Start Playing
Stay Playing

A summary of the evidence and stakeholder insights into women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

Prepared for the
Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation
Prepared by:

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Executive summary

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation (the Committee) was established to provide evidence-based and practical recommendations to the Minister for National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing on government actions to improve women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation. In order to inform their recommendations, the committee considered research and evidence from government and academic sources, and insights from stakeholder consultation. Key issues identified by the committee are outlined herein.

Queensland women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation – Population information and characteristics

- Women and girls in Queensland are generally less likely to participate in sport and active recreation than men and boys.
- Females from specific community groups have been identified as having lower rates of participation, including:
  - younger women (18 to 44 years of age)
  - women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
  - disabled women
  - girls from single parent families
  - women and girls from low socio-economic status backgrounds
  - women and girls from rural areas
  - older women (65 years and over)
  - women with young children.
- Life transitions when women or girls are likely to stop participating in sport include:
  - adolescence
  - young adulthood
  - early motherhood
  - old age.
- Women and girls are more likely to engage in non-organised forms of sport and active recreation than organised/club based activities—dance was identified as a popular activity for girls, with a participation rate similar to popular sports such as swimming and diving and netball.

Motivators of women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

- Common motivators of women’s participation in sport and active recreation are health and fitness and enjoyment.
- Fun is an important motivator for girls’ participation; however body image becomes a motivator as girls transition to adolescence.

Barriers to and enablers of women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

- Barriers experienced by women and girls include:
  - lack of time due to competing priorities (school, work, caring responsibilities)
  - lack of childcare options
  - lack of suitable facilities or places (including safe places)
  - unappealing or unsuitable programs (including health and physical education classes)
  - low motivation
  - low confidence
  - cultural and gender factors
  - lack of partner or parental support.
- Enablers to women’s and girls’ participation include:
  - reducing the cost of participation, including associated costs such as transport and childcare
  - providing safe, comfortable and culturally appropriate facilities
  - facilities that provide for activities that women and girls want to engage with
  - providing culturally targeted information about activities and facilities
  - partnering sport and recreation programs with existing community programs
  - promoting identifiable role models
  - providing a variety of activities as part of physical education classes and community programs
  - social support to participate
  - promoting the fun and social aspects of participation.
Approaches to increase women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

- Despite the plethora of research exploring women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation and the implementation of programs to improve participation rates, a review of academic peer-reviewed publications found limited papers that evaluated the effectiveness of policies and programs in increasing participation.
- Researchers advise that programs to improve participation in sport and active recreation should focus on overcoming the barriers to participation experienced by women and girls.
- Evaluations of programs implemented in the United Kingdom (UK), including Active England, the Community Sports Initiative, Sports Action Zones, Girls on the Move, and Fit for Girls, identified that these programs had positive outcomes for women’s and girls’ participation.
- Key insights from the evaluation of these UK programs include: women and girls prefer social and recreational/non-competitive participation opportunities; programs should be sensitive to specific demographic and cultural issues; and the importance of partnerships and linking into community networks to program success.

Insights from Queensland sport and active recreation stakeholders

- Stakeholders identified that strategies to attract women and girls to participate should:
  - allow for flexible participation opportunities
  - help women and girls feel comfortable participating
  - highlight and consider the social aspects of participation
  - provide a broad range of activities
  - promote role models and effectively market to women and girls
  - support women’s roles on boards, as committee members, and volunteers
  - partner effectively with other organisations in delivering opportunities
  - address the costs of participation
  - address barriers associated with distance and isolation in regional and rural areas.
- Stakeholders suggested that negative attitudes to women’s and girls’ participation should be addressed by:
  - overcoming gender stereotypes and unhelpful attitudes to women’s and girls’ participation
  - sport and recreation organisations recognising the issues impacting female participation and providing better support
  - putting a focus on families and schools as vehicles for cultural and societal change
  - sport and recreation organisations making an effort to be culturally aware and inclusive
  - addressing the funding inequity for women’s and girls’ activities
  - reducing the cost of sport and recreation.
- Stakeholders identified that several organisations have a role in increasing and improving women’s and girls’ participation, including:
  - state and federal government agencies
  - schools
  - local government
  - corporate organisations
  - peak sport and recreation bodies
  - national and state sport and recreation organisations
  - universities and training organisations
  - not-for-profit sport, recreation community organisations
  - the media.

Future trends

- A report by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) identified the megatrends that will shape the sports sector over the coming decade.
- The following four megatrends identified by the CSIRO are particularly relevant to the committee’s considerations in relation to increasing women’s and girls’ participation:
  - A perfect fit: personalised sport for health and fitness
  - From extreme to mainstream: the rise of lifestyle sports
  - More than sport: the attainment of health, community and overseas aid objectives via sport
  - Everybody’s game: demographic, general and cultural change.
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1. Introduction

The Ministerial Advisory Committee on Women and Girls in Sport and Recreation (the committee) was established in March 2013. The role of the committee was to provide evidence-based and practical recommendations on government actions to improve women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation. This paper is a compilation of the research and evidence gathered by the committee between March and June 2013 and insights from stakeholder forums. The research, evidence and insights presented within this paper informed the committee’s recommendations to the Minister National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing, presented in the committee’s final report – *Start Playing, Stay Playing: A plan to increase and enhance sport and recreation opportunities for women and girls*. Although the purpose of this report is to present the information considered by the committee in forming their recommendations, this report may also be a helpful resource for the sport and recreation sector and other stakeholders who are seeking to develop policies and/or programs to increase or improve women’s and girls’ participation opportunities.

The paper presents a summary of the following:

- **Population information** on women's and girls' participation in sport and active recreation from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Queensland Health, which demonstrates that females in Queensland are generally less likely to participate in sport and recreation than males, and that particular groups of females have low participation rates.

- The **characteristics of women's and girls' participation** in sport and active recreation, which identifies the popularity of non-organised sport and active recreation activities.

- The **life transitions** when women or girls are likely to stop participating in sport and active recreation; these include adolescence, young adulthood, early motherhood and old age.

- Findings of the review of **government reports and the research literature** on the motivations, barriers and enablers to women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation, along with recommended approaches to improve participation.

- The **outcomes of stakeholder consultation** forums on the topic of women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation, staged in Brisbane and Townsville on 15 May 2013.

To conclude this report, a summary of the CSIRO report *The Future of Australian Sport: Megatrends shaping the sports sector over the coming decade*, commissioned by the Australian Sports Commission is provided. The megatrends identified in the CSIRO report have potential implications for policy and investment choices made by community groups, industry and government. These trends were considered by the committee alongside the other information presented within this report.
2. Queensland women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation – Population information

2.1 Women’s participation

Population information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identifies that Queensland women (aged 15 years and over) are generally less likely to participate in sport and active recreation than Queensland men, and they are also less likely to participate than women from other Australian states and territories. ABS survey information indicates that, during 2011-12, 59.5% of Queensland women participated at least once in sport or recreation, compared to 64.3% of Queensland men (ABS 2012a). The 4.8% gap between Queensland men’s and women’s participation rates was larger than the national average gap between gender participation rates, which was 2.4% (ABS 2012a). This population information also identifies that, during 2011-12, Queensland women (aged 15 years and over) were less likely to have participated (at least once) in sport or recreation than Australian women from all other states and territories. Overall, the national average participation rate for Queensland women during 2011-12 was 4.3% below the participation rate for Australian women. On a positive note, during 2011-12, Queensland women (15 years and over) were more likely than Queensland men to have participated in sport and active recreation on a regular basis, with 54.8% of women participating at least 105 times during the year, compared to 49% of men (ABS 2012a).

