

ACF NCEF  
PILOT PROJECT 2026



July 2026

NATIONAL

TITLES

FOR THOSE WHO

*Aspire Higher*



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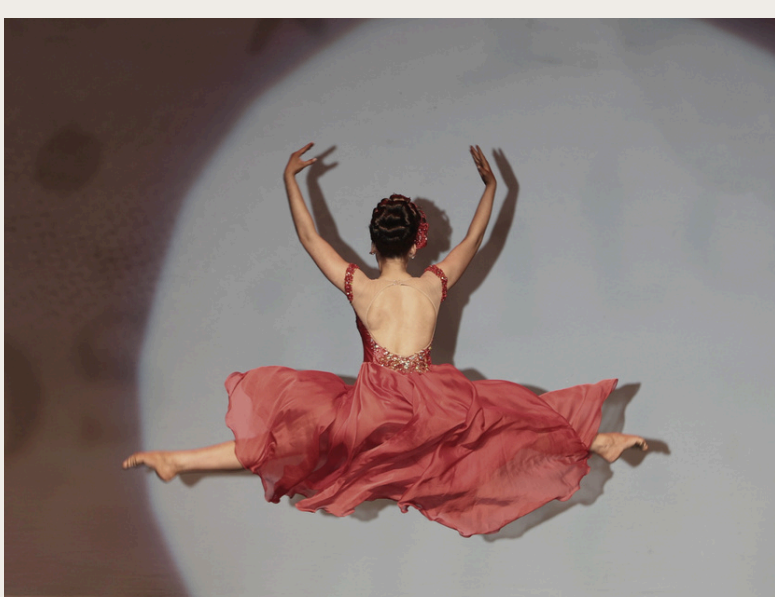
# ACF NATIONAL COMPETITION & EVENT FRAMEWORK (NCEF)

## A MODERN & FUTURE-FOCUSED APPROACH TO NATIONAL EVENTS

The Australian Calisthenics Federation (ACF) is proud to introduce the National Competition & Event Framework (NCEF) — a bold, strategic initiative that redefines how ACF's national events are delivered in Australia. Developed to support sustainable growth, the NCEF is designed to enhance national engagement through:

- Meaningful participation for all States
- Expanded and accessible pathways for competitors
- Streamlined event operations and delivery
- Strengthened governance
- Alignment with ACF's broader strategic objectives

Over the past 12 months, the NCEF has been a major focus of the ACF's national planning efforts. Behind the scenes, extensive collaboration with Member States, community stakeholders, and calisthenics participants has informed this work. The result is a national event framework that is equitable, accessible, and future-proof — tailored to support a thriving competitive landscape that reflects the depth and diversity of our sport.





## THE FOUR CORNERSTONES OF THE NCEF

As a result of the working party's efforts, the NCEF has four cornerstone events, each purposefully designed to reflect the outcomes of the NCEF Review and to meet the evolving needs of our community:

### *Cornerstone 1:* **ACF NATIONAL TITLES**

Where soloists, duos, and trios from across Australia come together to celebrate excellence, nurture talent, uphold inclusivity, and embody the spirit of national calisthenics.

### *Cornerstone 2:* **ACF STATE TEAM NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Uniting representative teams from across Australia, this event supports broader participation by offering multiple pathways that allow participants of all ability levels to represent their State.

### *Cornerstone 3:* **ACF CLUB CARNIVAL**

A celebration of grassroots calisthenics, this vibrant carnival welcomes clubs from across the country to connect, perform, and share their love for the sport across multiple divisions.

### *Cornerstone 4:* **ACF MASTERS GAMES**

Building on ACF's longstanding involvement in the Pan Pacific Masters Games and similar initiatives, this event creates space for ongoing participation, community connection, and intergenerational celebration of the sport.

Each of these events is designed to prioritise inclusivity, offering opportunities for State Teams, Club Teams, and Individual Competitors to take part in meaningful and inspiring ways.

## PHASED & STRATEGIC ROLLOUT

ACF is committed to a phased, evidence-based rollout of the NCEF over four years. Piloting key elements enables the Federation to:

- Ensure scalability and long-term functionality
- Refine delivery based on participation data and operational feasibility
- Assess community appetite across States, Clubs, and competition levels

This approach allows the NCEF to grow in alignment with participant needs and national capacity, while reinforcing sustainability and excellence.





