

31 May 2013

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir / Madam,

Thank you for the opportunity to make a statement on this matter, which we consider vital to the future international success of our sport.

While we may never top the athletics medal table at the Olympic Games, Athletics Australia aspires to lead the world as the home of the "best and fairest" athletes in the sport. We are very aware of the possibility of rogue athletes, scientists, and coaches – especially those outside our established/traditional performance centres not adhering to our values. How we manage this risk is crucial to our continued reputation.

Our small population and geographic challenges mean that our international success in the sport of Athletics has always depended on world leading innovation by our coaches and sports scientists. This has been true from the days of Percy Cerutti and the tradition has continued through the Australia Institute of Sport and more recently the SIS/SAS network. The rest of the world has caught up with many aspects of the AIS but we fully expect our success to accelerate again through the AIS's new Winning Edge strategy.

For these reasons it is vital to Athletics Australia that any outcome of this review results in a framework that reinforces the integrity of our sports scientists while leaving them free to innovate and experiment.

Within the sport of Athletics Olympic / Paralympic team member receive their sports science advice and/or delivery via a variety of routes:

1. Practitioners directly contracted by Athletics Australia,
2. Practitioners employed by the AIS/SIS/SAS network.
3. Personal arrangements set up by individual athletes and/or their advisors (for example, their personal coach, doctor, physiotherapist or agent).

In each case AA's mechanism for oversight of the process is via electronic reporting (especially in the sports medicine space via the Fair Play software system – which we plan to expand over time to cover other the sports sciences disciplines) and through interdisciplinary case conferences. These mechanisms can be imposed in the case of practitioners contracted directly by AA or through our partners in the AIS/SIS/SAS network.

Where athletes and/or their advisors set up personal arrangements then oversight relies on the voluntary buy-in and openness of the practitioners. We are planning to address this situation by creating a contractual relationship with our "supported" athletes requiring them to only use appropriate practitioners who provide information back to us as a sport, however this approach is resource dependent (basically we need sufficient money to create contractual relationships) and is likely to be hard to "police".

Whether or not there is a contractual relationship with practitioners, Athletics Australia is a relatively small NSO and we lack the resources to draw up independent and rigorous codes of conduct and ethical guidelines for all of the various sport science practitioners.

Therefore we would like the outcome of this review to be:

- Clarity for us as a sport as to how we can know which sports scientists are properly qualified and up to date with the latest ethical standards. This will allow us to only use "validated" sport scientists and to provide clear advice to those athletes who wish to set-up their own support network.
- Assurances that any sports scientists contracted through our partners in the AIS/SIS/SAS network are also "validated".
- Comfort that any outcomes of this review leave coaches and sports scientists free to innovate within the international rules of our sport (as defined by the IOC, IPC, CGF, IAAF and WADA). We believe that it is vital to the competitive success of our athletes that the domestic rules and regulations are no tighter than those binding our international competitors. Given the good standing of these international bodies, we don't believe that this constraint will lessen the scope or impact of the outcomes of this review.
- The establishment of an external oversight body for the sports science professions. We believe that an appropriate group would be a group of experts formed from representatives of the AIS, ASADA, academia and Head Coaches and/or Performance Directors from the major NSOs. The AIS already has many appropriate documents in place that could relatively easily and quickly be amended to act as national guidelines.
- Assurances that SIS/SAS network's sports scientists align with the oversight body's guidelines (for example the existing AIS and NSO policies).
- Consideration of how such guidelines could be enforced on independent sports scientists.

Yours sincerely,



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