



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

# **Her Sport Her Way Grant Program Evaluation report**

First round 2020-2021



## Acknowledgements

The report was prepared on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 by:

Bridget Foley	Senior Research Officer, SPRINTER
Dr Catriona Rose	Research Officer, SPRINTER
Dr Lindsey Reece	Academic Lead, SPRINTER

**SPRINTER, Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney.**

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Kerry Turner	Manager, Participation and Partnerships, Sector Performance
Margot Zaska	Project Officer, Participation & Partnerships
Anne Jackson	Project Officer, Participation & Partnerships
Cristy Cotter	Senior Project Officer, Participation & Partnerships
Andrew Putt	Director, Sector Performance

## Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to present interim findings from the SPRINTER evaluation of the Her Sport Her Way Grant Program (2020-2021). This evaluation report is the first of an annual, four-year evaluation cycle. It will contribute to a long-term evaluation of the Her Sport Her Way grant program and aspects of the broader Her Sport Her Way strategy evaluation.

All initiatives funded in the first round of the Her Sport Her Way grant program were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some initiatives pivoted and completed an adapted version of their funded initiative within the timeframe (Figure 1); however, most were delayed. Only initiatives that were completed within the timeframe are included in this evaluation report. This report does not include grant acquittal information, budget assessment, or cost-effectiveness assessments.

Figure 1 Her Sport Her Way grant program timeline 2020-2021



## Executive Summary

The power of sport to challenge societal norms and tackle big societal issues, including gender equity, is well known but often not integrated into routine government strategy. Her Sport Her Way (HSHW) aims to build a stronger sports sector where women and girls are valued, recognised, and have equal choices and opportunities to lead and participate.

The HSHW grant program provided State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) and State Sporting Organisations for people living with a disability (SSODs) resources to experiment and deliver new initiatives towards increasing participation of women and girls in sport, on and off the field.

Critical when encouraging experimentation and innovation is the evaluation of what works and what doesn't. This ensures progress can be made over time as knowledge develops. Evaluation of HSHW grant initiatives was a requirement of HSHW grant funding, and SPRINTER provided evaluation training and ongoing support for funded organisations.

- COVID-19 restrictions provided a significant challenge to all funded organisations. Ten of the funded 27 projects were completed within the funding period.
- The **Participation focused grants engaged approximately 1176 women and girls** in a range of initiatives delivered through the HSHW grant program.
- Most projects engaged adult women. **Adolescent girls should be targeted explicitly** by funded projects to address the high dropout rate during this life stage.
- Creating opportunities for women and girls to **engage regularly in sports** such as multiple sessions, coaching, and skill development had more positive impacts on increasing participation and retention than one-off participation events. Projects that **implemented strategies to overcome known barriers** and supported participants to **establish a new routine** built strong connections with participants.
- Communications to engage participants that showed relatable women and girls and reflected the projects target audience were successful. **Participant stories and images captured during project delivery provide an ongoing resource for future engagement.** This can help overcome the apprehensions and fears of the target audience.
- Delivery was often **strengthened through partnerships with experts.** An expert had experience engaging with the target audience (school teachers, cultural leaders) or new delivery mediums (online training, music producers).
- The **Leadership focused grants engaged 227 women and girls** in a range of initiatives delivered through the HSHW grant program.

- When the invitation was presented to them, women and girls responded to new opportunities to develop their skills and be involved in leadership roles in sport.
- **Online delivery provided flexibility for women and girls** to engage with training, education, accreditation, networking, and mentoring opportunities that may otherwise have been difficult for them to join.
- Webinars, music videos, media articles and social media posts **increased visibility and provided a new platform to increase the representation of women in sport** on and off the field. Seeing and hearing from other women and girls provided hope to those facing similar barriers.
- Funded SSO's and SSOD's **strengthened their capability** to create more gender-inclusive sports environments through additional formal policies and cultural changes.
- There was a significant increase in the number of organisations **pilot testing and data about what women and girls want and utilising knowledge** from their membership databases to prioritise and adapt grant activities.
- Project leaders championed HSHW projects inside and outside their workplaces, establishing **networks to help drive additional inclusion initiatives** forward.
- Grant projects helped **gain organisational buy-in** and initiated applying a female lens to strategic decisions, ensuring the default male-dominant approach is not standard.
- The grant projects demonstrated to staff within SSO's, and SSOD's the **potential for growth of their sport from engaging more women and girls on and off the field.**
- SSO's and SSOD's appreciated the Think Tanks, research insights and participation planning tool to guide their project development and learnt through their evaluations.
- The Office of Sport provided excellent support to grant recipients to deliver their projects, who felt they were part of a community working towards the HSHW vision.

This report is the first of its kind for the Office of Sport. It showcases what has been learnt through embedding evaluation within the HSHW grant program. SPRINTER highlights what works and what doesn't in grant delivery. This information should be shared broadly with the sports sector to build evidence of creating more gender inclusive sport environments and inspiring project ideas for future HSHW funding rounds.

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## Introduction

Women and girls in New South Wales (NSW) face barriers to participation in sport and are under-represented across the sports sector. Increasing participation and empowerment of women and girls is an NSW Government priority. The NSW Government's Women in Sport Strategy - Her Sport Her Way (2019-2023) aims to build a stronger sports sector where women and girls are valued, recognised, and have equal choices and opportunities to lead and participate. Her Sport Her Way includes a suite of initiatives led by the Office of Sport to empower women and girls to engage in sport. These initiatives contribute towards a whole-of-government and whole-of-community policy framework providing a comprehensive and targeted approach to promoting gender equality – the NSW Women's Strategy 2018-2022.

## Her Sport Her Way Grant Program

The Her Sport Her Way Grant Program is a key initiative of Her Sport Her Way. The Grant Program provides more than \$2.5 million over four years to assist NSW State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) and State Sporting Organisations for people living with a disability (SSODs) to develop and deliver new initiatives to increase participation of women and girls in sport, both on and off the field, with a focus on diversity and inclusion. Her Sport Her Way grant guidelines and a YouTube video of the CEO, Karen Jones, explaining the application process were available to all SSO's and SSODs in NSW before the submission deadline. The Office of Sport also encouraged grant applicants to utilise the Her Sport Her Way Participation Planning Tool (PPT) and attend annual Think Tank sessions, which showcased the latest research, insights, and case studies. These activities were designed to support sports organisations in developing and submitting quality grant applications.

The grant program guidelines included three categories of funding:

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<b>Participation</b>	Projects that aim to reduce barriers to participation for women and girls and create innovative, inclusive sport experiences that reflect what women and girls want.
<b>Leadership</b>	Projects that aim to attract, develop, and retain female coaches, officials, and leaders, and projects that recognise and celebrate their achievements.
<b>Capability</b>	Projects that aim to build the capability of organisations to increase the participation of women and girls both on and off the field, and projects that build gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments.

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In 2020-2021, the NSW Government announced 20 SSO's and 3 SSOD's as grant recipients to deliver 27 initiatives in the first round of the Her Sport Her Way grant program. Each initiative received between \$5,000-\$50,000 to explore new ways of delivering sport and test new ideas, collectively supporting one or more Her Sport Her Way grant program objectives.

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*The key objectives of the Her Sport Her Way Grant Program include:*

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- ❖ **Increase the number of women and girls playing sport and improve the retention of adolescent girls**
- ❖ **Increase the number of women in leadership positions both on and off the field**
- ❖ **Improve gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments**



## **Research partnership**

The power of sport to challenge societal norms and tackle big societal issues, including gender equity, are well known but are often not integrated into routine government strategy. In 2016, the Office of Sport and the University of Sydney established a policy-focused partnership to accelerate the generation and translation of evidence into policy and practice throughout the sports sector. This collaborative partnership with the University of Sydney's specialised academic, policy-focused research group - SPort and Active Recreation INTervention and Epidemiology Research group (SPRINTER) completes various annual academic and policy-relevant deliverables. Through the SPRINTER

research partnership, evidence-based planning has been integrated throughout Her Sport Her Way (2019-2023) – arguably an Australian first for Women in Sport.

SPRINTER is supporting the Office of Sport to conduct a rigorous evaluation of Her Sport Her Way. As a key initiative under the strategy, a nested evaluation of the Her Sport Her Way grant program was required. The Office of Sport engaged the SPRINTER group in the Her Sport Her Way grant program evaluation to understand whether the funded initiatives achieved the grant program's objectives.

The SPRINTER evaluation aimed to collate data from the first round of Her Sport Her Way grant program evaluations and explore key learnings from the delivery of funded initiatives. It also builds knowledge on promoting gender-inclusive environments through sport, strengthening the evidence base for future policy and practice.

The SPRINTER group deliverables with the Her Sport Her Way (HSHW) grant program included:

- 1. Provide SSO's and SSOD's with the latest research and insights for planning**
  - a. Delivery of a presentation to SSO's/SSOD's at the Round 1 HSHW Think Tank
  - b. Active participation in the planning and delivery of the Think Tank activities
- 2. Build capability of SSO's and SSOD's to evaluate their initiatives in a meaningful way**
  - a. Develop a new evaluation training workshop for funded organisations
  - b. Deliver two engaging evaluation workshops with funding recipients
  - c. Provide ad-doc evaluation advice to funding recipients throughout the funding period (Appendix 2)
  - d. Co-design evaluation resources with SSO's/SSOD's to collect meaningful data
- 3. Support the Office of Sport's evaluation of the HSHW grant program**
  - a. Collaboratively develop a logic model for the HSHW grant program (Appendix 1). The logic model theorises how the grant program's inputs, activities, and outputs will achieve its expected outcomes.
  - b. Develop a consistent template for case study reporting (Appendix 3)
  - c. Monitor delivery and evaluation progress of HSHW grant projects
  - d. Collate evaluation data and report on HSHW grant program delivery annually

## Evaluation approach

The SPRINTER evaluation articulates the contribution of the first round of initiatives delivered through the grant program to the overall HSHW strategic objectives. The evaluation of each project was the responsibility of the funded SSO/SSOD, as outlined in the HSHW Grant Program funding agreement<sup>1</sup>. The deliverables of the SPRINTER group during the grant period built the capacity of funded organisations to collect meaningful data for their individual evaluations.