# NATIONAL TITLES 2026

## Pilot Project Overview

### INTRODUCING THE ACF NATIONAL TITLES 2026

ACF is proud to launch the first pilot event under the National Competition & Event Framework (NCEF): the ACF National Titles, set for 5-12 July 2026. This document provides stakeholders, participants and their families with an overview of the event's vision, objectives, structure, and entry pathways.

The National Titles 2026 represent the peak of solo (& duo) performances in Australian calisthenics — a national celebration of excellence, inclusion, and artistic achievement. Designed for those who aspire higher, this inaugural pilot creates a prestigious stage to recognise and elevate talent from across the country.

As a flagship initiative aligned with ACF's Elevate 28! strategy, the event will test a scalable, transparent competition model that supports national alignment, equitable access, and sustainable growth. It reflects ACF's ongoing commitment to uniting States while honouring the unique character of each calisthenics community.

### ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This overview outlines the key elements of the pilot, including:

- Objectives of the pilot
- Tiered benchmarking framework
- Competition structure
- Entry qualification process and pathways
- Participant development initiatives
- Project timeline and key milestones from launch to delivery

Together, these components offer a comprehensive view of the vision and mechanics guiding this exciting new chapter in the ACF Calendar.



# FOUNDATIONS of the Pilot Project

## PILOT OBJECTIVES

The ACF National Titles 2026 pilot aims to establish a prestigious and aspirational National Solo & Duo event, underpinned by strong branding and clear market positioning. As a testbed for broader implementation, the pilot will evaluate logistical feasibility, trial scalable systems for entry, grading, and scheduling, and promote greater alignment and competitive parity across State-based calisthenics structures.

To ensure manageability during this critical testing phase, participation in the 2026 pilot will be limited to Member States. This approach enables ACF to refine operations, gather meaningful insights, and assess the framework's potential for future national expansion — including wider eligibility.

## EVIDENCE GATHERING

To inform and evaluate the pilot, a range of data will be collected throughout the planning and delivery phases. An initial Expression of Interest period in July–August 2025 will be used to gauge competitor interest and inform logistical planning. Feedback from the ACC25 post-event survey will be integrated to refine planning and participant experience. A structured National Titles post-event evaluation will also be conducted to capture insights, assess outcomes, and guide future iterations of the National Titles model.

## TIERED BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

The National Titles pilot will introduce a three-tiered benchmarking framework, developed and overseen by a newly created ACF National Grading Committee. This framework will include the development of a Tier Equivalency Matrix to accommodate variations across State divisions, structures, and grading systems. It will align participants more equitably at the national level, calibrate grading across jurisdictions to enhance fairness, and embed a sustainable review cycle to ensure continual refinement. The framework also supports transparent classification and builds trust in progression pathways at every stage.

# NATIONAL TITLES

## Branding



## For Those That Aspire Higher



The ACF National Titles are more than a competition—they're a national celebration of ambition, artistry, and excellence. As the premier stage for Australian soloists and duos, this prestigious event brings together division-leading performers from across the country, each ready to rise to their moment. Whether emerging or elite, competitors share a singular goal: to grow, push boundaries, and shine with pride and purpose.

For those who aspire higher, the National Titles are a platform—to be seen, to be elevated, and to be part of something greater. Aligned with the vision of Elevate 28!, the event champions inclusion, regional parity, visibility, and the celebration of our uniquely dynamic sport.

It is where excellence meets opportunity.  
It is where talent meets transformation.  
It is where ambition takes centre stage.



# EQUITY Structures

## BENCHMARKING FRAMEWORK

As part of the ACF National Titles pilot, a dedicated National Grading Committee will be established to oversee the development and delivery of a robust benchmarking system that ensures fair, inclusive, and transparent competition across States. A formal Committee Charter will guide its operations and governance.

The Committee's responsibilities will include:

- Designing a comprehensive benchmarking framework
- Coordinating cross-State calibration exercises to ensure consistency
- Developing a Three-Tier Equivalency Matrix for each age group
- Implementing a structured review cycle to evaluate and refine the process

The resulting three-tiered framework will be piloted at the ACF National Titles 2026 to assess its fairness, consistency, and ability to deliver grading parity. Its objectives are to align competitors by capability, bridge inter-State grading differences, and support transparent entry allocation. By standardising classification and progression, the framework aims to build trust and ensure participants compete at levels that best reflect their abilities.

