

Athletes, coaches and sport organisations in regional and remote areas face unique challenges, including limited access to facilities, training opportunities, coaching expertise and competitive events such as selection trials. These challenges are further compounded by resource constraints and geographical barriers, which hinder their development and ability to reach their full potential.



There is immense value for athletes and coaches to remain in their local communities, surrounded by the support of family and friends. Many of Australia's most exceptional athletes have proudly emerged from regional and remote areas of Queensland. It's vital that we do everything possible to ensure young athletes can access pathway opportunities and support without having to leave their home communities.

This document offers strategies and practical approaches to address geographical challenges, promote community engagement and support regional and remote athletes to thrive within Queensland's broader sport system. It provides insights for athletes, coaches and officials to participate, develop and progress in their chosen sport.

Let's work together to create effective and equitable pathways that minimise barriers experienced in regional and remote areas to ensure all Queenslanders have equal opportunity to develop, excel and reach their full potential in their chosen sport no matter where they live.

Roles and responsibilities

- **National (NSOs) and State Sporting Organisations (SSOs)** – To assist sport organisations in developing and structuring pathways that are relevant to their specific contexts and to ensure alignment with broader state and national strategies and promoting equitable access for regional and remote participants.
- **Community leaders, schools, universities and clubs (community)** – To engage local communities in the support and delivery of regional and remote pathways, fostering ownership, collaboration and sustained involvement in sport programs.
- **Coaches** – To provide tailored support to athletes participating in regional and remote settings by adapting training, competition and development strategies to overcome geographical and resource challenges while fostering skill development and personal growth.
- **Parents and guardians** – To play a positive and supportive role in their child's sporting journey by encouraging participation, providing emotional and practical support and facilitating access to training, development opportunities and competitions. Parents and guardians should also foster resilience, promote a positive attitude towards challenges and maintain open communication with coaches and organisation.
- **Athletes** – To take ownership of their development by actively participating in training, competitions and development opportunities. Athletes should demonstrate commitment, resilience and adaptability to overcome the unique challenges of regional and remote environments. They are encouraged to seek feedback, set personal goals and collaborate with coaches, peers and support networks to maximise their potential.

Strategies to explore

1. Develop regional and remote talent

Identify your sport's pathway

Create an easy-to-understand visual representation of the recognised development pathway/s to illustrate how an athlete, coach or official can progress within your sport. Don't assume people know your sport well.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Communicate widely

Develop clear and concise communication to ensure all stakeholders and prospective participants are aware of development opportunities and the pathway for their sport. You may wish to identify which opportunities are open to all and which require selection to attend.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Participation readiness

Ensure any required equipment (such as personal protection equipment e.g. mouthguards), accreditations or qualification requirements (such as performance standards – minimum time, distance or score; attendance at specific pre-events; or rankings) are communicated well in advance as these aren't always easy to access in regional and remote areas.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Talent identification programs

Implement programs designed to identify and nurture talent in regional and remote areas, ensuring that these athletes, coaches and officials have opportunities for pathway progression.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Showcase events

Commit to hosting key competitions in regional locations so more local athletes can demonstrate their skills in front of scouts, selectors and pathway program representatives. There may also be opportunities to rotate events within a region and/or the state on a regular basis. Consider opportunities to deliver athlete, coach and official development sessions prior to or immediately post these events to leverage more benefit from attendance.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Increase accessibility to competitions and events

Develop strategies to make regional and remote athletes more competitive by improving access to key competitions and events that provide exposure to higher levels of play. Consider invitational teams or wildcard entries to offer more opportunities.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Event format

Ensure events maximise the participation experience for all participants. Implement pool games or round-robin style formats for early rounds rather than direct "knock-out" formats so participants gain as much experience as possible.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Regional hubs

Use larger towns as coaching and training bases for surrounding communities, with regular updates and feedback provided through digital tools. Commit to regular physical presence by highly experienced accredited coaches to also facilitate professional development sessions (accredited or non-accredited) for coaches and officials. Stay connected to the Queensland Academy of Sport and the Australian Institute of Sport updates for the latest opportunities on coach development including the Gen 2032 Coach Development Program.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Invest in targeted support for coaches and officials

Ensure that coaches and officials have access to relevant training, development and mentorship opportunities in regional locations to ensure local athletes are receiving high-quality training and match experiences.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Coach sharing programs

