

Competition Review

Final Recommendations Report

May 2024



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Acknowledgements from Chair of Competition Review Working Group

On behalf of the Competition Review Working Group, thank you to each of the members of our swimming community who reviewed the proposal documents and submitted responses during the two opportunities for community feedback. The Working Group were very grateful to have received 174 responses to the first proposal, and 185 responses to the updated proposal. In comparison to the Competition Review completed in 2020, this is a significant increase from the 32 responses received and played a vital role during this review.

The Working Group appreciated and valued the feedback received from the community, making adjustments to 6 of the 8 initial proposed recommendations and added a 9th recommendation as a result of feedback.

I'd also like to acknowledge the contributions of my 15 fellow members of the Competition Review Working Group. Each member provided valuable and considered insights and perspectives throughout the process, respectfully debated and considered all stakeholder feedback. The Working Group worked well together to land on the final recommendations that we believe will continue moving our competitions forward as a sport across the country.

Therefore, a special thank you goes to the members of the Working Group for their time and support over the past 8 months. Your contributions to help move our sport forward are greatly appreciated and we are looking forward to bringing these recommendations to life.



Dale Johnson

Chair - Competition Review Working Group

Head of Participation, Competitions & Engagement - Swimming NZ

A Working Group consisting of 16 members including coaches, active swimmers, event delivery staff and Swimming NZ staff was formed to complete a review of competitions held throughout New Zealand. This followed on from the previous review recommendation (published in 2020) to conduct 4-yearly reviews.

The Working Group identified eight key issues within the scope of the review. As an overview, these issues were:

1. The timing of national events
2. The timing of regional championships
3. A lack of variety available across the competition pathway in New Zealand
4. A missing step in the competition pathway
5. Some Swimming NZ events required adjustments, which were:
 - NZ Champs
 - Division II
 - Junior Festivals
6. Inconsistencies in setting meet formats across New Zealand
7. The delivery and understanding of Designated and Development Meets
8. Costs associated with attending and delivering events

Using these eight identified issues as a guide, the Working Group discussed and debated options, before providing eight proposed recommendations for the swimming community to review and provide feedback on. An overview of the initial proposed recommendations were:

1. Articulate a competition pathway
2. Updated timing of national events
3. Updating timing of major regional championships
4. Recommendation for meet types at social and foundation levels
5. Setting meet formats
6. Adjusting Designated Meet criteria
7. Updates to Div II
8. Updates to Junior Festivals

The Working Group received 174 responses to the Proposal for Community Feedback. The Working Group met face-to-face to discuss the feedback and consider updating their proposed recommendations. The Working Group made updates to 6 of the 8 initial proposed recommendations and added a 9th recommendation as result of the community feedback. The Working Group opted to seek community feedback on the updated proposed recommendation 2 - timing of SNZ competitions.

The community provided 185 responses to the updated proposal for community feedback on the timing of SNZ competitions.

Upon reviewing these responses and by comparing the feedback received from the initial community feedback opportunity, the Working Group discussed the feedback and presented 9 final recommendations for the Swimming NZ Board to approve.

A brief overview of these 9 recommendations are:

1. Articulate a competition pathway
2. Updated timing of Swimming NZ competitions
3. Updated timing of major regional championships
4. Recommendation for meet types at club and foundation levels
5. Setting meet formats
6. Updates to Meet Approval Policy
7. Updates to Div II
8. Updates to Junior Festivals
9. Opportunities for Open Water competitions

The Swimming NZ Board endorsed all 9 recommendations from the Working Group, also recognising the thorough process of the Competition Review and thanking each of the Working Group members for their expertise and time.

The Competition Review final recommendations will now be used for planning of competition calendars and pathways across the country.

Following on from the Competition Restructure & Competition Pathway Review (2021 – 2024) that was completed in 2020, SNZ set up a Competition Review Working Group to complete review 4 years later, one of the previous recommendations from the last review.

The working group consisted of 7 coaches, 2 active swimmers, 2 event delivery staff and 5 SNZ staff members, possessing a vast array of experience within swimming, across varying levels and from across the country.

The Terms of Reference for the working group outlined they would provide expert advice and recommendations in the following areas:

- Competition structure of competitions at local, regional, zonal and national level – ie: timing of competitions
- Competition formats, age groups and qualifying criteria for competitions at local, regional, zonal and national level
- Competition pathways offered within New Zealand
- The structure of designated and development meets within New Zealand

Competitions at all levels of swimming in New Zealand have been identified as a major element of the delivery of swimming for our community. For this reason, the second Competition Review is an important step in continuing to provide quality racing opportunities for swimmers across the country.



