

# Submission

to

Senate Committee - Environment, Communications, Information  
Technology and the Arts

## **Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia**

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## **1. Introduction – Australian Sports Commission**

The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is Australia's primary national sports administration and advisory agency, and the cornerstone of a wide-ranging sports system. The Commission's roles and responsibilities are laid out in the Australian Sports Commission Act 1989, and we are governed by a board of Commissioners appointed by the Australian Government.

The ASC funds and works closely with a range of national sporting organisations, state governments, schools and community organisations to ensure sport is well run and accessible so that everyone can participate and enjoy the benefits. It also works with these organisations and through the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), which is a division of the ASC, and state and territory institutes and academies of sport, to develop sporting excellence at the elite level.

## 2. Executive Summary

The ASC is pleased to provide this submission to the Senate Inquiry, reflecting on the Commission's twenty year commitment to supporting the full involvement of women and girls in Australian sport.

Sport plays a major role in shaping Australia's identity and culture. It helps to maintain the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities and it builds personal and national pride. It contributes to the economy through employment and tourism. Sport helps to bind us together. It teaches us important life skills such as leadership, friendship, teamwork, respect, fairness, responsibility, resilience and how to engage with people from all walks of life.

The ASC is committed to the development of an inclusive, robust and self sustaining sports system. With this commitment the Commission is uniquely positioned through its leadership and collaboration with the National Sporting Organisations (NSOs) to facilitate cultural and structural changes in sport. This role is based on the Federal Government's current sport policy *Building Australian Communities Through Sport*, which is focused on NSOs being accountable, having good governance, sound structure and management and growing their sport through sound business practices and developing sustainable links to the corporate and community sectors. The policy also commits to "continue to encourage female participation in all aspects of sport in Australia".

The ASC recognises and supports the Australian Government's commitment to promoting gender mainstreaming in line with international best practice across all agencies. This approach ensures the needs of women are recognised, addressed and integrated into planning, policy development, programs and projects to achieve equity of opportunities and maximise outcomes.

The ASC contributes to Australia's reporting requirements of the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) through the Office for Women (OfW). Article 13 of CEDAW expressly requires that women have the same rights as men "to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life".

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.

In the past, women in sport programs have tended to focus on strategies and initiatives to remove, or at least reduce, barriers to participation of women at all levels of sport. The ASC is now working with NSOs to include strategies on achieving gender balance and diversity in their strategic planning, their key performance indicators and in their development programs, in many cases customised for their sport to be more gender inclusive.

The ASC's Women and Sport Unit works collaboratively with other ASC programs including coaching and officiating, ethics, Indigenous sport, disability sport, club development and membership growth, innovation and best practice and junior sport to

reinforce that sport needs more women for the betterment of Australian sport through ensuring programs are based on inclusive practices.

The benefits to sport, recreation and physical activity providers in engaging women more effectively are:

- An expansion of the market
- A greater ability to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse community
- More membership and participation revenue
- A larger talent pool of volunteers (including coaches, officials and referees)
- A larger talent pool of participants (which can result in a higher profile for the organisation), and
- Better management through broadening the diversity of backgrounds, perspectives, skills, talents and abilities of those in decision making roles.

Throughout women and sport policy development at the ASC common threads have occurred, where the recurring themes of leadership, equity and access, participation, education, media coverage, research and information sharing continue to be relevant.

Significant achievements to date have included: the development of gender equity guidelines for NSOs; the Harassment-Free Sport Strategy; Pregnancy in Sport Guidelines; Leadership Grants; High Performance Coaching and Officiating Scholarships and integrated sport programs covering youth, Indigenous, Disability and community club development. The ASC will continue to assist NSOs in developing effective business strategies to assist with the greater inclusion of women, particularly in the areas of governance, management and high performance coaching. The ASC will continue to work in an integrated manner across all sport programs to ensure the engagement of women through their activities as well as readdressing the area of women's sport in the media as part of a greater ASC investigation into sport media strategies. Further, research will continue to be undertaken to monitor and assess the effectiveness of the ASC's initiatives and programs in women and sport.

The Commission's priorities are to continue to educate, consult with and service an effective national sporting system that offers improved participation and excellence in sports activities for women and girls. The ASC is currently committed to:

- the continued provision of leadership education opportunities for women in all areas of sport through the Sport Leadership Grants for Women; and
- assisting national sporting organisations achieve effective business and organisational practices.

### 3. Women and Sport Policy Development

The first *National Policy and Plan on Women in Sport* in 1985 identified fourteen key focus areas – promotion, leadership development, participation development, elite level participation, junior sport, education, media coverage, sponsorship, funding, sports facilities, amalgamation, research, liaison and information exchange, program development and evaluation. These themes continued through the policies that followed until women and sport became part of the ASC's broader policy '*Backing Australia's Sporting Ability*' in 2001. At this time the ASC's policy had a key focus toward the principle of inclusion and the sport program areas began working more effectively to work collaboratively towards the goal of building an inclusive sustainable sports system.

Historically women and girls have experienced barriers to their participation in sport, recreation and physical activity. Over the last 20 years many strategies have been developed in Australia and overseas to redress this situation and advance opportunities for women and girls. 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. These opportunities were brought about by strategies ranging from the creation of national leagues in a number of national sports, to an increased number of disciplines and sports for women at Commonwealth and Olympic Games.