SPRINTER adopted a mixed-method approach for the evaluation of the HSHW grant program. Three discrete methods of data collection, detailed below, were designed to capture a comprehensive dataset to understand the impacts of the HSHW grant program on funded SSO's and SSOD's, assess the delivery of their funded initiatives and their contribution to achieving the aims of the broader HSHW strategy.

SPRINTER gained human research ethics approval for this evaluation from the University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (Reference number 2020/421).

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*The research questions for the HSHW grant program evaluation are:*

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1. How does the HSHW grant program influence the capability and capacity of state sporting organisations to create gender-inclusive environments?
2. What strategies work to increase participation of women and girls in sport on and off the field?

## Data collection

### Organisational survey

The organisational survey was co-designed by SPRINTER and the Office of Sport to monitor changes in the funded SSOs/SSOD's formal, quantifiable actions towards making the sports sector more gender-inclusive. The survey was administered by the Office of Sport using Survey Manager. The survey collected information from SSO's/SSOD's Chief Executives regarding their organisations use of the HSHW Participation Planning Tool (PPT), annual membership data of players and non-players by gender, and to share policies/strategies and actions the organisation had in place

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Government Her Sport Her Way Grant Program Guidelines 2020-2021

during the previous 12 months. This information provides a reliable, organisational-wide summary of recent actions to create gender-inclusive sport environments.

The survey was administered once directly after the evaluation workshop (before commencing program delivery) and again 12 months later. These time points were intended to represent a pre- post- comparison during the grant period. Only organisations that completed the survey at both time points are included in this report, allowing comparisons to the previous year's data.

## Case study

SPRINTER developed a HSHW case study template specifically for this evaluation to capture consistent and rich insights from funded initiatives (Appendix 3). The case study method provides each organisation with flexibility in their evaluation approach for their unique initiatives. The consistent template then enabled data to be collected in a consistent way by SPRINTER and directed organisations on the key information expected in their reporting from the outset.

Project leaders completed the case study template in two parts:

1. Background - The background part of the case study was completed for each initiative and submitted to SPRINTER after participation in the evaluation workshop. The background information allowed the SPRINTER group to check participants understanding of the workshop content and provide feedback and resources to support the evaluation of their funded initiative.
2. Project delivery – This part provided a comprehensive report of what occurred during the delivery of the funded initiative, the key learnings, challenges, and outcomes achieved. The Project delivery part of the case study was completed and submitted to SPRINTER for review after the delivery had ceased.

Due to the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic on project delivery during 2020, SPRINTER encouraged all SSO's/SSOD's to record the impacts of COVID-19 in the *"What actually took place during the project delivery?"* section of the case study. This existing section of the case study was useful to record changes organisations made to planned delivery during 2020 and 2021.



Figure 2. Case Study template provided to funded organisations to guide reporting

## Qualitative Interview/s

Interviews were used to gain an in-depth understanding of changes to sector capability and capacity to reduce gender inequities. After the funded initiative was completed, we invited each organisation's Chief Executive and Project Leader to participate in an evaluation interview; participation in the interview was voluntary and not part of the funding agreement.

The sports sector's increased capability and capacity are critical to both the HSHW strategy and grant program success; however, these are widely considered difficult to measure<sup>2</sup>. After significant discussions and literature searching, SPRINTER identified and agreed upon an appropriate theoretical framework to guide the development of our interview guide - Aruna Rao's 'Gender at Work' framework<sup>3</sup>.

This 'Gender at work' framework and supporting tools provided a well-tested approach to analysing gender, development, and organisational change<sup>4</sup>, although it has not been used in the sports sector previously. The 'Gender at Work' framework encourages consideration of change on a continuum from the individual through to system-wide; it considered formal changes such as a new staff appointment or new strategy and informal changes such as changes in attitudes and beliefs. Figure 2 shows four quadrants

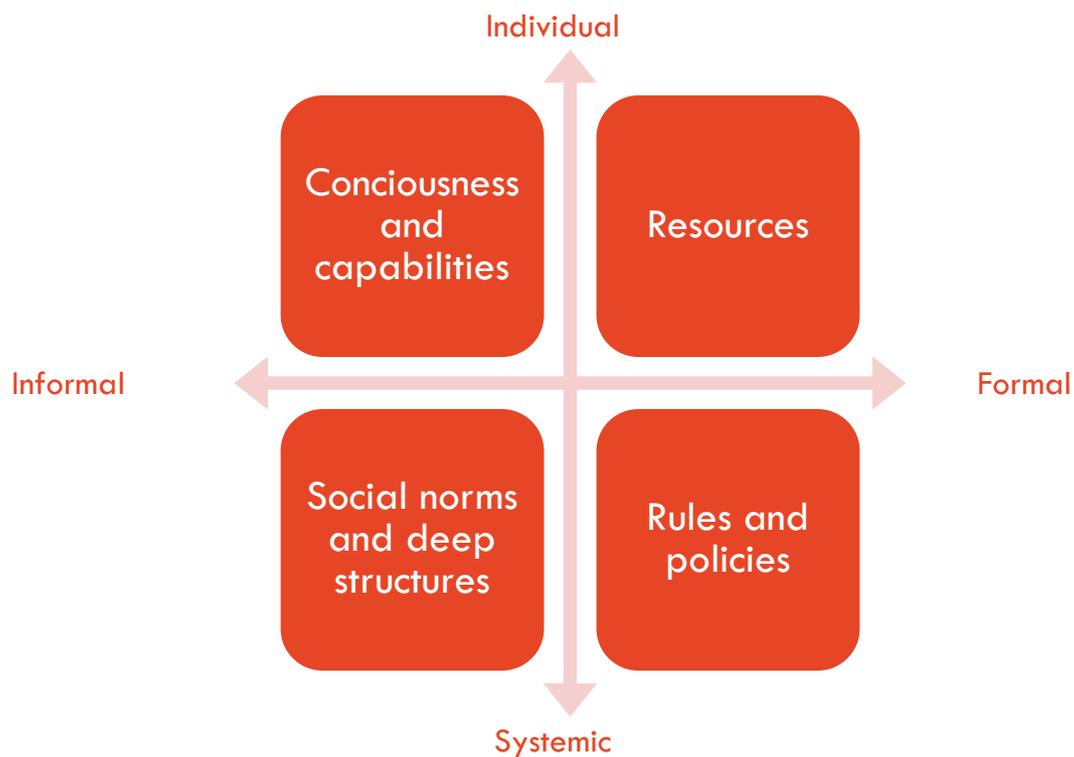
<sup>2</sup> Kloosterman J, Benning E, Fyles R. 'Measuring the unmeasurable': gender mainstreaming and cultural change. *Gender & Development*. 2012;20(3):531-545.

<sup>3</sup> Aruna Rao, David Kelleher, Joanne Sandler, Carol Miller. *Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations*. 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Gender at work framework. *Genderatwork.org*. 2018. Available from: <https://genderatwork.org/analytical-framework/>

that have been used to enhance our understanding of how gender inclusion and organisational change can occur in the sports sector.

Figure 2 Gender at Work analytical framework tool



SPRINTER designed a semi-structured interview guide using this theory-driven approach to understand the impacts of the HSHW grant program on sector capability by exploring the mechanisms and pathways leading to change in each context. Qualitative interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes for SSO/SSOD's funded for one initiative or 90 minutes for SSO's/SSOD's funded for two initiatives. SPRINTER conducted the interviews over Zoom (Zoom Video Communications Inc., 2016), audio-recorded and were transcribed for analysis by an Australian transcription company, WayWithWords (<https://waywithwords.net/>). The analysis is being conducted in NVivo, version 12, using an abductive Framework Method approach<sup>5</sup>. The comprehensive analysis is ongoing at this stage; we present initial findings in this report.

<sup>5</sup> Ritchie, J. & Spencer, L., 1994. Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In B. Bryman & R. Burgess, *Analyzing qualitative data*. pp. 173–194

## Findings

Available data to support the findings from round one of the HSHW grant program are detailed in Figure 3. We have summarised the available information by the three HSHW grant program objectives.

All twenty-three funded organisations were invited to complete the organisational survey at both time points, irrespective of their progress during the funding period. The survey responses provide insight into how the HSHW grant program has begun to influence the capability and capacity of state sporting organisations to create gender-inclusive environments. A combination of the completed case studies and in-depth qualitative interviews contribute to understanding the contribution the HSHW grant program initiatives have on increasing participation and leadership.

Figure 3 Data collection sources and available data



## Project descriptions

Table 1 presents a brief description of the completed projects in round one. To further support the findings, we have produced case study vignettes of each completed project (From Page **Error! Bookmark not defined.** of this report). These case study vignettes provide additional context and understanding regarding what strategies work to increase participation of women and girls in sport on and off the field.

