

“One State, One Network, All Welcome”



**NSW
ATHLETICS**



NSW Athletics Facilities Strategy

Summary Document | June 2026

INTRODUCTION

We are proud to present the inaugural NSW Athletics Facilities Strategy, the first statewide facilities plan developed to guide the future of athletics infrastructure across New South Wales.

For the first time in the history of athletics in New South Wales, the sport has come together to articulate a single, unified position on the infrastructure needs of athletics across the state.

Through NSW Athletics, we are now able to speak with one voice about the facilities required to support participation, athlete development and performance pathways for our sport. This Strategy reflects our collective ambition to ensure that communities across NSW have access to safe, modern and appropriately located athletics facilities, supporting the full pathway of the sport from grassroots participation through to high performance.

Developed in collaboration with Australian Athletics, local councils, schools, government partners, clubs, volunteers, coaches and athletes, this Strategy reflects a true whole-of-sport vision for athletics in New South Wales. The insights and contributions from across our community have been invaluable in shaping a clear and practical roadmap for the future of our facilities network.

Our shared ambition is simple: to ensure that every participant, regardless of age, background or ability, has access to quality athletics facilities in the right places, at the right time. By strengthening our statewide network of venues and investing strategically in infrastructure, we can support growing participation, develop future champions and ensure athletics continues to connect communities across New South Wales.

This document marks the completion of the first phase of this project, establishing a clear statewide framework and identifying key infrastructure priorities for the sport.

The evolution of this work will involve a deeper and more detailed focus on localised infrastructure needs, working closely with clubs, centres, councils and regional partners to better understand demand, identify priority projects and support the development of strong cases for investment across communities throughout New South Wales.

Through NSW Athletics, the sport is now better positioned than ever to advocate clearly and collectively for the investment required to support one of the most accessible and widely participated sports in the state.

Christian Renford
Chief Executive Officer



Further information about the NSW Athletics Facilities Strategy can be accessed via the QR code.





CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Executive summary	4
Athletics participation in NSW	5
Potential future demand for athletics	6
Current infrastructure challenges	7
Strategic facilities framework	8
- Strategic infrastructure priority 1 Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre	9
- Strategic infrastructure priority 2 Regional athletics hubs	10
- Strategic infrastructure priority 3 Localised venue projects	12
Implementing the strategy	13
Stakeholder roles	14

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Athletics is one of the most inclusive and far-reaching sports in New South Wales, engaging more than **50,000 registered members** and over **one million school students** each year.

However, the state's athletics facilities network is under increasing strain. Ageing infrastructure, limited synthetic track availability and regional access constraints threaten participation growth and the sport's long-term sustainability.

The NSW Athletics Facilities Strategy ("the Strategy") is underpinned by three strategic pillars and outlines a 10-year investment and delivery framework that provides a unified, evidence-based roadmap for the development of an accessible, equitable and future-ready network of athletics facilities across NSW.

The Strategy calls for a shared commitment from all levels of government, education and the sport to ensure that every community has the opportunity to *run, jump, throw, wheel and participate* in safe, modern and welcoming environments.

