

Senator Kate Lundy
Shadow Minister for Sport and Recreation
Senator for the Australian Capital Territory
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator

As the NSW Minister for Tourism and Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women, it was with great pleasure that I received your advice that the Senate had resolved to support an inquiry into women's sport, recreation and physical activity. I congratulate you on your effort in establishing the inquiry.

Please find attached the submission prepared by NSW Sport and Recreation in response to the Terms of Reference indicated in your correspondence.

I understand that a number of state based Institutes and other peak industry bodies are also making submissions to you regarding this issue. Officers of NSW Sport and Recreation have liaised with the New South Wales Institute of Sport, Australian Sports Commission, Womensport and Recreation NSW and the Women's Sport Media Group to assist them with their submissions to you.

I trust that the information provided from NSW is useful and look forward to the outcomes of the Senate inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Nori". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SANDRA NORI MP
Minister for Tourism and Sport and Recreation
Minister for Women
Minister Assisting the Minister for State Development

Attach:

Senate Committee Inquiry into Women in Sport and Recreation in Australia

The health benefits of women in sport and recreation in Australia

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

ABS¹ and other social research confirm strong positive associations of physical activity for girls and young women, with leadership and teamwork skills, skill development, improved self-esteem and a reduced likelihood of making health-compromising choices (substance abuse, physical inactivity, poor eating).

The benefits of physical activity for health and longevity among older adults (50 years or more) are also well established.ⁱⁱⁱ There is good evidence that in addition to reducing the functional declines of ageing, regular physical activity reduces the risk and severity of major diseases affecting women (e.g. cardiovascular and lung disease, diabetes and breast cancer). Regular movement and strength training help to maintain balance and flexibility, thereby assisting in the prevention of injurious falls, particularly amongst post menopausal women⁶.

Physical activity is also known to have strong correlates with psychological well being. Aerobic forms of exercise and strength training can reduce the symptoms of depression,^{iv} and anxiety. Exercise training among older adults has been found to be as effective as anti depressant medication^v. The Australian Longitudinal Study on Women's Health showed a clear relationship between mental health and physical activity in young, middle-aged and older women.

This association is significant, given the high prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders, including social phobias and disordered eating, and concerns about suicide and self harm, amongst young women in particular.

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;

The number of women actively participating in organised sport, fitness and recreation activities

Girls (5-14 years)

Current ABS data^{vi} on children's participation in organised sport¹ and physical activity (outside of school hours), shows much lower participation rates for girls aged 5-14 years than boys across this age group. NSW had the largest gender difference with 18 percentage points between girls (53%) and boys (71%).

Australian girls from non-English speaking backgrounds in this age group had significantly lower participation rates (27%) than NESB boys (50%), and compared to girls from English-speaking backgrounds (57%). Similarly, the participation rates differ between girls (42%) and boys (56%) from one-parent families, compared to children from couple families (58% & 72% respectively). Only 22% of girls from families with both parents unemployed participated in organised sport and physical activity, compared to 41% of boys. Similar patterns of participation in physical activity by school-aged girls (up to 16 years of age) are seen in the 2004 SPAN^{vii} survey results. Girls were found to be less physically active than boys across years 8-10, with girls from low income areas, urban areas and Middle Eastern backgrounds, less active than other students. These findings are consistent with the previous school survey conducted in 1997. The survey notes a positive trend in physical activity levels of both girls and boys (Years 8 & 10) since 1985.

The most popular organised sports for girls in NSW, as reported in the ABS survey¹, were netball (19%), swimming (19%), tennis (8%), outdoor soccer (7%), gymnastics/ trampolining (5%). Girls were reported to play fewer sports, with only 22% playing more than one sport, compared to 35% of boys. Girls also played organised sport less regularly, 45% playing more than once a week compared to 54% of boys.

