



Australian Polo Federation

Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027

April 2024



Revision



Document Number	Key Area of Focus	Revision Date	Version	Approved
		22.10.2025		22.10.2025

Foreword

The Australian Polo Federation, (formally known as the Australian Polo Council) was founded in or around 1924 and in 2012 became the Australian Polo Federation (APF). The APF is responsible for the development of polo in Australia and work closely with our member states who are recognised as State Sporting Organisations in their own right.

As the sport's governing body, the Board work hard to ensure our sport can grow and are consistently looking to develop strategies to increase participation and performance in the sport.

This strategic plan is a live document, intended to serve as a plan for the Board with the support of our member states, our hard-working clubs and our membership.

This plan will help our organisation focus its energy, to ensure members are working towards united goals, to assess progress towards these goals and adjust the APF's direction in response to a changing environment.

The Strategic Plan highlights three key areas of priority for the next three years, that form the building blocks of the Plan:

1. Governance
2. Participation and Development
3. Business Development

With your help and support the APF is committed to achieving 10% membership growth nationally per year.

Through a series of nationally coordinated initiatives, allowing for each state's operational nuances, we will be targeting junior development and increased female participation to drive growth.

With this map in place, I am confident we can make polo more accessible and grow it from the ground up.

Mark Adamson

Chairman

Our Vision

Strengthen Australia’s international polo reputation by remaining in the top five polo playing nations worldwide while enjoying participation growth across all cohorts.

Our Mission

As polo’s National body we will operate with prudent financial management, sound governance principles and an inclusive approach for polo to flourish and grow within Australia further developing the sports public profile and position in the community.

Our values

Respect: We strive to create an environment underpinned by trust, integrity, and safety for our players, volunteers, spectators and our horses.

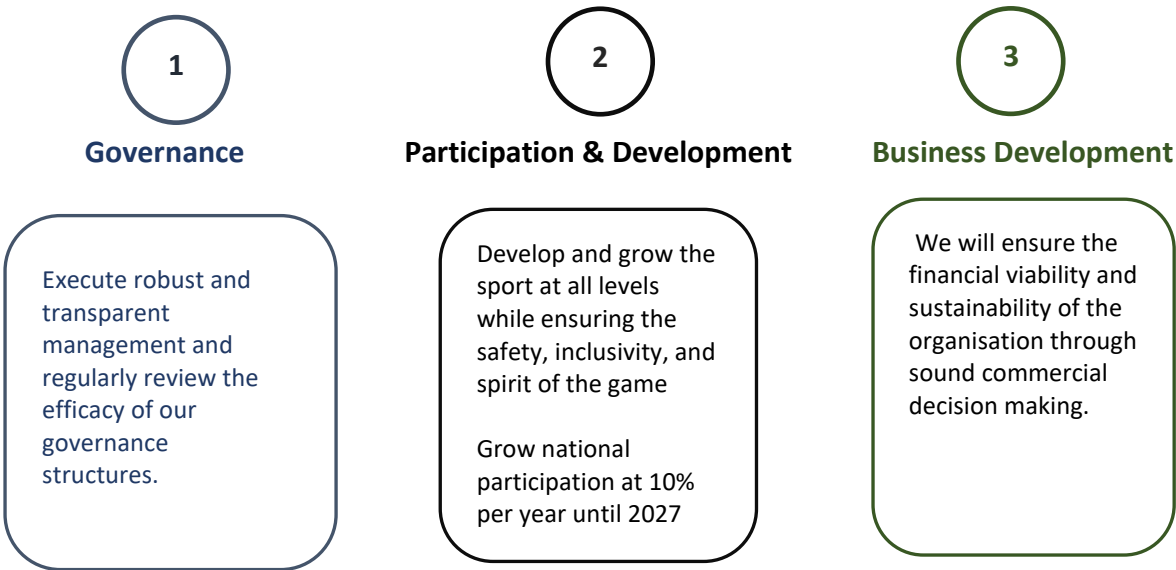
Access: We are committed to growing the sport of polo regardless of a person’s gender, income or cultural background and welcome all comers to the sport.

