



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

# **Her Sport Her Way Grant Program Evaluation**

## 2023 Report



# Acknowledgements

The report was prepared by the Sport & Recreation Intervention & Epidemiology Research (SPRINTER) Group. SPRINTER is part of the Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney.

This report was prepared on 30 June 2023 by:

Nicole Halim

Dr Indigo Willing

Bridget Foley

Dr Katherine Owen

**SPRINTER, Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney.**

ISBN: 978-1-74210-571-0

## Suggested citation

*Halim N, Willing I, Foley B & Owen K. Her Sport Her Way Grant Program Evaluation- 2023 Report. SPRINTER Group, Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney. 2023.*

We acknowledge the Office of Sport Her Sport Her Way team for their collaboration and support for this independent, rigorous evaluation of the Her Sport Her Way grant program.

Kerry Turner	Manager, Participation and Partnerships, Sector Performance
Margot Zaska	Project Officer, Participation & Partnerships
Anne Jackson	Project Officer, Participation & Partnerships
Cristy Cotter	Senior Project Officer, Participation & Partnerships
Andrew Putt	Director, Sector Performance

## Purpose of this Report

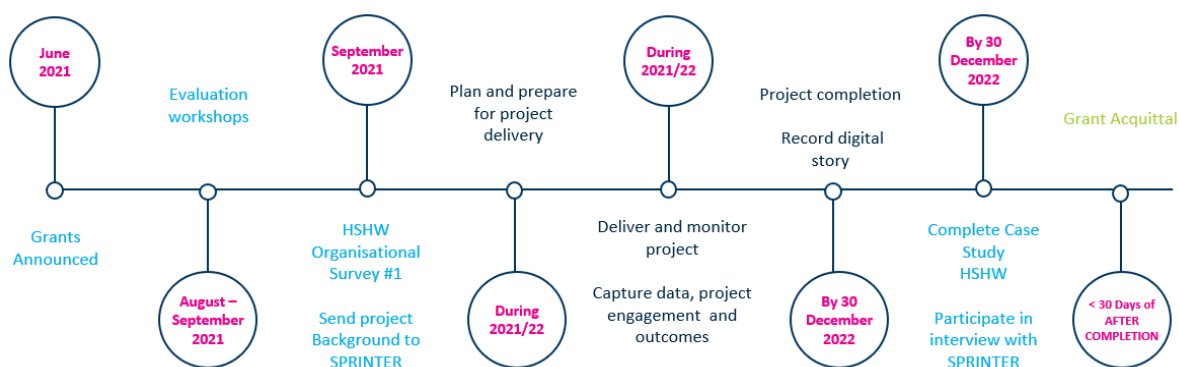
This is the second evaluation report from the SPRINTER evaluation of the Her Sport Her Way Grant Program (2019-2023). The Her Sport Her Way Grant Program is currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> Round.

The significant impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the deliveries of several funded projects led to subsequent delays in reporting. This evaluation report presents interim findings of the grant projects that have been awarded and outcomes achieved by completed grant projects during the period July 2021 and April 2023.

The schematic below represents the Her Sport Her Way Grant Program delivery timeline for organisations that were successful recipients in Round 2 of the grant program.

*Her Sport Her Way grant program 2021-2022 delivery timeline*

## HSHW Grant Timeline...



## Executive Summary

In a progressive stride towards empowering women and girls in the sports sector, the Her Sport Her Way Grant Program stands as a pivotal initiative of the NSW Government's Her Sport Her Way strategy. With an unwavering commitment to fostering inclusivity and diversity, this program aims to amplify the presence and value of women and girls in the sport sector.

The Her Sport Her Way grant supports State Sporting Organisations to develop and execute new, innovative initiatives that will encourage and retain participation of women and girls in sports, while also nurturing a gender-inclusive sporting culture both on and off the field.

By delving into the achievements, challenges, and key learnings of funded initiatives, this evaluation offers valuable insights to inform government officials and policymakers in shaping the trajectory of women and girls in sports across the state.

The **participation-focused programs** achieved success through the following strategies:

- **Collaborative and flexible approaches**, moving beyond traditional 'top-down' methods.
- Sport leaders emphasised the importance of **listening, co-designing, and accommodating participant responses**, creating essential bridges between envisioned changes and on-ground implementation.
- **Empowering local community** stakeholders, clubs, and associations to **lead program delivery** proved beneficial, strengthening brand awareness, and **ensuring the sustainability of initiatives** beyond the grant funding period.
- Despite challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions, **online technology helped extend program reach, breaking down geographical and financial barriers and increasing overall participation.**

The **leadership-focused programs** highlighted the importance of:

- Organisations being **adaptable and open to change**. These were cornerstones of successful leadership strategies, particularly in the face of COVID-19 challenges.
- Expert guest speakers, storyboarding, and **hands-on experiences** through on-field involvement and **mentorship were effective in cultivating emerging leaders.**
- Experienced leaders benefited from **recognition, networking opportunities**, and senior-level skills building, with practical applications extending beyond sports into everyday life.

