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MEDIA RELEASE

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MAJOR SPORTING CODES SIGN UP FOR NEW SYSTEM TO MEASURE LGBTI INCLUSION

In a world first, six major Australian sporting codes, including all professional football codes, have signed up to a national benchmarking framework to evaluate their efforts to better include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people within their organisations.

Launched today, the Pride in Sport Index (PSI) – the only one of its kind in the world – will be used by the Australian Rugby Union, National Rugby League, Australian Football League, Football Federation of Australia, Cricket Australia and Water Polo Australia to regularly measure how they support their LGBTI players, staff, spectators and supporters.

The PSI is an independently administered benchmarking system that provides the opportunity for all national and state sporting organisations to have their LGBTI related initiatives, programs and policies reviewed, measured and monitored. For more information, visit Pride in Sports' website [here](#).

PSI results will be published every year to show how participating organisations measure up, and awards will be provided to participating organisations and individuals demonstrating excellence in the promotion of LGBTI inclusion. The first awards ceremony will be in May 2017, acknowledging and rewarding efforts made during 2016.

The PSI has been developed following the release last year of the ground breaking *Out On The Fields* study, which provided some alarming statistics: only 1 per cent of respondents felt that LGB people were accepted in sporting culture, and almost 80% believed that openly LGB fans would not be safe as spectators.

National and state sporting organisations are being encouraged to participate in the Pride in Sport Index alongside the ARU, NRL, AFL, FFA, CA and WPA. The Pride in Sport Index is an initiative of the Australian Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and a legacy of the Bingham Cup Sydney 2014 (the world cup of gay rugby).

In addition, to the Pride in Sport Index, a new program – called Pride in Sport – has also been launched to help organisations better support their LGBTI players, staff, spectators and supporters. Pride in Sport provides members with a range of services to help them develop and implement effective LGBTI inclusion practices. The Pride in Sport program is operated by NSW-based HIV and LGBTI health organisation ACON, and partners with ACON's Pride in Diversity program which works to address LGBTI related discrimination and exclusion within Australian workplaces.

ACON Vice President and Co-Founder of the Pride in Sport Index Andrew Purchas: "In 2014, Australia's major sporting codes signed up to the Australian Anti Homophobia and Inclusion Framework for Australian Sport. Today's launching of the world's first Pride in Sport Index continues this important work. The Index will be more than just a signature on a piece of paper. It will provide the means for sporting organisations to demonstrate how they're reducing homophobia and transphobia and making sport more accessible for all."

For more information please contact:

David Alexander, ACON Media and Communications Officer

E: dalexander@acon.org.au T: +61 (02) 9206 2044 M: +61 (0)428 477 042



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Director of ACON's Pride Inclusion Programs Dawn Hough: "We're delighted to be launching the Pride in Sport Index and Pride in Sport program today. We believe that these two initiatives will make a significant difference to the lives of LGBTI people, not only athletes and players, but staff, volunteers, officials, coaches, parents and spectators. Nowhere else in the world, has an LGBTI inclusivity index and support program for sporting organisations and clubs been launched at a national level to tackle homophobia and exclusion in sport. We think that is something of which Australians can be very proud."

Water Polo Australia CEO Chris Harrison: "Coming from a team sport I have grown up with acceptance and acknowledgement of differences. It is pleasing as the leader of a sport to now extend that culture nationally and welcome all into our sport and family."

Football Federation of Australia CEO David Gallop: "FFA fully supports the PSI index as a way of benchmarking sporting organisations in regards to this important issue." Unfortunately, homophobia is still a major concern within the community and football has a unique position to be able to help change attitudes of many Australians. It is the right of every player, coach, volunteer and fan to feel accepted, on and off the sporting field, regardless of their sexuality."

