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| In Conversation – Change Our Game ChampionsAndrew Skillern, CEO Hockey Victoria  |
| Video transcript |

**[Change Our Game Logo]**

**[In Conversation – Change Our Game Champion. Andrew Skillern, CEO Hockey Victoria**

**Andrew Skillern:**I'm Andrew Skillern, the CEO of Hockey Victoria. And I'm a Change Your Game Champion.

**Interviewer:**
Andrew, tell us about your role as a Change Your Game champion.

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yeah, it's been a great experience so far. You know, as a CEO of a state sporting body, I think it's sort of incumbent on me as a leader to make sure that our organization, Hockey Victoria, we're doing absolutely everything we could to insure that we're engaging women at all levels of our sport. And thus far, I think it's helped us identify a number of areas we can really focus on the next 12 to 18 months.

**Interviewer:**
So, when you shine the spotlight on your own performance in that regard, what have you identified is something that needs to be addressed?

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yeah, I think we've found that we've always been a sport that has embraced men and women, and always been a sport that from a profiling perspective, a marketing perspective, a participation perspective, we've always really had a great mix.

I think what we've found is, everyone's lives get a lot busier and we start looking at those sort of deeper roles in leadership around coaching, officiating, and administration. And that's probably the area that we haven't paid enough attention to. And they're the things that we're going to have to tweak in terms of what that looks like, flexibility in roles. Flexibility in the way that we engage coaches and officials in the future. And I think that'll certainly help us engage far more women and bring them back into the sport.

**Interviewer:**
What have you found, when you sit around the table with the other champions? Because there's a group, a diverse group of sports, and men and women, and sports that are predominantly men and some sports that are predominantly women. What's been your take, from what you've learned from all of them?

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yeah, maybe proudly, I've probably felt that we've been quite progressed in some areas because of where we've come from. Again, a sport that, again, historically had almost 50 participation across our sport. So, I'm proud about that. And now I think there's some great learnings of some systems and some processes that we had, that some of the larger codes can take from us.

But at the same time, I think that there's some other probably, core elements to, the other codes development in terms of the progress and their human resources. Whether it's people development, et cetera, et cetera, They're the sort of things that I think, is on a medium-size sport, we can learn from them.

**Interviewer:**
As a sport that had the men's association and the women's association, and there was women's hockey and men's hockey, and they never spoke to each other, is any of that still existing at all levels? Club, national state?

**Andrew Skillern:**
I think we might have had our last of the men's and women's club within Victoria merge last year, so we'd be proud to say that doesn't exist in Victoria.

**Interviewer:**
Wow.

**Andrew Skillern:**
And I think the list went on in terms of all the other associations that went with it, you know, umpires, and the coach's associations, and junior associations, et cetera. But now we're all one big family now, that work together. And we certainly encourage gender diversity all the way from out, Victoria board, all the way through our sub committees, and the people that help deliver our game.

**Interviewer:**
A lot of the people that are watching this series, you know, we're trying to provide them with the right tools and information that work for them. So, you've got this situation in 2017 last year where you still got a club that's a men's club and only a women's club. How do you get them to come together? How do you convince them that it's overdue?

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yeah, it's a great question. And I think maybe part of it was that we really came, a few years ago, to make sure we had a really strong governance and framework, and development framework, for our hockey clubs. And I think, just for a chance, as a premier club, which they are, we're working through those governance principals and what we wanted to see in our hockey clubs going forward.

I think it just almost forced the men and women to have a lot more of a serious conversation about working together, because ultimately, they were playing out of the same venue, they had a number of the same key volunteers that were sharing responsibilities of both clubs. I just really hadn't got to that next step and made that up. And so, I think that that framework helped push us along.

This is very simple, you know. They hadn't gotten to that point.

**Interviewer:**
Yeah.

But we're now at that point where these things are no longer the way that sporting clubs should operate. So, you had difficult conversations? Or easy conversations?

**Andrew Skillern:**
I think easy conversations in a sense that there's a broader understanding around the benefits. I don't think that was such a challenge. But I think what ends up happening in sport is that we get very parochial about dollars and cents and what relationship did this club have with this sponsor? And God, if we come together, are we going to lose that money? What does that look like? A little bit like, we always had politics, power, that type of thing.

