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Equity in Sport Project

Discussion paper

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background

This project was commissioned by Melbourne University Sport (MU Sport) in order to review its gender equity practices and to formulate recommendations and a policy framework to facilitate improvement. MU Sport seeks to provide equitable participation opportunities to all student participants regardless of gender. Further, it seeks to assert itself as a leader in the gender equity space, both within the University of Melbourne and among equivalent university sporting bodies in Australia.

The project was initiated in response to a query raised at the Advisory Board level about the availability of particular opportunities to both male and female students. This query prompted a broader conversation around the importance of gender equity, and the need to ensure that MU Sport's procedures align with, if not exceed, University and industry standards and expectations.

1.2 Structure of discussion paper

The first section of this discussion paper outlines the project's background, brief and methodology, and provides relevant definitions and context around gender equity in sport to assist in framing the report. It also discusses the University of Melbourne's and Australian University Sport's broader policy positions on gender equity in student engagement. Sections 2 to 7 examine each aspect of MU Sport's operations listed in the brief in relation to gender equity standards and objectives. These are *media coverage*, *fitness and speciality programming*, *club activities*, and *participation opportunities*. Note that two additional sections, *representative sport and scholarships* and *reporting and implementation*, have been included to better capture the gender equity issues at play. Section 8 concludes the discussion paper, and three appendices are attached: the full list of recommendations as introduced in each section, the draft policy framework, and a list of questions asked of project stakeholders.

1.3 Project brief

1.3.1 Project brief overview

As described by the project brief and related briefing note, Melbourne University Sport is seeking a policy framework and recommendations for improvement, based on a review of its gender equity practices, for eventual approval by the MU Sport Advisory Board and implementation by MU Sport. The brief acknowledges that MU Sport does not currently have an official equity policy or a full set of gender-specified participation data, and emphasises the need to ensure that fairness targets are being met. The project objectives as contained in the briefing note are as follows:

1. Outline the current state of gender equity practices within Melbourne University Sport, as related to broader industry and University commitments.
2. To assess position as related to media coverage, club activities, fitness and specialty programming, participation opportunities and sporting provisions.

The project deliverables, which the briefing note states are to be developed to reflect current industry practice as related to both sport and higher education, are to:

1. Produce a discussion paper reflecting current standards of practice
2. Outline recommendations for improvement
3. Develop a policy framework, for approval by the Board and implementation by MU Sport.

The recommendations for improvement contained throughout this discussion paper are designed to supplement the policy framework, providing specific and detailed suggestions for best practice in particular areas, or once-off actions to address certain issues. In contrast, the policy framework, once adopted, will provide policy objectives and ongoing guidance applicable to MU Sport's operations more broadly.

The brief also lists a number of reference points with which to compare MU Sport's current practices. These documents are:

1. The University of Melbourne – Engagement Strategy
2. The University of Melbourne – Growing Esteem Strategy
3. The University of Melbourne – Social Inclusion Barometer
4. Australian University Sport – Inclusion and Diversity Guideline.

Each of these documents is addressed later in this section of the discussion paper.

In terms of the project's stakeholders, MU Sport provided the following list:

- Fitness services staff
- Business services staff
- Marketing staff
- Sport development staff
- Sport clubs
- University Equity and Diversity
- Australian University Sport.

In addition, MU Sport suggested that Monash Sport and Sydney University Sport be contacted to provide information or policy documents relating to gender equity in their respective organisations for benchmarking purposes. Consultation with the Director of MU Sport and the Chair of the MU Sport Advisory Board was also requested, and permission was granted to consult with the President and Women's Officer of the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU).

1.3.2 Project scope

As outlined previously, the project brief specifies several aspects of MU Sport's student-facing operations to be examined as part of the review of current practices, namely media coverage, club activities, fitness and specialty programming, participation opportunities and sporting provisions. It is noted that sporting provisions is included as a "catch-all" category, and that two additional sections are included – *reporting and implementation*, and *representative sport and scholarships* – as stated previously. However there are a number of issues relevant to gender equity that are not addressed as part of this project.

Gender equity at the governance and leadership level of MU Sport, including on the MU Sport Advisory Board and amongst senior staff members, was not included in the provided scope and is therefore not addressed in this discussion paper. It is widely acknowledged in Australian and international literature, however, that addressing the historical underrepresentation of women in decision-making roles within sports administration is crucial to ensuring equitable outcomes at the participation level. There is insufficient scope to fully explore this matter here. However, it should be noted that the University of Melbourne's Diversity and Inclusion website within the Staff Hub recognises the benefits of more equal representation of women at the leadership level and on boards.¹ It is therefore suggested that further work is undertaken to examine this

¹ The University of Melbourne 2017a, *Diversity and inclusion*, accessed 29 July 2017
<<https://staff.unimelb.edu.au/diversity-inclusion>>

aspect of gender equity within MU Sport and means of ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in decision-making.

A second issue that is not addressed in this report relates to student safety and appropriate behaviour at sporting events. This issue is one of particular interest to UMSU, and has become increasingly topical and pressing in recent times, particularly following the August 2017 release of the Australian Human Rights Commission's report entitled *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*.² The report demonstrated that university-run events, including sporting events, are common sites for sexual harassment and assault, particularly those events involving overnight stays or residential arrangements. Given that the report showed that female students are more likely than male students to have experienced sexual harassment or assault, the issue can certainly be framed as one of gender equity. However, it is noted that as a department of the University of Melbourne, MU Sport is bound by the University's policies and procedures for preventing and dealing with such incidents. It is also understood that MU Sport will therefore participate in the University's ongoing work around this issue led by its Respect Taskforce, which includes upholding the University's commitments to improve institution-wide policies, practices and culture through actions such as strengthening the Safer Community Program, introducing training modules, and improving reporting and disclosure processes.³

In terms of the project's scope, a final point should be made. The discussion paper has as much as possible focused on MU Sport's policies and practices as they relate to students in particular, as emphasised in the brief. However, because consultation with student participants was not included in the project's scope, the paper does not provide a direct account of students' experiences of gender equity. A number of recommendations later in the report emphasise the importance of student consultation as a means of gauging student satisfaction with, and gaining input into, MU Sport's programs and activities. As an additional point, many of the participation opportunities provided by MU Sport are open to non-students, and the experiences of students and non-students as club members, fitness members and campus sport participants, for example, are unlikely to be markedly different, with the exception of the fees paid. Therefore, the relevance of the discussion paper and its recommendations extends beyond currently enrolled students.

1.3.3 Methodology

The methodology for this project was largely prescribed by the brief, which listed relevant stakeholders to interview and documents to review. This project therefore used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative data obtained through interviews and text analysis with some quantitative analysis of other relevant data sources such as participation data provided by MU Sport.

Interviews and questionnaires

Interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders between July and September 2017. The majority of stakeholders were MU Sport staff. Individual, semi-structured

² Australian Human Rights Commission 2017, *Change the course: National report on sexual assault and sexual harassment at Australian universities*, viewed 26 August 2017
<<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/change-course-national-report-sexual-assault-and-sexual>>

³ The University of Melbourne 2017b, *Respect. Now. Always. National student survey of sexual assault and sexual harassment in university communities: University of Melbourne Summary Findings and Actions*, accessed 26 August 2017
<http://safercommunity.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2439409/rna-unimelb-summary.pdf>

interviews were held with each staff member listed in the brief. Staff members were asked a number of common questions about gender equity in MU Sport broadly, as well as questions specific to their particular portfolio, although they were welcome to comment on other areas of MU Sport. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the following non-staff stakeholders:

- The Chair of the MU Sport Advisory Board
- The University’s Director of Students and Equity
- The UMSU President and Women’s Officer
- Representatives from two of the four sports clubs selected to participate in the project by MU Sport.

The other two participating sports clubs responded to the same questions via a written questionnaire. A questionnaire was also provided to AUS. A telephone interview was conducted with one representative from Monash University and another representative completed a written questionnaire. Information was collected from Sydney University Sport via email.

Text analysis

Analysis of the policy documents listed in the brief was undertaken. Other policy documents were also analysed for benchmarking purposes, including Sydney University Sport’s policy on gender equity and the gender equity policies of a number of Victorian city councils.

Desktop research

A small amount of desktop research was undertaken to provide context to the report. Research focused predominantly on university sport programs in Australia and overseas, and on sport policy as related to gender equity in Australia.

Quantitative data analysis

Basic quantitative analysis was conducted on a number of data sources as a means of identifying and evaluating current practice. Examples of such data sources include the MU Sport Facebook page, the Winged Victory Facebook page and the MU Sport website, and the representative sport participation figures from 2012 to 2017.

1.4 Framing the discussion paper

1.4.1 Definitions

The following definitions are included to provide clarity around the terms used throughout this discussion paper and within the related policy framework and recommendations.

Term	Definition
Gender	<p>Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics, including roles and behaviours, that societies attribute to women and men. It differs to sex, which refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that distinguish females and males.</p> <p>However, it is acknowledged that gender and sex are not binary and exist on a continuum. This means that there is a diverse range of gender identities, such as transgender, genderqueer and agender, as well as many sex variations as in the case of intersex people.</p> <p>The terms women/female and men/male are used in this paper to mirror the standard gender categories used within sport, although it is recognised that such terms may not be inclusive of all identities.</p>

Gender equity	Gender equity refers to the process of being fair and just to women and men, acknowledging that their needs, interests and experiences may differ due to the social context. Gender equity requires allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly between genders, and takes into account that different strategies are often necessary to address existing imbalances and achieve equal opportunities and outcomes for all participants.
Gender equality	Gender equality refers to the identical treatment of, and provision of resources to, women and men. Gender equality may be best practice in some cases, however in other cases it may not result in fair or equivalent outcomes if the particular needs of each gender are not taken into account.
Gender lens	Applying a gender lens is the process of assessing how people of different genders may be impacted differently by a program, practice or policy, for example. When gender-based considerations become part of the design, implementation and evaluation of all activities, this is known as gender mainstreaming.

1.4.2 Context

The following assumptions have informed the development of this discussion paper, its recommendations and the policy framework attached. Each assumption is explained below to provide context and clarity.

Assumption 1: Gender equity in sport is important

In recent years, gender equity has been a focus of sporting organisations both locally and globally. International, national and state sporting bodies, governments at all levels and local providers of sport and recreational activities are increasingly working to ensure that they offer opportunities and services that are inclusive of participants of all genders. Upholding gender equity principles in sport has widespread benefits in the community at large, promoting respect for women and even playing a role in preventing domestic violence.⁴

Assumption 2: Women have historically been disadvantaged in sport

Although gender equity is a broad term used to describe fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all, gender equity initiatives in sport have generally focused on improving and expanding opportunities for women and girls. This is because women and girls have historically faced barriers to sports participation, including a lack of encouragement to play sport and be active due to social expectations based on traditional gender roles. This has over time resulted in a lack of certain opportunities for women. Consequently, as it is now widely acknowledged, sport and fitness programs and facilities have traditionally been designed with men in mind, meaning that many aspects of sport as we know it have been developed with relatively little regard for the unique needs of women.⁵ While it must be said that women's – and indeed men's – needs and

⁴ Our Watch 2017, *Sports Engagement Program*, accessed 20 November 2017
<<https://www.ourwatch.org.au/What-We-Do/%E2%80%8BSports-Engagement-Program>>

⁵ State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*, accessed 8 September 2017
<<http://sport.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/female-friendly-sport-infrastructure-guidelines>>

experiences in sport are not universal, there are many ways in which women in the current social context may find sport to be particularly exclusionary. Examples of this range from relatively straightforward issues, such as the explicit labelling of women's sports but not men's and difficulties in obtaining sporting attire designed for women's bodies, to more complex issues that may present greater barriers to participation, including a lack of accessible childcare facilities or an absence of equivalent opportunities in a particular sport entirely.

Assumption 3: Women-centric programs are sometimes necessary to redress imbalances

Although the explicit promotion of women's participation through establishing women-specific initiatives may seem unfair to some, it is quite commonplace as a means of redressing imbalances in participation and ensuring fairness. For example, the Victorian State Government has recently established the Office for Women in Sport, which is tasked with implementing the findings of the *Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation*.⁶ The Australian Government Department of Health runs the *Girls Make Your Move* campaign to empower young women to become more active,⁷ and numerous local councils across Victoria, such as Moreland City Council,⁸ have established gender equity policies that explicitly address female participation in sport and recreation.

Assumption 4: Individual choice is influenced by harmful gender stereotypes

It is acknowledged that students come to the University with participation preferences and attitudes influenced by the wider community, particularly ideas about gender roles, which continue to influence individual choice.⁹ This may indeed impact upon participation numbers and the popularity of certain opportunities, such as where men are more likely than women to express interest in playing traditionally male-dominated sports, or vice-versa. However, it is still incumbent on MU Sport to strive towards providing as many equivalent opportunities as possible to lessen the impact of gender-based expectations as to what activities are most "acceptable" for women and men, ensuring that students leave the University with a greater appreciation of what is possible.

Assumption 5: Participation in sport and fitness is important for health and wellbeing

Sport and fitness provide major benefits to individuals and their communities, particularly in terms of physical and mental health, confidence, social connectedness and even productivity.^{10 11} Further, physical activity habits in the young adult years are likely to influence habits during overall adult life, and for this reason tertiary

⁶ Premier of Victoria 2017, *Trailblazer Set To Lead The Way For Women In Sport*, accessed 2 November 2017 <<https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/trailblazer-set-to-lead-the-way-for-women-in-sport/>>

⁷ Australian Government, Department of Health 2017, *About this campaign*, accessed 2 November 2017 <<https://campaigns.health.gov.au/girlsmove/about-this-campaign>>

⁸ Moreland City Council 2017, *Moreland Active Women and Girls Strategy 2009*, accessed 16 September 2017 <<http://www.activemoreland.com.au/activity-providers/Resources-for-Moreland-sports-clubs/active-women-and-girls/>>

⁹ Soler, S, Prat, M, Puig, N & Flintoff, A 2016, "Implementing Gender Equity Policies in a University Sport Organization: Competing Discourses from Enthusiasm to Resistance", *Quest*, vol. 69, no. 2, pp. 276-289.

¹⁰ VicHealth 2017b, *Exercise daily*, accessed 5 November 2017

<<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/be-healthy/be-healthy-exercise>>

¹¹ Huggins, A & Randell, S 2007, "The contribution of sports to gender equality and women's empowerment", *International Conference on Gender Equity in Sports for Social Change*, Kigali, 2007, accessed 28 September 2017.

institutions are considered pivotal settings for encouraging physical activity.¹² Given the wide-ranging benefits of sport and physical activity, it is vitally important that women and men feel equally encouraged and supported to access sport and recreational opportunities. With women's average levels of physical activity and sports participation in Victoria sitting slightly below those of men,¹³ ¹⁴ sporting organisations must strive to create, promote and maintain programs and facilities that explicitly encourage female participation.

