

# HER SPORT

*HER WAY*



**SHAPING THE FUTURE OF  
WOMEN'S SPORT IN NSW**

2019 • 2023



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We acknowledge that the Office of Sport is spread across many traditional lands; we pay respect to all traditional owners of these lands and those who under custodial law are charged with nurturing and protecting country. We pay respect to elders past and present.



# MINISTER'S MESSAGE

As an enthusiastic supporter of women's sport, I am very pleased to share the Women in Sport Strategy – *Her Sport Her Way* with the people of NSW.

The women's sport landscape has changed significantly in recent years. We are currently experiencing an unprecedented interest in women's elite-level sport and a rise in the profile of new female role models. Sports are being challenged to provide opportunities for women and girls to play sports they haven't traditionally played and to offer traditional sports in different ways.

It is critical that we capitalise on this opportunity.

*Her Sport Her Way* looks through a female lens at the way that sport in NSW is delivered, coached, marketed, led, sponsored and consumed. It sets out initiatives to enhance women's and girls' participation as players, leaders and coaches, to provide appropriate facilities and to attract more investment and the recognition that women deserve.

To develop this strategy, the NSW Government has consulted with around 800 stakeholders from sport, government, non-government organisations, academia, corporates, advertising and media.

Over the next four years we will be building a stronger NSW sports sector where women and girls are valued, recognised and have equal choices and opportunities to lead and participate. I am confident that this strategy will drive powerful change for girls and women from grassroots to elite sports.

Now is the time to shape the future of the women's sport agenda. I look forward to working with our partners to support women and girls as participants and key contributors to the sport sector, and I invite you to be part of this journey.

Stuart Ayres  
Minister for Sport



# HER SPORT HER WAY

Participation in sport at any level, from grassroots to high performance, contributes to healthy and active living. Women and girls who participate in sport can realise significant physical, psychological and social benefits. Equitable opportunity to participate and be involved in sport should be the right of every girl and woman regardless of background or ability.<sup>1</sup>

“

Girls worldwide who play sport are more likely to attend and stay in school, more likely to finish their education, more likely to be in better health and earn higher wages during the course of their lives.

**The Honourable Dame  
Quentin Bryce AD CVO**

”

## TIME TO SHINE!

Women's sport is at a turning point. This is the time to shape the women's sport agenda in NSW to realise the health, commercial and societal benefits of increasing female engagement – as participants, fans, role models and decision makers.

In recent years, sports have had enormous success with women's teams and athletes with national and international dominance, record crowds, unprecedented broadcast deals, television audiences and digital engagement.

Women's sport continues to grow in focus for rights holders, brands and media. The sector is booming as the growth opportunity represented by under-engaged females is recognised, as brands demand a focus on

women's sports, and as gender equality takes ever-greater prominence<sup>3</sup>.

There has been a significant shift in the sports marketing landscape with the rapid rise in the importance and value of female fans. Female sporting personalities present a unique opportunity to reach this huge, predominantly untapped market. They can also carry social and health related messages authentically and are drivers of change.

The rise of women's professional sports is perhaps one of the greatest opportunities to redefine femininity and equality through powerful role models with diverse portrayals of what being a girl or woman is.

“

For Australian sport, 2017 will go down as a landmark, a milestone, a watershed, the year the dam broke and women flooded into professional sport.<sup>2</sup>

**Nicole Jeffery, Sports Journalist  
The Australian**

”

“

The public and media hunger has never been higher – there is more buzz and eyeballs. We've been captivated by women's sport, and it is igniting stories everywhere.

**Jacqui Mooney, Editor  
Australian Women's Health**

”

**Women are the fastest growing sports fan segment worldwide.<sup>\*</sup>**



**“There is a lot of excitement about women's sport. On the weekend that AFLW launched #AFLW had more tweets about that game than any other game that week – across all codes.”**

Olly Wilton – Head of Sport, Twitter Australia



**There is massive potential to grow the sponsorship base for women's sport.**

**In Australia, the women's sport audience topped 10m in the most recent seasons (AFLW, WBBL W-League, SSN).<sup>#</sup>**



**Female sporting personalities reach huge untapped markets, and inspire a whole new generation of kids.**



<sup>#</sup> Nielsen Sports, 2018 <sup>\*</sup> Repucom, 2015



## NEED FOR A SUSTAINABLE, STRATEGIC FOCUS

While impressive advances have been made, there is still a long way to go. Females continue to be under-represented across participation and in leadership roles at all levels of sport, with inequity in salaries and prize money, media coverage, access to facilities and resources.

The issues affecting participation and leadership for women and girls in sport are well established, and are the result of deeply entrenched practices, cultural norms and stereotypes that have been perpetuated and reinforced in broader society for many years.

The rise in profile of elite female athletes and the increase of girls and women playing 'non-traditional' female sports is challenging gender norms. The visibility of women in sport must be enhanced to inspire young girls and to normalise female participation.

A strategic approach is needed to ensure that current momentum drives sustainable change and a new sporting culture. Growing women's sport makes sense from equity, social, economic and population health perspectives.

“

It's (women's sport) now captured the imagination of the public. It's now about putting the shoulder to the wheel and making that sustainable and making sure these athletes are paid what they are worth.

**Kate Palmer, Chief Executive Sport Australia**

”

## HER SPORT HER WAY

This strategy – *Her Sport Her Way*, affirms the NSW Government's commitment to empower women and girls to have full access to opportunity and choice, be valued for their diversity, be recognised for their contribution, and be able to participate in all aspects of life freely and safely.<sup>4</sup>

Comprising a framework of initiatives across four strategic pillars of Participation, Places and Spaces, Leveraging Investment and Leadership, *Her Sport Her Way* aims to remove barriers and improve participation of women and girls across all levels and roles in sport in NSW.

The strategy development process involved consultation with a diverse group of almost 800 stakeholders, a global evidence review by the University of Sydney and analysis of media and consumer insights.

This all led to one major insight:



**For women's sport to be successful and sustainable we need to fundamentally rethink, through a female lens, the way that sport is delivered, coached, marketed, led, sponsored, and consumed.**

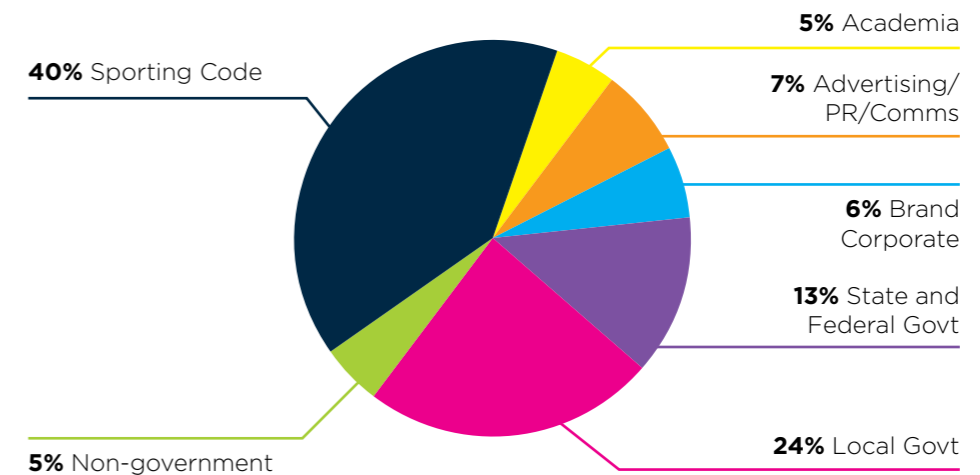
*Her Sport Her Way* is an articulation of the female lens applied to sport in NSW. The strategy systematically works across the four pillars applying the *Her Sport Her Way* lens. It identifies a suite of well-informed initiatives that provide a clear role for the NSW government to work with the sector and new partners in innovative ways to shape the future for women and girls. The initiatives will be implemented over a four-year period subject to resources.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Stakeholder engagement events included workshops, focus groups and an International Women's Day Sport Leaders' Breakfast. Around 800 stakeholders were consulted from all levels of sport and government,

non-government organisations, academia, corporates, advertising, public relations agencies, broadcast, and media. Quotes from various stakeholders have been included through the strategy with permission.

