



## Rowing Australia Classification Guidelines 2016 - 2020

### Rowing Australia Classification System Overview

The Rowing Australia (RA) Classification System provides a structure for competition for rowers with a physical, vision or intellectual impairment. Classification groups athletes according to the impact of their impairment on their ability to compete in the sport of rowing. The purpose of classification is to provide a structure for competition, to ensure an athlete's impairment is relevant to sport performance and that the athlete competes equitably with other athletes.

As the National Sports Organisation responsible for Rowing in Australia, RA is responsible for developing a clear Classification System for our sport which includes but is not limited to an outline of roles and responsibilities across RA and its member states to administer the system.

As a member of the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC), RA will accept the responsibility of ensuring that the National Classification System is reliable, consistent and compliant with the APC Classification policies, standards, and best practice models, as well as the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and FISA Classification policies, code, and standards, policies and regulations. This is to support continuity across National and International systems.

Rowing Australia recognises that classification management is in conjunction with system partners, Australian Paralympic Committee (APC) and Sport Inclusion Australia (formerly AUSRAPID), and that the State Associations have an important role to play in delivering the classification system under the national program.

This document was developed following consultation with the Australian Para- Rowing community, and in conjunction with the APC and the State Associations. It represents Classification best practice to ensure Rowing Australia's Classification System is conducted in accordance with National and International standards.

### Classification

Rowing Australia, in conjunction with its system partners the APC, Sport Inclusion Australia (SIA) and the State Associations will support all Australian rowers with physical, vision and intellectual impairments to have access to classification opportunities appropriate to their level of competition. RA will ensure compliance and continuity across the Provisional and National Classification system.

#### **Athletes with a Physical Impairment**

Classification is coordinated, organised, conducted and overseen by Rowing Australia in accordance with the Rowing Australia Classification Regulations and By-Laws.

#### **Athletes with a Vision Impairment**

Classification is coordinated by the Australian Paralympic Committee, in accordance with the APC Classification policies, procedures and regulations and international vision classification rules and procedures.



### **Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment**

Classification is coordinated by Sports Inclusion Australia, in accordance with the Sport Inclusion Australia Classification policies, procedures and regulations.

### **Classification Levels**

#### **State Classification**

State Classification requirements (if any) are specified by each State Association within its rules, and specifies the requirements for State regattas.

For national consistency, it is preferred that each State adopts the Provisional Classification system, however each State is able to conduct their own separate classification system for application at State and local regattas. However, it should be noted that the risks associated with conducting classifications outside of the Provisional and National Classification system include:

- Athletes potentially being provided with the incorrect sport class
- Athletes potentially being incorrectly excluded from the sport based on minimal impairment eligibility
- Athletes potentially being incorrectly included in the sport based on the minimal impairment eligibility

State Associations manage all elements of classification for its own classification system (if any).

State Classification is specific to that State only, and is superseded by Provisional Classification.

#### **Provisional Classification**

Provisional Classification provides an athlete with the opportunity to obtain an “indication of potential” Sport Class based on the documentary information provided.

This classification may be used when an athlete is new to Rowing and when a classification assessment is not conducted by a full classification panel.

- For athletes with a physical impairment, the provisional process involves a paperwork assessment by an RA endorsed National Medical Classifier and/or FISA Medical Classifier.
- For athletes with a vision impairment, the provisional process involves a paperwork assessment by APC endorsed VI classifier.

**Please note:** The sport class provided is an indication only and is based on the information provided at the time, and may be different once the athlete has been through a full Athlete Evaluation with a full National Classification Panel.

Rowing Australia recommends the Provisional Classification as best practice for local and State competitions as it provides athletes, Clubs and States with information that confirms whether an athlete meets the minimal eligibility requirements for Para-Rowing and outlines the potential sport class. This ensures a smooth process through the National Classification Pathway.



State Associations are not obliged to comply with the Provisional Classification system, and are able to conduct their own separate classification system for application at State and local regattas, in accordance with the rules of that State. However, it should be noted that the risks associated with conducting classifications outside of the Provisional and National Classification system include:

- Athletes potentially being provided with the incorrect sport class
- Athletes potentially being incorrectly excluded from the sport based on minimal impairment eligibility
- Athletes potentially being incorrectly included in the sport based on the minimal impairment eligibility

Provisional classification supersedes any state based classification system.

### **National Classification**

National Classification allows an athlete to be fully assessed by a panel of classifiers as appropriate for the impairment type.

- For athletes with a physical impairment, this will be face to face assessment by a panel of FISA trained and RA endorsed Medical and Technical Classifiers at an opportunity organised by RA.
- For athletes with a vision impairment, this will be a face to face assessment by an APC trained and endorsed VI classifier, through an assessment opportunity approved by APC.
- For athletes with an intellectual impairment, this will be a paperwork assessment conducted by Sport Inclusion Australia.