Enjoyment: Enjoying ourselves, valuing the relationships within the polo family and the connection with our horses are instrumental in how we grow the sport.

Fair Play: Fairness and honesty at all times is our underlying philosophy in running polo

APF key areas of focus

The APF has identified three specific areas on which to focus during the next three years that were driven by member feedback¹. Each area has an overarching goal. The areas of focus and the goal statements are below:



Snapshot of Polo

In 2021 the APF surveyed its national membership to seek feedback for the Board to make decisions surrounding the strategic direction of the sport. The findings of the Report also provided economic data demonstrating the significant contribution polo makes.

The membership provided overwhelming feedback that polo needs to grow from the ground up, that is, making polo more affordable and accessible was critical to the future of the sport.

- Annual spend \$21.7m averaging at \$54,322 per bill paying member
- Capital value \$400m
- Horse ownership - 4800 at an average 12 per person
- 400 bill paying members
- Over half of our members participate a few times per week while nearly one in ten said every day.
- On average people travelled 232 km return trip to play in tournaments
- Members spend on average \$780 per day when attending tournaments comprising travel, food accommodation and wages for grooms

Member's response to to increasing participation

Work on making polo accessible for all ages and abilities. Develop Polo 101 for beginners to transition into full membership and full field. Cater for all levels, high and low. Continue to create events for development such as junior coaching clinics, adult coaching clinics, pony club coaching and beginner days.

Help coordinate the states and clubs in attracting more women and girls to the sport. Develop more female players, coaches and umpires.

Member's response to pathway development

I think polo would benefit greatly if it had a representative pathway. Have a regional, state and national pathway that encourages children to participate and improve.

Key Areas of Focus

1

Governance

Goal Statement:

Execute robust and transparent management and regularly review the efficacy of our governance structures.

Sub-Categories:

- Financial Management
 - Functions of the Board
 - Planning
 - Risk Management
 - Achieve Board gender equity
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Participation & Development

Goal Statement:

Develop and grow the sport at all levels while ensuring the safety, inclusivity, and spirit of the game

Grow national participation at 10% per year until 2027

Sub-Categories

- Pathway development
 - Junior participation
 - Female Participation
 - High performance strategies
 - Sport Development
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3

Business Development

Goal Statement:

We will ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the organisation through sound commercial decision making.

Sub Categories

- Commercialisation
 - National Sponsorship
 - Communications
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Implementation Plan

Governance

Execute robust and transparent management and regularly review the efficacy of our governance structures.

Key Strategies

- Governance Committee review its Terms of Reference to support the implementation of the strategies listed in the sub-categories below.

Subcategories	Strategy
Financial Management	Undertake annual assessment of financial management of APF
Functions of the Board	Review the function of the Board to determine its structure and composition is resourced appropriately to execute the strategic direction of the APF. Achieve gender equity on the Board
Planning	Review the implementation of the strategies after 6 months (2024) and annually review the strategic plan. Review all other APF plans annually. (Role of the Governance committee)
Risk Management	Undertake annual risk assessments of the APF to ensure it is compliant with the Associations Incorporation and Australian Sport’s Commission’s NSO compliance requirements to retain NSO status. Update the Risk Register on an annual basis

Implementation Plan (continued)

Participation and Development

Develop and grow the sport at all levels while ensuring the safety, inclusivity, and spirit of the game.

Grow national participation at 10% per year until 2027.

