



dAIS Scheme Guidelines

2024/25

October 2024

1. Purpose

In support of HP2032+ Sport Strategy outcomes, the Federal Government, through the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) direct athlete income support (dAIS) scheme, aims to provide athletes with direct financial support to enable them to focus on training and competitions to achieve the strategy targets in Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games sports.

2. Important Dates

2.1. Process timeline

National Sporting Organisation (NSO) dAIS nominations will take place once each financial year. Successful athletes will receive two dAIS grant payments each year.

NSOs, in collaboration with the ASC, will have the discretion to elect the time of year in which they nominate athletes for dAIS support.

3. dAIS Allocations and Grant Amount

The ASC has committed a total of \$20.80 million for the dAIS Program in 2024/25, in line with the uplift in funding provided by the Federal Government in June 2024.

NB: There is no guarantee that an athlete who receives dAIS will be offered dAIS support in a subsequent year.

Notional dAIS grant amounts for Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic athletes are:

	Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic athletes	
	Annual grant amount	Amount of each payment
Podium	\$43,000	\$21,500
Podium Ready	\$31,000	\$15,500
Podium Potential	\$4,000 - \$16,000	\$2,000 - \$8,000
Developing		
Emerging		

Notional dAIS grant amounts for athletes who compete in an Eligible Discipline in the sport of Lawn Bowls and Netball are:

	Commonwealth Games-only athletes	
	Annual grant amount	Amount of each payment
Podium	\$43,000	\$21,500
Podium Ready	\$4,000 - \$16,000	\$2,000 - \$8,000
Podium Potential		
Developing		
Emerging		

NSOs may be invited to nominate Podium Ready, Podium Potential, Developing, and Emerging athletes to receive dAIS funding. This funding will be prioritised to sports that do not qualify any athletes for Podium dAIS and will be based on the sport's ability to medal at the 2026 Glasgow Commonwealth Games.



4. Eligibility Criteria

4.1. Eligibility to nominate

While dAIS is a direct athlete grant, athletes do not apply for a dAIS grant by themselves. Athletes are nominated by their NSO.

To be eligible to nominate athletes, NSOs must meet the [National HP Sport Eligibility framework](#). The ASC will prioritise funding based on the HP2032+ Sport Strategy outcomes to ensure the right support gets to the right athletes to deliver medal-winning success at future Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games.

4.2. Athletes' eligibility sport strategy outcomes the prioritisation

To be considered for a dAIS grant, an athlete must:

- a) Be nominated by their NSO;
- b) Be categorised in accordance with the NSO sport specific Athlete Categorisation Framework;
- c) Be training to represent Australia in an Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games event/discipline;
- d) Be an Australian citizen and eligible to represent Australia at the next Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games;
- e) Be following an individual performance plan which is endorsed by their NSO;
- f) Satisfy the dAIS means test (refer to Section 9);
- g) Have a signed athlete agreement with their NSO and not be in breach of that agreement;
- h) Not be currently serving a sanction or provisional suspension for an anti-doping rule violation and/or not be in breach of a NSO integrity policy including Member Protection, Competition Manipulation & Sports Wagering, Misuse of Drugs and Medicines;
- i) Para athletes only - Hold a review or confirmed status international classification. Para athletes who do not hold an international classification should hold a national classification and be planning to seek international classification within an acceptable timeframe.

5. How to Nominate

Nominations for dAIS support is as follows:

- The ASC will invite NSOs to nominate athletes once a year in line with the annual Athlete Categorisation process.
- The ASC will advise the NSO of the dAIS funding allocations for the financial year, and
- Provide detailed instructions and guidance to nominate athletes based on the eligibility criteria.

5.1. Nomination of an athlete of under 18 years of age

To nominate an athlete under the age of 18 years old, NSOs must:

- inform the athlete's parent/guardian about the nomination;
- obtain the contact details of the parent/guardian's (name and email address); and
- provide, with the parent/guardian's approval, the contact details on the nomination form.

The parent/guardian will:

- be notified by email by the ASC if their child is successful with the nomination; and
- be required to co-sign the dAIS Athlete Agreement for the dAIS grant awarded.

5.2. dAIS and the National Athlete Categorisation Framework

Prior to nominating athletes for dAIS support, NSOs will be required to develop a sport-specific Athlete Categorisation Framework, agreed by the ASC, to underpin the prioritisation and planning of support to athletes under the dAIS scheme.