Assumption 6: All students contribute to MU Sport through payment of the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF)

MU Sport's allocation of SSAF from the University comprises a significant portion of its total income. In 2016, \$2.48 million of over \$7 million in revenue came from SSAF.¹⁵ SSAF contributions are used to improve MU Sport's facilities and programs and their affordability for students, however in most cases the student user is still required to pay. Despite this, given every enrolled student contributes to SSAF, of which approximately 55 per cent were female in 2016,¹⁶ it is important that equity measures are put in place to ensure that funding does not provide substantially more benefit to one gender than the other, and that MU Sport's programs are inclusive of and accessible to all students.

1.5 Overview of relevant documents

The following documents have been reviewed to frame the subsequent discussion of MU Sport's gender equity practices. Whilst none of these documents provide specific gender equity standards or regulations with which MU Sport must comply, they do offer overarching statements of values and principles that should guide MU Sport's approach to gender equity.

The University of Melbourne – Growing Esteem Strategy 2015-2020

Growing Esteem is the University's strategic plan, outlining its broad vision for the year 2020 and actions toward realising this.¹⁷ *Growing Esteem* affirms engagement as a central part of the University's mission, and acknowledges the important role that sports bodies, among other institutions, have played in the University's public engagement. The strategy does touch on equity, but largely in terms of its commitment to supporting cohorts from educationally, financially or socially disadvantaged backgrounds who face barriers to attending the University of Melbourne. However, *Growing Esteem* makes one general point that may guide MU Sport in its endeavour to facilitate gender equity. The strategy emphasises the importance of ensuring that all students have an experience that is comparable in terms of lasting quality and

¹² Leslie, E, Sparling, P B & Owen, N 2001, "University campus settings and the promotion of physical activity in young adults: lessons from research in Australia and the USA", *Health Education*, vol. 101, issue 3, pp. 116-125.

¹³ VicHealth 2015a, *Sport Participation in Victoria, 2015*, accessed 7 September 2017 <<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/media-and-resources/publications/victorian-participation-in-organised-sport>>

¹⁴ VicHealth 2015b, *Female participation in sport & physical activity: A snapshot of the evidence*, accessed 8 September 2017 <<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/female-participation-in-sport-and-physical-activity-a-snapshot-of-the-evidence>>

¹⁵ Melbourne University Sport 2016a, *Annual Report 2016*, accessed 25 October 2017 <http://www.sport.unimelb.edu.au/annualreport_9_716462657.pdf>

¹⁶ The University of Melbourne 2017c, *University Statistics*, accessed 8 November 2017, <<http://about.unimelb.edu.au/tradition-of-excellence/university-statistics>>

¹⁷ The University of Melbourne 2015a, *The University of Melbourne Strategic Plan 2015-2020: Growing Esteem*, accessed 26 July 2017 <https://about.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1462065/11364-GROWING-ESTEEM-2015-FA-WEB.pdf>

enrichment (p. 10). Applying this statement to MU Sport may support the equity principle that comparable programs, if not exactly the same, should be offered to female and male students in order to ensure all students are able to access high quality and enriching experiences in sport.

The University of Melbourne – Engagement Strategy (Engagement at Melbourne 2015-2020)

Engagement at Melbourne details the University’s strategy for engaging with wider society.¹⁸ Its vision for engagement is guided by three commitments: public value, engaged research and engaged students. *Engagement at Melbourne* recognises sport and sporting clubs as an important part of the University’s history, engagement and student experience, particularly as a means through which active citizenship among students and alumni may be realised.

Engagement at Melbourne does not explicitly address gender equity, but makes two important points that affirm MU Sport’s position on enabling gender equity. Firstly, the strategy emphasises that the University’s operations must reflect values of fairness and diversity (p. 8). Secondly, under its commitment to student engagement, the strategy outlines the University’s aim to support students from equity priority groups to participate more fully in engagement experiences, recognising the particular needs and priorities of these cohorts (p. 13). Further, it also aims to report on progress towards achieving its equity objectives. Although women students are not generally considered an “equity priority group”, as equity priority groups are generally those who face barriers to reaching tertiary education, the University elsewhere acknowledges the need to ensure women are supported to participate where they have been traditionally underrepresented.¹⁹ Therefore, *Engagement at Melbourne* can be read as offering in-principle support for initiatives that strive for fairness, diversity and equity in engagement experiences, particularly for student cohorts that have historically exhibited lower levels of engagement.

The University of Melbourne – Social Inclusion Barometer 2014

The University’s *Social Inclusion Barometer*, published biennially, depicts the University’s progress toward student and staff equity objectives.²⁰ The 2014 publication is the most recent version available online. Although the *Social Inclusion Barometer* lists students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, regional and remote backgrounds, Indigenous backgrounds and students with disability as the main foci of the University’s equity strategies, the document does address gender in its student profile, particularly women in non-traditional areas. However, its focus is largely on rates of participation in the University generally and female concentration in specific academic disciplines, rather than participation across the various aspects of extra-curricular engagement. The *Social Inclusion Barometer* does point out that the percentage of female students is higher across all course levels, in line with general trends in Australian higher education. In 2014, female students comprised 55.2 per cent of all students (p. 16). It follows then, ideally, that female students should make up a similar proportion of student participants in MU Sport’s programs.

¹⁸ The University of Melbourne 2015b, *Engagement at Melbourne 2015-2020*, accessed 29 July 2017 <http://about.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1713967/Engagement-at-Melbourne-2.pdf>

¹⁹ The University of Melbourne 2014, *Social Inclusion Barometer 2014*, accessed 27 July 2017 <http://provost.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1457169/2014SocialBarometer-FINAL-Published.pdf>

²⁰ The University of Melbourne 2014, *Social Inclusion Barometer 2014*.

The *Social Inclusion Barometer* also states the University's support for the introduction of a third gender option on student administrative records to ensure inclusion of "indeterminate/intersex/unspecified persons", in line with the Australian Government's *Guidelines on the Recognition of Sex and Gender* (p. 16).

Australian University Sport – Inclusion and Diversity Guideline

Australian University Sport (AUS) has a guideline on inclusion and diversity, developed in 2016, which focuses on the inclusion of participants of different genders, students with disabilities, and students from multicultural and Indigenous backgrounds.²¹ AUS recognises that gender refers to a diverse range of gender expressions and identities, and developed the Guideline to ensure that all participants have the same rights to participate in university sporting events. In terms of gender specifically, the Guideline:

- Recognises that discrimination on the basis of gender is against the law under federal and state anti-discrimination legislation
- States that AUS will not restrict entry to sports to any one gender "except where strength, stamina or physique of the competitor is relevant to the sport" (p. 1)
- States that AUS will provide competitions that are recognised by relevant national sporting organisations (NSOs), and will adopt the rules, regulations and policies of NSOs in relation to gender, and therefore may offer men's, women's, open and mixed divisions
- Allows for two bases upon which AUS may accept that participation in a sport may not be open to all competitors, which are:
 - "Where the strength, stamina or physique of competitors is relevant to a sport it may [be] inappropriate to offer participation in all competitions."
 - "Where insufficient teams/entries are fielded in any [one] competition of a sport to provide for a fair and worthwhile competition, AUS accepts that a national competition will not be offered in that competition." (p. 2)

Clearly, the AUS Inclusion and Diversity Guideline is largely designed to be applied in a different context. As the peak governing body of university sport in Australia, AUS is responsible for organising intervarsity competitions and therefore must play a role in determining competitor eligibility and the competitions to be offered. With the exception of its campus and community sport programs, questions around gender-based eligibility and the demand threshold for running men's, women's and mixed/open competitions are largely outside the domain of MU Sport, falling to either AUS for intervarsity sport, or the state or national sporting organisations to which clubs are subscribed. Therefore, the Guideline is not entirely relevant in guiding MU Sport's work around gender equity.

However, the Guideline is a useful reference point in terms of the sentiments it expresses, particularly its affirmation that all students have the same rights to access opportunities to participate in university sport, and its commitment to providing competitions suitable for all genders provided there are enough entrants for a fair and worthwhile competition – although what determines a "worthwhile" competition is not made explicit. By and large, these standards should be reflected in MU Sport's future gender equity policy and procedures.

²¹ Australian University Sport 2016, *AUS Guideline: Inclusion and diversity*, accessed 29 July 2017 <http://www.unisport.com.au/images/documents/Event_policies/AUS_Guideline_Inclusion_Diversity_final_May2016.pdf>

Section 2: Media coverage

2.1 Introduction

An analysis of MU Sport's current practices in relation to media coverage was requested in the project brief. Interviews were conducted with two staff members in the marketing team, and an analysis was undertaken of the posts and articles on the Melbourne University Sport Facebook page, the Winged Victory Facebook page and the news archive on the Melbourne University Sport website.

It is well recognised in the industry that online media plays an important role in promoting the achievements of women in sport and in encouraging female participation, especially as women tend to research programs, clubs and facilities in depth before committing to attend.²² It is therefore incumbent on sporting organisations to ensure they have a social media and marketing strategy that is sensitive to the interests of current and potential female participants.

Overall, MU Sport's media coverage was very good from a gender equity perspective. It was clear that staff are mindful of ensuring the diversity of the student body – gender and otherwise – is reflected in the articles and images posted online. This was especially evident in the photos appearing on the MU Sport and Winged Victory Facebook pages, where most photos either depicted a mix of genders, or a balance was achieved in the selection of photos of a particular event.

There was a perception among some staff members that achievements of male athletes tend to be celebrated more than those of female athletes, and this is perhaps reflected in online content. It is recognised that to an extent, MU Sport and the marketing team rely on clubs and other connections to obtain information and content to share on social media channels. However, there are still some areas where improvements to current practice could be made, as outlined below.

2.2 Social media and website

An analysis was undertaken of the posts on the MU Sport and Winged Victory Facebook pages, as well as the articles appearing in the news archive section of the website. Posts made and articles shared between 1 January and 29 September 2017 were categorised according to the (presumed) gender of the athlete or team featured, or the gender to which an opportunity was open. Such posts included articles highlighting individual and team achievements and promoting upcoming competitions, events and opportunities. The categories were:

- Female
- Male
- Mixed (posts that featured mixed-gender sports)
- Multiple (posts that featured University of Melbourne participants of different genders, such as posts depicting more than one team or sport)
- General (posts that provided general information or promoted opportunities open to all, such as facilities updates and fitness member events)

Posts and articles featuring national representative teams were included in the gender category of the University of Melbourne student or alumni featured, and posts that featured a sport with both female and male teams but had photos depicting only one

²² Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation 2011, *The ideal sports club for women*, accessed 9 September 2017 <<https://www.womeninsport.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Ideal-Sports-Clubs-Web-Ready.pdf>>

gender were included under that gender category. The number of posts in each category across both Facebook pages appears in the table below.

Figure 1: Website, MU Sport and Winged Victory Facebook pages – posts by gender

Category	MU Sport Facebook page	Winged Victory Facebook page	Website
Female	31	42	15
Male	40	65	12
Mixed	3	9	0
Multiple	51	27	11
General	146	12	10

As demonstrated, both the MU Sport and Winged Victory Facebook pages featured slightly more posts focused on male students, alumni and opportunities. However, in the case of the MU Sport Facebook page that this discrepancy could be largely attributed to the numerous posts promoting standalone male team events, such as Go8 or intervarsity Australian rules football and cricket competitions, and is therefore linked to the broader issue of participation opportunities. For example, on the MU Sport Facebook page there were three posts promoting the Varsity Challenge T20 Cricket match on 13 March and six posts promoting men’s intervarsity Australian rules football matches, excluding content published after these events were held. While it is indeed important that such events are promoted, especially as a means of engaging the broader student population in sport, care must be taken to ensure that women’s sporting events are given equivalent attention. When equivalent opportunities are offered in these sports for women it is assumed that they will receive equal promotion on MU Sport’s social media channels.

Interestingly, news articles posted on the MU Sport website within the same time period slightly favoured female students and alumni. It is again important to strive for a balance of genders, but it is acknowledged that many of these articles are produced in response to an individual student or alumni’s success, which is largely outside MU Sport’s control.

2.3 Other observations

A number of additional observations for areas for improvement were made during the analysis of MU Sport’s Facebook pages and website.

2.3.1 Use of non-parallel language

In some cases, posts and events shared on the two Facebook pages did not specify when teams or competitions were male, whereas female teams were almost always marked as such, with the exception of netball which does not generally offer men’s competitions. Examples include the (men’s) intervarsity Australian rules football matches, where the team competing was described as the “Melbourne varsity AFL team”. In comparison, it is difficult to imagine a women’s Australian rules football match being promoted without any mention of women, for example. Regardless of whether an equivalent women’s team is fielded on any one occasion, it is important that gender is acknowledged on a consistent basis. This is a practice that should be adopted throughout MU Sport, not just in its official media and marketing activities. Clubs should also be encouraged to use equivalent language, especially when creating online content that MU Sport will share on social media.

This use of “non-parallel” language – where the female version of a sport is marked but the male version is not – has a qualifying effect, tacitly reinforcing the idea that men’s

sport is the norm while women’s sport is an inferior “other”.²³ While it is common practice in sport at all levels, such as in the case of the professional men’s “AFL” and women’s “AFLW”, non-parallel language should be avoided, and grassroots sporting organisations should attempt to lead this change by demonstrating through language that women’s sport and men’s sport are valued equally.

Recommendation 1: Use parallel language consistently

In all of its social media, marketing and other communications, MU Sport should ensure that gender is marked on a consistent basis.

2.3.2 Specifying gender in participation opportunities

Studies suggest that women in particular will research sport and recreational programs, clubs and facilities extensively before committing to attend.²⁴ Additionally, because there have historically been fewer sporting opportunities available to them, women may sometimes assume that particular opportunities are not “for them” – in terms of gender and ability level – unless otherwise specified. Where participation opportunities are open to all, this should be made clear so as not to deter anyone from participating. This is especially important for sports that are traditionally male-dominated, such as Australian rules football, rugby and football (soccer). This practice may be less important in the promotion of other activities that are universally acknowledged as open to all, such as fitness membership.

Examples of where gender could be better specified include posts promoting sports club trials, particularly those clubs that are traditionally male (or female) dominated but which now have female (or male/mixed) teams, and event timetables for the club-run “come and try” activities.

Recommendation 2: Ensure gender is specified in the promotion of participation opportunities

Promotional materials for participation opportunities should clearly state who the opportunity is open to, whether that be just women or just men, both women and men, or mixed/open to all. This is particularly important where there may be ambiguity due to the history of the sport or activity, and should help ensure that students are not unnecessarily deterred from participating.

2.3.3 Clubs

During interviews, sport development staff acknowledged that MU Sport could do more to assist sport clubs in promoting their participation opportunities. While additional social media and online promotion may not be a priority for all clubs, especially those that reach membership capacity yearly, some clubs may benefit from assistance in extending their online reach, particularly to women where the club is attempting to expand its women’s program.

There are many online resources providing guidance to sport organisations and clubs to better promote their offerings to women; thus viewing promotion through a gender lens. For example, the Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation, which conducted a study on the “ideal” sports club for women, provides a list of the information and elements a club website should contain in order to attract more female participants. The list includes:

- Information about when and where the club meets

²³ Huggins & Randell 2007, “The contribution of sports to gender equality and women’s empowerment”.

²⁴ Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation 2011, *The ideal sports club for women*.