Name	Organisation	Representing
Dale Johnson (Chair)	Swimming NZ	Head of Participation & Events
Gary Francis	Swimming NZ	Olympic Programme Lead
Simon Mayne	Swimming NZ	Paralympic Programme Lead
Carlrine Gillespie	Swimming NZ	TO & Volunteer Development Lead
Kira Morrison	Swimming NZ	Event Coordinator
Willy Benson	Heretaunga Sundevils	Coach
Peter Burgon	Jasi	Coach
David Lyles	Phoenix Aquatics	Coach
Brigitte Mahan	North Canterbury	Coach
Frank Touelle	SwimZone Racing	Coach
Michael Weston	Coast	Coach
Mat Woofe	Hamilton Aquatics	Coach
William Campbell	Wharenui	Swimmer
Emilia Finer	Neptune	Swimmer
Angeline Hardie	Swimming Waikato	Event Delivery
Quinton Hurley	Swimming Canterbury West Coast	Event Delivery

The process for the Competition Review took place between September 2023 and May 2024.

1. Working Group Formed

Expressions of interest were sought to be involved in the Working Group, with the coaches then voted upon by the coaching community as to who they would like to represent them on the Working Group. The top 7 voted coaches were selected to the Working Group, alongside 2 event delivery staff and 2 active swimmers.

2. Identified Issues

The Working Group completed a survey prior to the first meeting to identify the issues that they felt needed addressing within the scope of the Competition Review. These have been the starting point for Working Group discussions and recommendations.

3. Face-to-Face Meeting to Propose Recommendations

The Working Group had a group meeting to discuss opportunities to address the issues identified and present a proposal for community feedback. Following some additional virtual meetings, the proposal for the community was prepared.

4. Shared Proposal for Community Feedback

The Working Group shared the proposed recommendations for the Competition Review with the wider community to seek their feedback. This took place between February and March 2024.

5. Working Group Reviewed Community Feedback

The Working Group reviewed the 174 responses received from the community and met face-to-face to discuss. The Working Group made updates to 6 of 8 initial recommendations as a result of the feedback received. Given the updates to Recommendation 2 were significant, the Working Group wanted to seek community feedback again on the timing of SNZ competitions.

6. Shared Updated Proposal for Community Feedback

The Working Group shared the updated proposed recommendations for a second opportunity for community feedback on timing of SNZ competitions only in March 2024.

7. Working Group Reviewed Feedback from Updated Proposal

The Working Group met virtually to discuss the 185 responses received from the updated proposal feedback, before making their final recommendations.

8. Working Group's Final Recommendations Approved by Swimming NZ Board

The Working Group's final recommendations were presented to the SNZ Board for their approval.

9. Final Recommendations of the Competition Review Published

The Working Group's final recommendations were presented to the community and planning for competition calendars began to align with the final recommendations.



One of the first tasks for the Competition Review Working Group was to review the current state of competitions held across New Zealand. This review was conducted via a survey of group members, and identified key issues that formed the basis of the focus areas the Working Group wished to propose recommendations and solutions for, to improve the delivery of competitions in New Zealand.

The key issues identified by the Working Group (in no particular order) were:

1. The timing of national events

Three factors were identified as issues to be addressed:

- NZ Champs and NAGS are too close together on the calendar.
- NZ Secondary Schools and NZ Short Course are too close together on the calendar.
- NZ Short Course is not being held in the school holidays.

2. The timing of regional championships

Whilst acknowledged that this is a result of the previous Competition Restructure & Competition Pathway Review, clashes of when regional championships are held were identified as an issue to address. Part of this issue also noted a lack of collaboration across the country when setting the competition calendar.

3. A lack of variety available across the competition pathway in New Zealand

Some issues were identified across the competition pathway such as:

- Lack of team-based competitions
- Lack of clear break in season
- Lack of race practice being utilised
- Lack of valuing each competition for its role in the competition pathway

4. A missing step in the competition pathway

The Working Group felt that significant racing opportunities were restricted for swimmers, compounded by regional championships being held in the same period and on the same weekends.

