



SPORT INTEGRITY **MATTERS**

ISSUE 17 | JUNE 2024

CONCUSSION
MORE THAN JUST A HEAD KNOCK

PARIS 2024: GAME ON!

**SETTING UP A FUTURE
WITH INTEGRITY**

**ASSESSMENT OF ALLEGATIONS
OF MISCONDUCT OF
AFL'S ILLICIT DRUGS POLICY**





SPORT INTEGRITY
AUSTRALIA

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Concussion in
the spotlight



Review of AFL
misconduct allegations



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Game on!

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ABOUT OUR INDIGENOUS ARTWORK

Chern'ee Sutton is a contemporary Indigenous artist from the Kalkadoon people. This painting is her interpretation of Sport Integrity Australia and our reconciliation journey.

The large community symbol pictured represents Sport Integrity Australia. Within this community symbol is Australia, which represents a single nationally coordinated organisation to address all sport integrity issues. Canberra, where our office is located, is represented by the small community symbol within Australia.

See the whole artwork and read the full story on our website.

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.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

With the Paris Olympics and Paralympics almost upon us, the focus quite rightly is on the athletes with their journeys providing an inspiration to all of us.

Behind the scenes Sport Integrity Australia (SIA) has worked closely with the Australian Olympic and Paralympic Committees, National Sporting Organisations, the World Anti-Doping Agency and the International Testing Agency (ITA), with the aim of ensuring Australian athletes are well prepared for the Games.

For many athletes, the prospect of competing in a major event is daunting enough without the added stress of anti-doping testing. Which is why, as an agency, we put such an emphasis on education. Our team of educators have conducted various workshops and created an online course, specifically tailored to athletes competing in Paris.

While SIA doesn't have an anti-doping role during the Games, we have a number of staff in support roles at the request of the French anti-doping agency and ITA. It is a great opportunity for our experts to provide specialist advice and to also learn from our anti-doping counterparts. I wish them well.

Our focus has always been to work with sports to protect the sport, their athletes and all involved in sport from all integrity threats.

We regularly work behind the scenes in a range of capacities aimed at assisting sports, including support provided to Ice Skating Australia and the assessment of allegations relating to the AFL's Illicit Drugs Policy raised in Federal Parliament by MP Andrew Wilkie.

And the embedding of National Integrity Managers in National Sporting Organisations has had an enormous impact in providing education and guidance in dealing with difficult integrity matters.

During my time at SIA, there has been a collective emphasis on working in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcome. In many aspects, partnerships are the key to ensuring there are tangible benefits to athletes and sports.



During my time at SIA, there has been a collective emphasis on working in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcome. In many aspects, partnerships are the key to ensuring there are tangible benefits to athletes and sports.

In Australia there is a certain amount of pride in the seriousness that we place on integrity in sport, and it is reflected in some of the commentary by athletes when speaking about the anti-doping process in Australia.

I am proud of the impact we are having. The culture is changing.

As some of you may have heard I have informed the Minister that I will be leaving my role as CEO on 2 August 2024.

I feel as though the time is right for fresh eyes after four years as CEO, and three years prior in anti-doping. I have achieved what I set out to do – to build the foundations of a world-leading sport integrity agency.

There is an incredible team here at Sport Integrity Australia who are committed to this cause and, with the foundations laid, they are the future.

I wish you all the best.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Sharpe'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

David Sharpe APM OAM
Chief Executive Officer





CONCUS

CONCUSSION

More than just a head knock

While concussion is often considered part and parcel of playing sport, studies have shown that the risks of head trauma are far greater and potentially longer term than a fuzzy head, staggering or seeing double.

With a new story in the media every week about the impact concussion is having on the health and wellbeing of athletes, how we deal with concussion (or not deal with it) is an emerging threat to the safe sport landscape.

Concussion in sport isn't just an issue at the elite level, it impacts athletes at all levels.

Lisa White is a Titled Sports and Exercise Physiotherapist who has been working in sport for 22 years. She has worked with Olympians and Paralympians, attended the Commonwealth Games and is across a variety of local sports – from multiple football codes, rowing, triathlon, cycling, martial arts and gymnastics.

As a sideline physio in local sport, White often makes decisions on whether players have been concussed and if they should continue to play and feels that, historically, concussion has been poorly understood.

"General physiotherapy training did not equip me with the skills to make informed decisions regarding their ability to play and the potential serious consequences of concussion," she says, "So I undertook official studies to be qualified in concussion testing.

"In our clinic alone, our concussion trained physios see several patients a day for concussion rehabilitation," White explains.

"There is rarely a game of any contact sport that we work at on a weekend that does not require an assessment for a potential concussion at some point, more often in some codes such as rugby."

Concussions occur regularly in sport at all levels, according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. In 2020-2021 they cited "every four minutes, someone in Australia is hospitalised for a head injury" and "24% of these injuries are from sport". Cycling has the highest hospital admission rate for head injuries.

According to the Australian Institute of Sport's Concussion and Brain Health position statement 2024, during the 2019 National Rugby League (NRL) season in Australia, an incidence of 15.4 diagnosed concussions per 1,000 hours of match play was reported.

While these high impact or "collision" sports are well versed in concussion, there are also sports considered "limited-contact" that may be a little behind in policies and procedures around concussion, particularly at the grassroots level.

Malcolm Murta played soccer from the age of five and worked his way through the age groups, through to junior state representative level and into the National Premier League (NPL) until multiple concussions and then a final "king hit" had him hanging up his soccer boots for good.

"I remember one concussion when I was playing youth NPL for under 18s and I got a kick to the face mid-air going for a diving header which pretty much knocked me out instantly," Murta recalls. "I hit the ground face first. I was definitely concussed but was expected to play the next week. I didn't, but the expectation was there."

His story is particularly difficult because many of his concussions went undiagnosed and he continued to hit the field week after week. The roll-on impacts meant that even the slightest head tap might send him into "full head knock hell". It has impacted his life so significantly that he has lost entire periods of time due to memory loss.

"I think the first time I remember my symptoms were really bad was in Under 23s. I got two head knocks in the same game within 10 minutes of each other and then I drove myself home. I wasn't with it and nobody stopped me from driving.

"I don't remember driving home and I don't remember from then until a few days later. That was the first time I realised that this was getting pretty real."

As with any young person making strides in their sporting career, the fear of seeming weak or unsuitable played heavily on Murta's mind, particularly since he was making inroads to First Grade.

"At that time I was like, 'I'll give it one more head knock and then that's it' because I was like, 'I don't want to live in fear,'" he says. "Like I want to keep playing. I was going through the ranks and had a future."

"But then I had the big injury. Right at the same time I'd been offered to play with First Grade, I was at training and got hit in the head with a close ball at around 100km an hour. They said it was the equivalent of a king hit."

"This was a Tuesday night in March right before the season kick off," he recalls. "I don't remember anything from the Friday beforehand right up until the middle of June."

"I had just started working in real estate and I sold my first house. I don't remember selling the house, which is a huge milestone and achievement and I don't remember it."

There are many things that Murta doesn't remember during that time, including his 21st birthday. As a result of his concussion and the ongoing cognitive repercussions, he had to give up his job and due to the basic insurances offered in community sport, he couldn't afford the upkeep in his specialist care.

"Two years after quitting sport, I still suffer vertigo, tinnitus, lack of sleep, anxiety attacks, fatigue and I've also had depression."

When asked about the potential impacts of a concussion on an athlete, White says there are the short-term impacts of symptoms such as headache, visual, vestibular, cognitive, psychological, metabolic and cervical spine issues and the time off sport which can have significant social impacts.

As well as mental health and in some cases financial issues with not being able to participate in their sport, attend work or school.

"One of the biggest dangers with a concussion can be sustaining a second head knock before recovering from the first," she explains. "This can put an athlete at risk of post-concussion syndrome or Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), which includes long term and more significant issues such as career-ending concussions for professional athletes, permanent physical and mental disability, loss of income, mental health issues, social issues and poor academic performance in children and adolescents."

Having had over 20 significant head knocks in his sporting life, Murta is concerned about CTE.

"Having all these concussions, I mean, I'm not trying to exaggerate, but CTE is a big thing that concerns me," he says. "And the fact that you don't know you've got it until after you passed away is a big scary thing."

White is hopeful that the recent shift in how concussion is being treated in sport will make it less of a threat for future generations of sports people.

She acknowledges there has been some great research into concussion over the past few years and can see firsthand that a lot of sporting codes are starting to recognise the long-term issues by increasing their mandatory stand down times for post-concussion injuries.

"The recent Senate inquiry into sports-related concussion has made some really helpful recommendations to those working in sport for managing sports-related concussion," she says. "In conjunction with the position statement by the AIS, concussion management and awareness is heading in the right direction and we will see some really exciting things in the future."

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Two years after quitting sport, I still suffer vertigo, tinnitus, lack of sleep, anxiety attacks, fatigue and I've also had depression.

MALCOLM MURTA
NATIONAL PREMIER LEAGUE SOCCER PLAYER

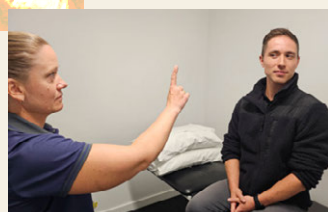




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One of the biggest dangers with a concussion can be sustaining a second head knock before recovering from the first. This can put an athlete at risk of post-concussion syndrome ... which includes long term and more significant issues.