However, women and sport has continued to be characterised by under-representation in all aspects of sport, recreation and physical activity. Indicators highlighting their low rate of involvement, particularly in sport, include:

- lower participation rates than men and boys;
- under-representation in all areas of leadership, management and decision making;
- under-representation in all areas of coaching and officiating, especially at the elite level;
- inadequate and inappropriate media coverage;
- greater 'drop-out' rates than men and boys, and;
- less sponsorship and funding than for men and boys.

Factors identified that are directly responsible for the low participation rate of women and girls in sport, recreation and physical activity include:

- lack of time or perceived lack of time;
- social stereotyping;
- lack of childcare and lack of awareness of childcare options;
- fewer opportunities available for participation;
- reduced leisure time owing to family responsibilities;
- concern for personal safety;
- lack of access to financial resources;
- harassment;
- lack of information about what is available;
- lack of skills;
- lack of culturally appropriate facilities/programs;
- lack of confidence in approaching activities alone;

- lack of access to appropriate, accessible, affordable and acceptable facilities and services, and;
- cultural and social pressures.

These factors clearly indicate that formidable challenges must be overcome before gender equity in sport, recreation and physical activity can be achieved. They also indicate that to understand and address the complex influences on female involvement in sport, recreation and physical activity, two major issues must be considered:

- The broader social, economic, cultural and physical context of the lives of women and girls, and
- The impact of the current infrastructure and culture within sport and recreation.

Australian women and girls, regardless of social, economic, cultural or physical backgrounds and circumstances, should have opportunities equal to those of men and boys to participate in every aspect of sport, recreation and physical activity and, when they do so, should be treated equitably. It is the responsibility of sporting organisations to provide an environment and culture which is conducive to the full participation of all women and men, being mindful that it is not sports responsibility to resolve greater social issues.

## **4. The Australian Sports Commission's Approach to Women and Sport**

### **4a. Women, Sport and the Media**

In 1984 a working group on Women in Sport was established by the Commonwealth Government with a focus on the nature and scope of media coverage of women in sport in Australia. The group was responsible for delivering the report *Women, Sport and the Media* which was tabled in Parliament and launched by the Prime Minister in May 1985. The report noted that despite evidence collected over many years, the problems relating to women in sport remained largely ignored.

*The report is unequivocal in its message. Now is the time for concerted action to make sure that, for women in sport in this country, things will change. For too long, and in the face of overwhelming evidence and persistent advocacy, irrelevant attitudes, ignorance and blatant prejudice have allowed women to be treated as second class sporting citizens.*<sup>1</sup>

The report contained recommendations to Government, sporting associations and the media which addressed improvement in processes and practices, as well as structural barriers facing women in sport.

The report *Women, Sport and the Media* (1985), led to the establishment of the Women's Sport Promotion Unit (WSPU) in 1987 under the auspices of the ASC. The operations of the WSPU were based on implementation of the *National Policy and Plan on Women in Sport* policy. This policy covered areas including promotion, enhanced sponsorship and the fair and unbiased media coverage of women's sport. Initial activities of the WSPU included: establishment of a photographic library; establishment of a media directory; screening of a community service advertisement by over twenty television stations; and direct contact with media representatives which resulted in increased media coverage.

In October 1991 the ASC launched a project on Women, Sport and the Media with the aim of lifting the media profile of women's sport. The intention was to work with a small number of selected sports and a television production agency to develop media packages on their major events. The budget was \$150,000, and submissions from gymnastics, equestrian, diving, canoeing, waterskiing, touch and basketball were funded. Subsequent monitoring of coverage showed an increase in exposure of the targeted women's events and individual sportswomen. In addition a program of constructive liaison between media personnel, sports and the ASC along with a number of workshops/seminars was planned to improve the media coverage of women's sports in the long term. The program was designed to provide strategies to assist NSOs more effectively engage the media in covering their sports. Since this time NSOs have become more conscious of the needs of the media. Many NSOs now employ the services of media managers or advisers to assist in a more effective relationship between the sport and the media.

At the same time the Sport and Recreation Ministers Council funded the Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS) Special Sub-committee on Women and Sport to undertake a research project on the quality and quantity of media coverage of

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: *Women, Sport and the Media: A Report to the Federal Government from the Working Group on Women and Sport*. Australian Government Publishing, 1985.



women in sport in Australia. The project was managed by the ASC and researched by Dr. Brian Stoddart. Results were published in *Invisible Games: A Report on the Media Coverage of Women's Sport, 1992*. The report noted the 'relative invisibility and poor portrayal of women's sport (when covered) in the media has been a topical issue for some years both in Australia and overseas'. The survey estimated newspaper coverage of female sport at 8% and television coverage 9% and concluded 'while the coverage of women's sport has increased slightly in Australia since 1980, there is still room for improvement'.<sup>2</sup>

Further research was conducted by the ASC (contracted to the University of Canberra Centre for Sports Studies) in 1996 into media coverage of women's sport, which highlighted the continuing selective and inadequate state of media coverage of women's sport. This research was published in *An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia*. This report again notes that participation rates of women in organised sporting activities (44.6% according to a 1994/95 ABS study) do not match the percentage of media coverage devoted to women's sport. The 1996 study confirmed that women's sports were still given little coverage in the mass media outlets of newspapers, magazines, television and radio during the survey period, although there had been an increase in coverage over time in Australian newspapers.

