads with appropriate coaching and high performance leadership positions in place.

Recommendation 8 – improved governance processes

Bowls Australia lead, with the assistance of the ASC and State Departments of Sport and Recreation, the exploration of opportunities to bring about governance change, education and modernisation in the State and Territory Associations.

Recommendation 9 –world event for under 25

Bowls Australia put a proposal to the World Bowls body for a World Championship event for the Under 25 age group (or similar) to enhance the pathway for younger bowlers.

(N.B. Lobbying other countries for support will also be an important part of this).

3.2.4 National player development framework

At the national level there are clear targets set by the national coaches for the national squad. As already outlined there would be benefit in tailoring these more in line with the cultural expectations of optimising the performance of the individual and team.

It is at the level below national squad athletes that the direction, monitoring, targets and benchmarks are not so clear, especially when in the majority of states no dedicated high performance coach or leader exists. Identification of athletes at both state and national level occurs largely at major competitions and is at the discretion of the selectors. Certainly the best way to identify talent and relevant desirable player attributes for any sport, is by an experienced coach or knowledgeable selector, within the competition context. When it comes to developing talent, however, direction in the form of a skills curriculum and some measurable targets or benchmarks is a valuable asset for coaches at local and state level.

A form of this does already exist for bowls through the national program, but as outlined in section 3.1.4, there is a demand for such information to be disseminated widely to athletes and coaches outside of the national squad. It is important however that this information be relevant to each level of athlete and coach in the pathway.

While this is not an urgent priority for bowls, in the longer term a nationally driven, coordinated approach to developing a comprehensive player attributes model with a skill and competency curriculum and testing protocols to support this, would give guidance to aspiring athletes and coaches from local and regional level through to the national squad level. Several other sports such as golf, tennis and football (soccer) have recently developed similar National Player Development Frameworks. These and other sports have national core competencies and related skills tests (for example, 10–12 easily administered tests, in matrix form with levels of achievement set for athletes to progress through as they develop). This national framework would then align with coach education through the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme process.

A well designed national athlete development framework will inform and help finalise a mature national system with competition, coach (and officials) pathways that compliment and support the athlete development pathway from entry level to elite performer.

Recommendation 10 – national player development framework

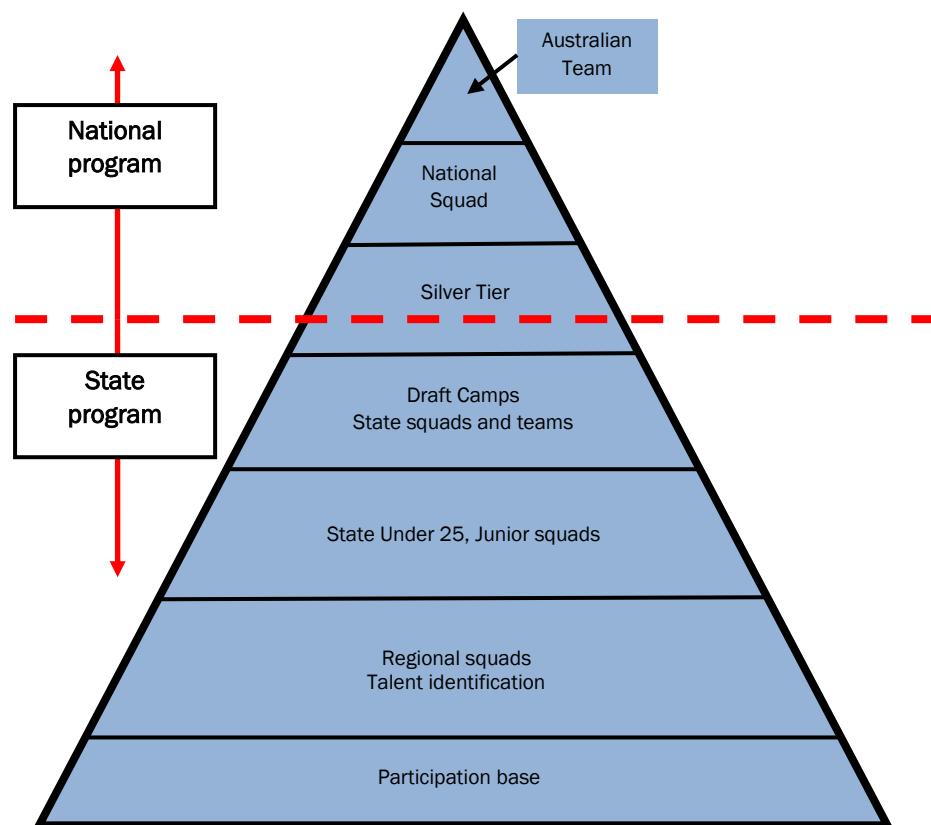
In the longer term, expand the fitness standards and skills testing protocol into a nationally driven and coordinated player development framework that is relevant and applicable to athletes at all stages of the bowls high performance pathway.

