

**COMPETITION RESTRUCTURE &
COMPETITIVE PATHWAY
REVIEW**

FINAL REPORT

**APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
IMPLEMENTATION - JULY 2020**

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Executive Summary

In January 2019, the **New Zealand Competition Restructure Working Group** (the Working Group) was established to lead a review of our existing competition structure and competitive pathway and provide a detailed report, including recommendations for change, to the Board of SNZ for its consideration in mid-2020 with any approved changes coming into effect in early 2021.

Throughout 2019, the Working Group met on several occasions, consulted with many within the swimming community and in December 2019, provide the Swimming New Zealand (SNZ) Board with a series of recommendations it believed would address the issues identified by the Working Group and as outlined in Appendix 7.

Following consideration by the Board, the Working Group released the **Competition Restructure & Competitive Pathway Review** document which was released for consultation on 18 December 2019 – 1 May 2020.

94 submissions were received from 68 individuals and 26 clubs and regionals. ‘Coaches’ were the largest group of respondents with 31 (33%) and individuals from the Canterbury West Coast Region had the most responses (16). 84% of all respondents were either “very supportive” or agreed that the “recommendations made sense”.

In May and June of 2020, the Working Group reviewed, considered and analysed all submissions received making small changes to 4 of the 8 recommendations listed in the **Competition Restructure & Competitive Pathway Review** document based on the feedback received.

On July 1 2020, the Working Group’s final recommendations were presented to the SNZ Board for consideration. All recommendations were approved as submitted with both the Board and Working Group confident that the approved recommendations will positively impact the original issues identified.

On 28 July 2020, the Final Report of the **Competition Restructure & Competitive Pathway Review** was released to the membership.

In releasing this report, SNZ acknowledges the efforts of the Working Group and thanks the groups individual members for their time and commitment to this important project. SNZ also reinforces the Work Group’s position that “New Zealand should work towards being the most skilled competitive swimming nation in the world, by having a higher level of skill execution across all levels of swimming” and will actively look at initiatives and programmes that will drive us towards this goal.

Desired Outcomes

In implementing the eight approved recommendations, SNZ and the Working group are confident that the following seven outcomes will be achieved:

1. Provide an aligned and appropriately structured competition and training framework
2. Enable swimmers to focus on achieving their best performances at key points within a season in line with the new competition calendar
3. Provide coaches the time to focus on specific competencies, such as skill development, within a specific training period
4. Enable coaches to develop a more holistic training calendar focused on skill development, racing and competitions aligned to a nationally agreed training cycle
5. Enable better long-term planning due to the establishment of a revolving four-year competition calendar
6. Provide appropriate age for stage racing opportunities
7. Significantly simplify the training and competition cycle at all levels of our sport

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Approved Recommendations

All of the Working Group's eight recommendations have been approved by the SNZ Board with four being approved as detailed in the consultation document and four being approved after minor modifications being made by the Working Group following review of the submissions received.

Recommendation One

The national senior (13 yrs. +) competition calendar is aligned into three distinct training and competition cycles. Each cycle concludes with a significant racing opportunity.



SNZ Comment

The National championship calendar will be restructured immediately into the three distinct training and competition cycles. Regional championship should align with their defined purpose by December 2021.

The proposed "Island championships" events in the original review is not supported. (This should not affect the long standing south island champs).

Recommendation Two

Original recommendation:

Transfer the 17 & 18 years age group from National Age Groups to NZ Opens by adding an 18 & Under qualifying standard for Opens.

Modified recommendation following membership consultation:

The 17 & 18 years age group is moved from National Age Groups Championships to NZ Swimming Championships (formally NZ Opens) by adding a 17 & 18 years age group and qualifying standard to the NZ Swimming Championships.



SNZ Comment

Recommendation to be implemented at the 2021 NZ Swimming Championships. The NZ Swimming Championships will now include A, B & C finals.