The Her Sport Her Way grant funding had a **significant positive impact** on increasing organisational capability and capacity to **design, deliver, and evaluate innovative programs** while fostering gender-inclusive cultures and environments.

- The benefits were diverse and multidimensional, encompassing health, social, and economic aspects.

- Importantly, some benefits, such as **understanding the mental health advantages of gender-inclusive environments and increased emotional intelligence**, were intangible but highly valuable.
- The **inclusion of boys, men, non-binary, and gender-diverse individuals as valuable contributors** to participation and leadership were acknowledged, with potential for further exploration.

Based on these evaluation findings, it is recommended that support and funding for the Her Sport Her Way grant program remain in place.

- Emphasising **collaboration, flexibility, and inclusivity** will further enhance the program's impact.
- Explicitly **targeting adolescent girls** and exploring the **inclusion of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals** may also provide valuable insights and advance gender equity in sports.
- Sharing these findings widely within the sports sector will **foster more gender-inclusive environments** and inspire future project ideas for Her Sport Her Way funding rounds.

The Her Sport Her Way grant program has the potential to **catalyse positive change, empowering women and girls** to excel both on and off the field.

# Contents

Her Sport Her Way Grant Program Evaluation .....	0
Acknowledgements.....	1
Purpose of this Report .....	2
Executive Summary.....	3
Contents .....	5
Introduction.....	8
Her Sport Her Way Grant Program.....	8
Program objectives.....	9
Grant Program Rounds.....	9
Program evaluation and reporting .....	10
Findings from the 2021 HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Report.....	10
Evaluation approach.....	11
Data collection.....	11
Organisational survey .....	11
Evaluation caveats.....	11
Case study.....	12
Qualitative Interview/s.....	12
Findings.....	14
Data collection sources and available data .....	14
Building evaluation capacity in SSOs.....	15
Evaluation training and planning.....	15
Project descriptions.....	16
Objective: Increase the number of women and girls playing sport and improve retention of adolescent girls .....	18
Successful strategies for increasing participation .....	19
Challenges to increasing participation.....	20
Objective: Increase the number of women in leadership positions both on and off the field .....	22
Successful strategies to increasing women in leadership positions .....	23
Challenges to increasing women in leadership positions.....	23

Objective: Improve gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments.....	25
Successful strategies to creating gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments.....	25
Challenges to creating gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments.....	26
Survey data.....	27
Junior and adult player memberships.....	27
Participation of women and girls (vs men and boys) in various sporting roles, on and off the field .....	27
Strategies off the field.....	28
Strategies on the field.....	29
Formal policies and strategies.....	32
Inclusive facility design awareness.....	32
HSHW grant projects.....	33
Case Study 11: ‘I am a Girl I Can Do Anything’ Projects – Basketball NSW.....	33
Case Study 12: Girls on Track ‘Dare to be Different’ events in Sydney and Newcastle – Motor Sport Australia.....	35
Case Study 13: ‘Next Gen’ Female Gymnastics Leaders - Gymnastics NSW.....	37
Case Study 14: ‘Go Row Indoor’ project - Rowing NSW.....	38
Case Study 15: ‘Rowing Wrap’ project – Rowing NSW.....	39
Case Study 16: ‘Sailing Her Way’ training program – Sailability NSW.....	40
Case Study 17: ‘Her Skate Sport’ – Skate NSW.....	42
Case Study 18: ‘Engaging Mothers and Friends in softball’ – Softball NSW.....	43
Case Study 19: ‘SHEroses’ program – Tennis NSW.....	45
Case Study 20: ‘Building leadership skills in female athletes’ – Cricket NSW.....	46
Case Study 21: ‘She Rides: Zero to Hero’ project - AusCycling.....	47
Case Study 22: ‘Recognise and increase the visibility of female diving role models’ - Diving NSW.....	49
Case Study 23: ‘Mental Health Network’ project – NSW Ice Skating.....	51
Case Study 24: ‘Coach Her Way’ – Rowing NSW.....	53
Case Study 25: ‘Girls Making Waves’ (Round 2) - Water Polo NSW.....	54
Case Study 26: ‘Women in Sport Leadership’ – NSW Rugby League.....	56
Conclusions.....	58
Contact.....	59

Appendix 1: HSHW Grant Program Logic Model .....	60
<i>Inputs</i> .....	60
<i>Activities</i> .....	60
<i>Outputs</i> .....	60
Appendix 2: Funded Projects in Rounds 1 - 4 (2019-2023).....	62
Round 1 (2019-2020).....	62
Round 2 (2020-2021).....	62
Leadership projects (2020-2021).....	63
Round 3 (2021-2023).....	63
Round 4 (2022-2023).....	63
Appendix 3: HSHW Case Study Template.....	64



## Introduction

The participation and empowerment of women and girls in sport remain a key priority for the New South Wales (NSW) Government. Despite progress, barriers to their involvement persist, and gender representation within the sports sector remains imbalanced. To address this issue, the NSW Government introduced the Women in Sport Strategy - Her Sport Her Way (2019-2023), which seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable sports sector, where women and girls are valued, recognised, and provided with equal opportunities to lead and participate in sports.

