



SPORT INTEGRITY *MATTERS*

ISSUE 15 | DECEMBER 2023

**THE HIDDEN UNDERBELLY
OF SPORT**
FINDINGS ON VIOLENCE
AGAINST CHILDREN

2024 PROHIBITED LIST
WHAT'S CHANGED?

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN
AUSTRALIAN SPORT**

CHAMPION OF CHANGE
WHAT DRIVES PARALYMPIAN
ELLA SABLJAK





SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA

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FEEDBACK

Do you have a story about an integrity issue that you want to share with the sports community through future issues of *Sport Integrity Matters*?

Send an email to
communications@sportintegrity.gov.au

All feedback is appreciated.

CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO	3
THE HIDDEN UNDERBELLY OF SPORT	4
Victoria University's findings about violence against children in sport	
ADVANTAGE: INTEGRITY	7
Tennis is leading continuous improvement in the sport integrity space	
SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA ADVISORY COUNCIL	10
A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIAN SPORT	13
Sporting organisations have obligations too, writes lawyer Nikki Dryden	
A CHAMPION OF CHANGE	16
Paralympian Ella Sabljak on what drives her to push for change	
2024 PROHIBITED LIST: WHAT'S CHANGED?	18
LOOKING AT THE BIGGER PICTURE: NATIONAL, REGIONAL, GLOBAL	20
Non-Compliance	20
Russia	21
Director appointed to key WADA Committee	21
2023 Pacific Games	22
2024 FELLOWSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED	22
RAISING THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION	23
CALLING TIME: DISCUSSING LIFE AFTER SPORT	24
Olympians Petria Thomas and Ben Hardy, and AFL forward Josh Bruce on life after elite sport	

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

It has been a year of significant transformation for Sport Integrity Australia with the implementation and progression of a number of key programs and policies aimed at protecting the integrity of Australian sport.

Central to this progression has been the collaboration with key stakeholders including Government, the World Anti-Doping Agency, the International Testing Agency, World Athletics Integrity Unit, National Sporting Organisations (NSO), National Sporting Organisations for People with Disability (NSOD), the Australian Olympic Committee, Paralympics Australia, Commonwealth Games Australia, the National Sports Tribunal, the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Institute of Sport, the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission and our federal and international law enforcement partners.

Memorandums of Understanding have been signed with partners, we also worked with the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to develop frameworks to protect athletes from online abuse and supported the West Australian Institute of Sport in signing up to the National Integrity Framework (NIF).

It's been a year in which we have worked hard to ensure the processes and systems across all of our programs evolve with the expectations of our agency. NSOs and NSODs have played a critical role in developing NIF policies and standards, making them more streamlined, flexible and practical to use.

Sport Integrity Australia invested \$4 million directly into sports' capability by extending the roles of National Integrity Managers embedded in NSOs and NSODs. There are now 19 National Integrity Managers (employed by sports) working across 30 sports and seven Integrity Support Officers (employed by our agency) working across 25 sports. In 2024 we will continue to listen and develop the capability of the National Integrity Managers.

The agency also launched the Safety in Sport Continuous Improvement Program to strengthen safeguarding capability and practices across the sports sector.

“... our plan is to develop external facing programs to promote safety for women and First Nations peoples in sport.”

Following a pilot program, 24 sports have now signed up to the program.

There was also the development of a range of resources to assist sports in areas outside Sport Integrity Australia's remit, including an investigation toolkit and a bullying referral guide.

Another area of focus for us has been refining the Integrity Complaints process, including the development of a case categorisation system, reducing the timeframes when dealing with complaints and anti-doping matters, and enhancing our communications with sports throughout this process.

One of the challenges we face, as highlighted in *The hidden underbelly of sport* (p4), is encouraging participants in sport including young males to report abuse. It is why we have had a focus on this issue and worked alongside Play by the Rules to raise awareness within the sporting community with the Start to Talk campaign. The campaign has been an overwhelming success with widespread coverage across all media.

Sport Integrity Australia has also played a role in a number of major sporting events in the region with key personnel embedded in events and teams, including the FIFA Women's World Cup Integrity Taskforce, the Australian team for the Youth Commonwealth Games and the anti-doping team for the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands, with the aim to enhance safeguarding and match-fixing education activities.

Education continues to be the primary focus for all levels of sport with face-to-face education sessions,

online education courses and Play by the Rules education courses.

We have also conducted an organisation-wide review of culture and racism, led by Sport Integrity Australia Culture and Safety Advisor Patrick Johnson.

Over the next 12 months our plan is to develop and deliver external facing programs to promote safety for women and First Nations peoples involved in sport. We will also work in partnership with the Australian Olympic Committee/ Paralympics Australia in the lead-up to the 2024 Paris Olympics and Paralympics.

We are continuing to develop data around trends to inform our education and testing programs.

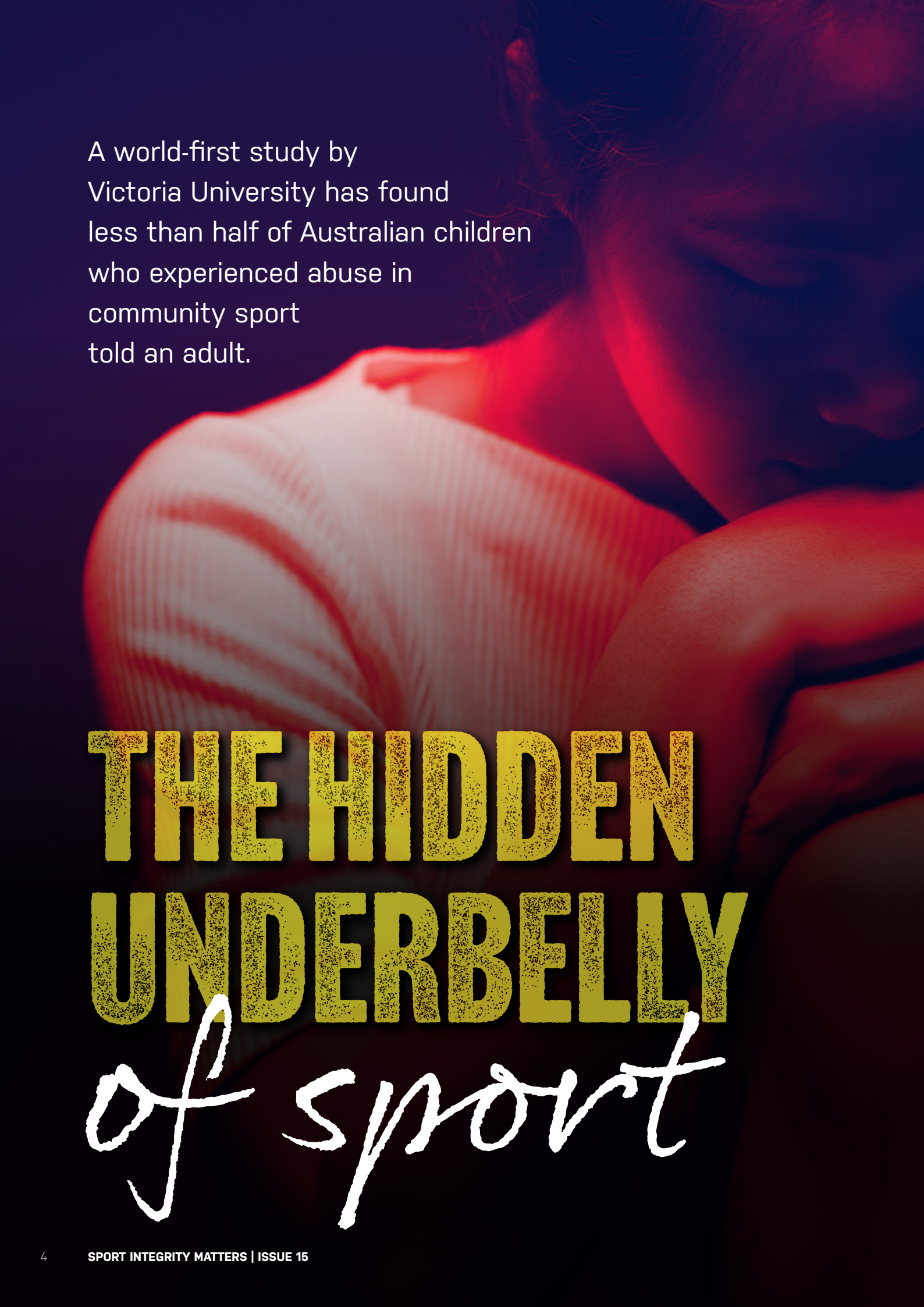
And, of course, the countdown to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympics has well and truly started with Sport Integrity Australia determined to ensure there is an integrity legacy from the Games. I look forward to working with all stakeholders to put in place a world-class integrity model, not just for our current athletes but for future generations of Australians involved in sport.

