



Classification Policy

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Definition of classification.....	3
1. Policy Purpose	3
2. Paralympic governance in classification.....	4
3. Policy Statements	5
4. PA roles and responsibilities	6
5. Classification organisations roles and responsibilities	9
6. Athlete and athlete support personnel roles and responsibilities.....	11
7. Classifiers	11
8. Intentional Misrepresentation	11
9. Conditions.....	13
10. Provision.....	15
11. Application.....	15
12. Definitions	16
13. Relevant policies, codes and standards.....	19

Definition of classification

Classification is central to Para-sport, used to form the structure for competition in the Paralympic movement. The IPC Athlete Classification Code and its International Standards (**the Code**) is the fundamental document on which classification in the Paralympic movement is based.

In accordance with the Code, classification in Para-sport:

1. defines who is eligible to compete in the Para-sport competition pathway;
2. groups athletes into sport classes which aim to minimise the impact of the eligible impairment on the outcome of Para-sport competition.

In seeking to minimise the impact of the eligible impairment on the outcome of Para-sport competition classification follows a three step process:

1. Does the athlete have an eligible impairment for the Para-sport?
2. Does the athlete meet the minimal impairment criteria specific to the Para-sport and/or discipline they wish to compete in?
3. Which sport class will the athlete compete in?

The classification processes of each Para-sport share common features, however, the classification process is specific to each Para-sport.

1. Policy Purpose

The PA Classification Policy is supplemented by Australian Classification Standards. These support the implementation in Australia of the IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards, and align with the IPC Model of Best Practice: National Classification.

The PA Classification Policy and Australian Classification Standards apply to all organisations and individuals delivering and participating in Para-sport in Australia.

Implementation of the PA Classification Policy and Australian Classification Standards is designed to uphold integrity within Para-sport classification in Australia.

National Sporting Organisations, PA members, classification partners (**Classification Organisations**), classifiers, athletes and athlete support personnel, need to be aware of their obligations, rights and responsibilities, as well as classification rules and procedures.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- 1.1 Provide a clear statement on the purpose of Classification in Para-sport in Australia;
- 1.2 Set out the position, role and responsibilities of Paralympics Australia (**PA**) with regards to classification, as a member of the International Paralympic Committee and in accordance with 'the Code';
- 1.3 Create a framework for outlining the policies, processes and procedures for the management of classification for Para-sport in Australia;
- 1.4 Set out the requirements of classification organisations, classifiers, athletes and athlete support personnel with regards to classification, in accordance with the Code and as individuals or organisations in the Australian Para-sport classification system; and
- 1.5 Promote and uphold the integrity of Paralympic sport.

2. Paralympic governance in classification

The International Paralympic Committee (**IPC**) is the global governing body of the Paralympic movement.

- 2.1 PA is the National Paralympic Committee (**NPC**) for Australia and a member of the IPC.
- 2.2 The Code applies to all members of the Paralympic movement and to all athletes competing in Para-sport and their support personnel
- 2.3 The Code is the fundamental document upon which Classification in the Paralympic movement is based. The Code details policies and procedures common across all sports and sets principles to be applied by all Para-sports.
- 2.4 PA works with classification organisations and Australian classifiers in the Australian Para-sport classification system.
- 2.5 PA will represent national classification interests and classification concerns to the IPC.

3. Policy Statements

- 3.1 All Australian athletes with physical, intellectual or vision impairments should have access to classification opportunities relevant to their Para-sport and level of competition.
- 3.2 Access to classification in Australia is a free service; and to remove barriers to participation in Para-sport pathways, athletes shall not be bound to pay a fee to access a classification assessment.
- 3.3 National classification in Australia serves to determine whether an athlete meets the relevant sport's minimal eligibility criteria and help the athlete to understand their Para-sport pathway opportunities. The allocation of a sport class makes for meaningful Para-sport competition at a national level. National classification supersedes any provisional classification assessment.

- 3.4 Provisional classification assessments support an understanding of eligibility and class may be adopted in the Australian classification pathway. It must be recognised that an athlete's class may change at a national classification.
- 3.5 Australian national classification rules, procedures and practices will, where possible, mirror those of the relevant International Federation (**IF**).
- 3.6 International classification is carried out under the IF processes and athlete evaluation conducted by classifiers accredited by the IF for the sport. International classification serves to determine whether an athlete meets the sports minimal eligibility criteria and allocate a class for international competition.
- 3.7 It is possible that an athlete may change class when assessed by an international classification panel, under the international classification rules for the sport. International classification supercedes national classification.
- 3.8 International classification rules will be updated from time to time and each sport must adopt international changes within their national classification activities relevant rules, procedures and practices as early as practicable.