The NSO sport-specific athlete categorisation matrix, aligned to the National Athlete Categorisation Framework, should outline a criteria for Podium, Podium Ready, Podium Potential, Developing and Emerging athletes that covers:

- Performance criteria against each dAIS level;
- Annual benchmark events (i.e. World Championships), and other key selection events that may be considered as part of their assessment/reassessment process;
- Any additional performance standards or progression benchmarks that athletes will need to meet at each Athlete Categorisation level to be nominated for dAIS support;
- Any qualifying criteria to assess athletes' performances against the depth of competition at events being used for assessment;
- Any other non-performance-related factors that may be determining factors in the level of dAIS support offered;
- Associated Policies for dAIS eligibility, including Injury, Illness, Pregnancy, and Transition policies; and
- Appeals process.

Any adjustments to this Framework and Matrix must be agreed with the ASC before being applied.

5.3. Associated Policies for dAIS eligibility

All NSOs are required to address, within their own sport specific Athlete Categorisation Framework, associated policies to categorise athletes for dAIS eligibility under the following:

- Athletes with dependents.
- Short and long-term major injury and illness;
- Time away from competition;
- Transitioning into a sport from another; and
- Pregnancy

An athlete may be nominated for a full allocation of dAIS under an associated policy, if they meet the requirements outlined in their NSO Associated Policy for dAIS eligibility, as agreed by the ASC.

If an NSO elects to nominate an athlete under an associated policy for dAIS eligibility, athletes will be supported as part of the allocation available to the NSO.

To support NSOs in developing the associated policies for dAIS eligibility, the ASC has provided guidance notes in Appendix A.

Athletes nominated for dAIS under an associated policy (see appendix A) in two consecutive dAIS years will not automatically qualify for dAIS support. The ASC will review nominations on a case-by-case basis and may require additional information from the NSO and/or athlete.

6. Assessment Process and Grant Approval

The ASC will assess dAIS nominations as follows:

1. The ASC will advise the number of dAIS Podium and Podium Ready allocations, and a total dAIS grant value for Podium Potential, Developing and Emerging allocations per financial year;
2. NSOs will nominate athletes based on the dAIS eligibility criteria;
3. The ASC dAIS Nominations Review Panel (dAIS Panel) will review nominations and recommend eligible nominations to the Grant Approver;
4. The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Director, as Grant Approver, may accept the determinations of the dAIS Panel and approve payments to athletes, or, if not accepted, will refer the determinations back to the dAIS Panel for discussion with the relevant sport.

The dAIS Panel will comprise of:

- Director, Performance Pathways and Programs, ASC – Chair;
- Director, Sport Strategy and Investment, ASC; and
- Consultant Sport Financial Advisory, ASC.

The AIS Director's decision is final in all dAIS matters, including: the approval of the grant, the grant amount to be awarded, and the Terms and Conditions of the grant.

7. dAIS Dependants' Responsibilities Support

The ASC, at its sole discretion, will consider nominations from NSOs to top-up the dAIS allocation to a Podium or Podium Ready athlete on the basis of financial hardship due to the athletes' responsibility for dependants, primarily children. A maximum top-up of \$10,000 per athlete per year will be considered. Any funding provided is in addition to the NSO's dAIS funding allocation for the financial year.

To improve consistency in the assessment of the nominations, for the 2024/25 year the ASC will review all nominations in a dedicated assessment session in April 2025, therefore nominated athletes who are approved to receive this support will receive this additional funding top-up as a lump sum in addition to their second payment of the financial year.

8. dAIS Transition Support

The ASC, at its sole discretion, will consider nominations from NSOs to provide support for an athlete who is transitioning out of competitive sport due to retirement or non-selection/categorised.

To be eligible for the dAIS Transition Support, an athlete must:

- a) Be nominated by their NSO;
- b) Prior to announcing retirement, be categorised as Podium, Podium Ready or Podium Potential (Podium for CG-only sports) within the sport specific athlete categorisation matrix, and be receiving dAIS support in the year prior to retirement/non-selection;
- c) Have a transition plan in place with a member of the NSO's Athlete Well-being & Engagement team (or equivalent) and meet regularly focussing on maintaining their wellbeing during the transition;
- d) Satisfy the dAIS means test (refer to Section 10); and
- e) Not be currently serving a sanction or provisional suspension for an anti-doping rule violation and/or not be in breach of a NSO integrity policy including Member Protection, Competition Manipulation & Sports Wagering, Misuse of Drugs and Medicines;

Eligible Podium and Podium Ready athletes may be provided with up to a half (0.5) dAIS allocation in line with the 2023/24 grant amounts (excluding one-off top up), based on their most recent athlete categorisation level. For all other categories, the maximum grant amount will not exceed 50% of the annual dAIS grant received in 2023/24. Any funding provided is in addition to the NSO's dAIS funding allocation for the financial year.

