

Women's Participation and Facility Access Project

A joint research project by

VicSport

and

Womensport and Recreation Victoria

for

Sport and Recreation Victoria

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1 Scope of the Project

The Women's Participation and Facility Access Project was a joint project by VicSport and Womensport and Recreation Victoria (WSRV). The objective of the project was to undertake research into the needs of women accessing sports facilities/events and to assess the level of adequacy of facilities in meeting the needs of women.

Following the identification of the needs of women accessing facilities, a communication campaign has been developed in order to:

- Raise public awareness about the current level of adequacy for female participants.
- Raise awareness to facility managers and planners and provide strategies about catering for women's needs.

The scope of this project is:

“To influence change in the distribution of government and other resources to enable better access to and participation of women in sport.”

What is a Facility?

For the purposes of this project, the word facility is used to describe areas where sport and recreational activities occur. These may include one or multiples of the following:

- Indoor
- Outdoor
- A clubroom/clubhouse
- Sports grounds or green space.

One cannot underestimate the impact of the management and culture on the nature of a facility.

2 Methodology

2.1 Literature Review

The starting point of the project was a literature review into the past and current situation facing women in sport. The literature review looked at studies undertaken in the 1980's, 1990's and 2000 enabling an assessment of the extent of advancements in meeting women's needs when using sports facilities. This also allowed the project to list previous needs of women and assess whether changes had occurred from previous documentation.

2.2 Interviews

Extensive consultation was important in understanding the needs of women participating in sport and recreation and assessing the current levels of facility adequacy. Interviews were held in regional and metro Victoria, targeting participants and administrators at elite, club, local government and state sporting association level. Interviews were conducted with:

- Jeavons Recreation and Tourism Planners (JRTP)
- Kate Palmer, Netball Victoria
- Janice Lane & Christine Constantinou, Darebin City Council
- John Harmer, Australian Women's Cricket coach
- Jenny Borlase, Australian Netball Team
- Sue Howard, Maribyrnong City Council

2.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups were an important part in the process of assessing the needs and facility concerns of women in sport. This process covered metro and regional Victoria, involving:

- Participants (club and elite level) and parents,
- Administrators and coaches,
- Local government authorities in regional and metro Victoria, and
- Consultants in the Recreation Planning industry.

3 Needs analysis

3.1 Literature Review

There is more to sport and recreation facilities than bricks and mortar. A good facility is not necessarily one with the best buildings or grounds. In most cases it is largely the culture and atmosphere at the facility that impacts on the degree to which a facility is deemed to be accessible to women.

Historically sport has catered for the Anglo-Saxon male and facilities were designed and built with their needs in mind. Sports grounds and pavilions catered for cricketers and footballers with little thought to female and cross-cultural needs.

However as women's participation in sport shows signs of increasing (and more specifically in traditionally male dominated sports - ABS statistics indicate a 21% increase in women's soccer from 1998-2000), the fact that facilities still cater primarily for the Anglo-Saxon male has become a problem.

Evidence from studies in the 80's, 90's and 2000 indicates that there is a long way to go in ensuring equal access to facilities and equity of distribution of resources in sport between female and male participants. The recommendations being put forward in 2000 are alarmingly similar to those put forward in the 80's and 90's. Given the number of studies undertaken to address the needs of women in sport, it is a concern that so little change has occurred to level the playing fields and ensure equitable access to sports facilities by both men and women.

Following a conference presented by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation on women in sport held in 1982, recommendations included:

- The distribution of resources between men's and women's recreation activities be on a more equitable basis than appears to exist at present,
- Child care should be available in association with recreation activities,
- A breakdown of expenditure for male and female recreation activities by the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation should be made available.

1992 study on Women's Sport in the Burdekin Report, found the most influential factors in making participation easier to be:

- Lower costs
- Group sessions with friends
- Wider variety of program times
- Improved facilities
- Provision of transport

Jeavons Recreation and Tourism Planners undertook a "Western Region Sport Facility Study" in 2000. The study found that:

"Whilst a number of sports catered well for women, the availability and condition of facilities especially for growth sports (such as women's soccer and women's rugby) are disincentives for women who want to play."

The study found that access to facilities was an issue especially for those wanting to play socially without routine involvement in a club.

A recommendation to come out of the "Women in Sport" conference in 1982 highlights the lack of change from 1980 to 2000:

"The distribution of resources between men's and women's recreation activities should be on a more equitable basis than appears to exist at present".

ABS figures for 1999-2000 indicate an increase in the number of Australians participating in Organised Sport.

Victoria has seen an increase of 5.7% in females participating in organised activity, which puts Local Councils under increased pressure to allocate facilities to accommodate them.

