

AUSTRALIAN ATHLETICS

Strategy 2026 - 2036

Unleashing the Power of Athletics

A decade of performance, participation and purpose



Acknowledgement of Country

Australian Athletics acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we walk, run, jump, throw and roll.

We pay our deepest respects to Indigenous elders throughout Australia, both past and present.

Artwork by Shane Cook



Athletics is the heartbeat of Australian sport

No barriers. No limits.
Just movement.

- 125 years of heritage, yet more relevant than ever
- Low barriers to entry, open to everyone, everywhere
- The #1 Global Olympic, Paralympic, Commonwealth sport for audience reach
- A foundation sport – if you've walked, run, rolled, thrown or jumped, you've done athletics
- A sport of true gender equality: equal events, exposure, and prize money
- One of the largest participation sports in Australia and globally

Australian Athletics Strategy

2026–2036

Foreword from the President and CEO

Athletics is where many Australians take their first sporting steps: at school carnivals, Little Athletics, community fun runs, or cheering as our athletes compete on the world stage.

Athletics is a foundation sport. If you've walked, run, thrown, rolled or jumped, you've done athletics. It is the simple, powerful act of moving. A sport spanning generations, abilities and communities, with true gender equality across events, exposure and prize money.

This strategy is more than a roadmap for the next decade. It is a statement of who we are, where we are going and the role athletics can play in the lives of Australians.

Grounded in performance, participation and purpose, our vision is simple but powerful: **Unleashing the Power of Athletics, leading every Australian to a lifestyle inspired by Athletics.**

Over the next decade, we will strengthen our sport by investing in volunteers, coaches and officials, deliver world-class performances that inspire the nation, reach new audiences and create new ways for Australians to participate and engage.

Our ambition is to grow athletics in scale, impact and relevance, while safeguarding the integrity, safety and inclusiveness that define us.

Ambition must be matched by capability. That means strong governance, financial sustainability and digital innovation, and building a unified national approach following the unification of Australian Athletics and Little Athletics Australia, alongside our Member Associations.

This strategy belongs to all of us. Its success depends on working together, nationally aligned and locally empowered, to deliver great experiences from grassroots participation to the global podium.

Let's unleash the power of athletics, together.



Jane Flemming, OAM
President



Simon Hollingsworth
Chief Executive Officer



Athletics reaches every Australian, no matter their age, background or postcode, building a nationally connected, emotionally engaged community.

Programs reaching schools, families, and culturally diverse communities

Accessible at every level from kindergarten-age kids to representing Australia.

30.7M digital impressions. Digital and broadcast reach surging through broadcasting and online growth.

A sport that connects hearts, unites communities, and carries the heritage and hope of a healthier Australia.



Golden Success in a Global Sport

Elite Athletics

Across an unprecedented breadth of events, disciplines and classifications, Australian athletes are standing on podiums, breaking records and taking their place among the best in the world. There is extraordinary depth at the top, emerging talent pushing through, and another generation rising behind them.

This is not one golden generation. This is what sustained excellence looks like.