- Clear information about fees and payment
- Information about the required ability level, and if it is open to all this should be made explicit so women do not assume they are not good enough
- Images of current club members that look friendly and welcoming
- Providing a feel for the culture and environment of the club.²⁵

Although an analysis of individual club websites and social media pages was outside the scope of this project, MU Sport could consider undertaking work on this in future, with a view to ensuring that affiliated clubs promote themselves in ways conducive to encouraging female participation.

Recommendation 3: Explore opportunities to support clubs in developing online and social media strategies that encourage female participation

MU Sport should investigate ways of supporting clubs to improve their online media strategies and expand their reach, where the club is seeking to increase its female (or male) membership. This could be achieved through workshops or guides on social media and website development strategies.

2.3.4 Female participation campaigns

Finally, given that women are generally underrepresented in many of its programs, MU Sport could consider developing a campaign to encourage women specifically to sample and participate in its programs. This was an idea that emerged in stakeholder interviews with marketing staff. A women’s participation campaign could be focused solely on fitness membership, campus and community sport or club activities, or could encompass all of these programs. Such a campaign could be run to coincide with other events on campus and beyond, such as International Women’s Day. To ensure prominence, MU Sport should consider partnering with student organisations including UMSU and the Graduate Student Association (GSA), relevant University portfolios, and staff networks if the campaign is envisioned as including female staff as well.

By way of benchmarking, AUS has committed to featuring female participation on a broad scale, and supports member universities to encourage more women to participate in sport via marketing campaigns. An example of this is the *She Can Stories* online campaign, run by Arc @UNSW, which features empowering stories of female sport participants.²⁶ Additionally, campaigns to explicitly encourage female participation are commonplace in government. One prominent example is the Australian Government’s *Girls Make Your Move* campaign, based on Sport England’s *This Girl Can* initiative.²⁷

Recommendation 4: Develop a campaign to encourage greater female participation in MU Sport’s programs

A campaign targeted at female students (and staff if appropriate) may assist in encouraging more women to participate in sport and fitness activities on campus, as well as conveying to existing female participants that MU Sport is actively considering their needs and interests. Such a campaign should include an online/social media component and events allowing women to sample and learn about MU Sport’s various programs and offerings, including fitness membership, campus and community sport, representative sport and scholarships.

²⁵ Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation 2011, *The ideal sports club for women*.

²⁶ Arc @ UNSW 2017, *She Can Stories*, accessed 1 November 2017

<<https://www.arc.unsw.edu.au/sport/she-can/women-of-unsw-sport>>

²⁷ Australian Government, Department of Health 2017, *About this campaign*.

2.4 Conclusions

MU Sport's media coverage is good from a gender equity perspective, as it is acknowledged that gender imbalances in published content simply reflect the activities of MU Sport as a whole. However, some proactive and relatively straightforward actions, including consistent marking of gender and encouraging sport clubs to effectively promote their activities online to potential female participants, as well as a more involved effort to run a female participation campaign, may go a long way in promoting inclusion and encouraging women to engage with MU Sport.

Section 3: Fitness and specialty programming

3.1 Introduction

This section of the discussion paper focuses on the programs offered to fitness members and casual users of the gym and aquatic facilities, and group fitness programs. Four interviews were undertaken with fitness services staff. Other data sources used for this section included fitness attendance analysis and membership data for 2016 and 2017 and the 2016 Fitness Survey.²⁸

Fitness services staff were well aware of the different but converging ways in which women and men generally use the facilities. They were also conscious of ways in which certain aspects of MU Sport's fitness facilities, in particular the gym, may have been unwelcoming to women the past, due to an underlying assumption that what works for the (male) majority of users will be suitable for everyone. There was an acknowledgement that while many significant improvements have been made, including changes to gym layout and an emphasis on instructors writing gender neutral fitness plans for members, there is still some more work to be done in ensuring the environment is inclusive for all. As outlined in this section, applying a gender lens in this area to ensure differing needs are considered will assist in achieving this goal.

It is worth noting that according to the 2015 Student Wellbeing Survey, female students were slightly more likely than male students to use sport and recreational facilities outside the University.²⁹ Although this may also include other types of participation such as sport clubs, there is a possibility that certain aspects of MU Sport's facilities have discouraged women from participating on campus; instead preferring to use external facilities.

3.2 Membership and fees

Attendance analysis data from 2016 and 2017 indicates that there are more male fitness members than female members, despite there being more women enrolled as students and employed as staff.³⁰ Given that fitness membership includes gym and pool use, traditionally preferred by men, as well as group fitness classes which are more popular among women, this data suggests that there is a greater need for emphasis on promoting female participation than male participation.

By way of comparison, in 2016 55.67 per cent of students were female.³¹ Although not all fitness members are students, these figures suggest that more work could be done to encourage women to use the fitness facilities on campus and remove barriers to them doing so.

Figure 2: Fitness membership by gender, 2016 and 2017

Gender	2016	2017 (1 January - 4 September)
Female	5,199 (48.7%)	4,887 (47.7%)
Male	5,476 (51.3%)	5,352 (52.3%)

²⁸ Melbourne University Sport 2016b, *2016 Fitness Survey Results*, accessed 19 August 2017 <<http://www.sport.unimelb.edu.au/Survey#Fitness>>

²⁹ The University of Melbourne 2016, *Student Wellbeing Survey 2015*, accessed 25 September 2017 <http://sport.unimelb.edu.au/news-wellbeing-survey_4_3093375584.pdf>

³⁰ The University of Melbourne 2017c, *University Statistics*.

³¹ Ibid.

The Monash Sport (Clayton campus) experience demonstrates that gender parity in fitness membership is possible. Although the total proportion of female students is around 56 per cent, over a few years Monash Sport was able to increase female membership numbers from very low levels to 50 per cent by altering the layout of the gym. The gym had been recognised as intimidating for some women due to the heavy weights section being located near the entrance, which was identified as not being conducive to beginner members joining.

Recommendations for improvement that may assist in encouraging more women to become fitness members will be made later in this section of the discussion paper. However, it is of utmost importance that reliable membership data that accounts for gender is collected, monitored and reported at least annually in order to identify trends over time.

Recommendation 5: Improve collection of fitness membership data by gender
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MU Sport should ensure that its fitness membership data accurately captures gender, as indicated by members when joining, and that membership figures by gender are routinely monitored and reported on. It is important that members are able to choose a third gender option, trans/intersex/other, if they do not identify as either female or male, in line with current University practice.

In terms of fees, it is recognised that MU Sport has reduced casual use fees in 2016 and 2017, and has introduced free swim sessions for students, which are positive steps. However, research suggests that in general, the cost of participating in sport and fitness activities presents a major barrier to female participation.³² VicHealth recommends that sport and recreational facilities offer greater flexibility with cancellations and payment,³³ while the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services' *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines* recommend more "pay as you go" options to maximise female participation.³⁴

Recommendation 6: Consider lowering fees for students
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MU Sport should consider lowering casual visit and/or membership fees for students, considering that costs are recognised as a significant barrier to participation, particularly for women.
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3.3 Gym facilities

Staff acknowledged that similarly to Monash, gym layout was also an issue for MU Sport, particularly in the Beaurepaire Centre, where the facilities have until relatively recently been assumed to cater as well for women as they do for men. The concentration of heavy equipment in the downstairs section of the gym is known to create an environment where some women, and indeed some men, do not feel welcome. This has created somewhat of an upstairs/downstairs divide, which has typically seen mostly men occupy the downstairs section, and predominantly women use the upstairs section where most of the cardio machines are situated. Notably, by applying a gender lens to the facility, significant efforts have been made recently to lessen this divide. Following the purchase of new equipment, a number of cardio machines were moved downstairs to facilitate a better balance. It is understood that the building itself provides limitations on the configuration of the gym, however MU Sport should continue over time to work

³² State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*.

³³ VicHealth 2015b, *Female participation in sport & physical activity: A snapshot of the evidence*.

³⁴ State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*.

towards integrating the traditional “sections” of the Beaurepaire Centre gym where possible. This is particularly important considering that the downstairs section, being highly visible to passers-by on Tin Alley, is perhaps the most prominent advertisement for MU Sport’s fitness facilities.

Recommendation 7: Continue to work towards integrating the various types of equipment in the Beaurepaire Centre gym

Ensuring a mix of equipment in each section of the gym will help to facilitate a gender balance across the gym, reducing the proportion of space where beginners feel unwelcome.

Although it was mentioned by staff that the types of training generally undertaken by women and men are becoming more aligned, there are still many ways in which preferences tend to differ – preferences that are largely informed by outside influences. It is important however that all fitness members and casual users, regardless of gender, feel confident in using the different types of equipment and training on offer. To this end, one staff member suggested trialling a women-centric strength and conditioning program. Such a program could be designed to teach participants proper technique, safety measures and the benefits of weight-based training. This may be a more popular means of introducing women to this type of training than one-on-one sessions with an instructor given that women tend to prefer group-based fitness activities. It may also further assist in creating more of a gender balance in the different sections of the gym.

Recommendation 8: Trial a women-centric strength and conditioning program

A women-centric strength and conditioning program is likely to be an effective means of introducing women, who typically engage in less weight-based training, to this type of training. Emphasis should be placed on proper technique, safety and the benefits of weight-based strength training. Alternatively, such a program could be run for beginners generally, though this is likely to attract fewer women.

Another idea that emerged in many stakeholder interviews was the introduction of women-only gym timeslots to enable women who may be uncomfortable working out in the presence of men to use the gym facilities. This may be particularly important for those whose needs as women intersect with their needs as members of particular cultural or religious groups, such as Muslim women. However, given that 49 per cent of young Victorian women reportedly feel embarrassed exercising,³⁵ such an initiative may provide benefit to a diverse range of women.

Women-only timeslots have been discussed within MU Sport for quite some time, and it was clear that staff members believed it would be a positive initiative to implement if it could be resourced, especially considering the diversifying demographic of the University’s students and staff. The Lincoln Square facility, which is small but can more easily be closed off to the gaze of passers-by than the Beaurepaire Centre, was suggested as a possible venue.

Some staff members were aware however that women-only gym timeslots have been implemented previously at the University, but were discontinued following a successful complaint to the Equal Opportunity Board in 1990.³⁶ For this reason, there was some anxiety expressed around the idea. However, so long as legal advice is sought,

³⁵ VicHealth 2017a, *Young Adults*, accessed 6 September 2017
<<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/life-stages>>

³⁶ Senyard, J E 2004, *The Ties That Bind: A History of Sport at the University of Melbourne*, Walla Walla Press, Petersham NSW.

particularly around the process of applying for an exemption under relevant equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation if necessary, the initiative need not meet the same fate once again. A number of community recreational centres are known to provide successful women-only timeslots, such as the North Melbourne Community Centre.³⁷ The Centre runs four female-only gym sessions per week, which has resulted in an increase in female membership from 31 per cent to 48 per cent.

For this initiative to be successful at MU Sport, a number of factors should be considered. Firstly, targeted consultation must be undertaken with relevant communities on campus, including the Women's and People of Colour Departments/Office Bearers at UMSU and the GSA, international student groups and student cultural and spiritual groups, such as the University of Melbourne Islamic Society (UMIS) among others. Consultation is of utmost importance in ensuring that the initiative is viable and is set up to meet the needs of the cohorts it is designed to benefit. Seeking feedback from existing members is unlikely to yield particularly useful data on demand for women-only timeslots, as those groups the initiative is targeted towards may not already be participating.

Secondly, there needs to be a reasonable variety of women-only timeslots available to suit differing needs, otherwise participants may not deem the initiative worthwhile. For example, a weekend timeslot, an evening timeslot, a daytime timeslot and an early morning timeslot each week would ensure that various preferences are catered for.

Thirdly, women-only timeslots should be well promoted amongst both existing fitness members and the wider University community. Utilising connections with relevant student groups may assist in spreading the message.

Finally, a lag time in uptake should be expected, as potential participants may not necessarily be fitness members already and would therefore need to go through the process of joining before utilising the timeslots. Some may wait to hear feedback from others before doing so. If there is capacity for students to trial these sessions before joining, this may encourage greater uptake and subsequently greater numbers of women becoming fitness members.

Recommendation 9: Establish women-only gym timeslots
<p>MU Sport should work towards establishing a consistent schedule of women-only timeslots, ensuring that due consideration is given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted consultation with relevant student groups and communities on campus to gauge demand and develop the initiative to meet identified needs• The variety of timeslots offered, including time of day and duration• The promotion of the initiative to its target cohorts and existing fitness members• The potential for students who are not already fitness members to trial the timeslots• Data collection to measure success.

3.4 Aquatic facilities

No particular gender equity concerns were raised by staff around the aquatic facilities, other than the fact that the pool tends to be used by men more so than women. The reasons for this are not known.

³⁷ State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*.

In a similar vein to women-only gym timeslots, staff also suggested women-only pool timeslots as a means of enabling more women, particularly Muslim women, to use the pool. It is understood that to install blinds around the Beaufort Centre pool, which would be necessary to ensure privacy, is likely to be a significantly expensive exercise, meaning financial assistance from the University may be required. Thus far the expense has been prohibitive. Provided that funding can be secured in future, MU Sport should take steps to implement women-only pool sessions, considering the same factors as outlined above for the women-only gym timeslots.

<p>Recommendation 10: Establish women-only pool timeslots</p> <p>MU Sport should work towards establishing a consistent schedule of women-only timeslots, ensuring that due consideration is given to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted consultation with relevant student groups and communities on campus to gauge demand and develop the initiative to meet identified needs • The variety of timeslots offered, including time of day and duration • The promotion of the initiative to its target cohorts and existing fitness members • The potential for students who are not already fitness members to trial the timeslots • Data collection to measure success.
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Monash University Sport at Clayton runs aquatic education programs for female students, which are reportedly very popular. As part of its efforts to gauge demand for women-only pool timeslots, MU Sport could investigate whether there is a need for women-only swim classes in addition to existing offerings, especially given the popularity and success of its Water Safety Program.

3.5 Group fitness

Again, no significant gender equity concerns were raised about group fitness, although it was acknowledged that the majority of participants, approximately 80 per cent, are female. Data collection has historically been an issue, however a new online booking system, “Connect”, has recently been introduced, which should assist in measuring participation by gender. MU Sport should ensure that participation statistics by gender are regularly reviewed. This data may assist in identifying opportunities to increase male participation by indicating which classes are most popular among men, if increasing male participation in group fitness is considered necessary.

3.6 Fitness survey

Every two years, a survey of fitness members is conducted. While the survey gathers data on the gender of respondents, data is not cross tabulated by gender. This means that important insights into the satisfaction, usage trends and feedback of members as influenced by gender are not being captured by MU Sport. Additionally, including other relevant categories, such as staff or undergraduate/postgraduate and local/international student status may also provide some valuable data that could be used to inform future programs, facilities improvements and targeted marketing campaigns. It is therefore recommended that MU Sport ensures that data from future fitness surveys can be cross tabulated by gender, as well as other categories.

