

INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF GYMNASTICS NEW ZEALAND

INTRODUCTION

In July 2020, Gymnastics New Zealand was made aware of a number of distressing and concerning allegations of abuse within the sport.

Following these—alongside with Sport NZ Interim Complaints Mechanism and Gymnastics New Zealand Safe Sport mechanism—a wider review into the sport of gymnastics in New Zealand was instigated. This independent review was executed by David Howman.

The [full report](#) is available alongside the [Statement of Commitment](#) from Gymnastics New Zealand to enact the recommendations received as a result of the review.

Timeline of updates regarding the Independent Review

Wednesday 10 February 2021: Report Release

[Media release: Gymnastics New Zealand Releases Report Following Independent Whole of Sport Review](#)

Tuesday 2 February 2021: Upcoming Report Release

As you will be aware, in August 2020, Gymnastics New Zealand (Gymnastics NZ) commissioned David Howman to conduct an Independent Review into the sport, following the distressing and deeply concerning allegations of physical, mental, and emotional abuse of former and current athletes.

Mr Howman, and his assistants Dr Lesley Nicol and Rachel Vickery, have now completed this review and are preparing to release it.

Gymnastics NZ will receive the report on Thursday 4 February. Once the organisation has had an opportunity to read and digest the report, it will be released to the gymnastics community, key stakeholders, and other interested parties, in full and unedited, on Tuesday 10 February.

Gymnastics NZ thanks you for your patience, and we look forward to being in touch again on 10 February.

Friday 4 December: Submission Phase Concluded

The independent Whole of Sport Review launched by Gymnastics New Zealand (Gymnastics NZ) in response to the exposure of unsafe and abusive practices in the sport, both historical and current, has now concluded the submission phase. The review team of David Howman, Lesley Nicol and Rachel Vickery are now compiling the report that will present the findings of the review and outline any recommendations.

It is envisaged that this report will be provided to Gymnastics NZ in the new year, no later than 4 February 2021. The full and unedited report will be released upon its receipt.

Gymnastics NZ would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge everyone who has come forward to share their experiences, complaints, issues, concerns, observations and suggestions. We know that sharing these experiences has not been easy, and we applaud your bravery in doing so. Your contributions are vital in helping provide better gymnastic experiences for everyone involved, now and in the future.

The [Independent Complaints Mechanism](#) continues to operate separately for those who may still wish to come forward in confidence. The mechanism can be reached via the Safe Sport email or the ICM directly. Both details can also be found on the home page of the [Gymnastics NZ website](#).

Once we have received the report, we will be able to provide more information around the format and timeframe required to review it and then evaluate and implement the proposed recommendations.

Gymnastics NZ will ensure this process includes collaboration with athlete's past and present, coaches, clubs, volunteers, and key stakeholders such as Sport NZ, the Human Rights Commission and athlete representative groups.

We look forward to working with you during 2021 to realise the full potential for change we believe will be presented by the review. We will update you again, once the report has been released.

The independent, Whole of Sport Review of Gymnastics in New Zealand was due for completion mid-October. However, David Howman—the Reviewer—has requested an initial one-month extension.

As per the flexibility granted by the Terms of Reference, and in the interest of a full and thorough review, this request for an extension has been granted. This now moves the expected completion date to mid-November.

THE REVIEW TEAM

David Howman CNZM - Independent Reviewer

David is a sport integrity consultant in Wellington. He is the Chair of the Athletes Integrity Unit (World Athletics), having been re-appointed to that position by the World Athletics Council in September 2019, the Chair of World Squash Ethics Commission, Deputy Chair of the ITF Ethics Commission, and Chair of the ICC Anti-Corruption Oversight Group. David was a member of the Australian Government's Panel reporting on Sport Integrity in 2018, and holds the position of Adjunct Professor at AUT. Locally he is presently Chair of the Board for Cricket Wellington.

David was Director General (more corporately named the CEO) of the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), from August 2003 until July 2016, and was instrumental in the shaping of WADA into a highly respected and unified global organization responsible for regulating and monitoring world sport and world governments. Among many partnerships developed by WADA during this time was one with Interpol cemented by an MOU signed in 2009, and several with other international bodies such as UNESCO and World Customs.

Prior to his time at WADA David practised as a barrister specialising in sport law, and represented many prominent NZ players, referees and coaches. He was Chair of Tennis NZ, Fairplay Citing Commissioner for NZ Rugby and SANZAR, and on the Boards of the Hillary Commission and NZ Sports Foundation. With a large experience of governance at both local and national levels in sport in New Zealand, accompanying his management skills, David brings a unique leadership capacity to all matters he is engaged in.

David received a CNZM for services to sport in 2017.

Dr Lesley Nicol – Advisor

Lesley is a specialist Sports and Exercise Physician, with a background in physiotherapy and elite sport.

While completing her degrees in Physiotherapy and Medicine, Lesley had a stellar career for the Silver Ferns. She played 110 tests, captained the team and won a Netball World Championships title in 2003. She was recently inducted into the NZ Sports Hall of Fame and is a recipient of the New Zealand Order of Merit.