STRATEGIC PILLARS

ONE:
Community
Participation

TWO:
Pathways &
Development

THREE:
Collaboration &
Partnerships



ATHLETICS PARTICIPATION IN NSW

2024 REGISTERED NSW ATHLETICS MEMBERS

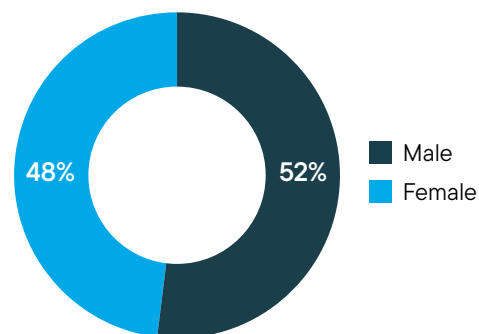
51,565¹

2024 MEMBERS BY CATEGORY

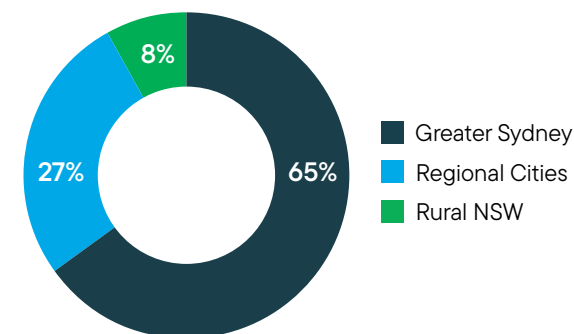
Participants	48,845
Coaches	811
Officials	321
Volunteers & other non-participants	1,588

1. This figure include all registered NSW Athletics members, participants, coaches, officials and other registered volunteers.