<p>Recommendation 11: Ensure fitness survey data can be cross tabulated by gender</p> <p>Cross tabulation of fitness survey data by gender, as well as other relevant student or staff categories, may provide useful insights to MU Sport to inform future programs, facilities improvements or targeted marketing campaigns.</p>

3.7 Conclusions

MU Sport's fitness programs and facilities are generally good from a gender equity perspective. However, because men have traditionally been more prolific users of fitness facilities in MU Sport and elsewhere, such facilities have generally been developed for a predominantly male clientele, and therefore a "one-size-fits-all" or gender blind approach has been taken. Therefore, more could be done – as described by the recommendations – to make sure the specific needs of women are provided for, and that progress towards a more equal proportion of female and male members can be measured.

Section 4: Representative sport and scholarships

4.1 Introduction

This section addresses student participation in representative sport, as well as sports scholarships, and makes recommendations for improvement in these areas.

Representative sport includes AUS events, such as Australian University Games (AUG), Southern University Games (SUG) and Australian University Championships (AUC), as well as the Varsity Challenge series against Monash University, other intervarsity competitions, and domestic and international tournaments.

Sources of data for this section of the discussion paper include interviews with sport development staff (with contributions from others), and participation and scholarship data provided by MU Sport.

4.2 Representative sport

4.2.1 Overall participation opportunities

Participation data suggests that every year from 2012 to 2016, more male students than female students have competed in representative sport, as per the table below. This means that MU Sport has facilitated more opportunities for male students to represent the University than it has for female students.

Figure 3: Participation in representative sport by gender

Year	Female participants	Male participants	Participants in open/mixed competitions*
2016	291	428	90
2015	235	276	148
2014	301**	330**	103
2013	215**	256**	144
2012	169	226	77

*Note that it is not possible to identify from the data how many students of each gender competed in open and mixed categories.

**These figures exclude the number of students who participated in AUC distance running, which is part of the Melbourne Marathon. This is because the majority of these students had little-to-no contact with MU Sport, and the large numbers (281 female and 199 male in 2014; 187 female and 159 male in 2013) would have skewed totals significantly.

2017 data was not included in this analysis given that competitions were not yet complete at the time of data collection.

There are a number of factors that this data does not take into account, including the need for some teams but not others to qualify for AUG through SUG, and cases where AUS has not run a competition due to insufficient entries. This considered, the proportion of women as overall participants could be higher than it is, given the greater percentage of female students enrolled, and the fact that two sports, netball and softball, only support women's competitions at the NSO level (except for netball which supports mixed competitions), whereas every other sport recognises both women's and men's, or open, competitions.

One contributing factor to the disparity in participation, especially in 2016 and 2015, is the addition of opportunities for men to compete in Australian rules football competitions through the Go8 inter-university matches. Due to the large standard squad sizes in Australian rules football, these opportunities have inflated male participation figures. In interviews, staff were very aware of the fact that the establishment of this

competition with no female equivalent was problematic for many reasons, but it was chosen because it was familiar and likely to achieve success.

4.2.2 Sending representative teams and athletes to competitions

Participation data from 2012 to 2016 further suggests that women's teams and female individual athletes were more likely than their male counterparts not to compete at an event where an opportunity was available. However, this cannot be completely verified due to missing AUS data as to which competitions went ahead each year. MU Sport's participation data suggests that at least 23 women's teams did not compete in competitions where an equivalent University of Melbourne male team competed and a women's competition was supposedly available, whereas only four male teams did not compete where MU Sport sent a female team or athlete, and where a competition was available.

Ideally, for every men's team fielded and every individual male athlete to compete there would be a corresponding women's team or athlete. This is difficult to achieve in practice however, especially in individual sports, where student interest levels and personnel fluctuate yearly due to the transient nature of the student population and numerous individual factors such as cost. Despite there being more instances of MU Sport failing to send women's teams than men's teams, based on interviews with staff, MU Sport does not directly discriminate by gender when deciding which teams may compete at AUS and other events. It has three criteria that prospective teams (and where applicable individual athletes) must meet. These are:

- Leadership (there must be a leader or leaders who are willing and capable of organising the team)
- Competitive players
- A senior, non-playing coach.

These criteria are reasonable, particularly given the administrative work required to send numerous teams and athletes to large-scale competitions. While these criteria appear to treat all potential teams equally and therefore do not discriminate, from a gender equity perspective there could be some proactive work done both to encourage more women to compete in representative sport, and to support those teams who wish to compete but who may be struggling to meet the internal criteria for entering a team. Given the large student population and high proportion of female students within this, there should not be many reasons why women's teams are routinely not fielded, particularly in nationally popular sports. Although it is acknowledged that this kind of support would add to the administrative burden of sport development staff in the lead up to events such as AUG, some affirmative action in this space may assist in reinforcing the importance of women's sport, encouraging students to see value in competing and to take this forward into the community.

Recommendation 12: Support potential representative teams that may be struggling to meet eligibility criteria for competing at AUS competitions

MU Sport should proactively support teams and athletes in cases where a sport has often failed to meet the internal criteria to compete at AUS events, to assist in facilitating more equal participation of women and men in representative sport. Such support could include:

- Engaging with the relevant club directly and well in advance of the event to identify potential competitors, managers and coaches
- Supporting students to promote trials for the event, such as through sharing social media content and providing printing facilities if the organisers wish to distribute posters or flyers
- Directing a proportion of AUG scholarships on a priority basis to sports that struggle to send both female and male teams or athletes, and ensure gender equity is an overall consideration in awarding these scholarships.

4.2.3 Non-AUS interstate and international opportunities

Participation data indicates that the majority of opportunities available for students to compete in interstate and international competitions or tournaments external to AUS have been offered to men. There were four instances of this between 2012 and 2016, which included three Australian rules football games against other Go8 universities (one of which was played in Melbourne) and a men’s football (soccer) tournament in China (the World Elite University Football Tournament or WEUFT). There was only one case where a women’s team competed in the absence of a male equivalent, which was the Great Race (rowing) in New Zealand. This trend seems to be becoming more pronounced, with a further three matches and one tournament being offered to men and not to women in 2017 alone.

These cases, while forming only a small portion of total participation opportunities, are particularly noteworthy given the costs involved in providing them. While in most cases student athletes pay their own way to compete in AUS events, it is understood that MU Sport, and in some cases the University, has subsidised participation in some of these events substantially, including covering the cost of flights. Financial figures were not analysed as part of this project, but it is estimated that male students are more likely than female students to benefit from expenditure in this area, which is not a fair or equitable outcome. To provide for greater transparency, and to measure progress toward gender equity in this area over the coming years, it is recommended that MU Sport clearly report expenditure on representative sporting events, including figures that indicate expenditure on opportunities for each gender.

Recommendation 13: Report clearly on expenditure by gender on representative competitions and tournaments

To provide for transparency and the measurement of progress on gender equity, MU Sport should ensure its expenditure on representative tournaments and competitions is clearly reported in relevant financial reports and ideally in its annual reports as well. This will also allow the Advisory Board to easily identify significant expenditure discrepancies between men’s and women’s competitions, with a view to discussing opportunities for improvement on a continual basis.

MU Sport has been upfront in acknowledging the problem of inequity in representative sport, and is attempting to identify opportunities for improvement. In relation to the Go8 Australian rules football competition, MU Sport and others in the Go8 network have recognised the problematic nature of having a traditionally male-dominated sport as the marquee event when an equivalent women’s opportunity is not offered. It has been

suggested that a women’s competition in Australian rules football or netball be established once the men’s competition is up and running.

Similarly, MU Sport’s participation in WEUFT has been extensively discussed. The University and MU Sport accepted the invitation to participate in WEUFT in part due to the University’s interest in engagement in the Asian region. The tournament’s organisers in China have reportedly not shown a willingness establishing a female competition at WEUFT, and MU Sport has actively considered withdrawing its participation until such an opportunity is available for women, and making its position known to the organisers to encourage them to consider a women’s competition. If MU Sport’s participation in this or similar opportunities were to continue, staff raised a number of ideas for providing for better gender equity outcomes, such as identifying an international tournament in the same sport for women to compete in, hosting a similar tournament at the University, or finding a tournament for a different women’s team to compete in, such as sending a netball team to New Zealand. These are all positive ideas, and each may be appropriate under different circumstances, as a gender equity approach allows for differences in the opportunities available where the overall outcome is fair. However, there is a risk of opportunities for women’s participation “pooling” in traditionally female-dominated sports, such as netball, if these become the “go-to” sports where MU Sport seeks to establish an opportunity for women to correspond to an opportunity already provided for men. Therefore, as outlined in the following recommendation, consideration should first be given to providing an opportunity in the same sport.

Recommendation 14: Provide equivalent opportunities for each gender to compete in non-AUS interstate or international competitions

In cases where MU Sport is invited to participate in a representative sporting event that does not offer a competition for both women and men, MU Sport should consider the declining the invitation, and lobbying publically with other institutions for the establishment of a competition for the unrepresented gender.

If this is not possible and MU Sport still wishes to compete, it should:

- Identify an equivalent opportunity in the same sport in the same year for the other gender, whether this is organised externally or by MU Sport itself
- Provide an opportunity in a different sport for a team of the unrepresented gender to participate in a similar competition of equivalent status and value, if the above is not possible
- Decline the invitation if there is insufficient funding or time to coordinate participation in an equivalent event.

4.3 Scholarships

A basic analysis of MU Sport’s allocation of sports scholarships based on the data provided did not reveal significant systemic inequities based on gender, although it was noted that consistently more male students receive scholarships overall. However, an important mitigating factor is that more male students apply, which can in many cases be attributed to external influences given that students often apply for scholarships prior to or soon after commencing at the University. The take-up rate of scholarships is about 95 per cent, meaning that most applications are successful. MU Sport’s allocation of scholarships operates in the same way as the Australian Sports Commission, and staff advised that gender targets for scholarship allocations are not commonplace in the industry.

A breakdown of Elite Athlete Program (EAP) scholarship holders by gender is presented in the table below. It is noted that the percentage of female EAP scholarship holders has generally been increasing.

Figure 4: EAP scholarship holders by gender

Year	% Female	% Male
2017	43.7	56.3
2016	41.5	58.5
2015	45.8	54.2
2014	38.9	61.1
2013	35.7	64.3

In terms of High Performance Scholarships and Friends of the Sports Association Scholarships, which support recipients with their competition costs, the overall gender breakdown of funding awarded to female and male recipients was fairly even considering that more men apply for and receive scholarships. These percentages, as provided by MU Sport, are presented in the following table.

Figure 5: Percentage of High Performance and Friends of the Sports Association scholarship funds allocated to women and men

Year	% of funds allocated to female scholarship recipients	% of funds allocated to male scholarship recipients
2017	41.5	58.5
2016	51.3	48.7
2015	52.0	48.0
2014	59.3	40.7
2013	43.8	56.3
Average 2013-2017	49.6	50.4

Note that figures are rounded to one decimal place.

It is positive that MU Sport has consistently recorded this data, and it should continue to do so in order to monitor trends. Should the number of applications received from women plateau or decrease, MU Sport should consider promoting the availability of scholarships to female students specifically. This may assist in encouraging more women to apply, given that in many aspects of sport women tend to underestimate their abilities.

Recommendation 15: Continue to monitor scholarship data by gender, and promote scholarship offerings to women

If MU Sport identifies that the proportion of female scholarship recipients has plateaued or decreased, scholarship opportunities should be promoted in a way that encourages more women to apply. Examples of such promotion could include:

- Incorporating scholarship information in a female-centric participation campaign, as suggested in Recommendation 4
- Targeted advertising of opportunities on social media
- Promoting scholarship opportunities to club members.

4.4 Conclusions

Encouragingly, MU Sport has generally kept good data on scholarships and student participation in representative sport, which has allowed for analysis of participation and scholarship figures over time. While scholarship allocation processes and outcomes seem to be sound from a gender equity perspective, there is room for improvement in the numbers of women competing for the University in intervarsity competitions. Although it is acknowledged that women have traditionally demonstrated less interest

than men in such competitions, from a gender equity perspective it is important that specific attention is paid to boosting interest and uptake levels among women, particularly by promoting opportunities and supporting interested participants and teams. As addressed in the recommendations and policy framework, it is also of utmost importance that MU Sport actively identifies representative sporting opportunities that cater to both female and male students, to ensure that it is not further contributing to the overall gender imbalance in representative sport.

Section 5: Club activities

5.1 Introduction

This section addresses the activities and practices of sport clubs in relation to gender equity. Data collected for this section included interviews with sport development staff and commentary from other MU Sport staff, as well as MU Sport's data on club membership and funding, and a combination of interview data and written responses to questionnaires from club executives and committee members. Four clubs – Melbourne University Basketball Club (MUBC), Melbourne University (Australian rules) Football Club (MUFC), Melbourne University Rugby Football Club (MURFC), and Melbourne University Soccer Club (MUSC) – were asked to participate in this project. MU Sport selected the clubs and provided contact details for relevant club executives and committee members. Club representatives were asked about gender equity in various aspects of their club operations, including membership and growth, facilities use and resources, and governance and funding. Responses were provided in the form most convenient for each club.

Given that only four clubs participated, this discussion paper does not provide a comprehensive or representative overview of practices of all MU Sport-affiliated clubs. Therefore, each club is presented as a case study in developing women's participation, which will be followed by a series of learnings and recommendations based on these experiences, as well as general recommendations aimed both at all MU Sport clubs generally and MU Sport itself.

5.2 Case study: Melbourne University Basketball Club (MUBC)

A questionnaire was completed by the Club's Treasurer, which addressed both male and female participation at the Club.

As with most sports, women's participation in basketball is growing. In terms of the Club's membership, there is a reasonable balance, with twelve men's teams and ten women's teams. There are both men's and women's elite, competitive, intermediate and beginner teams. The Club regularly has to turn away potential members of both genders, and this is done based on attendance at trials. Although the Club does not specifically promote its opportunities to women, it was acknowledged that the women's representative on the executive had been doing a good and important job of managing the women's teams. The Club has not established informal or less structured participation opportunities, but some of its lower grade teams are considered fairly social.

In terms of governance, the Club is run by a single committee, which is viewed as working effectively. Encouragingly, the gender breakdown of the committee is usually about 50/50. Funding to the Club from MU Sport is directed towards the high-level state league teams for the development of players who are students. This funding benefits women and men equally.

Facilities and resources-wise, women and men are given equal access to the "prime" timeslots, and the equipment used is of equal standard. With the Club based on campus, the facilities are good. However there is some strain on their use as court allocation from MU Sport has not kept pace with the growth of the club.

In terms of coaches and volunteers, the Club had three female coaches in 2017, and its volunteer base is said to generally reflect the gender breakdown of the membership.

5.3 Case study: Melbourne University Football Club (MUFC)

An interview was conducted with members of the MUFC Board and the Melbourne University Women's Football Club (MUWFC) committee. MUFC oversees three separate divisions: the University Blacks, the University Blues (both men's) and MUWFC.