3.2 Summary of Interviews

The key points identified by Sally Jeavons included:

- The kitchen is often the focal point of the club - sufficient space is required to encourage interaction.
- Separate change rooms are important with adequate space and attention to the finishing touches to make them comfortable for both men and women. It is advisable

that finishes within the change rooms should be of an equal quality to those used in domestic developments.

- Internal open areas are an important requirement of sports facilities.
- Children's play areas that are visible and located close to the playing area are an important requirement for mothers.
- Adequate storage areas for equipment.
- Internal viewing areas of outdoor playing arenas create a family atmosphere.

Identifying the user was one of the key recommendations of the Local Government seminar.

Kate Palmer identified the need for more women to be included in all levels of decision-making.

Access of women to facilities was also raised by a number of interviewees. Other related issues included:

- More facilities available to women. Without facilities having designated times for women to train and compete, women have to compete with men for available times. This usually leads to women getting times that cause conflicts with other priorities such as family time, work or study commitments.
- More night sport so that working women who have children can have the children looked after by the children's fathers or other family members.
- More coaching courses tailored to suit women. Many coaching courses are aimed at men with a female component. It is important that specific coaching courses are written to address issues for female athletes that have been well documented from previous research.
- Clubs/facilities should be more family friendly and welcoming.

Darebin City Council has successfully set up facilities exclusively for women's use as well as ensuring that current facilities used by men's teams provide for women's needs and are in a position to cater for an anticipated increase in women's teams in the future.

The key to the success of Darebin City Council is the framework according to which they operate, which clearly stipulates the allocation of facilities to under-represented groups (including women) in order to redress imbalances.

Quality and quantity of facilities was raised by several interviewees. For example:

With regard to the actual facility, most soccer clubs in Victoria have a clubhouse at their ground. The biggest problem regarding these clubhouses is the lack of toilet and change room facilities, and in most cases there is only one change room available which is used by the men/boys teams - leaving the women to use public toilet blocks as change rooms where these are available. The lack of change rooms is especially a problem in the juniors where many teams are involved in mixed competition.

3.3 Summary of Focus Groups

Focus group discussions resulted in the identification of three areas where women's needs in facilities can be categorised; namely the facility, management and access.

3.3.1 The Facility

- Change rooms are a **basic** need for male and female participants i.e. showers and lockers. This should be the case for indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Internal and external space to encourage social interaction and to hold meetings.
- The provision of lighting in the car park contributes to a safer environment. Sufficient space should be provided to enable mothers to manoeuvre prams with ease.
- Grounds should be maintained and in good condition. Fields should be well marked.
- Adequate storage space for equipment should be provided. Equipment should be maintained in good condition.

3.3.2 Management

- Staff should be trained to be friendly, welcoming and personal.
- Scheduling should be more equal. It is common for men to get the ideal/convenient time slots and women get what's left over.
- Women want to be catered for in the same way as men with regards to bar facilities. Soft drinks and juices should be made available.
- Sports facilities should be "SmokeFree" and "SunSmart".
- First aid is important especially in regional Victoria where access to a hospital may not be readily available.
- Childcare or the provision of viewable safe playgrounds are a requirement, there is a significant drop-off in participation rates in the young mother age group.

3.3.3 Access

- Women want to have access to playing facilities of an equal quality to men/boys. It is common for Under-13 boys to get preference over the women.
- Information should be widely available especially around what activities are offered and times available.
- Local access is important. A convenient location makes participation easier.

3.3.4 Local Government Subsidies

There are a number of obstacles in the way of achieving absolute equality. One problem facing Local Government Authorities (LGAs) is the finite number of facilities available for the growing number of people wanting to use these facilities. LGAs are in the precarious position where limited space and financial resources prevent them from being able to build more facilities.

Victoria has seen an increase of 5.7% in females participating in organised activity, which puts Local Councils under increased pressure to allocate facilities to accommodate them.

To complicate the issue further, large proportions of council-owned facilities remain unchanged, hence are inappropriate to the changing nature of the users. This results in many facilities being inaccessible to minority groups, especially women and girls, which then limits the capacity for the growth of these minority groups.

Maintaining sports facilities and grounds requires massive amounts of money, for example to maintain **one** cricket oval in City of Manningham costs as much as \$20 000 per annum. To assist in recouping a portion of these costs LGAs apply the User Pays System. In the case of outdoor sports, the user pays between 10 - 30% of the total costs associated with that facility. Councils allocate a significantly lower subsidy to indoor facilities and the user in this instance can pay as much as 80% of total costs associated with the facility, and in the majority of cases, indoor facilities are tendered out to private companies that exist to make a profit.

Therefore Council is subsidising outdoor sport to a greater degree and the major benefactor of this subsidy are male dominated sports. To substantiate this view a leading metropolitan Local Government Authority found that they were subsidising males between the ages of 25 - 40 years by as much as 60% and has recognised the need to address this and consider strategies to balance subsidies more equitably between female and male participants.

