



**COMPETITIVE
PLAY
BLUEPRINT**





CONTENTS

<i>THE VISION</i>	5
<i>WHAT WE DID</i>	6
Everyone's game	8
Putting the player at the heart of the review	9
Who we spoke with	10
<i>WHAT WE LEARNT</i>	12
Five key themes	14
<i>OUR MOTIVATION FOR CHANGE</i>	16
1. Reset the aspiring player strategy	18
2. Redesign pathway	19
3. Ratings/rankings integration	20
4. Refresh formats	21
5. Enhance team-based products	22
6. Reform first competitive experience	23
What will help us change	24
<i>WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE</i>	26
The Australian Competition Framework	28
What will be different	29
Unified structure	30
How we will define success	32
<i>WHAT HAPPENS NEXT</i>	34
The road ahead	35



THE VISION

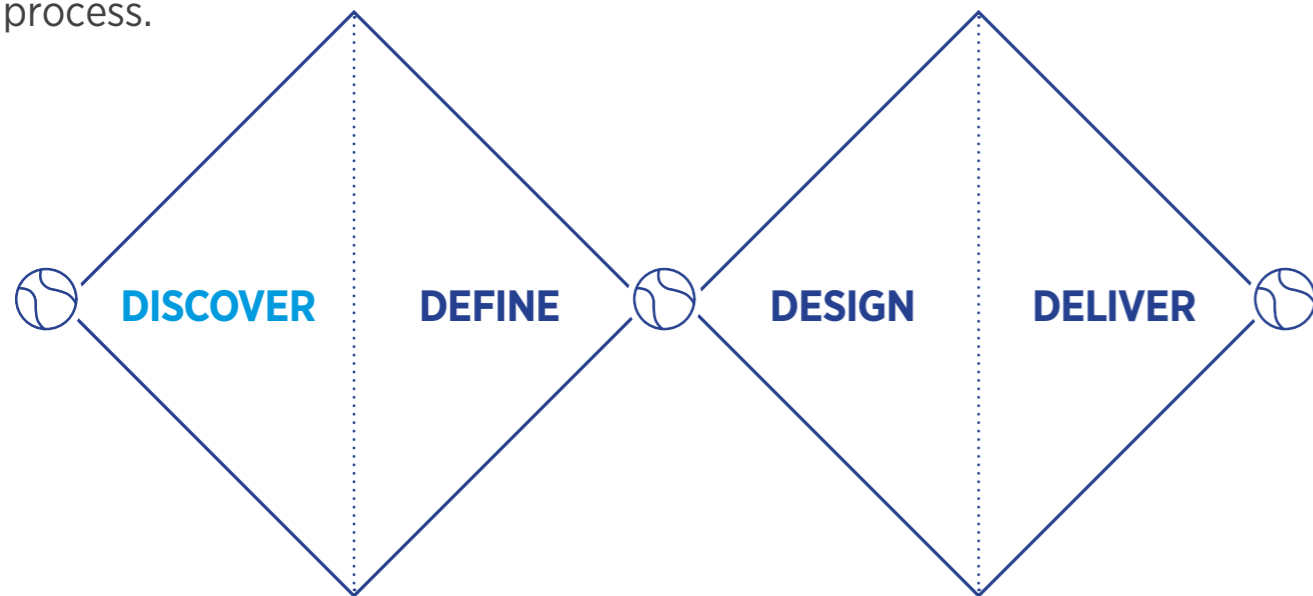
A competitive play framework that attracts and retains players of all abilities while developing future champions to benefit the long-term health of Australian tennis.



