

McLAUGHLIN SPORTS CONSULTANCY - YOUR NEEDS: OUR FOCUS!



QUEENSLAND TOUCH FOOTBALL

*Talent Pathway Review -
Recommendations Report*



24th April 2024

Contents

Statement of Limitations	Page 03
Executive Summary	Page 04
Recommendations	Page 07
Next Steps	Page 31
APPENDIX A QTF Talent Pathway Review - Terms of Reference	Page 32
APPENDIX B Project Methodology	Page 35
APPENDIX C Interviews - Findings Summary	Page 38
APPENDIX D Written Submissions - Findings Summary	Page 44



Statement of Limitations

MSC has completed Stages 1-9 of the Talent Pathways with the degree of skill, care and diligence always exercised while performing services of this nature. All recommendations tabled within this Report are based on the direct, indirect and supplementary evidence collected and analysed via the agreed Review methodology – refer to Appendix B.

MSC takes no responsibility for the completeness or form of any subsequent copies of this Report.



Mike McLaughlin

MBA (Sport Management)

Bachelor of Sports Science (Sports Studies)

Grad Dip (Sports Coaching)

Cert IV in Training and Assessment



Executive Summary

This Report highlights a series of recommendations to come from MSC's undertaking of an independent Review of the Queensland Touch Football (QTF) Talent Pathway between February and April 2024.

Based on the information gathered via Stages 1-8 of the Review (refer to the Project Methodology in Appendix B), this Report provides advice to the Project Reference Group and the QTF Board, in line with the Review Terms of Reference (refer Appendix A).

Review Reference Group

Troy Morgan (Chair)

Dave Zanette (QTF Board Director and Elite Player)

Jason Boyd (Elite Coach)

Kim Sue See (Elite Player)

Bree-Ann Lo Grande (Referee and Coach)

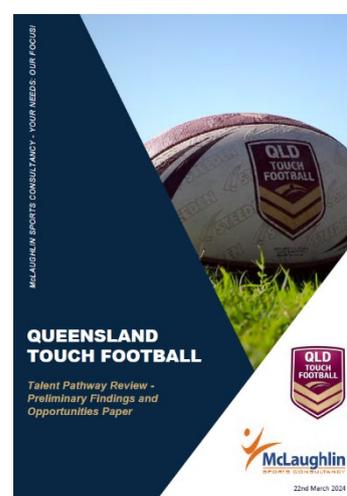
Charlie Griffiths (QTF Events Manager)

Katie Gieger (QTF Game Development Coordinator)

Preliminary Findings and Opportunities

The Review methodology involved MSC's development of a detailed **Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper** (Project Stage 5) which presented an extensive list of evidence-based findings and opportunities, all of which MSC has considered when crafting the recommendations presented in this Report.

The details of the *Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper* are not included within this Recommendations Report, and as such, **the preliminary paper should be read in its entirety, prior to consuming this Recommendations Report.**



Interviews - Findings Summary

Following the development of the Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper, MSC conducted a series of 1-on-1 interviews with key Talent Pathway ecosystem stakeholders, including coaches, players, referees and staff (TFA, QTF and NSWTA).

Appendix C of this Report presents the list of individuals who participated in stakeholder interviews and a summary of findings to come from the interview stage of the Review.

Recommendations Focus Areas

The main body of this Report presents **17 x evidence-based and purpose-driven recommendations** in the following 9 x Recommendation Focus Areas.

1. Purpose

What should the *purpose* of the QTF Talent and Performance Pathway be?

2. Performance Culture

What guiding principles and culture will optimally support the *purpose* of the Pathway being achieved?

3. Participation Framework

How should the Participant Pathway Framework be structured to optimally attract, train, support and retain talent?

4. Performance Environments

What competitions, events and academies will optimally and sustainably support the *purpose* of the Pathway being achieved?

5. Programs

What programs will optimally and sustainably support the *purpose* of the Pathway being achieved?

6. Policies and Procedures

What policies and procedures are needed to ensure the *purpose* of the Pathway is achieved?

7. Digital Infrastructure

What digital systems are needed to optimally and sustainably support the *purpose* of the Pathway being achieved?

8. Pathways and Performance Planning

How can pathway partners collaboratively plan to ensure the *purpose* of the Pathway is achieved?

9. People

What human resources are needed to optimally and sustainably deliver the QTF Pathways and Performance Plan



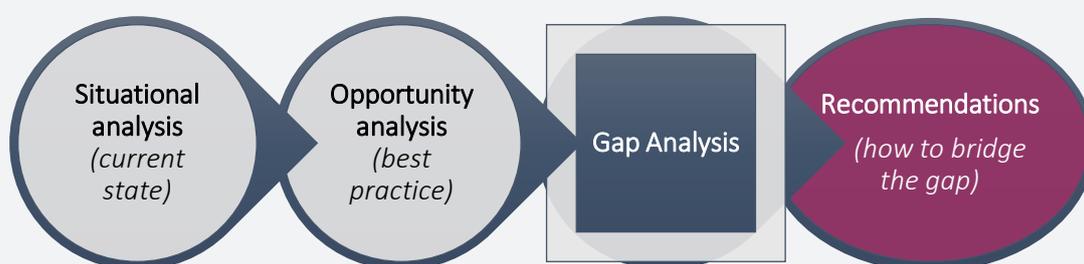
Recommendations Snapshot

RECOMMENDATION 1.1: QTF Pathways and Performance System Purpose Statements	Page 8
RECOMMENDATION 2.1: Establish a Pathways and Performance Cultural Blueprint	Page 9
RECOMMENDATION 3.1: Contribute to the Development of a “Whole of Touch Football” Participation Framework and Support Resources	Page 10
RECOMMENDATION 4.1: Performance Focused Competitions	Page 12
RECOMMENDATION 4.2: Pathways and Performance Events	Page 14
RECOMMENDATION 4.3: Pathways and Performance Events and Competitions Calendar	Page 17
RECOMMENDATION 4.4: Pathways and Performance Academies	Page 17
RECOMMENDATION 5.1: Expansion of the QTF Coach Developer and QRSS-QTF Coach Developer Programs	Page 19
RECOMMENDATION 5.2: “Next-Gen” Performance Coach Accelerator Program	Page 20
RECOMMENDATION 5.3: Continuation and Enhancement of the QTF Referee Development Model + “Next-Gen” Performance Referee Accelerator Program	Page 21
RECOMMENDATION 5.4: QTF Selector Development and Accreditation Program	Page 23
RECOMMENDATION 6.1: QTF Pathways and Performance Talent Identification and Selection Framework	Page 24
RECOMMENDATION 6.2: Updated Event and Competition Rules	Page 26
RECOMMENDATION 7.1: Talent Identification Webform	Page 27
RECOMMENDATION 8.1: Pathways and Performance Plan	Page 28
RECOMMENDATION 8.2: State of Origin Campaign Reviews	Page 29
RECOMMENDATION 9.1: Pathways and Performance System Human Resources	Page 30

Recommendations

To assist in formulating the recommendations, MSC conducted a gap analysis between the *current state* of the Touch Football Talent Pathway in Queensland and what could be considered best practice, giving due consideration to the nature of the Queensland (and national) Touch Football Pathways and Performance ecosystem and the resources QTF has to invest into making change. The recommendations tabled in this Report are designed to present the necessary actions to close identified gaps between *current state* and *best practice*.

Gap Analysis Approach



Recommendation Focus Area 1 – Purpose

RECOMMENDATION 1.1:

QTF Pathways and Performance System Purpose Statements

The core purpose of the “**Pathways**” elements of the QTF Participation Framework outlined in Recommendation Focus Area 3 (i.e. Participation - *Pathways* – Performance) should be: To provide high quality and accessible opportunities and environments (competitions, events and academies) which optimise the identification, development and retention of talented players, coaches and referees throughout Queensland, enabling sustained success for Queensland teams in the following events:

- National Schools Championships (15s)
- NYC
- NTL Championships
- State of Origin (Seniors)

The core purpose of the “**Performance**” elements of the QTF Participation Framework outlined in Recommendation Focus Area 3 (i.e. Participation - *Pathways* – Performance) should be: To provide high quality and accessible performance focused opportunities and environments, enabling sustained success for Queensland teams in the following events:

- NRL Touch Premiership
- State of Origin 20s and Opens (Men’s Women’s and Mixed)

Note: Transitioning significant numbers of Queensland players, coaches, referees and selectors into national team programs (Youth and Opens) in Men’s, Women’s and Mixed divisions should also be a purpose of the performance elements of the QTF pathway.