2.2 Girls’ participation

Population information from the ABS indicates that Queensland girls participate less in organised sport outside of school than the national average, and are less likely to participate in organised sport than boys. ABS information from 2012 identifies that Queensland girls (aged 5 to 14 years) are less likely than Queensland boys to have participated in organised sport outside of school during the twelve months prior to survey, with participation rates of 49.4% for girls and 63.2% for boys (ABS 2012b). Combining participation in organised dance and organised sport (outside of school) reduces the difference in the participation rates between boys and girls. However, the 2012 information shows that Queensland girls are still less likely than Queensland boys to participate in these forms of organised activity, with a participation rate of 60.2% for girls, compared to 64.4% for boys (ABS 2012b). When comparing girls’ participation in organised sport outside of school across all Australian states and territories, the ABS 2012 survey finds that the participation rate for Queensland girls is 4.2% lower than the Australian average (ABS 2012b). Queensland girls have one of the lowest rates of participation, second only to the participation rate for girls from the Northern Territory (ABS 2012b).

With regard to non-organised sport and recreation, population information from the ABS and Queensland Health identifies that Queensland girls are participating less than boys. In 2012, the ABS collected data on children’s participation in recreation activities; however, this was limited to the activities of “skateboarding, rollerblading or riding a scooter,” and “bike riding”. The ABS population information reveals that Australian boys are more likely to participate in “skateboarding, rollerblading or riding a scooter” (60%), and “bike riding” (69.9%) than Australian girls (47.2% and 56.8%, respectively). Queensland Health information from 2006 identifies that Queensland girls are less likely than boys to participate in adequate levels of physical activity 1 (Abbott, Macdonald, Mackinnon et al. 2007). The Queensland Health information indicates that girls in years 1, 5 and 10 are less likely than boys of the same cohorts to participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity daily (Abbott et al. 2007).

2.3 Participation across the community

Information from the ABS, research and government publications identifies particular community groups among which females have particularly low rates of participation in sport and active recreation. Table 1 on page 8 identifies these groups and the significant factors relating to their participation.

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1 Physical activity measured by Queensland health includes sport and active recreation activities, along with activities such as chores and active transport.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Group</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Young women 18–44 years of age | ABS (2012a) information shows that Queensland women in the 15–17- and 18–24-year age groups are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation on a regular basis (105 times per year) than are Queensland men in these age groups, and are less likely to participate than Queensland women in other age groups. Participation rates for young Queensland women and men reported by the ABS (2012a) are:  
- 47.3% for QLD women 15–17 years.  
- 39.6% for QLD women 18–24 years.  
- 55% for QLD men 15–17 years.  
- 46.1% for QLD men 18–24 years.  
The participation rate for all Queensland women (15 years +) reported by the ABS is 54.5% (ABS 2012a).  
ABS (2012a) information shows that, although Queensland women in the 25–34- and 35–44-year age groups participate in sport and active recreation on a regular basis more than men, they are less likely to participate on a regular basis than are women in older age groups. The participation rates for Queensland women (25 years +) reported by the ABS (2012a) are:  
- 51.7% for QLD women 25–34 years.  
- 52.4% for QLD women 35–44 years.  
- 62.5% for QLD women 45–54 years.  
- 66.1% for QLD women 55–64 years.  
- 54.5% for QLD women 65+ years 46.1%. |
| Women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds | ABS (2012a) information shows that Queensland women born in non-English-speaking countries are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation (participation rate 45.4%) than are Queensland women born in Australia (participation rate 60.9%) or Queensland women born in another English-speaking country (participation rate 63.1%).  
ABS (2012b) information shows that Australian girls born in non-English speaking countries have a participation rate of 31.1%, which is less than the participation rate for girls born in Australia (54.4%) and for Australian girls born in another English-speaking country (63%).  
ABS information (2012b) shows that Australian girls with both parents born in non-English-speaking countries, and Australian girls with one parent born in a non-English-speaking country have lower participation rates (33.7% and 51.7%, respectively) than do Australian girls whose parents were both born in Australia (62.1%). |
| Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls | ABS (2010) information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ participation in physical activity (sport, recreation or other physical activities at least once in the 12 months before interview in 2008) shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are less likely to participate than are men from the same population (23% and 38%, respectively).  
ABS (2010) information also identifies that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls are less likely to participate in organised sport outside of school than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys (participation rates of 43% and 51% respectively).  
ABS (2012a) information shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation on a regular basis than are women in other age groups. (ABS 2012c).  |
| Disabled women | ABS data from 2009 shows that the rate of participation in at least one activity away from home over a 12-month period is lower for disabled women (18 years +), than for disabled men (20% and 27.6%, respectively) (ABS 2012c). |  
| Girls from single parent families | ABS (2012b) information shows that Australian girls from single-parent families have a lower participation rate compared with Australian girls from two-parent families (42.4% and 57.2%, respectively). |
| Women and girls from low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds | The 2006 Senate report About Time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia notes that women and girls from low SES backgrounds are less likely to participate in sport and recreation, compared with other women and girls (Australian Government 2008). |
| Women and girls from rural areas | The 2006 Senate report About Time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia notes that women and girls from rural and regional areas are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation, compared with women and girls from urban areas (Australian Government 2006). |
| Older women (65 years +) | The 2006 Senate report About Time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia notes that older women (65 years +) are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation, compared with younger women (Australian Government 2006). |
| Women with young children | The 2006 Senate report About Time! Women in sport and recreation in Australia notes that women with young children are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation, compared with other women (Australian Government 2006). |

Table 1: Groups of women and girls who are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation.

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2 Information is not available to compare the participation rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and girls and non-Indigenous women and girls because of differences in survey methodologies.

3 Information is not available to compare the participation rates of disabled women and non-disabled women because of differences in survey methodologies.
3. Characteristics of women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

3.1 Features of women’s participation

ABS population information on adult participation indicates that Queensland women are more likely to participate in non-organised rather than organised sport and active recreation. According to this ABS data, in 2011–12, 48.4% of women (aged 15 years and over) participated in information sport and active recreation, and 22.8% participated in organised sport and active recreation (ABS 2012a). The 15 to 17 year old age group is the only group where Queensland women participate equally in organised and non-organised activity: 42.1% and 42.7%, respectively (ABS 2012a). Figure 1 on page 10 shows the top 10 sport and active recreation activities (organised and non-organised) for Queensland women according to ABS data.

3.2 Features of girls’ participation

Information from the ABS and Queensland Health surveys suggests that Australian girls are more likely to engage in non-organised forms of sport and active recreation than organised. Although ABS information is not available to compare girls’ overall participation in organised and non-organised activities, the participation rates for girls aged 5 to 14 years for “skateboarding, rollerblading or riding a scooter”, and “bike riding” are higher than the participation rates for any single organised sport. According to ABS survey information, the five most popular organised sports for Australian girls aged 5 to 14 years are swimming and diving, netball, gymnastics, basketball and outdoor soccer (ABS 2012b). Organised dance has a high participation rate for girls, with only the organised sports of swimming and diving, and netball having higher participation rates. Figure 2 on page 10 shows the participation rates for the selected recreational activities, the top five organised sports, and organised dance. Table 2 on page 11 provides information on self-reported participation in physical activities of girls in years 1, 5 and 10 (organised and non-organised) collected by Queensland Health in 2006 (Abbott et al. 2007). As expected, participation in ‘play activities’ decreases as girls get older and is replaced by other non-organised activities such as running/jogging and walking. Older girls also report more participation in sports or physical education (PE) undertaken at school, in addition to walking, running/jogging and dancing.

