



# 2020-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

The 2020-2024 Strategic Plan defines the AFF's focus over the next four years as an organisation with a view to ensure that we:

- foster, promote and control the sport of fencing in Australia;
- provide opportunities for participation in fencing by all members of the community;
- achieve a high and consistent standard of coaching and officiating;
- promote fair competitions and support the health and safety of everyone involved in the sport;
- promote Australia internationally as a successful nation in fencing;
- increase the awareness of the sport among the general public, business community, the media and government;
- provide efficient and effective administration of the sport; and
- maintain the long-term financial viability of the AFF.

Six strategic priorities have been identified as the main areas of focus for the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan.



**ACHIEVE CRITICAL  
MASS**



**PERFORM WELL TO  
INSPIRE MORE**



**FUTURE PROOF THE  
SPORT**



**TAKE A WHOLE-OF-  
SPORT APPROACH**



**SAFE SPORTS**



**TALK IT UP**

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: ACHIEVE CRITICAL MASS



Increasing social and competitive participation is fundamental to the AFF's purpose, as greater numbers translate to more viable clubs, stronger competition and more alternative pathways for fencers seeking ongoing involvement. The AFF will support clubs and Member States to strengthen their participation base by making fencing a sport of choice. In addition to increasing the raw number of active fencers, the AFF is committed to being an inclusive sport which supports men and women equally, strives for a culturally diverse membership and increases access to fencing for all.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
Develop capability at the school, club and state level to deliver participation programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand AusFence for general community consumption.</li> <li>Increase accredited coaches / facilitators available to deliver participation programs.</li> <li>Develop resources for clubs to make membership management, invoicing and club administration more efficient.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded AusFence program operationalised by mid-2022.</li> <li>New facilitator coaching accreditation pathway established and promoted.</li> <li>Develop resources and make available to clubs for use starting in 2022.</li> </ul>
Provide greater exposure to clubs and Member States in AFF communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote clubs and Member States through AFF communications and explore other opportunities to give greater exposure to clubs.</li> <li>Collect club membership data at the point of AFC competition registration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Club membership published with competition results from mid-2021 onwards.</li> <li>AFF website updated with 'find-a-club' functionality with direct links to clubs.</li> </ul>

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
Promote and support para-fencing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding sources to assist Members States with para-fencing equipment or initiatives.</li> <li>Promote fencing to identified disability support service providers.</li> <li>Foster relationships with Disabilities Sports Australia and Paralympics Australia and explore opportunities for collaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Para-fencing opportunities available to athletes in each Member State by 2024.</li> <li>Para-fencing demonstration and/or instructional at one or more AFC competitions each year to promote para-fencing in Australia by the 2023.</li> <li>Create and execute a target marketing campaign to promote fencing to disability support service providers by the end of 2022.</li> </ul>
Effectively capture and report participation and membership data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and introduce mechanisms to accurately capture strategic information and report participation data at all levels.</li> <li>Leverage captured data to improve governance, development, marketing and funding initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Procure and implement a national membership data capturing IT solution by the end of 2022.</li> </ul>
Increase participation in AFC competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the quality of Australian national circuit events.</li> <li>Consider recommendations from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Working Group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Entry numbers in Australian national circuit competitions and age category championships increase year on year from 2021 onwards.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: PERFORM WELL TO INSPIRE MORE



Fencing has a proud history as one of the five original Olympic sports in the modern era and qualifying individual fencers and teams to the Olympics remains a driving force behind AFF supporting operations. The AFF will develop high performance athlete pathways incremental and constant improvement in international rankings, aligning programs where possible with club and state delivery models. To support these organisational objectives and make international competition accessible for our best athletes, the AFF will source external funding, allocate those funds in the most effective manner, and leverage external expertise and resources.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
Deliver a High Performance Program which supports Australian fencers to be successful at international events and qualify for a future Olympic Games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and administer a structured national high performance program capable of producing long-term, sustainable international success.</li> <li>Identify and implement measures to actively support the development of a National Squad (<b>NS</b>).</li> <li>Implement strategies to support and retain elite athletes by providing assistance to enable them to balance their sporting and education / career goals.</li> <li>Encourage and support NS athletes in pursuing sponsorship opportunities.</li> <li>Enabling the best athletes to represent Australia at international competitions.</li> <li>Regularly review and refine the high performance program to identify areas for continuous improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and document the new High Performance Program by mid-2021.</li> <li>Review and update policies relating to selection and rankings to support updated High Performance Program initiatives including rankings to be consistent with the practices of the international governing body.</li> <li>Formalise a terms of reference and establish High Performance Commission by mid-2021.</li> <li>Update National Weapon Coach contracts to support updated High Performance Program initiatives by mid-2021.</li> <li>Update High Performance Athlete contracts to reflect the new High Performance Program initiatives by mid-2021.</li> </ul>
Source and retain High Performance funding from external sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate external funding opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing funding from external sources retained where possible.</li> </ul>