Approved Recommendations

Recommendation Three

Original recommendation:

Qualifying opportunities for national meets (not counting regional championships) are limited to 10 meets per region, to be known as “National Qualifying Meets”. National Qualifying Meets will replace “Approved Meets.”

Modified recommendation following membership consultation:

Qualifying opportunities for national meets, (not including regional championships) will be limited to 10 meets per region. These will be known as “Designated Meets” and others, as “Development Meets”.



SNZ Comment

The limit of 10 designated meets per region will be implemented from July 2021. The structure & criteria of what a designated meet is, will be very clearly communicated by SNZ for July 2021.

Recommendation Four

Original recommendation:

National Qualifying Meet times will not be required to enter Regional Championships.

Modified recommendation following membership consultation:

Approved times or times from ‘Designated Meets’ are not required to enter Regional Championships.



SNZ Comment

This recommendation will come into operation with immediate effect. SNZ will review guidelines for swim meets (both designated and development) and how they are officiated, with guidelines to be released in July 2021.

Approved Recommendations

Recommendation Five

Original recommendation:

Consistent age group categories are implemented across all regional and national events.

Modified recommendation following membership consultation:

Consistent age group categories are implemented across all national events, with the minimum age of 13 years.

All regional championship age groups should be aligned.



SNZ Comment

This will be implemented for all national championships in 2021.

The recommendation aligns with Sport NZ's 'Balance is Better' philosophy.

Recommendation Six

SNZ to re-introduce and administer the XLR8 programme for swimmers who are 12 years and under, to promote the development of all strokes, and realign the 12&U competition calendar.



SNZ Comment

The revamped XLR8 replacement program will be ready for launch in July 2021.

From 2021 the SNZ Junior Festival's will move to 4 separate weekends to be completed before March each year. Regional Junior Championships should be held in March of each year.

Approved Recommendations

Recommendation Seven

Each regional and national competition in the structure needs to have a clearly defined purpose and position within the athlete development pathway. (See Appendix 3).



SNZ Comment

SNZ and regions need to ensure that their major events have a clearly defined purpose with immediate effect.

Recommendation Eight

The competition calendar to be set for a four-year cycle from January 2021 - December 2024, with the next competition review occurring in June 2023.



SNZ Comment

The recommendation will come into effect from the 2021 Calendar.

National training cycle & racing framework for swimmers 13yrs +



**Significant
Racing
Opportunity**



SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
TRAINING PERIOD			- Major Regional Championships
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL
TRAINING PERIOD			- NZ Championships - NZ Age Group Championships - DIV II Championships
MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
TRAINING PERIOD			- NZ Short Course Championships

National Event Format:

EVENT:	New Zealand Swimming Championships (Formally NZ OPENS)
LEVEL:	Performance
PURPOSE:	To crown our National Champions and to select the best athletes to represent NZ at pinnacle events. Provides a significant racing opportunity at the end of a training cycle.
FORMAT:	Heats & Finals (8 lanes) Open Q Times 17 & 18 Q Times PARA (Multi Class) Open Finals - A, B & C Swimmers can only swim in events for which they have qualified.

EVENT:	New Zealand Age Group Swimming Championships
LEVEL:	Performance
PURPOSE:	To crown Age Group Champions, whilst learning to enjoy racing at a national level; selection of the Age Group swim teams. Provides a significant racing opportunity at the end of a training cycle for age group swimmers.
FORMAT:	Heats (combined ages) & finals in Age Groups Age Groups & Qualifying Times <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 years• 14 years• 15 years• 16 years PARA (Multi Class) Swimmers can only swim in events for which they have qualified.

