

ACTIVE WOMEN & GIRLS

STRATEGY 2018



CITY OF
BALLARAT 



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2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 WHY DEVELOP THIS STRATEGY?

The 2018 Active Women and Girls' Strategy aims to provide a tailored response to priority issues identified within the municipality that may be constraining women and girls' involvement in sport or physical activity, either as leaders or participants.

Broadly speaking, Active Victoria 2017–2021 – A strategic framework for sport & recreation in Victoria identifies participation in sport by women and girls is only half that of men and boys. This is consistent trend Ballarat also is experiencing.

The municipality's involvement in sport, recreation and leisure is driven by a desire to positively influence the health and wellbeing of all its residents, as well as contributing to the culture, lifestyle and liveability of the city. A key driver of this strategy is to support the health and wellbeing of the community by encouraging participation in both structured and unstructured physical activities, while addressing priorities outlined in the City of Ballarat Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and the future Recreation Strategy.

Throughout the consultation process four key pillars were identified; participation, culture and environment, infrastructure and media action. Each seek to align with the vision and goals identified in the Council Plan 2017-2021.

- 1. Participation** – initiatives to encourage active participation, athlete pathways and data collection.
- 2. Culture and environment** – initiatives that support women and girls in leadership and governance roles, positive female role models, club education, development and volunteer support.
- 3. Infrastructure** – equitable access to suitable facilities to support participation.
- 4. Media action** – a focus on promotion, exposure and positive messaging to motivate and change behaviours.

The Active Women and Girls' Strategy seeks to create equitable opportunities for female participation in sport, so women and girls have equitable opportunities to participate in the sporting environment. In this context, "equity" requires consideration of the unique needs, interests and experiences when developing and delivering services and allocating resources.

This strategy also acknowledges gender inequality is a pressing societal issue, and that the sport and recreation sector have a positive role to play in changing the current climate around women and girls.

Sport and physical activity participation can play an important role in supporting gender equity, re-shape stereotypes, empowering participants and supporting women and girls. Sporting environments need to be safe, welcoming and inclusive places that support participation by all members of the community. As experienced in other industries, women and girls are also commonly underrepresented in leadership and governance roles within sporting environments. There are many factors that contribute to this underrepresentation, with the outcomes resulting in fewer positive role models for women, less visible pathways to pursue leadership roles and a lack of diversity/representation in decision making.

The Victorian Government's *Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation (2014)* resulted in the release of *A Five-Year Game Plan for Victoria* in November 2015. The report outlines a vision of the future, where women and girls are represented in all roles in sport and active recreation and is the norm for females to have the same choices and opportunities to lead and to participate as their male counterparts.

2.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

This strategic document represents the overarching strategy to guide future initiatives aimed at increasing female participation in sport and physical activity within the municipality. The strategy has a four-year timeframe and is supported by a strategy action plan that identifies priority initiatives, and aligns with Council Plan, key recreation documents and capital programs and budgets.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

To obtain the information necessary to develop an informed strategy, the following methodology was utilised:

- Development of a project bulletin to inform the community and to provide information on how to be involved in the project
- Development of community surveys to ascertain the needs of key local, including females of varying ages and women and girls' in relation to women and girls' physical activity, services and facilities
- Review of relevant documents to understand the context in which female physical activity is provided in the municipality and the policies and issues which may impact future provision
- Review of the demographic make-up of the Ballarat community to identify the profile of existing residents and to determine future population projections and areas of growth
- Assessment of local female sport and recreation trends
- Interviews with key stakeholders such as sports clubs, state sporting associations and state government departments to discuss issues related to women and girls' physical activity in Ballarat

- Undertook the Women and Girls' Forum with local community and sporting stakeholders
- Undertook the Women and Girls' Strategy Soft launch with key stakeholders
- Basic audit of facilities and programs.

2.4 GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

It is recognised that City of Ballarat is not alone in supporting women and girls' participation in sport, recreation and physical activity. There are many other government and non-government agencies, groups and associations that have an interest and involvement in this field such as Federation University Australia. The City of Ballarat will work in partnership with relevant organisations to deliver the strategic pillars and key actions. Other partners, although not limited to, are: Sports Central, Womens Health Grampians, Local primary and secondary schools, state sporting associations, local sporting associations, local media, women's health networks and the local community.

One key document worth highlighting is Victoria Government's Gender Equity Strategy. This strategy aims to progressively build the attitudinal and behavioural change required to reduce violence against women and deliver gender equality through six settings. One key setting being sport and recreation.

The City of Ballarat will assess the success of long - term outcomes of this strategy by measuring changes in two main areas: club based and informal physical activity levels within the community. Club - based outcomes will be measured against the 12 club-based sports identified by Federation University Australia, and information sports such as cycling, running and walking groups.

Finally, the proposed partnership with Federation University Australia will be critical in establishing appropriate baseline data, as well as explore realistic options for ongoing monitoring and measurement of outcomes.



3.0 PILLARS

3.1 WOMEN AND GIRLS' STRATEGY – PILLARS

This strategy will identify four key focus areas that will guide Council over the next four years on projects to be delivered. The outcomes of any projects or initiatives will be communicated based on how they address four key pillars. They are:



PARTICIPATION

Initiatives to encourage active participation, athlete pathways and data collection.



CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Initiatives that support women and girls in leadership and governance roles, positive female role models, club education, development and volunteer support.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure equitable access to suitable facilities to support participation.



MEDIA ACTION

Focus on promotion, exposure and positive messaging to motivate and change behaviours.



4.1 OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The research and consultation undertaken for this project has identified four priority areas for action, each of these is summarised below.

