

# SLSQ Procedure

<b>Title:</b> Concussion Procedure	<b>Department:</b> Club Services - Lifesaving
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## Introduction

A concussion is a type of head injury which may have tragic consequences. As an organisation, we oversee and run a number of activities that may result in a concussion. These activities include but are not limited to, boards, skis, IRBs, jet skis, surf boats, and beach events. It is important that all SLSQ members be aware of this procedure and the information contained within, to minimize the impact of a concussion. This procedure is based on the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport 2016<sup>1</sup> (the Concussion in Sport Australia position statement<sup>2</sup>, as well as the Rugby Australia Concussion procedure<sup>3</sup>.

## Scope

Applies to all Surf Life Saving members, Lifeguards, and Staff.

## Purpose

A concussion may be very difficult to detect, and symptoms and signs can be varied, non-specific, and subtle. The following procedure will help to manage someone who you suspect may have or indeed does have a concussion.

## Application

This procedure is considered a Surf Life Saving Queensland (SLSQ) Procedure it is expected that SLSQ members will put the safety of themselves and others ahead of other priorities. Intentional or reckless disregard for this may be cause for consideration of disciplinary action pursuant to the rules, regulations, policies procedures, and Code of Conducts of Surf Life Saving.

## Definitions

**Concussion:** a traumatic brain injury caused when impulsive forces are transmitted to the head. It can be caused by a direct blow to the head or indirectly when other parts of the body are injured.

A concussion may result in short lived neurological (brain) impairment that should resolve with rest and a gradual return to activity.

<sup>1</sup> McCrory P, Meeuwisse W, Dvorak J, Aubry M, Bailes J, Broglio S, et al. Consensus statement on concussion in sport-the 5(th) international conference on concussion in sport held in Berlin, October 2016. Br J Sports Med. 2017;51(11):838-47.

<sup>2</sup> Elkington L, Manzanero S, Hughes D. Concussion in Sport Australia: Position Statement. In: Australia CiS, editor. Canberra: Sport Australia; 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Rugby Australia. Concussion Procedure. Sydney; 2021

**Registered Health Practitioner:** Registered Nurse, Doctor, Qualified Physiotherapist

**Waterways:** oceans, rivers, damns

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### **UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES**

A concussion can have a significant impact on members. The combination of a concussion and the waterway is potentially fatal. Any SLSQ member experiencing a concussion **MUST** be removed from patrol, training, competition, or any other lifesaving activities for 24-48 hours (please refer to Figure 1).

If an SLSQ member experiences a concussion, a gradual return to patrolling, training, competitive and any lifesaving activities should be supported under the guidance of an appropriate expert health professional (please refer to Figure 2). However, the member should be monitored for development of the symptoms and signs outlined in Figure 1.

### **STEPS TO HANDLE A CONCUSSION**

**For Surf Sport events only refer to Figure 4**

Steps 1-6 are to be followed if a member experiences a concussion:

#### **Step 1: Recognise (Refer to Figure 1)**

The most important factor in the recognition of potential concussion in SLSQ members is that a concussion can occur without loss of consciousness or obvious neurological signs. A concussion must be suspected if a member has **ANY** of the above symptoms or signs after a suspected or witnessed head collision (Refer to Figure 1).

#### **Step 2: Remove (Refer to Figure 1 & 3)**

Any member with symptoms or signs of a potential concussion must be removed from the patrol, carnival, or other activity immediately. There must not be further participation for 24-48 hours from when the concussion occurred. (Refer to Figure 3)

Members suffering head injuries in the water, on the beach, or with the use of any type of watercraft (for example, rescue boards, skis, IRB, surf boats) are at high risk of neck injury. Assessment by appropriately trained SLSQ members Safety and Emergency Management Coordinator or qualified health professionals is mandatory if a neck injury is suspected.

