



# Relocation Principles for National Sporting Organisations

People Development & Wellbeing

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AIS

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# OVERVIEW

Relocating to a high performance (HP) program represents a significant transition in the life of an elite athlete. Every athlete relocation is unique and requires a consideration of individually tailored support, advice, and education.

## Vision

**Australian athletes who relocate to a high performance program are supported to thrive in sport and in life.**

## Purpose

This document provides National Sports Organisations (NSOs) with a framework of principles and accompanying guidelines to consider when working with athletes who are relocating to a HP program. The purpose of these principles and accompanying guidelines is to foster informed decision-making, promote clarity of communication, and maximise an athlete's positive experience of HP.

This framework is intended for use as a 'best practice' guide. It is anticipated that NSOs will draw from it in formulating policies and processes that are specific to, and customised for, the particular demands of individual HP programs.

## What constitutes a relocation

### *Required or approved vs discretionary*

Some athlete relocations are required by NSOs as being necessary for program participation and team selection. Other athlete relocations occur as a result of joint decision-making between an NSO and a categorised athlete who is seeking improved sporting opportunities.

Instances of relocation that are made at an athlete's personal discretion, in the absence of the High Performance Director's (HPD) direction or approval (i.e. an athlete is simply 'trying a new environment'), are not regarded as athlete relocations for the purposes of this framework.

While NSOs are encouraged to assist any athlete who is moving between training environments as much as reasonably practicable, these principles have been designed for use in cases of required or approved relocation only. All required or approved relocations should be approved by the NSO's HPD.

### *Permanent vs temporary*

Athlete relocation may be either temporary (training block, camp, or other specific period even if extended in duration) or permanent (relocation from an athlete's place of primary residence to a new HP training environment). These principles have been designed to assist in scenarios of permanent relocation, but may be useful to consider in matters of temporary relocation as well.

## Relocation principles

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|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Athlete Readiness   | 5. Induction               |
| 2. Communication       | 6. Career & Education      |
| 3. Finances            | 7. Connection to community |
| 4. Housing & Transport | 8. Exiting                 |



## Principle 1. Athlete Readiness

***Athletes are equipped with the emotional skills and practical abilities required for relocation.***

Every relocation is unique. Accordingly, each athlete should be considered individually in terms of their general physical and psychological needs, demonstrated independent living skills, career and education requirements, and capacity to integrate into a new environment.

Athletes (and their families) should be fully briefed about the requirements, challenges, and risks involved in relocation. Briefing should include detailed education around the day-to-day expectations and obligations that apply to athletes in the HP program.

## Principle 2. Communication

***NSOs ensure that relocation communication is timely, transparent, and accessible.***

A relocation offer from an NSO to an athlete should be made in writing (for example, in the Athlete Agreement or a separate relocation agreement) and should detail any other available support as appropriate (for example, access to SSSM services, gym facilities, etc.).

The athlete's primary service provider (NSO or NIN) should be clearly identified. Where various providers are responsible for different services, service provision is clearly mapped. Details about support service providers, relevant contacts, the Mental Health Referral Network (MHRN), Career Practitioner Referral Network (CPRN), and codes of conduct should also be provided.

## Principle 3. Finances

***NSOs ensure that all financial responsibilities and expectations are established prior to relocation, and are detailed in the relocation offer or agreement.***

Athletes should be fully aware of their financial responsibilities when relocating. It is therefore important that NSOs are upfront, transparent, and comprehensive regarding all financial commitments undertaken by the athlete in the course of relocation.

A relocation agreement should be prepared and signed by both the NSO and the relocating athlete that communicates the rights, responsibilities, and financial obligations of each party.

## Principle 4. Housing & Transport

***NSOs provide relevant and up-to-date information, support, and guidance in relation to housing and transport.***

Housing requirements differ considerably by NSO, HP program, and individual athlete needs. Regarding housing and transport, it is recommended that NSOs provide specific details around any assistance available to athletes in the relocation agreement.

Information should be provided that equips athletes with the requisite skills and knowledge to independently manage housing and transport arrangements.