If an athlete is currently receiving dAIS under an associated policy related to transitioning from the sport, they may not be automatically qualified for dAIS Transition Support. The ASC will review nominations on a case-by-case basis and may require additional information from the NSO and/or athlete.

If an athlete has received dAIS Transition Support and then decides to return to competitive sport within 12 months, the athlete may be required to return the funding provided and/or have future dAIS payments reduced by any dAIS Transition Support provided.

9. dAIS Means Test

To ensure that the dAIS funding is allocated to those athletes who have the greatest need for support, dAIS is subject to means testing.

The after-tax income threshold for receipt of the full dAIS allocation is \$80,000 AUD per annum.

Where an athlete's annual after-tax income is over that income threshold, the athlete will get a reduced percentage of the full dAIS allocation, according to their income band, as per the table below:

Income band	Annual After Tax Income range (AUD)	Eligible % of dAIS
Band A	<=\$80,000	100%
Band B	\$80,001 - \$90,000	75%
Band C	\$90,001 - \$100,000	50%
Band D	\$100,001 - \$110,000	25%
Band E	>\$110,001	0%

Income for the purpose of this means test includes income from all sources excluding previous dAIS grants provided by the ASC and discretionary grants issued by the Australian Sports Foundation arising from philanthropic donations.

An athlete's annual income for the purpose of this means test can be determined based on either:

- Option 1. The athlete's average annual after tax income for the last four financial years ending 30 June; or
- Option 2. The athlete's projected income for the current financial year ending 30 June.

Athletes can select the calculation option that gives them the most favourable outcome.

If selecting option 2 and, at any point in time, an athlete is aware that their financial year income for the period exceeds the projected income used in the means test assessment for the dAIS grant received with the effect of changing the declared Income Band, the athlete must immediately inform the ASC via email (AISInvestment@ausport.gov.au) to adjust for any dAIS grant amount that was overclaimed or underclaimed.

It is important that athletes are aware that it is an offence for a person to make a false or misleading statement in, or in connection, with an application for a dAIS grant. The ASC will undertake audits annually to ensure athletes have been paid in accordance with their eligibility under the dAIS means test. Failure of the dAIS means test audits may result in an athlete having to pay back their unentitled dAIS funding.

Athletes are strongly encouraged to seek financial and/or taxation advice if they are uncertain as to their eligibility under the dAIS means test.

10. Notification of Outcomes

10.1. Notification to NSOs

NSOs will be notified by email of the outcome of their nominations including:

- The name of the successful athletes awarded for a dAIS grant; and

- The amount of the dAIS grant awarded, including, any additional support for Transition or Dependents' Responsibility, if applicable.

10.2. Notification to successful athletes

After notifications are sent to the NSOs, the ASC will notify the successful athletes by email of the outcome of their nominations including:

- The amount of dAIS grant awarded including, any additional support for Transition or Dependents' Responsibility, if applicable; and
- The requirements and process for claiming the dAIS grant.

11. Athletes Claiming and Agreement

Athletes must complete the following requirements to claim the dAIS grant.

- Complete the following learning modules, which are mandatory even if the athletes have previously completed similar modules, including:
 - (i) Sport Integrity Australia's anti-doping and anti-match fixing learning modules,
 - (ii) ASC Athlete Code of Conduct learning module,
 - (iii) dAIS means test audit learning module, and
 - (iv) dAIS Athlete Agreement learning module;
- Agree to the ASC Athlete Code of Conduct;
- Confirm or accurately notify the ASC the correct income band to ensure the eligible grant amount is accurate according to the dAIS means test;
- Accept a dAIS Athlete Agreement (if the athlete is under 18 years of age, their parent/guardian must co-sign the dAIS Athlete Agreement); and
- Confirm or accurately notify the ASC the current contact and bank account details for grant payments to be processed.

The dAIS Athlete Agreement sets the terms and conditions of accepting the dAIS grant.

12. Spending dAIS

The purpose of the dAIS grant is to provide financial support to athletes to assist with covering basic living costs and sport associated expenses so that they can focus on training and preparation to compete in their next Pinnacle Event.

There is no restriction on how athletes should spend the dAIS funding and the ASC do not require athletes to acquit the grant.

Since there is around a six-month gap between the two dAIS payments each year, athletes should manage their financials well and seek assistance from the NSO Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement staff if required.

For athletes under the age of 18 years old, the respective NSOs are required to work with the athletes to develop an expenditure plan for their dAIS grant.

