

The Senate

Environment, Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts
References Committee

About time!

Women in sport and recreation in Australia

September 2006

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Abbreviations

ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACE	Athlete Career and Education
ACHPER	Australian Council for Health Physical, Education and Recreation
AFL	Australian Football League
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
AIS	Australian Institute of Sport
ANPA	Australian Netball Players' Association
AOC	Australian Olympic Committee
APC	Australian Paralympic Committee
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
ASTRA	Australian Subscription Television & Radio Association
AWRA	Australian Womensport and Recreation Association
AWU	Australian Workers' Union
CALD	culturally and linguistically diverse
CBT	Commonwealth Bank Trophy (netball)
CHD	coronary heart disease
COAG	Council of Australian Governments
DAS	Direct Athlete Support
ERASS	Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FFA	Football Federation Australia
IOC	International Olympic Committee
LTC	long term health condition

NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
NIDDM	non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus
NSO	National Sporting Organisation
OfW	Office for Women
PGA	Professional Golfers Association
SEIFA	socio-economic index for areas
SES	socioeconomic status
SPARC	Sport and Recreation New Zealand
WNBA	Women's National Basketball Association
WWDA	Women with Disabilities Australia

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 On 29 March 2006, the Senate asked the Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee to conduct an inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia, for report by the first sitting day of September 2006. On 15 August 2006 the Senate granted the Committee an extension of time to report to 6 September 2006.

1.2 The terms of reference were to inquire into women in sport and recreation in Australia, with particular reference to:

(a) the health benefits of women participating in sport and recreation activities;

(b) the accessibility for women of all ages to participate in organised sport, fitness and recreation activities, with additional reference to state and federal programs, including:

(i) the number of women actively participating in organised sport, fitness and recreation activities,

(ii) characteristics of women not participating in organised sport, fitness and recreation activities (including, for example, socio-economic strata, age, women with a disability, Indigenous or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women),

(iii) constraints, including strategies to overcome the constraints that may prevent these women from participating,

(iv) the effectiveness of current state and federal grant programs that encourage women to participate,

(v) the retention and attrition trends of grassroots participation, including comparisons with male athletes at a similar level,

(vi) the remuneration, recruitment, retention and attrition of elite female athletes, including comparisons with elite male athletes,

(vii) retention of athletes competing in senior and open age state and national sporting competitions, with possible strategies to retain female competitors in elite and sub-elite competition,

(viii) opportunities and barriers for national team members and competitors in international competition, and

(ix) the financial status, success and viability of women's national league competitions, including strategies to improve these factors;

(c) the portrayal of women's sport in the media, including:

(i) the role of the government to regulate and review the coverage of women's sport in the media (print, radio and electronic),

(ii) the influence of pay television on the coverage of women in sport,

- (iii) the promotion and publicity of women's national league competitions,
 - (iv) the financial status and success of women's national leagues, and
 - (v) strategies to improve the amount and quality of media coverage for women's sport; and
- (d) women in leadership roles in sport, including:
- (i) the number and proportion of women in coaching, administrative and officiating roles,
 - (ii) the issues associated with women in leadership roles in both elite and grassroots activities,
 - (iii) trends and issues for women in organisational leadership roles, and
 - (iv) strategies to improve the numbers of women in coaching, administration and technical roles.

Note on references in this report

1.3 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the Committee rather than a bound volume of submissions. References to Committee Hansard are to the proof Hansard transcript of hearings. Page numbers may vary between the proof and the official Hansard transcript.

Conduct of the inquiry

1.4 In accordance with its usual practice, the Committee advertised details of the inquiry in *The Australian*. The Committee also wrote contacted a range of organisations and individuals, inviting submissions. It received 88 written submissions, as listed at Appendix 2. Public hearings, and the documents tabled at them, are listed in Appendix 3. The context of this inquiry is outlined in Appendix 1.

1.5 Public hearings of the committee were held in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, which included teleconferences with witnesses from South Australia and the Northern Territory. Details of the hearings are at Appendix 3. The committee thanks everyone who made themselves available for hearings, particularly those who travelled to make it to the capital city locations.

1.6 Physical activity amongst school-age children emerged as an issue in submissions and hearings, and this led the committee to write, on 3 August 2006, to all state and territory departments of education, asking them a number of questions about the status and extent of physical activity within school programs. By the time of reporting, the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia had responded to this query. Their replies are included in Appendix 4. It is the committee's intention to pursue responses to its query and it will publish them on its website as they become available.

1.7 Late in the inquiry process, the committee sought information from the outdoor recreation and fitness sectors, and is very grateful to the individual businesses and organisations who responded promptly to the committee's queries.

1.8 This inquiry was an inquiry into women's participation in sport and recreation. However, the evidence quickly revealed three important points that the committee believes are useful to express in the opening chapter of this report.

1.9 First, the challenges faced by women are not challenges they face alone. There are great health benefits for all Australians that come with being physically active, and there is a need for everyone – women and men, boys and girls – to be more active, and for governments and sporting organisations to play roles in facilitating that activity. There are hurdles that elite sportsmen and women both face in their efforts to compete at an elite level. Outside the sports that have the lion's share of media coverage, and which are financially strongest, most elite sports people are working hard with relatively few direct financial rewards.

1.10 Second, the solutions to the challenges faced by women's sport are not for women alone to implement. It has to be a partnership of women and men working together to create change. The committee received evidence from men and women alike about how sporting endeavours and recreational activities can be enhanced through equal opportunities for women to participate in playing, coaching, administrating, officiating and governing sport and recreation. Sporting and recreational bodies and all participants will be the beneficiaries of policies and attitudes that remove barriers to women's involvement at all levels.

1.11 Third, all sportspeople have a part to play in ensuring everyone can enjoy their game or activity and all parents have a part to play in ensuring their boys and girls stay active and healthy. Everyone in the media, male or female, needs to take every opportunity to give the diversity of sports the coverage they deserve. It is about time that women have enhanced opportunities, access, media coverage and roles in all sports and activities.

Chapter 2

Health Benefits of Participation in Sport

2.1 This chapter reviews the health and associated benefits of participation in sport and recreation activities, with a particular emphasis on the benefits accruing to women. The chapter discusses the health care costs of physical inactivity. There is also a discussion of the advantages participation provides in terms of promoting social cohesion in the community.

2.2 One submission, reflecting much of the evidence received during the inquiry, commented that:

The individual, community and societal benefits of regular participation in sport and physical activity are well documented, as are the risks and costs of physical inactivity. Physical inactivity is considered to be the leading risk factor contributing to preventable illness and morbidity among women in Australia.¹

2.3 Participation in physical activity contributes to the overall physical and psychological health of individuals of all ages and social groups.² Studies – both in Australia and overseas – have found that physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in Australia. Physical activity has also been linked to a reduction in the incidence of other diseases such as diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, some forms of cancer, and injury among older people.

2.4 Submissions to the inquiry emphasised the health benefits for women of participation in sport and recreation. The National Heart Foundation stated that physical inactivity is a significant risk factor for cardiovascular disease and is the leading cause of burden of disease for Australian women. Less than half of all adult women are active enough to gain a health benefit.³

2.5 VicHealth stated that:

Physical inactivity is responsible for about 7% of the total burden of disease in Australia and rates second only to tobacco smoking.

The physical benefits of participating in sport and recreation have been well documented and include decreasing the risk of cardiovascular disease, particularly coronary heart disease, lowering blood pressure, decreasing the chance of developing Type 2 diabetes, raising levels of good cholesterol

1 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 1.

2 National Heart Foundation, *Submission 45*, pp 1–2; VicHealth, *Submission 54*, pp 5–6; Sports Medicine Australia, *Submission 19*, pp 1–2.

3 National Heart Foundation, *Submission 45*, p. 1.

(HDL) and being protective against some forms of cancer. Weight bearing exercises such as walking, running and weight training can also strengthen the musculoskeletal system, which can decrease the likelihood of developing osteoporosis and osteoarthritis and, in the elderly especially, lessen the risk of having a fall. There are also many mental health and wellbeing benefits from physical activity which are less formally documented and recognised.⁴

2.6 A review of recent epidemiological evidence published between 2000 to 2003 on the benefits to health of physical activity concluded that:

Recent papers have reinforced our understanding of the cardiovascular protective effects of moderate physical activity (PA)...The evidence base for protective effects of activity for women, older adults and for special populations has strengthened. Cancer prevention studies have proliferated during this period but the best evidence remains for colon cancer prevention, with better evidence accumulating for breast cancer prevention, and uncertainty or mixed evidence for the primary prevention of other cancers. Important new controlled evidence has accumulated in the area of type 2 diabetes...Limited new evidence has accumulated for the role of PA in promoting mental health and preventing falls.⁵

2.7 A major study by the US Surgeon General made similar links between physical activity and health concluding that both men and women could substantially improve their health and quality of life by including moderate amounts of physical activity in their daily lives.⁶ The study analysed the effects of physical activity on health and disease and found that:

- Higher levels of regular physical activity are associated with lower mortality rates for both older and younger adults.
- Regular physical activity or cardiorespiratory fitness decreases the risk of cardiovascular disease in general and of coronary heart disease mortality in particular.
- Regular physical activity prevents or delays the development of high blood pressure, and exercise reduces blood pressure in people with hypertension.
- Regular physical activity is associated with a decreased risk of certain cancers.
- Regular physical activity lowers the risk of developing non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus.

4 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 5. See also Dr Fullagar, *Submission 2*, pp 1–14.

5 AE Bauman, 'Updating the evidence that physical activity is good for health: an epidemiological review 2000-2003', *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 7(1), 2005; 6–19. See also Green Prescription, *Physical Activity and Health: the benefits of physical activity on minimising the risk of disease morbidity and mortality*, August 2001.

6 US Surgeon General, *Physical Activity and Health*, 1996.

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- Regular physical activity is necessary for maintaining normal muscle strength and joint function. In the range recommended for health, physical activity is not associated with joint damage or development of osteoarthritis and may be beneficial for many people with arthritis.
 - Weight-bearing physical activity is essential for normal skeletal development during childhood and adolescence and for achieving and maintaining bone mass in young adults.
 - It is unclear whether resistance or endurance-type physical activity can reduce the accelerated rate of bone loss in postmenopausal women in the absence of oestrogen replacement therapy.
 - Evidence suggests that strength training and other forms of exercise in older adults preserves the ability to maintain independent living status and reduces the risk of falling.
 - Low levels of physical activity contribute to a higher prevalence of obesity. Physical activity may favourably affect body fat distribution.
 - Physical activity appears to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety and improve mood. Regular physical activity may reduce the risk of developing depression, although further research is required on this issue.
 - Physical activity appears to improve health-related quality of life by enhancing psychological well-being and by improving physical functioning in persons compromised by poor health.

2.8 The study found that physical activity may, however, have adverse effects. The most common health problems that have been associated with physical activity are musculoskeletal injuries, which can occur with excessive amounts of activity or with suddenly beginning an activity for which the body is not conditioned. Serious cardiovascular events can occur with physical exertion, but the net effect of regular physical activity is a lower risk of mortality from cardiovascular disease.

2.9 The study found that for women in particular physical activity need not be strenuous to achieve health benefits; women of all ages benefit from a moderate amount of physical activity, preferably daily; and additional health benefits can be obtained through greater amounts of physical activity. Women who can maintain a regular routine of physical activity that is of longer duration or of greater intensity are likely to derive greater benefit.

Health care costs

2.10 While participation in sport and recreation has particular health benefits for the individual, public investment in sport and recreation pays public health dividends.

2.11 The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) stated that physical inactivity is responsible for about 6.7 per cent of the total burden of disease and injury in Australia in 2003 – 6.5 per cent for males and 6.8 per cent for females.⁷

2.12 A report into the costs of illness attributable to physical inactivity in Australia found that the annual direct health care cost is approximately \$377 million per year.⁸ The costs (for each of the diseases or conditions in the study) were estimated to be \$161 million for coronary heart disease (CHD), \$28 million for non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM), \$16 million for colon cancer, \$101 million for stroke, \$16 million for breast cancer, and up to \$56 million for depressive disorders.

2.13 The report estimated that 122 deaths per year from CHD, NIDDM and colon cancer could be avoided for every one per cent increase in the proportion of the population who achieve a level of sufficient and regular physical activity. These estimates indicate that one quarter of these deaths occur in people under 70 years and indicates that 1764 life years could be gained for every one per cent increase in moderate activity levels. The analysis indicates that gross savings of \$3.6 million per annum in the health care costs of these three diseases could be achieved for every one per cent gain in the proportion of the population who are sufficiently active.

2.14 Another report also estimated that physical inactivity accounts, on a conservative estimate, for approximately \$400 million each year in direct health costs. There are about 8000 preventable deaths each year in Australia associated with physical inactivity, and it makes a large contribution to the overall burden of disease in Australia, ranking second only to tobacco use as the most important issue in prevention.⁹

2.15 Studies overseas have reached similar conclusions on the effect of physical inactivity on health costs. A US study concluded that increasing participation in regular moderate physical activity among the population over the age of 15 years would reduce annual medical costs in that country by approximately US\$29.2 billion in 1987 – US\$76.6 billion in 2000 dollars.¹⁰

2.16 The National Heart Foundation also argued that health benefits from physical activity can translate into significant health cost savings. The Foundation estimated that \$8 million per year could be saved for every one per cent increase in the proportion of the adult population that is sufficiently active.¹¹

7 AIHW, *Australia's Health 2006*, pp 146,162. See also VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 5.

8 J. Stephenson *et al.*, *The Costs of Illness Attributable to Physical Inactivity in Australia*, Commonwealth Department of Health & Aged Care and the ASC, 2000, pp vii–viii.

9 A. Bauman *et al.*, *Getting Australia Active*, National Public Health Partnership, 2002, p. vi.

10 M. Pratt *et al.*, 'Higher Direct Medical Costs Associated with Physical Inactivity', *The Physician and Sportsmedicine*, vol 28, no.10, October 2000, p. 1.

11 National Heart Foundation, *Submission 45*, p. 2. See also Sports Medicine Australia, *Submission 19*, p. 1.

2.17 The obesity problem in Australia provides an example of the significant burden such conditions can impose on the health care system. Obesity has significant health effects, including as a risk factor for cardiovascular disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, sleep apnoea, osteoarthritis, psychological problems and reproductive problems in women.

2.18 While the personal burden of obesity is considerable, through reduced life expectancy and increased disability, the financial burden for governments of increased health care costs associated with obesity are also significant. In 1989-90 the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) estimated that the indirect costs of obesity in Australia amounted to \$736 million (excluding personal expenditure on weight control measures – estimated at \$500 million a year). Further, reducing the prevalence of obesity by 20 per cent would realise health care savings estimated at \$59 million.¹² More recently in 2003 the National Taskforce on Obesity estimated that the annual cost of obesity was \$1.3 billion and rising.¹³ In the United States it has been estimated that the cost of obesity related medical expenses reached US\$75 billion in 2003.¹⁴

2.19 The health care costs associated with eating disorders are also considerable. In 2000-01, some 16 per cent of all hospitalisations for mental and behavioural disorders in women aged 12-24 were due to eating disorders. A recent report found that for young women the most frequent diagnoses resulting in hospitalisation was depression, followed by eating disorders.¹⁵ The 1999 *Burden of Disease and Injury Survey* found that eating disorders were the fourth leading cause of burden in females aged 15-24.¹⁶

2.20 Evidence indicates that participation in sport and recreation has benefits for all age groups. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and other social research confirm strong positive associations of physical activity for girls and young women, with leadership and teamwork skills, skill development, improved self-esteem and a reduced likelihood of making health-compromising choices (substance abuse, physical inactivity, poor eating). The benefits of physical activity for health and longevity among older adults (50 years or more) are also well established. There is good evidence that in addition to reducing the functional declines of ageing, regular physical activity reduces the risk and severity of major diseases affecting women (e.g. cardiovascular and lung disease, diabetes and breast cancer). Regular movement and

12 NHMRC, *Acting on Australia's Weight*, 1997, p. 85.

13 National Obesity Taskforce, *Health-Weight 2008*, Department of Health and Ageing, 2003, p. 2.

14 US Centers for Disease Control, 'Obesity Costs States Billions in Medical Expense', *Press Release*, 21 January 2004.

15 AIHW, *Australia's Young People: Their Health and Well Being*, 2003, p. 100.

16 AIHW, *The Burden of Disease and Injury in Australia*, 1999, p. 71. See also www.womhealth.org.au

strength training help to maintain balance and flexibility, thereby assisting in the prevention of injurious falls, particularly amongst post-menopausal women.¹⁷

2.21 As noted above, physical activity is important in maintaining good health. National guidelines have set out the amount of physical activity that Australians should take up if they are to gain health benefits. The National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week to obtain health benefits. This is generally interpreted as 30 minutes on at least five days of the week, a total of 150 minutes of moderate activity per week. The guidelines for children and adolescents recommend at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.¹⁸

2.22 The National Heart Foundation stated that the majority of Australian women are not physically active enough to obtain health benefits. According to the 2000 National Physical Activity Survey, more than half (55 per cent) of Australian women aged 18-75 years are not reaching recommended levels of physical activity and a further 15 percent do not participate in any physical activity.¹⁹ VicHealth stated that in Victoria in 2004 only 58.6 per cent of men and 55.1 per cent of women participated in sufficiently regular physical activity to achieve a health benefit.²⁰

2.23 There are no recent national data on the physical activity levels of Australian children and adolescents. In a 2004 survey in NSW, three quarters of the students in Years 6, 8 and 10 reported levels of physical activity that met the physical activity recommendations (see above). Boys reported more activity than girls, but for both genders participation decreased with age. A 2004 survey in Western Australia found that one-quarter of high school males surveyed, one-third of high school females and one out of seven primary school students reported doing no sport, exercise or dance activities in a typical week.²¹

Social cohesion

2.24 Public investment in sport and recreation also benefits social cohesion and community-building. Sport and recreational activities bring people together and help build a sense of community. VicHealth noted that:

Sporting and active recreation activities can be the glue that holds communities together. Sport builds social capital by providing a sense of unity. It is a social leveller, fostering a sense of trust amongst participants and members and contributing to greater social cohesion...Sport and shared

17 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, pp 5–6; NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 1.

18 AIHW, *Australia's Health 2006*, p. 162.

19 National Heart Foundation, *Submission 45*, p. 1.

20 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 5.

21 AIHW, *Australia's Health 2006*, p. 164.

recreation activities offers people the opportunity to be involved, which provides them with a positive sense of self worth. Opening these opportunities to the younger community and allowing adolescence to participate in sports and physical activity, will generally promote their active participation in their later life and thus lower their chances of developing such diseases as coronary heart disease and diabetes.²²

2.25 Bowls is one example of the role sport can play with older women. Although the sport is strongly focussed on attracting younger participants, it provides far more than physical exercise. Given that most bowls facilities are part of a club, the sport provides the setting for social interaction in a safe and supportive environment. Bowls Australia noted that:

For the older demographic bowler the social and mental health benefits gained from bowls are invaluable. Bowls Clubs provide a sense of community; a safe welcoming environment where the older population in particular can gain a sense of belonging. Often they help integrate people back into the community, such as those recovering from an illness or those who have lost a partner.²³

2.26 Participation in sport and recreation also helps build bridges across age and cultures. Sport has a strong tradition of being a social equaliser. Sport often forms the bond between people from different cultures: a shared passion for a team or playing together in a team forms the basis of many enduring friendships across modern society. VicHealth noted that:

In many communities, sport is seen as a means of building community pride and loyalty, with sporting events providing a meeting place and a means of uniting people across age groups.²⁴

2.27 Participation also provides an intergenerational link between parents and their children and grandparents and their children and grandchildren. For example, for many parents and grandparents, the shared experience of throwing or kicking a ball around, or taking their child/grandchild to play their sport or training is a meaningful one that provides the opportunity for family members to spend time together.

Commonwealth and State Government initiatives

2.28 The Commonwealth and the States have introduced a number of initiatives to encourage regular physical activity and active living.

2.29 The Commonwealth, under the *Building A Healthy, Active Australia* initiative operates four measures to address the declining physical activity and poor eating habits of Australian children:

22 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, pp 5–6. See also Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 3.

23 Bowls Australia, *Submission 70*, p. 2.

24 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 5.

- *Active After-School Communities* – provides an after-school physical activity program in schools and approved after school hours care services.
- *Active School Curriculum* – new funding conditions require education authorities to include in their curriculum at least two hours of physical activity per week for children in primary school and junior high school.
- *Healthy School Communities* – grants are provided to community organisations linked with schools, such as parents and citizens associations, to initiate activities to promote healthy eating.
- *Healthy Eating and Regular Physical Activity – Information for Australian Families* – provides families with practical help and information about how to make healthy eating and physical activity part of their everyday lives.²⁵

2.30 In February 2006 Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to the implementation of *The Better Health for all Australians Action Plan* with programs to commence in 2006 and 2007. This Plan includes national efforts to reduce lifestyle health risks such as inactivity, obesity, alcohol and smoking. The package includes the following priority areas:

- Promoting healthy lifestyles – the program will encourage people to make informed lifestyle choices and reduce the risk of developing chronic disease. A focus will be on agreement of simple, consistent messages between all jurisdictions that all Australians can benefit from healthy lifestyle advice.
- Supporting lifestyle and risk modification – this initiative will provide support for people at high risk of developing a chronic condition to make lifestyle changes and reduce their risk. The services will be provided by approved providers such as registered nurse and allied health professionals.²⁶

2.31 The Commonwealth has also implemented a number of initiatives to promote a healthy, more active community generally. These include initiatives through Medicare, such as Medicare rebates for services by medical practitioners treating patients for obesity; and Enhanced Primary Care Medicare items to provide preventive care for older Australians; the National Child Nutrition Programme; the Diabetes Prevention Pilot Initiative; the Smoking, Nutrition, Alcohol and Physical Activity Framework for General Practice; Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, to address health issues, including obesity and related risk factors, in children and families; various programs targeting Indigenous communities and rural communities; various community awareness programs, and research initiatives.²⁷

25 www.healthyactive.gov.au

26 Minister for Health and Ageing, 'Better Health for all Australians', *Media Release*, 10 February 2006.

27 www.healthyactive.gov.au

2.32 The States have also undertaken various initiatives. In Tasmania, the Women Get Active Program aims to enhance the health and wellbeing of women and girls through physical activity. The program specifically seeks to engage women and girls who are not currently physically active and who may have experienced barriers to physical activity such as body image, costs of participation and concern for personal safety.²⁸ In Queensland, the government has established an Obesity Taskforce to implement a number of physical activity and nutrition initiatives. Queensland Health also has staff based throughout the state to promote programs to improve physical activity in the community.²⁹ In Western Australia, the Department of Sport and Recreation operates a number of community grants schemes. One program targets currently inactive women to participate in a range of exercise activities.³⁰

Findings

2.33 The committee found that:

- Participation in physical activity contributes to the overall physical and psychological health of individuals of all ages and social groups.
- Studies – both in Australia and overseas – have found that physical activity reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease, which is the leading cause of death in Australia. Physical activity has also been linked to a reduction in the incidence of other diseases such as diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, some forms of cancer, and injury among older people.
- The public investment in recreational and sporting activities provides an important dividend to terms of both public health and social cohesion.
- Participation in recreational and sporting activities is therefore a practical and efficient way to increase physical activity, thereby maximising the health and social dividends to the community.
- There need to be sustained and focussed efforts to increase the physical activity levels amongst all Australians.
- Strategies need to be developed for minimally physically active and sedentary people – both males and females – to undertake some form of physical activity and these need to be applied across all age groups.
- Strategies need to be developed for both men and women who are moderately physically active to ensure that they can sustain this level of activity throughout their lives, regardless of age.

28 Sport and Recreation Tasmania, *Submission 51*, p. 3.

29 Queensland Government, *Submission 49*, pp 2–5; Queensland Womensport, *Submission 39*, p. 6.

30 WA Department of Sport and Recreation, *Submission 48*, p. 3.

Chapter 3

Grass Roots Participation

3.1 This chapter discusses data relating to the women's participation in organised and non-organised sport and physical activities; the major barriers to participation; and strategies to encourage greater participation by girls and women. The chapter also highlights the particular needs of special needs groups, including women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, women with disabilities, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Indigenous women and women living in geographically isolated areas.

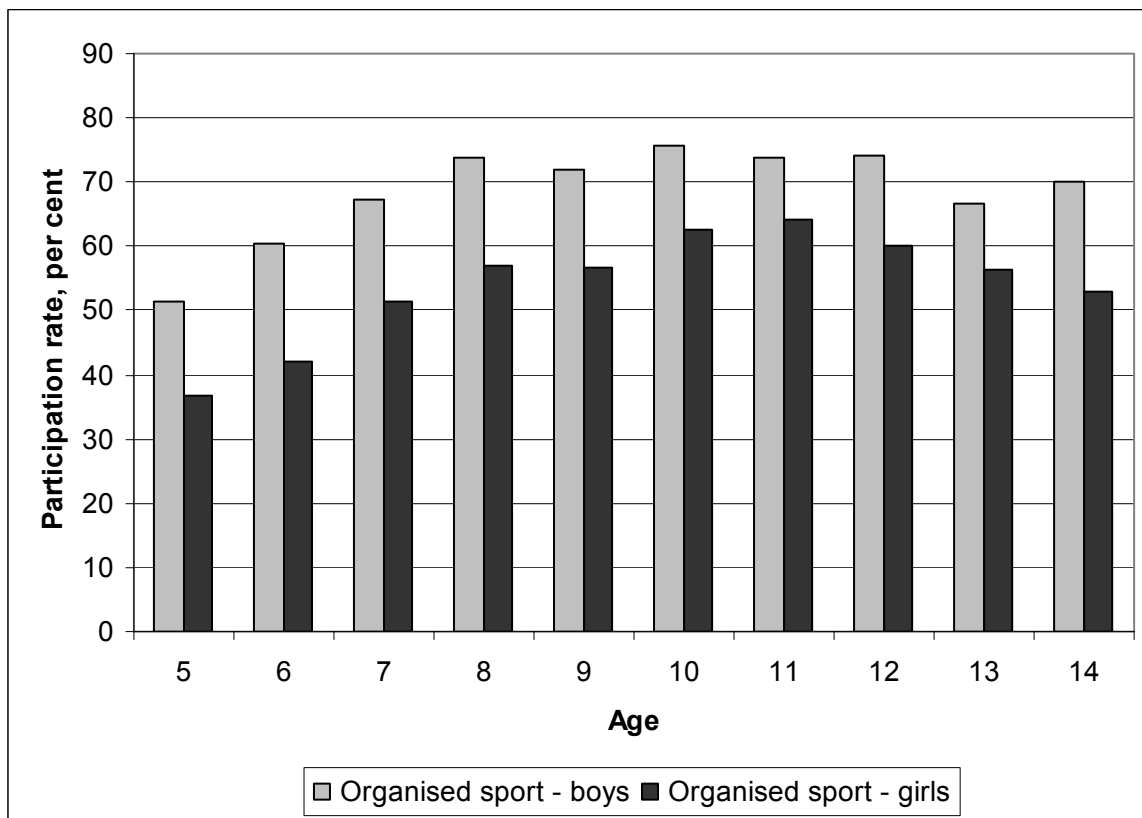
Participation in sport and recreation activities

Girl (5-14 years)

3.2 The ABS in its *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities 2003* collected information on participation in organised sport, organised cultural activities (music, singing, dancing and drama lessons) and leisure activities (skateboarding or rollerblading, bike riding, watching television or videos, playing computer games, other computer use, art and craft activities and reading for pleasure).¹

3.3 Figure 3.1 shows participation in organised sport by age and gender.

1 'Organised sport' is defined in the survey as sports played or trained for outside of school hours which were organised by a club, association or school. The club or association need not be a sporting body, for example, it may be a church group or a local gym. Any organised or structured training or practice sessions are included as long as they have been set by an instructor or coach. See ABS, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities*, Cat. No. 4901.0, April 2003, p. 49.

Figure 3.1 Children's participation in organised sport

Source: ABS, *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities*, April 2003, p. 14.

3.4 The ABS data indicate that in 2003:

- Some 62 per cent of children aged 5 -14 years participated in organised sport. Across all age groups, boys had a higher participation rate (69 per cent) in organised sport than girls (54 per cent). Dancing was the one activity in which girls participated much more extensively than boys (23.8 per cent versus 1.6 per cent).
- Female participation rates in organised sport declined from a high of 64 per cent at 11 years to 53 per cent at 14 years.
- Female participation in active leisure activities such as skateboarding/rollerblading and bike riding also declined from about 10 years of age.
- The rate of participation of boys in organised sport increased from 66 per cent in 2000 to 69 per cent in 2003. However, there was no statistically significant change for girls.
- Nearly one-third (29 per cent) of children participated in two or more sports – 35 per cent for boys and 23 per cent for girls. For girls, the most popular

sports were netball (18 per cent or 233 000), swimming (17 per cent or 225 500), tennis (8 per cent or 100 000) and basketball (7 per cent or 88 900).²

- Some 46 per cent of girls did not participate in organised sport (compared with 31 per cent of boys).³

3.5 Age and gender are important variables in explaining participation rates in organised sport, with girls being less likely than boys to participate, even when organised dancing (a popular activity among girls) is included in the analysis. Children in the younger and older age groups (5 to 7 years and 12 to 14 years) are less likely to participate than those in the middle childhood years (8-11 years).⁴

Women (15 years and over)

3.6 Three data sources provide information on the participation rates of women in organised and non-organised sport and physical activity. They are:

- the Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey (ERASS) survey for 2004;
- the ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey for 2002 (based on results from the General Social Survey 2002); and
- the ABS Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activity survey for 2004 (conducted as part of the ABS Monthly Population Survey).

3.7 ERASS is a joint initiative of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and the state and territory departments of sport and recreation. ERASS collects information on the frequency, nature and type of activities of persons 15 years and over for exercise, recreation and sport during the 12 months prior to the interview. It provides information on organised and non-organised activity for exercise, recreation and sport.⁵

2 ABS, *Children's Participation*, p. 5.

3 ABS, *Children's Participation*, pp 5–6, 14.

4 ABS, *The Young and the Restful (Re-Visited) – The Effects of Recreational Choices and Demographic Factors on Children's Participation in Sport*, 2005, pp 11, 15.

5 'Organised sport and physical activities' refers to sport and physical activities that were organised in full or in part by a club, association or other type of organisation. See Australian Sports Commission, *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport, Annual Report 2004*, (ERASS survey), p. 61.

3.8 The ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey presents results from the General Social Survey 2002 relating to participation in organised and non-organised sport and physical activities by persons aged 18 years and over.⁶

3.9 The ABS Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activity survey 'presents information on the number of persons aged 15 years and over who were involved in organised sport and physical activity over a 12 month period'.⁷ The survey examined both playing and non-playing roles.