National Event Format:

EVENT:	New Zealand Short Course Swimming Championships
LEVEL:	Performance
PURPOSE:	<p>To crown National Champions both Age and Open, whilst learning to enjoy racing at a national level. To select swimmers for pinnacle international SC events.</p> <p>Provides a significant racing opportunity at the end of a training cycle for Open & Age group swimmers.</p>
FORMAT:	<p>Heats in the morning act as Timed Finals for Age Groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 years• 14 years• 15 years• 16 years• 17/18 years <p>PARA (Multi Class)</p> <p>Open Finals - A, B & C</p> <p>Swimmers can only swim in events for which they have qualified.</p>

EVENT:	New Zealand Division II Swimming Championships
LEVEL:	Competitive
PURPOSE:	<p>To provide an introduction to competitive swimming at a national level.</p> <p>Provides a significant racing opportunity at the end of a training cycle for age group swimmers</p>
FORMAT:	<p>Heats (combined ages) & finals in Age Groups</p> <p>Age Groups & Qualifying Times</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 13 years• 14 years• 15 years• 16 years + <p>Swimmers can only swim in events for which they have qualified.</p>

National Event Format:

EVENT: Regional Championships

LEVEL: Competitive/Regional

PURPOSE: To crown the regional champions.

Larger regional championship held in December will provide a significant racing opportunity at the end of a training cycle.

FORMAT: Heat and Final or Timed Finals - Depending on the size of the region and time available.

Age Groups & Qualifying Times

- 13 years
- 14 years
- 15 years
- 16 years +



Appendix 1

Parties which provided a response to the review

The table below shows what category respondents identified with when submitting a response.

Category	Responses	
Club Committee	14.89%	14
Regional Board/Committee	12.77%	12
Club Coach	32.98%	31
Swimmer	7.45%	7
Other	31.91%	30
Total		94

Regions Boards which submitted a response (12 including NZSCTA)
Swimming Northland
Swimming Auckland
Swimming Counties Manukau
Swimming Waikato
Swimming Bay of Plenty
Swimming Hawkes Bay Poverty Bay
Swimming Manawatu
Swimming Wellington
Swimming Nelson Marlborough
Swimming Canterbury West Coast
Swimming Otago
New Zealand Swim Coaches & Teachers Association (NZSCTA)

Appendix 1 continued

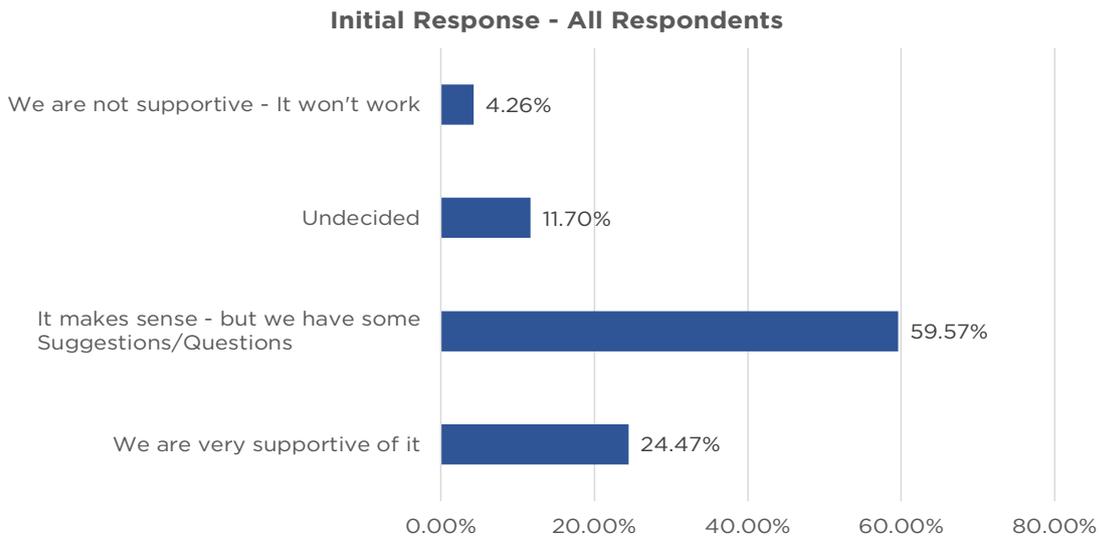
Clubs Committees which submitted a response (14)	
Feilding Amateur Swimming Club	
Howick Pakuranga	
Comet Swim Club	
Blenheim Swimming Club	
Palmerston North Swim Club	
Pirates Swim Team	
Tawa Swimming Club	
Kiwi West Aquatics	
Swim Timaru	
Liz van Welie Aquatics	
Geraldine Swimming Club	
Pukekohe Swimming Club	
Porirua City Aquatics	
SwimZone Racing	