Key Strategies

- Polo Development Committee to review its Terms of Reference to support the implementation of the strategies listed in the sub-categories below.
- Build on the data from APF surveys to maintain understanding of members and Club needs
- Grow polo from the ground up through helping the State’s and Clubs develop and implement initiatives aimed at making polo more accessible and affordable
- Promote female and junior participation as major priorities

Subcategories	Strategy
• Pathways	Seek feedback from the State Association’s on their current approach and intent on developing pathway for polo from pony club (and other beginner entry) to social participation through to high goal. Based on their approach develop a coordinated pathway plan that provides national consistency while allowing for each state’s nuances. Create a Polo Participation Kit that provides comprehensive information for new riders.
• Female participation	Create a Women’s Polo Committee and develop a national strategy that closes the participation and performance gap with female polo by partnering the State’s in an initiative that target recruiting female equestrians from other horse sports; increases the number and proficiencies of female umpires and coaches.
• Junior participation	Create a Junior Polo Committee and develop a national strategy in partnership with the State’s to create a consistent approach to growing junior polo. Look to existing models (such as Scone) to determine how best to recruit (and keep) young riders post their involvement in schools. Develop a mentoring program in each state.

Implementation Plan (continued)

Participation and Development (continued)

• High performance	Review and update existing strategies to determine their effectiveness in developing polo through to the elite level. Seek input from the State's and develop a new national high-performance plan based on a review of existing strategies: ○ Encourage representative teams & growth of inter Club, State & International events. ○ Showcase talent & promote award initiatives. Document pathways for player development at representative level. ○ Continue to develop National/State representative player conduct guidelines ○ Protect and grow the strength of the Australian polo brand. Investigate establishing Ambassador program
• Asian engagement	Establish a Polo Asian Engagement Sub-committee to build on existing State-based initiatives and member relationships that have reciprocal arrangements. Assess the potential of expanding "Indian Ocean Rim" competition strategy (WAPA) to Polo
• Sport Development	Review and update existing strategies to determine their effectiveness in developing the sport: ○ Implement umpire guidelines and Chief umpire initiatives incl. regular revision of umpire accreditation program. ○ Implement State development meetings to encourage dialogue & cross-referencing of initiatives. ○ Continue working towards parity of handicaps nationwide. Work to align foreign player and women's polo ○ Encourage universal understanding of rules with alignment at national, State and Club levels. ○ Promote importance of safety of horse & rider & horse welfare. Promote Tournament/ Event Risk Management guideline/ policy adherence.

Implementation Plan (continued)

Business Development

We will ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the organisation through sound commercial decision making.

Key Strategies

- The Strategy and Revenue Committee review its Terms of Reference to support the implementation of the strategies listed in the sub-categories below.
- Having determined what strategies, the APF want to implement in 2024 (and thereafter) produce an annual business plan to determine resources required and set priorities
- Develop a communications strategy

Subcategories	Strategy
• Business Planning	Review the business plan for the APF operations and to implement priorities from the Strategic Plan. As part of the business plan produce a return on investment for monies being sought.
• Commercial operations and partnerships	Build and update the economic profile of APF and identify potential national investor in the sport and government funding. Seek NSO funded status from the Australian Sports Commission. Produce base investment document (with updated economic contribution data from polo expenditure) to be used for range of private and government grants and income sources.
• Communications	Prepare a communication plan for polo that is linked to selected strategies from this plan and should include broad messages such as: ○ How polo can be more accessible (affordable and inclusive) ○ Polo’s role in regional development and social well-being ○ APF’s role to be a funded NSO ○ Polo’s commercial value to a national sponsor

Implementation Plan (continued)

Business Development (continued)

- Financial Sustainability

Continue to demonstrate to your members that as a Board, you are governing a growing high value sport that requires capital investment from Government and corporate sectors.
- Building long term relationships with Key Stakeholders

Identify and produce list of current and intended key stakeholders and incorporate this as part of the communication plan

Notes for Implementation

It is recommended the APF Board rank the strategies in order of priority and are urged to recruit participation on the recommended sub-committees from within and external to the membership and that a Board member chair the respective committees.

Performance measures for this strategic plan have not been recommended. These, timeframes and budgets can be added once the priority strategies have been agreed upon by the APF.