



19 March 2026

Australian Athletics and Little Athletics Australia complete historical national unification

In a historic day for athletics in Australia, Australian Athletics (AA) and Little Athletics Australia (LAA) have today signed final contracts to complete the process of national unification.

Following the announcement in December 2025 that key terms for unification had been agreed, AA and LAA have diligently worked through final details to make national unification a reality.

The Presidents of AA and LAA, Jane Flemming OAM and Sherrie Boulter, met in Melbourne yesterday to sign off on the new arrangements for unification.

Flemming said: “Our sport continues to go from strength to strength as the 2032 Games loom ever closer. This unification sets athletics up for long term success both in keeping younger athletes in our sport as they mature and creating better links between families, clubs, officials and volunteers who are so critical to our success.”

Boulter noted: “I am excited for the future of Little Athletics under a fully unified sport. This historical agreement preserves everything that is unique and special about Little Athletics and its 60-year history whilst providing more opportunities and support for our sport and simplified pathways for our athletes.’

Under the terms of the agreement a unified AA will be the National Member Federation, aligning with World Athletics, World Para Athletics and the Australian Sports Commission.

This historic agreement will secure the preservation and celebration of Little Athletics’ name, brand, history and place in a unified and enhanced sport.

The unified national sporting body will be responsible for all aspects of athletics across high performance, opens, junior and Little Athletics programs. Accordingly, the expanded organisation will also be responsible for implementing the National Integrity Framework for the sport as a whole and will work closely with its State and Territory members to provide national strategic oversight of coaching and officiating.

State and Territory Members Associations will continue to lead local delivery of athletics programs at a state and community level.

This will be delivered through a national network of more than 6000 coaches and 700 clubs and centres, giving the sport unprecedented reach and a true national footprint.

LAA and AA are delighted to announce that as part of the unification, Coles will remain as the naming-rights partner of Coles Little Athletics.

Through this partnership Coles will continue to support Little Athletics Centres and Clubs around the country, ensuring facilities, equipment and fresh fruit are available for more than 90,000 participants to learn skills, make friends and have fun.

Since 2017, the Coles partnership has been a critical driver of growth for Little Athletics and reflects a strong focus on the community impact of the sport.

The unification will support growth in participation in athletics at all levels and clearer athletics pathways as children progress into more competitive and structured athletics and keep them within the sport's ecosystem.

Importantly, the work of the thousands of volunteers who power athletics each week at local centres and clubs will continue.

The unification will formally commence on 20 April with the integration into a single office and combined workforce at Athletics House at Lakeside Stadium, Melbourne.

As part of the new structure, Sherrie Boulter will step down from her current role as LAA President to join the AA Board as a Director.

Jane Flemming will continue as President of AA.

State and Territory Members of LAA will become Associate Members of AA under the existing AA Constitution, and LAA will be represented across key committees and operational working groups within AA's operations.

AA will maintain and oversee important features of the LAA landscape such as national awards, life membership and records.

As with any organisational change, there are further opportunities to explore ways to grow the sport and align the structure, pathways and delivery of athletics.

This unification is being undertaken with the full support of all AA and LA Member States/Territories, reflecting a remarkable sense of shared purpose and focus on ensuring that the sport can thrive into the future and capture the opportunities that will flow from a home Games in 2032.

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Work will be undertaken in close consultation with Members and seek to ensure that the sport is accessible, social and engaging for participants regardless of level.

While more work is required, the forthcoming aligned national championships in Brisbane are an excellent example of the benefits that will flow from working together for the good of families and participants.

Key areas of initial focus will be: Growing participation and aligning pathways and technical regulations, development of a national digital strategy, integrity and safeguarding of children in the sport and facilities planning across different states and territories to meet growing demand.

The AA and LAA Boards commend the work of their respective Members in progressing reform and taking practical steps locally to ensure parents, families and children can easily access athletics.

This local reform has created the right conditions and collaborative culture necessary for a successful national unification.

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