PILLARS	 PARTICIPATION Initiatives to encourage participation, athlete pathways and data collection.	 CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT Specifically, initiatives that support women and girls in leadership and governance roles, positive female role models, club education, development and volunteer support.	 INFRASTRUCTURE Facilitating equitable access to suitable facilities to support participation.	 MEDIA ACTION Focus on promotion, exposure and positive messaging to motivate and change behaviours.
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase female participation in both structured and unstructured physical activities closer to the current <i>National Physical Activity Guidelines</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase female participation and representation in leadership, governance, coaching and executive roles in the local sport and recreation sector, including within sporting clubs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make improvements to facilities and infrastructure to support increased female participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase local media exposure and enhance positive messaging associated with women and girls' sport and active recreation.
STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve data collection and monitoring of participation preferences and recording (qualitative and quantitative measures). • Work with sporting clubs to encourage increased female participation and engagement, particularly in junior years. • Investigate strategies to support increases in female participation in informal and non-club-based physical activity opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with sporting associations and clubs to develop and implement policies and incentives that proactively support female participation and representation in leadership roles. • Actively support professional development, mentoring and training opportunities for women and girls to fulfil leadership, governance and coaching roles in the sport and recreation sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the suitability of facilities for women and girls – formal sport and informal recreation through using Universal Design principles within design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively identify and support programs such as <i>Girls Make Your Move</i> campaign¹. • Develop a local multi-faceted physical activity promotion and communication strategy to motivate and encouraged changed behaviours. • Investigate developing a City of Ballarat specific website identifying opportunities for physical activities for all.

¹ <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/girlsmove/publishing.nsf/Content/home>

5.0 FAST FACTS



PARTICIPATION

Initiatives to encourage participation, athlete pathways and data collection.

- More than two thirds of adult Australian females 67 per cent were classified as being sedentary or having low levels of exercise. (Vic Health 2012)
- Research confirms that 44 per cent of females generally prefer non-organised (non-club based) physical activity options, 9 per cent choose organised physical activity. (Vic Health October 2014)
- The Victorian population over 15 years of age is 67.2 per cent of males and 65 per cent of females. These Victorian statistics mirror the national participation rates of the general population of 66. per cent of males and 63 per cent of females. In contrast, just 27 per cent of males with disability and 20 per cent of females with disability aged 18 years or over reported participating in sport or recreation away from home in the 12-month period prior to interview. (Australian Bureau of Statistics, Sport and Recreation: 2012)

Sport participation findings (Ballarat City Council Sport participation profile October 2017).

- Female participation in sport peaks for those aged 10–14 years, followed by those aged 5–9 years.
- There is a significant decrease in female sport participation from ages 15–19
- Sport participation is considerably higher for males than females.
- The overall male and female sport participation rates for Ballarat region were lower than all other larger regional areas.
- The male sport participation rate for the region in 2015 was double that of the female participation rate male 20.0 per cent versus 9.8 per cent for females.
- Compared to all Victorians, a significantly smaller proportion of Ballarat residents engaged in no physical activity during the week. (13 per cent) Victoria average was 18 per cent.
- Organised participation by females remains below males, particularly from adolescents onwards.
- Women and girls have different motivations and barriers to participation such as: life stages, inflexible opportunities, societal pressures, safety, confidence, knowledge and perception of ability.



CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

Specifically, initiatives that support women and girls in leadership and governance roles, positive female role models, club education, development and volunteer support.

- Women and girls are generally under-represented in club leadership and mentoring roles, including coaching. (Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation 2015)
- Women and girls in leadership positions have the capacity to act as positive role models and significantly influence female participation outcomes. (Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation 2015)
- Women and girls need to see that there are pathways for ongoing involvement in sporting clubs to help address high adolescent drop-out rates. (Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation 2015)
- Women and girls' participation needs to be fully embraced and evident at all levels throughout club operations.
- Create club environments that are safe, welcoming and family friendly to encourage female participation and engagement. (Vic Health – Healthy Sporting Environments Demonstration project 2014)



INFRASTRUCTURE

Facilitating equitable access to suitable facilities to support participation.

- Inappropriate and inadequate infrastructure is commonly identified as a barrier to participation. This includes infrastructure to support formal sports as well as informal recreation. (Kowal J & Fortier MS 2007)
- Current infrastructure provides a higher level of support for initiatives that encourage traditional male dominated activities ahead of activities targeting women and girls.
- Improving facilities supporting females are now considered an integral part of broader Universal Design Principles (i.e. facilities that are designed to maximise use and appeal for all members of the community). (SRV Funding Guidelines 2018)
- Provision of access to safe social spaces is integral to supporting female participation within sporting clubs.



MEDIA ACTION

Focus on promotion, exposure and positive messaging to motivate and change behaviours.

- The way women and girls are portrayed in the media can influence participation outcomes. (Kane 1988; Dyer 1993)
- Female sport generally receives less media coverage than traditional male sports and activities. (Women's leadership Institute Australia 2013)
- Less coverage means less exposure which directly impacts on the promotion and messaging associated with female sport participation. (Towards a Level Playing Field: Sport and Gender in Australian Media report compiled for the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) 2009)
- A lack of knowledge/awareness of existing participation opportunities available within the municipality is a barrier to participation.

6.0 OUR COMMUNITY

6.1 OUR REGION

Ballarat is in central Victoria, just over an hour from Melbourne. Ballarat is bordered by Golden Plains Shire, Hepburn Shire and Pyrenees Shire and Moorabool Shires.

6.2 POPULATION

Ballarat's population is approximately 103,407 (June 2016) with a population density of 1.40 persons per hectare. The population is projected to reach 160,000 by 2040, with a male population of 48.1 per cent and 51 per cent female population. (2016 census)

6.3 WARDS

There are three wards North, Central and South.

6.4 BORDERING SHIRES

Outside Ballarat the four bordering shires consist of mainly smaller towns and rural locations, with approximate population of; Golden Plains Shire 15,330 (2016 census), Hepburn Shire 15,330 (2016 census) and Pyrenees Shire 7,000 (2016 census) and Moorabool Shire 32,311 (2016 census).

6.5 BALLARAT SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH PROFILE

Two key sources of information have been used to provide an overview of the current participation and health profile of women and girls in Ballarat, specifically:

- Ballarat City Council Sport Participation Profile, January 2018.
- City of Ballarat Sport, Physical Activity and Health Profile, developed by Sport and Recreation Spatial (SRS) – Federation University Australia and Victoria University, draft report July 2015.
- City of Ballarat VicHealth Indicators Survey Results, January 2012.

