

## Who is in charge?

Going forward our staff and volunteers will be working on both OneSport objectives as well as the objectives of their respective organisations. It is clear that we will need to determine a clear and efficient reporting structure for these OneSport objectives and we are looking at this question as a matter of priority. Our Boards have decided to “beef up” the existing LANSW and ANSW Joint Working Party (JWP) and manage a series of OneSport programs with this as a steering committee. For 2 years it has been an advisory group to the two CEOs and they have needed no more authority to progress a series of cooperative initiatives. If this group needs more authority from either Board (eg significant staff changes, major budget items), Boards could be asked to provide delegations or approve specific initiatives. In this model the JWP membership includes CEOs, Chairs of ANSW, LANSW and President of Masters, a few other directors, a rep from the NSW government and access to senior staff.

## What about age groups?

Little Athletics Australia has already made decisions, announced recently, which make good progress to a more aligned set of age groups in the child to teenage transition area. These take effect progressively over the next 2 seasons. Both governing bodies have resolved to align with calendar years as cut off dates, because this is the system used by both the Australian schools system and the IAAF.

## What about implement weights?

These are issues that are being considered by working groups nationally and in individual states. In NSW we are confident that where a compromise is necessary to reduce confusion between school, Little A and senior athletics rules for athletes of the same age that there is goodwill to resolve the matter with the best interests of the athlete as the key criteria.

## What about the Masters rego fee?

This is a matter for the Masters body to consider. There are only about 50 masters athletes in NSW not already registered with an ANSW club. We think we can move to a solution here, but it is not the biggest priority in our program. We are encouraged that Masters Athletics has joined as a part of this OneSport planning process.

## What about Masters event opportunities?

ANSW already has a significant program of inclusion of masters events in its summer and winter club and championship meets. By potentially including a variety of stakeholders, including Masters, within the body that monitors OneSport objectives, we should be able to ensure that there are opportunities for all.



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## When do clubs have to merge?

They don't. While it is our experience that there are many situations where the same club can and wants to engage child and adult members, there is a place for specialist clubs across age, event type, and across the spectrum from elite to social athletics. It makes no sense for a University Club to be required to support children athletes and there is no requirement for any Little Athletics centre to include adults. Our key concern is that there are clear pathways for growing children and teens to seamlessly continue their interest in athletics as they get older or are looking for different ways to do athletics. This is about communication, about children seeing what teenage or senior athletics looks like in all its forms, about club and centre administrators understanding and respecting the varying needs of athletes within and across various age groups, and knowing that the governing bodies are focussed on helping leverage all our combined resources, volunteers and goodwill to ensure every athlete can find a way to participate, learn and excel within the whole NSW athletics movement. It is not about enforcing a cookie-cutter approach to all Clubs and Centres.

## What about sponsorship opportunities?

We believe that there are opportunities for external investment in our sport that will be more likely to emerge if we can act in concert to assure a commercial sponsor of "reach" to all participants. This has been seen with other sports where the whole community around a sport is engaged to bring a positive association to a brand (eg cricket and Commonwealth Bank where both the national teams and local junior cricket clubs are involved). This is not our first priority, and we may need national links to develop, but we believe that closer cooperation between ANSW and LANSW will encourage commercial sponsors that there is a way they can contract for a whole of sport deal.

## Will we have a combined state T&F championships?

While we have already combined some of our state cross country championships, the size of our sport means not every activity actually benefits from combination. So we will work together to pick and choose which championships make sense to run as part of the same meet. The key decision criterion will be what supports the best long-term retention of transition age children in the sport. If being able to see older athletes at a championship is important, we will try to do some of it. With respect to the state T&F championships, the LANSW and ANSW events are simply too big to combine as one event on one weekend at this time.

## What about officials?

In the last 2 years there has been great progress in alignment of the officials programs for both senior and little athletics. An officials JWP has been supporting cooperative officials courses and accreditation processes and encouraging officials from both segments of our sport to support events run by the other. We need officials from both groups to continue to welcome and include official colleagues who developed their skills in another part of our sport so we can grow the overall pool of available officials and create pathways for their development.

## Why don't little A centres just join ANSW?

There are already a few who have done so as it gives them easy access to ANSW events, ANSW communications and support. In northern NSW a group of little A centres has even combined to make an ANSW club so some of their older athletes can register, run in ANSW competitions but still be part of their little A's organisation. While this may be a sensible option for some centres, there are good reasons why it might not work for all LANSW centres. In those cases, our job is to make sure that the athletes at those centres have a pathway for a life of involvement in athletics.

## Children, adults and older athletes all have different needs. Why not leave things as they are?

It is true that every athlete is different. It is not our intent to build a one-size-fits-all sport. We are mainly focussed on ensuring that the links, cooperation, services and communication are in place to ensure that athletes can see a "cradle to grey" pathway for themselves in our sport. For that to happen, we benefit from shared plans. Today we don't yet operate in a way that makes it easy to transition, especially between Little As and senior athletics. Where needs of different athletes overlap, there is benefit in cooperating to meet those needs. The same applies for coaches and officials in our sport.