4. PA roles and responsibilities

As a member of the IPC, PA accepts the following roles and responsibilities under the Code, and aligns the Australian classification system with the IPC Model of Best Practice for National Classification:

- 4.1 Being responsible for communication with regards to classification with the IPC and other NPCs; and supporting coordinated communication between NSOs and IFs for sport-specific classification matters.
- 4.2 Ensuring that national classification rules conform with the Code and making recommendations for compliance with the Code.
- 4.3 Establishing procedures to address non-compliance with the Code.
- 4.4 Developing and implementing a policy for members to comply with the Code and establishing procedures to address non-compliance with the Code.
- 4.5 Developing and implementing an Australia Classification strategy, to support harmonisation and consistency of classification across Para-Sport. PA may include modifications to the Code to support classification in Australia.
- 4.6 Establishing an Australian Classification Framework including policies, procedures, rules and regulations to support Code Compliance in Australia. The Framework will provide guidelines for the technical and operational requirements for classification in Australia relating to:
 - eligible impairment types;
 - athlete evaluation;
 - protests and appeals;
 - classifier personnel and training; and
 - data protection.
- 4.7 Providing support and leadership to classification organisations and Australian classifiers to implement activities in compliance with the Code.
- 4.8 Aligning national classification in the Australian Para-sport classification framework and system with the IPC Model of Best practice for National Classification as practicable.

- 4.9 Developing classification resources and education with reference to:
- classification in Para-sport
 - the Code
 - IF classification rules
 - athletes' rights and responsibilities
 - athlete support personnel rights and responsibilities
 - classifier rights and responsibilities
 - intentional misrepresentation
 - integrity in classification
- 4.10 PA recognises the primacy of the Code and each IF's classification rules and associated athlete classifications over national classification activities.
- 4.11 In the event that this Policy and its associated national classification standards fail to provide for a matter in respect of which there is provision in the IPC Code, the provisions appearing in the IPC Code shall apply.
- 4.12 PA will ensure there are processes and procedures in place in regards to the protection of Athlete classification data.
- 4.13 PA will only recognise Australian classification activities that are conducted within the scope of this policy and standards that are developed by the PA under this policy.
- 4.14 PA and classification organisations will only recognise national classification decisions of Australian classifiers where those classifiers are trained, recognised and/or certified by PA and/or the classification organisation.
- 4.15 PA is not responsible for providing assistance to sports and/or impairment groups not considered under the Code.

- 4.16 PA prioritises sports on a Paralympic program. PA reserves the right to consider available funding and resources in determining the level of classification support provided to each Para-sport.
- 4.17 PA reserves the right to determine whether classification support will be available for IPC recognised sports that are not on a Paralympic program. PA reserves the right to consider availability of resources in determining whether to support classification for IPC recognised Para-sports.

5. Classification organisations roles and responsibilities

- 5.1 Classification organisations are bound to and expected to comply with the Code, relevant IF classification rules, PA Classification policies and Australian standards.
- 5.2 PA expects that classification organisations will have ongoing collaboration with PA for the continuous improvement of national classification activities in their sport. PA expects that its members and/or classification partners will integrate classification activities into their sport, including:
- 5.2.1 Developing a sport-specific strategy for classification in their sport in conjunction with PA;
- 5.2.2 Developing and implementing classification policy and processes relevant to its operational responsibilities that relate to their Para-sport and align with the PA Classification policy and Australian classification standards:
- Eligible impairment types for Para-sport pathway
 - Australian athlete evaluation
 - Australian protests and appeals

- Australian classifier personnel and certification
- Australian data protection
- Intentional misrepresentation and classification integrity

5.2.3 Providing national classification opportunities for athletes within their sport and supporting best practice in national classification delivery.

5.2.4. Publishing a masterlist of all Australian athletes who have been classified at provisional, national and international level. The published masterlist will include athletes, regardless of whether the athlete has an active registration and/or membership of the sport.

5.2.4 Structuring national competition in accordance with the Para-sport classes defined by the relevant IF classification rules.

5.2.5 Collaborating with PA in identification, training, development and recertification of Australian classifiers. The education and certification process will be aligned with that of the relevant IF where practicable, but will allow for national flexibility to ensure classifiers are adequately trained and educated in relevant Australian classification system policies, standards, rules, processes and expectations.

