

DRAFT

Women's Participation in Sport and Active Recreation in Melbourne's West:

ACTION PLAN FOR CHANGE 2020 - 2025

OCTOBER 2019 v3.3

VICTORIA State Government

women's health west

Brimbank City Council

HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

Maribyrnong CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF MELTON

City of Moonee Valley

CITY OF MELBOURNE

wyndhamcity city. coast. country

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Elders, their families and forebears of both clans the Boonwurrung and Wurundjeri tribes of the Kulin Nation and Wadawurrung - West of the River in Wyndham, who are the Traditional Custodians of Melbourne land for many centuries.

We acknowledge that the land on which we work is the place of age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal and that the Kulin Nation people's continuous living culture has played a significant and unique role in the life of this region.

We would like to thank the anonymous focus group participants who shared their experiences with the council members and Victoria University and Monash University researchers.

PROJECT PARTNERS:

Wyndham City Council (Lead Partner)
Brimbank City Council
Hobsons Bay City Council
Maribyrnong City Council
Melbourne City Council
Melton City Council
Moonee Valley City Council
Women's Health West
Victorian Government

The Victorian Government contributed $45,000 to the delivery of this project through the Community Sports Infrastructure Fund.

PROJECT DELIVERY:

- Victoria University and Monash University
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  - Professor Rochelle Eime, Victoria University
  - Dr Sarah Oxford (Project Manager), Victoria University
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- Inside Edge Sport and Leisure Planning and Life Sport Journey
  - Michael Bodman, Inside Edge
  - Kirstie Robinson, Inside Edge
  - Nikki Burger, Life Sport Journey

Preface



The Women's Participation in Sport and Active Recreation in Melbourne's West: Action Plan for Change ("the Action Plan") provides strategic direction to partners on challenging the gendered barriers to women's participation in sport and active recreation.

Women and girls in the western region of Melbourne:

- Are more diverse culturally, ethnically and economically;
- Are underrepresented in sport and active recreation more than all other regions of Melbourne (refer pages 34/35);
- Belong to communities in three of the fastest growing areas of Australia;
- Experience high commute times which impacts available leisure time, and
- Have more parent and carer duties on average than greater Melbourne.

The Strategy

VISION: Women and girls in Melbourne's west experience equity in access and participation in sport and active recreation

Through the development and implementation of this Action Plan, project partners will:

- Challenge and address the gendered barriers to women's and girls' access to sport and active recreation;
- Increase representation of women and girls in sport and active recreation across the western region of Melbourne, and
- Create positive change through region-specific actions in policies, physical environments, education and communication.

WHAT WE NEED (THE ENABLERS)

For the successful delivery of this Action Plan, the following enablers are critical:

1. A commitment by partner councils to utilise this Action Plan when planning and delivering sport and active recreation in the local area.
2. Continued regional collaboration and a partnership approach to implement the Action Plan.
3. Integration of the Action Plan into existing business and organisational frameworks which support gender equity, health, wellbeing, sport and active recreation.
4. Change agents and owners to drive strategic actions and outcomes.
5. Collaboration between councils, partners, communities and facilitators of sport and active recreation.



"There is no longer a place for the sub-category known as 'women's sport'. There is just sport." Sport Australia CEO Kate Palmer on why it's time to change the way we talk about women in sport."

— Sport Australia

Action Plan for Change



Establishment of Strategic Actions

The Action Plan provides evidence based, strategic direction to project partners in Melbourne's west to support the planning, development, and implementation of women's and girls' improved participation in sport and active recreation.

It identifies 48 actions that partners will focus on to change the way in which women and girls access, participate and experience sport and active recreation.

This Action Plan identifies primary prevention initiatives at a regional scale using the social ecological model (refer page 6), which address issues of gender inequity in systems, communities and individuals.

Identified actions target:

- **Policy:** Strategic and operational;
- **Environments:** Built, cultural, social and structures of coordination;
- **Education:** Capacity building, collaboration, formal and informal structures, and
- **Communication:** Advocacy, promotion and informing.

THE REGION

Melbourne's western region identifies with three distinct types of living; urban growth areas, inner suburban-low density and inner-city high density.

Each urban type has been identified to have some influence on participation in, and access to physical activity opportunities across the region.

Actions are regionally significant and locally adaptable. Partners will adapt the Action Plan locally depending on municipal specific requirements to build capacity and confidence of women and girls, both now and in the future.

Regional projects may be considered where external investment can be sourced.

Action Plan for Change

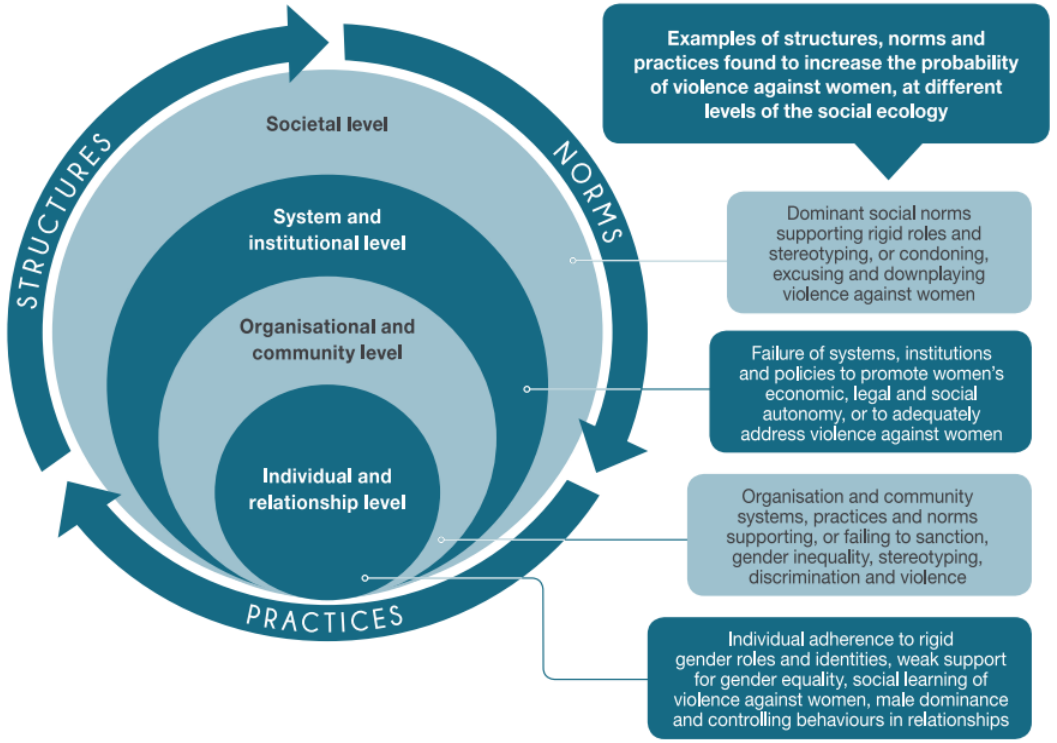
There is no single solution to increasing women's and girls' participation in sport. The social-ecological model (SEM) works on the principle that to drive societal change, you need to act across multiple levels of the model simultaneously.

"Sport is a universal language. At its best it can bring people together, no matter what their origin, background, religious beliefs or economic status."

— Kofi Annan, former United Nations Secretary-General

Sport is central to Australian culture and lifestyle. This Action Plan recognises the importance of sports and active recreation in enabling gender equity, and a safe and harmonious society.

Applying the SEM is more likely to sustain greater impact over time than any single intervention. The value of applying this model to sport, recreation and women and girls, is that it not only identifies the individual factors influencing participation, it acknowledges the complex interactions of each individual relationship and the organisation of the community, systems of process and societal norms.



Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

Key Strategic Priorities

Five key strategic priorities will positively improve the experiences of women's and girls' participation in sport and active recreation in Melbourne's west from 2020 - 2025.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1
Leadership and Capability

Objective: Address the imbalance of opportunity, representation and access to sport and physical activity for women and girls in Melbourne's west through sport and community education, leadership development and capacity building.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2
Welcoming Facilities

Objective: Plan and deliver physical environments with equitable access to facilities and spaces for women and girls to participate and enjoy their involvement in sport and active recreation.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3
Safety and Transport

Objective: Provide safe and accessible spaces and transport routes to maximise opportunities for women and girls to participate in physical activity.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4
Programming and Cost

Objective: Support a mix of free or low cost programs and activities that are inclusive of women and girls of all ages, cultures and abilities.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5
Recognise, Celebrate and Promote

Objective: Generate positive messages and events that represent the diversity of women and girls living in Melbourne's west and celebrate the achievements of local women in sport and active recreation.

