



## ALCA Youth Development Pathway Report & Guide

This document adds to an earlier report published in February 2020 which caused considerable interest. The 2020 report analysed participation and performances data from Australian ILCA Youth World Championship Team from 2009 – 2020.

### ALCA Youth Development Pathway

The Australian Laser Class Association (ALCA) in 2009 embarked on a strategy to sustain and grow the ILCA Youth & U21 classes.

ALCA endorsed a simple “Youth Development Pathway” of events to support district association that align with club, state, and national High-Performance programs

1. ILCA Youth & U21 State Championships
2. Midwinter Championship (optional pre-worlds warm-up event currently at RQYS)
3. ALCA Australian Youth Championship; and
4. ILCA Youth & U21 World Championships.

Sailors can decide what level that they would like to develop their sailing so that clubs and state associations can organise support. The ALCA Youth Development Pathway today with the support partnering clubs and state-based associations is key to ILCA sailor development, important to growth and sustainability of the ILCA Class.

In 2019 ILCA began awarding prizes for U23, accordingly ALCA and district associations may consider extending the Youth Development Pathway to u23.

### Proposal and next step

The ALCA to table information in this document.

ALCA to decide the mechanics of how to better inform the sailing community in Australia about the Youth Development Pathway including:

- better articulating why preferencing the ILCA class is important
- how successful programs have used the Pathway to grow
- how to use the Pathway to consolidate the club and association relationship.

### Sustainable Youth Development

ALCA calls on the Australian sailing community to embrace the ALCA Youth Development pathway as a viable and stable platform for clubs and associations to build youth & U21 fleets (possibly will extend to U23).

The ALCA Youth Development Pathway vision sees the potential for larger fleets where young sailors aspire to competition for active lifestyle and social reasons. This allows a larger sailing economy to

emerge, a mainstream approach to youth development with a broader diversity of sailors with the potential for more youth coaches and related support structures at club and association level.

The ALCA Youth Development Pathway is presented as a more productive alternative to the Olympic pathway. For all the good work achieved there remains a tendency to focus on the goal more than retention, whittling participation to the point where many clubs and associations are no longer using it. Through lack of an alternative, we have a critical shortage of coaching experience and relevant support.

The Olympic Pathway is an inspiration for young sailors but at its apex does not have resources nor has the interested in the development of the mainstream youth classes. The narrowing Olympic selection process that begins at youth development tends to disenfranchise rather than motivate the mainstream to continue sailing, effectively an inefficient mechanism for talent acquisition.

Clubs and associations are encouraged to build upon the ALCA Youth Development Pathway as a stable alternative where coaches and organisers can focus on training and the next social or sailing event. Aspiring youth and U21 athletes are better placed in this kind of mainstream, where they can trial their state high performance scholarship, or fail and continue sailing, perhaps try again later. These program environments are functioning in some states but not in all.

ALCA applauds Australian Sailing assistance to Clubs and Associations in their efforts to improve standards of sailing and long-term growth, the sponsorship of ILCA Youth & ILCA 4 World Championship Team coaches. The Australian Olympic movement remains a key motivational driver, their institutional, financial, organisational, and technical support are vitally important, ALCA and its members will remain organised to help it succeed.

## General comments about this guide

A program is a series of organised activities that engage sailors in training, development and competition, normally a sailing club(s) or a state Laser Association or a combination of both. The report does not ignore the difficulty of building support mechanisms but rather endeavours to make more likely for them to be successful.

When major events bring home a mix of new and improving sailors, state base programs also have an opportunity to grow and improve from their experience. That can only happen when clubs and associations are organised to use competition to grow fleets. Some states are organised, but the standard of sailing is patchy which makes it harder for programs to hang on to sailors.

Whatever the results the report shows acknowledges commitment where sailors will have learned where the world standard of competition lies and be better informed about the kind of support needed in their home environment to climb the ranks. Most of all sailors are stimulated when programs step-up.

## ILCA 4 youth intake – making the right choice

The ILCA youth intake is mostly through club based junior programs who develop sailors for club racing. Ideally these sailors can enjoy club activities and be encouraged to join their state ILCA class association where they can be exposed to a standard of competition that only class competition can provide. Some will follow Pathway competition to compete at a higher level. In this way clubs and the ILCA class association are complimentary partners who help each other retain sailors in the sport.