5.2.6 The classification organisation will put in place processes and procedures whereby athlete classification data is handled stored and protected

5.2.7 Developing and circulating general classification information and education for their sport, including:

- Classification pathway and processes for their sport
- Eligible impairment types for their Para-sport

- the Code
- IF classification rules
- athletes' rights and responsibilities
- athlete support personnel rights and responsibilities
- classifiers rights and responsibilities
- intentional misrepresentation and classification integrity

5.2.8 PA may suspend funding or support for classification organisations that are not in compliance with the Code and/or this policy.

6. Athlete and athlete support personnel roles and responsibilities

- 6.1 Athletes have a responsibility to give a true reflection of their impairment, skills and ability in classification.
- 6.2 Athletes and athlete support personnel must familiarise themselves with and conduct themselves according to the Code, relevant sport IF classification rules and national classification policies.

7. Classifiers

- 7.1 Australian Classifiers must conduct themselves in accordance with the Classifier Code of Conduct and adhere to the conditions laid out in any Classifier Agreement, the Code and relevant classification rules including the relevant IF Classification rules, PA Classification policy and Australian standards when involved in classification activities in Australia.

8. Intentional Misrepresentation

8.1 Intentional Misrepresentation (**IM**) is a deliberate attempt by an athlete or support person (either by deed or omission) to mislead an international federation or national body as to the existence or extent of skills and/or abilities relevant to a Para-sport and/or the degree or nature of eligible impairment during athlete evaluation and/or any point after the allocation of sport class.

8.2 IM includes circumstances where an athlete or support person:

- submits false and/or fraudulent medical diagnostic information as a part of the classification process, or withholds relevant medical documentation that may have an impact on the classification process;
- attempts to deceive the classification panel during athlete evaluation by misrepresenting the athlete's skills and/or abilities and/or the degree or nature of impairment;
- deliberately presents at athlete evaluation in a way that is inconsistent with how they present in competition or with their medical diagnostic information
- fails to make a medical notification as to a change in circumstances that may impact upon sport class allocation
- knowingly assists, covers up, is involved in any type of complicity involving IM or disrupts the athlete evaluation process with the intention of deceiving or misleading the classification panel

8.3 IM is cheating and is a significant risk to the integrity of Para-sport.

8.4 IM investigations may occur through the relevant classification jurisdictions. For an athlete with an international classification this investigation is through the relevant IF, for athletes with a national

classification this investigation is through the relevant national classification body for the sport.

- 8.5 Athletes and/or support personnel may be subject to investigation and are to cooperate with any IM investigations.
- 8.6 Athletes and/or support personnel may be subjected to subsequent disciplinary actions if found guilty of IM offences under the Code, IF classification rules or national classification rules.
- 8.7 PA and classification organisations will cooperate with IM investigations.
- 8.8 PA and classification organisations will recognise, respect and enforce any ban imposed on an athlete or athlete support person for IM by a signatory to the IPC Athlete classification Code.
- 8.9 Anyone with information of genuine concerns of IM should report these concerns through the relevant classification organisation
- 8.10 PA will establish processes for individuals to raise IM concerns and managing concerns of IM relevant to the respective level of classification and sporting jurisdiction. PA will not act on any concerns that it believes are intended to be malicious and/or cause distress.

9. Conditions

- 9.1 Australian Classifier roles, certification and training shall follow the Australian Classification Standard - Classifier Personnel and Training.
- 9.2 Classification in Para-sport in Australia shall follow the Australian Classification Standard - Eligible Impairment Types, and the Australian Classification Standard – Athlete Evaluation.

- 9.3 Classification Data protection shall follow the Australian Classification Standard – Data Protection and abide by relevant national and/or state legislation.
- 9.4 Classification protests and appeals shall follow the Australian Classification Standard - Protest and Appeals.
- 9.5 An athlete has a right to challenge their classification through the protest or appeals process relevant to the respective level of classification and sporting jurisdiction.
- 9.6 Any protests or appeal directed to PA, including where PA manages the classification for the sport or impairment group, are confidential. Parties to protests and appeals shall not disclose information relating to the protest or appeal or the proceedings to any person or entity outside those directly required to assist in the resolution, which may include, but are not limited to:
- athletes and their appointed representative(s);
 - Australian Classifiers;
 - PA employees;
 - sport, medical or scientific consultants engaged for the purposes of the protest or appeal; and
 - any legal counsel involved in the process.
- 9.7 Disciplinary action may be taken against PA employees, volunteers, contractors; classification organisations; Australian Certified Classifiers; athletes; athletes and athlete support personnel who breach this policy.

