

Structure and Pathways Plan

National Level



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Proposed Structure and Pathways	4
Linking the Pathway	10
Structure and Pathway Characteristics	11
Integrating AWD Requirements	12
Classification Opportunities	12
Professional Development Opportunities	13
Paracanoe Organisational Structure	14
Supporting Rationale	15

Introduction

Fundamental to increasing the number of participants involved in the sport of paracanoe is the development and provision of more suitable and regular opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to get involved in. It is imperative that we place a strategic focus on collaboration right across the entire paracanoe pathway – from foundation up, and paramount to this focus is moving away from the divisive community versus elite sport debates of the past and developing a collaborative, efficient and integrated national paracanoe framework focused on both growing participation for the benefit of the community as well as the high performance system.

Opportunities for all athletes to compete, particularly those pursuing high performance goals, are critical to their ongoing development, as well as in the recruiting and retaining participants seeking to get involved in a sport with more than just a 'pass the time' focus. Essentially, strengthening the quality and frequency of domestic participation, training and competitions in Australia is crucial to bridging the widening gap between foundation and high performance paracanoe.

The presence of a recognized and approved 'Paracanoe Structure and Pathways Plan' will assist Australian Canoeing in communicating a consistent vision for the sport to its many stakeholders, ideally galvanizing people and organisations to work together in an efficient and effective manner to ensure a connected pathway is created, not just in the states and territories, but both nationally and internationally as well.

Proposed Structure and Pathway

Whether simply participating for recreational purposes, or competing at a club, state, national or international level, paracanoe provides opportunities for persons with a disability. Since its inception, more and more athletes have commenced participating and competing in paracanoe around the world.

By establishing a recognized and comprehensive paracanoe development pathway, we will be well placed to assist athletes, parents, coaches to better understand, and maximize, the available pathway from participation right through to high performance.

Adapted from the current canoe/kayak framework, the paracanoe pathway takes into consideration the needs of athletes of varying disabilities, some of which require little deviation from the current framework to those likely to benefit from a more modified structure.

The proposed structure and resulting pathways for paracanoe in Australia are demonstrated below:



Ultimately, the primary objective of this document is to ensure that both existing and future paracanoe participants are provided with clear and defined pathways that fully support a range of individual goals. For some, paracanoe may simply be a means of participating in a friendly sport and social environment at a foundation level, whilst others may wish to learn about the skills and strategies associated with the more competitive environment and test themselves at the highest level of competition available to them.

It is believed that the key to successful structures and pathways in sport are appropriate entry and exit points, ongoing opportunities for development, accessible, cost-effective and well resourced programs, as well as the potential to aspire to the highest level of competition, which in paracanoe's case is the Paralympics.

Entry Point – Foundation

Foundation programs have traditionally been more focused on providing an introduction to a particular sport rather than producing elite level athletes, however the reality is that all elite athletes must start somewhere. In the case of paracanoe, foundation participation is absolutely vital in providing an initial introduction to the sport, as well as ensuring participants continue to stay involved for many years to come.

Paracanoe 'foundation' is aimed at all levels of disability and is designed to provide participants with a positive first experience in the sport. It is a club level, participation orientated program, which can be utilized as an introductory program for those participants who may wish to progress into more structured, skill-based sessions.

Clearly, the aim at this level is to engage the local community and provide access to opportunities for involvement at the recreational level. It seeks to expose people with a disability to the sport in a safe and friendly environment, whilst facilitating the development of the most basic skills.

It is important to remember that not all athletes participating in these programs are classifiable and therefore the Paralympic pathway may not be applicable for some. There is also likely to be some variation in the motives for participation (some athlete driven, some support worker/carer/parent driven), and as a result the focus of these programs has generally been on providing an introduction to the sport of paracanoe and facilitating ongoing participation through positive social experiences. Irrespective of this, there is likely to be athletes who have the desire and commitment to progress further and continue learning, and therefore it is imperative that further structures are developed and implemented in order to support this progression.

The technical and tactical skills developed at the Foundation level include:

- ✓ Water Safety (capsize drills)
- ✓ Technique
- ✓ Boat Handling Skills

The physiological development of the Foundation level should include:

- ✓ General movement, balance and coordination development
- ✓ General aerobic capacity
- ✓ General strength

Considerations for the Foundation stage of development include:

- ✓ Adaptations and prosthesis
- ✓ Athlete goals

Continued Participation – Pathway Program

The following level of involvement in paracanoe is termed 'Pathway Progression', is designed to support continued participation in the sport. The over-arching goal of the pathway is to ensure the provision of opportunities for athletes to learn and develop skills and abilities to successfully compete in regattas at state, national and international level paracanoe events.

