

Chapter 5

Leadership and Governance

5.1 This chapter reviews leadership and governance issues as they relate to sports organisations. The quality of governance of sports and recreation organisations determines their success in meeting their goals in advancing both grass-roots participation and elite performance.

5.2 Governments have an interest in advancing these outcomes because increased participation in sport and recreation activities plays a role in promoting public health and social cohesion within the community, and is central to creating role models and inspiring greater participation and national pride.

Boards and leadership roles

Numbers on boards

5.3 Women continue to be under-represented in the decision-making structures of sports organisations. Statistics indicate that the number of women on National Sporting Organisations (NSO) boards is at a low level, with a national average of one woman to seven men on boards in 2005. Consistent with this is the low number of women in executive positions, where women hold only 13 per cent of executive officer positions in the top 40 funded NSOs.

5.4 There is no comparative benchmarking data available for the not-for-profit sector; however the NSO position is similar to that of corporate Australia. In the ASX200 companies, women hold only 8.6 per cent of board positions and 10.2 per cent of executive management positions.¹

5.5 Some NSOs, particularly those with greater female participation levels have achieved greater gender-equity in relation to board and associated representation. Hockey Australia stated that its constitution provides that no one gender shall constitute less than 35 per cent of the Board's elected membership. Currently four of the state presidents are female in addition to the national president. However Hockey Australia stated that, whilst states aim to be gender-inclusive, there is one state board that has no female board member. In addition to the formal constitutional requirements, Hockey Australia has taken these principles of gender equality into its policies and practices. All operating committees or commissions of Hockey Australia must have a gender balance.² Hockey Australia noted that 'we are probably one of the more advanced gender-equal organisations in the country'.³

1 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 21.

2 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, pp 2–3.

3 Mr Adamson, Hockey Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 82.

5.6 The Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) is also advancing female representation at board level. The IOC set targets to achieve 20 percent gender representation by 2006 in all National Olympic Committees, International Federations, the National Federations and all sports organisations belonging to the Olympic Movement.⁴

5.7 The AOC technically complies with this target, with their executive board includes three women making up 21 per cent of the total membership. Women make up 25 per cent of National Federation representation to their respective International Federations. All State Olympic Council executive boards have at least one women member out of a possible four to five members in addition to one president, one vice-president and four executive directors.⁵

5.8 However in response to a question about the IOC to showing leadership by encouraging women, the AOC stated:

They are, they (IOC) just have not lived it out in practice terribly well, if I might say so, when you look at the number of women who are IOC members as compared to the number of men. They had a bit of a rush to get a few more, but they have not really increased their numbers (of women) in the last few years. So they still have some work to do and they would admit that.⁶

5.9 Bowls Australia stated that governance at the national and state levels of the sport aims at gender equal representation on the board and council. The organisation stated that this is not the case at the club level and the lack of female representation at this level 'is of great concern to the sport'.⁷

5.10 Some NSOs are performing less well. The Professional Golfers Association (PGA) noted that the numbers of women in leadership roles in its organisation are 'relatively small' and acknowledged that 'significant work' is required to address this issue.⁸ Basketball Australia has three females on the board.⁹ The Australian Football League (AFL) has one woman on its board and there are women directors in some states – 'it is stating to flow through the system gradually'.¹⁰ Only one member of the Paralympic Committee board is a woman.¹¹ Cricket Australia has no female

4 AOC, *Submission 27*, Attachment 3, p. 18.

5 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 3.

6 Ms Brownlee, AOC, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 6.

7 Bowls Australia, *Submission 70*, p. 3.

8 PGA, *Submission 52*, p. 4.

9 Mr Bird, Big V Basketball, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 45.

10 Mr Woodman, AFL, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 91.

11 http://www.paralympic.org.au/apc_sub.asp?id=292, accessed August 2006.

representation on its board but increased female representation is an 'active goal' of the organisation.¹²

5.11 ACTSport stated that of 49 state sporting organisations in the ACT only 20 per cent held the office of president and 40 per cent held the office of executive director. Many of the executive officer positions were however largely administrative roles – not actual decision-making roles.¹³

5.12 The proportion of women on the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) board was 30 per cent in 2006-07 – an increase from 24 per cent in 1984-85. At the senior management level, 20 per cent of executive positions are held by women and 37.5 per cent of general manager positions.¹⁴

Barriers to advancement

5.13 A number of barriers hindering the advancement of women to leadership roles were identified during the inquiry. These included the attitudes and perceptions of the 'male-dominated' sports culture, perceptions and expectations of women, and work-life issues.