5. Some SNZ events need adjustments to better suit the competition calendar and pathway

Three events were noted for having issues that needed addressing:

- NZ Champs
 - The financial viability of the event in its current format as a standalone event
- Div II
 - The timing of Div II on the competition calendar
 - The length of the competition
 - NAGS swimmers competing at Div II
 - Slower than qualifying times
- Junior Festivals
 - The timing of Junior Festivals on the competition calendar
 - The gap between Junior Festivals and NAGS for 12 year olds turning 13 year olds

6. Inconsistencies in setting meet formats around New Zealand

Clarity needed on the following when setting up competitions:

- Qualifying times
- Age as of date
- Age group bands
- Event scheduling (ie: don't need every event)
- Length of competitions

7. The delivery and understanding of designated and development meets

A few issues were identified with the current state, including limiting regions to 10 designated meets, a lack of collaboration when selecting designated meets within the regions and a lack of understanding/education within the community.

8. Costs associated with attending and delivering events

It was widely acknowledged that inflation and costs are making attending and delivering events increasingly difficult for participants and event organisers alike. The trend of decreasing membership numbers and participants at national events over the past few years was noted.

Recommendation 1

Articulate a Competition Pathway

The Working Group felt that an important first step to assist in the Competition Review was to outline the competition levels by articulating a competition pathway. This enables the community to have a clear understanding of the varying levels of competitions offered in New Zealand, as well as highlight that racing at each level is something to be celebrated and crucial to the development of swimmers across all levels of the competition pathway.

At the same time, the working group hopes that demonstrating the club competition level may showcase that there is a level for swimmers to stay involved in club swimming, and encourage those who aren't aspiring to swim in the competitive and performance levels that there is still a place to enjoy our sport.

The proposed competition pathway aligns with the Sport NZ Development Framework and outlines which events sit in each level of competition:

- Performance
- Competitive (broken into two tiers)
- Club
- Foundation

Updates from Initial Proposal to Final Recommendations

The Working Group updated the following as a result of community feedback:

- Social level terminology updated to “club” level
- Swapped Tier 1 and Tier 2 of the competitive level terminology around so Tier 1 was higher on the competition pathway
- Placed NZ Secondary Schools in the Competitive - Tier 2 level

Working Group Comment

Within this competition pathway, it is important to note that all levels involve competition, and some meets may cater for multiple levels at the same time for different swimmers. An example of this could be a swimmer at club night for the first time, which would be foundation and club competition at the same time.

A visual overview of the competition pathway is in Appendix 1.

Recommendation 2

Updated Timing of Swimming NZ Competitions

The Working Group discussed the timing of SNZ competitions at length following the two sets of feedback received from the community. Upon reviewing this feedback, the Working Group have recommended the timing of SNZ competitions as outlined below.

The Working Group acknowledged the vast array of feedback received and noted that finding a solution that satisfies all perspectives was challenging. The Working Group has recommended timings that were supported as the best for the sport moving forward.

Please note that HP team selection criteria wasn't within the scope of the Competition Review, however it has been mentioned within the recommendations to accommodate the competition calendar for 2025 and beyond.

Please find the summary and explanation of each update:

NZ Open Water Recommendation

These championships will be held in January during the Summer School Holidays.

Working Group Comment

This timing hasn't been adjusted from previous years and the initial proposal shared for community feedback. However, the Working Group would like to see these championships delivered across two days to provide a better opportunity for swimmers to compete in multiple races if they wish.

NZ Champs Recommendation

The placement of NZ Champs shifted during the proposals and feedback review as the Working Group tried to find the best balance across the calendar.

Initial Recommendation

NZ Champs to be held in June

Final Recommendation

NZ Champs to be held within the mid-May to mid-June window, with the 17-18 years age group to be hosted at NZ Champs

The key reasons behind the recommendation:

- Separating NZ Champs and NAGS on the calendar
- NZ University exam periods begin after King's Birthday weekend in June
- The close proximity of NZ Champs to international pinnacle competitions, with a recommendation to have a longer lead-in period
- The need to increase depth of racing at NZ Champs

Working Group Comment

The Working Group valued the feedback received from both proposals for community feedback.

The Working Group has recommended that the 17-18 years age group is returned to NZ Champs. This is to support the development of our older age group swimmers to experience open age competition and the depth of racing at the level. The finer details of how this will be delivered will be in the competition information book once published closer to the respective date.

Whilst not within the scope of this review, the Working Group has also recommended that NZ Champs should be the final competition in the selection period for NZ teams selection.