### Step 3: Record

The details of the member, the incident, and the symptoms and signs should be entered into LIMSOC. If the injury occurred during a SLSQ event or patrol, a hardcopy Incident Form must be completed and lodged with SLSQ. (Refer to Figure 3) Incident form to be sent to [socc@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:socc@lifesaving.com.au)

### Step 4: Refer

All members with a potential concussion must be referred to a medical professional within 72 hours of the injury. Members requiring immediate medical attention (see Red Flags in Figure 1) or with suspected neck injuries, should be referred to Queensland Ambulance Service, preferably via the State Communications Centre (SOCC) or by ringing (000).

The member at all times must:

- Be in the care of a responsible adult
- Not drive a motor vehicle
- Avoid alcohol consumption
- Provide accurate and complete information to the health professional.

SLSQ members must attend a registered health professional with the appropriate expertise to assess for signs of concussion and advise SLSQ when the member can return to activities within SLSQ. Written approval for the member to return must be provided by the appropriate health professional. This can include Registered Nurse, Doctor, Qualified Physiotherapist. It is expected that SLSQ members follow the advice of these expert health professionals.

### Step 5: Rest

Rest is crucial to the recovery from a concussion. Members must rest completely for a minimum of 24 hours after the injury. Children 18 years or under are not to return to contact/collision activities before 14 days from complete resolution of all concussion symptoms.

Rest involves reducing physical and mental activity to a level that allows symptoms to settle. It may include:

- Resting quietly at home
- Missing a day or two of work, school, or study
- Limiting any tasks that require prolonged focus or concentration
- Avoiding excessive TV, mobile phones, gaming etc as these can aggravate symptoms

This rest should continue until symptoms have resolved without further need for medications.

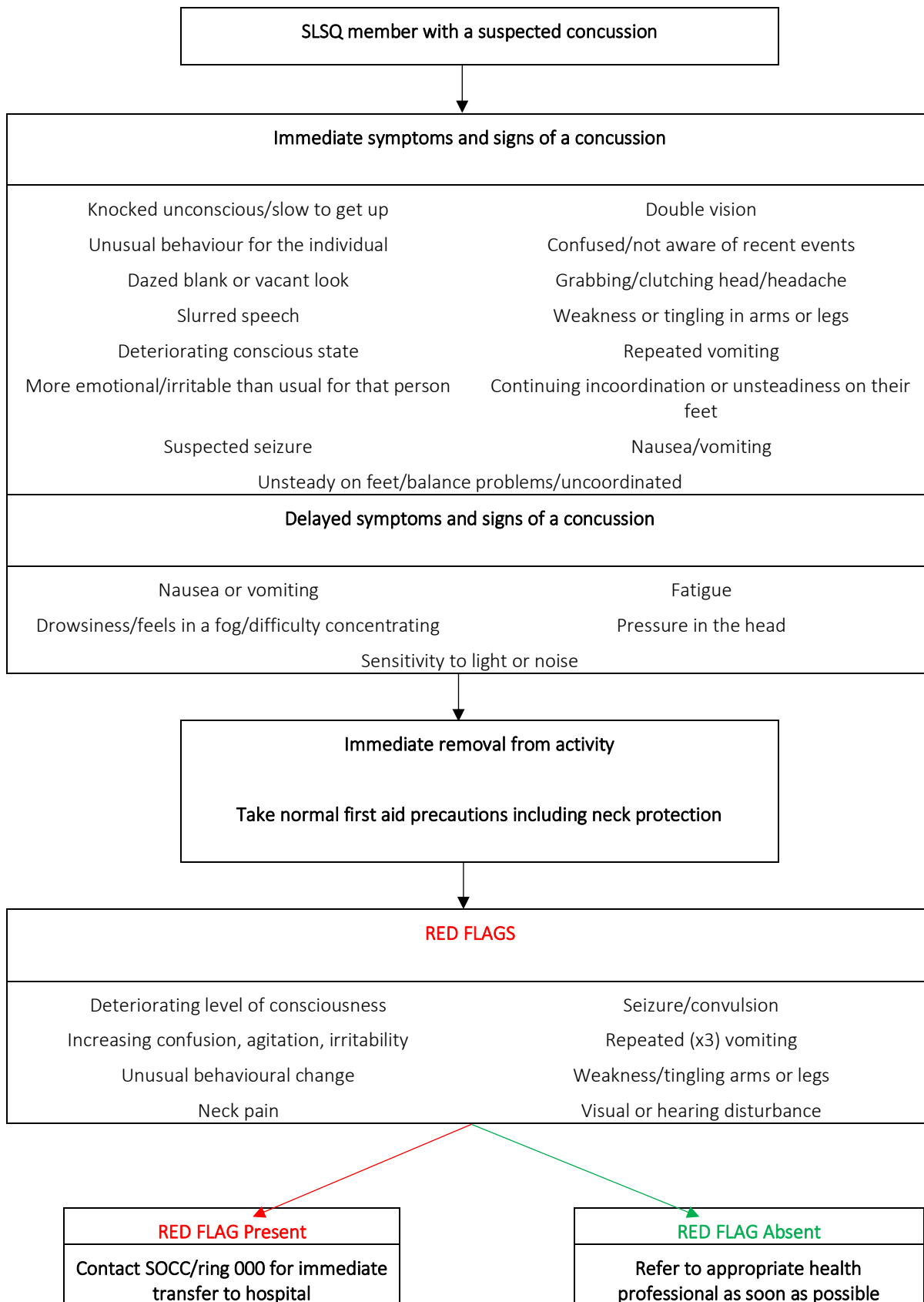
### Step 6: Recovery and Return (refer to Figure 2)

