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## ASC tribute to AOC leaders, AIS doctor earns top honour

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) has paid tribute to John Coates AC for his leadership of the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) over the past 32 years, while welcoming the opportunity to work with incoming AOC President Ian Chesterman AM during an exciting era for Australian sport.

The ASC also praised the outstanding work of Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) Chief Medical Officer Dr David Hughes, who was today awarded the AOC's highest honour, the AOC Order of Merit.

Mr Coates stood down as AOC President at its Annual General Meeting today and ASC Chair Josephine Sukkar AM commended the incredible legacy he had established.

"For more than three decades as AOC President, John has devoted himself to the advancement of Australian sport, especially the Olympic sports that inspire and unite our nation," Mrs Sukkar said.

"His staunch dedication to Australian sport extends far beyond his role as AOC President, indeed he provided strong service to the Australian Sports Commission and Australian Institute of Sport as a Commissioner during our formative years in the 1980s and 90s. John's influence on Australian and international sport has been profound and we know his leadership will long continue, including in roles with the AOC and International Olympic Committee Boards."

ASC CEO Kieren Perkins OAM was an athlete on three of the six Olympic teams where Mr Coates was Chef de Mission and was also part of the Sydney 2000 bid team alongside him.

"When you consider it took 60 years for Australia to first host the modern Olympics, at Melbourne in 1956, it is incredible to think that John played such a prominent role in securing both the 2000 Sydney Games and the 2032 Brisbane Games during his stewardship as AOC President," Mr Perkins said. "The platform is set for an exciting decade ahead."

Mrs Sukkar welcomed the appointment of Ian Chesterman AM as new AOC President.

"The recent Tokyo and Beijing Games were a triumph and in the next decade we have a wonderful opportunity to build on this momentum," Mrs Sukkar said. "Australian sport is working closer together as part of the National High Performance Sport Strategy. We look forward to continuing to work with the AOC as we drive a collective vision for sport in Australia and build sustainable success on the road to the 2032 Brisbane Games and beyond."

AIS Chief Medical Officer Dr David Hughes was honoured today by the AOC with an Order of Merit Award, having led the Australian Olympic medical team for the past two Summer Olympics in Rio and Tokyo.

"Tokyo was an unprecedented Olympic experience, first postponed and then staged in the midst of a global pandemic," Mr Perkins said. "For the Australian team to thrive as they did in Tokyo, without incident, is testament to the professionalism, diligence and leadership of Dr Hughes and his medical team."

"We may never see another Games like Tokyo but we, at the ASC are lucky to see every day the significant contribution Dr Hughes makes to Australian sport. His work impacts Australian sport at every level, from community participation to our Australian representative athletes. He has trained, mentored and influenced a vast network of medical staff and Chief Medical Officers throughout Australia's sporting industry."

"David was a key driver in world-leading protocols that helped Australians return to community and high performance sport when COVID-19 first struck in 2020. He continues to lead work on vital areas such as sport-related concussion and the National Sport Injury Database project. It's wonderful to see the AOC recognise David with this deserved award."

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