NAGS Recommendation

The placement of NAGS shifted during the proposals and feedback review as the Working Group tried to find the best balance across the calendar.

Initial Recommendation

The initial proposal was to hold NAGS in March prior to the Term 1 School Holidays.

Final Recommendation

NAGS to be held in the first week of Term 1 School Holidays for 13 - 16 year olds

The key reasons behind the recommendation:

- Hosting the championships in the school holidays means students don't need to miss a week of school to attend
- Avoids clashes with other aquatic sports - eg: SLSNZ Nationals
- Separation of NZ Champs and NAGS on the calendar
- Opportunity for older age group swimmers to attend Australian Age if they wish
- Sits at the completion of the Major Regional Championships (LC) as part of the competition pathway

Working Group Comment

The Working Group valued the feedback received from both proposals for community feedback.

The Working Group has recommended these championships are for 13 - 16 years. This enables the 17 - 18 years to continue their development alongside our open age swimmers and increase the depth of racing at that level. This also supports NAGS to have more balanced session lengths.

The Working Group has juggled multiple key factors to land at this recommendation, with the need to balance depth across both NZ Champs and NAGS and separate these championships key reasons.

NZ Short Course Recommendation

The placement of NZ Short Course remained consistent throughout the proposals.

Initial Recommendation

Short Course to be held in the first week of Term 3 School Holidays

Final Recommendation

Short Course to be held in the first week of Term 3 School Holidays

The key reasons behind the recommendation:

- Hosting the championships in the school holidays means students don't need to miss a week of school to attend
- Separation of NZ Short Course and NZ Secondary Schools on the calendar

Working Group Comment

The Working Group noted that SNZ and Surf Lifesaving NZ (SLSNZ) will work together to ensure competitions don't clash with SLSNZ Pool Champs

NZ Secondary Schools Recommendation

The placement of NZ Secondary Schools shifted during the proposals and feedback review as the Working Group tried to find the best balance across the calendar, before landing at the same timeframe as the initial recommendation.

Initial Recommendation

NZ Secondary Schools to be held in early Term 3 (end of July)

Final Recommendation

NZ Secondary Schools to be held in early Term 3 (end of July)

The key reasons behind the recommendation:

- Separation of NZ Short Course and NZ Secondary Schools on the calendar

Working Group Comment

The Working Group acknowledged the popularity of students representing their school and therefore the need to include this competition on the pathway.

Junior Festivals Recommendation

The placement of Junior Festivals was updated slightly since the initial proposal following the feedback received.

Initial Recommendation

Junior Festivals to be held in February - March

Final Recommendation

Junior Festivals to be held in early March

The key reasons behind the recommendation:

- Placement of the festivals towards the end of summer
- Festivals to be held in March to provide a larger break between the January school holidays and the competition

Working Group Comment

The Working Group see the festivals as the major racing opportunity for 12 & under.

The Working Group has also recommended SNZ work alongside other popular competitions (eg: SLSNZ Oceans Festival) to avoid clashes.

The Working Group also recommended that qualifying times wouldn't be offered for the Junior Festivals following the feedback received, as the festivals would be an opportunity for all swimmers to be involved as a festival of swimming.



Div II Recommendation

The placement of Div II shifted during the proposals and feedback review as the Working Group tried to find the best balance across the calendar.

Initial Recommendation

The initial proposal was to hold Div II in May after NAGS

Final Recommendation

Div II to be held in the late March prior to NAGS

The key reasons behind the recommendation:

- NAGS should be held after Div II is held to further support the competition pathway
- Summer clubs often wrap up their season in late April/early May

Working Group Comment

The Working Group valued the feedback received from both proposals for community feedback. The Working Group has provided further recommendations for the delivery of Div II outlined in Recommendation 7.

Off Season

The Working Group made note of highlighting when swimmers would have an off season within the competition calendar. With the current calendar, there have been few opportunities provided for a break.

- **Christmas & New Year**

Kiwis love to have a break with whanau and friends in the summer, so the calendar accommodates having a break during this period.

- **Second Week of School Holidays**

Some major national championships have been positioned in the first week of school holidays so that age group swimmers can enjoy the second week of holidays with their whanau and friends.

The Working Group also acknowledged that coaches, parents and swimmers should make a plan across the year to ensure swimmers are utilising opportunities to have a break and get some rest.

A visual overview of the competition calendar can be found in Appendix 2.

