



# Media Statement

Tuesday 10 April, 2007

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Statement by Mr Bill Daniels, Executive Director, Independent Schools Council of Australia

## **Outcome of meeting with senior officials of the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority**

Dr Geoff Newcombe, Executive Director of the Association of Independent Schools of NSW and Mr Bill Daniels, Executive Director, Independent Schools Council of Australia met this afternoon with ASADA senior officials to discuss the development of appropriate programs and protocols to ensure school sports remain drug free.

The use of banned substances to enhance sports performance and gain unfair and illegal advantage over competitors is counter to the whole ethos of sporting engagement in independent schools. Independent schools promote sport as a means for young people to participate in physical activity that enhances their health and wellbeing. Sport also helps students learn about self-discipline, achieving one's personal best, cooperation and contribution to a team effort, and about competing fairly.

It is in everyone's interests that school sports remain drug free, and the independent schools sector supports ASADA's role in deterrence and detection of the use of drugs in sport.

At the same time, the sector wants any program of drug testing of school-age athletes to take into account the age and circumstances of students and the level of competition. An effective program should also take into account all government regulations with which schools must comply in regard to duty of care and protection of students during school hours and at school events. It must also ensure that principals and governors of independent schools are fully apprised of protocols around drug testing of student athletes.

Following the meeting with ASADA officials, ISCA and AIS NSW are confident a sensible and practicable regime that recognises the needs of athletes and their parents and schools, as well as the interests of sporting associations and the public can be developed.

As a first step, ASADA will meet next week in Sydney with a number of heads of NSW independent schools to discuss a way forward, including protocols for testing athletes at intra and inter-school sporting events and the development and trial of an education package for independent school principals and governors. This package of materials would incorporate a clear statement of the rights and responsibilities of school athletes and the school and sporting officials who support them in relation to drug testing.

The independent sector appreciates the willingness of ASADA to work cooperatively with the sector, and acknowledges the help of the Australian Minister for Arts and Sport, Senator George Brandis, in facilitating national discussions.