Operational points:

- Consider a national workshop to share existing resources and knowledge and gain consensus for the key elements of player development and how to make the framework relevant and user-friendly for the sport.
- A national player attribute model should define the attributes (physical, technical, tactical and psychological) required for an international quality player.
- A skill and competency curriculum should outline the progression of skills and competencies required to achieve the desired national player attributes.
- Testing protocols should support the stepped progression and provide targets for coaches and athletes to enable development.
- The National Player Development Framework should then tie into education and development of coaches and selectors.

Summary of the athlete development pathway

The evolving athlete development pathway for bowls can be summarised as follows:



3.3 Coach development

The 2003 HPAP report contained 4 recommendations specific to coaching:

1. The targeting of ex-athletes as forward thinking impactful coaches.
2. The development of a coaching system, hierarchy and pathway.
3. Standardisation of state and regional coach requirements and selection, with the National Head Coach to coach the coaches and set national technical direction.
4. Investigate the use of the AIS as a resource, support and mentoring for head and senior coaches.

The progress on each of these areas has been slow and as already mentioned there is very little culture of high performance coaching in bowls, with coaching traditionally being for the introductory bowler. There is reportedly a wide spread view in bowls that “once you can beat the coach, they can no longer teach you anything”. Once a player moves beyond the introductory level, they are traditionally mentored by the senior person (usually the skip) in their team. There is very little understanding of the high performance coaching concept of guiding and facilitating learning through game analysis.

Interestingly several of the very best athletes interviewed as part of this review reported having a coach and that this person was someone who had known them for a long time, mentored and guided their progress and knew their game well enough to still provide feedback or bounce ideas off. They essentially described a mature high performance coach-athlete relationship akin to that seen in other sports (golf, tennis, etc). There is also a growing culture among athletes in junior programs that they should have a coach and as is often the case, the best place for culture change is with the juniors.

Nonetheless there are reportedly very few coaches with a good high performance understanding (a handful in each state at most), with little development or encouragement occurring through the STAs. Many coaches are working in isolation however there are a few states/areas where those with an interest in high performance are getting together, sharing ideas and mentoring each other. These include some well regarded established coaches and some promising emerging coaches.

No systematic targeting of ex-athletes as coaches has been implemented as yet, although the two national coaches are former elite bowlers. Targeting ex-athletes is certainly seen as a good idea, but there is not yet the structure, pathway or development system in place to support them at national or state level. The culture of bowls is such that former high level athletes are regarded as most likely to gain respect as high performance coaches.

Over the last couple of years Bowls Australia has been working hard on implementing a new National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) for coaches. Although there have been some challenges and delays getting this off the ground because of concerns from the members surrounding various aspects of the system, roll out now seems imminent. The new system will however start with the lower levels of coaching accreditation and the top “high performance coach” level will take some time.

The skill requirements of high performance coaches are not yet defined, but there may be an opportunity to tie this in with high performance coach development. If facilitated and supported properly the development of the emerging high performance coaches around the country could inform knowledge of the requirements of high performance coaches in bowls and be used to develop and educate future coaches.

The third recommendation from the 2003 report (above) does not appear to have seen much progress. Only about half the state squads have coaches and only one state (South Australia) has a designated state high performance coach/manager. Another state (Queensland) has a development officer who is also filling this role, with a third (Northern Territory) who has a part-time Executive Officer with strong high performance experience, but only a very small program. There has certainly been no standardisation of requirements for coaches at state or regional level and indeed there is still not buy-in, consensus or commitment by the STAs to have these coaching positions in place.

There is no evidence of the national coaches coaching the coaches or setting technical direction (outside of an invitation to one national camp and access for selected coaches to the Draft Camps).

Possibly the most progress has been made on the fourth recommendation from the 2003 report. The ASC supports the national coaches (and the High Performance Manager) through their Elite Coach Development Program and they are part of the network of high performance coaches and leaders supported by ASC programs. Additionally applications have recently been successful to gain ASC Coach Development Program support for two other emerging coaches in the system.