## Her Sport Her Way Grant Program

A principal component of the Her Sport Her Way strategy is the Her Sport Her Way (HSHW) Grant Program, a key initiative aimed at empowering women and girls in the realm of sports. Over the course of four years, the grant program commits more than \$2.5 million to support NSW State Sporting Organisations (SSOs)<sup>1</sup> in developing and implementing innovative initiatives that enhance women and girls' participation in sports, both on and off the field, with a strong emphasis on diversity and inclusion.

The Office of Sport held an information session to provide an overview of the grant program eligibility requirements, application process, [grant guidelines](#) and [FAQs](#). The Office of Sport encouraged grant applicants to utilise the Her Sport Her Way Participation Planning Tool (PPT) and Think Tank resources, which showcased the latest research, insights, and case studies. These activities were designed to support sports organisations in planning and prioritising projects, and developing and submitting quality grant applications.

The grant program offers funding across three project categories:

---

<b>Participation</b>	Projects that aim to reduce barriers to participation for women and girls and create innovative, inclusive sport experiences that reflect what women and girls want.
<b>Leadership</b>	Projects that aim to attract, develop, and retain female coaches, officials, and leaders, and projects that recognise and celebrate their achievements.
<b>Capability</b>	Projects that aim to build the capability of organisations to increase the participation of women and girls both on and off the field, and projects that build gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments.

---

---

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of this evaluation report, State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) refer to both SSOs and State Sporting Organisations for people living with a Disability (SSODs)

## Program objectives

The overall objectives of the HSHW grant program include:

- Increase the number of women and girls playing sport
- Improve the retention of adolescent girls
- Increase the number of women in leadership positions both on and off the field
- Improve gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments

These objectives have remained consistent since the launch of the HSHW grant program.



## Grant Program Rounds

There have been four grant rounds during 2019-2023.

- Round 1 (2019-20) **27 projects across 23 SSOs** were awarded their share in \$635,130.
- Round 2 (2020-21) **24 projects across 17 SSOs** were awarded their share in \$641,158.
- Round 3 (2021-22) **24 projects across 20 SSOs** were awarded their share in \$650,000.
- Round 4 (2022-23) **26 projects across 17 SSOs** were awarded their share in \$625,280.

In total, the HSHW grant program has awarded \$2,551,568 to **101 projects across 38 SSOs** to achieve the HSHW objectives. A list of the HSHW funded projects is accessible [here](#).

In addition, an investment of \$229,027 was provided for 9 leadership projects across 9 SSOs aligned with the HSHW objectives under the Strategic Partnership program (2020 -21). These 9 projects have been included in the evaluation findings. A list of the leadership funded projects is accessible [here](#).

## Program evaluation and reporting

The Office of Sport engaged the SPRINTER group in a policy-research partnership to conduct the evaluation of the Her Sport Her Way grant program (2019-2023).

This partnership included designing an evaluation framework (including a logic model, research questions, and reporting templates for grant recipients), building capacity of SSOs to evaluate their projects, ongoing evaluation support for funded projects, and providing SSOs with the latest research and insights for planning).

The evaluation of each project was the responsibility of the funded SSOs as outlined in the HSHW Grant Program funding agreement<sup>2</sup>.

## Findings from the 2021 HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Report

The first HSHW grant evaluation report included 10 completed projects funded in Round 1 of the grant program. At the time of previous reporting, 17 projects from Round 1 had yet to be completed. COVID-19 restrictions provided a significant challenge to all funded organisations in their capacity to deliver and complete projects within initial target delivery windows. Unprecedented impacts of the pandemic have continued to cause extensions in delivery timelines.

The previous (2021) HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Report can be accessed [here](#).

---

<sup>2</sup> NSW Government Her Sport Her Way Grant Program Guidelines 2022/2023

## Evaluation approach

SPRINTER adopted a mixed-methods approach for the evaluation of the HSHW grant program. The approach aimed to empower project leaders and build their capacity to conduct their own evaluations of the grant funded projects. Human research ethics approval was gained for this evaluation from the University of Sydney's Human Research Ethics Committee (Reference number 2020/421).

The research questions for the HSHW grant program evaluation are:

1. How does the HSHW grant program influence the capability and capacity of state sporting organisations to create gender-inclusive environments?
2. What strategies work to increase participation of women and girls in sport on and off the field?

## Data collection

Three methods of data collection (surveys, case studies, and qualitative interviews) were used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of the HSHW grant program on funded SSOs, to assess the delivery of their funded initiatives, and their contribution to achieving the aims of the broader HSHW strategy.

Evaluation data presented in the current report covers the period of data collection after publication of the previous HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Report (from June 2021 to April 2023).

