

REVIEW PROCESS

The interview process took place between September and December 2018 with Maria Dew QC providing the Hockey New Zealand (HNZ) Board a draft report in early December 2018 and a full report in early January 2019. The report has since been reviewed by lawyers and redacted to ensure the privacy rights of all parties participating in the review have been respected.

The review was open to any interested parties who volunteered to participate, with current and former Black Sticks Women's team (BWST) members invited to do so by HNZ and the Hockey Players Association (HPA). Overall, 65 interviews were conducted, including 33 past and present players, with the remainder of participants being HNZ, High Performance Sport New Zealand (HPSNZ) or HPA staff or representatives; other interested parties and high performance sport professionals. Additionally 58 documents were reviewed, including policies, HNZ high performance information, confidential submissions and publicly available resources on female high performance sport and athlete welfare.

The majority of players who volunteered to be interviewed have been in the team in recent years (between 2016 and 2018 inclusive) and represented at least half of the total number of squad members for each of the past three years.

The confidentiality of the review process was critical to allow participants to speak openly about their experiences and views of the environment. All interviews were conducted in a confidential setting with an undertaking given that interviewees would not be named or identified in the report.

SUMMARY

This independent review arose, in part, out of concerns raised about the BSWT environment in August 2018.

In late August 2018, the HPA presented HNZ with confidential and anonymised concerns raised on behalf of BSWT current and past players, recording those players' concerns. The concerns raised were about a negative environment.

It is important to note this review is not an employment investigation. It has been commissioned by HNZ as an opportunity to review, more broadly, the BSWT environment and player welfare issues as set out in the Terms of Reference. The review therefore presents a wide range of views expressed by current and former players and others interviewed during a confidential voluntary process. The objective has been to permit all interviewees to express their views openly, without concerns being individually identified. The review also presents conclusions and recommendations, but not any findings of fact in relation to any HNZ employee's employment.

The review Terms of Reference sought a review of any claims of harassment, bullying or other improper conduct, a review of HNZ and HPA policies and processes for raising player welfare issues, the effectiveness of HNZ communication with players and the health

and wellbeing initiatives for players. The review was also instructed to identify any other relevant areas for consideration that may contribute to the BSWT environment. In broad terms, HNZ and HPA wished to understand whether there were any issues of concern within the BSWT environment, which may impact on athlete or staff welfare and if they exist how to address them.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

1. The majority of BSWT players interviewed have been in the team in recent years; between 2016 and 2018 inclusive. Of the 33 players interviewed (which represents at least half of BSWT players between 2016 and 2018), 24 players reported serious concerns about the BSWT environment. This group made up just over 70% of all players interviewed. This same group includes 18 players who are well capped yet have serious concerns about the BSWT environment.
2. The 65 interviews conducted during this review have shown that there is currently a very clear disconnect between:
 - a) the majority player view of a negative environment they have reported experiencing for the last two years and longer. This includes their view that this is not helping them reach their full potential as players and is impeding the success of the team; and
 - b) the almost unanimous view of the HNZ and HPSNZ staff, as well as a smaller group of players, that the environment is largely positive and successful. This group of interviewees do acknowledge improvements can be, and have been, made to the BSWT environment. The HNZ and HPSNZ staff considered that this work can continue with current personnel and resources already in place for much of the last two years.
3. A small number of players and HPA representatives interviewed reported they had been informally raising concerns with HNZ about the BSWT environment for several years but particularly after the Rio Olympics in 2016.
4. HNZ has not responded previously to informal concerns raised about the BSWT environment, for several reasons:
 - a) it had not previously received any formal complaint of bullying behaviour;
 - b) HNZ held the view that the concerns raised by HPA, on behalf of unnamed players could not be acted upon unless there was a formal complaint by a named player;
 - c) HNZ believed that the informal reporting of any negative behaviours only involved a few players who were unhappy with non-selection decisions or that any concerns had been resolved. This review has shown that view is incorrect; and
 - d) HNZ and HPSNZ representatives interviewed did not observe or experience the behaviours that have been described by the majority of the players interviewed, or otherwise considered the behaviours were largely reasonable and necessary in an elite sporting environment.
5. HNZ does have a committed coaching staff, who are acknowledged as having strong technical skills. Overall, there has been a lack of acceptance of the player concerns raised in this review.
6. HNZ has not committed sufficient resource, or given adequate consideration, to the Human Resource and Sports Duty of Care aspects of the BSWT player welfare, in