#### **Comparative % newspaper coverage**

	1980	1984	1988	1992	1996
Women	2.0	1.3	2.5	4.2	10.7
Mixed	1.8	2.8	1.5	12.1	10.2
Men	96.2	95.9	96.0	83.7	79.1

*Source: An Illusory Image: A Report on the Media Coverage and Portrayal of Women's Sport in Australia, ASC, 1997.*

The ASC decided not to continue the media research beyond the 1996 study, as it was felt that no new findings would be identified. However, the Office of the Status of Women collaborated with Womensport Australia<sup>3</sup> to produce *Inching Forward - Newspaper coverage and portrayal of women's sport in Australia: A quantitative and qualitative analysis 1996-1997*. The report used the same methodology as the studies cited above to enable comparative analysis of data, and noted that again, whilst both the quantity and quality of coverage had improved, there was still some way to go. Whilst newspaper coverage during the Atlanta Olympic Games was relatively high, there had been no improvement during non-Olympic periods. The quality of reportage and images had generally improved from 1996 to 1997.

In 1990 the WSPU was replaced by the Women and Sport Unit, and was repositioned within the ASC to reinforce its advisory role across all ASC programs. To increase the impact of the Unit, it took on a policy development and monitoring role in addition to promotions.

<sup>2</sup> Reference: *Invisible Games: A Report on the Media Coverage of Women's Sport*, SRMC, 1992.

<sup>3</sup> Womensport Australia, Australian non-government womensport organisation, 1991-2001

The Prime Ministerial Women in Sports Awards were instigated in 1991, primarily funded by the ASC (with sponsorship from Mobil Oil), to recognise exemplary initiatives that provided special support for women and girls participation in all aspects of sport. The Awards acknowledged groups and organisations who had taken special measures to lift the participation and status of women in Australian sport. The scheme also provided two scholarships to aid young women pursuing tertiary studies in a sports-related field. A review in 1996 found that whilst the awards were popular, their relatively short term impact and lack of sustained media interest over time did not justify the amount of time, energy and financial resources required to conduct them. It was felt that with limited resources, greater impact could be achieved through a range of other strategies. Aspects of these awards were then incorporated into a new Active Australia Sport Industry Awards Scheme, and subsequently the current Ausport Awards.

#### **4b. Gender Equity in Sport**

In 1984 the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act* was passed outlawing discrimination on the basis of sex, marital status or pregnancy, with respect to employment; partnerships; qualifying bodies; registered organisations; employment agencies, education, goods, services and facilities; accommodation; land; clubs; awards; superannuation and enterprise agreements. Sexual harassment was also deemed unlawful behaviour. A number of these areas are relevant to sport, and as such the Act was the catalyst for much of the future work done in the area of gender equity in sport.

Following the Inquiry, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, with financial assistance from the ASC, published *Women, Sport and Sex Discrimination Guidelines on the Provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1994*, to help and encourage women to tackle discrimination in sport. The Guidelines informed readers of the provisions under the Act, areas where it is unlawful to discriminate, exemptions and use of complaints procedures, and also provided strategies to overcome sex discrimination.

The Guidelines complemented the ASC document *Towards Gender Equity in Sport: A Practical Guide for Sporting Organisations in Developing a Gender Equity Action Plan* which was based on stakeholder consultation and launched in April 1992. This guide aimed to assist sporting organisations achieve full access and equity for women and girls in their sport. For the first time the ASC incorporated gender equity requirements into the guidelines on the preparation of co-operative arrangements with National Sporting Organisations.

In 1994 *The Brighton Declaration on Woman and Sport* was developed and endorsed by 280 delegates from 82 countries at the first international conference on women in sport in the United Kingdom. An international set of principles was agreed aimed at developing a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport. The Declaration was endorsed by the Australian State and Commonwealth Sport and Recreation Minister's Council (SRMC), Standing Committee on Recreation and Sport (SCORS) and the ASC. Its principles were reflected in *Australian Women and Sport Strategy 1996-2001*. As a result gender equity was included in ASC and State Government funding and reporting criteria at elite and grass roots levels, a gender equity checklist was developed for those responsible for policy/program development and implementation, and SCORS

supported inclusion of childcare facilities in all new sport and recreation facilities funded by Commonwealth and States. Mentoring and role model programs for young girls were also developed.

#### **4c. Harassment-Free Sport**

The ASC works with NSOs, government and industry partners to establish structures and policies that ensure a fair, safe, ethical and inclusive sporting culture at all levels. Programs addressing the issues of ethics in sport include the *Harassment-Free Sport Strategy*, member protection policy framework, education and training, and a program to encourage all national sporting organisations to adopt agreed guidelines on ethical principles and behaviours.

Discrimination and Harassment is prohibited by State and Federal legislation. Sporting Organisations also have moral obligations in relation to upholding the integrity of sport through establishing standards of appropriate behaviour and in providing safe, respectful and appropriate sporting environments. Although some NSOs had begun to adopt Codes of Conduct, an increasing number of well publicised issues of harassment during the 1990s, including sexual harassment, were occurring within local, state and national sporting organisations.

Individuals in sport can be particularly vulnerable because the environment is characterised by close physical and emotional contact. In response to these issues, the ASC, in conjunction with Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, developed an industry wide *Harassment-Free Sport Strategy*. The strategy was based on a revision of the *National Women and Sport Policy*, a literature review and an inventory of research needs. The strategy aimed to contribute to a harassment free, safe and enjoyable sporting environment through a system which prevents and deals effectively with harassment, discrimination, child abuse and other forms of inappropriate behaviour in sport. It included policies, procedures and guidelines for Sports Administrators, Athletes and Coaches.