The Ballarat City Council Sport Participation Profile report provides a comparison between the Ballarat and other regional cities, specifically Geelong and Bendigo, as well as Victoria as a whole. The findings present a mix of both positive and negative health statistics for the city, a snapshot of key findings relevant to this project include:

- Higher rates of obesity compared to Geelong, Bendigo or Victorian averages
- Lower rates of overweight residents compared to Bendigo, however higher than Geelong and Victoria
- Lower rates of diabetes than Geelong and Victoria, however higher than Bendigo
- Higher rates of child development vulnerability
- Higher rates of psychological distress
- Higher rates of people volunteering compared to the other regions.

In terms of physical activity and sport participation, compared to Victoria, Geelong and Bendigo, Ballarat generally compares favourably suggesting relatively high levels of participation. Selected findings include:

- Lower rates of people who were physically inactive
- Lower rates of people who were sitting for at least seven hours per day
- Higher rates of participation in organised physical activities
- Higher rates of club-based participation
- The rate of sport participation by females varied across the lifespan, with the highest rate of participation in Ballarat being the 4-15-year-old range 32 per cent, before declining to 2per cent for those aged 16-19 and 1per cent amongst those aged 20-29 years.

The VicHealth indicators survey (2012) also provided a snapshot of physical activity participation patterns of Ballarat residents. Many important findings were identified which will influence future initiatives aimed at encouraging increased participation by women and girls. Notable findings included:

- Overall, 82 per cent of the population participated in physical activity within the last 12 months. Female participation was slightly higher than males 84.1 per cent
- Residents with higher incomes and higher levels of education are much more likely to have engaged in physical activity (a discrepancy of 37.6 per cent exists between the participation rates of the least educated and the most educated).
- Overall 91.2 per cent of residents' report there are enough opportunities to participate in physical activities in the Ballarat; there was relatively little difference in this rating between genders, although females rated slightly higher 91 per cent vs 90.8% respectively. However, differences emerge in relation to age with higher levels of dissatisfaction in those aged between 18-24 years and 45-54 years.

- Residents are engaged in a wide variety of physical activities with more than over 70 different types of activities registered in survey results. The most popular physical activities in the Ballarat include walking, cycling, gymnasium workouts, bushwalking, swimming, running, golf, netball, Australian Rules Football and aerobics. Other notable findings included:
 - Walking is more popular with females than males.
 - Cycling is more than twice as popular with men 21per cent than women 9 per cent and is underrepresented in those with low incomes and low education groups and is most popular with males aged 35-44 years.
 - Gymnasium workouts are more popular with women than men 17per cent vs 10 per cent respectively.
 - Bush walking is slightly more popular with men 14per cent than women 12per cent and is a popular activity for those aged between 45-64 years. Bush walking is popular across all ranges of income and education and is a common physical activity for those with low household incomes and lower levels of education.
 - Swimming participation is slightly higher for females 10per cent than males 9per cent and is a popular activity for people aged 25-44 years, middle and high-income earners and people with tertiary education.



7.0 ACTION PLAN

The following table, on page 13, provides a set of objectives, strategies and actions to guide the City of Ballarat in terms of the planning, development and implementation of women and girls' programs, facilities and opportunities from 2018 onwards. Priorities have been developed from:

- An assessment against City of Ballarat's vision and planning principles for recreation and open space
- Community forums workshops and soft launch
- An assessment of existing strategies and reports
- Physical audit of facilities
- Review of existing practices and procedures
- Assessment of best practice
- Community surveys
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Demographic review
- Analysis of existing programs
- Examination of trends and participation rates
- Review of available or potentially accessible resources.

Each of the actions identifies key partners, possible year of delivery and potential organisations involved in supporting and delivery of the action. Resources or costs of implementation are yet to be identified. It is anticipated that wherever possible, external funds will be sourced to help fund initiatives.

The actions are listed according to their respective pillar as described earlier in the document.



Participation



OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	YEAR (2018-2021)	RESPONSIBILITY
Increase female participation in both structured and unstructured physical activities closer to the National Physical Activity Guidelines.	Improve data collection and monitoring of structured and unstructured physical activity and participation preferences and recording (qualitative and quantitative measures).	1 Conduct and monitor research on structured and unstructured physical activity and participation rates for women and girls across the Ballarat region, particularly activities likely to be popular with women such as walking, netball, aerobics/group fitness/gym activities, cycling, swimming, running, yoga, dance, tennis and soccer.	City of Ballarat, Federation University Australia	2018/2019	City of Ballarat, Federation University Australia
	Work with sporting clubs to encourage the increased female participation and engagement, particularly in juniors.	2 Work with FedUniWestVic Academy of Sport, Sports Central and Sports associations to explore possible opportunities and actions required to improve sport pathways for women and girls.	FedUniWestVic Academy of Sport, Sports Central, State Sporting Associations, Local Clubs	2018/2019	City of Ballarat
		3 Support women's and girls' sport participation initiatives.	Sport Central, State Sport Ass, Local Clubs	2018/2019	All
	Investigate strategies to support increases in female participation in informal and non-club based physical activity opportunities.	4 Support local competitions and physical activity events targeting women and girls.	City of Ballarat, Sport Central, State Sporting Associations Local Clubs, Ballarat & District, Aboriginal Cooperative, Vic Health, Ballarat Health Services, Health Partner Group.	2019/2020	All
		5 Identify opportunities to partner with organisations that delivery female physical activity programs or initiatives such as the Daughters of the West		2019/2020	City of Ballarat
		6 Explore opportunities to work with community groups and other relevant service providers or agencies to facilitate opportunities for low cost, social physical activity options these may include Park Run, walking groups, walking soccer, netball/ basketball etc).		2019/2020	City of Ballarat
		7 Develop a series of walking, running and cycling maps for the City of Ballarat to promote opportunities for local participation.	City of Ballarat, Tourism Ballarat	2020/2021	City of Ballarat
		8 Develop a strategy around family-friendly activities. This will include promoting general play spaces as free family-friendly exercise and active participation opportunities.	City of Ballarat	2020/2021	City of Ballarat



OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	YEAR (2018-2021)	RESPONSIBILITY
<p>Increase female participation and representation in leadership, governance, coaching and executive roles in the local sport and recreation sector, including within sporting clubs.</p> <p>Culture and Environment</p> 	<p>Work with sporting associations and clubs to develop and implement governance policies and incentives that proactively support female participation and representation in leadership roles</p>	<p>9 Develop a City of Ballarat policy that identifies requirements for clubs to support increased female participation and leadership roles in club sport and physical activity. Investigate possibilities in linking club-based and facility to leasing and licensing arrangements.</p>	<p>City of Ballarat, State Sport Associations, Sports Central</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>City of Ballarat, Sports Central</p>
	<p>Actively support professional development, mentoring and training opportunities for women and girls to fulfil leadership, governance and coaching roles in the sport and recreation sector.</p>	<p>10 Ensure external infrastructure applications identify how the project supports or encourages increased participation by women and girls.</p>	<p>City of Ballarat, State Sport Associations, Sports Central</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>City of Ballarat, Sport Recreation Victoria</p>
	<p>11 Partner with external recreation or health organisations to facilitate club development programs that have a focus on positive sporting club cultures.</p>	<p>City of Ballarat, Ballarat & District Aboriginal Cooperative, VicHealth, Sports Sports Central, FedUniWestVic, State Sporting Associations, Schools, Women's Health Grampians</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>Sports Central, State Sporting Association, Local Sporting Associations.</p>	
	<p>12 Promote and encourage sporting clubs in Ballarat to become a Communities of Respect and Equality (CoRE) member to foster equal, safe and inclusive environments for women and girls.</p>		<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>All</p>	
	<p>13 Identify and support opportunities for female coaches, officials, educators, academics and leaders to share their skills and expertise at development sessions, conferences and training events</p>		<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>Sports Central, State Sporting Association, Local Sporting Associations.</p>	
	<p>14 Identify and support initiatives that increase female volunteer recruitment and participation in club leadership roles.</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>Local Sporting Associations</p>	
	<p>15 Ensure the City of Ballarat's Sport and Active Living Grants program supports coaching, training and leadership initiatives targeting females. Look for opportunities to support pilot programs that promotes local women and girls' programs.</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>2018/2021</p>	<p>City of Ballarat</p>	
<p>16 Support the development of an annual Women in Sport & Community Leadership Forum to promote and recognise women and girls' contributions, skills and expertise as athletes and leaders in the community.</p>	<p>2019/2020</p>	<p>2019/2020</p>	<p>Sports Central, City of Ballarat</p>		

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	YEAR (2018-2021)	RESPONSIBILITY
Make improvements to facilities and infrastructure to support increased female participation.	Enhance the suitability of facilities for women and girls – formal sport and informal recreation through using Universal Design Principles.	17 Audit existing facilities to determine suitability for females use and establish a prioritised schedule of works to improve venues when budgetary and funding opportunities arise or as required. Identify improvements to facilities, child play areas and basic amenities such as lighting, seating, access to toilets and water fountains.	City of Balt, Sport & Rec Victoria	2018 + 2019	City of Ballarat
		18 Partner with appropriate City of Ballarat Departments to ensure future town place planning adequately develops open space that supports physical activity participation opportunities for all ages.		2018/2019	City of Ballarat
		19 Continue to identify opportunities for paths, tracks and trail improvements to support informal physical activity participation and safe environments. This includes through the City of Ballarat Walking and Cycling Strategy 2017.	City of Balt, Sport & Rec Victoria	2018/2019	City of Ballarat
				2018/2019	City of Ballarat

Media Action

OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTIONS	PARTNERS	YEAR (2018-2021)	RESPONSIBILITY
Increase local media exposure and enhance positive messaging associated with women and girls sport and active recreation.	Actively identify and support programs such as Girls Make Your Move campaign.	20 Advocate for the inclusion and promotion of women and girls' sports and participation opportunities through the City of Ballarat's media and communication platforms.	City of Ballarat, local media, local clubs, Sports Central, relevant social media platform	2018/19	City of Ballarat, local media, local clubs, Sports Central, relevant social media platform
		21 Advocate to increase awareness through Ballarat media organisations to promote women and girls' involvement and successes in sport and recreation.		2018/19	City of Ballarat
		22 Advocate to increase awareness and use of online/social network tools to communicate opportunities for informal physical activity participation and virtual club/groups.		2018/19	City of Ballarat
	Develop a local multi-faceted physical activity promotion and communication strategy to motivate and encouraged changed behaviours.	23 Establish a working group to scope the possible development of a City of Ballarat physical participation specific website, associated promotional campaign and define responsibilities for ongoing management, including social media moderator/manager/ action plan.	City of Ballarat, Sports Central, local media	2018/19	City of Ballarat, Sports Central, local media
	Investigate developing a City of Ballarat specific website identifying opportunities for physical activities for all.	24 Develop and launch website and partner with MPHWP action to develop online resource to assist community to determine facilities and services are available	City of Ballarat, Sports Central, local media	2019/20	City of Ballarat, Sports Central, local media

8.0 APPENDIX: SELECTED RESEARCH FINDINGS

8.1 CONSULTATION OUTCOMES

8.1.1 Physical Activity Participation

The City of Ballarat hosted a one-day forum for local organisations involved in sport and recreation on Friday 11 March 2016, with feedback used to inform the Active Women & Girls Strategy. The following section provides a summary of key findings from the Active Women and Girls Forum and club survey results.

- Increase the awareness of the needs for women and girls in sport.
- Explore a vision and pathway to increase participation of female in sport and recreation
- Collect information, share ideas
- Gain inspiration, greater awareness and stakeholder links
- Develop a collaborative approach to innovation
- Establish priorities to promote women's physical activity participation in Ballarat.