State associations need to disseminate clear information so that families can make informed decisions about joining the ILCA class. Junior graduates are being offered the ultimate tactical/big

fleet competition in the ALCA Youth Development Pathway. Readily available at low cost the ILCA dinghy requires minimal maintenance which helps young sailors compete with a high degree of independence i.e. more time on the water. Standards of sailing are elevated through accuracy, control, tactics, and strategy best developed in single handed classes in big fleet competition. These elements are important foundations for any youth sailor and provides an entry to the ultimate game of sailing that only big fleets represent. Sailors won't get that anywhere else.

Junior graduates and club programs need to be informed about this before they opt for an alternative class. There are many rival classes, wind or kite foils for example that may be novel or fast but not come with the same tactical/big fleet competition and development pathway available through ILCA. Fleets will therefore tend to be smaller and competent coaches will be harder to find. Sailors will find it more difficult to gain the experience to compete effectively, clubs will find it difficult to build and sustain fleets.

## Connecting intake to the Youth Development Pathway

One of the most successful dinghy programs anywhere has been the ALCA Youth Development Pathway, at one end are local sailing events, at its peak are outstanding performances of the Australian ILCA Youth and U21 fleets. It needs to be better utilised.

Many sailors use parts of the pathway but are not aware of where it leads or how to get involved. club and association organisers are encouraged to present the full extent of the pathway as a motivational driver. Just see what happens! Hopefully smaller training pools turn into larger and more viable programs.

The Pathway is stable, organised and has stood the test of time. The ALCA Youth Development Pathway is for fleets of youth sailors to prepare themselves at district and national level to compete in tactical/big fleet competition. ILCA World and Australian championship sailors bring experiences back to their training partners lifting the standards of sailing in each state, inspiring other to follow.

Unfortunately, not all states are engaged in Pathway competition, which makes it more difficult for their programs to gain the experience necessary for coaches to develop and young sailors to succeed.

## Improving the standard of sailing & coach development

Coach development and active fleets are fundamentally important to youth sailing. Australia has nowhere near enough experienced coaches, it is important that we develop them. One of the avenues for coach development is as an Australian ILCA Youth World Championship team coach, potentially there are six roles.

ALCA through fundraising has facilitated 33 coaches to travel with Australian teams to ILCA Youth World events, a very popular event. Coaches are there to unify the team and optimise the regatta experience, an important motivator to continue sailing. ALCA has fundraised \$288,000 for Youth Teams since 2009 and has organised teams which helped with affordability. Additionally there has been support for U21's.

Coaches are contacted or make themselves available for selection. The coaching decision is ultimately decided by sailors, however interested parties in the decision include Australian Sailing who may sponsor the program and ALCA. While ALCA's primary interest is in the team as part of its membership, it is also interested in the coaching experience gained at the event, particularly where young and emerging talent are committed to the ongoing development of the fleet in circumstances where they have state-based support.

Many of our best and brightest state and national coaches have supported ILCA Youth teams. Placements are limited, coaches will need to build a case for selection through AS to gain their sponsorship or through ALCA via state Association who may make representations on their behalf.

For optimised coaching support the goal is for two coaches for each Youth ILCA 4, ILCA 6 & one or two coaches for U21 teams. This began occurring in 2016 and 2017 when 5 coaches were organised. The second coach is a win for the team but particularly for girls whose support can be prioritised. Those strong numbers contributed to a strong U21 worlds team this year.

Fundraising can begin as soon as sailors have made application to Championship events. Teams of 10 have been able to raise funds but inevitably need sponsors to achieve an affordable budget, funds raised are held in Trust by ALCA and accessed by a team representative. Teams of less than ten normally need additional sponsorship to sustain participation. Larger teams have on occasion required a second coach, not necessarily a marginal cost benefit, typically an additional sponsor(s) will be required.

## How we relate to State High Performance and the Olympics

General principles are presented to guide the conduct of relationships are required between State High Performance, class associations and clubs for the common good of sailing.