A further issue relating to coaching is that of remuneration which affects both the motivation of talented coaches to pursue a career in coaching, and the ability of a sport to provide a pathway. There is some precedent in bowls for paid club coaches and also private coaches charging for individual lessons. Most of the paid club coaches are also high standard athletes who are essentially paid to play for the club, sometimes merely under the guise of club coach. It is important to encourage coaches to charge for their experience and expertise as this raises the expectation of the client, which raises the standard of the coach (to deliver a quality service), which then raises the profile and perception of coaching as a profession and also creates a viable career for good coaches.

Recommendation 11 – coach network

Bowls Australia and the STAs work in partnership to form an inclusive network of coaches who work with or are interested in high performance. The group should be led by the national coaches and high performance manager and provide:

- sharing of ideas and experience through formal and informal networking;
- opportunities to be involved in national and Draft camps, gaining hands on experience alongside national coaches;
- a high performance coach network with commitment to state squad coaches in each state/territory;

This will result in the development of a high performance coaching culture and pathway throughout the system.

Recommendation 12 – informing coach education

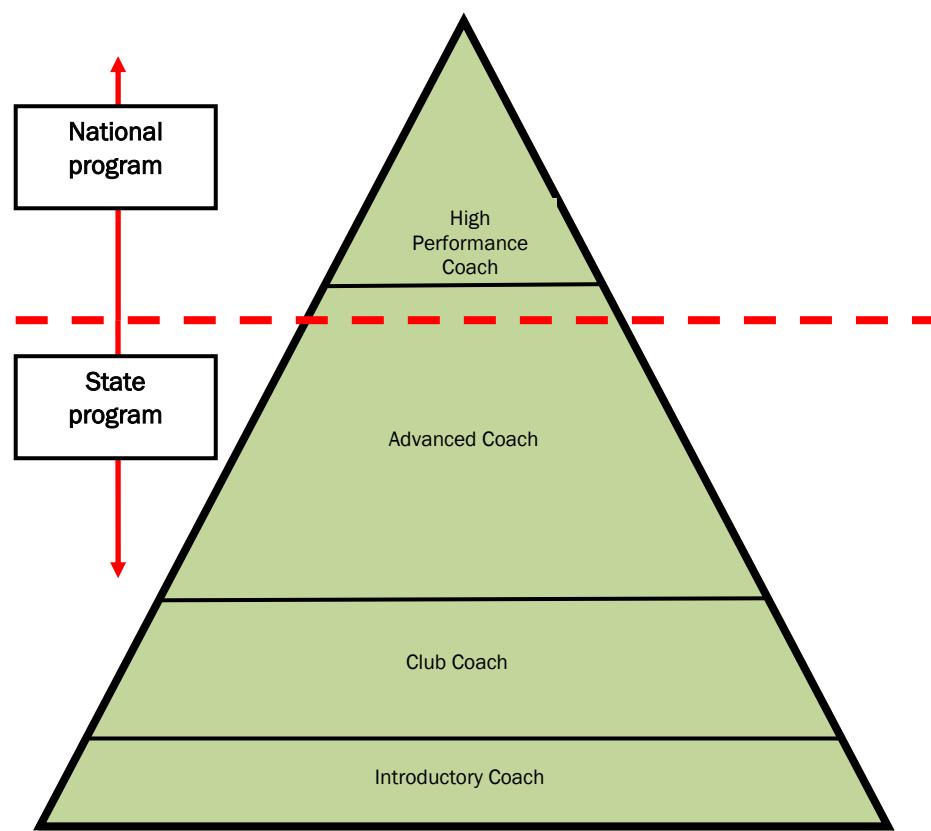
Use the high performance coach network and the development of high performance coaches, to gather knowledge on the specific requirements of Bowls high performance coaches and inform the development of the high performance level of the National Coach Accreditation Scheme.

Operational points:

- Include gatherings at major events, a dedicated web area, emails, newsletter, as well as a national conference including speakers from other related sports. The purpose to this is contact, engagement and supported development.
- Consider tapping into the services of existing high performance coaches who are already conducting high performance coaching education seminars.
- In the longer term, consider a more formal network of recognised ‘satellite coaches’ comprising state squad coaches and coaches who are available to work with national squad athletes.

Summary of the coach development pathway

The evolving coach education pathway for bowls, as agreed between Bowls Australia and the ASC can be summarised as follows:



3.4 Competition

The ideal model for the competition pathway as part of the high performance system was the one area on which a consensus solution was not reached during the consultation process. The 2003 HPAP report recommended a national Grand Prix series, with four to six rounds per year culminating in a national title. It also recommended a ranking table or points system and a qualification process. These events were to be tied to national selection protocols.

