

FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework

A systems and best practice approach for empowering and supporting NSW citizens through life-long active living, recreation and sport.



The **FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Development Framework** developed by the NSW Office of Sport is an integrated and progressive framework and whole of system approach:

- providing a strategic and practical framework for NSW and the sporting active recreation sector for supporting all outcomes of Physical Activity including Active Recreation, Community Sport Participation and High-Performance sport.
- empowering the participants and athletes of NSW and supporting them through their life-long journey in sport and physical activity.
- supporting stakeholders (i.e., parents, coaches, volunteers, schools, universities, clubs, sporting organisations and providers etc.) by providing best-practice guidance for each level of the developmental continuum from grass roots to podium.

FTEM NSW is directly informing and supporting current policy, strategy, practice and delivery within the NSW sport sector including the **Future Champions-Pathways to Sporting Success** strategy.

FTEM NSW is featured within the National policy recommendations **Getting Australia Active III** (see <https://preventioncentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Getting-Australia-Active-III-April-2020.pdf>).

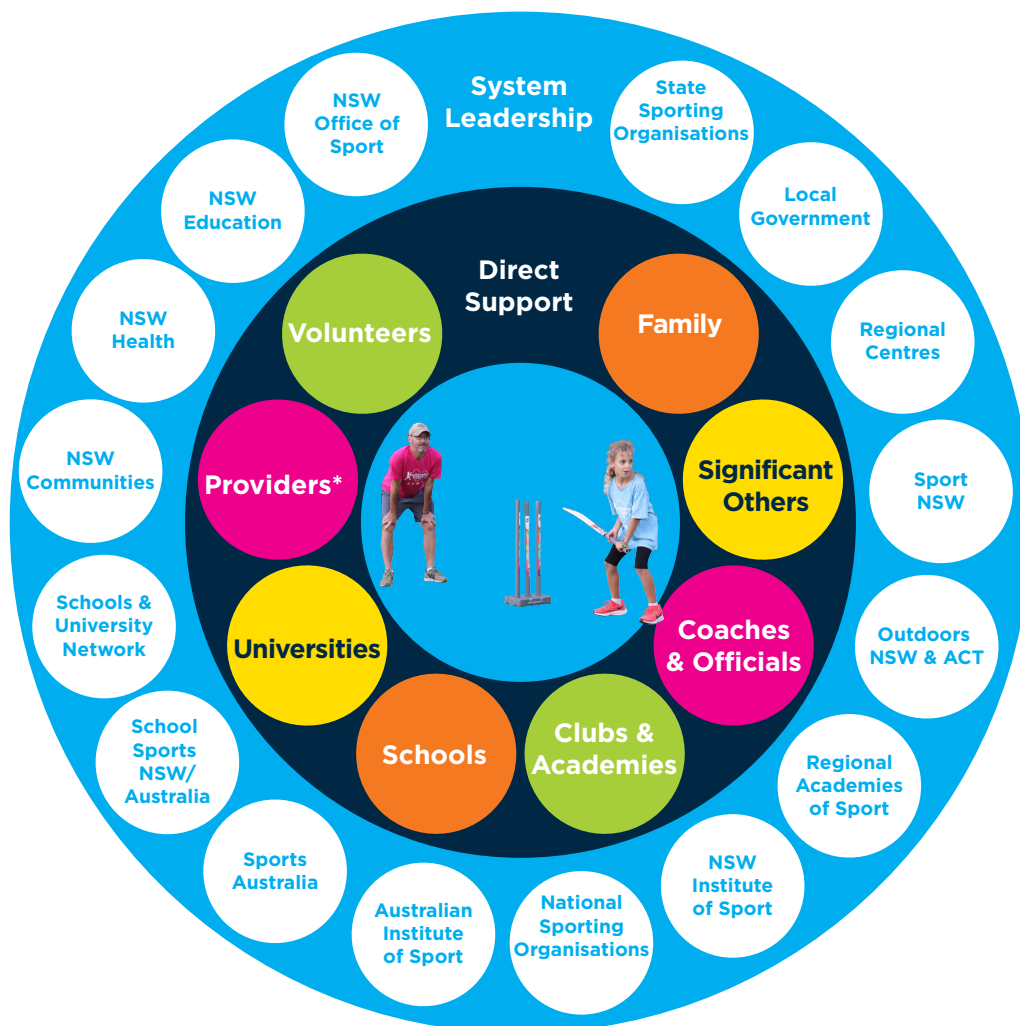
Background of FTEM

- Is informed by the original **FTEM Athlete Development Framework (Gulbin, Croser, Morley & Weissensteiner, 2013)** developed by the **Australian Institute of Sport** and utilised extensively within the Australian sports sector including a number of **National Sporting Organisations**.
- Recognised by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** as a 'viable, evidence-informed and inclusive developmental framework' within the **IOC Consensus Statement on Youth Athlete Development** (Bergeron et al., 2015)
- Is aligned with and facilitates the implementation of Sport Australia's **National Physical Literacy Framework** (see www.sportaus.gov.au/physical_literacy) through its 'whole of systems' and operational approach and its provision of guidance for all stakeholders at each level, across the life-course.

Office of Sport acknowledges that we are living and working on Aboriginal land and recognises the strength, resilience and capacity of Aboriginal people on this land. We would like to acknowledge all of the Traditional Custodians of the land and pay respect to Aboriginal Elders past and present.