LISA WHITE
TITLED SPORTS AND EXERCISE PHYSIOTHERAPIST



Physiotherapist Lisa White conducting concussion testing at SportsCare Canberra.

Although she acknowledges there is still a long way to go with raising awareness and ensuring that all sporting organisations, coaches, parents and athletes appreciate the potentially detrimental impact that concussion can have on an athlete of any level. There is also a way to go in refining concussion protocols across different sporting organisations and ensuring that these are implemented effectively.

"Setting a high standard in concussion management in high performance, professional and representative sport helps to filter down to the grassroots and increase awareness," she says.

"Just because you cannot see a concussion does not mean it is not serious. Any suspected concussion should be thoroughly assessed by a trained professional and athletes should not be returned to play until they have been appropriately cleared.

"We have had multiple situations of parents arguing when their children are removed from play and refusing to have them assessed until the clubs and coaches insist before letting them to return to play.

"I think this is due to a lack of education and understanding. It's terrifying to think that their child may suffer a lifelong brain injury for the sake of playing a local game of sport."

Murta agrees that the most important thing is education and awareness.

"I've never really spoken about my head injury to a lot of people because just for the memories it brings up," he admits. "But if it can save someone else from getting concussions or sort of look after himself more that's, I guess, the biggest goal is to talk about it."

Murta has steered clear of sport since the big hit and is now working in a family friendly environment with people who understand the long-term impacts concussion has had on his wellbeing.

How does he feel now, on reflection?

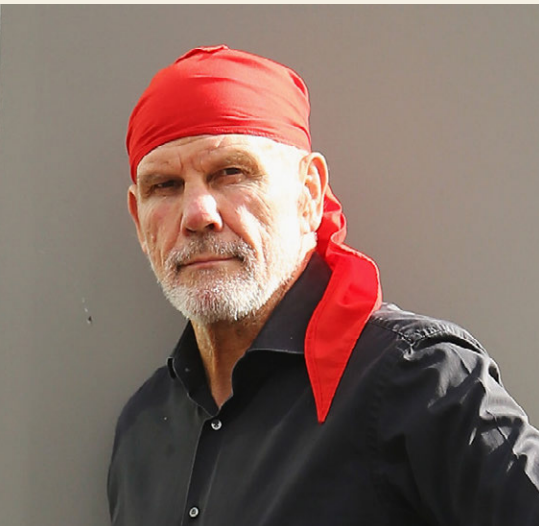
"It was a big turning point in my life and everything, but I mean it's sort of weird to look at the concussion and think, 'if that hadn't happened, I wouldn't be where I am today'," he reflects. "Pretty much in the job I am, I wouldn't have had the opportunities I've had so far if it hadn't happened, so you've got to focus on the positives."

White's viewpoint, whether she's on the sidelines of local or elite level sport, remains the same.

"In my role it can seem challenging to make a decision to remove a significant player in a vital part of an important game as there is a lot of pressure from coaches, players and the crowd and there is significant time pressure," she says.

However, she is adamant that regardless of the level, the sport or the age of the participant: "If in doubt, sit them out!"

THE KNOCK-ON EFFECTS



In a [podcast](#) recorded in 2021, Sport Integrity Australia spoke to former Wallabies player Peter FitzSimons, whose personal crusade against concussion started two decades ago.

"... years ago in reading *The New York Times*, I became more and more aware of how concussion was a serious issue in sport ... there were lots of NFL players particularly that were to use the old terminology 'punch drunk' which was like a revelation to many people because a lot of us were naive enough to think that it was only boxers that could suffer damage through concussion."

At the time of the interview FitzSimons suggested that while "huge progress" within contact sporting codes has been made, the rules were still flaunted each week.

"...When you see someone clearly concussed, clearly gaga, still getting HIA (head injury assessments), which is let's see if they're concussed or not, and then so often they come back on the field Can you tell us what it was?" he asks. "Professional football codes have to get serious about observing the protocols."

In the podcast FitzSimons cited America as leading the charge in this space due to concussion problems in the NFL.

"You know in America it was not taken seriously for many years, many decades until I think the first case was \$800 million class action ... I don't have the figures in front of me ... but there was serious money that changed hands ... [because] the footballers were quite reasonably saying, 'You knew what this was doing to our brains and yet you still sent us out there ... you put us out there week after week, we suffered brain damage because of what you did'."



Michael Milton



Associate Professor Alan Pearce

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It's all about small steps, it's all about changing the attitudes of the wider community to concussion or sub-concussions, taking the injury more seriously... We will still keep calling for changes because we know that the long-term welfare will pay off in the end.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ALAN PEARCE



One of our most successful Paralympians with six gold, three silver and two bronze medals, Michael Milton, admitted in the same podcast he competed in an era where he often didn't wear a helmet in downhill skiing and that crashes were all part of the sport.

"[The impacts of those crashes] is certainly a concern going forward," he admits. "When I start to think about skiing over 6,000 days in my life, averaging a crash at least once a day, you start adding up and thinking there's probably pretty high numbers of multiple impacts that potentially could have an issue in the future."

When reflecting on the many sports over and above the obvious concussion sports like football and boxing, Milton suggested that training coaches, medical staff and the athletes themselves in the importance of taking concussion seriously was the key.

"I think certainly the way things are managed have changed over the years, and you know I think it's probably more important for those people involved in the sport to have education and an understanding."

Associate Professor Alan Pearce, a neurophysiologist said that sports are now starting to take concussion seriously.

"The emerging evidence worldwide is very clear that there are links between repeated head trauma and that's either with repeated concussions or what we call sub-concussions where the brain receives impacts, but you don't see the obvious signs of concussion *per se*," he explained. "And what we do see from the international research is that there are links now to a range of diseases and cognitive impairments."

"It's all about small steps, it's all about changing the attitudes of the wider community to concussion or sub-concussions, taking the injury more seriously... We will still keep calling for changes because we know that the long-term welfare will pay off in the end."

You can listen to the full interview on the Sport Integrity website



Concussion in Australian Sport website

Concussion affects athletes at all levels and is a growing concern nationally and internationally.

The [Concussion in Australian Sport website](#) has resources for athletes, parents and teachers, coaches and support staff, medical practitioners and physiotherapists, to support the [Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement](#).

"There is no such thing as a good concussion, and we need to be concerned about each concussion and manage each concussion seriously," Dr David Hughes, Australian Institute of Sport Chief Medical Advisor, says.

Concussion in Australian Sport brings together evidence-based information on concussion for the management of sports-related concussion for all Australians, regardless of the sport, location or level of participation.

Studies into CTE thanks to the Australia Sports Brain Bank

According to the Concussion and Brain Health Position Statement, 100,000 sport related concussions occur in Australia each year. Most concussions occur in community sport however many are still not documented.

Studies are being undertaken to determine what the long-term impacts of concussion in sport might be. Researchers are studying possible links between sport and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE).

The Australian Sports Brain Bank (ASBB) is an international collaboration committed to researching the long-term effects of regular concussions in Australian sportspeople on the brain, in particular with regards to CTE. There is currently no test available to test for CTE in the living, but the ASBB is hoping to change that.

First found in the sport of boxing, CTE is a condition caused by repeated mild traumatic brain injuries and is now being linked to sports such as American football, Australian Rules football, rugby league and rugby union. No doubt as the ASBB grows in donations, other sports with participants at risk of CTE will come to light.

According to the ASBB, CTE can cause problems with memory, thinking, personality and behavioural changes, aggression and depression.

ASBB international partner, the Concussion Legacy Foundation, publishes up-to-date information about the science of CTE on their website.

For more information head to www.concussionfoundation.org and www.brainbank.org.au/



TIME FOR CONSOLIDATION

As Sport Integrity Australia CEO David Sharpe's tenure draws to a close, we look back at the first four years of Sport Integrity Australia.

Since opening our doors, Sport Integrity Australia has built, learnt and, importantly, written the opening chapter of the sports integrity playbook.

At the time, the agency had a bold vision – to protect sport together – a vision that remains as important four years on.

As Sport Integrity Australia CEO David Sharpe has said many times over the years, there are so many elements to sports integrity that "no one agency, no one country, can manage alone".

"We have built the model, now as a sporting nation we must move forward together to ensure a safe Australian sporting culture for all," he says.

It is the model that will help us set the culture of sport ahead of Brisbane 2032, he says, and it is a model that only works if we have the buy-in from all stakeholders.

"I would particularly like to recognise the role sports have played in developing our agency and their willingness to make sport better. Without them, we couldn't have achieved what we have set out to."

One of the agency's greatest achievements during his time, he says, was the acceptance and implementation of a National Integrity Framework (NIF).

All sports acknowledged the need for change and have embraced the NIF and its policies and "drawn a line in

the sand" on the behaviours and conduct that are not acceptable in sport.

It's a model built for sport, with sport.

The subsequent funding and embedding of 22 National Integrity Managers (NIM) across 40 National Sporting Organisations and National Sporting Organisations with Disability is also noteworthy.

Significantly, last month Sport Integrity Australia announced an increase in funding of the NIM program, to \$2.26 million per year, for the next two years.