5.14 In relation to tertiary education institutions, evidence presented by VicSport, referring to information from Deakin University suggests that, while there was gender balance of students graduating from undergraduate courses, there were quite stark differences in gender representation at the postgraduate level. As enrolments increased in Deakin's Sport Management programs since 1998, the proportion of female enrolment has decreased to 28.1 per cent in 2006. The evaluation also showed that the male students are already established in their career within the sport industry, and are returning to gain new skills for their career development. In comparison, female students are generally young women who are either seeking employment, or early in their career who feel that they need further education to gain entry into the sport industry.¹⁵

5.15 Negative perceptions and unreasonably expectations impact on the acceptance of women in leadership roles at all levels. The AOC noted that women leaders are often described as 'lightweight' and seen in a less favourable light, with an expectation to meet higher standards of performance than their male counterparts.¹⁶

5.16 Ms Reid also commented on the male-dominated sports culture:

12 Mr Brown, Cricket Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 90.

13 ACTSport, *Submission 36*, pp 7–8.

14 ASC, *Submission 30A*, pp 2, 4.

15 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 10.

16 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 3.

Sport is also a reflection of society. In many respects we live in male-dominated society where women's participation...is still seen as symbolic of their stereotyped relationships with men in everyday life. As such, women have to challenge prevailing attitudes that encompass their participation in some sports...and in leadership roles within organisations.¹⁷

5.17 Evidence pointed to the need to change this culture. Ms Reid stated that:

The ability to effect change should not rest with just a few women's sport agencies or individual activists. The authority to increase women's participation and status in sport rests largely with the people who control the national and state organisations as well as the clubs. As previously stated, men dominate management and executive positions and the traditional constraints that cause women and other minority groups to be marginalised in sport are part and parcel of the historical development of sporting culture. These 'leaders' determine the agenda, the budget, allocation of resources and the prioritising of program initiatives. Different attitudes to gender relations must be developed in order to challenge and shift the traditional views that have caused discrimination against women in sport.¹⁸

5.18 Similarly, the AOC pointed to the need to change the structures of sport organisations to advance women:

In many cases it is the system and the way our sport is structured at the lower levels in that we come through a state system. The state nominates people to the national body. To go back to the state level, they are nominated from their clubs. If you look at who runs most sporting clubs, at a local level it is probably predominantly men. They are not going to nominate a woman if they are in the top position. It is sometimes the structure which limits the opportunities for women to take up positions, so you have to start people thinking that they may need to change the structure lower down to give more opportunities to women to come through and sit on boards at club level, state level and then up to national level. It takes time to change those things. I do not see a huge resistance amongst the people who are implementing the structures or the policies as such. I think it is more the structure that would have to change.¹⁹

5.19 Womensport and Recreation NSW commented on resistance to change from some boards and some board members:

...the generic term 'the boys club' can have a lot to do with the influence on policies that filters down to the strategic plan and the operational issues of an NSO. If the board does not see it as a priority, it is very difficult for

17 Ms Reid, *Submission 26*, p. 1.

18 Ms Reid, *Submission 26*, p. 3.

19 Ms Brownlee, AOC, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 7–8.

the management of an NSO to try to make it a priority, because you will get a lot of board resistance.²⁰

5.20 The AOC emphasised the importance of cooperative partnerships between men and women to effect change:

It has been important to acknowledge the support of men in providing opportunities, opening doors, so to speak, and standing beside women as they work towards leadership positions. The most successful outcomes are the result of cooperative partnerships, men and women working together as equals, providing diversity of skill sets and effectiveness of organisational leadership.²¹

5.21 A common reason often cited for not appointing women to leadership positions is that women with these skills are not available. The SA Premier's Council for Women considered that this argument is not based on evidence, since women have these skills and experience, but not necessarily the recognition or the networks to achieve appointments.²² The Australian Womensport and Recreation Association (AWRA) noted that this argument places the responsibility back on women rather than the system and can often generate another batch of 'leadership programs for women' thus starting a vicious 'victim' cycle again.²³

5.22 Work-life issues, including work and family responsibilities, also limit the time many women have available for leadership positions.²⁴ Softball Australia argued that the demands of family life were a key factor explaining why women do not aspire to leadership roles in that organisation.²⁵ The SA Premier's Council for Women suggested that women can be encouraged to take up these positions through reimbursement of child care and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in board work. Mentoring programs can also assist women to develop networks in senior roles.²⁶

5.23 The case for more equal participation of women in leadership positions is strengthened by the fact that women add value to such positions. Research has shown that mixed gender boards achieve high standards of governance and are as profitable

20 Ms Boon, Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 26–27.

21 Ms Brownlee, AOC, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 2.

22 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

23 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 7. See also Mrs Crosswhite, AWRA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 76.