Australian Rugby Union CEO Bill Pulver: "Australian Rugby is committed to providing environments where everyone involved is treated with respect and dignity. By committing to participate in the Pride in Sport Index Australian Rugby will continue to strive for greater inclusion and constant improvement in our policies and behaviours throughout the game. Every individual, whether they're players, supporters, coaches or administrators should feel safe, welcome and included, regardless of race, gender or sexuality."

Australian Football League CEO Gillon McLachlan: "Sport has a very important role to play in promoting equality, and the AFL is very pleased to be part of the Pride in Diversity Index. We are committed to being a sport that welcomes and supports everyone, and being part of the fight against homophobia. We look forward to continuing to work with Pride in Diversity."

Australian Human Rights Commission President Professor Gillian Triggs: "All people have the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, regardless of their sexual orientation, sex or gender identity. The Australian Human Rights Commission welcomes the release of the inaugural Pride in Sport Index as an important contribution to ongoing efforts to overcome the barriers that prevent lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse and intersex people from participating in sport."

National Rugby League's General Manager of Community Ellen Beale: "The NRL was delighted to continue its support of Pride in Diversity and witness the first Pride in Diversity Sport Index come into play. The NRL is a vocal supporter of equality and we are proud of the fact that we were the first Australian sporting code to join Pride in Diversity in 2014 and to endorse the Anti-Homophobia and Inclusion framework. The aim of the Pride in Sport Index fits perfectly with our core values of inclusiveness, courage and teamwork and as a game, we will continue to encourage and support everyone in society, no matter what their sexual orientation is."

Cricket Australia's CEO James Sutherland: "Homophobia is unacceptable – whether it's on the field, in change rooms, or in the stands, there is simply no place for it in cricket. Sport has a unique ability to drive and support social change and, in recognising the Pride in Sport Index, Australian cricket further emphasises its commitment to ensure the genuine diversity and inclusiveness of our sport. Our vision is to be a sport for all Australians, irrespective of gender,

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sexuality, religion or background. We believe that the Index will play an important role in supporting our efforts to eradicate homophobia in cricket."

Australian Sports Commission's General Manager, Participation and Sustainable Sport

Michael Thomson: "The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) believes sport should promote fairness, equity and integrity in sporting behaviour. Sport should be a place where people feel welcome and safe and where they are treated with respect and dignity. The Pride in Sport Index (PSI) provides sporting organisations with an opportunity to reflect on their work in the inclusion of LGBTI participants and staff and identify areas they can address to ensure their sport is truly inclusive. The ASC commends those sports that have committed to completing the PSI in the first year, and looks forward to seeing the PSI continue to grow."

Pride in Sport website: www.prideindiversity.com.au/prideinsport/

Interview opportunities:

Daniel Kowalski – Daniel is an openly gay, former Olympic swimming champion in freestyle events, competing in two Olympic Games in 1996 and 2000, in 200-, 400- and 1,500-metre individual freestyle events and in the 4x200-metre freestyle relay.

At the 1996 Summer Olympics, he was the first man in 92 years to earn medals in all of the 200-, 400- and 1500-metre freestyle events.

Kowalski announced his retirement from competitive swimming in 2002 and has spent the last decade completing a sports marketing degree at Bond University, coaching in the United States and speaking engagements around the country.

In 2010 Kowalski publicly came out as gay after being inspired by Welsh rugby player Gareth Thomas and later was selected by readers of samesame.com.au as one of the 25 most influential gay Australians.

Simon Dunn – Simon is the world's first openly gay man to represent their country in the bobsleigh. A former member of the Sydney Convicts gay and inclusive rugby union team, Dunn followed his dream to become a competitive bobsledder for Australia and currently is based in Calgary, Canada for training with the other members of Australia's bobsleigh Olympic team. Simon is an outspoken LGBTI advocate, voicing his opinion often on issues such as marriage equality and LGBTI inclusion in sport.

Attracting a very wide and devoted fan base, Simon has rapidly become a very popular and well-loved figure within Australia's LGBTI community.

Please contact David Alexander for interview requests.

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