

**RESPONSE TO SENATE INQUIRY INTO WOMEN IN
SPORT AND RECREATION IN AUSTRALIA BY
SPORT AND RECREATION QUEENSLAND**

Sport and active recreation¹ are essential elements of achieving a balanced lifestyle necessary for healthy living, enjoyment and socialisation. Their social, emotional, psychological and physical benefits are widely known and accepted. They are valued as cultural trademarks of our society and the economic benefits of sport and active recreation and the role they play in building social capital and community well-being are also now increasingly recognised.

Queensland's lifestyle, climate, wealth of natural assets, rural and coastline environments place our State in an ideal position to provide opportunities for sport and active recreation. The Queensland Government has capitalised on these inherent advantages to support participation in sport and active recreation across the State. Greater participation at all levels also means more women and girls are intimately involved in the future direction of sport and recreation. This is vital if the industry is to effectively reflect their needs, as well as meet emerging challenges and opportunities.

CHALLENGES

Significant support, articulated in further detail below, is being provided at the State and local levels to encourage women and girls to participate in sport and recreation in Queensland, whether through specific initiatives for women and girls or broad and more inclusive measures. However, despite this significant support, unless a number of broader social and economic issues which are barriers to participation for women and girls, are addressed, women and girls will not be in a position to increase their take up of sport and recreation opportunities. These primarily relate to greater time constraints and family responsibilities and include such issues as time poorness, financial capacity, availability and flexibility of child care and support, flexibility in employment and broader social and family considerations. Effecting significant change for women and girls will require support and collaboration across governments.

The broader social issues could be addressed by initiatives that primarily fall within the responsibility of the Commonwealth - the Commonwealth is in a position to support a more holistic intervention to enhance State and local level sport and recreation initiatives through the Commonwealth's portfolio areas of:

- child care, by ensuring the child care regime is sufficiently flexible, extensive and affordable to support women with children, particularly those in employment who may be time poor and therefore less able to commit time and resources to sport or recreation;
- taxation regimes, to support rebates and other opportunities for taxation relief to support working women, women and families with children and various employment options such as part time work, as measures to support sufficiency of income and address time poorness as barriers to participation;
- indigenous affairs, to address a range of social, health and economic issues in indigenous communities which, when addressed, would support greater access to infrastructure and programs to support sport and recreation, and support greater opportunities in time and financial support for women and girls to pursue such activities; and
- health and ageing, particularly initiatives aimed at preventative measures for chronic diseases, to address the ongoing need for girls through to older women to remain healthy and capable of undertaking sport and recreation suitable to their capacity.

¹ For the purposes of this document, the term 'active recreation' refers to "activities engaged in for the purpose of relaxation or enjoyment with the primary activity requiring physical exertion, and the primary focus is on human activity. These activities are not based on formal competition and lack a formal set of rules (other than those relating to safety)". The term incorporates the outdoor recreation, fitness and community sectors of the sport and active recreation industry.

Further assistance by the Commonwealth Government in these areas, as well as ensuring there are sufficiently flexible and available employment options such as part time work, would support the reduction in participation barriers for women and girls, enabling them to engage more regularly in sport and recreation and reap the benefits of a balanced lifestyle necessary for healthy living, enjoyment and socialisation.

SEVEN YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT IN QUEENSLAND

Since 1998, the Queensland Government has placed a high priority on advancing the well-being of communities through sport and active recreation, including through a range of significant initiatives, including:

- provision of over \$140 million over the last seven years to help community based clubs, state sport and active recreation organisations, local governments and indigenous organisations to deliver programs and services to increase participation opportunities across the State.
- best practice advice, resources and information to assist families, schools, child care providers and clubs to deliver participation opportunities. For example, the *Get Active Queensland Children and Young People Strategy* is widely recognised as the most comprehensive program in the nation aimed at increasing participation in sport and active recreation by children and young people in a multitude of settings.
- developing the capabilities of people involved in the sport and active recreation industry through ground-breaking developmental programs accessible throughout Queensland, such as *Locker Rooms*, *Building Active Communities* workshops, and on-line training packages.
- investing over \$400 million in the last seven years in developing state-owned sport and active recreation assets, such as its twelve outdoor recreation centres, the Townsville Sports Reserve, Dairy Farmers Stadium, the Brisbane Cricket Ground and Suncorp Stadium – representing a substantial legacy to current and future generations of Queenslanders; and over \$200 million towards the development of a range of sport and active recreation facilities for Queensland's widely dispersed communities, from walking trails, cycle paths, small-scale venues, and local centres, to major regional facilities, to national and international level infrastructure that also help attract sporting events to the State.
- positioning the Queensland Academy of Sport (QAS) as the leading state institute with state-of-the-art sporting facilities, programs and sport science support the State's athletes' prospects of national and international success; and establishment the first state-sponsored Centre of Excellence for Applied Sport Science Research facility to assist in optimising the performance of QAS athletes and ensure the QAS remains at the forefront of athlete development and support.