Sharpe says he's proud of what has been achieved through the NIM program so far, with 93 sports committed to implementing the National Integrity Framework, and "we want to do all we can to continuously support those sports and managers who are as committed to protecting the integrity of sport as we are".

The benefits of the program are many, as it has enabled us to work directly with sports over the years to provide advice and guidance on integrity issues, including the management of complaints. The agency has also directly helped a raft of sports in this area, from football, gymnastics and the Western Australian Institute of Sport to more recently the AFL and figure skating.

Our commitment to building the capability of sport does not stop there.

In June 2023, Sport Integrity Australia launched a Safeguarding in Sport Continuous Improvement Program. At its core, the program aims to embed a culture of child safety and member protection across all levels of sport in Australia.

Above: The Minister for Sport, Anika Wells, visited the agency recently to thank David Sharpe for his contribution to sport and his stewardship in building Sport Integrity Australia into an international regulatory leader.

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We have built the model, now as a sporting nation we must move forward together to ensure a safe Australian sporting culture for all.

**DAVID SHARPE APM OAM
CEO, SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA**



Twenty-four sports have signed up in the past year, with discussions with other sports ongoing.

Sixteen of these sports have completed the audit phase which has identified several key themes, such as safeguarding risk management, embedding safeguarding into strategic and integrity plans, and recruitment to child-related positions.

"This report identifies what sports are doing well and what they need to focus on," he says. "With ongoing support, we can help sports drive genuine cultural change for everyone – from the elite level right down to the clubs."

However, Sport Integrity Australia's role in protecting sport extends beyond our borders with the agency active in many global forums and advisory groups. Earlier this year the agency has established and chairs a global body to support 32 like-minded countries in developing agencies in their countries based on our model and learnings.

Over the years we have been a staunch advocate for embedding fairness and integrity into all sport: on and off the field. Behind the scenes there has been a lot of work done to ensure that the anti-doping system, in particular, is consistent, robust, and transparent, regardless of where you compete.

"We have led a push for change, whether it be for the testing and analysis of EPO [Erythropoietin] or providing clarity on decisions to ensure faith in the system is maintained. Australian athletes are regularly tested and held to the highest level of accountability; we expect the same for all athletes."

The agency, and Sharpe in particular, has also called out the dearth of female leaders in sport, particularly in Australia.

The Minister for Sport Anika Wells, in her keynote address to the Women in Sport Congress last year, pointed out that, in 2023, only 22% of CEOs and only 25% of board chairs across 65 NSOs were women.

These figures are even lower today.

They highlight a sad reality in Australia and show that we are lagging behind the rest of the world, Sharpe says.

As a result Sport Integrity Australia is creating an Empowering Women and Girls in Sport Program, designed to prevent and respond to integrity threats to women and girls across all levels of sport in Australia so that women and girls can enter, stay and thrive in sport.

"While there is an obvious imbalance within Australian sport, internationally there is a far greater desire to empower and promote Australian women into leadership positions in sport," he says. "This program is designed to correct that imbalance."

The Empowering Women and Girls in Sport Program has four key draft initiatives:

- Supporting Women in Leadership
- Empowering through Education
- Influencing in Partnership
- Understanding and Strengthening the Integrity Environment.

While the sporting integrity landscape is changing for the better, Sharpe says there is still a way to go.

"Despite all the work and all the awareness, we still see abuse, racism, homophobia, match-fixing and illicit drug use dominate the headlines," he says. "I have called on leaders in sport to use the power of their brands to drive cultural reform in Australian sport."

"I have always said we can only be successful in partnership. In partnership with sport, law enforcement, intelligence, safeguarding and regulatory agencies."

Sharpe says he has done what he had set out to do.

"I feel the agency has completed the build phase and, with funding secured and a new leadership team in place, it is now time to hand over the reins to take the agency into the future."

"We are now well placed to shift focus leading to 2032 from changing culture, to creating it."

Sport Integrity Australia finalises assessment of allegations of misconduct of **AFL'S ILLICIT DRUGS POLICY**

The assessment focused on statements provided to Sport Integrity Australia by Mr Andrew Wilkie MP and centered on claims that the AFL sanctioned an illicit drug testing regime that was detrimental to players and potentially breaching the World Anti-Doping Code.

Under the *Sport Integrity Australia Act 2020 (Cth)* and the WADC, SIA has the powers to investigate any matters relating to anti-doping. The agency commenced a thorough assessment of Mr Wilkie's allegations of 'secret testing', including review of the associated statements and discussions with a range of relevant stakeholders to seek information on the AFL's Illicit Drugs Policy and its operation to help us to determine if it was in breach of the WADC or not.

Critically, this Assessment is relevant to all sports in Australia. It's important to note that AFL is not alone in its journey to stay ahead of the curve when it relates to illicit

drug use in sport. We urge Australian sports to take heed of the lessons learned and issues raised in the assessment and develop their own robust frameworks to address these threats.

Sport has a critical role to play in social cohesion in our society. Sports, governments, medical professionals, educators, law enforcement and intelligence agencies must strengthen their partnerships in a nationally coordinated manner to put a ring around sport to ensure athletes are supported while also creating an environment hostile to criminal elements.

The message must be sent now that sport is not open for exploitation. Success relies on acknowledgment that we all have a role to play in protecting sport.

Success relies on acknowledgment that we all have a role to play in protecting sport and this approach needs to be led by professional and Olympic/Paralympic sports who have extensive public profiles, including the AFL. Through the power of these sports' brands, they are in the driver's seat to lead cultural and behavioural change and reinforce positive attitudes from the grassroots to elite levels.

Our agency is committed to supporting all sports at all levels in Australia through provision of advice, guidance, support and educational resources to shape positive cultures to keep sport safe and fair for all.

To read the full assessment report visit our website.

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We urge Australian sports to take heed of the lessons learned and issues raised in the assessment and develop their own robust frameworks to address these threats.

Key findings

- Based on the information provided there were no breaches of the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC) through any Anti-Doping Rule Violation by AFL players or support personnel or that injuries were feigned to cover up for positive drug testing during the week by the AFL or club doctors.
- As a signatory to the WADC, the AFL has mandatory obligations around anti-doping education. While the AFL does have a current Anti-Doping Education Plan, we identified a need for the AFL to enhance its education program to all levels of the game.
- That there are no irreconcilable inconsistencies between the AFL's Illicit Drugs Policy and the National Anti-Doping Scheme, while both ultimately aim to protect health and to promote integrity in sport, they operate under separate objectives and distinct frameworks.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

- The need for a level of independent oversight of the Illicit Drugs Policy
- Guidelines for AFL sanctioned illicit drugs testing within the policy
- Continued expansion of the intelligence capability in the AFL's integrity unit
- Expand and promote AFL anonymous tip off portal
- Testing of AFLW players in the new policy
- Developing a strategy for addressing illicit drug use by non-players
- Greater education on the Illicit Drugs Policy and anti-doping policy
- Continuing to expand the AFL's Education Program



PARIS 2024 GAME ON!

Since 1908 and 1952, the Australian Olympic and Paralympic teams respectively have been guided by a **Chef de Mission**. Taken from the French language, Chef de Mission translates to 'Head of Mission' and their role is exactly that, to unite and lead the national delegation to sporting success, on the world's biggest stage. Meet our Paris Olympics chefs!



KATE McLOUGHLIN – PARALYMPIC AUSTRALIA CHEF DE MISSION

More than 100 years after the role was created, Kate McLoughlin became the first female to lead a team through the Paralympics in Rio in 2016.

Since then, McLoughlin has gone on to lead our Summer and Winter Paralympic teams to success and she is taking it all on again for the fourth time, preparing to lead our Paralympians into Paris 2024.

Credited with creating a performance-driven, inclusive and supportive environment for athletes, McLoughlin was also named 'Best Official' by the International Paralympic Committee in 2017.

But like any great leader, Kate recognises that success is driven by collaboration and preparation.

"A Chef de Mission is the person who oversees the planning and implementation of an Olympic or Paralympic Team," McLoughlin says.

"We bring together expert practitioners across performance services, operations and media to ensure our athletes have the best possible performance environment when it counts.

"I believe success comes when this team of people – athletes, coaches, officials and staff – work together to develop trust and collaborative relationships well before the Games begin.

"A strong, inclusive culture has been critical to our success in recent campaigns. No matter what is thrown at us, the team works together to find solutions and to ensure athlete performance and wellbeing are what we always prioritise."

The COVID-era saw a sharp increase in worldwide viewership of the Paralympic Games and while overall this was a positive outcome for the sports and athletes, there were some who were quick to criticise the changing landscape of Paralympic sport.

McLoughlin embraces this change saying that it allows athletes to be seen as nothing more or less than just that, athletes.

"Paralympians have always considered themselves as elite athletes first and foremost as have fans of Paralympic sport," McLoughlin says.

“

A strong, inclusive culture has been critical to our success in recent campaigns. No matter what is thrown at us, the team works together to find solutions and to ensure athlete performance and wellbeing are what we always prioritise.

**KATE McLOUGHLIN, CHEF DE MISSION
PARIS PARALYMPIC GAMES 2024**



Clockwise from above: Paralympic Chef de Mission Kate McLoughlin with co-captains of the 2020 Tokyo Games, wheelchair rugby ace Ryley Batt and veteran Danni Di Toro (para-table tennis and wheelchair tennis); becoming the first female to lead a team at the Rio Paralympics in 2016; and with 2024 Paralympic team captains Angie Ballard and Curtis McGrath, who were told of their ascension to the co-captaincy by Di Toro and Batt.