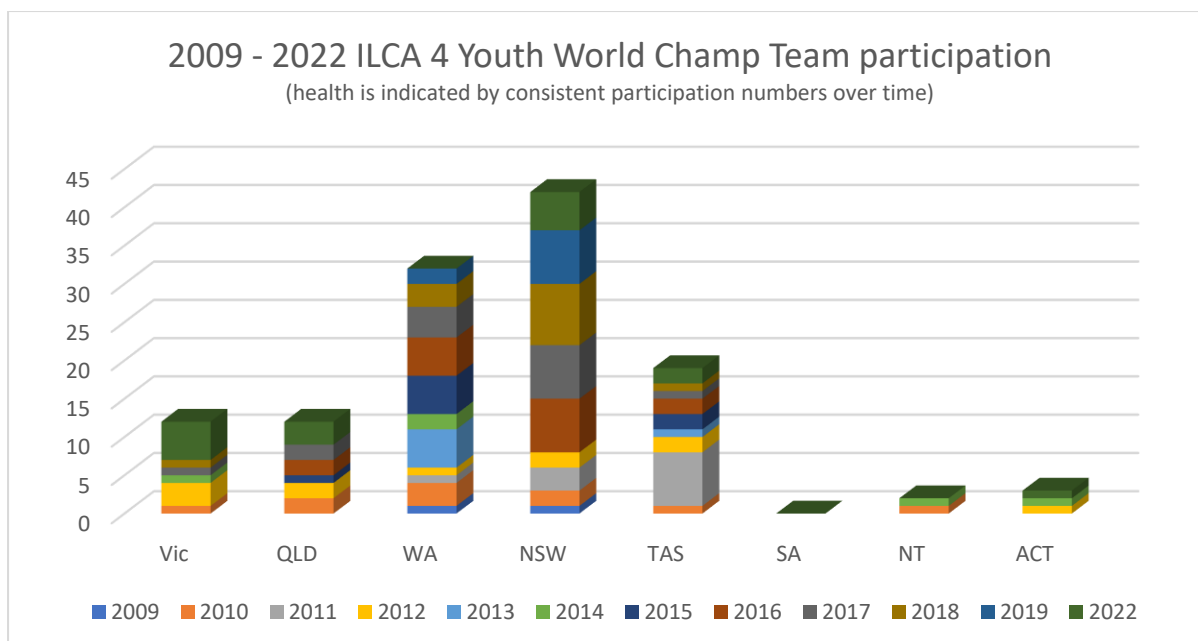
**Special responsibility:** Special responsibility A peak body representative and new entrant to sailing, State High Performance has a special responsibility to take reasonable steps to assure club and association memberships are not compromised.

**Principle of co-existence:** ALCA see State High Performance, Club and Association as complementary programs, a longer-term view is required for the common good to prevail. Viability of all state-based sailing activities dictates that all parties need to find ways to co-exist and strengthen each other. There would need to be consultation or recourse to address these problems.

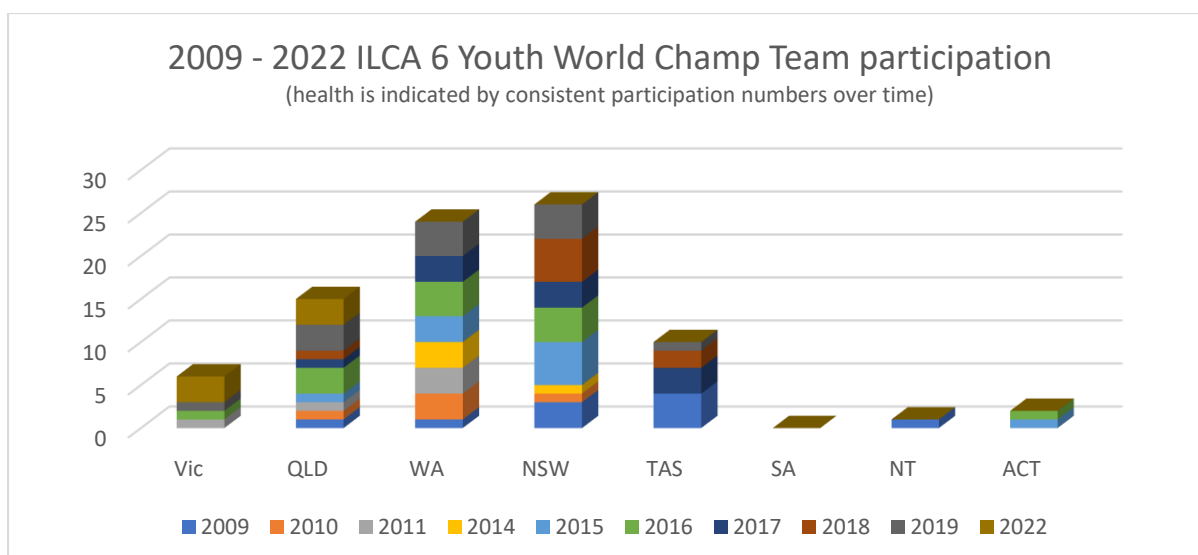
**Examples of breaches:** Centralised coaching may impact the ability for club and association feeder classes to finance programs that produce sailors, which is detrimental to all parties. Transfers of talented sailors who sustain smaller Club or Association fleets may be detrimental or lead to the collapse of those programs. State High Performance which offers scholarships to those sailors may be undermining the viability of those fleets when those sailors leave their home environment.