3.10 The main findings of these surveys include:

- The overall participation rate for exercise, recreation and sport in the ERASS survey was 82.8 per cent – with similar participation rates for males and females (83 per cent and 82.6 per cent respectively). The overall participation rate in the ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey was lower at 62.4 per cent – with participation rates for males (65 per cent) and females (59.9 per cent).
- Organised participation – all surveys showed higher rates of participation for men. The ERASS survey recorded a participation rate for males of 44.7 per cent) compared to females 40.8 per cent. The ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey recorded participation rate for males of 34.3 per cent compared to females 28.5 per cent, while their Organised Sport survey produced overall rates of 26.9 per cent for men and 20 per cent for women.
- Non-organised participation – the ERASS survey recorded a lower participation rate for males (38.3 per cent) than females (41.9 per cent). The ABS Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey recorded a similar participation rate for males (30.7 per cent) and females (31.4 per cent).

3.11 The ERASS survey reports higher participation rates overall and higher participation rates for women in both organised and non-organised physical activities than ABS data. The differences in results may be attributable to the surveys measuring distinct types of activities engaged in by respondents. The ASC commissioned ACNielsen Research to examine the reasons for the contrasting results, which they studied by administering the ABS and ERASS questions to two random samples of 700 interviewees using identical survey techniques. Their study reproduced the different participation rates for the two sets of questions. This implies that the two surveys are measuring different sorts of participation in physical activity:

6 'Organised sport and physical activities' refers to sport and physical activities which were organised by a club or association. The club or organisation did not need to be a sporting body – it may be a social club, church group or gym. Whether an activity was regarded as a sport or physical activity was left to the opinion of the respondent. However prompt cards listed the following –fitness/health activities; other leisure physical activities; ball sports; racquet sports; other team sports; water sports; other sports; and any other physical activities. See ABS, *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities*, Cat. No. 4177.0, 2002, p. 38.

7 ABS, *Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activity*, Cat. No. 6285.0, April 2004.

ACNielsen also found that even though the GSS had a higher response rate than ERASS (91% compared to 46% in 2002), this was not biasing ERASS results. ACNielsen proved this by using a split sample design, where they interviewed 1,400 respondents using Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing. They randomly selected half the sample (700 respondents) and asked them the ERASS question, while the other half (700 respondents) were asked the GSS question. Even though this ACNielsen study achieved a response rate of just 32%, the participation rates obtained from the GSS and ERASS questions in this study were comparable to the results of the original surveys. ACNielsen, therefore, concluded that there is no evidence of bias in the ERASS data caused by response rates...

In summary, the GSS is asking a very different question than ERASS in the mind (comprehension) of respondents. ERASS is measuring a much broader concept of physical activity than the GSS, where respondents are more likely to include recreational physical activities (be they organised or non-organised).⁸

3.12 The ERASS survey for 2004 indicates that in the previous 12 months an estimated 13.1 million persons aged 15 years and over participated in at least one physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport – a participation rate of 82.8 per cent. As noted above, the overall participation rate for males and females was similar (83 per cent and 82.6 per cent respectively).

3.13 In relation to *organised* participation, 6.8 million persons aged 15 years and over participated in organised physical activity for exercise, recreation and sport.⁹ This represents a participation rate of 42.7 per cent. Of this number, participation for females was 40.8 per cent, whereas for males it was 44.7 per cent.¹⁰

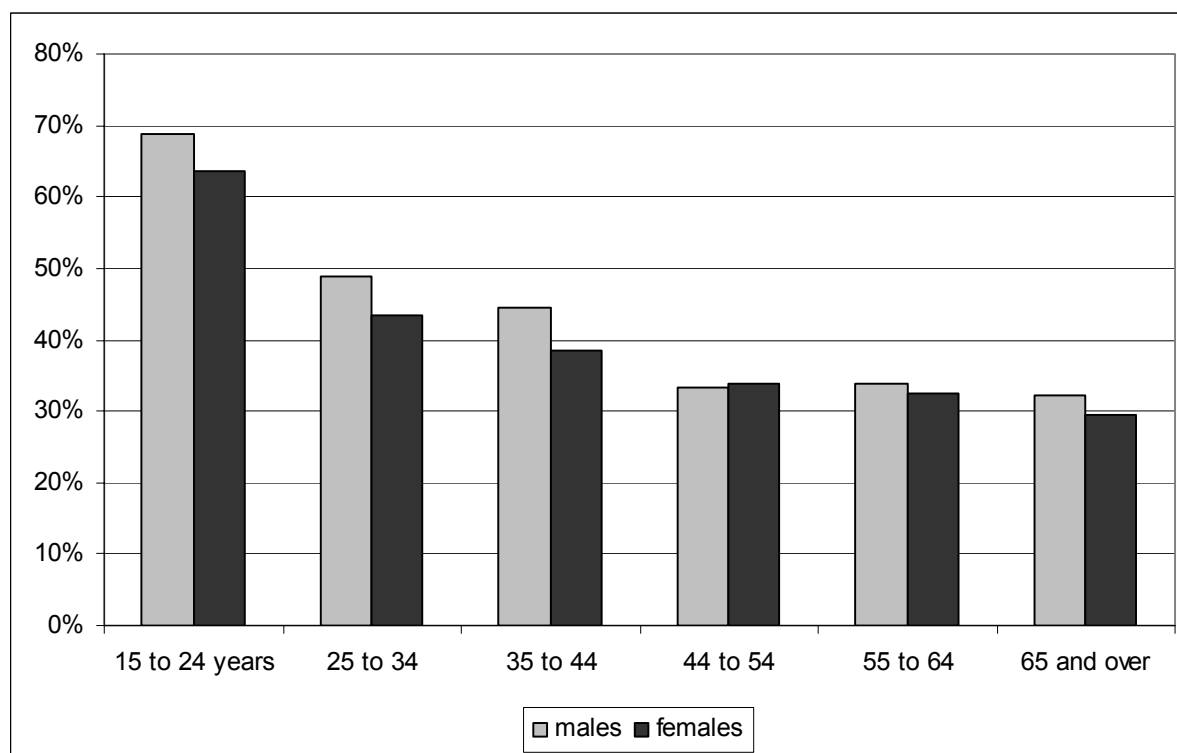
3.14 The data also shows that organised participation rates were highest for women (and for men) in the 15 to 24 age groups (63.5 per cent), and declined steadily with age to 29.4 per cent for women aged 65 years and over (Figure 3.2).¹¹

8 ASC, *Submission 30B*.

9 Relates to people aged 15 years and over who participated in any organised physical activities for exercise, recreation and sport over a 12-month period prior to interview in 2004. See ERASS survey, p. 2.

10 ERASS survey, p. 6. The report presents information regarding the level and frequency of participation in organised and non-organised activity for exercise, recreation and sport; type of participation in physical activity; and trends in participation over time.

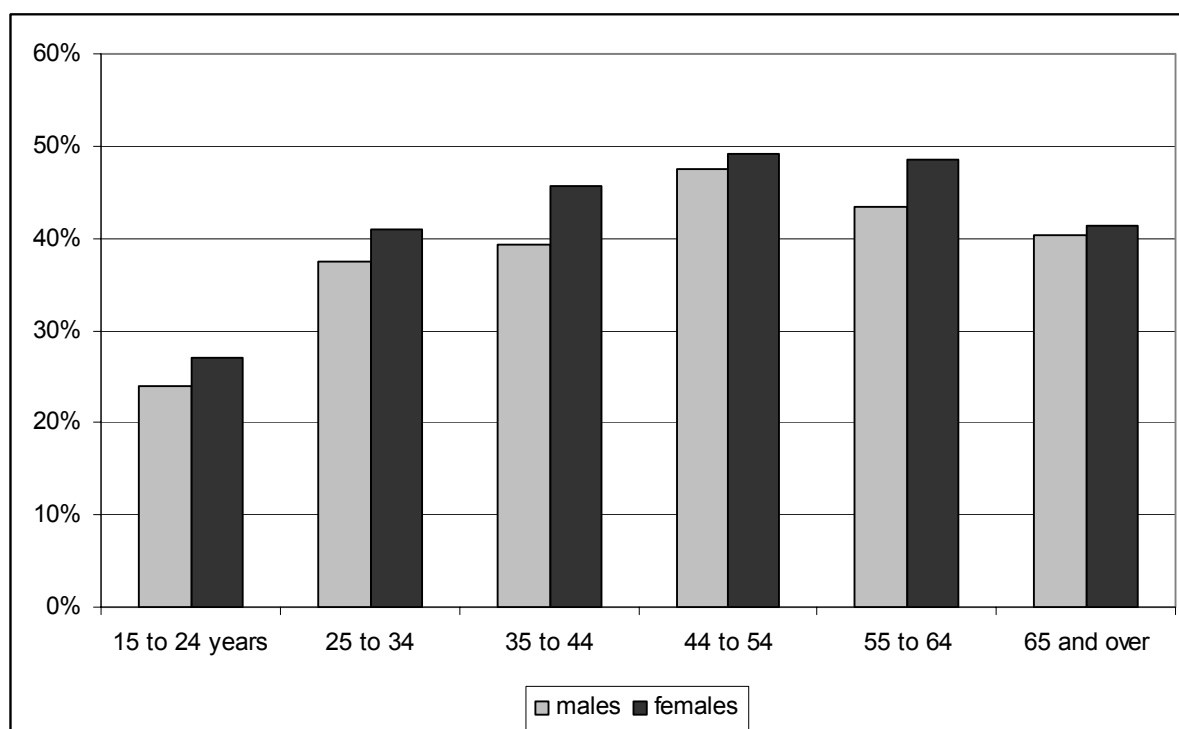
11 ERASS survey, p. 33.

Figure 3.2 Participation rates (organised activities) by gender, 2004

Source: ASC, *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport, Annual Report 2004*, Table 14.¹²

3.15 The data for adults who are active, but do not participate in *organised* sport, tell a different story (Figure 3.3). Participation rates for non-organised activities show greater participation by women, and greater participation with age until around retirement, when participation declines.

12 These figures combine those who reported engaging only in organised sport and those who participated in both organised and non-organised sport.

Figure 3.3 Participation rates (non-organised activities) by gender, 2004

Source: ASC, *Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport, Annual Report 2004*, Table 11.

3.16 ABS data also provides information on participation rates. The data for the 2002 Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey indicate that 9.1 million people aged 18 years and over participated in sport and physical activities in 2002 – with slightly more males (65 per cent) than females (59.9 per cent) participating in these activities.

3.17 In relation to organised participation, the two ABS surveys produce slightly different results. The Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey showed almost a third (31.4 per cent) of the population aged 18 years and over participated in organised sport. Males were more likely to participate in organised activity (34.3 per cent) than females (28.5 per cent). The Involvement in Organised Sport and Physical Activity produced lower figures: 23.4 per cent for the population as a whole (26.9 per cent for men and 20 per cent for women).

3.18 Participation rates declined rapidly with increasing age. In the Participation in Sport and Physical Activities survey, females aged 25-34 years had the highest participation rate (68 per cent) while females aged 65 years and over had the lowest (41.3 per cent). For over half of those who had undertaken some participation (61.8 per cent), it was something done at least weekly. The proportion of the population with this frequency of participation was similar for both males and females – 38.6 per cent for males and 38.7 per cent for females. Almost three-quarters of people 18 years and over who participated in sport and physical activities limited their participation to one or two activities. Males participated in more activities than

females with 30.6 per cent of males compared with 22.4 per cent of females participating in three or more activities.¹³

3.19 Womensport and Recreation Victoria cited information from the Heart Foundation and Deakin University Seesaw study, which showed that generally participation rates are similar for men as for women, but that only 44 per cent of females reach the minimum physical activity threshold of 150 minutes per week.¹⁴

Changes in participation

3.20 As noted above, data indicate that girls and young women are less physically active than young men and become increasingly so as they get older, in particular as they leave the structured environment of school and make the transition to adulthood.

3.21 Data indicate that girls' participation in organised sport and in the more active leisure activities declines from the mid-teen years. Evidence to the inquiry commented on these trends. The Football Federation Australia (FFA) stated that:

...there is a massive drop-off rate, which is common in all female sports. There is a massive interest in sport when people are at a young age. They get to 14, 15 and 16 and the drop-off rate is extraordinary. The highest percentage of those playing sport are women over 35. Obviously a lot of mothers come back and play sport.¹⁵

3.22 Womensport and Recreation Victoria noted the same decline:

Our scoping research suggests that there is about a 50 per cent drop-out rate at the ages of 10 to 14, so it is actually much younger. Five or 10 years ago it was that 16-year-old age group, where there is the discovery of boys and all the other things that go along with being a teenager. But now, as children mature earlier, the dropout age has come down. It is obviously of massive concern. To be honest, I do not know how much is being done about it. There are certainly the mandates that VicHealth spoke about with regard to in-school hours. But I have not seen a significant investment in the out of school hours area from the government when you consider that Scotland invests about £42 million, or approximately \$100 million, in after-school activity for a population of about four million people.¹⁶

3.23 As indicated above, participation rates overall generally decline for women particularly after the mid-20s. While their participation in organised sport declines markedly, participation in non-organised sport generally increases. In the ERASS survey (see above), the participation rate of females aged 15-24 was 90.6 per cent but

13 ABS, *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities 2002*, pp 3–5.

14 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 5.

15 Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 14.

16 Ms Justin, Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 19.

declined to 84 per cent for 25-34 and 35-44 year-olds. Participation for the same age groups in organised sport declined from 63.6 per cent for 15-24 year olds to 43.4 per cent for 25-34 year olds, and 38.5 per cent for 35-44 year olds. However, participation in non-organised sport *increased* from 27 per cent for 15-24 year old to 41 per cent for 25-34 year olds and 45.6 per cent for 35-44 year olds.

3.24 Motherhood also influences participation in sport and recreation activities. Women with children are less likely to be active, whilst inactivity increases with the number of children.¹⁷ Qualitative research in Sydney found that the main barriers to participation for mothers to be personal resources (time and money), lack of partner support, lack of leisure companions, poor access to venues (including lack of transport), and lack of good quality child care.¹⁸

3.25 Research by Ms Gilchrist of the University of Sydney into the physical activity choices of young women aged 20-25 found that they had many competing demands on their time including work, study, friends, partners and finances. All participants in the study were active in sports when younger. Leaving school marked a decline in general physical activity. Opportunity for social sport and recreation decreased as they became older – 'negotiating time pressure and friendship became more of an issue and non-physical social activities (shopping and consumption focussed) became more desirable'.¹⁹ Several young women in the study stated that in their teens, sport ceased to be 'fun' and physical activity became about weight loss and body modification, often connected with a desire to appear sexually attractive.

3.26 Most of the women in the study engaged in some type of physical activity currently, at least intermittently, and almost half did so regularly. The majority of women who engaged in regular physical activity did so for enjoyment – only a small number did so to change their appearance through 'body work'. The minority not engaged in physical activity explained their inactivity due to 'busy social lives' and expressed satisfaction with their body image.²⁰ Older people also have lower participation rates and this is discussed later in the chapter.

3.27 The committee understands there is growing recognition of the problem that girls and women are dropping out of sport and recreation activities, and that there are programs aimed at addressing this, such as:

- Sporting organisations developing plans targeted specifically at recruiting and retaining girls and women to participate in sports, such as the Australian Football League's (AFL) Women's and Girls Strategic Plan.²¹

17 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 5.

18 M. Lo Casio *et. al.*, *Busy Mums Wanted: A Qualitative Study of Mothers and Physical Activity*, 1999, cited in NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 5.

19 Ms Gilchrist, *Submission 11*, p. 3.

20 Ms Gilchrist, *Submission 11*, pp 2–4.

21 AFL, *Submission 69*.

- State governments targeting support programs specifically toward women, such as Queensland's Club Development Program and State Development Program, the guidelines which 'rate projects targeting the participation and development of women and girls very highly'.²²
- Girls' breakfast programs targeted at increasing girl's participation and keeping them involved.²³
- Bridging Gaps with Basketball, a cooperative initiative in Victoria getting young Sudanese migrants active in basketball.²⁴

Despite these efforts, it appears clear that more has to be done to keep girls and women active. Some of this effort must be in a school setting, discussed later in the chapter. Other parts need to be in the general community.

3.28 The committee found that:

- Women's participation in sport and recreation is according to most studies less than men's.
- Women's participation in organised sport in particular is lower than men's, and there are more organised sporting opportunities for men than for women.
- The involvement of girls in physical activity drops off sharply in the early teenage years, this trend is the biggest divergence between male and female participation, and is a serious concern.
- While there is a need for greater levels of physical activity amongst all parts of the population, this need appears most pressing amongst girls and women.

Recommendation 1

3.29 The committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission and state and territory sport and recreation authorities, in collaboration with the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, develop and implement strategies to address the issue of the high attrition rates in female participation in sport and recreation activities.

Participation in particular activities

Outdoor recreation

3.30 The committee received evidence about women's participation in outdoor recreation. There have been several studies of outdoor recreation in Australia and overseas, and these have produced some significant results. A 2001 study in South

22 Sport and Recreation Queensland, *Submission 49*, p. 3.

23 Ms Boon, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 25; Sport and Recreation Queensland, *Submission 49*.

24 Ms Jolly, VicHealth, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 2.

East Queensland revealed high participation rates in outdoor activities and that people prefer to conduct these activities in natural settings.²⁵ Selected rates of participation are shown in Table 3.1. Two of the most popular activities – walking and water activities – were both amongst the most likely to be engaged in by women, and the activities performed most frequently.²⁶ Similar results were reported in a separate study performed in Central Queensland.²⁷

Table 3.1 Rates of participation in outdoor recreation, South East Queensland

Activity	Male participation, per cent	Female participation, per cent
Walking or nature study	45	52
Camping	37	31
Bicycle riding	33	22
Horse riding	6	8
Water activities (other than use of watercraft)	57	56
Abseiling or rockclimbing	7	5

Source: Jackie Kiewa, Terry Brown and Ray Hibbins, *South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study*, Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, 2001, p. 32.

3.31 The rates of participation in outdoor recreation dwarf those for most organised sports, and typically show greater participation by women than in organised sport. Significantly, and consistent with studies of women's interest in sport generally, the studies of outdoor recreation showed that 'competition related reasons' were the least important reasons for people to engage in outdoor recreational activities.²⁸

25 Jackie Kiewa, Terry Brown and Ray Hibbins, *South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study*, Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, 2001.

26 Jackie Kiewa, Terry Brown and Ray Hibbins, *South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study*, Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, 2001, p. 37.

27 Queensland Department of Communication and Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport and Department of Natural Resources, *The Central Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study*, The Departments, 2000.

28 See Queensland Department of Communication and Information, Local Government, Planning and Sport and Department of Natural Resources, *The Central Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study*, The Departments, 2000, p. 12; Jackie Kiewa, Terry Brown and Ray Hibbins, *South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study*, Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation, 2001, p. 85.

3.32 The Outdoor Industry Association produces a substantial annual study of outdoor recreation participation in the United States.²⁹ Its 2006 results reinforce findings of other Australian studies such as those discussed above, as well as providing some more in-depth analysis of individual trends than has been possible with some Australian data. Key findings from the US include:

- Participation in outdoor activities was quite high (just over two-thirds of American women).
- If fishing is excluded, participation in outdoor recreation is almost as high for women as it is for men.
- Participation rates remained stable, but the number of individual outdoor outings declined.
- There is a growth in outdoor activities that can be 'done in a day'.
- Time constraints are important in limiting people's participation, and this may be connected to the fact that women's number of outings may have dropped more sharply than men's.
- Women may be shifting to fitness activities at the expense of outdoor activities.

3.33 The Outdoor Council of Australia noted that government support for outdoor recreation organisations and data collection was so weak it was hard for informed decisions to be made or planning to be undertaken in this area.³⁰ The committee is concerned that, given the high rates of female participation in outdoor recreation (higher, typically, than for organised sports in general), this situation may be hampering efforts to ensure all people, and women in particular, are gaining the health benefits of outdoor activities.

Fitness

3.34 The fitness sector, comprising fitness centre businesses and personal training studios, is an important part of women's sport and recreation experience. The industry estimates that around 900 000 women in Australia use fitness businesses, and comprise around 55 per cent of all fitness centre clients.³¹ The industry is growing fast, with the largest player, Fitness First Australia, reporting a growth rate of around 30 per cent per annum, again with most members being female, and most members being new (that is, not just switching between clubs).³² Fitness First also reports that more than a third of their members do group fitness classes, and of these, more than

29 Outdoor Industry Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Study*, Eighth Edition, 2006, <http://www.outdoorindustryfoundation.org/resources.research.participation.html>, accessed August 2006.

30 Outdoor Council of Australia, *Submission 75*.

31 Fitness Australia, *Submission 74*.

32 Fitness First Australia, *Submission 73*.

80 per cent are female. Another major member of the fitness sector, Zest Health Clubs, reported having over 65 000 members, with 58 per cent of members being women, as well as 74 per cent of staff.³³ One of the highest profile and fastest growing businesses is Fernwood Women's Health Clubs, which caters exclusively to female clients. It is growing very rapidly and has over 80 000 members.³⁴ It reported that the majority of its members had not previously used a gym. It appears to be the second largest business in the fitness sector, despite catering only to women.

3.35 Meeting women's needs appears to be an important part of how the sector operates. Most clubs, at least amongst the major providers, appear to offer child care and/or women's only areas or classes. As with outdoor recreation, the fitness sector's high rate of female participation may reflect a preference for less organised and less competitive physical activity.

Dance

3.36 Dance has been used in many programs to encourage girls in particular, who are less likely to participate in organised sport, to become more physically active. Dance has been overlooked in the past as it does not fit into the traditional sporting model:

There is a relationship between sport, physical education, tourism, the creative arts and recreation which we need to see in focus. I have given definitions of sport, recreation, the sports industry, leisure and physical education. A dance, in some centres, is considered sport; in others it is not. Certainly it is part of sports programs in some schools. I am in favour of dance.³⁵

[W]e talk about active recreation but a lot of our work has been focussed a little more on organised sport or other forms of recreation. Where does dance fit? Everything seems to go into boxes, so is it within arts or sport? We are having those discussions and debates and recognising that, yes, we do need to be looking at it. Although it has never been something that has not been included, it perhaps has not been promoted.³⁶

3.37 Dance has been successfully integrated into the sports funding model in some programs:

Within the out of school hours sports program, which was a pilot we did with the Australian Sports Commission, we funded Dancesport Victoria to deliver programs. It was only two terms but it was extremely successful. They got a lot out of it. Dancesport Victoria did also; being linked to an

33 Zest Health Clubs, *Submission 79*.

34 Fernwood Women's Health Clubs, *Submission 78*.

35 Dr Colvin, ACHPER, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 83.

36 Ms Jolly, VicHealth, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 6.

organisation such as VicHealth gave them a bit of credibility within their industry as well.³⁷

Recommendation 2

3.38 The committee recommends that all levels of government consider extending resources to a broader range of sports to ensure that women are provided with greater choice and opportunity for participating in physical activity including for example outdoor recreation and dance.

Barriers to participation

3.39 Historically, women and girls have experienced barriers to their participation in sport, recreation and physical activity. Over the last decade in particular several strategies have been developed in Australia (and overseas) to redress this situation and advance opportunities for women and girls.³⁸ These strategies have partly resulted in more women and girls being involved in sport, recreation and physical activity and more competitive opportunities for them, both in Australia and internationally. The participation rate for women in organised physical activity increased from 37.7 per cent in 2001 to 40.8 percent in 2004.³⁹

3.40 These opportunities were brought about by strategies ranging from the creation of national leagues in netball, softball, basketball, cricket, soccer and hockey, to an increased number of disciplines and sports at Commonwealth and Olympic Games. Nevertheless, the lower participation rate of women in organised sports in particular suggests that there may still be barriers to participation that can be examined by sporting organisations.

3.41 Numerous studies and submissions to the inquiry have indicated that the factors that are directly responsible for the low participation rate of women and girls in sport, recreation and physical activity include:

- lack of information about what programs are available;
- lack of access to appropriate, accessible, affordable and acceptable facilities and services; and
- lack of culturally appropriate facilities/programs;
- social stereotyping;
- lack of time or perceived lack of time;
- lack of childcare and lack of awareness of childcare options;

37 Ms Kerr, Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 6.

38 ASC, *National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity*, 1999, p. 3.

39 ERASS survey, pp 9–12, 47–48.

- fewer opportunities available for participation;
- reduced leisure time owing to family responsibilities;
- lack of skills or perceived lack of skills;
- lack of financial resources;
- harassment;
- lack of confidence in approaching activities alone; and
- cultural and social pressures.⁴⁰

3.42 These factors indicate that major challenges must be overcome before gender equity in sport, recreation and physical activity can be achieved. They also suggest that to understand and address the complex influences on female involvement in sport, recreation and physical activity, issues such as the broader social, economic, cultural and physical context of the lives of women and girls and the impact of the current infrastructure of sport and recreation must be considered.

Barriers to girls' participation

3.43 As noted above, a number of barriers to girl's participation in sport have been identified and the major factors are discussed below.

Poor self image/self confidence

3.44 Body image, lack of self confidence and/or belief that they lack skills or physical competence is a significant barrier to girl's participation in sport and recreation activities. One study commented that:

Both men and women use their physical appearance, weight and body shape, as a measure of self worth and physical attractiveness. However there appears to be less room for manoeuvre for women and girls... Visual images of the 'ideal' women are used to sell everything... this commodification of the female body... can lead women to identify their physical appearance as a type of currency – personal worth or value as measured by body type.⁴¹

3.45 Girls also tend to underrate their ability to perform at sports and are less likely than their male peers to view themselves as talented. Lower rates of participation in early childhood may also mean that girls have poorer motor skills that are the precursors for sport. A lack of confidence in their abilities to perform physical tasks

40 *National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport*, pp 3–4; ASC, *Why Don't Girls Play Sport?*, 2001; ASC, *Body Image and Participation in Sport*, 2001; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *Equity for Women in Sport: A Discussion Paper*, September 1991, pp 21–23; Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, *Submission 34*; Fitness Australia, *Submission 74*.

41 ASC, *Body Image and Participation in Sport*, p. 1.

may lead girls to avoid situations which could expose their lack of confidence. When this reluctance begins at an early age, girls can fail to master basic motor skills which in turn results in their avoidance of games or sports which involve such activities.

3.46 A further complicating factor is that females are more concerned than males about eating, body weight and appearance. For many women, dissatisfaction with body shape and appearance peaks during adolescence. It is at this time that many teenage girls are often required to wear school or club sports uniforms that make them feel particularly self-conscious.⁴²

3.47 Ironically, while many girls avoid sport because they are self-conscious or feel they lack skills, girls who are physically active report a more positive body image and greater self-confidence.

Dress code

3.48 The strict dress code in some sports can be a deterrent to women's participation in sport. Womensport and Recreation NSW argued that girls often feel uncomfortable in certain types of sports attire, especially if they are already self-conscious about their body shape.

...it can have a detrimental impact on the participation rate... If they are merely doing it on a social basis and they are not particularly looking to be an elite athlete or talented athlete and are just there to play the game and have fun, they may not have a size 8 or size 10 body; they may be a size 14 or size 16 but they are happy to get out there and participate. Put them in an outfit like that and it highlights to them that they do not look the same.

If that is the only way they are able to participate in their chosen sport at any level, particularly at a social level, where they are not playing for prize money, they are not competing in a state-level competition and where their skill level is about having a bit of fun then it makes it really difficult for them to think: 'I have to go through some discomfort, perhaps some embarrassment. I don't feel comfortable running around wearing this. I would feel more comfortable if I could wear shorts and a T-shirt or a longer skirt and a T-shirt or something like that'.⁴³

3.49 Womensport and Recreation Victoria also noted that a strict dress code may affect participation from the mid teens up to the elite level:

[it affects] not just in that age group [10-14 year olds] or at the amateur level but certainly all the way through to the elite level. In fact, I know of somebody in their late 20s or early 30s who was refusing to play basketball because they were not allowed to wear a particular short. They did not want to wear the baggy shorts; they wanted to wear bike shorts because they were more comfortable. With respect to professionals, a number of female

42 ASC, *Why Don't Girls Play Sport?*

43 Ms Boon, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 30.

WNBL players find the bodysuits abhorrent. In fact, one team has recently gone back to shorts and singlets. It can be a deterrent not just at the younger level but throughout.⁴⁴

Lack of positive role models

3.50 Girls also suffer from a lack of positive role models which is influenced by the lack of media coverage for women's sport. This has the effect of limiting the opportunities to find out about women's sporting achievements and denies many young women and men female sporting role models. The lack of promotion of female athletes also reinforces the concept that sport is a male domain. Womensport and Recreation Victoria noted that young women are more likely to nominate a sportsman rather than a sportswoman as a role model in sport.⁴⁵

Role of family/peers

3.51 Family, friends and peers exercise an important influence on girls' sports participation. Girls whose parents regularly exercise are much more likely to continue their involvement in sport than those whose parents are inactive.⁴⁶ This is particularly the case for those girls whose mothers exercise. Friends and peers can also influence participation. Many teenage girls endure taunts and insults about their bodies, especially from their peers. During adolescence, a time when young women are particularly sensitive to comments about their bodies, such remarks can be especially potent.⁴⁷

Physical education in schools

3.52 People who participate in sport and other types of physical activity at an early age, and especially during adolescence, are more likely to be physically active adults. Submissions emphasised the need for quality physical activity, sport and recreation programs in schools as a means of equipping girls with skills and knowledge essential for them to confidently participate in organised sport.⁴⁸

3.53 Some submissions argued that there was a lack of opportunities to participate in sports at school or in after school sports activities.⁴⁹ Under the Commonwealth schools funding legislation for the 2005–2008 triennium, education authorities will be

44 Ms Justin, Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 21.

45 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 5.

46 Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, *Submission 34*.

47 ASC, *Why Don't Girls Play Sport?*, p. 4.

48 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 12; WA Netball, *Submission 13*, p. 2.

49 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 5; Confederation of Australian Sport, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

required to include in their curriculum at least two hours of physical activity per week in primary schools and junior high school.⁵⁰ This is discussed later in the chapter.

3.54 Submissions also noted that physical education classes in schools are often not geared to the needs of girls. One submission noted that many classes are gendered, 'producing constructions of young women as weaker, less enthusiastic and less skilled in sports than young men'.⁵¹ Girls responding to a survey conducted by a group in regional Victoria said that '[i]n school sport, the main focus is on competition meaning those with lesser ability are excluded/or feel excluded and give up'.⁵²

Barriers to women's participation

3.55 There are other barriers to participation in sport that particularly affect women.

Lack of time

3.56 Women tend to have less time than men as they take on the greater burden of responsibility for housework, childcare and the care of elderly or infirm relatives.⁵³ This is one of the key reasons for not taking part in sport. The Department of Sport and Recreation WA stated that more women than men report lack of time and childcare commitments as barriers to participation.⁵⁴ Increasing numbers of women are in the full time and part time workforce. Patterns of work are changing with increasing casualisation of the workforce, unpredictable shifts, and uncertain hours of work all working to impede access to opportunities to engage in sport or recreation.⁵⁵

3.57 The SA Premier's Council for Women commented on the time and work life pressures that place a burden on many women. The Council noted that studies have shown that more employees feel stressed by conflicting priorities of work and family and pressured by time with more than half of Australian couples with dependent children always or often feeling pressed for time.⁵⁶ The results of the outdoor recreation surveys mentioned earlier all appear to suggest that time constraints are an issue, and that these weigh disproportionately on women.

