

Hon Daniel Mookhey

MLC Chair, Public Works Committee

Legislative Council Parliament of NSW

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Dear Mr Mookhey,

I ask that the Public Works Committee consider my submission to the Inquiry into the granting of contract number OoS17/18-021 by the Office of Sport.

**My background and involvement in Equestrian Sport.**

I have been a member of Equestrian Australia (EA) formerly known as The Equestrian Federation of Australia (EFA) for the past 40 years.

My involvement in the sport has primarily been in Show Jumping.

I began as a volunteer assistant with the Melbourne Show Jumping Club picking up rails at jumping events throughout Victoria. This led on to my interest in Course Design for Show Jumping.

I am currently accredited by the world governing body of equestrian sports, the Federation Equestre International (FEI) as a Level 4 Course Designer for Jumping, a Level 4 Technical Delegate for Jumping and a Level 4 Course Director for Jumping.

Level 4 is the highest level of accreditation for the FEI. I am the only official in jumping in Australia to have this level of accreditation.

In my role as a Course Designer, Technical Delegate and Course Director I have been fortunate to practice my craft in all states of Australia and internationally at the following countries:

New Zealand, Indonesia, Mexico, Canada, China, USA, Mexico, Korea, China, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong, Germany, Uzbekistan, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, Singapore, Netherlands.

The major events that I have been a member of the Course Design Team or the Course Designer, Technical Delegate or Course Director include:

Seoul Olympic Games, Atlanta Olympic Games, Beijing Olympic Games, Sydney Olympic Games, Anaheim European Championships, Leipzig World Cup final, Guang Zhou Asian Games, Incheon Asian Games, Singapore Youth Olympic Games, Nanjing Youth Olympic Games, South East Asian Games.

From 1998 – 2000 I was employed by SOCOG as a consultant for jumping at the Sydney Olympic Games and was co- course designer for the jumping competitions.

As a course designer the competition arena surface is critical to the success of an event at any level, whether it is 60cm or 1.6m.

For major championships the Technical Delegate is required to sign off on the suitability and safety of the competition and warm-up arena surface.

In discussions at the FEI Level 4 Course Designers conference in Stuttgart, Germany 2014 there was a discussion on the suitability of ebb and flow arenas. The general consensus was that they provide all of the qualities required for high level competition and that there is very little down time at an event for watering and raking of the arena surface particularly if the arena is surfaced with mats.

### **Conflict of Interest**

I know Stephen and Nicki Dingwall as they are competitors in Jumping and, as a course designer and event organiser, it is inevitable that I would have intermittent contact with them during the conduct of events

I also know Peter Dingwall as he was President of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Jump Club and, as I was President of Jumping NSW at the same time, I had occasions to discuss issues related to the sport which were of interest to both organisations.

At no stage in the tender process did I have any contact or discussion with these people about the tender

I have not had any financial dealings with these people.

I have known Bruce Farrar since he became CEO of Equestrian NSW. We have discussed (sometimes quite robustly) many issues related to the sport and in my case jumping in particular.

We had on a number of occasions discussed the poor state of the competition arenas at SIEC.

At the suggestion of Leopoldo Palacios, who was the co-course designer at the Sydney Olympics and had been invited to course design for the Jumping NSW Summer Classic event, we trialled adding wood chip to the sandy loam surfaces.

This met with some improvement in the arena surface and in further discussion with SIEC staff it was decided to add chip to the main arena, arena two and the indoor arena. Whilst there was noticeable improvement in the performance of the horses with this, it was still not optimal.

I have never seen the original document that was prepared for submission to the Office of Sport.

Prior to a meeting at SIEC with representatives from the Office of Sport and SIEC I had not met Barry Smith. Subsequent to this meeting I had no further contact with Barry Smith.

### **Testing of the Surface for Suitability**

I was engaged by the Office of Sport through Jim Kasif to sign off on the arenas as being 'fit for purpose'.

I knew that The Show Horse committee of NSW had conducted their major event on the new surface and spoke with two of the high level competitors who had competed at the event to gain their opinion. Both competitors gave glowing endorsement on how much better their horse performed.

Their only complaint was that the pump to adjust the level of water, which is located adjacent to the exit gate of the warm up arena, caused some horses to shy when it cut in and out.

I raised this issue with SIEC staff and they subsequently installed a noise suppressing cover

The two high level Dressage riders who tested the arena, Brett Parbery and Denise Rogan, both were overwhelmingly positive about the responsiveness of their horse on the Otto surface

In the final trial of the newly established arenas I provided the jumping equipment and designed a course in the indoor arena for this test. I arranged for three of Australia's top show jumping riders to test the arena. (Three time Australian Champion, Jamie Kermond, two time Australian Champion, David Cameron and World Cup League winner, Billy Raymont) .

The timing of this test was fortunate as Billy Raymont and Jamie Kermond were about to travel to a major event in Hong Kong and then the FEI World Cup finals where they would be required to jump obstacles up to 1.6 metres high. The surface at these events would be similar to the newly installed Otto surface. The new surface allowed them to confidently jump obstacles of this height in the indoor arena for the first time.

All of the riders had competed in the arena prior to the installation of the new surface. They could not believe the significant positive difference the new footing made to their horses' performance

At this trial there very few pellets evident on the surface.

As jumping is the most dynamic of equestrian activities where the horses have to jump high and wide obstacles, often at speed, and making sharp turns, it is a true test of a surface. The surface can be managed by the moisture content and compactness to provide optimum performance for other disciplines.

My assessment of the Otto surface that was installed at SIEC meets all of the FEI requirements of Impact , Firmness, Cushioning, Responsiveness, Grip and Uniformity

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