



Hockey Australia Submission

Senate Inquiry into Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia

Introduction

Hockey Australia Inc was established on 1 January 2001 following the amalgamation of the previously separate men's and women's national bodies, the Australian Hockey Association and the Australian Women's Hockey Association. This amalgamation was in response to the requirement by the International Hockey Federation that all national associations be amalgamated by October 2000. Support was also provided by the Australian Sports Commission to assist with the amalgamation process.

Both the men's and women's associations had a long history and tradition in leading the sport of hockey in Australia with women's hockey commencing in 1910 and men's hockey in 1925. The international success of the men's and women's national teams has been significant and grass roots participation continues to grow. The sport provides for participation from age 6 to 76, from boys and girls participating in Hook in2 Hockey and Rookey to men and women playing Vets Hockey at a local and international level. Hockey has been a sport that has always provided opportunities for men and women and continues to do so as an amalgamated body.

Governance

To ensure that each Association was equally acknowledged and represented in the new amalgamated body, the principle of equal representation was enshrined in the interim constitution and later embodied in the constitution now guiding Hockey Australia.

The interim constitution covered the period 1 January 2001 to 1 January 2003 and consisted of an 8 member Board, four members of each gender. The interim constitution also included that if the President was of one gender, the Vice President would be of the opposite gender. Since the first interim Board of January 2001 the President of Hockey Australia has been Mrs Pamela Tye.

The interim constitution was amended in November 2003 and in respect to gender now reads:

"14.5 No one gender to constitute less than 35% of the Board's elected membership."

Whilst it was important for the new Association to embody this principle of equity it was also important for it to provide leadership and model this principle and structure to its member states.

Hockey Australia indicated to all its state members that it would encourage and support them to become amalgamated associations and in 2005, NSW became the final state association to amalgamate. Those states that amalgamated after the formation of Hockey Australia have adopted similar gender principles in their constitutions, although greater constitutional consistency amongst all member states and the national body is yet to be achieved.

As an example the NSW interim constitution provided for a Board of 4 representatives from the previous men's and women's association. The President and Vice President (opposite genders) would hold office for three years and two Board members, also of opposite genders, would hold office for 2 years. After the two year interim constitution the final constitution follows the Hockey Australia principle that no one gender shall constitute less than 35% of the Board's elected membership.

Currently four of the state presidents are female in addition to the national president. However whilst states aim to be gender inclusive there is one state board that has no female board member. This state was one of the first states to amalgamate in the early 1990s and their constitution has never provided for any gender balance and is reluctant to do so. In two states, Tasmania and Western Australia the Executive Officers of the Association are women.

In addition to the formal constitution requirements, Hockey Australia has taken these principles of gender equity into its policies and practices. All operating committees or commissions of Hockey Australia must have a gender balance. When nominations or recommendations for committees are presented to the Board for approval, the Board has steadfastly refused to finalise a committee or commission until it has achieved a gender balance. This has often resulted in committees having to seek out new members to achieve this outcome but all have complied.

The other key governance principle adopted by the Hockey Australia Board is that all resources are to be allocated equitably between the men's and women's programs, at all levels. In 2002 when the Hockeyroos were sponsored by ANZ the finances were adjusted in such a manner that there was no disadvantage to either the men's or women's programs.

On the international stage women have also been well represented in the governance of the International Hockey Federation (FIH). The current HA President Mrs Pamela Tye was a Vice President of the FIH for 4 years and women members have been represented on the Athletes Commission, Development and Coaching Commission and the Rules Commission.

Athlete support

Hockey Australia manages and supports two national teams, the Hockeyroos and the Kookaburras. These teams have a very successful record at World, Olympic and Commonwealth Games with the current men's team Olympic Champions and the women's team having won three Olympic Gold medals.

These teams and the supporting national junior teams and squads are supported through funding received from the Australian Sports Commission and support from the Australian Institute of sport. The programs and program staff are similar for both the men's and women's programs and funding is provided on an equitable basis to enable both teams to participate in the international program which is also similar in nature.

Support for players is provided through the Australian Government's Direct Athlete Support scheme, from HA resources and through the Australian Olympic Committee'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 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 require 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.

Media

The media profile of the men's and women's teams is quite reasonable. This is achieved by Hockey Australia dedicating resources to employing a communications coordinator at the national office and supporting them to attend events and to prepare and lodge media stories with the local and national media outlets.

To support the profiling of major events in Australia, Hockey Australia has bought TV production and air time to ensure coverage of the events. The International Hockey Federation will attempt to sell off the feed to other participating countries to help offset the

costs to Hockey Australia. For the 2002 Women's World Cup in Perth and the 2005 Women's Champion's Trophy in Canberra, Hockey Australia provided some total of \$450,000 to help broadcast the events in Australia.

Profiling the players in the media is a constant challenge and efforts are made equally for both teams. The Hockey Australia website newsletter and other publications also ensures that both the men's and women's teams and players are profiled equally.

Corporate support

Currently neither the men's or women's team receive sufficient corporate support, despite their high profile and track record of success. This is not without considerable effort and cost by Hockey Australia to secure corporate support for the teams.

The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has secured 4 global sponsors and provides these sponsors naming rights of the international events that are under the auspices of the FIH. Whilst this provides some income for events hosted in Australia, there is limited opportunity to seek Australian sponsors to these major events and to package up a sponsorship deal that includes both the event and the national teams. This further reduces the 'product' that Hockey Australia has to sell and to thus find additional support for the players. In addition the restrictions imposed by the Olympic Insignia Protection Act, further impacts on the ability to secure high level sponsorships.

Coaching (high performance)

High performance coaching is the one area where Hockey Australia has struggled to achieve gender equity.

The five full-time national team coaches are male. The scholarship coach and two part-time consultant coaches attached to the women's program are female.

Of the state based National Training Centre coaches employed full time by state institutes and Hockey Australia, only two of the thirteen coaches are women. Currently at the international level the top ten ranked women's teams are all coached by males.

To examine the reasons for the lack of women coaches Hockey Australia has surveyed its former elite women's players indicating that many of these potential coaches were pursuing career and family options and were reluctant to seek a coaching career. Given the strong view still held in sport about women's ability to coach men's teams there are consequently less opportunities available to women whilst it is sometimes considered preferable, even by women athletes, that men coach women's teams, particularly at the elite level.

In 2005 Hockey Australia introduced a women's coaching apprenticeship scheme aimed at developing potential elite women coaches. A small funding grant was secured from the ASC and with a financial and resource commitment by Hockey Australia, the program 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 and grow, greater financial support is required over a longer period of time.

Participation

According to the HA census conducted in 2005, there were 68,247 (52.7%) registered male hockey players and 61,144 (47.3%) female.

Coaching and Officiating (general)

Hockey has 6,922 accredited coaches made of:

Female:	3100 (45%)
Male:	2,192 (55%)

There are 4,216 accredited officials made up of:

Female:	2,024 (48%)
Male:	2,192 (52%)

International Performance

The Australian women's team, the Hockeyroos has an enviable record in major competitions including:

- 3 Olympic Games Gold Medals
- 2 Commonwealth Games Gold Medals
- 2 World Cups
- 6 Champions Trophies

Conclusion

Hockey in Australia has a strong tradition of participation and involvement by men and women. Both men and women have independently governed and managed their respective programs and this experience created the expectations that each will continue to be equally involved in the future. Hockey Australia has firmly adopted these principles both in its constitution and in its practices. Whilst many challenges still remain for the sport to grow its profile and base and support its teams and programs the principles of equity are part of its culture and are demanded by its members.