The *Harassment-Free Sport Strategy* was issued in 1998/99 and was supported by training material, fifteen awareness seminars and skills training for Harassment/Complaints Officers. Positive stakeholder comments on the strategy have been recorded. By 1999/2000 over 100 accredited harassment complaints officers had been trained and seminars had been conducted with all AIS coaches. The strategy was recently reviewed and was realigned in 2005 to provide more educational and awareness initiatives to NSOs.

A key tool of the *Harassment-Free Sport Strategy* is the Member Protection Policy template. The policy template was developed to assist sporting organisations reduce and deal effectively with complaints of harassment, discrimination, child abuse and other inappropriate behaviour. The template provides a general framework of:

- key policy position statements (on child protection, anti-harassment and discrimination, sexual relationships);
- organisational and individual responsibilities;
- codes of conduct that are relevant to all state/territory member associations, clubs and individuals;
- guidelines on state and territory child protection legislative requirements; and
- processes such as complaints handling, tribunals and investigations.

It is a generic document for guidance only, designed to assist organisations to write their own policy and procedures. The template is regularly updated to reflect changes in legislation and sport industry needs. NSOs are advised of updates via email bulletins, the Sport Ethics Newsletter, discussion with Sport Consultants and on the ASCs website.

Under the ASCs funding and recognition terms and conditions, national sporting organisations must develop, implement and regularly update a nationally endorsed member protection (or similar) policy that complies with current commonwealth, state and territory anti-discrimination and child protection legislation, and that promotes positive and respectful behaviours. The ASC monitors compliance and works with NSOs to ensure that their policies are adequate and regularly reviewed to comply with federal and state legislative requirements. At May 2006, funded NSOs have fulfilled or are close to fulfilling the requirement to have a nationally endorsed and up to date Member Protection Policy (MPP) in place. The process of keeping policies up to date is a constant one given frequent changes to state and territory child protection legislative requirements.

More information on the *Harassment-Free Sport Strategy* can be found on the ASC's website at [www.ausport.gov.au/ethics](http://www.ausport.gov.au/ethics). Information on the website is currently being updated including the Member Protection template, child protection information (to reflect recent changes in state child protection legislation), codes of conduct and suggested wording for position statements on pregnancy and trans-genders.

#### **4d. Pregnancy in Sport**

Advances in medicine and shifts in social attitude have led to more and more women participating in sporting activities throughout pregnancy. Issues of liability, and the rights of players, the unborn child, team members, coaches and administrators were therefore examined, to achieve both awareness of, and a balance between, these rights. Based on this analysis, in 1996, the ASC published the booklet *Pregnancy, Sport and the Law: A Guide for the Player, Coach, Official, Administrator and Facility Manager* providing guidelines within which a sport and its participants could operate with respect to pregnancy and sport. The guidelines stated 'it is up to the individual athlete to weigh up the benefits of exercising during pregnancy with any perceived risk of injury to herself or her unborn child'.<sup>4</sup>

By 2002, several prominent Australian sportswomen had been competing at an elite level well into pregnancy, thereby leading the way in changing attitudes about pregnancy in sport. Despite this, legal, industrial, social and ethical concerns relating to the issue of pregnancy and sport culminated in the 2001 controversial ban on pregnant players by Netball Australia. The ban led to legal proceedings and increased media attention on the issue of pregnancy in sport. As a result the ASC, together with Sport Industry Australia, held a National Forum on Pregnancy in Sport in August 2001, and based on conclusions from the forum and other expert contributions, developed *Pregnancy in Sport: Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry* which was launched in May 2002. Issues addressed included: health; insurance; ethical and

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<sup>4</sup> *Pregnancy Sport and the Law: A Guide for the Player, Coach, Official, Administrator and Facility Manager*, Australian Sports Commission, 1996

legal implications; who should make decisions; the rights of pregnant mothers, the unborn child and other participants in sport; and how policy makers balance these issues with the need to ensure that more women participate in sport and physical activity. The guidelines are intended as a practical checklist for all those concerned with pregnancy in sport, but note that ‘because each person, each pregnancy, each legal case and each sport is different, (the) guidelines can only assist in a general way with making decisions about this issue’.<sup>5</sup>

#### **4e. Sport Leadership Grants for Women**

The Sport Leadership Grants for Women is a current partnership project between the Australian Government Office for Women and the Australian Sports Commission (ASC). The program has been in place since November 2002 and has to date distributed \$1,203,000 to 469 projects. While the program originally focused on women in rural and remote communities, it now spreads to women throughout Australia, including capital cities.

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;
- create opportunities for women, including women in disability sport, women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and Indigenous women, to undertake accredited sport leadership training in coaching, officiating, sport administration, sport governance and management;
- create opportunities for women’s leadership development in rural and remote communities; and
- assist more women to participate in high performance coaching and officiating education and development opportunities.

The program provides successful applicants with a one-off grant of up to \$5,000 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 in the following categories: high performance coaching and officiating; Indigenous women in rural and remote communities; women in disability sport; women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and general sport leadership. Projects were identified from the following four project areas: coaching, officiating, governance and management.

In August 2005, the ASC contracted the University of Ballarat (UB) to evaluate the 2005 Sport Leadership Grants for Women’s program. The aim of the evaluation was to conduct an assessment of projects undertaken by grant recipients in order to identify future improvement opportunities for grant categories and project areas.