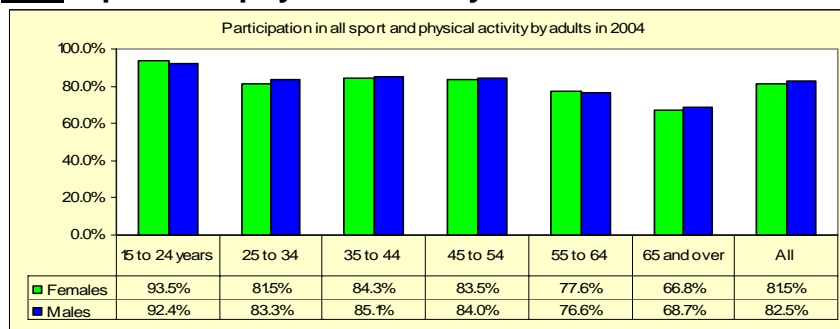
Women (15 years and over)

The recent ERASS survey^{viii} notes little gender difference in participation rates in all² sport and physical activity between females (81.5%) and males (82.5%) in this age group.

¹ (a) 'organised' sport means organized by a club, school, association or other organization and is conducted outside school hours

² 'all' includes both 'organised' and 'non-organised' sport and physical activity

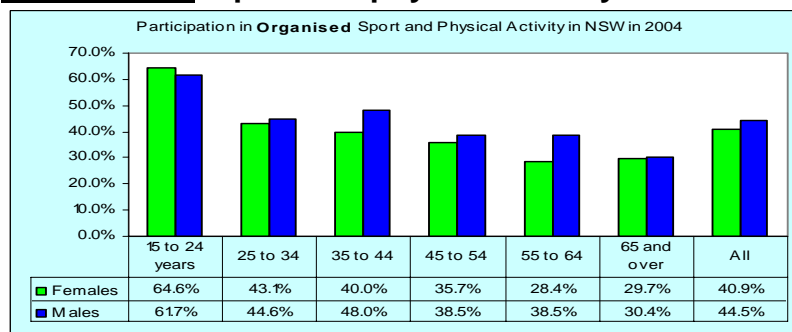
ALL³ sport and physical activity



Participation rates for both sexes generally decreased with age, with females and males aged 15 to 24 years having the highest rates and those aged 65 years and over having the lowest. This is consistent with NSW Health Survey^{ix} data, showing adequate levels of physical activity most frequently reported by all people aged 16-24, and least frequently reported by females 65 years and over.

The top sports and physical activities for women in NSW, as reported in the ERASS survey, are walking (49.4%), aerobics/fitness (19.7%), swimming (18.5%), tennis (8.7%), bushwalking (6.2%), yoga (5.9%), cycling (5.9%), netball (5.2%), and dancing (4.8%).

ORGANISED⁴ sport and physical activity



Women in NSW had lower participation rates (40.9%) than men (44.5%) in organised sport and physical activity across all age ranges, except in 15 to 24 year-olds, where males had a slightly lower rate. The largest differences were in the 35-44 year and 55-64 year ranges, where male participation rates were greater than female rates by 8% and 10% respectively.

The most popular organised sports and physical activities for women 15 years and over in Australia are walking (51%), aerobics/ fitness (21%),

³ 'all' includes both 'organised' and 'non-organised' sport and physical activity

⁴ 'organised' refers to sport or physical activity organised by a club, association or other organisation

swimming (18%), tennis (8%), cycling (7%), netball (6%), yoga (6%) and running (6%).

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 women)

Australian health population surveys identify a number of sub-groups of adults, as having a higher risk of physical inactivity. These include married women, especially those with children, socially-disadvantaged people (unemployed, single parents), people from a non-English speaking background and Indigenous adults.

Constraints, including strategies to overcome the constraints that may prevent these women from participating

There is a complex range and interplay of personal, social, behavioural, demographic and environmental variables that influence participation in sport and physical activity. This is evident in all of the health and sport research in this area.

A review of studies on determinants of adult participation (18 years and over) in physical activity^x cites age and gender to be the two strongest demographic influences, with physical activity consistently higher in men and inversely associated with age. Perceived self-efficacy and social support emerged as the strongest and most consistent behavioural and social determinants respectively, particularly for women. Socio-economic status appears consistently as a major influence, particularly in relation to children's participation in organised sport¹.

