

## Appendix H: OWIA Independent Concussion Consultant (ICC) Telehealth Protocol

### INTRODUCTION

Background to the introduction of an OWIA protocol for ICC telehealth consultation

- This protocol has been adapted from World Rugby with minimal changes.
  - World Rugby experience with their ICC offering has been successful (introduced in Rugby World Cup 2015 & continued in Rugby World Cup 2019).
  - There are 2 specific challenging return-to-sport scenarios in which the ICC facilitates individualised care. This supports team medical decision-making and prevents under-reporting of concussion by athletes.
  - Reference: [https://resources.world.rugby/worldrugby/document/2021/08/09/3e2cdf27-ebad-4e9d-9c76-12b9822abf8b/ICC-Return-to-Play-Process\\_EN.pdf](https://resources.world.rugby/worldrugby/document/2021/08/09/3e2cdf27-ebad-4e9d-9c76-12b9822abf8b/ICC-Return-to-Play-Process_EN.pdf) which is also linked from this page:  
<https://www.world.rugby/the-game/player-welfare/medical/concussion/ICC>
- As outlined in the OWIA Concussion Management Flowchart (Appendix D), an ICC is required for:
  - Return to play following completion of GRTS at a minimum 12 days post-injury, in athletes with a significant concussion history
  - Return to play between 7-12 days post-injury in athletes with no concussion history and a rapid recovery (no criteria 1, abnormal HIA2 and normal HIA3)
- These 2 scenarios are managed based on individualised risk stratification.
  - The presence of a significant concussion history represents increased risk.
  - The setting of a rapid recovery indicates low risk of complications or recurrence with an earlier return to sport
- The ICC process is not intended for athletes who are symptomatic or displaying delayed recovery, but rather for asymptomatic players, who have recovered fully, and for whom an independent consultation should be sought, based on the scenarios described above.
  - If an athlete is seeing a specialist for concussion management who has the required qualifications of an ICC, then they can provide an ICC opinion following full recovery.

### NOMINATED INDEPENDENT CONCUSSION CONSULTANT (ICC) CONSULTATION

A panel of experts willing to provide ICC services for the OWIA is detailed below with contact details. Video telehealth consultation provides ease of access from geographically isolated locations and offers the expertise of leading international experts.

The procedure to obtain an ICC opinion is:

1. Team Doctor or embedded HCP identifies an Independent Concussion Consultant (ICC) of their choice from the OWIA ICC panel.
2. Team Doctor or embedded HCP confirms via email an appropriate time for video telehealth consultation with the ICC.
3. Team Doctor or embedded HCP forwards to the ICC with cc to OWIA CMO prior to the ICC consultation, the application form and all key information including:
  - a. Video clip of incident
  - b. Copies of all HIA forms plus all Cognigram results

The following process is to be used for the ICC consultation:

1. Team Doctor or HCP with the athlete present commences the consultation with the ICC, discussing the results of all HIAs and any Cognigram tests.
2. The incident video is reviewed and discussed by all three participants
3. Team Doctor or HCP and player answer all questions asked by the ICC.
4. The ICC has a private consultation **with only the athlete present**.
5. Team Doctor or HCP returns to the room to complete a balance assessment under the view of the ICC, plus any other clinical assessment as requested by the ICC.
6. Team Doctor and ICC discuss the case **without the athlete present**, determining if the athlete:
  - Requires further investigation or follow-up consultation.
  - Is not fit to return to play, or
  - Is fit to complete Stage 6 of the GRTS and return to competition.

**The aim is to reach agreement; however, if this is not possible, the ICC has the ultimate decision.**

7. Player returns to consultation and the Team Doctor or HCP outlines the agreed return to play opinion(s)
8. If follow-up consultation is required, an appointment date is agreed
9. The ICC completes ICC Referral / Report Form and forwards to both the Team Doctor / HCP and OWIA CMO.
10. On receipt of the completed report, OWIA will pay the fee to the ICC.

### OWIA ICC PANEL CONTACT DETAILS

Dr Corey Cunningham	AUS	<a href="mailto:corey@hillssportsmedicine.com.au">corey@hillssportsmedicine.com.au</a>
Dr Viran de Silva	AUS	<a href="mailto:viran.des@gmail.com">viran.des@gmail.com</a>
Dr Kira James	AUS	<a href="mailto:info@fnqsm.com.au">info@fnqsm.com.au</a>
Dr Stephen Kara	NZ	<a href="mailto:stephenkara1965@gmail.com">stephenkara1965@gmail.com</a>
Dr James McLaren	AUS	<a href="mailto:jrm.mclaren@gmail.com">jrm.mclaren@gmail.com</a>
Dr Richard Sylvester	UK	<a href="mailto:richard.sylvester@nhs.net">richard.sylvester@nhs.net</a>

### ICC Minimum Criteria

1. Medical Doctor with specialist qualifications such as - Neurologist, Neurosurgeon, Sport & Exercise Medicine Physician, Primary Care Emergency Medicine or other specialty as agreed by OWIA
2. Experienced in management of concussion in elite contact sports
3. Independent of athlete's performance team - holds no position within the relevant Institute.
4. In the event of any queries, please contact OWIA [peter.braun@owia.org](mailto:peter.braun@owia.org) for clarification.