Bowls Australia have largely achieved these recommendations, however there are widely diverse views about the success of the Grand Prix series. Some believe it is a great concept and has created real opportunities for those who wish to excel. Others believe the series is unfair, irrelevant and without purpose.

The key issues surrounding the Grand Prix series were identified as follows:

- Each event relies on the hosting and significant financial input from a Bowls club. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find clubs with the resources and will to support the events, rendering the model potentially unsustainable.
- The events and the Series by-pass the states, creating ill-will and working against a longer term goal of engagement and buy-in from states.
- Events are held on the eastern seaboard, making it very expensive and time consuming for athletes from the smaller states to compete. The result is that those competing are not always the athletes with the most potential, but rather those with the time and funds to do so.
- Both the qualification process and ranking systems are problematic and despite numerous changes are still not optimal.
- TV coverage of the Series has been a valuable promotional vehicle for the sport and athletes, however the demands of TV have meant a decrease in flexibility to tailor the series to reflect the format of upcoming international events.

In summary questions are raised as to the sustainability of the series and also whether it is meeting the desired competitive purposes of the high performance system.

Gaining full alignment of a competition pathway with the athlete development pathway will remain a challenge for bowls because of the strength and role of the traditional Pennant/ Sides format, which is different from the format played in most international competitions. There is a strong argument that Pennant bowls has its place in athlete development as the large majority of national representatives have come from this background. It is also the crucial link with the majority of the bowls membership.

The questions to be answered then are:

- What competitions are needed to develop high performance bowlers?
- What competitions are needed to select national squads and teams (both to achieve the high performance outcomes and also to achieve the broader goals of system development)?
- What competitions (and/or camps) are needed to prepare Australian teams for international competitions?
- Is TV coverage important for the game of bowls? If so, what is the objective of having TV coverage and how can this be achieved?

- What resources are available and how can they best be utilised?

The solutions to these questions are not all simple. The first question and maybe the second very probably comes back to the identification of optimal player attributes and the national player development framework.

The question of TV coverage relates to the image and marketability of the sport. Does TV generate sponsorship or other revenue that can be funnelled back into the high performance program? If not, does it create interest in the sport which translates into increased membership? If not, why not and how could that be achieved? Finally does it generate pride in the high performance athletes by the bowls membership so that they support the high performance program and athletes?

Finally the question of resources. Other competitions exist, including various private domestic tournaments, as well as international events with significant prize money such as those put on by the Professional Bowlers Association. How can these be used to benefit the development of Australian athletes? Bowls Australia is already exploring these options and must continue to do so, along with continually monitoring the viability of their current investments in competitions.

There is no doubt bowls is in need of and lends itself to different formats of the game. Like cricket with “Test”, “One Day” and “Twenty20”, different formats of the game would not only enhance skills and opportunities for athletes, they would also potentially broaden the appeal of the game to participants and spectators alike. Creating a strategy around the exploration, development and publicity of two or three new formats may even alleviate the issue of how to convert the vast number of social bowlers to full memberships.

The Australian Open Championships, which is part of the Grand Prix Series, is a form of the game that is arguably not being capitalised upon. The Grand Prix Series could work well as a series of all of the state/territory ‘Opens’, culminating in the Australian Open Championship. The timing of the Open Series would have to be worked out in relation to the Pennant season, but the two could be complimentary.

If each STA could simply come to a collective agreement and standardisation of the way they run their state championships – all in the ‘Open’ format, then a fairer system of ranking and qualification for the Australian Open would be much easier to achieve.

[It is noted that a commercial review of Bowls Australia is concurrently being undertaken which may have ramifications for the TV product and sponsorship opportunities, however the optimal competition pathway should still be developed to suit the purposes of the high performance program and athlete development pathway.]

