

Athletics Australia NASS for Relays Terms of Reference (As at 2024-10-02)

Introduction

In February 2022 the Athletics Australia High Performance (AA-HP) Programme identified the need to target funding to support a national approach to relays with the goals of:

- 1) *Delivering a sustainable and consistent National Relay Program through to the Brisbane Olympic Games 2032.*
- 2) *Achieving the following Performance Goals:*
 - a) *2032 – Teams in all five finals, 4x100m (M&W), 4x400m (M&W) Mixed 4x400m. Achieve 3 medals.*
 - b) *2028 – Teams in all five finals 4x100m (M&W), 4x400m (M&W) Mixed 4x400m. Achieve 2 medals.*

In October 2024 the AA-HP Programme will introduce “NASS for Relays” to support athletes in order to assist Athletics Australia to achieve these goals.

This document contains the Terms of Reference which outline the requirements and process for an athlete to be considered for selection for NASS for Relays support.

NASS (traditionally for individual athletes)

NASS is a system that supports Australian Athletes who have the greatest potential to achieve AA's High Performance Program goals and targets at the Olympic Games, Paralympic Games, World Championships and Commonwealth Games (termed Benchmark Events – BME). AA-NASS selections are made in line with the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Athlete Categorisation Framework. Full details of NASS can be found [here](#).

NASS for Relays – Categories

For the purposes of the Relay Program, there are three core NASS for Relays categories:

Category	Description
Medal Stream (maximum of 6 athletes)	<p>The Medal stream is for athletes who, in the opinion of the relay coaches and NASS selectors, will form part of the core relay team at the next BME, and where that team has the potential of achieving a top-16 finish (qualify for World Championships/Olympic Games).</p> <p>The Medal stream is further comprised of the following levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medal – where the relay team has the realistic capacity to win a medal at the next Olympic Games, and has achieved a top-3 finish at a BME within the previous 24 months • Podium Ready – where the relay team has the realistic capacity to reach the final at the next Olympic Games, and has finished 4th-8th at a BME in the previous 24 months • Podium Potential – where the relay team has the realistic capability of making a BME final within the next 2 years
Pathway Stream (maximum of 6 athletes)	<p>The Pathway stream is for athletes who, in the opinion of the relay coaches and NASS selectors, meet at least one of the below criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where the relay team is not categorised in the Medal stream, the athletes who will likely form part of the core relay team at the next BME, and that team will highly likely qualify for the next BME; • Where the relay team is categorised in the Medal stream, the athletes who will likely form part of the core of that team in approximately 2-4 years.
Representative Stream (maximum of 2-6 athletes)	<p>The Representative stream is for athletes who, in the opinion of the relay coaches and NASS selectors, are either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likely to form part of the core relay team for the next 12 months, but where the relay team is not categorised on the Medal or Pathway stream; • Outside of the core relay group but may be utilised in cases of injury to this group.

Expressions of Interest

Athletes are eligible for selection for NASS for Relays support if they submit an Expression of Interest (EoI) to be considered for selection prior to the post international season Athletics Australia NASS selection process (usually held in October each year). For athletes who do not submit an EoI it will be assumed that they are not interested in being part of the Athletics Australia relay program and will not be eligible for selection.

NASS for Relays Selection Process

The Athletics Australia NASS selection panel will select athletes for NASS for Relays support as part of the annual post international season Athletics Australia NASS selection process.

For the avoidance of doubt:

- The highest category of each of the respective relay squads will be determined by the NASS panel in accord with the categorisation criteria outlined above.
- Athletes will then be considered for selected for a level of support as outlined above.
- The maximum number of athletes selected does not have to be met (i.e. fewer athletes than 6 can be selected for the highest level of categorisation for each relay squad).
- Membership of a relay squad at the previous BME does not necessarily correlate with membership of the relay squad at the next BME, and hence does not guarantee categorisation.

Factors considered for categorising each athlete will include, but is not limited to:

- The role each individual athlete will play in each relay squad.
- Data in relation to involvement in relay camps over the last 12 months in relation to splits and exchange times.
- Baton-changing skills and versatility to run in alternate positions.
- Recent (i.e. in the last 12 months) individual performances in 100m, 200m and 400m.

Note: Finishing position in National finals WILL NOT be the main criteria for selection for our camps.

NASS for Relays selections will be reviewed every 12-month following the international competition season. However, athletes may be removed before the end of a given 12-month period (see **Omissions Process**, below), or added to the program (or promoted up a level) following the domestic season should their performances warrant such a change to be made.