## Organisational survey

The organisational survey was co-designed by SPRINTER and the Office of Sport to monitor changes in the funded SSOs formal, quantifiable actions towards making the sports sector more gender inclusive. The survey was administered by the Office of Sport using Survey Manager. The survey collected information from SSOs Chief Executives (or equivalent) regarding their organisation's use of the HSHW PPT, annual membership data of players and non-players by gender, and to share policies, strategies and actions the organisation had in place during the previous 12 months. This information provides a reliable, organisational-wide summary of recent actions to create gender-inclusive sport environments.

The survey was designed to be administered once directly after the evaluation workshop, before commencing program delivery (pre-survey), and again 12 months later (post-survey). These time points were intended to represent a pre- post- comparison during the grant period.

## Evaluation caveats

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted SSOs in their delivery of funded projects. Subsequent delays of most projects have led to clashes and/or delays in scheduled survey rollouts for organisations that received multiple HSHW grants. As such, only 3 of 29 (10%) organisations have completed both a pre- and post- survey in the current reporting period. As this sample size is not sufficient to accurately assess organisational changes, the survey data have been combined to represent one cross-sectional time point. Therefore, the survey findings presented in this report are

intended to represent insights into the current and collective state of how funded SSOs are performing in fostering a gender-inclusive environment for women and girls across the sporting sector.

Discretion should be taken when comparing data presented in the current and previous reports as organisational changes are most accurately monitored when assessed within the same individual organisations. Between the previous and current HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Reports, of a total of 40 unique organisations surveyed, there is an overlap of 11 organisations that have provided survey data.

## Case study

SPRINTER developed a HSHW case study template specifically for this evaluation to capture consistent and rich insights from funded initiatives (see Appendix 3). The case study method provides each organisation with flexibility in their evaluation approach for their unique initiatives. The consistent template then enabled data to be collected in a consistent way by SPRINTER and directed organisations on the key information expected in their reporting from the outset.

Project leaders completed the case study template in two parts:

1. Background - The background part of the case study was completed for each initiative and submitted to SPRINTER after participation in the evaluation workshop. The background information allowed the SPRINTER group to check participants understanding of the workshop content and provide feedback and resources to support the evaluation of their funded initiative.
2. Project delivery – This part provided a comprehensive report of what occurred during the delivery of the funded initiative, the key learnings, challenges, and outcomes achieved. The Project delivery part of the case study was completed and submitted to SPRINTER for review after the delivery had ceased.

## Qualitative Interview/s

Interviews were used to gain an in-depth understanding of changes to sector capability and capacity to reduce gender inequities. After the funded initiative was completed, we invited each organisation's Chief Executive (or equivalent) and Project Leader to participate in an evaluation interview; participation in the interview was voluntary and not part of the funding agreement.

The sports sector's increased capability and capacity are critical to both the HSHW strategy and grant program success; however, these are widely considered difficult to measure<sup>3</sup>. After significant discussions

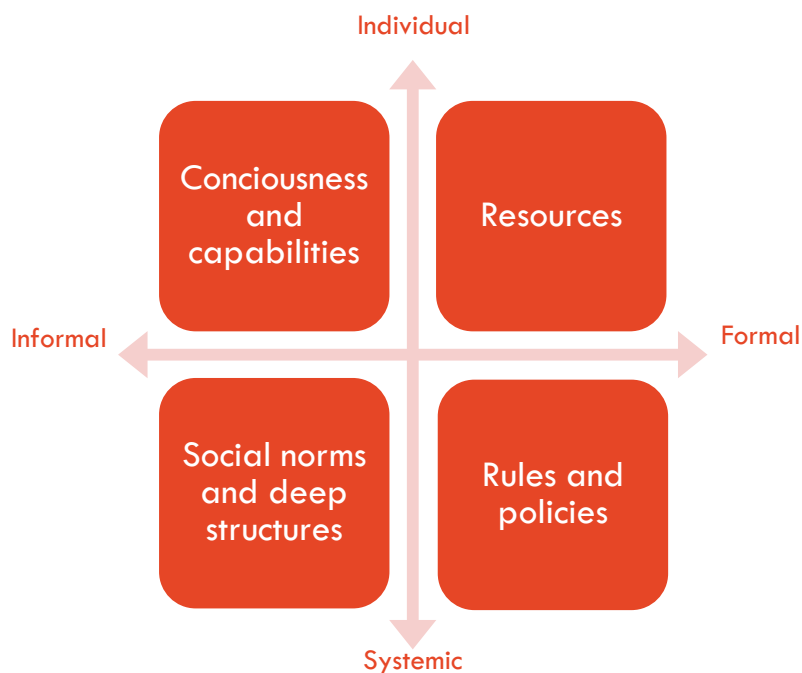
---

<sup>3</sup> Kloosterman J, Benning E, Fyles R. 'Measuring the unmeasurable': gender mainstreaming and cultural change. *Gender & Development*. 2012;20(3):531-545.

and literature searching, SPRINTER identified and agreed upon an appropriate theoretical framework to guide the development of our interview guide - Aruna Rao's 'Gender at Work' framework<sup>4</sup>.