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4 Physical activity measured by Queensland Health includes sport and active recreation activities, along with activities such as chores and active transport
Top 10 sport and active recreation activities for Queensland women 2012

Figure 1: Top 10 sport and recreation activities (organised and non-organised) for Queensland women 2012 (ABS 2012a)

Australian girls' participation in organised sport, organised dance and active recreation - most popular activities 2012

Figure 2: Australian girls' participation in organised sport, organised dance and selected recreational activities. (ABS 2012b)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Year 10</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Playing outside</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>Sports/PE at school</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>Chores</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing on playground equipment</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>Playing outside</td>
<td>89.9</td>
<td>Sports/PE at school</td>
<td>68.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports/PE at school</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>Chores</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>49.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chores</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>Running/jogging</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>Running/jogging</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike riding</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>Bike riding</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trampolining</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>Walking the dog</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skipping with a rope</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>Playing on playground equipment</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>24.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>Skipping with a rope</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>Touch football</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running/jogging</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>Trampolining</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>37.8</td>
<td>Handball/4 square</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming (at a pool)</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>Skateboarding/rollerblading</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboarding/rollerblading</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walking the dog</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>Swimming (at a pool)</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>Walking the dog</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>Bike riding</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>Netball</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Athletics</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>Aerobics</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handball/4-square</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Swimming (at a pool)</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>Handball/4 square</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>Scooter</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martial arts</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>Baseball/softball</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>Hockey</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Queensland Healthy Kids Survey 2006 – Participation in physical activities over the previous week for girls in years 1, 5 and 10.
4. Women’s and girls’ life transitions and participation in sport and active recreation

The Australian and international literature shows that the participation of women and girls in sport and active recreation fluctuates throughout the lifecycle. Table 3 outlines the life stages and the related transition, life events and factors that appear to negatively influence women’s and girls’ participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Stage</th>
<th>Transitions and life factors</th>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence (12–18 years)</td>
<td>Transitioning from primary to high school and progressing through high school.</td>
<td>Craike, Symons &amp; Zimmermann 2009; Slater &amp; Tiggemann 2010; Yungblut, Schinke &amp; McGannon 2012; Bell &amp; Lee 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adulthood (18–30 years)</td>
<td>Transitioning from school to university or work, moving out of the family home, beginning a live-in relationship, marriage.</td>
<td>Brown, Heesh &amp; Miller 2009; Allender, Hutchinson &amp; Foster 2008; Laverty &amp; Wright 2010; Wright &amp; Laverty 2010b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement (65+ years)</td>
<td>Health factors, disability</td>
<td>Brown et al. 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Life transitions and stages when women and girls reduce their participation in sport and active recreation

Australia-wide population information provides an insight into drop offs and transitions in women’s and girls’ participation. As outlined in Figure 3 on page 13, ABS survey information shows that girls’ participation in organised sport tends to increase from the ages of 5 to 8 years through the ages of 9 to 11 years (participation rate 59%), and then decreases through to the ages of 12 to 14 years (participation rate 52.9%) (ABS 2012b). Figure 4 on page 13 demonstrates the life stage transitions in Australian women’s participation. For Queensland women aged 15 years and above, ABS information shows that regular participation in sport or active recreation is at its lowest for women aged 15 to 17 years and 18 to 24 years (participation rates of 47.3% and 39.6%, respectively). Regular participation rates then increase to 51.7% for the 25 to 34 year age group and remain steady at 52.4% for the 35 to 44 year age group. The regular participation rate begins to increase in the 45 to 54-year groups (62.5%) and continues to increase in the 55 to 64-year age group (66.1%), before decreasing for the 65 and over age group (54.5%) (ABS 2012a).

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Data for the regular participation rate are based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for participating at least 105 times in a 12-month period.
Participation of Australian girls in organised sport outside of school 2012

Figure 3: Participation of Australian girls in organised sport outside of school (ABS 2012b)

Regular participation of Queensland women in sport or active recreation 2012

Figure 4: Regular participation of Queensland women (15 years and above) in sport or active recreation (ABS 2012a)
5. Motivators of women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

5.1 Motivators of women’s participation

According to ABS data, the most common self-reported motivator of women's participation in sport and active recreation is health and fitness, followed by enjoyment. Figure 5 below depicts the main motivators of women’s participation according to ABS data in order of their ranking by Australian women. Although health and fitness is noted as a common motivator for Australian women, several studies have shown that western ideals of health and body image or beauty do not motivate women from CALD backgrounds to participate (Wright & Laverty 2010; Dworkin & Messner 2002; Wray 2002).

![Figure 5: Main motivators to participate in sport and active – Australian Women (ABS 2007)](image)

5.2 Motivators of girls’ participation

Studies into girls’ involvement in sport and active recreation identify two key motivators of their participation, fun and body image (i.e. weight loss and weight maintenance). Fun is a strong motivator for young girls and young adolescents (Craike et al. 2009; Yungblut et al. 2012). Body shape and weight management is a reported motivator, particularly for older adolescents (Allender, Cowburn & Foster 2006; Lee 2010; O’Flynne & Lee 2010). As girls become older and move through adolescence, their motivations change and focus more on body image than fun and enjoyment (Craike et al. 2009). Craike et al. (2009) also reported that the change in motivation to participate coincides with changes in the nature and experience of sport and active recreation, typified by: a reduction in the range of activities participated in; a decreased emphasis on competitive types of activity; an increased emphasis on fitness or socially focused types of sport and recreation; fewer spontaneous sport and recreation activities; and more planned types of activities. Although fun is no longer the primary motivator for participation in older adolescents, studies have shown that the “fun factor” is still important because girls and adolescents are more likely to participate if they perceive activities as fun (Belanger-Gravel & Godin 2010; Lee 2010; O’Flynne & Lee 2010; Yungblut et al. 2012).
6. Barriers to and enablers of women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