24 Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, p. 17; Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 9.

25 Softball Australia, *Submission 24*, p. 5. See also Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 5.

26 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

(and in some cases more so) as single gender male boards.²⁷ A study of women in IOC governance found that:

[in the] profiles of the women who have since come into the Olympic family, and it is very clear that the women who have come into it are highly educated—more highly educated than the men generally—and they are very committed, very hardworking and make very positive contributions. So that idea of more females in governance would seem to have a very positive effect.²⁸

5.24 Other barriers to advancement include:

- Women may lack the confidence to stand for election, and may have no 'insider' support.
- Women may lack experience of work in key national organisations or international settings – thus the vicious cycle of 'no experience, no opportunity' comes into play.
- Women's networks are often personal relationships; they often lack political and business contacts and the benefits that can flow from these contacts.
- Women lack appropriate role models.²⁹

Advancing women into leadership roles

5.25 A number of strategies have been proposed to improve the numbers of women in leadership roles. These include:

- Rewarding sporting organisations that meet a self-imposed system of increasing the representation of women on boards. Such organisations could receive incentive or bonus funding from government departments.
- The imposition of quotas or targets in relation to the proportion of women on boards. Specific quotas could be imposed as a condition of government funding for sports organisations.
- Amending the constitutions of sporting organisations to enshrine the rights and representations of their members, male and female. This could act as an ongoing catalyst for systemic change within organisations.
- Implementing succession training for potential or new board members on the provision that organisations must nominate both men and women in order to participate.

27 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, pp 20–21.

28 Ms Vescio, Women in Sport Media Group, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, p. 55.

29 Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, p. 17; Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, pp 9–10.

- Implementing organisational change within organisations so that they structure and conduct meetings in a more 'women friendly' way in terms of when they are held and how long they run.
- Encouragement of national sport organisations to support women as leaders through the use of leadership training, and conference participation.
- Providing networking opportunities for women working in the sport and recreation industry;
- Providing practical professional development opportunities which better equip women to discharge their duties.
- Providing mentoring and/or apprenticeship programs for women administrators and board members;
- Providing role models for women aspiring to work in the industry.
- Encouraging organisations to actively target women to take on leadership roles.
- Addressing work-life issues, including work and family responsibilities. Women could be encouraged to take up these positions through reimbursement of child care and out-of-pocket expenses incurred in board work.³⁰

5.26 In relation to the imposition of quotas, the AWRA argued that sporting organisations that receive government funding should provide female board representation of 10 or 20 per cent by 2007 and that this proportion should gradually increase over the next 10 years.³¹ Womensport and Recreation Victoria argued that sports with less than 10 per cent female board membership should be identified and mechanisms put in place to match these organisations with skilled women on board positions.³²

5.27 The SA Premier's Council for Women stated that equity on boards is achievable when 50 per cent targets are set to be achieved within specified timelines. South Australia's Strategic Plan has set targets to appoint 50 per cent women as chairs on State Government boards and committees by 2006 and of chairs by 2008. When the plan was launched in 2004, there were 32 per cent of women on boards. The target helped achieve 40 per cent representation of women on boards as at June 2006. Legislation in South Australia also requires private organisations to consider gender balance in their board appointments.³³

30 AWRA, *Submission 71*, pp 7–8; Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, pp 17–18; SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

31 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 7.

32 Womensport and Recreation Victoria, *Submission 55*, p. 10.

33 SA Premier's Council for Women, *Submission 57*, p. 20.

5.28 Some evidence to the inquiry, however, opposed the imposition of quotas, arguing that the best person selected for the job – whether male or female – should be appointed.