2024 will be a year of consolidation and with a focus on building the agency's capability to ensure integrity is embedded into the culture of sport.



David Sharpe APM OAM
Chief Executive Officer





A world-first study by
Victoria University has found
less than half of Australian children
who experienced abuse in
community sport
told an adult.

THE HIDDEN UNDERBELLY *of sport*

New research has revealed the under-reporting of child abuse at community level sport in Australia. The research, led by Dr Mary Woessner and Dr Aurélie Pankowiak, explored how children talk about – or don't talk about – their experiences of abuse in sport. They surveyed 800 adults, and 82% of them said they experienced a form of abuse (including sexual, emotional and physical abuse, neglect, bullying and harassment) in community sport as children.

The survey found more than half of the respondents who experienced abuse never spoke to an adult about the violence, while three in four children never spoke to an adult about abuse from a coach.

Those who experienced peer violence disclosed at the highest frequency to parents (35%), although boys had significantly lower rates of disclosure compared to girls.

Disclosure rates of violence by coach were 27% and even lower when perpetrated by a parent (13%).

Dr Woessner said the survey was highly concerning for everyone involved in sport and highlighted the crucial factors that helped to facilitate disclosure by a child.

"We knew very little about how children spoke about their experiences of abuse," she said.

"First, a child victim/survivor (and adults around them) needs to recognise their experience as abuse as in many instances the abuse is normalised. However, even when children are aware and able to say something is wrong, we found they think twice before speaking to an adult. Children first weigh up their experience against those around them, often wondering if their experience is 'bad enough'."

As one respondent interviewed said "...it's [violence] a cultural thing in the sport. And so you just learn to live with it, ignore it."

Some survey respondents participated in research interviews to talk about the process of telling adults about the violence they experienced. The disclosure process was conceptualised as two interrelated phases: the child's internal conceptualisation of the violence they experienced and appraisal of the risks to talk about it to an adult, and the disclosure interaction with the adult.

After experiencing violence in sport, interviewees described weighing up how bad the violence they experienced was, what the consequences of speaking to an adult might be and if they knew an adult that they trusted enough to speak to.

One participant shared how he would first compare his own experiences of abuse in sport against the experiences of his peers when deciding whether or not to say something. He thought if they stayed silent, he should too. He said the bullying behaviours were widespread.

It was even more challenging for the child to speak out when the trusted adult – either a parent or the coach – was the perpetrator of the abuse. As this respondent shows, "...at a young age, it's hard because my parents and my coach, I saw them with a lot of respect. And I gave them a lot of authority. So, it's hard to address dissatisfaction about people that you also view as like an authority figure in your life, and as someone that you respect."

The perceived consequences of disclosure also focused heavily on the consequences, either to themselves or the perpetrator, "I didn't want them [my parents] to withdraw me from sport altogether, because sports always been everything in my life, it truly has. So, I suppose there was a fear of losing that."

Another respondent said, "I sort of battled definitely internally with that...I didn't want to do [harm] to someone's reputation, or their character."

The report found that a barrier to disclosing abuse was the dual roles many volunteers held within their sporting clubs (two-thirds of volunteers are parents) "creating a web of interconnected relationships".

For those children that disclosed to an adult, the first response was critical.

The study found that when the participants shared their disclosures to an adult (frequently parents or a coach) "in almost every instance" they were dismissed, disbelieved or

“

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”

KEY FINDINGS

- More than half said they never spoke to an adult about the abuse.
- 3 in 4 children never spoke to an adult about abuse from a coach.
- Rates of disclosure were even lower when the abuse was from a parent, with 8 in 9 children not speaking to another adult about their experiences.
- Boys disclose peer abuse in sport less frequently than girls, while girls had lower rates of disclosing to an adult within the sport club (coach/club manager) than boys.
- The majority of children disclosed to their parents.
- Participants often felt dismissed by the adult they spoke to, and this had a critical impact on their future appraisal of violence.

KEY FINDINGS

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"...at a young age, it's hard because my parents and my coach, I saw them with a lot of respect. And I gave them a lot of authority. So, it's hard to address dissatisfaction about people that you also view as like an authority figure in your life, and as someone that you respect."

"[bullying] ...it's [violence] a cultural thing in the sport. And so you just learn to live with it, ignore it."

"a lot of things I didn't disclose to them."

"... they [parents] were basically the only people that I felt I could talk to. And because I got no traction with them, I just accepted that that was the way it was going to be and had to put up with it."

"... she [the mother] sent an email to the club. [She] said 'this happened, I want an apology to my daughter and to me and this is unacceptable'... But as far as I know we never got a response. Never got an apology... But she didn't actually follow up on matter after the email, she was like it is not going to do anything. What are you gonna do?"

"As far as with [violence by] my coach, I felt as though because he'd been a family friend for so long that I would've have been able to talk to him. So, it was very hard when I got those [dismissive] reactions ... So that sort of let me down, and so like, well, what's the point of talking to anyone out there other than like my mum and dad, what's the point?"

diminished with the adult pushing the child to take responsibility for themselves and be resilient.

The research also found that even when the adult offered a supportive and empathetic response, this was rarely followed up with long-term support or by lodging an official report of abuse, leaving the experiences of abuse undocumented and unaddressed.

Dr Pankowiak shared that participants "often felt dismissed by the adult they spoke to, and this had a negative impact on the child's future appraisal of violence and served to shut down further attempts to disclose it".

The research calls for an urgent need to revisit current disclosure procedures and develop better prevention and response initiatives for all forms of abuse/violence in sport.

"We need training and support for all club volunteers on how to recognise and respond to instances of violence," Dr Woessner said.

"As a community we need to all be prepared to call out all forms of violence in order to break the silencing cycle of normalising violence that clearly exists in community sport."

“

... even when the adult offered a supportive and empathetic response, this was rarely followed up with long-term support or by lodging an official report of abuse, leaving the experiences of abuse undocumented and unaddressed.

”

The recommendations also included:

- ensuring that all types of abuse in sport are identified within policies and/or codes of conducts to assist in children and adults recognising what constitutes abuse, and
- ensuring clear guidance on responding to diverse types of abuse in sport, with training and content directed towards parents as likely first responders in community sport.

The full report, *Telling adults about it: children's experience of disclosing interpersonal violence in community sport* can be found online at www.tandfonline.com.

If this article has raised issues for you or if you're concerned about someone you know, call Lifeline on 13 11 14, or Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800.

ADVANTAGE:

Integrity



Like many sports, tennis has unique integrity challenges. As an individual sport, one player can be targeted to try and organise, plan and control a corrupt outcome, while safeguarding risks arise because of the need for talented junior players to travel nationally and internationally to remain competitive, often accompanied only by their coach.

Daniel Stuk



These challenges require tennis to have customised policy standards, which comply with or exceed the National Integrity Framework.

We chat to Tennis Australia's Director of Integrity and Compliance Daniel Stuk about tennis' key integrity issues, how they handle them and why their unique challenges have seen them leading continuous improvement in the sport integrity space.

What integrity issues are you seeing within your sport nationally and internationally?

Internationally, tennis is focused on safeguarding all participants from abuse, discrimination, harassment and bullying. Due to the international nature of the sport, participants and personnel are often crossing borders and competing in different countries. Tennis Australia and the other international governing bodies need to work collaboratively and cooperatively to protect players from integrity threats.

Nationally, we work proactively with coaches and parents to educate on appropriate behaviour standards for interactions with children and young people. Particularly for coaches, we are working with them to update their practices to align with contemporary standards around matters such as tone of voice, training methods and creating professional boundaries.

How important is having a national set of Sport Integrity Policy Standards?

We recognise that having clear and unambiguous rules that apply across the whole sport is necessary to ensure all participants are treated fairly and consistently. Our policies have come a long way since we first implemented our national member protection policy in 2001. We've been on a journey of continuous improvement ever since, with each iteration of our policies improving on the previous. For example, we now utilise alternative dispute resolution techniques such as agreed sanctions, conciliation and mediation (rather than going straight to tribunal) to expeditiously and efficiently resolve complaints.

