

Snowboarder Nate Johnstone has been awarded a professional contract from the OWIA

# To Pyeongchang and beyond...



Following the success of the 2014 Winter Olympic Games, and leading into the quadrennial toward the 2018 Games, the NSWIS and its program partners, including the Olympic Winter Institute of Australia [OWIA] and Ski and Snowboard Australia [SSA], have reviewed the nation's winter sport structure to improve on the results in Russia at future editions of the Games.

"At the end of each Olympic cycle we review our sport programs to determine what our strengths were, what our weaknesses were and where we need to improve ahead of the next Games," said OWIA Chief Executive Officer Geoff Lipshut.

"With the proper monitoring and review process, we believe that the new structure we've devised in consultation with a number of organisations, including the NSWIS, is more contemporary and relevant in having an extremely positive impact on the development of our athletes in the lead up to Pyeongchang 2018."

Stemming from the most recent review, the NSWIS will take on an increased national role, as the primary Institute partner, in the delivery of Australia's Winning Edge 'tier one' foundation sport programs throughout the next Olympic cycle. Included in the foundation sports are freestyle moguls and snowboard cross, as well as ski slopestyle, ski half-pipe, snowboard half-pipe and snowboard slopestyle, which are all grouped together as 'Park and Pipe'.

A total of 45 NSWIS scholarships will be offered to elite Australian athletes who meet the criteria across the Winter Sports Program, including the foundation sports, ski cross and a small number of individual scholarships that cover disciplines such as biathlon, cross country and alpine skiing.

The key to the successful partnership is the shared sense of purpose between the program partners. Consisting of the NSWIS, OWIA, SSA and NSW Snowsports, as well as Jindabyne Sport

and Recreation Centre, Perisher and Thredbo, all parties are invested in deepening Australia's winter sports talent pool for future gain.

"The revised structure means we are running a truly a collaborative program," said Kim Crane, Manager of High Performance Sport & Excellence at the NSWIS.

"The operational and servicing responsibilities are shared by the NSWIS, OWIA and SSA, from funding to coaches and service staff employment, and managing athlete programs,

"Venue support is obviously a huge component of the program and we have outstanding resources in that area.

"During the Australian winter the primary NSWIS base is located at Jindabyne Sport and Recreation Centre, with the athletes on snow training at both Thredbo and Perisher, which put huge amounts of time and resource into snowmaking, building and shaping courses, providing access to the slopes and other general support services so our athletes can continue to train and compete."

The newly established 'Park and Pipe' component of the NSWIS Program, underpins a new initiative from the OWIA that sees professional contracts awarded to targeted athletes in these disciplines.

Although still in its infancy, a number of snowboarders and snowboard coaches from the new Park and Pipe Program were recently involved in a NSWIS/SSA Performance camp

with Bud Keene, former coach of Olympic snowboard champion Shaun White. Held at Perisher, the camp brought together seasoned riders such as Nate Johnstone and Kent Callister with a cast of rising stars on the slopes who all worked on improving their on and off snow skills, while building a strong team culture within athletes who will likely spend time together on tour overseas.

Crane said the success of the first camp is a positive result, and the new structure will continue to develop under the AWE strategy.

"Initiatives such as the Park and Pipe Performance camp are important for the athletes because they allow the riders to bond and train as a group, but also important for us and our program partners including the OWIA and SSA because we get firsthand knowledge of what our athletes and coaches need to keep developing their skills.

"Naturally we review these camps and initiatives with the OWIA and the rest of the program partners, and because of the collaborative nature of the new structure we are able to get greater input from all parties to determine where we need to improve to make sure our winter sport athletes are the best in the world.

"As an organisation the NSWIS is excited that we're able to play such a key part in Australia's winter sport future, and we are looking forward to seeing the results."