



Steve Dimopoulos MP

Minister for Environment
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Minister for Outdoor Recreation

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Mr Alan Clayton PSM
Chair, Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board
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Dear Mr Clayton

I am pleased to provide you with this Statement of Expectations (SOE) for the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports (PBCS) Board of Victoria for the 2023-2025 period. This SOE replaces the previous SOE and applies from the date of this letter as otherwise amended.

I am committed to ensuring that the PBCS Board remains empowered in its role as the regulator of the PBCS industry under the *Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985* (PBCS Act). I commend the Board for maintaining high standards of regulatory oversight of the PBCS industry on my behalf, and for fulfilling the other key purposes of the PBCS Act, namely, promoting safety, reducing the risk of malpractice and upholding integrity.

Facilitating a vibrant program of promotions where the health and safety of contestants and the highest standards of integrity are at the centre of the Board's focus is the fundamental premise of the role and responsibilities of the PBCS Board. The PBCS Board's contribution to supporting the coronial inquest into the death of Shane Tuck, the establishment of its Medical Advisory Sub-Committee and finalisation of its traumatic brain injury (TBI) and concussion management policy are clear demonstrations of its commitment to prioritising the safety, health and wellbeing of contestants.

Strategic framework

The PBCS Board is established under the PBCS Act and operates to regulate the PBCS industry to ensure the integrity of all professional boxing and combat sports in Victoria through its administration of the PBCS Act and the *Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Regulations 2018* (PBCS Regulations).

Priorities for the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board

As the regulator of the PBCS industry, the Government expects the PBCS Board to continue to ensure that regulatory standards are upheld, community expectations are met, and the safety of contestants is prioritised.

The Government expects the PBCS Board to prioritise the following for the 2023-2025 period:

1. Essential regulation of professional boxing and combat sports in Victoria

- Ensure the integrity and fairness of the industry, through issuing licences, registrations and permits, and supervising professional contests and weigh-ins.
- Take necessary steps to reduce the risk of malpractice, promote the safety of contestants, and uphold industry integrity.
- Increase the awareness and understanding of the regulatory framework within the combat sports community and facilitate understanding of obligations by licensed officials, permit holders and registered contestants.
- Identify the training needs of key stakeholders within the industry and, in collaboration with DJSIR, ensure that there are appropriate training and development opportunities for contestants, ringside doctors, referees and judges.
- Identify areas of strategic importance and facilitate and consider evidence-based research in areas of boxing and combat sports.
- Develop and maintain Board policies relating to contestant safety and wellbeing and the integrity of the sport.

2. Safety of contestants, including concussion and traumatic brain injury

- Facilitate the introduction and implementation of measures to improve the safety and health outcomes for contestants participating in the professional boxing and combat sports sector through:
 - Implementing recommendations arising from Sports Medicine Australia's report into concussion awareness and education in the PBCS industry, inclusive of:
 - mandatory concussion education for all licensed officials, registered contestants and ringside doctors
 - baseline and follow-up neurological testing for boxing and combat sport contestants
 - mandatory reporting of concussion sustained in training settings.
 - Finalising, publishing and implementing the PBCS Board's Traumatic Brain Injury policy.
 - Applying a responsive approach to coronial inquiry findings and reports that inform potential reform and changes to rules and practices that improve participant safety in boxing and combat sports (including the coronial inquest into the death of Shane Tuck, the Concussion in Sport Consensus Statement; the Senate Inquiry's Report into Repeated Head Trauma and Concussion in Contact Sports).
 - Continuing to provide guidance and direction around policies, practices and emerging technologies that improve contestant safety in response to the evolving evidence around the prevention and management of traumatic brain injury.
 - Establishing and communicating clear criteria that apply to the PBCS Board's consideration of proposed match-ups, premised on even and competitive contests.
 - Educating the PBCS industry on safety measures, equipment, training and contest preparation techniques that can reduce the risk of injuries.

- 3. *Review of the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports regulatory framework***
 - Participate in the independent regulatory review of the PBCS Act and PBCS Regulations led by DJSIR, which includes consideration of the PBCS Board's governance structure, powers, duties and functions.
 - Participate in the subsequent implementation planning associated with any findings and recommendations of the independent regulatory review.
- 4. *Online permit, registration, licence and injury management portal***
 - Contribute to the development, delivery and implementation of an online permit, registration, licence and injury management portal for PBCS.
 - Engage and support the PBCS industry during the implementation stage of the online portal.
- 5. *Capacity building***
 - Documentation of the PBCS Board's decision-making considerations and approach in fulfilling its operational duties and responsibilities, inclusive of its assessment of applications for permits, licences and registrations, monitoring ongoing compliance with conditions and requirements, ongoing monitoring of performance/competency of contestants and its supervision of weigh-ins and promotions.
 - Establish clear accreditation criteria, pathways, recruitment opportunities and performance monitoring for ringside doctors, second medical officers and licensed officials.
- 6. *Role of the Combat Sports Unit***
 - Documentation of clear operating procedures, standards and expectations required of the Combat Sports Unit to effectively support the Board in executing its regulatory responsibilities.
- 7. *Effective communication and engagement with stakeholders***
 - Utilise appropriate stakeholder consultation and engagement tools to advise the PBCS industry on the legislative and regulatory framework.
 - Implement a communication and engagement strategy to build industry understanding of the role and purpose of the PBCS Board in promoting safety, reducing the risk of malpractice and upholding integrity in the PBCS industry.
- 8. *Promoting gender equality***
 - Align the PBCS Board's intended outcomes with the expectations of the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and the Government's Women on Boards commitment to increase the number of women on boards.
 - Acknowledge that advancing gender equality is a shared responsibility and delivers benefits to all Victorians regardless of gender.
 - Consider, promote, encourage and facilitate gender equality and improvement of the status of and respect for women across all roles in PBCS Industry in Victoria.
 - Support a pathway to consider, promote, encourage and facilitate gender equality and identify barriers to female participation, particularly in officiating.

9. Corporate Governance

- In carrying out the purpose and functions of the PBCS Board as outlined in the PBCS Act, apply the principles of good governance as spelt out in the Victorian Government's *Guide to public entity good governance*.

Governance, accountability and reporting

I expect the PBCS Board will adhere to the highest standards of good governance and integrity. The PBCS Board's governance, accountability and reporting requirements include the annual submission of a PBCS Board Activity Report, including to DJSIR, to demonstrate progress on implementing the specified priorities in the SOE.

Communication with the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions

I expect the PBCS Board to provide input and information to DJSIR, when requested, to ensure that advice to me and the Government is thorough, accurate and timely.

The PBCS Board should keep the Government and DJSIR informed of any issues relating to it and provide prior notice of significant announcements and events that may attract media attention. In relation to Victorian Government policy or funding, I expect that the PBCS Board will not publicly comment on these matters unless prior agreement has been received.

Next steps

Following receipt of this letter, I expect the PBCS Board to begin working towards the expectations articulated in this statement, and to formally outline how it intends to meet the requirements for the years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

I commend you and the PBCS Board on continuing to regulate the PBCS industry to a high standard, especially with the rapid growth in the number of contests and promotions following the COVID-19 pandemic. I also once again commend the PBCS Board for its commitment to prioritising work on concussion and TBI, including your effective and meaningful contribution to the challenging matter of the coronial inquest into the death of Shane Tuck.

For further information, please contact Ms Tess McLachlan, Senior Manager – Regulation, Risk and Policy, Boxing and Combat Sports – DJSIR via phone on 0404 061 043 or by email at tess.mclachlan@sport.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Steve Dimopoulos MP
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events
Date: 11/12/2023