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| Change Our Game IWD Lunch The Hon. Martin Pakula, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events  |
| Video transcript  |

**[Change Our Game Logo]**

**The Hon. Martin Pakula, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events**

I want to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we're gathered and pay my respects to elders past and present. I want to acknowledge the governor, the Honorable Linda Dessau, AC, and Mr. Anthony Howard, Lizzie Blandthorn, the Parliamentary Secretary for Sport, all of the Change Our Game ambassadors and champions, our states sporting body, presidents and CEOs, our keynote speaker Tracy Holmes, our panelists Mel Jones . This is the second event that Mel and I have been at today, together, the first one being the recognition of the fact that we are one year to the day away from the women's T20 World Cup Final at the MCG.

We set a world record this morning for the biggest number of signatures on a piece of sporting memorabilia and twelve months from today we want to set another world record being the biggest ever crowd at a women's sporting event. And if we sell out the G that is what we will have for the women's T20 World Cup Final, and in between that event and this event I've been to the world's longest lunch where I managed to get entrée in but that was a lunch where 1600 people were being ... had lunch prepared for them by three women's chefs. Nicki Riemer's made entrée, Karen Martini - main, and Lauren Eldridge - dessert. I'm sure main and dessert will be as magnificent as entrée was.

But there is a massive and wonderful celebration of all the amazing things that women can do today whether it be in sport or in the culinary delights or indeed as Bridie said, in sports broadcasting. And I haven't forgotten to mention the other panelists Patrick Shaw, Stef Hanson and Steve Whately. I am really happy to be here today. It made me ... Bridie's speech made me think about what was the most remarkable bit of footage of women's sport that I have seen and the one that sprung to mind was actually one that I'm sure many of you have seen, was Kathy Switzer in the 1967 Boston Marathon when she snuck into the race, in a race that was all men, because at the beginning of the race it was inclement weather and everyone had hoodies on and nobody noticed that she was a woman.

She'd registered only with Kathy Switzer so that again nobody knew that she'd registered as a woman. So she had a numbered bib. And she was running in the marathon in a group of people, including amongst them being her boyfriend, a bloke called Tom Miller, and the TV van which was filming the race, went past and one of the race officials who was on the back of that truck saw Kathy Switzer running and decided that the smart thing for him to do would be to jump off the truck, chase her and try and rip her number off. Which he then proceeded to do.

I don't know if anyone's seen the footage but Switzer ... Kathy Switzer's boyfriend watching this then gave Semple one of the world's best hip and shoulders, put him into the gutter and she bolted off with an entourage around her. And even though she finished the race in something like four and a half hours she said that she had never been more determined to finish anything in her life because she said, "If I don't finish this race it will be a sign to girls and women everywhere that women just can't run marathons."

And she finished despite being accosted in that way and from that moment on women's participation in marathon running took off. So for me that was one of the most iconic moments I've ever seen in women's sport and when you listen to some of the stories that Bridie told about the performances of women in marathons after that, it wouldn't have probably been possible. I think Kathy Switzer probably brought it forward by a decade by the way that she conducted herself that day.

I just want to talk about some of the things the government is doing and in this regard, government is really no more than a facilitator. We have to provide the environment, and the facilities and the funding, and the support. The activity and the impetus is coming from girls and women themselves and from sporting organizations. But we are really proud of things that we've done in regard to female friendly facilities. We are announcing today that there will be another round of our ... of the Change Our Game Scholarship Program which provides women with the opportunity to reach their full potential in off-field roles and helps influence how sport and recreation is delivered.

We see so many wonderful examples now of women in sporting administration, quite apart from Bridie. I think of the portfolio I had before I took over Sport, Tourism and Major Events, and I've been minister for Racing. I think about the women that are on ... you know Amanda Elliott is a very high profile example as chairman of the VRC. But we have great women like Jane Brook on the board of Harness Racing Victoria; women like Catherine Ainsworth; women like on the board of Racing Victoria, like Sharon McCrohan and Kate Joel; women on the boards of all our principle racing clubs and many of the CEO's of our country racing clubs are women as well.

So we have some remarkable examples of women in sporting administration and I'm just starting to meet many of them now in my new portfolio role but I already met many, many extraordinary and remarkable female sporting administrators in my role as Minister for Racing.

But one of the great components of Change Our Game is the importance of young girls seeing their female sporting heroes on TV or featured prominently in newspapers. There was an image I saw about ... I think it was two or three weeks ago and I'm almost certain it was the North Melbourne AFLW team, and the North Melbourne women had just scored a goal and they had run towards the crowd to celebrate and some intrepid photographer had caught this fantastic image of the North Melbourne AFLW players celebrating with the crowd and the crowd was just a bunch of young girls in North Melbourne jumpers and you could see the excitement in their face.

And it was just a ... you know, in one moment it just encapsulated the power of role models and the power that a sporting image can have in teaching young girls that really there are no limits to what they can achieve. So to the extent that initiative helps with publicizing those sort of role models and to the extent that our provision of infrastructure can help as well, it is something that the government really needs to continue to do and I can assure you that we will. And in that regard, the work that Lizzie Blandthorn, as parliamentary secretary for sport will do over the next four years, will be incredibly important as well, and Lizzie and I have known each other a long time. I can assure you we will work exceptionally well together and there's so much that we can do.

I think it is also just worth remarking on the fact that there are stories happening every week that demonstrate the amazing strides that our sporting ... our female sporting teams are making. The Matildas having a big win at AAMI Park on Wednesday, over Argentina, as preparation for the World Cup in June. The announcement by the FFA just this week that Melbourne is the preferred home for the Matildas and the government will work closely with Football Federation Australia to try and make that a reality.

I've already mentioned the fact that we're one year 'til the women's T20 World Cup Final but we've been watching with I think, amazement, the performance of our women's cricket team over the summer and of course we're seeing AFLW just going from strength to strength. And I don't, in saying that, leave out any of the other amazing performances in women's sport in netball, and basketball, and hockey, and so many other sports that we've been privileged enough to witness over the last twelve months.

So I think that's probably all that you need to hear from me. I know that you've been told by Bridie to keep eating while the speeches are on but I also notice that most of you don't and I'm very appreciative of that so I want to let you get back to your meal.

But look the government will be a constant, a reliable and a resolute partner of women's sport. We have been over recent years and that will certainly continue and together I just want to see us all provide that encouragement and that role model for young girls to reach for the stars and so many of the people in this room are doing that every day of their lives.

So thank you.

**[State Government of Victoria logo]**

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