Rationale

The QTF Pathways and Performance system is pressured by significant financial, human and system resource constraints, and therefore, the system cannot (and should not) attempt to be all things to all people.

QTF is charged with the responsibility for leading pathway and performance-based player, coach and referee development for the sport of Touch Football in Queensland. As such, QTF (and TFA) need to clearly define and understand what constitutes the “Pathways” and “Performance” elements of the Queensland Touch Football ecosystem. This should task place as the Touch Football (Whole of Sport) Participation Framework is developed – refer Recommendation 3.1.

Clarity of Purpose

Recommendation Focus Area 2 – Pathways and Performance Culture

RECOMMENDATION 2.1:

Establish a Pathways and Performance Cultural Blueprint

Develop and implement a QTF simple and memorable *Pathways and Performance Cultural Blueprint* document. This process should identify what the QTF Pathways and Performance system sees as “non-negotiables” for being part of the broader Pathways and Performance system and should drive a culture of accountability from all involved – what we walk past is what we accept.

Note: This task could be incorporated into the development of the QTF Pathways and Performance Strategy (refer Recommendation Focus Area 8).

The Cultural Blueprint should be underpinned by a suite of guiding principles, which act as anchor points for key decisions and activities. These guiding principles become the foundations for how the Pathways and Performance system goes about its business.

QTF Pathways and Performance system guiding principles should include:

- **Culturally Defined:** Our culture defines high-performing behaviours expected of all involved in the system.
- **Player Centred:** Our players’ development and well-being are at the heart of every decision we make.
- **Coach Led:** Our coaches are the leaders of our programs.
- **Expert Informed:** Our decisions are guided by expert knowledge and are evidenced-based.
- **Aligned Systems:** QTF pathways and performance systems are cohesive and aligned across the state.

Rationale

Less than 20% of the 645 QTF Talent Pathway survey respondents agreed that: *The Talent Pathway has a clear culture and values system, which is understood by players, coaches, referees and parents at all levels of the pathway.*

At its simplest, the Cultural Blueprint is about “the way we do things in Queensland” – it’s how people within the QTF pathways and performance system **behave when everybody is watching ... AND WHEN NOBODY IS!** It should be built on an agreed set of values that inform, and are evident in, the behaviours of those who govern, deliver and/or participate in the QTF Pathways and Performance system. The Cultural Blueprint should guide how individuals operate and how groups will work together to do what is best for the sustainable and repeatable success of QTF Pathways and Performance teams, players, coaches, referees and selectors. It should define the character of the delivery system and guide how everyone involved behaves as they play their part in achieving the purpose of the QTF Pathways and Performance system.

Recommendation Focus Area 3 – Participation Framework

RECOMMENDATION 3.1: Contribute to the Development of a “Whole of Touch Football” Participation Framework and Support Resources

QTF to play a key influencing / supporting role in TFAs development of a National Touch Football Participation Framework and associated supporting resources (e.g. player profile / syllabus).

The key purpose of the National Touch Football Participation Framework should be to provide specific guidance to anyone who influences a Touch Footballer (e.g. parents, coaches, referees, selectors, performance services personnel and administrators) in order for them to optimally support players’ successful participation in the sport at any level (not just Pathways and Performance levels).

The opportunity exists for QTF to work with TFA to ensure the National Touch Football Participation Framework, and the resources which support its effective implementation, achieves the following:

A unified whole of sport pathway that provides maximum opportunity to increase participation numbers, the level of interest in Touch Football and the quality of players, coaches, referees and selectors progressing through the Pathway.

A verifiably sound framework to guide national, state and local planning, decision-making and allocation of resources (in the case of this Review, as it relates to Pathways and Performance initiatives).

TFA (and QTF) player, coach, referee and selector development programs, competition, event and academy frameworks that are considered best practice and not merely the outcome of accumulated tradition.

Cohesion within the National Touch Football membership and pathways networks via a highly visible, user-friendly, transparent and credible participant support framework.

Additional benefits of a National Touch Football Participation Framework, as they relate to the QTF Pathways and Performance system, should include:

To provide a framework of player skills and attributes, designed to support everyone involved in delivering Touch Football in Pathways and Performance environments across Queensland.

To help athletes, coaches, parents, referees, selectors and administrators to know “what” players should be doing, “when” they should be doing it, “how” they should be doing it, and “how often”.

To help coaches, parents and selectors (and players) identify which stage of development a player is in and what support they need.

To help coaches and others to holistically develop athletes by providing high quality guidance (e.g. technical, physical, psycho-social, competition/event, parental support, well-being, etc.) relevant to players in the Pathways and Performance elements of the Framework.

Rationale

Over 90% of the 645 QTF Talent Pathway survey respondents agreed that: “A Talent Pathway curriculum, which identifies the technical, physical, tactical, psychological and other requirements of a player at the various stages of the pathway, including how these attributes should be developed, is needed to optimally support talented player identification, development and retention.”

In order to implement plans, competitions, events and programs designed to meet the needs of all Touch Football participants (in this case, with a focus on those within the Pathways and Performance elements of the Framework), QTF needs to know who participates in these elements of the Framework, what their participation motivations are, what their support needs are, and what the roles of coaches, referees, parents, clubs/affiliates, TFA and other delivery partners such as schools, are in this space. A whole of Touch Football Participation Framework, and supporting resources are needed for this to occur.

In 2013 TFA developed a broad and overarching Touch Football Athlete Development Framework which was based on the [FTEM](#) model, developed by the Australian Institute of Sport. Although this Framework provided a basic outline of the different phases of player development and a basic skills matrix associated with each phase, the details are scant and the level of impact this Framework has had on all elements of the Touch Football participant system appears to be minimal. TFA is currently looking to simplify its current FTEM model to increase the impact it has on the sport.

Having reviewed a draft version of *TFA’s Coach Education and Development Framework*, which is currently under development, MSC is aware that there will likely be three core participation streams within an updated TFA Participation Framework, i.e. **Participation – PATHWAYS – PERFORMANCE**. It is understood that the detail which sits behind the Framework (e.g. player profile / syllabus, etc.) is yet to be developed. Whether TFA will be undertaking this work, and if so, what the timelines or methodology attached to this process is unclear.

Given the detail supporting the effective nationwide delivery of the new TFA Participation Pathway Framework is yet to be developed, the timing is ideal for QTF to play a positive role in this work. MSC encourages TFA, QTF, other state associations and the NRL, to work together to develop a best-in-class Participation Framework and supporting resources for Touch Football.

Touch Football reviewing the Participation Frameworks of other sports as part of developing an updated Participation Framework presents as a key opportunity. An example of a Participation Framework developed by another sport which appears closely aligned with the broad structure of TFA’s draft Framework is that of Rugby Australia, i.e. **Learn – Play (Participation) – Compete (Pathways) – Perform (Performance)**. MSC has worked with several National and State sporting organisations to develop sport specific Participation Frameworks and can link QTF (and TFA) with these organisations, and their work in this space, should this support be requested.

Note: If QTF feels TFA’s approach to the development of the National Participation Framework and/or the support/implementation resources which sit behind it is not aligned with QTF’s expectations, including timeframes, QTF should consider developing a Queensland-specific Participation Framework and/or partnering with other state associations to do so collaboratively (e.g. NSWTA).

Recommendation Focus Area 4 – Performance Environments

RECOMMENDATION 4.1: Performance Focused Competitions

4.1.1: QTF to work with South-East Queensland regions and affiliates to co-design; and then QTF to govern and manage the delivery of a *pathways and performance focused* competition in South-East Queensland (e.g. SEQ Super-Series).

It is recommended the event incorporate Men's Open and Women's Open categories only (this could expand to incorporate 20s if the need is evident) and be designed to:

- Support the week-to-week development of players, coaches, referees and selectors currently participating in, and those with the potential to participate in, NTL Championships, NRL Touch Premiership and/or State of Origin 20s and Open's.
- Encourage maximum participation of high-quality talent by incorporating a home and away element to the competition, having the competition formally embedded as a Queensland State of Origin TID competition; and including innovative delivery concepts such as playing fewer rounds, with more games in each round (e.g. 2 games played every second Sunday).
- Include teams from the South Queensland, Brisbane, South-West Queensland and Sunshine Coast, Fraser and Burnett regions.
- Incorporate 6 teams in each division.