Strategic Priority 1: Leadership and Capability

OBJECTIVE: Address the imbalance of opportunity, representation and access to sport and physical activity for women and girls in Melbourne's west through sport and community education, leadership development and capacity building.

Why?

Focus Group findings:

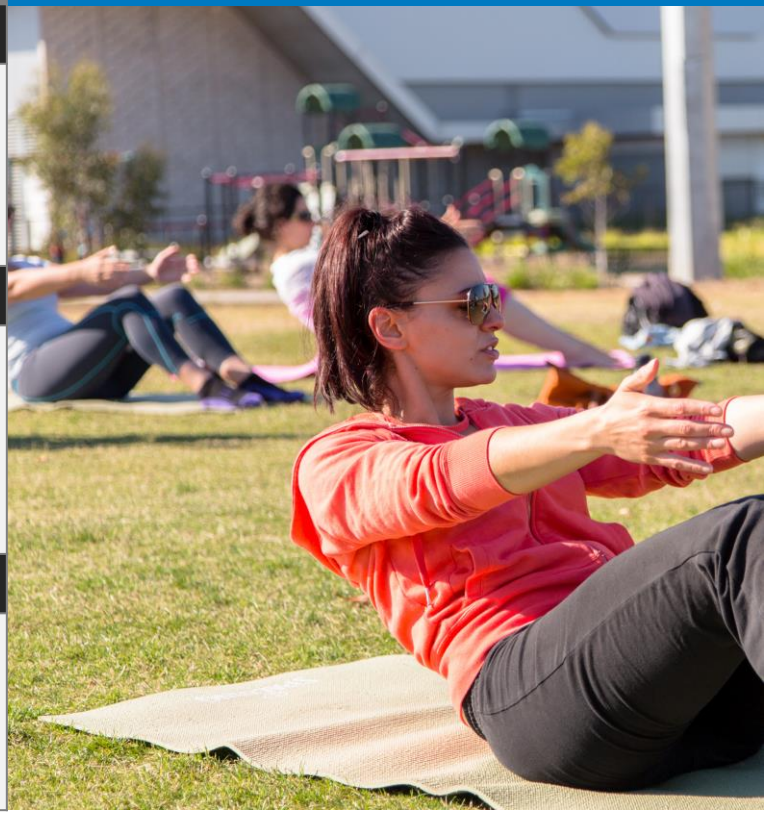
- Difficulty gaining support to allow the time and freedom to undertake physical activity.
- Positive attitudes towards physical activity and its importance.
- Importance placed on female role models within communities that women and girls can relate to.
- Bias and low capability of instructors and facilitators to deliver recreation services and programs for women and girls because of gender, ability, age, ethnicity and culture.

Literature Review findings:

- Create gender-focused conferences and workshops; strengthen current female-focused programming; support female leaders and open pathways for potential leaders (Casey, 2-14; Equity is the Game; O'Neil et al., 2015).
- Engage female role models, such as high profile players or coaches that can engage and inspire younger girls (Equality is the Game, 2017; O'Neil et al., 2015).
- Engage female mentors and promote to women and girls that you don't have to be an elite player to be involved in sport (Equality is the Game, 2017; O'Neil et al., 2015).

Relevance to the Western Region community:

- Lower participation in sport and recreation than Melbourne's average across generations in the region.
- Women and girls reduced exposure to sport and recreation environments to develop capability, confidence and awareness.
- Under representation of women and girls in existing sport and recreation settings decreasing presence and interaction with existing leadership and development.



CHANGE OUR GAME

An initiative of the Victorian Government

VICTORIA State Government

MEETING THE WOMEN ON BOARDS QUOTA

From 1 July 2019, a 40 per cent women on boards quota is in effect for all peak organisations receiving program funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth.

40%

100+

CHANGE OUR GAME SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Change Our Game Scholarship Program provides funding of up to $10,000 to assist women working and volunteering in the sector to access professional development opportunities.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION GUIDELINES

Developed the Change Our Game Recruitment and Retention Guidelines for Women in Sport and Recreation to assist community sport and recreation organisations increase the number of women and girls in leadership roles.



80+

COMMUNITY ACTIVATIONS

Grants of up to $5,000 awarded to community clubs to support events that showcase adn celebrate women and girls. High Profile Change Our Game Ambassadors attend events to provide inspiration and guidance.

WORKING TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION.

Learn more about the initiative
www.changeourgame.vic.gov.au

Figures current as at July 1, 2019

"We don't have any family and friends support here, we are busy making friends, we're busy trying to settle the family… most of us are new mums… (back home) there's so much support. We're just shattered and broken when we reach a new country with zero support".

— Indian woman, urban growth area

Strategic Priority 1: Leadership and Capability

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
POLICY			
1.1 Integrate Action Plan priorities into Council strategies, policies and municipal public health and wellbeing plans leading the agenda on gender equity.	Victorian Government	Local Government	2020/21
1.2 Work together with Women's Health West and regional partners to support the implementation of the Preventing Violence Together 2030 Strategy in areas related to sport and active recreation.	Women's Health West	Local Government	2020/21
1.3 Review Occupancy Policy of sport and recreation facilities to include female executive committee representation and possible quotas.	Victorian Government, Women's Health West	Local Government	2021/22
1.4 Revise Local Government funding guidelines to include categories that promote female coaching, training, education and leadership initiatives in sport and active recreation.	RTO's, State Sporting Associations	Local Government	2022/23
ENVIRONMENT			
1.5 Deliver physical and operational environments at sport and recreation venues to deliver formal and informal leadership training, mentoring and connection for women and girls.	Clubs, RTO's, Social Enterprise	Local Government	2023/24
1.6 Support and encourage sporting clubs, recreation providers and user groups to increase exposure and opportunities for women and girls to be involved in all aspects of sport and recreation.	Clubs, Regional Sports Administration, Local Government, OWSR, National Sporting Organisations, Social Enterprise, RTO's	State Sporting Associations	2021/22

Strategic Priority 1: Leadership and Capability

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
COMMUNICATION			
1.7 Establish local communication platforms and networks to promote leadership, networking and learning opportunities in community sport and recreation.	Media, Women's Health West, Agencies in Wyndham, State Sporting Associations	Local Government	2021/22
1.8 Engage female role models from diverse backgrounds, including high profile players or coaches that can engage and inspire younger girls to continue to be active.	State Sporting Associations, Local Clubs and Leagues, OWSR	Local Government	2022/23
EDUCATION			
1.9 Partner with organisations to deliver gender equity, leadership training and development opportunities for female staff and volunteers at local sporting clubs and organisations.	Gender Equity Organisations	Local Government, State Sporting Associations	2020/21
1.10 Invest in senior leadership training at sports clubs and community user groups and encourage the review of committees to insist on a diverse range of candidates.	Community Groups, Sports Clubs, State Sporting Associations	Local Government, State Sporting Associations, Regional Leagues	2021/22

"It's humiliating when you're older and you can't keep up and you deal with that but then you've got someone screaming at you or just saying do it this way, do it….. keep up with the class"

—— 65+ woman, urban growth area

Strategic Priority 2: Welcoming Facilities

OBJECTIVE: Plan and deliver physical environments with equitable access to facilities and spaces for women and girls to participate and enjoy their involvement in sport and active recreation.

Why?

Focus Group findings:

- Women and girls demand a diversity of sport and active recreation opportunities in varied formats.
- Many women and girls did not feel comfortable participating in traditional sporting and physical activity spaces.
- Older women experience issues with the temperature of changing facilities at leisure centres, too cold making showering and dressing post swim unpleasant. Fear of sickness in the winter months.
- For women with children, childcare is a significant consideration to enable their participation, alternatively providing activities that involve their children.

Literature Review findings:

- Ensure that sport participation products or programs meet the particular needs and motivations of girls and women e.g. providing opportunities that are social, flexible, non-competitive and consider child care options (O'Neil et al., 2015).
- Ensure the facility is appropriate; review access and usage policies to ensure fair access to spaces and times; universal adoption of equitable policies; strategies and audit tools. Provide accessible and clean facilities. Have female friendly changing facilities (O'Neil et al., 2015; Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2017; VicHealth, 2015).