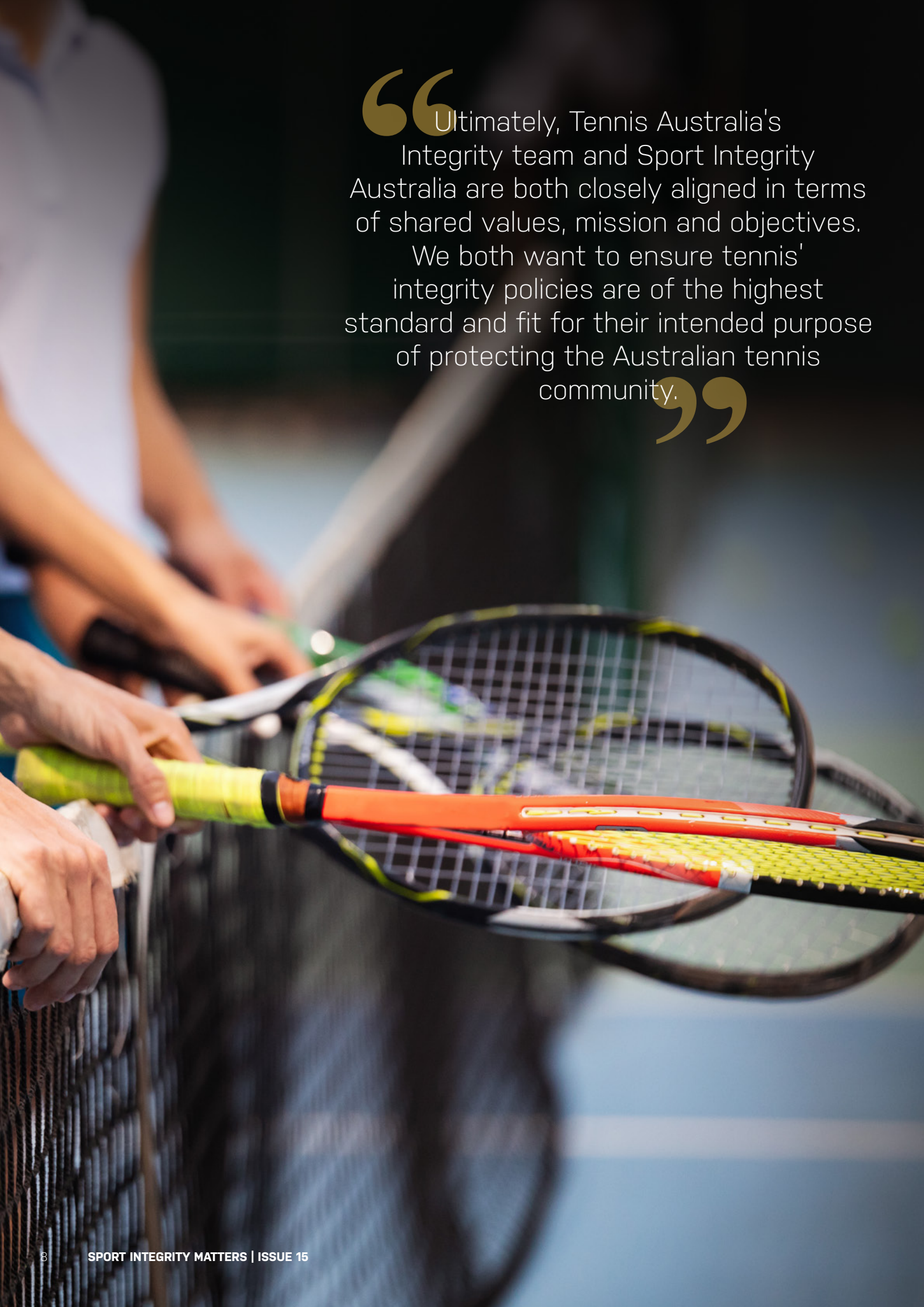
Our participants are familiar with these policies and they are bespoke to tennis' needs, resourcing and governance structure. They are similar to the National Integrity Framework, but designed specifically for the nuances of tennis. It was for these reasons that Tennis Australia has maintained its own set of Sport Integrity Policy Standards, as opposed to adopting Sport Integrity Australia's National Integrity Framework.

How did Tennis Australia find the Integrity Standards process and what was gained?

We welcomed and embraced the integrity standards process. Ultimately, Tennis Australia's Integrity team and Sport Integrity Australia are both closely aligned in terms of shared values, mission and objectives. We both want to ensure tennis' integrity policies are of the highest standard and fit for their intended purpose of protecting the Australian tennis community. As such, the dialogue with Sport Integrity Australia was very productive and useful, with the independent and objective set of eyes insightful, giving us a fresh perspective on complex issues. We subsequently made a series of changes to our policies based on the Sport Integrity Australia feedback which have enhanced our policies' accessibility and clarity.

How had your sport handled integrity-related issues previously?

In early 2016, Tennis Australia first introduced its own specialised integrity team to protect our sport from



“Ultimately, Tennis Australia's Integrity team and Sport Integrity Australia are both closely aligned in terms of shared values, mission and objectives. We both want to ensure tennis' integrity policies are of the highest standard and fit for their intended purpose of protecting the Australian tennis community.”



integrity threats, with that team triaging and managing integrity cases within the sport since. We've more recently prioritised education and the implementation of proactive and preventive actions to address issues before they occur or escalate. We've introduced new capability within the education space including more outreach and face-to-face engagement by attending tennis tournaments, events, camps and tours. Building relationships with participants has helped establish trust within our tennis community which leads to more and better quality disclosures. Our education extends to coach conferences, officiating seminars and information nights for players/parents, with messaging focused on identifying and mitigating risks and disclosing the questionable behaviour of others, rather than simply responding and reacting to issues as they occur.

We also work closely with our state and territory governing bodies to ensure a unified and consistent approach to integrity matters at all levels of the sport, right across the country. We now hold bi-monthly integrity forums for state integrity leads, as well as mentoring and secondment opportunities for integrity leads to upskill their knowledge in this area.

Do you have a dedicated integrity employee/resource?

The integrity team is a multi-disciplinary team with specialised lawyers, investigators and educators. The benefit of having a team with varying backgrounds is the different perspectives that each can bring. We create a culture of teamwork so that we can benefit from that diversity of thought and ensure our approach is best practice. The team is unequivocally aligned to our core purpose of keeping the sport of tennis safe, inclusive and fair.

What is your current integrity focus at Tennis Australia?

Our current focus is on listening to the voice of children and young people and their families. We want to deeply understand their perspective on what makes tennis a great participation sport, but also what we as an integrity team can do at a structural and tactical level to ensure their environment is safe, welcoming and inclusive. The insights we get from these conversations and feedback are always enlightening. We are also reviewing all of our processes and practices to consider whether they are human-centred and trauma-informed. Despite the integrity team often dealing with conflict and difficult and uncomfortable subject

matter, our aim is for all engagements with our team to be customer focused, empathetic and considerate.

In the lead-up to the 23–24 Australian summer of tennis, we are also reviewing the integrity arrangements and processes for betting operators within our product fee integrity agreements.

With events such as the Australian Open in mind, what are some of the unique problems you've noticed with a global sport such as tennis?

We're in the fortunate position that the Australian tennis community really values the integrity of the sport. Players, coaches, officials and other support personnel are, on the whole, passionately aligned to our core tennis values of commitment, respect and competing (and participating) to the best of your ability. However, being an international sport, we have participants from all over the world coming to Australia to play in our professional tennis events. Not all international participants value sports integrity the way Australians do. Also, participants from other nationalities have different cultural norms around safeguarding and behaviour standards. Accordingly, we always have to be vigilant to ensure all players and personnel uphold the standards we expect whilst they are competing and participating on Australian shores.

How do you feel about the way we handle sport integrity in Australia as a nation?

We should be very proud of Australia's commitment to sports integrity and our world leading approach. When I attended the International Sports Convention on Sports Integrity in London earlier this year, I was pleased to see the level of interest from Europeans about Australia's approach to sports integrity. They were impressed with the level of cooperation in Australia between government, law enforcement, national sporting bodies and other agencies and organisations. Sport Integrity Australia is also leading the way in terms of a national government's coordinated, integrated and sophisticated response to sports integrity threats.

Any advice, lessons learned or suggestions to other sports based on your sport integrity journey to date?

There is a temptation for sports' integrity units to be quite reactive and responsive in nature. At tennis, we try to be more proactive, focusing on education rather than discipline.

The journey is long and never ending, but super rewarding. Don't be overwhelmed by the enormity of the task. Be strategic around the most immediate and salient integrity risks to your sport and start by addressing these. Bring in other team members who are aligned to your sport's values and core integrity objectives to maximise the impact you can have!

Finally, never lose sight of the fact that players are people first, and athletes second. Any engagement that an integrity team has with them (or other tennis participants), either as victims, witnesses, respondents or otherwise, should always have care and concern for their wellbeing as the central focus. ■

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA

Advisory Council

The Advisory Council provides strategic advice to Sport Integrity Australia's CEO and advice to the Minister for Sport relating to the operations of Sport Integrity Australia.

