



Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia

*Terms of Reference
Cricket Australia submission*

Overview

Increasing the involvement of women in cricket is a major priority for Cricket Australia, as detailed in our formal strategic plan, *From Backyard to Baggy Green 2005 – 2009*.

Better engaging females as participants, coaches, administrators, spectators, viewers, umpires, consumers and volunteers is a significant component of our formal plan.

As a sport, we understand that we have some further work to do to make our game more accessible, more accommodating and more relevant to females in Australia. In terms of formal participation, females currently account for just over 10 per cent of the 543,433 cricket players across Australia.

Cricket Australia is in the process of developing a women's cricket strategy to understand and address some of the challenges and issues faced by our sport. This includes undertaking research and analysis, receiving advice and preparing formal strategies.

We support this inquiry by the Federal Government as we believe some of the factors that inhibit females being involved in cricket, are the same or similar factors that prevent women from playing and participating in sport in general.

In order to comprehensively address the fundamental issues, greater direction and investment from the Government is critical so that sporting bodies have clear mandates to work toward.

Within the enclosed submission, we provide information under each term of reference specifically related to cricket.

In addition, we make the following suggestions and recommendations for the inquiry to consider:

- Ongoing Government support and investment is essential to understanding why females are not more engaged in sport and recreation, and to overcoming these barriers. Formal theory and framework must underpin any future activity to engage females in sport and recreation;
- Government support and investment is essential to support sport-specific initiatives that seek to increase the involvement of females.

For example, the successful *CricHit* program introduced for young girls aged 8-10 years was an initiative heavily supported by the Government financially, which resulted in a significant surge in the number of young females playing cricket.

We look forward to the findings of the inquiry and, beyond that, to continuing to help promote and involve women in sport and recreation in Australia.

DAMIEN BOWN
GENERAL MANAGER GAME DEVELOPMENT
CRICKET AUSTRALIA
16 June 2006

Terms of Reference

The Senate has referred the following matter to the Committee for inquiry and report by the first sitting day in September 2006, with particular regard to:

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

The benefits are a healthier society, reducing the burden on the healthcare system, decreased obesity levels, people leading a healthy, happy and balanced lifestyle, stress relief.

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;

Cricket Australia compiles a census each year that details gender specific participation and is program related (entry level, school and club).

The following table summarises cricket participation in Australia in 2005-06. Note, a 'formal' participant is defined as someone who has played a minimum of four scheduled or organised matches in a year.

Cricket Participation in Australia: Male and Female 2005- 06

	Male	Female	Total
Club Traditional	301,369	6,884	308,253
Club Non - Traditional	5,936	1,334	7,270
School Traditional	102,098	21,538	123,636
School Non - Traditional	36,684	20,017	56,701
Entry Level	40,552	7,021	47,573
Total participants	486,639	56,794	543,433

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);

Cricket Australia does not - nor do any of our state and territory associations - collect data relating to socio-economic strata, disability, Indigenous or Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) people.

Gathering this information is an important step forward for cricket to gain a greater understanding of our current participants and to attract new communities to the game. We are currently investigating the opportunity to incorporate this data collection in our census moving forward.

iii. constraints, including strategies to overcome the constraints that may prevent these women from participating;

Cricket Australia is currently conducting in-depth research in this area. Anecdotal information to date has led to two key assumptions. Time constraints is an issue affecting female participation generally, and this is highlighted particularly with cricket. Participants traditionally have been required to give up whole days - sometimes weekends - in order to play.

This is being addressed by making non-traditional and modified forms of the game available to participants. Limited-over games have been successful at not only introducing new participants, but also retaining current participants with constraints on their recreational time.

Research conducted on current state under-19 female participants shows a keen interest in the new form of the game, Twenty20.

Another challenge for cricket is overcoming the very traditional male club environment. We are actively encouraging integrated clubs across Australia. Participation among females at club level is very low. This can be addressed by making clubs more accessible to females and by offering more modified forms of cricket at club level.

iv. the effectiveness of current state and federal grant programs that encourage women to participate;

Cricket Victoria was fortunate to be offered the "Women Sport Package Funding" by Sport & Rec Victoria (SRV) and the opportunity to form links with two other sports - Basketball Victoria and Football Federation of Victoria - which will enable us to share knowledge, support and information through our Federal system.

The funds will be spent on increasing female participation and further developing elite pathway programs. This program is driven by the three sports and not SRV although they fund the program.

v. the retention and attrition trends of grass roots participation, including comparisons with male athletes at a similar level;

Participation information gathered shows clearly a stronger female participation base at school level, but then a large decrease at club level.

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

Currently, Cricket Australia's national female athletes do not receive payment. However, athletes do not incur any expenses with all competition, travel, accommodation and allowances provided. Athletes are also provided with access to coaching, sports science and medicine while health care costs are also covered.

Male cricketers at national level are professional, with remuneration provided on a contract basis. They are required to tour for a large proportion of the year.