794 people consulted



### Top priorities for NSW Government identified by stakeholders



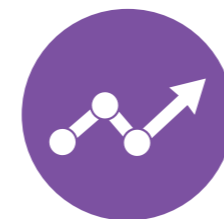
#### Dedicated funding

- Invest in female friendly facilities
- Attract female events to NSW
- Resource the sector to innovate



#### Governance and policy

- Increase women in leadership positions on and off the field
- Recognise and profile good practice across NSW
- Link funding to gender inclusive guiding principles



#### Capability development

- Provide research, data insights and tools to build capability across sectors to innovate, leverage investment, and drive culture change
- Support key influencers (coaches, teachers, parents, peers) to inspire and empower women and girls to participate
- Leverage and measure return on investment



#### New and innovative partnerships

- Provide a platform for connecting brands, investors and sports looking to grow the game for women and girls
- Develop a more sophisticated and collaborative approach to sponsorship
- Lead a communication strategy to leverage existing state and national campaigns, bridge gaps and grow profile and visibility, drive consistent messaging and empower young girls

# HER SPORT HER WAY

## STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

The Office of Sport has designed a series of initiatives across four strategic pillars, Participation, Places and Spaces, Leveraging Investment and Leadership. We've applied the 'Her Sport Her Way' lens to each pillar to achieve the vision of enabling women and girls to be valued, recognised and have equal choices and opportunities to lead and participate in sport in NSW.



### FOCUS ACROSS FOUR PILLARS



#### PARTICIPATION

Increase the number of women and girls playing sport



#### PLACES AND SPACES

Lead, guide, inform and invest in the provision of sport facilities that support women and girls



#### LEVERAGING INVESTMENT

Maximise investment in women's sport across the sporting sector, corporate sector, media, social media and government



#### LEADERSHIP

Support the sector to increase the number of women in leadership positions on and off the field, and develop inclusive sporting cultures

### WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR NSW?



More women and girls playing sport

Improved retention of adolescent girls in sport



Sport facilities that meet the current and future needs of female participants and fans

Gender inclusive sporting cultures



More women in leadership positions on and off the field

Major women's sporting events secured and showcased



Increased investment in women's sport across the sporting sector, corporate sector, media, social media and government

# HER SPORT HER WAY

## Summary of Initiatives



### 1. PARTICIPATION

#### 1.1 Reduce barriers to participation and create innovative, inclusive sport experiences that reflect what women and girls want

- Establish a *Her Sport Her Way* grant program to support increased participation of women and girls both on and off the field
- Conduct Innovation Think Tanks and Participation Planning workshops with sport sector and new partners
- Develop the Participation Framework for Women and Girls resource and on-line tool for sports to drive participation
- Undertake targeted marketing and engagement of diverse providers to promote gender equity of the Active Kids Program

#### 1.2 Support key influencers like parents and coaches to facilitate girls' participation

- Scale up of the award winning girl empowerment program Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered (DADEE)
- Develop a specific coach education module for coaching girls



### 2. PLACES AND SPACES

#### 2.1 Improve places and spaces across the sport facility hierarchy: National/State (Stadia); High Performance; Regional; District; and local to better support women and girls

- Plan and provide for Female Friendly (FF) facility investment across NSW
- Develop a NSW Sport Infrastructure Strategy which has a focus on supportive environments for women and girls
- Conduct Bright Ideas Design Challenge for cost-effective FF facilities
- Develop a suite of FF tools including principles, design guidelines and access templates
- Work collaboratively across the facility hierarchy to promote and apply FF principles, guidelines and templates



### 3. LEVERAGING INVESTMENT

#### 3.1 Build confidence across the sport, corporate and government sectors to maximise investment in women's sport

- Establish a Collaboration Roundtable to explore new approaches to sponsorships and partnerships
- Work with sector partners to develop a Framework for measuring Return on Investment (ROI) for women's sport
- Develop Consumer Insights Reports and conduct Trendspotter Forums bringing together key stakeholders

#### 3.2 Use new and innovative approaches to generate funding that taps into corporate value alignment with women's sport and societal benefit

- Explore a consortium approach to facilitate partnerships with the corporate sector

#### 3.3 Unite all initiatives and stakeholders under the *Her Sport Her Way* banner to amplify messaging across touchpoints

- Develop a communications strategy, branding and messaging kit to unite and engage stakeholders and partners

#### 3.4 Attract national and international women's events to NSW to leverage investment opportunities and drive positive legacy

- Secure funding and support for upcoming international events
- Work closely with NSOs/SSOs/clubs to better align and maximise event legacy opportunities
- Leverage event investment to strategy messaging, branding and resource materials



### 4. LEADERSHIP

#### 4.1 Set targets for gender balance and promote good governance principles

- Adopt Sport Australia's *Mandatory Sports Governance Principles* target of 40% of women on boards for state sporting organisations by 2022
- Develop and apply gender equity principles to Office of Sport funding programs and relevant contract agreements

#### 4.2 Build the capability of NSW state sporting organisations to increase women in leadership roles and on boards

- Establish the NSW Sport Leaders of Change Program to support targeted sport CEOs improve outcomes for women and girls
- Develop resource portal linking to information, tools, scholarships, mentoring programs and campaigns
- Work closely with sports on strategies to improve culture and opportunities for women

#### 4.3 Develop the NSW Female Coaches Framework to attract, develop and retain female coaches across all levels of sport

- Engage key partners in the development of a framework to address the barriers to participation for female coaches from community through to high performance sport
- Develop a targeted 'awareness to action' campaign to inspire women and girls to coach
- Establish the *Her Sport Her Way Coaches' Alliance* as a platform for networking and mentoring female coaches
- Implement initiatives to attract, develop, retain and progress high performance female coaches

#### 4.4 Recognise and celebrate the achievements of leaders in women's sport

- Establish annual Leaders of Change Excellence Awards to be announced by Minister for Sport on International Women's Day





# 1. PARTICIPATION

## Rationale:

Improving and increasing girls' and women's participation in sport is essential to reap the associated social, mental and physical benefits

## Objective:

To increase the number of women and girls playing sport

## NSW STATE OF PLAY

The sport sector is recognised as a critical setting for promoting health enhancing physical activity across the general population. Despite numerous benefits associated with sport participation, namely physical, social and mental health, rates and patterns of participation fluctuate throughout the life course.<sup>5</sup>

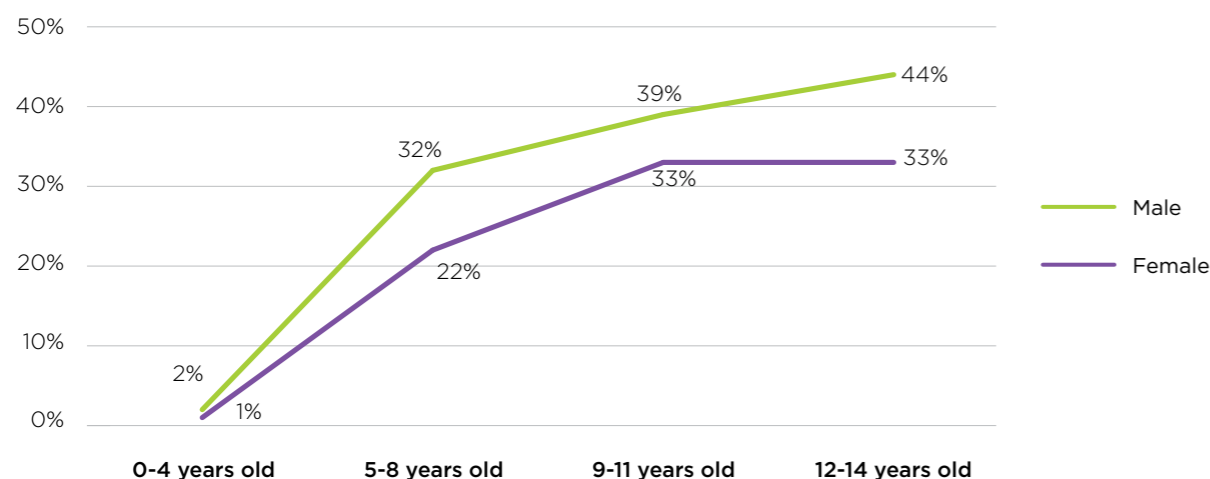
According to AusPlay, only 21% of NSW girls (0-14 years) participate in organised sport and physical activity outside of school hours three times a week.

Boys' rates are consistently higher and increase with age, while girls' rates plateau when reaching adolescence.