They will play a crucial role in ensuring safety and integrity in sport remain front and centre in the lead-up to the 2032 Olympics and Paralympics.

Advisory Council Chair

Sarah Kenny said the breadth of experience and insight the new Advisory Council offered was invaluable for sport.

"Sport integrity issues are very complex and can vary across different sports, requiring a broad range of expertise, which this group brings," Ms Kenny said. "Collectively, we are looking forward to providing strategic advice on both current and emerging integrity issues.

"It's important we work together to ensure that integrity is core to all parts of the sporting pathway. Safeguarding the integrity of Australian sport has never been more important, particularly with the Brisbane Olympics and Paralympics in our backyard in 2032."

REAPPOINTMENTS

Sarah Kenny

Ms Kenny was the inaugural Chair of the Advisory Council and has been reappointed for a two-year term. She is a legal consultant and company director, after 20 years as a corporate partner at major international law firm Herbert Smith Freehills. Ms Kenny competed at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games in the windsurfing exhibition event and was a member of Australian Sailing's Olympic Nomination Panel for multiple Olympic Games. Sarah is a former Vice-President of Australian Sailing and is currently Vice-President of World Sailing.



Lynne Anderson

Ms Anderson was a member of the inaugural Advisory Council. She is currently a Board Member of the Australian Sports Commission, the former CEO of Paralympics Australia, and former Chair of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs (National Rugby League) with 30 years involvement both in Australia and globally in the sports business industry.



James Sutherland

An original member of the Advisory Council, Mr Sutherland is the CEO of Golf Australia and the former CEO of Cricket Australia (2001–2018). He is the current chair of PlayHQ and a board member at the Geelong Football Club (AFL). He is a former first-class cricketer and a qualified chartered accountant.



Megan Mitchell

Ms Mitchell is an original member of the Advisory Council. She also has a background in leadership roles in child protection and was instrumental in developing the national principles for child safe organisations. Prior to this, she was the New South Wales Commissioner for Children and Young People.



*Opposite page (at top):
The Advisory Council met for the first time in November 2023 at the Sport Integrity Australia office in Canberra.*

*Absent: Sarah Kenny
(virtual attendance) and
Katarina Carroll.*

“Sport integrity issues are very complex and can vary across different sports, requiring a broad range of expertise, which this group brings.”



NEW MEMBERS

Katarina Carroll

Ms Carroll was appointed as Queensland Police Commissioner in mid-2019. She is the first female Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service. Prior to her current appointment, she was Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services from 2015 until 2019. Ms Carroll has a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology from Griffith University and an Associate Diploma in Community Welfare from James Cook University.



the Yoorrook Truth-telling Commission in Victoria. Mr Goodwin is a member of the Yuin people of the South Coast of New South Wales. He currently serves on several boards, including the Museums Victoria Board and the Human Rights Law Centre, Melbourne.

Katherine Leigh

Ms Leigh has been Director-General, ACT Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate and Head of the ACT Public Service, since early 2014. Prior to taking up her present position she was Director-General, ACT Justice and Community Safety Directorate (2009–2014) and First Assistant Secretary (and acting Deputy Secretary) with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (1999–2009). She is also a Board Member of the ANZ School of Government and the ACT Institute of Public Administration.



Professor Sophia Nimphius

Professor Nimphius is an academic and community leader with expertise in high performance sport, athlete health, ethics, gender equity, diversity and inclusion, and education and learning. As Pro-Vice Chancellor (Sport) at Edith Cowan University she is responsible for developing and implementing a strategic University-level plan with sport as a vehicle to deliver on objectives across academic research and student life. She has held prior roles for Softball Australia and Surfing Australia (Sport Science Manager) in addition to serving on several boards/committees within and external to sport (Australian Strength and Conditioning Association, the ECU Pride Committee, and Panel Chair Science in Australia Gender Equity).



Danny Morseu

Mr Morseu is a Torres Strait Islander and a former basketball player who represented Australia at the 1980 and 1984 Summer Olympics. He was the first Indigenous basketballer to be inducted into the NBL Hall of Fame (2002). Currently a manager at the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, Mr Morseu is also Deputy Chairperson of the Indigenous Advisory Group to the Australian Olympic Committee and an Advisor to assist the National Basketball League in developing their reconciliation plan. He is a former Chairperson of the National Indigenous Basketball Academy.



Monique Murphy

Ms Murphy is a Paralympic swimmer. She was appointed as a Dolphins Swim Team leader in 2017. She won a silver medal at the Rio Paralympic Games and has been a Paralympics Australia team member and Education Presenter since 2019. She is also an Education Presenter for Sport Integrity Australia. She worked as an Executive Officer with the Queensland Academy of Sport – Minerva Partnership and was a Community Custodian with Lifeline/AIS (2019–2021). She is currently an Associate at Scyne Advisory.



Dr Amber Halliday

Dr Halliday is a three-time rowing world-champion and dual Olympian. She has won numerous Australian National titles, rowing World Cups and is a winner at the Henley Royal Regatta. In 2009 she transitioned to elite cycling where she was soon a National Champion, a Tour winner, and cycled internationally with the Australian team. It was in a cycling race in her hometown of Adelaide in 2011 that Amber crashed, enduring a traumatic brain injury. She defied odds in her long recovery, remarkably qualifying for her PhD in psychology and is now working for the South Australian Government in research, data and policy.



Timothy Goodwin

Mr Goodwin is a Barrister at the Victorian Bar who practises primarily in commercial and public law. He was a Junior Counsel Assisting the Royal Commission into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory and is currently Junior Counsel Assisting



START TO TALK.

When it comes to kids' sport,
ask the right questions.

How will your
club keep my
child safe?

Does the club
have a Child
Safeguarding
Policy?

Does the club
have written
Codes of
Conduct?

Start to Talk is a national campaign aimed at promoting child safety by encouraging parents and sporting organisations to discuss how to create a child safe environment.

Read, download and discuss Child Safe Sport resources developed in partnership with Sport Integrity Australia.

Don't take child safety in your sport for granted.



www.playbytherules.net.au/start-to-talk-campaign

A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO HUMAN RIGHTS IN AUSTRALIAN SPORT



Countries have obligations and duties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Sporting organisations have obligations too, writes **Nikki Dryden**, a human rights and sport lawyer.



Human rights can be daunting, particularly when we see large scale abuse during war or the flagrant disregard of peoples' rights. We can feel powerless to help.

Even in sport, the forcing of thousands of people from their homes and worker deaths to build stadia or the curtailing of freedom of speech when delivering major sporting events, are hard areas to fix. As a human rights and sport lawyer, I am often frustrated and overwhelmed by the work, deflated that

these wrongs may never be righted.

Thankfully the International Olympic Committee now has a Strategic Framework on Human Rights ensuring global sporting organisations take proactive human rights measures. Starting with Paris 2024, running into Brisbane 2032, all Olympic Games will now be executed under human rights rules.

Australian sport also protects the human rights of participants under the National Integrity Framework (NIF) and with some small practical steps at the grassroots level sport can be prepared for more formal human rights frameworks and processes. Some boards and administrators across a variety of sports are already working on this.

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that everyone in the world has irrespective of who they are and where they live. They are based in equality, dignity and respect and obligate all of us to ensure they are upheld.

Australia likes to think everyone has a 'fair go', but for Australian sport to be experienced by all equally, we need to proactively make changes to our own personal behaviour and the way our sports protect against and remedy for human rights abuse when things go wrong.

While countries have obligations and duties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, sporting organisations have obligations too. If human rights aren't upheld, there are direct negative impacts to the participant whose rights are violated, and it can damage sporting organisations through reputational, financial and legal consequences.

“Australia likes to think everyone has a 'fair go', but for Australian sport to be experienced by all equally, we need to proactively make changes to our own personal behaviour and the way our sports protect against and remedy for human rights abuse when things go wrong.”