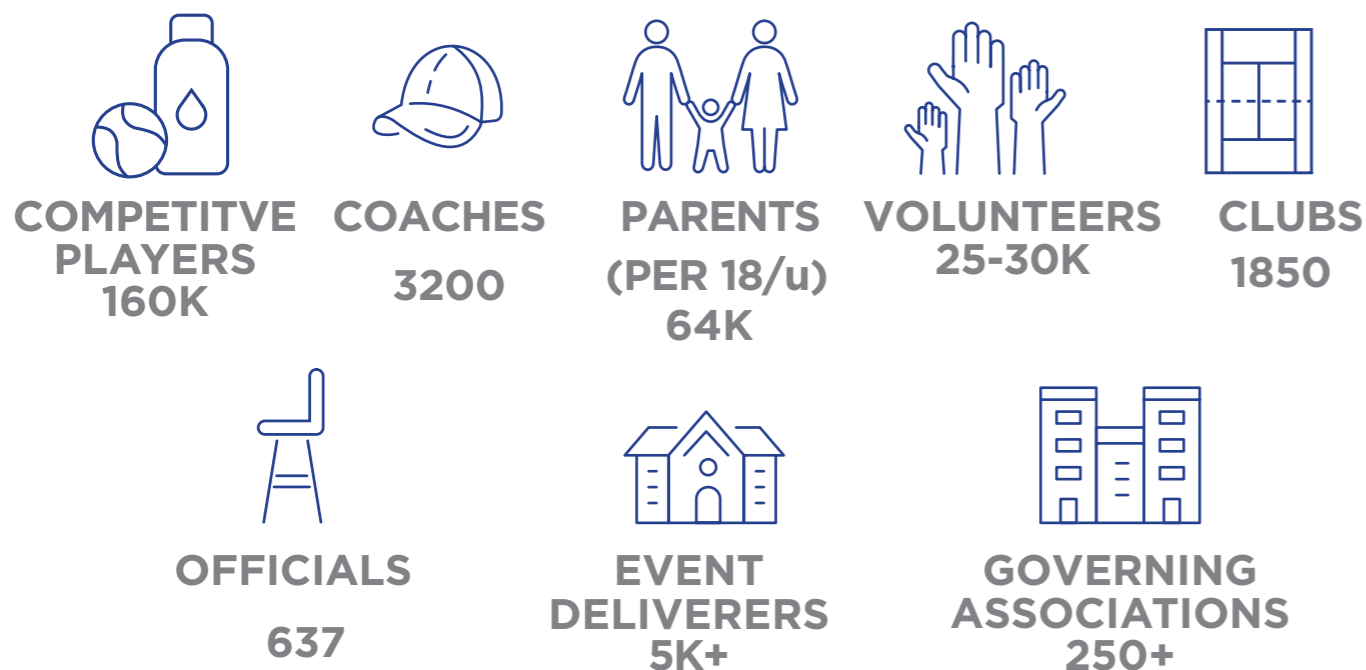
**WHAT
WE DID**

EVERYONE'S GAME

The Competitive Play Review is following a human-centred-design process.