## Principle 5. Induction

***NSOs ensure that relocating athletes are inducted to the daily training environment (DTE) in a way that fosters inclusion, transparency, social connection, and overall wellbeing.***

The induction of a new athlete into a HP program should be undertaken in a manner that enables the athlete to comfortably manage the transition. In instances where athletes are relocating to a HP program for the first time, a customised approach should be considered between, for example, a straight entry into full training or a more gradual introduction. Such considerations may be negotiated between the HP manager and the athlete during the planning phase of a relocation.



## Principle 6. Career & Education

***NSOs ensure an athlete's education and/or employment goals are supported when considering relocation.***

The AIS is committed to supporting Australia's elite athletes to achieve whole-of-life success, both during and after their time in high performance sport. In keeping with this commitment, an athlete's interests and aspirations around career and education should be explored as part of the relocation process.

This process may involve a review of an athlete's individual life plan (or the career, education & wellbeing aspects of an athlete's Performance Plan). It may also involve liaison with the Elite Athlete Education Student coordinator at any relevant EAEN institution, and a briefing around the CPRN.

## Principle 7. Connection to community

***NSOs ensure that relocating athletes are briefed about, and have access to, relevant community services and support networks.***

Social connection is a key index of wellbeing, and of particular importance to any individual undertaking a successful relocation. It is therefore suggested that NSOs take a proactive approach to supporting a relocating athlete to connect with the local community, both within and outside of the parameters of their sport.

In addition, opportunities to be involved in the NSO's community engagement programs, as well as AIS Community Engagement initiatives, should be raised and explored as appropriate.

## Principle 8. Exiting

***NSOs ensure that athletes are emotionally and practically supported when exiting a HP program.***

The AIS acknowledges the importance of providing transition support for elite athletes at every stage of their high performance career, including during times of non-selection and when transitioning-out of HP sport.

NSOs should consider developing processes and policies that provide guidance to both HP staff and categorised athletes around the management and delivery of a supported transition-out of the HP program.



# APPENDIX 1 – AIS ATHLETE RELOCATION GUIDELINES

## 1. Athlete Readiness

AW&E managers should meet with athletes (and their family if the athlete is under 18) to assess and support an athlete to be practically and emotionally ready for relocation. AW&E Managers are encouraged to proactively offer their support and lessons learned from prior relocations, to help prepare athletes for their individual relocation needs. Where the relocation is from a NIN to a NSO program, a meeting with the NIN AW&E provider may provide a helpful starting point.

The *Athlete Relocation Guide* and *Athlete Questionnaire* are resources that AW&E managers may find useful for information-gathering purposes during this phase (Appendix 2).

### Areas for consideration

1.	Familiarity with HP program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the athlete familiar with the new DTE and surrounding location? Is a familiarisation visit required? If so, who will be financially responsible?</li> <li>Does the athlete have knowledge in relation to the day-to-day expectations of the HP program? How do they anticipate managing these expectations?</li> <li>How committed is the athlete to meeting these expectations?</li> </ul>
2.	Independent living skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the athlete lived out of home before?</li> <li>Is the athlete over 18? If not, what considerations must be taken into account for minors?</li> <li>Does the athlete have skills and experience in matters of basic self-care and self-sufficiency? Do they have adequate nutritional knowledge? (Have they ever shopped, cooked, and cleaned for themselves?)</li> <li>Has the athlete ever been responsible for paying bills? Has the athlete ever prepared and followed a budget? (Done a grocery shop? Laundered their own clothes?)</li> </ul>
3.	Emotional readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected resilience: is the athlete mentally equipped for a significant relocation? (Tools are commercially available to sports to help with relocation readiness screening, if required).</li> <li>Social skills: is it anticipated that the athlete will be able to interpersonally connect with new people? Are their communication skills adequate, or is this an area that requires development?</li> <li>Knowledge of the DTE: is the athlete familiar with other athletes and coaches in the new DTE? Do they know who is going to be there? Are there any existing interpersonal issues?</li> </ul>
4.	Cultural considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any cultural, religious, or language-barrier considerations pertinent to the athlete that should be considered prior to the move?</li> <li>Diversity: is the new DTE equipped to deal with any diversity or inclusion issues as relevant?</li> </ul>
5.	Practicalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there any medical, injury, or mental health concerns where management needs to be transferred?</li> <li>Athlete equipment: where will it be stored? How will it be transported?</li> </ul>