Sports already have policies that protect against some abuse and discrimination and with the introduction of the NIF, Sport Integrity Australia has elevated human rights protections to an international standard. The NIF has two policies – Member Protection and Safeguarding Children and Young People – that link to the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child and other UN treaties that protect against discrimination based on sex, race, religion, age and disability.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN SPORT: A LIVED EXPERIENCE

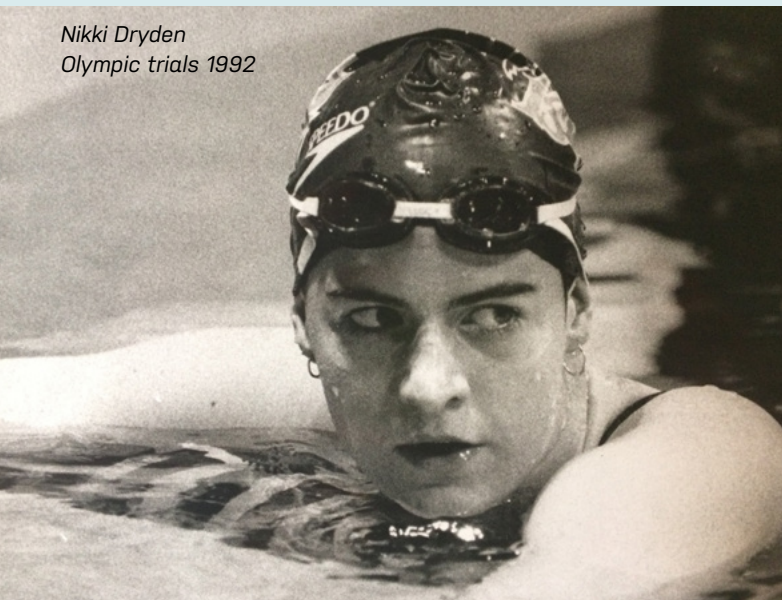
The sport system failed to protect me as a two-time Olympic swimmer. When I was an elite child athlete growing up in Canada, I was a poster girl for success. National champion at 14, international medallist at 16, Olympian at 17. The next year I was the fastest swimmer in the world in the 400m free (short course, but still!). However, behind

the success my coach was physically and psychologically abusing me.

He failed to put my development as a child first and used his power to control what I did and thought, what I ate and whether I could drink water, what national team events I could attend. He misappropriated my prizemoney and ignored injuries. I developed an eating disorder and later mismanaged a career-ending shoulder injury. For years after I thought I was a total failure and that my career was worthless. My experience is not unique; friends were sexually abused by coaches as children, were hospitalised for eating disorders and one attempted suicide. All while swimming at the top of the sport.

Our stories are strikingly similar where everything looks fine on the surface; fast swimmers, great players, perfect performers, but underneath we are being abused, neglected and exploited creating trauma that follows us for a lifetime. The perpetrators of abuse are not just individual actors but are supported by sporting structures and systems that fail to protect us from abuse and fail to address organisational behaviours that perpetuate it.

Nikki Dryden
Olympic trials 1992



“He failed to put my development as a child first and used his power to control what I did and thought, what I ate and whether I could drink water, what national team events I could attend.”

HUMAN RIGHTS FOR SPORT: PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The recent Netflix biopic about football superstar David Beckham created discourse about the parental abuse he suffered as a child footballer. However, his reality is mirrored at all levels of sport.

While watching *Beckham*, we worry about him, but not ourselves, the athletes we rally behind or even our own children. We must ask ourselves how strongly do we feel that our child/ren shouldn't be abused when participating in sport?

That means feeling safe and included to be who they are.

This means putting athletes and, more broadly, participants at the centre of sport. By using a human-centred approach, we put the child, athlete, official, volunteer or coach at the centre of any response to an action. It involves how we listen, support and respond. It is about transparency and accountability to that person, empowering them to make choices about their participation.

Putting athletes at the centre of sport benefits their personal and interpersonal relationships, retains them longer, and protects and empowers them against harm. Athlete centred sport promotes human rights and can safeguard against abuse when power is shared by the coach and athlete and there is an emphasis on the athlete's rights, development needs, health and wellbeing.

A real-world example might look like this, a 12-year-old team just lost their grand final, performing below expectation. The coach would ask the players what they think went wrong, working with the team to build concrete ways of improving. This way the players' human rights are protected, they have learned their feedback and opinions are valued, and they likely will have a more positive interaction with their coach and the game.

Taking a human-centred approach is a practical way to implement human rights. What would it take to make a human-centred approach happen at your club? It could be one action at a time. We may not be able to address the big issues today, but together we can do our part ensuring that everyone really does get a fair go.

Nikki Dryden is the Human Rights Advisor for Sport Integrity Australia.

If this article has raised issues for you or if you're concerned about someone you know, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.



A CHAMPION OF

change

An Australian wheelchair basketball and rugby player, **Ella Sabljak** is also a member of the World Anti-Doping Agency's Athlete Council and Sport Integrity Australia's Athlete Advisory Group. In her own words, Ella talks about the role sport plays in her life, the challenges she's faced and what drives her to push for change.

It wasn't until I was 15 that I re-discovered sport. That time was pivotal for me in discovering who I was and accepting my disability.

It's more than just sport for me. It's about pushing my boundaries, reaching my full potential, as well as acceptance and inclusion.

Para-sport plays a huge part in society by offering people with a disability the opportunity and option to play sport, which in turn breaks down the social stigmas around disability. In high performance sport we are still seeing athletes with a disability being celebrated for 'getting out there and giving it a go'. Athletes with a disability put in as many hours (as our able-bodied counterparts) to work on our craft with limited financial support, access to facilities, coaching and still manage to come out on top despite all that is thrown at us.

Para-sports encourage individuals to step out of their comfort zones and embrace challenges, showcasing what can be achieved.

Not only does Para-sport allow people with a disability to play sport, it also opens up the doors to have significant social impact on society.

When we see athletes competing at the Paralympic Games, the social impact of having a person with a disability in the public eye allows us to break down those misconceptions of disability and discrimination and fosters conversation about accessibility and creating an inclusive society.

Ultimately, the saying 'you can't be what you can't see' highlights the importance of representation and awareness in promoting inclusivity.

Ella's Achievements

■ Under 25 – World Wheelchair Basketball Championships

2011 – Silver Medal
2015 – Silver Medal

■ Australian Gliders

2021 – Tokyo Paralympic Games 9th place

■ Commonwealth Games – 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball

2022 – Silver Medal

■ Wheelchair Rugby

2022 – Gold at the World Championships

2023 – Gold at the Paris World Cup

■ Athlete Representative

World Anti-Doping Agency Athlete Council

Sport Integrity Australia's Athlete Advisory Group

Paralympics Australia's Athlete Commission



Shifting from basketball to rugby was a seamless transition for Ella. In 2022, she was part of the team that won gold at the Wheelchair Rugby World Championships (previous page).

REPRESENTING AUSTRALIA

Competing for Australia in both wheelchair basketball and rugby is a massive privilege and I will never take my opportunities for granted. Sport has allowed me to create lifelong friendships, challenge myself into doing things which I never thought was possible and create a life where I am living to my full potential.

In 2011, my journey representing Australia began at the Under 25 Women's World Wheelchair Basketball Championships in Canada. Following our silver medal, I earned a spot on the senior Australian team, known as the 'Gliders', and competed in the Osaka Cup in Japan in January 2013.

It wasn't until 2018 that we competed in the World Wheelchair Basketball Championships in Hamburg, marking my first major Australian tournament outside of junior world championships. In 2019, we secured qualification for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, but the pandemic forced an unexpected detour. These Paralympic Games were unlike any experience I had encountered before, no crowds and family, leaving only our team and the sport we love.

I transitioned to training for the Commonwealth Games, which featured 3x3 wheelchair basketball for the first time in Birmingham. These games marked my final competition representing Australia in wheelchair basketball, winning a silver medal.

In 2022, I was presented with the opportunity to try Wheelchair Rugby, and I quickly earned a place on the Australian Steelers for the World Championship team. We went on to win a gold medal at the 2022 Wheelchair Rugby World Championships in Vejle, Denmark. Shifting from basketball to rugby was a seamless transition in terms of chair skills and movement, both with and without the ball. However, I had to adapt and learn new strategies and gameplay.

Currently, I am a full-time wheelchair rugby player with my sights set on the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games with the Australian Steelers.

EXPANSION OF PARA-SPORT

Throughout my career, I've witnessed a substantial expansion of Para-sport, not only in terms of representation but also in funding. A significant milestone was reached at the 2021 Tokyo Paralympic Games, thanks to an extensive campaign led by Chloe Dalton (thefemaleathleteproject). This campaign resulted in Paralympic medallists receiving the same financial rewards as their Olympic medallist counterparts. In the past year, our government has also granted equal funding to both Olympic and Paralympic sports, a significant moment for our Paralympic movement here in Australia.

Beyond funding, we've seen a growth of multi-class sporting events in schools, enabling children with disabilities to participate in sports alongside their peers. Additionally, Para-sport is now accessible to a broader audience through television broadcasts. For instance, the Paralympic Games will be televised on Channel 9, while the PowerRoos (powerchair Soccer) can be watched on

“Beyond funding, we've seen a growth of multi-class sporting events in schools, enabling children with disabilities to participate in sports alongside their peers.”



