

Dear Honourable Daniel Mookhey MLC

Chair

Chair, Public Works Committee

Legislative Council Parliament of NSW

Email: publicworks@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear

Thank you for your communication of 6 October Reference D21/52120 with regard to the Inquiry into the granting of contract number OoS17/18-021 by the Office of Sport.

And thankyou for highlighting the paragraphs in two submissions which mention my name.

My equestrian background and expertise .

I have been involved in equestrian sport (in particular the sport of dressage) in Australia and internationally as a dressage official - FEI 5* dressage judge - and officiated at the Sydney Olympics and Equestrian World Championships, World Cups , Asian Games etc since that time. I have been variously Chair of Equestrian Australia, Equestrian Queensland, and Chair of Australian Dressage Committee. Currently I am Chair of the Equestrian Australia Dressage officials committee. In addition, I have been a member of the FEI Dressage committee and also am an Education Course Director, and a member of the current Judges Supervisory panel.

Most recently, after acting as the FEI appointed Technical Delegate for the SE Asian Championships and the 2018 Asian Games, I was appointed and officiated at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics held at Bajikoen Tokyo in July 2021.

The role of the Technical Delegate is to oversee and approve **all** aspects related to the technical and administrative arrangements for the conduct of the event, including the appropriateness of the footing in terms of horse welfare and the sport. I worked with Professor Lars Roepstorff and Oli Homberg – FEI equestrian footing experts during the Tokyo Olympic games.

I will now make comment on the extracts from the two submissions which have made comments about myself.

Extract from Submission by Maggie Dawkins. Date: 25 August 2021

“Did Mary Seefried provide full disclosure in regard to her involvement in the SIEC upgrade as a member of the national dressage committee in 2017?”

Response. The Australian Dressage Committee is the national body which works to develop and implement national policy and rules for the sport of dressage. It has absolutely no jurisdiction over facilities. In NSW SIEC facility is purely a matter between the State Branch and NSW Office of Sport and any contractual arrangement and funding is their alone. The EADC's advice was not sought by ENSW.

Did the Office of Sport disclose in a comprehensive briefing, to Mary Seefried the origins of the surface and that it was second-hand and contaminated?

I was made aware by the Manager of the facility of the history of the arena surface up to the time I was asked to visit and give my opinion in March 2021. An initial briefing with Michael Toohey, Director Greater Sydney Branch, NSW Office of Sport, Mark Fulcher, Venue Manager SIEC, Dave Porter, Operations Coordinator SIEC, provided background to the construction, development and ongoing management of the indoor and warm up surfaces. Remediation work carried out in July and August 2020 was also outlined.

Did Mary Seefried ensure that the arena surface was insured against public liability, if an injury was sustained by a rider or horse?

This was not a matter I was concerned with and as it is multi use facility I believe it would have adequate public liability insurance to cover any eventuality and also that its contractual arrangements with bodies that would hire the facility would also cover adequate insurance arrangements.

On what basis did Mary Seefried claim the arena surface was safe and suitable.

As above, I was asked in March 2021 to give an expert and independent opinion on the surface of the Indoor arena and warm up at that time at SIEC by the Manager of the facility. Besides a visual and physical check of the arena, I arranged to have elite Grand prix riders from the dressage community ride on the surface test it to the maximum and give their experienced opinion. They were very happy with the surface and especially stated that it did not compromise the welfare of their horses. I provided a report to Mark Fulcher on this, along with John Vallance, Jumping Courses designer.

Extract from Redacted Submission NSW LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL Public works committee Inquiry into the granting of contract number OoS17/18-021 by the Office of Sport Terms of Reference and submission – CONFIDENTIAL (Name etc, email and address to be withheld only) –

“How can any trust be placed in Mary Seefried when she has NO professional documented evidence to support her statement that the arena surface is safe?

The evidence I have for the arena being safe is my own personal experience of many years working on good and bad surfaces as a dressage judge and technical delegate, the fact that I was deemed experienced enough by the FEI to be appointed as Technical Delegate for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. and the responses that were provided by the elite dressage riders who rode on the surface in front of me on that day ...

How does she support her ‘assumption’ to an Insurance Company? The Equestrian Community know that the arena is second-hand and contaminated - how then can Mary Seefried recommend it as being SAFE under Insurance Policy Specifications for same and duty of care for possible Litigation against safety in the face of injury or death?

I was not asked to give any opinion in relation to Insurance Policy Specifications.

I would like to question whether this Parliamentary Investigation can ascertain whether Minister Geoff Lee, Mr. John Vallance and Ms. Mary Seefried were given copies of the SIEC Insurance Policy to read, where it specifically states that the policy covers any 'negligence in duty of care to disclose and ensure a safe, durable surface which meets FEI standards and requirements for International FEI Competition' in the case of any injury or death from the known second-hand contaminated failed material in the SIEC arenas.

As an FEI official and technical delegate, I gave my opinion in relation to my learned technical experience. I was not given any documentation to read related to insurance matters, but welfare of horses is my concern. Welfare of horses is paramount in everything I do as an FEI official, as well as risk management for safety of combinations. Thank you for the opportunity to give this response.

Best regards,

Mary Seefried