Relevance to the Western Region community:

- Women and girls access sports facilities in the west only half as much as males.
- Women and girls currently participate more in activities that are not provided in sports facilities.
- Residential growth is creating new communities which do not have timely access to new local sport and recreation facilities reducing connection and engagement.
- Inner west facilities are aging and limit women and girls engagement.
- Large numbers of children aged under 15 years requiring critical childcare considerations for parents and carers.

"I'm a single mum, and if I have to leave my child behind, I have to look for who can take care of my child... And that keeps me behind. Like for instance, I started cardio tennis…she sits on the bench while I do it. Doesn't work. Half of the session I'm sitting with her, half of the session I am trying to play but she's crying on the other side. No place offers child minding service".

— Mother, urban growth area



"Girls worldwide who play sport are more likely to attend and stay in school, more likely to finish their education, more likely to be in better health and earn higher wages during the course of their lives."

- The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO

Sport and Recreation Victoria - The Female Friendly Sport Infrastructure Guidelines

Provides information and advice on how to deliver more gender equitable environments. The information assists community sport and recreation clubs, governing sport bodies, recreation facility management organisations, as well as local government bodies.

https://sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/female-friendly-sport-infrastructure-guidelines

'A number of women raised concerns about their physical safety when looking to exercise in outdoor environments. All women had a heightened awareness about protecting their safety within the outdoors, which mean they rarely would use deserted parks and running trails to be physically active'.

Issues and Opportunities Paper (consultation feedback)

Strategic Priority 2: Welcoming Facilities

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
POLICY			
2.1 Revise sports ground and community infrastructure development and occupancy policies to create better access to facilities and activities which reflect the different ways women and girls participate in sport and recreation.	State Sporting Associations	Local Government	2021/22
2.2 Incorporate inclusive design principles in policy and design briefs of all community, recreation and sport facilities.	State Sporting Associations	Local Government	2020/21
ENVIRONMENT			
2.3 In partnership with the Victorian Government, develop and implement a “Female Friendly Participant Checklist” and assess all sport, recreation and community venues across the region to identify commonalities, significant gaps and areas of focus for improvement in enhancing the capacity and experience for women and girls.	Sport and Recreation Victoria, Office for Women in Sport and Recreation (OWSR)	Local Government	2020/21
2.4 Create a network of facilities across the region that provide formal and/or informal child care options alongside sport and active recreation programs through design, operation or in partnership with care and early years services.	Kinder Services, Childcare Services, Leisure Facilities and Operators, Women’s Health West, Architects and designers	Local Government	2021/22
COMMUNICATION			
2.5 Ensure that women and girls have equal representation in stakeholder engagement for all future sport, recreation, physical activity and open space strategies and site specific master plans.	Sports Clubs and Community Groups	Local Government	2020/21
2.6 Promote facilities that facilitate social, flexible and non-competitive opportunities, reduce barriers to participation and consider low-cost childcare options for families and carers.	Sports Clubs and Community Groups	Local sports industry	2021/22
2.7 In partnership with the Victorian Government, develop a gender-neutral language fact sheet to assist sport, recreation and community organisations to create inclusive environments.	Sport and Recreation Victoria	Local Government	2023/24

Strategic Priority 2: Welcoming Facilities

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
EDUCATION			
2.8 Educate clubs, community organisations and members on the opportunities for families in the care of children whilst carers and parents access sport and recreation.	Sports Clubs, Community Groups	Sports Clubs, Local Government	2022/23
2.9 Educate industry partners in design and construction of facilities on the requirements of including female friendly amenities and in making facilities appear welcoming to women and girls.	Architects and Designers, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Local Government, Sports Clubs, Community Groups, Venue Operators	Local Government	2020/21



Strategic Priority 3: Safety and Transport

OBJECTIVE: Provide safe and accessible spaces and transport routes to maximise opportunities for women and girls to participate in physical activity.



Why?

Focus Group findings:

- Safety concerns on public transport, particularly when waiting at more remote train stations and bus stops.
- Preference for women-only programs and activities to participate in physical activity.
- Concern about physical safety when looking to exercise in outdoor environments in the early morning and evening.
- Outdoor surfaces are often uneven and difficult to navigate. Fear of falling and causing injury.
- Lack of own transport and reliance on public transport can restrict the choice of facility and access.
- Distance of leisure facility to public transport, requirement to walk a distance to access the location.
- Recreating alone reduces sense of safety, but coordination of obligatory group participation is restrictive.

Literature Review findings:

- Participation rates are lower for women experiencing social and economic challenges regardless of the cause, for example those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those with a disability and those from low socio-economic backgrounds (Cortis et al., Jenkin et al., 2017; O'Neal et al., 2015).

Relevance to the Western Region community:

- Transport is a significant issue for disability groups, migrant women and those aged 65 and older.
- Outer western suburbs are serviced poorly by Public Transport and road congestion is significant.
- Use of primary sports facilities by traditional male sports.
- Women and girls sports are generally facilitated on or in smaller less developed facilities with reduced transport access.

"Safety on public transport is an issue. I won't go on a bus. I go on a train sometimes but even that gives me anxiety".

— 65+ female, inner low density

Strategic Priority 3: Safety and Transport

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
POLICY			
3.1 Western Metropolitan Regional Trails Strategic Plan 'West Trails' is delivered including risk management and maintenance procedures implemented for shared path networks to improve access and safety of users.	Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water	Local Government	2021/22
3.2 Include recreation facilities as destination nodes in the local government integrated transport plan for each municipality.	Public Transport Victoria (PTV), Department of Transport (DOT), Bicycle Network Victoria	Local Government	2023/24
ENVIRONMENT			
3.3 Review safety and security measures at remote bus and train stations with Public Transport Victoria (PTV) to increase the real and perceived safety for women and girls.	PTV	Local Government	2020/21
3.4 Investigate and confirm sites for increased lighting on paths and in outdoor open space to recognised outdoor exercise environments, for example outdoor fitness equipment and sporting surfaces.	Sport and recreation providers	Local Government	2020/21
3.5 Provide safe, accessible and clean facilities to encourage participation in physical activity.	Community Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2021/22
COMMUNICATION			
3.6 Promote public transport options and wayfinding opportunities to assist community members from train stations and bus stops to local or nearby venues.	Community Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2021/22

Strategic Priority 3: Safety and Transport

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
EDUCATION			
3.7 Work with service providers to develop and deliver women's programs during peak times.	Community Clubs and Organisations, State Sporting Associations, Sport and recreation providers	Local Government	2021/22
3.8 Ensure adequate safety measures are in place to reduce the risk of injury on paths requiring resurfacing or remedial works.	Community Clubs and Organisations, State Sporting Associations, Sport and recreation providers	Local Government	2021/22

Strategic Priority 4: Programming and Cost

OBJECTIVE: Support a mix of free or low cost programs and activities that are inclusive of women and girls of all ages, cultures and abilities.

Why?

Focus Group findings:

- Programming of activities to be scheduled outside of regular work hours (9.00am – 6.00pm).
- Desire to participate in community led activities, that are culturally familiar.
- Dislike to sign up for direct debit membership options, feelings of loss of control of money, incorrect amounts debited, insufficient funds resulting in penalties.
- Higher cost for casual visits or one-off upfront payments to participate is prohibitive.
- The high costs of participating in community sports clubs discourages women's participation.
- Flexibility of programming and ad hoc attendance is important to women and girls.

Literature Review findings:

- Develop, promote and mainstream alternative sports; ensure there are sport-related participation products or programs that meet the changing needs of people throughout significant life stages, from young children to older adults (O'Neil et al., 2015).
- Investigate the motivations of the target group by speaking with them and consider how best to provide and promote participation opportunities that support these motivations (VicHeath 2015).
- Cost of participation seems to disproportionately affect women and girls for a variety of reasons. Women generally earn less than their male counterparts, and when families have to make choices, often male participation opportunities are prioritised. Women facing disadvantage are particularly vulnerable to cost pressures (Cortis et al., 2007; Jenkin et al., 2016; O'Neal et al., 2015).