Athletes who receive dAIS do not have a duty or obligation to provide any services to the ASC, as the ASC does not regard the payment as a reward for success.

13. dAIS Tax Class Ruling

The Australian Taxation office (ATO) has issued a class ruling (CR2021/100) for dAIS to ensure any grant is exempt from tax which is [available on the ATO website](#). The ruling states that dAIS grants are not assessable income for the purposes of sections 6-5 or 6-10 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 provided that the athlete is not carrying on a business as a sportsperson. Athletes should seek taxation advice if they are unsure as to whether their dAIS grant is taxable.

14. Child Safe

The ASC is committed to Australian sport environments that are safe, supportive and friendly for children.

The [ASC Child Safe Policy](#) outlines our commitment to child safeguarding, and the obligations and responsibilities of our people and stakeholders to protect children. All dAIS recipients will be bound by the ASC Child Safe Policy.

The ASC has adopted the Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations. All funded organisations will be expected to adopt and implement the National Principles for Child Safety and ensure that all child related personnel are compliant with legislation relating to the employment or engagement of people working with children, including Working With Children Checks and mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect.

The ASC is a participating organisation in the National Redress Scheme and has adopted the Australian Government Grant Connected Policy. An organisation will not be eligible to receive funding (including any direct athlete grants) if it is named by the National Redress Scheme for Institutional Child Sexual Abuse on its list of "Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme.

15. Disclosure of Information

The ASC must treat any personal information according to the Privacy Act 1988 and the Australian Privacy Principles. Athletes' personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

Personal information submitted to the Athlete Management System (AMS) system is collected by the ASC for the purpose of considering applications for and administering the program. The information collected may be disclosed to other government agencies for this purpose.

The personal details of successful athletes (including name, home state, sport, supporting organisation, the value of the grant awarded and a brief description of the purpose for the grant) may be released by the ASC to the public and the media and may be placed on the ASC website, including for the use of promotional purposes.

View the [ASC Privacy Policy](#).

16. Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or Program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if ASC staff, any member of the Assessment Panel, a committee or advisor, and/or you or any of your personnel, for example:

- has a professional, commercial, or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an ASC officer, or a member of an external panel
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant Program.

NSOs will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest. If you later identify an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest, ASC must be informed in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for ASC staff will be handled in accordance with ASC's Conflict of Interest Policy. dAIS Panel members will also be required to declare any conflicts of interest.

17. ASC Discretion

This document is intended to provide guidelines for the administration of the dAIS scheme only. The ASC may, among other things and at its sole discretion (within appropriate financial delegations):

- Offer dAIS to athletes who have been nominated by their NSO under policies in Section 5 of these guidelines.
- In deciding whether to issue a dAIS grant, consider an athlete's compliance with their obligations and responsibilities under any previous dAIS grant; and
- Amend any aspect of these guidelines including (but not limited to) the grant amounts, eligibility criteria, performance considerations and timeline.

18. Enquiries and Feedback

For any questions regarding dAIS, please contact: AISInvestment@ausport.gov.au.

Any complaints can be lodged using the complaints form on our website [Feedback and Complaints | Australian Sports Commission \(ausport.gov.au\)](#).

Appendix A – Guidelines for NSO dAIS Associated Policies

The ASC require NSOs to address, within their own sport specific athlete categorisation matrices, policies for recognising athletes who are identified as contributing to the performance outcomes of the sport at the next pinnacle event where one of the following may apply:

- a) An athlete is recovering from major injury or illness;
- b) An athlete is taking time away from competition;
- c) An athlete is transitioning into a sport from another; and
- d) An athlete is pregnant.

The *Guidelines for NSO dAIS Associated Policies* assume an athlete nominated under the NSO Policies is categorised and receiving dAIS based on the NSO Athlete Categorisation matrix and that the athlete will return to the sport under the same categorisation (or similar). Athletes nominated under these policies are included in the NSO dAIS allocations.

Associated Policies offer sports the ability to nominate athletes for dAIS support whilst the athlete is taking time away from competitive sport for one of the above reasons. There is an assumption that a level of training will be maintained and therefore it is reasonable to assume additional non-financial service support (strength and conditioning, gym access, physiotherapy, psychology, Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement (AW&E)etc.) will continue to be provided through the NSO where appropriate and agreed.

