

Inquiry into  
**Women and Girls in Sport  
and Active Recreation**



A Five Year Game Plan for Victoria

November 2015



# Contents

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction                       | 4  |
| Case for change                    | 8  |
| Commitment to outcomes             | 11 |
| Innovative ways to affect change   | 19 |
| Change the environment             | 26 |
| Showcase achievement               | 33 |
| Implementation                     | 38 |
| Endnotes                           | 39 |
| Appendices                         |    |
| A. References                      | 41 |
| B. Terms of reference              | 44 |
| C. Advisory panel members          | 46 |
| D. Community consultation schedule | 48 |

# Introduction

The Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation was established in late 2014 to advise the Victorian Minister for Sport on practical actions that the sport and active recreation sector could adopt to enhance participation by women and girls and to increase their engagement in leadership and governance roles.

An advisory panel was established consisting of nine prominent sports industry representatives and chaired by Peggy O'Neal.

Early in its deliberations, the advisory panel agreed it wanted to deliver a report that recommended bold and practical actions.

The intent of these recommendations is to deliver 'on the ground', every day changes in thinking, behaviour and the way sport and active recreation operates, in other words, practical recommendations that will make a significant difference.

A number of the recommendations, particularly those about education, are the types of recommendations that everyone would expect to see in a report such as this. That does not diminish their importance.

Some of the recommendations such as those about creating a new 'ambassadors of change' style program focussed on community sport and active recreation, or mandating gender balance and good governance principles, are potentially ground breaking for sport and active recreation if applied at all levels in Victoria. It's not that the substance of the recommendations has never been broached before. The advisory panel sees that bold action is required for the recommendations to be consistently applied and pursued, and believes that if that occurs, they will deliver change.

It is also important to note that the advisory panel did not approach this task with the view that women themselves needed to change. Rather it is broader society and the sector in particular that is being challenged to change if gender equality is to be achieved.

## Engagement with the sport and active recreation community

While the advisory panel reviewed current research and reports, it also sought public feedback on the current issues women are experiencing, which present barriers to participation and leadership, as well as possible solutions. The advisory panel consulted with both men and women, including:

- individuals involved in grassroots sport and active recreation
- sector leaders
- leaders from other industries.

Through the consultation process the advisory panel heard from leaders who cited examples of the positive difference it made to their organisations to have women as part of the leadership team, bringing new insights and approaches. It was particularly interesting to hear the comments from the fathers of girls who wanted their daughters to have the “same opportunities”.

The overwhelming message from the consultations was that there are many women and girls with the talent and desire to contribute to the sport and active recreation sector, but the opportunities to participate and lead were either elusive or not readily evident.

Through the consultations the advisory panel noted a strong appetite for change across the sport and active recreation sector at all levels and from both men and women. In fact, the changes reported by respondents, which are happening now, have shone a light on the value that women and girls bring to the sector and how this change can bring positive benefits to the health, wellbeing and social connectedness of our community.

Whilst the messages the advisory panel heard were expressed in many ways and with many different voices, the common messages heard were:

- there is a need for change
- there is a lot of work to be done
- collaboration is needed if change is to happen.

Through the consultation process, key themes concerning participation and leadership were identified and explored. Emerging topics highlighted through these discussions were:

- leadership, clear goals and measurement are the first necessary ingredients to create and support change
- changes to traditional structures and ways of working are essential to developing new participation and leadership opportunities
- new ways of ‘thinking’ and ‘doing’ need to be nurtured through education and training
- visibility is important. Promotion of female sport and active recreation opportunities, pathways and role models – whether they focus on participation or leadership – provide an opportunity for inspiring and engaging more women and girls.

## Defining the challenge

Despite a stellar year for female sport at the elite level and a general view amongst sector leaders that something is shifting, the starting point for discussions throughout consultation was that participation and leadership in the sport and active recreation sector is still culturally dominated by men and boys.

Across the sector the majority of leadership roles are held by men, and media coverage focuses primarily on male sports. Most sports media decision makers are men, as are most sports journalists.

While overall participation rates in Victoria are high, female participation rates are still lower than male participation rates.

The issues affecting female participation and leadership are not new and certainly not unique to Victoria. These issues are the result of deeply entrenched practices, cultural norms and stereotypes that are perpetuated and reinforced in our broader society.

The diagram below highlights the four themes that the advisory panel identified as key to creating the required cultural shift. The advisory panel believes that these themes can be translated into actions that can advance the sector.

The advisory panel is conscious that each theme is not mutually exclusive but, instead, each is reliant on the other so that, combined, change can be achieved.



## Our future vision

In writing this report, the advisory panel worked towards putting together a vision of the future, where women and girls in all roles in sport and active recreation are the norm and where females and males have the same choices and opportunities to lead and to participate.

This report seeks to identify recommendations and associated actions to deliver this vision.

The advisory panel is convinced that the nine recommendations, which are summarized below under four themes, if implemented consistently over the next one to five years, will deliver change.

Action is just as important as coming up with the ideas. That is the next stage. To guide this phase, the advisory panel recommends the appointment of an implementation committee and the development of a scorecard to measure progress. It may be a cliché to say ‘what gets measured gets done’, but the advisory panel is firmly of the view that the cliché is also true.

This is our game plan:

| Themes                           | Recommendations   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Commitment to Outcomes           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drive Commitment through an Ambassador Program</li> <li>2. Engage and Empower by Connecting Ambassadors to Women and Girls</li> <li>3. Mandate Gender Balance and Good Governance Principles</li> </ol> |
| Innovative Ways to Effect Change | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Reform Recruitment Practices and Processes for Leadership Positions</li> <li>5. Enhance Participation Choice and Improve How Opportunities are Marketed</li> </ol>                                      |
| Change the Environment           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Deliver Female Friendly Built Environments and Equitable Facility Usage Policies</li> <li>7. Build an Enabling Environment through Education and Training</li> </ol>                                    |
| Showcase Achievement             | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Showcase the Pathways and Opportunities through Role Models</li> <li>9. Increase the Profile of Women in the Sports Media</li> </ol>  |

# Case for change

When a sport moves to gender equality and inclusion I think the possibility for change is greater. If sport becomes more inclusive, and it's used as a vehicle to build inclusion for men and women, then it has potential to create change in the nation.

**Elizabeth Broderick, Australia's Former Sex Discrimination Commissioner.**

Sports is a global language capable of bridging social, cultural and religious divides. It can be a powerful tool for fostering understanding, tolerance and peace...it teaches us teamwork and fair play. It builds self-esteem and opens up new opportunities. This in turn can contribute to the wellbeing of whole communities and countries.

**Kofi Annan – upon granting United Nations special observer status to the IOC in 2009**

## Why change?

Sport and active recreation offers vital opportunities for enriching our communities and these opportunities should be available to all Victorians. Women and girls make up just over half the Victorian population. We know through academic graduation rates and other measures that women have skills, knowledge and experience that are equal to men. Not tapping into that talent pool for the benefit of the sector seems inequitable and wasteful.

There is a substantial gap between the number of men and women in leadership positions across all Victorian sporting sectors. For example in Victoria only:

- 29% of executive officers in State Sporting Associations and Regional Sports Assemblies are female
- 33% of board positions available in these Associations and Assemblies are held by women.<sup>1</sup>

Without question the gender imbalance is not as great as in the past. It is also getting smaller. Over the last year a number of sports have appointed more female board members. However, there is still a way to go.



Often quoted research indicates that at the current pace of change it will take 177 years to reach gender equality in the workplace.<sup>2</sup> The point this illustrates is that while many leaders and decision makers would say that they support gender equality, current decision making practices with regard to the selection and appointment of candidates to positions, particularly leadership positions, tells a different story. If we want change to occur any time soon, intervention is required.

The health, economic, social and equity benefits associated with more women and girls involved as participants and as leaders are substantial for individuals, sport and active recreation organisations, as well as the broader society. Increasing female engagement in all aspect of sport and active recreation is not just the right thing to do, but it is also the sensible thing to do for Victoria.

## Health benefits

The most obvious benefits of sport and active recreation are the health benefits that come from physical activity. Sport and active recreation provide benefits to everyone in terms of our mental health and wellbeing.

Estimates suggest that between 60% and 70% of the Australian population<sup>3</sup> is sedentary or has low levels of physical activity. Given this, and that we know that female participation is lower than male participation, getting more women and girls active will have significant population level benefits.

Regular sport and active recreation participation leads to a healthy lifestyle which can result in longevity due to the social, physical and psychological benefits it provides. Taking part in physical activity improves mental wellbeing by reducing stress, anxiety and depression.<sup>4</sup> This results in a lessened economic burden on the healthcare system.

Generally, participation in sport and physical activity can provide everyone, including women and girls with the following benefits:

- Prevention and management of disease such as coronary heart disease, strokes, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and dementia
- Increased health, fitness, body and bones strength
- Weight loss and prevention of obesity
- Reduced risks of mortality
- Increased mental health and improved wellbeing
- Increase in social connections and enjoyment<sup>5</sup>

## Improved board and organisational performance

Women can play a vital role in governing sport bodies. There were reports throughout the consultation concerning the positive differences being made already by women on boards. They provide a great diversity of skills, experience and ideas that contribute to good governance, leadership and better decision making.<sup>6</sup>

There are many research reports that indicate that gender balance on boards leads to improved performance, including a 2011 Reibey Institute<sup>7</sup> investigation, which found that over a three and five year period, ASX500 companies with women directors delivered significantly higher return on equity than those companies without any women on their boards.