Figure 2 shows concussions require the following stepwise criteria which can be seen below. The Figure is taken directly from SportAus which can be found on the following link <https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/athlete>.

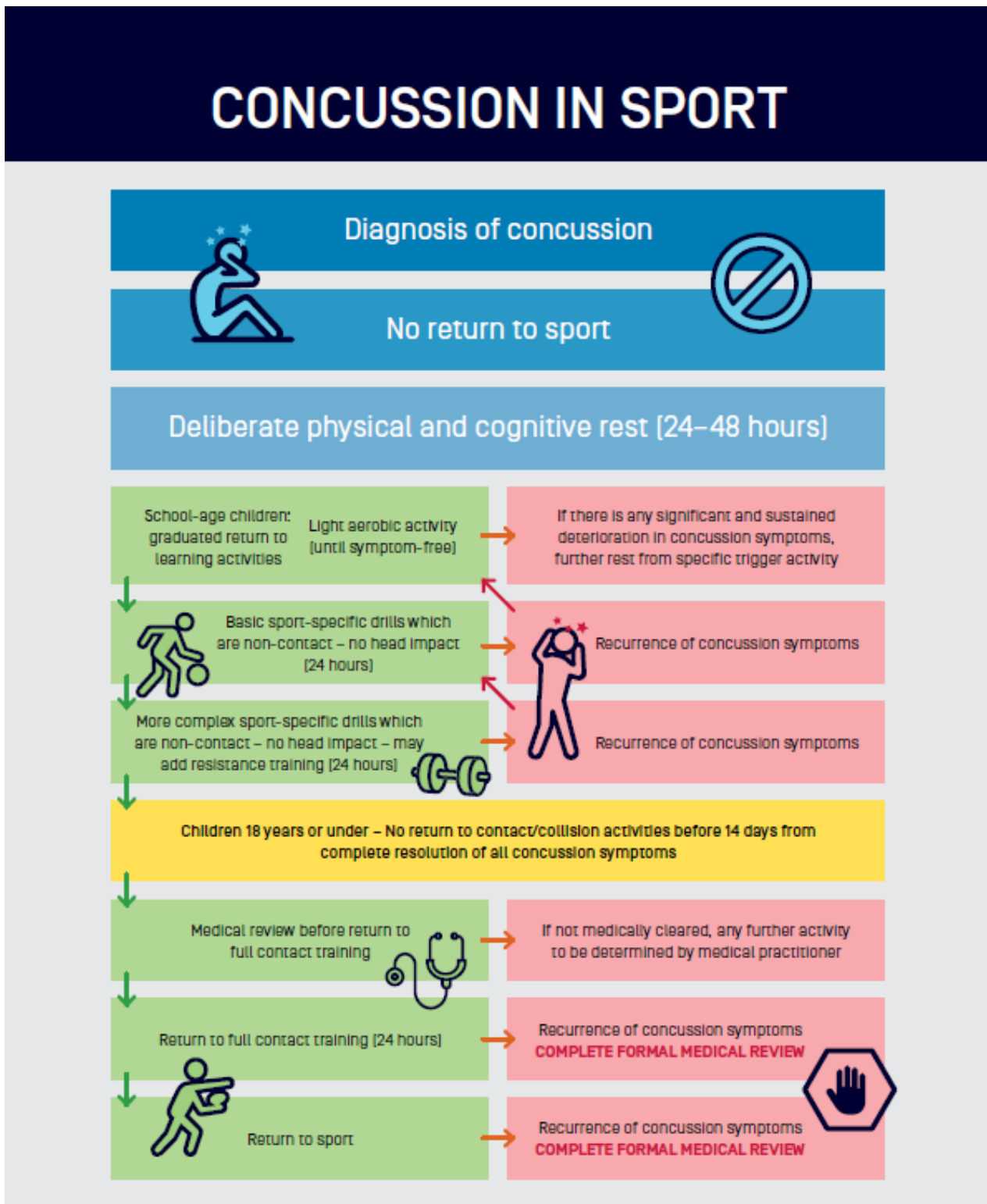
A return to normal activities of daily living (not hard exercise) without ongoing requirement for medication for symptom control. A graduated return to exercise provided there is no return of symptoms or requirement for medication for symptom control.