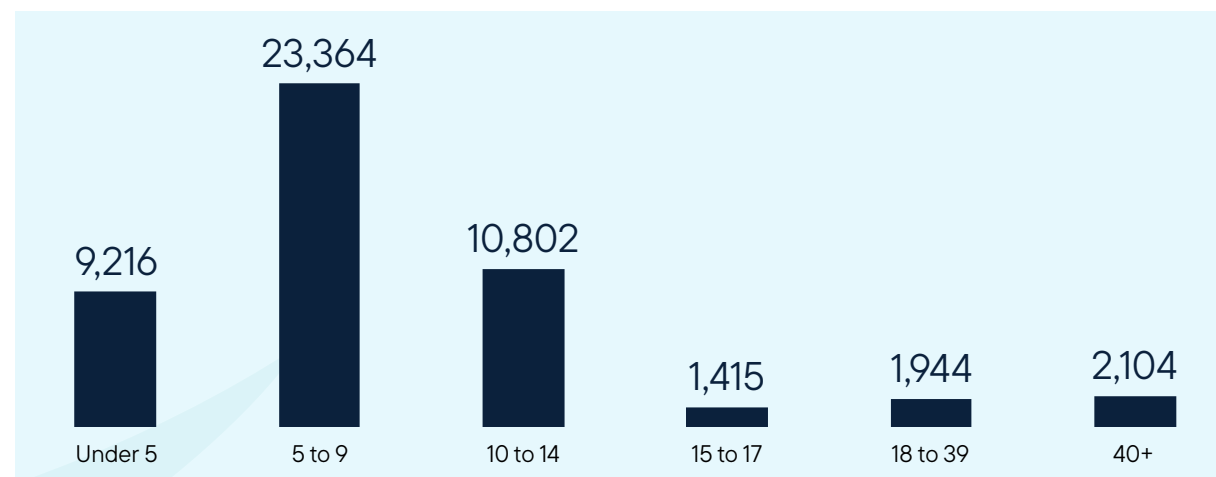
2024 PARTICIPANTS BY GENDER



2024 PARTICIPANTS BY LOCATION



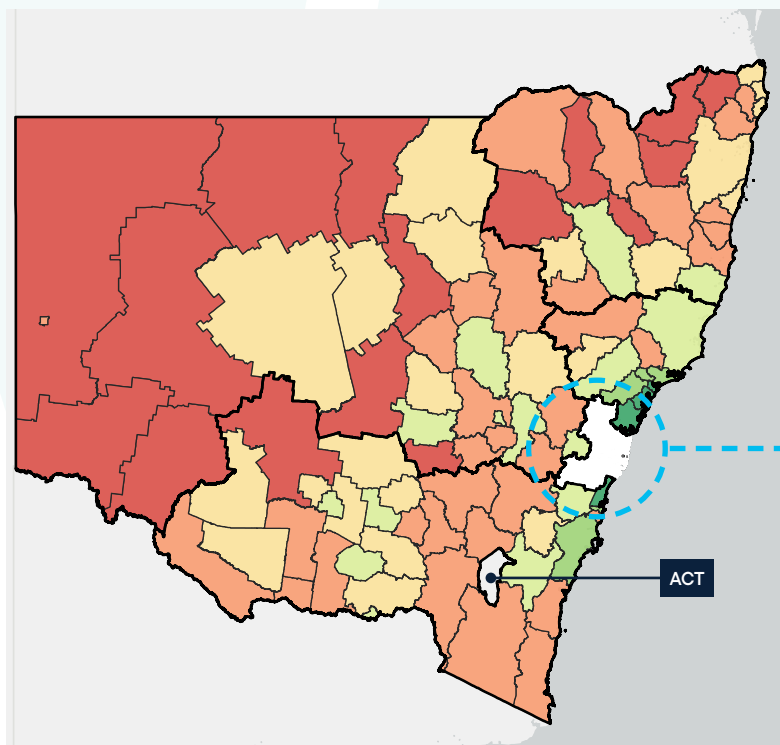
2024 PARTICIPANTS BY AGE CATEGORY



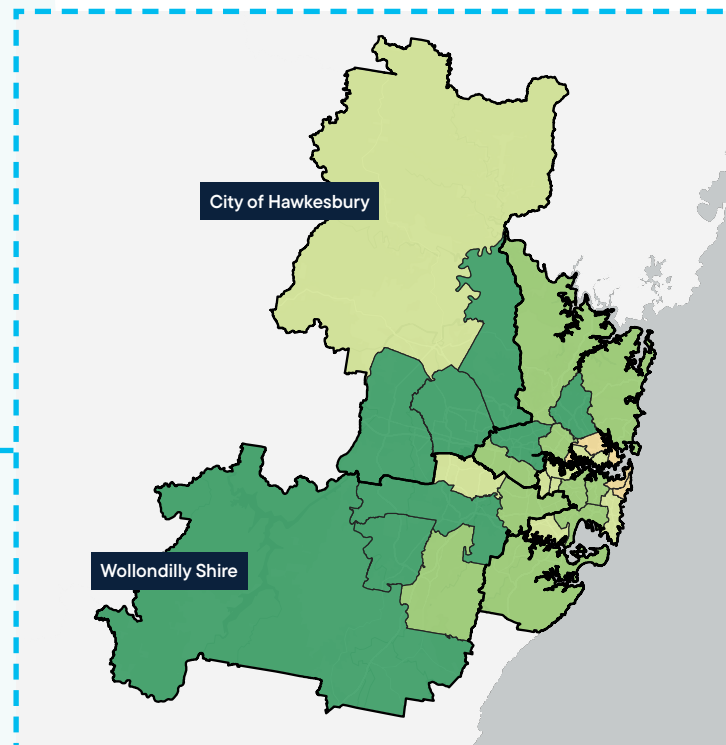
POTENTIAL FUTURE DEMAND FOR ATHLETICS

The potential demand for Athletics across all NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs) has been mapped using an Athletics Demand Model. Key potential high-level demand hot spots are highlighted by the green and dark green shaded LGA locations.

NON-METROPOLITAN LGAs BY DEMAND SCORE



METROPOLITAN SYDNEY LGAs BY DEMAND SCORE



The Athletics Demand Model uses four key metrics to assess potential demand. A rating (or score) of 1 to 6 has been applied to each demand metric, with a maximum possible total demand score per LGA of 24. The higher the total demand score, the greater the demand for athletics facility provision is likely to be.

- > 16-24
- > 13-15
- > 10-12
- > 8-9
- > 5-7
- > 0-4

More detailed demand analysis has been conducted at LGA and NSW Athletics Region level and is available in the NSW Athletics State of Play Report that complements this Strategy.

CURRENT INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

There are 202 known formal athletics facilities throughout NSW. Despite strong participation levels and community demand, the NSW athletics facility network faces multiple systemic challenges:



Provision & access limitations

89% of athletics track facilities are grass tracks, with many shared with multiple sports and other community activities.