4.1.2: In addition to the successful delivery of the SEQ Super-Series, if it is determined that QTF has the necessary resources, QTF should work with *non-SEQ* QTF regions and affiliates on a needs-basis to co-design; and then QTF to govern and manage the delivery of *pathways and performance focused* competitions in identified regional talent hot spots (e.g. Rockhampton, Townsville, etc.) to optimally support the week-to-week competition requirements of Performance level players, coaches, referees and selectors in identified regional locations.

Rationale

The planned series of competitions that contribute to athlete/team, coach and referee performance success is a widely agreed requirement of the daily performance environments of performance focused athletes (+ coaches and referees) in any sport. Given the delivery of competitions is the core role of affiliates, not QTF, currently all pathways and performance focused Touch Football competitions (not events) are governed and managed by QTF affiliates. This event governance model can work if the affiliate has the capacity to design and deliver a high quality competition of this nature, however it represents a risk to QTF in the pathways and performance space if this is not the case.

It is clear the standard of the BMTA delivered Metro-Cup Premier Division (i.e. the key "pathways and performance focused" competition in SEQ, which has the largest talent pool in the state) has declined significantly in recent years.

Due to the importance of high-level competition within the daily performance environments of performance-focused players, coaches and referees, if the purpose of the QTF Pathways and Performance system is to be achieved, QTF needs to take the lead in this space where feasible – it's that simple.

The geographic proximity of SEQ regions/affiliates will allow for the introduction of a performance focused competition in SEQ, and as such, QTF can and should govern and manage the delivery of the SEQ Super-Series.

To optimise the smooth transition from the BMTA governed Metro-Cup Premier Division, to a QTF governed SEQ Super-Series, QTF will need to openly engage with BMTA, with the aim being to implement a mutually beneficial strategy in the performance competition space. When making strategic decisions relating to the performance focused competition framework in SEQ, BMTA and QTF should focus on the “player centred” guiding principle with the Pathways and Performance Cultural Blueprint (refer Recommendation 2.1) – i.e. “*players’ development and well-being are at the heart of every decision we make*”.

Note: The BMTA governed Metro-Cup has many divisions – Premier, Division 1, Division 2 and Division 3 in Men's and Women's and a Mixed Gender All Abilities competition. This recommendation (Recommendation 4.1) only relates to QTF governing an SEQ performance focused competition, designed to replace BMTA's struggling Premier Division. If this were to occur, BMTA would still govern all other elements of the Metro Cup competition.

Additionally, if it is determined that QTF has the necessary resources, QTF should also look to govern and manage the delivery of innovative, performance focused competitions in non-SEQ regional talent pool hotspots.



RECOMMENDATION 4.2: Pathways and Performance Events

QTF PATHWAYS Focused Events Framework

It is recommended that the current “Pathways” focused events framework remain in place, with the following caveat:

QTF puts provisos in place to prioritise QTF regional team participation in the NTL Championships event. It is recommended that the focus of this TFA governed event, as far as it being a key event within the QTF Pathways and Performance system, is for QTF regions to coordinate the selection of regional representative teams, who then compete in the NTL Championships.

Note: NSWTA put strategies in place in relation to the 2024 NTL Championship to strengthen the focus on regional teams participating in the event, which appear to have been effective, e.g. NSW State of Origin selectors at the NTL Championships were required to prioritise the assessment of players in NSWTA regional teams as opposed to affiliate teams.

QTF PATHWAYS Events Journey (YOUTH)



QTF PATHWAYS Events Journey (ADULT)



QTF PERFORMANCE Focused Events Framework

It is recommended that the current events framework remain place, with the following caveat:

If TFA does not successfully deliver the NRL Touch Premiership within the next 12-24 months (noting this competition has not been delivered since 2020), and continue to do so annually, QTF should prioritise the establishment and delivery of a Queensland based NRL Touch Premiership Tri-Series event/competition. This series should involve Men's and Women's Open teams from the South Queensland and South West (Titans), Brisbane and Sunshine Coast (Broncos), and Central and North Queensland (Cowboys) as a key performance focused opportunity for players, coaches, referees and selectors; and as a prioritised State of Origin selection competition/event.

QTF PERFORMANCE Events Journey

QTF NRL Touch Premiership Permits Teams



State of Origin (Men's and Women's 20s and Opens)



Rationale

The majority of stakeholder feedback via e-surveys, focus group sessions and interviews, in relation to the QTF talent pathway event framework, was positive. Stakeholders feel there are enough events within the framework and as such there is no need to add to the framework or change it significantly.

The majority of constructive feedback relating to the QTF events framework focused on the need for the NTL Championships to be a **true pathway event** and to prioritise the regional representative teams competing in the event, as opposed to the event being opened up to affiliate teams, as is now permitted by TFA. Key reasoning behind this stakeholder position is summarised below:

Although certain affiliate teams can be formed from time to time which include high level players and these teams can perform well at the event, the sustainability of this individual team-based approach (i.e. where a particular coach and/or group of players get together to enter a team into the NTL), only works for as long as that coach / those key players are involved. "What happens when these people leave that team?" was a common question asked. This approach presents as a risk to the QTF Pathway.

The vast majority of stakeholders felt the structures and processes involved at the regional level (although these vary between regions at present and require improvement) provide a more visible and sustainable approach to the delivery of Queensland pathways focused teams competing at the NTL Championships.

Having regional teams participate in the NTL Championships is also seen to provide a less confusing pathway, in that it is clear that in order to participate in the NTL and then potentially in the NRL Touch Premiership and State of Origin, players are selected to play for their affiliate (State Cup), then their region (NTLC), then their NRL Touch Premiership Permit (NRLTP) and then their state (SOO). A system which allows players to be selected to play for Queensland (and potentially Australia) simply by playing for their club/affiliate at the NTL, whilst others follow a different pathway, is seen by many involved in the Review to be confusing and unfair.

Additionally, the majority of feedback regarding the new NTL Championships event format is that the focus of this event should be pathway/performance, not participation; and therefore, the NTL Championships event must be a prioritised event within the Queensland State of Origin selection process (refer Recommendation 6.1) if its validity within the QTF Pathways and Performance System is to be maintained.

Note: An outcome of the independent QTF Governance and Operating Model Review, conducted by MSC in 2019, was that the key role of regions should not be the governance of the sport in specific catchments, but rather the key role of regions should be in the pathways space (i.e. providing local pathways environments and opportunities for players, coaches and referees). This finding aligns with the commentary above.



RECOMMENDATION 4.3:

Pathways and Performance Events and Competitions Calendar

QTF to work with TFA and other State Touch Football Associations to co-design an integrated national *Pathways and Performance Events and Competitions Calendar* designed to allow QTF Pathways and Performance events (including those governed by TFA) and competitions to flow seamlessly into each other. This collaborative and considered approach will allow players, coaches, referees and selectors to progress seamlessly through events and competitions as they strive to achieve their performance goals.

The delivery of “Q-Pathways Academy” and “Future Maroons Performance Academy” programs (refer Recommendation 4.4) should also be included in this annual calendar.

Rationale

To maximise the understanding of, and engagement in, the QTF Pathways and Performance system, by all QTF Pathways and Performance system stakeholders, and to optimise the purpose of the QTF Pathways and Performance system (refer Recommendation 1.1) being achieved, an integrated annual *QTF Pathways and Performance Events and Competitions Calendar* is required to be developed and widely promoted to all relevant audiences, each year. *Reminder: Each pathways and performance focused event/competition should have a specific purpose which aligns with the needs of players within specific elements of the Touch Football Participation Framework (refer Recommendation 3.1).*

RECOMMENDATION 4.4:

Pathways and Performance Academies

The QTF Academies Model to incorporate:

→ **Q-Pathway Academy:** This Academy (currently branded Q-Youth Academy) could target up to 25 players (2 teams) selected from the NYC in each of the 14s, 16 and 18s boys and girls divisions (i.e. 75 players) who are *identified as having the potential to represent Queensland in National Schools Championships (15s) and NYC (18s) within 2 years.*

The player profile / syllabus element of the Touch Football Participation Framework (Refer recommendation 3.1) should be used to guide the design of Q-Pathway Academy sessions.