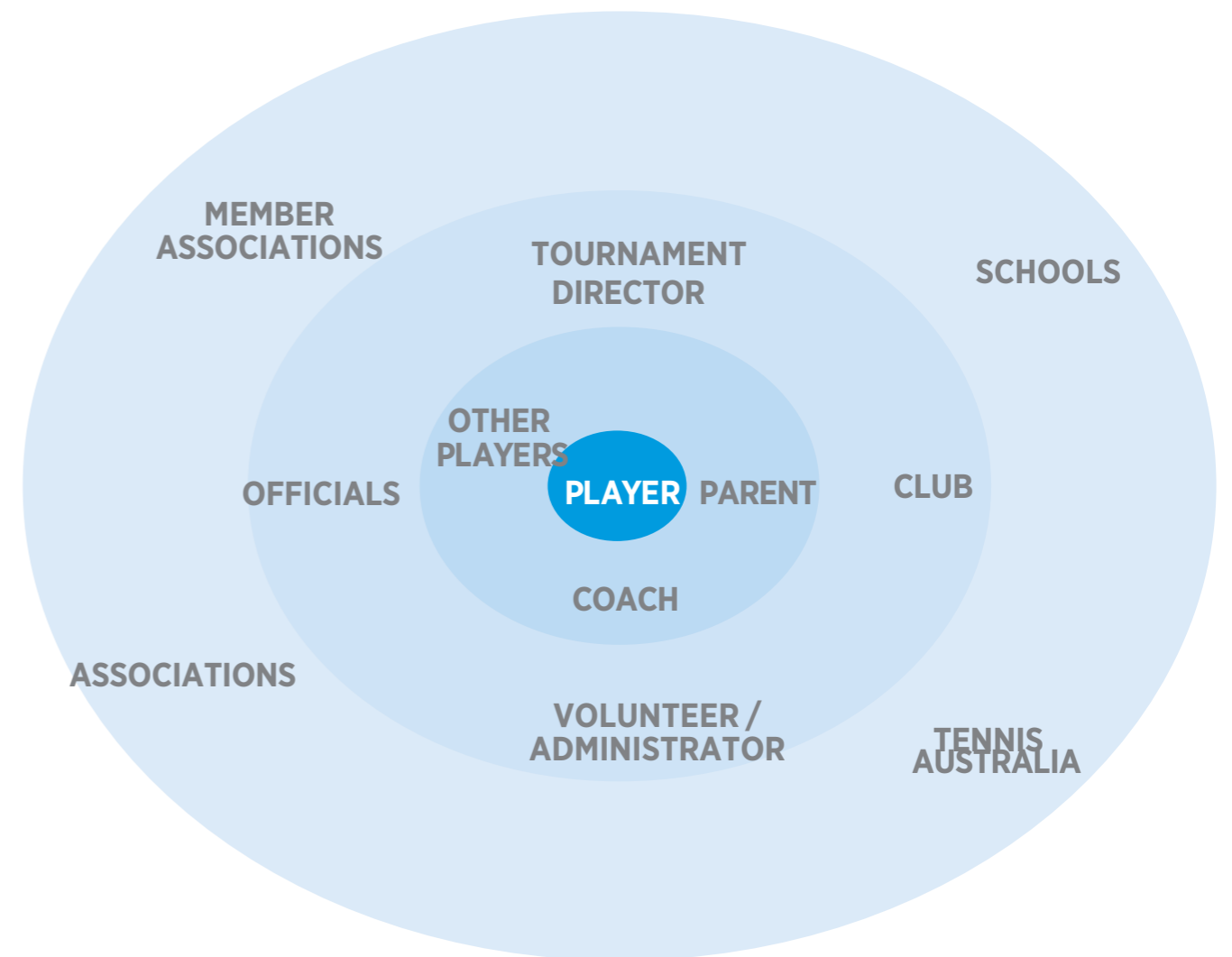
Many stakeholder groups make up the Australian competitive tennis ecosystem – each with varying perspectives and needs.



PUTTING THE PLAYER AT THE HEART OF THE REVIEW

Throughout the review, we are placing the player at the centre of all design and decision-making in the knowledge that meeting the needs of the player will lead to an improved system overall.

We have divided the 160k competitive players by age, ability and aspiration into 23 different segments and are using the competition preferences of each of these groups to help with the design of future competition products, programs and pathways.



WHO WE SPOKE WITH

We spoke to a large number of Australian tennis stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the current state of competitive play.

We also looked beyond Australian tennis to other national tennis federations and other sports to determine current and future trends in measuring and evaluating competitor's abilities.

THE DATA SOURCES



4408

Survey Responders

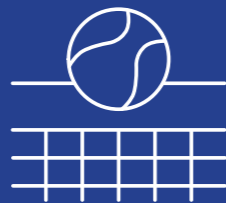
Australian players, parents, coaches, competition organisers, volunteers



51

Research Documents

Academic papers, reviews and survey results



10

Leading Trends

Domestic and global tennis trends



10

Top 250 players

Ten interviews with Australian players currently or previously ranked in the world's top 250



6

Domestic Sports

Basketball, Athletics, Soccer, Gymnastics, Swimming and Cricket



4

International Tennis Federations

United States Tennis Association, Lawn Tennis Association (UK), French Tennis Federation, Tennis Canada



3

Workshops

Working Group ideation and validation sessions



1

Hypothesis Session



***WHAT WE
LEARNT***

FIVE KEY THEMES

Five key themes identified during the discovery phase will underpin the road ahead.

PATHWAYS

The Finding: The current competition pathway is disconnected, difficult to understand and does not represent a player's journey.

The Opportunity: Develop a holistic pathway centred around the player journey identified in the discovery phase. Invest in communicating and educating players, parents and coaches about the right type and amount of competition for each stage.

RANKING & RATINGS

The Finding: There is ranking and rating clutter with the purpose and audience of each not well defined.