The barriers to and enablers of women's participation are outlined in Table 4 on page 16, and the barriers to and enablers of girls' and adolescents' participation are outlined in Table 5 on page 17. These barriers and enablers were identified through a review of Australian and international academic and government literature, as well as stakeholder consultation.
6.1 Barriers to and enablers of women’s participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Enabler</th>
<th>About</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Competing priorities and lack of time</td>
<td>Competing priorities and a lack of time are a barrier for young women (18–40 years), mid age women (40–65 years), and low SES women. Women perceive that they are time poor. Women tend to take on the burden of domestic responsibilities, including housework and caring roles (Australian Government 2006; Caperchoine, Mummyery &amp; Joyner 2009; Kowal &amp; Fortier 2007).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of appropriate and affordable childcare</td>
<td>Reducing the costs of childcare</td>
<td>There is a consistent lack of access to appropriate, regular and affordable childcare to enable women aged 18–40 years to participate in community sport and recreation (Australian Government 2006; Caperchoine et al. 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costs of Participation</td>
<td>Reducing the costs of activities and associated costs</td>
<td>The cost of participation, including associated costs such as childcare and transport, is a barrier to participation for young women (18–40 years), older women (65+), CALD women, disabled women, low SES women, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (Australian Government 2006; Caperchoine et al. 2009; Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2010). Programs to reduce and help with the direct costs of activities, and associated costs, such as transport and child care, are enablers of participation for women (Cortis, Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2008).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor access to or availability of venues and places to participate and a lack of appropriate facilities for women</td>
<td>Providing safe, comfortable and culturally appropriate facilities and culturally targeted information about activities and facilities</td>
<td>Poor access to venues, including venues with appropriate facilities, is a barrier to participation for young women (18–40 years), CALD women, disabled women, low SES women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and rural women. Poor access can be compounded by a lack of transport and a lack of information on available facilities. A lack of physical access to premises and a lack of venues and facilities with suitable equipment are barriers for disabled women (Australian Government 2006; Caperchoine et al. 2009; Cortis et al. 2008; Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2010). Providing safe, comfortable and culturally appropriate facilities and culturally targeted information about activities and facilities can enable participation (Cortis et al. 2008; Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2010).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor access to programs</td>
<td>Providing culturally targeted information about activities Partnership sport and recreation programs with existing community programs</td>
<td>Poor access to programs is a barrier to participation for rural women because of smaller populations and a lack of available people to run programs. It is also a barrier for women from CALD backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, and disabled women because of a lack of culturally appropriate programs and trained staff to run and manage programs (Australian Government 2006; Caperchoine et al. 2009). The provision of culturally targeted information about activities and facilities is an enabler to participation where facilities and people to run programs are available (Cortis et al. 2008). The partnering of sport and recreation programs with existing community programs is also an enabler (Caperchoine et al. 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling unsafe</td>
<td>Providing safe environments for sport and active recreation</td>
<td>Feeling unsafe while participating because of factors such as traffic, lack of lighting, animals (dogs and snakes), and gangs and suspicious individuals, was identified as a barrier to participation for: young women (aged 18–40); CALD women; disabled women; low SES women; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. A safe environment is an enabler of participation (Kowal &amp; Fortier 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climate</td>
<td></td>
<td>The weather was identified as a barrier for women’s participation; participation is affected by hot, humid and wet summers in northern Australia and cold and dark winters in southern states (Caperchoine et al. 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of leisure companions</td>
<td>Not having anyone to participate with is a barrier for women, particularly CALD women (Australian Government 2006, Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2010).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural factors and social norms</td>
<td>Providing identifiable role models</td>
<td>For some cultures sport and recreation is not seen as an appropriate way for females to spend leisure time. Cultural factors can also exacerbate the experience of other barriers, such as competing priorities, lack of facilities, lack of access to programs, and lack of leisure companions (Australian Government 2006; Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2010; Cortis et al. 2008). A lack of cultural awareness in the delivery of sport and active recreation programs also limits participation for CALD and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women (Caperchoine et al. 2009). Social norms have been identified as a barrier to the participation of women from low SES areas (Australian Government 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal perceptions and motivation</td>
<td>Personal perceptions have been identified as barriers to women’s participation including: low self-esteem and poor body image (Australian Government; Caperchoine et al. 2009); lack of confidence (Sawrikar &amp; Muir 2010, Cortis et al. 2008); a perception of being too old (Australian Government 2006); a perception of not being the sporty type (Australian Government 2006); negative early life experiences (Australian Government 2006); and lack of motivation (Kowal &amp; Fortier 2007).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injury and health problems</td>
<td>Injuries, health problems and the fear of injury or re-injury are barriers to women’s participation, particularly among older women (Brown et al. 2009).</td>
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Table 4: Barriers to women’s participation in sport and active recreation
### 6.2 Barriers to and enablers of girls’ participation

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<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Enabler</th>
<th>About</th>
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| Competing priorities                        |                                              | Competing priorities are a barrier for girls in both early and late adolescence. As girls move through adolescence, they place a greater priority on activities other than sport and recreation. Competing priorities include:  
|                                              |                                              |  - School work – school work is seen as a competing priority, particularly as girls transition from early to late adolescence.  
|                                              |                                              |  - Other leisure activities – both early and late adolescent girls note that they reduce their participation in sport and recreation to engage in other activities, such as socialising with friends; older girls report that they have more leisure activities from which to choose.  
|                                              |                                              |  - After-school jobs – older adolescents note that after-school jobs are a competing priority (Craike et al. 2009; Halyk, Brittain, Dinger et al. 2010; Slater & Tiggemann 2010). |
| Girls perceive that physical education is not | Providing a variety of activities in physical | Among older adolescents, PE is a lower priority than other school subjects. The timetabling of PE classes is also a barrier, particularly for older students, for whom PE is not a compulsory subject. Teachers also perceive the timetabling of PE subjects as a barrier (Craike et al. 2009; Halyk et al. 2010). |
| an important subject                        | education classes                             | PE classes do not appear to cater well for girls. Girls report that they would be more likely to participate in PE classes and would enjoy them more if activities were more varied (Australian Government 2006; Craike et al. 2009; Hay & Macdonald 2010; Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Halyk et al. 2010). |
| Physical education classes do not cater well | Friends who do not participate               | Girls belonging to a friendship group that is perceived to be “not sporty” are less likely to participate. Conversely, friends are an enabler to girls’ participation if their friendship group is “sporty” (Allender et al. 2006; Australian Government 2006; Craike et al. 2009). |
| for girls                                   |                                              | Many girls do not see participation in sport and recreation as a feminine pursuit and therefore do not participate (Craike et al. 2009; Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Lee & Macdonald 2010). Hay and Macdonald (2010) found that school teachers and boys perceive that girls are less motivated and less able to participate and do well than are boys in senior PE classes. |
| Perceptions about being feminie             | Parental support                              | Parents influence girls’ participation in sport and recreation negatively by not providing access or transport to opportunities, and by discouraging participation in sport and recreation while encouraging participation in other activities, such as jobs, school work and school subjects other than PE. Parents positively influence participation through encouragement and by providing access or transport to opportunities (Craike et al. 2009; Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Halyk et al. 2010). |
| Lack of parental Support                    | Highlighting fun and social aspects           | Girls’ participation in sport and recreation declines because the activities are perceived as less fun and more competitive as the girls become older. Sport becomes more competitive during the transition from primary school to high school and from junior to senior high school. Highlighting the fun and social aspects of sports appears to increase motivation to participate and participation rates (Craike et al. 2009; Halyk et al. 2010; Lee 2010; Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Yungblut et al. 2012). |
| Competitiveness                             |                                              | Girls of all ages report that poor body image affects their participation (Slater & Tiggemann 2010). A related issue, feeling uncomfortable in mandated uniforms, is a barrier for all girls (Allender et al. 2006; Australian Government 2006; Slater & Tiggemann 2010). |
| Body Image and sports uniforms              |                                              | A lack of community facilities is a barrier to participation. Conversely, having facilities available for those activities that girls want to participate in is an enabler (Halyk et al. 2010; Lee 2010; Lee & Macdonald 2010). |
| Lack of facilities                          | Availability of facilities                    | For some girls, having to participate with boys in PE classes and outside school is a barrier because boys are perceived as being too competitive and not supportive of their participation. Girls from CALD communities perceive this as a barrier to participation (Craike et al. 2009; Knez 2010). |
| Mixed-gender participation                  |                                              | Lack of confidence to engage with sport and active recreation activities is a barrier to participation in girls of all ages (Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Australian Government 2006). |
| Lack of confidence                          |                                              | Lack of confidence to participate in sport and active recreation activities is a barrier to participation in girls of all ages (Slater & Tiggemann 2010; Australian Government 2006). |
| Poor team relationships                     |                                              | Poor team relationships, including conflict, bullying and being left out, influence participation (Slater & Tiggemann 2010). |
| Negative experiences                        |                                              | Girls who experience negative experiences in PE classes or in outside-school sport or recreation are less likely to participate (Allender et al. 2006; Hay & Macdonald 2010). |
| Lack of motivation                          |                                              | Some studies have found that some girls do not want to participate in sport or recreation (Halyk et al. 2010). |
| Cultural issues                             |                                              | Some girls do not participate for cultural or religious reasons (Knez 2010). |