## 2009-2022 ILCA Youth Worlds participation & performance analysis

The graphical data provides a state-by-state profile of participation and performances for analysis purposes, an insight into how youth development is performing nationally.

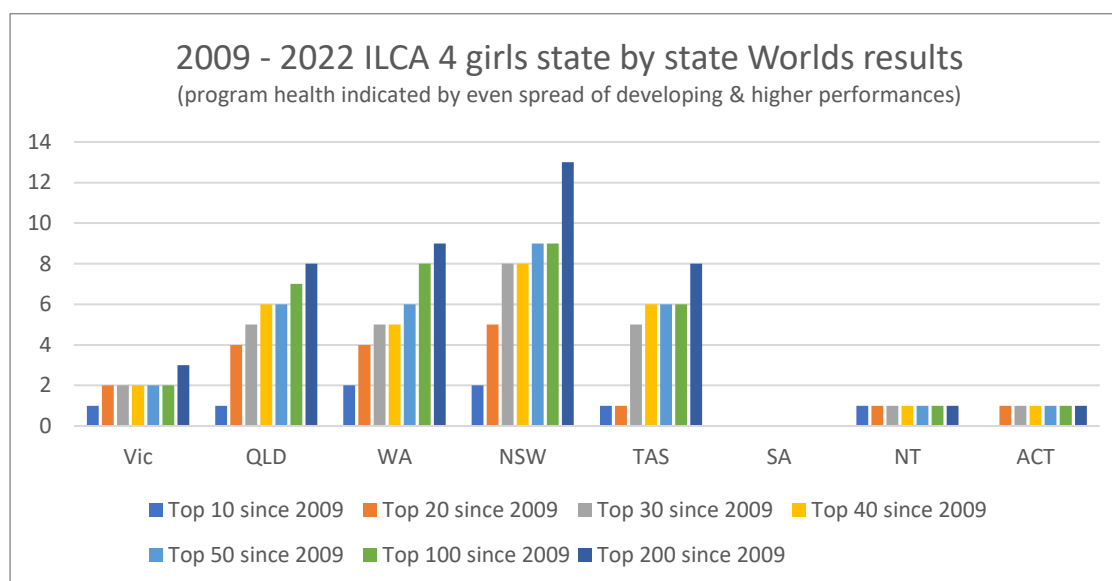


The above chart shows that state programs have sailors attending ILCA Youth World Championships, how many and regularity of participation since 2009. Because the ALCA Australian National Championship is a qualification event we also know the same state-based programs have sailors at nationals and by implication in local competition. Active sailors bring their experiences back to their home fleets where they lift the standard of sailing. Regular and higher ILCA 4 participation tends to reflect a healthy intake of sailors from feeder junior programs. WA and NSW have higher rates and more regular participation, which is a good foundation for fleet development, concerningly WA did not send a team in 2022 which will be a setback.