The Opportunity: Design and adopt a primary ranking/rating system built on the desired competition behaviours, experiences and objectives per player segment identified during the discovery phase.

FORMATS

The Finding: There is an abundance of inconsistent formats and naming conventions with limited insight into what the player and deliverer want.

The Opportunity: Overhaul formats with a focus on time, team and level-based competitive opportunities. Remove offerings that do not meet the demands of the player or deliverer. Continue to experiment with different formats in a more formalised way.

CULTURE

The Finding: There is a poor perception of tournaments due to subpar first experiences and the lack of officials and management oversight of tournament hosts.

The Opportunity: A competition structure underpinned by the Tennis Values and embedded with the Spirit of Tennis Behaviours. Invest in reforming the first competitive experience.

DELIVERY

The Finding: Inconsistent delivery and at times a lack of trust and confusion over responsibilities.

The Opportunity: Improve the governance and management structure of competitive tennis using clear language, defined competition calendars and delivery principles. Embed recommendations from other reviews such as child safety, Tournament.



***OUR MOTIVATION
TO CHANGE***

1. RESET THE ASPIRING PLAYER STRATEGY

The following competitive play opportunities can help support an aspiring player's pursuit of a professional career:

- The right amount and type of competitive experiences for juniors
- Competitions that provide international ranking points and thus entry into international events
- A range of opportunities for players to earn prize money in order to sustain a career.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. There needs to be a 'pathway' of ITF Junior and Pro Circuit events offered in Australia / Oceania
2. While it is imperative that the 'pathway' includes both hard and clay-court events, there is also a strategic advantage for Australia to offer events on grass
3. There needs to be cost-benefit consideration for event running costs, player expenses, appropriate event offerings and point availability
4. The timing of event offerings is critical:
 - To ensure the right event is accessible to the right player
 - To avoid conflict with school commitments as well as overseas playing opportunities
5. The determination of event locations needs to consider feasibility, exposure and opportunity. A two-year cycle may assist in meeting all these constraints
6. Events offered to males and females do not need to be the same but the total prize money pool does
7. Work with the Asian Tennis Federation and Oceania Tennis to align schedules in our region.