Table 5: Barriers to and enablers of girls’ participation in sport and active recreation.
7. Approaches to increase women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

7.1 Policies, programs and initiatives to improve women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

Despite the plethora of research exploring women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation and the implementation of programs aiming to improve participation rates, a review of academic peer-reviewed publications found limited papers that evaluated the effectiveness of sport and recreation policies and programs. A number of publications were identified that demonstrated positive increases in general physical activity as a result of health interventions for individuals, however these were deemed not relevant to the committee due its remit to develop recommendations for the sport and recreation portfolio. This lack of evidence for community initiatives has been noted in several review papers (Camacho-Minano et al. 2011; Priest et al. 2008; Rees et al. 2006). As part of this review of the literature a few papers evaluating the effectiveness programs to increase or enhance women and girls participation in sport and or active recreation have been identified and their findings are summarised herein.

Within the past decade, several community programs have been implemented in the UK with the aim of increasing participation in sport and active recreation among groups that are less likely to participate, including women and girls. Five of these programs have been evaluated, including: Active England (Hall Aitken 2008; Hall Aitken 2009a); Community Sport Initiative (Hall Aitken 2009b); Sport Action Zones (Sport England 2006); Girls on the Move (Taylor 2008); and Fit for Girls (Inchley, Mitchell, Kirby & Currie 2012). Table 6 on page 19 provides further information on each of these programs. Evaluation reports identified that these programs had positive outcomes for participation amongst target groups, including women and girls. Evaluations of these programs highlighted the following key observations with regard to women’s and girls’ participation:

- Key barriers to participation are negative perceptions of sport as highly competitive, requiring high levels of ability and risky in terms of injury.
- Popular draws for participation are active recreation activities, especially outdoor recreation activities, which are presented as fun rather than competitive, such as various forms of dancing, yoga, walking and pilates.
- Project champions who are plugged into local community/organisation networks and who work with sport and non-sport organisations that are already connected with specific target groups of women and girls are the key to program success.
- Targeting women and girls alone is ineffective unless a project is also sensitive to specific demographics, such as socio-economic background and cultural, linguistic or religious background.
- Age-appropriate and female-only activities are key enablers for participation.
- Younger women may be drawn to fun and unusual activities that are non-competitive.
- Women of child-bearing age require child-minding services to facilitate participation.
- Older women may be more likely to participate in activities framed as social events.
- Providing facilities may not be as important as ensuring the activities provided are what locals want.
- Outreach to specific groups is critical as opposed to simply providing and promoting facilities or programs.
Active England was a £94.8 million funding program, delivered by Sport England and funded jointly with the Big Lottery fund. The funding program was implemented to support the Government’s strategy for delivering its sport and physical activity objectives outlined in Game Plan. The program’s three main objectives were to:

- create sustainable, innovative multi-activity environments in areas of sport, social and health deprivation
- increase participation in sport and physical activity among all the sections of society but particularly those sections of society under-represented in sport and physical activity participation
- ensure that the sports sector and key partners adopt new ways of working.

The Community Sport Initiative (CSI) complements the UK Government’s Game Plan strategy and aims to increase participation among groups with low levels of participation in physical activity.

Under the CSI, clusters of programs are delivered to support participation in the following target groups: people on low income; people with disability; women and girls; black and minority ethnic communities; young people; and older people.

The CSI funds 299 projects across Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Sport Action Zones are implemented in 12 of the most disadvantaged communities in England, incorporating principles of front-line sports development, over a five-year period. The aim of the program is to help local communities to help themselves by involving them in the planning and delivery process.

Girls on the Move is a program designed to increase the physical activity levels of girls and young women in Scotland by addressing the barriers that prevent them from participating in physical activity. The program was initiated and is funded by The Robertson Trust and the Scottish Government (£450,000 over three years) and has been supported and delivered by Youth Scotland, the Scottish Sports Association, Sports Leaders UK and NHS Health Scotland.

Girls on the Move includes a participation program that provides grants to community groups to allow them to deliver physical activities requested by girls aged 11 to 18 years and a leadership program that provides opportunities for young women (16 to 25 years) to attend 4–5-day leadership courses leading to nationally recognised leadership certificates.

Fit for Girls is a joint program between sportscotland and the Youth Sport Trust that aims to promote physical activity among girls aged 11 to 16 years. It is aimed specifically at girls who are least likely to be active, who are not currently active in the extra-curricular setting and who may opt out of curricular PE. Delivered through secondary schools, the program provides training for PE teachers, Active Schools coordinators and other physical activity professionals to equip them with the knowledge, tools and skills to consult, plan and implement positive PE experiences and sustainable physical activity programs for girls in the school setting.

In relation to initiatives to improve women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation in Australia, there is limited information on the success or otherwise of policies and programs. One report of a successful initiative analysed the transition of a Sydney sports club from being a culturally and gender-exclusive club (predominantly male Anglo-Saxon) to a culturally and gender-inclusive club over a period of a decade. Maxwell and Taylor (2010) report that the club encouraged cultural diversity by:

- Developing a flexible uniform policy (e.g. allowing Muslim women to wear a hijab).
- Providing female-only training sessions.
- Developing women leaders and coaches.
- Serving culturally appropriate food in the canteen.
- Taking into consideration religious events, such as Ramadan.
- Partnering with the community.

The literature provides some evidence of the success of community walking group programs in improving Australian women’s participation in active recreation. Chau 2007 notes that Australian programs, such as Just Walk It (nationwide), the Lockridge Walking Group (Perth) and the Concord Community Walking Initiative (Sydney), were successful in improving women’s participation. Chau (2007) concludes that the following elements should be included to ensure the success of walking groups:

- Walking groups should be led by organised, enthusiastic, understanding, caring and encouraging walking group leaders.
- Walking group leaders should be provided with training and support, so that walking groups may be self-reliant and empowered to manage their own activities.
- A partnership approach should be undertaken and collaboration should be encouraged between organisations (government agencies, local government, community organisations and businesses) to ensure that walking groups are supported.
- A local facility should be used as a meeting place both before and after the walk.
• Walking groups should be part of a larger program so that group members have a sense that they are part of a bigger project and identify with the broader program.
• The program coordinator should identify opportunities for participating in other social and community activities (e.g. fundraising for charity).
• Program participants should be intermittently surveyed or focus groups should be held with participants and stakeholders to provide feedback and suggestions about walking group activities and related events.