...I would never like to think that I had been given a role or a job because I was a female. I would want to be given a job because I personally felt I was the best person for the job...That does not necessarily sit for every female out there who feels confident. It depends on the situation. It depends on the broader context that you are talking about, and I think it has to be very well managed if you are going to do it, so that we do not end up in a situation where we have the naysayers saying, 'She was only ever given a job because she is female.'³⁴

5.29 Another perspective was offered by Ms Brownlee:

Affirmative action, to my understanding, is putting in place regulations, bylaws or a commitment to making sure that men and women are provided equal opportunities to take up positions and equal support, whether that is financial or in resources or additional personnel. I certainly do not believe in quotas. I think that sometimes gives the wrong message and that people are put into positions where they should not be. I definitely believe you should have the best person for the job, whether they are male or female; but affirmative action sometimes is necessary to get people thinking that we do not need a committee of all men or all women. We need the balance.³⁵

5.30 Submissions argued that there needs to be culture change within sports organisations to advance women in leadership roles. The AWRA noted that :

The crux of the issue for women's representation is that the sport system itself needs to be influenced to increase the participation of women. To do this, the traditional male structures of sport need to be the focus of change for women. A new paradigm of attacking the issues facing women is required.³⁶

5.31 Witnesses noted the often daunting experience of sitting on male-dominated boards. Ms Roffey stated that:

Every day I go to meetings where I am the only female—for example, sitting in the AFL boardroom. It is quite an austere setting to be sitting in. You really have to hold your own in there. Every time you say something it has to be sensible and relevant, sometimes to a much greater degree than what some of my male colleagues around the table might say.

I was speaking to one of the women involved with the AFL commission. On her first day, she said, she turned up and there were two men's name tags to either side of hers. The men picked up their name tags and put them

34 Ms Roffey, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 13.

35 Ms Brownlee, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 5–6.

36 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 6.

on the other side of the table, to make the point that they really did not want her there.³⁷

5.32 The Confederation of Australian Sport argued that sports organisations need to be adequately resourced to effect change:

Compared to the corporate sector, most sporting organisations are comparatively poorly resourced and as such cultural change will inevitably lag behind what is occurring in the corporate sector.

...in appointing successful and talented women to leadership roles, the government, the ASC and sporting agencies themselves must provide the facilities that support those women in their job....sporting organisations [need to be] assisted with the resources available to them to support women in leadership roles, and concomitantly encouraged to create flexible workplaces.³⁸

5.33 Evidence indicated that there were benefits in investing in skills development for women sport administrators to encourage them to take on more senior roles in organisations.³⁹ The AOC has conducted workshops on leadership issues, which provided the opportunity for women sport leaders to increase their knowledge and skills specifically in the areas of leadership, interpersonal skills, communication skills and successful team building. The target groups were identified by their sports as demonstrating the ability to be a potential leader, and one nomination was accepted from each organisation. In addition, each sport made a commitment to support their nominated woman in the pursuit of leadership opportunities.⁴⁰

5.34 Opportunities for effective networking were also identified as important. The AOC has conducted workshops covering the areas of negotiation skills, time management, planning/meeting skills and techniques for successful networking. From these workshops a selection of those women considered to demonstrate a high level of leadership potential were invited to a working lunch. This provided the opportunity for a presentation by a leading businesswoman, further networking and positive, supportive interaction.⁴¹

5.35 Submissions also pointed to the importance of using athletes, especially at the sub-elite level as potential leaders. VicSport noted that:

The sub-elite sporting level offers a potential pool of female leaders as yet untapped. At the sub-elite level sit a vast number of athletes who have the

37 Ms Roffey, VicSport, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, pp 12–13.

38 CAS, *Submission 60*, p. 8.

39 Mrs Crosswhite, AWRA, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 75.

40 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 4.

41 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 4.

inherent qualities – focus, dedication and internal drive – which lend themselves easily to leaderships.⁴²

5.36 VicSport noted that an important aspect of developing confidence in leadership is providing these women with skills and knowledge in areas such as public speaking, personal interaction and personal growth and development to help build the confidence required to give back in a leadership capacity. VicSport noted that with an injection of funding, programs such as the Women in Sport Leadership program could be extended to help better prepare elite female athletes to become leaders, and specifically to capture the highly viable sub-elite athlete level as role models.⁴³