- Other practical considerations to consider (Can the athlete drive? Do they have a car or need public transport? Is the athlete currently studying? If the athlete is currently studying are there any cross-institutional requirements that need to be investigated and requested? Is a transfer possible?)
- Has the athlete ever worked before? Will they be required to work in the new location? Do they have a resume? (Does the athlete work with a national employer? Can they continue with employment but change locations or work flexibly or remotely? Will they need temporary employment arranged? Can they take leave without pay with their current employer? What notice do they need to give a current employer?)
- Are trips back home expected or arranged? (Where possible, trips back home should be negotiated prior to relocating or very early in the relocation process. This should include the number and timing of trips, and who will be financially responsible. Having a planned trip back home is likely to give the relocating athlete something to look forward to, and assist with feelings of homesickness)

## 2. Communication

The relocation process will be a more positive experience for athletes and their families when communication is timely, transparent, and accessible. It is imperative that the primary service provider (NIN or NSO AW&E) is clearly nominated to avoid communication overlaps or miscommunications.

In some case, a relocation may involve an athlete moving to join a team or program for the first time. However in many cases a relocation will be a hand-over of a pathway athlete in a NIN to the NSO's HP program. In these circumstances it is important for the NSO to communicate with the providers in the NIN that already have an established relationship with the athlete, to ensure a smooth provider transition.

As a measure of best practice, NSOs should prepare a relocation contract/offer that details: support services, financial obligations, HP expectations, emergency contacts, support personnel, codes of conduct, and any other relevant details that will assist the athlete to understand their rights and responsibilities within the HP program. Establishing sound communication pathways will help to support the relocation process and experience.

### *Areas for consideration*

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| 1. | Service provider       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is the primary service provider? Is the athlete aware of who the primary service provider is?</li> <li>• Are other service providers clearly mapped out?</li> <li>• Is the athlete currently accessing any AIS services (MHRN or CPRN for example) that may need to be considered and transferred?</li> </ul>   |
| 2. | Communication pathways | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the athlete been provided with contact details for all relevant coaches, service providers, and fellow athletes within the HP program?</li> <li>• What are the appropriate communication pathways for athletes if they have a question or concern?</li> <li>• Are there clear communication guidelines and/or pathways in place for parents and/or partners?</li> <li>• How is ongoing communication managed between the NSO and parents? How do parents access information relating to the athlete and/or the sport (for example, competition dates)? Who manages this?</li> <li>• Is there a parents and partners network?</li> </ul> |



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| 3.     Contracts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the athlete been briefed around all relevant and applicable codes of conduct?</li> <li>• What support services are available to athletes? (For example: AW&amp;E, MHRN, Physiotherapy, Strength &amp; Conditioning, Psychology, Doctor, etc.)</li> <li>• Who is responsible for trips back home, both financially and in terms of timing?</li> </ul> |
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### 3. Finances

Financial considerations should be reviewed by the NSO and the relocating athlete, with all relevant financial obligations clearly communicated in the relocation agreement. Athletes should be assisted to explore the costs associated with relocating and how they intend to support themselves once they have relocated.

#### *Areas for consideration*

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| 1.     Financial support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is financially responsible for the logistics of the relocation (for example: flights, temporary accommodation, transport to and from airports, removalist costs, etc.)?</li> <li>• Is the relocation from or to a NIN program? If so, is NIN support available?</li> <li>• Is the move temporary or permanent? Does this affect the level of NSO financial support offered?</li> </ul> |
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| 2.     Travel | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who is responsible for costs associated with travel for competition?</li> <li>• Are trips home available and who will be financially responsible for flights/transport?</li> </ul> |
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| 3.     Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any relevant grants or funding that the athlete can access? Is the athlete eligible for any scholarships?</li> <li>• Are there any other sport-related costs associated with the move? If so, who is responsible?</li> <li>• Has the athlete prepared a budget? How much money will they need per week?</li> <li>• Will the athlete require a job? Will they have enough time for work if also training and studying?</li> </ul> |
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## 4. Housing & Transport

Housing requirements differ considerably by NSO, HP program, and individual athlete needs. Regarding housing and transport, it is recommended that NSOs provide specific details around any assistance available to athletes in the relocation agreement.