10. Provision

- 10.1 PA will appoint a person who will be responsible for monitoring progress in implementing this policy and for providing advice to the CEO, Board and PA's members on its implementation.
- 10.2 PA employees, contractors, volunteers and classification personnel have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and abide by, the relevant Australian classification policies, standards, rules, and guidelines.
- 10.3 Athletes and athlete support personnel have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and abide by, the relevant Australian classification policies, standards, rules and guidelines.
- 10.4 Classification organisations and their classification personnel have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and abide by, the relevant Australian classification policies, standards, rules and guidelines
- 10.5 Australian Classifiers, including trainee classifiers, have a responsibility to ensure they are aware of, and abide by, the relevant Australian classification policies, standards, rules and guidelines.

11. Application

This policy applies to:

- 11.1 PA employees, contractors and volunteers
- 11.2 Classification organisations

11.3 All Australian athletes and athlete support personnel engaged in any level of Para-sport competition or participation.

11.4 All Australian Classifiers and classification personnel in any Para-sport that is recognised by the IPC.

12. Definitions

Appeal is the process by which a formal objection to how the athlete evaluation and/or classification procedures have been conducted is submitted and resolved.

Athlete refers to an individual who participates in Para-sport.

Athlete Evaluation is the process by which an athlete is assessed in accordance with the classification rules, so that they may be allocated a sport class and sport class status.

Athlete Support Person or Support Person refers to any individual who supports an athlete, including but not limited to coaches, managers, sport scientists, physiotherapists, doctors, administrators, carers and parents/guardians.

Australian Classification Standards complement this policy and provide the technical and operational requirements for classification.

Australian Classifier is a classifier who has completed all the required training and education to be certified as a trainee, national or international classifier for a particular Para-sport and/or impairment group, and who is recognised / certified by PA and/or the NSO.

Australian Classifier Code of Conduct is the behavioural and ethical standards for classifiers specified by the PA for all Australian classifiers.

Australian Para-sport Classification system is the framework for classification in Australia, encompassing various organisations responsible for classification in the Para-sport and/or impairment type and the structure for classification.

Classification is the process by which athletes are grouped into sport classes according to the extent to which their impairment impacts the fundamental activities in the specific sport or discipline.

Classification partner refers to an organisation recognised as having national administration responsibilities for classification, either for the sport or impairment type.

Classification Personnel are individuals who act with the authority of a classification organisation in relation to athlete evaluation.

Classification Organisation refers to National Sports Organisations, PA members and recognised classification partners recognised as having national administration responsibilities for Para-sport classification, either for the sport or impairment type

Classifier is an individual authorised to evaluate athletes in accordance with the classification rules for the sport or impairment type.

Impairment is a physical, intellectual or vision impairment. Eligible Impairment is an impairment designated as being a prerequisite for competing in Para-sport, as designated by the Code.

Intentional Misrepresentation is a deliberate attempt by an athlete or athlete support personnel (either by fact or omission) to mislead an international federation or national body as to the existence or extent of skills and/or abilities relevant to a Para-sport and/or the degree or nature of eligible

impairment during athlete evaluation and/or any point after the allocation of sport class.

International Federation (IF) is the international sporting organisation recognised by the IPC as responsible for a particular sport worldwide and has authority for classification of its sport internationally.

IPC is the International Paralympic Committee

IPC Athlete Classification Code and International Standards ('the Code') Is a document which details the purpose of classification, policies and procedures that should be common to all sports classification systems, and sets principles to be applied by all sports within the Paralympic Movement.

National Sport Organisation (NSO) is the national sporting organisation recognised by the International Federation as responsible for the sport within Australia.

PA Member refers to each member organisations of PA (who pay an annual membership fee and have a right to vote at the AGM) under the Company's constitution.

Para-sports refers to all sports for athletes with a physical, intellectual or vision impairment, on a Paralympic program, or recognised by the IPC.

Protest the procedures by which a reasoned objection to an athlete's sport class is submitted and subsequently resolved. See also "**Appeal**".

13. Relevant policies, codes and standards

Includes:

- IPC Classification Code and International Standards
<https://www.paralympic.org/classification/2015-athlete-classification-code>
- IPC Classification Code Model of Best Practice – National Classification
<https://www.paralympic.org/classification/2015-athlete-classification-code>
- Australian Classification Standard - Eligible Impairment Types (in draft)
- Australian Classification Standard - Athlete Evaluation (in draft)
- Australian Classification Standard - Protests and Appeals (in draft)
- Australian Classification Standard - Classifier Personnel and Training (in draft)
- Australian Classification Standard - Data Protection (in draft)
- Australian Classification Roles and Responsibilities in Australia (in draft)
- PA policies (including but not limited to People Protection Policy, Privacy Policy, Whistleblower Protection Policy)