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Media Release

Rowing Australia concerned with Crawford Report recommendations

Wednesday 18 November 2009

Rowing Australia President, Patrick McNamara, has come out in support of Australian Olympic Committee President John Coates saying that the logic behind many of the recommendations in the Crawford Report are flawed and misguided.

Whilst Rowing Australia welcomes the opportunity to discuss the recommendations concerning the structural reform of our sports system, particularly those relating to the elite sports network and the strengthened role of National Sporting Organisations, it is deeply disappointed at the comments made overnight that extinguish the aspirations of so many Australians.

McNamara raised his concerns over what Mr. Crawford and his panel was thinking.

"I know the sport of rowing and I know from first hand experience that the inspiration generated by the success of the Oarsome

Foursome had an overwhelming positive effect on participation in our sport," McNamara said. "The report's suggestion that Olympic success has no bearing on participation is simply wrong," McNamara said.

"Suggesting that medals don't drive participation is like saying that winning the AFL premiership doesn't drive club membership."

Mr. McNamara also dismissed the argument that is trying to place a dollar value on each Olympic medal won.

"The same ridiculous argument can be made about the real cost of an AFL premiership. Would the Geelong members bemoan the investment made by their club over many years to then win two AFL flags in three seasons? I don't think so."

RA CEO Andrew Dee has also expressed his disappointment at some of the recommendations made in the report.

"I'm afraid that any positive elements of the Report are overshadowed by its disregard of Olympic and Paralympic sports and the value of their international success and status to Australia."

Dee also reflected on the time it has taken for the Report to emerge.

"We expected a lot more from the Report given it has taken so long, but unfortunately on balance it has missed the point and now all we have is more confusion."

Mr McNamara concluded by saying the Government now has an important role.

"We encourage the Government to carefully consider its response and whether it is prepared to endorse a set of recommendations that has the potential to destroy the success and international reputation of our nation that has been built up over many years."

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