*Table 1 Brief project descriptions of competed projects in round one of the HSHW grant program (2020-2021)*

Leadership	Participation
<p><b>The 'Roll Model' Project – Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT</b> A three-week campaign including the launch of a Music Video increasing visibility of female disability sport athletes and subsequent media drive.</p>	<p><b>Finish Lines, not Finish Times! – Triathlon NSW</b> A series of women's only triathlons or aquathons, conducted by clubs across NSW. Events were designed by local clubs and promoted by the SSO. Some included training.</p>
<p><b>Women's Education Roadshow – Surfing NSW</b> Education and upskilling project for females currently in leadership positions through providing free, formal accreditation. Accreditation provided online, and the roadshow identified leaders.</p>	<p><b>Her Wave – Surfing NSW</b> A four-week progressive surf program (which also included an additional free surf relayed progressive or wellness component Yoga, video analysis &amp; Gym).</p>
<p><b>AFL Future Leaders Community Program -AFL NSW/ACT</b> A gender-neutral online educational program with specific emphasis on leadership and personal development of youth, to increase club leadership and volunteerism, as well as improve confidence and empowerment young members.</p>	<p><b>Girls Making Waves – Water polo NSW</b> A modified 'come and discover' water polo program introducing basic skills and team building within a fun environment, with the goal to give them the confidence to join a club.</p>
<p><b>Removing the "Priorities" Barrier – Hockey NSW</b> A person-centred approach to identify and pilot test sustainable strategies to enable females to be active officials or coaches in development and State teams and competitions.</p>	<p><b>Multicultural engagement program – Hockey NSW</b> Female multicultural school and community trial events for Hockey to help promote sport and physical activity in CALD communities. Co-designed with multicultural leaders.</p>
<p><b>Dive into Coaching and Officiating – Diving NSW</b> Online education, mentoring, support to increase the number of level-1 to level-2 coach accreditations and fast-track talented female coaches.</p>	<p><b>Women Only Swim Meet – Masters Swimming</b> One-off swimming meet providing a private, safe &amp; secure environment for multicultural adult women and master's swimming members to compete.</p>

The remaining 17 projects were substantially delayed due to COVID-19 impacts (Appendix 2).

## Objective: Increase the number of women and girls playing sport and improve retention of adolescent girls

The **Participation focused grants engaged approximately 1176 women and girls** in a range of initiatives delivered through the HSHW grant program. We found that none of these projects would have been delivered without the HSHW funding.

On average, participants in funded activities were adult women; This reflects the membership base of the funded organisations (60% adult members). The only completed initiative that successfully engaged adolescent girls were delivered through a school (Case study 7).

Due to the short-term reporting time frame, the impacts of projects with younger participants on adolescent girls' retention are not clear.

### Successful strategies for participation projects

- **Knowing the starting point**
  - The need for grant activities to address gender inequities in participation and leadership was clearly established by SSO's and SSOD's through routine monitoring and reporting gender representation in their membership base.
- **Participant-informed program design** (pilot testing/pre-survey)
  - Half of the funded projects included primary data collection within the initial phases of their project, which provided information to enhance the quality of their project delivery.
  - Five organisations collected information from their target audience about current barriers to participation and used this data to design a comprehensive program that systematically overcame these barriers.
  - Four organisations pilot tested their initiatives at a small scale before rolling them out across a larger region. These pilot tests allowed the organisations to modify aspects of the program or, in some cases, re-design their entire initiative to engage participants better.
- **Connection with local stakeholders for delivery in their communities**
  - SSO's and SSOD's mostly had small, centralised teams with limited capacity to deliver comprehensive state-wide initiatives. Organisations that spent time engaging their affiliated clubs to deliver the HSHW projects with their local communities had good success and strengthened the initiative's sustainability after the funding period ceased as delivery staff remained in place.
  - A strength of connecting with local stakeholders, beyond affiliated clubs, was their existing relationships with the target audience. Where multicultural engagement was a focus, projects engaged local multicultural groups, which enhanced their reach into these communities.
- **Recruiting new participants through social media**

- To engage a new audience of women and girls, rather than those already regularly participating in their sport, various promotional activities were used, including website promotion, newsletters, social media posts, media articles, and word of mouth from their existing membership base. The most effective communication channel for reaching new audiences appeared to be social media, as part of a broader communication strategy.
- **Refreshing promotional material to reflect project intention**
  - Some organisations reported a disconnect between their initiatives and the resources available to promote them to the public. For example, promoting a fun, participation focused event with photos of highly competitive athletes. Aligning promotional materials to the experience of the event was more attractive to the target audience, e.g., photos of women of all shapes and sizes taking part.
- **Delivering more than a one-off session**
  - Through trial and error, organisations found that creating opportunities for women and girls to engage regularly had a more positive outcome for increasing participation and retention. For example, after their pilot, Surfing NSW changed from a one-off event to an event every Saturday in one month (4-week program). Triathlon NSW encouraged event organisers to develop strategies for first-timers in addition to their events. These regular engagement opportunities supported participant enjoyment and had the added benefit of creating social connections between new participants.
- **Communicating details about events specifically for women and girls**
  - Organisations found that communicating information to potential participants, which address anxieties about attending events (such as what to wear, where to park or not knowing who to talk to) removed barriers and were well received.
  - In-person coaching, and Facebook groups were beneficial to identify what information women and girls need to know before attending their events and provided an informal way for women and girls to ask questions and develop their confidence before an event
  - Another formal strategy was developing an internal communications review committee to ensure that event information answered many potential questions women and girls may have before participating in an event.

## Challenges to increasing participation

- **COVID restrictions**
  - The unprecedented COVID-19 restrictions during 2020-2021 caused all organisations to alter their planned initiatives. Organisations reported difficulties scheduling their in-person events and acknowledged some luck in timing their delivery.

- Organisations that reduced the scale of their planned delivery often added an online leadership or educational component to their participation focused initiatives in response to the COVID-19 restrictions. This additional component contributed to increasing the organisations capacity to create gender-inclusive environments through delivering multiple, complementary interventions.
- **Reaching adolescents outside of school**
  - Few participation initiatives targeted adolescents, and only one successfully engaged them. Organisations that included adolescents within their target audience, e.g., 13-65-year-old target audience, but did not focus on them specifically, had limited success engaging them.
- **Sustaining new initiatives after the funding period**
  - Organisations that delivered new initiatives through the grant program learnt a lot through their implementation and evaluation; however, the funding was exhausted in delivery. Few organisations included training local implementation staff or developing guidebooks for future delivery staff in round one.
- **Identifying stakeholders willing to try new things**
  - Some affiliated clubs were more receptive to trialling the HSHW initiatives than others. Organisations mentioned the importance of identifying areas with the least resistance for their early trials, rather than spending a lot of energy and resources trying to implement a project in an area with no history/interest in gender-inclusive activities.
- **Limited application of behaviour change theories**
  - Most projects were experimenting with new ideas through their grant projects to address the observed gender inequities. Their experimentation was most often informed by intuition and previous experience rather than evidence and behaviour change theories.

## Objective: Increase the number of women in leadership positions both on and off the field

The **Leadership focused grants engaged 227 women and girls** in a range of initiatives delivered through the HSHW grant program. These included online webinars, online education and accreditations, mentoring activities, and provision of supports (childcare, transport etc.).

The number of opportunities for women in leadership positions, on and off the field, were diminished by the impacts of COVID-19; however, projects developed female leaders' skills during the pandemic in preparation for future opportunities.

### Successful strategies

- **Scanning for leadership talent**
  - Participants engaged in leadership initiatives were already involved in the sport and purposefully selected for further growth. The engagement was typically achieved through direct conversations, member email blasts, and having information available on their website, newsletter and sometimes opened to a broader audience through social media.
  - By strengthening and developing the skills of women and girls involved in the sport, organisations found these program participants were more engaged, affirming their position in the sports community.
- **A person-centred approach to overcoming barriers**
  - Barriers for all women are not equal. Organisations found to retain influential leaders, providing a range of flexible options to support them in a leadership position, which met their individual needs, had good success rather than a one-size-fits-all approach—for example, mentoring for a young coach or allowing a family member to join them at a carnival to assist with childcare.
- **Formal education and accreditation**
  - Progressing women through the development pathway requires completion of accreditations, training, and course. While opportunities for practical experiences were limited, increased access to theory components prepared more women and girls for leadership positions off the field.
  - The demand for these courses was high, potentially due to significantly increased unemployment rates during the pandemic.
- **Online delivery**
  - Whether it was planned or not, online delivery during 2020-2021 was an effective way of engaging with the community and building leadership skills.
  - Online education and training received higher engagement than anticipated during the pandemic. Mentoring through online platforms was also positively received by mentors and mentees.
  - Online delivery proved to increase the flexibility of leadership initiatives, improving access for women and girls, especially those in regional areas.
- **Identifying appropriate influencers for the target audience**

- Aligned with the notion “*If she can see it, she can be it*”, organisations sought examples of women in leadership positions in their sport who they could profile to others and show them how competing priorities don’t need to stop women from excelling in leadership positions.
- Once influencers had been identified, webinars, website profiles and news articles were used to start the conversation about overcoming barriers to fulfil leadership positions in sport as a woman.
- **Media partnerships to amplify the message**
  - Increasing visibility of female coaches, officials, and role models to inspire participation in new markets needs experts to deliver the message. Most funded initiatives that received media attention were participation initiatives, except the How I Roll campaign. Media partners helped increase the visibility of Wheelchair sport’s initiative and developed relationships to keep telling stories of their members going forward.