## INCLUSION FRAMEWORK

As part of its ongoing commitment to equity and accessibility, the ACF is developing a comprehensive Inclusion Framework in partnership with the ACF DivInc Committee and ASC's Play Well program. This participant-centred, evidence-based initiative will adapt calisthenics for broader inclusion.

The framework will follow the TREE model, addressing four key areas of modification

- Teaching/coaching strategies
- Rules and regulations
- Equipment adaptation
- Environmental accessibility

The aim is to create a modified program that meets diverse participant needs, promotes access, and embeds inclusion across all levels of the sport.

While full implementation will take 12 to 24 months, an initial pilot — focusing on rules — will be trialed at the 2026 ACF National Titles.





# NATIONAL TITLES 2026

## Entry Eligibility

The ACF National Titles 2026 are open to competitors from Member States in the Sub-Junior through to Senior age groups, across the following categories:

- Calisthenics Solo
- Graceful Solo
- Calisthenic Duo - see page 15 for further information and caveats.

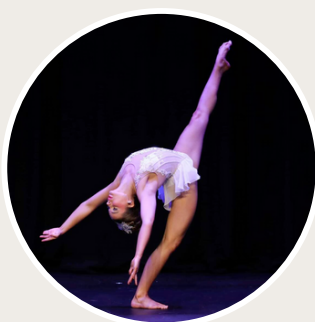
To be eligible to enter the National Titles 2026, competitors must:

- Be a registered competitor with a recognised Member State Association in 2026.
- Have participated in their 2025 State Championship in the item(s) they intend to enter at Nationals Titles (i.e. Calisthenics Solo, Graceful Solo, and/or Calisthenic Duo)
- Meet the Skills Requirements outlined in the ACF National Rules & Regulations.

## ELIGIBILITY TIMING

- To accommodate differences in solo & duo competition schedules across Australia, and support families in planning travel, eligibility for the National Titles 2026 will be based on a competitor's participation in their State's 2025 Solo / Duo Season.
- Therefore, age-groups for the National Titles 2026 will be the Competitor's age as at 31 December 2025.

Competitors who meet all entry criteria are eligible to self-nominate for a competition place at the National Titles 2026 by submitting a Preliminary Entry.





# COMPETITION CAPACITY & Tier Structure

Each section — defined as a specific item (e.g. Graceful Solo or Calisthenic Solo) by age group within each Tier (e.g. Junior Graceful Solo – Tier 2) — will have a capped number of allocated competition places, determined by the following factors:

- Expression of Interest (Eoi) data
- State division structures and anticipated participation
- Venue availability, scheduling and logistic feasibility

To promote transparency and community trust, finalised entry caps for all sections will be published in advance of Preliminary Entries opening, enabling participants and families to make informed decisions.

## TIER 1: SHOWCASING THE BEST OF THE BEST

Within the ACF National Titles pilot, Tier 1 represents the pinnacle of individual performance — a premier platform designed to elevate standards and spotlight Australia's most exceptional soloists. To honour the depth of talent nationwide, a refined heat-to-final format will be trialled for Junior, Intermediate, and Senior divisions. This structure provides a prestigious and purposeful step in the journey toward the National Title, where finalists rise through demonstrated excellence. It also serves as a strategic test of scalability, informing the potential extension of this format to additional tiers and age-groups in future events.

To support the introduction of a heat structure in Tier 1, the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior divisions will accommodate a larger number of competitors in the 2026 pilot. This expansion reflects the tier's focus on high-performance competition and its role within a broader national benchmarking framework designed to elevate participation and identify excellence at scale.

### Title Heats – Tier 1 Format

- Tier 1 competitors will be randomly divided into two heats per age group
- The top five scoring competitors from each heat will progress to the Tier 1 Final
- Place-getters in each heat will be awarded and acknowledged

### National Title Finals

Finalists will compete in the Grand Finale to determine the Junior, Intermediate & Senior ACF National Title Champions.



# ENTRY Pathways

Competitors have access to three distinct and exciting pathways to secure a place in this prestigious national event - Pinnacle, Aspire & Inclusion Pathways. The model honours high achievement at the State level while also providing opportunities for broader participation and inclusive representation. This approach ensures that excellence is recognised, emerging talent is encouraged, and competitors have a clear and structured route to the national stage.