It was found that grant projects inspired women to gain further education or training, encouraged them to take up roles in coaching, governance and administration, and/or encouraged the establishment of support groups/networks. Assisted the development

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<sup>5</sup> *Pregnancy in Sport: Guidelines for the Australian Sporting Industry*, Australian Sport commission, 2002

of supportive relationships/networks with other participants, quality of presenters, relevance of presented information, and comprehensive, concise course content were all identified as strengths of the grant projects.

Organisations indicated that they intend to provide further opportunities for the development of women's leadership beyond the grant program. The types of opportunities stated by organisations included: continuing with the group or activity; employing a specific person to develop women's leadership; using the grant project as a model for future programs; conducting a forum or conference on women's leadership; running new courses; and applying for more funding. The Sport Leadership grants for Women will continue to be offered in 2006/07.

#### **4f. Coaching and Officiating**

##### ***i. Coaching***

The National Coaching Scholarship Program (NCSP) enhances the development of high performance coaches by fast tracking both the formal education and practical coaching experiences of the scholarship holders. The program provides a placement in a structured high performance environment with a recognised mentor coach, as well as postgraduate studies in coaching and access to other professional development activities.

In addition to the NCSP a high performance coaching support program identifies solutions to issues confronting high performance coaches. The program offers access to high performance coaching conferences, workshops, presentations and networking opportunities. It also works with national sporting organisations in the development of their high performance coaching system in areas such as succession planning.

The ASC's National Coaching Scholarship Program commenced in 1992. It evolved from the AIS coaching scholarship program, and has traditionally been regarded as being one of the best in the world for developing high performance coaches. The program aims to prepare coaches for a career in high performance coaching through a combination of education, practical experience and philosophical development within the best possible elite sports programs in Australia. Sports are encouraged to seek appropriately skilled female candidates for scholarship positions. Some sports may be requested to target female coaches for scholarship positions, particularly those that have few female coaches at the elite level. At certain times coaching scholarships specifically targeting women have been offered to accelerate the development of female coaches at the elite level. In 2004 a review of the ASC high performance coach development programs was undertaken to ensure they were meeting the needs of the coaches for whom they were designed.

The gender comparison of scholarship holders confirms that 40% have been allocated to female coaches between 1993 and 2003.

##### **Male and female NCSP scholarship holders 1993-2003**

	<b>number</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>females</b>	70	40
<b>males</b>	108	60
<b>total</b>	178	100

Source: National Coaching Scholarship Program Tracking Project Report, ASC internal report, March 2004

In addition, in 2002/03, the Coaching and Officiating Unit provided funding support to three NSOs to assist in the development of rural and regional female coaches. In 2003/04 the unit instigated a Female Coaching Grants Program with a focus on retention and development. Twenty-six NSOs submitted proposals and three (Gymnastics Australia, Australian Soccer Association and Hockey Australia) were recommended for annual funding support over a three year period.

Currently the ASC collation of statistics of coaching accreditation levels shows a consistent drop by both men and women as high levels of accreditation are attained. Remarkably between 1992 and 2006 there has been a more significant drop in the number of accredited men in coaching.

#### Accredited coaches by gender and level at 1 Jan 1992 and as at 19 May 06\*

	2001			2006		
	Male	Female	Female %	Male	Female	Female %
<b>Level 1</b>	59211	25978	30	41,557	23,302	36
<b>Level 2</b>	8242	1792	18	4,187	1,630	28
<b>Level 3</b>	1167	149	11	999	170	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>68620</b>	<b>27919</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46,743</b>	<b>25,102</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: ASC coaching accreditation database (\*2006 figures still to be received from Netball, Rugby League and Union, AFL, Cricket and Football).

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 still of concern.

Further, the figures show a significant difference between numbers of male and female coaches, which becomes more pronounced as the level of accreditation increases.

#### ii. Officiating

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 and high performance levels. However, there is still an imbalance between male and female accredited officials.

#### Accredited officials by gender and level as at 19 May 2006

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

Source: ASC officiating accreditation database

The National Officiating Scholarship Program (NOSP) aims to assist in the development of potential high performance officials. The program is built on the desire to provide a future pathway for the officials upon completion of the

scholarship. The scholarships are aimed at the high performance level official and conducted over a calendar year.

An officiating scholarships pilot study commenced in March 2003, as a “Year of the Official” initiative. In October 2003, the Minister formally launched the program as part of the Year of the Official with three sports involved in a pilot program. Based on a review of the pilot program, the ASC formalised the NOSP in March 2004 with seven sports awarded scholarships (1 woman). In 2005 the ASC awarded scholarships to 18 officials (8 women) from 15 sports of which ten were working towards international accreditations. In 2006 funding was awarded to 16 NSO’s to support a total of 20 officials (6 women).

#### **4g. Sport Programs**

##### ***i. Girls/Youth***

In 1989/90 the ASC allocated \$135,000 to the development of a national campaign to promote women and girls in sport. In 1991 the ASC Women and Sport unit launched the *Active Girls Campaign*, to

- encourage teenage girls to become more actively involved in sport and physical activity, and
- increase public awareness of the social pressures and discriminatory practices that discourage girls from fully participating in sport.