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Strengthen development pathways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement dedicated elite athlete pathways. The objective of the AFF National Performance Pathway (NPP) Program is to deliver a multi-weapon program through which every AFF athlete can access development opportunities that support them to maximise their potential.</li> <li>• Provide athletes with development pathways for the 2032 Olympic cycle.</li> <li>• Maximise athlete development opportunities through an aligned delivery structure which includes clubs, State Performance Centres, and NPP Program activity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Execute the AFF's Performance Pathway Workforce Plan.</li> <li>• Review delivery and resourcing structure around the AFF's National Performance Pathway Program on a regular basis.</li> <li>• Strong participation in the AFF High Performance Pathway, across all weapons and genders.</li> </ul>
Increase access to external expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on existing initiatives to introduce dedicated, fencing-specific support services for NS athletes in areas such as physiotherapy, strength &amp; conditioning, sports psychology, biomechanics and video analysis.</li> <li>• Explore potential to partner with the national and State institutes of sports and/or university sector to draw on sports science expertise.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to share the knowledge and experience of elite international fencers resident in or visiting Australia.</li> <li>• Build relationships with other Australian NSOs to benefit from high performance knowledge and expertise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to dedicated, fencing-specific support services for NS athletes in areas such as physiotherapy, strength &amp; conditioning, sports psychology, biomechanics and video analysis by the end of 2023.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: FUTURE-PROOF THE SPORT



Critical to increasing participation and strengthening high performance is a capable and committed pool of fencing coaches. In addition to maintaining standards through its accreditation process, the AFF will support and develop coaches with initiatives for fostering collaboration, sharing expertise and leveraging overseas tours to provide coach learning opportunities.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
Increase the number of domestic coaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement an easily accessible tiered accreditation system administered by the AFF.</li> <li>Ensure annual delivery of a Level 1 Coaching course in each Member State and annual delivery of a Level 2 Coaching course.</li> <li>Promote diversity among coaches by actively recruiting demographic groups which may be under-represented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver new coach accreditation system by end of 2022.</li> <li>Annual Level 1 Coaching courses run in each Member State.</li> <li>Annual Level 2 Coaching course delivered.</li> </ul>
Strengthen coaching expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement training and formal development programs for domestic coaches, including requirements for ongoing professional education and development.</li> <li>Work with the FIE to provide opportunities for coach training overseas.</li> <li>Create opportunities for coaches to accompany Australian teams on international tours.</li> <li>Provide regular opportunities for coaches to network and exchange ideas and experience in an informal setting to build trust and co-operation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make available an expanded digital coaching resource.</li> <li>Coaches traveling overseas with the Australian athletes for tours and competitions.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: TAKE A WHOLE-OF-SPORT APPROACH



Fencing is a highly technical sport which relies on skilled officials to interpret and apply rules consistently and fairly, at the piste and when managing competitions generally. Through the following initiatives, the AFF seeks to develop officials who can contribute to safe and enjoyable fencing tournaments in Australia and create a competitive local arena that supports fencers to achieve on the international stage.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
Develop domestic tournament management capability and increase the number of domestic referees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer a tiered accreditation system providing pathways development for referees and tournament management.</li> <li>Develop training programs for domestic referees.</li> <li>Work with the FIE to provide overseas opportunities for referee training and certification.</li> <li>Promote diversity in the pool of accredited national referees by actively recruiting demographic groups which may be under-represented.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver new referee accreditation system by end of 2022.</li> <li>Establish an Officiating Commission by the end of 2022.</li> <li>Increased number of Australian accredited referees at all levels.</li> <li>Increased number of Australian FIE accredited referees.</li> </ul>
Reduce the running costs of competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Replace RegisterNow with a more cost effective solution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New competition registration software in use by early 2022.</li> </ul>
Enhance officiating expertise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable exposure to ongoing referee education and development.</li> <li>Develop the skills and experience of the current and next generation of tournament management personnel, through exposure to appropriate national and international opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make available expanded digital refereeing resource.</li> </ul>