Paracanoe Talent

The aim of the paracanoe 'Talent' level is to develop the athlete to be able to successfully compete at a club, state and national level.

The technical, tactical and mental skills developed at the 'Talent' stage include:

- ✓ Continue to develop aerobic capacity
- ✓ Technique efficiency at varying stroke rates and speeds
- ✓ Introduction of speed and speed endurance training sessions
- ✓ Race plans and tactics
- ✓ Goal setting for main competitions
- ✓ Continue to develop boat handling skills
- ✓ Understand Australian Canoeing rules and regulations
- ✓ Psychological skills training for racing

The physiological skills developed include:

- ✓ General aerobic capacity
- ✓ Speed
- ✓ Speed endurance
- ✓ Core stability
- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Initiate role of recovery on the effects of training and racing ability

Considerations for the 'Talent' level include:

- ✓ Refine adaptations and prosthesis
- ✓ Individual goals
- ✓ Training volume and intensity depending upon disability and social circumstances (work/study)

- ✓ National level classification by a classification panel prior to national competition

Competitions

- ✓ Club events
- ✓ State Championships
- ✓ National level events (Grand Prix events and National Championships)

High Performance – Pathway Progression

The aim of the paracanoe 'Elite' level is to develop athletes to compete successfully on an international level, focusing primarily on the World Cup, World Championships and the Paralympics Games.

The technical, tactical and mental skills developed at the 'Elite' level include:

- ✓ Optimum technique for the individual
- ✓ Race tactics and race plans for all racing conditions
- ✓ Race tactics and race plans for International level racing
- ✓ Goal setting for competition outcomes
- ✓ Refine boat handling skills
- ✓ Understand International Canoe Federation Rules and Regulations
- ✓ Psychological periodization skills training

The physiological skills developed at the 'elite' level include:

Race Specific:

- ✓ Endurance base
- ✓ Speed endurance
- ✓ Speed and maximum speed
- ✓ Acceleration
- ✓ Core stability
- ✓ Strength
- ✓ Power
- ✓ Optimal recovery

Considerations for the 'elite' level include:

- ✓ Biomechanical input to adaptations and prosthesis
- ✓ Use of sport science and sports medicine for optimal training periodization and recovery monitoring
- ✓ Individual goals
- ✓ Specific training volume and intensity depending upon disability and social circumstances (work/study)
- ✓ Classification by an International Panel

Competitions

- ✓ Club events
- ✓ State Championships
- ✓ National level events including Grand Prix events and National Championships

- ✓ International competitions including World Cups, World Championships and Paralympic Games

Paracanoe 'mastery' is athletes who demonstrate the ability to perform at the podium level at International level competitions on regular occasions.

Involvement in the above-mentioned pathway, with the exception being 'foundation', essentially requires participants to display a certain level of skill and commitment, ability to understand and learn skill and strategies of the sport and a willingness to implement them.

The entire environment has a performance focus, with the primary emphasis being on the attitude and performance of the athlete.

Those athletes selected to participate in the 'Talent, Elite and Mastery' programs will ideally have a desire to compete in paracanoe at the highest level and, as a general rule, display some of the characteristics required to be successful at higher levels of competition.

The paracanoe 'Elite' and 'Mastery' level will be delivered in accordance with the High Performance Plan delivered by Australian Canoeing, and will be overseen by the National Performance Director.

Linking the Pathway

The purpose of the pathway is to support and enable potential young athletes to develop the skills and abilities associated with each level before progressing to the next. It will also ensure better guidance is provided as to the areas of development required, whilst still allowing for the fast tracking of athletes were required/beneficial.

Clearly the paracanoe 'Foundation' level is aimed primarily at introducing participants to the sport and facilitating a positive experience. For some, this may be all they are after, however for others they may wish to take their involvement to the next level.

The paracanoe 'Talent' level is targeted towards those participants who are interested in learning more about the sport and beginning to compete in structured competitions. Progression from 'Talent' to elite is likely to be determined by the relevant coach, and will be based on characteristics such as skills developed/required, capacity to learn and develop, and motivation/desire to progress (this is an extremely subjective assessment and one that is best carried out in consultation with the athlete/parent/guardian).

The paracanoe 'Elite' level will be more structured and based on a prescribed set of criteria determined by Australian Canoeing. Paracanoe 'Mastery' is an extension of the 'Elite' level and is demonstrated by the ability to be on the podium at an international level frequently.