5.37 A number of sports and recreation organisations and state governments have implemented strategies to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles. The AOC, as noted above, provides a number of workshops and other initiatives to address leadership issues. In 2005, the AOC conducted a seminar 'Leadership Dynamics' with a strong, yet different, emphasis on increasing the representation of women on boards of our member sports. Given the knowledge that in the world of sport men are required to 'champion' change initiatives along with the women, the AOC looked closely at the board membership of its National Federations and invited those men and women who could effect change within their organisations or be potential board members. Also invited were several sports who had demonstrated excellent management/governance principles and these people were used as leaders for the group workshop sessions. The program presented current best practice in business with particular reference to governance, board diversity and cultural change. The AOC commented that:

Participants appreciated the opportunity to network and share ideas. They viewed the seminar as a positive indication of the AOC working more closely together with the sports and empowering them to make changes at all levels, particularly with respect to increasing the number of women on Board positions. Recent anecdotal comments would indicate that the effect of this seminar continues to influence in a positive manner, the composition of Board members in our Olympic sports.⁴⁴

5.38 Other AOC initiatives included:

- World Leadership Forums – the AOC continues to select women in leadership positions and/or women athletes to attend various national, regional and international conferences.
- Role models – the AOC both centrally, and through the State Olympic Councils encourages athletes to be role models for young people through their involvement in Olympic Academics, AOC Awards and presentations at school assemblies. The impact of athletes sharing their experiences with

42 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 11. See also Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 6.

43 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 11.

44 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 5.

youth is inspirational and has often resulted in young people changing 'direction' and striving to achieve their personal best.

- Recognition – the AOC submits a nomination each year for the 'IOC Women in Sport Trophy' to promote the advancement of women in sport. The award recognises outstanding achievement and landmarks made to encourage the participation of women and girls at all levels in the sporting world by individuals or an organisation.
- Affirmative action – where appropriate, affirmative action has been taken to increase the number of women and achieve an equitable balance of gender. For example, on the AOC Athletes' Commission the Constitution states that of the 8 members elected at each Olympic Games by the athletes, no less than three males and no less than three females shall be elected.⁴⁵

5.39 A number of women's sports organisations and other organisations have developed leadership and mentoring programs to increase the leadership skills of women.⁴⁶ VicSport operates a number of programs including the Women in Sport Community Leadership Program which targets women who have been identified by members of the industry as potential future leaders. In addition to the skill development aspects of the program women are also matched with a suitable mentor to help them achieve in areas they wish to develop.⁴⁷

5.40 State governments also have put in place a number of strategies to address issues of leadership for women in sport. Strategies initiated by NSW Sport and Recreation include:

- Continue and expand the successful Women's Sport Leaders Scholarship Program;
- Develop and conduct sports management workshops for women;
- 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; and
- 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.⁴⁸

45 AOC, *Submission 27*, p. 5.

46 Womensport Queensland, *Submission 39*, p. 16.

47 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 8.

48 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, pp 9–10; Ms Jenkins, NSW Sport and Recreation, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 2 August 2006, pp 92–93.

5.41 The Queensland Government provides Women in Sport Professional Development and Networking Forums by professional sportswomen to increase women's professional awareness of effective ways to target their advancement in sports organisations.⁴⁹ The WA Department of Sport and Recreation is currently developing a leadership program as part of its overall industry training and development program.⁵⁰

The Sport Leadership Grants for Women

5.42 The Sport Leadership Grants for Women provides another avenue for providing leadership skills for women in sport.

5.43 The scheme is a current partnership project between the Australian Government Office for Women and the Australian Sports Commission. The program has been in place since November 2002 and has to date distributed \$1 203 000 to 469 projects. The key objectives of the grants scheme are to create opportunities for women in sport for the development of sport-specific leadership skills and knowledge acquisition; and create opportunities for women to undertake accredited sport leadership training in coaching, officiating, sport administration, sport governance and management.

5.44 The program provides successful applicants with a one-off grant of up to \$5000 for individuals (applications must be endorsed by an incorporated organisation) and up to \$10 000 for incorporated organisations. In 2005/06 \$400 000 was allocated under the program.⁵¹

5.45 Submissions argued that this program is effective, with some organisations arguing that increased funding needed to be provided.⁵² Womensport and Recreation NSW commented that the program is excellent but an increase in funding would allow more participants to benefit and so enhance their leadership skills.⁵³ The AWRA argued that funding under the program should be increased to \$1 million, arguing that the current level of funding is 'too low for real outcomes at the organisational level'.⁵⁴

Role of education

5.46 Submissions noted that another component to preparing women for leadership roles in sport is through the education system including TAFE or universities.