The international program for the national female team currently offers limited competition. This is due to the restricted number of countries competing at international level and the cost of such tours and competitions.

Retention of elite female athletes is difficult as female cricket in Australia is not professional. This means female athletes must also work (or study) and this is a challenge to balance with the training and competition required at this level.

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;

As above, the retention of athletes at elite and sub elite level is difficult in any sport. Some retention strategies to consider include:

- Offer a variety of competition including limited-over matches which do not take up as much time as traditional cricket matches.
- Offer exposure to best facilities and coaching staff.
- Better assist with family issues and work-life balance.

viii. opportunities and barriers for national team members and competitors in international competition; and

As mentioned above the most significant barrier for our Australian players competing in international cricket is the difficult balance they must maintain between their commitment to cricket (training and competition) and the need to also work full time. Currently there are also limited opportunities for international competition due to the lack of countries playing at this level. Progress has been made with our international athletes no longer expected to bear the cost of any international tours.

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

Currently the Commonwealth Bank Women's National Cricket League (WNCL) is almost totally funded by the state associations. This competition is a long way off being self funded with limited sponsorship and spectator interest.

To increase the viability of this league, the following issues are currently being investigated:

- Increased promotional activity;
- New game formats;
- Increasing media exposure; and
- Increasing sponsorship.

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);

Cricket Australia would encourage further support from Government to open up opportunities for increased coverage of women's sport in the media.

It is the level and type of exposure that are the critical components to providing a greater representation of female sport in the media.

Potential strategies to address increased media coverage for women in sport are detailed below.

ii. the influence of pay television on the coverage of women in sport;

Cricket Australia has recently formed a relationship with Fox Sports to televise men's domestic cricket. Over time, we will seek to input suggestions and take the lead to explore opportunities for women's cricket to be televised.

For example, Cricket Australia persuaded Fox Sports to televise live the ICC Women's World Cup Final between Australia and India in April 2005, resulting in rare public exposure and consequent favourable public response.

In the interim, Cricket Australia is continuing strategies to create roles and recommendations to encourage female commentators to be considered for roles with our media partners.

Meanwhile, a specialist media advisor accompanies the Australian team for international games in Australia to assist with coverage and promotion.

iii. the promotion and publicity of women's National League competitions;

Promotion of the Commonwealth Bank Women's National Cricket League is the responsibility of each state association.

However, resources at this level are stretched which often results in many aspects - including women's cricket, Indigenous cricket, youth cricket – being overlooked for promotion.

Cricket Australia's website, www.cricket.com.au, offers live ball-by-ball scoring of the domestic matches.

Potential strategies to address increased media coverage for women in sport are detailed below.

iv. the financial status and success of women's national leagues;

The Commonwealth Bank Women's National Cricket League is not a profit generator, nor are the men's domestic competitions, because of operational and logistical costs associated with staging a national competition.

Despite the competitions operating as an expense, they provide vital opportunity for players to compete at a high level and gain experience which enables them to step up to the next level – international competition. Thus staging a strong, healthy and successful competition is imperative.

v. strategies to improve the amount and quality of media coverage for women's sport;

- Increase Government funding to organisations who develop specific female sport initiatives to drive participation, promotion, accessibility etc;
- Government grants to fund resources in promotion and media;
- Government grants to fund purchase of advertorials in print media;
- Offer incentives for media to follow/report on women's sport;
- Encourage organisations to integrate and assign resources to the promotion and publicity of women's sport;
- Run media training sessions and workshops to up skill volunteers so they can help drive media coverage;
- Set regulations on the type of images that can appear in media to cover women's sport;
- Government grants for organisations to employ people to focus on women's sport.

d. women in leadership roles in sport, including:

i. the number and proportion of women in coaching, administrative and officiating roles;

Approximately five per cent of accredited cricket coaches are female. By way of example, there was one female among 20 candidates at a recent Level Three (High Performance) course.

Females in administrative and officiating roles are generally very low. Cricket Australia sees this as an important area to investigate and improve in the future especially concerning female representation at board level.

ii. the issues associated with women in leadership roles in both elite and grass-roots activities;

- Lack of role models;
- Limited specific-female training courses;
- Course presenters are rarely female;
- Balancing motherhood

iii. trends and issues for women in organisational leadership roles; and

- Maintaining family and work life balance;
- Achieving an equitable ratio of men to women in general manager and CEO roles.

iv. strategies to improve the numbers of women in coaching, administration and technical roles.

- Provide specific grants for women in coaching;
- Better use of role models;
- Promote volunteer committee work which would allow women who, due to other commitments, have left sport to return in a less official and demanding capacity;
- Put in place programs such as mentoring, networking and talent identification projects, to identify women with leadership potential who may lack the confidence or know how to gain positions in the industry;
- Educate elite athletes on the role and function of their sports' board in an attempt to influence them to return to the sport in a leadership capacity;
- Explore the potential of the sub-elite athlete who realise they are not going to make it to the top of their sport and get them interested in other avenues such as coaching, administration, board leadership etc.

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