"But for those who watched Paralympic sport for the first time in Tokyo, it became clear that the toughness and spirit of our team was the element that most resonated, not the stories of what brought each athlete to the Paralympic Games.

"Disability is rarely the lead story in modern Paralympic sport, it is about elite performance. I was so proud of the way our athletes spoke in support of one another, in support of our team culture, Paralympic sport in general and how they used their platform to help all Australians rethink their perceptions of disability and show how sport has this unique ability to change the world for the better."

Just like those athletes, McLoughlin is using her own platform to create positive change and push for greater inclusivity on all fronts.

When asked whether her appointment as the first female Chef de Mission felt groundbreaking she says that it's the collaborative efforts of female change-makers that has felt the most impactful.

"The honour of being appointed the first female Chef de Mission was huge for me," she says. "But one thing that I think is groundbreaking, is the fact that in 2024 we have, for the first time, female Chefs de Mission for all three major multi-sport National Teams (Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games).

"Whilst the final year of preparations for the Games involve a huge amount of hard work and time away from family, it has been wonderful to have Anna (Meares) and Petria (Thomas) by my side.

"Three strong female leaders working together and in regular contact to support one another on three very similar journeys has been a highlight of this campaign for me."

It's her team-focused mindset that has propelled McLoughlin to achieve such success as Chef de Mission.

She says that everything from the integrity training and frameworks to inclusive consultation processes have a pivotal role in steering our Aussies toward Paralympic success.

"Every decision we make in the build-up to the Games is focused on athlete safety, wellbeing and performance but is also layered with advice from those with lived experience of disability and of being a high-performance athlete," McLoughlin says.

"The athlete voice counts. The coach voice counts and the sports' views count."

Listening to these voices requires work to build relationships – a Paralympic Team doesn't magically come together once every four years – it takes work to build and gain the trust of every member over weeks, months and years.

"It's not easily given, it has to be earned. That's so important to me as a leader.

"Embedding integrity education in Para-sports is so important. Not just Para-sport, all sport.

"Educating our athletes on their responsibilities as they relate to integrity across a range of areas gives us the best chance to ensure sport is fair.

"In Para-sport, classification integrity is paramount and we have been so fortunate to work in partnership with Sport Integrity Australia to develop critical modules that will assist our athletes, our coaches and our administrators to understand what their role is in maintaining the reputation and integrity of Australian Paralympic sport and what they need to do to adhere to the International Paralympic Committee Classification Code."

With the Olympics and Paralympics just around the corner, McLoughlin is already looking forward to future Games and

says that it's the more inclusive culture and structures she helped cultivate, which she is proudest to leave behind as foundations for future success.

"I hope my legacy will be the ongoing strength of the Australian Paralympic Team culture we have built to honour the trailblazers of our movement, recognise the contributions of all Paralympians to our sports and to use their expertise and skills to add value to future Paralympic teams.

"We have increased the percentage of people with disability on our headquarters team from 6% in Tokyo to 13% in Paris.

"I want this to continue to rise – particularly in areas like coaching, media, sports science and leadership within Paralympics Australia.

"Paralympians have incredible experience and transferable skills that will be critical to propelling this amazing movement forward in what we hope will be a more inclusive world toward Brisbane 2032."

ANNA MEARES – OLYMPIAN FOR LIFE

It is fair to say that Anna Meares has ridden the highs and lows of the Olympic Games.

Despite six medals from four Olympics, Australia's Chef de Mission is well-placed to mentor and counsel athletes through the good times and bad.

Like winning gold at the 2012 London Games in the days after the "worst race of my career and absolutely stuffing up the Kieran as world champion". Or when she completed one of the greatest comebacks in Australian Olympic history to claim silver in Beijing in 2008, after crashing at 65km/h and breaking her neck seven months earlier.

With six Olympic medals from four Games, champion cyclist Anna Meares is used to being Olympic royalty but takes on a supporting role in Paris.



“

I think it will be a great Games like any Games, it will have its challenges, that's fine. But we have a really experienced team that's capable of adjusting very quickly to circumstances as they arise and we'll do that as each occasion arises.

**ANNA MEARES, CHEF DE MISSION
PARIS OLYMPIC GAMES 2024**

Meares describes her role leading the Australian team as "multi-faceted".

"My role is to build relationships with the sports, the coaches, the athletes and the high-performance directors so that I understand what the nuances of each sport are, what sort of support mechanisms they have in place, what they require for competition to be able to be as smooth as possible," she says. "Then I take that information and I'll work with my team at the AOC [Australian Olympic Committee] and build the environment and the culture for the team and put those structures in place.

"My job is to take as much off the athletes' plate as possible so they can just go ahead and do what they are exceptional at doing and getting the best out of themselves."

With more than 450 athletes spread across 35 venues from the Eiffel Tower Stadium to the Stade de France to the Château de Versailles, not to mention surfing in Tahiti, Paris 2024 is a logistical nightmare for any Chef de Mission.

To help her achieve this she has built an impressive leadership team around her with Olympians Mark Knowles, Kaarle McCulloch, Bronwen Knox, Kyle Vander Kuyp and Ken Wallace.

"I think it will be a great Games like any Games, it will have its challenges, that's fine. But we have a really experienced team that's capable of adjusting very quickly to circumstances as they arise and we'll do that as each occasion arises."

Having experienced the excitement as a rookie of trying to win and as a matriarchal figure fearing what would happen if she didn't – she appreciates the different pressures and anxieties of a Games.

Despite her own medal haul, Meares insists there'll be no medal target set for the Games – something she said she would've loved when she was competing.

"Success can be winning a silver, winning a bronze, making a final, performing a personal best, an act of sportsmanship or sportswomanship [or] making the team. There are a lot of people who don't get the opportunity to make the team to be an Australian Olympian."

So how does one of Australia's most successful Olympians sell this message to our athletes?

"Why do I have this outlook and philosophy?" she asks. "Like everything in life, there is a whole lot that happens behind the scenes that people don't realise and that can affect how people see what that success looks like at the time."

Take Beijing and that aforementioned crash. Or Rio where she finished a tyre-width behind Great Britain's Rebecca James to win bronze in the keirin and become the first Australian athlete to win individual medals at four consecutive Games.

"I came home from my fourth Games with the bronze medal, which I was so proud of, and it was so hard to earn and a lot of people said to me 'we're sorry, you must be disappointed you didn't win gold'.

"We can devalue or discredit the achievement of silver, of the bronze, of making the final or a personal best... it's having those conversations and keeping it real but I'm also appreciating that expectation and hope is different for everyone."

She was the flag-bearer and captain of the Australian team in Rio, an opportunity she was grateful for and one that helped change her outlook. It is not lost on Meares that she has the responsibility of bestowing that honour in Paris.

In 2024 we have female Chefs de Mission: Anna Meares (Olympics), Petria Thomas (Commonwealth Games), and Kate McLoughlin (Paralympics).



Anna Meares' Olympic Record

GOLD

2004 Athens	500m time trial
2012 London	Sprint

SILVER

2008 Beijing	Sprint
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BRONZE

2004 Athens	Sprint
2012 London	Team sprint
2016 Rio de Janeiro	Keirin

"I remember what that moment was like for me when Kitty [Chiller] asked me to be the flag-bearer. I know what that meant to me," she said.

"I will never forget walking into the stadium in Rio ... The wall of noise and the wall of colour that came at us as Australia was announced into that stadium ... for me it changed the whole experience of my last Olympic campaign. It took the pressure off. It made me feel like my contribution to sport and Olympic sport, in particular, in Australia, was recognised."

She is also making history outside of the velodrome, alongside Kate McLoughlin and Petria Thomas – it is the first time Australia has all women leading all the Games teams.

"I'm grateful that Ian Chesterman saw in me a capacity to be a great leader for the Australian Olympic team," she said. "I'm grateful for Petria, who was Australia's first female Chef de Mission for the Commonwealth Games, saw something in me to work with her as a general manager.

"Across the board now to see women in these roles – Commonwealth Games, the Paralympic and the Olympic teams is really special. We have a great friendship and connection and support that we provide for each other.

"What I have noticed is that some of the athletes have come to me and said 'just seeing you in this role makes me realise there's opportunity for me when I'm finished competing' and that really nice to hear."

She believes the biggest barrier for women is getting experience.

"I was involved in the sport for 20 years and 16 of those years were at the elite high performance level and my experience was very much athlete-based," she says.

"So it was hard to get experience outside of that in roles. So I was very grateful when Petria offered me that opportunity because I think it started the ball to roll, so to speak, for me to be where I am today."

She says that it is only now, as Australia's most decorated cyclist and first Australian to win individual medals at four consecutive Games, that she understands the true status of being an Olympian.

"I feel like I'm growing into being an Olympian and I'm realising that that follows me for life. Being an athlete is for a very short window of time, but being an Olympian follows me for life." ■

SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA STAFF ON THE GROUND IN PARIS

Sport Integrity Australia is honoured to accept the invitation of the French National Anti-Doping Organisation (AFLD) to formally assist in the implementation of a testing and sample collection program throughout the Games.