A return to SLSQ activities, events, and training will occur once the member has returned to their pre-injury activity levels, remains symptom free without medications, AND the expert health professional has provided approval for that return. A copy of the written approval by the member must be sent to [volunteerwc@lifesaving.com.au](mailto:volunteerwc@lifesaving.com.au).

**FIGURE 1 – SLSQ CONCUSSION PROTOCOL (APARTED FROM SPORTAUS)**



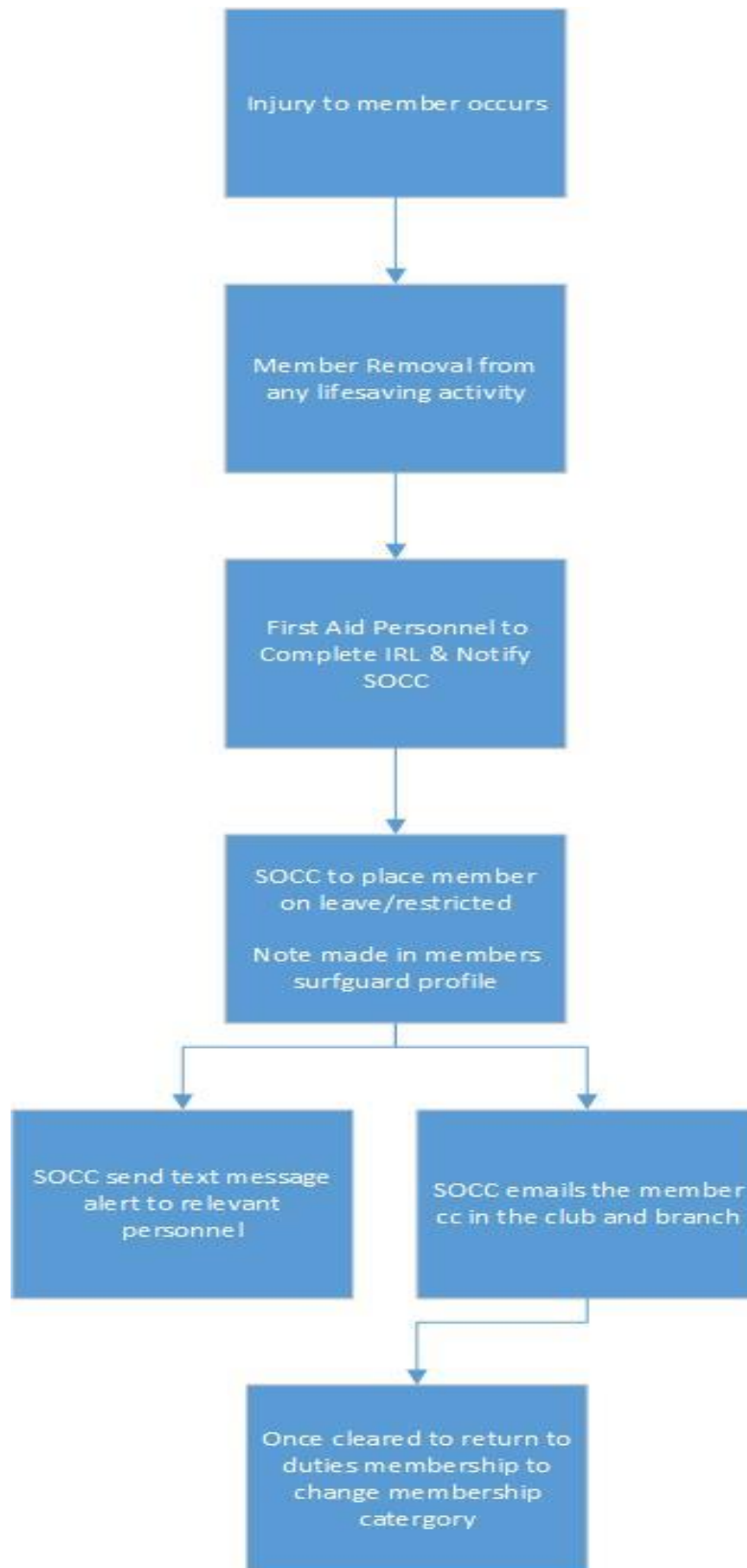
**FIGURE 2 – SLSQ’S SUPPORT SPORTAUD RETURN TO ACTIVITIES PROTOCOL FOR A CONCUSSION**



ACSEP/SA

**FIGURE 3 – REMOVAL PROCESS**

The following flowchart is to be referred to when removing a member from a potential concussion.



## **FIGURE 4 – SURF SPORTS EVENT PROCEDURE ONLY**

### **Step 1**

If a patient presents with a head knock, use figure 1 to access symptoms. If the patient has any of these symptoms, **they are not to continue to compete for 24hrs** and then follow the steps below. This ruling is done by First Aid in conjunction with the SEMC. If there are no symptoms, treat the head knock accordingly and have the patient 'handed to either Parent, Team Manager or Coach. Advise caring adult to monitor for any delayed symptoms.

### **Step 2**

Record the details of the injury as an incident report. Admin to remove the athlete from any events occurring on that day. SEMC to advise the Team manager of the 24hr time out of competition and log this (including the symptoms observed) with the Carnival Committee. Advise the Team Manager of the protocol to gain medical clearance. The team manager will then advise relevant personnel (coach/club captain) at the club so that this protocol is adhered to. The member at all times must:

- Be in the care of a responsible adult
- Not drive a motor vehicle
- Avoid alcohol consumption
- Provide accurate and complete information to the health professional.

### **Step 3**

Written approval for the member to return to competition, training or patrols must be provided by an appropriate health professional. This can include Registered Nurse, Doctor, Qualified Physiotherapist. Therefore, all members ruled out of competition under the concussion guidelines should be referred to a medical professional within 72 hours of the injury. The medical clearance will need to be shown to the club before the member can return.

### **Note**

A return to SLSQ activities, events, and training will occur once the member has returned to their pre-injury activity levels, remains symptom free without medications, AND the expert health professional has provided approval for that return.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. Where can I find more information on Concussion Protocol?  
[www.concussioninsport.gov.au](http://www.concussioninsport.gov.au)

## **RELATED PROCEDURE INSTRUMENTS**

[Overview | Concussion in Australian Sport \(concussioninsport.gov.au\)](#)