Individuals which submitted a response	
68 individuals indicated what region they were from	
Auckland	5
Bay of Plenty	7
Canterbury West Coast	16
Counties Manukau	5
Hawes Bay Poverty Bay	1
Manawatu	1
Nelson Marlborough	2
Northland	6
Otago	3
Other	5
Southland	2
Taranaki	2
Waikato	1
Wellington	12
Grand Total	68

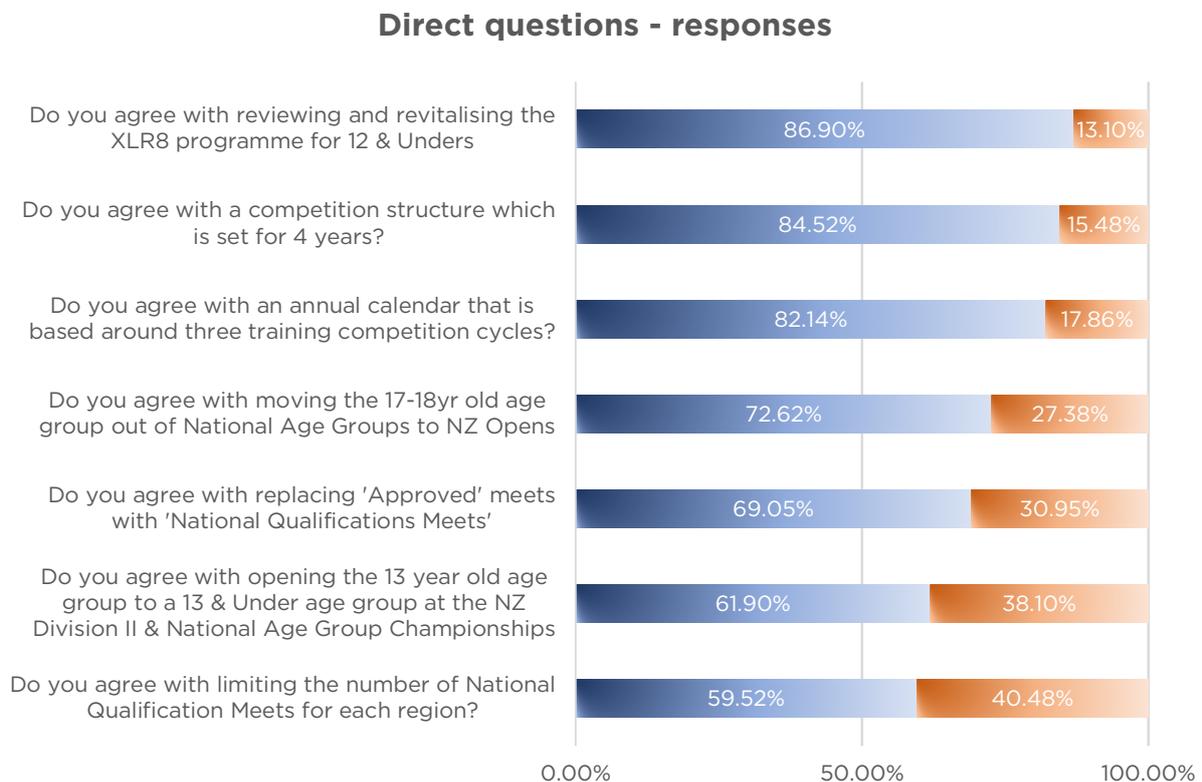
Appendix 2

Summary of the direct questions which were asked in the submission process.