This 'Gender at work' framework and supporting tools provided a well-tested approach to analysing gender, development, and organisational change<sup>5</sup>, although it has not been used in the sports sector previously. The 'Gender at Work' framework encourages consideration of change on a continuum from the individual through to system-wide; it considered formal changes such as a new staff appointment or new strategy and informal changes such as changes in attitudes and beliefs. Figure 1 shows four quadrants that have been used to enhance our understanding of how gender inclusion and organisational change can occur in the sports sector.

Figure 1. Gender at Work analytical framework tool



SPRINTER designed a semi-structured interview guide using this theory-driven approach to understand the impacts of the HSHW grant program on sector capability by exploring the mechanisms and pathways leading to change in each context. Qualitative interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes for SSOs funded for one initiative or 90 minutes for SSOs funded for two initiatives. SPRINTER conducted the interviews over Microsoft Teams, audio/video-recorded and were transcribed for analysis by an

<sup>4</sup> Aruna Rao, David Kelleher, Joanne Sandler, Carol Miller. Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organisations. 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Gender at work framework. Genderatwork.org. 2018. Available from: <https://genderatwork.org/analytical-framework/>

Australian transcription company, WayWithWords (<https://waywithwords.net/>). The analysis was conducted in NVivo, version 12, using an abductive Framework Method approach<sup>6</sup>.

Illustrative quotes from interview participants are presented throughout this report but have been de-identified to ensure anonymity. The project category (Participation, Leadership or Capability) has been used to provide additional understanding about what grant recipients reported in their interviews.

## Findings

The NSW Government has awarded 41 SSOs funding to deliver 110 projects during 2019-2023. This includes 101 projects under HSHW grant program and 9 leadership projects under the Strategic Partnership program (2020-21). Among the 110 funded projects, 26 (24%) have been completed to date, of which 10 have been previously included in the first HSHW grant program evaluation report (see Appendix 2).

The overall low completion rate can be attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 causing several funded organisations to experience delays in project delivery and/or submitting a variation request to meet target project delivery or completion windows.

## Data collection sources and available data

In this current report, we have summarised available findings and lessons learnt of the 16 remaining completed projects by the three HSHW grant program objectives. These findings represent a consolidated synthesis of the following (see pages 18 to 26):

- **Qualitative interviews**- 7 interviews conducted regarding 6 projects. 3 CEO (Chief Executive Officer) participants and 6 Project Leaders. Average length = 62 minutes
- **Case studies**- 16 completed case studies.

Additionally, to monitor grant impacts on changes across the sport sector over time, 32 organisations that have completed either a pre- or post- **survey** from the time of the previous report until current are also included in this report (see pages 27 to 32).

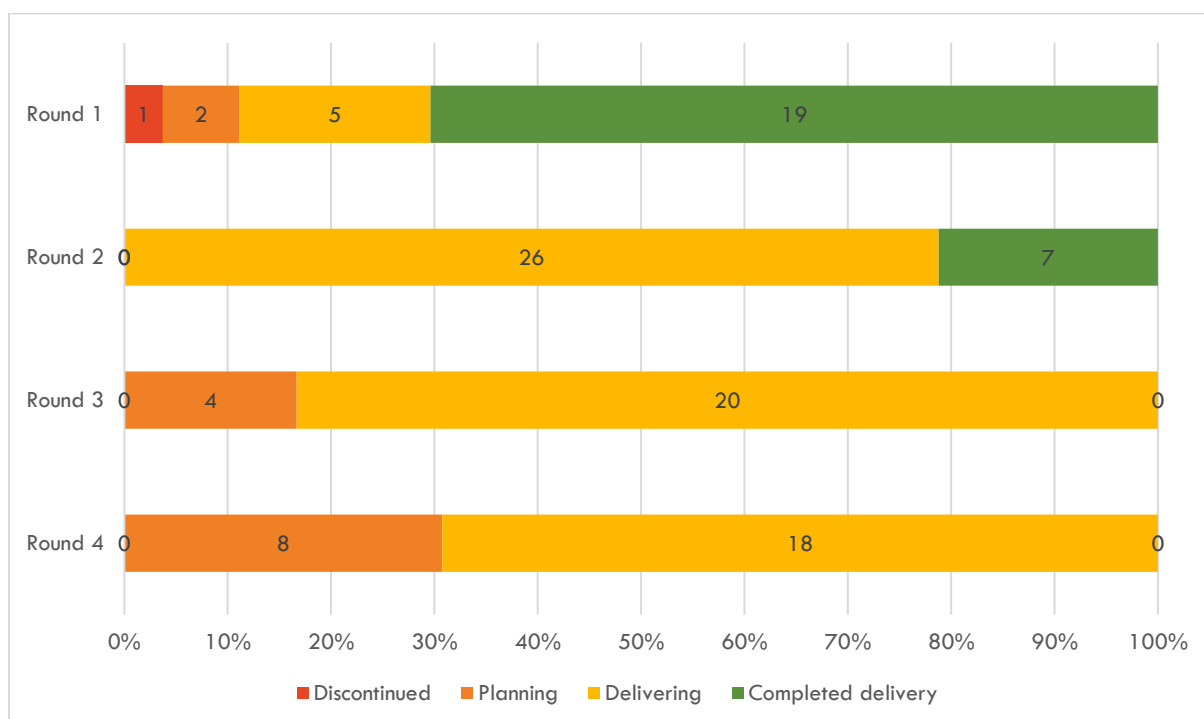
---

<sup>6</sup> Ritchie, J. & Spencer, L., 1994. Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In B. Bryman & R. Burgess, *Analysing qualitative data*. pp. 173–194

