
RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN IN SPORT AND RECREATION

A GUIDE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION CLUBS

This guide has been developed to help you increase the number of women and girls in leadership roles at your club. It also offers guidance on strategies to ensure women and girls have rewarding experiences in these roles, making them more likely to stay on longer in leadership positions.

Sport and recreation clubs can involve more women and girls in leadership positions at all levels from grassroots through to elite.

Women continue to be under-represented in visible leadership roles across the sport and recreation sector. Grassroots sport and recreation clubs play an important role to drive positive change.

Gender diversity is key to growing your club.

Gender diversity is an important element in creating a healthy club environment. Clubs that offer appealing participation and leadership opportunities for people of all genders, not just men and boys, can attract and retain a wider range of members, making it easier to grow their membership base.

Leadership happens in many different roles.

Leaders don't just have to be presidents. Leaders may also include committee members, coaches, instructors, officials, and other key volunteers such as team managers.

Women can face different barriers to leadership:

- Women often feel reluctant to take on leadership roles in male-dominated environments.
- Women in leadership roles often report feeling intimidated or treated dismissively.
- If a leadership environment is not welcoming and open, women are likely to leave.

This guide covers key areas to help you recruit more women into leadership roles, including:



recruiting women to join your committee - a key leadership group at your club



women and girls as **leaders outside the committee:** coaches, officials and other key volunteer roles



making leadership at your club a **rewarding experience** for women and girls



RECRUITING WOMEN TO JOIN YOUR COMMITTEE

The committee is a key group of leaders at your club, so having a good gender balance is important.

It is important your committee best represents your community, both current and future.

Committee members are elected according to your club's rules or constitution to run the club on behalf of members, and to achieve the club's goals and objectives.

Having gender balance on your committee helps to:

- enable your committee to better understand the needs and interests of all club members
- reduce the risk that members of one gender will be prioritised over others
- improve your committee's problem-solving abilities
- increase the pool of ideas and skills available for the committee to draw on
- empower the committee to be more creative and innovative.

Tips for recruiting women to join your committee

- 1 Develop a safe and inclusive culture
- 2 Promote committee roles widely so that different people have an opportunity to apply
- 3 Ask women what roles they would be interested in fulfilling
- 4 Present your club as diverse and inclusive in public forums
- 5 Write a clear and inclusive position description for the role
- 6 Provide clear information about the responsibilities and commitments of committee members
- 7 Ensure women have opportunities to take on influential decision making roles
- 8 Provide a welcoming and informative induction process

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DIVERSITY
 AND GENDER BALANCE IN
 SPORT IS A MAJOR
ISSUE
 THAT NEEDS TO BE
ADDRESSED
TODAY.”

JUSTIN HUBER - CEO,
 BASEBALL VICTORIA

1. Develop an inclusive culture

Think about the culture of your committee and your club more broadly. Are people of all genders treated fairly and equally? Are women encouraged and supported to nominate for committee roles?

- ✓ Review your committee's governance processes and structures (eg. constitution)

Identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Ensure women are encouraged and supported to participate
- ✓ Look at the current gender balance on your committee

Consider setting a quota eg. minimum 40% of committee members must be women
- ✓ Offer greater flexibility

Can the timing of meetings be adjusted to make it easier for committee members who are parents or work shifts?

Is the location of your meetings easy to get to for all members?

Does the location make women feel safe and welcomed?
- ✓ Ensure gender equality is embedded in your clubs diversity and inclusion policy

If your club does not have a diversity and inclusion policy, an example of an effective policy can be found on the next page

Practical Example - Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Creating and actively promoting a diversity and inclusion policy highlights your club's commitment to diversity and inclusion. It can help you signal to your members that women are welcomed and encouraged to take on leadership roles at your club.

Why this diversity and inclusion policy is effective:

- ✓ Clearly states that the club values diversity and encourages everyone to be a part of the club

Jumbo Jets Sports Club Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The Jumbo Jets Sports Club values diversity and welcomes all members of the community. We are committed to making our club as inclusive as possible, and encourage participation by people of all abilities, ages, backgrounds and identities.

At our club we:

 - Value the diversity of our members
 - Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person
 - Treat everyone equally, regardless of age, gender, race, culture, ability, religious belief, sexual orientation or social / economic status

✓ Signals commitment to inclusion more widely
- ✓ Outlines both values, and then how these will be acted on

 - Recognise the role every person plays to make the club a success. Success is not only measured by the on-field results, but by the culture and atmosphere of the club
 - Behave in a way that actively encourages and supports participation by all
 - Help new members feel like they belong, by introducing them to other members and showing them around the club

Our committee and leadership group, including the coaching team, will:

 - Role model inclusive and respectful behaviour
 - Ensure a diverse range of people are involved in key leadership roles at the club, including on the committee, in coaching and officiating positions, and in other decision-making roles
 - Offer everyone fair and equal access to club facilities, equipment and other resources
 - Showcase and celebrate the diversity of our members in our posters, promotional materials, social media and online present
 - Regularly review our club's policies and practices to ensure they support diversity and inclusion
 - Ensure everyone is able to enjoy their sport in a friendly and positive environment, free of harassment and intimidation and abuse.