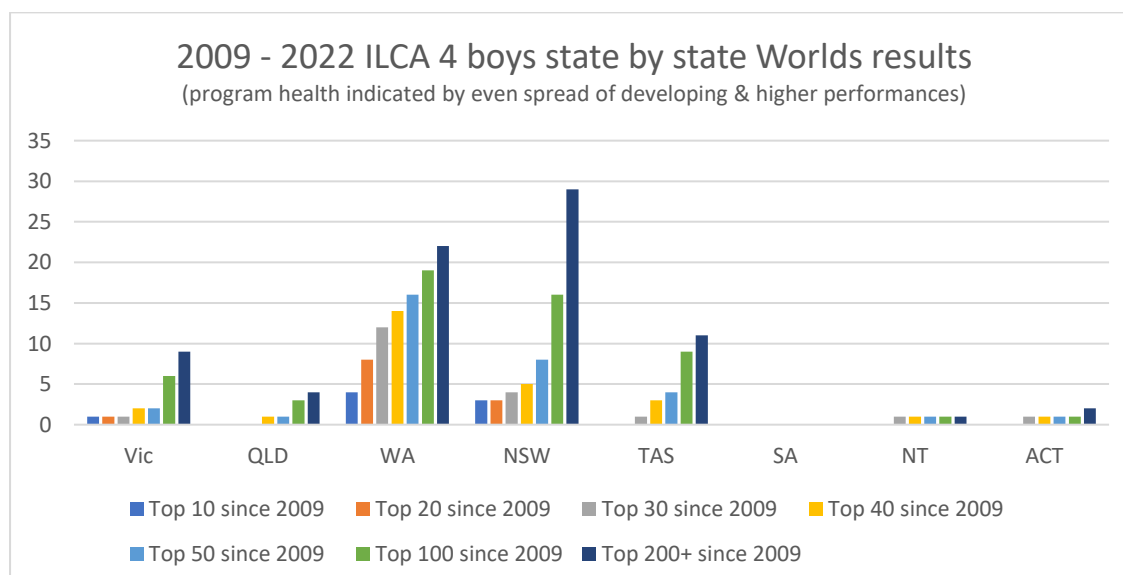


The above chart shows ILCA Youth World Championship sailors by state, how many attendances and regularity of participation since 2009. Because the ALCA Australian National Championship is a qualification event we also know the same state-based programs have sailors at nationals and by implication in local competition. Active sailors bring their experiences back to their home fleets and lift the standard of sailing more broadly. Regular and higher ILCA 6 participation tends to reflect progressions from previous ILCA 4 and accumulating experience. WA and NSW have higher rates and more regular participation which is a good foundation for fleet development. Qld rate of

participation has improved more recently which is positive but the progression from ILCA 4 is weaker indicating a disadvantage to sailors who start competing at an older age.



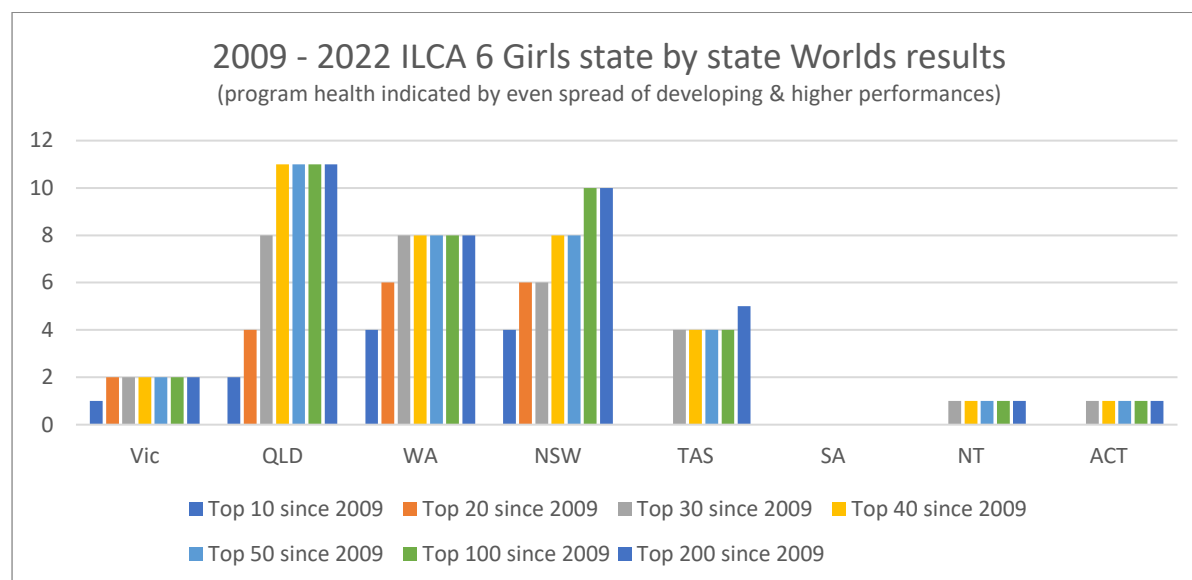
The above bar chart groupings indicate the standard of sailing achieved and potential for state programs to support and improve ILCA 4 girl performances. When read in conjunction with the ILCA World Championship team chart results project a picture of how many and how often states are participating and whether they are improving. Sailors who are improving tend to be more actively returning to key events. An indicator of the health of a state program will be regular participation of sailors (commitment) who enter the groupings in right-hand bars and progress to the left-hand bars as they improve in subsequent events (improvement). Qld looks healthy but its low rate of participation and top ten results will constrain it despite occasional high achievements. WA & NSW are balanced, Tas has positive signs from a small base.