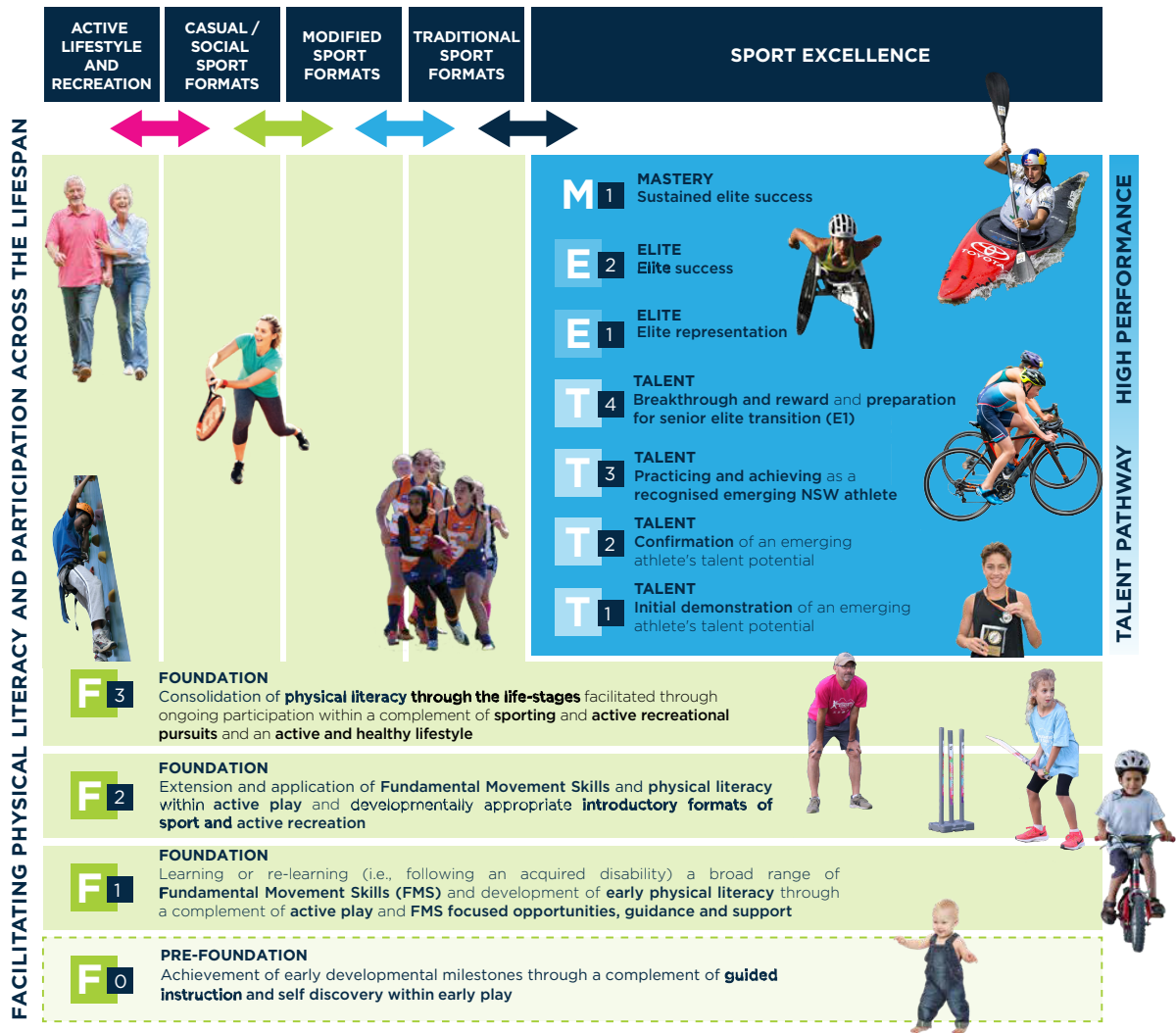


At the core of FTEM NSW, is building on the early elements of physical literacy and effectively integrating them (*the right complement at the right time*) to **support the participant's holistic development and competencies**, in and out of sport.



To adequately facilitate an individual's development at each level of **FTEM NSW** and ensure the **right support at the right time**, requires a dedicated integrated approach and effort including importantly, positive engagement and collaboration of direct support providers who are in turn, adequately supported through effective and ongoing system level leadership and support.

FTEM NSW Participant and Athlete Framework



Key Features of FTEM NSW

- Presents a 'chronology' of eleven integrated and progressive developmental levels spanning the lifespan and inclusive of all physical activity outcomes - **Active Lifestyle pursuits and Social, Recreational and High-Performance** sport.
- Provides a **logical blueprint** ensuring the right fit and progression of strategy, programs and support for participants no matter what level they are at.
- To ensure coverage of the lifespan and to ensure alignment with Sport **Australia's National Physical Literacy Framework**, FTEM NSW features an additional level in its Foundational stage, the Pre-Foundational level F0, at its base.
- Includes **imagery that is inclusive and representative of the participants and athletes of NSW** featuring sporting ambassadors Olympian Jessica Fox and Paralympian Madison de Rozario and key initiatives of the NSW Office of Sport, including its **Sport and Recreation Centres, Daughters and Dads program** and the **Duke of Edinburgh's International award**.
- Provides a **common language** for all stakeholders.
- Is **inclusive** catering for all participants no matter their motivation and goal, life-stage, demographic, capability or capacity.
- Is **not based on chronological age** but advocates a best practice approach for maximising an individual's engagement, development, progression and transition within sport and active recreation.