✓ Commits to diversity in leadership roles
- ✓ Gives members a person they can contact to discuss concerns or ideas

If you have any questions about diversity and inclusion at our club, please speak to committee member Sam Salmon - 0412 345 678 or ssalmon@jumbojets.org

Policy last updated: 10 May 2019

✓ Shows the policy is being updated regularly

Recruiting women to join your committee

2. Promote committee roles widely so that different people have an opportunity to apply

If you notice that not many women are showing interest in committee roles, think about where else you could promote the role to attract their attention.

Ideas include:

- calling for nominations from your member base
- starting a register or list of people who have shown interest in potentially joining your committee
- proactively approaching women who are involved in your club to discuss whether they would be interested in a committee role
- promoting the role on your club's social media
- clearly articulate the time commitment required to fulfil the role
- create position descriptions for all roles (refer to section 5).

3. Ask women what roles they would be interested in fulfilling

Speak to the women in your club, and find out what their interests are. Some people who have never volunteered on a committee may be apprehensive about what's involved and the level of commitment required.

Project based, or time-limited tasks and roles provide a mechanism for women to get a better understanding about leadership roles at your club without making a long-term commitment up front

4. Present your club as diverse and inclusive in public forums

Review how your club presents information about itself in public forums – especially online. Make sure your commitment to gender equality is clear in all forums.

For example, think about the number of pictures of women on your website relative to pictures of men. If you have more pictures of men, then that is probably who you will attract to your club and your committee - regardless of whether this is your intention.

More tips for marketing your club as inclusive and welcoming to women can be found in the [Change Our Game Smart Strategies for Marketing to Women and Girls](#).

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”

Elise Cafarella

Office for Women in Sport and Recreation



“ SUCCESSFUL ORGANISATIONS PRIORITISE DIVERSITY ”

Chelsea Roffey

Change Our Game Ambassador



5. Write a clear and inclusive position description for the role

- **Write a position description that explains the skills required for the role.**

Provide a position description that clearly outlines the responsibilities of the committee role you are advertising.

- **Consider dividing the required skills into ‘essential’ and ‘desired’ categories.**

Research shows that women are more likely than men to question their ability to take on a leadership role, even when they have the skills needed for the job. Dividing required skills into ‘essential’ and ‘desired’ categories may help encourage women to nominate for a committee role.

- **Think about what skills the new committee member will need to have.**

To develop the position description, have a discussion with your committee about what you are looking for in a new member and the kinds of skills and qualifications you are hoping they will bring to the role. It may be useful to start by reviewing the skill sets and capabilities you already have on your committee, noting each member’s capabilities and qualifications.

- **Actively refer to your club and committee’s commitment to diversity and inclusion in your position description.**

If you make your club’s values clear, and highlight your focus on developing a diverse, welcoming, inclusive and safe committee, women are more likely to feel welcome and comfortable to apply for and accept an offer to join your committee. Include these values in your position description and make sure they are mentioned every time you advertise a committee role.

- **Use gender inclusive language in your position description and in advertising committee roles.**

Use inclusive language to write your position description to ensure you encourage people of all genders to apply. For example, don’t write ‘the right man for the job’ – say ‘the right person for the job’. If there’s a lot of ‘masculine’ wording in your position description (e.g. words like ‘competitive’ or ‘dominant’), think about re-writing it to use words that are more gender neutral.

Practical Example – Position description



Background on the club is included so people external to the organisation can have an understanding of the club and its purpose

Sample Role Description

President – Jumbo Jets Sports Club

The Jumbo Jets Sports Club was established in 1960 to provide a variety of sporting activities for the local community of Jumboville.

With over 2,000 members, the club is the largest in the outer metropolitan region.

The club is governed by a committee of management which consists of 6 members and the role of the President is to provide leadership and direction to the club and committee.



Language used is not inclusive of women and girls

Essential skills

The right man for the job will be able to:

- develop good relationships internally and externally
- lead committee members in achieving the Club’s goals
- represent the interests of Club members and other interest groups
- be a strong role model and a positive image for the Club in representing the Committee in other forums (e.g. league delegate meetings)
- speak confidently in public

He will also have experience as a leader on boards and committees.

Specific duties include:

- Maintaining a comprehensive knowledge of all organisation activities
- Understanding the Committee Constitution, rules and duties of office bearers
- Chairing Committee meetings to ensure they are run efficiently and effectively
- Acting as a signatory for the Club in all legal and financial matters
- Leading the Committee in governance matters
- Managing performance of Committee members to ensure they are fulfilling their role effectively and can help them to optimize their contribution
- Acting as a spokesperson and representing the Club in public forums
- Attending all key Club functions



Outlines the time commitments required

The Jumbo Jets Sports Club constitution states that the Committee of Management must meet a minimum of 4 times per year. The President will also be required to represent the club at various subcommittee meetings and other community meetings as required.

