

State of Play Survey

2022-23



CHANGE
OUR
GAME



CHANGE OUR GAME State of Play Survey

The Victorian Government proudly acknowledges Aboriginal people as the First Peoples and Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and water on which we rely.

We acknowledge the ongoing leadership role of the Aboriginal community on gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. As First Peoples, Aboriginal Victorians are best placed to determine a culturally appropriate path to gender equality in their communities.

Since 2016, *Change Our Game* has been the Victorian Government's campaign to drive positive change for women and girls in sport and active recreation, in pursuit of gender equality.

To better understand the sports community's current views on gender equality in sport, the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation (OWSR) commissioned Ernst & Young to carry out an attitudinal survey.

Between October and November 2022, more than 670 Victorians answered questions on a range of topics relating to gender equality in sport, including values and behaviour in community sport, elite sport, sports media and coverage, leadership opportunities and perceptions, and experiences working and volunteering in sport. Throughout this report, 'people' refers to survey respondents.

The survey forms part of the *Change Our Game* Research and Insights Initiative, which funds and promotes targeted research to advance the conversation around gender equality in sport and recreation in Victoria.

The survey: key details



More than **670 respondents** living in Victoria.



51% women
48% men
1% non-binary



66% Melbourne
17% regional
17% prefer not to say

Respondents included:

69% volunteers and staff
39% players
27% coaches
15% spectators

(NB: respondents could identify up to two primary categories)

In total, respondents played, watched, coached or worked in **more than 50 sports**. Top sports represented were:



basketball



Australian rules football



soccer



tennis



netball

16% CALD

2% Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Snapshot of findings



The State of Play Survey revealed that overall, while there are some positive attitudes towards women and girls in sport and their right to equal opportunities and access, change is still required in terms of underlying attitudes and behaviours.

Consistently throughout the survey, men were less likely than women to perceive gender inequality in various aspects of sport:

Negative behaviour and gendered discrimination in community sport were reported by more than half of people, and women were more likely than men to see or experience it.

People overall felt women had fewer leadership opportunities in sport than men, and more women believed this to be the case.

Men were more likely to think that there had been a conscious effort to treat men and women equally over the last five years in their sport, compared to women.

Men were more likely than women to agree that young girls and boys, and men and women, are supported equally by their club to play sport.

Of people who played community sport, women were less likely than men to agree that club facilities were shared equally between men and women or that the main playing venue was shared equally.

Top five issues in sport (1-5)

Advertising in sport such as promoting gambling or alcohol	33%
Fair and equal participation opportunities for women and men	32%
Fewer volunteers willing to be involved in sport	32%
Racism in sport	29%
Player "off-field" behaviour	26%



Gender equality in sport

Key findings

90% vs 66%

women said men said
gender inequality is still an issue in sport that needs to be fixed.



#2 issue in sport:

fair and equal participation opportunities for women and men.



- ▶ Women were more likely to indicate that men had more opportunities in sport than women, except for community sport coaching, where they felt men and women had similar opportunity.
- ▶ Men were more likely to think that there were equal opportunities for both men and women in all aspects *except* community coaching.

2 in 3

people agreed their sporting organisation needed to work towards **better gender balance**.



9 in 10

people believed there should be more effort to promote girls continued involvement in sport through their teens.



Only 27%

believe women are treated fairly and not disadvantaged in any sport.

Sporting culture and attitudes

Key findings

> 50%

of people who play community sport have experienced or seen **gender imbalance (56%) sexist language and jokes (55%)**.

28%

of women have considered leaving their club due to inequitable treatment.



Women are

2.5x

more likely to report **feeling unwelcome** at their sporting club compared to men.

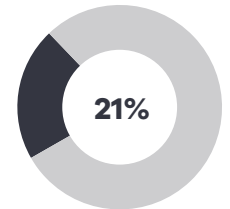
People were
> 10x

more likely to believe men have more opportunities for financial support as elite athletes than women.

Women working or volunteering in sport were **13% less likely** than men to feel comfortable voicing their opinion, and **8% less likely** to feel that their opinions were valued.