## Building evaluation capacity in SSOs

Grant recipients were required to attend evaluation training workshops before commencing delivery. Representatives from 107 projects (97%) participated in the evaluations workshop. The SPRINTER group provided ongoing evaluation support and training throughout the delivery of the funded projects. Most grant recipients developed an evaluation plan prior to project delivery with SPRINTER (Round 1: 93%; Round 2: 100%; Round 3: 83%; Round 4: 69%) (Figure 2). The SSO representatives that participated in the evaluation workshops reported increasing their knowledge, skills, and confidence to conduct their own evaluation.

Figure 2. Progress of funded projects by HSHW funding round



## Evaluation training and planning

	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Total projects	27	33	24	26
Attended an evaluation workshop or training	27 (100%)	33 (100%)	21 (88%)	26 (100%)
Submitted an evaluation plan	25 (93%)	33 (100%)	20 (83%)	18 (69%)
Completed delivery and submitted a case study to the evaluation	19 (70%)	7 (21%)	NA	NA
Discussed in interview	11	3	NA	NA

Note: To date, 19 participants from 11 organisations have participated in an interview about 14 projects.



## Project descriptions

Table 1 presents brief descriptions of the completed projects in Round 1 and Round 2. To further support the findings, we have produced case study vignettes of each completed project (from page 33 to 56 of this report). These case study vignettes provide additional context and understanding regarding what strategies work to increase participation of women and girls in sport on and off the field.

Table 1 Brief project descriptions of completed projects in Round 1 and Round 2 of the HSHW grant program (2019-2023)

Leadership	Participation
<p><b>‘Next Gen’ Female Gymnastics Leaders - Gymnastics NSW</b> A one-year program seeking to increase the number, skill set, and employment opportunities of future female leaders in grassroots gymnastics through professional development.</p>	<p><b>‘I Am a Girl I Can Do Anything’ projects – Basketball NSW</b> A series of four designed to attract, re-engage, and retain women and girl players, whilst forging a pathway for women administrators and coaches to support and strengthen their impact in basketball.</p>
<p><b>‘Sailing Her Way’- Sailability NSW</b> A training program designed to increase women's participation in sailing and promote women's leadership roles within Sailability NSW branches.</p>	<p><b>Girls on Track ‘Dare to be Different’ events – Motorsport Australia</b> A program aiming to boost young girls' participation in and connections to motor sport through workshops and activities designed to boost their confidence by meeting women who have a successful background in motor sports.</p>
<p><b>‘SHEroes’ program - Tennis NSW</b> A program aiming to empower women in tennis and provide them with opportunities to gain experience, develop, and grow as leaders.</p>	<p><b>‘Go Row Indoor’ - Rowing NSW</b> A modified indoor rowing program encouraging women who have taken a break from rowing (or other sports) and looking to get back into being physically active.</p>
<p><b>Building Leadership skills in female athletes – Cricket NSW</b> A leadership development program, consisting of educational sessions for young and emerging women elite cricketers.</p>	<p><b>‘Rowing Wrap’ project - Rowing NSW</b> A project for women and girls' retention, acquisition, and participation in rowing.</p>
<p><b>Recognise and increase the visibility of female diving role models - Diving NSW</b> A project that recognised and increased visibility of women role models in diving through storyboarding women leaders and mentoring initiatives.</p>	<p><b>Her Skate Sport – Skate NSW</b> An 8-week program consisting of seminars, workshops and courses aiming to enhance the visibility and accessibility of women (and girls) across all areas of participation in Roller Sports.</p>

Leadership	Participation
<p><b>'Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) and Mental Health Network' project - NSW Ice Skating</b></p> <p>Establishment of a network of trained individuals equipped with skills to support the mental health of members (including young girls) in ice skating.</p>	<p><b>Engaging Mothers and Friends in softball – Softball NSW</b></p> <p>An 8-week introductory program encouraging mothers and their friends to play softball for the first time or return to the sport.</p>
<p><b>Women in Sport Leadership - NSW Rugby League</b></p> <p>An innovative training initiative designed to support the career development of women in sport leadership, with a focus on coaching.</p>	<p><b>'She Rides: Zero to Hero' project – AusCycling</b></p> <p>An innovative initiative aiming to break down entry-level barriers for women looking to engage in bike riding.</p>
<p><b>'Coach Her Way' - Rowing NSW</b></p> <p>Networking and development opportunities designed to pair existing coaches with mentor coaches to increase the number of women in coaching positions.</p>	<p><b>'Girls Making Waves' - Water Polo NSW</b></p> <p>A modified water polo program aiming to retain young girls' participation in the sport, including women-only coach and referee sessions, as well as training of 'Chief Fun Officers.'</p>

## Objective: Increase the number of women and girls playing sport and improve retention of adolescent girls

The **participation funded projects engaged 1627 women and girls** in a range of initiatives delivered through the HSHW grant program. All of these were successfully delivered with the HSHW funding. The participants in funded activities were a mixture of girls and adult women; this reflects the membership base of the funded organisations (55% adult and 45% junior members).