Relevance to the Western Region community:

- Preference to participate in culturally familiar activities.
- Low socio-economic families.
- Importance of walking for all women all times of the year.
- Use of facilities for traditional sports competition and training in peak times.
- Night time access to free and reduced fee access to facilities and programs is restricted by traditional sport and daylight.

Daughters of The West

Daughters of the West is a free ten-week health and physical activity program for women of all ages (18+) and abilities offered across the Western Region Councils. The program incorporates one hour of health education on a topic of interest for women each week, followed by one hour of physical activity. In 2018, free child care was offered at one session each week to enable mothers/female guardians to attend. This was a great addition to the program that meant that many more women were able to access the program.



Sports Ground and Pavilion Allocation Policy

Moreland City Council introduced a Policy to address the inequity within sports clubs. The policy requested clubs to be inclusive of women, juniors, people with a disability and people from culturally diverse communities, or risk losing allocation of a ground to a club who is being inclusive. Moreland was the first council in Victoria to prioritise the allocation and use of sporting grounds and pavilions to clubs which demonstrate inclusiveness of women and girls. Female participation rose from 11% (2009) to 24% (2019) and all clubs operate in accordance with policy.

http://www.activemoreland.com.au

New funding program seeks creative ways to get more Victorians moving

VicHealth is offering $500,000 in funding through its Innovation Challenge: Physical Activity focusing on two areas: making council owned facilities like pools, gyms and parks more inclusive and welcoming for women making traditional sport more inclusive for less active, disadvantaged and culturally diverse Victorians.

https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/funding/innovation-challenge-physical-activity-grants

"I would say money, the fees associated with team sport for a season can be expensive".

— Sudanese woman, inner low density housing

Strategic Priority 4: Programming and Cost

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
POLICY			
4.1 Develop and implement a Gender Equity Allocation Policy to ensure facilities, sports clubs, community groups and programs are inclusive to women and girls of all ages, cultures and abilities.	Vicsport, VicHealth, OWSR	Local Government	2020/21
4.2 Review fee structures in council owned leisure assets that impact the flexible needs of women and girls and seek to remove or reduce the burden of premium casual fees.	Sport and Recreation Facility Operators	Local Government	2022/23
ENVIRONMENT			
4.3 Involve target audiences in the design and development of new programs, including scheduling and pricing sensitivity.	State Sporting Associations, Local Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2020/21
4.4 Design and structure programs that help to facilitate activities for women and girls, giving consideration to aspects such as program location and setting, allocation of resources and modification of equipment.	State Sporting Associations, Local Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2023/24
COMMUNICATION			
4.5 Promote programs that facilitate opportunities for low (or no) cost, social physical activity options in local parks, shared trails, open spaces or other community facilities managed by councils (e.g. Active Maribyrnong, Active8, BeActive, Parkrun, walking groups).	Sport and Recreation program providers	Local Government	2021/22
4.6 Identify, support and promote key women's and girls' regional events and competitions that drive new interest, participation and promotional opportunities for sport and community activities (eg. 3-on-3 basketball, AFLW / VFLW, Melbourne Renegades fixtures, Western Melbourne W-League).	State Sporting Associations, Sports Administrators, Event Organisers	Local Government	2021/22
4.7 Promote sport and physical activity programs (traditional and non-traditional) that meet the changing needs of women throughout significant life changes, from young children to older adults.	Sport and Recreation program providers	Local Government	2022/23

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
EDUCATION			
4.8 Develop a consistent Western Regional State of Play report that provides an evidence base through analysis of priority activities for women and girls to aid strategic decision making (eg. Melbourne East Regional State of Play dashboard).	Sport and Recreation Victoria – Office for Women and Girls, Sport Australia	Local Government, Women's Health West	2021/22
4.9 Work with service providers, sports clubs and local communities to develop and promote physical activity opportunities outside of work hours (9.00am – 6.00pm).	Women's Health West, National Sporting Organisations, State Sporting Associations, Sport and Recreation Providers	Local Government	2020/21
4.10 Work with migrant and refugee community groups to support self-led activities that encourage inclusion and cultural familiarity in a safe and supported environment.	Women's Health West, National Sporting Organisations, State Sporting Associations, Sport and Recreation Providers	Local Government	2020/21

"Every time I think about sort of spending more time, getting out and spending more time on myself, I tend to decide I should be at home for the family. I tend to prioritise them over myself all the time".

— Woman in paid employment, urban growth area

Strategic Priority 5: Recognise, Celebrate and Promote

OBJECTIVE: Generate positive messages and events that represent the diversity of women and girls living in Melbourne's west and celebrate the achievements of local women in sport and active recreation.

Why?

Focus Group findings:

- Strong word of mouth network and connection to community and health services.
- Lack of knowledge of what activities and opportunities are available within their local communities and cannot readily seek these out.
- "Seeing ourselves" – clear advertisement required regarding the level of ability needed to participate.
- Body image and confidence in appearance and skills influenced women's participation and engagement.
- Information required in multiple languages and distribution formats including paper based.
- Display images of diverse cultures so women see themselves in the marketing material.
- Mixed media approach to marketing including public transport, social media, schools, maternal child health, GPs and libraries is the best place to reach the target audience.

Literature Review findings:

- Use images of a diverse range of people. Embrace a range of marketing and promotional opportunities. Actively engage the local community by promoting your club as welcoming and inclusive for all members (Equality is the Game, 2017; O'Neil et al., 2015).
- Low level of confidence and self-belief can discourage women from participating in activity programs (Little et al., 2003), as can a lack of exercise-specific knowledge (Newson & Kemps, 2007).
- For girls and young women, self-efficacy, attitude, and enjoyment are strongly related and informed by concerns about body shape and weight management, and perceived pressure to conform to popular ideals of beauty (Coleman, Cox, & Roker, 2007; Craike et al., 2006; Dwyer et al., 2006; Eime, et al. 2013; James, & Embrey, 2002; Scheerder et al., 2006).

Relevance to the Western Region community:

- High proportion of new arrivals and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities (CALD).
- Just under 40% of residents in Melbourne's west indicate they have English and/or Australian ancestry.
- Almost two thirds of residents in Melbourne's west have one or both parents who were born overseas (65%), compared with 57% in greater Melbourne.
- Residents in Melbourne's west are less likely to speak English at home (52%) than residents of greater Melbourne (62%).



"It's important that we can see ourselves in the marketing, at the moment you don't see diversity, so you don't see an Indian name on marketing material".

— Indian woman, urban growth area



Gender Equity Leader of the Year Award

Melton City Council's annual Community Achievement Awards includes the Gender Equity Leader of the Year award. This award recognises contributions from community members who ensure that information and services are inclusive of and accessible to all people. The winner of the 2019 Community Achievement Award was the first female head coach in the Gridiron League and club president. She is well known to uplift women and challenge gender stereotypes within the City of Melton.

Strategic Priority 5: Recognise, Celebrate and Promote

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
POLICY			
5.1 Work with Vicsport, VicHealth, Parks, Office for Women in Sport and Recreation (OWSR) and Leisure Australia (PLA) and other industry bodies to promote and showcase the positive work and examples of female coaches, educators and leaders from Melbourne's west to share their skills and expertise at industry events, conferences and development programs.	Industry bodies	Local Government	2020/21
ENVIRONMENT			
5.2 Create places within the community for women and girls to celebrate their achievements and connect through their experiences of sport and recreation.	Community Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2021/22
5.3 Engage clubs to promote sport and recreation facilities as welcoming and inclusive for all members.	Community Clubs	Local Government	2020/21

Strategic Priority 5: Recognise, Celebrate and Promote

WESTERN REGION ACTIONS	PARTNERS	RESPONSIBILITY	YEAR
ENVIRONMENT			
5.4 Ensure project partner website and social media information has consistent and prominent messaging regarding the promotion and accessibility of opportunities for the diversity of women and girls in the region. Ensure linkages to other industry sources, resources and promotional information are provided and functional.	Community Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2021/22
COMMUNICATION			
5.5 Promote local applications and the key achievements of female champions through regional media avenues, local community recognition programs and other peak industry body awards programs (eg. individual State Sport Organisations, Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Vicsport awards).	Industry bodies	Local Government	2020/21
5.6 Use established women and girls networks to communicate, market and promote opportunities, for example, for new mothers, the maternal child health centres can provide information about appropriate physical activity opportunities.	Community networks	Local Government, Women's Health West	2021/22
5.7 Represent all the women and girls from the west in advertising through images of diversity in culture, ethnicity and life stages with information in multiple language formats.	Industry bodies	Local Government	2020/21
5.8 Celebrate female athletes, participants and leaders and display their images and names on the walls of community facilities.	Community Clubs and Organisations, Local Government	Community Clubs and Organisations	2022/23
5.9 Leverage existing state and national campaigns to drive action locally (for example VicHealth's *This Girl Can* campaign).	Industry bodies, Victorian Government	Women's Health West	2020/21
EDUCATION			
5.10 Develop and promote a series of local case studies that demonstrate an improvement made to physical infrastructure that has resulted in measurable and sustainable increased use by women and girls.	Community Clubs	Local Government	2020/21
5.11 Work with women and girls to increase levels of confidence about how they spend their time so they can achieve an active lifestyle.	Community Clubs and Organisations	Local Government	2022/23

Monitoring, Measuring and Evaluating

Monitoring of the implementation and impact of this Action Plan requires consistent and collaborative measures across all project partners. Monitoring will be reviewed by the project partners quarterly.