### *Areas for consideration*

1.	Options and practicalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When will the move take place and how will the athlete get to the new location?</li> <li>• Does the NSO have accommodation available? Where will the athlete be spending their first night? Does the NSO provide short-term accommodation for when the athlete first arrives?</li> <li>• Does the athlete have friends, teammates, or family that they would like to stay with? Is staying with a host family an option?</li> <li>• Does the NSO have connections with local real estate agents that may be able to help?</li> <li>• Has the athlete rented before? Will they need reference letters and character support?</li> </ul>
2.	Athlete needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How long is the relocation for?</li> <li>• What sort of accommodation is the athlete looking for? What are their expectations?</li> <li>• What is the athlete's accommodation budget?</li> <li>• What location would be most suitable? Does accommodation need to be close to University, training, work?</li> <li>• Does the athlete have a car? Will they require access to public transport?</li> <li>• What household goods will the athlete need? What household goods will they be bringing with them?</li> </ul>
3.	Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the athlete require guidance around how to source and research accommodation opportunities (rentals, share houses, flat-mates, etc.)?</li> <li>• Does the athlete require skills education around budgeting, paying rent, or paying bills?</li> <li>• Should the athlete put their name on the lease in a share house situation?</li> </ul>

## 5. Induction

Inducting athletes into the HP program is a key opportunity for the NSO to represent the organisation's culture and values.

It is important to acknowledge that relocating athletes will have many adjustments to negotiate during the first few weeks in a new location. In addition to commencing training with the HP squad, they may also start studying at a new university or school, begin a new job, and/or be settling into a new home environment. The transition is likely to be physically and emotionally exhausting, and to require ongoing support, communication, and monitoring to ensure that challenges do not become overwhelming.

### *Areas for consideration*

1.	DTE induction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When will the athlete be inducted? How will it be done and who will be involved?</li> </ul>
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- Does the athlete require a 'buddy' to assist with their transition into the squad and HP environment?
- What does the first week look like? Is the athlete expected to move immediately into a full training program, or are they able to transition-in more gradually? Has this option been discussed with the HPD?

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2. Other induction considerations
- How does the athlete access information around training times, locations, and updates, etc.? Has the athlete been added to email lists, group chats, or social media groups that will enable them to access this information?
  - Does the athlete know who to approach if they have any questions or concerns?
  - Is the AW&E manager liaising with relevant HP staff in relation to the athlete's transition-in to the HP environment? Has the coach been educated in terms of signs to look for when athletes may be experiencing difficulties (for example: changes in mood, behaviour, performance, etc.)?
  - Are there scheduled AW&E review meetings post-relocation?
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## 6. Career & Education

Many athletes will already be studying or working, but may not be aware of the options and support available to them when relocating.

The AW&E manager should provide relevant information, guidance, and support that enables the athlete to make informed decisions in relation to their career and education. Where the relocation is from a NIN program, a review of the work done between the NIN and the athlete so far, and how it may be continued, revised or changed as needed should be considered.