Develop a rotating schedule where skilled coaches visit multiple towns ensuring expertise reaches everyone. Where possible pair a participation initiative with coach education sessions so that both athletes and local coaches benefit from the visit.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Mentorship programs

Connect regional athletes, coaches and officials with mentors who have successfully navigated pathway programs, particularly those from similar backgrounds.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Cost-equalisation

Consider implementing specific policies to pool and redistribute travel costs for certain events ensuring all athletes pay the same amount no matter where they are from.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Cross collaboration

Encourage collaboration between different sports and Councils to reduce costs, share resources, facilities and expertise in regional areas. Reach out to those State Sporting Organisations that are seen and active in particular regional and remote communities and seek opportunities to leverage their expertise and experience for the betterment of the broader sporting community.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Evaluate

Regularly assess the effectiveness of pathways to ensure they provide equitable opportunities for athletes, coaches and officials and meet the sport's needs. Monitor the proportion of athletes, coaches and officials advancing through your pathway who are based outside South East Queensland.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Strategies to explore

2. Integrate education and sport

Athlete monitoring

Consider the best way to monitor and communicate training loads across school and club commitments to prevent injury and ensure an athlete's wellbeing.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community, Coaches, Parents, Athletes

Flexible education options

Work with schools to offer flexible learning arrangements for athletes who need to travel or train extensively.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community, Parents, Athletes

Blended programs

Combine physical activity with academic or leadership initiatives, tracking progress toward fitness, sport and educational goals.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

School-sport club collaboration

Strengthen ties between schools and local sporting clubs to improve pathways for young athletes.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

Pathway alignment

Develop relationships with Queensland Representative School Sport and work together to align club and school pathway opportunities.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

University sport

Communicate sport offerings to students who have migrated from home to major regional centres or cities for university to ensure they are aware of competitions and pathways being delivered regionally, nationally and internationally.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

3. Leverage technology

Digital platforms

Use virtual coaching including AI, online tutorials and conferences and hybrid competitions (blending local games with online leaderboards) to connect athletes with training and feedback opportunities.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Live streaming

Broadcast games and training sessions on appropriate platforms to increase engagement and learning. Train volunteers in basic video editing and streaming platforms.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Augmented reality (AR) training

Introduce augmented reality tools for skills development, such as visual guides for dribbling or running techniques.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Performance monitoring tools

Equip athletes with the latest wearable technology to track performance and share data with pathway program selectors.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Video submissions

Encourage athletes to create and submit video highlights of their performances to relevant pathway leads and talent scouts. Depending on your sport, encourage athletes to check out the Youfor2032 world-first app which uses AI and computer vision to assess athletic potential as part of Queensland's biggest athlete talent search for the next generation of champions.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Talent tracking

Implement a talent identification database to track and monitor potential athletes over several events, seasons or years ensuring they are invited to key development opportunities, trials and events.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches

Community crowdfunding

Consider online fundraising to support athletes, coaches and officials through Australian Sports Foundation or GoFundMe. Promote transparency by publicly tracking funds and outcomes.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Coaches, Parents, Athletes



Strategies to explore

4. Improve accessibility and increase opportunities in community

Shared facilities

Partner with schools and community centres to develop multi-purpose facilities/regional hubs that serve both education and sport and recreation needs.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

Transport solutions

Drive community-led, potentially subsidised, transport options to help athletes travel to sporting events and facilities.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs

Volunteer development

Incentivise and support local volunteers to become coaches, officials and administrators. Implement a train the trainer approach to translate knowledge and expertise into the community.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

5. Promote regional and remote success stories

Highlight role models

Share the stories of successful athletes, coaches and officials from regional Queensland to inspire others and demonstrate that pathways are achievable.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community, Coaches, Parents

Media coverage

Work with local and state media to promote regional athletes, coaches and officials and their achievements, increasing their visibility to selectors and sponsors.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community

Social media platforms

Encourage athletes, coaches and officials (over the age of 16) to build their personal brand on social media, showcasing their skills and achievements to a wider audience.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community, Parents, Athletes

Local heroes

Showcase stories of local athletes to inspire participation and create relatable role models.

Target audience: NSOs and SSOs, Community, Coaches, Parents, Athletes

By addressing the unique challenges of regional and remote areas and leveraging community resources and digital innovations, these strategies aim to build inclusive, sustainable pathways for athletes, coaches and officials to reach their full potential.