Australian Rules Football has seen extensive growth in female participation in recent years, particularly since the launch of the AFLW competition. Female participation in the Club's activities grew by 67 per cent in 2017, and MUWFC'S membership now comprises 180 female members; half of which are students. The club has so far kept pace with the influx of female players by expanding to accommodate them, but is reaching capacity. There were four senior women's teams in 2017, which was equal to the number of senior (including under-19) teams in each of the Blacks and Blues divisions. As has been the case for many years, MUWFC has one team that plays at the highest level, while two of its teams cater for less experienced players. Due to the increasing popularity of Australian rules football for women in the community, MUWFC has not needed to actively promote itself outside of standard activities such as O Week, however it does promote itself in schools to support junior partner clubs. Given the rising demand for participation in the women's game, the importance of creating social and less structured opportunities is strongly acknowledged. For example, MUWFC offers a training-only membership for those who want to get fit and have fun without the commitment of matches, and will look to run a four-week introduction to football program for beginners and a mixed AFL 9s competition for students in future.

In terms of governance arrangements, the current MUFC setup of three separate "arms", or divisions, is viewed as the best and most natural way of operating. This arrangement enables each branch to operate with general autonomy, but allows for collaboration where most efficient, such as in liquor licencing. Autonomy is considered important given each division has historically developed its own culture. For MUWFC, it also provides a space to operate in a way that specifically encourages female participation, given that in the Club's experience, applying practices that have been successful for men's teams will not necessarily work for women's teams. Another strength of this governance approach was the MUFC Board, to which each division reports. The Board is seen as providing some "distance" in decision-making from the day-to-day operations of the Club's three divisions. There are four MUWFC representatives on the Board, in line with the representation of the other divisions.

With regard to facilities use and resources, match day field allocation has generally not been an issue given that the men's and women's teams play on different days. Due to limited availability of the University of Melbourne oval, MUWFC has had to be creative in sourcing an alternative training venue, and was able to establish a partnership with North Melbourne Football Club involving access to their ground. This has actually led to MUWFC having access to higher quality facilities than the Blues or Blacks.

Also of note was the family friendly cultures that have been fostered across all MUFC divisions, which has encouraged women to get involved as volunteers and committee members in the Blues and Blacks. Additionally, MUWFC noted that its culture provides an inclusive space for LGBTIQ women. In terms of barriers to participation, it was noted that childcare is an issue for female players in particular.

5.4 Case study: Melbourne University Rugby Football Club (MURFC)

Although rugby union is a traditionally male-dominated sport, women's participation is growing. MURFC provided input into this project through an interview with the Club's President.

In terms of membership, the Club currently has six men's teams and two women's teams (the UniPanthers), including a senior team and a youth team, which is promoted through schools. Increasing female participation is viewed as a fair as well as a pragmatic goal, given the financial imperative to be able to include more people. The Club has not yet had to turn away female players due to an oversubscription. A key issue preventing the expansion of the female game is the lack of opposition, as only a minority of rugby clubs in Victoria have women's teams. Although it also does not yet offer modified or less structured forms of the sport, MURFC recognises that rugby sevens is a vehicle for growth in the women's game particularly, in part due to the Australian women's rugby sevens team's success at the 2016 Olympics. MURFC are hoping to be able to support a team to compete in the Women's University Sevens Series in future, even if there is no male equivalent, as this provides a pathway to national selection that female rugby players have not always had.

With regard to facilities use and equipment, the off-campus facilities MURFC hires from the local council, particularly the change rooms, are considered sub-standard and not particularly female friendly. A working group including both MURFC and the Melbourne University Gridiron Club has been established to discuss and address this issue. The scheduling of matches was one area the Club felt was inequitable, with its female teams often scheduled to play at the less-preferred timeslots, usually in the morning as the first game of the day. The scheduling of matches however is the domain of the governing body, Victorian Rugby Union (VRU), and MURFC has made a submission to VRU to request that women's matches are scheduled at more popular times. The Club's resources, equipment and funding are considered to benefit all members equally.

In terms of governance, the Club is governed by a single committee, and the first woman has now been appointed. The Club hopes to achieve a balance of skills on the committee, which may also lead to a greater representation of women.

MURFC has placed a strong emphasis on creating a culture where everyone feels welcomed to have a go. The Club currently has two female coaches, and a number of female volunteers and physios. One barrier to women's participation identified by the Club is childcare, which it hopes can be gradually overcome by fostering a family friendly culture where children are welcome.

5.5 Case study: Melbourne University Soccer Club (MUSC)

MUSC participated in this project via written questionnaires answered by the Club's President and Women's Vice-President.

Female participation has grown significantly in football (soccer) in recent years, and is now the second most played team sport among girls in Australia. Due to the legacy of soccer being a traditionally male-dominated sport, as might be expected the Club has more men's teams than women's teams – 13 and six respectively – although participation and demand has grown for both. Every year, the Club's men's division turns away several hundred players who express interest, which occurs through competitive preseason trials. In 2017, the women's division had to turn away potential players for the first time. Given the emphasis on providing opportunities for players with a variety of skill levels, commitment was the key criterion for women joining the Club, such as through attendance at preseason training sessions and registering by a deadline, although the Club found this to be a difficult process.

The Club is at a point where it is unable to add new teams due to a resources cap; namely a lack of training and match facilities allocated by local councils. Both divisions acknowledge that one option would be to withdraw some of the less competitive men's

teams to allow room for growth in the women's division, although this is not an ideal scenario given the number of men who are turned away annually. To ease the strain, both divisions are interested in running modified or small-sided competitions, recognising that some players would prefer less formal participation opportunities. However, the Club is unable to secure facilities for this because the local council prioritises competitive fixtures. Access to a synthetic pitch would assist the Club in providing such opportunities, but pitches are in short supply in the local area.

In terms of facilities use, both divisions felt that progress had been achieved in creating a fairer balance in training timeslots. This direction came from the Club's Board, taking into account the higher levels at which the top women's teams play, although it does mean that fewer men's teams are able to train twice per week while all women's teams do. Like MUWFC, the women's division of MUSC has established and maintained relationships outside of the University, and has had access to a facility in a neighbouring municipality, which is of mixed quality. MUSC approaches match day scheduling as a whole club, and the top men's and women's teams both have access to the "prime" timeslots given that they play on different days by convention.

Governance-wise, MUSC is governed by an overarching board with separate men's and women's operational committees. The Board comprises executive members of each committee, and at present there are four male and three female board members. Both divisions identified issues with this split approach, particularly inefficiencies due to duplication of tasks and a lack of investment in each side of the club by the other. However, the women's division indicated that having its own committee provides for some autonomy and a means through which women's interests can be represented, given that women are a minority within overall club membership. While the Board previously split MU Sport funding for coaches proportionately, it now divides this funding equally between men and women.

In 2017, the Club had two female coaches and would like to see more in future, though it acknowledges that societal issues are at play here. It was also noted that female players tend to be more actively involved in volunteering with club activities than male players.

5.6 General recommendations for club sport

Based on the experiences detailed by the clubs that participated in this project, as well as interviews with MU Sport staff, a number of recommendations are made that relate to multiple aspects of club operations, including membership and growth, facilities use and governance. Subsequently, recommendations will be outlined for each of the categories listed above.

5.6.1 Club service agreements

Although MU Sport has oversight over many aspects of club governance, funding and operations, clubs are generally left to their own devices when it comes to allocating resources within the club. Sport development staff were confident that clubs generally allocate resources fairly between participants of different genders, as seemed to be the case for the clubs that participated in this project, and noted that no club-related complaints of a gender equity nature had been made to MU Sport in memory. However, fairness in resource allocation cannot be guaranteed across all clubs at this time, and MU Sport must be proactive in laying the foundations for fair outcomes within its affiliated clubs, rather than just reactive in responding to identified problems. Considering sports clubs receive a significant amount of funding, there is a need for individual club practices to be examined on a case-by-case basis by MU Sport, with some accountability measures put in place.

What became evident in discussions with club representatives was that each club operates quite differently, and therefore a one-size-fits-all approach to gender equity in clubs would not be appropriate at this point in time. The different needs and practices of clubs are reflected in their differing club service agreements, which recognise the affiliation of a club to MU Sport, outline the obligations and responsibilities of each party, and set out facility access, operational and financial support arrangements. It is recommended that future club service agreements include a gender equity strategy specific to each club. This is likely to be fairly straightforward to incorporate into existing agreements considering the template agreement provided by MU Sport already states at clause 2.8:

“The Club will, to their best endeavours, deliver opportunities that align with the objectives of the University’s Sport Strategic Plan and will deliver on Club-specific key performance indicators as may be agreed annually.”

Gender equity strategies within club service agreements could either take the form of a list of equity-related key performance indicators contained in its own section of the document, or specific commitments to certain actions or targets embedded throughout the document in the relevant sections.

<p>Recommendation 16: Embed gender equity strategies in club service agreements</p> <p>MU Sport should work with clubs to develop appropriate gender equity strategies for inclusion in each club’s club service agreement. These could be discussed in strategy meetings and reviewed annually along with the agreement at large, and must be tied to the club’s funding arrangements or facility allocations so as to incentivise compliance. The strategy should also be reported on, as a separate agenda item, at each club’s Annual General Meeting. Gender equity strategies should include key performance indicators, targets and/or commitments to specific actions relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and membership proportions of women and men • The number of teams and participation opportunities available to each gender at different levels of competition (from beginner to elite) • Facility use • Scheduling of training times and matches, particularly access to “prime” timeslots and high-quality playing facilities • The number and value of club-specific scholarships available to members of each gender • Coaching and staff appointments, performance and responsibilities, where applicable • Gender representation on the board or committee <p>Each club’s gender equity strategy should be developed to align with the future gender equity policy framework.</p>
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By way of comparison, Monash University requires clubs to re-affiliate each year. For competitive clubs, particular attention is paid to gender equity provisions during this process, including having organisational sections for each gender and balanced gender representation among office bearers. Clubs are also required to present their timetable of training and match allocations for review each year, which are subject to a policy on equitable access to all teams subject to standard and requirements. Additionally, in terms of grants for club-run projects, only projects that will benefit all club members receive funding, except for start up programs; a recent example of which was the establishment of a women’s section of the Monash Blues Football Club (Australian rules).

5.6.2 Data collection

From an MU Sport perspective, gender proportions within club membership figures have been difficult to track, which does not allow for an overall gender analysis of club participation. MU Sport relies on clubs to report their membership figures under its *Club Membership Policy*. However, sport development staff indicated that the figures received are not always accurate. Further, clubs are required to collect information from members under all the fields contained in the *Club Membership Form Template*. The template form does not provide for club members to specify gender directly, rather, it contains a list of titles to choose from. This means that data on gender is not necessarily captured accurately, as the titles of “Dr” and “Prof” are gender neutral. Additionally, this form does not allow for members to express that they identify as neither female nor male, whereas the University now requires that all student administrative forms provide a third gender option.

Recommendation 17: Ensure club membership data accurately captures gender

To enable MU Sport to monitor progress toward gender equity targets and identify areas for improvement, club membership data must accurately capture gender. This can be facilitated by:

- Amending the *Club Membership Form Template* to provide clear gender options for members to choose from, including a third option for members who identify as trans/intersex/other
- Amending the *Club Membership Policy* to make it explicit that clubs must report the gender breakdown of their membership, as well as other relevant categories
- Communicating to clubs the importance of providing accurate data on gender.

5.6.3 Coaching

Generally speaking, women are significantly underrepresented in coaching positions and management of sports teams,³⁸ and based on the data from the clubs that participated in this project, this is likely to hold true for most MU Sport clubs as well. Encouragingly, all four participating clubs had female coaches in their ranks, but more can be done to increase the proportion of women in coaching roles. This would provide benefit to club members in the form of female role models, and to the coaches themselves through the acquisition of valuable leadership skills. In addition, female coaches need not exclusively coach female teams, so all club members could benefit from having greater diversity in coaching staff.

Targets for female coaches would not be practical given the difficulties clubs already face in recruiting volunteer coaches, however support could be put in place to encourage women in clubs to take on coaching roles. A good example of this is MUWFC, which encourages female players who are unable to play through injury to undertake coaching courses. The Club pays for these courses, and this approach allows former players to stay actively involved in the club. This practice should be encouraged in all clubs where women are underrepresented in coaching, and MU Sport should provide financial support for this where necessary.

³⁸ Huggins & Randell 2007, “The contribution of sports to gender equality and women’s empowerment”.

Recommendation 18: Support the development of female coaching

Clubs should attempt to increase the number of female coaches within their ranks by encouraging female club members and former players to undertake coaching courses and providing financial support for them to do so. Where clubs are unable to provide financial support for this purpose, MU Sport should consider this in discussions around the Club's funding arrangements and provide appropriate financial support.

In some cases, clubs receive direct funding from MU Sport to cover coaching costs. This support usually allows clubs to recruit and cover the costs of highly qualified coaches for their most competitive teams, while the majority of coaches remain volunteers. The way in which this money is distributed to coaches within a club is the domain of the club itself, however given MU Sport's contribution, clubs should ensure that both male and female members will benefit from the expertise that paid coaches provide. MUSC decided in 2017 that the funding received from MU Sport for coaching should be split between the coaches of the highest men's and women's teams, taking into account that while the majority of the club's members are male, its top female team plays at a higher level. This example demonstrates a fair outcome in terms of gender equity, and other clubs should follow suit where applicable. This provision could also apply to other paid club positions, as suggested within Recommendation 16.

Recommendation 19: Ensure that female and male club members benefit from funding provided for coaching purposes

MU Sport should ensure – through discussions with each club in strategy meetings and provisions included in club service agreements – that funding provided for coaching positions will be used in a way that benefits both female and male members. This could mean that all paid coaches must work to the benefit of female and male members, or that individual coaches appointed to coach either men's or women's teams are remunerated equally.

5.6.4 Childcare

Childcare was mentioned by two of the participating clubs as a barrier to participation, particularly for female members who have caring responsibilities. Given that there is limited availability of childcare on evenings and weekends when club teams are most likely to train and play, this is a difficult issue to address. However, MU Sport could explore opportunities for establishing an arrangement with childcare providers near the University, which could enable club members, and perhaps also fitness members, to access childcare services for their children at a subsidised rate.

Recommendation 20: Explore opportunities for establishing a childcare arrangement with local providers for club and fitness members

MU Sport should investigate whether an arrangement can be made with a childcare facility near the Parkville campus that would allow club and fitness members to access childcare at a subsidised rate.

5.6.5 Club member survey

Considering that the scope of this project only required engagement with a small number of clubs, there may be other gender equity issues in clubs that have not been identified in this discussion paper. In the past, MU Sport has run a sports club member survey. Results of the 2013 survey indicated overall satisfaction among club members, with 87.3 per cent of respondents expressing satisfaction with the friendliness,

approachability and inclusiveness of their club,³⁹ which is very positive. However, future iterations of the survey should be able to record and account for gender to measure whether the needs of female and male club members are being met, and identify what improvements could be made along gender lines, or indeed, based on the responses from any other demographic.

Recommendation 21: Ensure future club member surveys account for gender

To generate a clear picture of the experiences of club membership as influenced by gender, future iterations of the Club Member Survey should record gender, and data should be able to be cross tabulated by gender as well.

5.7 Recommendations: membership and growth

Among the four clubs to participate in this project, all were experiencing growth in membership and demand, particularly from women. In most cases, a resources cap due to insufficient facility allocations and constraints on volunteers' time was prohibiting further growth. Although these issues are not specifically gender equity issues, they may affect gender equity outcomes if they prevent clubs from growing female participation to a level that is more comparable with the existing levels of male participation. A lack of facilities on campus and in the surrounding areas is a long-term issue that MU Sport is actively working to address.