Perceived barriers also emerged as powerful influences on participation. An ABS report^{xi} on surveys of perceived barriers and motivators to participation in sport and physical activities, reports the most common constraints for women generally, as time pressures, caring responsibilities and access to exercise. The main motivators were flexibility in activity choice, accessibility and a safe environment.

Among girls 5-14 years, having fun and being with their friends have been found in ABS surveys to be the most important motivators for participation in organised sport and physical activity. A review of literature^{xii} relating to adolescent girls reports positive associations of physical activity with enjoyment, self confidence, self efficacy and physical self perceptions. Parental and family support was also strongly associated with organised sport involvement.

Qualitative research in Sydney^{xiii} found the main barriers to participation for mothers, to be personal resources (time and money), lack of partner support, leisure companions, poor access to venues (including lack of transport) and lack of good quality child care.

Health research points to social interaction and improving appearance as the main motivators to participation in older women.

It is clear from the research that what works for one group of women, in a particular setting, from a particular demographic will not work for all, and in fact may not be effective for another group with similar characteristics.

International and national best practice literature highlight the critical importance of multi-faceted, multi-strategic, multi-sectoral approaches to increasing participation in sport and physical activity.

There are a number of recommendations for best practice approaches to promoting increased participation in particular groups.

For girls and young women - more emphasis on skill development, participation and enjoyment, than on competition; improving school-community links for transition into community based activities, early intervention and re-orienting programs for adolescent girls in relation to choice of activities, structure and dress requirements.

For older women – programs with high levels of social contact, complemented by multiple reinforcements of the physical activity message were most successful.

Health studies also stress the need for properly evaluated physical activity interventions, particularly sport-based programs, so that further investment can be made in programs and strategies that are most likely to result in increased participation levels.

The effectiveness of current state and federal grant programs that encourage women to participate

NSW Sport and Recreation has a number of grant programs targeting the participation of women in sport and recreation. These include:

- Women in Motor Sport Scholarship Program
- Women in Yachting Scholarship Program
- Women in Surfing Scholarship Program
- Women's Sport Leadership Management Program (SLMP) contains three categories targeting women in sport. The purpose of the program is to develop and extend the skills, knowledge and networks of women working in paid and volunteer roles in sport and recreation, with a view to:
 - improving opportunities for advancement in their sport
 - increasing their capacity to facilitate organisational change

- improving sport and recreation opportunities for women and girls.

Scholarships are offered in three categories:

- *International Travel*
 - Three scholarships of \$3,000 to attend an international event, conference or to gain work experience
- *Sports Management and Leadership*
 - Three groups of 15 women undertake a tailored four-day professional development program including:
 - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator
 - Leadership skills
 - Coaching for leaders
 - Goal setting and planning
- *Coach and Official Development*
 - Twenty scholarships of \$500 to undertake education and training in sports coaching and officiating

Over 394 SMLP scholarships have been awarded since 1997.

These programs are effective because they address a number of the core barriers outlined previously, including socio-economic status (cost to scholarship recipients is nil), time management (information provided to SMLP recipients), poor access to venues (all participants are provided with access to venues and financial assistance to travel to the programs). Additionally the programs provide a supportive network for women to discuss issues that affect them. The network continues after the programs have ceased through informal gatherings, phone and email.

The Australian Sports Commission also runs a similar leadership program which NSW Sport and Recreation distributes through its networks.

NSW Sportswomen – Get Out in Front is a joint program funded by the NSW Premier's Department (Office for Women), auspiced by Sydney University Sport and run in partnership with the NSW Institute of Sport and NSW Sport and Recreation. The 12 month project provides promising sportswomen with training in media and sponsorship through a series of workshops in regional sports academies across NSW.