Redressing the low representation of women in senior levels of management, not just on boards, in sporting organisations is imperative to delivering improved board and organisational performance.

## Building stronger, more resilient communities

Sport contributes to building social connectedness.<sup>8</sup> Sport can play a vital role in bringing people together, and helping them to extend their social networks. It also has a role in teaching young people social values such as respect, responsibility, commitment and team work.

Nelson Mandela commented that ‘sport can change the world’.<sup>9</sup>

The United Nations has recognised the potential for sport to socially empower women and girls.<sup>10</sup>

In Australia, Natasha Stott Despoja (Chair, Our Watch) recognised that sporting organisations connect large numbers of people and can provide an environment that promotes women’s participation and opportunities and, in turn, helps eliminate gender-based discrimination and violence-supportive attitudes<sup>11</sup>.

The advisory panel agrees that sport can be a powerful agent of social change, as did many people who attended the consultations. The advisory panel heard countless stories to illustrate just how influential sport can be as a vehicle for reform and cohesion.

## Fair use of public resources

Governments (federal, state and local) in Australia make a substantial financial contribution to sport and active recreation at both the high performance and grassroots levels, through infrastructure and program investments.

Given the health, economic and social benefits outlined above, the advisory panel is of the view that when public money is used for sport and active recreation, broad public benefits should accrue. The recommendations outlined in the next four sections will help ensure that change happens and the benefits of government investment are shared widely.

# Commitment to outcomes

Throughout the advisory panel's consultation and discussions, the importance of strong leadership to securing lasting change was repeatedly raised. The consistent message was that change does not happen without leadership 'buy-in' and action from the top.

Leaders need to focus on establishing and nurturing a cultural environment that is receptive and willing to change; identifying and acknowledging existing barriers; making a public commitment to change; and measuring progress.

## Leadership for sustainable change

Leaders in sport and active recreation are not only the presidents, board and committee members, CEOs and other senior administrators. Leaders are also the coaches, officials, volunteers and team captains.

The advisory panel noted that there are some organisations and individuals that have been active in recruiting women into leadership positions. There are many other organisations that have an interest in doing so, but need to make a commitment.

Recruitment is the first step, growing talent is the next. Feedback from the consultations highlighted that there are organisations nurturing female leadership talent and effectively providing a training ground for women to go on to other roles. The issue is that there just aren't enough of those organisations currently.

Actively recruiting women and investing in growing talent need to be embedded as business as usual, not regarded as something special. The challenge is how to change systems and culture to normalise women in leadership positions, not to regard them as novelties whose success is notable due to its rarity.

## CASE STUDY



### Traralgon City Soccer Club - 50/50 Clubs Initiative

A partnership between Gippsland Women's Health and GippSport was established to work on improving gender equity in sports clubs in Gippsland. The "50/50 Clubs – working towards gender equality" initiative was the result.

In signing up to the project, Traralgon City Soccer Club undertook a 'Gender Audit' of their club, determining what positive changes the club could make to overcome barriers to females participating at all levels and ensure that the club is safe and welcoming for females.

The club committee attended a 'Mentors in Violence Prevention' training session to increase their capacity to recognise and respond to disrespectful attitudes towards females, and raise awareness about the impact of violence, as well as the issues that contribute to it occurring. They ensured promotional material was displayed around their club, hosted events for their club members to explore the issues including hosting the play 'You the Man' that focuses on how bystanders can support people in violent relationships, and challenging sexist behaviours that devalue women.

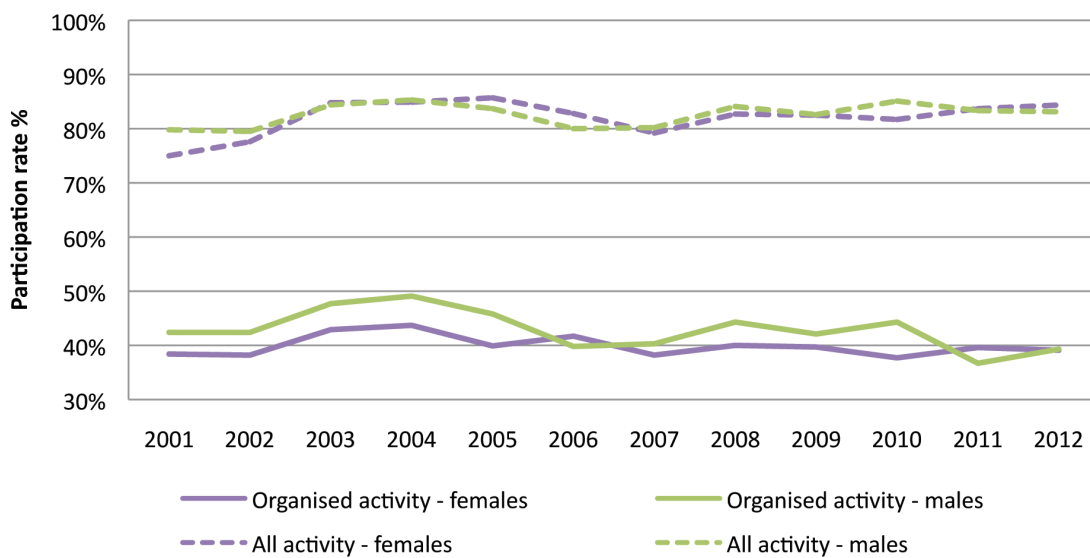
The club utilised the findings of the 'Gender Audit' to successfully apply for a grant to improve lighting in the club car park, as a tangible way of increasing safety for women and children at the club.

The Panel heard at the Gippsland consultation from representatives of the club who said that having club leaders who are passionate, well respected and willing to take on the issue is imperative to making change happen. The club is stronger as a result, with increasing female membership and more women in active volunteer roles. A commitment to creating a club that is genuine about developing an inclusive culture is a vital first step.

## Participation outcomes affected by strong leadership

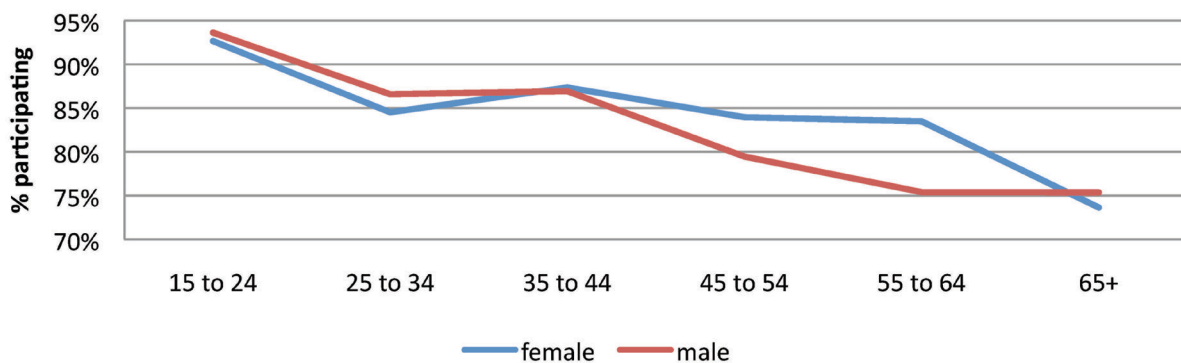
While sport and recreation participation rates for women and girls have tended to be lower than rates for their male counterparts in Victoria, the difference in overall numbers is generally not substantial.

### Participation rates, Victoria, 2001-2012



Source: The Exercise, Recreation and Sports Survey (ERASS)

### Overall participation by age and gender, Victoria, 2012



Source: The Exercise, Recreation and Sports Survey (ERASS)

Consultations show that the primary issue facing Victoria is not an overall lack of participation opportunities for women and girls in Victoria, but a lack of certain types of opportunities, which would not only increase overall participation, but also enhance existing opportunities. Specifically:

- some sports and active recreation activities have a strong cultural history of male competitions and these sports don't currently offer the same opportunities as some other types of sports
- even when opportunities to participate exist, the quality of those opportunities is sometimes lacking due to a range of factors (see the next two themes for a discussion of these factors)
- many women and girls are looking for non-traditional sporting activities, including modified sports, social sports and active recreational / non-competitive opportunities.

The sports of Australian rules football and cricket are leading the change to break the barriers to female participation that their codes have traditionally presented.

For instance, in Cricket Victoria's Strategy for Victorian Cricket 2015 – 2017 it committed to having a diverse participant base that reflects the Victorian population base in terms of gender, ability and cultural background by 2017, with 30% female participation. In 2014/15, female participation in cricket grew to 61,593 (19% of total participation). Only a commitment to change from leaders can make the necessary system level changes required.

The rapid increase in female participation seen over the recent years confirms Australian rules football as one of the fastest growing female sports in Victoria. Results showed females have been pulling on the jumper more than ever, with the introduction of 63 new female sides across the state in 2015. When coupled with the growth in 2014, 111 new female teams were established in Victoria over the past two years.