7.2 Advice from the academic literature on improving women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation

Although there are few examples reported in the academic literature of community sport and recreation programs that result in sustained increases and enhancements to women’s and girls’ participation, studies investigating the barriers and enablers to participation draw conclusions regarding what should be done to improve outcomes. Consistently it is concluded by researchers that in order to improve and enhance participation, community programs should aim to address the barriers to girls’ and women’s participation (Cortis et al. 2008; Halyk et al. 2010; Kowal & Fortier 2007; Priest Armstrong and Waters 2008; Sawrikar & Muir 2010). The academic literature offers the following suggestions aimed at guiding improvements to women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.

Increasing diversity
• Policies and programs should not ignore central issues, such as race and class, in addressing women’s participation in sport and recreation (Dworkin & Messner 2002).
• Government and sports organisations should implement strategies and practices to promote cultural diversity in sport and recreation (Sawrikar & Muir 2010).
• Programs should provide targeted information about activities and facilities, and promote facilities as culturally diverse (Cortis et al. 2008).
• Policies and programs should target recently arrived migrants and offer skill building opportunities (Sawrikar & Muir 2010).
• Culturally and gender inclusive facilities and activities should be provided (Cortis et al. 2010; Knez 2010; Wray 2002).
• Policies and programs should address a sense of inclusion and belonging by increasing the number of media images and role models of ethnic minority women taking part in sporting activities (Cortis et al. 2008; Sawrikar & Muir 2010).

Addressing gender stereotypes
• Policies and programs should aim to overcome gender stereotypes (Craike et al. 2009; Hay & Macdonald 2010; Lee & Macdonald 2010; Slater & Tiggemann 2010).
• Programs should provide both single-sex and mixed activities (Rees, Kavanagh, Harden et al. 2006; Slater & Tiggemann 2010).
• Changes should be made to sportswear and uniforms (Slater & Tiggemann 2010).

Better engaging and supporting girls and young women
• Girls need to be assured of positive experiences in PE and sport (Camacho-Minano, LaVoi & Barr-Anderson 2011).
• Programs should be developed around how young adults structure everyday routines, demands, influences and drivers for sport and recreation participation as part of their post-school lives to encourage women to remain active after schooling (Laverty & Wright 2010).
• Programs should appeal to girls’ and adolescents’ need for socialising (Craike et al. 2009; Rees et al. 2006; Camacho-Minano et al. 2011).
• Sport and recreation should be prioritised in the school curriculum (Craike et al. 2009).
• Educators and other participation providers should aim to increase the range of activities in PE and community sport (Camacho-Minano et al. 2011, Rees et al. 2006).
Community and school facilities should be accessible (Craike et al. 2009; Rees et al. 2006).
If role models are promoted, they should be female, under 40 years of age and represent participation in a number of activities. They should not necessarily be athletes; rather they should be someone that girls can relate to (Vescio, Wilde & Crosswhite 2005).

**Reducing the cost and improving the accessibility of sport and active recreation**
- Policies and programs should provide for affordable participation, childcare and transport (Sawrikar & Muir 2010).
- Support should be provided for participation in more diverse settings and through flexible options to ensure that women with busy lives can continue to engage in sport and recreation (Laverty & Wright 2010).
- Less expensive non-commercial options for women with busy lives should be provided as an alternative to commercial gyms (Laverty & Wright 2010; Wright & Laverty 2010).
- Policies and programs should aim to increase partner and social support (New South Wales Department of Health 2003).

**Increasing personal motivation**
- Policies and programs should aim to enhance intrinsic motivations for participation (Camacho-Minano et al. 2011; Craike et al. 2009).
- The fun and social aspects of sport should be emphasised, rather than the competitive aspects (Belanger-Gravel & Goodin 2010; Rees et al. 2006; Slater & Tiggemann 2010).
- Program providers should develop the social side of sport and recreation (Rees et al. 2006).
8. Stakeholder consultation

On 15 May 2013, the committee held two stakeholder consultation forums with key players in the sport and recreation industry. Forums were held in both Brisbane and Townsville to ensure that they captured issues faced by women and girls in regional areas of Queensland as well as women in southeast Queensland. This section outlines the ideas and insights generated at each of these forums.

8.1 Examples of strategies that have successfully attracted women and girls into sport and recreation

Stakeholders in Brisbane and Townsville identified similar successful strategies to attract women and girls into sport and recreation. The strategies identified were consistent with seven key themes:

1. Allowing for flexible participation so women and girls can participate despite school, work and family priorities.
2. Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating.
3. Highlighting and considering the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation.
4. Providing a broader range of activities and providing activities that women and girls are interested in.
5. Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls.
6. Supporting women’s roles as board and committee members, coaches and volunteers.
7. Partnering with other organisations and taking up participation opportunities delivered through schools and other organisations.

Table 7 below provides examples of the strategies identified within each of the seven key themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Allowing for flexible participation so women and girls can participate despite school, work and family priorities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Providing flexible programs by modifying structures, scheduling fixtures at different times and providing social competitions that are less competitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enabling women to participate by providing childcare or information on suitable childcare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Running “mums and bubs” programs/fixtures where formal or informal childcare is provided.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Providing female-only participation programs (e.g. Brisbane City Council’s Real Adventure Women [RAW] program or programs specifically for multicultural women).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Running female-only competitions supported by female coaches and officials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Providing good quality facilities, including playing (e.g. well maintained courts) and support facilities (e.g. change rooms) for women so they can have a better experience.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Highlighting and considering the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Conducting social competitions that provide time for women and girls to catch up and chat as well as play a game of sport or engage in a recreation activity.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Providing a broader range of activities and providing activities that women and girls are interested in</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Drawing on activities that have been successful in attracting female participants (e.g. cardio tennis).</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Conducting targeted marketing (e.g. AFL’s pink packs for girls participating in AusKick).</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promoting role models including peer-level role models that women and girls can identify with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Promoting and marketing family-based leisure opportunities (e.g. recreational bike rides, bushwalks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing with social media and local media, using existing members to build social media networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing specifically to women and girls as active participants who enjoy sport and recreation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting women’s roles 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.

Partnering with other organisations and taking up participation opportunities delivered through schools and other organisations

- Facilitating sports partnering with local schools to deliver school-based programs.
- Funding organisations with the aim of increasing participation.

For example, the Bindal Sharks United Training Employment and Recreation Aboriginal Corporation is funded by the Commonwealth Government to employ a coordinator and an Indigenous trainee to administer a small grants program to encourage participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in sporting and active recreation activities. The corporation advises that, over the past 2.5 years, there has been a 6% increase in Aboriginal women’s participation in sport and active recreation.

Table 7: Strategies identified by stakeholders as successful in attracting women and girls to participate in sport and active recreation.

8.2 Key changes and 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 changes and approaches identified were consistent with the seven key themes identified for the first stakeholder question. Two additional themes were suggested: addressing the costs of participation; and addressing problems associated with isolation and distance in regional and rural and remote areas:

Table 8 below provides examples of the strategies identified within each of the nine key themes.

