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19 June 2013

Background

The Australian Psychological Society's (APS) College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists (CoSEP) has recently provided contributions to the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Agency Amendment Bill in addition to the Senate Inquiry into the Advertising and Promotion of Gambling Services in Sport, and welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Practice of Sport Science in Australia.

Accreditation and Regulation of the Profession

Sport and Exercise Psychology is a discipline of psychology that is commonly placed under either Sports Science or Sports Medicine departments, depending upon the organisational structure of the relevant sporting institute, academy or sporting organisation. Sport and Exercise Psychology is more accurately recognised as part of the psychology profession which is independent of either grouping. As a registered health profession, sport and exercise psychology possesses its own body of international literature and research, Code of Ethics, its own professional body, and its own accreditation processes. Sport and Exercise Psychology is recognised as an allied health profession, a separate discipline within psychology by virtue of its endorsement status under The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (APHRA) and its status as a specialist College within the APS. Sport and Exercise Psychology is far more akin to Sports Medicine as an organised and regulated industry group rather than Sports Science. Sport and Exercise Psychology has key managing and accrediting bodies:

- The APS is the premier professional association for psychologists in Australia and is comprised of nine Colleges, including CoSEP, that represent specific areas in psychology of which Members with appropriate qualifications and experience may be eligible to join. Each College promotes its specific area of practice, maintains and safeguards practice standards and quality assurance, and encourages and supports the education, supervision and professional



development of practitioners. CoSEP plays an active role in setting the quality of service delivery in sport and exercise psychology, and advises and makes recommendations regarding the education and training of sport and exercise psychologists to the Tertiary sector. CoSEP additionally acts as a focal point for consumer, community-based and other general public inquiries relating to sport and exercise psychology.

- o Rigorous training mostly in the form of six years within an accredited Tertiary specialist program plus a further two years minimum supervision may qualify an individual eligible to become a Member of CoSEP. Members of CoSEP are then registered and endorsed to utilise the title of "Sport and Exercise Psychologist" with AHPRA - the organisation responsible for the implementation of the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme across Australia. The Psychology Board of Australia (PsyBA) is the National Board responsible for legal governance of the psychology profession on behalf of AHPRA.

Sport and Exercise Psychologists function under these highly developed operational models, including ethical practice guidelines and "duty of care" philosophies of practice, paradigms that are yet to be adopted by the various Sport Science disciplines. *Sport and Exercise Psychology exists as an independent discipline within the psychology profession that encompasses accreditation and regulatory systems.* It provides a resource and consultancy base for organisations such as the Australian Sports Commission, the Australian Olympic Committee, the Australian Institute of Sport, as well as the State Institutes of Sport/State Academies of Sport. CoSEP also holds associated professional links with a range of relevant international and professional organisations, such as Sports Medicine Australia (SMA), International Society of Sport Psychology (ISSP), and the Asian South Pacific Association of Sport Psychology (ASPASP).

Sport and Exercise Psychology uses a best practice model that could be referenced as an ethical and operational framework for other sub-disciplines of 'sports science' as well as being a source for future recommendations for the recently empowered National Integrity Unit (NIU).

Professional Practice, Ethical Obligations and Duty of Care

- o The role of Sport and Exercise Psychologists is to enhance athlete and team performance. Sport and Exercise Psychologists use and apply evidence-based interventions encompassing conceptual, attitudinal, cognitive, somatic, and psycho-physiological paradigms and protocols to sport-specific contexts. Sport and Exercise Psychologists are not involved with the prescription of, nor recommend the use of supplements, medications, or drugs (legal, illicit, or performance enhancing).
- o Sport and Exercise Psychologists have a duty of care for and are focused on the health and wellbeing of athletes, coaches and support staff and reinforce psychological, emotional and behavioural strategies that maintain life balance,



build resilience and achieve goals. These skills and strategies contribute to an athlete's performance being sustainable across changing and challenging circumstances and to help an athlete manage competing demands and pressures within a training, competition and home environment.

- Sport and Exercise Psychologists understand and defend the human rights and dignity of all involved in elite and developmental/grass roots sport. They consult with and make recommendations to sporting organisations related to duty of care of athletes, coaches and support staff guided by ethical principles and processes.
- Within this duty of care framework, Sport and Exercise Psychologists provide a strong support resource for athletes, coaches and their support staff by being solution-focused and empowering others to make value-based decisions. Sport and Exercise Psychologists assist in assessing and developing a team culture that is resilient, and where the actions and behaviours of athletes, coaching and support staff and the organisation are consistent with shared values. This can include empowering individuals and team cultures with alternatives to substance-based performance enhancement protocols that rely on cognitive, behavioural pattern change, specific human factor based techniques and/or heightened awareness protocols within appropriate team, organisational and cultural frameworks.

The College of Sport and Exercise Psychologists appreciates the opportunity for this submission to be included in the tabling of reports. We are available to answer any questions the Senate Inquiry has of this submission, or of any aspects of the submissions and witness statements already made relating to our role in elite sport. We are also available to respond to any of the draft reports or recommendations of the Inquiry. Should there be need for further sittings of this Senate Inquiry, we would be happy to appear as witnesses and/or provide further comment within our area of expertise in the effort to assist policy makers and the Australian Government in making informed choices on matters of great public interest.

Yours sincerely,

Tracey Veivers BA(Beh Sc) DipPsych MPsych MAPS

Chair

Australian Psychological Society College of Sport & Exercise Psychologists

National Executive Committee

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