50 Department of Education, Science and Training, Active School Curriculum, [http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing_nsf/Content/active_school_curriculum.pdf/\\$File/active_school_curriculum.pdf](http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing_nsf/Content/active_school_curriculum.pdf/$File/active_school_curriculum.pdf), accessed August 2006.

51 Ms Gilchrist, *Submission 11*, p. 1.

52 Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, *Submission 34*, p. 2.

53 Dr Fullagar, *Submission 2*.

54 Department of Sport and Recreation WA, *Submission 48*, p. 1.

55 Recreation SA, *Submission 38*, p. 1.

56 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 11.

Cost of participation

3.58 The cost of involvement in a recreation activity is prohibitive for many women. Womensport and Recreation Victoria reported that, in a recent survey of women and sport in Victoria, the cost of participating in sport was cited as the main barrier for women participating in sport.⁵⁷ Costs include membership fees and often uniforms or equipment costs. These costs put many activities out of the range of the average family. Women, especially from single income families, may not have sufficient disposable income to permit participation in activities other than activities that do not involve a cost, such as walking. Recreation SA stated that many women put their own social and recreational needs after the recreation needs of the rest of their family.⁵⁸

Child care

3.59 Access to appropriate, regular and affordable childcare options is a major barrier to participation in sport and recreation activities. While many large fitness centres and indoor swimming pools provide on site crèches and/or child minding facilities this is not the case for most sport and recreation organisations, particularly community based groups. Access to childcare also impacts on older women, such as grandmothers, who provide care on a regular basis for their grandchildren and often forego their recreation activities to care for these children.⁵⁹

Facilities

3.60 The lack of appropriate facilities is a barrier to participation for both girls and older women. At the time when the majority of current facilities were designed and built, participation in sports was strongly dominated by males, and sports grounds and amenities were built with little thought for women's needs. VicSport noted that:

...the best facilities are not necessarily those with the best buildings or grounds, but rather those catering for the needs of a wide cross section of society, including those of women...there are realistically still very few facilities genuinely accessible for women.⁶⁰

3.61 Submissions noted that the quality and quantity of facilities need to be improved, including the upgrading and/or proper maintenance of playing fields, and the provision of female changing rooms and toilets and other facilities.⁶¹ Submissions noted that the provision of appropriate facilities is a particular problem in regional and

57 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 4.

58 Recreation SA, *Submission 38*, p. 1.

59 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 4; Recreation SA, *Submission 38*, pp 1–2.

60 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 4.

61 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 11; VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 5.

rural areas. The lack of suitable facilities is also increasingly felt as more women engage in traditionally male-dominated sports.

Encouraging girls and young women's participation

3.62 Reports and submissions to the inquiry have emphasised that if there is to be a significant change in the overall participation rates for women, it is essential that more is done to make involvement in sport more attractive for young women. As attitudes in relation to sport are developed at an early age, this requires action at both the primary and secondary school level.⁶²

Physical education in schools/transitional pathways

3.63 As noted previously, there was considerable evidence suggesting that there was a lack of opportunities for children to participate in sports at school.⁶³

3.64 Under new Commonwealth funding arrangements for schools, state and territory governments and non-government education are required to include in their curriculum at least two hours of physical activity per week for primary and junior secondary school children.⁶⁴ Physical activity is defined in this instance as any form of structured or non-structured exercise or movement. It may include, but not be limited to, activity such as walking, running, dance, the development of fundamental movement skills, swimming, basketball or other sports. It may also include activities that require physical skills and utilise strength, power, endurance, speed and flexibility.⁶⁵

3.65 The committee notes that reporting requirements under the agreement are still being finalised, and it urges governments to move quickly to a reporting framework. There appeared to be some confusion amongst inquiry participants regarding the status of school sport. This might be because some jurisdictions have highly devolved arrangements, meaning sporting activity can vary from school to school and region to region (such as in Tasmania). It may also be because changes are currently underway, under the inter-governmental agreement mentioned above.

3.66 The committee asked all states and territories to describe the arrangements in their education systems for physical activity. At the time of reporting, it had received

62 Sport 2000 Taskforce, *Shaping Up: A Review of Commonwealth Involvement in Sport and Recreation in Australia*, 1999, pp 90–93; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *Half Way to Equal: Report of the Inquiry into Equal Opportunity and Equal Status for Women in Australia*, April 1992, pp 114–17.

63 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 5; Confederation of Australian Sport, *Submission 60*, p. 4.

64 Department of Education, Science and Training, Active School Curriculum, [http://www.healthyschools.gov.au/internet/healthyschools/publishing.nsf/Content/active_school_curriculum.pdf/\\$File/active_school_curriculum.pdf](http://www.healthyschools.gov.au/internet/healthyschools/publishing.nsf/Content/active_school_curriculum.pdf/$File/active_school_curriculum.pdf), accessed August 2006.

65 www.healthyschools.gov.au, accessed August 2006.

responses from the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia. These responses are included in Appendix 4. The questions states and territories were asked by the committee were:

- (a) what physical education classes are required and what are available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school;
- (b) what proportion of physical education classes are required to involve exercise activity
- (c) what school sport during regular school hours is required, and what is available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school;
- (d) what other obligations are there to participate in school-organised sporting activity outside regular school hours;
- (e) in each of the above cases, what is included in the meaning of sport, physical activity or exercise;
- (f) in each of the above cases, who determines whether schools and students are complying with the relevant policy; and
- (g) does the regulation of any of the above matters vary according to the type of school (for example, public, Catholic or other private).

3.67 The extent of school-base activities varied between jurisdictions. It also appears that in some jurisdictions sport is compulsory to some degree (for example Victoria and NSW), while in others it is not at the present time (for example Tasmania and Western Australia).

3.68 Evidence suggested a lack of commitment by some State and Territory education authorities toward encouraging girls to take up or stay involved in sport. In particular it has been argued that the prevailing culture about sport at many schools does not encourage girls to participate. The WA Sports Federation stated that:

...the foundation of participation is born in the school system...until there is a more positive attitude and culture for skill development in basic school physical education programs delivered by qualified teaching staff ...there will be little, if any change in the future.⁶⁶

3.69 WA Netball stated that the removal of compulsory physical education from the school curriculum in Western Australia has 'had a noticeable impact on the likelihood of children becoming involved in sport, an, therefore, undertaking a healthy work/life balance in their long term lifestyle development'.⁶⁷

3.70 It is the responsibility of State and Territory education authorities to create a receptive and supportive environment in school so as to help encourage more girls to

66 WA Sports Federation, *Submission 37*, p. 4.

67 WA Netball, *Submission 13*, p. 2.

take up and stay involved in sport. The importance of quality physical education as being an integral part of every school curriculum was also emphasised.⁶⁸

3.71 The Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) argued that there needs to be a review of school based physical activity programs to determine the extent to which schoolgirls are exposed to:

- skills and knowledge essential to participate in organised sport in the broader community;
- female teachers as role models of active women;
- the effectiveness of single sex or co-education classes in physical activity especially in promoting lifelong participation;
- best practices appropriate to Aboriginal, ethnic and cultural diversity;
- programs such as sport education which include information and experience on successfully making the transition from school to organised sport;
- opportunities to participate in school teams in competitions organised by state sporting organisations (or their regional affiliates);
- school policies and practices which support the training and competition of elite schoolgirl athletes without compromising their academic pursuits; and
- the opportunity to be made aware and linked to community based sport and recreation programs through their school and other agencies.⁶⁹

3.72 Recreation SA also emphasised the importance of improved pathways into sport and recreation activities from school. The organisation noted that the transition from school does not provide easy access to clubs etc, especially for young people whose parents are not involved in the activity. Recreation SA suggested that clubs and state sporting bodies could have greater involvement in school sport and help run competitions and provide coaches. By joining a school team run by a club, many school leavers will have a continuous pathway into their sport of choice.⁷⁰

3.73 There have been steps taken to improve the linkages between school and sporting clubs and organisations. The committee recognises the Active After-school Communities program as one vehicle for this.⁷¹ This is work on which all parties involved in sport and recreation can further build.

68 Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Recreation and the Arts, *Physical and Sport Education*, December 1992, pp xiii–xvi; *Half Way to Equal*, pp 114–17; *Shaping Up*, pp 90–91.

69 ACHPER, *Submission 17*, p. 3.

70 Recreation SA, *Submission 38*, p. 4.

71 Active After-School Communities,
<http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing.nsf/Content/initiatives-a>,
accessed August 2006.

Recommendation 3

3.74 The committee recommends that, in light of the pressure on available sporting facilities, state and territory education authorities should work with sporting clubs and organisations, and local communities, to improve cooperation and access to facilities for children's sporting activities, particularly schools.

Dress code

3.75 There may be a need to relax the strict dress codes in place for many sports. Some evidence indicated that the dress codes are too strict or are applied in an inflexible way.

3.76 Bowls Australia noted that the implementation of its dress code is often inflexible:

At national level our dress code is very flexible, but it is the states and the clubs that implement those policies and they are very strict. The skirts are sometimes measured; there are regulations for the length of sleeves and so on. It is about educating the clubs and the states that that is not appealing to younger women. They do not want to do that.⁷²

3.77 Evidence however suggested some more positive examples. Netball Australia noted that:

...we attract an incredibly wide range of girls and women to play, of all different shapes and sizes, and so the netball uniform that has been developed for the majority of players is one that they feel comfortable in and do not feel threatened in. They do not need to feel sexy; they are just there to get out to play and to be free to move and participate. Our uniform has just been based on that.⁷³

3.78 Not everyone was happy with netball's arrangements, however:

All of the sports themselves obviously want to be seen to be up with the rest of the community, and we have seen the introduction in the last three years of lycra suits for the netballers. Unfortunately, that has had a detrimental effect on some of the girls.⁷⁴

3.79 The marketing of certain sports can influence dress code considerations. One witness noted that:

I was Chief Executive of Women's Cricket Australia, too. It has always been a choice: do you make them look sexy, or do you dress them

72 Miss West, Bowls Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 98.

73 Ms Dix, Netball Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 99.

74 Mrs Trotter, Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 30.

appropriately for the sport? When you have athletes who are sliding on the ground and taking dives or whatever—

The softballers do look nice in shorts, but they are sliding on the ground and ripping their legs to pieces. Or do we go back to the old-style pantaloons or knickerbockers? It is a real choice. Do we market the game so that we attract some media coverage and they look really good, or do you play the sport as it needs to be played at the really high level?⁷⁵

3.80 Sports dress codes need to be based on health and safety considerations. Womensport and Recreation NSW noted that:

...the primary determinant for uniform styles should be health and safety aspects. In organised competition there should be a graduated range of uniforms within a fairly broad spectrum, but governed by that health and safety issue, which allows the widest range of people to comfortably compete in whatever they are doing. If that was the case then I think that would significantly resolve it.⁷⁶

Other strategies

3.81 Submissions also noted the need for innovative approaches to encouraging greater involvement of girls and young women in sport. NSW Sport and Recreation stated that 'best practice' approaches in this regard provided:

- more emphasis on skill development, participation and enjoyment, rather than competition;
- improved school-community links for transition into community based activities (as discussed above);
- early intervention; and
- re-orienting programs for adolescent girls in relation to choice of activities, structure and dress requirements.⁷⁷

3.82 Other suggested practical strategies for encouraging greater participation by and girls and young women included:

- Developing programs that cater to the different needs and abilities of women and girls eg. tailoring training programs to individual requirements.
- Providing non-traditional sports and physical activities to encourage greater participation by women and girls, including those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Experimenting with different sports and lengths of seasons.

75 Ms Crow, Softball Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 99.

76 Mr Lozan, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 31.

77 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 5.

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- Reducing the duration of competition to accommodate the lack of time available that many women face in an era of longer working hours and family responsibilities.
 - Encouraging and supporting women and girls to conduct their own competitions.
 - Providing competition that focus on the fun and social aspects of sports participation – eg. 'come and try' days are being trialled in some sports.
 - Providing an environment that encourages women and girls to take up sports or activities that they've undertaken in the past in an effort to win back 'drop-outs'.
 - Adopting and implementing organisation-specific anti-harassment policies and procedures.
 - Ensuring that coaches and other personnel operate within an agreed code of conduct.⁷⁸

3.83 It was also noted that more promotional resources relating to women's sport need to be available and they should be targeted at women and girls, parents, teachers, coaches, health professionals and sport organisers. Such information needs to emphasise the health benefits of physical activity; ensure that coaches, officials and administrators are aware of women's health issues; and provide information on lifecycle changes (such as pregnancy and menopause) and how they affect involvement in sport.⁷⁹

3.84 The committee found that:

- Girls and younger women have a number of significant barriers to participation in sport and recreation activities.
- The foundations for children's participation in sport include learning at a young age basic gross motor skills including running, jumping, kicking, throwing and catching.
- There is extensive recognition of the issue of the barriers faced by girls and women, and there are some programs in place in individual jurisdictions and individual sports, to combat the problem.
- Participation in sport and recreation provides many positive psychological and physical outcomes for girls and young women.

78 Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, pp 3–4; NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 5; ASC, *How to Include Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity*, 1999, p. 8; NSW Department of Sport and Recreation, 'Increasing the participation of women and girls', *Information Sheet*, 2002; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *Equity for Women in Sport: A Discussion Paper*, 1991, pp 12–15.

79 ASC, *How to Include Women*, p. 8.

- Strategies need to be developed by governments and sporting and recreation providers to increase the participation of girls and younger women in sport and recreation, and these need to include strategies to improve body image for young women. These strategies could include:
 - Improvements to the provision of physical education in schools, in particular aimed at ensuring girls are comfortable and able to participate equally with boys.
 - Relaxing the strict dress codes in place for many sports.
 - Improved school-community links for transition into community-based activities.
 - Providing programs that emphasise participation, enjoyment and the social aspects of sport, rather than the competitive aspects of sport.
 - Developing programs that cater to the different needs and abilities of girls and younger women.
 - Developing a variety of programs, such as non-traditional sports and physical activities, and programs that provide different approaches such as experimenting with different lengths of seasons and reducing the duration of competition.
 - Encouraging and supporting women and girls to conduct their own competitions.
 - Providing a supportive environment that encourages women and girls to take up sports or activities that they've undertaken in the past.
 - The dissemination of information relating to women's sport targeted at women and girls, parents, teachers, coaches, health professionals and sport organisers.

Recommendation 4

3.85 The committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission inquire into the dress code policies of sports organisations with a view to encouraging clubs, schools and sports organisations to review these policies.

Recommendation 5

3.86 The committee recommends that sporting organisations, with the assistance of the Australian Sports Commission and state and territory sport and recreation authorities, develop strategies to provide more sporting activities focussed on participation and enjoyment.

Encouraging women's participation

3.87 Just as the barriers to participation differ for girls and women, different strategies have been proposed to encourage their increased participation.

Time considerations and cost of participation

3.88 A number of strategies were suggested to address the issues of the lack of time and the cost of participation that many women face.

3.89 VicHealth suggested that there is a need for a number of work-life supports to be adopted including the need to work with employers to implement work based sick leave, flexible work hours, job sharing, and day care subsidies. VicHealth also argued that there is a need to work with fathers and others with social and family responsibilities, to promote understanding and assist mothers to participate in sport and active recreation.⁸⁰

3.90 The UK study, *Making Women and Girls More Active*, suggested that efforts should be made to make physical activity a part of the working day, preferably with employer support, to address the lack of time many women have for physical activities, for example, lunchtime exercise groups. The study also suggested that subsidies for women's activities could be provided to make them more affordable.⁸¹ This possibility was also identified by the fitness sector peak body Fitness Australia.⁸²

Child care

3.91 Access to affordable and accessible child care options were canvassed during the inquiry.

It is a general female participation issue in all walks of life and is not restricted to sport and recreation, be it as a participant or as an official. We cannot look at it in isolation; it needs to be looked at as the issue of availability of child care for women to participate more fully in all aspects of life outside the home. This is just one aspect where the lack of adequate child-care impacts upon females being able to do what they want to do.⁸³

3.92 As noted above, while many large fitness centres and indoor swimming pools provide on site crèches and/or child minding facilities this is not the case for most sport and recreation organisations, particularly community based groups.

3.93 Submissions and studies suggested a number of options in relation to the provision of child care. The UK report referred to above noted that there was a need to investigate options for the provision of childcare, or assist with childcare costs, and for facilities to adopt a child-friendly approach so that women can bring their children with them to the venue.⁸⁴ VicSport noted that some sport and recreation groups have developed 'Mums and Bubs' classes and similar programs at their facilities to provide

80 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 12.

81 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, Appendix 5.

82 Fitness Australia, *Submission 74*.

83 Ms Boon, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 24.

84 Cited in SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, Appendix 5.

access to physical activities for new mothers. This enables mothers to bring children with them when they exercise.

3.94 Netball Victoria suggested the possible option of child care facilities located in schools:

One of the issues for young mothers is access to facilities that are close to home and that do not require multiple drop-offs. In some places it was suggested that schools could act as hubs; for example, with child care in the school grounds where the community centre is so that there could be one drop-off for everybody. You would not have to take the child to child care, spend an extra 15 minutes going to the venue to play your game and then have to repeat your journey to come back, increasing petrol use and increasing the time taken. If there were a facility such as that, you could walk in the door, put the child into the creche, go and play your 40 minutes of netball, pick the child up and go home. There would be easy access at low cost and they would be more likely to participate.⁸⁵

3.95 Submissions noted that the high costs involved in operating crèches or child care facilities limits the ability of most sport and recreation organisations, especially community based groups from operating these facilities.⁸⁶ VicSport suggested that the sport and recreation sector be provided with government assisted subsidies to provide cost effective child care.⁸⁷

3.96 The fitness sector is growing fast and is an area in which women's membership outstrips men's, and in which organised classes are overwhelmingly populated by women. The provision of childcare arrangements is very widespread in this sector, and strongly suggests this is a critical factor for women.⁸⁸ VicSport noted that:

The fitness industries—say, gyms and swimming pools—have done really well because they have provided creches. Parents can pop in, do aerobics or spin or have a swim and leave their kids at the creche. They really saw this coming and made a focal point of it and they have women coming and using the centre when it is usually empty. That is great, but we do not have the same structure and we certainly do not have the same money in sport and recreation. It would be very difficult for the local hockey club to get licensed and do everything that would need to be done to have a recognised

85 Ms Sheehan, Netball Victoria, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 47.

86 Recreation SA, *Submission 38*, p. 1.

87 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 4

88 Fitness First Australia, *Submission 73*; Zest Health Clubs, *The Zest Difference – How Do I Choose?*,

<http://www.zesthealthclubs.com.au/pages.asp?page=zest&pubid=17&issid=61&artid=307&pid=343>, accessed August 2006.

childcare centre there....One way to do that would be with some assistance from government in helping with the set-up costs.⁸⁹

3.97 Fitness Victoria and Fitness First Australia both drew attention to the impact of legislation governing child care on the availability of such care at fitness centres. They expressed particular concern that if short-term on-site care at fitness centres had to meet the same standards of staffing and infrastructure as long-term care, this could lead to fewer fitness centres offering care, reducing accessibility for women with families.

Facilities

3.98 Various strategies were proposed to improve the provision of facilities for girls and women. Submissions argued that facilities need to include separate change rooms and toilets for women and girls and that these facilities should provide adequate space and be of an acceptable standard.⁹⁰ The need for more adequate facilities for women will emerge as a more significant issue as women's participation rates increase.

3.99 Ongoing funding programs directed to community based clubs and associations to provide facilities could continue and be expanded. Netball Victoria cited as an example the Country Football and Netball Program which provides funding to assist country football and netball clubs to develop facilities (including shared community, club and social facilities and multi-use facilities) in rural, regional and outer metropolitan areas.⁹¹

3.100 Submissions also argued that there need to be co-funded programs between local, State and Commonwealth Governments to improve infrastructure in both metropolitan and regional areas, especially those that have demonstrated particular benefits for women.⁹²

3.101 Other options proposed included:

- flexibility of use – considering multi-purpose use in the construction of new facilities and the use of existing facilities in traditional 'down time' periods;
- the feasibility of alternative constructions, for example, open sided 'shed' constructions as facilities for indoor sports – with the aim of providing relatively low cost facilities which would allow all year round use and night use of facilities; and

89 Ms Roffey, VicSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 15.

90 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 5; VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 9. See also Mr Lozan, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 23; Ms Jolly, VicHealth, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 2.

91 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 11.

92 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 11.

- urban design that facilitates access to physical activity including the provision of wide footpaths and access to public open space.⁹³

3.102 Playing and training access for women needs to be improved. When women have to compete with men for available times for access to playing fields and other facilities, they are often allocated non-prime time access which often conflicts with their other priorities such as family commitments or work.⁹⁴

3.103 The committee found that:

- Women face a number of significant barriers to participation in sport and recreation activities.
- Strategies need to be developed by all levels of governments and sporting and recreation providers and others to increase the participation of women in sport and recreation. These strategies could include:
 - Consideration of work-life issues, such as flexible work practices by employers, and the attitude of partners, to address the multiple time demands on women;
 - Increased provision and/or facilitation of physical activity, such as exercise groups, in workplaces;
 - The provision of on-site childcare facilities and/or assistance with child care costs;
 - Adoption by facilities of child-friendly policies to encourage women to bring children with them to venues;
 - Adoption by facilities of 'time-friendly' policies, especially providing access at the most convenient times for women;
 - Consideration by sport and recreation organisations of forming partnerships with child care providers to further facilitate child care options;
 - The increased provision of facilities that cater for the needs of women, including separate shower, changing facilities and toilets;
 - Funding of community-based clubs and associations to maintain and upgrade facilities;
 - Jointly funded Commonwealth, state and territory programs to improve sports and recreation infrastructure; and
 - The flexible use of facilities, including multi-purpose use of facilities.

93 VicHealth, *Submission 54*, p. 9; Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 11.

94 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 6.

Recommendation 6

3.104 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth, states, territories and local government recognise the importance of occasional child care in facilitating women's participation in sport and recreation.

Recommendation 7

3.105 The committee recommends that sport and recreation provider organisations canvass members to establish the most suitable times that will enable women to participate in sport and recreation activities and facilitate access to women during those times.

Recommendation 8

3.106 The committee recommends that the Commonwealth encourage state and territory governments, and especially local government, to address the lack of women's facilities at sporting venues.

Groups with special needs

3.107 Some groups, such as women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, women with disabilities, women from CALD backgrounds and Indigenous women generally have lower participation rates in sport and recreation activities than other women. Women living in geographically isolated areas also have barriers to participation. The needs of these groups and strategies to address their particular circumstances are detailed below.

Low SES groups

3.108 Women (and girls) from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds have lower participation rates than women from higher SES backgrounds. An analysis of 2002 ABS data found that participation in organised sport declined where children were from low SES households; or from families with unemployed parents or in single parent family with an unemployed parent.⁹⁵ A similar ABS study focussing on adults found that participation in organised sport declined for particular groups including those from low SES status groups. A direct relationship was found between participation and the socio-economic index for areas (SEIFA) – an index of relative disadvantage – with participation rates for each of the quintiles increasing from 50.7 per cent for the lowest quintile to 75.3 per cent for the highest quintile.⁹⁶

3.109 Conversely, data indicate that, in general, people from higher SES groups participate more in sport and recreation activities. Data also indicate that people who participate in organised sport and physical activity:

95 ABS, *The Young and the Restful*, p. 15.

96 ABS, *Sport and Related Recreational Physical Activity – The Social Correlates of Participation and Non-Participation by Adults*, 2005, pp 11–12.

- are more likely to have attained a higher educational level than the general population;
- are more likely to be employed full-time than non-participants; and
- are more likely to be employed in professional occupational groups than other occupations.⁹⁷

3.110 Some of the organised sports and physical activities whose participants tend to have incomes in the lower end of the income range include dancing, lawn bowls, netball, swimming, ten-pin bowling, tennis, basketball, and Australian Rules football. These activities are low-participant-cost sports. While lawn bowls and dancing are able to cater for older people not in the workforce, and with little or no income, the inclusion of sports such as tenpin bowling, tennis and netball may be explained by the player base which includes part-time workers or people not in the workforce.⁹⁸

3.111 Submissions outlined the constraints which preclude women from low SES groups participating in sport and recreation, including the cost of participation. Recreation SA noted that in Elizabeth Vale, an older low income area with high unemployment, an outdoor fitness area was opened that contained a range of fitness equipment usually found in gyms and fitness centres. The usage has been considerable with the users being mainly middle aged women. The organisation noted that the success of the venture indicates that women will be active and participate if there is little or no cost involved.⁹⁹

3.112 There are few studies that examine the reasons for the lower participation rates of women from low-SES backgrounds. One recent Australian study examined the socio-economic factors explaining differences in physical activity levels of high-, middle-and low-SES women and provides some insight into these factors. The study suggested that SES differences in women's physical activity may be mediated by multiple intrapersonal, social and physical environmental factors. These include negative early life physical activity experiences (a consistent theme among those of low/mid-SES), greater priority given to television viewing (low-SES), lack of time due to work commitments (low-SES) and neighbourhood barriers (low-SES).

3.113 Low-and mid-SES women reported negative childhood experiences in sport and physical activity and these negative experiences may contribute to lower levels of participation in later life. Intrapersonal barriers to physical activity included lack of time and lack of motivation. Often these barriers appeared linked with low SES women in particular reporting that they had little discretionary time available and that they were not always highly motivated to be physically activity. Low-SES women described work commitments as limiting their ability to be active. Adverse influences of the work environment on physical activity were not always attributed to long

97 ASC, *Active Australia: The Numbers Game*, 2000, pp 18–27.

98 ASC, *Active Australia*, p. 26.

99 Recreation SA, *Submission 38*, pp 3–4.

working hours. Women of low-and mid-SES also reported workplace stress, poor working conditions, inflexible working hours, as well as social norms whereby engaging in physical activity in worktime was frowned upon. Low-SES women commonly expressed negative views about their neighbourhood environment, in particular in relation to safety. Perceived lack of facilities and cost were not identified in the study as major barriers to participation in any SES group, although previous studies found that these factors were important. Many low-SES women acknowledged that their neighbourhood had good facilities, but that they lacked the motivation to access them.¹⁰⁰

Older women

3.114 Older women are less likely to participate in sport and recreation than other women. There is a growing body of literature that is exploring the impact of physical exercise on older women. Research indicates that it has far greater impact than just the obvious physical outcomes and that there are also significant social and mental health benefits. The Office for Women (OfW) is currently funding research into the impact of physical activity for older women. The study will consider the impact of physical activity and lack of physical activity on health and other outcomes for mid-age and older Australian women. The final report is due to be released in May 2007.¹⁰¹

3.115 One study into barriers to participation amongst older Australians found that the most common barriers to be lack of time; lack of motivation; poor health; a perception of being 'too old' or 'active enough'; and childcare commitments. More women than men reported lack of time and childcare as barriers. Among older adults (aged 55 years and over) the main five barriers after 'already sufficiently active' were injury or disability; a perception of being 'too old'; lack of time; and not being the 'sporty type'. Women were found to be more likely than men to report being 'too old' and not being the 'sporty type'. Women's barriers appeared to reflect their self image whilst men's barriers appeared to reflect their health status.¹⁰²

3.116 The ACHPER noted the problems of motivating many older women to participate:

They get out of the habit of being physically active. They get married, they have a family and they might be physically active as young mothers, but as they age, there is the old adage: 'the mind's willing, but the body ain't.' They

100 K. Ball *et. al.*, 'How can Socio-Economic Differences in Physical Activity among Women be Explained?', *Women and Health*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2006, pp 108–111. The study involved interviews with 19 high-, 19 mid- and 18 low-SES women in three suburbs in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

101 OfW, *Submission 32*, pp 2–3.

102 M. Booth *et.al.*, 'Perceived Barriers to Physical Activity Among Older Australians', *Journal of Aging and Physical Activity*, vol.10, pp 271–280, 2002. See also WA Department of Sport and Recreation, *Submission 48*, pp 1–2.

get out of the pattern of being physically active and then they do not necessarily see ways of getting into it.¹⁰³

3.117 NSW Sport and Recreation argued that 'best practice' in encouraging greater participation of older women is to implement programs with high levels of social contact, complemented by multiple reinforcements of the physical activity message.¹⁰⁴ The ACHPER also noted that:

There are plenty of opportunities for people to be physically active. It is just a matter of getting the message out and convincing women that they are able to do it and that there are lots of health benefits, both physical and mental, that are associated with it.¹⁰⁵

3.118 A number of recreational pursuits cater for the social needs of older women. The Women's Golf Executive of Yowani Country Club referred to the social support network at the golf club that extends even to older members that have ceased to play the game.¹⁰⁶

Women with disabilities

3.119 Women with disabilities have lower participation rates than the general population and when compared with men with disabilities. Data from the ABS 2002 General Social Survey indicates that the overall participation rate in sport and physical recreation for those with a disability or long term health condition (LTC) is at lower levels when compared to those without a disability or LTC (54.6 per cent as compared to 70.2 per cent). Overall more males (57.3 per cent), participated than females (52 per cent). This pattern of participation holds for all age groups from 18 years to 65 years and over. The severity or degree of disability appears to be related to the levels of sports participation. The lowest levels of participation were observed for those reporting a disability with 'severe' core activity limitation. Participation levels increased as the degree of limitation reduced.

3.120 Walking for exercise ranked as the number one activity for both genders for all disability types. The ranking of the top-ten activities however varied for each disability type but typically included swimming, aerobics/fitness and tennis. Higher levels of non-participation were observed for those who reported 'no access' to transport or 'difficulty' in accessing transport; and where self-rated health status was reported as 'fair' or 'poor'.¹⁰⁷

103 Ms Pickup, ACHPER, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 90.

104 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 5.

