

2027 World Anti-Doping Code Implementation – FAQ Brief for Sports

September 2026 | For National Sporting Organisations and National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability

Purpose of this FAQ

- This FAQ is a briefing aid for sport CEOs, Boards and senior executives on Australia's implementation of the 2027 World Anti-Doping Code.
- It explains what is changing at a high level, why the changes matter for sports, and the practical steps NSOs and NSODs may need to take before 1 January 2027.
- It is intended to support consistent messaging with sport leaders, integrity managers, legal teams, athletes and athlete support personnel as Sport Integrity Australia supports adoption of the 2027 Australian National Anti-Doping Policy.

Key messages for sports

- Australia must implement the 2027 World Anti-Doping Code (the 2027 Code) and International Standards by 1 January 2027 to remain Code-compliant.
- This is done through targeted legislative amendments to support Australia's broader 2027 Code implementation package, including updates to the *Sport Integrity Australia Act 2020*, the *Sport Integrity Australia Regulations 2020*, including the National Anti-Doping Scheme being Schedule 1 to the Regulations, and the 2027 Australian National Anti-Doping Policy (ANADP).
- National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) and National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability (NSODs) will need to adopt the 2027 ANADP before the 2027 Code commences on 1 January 2027.
- Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) will continue to brief and support sports through implementation, including education, guidance and adoption support.
- Most day-to-day anti-doping obligations for athletes and sports will continue to operate in a familiar way.
- The main categories of change in the 2027 Code relate to:
 - Increased recognition of human rights and system fairness, including equality of arms for appeals and no mandatory publication of No Fault cases.
 - Further protections for minors, with more focus on the role of athlete support personnel.
 - Enhanced options for case cooperation and early resolution, coupled with increased flexibility in the sanction regime.
 - Increased independence, particularly directed at NADOs, institutional independence of hearings and appeals and the role of the independent review expert in exceptional circumstances.
- To ensure legislative compliance with the 2027 Code, the Sport Legislation Amendment (World Anti-Doping Code Implementation) Bill 2026 includes the following themed amendments:
 - independent review of Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) decisions
 - operational independence in anti-doping decision-making
 - publication and privacy safeguards
 - alignment of definitions with the 2027 Code.

FAQ at a glance

What sports should know	Australia is updating its anti-doping framework for the 2027 Code. For sports, the key point is that most day-to-day obligations will remain familiar, but there will be targeted changes to policy adoption, TUE reviews, decision-making responsibilities, privacy safeguards and definitions from 1 January 2027.
What sports need to do	Adopt the 2027 ANADP, ensure membership agreements and related sport rules are aligned, and work with SIA on implementation, education and operational readiness.
What athletes may notice	For most athletes, day-to-day obligations will remain largely the same. Some athletes may notice changes to TUE review pathways and enhanced privacy safeguards in specific circumstances. Athletes in Registered and National testing pools will receive targeted guidance about their whereabouts obligations under the 2027 ANADP.
What SIA will do	SIA will continue to lead national implementation, provide guidance to sports, support education and engagement, and work with WADA to ensure Australia remains compliant with the Code.

What this means for sports

This table summarises the key changes CEOs and Boards are most likely to need for briefing, decision-making and implementation planning.

Change area	What sports need to know	What sports may need to do
Code Changes		
Human rights and fairness	The 2027 Code places greater emphasis on athlete rights, fairness and procedural safeguards, including appeal rights, provisional suspension processes, and no mandatory public disclosure in No Fault cases.	Ensure leaders, integrity staff and athlete-facing personnel understand that the updated framework is not only about enforcement, but also about fair process and athlete protections.
Protections for minors and vulnerable people	The 2027 Code strengthens protections for minors, protected persons and other vulnerable participants across anti-doping processes and places greater responsibility and scrutiny on the role of Athlete Support Personnel.	Be prepared to support the strengthened approach to privacy, communication and case handling where minors, protected persons or recreational athletes are involved.
Flexible and proportionate sanctions	The 2027 Code introduces greater flexibility and clarity in sanctions, taking into account the circumstances of the case, including intention, contamination, substances of abuse matters and TUE-related administrative error. It also places greater emphasis on case resolution and cooperation to promote non-litigious resolution of cases.	Understand that outcomes may be more tailored to the circumstances of each case, while still operating within the Code and ANADP framework.
Independence across the anti-doping system	The 2027 Code strengthens independence across the doping control process, including testing, investigations, results management, hearings and appeals.	Recognise that SIA will have greater responsibility for certain decisions previously imposed by sports, and that sports will support implementation rather than being responsible for handing down decisions.