Maintenance costs will always be there regardless of who makes use of a facility. However it is a fact that few women's teams have access to sports facilities during peak times, hence the claims that facilities offer the most benefit to the male dominated sports. In the near future, LGAs face a significant challenge to develop strategies to ensure that these facilities cater for the wider population.

3.4 Issues

The following issues have been identified as contributing to women's satisfaction levels within sports facilities being lower than acceptable, thus leading to lower female participation rates.

3.4.1 Poor facilities

An increase in female participation in traditionally male dominated sports has resulted in the original facilities not catering for women's needs (eg. No female change rooms/toilets).

This issue has arisen due to lack of vision by many LGAs within Victoria. It has been shown that when LGAs have a proactive approach to facility design and also include community consultation, the proposed facility caters for a wider variety of users, is utilised to a higher degree and becomes more financially viable. This has been shown to be the case in facilities at Caulfield Park, WORLD and at Northcote. All these facilities have reported an increase in female participation rates and user viability since they have been built or redeveloped.

3.4.2 Club culture

Older clubs and facilities which have a strong history of male participation see men's teams receiving a higher priority when considering programming issues: training times, ground allocations and distribution of club resources.

The "culture" of a club/committee/facility management often excludes women from being involved in decision-making processes.

There needs to be a cultural change at all levels of the sport structure that females are to be involved at the same level as males are. This issue seems to still be prevalent at a club level where many female teams are new or their needs are not understood. The clubs that

are successfully increasing their female satisfaction and therefore their participation level are those that include women at all levels of the club's decision making process.

Clubs and associations that have shown this to be an advantage include the Victorian Soccer Federation and Darebin City Council. There needs to be a push from all areas of sport to highlight the need for women to be involved and also for women to make the decision that they need to be involved to assist not only themselves but also others to voice their views.

Clubs should lead by example, showing evidence that their women's teams are a priority and that they are given equal opportunity. A starting point would be increasing the representation of women on management committees within clubs and ensuring that women's teams are given equitable time on suitable grounds for training. It is also important that clubs actively market their local area to encourage more female participation.

There is a need for Sports Associations to assess the feasibility of scheduling all matches on one day over the weekend and the impact this has on Local Government's capacity to cater for them. It may be that by scheduling half the games on a Saturday and the other half on a Sunday, more room can be made to cater for women's teams.

If equality is to be realised, Sports Associations need to understand that resistance against implementing these types of changes on the basis that matches have always been played on a Saturday puts Council in a difficult position.

3.4.3 Local government subsidy

The historical dominance of traditional field sports in public open spaces has resulted in male sports demanding high maintenance from local government. To change this high level of financial subsidy becomes politically sensitive. Consequently, the distribution of financial subsidy from local government to local sport is dominated by men's field sports.

Many women do not have the political acumen of their male counterparts. Even when these women become involved in sport they are accepting of the allocations of resources that are given to them. The women will rarely complain, even if these are not fairly distributed. It is therefore necessary for LGAs to assist in making resource allocation, especially field allocations, more equitable for women. LGAs that have done this with success include City of Greater Dandenong and Darebin City Councils.

It is also essential that councils research their own subsidy distribution to see that women are receiving an equal portion of subsidies, as are the men. The Ballarat City Council recently undertook a program where grounds that were highly subsidised needed to start assisting with the ground costs so that other facilities within the region could be assisted to a higher degree.

Councils need to consider re-prioritising their efforts. Councils should recognise their instrumental role in the development of smaller sports in addition to catering for the major sports. Strategies are required to make room for minority groups in the market, in the hope that these groups will grow to become equal partners in the sports sector.

Through the use of service agreements, Councils are able to be more assertive in the allocation of fields for use by women's teams. This may be achieved by including clauses in Service Agreements, which stipulate that minority groups must occupy a certain percentage of use of the facility.

Another option worth investigating is a 10% concession offered to clubs with women's teams participating in local competition. This will help stimulate the transformation process and encourage clubs to make women's sport a priority. This strategy has been implemented at Darebin City Council and demonstrates their commitment to correcting the historical imbalances.

Local government authorities could offer grants to clubs that offer programs aimed at increasing participation in minority groups.

4 Models for Success

4.1 Darebin City Council

Darebin City Council developed a facility exclusively for women's sport in Northcote. Developed over ten years ago, the facility is known for its superior quality of the fields with many men's clubs wanting to make use of the facility. The facility in Northcote caters for a range of sports such as soccer, cricket, football and soon touch football. The high participation rates amongst those clubs making use of the facility supports the need for clubs to be more accommodating of female members.

Darebin City Council enforces a policy whereby facilities must have the capacity to accommodate women. With an anticipated increase in participation of women in sport, Darebin City Council requires facilities to make the necessary changes now in order to be able to accommodate women as and when needed. An example of this is Olten Reserve where the clubrooms were designed to cater for both male and female members despite the fact that the facility is currently being used by men's teams only.