In keeping with our agency's commitment to protecting the integrity of sport, five representatives will be on the ground to support this initiative, and keep sport clean, fair and safe for all.

In support of the AFLD, Sport Integrity Australia will have one staff member working within the Doping Control Coordination Centre at each of the Games. In addition, three experienced SIA Doping Control Officers will be supporting the anti-doping testing program across both Games.

Travelling with his wealth of experience, Sports Operations Assistant Director Steve Northey will be located within the Athlete's village during the Olympic Games as part of the Doping Control Coordination Centre.

"My role will be working alongside other members of the AFLD testing team and the International Testing Agency to assist in implementing and coordinating the Pre-Games and In-Competition testing programs at the Games," Northey says.

"Having previously worked at the 2018 Commonwealth Games and the Tokyo Olympic Games, I'm again looking forward to this amazing but challenging experience."

Driven by their passion for sport, SIA staff will be volunteering at the Games. Sports Partnerships Assistant Director Adam Castle will play an integral role during the Paralympic Games as Manager Ground Transport for the Australian team.

"This will be my first Paralympic Games and I'm excited to make a contribution and help provide a positive Games experience for the athletes," he says.

"My role will be to manage the movements of all athletes and staff from the time they arrive in Paris until they depart using a mix of Games transport and fleet vehicles. Transport is almost always the area that has the most issues and this Games will be no different with some unique logistical challenges. There will be a dedicated team of operational staff who will be working very hard behind the scenes."





Olympic and Paralympic eLearning course

Sport Integrity Australia, the Australian Olympic Committee and Paralympics Australia have once again collaborated on an eLearning product to support the Olympic and Paralympic teams as they prepare for some of the biggest sporting events in history.

This is the third Olympic and Paralympic cycle that has seen Sport Integrity Australia work with the event governing bodies to ensure that athletes have a single touch point for all their education and integrity needs.

Sport Integrity Australia Director of Education Alexis Cooper says the new course has been designed to ensure that athletes and teams have all the information they could need at their fingertips.

"We're thrilled to once again partner with Paralympics Australia and the Australian Olympic Committee to educate team Australia," Ms Cooper says.

"This course covers the need-to-know information for all team members and is an integral part of their preparation for the Games. It is critical that all athletes and support personnel understand what the integrity policies mean for them."

Information in the Paris 2024 course is featured in a variety of formats including videos presented by former Olympic athlete and Deputy Chef de Mission Bronwen Knox, quizzes, case studies and activities.

The course will take approximately 20 minutes to complete and is a compulsory requirement for both Australian teams. It is available via Sport Integrity Australia and the Australian Olympic Committee's eLearning platforms.

The course will prepare athletes and teams to:

- **Recognise whereabouts obligations** that apply for the Games
- **Manage medications and supplements** to avoid any inadvertent doping violations
- **Identify appropriate interactions** between adults and young people
- **Respond to any approaches to manipulate a competition**, if they occur, and
- **Identify where to report any integrity issues** while at the Games.

PLAYING GAMES

Sport Integrity Australia is proud to support our Aussie Olympic and Paralympic hopefuls with a uniquely designed deck of cards inspired by the Paris 2024 Games.

Commemorating 100 years since the last Summer Games held in France, the deck design pays homage to the classic Art Deco style that originated in Paris in the 1910's.

The deck features the design of the Stade Olympique de Colombes, the main venue of the 1924 Summer Games.

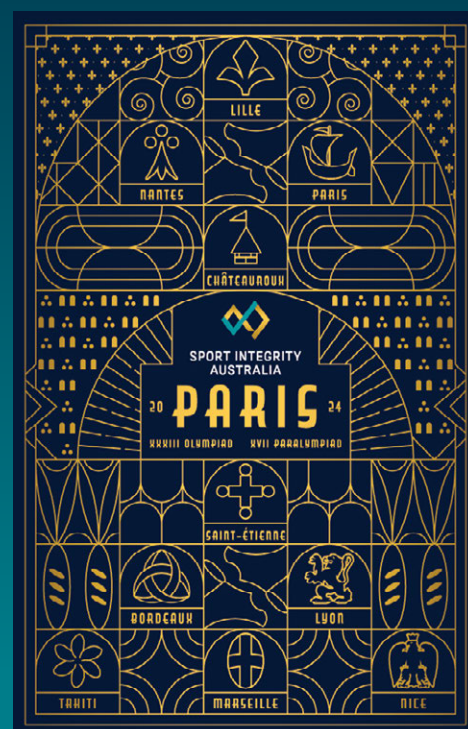
The major event playing cards were created as an activity to occupy our athletes during their travels and in their downtime.

This year's Summer Games will take place across ten locations throughout France, each location's coat of arms is displayed on the cards representing a map of Olympic venues.

In the center of the card design are 23 circle clusters which represent the number of Paralympic sport disciplines and 48 arches to represent the Olympic disciplines.

This major sport event marks the fourth iteration of uniquely designed cards, each nodding to our Aussie mascot – the kangaroo.

Sport Integrity Australia wishes our Aussie's luck at the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Integrity

IS AT THE CORE OF A STRONG CULTURE



Sport Integrity Australia Advisory Council Chair Sarah Kenny is a former Olympian, prominent lawyer and sports administrator.

On our podcast *On Side*, we talk to Sport Integrity Australia's Advisory Council Chair Sarah Kenny about integrity threats in sport and her role in influencing the sporting landscape. This is an edited extract.

You're SIA's Advisory Council Chair, World Sailing vice president, a lawyer, you cover a fairly wide range of topics that are associated with sport integrity. You're able to mould them all together into one, do you think?

In a funny way my entire career led me to a role like this one with Sport Integrity Australia. Being a lawyer by profession, integrity and proper practise and process is really at the heart of what you do day in day out ... just like it is in my professional career integrity is at the core of sport. That background as well as really seeing sports through from a competitive level, through being a parent of athletes in pathway and Olympic programs, being on the board of an NSO and then, now on the governing body of an International Federation, it gives you a fabulous perspective on sport. I think the broader your experience in sport and sort of aligned fields where integrity is at the core of the field, the better value you will contribute.

One of the criticisms of management in sport is that they don't really know what's going on at the bottom level. Do you feel as though you've got a good grasp?

Absolutely. I think it's quite hard if you don't have that experience. You really have to understand most sports are challenged. Having an understanding of the pressures that the national bodies are under helps you when you're at the international level to really think about how you're going to come up with rules, requirements, processes that not just are the right thing for the sport but that our participants can actually engage with and deliver on and commit to.

Do you think younger sailors coming through have a real awareness of integrity issues in sport, whether it be gambling, anti-doping, abuse by coaches...?

I think they do, for a lot of reasons. Generally, the NSOs are much better equipped, much more aware and they've got toolkits like the Sport Integrity Australia National Integrity Framework, they've got access to really good education products. I know that the drug education is excellent, it becomes a prerequisite to enter into the National Youth Championships at least. The unique thing about sailing, too, I think is we have a pretty complex set of racing rules ... [And] we've got young kids at the helm of a boat, they really do need to understand the rules. So, in general terms, there's a higher degree of awareness perhaps than in other sports because of that level of responsibility they have at a young age.

What was the education like as a young windsurfer coming through in terms of anti-doping and some of the integrity issues that we've talked about?

I mean the word that comes to mind is 'non-existent'. We didn't have women's events in Olympic Sailing at the time. I was lucky enough to do a demonstration event in windsurfing but I really don't have a lot of recollection of anything around these topics. It was there, of course, in part, but it wasn't anywhere like what we have in sport today. We've come a long, long way in those few short decades.

What do you see as the main threats to the integrity of sport?

Anti-doping continues to be a major issue relative to other integrity issues in sport. There is a lot of investment, money, time ... perhaps that's a distinction we can draw with the other integrity issues which haven't had the same investment and infrastructure. Increasingly we're seeing those threats, the match-fixing [and] corruption issues emerge and often they are at the lower levels of sport, so they can be even harder to identify those issues. The broader issues around advertising of gambling in sport. Safeguarding is a tricky issue [too] and the wellbeing of athletes. I think they will continue to be real challenges for sport.

How important is your role in terms of the context of Australian sport as the Chair of Sport Integrity Australia Advisory Council?

Where I found we've had the most impact is when we can help influence and inform in the early days of developing new policies, strategies, approaches, initiatives. The Council is drawn from a very wide array of professional and sporting backgrounds as diverse as law enforcement, child protection lawyers, we have athletes who've come from very different backgrounds and most have long years of experience ... when we get the chance to talk about an issue early enough, the context and richness of the discussion is really inspiring and we have provided incredibly valuable insight and input. I think it's what's needed because the issues are complex as an agency we're a groundbreaker and a trailblazer, there are not many like us and these issues, a lot of them are new and evolving.

I would imagine as an Advisory Council member you'd be asked questions about integrity issues relating to sport?

That's the power of a body like that. I think, in sport, everyone relates to it and everyone wants to be engaged in it and we want sport to be something that's accessible to everybody so the broader your leadership group is, the better input you're going to have because you're constantly getting feedback and it helps people think a bit more outside the box. There have been occasions where something presented is heading in a particular direction and, due to some specific experience and background, one of our Council members has offered some insight and actually changed the shape of that initiative.

