



## EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Canberra, 19 January 2025

The Embassy of the Republic of Serbia expressed its profound concern about the comments from Channel Nine Sports Commentator, Mr Tony Jones, about the Serbian tennis player Mr Novak Djokovic during the live broadcast on the evening of 17 January 2025.

Mr Tony Jones in the live broadcast had called Mr Novak Djokovic “overrated”, “has-been” and, which is the most concerning, had called for Novak to be “kicked out”, referencing to the 2022 tournament when Mr Djokovic was not allowed to play and, by the decision of the Australian Minister of Immigration of the day, deported from Australia.

That event is still very much present in the minds of the Serbian people worldwide, including within more than hundred thousand of Australians of Serbian origin, who were also collectively victimized at the time. That event had also a strong impact on bilateral relations between the Republic of Serbia and Australia and the current two governments of the day had put joint efforts to successfully overcome this situation at the end of 2022.

The Embassy of the Republic of Serbia considers that Mr Jones’ comments are totally inappropriate and disrespectful towards – we will proudly say – the greatest tennis player of all times and the record-holding ten times winner of the Australian Open tennis tournament in men’s singles. There has never been in the history the case that Australian athlete has been insulted and disrespected in such a way by the media or any public official in Serbia.

The Embassy of the Republic of Serbia considers also that Mr Jones’ statements have negatively impacted the Serbian community in Australia, which was also affected by such comments.

In our opinion, such behaviour is clearly unprofessional and it can hardly be called “a joke” and “good-natured banter with the Serbian fans”.

The Embassy firmly believes that such comments are clear breach of the MEAA Journalist Code of Ethics, which inter alia, stipulates that journalists should commit themselves to respect the rights of others, that they will educate themselves about ethics and do not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious belief, or physical or intellectual disability. Similar provisions are also part of the Code of Conduct of Nine Entertainment Co.

Bearing all that in mind, the Embassy of the Republic of Serbia expects from Channel Nine to formally review if the behaviour of Mr Tony Jones is appropriate according to the Code of Practice and other professional norms of journalism. If it is determined that professional standards and ethics have been violated, we expect Mr Tony Jones to be sanctioned accordingly.