



### What's included

- Federal Government Response Released
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### Federal Government's Response

On or around a month ago, Concussion Australia wrote to each Federal, State and Territory Minister for Health, Education and Sport (and their shadow equivalents) to outline our view of the Federal Government's response to the Senate Inquiry report into concussion. The contents of that email, as are relevant to our newsletter, and which we have chosen to share with the public, is as follows:

*Concussion Australia supports the fact that the Government has both responded and is pleased that it agrees to recommendations 7 and 8 (both of which are about education, and both of which Concussion Australia can roll out in full if funded).*

*Unfortunately, the Response is conservative, lacks direction and it appears to handball these issues over to the States. Given the content of the Response, our intention is to now work with the States to implement Concussion Australia's Official Response to the inquiry.*

*Now that the Federal Government has responded, our view is that the States have complete discretion as to whether they step up to protect current and future generations from concussion/s.*

*The States have legislative power in education and the States (including their respective Department heads) can no longer say that they are waiting for the Federal Government to act before doing anything (which is what we have received from some jurisdictions) because the Federal Government appears to have now handed the issue of education over to the States.*

*The Response also fails to commit to anything relating to insurance (despite the Federal Government having that power under s 51 of the Constitution), and that is one of the biggest issues in grassroots sport – bearing that in mind, the States now appear to have a constitutional mandate and complete carriage of legislative change as it relates to insurance in sport.*

*Obviously, the most efficient approach would be for the Federal Government to reverse its position and to commit to legislating in the area of insurance, which saves the need for the States to deal with this and provides a uniform approach.*

*In our official response, we expressly called upon all governments to refuse to indemnify sporting bodies if they are sued for concussion and related injuries. Despite this, we have recently seen every State government [agreeing to indemnify](#) sporting organisations who refuse to join the National Redress Scheme.*

*The reason we raise this is because we can foresee the same occurring with concussion, and we note that should sporting organisations come to the government seeking indemnification for concussion and related injuries, that every State (and the Federal Government) was on notice that it could have amended and or introduced legislation (as could the Federal Government) about insurance in sport to protect current and future generations. This would be a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive approach.*

With all of that in mind, Concussion Australia has asked each State Minister for Sport, Health and Education (and their shadow equivalents) to:

- meet with us to tell us (and or write to us about the same) their respective positions on our Official Response (and on the Federal Government's Response) including the contents of that response such as legislative change in their jurisdictions;
- to discuss possible funding for Concussion Australia to work in their jurisdictions as educators (in much the same as our Federal pre-budget submission); and
- to speak to each State about what each respective State is going to do or commit to doing to solve the myriad of issues in the concussion space.

Concussion Australia has also requested the various State Ministers to raise at the next national cabinet/meeting for sport ministers the issue of insurance and to similarly request the Federal Government to "cover the field" in this area.

Concussion Australia will otherwise continue to conduct its work and has arranged several meetings with Ministers and Shadow Ministers in the coming weeks to discuss the matters we have raised above and other matters that are not in the public domain.

## CEO Report

The second half of 2024 saw some huge wins for Concussion Australia including conducting two workshops with a local Brisbane AFL Club, several online support groups with a lot of new attendees, regular referrals, along with countless meetings with politicians (and their staff) and other organisations.

In November 2024, Concussion Australia completed and published our first [Guide to Managing Concussion/s](#) - this has been shared with every State and Federal Minister (and shadow equivalent) for Sport, Health and Education so that it can be used to assist their Departments and the community as a whole to identify and manage concussion.

This is a best-in-class guide that can be used by government (including education department, most of which do not have concussion guidelines for State schools), sporting regulators, sports clubs and their executives, teachers, athletes, parents and everyone in between - in my view, the positive of this guide over others is that it is concise, relevant, accurate, independent and conflict of interest (or potential) free.

On a personal note, I was very pleased to be nominated as one of the ACT Young Australians of the Year for my work with concussion. I do not get paid for what I do at Concussion Australia; I do it because it needs to be done and because it is very close to my heart. Late in 2024 I was also very involved in a series of national reports by the ABC about concussion education, and I congratulate Jasmine Hines and her team on their reporting; I am looking forward to continuing to further work with their reporters.

2025 is shaping to be a decisive year and I am looking forward to continuing to work for the benefit of the community, meeting with several ministers, conducting educational workshops in or around late March/April 2025 across Australia.

## Workshops at the Wynnum Vikings Club

Concussion Australia ran two workshops with the Wynnum Vikings Club. On or around 50-100 people attended those workshops, and from the survey results (with on or around 22 valid survey responses: both the pre and post workshop component completed; and a further remaining 5 that completed the pre workshop component and accompanying numbers based question), we can see that:

- Out of 27 total responses, participants thought they had suffered a total of at least 38 concussions;
- Out of those 38 concussions, 11 of those concussions were attended to by a doctor or medical practitioner;
- Two people had suffered 6 or more concussions;
- 66% (18/27) of attendees had not been provided with concussion education before our workshop;
- 80% of people who suffered a concussion in sport continued playing after being concussed.
- 95%+ of attendees (22/23) felt more prepared to deal with concussion after attendance, and the remaining (4/27) did not answer the post workshop component question.

## Media in the last 6 months

- In November 2024 Brendan Swan joined Saskia Mabin from ABC Canberra to talk about his personal story with concussion and his ACT Young Australian of the Year nomination. You can listen to that [here](#).
- In (and for some time beforehand) November 2024 Concussion Australia was involved with a national rollout on the ABC network about grassroots concussion education, which featured on [ABC Radio National](#), [ABC National News](#) and in [print](#).

## Next online support group

- Concussion Australia's online support groups will commence in February 2025.

## Donate to our mission