Eight priority themes for action were identified during the forum:

- Volunteer development and education
- Data and research
- Leadership and role models
- Policy mandate for City of Ballarat
- Values/attitudes/culture
- Alternative participation ideas/products
- Facilities, access and development
- Working together

8.1.2 Volunteer development and education

- **Change:** Support and guidelines for coaches and leaders. Welcoming new members to any sporting club is considered positive.
- **First Steps:** Educate parents, children, clubs, school students and gym users.
- **Provide more:** Volunteers with development opportunities and mentoring on how to do their roles to encourage more people to get involved and assist.



8.1.3 Data and Research

Provide more:

- Reflective data for all sport and recreation activity.

First Steps:

- Gather local data and seek women and girls themselves in community consultation.
- More accurate data that reflects all sport/recreation/leisure activities, not just organised sport.
- Determine what females want to do in terms of sport, and why they are not yet doing it?
- Use mapping technology to analyse where females are and are not participating in sport.
- Gather more/better data, including specific target groups.

8.1.4 Leadership and Role Models

First Steps:

- More organisations/clubs/associations advocating for female participation and leadership in sport.
- Support and improve participation opportunities and pathways, including leadership opportunities/roles.
- Improve consideration of female needs in infrastructure development.

Change:

- More promotion of women on boards and associations as positive role models promoting gender equality, including more positive media coverage.

Provide more:

- Female leadership roles on and off the field including committees, officials, coaches, managers, boards / governance.
- Support for female recruitment and retention.
- Advocates for female participation, including supporting men who invest in developing leadership capacity of females.
- Women in leadership roles, including having more women represented in all facets of senior management. Empowered females.

8.1.5 Policy mandate for the City of Ballarat

First Steps:

A public commitment to actively support an increase in participation of females in sport and promote that to all residents.

8.1.6 Values/attitudes/culture

Change:

- Perceptions and messages about female involvement in sport and recreation (e.g. too muscly, not good enough, boys' sports).
- Change attitudes to establish equality in sport
- Increase recognition in media.
- Equal access to facilities.
- Understand that female approaches and needs in sport and recreation can be different to males.

8.1.7 Alternative participation ideas/products

Change:

- self-esteem by nurturing safe and supportive environments without judgement and providing opportunities to participate and realistic imagery.
- Increase the amount of sport and recreational opportunities in the region for all skill levels.
- Develop a policy/strategy that focuses on the whole lifespan and across the "needs" spectrum; i.e. entry, social, active, competitive, skills mastery, etc.

More:

- Deliver flexible, non-traditional, minimal commitment product offerings i.e. deliver to girls/women what the research says they want.



8.1.8 Facilities: Access and development

First Steps:

- Encourage more sports to be inclusive of females and provide the facilities to support. This would include separate changing rooms.
- Educate community clubs and groups about available funding and external grants.

Provide more:

- Facilities by:
 - Increase availability/access to current facilities for more user groups.
 - Upgrade and create new facilities to accommodate more use.
 - Create better facilities by providing equal access to change rooms and playing fields.
 - Safe and welcoming, including well-lit car park.
 - Providing access to popular time-slots, rather than fitting women's matches in before or after a men's sports game.

Change:

- Facilities to be more female and family-friendly.
- Improve the maintenance and upkeep of existing facilities to increase appeal for female use.
- Support community access to external grants and funding to support facility improvements.

8.1.9 Working together

First Steps:

- Further exploration of how schools can contribute/facilitate strategies to increase female participation and positively influence perceptions/attitudes.
- Develop a women-focused sport and recreation committee/working group to help support/guide City of Ballarat initiatives in this area.
- Continued two-way communication between the City of Ballarat and community groups.



8.2 CLUB/ASSOCIATION SURVEY RESULTS

8.2.1 Club/association survey results

A selection of notable findings and survey responses during the 2016 consultation period.

8.2.2 Participation

- In AFL Goldfields during 2016, female team numbers increased by 36 per cent, to 33 teams across the region with Ararat, Ballarat, Central Goldfields, Hume, Macedon Ranges, Melton, Mitchell and Moorabool Local Government Authorities all supporting at least one female team.
- Female participation in martial arts (Karate) is strongest in the 15-24 age group and self-defence classes for those aged over 35 years.
- Soccer clubs are reporting mixed participation results for women and girls, however a lack of suitable facilities for female players has been one reason for declining participation in adult ages.
- There are no female cricket umpires in Ballarat. Female participation in club cycling has been declining for many years.

8.2.3 Club management and administration

- The survey respondents represented 149 committee of management or board positions, of which 41 or approximately 38 per cent are filled by women.
- There are approximately 1,396 individuals involved in club management, administration and operational roles from the survey respondents, of which approximately 33 per cent are filled by females.

8.2.4 Perceived barriers to participation

- Lack of female-friendly and supported facilities and amenities.
- Weather conditions/climate deterring outdoor sport participation.
- Male dominance of the sport, both in participation and management areas
- Lack of elite player role models
- Poor/limited media coverage and promotion of female sport
- Lack of respect for female sport, skill level/standard and achievements
- Lack of time exacerbated by commitments to family responsibilities
- Stereotypes and perceived role of women
- Lack of female competition structures and pathways
- Cost and economic barriers.

8.2.5 Other comments/suggestions

- Training and completion times not suiting females with family commitments
- Increase grants and funding opportunities to support female participation and training
- Improve media coverage and promotion of role models
- Promote the benefits of participation
- Target schools to increase female participation in a range of sports/activities assisting to provide a solid grounding in sport and physical activity
- Attract and host significant female teams, competitions and events to Ballarat
- Facilitate training and education programs for women.

