

14. WOMEN AND GIRLS

Issue:

NSW Government efforts to increase the participation of women and girls in sport, physical activity and recreation in NSW.

Suggested Response:

The NSW Government is committed to increasing the number of women and girls involved in sport and recreation from an early age to encourage their continued involvement in sport and recreation over the course of their lives.

1. Funding

The NSW Government is supporting the 2010 International Women in Sport Conference which will be held in Sydney and has committed \$500,000 to this event. I have recently announced another \$15,000 in funding to provide 15 scholarships to assist women from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend this conference, which is the first of its kind in the Oceania region.

2. Programs

NSW Sport and Recreation conducts a number of programs focused solely on increasing the participation of women and girls in sport.

These include the *Women's Sport Leaders Scholarship Program* which was allocated \$100,000 in 2008-09. Eighty-four women received funding under this initiative. Additional funding is provided to run leadership programs for both multi-cultural and Indigenous women specifically. In 2008, 31 women participated in the Multicultural Women's Leadership Program and 11 women participated in the Indigenous Women's Leadership Program.

Regular sports clinics to introduce girls to predominantly male sports such as surfing, cricket, football and aquafitness as well as teaching and coaching courses are also provided.

NSW Sport and Recreation also coordinates a number of programs which provide sport and physical activity opportunities to women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Wimswim program teaches women from predominantly Arabic backgrounds how to swim in a supportive and private environment. Since 2005, 1290 women have registered for this program.

The Government through the Premier's Sporting Challenge is undertaking a "Girls in Sport Intervention and Research Project".

Twelve intervention schools and twelve control schools are part of the longitudinal study exploring ways to increase the moderate and vigorous activity levels of girls in Years 8 to 10. NSW Sport and Recreation is providing support to intervention schools by connecting them to community sporting clubs and providing advice on strategies

for engaging young people in sport.

3. Participation rates

For overall physical activity, female participation rates were slightly lower than for males – 81.4% for females compared to 83.8% for males.

Participation by women declines with age. In 2008, the highest participation rate was for 35-44 year olds at 84.2% and the lowest was 73.2 % for women aged 65 and over.

The overall trend in 2008 was upward.

Data for 2009 has yet to be released.

4. Improving media coverage

The NSW Government is committed to raising the profile of women's sport in NSW and to improving women's involvement in sport, recreation and physical activity at all levels and in all capacities.

The Government has provided \$500,000 to the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) for the period 2006 - 2010. This funding is to assist them to organise and conduct the 5th International Women in Sport Conference in Sydney in 2010. The Conference focus is on increasing the profile of women in sport. The bid

document states that improved media coverage for women is a key issue and envisages developing a blueprint to improve women's sport coverage as the conference legacy.

In past years, funding has been provided to the Women's Sport Media Group to conduct four media training courses to help raise the profile of women's sport in the media. This training involved specific practical experience for women involved in administrative roles within sport to help get their message heard.

In 2008 Womensport and Recreation NSW was granted \$15,000 to host two breakfasts targeting schoolgirls, one in Sydney and one in regional NSW. Over 1000 schoolgirls attended these breakfasts. The importance of increasing the media exposure of women and girls in sport is a central theme of these breakfasts.

The Women's Sport Leaders Scholarship Program is a major program specifically targeted to women with the aim to develop and extend the skills, knowledge and networks of women in leadership and decision-making roles in sport and recreation.

Funding of \$100,000 per annum has enabled over 500 women to receive scholarships under this program. The skills developed in these courses often improve the media skills of the women who attend to better represent women in their sport.

The development and implementation of policies and programs aimed at increasing the involvement of women in sport and raising the profile of women's sports will continue to be a priority of this Government.

5. Representation on boards

The Government continues to work towards its commitment of women occupying 50 per cent of all new appointments to NSW boards.

Examples of progress within the Sport & Recreation portfolio include:

- the Centennial and Moore Park Trust, which has 8 members, including 5 women;
- the Hunter Sporting Venues Authority, which has 7 members, including 3 women; and
- the Wollongong Stadium Trust, which has 7 members, including 3 women.