



STATEMENT OF INTENT

VISION

The vision of the National Sports Tribunal (NST) is to promote and protect the integrity and fairness of Australian sport as the national sporting community's forum of choice for consistent resolution of disputes.

Sport can promote and help achieve a wide range of Government policy priorities including community sport participation, preventive health, social inclusion, high performance success, international and regional engagement, economic recovery, trade and tourism. Protecting the integrity and fairness of Australian sport is critical to achieving these outcomes. Public confidence in the reputation and honour of the Australian sporting system is necessary for people to feel connected to sport and physical activity at all levels, and the NST plays an important role in maintaining that confidence. As espoused in *2032+: Australia's High Performance Sport Strategy*, we share a collective commitment to balance ambitious performance goals with a culture of care and to prioritise integrity, fair play and pride in what makes us uniquely Australian.

In particular, over the next 12 months the NST is well placed to:

- Support gender equity:
 - through diversity in the Tribunal, with no more than 60% of Tribunal Members representing one gender; and
 - providing dispute resolution services for those experiencing gender-based discrimination in sport.
- Explore opportunities for international and regional engagement, such as hosting an international conference for sporting tribunals and extending dispute resolution support to South Pacific nations.
- Investigate how we might assist in the delivery of top-tier international sporting events in the 'green and gold decade' by providing dispute resolution services to those events.
- Contribute to Australia's participation in benchmark international events by providing resolution of selection appeals, starting with nominations and selections for the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

ROLE OF THE NST

The mission of the NST is to provide an effective, efficient, independent, transparent and specialist tribunal for the fair hearing and resolution of sporting disputes.

In line with this mission, the NST will continue to focus first and foremost on its core business of sports dispute resolution services including arbitration, mediation, conciliation and case appraisal. We will deliver these services in accordance with the NST legislation and the policies of eligible sporting bodies, and in a manner aligned with our values to:

- remain independent;
- act with integrity and impartiality;
- deliver quality justice and outcomes;
- be accessible; and
- respect individuals.



PRIORITIES

Safety and fairness in sport

The NST acknowledges its important role in ensuring safety and fairness in Australian sport and will continue to provide its services to hear disputes relating to:

- anti-doping rule violations;
- disciplinary matters;
- selection and eligibility;
- bullying, harassment and discrimination; and
- other disputes approved by me as CEO.

I will allocate Members to constitute the Tribunal for all matters within the NST's Anti-Doping, General and Appeals Divisions.

The NST will lead by example with respect to safe and fair practices. Guided by our values, we will continue to collaborate with Sport Integrity Australia to help build and embed an inclusive, dependable culture within integrity bodies as well as the wider sporting community. Recognising that independence with a lack of bias is critical to the role played by the NST in providing a fair and safe sporting environment, the NST has established robust conflict of interest processes, including protocols for staff that build on departmental policy.

The NST will also continue to provide guidance to Members and staff, including advice on the exercise of statutory powers to Members. Documents such as the NST Bench Book, the NST Parties Handbook and the NST Member Handbook assist with provision of this advice and will be continually reviewed and updated for best practice.

Position the NST as the forum of choice for resolution of sports disputes

Positioning the NST as the forum of choice for the resolution of sporting disputes is an explicit part of our vision. The number of disputes heard by the NST is continuing to grow each year. We report on these numbers along with other aspects of our operation and performance in the Department's Annual Report. The NST is continuing to engage with sporting organisations and peak bodies to embed its jurisdiction in their policies and rules.

As CEO, I will represent the NST and promote its services, including through presentations to sporting organisations, interest groups and government agencies; and responding to the media as appropriate.

I will also ensure the ongoing implementation of a fit-for-purpose fee structure for operations of the NST, reviewing fees and charges annually in line with the Government's policy on indexation. Fees and charges are based on a partial cost recovery charging framework, balancing a user-pay approach for some services while ensuring the NST remains affordable for athletes, sporting bodies and other parties. This includes my assessment of applications for hardship assistance.

In line with the focus areas identified in the *Final Report of Evaluation of the National Sports Tribunal Pilot* (June 2022), the NST will provide specific attention to accessibility, ensuring that our processes are equitable and appropriate for those with specific needs. Guidance such as that recently developed to assist vulnerable persons and persons requiring additional support will be provided to NST Members and parties. We are currently reviewing our standard operating procedures with a view to making them as user-friendly as possible for participants.



The NST is also currently reviewing membership of our Legal Assistance Panel to maximise the number of suitable legal practitioners willing to provide pro bono legal assistance, or services at a reduced cost, to parties before the NST.

Corporate strategy and management

As CEO, I commit to principled, contemporary management and sound corporate strategy for the NST. Over the next 12 months, this will include:

- continuing to evolve the NST’s mission and strategic direction consistent with the Government’s objectives and priorities;
- managing the NST’s performance and resources including remuneration for Members and development of a workforce strategy for Members and staff;
- developing and strengthening key stakeholder relationships including those with other portfolio sport entities, peak bodies, sporting organisations, international tribunals and other integrity bodies;
- ensuring the NST responds effectively and nimbly to the public service environment in which it is based; and
- maintenance of efficient support to Members and processes that allow for timeliness and reflect a culture of continual improvement and growth.

ORGANISATIONAL GOVERNANCE

The NST continues to operate in accordance with powers and functions established by the *National Sports Tribunal Act 2019* and the *National Sports Tribunal Rule 2020*. As the NST transitions from a pilot program to an ongoing tribunal, it will be timely in the next 12 months to review its legislation and recommend any necessary or desirable amendments, commencing with the *National Sports Tribunal Practice and Procedure Determination 2021*.

The NST promotes an inclusive, collaborative and team-based culture and will continue to manage our workforce to allow for prospective scaling-up of operations, including undertaking specialised recruitment where required. We incorporate the four APS reform priorities, in particular taking pride in embodying integrity and continuously improving our processes to place people at their centre. The NST is also committed to implementing priorities for improvement arising from the Department’s Capability Review.

The NST will work closely with the Department to ensure all financial management and accountability standards are met and it operates judiciously, proving its value to Australian sport whilst remaining affordable for parties.



ADVICE TO GOVERNMENT

The NST is committed to working collaboratively with other sport entities in the Health and Aged Care portfolio. We will continue to liaise with the Office for Sport, the Australian Sports Commission, Sport Integrity Australia and the Australian Sports Foundation to optimise stakeholder engagement opportunities and consider issues such as major events, human rights, culture and leadership, empowering women in sport and the development of the National Sports Plan.

Cooperation will continue in order to provide sound, coordinated and strategic advice to Government and to ensure critical issues are addressed cohesively within agreed communication protocols and timeframes.