Structure and Pathway Characteristics

<i>FTEM Stages</i>									
Non-Elite (Foundation Movement)			Pre-Elite (Potential to be Elite)				Elite (Senior International)		
<i>Phases and Description</i>									
F 1	F 2	F 3	T 1	T 2	T 3	T 4	E 1	E 2	M 1
FOUNDATION			TALENT				ELITE		MASTERY
Basic movement foundations	Extension and refinement of movement foundations	Sport specific commitment and/or competition	Demonstration of potential	Talent verification	Practicing and achieving	Breakthrough and reward	Senior National Team representation	Podium success	Sustained success at E2
<i>An Athlete is:</i>									
Learning basic movement patterns, strength, balance and control	Paddling and keeping a canoe kayak upright and moving	Attending coaching and/or competitions in any paddle sport	Demonstration of HP potential from training/competition and/or talent ID	Potential verified and athlete is invited to participate in a National Talent Squad (NTS)	Embedded in pre-elite, daily training environment	Embedded in National Development camps (possible 2 nd entry athletes to World Cup/World Championships)	Competition at World Cups, World Championships or equivalent	Finishes on podium at World Cups, World Championships or equivalent	Consistent podium success over four or more years
<i>Daily Training Environment</i>									
Formal or informal physical education at home or at school or similar	Paddling a craft of some description for fun or recreation	Involved in a paddle sports club and paddling regularly	Active member of a Pathway Program Accredited (PPA) Club or similar		Active member of a PPA Club and working with an elite program (SIS/SAS)		Actively involved in SIS/SAS or NCE training program		
<i>Competition Target</i>									
Not competing		Club and Schools' events	State and National Championships			World Cups, World Championships or equivalent and/or Paralympic Games			
<i>Athlete Category</i>									
N/A			Emerging		Developing		Podium Potential		Podium

Integrating AWD Requirements

In order to develop a cohesive, functional and comprehensive AWD pathway, it is imperative that we embed the various processes and requirements of AWD sport into the existing structures and frameworks that have already been put in place by Australian Canoeing.

As is the case with the majority of sports, there are 4 main functional areas that are considered a fundamental part of development with these being:

- Coaching
- Education
 - Coaches
 - Officials
- Community Engagement and Awareness
- Talent Identification

It is envisaged that the AWD components/requirements associated with the above mentioned areas should integrate seamlessly into the existing process developed to cater to the needs of able-bodied canoeing.

However, in order to effectively support the provision of participation opportunities and the broader development of paracanoe, there is the additional element of classification that needs to be catered for.

Authorized classifiers according to the classification guidelines for the sport, which are determined by the International Canoe Federation, perform the classification of athletes in paracanoe.

Classification Opportunities

Through the implementation of the proposed 'Structure and Pathway Plan – National', it is envisaged that classification opportunities will be created at the State Competition level. Currently, all classification for paracanoe is undertaken at a national level event or on a 'as required' basis via a remote system (for a provisional classification) and until assessed in person. This process is subject to change as paracanoe develops and participation numbers increase.

The exact details of how the classification process will integrate into the various structures will be determined through consultation between relevant APC staff, Australian Canoeing, key contacts in each state/territory and other relevant stakeholders.