AusPlay data shows women and girls from disadvantaged areas participate consistently less than those in least disadvantaged areas.<sup>6</sup>

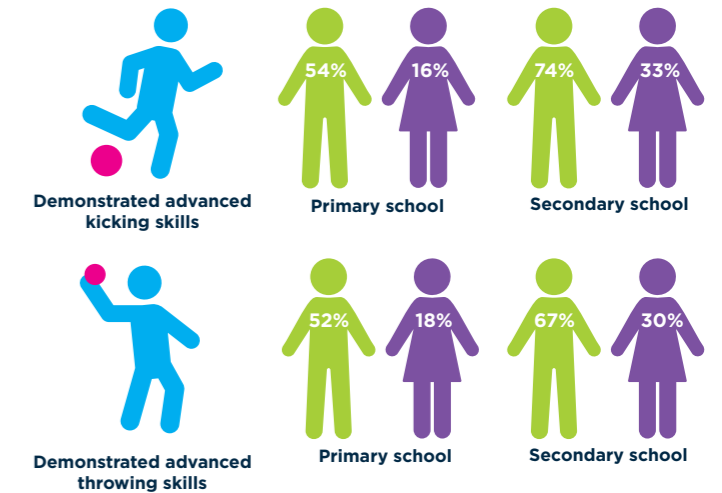


## Participation in organised sport and physical activity outside of school hours - 3 times per week



## FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS

Sport participation can lay the foundations of movement skills for lifelong participation, however in NSW the gender imbalance is clear from an early age. NSW girls are behind boys in the acquisition of key skills, demonstrating a significantly lower mastery level of kicking and throwing.<sup>7</sup> This may impact on girls' ability and willingness to participate in many team sports.



## FEMALE PARTICIPATION DRIVERS AND BARRIERS

To engage more women and girls in sport, we need to first understand what factors influence choices to engage with sport at different life stages.

A girl's or woman's relationship with physical activity and sport is very complex and is based upon a web of personal, social and environmental influences which change with life stages.

Examples include during adolescence, feeling a disconnect after leaving school, a lack of sporty role models and loss of 'cool factor'. For new mums, guilt can be associated with leaving their newborn baby. Focussing on isolated motives or barriers like time or cost misses the point.

However, research behind VicHealth's 'This Girl Can' campaign found a universal barrier across life-stages: women feel intimidated and/or embarrassed to exercise in public because of a fear of judgement around their appearance, ability and priorities.<sup>8</sup>

A 2015 study by Women in Sport UK identified six core values which inform women's behaviour and decision making. These values represent what is important to women in modern life and how they want to spend their time and energy. These values will be dialled up and down for different women and at different stages in their lives.<sup>9</sup>

Sport can learn from these insights, drivers and barriers specific to females to improve the delivery and tailor their offerings accordingly.

### Universal barriers to participation

Fear of judgement is the main barrier for girls and women because of:



### Core values informing women's behaviour and decision making





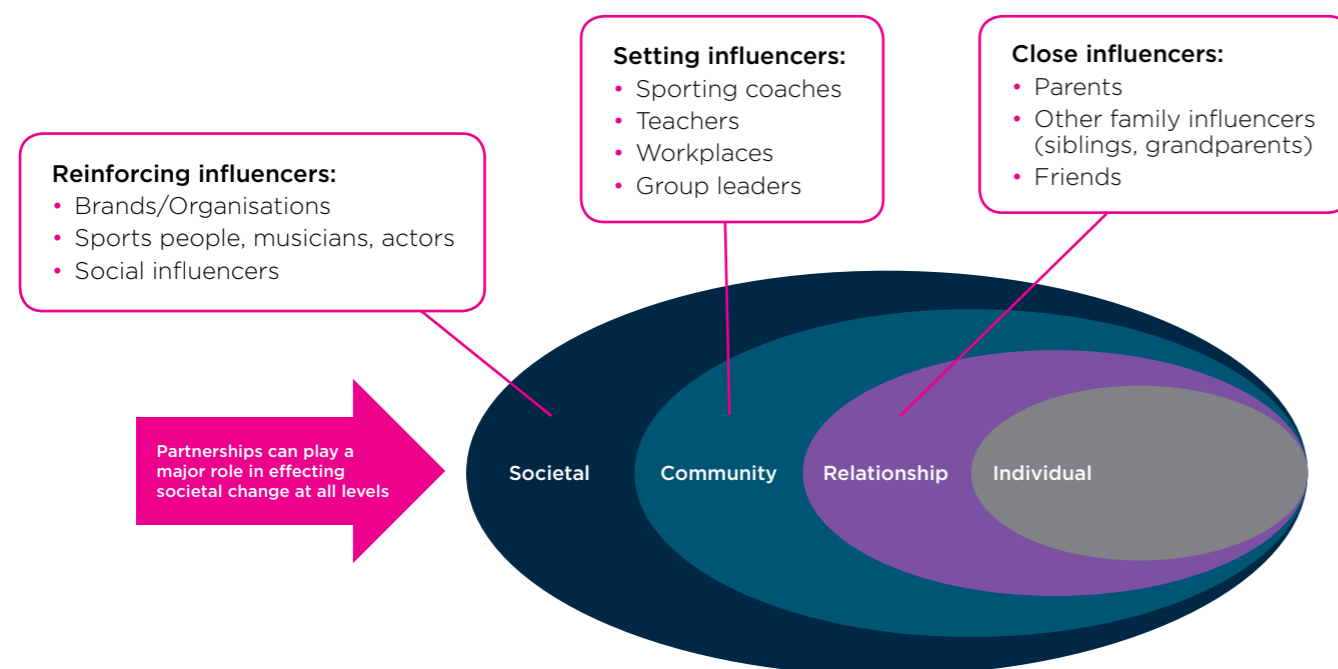
## THE SOCIAL ECOLOGICAL MODEL: A FRAMEWORK FOR INCREASING PARTICIPATION

There is no single solution to increasing girls' and women's participation in sport. The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) works on the principle that to drive societal change, you need to act across multiple levels of the model simultaneously.<sup>10</sup> This approach is more likely to sustain impact over time than any single intervention. The value of applying this approach to sport and women, is that it not only identifies the individual factors influencing participation, it appreciates the complexity in which each factor interacts.

*Her Sport Her Way* aims to drive participation growth via two approaches, supporting the sector to create inclusive sport experiences that reflect what women and girls want, and by supporting the key influencers, like parents and coaches to inspire participation.

The Sport and Active Recreation Intervention & Epidemiology Research (SPRINTER), University of Sydney Evidence Review recommends that creative, imaginative and insight-driven approaches are needed to increase female participation. To have wide appeal, sport must align with women and girls' core values – reflecting what is important to them at a specific stage in their lives.<sup>4</sup>

### Social-Ecological Model for system-wide change



In addition to financial support, stakeholders wanted more data, insights, training and tools to build capacity to innovate, test new ideas, products and approaches aimed at increasing female participation.

Stakeholder consultations also indicated that a whole of game approach to bridge the gap between the elite and grassroots levels was important to increase participation at the community level.

## WHAT'S NEEDED TO DRIVE FURTHER PARTICIPATION?

There is no better time for women and girls to reap the benefits of participation in sport. The following recommendations have been developed to impact across all levels of the Social-Ecological Model.

“

What's really essential for girls is having role models – in elite sportspeople; but even more so role models in each other. #TeamGirls helps girls realise they don't have to search very far to find people in their life that will give them the confidence to be a really amazing version of themselves and realise their potential.

**Clare McMeniman**  
former Diamond (Netball)

”





# 1. PARTICIPATION

## STRATEGIES

**1.1 Reduce barriers to participation and create innovative, inclusive sport experiences that reflect what women and girls want**

**1.2 Support key influencers like parents and coaches to inspire women and girls to participate**

## INITIATIVES



### FUNDING

#### • NEW GRANT PROGRAM:

Establish *Her Sport Her Way* annual grant program to support participation growth for girls and women both on and off the field. Projects may include innovative participation opportunities, strategic planning, capability development as well as leadership, mentoring, scholarship and coaching initiatives. This initiative will be enhanced through sector training via Innovation Think Tanks.

#### • ACTIVE KIDS:

Undertake targeted marketing and engagement of diverse providers to promote gender equity of the Active Kids Program.



### INSIGHTS & TOOLS

#### • PARTICIPATION FRAMEWORK:

Develop the Participation Framework for Women and Girls resource and on-line tool in partnership with the Sport Australia to help sports develop and implement strategies to drive participation at all levels.



### TRAINING & EDUCATION

#### • INNOVATION THINK TANKS AND PARTICIPATION WORKSHOPS:

Conduct Innovation Think Tanks and Participation Planning workshops with sector partners to build capability and support practices to increase female participation and improve the experiences of women and girls.



### TRAINING & EDUCATION

#### • GIRL EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM:

Scale up of the University of Newcastle Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered (DADEE) program through the Office's regional services and the sport sector.

#### • COACHING RESOURCE:

Review and influence coach education with the intention of building awareness of the barriers to female participation, and developing a new 'coaching girls' module and resource materials.

