

## PROPOSAL OF NEW COMPETITIVE PATHWAY

The figure below (Fig.1) is a representation of the competitive pathway currently operating in New Zealand.

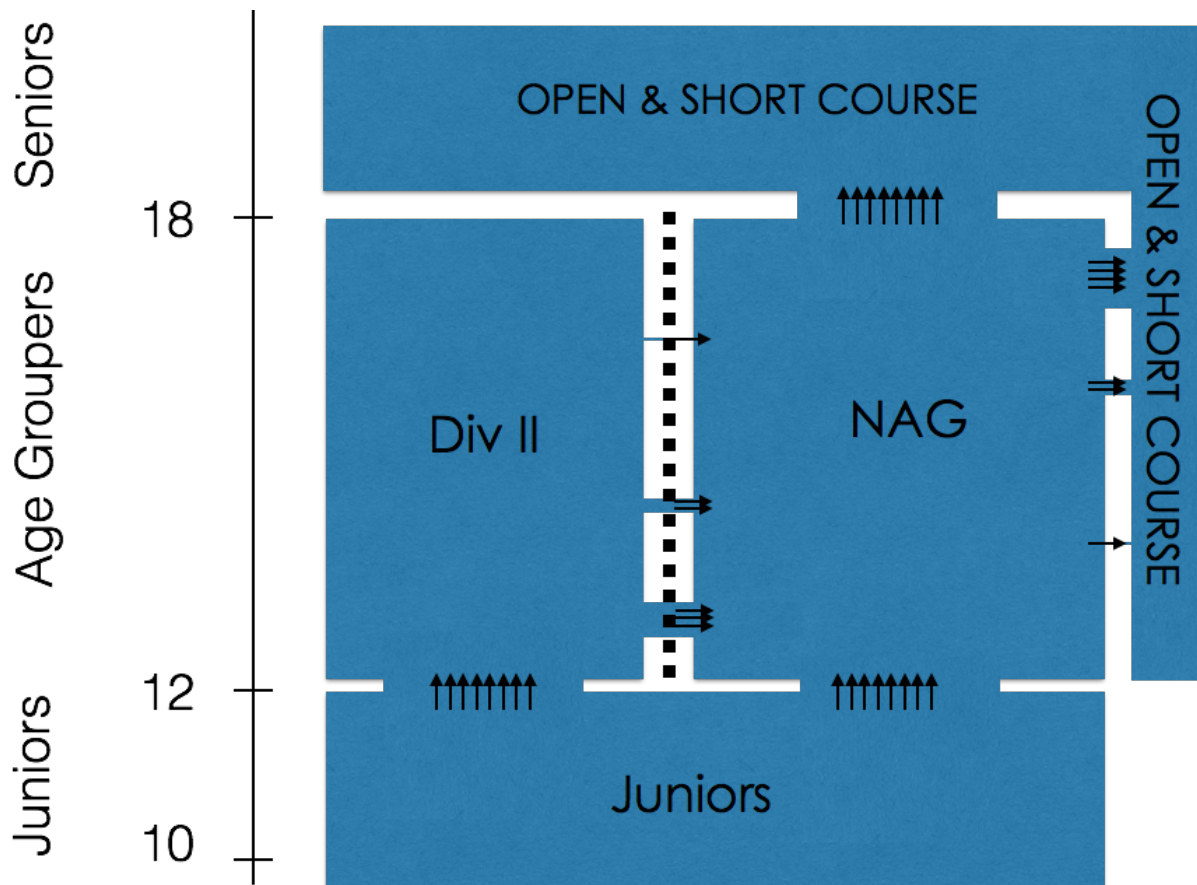


Fig 1. Representation of the current Swimming NZ Competitive Pathway

This pathway has some relevant characteristics:

1. The breakdown after the age of 13 in two separated pathways based on performance.
2. The absence of gender-related differences
3. An almost identical competition format for the whole pathway (Junior to Open)



It's very well accepted that the rate of maturation varies considerably among individuals and that differences of 1-2 years in the biological age are relatively common. It is also accepted that performance before the age of maturation has a strong relationship with the biological age of the swimmers. Therefore, separating swimmers according with performance from the age of 13 does not seem to be the best way to conduct our swimmers along the competitive pathway.

The rate of physical development is different for males and females and so is the age at which both genders achieve maturation. The best NZ female swimmers at the age of 13 are around 125 FINA points above their male counterparts and it takes the boys around 2 years to bridge that gap.

It's also very well documented that female swimmers achieve their full athletic potential on average around two years before males.

Those evidences have prompted most of the leading swimming nations to consider some gender related differences on their competitive pathway. From the US to Europe female swimmers are 1-2 years ahead of males swimming wise with the aim of giving consideration to their accelerated rate of development.

The adaptation of the format of the different competitions to the characteristics of the swimmers and their stage of development has not been given enough consideration on the NZ competitive pathway.

From competing long course at Juniors, which doesn't seem to fit very well with that stage, to keeping swimmers competing within their own age until they are seniors, it is clear that the format of the meets for Juniors, Age Groupers and Youth swimmers can be greatly improved.