Recommendation 3

Updated Timing of Major Regional Championships

The Working Group had a lengthy discussion around the best way to structure the competitions in Tier 2 of the competition pathway. The group felt that having the ability for swimmers to attend major racing opportunities and travel as a club team were positive and strengthened the major regional championships.

These major regional championships serve as an important step in the competition pathway, as the major racing opportunity within the zone, as well as welcoming those from other parts of the country to raise the standard of racing.

Updates from Initial Proposal to Final Recommendations

The Working Group updated the following as a result of the feedback:

- The timing of when the major regional championships would be held to align with the timing of Swimming NZ championships
 - One Major Regional Long Course Championships in each month between December - March
 - One Major Regional Short Course Championships every couple of weeks between late July - September
 - Open Water opportunities to be spread during the summer period as available to organise or access existing competitions already hosted

Working Group Comment

The group noted that this recommendation requires greater collaboration from the local event committees and regions when setting their calendars, to avoid clashes and provide swimmers more opportunities to race during their preparation for national championships.

The group noted the success of this delivery in Australia, where state championships are spread out during the lead in to Australian Championships. This has seen club teams travel interstate as part of their preparations, something that was deemed to be a positive for providing more opportunities for swimmers to race at the Competitive Tier 2 level of the pathway.

Recommendation 4

Recommendation for Meet Types at Club & Foundation Levels

The Working Group didn't wish to dive into prescribing exactly what meets should be held when and where at the club and foundation levels of the competition pathway locally, feeling this is better left to regions who have a better understanding of their local needs. However, the Working Group did want to make some recommendations to clubs and regions planning their local calendars.

1. Clubs and regions should endeavour to provide more variety of meet types within the local calendar. A particular mention was made to increase the number of team-based events offered – eg: leagues and dual meets.
2. Clubs and regions could look to offer shorter meets that are around 2 – 3 hours in length, more often. This would increase the opportunities to race during the season.
3. Clubs and regions don't need to offer every event on the schedule for each meet. This was noted as a potential way to offer shorter meets.
4. Clubs and regions should value the use of club nights and inter-club carnivals as a social event that also provides a great opportunity for race practice and fundraising opportunities for the club.

Updates from Initial Proposal to Final Recommendation

The Working Group didn't make any updates to this recommendation following the community feedback received.



Recommendation 5

Setting Meet Formats

The Working Group discussed the rationale for setting qualification criteria for national competition to provide some consistency. The group felt that it was inappropriate to prescribe the competition details for regional and local competitions but hoped that providing an explanation for setting these at the national level would assist.

Age as of Date

Whilst the Working Group completely understood the rationale behind having an Age as of Date consistent from year to year, it felt that this would be challenging to continue given the proposed calendar changes. In this case, the recommendation was to have the Age as of Date as the first day of competition for all competitions held by SNZ.

Age Group Bands

The Working Group discussed the age groups at length and recommended the current age groups remain the same at national championships. These will be articulated in the respective event information books for each competition.

Qualifying Period

The Working Group suggested that the qualifying period commence on 1 January the previous year. This allows for swimmers to qualify at the event the previous year.

Updates from Initial Proposal to Final Recommendations

The Working Group made some minor updates:

- Div II age groups to remain as previous years, noting the age groups for each respective SNZ competition will be provided in the competition information book
- The host region has the flexibility to set their age groups for their Regional Championships

Recommendation 6

Updating Meet Approval Policy

The Working Group felt that the current state of designated meet delivery wasn't meeting the intention of the last Competition Review.

The Working Group has recommended that the Meet Approval Policy (007) be revised to have "Officiated Meets" where swimmers can achieve qualifying times for national meets when the minimum technical officials requirements are met. The policy will be updated to provide minimum requirements for less lanes, in order to make meets such as Time Trials with less lanes utilised more attainable in fulfilling the Officiated Meets requirements.

As part of this recommendation, the Working Group has recommended removing the limited number of Officiated Meets per region. However, the Working Group does strongly recommend regional event committees signing off on the calendar for their local area.

The Working Group has noted that meet flyers will need to specify which meet approval status it will be to assist with swimmers making plans.

With the update to the Meet Approval Policy, there will be a revision of the number of timekeepers required at Officiated Meets as well.

Meets that don't pass the Officiated Meets requirements will be called "Development Meets", in which swimmers won't be able to achieve qualifying times for national meets. However, these meets have been identified as a good opportunity for developing swimmers skills and technical officials skills.