Recommendation 13 – aligning competition and athlete pathways

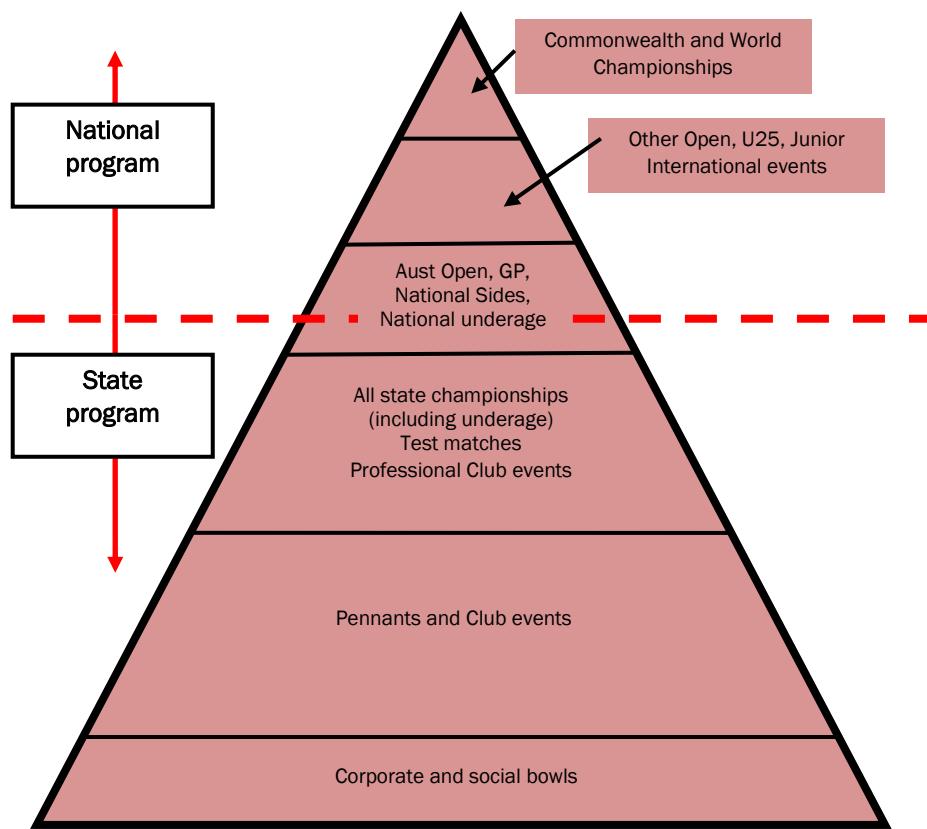
Bowls Australia and the STAs review the Australian high performance competition pathway through a detailed assessment process, to achieve:

- a) appropriate competitions for the purposes of: development, selection, preparation and publicity of athletes;*
- b) national consistency in conducting State/Territory ‘Open’ Championships, feeding into an Australian Open final;*

- c) broadening the appeal of the game through the exploration and development of different competition formats, while not losing the invaluable history and roots of bowls in Australia;
- d) identification of the best use of resources across the system to achieve these desired outcomes.

Summary of the competition pathway

The evolving competition pathway for bowls (while incomplete) can be summarised as follows:



3.5 Selection

The area of selection is a pertinent illustration of the disconnect and tension between Bowls Australia high performance and the STAs. Everyone is doing things their own way and too often pulling in different directions. There are no common policies, procedures, guidelines or understanding around selection of athletes to state and national teams. The fact that there is a lack of common direction and mutual understanding between STA and national selectors is detrimental to athletes and is also a waste of collective resources.

Selection in bowls, by its nature, is largely subjective. It is difficult to determine the specific attributes and even performances that determine the best bowler for a team or event. The 2003 HPAP report asked for both qualitative and quantitative selection parameters to be put in place. Bowls Australia has done this to some extent but these parameters/criteria are not well known or understood. There is confusion and lack of clarity among the athletes as to what they have to do to be selected. The STAs certainly do not understand what Bowls Australia is looking for. Selection must be defined and related to both the athlete development and the competition pathways.

Selection at the STA level has always been hierarchical both in the way athletes progress through the levels (must be established in each level of team to be considered for the next level), and the selectors themselves who are usually elevated to the role of selectors by longevity in the committee structure, not by recognition of relevant skill or expertise. The perception is that selection is based as much on personal relationships as on skill.

Selectors in bowls are often delegates not experts in high performance (notably at the STA level). There has been very little education around selection and also very little legal input into policies and procedures. In an increasingly litigious society including the sporting environment, there is strong argument for sports to become more professional and diligent in the area of selections. In addition, selectors have a high level of responsibility as they have athlete's futures (and often livelihoods) in their hands. Because of the subjectivity of the process and the fact that the selectors sometimes lack specific expertise, high performance credibility and understanding, there is a degree of mistrust and frustration around selection from all quarters, which is an omnipresent risk for the sport.

The process for selection is changing in some states with the realisation that the coaches, those with specific insight into the way the game is played at a high level, and/or those charged with the responsibility of team success, are the selectors. The national Head Coach heads the national selection panel, which is good practice since he is the person with responsibility and accountability for national team success.

There are some good models in place and some good selection policies are being developed (for both athletes and selectors), including that of Bowls Australia. The new Western Australian High Performance Plan, for example, contains position descriptions, required skill sets and selection criteria for all teams, coaching positions and selectors. South Australia has also been working on improved selection policies and practices. Each state as well as Bowls Australia are however designing their selection panels, polices and requirements in isolation. Everyone is 'reinventing the wheel' and there is no sharing of best practice.