The following monitoring and review process will be led by the Project Partners to ensure that the Women's Participation in Sport and Recreation in Melbourne's West – An Action Plan for Change, remains relevant for all stakeholders. Broadly speaking, positive change will see:

- Increased diversity of sports provided that reflect the needs of women.
- Percentage of infrastructure and occupancy policies which reflect gender equity.
- A mix of local and regional sport and recreation facilities that have the capacity to cater for the growing female population and higher participation levels.
- Sport and active recreation use of community spaces integrated with other community uses encouraging and supporting women's physical activities.
- Auditing of boards, committees and coaches to confirm gender breakdown.
- Percentage of capital spend which provides well-planned, high-capacity infrastructure and facilities that minimise future risks, meet universal design principles and optimise flexible utilisation.
- Representation of diverse culture, ethnicity, generation and social economic status in programs and facility use.
- Percentage of women and girls in sport and recreation social media by local government.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION TIMELINE

2019

Women's Participation in Sport and Recreation in Melbourne's West | An Action Plan for Change 2020-2025 developed.

Annually

Local and regional stakeholder review to assess progress of Action Plan delivery and ensure continued alignment with strategic directions. State of Play data collection and analysis.

2023

Three-year region-wide strategic review and evidence-based assessment of achievements. Review of data collected and re-prioritisation of actions.

2025

Five-year Action Plan review and evaluation of community benefits and investment secured. New five year Action Plan developed and communicated.



PART B

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Project Methodology

The Women's Participation in Sport and Active Recreation in Melbourne's West: An Action Plan for Change project was undertaken over 12 months through a series of structured stages.

STAGE 1 BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

- Inception meeting
- Confirm scope and methodology
- Industry research and analysis
- Academic literature review
- Background and Literature Review document (Volume 1)

STAGE 2 CONSULTATION

- Communications plan
- Identification of focus group cohorts
- Focus groups
- Consultation findings review and analysis
- Identification of key barriers to participation and potential enablers

STAGE 3 STATE OF PLAY MAPPING

- Regional sport and physical activity participation analysis
- Identification of demographic indicators and influences on participation
- Comparison of LGA performance against metropolitan and Victoria benchmarks

STAGE 4 ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES PAPER

- Presentation of key issues and opportunities to Project Control Group (PCG)
- Draft Issues and Opportunities Paper (Volume 2)
- PCG review of Issues and Opportunities Paper
- Update and finalisation of Issues and Opportunities Paper

STAGE 5 ACTION PLAN PREPARATION

- Strategic directions workshop with PCG
- Draft Action Plan (Volume 3)
- Presentation of and feedback on Action Plan by PCG and stakeholders
- Finalisation of Action Plan and advocacy document
- Launch of Women of the West Action Plan

Background

The Victorian Government's, "Active Victoria – A strategic framework for sport and recreation in Victoria 2017-2021" identifies that female participation in sport is only half that of males.

Participation rates in sport decline steeply after the teenage years for all participants. However, irrespective of age, males continue to participate in sport at double the rate of females for those aged 5 to 65+.

The decrease in sport is partially made up by increased participation in active recreation with participation levels among women significantly higher than men in non-competitive activities. Research undertaken in the development of this Action Plan reinforce the significant literature and data supporting non-competitive activities.



As evidence to support the need for an Action Plan, the Victorian Government's Active Victoria Strategic Framework (2017) identifies:

- The lower participation levels of women in sport limits the benefits of social connectedness and community cohesion provided by organised and structured community level sport.
- Lower levels of female participation in sport reflect deeply entrenched practices, cultural norms and stereotypes in our broader society.
- Getting women and girls more involved in all roles in sport and active recreation and providing females with the same opportunities as men are essential elements in creating a broader and more inclusive state.
- There are significant groups of Victorians who are less likely to participate in sport or active recreation, including Aboriginal Victorians, people with a disability, people with poor health, recently arrived migrants and those with little or no English, and people with low incomes or living in areas of relative socioeconomic disadvantage.
- These lower levels of participation affect Victorian's health and wellbeing and connection to community.

Government Policy

The Victorian Government "Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation" (2014) culminated in the release of "A Five-Year Game Plan for Victoria" (2015).

The vision for the future is one where women and girls are represented in all roles in sport and active recreation and have the same choices and opportunities to participate and lead as their male counterparts.

Participation in sport and physical activity can play an important role in supporting gender equity. Through supporting women and girls, addressing and re-shaping gender stereotypes and empowering and connecting those involved we begin to influence attitudes. It is critical that sporting environments and places where women and girls want to be active, are safe, welcoming, inclusive and accessible at the times in which they can and wish to participate.

The Victorian Government's "Gender Equality Strategy" aims 'to progressively build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality. The Strategy draws on global evidence of what works in gender equality.' (2018) The Strategy also considers six key settings for state-wide action, one of which is sport and recreation.

Literature Review

The academic Literature Review provides compelling background for the 'Women's participation in sport and active recreation in Melbourne's West: An Action Plan for Change' project with a review into Australian and international peer-reviewed research published in the last 20 years. This literature covered a range of participation contexts, from club-based competitive sport, to physical activity programs, to informal sport and active recreation.

The factors shaping girls and women's participation in sport, exercise and active recreation predominantly cover:

- **The level of the individual (the role of personal choices, feelings, attitudes and constraints).**
- **Their relationships with others (inter-personal factors).**
- **Structural and cultural (gendered norms, how sport and activities are organised and managed).**

Themes and Trends

A series of broad trends and themes emerged of the intersecting personal, social and cultural factors that shape girls and women's participation in sport and active recreation. The psycho-social research findings were distilled into three major factors that shape girls' and women's participation in sport and active recreation (should be taken into account when designing programs):

1. TIME:

Women of all ages consistently identified lack of time as a critical barrier impeding their participation in physical activity;

2. SUPPORT:

Lack of support typically in the form of family or friends not emotionally and/or psychologically supporting the activity;

3. SELF-EFFICACY:

Belief that one can successfully perform an activity – low level of confidence and self-belief can discourage women from participating in activity programs.

In addition to individual and interpersonal factors, there are also social and demographic factors that need to be taken into consideration. 'Women' are not a homogenous category, certain barriers are more problematic for some groups of women than for others. Those women facing additional barriers include:

- CALD girls and women;
- girls and women with low socioeconomic status;
- girls and women with disabilities; and
- older women.