- Is **not linear in application**.
- Is **flexible** in application catering for **individual variability**.
- Within its **Foundational** levels, highlights the critical importance of developing **early movement foundations and physical literacy** to support positive engagement in physical activity through the life stages.
- Within its **Talent** levels, provides a logical and progressive approach to support the **effective selection, development and transition of emerging athletes**.

Unpacking the levels of FTEM NSW

The FOUNDATIONAL Levels - F0, F1, F2 and F3

The Foundational levels of FTEM NSW present a recommended chronology of levels and best practice for –

- developing Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) and Physical Literacy (PL) expressed, consolidated and supported through a complement of Sport, Active Lifestyle and Recreation for all NSW children.
- accessible participation opportunities (programs, products) across the lifespan that are a fit to the motivation, capacity, capability and commitment of the participant
- developing critical skill foundations (technical, tactical, psychological, social) to support engaging and fulfilling sport experiences for all participants
- progression of gifted athletes into the Talent Pathway and future High Performance

FOUNDATION LEVEL & FOCUS

LEVEL DESCRIPTION & INTENT

Foundation 3

Consolidation of physical literacy through the life-stages facilitated through ongoing participation within a complement of sporting and active recreational pursuits and an active and healthy lifestyle.



The participant is consolidating their Physical Literacy and required knowledge structures applying them effectively through the life-stages within a complement of –

- an active lifestyle and engagement within recreational pursuits.
- casual/social, modified (age and capability appropriate) and traditional formats of organised sport.
- unorganised formats of sport and recreational activity.
- diverse play experiences.