Darebin City Council lists the following recommendations when developing/redesigning a facility:

- Change rooms and toilets for men and women.
- Shelter for parents and families.
- Club consultation during the design phase of development.
- Community forums to ensure support over decisions made.
- A clear framework that stipulates policies and procedures.

4.2 Victorian Country Netball/Football League

The country netball/football league has been in existence for over 60 years whereby the netball and football teams are scheduled to play at the same venue on the same days. The league came about for practical reasons; it enables families to enjoy a day out together and contributed to developing community spirit and social interaction between the men and women's teams. The structure has been successful in bringing about a degree of equality and equity between men's and women's sport.

An overriding factor in the success of the association between the netball team and football team is the existence of a committee representing netball players. It is evident that those netball clubs that enjoy a healthy relationship with the football teams and are satisfied that their needs are met are those that have their own committee or have female representation on club committees that are usually male dominated.

The positive relationship between netball and football is largely due to the existence of a committee representing both sports and the needs of members. However the netball clubs are still required to exercise assertiveness especially with regard to decision-making. The view that the netball club will fit in with the football club is possibly due to the lack of representation of women on committees and the low self-esteem of many women. It is important for women to actively voice their needs and concerns if they are to become more involved in the decision-making process.

The West Gippsland Netball Association has been identified as a model for women's participation and successful co-existence with the football clubs. The netball association has identified the need to get more involved in the planning and decision-making processes of the league, and it is anticipated that this proactive approach will enhance the relationship between football and netball. The link between netball and football has benefits for the netball club through the association with the heart of a country town, that is, the football club.

The West Gippsland Association referred to a decrease in spectator attendance when netball clubs were not represented. These women will bring insights and ideas that can be built upon and that will benefit both sports.

4.3 Caulfield Park

Caulfield Park is a council-owned sports facility catering specifically to field sports. The pavilion within the facility houses the Caulfield Men's and Women's Lacrosse Clubs and the Caulfield Cricket Club (men's teams only).

Prior to 1999, the pavilion at Caulfield Park offered two sets of change rooms, both of which were available for use by the men, with no female change rooms. This resulted in female players being forced to change alongside the field which especially a problem when the women's lacrosse club hosted club matches during the lacrosse season - involving around 300 female players on a day.

The Park was redeveloped in 1999, this was funded by the City of Glen Eira and the main driver behind the redevelopment was Linda Smith, Manager of Recreation at City of Glen Eira. "Council was aware that a women's lacrosse team had played at Caulfield without facilities for some time. We recognised this as a problem and made it a priority to upgrade the facility in 1999. We were fortunate in that we had capital available to address the problem."

The redevelopment had the following objectives:

- Addition of female change rooms.
- Addition of a disabled toilet.
- Provision of additional storage space for users.

It was important that clubs were given the opportunity to have input into the design phase of redevelopment. This ensured that the users accepted the changes and was important in improving the viability of the facility.

Prior to the redevelopment, the pavilion at Caulfield Park was not equipped to cater for school sports, which impacted on its viability. However since the addition of female change rooms and the official opening in November 1999, the facility hosted the National Under-17 School Girls Cricket Championships. The Victorian Women's Cricket Team has also been able to use the facility for state matches.

The lacrosse club has benefited in that the men's and women's lacrosse teams are now able to train on the same nights creating an excellent social atmosphere in the club. The women's teams also feel that their presence is valued and the upgrade has created more of a family atmosphere in the club.

The City of Glen Eira has implemented a strategy stating that any redevelopments should be undertaken with a view to making the facility unisex. This strategy is as a result of Councils recognition that the demographic of the users of facilities is changing. For facilities to be viable, they must cater for both men's and women's teams.

4.4 WORLD, Bairnsdale

The Women's Organisation Recreation Leisure Development (WORLD) was established 15 years ago as a result of extensive lobbying and fundraising from the softball and netball clubs in Bairnsdale. The facility is used by netball, hockey and softball clubs. It offers

clubrooms, playground facilities enclosed and adjacent to the clubhouse, lighting on the netball courts, adequate carparking and an adjacent child-care centre.

Participation has increased to such an extent that the facility is now too small for the number of women making use of it and plans are underway to raise funds for further development.

4.5 Moreland City Council

In 1999 a well-established cricket club applied for an allocation for a turf wicket for their women's team. Moreland City Council in making their allocations for the 1999/2000 season undertook an extensive consultation process to ensure that gender equity and access issues were considered in all allocations. The importance of involving key stakeholders in the decision-making process was recognised by Moreland City Council as being vital to ensure ownership of the outcome.