The Campaign, conducted over four years, incorporated

- Cinema and TV community service announcements
- Radio talkback sessions
- Distribution of Active Info, a resource kit for schools about girls, physical activity & sport. The Heart Foundation and Women and sport Unit combined to develop the kit which consisted of four introductory sheets and seven issue and strategy sheets. Three classroom activity worksheets were also included with examples of ways in which issues influencing girls’ and women’s participation in sport can be incorporated into the formal curriculum. An Active Girls Diary was also produced.
- Direct work with schools and community groups on sports programs for teenage girls
- The Active Girls Triathlon series - over 130 events were subsequently conducted around Australia

The Active Girls Triathlon series was a substantial legacy of the campaign, having been taken over by Triathlon Australia at the conclusion of the campaign. An undated campaign review paper claimed there was no doubt that the campaign had early impact, and continued to do so. It noted that adult reaction to the messages was varied, however the response of girls was almost unanimously positive. The report claimed that ‘Schools, community organisations and government authorities were developing promotions and sporting programs under the Active Girls Campaign banner, making being an ‘Active Girl’ an increasingly positive experience’. The Active Girls Campaign was discontinued in 1994 due to a change in policy direction, however the Active Girls resources remained available for sale through the ASC publications catalogue.



The Active Girls resources were then reviewed in early 2000 and were found to be dated and would be counter-productive if used in today's climate where the issues are better acknowledged and there is far greater support for the mainstreaming approach. The remaining *Active Girls* resources were removed from sale at this time.

In 1997 the Australian Government launched *Active Australia: A National Participation Framework*, to increase the number of participants in physical activity and ensure they are participating in the best possible environments. Obligations under Active Australia incorporated targeted populations including women, and as such Active Australia resources targeting parents and educators of girls were developed, for example a brochure providing strategies for recruiting women and girls as coaches and officials.

The ASC through the National Junior Sport Program (NJSP) has completed the new national framework for junior sport. The Junior Sport Framework (JSF) supersedes the 1994 National Junior Sport Policy. The JSF is a resource that aims to assist all sporting organisations, including NSOs, to build safe, fun, quality and inclusive environments for the delivery of junior sport. By developing a junior sport policy based on the JSF, sporting organisations will encourage the best possible sporting experiences for young people at all levels; whether they want to be involved in non-competitive activities, learning new skills or competing at an elite level. It also encourages links between sporting organisations, schools (Active Australia Schools Network), government sport and recreation agencies to ensure a consistent approach for junior sport growth and delivery in Australia.

The Active After-school Communities (AASC) program is the major component of the Australian Government's *Building a Healthy, Active Australia* package. It is a free national after-school hours sports program that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of Australia's primary school aged children through structured physical activity. A network of state, territory, and regional coordinators employed by the ASC work with schools and out of school hours care services to help match chosen activities, which include non-traditional, traditional and modified sports, with local deliverers. By Term 3 2007, more than 3000 primary schools and approved out of school hours care services around Australia – from metropolitan areas to rural and remote regions will be involved in the AASC. After the first full year of delivery, the AASC reported in Term 4 2005 that the program was being delivered to 33,193 males and 29,563 females.

#### ***ii. Indigenous***

The ASC works closely with the Australian sporting industry to deliver programs and services to Indigenous communities. The ASC aims to improve the number of Indigenous people actively participating in organised sport and create effective sporting pathways to allow Indigenous sportspeople to attain their sporting goals.

The Indigenous Sport Program supports and undertakes initiatives to increase the participation of Indigenous women in sport through providing access to competition as well as coaching and officiating leadership programs.

Research 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.<sup>6</sup>

Sport is also a vehicle in Indigenous communities to assist with decreasing health problems such as obesity and diabetes (type 2) and also divert juveniles away from risk taking activities (criminal activity, substance misuse, anti-social behaviour). The high rate of teen pregnancies is also an area of concern for Indigenous communities and the ISP is working to encourage young women to stay involved in sport after the birth of their children.

The Indigenous Sport Unit (ISU) at the ASC provides two scholarship opportunities for Indigenous athletes. The Indigenous Sporting Excellence Scholarships (ISES) give Indigenous sportspeople the opportunity to improve their sporting performance at an elite level. The scholarships complement, but do not replace, existing mainstream programs and initiatives. The successful scholarship recipients are selected by NSOs and are valued at \$500 each. Below is a table showing the number of female and male recipients since the scholarships inception.

### **Indigenous Sporting Excellence Scholarships**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1997/1998	80	47	127
1998/1999	74	45	119
1999/2000	71	47	118
2000/2001	100	63	163
2001/2002	58	42	100
2002/2003	57	43	100
2003/2004	59	41	100
2004/2005	57	43	100
2005/2006	55	45	100
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>1,027</b>

*Source: ASC Indigenous Sport Unit, 2006*

The second scholarship program is the Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program (EITAAP). This program is 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. It is for travel and accommodation expenses only.

### **Elite Indigenous Travel and Accommodation Assistance Program**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
1996/1997	185	140	325
1997/1998	312	287	599
1998/1999	249	215	464

<sup>6</sup> 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples – Aspects of Sport and Recreation' National Centre for Culture and Recreation Statistics, ABS, 2004.

1999/2000	309	284	593
2001/2002	185	175	360
2003/2004	342	264	606
2004/2005	315	299	614
2005/2006	371	348	719
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,268</b>	<b>2,012</b>	<b>4,280</b>

Source: ASC Indigenous Sport Unit, 2006

The government has recently committed to a new targeted approach to deliver a talent identification program based on the unique potential and needs within the Indigenous community. The program will focus on a selection of suitable sports, in particular athletics, for male and female Indigenous athletes. This program will add further value to the work the Commission currently undertakes with the NSO's through the Indigenous Sport Program.