For gifted athletes, consolidation of their holistic sport-specific skills, expressed through commitment to learning within training and competition, sampling a broad range of sport, recreation and play and specialising later, provides solid foundations for future high performance. Research shows that early specialisation (limiting participation to one sport or activity) does not correlate with long term high performance in most cases.

Approximate Age Range - YOUTH 12-18 years; ADULT >18-65 years; SENIORS > 65 years

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment

Foundation 2

Extension and application of Fundamental Movement Skills and physical literacy within active play and developmentally appropriate introductory formats of sport and active recreation.



The participant is applying and extending their FMS and early Physical Literacy through –

- sampling age and developmentally appropriate organised introductory formats of sport and recreational activity.
- diverse unorganised Active Play experiences within the home, outdoors and school environment.
- an active lifestyle and enjoyment of recreational pursuits.

Approximate Age Range - Generally, 8 to 11 years for the majority of participants but could be any age for individuals with an acquired disability or youth/adults being introduced to a sport or recreational activity for the first time.

Physical Literacy Phase - Acquisition and Accumulation

Foundation 1

Learning or re-learning (i.e., following an acquired disability) a broad range of Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) and development of early physical literacy through a complement of active play and FMS focused opportunities, guidance and support.



The participant is learning or re-learning (i.e., child, teenager or adult following an acquired disability) a broad complement of Fundamental Movement skills (FMS) including locomotor, object control, balance, aquatic and acrobatic skills. This is achieved through a complement of –

- sampling best-practice, evidence informed organised programs that directly support FMS development and incorporate guided instruction to facilitate learning and application.
- fun, positive engagement in diverse, unorganised Active Play experiences within the home, outdoors and school environment.
- an active lifestyle and enjoyment of recreational pursuits.

Approximate Age Range - Generally 4 to 7/8 years but for individuals with an acquired disability it could be any age.

Physical Literacy Phase - Foundation & Exploration

Pre-Foundation F0
Achievement of early developmental milestones through a complement of guided instruction and self discovery within early play.



A baby/ toddler/young child is achieving their early motor milestones (e.g., crawling, learning to sit and stand, learning to walk, run, push and pull, grasping and intercepting objects etc.) through guided and facilitated self- discovery and play.

Approximate Age Range - 0 to 2-3 years

Physical Literacy Phase - Pre-Foundational

The TALENT Levels - T1/T2, T3 & T4

The Talent levels of FTEM NSW present a recommended chronology of strategy and best practice to contribute to the sustainable health of the NSW Talent Pipeline ensuring -

- A more aligned and effective approach to talent selection so that emerging athletes across NSW that have future high-performance potential and aspirations, have equitable opportunity to enter the talent pathway
- Dedicated educational, coaching, integrated service, vocational and well-being support and progressive competitive opportunity to empower recognised pre-elite athletes across NSW to develop and refine their skills and strategies in and out of sport
- Effective and aligned transitional strategies including competitive opportunity and exposure to adequately prepare and support the transition of pre-elite athletes to an elite level and beyond.

TALENT LEVEL AND FOCUS

LEVEL DESCRIPTION AND INTENT

Talent 4

Breakthrough and reward and preparation for senior elite transition (E1)

Clear performance benchmarks signaling readiness for transition into senior elite level and dedicated strategy and support to facilitate this transition.

The pre-elite athlete achieves a significant breakthrough and is recognised formally by their respective SSO/NSO, SSOD/NSOD as a prospective elite athlete and is directly assisted in their transition to the elite ranks (e.g., for prioritized Olympic and Paralympic sports an NSWIS or NSO Scholarship/funding; for a Professional sport being a recipient of a rookie contract within a top tier state squad or professional team etc.). They are commonly considered a 'categorised athlete' in line with their NSO/NSOD and may receive additional monetary and service support (e.g., dAIS payments). Holistic and integrated support is provided to the athlete as listed for the T3 level as well as dedicated and individualised education, preparation and management of the pre-elite to support their pending transition to the elite level through:

- an aligned and agreed understanding of potential barriers and facilitators.
- implementation of proactive strategies to mediate the transition.