## CASE STUDY

# DADS AND DAUGHTERS EXERCISING AND EMPOWERED, UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE



Dads and Daughters Exercising and Empowered (DADEE) is a world-first lifestyle program developed by the University of Newcastle targeting fathers as the agents of change to improve their daughters' physical activity levels, sport skills and social-emotional wellbeing.

Research has consistently demonstrated the unique and powerful influence dads have in shaping physical activity behaviours, learning ability, self-esteem, body image, social skills and resilience, particularly for girls.

DADEE was conceived in 2014 in response to the decline in physical activity seen in adolescent girls in Australia and the associated risks to their future physical and psychological health.

The DADEE program includes nine weekly sessions of 45 minutes including education sessions for dads and daughters separately, and practical sessions with dads and daughters together.

DADEE uses a range of evidence-based strategies to teach fathers about the significance of their relationship and how to emotionally connect with their daughters.

The daughters' education sessions focus on developing key social and emotional skills including self-control, persistence, critical thinking, resilience, and self-reliance.

The practical sessions focus on three key areas: rough and tumble play, fun fitness and fundamental movement skills.

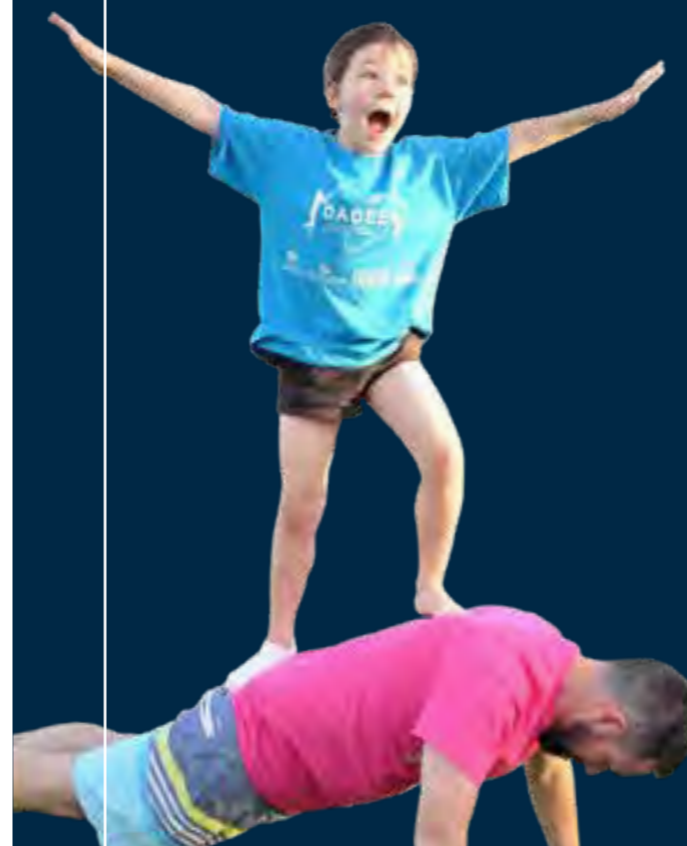
Research outcomes from the program show that both fathers and daughters have improved physical activity levels and the quality of their relationship also benefits.

After participating in DADEE, girls felt better about themselves, had stronger relationships with their fathers and were more active within the family. There were also dramatic improvements in sport skills and participation and new-found confidence.

By improving girls' confidence in kicking, catching, throwing, striking and bouncing, the program has put these DADEE girls on a new trajectory where they will be much more likely to lead a physically active lives and engage in a broader range of community sports.

The biggest impact of the program for many fathers was not necessarily what they anticipated. Although they may have enrolled to help their daughter become more active or more interested in sport, they left with a greater understanding of their unique and powerful influence on their daughters and how the way they interact with their daughters can profoundly influence their wellbeing.

Importantly, the program develops in girls the critical thinking skills and resilience to address barriers related to gender.





## 2. PLACES AND SPACES

### **Rationale:**

*The availability of, and equity of access to safe, comfortable, and inclusive sport places and spaces encourages and enables women and girls to participate*

### **Objective:**

*Lead, guide, inform and invest in the provision of sport facilities that support women and girls*

### FACILITIES INFLUENCE PARTICIPATION

Sport infrastructure is a core enabler of strategies designed to grow women's and girls' sports participation, improve high performance sport outcomes, drive sport related tourism and foster sector sustainability and business outcomes.

The equitable provision of, and access to high quality female friendly sport and active recreation facilities is critical to supporting and growing participation opportunities for women and girls. There is a significant positive relationship between sports participation and provision of sports facilities across both metropolitan and regional areas.<sup>11</sup>



Inappropriate and inadequate sport infrastructure was commonly identified by stakeholders as a barrier to women's and girls' sports participation. It is also understood that design can either facilitate or impede women's and girls' use of sport places and spaces. Ensuring facilities are appropriate by applying universal design principles, prioritising safety, having family friendly social spaces and being clean and easily accessible are also important.

Other influences include the variety of sport content available and equity in the scheduling of sport programs. Stakeholder consultations provided many stories about female teams and individual athletes not receiving equal access to playing spaces, training venues and appropriate sport programs and other resources such as equipment. Even when women and girls received access to the best quality facilities, they were often scheduled at the worst times. Entrenched attitudes and unconscious bias, particularly around traditionally male sports, have influenced resource allocation and limited the opportunities for women and girls.

### GOVERNMENT, SPORT AND COMMUNITY INPUT IS NEEDED

Providing access to places and spaces for sport and active recreation remains an ongoing challenge. All tiers of government, the sector itself and the community have a role to play. Significant commitment and investment from the whole sector is required to provide redeveloped and new facilities that meet the needs and expectations of female sport participants, officials, high performance athletes, fans, spectators, volunteers, paid staff and the media.

Collaboration across all levels of government and the sport sector is required to gather the evidence to plan and prioritise the future sport facility requirements and investment is needed to meet current and future demand.

90%

of survey respondents voted leveraging investment in improved facilities for female players and fans as a top 3 priority for Government.<sup>12</sup>





## APPLYING THE HER SPORT HER WAY LENS TO FACILITIES

Sport and recreation facilities are typically categorised into a facility hierarchy based on characteristics including the type of competition, training and events held at the facility as well as additional services and connectivity to the community. Planning and investment for National/State level facilities will require ongoing consultation to ensure the needs and expectations of professional women's sports and female fans are addressed.

Applying a gender lens in the design of Regional sport hubs and regionally significant facilities will improve and increase the opportunities for female participants and those in support roles. Local and Neighbourhood level facilities provide the introductory access and opportunity for local and club level participation for all women and girls.

To address all the challenges, the sport sector will need to adopt a more flexible and collaborative approach to the provision and use of facilities so that availability and access is increased while providing appropriately for women and girls from diverse backgrounds. In future the *Her Sport Her Way* lens will need to be applied to planning, design and management of new facilities, and retro-fitting existing facilities.

## RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

At all levels, ongoing stakeholder consultation and research is critical in determining the needs and in the design and management of sport facilities. Office of Sport has commenced this important work. For example, the Office commissioned the 2018 Sport Facility Needs for Multicultural Communities study which found 23% of females compared to 15% of males considered safety as an important feature when choosing a sport facility.

Government has a role in leading the design, planning and management of sports facilities to enhance women's and girls' sense of belonging, connectivity and safety that lead to increased engagement in sport.

Innovative solutions should be explored through partnerships between all levels of government and sector stakeholders. This will assist in leveraging economic, health and social outcomes and strengthening the value proposition of sport and active recreation. Innovation should address new trends including emerging sports and the increasing technological advances driving participant, fan, and spectator expectations.



"A key issue which is going to cause tension and affect the talent pathway from improving at the same rate as the professional level is the lack of facilities that accommodate girls and women at community sport grounds."

Natalie Fagg  
Sydney Swans



Cricket Australia's 2017 audit of facilities reported that of the 1,775 NSW facilities

**13%**

have female friendly facilities which is below the national average of 19%

Cricket Australia  
Facility Audit



"Many of our facilities are inadequate especially when it comes to meeting the needs of female players which is concerning given that this aspect of our game continues to grow with almost a quarter of registered players being female."

Stuart Hodge  
CEO, Football NSW



# WHAT'S NEEDED TO ENSURE SPORT FACILITIES MEET THE NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS?

A strategic approach to places and spaces which incorporates research, innovation and partnerships is key to increasing suitability and access for women and girls now and into the future. This approach has been incorporated into the following recommendations.



Improving the quality of existing surfaces, lighting and amenities was seen as the minimal critical strategy to reduce immediate barriers for women’s and girls’ participation in sport.