With constraints on facilities considered, providing more social and modified sporting opportunities was viewed by two of the participating clubs as a reasonable compromise, especially considering these opportunities are likely to require less time and space, and could in some cases be held on campus. Such opportunities could include small-sided competitions, training only memberships and introductory skills programs. It is therefore recommended that MU Sport work with and support clubs to plan and establish such opportunities, as has been discussed for some time within MU Sport. However, these opportunities should not be the only means through which women's participation is allowed to grow. In some cases, clubs may need to actively consider reducing the number of men's teams to create a more equal balance of teams, even though this is not an ideal situation.

Recommendation 22: Continue to support clubs in establishing social and modified participation opportunities for their members

Such opportunities could be created in the following cases:

- To provide opportunities for women, particularly those who are new to a sport, to participate where additional women's teams cannot be established to meet demand – although this should not be the only vehicle for growing female participation
- To provide an alternative to formal club membership and competition for men where a club reduces the number of men's teams to allow for the creation of more women's teams, or vice versa
- To facilitate collaboration between women's and men's divisions of clubs through running small-sided mixed competitions, for example.

MU Sport could assist clubs in creating these opportunities by offering strategic advice, start up grants or additional funds, and support to source venues.

³⁹ Melbourne University Sport 2013, *MU Sport Clubs 2013 Annual Member Survey Results Presentation*, accessed 28 August 2017
<http://www.sport.unimelb.edu.au/images/Survey_3_98054598.pdf>

5.8 Recommendations: facilities use

As identified by the clubs that participated in this project, the availability of suitable facilities is a significant issue. Three of the four clubs surveyed used facilities external to the University, and two clubs, MUSC and MURFC, identified issues with the quality of some of the facilities used. In the case of MURFC, the change room facilities were perceived as not being female friendly.

According to the International Working Group on Women and Sport, female participation is influenced by the extent, variety and accessibility of facilities.⁴⁰ Therefore, facilities should appropriately and equitably meet the particular needs of the women in the community in their planning, design and management. The Victorian Government's *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines* highlight several important features that contribute to creating an inclusive facility, which include changing facilities that cater for women as well as men, inviting community spaces, family friendly attributes such as baby change facilities where possible, and being clean and well-lit.⁴¹

Although these facilities are owned and maintained by local councils, clubs and MU Sport can play a role in lobbying for facility upgrades and refurbishments at both a council and state government level, as demonstrated by the working group that MURFC are involved in, particularly as the University has significant pull power in bringing people into the surrounding communities.

Recommendation 23: Continue to support clubs in advocating for upgrades to local council facilities
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MU Sport should advocate for and support improvements to facilities utilised by its affiliated clubs, particularly upgrades intended to make the facility more accessible in line with the Victorian Government's <i>Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines</i> .
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5.9 Recommendations: governance

Club governance arrangements are complex, influenced by numerous practical and historical factors, and at times subject to debate. For these reasons, this paper does not substantially address club governance structures, other than to point out that there are benefits to both split structures, where clubs have separate divisions for women and men such as those in MUFC and MUSC, and unified structures as in MUBC and MURFC. Split structures provide gender-based divisions with autonomy to operate in ways that best suit their participants, given that best practices across a range of operational activities may be different for women and men. They may also ensure strong representation where there are fewer members of one gender as a total proportion of club membership. On the other hand, unified structures facilitate better integration between participants of each gender, allowing less established programs to leverage off existing programs and encouraging the base of male members to support the growth and development of female teams, or vice-versa.

Another aspect of governance that relates to gender equity is the representation of women on club boards and committees. The clubs that participated in this project generally had a reasonable gender balance on their governing board or committee, however it is not known how the gender balance plays out across all of MU Sport's affiliated clubs.

⁴⁰ State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*.

⁴¹ Ibid.

Club participants and MU Sport staff alike acknowledged the importance of female representation in sports club governance, both symbolically and practically. Modelling diversity in this way is likely to have a ripple effect, influencing club cultures to become more explicitly inclusive of women and other underrepresented groups. A significant volume of literature supports this view in a broader context, particularly where women have been underrepresented. For example, women in board and senior roles are likely to bring diverse considerations and “value-adding” talents, and to represent stakeholders who have previously been excluded,⁴² while club committee members who are representative of the membership may assist in creating an ideal atmosphere for female participation.⁴³ Further, volunteer involvement in club governance and operations fosters leadership skills and other attributes that are valuable to the future career prospects of students and alumni. Therefore, MU Sport should develop ways of ensuring that women are being given appropriate opportunities to participate in club governance and decision-making, and are supported to do so. As outlined in the recommendations below, this could occur through a setting a target of 50 per cent female representation on governing boards and committees across all of MU Sport’s affiliated clubs, and establishing women in sport network to support women leaders and volunteers, considering the importance of networking in sports management and the fact that women have historically not been well included in this.⁴⁴

<p>Recommendation 24: Set a target of 50 per cent female representation on governing boards and committees across all of MU Sport’s affiliated clubs</p>
<p>To ensure that women and men are both well represented in club governance and decision-making, MU Sport should aim to have 50 per cent female representation on club boards and governing committees within a specified timeframe. This target would require that half of the total of board/committee members of affiliated clubs identify as women, rather than 50 per cent within each individual club, providing for some balance where club membership is skewed in favour of one particular gender. The ratio of female and male board/committee members should be reviewed at club’s annual strategy meetings and monitored overall. Where the gender balance is unequal, MU Sport should communicate to clubs that they must be proactive in encouraging female members to nominate for board and committee positions when positions open.</p>

<p>Recommendation 25: Establish a women in sport network</p>
<p>MU Sport should consider establishing a women in sport network for female club leaders and volunteers. This network could become a useful resource for club administrators, such as through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The informal sharing of best practice relating to gender equity and female participation • Seminars on practical aspects of improving female participation within clubs, such as recruitment and retention strategies and strategies for obtaining grants and sponsorship. <p>Alternatively, a broader approach could be taken whereby women involved in MU Sport in various capacities, including as elite athletes, intervarsity team managers and coaches, staff, Advisory Board members, club members and other participants, could be invited to attend and hear from industry leaders and other guest speakers.</p>

⁴² Adriaanse, J A & Schofield, T 2013, “Analysing gender dynamics in sport governance: A new regimes-based approach”, *Sport Management Review*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 498-513.

⁴³ Women’s Sport and Fitness Foundation 2011, *The ideal sports club for women*.

⁴⁴ Hoffman, J 2013, “The Old Boys’ Network”, *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 9-28.

5.10 Conclusions

The four clubs that participated in this project – MUBC, MUFC, MURFC and MUSC – provided valuable input in terms of identifying gender equity issues and exemplifying ways of alleviating them. It was clear that these clubs, and one would expect clubs across the board, are actively considering how to make their clubs more equitable. However, as has been described, clubs must contend with numerous constraints, including limited availability of facilities, funds, volunteer resources, as well as the ever-increasing influx of new participants yearly. The recommendations in this section that address club activities at a governance level, including the negotiation of club service agreements and the emphasis on increasing female representation in club leadership, will ensure that gender is embedded as a relevant consideration, setting the scene for more practical measures to improve gender equity within clubs. For its part, MU Sport must ensure that improvements across gender equity measures can be recorded through better capturing gender in both club membership data and the experiences of club members via the Club Member Survey.

Section 6: Participation opportunities

6.1 Introduction

This section discusses participation opportunities not captured in previous sections of the paper. In particular, it focuses on campus and community sport and suggestions for expanding programs of this nature. A number of MU Sport staff members discussed the importance of social and modified sporting opportunities in interviews, particularly as a means of engaging women who are seeking to become involved in sport again after a period away from participating, and those who are trying a new sport for the first time at university.

6.2 Importance of social and modified formats of sport

As discussed in the previous section in relation to clubs, social and modified forms of sport, particularly those that are less formal in terms of time commitment, are an important growth area. Such programs are said to eliminate participation barriers inherent in competitive, high cost and time intensive sporting activities, particularly those traditionally offered by sports clubs.⁴⁵ Social and modified sport activities are well suited to those who have not participated in sport previously on a consistent basis, as well as those who may have never participated in a sport at all. Although they are likely to provide benefit to participants of all genders, social and modified sporting opportunities may be particularly important for women, due to the well documented phenomenon of young women ceasing sports participation in their teen years.⁴⁶ University campuses therefore provide an ideal setting for women to re-engage with sport at a non-competitive level.

6.3 MU Sport's current offerings: campus and community sport

In addition to social and informal sports opportunities provided by its affiliated clubs, MU Sport has two similar programs that provide social opportunities in team sports. Campus sport provides weekday competitions in futsal, basketball, netball and dodgeball, while community/Tin Alley sport offers netball competitions on weeknights. The following table lists the opportunities available by gender in 2016.

Figure 6: 2016 Campus and community sport opportunities

Sport	Competitions available
Basketball	1 mixed competition
Dodgeball	1 mixed competition
Futsal	1 mixed competition 1 men's competition
Netball	6 mixed competitions 1 women's competition

At present, the gender balance is appropriate, with the majority of opportunities being available to all, supplemented by two single-gender competitions in popular sports. MU Sport should continue to monitor demand for campus and community sport opportunities, and consider expanding these offerings if uptake is expected. Tracking participation by gender may assist in identifying areas of growing demand. While mixed-gender competitions are likely to meet the needs of most women and have the added benefit of being inclusive of all, increasing the number of women's competitions

⁴⁵ State Government of Victoria, Department of Health and Human Services 2017, *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*.

⁴⁶ Craike, M J, Symons, C & Zimmerman, J M 2009, "Why do young women drop out of sport and physical activity? A social ecological approach", *Annals of Leisure Research*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 148-172.

may encourage more women, particularly those who may lack confidence in their abilities, to participate in sports that have traditionally been less accessible to them.

Recommendation 26: Continue to monitor demand for campus and community sport opportunities, and create additional opportunities for women where uptake is likely

MU Sport should continue to monitor interest in its campus and community sport programs, and should track actual participation rates by gender. Expansion of these programs to meet identified demand should be considered, particularly given their benefit to the student community and women in particular.

6.4 Suggestions for future programs

Although small-sided team sports are usually what come to mind when considering social sporting opportunities, there are many other options that could be considered. Programs that aim to introduce novice players to a sport in a non-competitive, social environment may be effective in engaging students who have not consistently participated in sport in the past, or who are looking to learn a new sport, improve their fitness or meet new people. Such programs may also provide a “bridge” into more competitive sport. Women-only programs of this type are particularly important considering that women sometimes lack confidence in their skill level,⁴⁷ and therefore may be reluctant to go along to more “serious” competitive sporting activities where they expect to feel self-conscious and out of their depth.

The Melbourne University Tennis Club began offering a women-only program in 2017, which provides an example of a successful model for introductory and social sporting programs. The program was run by coaching provider BreakPoint Analysis with support from the Club and MU Sport, and involved cardio tennis classes taking place over a six-week period with morning or afternoon tea provided. In its first time running, 32 women participated, and there are plans to expand the reach of the program and the variety of activities offered in 2018.⁴⁸

Another suggestion that was raised in interviews with MU Sport staff was a bike safety and maintenance program targeted specifically at women and/or international students. This type of program would provide benefits beyond those usually associated with sport. In a similar vein, self-defence classes could be another skills-based option to explore. In examining these possibilities and others, MU Sport should consider the range of programs that already exist in the University community, such as those offered by UMSU and the GSA, to avoid duplication. Where appropriate, MU Sport could consider supporting or partnering with groups that offer existing programs, which may assist in extending their reach.

Recommendation 27: Explore opportunities to establish introductory and skills-based sport programs for students

MU Sport should consider options for developing programs with a focus on learning and skill development in a relaxed environment; either concentrated on particular sports, or on physical activities such as cycling that require safety considerations. These activities could be offered as women-only or mixed-gender, depending on the activity and demand, and could be run in collaboration with sport clubs, coaching providers and student organisations where appropriate.

⁴⁷ Lirgg, C D 1992, “Girls and Women, Sport, and Self-Confidence”, *Quest*, col. 44, no. 2, pp. 158-178.

⁴⁸ Melbourne University Tennis Club 2017, Facebook update, 22 September, viewed 21 November 2017 <<https://www.facebook.com/melbourneunitennis/posts/1610168825702630>>

6.5 Conclusions

MU Sport's current offerings in terms of social and modified sport are appropriate, and provide accessible opportunities for students to participate in sporting activities that do not require high levels of skill, experience, time or financial commitment; all of which are recognised barriers to female participation. As demand for and awareness of the importance of such opportunities grows, MU Sport should consider innovative ways of expanding its social, modified and skills-based offerings as outlined in the recommendations contained in this section.

Section 7: Implementation and reporting

7.1 Introduction

This section contains recommendations that are general in nature, or applicable across various different sections of this report. They pertain to the reporting of progress on recommended gender equity measures, as well as consultation with students in relation to potential new programs and the implementation of the project's recommendations.

7.2 Reporting

It is vitally important that MU Sport reports on its gender participation data in a way that is clear, transparent, and useful in measuring progress towards its goals. MU Sport's annual report provides a good opportunity to publish this data, given the report is publically available. Participation data by gender should be published under each section of the report, as is already done for elite athlete support.

Recommendation 28: Publish participation data by gender in the annual report

To ensure that MU Sport's progress towards gender equity goals is clear and easily accessible, participation data by gender should be published under the relevant sections of the annual report. These figures should include data on participation in the following areas as a minimum:

- Campus sport
- Community sport
- Fitness Services (participation/membership)
- Sporting clubs (gender reported as a total of all MU Sport club members, or within each individual club)
- Representative Sport
- Elite Athlete Program
- Blues and Sports Awards

7.3 Student consultation

One issue that was raised in a number of interviews with staff is the question of how to engage with students who are not currently participating in MU Sport's programs – which are more likely to be women and especially postgraduate women. A number of recommendations contained in this discussion paper involve activities that would not only be new for MU Sport, but may also seek to engage groups of students currently underrepresented as MU Sport participants. Therefore, in establishing demand for new programs, MU Sport may need to look outside its own participation data and into the wider student community. Opportunities to test the likely uptake and viability of proposed new programs, or to provide students with opportunities to suggest ideas programs they would like to see established, could be incorporated into existing surveys, such as the Wellbeing Survey. MU Sport could also run focus groups to this effect to assist in identifying currently unmet needs among students.

Recommendation 29: Conduct consultation with the wider student body around proposed new programs and initiatives

Consulting with the broader student population through widely-distributed surveys or focus groups may assist MU Sport in identifying:

- The likely uptake and viability of proposed programs and initiatives designed to encourage broader participation
- Currently unmet needs and ideas for future initiatives
- Reasons why certain groups of students do not engage with MU Sport, and what can be done to encourage them to do so.

It should be noted that for proposed initiatives aimed specifically at certain groups of students, such as cultural and religious groups, targeted consultation should also be undertaken with relevant student clubs and representative organisations, as is applicable to Recommendations 9 and 10.