105 Ms Pickup, ACHPER, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 90.

106 Ms Willis, Yowani Country Club, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, pp 29–30.

107 ABS, *Sport and Physical Recreation Participation Among Persons with a Disability*, July 2006, pp 9–10.

3.121 Women with disabilities face problems in relation to access to sport and recreation opportunities. It has also been argued that these women face greater barriers than men with disabilities, being subject to the stereotypes of passivity and dependence associated both with women and with people with disabilities.¹⁰⁸

3.122 Women with Disabilities Australia (WWDA) outlined the constraints which preclude women with disabilities participating in sport and recreation. These include:

- Lack of suitable programs, including programs which cater specifically for women with disabilities, and lack of an inclusive component in mainstream commercial and community programs.
- Lack of information – even where programs exist, many women with disabilities do not receive information about programs and thus do not participate.
- Lack of access, including the lack of physical access to premises and lack of suitable equipment.
- Lack of money – women with disabilities are amongst the most economically marginalised groups in society.
- Lack of transport, and the high cost of transport – for women with disabilities who rely on wheelchair accessible taxis, or accessible bus services, it is often impossible to schedule travel in order to get to an activity.
- Lack of personnel – conducting programs for women with disabilities is likely to require much more intensive involvement of personnel.
- Negative attitudes – for many women with disabilities, their experience of participation in sport, fitness and recreation has been a negative one. Taunts which focus on lack of ability, or physical deformity amount to severe harassment, for which the only defence is to withdraw from the activity.¹⁰⁹

3.123 WWDA pointed out that research indicated that there was significant unmet need amongst women with disabilities for programs in which they could engage.¹¹⁰ Much of this need is not amongst high profile disabilities such as wheelchair sports:

My perspective as a person in a wheelchair is that the highest profile of all disability sports, even though it is skewed to men, is wheelchair sports. In a way there are some things in place to help women in wheelchairs to participate in sports, but we have to look across the spectrum at people who are blind, vision impaired and hearing impaired. What are we going to do with those people who have severe core activity restrictions? We really

108 *Half Way to Equal*, pp 203–04.

109 WWDA, *Submission 25*, pp 5–7.

110 Ms Salthouse, WWDA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 5.

have to look at what can help them to maintain their flexibility and fitness and at the same time help them in their general interactions in the community.¹¹¹

3.124 There is also an almost complete lack of role models:

what information do we have about even Paralympian women competing? What are the figures about elite sportswomen with disabilities? I do not think we have them. I also want to look at the media and women with disabilities. I would say that since Louise Sauvage retired we have not had a single picture of a woman with a disability in a single national daily. It is lamentable, even compared with the low coverage of our elite sportswomen. There is not a thing about Paralympians or women with disabilities doing anything participatory at a national level—nothing at all.¹¹²

3.125 WWDA proposed a number of strategies to encourage greater participation of women with disabilities in sport and recreation. These included:

- Funding of more disability specific programs to cater for all age groups, all disabilities, and with a range of degrees of impairment from mild to severe. The majority of targeted programs which do exist cater for young women with disabilities who are still in the education system, or have just left it, that is, from 15-20 years of age. Programs predominantly target young women with intellectual disabilities. In addition, some programs cater for senior women with disabilities. Programs for the 20-60 year age group do not exist.
- Greater attention needs to be paid to developing integrated programs in which women with disabilities can be supported by carers or fellow participants who are able-bodied. Mainstream sport, fitness and recreation organisers do not automatically consider an integration model, and this will require a cultural and attitudinal change. Few commercial establishments have a Disability Action Plan, or have had an access audit conducted of their properties. Encouragement for them to extend the scope of their fitness agenda to include targeted programs for women with disabilities could increase the opportunities for participation.
- Government funding is needed to encourage community groups to develop programs targeting women with disabilities. The *Well and Able* project in the ACT which promotes health and well being of women with disabilities is an example of a successful community development project funded by the ACT Government.¹¹³

111 Ms Salthouse, WWDA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 5.

112 Ms Salthouse, WWDA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 3.

113 Disabled WinterSport Australia, *Submission 9*, p. 1.

- Information – organisations need to ensure that information on programs is available in locations where women with disabilities may be contacted, including peak disability organisations and disability service providers.
- Access – government incentives needs to be provided to improve physical access to buildings and assist fitness establishments to purchase accessible equipment and to train staff in their use.
- Cost – all organisations which conduct sport and recreation activities need to develop policies to enable women with disabilities from low SES groups to participate.
- Personnel – conducting programs for women with disabilities requires more intensive involvement of personnel. The involvement of volunteers needs also to be considered.¹¹⁴

3.126 The committee believes that there may need to be greater accountability of NSOs for their efforts to increase opportunities for participation by people with disabilities.

CALD women

3.127 People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (CALD) are under-represented in the numbers of people participating in sport and recreation, particularly in the case of CALD women. The ABS has found that women born in non-English speaking countries have significantly lower participation rates in sports and physical recreational activities (46.3 per cent) than women born in Australia (63.6 per cent) or born in main English-speaking countries (66.5 per cent). Men born in non-English speaking countries had a participation rate in sport and physical activity of 56 per cent.¹¹⁵

3.128 The OfW is undertaking research on the characteristics of CALD women who participate in sport and recreation activities, for example, age, labour force status, education, number of years resident in Australia, and the factors that may encourage or inhibit CALD women from participating in sport and recreation activities.¹¹⁶

3.129 For CALD women, studies have identified the need for participation rates to be targeted and increased, not only in traditional sports but also in other culturally-specific leisure activities. Barriers to participation include lack of information, language and communication problems, family and cultural traditions, and racism.

114 WWDA, *Submission 25*, pp 4–7. See also Women's Centre for Health Matters, *Submission 33*, pp 1–5.

115 ABS, *General Social Survey: Summary Results, 2002*, p. 54.

116 OfW, *Submission 32*, pp 4–5.

Many sporting organisations do not have the resources, understanding or willingness to accommodate the particular needs of women from different cultures.¹¹⁷

3.130 A study by Professor Taylor of the University of Technology, Sydney on the sport and recreation needs of CALD women in NSW identified a number of barriers to participation. These included:

- a lack of information about how to access programs;
- lack of female-only facilities;
- lack of knowledge or empathy on the part of providers in relation to different cultures and their requirements;
- lack of programs that take into account the needs of all family members, eg both women and younger children;
- lack of knowledge of the benefits of physical activity;
- reluctance of many women to join exiting sport and recreation programs (and a desire to participate within their own cultural group);
- a perception that sport is too aggressive and competitive;
- lack of proficiency and lack of confidence in the use of English;
- the prohibitive cost of sport and recreation programs;
- the lack of female role models within ethnic communities who can encourage others to get involved in sport and recreation activities; and
- lack of access to transport to venues.¹¹⁸

3.131 Professor Taylor suggested a number of strategies for sporting and recreation providers to facilitate participation by CALD women. These included:

- ensure providers have a clear understanding of the ethnic composition of their local community;
- develop a listing of facilities that can be used as female only venues;
- establish child care services to allow women with younger children to participate in programs;
- develop a program of physical activity participation that incorporates education about the health, social and community benefits of physical activity;
- establish programs that are specifically designed to cater for the identified needs of the target group;

117 ASC, *Active Australia*, pp 15–16.

118 Professor Tracy Taylor, 'Identifying Best Practices in Sport and Recreation for Women from non-English Speaking Backgrounds', *Submission 29*, pp iii–vi.

- promote sport and recreation activities that emphasise the social aspects of participation;
- ensure wide promotion of programs and services through non-traditional outlets eg, places of worship, community centres;
- provide printed information in community languages. Where programs are only available in English, ensure staff are aware of how to incorporate the needs of women whose proficiency in English is poor;
- cost – conduct pilot and entry level programs at minimal cost to participants to initiate involvement;
- role models – target girls and women that are involved in sport and recreation to speak at schools, women's clubs and ethnic community gatherings;
- transport – develop program-based transportation schemes such as car pooling and community buses. Choose venues that are easily accessible by public transport;
- work with potential participants to develop non-exclusionary programs; and
- adopt flexible requirements for sports clothing.¹¹⁹

3.132 Dress code considerations are also an important consideration for women from certain ethnic minorities or those with low incomes. One submission noted many girls and women from ethnic backgrounds do not feel comfortable wearing certain types of clothing while playing sport. Womensport and Recreation NSW argued that there is a need to relax requirements for sports clothing (where they are not governed by safety issues) and for sports organisation to be aware of the clothing requirements of specific ethnic groups.¹²⁰ They also supported the provision of discrete facility usage periods in facilities. The organisation pointed to the example of Bankstown City Council which has been trialling discrete female use periods at one of their swimming pools.¹²¹

3.133 Professor Taylor noted that programs and services that incorporate 'best practice' for CALD women are scarce in NSW, especially outside major metropolitan areas. While resource constraints, eg budgets, staff, facilities, account for some of this inadequacy its main cause appears to be a lack of understanding of the needs of these women and inappropriate methods to facilitate their participation. Women only sessions, outreach workers of the same sex or religion and the employment of leisure/sport centre staff from non-English speaking backgrounds were found to be successful strategies for increasing participation. CALD women also indicated a strong preference for segregated programs. Professor Taylor noted that there was a

119 Professor Tracy Taylor, Identifying Best Practices, *Submission 29*, pp iii–vi.

120 Professor Tracy Taylor, Identifying Best Practices, *Submission 29*, p. vi. See also Mr Lozan, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 31.

121 Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, p. 3.

need for the introduction of more ethnic-specific and women-only programs and that these programs need to be developed in close consultation with CALD women.¹²²

Indigenous women

3.134 ABS data on Aboriginal communities indicates that in 2005, Indigenous women were less likely to participate in a sport or physical activity than Indigenous men (36 per cent compared to 52 per cent).¹²³ The overall participation rate of the Indigenous population in 2002 was less than half (46 per cent) compared with almost two-thirds (63 per cent) of the non-Indigenous population.

3.135 For both populations, participation declines with age, however, there is a much greater difference between the participation levels of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in the older age groups. For those aged 45 years and over, the rate of participation of Indigenous people is less than half that of the non-Indigenous population.¹²⁴ The ASC noted that '[r]esearch has shown Indigenous women and girls, particularly in regional and remote areas, are less likely to participate in sport because they do not have access to sport programs or competitions'.¹²⁵

3.136 Studies have noted that sport is important to young Indigenous people because the 'playing field' is seen as a place where equality can be achieved with non-Indigenous people. Sport is a vehicle in Indigenous communities to assist with addressing health problems such as obesity and diabetes (type 2) and also diverts juveniles away from risk taking activities (criminal activity, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour).

3.137 A key factor hindering participation is the lack of access to suitable facilities in both rural and urban areas. Another key issue is the need for cross-cultural awareness by non-Indigenous people who deliver services and training, including coaches, referees and others.¹²⁶ One submission commented on the cultural barriers that are faced by women from Indigenous backgrounds, particularly in regional area:

These cultural issues tend to be exacerbated by socio-economic issues, particularly in remote and regional areas, and particularly in relation to travel and other commitments required to participate.¹²⁷

122 Professor Tracy Taylor, Identifying Best Practices, *Submission 29*, pp 20-21.

123 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 14.

124 ABS, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – Aspects of Sport and Recreation*, September 2004, p. 4.

125 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 18.

126 Sport 2000 Taskforce, *Shaping Up: A Review of Commonwealth Involvement in Sport and Recreation in Australia*, 1999, pp 93-94; ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 18.

127 WA Netball, *Submission 13*, p. 1. See also Ms Jennings, NT Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, pp 39-41.

3.138 The Committee believes that Indigenous women need to have access to opportunities to participate in sport and recreational activities and that their particular needs should be taken into account in providing services and programs.

Women living in geographically isolated areas

3.139 ABS data for 2002 indicate that the rate of participation in sport and physical activities was slightly higher by residents of capital cities (63.4 per cent) than those resident elsewhere in Australia (60.6 per cent). Men resident in capital cities had higher participation rates than women (67.1 per cent as compared with 59.9 per cent), however the participation rates for men and women were similar for those resident outside the capital cities (61.2 per cent – for men – as against 60.1 per cent for women).¹²⁸

3.140 Analysis of this 2002 ABS data found that those living in an inner regional area are more likely to participate relative to major city dwellers. Data also show that those living in outer regional or remote areas are neither more nor less likely to participate as those living in major cities.¹²⁹

3.141 Although people living in less densely settled areas are just as active as their urban counterparts, they do not have access to the same range of recreational or sporting facilities or to the multitude of sporting activities and teams that may result from a larger population base. However, opportunities to participate are often particularly valued as a social driver in sustaining regional and remote communities.

3.142 Some of the difficulties encountered in fostering participation in sport and recreation in regional and remote areas were highlighted during the inquiry. The Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly highlighted some of the challenges that girls face in regional areas:

- Girls are interested in sport, but teams are quite small. It is the more skilled girls who get an opportunity to increase their skills, and those girls who are not as good may not even get the opportunity to play.
- Due to small populations in regional and rural areas, there are often not enough girls with ability and interest to field teams.
- The time and distance that students have to travel to participate, especially in higher level competition causes problems. These demands often discourage further participation at higher levels.
- Smaller communities are also very traditional in their outlook on sport. They tend to offer the 'big four' – tennis, cricket, football and netball. If women and

128 ABS, *Participation in Sport and Physical Activities*, pp 4, 11.

129 *Social Correlates of Participation*, pp 11–12.

girls do not access these sports, there few options for them in their own towns. Again, the towns lack critical mass to start a new sport.¹³⁰

3.143 The NT Government commented on the problems of remoteness in the Territory and the impact this has on participation. These factors including small populations, the distance between towns and communities, high travel costs involved, and limited facilities in smaller communities.¹³¹ The Department noted the 'serious challenges' that geographical remoteness plays in promoting female participation in sport and recreation in the Territory.¹³²

3.144 The Committee believes that women living in geographically remote areas need to have access to opportunities to participate in sport and recreational activities and that their particular needs should be taken into account in providing services and programs to these areas.

Concluding remarks

3.145 The evidence received by the committee appeared to contain some clear messages about how women's participation in sport and recreation can be encouraged. High rates of participation and rapid growth amongst women members occurs where there is convenience, flexibility, child care, and non-competitive activities. There is a message here to all sport and recreation providers that if they pay attention to women's needs, such as for childcare, women will participate.

3.146 There are a number of constraints on participation that disproportionately affect women generally, and some groups of women in particular. The lack of time reported by women, as well as convenience and childcare constraints, were prominent amongst these. The committee would be concerned if, as was being suggested by the fitness industry, government regulation could make it more difficult for women to make use of fitness centres because of limited childcare opportunities.

130 Mrs Trotter, Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, pp 26–27.

131 NT Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport, *Submission 58*, pp 3–5.

132 Ms Jennings, NT Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, pp 40, 45.

Chapter 4

Elite Participation

4.1 Australians have continued to excel in elite sporting performance in the international context as a result of focussed investment by successive governments. This investment recognises that elite sport is essential to the Australian sport and recreation system as it has three roles: assisting athletes realise their full potential; providing inspirational role models for existing and future participation; and evoking local, regional and national identity and pride.

4.2 For Australia to perform well at world championship events and major international sporting competitions such as the Olympics, Paralympics and Commonwealth Games, a high level of organisation is required to identify, nurture, support and develop talented athletes. This commitment starts with Australia's extraordinary community base of volunteers and enthusiasts working within Australia's community sports organisations.

4.3 The ability for an athlete to achieve success at an international level is based on the egalitarian principal that dedication, ambition and talent will determine their level of success, rather than socio-economic status, geographic location or gender etc. However, this inquiry has confirmed the ongoing reality that there are many differences between male and female elite sports people, regardless of the sport they play.

4.4 This chapter discusses problems in the recruitment and retention of elite sportswomen, including levels of remuneration and limited career paths, and the significant problems these pose for athletes in pursuing a career at the elite level in their chosen sport. The chapter also discusses issues related to the financial status and viability of many national league competitions and the opportunities and barriers for national team members and competitors in international competition.

Recruitment and retention

4.5 Women's sports report problems in the recruitment and retention of female elite athletes. As discussed in chapter 3, evidence indicates that many girls drop out of sport in their mid teens and this factor poses problems in providing a continuing player base for many sports. Sports also face difficulties retaining players who have made it to the elite level due to the challenge females face in earning a living and developing a career path while participating in national and international competition.

4.6 One possible explanation or factor is the lack of career paths so that potential sportswomen are not able to reach their full potential. One witness noted that:

[a] reason that these young women drop out is that for young women there is no full-time professional career path as an athlete in a team sport.¹

4.7 Hockey Australia outlined some of the issues with retaining people in the sport, particularly later in their careers:

ACTING CHAIR—Have many of them stayed with the sport?

Mr Adamson—Some of them have, but not as many as we would have liked. They were obviously a very high-achieving group of people and so logic would suggest that they would be high achieving if they stayed in the sport in an administrative or particularly a coaching capacity. I said before that hockey players are not very well paid. There are two or three issues with those players, once they finish playing. Firstly, after training for all that time and committing themselves to competition for three months of the year, many of them were tired of the sport and wanted a break. Many of them wanted to start a family and many of them had not had the opportunity to start a career in a meaningful way and needed to establish themselves. The latter applies to men's hockey as well. In particular, there was the issue of starting a family; they retire from hockey at 30 or 33, and that became an issue for us.²

4.8 Big V Basketball stated that of the 465 athletes who competed in its elite competition in 2002, only 82 are still regularly involved in competition. A large number of players who entered the league between 17-21 years of age are leaving the league by the time they are aged 22.³

4.9 The Football Federation Australia (FFA) also commented on the 'massive' drop-off rate in female soccer which is common in all female sports – 'the challenge for us is converting [grassroots participation] into a league and then into a highly competitive national team'.⁴ Cricket Australia noted that retention of elite female athletes is difficult as female cricket in Australia is not professional. This means female athletes must also work or study which poses challenges with regard to training and competition.⁵

4.10 Submissions pointed to a number of strategies to retain female competitors in elite competition. These include:

- Provide improved remuneration and other financial benefits, including scholarships;
- Provide female athletes with access to quality facilities and coaching staff;

1 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 57.

2 Mr Adamson, Hockey Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 89.

3 Big V Basketball, *Submission 18*, p. 3; Big V Basketball, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 35.

4 Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 14.

5 Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

- Better assist with family issues and work-life balance; and
- Provide funding for elite programs in regional areas to encourage greater retention of athletes from those areas.⁶

4.11 Submissions noted that a major problem in retaining female athletes occurs when female athletes start a family. In most, but not all cases, a male athlete continues his career unimpeded after the birth of a child in the family. A female athlete, on the other hand, either retires or continues on with her sport, but with enormous stresses of juggling child care and training and competition commitments. The SA Premier's Council for Women stated that the numbers of women that this affects is increasing, as the average age of athletes competing at the highest level is increasing.⁷

4.12 The Australian Sports Commission and sporting organisations have a number of initiatives to assist with the retention of female athletes. The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) provides a program for both male and female athletes –the ASPIRE Career Assistance for Olympians program. Under this program athletes are assisted to find employment which provides flexible work practices so that athletes can embark on a career without jeopardising their athletic goals. All athletes regardless of gender also have access to the Olympic Solidarity Grants which makes scholarships available to assist with training programs.⁸ The ASC programs are discussed later in the chapter.

Remuneration

4.13 Women athletes earn far less than men when playing in a national league, whether comparing women participating in an all female league (like netball) with men participating in a male-dominated league (such as rugby), or whether one is considering a sport with national leagues for both men and women (like football).

...for young women there is no full-time professional career path as an athlete in a team sport. Little girls write to me and say that when they grow up they want to be a professional netballer. I am tempted to write back, 'Me too.'...On a rough count, there are over 3,000 full-time jobs for men as athletes in team sport in Australia. There is not one single job for women in that role.⁹

4.14 Submissions noted that the remuneration of elite women athletes is generally insufficient to allow athletes to compete on a full-time basis. One witness noted that:

It is frustrating, particularly when you see what the footballers earn. By the same token, you cannot begrudge them for what they earn because they are

6 ANPA/AWU, *Submission 62*, pp 5–8; Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 14; Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

7 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 16.

8 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 2.

9 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 57.

part of a marketplace that allows them to earn that. Obviously their sports are doing something well. It is frustrating not because we all want to grow rich out of our sport—if I wanted to do that, I am playing the wrong sport—but because it would be great to have the time to concentrate on it.¹⁰

4.15 In relation to netball, a 2005 survey conducted by the Australian Netball Players' Association (ANPA) and the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) found that members of ANPA do not receive sufficient amounts of remuneration to play their sport on a full-time basis with most having to rely on supplementary income.

4.16 The survey found that:

- 83.2 per cent of respondents who played in the Commonwealth Bank Trophy (CBT) in 2005 earned less than \$4000 with the average being approximately \$2000, while some earned nothing.
- All players (except those at the Australian Institute of Sport) were responsible for paying any costs associated with an injury.
- 84.2 per cent of respondents committed more than 25 hours per week to either their other job or education and 58.4 per cent committed more than 38 hours per week.
- 67.3 per cent of respondents had or were completing a tertiary qualification, 12.9 per cent were or had completed a TAFE qualification and 18.8 per cent were completing secondary schooling.
- Respondents engaged in full-time work accounted for 41.6 per cent of those surveyed, 14.9 per cent were employed part-time and 37.6 per cent were casual employees.¹¹

4.17 Netball Australia noted that while netball is the most popular organised sport in Australia, the combined total earnings of the 128 players in the National Netball League is only \$500 000 annually, which was described as a 'mere pittance' when compared with elite male sportsmen.¹² Netball Victoria stated that base payments for elite players in the CBT range from \$1500 to \$15 000 (excluding personal sponsorships) and travel and accommodation expenses are paid when travelling to play. A small number of players also have individual sponsorship.¹³

4.18 Hockey Australia stated that support for players is provided through the Commonwealth's Direct Athlete Support Scheme (now the Australian Government

10 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 61.

11 ANPA/AWU, *Submission 62*, pp 5–6.

12 Netball Australia, *Submission 65*, p. 2.

13 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 13.

Sport Training Grant scheme), Hockey Australia resources and through the AOC's medal incentive payments.

There is also limited scope for players to receive payment outside this scheme and playing for their states in the Australian Hockey League at best provides limited payment at and at worst requires players to make a financial contribution to play in the League.

Player payments and therefore the ability to make a small living from the game usually requires the players to go overseas, usually to Europe in the off season. However, with the very full national and international program for the national teams this is usually done by up and coming players or those at the end of their playing careers.¹⁴

4.19 Cricket Australia stated that its national female athletes do not receive payment, however, expenses associated with competition such as travel, accommodation and allowances are provided.¹⁵

4.20 The AWU, referring to netball in particular, argued that levels of remuneration will need to be addressed in association with other factors such as improved marketing of the sport:

Ultimately, this sport has to deal and compete with the legacy of male dominated sports coverage in Australia...The players have got themselves organised, they are developing a professional voice. There is some change and perhaps some other people and some further new thinking coming into the sport. I think remuneration for players has to go up, and it will. It will just happen; the tide will rise. But that process is only part of it. The rest of it has to fall into place—television, marketing and developing even better links with the private sector.¹⁶

4.21 Table 4.1 illustrates the wage distribution of elite male sports compared to netball in Australia.

14 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, p. 4.

15 Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 2.

16 Mr Shorten, AWU, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 63.

Table 4.1 Wage distribution at elite level sport in Australia

	Competition (\$)	Per Team (\$)	Per Player (\$)
Netball	416,600	59,514	3,967
Basketball	8,096,000	736,000	73,600
Australian Football	97,840,000	6,115,000	156,794
Soccer	12,000,000	1,500,000	75, 000#
Cricket (State)	N/A	N/A	42,500*

This does not allow for the one player per team that does not have to count in the salary cap.

*The minimum a player can be contracted for is \$22,500 while the maximum is \$65,000. However, players then get remunerated on the amount of games they play at a rate of \$3,100 for a four-day game and \$1,100 for a one-day game.

Source: ANPA/AWU, *Submission 62*, p. 7. The data for netball refers to women's remuneration, the other sports to men's remuneration.

4.22 The data indicate that netball compares very unfavourably with other professional sports with regards to remuneration. The ANPA/AWU submission also drew attention to the much higher remuneration and other conditions available in the New Zealand netball league. The minimum the majority of players on lists received is \$12 000, some 40 players earn above \$20 000, and seven earn more than \$45 000. The New Zealand competition only has seven rounds plus finals compared to fourteen rounds and finals in Australia. Thus for half the amount of work as Australian athletes, New Zealanders can expect to earn ten-times as much money as ANPA members.

4.23 In addition to being paid by their club, New Zealand national players receive a further salary from Netball New Zealand, along with a Prime Minister's scholarship, which is also available after they retire. This government-funded scholarship allows players to attend university free, pays for books and other associated costs with professional development.¹⁷ This is discussed later in the chapter.

4.24 The vast majority of female athletes cannot make a living from their sport in Australia, and must work on a full-or part-time basis and/or rely on financial support from a partner or family. Athletes can only reach their full potential with the right supports in place, including adequate remuneration. The more time an athlete has to focus on their skills, train and concentrate, the better their performance.

17 ANPA/AWU, *Submission 62*, pp 7–8. See also www.sparc.org.nz, accessed August 2006.

Balancing work-life commitments

4.25 As a result of inadequate remuneration available from their sports, the majority of elite female athletes must compete at an international level as well as studying or working full time to support themselves.

4.26 Elite sportswomen gave first-hand accounts to the committee of the frustrations involved in balancing these work-life situations, especially the competing demands on their time with sporting, family and work commitments. Mrs Ellis, the Australian Netball captain told the committee:

....a lot of sportswomen have to work full-time, obviously to support themselves. Most of us have partners or families and we need to be able to devote some time to them. It is frustrating to have to fit in so much. When you look at the Australian netball team, over half of our team have tertiary qualifications. I think that is pretty important. Education is just as important as sport. But it would be nice to be able to combine that in a much easier way.

Several years ago I was working full-time as a solicitor for a firm in Sydney. I was trying to play for the Swifts, coach and do all the things that you think you should do as part of your sport. I went very close to an emotional breakdown because I did not have the time. I had just got married and I wanted to spend more time with my husband. It is pretty tough when you think there is potential for your sport to pay you a salary, but it is not. That more than anything else makes it pretty frustrating.¹⁸

4.27 Similarly, Ms Dick, Director of the ANPA, stated that:

I have been playing for a number of years, and my circumstances have changed. When I first started playing netball I was at university. It was a bit easier then, because I was flexible with my training schedule and could work around things a bit easier. I was working as well, which was hard, just to get an income. I am still playing at CBT level and enjoying it, too. Working full time, it is a struggle to train and be fresh for games at the end of the week. I love netball and it is a passion. There are Phoenix and other commitments outside of netball, too. I want to coach little kids, because that is really enjoyable, but it is just hard to get out of full-time work for that.¹⁹

4.28 Ms Kitchin, a member of the ANPA, highlighted the health and psychological demands placed on athletes:

Other sports offer opportunities to go straight into professional sport, and that can be their living. We do not have that. We have to work full time just to support ourselves. That means that we have to get up at 5 o'clock twice a week to go to training in the morning, and on the days that we do not we have to go to training after work. It affects our health. It affects us

18 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 61–62.

19 Ms Dick, ANPA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 58.

psychologically. You get to a game at the end of the week and you are not in the mental state to play. It is very hard; you cannot reach your potential as an athlete and you cannot reach your potential in your career. You cannot reach your career goals all the time, because you have to sacrifice the time to put towards your sport.²⁰

4.29 Ms Ellis raised similar concerns:

There has been a spate of knee injuries in the last six months, which I think is due to athletes trying to do too much in their lives. They are trying to train. They are trying to do everything that their coach is asking of them. You do not want to let your team mates down. You cannot take a night off because you are tired. You cannot do that to your team mates, and you do not want to let your coach down. You do not want to let your employer down either, because they are often helping you get through your career, giving you time off and being very lenient. So you do not want to not turn up just because you are tired. It is probably less to do with the decisions that you make and more to do with the impact that it has on your life.²¹

4.30 Witnesses also stated that work and study commitments resulted in less time being available to devote to coaching clinics and public profile media work. Ms Ellis stated that:

I know that a lot of the girls in my team whom I play with are either working full time or studying full time. They cannot get out to do shopping centre promotions, which leads again to the invisibility of the sport. There are footballers out there doing coaching clinics in schools, promotions and appearances. A lot of my team mates cannot afford to do that because there are just not enough hours in a day and they are trying to do too much. It is probably a fairly good reflection of what women are like generally, I think, in terms of trying to be superwoman and do absolutely everything—have your home, your career and your family and, for us, our sport as well. That impacts again, I think, negatively on our sport.²²

4.31 Similarly, Ms Dick stated that:

There are a number of such [promotional requests] requests. Of course, you want to do that. I love my sport and I want to put back into netball what they give me as well. It is great going to a clinic where the little girls aspire to be like you, and they are the things that I want to do. Unfortunately, I have to decline those requests. That is just the way it is.²³

20 Ms Kitchin, ANPA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, pp 58–59.

21 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 62.

22 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 62.

23 Ms Dick, ANPA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 58.

4.32 An ability to earn a living from their sport would be an important advance as it would remove the other pressures and distractions athletes face so they could concentrate on their sporting performance.

4.33 The above discussion starkly illustrates the challenges female athletes face in managing the competing demands of high-level competition as well as work and/or study and family commitments. This is also related to broader societal issues related to time and work life pressures that women face and the division of labour between men and women generally. Evidence indicates that women continue to carry the responsibilities of caring and domestic roles within relationships and the demands of elite competition pose an additional burden on female athletes.²⁴

Career pathways

4.34 Submissions and other evidence noted the lack of professional career pathways for elite athletes.²⁵

4.35 The FFA commented on the problems of structuring effective elite player pathways in women's soccer. There is 'some confusion or lack of cohesion' between the current pathways (the school system, the club system and the National Training Centre programs at the State Institutes or Academies level). Given the age of the elite players, many players participate in all three pathways and some do so concurrently – 'this equates to a huge time commitment on the part of players and cost commitment on the part of their parents'.²⁶ The FFA noted that while the pathways will never be overly clear, the challenge for the Federation is managing the player's workload and players need to be monitored to ensure there is no burn out or increase of injury and that their non-football career or education is not adversely affected. The Review Committee into Women's Football recommended a structure that is inclusive of all pathways, but with a need to prioritise a particular pathway that accelerates development to compete for the national team at an international level.²⁷ The Federation commented on the status of the Review's recommendations stating that:

....the organisation has adopted the principles of the report but has had to say that it is something that we can only do when we can afford to do...
The importance of it is recognised. It is just the affordability.²⁸

4.36 Submissions also noted a lack of opportunities for female athletes to stay involved with their sport once they have finished playing at an elite level. Ms Dick stated that with regard to netball:

24 See, for example, SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, pp 10–11.

25 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 57.