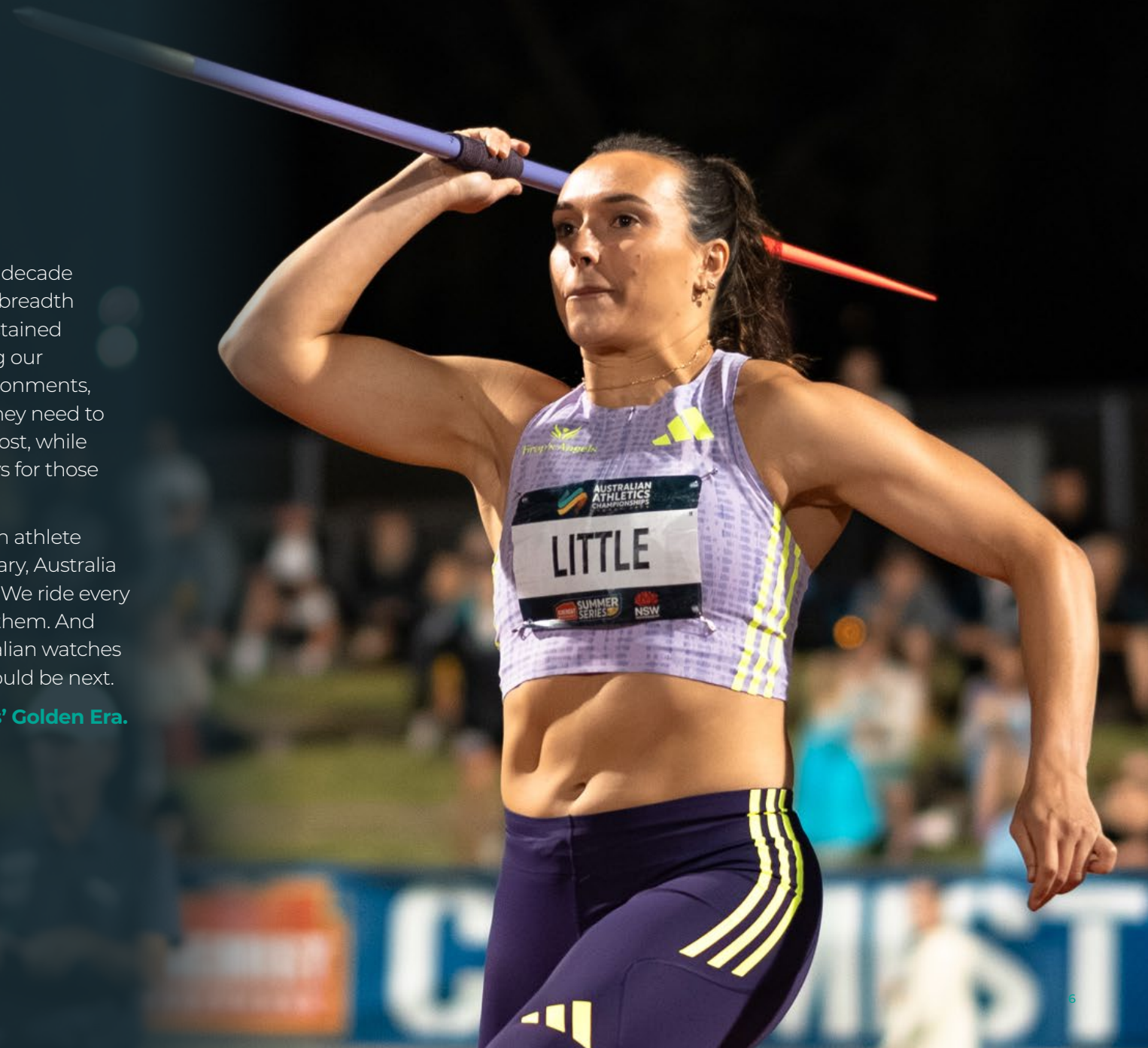
Today, a new generation is rising to write the next chapter: faster, higher, stronger, and more numerous than ever before.

They don't just compete. They lead. They inspire. And they represent the very best of Australian sport: resilience, courage and brilliance on the world's biggest stages, from the Olympic and Paralympic Games to World Championships and everywhere in between.

Our ambition over the next decade is to turn this extraordinary breadth and depth of talent into sustained international success, giving our athletes the coaching, environments, competition and support they need to perform when it matters most, while strengthening the pathways for those coming next.

Because when an Australian athlete does something extraordinary, Australia feels it. We hold our breath. We ride every second. We celebrate with them. And somewhere, another Australian watches and starts to believe they could be next.

This is Australian athletics' Golden Era.




AUSTRALIAN ATHLETICS
THE VISION
Unleashing the Power of Athletics
Leading every Australian to a Lifestyle inspired by Athletics

The framework for our future

The strategic framework guiding Australian Athletics from 2026 to 2036.



Vision

Where we want to be

Unleashing the Power of Athletics

Leading every Australian to a lifestyle inspired by athletics

Strategic Pillars

What our focus needs to be

High Performance
Championing Greatness

Core of Athletics
Strengthening the heart of the sport

Beyond the Track
Inspiring new audiences through mass participation and innovation.

Strategic Priorities

What we need to deliver

Win Well
Deliver success with resilience, pride and the wellbeing of our people.

Sustained HP Success
Sustain international success through world-class coaching and support.

Develop Future Talent
Identify, nurture and retain the next generation of champions.

Build World-Class Coaching and Performance Environments
Build integrated, high-performance environments where athletes and coaches thrive, laying the foundation for success on the world stage.