49 Queensland Government, *Submission 49*, pp 2–3.

50 WA Department of Sport and Recreation, *Submission 48*, p. 6.

51 ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 13.

52 ACHPER, *Submission 17*, p. 7.

53 Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, p. 5.

54 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 8.

Submissions noted that courses are now available in coaching, sport management and sport sciences, and that women should be encouraged to pursue these opportunities.⁵⁵

5.47 VicSport noted that:

The issue of tertiary education is an area of specific interest and relevance to the debate around women in leadership roles. As sport in Australia continues on its path of increased professionalism and bureaucratisation there is a greater need for tertiary educated sport managers and sport administrators.⁵⁶

Findings

5.48 The committee found that:

- It is in the interests of the good governance of sport that the full range of skills and experience is able to be drawn from the community. These skills, and availability for leadership, lie with both women and men.
- Women continue to be under-represented in the decision-making structures of most sports organisations.
- A number of barriers hindering the advancement of women to leadership roles were identified including the attitudes and perceptions of the 'male-dominated' sports culture, perceptions and expectations of women and work-life issues.
- It is in the interests of boards to set targets for greater gender equality as this will increase the pool of talented personnel available.
- Strategies need to be developed by governments and sporting and recreation providers to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles. These strategies could include:
 - The imposition of quotas or targets in relation to the proportion of women on boards.
 - Rewarding sporting organisations that meet a self-imposed system of increasing the representation of women on boards.
 - Amending the constitutions of sporting organisations to enshrine the rights and representations of their members, male and female.
 - Encouragement of national sport organisations to support women as leaders through the use of leadership training, and conference participation.
 - Providing networking opportunities for women working in the sport and recreation industry.

55 ACHPER, *Submission 17*, pp 7–8.

56 VicSport, *Submission 31*, p. 9.

- Providing practical professional development opportunities which better equip women to discharge their duties.
- Providing mentoring and/or apprenticeship programs for women administrators and board members.
- Providing role models for women aspiring to work in the industry.
- Addressing work-life issues, including work and family responsibilities.
- Labor Senators have the view that the Australian Sports Commission and NSOs should adopt the provision in Hockey Australia's constitution that provides that no one gender shall constitute less than 35 per cent of a board's elected membership by January 2008.

Recommendation 12

5.49 The committee recommends that appropriate organisations with an interest in women in sport and recreation be funded by the Australian Sports Commission to provide skills training in the areas of leadership, communication skills and successful team building; and that the Commonwealth fund the Commission to implement this.

Recommendation 13

5.50 The committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission continue to provide opportunities for women sport leaders to attend workshops and forums to develop techniques for successful networking.

Recommendation 14

5.51 The committee recommends that the Sport Leadership Grants for Women be continued and that the Commonwealth increase funding for this scheme.

Coaching, officiating and administrative roles

Numbers

Coaching

5.52 Women continue to be under-represented in coaching, officiating and administrative roles. ASC statistics of coaching accreditation levels shows a consistent drop by both men and women as high levels of accreditation are attained (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Accredited coaches by gender and level at 1 January 1992 and as at 19 May 2006

| | 2001 | | | 2006 | | |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|-----------|
| | Male | Female | Female % | Male | Female | Female % |
| Level 1 | 59 211 | 25 978 | 30 | 41 557 | 23 302 | 36 |
| Level 2 | 8242 | 1792 | 18 | 4187 | 1630 | 28 |
| Level 3 | 1167 | 149 | 11 | 999 | 170 | 15 |
| Total | 68 620 | 27 919 | 29 | 46 743 | 25 102 | 35 |

Source: ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 15. The 2006 figures exclude Netball, Rugby League and Union, AFL, Cricket and Football.

5.53 These figures indicate that a slight improvement in the discrepancy between male and female coaches is apparent over time, however the imbalance at the level 3 accreditation level is significant. Further, the figures show a significant difference between numbers of male and female coaches, which becomes more pronounced as the level of accreditation increases.

Officiating

5.54 The current situation in Australia with respect to gender imbalance within registered officials is slightly more encouraging than the coaching area, particularly at level 3. However, there is still an imbalance between male and female accredited officials (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Accredited officials by gender and level as at 19 May 2006

| | Male | Female | Female% | total |
|------------------|------|--------|---------|-------|
| Level 1 | 1864 | 1440 | 44 | 3304 |
| level 2 | 834 | 335 | 29 | 1169 |
| level 3 | 264 | 166 | 39 | 430 |
| High Performance | 63 | 9 | 13 | 72 |

Source: ASC, *Submission 30*, p. 15.