21%

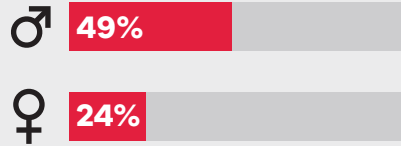
believed **women should not play some sports**.



Elite sport

Key findings

Men were twice as likely as women to believe male elite athletes are more skillful than female elite athletes.



Men are...

34% more likely to believe community club facilities are shared equally between men and women.

28% more likely to believe women and men's teams have equal access to (main) community sport facilities at peak times.

4 in 5 elite athletes

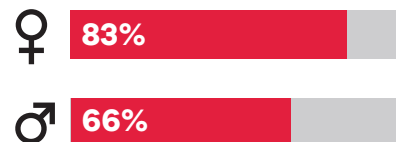
felt there had been a conscious effort to treat men and women equally in sport in the past 5 years.

But men elite athletes were **2.5x more likely** than women elite athletes to report that they felt that effort had been 'to a great extent'.

1 in 3

elite athletes felt **women and men had equal sponsorship opportunities**.

Parents of boys were **significantly more likely** to say their son had elite athletes they considered as role models compared to parents of girls.

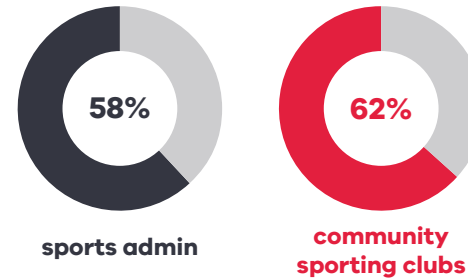


Leadership

Key findings

2 in 3

people reported that men have more opportunities to be in senior leadership positions



Women were more likely to perceive gendered differences in who holds executive roles in sport.

73% women noted that men are more likely to get general leadership roles, compared to 59% of men.

4 in 5

people working in sport felt men and women are given recognition for their work equally within their organisation but

1 in 4

still felt men were more qualified to make decisions.

4 in 5

people working in sport felt their organisation cared about creating a work environment where men and women are equal.



Women and men working in sport felt their direct managers were supportive of their careers in similar numbers (94% vs 95%).

Leadership

Key findings (continued)

More than

1 in 3

men working in sport, and 14% of women, believe **men are generally more experienced and qualified to make decisions**... although 56% of men and 84% of women disagree with this.

People agreed a board quota to require sporting organisations to have at least **40%** women on their committees or board led to:

- ▶ more opportunities for women on boards **(84%)**
- ▶ increased diversity of opinions and ideas **(81%)**
- ▶ better outcomes for participants **(63%)**
- ▶ better decision-making **(60%)**
- ▶ improved board performance **(59%)**

Women in sports media



97% of women and **83%** of men who watched sport wanted more women commentators - **91%** of respondents overall.



People want commentators who are:

- insightful **(100%)**
- knowledgeable **(99%)**
- entertaining **(83%)**

These attributes rated far higher than playing sport at the highest level **(40%)**.



53% of respondents reported that they had noticed an increase in the coverage of women's sports over the last five years.

Despite **two-thirds of people** believing women have fewer senior leadership opportunities, **87% feel women** are as good as men at leading sports organisations.

People were more than

16x

more likely to believe men have more opportunities to coach elite teams than women.

In community sport, people were

4x

more likely to believe men have more opportunities to coach junior or community clubs than women.

The State of Play survey shows that further improvement is needed in a range of areas when it comes to gender equality in sport and active recreation, including use of community sport facilities, opportunities for women in leadership roles, respectful behaviour, opportunities for women as athletes and men's recognition of existing inequality.

Achieving meaningful change towards gender equality requires a system-wide approach to these issues: reforming structures and cultures, supporting and investing in women, implementing strong policy, and advocacy.

Through the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, and the *Change Our Game* movement, the Victorian Government is investing in initiatives that drive change, and is committed to leveling the playing field for women and girls.

To learn more, visit changeourgame.vic.gov.au





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