



# Paralympics Australia Athletes Commission Charter

**April 2024**

## 1. Purpose Statement

The purpose of the PA Athletes' Commission (the **PA AC**) is to represent Paralympians by engaging Paralympics Australia management (**PA**), the para-sport community and the Paralympics Australia Board (the **PA Board**).

## 2. Values

The PA AC is committed to:

- 2.1. striving for genuine belonging for Paralympians in all areas of life;
- 2.2. being a proud and consistent voice for all Paralympians;
- 2.3. ensuring that athletes are empowered and supported members of the Australian Paralympic movement (known as **The Mob**); and
- 2.4. ensuring that PA is always connected to the voice of the athletes.

## 3. Role and Objectives:

The PA AC may:

- 3.1. provide feedback and suggestions to PA and the PA Board on all matters relating to the Paralympic movement including the International Paralympic Committee (the **IPC**), the International Federations, the National Paralympic Committees, doping and other integrity matters, eligibility, Paralympic Games facilities, Paralympic ceremonies, sport, athlete welfare, career development and politics. In addition, the PA AC may raise issues on behalf of the disability community, regardless of whether the subject matter relates to sport;
- 3.2. where appropriate and as requested, provide input into and review PA policies and directives and provide feedback;
- 3.3. work with PA to ensure there is a Paralympic legacy, which includes connecting retired athletes with current athletes and ensuring that there is a strong connection between Summer and Winter athletes and teams;
- 3.4. liaise with athletes and encourage all Paralympians to become active members of the Paralympic movement and involved in decision making processes;
- 3.5. liaise between PA, the PA Board and the athletes;
- 3.6. build relationships within National Sporting Organisations (**NSOs**) and encourage better para-athlete representation within the NSOs;
- 3.7. interact and liaise with the communities around us, including governments, to encourage better policies for people with a disability, in conjunction with PA where appropriate;

- 3.8. contribute to the overall performance of the Mob by ensuring that there are communication pathways for athletes to feel connected;
- 3.9. nominate, appoint or elect athletes to representative bodies or other external positions where requested or appropriate.
- 3.10. endeavour to support all Paralympians;
- 3.11. engage a broader leadership group (the **Leadership Team** or **LT**), by appointing, where practical, one athlete representative from each sport, and athletes from diverse representative groups, including, but not limited to, First Nations Australians, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, culturally and linguistically diverse persons and disability groups/classifications not already represented on the PA AC; and
- 3.12. liaise with the IPC Athletes' Council, the AIS Athlete Advisory Committee, any NSO Athlete Commissions, Athletes' Commissions from other countries and the AOC Athletes' Commission.

## 4. Meetings

- 4.1. The PA AC meets face-to-face or electronically at least 4 times a year as arranged by the Chair or their delegate.
- 4.2. Each meeting includes consideration of reports and updates on relevant activities of PA and consequent advice or recommendations on issues of significance from the perspective of the PA AC and the LT.
- 4.3. Financial support for PA AC meetings will be borne by PA. The cost of PA supporting AC meetings is capped at the amount agreed by PA during the annual budget process. The cost of PA supporting AC meetings is subject to any mid-year cost containment exercises that are required to be undertaken by PA. Reasonable pre-approved out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Paralympics Australia budget.
- 4.4. Decisions will be made by a simple majority, with the Chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- 4.5. A quorum will require 6 PA AC members.
- 4.6. Meetings will be run by the Chair or their delegate.

## 5. Composition

- 5.1. The PA AC will comprise of:
  - 5.1.1. seven athletes elected at each Summer Paralympic Games by the athletes who are members of the Australian Paralympic Team competing at those Summer Paralympic Games;

- 5.1.2. one athlete elected at each Winter Paralympic Games by the athletes who are members of the Australian Paralympic Team competing at those Winter Paralympic Games;
  - 5.1.3. three retired athletes who will be appointed by the PA AC during each Winter Paralympic Games. If the Chair and Deputy Chair are retired athletes seeking re-election, then the Chair will appoint another PA AC member to oversee this process. Retired athletes seeking re-election must recuse themselves from the process; and
  - 5.1.4. one to two First Nations Paralympians who will be appointed, during each Winter Paralympic Games, by the PA AC in consultation with one or more non-nominated First Nations Australian Paralympians and/or one or more non-nominated members of the PA First Nations Advisory Group (or similar body). As well as this nomination and appointment process, we endeavour to have genuine connection between the PA AC and First Nations Australian Paralympians, and the PA AC and the PA First Nations Advisory Group (or similar body), to share ideas and support each other wherever appropriate.
  - 5.1.5. If the Chair and Deputy Chair are seeking re-election, then the PA AC will appoint another PA AC member to oversee this process. Athletes seeking re-election must recuse themselves from the process.
  - 5.1.6. If an athlete in the AC or the LT requires/requests a support person (e.g. higher needs athlete, athlete with an intellectual impairment, etc.), the support person will be accommodated, but will not have a casting vote.
- 5.2. The PA AC will set a voting system which ensures that the PA AC will, provided that there are sufficient candidates, have:
- 5.2.1. not less than three athletes who identify as male and not less than three athletes who identify as female elected at the Summer Paralympic Games;
  - 5.2.2. not less than one retired athlete who identifies as male, not less than one retired athlete who identifies as female;
  - 5.2.3. if two athletes are appointed as First Nations representatives, not less than one who identifies as female and not less than one that identifies as male – with preference for one current and one retired where possible.