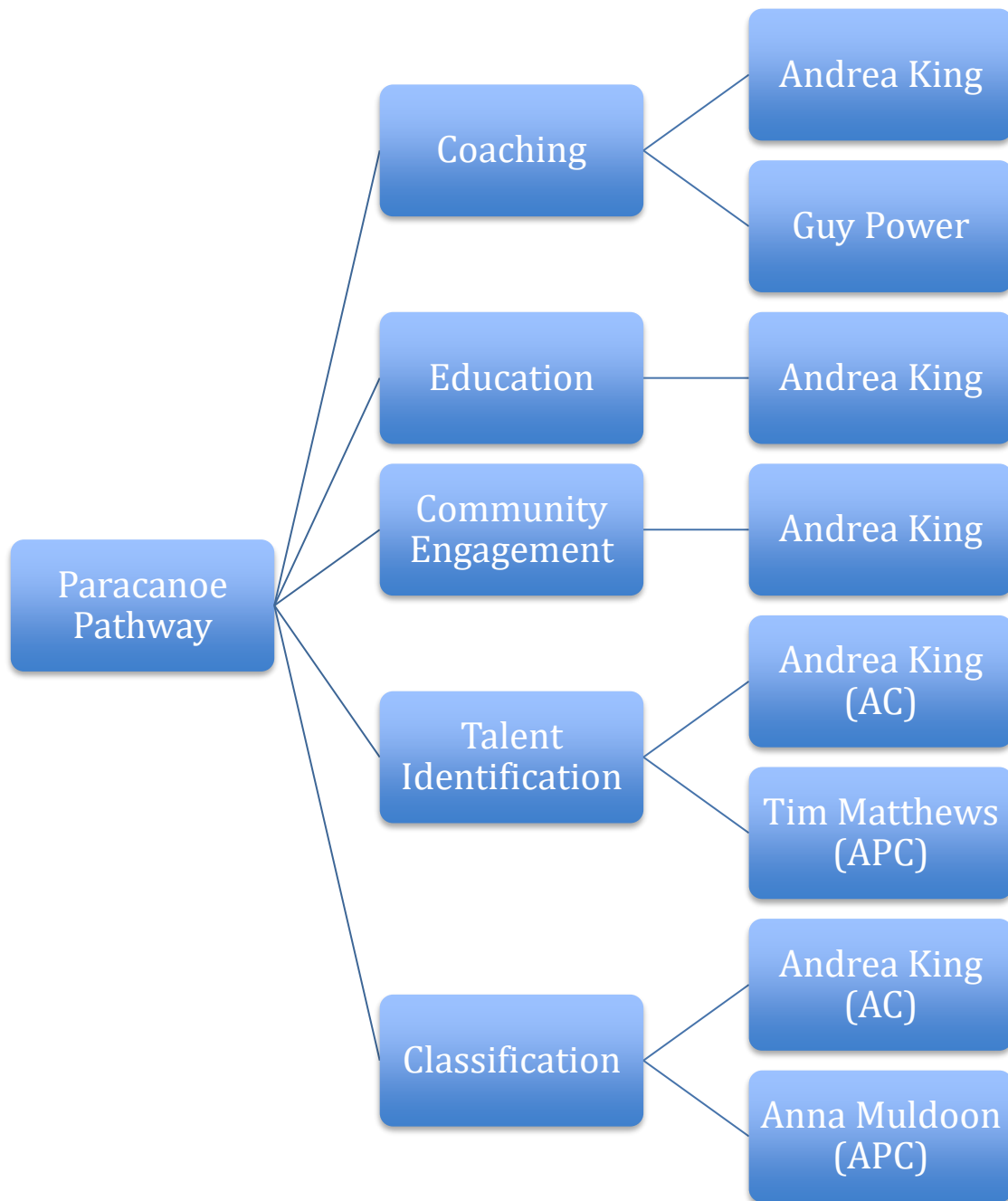
Professional Development Opportunities

Through the implementation of the proposed 'Structure and Pathway Plan – National', it is envisaged that professional development opportunities may be able to be incorporated on a more regular basis. Depending on how the various regional competitions' are structures (frequency, numbers, etc), the possibility may exist to provide access to workshops in the following areas (examples only) whilst facilitating these competitions:

- Coaching
- Classification

Once again, the exact details on how these professional development opportunities will be integrated into the various regional competition structures' need to be determined through consultation between relevant APC staff, Australian Canoeing, key contacts in each state/territory and other relevant stakeholders.

Paracanoe Organisational Structure



Supporting Rationale

The 'Structure and Pathway Plan – National' is seen as providing the necessary framework to support the development, progression and growth of paracanoe, as well as ensure its ongoing sustainability in the longer term. Broadly speaking, it provides opportunities (entry points and pathways) for a range of abilities and levels of participation, thereby allowing participants who wish to remain social to do just that, as well as supporting those who have the desire to see how far their talent will take them. Whilst natural ability/talent to play the sport is beneficial to the exploration of the available pathways, the opportunity to progress to the next level is also dependent on the capacity of the individual to display a certain level of commitment and desire, thus aligning the characteristics of this paracanoe pathway with that seen in the majority of sports.

It is anticipated that the 'Structure and Pathway Plan – National' will be treated as a guide, and therefore will need to be adjusted to suit each state/territory according to how well it aligns with the goals and expectations of the participants, family, friends, and other stakeholders. Only once implementation has begun can we begin to see where the gaps are present, and where additions, deletions or modifications may need to be made. The reality is that the 'Structure and Pathway Plan – National' will need to be considered a fluid document, as once the sport begins to grow and develop, naturally the plans associated with it will need to grow and develop also.

Regardless, at this present point in time, this plan does provide the sport of paracanoe with some guidance as to the direction it needs to take if it wishes to achieve a range of goals, spanning from health and social outcomes right through to achievement of elite level success.