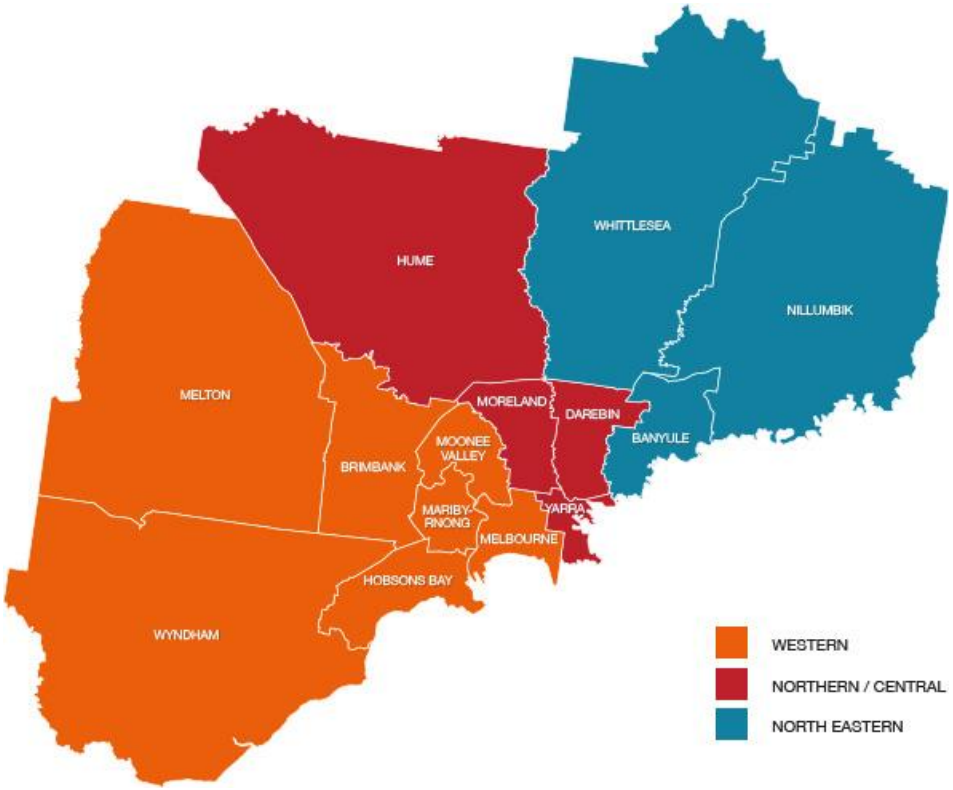
At a structural level, women are still heavily underrepresented in the governance and management of sport. In general, social groups that dominate sports participation also control its organisation and management. This, along with the persistence of historically entrenched gendered norms and feminine ideals, is an important contextual factor to consider when attempting to change the participation patterns of girls and women in sport and active recreation.

The academic review proved useful in helping to identify selection criteria for the focus groups and in guiding the formulation of focus group questions.

The full Literature Review is provided in Appendix 1.

The Western Melbourne Region

The western Melbourne region LGAs include; Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham. These are identified in orange in the Map below.



Population

The population of the Western Melbourne region is approximately 727,443 (June 2016) comprising 49.8% male and 50.2% female with a median age of 34. There are 189,877 families with an average children; per family of 1.9 for families with children and 0.9 for all families. The regional population is projected to reach over 1.1 million people by 2021 and is recognised as a significant growth area within Victoria.

Compared to that of Greater Melbourne 4,485,211, of these 49.0% were male and 51.0% were female with the median age of 36. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people made up 0.5% of the population. (2016 Census)

People – cultural language and diversity

The most common ancestries in Melbourne's west were English (15.9%), Australian (15.5%), Indian (5.4%), Vietnamese (5.2%) and Irish (5.0%). 52.0% of people only spoke English at home. Other languages spoken at home include Vietnamese 6.6%, Punjabi 2.4%, Mandarin 2.1%, Arabic 2.0% and Hindi 1.9%.

Compared to Greater Melbourne the most common ancestries were English 20.3%, Australian 18.3%, Irish 7.0%, Chinese 6.1% and Scottish 5.6%. (2016 Census)

The Western Melbourne Region



Median weekly household income

The median weekly household income in Melbourne – West is $1,486. The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over in Melbourne - West was $625.

Compared to Greater Melbourne, the median weekly household income is $1,542. The median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over was $673. (2016 Census)

Levels of highest education attainment

Of people aged 15 and over in Melbourne - West, 18.3% reported having completed Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, 13.8% had completed a Certificate III or IV and 9.0% had completed an Advanced Diploma or Diploma. 21.8% attained a Bachelor Degree level and above, compared with 24.3% across Victoria.

Compared to that of Greater Melbourne, of people aged 15 and over 17.2% reported having completed Year 12 as their highest level of educational attainment, 12.8% had completed a Certificate III or IV and 9.5% had completed an Advanced Diploma or Diploma. (2016 Census)

Supporting the health and wellbeing of girls and women in Melbourne's west

A key driver of this Action Plan is to support participation and gender equity in the community by encouraging both structured and unstructured physical activity by addressing and minimising the barriers girls and women face in living healthy lifestyles.

Through the Literature Review, development of the Issues and Opportunities Paper and the consultation process, five strategic priorities were identified in order to increase the participation and representation of girls and women in sport and active recreation in Melbourne's west.

The Action Plan seeks to create 'equitable' opportunities for girls and women to participate in sport, recreation and physical activity.

The messages around 'equitable' opportunities are intrinsic to this Action Plan and require consideration of the unique needs, interests, priorities and experiences when developing and delivering services and allocating resources.

As such, this Action Plan recognises that gender inequality is a far-reaching and pressing issue and that the sport and recreation sector has a positive role to play in changing the status quo for women and girls.

Participation in Sport and Recreation

Three key sources of information have been used to provide a picture of the current participation in sport and active recreation in Melbourne's west for females:

- Women's participation in sport and active recreation: A review of Academic Literature (May 2018).
- Women's participation in sport and active recreation: Issues and Opportunities Paper (November 2018).
- Sport and Recreation Spatial – Sport Participation Rates – Victoria (2016).

"Sport and Recreation Spatial" is a collaborative venture of Federation University and Victoria University. It investigates and integrates data about sport and recreation participation, sport and recreation facilities, population demographics and population health for evidence-based decision making.

Key data from Sport and Recreational Spatial is acknowledged as providing important background to the Issues and Opportunities Paper (2018) whereby sport participation trends (2015–17) from **12 major Victorian state sporting associations, representing popular sports were evaluated:**

Australian football
Basketball
Bowls
Cricket
Football (soccer)
Golf
Gymnastics
Hockey
Netball
Sailing
Swimming
Tennis.

What the data shows

Data clearly shows that females residing in Melbourne's favour non-organised physical activity. This indicates an emerging demand for related facilities, services and programs within Councils. Data also indicates the need to identify the issues underpinning the enablers and barriers for women's participation in sport and active recreation (non-organised physical activity), in order to increase their participation.

A breakdown of each of the 12 major sports by gender and LGA region show that in general there are significantly more male than female registered sports participants for sports played within Melbourne's west. Exceptions to this were shown in gymnastics and netball, where females were involved in much higher numbers. Hockey and swimming had similar proportions of male and female participants. The following tables show female participation rates in Melbourne's west.



A snapshot of key findings

Sport and Recreation Spatial outlines participation rates and trends by age group and geographical area. The research revealed:

- Substantial differences in participation rates for different sports among young children and adolescents and by age 30, participation rates dropped drastically in all sports.
- The highest rates of female physical activity in Melbourne's west was non-organised sports for all LGAs other than Hobsons Bay.
- Participation of females aged 4 to 99 in Hobsons Bay and Moonee Valley were higher than the 9.3% metro Melbourne average. All others were lower and between 1/3 to 2/3 of the metro average.
- The next highest rates were seen in activities provided by (or within) sport and recreation clubs/environments.
- No commentary has been provided on patterns or trends relating to non-organised physical activity based on the lack of industry data available.

Female Participation in Melbourne's west

The following table shows the female participation rates per 100 persons in Melbourne's west according to the types of physical activity they engage in.