26 FFA, *Submission 47*, p. 19.

27 FFA, *Submission 47*, Appendix 1, p. 19. See also Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 20–21.

28 Mr Boulton, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 17.

I do not think they are as recognised in the sport. I do not want to say ‘not respected’. I have played over 100 [Commonwealth Bank Trophy] CBT games and I am not even invited to the Netball Australia dinner. I am not whingeing about that. But there are things like that, that connection, and the communication between the sport as well and their players. In terms of the head of Netball Australia, I never met the CEO before Lindsay came. It was great that we met her, but it is about that kind of relationship and building that network.²⁹

4.37 Netball Victoria stated that involvement in the sport would be enhanced if the sports were supported via subsidies to employ athletes as staff members or special scholarships were provided to enable athletes to work and train and also develop skills in administration which could be used within the particular sport.³⁰

Support for elite athletes

4.38 The Australian Sports Commission funds a number of programs for elite athletes. The ASC administers the Direct Athlete Support (DAS) Program, a Commonwealth Government initiative to provide direct funds to targeted elite athletes, selected on the basis of medal potential and individual need, to assist with daily living and training environment costs. DAS allocations are made directly to athletes by the ASC based on submissions received from NSOs.

Table 4.2 Direct Athlete Support Scheme breakdown by gender (payments made prior to 14 August 2006)

Scheme	Female (\$)	Number Supported	%	Male (\$)	Number Supported	%
Athens 2004 Direct Athlete Support	\$577 166	118	52.7	\$472 833	106	47.3
Melbourne 2006 Direct Athlete Support	\$1 615 276	254	50.2	\$1 773 079	252	49.8
Australian Government Sport Training Grant (1 Jul 05 to 14 Aug 06)	\$746 597	74	71.2	\$253 484	30	28.8

Source: ASC, *Submission 30A*, p. 3. The gender breakdown for the Australian Government Sport Training Grants is skewed by the nature of the sports in which grants have been disbursed to date, and the committee was advised that the likely longer term breakdown would be similar to previous direct athlete support schemes.

29 Ms Dick, ANPA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 60.

30 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 13.

4.39 The ASC, through the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), also provides scholarships to elite athletes. Approximately 700 athletes access these scholarships each year in 35 separate programs covering 26 sports. At present there are 673 scholarship holders, comprising 383 males (56.9 per cent) and 290 females (43 per cent). The selection criteria vary among sports but, as a general rule, successful applicants need to be competing at the national championship level who are recognised by the relevant national sporting body as elite or who have developmental potential. Scholarship benefits may include access to facilities; high performance coaching; personal training and competition equipment; travel, accommodation and living expenses for events chosen by the AIS; full board at the AIS Residence or living out expenses; reimbursement of education expenses up to certain limits (depending on the type of study undertaken); assistance provided by the Athlete Career and Education program (ACE); and incidental expenses. Acceptance of scholarships require the acceptance of certain conditions, including undertaking a technical or academic course or finding suitable full-time or part-time employment.

4.40 The ASC also provides Indigenous Sport Excellence Scholarships. These scholarships are available for elite-level Indigenous athletes, as well as coaches and officials. 45 per cent of these went to women in 2005-06.³¹ The Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program is also available for Indigenous sportspeople who have been selected for a state team to compete at national championships or an Australian team to compete at an international event.³² 48 per cent of these went to women in 2005-06.³³

4.41 The ACE program, which is a program of the AIS, is also available. This program provides AIS Scholarship holders with career, education and personal development services as well as transitional support for athletes experiencing personal and sporting changes. The ACE program provides all AIS Scholarship holders with access to these services to assist them in preparing for 'life after sport'. More than 3000 elite athletes, from amateur and professional sports, access ACE each year. In the year to date, 2173 athletes have accessed ACE services, comprising 1174 males (54 per cent) and 999 females (45.9 per cent).³⁴

4.42 The relatively balanced gender outcomes for ASC schemes reflects the commitment of the Commission to gender equity goals. The government's sport policy *Building Australian Communities Through Sport* commits to 'continue to encourage female participation in all aspects of sport in Australia'.³⁵ The Commission saw its role in this context:

31 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 18.

32 www.ausport.gov.au, accessed August 2006.

33 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 19.

34 www.ais.org.au, accessed August 2006.

35 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 4.

Australia must continue to foster a culture of change through a mature approach which encourages and supports the full involvement of all women and girls in every aspect of sport, recreation and physical activity in Australia.³⁶

4.43 In New Zealand, the NZ Academy of Sport operates a number of programs to assist elite athletes, many of which are similar to the AIS programs. These include:

- the Prime Minister's Athlete Scholarships programme;
- ACE; and
- Performance Enhancement Grants.

4.44 The New Zealand Prime Minister's Athlete Scholarships programme assists talented and elite athletes achieve tertiary and vocational qualifications while pursuing excellence in sport. The Prime Minister's Athlete Gold Level scholarships are also available as part of the Prime Minister's Athlete Scholarships programme. The scholarships provide athletes with an opportunity to study for a tertiary or vocational qualification after they are decarded and/or retire.³⁷

4.45 The New Zealand ACE programme assists athletes to effectively manage their lives in order to achieve sporting excellence. ACE advisors provide athletes with individualised services in the areas of integrating sport and other life goals; life skills, such as decision-making and goal setting; employment; financial budgeting; career advice; education options; and media skills. Performance Enhancement Grants offer elite athletes financial support associated with training, equipment and day-to-day living so they can focus on their sports performance.³⁸

4.46 Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) manage the 'Avenues' program which is designed to prepare athletes with a career opportunity when they retire from sport and take off some of the financial pressures while they are participating. The program is supported by a human resources company and places athletes with suitable 'athlete friendly' employers.

4.47 It is in the intrinsic nature of women's sport that most women pursue a career and education while playing. The tensions, both around the demands on time, and between sport and different, perhaps better paid careers, take their toll:

Managing to train at the level required to be selected for state squads and the Australian squad demands full-time employment, and it gets too demanding on many of the girls and they have to give it up.

The government assistance that we receive once we reach the AIS squad and the Australian team is extremely helpful, yet we are required to take

36 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 4.

37 Athletes who are 'carded' are eligible for funding and services, as determined by their National Sports Organisation.

38 www.sparc.org.nz, accessed August 2006.

about six to eight weeks off a year from our full-time jobs to travel to international competitions, and that just gets too much. The decision is: fulfil your dream and play for Australia but maybe not have a job when you get home. Most of the girls in the squad, 99 per cent of us, have a university degree, so we are quite employable.

ACTING CHAIR—What percentage?

Miss Quigley—Some 99 per cent. Every single player bar one has a degree. We are very employable. Some girls choose going off and taking a good wage over playing softball, which is unfortunate.³⁹

4.48 This steady migration of young women away from their sports may be exacerbated by the fact that there are not many genuine career paths in the sport on completion of playing, such as the very limited number of full time coaching roles in women's sport.

Need for female role models

4.49 Submissions emphasised the need to promote sportswomen as role models to inspire and motivate girls and young women to pursue sporting careers. The absence of female sporting role models is a major contributing factor to the low participation rates of girls in sport and recreation activities.

4.50 The Women in Sport Media Group stated that young women and girls:
...need to be familiar with the names of the captain of the Matildas, the captain of the Southern Stars cricket team and the captain of the Hockeyroos. They need to know what the Matildas have just achieved and where they are going. Those sorts of things should be part of the general information that is out there for our women and young girls.⁴⁰

4.51 The Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly also noted that:
A lot of the girls do not have a role model to identify with. When some of our better sportswomen, for example, choose to have families in the middle of their sporting career, a lot of girls miss out on seeing them, because they have issues to do with child care and, obviously, there are other priorities.⁴¹

4.52 Evidence to the inquiry indicated that sportswomen provide excellent role models:

Women in sport are some of the best role models in society today; although we work full-time and train the hours of professional athletes, like some of those in the AFL, NBL and NRL, we find time to still work with the development of softball. A lot of us go back to our local clubs and

39 Ms Quigley, Softball Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 97.

40 Ms Mitchell, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 45.

41 Ms Trotter, Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 31.

associations and work with charities such as Red Dust Role Models and ARM Tour, where we go up to the Northern Territory and work with the Indigenous children up there.⁴²

What better marketing tool than the hundreds of elite female athletes that train at rural and metropolitan facilities around the country, who give their sport their total concentration and commitment for little to no hope of financial gain? Young women need to see that there is a future in competitive sport and that there are hundreds of confident, strong women who strive daily for their sporting goals. Such women need to be promoted, so that their protégés can realise that there is a future in pursuing sport at an elite level. For every Andrew Johns, Lleyton Hewitt or George Gregan, we desperately need a Liz Ellis, Alicia Molik or Susie O'Neill.⁴³

4.53 Netball Australia outlined the dangers of not encouraging positive female role models:

In the absence of media presence of positive female sporting role models, young women will seek guidance and assurance from whoever graces the front cover of their teen magazines, or whoever appears on their favourite television shows. Currently, that void is filled with Hollywood starlets who have little more than a famous family name and an expensive wardrobe to their credit. Poor self-image is inextricably linked with the constant coverage of these 'role models', as they are held up to represent the traits and features of the ideal woman.⁴⁴

4.54 The powerful role of the media in 'creating' role models is illustrated in several studies. One study reviewed a range of media that involved various depictions of women and girls, especially where physical appearance is valued, and concluded that the media plays a key role in shaping young people's beliefs, perceptions and attitudes.⁴⁵

4.55 The Women in Sport Media Group argued that if there was greater coverage of women's sport, 'it is likely that girls will choose some role models out of those people who they are widely exposed to and they will imitate and say, 'It is great to be involved in sport. I like to do that as well'. The Group added that:

We have actually done some research with a group at the University of Technology Sydney into role models for adolescent girls. It was found that the adolescent girls prefer to have a female role model and also usually below 40 years of age. Now, if they were to see all these sportswomen on TV and in the paper, they will have plenty to choose from. But we also

42 Miss Quigley, Softball Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 97.

43 Netball Australia, *Submission 65*, p. 2.

44 Netball Australia, *Submission 65*, p. 1.

45 Kaiser Family Foundation and Children NOW, *Reflections of Girls in the Media: A Two-Part Study on Gender and Media*, 1977. See also V. Barry, 'Adolescents' Uses of Media for Self-Socialisation', *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 24, no. 5, 1995, pp 519-33.

notice that they often do not choose them because they are not available. One comment was made in a focus group. A girl said—and it is typical—‘If Don Bradman had been a woman, he would have been my role model, but because he is a man I can’t take him as my role model.’⁴⁶

4.56 The lack of promotion of women's sport – and the participants as role models – is illustrated in the case of the Matildas.

I think a good example is what has just happened with the Matildas. I was actually interviewed...to comment on the poor media coverage of the Matildas. If you take that in comparison with the Socceroos, they said that when they played the last qualifying round to get into the World Cup, there was a huge atmosphere all around the country. When that happened to the Matildas—it was about a week ago when they played and won that particular match—hardly anyone knew about it. There was a bit of media coverage... But it is sometimes such a great pity when we have fantastic sportswomen out there but no-one knows about them...For those men’s teams, why does everyone know about them? They have huge advertisements all the time in the papers, everywhere on the radio; you follow all the players. If they would do something like that sort of promotion for the Matildas, I reckon you would get full stadiums, no doubt.⁴⁷

4.57 Submissions and other evidence suggested that increased media coverage of women's sport is essential in creating positive role models. Increased media coverage would:

- lead to recognition for sportswomen and their achievements and a sense of equity in the media so that people are aware of what these women have achieved.
- attract more sponsorship and other funding and to lift the profile of women’s sporting teams, events and programs. Without media coverage, the sponsorship and funding is difficult to obtain because the necessary 'profile' is not there and it is hard to convince people to support women's sport.
- provide fit and healthy role models for young women and girls (as discussed above).

Issues related to the role of the media in promoting women's sport are discussed further in chapter 6.

4.58 The committee considers that a concerted effort is needed by governments, sporting organisations and the media to promote female sportswomen as role models to girls and young women. It is important that we as a nation celebrate and value the contribution of sportswomen.

46 Ms Vescio, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 51.

47 Ms Vescio, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 49.

Other issues

4.59 Other issues raised during the inquiry related to the financial status and viability of women's national league competitions and the opportunities and barriers for national team members and competitors in international competition.

Women's national league competitions

4.60 Submissions raised questions in relation to the financial status and viability of women's national league competitions.

4.61 Several national leagues appear to face questions over their continued viability. Netball Victoria stated that Netball Australia and each of the member organisations have managed under 'extraordinary pressure' to keep the national netball league operating. Netball Victoria noted however that the losses sustained by the organisation over the past nine years in the Commonwealth Bank Trophy (CBT) program have been 'significant' – 'the investment made in this area compared to all other areas of our sport are significantly higher and cannot be sustained in the long term'.⁴⁸ The organisation argued for a review of the national competition to ensure its continued viability.⁴⁹ The ANPA/AWU also questioned the viability of the CBT competition as presently structured.⁵⁰

4.62 Cricket Australia stated that the Commonwealth Bank Women's National Cricket League is almost totally funded by the state associations. The competition is 'a long way off' being self funded as it attracts limited sponsorship and spectator interest. In an effort to improve the viability of this league Cricket Australia is investigating increased promotional activity; new game formats; increasing media exposure; and increasing sponsorship.⁵¹

4.63 The FFA noted the considerable difficulties it faces in establishing a national league. The requisite investment costs are too high in relation to the revenue generation opportunities available. The geographical size of the country means home and away competitions are very expensive to stage. Airfares are the largest expense item. For example, in the men's national league when Perth Glory travels to Auckland to play the NZ Knights it is currently the world's longest road trip in a domestic football competition: 'almost 5400 kilometres separates Perth from Auckland meaning a flight of over 8 hours and a time difference of 4 hours for the travelling team'.⁵² On the revenue generation side, the commercial opportunities for female sport are more

48 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 15.

49 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 15.

50 ANPA/AWU, *Submission 62*, pp 10–12.

51 Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

52 FFA, *Submission 47*, p. ii.

limited. Limited media coverage makes it more difficult to attract sponsors, which means limited revenue with which to conduct a viable national league.⁵³

4.64 Despite questions over viability, evidence indicated the importance of national league competition to elite sport. The FFA, in particular, noted that the formation of a domestic national league is important for the Federation because it forms part of the national team selection process; provides regular, high level competition for elite players; enables players to test themselves against the best players; and assists develop women's football generally by showcasing the best players.⁵⁴ These considerations undoubtedly apply to other sports as well.

4.65 Various strategies were suggested to improve the viability of national league competitions. Netball Victoria argued that government should play a role in providing strategic advice and support to assist sporting organisations to become more commercially oriented businesses.⁵⁵ As noted above, Cricket Australia is investigating several strategies including increased promotional activity and sponsorship; and increasing media exposure.⁵⁶ These sports generally lack the funding to support advertising to any substantial extent, therefore public awareness suffers as a result, and little interest can be generated within the various television networks to televise these sports.

4.66 The committee believes that, given the importance of national league competition to elite sport, that the leading women's sports of netball, basketball, hockey and football in particular should be professional in the national league competitions.

International competition

4.67 Submissions noted that there are significant barriers for national team members and competitors in international competition. The most significant barrier was identified as the difficult balance athletes must maintain between their commitment to their sport and work commitments.⁵⁷ Obtaining sponsorship is also a major issue for women competing at international competitions. This is linked to the profile of women's sport, which in turn is linked to media coverage.⁵⁸

4.68 The ANPA/AWU stated that women face significant challenges in the bid to compete in open international netball competition. ANPA members indicated that the

53 FFA, *Submission 47*, p. ii.

54 FFA *Submission 47*, p. ii. See also Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 13.

55 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 15.

56 Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

57 Netball Victoria, *Submission 21*, p. 14; Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 3.

58 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 16.

major barriers to international competition are the high performance training requirements placed on them as national squad members and inadequate remuneration arrangements.⁵⁹

4.69 Some sporting organisations provide financial assistance to athletes to compete in international events. The AOC Funding Program provides National Federations with funding to contribute to the cost of competitors in international competition in each of the four years in preparation for an Olympic Games. In addition, athletes and coaches who won medals at the 2004 Olympic Games or who win medals at World Championship events are considered for AOC direct funding to help achieve selection at the 2008 Olympic Games. Neither funding program differentiates between male and female athletes.⁶⁰

4.70 Another issue raised in evidence was the importance of reasonable coordination between national league competition programs and international representative commitments of athletes. The FFA referred to the Women's Football Review Final Report:

The review committee recommends that the timing of the league season be determined in the best interests of the development of Women's Football. It should not be determined by national commitments but determined in cooperation and consultation with the national team. As with the A league, known dates of national team activity may be avoided where possible, such as Asian Championships.⁶¹

4.71 Another perspective was offered by a netball player:

The commitments are increasing all the time to get gold medals or reach the world championships. I was in the Aussie squad a couple of years ago. The commitment was quite extensive at that time. We have a couple of Aussie girls in our team. They spend a week off work every sort of second week leading up to the Commonwealth Games. That is going to increase. We have the world championships next year. The commitment is amazing. They have to juggle their full time work or university. They have to have very understanding employers.⁶²

4.72 Evidence suggests there may also be opportunities for some sports where the men's teams have a much higher profile, to schedule women's international matches with the men's international matches. The FFA, in their Women's Football Review Final Report states a one of their key recommendations:

59 ANPA/AWU, *Submission 62*, p. 9.

60 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 2.

61 FFA, *Submission 47*, attachment 1, p. 16.

62 Ms Dick, ANPA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 59.

The season would be played over summer with the finals series to coincide with the men's A league to enable cross promotional opportunities.⁶³

4.73 In some cases, particularly in sports where the men's competition is dominant, evidence suggests that women's teams would benefit from greater opportunities to compete at an international level because the resources are not currently allocated to them:

International fixtures and playing opportunities are governed by Cricket Australia and states would be fully supportive of moves to increase playing opportunities for not only the senior, squad, but the Youth Development Squad (U23) who have been under-serviced and under-exposed to international opportunities.⁶⁴

Concluding remarks

4.74 The committee found that:

- There are significant problems in the recruitment and retention of elite sportswomen in Australia.
- There is significant inequity between elite men's and women's capacity to earn a living from their sport. The remuneration available to elite sportswomen is insufficient in the vast majority of cases to enable them to play their sport on a full-time basis.
- The inability to earn a living from one's sport creates significant problems for many sportspeople, particularly sportswomen, in managing the competing work-life demands of sport, family and work/study commitments.
- Earning a living from one's sport can have significant flow-on benefits for participants and sports organisations alike, such as keeping role models involved in various ways with their sport for life.
- There is a distinct lack of professional career pathways for sportswomen and this impacts on their ability to commit to a full-time sports career.
- There is a need by governments, sporting organisations and the media to promote elite sportswomen as role models to motivate girls and young women to pursue sporting careers. It is important that we as a nation celebrate and value the contribution of sportswomen just as sportsmen are promoted and valued as role models.
- Given the importance of national league competition to elite sport, leading women's sports should aim to be professional in the national league competitions.

63 FFA, *Submission 47*, attachment 1, p. 4.

64 Cricket NSW, *Submission 40*.

- There are significant barriers to the participation of elite sportswomen in international competition and financial assistance may be needed to provide on-going opportunities for this standard of competition.

4.75 The committee commends the AOC for its ASPIRE initiative, as well as the ASC for its ACE program, both of which provide valuable assistance to athletes in developing and maintaining career paths.

Recommendation 9

4.76 The committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission further develop and expand the AIS ACE career assistance program to enable a greater number of athletes to compete in elite sports. The committee recommends the AOC expand its ASPIRE Career Assistance Program.

Recommendation 10

4.77 The committee recommends that a concerted effort be made by governments, sporting organisations and the media to promote sportswomen as role models to girls and women and to the wider community. This recommendation aims to motivate girls and women to pursue a career in sport and to motivate them to commence or continue participation in sport and recreation.

Recommendation 11

4.78 The committee recommends that NSOs review, and modify if required, the timing of national league competitions to facilitate participation by elite sportswomen in Australia's national representative teams.

Chapter 5

Leadership and Governance

5.1 This chapter reviews leadership and governance issues as they relate to sports organisations. The quality of governance of sports and recreation organisations determines their success in meeting their goals in advancing both grass-roots participation and elite performance.

5.2 Governments have an interest in advancing these outcomes because increased participation in sport and recreation activities plays a role in promoting public health and social cohesion within the community, and is central to creating role models and inspiring greater participation and national pride.

Boards and leadership roles

Numbers on boards

5.3 Women continue to be under-represented in the decision-making structures of sports organisations. Statistics indicate that the number of women on National Sporting Organisations (NSO) boards is at a low level, with a national average of one woman to seven men on boards in 2005. Consistent with this is the low number of women in executive positions, where women hold only 13 per cent of executive officer positions in the top 40 funded NSOs.

5.4 There is no comparative benchmarking data available for the not-for-profit sector; however the NSO position is similar to that of corporate Australia. In the ASX200 companies, women hold only 8.6 per cent of board positions and 10.2 per cent of executive management positions.¹

5.5 Some NSOs, particularly those with greater female participation levels have achieved greater gender-equity in relation to board and associated representation. Hockey Australia stated that its constitution provides that no one gender shall constitute less than 35 per cent of the Board's elected membership. Currently four of the state presidents are female in addition to the national president. However Hockey Australia stated that, whilst states aim to be gender-inclusive, there is one state board that has no female board member. In addition to the formal constitutional requirements, Hockey Australia has taken these principles of gender equality into its policies and practices. All operating committees or commissions of Hockey Australia must have a gender balance.² Hockey Australia noted that 'we are probably one of the more advanced gender-equal organisations in the country'.³

1 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 21.

2 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, pp 2–3.

3 Mr Adamson, Hockey Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 82.

5.6 The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) is also advancing female representation at board level. The IOC set targets to achieve 20 percent gender representation by 2006 in all National Olympic Committees, International Federations, the National Federations and all sports organisations belonging to the Olympic Movement.⁴

5.7 The AOC technically complies with this target, with their executive board includes three women making up 21 per cent of the total membership. Women make up 25 per cent of National Federation representation to their respective International Federations. All State Olympic Council executive boards have at least one women member out of a possible four to five members in addition to one president, one vice-president and four executive directors.⁵

5.8 However in response to a question about the IOC to showing leadership by encouraging women, the AOC stated:

They are, they (IOC) just have not lived it out in practice terribly well, if I might say so, when you look at the number of women who are IOC members as compared to the number of men. They had a bit of a rush to get a few more, but they have not really increased their numbers (of women) in the last few years. So they still have some work to do and they would admit that.⁶

5.9 Bowls Australia stated that governance at the national and state levels of the sport aims at gender equal representation on the board and council. The organisation stated that this is not the case at the club level and the lack of female representation at this level 'is of great concern to the sport'.⁷

5.10 Some NSOs are performing less well. The Professional Golfers Association (PGA) noted that the numbers of women in leadership roles in its organisation are 'relatively small' and acknowledged that 'significant work' is required to address this issue.⁸ Basketball Australia has three females on the board.⁹ The Australian Football League (AFL) has one woman on its board and there are women directors in some states – 'it is stating to flow through the system gradually'.¹⁰ Only one member of the Paralympic Committee board is a woman.¹¹ Cricket Australia has no female

4 AOC, *Submission 27*, Attachment 3, p. 18.

5 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 3.

6 Ms Brownlee, AOC, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 6.

7 Bowls Australia, *Submission 70*, p. 3.

8 PGA, *Submission 52*, p. 4.

9 Mr Bird, Big V Basketball, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 45.

10 Mr Woodman, AFL, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 91.

11 http://www.paralympic.org.au/apc_sub.asp?id=292, accessed August 2006.

representation on its board but increased female representation is an 'active goal' of the organisation.¹²

5.11 ACTSport stated that of 49 state sporting organisations in the ACT only 20 per cent held the office of president and 40 per cent held the office of executive director. Many of the executive officer positions were however largely administrative roles – not actual decision-making roles.¹³

5.12 The proportion of women on the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) board was 30 per cent in 2006-07 – an increase from 24 per cent in 1984-85. At the senior management level, 20 per cent of executive positions are held by women and 37.5 per cent of general manager positions.¹⁴

Barriers to advancement

5.13 A number of barriers hindering the advancement of women to leadership roles were identified during the inquiry. These included the attitudes and perceptions of the 'male-dominated' sports culture, perceptions and expectations of women, and work-life issues.

5.14 In relation to tertiary education institutions, evidence presented by VicSport, referring to information from Deakin University suggests that, while there was gender balance of students graduating from undergraduate courses, there were quite stark differences in gender representation at the postgraduate level. As enrolments increased in Deakin's Sport Management programs since 1998, the proportion of female enrolment has decreased to 28.1 per cent in 2006. The evaluation also showed that the male students are already established in their career within the sport industry, and are returning to gain new skills for their career development. In comparison, female students are generally young women who are either seeking employment, or early in their career who feel that they need further education to gain entry into the sport industry.¹⁵

5.15 Negative perceptions and unreasonably expectations impact on the acceptance of women in leadership roles at all levels. The AOC noted that women leaders are often described as 'lightweight' and seen in a less favourable light, with an expectation to meet higher standards of performance than their male counterparts.¹⁶

5.16 Ms Reid also commented on the male-dominated sports culture:

12 Mr Brown, Cricket Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 90.

13 ACTSport, *Submission 36*, pp 7–8.

14 ASC, *Submission 30A*, pp 2, 4.

15 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 10.

16 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 3.

Sport is also a reflection of society. In many respects we live in male-dominated society where women's participation...is still seen as symbolic of their stereotyped relationships with men in everyday life. As such, women have to challenge prevailing attitudes that encompass their participation in some sports...and in leadership roles within organisations.¹⁷

5.17 Evidence pointed to the need to change this culture. Ms Reid stated that:

The ability to effect change should not rest with just a few women's sport agencies or individual activists. The authority to increase women's participation and status in sport rests largely with the people who control the national and state organisations as well as the clubs. As previously stated, men dominate management and executive positions and the traditional constraints that cause women and other minority groups to be marginalised in sport are part and parcel of the historical development of sporting culture. These 'leaders' determine the agenda, the budget, allocation of resources and the prioritising of program initiatives. Different attitudes to gender relations must be developed in order to challenge and shift the traditional views that have caused discrimination against women in sport.¹⁸

5.18 Similarly, the AOC pointed to the need to change the structures of sport organisations to advance women:

In many cases it is the system and the way our sport is structured at the lower levels in that we come through a state system. The state nominates people to the national body. To go back to the state level, they are nominated from their clubs. If you look at who runs most sporting clubs, at a local level it is probably predominantly men. They are not going to nominate a woman if they are in the top position. It is sometimes the structure which limits the opportunities for women to take up positions, so you have to start people thinking that they may need to change the structure lower down to give more opportunities to women to come through and sit on boards at club level, state level and then up to national level. It takes time to change those things. I do not see a huge resistance amongst the people who are implementing the structures or the policies as such. I think it is more the structure that would have to change.¹⁹

5.19 Womensport and Recreation NSW commented on resistance to change from some boards and some board members:

...the generic term 'the boys club' can have a lot to do with the influence on policies that filters down to the strategic plan and the operational issues of an NSO. If the board does not see it as a priority, it is very difficult for

17 Ms Reid, *Submission 26*, p. 1.

18 Ms Reid, *Submission 26*, p. 3.

19 Ms Brownlee, AOC, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 7–8.

the management of an NSO to try to make it a priority, because you will get a lot of board resistance.²⁰

5.20 The AOC emphasised the importance of cooperative partnerships between men and women to effect change:

It has been important to acknowledge the support of men in providing opportunities, opening doors, so to speak, and standing beside women as they work towards leadership positions. The most successful outcomes are the result of cooperative partnerships, men and women working together as equals, providing diversity of skill sets and effectiveness of organisational leadership.²¹

5.21 A common reason often cited for not appointing women to leadership positions is that women with these skills are not available. The SA Premier's Council for Women considered that this argument is not based on evidence, since women have these skills and experience, but not necessarily the recognition or the networks to achieve appointments.²² The Australian Womensport and Recreation Association (AWRA) noted that this argument places the responsibility back on women rather than the system and can often generate another batch of 'leadership programs for women' thus starting a vicious 'victim' cycle again.²³

5.22 Work-life issues, including work and family responsibilities, also limit the time many women have available for leadership positions.²⁴ Softball Australia argued that the demands of family life were a key factor explaining why women do not aspire to leadership roles in that organisation.²⁵ The SA Premier's Council for Women suggested that women can be encouraged to take up these positions through reimbursement of child care and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in board work. Mentoring programs can also assist women to develop networks in senior roles.²⁶

5.23 The case for more equal participation of women in leadership positions is strengthened by the fact that women add value to such positions. Research has shown that mixed gender boards achieve high standards of governance and are as profitable

20 Ms Boon, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 26–27.

21 Ms Brownlee, AOC, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 2.

22 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

23 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 7. See also Mrs Crosswhite, AWRA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 76.

24 Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, p. 17; Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 9.

25 Softball Australia, *Submission 24*, p. 5. See also Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 5.

26 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

(and in some cases more so) as single gender male boards.²⁷ A study of women in IOC governance found that:

[in the] profiles of the women who have since come into the Olympic family, and it is very clear that the women who have come into it are highly educated—more highly educated than the men generally—and they are very committed, very hardworking and make very positive contributions. So that idea of more females in governance would seem to have a very positive effect.²⁸

5.24 Other barriers to advancement include:

- Women may lack the confidence to stand for election, and may have no 'insider' support.
- Women may lack experience of work in key national organisations or international settings – thus the vicious cycle of 'no experience, no opportunity' comes into play.
- Women's networks are often personal relationships; they often lack political and business contacts and the benefits that can flow from these contacts.
- Women lack appropriate role models.²⁹

Advancing women into leadership roles

5.25 A number of strategies have been proposed to improve the numbers of women in leadership roles. These include:

- Rewarding sporting organisations that meet a self-imposed system of increasing the representation of women on boards. Such organisations could receive incentive or bonus funding from government departments.
- The imposition of quotas or targets in relation to the proportion of women on boards. Specific quotas could be imposed as a condition of government funding for sports organisations.
- Amending the constitutions of sporting organisations to enshrine the rights and representations of their members, male and female. This could act as an ongoing catalyst for systemic change within organisations.
- Implementing succession training for potential or new board members on the provision that organisations must nominate both men and women in order to participate.

27 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, pp 20–21.

28 Ms Vescio, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 55.

29 Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, p. 17; Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, pp 9–10.