While many of these programs and projects are servicing the community in general, women and girls are key beneficiaries of these important Queensland Government initiatives.

STATE COMMITMENT TO SPORT AND RECREATION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women and girls are a key recipient of the significant commitment and investment the Queensland Government has made, independent of Commonwealth Government support, to encourage participation in sport and active recreation by Queenslanders. In recent years, the Queensland Government has invested more than \$79 million in initiatives, programs and services targeting or supporting participation in sport and active recreation and physical activity – including participation by women and girls.

The Active Girls breakfast seminars target young girls and aims to inspire and encourage them to increase their participation levels and achieve their goals in sport and active recreation. The seminars are conducted by professional sportswomen and female Olympians and coaches and includes topics such as "How to be successful in sport in a rural or regional area" and "Achieving success on and off the field". Six breakfast seminars were held in 2005/06 with further workshops planned for 2006/07, building on the success and popularity of the earlier seminars.

The Women in Sport Professional Development and Networking Forums are presented by professional sportswomen and aim to increase women's professional awareness of effective ways to target women and girls' involvement and advancement in and through sport and active

recreation from the grassroots to the elite levels. They also teach women to achieve a balance between work, life and sport. Six well attended forums were held in 2005/06, with more of these highly regarded forums planned for 2006/07.

The Active Girls web resource, currently under development, aims to be a key tool to provide useful information for parents, teachers and coaches about supporting girls to get active and become more involved in sport and active recreation.

The Queensland Government provides extensive financial support to women-specific sports and give priority to projects that will get more women and girls participating in sport and active recreation. For example:

- the guidelines for the Club Development Program and State Development Program rate projects targeting the participation and development of women and girls very highly;
- over \$12 million has been provided to 26 state sporting organisations with significant female membership since 2003; and
- significant funding and developmental support for Womensport Queensland since 1994, the state sporting organisation for women in sport.

The Queensland Academy of Sport, the leading state institute responsible for developing our current and future elite athletes, provides squad programs for a range of Olympic, Paralympic and non-Olympic sports, supporting young athletes who demonstrate the potential to excel in their chosen sport to elite level athletes who are world champions or Olympic/Paralympic medallists.

The Academy's current squad programs provide assistance for female athletes for sports such as cycling, diving, gymnastics, hockey, softball, swimming and volleyball. Additionally, the Academy provides opportunities for female athletes to participate in squad programs for sports not traditionally regarded as women's sports, such as basketball, canoeing, football, golf, rowing and water polo.

The Queensland Government's commitment to women's issues is shown in its establishment of the Office for Women, an agency dedicated to oversee the delivery of the Queensland Government's policies for women, encouraging greater collaboration between government agencies, business, industry and the community to improve the lives of women. The Office for Women achieves this by creating opportunities for women to shape, transform, access and realise the benefits of the Smart State; and meeting challenges in areas where women still experience greatest under-representation, inequity and need.

The Office for Women's key policy document, *Women in the Smart State Directions Statement 2003-2008*, includes a key initiative – the *Smart Women on the Move* strategy. One facet of this strategy targets women's representation and leadership in the sport and recreation sector and includes the development of programs to enhance women's representation in the management and delivery of sport and recreation. In support of this, the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation works with industry, community groups and other government agencies to support women in Queensland gain the rewards of active living.

The Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation, the Queensland Government's primary agency encouraging Queenslanders to participate in sport and active recreation, provides a range of initiatives of which women and girls are major beneficiaries. A number of these initiatives have gained both national and international recognition, in particular the *Children and Young People Strategy*, a flagship initiative, with the Strategy resources sought by governments from around the country and overseas. A snapshot of these initiatives is provided below.