Table 3: Rates[1] of female physical activity, Melbourne's west 2016: by organisation type*

	Sports club	Rec club	Gym	Studio	Coach	Public Space	Events	Work	Education	Community	Other	Don't know	Not organised
Brimbank	7.6	22.1	4.5	0.0	3.3	0.9	0.0	3.1	1.3	1.6	1.7	0.1	63.7
Hobsons Bay	38.8	27.6	19.5	0.8	2.6	3.2	6.4	1.8	0.0	4.2	2.8	0.0	37.6
Maribyrnong	18.4	28.0	14.5	0.0	3.7	3.0	0.0	9.8	3.8	5.1	4.6	0.0	78.5
Melbourne	16.6	43.3	13.6	0.0	2.9	0.0	0.0	4.2	0.3	1.9	3.4	0.0	98.4
Melton	4.1	25.7	5.8	0.0	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.1	2.6	0.0	55.9
Mooney Valley	20.3	38.6	15.9	1.9	4.5	0.0	0.0	2.6	0.8	4.4	3.0	0.0	81.5
Wyndham	10.9	15.0	8.0	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.2	5.7	1.9	63.5

[1] Participation rate per 100 persons. * Key (AusPlay definitions of organisation type)

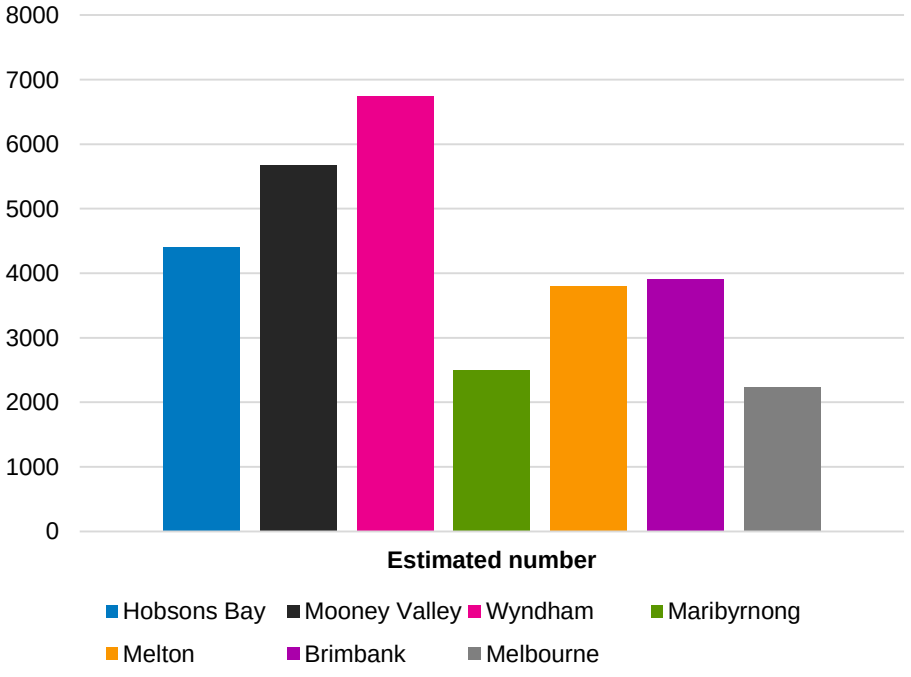
- Sports club or association
- Recreation club or association (e.g. social club, senior citizens' club, abseiling association)
- Gym/Fitness club/sports/leisure centre
- Private studio (e.g. dance, yoga, pilates, martial arts)
- Individual personal trainer or coach
- Public space (including park, oval, beach)
- Events (e.g. fun run or Parkrun)
- Work
- Educational institution (e.g. school or university)
- Community-run programs
- Other (record answer)
- Don't know
- Not organised

Female Participation in Melbourne's west

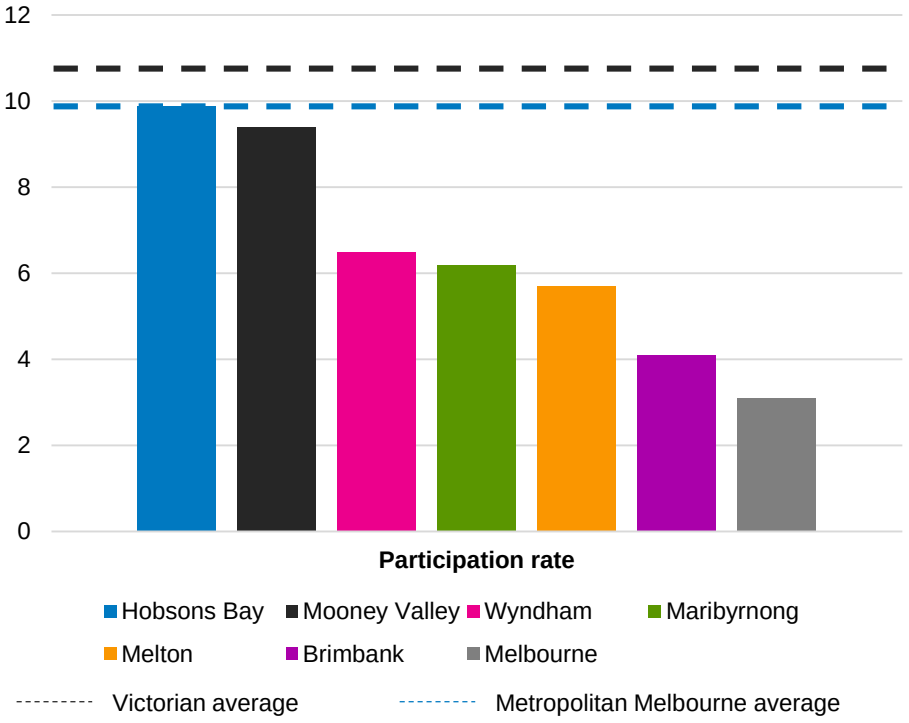
Summary of Female participation in Melbourne's west (by Council) compared with both the Victorian (10.7%) and Metropolitan Melbourne (9.3%) average.

The graphs below show the performance of Council areas in Melbourne's west compared to Metropolitan and Victorian averages for female participation rates in sport and active recreation.

Females aged 4-99 sports participants



Females aged 4-99 sports participants



Female Participation in Melbourne's west



The following table (Issues and Opportunities Paper 2018) shows the number of female sports participants registered with any of the 12 major sports in Melbourne's west and the participation rates of females per 100 persons in the age cohort. It also shows a comparison with Metropolitan Melbourne and Victoria figures.

Table 1: Rates[1] of registered female sport participants[2], Melbourne's west and comparators 2016