Is it fascinating to you on a weekly or daily basis to look at integrity issues relating to sport?

Look it is, but also I'm passionate about it because I think integrity is at the core of a strong culture, whether that's in sport or otherwise. I'm very much of the school of 'it's not just *what* you say, it's actually *doing* what you say' and I think that can be quite hard sometimes in sport. You can have all the integrity policies, processes, procedures in place but if you're not actually delivering on them, they're just words on the page.

Because your opinion holds such gravitas, I'd imagine that in a community setting you've almost got to be careful about what you say because it can be deemed almost as policy?

Yeah. You won't see me in the media commenting on this stuff very often, if at all.

Listen to On Side on all major streaming platforms.
On Side Podcast | Sport Integrity Australia



THE 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.

The Advisory Council members:

- Sarah Kenny (Chair)
- Megan Mitchell
- Lynne Anderson
- James Sutherland
- Katarina Carroll
- Timothy Goodwin
- Katherine Leigh
- Monique Murphy
- Prof Sophia Nimphius
- Dr Amber Halliday

Learn more about the Advisory Council on the [Sport Integrity Australia website](#).

SETTING UP A FUTURE WITH INTEGRITY



Our Assistant Director Kate Walker was seconded to Volleyball Australia as a National Integrity Manager in 2022. As she departs the sport two years later, she shares her highlights, challenges, learnings and "the gaps" in the system.

Despite a long list of achievements at Volleyball Australia, Kate Walker rues the fact there were "still so many things I didn't get to achieve". It's the nature of the job when, like with most of her fellow integrity managers at smaller sports, you're handling the complaints, education and even HR grievances at all levels of the sport.

Averaging 1–2 formal complaints every week, in addition to dealing with reports, providing states with advice and guidance, Walker says the "real-life experience" she will bring back to the agency will be "invaluable" for the agency going forward.

"It was pretty similar to what I expected," Walker says, "in terms of the complexities of the cases, the variety of work (education, policy, complaint management, advice etc) and the stakeholder relationships."

When it came to putting policies into practice, she believes the key was being "adaptable".

"The way I operated was 'how can we do this activity by making it as safe and fair as possible'," she says. "Nothing is perfect, but the ability to adapt and work within existing processes is really the key to success."

"I relied on the staff's knowledge and expertise in their respective areas and offered suggestions for improvements as I saw relevant – rather than approaching it with a firm 'no' or 'you can't do that!' which never lands nicely! The areas that I was firm on was the non-negotiables around child safeguarding and other legislated obligations."

The biggest integrity challenges in the sport were around safeguarding, she says, "however anti-doping and competition manipulation also feature, just not as frequently".

Most were Category 1 offences such as directly texting a child, inappropriate comments on social media, professional boundaries, and bullying and harassment. However, there were also matters that were referred to law enforcement.

With regards to the role itself, there were many significant challenges along the way, with varying levels of complexity.

"I dealt with a couple of serious criminal matters which were interesting and frustrating in the same vein," she says. "The different jurisdictions and willingness to share information with sports is often a point of frustration when you're trying to manage risk in a community."

"I also navigated a complex historical matter, which required empathy, negotiation and influence."

It highlights the importance of having the right people in the right roles, she says.

"You can have all the best policies and practices in the world but you need the right people implementing them."

“

THE WAY I OPERATED WAS 'HOW CAN WE DO THIS ACTIVITY BY MAKING IT AS SAFE AND FAIR AS POSSIBLE'. NOTHING IS PERFECT, BUT THE ABILITY TO ADAPT AND WORK WITHIN EXISTING PROCESSES IS REALLY THE KEY TO SUCCESS.



"There are some really good people working for sport who genuinely want and try to do the right thing, but are at capacity."

"I've also learnt more about my own personal values and how they align with my career."

It also highlighted a gap across most sports – the protection of integrity managers as employees.

"Many sports don't have a designated HR person, so the integrity manager becomes that person for everyone in the sport, but it's critical that there is someone within the organisation is also looking out for them."

"The HR function is such a fundamental service for any organisation that relies on people to perform roles. Having a HR service for employees to rely on and for employers to meet best practice recruitment, screening, performance reviews and employee development is crucial in raising the level of integrity within sport."

This is where the National Integrity Manager Network was "invaluable", she says.



Funded by Sport Integrity Australia, the 24-person Network was established to help boost sport's understanding, awareness and capability to manage integrity threats at all levels.

"I called them my 'brain trust' and really enjoyed the team spirit within the network, and genuine desire to share and collaborate.

"A highlight of my time in the role was the comradery, friendship and connections I made with other integrity managers."

In terms of the benefits of having a National Integrity Framework (NIF), "I can say that certainly the recordkeeping, legality of the process and templates that the NIF now requires are much more sophisticated than previously".

However, the load on sports is still considerable – particularly at state level.

Volleyball NSW CEO Baz Wedmaier agreed, saying the lack of resources and support at the community club/association level was a significant obstacle to fully implementing the NIF.

"Understanding and properly implementing the NIF policies at the grassroots level has been challenging," he says. "The consistent level of education that needs to be streamed down with active feedback up is hard to achieve.

"Kate has been the best part of implementing this process. Her approach to the national integrity manager role is approachable and receptive, making her an excellent sounding board and providing informative and instructional support."

However, he says more work is required to support the increased capacity and capability of volunteers in the club setting.

Walker says one of her proudest achievements was setting up an Independent Tribunal for the sport, a tribunal that is accessible for all levels and all events – from national, state and club.

Ten members, ranging from legal practitioners, sports administrators and people with mediation experience,

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I ALSO BRING WITH ME A LIST OF 'WHAT WORKED' AND 'WHAT DIDN'T WORK' WHICH CAN ONLY HELP SPORT INTEGRITY AUSTRALIA'S ABILITY TO ASSIST SPORTS GOING FORWARD.

were appointed for a two-year period. The sport is currently building the tribunal into all of its event regulations for all their on-court issues.

"We now have an escalation to the tribunal for those matters and, most importantly, it is accessible for the whole sport, so clubs, states can all utilise it."

She is also proud of being able to secure a grant for a transgender project so volleyball can "do it right from the beginning, starting with consultation before we draft a policy" and her work on a historical matter.

Her parting message for her Integrity Manager colleagues is to keep leaning into each other for support and "know that the work we do is so important for sport".

"Prior to this secondment, it was easy for me to lose sight of the reality of what sports were facing," Walker says. "I will now have an increased level of empathy, and a better understanding of the complexities of what integrity managers face daily. I also bring with me a list of 'what worked' and 'what didn't work' which can only help Sport Integrity Australia's ability to assist sports going forward."

NATIONAL INTEGRITY MANAGERS PROGRAM FEEDBACK

Feedback summary from CEOs

WHAT ARE THE KEY ACTIVITIES YOUR NATIONAL INTEGRITY MANAGER (NIM) HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR?

- Complaints
- Support and guidance to SSO about complaints process
- Education
- Implementing the National Integrity Framework (NIF)
- Communication with stakeholders
- Policy development / review (NIF and non-NIF)
- Update website and resources

WHAT ARE THE KEY INTEGRITY THREATS IN YOUR SPORT THAT YOUR NIM SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON?

- Educating coaches
- Updating sport rules / policies to align with the NIF
- Leadership and guidance on all integrity matters
- Child Safeguarding / Member Protection
- Building awareness and educating NSO & SSO Executive on the NIF

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU THINK YOUR NIM HAS FACED IN THE ROLE?

- Volume of complaints
- As a result, there is limited time and capacity to undertake proactive education and process improvement

WHAT SUPPORT COULD SIA PROVIDE TO YOUR NIM TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR ROLE OR FURTHER DEVELOP PROFESSIONALLY?

- SIA to broker an arrangement with ANZSLA
- Increase in funding
- Wellbeing support
- Additional resources / complaints manager
- Complaints Management System
- NIF-related resources e.g. Running an investigation
- Dedicated sounding board at SIA for NIMs to bounce ideas off around an approach to a matter

Feedback summary from National Integrity Managers

DO YOU HAVE A DUAL ROLE IN YOUR ORGANISATION, IN ADDITION TO YOUR NIM ROLE?

- Complaints Manager
- Legal advisory
- Drawn into HR, transgender or RAP working groups or matters
- Special projects

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED IN THE ROLE?

- Managing three sports
- Increased complaints workload takes focus away from proactive education
- Always on call – after hours, weekends, holidays
- Drawn into non-integrity issues – transgender athletes, concussion and athlete transition concerns
- Capacity, isolation (silo outside of the NSO)
- Complaints take up the majority of time and really funding is insufficient to cover both a complaints and integrity manager role

DO YOU FEEL SUPPORTED AND VALUED IN YOUR ROLE BY YOUR CEO/BOARD? WHY?

- Generally yes, a few don't
- Depending on the size of the organisation, tends to indicate where the NIM sits in the org chart

WHAT ADDITIONAL SUPPORT COULD SIA PROVIDE YOU IN THIS ROLE?

- Independent Tribunal to hear matters
- Hosting a peer review of complaints process
- Complaint Management system
- Additional education resources
- Guidance and direction relating to non-recent abuse
- Continue to create resources, provide the webinars that have been happening recently, more information and training on managing complaints.
- Nationally aligned WWVP process

IS ACHIEVING POSITIVE 'INTEGRITY' OUTCOMES A KEY CONSIDERATION IN ALL DECISION MAKING IN YOUR NSO/NSOD?