Play Well
Delivering safe, inclusive and enjoyable athletics experiences for all.

Lead the Athletics Event Experiences
Stage world-class athletics meets that captivate fans and attract elite talent.

Integrated Pathways, Little Athletics to lifelong
Building connected journeys for every athlete, from centres and clubs, children to adults.

Empower community and volunteers
Support and grow the people who power the sport.

Engage new audiences
Attract and engage new audiences through bold storytelling, digital innovation and culturally relevant experiences.

Engage the running community
A home for every Australian who moves; on trails, tracks, paths and parks, from walking to running and everything in between.

Innovation
Create and scale new athletics products, platforms and experiences to grow the sport for all ages and abilities

Enablers

What underpins and enables success

Integrity and governance systems that enable safe, trusted and high-performance delivery

People and culture, attracting, retaining and motivating talented people to build a thriving culture across every layer of the sport.

Financial resilience and disciplined investment, building reserves to fund long-term growth

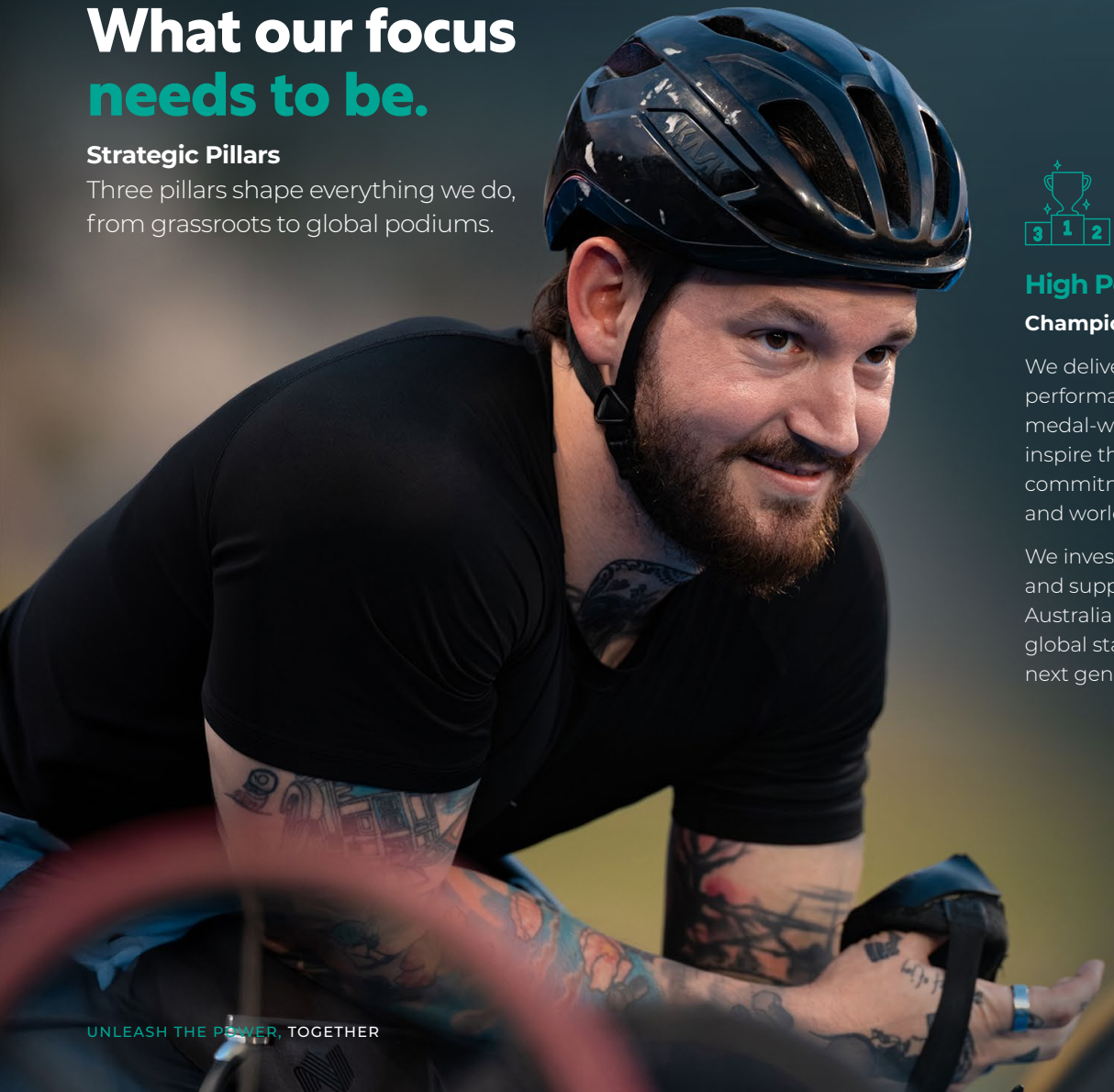
Commercially ambitious, building strategic partnerships and diversified revenue for sustainable growth