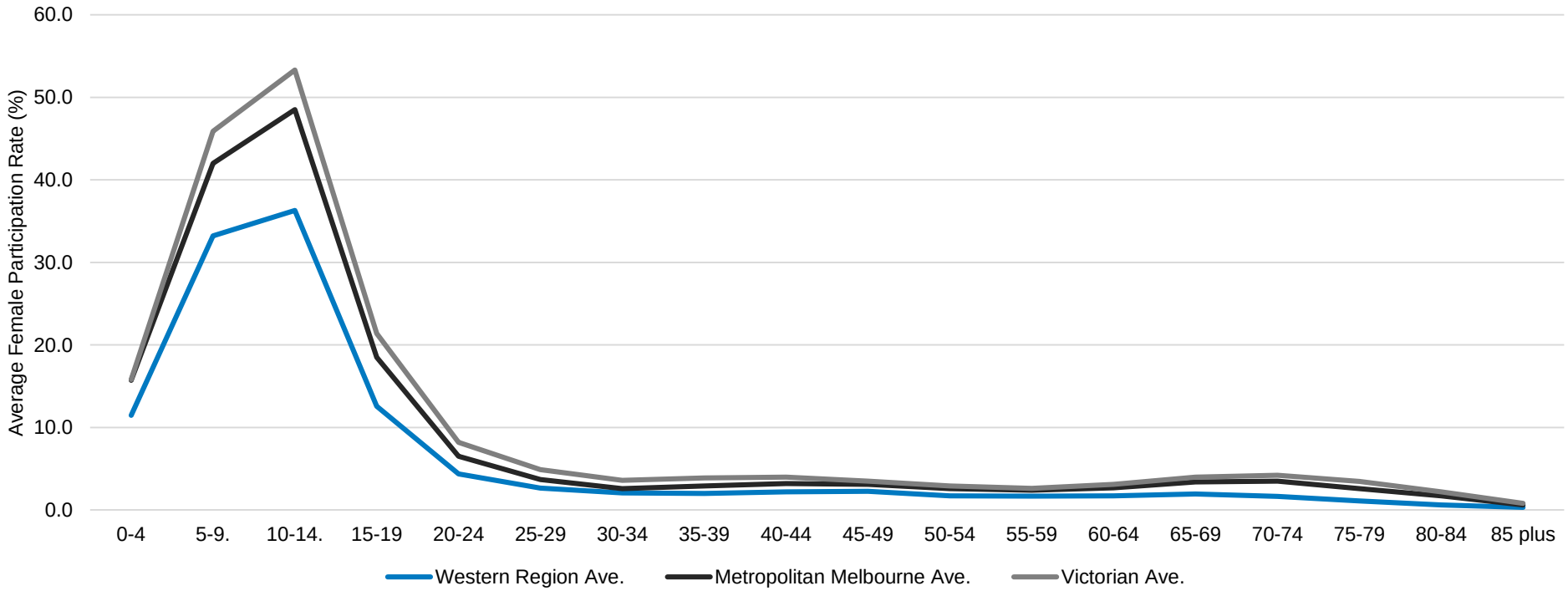
Age	Brimbank		Hobsons Bay		Maribyrnong		Melbourne		Melton		Moonee Valley		Wyndham		Metropolitan Vic		Victoria	
	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)	Number	Rate[1] (%)
Females 4-99	3,916	4.1	4,408	9.9	2,504	6.2	2,234	3.1	3,803	5.7	5,671	9.4	6,751	6.5	207,914	9.3	317,309	10.7
4	82	5.8	118	19.1	76	15.1	42	11.3	85	6.9	104	14.0	168	8.2	4,681	15.7	6,228	15.8
5 to 9	1,245	20.6	1,369	46.4	1,022	45.7	413	31.0	1,197	19.3	1,567	45.8	2,208	23.8	58,971	42.0	86,333	45.9
10 to 14	1,325	23.1	1,203	51.4	610	36.9	353	35.7	1,182	23.7	1,723	54.7	1,985	28.5	60,794	48.5	91,010	53.3
15 to 19	449	7.1	500	21.5	186	9.7	340	5.1	433	9.6	706	21.6	861	13.3	25,326	18.5	38,944	21.4
20 to 24	215	2.8	191	7.1	108	2.9	222	1.3	205	4.4	311	7.1	359	5.0	11,511	6.5	18,151	8.2
25 to 29	118	1.4	149	4.3	121	2.4	230	1.6	157	2.9	195	3.7	236	2.4	7,418	3.7	12,022	4.9
30 to 34	84	1.0	124	3.4	84	1.7	144	1.5	132	2.1	151	3.0	210	1.7	4,993	2.6	8,671	3.6
35 to 39	86	1.2	104	3.0	56	1.5	85	1.8	119	1.9	126	2.9	172	1.7	4,794	2.9	8,264	3.9
40 to 44	78	1.1	143	4.1	54	1.7	48	1.5	78	1.4	164	3.6	156	1.9	5,207	3.2	8,469	4.0
45 to 49	57	0.8	146	4.2	75	2.7	58	2.1	57	1.2	153	3.4	97	1.4	4,971	3.1	7,443	3.5
50 to 54	38	0.6	84	2.6	42	1.8	52	2.0	39	1.0	113	2.9	66	1.1	3,797	2.6	5,695	2.9
55 to 59	28	0.4	93	3.1	33	1.6	62	2.6	23	0.7	96	2.6	43	0.8	3,267	2.4	4,970	2.631
60 to 64	31	0.6	47	2.0	12	0.7	65	3.1	37	1.2	93	2.9	58	1.4	3,161	2.7	5,238	3.1
65 to 69	30	0.6	55	2.6	8	0.6	79	4.3	35	1.4	69	2.4	57	1.7	3,575	3.4	6,046	4.0
70 to 74	31	0.9	30	1.9	5	0.6	32	2.8	17	1.1	40	1.8	50	2.4	2,722	3.5	4,731	4.2
75 to 79	10	0.4	26	2.0	8	1.0	6	0.8	7	0.7	32	1.6	18	1.2	1,587	2.6	2,974	3.48
80 to 84	8	0.4	14	1.2	2	0.3	3	0.5	1	0.2	17	1.1	6	0.6	802	1.7	1,493	2.2
85 plus	1	0.1	11	0.9	1	0.1	1	0.1	1	0.2	12	0.7	2	0.2	337	0.6	629	0.8

[1] **Participation rate per 100 persons in age cohort.**
[2] **Registrations in any of 12 major sports**.

Female Participation in Melbourne's west

Summary of female participation rates by age cohort in Melbourne's west compared with both the Victorian and Metropolitan Melbourne averages.

The graph below shows participation rates per 100 people (by age cohort) for each Council areas in Melbourne's west compared with the Victorian and Metropolitan Melbourne averages.



Key Findings

Issues and Opportunities

Through a consultative process and series of focus groups, the Issues and Opportunities Paper (provided in full in Appendix 2) builds an understanding of women and girls' physical, social and cultural determinants of participation. These determinants provide the backdrop to developing the Action Plan to engender change.

Focus groups

66 participants across 13 focus groups represented by various cohorts of women in Melbourne's west participated in the study:

- Pacifika
- Indian
- Vietnamese
- Sudanese
- New mothers
- Women in paid employment
- 65+
- Women with a disability
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, and Intersex (LGBTQI).

Barriers and facilitators

A number of barriers to and facilitators of participation were articulated by the young women and women participating in the focus groups.

The barriers to and facilitators of participation emerged as eight themes (shown in more detail on the next page) described as:

1. Cost
2. Knowledge/ awareness
3. Time
4. The importance of childcare
5. Role of support/ role models
6. Unwelcoming/ unfriendly environments
7. Safety
8. Transport.

Intersecting issues and identified opportunities

Of the themes to emerge, a number intersect and overlap (lack of time, need for childcare, cost, transport). This creates additional challenge in addressing the barriers to participation faced by women in the region.

That said, whilst the focus groups revealed the complex and intersecting barriers experienced by women, it also revealed the ways in which they sought to negotiate these and facilitate positive physical activity opportunities for themselves.

These discussions revealed opportunities in:

- Positive attitudes
- Self organisation in communities
- Non-traditional activities/facilities
- An alternative version of traditional sport
- Connect and communicate.

Research behind VicHealth's 'This Girl Can' campaign found a universal barrier across life-stages: women feel intimidated and/or embarrassed to exercise in public because of a fear of judgement around their appearance, ability and priorities.

Barriers and Facilitators to Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

A number of barriers (hampers) and facilitators (enhancers) of participation were identified in the focus groups:

X Barriers

Λ Enhancers

1. Cost	
X	General cost of activities
X	Necessity for membership to receive discounted rates
X	Penalised as a casual user
X	Cost of sports clubs
X	Payment of childcare on top
X	Dislike of direct debit
Λ	Requirement for flexibility

2. Knowledge/ awareness	
X	Lack of knowledge of local activities
X	Reliant on word of mouth
X	65+ dislike online information
Λ	Need to advertise through existing services they access (Maternal child and health nurse, GP surgeries)
Λ	Younger women prefer information via Facebook
Λ	Need to 'see themselves' in marketing material

3. Time	
X	Intersecting issue
X	Felt particularly by mothers in paid employment
X	Challenges of 'negotiating' time
X	Women's time as the lowest priority
Λ	Culture and socio- economic status influencers
Λ	Scheduling of activities

4. The importance of childcare	
X	Critical for mothers
X	Generally only suitable for younger children
Λ	Quality
Λ	Activities involving children valuable
Λ	Needed to be affordable, easy to access
Λ	New mothers want to have social networks
Λ	Facilitating at-home activity

Barriers and Facilitators to Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

A number of barriers (hampers) and facilitators (enhancers) of participation were identified in the focus groups:

X Barriers

Λ Enhancers

5. Role of support/ role models	
X	Women who considered themselves to be sporty still required peer support
Λ	Important for all women, particularly migrant women
Λ	Needed to see someone similar to them doing activity
Λ	Opportunity to attend with a friend

6. Unwelcoming / unfriendly environments	
X	Sports clubs unwelcoming unfriendly
X	Male dominated at some
X	Migrant women feel they lack skills to do structured sport
X	Self conscious in fitness spaces
X	Feel patronised by staff, particularly older women
X	Unpleasant changing rooms

7. Safety	
X	Experiences of harassment particularly for migrant women
X	Fear of outdoor spaces at night and if not busy during the day
X	65+ fear of injury and need for good surfaces
Λ	Preference for women only spaces

8. Transport	
X	Significant issue for disability groups, migrant women and 65+
X	Facilities not always well connected
X	Safety on public transport
Λ	Need opportunities within 15 minute radius


CHANGE
OUR
GAME

VICTORIA
State
Government

women's health west

Brimbank
City Council

HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL

Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF
MELTON

City of
Moonee Valley

CITY OF
MELBOURNE

wyndhamcity
city. coast. country