Change area	What sports need to know	What sports may need to do
Legislative changes to the SIA Act		
Independent review of a refusal to grant a TUE	The NST is the forum for an athlete to appeal a decision by ASDMAC not to grant a TUE.	Understand the new role of the NST in reviewing an ASDMAC decision not to grant a TUE in the anti-doping division.
Operational independence of SIA in managing the end-to-end doping control process	The SIA CEO will be responsible for handing down provisional suspensions and imposing sanctions on athletes in place of the sport.	Sports will still be responsible for ensuring the consequences are enforced.
Athlete definition	The definition of athlete will be updated to align with the 2027 Code, including removal of the six-month deeming rule.	Support SIA by ensuring that all athletes formally agree to be bound by the ANADP and seek SIA advice if eligibility or coverage questions arise.
Amended definitions and recognition of WADA technical letters	The Bill will update relevant definitions and the framework will recognise WADA technical letters as part of the international anti-doping framework.	No significant direct action is expected beyond adopting and applying the updated 2027 ANADP.
ANADP Adoption		
Policy adoption and implementation	NSOs and NSODs will need to adopt the 2027 ANADP before the 2027 Code commences.	Plan Board or delegated approval processes, align membership agreements and related sport rules with the updated ANADP, update internal communications, and participate in SIA implementation briefings.

Frequently asked questions for sports

Australia's Anti-Doping Framework

1. What comprises Australia's Anti-Doping Legal Framework?

The UNESCO International Convention Against Doping in Sport (UNESCO Convention) is the international legal instrument under which States Parties, such as Australia, agree to adopt measures consistent with the principles of the World Anti-Doping Code.

Australia's anti-doping legislation gives effect to its international obligations under the UNESCO Convention and establishes Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) as Australia's National Anti-Doping Organisation under the Code. SIA is responsible for adopting and administering anti-doping rules that comply with the Code.

Australia's National Anti-Doping Program operates under a hybrid statutory and contractual system, consisting of the:

- *Sport Integrity Australia Act 2020*
- *Sport Integrity Australia Regulations 2020*, including the National Anti-Doping (NAD) Scheme
- the Australian National Anti-Doping Policy (ANADP).

The ANADP is adopted by Australian Sports Commission-recognised sports.

Code Update Process and Implementation

2. Why is the Code changing?

The Code is the global set of harmonised anti-doping rules that was first approved in 2003 and came into force on 1 January 2004.

Code updates occur periodically to reflect changes in science, medicine, technology, anti-doping practice and athlete rights. The 2027 Code is the next scheduled update following previous revisions in 2009, 2015 and 2021.

This Code Update process commenced in September 2023 with the proposed Code concepts released for stakeholder consultation prior to the first drafting phase. Stakeholders were consulted on three drafts, with a final draft approved by the WADA Executive Committee (ExCo) in September 2025. On 5 December 2025, at the 6th World Conference on Doping in Sport, ExCo approved the International Standards and the WADA Foundation Board approved the Code.

3. Why does Australia need to update its anti-doping framework?

Australia must update its anti-doping framework because the 2027 Code and International Standards commence on 1 January 2027. All World Anti-Doping Code (Code) signatories, including Sport Integrity Australia, need their rules and systems aligned by that date.

4. Why is this needed now?

The change is needed now because the new Code starts on 1 January 2027. Australia's legislation, regulations and the 2027 ANADP need to be in place before then.

If Australia is not Code-compliant by 1 January 2027, there may be operational, reputational and international consequences, including scrutiny from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and potential impacts on Australia's standing in global sport.

5. *Why is the implementation timeline tight?*

The 2027 Code and International Standards were finalised in late 2025. SIA and the NST have been working through 2026 to update Australia's legislation and policies so the full framework is ready for commencement. Due to high demand for Commonwealth legislative amendments in 2026, the earliest date for introduction of the Bill was 17 September 2026, with passage also expected during the Spring Sitting Period.

6. *What does the updated legislation change mean for sports?*

The legislative reforms make targeted updates to support the 2027 Code. The main changes relate to TUE review pathways (to be transferred to the NST), operational independence in anti-doping decision-making, publication and privacy safeguards, and updated definitions.

7. *What does this mean for how anti-doping works in your sport?*

Australia's anti-doping system is delivered through a combination of legislation, regulations and the ANADP adopted by sports.

The updated legislation does not redesign the system. It updates targeted parts of the framework that are enlivened under legislation so Australia remains aligned and compliant with the 2027 Code.

The main benefits are stronger independent review, clearer independent decision-making responsibilities, improved privacy safeguards and continued adoption of internationally consistent anti-doping rules.

8. *Why is the NST being given a role in Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) reviews?*

The 2027 Code requires an independent national-level pathway for reviewing TUE decisions. The NST is Australia's specialist independent sports tribunal, so it is the appropriate body to hear these reviews.