Note: As is currently the case, players in Queensland Schools 18s Teams should not be involved in the Q-Pathway Academy, as they have the opportunity to be involved in the Future Maroons Performance Academy, refer below. The focus of the Q-Pathway Academy should be similar to its current focus, but with a greater emphasis on providing players with the highest possible quality of coaching available (e.g. teams to be led by current / previous State of Origin coaches and supported by identified “Next Gen” coaches, refer Recommendation 5.2). The Academy should continue to have a focus on developing JETS program referees, and it should also support the development of Next Gen Referees (refer Recommendation 5.3).

The QTF Academies Model to incorporate:

→ **Future Maroons Performance Academy:** This new QTF Academy initiative is inspired by the recently launched NSWTA Emerging Blues initiative and would target up to 25 male and 25 female players who have been *identified as having the potential to be selected in the Queensland 20s State of Origin Team within 2 years*. As such, players would be selected via events including the NYC (16s and 18s) and NTL Championships, along with competition such as the SEQ Super Series and regional performance focused competitions (refer Recommendation 4.1).

The Future Maroons Performance Academy should be a key element of the State of Origin 20s and Opens talent identification system, therefore its focus should be on building player awareness of what it takes to play for Queensland in the Opens Division (not the 20s division); and the player profile / syllabus element of the Touch Football Participation Framework (Refer recommendation 3.1) should be used to guide the design of Future Maroons Performance Academy sessions.

The Academy should also focus on developing Next-Gen Coaches and Referees (refer Recommendations 5.2 and 5.3).

Note: Although participation focused programs delivered by QTF are not within the scope of this Review, it is apparent that the current QTF Academy offerings listed below are designed to provide developmental support for players in the Participation stream of the yet to be finalised Touch Football Participation Framework (refer Recommendation 3.1):

- Q-Discovery Academy
- Q-Development Academy
- Q-Performance Academy

It is suggested that these QTF Academies be re-branded (and potentially re-designed, if necessary) to align with the Touch Football Participation Framework, once this is finalised. Ideally each Academy's purpose and design would align with a specific element of the Participation Framework. The main rebrand will likely relate to the Performance Academy, as this offering is not "performance" focused as this pertains to the recommendations within this report.

Rationale

Providing intensive, high quality learning and training environments via academy programs which are designed to support the development needs of specific player cohorts is proven to be a successful talent identification and development strategy in many sports. The key, however, is for any academy program to have a very specific purpose and for this purpose to drive the design and delivery of academy programs.

Currently, the Discovery, Development and Performance Academies are in essence, participation focused offerings, and as such should not be included in the QTF Pathways and Performance system.

The Q-Youth Academy, which has received lots of positive feedback, appears to lack some clarity in relation to its purpose. As it currently stands, the Q-Youth Academy targets “talented” who form boys’ and 3 girls’ teams aligned with Queensland NRLP permits (Titans, Broncos and Cowboys) in the 14 and 16s divisions. This can see over 200 players participating. The purpose of the recommended Q-Pathway Academy is more specific (*i.e. support players identified as having the potential to represent Queensland in National Schools Championships 15s and NYC 18s within 2 years*) and as such would, in all likelihood, target less players and provide a higher level of pathways-focused program delivery.

A QTF academy specifically targeting players with the potential to play State of Origin 20s or Open’s within 2 years does not currently exist; and there is a distinct gap between when a Queensland / regional u18s player competes at NYC, and the selection of State of Origin 20s teams. The Future Maroons Performance Academy is a key initiative designed to fill this gap.

Both recommended QTF Academy Programs will provide controlled environments in which to introduce the QTF Pathways and Performance Cultural Blueprint (refer Recommendation 2.1) to players, coaches, referees, selectors and others involved and to embed this into their daily performance environments when they leave their Academy sessions.

Recommendation Focus Area 5 – Programs

RECOMMENDATION 5.1: Expansion of the QTF Coach Developer and QRSS-QTF Coach Developer Programs

Expand the delivery of the QTF Coach Developer Program (*i.e. targeting affiliate team coaches, coaching at junior and/or senior State Cup events*) and the QRSS-QTF Coach Developer Program (*i.e. targeting Queensland teachers coaching regional teams at state primary and secondary school Touch Football championships*).

Due to the “Pathways” focus of these programs, it is recommended both programs be rebranded to “Pathways Coach Developer Programs”.

Rationale

Providing “non-course” development and support programs, targeting affiliate level coaches and school-based coaches of regional school teams, which incorporates online learning, face to face learning sessions, pre-event support, game support during events and follow-up support post event, as well as connecting program participants to other coaches in their situation, are innovative offerings and their roll-out should be expanded if feasible.



RECOMMENDATION 5.2: “Next-Gen” Performance Coach Accelerator Program

Develop and implement a “Next-Gen” Performance Coach Accelerator Program, designed to accelerate the development of a small number of outstanding coaches, capable of coaching in the Performance element of the Participation Framework – i.e. NRL Touch Premiership, State of Origin 20s and Opens, Emus Youth and Opens.

The program should look to achieve gender equity.

Rationale

The need for QTF to increase the size and skill set of its performance level coach cohort (particularly female coaches) has been identified at various stages throughout this Review. It is widely agreed that performance coach development requires far more than *coaching courses* – It requires a suite of bespoke support and development mechanisms designed to meet the specific competency gaps identified in current and aspiring performance coaches.

The successful implementation of many operational recommendations within this Report will hinge significantly on the capacity (skills, philosophies, size and statewide reach) of the coaching cohort working with performance level players across the state – now and in the future.

QTF is presented with the opportunity to change what it means to be a Performance Coach, and to not only inspire and support the development of *current coaches*, but to do so with the ***next generation of Performance Coaches***.

The program should look to take a group of current and aspiring performance coaches on a development journey over a 2-3 year period, incorporating a number of academies, individual performance and development plans, a mentoring program, and regular performance reviews.



RECOMMENDATION 5.3: Continuation and Enhancement of the QTF Referee Development Model + “Next-Gen” Performance Referee Accelerator Program

5.3.1: Continue to *deliver and refine* QTF Pathways and Performance focused referee development programs delivered by the QTF State Referee Team, designed to support the development of high numbers of referees across the state.

These roles and initiatives include (but may not be limited to):

Referee Management Team

- The Director of Referees provides leadership, direction and oversees all programs and is the driver of all aspects of the arm.
- The Referees Manager is responsible for the coordination of all logistical and administrative requirements for referees at state events, in accordance with the requirements of QTF.

Coaching & Assessment

- Primarily responsible for the implementation, evaluation, and revision of referee coaching and assessment throughout Queensland, including the development of the State Referee Panel.

Sports Performance

- Develop and manage the Referee Sports Performance program in Queensland while ensuring professional and constructive assessment of referees.

Junior Development

- Primarily responsible for junior development via tournament reports, development plans, and junior strategies, as well as liaising with Regional Directors of Referees to seek feedback on junior referees who have the potential for selection onto the JETS Program.

Upgrades

- Primarily responsible for Referee upgrades, which includes liaising with Affiliates and Regional Directors of Referees to seek feedback for potential referees that they feel have the ability to achieve an accreditation upgrade (Level 3, 4, 5, 6) meeting the minimum requirements (time/courses).
- The State Referee Panel works with the QTF Referees Coaching Panel at selected tournaments with a view to upgrading referee coaching levels and undertaking to the coaching of Referees.

State Referee Panel

- All panel members are referee coaches and have the capability of presenting Badge Level Courses, Facilitator, and Referee Coach Courses.

5.3.2 QTF to develop and implement a “Next-Gen” Performance Referee Accelerator Program, designed to accelerate the development of a cohort of talented referees, capable of refereeing in the Performance element of the Participation Framework in the next 2-3 years – i.e. NRL Touch Premiership, State of Origin 20s and Opens, Emus Youth and Opens.

The program should look to achieve gender equity.