Channel 10. Wheelchair Rugby and Wheelchair AFL Nationals are available on Kayo, and Swimming and Athletics can be watched on Channel 9. By making Para-sport more visible to the public, we increase awareness and bust misconceptions surrounding disability.

FINDING MY VOICE

Growing up with a disability, often people would speak on my behalf – whether it be related to schooling, hospital appointments or socially. I never learned how to use my voice to express what I needed because it was done for me. As I grew up, I noticed people asking questions that were for me, but directed to whoever else I was with. It feels as though you don't exist and can't speak for yourself – because of how society views disability.

When I started to become more involved in sports, I discovered my voice. I began speaking up for myself, calling out behaviours that would never be acceptable in the 'real world' outside of high-performance sport, helping other people discover their voices and how to use it. I've always fought for the underdog. This is what drives me on athlete councils, for all para-athletes to have their voices heard and listened to on matters that directly affect us. From a Paralympian's perspective, we're always fighting for a seat at the table. I want to be a champion of change, so no one is left behind.

My work with the World Anti-Doping Agency and Sport Integrity Australia has been a steep learning curve, especially in all matters anti-doping and, recently, in classification and Intentional misrepresentation. Having the athlete voice is crucial in these organisations as it informs everyone about what is actually happening within the athlete world and how we can best represent them with the athlete safety, wellbeing and integrity being at the forefront of every decision we make.

INTEGRITY IN SPORT

Integrity plays such a crucial role in all sports, including Para-sports. It is vital that competition is fair and athletes have an equal opportunity to succeed. This is where in Para-sports specifically classification plays an enormous role in keeping sport fair.

Classification ensures a level playing field where athletes are classified fairly based on their impairments, preventing any manipulation of the system. This is essential for the credibility of Para-sport and for maintaining the trust of both athletes and the public. I would stress that classification plays a larger role in Para-sport than anti-doping does.

Classification is an incredibly flawed system, it's a system put in place to protect the integrity of Paralympic sports and athletes, however because we're dealing with medical information, internal and external pressures to perform, selection, this brings in the ability to manipulate the system to the athlete's advantage. You're often placed in a sticky situation if you're questioning someone's disability relating to classification because you don't want to call someone a cheat or a liar and no two disabilities are the same ... but where do we go if we suspect someone of cheating?



Top: As a member of Sport Integrity Australia's Athlete Advisory Group, Ella wants to be a champion of change, so the athlete voice is at the forefront of decision-making.

Above: Ella says competing for Australia in both wheelchair basketball and rugby is "a massive privilege and I will never take my opportunities for granted".

In my experience, I have only seen and heard of a couple of occasions where other people have speculated that another athlete is cheating the system but that's all it has been, speculation.

OTHER CHALLENGES

One of the challenges I've encountered in Para-sport and, in my own opinion, particularly, is the relatively faster ascent to the top.

The Paralympic pathway appears to be less competitive for both athletes and administrators compared to the Olympic pathway. It's not uncommon to see individuals without disabilities, such as coaches, domestic classifiers, managers and administrators, transitioning into Para-sport after experiencing limited success in their non-disabled sport pursuits.

This sometimes creates the perception that involvement in Para-sport is a secondary choice rather than an equal and valuable one to non-disabled sports. Consequently, it can lead to a lack of genuine support and engagement, with some individuals getting involved primarily for un-altruistic reasons.

Athletes with disabilities often find their voices ignored and when we do speak out, it may be suggested that we express gratitude for the opportunities provided rather than being heard. This issue within Para-sport is multi-faceted, with its roots in funding disparities and the need for equal opportunities to attract and compensate the best person for the job.



2024 PROHIBITED LIST

WHAT'S CHANGED?

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) updates and publishes the [Prohibited List](#) each year.

This list is the International Standard that outlines:

- the substances and methods that are prohibited in- and out-of-competition
- the sports in which the substances and methods are prohibited.

The Prohibited List comes into play on 1 January each year.

Athletes, coaches, sports doctors and pharmacists are being urged to familiarise themselves with the latest updates.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR CHANGES TO THE 2024 PROHIBITED LIST?

From 1 January 2024, the drug **Tramadol** will be added to the 2024 WADA Prohibited List and will be prohibited in-competition.

In positive news, the donation of plasma or plasma components via **plasmapheresis** is no longer prohibited for athletes when performed in a registered collection centre.

The minimum washout period for **rectal administration of glucocorticoids** has now been included on the WADA Glucocorticoid Washout Table. Rectally administered glucocorticoids remain prohibited in-competition.



Route	Glucocorticoid	Washout period
Oral	All glucocorticoids	3 days
	Except: triamcinolone; triamcinolone acetonide	10 days
Intramuscular	Betamethasone; dexamethasone; methylprednisolone	5 days
	Prednisolone; prednisone	10 days
	Triamcinolone acetonide	60 days
Local injections (including periarticular, intra-articular, peritendinous and intratendinous)	All glucocorticoids	3 days
	Except: prednisolone; prednisone; triamcinolone acetonide; triamcinolone hexacetonide	10 days
Rectal	All glucocorticoids	3 days
	Except: triamcinolone diacetate; triamcinolone acetonide	10 days



TRAMADOL

What is it and why is it used?

Tramadol is a potent opioid medication that is used for short-term relief of moderate to severe pain.

It is a prescription-only medicine and should always be used under the supervision of a medical professional.

Why is it banned?

Tramadol has been on WADA's [Monitoring Program](#) with data from this program indicating its significant use in sport. Tramadol use is of concern because of the risk of physical dependence, opiate addiction and overdose. Research studies funded by WADA have also confirmed the potential for Tramadol to enhance sports performance. In 2022, WADA announced that Tramadol will be included on the [2024 Prohibited List of Substances and Methods](#). The delay in implementation was to provide education to athletes, as well as their medical and other support personnel so that there is a better understanding of the practical implications of Tramadol prohibition in-competition.

What should athletes who are currently taking it do?

Any athlete found to be taking Tramadol in-competition faces the prospect of an Anti-Doping Rule Violation (ARDV) and a ban from sport. Athletes who are taking Tramadol should speak to their doctor about seeking alternative pain medication that is permitted in sport. If no alternative is available, athletes may need to apply for a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) to continue taking Tramadol.

Athletes using Tramadol out-of-competition should be aware of the washout period for the medication and ensure they cease use prior to this period to allow for the drug

clearance prior to the in-competition period starting. WADA has advised the "washout period" for Tramadol, based on therapeutic use, is 24 hours.

The washout period refers to the time from the last administered dose to the time of the start of the in-competition period (i.e. beginning at 11:59 pm on the day before a competition in which the athlete is scheduled to participate, unless a different period was approved by WADA for a given sport).

What is the process that will be required for athletes who need to use Tramadol for therapeutic purposes?

Athletes may at times need to use a prohibited medication to treat a legitimate medical condition. Athletes who are prescribed Tramadol for a diagnosed medical condition may be eligible for a TUE. TUEs are administered by the Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee (ASDMAC). Athletes and medical personnel can obtain more information about applying for a TUE for Tramadol on the Sport Integrity Australia [website](#).

DON'T FORGET!

- Athletes, coaches, sports doctors and pharmacists are urged to familiarise themselves with the List.
- Athletes are reminded of strict liability and that they are wholly responsible for everything that they put into their body.
- Athletes and medical personnel should be aware that **Salbutamol** remains prohibited at all times above 6 puffs in 8 hours and above 16 puffs in 24 hours. Salbutamol should only be used under the supervision of a doctor and athletes should avoid self-medicating.



2024 OUT NOW! ANNUAL UPDATE



SPORT INTEGRITY
AUSTRALIA



Be aware of substances that are banned in sport



Know what to do if anyone ever approaches you to throw a competition



Learn how to search for batch-tested supplements

and more!



<https://elearning.sportintegrity.gov.au>

SPORT INTEGRITY MATTERS | ISSUE 15

LOOKING AT THE BIGGER PICTURE: NATIONAL, REGIONAL, GLOBAL

Sport Integrity Australia's focus internationally has been on strengthening global capability.

In October, Sport Integrity Australia added a new international partnership to the list after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sport to enhance our respective integrity capabilities internationally.

The agency's Head of International Relations, Darren Mullaly, said these partnerships were essential as integrity threats to do not stop at our borders.

"We need to work together to ensure a clean, safe and fair playing field for all athletes, regardless of where they are competing. We know threats to sport are global and they are increasing, which is why this MoU with Malta is important, so we can share a commitment of continuous improvement, to strengthen our own programs and fill gaps within our respective regions."