Approximate Age Range - Variable

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment

Talent 3

Practicing and achieving as a recognised emerging NSW athlete

A broad developmental level coordinated through Deliberate Programming (Could span 1 to 6+ years).

The identified and confirmed pre-elite athlete is formally recognised and supported by their respective SSO/SSOD and in some cases, their NSO/NSO (i.e., representation with a National Training Youth squad/team) and are committed to achieving higher levels of sport performance.

They are embedded within recognised and dedicated pre-elite programs featuring the right fit of individual case management and effective integration of collaborative support partners (e.g., State Sporting Organizations (SSO and SSOD), Regional Academies of Sport, Developmental Academies, Schools, Universities Clubs etc.). There is a shared understanding and commitment between ALL collaborative support partners specific to ensuring the effective case management of each athlete (e.g., monitoring training and competition loads and demands, injury incidence, wellbeing etc.) and where the right fit of competition opportunity and progression is provided to the athlete.

Within this level, the coordination and quality of integrated support through a dedicated and transparent deliberate programming approach is driven by transparent and shared Individual Athlete Development/Performance Plans (IAPP) and informed by ongoing athlete monitoring, to maximise and reduce potential burnout, injury, underachievement and dropout.

Approximate Age Range - Variable

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment



Talent 2

Confirmation of an emerging athlete's talent potential.



Complementary talent selection events and processes.

Aspiring athletes identified within T1, are immersed into a formalised, observational trial period within their daily training environment (e.g., 1-3 months) AND/ OR attend dedicated Talent confirmation camps/events to formally CONFIRM their readiness and suitability to progress to the T3 level. Emerging athletes are required to demonstrate their 'full' ATHLETIC PROFILE within both training and competitive contexts which encompass their -

- sport-specific skills (technical, perceptual & cognitive)
- psychological skills (e.g., character, motivation, commitment, learning potential, self-regulation, resilience/coping skills, self-management etc.)
- social/emotional skills and sport-life balance
- sporting smarts (knowledge structures)
- physical literacy and neuromuscular robustness
- physiological capacity
- coachability and adaptability

An athlete's biological maturational status, developmental history and training age is formally recognised and directly informs related decisions.

Approximate Age Range - Variable

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment

Talent 1

Initial demonstration of an emerging athlete's talent potential.

The aspiring athlete initially demonstrates their talent potential and are recognised by their respective SSO/SSOD and/or regional system partner (e.g., Regional Academy of Sport etc.) after being identified -a) Within their main sport (Traditional Talent Identification) through -

- being talent spotted at a Regional or State Under-age or Club level championships/event
- attending a designated TID testing day

b) Talent spotted from within another sport (Talent Detection or Transfer) and considered to have high performance potential in the future.

Consequently, the athlete is offered an opportunity to progress to the CONFIRMATION level (T2) to verify their talent potential and readiness. An athlete's biological maturational status, developmental history and training age is formally recognised and directly informs related decisions,

Approximate Age Range - Variable

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment

The ELITE & MASTERY Levels - E1, E2 & M

The Elite and Mastery levels of FTEM NSW present a recommended chronology of strategy and best practice for -

- engaging their 'voice' - learning from their experiences and perspectives to directly inform their own case management, system level strategy and practice and provide ambassadorial leadership to motivate and empower emerging athletes and the next generations of sport participants.
- ensuring our elite athletes are well supported (domestically and internationally) through an effective individualised case-managed approach featuring the right match of interdisciplinary service support (including well-being).
- adequately preparing and supporting our elite level athletes before, during and after competing in key benchmark events.
- adequately preparing and supporting our elite athletes for life after sport.

ELITE/MASTERY LEVEL & FOCUS

LEVEL DESCRIPTION & INTENT

Mastery

Sustained Elite Success



Sustained success over multiple High-Performance cycles at the highest level of International or Professional sport.

Receives ongoing, individualised, and coordinated support coordinated through effective deliberate programming as E1 and E2 level and potential for re-invention and innovation within main sport.

A critically valuable voice and ambassador to support aligned advocacy/policy, strategy, research, practice and education.