The Jumbo Jets Sports Club values diversity and welcomes all members of the community. We are committed to making our club as inclusive as possible, and encourage representation on our committee from people of all abilities, backgrounds and identities.



Skills have not been broken down in to essential and desired skills



Contact details have not been provided on who to contact for further details



Includes the club’s diversity policy

Recruiting women to join your committee

6. Provide clear information about the responsibilities and commitments of committee members

Provide information to those interested in joining your committee, so they can understand the role of the committee and what your club's values are.

Include information like:

- a committee member position description
- how often meetings take place, what time they start and how long they go for
- a description of the committee, including number of members and their roles
- types of support that committee members can access, ie. does your club have a buddy / [mentoring system for new members](#)
- skill development opportunities for committee members
- a copy of the constitution and/or by-laws
- a copy of your club's strategic plan or forward plan
- a copy of relevant club policies, like a diversity and inclusion policy, member protection policy or code of conduct
- any payment of honorarium or reimbursement of expenses.

7. Ensure women have opportunities to take on influential decision making roles

When allocating roles on your committee (e.g. treasurer, secretary), ensure there is gender balance across the different types of roles, and that women are equally represented in influential decision-making roles.

8. Provide a welcoming and informative induction process

Taking new leaders through a welcoming and informative induction process helps ensure they can start their new role feeling confident and supported, and are aware of the values, aims and processes of your club.

Look at your existing induction process. When someone new joins the committee, are they given all the information they'll need to perform their role? Are they told about supports that are available to new committee members?

Take new committee members through the induction process as soon as possible after they begin in their role.

If your committee and club offer a supportive, inclusive and enabling environment, this will help retain women in leadership roles longer.

YOUR INDUCTION PACK COULD INCLUDE:

- clear information about the responsibilities and commitments of committee members (refer to page 12)
- contact details of other committee members
- forward calendar of committee events and meetings
- annual report
- current financial year budget
- committee minutes from last 2 meetings
- organisation chart
- any other information you feel important in explaining what is required of the role





WOMEN AS LEADERS — OUTSIDE THE — COMMITTEE

The committee plays an important role in leading your club, but committee members aren't the only ones who provide leadership.

Coaches, officials and other key volunteers like team managers are part of your club's wider leadership group, and ensuring women are represented across these roles is just as important as it is on your committee.

Many of the strategies for recruiting women to key leadership roles in coaching or officiating are similar to strategies for recruiting women to the committee. The following 'quick guide' can be used to help you ensure committee roles and other leadership opportunities are more attractive and accessible to women, and that women taking on these roles have rewarding experiences that encourage them to stay in the roles for longer.

Quick guide: recruiting women into leadership roles

- ✓ Develop an inclusive and welcoming culture
- ✓ Create and promote a diversity and inclusion policy
- ✓ Use gender inclusive language in your position description and in promoting the role
- ✓ Review your processes and practices, and look at whether leadership roles are held by people of different genders
- ✓ Write a role or position description that clearly explains the skills required and responsibilities of the role
- ✓ Review how your club presents information about itself in public forums
- ✓ Offer greater flexibility and promote it
- ✓ Promote leadership roles widely at your club and beyond
- ✓ Provide a welcoming and informative induction process to new leaders



MAKING

LEADERSHIP A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

Top tips for making leadership experiences rewarding for women

Recruiting women to join your committee or to take on other leadership roles is a great first step, but it's important you don't stop there. If your committee and club offer a supportive, inclusive and enabling environment, this will help ensure women stay on in leadership roles longer, have a rewarding experience and can contribute toward achieving the best outcomes for your club. Some tips for making your club and committee a great environment include:

Provide flexibility

Provide flexible options for people to engage with their leadership responsibilities in a way that fits with their other commitments. This will make leadership roles easier to maintain for women (and others) who have children or other responsibilities.

Provide development opportunities

Think about development opportunities you could provide to leaders. This could include access to education or training, or opportunities to participate in different activities to expand their skills and knowledge. Make sure women have the same access to these development opportunities as men.

Provide equal pay

If you are paying leaders at your club, ensure people are paid at the same rate, regardless of gender, when they have the same or similar responsibilities.

Set up a buddy or mentoring system

A buddy or mentoring system can help new members become familiar with how the committee works, and to enable them to seek feedback on their work. Pair newer committee members with those who have more experience, so that new members have someone to check in with.

Keep developing your committee and your wider leadership team

Regularly review your policies and practices. Make sure all members are being supported to participate equally, and are enabled to work together in a collaborative way.

Ask for feedback

Regularly check in with women leaders at your club, ask how they are going and what would improve their experience.



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