



MEDIA RELEASE

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New U15 Championship strengthens school sport pathway to Australian Softball

Softball Australia and School Sport Australia (SSA) are pleased to announce a new 15 Years and Under (U15) Softball Championship from 2027, creating a stronger connection between school sport and Australia's national softball pathway.

The new championship will replace the existing U18 School Sport Australia Softball Championship from 2027, following a joint review and extensive collaboration between the two organisations. The U12 Championship will continue, ensuring school-aged athletes have national representative opportunities across multiple stages of their sporting experience.

By moving to the U15 age group, the championship will better align with Softball Australia's athlete development framework, reduce overlap with existing national competitions and provide talented young athletes with an opportunity to be identified and supported at a critical stage of their sporting journey. The announcement comes at an exciting time for Australian softball, with the sport set to return to the Olympic Games at Los Angeles 2028, providing an additional source of inspiration for the next generation of Australian players with aspirations for Brisbane 2032.

Under the new model, the two organisations will work more closely with State and Territory Bodies to create a high-quality national championship experience while strengthening links between school sport, community participation and representative pathways.

The U15 age group has been identified as a key athlete development window. Strong participation across the 12 – 14 age group nationally provides an opportunity to connect more young players with ongoing development opportunities while maintaining a positive and enjoyable sporting experience.

Beyond athlete development, the championship will also support the development of coaches, officials and volunteers, helping strengthen the workforce that underpins softball throughout Australia.

Chief Executive Officer of Softball Australia Sarah Loh said: "Our partnership with School Sport Australia creates an important opportunity to identify and support some of the country's most promising young softballers. The U15 age group is a key development window, and this championship will help connect talented athletes with future state, national and Australian representative opportunities. We're proud to work with SSA to provide students with a national stage to compete, develop and aspire to higher levels of the game."

School Sport Australia Executive Officer Phil Reeves said the new program demonstrated the importance of working collaboratively with National Sporting Organisations to ensure its championships remain relevant and connected to contemporary national sporting pathways.

"This is exactly the type of partnership we want to develop with our National Sporting Organisations. Rather than simply continuing with an existing model, we have worked with Softball Australia to identify where a School Sport Australia Championship can have the greatest impact. The result is an exciting opportunity for students to represent their state or territory at national level while participating in a championship that has a genuine connection to the sport's national pathway and potentially future Australian selection."

The introduction of the U15 Championship ensures the national school sport softball program complements Softball Australia's existing competition structure while providing a valuable representative opportunity for students selected through state and territory school sport pathways.

Further information regarding the inaugural 2027 School Sport Australia U15 Softball Championship, including dates, location and competition arrangements, will be announced following consultation between the two organisations and participating Member Bodies.

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MEDIA CONTACTS

School Sport Australia: Phil Reeves 0437 832096 eo@schoolsportaustralia.edu.au

Softball Australia: Alex Dandanis 0401 887 027 media@softball.org.au

About School Sport Australia

School Sport Australia is responsible for the development and promotion of school sport at a national level and provides opportunities for Australian school students to compete at the highest level of representative school sport through its national championship program.

About Softball Australia

Softball Australia is the national governing body for softball in Australia, providing leadership and support for the sport through participation, development and high-performance programs nationally.