

Strict New Anti-Doping Laws Introduced By AOC

The Olympic boss of Australia, John Coates, has introduced the strictest anti-doping laws in Australia that would make athletes and officials to truthfully answer any questions put to them by the anti-doping body, the Australian Anti-Doping Agency.

Speaking at an Australian Olympic Committee meeting, Coates remarked that his organization was watching the investigation the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority was undertaking into the National Rugby League and Australian Football League and wanted to make sure that any investigation into the use of drugs in Olympic sports was not hindered. He added that it would be naïve to not expect that some Australian athletes and officials in Olympic sports have so far fallen through the net because of inefficient (drugs) testing. The AOC chief also said he had no problem with information from "phone taps, surveillance and credit card receipts" being used to assist any [anti-doping investigation](#).

The announcement came as Sports Minister Kate Lundy announced new funding of \$3.46 million in the 2013/14 Budget for the Australian Anti-Doping Agency and the [National Integrity of Sport Unit](#). A total of \$1.7 million of the funding will be provided to the National Integrity of Sport Unit and \$1.76 million to ASADA. Senator Lundy, in a statement, said this funding was being provided to help the Australian Anti-Doping Agency with its present investigations and to help individual sports strengthen their integrity systems on the back of the Australian Crime Commission's Project Aperio Report. Senator Lundy added the investigation resources of ASADA have already been doubled in the wake of Project Aperio and this funding will see those resources maintained until at least 2014/15, to ensure ASADA can explore all possible avenues of inquiry. Lundy added that from grass-roots participation to elite sport, the Australian government is committed to Australian sport being played clean and fair.

All athletes and officials, under the new AOC Anti-Doping By-Law, would be required to give a statutory declaration upon taking up positions or membership in the team agreeing to fully cooperate with any investigation by ASADA and they must fully co-operate with ASADA even if to do so might incriminate or expose them to a penalty. The new law also obligates athletes and officials to give information, produce documents and answer questions as required by ASADA.

The Lance Armstrong case in which he categorically denied use of banned performance enhancing drugs and managed to pass all doping tests, had given more weight to amending the AOC By-Law, Coates remarked.

Coates added that failure to co-operate with and assist ASADA, in every way, can result in an athlete or official being ruled out of an Olympic Team and they may be ineligible for membership of or selection to any Team, or to receive funding from or to hold any position within the AOC for such period as determined by the Australian Olympic Committee. He also added that it was important to uphold the integrity in Olympic sport and Coates "welcomed" the assistance that Customs and the Australian Crime Commission were offering to the Australian Anti-Doping Agency.