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Thornleigh and the Sydney Olympics

WorkCover's Thornleigh Laboratory Service was appointed official glue tester by the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) because of its renowned expertise in analysing volatile compounds by gas chromatography and because it would be accepted as an impartial authority in case of disputes.

The glues are used to attach the foam rubber covering to the table tennis rackets. Some glues are banned because they alter the sponginess of the surface, which changes the way balls ricochet off the rackets and gives an unfair advantage.

Other glues are prohibited because their organic vapours can be irritating to the eyes, mucous membranes and skin or can cause dermatitis, headaches, nausea and dizziness. Banned substances include aromatic hydrocarbons, chlorinated hydrocarbons and aliphatic hydrocarbons.

Tests can be carried out during competition or training in accordance with IOC rules. Pre-event notification of test preparations resulted in no banned substances being detected by ITTF portable devices at the Olympic Games so the WorkCover Laboratory was not called on to confirm screening test results.



Table Tennis shot of Thornleigh staff with the two table tennis referees in Olympic uniform plus the head of the Australian Table Tennis Federation without uniform in the middle