Sydney District Sport Facility Plans  
– Local Government Focus Sessions,  
April 2018



# 2. PLACES AND SPACES

## STRATEGIES

2.1 Improve places and spaces across the sport facility hierarchy: National/State (Stadia); High Performance; Regional; District; and Local to better support women and girls

## INITIATIVES



### INVESTMENT

- **NSW SPORT INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY:**  
Develop a NSW Sport Infrastructure Strategy which has a focus on supportive environments for women and girls.
- **FEMALE FRIENDLY FACILITY INVESTMENT:**  
Plan and provide for female friendly facility investment across NSW.
- **BRIGHT IDEAS DESIGN CHALLENGE:**  
Conduct a bright ideas design challenge to elicit new design models for cost-efficient construction of female-friendly facilities.



### TOOLS

- **FEMALE FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES:**  
Develop principles for sport places and spaces at all levels. Champion and promote adoption of principles across the government and sport sectors.
- **FEMALE FRIENDLY DESIGN GUIDELINES:**  
Develop guidelines for stadia, high performance, regional and community sport with consideration given to athletes/participants, fans, community, media and facility funders.
- **ACCESS POLICY AND PRINCIPLES:**  
Develop model policies and principles for the allocation and use of sport facilities for councils and facility operators for male and female teams/ events.



### EDUCATION

- Provide opportunities for knowledge sharing on Universal Design Principles through forums and workshops.



### INSIGHTS

- Implement a research project to look at culturally diverse populations’ sport participation needs (including female specific needs) to inform facility planning.

The culture shift included displaying images of the Giants AFLW and Netball players throughout the GWS Giants facility.



## CASE STUDY

### GWS GIANTS FACILITY SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK

**In June 2016, the GWS Giants were one of eight AFL clubs granted an AFLW licence for the inaugural 2017 season. Only months later, the Giants entered a partnership with Netball NSW to form Giants Netball, competing in the Suncorp Super Netball league, laying the foundations for a super club in Western Sydney.**

The club had less than five months to redesign the existing GWS Giants facility at Sydney Olympic Park to meet the high performance training needs of two new elite women's programs. The existing facility had already been re-designed to meet the needs and expectations of the 40+ male AFL playing group and 40 support staff. While the facility was ideal for the men's AFL program, there were no specific, standalone amenities to cater for the AFLW program, nor were there any lights on the training field to cater for the extended AFLW training hours. Timelines were tight!

The AFL's decision to schedule the AFLW season prior to the men's AFL season avoided season duplication and overuse of the facility in peak times. However, a willingness and commitment to the female programs at all levels of the Giants was needed to allow the existing structures to be extended to meet new functional requirements of the AFLW and Netball programs.

Critical to the success was creating a new sense of club, a facility that integrated inclusion through design and a feeling of belonging for the three teams. The culture shift included displaying images of the Giants AFLW and Netball players throughout the facility and being flexible in scheduling. The high performance culture of learning from each other that had been introduced via the men's program several years earlier was dramatically enhanced along the way.

The changes resulted in a facility that reflects its club's three elite sports teams, GWS Giants, Giants AFLW, and Giants Netball. The design utilised a practical, modest budget to integrate a retro-fit model that created a comfortable, safe and high quality facility for all teams and staff. The facility's functional design was modified to ensure access to all areas and new fit for purpose female change rooms were built.

The Giants identified two key learnings which could be applied to other facilities and sports. Firstly, all new facility design briefs should specify multi-purpose and flexible design as well as functionality with the capacity to meet new growth markets. Secondly, provision of a suitable number of toilets and showers to cater for multiple high performance training squads is essential.





# 3. LEVERAGING INVESTMENT

## Rationale:

The rise in profile of women's sport represents an opportunity to sustainably grow women's sport by attracting and leveraging investment. To attract that investment, we must highlight the value of female fan bases, role models, social impact, and purchasing power.

## Objective:

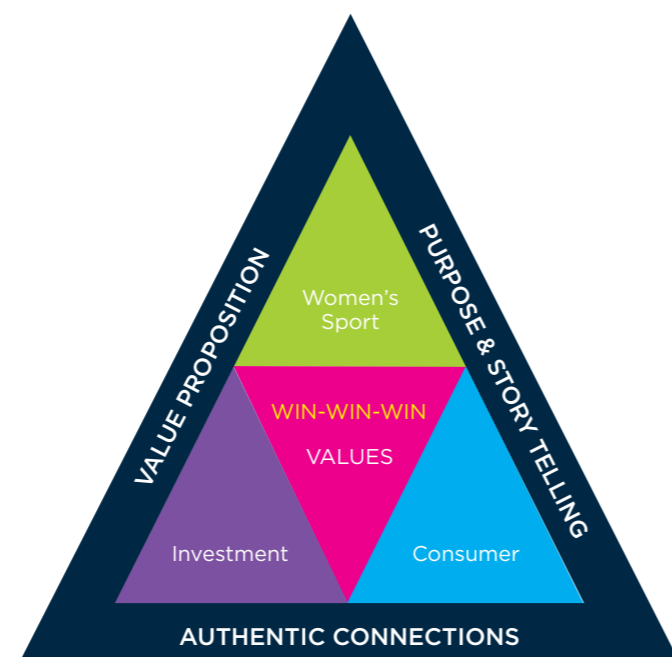
Maximise investment in women's sport across the sporting sector, corporate sector, media, social media and government

## THE VALUE PROPOSITION

There is a strong case for investment in women's sport – the value proposition is clear and it is a win-win-win for all involved. Consultations showed that there are shared values which are central to women's sport (as the product), consumers who watch, participate and engage with the sport, and investors (brand/corporates, broadcasters/media, government, and sporting codes) who see value in investing in the product. The win-win-win model (right) illustrates this relationship.

Women's sport is providing a powerful connection between businesses and brands wanting to tap into values-based positioning. Authentic connections, shared values, and purpose-based story-telling are what helps realise the value and propel it forward.

For government, the links between sport, physical and mental health, and wider societal benefits are well proven. Professionalisation of women's sport has the ability to increase participation in sport by normalising female participation through providing positive role models and a pathway for girls to continue playing competitive sport. Major events provide tourism, investment and social opportunities.



Women's sport represents a greenfield opportunity for investment for corporates and brands. In an era where brands are increasingly being held accountable to show social value and equality, women's sport represents an opportunity for brands to communicate positive health and social messages to their customers and make use of top female sporting talent as role models.

The rapid rise in the importance, influence and value of female fans and athletes has been a distinctive shift in the Australian sports marketing landscape. Fans are at the centre of sports marketing, and female sporting personalities present a unique opportunity to reach a huge, predominantly untapped market.

For Australia's major sporting codes, engagement with women is integral to their future. Codes have a big opportunity right now to facilitate a new style of investment and partnerships that will revolutionise the professional version of their game, and grow a new participant, audience and fan base. With the changing media landscape, women's sport has the potential to raise profile and generate revenues in a different way.

“

Women's sport has been traditionally under-utilised by sponsors, but it is now being recognised for its ability to hold healthy values, its clean image, its ability to build confidence in girls, and its powerful role models with interesting stories.

**Tim Underwood**  
GM – Commercial, Netball NSW

”

“

Young girls are just as into sport as boys, but they don't have as many role models as boys. Our latest KIDS & SPORTS Study found that 5-17-year old girls could list only half as many role models at the professional level as the boys could in the same age group.<sup>13</sup>

**Ben Cox**  
Vice President and General Manager,  
Nickelodeon Australia

”



# STAKEHOLDERS' VIEW OF THE UNIQUE VALUE PROPOSITION OF WOMEN'S SPORT

“

Respected and loved brands, have a clear purpose. Today, people don't just want to buy something, they want to buy into something. They seek brands that deliver both great value and great values. There is a cause-and-effect relationship between financial performance and purpose.

Millennials and Gen Xers are looking for brands they can believe in. Sports' fan base, media coverage and attention-grabbing athletes are the highest profile channels for companies to promote their values and drive positive legacy change.

**Gayle While**  
Deputy CEO of Clemenger BBDO

”



48%

of people say they would watch more women's sport if it was accessible free on TV or online.<sup>14</sup>

“

The competitive advantage offered by women's sport is in the depth of engagement, accessibility and storytelling ability of talent, direct access to grassroots level of sport, and a positive brand association.

**Kayla Ramiscal**  
Nielsen Sports

”

“

Our AFLW sponsorship has achieved higher brand consideration and hugely positive social sentiment. Our AFLW social videos achieved broad reach and many of our digital stories were watched to 100% completion. NAB AFLW content collectively reached a total of 6.6m people across our channels.

**Thomas Dobson**  
Head of Media & Partnerships at NAB

”

“

The emotional connection of AFLW players, depth of their stories, and lack of off-field scandal has given AFL a new kind of value. With men players, we shut down stories. With women players, we let the stories flow.