Embedding social media as a core component of marketing and communications strategies has been reported by SSOs to be invaluable and highly effective in driving the promotion of activities and events and boosting participant engagement with funded programs. **The participation funded projects have successfully engaged 551,192 participants through social media platforms** such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter.

One of the most important drivers of success across the programs was through multi-level insights and collaboration rather than just 'top down' approaches to recruitment, participation, and retention. For instance, sport leaders often placed an emphasis on listening, co-designing, and being flexible to accommodate participant responses within the programs. This also created important bridges and connections between how sports managers envisage change and how they play out on the ground in terms of the kinds of directions that were taken once rolled out.

At the same time, the continuous engagement with professionals who could take the lead and have long-term experience was also crucial for developing a certain quality and quantity of resources, spokespeople, mentors, and role models, and to boost the image of sports for the widest possible audience. A successful approach for organisations was to appear both welcoming to newcomers and those interested in the leisure aspects, while also portraying the high-performance side of sport for those wishing to compete and advance to an elite level.

Retention across the period of these programs was undoubtedly affected by COVID-19 restrictions. Everyday barriers that may affect retention rates in sport were therefore compounded by additional concerns over physical illness and limitations in relation to prevention. Unforeseen benefits, however, include that the move to online technology often increased the reach and scope of original target populations chosen by sport organisations. For instance, geographical limitations were removed as were cost-related barriers such as childcare for mothers and carers, travel, and time-off work to undertake courses, training, and mentoring meetings.

## Successful strategies for increasing participation

- **Participant-focused models**
  - Engaging players and members in the program design (e.g., hosting youth leader forums, organising networking opportunities) and obtaining participant feedback has provided funded organisations with useful insights into what motivators and barriers can sustain engagement in sport.
- **Story-telling strategies**
  - It was observed that although diversity exists across sport, women and girls can fear being their authentic selves and see it as being a barrier to participation. Building and showcasing persuasive and engaging stories around the participants being themselves and encouraging women and girls to share their experiences has been ‘game changing.’
  - Establishing assets such as photography libraries of sport activities and events was also a productive strategy, with some organisations also emphasising the importance of hiring professional photographers who also knew how to shoot a particular sport, capturing athletes at their best.
  - Including social media for promotional strategies was also a highly effective strategy for reaching wider audiences than traditional printed material alone (that can be restricted by limited distribution opportunities and higher costs). Social media is also well-suited to certain demographics who have been ‘raised’ with technologies such as smart phones and consume information through shorter-running messages and a ‘click culture’ of internet-based news to find out more about sport.
- **Encouraging fun and social play**
  - Expanding programs to include, and sometimes prioritise the social benefits of participation and a social lens on playing opened various sports to a wider age range of women and girls at various life stages and abilities.
  - Having a dedicated person or team to welcome and encourage participants to ensure they have fun was also an effective strategy rather than just brief or superficial statements by coaches at the beginning of sport sessions. For instance, having ‘ambassadors’ and what one organisation called ‘Chief Fun Officers’ assisted participants to feel both welcome and motivated to remain in the sport.
  - Creating broader images of sport to portray it as a relaxed and casual form of leisure, rather than exclusively being a competitive and formal pursuit (e.g., elite athletes in uniforms), was also seen as a vital step to boosting participants’ motivations to engage in the sport.
- **Multigenerational participation**
  - Having a mixture of ages and levels, including at the junior one, was seen by some organisations as not only inclusive but also a positive step to ensuring further participation and stronger retention rates.
- **Engaging local stakeholders in communities**
  - Funded organisations mostly had small, centralised teams with limited capacity to deliver comprehensive state-wide initiatives. Organisations that spent time engaging their affiliated clubs to deliver the HSHW projects with their local communities had good success and tended to strengthen the initiative’s sustainability after the funding period ceased (also when delivery staff remained in place).
- **Adapting to COVID**
  - The ability of funded organisations to remain flexible, agile, and resilient during various phases of their projects was a cornerstone to successful implementation of programs. At

times, innovation was fundamental in building organisations' abilities to pivot and maintain program delivery despite challenges encountered.

- Shifting to online delivery was a common strategy adopted by most organisations during COVID. This approach increased the flexibility of leadership initiatives, improving access for women and girls, especially those living in regional areas, those with work or personal obligations that may clash with the program schedule, and people affected by COVID-related lockdowns, isolation and for maintaining social distancing.
- Moving to online alternatives also reduced the cost for some programs relating to travel expenses for staff, guest speakers and participants and other costs such as venue hire and catering.
- **Strategic timing of programs**
  - Strategically timing programs delivery around recurring or public events that target women and girls was successful in maximising reach, access to, and engagement with the target audience. These events could be internal (i.e., hosted by SSOs) or external (e.g., national or international annual sporting/charity events or awareness days/weeks/months) (e.g., Breast Cancer Awareness month)
  - Tailoring program schedules around participant availabilities was also effective in boosting participation rates, particularly for those that have regular personal or family commitments to attend to.

