

# Independent Steering Committee Appointments Panel



## Response to feedback: Steering Committee Terms of Reference and Role Descriptions

The terms of reference and role descriptions for the Gymnastics New Zealand Steering Committee (Steering Committee) have been finalised after a review of feedback received from the gymnastics community and key stakeholders following consultation on draft documents.

The independent Steering Committee Appointments Panel (SCAP) will now seek [expressions of interest](#) to join the Steering Committee and aim to have it established by the end of this year. SCAP will promote the opportunities widely, and hope to have a wide range of applicants, including from current and former members of our gymnastics community.

### Approach to Consultation

Gymnastics New Zealand (Gymnastics NZ) and the independent Steering Committee Appointments Panel (SCAP) sought feedback on a draft terms of reference and a proposed outline of roles and competencies for the Steering Committee during September 2021.

An on-line survey was promoted widely to the gymnastics community, along with invitations to make a written submission and to take part in three community hui. In response to this initial feedback, a second survey and three further community hui took place, targeted specifically at athletes including those who considered themselves survivors. This second set of hui were held confidentially with the SCAP to consult more deeply on feedback received on the athlete/survivor role description in the initial community hui. An invitation to directly contact the Chair of the SCAP and the Chair of the Steering Committee was also made.

In addition, the SCAP and Gymnastics NZ met with a number of key stakeholders and experts to gain their perspectives—Safeguarding Children NZ, the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, the NZ Human Rights Commission and Sport New Zealand.

[The Steering Committee Appointments Panel would like to thank everyone for the time and rich insights you gave through the consultation process, which has helped to strengthen our approach.](#)

## Changes in Response to Feedback

Feedback showed some key areas of concern, some differing views and areas of emphasis, and a wide range of suggestions to improve the draft terms of reference, roles, and competencies.

The SCAP considered all feedback to identify key themes and issues, recognising that some difficult choices would need to be made. SCAP then worked with the Gymnastics NZ Board to make changes to the final documents, incorporating all feedback where possible, and balancing the range of views.

Some feedback related to the appointments process, which will be considered as part of the expressions of interest process. Other feedback related to the operation of the Steering Committee, for example engagement with the community including youth. The Chair of the Steering Committee will discuss this feedback with the Steering Committee once established.

## Positioning of the Steering Committee

Feedback indicated that the draft documents were unclear about whether the Steering Committee was a strategic or operational body, and greater clarity would help determine what experience and competencies would be required on the committee. A widely held view was that the full range of experience and competencies in the draft documents would be hard to find in a small group. Feedback also showed it was unclear how members of the gymnastics community could contribute to the work of the Steering Committee if they were not members.

*The SCAP discussed this feedback with Gymnastics NZ, and Gymnastics NZ confirmed that the Steering Committee is a strategic body that will direct and oversee the design of a work programme to implement the review recommendations, supported by a small team. The roles and competencies required of Steering Committee members reflect this. Additional members can be co-opted to supplement knowledge and provide specialist expertise where required.*

*The Steering Committee will engage widely with the Gymnastics NZ community, including survivors and those who have lived experience of harm. This will be through direct engagement, and through working groups established to involve community voices.*

## Independence, Transparency, and Accountability

Feedback indicated some concerns around transparency of decision-making, citing some conditions in the draft terms of reference such as the Board's ability to remove Steering Committee members, or not accept recommendations from the Steering Committee.

*There was also concern that agreed changes might not be implemented, and requests for clear processes to monitor and measure Gymnastics NZ's implementation of the approved proposals from the Steering Committee were requested.*

*The Gymnastics NZ Board supported a number of changes to the terms of reference recommended by the SCAP to strengthen independence, transparency and accountability in response to this feedback. These changes include:*

- *the Board will accept the nominations for the Steering Committee as presented by the SCAP;*
- *any removal of a Steering Committee member now requires a joint recommendation from the independent Chair of the Steering Committee and the Chair of the Gymnastics NZ Board;*
- *the Board will provide the Steering Committee with an explanation if it does not accept a proposal, and the Steering Committee approved work plan and proposals, once approved, will be made publicly available.*

*The Gymnastics NZ Board will also formally ask the Steering Committee to make proposals on how Gymnastics NZ's implementation of the approved proposals from the Steering Committee will be monitored.*

## **Roles**

Feedback expressed support for retaining distinct roles on the Steering Committee but included a range of views on which roles were required, and the focus of these roles.

Some feedback questioned the role of the Gymnastics NZ Board on the Steering Committee. For some, this compromised the independence of the committee, others felt it was unnecessary as the Steering Committee reported to the Board.

### **Athlete/Survivor Role**

Feedback showed that the title of these roles was contentious. For some, the term 'survivor' was vital, and for others it was alienating. Others did not identify with the term 'survivor' even though they have had experience of harm. This was particularly the case for male gymnasts. The title of these roles felt to be confusing and limiting. Some felt that the 'slash' meant members had to be both athletes and survivors, and should be termed 'athlete and survivor' to give a place for a broader 'athlete-centred' voice. Many commented that many gymnasts had at least witnessed harm. Many noted that the survivor voice must be central in the process of driving change, and some also noted the critical importance of a peer group of survivors so they can feel safe and connected within the wider Steering Committee.

*Feedback reinforced the need for an athlete-centred approach to bring positive change. Views that members of the wider gymnastics' community should also be an important voice of the Steering Committee were also powerful.*

Coaches, judges, administrators, and parents have often also been gymnasts, and have had additional experiences that are an important contribution to identifying practical changes that would work. There was also a concern that having coaches, administrators or judges on the Steering Committee would not make it a safe space for survivors.

