

Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025

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State Development, Infrastructure and Works Committee
Queensland Parliament
Parliament House, George Street, Brisbane QLD 4000
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Submission to the Inquiry into the Queensland Academy of Sport Bill 2025

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) Bill 2025. As a representative of Sporting Wheelies, Queensland's leading organisation in para sport and inclusive physical activity, I welcome the intent of the Bill to formalise QAS as a statutory body. However, I wish to highlight several key considerations to ensure equity, inclusion, and long-term sustainability of para sport development in Queensland.

1. Ensuring a Stronger Pipeline from Grassroots to Elite Para Sport

The Bill's focus on emerging and elite athletes is crucial, but grassroots and community-based para sport development must not be overlooked. The pathway to Paralympic representation begins long before an athlete enters the high-performance system. Without strong grassroots participation, Queensland risks limiting its future pool of Paralympians.

We recommend that the Bill explicitly acknowledges the need for investment in grassroots para sport pathways, including:

- Funding support for disability sport organisations, such as Sporting Wheelies, that deliver early-stage athlete identification and participation programs.
- Integration of Sporting Wheelies' Disability Sport & Recreation Officers (DSROs) and grassroots sports programs within QAS frameworks to further establish and enhance local and regional participation and transition athletes into structured pathways.
- A clear strategy for bridging community sport and high-performance sport to ensure sustained growth in para sport participation.

2. Inclusive Representation in QAS Governance

The establishment of a QAS Board is a significant step, but it is essential that lived experience and expertise in para sport are represented at a governance level. Sporting Wheelies strongly recommends:

- A minimum of one board position dedicated to para sport expertise and disability inclusion to ensure decisions reflect the needs of Queensland's Paralympic pathway.
- The establishment of a Para Sport Advisory Committee to guide the Board on accessibility, athlete development, and inclusive policies.
- A commitment to universal design principles in future QAS facilities and programs to ensure they are accessible for all athletes.

3. Collaboration Between QAS and Disability Sport Organisations

The Bill references collaboration with institutes of sport and sporting organisations, but explicit inclusion of disability sport organisations is critical to ensuring QAS supports all athletes equitably. Sporting Wheelies has long played a pivotal role in developing Queensland's para athletes and should be formally recognised as a key partner.

We recommend:

- A formalised partnership between QAS and Sporting Wheelies (as Queensland's disability sport leader) to ensure alignment of athlete development pathways.
- Co-designing talent identification and athlete development initiatives with organisations that specialise in para sport.
- Clear investment in adaptive coaching and officiating development to grow expertise in inclusive sport practices.
- Dedicated investment in resources and specialised equipment to support the development of para athletes to ensure equitable access

4. Employment and Pathways for People with Disabilities in QAS

Beyond athlete development, QAS must champion inclusive employment practices to ensure people with disabilities are involved at all levels, including coaching, administration, and leadership roles. We recommend:

- A commitment to employing people with disabilities within QAS in coaching, sports science, and administrative roles.
- Dedicated pathways for athletes with disabilities transitioning into post-competitive careers in sport leadership.

Sporting Wheelies strongly supports the establishment of QAS as a statutory body but urges the Committee to ensure disability sport is not treated as an afterthought in high-performance planning. Queensland has a unique opportunity to lead the nation in para sport development, particularly with Brisbane 2032 on the horizon.

By embedding grassroots para sport investment, inclusive governance, formal partnerships with disability sport organisations, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities within the QAS framework, the Bill can deliver a truly inclusive and world-class sporting system for all Queenslanders.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to provide further input or attend a public hearing to elaborate on these recommendations.

Sincerely,



Dane Cross
Chief Operating Officer
Sporting Wheelies