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Commonwealth Games Bowls shadow squad gets anti-doping message

The Commonwealth Games Bowls shadow squad will be taking some time out in Shepparton, Victoria on Saturday to boost their anti-doping knowledge with the Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) education program.

Australia's elite athletes preparing for this year's Commonwealth Games are a crucial audience for the anti-doping message.

Doping in sport can have serious ramifications for athletes. In addition to the health risks, under the World Anti-Doping Code athletes in possession, using, or attempting to use prohibited substances potentially face serious penalties including a lifetime ban for second offences.

Presenters from ASADA will provide participants with the opportunity to understand anti-doping rules and procedures, and their rights and responsibilities.

Acting ASADA CEO, Richard Ings said that education is an important part of ASADA's multifaceted approach to protect Australia's sporting integrity through the elimination of doping.

"Our education program reinforces important messages like the risk of inadvertent doping and the importance of checking the status of medications.

"We also want to ensure athletes understand their rights and responsibilities throughout the anti-doping process.

"Too many athletes have learnt the hard way that they can never win their reputation back if they go down the doping path in sport," said Mr Ings.

Bowls Australia's CEO, Neil Dalrymple said that they are very supportive of ASADA's education program.

"It is very important for our national squad athletes to participate in these sessions. Many of the athletes in attendance will represent Australia in future Commonwealth Games and/or World Championships, so having a clear understanding of their responsibilities and our Anti-Doping policy is imperative," said Mr Dalrymple.

ASADA invests heavily in world class anti-doping education. In 2008/09, a record 10,530 athletes and support personnel attended 221 education activities across Australia.

Surveys indicated that 97 per cent of participants believed the education session reduced their likelihood of inadvertent doping, and 95 per cent believed it deterred them from contemplating doping.

ASADA's anti-doping education program has been developed with input from national sporting organisations, Australian athletes, other national anti-doping organisations and the World Anti-Doping Agency.

ASADA's education aims to reduce the number of athletes contemplating doping, reduce the percentage of inadvertent anti-doping rule violations and raise anti-doping awareness throughout the Australian sporting community.

Media note: Shadow squad – Bowls Australia has short-listed 28 players who are currently competing in a number of key selection events to earn the right to gain the national body's recommendation for a spot on the Delhi Commonwealth Games team.

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