Initiative	Impact
<p><i>Children and Young People Strategy (C&YPS) Resources for parents and early childhood professionals:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move Baby Move • Active Alphabet • Lets Get Moving 	<p>Over 73,990 booklets have been distributed since 2003. The strategy aims to develop children's ability to master fundamental movement skills (locomotion, ball control, throwing, catching, kicking and striking) between the ages of two and seven years old, recognising that the critical period for developing these skills is between the ages of two and seven years old.</p>
<p><i>Children and Young People Strategy Resources for schools and school communities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Get Active Queensland Schools Program</i> • <i>Active School Leaders (ASL)</i> • <i>Daily Physical Activity - A Guide for Schools</i> • <i>Support an Active Learner</i> • <i>Schools Out, Keep Active!</i> 	<p>Schools are where children spend most of their time outside the home and they have an extraordinary influence on the development of lifelong behaviour patterns, not just in the classroom but also from environmental cues, role modelling and peer influence. As the first jurisdiction to introduce such an intervention, approximately 95,000 Queensland children have participated in the <i>Get Active Queensland Schools Program</i>, 5550 resources have been distributed and over 134 hours of outside school hours care has been provided.</p>
<p>Community Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Locker Rooms</i> • <i>Building Active Communities Workshops</i> 	<p>These workshops have provided new opportunities for volunteers, club officials and coaches to deliver programs and introduce initiatives that are relevant and flexible to adapt to the changing sport and active recreation environment. 146 Building Active Communities workshops have been conducted across Queensland, with over 3,598 people attending. 106 Workshops are planned for 2006. 137 Locker Rooms have been conducted around the State, with over 8,663 people attending. 36 Locker Rooms are planned for 2006.</p>
<p>Professional Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Moving with Young People Workshops</i> • <i>Get Active Queensland Teacher Workshops</i> • <i>Get Active Queensland Accreditation Program</i> 	<p>Over 4500 people have participated in these workshops and program that are designed to develop children's ability to master fundamental movement skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching early childhood professionals how to move with young children; • showing teachers how to incorporate physical activity into the school curriculum; and • providing accreditation to school community members respectively.
<p>Funding Programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Club Development Program</i> • <i>Indigenous Community Development Program</i> • <i>Minor Facilities Program</i> • <i>Major Facilities Program</i> • <i>Local Government Development Program</i> • <i>State Development Program</i> 	<p>The Queensland Government invested over \$140 million over the last seven years through Sport and Recreation Queensland's funding programs, to increase the number and quality of participation opportunities provided and increase in the number and quality of facilities available.</p>

Obesity Summit

Obesity and excessive weight gain is a global epidemic. In Australia, over half of all adults and almost one in four children are affected leading to a dramatic increase in chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some forms of cancers. Evidence indicates that due to the current overweight and obesity epidemic, the present generation of children may be the first to die at a younger age than their parents.

Although in simplistic terms personal weight is predominantly a function of an individual's energy consumption and energy expenditure, the epidemic of obesity is a complex issue that is inextricably linked to environmental, technological, social and economic factors.

In addition to the significant efforts already being made by the Queensland Government to tackle this issue (including the *Eat Well, Be Active – Healthy Kids for Life* action plan, the *Safe and Healthy Schools* initiative, the *Get Active Queensland Children and Young People Strategy* and the \$155 million investment in its *Chronic Disease Strategy*), the Premier convened an Obesity Summit held on 3 and 4 May 2006, to identify the most effective ways in which obesity can be tackled.

To support a concerted partnership with the community, industry, local governments and the Commonwealth Government and a focus on multi-sectoral partnerships and coordinating efforts across government, the Queensland Government announced over \$21 million investment in a range of initiatives over the next three years for partnerships, grants, facilities and other resources to help fight obesity. Women and girls are major beneficiaries of these initiatives.

The Queensland Government has established an Obesity Taskforce to progress key physical activity (and nutrition) initiatives including:

- investing \$8.48 million over three years for a State-wide communications strategy involving a social marketing campaign to consolidate and increase the broader promotion healthy eating and exercise; a household information pack containing useful information about healthy eating and exercise for every Queensland household; and a website dedicated to healthy eating and exercise;
- investing \$10 million over three years for a Community Partnership Grants Program for community projects to promote healthy eating and living;
- the Young Athletes Assistance Program to help children and young people to attend sporting meets;
- a new framework to open up school sport and recreation facilities for community use, recognising that school facilities are an important yet under utilised means of providing a diverse range of quality sport and active recreation facilities to meet the needs of schools and local communities;
- Kids GP Campaign – a partnership with Australian Medical Association (Queensland) to extend its campaign. This initiative will strengthen obesity education in the classroom;
- a \$2 million cycle transit centre in partnership with Brisbane City Council;
- Better Choice Strategy – aiming to provide healthier food to staff and visitors at Queensland Health facilities;
- Business Partnerships awards;
- healthy lifestyle programs for public sector workforce;
- developing partnerships with organisations, such as the Australian Breastfeeding Association, to promote healthy eating and exercise to young mothers; and
- sponsorship of the international obesity conference.