The consultation and research revealed many examples both at a system and local level that demonstrated that when an organisation's leaders make a commitment to address barriers to participation, whether that is developing new programs or making other alterations, change happens.

## CASE STUDY



### The Sarah Blanck Perpetual Trophy and the SWAG Project

Australian sailor, dual Olympian, winner of the Olympic class Europe World Championships in 2002, the ISAF Youth World Championship in 1995 and the Laser Radial Women's World Championships in 1997.

The work is driven by her incredible passion to increase female participation in sport and physical activity. The aim is to engage the women and girls and inspire the community to have more active women.

Having experienced the participation pathway from foundation levels through to the high performance level sport, Sarah felt that there were opportunities to make significant improvements to the participation pathway by focusing on the whole sports person.

The Sarah Blanck Perpetual Trophy (SBPT) and SWAG Regatta is the result, with the inaugural event held in November 2014, with 43 sailors. The 2015 event numbers were capped at 60 sailors to ensure a high quality developmental experience for all involved including race officials. The sailors, coaches (including five Olympians), rescue crew, administrators, and race committee were all women. Participant feedback has been extremely positive.

Without one individual, in this case, Sarah Blanck, driving change and taking a leadership role by committing to improving outcomes, the regatta would never have occurred and 60 women sailors, plus a number of coaches, officials and administrators, would not have had an opportunity to develop their skills.

## CASE STUDY



### She's Game Program - Maribyrnong City Council

In 2015, Maribyrnong City Council implemented the She's Game: Gender Equity in Sport program, which was designed to increase the number of women participating in sport and physical activity across the local government area.

While the initiative had a number of elements, including research into participation barriers and creating club resources to support change, the project partners realised that to achieve sustainable change a commitment was first required from local club leaders. The council in partnership with Leisure Networks, worked with the committees of four local clubs, over three 90-minute sessions to kick start the commitment process and garner support.

The initial focus of the sessions was the benefits of increased female participation, the barriers that many women face in attempting to participate in sport, and what clubs can do to overcome these barriers.

The second and third sessions provided opportunities for clubs to identify opportunities for improvement, particularly regarding governance structures and processes, in order to better incorporate more female participants within their club.

As a result, two clubs have already committed to creating female teams in 2016, one for women and one for girls, respectively.



# RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

In order to create the initial drive for change, the advisory panel makes the following recommendations:

## 1. Drive commitment through an 'Ambassadors of Change' Program

There are several existing 'Male Champions of Change' programs. The initial one was established by Elizabeth Broderick, which invited male leaders in various industries to become a champion of change in gender equity in the businesses they lead and a community role model.

Feedback from the consultations suggests that this model, which voluntarily co-opts leaders to this cause, borrowing their credibility and good reputations, and asking them to speak up and represent change, is a powerful one.

The advisory panel believes that a similar program, using an 'Ambassador of Change' model, to drive change in organisations that support inclusive sport and active recreation, and which are not covered by any existing programs, would be an effective vehicle for change at the grassroots, sub-elite and elite levels in Victoria.

This new program would be open to male and female presidents, CEOs and other sector leaders. The program would include not only peak organisations such as state sporting associations and other key state sport and active recreation bodies, but also associations, leagues and clubs. The program should also be open to leaders in local government. It is also recommended that the program be chaired by the person holding the position of Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner, or someone of similar independent standing with a commitment to change.

Essential elements of the program would include:

- voluntary joining, with incentives including recognition of individual participation by the Minister for Sport as well as peer support
- a pledge to lead and act from all participants
- a clear statement of expectations, including values and behaviour, establishing good practice and setting benchmarks for progress
- regular monitoring (via a good practice scoreboard) and reporting progress to others in the program
- recognition by the Minister of Sport achievement by participants.

## 2. Engage and empower by connecting ambassadors to women and girls

Leading a commitment to change also needs to engage and empower those whom the commitment seeks to benefit – in this case women and girls.

The advisory panel proposes a workforce development initiative that links the Ambassador of Change Program to on-the-ground efforts in the sector to recruit and develop women leaders and to enhance participation opportunities.

Essential elements of the program would include:

- sector organisations invited to nominate potential or developing women and girls leaders (in both paid and volunteer roles)
- a series of leadership and participation development seminars, conversations and/or other programs to be offered to develop essential skills, and provide networking opportunities, including connecting with the Ambassadors
- develop and train volunteer mentors to support people registered in the program
- funding provided for sector female leadership programs/scholarships.

## 3. Mandate gender balance and good governance principles

In March 2012, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) issued its revised Sports Governance Principles and in 2013, Mandatory Governance Principles for National Sporting Organisations (NSOs). Mandatory Principle 2.6 'Gender Balance on Boards' acknowledges research showing that increased gender diversity on boards leads to better corporate performance. The principle sets out the requirement that all NSOs should seek to achieve a target of 40% representation of females on their boards, and report on the gender representation at executive management level<sup>12</sup>.

While the advisory panel heard debate about whether there should be targets or quotas for the sector, and over what time period change should occur, there was strong agreement amongst the advisory panel and the consultation participants that:

- all organisations that receive Victoria Government funding should have a minimum of 40% women on their governing bodies. The advisory panel believes this requirement should be framed as a minimum quota
- a phase-in period of up to three years is reasonable for change. The advisory panel recognises that there is a life cycle for existing appointments and in some cases constitutional changes may also be required
- there should be annual monitoring and reporting against this quota.

# Innovative ways to affect change

Gender equality in sport and active recreation, whether it is viewed through a leadership or a participation lens, will not be achieved by doing the same things the same way as they have been done in the past.

The sport and active recreation sector is rich in history and tradition but sometimes traditional thinking can become a barrier to change. Success will come from innovative thinking, reflecting on the issues and barriers, and creating new ways to address them. Success requires thoughtfulness, an open mind and tenacity to see change through.

Through the research that the advisory panel reviewed and from the consultations that occurred, it became clear that sometimes relatively simple changes make a big impact.

## Leadership as an attractive choice

There are female presidents, board and committee members, CEOs and other leaders in sport and active recreation. However, gender equity in leadership is still to be achieved across the sector.

Issues related to increasing the number of females in leadership roles were raised in the consultations. They included:

- Women often feel reluctant to participate in boards, committees and other leadership roles in strongly male-dominated environments. Even women holding leadership positions often reported feeling intimidated or treated in a dismissive way.
- Many women reported a lack of confidence to take on leadership roles. Sometimes this related to a perceived lack of skills. Research indicates that women are more likely than men to question their competence or suitability for leadership roles, even when through objective measures they may be appropriately qualified<sup>13</sup>. The lack of confidence by women supports the need to actively recruit women to achieve a balanced candidate pool for selection, as well as providing education and training to grow confidence and develop the necessary skills.
- Retention of women in leadership roles within sport and active recreation was also regularly raised as an issue. Research shows if the environment is not welcoming and open, women leave, particularly when they are a distinct minority. When a third of the board is female, a critical mass for retention seems to be achieved<sup>14</sup>.

- Women and men on gender balanced boards felt a positive difference when the ratio became equitable. Further, women did not feel detached, and board members in these environments often encouraged diversity and monitored recruitment and selection procedures to ensure they were bias-free<sup>15</sup>.
- There is a clear lack of visible role models and pathways for women in leadership within sport and active recreation. Examples of women with careers, especially paid careers, in sports administration and other leadership roles are not numerous. For many people that the advisory panel spoke to, the way to get started was not clear. There is a lack of awareness of how leadership roles in sport and active recreation at a grass roots or community level could lead to full time professional roles and careers in the sector for females (officiating, management, etc.). Consequently, women have not typically pursued this as a possibility. (This issue is further explored in the “Showcase Achievement” theme).
- Even when women do put themselves forward, there are barriers to being selected. While there is still evidence of actual gender discrimination (even for people and organisations with good intentions), it seems to be likely that unconscious bias in recruitment and selection processes is a reason why women don’t get recruited or appointed.
- The advisory panel believes that this can be mitigated by education and by changing the culture within the organisation to make it more welcoming and inclusive. These changes will contribute not only to gender equality, but can encourage greater diversity more broadly.
- Challenging unconscious bias requires challenging assumptions about what skills and experience are required to perform a role. While women regularly hold human resource and sports science / therapy roles, this traditional view of women in supporting and caring roles limits the appointment of more females into senior management, coaching, officiating and governance roles.
- In sport, there is still a commonly held view that people who have played the sport, particularly those who were successful players, are considered the natural choices for governance, management and other leadership roles. Given the dominance of professional sporting codes in Australia, where men dominate participation, and where many of the paid jobs exist, this is also a substantial barrier for many women wanting to forge a paid career in sport.
- Unconscious bias is more easily overcome if the benefits of gender diversity are embraced and the case for change accepted.

## CASE STUDY



### Improving leadership and governance

#### – Tennis Victoria

The Tennis Victoria Board is committed to change and for a number of years has strongly signalled to all 900 affiliate clubs and associations that women are strongly encouraged to nominate as candidates for board elections. Unfortunately, this traditional approach to seeking board candidates wasn't achieving gender equity results as women weren't nominating.

Women who were approached were reluctant to enter a very public election process, where they thought that they may have little chance of securing the required votes.

As a result in 2011, the board had just two female members out of 10 (20%). The board was concerned that this could be reduced to one or even zero when the existing female directors were up for election.