## Pinnacle Pathway

The Pinnacle Pathway recognises participants who placed 1st to 5th in their 2025 State Championships across all divisions. This distinguished entry pathway provides priority consideration during the initial offer round for competition places at the ACF National Titles, recognising and rewarding high-level achievement.

A majority of places in each section within each Tier will be reserved for Pinnacle entrants during the initial offer round. The exact proportion will be determined using the data-informed methodology outlined in the Tier Structure section (see page 10) and published alongside final entry caps prior to the opening of Preliminary Entries — ensuring transparency, fairness, and clarity for all participants.

## Aspire Pathway

The Aspire Pathway is available to participants who competed in the 2025 solo season but do not qualify for the Pinnacle Pathway. It offers a nomination opportunity for additional eligible entrants seeking to participate in the ACF National Titles. By extending access beyond top State place-getters, the Aspire Pathway encourages broader engagement while upholding the event's prestige and commitment to competitive excellence.

## Inclusion Pathway

A dedicated event for competitors participating through modified, supported, or inclusive programs. The Inclusion Pathway embraces diversity in ability and experience, ensuring that all participants have the opportunity to perform on a national stage in a manner that respects their unique needs.



# ENTRY PROCESS & Categorisation

The entry process for the ACF National Titles 2026 Pilot is designed to ensure equity, and alignment with national benchmarking objectives. All competitors must follow the guidelines outlined below when submitting Preliminary Entries.

## PRELIMINARY ENTRY SUBMISSION

At the time of Preliminary Entries opening in 2026, all competitors are required to provide information of their 2025 SOLO SEASON, including:

- Their State,
- Age-group
- Division, and
- Placing (if applicable) for each item they intend to enter.

*For example,*

- *State X, Junior, Graceful Solo (Division 2-3<sup>rd</sup> place), Calisthenic Solo (Division 1-did not place).*

Competitors nominating through the Inclusion Pathway will specify:

- Their State,
- Age group (if applicable)
- The item(s) they participated in during the 2025 SOLO SEASON.

**Note:**

- No payment is required at the time of Preliminary Entry.
- Submitting a Preliminary Entry does not guarantee a place in the National Titles competition (see Offer Rounds information on pages 13 & 14).

## ENTRY CATEGORISATION

A verification process will be established to confirm the eligibility of Preliminary Entries, enabling ACF to accurately categorise entries within the competition framework. To support the round offer process (see next page), all verified entries will be categorised based on the following criteria:

- By State
- By Entry Pathway – Pinnacle, Aspire, or Inclusion
- By Tier, based on the Tier Equivalency Matrix

Note: Competitors entering via the Inclusion Pathway will not be graded as part of the 2026 pilot.





# OFFER ROUNDS

## Pinnacle Round

The Pinnacle Round represents the first phase of entry allocation for the ACF National Titles 2026, offering priority access to Pinnacle Pathway competitors who have demonstrated excellence at their State Championships.

### PRIORITY OFFERS

- First place-getters from each State Championship division who have entered through the National Titles Preliminary Entry process will automatically receive an offer for a competition position in the Pinnacle Round, aligned to their corresponding Tier.
- Second place-getters may also be automatically offered a Titles position, subject to overall entry volumes and available capacity within each Tier.

### STATE-BASED ALLOCATION

To promote equity across States, any remaining proportion of allocated competition places within each section assigned to the Pinnacle Pathway will be randomly drawn from the broader pool of qualifying Pinnacle entrants.

As part of the 2026 pilot, ACF will implement a process that ensures equal opportunity across States, with remaining places distributed based on State-level preliminary entry volumes. This approach supports balanced national representation while reinforcing fairness within the selection process.

Note: The ACF is committed to transparency and integrity in both the State-based and random allocation processes. Research-informed, independently overseen methods will be finalised and published prior to the opening of Preliminary Entries

### OFFER & ACCEPTANCE

Competitors selected through the Pinnacle Round will receive a formal offer with a clearly specified acceptance deadline. Entry will be confirmed upon completion of the required electronic acceptance process (to be finalised) and payment confirmation. Once confirmed, entrants will proceed to program scheduling and event planning.