From a national perspective, traditionally if a player had not been selected to play for his/her state, then they had no chance of being selected for a national team. This was especially problematic for athletes in the larger, more competitive states where good athletes could easily be left out of teams. Because of this and also because the 2003 HPAP report recommended that the Grand Prix Series be used for national team

selection, there is now the situation that Bowls Australia are at times selecting athletes who are not in State teams . The Grand Prix is providing athletes with a new opportunity to be recognised, but this process is also creating significant ill-will in the states due to the perceived signal it is sending the STA selectors that “Bowls Australia doesn’t trust us to identify the talent in our own state”.

With the change in the Bowls Australia policy to a panel of only three selectors (one of whom is the National Head Coach), there is the question of “how can only three people be across all the athletes in the country”. The answer is if they do not have good communication with the STAs it must be very difficult. If they do have good working relationships with the states there is a higher chance that all talented athletes have an opportunity to be identified. Bowls Australia needs expertise in the states as they cannot possibly observe all the potential talent. This would also take the pressure off Bowls Australia to have to run the Grand Prix Series and would arguably give those who can’t participate in the Series more opportunity to be noticed. If selection was aligned and there was mutual understanding of the desired athlete attributes, then the competition pathway could be designed to meet the needs of player development and preparation rather than selection. And the states need to feel that they are part of high performance and they are respected for their knowledge and involvement.

The states don’t always have to agree with Bowls Australia’s selection parameters. They merely have to understand where each other is coming from and why. Then they have to communicate what each other has done so there is at least understanding of and respect for the different needs and objectives. There will be times where the selection objectives are complimentary and times when they won’t be, but if everyone is at least aware of what is each other is looking for and why, then the athletes and the sport as a whole will have better harmony and synergy.

Finally selection is not just about selecting athletes for teams. Clear selection policies should also be in place for selecting selectors, coaches and team managers. All of these positions require an articulation of the qualities and competencies required, as well as the selection criteria and process. This will ensure the best possible candidates are selected for various roles and that the process of selection is transparent and fair.

Recommendation 14 – national selection forum

Bowls Australia convene a national selection forum to discuss, inform, educate and share philosophies, policies and best practice for selection. This should form the beginning of ongoing communication, information sharing, education and up skilling of all selectors – national and state.

Appendix A: Framework and terms of reference for a Review of Bowls national high performance pathways

Purpose:

To assess and define the national high performance pathway needs for Bowls, including gaining national consistency and the alignment of programs and contributions (financial, personnel, facilities, infrastructure and governance) across underpinning programs, all towards the common goal of National Program success.

When:

To be conducted commencing April 2009, for completion by July 2009.

The Aim:

To assess and evaluate:

- The existing high performance pathway structure for Bowls in Australia;
- The changing high performance culture in Bowls as a result of the 2003 review;
- The effectiveness of national program leadership and direction for underpinning programs;
- The best use of resources across the national system;
- The aims and roles of all the various stakeholders and organisations;
- The alignment and inter-relationship of athlete, coach and competition pathways towards development of elite athletes.

To use gap analysis to develop recommendations for the high performance pathway into the future, including optimal use of resources and maximisation of opportunities for elites athletes and coaches.

Terms of Reference

1. Assess the current high performance structures and systems of elite athlete and coach development in Australian Bowls.
2. Identify the current **views of “high performance”**, as well as the **aims** and **roles** of the various stakeholders in the elite athlete development pathways:
 - a. Bowls Australia
 - b. State bodies
 - c. State Institutes of Sport
 - d. Clubs
 - e. Competitions

3. Examine the contribution of each of the above organisations to athlete, coach and competition pathways; determine how they inter-relate; assess the cost-benefits of resources (financial, personal, facilities, and infrastructure) that exist across the system nationally for Bowls in Australia; and make recommendations for future best use of resources.
4. Assess the effectiveness and adequacy of talent identification and development programs to enhance the elite pathway, specifically including support of athletes at the U18 and U25 level and any relevant programs at state and club level.
5. Examine and assess the pathway (including competition) opportunities specifically for women.
6. Seek input from players and coaches and other stakeholders on how the structure has worked and how it could be improved.
7. Identify any gaps in the system and assess the best way currently to address any issues.

