Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation Stakeholder Forum
Forum Report
Prepared by:

The Queensland Government supports and encourages the dissemination and exchange of its information. The copyright in this publication is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia (CC BY) licence.

Under this licence you are free, without having to seek our permission, to use this publication in accordance with the licence terms.
You must keep intact the copyright notice and attribute the State of Queensland as the source of the publication.
For more information on this licence, visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/au/deed.en

Disclaimer
This document has been prepared with all due diligence and care, based on the best available information at the time of publication. The department holds no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this document. Any decisions made by other parties based on this document are solely the responsibility of those parties. Information contained in this document is from a number of sources and, as such, does not necessarily represent government or departmental policy.

May 2015
Thankyou from Professor Doune Macdonald

As chair of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation I would like to thank all the stakeholders who attended the forums in Brisbane and Townsville on 15 May 2013. The role of the Ministerial Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to the Honourable Steve Dickson, Minister for National Parks, Sport and Racing on strategies and actions to encourage greater participation in sport and recreation by all women and girls in the community. The stakeholder forums were successful in generating ideas and insights that will assist in the development of the Ministerial Advisory Committee’s recommendations, which will be provided to the Minister in September 2013. The stakeholder forums were a very effective and worthwhile exercise and I would like to thank you all for your participation.
Background .......................................................................................................................... 1

Stakeholder Forum Ideas and Observations ........................................................................... 2

1. Examples of strategies that have successfully attracted women and girls into sport and recreation .......... 2

2. Key changes / approaches that sport and recreation organisations can implement to attract women and girls ........................................................................................................... 3

3. Cultural / societal factors that need to change to make sport and recreation more inviting for women and girls ........................................................................................................... 5

4. The role of government in encouraging women’s and girls’ participation ................................................. 6

5. The role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women and girls in sport and recreation ........ 7
Background

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation (Ministerial Advisory Committee) was established on 6 March 2013. The Ministerial Advisory Committee’s purpose is to provide advice to the Minister for National Parks, Sport and Racing on how the government can improve women’s and girls’ lifelong participation in sport and active recreation. The Ministerial Advisory Committee will provide its recommendations in its final report to the Minister in September 2013.

The Ministerial Advisory Committee comprises of five experts in the field of sport, recreation and physical activity with experience in elite competition, academia and sports administration. Professor Doune Macdonald, Head of the University of Queensland’s School of Human Movement Studies is the chair of the committee. Professor Macdonald is supported by four other committee members: Ms Natalie Cook (five time beach volleyball Olympian); Ms Sue Nisbet (General Manager of Softball Queensland); Dr Sue Hooper (Director of the Queensland Academy of Sport’s Centre of Excellence); and Mr David Keating (former President of the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation).

On 15 May 2013, the Ministerial Advisory Committee held two stakeholder consultation forums with key players in the sport and recreation industry. Consultation forums were held in both Brisbane and Townsville to ensure that the ideas generated through stakeholder consultation considered the issues currently faced by women in both regional and metropolitan areas of Queensland. These two consultation sessions were a great success, with both forums resulting in a number of ideas and insights which have assisted in the development of the Ministerial Advisory Committee’s recommendations. This report provides a synopsis of the ideas and insights generated by participants at the stakeholder forums.

Attendees at the Brisbane stakeholder forum included representatives from:

- QSport,
- the Queensland Outdoor Recreation Federation (QORF)
- State Sporting Organisations (SSOs)
- the recreation industry
- the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation Inc (ACHPER)
- community sport and recreation clubs and organisations
- WomenSport Queensland Association Inc.
- Elite / Professional Sports clubs
- Academia
- Local government
- Queensland Government Departments including the Department of Education, Training and Employment; the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services; and the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games.

Attendees at the Townsville stakeholder forum included representatives from:

- Community sport and recreation clubs
- Townsville City Council and Hinchinbrook Regional Council
- Townsville Fire
- Bindal Sharks United Training and Employment, Sport and Recreation Aboriginal Corporation
- Department of Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs
- Australian Sports Commission
- James Cook University.
The forums were focused on the following questions:

1. Can you provide and share examples of strategies that have successfully attracted women and girls into sport and recreation?

