



The Hon Annika Wells
Minister for Sport, Minister for Communications
at the National Press Club
15 October 2026
Transcript

Megan Poore: Megan Poore, *The Women's Advocate*. Minister, I'm going to ask you to pivot. Your address today has been advertised, and you were introduced, under both your portfolios, Communications and Sport. As Minister for Sport, you have power under Section 11 of the Australian Sports Commission Act to direct ASC policy. Minister, we're hearing that clubs are afraid to exclude males from female categories because ASC guidance makes female-only sports sound like a legal risk, despite Section 42 of the Sex Discrimination Act. Guidance from the commission does shape how clubs view that risk. Will you direct the ASC to clearly tell clubs when female-only competition is lawful?

Annika Wells: The ASC already does that work.

Megan Poore: Minister, the guidance does frame Section 42 as excluding an individual rather than providing for a class exemption for women and girls so there is a matter that does need to be addressed. Section 42, of course being where strength, stamina, and physique are a factor. The recommended process for clubs is burden-burdensome. I'd welcome a response.

Annika Wells: Kieran Perkins is the CEO of the Australian Sports Commission, works with me, and is the author and arbiter of that regulatory guidance. What I would say from having worked with Kieran in this space is that there aren't classes because each sport is different, and the requirements of physicality looks different for each sport, which is why we need to work individually with NSOs or IFs, National Sport Organizations or International Federations, about this particular matter and the guidance that we need to give our clubs.

Megan Poore: Minister, thank you for your time.