

# Competition Review

Updated Proposal  
for Community Feedback

March 2024



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Following on from the Competition Restructure & Competition Pathway Review (2021 – 2024) that was completed in 2020, Swimming New Zealand (SNZ) set up a Competition Review Working Group to complete the 4-year review leading into 2025 – 2028, one of the previous recommendations from the last review.

The working group is made up of 7 coaches, 2 active swimmers, 2 event delivery staff and 5 Swimming NZ 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 for the upcoming 4-year cycle 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.



<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Dale Johnson (Chair)	Swimming NZ	Head of Participation & Events
Gary Francis	Swimming NZ	Olympic Programme Lead
Simon Mayne	Swimming NZ	Paralympic Programme Lead
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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 Proposal for Community Feedback of the Competition Review provided the community a feedback window in February and March. During this period, we received 172 survey responses and 2 emails for the Working Group's consideration.

The Working Group has reviewed the feedback and made some updates to the proposal that they are seeking community feedback on. The feedback received has been the driving force behind the rationale of this updated proposal, which will be outlined in Appendix 1 and 2 as well as the rationale behind the updated proposal noting the feedback received.

As a reference point, the initial proposal in February from the Working Group provided the following eight recommendations:

1. Articulate a competition pathway
2. Updated timing of national events
3. Updating timing of major regional championships – graphic provided in Appendix 2
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 is seeking feedback on updates relating to Recommendation 2 (Updated Timing of National Events), as the feedback received has required some changes to the calendar to accommodate the points raised in the survey.

Please note, the Working Group has recommended updates to 6 of the 8 recommendations following the feedback received. This updated proposal will focus only on Recommendation 2.

## Recommendation 2

### Updated Timing of National Events

The Working Group discussed the timing of events at length following the feedback received from the community. Upon reviewing the feedback, the Working Group felt there were some timing adjustments that would better accommodate the feedback received.

Please note that HP team selection criteria isn't within the scope of the Competition Review, however it will be adjusted to accommodate the calendar proposal for 2025 and beyond.

Please find the summary and explanation of each update:

#### **NZ Open Water**

The Working Group was supportive of maintaining the position of NZ Open Water Champs in the January School Holidays, during the summer period.

#### **NZ Champs**

The initial proposal had NZ Champs sitting in June. The key themes from the feedback received were:

##### Positives

- Separation of NZ Champs and NAGS on the calendar

##### Feedback to Consider

- NZ University exam periods are throughout June and this event shouldn't be within this period
- The close proximity of NZ Champs to the international pinnacle, with a recommendation to have a longer lead-in period

The Working Group valued the feedback, and has made the proposal for NZ Champs to be held within the April School Holidays, with the intention to avoid a clash of dates with Australian Age Group Championships. This ensures NZ Champs avoids the NZ university exam period and extends the lead-in to international pinnacle.

## **NAGS**

The initial proposal was to hold NAGS in March prior to the Term 1 School Holidays. The key themes from the feedback received were:

### Positives

- Separation of NZ Champs and NAGS on the calendar
- Ability for swimmers to attend Aus Age if they wish

### Feedback to Consider

- Age group events should be in the School Holidays
- March timing may clash with SLSNZ Nationals
- March timing mightn't support swimmers having a break over Christmas
- NAGS should be held after Div II

The Working Group valued the feedback, and has made proposal for NAGS to be held in the first week of the Term 2 School Holidays (July). This enables the positives to remain including separation from NZ Champs and providing opportunity to race at Aus Age, whilst ensuring NAGS doesn't clash with SLSNZ Nationals and remains in the School Holidays. This supports age group swimmers to have a break with whanau over the Christmas School Holidays with plenty of time to prepare and enables Div II to be held prior to NAGS.

## **Div II**

The initial proposal was to hold Div II in May across a 3 day weekend. The key themes from the feedback received were:

### Positives

- Div II an important stepping stone on the pathway
- Supportive of hosting the event over 3 days
- No NAGS swimmers

### Feedback to Consider

- NAGS should be held after Div II
- Summer clubs often wrap up their season in late April/early May

The Working Group valued the feedback, and has proposed the event is held on the first weekend in May to accommodate summer clubs and to be held prior to NAGS. The recommendation remains for no NAGS swimmers to be at the event, with the definition to be clarified in the event information.