Allowing for flexible participation so women and girls can participate despite school, work and family priorities

- Enabling childcare - this does not necessarily need to be formalised childcare (e.g. volunteers rotate to look after the kids, “mums and bubs” programs).
- Providing modified programs and schedules such as social competitions or programs scheduled for after the morning school drop-off.
- Promoting intergenerational participation activities (e.g. social competition for mothers while their kids are training at the same venue).
- Providing opportunities suitable for males and females (e.g. netball and football offered at the same facility).
- Encouraging more workplaces to offer corporate games days and provide workplace incentives for participation.

Helping women and girls to feel comfortable participating

- Providing facilities that cater for women and girls (e.g. with childcare and women-only spaces).
- Enhancing social safety by implementing strategies to reduce bullying and sexual harassment, and by providing supportive and inclusive environments.
- Enhancing physical safety (e.g. good lighting and maintained pathways).
- Encouraging local councils to promote the availability of suitable facilities for females and groups of females, such as CALD women (e.g. women-only facilities at a particular time of day, facilities with suitable change areas).
- Encouraging more flexible uniform policies to enable women and girls to feel comfortable participating and to reduce the cost of participating.
- Promoting gender segregation for school PE classes.

Highlighting and considering the social aspects of participation in sport and recreation

- Emphasising the social elements of sport and recreation, for example, by promoting “come and try” or “bring a friend” days.

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

- Providing a wider range of activities; e.g. dance is popular among girls.
Promoting role models and effectively marketing to women and girls

- Marketing to women and girls, avoiding gender stereotypes and using peers as role models.
- Promoting fit and healthy role models that women and girls can relate to, including role models from CALD communities and disabled women.
- Promoting female participation in non-traditional sports, e.g. rugby.

Supporting women’s roles as board and committee members, coaches and volunteers

- Listening to women and encouraging them to join committees.

Partnering with other organisations and taking up participation opportunities delivered through schools and other organisations

- Providing inter-sport participation opportunities by, for example, partnerships between sports.
- Encouraging schools to include outdoor education in their curriculum and more recreation opportunities at school.
- Advocating for mandatory participation in sport and active recreation from Prep to year 12.
- Providing programs to target sport and recreation with other community issues, such as training for employment, personal development classes, and programs for children at risk.
- Linking into youth detention centres to provide participation opportunities for children in the justice system and linking into nursing homes and hospitals to provide participation opportunities for older people.

Addressing the costs of participation.

- Providing incentives, such as vouchers for women and girls, to help with the cost of participating.
- Promoting lower cost participation options.
- Providing 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.

- Providing fuel cards for children living in regional areas to help with travel costs associated with sport competition.
- Providing elite opportunities in regional areas to enable elite participants to stay in regional areas, rather than having to relocate to Brisbane.

Table 8: Key changes and approaches that sport and recreation organisations can implement to attract women and girls.

8.3 Cultural and 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. The following six key themes have been 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. The perception of sport and recreation as Anglo-Saxon
5. Funding inequity for women’s and girls’ activities
6. The cost of sport and recreation

Table 9 on page 25 provides further information on the six key themes identified.

Although not a cultural or societal factor, the issue of geographical isolation was raised in the Townsville forum. In regional, rural and remote areas, geographical isolation can increase the costs associated with participating in sport and recreation because of the need to travel distances to participate. It can also reduce the diversity of activities because there are fewer potential participants and a lack of infrastructure and appropriately trained or experienced people to run programs and coach teams. When sporting fixtures are established, it can be difficult to provide meaningful competitions.
Gender stereotyping and attitudes

- The 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 that they do; they don’t want to be restricted to traditional female sports.
- It is okay for girls to be competitive; however, it is also okay to participate in sport and recreation just for fun.
- Women’s and girls’ uniforms are more revealing than men’s uniforms. This makes some women and girls feel uncomfortable and prohibits 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 women and girls re-engaging after time off.
- State sporting organisations (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 and recognise the importance of PE and other opportunities for sport and recreation in the school setting.
- Sport and recreation need more emphasis in the national curriculum.
- Children are socialised in families, and the family is an important target for changing cultural and societal factors.

The perception of sport and recreation 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 associated with participation.
- Social media can assist in promoting role models from different cultural backgrounds.
- There is a need to source providers with appropriate training to deliver programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from multicultural backgrounds, and disabled people.

Funding inequity for women’s and girls’ activities

- Those activities that females are more likely to do (e.g. walking for recreation, going to the gym and dancing) do not receive as much funding as some other activities.
- There should be more focus on outdoor recreation and the opportunities it presents for participation.

The cost of sport and recreation

- Participation in sport and recreation has a high cost, particularly for families with more than one child and for people with low income, including young people, disabled people and the elderly.
- Insurance costs for sport are increasing.

Table 9: Cultural and societal factors that need to change to make sport and recreation more inviting for women and girls.

### 8.4 The role of government in encouraging women’s and girls’ participation

Table 10 on page 26 summarises the thoughts of stakeholders about the role of government in encouraging women’s and girls’ participation.
Role of the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing

- Target funding to provide:
  - the best outcomes for women and girls
  - ongoing support as part of a broader suite of activities.
- Enable the industry by building its capacity and increasing the understanding of factors influencing women’s and girls’ participation.
- Promote women’s and girls’ participation through social media and marketing.
- Sponsor and promote sporting events for girls and women, including high-profile events, such as a women’s world cup.
- Provide resources, assistance and advice to help clubs attract women and girls.
- Leverage outcomes from the upcoming Commonwealth Games.
- Encourage women’s and girls’ participation in outdoor recreation, with a possible youth focus.
- Advocate for inclusion of sport and recreation within the school curriculum.
- Identify ways to reduce the cost of participation, in addition to the *Get in the Game* voucher system, which targets only a small part of the population.

Role of the Department of Education, Training and Employment

- Link with sport and recreation organisations to provide pathways for participation in a range of activities.
- Increase the emphasis on PE 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 PE classes.
- Share school facilities.
- Link schools to the community to provide better coaching 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).
- Prioritise well-located and suitable green and open space for sport and active recreation.
- Facilitate coordination between different agencies to provide suitable facilities in appropriate locations.
- Set up equipment hubs to enable sharing in local areas.
- Provide support to community organisations and 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.
- Through ownership of the ABC, ensure more women’s sport is televised.
- Enable tax incentives for individuals to participate and for companies to invest in facilities.
- In partnership with state government, work to change social and cultural issues influencing women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.

Other Government Departments/ Government in General

- Bid for major women’s sporting events, such as a women’s world cup.
- Share data and research more effectively with other agencies.
- Provide corporate incentives and sponsorships for activities or programs that aim to increase women’s and girls’ participation.
- Provide examples of successful case studies.
- Promote cultural change to place women on boards.
- Partner with youth organisations and fund youth organisations for sport and recreation programs.
- Improve transport links to sport and recreation facilities.
- Improve coordination in the provision of facilities and participation opportunities.