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: SAFE SPORTS



Integrity in fencing will be addressed on and off the playing field through an unequivocal commitment to fairness, respect and a safe sporting environment. The AFF will continue to work with external agencies to develop policies and procedures which protect individuals, promote fair competitions and support the health and safety of everyone involved in the sport.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
<p>Make fencing a safe sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain, update and rationalise safe sport policies and procedures in line with current legislation, rules and regulations and community standards.</li> <li>• Review the AFF's integrity framework to reduce the administrative burden on Member States and provide better outcome for members when disputes arise.</li> <li>• Ensure Member States and athletes are regularly reminded of the AFF's policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Maintain relationship and open dialogue with Sports Integrity Australia.</li> <li>• Explore options for health and wellbeing framework for athletes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update and rationalise policies and procedures in line with current legislation, rules and regulations and community standards by the end of 2021.</li> <li>• Policies and procedures are compliant with the directives of applicable governing bodies and external funding agencies.</li> </ul>

## STRATEGIC PRIORITY 6: TALK IT UP



A shifting media landscape and rapid developments in digital communications platforms provides new opportunities for the AFF to market the sport and promote its brand directly to consumers. The AFF will ensure marketing and communications support growth plans and program initiatives to attract and retain active fencers, foster community and promote fencing as a modern, dynamic sport.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
Raise awareness of contemporary fencing as an exciting, accessible and competitive sport for all age groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify opportunities to improve branding with quality images, graphic design and signage.</li> <li>Identify opportunities for external media coverage and distribute suitable media releases as opportunities arise.</li> <li>Regularly publish quality news and event promotions to AFF digital channels (website and social media presence).</li> <li>Identify and explore new and emerging channels/platforms and establish a presence there for the AFF where suitable.</li> <li>Improve broadcasting quality of event livestreams (improve technology and improve skills).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make available professional head shot service at 2 or more AFC competitions each year.</li> <li>Review and update the AFF website annually and update content as the need arises.</li> <li>Create broadcasting guidelines by the end of 2022.</li> <li>Improve the viewing experience of AFC competitions.</li> </ul>
Increase participation rates by working with Member States to develop suitable marketing strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop communications capacity in Member States with resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold an information seminar at an NFC competition on leveraging social media and NPF best practice by the end of 2022.</li> </ul>
Promote fencer member loyalty and retention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage existing membership data to create direct marketing email segments for various marketing initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build mailing lists and increase direct mailing initiatives by the end of 2022.</li> </ul>

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO	HOW WE ARE GOING TO DO IT	HOW WILL WE MEASURE SUCCESS
<p>Promote and leverage recognisable national brand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore potential to harmonise branding at State and national level.</li> <li>• Develop and market range of Australian fencing merchandise.</li> <li>• Develop marketing strategy for Australian representative teams.</li> <li>• Explore sponsorship possibilities at whole of organisation and project level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure AFF branded banners for use at AFC competitions.</li> <li>• Expand AFF online shop by end of 2021.</li> </ul>
<p>Enhance relationships with key bodies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthen relationships with key bodies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sport Australia (through the National Combat Centre);</li> <li>○ Australian Olympic Committee (AOC);</li> <li>○ International Fencing Federation (FIE);</li> <li>○ Oceania Fencing Confederation (OFC);</li> <li>○ Commonwealth Fencing Federation (CFF); and</li> <li>○ other NSOs and State and Federal Governments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Actively engage with key bodies, seek representation on committees (where appropriate), and increase quality and quantity of formal and informal contact.</li> <li>• Participate in programs and opportunities and identify and develop strategic partnerships to establish joint projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify key bodies and contact each key body to invite them to subscribe to the AFF mailing list by mid-2021.</li> </ul>