9. *Does this significantly expand the NST's role?*

No. The change is targeted to TUE reviews required under the 2027 Code. It does not fundamentally change the NST's broader role.

10. *What happens if the national anti-doping framework is not ready by 1 January 2027?*

If the framework is not compliant by 1 January 2027, there may be a mismatch between sports' anti-doping policies and Australia's legislation. WADA may also raise compliance concerns, which can create reputational and international consequences. The aim is to have the legislation, regulations and 2027 ANADP in place before commencement.

11. *How is SIA working with WADA on Code compliance?*

SIA is engaging with WADA as Australia updates its overall anti-doping framework. WADA assesses whether the combined package of legislation, regulations and the 2027 ANADP is Code-compliant.

Review, independence and athlete protections

12. Is this change being made because of an issue in Australian sport?

No. The changes are not a response to a problem with Australian sport. They are part of the regular international Code review cycle.

Australia has updated its anti-doping framework after previous Code revisions and is doing the same for the 2027 Code to maintain international alignment and remain compliant with the Code.

13. How should sport CEOs describe Australia's anti-doping system?

Australia has a strong and longstanding commitment to clean sport and plays an active role in the international anti-doping system.

SIA delivers Australia's national anti-doping program, including education, testing, investigations and results management, consistent with international requirements.

For sports, the key message is that the 2027 changes are about maintaining international alignment and strengthening athlete protections, not responding to a failure in the current system.

14. What protections exist for athletes?

The anti-doping framework contains a range of protections designed to ensure fairness, transparency and independent review.

Athletes have access to independent review and appeal mechanisms through bodies such as the NST. The updated legislation further strengthens these protections by allowing athletes to seek review of decisions to deny a TUE through the NST rather than an internal review panel.

The legislative changes also strengthen privacy protections by expanding circumstances where Anti-Doping Rule Violations (ADRVs) do not have to be publicly disclosed and requiring greater consideration of the interests of minors, protected persons and recreational athletes before publication occurs.

Consultation, implementation and support for sports

15. How have sports been involved in the Code review and implementation process?

Sports have been engaged through the international Code review process and through SIA's domestic implementation planning, including consultations on the adoption of the 2027 ANADP throughout this transition year.

The 2027 Code update process began in September 2023 when the Code concepts were first released for stakeholder consultation. SIA provided feedback to WADA at every opportunity in collaboration with the Australian sporting community.

16. What changes will athletes actually notice from 1 January?

For most athletes, there will be little day-to-day change. The majority of anti-doping obligations, including testing, prohibited substances, ADRV and most whereabouts obligations, will continue to operate in a familiar way.

For athletes directly affected by specific changes, SIA will provide targeted guidance on testing pool requirements, Domestic Testing List arrangements, TUE review pathways, privacy protections and related processes under the 2027 ANADP.

Athletes will also receive education and guidance on any relevant changes before the revised Code comes into effect.

17. What changes are required from National Sporting Organisations and National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability?

NSOs and NSODs will be required to adopt the 2027 ANADP and ensure their membership agreements, related rules and internal processes are aligned with the updated policy framework.

Sporting organisations will continue to recognise and support SIA's role as Australia's National Anti-Doping Organisation (NADO) and will be required to implement changes reflected in the 2027 ANADP.

The most significant operational change is that certain anti-doping decisions that were previously imposed by sporting organisations will instead be imposed by the SIA CEO.

18. By when must sports update their policies?

NSOs and NSODs will need to adopt the 2027 ANADP before the Code comes into force on 1 January 2027. SIA has worked, and is working, with sporting organisations throughout 2026 to support timely adoption and implementation of the updated policy framework.

Due to the timing of the commencement of the 2027 Code, it is recommended that sports implement updates by 18 December 2026. This will allow for the Christmas shutdown period.

19. What education will SIA provide to athletes and support personnel?

SIA will provide a comprehensive education and engagement program to support implementation of the Code. This will include webinars, educational resources, stakeholder briefings and targeted guidance for athletes, athlete support personnel and sporting organisations. Education materials will explain key changes, what they mean in practice and any actions required before commencement of the new arrangements.

20. Will these changes create additional costs for sports?

The legislative amendments are not expected to impose significant additional costs on sports. SIA will support implementation through existing planning, education and engagement activities.

21. How have athlete voices been considered?

The 2027 Code review included athlete consultation at the international level. SIA will also support athletes and athlete support personnel in Australia through education, guidance and implementation communications.

Strategic context for sport CEOs

22. Is Australia taking a similar approach to other Code signatories?

Yes. All Code signatories are required to review and update their frameworks for the 2027 Code. Australia is implementing the changes through legislation, regulations, policy updates and education so sports continue to operate under internationally consistent anti-doping rules.

