



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission



# Media Release

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## ASC announces independent review of athletics

The Chair of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) John Wylie AM and the President of Athletics Australia David Grace QC today announced an independent review into the sport of athletics in Australia, to be chaired by John Buchanan.

“While there were some fantastic performances at the recent Commonwealth Games, there are a number of systemic issues facing athletics across high performance, governance and participation that warrant an independent review,” Wylie said.

“John Buchanan is eminently qualified to lead this work having held a variety of roles in international cricket, most notably as the incredibly successful Australia national team coach between 1999 and 2007.

“During his career, he has forged a reputation for being inventive, thorough in his preparation and driven to succeed. His ability to work with all of the sport’s stakeholders will be critical in ensuring the review identifies solutions for the long term future of the sport.”

The sport today faces many challenges including:

- stagnant junior participation numbers at a time when participation in other sports is growing strongly
- fragmented and complicated governance structures
- too often a lack of common purpose and cohesion at the elite level where the right tone needs to be set as an example to aspiring young athletes.

The review will evaluate all options and make recommendations for improving participation in athletics at the grassroots level through to increased success at the international level.

It will consider issues such as how to:

- create a greater culture of unity and common purpose in a sport that is often characterised by individual endeavour
- ensure that the sport’s governance, administration, pathways and high performance programs operate to maximum effectiveness
- achieve the most effective coaching, athlete support and competition environment
- ensure that the ASC’s investment of taxpayer money in the sport, currently [in excess of \$8 million per year], is spent to maximum benefit
- attract greater commercial support for the sport.

“The ASC is keenly interested in seeing athletics achieve greater success in Australia,” Wylie said.

“We encourage all stakeholders in athletics – administrators, coaches, athletes, volunteers, support staff – to participate in this review with an open mind and a willingness to embrace change, in the best interests of the sport.

“The turnaround and change in culture in Australian swimming evident at the Glasgow Games which followed the 2013 Independent Smith Review shows how quickly positive change can occur with the right mindset.”

Grace added: “Athletics Australia welcomes this review, which we see as assisting the sport to create a blueprint for its future direction and development. The board, executive and member associations of Athletics Australia will give full co-operation to the review which will also incorporate the views of all relevant stakeholders.”

The review panel will include former star sprinter Melinda Gainsford-Taylor, former cross-country international and senior Victorian Treasury official Dr Lynne Williams, experienced investment banker and former national junior 800 metre runner Mark Bartels and the Director of the AIS Matt Favier.

It will report by the end of 2014. The terms of reference can be found at [ausport.gov.au](http://ausport.gov.au)