NASS for Relays Expectations and Commitments

By submitting an EoI, interested athletes confirm that they will support the following key terms of membership:

- Athletes will be considered primarily as relay athletes and will therefore make relay performance a key priority.
- Athletes commit to attending all relay camps and competitions planned by relay coaches (see Appendix). Notice/details for these camps and competitions will be provided as quickly as possible, and outside of special circumstances at least 4 weeks' notice will be given. In the case of injury or illness, a report should be provided by their local NIN site's medical team to guide a decision regarding level of involvement in the camp. Where there is an issue with attendance due to an athlete's personal circumstances (e.g., educational exam), permission to attend those commitments will not be unreasonably withheld. Exemptions will not be granted for individual competitive goals, or poorly planned tapering into camps.
- At the relay camps and competitions, undertake the relay training sessions delivered by the coaches to their best of their ability. This includes ensuring they arrive at the camp in a sufficiently recovered state to tolerate the training and competition loads (which will be communicated in advance) at the required intensity. Where an athlete is carrying an injury, guidance from the relay program medical staff will be utilised to determine overall training load and intensity.
- Attend all relay program meetings and review sessions. During these sessions, athletes will engage in a respectful manner with both staff and fellow athletes.
- In partnership with their personal coach, State Performance Advisor, and Relay Program staff, complete the biannual NASS Planning process, including the Individual Athlete Performance Plan (IAPP) and What it Takes to Win (for Relays) Analysis.
- Return travel from an athlete's home airport to the camp, as well as all transport during the camp, is covered by AA. In addition, AA will arrange and pay for the accommodation of athletes during the camp and competition period and provide athletes with a daily food stipend. Athletes are responsible for the cost of their travel to their home airport, and any food costs above those provided by AA.
- Athletes must comply with all relevant AA and AIS policies, including the Codes of Conduct.

Prize Money

Should a relay squad receive any prize money from competitions (e.g., Diamond League, World Championships), then this prize money will be split equally between all athletes selected for the competition in which prize money is won.

For the avoidance of doubt, athletes do not have to be on NASS to receive prize money, provided they were in the squad for the competition in which prize money was won. However, they do have to have been a committed member of the relay squad to be eligible. For example, if a 100m runner is selected for the World Championships, under the rules of the competition they also have to be entered in the 4x100m relay. However, they would not be eligible for prize money unless they carried out the required number of relay training sessions prior to the competition.

As an example, if six athletes are named in the squad for a competition in which \$12,000 is awarded in prize money, each athlete would receive \$2,000 ($\$12,000 / 6$).

Injury &/or Illness

Practice is how we will improve. Whilst injury and illness is part of competitive sport, athletes that have a poor injury record and/or are regularly unable to take part in sufficient high velocity changeovers will likely not be selected for squads.

Athletes who sustain injury or illness at any time should have their recovery supported by a NIN physio/ medical practitioner with communication into the relay medical team.

Omissions Process

Athletes may be removed from the NASS for Relays support through the following processes:

- Following a 6-monthly review, if the athlete has not met the key membership terms highlighted above, they may be removed from NASS for Relays support.
- If, at any point, the athlete violates the AA Code of Conduct, or any other AA, AIS, or Sports Integrity Australia Policy, they may be removed from the program at any time.

NASS Medical & Pregnancy

As per the NASS Policy, an athlete on the Medal or Pathway stream may be placed on the Medical or Medical – Pregnancy categories, if it is believed that the athlete can return to a performance level in line with their original NASS selection within a defined time period.

Athletes will not be considered for NASS Medical if they have:

- Failed to report their injury in a timely manner to their NIN medical staff; and
- Not followed prescribed injury risk-reduction and/or rehabilitation guidance from NIN medical staff.

Appendix 1 – Men's 4x100m Relay Program (2025)

The Men's 4x100m Relay Program for early 2025 is outlined below. Note that dates may change if required for performance and/or operational reasons, but any such change will be communicated as soon as practical.

January 6th – 11th – Camp #1 (Gold Coast)

- 2 x training sessions (7th and 9th)
- 2 x races (11th in Brisbane)

February 3rd – 8th – Camp #2 (Gold Coast)

- 2 x training sessions (4th and 6th)
- 2 x races (8th at Runaway Bay)

March 10th – 15th – Camp #3 (Gold Coast)

- 2 x training sessions (11th and 13th)
- 1 x race (15th – Sydney TC)

May 1st – 12th – World Relays

- Training (Gold Coast) – 2nd and 5th
- Travel to Guangzhou – 6th
- Training (Guangzhou) – 8th
- Competition – 10th and 11th

Appendix 2 – Women's 4x100m Relay Program (2025)

The Women's 4x100m Relay Program for early 2025 is outlined below. Note that dates may change if required for performance and/or operational reasons, but any such change will be communicated as soon as practical.

January 6th – 11th – Camp #1 (Gold Coast)

- 2 x training sessions (7th and 9th)
- 2 x races (11th in Brisbane)

February 3rd – 6th – Camp #2 (Gold Coast)

- 2 x training sessions (4th and 6th)

March 10th – 15th – Camp #3 (Gold Coast)

- 2 x training sessions (11th and 13th)
- 1 x race (15th – Sydney TC)

May 1st – 12th – World Relays

- Training (Gold Coast) – 2nd and 5th

- Travel to Guangzhou – 6th
- Training (Guangzhou) – 8th
- Competition – 10th and 11th

Note: Changeover sessions at Relay Camps will always be high velocity/ high intensity efforts. Coach-athlete pairings will need to taper into camps and recover out of camps. Like with any team sport, you are vying for a place on a team at a major tournament and are there to impress the coaches/ selectors (as well as hone/ develop individual skills and partnerships with other athletes).