Updates from Initial Proposal to Final Recommendations

The Working Group updated the following:

- Terminology altered from "Approved" and "Unapproved" meets
- Meet flyers will need to specify which meet approval status it will be
- Recommend reducing the number of timekeepers required at Officiated Meets
- Strongly recommend regional event committees sign off on the competition calendar for their local area

Recommendation 7

Updates to Div II

The Working Group had multiple discussions around various aspects of this competition. The Working Group felt that Div II has held an important place in the competition pathway in the past as a stepping stone for swimmers working toward National Championships.

However, with the introduction and promotion of the Major Regional Championships in the pathway, the Working Group has recommended that clubs utilise these in the lead-up to national championships as an important stepping stone. This includes the opportunity for teams to travel away together for racing. In this case, the Working Group has recommended that Div II continue in 2025 and 2026. From 2027 and beyond, the Major Regional Championships will be the stepping stone to national championships with Div II not being delivered.

The rationale behind this recommendation was to provide 2 years to strengthen the Major Regional Championships and provide the community the direction for where the pathway opportunities are heading moving forward, with a couple of years to adjust to these improvements to the pathway.

The Working Group acknowledged all of the feedback received from the community, and weighed up ways to continue growing the pathway and the sport into the future. Some of the challenges identified early in the Competition Review process relating to Div II were hard to resolve, and the Working Group has recommended that Major Regional Championships are the best option for growing the pathway and sport for the long-term.

The Working Group felt that the competition would work well over a weekend in late March, with the event being held before NAGS and promoting the value of the Major Regional Championships in the competition pathway. The event would be held as timed finals to be held over 5 sessions from Friday - Sunday.

The finer details of Div II will be published in the competition information booklet.

Recommendation 8

Updates to Junior Festivals

The Working Group discussed the Junior Festivals at length. The group felt that Junior Festivals were better placed toward the end of the summer, in the early March period. These festivals would continue to be held within zones for 12 & under, and held as the major racing opportunity for this age group.

The Working Group recommended that no qualifying times are required for these festivals, encouraging swimmers aged 12 & under to participate at the end of the summer period.

Updates from Initial Proposal to Final Recommendation

The Working Group updated the following:

- Removal of qualifying times for 12 year olds
- Shift to early March from February - March window to avoid clashes with Surf Lifesaving NZ's Oceans Festival

Working Group Comment

The recommendation was to have the host region have greater involvement in delivery of the competitions.

The Working Group did acknowledge that regions should look to host Have A Go meets locally at the start of the summer period as part of welcoming young swimmers into the club swimming space, which would cover the gap created by moving the festivals away from November.



Recommendation 9

Opportunities to Participate in Open Water

The Working Group has identified the importance of Open Water requiring its own pathway and opportunities, highlighted by the addition of recommendation 9 (not included in the initial proposal). These opportunities to participate in Open water competitions are outlined below:

NZ Open Water

This event will remain in January.

Secondary School Open Water

The national and zonal championships will remain on the pathway during the summer period, with the timing finalised by the event organiser.

Other Domestic Open Water Events

It's been acknowledged that there are currently very few (or none) opportunities for Open Water events delivered with World Aquatics rules outside of NZ Open Water across the country over the past few years. The Working Group recommendation is to continue partnering with event organisers (such as the Banana Boat NZ Ocean Swim Series) as great opportunities to swim at open water competitions.

Whilst it is acknowledged that some opportunities to race within regions would be good, the Working Group has acknowledged this might not be financially viable and has recommended promoting existing Open Water opportunities. These will be promoted via our Open Water calendar on our website and social media.

International Opportunities

The Working Group has indicated support for NZ Open Water to remain in the summer holidays, about 2-3 weeks prior to the Australian Open Water Championships, as another opportunity for swimmers to race Open Water.

Alongside these two championships in January, other Australian states and the World Aquatics Open Water World Cups held across the year as opportunities to race internationally to align with the offerings within NZ.

Conclusion

The Working Group is grateful for everyone who provided feedback during the two opportunities. With the 174 responses during the Proposal for Community Feedback window and the 185 responses during the Updated Proposal for Community Feedback window being extremely beneficial for the Working Group putting together these recommendations. All of the feedback across both opportunities was vital in updating the recommendations in this Competition Review, with 6 of 8 recommendations from the initial proposal improved as a direct result of the feedback, and an additional recommendation being added.

