

Stats and Facts

The world affects men and women differently, in many different ways. Some of this may be due to social expectations, and what is considered appropriate behaviour for men and appropriate behaviour for women. Other difference may be due to biological reasons. This section will highlight some of the differences men and women at your club may experience, and demonstrate some of the inequalities women may be more likely to face.

Women's Participation in Sport

Sport plays a huge role in Australian culture and in the lives of many individuals. For those in rural communities, Football and Netball clubs, Soccer clubs, Tennis Clubs and Cricket clubs, can be the heart and soul of their community and have an integral role in community life.

However not everyone experiences the same access to participating in sport, with women often experiences greater barriers. A report investigating women's participation in sport and recreation in Australia found "the attitudes and perceptions of male dominated sport culture, perceptions and expectations of women, and work-life issues" as the leading barriers.

The *About Time* Report further found the factors that are directly responsible for the low participation rates of women and girls in sport, recreation and physical activity included:

- lack of access to appropriate, accessible, affordable and acceptable facilities and services
- lack of culturally appropriate facilities/programs
- social stereotyping
- structures and recruitment process are institutionalised within the culture, boards of management are often drawn from volunteers and the ranks of male dominated participants
- lack of role models
- lack of time
- lack of appropriate childcare and lack of awareness of childcare options
- fewer opportunities available for participation
- reduced leisure time owing to family responsibilities
- lack of skills or perceived lack of skills
- lack of financial resources
- harassment
- lack of confidence in approaching activities alone, poor self-image
- cultural and social pressures.

How can we overcome barriers?

In order to address this deficit we need to look at ways to overcome the barriers to women participating in organised sport and obtaining leadership roles in sporting clubs, including:

- Women being mentored in leadership roles in sporting clubs
- Women and men being represented and valued in all aspects of sporting clubs
- Family friendly environments in sporting clubs – responsible serving of alcohol, parent rooms, family events
- Offer training – Australian Sports Commission (ASC) offer Sport Leadership Grants and Scholarships for Woman- a program which provides women with opportunities to undertake training to reach their leadership potential as coaches, officials and administrators. The Sport Leadership Register is a free service for qualified women looking to gain leadership roles within national sporting organisations.
- Set a target above current levels of women on boards of management and on committees in sporting clubs and an achievable timeframe. Let people know you are doing it – advertise, let the other clubs around you know.
- Advertise positions and create role descriptions that will facilitate finding the best person for the role
- Policies that promote inclusive, respectful relationships and equity to be developed within sporting clubs
- Policies to address disrespectful and sexist behaviour to be developed in sporting clubs

https://secure.ausport.gov.au/clearinghouse/knowledge_base/organised_sport/sport_and_government_policy_objectives/womens_sport

Coverage of Women's Sport

Towards a Level Playing Field: Sport and gender in Australian media report confirms that female sport compared to male sport receive significantly less coverage on Australian television, despite the ongoing successes and high standard of female sport:

- Coverage of women in sport made up 9% of all sports coverage in Australian television news media
- Male sport occupied 81% of television news reporting
- Television news reports on female sport had the lowest average duration of all the types of sport analysed, with reports on male sport having an average duration of 30 seconds longer than reports on female sport.
- To put this into context, horseracing received more air time than women's sport in

https://secure.ausport.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/595567/Towards_a_level_playing_field_-_Updated_Version.pdf

How can we promote Women's Sport

- Ensure your club promotes the female members achievements – ensure this is equal to the promotion the male members receive

- Provide your local media with all results of the women's matches
- Advocate to your local media to increase the coverage of women's sport e.g. more dedicated print space, more front and back page coverage, coverage that is equal to males
- Advocate to peak media e.g. Herald Sun to increase the coverage of women's sport
- Value the contribution made by female members at your club – ensure the males achievements do not overshadow the females e.g. player payments, more emphasis on male team achievements and success
- Ensure there is equal representation of male and female achievements in your club rooms e.g. display of team photos, photos of players who have reached milestone games, premiership trophies and flags
- Equal representation of men and women on your club website
- Advocate to peak media bodies e.g. Channel WIN, Channel Prime etc to increase the coverage of women's sport

Sexism

Sexism can affect any gender, but particularly affects women and girls. Sexism has been linked to gender stereotypes and gender roles –beliefs about the characteristics and behaviors that are acceptable for men and for women.

