

Surfing New Zealand Athlete Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The purpose of the **Surfing NZ Athlete Advisory Group** is to provide independent, athlete-informed advice to the Surfing New Zealand Board and leadership. The advisory group ensures the voice of current and former athletes is embedded in decision-making, promoting a culture of integrity, inclusivity, and respect. Through this, it supports the wellbeing of athletes and contributes to a stronger, values-driven, and athlete-centered future for the sport.

2. Objectives

- Represent the interests, perspectives, and wellbeing of athletes at all levels.
- Provide input into policies, programmes, and strategic decisions that affect athletes.
- Strengthen the connection between athletes and Surfing NZ governance.
- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of the sport.
- Support the development of a positive, safe, and sustainable sporting environment.

3. Membership

- **Chairperson:**
 - Elected by advisory group members and confirmed by the Surfing NZ Board.
 - May be a current or former international representative with experience across multiple aspects of the competitive surfing pathway.
 - Will serve as a non-voting member on the Surfing NZ Board with full speaking rights during relevant discussions.
- **Advisory group Members:**
 - Minimum of 5 and up to 7 members, including the Chair.
 - Appointed by expression of interest followed by interviews conducted by a selection panel including Surfing NZ and Surfing NZ board representatives.
 - Members to be representative of the Surfing NZ Community.
 - Must have a sound understanding of:

- Athlete development and competition pathways
 - Competition rules, judging, and officiating
 - Athlete wellbeing and expectations
 - Governance and sport administration
- **Term:**
 - Two-year terms, with eligibility for reappointment.
 - Positions will be reviewed every two years on a staggered basis to support succession planning, with appointments made through an expression of interest and selection panel process.
- **Diversity and Representation:**
 - The advisory group representation will aim to reflect the Surfing NZ community across gender, ability, cultural diversity, age, geographic spread and athlete experience - from community level to high performance.
- **Emerging Voices:**
 - The advisory group may invite recent junior or development-level athletes to contribute, ensuring future-focused perspectives are included.
- **Ex-Officio Member:**
 - The Surfing NZ CEO (or delegate) will serve in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity.
- **Conflict of Interest:**
 - All members must declare any potential conflicts, especially regarding selection, commercial roles, or governance positions.
- **Resignation and Removal:**
 - A member may resign at any time by written notice to the Chairperson (or to the CEO if the Chairperson is resigning).
 - A member may be removed by a majority vote of the Surfing NZ Board following consultation with the Advisory group, on grounds of serious misconduct, persistent non-attendance, or conduct inconsistent with Surfing NZ's values.
 - If a vacancy arises mid-term, the selection panel process may be used to appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term, or the Advisory group may co-opt a temporary member until the next scheduled appointment round.

4. Operating Principles

- The group will have a minimum of four meetings per year (in person or online).
- Meetings may be held alongside major domestic and international events and/or high performance activities.
- The Advisory group may conduct business via email or digital platforms.

- A quorum shall consist of more than four of the Advisory group members. Decisions will be made by consensus or, if necessary, by a majority vote.
- A delegate will prepare meeting minutes within seven working days. Draft minutes will be circulated to all members and ratified at the subsequent meeting.
- Minutes recorded and shared with the Surfing NZ Board via the CEO or delegate.

5. Responsibilities

The advisory group is responsible for providing advice and recommendations to the Surfing NZ Board across all areas of athlete experience, with a particular focus on the following domains:

- **Athlete Development:**
Support the creation of clear, inclusive, and sustainable pathways for athlete progression from grassroots to high performance.
- **Athlete Wellbeing:**
Champion holistic wellbeing, including mental, physical, emotional, cultural, and social health.
 - Promote safe, inclusive, and respectful environments.
 - Advocate for culturally responsive wellbeing frameworks
 - Support athlete transition, identity, and life beyond sport.
 - Recommend wellbeing initiatives, education, and partnerships.
- **Integrity and Fair Play:**
Provide input on anti-doping and ethical conduct in line with national and international standards.
- **Rules, Judging and Regulations:**
Offer athlete perspectives on competition rules, judging/officiating, and event regulations.
- **Events and Competitions:**
Advise on event formats, scheduling, and athlete experience at domestic and international events.
- **Rankings and Selection:**
Promote transparency and fairness in selection processes and ranking systems.
- **Coaching and High Performance:**
Contribute to the development of coaching frameworks and high-performance strategies that reflect athletes' needs.
- **Marketing and Promotion:**
Support athlete-led storytelling and visibility through media, social platforms, and community engagement.

- **Regional and Grassroots Development:**
Ensure athlete voice is reflected in regional growth strategies and community engagement.
- **Communication:**
 - Maintain open channels with athletes through surveys, forums, and direct outreach.
 - Ensure athlete feedback informs Advisory group discussions and recommendations.
- **Promotion of the Advisory group's Work:**
 - Collaborate with clubs/regions and stakeholders to raise awareness of the Advisory group's role.
 - Publish an annual summary of activities to promote transparency and athlete engagement.

6. Athlete Wellbeing

The Athlete Advisory Group recognises that athlete wellbeing is foundational to performance, participation, and long-term engagement in surfing. The Advisory group will:

- **Advocate for holistic wellbeing** that includes physical, mental, emotional, cultural, and social dimensions.
- **Promote safe and inclusive environments** that are free from discrimination, harassment, and abuse.
- **Support athlete voice** in the development of wellbeing policies, education, and support services.
- **Encourage culturally responsive approaches**, including the integration of Māori and Pacific models of wellbeing (e.g. *Te Whare Tapa Whā*, *Fonofale*).
- **Collaborate with Surfing NZ** to ensure wellbeing is embedded in high performance, community, and development programmes.
- **Monitor and respond to emerging wellbeing issues**, including burnout, transition out of sport, and access to mental health support.
- **Champion athlete-led initiatives** that foster connection, identity, and purpose beyond competition.

7. Resourcing and Expenses

- Advisory group members serve in a voluntary capacity and are not remunerated for their time.
- The Surfing NZ board will provide administrative support to the Advisory group, including coordination of meetings, preparation of agendas, and distribution of minutes.
- The Surfing NZ Board will ensure the Advisory group has adequate resources and support to carry out its role.

8. Authority

The advisory group is an advisory body. It may make recommendations to the Surfing NZ Board but does not hold decision-making authority.

9. Review

The Terms of Reference and performance of the Advisory group will be reviewed bi-annually by a joint sub-committee of the Advisory group and Surfing NZ Board.

10. Related Policies and Documents

- TBC

Approved: 28th May 2026

Next Review: 28th May 2028