

Chapter 9

Concluding remarks

9.1 The Australian Crime Commission's (ACC) February 2013 report, *Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport*, and the announcement of a formal investigation into doping in sport by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA), drew public attention to the practice of sports science in Australia. The committee has been careful not to not pre-empt ASADA's findings.

9.2 The committee reiterates its thanks to the organisations and individuals that contributed to this inquiry. It is heartened by the positive steps that have already been taken to eliminate the risk posed by 'rogue individuals', to promote the health and welfare of athletes, and to protect the reputation of the profession. The committee does acknowledge that sports science has, by and large, been a force for good in Australian sport.

9.3 In the course of this inquiry, the committee has taken evidence and considered all the terms of reference. The committee focused on term of reference (c) relating to the duty of care of sports scientists to athletes, and the ethical obligations of sports scientists in relation to protecting and promoting the spirit of sport. All committee members support the recommendations in chapter 3 of this report for the government develop a statement of sports ethics, and that sports ethics be taught to students at tertiary level and athletes within sporting organisations.

9.4 As chapter 4 of this report notes, the committee argues that any recommendations about regulation or accreditation made before the ACC and ASADA release their findings are premature. Senator Richard Di Natale, on the other hand, contends that action is needed now.

Summary of additional comments

9.5 The additional comments from Senator Di Natale are predicated on an understanding that there are significant gaps in the oversight of sports scientists. While the full extent of misconduct may not be known, it is clear that sports scientists are neither accredited nor regulated and, therefore, their duty of care and their professional responsibilities are neither defined nor enforced. Accordingly, the Senator recommends in this report that:

- the Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport should conduct a feasibility study into Exercise & Sports Science Australia's (ESSA) ability to administer a national system of sports science accreditation that is backed by employers and capable of achieving widespread uptake;

- relevant disciplines of the sports science profession be considered for inclusion in the National Registration and Accreditation Scheme, administered by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency;
- an independent advisory group be established to provide information on substances and practices impacting on athlete health and welfare;
- governance and best practice principles released by the Australian Sports Commission be adopted by national sporting organisations;
- national sporting organisations limit the permitted use of supplements to those classified by the Australian Institute of Sport's *Sports Supplement Program* as having proven efficacy, and introduce publicly available registers of their use.

9.6 Senator Di Natale argues that if these recommendations are adopted and implemented, the reputation of sports science and its utility to athletes and the community will be enhanced.

Senator the Hon. Bill Heffernan
Chair

Senator Glenn Sterle
Deputy Chair

Senator Richard Di Natale
Senator for Victoria