

Parliament of NSW Legislative Council Public Works Committee

Inquiry into granting of contract number OoS17/18-021 by the Office of Sport

SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION BY BRUCE FARRAR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF EQUESTRIAN NSW

Introduction

- 1 I, Bruce Farrar, received a letter on 7 October 2021 from the Parliament of NSW Legislative Council Public Works Committee (**Committee**) regarding an inquiry into the granting of contract number OoS17/18-021 by the Office of Sport (**OoS**). In this letter, the Committee invited me to respond to potentially adverse comments made in submissions.
- 2 I provided a response on 29 October 2021 (**First Submission**).
- 3 I appeared voluntarily as a witness at the public hearing before the Committee on 29 November 2021 alongside Helen Baston, Equestrian NSW Board Member, and Brad Frankum, Equestrian NSW Board President. I did not take any questions on notice.
- 4 I attended the second day of the public hearing on 17 March 2022 as an observer.
- 5 I received another letter on 18 March 2022 from the Committee. In this letter, the Committee invited me to respond to potentially adverse comments made in the public hearing.
- 6 I have reviewed the transcripts and wish to make a Supplementary Submission in a 'question and answer' format which addresses some of the comments/queries made by witnesses at the public hearing on 17 March 2022.

Supplementary Submission

- 7 **Why did I draft the Sydney International Equestrian Centre (SIEC) Arenas Upgrade Funding Request to the then NSW Minister for Sport, Stuart Ayres?**
 - 7.1 I refer to paragraphs [12] to [16] of my First Submission. In summary, the SIEC arenas had not had any significant upgrades in 17 years, and NSW had lost major events to more modern facilities (particularly to Boneo Park and Willinga Park), and I knew that improved arena technology was available. At an Equestrian NSW Board meeting on 25 February 2016, I was directed to draft the funding request by the Equestrian NSW Board.
- 8 **Did I obtain estimated costs for the works from Barrie Smith Motor Sport, prior to the invitation for tenders being issued?**
 - 8.1 Yes, for the rubber cushion mats. All other costs (e.g.: for super-fine, sub-angular silica sand, geo-fabric and constructions costs etc) were estimated using publicly available figures. Other background information (e.g.: sand specifications and Ebb and Flow details) was provided by Capricorn and relevant suppliers. I understand this to be standard practice for stakeholders, particularly sporting bodies, to build up cost estimates, when asking for government support.

- 9 **Why did I take samples from the Capricorn indoor arena at Willinga Park?**
- 9.1 This was to understand and benchmark the performance of arena sands. I took at least six samples from other arenas, including SIEC. All were tested at NATA certified laboratories, all with owners' consent. As outlined in paragraph [15] of my First Submission, this was to give Equestrian NSW the best chance at securing funding and finding a solution which would bring the SIEC arenas up to international standards.
- 10 **Did I determine the technical specification and suppliers included in the Invitation to Tender?**
- 10.1 I provided suggestions, some of which were rejected (e.g.: cushion mats) but ultimately the technical specification and invited tenderers were decided upon by the NSW Office of Sport.
- 11 **Who decided the makeup of the Technical Advisory Panel?**
- 11.1 In the funding request, I recommended that Oliver Hoberg be engaged as the technical expert (as outlined in paragraph [21] of my First Submission). When he was unavailable, the Project Manager, Jim Kasif, asked me to provide the names of suitable candidates for a Technical Advisory Panel. I suggested John Vallance, Julie Farrell and myself. We were invited by the OoS to serve on the Technical Advisory Panel and submit our assessments of the tenders.

Summary

There has been no evidence presented to the Committee to support any allegations of impropriety against me. The processes used by the NSW Office of Sport were effective under the circumstances and I understand that additional controls have been introduced to more clearly document what is required. I am proud of my role in helping secure a world class arena at SIEC and congratulate the NSW Office of Sport for the collaborative approach taken to fund and deliver the project.

BRUCE FARRAR
Chief Executive Officer