So the board decided to go beyond just making a visible public commitment to achieving and maintaining at least 40% of each gender on the board. They decided to get innovative. They empowered the CEO along with a new nominations committee to undertake proactive steps to maximise the chances of achieving change. The CEO and the board worked collaboratively on best practise for its nominations committee – including having a respected Independent Chair – to ensure the integrity of the process and its planned outcomes.

From 2014, when the board established a nominations committee, it adopted a skills based approach, identifying the desired skills needed over the next 1-3 years. In 2015 the board decided to establish a Tennis Victoria Potential Female Directors Register (the Register).

The CEO, board and nominations committee then used their networks to proactively identified well credentialed women who match the skills being sought to see if they may be interested in meeting to make an assessment of potential fit for both parties, and possibly joining the register. Individuals on the private register are encouraged to nominate for election when their skills are matched as aligning with that year's identified skills needs. Everyone on the register is regularly communicated with individually so they are kept informed of progress. They are also invited to Tennis Victoria functions so they stay engaged.

A nominations committee report – which goes to all voting affiliates – clearly outlines how the register candidate's background suits the current skills needed and restates the board's gender balance commitment. Other nominees (who have still been all male to date) are also assessed against the advertised criteria. The nominations committee report has proved very informative and influential upon those affiliates that choose to cast a vote.

As a result there are more women on the board, and Tennis Victoria reached the desired 40% mark in November 2015, just seven months after establishing the register.

## Factors affecting participation

While it is true that current traditional participation offerings for sport and active recreation suit many people (including females), they don't meet all the needs of all women and girls. Enhancing participation opportunities involves addressing barriers to participation.<sup>16</sup> Key barriers raised during the consultation included:

- Competing demands for time. Sport is usually offered on weekday evenings and weekends, but that still creates a dilemma for many women and girls. Many women take on primary caring roles in their families and as a consequence, generally have less discretionary time. Women and girls also have competing social, study and work commitments and don't always have the support at home that many boys and men enjoy. Participation in activities with either extensive or rigid time commitments (particularly team sports) becomes extremely difficult under these circumstances.
- Lack of appropriate skills. This may lead to feelings of inadequacy, as many females have had less encouragement and had less opportunities to acquire physical literacy early in life, sometimes this is due to stereotypical play types, where girls often engage in more passive play, and boys in more active play activities.
- Disadvantage. Participation rates are lower for women experiencing social and economic challenges regardless of the cause (for example those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those with a disability and those from low socio-economic backgrounds).
- Cost of participation. This seems to disproportionately affect women and girls for a variety of reasons. Women generally earn less than their male counterparts; and when families have to make choices, often male participation opportunities are prioritised. Women facing disadvantage are particularly vulnerable to cost pressures.
- Different male and female physiology. This is not always factored into coaching practice and game development, including the rules and the establishment of competitions. This means that some options are not as accessible and female friendly as they might be.
- Social aspects of participation. Failure to fully appreciate that many girls and women value the social aspects of participation as highly as (or perhaps even more highly than) the competitive aspects.<sup>17</sup>
- Body image issues for women. These are not confined to sport and active recreation, but participation in these activities often require uniforms or clothing that are body hugging or otherwise revealing, making some women and girls uncomfortable.
- Uniform requirements. Sometimes these requirements are in conflict with religious practice or cultural norms and also pose a barrier to participation for some women and girls.

Alternative participation offerings to address these barriers include modified forms of a traditional sport including social or recreational versions of some games. The advisory panel noted that there has been effective product development by some sports and other organisations. Examples such as Cardio Tennis, Park Run, Swing Fit (golf), AFL Active and social forms of netball were regularly mentioned during the consultation.

## CASE STUDY



### Hockey

#### – Women's Masters

In 2012 Hockey Victoria (HV) identified that a major barrier for women playing hockey at the Masters level was due to fixturing. In 2012 both the Men's and Women's Masters competitions were played on the same night. After a survey of the hockey community and discussions with women eligible to play Masters, it became apparent that many women did not play because they were caring for children to enable their male partner to play Masters hockey.

HV then decided to change the night of Women's Masters so it did not clash with the Men's Masters competition. Since this change, there has been a steady increase in the number of women participating in the Masters competition. In 2012, 22 teams entered in the winter Women's Masters competition. In 2015, a total of 27 teams entered. The results speak for themselves.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

In order to create innovative ways to effect change for sport and active recreation, the advisory panel makes the following recommendations:

### 4. Reform recruitment practices and processes for leadership positions (paid and volunteer)

Based on the findings, the advisory panel is of the view that while there are a number of key actions to increase the number of women in leadership positions, perhaps the most significant action to take is adopting a different approach to recruitment. The advisory panel recognises that recruitment in the sector is the responsibility of sector agencies. However, in partnership with the sector, the Victorian Government has a role in encouraging and facilitating practical changes in recruitment that will ultimately support the achievement of 'Recommendation 3 Mandate Gender Balance and Good Governance Principles'. The advisory panel envisages state and local government, as well as the sector working together to implement the following actions:

- Rethink role/position descriptions, including questioning what skills and experience are actually required.

- Think about new and different ways to identify candidates, such as tapping into women's networks, using social media and using only recruiting services that also help develop potential female candidates, for example, CV preparation, interview practise and assembling a significant pool of capable females to put forward for leadership vacancies.
- Encourage organisations to offer flexible working arrangements and to share case studies about practical examples of how this can work.
- Invest in training for CEOs and senior executives (Ambassadors of Change) around diversity on recruitment, creating shortlists with a better gender balance and how to advocate for more women in leadership positions.
- Establish nominations committees and insist on equality among, and a diversity, of candidates.
- Ensure that cultural issues are taken seriously and that when women are appointed to boards and committees, the environment is inclusive and welcoming.
- Increase efforts to create and promote pathways for female leaders. There needs to be a clear road map in place to facilitate career growth for women. For example, an administrator career map could be created for easy understanding of the opportunities in sports administration (equally for board and committee roles).

## 5. Enhance participation choice and improve how opportunities are marketed

Based on the findings, the advisory panel is of the view that continuing to support and nurture innovative practice is essential to not only increase female participation but also to improve the experience of women and girls when they do participate.

Consultation with leaders in the sector indicated strong support for continuing to build the supply side of the participation equation, by creating improved participation opportunities. The sector should be encouraged and supported to innovate. The following actions would support the development, delivery and promotion of improved choice. Again, the advisory panel envisages state and local government, as well as the sector working together to implement the following actions:

- Ask women and girls what they want in a sport and active recreation activity.
- Develop, promote and mainstream modified forms of traditional sport offerings, including social sport alternatives and active recreation opportunities so that they are readily available, equally promoted and recognised across the sector and appeal to women and girls.
- Explore options for improved support to address barriers created by cost and caring responsibilities (for example availability of childcare, avoiding scheduling sport at times that are likely to clash with caring responsibilities, payment options or subsidies, other ways to reduce cost such as reviewing uniform and equipment requirements).
- Introduce greater flexibility regarding the level of time commitments, particularly for training.
- Encourage a flexible approach to thinking about the rules, participation requirements and coaching methods that currently don't adequately account for female needs, including attitudes and motivations such as the reasons women and girls participate as well as the physiological differences between females and males.



- Encourage greater sharing and learning across the sector – the development and sharing of clear, replicable case studies and examples of how to do things differently.
- Consider, in all promotion or marketing of opportunities, the style, language and images to be used in marketing to overcome the negative stereotypes some women associate with sport and particularly the way it is traditionally marketed and promoted. The creation and distribution of a simple style guide could assist in this endeavour.
- Use social media to target young women in particular (for example the Sport England campaign, This Girl Can). More effort is needed to normalise women and girls in sport and active recreation – as participants, coaches, officials, administrators, and heads of sporting organisations.
- Create targeted education/awareness programs explaining the role that supportive family, friends and school can play to ensure females stay involved and active, focussing delivery to childhood educators, schools, the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) and community groups.

# Change the environment

Changing both the cultural and physical environment is fundamental to achieving sustainable outcomes.

The cultural environment influences the way people think about and act towards each other. It not only affects the 'tone' of relationships but also the outcomes of interactions.

The advisory panel heard from many people who spoke about the lack of respect shown to women and girls as participants and as leaders in sport and active recreation. There was a strong consensus that the absence of respect was a root cause of gender inequality.

Adopting a new way of thinking – not how to assist women to fit in to the existing environment but how to change the environment so that women and men are given equal opportunities to lead and participate and so that they are equally valued for their involvement – is vital to changing the cultural environment.

The advisory panel recognises that sport not only plays a role in influencing broader culture but that it is also a reflection of the broader culture. Changing the broader cultural environment involves work which goes well beyond the terms of reference of this Inquiry.

However, the advisory panel heard examples of local actions in sport and active recreation that did change attitudes and behaviours. The catch cry think global, act local, while originally in a different context, has resonance.

Education and training also plays a role in building an environment where respect is developed and demonstrated through the way people think, talk and act every day.

## Leadership development

Driving change in both the cultural and physical environment of the sport and active recreation sector is critical to developing leadership opportunities and ensuring that potential leaders, and those in leadership positions, continue to grow and develop. It is about setting up an environment where changing attitudes are encouraged and new habits are established.

