

Statement on NIN Closedown 24 March 2020

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The Directors of the National Institute Network met yesterday to discuss the operational and strategic ramifications of the directions from Australian governments in addressing matters regarding coronavirus (COVID-19).

Australian governments are focused on working together to slow the spread of COVID-19 to save lives. From midday yesterday, tighter restrictions were enforced on a range of activities. New measures include the closure of gymnasiums or indoor sporting venues.

The AOC [announced yesterday](#) that they are preparing for a postponement of the 2020 Olympic Games. This is understandably disappointing for athletes and coaches. It does however provide them with clarity and an ability to reset their planning and training goals. It takes the urgency out of the immediate preparation for Tokyo 2020.

Prior to yesterday, the actions of the high performance sport system have primarily been aimed at reducing the risk of infection for individuals (athletes/staff) and protecting their health and ability to train for competitions. This has now changed. The aim now is to influence behaviours to reduce the risk of individuals contributing to community transmission in the wider population. Sporting performance and its impact has become very much a secondary consideration.

All sporting organisations need to consider our individual and organisational roles in modelling those behaviours that can reduce the community transmission risks – i.e. reducing unnecessary travel, avoiding gatherings of individuals and practising social distancing. This change in circumstances has made our usual focus on delivering performance support redundant.

As stated by the Prime Minister, we need every Australian to do their bit to save the lives of other Australians. Trying to maintain business as usual in high performance sport at this particular time is not an option. Accordingly, the National Institute Network is united in closing our facilities and doing our best to enable athletes to maintain social distancing including training at home. This is the right decision for the health and welfare of athletes. The network's medical and allied services will be available via phone. Injuries and illnesses will be treated via face to face servicing if absolutely required.

We encourage all sporting organisations, athletes and coaches to abide by the latest government directives, to make wellbeing their number one priority, and to do everything possible to minimise unnecessary contact between individuals. The matters relating to COVID-19 constitute a health crisis and matters of health must take priority over matters of sport.

The high performance sporting system is well equipped to deal with adversity. Our leaders, athletes and administrators will continue to be role models for the Australian community.