Limited support amenities

Outdated changerooms, toilets, storage and spectator areas restrict inclusivity and efficiency of operation.



Geographic disparity

Only 23 eight-lane synthetic tracks exist statewide, with 12 located within the Greater Sydney area - this limits access and creates regional inequities.



Climate & environmental risks

Flooding, heat and water source constraints particularly affect grass track venues and increase long-term maintenance costs.



Ageing infrastructure

Many tracks and off-track amenities are beyond their expected life, impacting safety, usability, and event and school carnival delivery.



Technology gap

NSW lacks a unified data, results or analytics platform and has limited adoption of modern training and event technology.



Volunteer & club pressure

Increasing expectations on volunteers and financial constraints are limiting local sustainability.



High-performance support

There is no purpose built short-track or indoor training venue in NSW and only one Class 1 World Athletics certified track - limiting athlete preparation and performance opportunities in the lead up to Brisbane 2032 and post games legacy opportunities.

These challenges collectively place the sport at risk of falling behind other states in delivering modern, inclusive and high-performing facilities within an ever changing and evolving environment.



STRATEGIC FACILITIES FRAMEWORK

VISION	Secure the sport's future through a unified network of quality, inclusive and innovative facilities.					
STRATEGIC PILLARS	ONE: Community Participation		TWO: Pathways & Development		THREE: Collaboration & Partnerships	
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	Ensure athletics facilities are inclusive, designed to enhance user experience and promote opportunities for all to participate, coach, officiate, volunteer and spectate.		Develop a strategic network of venues that create high-performance environments to support athlete development, coaching excellence and event delivery.		Work closely with landowners, facility operators and the club network to ensure facilities consider sustainable and innovative approaches to provision, management and financial operation.	
PRINCIPLES	1.1 Capacity & Capability	1.2 Safe & Inclusive Environments	2.1 Talent Development	2.2 Elite Performance	3.1 Sustainability & Innovation	3.2 Partnership Support
KEY STRATEGIES	20 Key Strategies and Actions have been developed and presented over the following pages.					
DESIRED OUTCOMES	Equitable access to quality athletics facilities across all regions of NSW.	Improved facility quality, safety and usability for athletes of all levels.	Welcoming, safe, and inclusive environments are provided for all participants.	The long-term sustainability of clubs and venues is secured.	Modernised facility planning, data and operating methods are implemented, and innovative approaches are embraced in the future.	

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 1: SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK ATHLETICS CENTRE (SOPAC)

SOPAC is NSW's premier athletics venue and a cornerstone of the sport's growth and performance pathway.

Purpose-built for the Sydney 2000 Games and certified to World Athletics Class II standard, it remains the state's most recognisable and capable facility for hosting major events, high-performance training and year-round school carnivals and community participation.

The venue supports the full breadth of the sport – State and National Championships, Olympic and Paralympic trials, school finals and grassroots programs – offering high-capacity infrastructure, excellent public transport access and integration with the broader Sydney Olympic Park precinct.

Future opportunities include enhanced Class I/II track provision, expanded road and cross-country event capability, and new indoor high-performance and short-track facilities.

This would position Sydney Olympic Park as the nation's leading, most innovative and versatile athletics hub.