Sexism is still prevalent in Australian society and has a vast impact. According to the Australian Institute (2015)

- 87% of Australian women have experienced at least one form of verbal or physical street harassment
- Among those who had experienced street harassment:
 - 56 per cent of women were alone when they last experienced street harassment;
 - Three in four women (74 per cent) were harassed by a man or a group of men;
 - A majority of women (54 per cent) were younger than 18 when they first experienced street harassment;
- 40 per cent of Australian women do not feel safe when walking alone at night in the area where they currently live, compared to 17 per cent of men;
- 87 per cent of Australian women have taken at least one action to ensure their own personal safety in the last 12 months (e.g. avoiding walking home alone at night).

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission;

- A quarter of women (25%) experienced sexual harassment in the workplace during this period, 90% of whom said they were harassed by a man.
- Women were at least five times more likely than men to have been harassed by a boss or employer.
- This is in comparison to one in six men (16%) experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Nearly four out of five (79%) harassers were men, a slight decrease from 2008 (81%).

Sexism can take place in many forms. It may be less severe and a low level of sexism such as a sexist joke or comment, or it may be more severe, such as sexual coercion or unwanted sexual attention.

Women predominately experience the lower levels of sexism more so than the more extreme forms of overt sexism. Sexist jokes and comments made frequently can lead to a normalisation of this behaviour, and fosters a sexist culture in which these behaviours are tolerated (Sojo et al, 2015).

Research demonstrates that women's exposure to a high frequency of low level sexism is significantly more detrimental to a woman's organisational commitment, satisfaction and general health and well-being compared to the more severe cases of sexism that occur on a lower frequency (Sojo et al, 2015). Therefore it is important for clubs and organisations to take action on the low level forms of sexism to ensure women feel valued, are more committed to the club and feel safe and respected.

Perpetrators may not believe or accept that they are being sexist, and will often respond when challenged that they are "just joking". Sexism can be particularly damaging for women due to "stereotype threat" which can often leave the victim of the sexist remark/behaviour, questioning her ability and the intentions of the person who made the remark. Stereotype threat is a strong negative predictor for female performance, and highlights how undermining sexism can be (Sojo and Wood, 2012).

Beliefs of male dominance

There have been a number of Australian surveys exploring individual attitudes and views toward gender stereotypes and violence against women in Australian society. Some of the survey outcomes, reveal some worrying statistics in regards to what people think is acceptable in relationships, and what behaviour is acceptable for men and women. The White Ribbon Youth Survey discovered;

- Over one in four young males (28%) believe 'girls like guys in charge of the relationship'
- 19% of young males believe, men are supposed to be head of the household and take control of the relationship

The National Community Attitudes survey found;

- nearly 2 in 5 believe that a lot of times women who say they were raped led the man on and later had regrets
- Up to 1 in 5 believes that there are circumstances in which women bear some responsibility for violence
- Up to 28% of Australians endorse attitudes supportive of male dominance of decision-making in relationships, a dynamic identified as a risk factor for partner violence
- More than a quarter believe that men make better political leaders

Things your club can do to prevent sexism and promote equality between men and women

- Have a zero tolerance culture to sexist jokes and comments
- If sexist jokes/comments are made, ensure they are addressed and dealt with seriously
- Provide all players and club members at the beginning of each season with information on your club policies and who they can go to access these policies or for more information or help
- Clearly explain where the club stands on sexist behaviour or comments, and outline the course of action that will be taken if behaviour/comments breaches policy/club code of conduct

- All teams to have agreed way of addressing sexist language and disrespectful behaviour, and implementing bystander action
- Who is represented on your board/committee? Is there equal representation of men and women
- Involve men and women equally in the clubs decision making
- Celebrate and reward the achievements of men and women equally
- Celebrate and acknowledge the contributions made by all members of the club equally
- Promote and share the results and achievements made by all players and members with the club and local media
- Ensure clubrooms display memorabilia and the achievements of men and women equally e.g. players who have reached milestone games, team premierships, best and fairest winners etc
- Offer mentoring for those new in leadership positions
- All club leaders to role model respectful behaviour

References

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