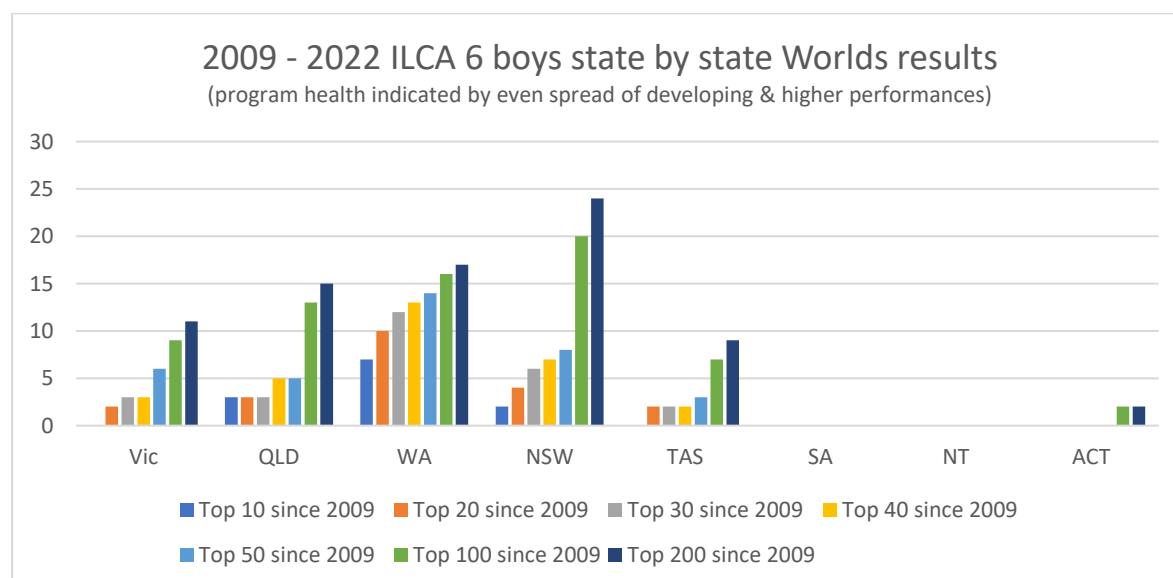
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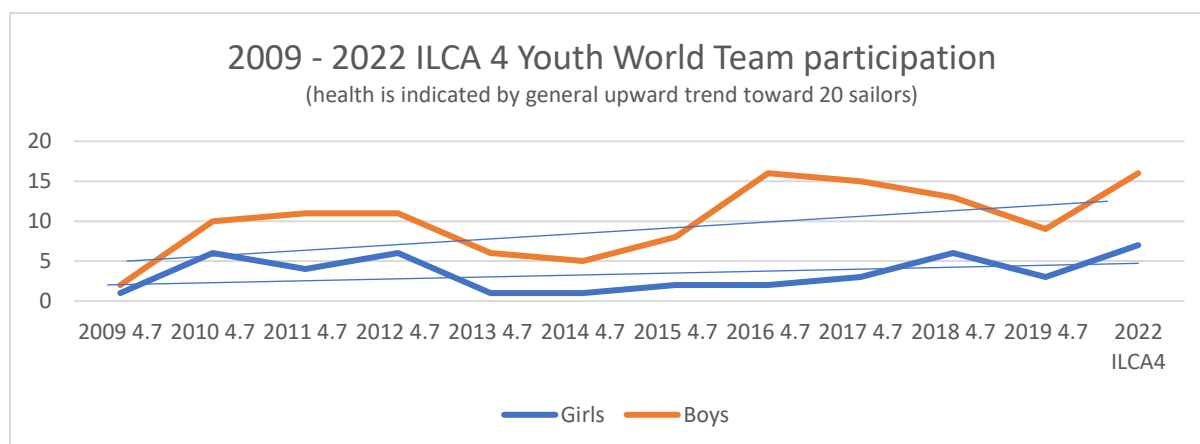
improve in subsequent events (improvement). WA looks balanced with high & routine intake, fewer top 200 transitioning to top 10 results, but it did not send a team in 2022 and with less competition during Covid development may be hampered. Vic, Qld, Tas have small intakes that are not progressing to the left-hand bar. NSW has a larger intake and similarly are not progressing to the left-hand bar. In general terms Vic, Qld, NSW and Tas state programs have reasonable standards of sailing in the home fleets but need more support to impact retention and get them to the next level.



