

# Organised crime and drugs in sport

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THE HON. JASON CLARE MP

CABINET SECRETARY

MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS

MINISTER FOR JUSTICE

SENATOR THE HON KATE LUNDY

MINISTER FOR SPORT

MINISTER FOR MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

MINISTER ASSISTING FOR INDUSTRY AND INNOVATION

The Australian Crime Commission today released the findings of a 12-month investigation into the integrity of Australian sport and the relationship between professional sporting bodies, prohibited substances and organised crime.

In response the Gillard Government together with Australia's major professional sports have announced tough new measures to crack down on the use of performance enhancing drugs and unethical behaviour in sport.

The Australian Crime Commission investigation (codenamed Project Aperio) was supported by the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) and the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA).

Four key areas were examined:

- The market for Performance and Image Enhancing Drugs (PIEDs)
- The involvement of organised criminal identities and groups in the distribution of new generation PIEDs
- The use of World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) prohibited substances by professional athletes in Australia
- Current threats to the integrity of professional sport in Australia.

## Key findings

The investigation identified widespread use of prohibited substances including peptides, hormones and illicit drugs in professional sport.

It also found that this use has been facilitated by sports scientists, high-performance coaches and sports staff.

In some cases, players are being administered with substances that have not yet been approved for human use.

The ACC also identified organised crime identities and groups that are involved in the distribution of PIEDs to athletes and professional sports staff.

The ACC report notes increasing evidence of personal relationships of concern between professional athletes and organised criminal identities and groups. This may have resulted in match fixing and the fraudulent manipulation of betting markets.

“The Australian Crime Commission has found that professional sport in Australia is highly vulnerable to infiltration by organised crime,” Mr Clare said.

“Multiple athletes from a number of clubs in major Australian sporting codes are suspected of currently using or having previously used peptides, potentially constituting anti-doping rule violations. Officials from clubs have also been identified as administering, via injections and intravenous drips, a variety of substances.”

The report concluded that some coaches, sports scientists and support staff of elite athletes have orchestrated and/or condoned the use of prohibited substances. Some sports scientists have indicated a preparedness to administer substances to elite athletes which are untested or not yet approved for human use.

The Australian Crime Commission also found that illicit drug use by professional athletes is more prevalent than previously indicated in official sports drug testing program statistics.

The work the Australian Crime Commission has done has confirmed that organised crime has a tangible and expanding role in the provision of prohibited substances to professional athletes, and this is facilitated by some coaches and support staff.

The Australian Crime Commission has referred its findings in relation to suspected criminal activity to relevant law enforcement agencies including the Australian Federal Police and all State and Territory Police Forces.

ASADA and other regulatory agencies will undertake additional investigations on the basis of the Crime Commission findings.

## **Response**

Responding to the report Senator Lundy said all sports have committed to work with the Government, the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) and law enforcement agencies to restore community confidence in sport.

“This week the Government introduced legislation to strengthen ASADA’s powers to enable the full and unhindered investigation of these issues,” Senator Lundy said.

“If persons of interest refuse to cooperate with ASADA investigations they will be liable for civil penalties.

“To support these new powers I have doubled the investigative resources at ASADA to ensure athletes and support staff who are involved in unethical behaviour will be scrutinised.

“In addition, I will be discussing with State and Territory Sports Minister’s measures which we can implement to further strengthen the National Integrity of Sport Unit.”

Senator Lundy issued a warning to sports administrators, medical officers, support staff and athletes that staying silent is no longer an option.

Australia's major professional sports are equally as committed to stamp out doping and will:

- Establish integrity units to deal with doping, betting and ethical issues within each sport;
- Cooperate fully with ASADA and law enforcement agencies in a joint investigation;
- Call on their athletes to come forward, own up and co-operate with investigators to possibly reduce sanctions;
- Enact a multi-code policy to share information and implement doping sanctions across codes; and
- Have zero tolerance for any support staff who are involved in peddling inappropriate substances and assurances that they will not be employed by other codes.

All members of the Coalition of Major Professional and Participation Sports (COMPPS) have received confidential, classified briefings.

The Australian Government is proud to provide almost \$13 million annually to ASADA to assist them in their fight against doping in sport.

The Australian Crime Commission report *Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport* can be found at [www.crimecommission.gov.au](http://www.crimecommission.gov.au)