Methodology:

1. Conduct a desk top review of current national and state plans and programs.
2. Use written submissions and one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders, athletes, coaches and officials, to identify key issues and seek solutions for bowls.
3. Convene stakeholder forum(s) if necessary.
4. Conduct a Gap Analysis and use program logic methods to analyse information gathered and form recommendations.
5. Produce a report on the review with recommendations for the high performance strategy structure and systems, including:
 - athlete pathways (Junior and senior);
 - coach pathways;
 - competition pathways;
 - resourcing structures;
 - role definitions; and
 - communication integration and alignment of the various organisations and stakeholders.

Appendix B: Bowls Australia high performance program and pathway review questionnaire

Bowls Australia (BA) in conjunction with the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), is conducting a review of BA's high performance program and pathway ([click here to see the current pathway structure](#)).

This review is 'the next step' after the 2003 High Performance Review and an opportunity to further improve upon the program and elite pathway for bowls in Australia. ([Click here for the Framework and Terms of Reference for the Review.](#))

An important part of the review is to obtain feedback from a broad range of stakeholders who are interested in the high performance program and pathway of bowls. This questionnaire is intended to be one of the main data collections to inform the review's findings. As such, all interested stakeholders are invited to complete a questionnaire and/or to make a written submission.

An extensive interview process, as well as stakeholder forums, will also be conducted. This questionnaire supports the interview process and we request that all those to be interviewed should complete all of possible/ relevant questions here within, *prior to the interview*.

The interviews themselves will be based on the questions, but will be less structured and will focus on specific issues. Having the written question responses will be invaluable to the accuracy of the information collected and will reduce the reliance on interpretation of verbal comments. For your information, comments will not be attributed to individuals or organisations without permission being sought.

Please return all questionnaires directly by email or fax to the reviewer (details below). If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me:

Jackie Fairweather
Senior Sports Consultant
Australian Sports Commission
Office: 02 6214 1992
Fax: 02 6214 1477
Mobile: 0408 412 063
fairweatherj@ausport.gov.au

Questions:

1. What do you believe should be the aims and objectives of the high performance program in bowls in Australia? (i.e. what does 'high performance' mean in bowls and what should it achieve?)
2. Comment on the progress and changes in Bowls since the 2003 High Performance Review:
3. Identify the major strengths of the current high performance program and pathway structure of bowls in Australia (*Note the high performance pathway is defined as the pathway spanning the development of players to U18 state team level, through to National Team representation at major international events*):
4. Identify the major weaknesses, or impediments to success, of the current high performance program and pathway structure of bowls in Australia:
5. Comment on the competition structure and pathways in bowls and how it compliments and aligns with the high performance pathway for athletes.
6. Comment on coaching in Bowls and the role coaches should or should not play in the development of world class bowlers through the high performance pathway.
7. In your opinion what would improve the bowls high performance pathways (athlete, coach and competition pathways)?
8. In your opinion, what does a developing bowler need from bowls organisations in Australia to prepare him/her to optimise their potential?
9. Who/what organisations should provide this support?
10. What role should the state and territory associations play and how/why does this differ from their current role in the high performance pathway?

11. What role should the bowls clubs play and how/why does this differ from their current role in the high performance pathway?
12. How do you identify talent in your state or territory?
13. What leadership or guidance does BA provide and what are your expectations of BA with regards delivery of the high performance pathway in your state or territory?
14. How would more guidance or direction from BA impact upon the high performance pathway in your state or territory?
15. What is your view on how the high performance pathway in bowls should relate to the broader participation side of the sport?
16. Do you have any further comments?