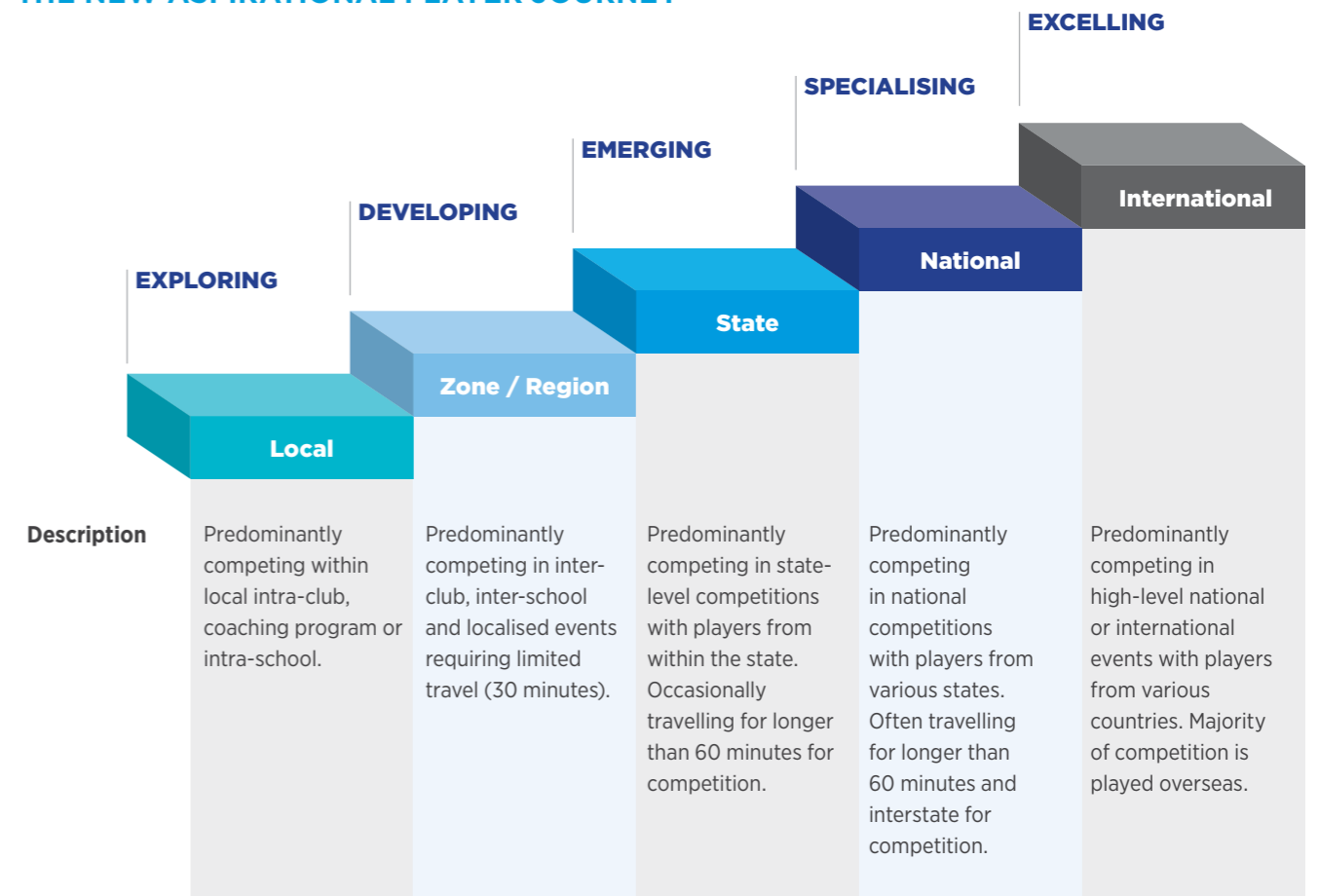
CALENDAR DESIGN

1. School holiday periods should be reserved for key junior events such as Nationals and some ITF Juniors
2. The length of domestic ITF tournament swings needs to be considered:
 - 3-4 weeks for Pro Circuits
 - 2-3 weeks for Juniors (in school holidays)
3. Lower grade Junior ITFs can overlap ITF Pro Circuit events (in the same week)
4. Higher grade Junior ITFs should not overlap ITF Pro Circuits or National Team Events (i.e. Junior DC/FC/WJTs) to allow these juniors to compete in both event types
5. There is not a strong need to offer ITF Pro Circuit events between April-September given most aspirational players are travelling during this time. This is a prime opportunity to offer prize money events
6. There is a Performance and Professional Events appetite for the UTR events proposal in 2021.

2. REDESIGN PATHWAY

1. 'Competitive Play' should become the umbrella term that encompasses all forms of competition including tournaments, leagues and school tennis
2. Adopt a Competition Matrix which includes all competition types and player preferences per segment
3. Create a five-stage pathway for the aspirational player segment. Identify competitive opportunities and match-count per stage
4. Develop a 'choose your own adventure' interactive Pathway option through digital platforms where you can filter by gender, age, ability and aspiration.

THE NEW ASPIRATIONAL PLAYER JOURNEY



3. RATINGS/RANKINGS INTEGRATION

- Every player given a rating to be used throughout the entire competitive play landscape, with less detail displayed for younger players
- An order of merit system to determine which players qualify for their State and National championship events. The order of merit position publicly displayed for the top 32 (or 64) profiles in the relevant age and gender segment at both a State and National level
- This allows for every player to know their standard and facilitate competitive match experiences across the country while also enabling the top players in each segment to be easily identified for selection to compete in higher level events
- Local and Zone level events would use the ratings for competition acceptance and seeding
- All displayed ratings for competition players across the country to be a whole number. Further rating detail such as decimal places to be available to administrators for grading, selection and team order processes.



4. REFRESH FORMATS

A formalised pilot plan of new formats with three layers of considerations:

- Type (individual / team / hybrid / gender)
- Structure (knock-out / round-robin / league / banded)
- In-game (scoring / court modification / time).

Pilots should serve to determine two primary objectives:

1. Improved player experiences
2. Improved player performance outcomes.

Engage the Tennis Australia Performance team to determine desired player improvements and co-design the pilot programs accordingly.