The Council organised a forum, attended by:

- Victorian Women's Cricket Association
- Moreland Moonee Valley Cricket Association
- Victorian Cricket Association
- Representatives of women's teams

At the forum it was agreed that:

- The women's team could not be accommodated at their home ground at this point.
- The women's cricket team would play their matches on a turf wicket at an alternative venue - which was being used by the men's seconds team.
- Council would seek to allocate grounds on the basis of standard of play where possible; taking into account other factors such as historical ties clubs had with grounds.

Those involved in the process expressed satisfaction at the opportunity for their concerns to be heard and an appreciation of being given the opportunity to be a part of the decision-making process. The outcome has been extremely beneficial for both the Council and the cricket team and the next step facing the club and the Council is the quest to ensure future allocations continue to promote equality in access of resources for future generations.

5 Policy makers

“To directly influence decision-makers at all levels to redress the imbalance.”

According to a 1997 report by the House of Representatives standing committee ("Rethinking the funding of community sport and recreational facilities: A sporting chance"), 90% - 95% of community sport and recreation facilities are owned by local government. With this in mind, it is clear that the project should primarily be aimed at influencing change within local government.

The communication campaign should be aimed at encouraging debate among state sporting associations, clubs and local government. The communication campaign is intended to bring about changes in the distribution of resources between genders as well as influencing policy makers to change the way facilities cater for women therefore addressing women's needs.

In addition to the communication strategy policy makers should adopt more inclusive practices towards women when developing, upgrading and allocating facilities.

To this effect the following recommendations are presented:

- Club consultation (male and female), by LGAs or other contracted bodies, during the design phase of facility development to be undertaken to ensure that the needs of female participants are catered for.
- Subsidy allocation by local government should be more equitable. Local Government policy should stipulate the allocation of facilities to under-represented groups (including women) to redress current imbalances.
- There is a minimum quota of women represented on the committees of mixed gendered clubs.
- Field allocation should be equitable and women should have access to facilities of the same standard. This can be done by way of lease agreements.
- Funders of facilities should ensure a minimum standard of basic needs are catered for when planning and tendering for sports facilities.

- A facility checklist should be drawn up to enable female users to have a clear understanding of what should be incorporated into the facility. This will assist when users are approached to provide input in the design phase of redevelopment.
- Clubs, through the efforts of LGAs and SSAs should be encouraged to enrol in Club/Association Management Program and Volunteer Management Programs in order to encourage women to become more proactive or involved in club committees and decision-making.
- SRV should adopt the NSW *“Sports Facilities: Making Physical Activity Safe and Accessible for the Community.”* SRV should adopt the guidelines specifically when new funding is allocated for development/redesign of a facility.
- Local Government should look at allocating funding to improve the provision of alternative forms of recreation, which are the preferred choice of women, eg lighting up walking paths.
- Increased awareness campaigns by local government aimed at local clubs to make them aware of the services available to clubs.

6 Communication

6.1 Objectives

“To develop a range of communication strategies to raise awareness of the current situation and needs of women in sport with regard to facilities.”

“To support women in sport throughout Victoria and ensure their rights and increase expectations of equal access”

“To raise the image and profile of VicSport and WSRV amongst their members and other stakeholders”; and

“To increase sport and social participation of all women and junior girls in Victoria”

6.2 Target Audiences

From the issues that were raised a communication strategy was written to assist in disseminating information in regards to women’s needs in sports facilities to policy makers within LGAs. A number of strategies were discussed and the following were highlighted.

There were a number of target audiences that were identified and the messages needed to be conveyed through the following channels:

Internal

Sport and Recreation Victoria

Highlight the need for a more equitable allocation of facility grants so that more facilities can upgrade and therefore welcome women into their clubs.

VicSport’s members

Through dissemination of information in regards to women’s needs in sports facilities, the option of assisting members to adopt “family friendly” practices at both an association and a club level.

WSRV's members

To disseminate results from the research and to further disseminate information into the general community on women's needs when accessing sport facilities.

External

Local Government Authorities

The need for LGAs to research their sport facility subsidies and to divide them equally amongst all stakeholders within the community. By decreasing the costs for women to participate in sport and recreation, the health level of the local community will increase and there will therefore be a lower need for healthcare costs at a later date.

The need for local clubs to be able to access information on how to upgrade their facilities and also how to make their club more "family friendly".

State Sporting Associations

To meet with a number of SSAs to gain their support in communicating the results of this project to member associations and clubs.

Local Clubs

By improving the experience of women and girls who are attracted to their club, more women will be retained and other women will be attracted to their club through word of mouth. Also by including women at all levels of decision-making, there will be a higher level of satisfaction experienced by the women and therefore more club involvement.

General Public

To highlight to all within the community that there are specific changes that are required to increase female participation in sport. This strategy is also aimed at getting women to ask for basic requirements from a facility and to expect that these requirements will be forthcoming.

Media

To harness relations with specific media outlets showing an interest in the results from the project.