Rationale

Feedback collected throughout the Review, in relation to the referee arm of the sport in the pathways and performance space, was largely positive. It is clear this arm of the sport has a structured and largely effective system designed to identify, develop, support and retain referees operating in the pathways and performance elements of the sport and all involved should be proud of what is currently in place. However, it also clear that more can be done in the performance refereeing space to retain and further develop highly talented referees, capable to refereeing at the highest level (particularly female referees).

QTF is presented with the opportunity to not only inspire and support the development of *current referees*, but to do so with the ***next generation of performance level referees***.

The “Next-Gen” Performance Referee Accelerator Program should look to take a group of current and aspiring performance referees on a development journey over a 2–3-year period, incorporating a number of camps, individual performance and development plans, a mentoring program, and regular performance reviews.



RECOMMENDATION 5.4:

QTF Selector Development and Accreditation Program

QTF to develop and implement a Selector Development and Accreditation Program designed to recruit, train, support and retain a network of selectors of the necessary size and capability to operate in all QTF Pathways and Performance event, competition and academy environments.

It is recommended that this program align with the Pathways and Performance streams of the yet to be developed Touch Football Participation Framework (refer Recommendation 3.1) and the QTF Pathways and Performance Talent Identification and Selection Framework (refer Recommendation 6.1). This approach would allow selectors to be trained to operate effectively in environments relevant to a particular stream within the Framework, e.g.

Pathways Selector

- Affiliate teams (junior state cup 14s, 16s, 18s, and senior state cup)
- National Schools Championships (15s)
- NYC
- NTL Championships
- State of Origin (Seniors)
- Q-Pathways Academy

Performance Selector

- NRL Touch Premiership
- State of Origin 20s and Opens (Men's Women's and Mixed)
- Future Maroons Performance Academy

Rationale

It is abundantly clear that the issue of player selection (and to a lesser extend coach and referee selection) is perceived by the majority of QTF pathways and performance stakeholders to be a **major** weakness within the Touch Football Talent Pathway in Queensland.

The opportunity for QTF (with or without the support of TFA) to develop and implement a player selector accreditation and development system; as well as a player, coach and referee selection policy framework (refer Recommendation 6.1), designed to more independently identify (and develop) talent across the state at all levels of the Pathways and Performance system is clear.

The Selector Accreditation and Development Program should align with a player profile syllabus within the yet to be developed Touch Football Participation Framework supporting resources (refer Recommendation 3.1), which identifies the technical, physical, tactical, psychological and other requirements of players at the various stages of the Pathways and Performance streams of the sport.

Recommendation Focus Area 6 – Policies and Procedures

RECOMMENDATION 6.1: QTF Pathways and Performance Talent Identification and Selection Framework

QTF to develop and implement a Pathways and Performance Talent Identification and Selection Framework which aligns with the Pathways and Performance streams in the yet to be finalised Touch Football Participation Framework (refer Recommendation 3.1).

The purpose of the Pathways and Performance Talent Identification and Selection Framework is to assist selectors operating in both the Pathways and Performance streams of the Touch Football Participation Framework to implement **best practice talent identification and selection methods and policies**, and to provide them with the tools and templates needed to assist in implementing these practices and policies when selecting players at Pathways and Performance events and programs.

Importantly, the Framework should clearly identify which events, competitions and academies are considered QTF pathways and performance team selection priorities and provide information relating to the minimum number of these events players are required to play in, in order to be eligible for selection. This would provide a clear, transparent and equitable platform from which key team selections are made. It would also help to optimise player (and coach/referee-selector) well-being and minimise burnout caused by players feeling that they need to participate in all events on the calendar in order to be selected in key teams.

The Framework could also include information to guide the open and transparent selection of pathways and performance coaches and referees.

Pathways Events, Competitions and Programs

- junior state cup 14s, 16s, 18s, and Senior State Cup
- National Schools Championships (15s)
- NYC
- NTL Championships
- State of Origin (Seniors)
- SEQ Super Series (recommendation 4.1)
- Q-Pathways Academy

Performance Events, Competitions and Programs

- NRL Touch Premiership
- State of Origin 20s and Opens (Men's Women's and Mixed)
- Performance focused competitions (e.g. SEQ Super-Series and regional equivalents)
- Future Maroons Performance Academy

Note: QTF may see value in referring to the [TFA Talent Identification and Selection Framework](#) which provides a guide to the talent identification and selection processes for Affiliate and Regional level Touch Football as part of this process.

Rationale

As per the rationale above relating to Recommendation 5.4 – Selector Accreditation and Development Program.

NSWTA have a process such as this in place designed to provide clarity, equitability and transparency in the State of Origin and NRL Touch Premiership selection processes which appears to work well (e.g. in order to be eligible for selection in a state of origin team, players may need to play in 2 of 5 events/competitions annually).



RECOMMENDATION 6.2: Updated Event and Competition Rules

6.2.1: QTF to review and update all rules (including conditions of entry) associated with player and team participation in the following Pathway and Performance Events:

Pathway Events

- Junior State Cup (14s, 16s, 18s) and Senior State Cup
- State of Origin (Seniors)
- SEQ Super Series and regional equivalents (recommendation 4.1)

Performance Events

- NRL Touch Premiership
- State of Origin 20s and Opens (Men's Women's and Mixed)

The Event and Competition Rule Review should focus on each event more effectively achieving its *purpose* within the Pathways and Performance ecosystem. For example, the purpose of the Junior State Cup (participation and development) is very different to the purpose of the NRL Touch Premiership (performance) and as such, the rules governing QTF events and/or relating to QTF teams' involvement in TFA governed and QTF/NSW co-governed events, should reflect this.

Note: in relation to events QTF do not govern (e.g. NTL Championships, NYC, NRL Touch Premiership), QTF should look to review and update policies relating to Queensland based player and team participation in these events, e.g. as they relate to encouraging regional participation in the NTL Championships).

6.2.2: QTF to develop event rules designed to effectively govern the delivery of the SEQ Super-Series competition and regional equivalents (recommendation 4.1)

Rationale

In line with many recommendations within this Report, there is a need to increase the clarity of various elements of the QTF Pathways and Performance system. Ensuring maximum clarity relating to the purpose of each pathway and performance event and competition and their rules and regulations is an important part of this process.



Recommendation Focus Area 7 – Digital Infrastructure

RECOMMENDATION 7.1: Talent Identification Webform

Implement a fit-for-purpose Pathways and Performance system Talent ID Webform that will allow accredited and approved personnel to submit the results of player (and referee) assessments at pathways and performance events, competitions, academies, as well as in their home coemption and training environments.

This system should allow for approved personnel from around the state to add player assessments data, aligned with specific performance criteria contained within the Touch Football Participation Framework (refer Recommendation 3.1), into a centralised database in real time, from any device. Key personnel (e.g. selectors, coaches, etc.) can then access this information to assist in the selection and ongoing performance (and well-being) monitoring of players.

QTF should clearly identify how digital technology can and should support the increasingly efficient and equitable state-wide delivery and review of the Pathways and Performance system.

Following this assessment, QTF should undertake a comparative analysis of other state and national sporting organisations' use of digital systems in the pathways and performance space and from here, identify potentially suitable systems and providers, costs involved and based on the financial viability of implementing the new digital platform, undertake the activities needed to provide access to the appropriate system.

Rationale

Another key system-related opportunity for QTF in the Pathways and Performance space is the use of digital systems. Technology, in all of its forms, is playing a greater role in sport, particularly high-performance sport; and technology that leads to increases in efficiencies, connection, integration, transparency and innovation in this space can lead to significant competitive advantage.

If QTF is looking to create a sustainable competitive advantage for its pathways and performance level athletes, coaches, referees and administrators, the use of technology within all elements of this system should be optimised wherever possible.

A contemporary example of a digital system used within a sport Talent Pathway, is the Talent ID Webform used by Football Australia. *“Due to the vastness of Australia, Football Australia has developed a secure Talent ID Webform that will allow accredited and approved coaches to submit technical assessments on players at club matches, Member Federation Talent Development Matches and National Talent ID Events. Acting on recommendations from FIFA, the new system will allow for coaches around the geographically vast country to add information into a centralized database. This Talent ID Webform will be accessible to accredited and approved coaches who will assess players based on specific performance criteria.”*

Recommendation Focus Area 8 – Pathways and Performance Planning

RECOMMENDATION 8.1: Pathways and Performance Plan

Work with key elements of the QTF (and TFA) Pathways and Performance ecosystem, using the QTF Board endorsed recommendations to come from this Talent Pathway Review, to drive the development of a medium-term QTF Pathways and Performance Plan (e.g. 2024-2028).