Establish a consistent and formalised method to obtain participant feedback about their format preferences.

There should be less 'tournaments' overall, particularly at the lower level which should be substituted with a more vibrant team competition. Whilst the aggregated number of available competitive opportunities need not reduce, the type of opportunities should change.

5. ENHANCE TEAM-BASED PRODUCTS

- Each state Member Association (MA) to establish a Junior State League for 10/u, 12/u, 14/u, 16/u and 18/u. Multiple divisions should be offered where the quantity of the relevant standard player exists. This should operate as an interclub league
- Tennis Australia to implement a Junior State League Play-off for 10/u, 12/u, 14/u, 16/u and 18/u, whereby the winning team from each MA Junior State League participates to find Australia's best junior teams
- Each MA to establish a State League for adults. Multiple divisions should be offered where the quantity of the relevant standard player exists. This should operate as an interclub league
- Tennis Australia to implement State League Play-off where the winning team from each MA State League participates to find Australia's best team. An option should be further explored for each team to include a certain number of wildcard players to cater towards players travelling during the year
- Each MA to establish a MOU with their inter-school associations and come to a state-wide agreement on standard days for school and club competition using the single rating for administration purposes



6. REFORM FIRST COMPETITIVE EXPERIENCE

- Develop updated guidelines, principles and templates for first competitive / tournament experience
- Revamp of ANZ Tennis Hot Shots to help prepare kids to compete with confidence and competence
- Reform and invest in the first defined 'tournament' experience (currently JDS).

WHAT WILL HELP US CHANGE

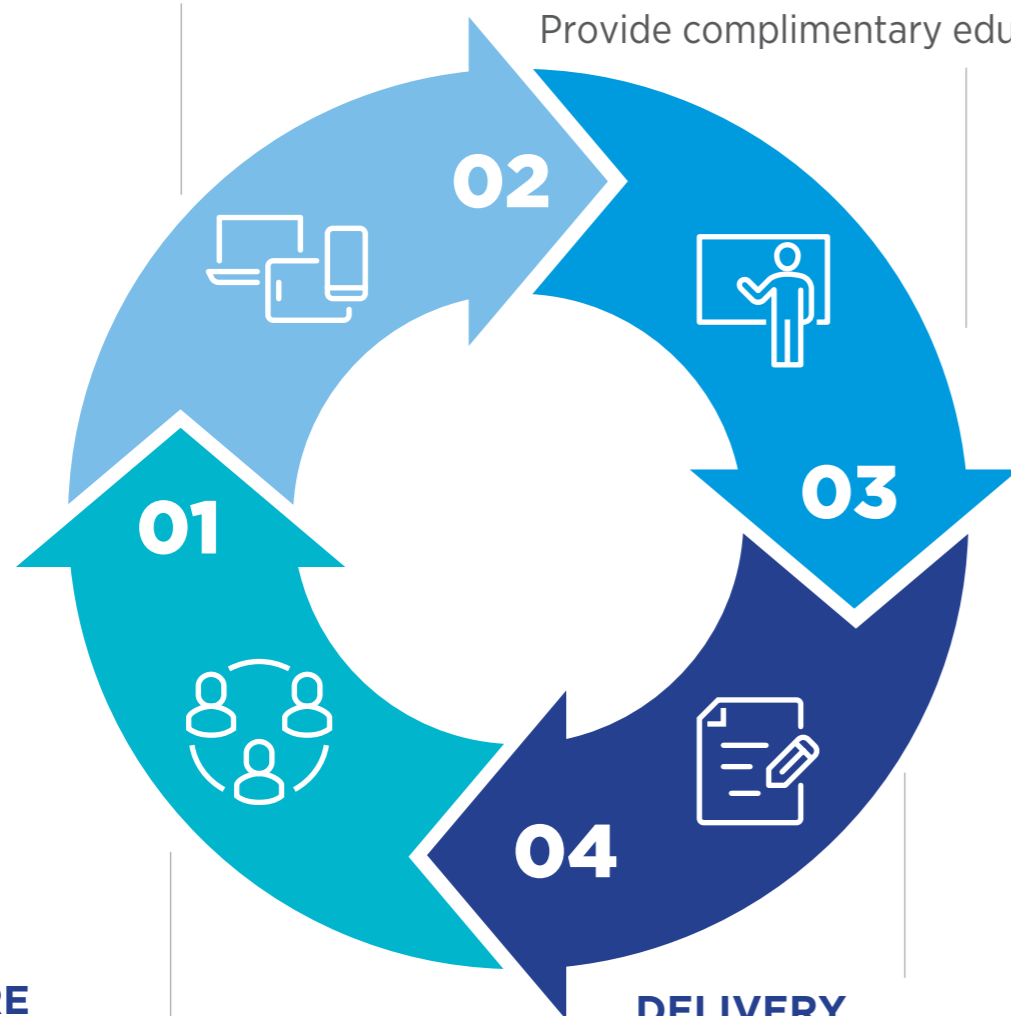
The in-game experience remains at the core of our proposal with the end-to-end improved through the development of four key enablers.