5.55 Some NSOs have achieved greater gender equity in representation of women in coaching and officiating. Softball Australia stated that currently the representation of women in coaching, administrative and officiating roles is 59.2 per cent in that organisation.⁵⁷

5.56 Hockey Australia reported that in 2005, 45 per cent (3100) of accredited coaches were female and 48 per cent (2024) of accredited officials. Hockey Australia noted however that high performance coaching is one area where it has struggled to achieve gender equity. The five full-time national team coaches are male. Of the state based National Training Centre coaches employed full-time by state institutes and

57 Softball Australia, *Submission 24*, p. 5.

Hockey Australia, only two of the 13 coaches are women. Currently at the international level the top ten ranked women's teams are all coached by males.⁵⁸

5.57 Some NSOs are performing less well. Bowls Australia stated that administrators, umpires, coaches and leaders in general are dominated by males at the club level – this was attributed to the low female membership base.⁵⁹ Cricket Australia noted that approximately five per cent of accredited coaches are female. Females in administrative and officiating roles are generally 'very low'. Cricket Australia noted that this as an important area to investigate and improve in the future.⁶⁰

Barriers to advancement

5.58 A number of specific barriers women face in advancing in coaching, officiating and administrative roles were raised in evidence. Many of the barriers were similar to those identified earlier in the chapter relating to barriers limiting the advancement of women to leadership roles.

5.59 Some of the barriers included the 'male-dominated' sports culture; perceptions and expectations of women; lack of career opportunities; lack of role models; issues of work-life balances; and limited training opportunities.⁶¹

5.60 A survey by Hockey Australia highlighted several of these concerns. The study surveyed former elite women players to examine the reasons for the lack of women coaches. The survey indicated that many of these potential coaches were pursuing career and family options and were reluctant to seek a coaching career.⁶² Hockey Australia elaborated on the findings of the survey:

They were obviously a very high-achieving group of people and so logic would suggest that they would be high achieving if they stayed in the sport in an administrative or particularly a coaching capacity. I said before that hockey players are not very well paid. There are two or three issues with those players, once they finish playing. Firstly, after training for all that time and committing themselves to competition for three months of the year, many of them were tired of the sport and wanted a break. Many of them wanted to start a family and many of them had not had the opportunity to start a career in a meaningful way and needed to establish themselves. The latter applies to men's hockey as well. In particular, there was the issue of starting a family; they retire from hockey at 30 or 33, and that became an issue for us. So there are those three things. We have been able to grab a number of them in certain positions. Our current scholarship coach is a

58 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, pp 5–6.

59 Bowls Australia, *Submission 70*, p. 3.

60 Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, p. 5.

61 CAS, *Submission 60*, p. 7; Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, pp 4–5.

62 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, p. 6.

former Hockeyroo. We have two former Hockeyroos on our board. We have been able to get some, but not as many as we would like.⁶³

Advancing women into coaching, officiating and administrative roles

5.61 A number of strategies have been proposed to improve the numbers of women in coaching, officiating and administrative roles. These include:

- Examining recruitment procedures to ensure that they provide equal opportunities for women, are accessible and are non-discriminatory (wording advertisements to encourage women to apply, ensuring a gender balance on selection panels and ensuring gender-neutral questions);
- Promoting the structures, career pathways and opportunities available in administration, coaching and officiating for women and girls (from club level to international level);
- Acknowledging individual achievements and the contribution of women (for example, at meetings, with general feedback and certificates of recognition, by profile in newsletters, magazines and other organisation publications, in media releases or by having woman speak at seminars);
- Providing an inclusive, safe and flexible work environment (one that encourages and values individual contributions, is accepting of individual differences, provides good open communications, makes reasonable time demands and provides childcare);
- Providing a mentoring and/or apprenticeship program for women administrators, coaches and officials;
- Encouraging and actively targeting women to take on decision-making roles on administration, coaching or officiating committees;
- Providing assistant coaching positions to women for all the male institute/academy programs coached by men so that more women will become eligible for paid positions in the future.
- Undertaking a media campaign that aims to change the stereotype of women coaches as soft or more 'touchy feely', particularly aimed at athletes that still believe men coaches to be tougher, stronger and more results-orientated.
- Introducing a national female coaching scheme, similar to the Coaching Association of Canada, where a trial campaign in hockey, softball and soccer in eight communities across the country is recruiting, training and working to retain women coaches.
- Encouraging sporting organisations to target or talent ID potential women coaches/officials and negotiate a development program that is realistic and achievable.