# OFFER ROUNDS

## Further Offers

### ASPIRE OFFER ROUND

- Remaining allocated competition places after the Pinnacle Offer Round will roll into the Aspire Round.
- Aspire offers will be randomly drawn from eligible Aspire Pathway applicants within each Tier. Offer distribution will be based on State-level Preliminary Entry volumes to ensure balanced representation. Full process details will be made available prior to the opening of Preliminary Entries.
- Selected Aspire Pathway applicants will receive an official offer with a clearly defined acceptance deadline.
- Entry is confirmed upon:
  - Completion of the electronic acceptance process (to be finalised)
  - Payment confirmation
- Once confirmed, entrants will proceed to program scheduling and event planning.

### SUBSEQUENT OFFER ROUNDS

If allocated competition places remain following the Aspire Offer Round, the following process will be implemented:

- Subsequent offer rounds will occur, alternating between eligible Pinnacle and Aspire entrants.
- Rounds will continue until all allocated competition places are filled, where operationally feasible.

This approach ensures that entry opportunities are distributed fairly and transparently, while maximising participation within the event's logistical and scheduling capacity.

### INCLUSION PATHWAY OFFERS

The offer process for the Inclusion Pathway will be guided by the number of preliminary entries received.

- If the number of entries exceeds the allocated places, a randomised allocation process — consistent with the Pinnacle & Aspire Round method — will be used to determine offers.
- Selected competitors will receive a formal offer with a clearly specified deadline for acceptance.

If Inclusion places remain unfilled after the acceptance deadline, additional subsequent offer rounds will be conducted, as outlined above, until all available entry positions are filled where possible.



# COMPETITION Structure

## AGE-GROUP SCHEDULING

Age-group sections will be scheduled in 2–3 day blocks to help minimise extended time commitments for families and support more manageable travel and accommodation planning.

## ITEM-BASED SCHEDULING

Each day will be grouped by item, streamlining competition logistics and creating a focused performance environment.

## HEATS & FINAL TIMING

Heats will take place at the beginning of each competition day, allowing competitors adequate recovery and preparation time before finals at the end of the day.

## DUO/TRIO COMPETITION

The National Titles 2026 pilot will focus primarily on Graceful and Calisthenics Solo items.

- Trios will not be offered as part of the 2026 pilot program.
- Duos may be included, depending on the volume of Expressions of Interest received.
- Should Duos proceed, they will participate as non-graded items for the purposes of the pilot.

This phased approach allows ACF to concentrate on refining and evaluating key structural elements while gathering meaningful data on participation demand and program feasibility.





# ACF DEVELOPMENT

## Investment

A strong and recurring theme emerging from the NCEF's community survey and consultation process was the widespread desire to see greater opportunities for participant development and a clear strategy to elevate competitive parity across States. In response, and as part of ACF's long-term commitment to the NCEF and its pilot implementation phase, as well as Elevate 28! and the ACF Participation Strategy, a suite of initiatives will be researched, developed, and considered for rollout.

These initiatives will focus on the development of participants, coaches, and officials, ensuring that growth is nurtured holistically and equitably across all regions. While final details will be released later in 2025, some of the early concepts under consideration include:

- ACF Solo Masterclass Series — in-person sessions delivered in rotation across States
- Virtual Cross-State Training Clinics — connecting participants beyond local boundaries
- National Training Webinars & Online Resources — providing accessible, high-quality learning
- Mentorship & Coaching Exchange Program — fostering knowledge sharing and leadership growth

These initiatives reflect ACF's vision for a connected, future-ready calisthenics landscape, where excellence is cultivated, capacity is built, and every participant has the opportunity to thrive.







# PILOT PROJECT

## Timeline

Date	Milestone
July, 2025	Official launch of ACF National Titles at <b>ACC25</b> , including venue and location announcement
July–August 2025	Expression of Interest period
September, 2025	Release of National Titles Guidelines
December, 2025	Launch of Tier Benchmarking Matrix & Inclusion Framework Rules
Dec 2025–Feb 2026	Delivery of selected competitor development initiatives
January, 2026	Preliminary Entries open
Feb–March 2026	Offer rounds: Pinnacle & Inclusion → Aspire → Subsequent rounds as necessary
5 - 12 July, 2026	<b>ACF National Titles 2026</b> event held



# ACF NCEF PILOT PROJECT 2026