More support is needed for all sector organisations to be genuinely and consistently welcoming and inclusive of girls and women in all roles.

In many cases, changing the environment to ensure greater gender equality in leadership roles may require not just cultural change (through addressing unconscious bias, gender discrimination and gender stereotyping), but practical modifications to policies and processes, such as board meeting procedures or flexible working arrangements.

## CASE STUDY

### **Women Take the Lead program – Motorcycling Victoria**

Motorcycling Victoria is working to increase the number of women in leadership roles within the motorcycling community. To achieve their goal, they realised that they needed to change the cultural environment, to empower and to enable women participating in motorcycle sport to feel comfortable as leaders.

The Women Take the Lead Program (WTLP) initiative was designed to enable female participants in the program to gain new insight into the leadership and career pathways available to them in motorcycling.

Training included a personality assessment, so individuals could understand themselves better, imparting knowledge about 'good practice' administration, communication techniques and approaches, strategic and tactical planning for implementation, and exploring the leadership opportunities within the sport. Participants were paired up to be a part of a mentoring relationship where they took turns mentoring each other.

Many of the women reported increased feelings of confidence, not only participating in their sport, but in their everyday lives too. Two of the participants have applied to be board directors at different motorcycle sporting organisations and one was successfully appointed to the Motorcycling Victoria Board this year. The board is hopeful that a number of the other participants will take up leadership roles in the future as a result of the program.

Motorcycling Victoria reports that the outcomes have exceeded their expectations, with immediate impact after only four sessions.



## Respect Gender Project – YMCA Victoria

Recognising that workplaces often demonstrate the sorts of norms and attitudes that need to change in order to build an equitable and respectful society and that women continue to be significantly underrepresented in senior leadership roles in most organisations, YMCA Victoria wanted to be proactive in supporting gender equity.

In 2011 YMCA Victoria entered into a partnership with the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth) and The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University to implement an innovative health promotion project. Y Respect Gender was a three year project that aimed to implement a variety of actions within the workplace of YMCA Victoria to address the social norms and attitudes that contribute to violence against women.

Some of the key actions taken by YMCA Victoria in delivering Y Respect Gender were:

- Four YMCA centres were engaged as Y Respect Gender pilot sites and used an action-learning approach to develop local actions to build their culture.
- Information was provided on YMCA Victoria's expectations for staff and relationships included in the central induction process.
- Senior women were actively engaged with the project team.
- Gender audit of policies was conducted and amendments made to some policies and procedures to strengthen support of gender equality principles.
- Training and presentations on understanding gender, gender stereotyping, and gender equality provided for staff groups at pilot sites and other YMCA centres, at manager forums, regional leadership meetings and other leadership gatherings. Training focused on awareness raising and also on building capacity of managers at all levels to implement change.
- Marketing and regular e-newsletters, articles and material that encouraged equal and respectful relationships.
- Y Respect Gender Project Coordinator engaged with senior male staff on a regular basis, including CEO and executive officers, to affect capacity building for their sponsorship of women's leadership.

This project resulted in a shift in the culture (particularly at pilot sites) which was characterised by a greater openness to conversations regarding gender norms and stereotypes, and a greater awareness of areas for change including an ongoing commitment to respect in the workplace at all levels of the YMCA.

The project has created an environment in which individuals in workgroups can discuss issues and find creative ways of addressing concerns about gender and equity.

## The grassroots participation environment

The consultations provided many stories about female teams and individual athletes not receiving equal access to playing spaces, training venues and other resources (for example coaches and equipment). Even when women and girls received access to the best quality facilities, they were often scheduled at the worst times like late night or early mornings. Entrenched attitudes influence resource allocation and the creation of opportunities. First, appropriate resources and opportunities for women and girls need to exist, and then women and girls need to be empowered to access them.

The provision of high quality sport and active recreation facilities is critical to supporting existing (and growing more) participation opportunities. All tiers of government, the sector itself and the community have a role to play in the planning and funding of sporting facilities.

At the grassroots level, the advisory panel heard that there is often a lack of understanding and awareness of what factors actually contribute to the engagement and disengagement of girls and women in sport and active recreation settings. Therefore, the challenge of retaining female participants remains. The keys to achieving equitable outcomes include:

- creating an awareness of the causes of gender inequalities in the sector
- educating administrators and other decision-makers about creating genuinely inclusive club environments
- understanding that resource allocation (i.e. the provision of appropriate facilities for females to participate) needs to be a priority to support change
- working with and supporting clubs, leagues and associations to make changes to these local environments is essential.

The advisory panel is aware that many local government authorities are now taking a proactive approach to facilities allocation to drive a change of approach by sporting and active recreation clubs and to help ensure greater gender equity in the provision of participation opportunities. More needs to be done to ensure that this is a universal approach and that good practice is shared and replicated.

The advisory panel noted the importance of the Victorian Government's \$10 million investment in Female Friendly Facilities Program, as well as other similar investments made by the state and local governments.

## The high performance participation environment

The high performance participation opportunities in Australia for female sports people to achieve a full time paid playing career are more limited than the opportunities available to men. Regardless of skill and career attainment, many female elite athletes struggle to receive equitable recognition and remuneration. The advisory panel noted that the choice of sport was also a contributing factor regardless of gender, overall, gender played a significant role in recognition and pay outcomes.

The advisory panel acknowledges that there have been improvements made in some sports and some events in recent years, but nevertheless this remains an overall issue for sport.

## CASE STUDY



### Female Facilities Community Campaign – Bayside City Council

Bayside City Council has identified that the lack of existing facilities that support female participation is a significant issue for them.

Bayside has 27 sporting pavilions, 50 sports clubs, 1300 teams and 20,000 club members – and a very high rate of participation in physical activity (compared to rest of Victoria). Yet 80% of these pavilions predate 1960 and 96% of sporting pavilions do not have appropriate change facilities for women.

Bayside City Council introduced a community campaign, (coinciding with the Bayside Leader and the Leader community papers also running their own similar campaign ‘The Grass Ceiling’) which promoted stories of inadequate sporting facilities affecting participation of women and girls in physical activity.

The success of the campaign has been the raising of awareness - for councillors, for council staff, for community members, and for community club administrators - of the current state of facilities for women and girls to participate in sport and active recreation, and the affect inadequate and inappropriate facilities has on welcoming and including females equally.

Awareness of the issues has made it easier for conversations to occur within council about planning the development of facilities and how funds are to be allocated, as well as within clubs about how they allocate the limited resources that they have to ensure female participation can be supported.

Bayside City councillors now recognise the need to support female participation through provision of appropriate and quality facilities. They have reinforced these views by agreeing to bring forward some planned facility improvement projects, specifically those projects that were believed to have the greatest impact on female participation (both in male-dominated activities, and where there is existing great demand for the activity from females).

Upgrading sporting infrastructure at the grassroots level will enable more women to participate in sport. Better facilities send a strong message that women and girls are welcome at the clubs. “These type of improved facilities helps our girls feel welcomes into the club, and feel like they have a place here” – Club President, East Brighton Vampires Junior Football Club

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

In order to create change in the cultural and physical environment for sport and active recreation, the advisory panel makes the following recommendations:

### 6. Deliver female friendly built environments and equitable facility usage policies

To achieve the equitable provision of, and access to, high quality female friendly sport and active recreation facilities, which will support existing and new participation opportunities, state and local government, as well as the sector must work together to implement the following actions:

- Ensure that the built environment is appropriate by applying universal design principles and other good design considerations.
- Encourage facility owners and managers to review access and usage policies to ensure females have a fair share of access to the highest quality facilities at the best and most popular times. Usage policies need to consider not just competition time, but training times, and the distribution between traditional competition and other participation opportunities, as well as different sports.
- The advisory panel acknowledges that there are already a number of local government authorities (the primary owners of community sport and active recreation facilities) that are already active in developing policies, strategies and audit tools to address access and use. Facilitating a universal adoption of these practices will drive change further.
- Address safety issues. There has been work over many years by local government on effective built environment design principles to reduce crime and improve sport and active recreation environments, which are often isolated places at night and during other off peak usage periods, should be regularly assessed to address safety concerns.

### 7. Build an enabling environment through education and training

Changing the environment involves education and training. State and local government, as well as the sector must work together to implement the following actions:

#### **Leadership:**

- Develop skill and cultural capability for existing leaders, at grassroots and in peak organisations, through the delivery of training and education focussed on leading cultural change, creating welcoming and inclusive environments, recognising and dealing with unconscious bias, good recruitment practice, and governance issues.
- Deliver regular sector-wide conferences and workshops on relevant topics such as the need for gender diversity, gender respect and participation, and provide an opportunity to share success stories.
- Strengthen existing female leadership programs and training and provide other professional development support opportunities to women in the sector (for example, through mentoring and connecting aspiring female leaders with the Ambassadors for Change program - see recommendation 1).

- Develop a Victorian scholarship program to help aspiring leaders access development opportunities they might not otherwise be able to afford such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors' course, other similar high profile governance and leadership professional development opportunities, or advanced coaching or officiating courses to increase women in the senior ranks.
- In partnership with the education sector, develop opportunities to support leadership pathways in schools and universities for young women.
- Develop opportunities for women to experience leadership via a sector wide secondment scheme.