National classification supersedes Provisional and State classification.

### **International Classification**

International Classification allows an athlete to be fully assessed by FISA appointed International Classifiers at an international event recognised by FISA, in accordance with the FISA Classification rules and regulations.

Rowing Australia manages all elements of classification for Australian team members with a physical or vision impairment who require international classification.

International Classification supersedes National Classification.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **State Rowing Associations**

State Rowing Associations will outline the classification requirements for athletes wanting to compete at local and state regattas in their jurisdiction.



State Rowing Associations are responsible for the below:

- Clearly outline and communicate the Classification requirements for competition in their State.
- Advise RA of the classification requirements at a local and State level.
- Advise RA of any change to the classification system that is being implemented at a local and State level that falls outside of the Provisional and National Classification systems.
- Ensure any system in place at a State level shows continuity through to the National Classification System.
- Nominate one person from the State Association who is the main contact for Para-Rowing matters (including Classification).
- Direct all National Classification and Provisional Classification enquiries to Rowing Australia to ensure continuity, conformity and consistency with the RA National Classification system.
- Will operate within the agreed National Rowing Classification System.
- Support athletes and their representatives to understand the classification process, classification rules and their roles and responsibilities
- Understand the Rowing Australia Classification Policy, Classification Regulations and By-Laws, and ensure compliance.

**Please note:**

There are potential conflict of interest issues with National Classifiers being involved in separate State Classifications. For example:

- Accredited National Classifiers are required to comply with a number of undertakings they give to the APC, and which are safeguarded by compliance with the APC approved National Classification System
- If a National Classifier is involved in a State based (or other) classification which is outside of or inconsistent with the National Classification system, then any subsequent National Classification involving that classifier may be compromised.

To avoid this potential conflict of interest, the expectation is that, in regards to Classification within Australia, FISA trained and RA accredited classifiers will only be involved in the Provisional and National Classification system.

**Rowing Australia**

Athletes competing at National events such as National Championships and Selection events must be Nationally Classified as per the RA Classification Regulations and By-Laws.

Rowing Australia is responsible for the below:

- Coordinate, organise, conduct and oversee all National Classifications as per the Rowing Australia Classification Regulations and Bye-Laws.
- Coordinate, organise, conduct and oversee all Provisional Classifications as per the Rowing Australia Classification Regulations and Bye-Laws
- Coordinate, organise, conduct and oversee all Review Classifications.
- Aim to provide two National Classification opportunities per year
- Maintain the Australian Rowing Classification Master List

P.O. Box 7147, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

**P** +61 2 6214 3526 **F** +61 2 6281 3910

**W** [www.rowingaustralia.com.au](http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au)

**ABN** 49 126 080 519



- Manage classification disputes
- Provide classification resources and education for classification stakeholders
- Manage classification certification and education for current and new RA Classifiers (physical impairment)
- Ensure the National Classification system meets the requirements for national compliance with the International Paralympic Committee Classification Code
- Ensure the National Classification system aligns with the Australian Paralympic Committee Classification Policies, Standards and Best Practice
- Ensure National Classifications are conducted as per FISA instructions and implement any changes to classification nationally as required
- Maintain the integrity of the sport and national classification system
- Prepare athletes for international classification as and when appropriate

### **Nationally Recognised Classification Opportunities (physical impairment)**

#### **National Classification**

The below events will be targeted as National Classification opportunities.

- A National Selection Event - National Team nominating athletes and others on a priority basis.
- National Championships – Athletes competing at the National Championships and others on a priority basis.

RA may, from time to time, offer further opportunities for national classification.

Conducting two National Classification opportunities per year provides multiple benefits to the athlete, state and sport, including:

- Opportunity to provide Protest Panels to resolve Protests during that classification opportunity
- Only athletes who require National Classification are classified
- Opportunity for classifiers to observe athletes during a racing environment
- Learning and development opportunity for classifiers

#### **Provisional Classification**

Provisional Classification opportunities are conducted on an 'as required' basis. The process outlining the manner in which this is conducted is contained within the RA Classification Regulations and Bye-Laws.

Wherever possible, Rowing Australia and State Associations will work cooperatively to develop a suitable timeframe for Provisional Classification paperwork submissions.

Provisional Classification provides benefits to the athlete, state and sport, including:

- Provides an indication of sport class
- Outlines an athletes eligibility for Para-Rowing
- Provides a smooth transition to the National Classification System

P.O. Box 7147, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

**P** +61 2 6214 3526 **F** +61 2 6281 3910

**W** [www.rowingaustralia.com.au](http://www.rowingaustralia.com.au)

**ABN** 49 126 080 519