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- Implementing organisational change within organisations so that they structure and conduct meetings in a more 'women friendly' way in terms of when they are held and how long they run.
 - Encouragement of national sport organisations to support women as leaders through the use of leadership training, and conference participation.
 - Providing networking opportunities for women working in the sport and recreation industry;
 - Providing practical professional development opportunities which better equip women to discharge their duties.
 - Providing mentoring and/or apprenticeship programs for women administrators and board members;
 - Providing role models for women aspiring to work in the industry.
 - Encouraging organisations to actively target women to take on leadership roles.
 - Addressing work-life issues, including work and family responsibilities. Women could be encouraged to take up these positions through reimbursement of child care and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in board work.³⁰

5.26 In relation to the imposition of quotas, the AWRA argued that sporting organisations that receive government funding should provide female board representation of 10 or 20 per cent by 2007 and that this proportion should gradually increase over the next 10 years.³¹ Womensport and Recreation Victoria argued that sports with less than 10 per cent female board membership should be identified and mechanisms put in place to match these organisations with skilled women on board positions.³²

5.27 The SA Premier's Council for Women stated that equity on boards is achievable when 50 per cent targets are set to be achieved within specified timelines. South Australia's Strategic Plan has set targets to appoint 50 per cent women as chairs on State Government boards and committees by 2006 and of chairs by 2008. When the plan was launched in 2004, there were 32 per cent of women on boards. The target helped achieve 40 per cent representation of women on boards as at June 2006. Legislation in South Australia also requires private organisations to consider gender balance in their board appointments.³³

30 AWRA, *Submission 71*, pp 7–8; Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, pp 17–18; SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

31 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 7.

32 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 10.

33 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

5.28 Some evidence to the inquiry, however, opposed the imposition of quotas, arguing that the best person selected for the job – whether male or female – should be appointed.

...I would never like to think that I had been given a role or a job because I was a female. I would want to be given a job because I personally felt I was the best person for the job...That does not necessarily sit for every female out there who feels confident. It depends on the situation. It depends on the broader context that you are talking about, and I think it has to be very well managed if you are going to do it, so that we do not end up in a situation where we have the naysayers saying, 'She was only ever given a job because she is female.'³⁴

5.29 Another perspective was offered by Ms Brownlee:

Affirmative action, to my understanding, is putting in place regulations, bylaws or a commitment to making sure that men and women are provided equal opportunities to take up positions and equal support, whether that is financial or in resources or additional personnel. I certainly do not believe in quotas. I think that sometimes gives the wrong message and that people are put into positions where they should not be. I definitely believe you should have the best person for the job, whether they are male or female; but affirmative action sometimes is necessary to get people thinking that we do not need a committee of all men or all women. We need the balance.³⁵

5.30 Submissions argued that there needs to be culture change within sports organisations to advance women in leadership roles. The AWRA noted that :

The crux of the issue for women's representation is that the sport system itself needs to be influenced to increase the participation of women. To do this, the traditional male structures of sport need to be the focus of change for women. A new paradigm of attacking the issues facing women is required.³⁶

5.31 Witnesses noted the often daunting experience of sitting on male-dominated boards. Ms Roffey stated that:

Every day I go to meetings where I am the only female—for example, sitting in the AFL boardroom. It is quite an austere setting to be sitting in. You really have to hold your own in there. Every time you say something it has to be sensible and relevant, sometimes to a much greater degree than what some of my male colleagues around the table might say.

I was speaking to one of the women involved with the AFL commission. On her first day, she said, she turned up and there were two men's name tags to either side of hers. The men picked up their name tags and put them

34 Ms Roffey, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 13.

35 Ms Brownlee, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 5–6.

36 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 6.

on the other side of the table, to make the point that they really did not want her there.³⁷

5.32 The Confederation of Australian Sport argued that sports organisations need to be adequately resourced to effect change:

Compared to the corporate sector, most sporting organisations are comparatively poorly resourced and as such cultural change will inevitably lag behind what is occurring in the corporate sector.

...in appointing successful and talented women to leadership roles, the government, the ASC and sporting agencies themselves must provide the facilities that support those women in their job....sporting organisations [need to be] assisted with the resources available to them to support women in leadership roles, and concomitantly encouraged to create flexible workplaces.³⁸

5.33 Evidence indicated that there were benefits in investing in skills development for women sport administrators to encourage them to take on more senior roles in organisations.³⁹ The AOC has conducted workshops on leadership issues, which provided the opportunity for women sport leaders to increase their knowledge and skills specifically in the areas of leadership, interpersonal skills, communication skills and successful team building. The target groups were identified by their sports as demonstrating the ability to be a potential leader, and one nomination was accepted from each organisation. In addition, each sport made a commitment to support their nominated woman in the pursuit of leadership opportunities.⁴⁰

5.34 Opportunities for effective networking were also identified as important. The AOC has conducted workshops covering the areas of negotiation skills, time management, planning/meeting skills and techniques for successful networking. From these workshops a selection of those women considered to demonstrate a high level of leadership potential were invited to a working lunch. This provided the opportunity for a presentation by a leading businesswoman, further networking and positive, supportive interaction.⁴¹

5.35 Submissions also pointed to the importance of using athletes, especially at the sub-elite level as potential leaders. VicSport noted that:

The sub-elite sporting level offers a potential pool of female leaders as yet untapped. At the sub-elite level sit a vast number of athletes who have the

37 Ms Roffey, VicSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, pp 12–13.

38 CAS, *Submission 60*, p. 8.

39 Mrs Crosswhite, AWRA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 75.

40 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 4.

41 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 4.

inherent qualities – focus, dedication and internal drive – which lend themselves easily to leaderships.⁴²

5.36 VicSport noted that an important aspect of developing confidence in leadership is providing these women with skills and knowledge in areas such as public speaking, personal interaction and personal growth and development to help build the confidence required to give back in a leadership capacity. VicSport noted that with an injection of funding, programs such as the Women in Sport Leadership program could be extended to help better prepare elite female athletes to become leaders, and specifically to capture the highly viable sub-elite athlete level as role models.⁴³

5.37 A number of sports and recreation organisations and state governments have implemented strategies to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles. The AOC, as noted above, provides a number of workshops and other initiatives to address leadership issues. In 2005, the AOC conducted a seminar 'Leadership Dynamics' with a strong, yet different, emphasis on increasing the representation of women on boards of our member sports. Given the knowledge that in the world of sport men are required to 'champion' change initiatives along with the women, the AOC looked closely at the board membership of its National Federations and invited those men and women who could effect change within their organisations or be potential board members. Also invited were several sports who had demonstrated excellent management/governance principles and these people were used as leaders for the group workshop sessions. The program presented current best practice in business with particular reference to governance, board diversity and cultural change. The AOC commented that:

Participants appreciated the opportunity to network and share ideas. They viewed the seminar as a positive indication of the AOC working more closely together with the sports and empowering them to make changes at all levels, particularly with respect to increasing the number of women on Board positions. Recent anecdotal comments would indicate that the effect of this seminar continues to influence in a positive manner, the composition of Board members in our Olympic sports.⁴⁴

5.38 Other AOC initiatives included:

- World Leadership Forums – the AOC continues to select women in leadership positions and/or women athletes to attend various national, regional and international conferences.
- Role models – the AOC both centrally, and through the State Olympic Councils encourages athletes to be role models for young people through their involvement in Olympic Academics, AOC Awards and presentations at school assemblies. The impact of athletes sharing their experiences with

42 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 11. See also Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 6.

43 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 11.

44 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 5.

youth is inspirational and has often resulted in young people changing 'direction' and striving to achieve their personal best.

- Recognition – the AOC submits a nomination each year for the 'IOC Women in Sport Trophy' to promote the advancement of women in sport. The award recognises outstanding achievement and landmarks made to encourage the participation of women and girls at all levels in the sporting world by individuals or an organisation.
- Affirmative action – where appropriate, affirmative action has been taken to increase the number of women and achieve an equitable balance of gender. For example, on the AOC Athletes' Commission the Constitution states that of the 8 members elected at each Olympic Games by the athletes, no less than three males and no less than three females shall be elected.⁴⁵

5.39 A number of women's sports organisations and other organisations have developed leadership and mentoring programs to increase the leadership skills of women.⁴⁶ VicSport operates a number of programs including the Women in Sport Community Leadership Program which targets women who have been identified by members of the industry as potential future leaders. In addition to the skill development aspects of the program women are also matched with a suitable mentor to help them achieve in areas they wish to develop.⁴⁷

5.40 State governments also have put in place a number of strategies to address issues of leadership for women in sport. Strategies initiated by NSW Sport and Recreation include:

- Continue and expand the successful Women's Sport Leaders Scholarship Program;
- Develop and conduct sports management workshops for women;
- Establish a network of profiled women to advocate for women and girls in sport;
- Facilitate the development of pathways for women sport leaders through networking and mentoring programs; and
- Work with targeted State sporting organisations to establish targets in their constitutions and strategic and operational plans that encourage greater participation of women in key decision making roles.⁴⁸

45 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 5.

46 Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, p. 16.

47 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 8.

48 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, pp 9–10; Ms Jenkins, NSW Sport and Recreation, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 92–93.

5.41 The Queensland Government provides Women in Sport Professional Development and Networking Forums by professional sportswomen to increase women's professional awareness of effective ways to target their advancement in sports organisations.⁴⁹ The WA Department of Sport and Recreation is currently developing a leadership program as part of its overall industry training and development program.⁵⁰

The Sport Leadership Grants for Women

5.42 The Sport Leadership Grants for Women provides another avenue for providing leadership skills for women in sport.

5.43 The scheme is a current partnership project between the Australian Government Office for Women and the Australian Sports Commission. The program has been in place since November 2002 and has to date distributed \$1 203 000 to 469 projects. The key objectives of the grants scheme are to create opportunities for women in sport for the development of sport-specific leadership skills and knowledge acquisition; and create opportunities for women to undertake accredited sport leadership training in coaching, officiating, sport administration, sport governance and management.

5.44 The program provides successful applicants with a one-off grant of up to \$5000 for individuals (applications must be endorsed by an incorporated organisation) and up to \$10 000 for incorporated organisations. In 2005/06 \$400 000 was allocated under the program.⁵¹

5.45 Submissions argued that this program is effective, with some organisations arguing that increased funding needed to be provided.⁵² Womensport and Recreation NSW commented that the program is excellent but an increase in funding would allow more participants to benefit and so enhance their leadership skills.⁵³ The AWRA argued that funding under the program should be increased to \$1 million, arguing that the current level of funding is 'too low for real outcomes at the organisational level'.⁵⁴

Role of education

5.46 Submissions noted that another component to preparing women for leadership roles in sport is through the education system including TAFE or universities.

49 Queensland Government, *Submission 49*, pp 2–3.

50 WA Department of Sport and Recreation, *Submission 48*, p. 6.

51 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 13.

52 ACHPER, *Submission 17*, p. 7.

53 Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, p. 5.

54 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 8.

Submissions noted that courses are now available in coaching, sport management and sport sciences, and that women should be encouraged to pursue these opportunities.⁵⁵

5.47 VicSport noted that:

The issue of tertiary education is an area of specific interest and relevance to the debate around women in leadership roles. As sport in Australia continues on its path of increased professionalism and bureaucratisation there is a greater need for tertiary educated sport managers and sport administrators.⁵⁶

Findings

5.48 The committee found that:

- It is in the interests of the good governance of sport that the full range of skills and experience is able to be drawn from the community. These skills, and availability for leadership, lie with both women and men.
- Women continue to be under-represented in the decision-making structures of most sports organisations.
- A number of barriers hindering the advancement of women to leadership roles were identified including the attitudes and perceptions of the 'male-dominated' sports culture, perceptions and expectations of women and work-life issues.
- It is in the interests of boards to set targets for greater gender equality as this will increase the pool of talented personnel available.
- Strategies need to be developed by governments and sporting and recreation providers to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles. These strategies could include:
 - The imposition of quotas or targets in relation to the proportion of women on boards.
 - Rewarding sporting organisations that meet a self-imposed system of increasing the representation of women on boards.
 - Amending the constitutions of sporting organisations to enshrine the rights and representations of their members, male and female.
 - Encouragement of national sport organisations to support women as leaders through the use of leadership training, and conference participation.
 - Providing networking opportunities for women working in the sport and recreation industry.

55 ACHPER, *Submission 17*, pp 7–8.

56 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 9.

- Providing practical professional development opportunities which better equip women to discharge their duties.
- Providing mentoring and/or apprenticeship programs for women administrators and board members.
- Providing role models for women aspiring to work in the industry.
- Addressing work-life issues, including work and family responsibilities.
- Labor Senators have the view that the Australian Sports Commission and NSOs should adopt the provision in Hockey Australia's constitution that provides that no one gender shall constitute less than 35 per cent of a board's elected membership by January 2008.

Recommendation 12

5.49 The committee recommends that appropriate organisations with an interest in women in sport and recreation be funded by the Australian Sports Commission to provide skills training in the areas of leadership, communication skills and successful team building; and that the Commonwealth fund the Commission to implement this.

Recommendation 13

5.50 The committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission continue to provide opportunities for women sport leaders to attend workshops and forums to develop techniques for successful networking.

Recommendation 14

5.51 The committee recommends that the Sport Leadership Grants for Women be continued and that the Commonwealth increase funding for this scheme.

Coaching, officiating and administrative roles

Numbers

Coaching

5.52 Women continue to be under-represented in coaching, officiating and administrative roles. ASC statistics of coaching accreditation levels shows a consistent drop by both men and women as high levels of accreditation are attained (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Accredited coaches by gender and level at 1 January 1992 and as at 19 May 2006

	2001			2006		
	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %
Level 1	59 211	25 978	30	41 557	23 302	36
Level 2	8242	1792	18	4187	1630	28
Level 3	1167	149	11	999	170	15
Total	68 620	27 919	29	46 743	25 102	35

Source: ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 15. The 2006 figures exclude Netball, Rugby League and Union, AFL, Cricket and Football.

5.53 These figures indicate that a slight improvement in the discrepancy between male and female coaches is apparent over time, however the imbalance at the level 3 accreditation level is significant. Further, the figures show a significant difference between numbers of male and female coaches, which becomes more pronounced as the level of accreditation increases.

Officiating

5.54 The current situation in Australia with respect to gender imbalance within registered officials is slightly more encouraging than the coaching area, particularly at level 3. However, there is still an imbalance between male and female accredited officials (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Accredited officials by gender and level as at 19 May 2006

	Male	Female	Female%	total
Level 1	1864	1440	44	3304
level 2	834	335	29	1169
level 3	264	166	39	430
High Performance	63	9	13	72

Source: ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 15.

5.55 Some NSOs have achieved greater gender equity in representation of women in coaching and officiating. Softball Australia stated that currently the representation of women in coaching, administrative and officiating roles is 59.2 per cent in that organisation.⁵⁷

5.56 Hockey Australia reported that in 2005, 45 per cent (3100) of accredited coaches were female and 48 per cent (2024) of accredited officials. Hockey Australia noted however that high performance coaching is one area where it has struggled to achieve gender equity. The five full-time national team coaches are male. Of the state based National Training Centre coaches employed full-time by state institutes and

57 Softball Australia, *Submission 24*, p. 5.

Hockey Australia, only two of the 13 coaches are women. Currently at the international level the top ten ranked women's teams are all coached by males.⁵⁸

5.57 Some NSOs are performing less well. Bowls Australia stated that administrators, umpires, coaches and leaders in general are dominated by males at the club level – this was attributed to the low female membership base.⁵⁹ Cricket Australia noted that approximately five per cent of accredited coaches are female. Females in administrative and officiating roles are generally 'very low'. Cricket Australia noted that this as an important area to investigate and improve in the future.⁶⁰

Barriers to advancement

5.58 A number of specific barriers women face in advancing in coaching, officiating and administrative roles were raised in evidence. Many of the barriers were similar to those identified earlier in the chapter relating to barriers limiting the advancement of women to leadership roles.

5.59 Some of the barriers included the 'male-dominated' sports culture; perceptions and expectations of women; lack of career opportunities; lack of role models; issues of work-life balances; and limited training opportunities.⁶¹

5.60 A survey by Hockey Australia highlighted several of these concerns. The study surveyed former elite women players to examine the reasons for the lack of women coaches. The survey indicated that many of these potential coaches were pursuing career and family options and were reluctant to seek a coaching career.⁶² Hockey Australia elaborated on the findings of the survey:

They were obviously a very high-achieving group of people and so logic would suggest that they would be high achieving if they stayed in the sport in an administrative or particularly a coaching capacity. I said before that hockey players are not very well paid. There are two or three issues with those players, once they finish playing. Firstly, after training for all that time and committing themselves to competition for three months of the year, many of them were tired of the sport and wanted a break. Many of them wanted to start a family and many of them had not had the opportunity to start a career in a meaningful way and needed to establish themselves. The latter applies to men's hockey as well. In particular, there was the issue of starting a family; they retire from hockey at 30 or 33, and that became an issue for us. So there are those three things. We have been able to grab a number of them in certain positions. Our current scholarship coach is a

58 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, pp 5–6.

59 Bowls Australia, *Submission 70*, p. 3.

60 Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 5.

61 CAS, *Submission 60*, p. 7; Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, pp 4–5.

62 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, p. 6.

former Hockeyroo. We have two former Hockeyroos on our board. We have been able to get some, but not as many as we would like.⁶³

Advancing women into coaching, officiating and administrative roles

5.61 A number of strategies have been proposed to improve the numbers of women in coaching, officiating and administrative roles. These include:

- Examining recruitment procedures to ensure that they provide equal opportunities for women, are accessible and are non-discriminatory (wording advertisements to encourage women to apply, ensuring a gender balance on selection panels and ensuring gender-neutral questions);
- Promoting the structures, career pathways and opportunities available in administration, coaching and officiating for women and girls (from club level to international level);
- Acknowledging individual achievements and the contribution of women (for example, at meetings, with general feedback and certificates of recognition, by profile in newsletters, magazines and other organisation publications, in media releases or by having woman speak at seminars);
- Providing an inclusive, safe and flexible work environment (one that encourages and values individual contributions, is accepting of individual differences, provides good open communications, makes reasonable time demands and provides childcare);
- Providing a mentoring and/or apprenticeship program for women administrators, coaches and officials;
- Encouraging and actively targeting women to take on decision-making roles on administration, coaching or officiating committees;
- Providing assistant coaching positions to women for all the male institute/academy programs coached by men so that more women will become eligible for paid positions in the future.
- Undertaking a media campaign that aims to change the stereotype of women coaches as soft or more 'touchy feely', particularly aimed at athletes that still believe men coaches to be tougher, stronger and more results-orientated.
- Introducing a national female coaching scheme, similar to the Coaching Association of Canada, where a trial campaign in hockey, softball and soccer in eight communities across the country is recruiting, training and working to retain women coaches.
- Encouraging sporting organisations to target or talent ID potential women coaches/officials and negotiate a development program that is realistic and achievable.

63 Mr Adamson, Hockey Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 89.

- Ensuring that organisations strategically plan and provide financial and human resources to develop female coaches and officials;
- Exploring the potential of sub-elite athletes who do not make it to the top of their sport to pursue other avenues such as coaching or administration.
- Encouraging and supporting women wherever possible to apply for senior positions.⁶⁴

5.62 A number of sports and recreation organisations and state governments have implemented strategies to increase the numbers of women in coaching, officiating and administrative roles. In 2005 Hockey Australia introduced a women's coaching apprenticeship scheme aimed at developing elite women coaches. A small funding grant was secured from the ASC as well as financial support from Hockey Australia which has supported a number of women coaches. Two of the participants have subsequently coached at the top domestic competition and one has experienced coaching at the international level. For this program to continue, greater financial support is required over a longer period of time.⁶⁵

5.63 In 2005 the PGA in conjunction with Griffith University established the PGA International Golf Institute (PGA IGI) – a centre of excellence to develop career pathways and opportunities for students, elite athletes, coaches and administrators in the golf industry. The current IGI intake is approximately 10 per cent female, with the aim to increase this number over coming years.⁶⁶

5.64 VicSport operated a Women's Community Leadership program which focused on enhancing the administration, leadership and management skills of women sport administrators in regional Victoria. The aim of the program was to increase the confidence of these women in their ability to perform administrative roles in their respective clubs and in turn to increase the professionalism in the sport industry in Victoria in general by encouraging women to take on high level roles within their clubs and organisations. VicSport noted that the program was considered 'highly successful' but lacked on-going funding.⁶⁷

5.65 State governments have also introduced programs to support women in these roles. NSW Sport and Recreation conducts workshops for club administrators on ways to increase the involvement of women as coaches and officials.⁶⁸ The WA Department

64 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 8; CAS, *Submission 60*, p. 7; Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, pp 4–5; Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, pp 5–6; See also ASC, *How to Include Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity*, 1999, p. 8; Sport 2000 Taskforce, *Shaping Up: A Review of Commonwealth Involvement in Sport and Recreation in Australia, 1999*, pp 80–81.

65 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, p. 6.

66 PGA, *Submission 52*, p. 5.

67 VicSport, *Submission 31*, pp 8–9.

68 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 9.

of Sport and Recreation provides regional women's coaching workshops to provide professional development support to regional female coaches.⁶⁹

5.66 As noted above, the Commonwealth's Sport Leadership Grants for Women scheme provides another avenue for providing leadership skills for women in sport, in the areas of coaching, officiating, sport administration, sport governance and management.

Findings

5.67 The committee found that:

- Women continue to be under-represented in coaching, officiating and administrative roles in most sports organisations.
- A number of barriers hindering the advancement of women in these roles were identified including the attitudes and perceptions of the 'male-dominated' sports culture, perceptions and expectations of women and work-life issues.
- Strategies need to be developed by governments and sporting and recreation providers to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles. These strategies could include:
 - Examining recruitment procedures to ensure that they provide equal opportunities for women, are accessible and are non-discriminatory;
 - Promoting the structures, career pathways and opportunities available in administration, coaching and officiating for women;
 - Acknowledging individual achievements and the contribution of women;
 - Providing an inclusive, safe and flexible work environment;
 - Providing a mentoring and/or apprenticeship program for women administrators, coaches and officials;
 - Encouraging and actively targeting women to take on decision-making roles on administration, coaching or officiating committees;
 - Encouraging sporting organisations to target or talent ID potential women coaches/officials;
 - Ensuring that organisations strategically plan and provide financial and human resources to develop female coaches and officials;
 - Exploring the potential of sub-elite athletes who do not make it to the top of their sport to pursue other avenues such as coaching or administration.

69 WA Department of Sport and Recreation, *Submission 48*, p. 6.

Chapter 6

Women's Sport and the Media

Introduction

6.1 Writing in response to submissions to this committee inquiry, journalist Greg Baum remarked:

Women's soccer is a joke...Women's cricket is not much better. Netball is OK, sometimes, when there is nothing else on. But women's basketball is not...Women runners, jumpers, throwers, cyclists and swimmers do their best, but it is, by definition, second-best.¹

6.2 Meanwhile, on morning commercial television on the day of one of the committee's hearings, Mr John Mangos of Sky News said

There's no way to say this nicely without sounding sexist, but the fact of the matter is blokes hit the ball further, kick the ball harder, go in harder, it's better to watch, end of story.²

6.3 These remarks may have been meant in good humour, but indicate an entrenched sexism that underpins the lack of balance in coverage of sport. It is sexism not because there are no differences between men's and women's sports, but because those differences cannot explain the differences in media coverage. Commentators such as those quoted above appear to be looking for excuses for the prejudices of either themselves or of media outlets.

6.4 Australian women's sport includes high-achieving teams and magnificent individual efforts. Australian sportswomen at international meets have given brilliant performances, sometimes outshining the men, such as when the Australian women's swimming team at the 2004 Olympic Games secured more medals than their male counterparts.³ The women's hockey team, the Hockeyroos have frequently dominated international competition, winning Olympic gold and international championships on many occasions.⁴ The Australian women's netball team has won eight of the eleven world championships.

1 Greg Baum, 'Count me out: women must earn coverage', *The Age*, 5 August 2006, p. 6 (sport).

2 Channel 7, *Sunrise*, 3 August 2006.

3 4 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze to the men's 3 gold 2 silver and 1 bronze. See Australian Olympic Committee, Aquatics – swimming, <http://www.olympics.com.au/sports.cfm?SportID=1&DisciplineID=14>, accessed August 2006.

4 Hockey Australia, Hockeyroos Major Achievements, <http://www.hockey.org.au/natteams/hockeyroos.asp>, accessed September 2006.

6.5 Individual performances also abound. Golfer Carrie Webb has won more major championships than any other Australian golfer, male or female. Lauren Jackson is not just Australia's best female basketball player: she was a member of the US National Women's Basketball League's All-Decade team, as well as being the competition's youngest-ever player to reach 1000 points, and its 2003 Most Valuable Player.⁵ Zoe Goss was one of Australia's top women cricketers when in 1994 she famously dismissed Brian Lara in a charity match.⁶ Her compatriot Belinda Clark retired with nearly 4000 runs at an average better than that of Steve Waugh or Alan Border. Of Australia's many gifted swimmers, it is Susan O'Neill who has won the most national titles. In the final days of this inquiry, Australian swimmers Liesl Jones and Libby Lenton broke two swimming world records in the one night – and both of them have multiple world record times to their names.⁷ This was closely followed by the Sydney Swifts being only the second team in any Australian league of modern times to complete a season undefeated in any game – the first to do so were the St George rugby league team in 1959.⁸

Why does women's sport get so little attention?

6.6 Despite many great achievements, women's sport gets little media coverage. This has been analysed in a number of studies, particularly in *An Illusory Image*, published by the Australian Sports Commission in 1996. Studies of print media coverage of women's sport in 1980 concluded that two per cent of print sports coverage was about women's sport.⁹ Data gathered for *An Illusory Image* suggested newspaper coverage had increased to 10.7 per cent.¹⁰ When the South Australian Premier's Council for Women commissioned similar research in 2006, it found that coverage was just 4.1 per cent, and that was despite a number of high-profile women's sporting events occurring during the study period.¹¹ Even these poor figures may overstate the impact of women's sport. *An Illusory Image* showed that most newspaper

5 Women's National Basketball Association, <http://www.wnba.com>, accessed August 2006.

6 Nabila Ahmed, 'Goss still living with her instant of fame that has lasted a decade', *The Age*, 7 December 2003, <http://www.theage.com.au/articles/2003/12/06/1070625580792.html?from=storyrhs>, accessed August 2006.

7 Swimming Australia, 'World record bonanza to close short course champs', 28 August 2006, <http://www.swimming.org.au/News/Latest%20News.aspx?nwid=%7B6E4C15A3-2CB8-448C-AF97-1FFFD7957A29%7D>, accessed August 2006.

8 Amanda Lulham, 'Swifts target unbeaten season', *The Australian*, 31 August 2006.

9 See Helen Menzies, 'Women's sport: treatment by the media', in K Dwyer (ed.) *Sportswomen Towards 2000: A Celebration*, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1989, pp 220–31.

10 Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1996.

11 Ms Pat Mickan, SA Premier's Council for Women, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 50.

stories on women's sport were relatively poorly positioned in the paper, and mostly appeared when there was less men's sport – during the week.¹²

6.7 A 1992 report stated that in 1988 only 1.3 per cent of televised sport was women's sport.¹³ The picture painted of television sports coverage by *An Illusory Image* was scathing: only 2 per cent of coverage was for women's sport, and this was carried almost exclusively by non-commercial networks. There was however more coverage of mixed sport, particularly due to the Wimbledon Tennis Championships falling during the study period. The little coverage provided was certainly not a reflection of the limited time available:

One program detailed the minutiae of guinea pig racing for more than six minutes, whereas the only woman's story on the same show was given 15 seconds.¹⁴

6.8 None of the commercial free-to-air networks provided data on their sporting coverage to the committee. Approximately 10 per cent of sport broadcast on Fox Sports is women's sport.¹⁵ The balance is better on the ABC, with around one third of national televised sport being national women's competitions (Table 6.1).¹⁶

Table 6.1 ABC TV Broadcasts of women's national sporting competitions

Year	Women's Sport: National Competitions (hours)	% of National Sport***
2001-02	82	31
2002-03	80	38
2003-04	98	33
2004-05	107	38
2005-06*	131**	44

Source: ABC, *Submission 59*, p. 3.¹⁷

12 Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1996, p. 8.

13 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *Half Way to Equal*, April 1992, p. 118.

14 Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1996, p. 14.

15 Mr Malone, CEO, Premier Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 33.

16 Note this does not take account of regional sport telecasts, about which the committee did not receive data.

17 * projected figures to end Financial Year; ** includes 34 hours broadcast on ABC2; *** Women's sport as a percentage of total National sport broadcast.

6.9 The only information on radio coverage of sport came from *An Illusory Image*, and provided the most disturbing picture of all. The study of two radio stations, one commercial and one non-commercial, revealed almost no women's sport (1.4 per cent), little mixed sport (3.5 per cent) with over 95 per cent of coverage being men's sport.

6.10 Many submitters were of the view that coverage of women's sport was improving only slowly, and that something needs to be done about it.¹⁸ With so many successful female individuals, women's teams, and with such extensive participation by women at grassroots level, reasons have to be found as to why coverage of women's sport is deficient. Sports writer Patrick Smith observed that the reason that golfer Carrie Webb did not receive good coverage was 'not her swing but her sex'.¹⁹ Many however argue that there are other reasons that women's sport lack media coverage.

6.11 The major argument sometimes made is that women just are not as good at sports as men, and people want to watch and read about the best. Journalist Julie Tullberg told the committee that she thought fans tended to be attracted to male performances, although that also appeared to be a function of what sports had media coverage.²⁰

6.12 However, there is also evidence to suggest performance is not necessarily related to media coverage. There are some sports that only women play at the elite level, and others that only men play. Even in these cases, the sports dominated by men get far more media coverage. If the argument were valid, then those sports where only women play at the elite level and are therefore by definition 'the best' would get media attention. Yet in general they do not. Only women play elite netball in Australia, but the media coverage of that competition is dwarfed by the coverage of any of half a dozen male team sports. Also, the argument does not get applied in men's sport. As sociologist Lois Bryson pointed out during a parliamentary inquiry in 1991:

Geoff Fenech is not considered a kindergartener because he probably could not last a round with a mediocre heavy weight boxer. Yet this is the framework applied to women.²¹

6.13 There are also occasions when women's events get equal or greater media coverage when broadcasters perceive something worth covering, such as successful women competitors at Olympic events.²² In New Zealand the 1999 netball World

18 Ms Reid, ACTSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 10.

19 Patrick Smith, 'Webb greatest of all but unable to break through grass ceiling', *The Australian*, 2 August 2006, p. 19.

20 Mrs Tullberg, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 66.

21 Lois Bryson, *A Sociological Perspective on Women and Sport in Australia*, in *Equity for Women in Sport Seminar papers*, 28 February 1991.