2. What key changes / approaches could sport and recreation organisations implement to attract more women and girls?

3. What cultural / societal factors need to change to make sport and recreation more inviting for women and girls?

4. What do you see as the role of government in this issue and what actions do you believe government should take to encourage more women and girls into sport and recreation?
   - What do you see as the role of Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing?
   - What do you see as the role of other government agencies?
   - What do you see as the role of local government?

5. What other organisations have a role in encouraging and facilitating women and girls in sport and recreation and what actions could they contribute to increasing participation?

The Brisbane stakeholder forum involved small group brainstorming sessions whereby participants were divided into groups to discuss the abovementioned questions and generating ideas to increase the participation of women and girls in sport and active recreation. Ms Victoria Carthew facilitated the Brisbane stakeholder forum, with the assistance of officers from the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing who facilitated the small group brainstorming sessions. Four Ministerial Advisory Committee members, Professor Doune Macdonald, Dr. Sue Hooper, Mr David Keating and Ms Sue Nisbett observed the Brisbane forum.

In Townsville, stakeholders were consulted through deputations. Stakeholders had fifteen minutes to discuss the abovementioned questions for stakeholder input with Ms Natalie Cook from the Ministerial Advisory Committee, officers from the Department of National Parks, Sport and Racing, and a representative from the Office of the Minister for National Parks, Sport and Racing.

The information presented within this report is based upon the stakeholder’s responses to the five questions above. The information does not represent the views or policy of the Queensland Government nor the views of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation.

**Stakeholder Forum Ideas and Observations**

1. **Examples of strategies that have successfully attracted women and girls into sport and recreation**

   Stakeholders in Brisbane and Townsville identified similar strategies to attract women and girls into sport and recreation. Seven key strategies were identified:
   
   1. Enabling flexible participation to allow women and girls to participate in sport and recreation whilst managing school, work and family priorities.
   2. Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating.
   3. Considering and promoting the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation.
   4. Providing a broader range of activities that women and girls are interested in.
   5. Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls.
   6. Supporting women as board and committee members, coaches and volunteers.
   7. Fostering partnerships between organisations, clubs and with schools to provide participation opportunities

   Table one on page three provides examples of the strategies identified within each of the seven key themes.
Enabling flexible participation to allow women and girls to participate in sport and recreation whilst managing school, work and family priorities.

- Creating flexible programs – modifying structures, scheduling fixtures at different times, social competitions that are less competitive.
- Enabling women to participate by providing/enabling child care or providing information on suitable childcare options.
- Running mums and bubs programs/fixtures whereby formal or informal child care is provided.

Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating

- Female only participation programs e.g. Brisbane City Council’s Real Adventure Women (RAW) program, programs specific for multicultural women.
- Female only competitions supported by female coaches and officials.
- Providing good quality facilities, including playing and support facilities (e.g. female friendly change rooms) for women so they can have a better experience.

Considering and promoting the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation

- Social competitions that provide opportunities for women and girls to catch up and chat whilst they participate in a game or recreation activity.

Providing a broader range of activities that women and girls are interested in

- Programs such as cardio tennis, with a focus on health and fitness, have been successful in getting more women to participate.

Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls

- Targeted marketing e.g. AFL’s pink packs for girls participating in AusKick.
- The promotion of role models, including peer-level role models, that women and girls can identify with.
- The promotion / marketing of family-based leisure opportunities (e.g. recreational bike rides, bushwalks).
- Marketing using social media and local media – using existing members to build social media networks.
- Marketing specifically to women and girls - marketing females as active participants enjoying sport and recreation.

Supporting women as board and committee members, coaches and volunteers

- Supporting female leaders in governance and other roles at clubs.
- Engaging women and girls by employing female development officers.
- Investing in female coaches.

Fostering partnerships between organisations, clubs and with schools to provide participation opportunities

- Sport and recreation clubs and organisations partnering with local schools to deliver school based programs.
- Funding organisations with the aim of increasing participation.

