

CHANGE OUR GAME

Girls in Sport Summit

KEY INSIGHTS



A young woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a red and blue soccer jersey and blue shorts, is running on a green grass field. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and a yellow structure.

Introduction

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Head, Office for Women in Sport and Recreation

The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation was established in 2017 by the Victorian Government and I was appointed the Head of the Office in that year.

It's the first Office of its kind in Australia and we are working to level the playing field across all levels of sport and recreation for women and girls.

We know girls tend to drop out of competitive sport when they're around 15 years old and often, the reasons for this relate to the environment, culture, people and facilities.

We also see fewer women holding visible leadership roles in sport in Victoria. Leadership positions across all levels of sport and active recreation can be varied but generally will include club presidents, coaches, umpires or referees, administrators and managers.

The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation is committed to achieving our objectives and what better way to determine what the barriers are for girls than to ask them ourselves. The Girls in Sport Summit provided us with valuable insight which will underpin future strategy and inform policy to level the playing field for women and girls here in Victoria.

On 13 October 2018, in the week of the International Day of the Girl, the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation (OWSR) hosted a first-of-its-kind deliberation, bringing together 82 girls aged between 13 and 15 years old, who are currently engaged in club sport.

The OWSR wanted to know what it's like for girls participating in club sport, what keeps them involved and what may turn them away.



The Summit provided an opportunity for OWSR and the participant group to not only work together, but to work together differently. Equipped with key information presented by the OWSR, together with their own knowledge and experience, participants worked together in small groups. Their task: to develop ideas and strategies in response to critical questions about participation, clubs, facilities and leadership.

This document has been prepared by the OWSR to highlight a selection of the key insights from the Summit. A comprehensive Summit Report* has also been developed. This report collates and synthesises the results of each survey and workshop.



The outcomes will be used by the OWSR to inform its work in increasing the participation of girls in sport and active recreation and in supporting the next generation of leaders.

By working together and driving positive change throughout the sector, we will Change Our Game for women and girls in sport.

* Summit Report prepared by Sixfold Consulting Group is available on request from the OWSR. Email changeourgame@sport.vic.gov.au



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

PART 1

Imagine Victoria in 10 years' time as the best place for girls to play sport.

Participants were asked the question, what would this look like?

Specific quotes have been selected as examples of participant responses

Women get paid the same as the men

"Girls get paid as much as the boys. Girls get to concentrate on training more without needing another job to support them."

Women are respected for their sporting talent and sport is viewed as gender neutral

"It's normal for girls to say 'I play football' and not be seen as a tomboy"

"People think differently about girls' sport. It's not seen as better or worse".

Equal media coverage, advertising and publicity for women in sport

"Women's sport on TV as much as men's sport."

More opportunity for girls to get involved and participate in sport

"There will be enough girls to run a full age group."

More women in leadership positions and viewed as role models in sport

"The opportunity for women and girls to pursue what they desire in sport. Coaching, administration and playing."

Equal crowds for women's sport

"Women and girls playing in the larger stadiums and boys and men wanting to come along to watch".

Facilities, uniforms and equipment that is designed for women

"Equal opportunities for facilities and hours of usage."

"Women and girls not needing to 'adapt' to fit."

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE LOOK LIKE?

PART 2

What do we need to change to get there?

Participants were asked to vote on the two ideas we most need to achieve if Victoria is to be the best place for girls to play sport.

1. EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN IN SPORT

Government to drive change at all levels

"...Government to [support equal] pay rates at clubs... especially for women."

Use money from the men's competition

"Don't wait until you have the money to pay the women, use the money from the men's competition - so women can spend the same time training as men."

Build support, spectators and sponsors with greater promotion, advertising and broadcasting

"More TV broadcasting [of women's sport] - at the same time as men's [sport]."

Cultural change: boys need to value girls; girls need more confidence to voice their opinions; and we need to change how people see girls' sport

"Boys [need to be]... more supportive and seeing [sic] there is a problem."

"...break down the barriers of what is a boy's sport and what is a girl's sport."

"Encourage girls to voice their opinion - be heard."

2. MORE GIRLS PARTICIPATE IN SPORT AND HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE AT ALL LEVELS

Clubs are structured around the way girls want to play

"Girls want to play... with friends, [and to] have fun."

New competition and pathway structures, including competitions offering sport in more age groups

"More administrators and commitment for new comp structures (where there are age gaps)."

Participants worked together in small groups to respond to this question. A selection of their summarised responses from both questions are provided below.

Think of some of the girls in your class at school who don't play sport. What can be done to encourage them to play club sport?

- Make it more affordable for girls to play club sport.
- Provide opportunities for girls to try a diverse range of sports (e.g. at school).
- Encourage and support all girls to give sports a go, regardless of their ability, so that they feel comfortable and have the confidence to participate.
- Provide 'bring a friend' and 'come and try' opportunities.
- Provide information to girls about different sports, clubs and how leagues work.
- Provide girls-only opportunities so girls can play and train separately to boys.
- Have flexible options so that sport can be accommodated around homework and social activities.
- Send the message about the value of sport by promoting the health and social benefits.
- Provide social and non-competitive opportunities to play.
- Consider logistics when scheduling training/games.

We know there is a drop-off of girls that play sport at 15 years old.

What would keep them involved?