*The SCAP considered this range of perspectives in depth, with an over-riding focus on ensuring that the voices of those who have been most harmed are heard, whilst also acknowledging that a broad range of experiences from the gymnastics community would best support the work of the Steering Committee. The SCAP recommended to the Board that these roles should be for current or former gymnasts, who may also have held other roles in the gymnastics community, and must include survivors and those who have lived experience of harm. The competencies for these roles have been amended to better capture the range of experiences and competencies that the SCAP will be looking for in appointing these roles. The appointments process will be designed with expert guidance to ensure all Steering Committee members have the attributes, skills, and training to ensure the safety of gymnast members, including through a trauma-informed approach.*

### **Gymnastics NZ Board Representative**

*Reflecting on feedback for a stronger and broader gymnast community presence and given the high level of trust and confidence in the Steering Committee and its processes, the Gymnastics NZ Board willingly offered its place on the Steering Committee to allow for an additional gymnast member to further strengthen representation.*

*The role previously earmarked for a Gymnastics NZ representative will now allow for an additional gymnast member. This will strengthen the gymnasts peer group and help ensure that the breadth of the gymnast experience can be reflected in the Steering Committee membership.*

### **Human Rights and Children's Rights Roles**

Those who gave feedback on these roles felt they were important to support the safety of the gymnast members, that they should be roles for experts with practical experience of applying best practice to deliver change, rather than advocates promoting a specific issue.

Feedback on the expertise of the child rights role was mixed, with some suggesting a safeguarding focus, others child and youth engagement, and others felt expertise in child psychology was valuable.

There was also feedback that the roles could be combined, although others felt the range of expertise would not be found in one person.

*Both of these roles will be retained to complement and support the gymnast members, and that the roles should be held by experts. They have changed the role descriptions to reflect advice on the knowledge and experience required of each role in order to contribute best-practice experience to the work of the Steering Committee. This includes re-framing the children's rights role as a 'child and youth specialist' with a focus that meets international best practice by combining a responsive protection role with a strategic and preventative safeguarding approach. They have included a focus on child and youth engagement in the additional competencies sought from any members of the Steering Committee, with the ability to co-opt this – and other – expertise if required.*

*The SCAP and Gymnastics NZ have also accepted feedback that all members of the Steering Committee should be provided with induction and training that builds the capability of all members in the principles and frameworks that underpin these roles including trauma-informed decision-making.*

## **Final Roles and Titles**

The updated composition and titles for Steering Committee members are:

- Independent Chair
- Five (5) gymnast members
- One human rights specialist
- One child and youth specialist
- One representative of Sport New Zealand (Sport NZ)
- Gymnastics NZ Chief Executive Officer (ex-officio member)

## **Competencies (skills, knowledge, behaviours) in Addition to the Specific Roles**

### **Proposed additional competencies**

Feedback on the proposed additional competencies was largely supportive, although some people noted that they were wide-ranging and there would need to be flexibility about the combination of competencies any one person brought to the Steering Committee.

*Former gymnasts commented that many of them were now qualified professionals across a range of disciplines which meant they could bring additional competencies as well as gymnastic experience.*

Some feedback requested that the competencies reflect a number of attributes more strongly. Wide feedback, including from the athlete/survivor hui, was to ensure that all Steering Committee members were resilient, and able to look beyond their own experience to help shape the future. Other suggestions were to include more dimensions of diversity including male gymnasts, people from Māori, Pasifika, Rainbow and disability communities and youth. Others added that all members should be competent in a trauma-informed approach and be able to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

There was one comment that competencies in programme governance, finance and risk were not required.

*As a consequence of the feedback, the role descriptions have been changed to make a clearer distinction between:*

- *competencies provided by the specific roles,*
- *personal attributes required of all members, and*
- *areas of technical expertise that could be provided by any member, or through co-opted members.*

*This provides flexibility about how the competencies are held, as applicants for specific roles may also provide technical competencies.*

*The personal attributes required by all members have been strengthened to reflect the feedback, although cultural diversity has not been strongly emphasised. Diversity in all its dimensions is an important consideration, but cultural diversity is not a focus of the recommendations of the Independent Review. Programme governance has been removed as a requirement of all members, but retained as a technical competency, along with finance and risk as these are important competencies for the effective operation of the Steering Committee.*

*Consideration was given to the realities, demands and expectations that will be placed on members of the Steering Committee, following which a decision was made that this situation means that membership of the Steering Committee is more suited to those 18 years of age and over. Those under 18 and the child and youth voices remain critical to the work of the Steering Committee and will be heard and engaged with as part of its consultation process.*

### **Application of competencies**

Some people questioned why the Gymnastics NZ Board and Sports NZ representatives did not appear to require the same competencies as other roles on the Steering Committee.

*The Gymnastics NZ Board and the SCAP have confirmed that whoever is chosen to represent Sports NZ will contribute to the same set of competencies as the other Steering Committee members.*

**Thank you for your feedback and contribution.**

**Gymnastics New Zealand and the independent Appointments Panel would like to reiterate its thanks to all of those who took the time to share their feedback as part of this process. Your feedback, insights, and ideas have added immense value.**

**We encourage anyone who is interested in being a member of the Steering Committee to put their hand up to be involved. We will be promoting the roles widely to encourage participation and are hopeful of continued strong support from the gymnastics community.**