22 Mr Lozan, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 27.

Championship final between Australia and New Zealand out-rated the Bledisloe Cup Rugby held a few months earlier (1 002 000 viewers, against 873 000).²³ In the US, the television audience for the men's tennis Grand Slam in the period 1997 to 2000 was less than that for the women's on eight out of 12 occasions.²⁴

6.14 Another complaint about women's sport is that it lacks depth of talent.²⁵ Yet, as Patrick Smith argued, there is great depth at the top of women's golf. The US Basketball leagues' Most Valuable Player Awards are equally likely to be won by different individuals, suggesting the women's and men's competitions have similar depth of talent.²⁶ Just as many different women have won major individual sporting events as have men (Table 6.2)

Table 6.2 Numbers of different individuals winning sporting competitions in the last ten events, by gender

Event	Number of male winners	Number of female winners
Australian Open, Tennis	7	6
French Open, Tennis	7	8
US Open, Tennis	7	7
Wimbledon, Tennis	4	7
World championships, 100 metres swimming freestyle	7	10
The Open (UK), Golf	8	7
The Open (USA), Golf	8	8

6.15 Do women watch other women play sport? The evidence suggests they do and, perhaps just as importantly, men watch women's sport as well. Premier Media

23 Margaret Henley, 'Going mainstream: women's televised sport through a case study of the 1999 Netball World Championships', in Roger Horrocks and Nick Perry (eds), *Television in New Zealand: Programming the Nation*, Oxford University Press, 2004, pp 167–183.

24 Alina Bernstein, 'Is it Time for a Victory Lap?: Changes in the Media Coverage of Sport', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 37, no. 3–4, 2002, p. 423.

25 Patrick Smith, 'Webb greatest of all but unable to break through grass ceiling', *The Australian*, 2 August 2006, p. 19.

26 National Basketball Association, http://www.nba.com/history/awards_mvp.html, accessed August 2006.

Group indicated that most of the audience for Fox Sports was male, but that this varied from event to event, with strong ratings for events with an even gender breakdown, such as major tennis competitions.²⁷ Womensport and Recreation NSW noted how the National Rugby League have recognised that half their audience are women, and see this as a positive.²⁸ Although 70 per cent of the audience at a USA Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) game may be female, the television audience is around 50-50 men and women.²⁹ The New Zealand television audience for the 1999 Netball World Championship was similarly evenly balanced. Margaret Henley's conclusion was that this confirmed 'the television scheduler's popular wisdom that men will watch any sport if it is quality sport, even if played by women'.³⁰

6.16 If women are just as ready to participate in and watch sport, and if women's sport is capable of being successfully reported, why is there so little coverage? There are several likely reasons.

6.17 First, men's sport has the advantage of incumbency. Men's sports have been reported for decades. They gain numerous advantages from this: familiarity to audiences; loyalties that have developed amongst viewers, including loyalties that are handed down within families; established business models and business experience, reducing the risks of failure; cash flows that allow them to continually advertise and promote their products, and so on. Chris Isidore, a commentator with CNNfn, in reviewing progress of the WNBA in US broadcasting, noted 'just how difficult it is to turn any new sports league into a money maker'.³¹

6.18 Second, the sporting marketplace is crowded, with four football codes being played and broadcast nationally, in addition to cricket, several other national sporting leagues, and widespread interest in other sports that might rate little attention in many other countries, such as swimming. There are also business linkages between some men's sports and broadcast media.³²

6.19 Third, the coverage of sport is to some affected by the attitude of the media and sports organisations.³³ Most reporting is by men, under male editors or program

27 Mr Marquard, Premier Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 42.

28 Ms Boon, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 27.

29 WNBA, History of the WNBA, http://www.wnba.com/about_us/historyof_wnba.html, accessed August 2006.

30 Margaret Henley, 'Going mainstream: women's televised sport through a case study of the 1999 Netball World Championships', in Roger Horrocks and Nick Perry (eds), *Television in New Zealand: Programming the Nation*, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 178.

31 Chris Isidore, 'WNBA: lovable money loser', 17 August 2001, CNNfn, http://money.cnn.com/2001/08/17/companies/column_sportsbiz/, accessed August 2006.

32 Ms Reid, ACTSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 12.

33 Mrs Tullberg, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 66.

managers. Several witnesses thought that women's involvement as journalists could result in good coverage of women's sport.³⁴ Liz Ellis remarked on how there was more coverage of women's sport in *The Australian* when its sports editor was a woman. She also argued that the journalists influenced the gender balance of content:

I think the last statement in particular—that people would not be interested in women's sport—is a bit of a furphy. I think it is more that the journalists want to write about football because that is what they know about.³⁵

6.20 She also made the point that the perceived minor status of women's sport also affects the way newspapers go about covering it. She spoke of how one paper would:

assign their junior reporters, their cadet reporters, to cover netball. So every year we get a new junior reporter who comes in and you have to explain the competition to them, the people they need to look out for and the history of what is happening.³⁶

The marginal interest shown by some individuals or businesses in media may also be reflected amongst some sporting organisations, one of which in its submission to this inquiry referred to women's sport, along with some men's sports, as 'minority sports'.³⁷

6.21 A fourth, and perhaps most important, reason for the neglect of women's sport is that it is trapped in cycles of neglect, poor funding, poor infrastructure and low levels of interest.

6.22 Football Federation Australia (FFA) pointed out that limited media exposure means limited commercial opportunities for sport. This severely curtails revenue-raising capacity, and limits interest from broadcasters. Lack of revenue prevents both expensive competitions (for example, flying teams interstate for national league games) and puts mainstream advertising (such as television spots) out of commercial reach. It also limits venue quality, and that can affect the willingness of fans to attend games. These factors all in turn reinforce a lack of media exposure, and thus a lack of media engagement.³⁸

6.23 This vicious circle, FFA suggested, could only be broken 'through government intervention, particularly in terms of a mandatory minimum coverage of women in sport or some kind of affirmative action'.³⁹

34 Ms Janice Crosswhite, *Submission 6*; Ms Mickan, SA Premier's Council for Women, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, pp 53–54.

35 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 59.

36 Ms Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 60.

37 VicSport - The Sports Federation of Victoria, *Submission 31*, p. 7.

38 Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 13.

39 Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 13.

Gendered coverage of women's sport

6.24 It is not only the quantity of coverage that is at issue. There are differences in the way the media portray women's and men's sport, mostly reinforcing gender stereotypes, or undermining women's achievements. As Ms Jackie Frank said in response to Mr Mangos's remarks on Channel Seven's *Sunrise* program, one of the issues with coverage is that 'The word is exposure. Women have to expose themselves to get a bit of airtime'.⁴⁰ This is a longstanding concern surrounding women's sport. Women's sport is more likely to be sexualised, and women are more likely to emphasise sexuality in fundraising for their sport.⁴¹ However, while this kind of portrayal is frequently used to secure media coverage, it can also create problems for the sport. One newspaper sports editor was reported in *An Illusory Image* as saying:

You would be surprised at the number of excellent action shots involving women sport-stars from tennis, netball and hockey, which get thrown in the bin simply as a result of their uniforms being short and their sports pants showing. It is not worth the grief we get from a very loud minority public to run these photos and that is a shame.⁴²

6.25 ACTSport raised the concern that stereotypes of what women play may create barriers to the media portrayal of sport:

I do not want to be disrespectful of netball, but it is an easy sport for the media to grab because it epitomises the ultimate in the feminine, non-threatening aspects of sport. It is 95 per cent played by women, for women. They wear skirts. There is a very feminine kind of presentation in the whole sport of netball.⁴³

6.26 The analysis presented in *An Illusory Image* highlighted how dominant were various stereotypes of women in media coverage. They were often referred to as girls; were more likely to be shown in passive poses; far more likely to be shown in posed, and sometimes sexualised, images; and subjected to stereotyped descriptions (as, too, were men).⁴⁴ One submission forwarded an example to the committee of coverage on one page of a newspaper, which printed a story about female competitors in terms of their appearance and emotions while in the other story, on the same page and covering the same sport, reported news on their male counterparts without any such language.⁴⁵

40 Channel 7, *Sunrise*, 3 August 2006.

41 Mark O'Keefe, 'Sexploitation or pride? Female Olympians' revealing poses stir debate', Newhouse News Service, 15 September 2000, <http://www.newhouse.com/archive/story1a091500.html>, accessed August 2006.

42 Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1996, p. 24.

43 Ms Reid, ACTSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 11.

44 Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1996, pp 8–11, 14, 17, 20–21.

45 Ms Jennifer Riatti, *Submission 23*.

A study of ABC online coverage of the 2000 Olympics found that while women and men athletes received relatively balanced amounts of coverage, the women were more likely than men to be infantilised and to be described in emotive terms, and there was limited breadth in the coverage of women in the Olympics.⁴⁶

6.27 Reporting of women's sport that reinforces stereotypes and trivialises women's achievements could be worse than no coverage at all.⁴⁷ However the overwhelming view of writers in the field, and of participants in this inquiry, is that there needs to be greater media coverage of women's sport, and that strategies need to be found that will achieve this outcome. One example of success that was regularly noted was that of the broadcasting of netball in New Zealand.

Media success: netball in New Zealand

6.28 In New Zealand netball is, as it is in Australia, a popular sport amongst women. As in Australia, there is a national netball league and a national team. Ten years ago, the code received similar levels of media coverage in both countries.⁴⁸ Today however, the sports share diverging fortunes, as netball in New Zealand has become a top-ranking sport behind Rugby Union.⁴⁹ The coverage of the sport is so good that Australian captain Liz Ellis was able to follow the Australian league results by reading the New Zealand papers.⁵⁰

6.29 Netball receives televised coverage in New Zealand on the free-to-air channel TVNZ. In 2006 TVNZ broadcast 18 National Bank Cup competition games including two matches each weekend for the seven weeks of the tournament, plus the four finals games, spread over three weekends. It also broadcast international games against Australia and South Africa, and the Commonwealth Games gold medal match (against Australia), and three Scottwood Trust games.⁵¹ TV viewing data indicates that netball secures a healthy share of New Zealand audiences, with the weekly national league games typically securing 20 to 30 per cent audience share. Feature events such as series finals and international matches secure much larger shares – up to two thirds of viewers in their time slots.

6.30 There have been several suggestions about why media portrayal of netball in New Zealand has undergone such a change. One concerns governance: Netball NZ

46 Dianne Jones, 'Half the Story? Olympic Women on ABC News Online', *Media International Australia*, vol. 110, pp 132–146, 2004.

47 Alina Bernstein, 'Is it Time for a Victory Lap?: Changes in the Media Coverage of Sport', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 37, no. 3–4, pp 415–428, 2002.

48 Mr Blandthorn, AWU, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 57.

49 Mrs Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 61; Mr Blandthorn, AWU, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 57.

50 Mrs Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 61.

51 TVNZ – TV One, *Submission 81* and attachments.

has a board with passionate business people from outside the sport bringing valuable business perspectives to bear on the sport's future, and they have worked to create a detailed blueprint for giving the sport a higher profile.⁵² Another reason for the change may be marketing success: the organisation has hit upon the right marketing strategies, getting the sport to the point where it is something that journalists and editors want to cover.⁵³ A third suggestion was that a franchise business model was keeping administrative costs down as well as bringing revenue and management expertise to bear for the sport.⁵⁴ A fourth factor may have been that the sports market is less crowded in New Zealand, with fewer football codes in particular competing for attention.⁵⁵ A fifth suggestion was media leadership:

Some 10 or 11 years ago apparently there was a network executive who took a punt. Netball in New Zealand was no different from netball in Australia... He took the punt, put his job on the line and said, 'If this sport does not rate or we do not get ratings, I am happy to lose my job.' What happened from that day was that the sport rated, and then the television networks decided it was a good idea to invest in it... The television networks were the ones who took the leap of faith.⁵⁶

6.31 It is likely that many factors influenced the process by which netball has become widely watched and widely reported in New Zealand. Margaret Henley, a New Zealand sports media researcher, has undertaken detailed analysis of media coverage of women's sport in New Zealand.⁵⁷ In her submission, Margaret Henley argued that a combination of initial broadcasting opportunities, and a leadership within the sport that saw televised coverage as a priority for the game, were critical to netball's success. She recognised that netball's initial opportunities for broadcast, while making it the envy of many women's sports overseas, were:

a fragile position which had to be continually fought for by the Netball executive at the time. Within this Executive body there was a small group of farsighted women such as Marjorie Jenden, who correctly assessed that if the sport didn't fight for a greater share from the broadcaster and demand greater respect for the value of the game, that it would be forever locked within a paternalistic relationship with the broadcaster and the sport would not flourish in the future.

52 Mrs Ellis, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 61.

53 Mr Blandthorn, AWU, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 53; Ms Roffey, VicSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 15.

54 Mr Shorten, AWU, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 56.

55 Ms Roffey, VicSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 15.

56 Mr Blandthorn, AWU, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 57.

57 See, for example, Margaret Henley, 'Going Mainstream: women's' televised sport through a case study of the 1999 Netball World Championships', In *Television in New Zealand: Programming the Nation*, Roger Horrocks & Nick Perry (Eds), Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2004; Margaret Henley, 'Sports Media: Our world on their Shoulders?', In *Media Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, Luke Goode & Nabeel Zuberi (Eds), Pearson Longman, Auckland, 2004.

They were unshakable in their belief that the survival of the sport depended on continued and increased exposure on television, and were realistic enough to recognise that the sport itself had to make changes making it more attractive the broadcaster.⁵⁸

6.32 Netball's evolution in New Zealand, particularly since its ratings success in 1999, have not put netball on the same footing as the major male sporting codes, such as rugby union. However, the high ratings, higher player pay and higher profile of the sport are clear, and appear clearly related to the capacity to maintain good quality live broadcasts on national television.⁵⁹

6.33 The media successes of some sportswomen, some events, and some sports – such as netball in New Zealand – show that better coverage is possible. The question is how it can be achieved.

Improving coverage of women's sport: the options

6.34 The committee agrees with many witnesses, that media coverage of women's sport is poor and improving only extremely slowly. It notes the concerns of Ms Mickan, that given the great successes of women in sport in recent years, there is even scope for the coverage to deteriorate from current already low levels.⁶⁰ Indeed, the data from the *An Illusory Image* report and the Premier's Council of South Australia suggests that print media coverage may have already declined from 1996 to the present day.

6.35 Improving media coverage is also important because it is inextricably linked to other issues in women's sport. It is tied into issues of the financing of women's sport, which in turn affects the capacity of sports to be professional, the availability of female role models the encouragement women get to participate, the quality of venues available, and so on.

6.36 The committee recognises that governments are already doing things that help ensure better media coverage of sport. First, the charter of the ABC requires it to 'broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community'⁶¹ and in responding to this, it broadcasts significant amounts of women's sport. Both women's bowls and netball are benefiting from the broadcast of national and international games on ABC channels, as are other sports played by women.

58 Margaret Henley, *Submission 80*, p. 1.

59 Margaret Henley, *Submission 80*; TVNZ – TV One, *Submission 81*; ANPA / AWU, *Submission 62*.

60 Ms Mickan, SA Premier's Council for Women, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 51. See also Mrs Crosswhite, AWRA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 73.

61 ABC, *Submission 59*, p. 1.

6.37 Second, the government is planning for the future of television to include multichannelling (already undertaken by the ABC), which will ensure more television channels are available to viewers. As these channels become available, their owners will be looking for new content. This will create new opportunities for sports that currently may be being 'crowded out' by the many existing, well-funded men's sports.

6.38 Third, government is supporting leadership and development activities in sports organisations, through its Sport Leadership Grants for Women, as well as having run education programs to assist women's sports in dealing with the media.⁶²

6.39 Nevertheless, the committee accepts that more can and should be done to promote women's sport in the media, and to give women a greater chance of being professional sportspeople.

Better coverage through growth in media

6.40 There may be scope for the coverage of women's sport to be improved through the increasing availability of additional channels, both through subscription television and through multichanneling, which is set to be introduced progressively in the next three years.⁶³ The ABC for example notes that:

If the multichannel genre restrictions are lifted later this year, as planned, ABC2 will be able to broadcast international women's sporting events, including games between Australia and New Zealand and potentially the World Cup qualifier.⁶⁴

6.41 It is true that subscription television sports channels, such as Fox Sports 1 and 2, have limited reach. Less than a quarter of households have subscription television,⁶⁵ and not all of those would have sports channels. Furthermore, the ratings of subscription sports channels are dwarfed by those of the main free-to-air broadcasters.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, recent figures from the ABC do demonstrate that increased coverage of women's sport is one possible outcome from the availability of extra channels (see Table 6.1, above).

62 ASC, *Submission 30*, pp 13, 22.

63 Senator the Hon Helen Coonan, Media Release, 'New Media Framework for Australia', 13 July 2006, http://www.minister.dcita.gov.au/media/media_releases/new_media_framework_for_australia, accessed August 2006.

64 ABC, *Submission 59*, p. 5.

65 Australian Subscription Television & Radio Association (ASTRA), *Submission 72*, p. 2.

66 See ratings data produced by OzTam, <http://www.oztam.com.au/archives.aspx?Year=2005>, accessed August 2006.

Better coverage through regulating broadcast media

6.42 Media content regulation for television broadcasting was frequently suggested to this committee.⁶⁷ This possibility was tentatively examined by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs in 1992. That committee recommended that

the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal inquire into whether there is an 'adequate and comprehensive coverage' of women in sport in the media and consider whether there is a need to establish a program standard for the coverage of women in sport.⁶⁸

6.43 The government responded indicating it supported this in principle, and agreed to pass the recommendation on to the then newly created Australian Broadcasting Authority.⁶⁹ At around the same time, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal released a study of people's perceptions of television. This study showed that, when it came to sport, there was significant support for the broadcast of more women's sport.⁷⁰ However, this was also a period when the regulation of programming was increasingly being devolved to broadcasters, and it is not clear that this issue was taken further by any party.

6.44 Content regulation requiring certain amounts of women's sport to be broadcast could be similar in nature to some other content regulation already in place. The Commercial Television Code of Practice already regulates content in a number of ways, such as the placement and timing of commercials, the nature of news and current affairs coverage, and what sort of programs can be shown at what time with respect to program classification. Australian content is regulated through the Broadcasting Services (Australian Content) Standard 2005, which is a legislative instrument under the *Broadcasting Services Act 1992*.⁷¹ It requires minimum levels of Australian content in general, but also regulates some types of content, and the times in which it must be broadcast.

67 For example, Mrs Janice Crosswhite, *Submission 6*; Women in Sport Media Group, *Submission 16*, Ms Mitchell, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 46; Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER), *Submission 17*; Womensport & Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*; Australian Womensport & Recreation Association, *Submission 71*.

68 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, *Half Way to Equal*, April 1992, p. 146.

69 Government response to 'Halfway to Equal' by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs, presented by the Hon. Paul Keating Prime Minister and the Hon. Wendy Fatin, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Status of Women, 17 December 2002, p. 63.

70 Stephen Nugent, Linda Sheldon, Kate Aisbett, Cherie Harkness and Nick Herd, *What we want from our TVs*, Australian Broadcasting Tribunal Monograph Series, No. 4, 1992.

71 <http://www.acma.gov.au/acmainterwr/aba/tv/content/documents/broadcasting%20svces%20-%20australian%20content%20standard%202005.pdf>, accessed August 2006.

6.45 Journalist Greg Baum had raised the concern that requiring minimum coverage could encourage people to report any sport, however obscure, just to meet the quota.⁷² This is highly unlikely to be a problem. Whatever the regulatory requirements, media outlets will work to maximise their profits, which in broadcasting will mean ensuring audiences are as large as possible. One of the strengths of a quota system in fact could be in harnessing the skills and ambition of broadcasters toward making the coverage as good as possible, simply because they will be disadvantaged commercially if they fail.

6.46 Nevertheless, some witnesses had misgivings about regulation that required some sport broadcasting to be women's sport. The WA Sports Federation opposed broadcasting regulation:

There should be no regulation of the media regarding what is published or produced re sport coverage. Public support for a sport or event will determine what the media covers. If increased media coverage of women's sport, or any activity for that matter, is a priority for government then government should do more by way of education, promotion and implementation of support systems to increase the public interest.⁷³

6.47 It is also clear that implementing such regulation would be difficult, as was acknowledged by some of its supporters.⁷⁴ This would be a regulatory balancing act that would be hard to get right, and easy to get wrong. Furthermore, it would be hard to implement a level regulatory playing field between the commercial broadcasters, the ABC, SBS and the subscription services, and probably impossible to extend it across television, radio and print journalism. There are also risks to women's sports if they are dragged into broadcasting before they are ready, and put on show purely because regulations required it. Requiring television channels to broadcast women's sport might result in them just increasing the use of overseas content. Australian television could end up with more women's sport, but less Australian sport, with no benefits for Australian women players. In any case, netball in New Zealand has demonstrated that it is possible to achieve significant media coverage without it being forced by heavy-handed regulation.

6.48 The committee also believes that broadcasting is changing, particularly through the introduction of multichanneling, and that now might not be a good time to introduce new content regulation. To give just one example, it is possible that forcing some existing free-to-air channels to host women's sport broadcasting might undermine the ability of some subscription television channels and production companies to forge links with sporting organisations to produce women's sporting competitions for niche markets. If this happened, Australia could end up with reluctant free-to-air broadcasters grudgingly doing a second-rate job of producing some

72 Greg Baum, 'Count me out: women must earn coverage', *The Age*, 5 August 2006, p. 6 (sport).

73 WA Sports Federation, *Submission 37*, p. 3.

74 Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 15.

women's sport, instead of enthusiastic partnerships between sport and media working to bring first-rate sports productions to audiences through digital channels or pay television. Both approaches might result in a certain number of hours of women's sport being broadcast, but enthusiastic partnerships are likely to be more sustainable. While the committee would like to see more coverage of women's sport, it is not convinced that regulation is the right approach to achieving it.

Better coverage through partnerships of sporting and media organisations

6.49 Success in creating a nationally broadcast league competition is likely to require the backing of a national sporting organisation, a broadcaster, and probably both. Broadcast of the WNBA in the USA is strongly backed by the National Basketball Association. While still struggling to achieve large audiences, the WNBA is growing and appears entrenched as a broadcast sport, with games on both free-to-air and subscription television.⁷⁵ A similar example at the other end of the scale is that of lawn bowls in Australia, where equal coverage of women's bowls on the ABC was achieved by Bowls Australia taking a stand and making that a condition of the broadcast deal.⁷⁶

6.50 A contrasting situation can be seen in the international organisation for football, Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), and its limited support for the women's game. FIFA pointed out that when a men's team qualifies for the World Cup and makes the second round, as Australia recently did, it receives 9.5 million Swiss francs from FIFA. A women's team with a similar achievement receives nothing. Given how widespread and popular the women's game is internationally, this is a disappointing approach for FIFA to take. If even well-resourced sporting organisations such as FIFA will not back their women's codes, then they will find it very difficult to develop. This is reflected in the widespread disappointment expressed about poor coverage of the Matildas' success in qualifying for the women's World Cup.

6.51 Sporting organisations frequently lack the resources to try something new or to provide any significant funding that would help achieve media coverage. Some are stretched to put on a national league, even though they have teams and programs in every state. However there was confidence that they could make progress if the resources were there.⁷⁷

6.52 The committee acknowledges the concluding remarks of the Women in Sport Media Group when it urged this inquiry:

75 Thomas Heath, 'A matter of value instead of profit', *Washington Post*, 12 July 2006, p. E01.

76 Bowls Australia, *Submission 70*.

77 Ms Buckley, FFA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 19.

to bring the benefits of regular increased media coverage on women's sport to the fore in its report and to recommend the adoption of strategies that will change the media scene for women in sport.⁷⁸

6.53 The committee also notes the ASC's view, that '[i]f Government were to increase investment in womens sport then opportunities to broadcast women's events would be a worthwhile investment'.⁷⁹ The committee believes this is an area in which the government can have a constructive influence.

Recommendation 15

6.54 The committee recommends that the Australian Government provide financial support, to be administered by the Australian Sports Commission, for initiatives that provide specific opportunities for greater ongoing coverage of women's sport. The committee believes the ASC should administer funding of up to \$3 million per annum, and that the initiative be reviewed after approximately three years.

6.55 One model for this support could involve sporting organisations forming partnerships with broadcasters, and then approaching the ASC with proposals. The ASC would provide support to partnerships that result in agreed media coverage outcomes.

The Paralympics

6.56 The committee received a submission from the Australian Paralympic Committee (APC), regarding scope for coverage of the forthcoming Paralympic events in Beijing in 2008. Australia has a significant Paralympic team, and is currently preparing for the Beijing Games.

6.57 Media coverage of the Paralympic Games in Athens cost the APC over \$380 000, and the APC indicated that '[n]o network would cover disabled sport without a direct payment to assist in the production and associated costs'.⁸⁰

6.58 The committee recognises the concerns expressed by Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA), that women with disabilities must overcome both gender and disability barriers in seeking to participate in sporting or recreational activities.⁸¹ This difficulty in participating and training may be reflected in the fact that women form a slightly smaller proportion of the Paralympic team compared to the Olympic team (39 per cent of Paralympic athletes versus 43 per cent of Olympic athletes at Athens in 2004). The committee notes that the APC recently ran a National Talent Search, and that one third of the 604 athletes identified in that process were

78 *Submission 16*, p. 3.

79 *ASC, Submission 30*, p. 22.

80 *APC, Submission 77*, p. 2.

81 Ms Salthouse, WWDA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 4 August 2006, p. 3.

women, highlighting the need to engage more women with disabilities in sporting activities.

6.59 Making sport visible, and holding up inspiring sporting role models, are important parts of the process of encouraging participation, and the committee believes that televising good quality coverage of the Paralympics would be a positive step. This would be a suitable example of a situation where a sporting organisation and a broadcaster could partner, and in that context the government could provide support.

Recommendation 16

6.60 The committee recommends that the government consider allocating up to \$1 million to the Australian Paralympic Committee to assist with production and associated costs of televised coverage of the forthcoming Paralympics, and that the arrangement stipulate that a condition of accessing this funding be that there be balanced coverage of male and female athletes.

Better coverage through enhanced skills and commitment

6.61 As well as making sufficient commitments to women's teams and competitions, improvements can also be achieved in media awareness. This is an area in which the committee felt media organisations and sporting organisations all bear some responsibilities. As the Women in Sport Media Group said:

Our group acknowledges that a more consistent effort needs to be made by the sports administrators themselves and we have taken steps to introduce strategies for workshops and so on, as mentioned in our submission. But we are also cognisant of the fact that editorial staff and producers have the say about scheduling and programming. They might make deals with certain parties and they are the ones to decide that one event rates more highly than another, and it is sometimes very hard to get through that.⁸²

6.62 The development of good relationships between media and sport has been a strong theme in past and current inquiries.⁸³ Premier Media Group, who produce pay-TV sports, commented that:

We see our relationship with the sports administrations and the sports as a partnership, and the better organised they are and the more professionally organised the better outcomes are achieved for them and for us.⁸⁴

6.63 The committee also heard that media awareness of women's sport needs to be raised. One suggestion was a:

82 Ms Mitchell, WWDA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 46.

83 Murray Phillips, *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*, Australian Sports Commission, Canberra, 1996; Dr Lynn Embrey, *Submission 15*; Mrs Tullberg, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, pp 67–69.

84 Mr Malone, Premier Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006.

summit of some of these key people in the media and looking at how they make policies about scheduling and yet are not flexible enough to fit in a Matildas' exciting final game or something like that, and just to look at some of those avenues and maybe open their eyes to what I say are so many stories and things out there. Once the media get a hold of them and lap them up, the audiences would follow.⁸⁵

Recommendation 17

6.64 The committee recommends that the Australian Government provide financial support, to be administered by the Australian Sports Commission, for the training of athletes and sports administrators to better utilise media opportunities.

6.65 Increasing the level of training and skills in organisations promoting women's sport will help improve media coverage. However it will only be effective if NSOs are serious about backing their women's competitions with resources and commitment. The committee saw varying degrees of commitment amongst these groups and calls on them to ensure they are providing appropriate backing for women's leagues.

6.66 News and sport media organisations also need to employ female professionals and make commitments to reporting newsworthy women's sport. Given the extraordinarily low levels of reporting by some media outlets, this is likely to involve them reconsidering their idea of what constitutes 'newsworthy'. This need for change within media organisations was widely recognised, not only by women's sport individuals and organisations, but mainstream sporting groups such as the Professional Golfers Association.⁸⁶

Concluding remarks

6.67 The committee is disappointed at the continuing poor coverage of women's sport by all media. It believes that if the recommendations in this report are implemented by the government, sport and recreation organisations, and media outlets they will make a significant contribution to improving the media profile of women's sports. However, it also acknowledges that improvements in media coverage of women's sport have been slow in the past. If the situation has not improved by 2010 in response to this report, it suggests that the Senate refer the issue back to the committee for further review. To track progress, the committee suggests that the ASC undertake an annual survey of coverage of women's sports.

85 Ms Mitchell, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 51.

86 Professional Golfers Association, *Submission 52*, section 4.3.

Recommendation 18

6.68 The committee recommends that the government fund the Australian Sports Commission to replicate in 2008–09 the surveys and analysis performed in the 1996 report *An Illusory Image*.

Senator Andrew Bartlett
Chair

Appendix 1

Context of the inquiry

The Committee acknowledges that this inquiry follows a large body of work over the last 25 years addressing the challenges facing women in sport and recreation.¹ These have included:

- *Fit To Play* (1980), sponsored by the NSW Women's Advisory Council
- *Sport: Achieving the Ultimate Recognition* (1985), Elizabeth Darlinson
- *Women, Sport and the Media* (1985), Working Group on Women in Sport - Office of the Status of Women and the Australian Sports Commission
- *Girls' Achievement and Self Esteem: The contribution of physical education and sport* (1985-87), Commonwealth Schools Commission
- *National Policy and Plan for Women in Sport* (1987), Office of the Status of Women
- *Equity for Women in Sport* (1991), Wendy Ey
- *Sportswomen Step Forward* (1991), Conference conducted by the Australian Sports Commission
- *Halfway to Equal* (1992), House of Reps standing committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs
- *An Illusory Image: A Report on the media coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia* (1996), Murray Phillips
- *National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity* (1999), Australian Sports Commission

The Committee notes the various international and national instruments which impact on women in sport and recreation.

International instruments include:

- Charter of the United Nations (1945)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 1979 (ratified by Australia, 1983)
- Health Promotion — The Ottawa Charter (World Health Organisation, 1986) (Ottawa Charter)

1 Dr Lynn Embrey, *Submission 15*.

- Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 1995 (United Nations, 1996) (Beijing Platform for Action)
- Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport (First World Conference on Women and Sport, 1994) (Brighton Declaration)
- Jakarta Declaration on Leading Health Promotion into the Twenty-first Century (World Health Organisation, 1997) (Jakarta Declaration on Health), and
- Windhoek Call for Action (Second World Conference on Women and Sport, 1998).

National instruments include the:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cwlth)
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 (Cwlth)
- Affirmative Action (Equal Opportunity for Women) Act 1986 (Cwlth)
- National Women's Health Policy: Advancing Women's Health in Australia (1989)
- National Policy for the Education of Girls in Schools (1987)
- Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women: Platform for Action — Australia's Implementation Report (1997), and the
- Charter of Public Service in a Culturally Diverse Society (1998).

