

NO STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT: the dumbest government press conference ever

Somebody should bear responsibility for the treacherous act of trashing the reputation of Australian sport, and denting national pride, by staging an evidence-free media stunt that went viral internationally.

The prime candidate is John Lawler, CEO of the Australian Crime Commission. However, the Minister for Justice, Jason Clare, and the Minister for Sport, Kate Lundy, must share significant responsibility also.

How much? Lawler built the shotgun, and fabricated the dummy wadding charges. He and the Ministers jointly fired it, half-cocked, thoughtlessly scattering critical confetti globally. Not one of them apparently considered what potential damage their staged media circus could have on the reputation of Australia and Australian sports. If they had, they would not have gone ahead...surely?

If they did consider potential damage, and still went ahead, the three are even dumber than it would first appear. Which is it? We invite Lawler, Clare and Lundy to answer the question: Did you consider the damage your over-the-top media conference would have on Australia's and Australian sport's reputation, locally and internationally? If you did, why did you proceed?



ABOVE: London Sun 7 Feb 2013

Here's what the Australian Government says about sport and Australia on two government websites. Before early February 2013, we were highly regarded worldwide for "cutting edge sports science sports medicine"...before Lawler, Clare and Lundy trashed the nation's reputation in relation to drugs.

Sport in Australia

Sport is widely recognised as an integral part of Australian life, and the Australian Government provides funding for sport as an investment in the community in terms of national pride, improved health, economic activity and stronger communities.

– Australian Government, Australian Sports Commission website, 1107 hours 12 Feb 2013:
http://www.ausport.gov.au/about/what_is_the_asc

What is the AIS?

The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) is Australia's premier sports training institute.

Outstanding athlete results combined with skilled coaches, world-class facilities and cutting-edge sports science sports medicine services have given the AIS its international reputation as a world's best practice model for high performance athlete development.

Australian Government, Australian Institute of Sport website, 1111 hours 12 Feb 2013:
<http://www.ausport.gov.au/ais/about>

(underlining added)

It's hard to understand why a sports scientist, Mr Stephen Dank, is being vilified in the media, apparently on some sort of wink/nod from "intelligence" dredged from somewhere (perhaps not the ACC), when the AIS says it does what Mr Danks said he was doing, 'cutting edge sports science/medicine'.

Has the Australian Institute of Sport been investigated? Is it under suspicion? Why not?

"The ACC's report does not justify its media-grabbing title Organised Crime and Drugs in Sport. ...Clare declared "the findings are shocking and they'll disgust Australian sports fans". In fact, the ACC did not make specific findings and its conclusion is vague...

– Gerard Henderson in the Fairfax media on 12 Feb 2013. <http://tiny.cc/nz4csw>

For that matter, the Australian Crime Commission should be investigated for its performance-based operation over the past two years. Here, below, is a link to an assessment of Mr Lawler, by the team at *Crikey*. Civil Liberties Australia has been watching the CCC closely for four years, and we think the ACC has declined considerably since the *Crikey* assessment was done 16 months ago. Documents in this CLA Special Investigation series demonstrate that others – the Audit Office (ANAO) among them – also do not think very highly of how the ACC has operated in that period.

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LAW ENFORCERS

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A man with extraordinary powers, but is he using them to good effect?
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Media conference ... or a staged performance by actors

It seems that the original media stunt event and follow-up appearances should be judged more as theatre than government/political communication of facts and accurate information. Civil Liberties Australia is writing to the Press Gallery to ask for a new award category.

Was Minister 'Scarey' Clare credible as the Man from SMASH? Did Minister Lundy twinkle as the Wicket Witch of the Wet? Was Commish Lawler convincing in the unaccustomed role of the Mafia Don ruling by fear? Perhaps we won't know just how good they were until the end of-year awards, the POOBAs, are handed out. POOBA stands for Politicians Or Other Bureaucrats Awards. This year they may include a thespian element for the first time, after the Drugs in Sport performance, which is expected to attract many imitators in Canberra, particularly on Capital Hill, and in State capitals and Darwin.

ENDS

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