Next Steps

This document is the guiding document for setting competition calendars and competition information/criteria for all levels of the Competition Pathway, commencing with planning for the 2025 calendar.



Competition Pathway

Recommendation 1 has provided an updated Competition Pathway displaying the varying levels of swimming competitions. These levels also align to Sport NZ's Sport Pathways Framework.

Pathway Level	Competitions
Performance	Selection on NZ teams for international competitions (eg: Aquablacks team)
Competitive – Tier 1	NZ Open Water NZ Champs NAGS NZ Short Course
Competitive – Tier 2	NZ Sec Schools (Pool & OW) Major Regional Championships Regional Championships Div II Junior Festivals
Club	Club Nights Club Champs Club Competitions Inter Club Carnivals/Meets Leagues Dual Meets
Foundation	Have a Go Meets

Competition Calendar

Please see the competition calendar to indicate when major competitions will be held during the year. Exact dates and venues will be confirmed closer to the competition.

Pathway Level	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Performance						
Competitive - Tier 1	NZ Open Water			NAGS	NZ Champs *	NZ Champs *
Competitive - Tier 2	Region LC #2	Region LC #3	Junior Festivals Region LC #4 Div II		Masters *	Masters *
Club & Foundation	Rather than prescribing when club and foundation level competitions should be held, some recommendations have been provided in Appendix 3					

*Please note that NZ Champs and Masters may float between mid-May to mid-June

Please note this competition calendar is subject to slight adjustments due to availability as the dates and venues are confirmed for each respective year

Competition Calendar

Please see the competition calendar to indicate when major competitions will be held during the year. Exact dates and venues will be confirmed closer to the competition.

Pathway Level	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Performance	World Aquatics Pinnacle	World Para Pinnacle				Qld Champs
Competitive - Tier 1				NZ Short Course		
Competitive - Tier 2	Region SC #1 NZ Sec Schools	Region SC #2 Region SC #3	Region SC #4			Region LC #1
Club & Foundation	Rather than prescribing when club and foundation level competitions should be held, some recommendations have been provided in Appendix 3					

Please note this competition calendar is subject to slight adjustments due to availability as the dates and venues are confirmed for each respective year

Competition Details

NZ Open Water Swimming Championships

- Timing: January (Summer School Holidays)
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 1

NZ Age Group Swimming Championships

- Timing: April (first week of Term 1 School Holidays)
- Length: 5 Days
- Pool Set Up: Long Course
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 1
- Format: Heats (combined age groups) & Finals (age groups)
- Age Groups: 13yrs, 14yrs, 15yrs, 16yrs, Multi-Class 13-18yrs

NZ Swimming Championships

- Timing: mid-May to mid-June
- Length: 5 Days
- Pool Set Up: Long Course
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 1
- Format: Heats & Finals
- Age Groups: 17-18 Years, Open, Multi-Class Open

NZ Secondary School Swimming Championships

- Timing: July (late)
- Length: 4 days (6 sessions)
- Pool Set Up: Short Course
- Level: Competitive – Tier 2
- Format: Timed Finals
- Age Groups: 13yrs, 14yrs, 15yrs, 16yrs, 17-19yrs

NZ Short Course Swimming Championships

- Timing: October (1st week of Term 3 School Holidays)
- Length: 5 days
- Pool Set Up: Short Course
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 1
- Format: Heats (includes age timed finals) & Finals (open)
- Age Groups: 13yrs, 14rs, 15yrs, 16yrs, 17-18yrs, Open, Multi-Class Open

Competition Details

Division II Swimming Competition

- Timing: March (Late)
- Length: 3 days (5 sessions)
- Pool Set Up: Long or Short Course
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 2
- Format: Timed Finals
- Age Groups: 13yrs, 14yrs, 15yrs, 16+ yrs

Major Regional Championships

- Timing: Spread across months leading into national championships
- Length: discretion of hosting region
- Pool Set Up: Long & Short Course Seasons
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 2
- Format: discretion of hosting region
- Age Groups: 13&U, 14yrs, 15yrs, 16yrs, 17-18yrs, Open, Multi-Class Open

Junior Festivals

- Timing: March (Early)
- Length: 2-3 days (weekend)
- Pool Set Up: Short Course
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 2
- Format: Timed Finals
- Age Groups: 10&U, 11yrs, 12yrs