Majority **YES** – noticeable change in approach and behaviour by Exec and Board.

However, some still are placing financial/commercial considerations and media considerations ahead of integrity outcomes.

Examples provided of where NIMs were excluded from discussions and decision making to avoid being challenged.

Voice of the child

In order to create a sporting environment that we all want for children and young people – one that's safe, respectful and inclusive – we need to truly understand how children feel about sport. This cross-agency initiative hopes to achieve this and more.

Children and young people are at the centre of a new initiative designed to ensure safe practices are embedded at all levels of sport.

Sport Integrity Australia is leading a research project with key partners within sport and child safeguarding, including the Australian Sports Commission, eSafety Commissioner and various state/territory Offices of Sport, to understand what children and young people really think about sport.

The *Children's Perceptions of Safety in Sport* study, to be conducted annually, is seeking to identify their experiences in sport, whether positive or negative.

It will assess and reveal whether they:

- **Feel safe in sport**
- **Have had positive experiences in sport**
- **Feel welcomed and included in sport**
- **Want to stay involved in sport**
- **Have been subjected to any negative experiences/behaviours in sport.**

It will also identify the typical role of the person who caused the negative experience/behaviour (i.e. coach, manager, parent, peer, spectator etc) and whether the negative experience/behaviour occurred in the physical or online environment.

The joint project is a pivotal element of our work in this space, according to Sport Integrity Australia's Director of Safeguarding Lisa Purves, and will help to develop a tool that can help inform all our priorities.

"It will provide children and young people's opinions about what sport can do to create a safer, more inclusive environment for them and also influence how we can build the capacity of sporting organisations and individuals to provide safe sporting environments," Purves says.

The initial survey will provide a baseline understanding in its first year and be repeated across future years to track the rate of change, "but it can also be used to do a deep dive into particular sports, region and demographics".

Purves says an initial consultation workshop illustrated the nuances in language that is needed to truly capture the experiences of our young people within sport.

"In Safeguarding we use the word 'Safe' or 'Unsafe'. If we ask people 'Is sport safe?', we will no doubt have the majority of people tell us sport is safe because we know sport works hard in creating safe spaces every day. So, what we have to describe to the children and young people participating in the survey, are the behaviours that we deem unsafe and ask them about their experiences," she says.

Helen McShane, from the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries in Western Australia, says it's the start of a "really valuable discussion and is a great opportunity to collaborate with others across Australia".

"I think there will be lots of learnings through this project which will be invaluable in shaping next steps," she says.

Mark Roach, from the NSW Office of Sport, says his agency supports the project as it directly aligns and supports the NSW Child Safe Standards, in particular Standard 2 which tells us we should be listening to children and young people.

"All sporting organisations should welcome the insights that this project will deliver and the ability to track changes over time," he says.





EDUCATION UPDATE

Sport Integrity Australia provides education resources about sport integrity for all levels of athletes, their parents, teachers, coaches as well as support and medical personnel. We are always creating new content to help you, so keep an eye out for new resources as we create them.

SPORTS PHARMACY COURSE

We have a brand-new Sports Pharmacy [eLearning course](#).

Designed in partnership with the [Australian Sports Drug Medical Advisory Committee](#), this course has been specifically designed to support pharmacists who work with, or are consulted by, athletes or sporting organisations in Australia.

The course includes information about:

- a pharmacist's role in clean sport
- a pharmacist's rights and responsibilities
- the Prohibited List
- Therapeutic Use Exemptions, and
- managing medications.

It also covers counselling of athletes, supporting athletes in anti-doping, strict liability and the anti-doping rules.

The course takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

DID YOU KNOW: Pharmacists can be required to provide records as part of an anti-doping investigation under Sport Integrity Australia's legislation. Pharmacists can also be investigated by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, if they supply performance enhancing drugs illegally.

WEBINAR WRAP

Understanding the risk environments within sport will go a long way to creating a safe and supportive environment for children and young people.

With this in mind, Sport Integrity Australia hosted a series of webinars to inform and educate sporting organisations, members, administrators and athletes on their roles in sport, what constitutes poor behaviour and how to manage the behaviour.

The webinars also discussed how to recognise boundaries and understand grooming in sport.

Understanding what behaviour is covered under a sport's policies, how to manage and report different types of poor behaviour under the National Integrity Framework were also covered.

"We all want sport to be a safe and friendly environment for children and young people, but not everyone knows what this actually looks like," Director of Safeguarding Lisa Purves said.

"The webinars were designed to change that. It's not about policies, it's about understanding the risk environment for children – how to identify those risks and how to keep them safe."

TRIMETAZIDINE USE IN SPORT

Trimetazidine (TMZ) is a substance most commonly found in medications used to treat heart conditions like angina.

Trimetazidine works by prioritising the oxygenation of glucose over fatty acids for producing energy in the body. This means that less oxygen is required for overall energy production and aerobic metabolic pathways are prioritised. It is thus valuable for people who may have less circulating oxygen available.

Trimetazidine is listed as a Non-Specified Substance, S4.4 (Hormone and Metabolic Modulators), under the [World Anti-Doping Agency's \(WADA\) Prohibited List](#).

WHY IS TRIMETAZIDINE BANNED?

Trimetazidine modulates the metabolism of sugars and fatty acids in the body to make it that there's less oxygen used. This may improve the endurance of an athlete as the oxygen they have goes further in terms of the energy it unlocks.

This means athletes using metabolic modulators, like Trimetazidine, will have improved endurance during training and competitions, therefore they are banned at all times (In and Out of Competition).

All prohibited substances are added to the [Prohibited List](#) because they meet at least two of the three following criteria:

- Use of the substance has the potential to enhance or enhances performance;
- Use of the substance represents an actual or potential health risk to the Athlete; and
- Use of the substance violates the spirit of sport.

HOW LONG DOES TRIMETAZIDINE REMAIN IN THE SYSTEM?

Trimetazidine can remain in the system for several days.

As is with all substances, there is no exact timeframe for detection and can be metabolised at different rates from person to person, as such athletes run the risk of testing positive to banned substances at any time.

CAN ATHLETES BE BANNED FOR USING TRIMETAZIDINE?

Yes, if an athlete returns a positive result for Trimetazidine they face a ban of up to four years from all sports under the [World Anti-Doping Code](#).

ONLINE EDUCATION

The best method of protection for any athlete is to keep themselves informed on what substances and methods are banned within sport.

The Sport Integrity Australia [eLearning platform](#) offers several courses and resources including our [Anti-Doping Fundamentals Course](#) and the [Annual Update 2024](#).

You can check your substances and medications easily by downloading the official Sport Integrity Australia app.

What are the side effects of Trimetazidine?

Any substance being consumed without direct medical oversight or prescription poses an increased health risk.

Side effects of the use of Trimetazidine include:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| ■ gastric or esophageal burning (burning of the stomach or throat) | ■ sedation and/or drowsiness |
| ■ muscular cramps | ■ palpitations |
| ■ dizziness | ■ visual disturbances |
| ■ effort induced discomfort | ■ anorexia |
| ■ depression | ■ hyperorexia |

In addition, there have been reports of **Parkinson syndrome** and **other motor disorders** such as tremor, muscle rigidity and walking disorders and restless legs syndrome occurring in people without a medical history of Parkinson Syndrome.

AT HOME & ABROAD NEW APPOINTMENTS

SIA REPRESENTATION ON THE INDEPENDENT OBSERVER TEAM FOR 2024 PARIS GAMES

Sport Integrity Australia is pleased to announce the selection of Darren Mullaly as Chair of the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) [Independent Observer team](#) for the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Darren Mullaly, Sport Integrity Australia's Head of International Relationships and Strategy, is the first Australian to be selected as part of the program that was established ahead of the 2000 Olympics Games in Sydney.

The Independent Observer team provides an independent review of all aspects of the anti-doping programs for major events, including the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This year's team is made up of a diverse and experienced group of anti-doping professionals and elite athletes from Canada, Switzerland, Kazakhstan and Brazil.

What's a day in the life of an Independent Observer look like? It includes daily visits to various event venues to observe how the anti-doping program is being implemented, from test distribution planning, the process of notification – including the work of chaperones, the process of sample collection – including the work of doping control officers, to the process of sample analysis and results management – including how samples are stored and delivered to the WADA-accredited laboratory and Therapeutic Use Exemptions are administered.

The Independent Observer program is designed to enhance athlete and public confidence as to the quality, effectiveness, and reliability of anti-doping programs during major international multi-sport events.

The appointment reaffirms that Sport Integrity Australia is seen as a leader on the world stage in the anti-doping space. Congratulations Darren.



BUTLER APPOINTED TO KEY ANTI-DOPING ROLE

Sport Integrity Australia would like to announce the appointment of Chris Butler as its Head of Anti-Doping Operations.

Butler has a wealth of experience in all aspects of anti-doping, coupled with extensive leadership skills and outstanding knowledge of the strategic international landscape.

He will lead the Operations branch, which focuses on delivering Australia's Anti-Doping program, as well as broader intelligence and information coordination.