Technology, AI and digital innovation, embedded to grow the sport

What our focus needs to be.

Strategic Pillars

Three pillars shape everything we do, from grassroots to global podiums.



High Performance

Championing greatness

We deliver world-class performance and develop medal-winning athletes who inspire the nation, with a deep commitment to athlete wellbeing and world-class coaching.

We invest in the talent pathways and support systems that keep Australia competitive on the global stage and identify the next generation of champions.

Core of Athletics

Strengthening the heart of the sport

We create a thriving athletics system that delivers world-class meets, connected pathways from Little Athletics centres and clubs into every level of athletics, and **empowers our Members, officials, volunteers and community associations** who are the backbone of the sport.

By investing in the people and experiences that bring athletics to life, we strengthen the heart of the sport for every Australian.

Beyond the Track

New audiences and bold innovation

We expand athletics through mass participation, bold new ventures and innovative thinking, reaching Australians far beyond the track.

By engaging new audiences and unlocking revenue streams that strengthen our ability to invest in the sport, we grow athletics in scale, impact and relevance.

What we need to deliver.

Ten priorities across three pillars, translating our strategy into action.



High Performance

Championing Greatness

Win Well

Delivering success with integrity, resilience and a deep commitment to athlete wellbeing. Our people are important to us. We win but in a way that makes Australia proud, on the track and off it.

Sustained HP Success

Sustaining international success through world-class coaching, high-performance systems and the support structures that keep our athletes at the top. Our ability to perform on the day it matters, creating consistent podium presence, is our benchmark.

Develop Future Talent

Identifying, nurturing and retaining the next generation of champions through targeted pathways and long-term athlete development. The pipeline starts now.

Build World-Class Coaching and Performance

We foster integrated, collaborative and high-performance training. coaching and support environments where athletes and coaches thrive. World class people and ecosystems enable our success on the world stage.



Core of Athletics

Strengthening the heart of the sport

Play Well

Delivering success with integrity, resilience and a deep commitment to athlete wellbeing.
Our people are important to us. We win but in a way that makes Australia proud, on the track and off it.

Lead the Athletics Event Experiences

Staging world-class athletics meets that captivate fans, attract elite talent and showcase the best of the sport. Every event is an opportunity to deepen love for athletics.

Integrated Pathways, Little Athletics to Elite

From their first steps at a centre or club to representing Australia on the global stage. From social participation to high performance, no athlete should fall through the gaps.

Empower Community and Volunteers

Supporting and growing the coaches, officials, schools and volunteers who are the backbone of Australian athletics. Their contribution makes the sport possible at every level.



Beyond the Track

Inspiring new audiences through mass participation and bold innovation.

Engage New Audiences

Attracting and engaging new audiences through bold storytelling, digital innovation and culturally relevant experiences. Athletics belongs to every Australian.

Engage the Running Community

A home for every Australian who moves; on trails, tracks, paths and parks, from walking to running and everything in between.

Innovation

Creating and scaling bold new products, platforms and experiences that grow the sport in scale, impact and relevance. We back bold ideas and move at pace.

How we will succeed

Enablers are the systems, people and capabilities that make it possible to deliver our strategy and achieve lasting impact. They underpin every pillar and every priority.



Integrity and governance: Keeping our sport safe, trusted and accountable

We safeguard athletics through strong governance frameworks and an unwavering commitment to safety, compliance and accountability.

From grassroots clubs to the global stage, we are led with transparency and purpose.



People and culture: Investing in the humans who power the sport

Our people, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers and administrators, are the engine of athletics.

We invest in a diverse, skilled and passionate community that empowers individuals, celebrates contribution and embraces difference.