## Challenges to increasing women in leadership positions

- **COVID-19 restrictions**
  - Many opportunities for the development of coaches at state- or national-competitions levels were cancelled or rescheduled due to COVID-19 restrictions.
  - With fewer opportunities available overall, there were only a limited number of leadership roles which new leaders could step into during the pandemic.
- **Access to formal accreditation**
  - The demand for training, education, and courses during the first round of delivery could not be met by the initiatives. For example, Surfing NSW reduced the cost of their courses and had to create a selection criterion rather than admit all interested individuals. In this case, the cost was a barrier to women and girls undertaking the training required to step into leadership positions off the field.
- **Technological capability when shifting to online delivery**
  - When program delivery pivoted from being face-to-face to online, it was a steep learning curve for organisations. They needed to learn how to utilise new technology platforms and ways of working to engage with members. Members also did not always have access to the technology required to meaningfully engage in online sessions (e.g., internet, headphones etc.).
- **National Sporting Organisation tensions**
  - SSO’s and SSOD’s did not have full control over all aspects of project delivery due to their place in the sports ecosystem. Accreditation and training may be led by the NSO and facilitated by the SSO or SSOD, limiting their ability to modify how training delivery and requirements.

## Objective: Improve gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments

The funding had a significant effect on increasing the capability and capacity of funded organisations to develop, deliver and evaluate new programs.

### Successful strategies

Improving gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments requires significant changes to social norms and deep systemic structures. Often these changes take a long time to be achieved and sustained. The HSHW strategy and HSHW grant program provide SSO's/SSOD'S with resources to advance gender inclusion in the sports sector. The initiatives that SSO's/ SSOD'S implement through the HSHW grant program across all funding categories have the potential to achieve successful change. Promising strategies are:

- **Multiple gender-inclusive actions across the organisation**
  - SSO's and SSOD's who delivered multiple initiatives addressing multiple HSHW grant program objectives gained significant momentum.
  - Organisations who received larger funding amounts or complementary funding from other NSW Government sources to address gender inequities in sport had a greater capacity to achieve change.
  - Organisations that integrated targets for gender inclusion within their strategy and/or developed gender-specific plans to increase participation of women and girls on and off the field were most successful at delivering comprehensive, organisational change.
- **Creating a brand from the strategy/initiative**
  - Organisations with a gender-inclusive strategy or target aligned their strategy both in objectives and name to the Her Sport Her Way strategy, e.g. "Her Sport", "Her Wave". This clearly demonstrates the momentum created from the Office of Sport's strategy.
  - The women's and girls' brands developed through these initiatives have gained traction among their target audiences. Organisations who developed a series of initiatives did so under a consistent brand that strengthened awareness of the organisations focus on creating gender-inclusive sports environments, e.g., Girls Making Waves, Finish Lines not Finish Times, and Her Wave.
- **Buy-in from the board**
  - Some organisations found more significant demand for their initiatives than anticipated when they applied to be part of the HSHW grant program. The enthusiasm from the sporting community for gender-inclusive initiatives led some CEOs to ask the board for additional funding to support the momentum from their clubs. This demonstrated organisational support for gender inclusion and extended the impact of the grants to creating gender-inclusive sporting environments.
- **Championed by SSO/ SSOD'S leaders irrespective of their gender**
  - The gender of the CEO or project leader was not associated with whether it was successful. The critical aspect was that the leader embodied the importance of gender equity in all aspects of their work.

- The HSHW funding was often used to assign human resources and accountability to the project leader to deliver the program. Having a person leading female-focused programs who was also involved in other aspects of the business meant gender inclusion filtered through the organisations into other situations that person was involved in.

## Challenges to creating gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments

- **COVID-19 impacts**
  - The COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions in 2020-2021 changed many aspects of sporting cultures.
- **Male-dominated sector**
  - Gender inclusion is not a priority across the entire sports sector ecosystem. During delivery, funded organisations aimed to avoid highly male-dominated areas, choosing to deliver their initiatives with allies. Organisations reported that working with like-minded clubs and partners required fewer resources and enabled proof of concept. It was anticipated that by sharing the benefits of project delivery with the gender-inclusive focused clubs, a shift in mindset could be achieved in male-dominated areas.

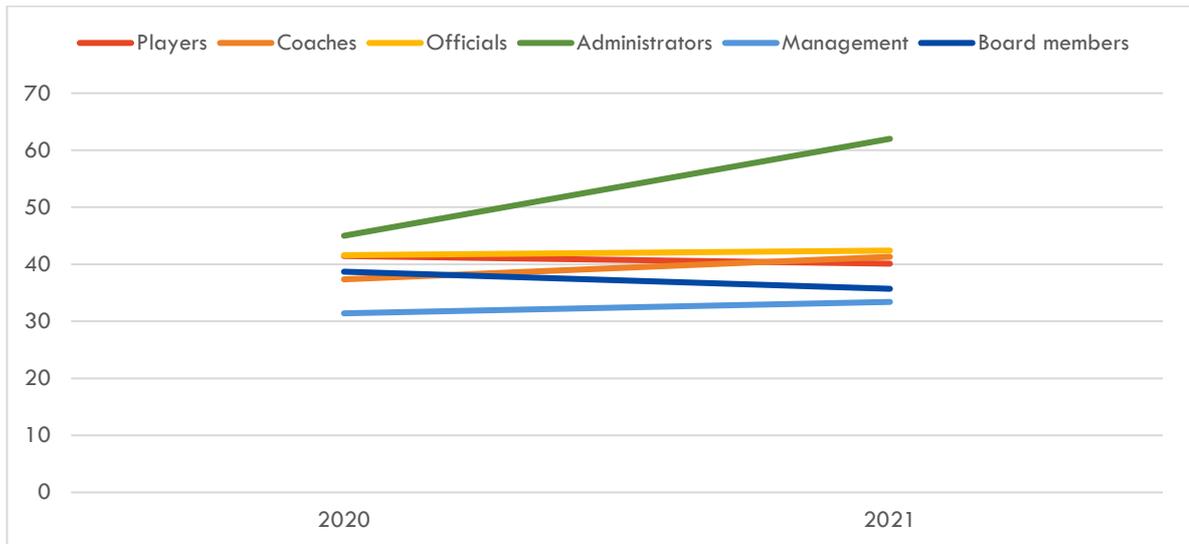
## Participation of women and girls in sport, on and off the field

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted participation during 2020-2021. The number of members across funded organisations decreased during the 12 months, along with the number of female members<sup>6</sup>. Figure 4 shows changes in the proportion of female members in different roles within funded organisations. The average proportion of female players and officials remained stable at around 40% across funded sports. While the size of most organisations' workforces shrunk during the funding period, females were retained, and the proportion of female coaches, administrators and managers increased compared to 2020.

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<sup>6</sup> We would not expect to observe a significant increase in the number of women and girls on and off the field in this 12-month timeframe, especially with the context of a pandemic.

Figure 4 Changes in the proportion of women and girls in sport, on and off the field 2020-2021, in funded organisations

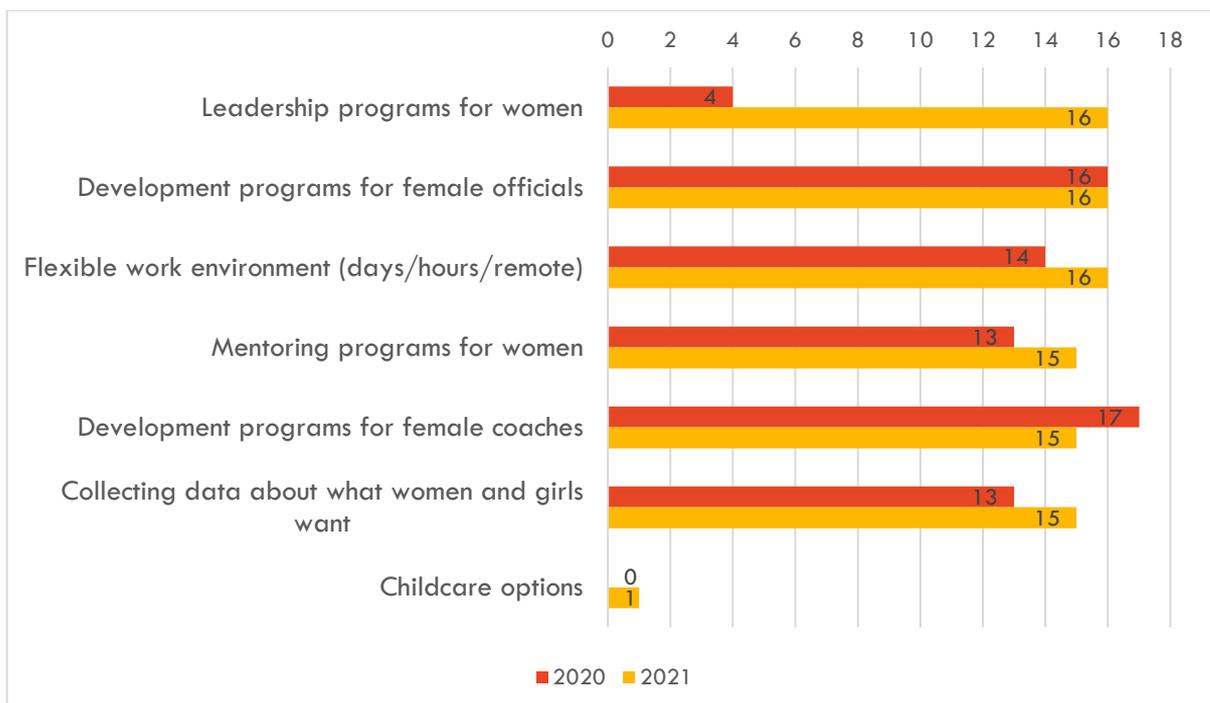


### Strategies off the field

We asked funded organisations "Which of the following strategies/actions to encourage greater participation from women/girls off the field has your organisation had in place during the past 12 months?"