7.4 Implementation of recommendations

To support the implementation of the policy framework and the recommendations contained in this paper, MU Sport should consider creating an equity and diversity staff portfolio, or similar, if there is capacity to do so. This type of role is relatively common in community sport and recreational centres, and also exists within AUS as an Inclusion and Diversity Officer role. The AUS Inclusion and Diversity Officer focuses on establishing an inclusive culture that fosters equitable sporting participation for students from diverse backgrounds and works to engage culturally diverse students in AUS programs. As is the case with the AUS role, the portfolio would ideally focus not just on gender, but on a range of equity groups where participation in sport may be low, or where there are likely to be unmet needs or barriers to participation. Alternatively, an equity and diversity committee could be established, involving MU Sport staff and Advisory Board members, for example, although this may not be as effective.

Recommendation 30: Create an equity and diversity staff portfolio
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A staff portfolio that focuses specifically on equity and diversity within MU Sport would provide support and expertise in the implementation of the policy framework and recommendations generated by this report. It would also provide ongoing strategic direction to MU Sport on future equity issues and initiatives for promoting participation amongst diverse groups of students. The role should focus on gender equity, as well as:

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gender diverse and LGBTIQ students• Students with disability• Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds• Indigenous students• International students. |
|---|

As an additional recommendation, further work should be undertaken to investigate equity issues and barriers to participation for the groups listed in Recommendation 30, with a view to ensuring that the specific needs of these groups are being met by MU Sport.

Recommendation 31: Undertake future work focusing on other equity groups

Further reviews of practice and the implementation of resulting recommendations may assist in ensuring that the profile of MU Sport's student participants aligns with that of the student body more broadly. Future work could focus on the following groups of students:
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- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gender diverse and LGBTIQ students• Students with disability• Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds• Indigenous students• International students. |
|---|

7.5 Policy framework

As requested by MU Sport, a policy framework has been drafted for endorsement by the MU Sport Advisory Board, and is attached in draft form at Appendix 2. The policy framework will provide ongoing guidance to MU Sport through a series of policy objectives applicable to all its student-facing programs and activities, and may be used in future to inform the development of procedures to address gender equity in more

specific areas of MU Sport. Policies such as this are commonplace in many different institutional settings; a directly relevant example being Sydney University Sport's gender equity policy.

Recommendation 32: Adopt a gender equity policy framework
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The MU Sport Advisory Board should adopt a gender equity policy framework to provide ongoing guidance to MU Sport through policy objectives applicable to all its student-facing programs and activities.

Section 8: Conclusions

8.1 Summary of project findings

The University of Melbourne's general policy statements in documents such as *Growing Esteem* and *Engagement at Melbourne* offer in-principle support to initiatives that strive for fairness, equity and diversity in University programs, and state that all students should have an experience that is comparable in terms of quality and enrichment. The programs offered by MU Sport certainly provide enrichment to the student experience, and play an important role in bringing together people from a diverse range of backgrounds – as sport is universally renowned for. This project has sought to guide MU Sport in strengthening these outcomes, specifically in relation to gender equity.

Based on the findings of this project, MU Sport has not deliberately sought to advantage one gender over the other in terms of the various participation and funding opportunities on offer. However, in many cases, it has tended to take a “gender blind” approach in assuming that the practices that cater for its traditionally largest base of participants, men, are equally suitable for all participants. This tendency is not unique to MU Sport, and is mirrored in sporting organisations at all levels, from community sports clubs to international sporting bodies. MU Sport staff, as well as club executives, are increasingly acknowledging their obligation to be sensitive to a more diverse range of needs and preferences, and there is an emerging emphasis on being proactive around issues of equity and inclusion. This is as applicable to other types of diversity, such as cultural diversity, as it is to gender.

As detailed in the previous sections of this discussion paper, the following issues relating to gender equity were identified as part of this project:

- An apparent underrepresentation of women across many of MU Sport's programs, including fitness membership, club membership representative student athletes and scholarship holders
- Inconsistent marking of gender in communications, including use of non-parallel language
- Issues with accurate data collection on gender in various sections of MU Sport, including use of fitness facilities, club membership and the various evaluation surveys that have been undertaken
- A lack of accessible options for women who would prefer to exercise in a women-only environment for cultural, religious or other reasons
- Certain aspects of the layout of gym facilities being uninviting for women and beginners
- More opportunities created for men than for women to represent the University in intervarsity competitions
- A greater proportion of interstate and international competition opportunities being offered to male students
- Off-campus facilities used by affiliated clubs that are in some cases not female friendly
- Scheduling of women's club matches at times that are less favourable (although this is sometimes a decision of the state sporting organisation)
- A lack of oversight of the ways in which clubs allocate resources and funding provided by MU Sport
- A lack of childcare facilities for club and fitness members with caring responsibilities
- Limitations on the capacity for female club membership to grow due to strain on facilities.

Recommendations for addressing these issues have been described in the paper, and are listed at Appendix 1. While some of these issues will require a time and resources-intensive effort to address, others may be quite straightforward to rectify. In considering these recommendations, MU Sport should categorise each on the basis of its priority level and likely timeframe for implementation.

8.2 Looking ahead

While this project did identify a number of gender equity issues in MU Sport's current practices, MU Sport should be encouraged by the fact that its staff and participating sports clubs demonstrated willingness to strive for continued improvement. MU Sport has taken an important step in a positive direction by undertaking this project. Over the coming months, MU Sport should carefully consider the recommendations contained in this discussion paper, and work collaboratively with stakeholders, particularly sports clubs and student groups, to make improvements that will enable it to achieve equitable outcomes for all student participants, regardless of gender. Through these actions, MU Sport can establish itself as a leader in the gender equity space, both within and outside the University community.

The author

Hana Dalton is a University of Melbourne alumna and a former student member of the MU Sport Advisory Board (June 2016-March 2017). She completed a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Politics and International Studies and a Diploma in Languages in 2016. During her time as a University of Melbourne student, Hana held the positions of Education (Academic Affairs) Officer and General Secretary at the University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU).

Hana has represented the University at the Australian University Games in women's football (soccer) on three occasions, and received a scholarship to do so in 2015. On each occasion, the team earned a bronze medal. Hana is also a current member of the Melbourne University Soccer Club, and has served on its women's divisional committee. She has also been a fitness member for a number of years.

Hana currently works at the Community and Public Sector Union, Victorian Branch.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to every stakeholder who made the time to meet with me, or provide me with information and support for this project. The input of MU Sport Staff, sports club representatives and others, including AUS, Sydney University Sport, Monash University Sport and Team MONASH, was invaluable, as were the insights of Elizabeth Capp (Director, Students and Equity), Professor Jim Angus (Chair, MU Sport Advisory Board) and UMSU student representatives.

I hope that this discussion paper and its recommendations will provide significant and ongoing benefit to MU Sport and its participants.

Hana Dalton

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Appendix 1: List of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Use parallel language consistently

In all of its social media, marketing and other communications, MU Sport should ensure that gender is marked on a consistent basis.

Recommendation 2: Ensure gender is specified in the promotion of participation opportunities

Promotional materials for participation opportunities should clearly state who the opportunity is open to, whether that be just women or just men, both women and men, or mixed/open to all. This is particularly important where there may be ambiguity due to the history of the sport or activity, and should help ensure that students are not unnecessarily deterred from participating.

Recommendation 3: Explore opportunities to support clubs in developing online and social media strategies that encourage female participation

MU Sport should investigate ways of supporting clubs to improve their online media strategies and expand their reach, where the club is seeking to increase its female (or male) membership. This could be achieved through workshops or guides on social media and website development strategies.

Recommendation 4: Develop a campaign to encourage greater female participation in MU Sport's programs

A campaign targeted at female students (and staff if appropriate) may assist in encouraging more women to participate in sport and fitness activities on campus, as well as conveying to existing female participants that MU Sport is actively considering their needs and interests. Such a campaign should include an online/social media component and events allowing women to sample and learn about MU Sport's various programs and offerings, including fitness membership, campus and community sport, representative sport and scholarships.

Recommendation 5: Improve collection of fitness membership data by gender

MU Sport should ensure that its fitness membership data accurately captures gender, as indicated by members when joining, and that membership figures by gender are routinely monitored and reported on. It is important that members are able to choose a third gender option, trans/intersex/other, if they do not identify as either female or male, in line with current University practice.

Recommendation 6: Consider lowering fees for students

MU Sport should consider lowering casual visit and/or membership fees for students, considering that costs are recognised as a significant barrier to participation, particularly for women.

Recommendation 7: Continue to work towards integrating the various types of equipment in the Beaurepaire Centre gym

Ensuring a mix of equipment in each section of the gym will help to facilitate a gender balance across the gym, reducing the proportion of space where beginners feel unwelcome.

Recommendation 8: Trial a women-centric strength and conditioning program

A women-centric strength and conditioning program is likely to be an effective means of introducing women, who typically engage in less weight-based training, to this type of

training. Emphasis should be placed on proper technique, safety and the benefits of weight-based strength training. Alternatively, such a program could be run for beginners generally, though this is likely to attract fewer women.

Recommendation 9: Establish women-only gym timeslots

MU Sport should work towards establishing a consistent schedule of women-only timeslots, ensuring that due consideration is given to:

- Targeted consultation with relevant student groups and communities on campus to gauge demand and develop the initiative to meet identified needs
- The variety of timeslots offered, including time of day and duration
- The promotion of the initiative to its target cohorts and existing fitness members
- The potential for students who are not already fitness members to trial the timeslots
- Data collection to measure success.

Recommendation 10: Establish women-only pool timeslots

MU Sport should work towards establishing a consistent schedule of women-only timeslots, ensuring that due consideration is given to:

- Targeted consultation with relevant student groups and communities on campus to gauge demand and develop the initiative to meet identified needs
- The variety of timeslots offered, including time of day and duration
- The promotion of the initiative to its target cohorts and existing fitness members
- The potential for students who are not already fitness members to trial the timeslots
- Data collection to measure success.

Recommendation 11: Ensure fitness survey data can be cross tabulated by gender

Cross tabulation of fitness survey data by gender, as well as other relevant student or staff categories, may provide useful insights to MU Sport to inform future programs, facilities improvements or targeted marketing campaigns.

Recommendation 12: Support potential representative teams that may be struggling to meet eligibility criteria for competing at AUS competitions

MU Sport should proactively support teams and athletes in cases where a sport has often failed to meet the internal criteria to compete at AUS events, to assist in facilitating more equal participation of women and men in representative sport. Such support could include:

- Engaging with the relevant club directly and well in advance of the event to identify potential competitors, managers and coaches
- Supporting students to promote trials for the event, such as through sharing social media content and providing printing facilities if the organisers wish to distribute posters or flyers
- Directing a proportion of AUG scholarships on a priority basis to sports that struggle to send both female and male teams or athletes, and ensure gender equity is an overall consideration in awarding these scholarships.

Recommendation 13: Report clearly on expenditure by gender on representative competitions and tournaments

To provide for transparency and the measurement of progress on gender equity, MU Sport should ensure its expenditure on representative tournaments and competitions is clearly reported in relevant financial reports and ideally in its annual reports as well. This will also allow the Advisory Board to easily identify significant expenditure

discrepancies between men's and women's competitions, with a view to discussing opportunities for improvement on a continual basis.

Recommendation 14: Provide equivalent opportunities for each gender to compete in non-AUS interstate or international competitions

In cases where MU Sport is invited to participate in a representative sporting event that does not offer a competition for both women and men, MU Sport should consider the declining the invitation, and lobbying publically with other institutions for the establishment of a competition for the unrepresented gender.

If this is not possible and MU Sport still wishes to compete, it should:

- Identify an equivalent opportunity in the same sport in the same year for the other gender, whether this is organised externally or by MU Sport itself
- Provide an opportunity in a different sport for a team of the unrepresented gender to participate in a similar competition of equivalent status and value, if the above is not possible
- Decline the invitation if there is insufficient funding or time to coordinate participation in an equivalent event.

Recommendation 15: Continue to monitor scholarship data by gender, and promote scholarship offerings to women

If MU Sport identifies that the proportion of female scholarship recipients has plateaued or decreased, scholarship opportunities should be promoted in a way that encourages more women to apply. Examples of such promotion could include:

- Incorporating scholarship information in a female-centric participation campaign, as suggested in Recommendation 4
- Targeted advertising of opportunities on social media
- Promoting scholarship opportunities to club members.

Recommendation 16: Embed gender equity strategies in club service agreements

MU Sport should work with clubs to develop appropriate gender equity strategies for inclusion in each club's club service agreement. These could be discussed in strategy meetings and reviewed annually along with the agreement at large, and must be tied to the club's funding arrangements or facility allocations so as to incentivise compliance.

The strategy should also be reported on, as a separate agenda item, at each club's Annual General Meeting. Gender equity strategies should include key performance indicators, targets and/or commitments to specific actions relating to:

- Recruitment and membership proportions of women and men
- The number of teams and participation opportunities available to each gender at different levels of competition (from beginner to elite)
- Facility use
- Scheduling of training times and matches, particularly access to "prime" timeslots and high-quality playing facilities
- The number and value of club-specific scholarships available to members of each gender
- Coaching and staff appointments, performance and responsibilities, where applicable
- Gender representation on the board or committee

Each club's gender equity strategy should be developed to align with the future gender equity policy framework.

Recommendation 17: Ensure club membership data accurately captures gender

To enable MU Sport to monitor progress toward gender equity targets and identify

areas for improvement, club membership data must accurately capture gender. This can be facilitated by:

- Amending the *Club Membership Form Template* to provide clear gender options for members to choose from, including a third option for members who identify as trans/intersex/other
- Amending the *Club Membership Policy* to make it explicit that clubs must report the gender breakdown of their membership, as well as other relevant categories
- Communicating to clubs the importance of providing accurate data on gender.

Recommendation 18: Support the development of female coaching

Clubs should attempt to increase the number of female coaches within their ranks by encouraging female club members and former players to undertake coaching courses and providing financial support for them to do so. Where clubs are unable to provide financial support for this purpose, MU Sport should consider this in discussions around the Club's funding arrangements and provide appropriate financial support.

Recommendation 19: Ensure that female and male club members benefit from funding provided for coaching purposes

MU Sport should ensure – through discussions with each club in strategy meetings and provisions included in club service agreements – that funding provided for coaching positions will be used in a way that benefits both female and male members. This could mean that all paid coaches must work to the benefit of female and male members, or that individual coaches appointed to coach either men's or women's teams are remunerated equally.

Recommendation 20: Explore opportunities for establishing a childcare arrangement with local providers for club and fitness members

MU Sport should investigate whether an arrangement can be made with a childcare facility near the Parkville campus that would allow club and fitness members to access childcare at a subsidised rate.

Recommendation 21: Ensure future club member surveys account for gender

To generate a clear picture of the experiences of club membership as influenced by gender, future iterations of the Club Member Survey should record gender, and data should be able to be cross tabulated by gender as well.

