



# What can we do to make our clubs better?

## Gender Equality in Wyndham Sport Project

### A gender equitable sports club is an opportunity for girls and women:

- To feel safe
- To see healthy and respectful relationships
- An opportunity to reach out for help
- Gain skills outside of playing sport with the opportunity to try out different roles, increasing confidence
- Feel Valued
- Work in collaboration and respect, with boys and men

These can lead to positive changes in the lives of club members and their communities

### How might a club know that there is a gender equality issue?

- Retention,
- Lack of sign-up
- Complaints
- Girls not moving up an age group/ returning next season
- Players not coming through by word of mouth
- Can you think of any others?

### What can a club do to identify any issues?

- Be proactive:
  - Surveys
  - Talk to girls
  - Have a women's officer who is the conduit/ the voice of girls and women
  - 30 minute forums with the girls/ women - how do you feel about the club? how comfortable/ safe do you feel at the club? tell us about your experiences at the club? how included do you feel in the club? what would help you to feel more a part of the club?

**Example** - A club's training nights are full so the new girls' team is scheduled on a night when the grounds aren't used. The club are very open to the girls and are happy to have a girls' team however the girls don't feel a part of the club as they aren't part of the usual club's activities. The girls training has been scheduled to fit around the 'core element' of the club as opposed to be included within. What do you think could be the solution(s)? –Could clubs re-

think scheduling or could the girls be asked what would help them to feel more included? Could more activity be spread across the week? Did the club know that the girls felt isolated?

### These are some questions to think about:

- How does your club make decisions about when teams train and what pitches they are allocated to? – How this is communicated to everyone in the club? – Is this process gender equitable, is it ‘this is what we have always done’?
- Who ensures the club rooms/ changing rooms, etc. are clean and tidy?
- Who makes the decisions around team kits? Do the teams themselves get a say, ie the girls?
- Are the same opportunities available for girls teams, ie quality of coaching? And linking into pathways?
- If your club has high level boys’/ men’s teams how do you ensure that lower level and girls’ teams are treated fairly and don’t always get left to last – how do you ensure that players and parents feel equally valued?
- How do Club social media and promotions ensure that girls and women are also represented? – if you were to count back over the last 10 Facebook posts (maybe pre-Covid!) who was featured the most? Is it the top teams and are they predominantly male – what does this say to someone who is looking at joining your club?
- How are girls talked about in club newsletters, are the female teams the exception, ie 8 teams and 1 girls’ team?
- If a woman asked how could she be involved in the club – would the response be the same as if they were a male? Thinking about assumption of background, interest, skills.
- If we have adult teams and women are dropping out at a certain age, but men aren’t, are we just assuming that they aren’t interested anymore, or is it that life situations have changed?

**Example - Hockey Victoria found masters women were dropping out, they surveyed the hockey community and found out they now had childcare commitments and that men partners were still attending the main training night, their solution was to have masters women on a different night so that both parents were still able to play – as Tuesday and Thursday are the main trainings nights across all sports how many may be affected by this even when they play different sports?**

- How many clubs plan to set up teams for girls and women and use the same formula/ structure as they have done for setting up boys/ men? – how do you know it suits girls and women?
- If your club are setting up senior women’s teams who are they targeting? Are you narrowing potential participants by targeting players from other sports/ clubs and aiming for a high level team, how about starting off with an offer for all levels including the opportunity for people without experience to join and then work out ideas of teams from who attends.
- Do we suggest coaching and umpiring roles to girls and women as much as to boys?
- If decisions could be construed as gender inequitable but they are based on other principles, how can we clearly communicate this so that they aren’t misinterpreted – ie when teams return to training
- If your club is looking to increase female committee members – consider why we should be encouraging them. What difference does it make? Why does having female voices make a difference? And therefore how can we make this an attractive opportunity for women?
- How does your club ensure that new members are welcome, know where things are and how the club works? – consider a Welcoming Officer – someone who likes meeting new people getting to know them
- How do you know who might be willing to volunteer at your club? – often people need to be invited to step forwards
- How do you know how people really feel about your club? – a small amount of feedback can go a long way
- If you are looking for more women and girls coaches think of what you are trying to achieve, if numbers are low, think about what other solutions there could be – getting girls and women to fulfil other bridging roles, ie a Women’s Officer, a player representative, coaching assistant, encouraging older girls and women to help out with other teams to introduce basic coaching concepts, confidence and discover that coaching is fun.
- Think about terminology –

**Example - at an athletics clubs when some boys/ men weren’t up to fitness, etc it was suggested they train with the girls that day, as opposed to groups being considered by ability level and choosing which level best suits on the day. When sessions were recategorised according to fitness/ ability and participants encouraged**

to think about what level they should be training at for that day it not only encouraged men and women to train better together but it also increased attendance by women and men, partly because those men who weren't in the 'elite' category didn't feel that they weren't good enough.

- **Do you ask players what they think of the uniforms?** Do they feel comfortable, are they a good fit? How inclusive is your uniform policy that if a person wished to wear a slightly different version of the uniform due to their cultural background that they could rather than having to get permission through a committee? When it is cold are longer layers allowed to be worn?
- Do you have a clear communication pathway that allows people to have a voice and find out information?
- Do you provide basic information so that new players can understand how the club works, key events and how they can get involved?

Do you have some ideas to add which could help other sports clubs? Please send them to

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