### *iii. Disability*

The ASC's Disability Sport Unit (DSU) manages four national programs that aim to increase the opportunities for Australians with disabilities to participate in sport, from the local level to the international stage. The DSU adopts the social model of disability, which asserts the rights of all individuals to have equal opportunities regardless of disability, throughout its programs and services. In this way, the DSU works with generic sport providers to ensure that existing programs and services are, as far as possible, inclusive of people with disabilities. This can mean the development of Disability Action Plans with national sports organisations or the provision of education and training programs at the community level. The benefits of participation in sport for women with disabilities are primarily the same for all people, with and without disabilities.

The ASC's *Project CONNECT* provides funds and resources to national sporting organisations to assist them in creating more inclusive opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport.

Through state and territory departments of sport and recreation and other agencies, support is also provided to an extensive network of training agencies to deliver the *Disability Education Program* to the sporting community at the grassroots. Around 5000 people are trained through this program every year.

*Sports Ability* aims to increase participation in sport of people with a disability, particularly those with high support needs. The program provides equipment, resource material and training for the delivery of disability sport activities in special schools, mainstream schools with special education units, and Indigenous communities across Australia. Sports Ability has been funded under the Commonwealth Games M2006 Legacy Program.

## 5. Women and Sport at the ASC – Moving Forward

In 2003 the ASC conducted the *Sport Needs More Women Forum*, the second major national conference on women and sport. The outcome of the forum identified the need for practical strategies and initiatives to assist the sporting industry deliver better service and education opportunities to current and potential members and also highlighted the need for further work to be done in the area of leadership to increase the number of women in key decision-making roles in sport.

The way sporting organisations operate is a reflection on the way society more broadly is organised, around the roles, responsibilities, activities and contributions of women and men. Carolyn Hannan, Director, UN Division for the Advancement of Women recently stated that “society dictates what is expected, allowed and encouraged in relation to what women and men do in different contexts”.<sup>7</sup>

The ASC promotes the philosophy of inclusion throughout its programs, which inherently includes the active involvement of women. In respect of women’s involvement this inclusion is considered more broadly to be mainstreaming,

*“Mainstreaming is not about adding a “woman’s component” or even a “gender equality component” into an existing activity, it is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels.”*<sup>8</sup>

Organisational change is a slow process and sport is still bound by some of its traditional constraints and practices, which inherently do not engage the full involvement of their sports demographic. Carolyn Hannan, Director, UN Division for the Advancement of Women also stated that most inequalities which still exist in sport are “often subtle and insidious and can require considerable courage to confront them, particularly where taking a stand for gender equality and empowerment of women can lead to ridicule or harassment. Only if individual women and men are prepared to make a stand will real change be possible”.<sup>9</sup>

Women in sport issues can no longer be addressed in isolation of the myriad of other factors impacting on not only sport, but society more broadly.

### 5a. Business Development Framework for NSOs

The ASC has developed an analysis framework ‘Building a Better Sport: Better Management Practices – Pilot Program’ to assist sports to develop more effective management practices. The framework is based on research as well as consultation with a number of NSOs. The program is designed to fit as part of the ASC’s overall objective work towards developing support and resources for national sporting organisations as part of its effective national sporting organisation strategy.

The draft National Analysis Framework was designed as a business development tool for NSOs to improve their business practices across their organisation. The

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<sup>7</sup> Carolyn Hannan, Director, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 2006

<sup>8</sup> International Labour Organisation, Gender Equality Tool, 2002

<sup>9</sup> Carolyn Hannan, Director, UN Division for the Advancement of Women, 2006

management tool is designed to tackle gender inequality by using a focus which addresses the complete nature of gender issues in sport and society, as a subset of broader processes to improve leadership, strategy and operations, by using generally accepted (good practice) management improvement tools and by adopting strategies that are driven by both a moral and compelling business case. The framework component assists NSOs to identify key problems that cause, and are caused by, the exclusion of women, with a series of strategy statements and guidelines on how to address the key problem areas. The report card provides NSOs with a self assessment measurement tool, where identified strategies and guidelines can be visibly measured through quantifiable indicators. On completion of the pilot and subsequent review, the ASC intends to make the Framework available to all NSOs.

### **5b. Leadership – Governance and Management**

On reflection of the past twenty years of achievements in women and sport, the ASC has successfully undertaken initiatives which have made positive changes to behaviours within sport. Despite these efforts, change has been slow in the recognition, recruitment and retention of women's involvement in all areas, but particularly in leadership roles within sport.

Good governance and management is crucial to sporting organisations achieving membership growth and sustainable sporting excellence. The ASC services and funds national sporting organisations to support all aspects of their operations and ensure they are accountable and transparent. The ASC assists these organisations to improve their governance and management structures and processes to ensure they are operating soundly and conform to current legislation and good practice.

In 2005 the number of women on NSO boards was 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% of executive officer positions in the top 40 funded NSOs. Comparatively there is no benchmarking data available in the not-for profit sector, however the NSO position is consistent with corporate Australia where in the ASX200 companies women hold only 8.6% of board positions and 10.2% of executive management positions.<sup>10</sup> Whilst the International Olympic Committee has set membership quotas for National Olympic Committee Executives to meet 20% female representation by December 2005, it is acknowledged that this is having or will have little impact on International Sporting Federations and their member organisations.<sup>11</sup>

The ASC is committed to providing skill development opportunities for women through the Sport Leadership Grants for Women. Through these grants the outcomes will continue to be positive for those women and their sporting organisations who gain benefit from them. Women in board/committee, management, coaching and officiating will remain the primary target for these grants, providing opportunities for women to attain valuable skills where those opportunities may not currently exist.