It is recommended that that plan include:

- Clarity of purpose relating to the QTF Pathways and Performance system and the purpose of the Plan itself.
- A summary of the Pathways and Performance Cultural Blueprint.
- Pathways and Performance system roles and responsibilities framework.
- Specific objectives, strategies and proof points relating to the QTF Pathways and Performance system.
- Clarity of prioritisation in relation to the QTF's investment in its Pathways and Performance system.

Note: Ideally QTF would refer to the TFA High Performance Strategy as it designs its Pathways and Performance Plan. This approach would maximise mutually beneficial alignment and decrease duplication. However, no such National HP Strategy is currently in place. Should TFA develop such a Strategy prior to QTF developing its Pathways and Performance Plan, the National Strategy should be referred to as part of this process.

Rationale

QTF does not currently have a medium term (e.g. 5-year) Strategy / Plan in place to guide the strategic direction, investment, or operational delivery of its state-wide Pathways and Performance system.

Following this Review, QTF will be presented with the opportunity to engage with key Pathways and Performance stakeholders to co-design a simple and user-friendly Pathways and Performance Plan.

If a 5-year QTF Pathways and Performance Plan was in place, QTF would then be in the position to develop Annual Pathways and Performance Action Plans, to guide the activation of the Plan over its lifecycle. The Annual Action Plans could identify the operational details (actions, timelines, responsibilities, budgets, etc.) associated with the effective and efficient implementation of identified activities annually.

RECOMMENDATION 8.2: State of Origin Campaign Reviews

QTF to initiate independent State of Origin campaign reviews at the completion of each SOO series.

Rationale

QTF should ensure systematic, honest and robust review, reflection and learning throughout the lifespan of the Pathways and Performance Plan to expose reality.

Aligned with this focus, QTF would benefit from including independent reviews of QTF's pinnacle performance event campaigns into its review mechanisms.

Note: The term campaign refers to the period of time from when a team is selected to when the event is completed. Therefore, all activities which take place from selection of the team, camps, etc., and the event itself should be reviewed.



Recommendation Focus Area 9 – People

RECOMMENDATION 9.1:

Pathways and Performance System Human Resources

The QTF human resource structure required to optimally and sustainably drive the implementation of the QTF Pathways and Performance Plan should include (but may not be limited to):

- 1. Board Appointed Pathways and Performance Taskforce (Sub-Committee):** The broad purpose of which being to oversee and contribute to the operational delivery of the QTF Pathways and Performance Plan.

The membership of the Taskforce *could* include:

- 1 x QTF Board Director (Chair)
- QTF Pathways and Performance Manager (refer below)
- 1 x current pathways player
- 1 x current performance player
- 1 x current QTF NRL Touch Premiership team coach
- 1 x current State of Origin Coach
- Current Australia Open coach/s (if Queensland based)
- Chair of the QTF State Referees Team
- 1 x current pathways referee
- 1 x current performance referee
- 1 x current / former pathways / performance selector
- 1 x key Regional Pathways and Performance stakeholder (i.e. 6 people)
- 2-3 x appointed taskforce members to fill skill gaps as required

A Terms of Reference will need to be developed for this Board appointed Taskforce, however it should relate largely to the activation (i.e. operational delivery) of the Pathways and Performance Plan, via the development and delivery of Pathways and Performance Annual Activation Plans.

- 2. Paid Pathways and Performance Manager:** This should be a full-time role if financially sustainable.

Rationale

For the past 2-3 years, QTF has not had a high functional Board appointed panel, sub-committee or similar to oversee the strategic and operational activities of the QTF Pathways and Performance system. This should ideally occur in collaboration with other key system partners.

The current QTF paid staff structure does not currently include a paid position whose main responsibility is the design, delivery and review of the Pathway and Performance system state-wide. It is evident the current QTF human resource structure is not enabling the Pathways and Performance system to achieve its potential. Having a sport pathways and performance professional filling a Pathways and Performance Manager role (ideally full-time); and establishing a multi-faceted, operationally-focused, volunteer Pathways and Performance Taskforce, whose responsibility is to assist the Pathways and Performance Manager to effectively implement the Pathways and Performance Plan, will significantly bolster both the capacity of QTF's human resource structure in this space.

Next Steps

- Review Reference Group to provide feedback to MSC on the Report, by individually completing the Recommendations Feedback tool provided – **by 7am on 23rd April 2024.**
- Online Review Reference Group meeting to discuss the group's collective position regarding MSC's recommendations: **6-7pm on 23rd April 2024.**
- QTF Board to identify which Review recommendations it endorses – *Date TBC.*
- QTF to communicate the Board endorsed recommendations to come from the Review to Pathways and Performance stakeholders – *Date TBC.*
- QTF to develop a Post Review an Action Plan designed to guide the effective and efficient implementation of the MSC recommendations endorsed by the Board – *Date TBC.*

MSC is grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the ongoing success of the QTF Pathways and Performance system through the completion of the Review and wishes the organisation and its partners every success as it implements recommendations which are endorsed by the QTF Board.

MSC would like to thank the many stakeholders who gave of their time and energy to share a wide range of views and experiences throughout the Review process.

Mike McLaughlin



Director – McLaughlin Sports Consultancy
MBA (Sport Management)
Bachelor of Sports Science (Sports Coaching)
Grad Dip (Elite Sports Coaching)
Cert IV in Training and Assessment



Appendix A

QTF Talent Pathway Review – Terms of Reference



01 December 2023

QLD TOUCH FOOTBALL TALENT PATHWAYS REVIEW - TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Background

The Qld Touch Football Talent Pathways Review aims to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the existing talent pathways within Queensland Touch Football.

The review will focus on assessing the alignment of the pathways with the strategic goals of the organization, the transparency and fairness of the criteria for player, coaching and referee progression, and the support provided to athletes, coaches and referees as they progress along the pathways. The outcomes of this review will guide the development of recommendations aimed at optimizing talent development and improving the overall talent of players, coaches and referees within the touch football community.

2. Objectives

The primary objectives of the Touch Football Talent Pathways Review are as follows:

- Evaluate the existing touch football talent pathways and their alignment with the strategic objectives of the organization.
- Assess the clarity, transparency, and fairness of the criteria for player, coaching and refereeing progression along the talent pathways.
- Identify any barriers or challenges that players and coaches encounter while navigating the talent pathways.
- Examine the support mechanisms, including training, mentorship, and coaching, provided to athletes, coaches and referees within the touch football talent pathways.
- Formulate recommendations for enhancing the touch football talent pathways to maximize talent development and organizational effectiveness.

3. Scope of Work

The review will encompass the following key areas specific to touch football talent:

- Examination of existing touch football talent pathways, including player development, talent identification, coaching development, and referee pathways.
- Evaluation of the documentation and communication of talent criteria and expectations at each stage of the pathways, including technical skills, tactical understanding, and fitness requirements.
- Analysis of the current support mechanisms available to players, coaches, and referees within the talent pathways, such as training programs, mentorship, and coaching.
- Review of feedback mechanisms and talent assessment processes used to measure progress along the pathways, including player assessments, coaching certifications, and referee development programs.
- Benchmarking against best practices and standards within the touch football community and comparable sports organizations.

4. Methodology

The Touch Football Talent Pathways Review will utilize a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods specific to touch football, including:

UNITE . INSPIRE . GROW .



+61 7 3367 6250



admin@qldtouch.com.au



qldtouch.com.au



Queensland Touch Football
83 Castlemaine Street, Milton QLD 4064

ABN 32 751 852 440



Queensland
Government





- Interviews and focus groups with players, coaches, referees, and relevant staff involved in the touch football talent pathways.
- Surveys to gather feedback from individuals involved in or affected by the touch football talent pathways, including players, coaches, and referees.
- Analysis of relevant documentation, including policies, procedures, and talent data specific to touch football talent.
- Benchmarking against best practices and standards within the touch football community and other relevant sports organizations.
- Consultation with key stakeholders, including touch football coaches, players, referees, talent directors, and other relevant personnel.