- Provide flexible, non-competitive opportunities to play sports.
- Have coaches that understand girls, treat players equally and are not all about winning.
- Make sure girls get equal access to a diverse range of sports and to suitable teams.
- Promote supportive, welcoming and inclusive environments.
- Let girls wear what they want when they play sport.
- Show girls that it is ok to be active and how sport can go hand in hand with schoolwork, reduce stress and help maintain friendships.
- Ensure parents, family members and coaches provide active encouragement and support for girls.
- Provide support and information on pathways, including pathways to elite levels and pathways for those who get cut from teams.
- Create rewarding opportunities for girls to take on other roles e.g. coaching and officiating.

WHY I STARTED PLAYING CLUB SPORT



To have fun



To improve my skills



I know someone involved already



To be with friends



To compete



To do something I'm good at



To get fit



To stay in shape

Participants individually responded to a series of survey questions. A selection of responses are set out below.



Trying my best



Having fun



Winning

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO ME?



Playing well as a team



Improving my skills

WHAT WOULD MAKE ME STOP PLAYING?



It's not fun anymore



My teammates don't make me feel welcome



I have other priorities



The standard of play is too low



It's not competitive enough



Cost of play or equipment too high

CLUB FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

Tell us about a time when you
(or another girl you know) felt
like you didn't belong or felt
unhappy at your club

Participants were asked to share stories in small group settings. Their stories included concerns about: coach, parent and spectator behaviour; safety in and around clubs; change rooms; poor team and club culture; teasing and disrespect; favouritism; playing with and against older players or with boys; and the standard of play being too high or not high enough.

"Coach body shamed the girls and used swear words while they played."

"Boys walking in and out of the change room while the girls are having their team talks and getting changed."

"Clubrooms were poorly lit with the drinking tap around the corner. One night a girl was approached by a strange man and had to yell for help."

"There are only toilets to get changed in because the change rooms have no private space."

"...the club song is gender biased towards males."

"At the start of the season the girls had no coach because the coach went to a boys' team and the substitute coach made it clear he did not want to be there."

"...using terms that are still male orientated - 'man up' coming from parents and coaches."

"Funding received for women's sport participation but the money is spent on the boys."

CLUB FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENT

Participants individually responded to a series of survey questions. Key insights from the surveys are set out below.

There were some positive responses to the questions around club facilities and environments.

For example, when asked if boys of a similar age get access to more space to train on, 50% of respondents answered that they get the same or better access to training space compared to their male counterparts.

However, participants also identified areas where there is clear need for improvement.

AT MY CLUB I HAVE ACCESS TO:

Analysis

Access to what is considered basic amenities (toilet paper, sanitary bins, safe toilet/change facilities) is still an issue.

88%

Toilet paper

85%

Toilets with doors that close and lock

74%

Sanitary bins

70%

Toilets that are generally clean

65%

Toilet areas that feel safe

65%

A place to change that feels safe

BOYS OF A SIMILAR AGE GET MORE RECOGNITION THAN GIRLS AT MY CLUB

31%

AGREE/
STRONGLY AGREE

26%

NEITHER AGREE
NOR DISAGREE

22%

DISAGREE/
STRONGLY DISAGREE

21%

NOT SURE/
DOESN'T APPLY

What are some characteristics of effective leaders?

Participants were asked what they thought were the characteristics of an effective leader in sport. Some of the most common characteristics nominated by participants are set out below:

GOOD
COMMUNICATOR

ENCOURAGING

APPROACHABLE

OPEN MINDED

SUPPORTIVE

UNDERSTANDING

KNOWLEDGEABLE

PASSIONATE

COMMITTED

FAIR

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

- Support, reassurance and encouragement from my club, team, family and the community
- More women in leadership roles, to improve stereotypes, role-modelling and visibility of women in these roles
- Knowledge about how to pursue a leadership role, including information on pathways, expectations and where to look for opportunities
- Payment for taking on leadership roles, including equal pay with boys and men at an elite level
- Respect from club members and the community and the enforcement of codes of conduct
- Mentors, including women mentors, who can assist and guide me
- More opportunities to try leadership roles, including flexible and graduated options
- The courage and confidence to back myself and ask for advice
- The knowledge that I am making a difference, that it can be fun and improve me as a player.

The important role
coaches play.

I PREFER A COACH WHO IS:



GENDER DOESN'T
MATTER



FEMALE



MALE

IS IT IMPORTANT THAT I GET ON WELL WITH MY COACH?

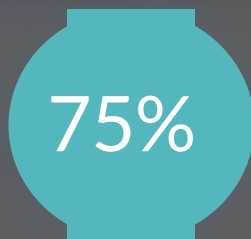
(on a scale of 1-5, how important is this to the decision that you stay at your club?)

88%

Of respondents gave getting on well
with their coach a high priority
rating*.

*On a scale of 1-5, the rated this 4 or 5 out of 5 (with 5
being the highest).

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A FEMALE COACH?



HAVE HAD A FEMALE
COACH BEFORE



HAVE NEVER HAD A
FEMALE COACH

CONCLUSION

The findings of the comprehensive Summit Report (available on request)* will be used to inform the future strategies and policies of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation. The valuable data will assist the sector to not only increase opportunities for women and girls on and off the pitch but also to support the next generation of sports leaders pursue their leadership goals.

The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation partnered with a number of key stakeholders to deliver the Change Our Game: Girls in Sport Summit.

We would like to recognise their vision and support in delivering this project. Thank you to:

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*The Summit Report prepared by Sixfold Consulting is available on request. If you have any questions or would like a copy of the full report, please email changeourgame@sport.vic.gov.au

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