Under the Government's Major Events Program and International Sporting Events Program, funding has been provided to support events specifically for women. These include the Layne Beachley Surf Classic to be held at Manly in October 2006, as part of the World Championship Tour. The NSW Government has provided \$150,000 for this event. Other events include the Opals World Basketball Challenge (01/02), Women's Cricket Ashes Match (02/03), Women's Hockey Champions Trophy (03/04), and Women's International Basketball Series Australia vs China (03/04).

The NSW Institute of Sport is the State's elite sporting centre of excellence, striving to improve NSW representation on national teams and to assist athletes to perform at world standard. Of the 73 NSWIS supported athletes who represented Australia at the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne 42 were females.

The NSW Government supports the Sydney Swifts (Netball team), through the Sydney Olympic Park Sports Centre which operates the venue which is the home of the Swifts.

The NSW Government provides \$2.7m per annum to over 90 State sporting organisations and peak industry bodies to support the development of sport and recreation within NSW. Some of the key initiatives for women and girls undertaken by sporting organisations with this funding include:

- NSW Rugby League is promoting female involvement in the sport by hosting a female volunteers luncheon and conducting workshops in administration and marketing. They are also actively supporting an U16 girls competition, a Sydney women's competition with six teams and will be conducting a development camp for girls aged 14-16 years in the Parramatta area.
- Softball NSW has identified management committees as being the engine room of their sport and are working to upskill female local sports administrators in a range of skills as well as provide them with resources to facilitate local management.
- Netball NSW is targeting women in the Far West of NSW who previously have not had an opportunity to participate in netball competitions. As part of this project, Netball NSW is providing subsidised player registrations, assisting remote districts to affiliate with the state body, developing a regular, structured competition and upskilling coaches and officials.
- Football in NSW is experiencing enormous growth in women's and girl's participation, with an increase of some 20% over the past two years. Some districts in Sydney have had a growth rate of over 100%. The two Soccer Federations are actively working within their sport to ensure that this growth can be catered for into the future.
- Basketball NSW has identified that females are under-represented across many aspects of the organisation's operations. It is encouraging its associations and clubs to develop action plans specifically to address this issue.

The portrayal of women's sport in the media, including;

There is currently a Women in Sport Media Group (WSMG) which was established in 2005. NSW Sport and Recreation has an officer who works with the group to assist them achieve their main goal of more recognition for Australian sportswomen in the media. The WSMG has prepared a submission covering this specific area.

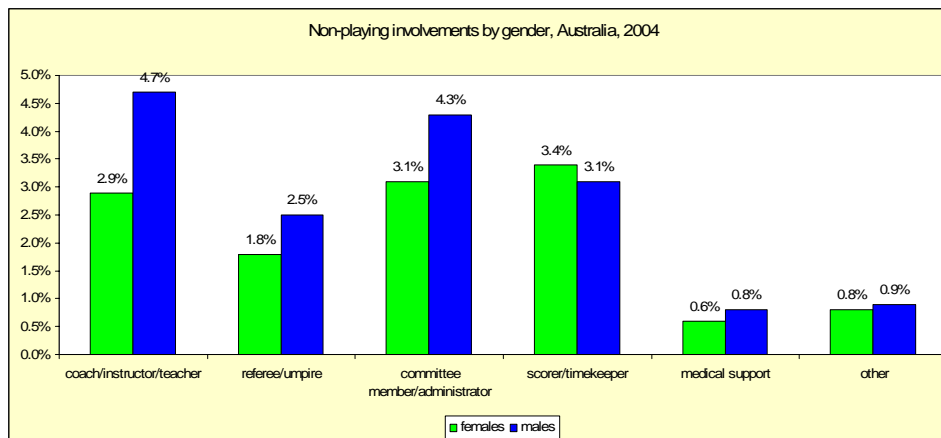
strategies to improve the amount and quality of media coverage for women's sport

- NSW Sportswomen – Get Out in Front is a joint program funded by the NSW Premier's Department (Office for Women), auspiced by Sydney University Sport and run in partnership with the NSW Institute of Sport and NSW Sport and Recreation. The 12 month project provides promising sportswomen with training in media and sponsorship through a series of workshops in regional sports academies across NSW..