## **Participation**

- Review and influence coaching education with the intention of building awareness of the barriers to female participation as well as providing options for addressing those barriers from a coaching perspective. This would include coaching psychology, as well as different coaching methods to address physiological differences.
- In collaboration with the education sector, establish strategies and resources to improve delivery of the curriculum for physical education teachers and sporting programs in schools with the aim of improving the physical literacy of girls, which could result in lifelong participation in sport and active recreation.



# Showcase achievement

For women, as with anyone, it is a case of ‘you can’t be what you can’t see.’ So the more we begin to see women working equally alongside men in traditionally male dominated industries – of which sport is certainly one – the more women will feel these careers are a valid choice.

**Elizabeth Broderick, Australia’s former Sex Discrimination Commissioner**

## It’s harder to be what you can’t see

In creating change, the importance of female role models as athletes and in leadership is significant. There are plenty of talented and capable women and girls in Victoria who are role models, but most of them are not known because their achievements are not reported. The consultations strongly reinforced that for many females, seeing other women and girls achieve in sport and active recreation is inspiring and showcases possibilities.

Showcasing what works and how to achieve success is part of building a new normal, which would increase the number of females participating in various forms of sporting and active recreation activities and holding positions of leadership in those organisations.

## Visible female leaders

The ‘tall poppy’ syndrome is often referred to in Australia. It has an impact on the way we treat our leaders regardless of gender. There are many strong influential leaders in the Victorian sport and active recreation sector. With some exceptions, most sport and active recreation female leaders don’t willingly choose to put themselves forward into the spotlight of broader public view. Those who do, often face intense scrutiny. There was a perception amongst some people who attended the consultations that female leaders are sometimes treated more harshly than men. There were a number of suggested causes of this including unrealistic expectations of perfection and unconscious bias.

Ensuring that leaders are well prepared to deal with public scrutiny is important. In this day and age, that also means dealing well with social media. If we are going to showcase success stories (and the advisory panel heard stories that are worth telling from the grassroots up to leaders in state-wide organisations) then telling those stories in the right way is essential. Preparing women and girls to be public speakers and figures is also important.

Celebrating successful female leaders and increasing their visibility may involve the use of mainstream media, but may also include sector-focused newsletters, social media and awards.

Having substantially greater numbers of females visible and positively promoted as coaches, officials and leaders of organisations will create a fairer and more welcoming environment for females. This will also illustrate to society more broadly that participation and leadership opportunities in sport and active recreation should be available to everyone.

## Participation

Almost universally, the advisory panel heard that there is a strong appetite for more female sport to be shown and reported on in media and for more women to be sport commentators. This supports research on the influential role media plays in showcasing female participation.

While the advisory panel's view is that media coverage of women's sport must increase if gender equity in sport and active recreation is to be achieved, the advisory panel acknowledges that there are commercial realities that need to be satisfied.

In 2015, an exhibition match of two women's AFL teams (Melbourne and the Western Bulldogs) was broadcast on free-to-air television for the first time. It drew an average audience in Melbourne of 175,000, an average of 301,000 viewers nationally and peaked at 501,000 viewers<sup>18</sup>. Obviously there is an interest in women's sport when it is well marketed, made available at accessible viewing times and presented with high production values.

This desire to see more women playing sport is contrasted with a recognised lack of media coverage of women's sport compared to men's sport and this is not significantly improving. In Australian society men's sport is more likely to be featured in print and electronic media, providing a skewed view of sport as a male-oriented activity. Women's sport accounts for 7% of the total television sport coverage and only 6% of print news<sup>19</sup>.

The volume of sports coverage of female athletes compared to male athletes offers disproportionate exposure to male sporting activities on Australian television, despite the ongoing successes of Australian women in international sport. Coverage of women in sport made up only 9% of all sports coverage in Australian television news, while 7% of non-news television programming content was devoted to female sport. Male sport, on the other hand, occupied 81% of television news reporting and 86% of non-news programming.

Television news reports about female sports on average were 30 seconds shorter than reports on male sports. The relatively low volume of reporting and comparatively low duration of air time given to female sport, when compared to women's success and participation rates, implies that male sports are more important and deserving of attention.<sup>20</sup>

Equal recognition and promotion of female sporting teams, athletes and leaders are vital to ensure that everyone – boys and girls, men and women – gets the same opportunities to be physically active and participate.



### Bendigo Advertiser and Bendigo Spirit Basketball Team

Driven by a desire to support and promote the success of Bendigo Spirit in the local community, a partnership was formed between Bendigo Spirit and Bendigo Advertiser (a key sponsor of Bendigo Spirit).

Bendigo Spirit was crowned WNBL National Champions of the 2012/13 and 2013/14 seasons and runners up in the 2014/15 season. Because of the promotion of the success of the team, the positive role models and regular media engagement within the community, Bendigo basketball's female participation grew at the local level.

The Bendigo Advertiser includes a segment specifically for the team through their website – feature articles, player interviews, match reports – and has made a point of emphasising that the team has always been given coverage because of its participation in a national competition (the highest level of competition of any sporting team in Bendigo) not because it is a female team. “When they’re winning, it’s easy to write about” (Bendigo Advertiser staff member).

Female participation numbers in 2013 and 2014 when Bendigo Spirit won national titles, increased by around 10%. There were roughly 100 additional females in a competition that had around 3,000 players, of which 1,000 of them were female. In previous years, before the success of the Bendigo Spirit, there was hardly any growth in female basketball participation.

This participation growth clearly demonstrates the benefits of positive media promotion and the influence of visible role models, particularly in regional areas.

While this may be a small scale example, it seems obvious that one of the keys to increasing female participation numbers is to have greater positive media promotion and greater visibility of female athletes as role models.

Every female athlete with a dream should be able to have an inspirational role model, and to have a clear understanding of how she can reach her goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTIONS

In order to showcase opportunities and achievement, the advisory panel makes the following recommendations:

### 8. Showcase the pathways and opportunities through role models

Role models are essential for inspiring change. State and local government, as well as the sector must work together to implement the following actions:

- Educate and support the sector to identify females within their clubs and communities who are strong role models and highlight the value of their contribution to both the organisations and communities.
- Use a range of role models (not just elite athletes or CEOs) to create a more realistic connection with a broader audience and to showcase the diversity of women and their achievements.
- Develop opportunities such as networking events, which could recognise and use role models, and provide a motivating environment for girls and women.
- Promote and recognise female role models through a range of initiatives, such as:
  - Develop a Victorian Honour Role of Women in Sport and Active Recreation
  - Create a women's leadership category in the annual Victorian Government Community Sport and Recreation Awards
  - Develop a 'role model database' of females in sport and active recreation, to encourage and make it easy for organisations to find and use these individuals as motivational speakers, award presenters, etc.
- Develop a social media campaign (which could be relatively modest or on a large scale similar to the Sports England "This Girl Can" campaign) to inspire women and girls to participate.
- Develop and deliver a resource to support female mentors and role models in sport and active recreation.

## 9. Increase the profile of women in the sports media

The advisory panel recognises that the media is independent and will make its own commercial, programming and content decisions. However, the advisory panel is equally of the view that the media can be worked with to improve outcomes for women. With state and local government, as well as the sector taking a consistent approach, implementation of the following actions will assist in achieving this recommendation:

- The media industry should be strongly encouraged to ensure that females in sport and active recreation are equally acknowledged and their achievements celebrated across all media (social media, newspapers, television coverage).
- Strategies must be developed to influence the media, such as briefing journalists, developing and pitching stories.
- Explore opportunities for leveraging government investment in major and significant events to showcase female athletes, including promotional material.
- Alternatives to mainstream media ought to be explored (social media and new streaming technologies) and local publications and publicity ought to be used to celebrate success and showcase achievements at every level.
- Shine a light on the domination of males in sport by publishing data on the level of female athlete representation in the media, including data such as percentage of prime time devoted to female sports, percentage of prime time sports commentary devoted to female sports.

# Implementation

The recommendations and actions within this report are expected to be implemented over the next 1 to 5 years.

As with most change of this scale, commitment and tenacity are required to achieve the desired outcomes.

Success relies on collaboration between government agencies (federal, state and local), the sector and associated commercial partners including the media.

The advisory panel recommends that an implementation group be established, chaired by Sport and Recreation Victoria, and should include representatives of:

- State sporting associations and peak active recreation organisation leaders
- Vicsport
- VicHealth
- Local government senior leaders
- The Office of Women's Affairs Victoria
- Department of Education and Training.

A secretariat to support the Implementation Group also needs to be made available.

The implementation group would be expected to develop a plan of work that would see the recommendations of this report implemented over the next 1 to 5 years. Thinking innovatively and using existing resources and budgets will be essential to the success of these changes.

This plan of work should also include overseeing the development of a scorecard to measure progress and report to the Minister for Sport.

