

Paddle Australia continues to monitor and assess the global COVID-19 pandemic both domestically and internationally. With the domestic season coming to an end, there is increased attention on the potential for attending international competitions. Paddle Australia has already made the difficult decision not to send national teams to the following events:

- ICF Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe World Cups 1 and 2, May 2021
- ICF Junior and U23 Canoe Slalom World Championships, July 2021

This Position Statement provides an update regarding the support of national teams to international competitions between now and the end of 2021.

Consideration has been given to a range of factors including, but not limited to, the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on:

- Australian Government travel restrictions
- local government lockdown restrictions of the destination city/country
- the Covid-19 cases globally and in particular the locations being visited
- the ability to access travel and in particular return home to Australia with restrictions in quotas, flight availability and the requirement to quarantine
- the cost of travel and quarantine
- the availability and scope of international travel insurance.

Further, specifically related to sending teams to International ICF events, the following additional issues have been considered:

- ability to vaccinate the team/athlete in adequate time prior to departure (based on the Australian Government Covid-19 Vaccination Program)
- the age of the group travelling (U18s present particular challenges, especially if isolation/quarantine requirements are in place)
- the size of the group travelling (larger the group = larger the risks)
- access to regular and valid Covid-19 testing regimes
- the risks associated with teams being stuck overseas and unable to obtain a flight home due to the entry restrictions within Australia.
- the ICF Covid-Safe Plan for each event
- availability and willingness of staff to travel
- Paddle Australia's duty of care towards athletes and staff
- the additional cost of travel, including increased flight costs, the need for single rooms, covid testing and quarantine expenses.

Underpinning all of these considerations is Paddle Australia's utmost priority of ensuring the health and safety of all athletes and staff.

NATIONAL TEAM TRAVEL

There is currently a strict 'Do Not Travel' advisory from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) on all overseas travel from Australia (with the exception of NZ). Australian citizens cannot leave Australia without an exemption from DFAT. Additionally, with the cap on international arrivals and limited quarantine places in each state and territory, athletes and staff face the risk of being overseas for extended periods.

Given it is unlikely that these restrictions will change in the foreseeable future, and based on an assessment of all of the above challenges, Paddle Australia has made the difficult decision that it will not be conducting national team tours outside of Australia in 2021 with the following possible exceptions:

Olympic / Paralympic Teams

Paddle Australia has made an exception for the Canoe Slalom and Sprint Olympic and Paralympic Teams, which are travelling under the management of the Australian Olympic Committee and Paralympics Australia, to attend the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, including attending pre-Games competitions and/or training camps.

The Olympic / Paralympic Teams are in a unique position of receiving priority vaccinations, have Australian Government travel exemptions approved through the Australian Olympic Committee and Paralympics Australia, and will be operating under very strict Covid-Safe protocols including extensive Covid-19 testing regimes.

Trans-Tasman Tours

Providing the current Government endorsed travel bubble remains in place between the two countries, Paddle Australia will consider supporting tours to New Zealand. Additional duty of care requirements (including the potential need for parents of U18 athletes to accompany their child) will be required, in case circumstances change and unexpected quarantine requirements are enforced.

With the exception of the above, Paddle Australia will not be sending any teams overseas to attend competitions. This decision affects the following teams including canoe slalom, canoe sprint and paracanoe:

- ICF Canoe Sprint and Paracanoe World Cup 1 and 2, May 2021 (*already completed*)
- ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups 1 and 2, June 2021
- ICF Junior and U23 Canoe Slalom World Championships, July 2021
- ICF Junior and U23 Canoe Sprint World Championships, September 2021
- ICF Canoe Slalom World Cups 3 and 4 and World Championships, September 2021
- ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships, September 2021

Paddle Australia is intending on conducting alternate national development opportunities across canoe slalom and canoe sprint later this year. More details will follow in relation to each discipline.

INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS:

It is understood that certain athletes may have unique circumstances where they are in a position to gain exemption to travel and support themselves to be able to attend World Cup or World Championship international competitions. If selected senior team/squad athletes are in a position to compete in international World Cup/Championship competition(s), without relying on Paddle Australia to provide travel exemptions or financial support, then Paddle Australia will consider supporting those athletes to enter the events.

**Position Statement:
International Travel & Touring
Teams**

26/05/2021

Athletes are encouraged to fully understand the risks involved including the following:

- ability of the athlete to obtain a travel exemption at both their departure and arrival destinations
- whether the athlete is vaccinated
- ability to access appropriate level of International travel insurance (that covers Covid-19 related medical concerns)
- individual risk assessment on planned travel activity (including access to medical care if required, accommodation arrangements, transport considerations)
- ability to secure a return flight into Australia given the limited flight availability

Currently, with the exception of the Olympic/Paralympic teams and any potential trans-Tasman tours, Paddle Australia is not committing any staff to travel internationally and will not be providing funding for individuals to travel to these events.

If any athlete is able to attend ICF events based on these circumstances, they will be required to sign the Paddle Australia International Travel Informed Consent Form. For clarity, for any ICF event, an athlete must be entered by Paddle Australia and compete representing Australia. Nevertheless, this does NOT constitute a National Team and the athlete is solely responsible for their own support and attends at their own risk.

Any National Senior Team athlete must submit an expression of interest to travel and compete internationally approximately 12 weeks prior to the competition.

Paddle Australia will continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates when required.

PJ – 26th May 2021