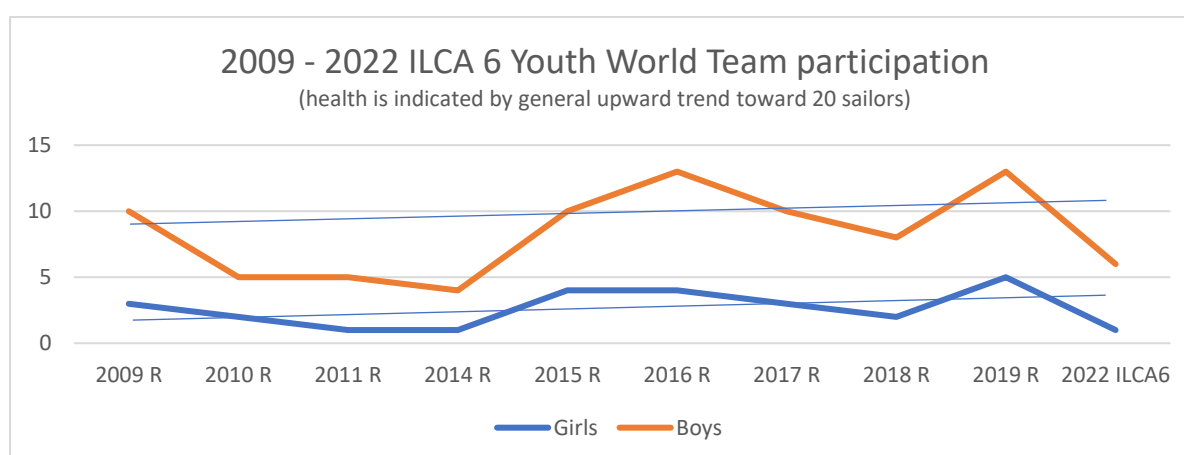
The above bar chart groupings indicate the standard of sailing achieved and potential for state programs to support and improve ILCA 6 girl performances. When read in conjunction with the ILCA World Championship team chart results project a picture of how many and how often states are participating and whether they are improving. Sailors who are improving tend to be more active at key events. An indicator of the health of a state program will be regular participation of sailors (commitment) who enter the groupings in right-hand bars and progress to the left-hand bars as they improve in subsequent events (improvement). Vic, Qld, Tas have small intakes that are not progressing to the left-hand bar. Vic participation is too low to detect improvement, Qld ability to improve is hampered by low and infrequent participation rates. NSW & WA are more balanced having larger participation rates progressing to the left-hand bar. Tas state programs have an opportunity to improve results.



The above bar chart groupings indicate the standard of sailing achieved and potential for state programs to support and improve ILCA 6 boy performances. When read in conjunction with the ILCA World Championship team chart results project a picture of how many and how often states are participating and whether they are improving. Sailors who are improving tend to be more active at key events. An indicator of the health of a state program will be regular participation of sailors (commitment) who enter the groupings in right-hand bars and progress to the left-hand bars as they improve in subsequent events (improvement). Vic, Qld, Tas ability to improve is hampered by low and infrequent participation rates. NSW & WA have larger participation rates however WA is more balanced progressions to the left-hand bar, indicating home program support is improving to a higher standard more effectively.



The above graph reflects participation rates of in the Australian ILCA 4 Youth World Championship teams, who will have qualified at the Australian nationals and been active in their respective state programs. The blue trend lines indicate an increasing participation rate of boys compared to girls which is healthy particularly the uptick during covid. However it appears that boys are transitioning into the event more often and at a greater rate than girls. ALCA initiatives such as Solidarity which sponsors girls to participate at nationals, competition prizes and event organisation that distinguish girls from boys, having a second coach at ILCA Worlds are all helpful however the ILCA class is informed that we can do better.