## **NZ Short Course**

The initial proposal was to hold NZ Short Course in the first week of the Term 3 School Holidays. The key themes from the feedback received were:

### Positives

- Held in the School Holidays
- Separation from NZ Sec Schools

### Feedback to Consider

- Ensure it doesn't clash with SLSNZ Pool Champs

The Working Group valued the feedback and has maintained the initial proposal of the first week of the Term 3 School Holidays. SNZ will work alongside SLSNZ in ensuring the dates don't clash.

## **NZ Secondary Schools**

The initial proposal was to hold NZ Sec Schools at the start of Term 3 in late July. The key themes from the feedback received were:

### Positives

- Separation from NZ Short Course

### Feedback to Consider

- Hold within the School Tournament Week

The Working Group valued the feedback. The Working Group acknowledged the value of NZ Sec Schools as a great event on our calendar and after considering the timing of other national events within this updated proposal and the timing of School Tournament Weeks, proposed that NZ Sec Schools were held as a long course meet in the School Summer Tournament Week (March). This enabled NAGS to be held in the school holidays and continue to be separated from NZ Champs, and students will be participating during the tournament week.

SNZ will work alongside NZ Water Polo to endeavour to avoid any clashes.



## Junior Festivals

The initial proposal was to hold Junior Festivals in the February & March window. The key themes from the feedback were:

### Positives

- Summer clubs had previously found November too early in the summer

### Feedback to Consider

- February was noted to be too close to the January school holidays where whanau get away
- Potential clashes with other events in February such as SLSNZ Oceans Festival and Weetbix Tryathlons which are popular at this age group
- Some feedback indicating not supportive of qualifying times being reinstated

The Working Group valued the feedback and have proposed the festivals to be held in early March. This avoids a clash with SLSNZ Oceans, and provides a larger break between the January holidays and the event.

The Working Group also proposed 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.

## Off Season

The Working Group made note of highlighting when swimmers would have an off season within the proposed calendar. With the proposal, there have been a 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 events 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.

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

## Open Water

### **Opportunities to Participate in Open Water**

The Working Group acknowledged the feedback that there was not much reference to Open Water events in the initial proposal, outside of the recommendation for NZ Open Water to remain in January. Upon reviewing this feedback, the Working Group has outlined the opportunities for Open Water below:

#### **NZ Open Water**

This event has been recommended to be maintained in January.

#### **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 events.

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. This would 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 2-3 weeks prior to the Australian Open Water Championships usually held at the end of January.

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 the 174 responses during the Proposal for Community Feedback window and has reviewed all the feedback received. The Working Group has proposed a calendar that accommodates this feedback.

## Next Steps

This document has been made available to provide the swimming community the opportunity to provide their feedback on the proposed recommendations and solutions. The process for providing community feedback is outlined below, as well as the next steps.

- The community may provide their feedback on this updated proposal recommendations and solutions by Friday 5 April.
- The community feedback received will be reviewed by the Competition Review Working Group and adjustments made to the updated proposal if required.
- The final recommendations from the Competition Review Working Group will be presented to the Swimming NZ board (May 2024).



## Proposed Competition Pathway

The Working Group has stated that draft 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	Events
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 Div II Regional Championships Junior Festivals
Club	Club Nights Club Champs Club Competitions Inter Club Carnivals/Meets Leagues Dual Meets
Foundation	Have a Go Meets

## Proposed Competition Calendar

The Working Group has put together this proposed competition calendar to indicate when major events would be held during the year. Exact dates and venues will be confirmed closer to the annual event.

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

Please note this proposed competition calendar is subject to change following additional information and feedback

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

Please note this proposed competition calendar is subject to change following additional information and feedback

## Proposed Event Details

### NZ Open Water Swimming Championships

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

### NZ Swimming Championships

- Timing: April (Term 1 School Holidays)
- Length: 5 Days
- Pool Set Up: Long Course
- Pathway Level: Competitive – Tier 1
- Format: Heats & Finals
- Age Groups: Open, Multi-Class Open

### NZ Age Group Swimming Championships

- Timing: July (first week of Term 2 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, 17-18yrs, Multi-Class 13-18yrs

### NZ Secondary School Swimming Championships

- Timing: March (Summer Tournament Week)
- Length: 4 days (6 sessions)
- Pool Set Up: Long 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

## Proposed Event Details

### Division II Swimming Competition

- Timing: May (Early)
- 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, 16-18yrs, 19+ 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