Signing the Maltese MoU was part of a bigger suite of meetings in Europe which included the UK Gambling Commission to gain insight into UK gambling reforms, investigation partnerships and to share data; the International Anti-Doping Arrangement to harmonise anti-doping practices; and to attend the biennial Conference of Parties to the International Convention against Doping in Sport, which focused on adapting to the constant evolution of the global sport ecosystem and its challenges.

Mr Mullaly also met with the Group of Copenhagen Follow-up Committee to discuss current trends and transnational initiatives essential to combating the manipulation of sports competitions. At this meeting he was appointed Vice Chair of the Group, recognising the significant role our agency plays globally. Other meetings attended in support of the Minister included the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Executive Committee (ExCo), Foundation Board (Board) and One Voice meetings, all of which help inform what we do to protect sport here in our country and embed Australia as a key presence in sport integrity globally.

International engagement also included meetings with USADA, the FBI Sports Integrity Unit and the United Nations. These meetings were invaluable in terms of identifying new partnerships and opportunities in the interest of keeping sport clean, fair and honest on the global stage.

"It's our global efforts and commitment to working with others that enhances our reputation in the sport integrity space here in Australia and worldwide," Mr Mullaly said. "We spend a great deal of time sharing our knowledge, creating solid partnerships and contributing to capacity



Sport Integrity Australia's Darren Mullaly, signed a MoU with the Authority for Integrity in Maltese Sport (AIMS) to enhance integrity capabilities internationally.

building globally. We are proud to be a key member of the global community working together to create a level playing field for all."

NON-COMPLIANCE

A global approach to anti-doping is key to keeping sport fair and safe for all. At the WADA ExCo and Board meetings in Montreal, members took decisions on a number of matters including the non-compliance of four anti-doping organisations.

Three National Anti-Doping Organisations (NADOs) and one Major Event Organisation were deemed non-compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code (Code) and added two other NADOs to the watchlist.

"WADA takes no pleasure in asserting non-compliance on National Anti-Doping Organisations or Major Event Organisations," WADA President Witold Bańka said. "However, the harmonisation of the anti-doping system is absolutely crucial – we agree with athletes when they tell us that all Signatories to the World Anti-Doping Code must be held to the same high standards as they are. Signatories must abide by the rules and decisions if we are to provide a level playing field for athletes."

The three NADOs that the ExCo alleges to be non-compliant with the Code are Venezuela, Nigeria and Tunisia, with the Olympic Council of Asia deemed non-compliant for failure to implement a previous decision by the ExCo.

The Bahamas and Cambodia are on the watchlist giving them an additional four months to correct outstanding non-conformities.

President Banka said, "WADA always supports Signatories and helps them when they have non-conformities in an effort to avoid this situation. We continue to monitor all Signatories' compliance with the Code to ensure the system remains strong."

RUSSIA

The ExCo and Board received an update in relation to the December 2020 decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) regarding the assertion of non-compliance with the Code on the Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA), for a period of two years. WADA is monitoring the progress being made by RUSADA as it seeks to satisfy the conditions of reinstatement as laid out by the CAS decision. In addition, WADA received formal notification from RUSADA

“We spend a great deal of time sharing our knowledge, creating solid partnerships and contributing to capacity building globally.”

that it disputed the allegation of non-compliance against it, as well as the proposed consequences and reinstatement conditions. WADA has publicly announced that it filed a request for arbitration with CAS on 16 November 2023. In the meantime, RUSADA remains non-compliant with the Code.

DIRECTOR APPOINTED TO KEY WADA COMMITTEE

Sport Integrity Australia's Director of Education Alexis Cooper has been appointed to the WADA Education Standing Committee.

Ms Cooper joins the 10-member Committee to provide advice, recommendations and guidance to WADA's Leadership Team about education strategies, programs and social science research projects.

"It is an honour to be appointed to the Committee and I look forward to working closely with my international colleagues in this space," Ms Cooper said.

"The group is a really wonderful mix of people from across the clean sport community. I've been lucky to work with a number of the members before, though some more than others, so I'm excited to get to know everyone a lot better."

The international Committee could well be considered a who's who in global anti-doping education, with representatives of National Anti-Doping Organisations, International Federations, academia, athletes and other parts of the international sporting community. Vacancies don't come up very often making this appointment an incredible reflection on the value placed on Australian expertise.

Ms Cooper has held the role of Director of Education for the past six years and in that time she's seen the increased commitment to education by WADA and the flow-on that has had on the global anti-doping community.

"One of the most significant changes they have made is setting a brand new International Standard of Education (ISE) in 2021, which made education a mandatory, reportable part of every single anti-doping organisation's program," she said.

"Prior to the ISE, organisations who had limited resources might only focus on things like testing and sanctions, but this change put education on the map and made every

organisation sit up and take notice of how important education was as part of an anti-doping program – not just an option or a 'nice to have'.

"A key part of the ISE is embodiment of the philosophy that athletes start their sporting careers clean, but that something happens that leads some athletes to dope. With that in mind, our job as educators is to keep them clean and help them deal with vulnerabilities.

"It's a philosophy that challenges the idea that anti-doping agencies are just here to catch out athletes, and one I really believe in."

Through the advice and guidance provided by the Education Committee, WADA has been providing resources to help less-resourced anti-doping organisations fulfil their obligations under the ISE in addition to supporting the likes of Sport Integrity Australia through the provision of guidelines, advice and opportunities for collaboration.

"I think there is still some work to do in how the global community can support less-resourced anti-doping organisations in the education space, how we can harmonise the system and how we can disseminate social science research findings," Ms Cooper said. "So I'm looking forward to discussions in that space, as well as any other curly topics that might come up over the next three years."

She said such collaboration was a focus for her and the agency.

"Australian athletes benefit when the global anti-doping system is working in harmony and everyone is being held to the same standards and receiving the same level of support. If an Australian athlete misses out on a medal to an athlete who has doped, it doesn't matter whether the doping was deliberate or not," she said.



2023 PACIFIC GAMES

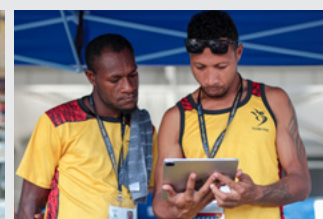
Last month a handful of Sport Integrity Australia staff joined our Drug Free Sport New Zealand colleagues at the Pacific Games to assist in ensuring a safe and fair event.

We provided education outreach, including our popular Virtual Reality offerings, as well as test distribution planning and testing support.

Our attendance at the Pacific Games is part of our collaborative approach to regional and global sport integrity issues. These partnerships are important for our capacity building and ensuring fair safe sport for all.

The Pacific Games is a multi-sport event held every four years with athletes from across the Pacific region representing 24 countries. This year's Games were held in the Solomon Islands from 19 November to 2 December, with Games previously been held in Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Samoa.

It's the first time the Solomons have hosted the Games with the local Doping Control Officers experiencing in-competition testing for the first time.



Right, top to bottom: The ORADO team, including Australian, New Zealand and local Doping Control Officers, and fun and games at our education outreach education sessions.

2024 FELLOWSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

The **2024 Ken Fitch Fellowship** has been awarded to Dr Bonnie McRae at the Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Medicine Physician (ACSEP) Annual Scientific Conference in Wellington.

Dr McRae, a Sport and Exercise Medicine Registrar from Brisbane, works both in private practice and at the Queensland Academy of Sport. She is also the Chief Medical Officer at Bowls Australia and at Brisbane Broncos NRLW team.

The annual 12-month Fellowship is awarded to a Sport and Exercise Medicine Registrar who has shown a passion to develop their knowledge of Sports Medicine and be an advocate for fair sport in their current roles.

Dr McRae cares for athletes from a variety of sports and performance levels – from community club through to international competition, individual sport and team sport athletes, able-bodied and para-athletes.

As a result, she has a strong interest in anti-doping medicine to ensure positive outcomes for the athletes she works with.

"I'm honoured to have been selected as the recipient of the 2024 Professor Ken Fitch Anti-Doping Fellowship," Dr McRae said.

"I'm really excited to further my knowledge around anti-doping, clean sport, and Australian Sport Drug Medical Advisory Committee (ASDMAC)/Sport Integrity Australia processes that occur behind the scenes. I think by improving my knowledge and understanding in this field as a doctor in the science and exercise medicine field, I will be able to pass on what I have learnt to both the individual athletes and organisations I interact with.

"Through this we can broaden the general anti-doping knowledge of athletes and sporting organisations and spread the principles of anti-doping and clean sport."

The Fellowship honours the work of Adjunct Professor Ken Fitch AO, who was the inaugural Chair of ASDMAC until his retirement in 2013, and helped to develop and shape the field of sports medicine in Australia and internationally.



