

Submission responding to:
Inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia

Prepared by:
Division of Sport and Recreation – Northern Territory

The following organisations have indicated an interest in the Inquiry, however, were unable to furnish information in time for this submission. These organisations would like the opportunity to discuss the issues contained within the Inquiry at a later stage:

Northern Territory Department of Health;
Sports Medicine Association NT;
Swimming NT; and
Northern Territory Institute of Sport.

Responses for items ‘a to d’ per the terms of reference provided as follows:

- a) Health Benefits of women participating in sport and recreation activities.**
No response at this time – Northern Territory Department of Health to respond at a later stage
- b) 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.**
 - The participation rate in exercise, recreation and sport by women in the Northern Territory (NT) is 82.3% (54,400 women); and
 - The highest participation rates for women in the NT are in fitness and health activities such as aerobics (20.7%:13,700 women), walking (47.3%:31,000) and swimming (22.5%:14,900).

ii. **Characteristics of women not participating in organised sport, fitness and recreation activities.**

- Language
- Traditional costume
- Religion and culture
- Spouse pressure
- Body image awareness
- Sensitivity to sun
- Sensitivity to heat
- Lack of confidence
- Low fitness levels
- Family considerations
- Work-life balances
- Time poor
- Social non acceptance perception
- Not interested in high levels of competition

iii. **Constraints including strategies to overcome the constraints that may prevent these women participating.**

Constraints	Strategies to overcome
Geographical layout of NT	
Climatic conditions	Indoor facilities and airconditioning, but too costly in most cases.
Small populations	Promoting more movement between regional centres and across state borders.
Remoteness and distance between towns/communities	
Travel costs	Promotion of revenue raising options and funding opportunities to sport and recreation organisations
Limited facilities in smaller communities	
Level of support services, professional development, training mentoring, development assistance	Attract more support and involvement from national sport and recreation organisations and streamline NT support services within the Sport and Recreation sector.
Financial resources	Promotion of revenue raising options and funding opportunities to sport and recreation organisations
Health and community issues	
Exclusive competition levels	Promotion of more social play and flexibility within competitions
Development pathways	
Safety	Promotion of safety awareness to sport and recreation clubs

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

Within the NT's Sport and Recreation funding, women are incorporated as part of the mainstream sport services for the purpose of seeking grants that focus on "opportunities to participate".

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

Although we have no specific NT data to map any trends, we are aware of the high attrition rate in organised sport of women between 15 and 20. This concern has been echoed by numerous sport and recreation providers within the NT. The attrition rate is higher for women than men at a similar level, particularly for organised sport activities.

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

Response to come from the NT Institute of Sport at a later stage.

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.

Response to come from the NT Institute of Sport at a later stage.

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

Response to come from the NT Institute of Sport at a later stage.

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

No information available.

c) The portrayal of women's sport in the media

No information available.

d) Women in leadership roles in sport, including;

i) The number and proportion of women in coaching, administrative and officiating roles.

No information available

ii) The issues associated with women in leadership roles in both elite and grass roots activities.

- Lack of support;
- Lack of resources;
- Professional progression and developmental pathways limited;
- Male domination still present in sports servicing men and women; and
- Attitudes and perceptions from community in favour of male leadership.

ii) Trends and issues for women in organisational leadership roles;

Sports in the NT that attract similar numbers of men and women such as basketball, lawn bowls, swimming, hockey and athletics, appear to be more accepting and supportive of women in leadership roles.

iii) Strategies to improve the numbers of women in coaching, administration and technical roles.

- Working with the Department of Chief Minister Office of Women's Policy, has enabled the inclusion of women in sport on the agenda for women's forums held in conjunction with Community Cabinet meetings throughout the Northern Territory. This activity is intended to kick start discussion, raise awareness, provide a general picture of the current situation and identify issues and possible solutions.
- Trials of two small professional development programs for women at Community S*port events at Mataranka in 2005 and 2006 have been positively received and participants have indicated a clear desire to be involved in sport in their community and to access further learning.
- Sport and Recreation is in discussion with the Women and Sport Unit of the ASC to attempt to secure funding to support two key projects in 2006/2007:
 - A leadership program for up to 20 women to further strengthen the capacity of women to take a lead in the Sport and Recreation industry in the Northern Territory; and
 - A proposed Women and Sport conference in the NT to bring about discussion of issues and identify direction for the future of women and sport.

- Encouragement of indigenous women to attend conferences such as Community Sport and Recreation Officers' Conference held in Katherine in November 2005. Previously female participation in such activities has been at a much lower levels, however the 2005 conference resulted in a 25% attendance of females which was a significant increase.
- It is also proposed to undertake data collection specifically related to women in sport and recreation to map trends and also attitudes and perceptions within the NT.
- Six out of seven Indigenous Sport Program Officers employed by the Division of Sport and Recreation and a large majority of Community Sport and Recreation Officers employed by Local Government Councils in the NT are male. It is recognised that there is a strong need for male officers to effectively work with male populations in remote communities, however, due to cultural and other difficulties for males officers attempting to provide appropriate programs for females it would be preferable for one male and one female officer per region to assist in addressing some of the barriers to participation and positively impact on the involvement of women and girls in sport and recreation in these remote communities of the NT. Lack of financial resources and interest from women for these positions will remain a barrier in the future.

NT Summary

Sport and Recreation, Department of Local Government, Housing and Sport, has an Officer responsible for 'Women in Sport', however, this is not a dedicated position. This situation will not change in the next 12 months, however, we recognise the need to ensure women in sport is maintained as a high profile. As mentioned above we plan to run conferences for women and collect specific data. These activities will be undertaken in conjunction with national and local agencies.

1)Participation rates taken from the Participation in Exercise, Recreation and Sport Survey 2004 Annual Report

2)Participation rates quoted are for females 15 and over.