Butler has 20 years' experience in anti-doping after joining the Australian Sports Drug Agency (the forerunner to the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) and Sport Integrity Australia) in 2001 and has worked across nearly all areas of anti-doping with a focus on education and testing.

His international experience includes five years leading the education and testing programs for an international sporting federation, positions on the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) Education Committee and other ad-hoc WADA working groups, and program delivery at international events including numerous World Championships and the 2008 Olympic Games.

He was the Director of ASADA's testing and education programs during the highly successful 2018 Commonwealth Games and, more recently, was seconded to the Department of Health for two years, leading the project to formally establish Sport Integrity Australia.





BUILDING CAPACITY AROUND THE GLOBE

Working closely with other Governments and National Anti-Doping Organisations is a fundamental element of Australia's international strategy.

GLOBAL LEARNING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Global Learning Development Framework is designed to create a more knowledgeable, professionalised and harmonised anti-doping workforce.

It's no secret that the anti-doping rules are necessary, but also complex.

This is as true for athletes who monitor every substance that enters their body, as it is for sport administrators who protect the reputation of their sport and the integrity of their competitions.

It's also true for staff at Sport Integrity Australia and at other anti-doping organisations around the world.

Anti-doping is a specialist occupation that requires considerable expertise and experience, but rarely do people get the opportunity to learn the ropes until they set foot in the door of an Anti-Doping Organisation.

A quick straw poll of anti-doping specialists at Sport Integrity Australia found that it took a staff member approximately 12 months of full-time work before they felt that they fully comprehended the intricacies of the Code and their respective International Standards.

And whereas Sport Integrity Australia might have strong programs to onboard and train staff, other less resourced countries (some with only one or two staff in the entire organisation) face significant challenges.

To help support the industry, the World Anti-Doping Agency has recently developed a program called the Global Learning Development Framework (GLDF), which is supported by expert staff from a range of anti-doping organisations, including Sport Integrity Australia.

Through the GLDF, WADA provides role-specific training to specialist areas in an anti-doping organisation: from education managers, testing coordinators, legal practitioners, to TUE administrators, and more.

Each training program runs for somewhere between eight to 16 weeks and provides technical training and

assessment on the Code compliance requirements, and best practice application, for each role. Each program is delivered to a group of 16 practitioners at a time from across the world, usually online to ensure it is cost-effective and accessible.

The result is a more knowledgeable, professionalised and harmonised anti-doping workforce working in unison no matter which nation or sport they represent.

Sport Integrity Australia's role in the program has been significant. Three SIA experts helped create content for training packages by contributing to four working groups, notably:

- **Justine Crawford** (Intelligence and Investigations)
- **Chris Butler** (Compliance)
- **Alexis Cooper** (Education and Therapeutic Use Exemptions).

Two SIA staff were also selected to be trainers in the program, delivering training to practitioners around the world on WADA's behalf, notably:

- **Steve Northey** (Testing)
- **Alexis Cooper** (Education).

As part of the program, both Steve and Alexis recently attended a GLDF training program in Poland to upskill their trainer competencies and work alongside their co-trainers.

As a group, they tackled problems like:

- How to ensure every participant feels comfortable to contribute, to maximise learning
- How to measure whether the participants are actually learning anything in real time
- Managing challenging group dynamics online, and
- Strategies to keep people interested and engaged in a three-hour online training course.

Both Alexis and Steve will be delivering programs in late 2024 to support testing and education managers in the Asia Pacific region.



Pictured left, Sport Integrity Australia's Steve Northey (Assistant Director Sports Operations) and Alexis Cooper (Director Education) attend the Global Learning and Development Framework (GLDF) education training program in Poland.

The program equips attendees with the knowledge and skills to feel confident in the planning, development, implementation and evaluation of their education plan and program, as well as to offer them a safe space to exchange experience and learn from other practitioners in the field.





BUILDING CAPACITY AROUND THE GLOBE

CODE REVIEW

On 21 May 2024, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) released the first drafts of the 2027 World Anti-Doping Code & International Standards.

Stakeholders are invited to provide feedback on these drafts to help strengthen the anti-doping system.

This is a two-year process carried out by WADA and will involve several phases of stakeholder engagement and consultation.

The first drafts and more detailed information regarding the process for submitting feedback is available on the Sport Integrity Australia website.

This includes:

- Information and an 11-minute webinar from WADA about the process
- Timelines and key phases
- First drafts for your consideration
- Information about how to submit feedback.

Stakeholders can provide feedback either to Sport Integrity Australia or directly to WADA. Depending on who you provide feedback to, the deadlines are different.

Deadline for providing feedback to Sport Integrity Australia: Friday, 20 September 2024. The earlier deadline is so we can collate and draft our response to align with WADA's deadline.

Deadline for providing feedback directly to WADA:
Friday, 11 October 2024.

This stakeholder consultation phase does not include the International Standard for Code Compliance by Signatories entered into effect on 1 April 2024.

For more information regarding the 2027 Code & IS Update Process or the Drafting Team Working Groups, visit the Code Review page on the WADA website: wada-ama.org.

ASIA/OCEANIA MEETING

The 19th Asia/Oceania Region Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting on Anti-Doping in Sport was held on 22–23 May 2024 in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan.

The meeting was co-hosted by WADA, Ministry of Sports – Republic of Uzbekistan and the Uzbekistan National Anti-Doping Agency. Sport Integrity Australia's Head of International Relations, Strategic Policy & Intelligence Darren Mullaly represented the Australian Government at the meeting. The meeting involved over 30 countries from across Asia and Oceania and four regional anti-doping organisation (RADO) representatives.

Ministers and government representatives received a presentation from WADA in relation to its 2025–2029 Strategic Plan and the 2027 World Anti-Doping Code (Code) and International Standards revisions.

Governments were encouraged to contribute to the ongoing consultation process in advance of the 2025 World Anti-Doping Conference in Busan, Republic of Korea, and to consider preparations for adopting the revised Code by 1 January 2027. In addition, representatives received presentations from the RADOs on how governments, national anti-doping organisations and RADOs can effectively work together to help build the capability of anti-doping organisations in our regions.

Lastly, the meeting considered the report and recommendations of WADA's Independent Observer team for the 2023 Asian Games (Hangzhou, China) including the importance of pre-Games education for athletes and athlete support personnel.

19th Asia/Oceania Region Intergovernmental Ministerial Meeting on Anti-Doping in Sport in Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan.



ANTI-CORRUPTION AND INTEGRITY FORUM

Staff from Sport Integrity Australia joined over 1,200 global integrity leaders from the public, private and civic sectors to share insights and methods to address ever evolving corruption threats in Paris.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-Corruption and Integrity Forum took a special focus on pressures posed to democratic integrity frameworks as a result of foreign interference, artificial intelligence and the symbiotic relationship between the rise of climate change and corruption.

Strengthening these frameworks is essential to support government, the private sector and civil society in efficiently combating corruption and producing the best outcomes for the public.

The conference saw several high-ranking international dignitaries address the forum which marked the 25th anniversary of the Anti-Bribery Convention, a cornerstone in the global fight against corruption, and a catalyst for international policy change.

The Anti-Bribery Convention is the first and only international anti-corruption instrument focused in the supply-side of the bribery transaction – the person or entity offering, promising or giving a bribe.

Applying the forum learnings to issues closer to home, Sport Integrity Australia staff then parleyed these ideas in a side event focused on fostering integrity policies and strengthening anti-corruption frameworks in the Asia-Pacific. A number of speakers from emerging democracies shared their efforts and initiatives in promoting anti-corruption measures within their countries.

A number of dignitaries addressed the forum, including:

- **Matthias Cormann**, Secretary General, OECD
- **Maia Sandu**, President, Moldova
- **Saara Kuugongel Wa-Amadhila**, Prime Minister, Republic of Namibia
- **Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara**, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs, Thailand
- **François Valérian**, Chair, Transparency International
- **Zakhona Mvelase**, Founder/Executive Director, African Women Against Corruption Network
- **Elsa Pilichowski**, Director, Public Governance, OECD
- **Eric Dupond-Moretti**, Minister for Justice France
- **Denys Maliuska**, Minister for Justice Ukraine.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE TRAINING COURSE

Hosted by the Council of Europe, the Tackling Competitions Manipulation in Sport (TCMS) Training Course is a programme tailored for public authorities, such as Sport Integrity Australia, who play a central role in the detection and prevention of competition manipulation in sport.

Sport Integrity Australia delegates joined international members of State Parties to the Macolin Convention and the MARS network (Magistrates/ Prosecutors Responsible for Sports) members to develop a deep understanding of the sport competition manipulation environment by examining the broader context, stakeholders, current trends, methods of detection and techniques for analysing alerts.

Fostering international collaboration amongst sporting regulators, the course provided members of international states and bodies the opportunity to exchange methods of criminal detection, disruption and prevention.

Attendees addressed how emerging competition manipulation trends such as the use of open social media platforms and betting platform data, can be used in the disruption of criminal activities.

The Tackling Competitions Manipulation in Sport Training Course in action.



Have you seen our
CHILD FRIENDLY
resources?

We have resources for children and young adults to help them better understand what sport integrity means for them.

You can download these age-specific fact sheets from our website.

[www.sportintegrity.gov.au/
what-we-do/safeguarding](http://www.sportintegrity.gov.au/what-we-do/safeguarding)



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