6.3 The Strategic Approach

A strategy to communicate with the various target audiences was compiled and a number of communication vehicles were decided upon. They are as follows:

- VicSport to compile a list of various communication vehicles such as newsletters and magazines that are produced by their members. Editorials to be distributed via these channels.
- VicSport and WSRV are to compile a list of newsletters and magazines produced by State Sporting Associations (SSAs) where editorial can be distributed.
- WSRV to set up a chat room on their web site where members of the community can air their views on women's facilities. Their comments could be used in editorials. It would be envisaged that a high profile members of the sport community would be available for the chat sessions.
- VicSport and WSRV to draft positive case studies. These case studies will then be targeted at regional and metropolitan community newspapers and newsletters of SSAs and LGAs.
- VicSport and WSRV to have input into the "Family Friendly Club" research currently being conducted.
- VicSport and WSRV to hold a regional workshop in Sale in May on this topic.
- VicSport and WSRV continue to identify 'best practice' in this area for inclusion in Sportsview and distribution to local press.

7 Recommendations and Actions

The basis for this project was to research women's needs in sporting facilities and to then communicate these findings to policy makers so that planning and design of new and renovated facilities would be more "family-friendly". As well as the communication strategy that had been outlined above, this project would like to summarise the recommendations and actions that have come out of this project.

- Club consultation (male and female), by LGAs or other contracted bodies, during the design phase of facility development to be undertaken to ensure that the needs of female participants are catered for.
- Subsidy allocation by local government should be more equitable. Local Government policy should stipulate the allocation of facilities to under-represented groups (including women) to redress current imbalances.
- There is a minimum quota of women represented on the committees of mixed gendered clubs.
- Field allocation should be equitable and women should have access to facilities of the same standard. This can be done by way of lease agreements.
- Funders of facilities should ensure a minimum standard of basic needs are catered for when planning and tendering for sports facilities.
- A facility checklist should be drawn up to enable female users to have a clear understanding of what should be incorporated into the facility. This will assist when users are approached to provide input in the design phase of redevelopment.
- Clubs, through the efforts of LGAs and SSAs should be encouraged to enrol in Club/Association Management Program and Volunteer Management Programs in order to encourage women to become more proactive or involved in club committees and decision-making.
- SRV should adopt the NSW *"Sports Facilities: Making Physical Activity Safe and Accessible for the Community."* SRV should adopt the guidelines specifically when new funding is allocated for development/redesign of a facility.

- Local Government should look at allocating funding to improve the provision of alternative forms of recreation, which are the preferred choice of women, eg lighting up walking paths.
- Increased awareness campaigns by local government aimed at local clubs to make them aware of the services available to clubs.
- VicSport to compile a list of various communication vehicles such as newsletters and magazines that are produced by their members. Editorials to be distributed via these channels.
- VicSport and WSRV are to compile a list of newsletters and magazines produced by State Sporting Associations (SSAs) where editorial can be distributed.
- WSRV to set up a chat room on their web site where members of the community can air their views on women's facilities. Their comments could be used in editorials. It would be envisaged that a high profile members of the sport community would be available for the chat sessions.
- VicSport and WSRV to draft positive case studies. These case studies will then be targeted at regional and metropolitan community newspapers and newsletters of SSAs and LGAs.
- VicSport and WSRV to have input into the "Family Friendly Club" research currently being conducted.
- VicSport and WSRV to hold a regional workshop in Sale in May on this topic.
- VicSport and WSRV continue to identify 'best practice' in this area for inclusion in Sportsview and distribution to local press.

8 Conclusion

This study has confirmed the iniquitous practices first identified in Victorian sport in 1982 still continue to exist.

By discussions with key players in women's' sport and focus group meetings with users this study has identified current issues and determined a communication strategy to begin to address these issues by raising awareness.

Other recommendations have been made concerning funding and facility development for government. Many of the recommendations made in this study refer to more inclusive practices to enable women to have a greater say in the sport industry.

9 Appendix 1

9.1 Jeavons Recreation and Tourism Planners (JRTP)

The services of Sally Jeavons of Jeavons Recreation and Tourism Planners were contracted to assist with the needs analysis. With twenty years experience with local government, her feedback and advice was of great value to the project.

JRTP indicated that councils regularly undergo research into gender equity that often resulted in changes in policy. However due to issues such as lack of financial and human resources, very rarely do the changes in policy translate into changes at the grassroots level, i.e. at the implementation phase.

JRTP was recently contracted to assist in the redevelopment of North Park Tennis Club, specifically looking at changes required to ensure that the facility suits both male and female participants. JRTP highlighted the importance of club consultation during the design phase of facility development and, as such, the members were consulted to identify their needs.