5. Deliverables

The review will produce the following key deliverables:

- A comprehensive report detailing the findings of the review, including strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in the touch football talent pathways.
- Clear and actionable recommendations for enhancing the touch football talent pathways, supported by evidence and best practices within touch football and related sports.
- A presentation to stakeholders, summarizing the key findings and recommendations specific to touch football talent pathways.

6. Timeline

The Touch Football Talent Pathways Review is expected to be conducted over a period of [insert timeline], with a final report and presentation to be delivered by [insert date].

7. Stakeholder Engagement

Regular communication and engagement with key stakeholders, including touch football administrators, coaches, players, referees, talent directors, senior leadership, employees, affiliates and regions will be essential to ensure that the review is comprehensive and the recommendations are aligned with organizational goals.

8. Budget

A detailed budget for the review, including any required resources, external expertise, or technology, will be developed and approved prior to the commencement of the review.

9. Reporting

The review will be overseen by a designated review committee headed by Board delegate, who will provide regular updates to board and management, as necessary.

10. Approval

This Terms of Reference for the Talent Pathways Review will be subject to review and approval by Board before the commencement of the review process.

[To be Approved by QTF Board of Directors]

Once approved, this document will serve as the guiding framework for conducting the Qld Touch Football Talent Pathways Review.

Appendix B

Project Methodology

The following project methodology was confirmed in February 2024, following Project Stage 1: Initial Meeting with the Review Reference Group.

Stage	Activity	Milestone Date
1	<p>Initial meeting with the Review Reference Group</p> <p>Face-to-face or online meeting to confirm the project scope and methodology details; roles and expectations of the Review Reference Group and MSC; finalise key milestone dates; and discuss next steps.</p>	February 2024
2	<p>Preparation and facilitation of a 4-hour, online focus group session with key QTF Talent Pathways influencers / stakeholders</p> <p>Bring key stakeholders together at the start of the project (e.g. 20-25 people) to ensure a consistent collective understanding of the purpose and nature of the Review; to instil a sense of confidence in the Review methodology and MSC; and to instil an “opportunity” mindset within the group relating to the Review.</p> <p>This session will also allow MSC to collect information relating to key driving and blocking forces impacting on the QTF Talent Pathways framework; including how the group feels driving forces can be optimised and blocking forces minimised or eliminated.</p>	February 2024
3	<p>In-depth Document Review</p> <p>E.G. Recent QTF annual reports; QTF strategic plan and talent development / high performance plans; TFA and QTF player and coach development pathways; support mechanisms including training, mentorship, and coaching provided to athletes, coaches and referees within touch football talent pathways; QTF talent pathways investment data; QTF human resource structures associated with the delivery of talent pathways programs and events; QTF and TFA TD and HP governance and operational policies and procedures (including criteria for player, coach and referee progression along the talent pathways); QTF talent pathways results; statistics relating to high performance athlete / coach and referee cohorts; and all relevant talent pathways information attainable from NSWTA, Touch New Zealand and other sports within Australia that are achieving great HP results, with whom MSC works (e.g. Swimming Australia, Hockey Australia, Cycling Australia, and others).</p>	February 2024
4	<p>e-Surveys</p> <p>Development, distribution and analysis of a series of specifically designed e-Surveys, designed to consult widely with all relevant parties (e.g. players, coaches, referees, parents of junior players, performance services personnel and others, as guided by the RRG).</p>	February/March 2024

Stage	Activity	Milestone Date
5	Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper Development of a comprehensive Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper based on evidence collected via Stages 1-4.	22 March 2024
6	Online Review Reference Group meeting Discuss the contents of the Preliminary Findings and Opportunities Paper (Stage 5, above) and its potential impact on future stages of the Review.	March 2024
7	Up to 20 x 1-on-1 interviews Interviews via MS Teams or phone with key QTF talent pathways stakeholders (e.g. staff, coaches, selectors, referees, committee members and players).	March/April 2024
8	Interview Findings Summary Paper	8 April 2024
9	<i>Recommendations Report</i> <i>Development of a detailed Recommendations Report in line with the Review terms of reference</i>	<i>16 April 2024</i>
10	Review Reference Group Feedback on Recommendations Development of a Recommendations feedback tool designed to allow all members of the Review Reference Group to identify which recommendations they endorse in principle and their level of priority; and which recommendation they do not endorse and why. Review Reference Group will then meet (face to face or online) to allow MSC to present a Review Reference Group Collective Position Statement (based on the completion of the aforementioned feedback tool) and for the group to discuss next steps relating to the effective implementation of endorsed recommendations.	April 2024
11	Development of a Collective RRG Position Statement	24 April 2024

Project Methodology

Appendix C

Interviews – Findings Summary

List of QTF Talent Pathway Stakeholders Interviewed:

1. Gavin Shuker	Rocky/CQ/QLD/AUS
2. Wayne Grant	TFA High Performance Manager
3. David Field	QLD Referee Director (20 Years)
4. Lee Rossow	Sharks Referee / SQBD Manager
5. Zac Genrich	BMTA General Manager
6. Katie Geiger	QTF Game Development Manager
7. Jason Boyd	QLD SOO Men's Open Coach
8. Peter Bell	QTF High Performance Panel; Former elite coach; Former QTF Pathways and Performance Manager
9. Dean Russell	NSWTA General Manager
10. Renee Marsh	Current NQTA President, former Operations Manager NQTA
11. Chris Loth	QLD Schools 18 Boys Coach
12. James Sharpe	Player, UQ Rebels President, TFA staff
13. Craig Morrow	QLD SOO Women's Open Coach; NRL Premiership – Cowboys Women's Head Coach
14. Christopher Davis	EX BMTA GM, Little Athletics CEO
15. Phil Gyemore	QTF High Performance Panel, Australian Men's Open Head Coach
16. Dorelle Lo Grande	Former QTF Director of Selectors
17. Tony Trad	NSW High Performance Manager
18. Tristan Mana	Former QTF Pathways and Performance Manager
19. Karlie Banks	NSW SOO (QLD Originally); Caboolture Touch employee
20. Paul Cobham	2023 QLD Schools 18 Girls Coach
21. Charlie Griffiths	QTF Events Manager
22. Michael Baartz	2022 QLD SOO Mixed Open Coach

The following stakeholders were scheduled for an interview, but were ultimately unavailable:

- Renee Murphy – Queensland State of Origin Women's Head Coach
- Tracy Upton – CQ Touch Regional Development Manager

Summary of Key Interview Findings

Discussion Theme 1: PARTICIPATION – TALENT – HIGH PERFORMANCE: Where does the QTF Talent Pathway start and finish?

Participation	Talent	High Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informal Touch Football. - School-based programs (e.g. Sporting Schools) and competitions. - Affiliate-based programs and competitions. - Junior State Cup (s) 10s and 12s. - All Abilities Touch Football. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Junior State Cup(s) 14s – 18s. - State and national School Championships. - Senior State Cup. - NYC. - NTL Championships. - Metro Cup (and equivalent). - State of Origin (Seniors Divisions) - Emus (Seniors Division). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NRL Touch Premiership (if it runs). - State of Origin (20s and Open Divisions). - Emus (Youth and Open Divisions).

Commentary

→ The events/competitions highlighted in **green** above are governed by TFA, and those highlighted in **blue** are governed by affiliates. The lack of control / input QTF has in relation to these elements of the pathway, as they relate to the identification, development and retention of Queensland players, coaches, referees and selectors, is something some stakeholders are concerned about.

For example, if TFA's design, governance or delivery the NTL Championships or the NRL Touch Premiership is questionable; and/or if BMTA's design, governance or delivery of the Metro Cup is questionable, this will have a negative impact on the QTF Talent and High Performance Pathway. Currently, there is little QTF can do about this, which places QTF at risk.

How QTF can strengthen and/or increase the role it has on the governance of QTF Talent and High Performance Pathway events and competition should be a focus of Review recommendations.

Talent and High Performance Pathway events

Discussion Theme 2: What should the purpose of the Talent and High Performance elements of the QTF pathway be?