- 5.2.4. not more than one current athlete who identifies as male and not more than one current athlete who identifies as female elected at the Summer Paralympic Games from any one sport on the Paralympic program. Retired and First Nations athletes may be from any sport – with preferences for different sports and disabilities where possible;
- 5.2.5. If insufficient athletes nominate from different sports and genders as per 5.2.4, then spots will be filled as per 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3, and 5.2.4 (from different sports and genders first), and then the next highest voted athlete from each sport will fill the remaining spots (keeping to gender ratios and maximising the diversity of sports and disabilities represented); and
- 5.2.6. If insufficient total athletes nominate, the above applies and then section 10 applies to fill the remaining spots.

## 6. Eligibility

- 6.1. To be eligible for the PA AC, a person must be:
  - 6.1.1. an Australian Paralympian, as defined by Paralympics Australia;
  - 6.1.2. at least 18 years of age and not have been sanctioned for:
    - a) breaching an anti-doping rule violation, as defined by the World Anti-Doping Authority;
    - b) Intentional misrepresentation; and/or
    - c) any other integrity matter, at any time; and
  - 6.1.3. in the case of a current athlete, a long list athlete for the Summer or Winter Paralympic Games during which an election is held; and
  - 6.1.4. in the case of a retired athlete, have competed at a Summer or Winter Paralympic Games:
    - a) in the previous 12 years; or
    - b) have a continued, official and demonstrated connection to sports administration, which may include but is not limited to: coaching or mentoring athletes, working for a sports organisation, or representing a National or International sporting body as a board or committee member. Satisfaction of this clause will be determined by the then current PA AC in conjunction with PA.

## 7. Election procedure

- 7.1. Election of the PA AC will be conducted by the relevant Chef de Mission or their delegate in accordance with the following procedure:
  - 7.1.1. Nominations will open 100 days before the Opening Ceremony of a Paralympic Games and will close one month prior to the Opening Ceremony. Candidates must nominate their gender identification;
  - 7.1.2. The names of each candidate will be recorded on a voting form and available either in the Australian team area at the Summer or Winter Paralympic Games and/or electronically;
  - 7.1.3. Athletes vote by placing a mark next to the names of candidates who the voter wishes to elect. Each mark will count as one vote for that candidate and voters may not place a mark next to more candidate's names than positions available;
  - 7.1.4. Athletes will only be able to vote once;
  - 7.1.5. In person or electronic voting must be open for at least 5 days during the Summer or Winter Paralympic Games;
  - 7.1.6. Subject to the requirements of section 5, the candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected. In the event of a tie, the Chef de Mission for that Paralympic Games will have a casting vote; and
  - 7.1.7. The Chef de Mission will announce the successful candidates prior to the Closing Ceremony.

## 8. Term

- 8.1. Each person elected to the PA AC will hold office from the day after the Closing Ceremony of the Summer or Winter Paralympic Games at which they were elected until the day of the Closing Ceremony of the next Summer (for current athletes) or Winter (for Winter, First Nations, and retired athletes) Paralympic Games.
- 8.2. If a person is appointed to the PA AC in accordance with section 10, that person will hold office until the next Summer (for current athletes) or Winter (for Winter, First Nations, and retired athletes) Paralympic Games at which point they may seek election.
- 8.3. After each Summer or Winter Paralympic Games, there will be a six month transition period, during which time outgoing PA AC members may attend as an observer for two meetings to assist with knowledge transfer to newly elected members.

- 8.4. PA AC members may resign during the course of their time by written notice to the Chair. The Chair may resign during the course of their term by written notice to the Deputy Chair.

## **9. Election of Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary**

- 9.1. The Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary positions will be declared vacant within one of the first two meetings, within 6 months following a Summer or Winter Games. The AC will decide by majority vote when that vote will occur, that fits best with availability and succession planning. PA AC members seeking election to these roles will nominate themselves at the relevant meeting and then leave the meeting while the vote occurs. Voting will be by a simple majority or as otherwise determined by the person chairing the meeting (if the Chair is seeking re-election, being the Deputy Chair until there has been a Chair elected).

## **10. Vacancies**

- 10.1. In the event of a casual vacancy occurring on the PA AC, the PA AC will seek expressions of interest and will appoint a person of the same gender and from the same category (i.e.: Summer, Winter, First Nations, or retired) as the previous incumbent.

## **11. Charter Variation**

- 11.1. This Charter may be updated from time to time by a resolution of the PA Board following consultation with the PA AC.