Table One: strategies identified by stakeholders as successful in attracting women and girls to participate in sport and active recreation.

2. Key changes / approaches that sport and recreation organisations can implement to attract women and girls

Stakeholders in Brisbane and Townsville suggested similar key changes and approaches that can be implemented to attract women and girls to participate in sport and active recreation. The key changes and approaches that were identified were consistent with the seven key themes identified for the first stakeholder question; however, there were two additional key themes identified. Nine key changes/approaches were identified:

1. Enabling flexible participation to allow women and girls to participate in sport and recreation whilst managing school, work and family priorities.
2. Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating.
3. Considering and promoting the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation.
4. Providing a broader range of activities that women and girls are interested in.
5. Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls.
6. Supporting women as board and committee members, coaches and volunteers.
7. Fostering partnerships between organisations, clubs and with schools to provide participation opportunities.
8. Addressing the costs of participation.
9. Addressing the issues with access to sporting and recreational facilities in regional and rural/remote areas.

Table two below provides examples of the strategies identified within each of the nine key themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enabling flexible participation to allow women and girls to participate in sport and recreation whilst managing school, work and family priorities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Providing/enabling childcare – not necessarily formalised childcare e.g. one mum volunteers each week to look after the kids. Mums and bubs programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modified programs and schedules – social competitions / participation opportunities provided after school drop-off.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Intergenerational participation activities e.g. while the kids are training the mums have a social competition on another field / court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities for concurrent male and female participation e.g. netball and football offered at the same facility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More workplaces offering participation opportunities, such as corporate games days, and workplace incentives to encourage participation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Facilities that cater for women – providing child care, women-only spaces, appropriately designed change rooms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving social safety e.g. strategies to reduce bullying, sexual harassment, providing supportive and inclusive environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving physical safety e.g. lighting and maintaining pathways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local councils to promote the availability of suitable facilities for females e.g. CALD women (e.g. women only facilities at a particular time of day, facilities with suitable change areas).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More flexible uniform policies so women and girls feel comfortable participating. Also to reduce the cost of participating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gender segregation for school PE classes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Considering and promoting the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Emphasising the social elements of sport and recreation e.g. promoting “come and try days” as “bring a friend day.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Providing a broader range of activities that women and girls are interested in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide a wider range of activities – stakeholders identified that dance is popular for girls.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing to women and girls – avoiding gender stereotypes, using peers as role models.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoting fit and healthy role models that women and girls can relate to, including, role models for women from CALD communities and disabled women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoting female participation in non-traditional sports e.g. rugby, AFL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supporting women as board and committee members, coaches and volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting them to join committees and boards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fostering partnerships between organisations, clubs and with schools to provide participation opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Inter-sport participation opportunities i.e. sports forming partnerships to increase participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providing more recreation opportunities through schools, e.g. schools including and/or increasing outdoor education in their curriculum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mandatory participation in sport / recreation / physical activity from Prep to year 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop programs to target other community issues through participation in sport and recreation, such as training for employment, personal development classes, and children at risk programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Form partnerships with youth detention centres to provide participation opportunities for children in the justice system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Form partnerships with nursing homes and hospitals to provide participation opportunities for seniors and aged people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addressing the costs of participation

- Incentives, such as vouchers for women and girls to go towards the cost of participating
- Identify options to lower the costs of participation.
- Provide free or affordable transport to enable women to participate in local sporting competitions or at gyms.

Addressing problems associated with isolation and distance in regional and rural/remote areas

- Provide fuel cards to regional parents and guardians to help lower travel costs so that children can participate in junior competitions.
- Provide regional elite programs to enable elite participants to stay in regional areas rather than having to relocate to Brisbane.

Table Two: Key changes / approaches that sport and recreation organisations can implement to attract women and girls.