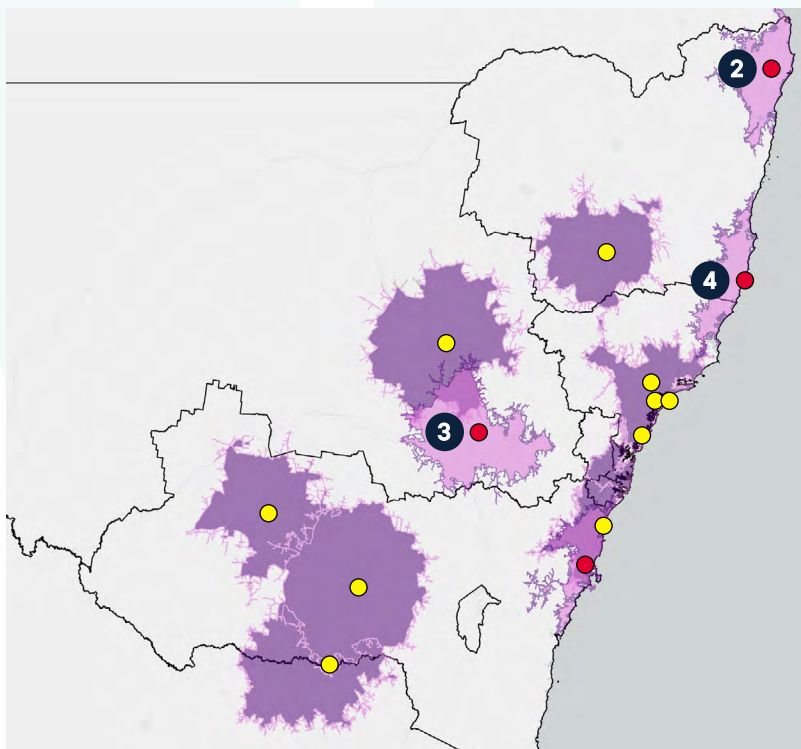
With targeted investment, SOPAC can evolve into Australia's only full-service athletics precinct. A long-term precinct master plan for SOPAC is required to support a collaborative and coordinated approach to future investment.



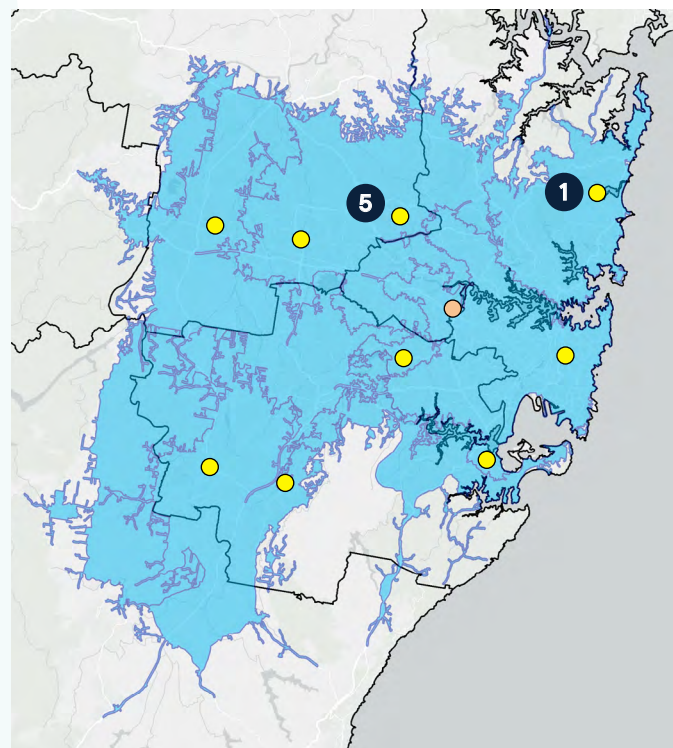
STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 2: REGIONAL ATHLETICS HUBS

The following maps provide the existing locations of the State Athletics Centre and the 20 identified existing Regional Athletics Hubs across Greater Sydney and NSW. Potential future Regional Athletics Hubs are also located to guide priority development and delivery over the next decade. Investment in these Hubs is vital to ensure geographical gaps in the NSW facility network can be closed.

ALL OF NSW (EXCLUDING METRO SYDNEY VENUES)



METRO SYDNEY (ZOOMED IN)



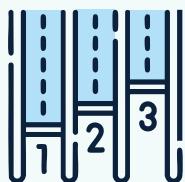
- State Athletics Centre
- Regional Athletics Hub
- Potential Future Regional Athletics Hub
- 90 minute drive time for existing non-metro hubs
- 90 minute drive time for proposed new regional hub locations
- 30 minute drive time for existing metro hubs

Five Regional Athletics Hub locations have been identified for strategic delivery between 2025 and 2035. Each location has been selected as it helps to fill a critical gap within the statewide network of regional athletics facilities across NSW.