The tables below show the response to the initial question.
What is your initial thought on the proposed changes?



The tables below show the responses from the 7 direct questions asked in the submissions.

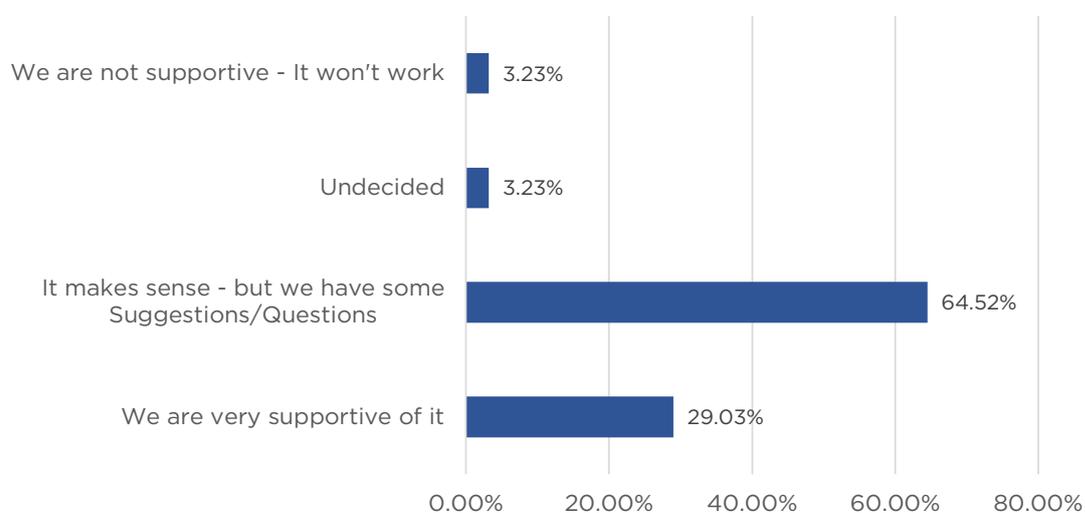


Appendix 2 continued

Summary of the direct questions which were asked in the submission process.

The tables below show the responses from Coaches to the initial question.
What is your initial thought on the proposed changes?

Coaches Responses



Appendix 3

Long-Term Athlete Development Pathway / Competition Levels

Each regional and national competition in the structure needs to have a clearly defined purpose and position within the Long-Term Athlete Development Pathway (recommendation 7).

This will be achieved by all meets aligning into five 'levels' of competition closely linked to the recognised Long Term Athlete Development framework and based on an aligned coordinated annual calendar.

It is also proposed that the competition calendar would be set for a four year cycle from January 2021 - December 2024 with the next competition review occurring in June 2023.

LEVEL	EVENTS	Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD)
High Performance	International Comps/ NZ National Teams	Training to Win / Perform
Performance	NZ Swimming Championships National Age Group Swimming Championship	Training to Compete / Perform
Competitive	Division II Swimming Championship <i>Major</i> Regional Swimming Championships	Training to Train / Develop
Regional	Regional Swimming Championships	Skill Development / Participate
Local	Inter Club, Club Champs, Club Meets	Fundamentals / Play

Appendix 4

Competition Calendar

The table below shows the senior (13 yrs. +) competition calendar and training cycles as described in recommendation 1.