# Endnotes

- 1 Vicsport, 2010 & 2013, 'Good Governance Project'
- 2 Diversity Council of Australia, 2014
- 3 Australian Medical Association, 2014, 'Position Statement on Physical Activity', <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/physical-activity-2014>
- 4 Dunn, A., Trivedi, m., and O'Neal, H., 2001, 'Physical activity dose response effects on outcomes of depression and anxiety', *Medical and Science in Sports and Exercise*, vol. 33, 2001, pp. S587-97, referred to by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), *Australia's Health 2006*, chapter 3, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/aus/ah06/ah06-c06.pdf>, viewed 27 November 2012
- 5 VicHealth, 2014, 'Female participation in sport and physical activity'
- 6 Carter, N., Wagner, H., 2011, 'The Bottom Line: Corporate Performance and Women's Representation of Boards' (2004-2008), *Catalyst*. <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/bottom-line-corporate-performance-and-womens-representation-boards-20042008>
- 7 Reibey Institute, 2011, 'ASX500 – Women Leaders', [www.reibeyinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/ASX500\\_Women-Leaders-2011.pdf](http://www.reibeyinstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/ASX500_Women-Leaders-2011.pdf)
- 8 Putnam, R., 1995. 'Bowling alone? America's declining social capital', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 6, pp. 65-78
- 9 Mandela, N., 2000, Presentation at the Laureus World Sports Awards 2000, Monaco
- 10 United Nations, 2007, 'Women, gender equality and sport', <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/Women%20and%20Sport.pdf>
- 11 Grant, H., 2014, Grants for sporting community to prevent violence against women and their children available in 2015 , *Our Watch*, [http://www.ourwatch.org.au/News-media-\(1\)/News-Media/Grants-for-sporting-community-to-prevent-violence](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/News-media-(1)/News-Media/Grants-for-sporting-community-to-prevent-violence)
- 12 Australian Sports Commission, 2013, 'Mandatory Sports Governance Principles'
- 13 Claringbould, I., & Knoppers, A., 2008, 'Doing and undoing gender in sport governance', *Sex Roles*, 58, 81-92. doi: 10.1007/s11199-007-9351-9
- 14 Kramer, V. W., & Konrad, A. M., 2006, 'Critical Mass on Corporate Boards: Why Three or More Women Enhance Governance', Wellesley Centers for Women's Publications Office
- 15 Shaw, S., & Hoerber, L. 2003, 'A strong man is direct and a direct woman is a bitch: Gendered discourses and their influence on employment roles in sport organisations', *Journal of Sport Management*, vol. 17, pp. 347-375.

- 16 Hanlon, C., Morris, T., & Nabbs, S., 2010, 'Establishing a successful physical activity program to recruit and retain women,' *Sport Management Review*, vol. 13, pp. 269-282
- 17 Ibid
- 18 The Herald Sun, 17 August 2015, 'AFL Media Watch: Women's footy outrates Essendon game, Brian Taylor's footy rant plus this week's commentary gems', retrieved from [www.heraldsun.com.au](http://www.heraldsun.com.au)
- 19 'Women in Sport Broadcasting Analysis,' April 2014, Australian Sports Commission in conjunction with Repucom
- 20 Dr Ralph Richards, 2015, 'Women's Sport', NSIC/Clearinghouse, Australian Sports Commission



# Appendix A

## References

A selection of articles and reports used to inform the inquiry

| Title   | Date                  | Author and publication   |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| About time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia  | Sept 2006             | Australian Senate Inquiry - Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts<br>References Committee |
| ANZ Bank's Equality Initiatives (TV ad)   | July 2015             | Australia's ANZ Bank and Whybin/TBWA Melbourne   |
| Australian Sports Commission – Women in Sport Broadcasting Analysis   | April 2014            | Australian Sports Commission in conjunction with Repucom   |
| Board Management Resources  | 2013-2015             | Vicsport   |
| CASSA Gender Equality Project   | Jan 2012-<br>Dec 2014 | Community Access and Services South Australia (CASSA)  |
| Darebin Council's Sports Facility policy  | Aug 2015              | Darebin City Council   |
| Female athletes, women's sport, and the sport media commercial complex: Have we really "come a long way, baby"? | 2014                  | Janet S. Fink for Sport Management Review 2015, vol. 18, issue 3, pages 331-342                                      |
| Female participation in sport and physical activity   | Oct 2014              | VicHealth Factsheet  |
| Gender agenda: Unlocking the power of diversity in the boardroom  | 2010                  | An Insync Surveys study in conjunction with Gender Worx and Board Benchmarking                                       |

| <b>Title</b>   | <b>Date</b>   | <b>Author and publication</b>   |
|--|---------------|---|
| Gender Balance in Global Sport Report  | July 2014     | Women on Boards, UK and Australia   |
| Gender Equity – what will it take to be the best   | July 2014     | Developed by the Richmond Football Club and delivered in partnership with Bluestone Edge, the Australian Football League (AFL) and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) |
| Go Where Women Are - Insights for engaging women and girls in sport and exercise   | 2014          | Sport England   |
| Helping women and girls to get active: a practical guide   | Aug 2015      | Sport England   |
| How one title led to another   | July 2015     | Kuros Ghaffari – Share America  |
| Leadership Lab – Why you want more women in your boardroom (opinion piece)   | Oct 2014      | Michelle Ray – The Globe and Mail   |
| Miss Representation – documentary that premiered at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival and later aired on OWN                         | 2011          | Written, directed, and produced by Jennifer Siebel Newsom   |
| More Than Just Letting Them Play:<br>Parental Influence on Women's Lifetime Sport Involvement                                      | 2008          | Dixon, M. A.; Warner, S. M.; Bruening, J. E. for Sociology of Sport Journal 2008 Vol. 25 No. 4 pp. 538-559  |
| Number of People Playing Organised Sport in NSW is falling   | May 2015      | Sport NSW Director and Woollahra Clr. Katherine O'Regan – the Sydney Standard   |
| Negotiating motherhood and athletic identity: A qualitative analysis of Olympic athlete mother representations in media narratives | Sept 2015     | McGannon, K. R.; Gonsalves, C. A.; Schinke, R. J.; Busanich, R.<br><br>For the Journal Psychology of Sport and Exercise 2015 Vol. 20 pp. 51-59                            |
| Our Watch Newsletter – investments/projects  | July-Aug 2015 | Our Watch   |

| <b>Title</b>   | <b>Date</b>         | <b>Author and publication</b>   |
|--|---------------------|---|
| Research Study: Retaining the Membership of Women in Sport   | Dec 2013            | Report to the Government of Australia – Office for Sport – Department of Health by the Confederation of Australian Sport  |
| Sport and Recreation Strategy 2015-2024 (Draft)  | Aug 2015            | City of Port Phillip  |
| Start Playing, Stay Playing – a plan to increase and enhance sport and active recreation opportunities for women and girls   | Nov 2013            | Macdonald, D., Cook, N., Hooper, S., Keating, D. and Nisbet, S. for the Queensland Government, Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing – Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation |
| This Girl Should: female participation in sport  | August 2015         | Touchline Magazine  |
| Understanding the Contexts of Adolescent Female Participation in Sport and Physical Activity                                 | 2013                | Eime, R., Harvey, J., Sawyer, N., Craike, M., Symons, C., Polman, R., & Payne, W. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 84 (2). pp. 157-166. ISSN 0270-1367  |
| VicHealth Funding Program - Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport Initiative                           | Mar 2015 – Jun 2017 | VicHealth   |
| What Sways Women to Play Sport? Using Influencers to Unlock Opportunities That Positively Impact Women's Sporting Behaviours | April 2015          | Women in Sport, UK  |
| Why you should think twice about ignoring women's sports   | July 2015           | Katja Iversen – Women in the World  |
| Women's Sport - Knowledge Base Summary   | 2015                | Australian Sports Commission's Clearinghouse for Sport  |
| Women and Sport – first report of session 2014-15  | July 2014           | UK House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee – Women and Sport First Report of Session 2014–15  |
| Women Leaders in Sport (WLIS) grant program  | Aug 2015            | Australian Government initiative that is managed by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in partnership with the Office for Women   |

# Appendix B

## Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation

Terms of reference – May 2015

### Aim

The inquiry will advise the Minister for Sport on practical actions for the sport and active recreation sector to enhance participation by women and girls and to increase their engagement in leadership and governance roles.

### Implementation

The inquiry will be undertaken by an expert advisory panel appointed by the Minister for Sport.

### Tasks

The advisory panel will develop a recommended course of action, for implementation over three to five years, and deliver a practical action plan, which is able to be supported and embraced by Victoria's sport and recreation sector and other agencies in partnership with Sport and Recreation Victoria.

The advisory panel's advice will be expected to include ideas for the sector and government to:

- Increase representation of women involved in governance and leadership roles within the sector; and
- Enhance accessibility, choice and pathways for women and girls to participate in sport and active recreation.

The advisory panel will be required to:

- Consult with participants, volunteers, leaders, innovators, researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers within the sport and active recreation sector and in the broader community
- Present the available evidence that informs and illustrates the role and benefits of women and girls in sport and recreation leadership and participation and identifies the key barriers to be challenged
- Identify and highlight potential responses to the behaviours and attitudes that continue to marginalise women and girls' involvement in sport and active recreation

- Identify priority areas of strategic focus and investment that could enhance the participation and engagement by women and girls in sport and active recreation, encourage sector support, and may deliver increased benefits to the sector and the community associated with more women and girls being and staying involved
- Seek sector (and where possible community) cooperation and collaboration in overcoming the barriers experienced by women and girls and driving positive and sustainable change.