**Darren Birch,**  
General Manager  
- Growth, Digital and Audience at AFL

”

The competitive advantage offered by women's sport is in the depth of engagement, accessibility and storytelling ability of talent, direct access to grassroots level of sport, and a positive brand association.





## CREATING A MOVEMENT: A UNIFYING BANNER

The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) which has been applied to the participation pillar works on the principle that in order to drive societal change, you need to act across multiple levels simultaneously. This becomes even more powerful with a unifying brand and consistency in messaging at all levels.

Stakeholder consultations revealed a desire for a unifying brand to help build an elevated common focus – rising above day to day competition between codes to much wider social value.

There is tremendous opportunity for the wider sporting sector to unify and empower girls and women with sport, driving culture change together. *Her Sport Her Way* has been designed to be that banner. All initiatives and partnerships under this strategy will be branded as such, signifying to consumers that the initiative has been designed with her in mind. A communication strategy, messaging guides and templates will help generate a consistent focus, ensuring all efforts contribute to the bigger picture objective.



## EVENTS ARE CENTRAL TO LEVERAGING INVESTMENT

NSW is leading the way in hosting and bidding for major women's sport events. Events and family experiences are central to fan engagement and participation strategies.

Having hosted the 2015 Netball World Cup and the 2017 Women's Rugby League World Cup, the NSW Government continues to work with the sector to support women's sports events, ranging from grassroots competitions such as the annual Koori Netball Tournament through to world championships such as the ICC World T20 2020.

NSW Government support of events is led with a legacy focus, ensuring that the sector has the facilities and resources to enhance participation opportunities for women and girls before, during and after events have been held in NSW. Events provide the opportunity to inspire the next generation, provide opportunities for NSW athletes to compete in front of friends and family, engage local communities, and deliver economic benefits to the people of NSW.

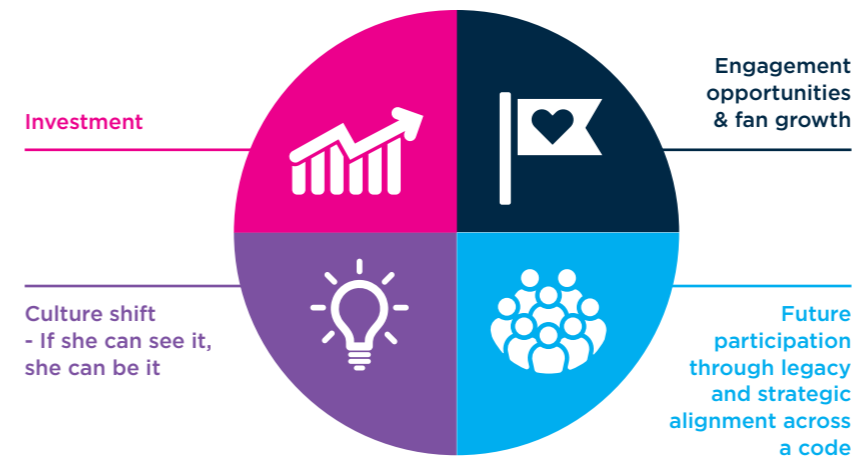
“

Community engagement is built into all Matilda's home games. The players love being on the pitch after games and meeting their fans. We couldn't get them off the pitch after the Brazil games.

**Emma Highwood**  
Head of Women's Football, FFA

”

Events drive...



# MEASURING VALUE AND ROI

A major barrier to investing in women's sport revealed through consultation is that existing sponsorship models are largely based on eyeballs on TV. This doesn't apply very well to women's sport as women, particularly younger women, don't watch much TV. Early sponsors of women's sport often described it as a 'leap of faith', as there is no measurement framework available. The resounding message is that a new yardstick is needed to measure and track the value of women's sport.

Focusing on TV audience and reach is an outdated metric as less people are watching live sport on television and those remaining on the platform are from older, largely male segments. As the influence of social media networks grows, the time spent interacting with social media displaces time spent with traditional forms of media including TV, radio, magazines, newspapers and radio.<sup>15</sup>

Young people in general are watching much less TV, and spending more time on social media and digital. A recent OzTAM report shows that over 65's spend an average of 135 hours a month watching live TV, compared to 26 hours a month by 18-24 year olds, and just 20 hours a month by teens.<sup>16</sup>

The case is even more significant for younger women, with new research revealing that young women are the most prolific users of all types of social media. Females aged 14-24 now spend a staggering 14 hours per week using social media. The average Australian aged 14+ spends almost six hours per week on social media.<sup>15</sup>

“

With 85% of Twitter users who are watching live sports content being under 35, Twitter is an interesting way to reach millennial audiences. Content can be provided in more snackable ways, with audiences able to engage in ways that suit them.

**Olly Wilton**  
Head of Sport, Twitter Australia

”

# WHAT'S NEEDED TO REALISE THE VALUE OF WOMEN'S SPORT?

Key elements in driving better commercial decisions across the board include better measurement and sponsorship frameworks; deeper consumer insights into perception and value; a greater understanding of the value proposition of women athletes; data on the impact of role models on brand and participation; and an understanding of the next generation and future interest and value. Further, a united focus on the wider societal benefits of women's sport, and the opportunity to celebrate successes and learn from each other will help drive culture change. These elements have been included into the following recommendations.



# 3. LEVERAGING INVESTMENT

## STRATEGIES

**3.1 Build confidence across the sport, corporate and government sectors to maximise investment in women's sport**

**3.2 Use new and innovative approaches to generate funding to tap into corporate value alignment with women's sport**

**3.3 Unite all initiatives and stakeholders under the Her Sport Her Way banner to amplify messaging across all touchpoints**

**3.4 Attract national and international female events to NSW to leverage investment opportunities and drive positive legacy**

## INITIATIVES



### SECTOR CAPABILITY - COLLABORATION, INSIGHTS, TOOLS

- **ROI FRAMEWORK:**  
Work with the sporting codes and the private sector to develop a framework that measures value and ROI for women's sport and test ideas in the market.
- **COLLABORATION ROUNDTABLE:**  
Establish a collaborative roundtable involving digital leaders, sporting codes, brands and agencies to develop nimble and more sophisticated approaches to sponsorships and partnerships.
- **INSIGHTS & TRENDSPOTTER FORUM:**  
Develop *Her Sport Her Way* Consumer Insights Reports and Trendspotter Forums which bring together all the latest evidence, case studies, and learnings from sporting codes, brands, media, social media and government. Use the forum as an opportunity to facilitate connections between sporting codes and brands to map and align their values.



### NEW APPROACHES TO INVESTMENT

- **CONSORTIUM OF HEROES:**  
Explore a consortium approach to facilitate and manage partnerships with the corporate sector that support *Her Sport Her Way* and adhere to an agreed set of principles and criteria.



### CAMPAIGN

- Develop a communication strategy, branding and messaging kit to unite the women's sports sector to:
  - Develop unifying branding and messaging to promote engagement and participation in girls' and women's sport.
  - Leverage existing campaigns to drive action locally.
  - Assess the need for campaigns where there are gaps in the market.
  - Increase visibility of role models to inspire participation.
  - Provide partner branding and marketing templates to partners that meet *Her Sport Her Way* criteria.
  - Celebrate partners and recognise their leadership through joint media announcements, social media content and profiling at key events and forums.



### EVENTS

- Secure funding and support for upcoming international event bids.
- Work closely with NSOs, SSOs, and professional clubs to maximise opportunities from hosting national events and competitions held in NSW.
- Leverage event investment to integrate *Her Sport Her Way* messaging, branding, and resource materials.

## CASE STUDY

# SUNCORP #TEAMGIRLS EMPOWERING GIRLS THROUGH TEAM SPORT

Suncorp announced its landmark 5-year sponsorship with Netball Australia (NA) in 2016, as Principal Partner, supporting the game from the grassroots through to elite level. It's a particularly compelling and engaging partnership that proactively supports the journey of Australian girls from the age of 5 through the introductory Suncorp NetSetGo program to the elite Suncorp Super Netball and Australian Diamonds competitions.

As the major partner of Australia's most popular and largest female sport, we were provided with an active community platform to launch our brand and #TeamGirls – a program designed to elevate a social conversation on the importance of building girls' confidence and personal well-being through the benefits of sport participation.

### WHAT INSIGHTS HELPED YOU DEVELOP THE #TEAMGIRLS PROGRAM?

The key insight underpinning our program is that with today's social pressures the confidence of young girls is at risk, impacting their long-term personal wellbeing. However we know that there is a strong correlation between sports participation and confidence, and studies have found that girls who play team sports are more likely to graduate, find a job and be employed in male dominated industries. There's even a direct link between playing sports in high school and earning a bigger salary. Competing in sport naturally gives you the feeling of wanting to win, it teaches resilience, teamwork, leadership, tactics, the importance of having a voice, learning from failure as well as success.