Key characteristics identified by JRTP as necessary for ensuring a sports facility successfully caters for the whole family include:

- The kitchen is often the focal point of the club - sufficient space is required to encourage interaction.
- Separate change rooms are important with adequate space and attention to the finishing touches to make them comfortable for both men and women. It is advisable that finishes within the change rooms should be of an equal quality to those used in domestic developments.
- Internal open areas are an important requirement of sports facilities.
- Children's play areas that are visible and located close to the playing area are an important requirement for mothers.
- Adequate storage areas for equipment.
- Internal viewing areas of outdoor playing arenas create a family atmosphere.

9.2 Local Government

In October 2000, the Outer Space Seminar was held, with representatives of a number of Local Government Authorities in attendance. The seminar was aimed at encouraging

debate among local government regarding the development and availability of open spaces and much time was devoted to emphasising the important role of open space within the community.

In his opening speech at the Outer Space Seminar the Hon. John Thwaites, Minister for Health, emphasised the important role sport and recreation plays in the economic success of Victoria. Sport has a significant impact on the economic and social climate within communities and this is what makes the allocation of open space such an important issue.

Relevant recommendations to come out of the seminar are as follows:

i) Flexibility

Flexibility is the key to the success of a facility/sportsground. The development should enable changes that will ensure the facility caters for the changing needs of users. Local government should allocate sufficient space to enable a wide variety of sporting activities to be catered for in one central area. This ensures efficient use of space and also contributes to creating a safer atmosphere.

There is a long lead-time between the planning and the construction phase and as such it is important that the facility allows adaptability in order to accommodate the changing trend in types of users.

ii) Financial Viability

To make grounds and facilities financially viable, they should cater for more than one sports code. Single fields are no longer financially viable due to the low number of users catered for. To maximise the financial benefits offered by the sport and leisure industry, the facility should be made accessible to those groups of people who show an increase in participation rate, eg women and juniors.

iii) Identifying the User

In the planning and design phase of facility development, it is essential that the user be identified. As previously suggested, the users of the facility will change over time and planning should take this into account. By undertaking planning within a clear framework, local government can ensure that the facility will cater for the needs of the intended users.

Research undertaken by Jeavons Recreation and Tourism shows that users show greater discrimination in relation to quality than was previously the case. With the increase in women's participation, one would anticipate that the importance of quality would become more of an issue. Despite the time required to consult with users in the planning phase, this is an essential determinant of the success of the facility and the

level of acceptance of the facility within the community. There is a definite trend away from competitive participation to more unstructured activities, such as walking and mountain biking. These trends should be identified during the consultation process. The developer would have to incorporate these trends into upgrading or development plans.

iv) The Needs of Women

Why do many women choose to use a walking machine in their home over walking outdoors or joining an athletics club? One of the answers to this question is safety, which is listed as a key issue for women participating in sport and recreational activities. Sports should be located in close proximity to residences in order to increase the accessibility of the area. There is an increasing emphasis on combining social activities with sport and recreation activities. Another reason is the degree of family friendliness of the club, not just in terms of access to facilities, but also in terms of the provision of suitable services.

Providing a rest area where mothers can enjoy a coffee while watching their children play is an important part of the mother's decision on which facility to use. This contributes to a safer atmosphere at the facility/grounds.

Walking is the most common form of activity undertaken by women, and especially new mothers. Local government should focus on the quality of the walkways and design them in a way that makes them useable by the users. Walkways should be useable and of a good quality.

9.4 Kate Palmer, Netball Victoria

Kate Palmer is CEO of Netball Victoria, which has a membership of over 112 000 players. Through the country netball/football league, the two sports have enjoyed a cooperative relationship for over 60 years. The league was brought about as a result of recognising the need to cater for the whole family in order to maintain high participation rates in these sports.

Although successful, there is still evidence of a general perception that the netball clubs will fit in with the football clubs. Decision-making frequently occurs in the absence of consultation with netball clubs/ associations. The major reason behind this is usually the relative absence of women on committees of management. There is a need for more women to become more actively involved with decision making on committees in order to have women's needs represented in the decision-making process. Women need to creatively, strategically and constructively use the sport system to achieve their goals.

On the issue of comparing access to facilities, it was suggested that a comparison between netball and basketball would provide interesting results. There are many instances where netball shares an indoor court with basketball and it has been suggested that there is a trend for basketball to get preference as far as scheduling goes. It is often the case that netball teams get the “left-over” times.

Kate Palmer expressed disappointment at the apparent acceptance by women of their position and the lack of involvement by women on management committees. This view has been echoed by Dawn Wilcock, of Womensport and Recreation Victoria, who believes that women are too accepting of their lack of input within sports clubs/associations. Women need to increase their expectations and have more input at a committee and local government level.

9.5 Janice Lane & Christine Constantinou Darebin City Council

Janice Lane and Christine Constantinou are responsible for the Leisure Services area within Darebin City Council. As a leader in the provision of resources for women’s sport, their input and experience was invaluable in order to put forward guidelines and recommendations in this report.

