

Doping Scheme - Proof Transcript 12 December 2025

Sport Integrity Australia Hearing Transcript Questions on Notice

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1. Identification of specific athletes on athlete lists

- **CHAIR:** And I'm not talking about something like, 'Here is our formal list with a title'—a formal list to submit. I'm talking about this happening in your meetings with them or in any of the information. What's the point of meeting with them if they're not going to—like, do they say, 'Yeah, there's a player in the north of the country that we're concerned about'? What goes on in these meetings?
- **Dr Benson:** I've not sat in the meetings, but, from the discussions I've had internally to understand what goes on in those meetings and now from the recording minutes, the other factors of the calendar of events throughout the year which will inform numbers and timing of testing—it's understanding the sport landscape and the calendar of events, pathway sports, the summer for sports and, as we mentioned before, some of the risk factors that might be specific and identified by sport.
- **CHAIR:** Just to be clear, in the last three years, not a single name of an athlete has been provided in any of the meetings, exchanges or formal discussions between Sport Integrity Australia and basketball, cricket, football or rugby union?
- **Dr Benson:** I will take that on notice just to give the 100 per cent accurate answer. There has not been one that I am aware of, but we will take that on notice just to make sure.

1. Taken on Notice to confirm if these meetings ever involve the identification of specific athletes by name, or are they only about general risk factors, calendars, and testing logistics?

ANSWER:

During the last three years we do not hold any record of an individual athlete being named during discussions between Basketball, Cricket, Football and Rugby Union with the Anti-Doping Testing team at Sport Integrity Australia in relation to being someone they feel should be tested.

2. Clarification of reasons as to why players should be tested

- **CHAIR:** Thank you. The AFL in 2023-24 provided their list of athletes but did not include any of the reasons for those athletes. Did that change in the later submission?
- **Dr Benson:** We haven't received a submission since then.
- **CHAIR:** The one with the 51 names is the last submission? Dr Benson: Yes, that's the last submission received.
- **CHAIR:** In the season prior, did they list any reasons as to why those players should be tested?
- **Dr Benson:** My understanding is that they did. As to the level of detail, I'll have to take that on notice.

2. Taken on Notice: In the season prior to 2023/24 did the AFL list any reason as to why certain players should be tested?

ANSWER:

Yes, previous lists provided by the AFL contained some rationale for players inclusion on the list. The rationale related to sport specific doping risk factors such as performance output improvements or decreases, contractual changes and known associations presenting an integrity risk to sport.

3. Clarification of third-party review on complaints handling

- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** Have you ever had an independent third party review your handling of complaints related to mistreatment and abuse?
- **Dr Benson:** No. Most of the reviews, to my understanding, I'll confirm on notice—have been internal audits. But, in saying that, my intention, and something I will discuss with my advisory council next week, is what that will look like next year. That's to look at the effectiveness of the whole National Integrity Framework. In March next year, it will be five years since the framework has been implemented. Others overseas are looking to us as a world-leading model, but we know there's work to be done to live up to that title and to make improvements. In saying that, that's a review that I want to be done to get those effectiveness gains. But—to answer that part of your question—with respect to individual matters, there are pathways for individuals to seek a review of any decisions that we make through the National Sports Tribunal. There's a mechanism for appeals for individual matters that do come through us.

3. Taken on Notice Have we ever had an independent third party review your handling of complaints related to mistreatment and abuse?

ANSWER:

Yes. Sport Integrity Australia has previously engaged an independent third party to review our complaint handling processes in 2022. All recommendations from that review have been addressed. We continue to work with external experts and consult with sports and athletes to ensure our processes remain contemporary, transparent, and aligned with best practice.

4. Clarification of third-party review time frames

- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** When will you review your processes for handling of complaints?
- **Dr Benson:** My intention—as I said, it's still in concept and yet to be discussed with the advisory council or the minister; it's only come up in the last week or two—would be to run it in the first half of next year. I'm probably going on. We have some opportunities for legislation reform, leading into 2027, with the implementation of the new World Anti-Doping Code. That does require legislation reform, for us to implement certain parts of the new code, which is a requirement. So there's an opportunity there, if there is legislative reform—whether or not it will expand our remit or powers to help with some of those gaps in the system that may be perceived or real. Aligning it with that process would be optimal, I think, if we can achieve it.
- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** With respect, having the intention to do it in the next six months is not actually a plan. Will it be done in the next six months, or is it more likely to be later than that?
- **Dr Benson:** As I said, I can't make firm commitments now, because we haven't developed a full scope. But I'm absolutely happy to take that on notice and come back to you in the coming weeks on that commitment, as we have some of those critical discussions before Christmas to bed that down.

4. Taken on notice confirmation of timeframes of review of complaints handling process

ANSWER:

The Terms of Reference for this review, which will include consultations with stakeholders, are currently being considered and will be finalised in the 2025–26 financial year.