Table 10: The role of government in improving women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.
## 8.5 The role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women and girls in sport and recreation

Table 11 below summarises the thoughts of stakeholders about the role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women’s and girls’ participation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporate organisations</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Female brands to link with and sponsor women’s and girls’ sport, from the elite to grassroots level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide opportunities, such as corporate games, for staff to participate in sport and recreation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Large companies, such as resource companies, to assist local communities and clubs to provide sport and recreation activities for women and girls.</td>
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<tr>
<th>QSPORT/QORF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Promote and advocate for women’s and girls’ participation opportunities across the sport and recreation industries.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PCYCs, Guides, Sporting Wheelies and other community organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Form partnerships with local clubs and sport and recreation providers to link individuals to participation opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Run programs with a sport and recreation element to empower women and girls.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support participation by older people, for example, by providing opportunities in nursing homes or targeting grey nomads.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Non-government health promotion organisations, such as the Heart Foundation and Cancer Council.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide support, fund and link client groups to sport and recreation participation opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Health organisations / Women’s health organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Refer client groups to opportunities to participate in sport and recreation and link in with local clubs and providers.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Become involved in supporting sport and recreation beyond the curriculum as extra-curricular activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide similar participation opportunities in non-government girls’ schools as provided in non-government boys’ schools.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Universities and training organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Train teachers and coaches to increase their skills and capabilities and increase their knowledge of issues specific to women’s and girls’ participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Conduct research on women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Recognise the importance of universities as settings for participation in sport and recreation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support participation during the transition from school to work and/or university.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Commercial sport and recreation providers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide non-commercial options for women without the means to pay so they can participate in exercise as alternatives to gyms and fitness centres.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve linkages between commercial organisations and sport clubs, for example, rock climbing clubs linking with commercial indoor rock climbing centres.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport and recreation organisations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Play a role in providing appropriate competitions and opportunities for women and girls, as well as balancing the support for men’s and boys' participation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Media</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Play a role in supporting women’s sport from the elite to the grassroots level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Use local media and social media as a means for clubs to promote women’s and girls’ participation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provide exposure to diverse role models.</td>
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*Table 11: The role of other organisations in encouraging and facilitating women’s and girls’ participation in sport and recreation.*
9. Megatrends shaping the sports sector over the coming decades: considerations for women’s and girls’ participation

Current and future trends will impact and change people’s experiences of participation in sport and active recreation. In order to plan and prepare for changes in the sport landscape, in 2013, the Australian Sports Commission contracted the CSIRO to undertake research and develop a report on the megatrends that are likely to shape the Australian sports sector over the next 30 years (Hajkowicz, Cook, Wilhelmseder, & Boughen 2013). The megatrends identified within the report *The Future of Australian Sport: Megatrends shaping the sports sector over the coming decade* are patterns of social, economic and environmental change that will impact on sport and recreation in Australia. The megatrends are likely to influence policy and investment choices made by community groups, industry and government. The six megatrends identified are as follows.

1. *A perfect fit: personalised sport for health and fitness*
2. *From extreme to mainstream: the rise of lifestyle sports*
3. *More than sport: the attainment of health, community and overseas aid objectives via sport*
4. *Everybody’s game: demographic, general and cultural change*
5. *New Wealth, new talent: economic growth and sports development in Asia*
6. *Tracksuits to business suits: market pressures and new business models*

In order to remain contemporary and achieve intended outcomes the impact and effect of such megatrends should be considered in development and review policies and programs. Therefore, the committee has considered the megatrends alongside the research evidence and stakeholder insights outlined within this report. Four of the megatrends are particularly relevant to the work of the committee: “A perfect fit”, “From extreme to mainstream”; “More than sport”; and “Everybody’s game.”

“*A perfect fit*”

The megatrend “A perfect fit” refers to the trend of increased participation in individualised sport and fitness activities (e.g., running, walking, and gym-based activity) and a concurrent decrease in participation in traditional organised sport. This trend arises because modern demands on time require that sport and active recreation participation fit around other commitments. Linking back to the findings and the insights arising from population data, the review of the literature and stakeholder consultation, this megatrend is already obvious in women’s participation, with non-organised recreation activities having the highest rates of participation. Programs and policies to accommodate this megatrend may help to improve women’s and girls’ participation due to their preferences for individualised sports and fitness activities. While acknowledging a preference for individualised sport and active recreation, the literature highlights that the social aspects of participation remain important to many women and girls. Therefore, policies and programs should ensure that social elements of sport and active are retained to support participation.

“*From extreme to mainstream*”

The megatrend “From extreme to mainstream” may have an impact on women’s and girls’ participation preferences in the future. At this point in time population data does not show that participation in extreme sports is popular for women or girls, however Hajkowitz et al. (2013) advise that there is evidence that participation in lifestyle, adventure and alternative sports and recreational activities, such as BMX, rock climbing, skate boarding and mountain bike riding is increasing. As suggested by Haikowicz et al. (2013) these types of activities are gaining popularity mostly with younger generations. Supporting their popularity amongst younger generations, these types of activities are often associated with their own subculture and are driven by widespread exposure through digital media.
“More than sport”

The megatrend “More than sport” acknowledges that governments, companies and the community increasingly recognise the broader benefits of sport and recreation, including better mental and physical health, crime prevention, social development and international cooperation activities. This megatrend has been evident for some time, for example, in 2003 the United Nations Inter-Agency Taskforce on Sport for Development and Peace advocated the role that sport could play in improving health, education and community outcomes and promoting peace (United Nations 2003). Publications, reviews and inquiries from governments and the non-government sector outline the benefits of participation in sport and active recreation for women and girls, which include improved physical, psychological, social and community outcomes (e.g. Bailey, Wellard & Dismore 2005 for the World Health Organisation; Centres for Disease Control n.d; Cortis et al. 2008 for the Australian Government; World Health Organisation 2013). For government sport and recreation departments and sport and recreation providers, linking policies and programs to these benefits may increase support and improve policy and program outcomes. At the same time, to remain relevant to women and girls, policies and programs should continue to highlight and promote the enjoyment and fun factor of participation as this review of the literature has identified that fun and enjoyment are important motivators for participation. The literature also suggests that different benefits of participation should be promoted to different groups of females due to different personal motivations. For example, promoting the health and fitness benefits to some women motivates participation, however women from CALD communities may be motivated more by the social and community building outcomes of participation.

“Everybody’s game”

Population data and evidence from the literature identifies that women and girls from CALD backgrounds are less likely to participate in sport and active recreation than other females. In addition, during consultation, Queensland sport and active recreation stakeholders acknowledged that effort was required to increase inclusiveness in order to increase participation and remain relevant to the Queensland community. Fittingly, the megatrend “Everybody’s game” cautions that sport and recreation must cater for population changes, such as the ageing population and changes to Australia’s cultural makeup, to remain a part of people’s everyday lives.
10. Closing

This report presents a summary of research and other input considered by the committee in forming their recommendations on actions that should be undertaken by the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing to increase and enhance women’s and girls’ participation in sport and active recreation. As population information and evidence from the literature identifies that women and girls are less likely to participate in sport and active than men and boys the committee concludes that action is required to increase equity in this area. As recommended by the research evidence, the committee believes that positive strengths-based strategies are required to reduce barriers and build on individual enablers and community strengths to both increase and enhance women’s and girls’ participation. The committee’s recommendations are presented in their final report, *Start Playing, Stay Playing: A plan to increase and enhance sport and recreation opportunities for women and girls*, presented to the Minister in November 2013.
11. References

11.1 Australian References


Australian Bureau of Statistics (2010). Perspectives on Sport, June 2010, Indigenous people’s participation in sport and physical activities (Cat No. 4156.0.55.001)


Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012b). Children’s Participation in Cultural and Leisure Activities, Australia, April 2012 (cat. no. 4901.0).


New South Wales Department of Health (2003). ProActive Mums promoting physical activity through child care centres: a randomised controlled trial. Sydney Australia


11.2 International References


