



# Summary of the 2010 Ethical and Integrity Issues in Australian Sport survey

This research, commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and conducted by Colmar Brunton Social Research in April 2010, identifies ethical and integrity issues within Australian sport, providing a better understanding of the incidence, prevalence and impact of these issues in the Australian sports system.

The priority issues around ethics and integrity within Australian sport were identified as going beyond the spirit of the game, verbal abuse and athletes being pushed too hard by coaches and parents.

The outcomes of this survey will assist in guiding the Australian Sports Commission and its partners with the development of industry-wide national strategies and solutions.

## Survey

The survey covered a range of issues related to the areas of:

- abuse and violence
- winning beyond the rules of the game
- inequity and harassment
- anti-social behaviours and attitudes
- junior participation
- gender participation
- athlete wellbeing
- specific roles.

## Respondents

Over 3700 responses were received across the following categories:

	National	State	Local	Total
Player	179	182	536	897 (24%)
Coach	159	281	1205	1645 (44%)
Official	169	189	214	572 (15%)
Administrator	113	171	336	620 (17%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>620 (17%)</b>	<b>823 (22%)</b>	<b>2291 (61%)</b>	<b>3734</b>

Of those who responded:

- 55 per cent were male and 45 per cent were female
- 67 per cent were involved in team sport, 20 per cent were involved in individual competition or squad training, and 13 per cent were involved in individual competition or training
- 63 per cent were from capital cities, 30 per cent were from major regional centres and 26 per cent were from small regional centres or country areas
- 6 per cent were aged under 18 years, 27 per cent were aged between 18 and 39, 54 per cent were aged between 40 and 59, and 12 per cent were aged 60 or older.

## Key findings

Respondents identified similar issues regardless of role, type of sport or level of sport. The key issues that consistently emerged for each category have been identified below.

### Issues most frequently seen within sport

- Juniors participating against more physically developed opponents
- Sledging
- Athletes being pushed too hard by coaches or parents
- Negative coaching behaviours and practices
- Juniors participating against more skilled opponents
- Negative administrative behaviours and practices

### Issues that most negatively impact on sport

- Going beyond the spirit of the game
- Verbal abuse
- Negative coaching behaviours and practices
- Athletes being pushed too hard by coaches/parents
- Negative administrative behaviours and practices
- Negative officiating behaviours and practices

## Negative coaching behaviours and practices

The negative coaching behaviours and practices most seen were:

- a focus on winning at all costs
- bias or favouritism
- criticism of officials
- verbally abusive coaching style
- team/athlete selection
- not managing players holistically.

The negative behaviour has the most impact on the perceived culture of the sport or organisation and the enjoyment of the people involved.

## Negative administrative behaviours and practices

The negative administrative behaviours and practices most seen were:

- conflicts of interest
- selection process and decisions
- favouritism or nepotism
- lack of experience or competence
- not following an organisation's policy, process or rules in decision-making
- not giving consideration to members.

Although negative administrative behaviours were not widespread, when they did occur they were seen to have a high impact on the administration of the sport, attracting and retaining volunteers, the culture of the sport or organisation, and the enjoyment of those involved.

## Negative officiating behaviours and practices

The negative officiating behaviours and practices most seen were:

- lack of experience or competence
- bias towards or away from teams or clubs
- bias towards or away from individuals
- criticism of other officials
- misuse or abuse of power
- inappropriate behaviour or officiating for the level of the participants.

The negative behaviour has the most impact on the enjoyment of those involved, the culture of the sport or organisation, attracting and retaining volunteers, and the way the game is played.

## Impact of behaviour of high-profile athletes and teams

All roles and levels of sport considered the impact of high-profile elite athletes and teams from their sport was more positive than the impact of high-profile elite athletes and teams from across all sports. However, both categories were seen to have an overall positive impact on sport.

## Anti-social behaviours and attitudes

Despite the frequent media coverage of anti-social behaviours and attitudes in sport, the behaviours did not rate high in terms of either 'frequency' or 'impact' (less than 10 per cent).

The following table contains a breakdown of seven identified anti-social behaviours and the number of people (averaged across players, coaches, officials and administrators) who identified the behaviours as frequently seen and ranked them within their top five issues that most negatively impact sport.

The behaviours were seen more frequently by players and were considered to have a greater impact at national rather than state and local level.

Issue	Frequency (%)	Impact (%)
Road safety issues	2.50	1.70
Non-performance enhancing/illicit drugs	0.25	0.75
Overuse or misuse of alcohol	5.50	7.25
Risky/potentially harmful sexual activity	1.00	0.00
Negative attitudes towards homosexuality	3.00	1.25
Negatives attitudes towards men	1.50	1.25
Negative attitudes towards women	5.00	5.75

## Find out more

To access the full survey results, visit [ausport.gov.au/supporting/ethics/strategies\\_and\\_initiatives/research](https://ausport.gov.au/supporting/ethics/strategies_and_initiatives/research)