DIGITAL

Embrace digitisation to support the competition experience for all players and administrators.

EDUCATION & COMMUNICATION

Reorganise and categorise competition to ensure it can be easily communicated and understood by all stakeholder groups. Provide complimentary education.



CULTURE

Adopt an improved structure which supports a holistic approach to competition, underpinned by Tennis's values and 'Spirit of Tennis' behaviours.

DELIVERY

Adopt an improved governance and management delivery model that supports the review recommendations. Synchronise language, calendars and delivery principles.





**WHAT IT
WILL LOOK LIKE**

THE AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION FRAMEWORK

The Australian Competition Framework is the proposed structure encompassing all endorsed competitive play formats across the country.

The framework is designed to provide clarity of Competitive Play options for all stakeholder groups. Additionally, deliverers, regardless of location or playing standard, will be encouraged to innovate and cater to local nuances, providing the best possible experience.

All matches across leagues, events and tournaments will count towards the same currency – a primary rating – providing players an increased variety of competition options, with a year-long calendar of opportunities for players of every standard.

For the aspiring player, the Competitive Play calendar offers regular opportunities for them to test themselves against the best within their state and across the country.

Further, all results will count towards an Australian Team Championships, meaning that players will always represent something greater than themselves.

The Framework is designed to unify, simplify and invigorate Competitive Play, improving the experience for both players and deliverers, while minimising the need for wholesale change to existing competitions around the country.

WHAT WILL BE DIFFERENT?

FROM

Players travelling extensively for competition

Multiple ranking and rating systems

Singles tournament play dominating the competition calendar

Conflicting competition offerings

A top-down approach to formats

TO

More competition opportunities found locally

One primary rating used to identify player standards

The right blend of singles play and team tennis

Simplified player offerings and player pathway

More player-led formats with local flexibility

UNIFIED STRUCTURE

FIVE PLAYER LEVELS (DEFINED BY RATING)