In 2021, funded SSO's/SSOD's reported a significant increase in providing leadership programs for women. Increases in flexible work environments, mentoring programs and collecting data about what women and girls want off the field were also observed (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Changes in organisational strategies to encourage participation OFF the field



### Strategies on the field

We asked funded organisations, "Which of the following strategies/actions to encourage greater participation from women/girls on the field has your organisation had in place during the past 12 months?".

Responses were provided on a four-point range (1: Whole organisation, or widely in place 2: Part of organisation, including trials 3: Currently investigating, but not trialled 4: Not considering). The options available are listed below in order from most widely adopted to not being considered in 2021.

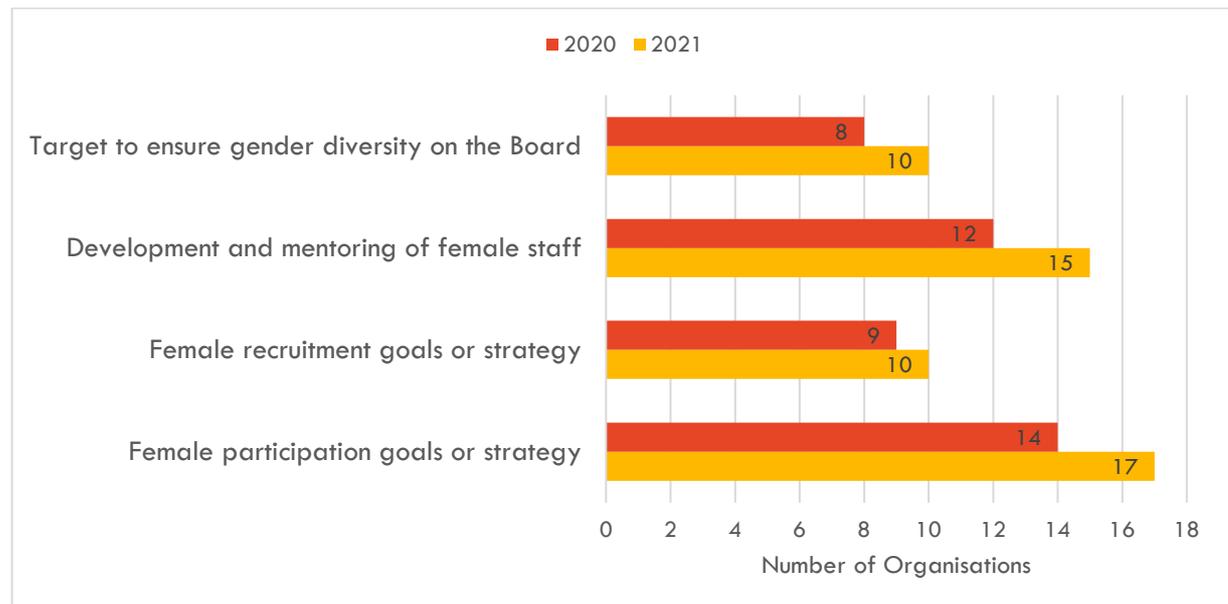
1. *Equitable facility access*
2. *Women/girls-only sessions and/or events*
3. *Non-competitive social or fitness-focused formats*
4. *Collecting data about what women and girls want*
5. *Flexible time & day options*
6. *Equipment provided by the organisation*
7. *Incorporating technology in program delivery*
8. *Change rooms facilities that meet the needs of women and girls as competitors, officials, and coaches*
9. *Shorter game formats*
10. *Uniforms designed for women and girls*
11. *Flexible membership options (short-term or casual)*
12. *Non-contact formats of the game*
13. *Childcare options for players*

Compared to 2020 survey responses, there was an increase in collecting data about what women and girls want, trialling non-competitive social or fitness-focused formats, and incorporating technology in program delivery.

## Formal policies and strategies

We asked, "Which of the following policies/plans/rules for diversity and gender inclusion has your organisation had in place during the past 12 months?". Figure 6 shows the difference in the number of organisations with organisational policies/plans/rules to ensure gender diversity across 2020 and 2021. This suggests that the HSHW strategy and HSHW grant program have made female-focused and gender-neutral programs a higher priority for SSOs/SSOD's.

Figure 6 Organisational policies/plans/rules for diversity and gender inclusion in place during the past 12 months



### Inclusive facility design awareness

Facilities should be planned, designed, and managed to be inclusive of all population groups. Organisations were asked, "Is your organisation aware of any inclusive design guidelines?". Ten organisations were aware of inclusive design guidelines in 2020, and this was the same in 2021. The guidelines highlighted each year were:

## Case Study Vignettes

The case studies and qualitative interviews have been combined to highlight key outcomes of each project funded in round one of the HSHW Grant program and the most significant changes from their initiatives.

### Case Study 1: The 'Roll Model' Project – Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT

*Aim: To increase the visibility of female role models in disability sport*

Wheelchair Sports NSW/ACT wrote, produced, and launched a music video to increase the visibility of disability sport athletes entitled "How I Roll". The [music video, performed by Casey Donovan](#), showcases the extraordinary spirit of the girls and women who play wheelchair sport. The clip featured Eliza Ault-Connell, junior wheelchair sport athletes, and other wheelchair sport stars projected onto the walls.

*"The Her Sport Her Way grant was the impetus for us to say, okay, here's our opportunity. We know we've got a problem with visibility. We also know we've got extraordinary athletes. How do we bring those ideas together now that we have some flexibility and funding to do it ... we set out to create a campaign that would elevate the*

*visibility of our wonderful athletes, not only the superstars of our sport but also the emerging younger athletes?”*

The HOW I ROLL Campaign launched on Tuesday, September 15th, 2020, and the media drive finished on Friday, September 25th. The campaign had over 128,000 views across Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. The campaign was also featured on a range of high-profile broadcast media spots (see summary: [https://youtu.be/KVyO3\\_8l4Fg](https://youtu.be/KVyO3_8l4Fg)).

The HSHW grant was an enabler. The funding allowed them to connect with high-quality production partners to create a resource that the sport will continue to use over the coming years. Most significantly, **it got Wheelchair Sport NSW/ACT on the radar of the female sports community** – starting a dialogue and relationship with a network of influential people, which they didn't have before. These new relationships will continue to ensure the stories of disability sport athletes are being told.

In addition to this successful awareness-raising project, Wheelchair Sport NSW/ACT was also funded through the NSW Government's Women Strategy to deliver a participation program. These complementary activities – the How I Roll campaign, and the Her Sport Festivals – contribute towards **Wheelchair Sport NSW/ACT's overall Her Sport Strategy**, inspired by Her Sport Her Way.

## Case Study 2: AFL Future Leaders Community Program -AFL NSW/ACT

*Aim: To improve the leadership and overall involvement of girls and boys participating in AFL, particularly to drive increases in volunteering, umpiring, coaching and other leadership positions.*

Volunteers and leadership are two areas clubs often struggle with, and improvements in this will lead to better club environments and greater retention and sustainability. This gender-neutral initiative was pilot tested in 2019 by AFL NSW/ACT on the North Coast, in partnership with the Institute of Sport (iSport). The pilot was delivered face to face with 30 kids and included an optional online component. The HSHW grant provided an opportunity to refine and expand the program across more regions of NSW. When COVID-19 hit, they adapted the model to be completed online. It was delivered via Zoom to four separate groups of kids in 3x1.5-hour sessions from April 20-25, 2020.

*“We chose April because it was the start of the footy season and it was school holidays. So, originally, we were looking at an April/May rollout if we were doing it face to face. Given it was school holidays and people were stuck at home, not being able to leave their houses, we just saw that as the opportunity to run something and to be honest, we weren't sure how many participants we'd get. It was something that we'd never tried in this format before. And to get 180 participants online, we were just blown away, and that shows that people were craving that engagement through that period in time.”*

The online format was necessary with COVID-19 restrictions. The experience for participants was different online, with some technical difficulties in the process (e.g.,

microphones and cameras not working, or difficulties logging in to session); however, it did have some benefits. E.g., “Some of the feedback we got was no travel was really positive”, and “it allowed for participants in different regions to mix and mingle and share ideas and have some variety”.

The participants feedback from the AFL Future Leaders Community Program was positive. Attendees reported an increase in knowledge and confidence around leadership. AFL NSW/ACT found through their feedback survey that 8.7/10 were likely to recommend the program to a teammate, and 9/10 reported they would likely take a leadership or volunteer role at the AFL club later in the year. Participants who took on leadership positions in their clubs have also been profiled in media articles and on the AFL NSW/ACT website.

The most significant change reported by AFL NSW/ACT was changing the mindset of young people to volunteer and be leaders in their local clubs.

*“The Youth Leadership Programme empowered the participants enough to say, right, we do have something to add. We’ve got value to add, and we’ve got a voice, and we’ve got the skills to be able to do it and the confidence to be able to do it. For me, that was the big change. To change the mindset of people to think just because I’m young, it doesn’t mean I can’t contribute.”*

## Case Study 3: Dive into Coaching and Officiating – Diving NSW

*Aim: To increase the number of females in high-performance roles, and provide education, mentoring and support for women in high-performance roles to fulfil professional goals with Diving NSW*

Observing their Membership database, it was clear that most coaches were male in the high-performance space. In contrast, most Diving participants are female. Diving NSW planned various initiatives that provide education, mentoring and support to change the gender imbalance in the sport.