Priority Location	Proposed Hub Features	Estimated Budget
1. Sydney Academy of Sport (Narrabeen)	Full renovation of existing track to World Athletics Class II certification, including drainage improvements in order to bring the venue back online and continue to support a significant and growing Sydney-North Region.	\$8.3m, including a \$6.7m NSW Government 2025/26 state budget allocation.
2. Southern Cross University (Lismore)	400m synthetic track, long jump, javelin, shot put, discus, hammer throw and pole vault elements, in order to address regional athletics hub gap and synthetic track shortage in Northern NSW. Potential training base for Brisbane 2032 Games.	Project still in budget scoping phase, with a \$3.6m NSW Government grant confirmed in 2025.
3. Orange Sports Precinct (Orange)	Floodlit 400m synthetic track to World Athletics Class II certification, throwing and jumping field elements, storage, athlete and spectator amenities. New athletics facility addresses a geographical gap between regional athletics hubs in Dubbo, Wagga, Canberra and Western Sydney.	Estimated \$10m, with funding commitments confirmed from Federal Government and Orange City Council.
4. Wayne Richards Park (Port Macquarie)	Development of facilities and amenities to meet Regional Athletics Hub hierarchy levels, including synthetic athletics track. Proposed venue addresses a geographical gap in the NSW North Region between venues in Newcastle, Tamworth, Coffs Harbour and Lismore (new venue proposed).	Project still in budget scoping phase.
5. Waterlane Reserve (Box Hill)	New athletics site with full range of grass track and field provision, including athlete and spectator amenities. Proposed venue addresses the significant identified demand within the Hills Shire and Sydney North-West Region.	Project still in budget scoping phase.

STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITY 3: LOCALISED VENUE PROJECTS

Several localised infrastructure priorities have been identified to enable the sport and its stakeholders to deliver on the sports' vision and strategic objectives and to assist in meeting facility hierarchy provision levels across the network. Securing an annual funding and support program from all levels of government and industry partners will be critical to driving localised facility projects.



Synthetic Track Renewal Projects

Goal: Ensure all existing synthetic athletics tracks across NSW are renewed within their 10-year life span and World Athletics certification period, with 10 tracks to be renewed by 2035.

Collective investment estimate: \$20M to support 10 synthetic track renewals.



Track and Field Lighting

Goal: Ensure the synthetic track network across NSW provides a mix of training and competition standard lighting to support year-round athletics participation.

Collective investment estimate: \$2M to support the installation of 200+ lux LED lighting systems at 5 priority venue locations by 2035.



Track and Amenity Upgrades

Goal: Prioritise upgrades to existing grass tracks and to off-field amenities including change rooms, toilets, spectator areas and social facilities that enhance child safety, promote inclusivity and deliver improved accessibility.

Collective investment estimate: \$15M (\$1.5M per year to 2035) to support 5 venues per year to undertake amenity improvements.



Management Practices

Goal: Assist landowners, managers and user groups to develop appropriate supporting infrastructure (such as storage, canteens, technology systems) in order to support the transition of athletics venues into long-term sustainable operating models.

Collective investment estimate: \$1M to help transform the management of 20 priority venue management models (2 venues per year to 2035) to future proof venue operations.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

NSW Athletics has a strong and vested interest in ensuring the athletics facility network across NSW is accessible, inclusive and functional.

We also need to ensure facilities are activated in ways that ensure all users feel welcomed, engaged and supported on their journey through the sport.