3. Cultural / societal factors that need to change to make sport and recreation more inviting for women and girls

Stakeholders in Brisbane and Townsville suggested similar cultural and societal factors that need to change to make sport and recreation more inviting for women and girls. Six key themes were identified:

1. Gender stereotyping and attitudes.
2. Support provided by sport and recreation organisations.
3. Families and schools as vehicles for cultural and societal change.
4. Sport and recreation is seen as Anglo-Saxon.
5. Funding inequity for women’s and girls’ activities.
6. The cost of sport and recreation.

Table three below provides further information on the key themes identified.

Although not a cultural or society factor, geographical isolation was raised as an additional issue at the Townsville forum. Geographical isolation in regional, rural and remote areas was said to increase the costs associated with participating in sport and recreation due to the long distances of travel required to participate. Geographical isolation can also make it difficult to provide a diversity of activities as there are less potential participants, a lack of infrastructure and a lack of appropriately trained or experienced people to run programs and coach teams. When it is possible to establish sporting fixtures, it can be difficult to provide meaningful competitions.

Gender stereotyping and attitudes

- Girls want to play how the boys play and they don’t want to wear pink.
- Women and girls want more choice in the sports and other activities they are able to participate in; they don’t want to be restricted to traditional female sports.
- Some girls want to participate competitively; however some girls do not like the competitive aspects of sport.
- Women’s and girls’ uniforms can be revealing, making some women and girls feel uncomfortable and prohibiting the participation of women from some CALD backgrounds.
- There needs to be an overall acceptance that women and girls can play sport and are good at it.

Support provided by sport and recreation organisations

- Sports need to be more accepting of girls who return to sport after not participating for several years.
- SSOs and recreation providers should promote and support women’s and girls’ participation, and gender equity should be integrated across the whole organisation.

Families and schools as vehicles for cultural and societal change.

- Schools and parents need to understand/recognise the importance of physical education and other opportunities for sport and recreation in schools.
- Sport and recreation needs more emphasis in the national curriculum.
- Children are socialised in families and the family is an important setting to target when changing cultural and societal factors.
Sport and recreation is seen as Anglo-Saxon

- SSOs, clubs and recreation organisations need to invite, encourage and provide for people from other cultural backgrounds.
- Flexibility is required in terms of uniforms and costs to participate.
- Social media could assist in promoting role models from different cultural backgrounds.
- Difficult to seek those with training to provide programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, multicultural groups and disabled people.

Funding inequity for women’s and girls’ activities

- Activities that females are more likely to participate in (e.g. walking for recreation, going to the gym, dancing) do not receive as much funding as some other activities and/or sports.
- More focus should be placed on outdoor recreation and the opportunities it presents for participation.

The cost of sport and recreation

- The cost associated sport and recreation can be prohibitive, particularly for families with more than one child and for people with low incomes, including young people, disabled people, and the elderly.
- Insurance costs for sport are growing.

Table Three: Cultural / societal factors that need to change to make sport and recreation more inviting for women and girls.

### 4. The role of government in encouraging women’s and girls' participation

Table four below provides the stakeholders’ responses as to the role of government in encouraging women’s and girls’ participation.

#### Role of the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

- Provide funding that -
  - targets the best outcomes for women and girls participation.
  - is not a one-off, but part of a broader suite of activities.
- Enable the sports industry, by building their capacity and increasing their understanding the barriers surrounding the participation of women and girls.
- Promote the participation of women and girls through social media and marketing.
- Sponsor and promote women’s and girls’ sporting events, including high profile events e.g. a women’s cricket world cup.
- Provide resources, assistance and advice to help sporting clubs attract women and girls.
- Leverage participation outcomes from the Commonwealth Games.
- Promote women’s and girls’ participation in outdoor recreation – with a possible youth focus.
- Advocate for sport and recreation in the curriculum.
- Identify ways to reduce the cost of participation additional to the Get in the Game voucher system, which only targets a small part of the population.

