Sport New Zealand Governance Paper

**High Performance Advisory Group**

April 2023

# Introduction

Given the importance of the high performance function, and its inherent link to culture and well-being in the environments of national sporting organisations, the Board and the Chief Executive may consider it desirable to formalise a High Performance Advisory Group (HPAG).

There has been much consideration as to whether a HPAG best serves the organisation as an advisory group to:

* The Board;
* Chief Executive; or
* The Board and Chief Executive, together.

In providing direction on high performance-related matters, the Board does this through the formation of policy, providing direction on and approving strategy, the provision of delegated authorities to the Chief Executive to operationalise the high performance strategy, and monitoring.

Because the leadership of the high performance function is primarily the Chief Executive’s responsibility (for example, along with community sport, competitions and events), Sport New Zealand believes that this advisory group best serves the organisation as an advisory group to management. The exception to this would be the creation of a special purpose Board Committee created for a defined term to oversee and monitor, for example, the implementation by management of recommendations from an independent review of the high performance function.

# Principles of the HPAG

The following outlines the key principles upon which the HPAG could be established and operate:

* This is an advisory group to the Chief Executive, not a committee of the Board that has a governance role.
* The Chief Executive remains fully accountable to the Board for leading the high performance function and achieving the agreed high performance outcomes.
* The HPAG does not have any delegated responsibility to take actions or make decisions on behalf of the Chief Executive or Board.
* The formation of and work of the HPAG does not change, in any way, the whole of the Board’s high performance responsibilities with regard to the setting of policy, providing and approving strategic direction, setting of delegated authorities and monitoring.

# Terms of reference of the HPAG

The following outlines potential content of the terms of reference for a HPAG.

**Purpose of the Committee**

The purpose of the committee needs to be determined. This could include, for example:

* To provide advice and guidance to the Chief Executive and management of the high performance programme to assist the organisation to achieve its high performance outcomes and objectives.

# The authority of the HPAG

The authority of the committee needs to be determined. This could include:

* The HPAG’s role is advisory only.
* The HPAG does not hold the authority or power to make decisions on the Chief Executive's or Board’s behalf.
* The HPAG will not overstep or assume any high performance or people and culture delegations and responsibilities that sit with the Chief Executive in terms of their leadership and operational management of the organisation.
* The HPAG may from time to time obtain such outside information, independent advice and legal opinions, and to consult with outside advisors with relevant experience and expertise as necessary, to properly discharge its duties and responsibilities, subject to the approval of the Chief Executive.

# Role of the HPAG

The HPAG’s role is to provide advice and guidance utilising the skills, experience and acumen of the members of the group.

The following activities could be included in the role of the HPAG:

* **High Performance Strategy:** Review the high performance strategy and its targeted outcomes, providing advice and guidance on potential risks and improvements.
* **High Performance Pathways and Operating Model:** Provide advice on the development of high performance pathways and operating models and guidance on potential risks and improvements.
* **High Performance Culture and Wellbeing:** Provide advice and assistance on the development of the high performance culture and wellbeing of people in the high performance system.
* **Staffing:** Assist as requested in the planning and preparation for the recruitment of key high performance personnel, including individual participation on appointments panels.
* **National Campaign Plans**: Meet on occasion with the national coaches and key high performance personnel to challenge their thinking on their campaign plans and achievement of key high performance outcomes, along with related tactics.
* **High Performance Issues:** Be a sounding board for the CEO and key high performance personnel on high performance issues of significance, as they arise from time to time.

# Membership and appointment of the HPAG members

This needs to be established in the HPAG’s terms of reference, and could include:

* Appointed members of the HPAG should have a range of skills relevant to the needs of the organisation and high performance challenges it may be facing.
* Members of the HPAG shall be appointed by the Chief Executive.
* The number of members can vary, but typically three to four is a good number.
* Membership could include Board members and independent high performance specialists (including a coaching specialist if desired).
* It would be standard for the Chief Executive to appoint the HPAG members for a specific term, for example three years.
* The chair of the Board can be a member of the HPAG if they have the requisite skills, but not the chair of the committee.
* The Chief Executive will appoint the chair of the HPAG.
* The Chief Executive will not be a member of the HPAG but will regularly attend meetings.
* Staff in roles relevant to the business of the HPAG will regularly attend meetings, upon the invitation and approval of the chair of the HPAG and Chief Executive.

# Reporting

This needs to be determined and could include:

* As the HPAG is advisory in nature, full minutes of meetings may not be considered necessary, as determined by the HPAG chair and CEO.
* However, any key recommendations should be recorded and circulated within one week of the completion of the meeting to the CEO and each HPAG member.

# Terms of reference

The terms of reference should be reviewed at least bi-annually, to ensure it is still fit for purpose.