23. Do Australian sporting organisations need to change their own anti-doping policies?

Yes. NSOs and NSODs will need to adopt the 2027 ANADP and ensure their membership agreements, related rules and internal processes support the updated anti-doping policy framework by 1 January 2027.

Most of the changes required to implement the revised Code will be made through amendments to the NAD Scheme and the ANADP, which NSOs and NSODs adopt as their anti-doping policy. These amendments will ensure that anti-doping rules remain consistent across Australian sport and continue to meet international requirements.

SIA is assisting NSOs and NSODs with this process and will continue to support adoption and implementation.

24. Will the changes affect community sport?

The amendments are not expected to have a significant impact on community sport. They are primarily designed to align Australia's anti-doping framework with the requirements of the 2027 Code and strengthen the operational independence of anti-doping decision-making. For most athletes, the anti-doping rules will remain familiar. The most significant changes are likely to arise only where an athlete or support person is facing a possible anti-doping rule violation managed under the Code.

25. Why does Code compliance matter for Australian sport and major events?

Maintaining Code compliance protects Australia's standing in international sport and supports confidence in clean competition, including as Australia prepares for major international events such as Brisbane 2032.

If a national anti-doping framework is found non-compliant, WADA consequences can affect a country's ability to host or participate in international sport. The objective is to avoid that risk by implementing the 2027 Code on time.

26. What do sporting organisations need to do?

SIA will share the 2027 ANADP with sport as soon as possible.

The main priority for sport is adoption of the ANADP by 1 January 2027.

The Sport Legislation Amendment (World Anti-Doping Code Implementation) Bill 2026 was introduced into Parliament on 17 September 2026 and will now continue through the parliamentary process. The final version of the updated ANADP remains dependent on the passage of the Bill through Parliament and WADA's review.

As the final ANADP must align with the legislation, regulations and WADA requirements, it cannot yet be formally settled.

SIA is aiming to submit a final draft of the ANADP to WADA next week, with WADA expected to take approximately three weeks to complete its review.

Should sports require an advance draft, SIA will be able to provide this once it has been submitted to WADA. Please note that any advance draft will remain subject to WADA feedback, the final passage of the legislation, and any consequential changes to the regulations.

Once the WADA-approved ANADP is released, organisations will need to prepare for adoption through their Board processes, with the policy taking effect on 1 January 2027. SIA encourages sport to identify a Board meeting in October or November where adoption can be considered and completed before the end of the year.

Sports will also receive an adoption pack with instructions on how to adopt the ANADP, publish it on their website and communicate it to members before it comes into effect.

Definitions and titles

This section explains the key organisations, titles and acronyms used in this FAQ.

Title or acronym	Meaning
2027 Code	The 2027 World Anti-Doping Code, which sets the global anti-doping rules that Code signatories must implement from 1 January 2027.
Regulations	The regulations that support Australia's anti-doping legislative framework, including the National Anti-Doping Scheme, and help give practical effect to Australia's Code obligations.
ADRV	Anti-Doping Rule Violation. A breach of the anti-doping rules, such as the presence or use of a prohibited substance, evading sample collection, tampering, possession, trafficking, or other conduct prohibited under the World Anti-Doping Code and the ANADP.
ANADP	Australian National Anti-Doping Policy. The anti-doping policy adopted by NSOs and NSODs to apply anti-doping rules across Australian sport.
ASDMAC	Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Council. The body that assesses Therapeutic Use Exemption applications in Australia.
Code signatory	An organisation that has accepted the World Anti-Doping Code and is required to implement Code-compliant anti-doping rules.
NADO	National Anti-Doping Organisation. The organisation responsible for delivering a country's national anti-doping program.
NAD Scheme	National Anti-Doping Scheme. The Australian legislative framework that supports the operation of Australia's anti-doping program.
NSO	National Sporting Organisation.
NSOD	National Sporting Organisation for People with Disability.
NST	National Sports Tribunal. Australia's independent sports tribunal, which will have a role in reviewing certain TUE decisions under the 2027 framework.
SIA	Sport Integrity Australia, Australia's National Anti-Doping Organisation and the agency responsible for leading national implementation of the 2027 Code.
SIA CEO	The Chief Executive Officer of Sport Integrity Australia. The SIA CEO has statutory authority under legislation and, under the updated framework, will make certain anti-doping decisions that were previously imposed by sports.
TUE	Therapeutic Use Exemption. An approval that allows an athlete to use a prohibited substance or method for legitimate medical reasons where the required criteria are met.
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency. The international body responsible for the World Anti-Doping Code and monitoring Code compliance.
Code	World Anti-Doping Code. The global anti-doping framework developed by WADA that sets the rules and standards Code signatories must implement to protect clean sport.