its policies and procedures. While HNZ has had policies in place, it has not provided education or guidelines for players to assist them in identifying bullying, harassment or unprofessional behaviour. While HNZ reviewed its existing Human Resources and Health and Safety policies and procedures during 2017 and 2018, they require enhancement and promulgation to players, to ensure player welfare is adequately addressed.

7. HPA has also not had any policies or education in place for players to assist them in identifying bullying, harassment or unprofessional behaviour. It has supported players to raise concerns, but with limited success. Overall, the players interviewed have felt well supported by HPA.
8. The relationship between HNZ and HPA, has been operating with a lack of trust between the parties at a management level. This has not been in the players' best interests as many players interviewed reported being concerned that seeking support from, or raising a complaint through, the HPA may negatively impact their place in the team.
9. HNZ does have a genuine commitment to changing the BSWT environment for the benefit of the players. However, the reviewer observed some reluctance at an operational level, to consider that this may require more fundamental change by HNZ. There was also some indication of haste by HNZ management to put in place already formulated solutions. The reviewer has encouraged HNZ to pause and reflect on this review before acting, to ensure the player voice is not suppressed.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Terms of Reference One: The recommendations detailed in the final section of this report acknowledge the challenge of acting when currently individual complainants are not willing to come forward at the time. However, the recommendations address other means that remain open to HNZ to act including:
 - a) to appoint an external organisational development sports consultant, from outside the existing HNZ and HPSNZ environment, to assist HNZ and players to collaborate over the modern expectations of the coaching role for female high performance athletes;
 - b) to ensure that HNZ adheres strictly to the Memorandum of Understanding with HPA and the HNZ Selection Policy and that player welfare and other non-coaching matters are managed through the High Performance Director in consultation with HPA.
 - c) HNZ to clarify for players the distinct roles and responsibilities of Head Coach and High Performance Director.
2. Terms of Reference Two: Policies and Procedures.
 - a) HNZ to engage an experienced Human Resources consultancy to provide revised HR policies and procedures including a Workplace Code of Conduct for staff and players.
 - b) HNZ to ensure training for staff and players on discrimination, harassment and bullying.
 - c) HNZ to appoint a dedicated HR Advisor to provide ongoing support for its policies and procedures and conduct exit interviews with departing players.
 - d) HPA should also develop its own policies and training for players to align with HNZ and for both organisations to collaborate on these policies.

3. Terms of Reference Three: Effective Engagement between players and HNZ.
 - a) HNZ to enhance its annual Induction Programme for the BSWT to include education on its policies and procedures, education on coaching needs for high performance female athletes, to demonstrate closer collaboration with HPA and to include a family and partners welcome and information session.
 - b) HNZ to develop opportunities for more regular contact with players and HPA, in a social or professional setting and to consider co-location of the HNZ office and player environment.
4. Terms of Reference Four: Health and Wellbeing.
 - a) The HNZ Board to enhance its People & Culture and Health and Safety, Wellbeing Committees with sufficient expertise to ensure that player wellbeing and welfare is adequately considered, including engaging regularly with the HPA and the BSWT Players' Leadership Group to progress and monitor the other 11 practical recommendations set out under the Terms of Reference Four Recommendations.
 - b) HNZ and HPA both have an important role to play in safeguarding player welfare. This will require better collaboration between them.