Women in leadership roles in sport, including;

- a) the number and proportion of women in coaching, administrative and officiating roles

Involvement in non playing roles - Organised Sport and Physical Activity



There were more than 1.5 million people involved in 2.2 million non-playing roles in Australia, with only 7% receiving any form of payment for these activities. The involvement of females in non-playing roles in organised sport and physical activity in 2004, was lower than males in all roles, except scorers or timekeepers.

The gender difference was particularly noticeable in non-playing involvements such as coaches, referees and administrators where females

were under-represented. This is consistent with national data from the Australian Coaching Council and the ASC, and with the profiles provided by NSW State Sporting Organisations. It is also a global issue.

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

Some issues include:

- Lack of role models
- Lack of opportunity to become Board Members (females tend to be secretaries, males tend to hold Chairing positions)
- Lack of time
- Lack of access (including transport)
- Lack of quality child care
- Lack of support from friends, siblings or parents
- Sporting culture is not always inclusive
- Discriminatory attitudes and harassment
- Lack of information on what programs are available.

trends and issues for women in organisational leadership roles

In 1999, 34% of decision making roles within NSW sporting organisations were held by women. There is a need for this information to be updated so any improvements can be measured.

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

- Equal opportunities for women to take up key leadership and decision making roles in NSW sporting organisations, as managers and administrators, coaches and officials.
- Implementing special measures, where necessary, to address known constraints to the involvement of women in these roles, including changes to organisational policies and procedures.

NSW Sport and Recreation has put a number of strategies in place to address the issues of leadership for women in sport. These include:

- Continue and expand the successful *Women's Sport Leaders Scholarship Program*
- Develop and conduct sports management workshops for women
- Conduct workshops for club administrators on ways to increase the involvement of women and girls as players, coaches and officials
- Establish a network of profiled women to advocate for women and girls in sport

- Facilitate the development of pathways for women sport leaders through networking and mentoring programs
- Conduct a state wide *Women in Sport Forum*
- Work with targeted State sporting organisations to establish targets in their constitutions and strategic and operational plans that encourage greater participation of women in key decision making roles
- Agreeing to support the International Women in Sport Conference in Sydney in 2010.

ⁱ *Getting Australia Active: Towards Better Practice for the Promotion of Physical Activity*. Bauman A, Bellew B, Vita P, Brown W, Owen N. Melbourne. March 2002.

ⁱⁱ *The Burden of Disease and Injury in Australia*. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Canberra. 1999

ⁱⁱⁱ *Older People and Active Living: Discussion Paper*. Premiers Council on Active Living. NSW 2006.

^{iv} *Physical activity and mental health – current concepts*. Paluska S & Schwenk T. Sports Medicine 29. 2000.

^v *The Association between physical activity and depression in older depressed adults*. Blumenthal JA. Journal of Ageing and Physical Activity 7(1). 1999

REFERENCES

^{vi} *Children's Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities*, ABS. April 2003 (Catalogue No. 4901.0)

^{vii} *NSW Schools Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey (SPANS) 2004: Short Report*. NSW Health. Sydney.

^{viii} *Participation in Exercise Recreation and Sport Survey 2004: Annual Report*. SCORS.

^{ix} *NSW Health Survey 2003*

^x *Current Knowledge on the Determinants of Adults' Participation in Physical Activity*. Report for the Population Health Division, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. Frost S, Brown W. School of Human Movement Studies, University of Qld. 2001.

^{xi} *Participation in Sport and Recreational Physical Activity: Barriers and Motivators, Key Concepts and Measures*. National Centre for Culture and Recreation Studies, Report for SCORS. ABS 2005.

^{xii} *Correlates of Participation in Physical Activity for Adolescent Girls: A Systematic Review of Recent Literature*. 2005.

^{xiii} *Busy Mums Wanted: A Qualitative Study of Mothers and Physical Activity*. Lo Casio M, Thomas M, Connelly A. CSAHS, Sydney. 1999.