Event Type	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	
HP MEETS		STATE TEAMS		Various Australian State Champs							International Pinnacle		High Performance Level
National Championship Meets								OPENS/ NAGS				NZ Short Course	Performance Level
DIVISION II								DIV II					Competitive Level
							Last Opportunity Meets				Last Opportunity Meets		
Regional Championship Meets				REGIONAL CHAMPS (LC)						REGIONAL CHAMPS (SC)			Regional Swimmer Level
Inter Club & Development Meets													Local Level
	TRAINING BLOCK				TRAINING BLOCK				TRAINING BLOCK				

Notes:

1. All Regional Championships are held within a 6-7 week period, not set strictly in December or June.
2. The last opportunity meets can be either a 'preparation' or 'last chance' meet for the following national meets (NZ Division II Swimming Championships, National Age Group Swimming Championships, NZ Swimming Championships, and NZ Short Course Swimming Championships).
3. Division II Swimming Championships would always be held **after** National Age Groups Swimming Championships.

Appendix 5

Regional Championship Age Group Matrix

To bring all regions into alignment the table below suggests the age groups and events for all regional championships. (Recommendation 5)

Stroke	Distance	Age Group			
		13yrs	14yrs	15yrs	16 & Over
Freestyle	50	✓	✓	✓	✓
	100	✓	✓	✓	✓
	200	✓	✓	✓	✓
	400	✓	✓	✓	✓
	800*	✓	✓	✓	✓
	1500*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Backstroke	50	✓	✓	✓	✓
	100	✓	✓	✓	✓
	200	✓	✓	✓	✓
Breaststroke	50	✓	✓	✓	✓
	100	✓	✓	✓	✓
	200	✓	✓	✓	✓
Butterfly	50	✓	✓	✓	✓
	100	✓	✓	✓	✓
	200	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual Medley	100	✓	✓	✓	✓
	200	✓	✓	✓	✓
	400*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Freestyle Relay	4x50	15 & U			Open
	4x100	15 & U			Open
	4x200				
Medley Relay	4x50	15 & U			Open
	4x100	15 & U			Open
	4x200				
Mixed Medley Relay	4x50	15 & U		Open	
	4x100	15 & U		Open	

*could be run as Open if numbers in the region are low

Appendix 6

Junior Regional Championship Age Group Matrix

To bring all regions into alignment the table below suggests the age groups and events for all regional championships. (Recommendation 5)

Stroke	Distance	Age Groups			
		10 & U	11yrs	12yrs	
Freestyle	50	✓	✓	✓	
	100	✓	✓	✓	
	200	✓	✓	✓	
	400	✓	✓	✓	
	800				✓
	1500				
Backstroke	50	✓	✓	✓	
	100	✓	✓	✓	
	200		✓	✓	
Breaststroke	50	✓	✓	✓	
	100	✓	✓	✓	
	200		✓	✓	
Butterfly	50	✓	✓	✓	
	100	✓	✓	✓	
	200		✓	✓	
Individual Medley	100	✓	✓	✓	
	200	✓	✓	✓	
	400				✓
Freestyle Relay	4x50	12 & U			
	4x100	12 & U			
	4x200				
Medley Relay	4x50	12 & U			
	4x100	12 & U			
	4x200				

Appendix 7

Issues identified by the Working Group (December 2019)

The Working Group identified key issues as being significant barriers to maximising our swimming potential both domestically and internationally:

1. Qualifying times between regional champs, NZ Division II, NZ Age Groups and NZ Opens, have been reviewed in isolation of each other with little regard to the overall development and progression of athletes
2. There is little coordination between SNZ and Regions in relation to the timing, purpose and structure of National and Regional meets
3. There is too much emphasis on having 'approved meets' in order to gain qualification for regional or national meets. The reason for having approved meets has become blurred resulting on these becoming the norm as opposed to the exception.
4. Most national events are at capacity, in terms of venue, so growth is almost impossible with any changes to these meets being driven by venue capacity as opposed to improving performances
5. The timing of Division II in the last 4-5 years has diluted the importance of some regional championships
6. The NZ Short Course Championships clashes annually with the Swimming Australia State Teams event
7. There is no agreed age group format consistent across all events.
8. There is limited understanding and knowledge of Long Term Athlete Development (LTAD) and how this should be applied to an effective competition pathway and structure