The Committee notes:

the 1994 Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport is an international set of principles intended as a guide to increasing the involvement of women in sport at all levels. Australia is a signatory to the declaration. The Windhoek Call for Action is a declaration that arose from the Second World Conference on Women and Sport held in Windhoek, Namibia, in 1998. It reaffirms the principles established in the Brighton Declaration, acknowledges the need for greater cooperation and coordination between agencies and organisations responsible for women's and girls' issues, and seeks further development of equal opportunities for women and girls to participate fully in sport, recreation and physical activity.²

The Brighton Declaration is available here: <http://www.iwg-gti.org/e/brighton/index.htm>

The Windhoek Call to Action is available here: http://www.iwg-gti.org/pdfs/call_e.pdf

2 Australian Sports Commission, National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity, 1999, http://www.ausport.gov.au/fulltext/1999/ascpub/national_policy_women.pdf, accessed September 2006.

Appendix 2

Submissions and Tabled Documents

Submissions

1. Mr Jim Daly, Adjunct Scholar, Human Movement, School of Health Sciences, University of South Australia
2. Dr Simone Fullagar, Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism, Leisure, Hotel and Sport Management, Griffith University, Queensland
3. Ms Donna Little, Senior Lecturer, Sport and Leisure Studies, School of Education, The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand
4. Ms Elaine Watson OAM
5. Womensport and Recreation Tasmania Inc
6. Ms Janice Crosswhite
7. UWA Sports & Recreation Association
8. International Coalition for Women in Shooting and Hunting (WiSH)
9. Disabled WinterSport Australia
10. The Royal Life Saving Society Australia
11. Ms Heidi Gilchrist, Associate Lecturer, School of Public Health, The University of Sydney
12. Dr Jane Fitzpatrick & Dr Susan White, Australasian College of Sports Physicians
13. WA Netball
14. Women's Golf Executive Committee, Yowani Country Club, ACT
15. Dr Lynn Embrey
16. Women in Sport Media Group
17. The Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER)
- 17A. The Australian Council for Health Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) (Supplementary Submission)
18. Big V Basketball
19. Sports Medicine Australia
20. Womensport & Recreation NSW Inc
21. Netball Victoria
22. Dr Ruth Sibson, Program Coordinator, Leisure and Sport Management, Edith Cowan University, WA
23. Ms Jennifer Riatti
24. Softball Australia
25. Women with Disabilities Australia
26. Ms Heather Reid
27. Australian Olympic Committee
28. Orienteering Australia Inc

29. A/Professor Tracy Taylor, Associate Dean (Teaching and Learning), University of Technology, Sydney
30. Australian Sports Commission
- 30A. Australian Sports Commission (Supplementary Submission)
- 30B. Australian Sports Commission (Supplementary Submission)
31. VicSport – The Sports Federation of Victoria
32. Office for Women, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- 32A. Office for Women, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (Supplementary submission)
33. Women's Centre for Health Matters
34. Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly
35. Womensport West – Women's Sport Foundation of WA (Inc)
36. ACTSport
37. WA Sports Federation
38. Recreation SA
39. Womensport Queensland
40. Women's Cricket, Cricket NSW
41. Sporting Shooters Association of Australia
42. Ms Kelly-anne Parkes
43. Hockey Australia
44. Cricket Australia
45. National Heart Foundation of Australia
46. Australian Rugby Union
47. Football Federation Australia
48. Department of Sport and Recreation, WA
49. Sport and Recreation Queensland
50. Department of Communications, IT and the Arts
51. Sport and Recreation Tasmania
52. Professional Golfers Association
53. Department of Sport and Recreation, NSW
54. VicHealth – Victorian Health Promotion Foundation
55. Womensport and Recreation Victoria
56. Females in Training
57. Premier's Council for Women, South Australia
58. Minister for Sport and Recreation, Northern Territory
59. Australian Broadcasting Corporation
- 59A. Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Supplementary Submission)
60. Confederation of Australian Sport
61. Ms Julie Tullberg, Sports Journalist
62. The Australian Netball Players' Association and The Australian Workers' Union
63. Women's Sports Foundation UK
64. Sports Federation of Queensland Inc
65. Netball Australia
66. SoccerFit

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67. Premier Media Group
 68. Mr Scott Bach
 69. Australian Football League
 - 69A. Australian Football League (Supplementary Submission)
 70. Bowls Australia
 71. The Australian Womensport & Recreation Association Inc (AWRA)
 72. Australian Subscription Television & Radio Association (ASTRA)
 73. Fitness First Australia
 74. Fitness Australia
 75. Outdoor Council of Australia Inc
 76. Fitness Victoria
 77. Australian Paralympic Committee
 78. Fernwood Women's Health Clubs
 79. Zest Health Clubs Limited
 80. Ms Margaret Henley, New Zealand
 81. TVNZ – Television New Zealand Ltd

Tabled Documents

Profiling sport role models to enhance initiatives for adolescent girls in physical education and sport – Johanna Vescio, Kerrie Wilde and Janice J Crosswhite, tabled by Women in Sport Media Group, 2 August 2006

An Exploration of Sports Participation by Girls from Non-english Speaking Backgrounds – Johanna A Vescio, Tracy Taylor & Kristine Toohey, tabled by Women in Sport Media Group, 2 August 2006

Providing a fair share for women in sport and recreation – Access, Opportunity, Involvement, Skill development, Lifestyle options – Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation – tabled by Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 2 August 2006

NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Surveys (SPANS) 2004 Summary Report – NSW Centre for Overweight and Obesity – tabled by Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 2 August 2006

University of Sydney, Faculty of Education and Social Work, Coach Education – Convenor Dr Donna O'Connor, tabled by Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, 2 August 2006

Safe sports facilities – making physical activity safer and more accessible for women – NSW Sport & Recreation, tabled by NSW Sport & Recreation, 2 August 2006

Women's Sport Leaders Scholarship Program - Anne Jackson, NSW Sport & Recreation, tabled by NSW Sport & Recreation, 2 August 2006

Arabic Girls Multi-Sport Program – Carolyn Brimfield, NSW Sport & Recreation, tabled by NSW Sport & Recreation 2 August 2006

Childcare Guidelines for NSW Sport, Recreation and Fitness Organisations – NSW Department of Sport & Recreation, tabled by NSW Department of Sport & Recreation 2 August 2006

A winning game plan – Creating opportunities in sport and active recreation – VicHealth, tabled by VicHealth 3 August 2006

A Sporting Chance – The inside knowledge on healthy sports clubs – VicHealth, tabled by VicHealth 3 August 2006

A strategy for women's sport & physical recreation in victoria – Womensport and Recreation Victoria Inc, tabled by Womensport and Recreation Victoria Inc 3 August 2006

Facts and figures – Womensport and Recreation Victoria Inc, tabled by Womensport and Recreation Victoria Inc 3 August 2006

Letter to Committee Secretary, Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee dated 3 August 2006 from Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly Inc, tabled by Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly Inc, 3 August 2006

Membership brochure – *Providing leadership and advocacy for Australian women and girls in sport and active recreation* – Australian Womensport & Recreation Association, tabled by Australian Womensport & Recreation Association 3 August 2006

Opening statement by Softball Australia, tabled by Softball Australia 3 August 2006

AFL Recreation Football CD, tabled by Australian Football League 3 August 2006

AFL Recreation Football Rule Book, tabled by Australian Football League 3 August 2006

Welcome to the AFL – The AFL's MULTICULTURAL PROGRAM welcomes people from all backgrounds to Australian Football, tabled by Australian Football League 3 August 2006

Parents' Guide to AFL Auskick – Where Champions begin, tabled by Australian Football League 3 August 2006

ParaQuad News – Paraplegic & Quadriplegic Association of NSW, tabled by Women With Disabilities Australia 4 August 2006

Exercise CAN be fun, tabled by Women With Disabilities 4 August 2006

Appendix 3

Public Hearings

Wednesday, 2 August 2006 - Sydney

Australian Olympic Committee

Ms Helen Brownlee, Executive Board Member

Football Federation Australia

Mr John Boulton, Head of High Performance
Ms Eugenie Buckley, General Counsel

Womensport and Recreation NSW Inc

Ms Michelle Boon, Director
Mr Peter Lozan, Director

Premier Media Group

Mr David Malone, Chief Executive Officer
Mr Jon Marquard, Chief Operating Officer

Women in Sport Media Group

Ms Ann Mitchell, Coordinator
Ms Johanna Vescio

Mrs Elizabeth Ellis (Private capacity)

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Mr Kim Dalton, Director
Ms Margaret Cassidy, Head of Policy and Resources, Technology and
Distribution Division
Mr Iain Knight, Head, ABC TV Sport
Mr Peter Longman, Editor, ABC Radio Sport

Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER)

Dr Alf Colvin, National President
Ms Meg Pickup, NSW President

New South Wales Sport and Recreation

Ms Carolyn Brimfield, Senior Project Officer
Ms Mia Jenkins, Industry Support

Thursday, 3 August 2006 – Melbourne

VicHealth

Ms Kellie-Ann Jolly, Director, Physical Activity Unit
Ms Megan Kerr, Senior Project Officer, Physical Activity Unit, Victorian
Health Promotion Foundation

Vicsport

Ms Kate Roffey, Chief Executive Officer

Womensport and Recreation Victoria

Ms Fiona Justin, Chief Executive Officer

Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly

Mrs Dianne Trotter, Executive Officer

Big V Basketball Victoria

Mr Wayne Bird, Chief Executive Officer, Basketball Victoria
Mr Matthew Cowling, Chief Executive Officer, Big V Basketball Victoria

Netball Victoria

Ms Kate Palmer, Chief Executive Officer
Ms Lynne Sheehan, Policy and Planning Manager

Australian Netball Players' Association and the Australian Workers Union

Mr Bill Shorten, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Australian Netball Players'
Association and National Secretary, Australian Workers Union
Mr John-Paul Blandthorn, Director, Australian Netball Players' Association
and Organiser, Australian Workers Union
Ms Ingrid Dick, Director, Australian Netball Players' Association
Ms Melanie Kitchen, Member, Australian Netball Players Association

Mrs Julie Tullberg, Journalist, News Ltd-Leader Newspapers**Australian Womensport and Recreation Association Inc**

Mrs Janice Crosswhite, President

Hockey Australia

Mr Linden Adamson, Chief Executive

Cricket Australia

Mr Damien Bown, General Manager Game Development

Australian Football League

Mr Lawrie Woodman, National Coaching Development Manager

Bowls Australia

Mr Mark Rendell, Chief Executive Officer
Miss Sally West, Operations Manager

Netball Australia

Ms Noeleen Dix, President

Softball Australia

Ms Susan Crow, Chief Executive
Miss Kate Quigley, Athlete

Friday, 4 August 2006 – Canberra**Women With Disabilities Australia**

Ms Susan Salthouse, Vice President

Mrs Heather Reid (Private Capacity)**ACTSport**

Mrs Heather Reid, Representative

Orienteering Australia

Mr Gareth Candy, Executive Officer

Females in Training

Ms Gillian Mitchell, Vice President
Ms Sian Mulholland, Coach
Ms Sandy Waters, General Committee Member

Women's Golf Executive Committee, Yowani Country Club

Ms Shirley Willis, Vice President
Ms Cheryl Gorham, Women's Captain

Northern Territory Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport

Mrs Bronwyn Rossingh, Manager of Strategic Sport Development, Sport and Recreation
Mrs Josephine Jennings, Women and Sport Coordinator, Sport and Recreation

South Australian Premier's Council for Women

Ms Pat Mickan, Deputy Chair

Australian Government Office for Women

Ms Lee Emerson, Branch Manager, Policy, Research and International

Australian Sports Commission

Mr Brent Espeland, Director, Sport Performance and Development
Ms Sophie Keil, Senior Sports Consultant, Women and Sport

Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts

Mr Bill Rowe, General Manager, Sport
Mr Gordon Neil, General Manager, Media Industries

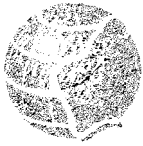
Appendix 4

Responses to letters sent to state and territory Departments of Education

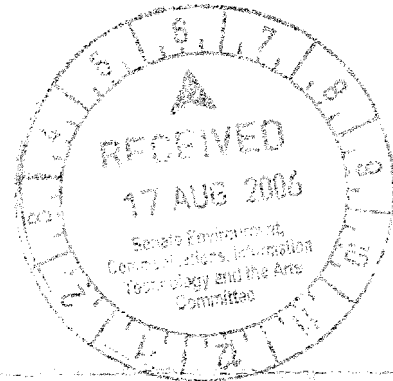
On 3 August 2006 the Committee wrote to state and territory Departments of Education, asking them a number of questions in relation to physical activity programs in schools. The questions were as follows:

1. what physical education classes are required and what are available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school;
2. what proportion of physical education classes are required to involve exercise activity
3. what school sport during regular school hours is required, and what is available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school;
4. what other obligations are there to participate in school-organised sporting activity outside regular school hours;
5. in each of the above cases, what is included in the meaning of sport, physical activity or exercise;
6. in each of the above cases, who determines whether schools and students are complying with the relevant policy; and
7. does the regulation of any of the above matters vary according to the type of school (for example, public, Catholic or other private).

Attached are responses received by the Committee by the time of tabling of this report. Responses from states and territories can also be found on the Committee's website.



Senator Andrew Bartlett
Chair
Environment, Communications,
Information Technology and The Arts
References Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Senator Bartlett

Thank you for your correspondence received 7 August 2006 regarding the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia.

The Department of Education and Training strongly advocates for quality physical activity opportunities for all public school children. Current initiatives include fulfilling the recommendations of the Child and Adolescent Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (CAPANS), commissioned by the Premier's Physical Activity Taskforce (PATF) in 2003.

Please find the responses to your specific questions below:

1. Recent State and Australian Government announcements regarding physical activity require that, from 2007, all students in Years 1-10 participate in a minimum of two hours of physical activity each week, during the school day as part of student learning programs. Schools are also encouraged to provide opportunities for students to be physically active during breaks, and before and after school.
2. Although there is no formal requirement for physical education classes to have pre-determined periods of activity, the Western Australian Curriculum Framework describes Health and Physical Education as providing students with an understanding of health issues and the skills needed for confident participation in sport and recreational activities. This enables students to make responsible decisions about health and physical activity and to promote their own and others health and well-being.
3. The Department has no compulsory requirement for participation in school sport during regular school hours and does not monitor what is offered to students.
4. The Department contracts School Sport WA Inc (SSWA) to offer interschool, interstate and international competitive sporting opportunities to students in Western Australian schools. SSWA is an association of school teachers with the principal purpose of organising and coordinating sporting competitions for school children at a local, regional and interstate level.

SSWA works in close cooperation with the Department, other educational sectors, state sporting associations, local government, key organisations in other states, schools and other agencies. Schools make their own decisions in relation to participation. Decisions are usually based on a school's capacity to identify staff members who are prepared to volunteer their time to prepare and present teams. It is the voluntary contribution of teachers' time that ensures the success of the various competitions.

SSWA is supported by a grant from the Department and through a user-pay system, in which schools competing in the interschool Champion Schools Program (132 events across 26 individual sports) and individual students competing at state level (in 27 secondary and ten primary teams) are largely responsible for the funding of specific components of the program. SSWA is located within the Department offices at 151 Royal Street, East Perth and comprises a full-time manager, a full-time executive officer, a full-time clerical officer and a full-time finance officer.

SSWA, in accordance with its charter, provides competitive opportunities for all students, regardless of sector, and encourages maximal participation in a range of quality sporting programs. The extent and intensity of the competition is varied and based on the experience, skill level, maturity and interest of the student.

5. *Physical activity* is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy. *Physical education* is defined as physical activity sessions performed as part of the school curriculum. *School sport* is defined as competitive physical activity performed as a logical extension to the school physical education curriculum and is conducted both in school and out of school time. *Exercise* is a subset of physical activity and is defined as planned, structured and repetitive bodily movement done to improve or maintain one or more components of fitness, such as muscle strength, endurance, flexibility or cardio-respiratory endurance¹

¹ Hands, B., Parker, H., Glasson, C., Brinkman, S. and Read, H. (2004). *Physical Activity and Nutrition Levels in western Australian Children and Adolescents: Report*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.

6. Schools are required to report on their compliance with two hours of physical activity requirement.
7. Two hours of physical activity requirement is consistent amongst Department, Catholic and Independent schools.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention.

Yours sincerely



PAUL ALBERT
DIRECTOR GENERAL

14 AUG 2005



Tasmania

DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

SCHOOL EDUCATION DIVISION

8 August 2006



Dr Ian Holland
Environment, Communications, Information
Technology and the Arts Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Dr Holland

Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia

I am responding to the letter you forwarded to David Hanlon, Deputy Secretary School Education, Department of Education Tasmania.

In response to your questions:

1. what physical education classes are required and what are available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school;

Government schools in Tasmania have a requirement to provide 2 hours of physical activity per week for school age children. All government schools K-10 offer physical education and in all cases it is compulsory for at least K-8. Some secondary schools make Physical Education optional for their 9 and 10 students. Only a very small percentage of schools do not have a specialist health and physical education teacher on staff and all of these are very small primary schools

2. what proportion of physical education classes are required to involve exercise activity;

As mentioned in (1), the requirement is for 2 hours physical activity per week. How schools organise this is up to them and it is not possible to provide more specific information about this.

3. what school sport during regular school hours is required, and what is available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school;

The delivery of school sport across that state varies considerably between primary and secondary, and between schools. It is not possible to provide accurate information about this. There is no single coordinating body for school sport. All government primary and secondary schools engage in swimming, cross country and swimming carnivals at an intra and inter school level. Some primary school sport associations run mini rosters/tournaments for their schools on a seasonal basis but this is restricted to grades 3-6. Some clusters/groups of primary schools jointly offer sporting competitions for their schools. Such sporting events occur during school hours. Some primary school sport occurs on weekends or in the evenings e.g. minkey hockey, netball, soccer, and flippa ball – these events are open to government, catholic and independent schools. At secondary level, the Northern high schools have midweek sport on Wednesday afternoons for years 7 and 8 and on Thursday afternoons for years 9 and 10. They also offer some sport on weekends. In the North-West it is mostly weekend sport and in the South it is a combination of after school midweek and weekend. None of this is compulsory. The Tasmanian government provides recurrent funding to support school sporting associations in the state in order to increase and enhance sporting opportunities for children and young people.

4. what other obligations are there to participate in school-organised sporting activity outside regular school hours; _

No child in the government system is obliged to participate in school-organised sporting activity outside regular school hours.

5. in each of the above cases, what is included in the meaning of sport, physical activity or exercise;

Sport is defined as activity which is structured and is guided by a set of rules and practices eg a roster, uniforms, codes of conduct, rules for play etc. Physical activity could include structured activity such as sport but is broader to include non-structured physical activity. Exercise implies a physical fitness element that focuses on the health-related components of fitness (strength, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance).

6. in each of the above cases, who determines whether schools and students are complying with the relevant policy;

Principals are required to verify that 2 hours of physical activity is being provided for all school age children.

7. does the regulation of any of the above matters vary according to the type of school; (for example, public, Catholic or other private).

The responses for points 1-6 are for government (public) schools only. There is variation between this provision and what is available in Catholic and independent schools. We are not in a position to provide information about practices in these other two school sectors.



Penny Andersen
A/Executive Director Curriculum, Standards and Support
Phone 03 6233 7107
Email: penny.andersen@education.tas.gov.au



Department of Education & Training

Office of the Secretary
SEC 17478



Dr Ian Holland
Environment, Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts
Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA 2600

22 AUG 2006

Dear Dr Holland

Thank you for your recent letter concerning the Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia.

The Department of Education and Training offers the Committee the following information:

Question 1 *What physical education classes are required and what are available (but not compulsory), in each year of school?*

- From prep to Year 3, Victorian Government schools must provide from 20 to 30 mins of physical education classes per day;
- From Years 4 to 6, Victorian Government schools must provide three hours of physical education and organised sport per week with a minimum of 90 minutes of physical education;
- From Years 7 to 10, Victorian Government schools must provide 100 minutes of physical education and 100 minutes of sport.

In addition to this, schools are required to develop teaching programs which will enable students meet the Health and Physical Education standards of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards for Prep – Year 10. Further information about these standards can be accessed at

<http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au/essential/personal/health/index.html>

Question 2 *What proportion of physical education classes are required to involve exercise activity?*

- All physical education classes at all year levels must involve exercise activity.

Question 3 *What school sport during regular school hours is required, and what is available (but not compulsory), in each year of school?*

- The required and available school sport time in regular school hours in Victorian Government schools from Years 4-6 is 90 minutes and from Years 7-10, 100 minutes.

In addition, the Department of Education and Training administers two sporting associations that come under the umbrella of School Sport Victoria—namely the Victorian Primary Schools' Sports Association (VSPPA) and the Victorian Secondary Schools' Sports Association (VSSSA). These organisations conduct school sport from Year 4 to Year 12 in government and non government schools.

These sporting associations also organise and host on a rotational basis, interstate exchanges. There are twenty organised sports available for primary students and thirty for secondary students. The associations organise seventeen primary exchanges and twenty secondary per year. There are approximately 500,000 school students actively involved in the work of these associations. The associations work closely, and under the auspice of, School Sport Australia.

Question 4 What other obligations are there to participate in school-organised sporting activity outside regular school hours?

- There are no obligations to participate in school organised sporting activity outside regular school hours.

Question 5 In each of the above cases, what is included in the meaning of sport, physical activity or exercise?

- The term sport means all activity that has as its ethos physical activity or is an organised or modified sporting event.

Question 6 In each of the above cases, who determines whether schools and students are complying with the relevant policy?

- The Department of Education and Training determines whether Victorian Government schools and their students are complying with the regulations concerning sport and physical education.

Question 7 Does the regulation of any of the above matters vary according to the type of school (for example, public, Catholic or other private)?

- The regulations apply only to Victorian Government schools although they are adopted by the non government school sectors.

I look forward to hearing of the results of the Committee's inquiry.

Yours sincerely



Dr Peter Dawkins
Secretary



Early Childhood and Primary Education
Secondary Education
Technical and Further Education
Vocational Education and Training
Higher Education
Adult and Community Education

DGL 06/1226

Dr I Holland
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Holland

I refer to your letter to the Director-General dated 3 August 2006 regarding the inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia. As the senior officer in the Department of Education and Training with responsibility for this matter, I have been asked to respond to you.

Thank you for informing me about this inquiry. The findings of the committee will help inform future directions around participation in physical activity and sport.

Please find attached the answers to the questions submitted by the committee.

If you would like further information about physical education and sport in NSW schools or clarification of the answers provided, please contact Rosemary Davis, CEO PDHPE on telephone (02) 9886 7651 or email rosemary.davis@det.nsw.edu.au

I look forward to the outcomes of this important inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Shadwick'.

Gillian Shadwick
General Manager
Learning and Development

25 August 2006

Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia

Question 1

The learning area that accommodates physical education in NSW schools is Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE). PDHPE is mandated from Kindergarten to Year 10.

In primary schools, it is recommended that students are provided with 120 minutes of planned physical activity each week. This is inclusive of 60-80 minutes of sport time in Years 3 - 6.

Many schools would be allocating more time than this recommendation. For example, some schools include 15 minutes of physical activity each day plus two additional 30 minute sessions focusing on fundamental movement skills each week. Other schools offer three 30 minute physical education lessons each week plus the weekly allocation of 60 minutes for school sport.

The minimum indicative hours for the PDHPE in Years 7-10 are 300 hours. Physical education is one component of the PDHPE key learning area and consists of structured lessons that include explicit teaching of movement skills and performance in a variety of movement contexts including aquatics, athletics, games, gymnastics and dance.

PDHPE is timetabled in secondary schools in a variety of different structures. The most common structures include:

- two forty-minute to 55-minute periods per week timetabled for physical education lessons and
- two seventy-minute to eighty-minute periods per fortnight timetabled for physical education lessons and one 45 to 55-minute lesson for PD and Health.

Question 2

There is no requirement regarding the proportion of physical education classes that involve activity. However, in most schools all physical education lessons would involve moderate physical activity for the majority of the lesson time.

Question 3

Schools are required to include two hours per week of planned physical activity, including in Years 3-6, a minimum of one hour for sport. In each of the Years 7, 8, 9 & 10, 80-120 minutes per week is to be allocated. 80-120 minutes per week is allocated if students are in Year 11, and for students in Year 12, if Year 12 students wish to participate.

Schools develop and conduct their own local sport programs according to student needs and interests, school resources and teacher expertise, availability of transport and community facilities, with the structure and delivery of sport determined by the school's timetable. School sport programs may include inter and intra-school

competitive sport, outdoor recreation/adventure sports, fitness, sport development and physical recreation activities.

Question 4

Government primary schools are able to enter 17 State knockout competitions. Secondary schools are able to choose from 45 competitions. Both categories of competitions have gender specific, and co-gender competitions. Secondary schools, in particular, regularly schedule the interschool knockout fixtures outside regular school hours.

Question 5

Sport as an aspect of the school curriculum is an integral part of an individual's development, requiring physical involvement in organised games or activities within an accepted set of rules.

The school sport program could include organised competition or training, for example, in athletics, gymnastics, water polo, ball games such as tennis, cricket, netball, basketball and all codes of football, and/or physical recreation activities such as swimming, abseiling, surfboard riding, skate boarding, aerobics, golf, horse riding, bushwalking and canoeing.

Question 6

School Principal, in consultation where appropriate with the School Education Director.

Question 7

All schools must follow the NSW Board of Studies (BOS) syllabuses for PDHPE. There is no mandated time from the BOS for PDHPE in primary schools. The Department however, recommends that 120 minutes of physical activity are provided in primary schools each week.

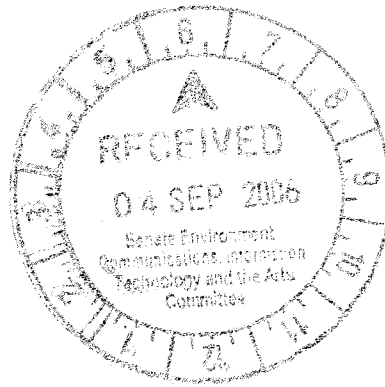
In secondary schools, the BOS mandates that 300 hours of PDHPE be delivered in schools from Years 7-10.

The NSW Department of Education and Training has mandatory time provisions for sport students in Years 3-11 in public schools. Schools in the Catholic and private sectors of education are not bound by such provisions.



Australian Capital Territory

ACT Department of
Education & Training
ABN: 71 506 957 312



File Ref:2004/00672

Dr Ian Holland
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Holland

Thank you for your letter of 3 August 2006 about the inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia. In reply to your questions about physical education and sport in ACT schools I am able to provide the following information.

1. What physical education classes are required and what are available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school?

The ACT Government schools policy on Health, Physical Education and Sport includes mandated hours for each student in years K-10.

The policy states that "for each child from years K-10 there are mandatory times to be devoted to the areas of health, physical education and sport/recreation," and includes the following table:

K-2	20 – 30 minutes of physical activity per day
years 3-6	A minimum of 180 minutes per week, of which at least 150 minutes must be active physical education or sport
years 7-10	A minimum of 180 minutes per week, of which at least 150 minutes must be active physical education, including sport

In primary schools, a variety of programs are offered to students to enhance their physical education programs. These include:

Feat for Feet, Health & PE week, Swim Smart, Sports Coaching, Sports Leadership, Dance, Active After Schools Community Program, Blue Earth Discovery, The 'Look' program, Smart Start, Sports Ability, Sports Development Programs.

In high schools, students are offered:

Sports Coaching, Sports Science, Outdoor Education, Talented Sports Programs and Recreation Programs.

2. What proportion of physical education classes are required to involve exercise activity?

Physical education classes are active and lessons usually commence with a warm up period of 'exercise activity'. Approximately 10 – 15 minutes of warm up activities generally include stretching exercises and a vigorous running activity. Most physical education lessons are of approximately 50-60 minutes duration.

3. What school sport during regular school hours is required, and what is available (but non-compulsory), in each year of school?

Sport education is included in physical education programs to allow students to be involved in competition as a member of a team in a variety of sports.

Sport that is widely available in schools but is not compulsory includes:

- intra school competition eg. lunch time
- inter school competition. eg. school vs school

ACT schools have an extensive range of opportunities for students to participate in sport at the interschool level. Each year a calendar of events is published for sporting days during school hours. Major sports carnivals are provided in Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country as well as a range of other sports. Students can also represent the ACT in a variety of sports.

4. What other obligations are there to participate in school organised sporting activity outside regular school hours?

There is no obligation to participate in school organised sporting activity outside regular school hours. Some schools organise teams to represent their school in community-based sport on weekends or after school. Some school sport is also held after school hours (4-6pm).

The Active After Schools Communities program run by the Australian Sports Commission employs community sports groups to work with primary age children in after school care programs.

5. In each of the above cases, what is included in the meaning of sport, physical activity or exercise?

In the ACT, sport is considered as vigorous physical activity. The physical activity may be for the purpose of discovering the limits of one's capabilities, or for fun, amusement and diversion. It involves competition against oneself or another, or a confrontation of natural elements.

Physical education is education through physical activity. It is a comprehensive term, including fitness, skills, movement, dance, recreation, health, games & sport plus the appropriate values and knowledge of each.

Physical activity or exercise refers to any activity that involves significant movement of the body or limbs. Moderate intensity physical activity will cause a slight, but

noticeable, increase in breathing and heart rate and may cause light sweating in some people.

6. In each of the above cases, who determines whether schools and students are complying with the relevant policy?

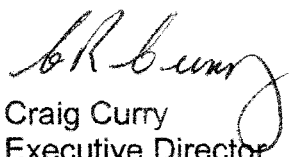
As the times are mandated, school principals are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

7. Does the regulation of any of the above matters vary according to the type of school (for example, public, catholic or other private)?

Each education sector has its own requirements. The Catholic sector suggests children must be active for a minimum of 30 minutes each day. The independent sector suggests 120 mins/week physical education plus sport.

I trust this information will assist your inquiry into women in sport and recreation.

Yours sincerely



Craig Curry
Executive Director

31 August 2006



Queensland
Government

31 AUG 2006

Department of
Education and the Arts

Dr Ian Holland
Secretary
The Senate Environment, Communications,
Information Technology and the Arts
Reference Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA QLD 2600



Dear Dr Holland

Thank you for your letter dated 3 August 2006 seeking advice from the Department of Education and the Arts on the type and number of physical education classes in which Queensland schoolchildren are expected to participate.

An election has been called in Queensland and, in accordance with caretaker conventions, I am unable to respond to you at this time. A response will be forwarded as soon as a new government is formed.

I invite you to contact Ms Jacky Dawson, Manager, Curriculum Branch on telephone (07) 3237 1109 or Ms Mary Summerson, Manager, Queensland School Sport Unit on telephone (07) 3350 7829 should you require further information.

Yours sincerely

KEN SMITH
Director-General

Ref: 06/93448

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