8.3 VICHEALTH: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACROSS LIFE STAGES

Motivators	GIRLS & ADOLESCENTS	WOMEN 18–55 YEARS	MOTHERS	OLDER WOMEN 55+ YEARS	FEMALES OF ALL AGES (SUMMATION)
	Having fun with friends Improving their skills Family activity, parents involved in physical activity Improve body image	Younger women motivated by improving their appearance and weight management Social over performance outcomes	Low levels of self-motivation, as priority is on their family rather than themselves Can be motivated by weight management and personal wellbeing Communicating the benefits of physical activity could potentially motivate mothers, such as being a positive role model within their family	Health outcomes	Social interaction

Table: Physical activity across life stages (source VicHealth)



8.3 VICHEALTH: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACROSS LIFE STAGES

Barriers

GIRLS & ADOLESCENTS	WOMEN 18–55 YEARS	MOTHERS	OLDER WOMEN 55+ YEARS	FEMALES OF ALL AGES (SUMMATION)
<p>Family (parent) support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> logistics, transport and organisation emotional support, praise and encouragement financial peer support and encouragement 	<p>Time constraints and shifting responsibilities related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> study work domestic and family duties 	<p>Lack of time</p>	<p>Fewer barriers than other female age groups</p>	<p>Confidence, knowledge and belief in their own ability</p>
<p>Adolescents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> time constraints with academic activities, social activities, and paid employment priorities shift toward spending social time with friends, household activities and school work. Physical activity becomes less of a priority during adolescence influenced by self-concept, confidence levels and perception of skills in comparison to peers influenced greatly by body image and experience greater drop-out during adolescent due to social and peer pressures on appearance 	<p>Perception that daily activities do not leave enough time to exercise</p>	<p>Family support</p>	<p>Understanding what exercise to undertake at what age and ability level</p>	<p>Lack of motivation</p>
	<p>Feeling tired</p>	<p>Family priority for time and money</p>	<p>Fear of injury</p>	<p>Time</p>
	<p>Not wanting to exercise alone</p>	<p>Guilt about spending time away from family and spending family resources on themselves</p>	<p>Perceived lack of ability</p>	<p>Finances</p>
	<p>Cost and inflexibility of payment structures, and inflexible time structures</p>	<p>Understanding what exercise to undertake at what stage of pregnancy</p>	<p>Existing health problems</p>	<p>Fatigue</p>
	<p>Obese women can feel their weight is a barrier to physical activity as it inhibits their energy level, confidence, and ability to participate</p>		<p>Long term sedentary patterns</p>	<p>Knowledge of what physical activity to undertake</p>
	<p>Intimidated by the gym environment</p>		<p>Perceived age barrier</p>	<p>Awareness and access to opportunities particularly for rural areas</p>
	<p>Perceived barriers for 18–55 year old women decrease as they become more active, women who are more active, perceive less barriers</p>			<p>Perceiving activities such as watching TV as more relaxing and instantly rewarding</p>
				<p>Sociocultural restraints can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> perception girls/women should not participate in physical activity language, religious wear previous physical activity experience facilities do not cater for gender segregation or food requirements

Table: Physical activity across life stages (source VicHealth)

8.3 VICHEALTH: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACROSS LIFE STAGES *

Program considerations	GIRLS & ADOLESCENTS	WOMEN 18–55 YEARS	MOTHERS	OLDER WOMEN 55+ YEARS	FEMALES OF ALL AGES (SUMMATION)
	Skill building through training sessions or short courses designed as ‘introduction’ to sporting activity	Flexibility with cancellations and payment	Child care facilities available or fun activities for children which would alleviate guilt	Scheduled routine of activities	Providing activities at flexible times, and creating flexible payment options.
	Creating opportunities to participate in physical activity with similar skilled peers and in gender groups or, if mixed, ensure it is a supportive environment	Locations for physical activity need to be within or close to work, study, or home	Incorporate children into activity	Education on health benefits and overcoming illness	Free introductory courses to increase confidence and remove cost and investment barrier
	Create activities which require little financial outlay for equipment (or borrow / hire equipment)	Create short or express activities which can be done during lunch breaks	Unstructured and flexible activities, such as walking groups	Social element	Work in partnership with key target groups (cultural or religious groups)
	‘Girls only’ programs will reduce peer pressure and issues related to self-image	Flexible social based, such as walking groups	For structured activities, having no cancellation fees and flexible payment options	Outdoors	Ensure program facilitators are educated and trained on cultural sensitives or requirements and are focused on motivating and supporting females
	Co-ordinate programs where girls and boys can participate in activities at same time (yet separately), reducing the time constraints and logistical barriers for parents	Include education elements to physical activity programs which include time-management skills and self-empowerment	Education of suitable activities for pregnant women	Consider walks around gardens	Create inclusive physical and cultural environments
	Create activities which facilitate whole family involvement		Flexible hours that physical activity is available and range of physical activity activities which fit into work day		Create opportunities for non-participating women to be included, such as volunteering
	Extend awareness and education of the importance of physical activity and the potential barriers for girls to teachers, family, role models and peers so that they can support girls’ participation and reduce drop-out rates		Provide resources which support physical activities at home, such as exercise programs, health and diet information, pedometers and diaries to track activity and maintain motivation		
			Take a ‘whole of family’ approach to create a program children, mothers and potentially partners can all participate or be included		

Table: Physical activity across life stages (source VicHealth)

8.3 VICHEALTH: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ACROSS LIFE STAGES

Promotional considerations	GIRLS & ADOLESCENTS	WOMEN 18–55 YEARS	MOTHERS	OLDER WOMEN 55+ YEARS	FEMALES OF ALL AGES (SUMMATION)
	<p>Promote the benefits of girls' involvement in physical activity to parents, teachers and role models. Particularly promote the potential for stress reduction and improved study</p> <p>Promote the social element of programs to girls; the fun, excitement and time with friends. Consider promoting programs to whole social groups, families and schools by perhaps offering discounts to bring a friend or sister</p> <p>Promote the skill-building elements of the program and emphasise it is not about performance or competition</p>	<p>Marketing should focus on the social and enjoyment benefits of the program</p> <p>For obese women, marketing the social enjoyment and other benefits to physical activity, as opposed to weight loss, may reduce the expectations and pressure women place on themselves</p>	<p>Communicate and educate the importance of physical activity to those within a mothers' support group (partners, family, work etc.) to encourage their support, both logistical (such as looking after children) and emotional</p> <p>Include easy-to-read health information about what activities are safe at what stage of pregnancy and motherhood</p> <p>Communicate health education and physical activity messages during the program by SMS and phone rather than rely on personal contact</p>	<p>Promote and educate the benefits of short or low impact physical activity (such as walking or gardening)</p> <p>Promote relevant and timely information specific to this group with consideration for overcoming illness or health concerns</p> <p>Promote the social element and a scheduled routine</p> <p>Promote the accessibility of the physical activity and ensure participants' activities will be achievable for their age group and ability</p>	<p>Throughout promotion material use 'real' images that females can relate to and 'see themselves' doing. This improves their self-concept and gives them a belief they can do the activity</p> <p>Extend this to include diverse images of religious or cultural groups, particularly for cultures where religious headwear is necessary and female only areas</p>