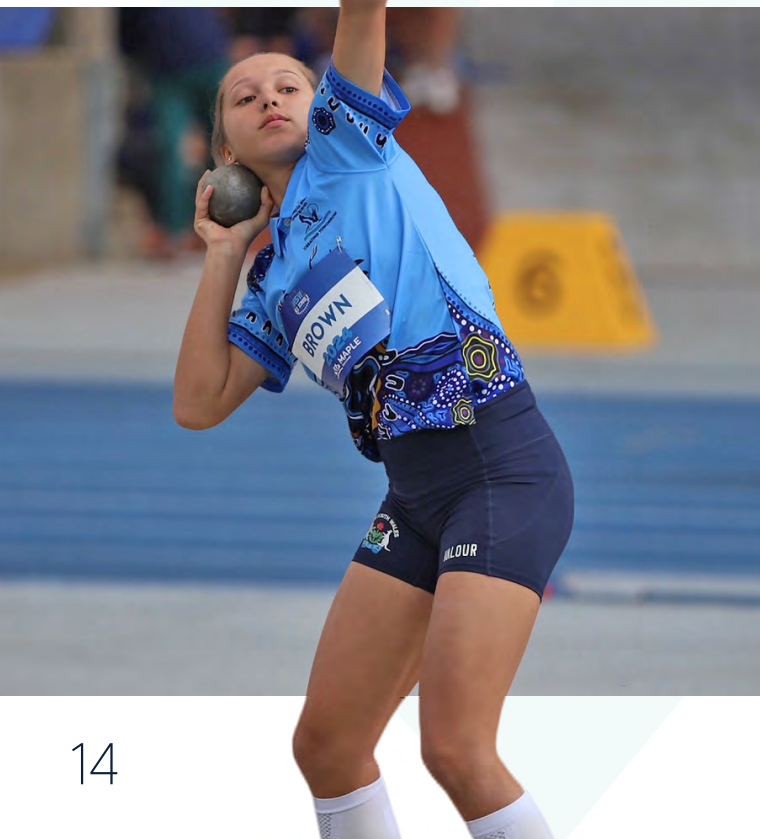
To achieve this and to support the range of actions and implementation initiatives identified within this Strategy, NSW Athletics will need to focus on three key roles:

- 1. Advocate:** For broader stakeholder support and investment into our sport and priority infrastructure projects.
- 2. Lead:** The national athletics community in terms of infrastructure delivery and innovation, and guide our delivery partners and stakeholders in facility design and best practice management.
- 3. Collaborate:** Across our sport, with government, education and the private sector to align our goals, objectives and priorities to create long-term interest in and sustainability of our sport.



STAKEHOLDER ROLES

Many stakeholders and partners have been identified as playing an important role in the implementation of the NSW Athletics Facilities Strategy.



Stakeholder roles

Stakeholder group	Key roles in supporting Strategy implementation
NSW Government	- Align state and federal planning for sport infrastructure - Define key policy directions for sport facility funding - Clarify NSW's position on Brisbane 2032-related initiatives - Co-fund NSW Athletics' priority facility projects - Maintain priority access to Sydney Olympic Park as the State Athletics Centre
Local Government	- Co-invest in NSW Athletics' priority facility projects - Support clubs with access to quality, affordable facilities - Assist with facility renewal and upgrades - Ensure seasonal and year-round access to facilities on Council land - Identify new sites for future facility provision and development - Collaborate on the development of business cases for new venue development
NSW and Australian Athletics	- Set facility standards based on hierarchy and athlete pathways - Factor venue access into event scheduling - Promote strong facility case studies - Lead facility-based collaboration between Little Athletics and Senior athletics - Collect and share relevant data to strengthen the facility network
School Sport and Education Sector	- Embrace new approaches to facility use and programming - Share data on access, capacity, use and need - Support advocacy for facility investment and improvement - Explore ways schools can support and grow athletics participation
Industry Stakeholders	- Lead innovation in facility design and delivery - Provide data to support strong investment cases





Sydney Olympic Park Athletics Centre
Edwin Flack Drive
Sydney Olympic Park NSW 2127
PO Box 595 Sydney Markets NSW 2129
T. 02 9746 1122