#### Role of the Department of Education, Training and Employment

- Partner with sport and recreation organisations to provide pathways to increase participation.
- Increase the emphasis on physical education in the curriculum and enable participation in sport and recreation as an extra-curricular activity.
- Incorporate outdoor education in other subjects, such as maths and science.
- Influence the education and training of teachers.
- Advocate for sufficient training for all teachers to include physical activity as part of their lessons.
- Provide funding for school sports equipment.
- Offer a larger variety of sports and include recreation in physical education classes.
- Provide access to school facilities.
- Partner with the community to provide better education, training and mentoring opportunities.
Local Government

- Provide places and spaces that enable and encourage women’s and girls’ participation e.g. change rooms, well lit and visible entrances (for safety).
- Prioritise suitable green and open spaces for sport and active recreation.
- Set up equipment hubs to enable sharing in local areas.
- Provide support to community organisations and sporting and recreation clubs to develop their capacity to meet community needs, such as participation opportunities for women and girls.

Federal Government

- Advocate for more female role models in the media.
- As owner of the ABC ensure more women’s sport is televised.
- Create tax incentives for individuals to participate and for companies to invest in facilities.
- Partner with state governments to change social and cultural issues impacting on women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.

Other Government Departments/ Government in General

- Bid for major women’s sporting events e.g. a women’s cricket world cup.
- Governments should share data and research more effectively.
- Provide corporate incentives and sponsorships for activities or programs that aim to increase women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.
- Provide examples of successful case studies.
- Assist in changing the culture surrounding women on Boards. This change is not focused on targets but more the promotion of equality of women on Boards.
- Partner with youth organisations to further participation in sport and recreation programs.
- Improve the availability of transport to and from sport and recreation facilities.
- Improve the coordination in the provision of facilities and participation opportunities.
- Improved coordination amongst government agencies and levels of government to provide well located and suitable facilities.

Table Four: the role of government in improving women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.

5. The role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women and girls in sport and recreation

Table five below provides the stakeholder’s responses as to the role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women’s and girls’ participation.

Corporate organisations

- Female brands should partner with and sponsor women’s and girls’ sport, from the elite to grassroots level.
- Provide opportunities such as corporate games to allow staff to participate in sport and recreation.
- Large companies, such as resource companies, should assist local communities and clubs by providing sport and recreation activities for women and girls.

QSPORT/QORF

- Advocate for women and girls participation opportunities across the sport and recreation sector.

PCYCs, Guides, Sporting Wheelies and other community organisations

- Form partnerships with local clubs and other sport and recreation providers to allow individuals greater access to participation opportunities.
- Run programs to empower women and girls with a sport and recreation element.
- Support older people’s participation, for example, providing opportunities in nursing homes or targeting grey nomads.
### Non-government health promotion organisations, such as the Heart Foundation and Cancer Council
- Provide, support, fund and link to sport and recreation participation opportunities.

### Health Organisations / Women’s Health Organisations
- These organisations could refer / prescribe for individuals to participate in sport and recreation by partnering with local clubs and providers.

### Schools
- Schools should be involved in supporting sport and recreation beyond the curriculum as extra-curricular activities.
- Private girls’ schools should provide similar participation opportunities as private boy’s schools.

### Universities and Training Organisations
- Universities and training organisations should provide training to teachers and coaches to increase their skills and capabilities and increase their knowledge of issues specific to women’s and girls’ participation.
- Universities have a role in conducting research on women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation.
- Universities and training organisations are important settings for participation in sport and recreation.
- Should support people’s participation – the transition from school to work / university is a time when young people drop out of participation.

### Commercial Sport and Recreation Providers
- Gyms and fitness centres are important places for women’s participation. However, non-commercial alternatives are required for women who cannot afford to participate at gyms and fitness centres.
- Commercial organisations should partner with clubs, for example, rock climbing clubs could link in with commercial indoor rock climbing centres to increase participation opportunities.

### Sport and Recreation Organisations
- Sport and Recreation Organisations have a role in providing appropriate competitions and opportunities for women and girls. They still need to have a balance and ensure that men and boys are encouraged to participate.

### Media
- The media has a role in supporting women’s sport from the elite to the grassroots level.
- Local clubs should partner with local media and social media to promote women’s and girls’ participation.
- The media should provide greater exposure to diverse role models.

*Table Five: the role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.*