But I think just continuing to have that conversation with the club and working through, again, what those overall benefits were. Putting some time in; You know, it's not just about sending them a framework in the mail from the big governing body and saying, "Well, this is what we think you should do."

I mean, we've really got to delve into our volunteers and we've got to make sure we help them come along and set themself up for the future.

**Interviewer:**
You talked before about participation in hockey very strong and equal across both genders.

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yep.

**Interviewer:**
Is that the same situation when it comes to volunteers and officials and administrators?

**Andrew Skillern:**
No, that's not the case. Currently, we have 44 percent participation in females and 56 in the men's. We were at 38 percent in our female participation back in 2012, so we've really been on a really strong journey to try and build towards 50/50 participation, men and women. And that's playing the game. We certainly, through this program, we're gonna start setting some pretty strong and robust targets around our representation and coaches, officials, and in administration. Because we feel they're the three areas that we absolutely need to do a lot more work in.

I think for a number of years, we've had a 50/50 representation on our board. We've had 50/50 representation in terms of executive roles at Hockey Victoria. But absolutely in that area of coaching and officiating where young girls and young boys are in an environment where we want them to look up to their officials and coaches as real leaders in our community, we think that's the area where we're really gonna roll our sleeves up and do a lot more.

**Interviewer:**
And what roadblocks do you think there are for that at the moment?

**Andrew Skillern:**
I think some of the biggest challenges we've found in our research is that if you think about hockey and the experience of being a hockey coach, the proposition is, can you come down and train a group of trainers two nights a week and then give up half your Saturday or half your Sunday to come and coach this team. And the reality is that, in terms of time commitment, that's a real challenge for a number of women.

So I think, for us, we've got to do a lot better in looking at job sharing. You know, really break down those roles and see how we can bring women in. And I know that in our performance program at the moment, we're looking at how can we bring women back in. And potentially, the first step is just around doing some special skills.

You know, rather than doing the whole preparation program before we go off to a national championship, can you come in and do some work with our defensive structure for four weeks, and make that contribution bite-sized and make it something that is able to be worked in with their busy lifestyles.

**Interviewer:**
And in terms of leadership within clubs, are you seeing enough women in leadership positions in clubs? Rather than just being part of committees and involved in that way?

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yeah, yeah, and again, that's a really valid point. We have a really interesting dynamic in Victorian Hockey, so over 50 percent of our presidents in original Victorian Hockey are women, which I would imagine, perhaps, outside probably the strongest representation you get in community sport.

In Melbourne, we have around about 18 percent of female presidents. So, almost one in every five, so that's interesting in itself. The participation is also a lot stronger, men versus women in Melbourne versus our regional communities, so perhaps that tells us something from history. But there is a challenge to bring more women into vice presidents, presidents roles, and not seeing that traditional, you know, "We got plenty of women on the board."

Yeah, they're doing all the work because they're doing the work. You've got them in as the secretary or the treasurer. But we've got some fantastic women that are waiting. And I think in particular, junior coordinators and presidents in our clubs are a high number of women. And I think, arguably, are doing one of the most important roles at a community hockey club then. And I think the school said that they can carry through to take on presidents' roles in the future, is something that we absolutely want to take to ends and grab.

**Interviewer:**
So by the sounds of things, Hockey Victoria is in a really good spot, no doubt you're helping the other champions along with some of the learnings that you've had. If we check back in with you in 12 months time, and say, "How you tracking, compared to where you were now?" What are the top couple of things you'd like to achieve?

**Andrew Skillern:**
Yeah, I think we can always look at some statistics. And I think we'll set some of those. But I think it's absolutely about thinking differently in the way that we approach engaging coaches and engaging our officials. You know, we can't just do the same thing we did 20 years ago, 10 years ago. And yes, we've had some minor tweaks, but at the end of the day, those roles, the roles we're asking women to do in those two disciplines, haven't really changed too much.

So where I'd like to see is, is to make sure that we've created flexibility. We've created, as I said, more achievable. You talk about the work force, you know, people working from home, job sharing, that type of thing, I think we need to be able to use those principles and put them into how we go about our coaching officiating.

I'm Andrew Skillern, the CEO of Hockey Victoria. And I'm a Change Your Game champion. There's never been a better time to change our game.

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**[State Government of Victoria logo]**

[Authorised by the Department of Health and Human Services, 50 Lonsdale St Melbourne. Spoken by D. Culbert and A. Skillern]

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