In the education phase of the project, two female coaches were identified by the CEO and sent to attend the ACPE “Fast Track for Coaches Course”. One of these female coaches is now employed part-time to deliver a First Bounce program -which is a new program for Diving that focuses on athletes diving skill development. This puts her firmly on the pathway to be a high-performance coach. She’s mentored on and off in that environment by NSWIS coaches too, which will keep developing her skills.

*“the most significant change is that we’ve started a new programme that’s more skills focused. We already have a national talent programme... this is a programme that the targeted female coach will be coaching. That’s open to the general public. So, NSWIS can talent ID the athletes from that programme.”*

COVID-19 restrictions impacted other phases of the planned activities. In place of their planned face to face mentoring and training with high-performance coaches on pool

deck, Diving NSW and the NSW Institute of Sport organised 8 zoom sessions for Diving coaches, between April 2020 and August 2020. The Zoom sessions included 1-1.5-hour discussions with Olympic/National Coaches from Australia, USA, Canada, Switzerland, Mexico, and Scotland.

*“There’s a Scottish coach. She’s the head coach of Scotland. And she’s a female, she has children, she travels. And so, we got a lot of insight from her into how to manage family, and how difficult it is for sometimes a female to be in that high-performance space with all that travel. In that male dominated environment... it’s just opened up the minds of some of our members now, that they can aspire to become a high-performance coach.”*

Female coaches from throughout NSW and other parts of Australia attended the Zoom sessions. Participants in the Zoom sessions were able to get an insight into the High-Performance environment, learn specific techniques required for high-performance diving and psychology. These sessions were recognised by Diving Australia as part of the continuation credits needed to maintain coach accreditation, strengthened Diving NSW’s relationship with NSWIS and led to a Fair Play award nomination.

## Case Study 4: Girls Making Waves – Water polo NSW

*Aim: To increase visibility of water polo, nurture social inclusion, and enjoyment of all levels of participation and address barriers to participation in young girls, such as swimming ability and appearance.*

Through community consultation with clubs and associations, Water polo NSW found there wasn’t a clear introduction pathway for girls coming new to the sport, if they were not strong swimmers. After discussions with stakeholders and operational planning sessions, a new program was designed to introduce girls 7-12 to Water polo, entitled Girls Making Waves.

Girls Making Waves aims to provide a welcoming and enjoyable water polo experience for girls that may not have previously considered the sport, with the goal to give them the confidence to join a club. By offering a modified version of the traditional game, starting on land before moving to inflatable tubes in the water, participants develop fundamental movement skills with a focus on throwing the ball, moving towards the goal, and shooting the ball at the goal. This modified version of the sport was very new and required a different approach to promote the program to the target audience.

*“Removing the barrier of, the perceived barrier, of swimming ability was big. We were very strong in the registration materials and the flyers that went out, about don’t freak out, you don’t need to be able to tread water for an hour. It’s all about shallow water. You can stand up if you need to. And yes, the swimwear, because girls have that sometimes, not all, body image thing.”*

The program was communicated across social media channels, email flyer to clubs / associations, local print / online, radio and tv interviews. Reminder social content was posted in the week leading up to the sessions and emails to registered participants sent the week of the session.

79 girls aged between 7-12 participated in the Girls Making Waves sessions. It's delivered by ex-Olympic athletes who are passionate about the sport and introducing new participants to the sport in a fun way – they are known as Chief Fun Officers. Key findings from their feedback survey include: 73% of participants in the Girls Making Waves sessions had never played water polo before; 13% of participants had only played once or twice before. 90% of survey respondents said they would like to be kept up to date on further Girls Making Waves sessions in their local area. 30% of survey respondents showed an interest in joining a club. This positive feedback from the pilot phase of the Girls Making Waves program show that it should be expanded. While this pilot of Girls Making Waves was a one-off session, future delivery is likely to be extended over more sessions to build participants skills further.

The most significant change achieved through this program was a shift in culture among clubs to create an on-ramp for new players to grow participation.

*“As an overall community, Water Polo NSW has been able to change the perspective, that water polo isn't just deep water, seven-a-side. That's been the best thing to come out of this, for clubs and associations and players and coaches in Australia, is to realise we can change the game [to increase participation] and still be successful in the traditional format of the game.”*

There was also a leadership component to the program with a female-only coach and referee course delivered by the Girls Making Waves Ambassadors developing the next generation over an intensive weekend-long Technical Academy, resulting in 13 new female accredited coaches and referees aged between 15-45.

## Case Study 5: Finish Lines not Finish Times! – Triathlon NSW

*Aims: 1. To offer a fun, low barrier first touch opportunity for women to try their first triathlon in a safe, friendly, and low-pressure environment.*

*2. To reduce barriers identified for the target demographic and encourage ongoing participation by inviting them into the club environment, with the goal of encouraging further participation and club membership.*

The concept for the Finish Lines, not Finish Times initiative came from a successful women's only club event delivered by an affiliated club in 2019. This event functioned as a pilot where the organisation could take lessons from what had been delivered independently by one of their clubs and create opportunities for other clubs across the state to deliver events for females. In addition to gaining operational insights from this pilot event, Triathlon NSW administered a survey to listen to female participants about their previous experiences participating in Triathlons and reasons they may have stopped.

This information provided a strong foundation for planning their project delivery. Triathlon NSW invited their affiliated clubs to apply for a share of HSHW funding to run women's only events. The clubs had to read the survey responses from women when planning their application and include their own strategies for first-timers in their application.

61% of respondents said seminars/workshops or skills sessions could encourage women to participate in a triathlon, followed by race-day 'chaperones' for newbies and social events, e.g., women's rides. Women's only training, women's only start waves or races, shorter length events and prizes were all strongly supported by respondents.

*“so, we put the onus on the clubs to say, how are you going to make this event supportive and encouraging for first-timers?... this was part of the application criteria”*

Triathlon NSW received 13 applications from 11 clubs, and with some additional investment from the board, were able to offer a range of different multisport events throughout NSW- aquathons, duathlons, triathlons. Some of the events were women-only events, and some added a women's only wave to an existing event. Each club's strategies for first-timers were unique, including goodie bags, Facebook support groups, group training sessions, and gym access around the event - but all aimed to create more welcoming and inclusive environments.

While the local clubs delivered the events, the SSO provided financial support and day-to-day support with running that event. Critically, the SSO took control of the marketing collateral for all events, which allowed the public to view the events as a series. This consistent marketing approach created a brand that people wanted to be part of and demonstrated the role of Triathlon NSW in delivering the events. Local club pages distributed the collateral to connect with their local audiences. Over time, clubs also helped the SSO enhance their materials for promoting the event.

*“We always say, Triathlon is for all ages and abilities but then our marketing and our media is photos of elite athletes.... once the events started happening, and a lot of the clubs got their own photographers... so now I have this huge bank of photos of just women having fun, women of all shapes and sizes. And we just gradually introduced it into our regular communications.”*

Through these events, Triathlon NSW engaged 660 participants (average age 41 years). Most (77%) of participants were not members, 36% had not participated in a multisport event before, and 25% had not participated in a multisport event in the past five years. This demonstrates they engage new participants in the sport through these Finish Lines, not Finish Times events and brought back many participants who had previously participated in multisport but not competed in recent years. The staff reflected that the most significant change achieved was how they “tapped into that market we didn't really know existed.” Whilst a remaining challenge for triathlon NSW is to engage younger females (12-25 years).

These female-focused events, delivered by local clubs, changed the way these clubs engaged with their communities. Having seen the success of the clubs funded in round one, there is an increased appetite to deliver non-competitive but challenging events for women and girls.

*“a lot of the clubs already expressed to us that they want to run them off their own back, they want to find funding every year to run a women’s event now.”*

## Case Study 6: Women Only Swim Meet – Masters Swimming

*Aim: To provide a women’s only swim meet in Western Sydney which to encourages participants to enjoy swimming as a healthy, accessible activity.*

Enthusiasm, energy and brainstorming between Swim School Director and Swim Sisters provided the basis for this event. Swim Sisters is an all-female swimming squad that removes fear and empowers women from multicultural backgrounds to get in the water and get moving. A one-off swimming competition was held at Auburn pool which was open only to women. Masters Swimming’s role was to create an opportunity for competition and guide participants to achieve personal bests through the event.

*“A program of events was structured along the lines of a regular master’s Swim carnival with online entries for existing female members and non-members all over 18 years of age. Four organisations pulled together to run an event at twilight; Officials were on deck, race times were taken, a BBQ was provided, barriers & screens were in place for privacy.”*

Forty-five women pre-booked online, and a few entries were accepted on the evening. During the event, they found that more time was required to educate new swimmers on master’s Swimming’s competition protocols to ensure seamless competition. Furthermore, Masters Swimming recognised that a stronger understanding of privacy requirements for participants would have improved the event. This event received a small amount of funding and had limited capacity to undertake evaluation activities.

## Case Study 7: Removing the "Priorities" Barrier – Hockey NSW

*Aim: to lift females in coaching, support, and mentor roles with Hockey NSW to mirror the 60% of females playing Hockey.*

Hockey NSW data supports research that fear of judgment, in relation to priorities, is a significant barrier to female participation in sport on and off the field. In 2019, Hockey NSW had 104 State team coaching & support roles on offer, and only 38% filled by females. Further, females comprised just 15% of roles available within male state teams. In comparison, 40% of roles within female state teams were filled by males. These disparities were driving Hockey NSW’s action to address gender inequities in their sport.