Approximate Age Range - As competition and performance at this level is at a Senior or Open Age level, athletes supported within this level are predominately aged 18 years and over.

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment

Elite 2

Elite Success



Achievement of a medal winning performance at a peak competition such as -

- World Championships, Olympics, or Paralympics or
- Professional league or championships
- and/or individual recognition and accolades at the highest level of sport (e.g., Brownlow (AFL) or Churchill medalist (NRL)).

Receives ongoing, individualised, and coordinated support coordinated through effective deliberate programming.

A critically valuable voice and ambassador to support aligned advocacy/policy, strategy, research, practice and education.

Approximate Age Range - As competition and performance at this level is at a Senior or Open Age level, athletes supported within this level are predominately aged 18 years and over.

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment

Elite 1

Elite Representation



The high-performance athlete achieves an elite status through selection and representation at the highest level of senior international competition or professional sport. Examples include being -

- An Australian representative competing at the highest level of Olympic and Paralympic sport (e.g., Senior World Championships, Olympics, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games etc.)
- A member of a team/squad that competes at the highest level of Professional sport domestically (e.g., team member of an AFL, NRL team etc.) and/or internationally

They receive coordinated and ongoing support through an individualised and effective deliberate programming approach which includes -

- accessibility to facilitative daily training environments and innovative, best practice coaching support
- individualised athlete case management through effective and accessible interdisciplinary service support directly informed by their athlete profile and status and needs
- guidance and support prior, during and following early senior elite competition experiences
- ongoing support and management of their dual career (i.e., vocational goals and demands)
- ongoing support and management specific to maintaining positive wellbeing and sport-life balance
- support and management of potential High-Performance stressors
- education and support of significant others (spouse, family etc.)

Are a critical voice and ambassador to support aligned advocacy/policy, strategy, practice and education.

Approximate Age Range - As competition and performance at this level is at a Senior or Open Age level, athletes supported within this level are predominately aged 18 years and over.

Physical Literacy Phase - Consolidation & Mastery, Transfer & Empowerment



Related FTEM Readings

- Bergeron, M. F., Mountjoy, M., Armstrong, N., Chia, M., Côté, J., Emery, C. A., Faigenbaum, A., ...Engebretsen, L. (2015). International Olympic Committee consensus statement on youth athletic development. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 49, pp. 843-851.
- Gulbin, J. P., & Weissensteiner, J. R. (2013). Functional sport expertise systems. In D. Farrow, J. Baker & C. MacMahon (eds), *Developing sport expertise: Researchers and coaches put theory into practice* (2nd ed., pp. 45-67). London: Routledge.
- Gulbin, J. P., Croser, M. J., Morley, E., & Weissensteiner, J. R. (2013). An integrated framework for the optimisation of sport and athlete development: A practitioner approach. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 31, pp. 1319-31.
- Gulbin, J. P., Weissensteiner, J. R., Oldenzel, K., & Gagné, F. (2013). Patterns of performance development in elite athletes. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 13, 6, pp. 605-614.
- Weissensteiner, J.R. (2017 a). Method in the madness - working towards a viable 'paradigm' for better understanding and supporting the athlete pathway. In J. Baker, S. Cobley, J. Schorer, & N. Wattie (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of talent identification and development in sport* Routledge handbook of talent identification and development in sport: Milton Park: Routledge, pp. 133-149.
- Weissensteiner, J.R. (2017 b). How contemporary international perspectives have consolidated a best-practice approach for identifying and developing sporting talent. In J. Baker, S. Cobley, J. Schorer & N. Wattie (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of talent identification and development in sport* Routledge handbook of talent identification and development in sport: Milton Park: Routledge, pp. 51-68.

Needing more information ?

- To access detailed information on the background of FTEM NSW and each of it's levels and key system level considerations, please visit our dedicate webpage <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/ftem-nsw>
- To access detailed guidance and tips for Instructors and Coaches, please visit our dedicated webpage <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/coaches>
- To access supportive case studies and resources for stakeholders please go to our dedicated webpages <https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/pathways-and-development/resources-and-tools>
- For advice specific to implementing FTEM NSW, please email us at futurechampions@sport.nsw.gov.au

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