Darebin City Council has successfully set up facilities exclusively for women’s use as well as ensuring that current facilities used by men’s teams provide for women’s needs and are in a position to cater for an anticipated increase in women’s teams in the future.

The key to the success of Darebin City Council is the framework according to which they operate, which clearly stipulates the allocation of facilities to under-represented groups (including women) in order to redress imbalances. In ensuring the needs of women are catered for, Darebin City Council pays special attention to:

- Identifying the needs of the users in the planning phase of facility design/development. Although this consultation process can take up to 6 months, no development is undertaken without club consultation. This has allowed the facilities to be developed that cater for users needs and are therefore become of increasing value to the community.
- Even though many of the clubs are currently only used by male teams, Darebin City Council requires that the facility caters for the needs of women too; eg change room

facilities for women in men's clubs. This is done with a view to an anticipated growth in women's sports in the future. The idea is that facilities are upgraded to cater for women's needs now in order to make them immediately accessible as required in the near future.

- Darebin City Council operates within its "Sports Aims" framework. This document emphasises the allocation of facilities to minority groups as an objective of Darebin City Council and is used to justify the decisions made by the Council with regard to allocation of resources and funding to upgrading facilities.

9.6 John Harmer, Australian Women's Cricket Coach

Women's cricket typifies the challenge of women in sport, due to its origins of being a traditionally male dominated sport. One anticipates that elite players have an easier path for participation, however the conservative perception of a woman's place in sport still exists. John Harmer is respected for his position within elite sport and firmly believes that women are not able to access facilities as conveniently and easily as men.

Harmer believes that the coach has an integral role to play in the creation of a culture encouraging the participation of women in sport. Harmer highlighted the following avenues for change in making sport more accessible for women:

- More facilities available to women. Without facilities having designated times for women to train and compete, women have to compete with men for available times. This usually leads to women getting times that cause conflicts with other priorities such as family time, work or study commitments.
- More night sport so that working women who have children can have the children looked after by the children's fathers or other family members.
- More coaching courses tailored to suit women. Many coaching courses are aimed at men with a female component. It is important that specific coaching courses are written to address issues for female athletes that have been well documented from previous research.
- Clubs/facilities should be more family friendly and welcoming.

9.7 Jenny Borlase, Australian Netball Team

Jenny Borlase was a prominent member of the Australian Netball team for a number of years. While elite level players enjoy excellent facilities, Borlase emphasised that access to facilities of an acceptable standard was a problem for players, especially in regional Victoria where netball clubs struggle with lighting and good quality surfaces. Netball clubs generally fund their own upgrading of facilities, undertaking fundraising to resurface the court.

In terms of scheduling, facilities need to think of offering a variety of times to accommodate working women and mothers. It was suggested that in order to make participation easier, there should be more central venues offering a range of sports thus contributing to a “family friendly” environment.

9.8 Theresa Deas, Victorian Soccer Federation

As one of the fastest growing men’s and women’s team sports in Victoria, soccer faces the problem a lack of suitable facilities. Theresa Deas works with women’s soccer in particular and was able to provide valuable input in terms of women’s access to soccer facilities. Access to facilities is a problem experienced by many women’s soccer teams other than those participating in the Premier League grade. The availability of facilities for women’s soccer teams is a problem throughout Victoria and the problem is especially evident in junior teams.

The lack of access to facilities could be attributed to:

- a) A shortage of soccer facilities for all Victorians, male and female.
- b) The women’s teams are in the minority and their needs come second to those of men’s. When there are fields available, the men get first preference.

In an effort to illustrate instances where unequal access is a problem, the Victorian Soccer Federation was asked to provide an example.

With regard to the actual facility, most soccer clubs in Victoria have a clubhouse at their ground. The biggest problem regarding these clubhouses is the lack of toilet and change room facilities, and in most cases there is only one change room available which is used by the men/boys teams - leaving the women to use public toilet blocks as

change rooms where these are available. The lack of change rooms is especially a problem in the juniors where many teams are involved in mixed competition.

Sandringham Junior Soccer Team does not have a clubhouse but is able to make use of school grounds. The school grounds do not have toilets available, and as such the teams must make use of toilets at the secondary school located a fair distance away.

In working with women's soccer clubs, The Victorian Soccer Federation found that many clubs are unaware of the services and financial assistance available to them through their local government authority. The Federation has identified the need to educate the clubs as to how to access their local government. Their view is that many clubs do not upgrade their services, as they are unaware of the availability of local government.

As far as equitable resource allocation, the Victorian Soccer Federation does not experience inequitable subsidy allocation and recognises government's push for increased female participation in sport. The biggest problem is that local clubs are not aware of the government's support of women in sport and resources available.