5. MO request for complaints lodged with SIA

- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** Is the minister kept informed about the misconduct of sporting organisations?
- **Dr Benson:** Only in the sense of trends and themes that we're seeing across the sporting organisations.
- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** So not particular instances?
- **Dr Benson:** Not necessarily particular instances, no.
- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** How is the minister informed?
- **Dr Benson:** I have a fortnightly meeting with the minister's advisers and a quarterly meeting with the minister. My next meeting is scheduled for Monday afternoon, where we will talk about trends and research. If something has emerged in the media, then we'll touch on what our role has been with respect to that—not specific decisions made, obviously, but whether SIA had a role in it and under what authority.
- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** Has the minister's office requested an update on complaints lodged with SIA? I'm keen to understand, if they have, how often that's occurred.
- **Dr Benson:** We don't do regular reporting. We certainly do an annual report on stats and holdings. It's obviously published in our annual report, and the minister has that. We don't really do a quarterly report, but I can recall to the minister on stats or current work on hand or
- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** But they haven't requested that?
- **Dr Benson:** Not that I can recall specifically. I'll take it on notice, just to make sure that I've got my response accurate there.

5. Taken on notice: Has the Minister Office ever requested an update on complaints lodged with Sport Integrity Australia?

ANSWER:

Sport Integrity Australia provides ministerial responses and briefings on individual matters when complaint concerns are raised with the Minister's Office by constituents, to ensure awareness of the agency's role and responsibilities. These briefings do not involve ministerial decision-making or intervention in individual cases. In many instances, constituent concerns relate to matters or conduct outside Sport Integrity Australia's jurisdiction.

6. Abuse and complaints reporting to MO since 2022

- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** How many times have you informed the minister about abuse and mistreatment complaints with NSO since 2022?
- **Dr Benson:** I'll have to take that on notice.

6. Taken on notice: How many times have we informed the minister about abuse and mistreatment complaints with NSO since 2022?

ANSWER:

Sport Integrity Australia has identified two documents since 2022 that specifically reference complaints involving a National Sporting Organisation and were provided to the Minister's Office. In addition to these, SIA maintains regular engagement with the Minister's Office on a range of strategic and operational matters to ensure awareness of the agency's role and responsibilities. To date, there have been no substantiated findings against a National Sporting Organisation, and SIA has not briefed the Minister on any allegations or reports outside the mechanisms outlined in Question 5.

7. Number of NSO mistreatment complaints received since 2022

- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** That's fine. Can you tell me how many complaints you've received since 2022 regarding mistreatment in national sporting organisations?
- **Dr Benson:** I'll have to take that on notice. It's available; I just don't have it in front of me now.

7. Taken on Notice: How many complaints we have received since 2022 regarding mistreatment in national sporting organisations?

ANSWER:

Between 1 July 2022 and 30 June 2025:

- 21 cases listed the national sporting organisations as the Respondent.
- 81 cases were managed that alleged conduct that occurred at the national level of sport.
- SIA also received reports of alleged conduct that were out of scope for SIA such as selection, governance or personal grievances, including 52 relating to conduct of national sporting organisations, and 98 of conduct at the national level of sport.

8. Number of 1300 hotline complaints made

- **Senator O'SULLIVAN:** Okay. I'll provide some other questions in writing in relation to that question, just to help with time at the moment. The minister announced in October 2022 that SIA would be expanding its 1300 hotline for people to make complaints. How many calls has that hotline received?
- **Dr Benson:** I'm going to look to Chris to see if he's got those figures at hand.
- **Mr Butler:** Not at hand, given the scope of the ANAO audit. But, as Sarah mentioned, we do have those readily available; I just don't have them in front of me. So, again, on notice we could easily provide that.

8. Taken on notice: how many calls have we received to the 1300 hotline for people to make complaints.

ANSWER:

The Safe Sport Hotline (1800 161 361) commenced 30 January 2023. The figures reported below also include those made to the SIA general enquiries line (1300 161 361) where the caller wished to share their story about racism/cultural or a child safety concern within a sport. As of the 1 July 2026, both lines were consolidated into the Safe Sport Hotline 1800 161 361.

Financial Year	Number of Safe Sport Hotline reports
2022/23*	40
2023/24	145
2024/25	203
Grand Total	388

**Commenced on 30 January so not a full financial year*

9. Executive completions of director's course

- **Ms ALDRED:** Do you know how many of your executive team might have undertaken the directors course?
- **Dr Benson:** I'll have to take that on notice. A lot of that happened before I joined the agency.

9. Taken on notice: How many of our executive team might have undertaken the directors course?

ANSWER:

3 of our senior executives.

10. Director completions of director's course

Ms ALDRED: A lot of boards today require their directors to undergo the directors course. Do you know any directors that may have undertaken the course?

Dr Benson: With the advisory council members, not all have—I'll take that on notice. We've been fortunate to have Golf Australia's CEO—I'll make the assumption he's done it, given the partnership they've got, but I'll take that on notice as well, to get clarity.

10. Taken on notice: How many members of the SIA Advisory Council have undertaken the Company Directors course.

ANSWER:

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