8.4 WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM ELSEWHERE?

8.4.1 United Kingdom

Women in Sport is a UK-based non-government peak organisation which has commissioned and led more than 30 years of research into the participation patterns, barriers and motivators influencing female involvement in sport and physical activities in the UK. The organisation recently released findings from research conducted in late 2014, titled “What Sways Women to Play Sport” .

The report acknowledges the motivations behind female sporting participation are extensive and varied and what sways or influences one woman at one time does not necessarily affect another. Influencers were defined as those individuals or groups who can change the behaviour or thinking of someone. The research therefore aimed to understand how role models and other influencers can be used to unlock opportunities that positively impact women’s participation behaviours.

The report identified that women’s motivations for sporting participation broadly fall into two categories, that is; external forces or internal drive. The report suggested that behaviour is driven by external forces, for example:

- Recognition from coach
- Respect from teammates
- Not wanting to disappoint a parent.

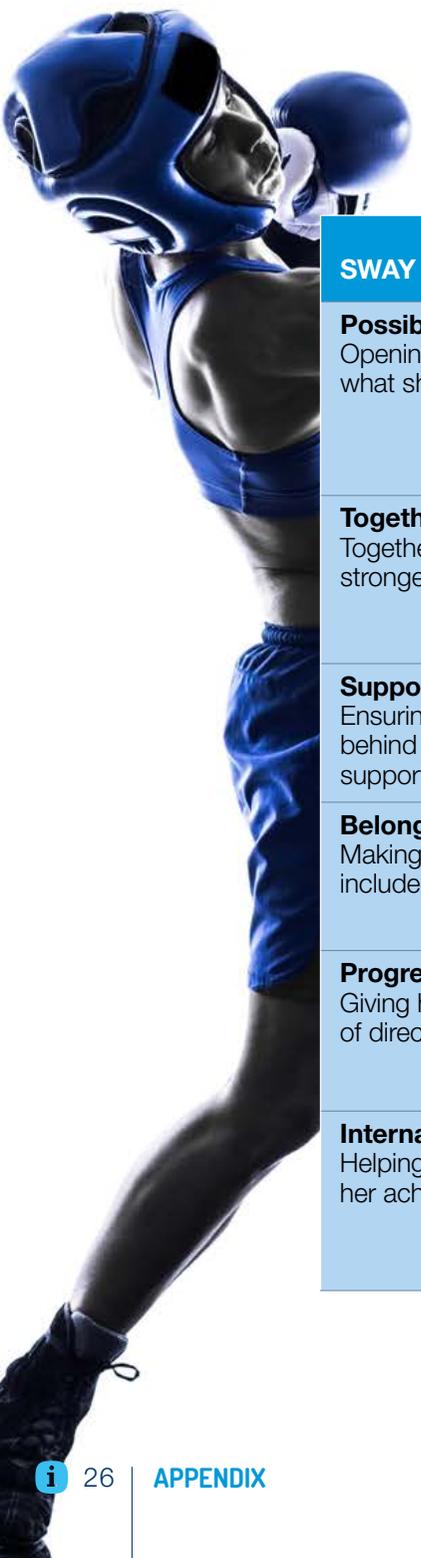
The report found that over-emphasis of external rewards can lead to participation lapsing, particularly if social outcomes are removed. Whereas strong internal drive is a primary motivator for ongoing participation, with less need for social recognition. Examples of important internal drive factors include:

- Feeling more energised after an activity
- Enjoying a sense of skill or fitness mastery
- Feeling of well-being and boost from improved fitness.

Internal rewards/motivators help prevent participation lapsing, especially throughout various life stages.

Having regard to the research results, the study identified six key spheres of influence, or sway factors, that activity providers can use to leverage greater participation among women. The model of influence - as it become known - can provide a framework to encourage further female physical activity participation and is outlined in the table below.





SWAY FACTOR	EXAMPLE INFLUENCE	EXAMPLE ACTIONS
Possibilities: Opening her eyes to what she can do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspiring women with 'real' stories they can relate to can help to prime participation. Imagery and stories of women 'like me' to prime her participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories framed around personal success. Include early stages of women's participation journeys.
Togetherness: Together she is stronger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friend's invitation makes sport possible = safety in numbers. Reward of socialising and bonding becomes an external motivator. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakdown barriers. Taking part with someone else. Sharing intentions increases commitment.
Support: Ensuring she has behind the scenes support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practical and emotional support from the people in her everyday life is crucial to kick start and sustain participation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family are often the gatekeeper. Encouraging and endorsing. Sharing her goals.
Belonging: Making her feel included and valued.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that participation in sport is enjoyable and an experience she wants to keep repeating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personalised contact. Respect and recognition. Opportunities for feedback. Lines of communication.
Progression: Giving her a sense of direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Skilled feedback and structured guidance from someone with more expertise than her helps sustain participation along the journey. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement suggestions. Praise. Setting realistic goals. Ongoing and personalised.
Internalise: Helping her reflect on her achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bringing out the internal rewards of taking part in sport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus shift to feeling good. Heighten her awareness of personal progress. Internalising her own sport behavioural journey.

Table: Sway factors and model of influence on female participation.