Recommendation 22: Continue to support clubs in establishing social and modified participation opportunities for their members

Such opportunities could be created in the following cases:

- To provide opportunities for women, particularly those who are new to a sport, to participate where additional women's teams cannot be established to meet demand – although this should not be the only vehicle for growing female participation
- To provide an alternative to formal club membership and competition for men where a club reduces the number of men's teams to allow for the creation of more women's teams, or vice versa
- To facilitate collaboration between women's and men's divisions of clubs through running small-sided mixed competitions, for example.

MU Sport could assist clubs in creating these opportunities by offering strategic advice, start up grants or additional funds, and support to source venues.

Recommendation 23: Continue to support clubs in advocating for upgrades to local council facilities

MU Sport should advocate for and support improvements to facilities utilised by its affiliated clubs, particularly upgrades intended to make the facility more accessible in line with the Victorian Government's *Female friendly sport infrastructure guidelines*.

Recommendation 24: Set a target of 50 per cent female representation on governing boards and committees across all of MU Sport's affiliated clubs

To ensure that women and men are both well represented in club governance and decision-making, MU Sport should aim to have 50 per cent female representation on club boards and governing committees within a specified timeframe. This target would require that half of the total of board/committee members of affiliated clubs identify as women, rather than 50 per cent within each individual club, providing for some balance where club membership is skewed in favour of one particular gender. The ratio of female and male board/committee members should be reviewed at club's annual strategy meetings and monitored overall. Where the gender balance is unequal, MU Sport should communicate to clubs that they must be proactive in encouraging female members to nominate for board and committee positions when positions open.

Recommendation 25: Establish a women in sport network

MU Sport should consider establishing a women in sport network for female club leaders and volunteers. This network could become a useful resource for club administrators, such as through:

- The informal sharing of best practice relating to gender equity and female participation
- Seminars on practical aspects of improving female participation within clubs, such as recruitment and retention strategies and strategies for obtaining grants and sponsorship.

Alternatively, a broader approach could be taken whereby women involved in MU Sport in various capacities, including as elite athletes, intervarsity team managers and coaches, staff, Advisory Board members, club members and other participants, could be invited to attend and hear from industry leaders and other guest speakers.

Recommendation 26: Continue to monitor demand for campus and community sport opportunities, and create additional opportunities for women where uptake is likely

MU Sport should continue to monitor interest in its campus and community sport programs, and should track actual participation rates by gender. Expansion of these programs to meet identified demand should be considered, particularly given their benefit to the student community and women in particular.

Recommendation 27: Explore opportunities to establish introductory and skills-based sport programs for students

MU Sport should consider options for developing programs with a focus on learning and skill development in a relaxed environment; either concentrated on particular sports, or on physical activities such as cycling that require safety considerations. These activities could be offered as women-only or mixed-gender, depending on the activity and demand, and could be run in collaboration with sport clubs, coaching providers and student organisations where appropriate.

Recommendation 28: Publish participation data by gender in the annual report

To ensure that MU Sport's progress towards gender equity goals is clear and easily accessible, participation data by gender should be published under the relevant sections

of the annual report. These figures should include data on participation in the following areas as a minimum:

- Campus Sport
- Community Sport
- Fitness Services (participation/membership)
- Sporting clubs (gender reported as a total of all MU Sport club members, or within each individual club)
- Representative Sport
- Elite Athlete Program
- Blues and Sports Awards

Recommendation 29: Conduct consultation with the wider student body around proposed new programs and initiatives

Consulting with the broader student population through widely-distributed surveys or focus groups may assist MU Sport in identifying:

- The likely uptake and viability of proposed programs and initiatives designed to encourage broader participation
- Currently unmet needs and ideas for future initiatives
- Reasons why certain groups of students do not engage with MU Sport, and what can be done to encourage them to do so.

Recommendation 30: Create an equity and diversity staff portfolio

A staff portfolio that focuses specifically on equity and diversity within MU Sport would provide support and expertise in the implementation of the policy framework and recommendations generated by this report. It would also provide ongoing strategic direction to MU Sport on future equity issues and initiatives for promoting participation amongst diverse groups of students. The role should focus on gender equity, as well as:

- Gender diverse and LGBTIQ students
- Students with disability
- Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Indigenous students
- International students.

Recommendation 31: Undertake future work focusing on other equity groups

Further reviews of practice and the implementation of resulting recommendations may assist in ensuring that the profile of MU Sport's student participants aligns with that of the student body more broadly. Future work could focus on the following groups of students:

- Gender diverse and LGBTIQ students
- Students with disability
- Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Indigenous students
- International students.

Recommendation 32: Adopt a gender equity policy framework

The MU Sport Advisory Board should adopt a gender equity policy framework to provide ongoing guidance to MU Sport through policy objectives applicable to all its student-facing programs and activities.

Appendix 2: Draft policy framework

1. Policy statement

- 1.1 Melbourne University Sport has a responsibility to provide equitable sporting and recreational opportunities to all students regardless of gender, and to ensure that its programs and services are meeting the needs and expectations of students of all genders;
- 1.2 Melbourne University Sport is legally obliged to comply with state and federal equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy aims to:
 - a) Outline the role of Melbourne University Sport in providing for gender equity throughout its programs and eliminating gender-based barriers to participation;
 - b) Embed gender equity as both an important value and a relevant consideration in all of Melbourne University Sport's activities.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all aspects of Melbourne University Sport's student-facing operations, including representative sport, fitness services, specialty programming, affiliated sporting clubs and media coverage.

4. Definitions

Term	Definition
Gender	<p>Gender refers to the socially constructed characteristics, including roles and behaviours, that societies attribute to women and men. It differs to sex, which refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that distinguish females and males.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that gender and sex are not binary and exist on a continuum. This means that there is a diverse range of gender identities, such as transgender, genderqueer and agender, as well as many sex variations as in the case of intersex people.</p> <p>The terms women/female and men/male are used in this policy to mirror the standard gender categories used within sport, although it is recognised that such terms may not be inclusive of all identities.</p>
Gender equity	<p>Gender equity refers to the process of being fair and just to women and men, acknowledging that their needs, interests and experiences may differ due to the social context. Gender equity requires allocating resources, programs and decision-making fairly between genders, and takes into account that different strategies are often necessary to address existing imbalances and achieve equal opportunities and outcomes for all participants.</p>

Gender equality	Gender equality refers to the identical treatment of, and provision of resources to, women and men. Gender equality may be best practice in some cases, however in other cases it may not result in fair or equivalent outcomes if the particular needs of each gender are not taken into account.
Gender lens	Applying a gender lens is the process of assessing how people of different genders may be impacted differently by a program, practice or policy, for example. When gender-based considerations become part of the design, implementation and evaluation of all activities, this is known as gender mainstreaming.

5. Context

5.1 In formulating this policy, Melbourne University Sport acknowledges the following contextual factors:

- a) That women have historically been disadvantaged in sport, due to traditional gender-based expectations and resulting barriers to participation, and a lack of opportunities;
- b) That participants of different genders may have different needs and preferences in relation to undertaking sport and recreational activities;
- c) That all students contribute to Melbourne University Sport through payment of the Student Services and Amenities Fee, and deserve participation opportunities that are accessible to and inclusive of all.

6. Policy objectives

6.1 To provide for fair and equitable outcomes, Melbourne University Sport will work to:

- a) Provide equitable opportunities – in terms of number, scope and quality – for students of all genders to participate in sport and recreational activities;
- b) Allocate funding for programs and activities in a way that demonstrates overall fairness to female and male participants;
- c) Ensure availability of sporting opportunities for each gender at all levels of participation, from beginner to elite;
- d) Apply a gender lens to the design and ongoing improvement of all programs and initiatives;
- e) Ensure that participants of each gender have equitable access to the highest quality facilities and equipment available to MU Sport and its affiliated clubs;

- f) Identify gender-based disadvantage and underrepresentation in participation where they may occur, and implement proactive measures for addressing these;
- g) Promote participation opportunities and sporting achievements in a way that demonstrates equal valuing of women's and men's sport;
- h) Facilitate leadership opportunities for participants of all genders, particularly in areas or roles where one gender has been historically underrepresented;
- i) Use its influence to advocate for equitable opportunities for participants of all genders in university sport.

7. Measuring success

7.1 Melbourne University Sport will:

- a) Ensure the accurate collection and recording of participation and membership data by gender across all programs;
- b) Monitor data to track participation trends, demand and progress toward equal levels of participation;
- c) Document how gender has been taken into account in the planning and implementation of programs and initiatives;
- d) Report on gender equity outcomes in a transparent and accessible manner.

8. Review

- 8.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Melbourne University Sport Advisory Board every two years.

Appendix 3: Stakeholder interview questions

MU Sport staff

The following questions are the generic questions asked to MU Sport staff members. Each individual was also asked to provide information, insights and in some cases data for their particular portfolio within MU Sport. Some of the broader questions contained in this list were also asked of the MU Sport Advisory Board Chair, the Director, Students and Equity, and UMSU representatives.

- Tell me a bit about your role, and how long you've been at MU Sport.
- Is there data on (area of participation) by gender? If so, has this changed much over time?
- How would you say MU Sport tracks in terms of female participation in (area of MU Sport)?
- In your experience, are there any major differences in the ways that male and female students/members/clubs use the facilities and programs?
- Are there any particular comments/feedback items/criticisms that tend to come from one gender more than the other?
- Looking at the organisation generally, how do you perceive the state of gender equity in MU Sport in terms of the programs/services/events offered?
- In what ways do you think MU Sport could improve its gender equity practices in terms of the services and opportunities offered?
- If you could make any improvements that would assist with gender equity within the organisation, what would they be?
- What would you say are the biggest barriers to women's participation in sport, both in society generally and in a university context?
- How do you think these could be addressed/overcome in a university sport context?

Sport Clubs

The following questions were asked of participating sport clubs in interviews, or alternatively issued to them in a written questionnaire via email.

Membership & growth

- Is women's participation in your sport growing?
- How many teams of each gender does your club have, and what levels do they play at (roughly divided into beginner/intermediate/competitive or elite)?
- Briefly describe the trends over time in terms of overall membership numbers and the ratio of male to female members.
- Has your club had to turn away potential members due to an oversubscription of teams or a lack of resources?
 - If so, roughly how many players of each gender had to be turned away each season?
 - How was this done (e.g. through trials, registering players on a first come first served basis, etc.)?
- What is the yearly registration fee?
- Does your club offer social teams or modified forms of the sport (such as a training or playing only opportunities, small-sided competitions etc.)?
- Has your club, now or in the past, made special efforts to attract more women to the club? If so, how was this done?

- Some clubs are reaching a point where they are no longer able to simply add new teams due to a cap on resources, especially playing and training facilities. If this is or was the case for your club, how would you go about increasing female participation?

Facilities & resources

- How are fields/courts and training/match timeslots allocated? What considerations are made in this process?
- Would you say men's and women's teams are given equal access to the "prime time"/optimal match and training timeslots? Why/why not?
- Would you say that the quality of equipment, training and home facilities used by men's and women's teams is generally of the same standard?
- Do you feel that the "home" facilities your club uses (whether on or off campus) are welcoming for women, such as, for example, including unisex provisions for toilets and showers, well-lit internal and external spaces, equal access to memorabilia space, baby change facilities, etc.?

Governance & funding

- Is your club governed by a single board/committee, or are there separate men's and women's committees?
 - Does your current system work well, or do you think it could work better?
- What is the breakdown by gender of committee/board membership?
- Does your club have a whole club approach to negotiating funding and other revenue, or are men's and women's teams/divisions/committees responsible for organising this themselves? (Funding and revenue here includes funding from MU Sport, sponsorship, grants, fundraising, donations, etc.)
 - Who benefits from these streams of funding/revenue ie. is it generally spent as needed across the whole club, divided equally or proportionately between men's and women's teams, spent by whichever part of the club collected it, etc.?
- What is the direct funding your club receives from MU Sport put towards and would you say that this benefits male and female members equally/proportionately to membership numbers?

Miscellaneous

- How many female coaches does your club have? Do the coaches and volunteers generally reflect the membership of the club in terms of gender?
- What do you see as the biggest barriers for women to get involved in your club? These can be practical/logistical or societal.
 - As coaches or volunteers
 - As players
- Are there any ways in which you think your club could become more equitable for women?
- How could MU Sport support your club in providing more, or more equitable, opportunities for women?
- Any other comments?

Australian University Sport (AUS)

The questions below were issued to AUS in a written questionnaire.

- How was the Inclusion & Diversity Guideline (and/or its predecessor policies) developed and was it developed in response to anything in particular?
- The Guideline talks about providing equal opportunity to all in terms of competing. Does this also apply to other practical aspects of organising AUS competitions, such as, for example, the allocation of facilities to male and female competitions and the allocation of timeslots for men's and women's competitions?
 - How are facilities and timeslots for competitions allocated, and is gender equity a consideration in this process?
- What sorts of data does AUS collect on female participation rates, and if such data is collected, what is the approximate percentage of male and females at AUG and SUG...
 - As athletes?
 - As coaches/managers?
 - Has this changed much over time? If so, why?
- Would you say that male and female athletes in any given sport are treated equally? Are there any sports where you think the opportunities provided to women, or to men, could be improved to be more equitable?
- Has AUS in the past identified any barriers to women's participation (as athletes or coaches/managers), or ways in which female participants have been traditionally disadvantaged, and if so what has been put in place to address this?
- Do you have any other comments regarding AUS's approach to inclusion/gender equity?

Other universities

The following questions were sent via email to Monash University Sport/Team MONASH and Sydney University Sport. Sydney University Sport responded by providing their gender equity policy.

- Do you currently have a policy or any guidelines relating to gender equity for sports participants? If so:
 - When was this developed, and was it developed in response to anything in particular?
 - What areas of sport does it cover (eg. sports clubs, intervarsity sport, fitness, scholarships, coaches, media coverage etc.)?
 - Has the policy made a difference to gender equity in terms of opportunities offered to students? How is success measured?
 - Does the policy relate to all sport participants/users or just students?
- What data do you collect that measures participation by gender?
- Do you have any mechanisms in place to ensure funding put towards male and female participation (whether through clubs, intervarsity competitions, etc.) is equal, or proportionate to the number of participants of each gender?
- Do you have any programs or strategies designed to alleviate barriers to female participation as athletes/sport participants (eg. women only gym timeslots or spaces, women only beginners sessions for particular sports, childcare for participants' children, etc.)?
- Do you have any programs or strategies designed to alleviate barriers to female participation as coaches/administrators/volunteers (eg. support to undertake female coaching clinics, women in sport networks, etc.)?
- Do you have policies/procedures for allocating facilities and resources (including fields/courts, match/training timeslots, etc.), and is gender equity a consideration here?

- Are women well represented in sports leadership, and have steps been taken in the past to ensure this is the case (eg. gender targets or quotas on the governing board/committee, leadership programs, etc.)?
- Is gender equity a consideration in the awarding of sports scholarships? If so, how is gender taken into consideration?
- Are there any mechanisms for reviewing or measuring progress on gender equity goals, if applicable? If so, what are these?
 - Do you have a staff member or committee whose role it is to ensure gender equity is a consideration in the organisation?
- Are there any other ways not already addressed in which your organisation supports female sport participation and participants, whether as athletes/fitness members/volunteers/coaches, etc.?
- Any other comments?