



## The Hon Martin Pakula MP

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery  
Minister for Trade  
Minister for Business Precincts  
Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events  
Minister for Racing

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Ref: BMIN-2-21-12368

Ms Simone Bailey  
Chair  
Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board  
Room 25, Level 14  
525 Lonsdale Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

Dear Ms ~~Bailey~~ *Simone*.

I am pleased to provide you with this Statement of Expectations (SOE) for the Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Board of Victoria (Board). This SOE replaces any previous SOE and applies from the date of this letter as otherwise amended.

### **Improving regulatory practice**

As Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events, I am committed to improving the health and wellbeing of Victorians. I am responsible for administering the *Professional Boxing and Combat Sports Act 1985 (Act)*. The purpose of this Act is to control professional boxing and professional combat sports, reduce the risk of malpractice, promote safety, and uphold industry integrity. This SOE should be read within the context of the objectives, obligations and functions outlined in the Act.

This SOE sets out my expectations of the Board's contribution to administering the Act and to the government's program to reduce red tape by promoting greater efficiency and effectiveness in the administration and enforcement of regulation. I expect the Board to incorporate the directions of this SOE into its operating model and regulatory activities.

### **Priorities for the Board**

I expect the Board to pro-actively regulate the professional boxing and combat sports industry in Victoria. Based on consultation undertaken by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (Department) with the Board, I have identified the six priorities below to improve governance and operational performance of the Board. Together, these measures aim to improve the regulatory system while ensuring that regulatory standards are upheld, and community expectations are met.

I expect the Board to prioritise its activity on the following:

*1. Compliance-related assistance and advice*

- Increase the awareness and understanding of the regulatory framework within the combat sports community, and facilitate understanding of obligations by licenced officials and registered contestants,
- Utilise appropriate stakeholder consultation and engagement tools to advise the combat sports industry on the legislative and regulatory framework,
- Draft and amend information presented on the Department's combat sports website and regularly review application forms,
- Provide timely, accurate and practical assistance and advice, and ensure that this advice is accessible to all regulated parties,
- Identify and advance opportunities for enhancing the understanding of the regulation of the industry and assess the need for industry forums,
- Support the Department in disseminating information to contestants, officials and promoters,
- Advise the Department on the revision of existing (or the development of new) guidance material to ensure it is easy to understand, accessible, useful and comprehensive.

*2. Risk-based strategies*

- Continue to implement a risk-based approach to the regulation of the professional boxing and combat sports industry in Victoria,
- Monitor and identify whether current regulations and policies are adequate and advise the Department where change is required,
- Identify areas of strategic importance and consider existing evidence-based research in areas of combat sport,
- Take necessary steps to identify and address any threats to the integrity of the industry and safety of contestants, such as fit-and-proper test, concussion management, and weight-cutting rules,
- Drive the implementation of an anti-doping testing scheme (in collaboration with Sports Integrity Australia).

*3. Timeliness*

- Demonstrate a commitment to timely approval of applications,
- Provide clarity about expected timing to obtain a licence, registration or permit,
- Minimise the time and effort for applicants to obtain necessary licences, registrations and permits by establishing processes that make it as quick and easy as possible for applicants to complete forms, submit required information and check their application status,
- Continue to improve the design of application and auxiliary forms with a focus on user-friendliness and on reducing the need to submit additional information,
- Reduce delays, inconvenience and costs incurred as a result of industry participants submitting incomplete or incorrectly filled-out forms.

*4. Accountability and transparency*

- Demonstrate a commitment to transparency and accountability,
- Communicate clearly and succinctly to the industry the Board's regulatory authority, roles and responsibilities,
- Regularly update publicly accessible information, through the Department's website, that informs the industry of the Board's role, responsibilities, and regulatory tools,

- Ensure that the industry understands what steps are required to obtain and maintain a licence, permit or registration, and also what pre-conditions have to be met and what fees have to be paid,
- Convene monthly meetings with standing items that report on regulatory activities (including the numbers of licences, permits and registrations approved, financial income, disclosures of potential conflict of interests, the presence of Board members at each weigh-in and promotion),
- Identify potential gaps in skills and experience of Board members that could compromise delivery of its regulatory functions and communicate this to the Department,
- Complete promotion compliance reports after each promotion and send them to the Department within three business days.

#### *5. Concussion management and education*

- Monitor and review concussion related research and medical guidelines to ensure rules and codes of conduct reflect the most current expert guidance and advice,
- Communicate head injury and concussion related health and wellbeing advice and information in an industry relevant context and user friendly/accessible format,
- Consider and respond to the outcomes from the 2020-21 commissioned concussion review project (in collaboration with Sports Medicine Australia),
- Advise the Department on the longer-term approaches and investments in research, education and training required to promote and support contestant safety and health and wellbeing, including best practice in concussion awareness, management and prevention.

#### *6. Regulation and industry development*

- Focus on the principal function of regulating the industry through the approval of licences, registrations and permits, and the direct supervision of all professional contests and weigh-ins,
- Take necessary steps to reduce the risk of malpractice, promote safety of contestants, and uphold industry integrity,
- Continue to support the Department in all aspects of industry engagement and development,
- Identify (and communicate to the Department) the need for training and education measures and advocate for the development of policies that contribute to the integrity of the industry and safety of contestants.

#### **Board's response**

I expect that within 30 days of receiving this letter, the Board will respond outlining how it intends to achieve the performance improvements and targets set out in the SOE. This response should include details of the specific activities that will be undertaken by the Board in the period from 1 July 2021 until 30 June 2023.

#### **Reporting requirements**

Reporting on the Board's progress to achieve the performance improvements outlined in the SOE should be undertaken annually at the end of the financial year. The progress report should be presented to the Department for consideration.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Board towards achieving best practice in the regulation of the professional boxing and combat sports industry in Victoria.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Pakula', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

**THE HON MARTIN PAKULA MP**  
**Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events**