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ASADA launches new athlete counselling service

The Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority (ASADA) has today launched a world-first counselling service that will provide support to athletes facing a possible doping ban from sport.

ASADA Chief Executive Officer Aurora Andruska said this initiative will provide every athlete, who has been notified of a possible anti-doping rule violation, with free access to independent and confidential counselling with qualified professionals.

“ASADA recognises that athletes who are confronting a possible anti-doping rule violation face serious consequences to their career and reputation, and that it can be a very difficult time for them.

“It is important that ASADA provides access to confidential counselling to help ensure the welfare of the athlete and to try and avoid some of the tragic incidents that have occurred overseas involving athletes serving an anti-doping rule violation,” Ms Andruska said.

It is believed that this is the first time this type of service has been offered by an anti-doping organisation anywhere in the world.

The counselling will be provided through Davidson Trahaire Corpsych, an independent organisation who provides wellbeing and performance services to more than 2000 organisations across the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

Ms Andruska said that the aim of this initiative is to provide short-term counselling and strategies to help individuals deal with very stressful and potentially life-changing circumstances.

“Many sports already have support structures in place for athletes but this is being implemented as an additional safeguard,” Ms Andruska said.

As part of this initiative ASADA staff involved in an athlete’s results management process, will receive training to increase their knowledge of warning signs related to anxiety, stress and depression.

ASADA is the Australian Government agency responsible for protecting the right of athletes to participate in doping-free sport. Further information about ASADA is available at www.asada.gov.au

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