Lesley completed her Sports and Exercise Physician specialist training at the Australian Institute of Sport and SportsMed Canterbury. She has worked with top-level teams including the Silver Ferns, Southern Sting, Mainland Tactix and the Canterbury Magicians. She now works at Forte Sports in Christchurch and is an HPSNZ contracted Doctor. She has also provided expert recommendation to Drug Free Sport NZ, NZ Olympic Committee Board, NZOC Athletes Commission and the Commonwealth Games Federation. She is a current

member of the NZOC Selection Committee. Her specialist fields of interests include female sports medicine, adolescent and paediatric sports injuries and general sports medicine.

Rachel Vickery - Advisor

Rachel is a Human Behaviour and High-Performance Coach. Rachel optimises performance, culture, communication and resilience in high pressure and high-stress situations. She works with athletes and coaches in the NBA (USA), NRL, AFL and numerous National, Olympic and World Champion level athletes and coaches in NZ, Australia and the USA. Rachel was recently on the Board of Swimming Queensland where she oversaw the Coach and Athlete development programs (from learning to swim to Olympic level athletes). Rachel also has 20-years of experience as a High-Performance Sports Physiotherapist.

In 2008 Rachel started a seminar series in Australia called “Growing Up In Lycra”, a program for female athletes and their mums to help navigate the challenges involved in being a young athlete in a ‘Lycra’ sport. This was followed by the “Creating Champion Men” program for males. Both were picked up by Swimming Australia and turned into a national resource.

2018 saw Rachel begin consulting into the University of Tennessee (USA) swim program. Since then, there has been a complete turnaround in team culture with the team going unbeaten last season—including conference championships—for the first time since the mid-1970s.

Rachel’s passion for her work stemmed from her time as a gymnast. She was a competitive and elite gymnast in the early to mid-90s and represented New Zealand on multiple occasions, including the 1991 World Championships and Team Captain at the 1994 Commonwealth Games. Rachel can resonate with some of the negative experiences that have recently come to light and is passionate about making a change and positively shifting gymnastics in New Zealand forward.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Independent Review of Gymnastics New Zealand

Overview:

Gymnastics New Zealand (GNZ) has been made aware of a wide range of complaints that detail, specific and general incidents of inappropriate practices and others that outline serious misconduct and or abuse.

The Board of GNZ has determined that given the wide range of these complaints, it is in the best interests of our community of athletes, coaches, parents, and participants that an independent review be conducted.

The independent review initiated by GNZ operates independently of the ICM process of Dyhrberg Drayton Employment Law (DDEL). The independent reviewer will have access to

data and information gathered through the ICM process with the consent of complainants/participants.

These two processes will allow the Reviewer to develop a holistic a view of GNZ's sporting culture and its impact/influence on its past and present participants and members.

As such, the overriding objectives of this review are to:

Allow the Reviewer to develop a holistic view of GNZ's sporting culture and its impact/influence on its past and present participants and members, from which the review will identify and develop:

(a) Lessons that can be learned by GNZ and our community arising out of the review; and

(b) Recommendations as to GNZ's policies, procedures, processes, education, and behaviours within the community and GNZ that can be improved or implemented to improve our culture and eliminate the identified poor practices, processes and behaviour.

Approach:

The approach to be taken is outlined below:

Review Process:

- The reviewer is empowered to collect and collate data and or information using whatever methods are proper from as wide number of sources as thought necessary to complete the review.
- Identify common themes, e.g. lack of, or inadequate processes and areas where changes are required.
- Identify if, when complaints were laid, the investigation of the incident/s followed any policy, procedure or identified best practice.
- Identify if the findings and suggested remedies were appropriate. If not, why not?
 - Identify what actions should have been undertaken.
 - Make recommendations on any future actions to mediate, rectify the identified inadequacies.
- Review past and present practices, processes and or policies, etc., of GNZ, identifying any shortcomings and recommending alterations and or additions to policies and processes to remedy the identified shortcomings.
 - Identify what works well and adds value, including recommendations for improvements.
- Review, comment on the sporting culture of gymnastics in NZ, making recommendations as necessary

To facilitate the receipt of information that individuals may believe is relevant to the independent Review, but is not a complaint, a dedicated email address

– reviewer@sportintegrity.co.nz - will be advertised via the GNZ website.

Interim Complaints Mechanism

Separate to this Review, is the complaints handling process being managed by the [Interim Complaints Mechanism \(ICM\)](#). The ICM is an independent service put in place by Sport NZ (SNZ) and High-Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) for High Performance athletes, which has been expanded to include complaints relating to Gymnastics.

Given the number and potential nature of the complaints, GNZ has supported that complaints will be processed via the ICM. The ICM process ensures a high level of independence and oversight, ensuring complaints are handled with the levels of sensitivity and oversight as required in the ICM process.

If any new or further relevant complaints are received during the period of this Review, then they must be referred to the ICM.

Confidentiality

Any information provided to the Reviewer in confidence will be kept confidential, so far as the law allows. The Review will be conducted in a manner consistent with the principles of natural justice, confidentiality, security, and information protection.

GNZ will make sure that no person who takes part in the Review will be subjected to retaliation or retaliatory action and will take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of anyone who cooperates, in good faith, with the Reviewer. As part of this, statements or written complaints will not be provided to any individuals outside of those who are required to sight them as part of this Review.

Publication

The existence of the Review, and these Terms of Reference, will be publicly available on both the GNZ and Sport NZ websites. After finalisation of the Independent Reviewer's report, the report will be published.

Timing

The Reviewer will begin the Review as soon as possible, with the aim that the report will be completed within two months. On completion, the report will be provided to the Chair of Gymnastics NZ.