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<sup>10</sup> Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, 2006 Women in Leadership Census

<sup>11</sup> Women, Leadership and the Olympic Movement, Loughborough University, January 2004

### **5c. Media**

The ASC recognises that the media coverage for women in sport needs to be improved. Media coverage contributes to promoting greater public awareness about the status and role played by women in sport, particularly in leadership and decision making positions. Consistent media coverage can provide a sport with a visual profile, select positive role models and, by increasing spectator appeal, it can help attract lucrative sponsorship opportunities. Currently there appears to be little corporate interest in sponsorship towards women's sport appearing on national television, either through free to air or subscription television.

Role models participating in their sports can be a motivation for others to participate. If Government were to increase investment in women's sport then opportunities to broadcast women's events would be a worthwhile investment.

Work undertaken in the early 1990s in the area of Women, Sport and the Media had early success in identifying strategies to raise the profile of women's sport. Education programs for both sports and the media had a strong impact, and the work undertaken in television production of special women's sport packages was particularly successful in increasing exposure of women's sporting events and female athletes. The program aimed to educate NSOs on strategies to engage the media more effectively, which could be continued beyond this introductory program led by the ASC. Many sports now employ the services of media managers or advisers to assist in further building relationships between the sport and the media.

Whilst the relationship between sport and the media has improved it still requires further work and women's sport coverage is one of the issues presently being addressed as part of a broader ASC strategy to address media coverage of sport. It should be noted however, that the high cost of television production is likely to prohibit meaningful results without significant investment.

### **5d. High Performance Coaching**

In another area of leadership in sport, the number of women in high performance coaching roles also remains at a low level, despite considerable numbers of women gaining accreditation at lower levels. There remains a culture within sport which makes it difficult for women to attain national level coaching appointments. Policies and procedures for the appointment of national coaches require ongoing revision by the NSO to ensure accessibility and transparency of appointment opportunities.

In addition to these processes, sports need to address opportunities for the ongoing development of high performance coaches seeking a coaching career at an elite level. In the pursuit of these high performance coaching opportunities women are often further challenged by additional factors affecting their coaching aspirations. Problems typically cited for women in the coaching profession as burnout, lack of financial incentive, lack of experience, family conflicts, (and) discrimination<sup>12</sup> continue to see a lack of women in these roles.

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<sup>12</sup> Canadian Journal for Women in Coaching Online, Coaching Association of Canada, March 2001, Vol 1, No. 4

The ASC will continue to support the NSOs in the development of high performance coaches and officials through its programs. In particular the Government's recent initiatives to introduce a national coach career and education program will support this endeavour.

### **5e. Sport Programs**

At a participation level the ASC continues to provide development opportunities supporting the community club level sporting organisations through the Club Development Network, AASC and Community Coach project. Inherently this work is aimed at improving their operational activities and providing an environment that attracts and retains both athletes and volunteers in sport. Anecdotally there are many women involved at a community level in both leadership and non-leadership roles. However, relatively few of these women are choosing to progress further to a state or national level.

The ASC is committed to providing inclusive opportunities for people within the Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities as well as people with a disability to be actively involved in sport. Participation by women in these targeted population areas remains low and the unique nature of the constraints on these women by their ability level, cultural, religious or social constraints make them important to be considered within the inclusive environment the ASC promotes. It is not necessary to deal with these issues in exclusion to the broader programs, however it remains important for consideration to be given to them when programs are developed, as has been done with the National Junior Sport Framework, the Active After Schools Communities Program and Project CONNECT to name a few.

### **5f. Research**

There is a need for some current relevant data and research collection in the area of women in sport. Much of the research that exists is more reflective of historical representations of women and sport. Some areas where further research could assist is in the areas of women's sport coverage and representation in the media, women in leadership positions, women in high performance coaching, coaching female athletes, health issues including the female athlete triad (disordered eating, amenorrhea, osteoporosis), women in disability sport and Indigenous women in sport. To date little research has been undertaken in these areas due to the lack of available resources. In order to undertake this research more financial resources would be required.

The OfW are currently undertaking research to examine how CALD women participate in sport activities, which has been highlighted as a research need through the Sport Leadership Grants for Women.

## **6. Conclusion**

The ASC is committed to building and supporting a viable, sustainable sport system. Integral to this is the continuing work with national sporting organisations to facilitate structural and cultural changes in sport to provide a rewarding experience for all Australians from grassroots to an elite level. This philosophy inherently requires the full involvement of women and men in all aspects of sport, through programs of inclusive participation and meeting the needs of the broad demographic that constitutes the Australian sporting community.

The ASC is committed to supporting:

- The provision of leadership education opportunities for women in all areas of sport, from governance and management to high performance coaching and officiating.
- The visibility of all Australian sport through media coverage of professional and non-professional sporting events.
- National sporting organisations improving and developing their business and organisational practices.
- The provision of opportunities within sport for all Australian women and girls, regardless of social, economic, cultural or physical backgrounds and circumstances.
- The collation and sharing of relevant research to enable the ASC to predict future trends which will in turn guide and support the development of programs delivered to sport.



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