Talent	High Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To attract, support, train and retain high numbers of talented players, coaches and referees, participating in all Talent Pathway events and competitions. ✓ For QTA regional (youth, open and seniors) and state (junior and youth) teams to achieve sustained success at benchmark events (e.g. NTL Championships, NYC). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For Queensland NRL Touch Premiership, and State of Origin 20s and Opens teams to repeatedly win. ✓ To transition high numbers of elite athletes, coaches and referees into national team programs.

Discussion Theme 3: In broad terms, rate the overall effectiveness of the current QTF Talent Pathway.

Performance Drivers	Under-performing	Progressing	Performing	Excelling
	Significantly below expectation – solutions to challenges not identified	Evidence of improvement – solutions to challenges being implemented	Performing well in all areas – on target	Exceptional performance – setting an international standard
<p>High performing Culture The people and systems that manage a safe player centred, performance-focused culture, underpinned by values of integrity, excellence and well-being.</p>				
<p>Leadership and Planning The systems and processes that identify, develop, manage and grow quality leadership personnel (paid and volunteer) to ensure that the TD and HP pathways are well governed and managed.</p>				
<p>Player Performance Pathways The infrastructure and systems that identify, develop, manage and retain sufficient numbers and quality of players at each stage of the athlete development pathway to ensure QTF achieves sustained success.</p>				
<p>Coaches The systems and processes that identify, develop, manage and retain High Performance coaches.</p>				

Performance Drivers	Under-performing	Progressing	Performing	Excelling
<p>Referees The systems and processes that identify, develop, manage and retain High Performance referees.</p>				
<p>Selectors The systems and processes that identify, develop, manage and retain High Performance selectors.</p>				
<p>DPE The resources, facilities, support and guidance in the athlete's day to day training and preparation that support them to achieve key performance targets for that athlete / team.</p>				
<p>Competition The planned series of competitions in place that contribute to the athlete / team's preparation for the major benchmark event/s.</p>				
<p>Events The planned series of events in place that contribute to the athlete / team's preparation for the major benchmark event/s.</p>				
<p>Player, Coach and Referee Well-being Systems in place to help all find the right balance between wellbeing, engagement in activities outside of training and competition, and the requirements of elite Touch Football.</p>				
<p>The use of technology Digital systems in place to support athletes, coaches, referees and selectors in talent and high performance environments.</p>				

Discussion Theme 3: What should the role/s of TFA be in the Talent and High Performance Pathway?

- Develop a whole of sport participation pathway framework, which clearly outlines the different participation environments, player stages of development and provides guidance on how to best develop and retain players in the sport.
- Develop and implement a National High Performance Plan.
- Professionally manage the national HP program.
- Access HP funding to ensure the HP system is based on having the best athletes, coaches and referees involved, as opposed to those who can afford it.
- Develop HP coaches, referees and selectors.
- Effectively structure and manage national/international events (e.g. NRL Touch Premiership, NTL).
- Work openly and proactively with states to improve state-based Talent and Performance programs.
- Support FIT in the drive towards Touch Football being included as a program sport at the Brisbane 2032 Olympic Games.

Discussion Theme 4: What should the role/s of QTF be in the Talent and High Performance Pathway?

- Promote the use of a whole of sport participation pathway framework, which clearly outlines the different participation environments, player stages of development and provides guidance on how to best develop and retain players in the sport.
- Develop and implement a QTF Pathways and Performance Plan.
- Professionally manage the QTF Pathways and Performance Program.
- Access government/commercial funding to ensure the QTF Pathways and Performance system is financially sustainable.
- Develop Pathway and Performance coaches, referees and selectors.
- Effectively structure and manage QTF events.
- Work openly and proactively with regions and affiliates to improve local Talent Programs.
- Manage / support the delivery of high quality performance focused competitions.

Discussion Theme 5: What changes would you make to the QTF TD pathway/system and why?

- QTF to govern and manage the delivery of key performance focused competitions, e.g. Metro Cup.
- Encourage/mandate QTF regional teams participating in national pathway event, i.e. NTL Championships.
- Establish a *Future Maroons Academy Program*, targeting the next crop of State of Origin 20s and Opens players.
- Establish a *Pathways Coach Development Program*, targeting the next crop of State of Origin 20s and Opens coaches.
- Establish a *QTF Pathways and Performance Panel*, or similar, to get more highly skilled people involved in the management and delivery of the Pathway. Look to attach honorariums to these roles to attract and retain the best people.
- Develop and implement a *QTF Pathways and Performance Plan*.
- Have a paid (full-time) QTF Pathways and Performance Manager in place to drive the delivery of the Pathways and Performance Plan.

Appendix D

Written Submissions – Findings Summary

MSC provided stakeholders targeted for interviews with the opportunity to provide a written submission (using a template provided by MSC) should they prefer to provide input into the Review via this means, or should they wish to provide information in addition to that provided during the interview process. MSC received 1 written submission, a summary of which is provided below.

Questions:

1. What should the purpose of the Touch Football in QLD Talent Pathway be?

To inform participants as to the access points and or pre-requisite steps or stages required in order to achieve their potential.

2. Touch Football in QLD Talent Pathway Model: What do you want and how/when will you know you have got it?

A pathway that addresses and caters for the unique QLD touch football landscape. That is, one that incorporates all stakeholders equitably and ultimately facilitates the conversion of as many Queensland juniors to State of Origin level as possible.

The model will be reflected in the participant numbers as well as our elite performances.

3. What is currently driving the Touch Football in QLD Talent Pathway towards achieving its purpose and potential? Please consider people, partnerships/relationships, programs, places/spaces, plans, policies, profile, the role of QTF, regions, affiliates, schools, academies, events, competitions, etc.

QLD is in a relatively good space (especially compared to other states & territories) in terms of this area, as we have had a good plan in place for some time. We still have good working relationships across the state generally and junior and schools touch is flourishing. However, the last review was in 2015 and we are well overdue for a thorough evaluation.

4. What is currently blocking the Touch Football in QLD Talent Pathway from achieving its purpose and potential?

The non-consultative approach currently taken by TFA in relation to pathway discussions across the country and TFA not currently having a clear strategic direction in this space e.g. TFA not having a national high performance strategy in place.

5. What strategies should to be implemented to address the blocking factors identified above?

I would establish a QLD Pathways/Performance Panel to review the issues and oversee delivery of outcomes. The regions need to be rebooted i.e. evaluating their relevance and effectiveness in order to identify what support is needed, where best practice can be implemented and ultimately, deliver a better product across the state. Emphasis must be placed on achieving the goals which are best for QLD. These goals would include – Participation, Pathway, High performance, calendar & events, etc.

6. In addition to strategies outlined above, what changes (if any) should be made to the current Touch Football in QLD Talent Pathway, in order for it to more effectively achieve its purpose and potential?

The lower part of the Pathway is working relatively well. It is the upper levels which are a worry. We have duplication in events (e.g. QLD State Cup and NTL) and we have created a divisive environment e.g. young players having to choose between their club and region (e.g. NTL Championships).

There is a huge gap between QLD State Cup and State of Origin, yet there is currently no QLD or National *high performance* event from which to select our players.

If a high performance National event for regions (the old NTL) is not in place, I would re-introduce State Championships at Opens and Seniors levels, possibly to fit in with a SOO cycle. I would also push for a return to an Elite 8 or similar National Elite event rather than a participation event (The Championship) with control over our QLD based players and coaches.

Other Comments

The critical points to both acknowledge and to address in the QLD talent pathway context include –

1. The unique Qld Touch Junior environment & the role of schools Touch

Unlike most other Australian states, Queensland has seen a somewhat school-based focus in Junior development rather than a community-based focus. While this has changed in recent years, the uniqueness of the QLD experiment should not be lost when assessing any pathway. This focus in schools came about due to the sport growing exponentially through the 80s within QLD schools. The sport was widely supported by teachers who in turn developed many of the organizational mechanisms to project the sport. This included quality coaching, referee development and even TID of athletes. At the time community junior competitions were spasmodic and the level of coaching was also limited. QLD schools were running State and National events before the community sports organizations. The results are still seen today with significant outcomes at both grass roots and elite end touch football.

No other Australian state boasts the same level of connection and continuity with the school sport system and community touch football as QLD does.

2. Traditions and history in the sport

It disappoints me to see some national decisions being imposed on QTF and regions with very limited stakeholder consultation, which pay little attention to the traditions and history of the sport in this state e.g. the important role the regions play in talent development in Queensland.