## Deliverables and timing

An interim report on issues concerning the leadership and participation by women and girls in sport and active recreation was delivered to the Minister for Sport in April 2015. The advisory panel's work will consider the issues raised in the interim report and the possible intervention points identified as being important to examine further. The advisory panel is expected to deliver a final report to the Minister, inclusive of recommendations and a practical action plan, by 30 October 2015.

## Inquiry advisory panel membership

### Chair

Ms Peggy O'Neal

### Members

Mr Nicholas Barnett

Associate Professor Dr Clare Hanlon

Mr Ken Jacobs OAM

Ms Melanie Jones

Ms Meagan Keating

Mr Mark McAllion

Ms Jerril Rechter

Mr David Talalla

## The role of the Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services, through Sport and Recreation Victoria, will:

- Provide secretariat, policy advice and research support for the advisory panel.
- Facilitate communications and engagement with the sector.
- Undertake work in parallel with the Inquiry as required to facilitate implementation of recommendations provided by the advisory panel and endorsed by the Minister for Sport (for example provision of advice concerning the potential alignment of ongoing SRV programs to support proposed strategies).

# Appendix C

## Advisory panel members

# Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation

The following individuals were appointed to the advisory panel:

**Peggy O'Neal** (Chair) joined the Richmond Football Club board in 2005 and was elected President in 2013. She is a lawyer and presently acts as a consultant to Lander & Rogers law firm. She is also on the board of a number of entities in the financial services sector as well as not for profit organisations.

**Nicholas Barnett** has been a director, business leader and consultant for over 30 years. He is CEO of Insync, a former partner of KPMG, non-executive chairman of Ansvr Insurance and a non-executive director of Mission Australia. Nicholas is also an author, a co-founder of Gender Worx and a passionate diversity campaigner.

**Dr Clare Hanlon**, Associate Professor, Institute Sport, Exercise and Active Living, Victoria University. Clare has over 25 years research and practical experience in sport, specialising as an industry adviser in research and collaboration strategies to encourage women in leadership roles and facilitate greater participation in sport and physical activity. She is a Director, Gymnastics Australia and Vice-President, Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand.

**Ken Jacobs** OAM is a former CEO of Cricket Victoria, a Director of Cricket Without Borders who was also an Advisory Board Member of the Asia Pacific World Sport and Women Conference (2012) and sits on a number of other not for profit boards.

**Melanie Jones** is a former physical education teacher, game development manager with Cricket Victoria and Australian Southern Stars cricketer. Currently is an athlete talent manager with Elite Sports Properties with a focus on female sport and a board director with Bowls Australia. Mel is also an international cricket commentator for ICC World Cups, the Indian Premier League and the Big Bash League.

**Meagan Keating** is currently the Director of Meagan Keating Marketing Services and holds a Bachelor Degree in Business Marketing from La Trobe University. Her previous roles include over a decade in Strategic Marketing & Sales with Telstra. Meagan has been actively involved in the community through her involvement with North Central Netball Region, a variety of netball initiatives and currently sits on the AFL Commission – Central Victoria. In addition, Meagan has a hands-on role in running the family motel business with her husband and three sons and is an active member of the Rochester Business Network.

**Mark McAllion**, has been CEO of Vicsport since January 2009, with 25 years of sports administration experience behind him. Mark's administration background is predominantly in the community sport and game development areas having worked with Cricket Victoria, Cricket Australia and Tennis Australia. Before joining Vicsport Mark was the CEO of Softball Australia. Mark holds a number of board and committee positions including being the Chairman of Deakin University's Exercise Sports Science Advisory Board, a member of the Victorian School Sport Council and a Director of Community Sport Australia.

*Note: Ollie Dudfield, General Manager of Sports Development at Vicsport represented Vicsport until June 2015.*

**Jerril Rechter** is the CEO of VicHealth and has extensive experience in leadership across government and not for profit sectors. A World Health Organization Advisor and Chair of the International Network of Health Promotion Foundations, Jerril is also a past and current member of numerous ministerial committees. Jerril is the 2015 Victorian winner of the Government and Academia category at the Telstra Victoria Business Woman of the Year Awards.

**David Talalla** works as an Umpires High Performance Panel member for Cricket Australia which includes match refereeing elite cricket in Australia. He also sits on the boards of the Victorian Institute of Sport and Gymnastics Victoria. He also took part in the Commonwealth Games 1998 and is a solicitor having qualified and practised in England. His passion is mentoring people from primary school to professional lawyers and elite sports people. He is also heavily involved in community work.

The community consultation process was facilitated by **Leigh Russell**. Leigh is an organisational development specialist, board director, performance coach, and public speaker/facilitator. Leigh is the former CEO of Netball Victoria and has worked for state, national and elite sporting organisations. Currently, Leigh runs Inspired Heads, a management consultancy and coaching practice, and serves as Chair of Tennis Victoria's Nominations Committee, Chair of Cricket Australia's Player Development Advisory Committee, lectures at ACU (leadership and culture) and is a coach on Foxtel's 'The Recruit'.

# Appendix D

## Community consultation schedule

| Consultation  | Date and location  | Purpose   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Community Consultation – Regional</p> <p><b>THOSE INVOLVED:</b></p> <p>Local leaders (networks, clubs, activities), regional sports assemblies, regional academies of sport, local government and community program staff involved in programs and sports facility management, local participants, parents of junior participants, academics, sporting boards/committee members.</p> | <p>Geelong - Wednesday 3 June</p> <p>Bendigo - Monday 6 July</p> <p>Traralgon - Thursday 23 July</p> | <p>Basic data gathering and consultation with regional grassroots/ local individuals/leaders involved with sport and active recreation, discussing challenges and solutions around the themes of participation and leadership</p>     |
| <p>Community Consultation – Metropolitan</p> <p><b>THOSE INVOLVED:</b></p> <p>Local leaders (networks, clubs, activities), state sporting associations, sporting boards/committee members, Local government and community program staff involved in programs and sports facility management, local participants, parents of junior participants, academics.</p>                         | <p>Melbourne - Thursday 20 August</p>  | <p>Basic data gathering and consultation with metropolitan grassroots/ local individuals/leaders involved with sport and active recreation, discussing challenges and solutions around the themes of participation and leadership</p> |
| <p>Focus Group – Girls and Young Women</p> <p><b>THOSE INVOLVED:</b></p> <p>Girls and young women – participants at grass roots and elite level (athletes, coaches, officials), secondary school, tertiary, SEDA students.</p>  | <p>Thursday 27 August</p>  | <p>Focussed discussion with girls and young women seeking their views, including testing ideas and draft proposals</p>  |



| Consultation  | Date and location                       | Purpose   |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Non-Sport and Active Recreation Sector Consultation</p> <p><b>THOSE INVOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marianne Barker, Barrister &amp; former Board Member of Taekwondo Australia</li> <li>• Bianca Chatfield, elite netball player, Director of The Ignition Project &amp; Pivot Performance</li> <li>• Alison Crabb, Nation Leader Flight Centre</li> <li>• Chris Dodd, Melbourne PWC Office Managing Partner</li> <li>• Kathryn Fagg, Director of Reserve Bank &amp; past-senior exec LinFox</li> <li>• Lisa Gale, National Australia Bank</li> <li>• Jane Hodder, Global Board Member and Partner, Herbert Smith Freehills</li> <li>• Helen Hovenga, Head of Human Resources/Talent, Transpacific Cleanaway</li> <li>• Nigel Howard, Victoria Police</li> <li>• Kate Jenkins, Commissioner Victorian Equal Opportunity &amp; Human Rights Commission</li> <li>• Mark Johnston, CEO, Central Goldfields Shire</li> <li>• Ben Lawrence, Wesfarmers HR</li> <li>• Naomi Lind, President, Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) Victoria</li> <li>• Janet Matton, Director of Epworth &amp; past-VP IBM</li> <li>• Stephanie Moorhouse, Olympic gymnast</li> <li>• Karen Morley, Researcher and Author</li> <li>• Brendan Pauwels, VicRoads</li> <li>• Angela Pippas, Journalist, TV &amp; Radio Presenter</li> <li>• Henriette Rothschild, Managing Director, Hay Group</li> <li>• James Sutherland, CEO Cricket Australia</li> <li>• Leigh Wilson, Mayor, Campaspe Shire</li> </ul> | <p>Melbourne - August and September</p> | <p>1-on-1 interviews conducted by Advisory Panel members</p> <p>Seeking additional information and lessons from outside the sport and recreation sectors. Testing ideas or draft proposals and promoting an understanding or awareness of the issues by (non-sport) stakeholders with potential influence</p> |

| Consultation  | Date and location | Purpose   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Champions Meeting<br><b>THOSE INVOLVED:</b><br>Sport and active recreation sector leaders and advocates | Monday 5 October  | Discussion of draft recommendations with individuals who will actively support and assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the final report (e.g. State Sporting Association CEO/EO, Board Chair, etc) |

The advisory panel also had conversations with, and received presentations from, the following individuals:

Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria and AFL Commissioner

Margot Foster AM, Chair Vicsport, Board Member VicHealth

Brendon Gale, CEO Richmond Football Club

Michelle Plane, CEO Netball Victoria

Andrew Skillern, CEO Hockey Victoria

Steve Walker, CEO Yachting Victoria