63 Mr Adamson, Hockey Australia, *Proof Committee Hansard*, 3 August 2006, p. 89.

- Ensuring that organisations strategically plan and provide financial and human resources to develop female coaches and officials;
- Exploring the potential of sub-elite athletes who do not make it to the top of their sport to pursue other avenues such as coaching or administration.
- Encouraging and supporting women wherever possible to apply for senior positions.⁶⁴

5.62 A number of sports and recreation organisations and state governments have implemented strategies to increase the numbers of women in coaching, officiating and administrative roles. In 2005 Hockey Australia introduced a women's coaching apprenticeship scheme aimed at developing elite women coaches. A small funding grant was secured from the ASC as well as financial support from Hockey Australia which 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, greater financial support is required over a longer period of time.⁶⁵

5.63 In 2005 the PGA in conjunction with Griffith University established the PGA International Golf Institute (PGA IGI) – a centre of excellence to develop career pathways and opportunities for students, elite athletes, coaches and administrators in the golf industry. The current IGI intake is approximately 10 per cent female, with the aim to increase this number over coming years.⁶⁶

5.64 VicSport operated a Women's Community Leadership program which focused on enhancing the administration, leadership and management skills of women sport administrators in regional Victoria. The aim of the program was to increase the confidence of these women in their ability to perform administrative roles in their respective clubs and in turn to increase the professionalism in the sport industry in Victoria in general by encouraging women to take on high level roles within their clubs and organisations. VicSport noted that the program was considered 'highly successful' but lacked on-going funding.⁶⁷

5.65 State governments have also introduced programs to support women in these roles. NSW Sport and Recreation conducts workshops for club administrators on ways to increase the involvement of women as coaches and officials.⁶⁸ The WA Department

64 AWRA, *Submission 71*, p. 8; CAS, *Submission 60*, p. 7; Womensport and Recreation NSW, *Submission 20*, pp 4–5; Cricket Australia, *Submission 44*, pp 5–6; See also ASC, *How to Include Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity*, 1999, p. 8; Sport 2000 Taskforce, *Shaping Up: A Review of Commonwealth Involvement in Sport and Recreation in Australia, 1999*, pp 80–81.

65 Hockey Australia, *Submission 43*, p. 6.

66 PGA, *Submission 52*, p. 5.

67 VicSport, *Submission 31*, pp 8–9.

68 NSW Sport and Recreation, *Submission 53*, p. 9.

of Sport and Recreation provides regional women's coaching workshops to provide professional development support to regional female coaches.⁶⁹

5.66 As noted above, the Commonwealth's Sport Leadership Grants for Women scheme provides another avenue for providing leadership skills for women in sport, in the areas of coaching, officiating, sport administration, sport governance and management.

Findings

5.67 The committee found that:

- Women continue to be under-represented in coaching, officiating and administrative roles in most sports organisations.
- A number of barriers hindering the advancement of women in these roles were identified including the attitudes and perceptions of the 'male-dominated' sports culture, perceptions and expectations of women and work-life issues.
- Strategies need to be developed by governments and sporting and recreation providers to increase the numbers of women in leadership roles. These strategies could include:
 - Examining recruitment procedures to ensure that they provide equal opportunities for women, are accessible and are non-discriminatory;
 - Promoting the structures, career pathways and opportunities available in administration, coaching and officiating for women;
 - Acknowledging individual achievements and the contribution of women;
 - Providing an inclusive, safe and flexible work environment;
 - Providing a mentoring and/or apprenticeship program for women administrators, coaches and officials;
 - Encouraging and actively targeting women to take on decision-making roles on administration, coaching or officiating committees;
 - Encouraging sporting organisations to target or talent ID potential women coaches/officials;
 - Ensuring that organisations strategically plan and provide financial and human resources to develop female coaches and officials;
 - Exploring the potential of sub-elite athletes who do not make it to the top of their sport to pursue other avenues such as coaching or administration.

69 WA Department of Sport and Recreation, *Submission 48*, p. 6.