## Why doesn't ANSW simply start running events for younger children?

Research shows that at all ages there is a range of different products that best suit any individual. For some children, Little A's current product is perfect. It may be that there are other products which may suit younger athletes as well: Little Athletics is currently reviewing some research commissioned nationally to advise on what additional athletics programs might help meet the needs of children who want non-competition exposure to athletics. Like other sports, we need to be prepared to evolve. Many of our current customers will still want what we have always done, but together, we are prepared to add new types of athletics to our portfolio to attract or retain participants who want something else. We will answer these types of questions better if we do it as OneSport, rather than trying to attack the same question from different positions.

## "Senior" athletics is only for elite and "serious" athletes. What about fun and fitness?

Actually, senior athletics is for all sort of athletes, including recreational or "social" athletes. In the last 5 years ANSW has introduced "Community Athlete" membership and the RunNSW series of funruns events to broaden our services to athletes who don't aren't looking to high level competition. Our Summer series this year included around 50 meets across the state, many of which are setup to appeal to athletes who simply want to have fun competing close to home at their own standard.

## What about schools competitions? When will this be combined?

There are a some traditional schools competition organisers who have existed for a long time: GPS, CAS, PSSA and CHS. They provide a great service to the schools and athletes who participate. And these bodies are improving their service to athletes every year. Lots of the key individuals in their administration are also active in LANSW and ANSW and the result is there is good respect, cooperation and sharing of volunteer resources. At present we don't see the main goal of transition age athlete retention in our sport being affected by changing the status, but as and if we identify new opportunities that materially benefit athletes by cooperating with these bodies, we will engage. We recognise that the sport as a whole has plenty of room for improvement in terms of working with schools.

## What about the sporting schools program?

The ASC has been administering a program to fund athletics skills development, presented by accredited "coaches" to schools in NSW as part of federal health department funding. We are working with AA on refining the way this is delivered in NSW so that we will improve the links between this "non-competition" athletics product and our traditional athletics clubs and centres, so that children inspired in the school environment know how to do more athletics with our movement and the coaches involved are brought "into the tent".

## Isn't the OneSport focus bad for our champion athletes and taking away governing body resources that should be invested in helping retain and support our very best senior and teenage athletes?

More state-based LANSW and ANSW resources than ever are being invested in programs like our Target Talent Program (TTP) and Junior Encouragement and Talent Squad (JETS). Despite federal government funding preventing continuation of the Australian Athletics tour, ANSW will still fund and conduct the Sydney Classic, Hunter Track Classic and other new Twilight Series events, specifically to provide high level competition opportunities for our top senior athletes. ANSW resources were involved in winning hosting rights and will be involved in conducting the National T&F titles in March/April, giving NSW athletes the chance to perform at the highest national level in their home state. So new initiatives and resources allocated to meeting the needs of non-elite and recreational athletes are not at the expense of our traditional champion class.

## What is being done to improve facilities?

Our LANSW and ANSW staff are active in working with clubs and centres to influence fiscally constrained governments to maintain and grow world class competition and training facilities for our best athletes. We have a new track at Dubbo, one coming at Maitland, recent resurfacing at SOPAC, and we are actively engaged with clubs and track owners for improvements at ES Marks, the Newcastle Blue track, Blacktown, Narrabeen and The Crest, among others. We will be better placed to lobby government if we do it as OneSport, representing the interests of all types of athletes.

## ANSW offers no competitions in my location, why would I want to be a part of that organisation?

Currently LANSW has a far more thorough coverage of NSW than senior athletics clubs do. One of the hopes is that by encouraging Little A's members to continue with athletics after Little A's may have lost relevance this may help grow senior athletics in regional areas. By acting as OneSport we are also better able to make all athletes aware of opportunities which do exist for regional athletes, such as the Country Championships, the RunNSW program (which features fun runs throughout the state, and summer and winter meets which are not based in Sydney).



## **I am happy with my child participating at Little Athletics. Is Little Athletics simply going to be taken over by ANSW?**

There is no intention within the OneSport plan to change any aspect of the way in Little Athletics operates, so if your child is participating in Little A's then s/he shouldn't notice any difference in their weekly competition. OneSport seeks to ensure that as well as the Little Athletics offering, kids are aware of what the next step in athletics might look like. There are thousands of children who choose to participate both in events run by LANSW as well as those run by ANSW. What is important is that we provide the best opportunity for children to find their niche within the sport, for tomorrow as well as today.

## **The Dual Athlete automatic registration process and OneSport bibs distribution initiatives in 2016 were poorly executed, causing disruption and angst for senior and Little As clubs and centres. These problems have not helped build confidence in the ultimate success of OneSport. Do the governing bodies and their staff have the capability to embark on all the OneSport initiatives outlined in the OneSport Strategic Plan?**

There are always going to be teething problems trying to align systems for the first time. These problems confirm the need for closer collaboration between the two organisations, so that we have a better understanding of each other. Some of the proposals in the draft OneSport plan (eg OneSport Competitions Strategy) are aimed specifically at helping overcome some of these implementation issues. In spite of any problems, the benefits that the initiatives have brought have overshadowed these. For example, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with respect to the concept of opening up Country Championships to younger athletes, even if the registration process hasn't been as smooth as we all would have liked.

## **When will the governing bodies merge?**

This is not clear or even decided yet. We don't think this is necessary for execution of a joint plan. The McLaughlin report proposes a timeline which has the two governing bodies considering the best way to be structured in 2019, assuming that other recommendations are able to be completed in the interim. All going to plan at that stage we will review the operation and progress and consider whether there are advantages in merging governance and get feedback from members then.