Girls are much more likely to drop out of sport than boys, with the steepest decline happening during adolescence, a critical time when girls should stay active in sport to benefit longer-term. There are many triggers for this drop-out, however girls suffer a larger decrease in self-esteem during this challenging time than boys do.

Our current #TeamGirls campaign message is Start Playing and Keep Playing to address both insights.

### WHAT WAS THE OPPORTUNITY?

Confidence is key to positive well-being, can help us achieve our life goals and get us to where we want to be. By supporting Australia's leading female sport, our #TeamGirls program provides the brand with a unique opportunity to initiate and be part of a family conversation around sport participation and confidence to drive engagement, positive behaviour and skills for life, on and off the court. We want to connect parents to tools and resources to help them have conversations with their kids about the importance of confidence.



By supporting Australia's leading female sport, our #Teamgirls program provides the brand with a unique opportunity to initiate and be part of a family conversation around sport participation and confidence to drive engagement, positive behaviour and skills for life, on and off the court.

### WHAT WAS YOUR APPROACH?

Through #TeamGirls we are able to support a social initiative that is of genuine concern for parents. It's important for our brand that this initiative is supported by not only NA but other respected partners in this field. Working with Reachout and our expert ambassadors, we are developing a bank of practical resources for parents. Leveraging relevant content across social/digital channels, we are focused on amplifying the issue and driving a clear message around the importance of sport.

We are also focused on increasing participation (via NetSetGo sponsorship, Fuel2Fly clinics) to provide access and demonstrate our commitment in building a nation of confident girls. By leveraging our association across all levels of the sport, and creating content that highlights the benefits of sport participation, we are able to give context to our sport participation and confidence building message. Personal stories of our Ambassadors including Laura Geitz, Clare McMeniman, Gabi Simpson and Liz Watson, also provide strong credibility and insight into the role sport has played in building their confidence and careers.

### WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED TO DATE?

Whilst our program is still in its infancy, we are beginning to see positive results. Brand sentiment is high, and our national awareness and consideration is growing. Social engagement has been strong for #TeamGirls delivering 5m+ reach during our launch, with significant engagement across social channels. Visitation to our #TeamGirls hub is steadily increasing and subscribers have doubled in the past year. Suncorp NetSetGo participation numbers are steadily increasing and netball as a sport to watch is becoming more popular with growing audience numbers across SSN broadcasts.



## 4. LEADERSHIP

### Rationale:

Leaders on and off the field in sport are key influencers, yet fewer women than men are appointed leaders. Strong gender balanced leadership that brings breadth of perspective, better decision making and encourages cultural change to better support girls' and women's involvement is key to achieving the Her Sport Her Way vision.

### Objective:

Increase the number of women in leadership positions on and off the field, and develop inclusive sporting cultures

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

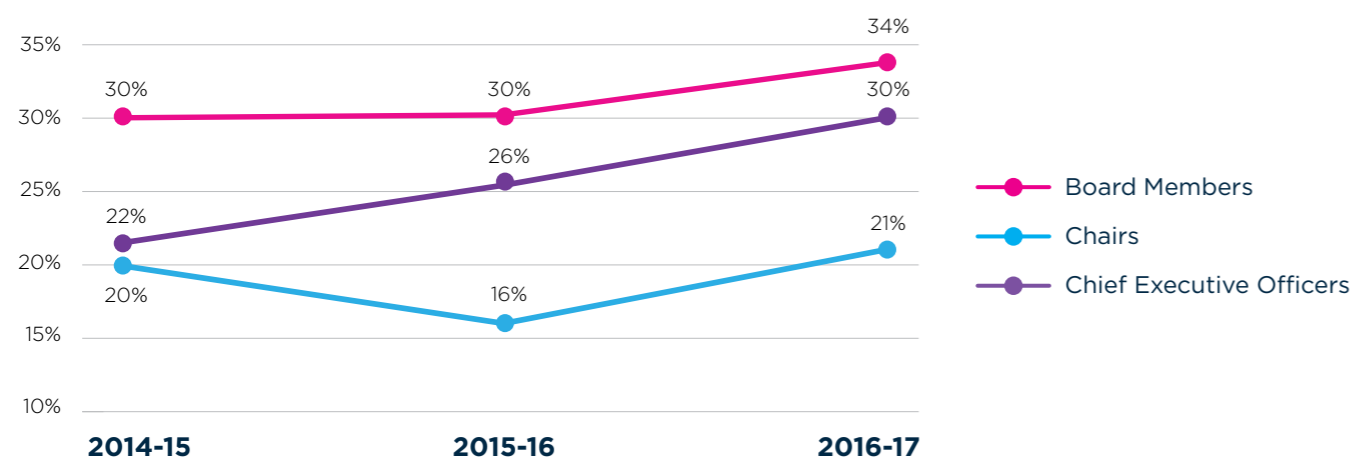
It is widely acknowledged that diversity delivers better decision-making and organisational effectiveness.<sup>17</sup> It is also known that systemic biases get in the way of women's advancement and that the solutions require systemic change.<sup>18</sup>

Inclusive sporting environments are those where gender roles, stereotypes and unconscious bias are challenged, and respectful, equal relationships are the norm.

In the NSW sports industry, women are under-represented as leaders at all levels including as coaches and officials.

From 2014/15 to 2016/17 the number of NSW State Sporting Organisation (SSO)\* women chief executives increased from 22% to 30%. Over this period, the number of women on boards has increased four percentage points to 34% and the percentage of women chairs is up 1%. Six percent of SSOs had no women on their boards.<sup>19</sup>

NSW state sporting organisations women in leadership positions



\* Includes: State Sporting Organisations, State Sporting Organisations - Disability and Peak Bodies.

In 2017 only two out of sixteen of major sports in NSW (Category 6) had at least 40% of women on boards.<sup>20</sup>

Under Sport Australia's *Mandatory Sports Governance Principles*, National Sporting Organisations for more than 30 Olympic sports are required to seek to achieve a target of 40% representation of females on their boards and report back on the progress made.

The Office of Sport Organisational Health Check (2018) found that 59% of NSW Boards do not have 40% female representation. The Office of Sport has provided board and leadership training for aspiring women leaders in past years, but it is clear more needs to be done.



The Office of Sport Organisational Health Check (2018) found that

# 59%

of NSW Boards do not have the 40% female representation

## LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL AT ALL LEVELS

As women's sport continues to grow, it is critical that leaders step forward to drive change from the top down persistently and consistently. For cultural change to be successful it needs to be underpinned by long term planning and resourcing and involve everyone from the executive and leadership team through to players, staff, fans, supporters, sponsors and volunteers.<sup>21</sup>



“

Women, as with anyone, it is a case of 'you can't be what you can't see'. So the more we begin to see women working equally alongside men in traditionally male dominated industries – of which sport is certainly one – the more women will feel these careers are a valid choice.

**Elizabeth Broderick**  
Former Australian Sex  
Discrimination Commissioner

”

“

Cricket made a deliberate decision to professionalise our women's teams. Why? It's both the right thing to do and the biggest growth opportunity for our game.

**Andrew Jones**  
CEO, Cricket NSW

”



## COACHES ARE KEY INFLUENCERS

Coaches are key influencers within sport and, as the face of the organisation, should reflect the diversity of participants. Women are under-represented as coaches from grassroots to high performance. Enabling more women to coach is not only important for women and girls, but for the culture of sport itself. Women have different life and leadership experiences and attributes that can contribute to a more diverse experience from a development perspective for both boys and girls.



## COACHES

Women are under-represented as coaches across the board.

### High Performance Coaching

- Olympic, Paralympic or Commonwealth Games typically see coaching figures of 85% male to 15% female.<sup>\*</sup>
- Only 9% of accredited high performance coaches at the Rio Olympics were female.
- At the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games, 90% of the Australian coaches were male.
- The W-League, AFLW, WBBL, and WNBL have twice as many male coaches as female women coaches.

### NSW Coaches

- 10 of the 30 coaches that are employed by NSWIS are women.
- In NSW in 2016/17 there were 48,320 (38%) female coaches and 78,580 male coaches (62%).

<sup>\*</sup> Sport Australia website (2018)



## WHAT'S NEEDED TO IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN TO LEAD IN THE SPORT SECTOR NOW AND INTO THE FUTURE?