The above graph reflects participation rates of in the Australian ILCA 6 Youth World Championship teams, all will have attended the Australian Nationals qualification event, some will be competing for the first time, others will be building their experience. The blue trend lines indicate that boys and girls are increasing participation rates at similar rates which is healthy. There is also a notable downtick during the covid period, some experienced sailors will have aged out and transitioned to



U21 which had a particularly high rate of participation, possibly that ILCA 4 sailors were not travelling or transitioning during that time. The problem is that less experience will be available for home fleet development. However the uptick in ILCA 4 participation indicates that a larger ILCA 6 team is possible in 2023.

2009 - 2022 ILCA Youth World Championship Participation								
Average per annum	Vic	QLD	WA	NSW	TAS	SA	NT	ACT
ILCA 4 boys	0.8	0.3	1.8	2.4	0.9	0.0	0.1	0.2
ILCA 4 girls	0.3	0.7	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.0	0.1	0.1
ILCA 6 boys	0.9	1.3	1.4	2.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.2
ILCA 6 girls	0.2	0.9	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.0	0.1	0.1
<i>note; average attendance per annum</i>								

The above table shows average attendance per annum which reflects the experience available to the home fleet that may affect training and developmental activity in each state. A nominal score of '1' indicates that a training program is averaging participation of at least one sailor with international experience per annum. Scores below '1' has implications caused by a less experienced fleet.

## Data analysis summary & comments

The Australian ILCA Youth Development Pathway has been a wonderful achievement, its capacity to engage large fleets at multiple levels has brought unity and stability to the front end of its ALCA national sailing organisation, a leader in the Oceania region, part of the ILCA International World Council. This is about people and there is clearly work to do, this report provides a way forward for state-based programs to support their fleets in a way that youth sailors have been responding to.

State base programs who find ways to induct and develop sailors are demonstrably more successful when at least some of their sailors attend key events and improve their performances, lifting the standard of sailing in their home fleet. ILCA dinghies are readily available, states have a way forward, success is available to the willing.

### ILCA 4 YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

More sailors than ever are competing at ILCA 4 World Championship level, the 2009-2022 participation rate for boys compared to girls is trending upward which is a healthy sign particularly with the 2022 uptick post covid which indicates recovery after limited competition. However it appears that boys are transitioning into the event more often and at a greater rate than girls. The good news is that diverging participation rate differential closes for girls in ILCA 6, where both genders are growing at similar rates.

Not all states are organised, the 2009-2022 data indicates that the state-based program support is uneven that some ILCA 4 World Championship sailors participate at higher rates and more regularly over the period which will affect stability and opportunities to develop in the home fleets. 2022 show promising signs of recovery in participation some less active states but it is too early to know whether those programs will be driving 'improvement'. 2022 ILCA 4 Team results were less competitive than in previous campaigns with only one sailor achieving top 30.

In general terms ILCA 4 Pathway competition has ample scope to continue growth, except for limited entries into the Youth World Championship, team size will be limited to around 20 sailors. Selection by application will be dependent on ranking results from the Australian Youth Championship being the qualifying event. Offers will become increasingly competitive, home state programs will come under increasing pressure to prepare their sailors appropriately.

## **ILCA 6 YOUTH WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP**

ILCA 6 girls and boys have been responding positively to the event, the long-term trend indicates both genders rates of participation are increasing similarly which is healthy. Despite a downturn in 2022 there are good reasons to expect that a general upward trend to continue ie strong 4.7 and U21 participation.

Some state programs have higher and more regularised participation rates which can help improve fleet development when compared to others, some state programs demonstrate the capacity to consistently improve sailors by comparison to others. WA has been a standout performer in this regard however for the first time in years has nil youth sailors participating which will be concerning to program organisers, coaches and state high performance. Adding to woes 2022 ILCA 6 Team results were less competitive than in previous campaigns with only one sailor achieving top 50.

In general terms ILCA 6 Pathway competition has ample scope to continue growth, except for limited entries into the Youth World Championship, team size will be limited to around 15-20 sailors. Selection by application will be dependent on ranking results from the Australian Youth Championship being the qualifying event. Offers will become increasingly competitive, home state programs will come under increasing pressure to prepare their sailors appropriately.

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