The 2018 Hockey NSW member engagement survey listed pregnancy in the top 2 reasons females left the sport. 76% of female players leaving the sport were satisfied with their experience but were still exiting due to conflicting priorities (e.g., family), not

because they are disenfranchised. Only 10% of their female umpires sit within the 30-40 age range. Their elite female Officials tend to commence their careers after 40 once family commitment & competing priorities diminish. This evidence built the case for Hockey NSW to intervene with HSHW grant program initiatives to lift females in coaching, support, and mentor roles with Hockey NSW to mirror the 60% of females playing Hockey.

Eight female members of the Hockey NSW community were engaged as part of this initiative. The team at Hockey NSW spoke with each person individually and developed strategies specifically to overcome the barriers they identified as holding them back.

*“When you talk about being flexible with coaches, players, and officials, that actually means giving them options, which we haven’t previously given... we now have a budget dedicated to ensuring Hockey NSW is flexible in providing support... when you say to someone you can grab a family room in the hotel and bring your mum along [to look after your child], that makes a difference.”*

When COVID-19 restrictions were imposed, and State Championships were cancelled, Hockey NSW came up with a different way of engaging their members and ex-elite athletes. They launched the inaugural Female Coach identification and development Program. The program hand-picked 20 young female athletes to be mentored by Casey Sablowski and Kate Jenner. The program aims to build capacity and capability away from the playing field to accelerate their progress into senior hockey roles and or as role models. Using videoconferencing, the 20 young females have been able to have one-on-one communication and mentoring with current and former Hockeyroos. The use of videoconferencing enabled the program to reach more females based in regional locations.

*“when you’re talking about balancing priorities for our females that have young families, then Zoom again makes absolute sense. If you had to fly or drive four, five, six hours somewhere, that’s a pretty big burden... Whereas if it means jumping on a Zoom call for an hour, that’s far more flexible.”*

The CEO reflected in the interviews that the most significant change was an increased awareness throughout the organisation about creating more gender equity.

*“Waking the organisation up that if you just expect something to happen, it won’t, you’ve got to change your stars overtly. You’ve got to actually change your strategy, change your plans to make it happen.”*

## Case Study 8: Multicultural engagement project— Hockey NSW

*Aim: To encourage participation from outside traditional hockey populations as part of our strategic commitment to increase diversity and inclusion within the sport of Hockey.*

Females of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) are underrepresented in Hockey. Previous research has found that creating links and establishing partnerships with CALD communities will help codes promote their sport to these groups and may lead to increased levels of participation.<sup>7</sup> A further report on CALD women identified multiple barriers that could reduce their desire to participate or change the kinds of sport and recreation activities they would choose. A lack of culturally appropriate facilities, high costs, family responsibilities or a lack of transport, for example could cause women to choose informal activities (like walking or exercising at home) over either organised sport or recreation activities.<sup>8</sup> Using this evidence as a base, Hockey NSW established partnerships with leaders of multicultural communities to co-design and deliver initiatives to increase diversity and inclusion within the sport of hockey.

*“One of the first things we did with that project was bring on a number of what we called female multicultural ambassadors... Each from different communities and started to talk about the different perspectives and things that we needed to be conscious of ...it was incredibly beneficial, having those ambassadors, those experts that could actually educate Hockey about accessibility.”*

“The one thing that kept coming through is this whole concept of trust, that when you’re going into a multicultural community, and you’re asking them to be part of your sport, there’s this period of actually building trust with the multicultural leaders of that community.”

Hockey NSW’s Multicultural engagement project successfully engaged 150 females in their Entry Level Hockey programs. This was achieved through targeting schools and colleges as well as our come and try community event. They found through a participant survey that 74% of participants in this initiative were given the opportunity to try hockey for the first time in their lives. Feedback was very positive from the events, and 83% of participants said they were keen to play more hockey. Hockey NSW hopes to see them join in the upcoming season.

In addition to high engagement of CALD communities at these events, Hockey NSW’s initiative was shared widely on their social media accounts, and gained media attention, featured on Primetime SBS News and in multicultural news media. These promotional showcases of Hockey NSW’s work to engage CALD communities may also contribute to more CALD females being interested in the sport, down the track.

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<sup>7</sup>[https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/racial\\_discrimination/whats\\_the\\_score/pdf/conclusion\\_and\\_key\\_issues.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/content/racial_discrimination/whats_the_score/pdf/conclusion_and_key_issues.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/women/publications-articles/general/participation-in-sport-and-recreation-by-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-women?HTML>

For Hockey NSW, the most significant change was that they developed a model to improve inclusion in the sport, which can be adapted to continue to create opportunities for more of the community to participate in hockey.

*“The whole model concept of looking through the female lens we’re absolutely using in other parts of the business. And then drawing on expertise outside of Hockey New South Wales to help when you’re looking through that lens. So, the ambassadors, as I’ve mentioned, we’re looking at starting indigenous ambassadors.”*

## Case Study 9: Her Wave – Surfing NSW

*Aim: To increase access, break down barriers and increase motivation for more females to participate in surfing by creating a fun, safe and encouraging environment for females to participate & promote ongoing commitment to the sport.*

The female demographic is an untapped market and significant growth area. Based on conversations and discussions with community members, Surfing NSW designed a Stand-Up Paddle (SUP) board program for delivery. Surfing NSW also employed a Project Officer to deliver this and their other funded initiative (Case Study 10).

SUP had been identified as an approachable activity for newcomers, which was easy to pick up, fun and enjoyable compared to surfing which is more difficult to learn. Before large-scale roll-out, four pilot SUP sessions were delivered and were poorly attended. Through feedback from those who had registered, Surfing NSW learnt from that women these were more interested in developing the skills to surf rather than SUP. They also found that by providing a free program, participants were less committed to attending.

*“We initially thought who’s not going to take up these lessons? ... we learnt a lot through that...you can’t just put things on for free, whether it’s movie night, you need to put, even, a \$5 amount just to ensure that they come.”*

Using their learnings from their pilot and additional consultations with surf schools regarding program design, delivery, uptake & challenges with female participants, a new program was created entitled “Her wave”. The Her Wave program was offered as a four-week progressive surf program delivered by local surf schools or board rider clubs, facilitated by Surfing NSW.

*“we didn’t want to just get the numbers and get these females through. We want them to be coming back and actually stand up on a board and love the sport, because it’s more about quality, not quantity... we talked to some surf school owners ...four weeks had worked for retention in the past.”*

The Her Wave program taught participants how to surf and included additional, surf relayed progressive or wellness activities such as Yoga, video analysis & Gym access. Programs catered to both beginner and intermediate female surfers to ensure progression options were available. These programs were delivered on weekend mornings from October 2020 through to February 2021. Activities were not impacted by COVID-19 restrictions.

Surfing NSW did not have a database available to reach out to people who had left the sport or tried it a few times and left. Their partnership with local Surf Schools and board rider clubs overcome this challenge, by integrating the program within their usual delivery program. These partners received funding to deliver the program and had KPI's to engage participants.

*“we put it out to our surf schools, who wants to be involved? And there were four standouts [Affiliated clubs] that wanted to do this programme. And rather than us going there and rolling it out, we said we're just going to facilitate and help your existing female programme.”*

In addition to engaging these partners to aide recruitment, Surfing NSW also set up a Her Wave Instagram account. This account provided another avenue to build a women's database to promote future opportunities for women and girls to engage with surfing. It shared content specific to women and girls to support the aims of this project.

*“we don't want to put photos of people doing massive turns and setting this unrealistic goal of surfing. It was more having fun, beginner surfers or just laughing on a wave.”*

229 females were engaged in the Her Wave program. Participants ranged from 25-60 years old; 80% were beginners and 20% were intermediate surfers. Prior to this initiative, Surfing NSW was not facilitating activities in local surf schools and board rider clubs – they did their own thing while Surfing NSW focused on accreditations and competitions. This funding provided new resources, through the employment of a project officer, who was able to build a network, connect with partners, test ideas, and bring the market potential of engaging women in surfing to the forefront.

*“it made the organisation go, wow, this[women] is actually an untapped market that we really need to put more energy behind. And even if it's our events crew being a little bit more aware of it, and when they talk to girls at events, they might see potential for one of them to do a coaching certificate.”*

The demonstrated potential from this project has shifted the mindset of affiliated clubs and internally within the organisations to plan to ensure surfing provides an inclusive culture for women and girls.

## Case Study 10: Women's Education Roadshow— Surfing NSW

*Aim: To increase the representation of females in leadership positions at a state level.*

Representation of female in Surfing NSW's judging and coaching are lacking. The Women's Education Roadshow was designed to promote more gender-balanced roles within our officiating pathway and retain female involvement in the sport. Surfing NSW planned to achieve this through providing a discounted rate for educational courses required to move through the leadership pathway. To identify target areas, Surfing NSW requested all surf schools shared a list of their active coaches. This information,

previous communications with surf schools and nominations received from affiliated clubs helped identify who received the discount vouchers.

*“We gained too much demand for what we had to offer, so we had to create a selection criterion that was fair and easily distributed between all our clubs, surfs, schools and regions.”*

Surfing NSW selected, informed, and evenly distributed accreditation voucher codes to successful candidates. Nominated participants commenced their online e-learning via the Surfing Australia website. Selected judges completed five modules online at the own pace. Participants could read coursework and complete multiple-choice questions throughout the modules. Upon completion, participants must pass an online test to be granted a Certificate of completion, uploaded on the surfing New South Wales profile. After online training was completed, participants also completed a practical component. A major challenge during the education roadshow was a change from the National Sporting Organisation in the documentation required to complete accreditation after training. This unforeseen additional work required additional resource to ensure that all participants in this initiative received their accreditation and were not disadvantaged due to Surfing Australia document requirements.