### *Areas for consideration*

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1. Education
- Is the athlete currently studying? At what level and in what capacity?
  - Does the relocation need to be planned around existing educational commitments (for example: end of semester exams, completing Year 12)?
  - Does the athlete plan to study in the new location? Have they fully explored their options around doing so, and what institutions provide equivalent course standings?
  - If currently enrolled at university or TAFE, is the athlete in contact with the relevant Elite Athlete Student Coordinator?
  - If planning to enrol at a new university or TAFE, does the athlete need to apply for credit for courses/subjects already completed? How early does this need to occur? What paperwork is required?
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2. Employment
- Is the athlete currently working? In what capacity?
  - Will they require work in the new location?
  - Do they require additional certifications relevant to their employment (for example Working With Children Checks)?
  - Is there an NSO network, alumni network, or other resource (such as the AIS EVOLVE program) that can assist with employment?
  - Has the athlete investigated the EVOLVE program for locally based participating employers?
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| 3. Career | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the athlete have a career plan? Is this being supported alongside sport?</li> <li>• Does the athlete require career guidance? If so, is a referral to the CPRN practical and appropriate?</li> </ul> |
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## 7. Connection to community

Athletes who connect with their local community within sport and outside of sport are likely to experience greater overall wellbeing than those who do not. NSO AW&E providers can provide a basic welcome pack that includes useful community information (local supermarkets, restaurants, petrol stations, emergency services, landmarks, transport routes, etc.).

### *Areas for consideration*

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|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. Social connection        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will the athlete be welcomed into the HP environment and are there opportunities in place for the athlete to get to know teammates on a social level?</li> <li>• Is the athlete intending to work, volunteer, or study when they relocate?</li> <li>• Does the athlete know where the local post office is? The closest supermarket? The handy local café? Things to do list, places to visit, recommended activities away from the sport?</li> <li>• Are there other athletes in the area, including from other sports, they can connect with?</li> </ul> |
| <hr/>                       |   |
| 2. Engagement opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there opportunities for the athlete to engage with the wider community using their athlete status as a platform?</li> <li>• Is the athlete interested in the NSO's or AIS' Community Engagement opportunities?</li> </ul>  |
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## 8. Exiting

When an athlete has relocated to be part of a HP program, exiting may pose added complications if relevant guidelines and processes are not in place. NSOs should develop transition-out guidelines that detail processes for managing an athlete's exit from a HP program.

Exit plan guidelines should be attached to any relocation agreement in order that any risks and/or areas of negotiation are clear (for example: for how long is the athlete financially supported, if at all, after exiting? For how long is service access/provision available and what are the details around this?).

A successful and effective transition-out plan may include:

- Athlete exit interviews with all relevant service providers (for example: HP Director, Head Coach, AW&E provider, Doctor, Physiotherapist, Psychologist, Strength & Conditioning, etc.)
- Action planning and follow-up
- Referrals
- Guidance around financial obligations and/or responsibilities.



### *Areas for consideration*

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| 1.    | Short term immediate considerations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the exit sudden or planned? Has family support been considered?</li> <li>• Does the athlete wish to relocate home or remain in the current location?</li> <li>• What are the athlete's immediate needs? Are they studying or working? Where do they intend to live?</li> <li>• Who is financially responsible for travel home? Was this clarified in the initial contract?</li> <li>• Will the athlete be exiting back into a NIN (or another NIN) program? Has handover between the NSO and the NIN been discussed?</li> <li>• Is the athlete continuing with the sport, or is it a complete exit? Is the athlete simply taking a break and may attempt to return, or is the exit more permanent in nature?</li> </ul> |
| <hr/> |                                     |   |
| 2.    | Longer term considerations          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a physical injury that requires ongoing management? Who is financially responsible?</li> <li>• Are there mental health concerns that require ongoing management or MHRN referral?</li> <li>• Does the athlete have a career plan? Do they require career counselling or CPRN referral?</li> <li>• Who will follow up with the athlete in the post-exit phase? How frequently will follow-up occur?</li> </ul>   |
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## APPENDIX 2 – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following optional resources may assist with the planning and review of individual athlete relocations. Contact the AIS People Development & Wellbeing team for access to this material:

- Athlete Welcome Letter
- Guardian Welcome Letter
- Athlete Welcome Pack
- NIN AW&E Questionnaire
- Athlete Questionnaire
- Parent/Guardian Questionnaire
- Relocation Support Process
- Relocation Success Letter
- Athlete Feedback Survey
- Wellbeing Survey
- Screening Tools
- Relocation Agreement Template





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