Recognising that dAIS can play a significant role in supporting an athlete whilst training and competing, in addition to the above policies (a through d), NSOs are required to develop a sport specific approach to the continuation of support, financial and otherwise, when an athlete transitions out of competitive sport, through retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation. This is a critical career change period for any athlete and referred to as:

- e) Transitioning out of competitive sport (retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation)

Athletes nominated under this policy (*Transitioning out of competitive sport (retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation)*) are NOT included in the NSO dAIS allocations and will be supported from the broader dAIS scheme funding.

a) Athletes recovering from major injury or illness

- The ASC recognise that an athlete may still be a contributor to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event despite suffering/recovering from a major injury or illness.
- It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should still be identified within the sport specific Athlete Categorisation matrix, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:
 - Pre-injury/illness the athlete is categorised AND was receiving dAIS support;
 - Has an individual athlete performance plan with a return to competition focus and timeframes outlined – including working with the AW&E team member (or equivalent);
 - Is meeting the requirements of the agreed rehabilitation plan; and
 - Is tracking against rehabilitation benchmarks to achieve pre-injury/illness performance outcomes.

b) Athletes taking time away from competition

- The ASC recognise that on occasion, to contribute to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event, an athlete may require some time away from competition for family, health and/or wellbeing reasons.
- It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should still be identified within the sport specific Athlete Categorisation matrix, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:
 - Prior to taking some time away, the athlete is categorised AND received one dAIS payment in the past 12 months;
 - Has an individual athlete performance plan focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the sports needs and performance standards;
 - Has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular pre-determined meetings scheduled with the sport Performance Director (or equivalent); and

- Maintains contact with AW&E staff (or equivalent) on a regular basis to ensure athletes are focussed on maintaining their wellbeing.

c) Athlete transitioning into a sport from another

- The ASC recognise that on occasion, high performing athletes may transition into a sport from another with the expectation they will contribute to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event of the new sport. Usually, a high performing athlete would only transition into a new sport if there was a strong likelihood of success.
- It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should be identified within the sport specific Athlete Categorisation matrix of the NEW sport, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:
 - the athlete was categorised in the previous sport in the past 24 months;
 - Has an individual athlete performance plan focusing on contributing to the national performance targets at the pinnacle event within a 4-year period; and
 - The athlete has an individual performance plan with the new sport, agreed milestones and is meeting progression targets.

d) Athletes who are pregnant

- The ASC recognise that athletes may take some time away from intense training and competition when they become pregnant or have recently given birth. These athletes may still be on track to contribute to national performance targets at the next pinnacle event.
- In line with this, the ASC has developed pregnancy guidelines for High Performance Sport to support sport specific guideline development.
- It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category should still be identified within the sport specific Athlete Categorisation matrix, and therefore eligible for dAIS nomination, if they meet the following minimum criteria:
 - Prior to becoming pregnant, the athlete was categorised AND received one dAIS payment in the past 12 months;
 - Has an individual athlete performance plan focusing on maintaining physical and mental wellbeing as it aligns to the sports needs and informed by specific medical advice as it relates to pregnancy;
 - Has an agreed return to sport and competition plan including timeframes and regular pre-determined meetings scheduled with the sport PD (or equivalent); and
 - Maintains contact with AW&E staff (or equivalent) on a regular basis to ensure athletes are focussed on maintaining their overall wellbeing.

e) Athletes who are transitioning out of competitive sport (retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation).

- Athletes in this category, with a history of contributing to sport outcomes, may be eligible for half an allocation of dAIS on the recommendation of the sport.
- It is recommended that a sport has clear guidelines defining transition out from competitive sport (retirement or non-selection resulting in non-categorisation) and only athletes who meet these criteria are eligible for this support.
- It is recommended that athletes who fall into this category may still be eligible for dAIS for a period of 6 months if they meet the following minimum criteria:
 - Prior to transitioning out of competitive sport, the athlete was categorised as podium, podium ready or podium potential within the sports athlete categorisation matrix AND received one dAIS payment in the past 12 months;
 - The athlete has developed a transition plan with a member of the sport specific AW&E team (or equivalent) and meets regularly focussing on maintaining their wellbeing during the transition; and
 - The sport may require that the athlete contributes to the sport in a specific way as part of being nominated for dAIS e.g., speaking at camps, promo material for upcoming events, inclusion in formal or informal mentoring programs, developing a plan to transition to sport specific coaching/administration/support services etc.

The ASC recommend that NSOs address the provision of non-financial support to all categorised athletes who may not have been eligible for dAIS in the past or may not qualify for dAIS as part the

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transition out of competitive sport for a period of 6 months. This includes athletes categorised at any level of the Athlete Categorisation. Support could include assistance with developing a transition plan with a member of the sport specific AW&E team (or equivalent) and meeting regularly to focus on maintaining wellbeing during the transition. This could be negotiated with NIN partners as part of the partnership agreements or MOUs when possible.