The online delivery was already planned before COVID-19 impacts hit however was to provide access and flexibility for people across the state to enhance their skills during COVID times. 95% of participants preferred online learning concerning in-person courses.

In total, 63 women completed a judge or coach accreditation course through this initiative. The project team also visited 45 surf schools, board rider clubs, coaches, and judges to discuss the needs of the network in NSW.

*“we were able to see that there is a demand for this out there that we didn't think otherwise.”*

The project has created an excellent blueprint program under Her Wave's "Lead Her" pillar and is a concept we are hoping to leverage investment by a brand in the future.

## Conclusions

The HSHW grant program is a key initiative in the NSW Government's women in sport strategy - Her Sport Her Way. The evaluation shows that the first round of HSHW grant projects have contributed towards achieving the grant programs long-term objectives; notably even amidst a pandemic. Without government leadership, it is likely that creating gender-inclusive sporting environments would not have been a high priority for SSO's and SSOD's at this time. The HSHW grant funding provided organisations with necessary resources to experiment and deliver new initiatives towards increasing participation of women and girls in sport, on and off the field.

This report shared interim findings from the first round of the HSHW grant program (2020-2021). This round of grant funding was severely impacted by the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most organisations extended their delivery timeline however, ten HSHW initiatives across eight SSO's/SSOD's were completed within the 12-month timeline (Figure 1). Further evaluation of the seventeen projects which were not completed during the first round of the funding should be undertaken. Additional actions may be required to increase the capacity of these organisation to deliver their initiatives once the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their operations are fully realised.

The initiatives that were completed during the first round of the HSHW grant program provide insights for future rounds. The strengths and challenges faced during grant delivery should be clearly communicated to the next round of successful HSHW grant program recipients. Sharing knowledge between SSO's/SSOD's and grant rounds will help build a stronger foundation for future projects and elevate the outcomes achieved in future funding rounds. The information collected through the current evaluation provides sufficient detail to inform the sector.



*Figure 7 Attendees representing the funded organisations in round one of the HSHW grant program, at the announcement at ANZ Stadium in 2020*

## Contact

**SPRINTER, Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney School of Public Health,  
Faculty of Medicine and Health, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney.**

D17 Charles Perkins Centre

The University of Sydney

NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 286 276 222

Email: [SPRINTER.group@sydney.edu.au](mailto:SPRINTER.group@sydney.edu.au)

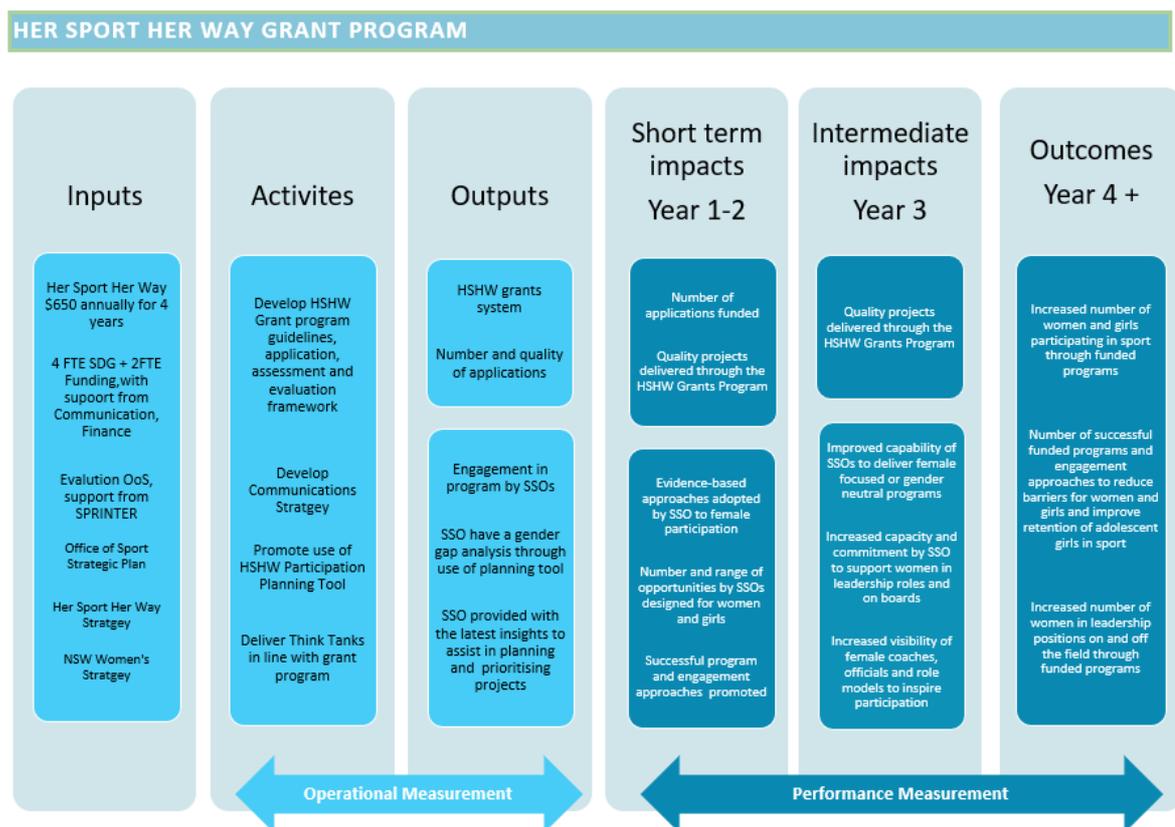
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/our-research/research-centres/prevention-research-collaboration.html>

<https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/sprinter-group>



# Appendix 1: HSHW Grant Program Logic Model

Figure 1 presents a logic model with six stages of the HSHW grant program implementation. Although each stage and components appear separate, they are highly related to each other.



## Inputs

The inputs to the HSHW program were all established by the NSW Government.

## Activities

Each of the listed activities are described in the HSHW Annual reports.

## Outputs

The **HSHW grants system** was developed to receive grant applications from State Sporting Organisations (SSO) and State Sporting Organisations for Disability (SSOD's) and administer the grant to successful applications. **60 SSOs/SSOD's engaged in the program** by submitting one or more applications for the first round of HSHW grant program funding.

The Participation Planning Tool (PPT) was launched in 2019 for **SSO's/SSOD's to have a gender gap analysis through use of the PPT**. In June 2020, 55% (n=12) of funded State Sporting Organisations reported they used the PPT in the past 6 months. In June 2021, 36% (n=8) of round 1 grant recipients reported using the PPT in the past 6 months.

All SSO's were provided with **the latest insights to assist in planning and prioritising projects** through the annual HSHW Think Tanks. SPRINTER provided insights from the

Active Kids evaluation, AusPlay and academic articles and reports for the Office of Sport to share with SSO's during the annual HSHW Think Tanks.

SPRINTER developed and delivered **two HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Workshops** with the round 1 HSHW grant program participants. The Evaluation Workshops were delivered on February 20<sup>th</sup> and February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. These workshops aimed to build capacity for evaluation in State Sporting Organisation staff working on projects funded through HSHW and to help the SSOs understand the evaluation framework and data collection process embedded within the HSHW funding agreement.

After participating in the evaluation workshop, SSO's were provided with a **HSHW case study template**. This resource, developed by SPRINTER, provided each project with a template for reporting from the beginning of the project to assist with their project planning and evaluation design.

Throughout round 1, SPRINTER have provided **ongoing evaluation support** to all funding recipients. Emails, phone calls, meetings, and virtual meetings (Teams/Zoom) were used to co-design data collection tools unique to the needs of the funded projects (surveys, feedback forms, registration questions etc.)

## Appendix 2: Funded Projects in 2020

A selection panel reviewed all applications, selecting **27 successful projects to receive funding, engaged from 23 SSOs**. Projects were funded under three objectives of the HSHW Grant program. The organisation **in bold** are the ones who completed the delivery of their project in Year 1.

Participation	Leadership	Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL NSW/ACT</li> <li>• CONFEDERATION OF AUSTRALIAN MOTOR SPORT</li> <li>• DEAF SPORTS AUSTRALIA</li> <li>• FOOTBALL NSW</li> <li>• GOLF NSW LIMITED</li> <li>• <b>HOCKEY NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>MASTERS SWIMMING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>NEW SOUTH WALES WATER POLO INCORPORATED</b></li> <li>• NSW GYMNASTICS</li> <li>• NSW HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING ASSOCIATION</li> <li>• NSW RUGBY UNION</li> <li>• ROWING NSW</li> <li>• ROWING NSW</li> <li>• SKATE NSW</li> <li>• SOFTBALL NSW</li> <li>• <b>SURFING NSW INCORPORATED</b></li> <li>• <b>TRIATHLON NEW SOUTH WALES LIMITED</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AFL NSW/ACT</b></li> <li>• BASKETBALL NSW</li> <li>• DISABLED WINTER SPORTS</li> <li>• <b>DIVING NSW INC</b></li> <li>• <b>HOCKEY NSW</b></li> <li>• SAILABILITY NSW INC</li> <li>• <b>SURFING NSW INCORPORATED</b></li> <li>• TENNIS NSW</li> <li>• <b>WHEELCHAIR SPORTS NSW</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL CLUB</li> </ul>