With the aim of improving the pathway in which NZ swimmers evolve SNZ is proposing a new competitive pathway which overview is represented on the figure below (Fig. 2)



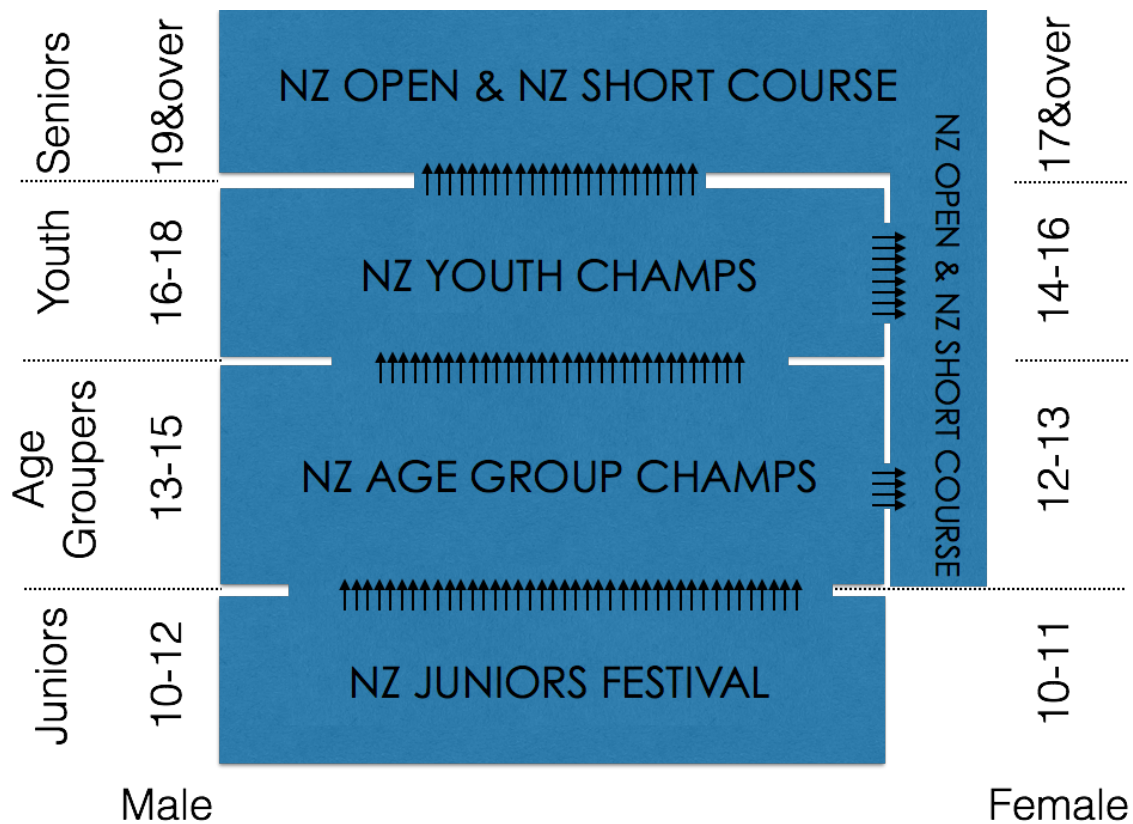


Fig 2. Representation of the proposed Swimming NZ Competitive Pathway

The main characteristics of the new competitive pathway would be the following:

1. The pathway would be broken down on ages rather than performance. National Age Group and National Youth Championships would replace the current NAG and Div II.
2. Males and females flow along the pathway would be slightly different.
3. The format of the three National competitions: NZ Junior Festival, NZ National Age Group Championships and NZ Youth Championships would need to undergo significant changes to adapt them to suit the different stages of gender development.



## NZ JUNIORS FESTIVAL

- Male 10 to 12, Female 10 and 11
- Short course
- Key Qualifying events 100/200IM as the initial qualification requirement
- Timed finals
- Programme and qualifying times would be revised according with the new format
- Recognition to swimmers performing across different strokes and distances (similar to the take your marks rankings) would be applied.

## NZ AGE GROUP CHAMPIONSHPS

- Male 13 to 15, Female 12 and 13
- Long course
- Olympic and distance non Olympic events
- Heats and finals except for 400, 800 and 1500 that would be timed finals
- 1 final and 1 podium per event/age

## NZ YOUTH CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Male 16 to 18, Female 14 to 16
- Long course
- Olympic and distance non Olympic events
- Heats and finals except for 800 and 1500 that would be timed finals.
- A,B and C finals (ages combined)
- 1 podium per event

## NZ SHORT COURSE CHMPIONHIPS

- Qualifying times for three categories:
  - o Age Group
  - o Youth
  - o Senior
- Olympic and non Olympic events
- Heats and finals except for 800 and 1500 that would be timed finals



- One final for Age Group and two finals (A and B) for Youth and Senior (combined).

#### NZ OPEN CHMPIONHIPS

- 4 days format except on Olympic years (6 days)
- Olympic and non Olympic events
- Heats and A and B finals except for 800 and 1500 that would be timed finals.