Financial resilience: Building reserves to fund long-term ambition

We build and maintain strong reserves through disciplined financial management and a deliberate reduction in reliance on any single funding source.

This gives us the stability to back bold ideas and invest in the long-term future of the sport.



Commercial ambition: Diversifying revenue to grow the sport

We are building a commercially ambitious organisation through bold partnerships, innovative revenue streams and new ventures.

By diversifying our income, we create platforms that reinvest directly in athletics at every level.



Technology, AI and digital innovation: Transforming how people experience and access athletics

We embed innovation at every level, from high-performance analytics to digital fan engagement and participation platforms.

By embracing technology and AI, we are transforming how Australians experience and connect with athletics.

These enablers don't sit apart from our strategy - they run through every pillar and every priority. Strong governance builds trust. Great people power the sport. Financial resilience funds bold ideas. Commercial ambition drives reinvestment. And digital innovation connects it all.

One Pathway, for Life.

Little Athletics

A positive and inclusive start to the joy of athletics.

Little Athletics is a **foundation for all sports.** It's where Australian kids take their first sporting steps and a lifelong connection to athletics can begin.

Built around f**amily, fun and fitness,** Little Athletics is about more than sport. It's friendships, personal bests and family rituals. It's the coach who helps master a new skill, encouragement from teammates and volunteers, and the ribbon that celebrates giving it a go and being your best.

It's where kids discover what they can do and families find community.

For the first time, we can connect that experience through one pathway for life.

The unification of Australian Athletics and Little Athletics Australia marks a new chapter, focused on delivering:

1. More seamless pathways for kids, making our sport easier for parents and families to navigate
2. Streamlined age standards and specifications across the sport
3. Growth and retention, increasing participation in Little Athletics while keeping more young people in our sport through their teenage years
4. Greater commercial strength, positioning athletics for success in the sports marketplace
5. Stronger governance and collaboration across our athletics ecosystem

The benefits are already evident. Our new State Members are part of the athletics family, strengthening collaboration. As One Sport, we are stronger, more connected and positioned for generations to come.

coles LITTLE ATHLETICS



The Sport's Beating Heart

Volunteers & Officials

They don't do it for the medals. They do it because they love this sport, and because it means someone else gets the chance to win one.

Every meet, every club competition, every regional carnival runs because someone showed up who didn't have to.

Before dawn on a Saturday, someone is marking the track. On a weeknight after work, someone is running a training session for kids who aren't theirs. Across the country, coaches, officials and volunteers take annual leave, drive hours, give up weekends and contribute countless hours of their own time, all so that athletics can happen for everyone else.

They've felt what this sport can give someone: the confidence, the friendships, the pride of a personal best. And they show up so the next person gets to feel it too. That's not sacrifice for its own sake. It's love for this sport, passed forward.

They are not support staff for our sport. They are our sport: its structure, its safety, its heart. This strategy commits to backing them the way they've always backed us, investing in their training, recognising their contribution, and making sure the people who carry athletics on their shoulders never go unseen.

That work is already underway. A new National Officials Strategy will strengthen how we recruit, develop, support and recognise officials across Australia, building a stronger and more sustainable pathway for the people who make our sport possible.



One sport. Every state.
One team.

Australian athletics is only as strong as the states and territories that deliver it every day across the country.

Athletics doesn't happen in one building. It happens on a track in Darwin, a footpath in Hobart, an oval in Perth, all at once. Our Member Associations are where the sport actually lives: where officials are trained, where clubs are supported, where athletes find their community and where the next generation first pulls on a bib.

Our federation is a source of strength. It connects a national sport with the communities that bring it to life every day. Every state and territory brings its own people, knowledge and experience, and together we create a stronger sport.

Our **National Strategic Framework** provides the shared foundation for how we work together, and the work to bring it to life is already well underway. National strategies across Participation, Integrity, Facilities, Digital and Officials are being developed, creating greater consistency, capability and alignment across the sport while recognising the needs of our local communities.

Over the next ten years, we grow by growing together: nationally aligned, locally empowered. When we align our systems, share our knowledge, and back each other's ambitions, the whole sport moves forward faster and with more momentum.




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Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission
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AUSTRALIAN OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
Paralympics Australia
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CHEMIST WAREHOUSE
RioTinto