A coordinated and strategic approach is needed to promote strong gender balanced leadership across all levels – coaching, officiating, management and boards. The recommendations below have been designed to shift the leadership landscape for women and girls at all levels of sport.





## 4. LEADERSHIP

### STRATEGIES

4.1 Set targets for gender balance and promote good governance principles

4.2 Build the capability of NSW SSOs to increase women in leadership roles and on boards

4.3 Develop the NSW Female Coaches Framework to attract, develop and retain female coaches across all levels of sport

### INITIATIVES



#### POLICY

- Adopt Sport Australia's *Mandatory Sports Governance Principles* target of 40% representation of women on SSO boards by 2022 with annual monitoring and reporting.

- **GENDER EQUITY GUIDELINES:**

Develop principles and guidelines to apply to Office of Sport funding agreements, programs and events.



#### SECTOR CAPABILITY

- **SPORT LEADERS OF CHANGE PROGRAM:**

Work with targeted CEOs to become champions for gender equity and commit to practical actions to improve sport outcomes for women and girls in their sports.

- **ON-LINE RESOURCE LIBRARY:**

Develop the *Her Sport Her Way* resource library hosted on the Office of Sport website.

- **FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT:**

Engage key sport partners across participation, talent development and high performance to develop a framework of initiatives to increase the number and visibility of female coaches at all levels. The framework will focus on policies, programs, athlete to coach transition, training, support networks, role models, talent identification, and promotion.

- **CAMPAIGN:**

Develop a targeted 'awareness to action' campaign for girls and women to become coaches. Campaign to focus on the positive individual and sport outcomes, reducing barriers, and creating role models.

- **HER SPORT HER WAY COACHES ALLIANCE:**

Build a network of female coaches and provide a platform for mentoring and sharing learnings and support.

- **TALENT DEVELOPMENT:**

Align with high performance strategies such as the Commonwealth Games Women's Coaching Internship by supporting the professional development of NSW female coaches in partnership with Regional Academies of Sport, NSW Institute of Sport and the Australian Institute of Sport.

- **HIGH PERFORMANCE**

Implement positive action initiatives to attract, develop, retain and progress high performance female coaches in NSW.

### STRATEGIES

4.4 Recognise and celebrate the achievements of leaders in women's sport

### INITIATIVES



#### AWARD SCHEME

- **EXCELLENCE AWARDS:**

Expand the Office of Sport's International Women's Day Awards to include:

- Leadership in Sport Award
- Women's Leadership in Sport Scholarship
- Women's Sport Trailblazer Award - Recognition for an individual or organisation delivering significant or innovative improvements for women and girls.



## CASE STUDY

### ALLIANCE OF WOMEN COACHES (USA)

In 2003, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) awarded a grant for two pilot professional development programs for NCAA women coaches. The programs became the basis for the NCAA Women Coaches Academy (WCA). The 3.5-day Academy includes topics such as leadership, diversity, team culture, communication, career advancement, staff management, legal issues, and work-life balance.

The academy graduates continually asked how they could stay connected so the idea for an organisation for women coaches was born.

Initially an alumni association exclusive to academy graduates was proposed. It became obvious that there was a wider need - women coaches from all sports and levels could benefit from enhancing their skills outside the sport specific.

In 2011 the Alliance of Women Coaches (AWC) was formed as a non-profit organisation to be a collective voice and a national network of women coaches.

The AWC has become the premier membership organisation dedicated to the recruitment, advancement and retention of women coaches of all sports and levels.

To date, the AWC has hosted 45 annual NCAA Women Coaches Academies for over 1,600 women coaches.



#### Highlights in 2017 include:

- Establishing a Mentor Program uniquely modelled into mentorship trios of inexperienced, mid-level, and experienced coaches. The program is positioned to serve those coaches at a pivotal point in their career while fostering growth and connections for all experience levels.
- Developing a next-level program for alumni called Academy 2.0.
- Partnering with the *Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport* to track WCA graduates and their career trajectories. This partnership also delivers an annual *Women in College Coaching Report Card*.
- Formalising a national partnership with the Women's Basketball Coaches Association to co-host the "So You Want to Be a Coach" entry program for graduating college student-athletes.

#### Key learnings were:

- Due to the significant demand to attend the Academy, the Alliance began hosting one-day regional workshops across the country to serve a greater mass of women coaches.
- The *Women in College Coaching Report Card* has brought a national awareness and dialogue to women in intercollegiate head coach positions.
- The ten graduates of Academy 2.0 have been very successful in securing higher positions including two head coaches, one associate head coach, one elected secretary of United Soccer Coaches, and one elected into her sport's Hall of Fame.
- The WCA model has been successfully adopted. In 2016, a Japanese Women Coaches Academy was developed, and the Japanese are aiming to have females in their Olympic head coach positions by the 2020 Olympics.

## CASE STUDY

### SMASHING THROUGH THE GRASS CEILING AS A REFEREE

Katie Patterson, the first female referee to officiate an A-League game almost quit refereeing as a teenager because she was bullied by spectators. *"Some of the comments I got when I first started were 'Go put your makeup on' or 'What are you doing here? Where's your handbag?'"*

Despite the criticism, Katie persevered with the profession and has gone on to officiate Westfield W-League games and made her senior level debut in 2015 at age 24.

In 2015, Katie became the first female to officiate an A-League team in the final series of the FFA Cup Round of 16.

*"Exposure to the Westfield FFA Cup has taken my refereeing to a whole new level due to the knockout nature of the tournament. The stakes are higher so you need to up your game and make sure that you are facilitating a match that is fair and exciting."*

*"I really love refereeing the men's game," she said. "It's different to women's football - not better or worse - it just requires something different of you because of the pace of the game and the speed that decisions must be made."*

Katie thinks there needs to be more support for all referees and says there is a long way to go before more women will be recognised in the sport. *"It's important we look at women's football in a way that says the women's game is not the ceiling for women officials"*, Patterson said.

Katie's ambition is to officiate regularly for the A-League and then go on to get her FIFA accreditation for international matches.

#### Acknowledgement:

Quotes sourced from Daily Telegraph article (August 30, 2015).



# IMPLEMENTATION

Over the next four years we will produce annual action plans presenting the initiatives under each of the four pillars, and where appropriate, include agreed targets and outcomes to enable progress to be measured. Annual action plans allow flexibility to consider future actions as new ideas emerge, and seize opportunities if and when they arise.

### MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Critical to improving opportunities for women and girls in sport is an ongoing commitment to data collection, monitoring and evaluation. In partnership with the University of Sydney, mechanisms for monitoring

and evaluation will be established to support the implementation of the strategy.

### GOVERNANCE AND REPORTING

The Office of Sport is responsible for overseeing the implementation of *Her Sport Her Way*. A dedicated team within the Office will lead and drive initiatives in partnership with the sector and other key stakeholders.

The Office will convene a *Her Sport Her Way* Advisory Committee to guide and support implementation, monitoring and reporting of action plans, as well as identification of opportunities for future action.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Her Sport Her Way* strategy is the result of a comprehensive process of consultation with representatives from a range of sectors across the NSW community. The Office of Sport would like to thank everyone who contributed their time and expertise to shape this important strategy.

Thank you also to the many sporting organisations and partners who have contributed images and quotes for use associated with the strategy.

The Office of Sport specifically acknowledges the assistance and input of the following:

**Participation Working Group:** Kerry Turner (Chair), Dr Lindsey Reece, Bridget Foley, Professor Philip Morgan, Darren Simpson, Rosemary Davis, Nikki Horton, Jackie Lauff, Aaron Bloomfield, Wendy Gillett, Linda Muir, Andrew Putt, Samara Kitchener, Cristy Cotter (Secretariat).

**House of Kitch, Healthy Communications.**

**SPRINTER Research Group, Prevention Research Collaboration, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney.**

The Office of Sport looks forward to continued collaboration with a broad range of external partners to progress each pillar of the strategy.

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## CHAMPIONS ARE MADE IN WINTER

It's 7am on a sunny winter Saturday morning in 2022. 16-year-old Elise puts on her football kit in the change rooms at the local pitch and meets her mates for a pre-game warm-up. They go through the game plan with Coach Stella: "*The Tigers are tough, but you have worked for this. Keep your head in the game and give it all you have*" said Stella.

Elise still couldn't get her head around the #dailyinspo quote that came through on her insta feed '*Bikini Bodies are made in winter*' – "*What does that even mean?*" she thought. "***Champions are made in winter; goals are scored in winter; records are smashed in winter would be much better #inspo***" she thought.

Back to the game plan. "*You are strong, powerful – play as a team and you've got this*" said Stella.

Bikini body thoughts faded away as Elise ran onto the pitch and felt the power coursing through her veins.