Personal Information

Name: _____

Organisational Affiliation (Title/role): _____

State(s) in which your experience is based: _____

Years of involvement: _____

Email Address: _____

Contact phone no.: _____

Appendix C: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good management is in place with a mandate to drive a national high performance program (HPP). • HPP has clear focus and objectives. • Full time national high performance and coaching staff employed. • New 'High Performance Culture' is spreading and generally accepted as necessary for success. • Good introduction of sport science principles. • Successful results from new High Performance Program over the last four years. • Good numbers of talented athletes. • Highly competitive sport in Australia – good competitive pressure and opportunities. • Strong club structure to underpin HPP. • Semi-professional opportunities – particularly in NSW and QLD. • Good participation numbers as well as strong interest from casual bowlers to underpin HPP. • Growing wave of talented younger bowlers (including U18). • Improving quality and acceptance of high performance coaching, especially by younger bowlers (and some precedent of paying coaches). • Innovativeness and drive of smaller states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of understanding of high performance program objectives and operations by the majority of bowls members. • Large gaps in athlete, coach and competition pathways and lack of alignment across the three. • National coaches not yet dedicated to case managing athletes in daily training environment. • Very little SIS/SAS support in DTE. • Lack of mutual communication and consultation between BA HP and SSOs. • Low capacity and will of the SSOs to support HP. • Culture and understanding of high performance coaching is still quite undeveloped. • Low quality and quantity of HP coaches and managers available for state teams and squads. • Loss of top level athletes from national team and resultant ill-will. • Misalignment, mistrust, lack of communication and lack of common objectives between state and national selectors. Lack of clear policies. • Resistance to change and explore new options for competition formats. Resulting difficulty in achieving HPP objectives as existing competitions do not reflect international formats. • Governance structure that hampers decision making and change.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More integration of state programs with national. • Mirrored and aligned national and state programs. • Clarification of roles, responsibilities and expectations across the system. • Introduction of new competition formats to support HP objectives and also to entice new people into the sport. • Refocusing culture to be one of positively enabling people to reach their potential. • Case management of individual athletes leading to optimal improvement of each athlete. • Greater use of athletes as ambassadors. • Establishment of junior programs in every state. • Forming a network of high performance coaches who share ideas and develop together to suit the growing needs to the sport. • Up-skill and educate all selectors to understand and support the objectives of the national system. • Australia lead and influence high performance development internationally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reluctance to be open minded and to consider evolution and change – by all stakeholders. • Inability to achieve better communication, mutual respect and understanding across all levels of the sport. • Increasing sophistication and resourcing of competitor country HP systems. • Further loss of the best athletes from the HP program. • Inability of states to align and support HP program and athlete development causing stagnation of HPP development. • Failure to develop high performance coaching culture and understanding. • Failure of the sport of bowls to adapt to changing society and attract new participants.

Appendix D: Program logic summary table

STRATEGIES	ASSUMPTIONS	RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	(Desired) OUTPUTS	SHORT- AND LONG-TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective planning and definition of relative roles across the system. • Optimising integration and resource use across the system; • Identification of needs of HP and of stakeholders and marry needs to resources to desired outcomes. • Targeted coach development. • Clear athlete development standards, stepped stages. • Ensure leadership to coordinate the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying potential athletes and providing them with a quality HP training environment and culture, will increase the depth of potential National level athletes, ensuring Australia improves or maintains its standing internationally. • Working with stakeholders and communicating/publicising HP will lead to better engagement and buy-in by STAs and others (Clubs) • The wave of culture change and understanding is growing in acceptance. • Governance and decision making is changing and will enable change in competition structures and HP in general. • Good quality HP coaches can be developed within the system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding – ASC and ACGA • Full time National Head Coach and HPM • Other national support staff – assistant coach, service staff, admin • State Associations – most with burgeoning junior programs • Strong Club system – venues, competitions and athlete support • Range of competition opportunities • A growing number of passionate and dedicated HP coaches and volunteers • Dedicated bowls websites, books, magazines, DVD's etc • NSWIS program • Some minor SIS/SAS support in other states • SSSM service support and growing understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective strategic and operational planning sessions with key stakeholders including STAs. • Communication and education re HP. • National skills, drills and fitness testing protocols – expanded and updated. • Case managed approach to athlete development, including DTE support and optimisation. • Establish a network of high performance coaches including development opportunities. • Expanded use of draft camps and silver tier squad for development and education of players and coaches. • Create a National selection system. • Coordinate a competition system that aligns with HP program objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed long and short term goals and priorities that form the basis of all activities. • National system of open communication, sharing best practice and consensus on national strategies. • Agreed National selection model and collective agreement on desired player attributes. • Strong and effective underpinning programs in every state (with coaches). • Enhanced opportunities, education and development of coaches. • Enhancing number of skilled coaches who understand the 'people' side of the game rather than just the technical. • Alignment in delivery of different competition formats across all states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved technical, physical and tactical skills of high performance athletes. • Increased competition for national team spots. • All stakeholders understanding their role and contributing to the national outcomes. • Increased number, competency and intrinsic satisfaction of coaches at all levels. • National network of high performance coaches. • Better communication and sense of unity across the national system. • Increased competition strength, depth and range of formats across all states providing upwards pressure at all levels of development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased quality and quantity of players available for national teams. ➤ Continuing success of national teams and world leading programs. ➤ Optimal contribution from all stakeholders in the system. ➤ Excellent opportunities for athletes and attractiveness of bowls as a team sport of choice. ➤ Increased awareness and pride in the bowls high performance program. ➤ Buy-in to a culture of excellence and continuous improvement.

Appendix F - BWA High Performance Development Pathway

