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 Helen Whittle.

SA News

## Equestrian SA inquiry labelled 'toothless and pointless' as bullying claims omitted

Craig Cook, The Advertiser

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Five months after the Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing announced it would oversee an independent investigation into the governance operations of the crisis-ridden sport, a tender to conduct the review has closed.

But the review terms of reference, written by the ESA board and signed off by the ORSR, specifically exclude:

“Investigations into the merits and outcomes of allegations of complaints (including bullying and harassment), but may examine consistency and compliance with approved process.”

Equestrian judge Helen Whittle says the review is effectively “toothless and useless” without an investigation into the toxic culture and administrative issues that has seen equestrian in crisis for several years.

“This review is more about propping up the (ESA) board and giving it a bit of a helping hand, rather than starting from first principles,” she said.

“All that could have been done without wasting taxpayer money. It’s been five months and there hasn’t been a reviewer appointed yet.

“The review terms don’t even have provision to consider the ESA constitution or the sport’s finances.

“To have any credibility, this review should have been over and presented in full to the membership before time for membership to be renewed (in June).”

Under the review timeline, any report will not be finalised until October 31 with the “findings and the future actions” communicated to the membership by December 31, 2019.

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ORSR chief executive Kylie Taylor has announced a Governance Review Committee, comprising representatives from her office the SA Board and an ESA member has been formed to manage the review process.

“I urge interested stakeholders to participate in the review, once the consultant has been appointed, to shape the future of the sport in South Australia,” Ms Taylor said.

“Following the procurement process, the committee anticipate that a consultant will be appointed and will commence the review on or after Monday June 17.”

Ms Whittle said she and other prominent members now had “very little faith in the process”.

“It’s all been very in-house so far and the membership is not being listened to,” she added.



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