FIVE PRODUCT DESIGN PRINCIPLES



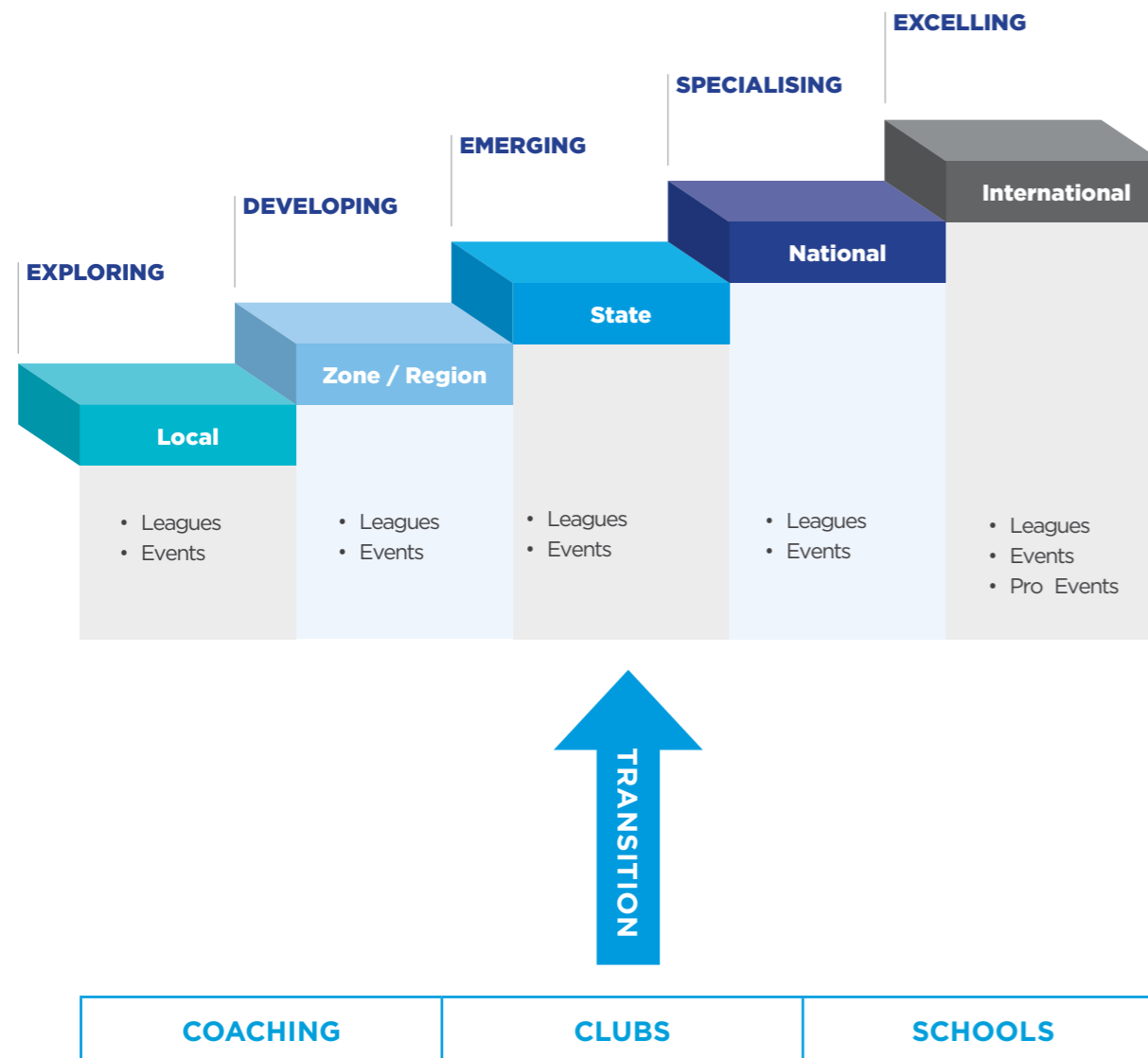
THREE COMPETITION TYPES



ONE PRIMARY RATING

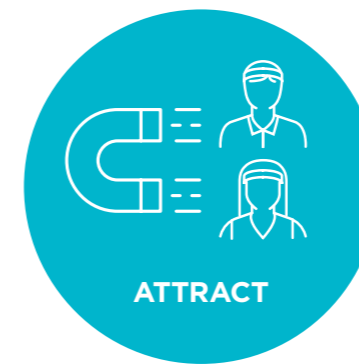


AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION FRAMEWORK



HOW WE WILL DEFINE SUCCESS

Statement of success: Every week every player has the opportunity for a local level-based competitive experience.



MORE PLAYERS COMPETING MORE OFTEN

- More players transitioning from coaching programs to formalised competition
- Increased female representation in competitive play
- Players understanding what their appropriate competition options are and where to find them.



MORE PLAYERS WITH A NATIONAL RATING

- More players retained following their first competitive experience.
- More opportunities for players to earn money in Australia to sustain their careers
- Players valuing singles, doubles and team events in equal measure
- More players understanding their relative standard.



MORE AUSTRALIANS IN THE TOP 200 ITF JUNIOR, ATP AND WTA RANKINGS

- Players consistently competing for and winning Grand Slam singles titles
- A strong contingent of players successfully competing on Tour
- A strong contingent of players accepted into top tier US Colleges.



***WHAT
HAPPENS
NEXT***

THE ROAD AHEAD