The report concluded that Women's participation is influenced in a multitude of ways: positively and negatively, directly and indirectly, externally and internally and intentionally and unknowingly. However, by focusing too directly on 'role models' rather than broader 'influencers', there is the potential to obscure a wide range of behaviours that can sway participation decisions and which can be leveraged to achieve greater positive participation impacts.

The report concluded that understanding how key influencers sway participation should be a primary consideration as part of any sport or physical activity program delivery. In particular, (1) people do not always realise how much they can influence others; (2) to achieve optimal impact, a multi-pronged approach is required; (3) the 'sway factors' work best in combination and at different points depending on life stages and; (4) behaviours and levels of influence change over time.

8.4.2 Canada

The *Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity* released a supplement to the Canadian Government's Sport for Life strategy titled *Actively Engaging Women and Girls: Addressing the Psycho-Social Factors* in 2012. The purpose of the document was to increase awareness about the experiences of women and girls, and provide recommendations to address the psycho-social factors that influence female athlete development, leadership and life-long participation in sport and physical activity.

As is the case in Australia, the report notes that "...women and girls continue to be underrepresented in the sport and physical activity system" and that "...it is time to create optimal conditions and systems that support women and girls to be active at all stages of participation and competition, as coaches, officials, leaders and in other roles related to sport and physical activity".

The report identifies that there are significant gender differences in participation and leadership in the Canadian sport and physical activity system. Women and girls typically report more barriers to sport and physical activity participation across the lifespan than men and boys, impacting on their involvement as participants, athletes, coaches, officials and leaders.

Reported barriers to participation identified in the Canadian setting are consistent with those regularly recorded in Australia and include:

Physical Barriers For example, low physical fitness; presence of illness/disease; lack of physical literacy (knowledge of fundamental movement skills/fundamental sport skills).

Psychological Barriers For example, limited confidence in their physical abilities or knowledge about physical activity and sport; low perceived behavioural control; low physical self-efficacy. There may be feelings of fatigue, fear, lack of confidence or negative attitudes; concerns about body weight, poor body image and low self-esteem.

Time-based Barriers For example, too much work or school work; responsibilities to care for younger siblings, children, or elderly parents; housework or chores; parental or family expectations for women and girls to be at home. Women often report feelings of guilt or have trouble prioritising sport and physical activity participation over other responsibilities and interests.

Interpersonal Barriers For example, low family, partner or caregiver motivation to support women and girls' physical activity engagement; family, partner or parental belief that sport is not as important for females as for males; lack of social support including a lack of peer support; limited positive feedback; limited role models; concerns about being perceived as unfeminine or a lesbian; and contradictory marketing messages and strategies.

Access and Opportunity Barriers

For example, cost; access to appropriate equipment; transportation; access to quality facilities; lack of culturally relevant activities; language and literacy barriers; experiences of discrimination or racism; accessibility issues for women and girls with a disability. For females with care-giving responsibilities, there may be limited access to alternative care or respite from such roles. The built environment and/or climate may pose additional challenges, both directly and indirectly.

Programming Barriers For example, lack of choice and variety, no female-only opportunities; low quality/untrained instructors and coaches; undesired focus on competition or specialisation; commitment requirements.

The report has a specific focus on addressing the psychological and social factors that influence participation, in particular:

- Levels of autonomy and control.
- Involvement, participation and empowerment.
- Social capital, social cohesion, trust and belonging.
- Social support, social networks and receiving positive feedback.
- Social diversity and tolerance.
- Vulnerability, security or safety.
- Demands, role conflicts or role imbalance.

The report found that these factors affect women and girls of all ages, influencing their health and well-being and their participation, athletic development, performance and leadership in sport and physical activity. The report suggests that addressing these factors will contribute to an environment that supports the development of physically literate, active, healthy women and girls.



8.4.3 MORELAND CITY COUNCIL

Moreland City Council developed the Moreland Active Women and Girls Strategy in 2010. The strategy structures a series of recommendations around the following themes:

Targeted activities and specific female population sub-groups, for example:

- Organised activities such as netball, aerobics/fitness classes and yoga.
- Unorganised/informal activities such as walking, running, cycling and swimming.
- Target groups including school students, older women (65+ years), women and girls from non-English speaking backgrounds, low income families and people with disabilities.

Building the capacity of existing sports clubs and providers of participation opportunities, for example:

- Increase female volunteer recruitment and leaderships roles.
- Capitalise and leverage off existing sports development programs for women and girls.
- Improving pathways for women and girls.
- Preventing female drop out of sport.
- Increasing participation opportunities within schools.

Developing suitable infrastructure, examples include:

- Increase facility and venue allocation to female sports and activities.
- Enhance the suitability of facilities for women and girls.
- Increasing the focus on paths, tracks and trails.

Enhancing choice through communication and information, for example:

- Accessing information – including development of an Active Moreland website / page.
- Information about existing opportunities and contacts.
- Benefits of participation.
- Walking and cycling maps.

8.4.4 VICHEALTH – THIS GIRL CAN VICTORIA – CAMPAIGN 2018

VicHealth launched the ‘This Girl Can’ Victoria program in 2018 to build upon success and empowerment of women across the state to get active and overcome feelings of judgment, which new VicHealth research shows is stopping them from getting active.

The research reveals over half of Victorian women worry about being judged when exercising. They worry more than men about keeping up, being unfit and find it harder to go back to exercise when they haven’t been active for a period of time.

The This Girl Can – Victoria campaign is a mass media, large-scale investment to smash the barriers (real or perceived) that stop women and girls in our community from getting involved. It’s a celebration of women doing their thing and being active – no matter how well they do it, how they look or how long it takes. This Girl Can – Victoria supports gender equality by challenging traditional gender roles (sporty and active as male traits) and by celebrating women who are fit and strong.

When designing programs for inactive women and girls, it helps to ‘look through their eyes’ to understand why they haven’t been involved before and overcome those barriers together. Four strategies can have a big impact on participation for women. Strategies being;

- Getting the attention of participants
- Tailored offering to create interest
- Building relationships between participants and providers
- Prepare providers for increased participation





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