

Hockey Australia statement regarding the report into the Independent Review of the Women's High Performance Program

Hockey Australia (HA) provides the following in response to the Independent Review into claims of a toxic culture, bullying and governance in relation to Hockey Australia's National Women's Program, the Hockeyroos.

The Hockeyroos occupy pride of place in Australia's sporting history and are the country's most successful women's Olympic team. In high performance, top level athletes are exposed to pressure and scrutiny that few people outside that environment can understand. This pressure and the stresses on the program overlaid by the impacts of COVID and the delay of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics have led to a series of issues that affected the team.

The Independent Review Panel of Bruce Collins QC, Gabrielle Trainor AO and Moya Dodd submitted their findings to the HA Board following an inquiry process that started in December 2020. The review was comprehensive and more than 100 people participated. The Review Panel was focused on understanding the systemic issues and recommending paths to healing, rather than apportioning blame.

Broadly the review found a dysfunctional culture within the National Women's High Performance Program that is not conducive to athlete wellbeing or sustained on-field success, and identified numerous areas for improvement. This outcome has been confronting and distressing for Hockey Australia, its management, Board, athletes and staff.

While we have made a considerable investment over the last three years, including efforts to implement changes since the Rio cycle, this has not been enough to prevent rupturing of the squad's cohesion, particularly with the uncertainty rendered by COVID-19 and the delay of the Tokyo Olympics. The process of this review has seen us all reflect seriously over the past months about what we could do better. The findings have been shared with the players and we will work with them to make changes to design and implement a cultural transformation program.

A total of 29 recommendations were identified by the Review Panel. Hockey Australia considers that this report will provide a strong roadmap for the National Women's Hockey Program to move forward and at the same time, outline areas that we can improve across our organisation more broadly.

The key findings and recommendations from the report cover a range of themes under the main headings of Culture and Governance.

Hockey Australia supports the intent and the principles the Review Panel recommended which include:

- the need to ensure an effective leadership model is implemented across all aspects of the high-performance program including coaching, support staff and across the playing group;
- striking an improved balance with the demands of the high-performance program and life outside of hockey;

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- ensuring engagement at every level from the Board, senior management, coaches, support staff and players is safe and respectful;
- improvements in a range of governance areas to ensure greater oversight and the tracking of culture of both men's and women's programs; and
- embedding a culture of mutual respect and trust between all participants in the delivery of the high performance program.

With the Olympic Games less than four months away, we intend to fast track our action plan to take into account the immediate priority of performing at our best in Tokyo, including the process of recruiting a Head Coach, High Performance Director and Assistant Coach.

We believe most people who participated in the review want the Hockeyroos to succeed and we want to work with our athletes and staff to create a positive culture and go on to even higher levels of excellence in the sport that they love. Change is needed and is already underway. Importantly, this is a collaborative effort and requires buy-in from everyone.


We want to sincerely thank Bruce, Gabrielle, Moya and Richard Redman for steering this review on behalf of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC).

From the time this inquiry was launched, Hockey Australia has treated it with the utmost seriousness and taken every step to ensure the process took its full course.

This has been a challenging period but undertaking the review has been crucial in addressing the allegations that have been directed at the Hockeyroos program since the Rio Olympics.

We are appreciative of those who came forward to be interviewed and have full trust and confidence in the findings and recommendations put forward by the Review Panel.

A Review Implementation Working Group will be assembled to formulate a recommendation and implementation plan based on the report. The implementation plan will then be provided to the HA Board for approval.



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President, Hockey Australia



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