Dr Bonnie McRae is presented with the Fellowship by ASDMAC member Dr Larissa Trease.

RAISING THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION

Every year Sport Integrity Australia revises its anti-doping education in accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code International Standard of Education.

Sport Integrity Australia's Anti-Doping Education Plan details our goals, objectives, resources, target audiences, interventions and key activities for anti-doping education for each financial year. It helps us ensure Australian athletes and sports personnel are getting the best education possible in this space.

The 2022–2023 financial year saw the agency deliver education across five key target areas:

- National Sporting Organisations and National Sporting Organisations for people with Disability
- School and tertiary education
- Medical practitioners
- Digital and online
- International engagement and research.

Sport Integrity Australia Director of Education Alexis Cooper says tracking our education across all elements of sport integrity is important to ensuring we're staying ahead of the game when it comes to keeping sport safe, fair and healthy for everyone.

"We've achieved some great reach this year through our education deliverables, but as with anything, there is always an opportunity for improvement," Ms Cooper says when reviewing the results.

"More than 140 education sessions were delivered to over 5,400 people and while we'd have liked to have done a little bit more, this figure is still a 70% increase on 2021–22 and brings our program back in line with pre-COVID levels.

"Feedback from these sessions indicated that over 99% of attendees felt they had a better understanding of the anti-doping rules following their attendance, and our presenters received an average rating of 9.3 out of 10."

Working with sports on their education is an essential part of ensuring maximum reach for best results.

"In regard to education plans within NSOs we now have 91 Anti-Doping Education Plans in place which is the greatest number of plans endorsed by sport since they were first developed. We'd like 100% compliance in 2023–24 and will continue to work towards that result."

Finding new and innovative ways to deliver education to ensure all learning styles are catered for is a particular focus each year.

"Our Decision Making in Sport Virtual Reality sessions continue to grow within schools and pathways sports, and



Using former and current athletes (top) as educators is a key part of our education strategy. The group delivered more than 140 education sessions to over 5,400 people in 2022–23.

our Managing Integrity in Sport course in conjunction with Victoria University reached another 60 sport administrators last financial year. The 2023 Annual Update online course has been completed by 19,282 people and our Health Effects app was updated to ensure greater athlete reach."

Ms Cooper says growing our education through partnerships, collaborations, new technologies and additional resources will continue to be a focus.

"Safety in sport does not stop at the border, so both national and international approaches are key if we want to remain at the forefront of sport integrity," she says. "Continuing our active involvement in the WADA Global Learning and Development Framework for Education, and our close working relationships with our international counterparts helps to enhance the education we offer both in Australia and globally."

Further deliverables will be included in the Sport Integrity Australia Education Plan for 2023–24 to ensure continual improvement for maximum reach and best results.

While education is an essential part of our commitment to clean, fair sport, we don't limit our education to anti-doping. In addition to the improper use of medicines and the dangers of substances and supplements, our education extends to all areas of our remit including safeguarding, member protection, competition manipulation and match-fixing.

To find out more see the [Education page](#) of our website.



CALLING TIME

DISCUSSING LIFE AFTER SPORT

Transitioning into retirement can be daunting, regardless of what sport you compete in. In the latest episode of our podcast *On Side*, Olympians **Petria Thomas** and **Ben Hardy**, and AFL forward **Josh Bruce**, discuss life after sport. This is an edited extract.

BEING AN ELITE ATHLETE

Josh: Playing professional football, it's a bubble, you're essentially quarantined from everyone, really, just so it's a professional sporting environment. As you get older, you sort of realise how different your life is and how different your work is to most workplaces.

Ben: When you're playing a high-level sport, you've got a lot of things that are taken care of for you. I didn't have to worry about paying my accommodation, you get a good salary, all those sorts of things, a bit more of a casual lifestyle where you're going out, you're going to dinner and you're a bit more affluent with your spending and then you come home and that's all taken away from you. You see a lot of athletes getting into trouble when they finish because they've got used to this lifestyle which you can't maintain because you don't have the income anymore. So that's one of the biggest things.

Josh: When you come into the system and people talk to you and they say your football isn't going to last forever and make sure you have a plan for afterwards and all these things, which is obviously super important, but at the same time, you want to make a feast of your career so it's kind

of, you know, I've got to give everything to football to succeed at it, so it's kind of like a catch 22.

LEAVING THE HIGHS BEHIND

Petria: It's hard, there's few things that come close [to the highs] to be honest, getting married and having kids, probably the two things that I can describe that would come closest to that sort of feeling of euphoria and happiness and, in some way, just relief. It is different. It does certainly take a period of adjustment to settle into normal life where there's not those huge highs, if you're lucky to get them during your sporting career. It's not easy.

Josh: It's been a bit of a whirlwind. It was obviously taken out of my hands a little bit with my second ACL and then subsequent retirement after that. Immediately we realised that we weren't going to live in Melbourne for the long-term so we thought it be best to be surrounded by family for the short period so we essentially tried to get our house ready for sale, moved the kids out of the house, got them to Canberra, go through a whole auction campaign, so I haven't really had time to stop and think too much. Currently I'm on the job hunt.

Ben: My career went 16 years or 17 years and then you've essentially stopped cold turkey. It has some big challenges. I decided I was going to finish because of family reasons. When I came home, I started my university degree. I didn't do that while I was playing because I didn't want that distraction as an athlete.

JOINING THE WORKFORCE

Josh: As a footballer, you do have certain skills that are applicable elsewhere. Obviously, you've shown that you can be disciplined within a structure. There are plenty of things I guess that can be transferred into general life from being a professional sports person.

Ben: I guess recognising that you haven't got a lot of these skills that other people have been doing for 15 or 20 years in the workforce and you have to start from a relatively low bar. I guess for me it was OK, I'm comfortable to do that, recognising that my experience in some ways is very comparable in other ways.

Petria: I just kept putting my hand up for opportunities when I saw them and I missed out on a few jobs but I eventually got an opportunity to do some part-time casual work at the Australian Sports Commission ... Even though you've got a wealth of experience in the sporting world, it might not necessarily be the experience that people are looking for. So it's really hard, you just got to keep trying and looking for those opportunities and taking them when they come up.

Ben: The first thing is I realised that I wanted to get an education and I wanted to go back to university to do that, something I hadn't done when I was playing, I guess. It gave me the first step, [the first] stepping stone to give myself some direction. It's not an easy thing when you've got all the choices, you're on your own, pretty much coming from a situation where it's all very prescriptive. It's not easy.

MENTAL HEALTH AFTER SPORT

Petria: I think it's a very real issue. When you spend so much of your life devoted to one particular thing and it's the focus of everything you do in your life, then that's gone all of a sudden it's a big hole to fill. I think some people fill that hole better than others. There's been some of my swimming colleagues over the years that haven't made the adjustment very well or they didn't prepare for life after their swimming career. I think there's a lot more effort now that goes into athletes preparing for their life after sports.

Josh: It's a huge change and I've seen it happen over and over and over again with ex-teammates, you know, they don't have that rush. They don't have the people screaming their name, they don't have all sorts of things about professional sport which make you feel good about yourself: your dopamine spikes and your serotonin, and you're exercising every day and you're forced to be there at a certain time, that regimented structure in your life with all the other bonuses on top in terms of the way it makes you feel and people can find it really challenging.

“When you spend so much of your life devoted to one particular thing and it's the focus of everything you do in your life, then that's gone ... It's a big hole to fill and I think some people fill that hole better than others.”

Ben: Yeah, absolutely. I mean that's that's the hardest thing some people might need to start putting their own structure in place to help them. Not that I'm sitting here as a psychologist or in that sort of space, but it is certainly an area where having done sport for a long period of time and athletes who in my case, voluntarily decide to finish when I finished, whereas other athletes get injured and that's their career cut short. So it's a completely different animal when you've got, you want this whole career in front of you, you're getting success and then, because of injury, you have to stop. It's not something I did but it's certainly something I would champion, trying to get all these young athletes to go through the schooling system, allowing themselves the time to go and get themselves educated so they can get back into the workforce a little bit easier.

- **Josh Bruce** played 163 matches in the AFL, representing the Western Bulldogs, St Kilda and Greater Western Sydney.
- **Petria Thomas** is an Olympic swimmer and three-time Olympic gold medallist, currently Sport Integrity Australia's Assistant Director Sport Partnerships.
- **Ben Hardy** is an Olympian and former captain of the Australian national volleyball team, now Sport Integrity Australia's Senior Intelligence analyst.

Listen to the full interview on the Sport Integrity website (www.sportintegrity.gov.au/news/podcasts)



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