



INTEGRITY IN SPORT FORUM 2014



MEDIA RELEASE

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Sports integrity is a community responsibility

Dr Pippa Grange in perhaps the most obvious of ways, summed up the breadth of issues revealed and topics dissected during the *"Integrity of Sport Forum – Winning at What Price"* attended by a who's who of Australian sport in Melbourne tonight.

The sports ethicist, one of six panel members invited by co-hosts **Victoria University** and the **Sport Australia Hall of Fame** (SAHOF) said that it was vitally important to broaden the very definition of integrity in sport.

"If we are only thinking about the rules and how they are applied we are missing so much," Dr Grange said.

SAHOF chairman, **John Bertrand** called on the more than 250 sports leaders and champions present to provide for the future.

"We need a roadmap for what's right and what's wrong," Bertrand, who is now also President of Swimming Australia said.

The Panel's youngest member, **Kim Crow** eloquently summarised the broader predicament.

"Everyone says integrity but what's important is when you witness it in practice," the world champion rower and AOC Athlete Commission chair said.

"When you learn to play sport, you copy the skills of others but you also copy their behaviours. We have to attain success by being better people.

"It's easy to imagine that kids now think that the stars are all on supplements or drugs."

A perhaps surprisingly recurrent theme was the call for the return of compulsory physical education in Australian schools, with many speakers identifying its demise as a critical factor in the challenges now facing Australian sports.

Hans Westerbeek, the Dean of the College of Sport and Exercise Science at Victoria University said that an hour of physical education per day was not only essential for all young Australians to better understand the own minds and bodies but also to avoid a diminishing talent pool for higher performance.

His comments come on the back of reports indicating that 80 percent of Australian children are failing to get at least an hour of exercise each day.

"Politicians are not visionary enough to deliver in this area. They need to be thinking 20 years down the track," Professor Westerbeek said.

Despite a strong media presence, speakers did not feel the need to hold back and as a result the evening was not without controversy. Both the departing Australian Football League CEO, **Andrew Demetriou** and the recently retired head of the World Anti-Doping Authority, **John Fahey** took the opportunity to take swipes at the process used after the Essendon Football Club self-reported itself to ASADA.

Fahey said that he never saw any justification for the public announcement led by the Australian government on the 'blackest day in Australian sport' whilst Demetriou observed that the methodology devised was damaging.

But perhaps surprisingly it was not the predominant thread of the evening's debate, cleverly moderated by sports broadcaster, **Francis Leach**.

The two and a half hour discussion explored topics as diverse as "sporting parents from hell", the powerfulness of the NBA response to Donald Sterling's racist rant, the challenge for young Australians in addressing the "grey area" on the way to higher performance goals and the consequences of the failure of the ICC to keep Brendon McCallum's vital testimony on match fixing confidential.

Australian Sports Commission CEO, **Simon Hollingsworth** justified his organisations controversial *Winning Edge* program.

"We are investing taxpayer money to achieve an outcome but under Winning Edge we do take a longer term perspective. But there are hard decisions to be made because there is only a finite pool of money," Hollingsworth said.

Just as another speaker observed it is equally unreasonable to outsource "integrity" and the solutions for the lack of it to the major sports.

One thing clearly identified by the evening's debate was that responsibility lies with a much broader group of stakeholders including participants, the parents and support teams, the media, commercial partners and fans.

-ENDS-

Further information on the Integrity in Sport Forum can be found here: www.vu.edu.au/sport-integrity including a [link here to available Victoria University media experts](#) who are available for ongoing comment regarding this growing issue. Please feel free to download this document for future reference.

For further information, please contact:

Samantha Culbert

Jump Media & Marketing

T: 03 9822 7110 / 0409 989 409

E: samantha@jumpmedia.com.au

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