## Challenges to increasing participation

- **Cost barriers**
  - Various cost barriers can affect participants' decisions to participate in sport. Issues raised included expenses required to participate (e.g., membership fees, competition registration fees)
  - Travel costs can also place financial burdens on participants, particularly during the return from COVID.
- **COVID impacts on planned activities**
  - Funded organisations whose sport relies heavily on infrastructure and facilities (e.g., ice skating) reported challenges with improving retention of participants when loss of infrastructure and facilities required for the sport (e.g., ice rinks) meant that demands for delivery of the sport could not be met.
  - COVID restrictions limited some sports in their ability to deliver funded activities as originally planned, causing some funded organisations to adapt their program delivery. In some circumstances, organisations had to accommodate for budget required to purchase new equipment needed to support modified programs.
  - Loss of venue access, equipment, and common delays from lockdowns and COVID related restrictions also led to organisations needing to reschedule or restructure some of their flagship events.
- **Lack of buy-in of planned activities**
  - There was an issue of balancing the need to remain sustainable by viewing sport as a profitable activity versus more altruistic approaches. This presented an issue for some SSOs that were newly established or that planned to roll out modified or non-traditional forms of sporting activities (including when programs were specifically tailored for women and girls or to be more gender-inclusive).
- **Reliance on volunteers**

- Smaller-scale organisations that relied on a large volunteer workforce for day-to-day tasks found it challenging to improve participation rates due to a lack of staff capacity on the ground that were able to support delivery of programs.
- **Red tape**
  - Adding to the existing challenges described above were administrative tasks, or “red tape” that created specific hurdles (particularly on matters that neither directly nor immediately impact participants on the field). Rollouts and deliveries of new programs and initiatives were often hampered by delays.
  - Having up to date information and data on individuals involved with sport, including for retention purposes, was also an issue. Improvements could be made with more consistently appointed staff who are able to dedicate time to maintaining contact details and in-person ties to participants.

## Objective: Increase the number of women in leadership positions both on and off the field

The funded **projects that focused on leadership engaged 379 women and girls in a range of initiatives** delivered through the HSHW grant program. Programs involved activities such as online educational modules (e.g., webinars), web-based and social media campaigns, formal certifications and accreditations, and providing opportunities for mentoring and networking.

Similar to the participation stream, leadership-focused projects also harnessed the power of social media to drive program engagement. A total of **30,187 social media engagements** were successfully reached through social media content views, posts, comments, reactions and click-throughs.

The aim of all leadership funded project was to increase the number of women and girls in leadership positions on and off the field. Again, being flexible and open to adapting activities in response to changes, challenges or unseen interests were key to growing successful leadership strategies. With the onset of COVID restrictions in 2020-2022, for instance, some programs also expanded their target to include individuals from outside their sport, offering leadership building opportunities to coaches from all sports to participate.

Most programs that set out to provide mentoring and guidance to emerging leaders made use of expert guest speakers who were sport leaders and role models from within their own sport, and some organisations invited leaders from other sports and professional areas to provide different perspectives and increasing the participants' networks.

Another successful strategy was using storytelling and creating profiles of influential and inspiring athletes online who shared their personal narratives as well as professional experiences. As well as doing structured courses, steps to accreditation and workshops, many emerging leaders were also given valuable time 'on the field' and sometimes 'paired' with more senior coaches, judges and officials in real life games, events, and competitions to have practical experiences.

For experienced leaders, recognition through promotional activities and awards was described as an important step- not just for the recipients, who can be under-valued compared to men leaders in sport- but also for inspiring others. Networking activities were also seen as crucial for women leaders in sport to know their experiences are not isolated ones, and to build peer-to-peer sources of support and feedback. Senior-level skills building was also a component of some programs offering vital leadership training in areas such as conflict resolution, understanding and translating policies for members and participants, and creating cohesive and inclusive environments. Gaining skills that were transferable to other areas of life was also a successful outcome, with program participants reporting in feedback how they were able to use some of the tools/ information they gained from the program in their everyday jobs/workplaces outside of sport.

## Successful strategies to increasing women in leadership positions

- **Boosting the profiles of established athletes, passionate ‘change agents’ and emerging leaders**
  - One of the most successful strategies has been focusing on the recruitment of passionate leaders rather than just elite coaches to lead programs and inspire future leaders to build their capacity in leadership roles. Examples from programs also included various efforts to showcase women and girls’ participation in multiple roles in sport, both on and off the field.
  - Aligned with the notion “If she can see it, she can be it” and “run by women, for women,” organisations sought women from a range of skills and backgrounds in leadership positions in their sport to be profiled to showcase how women could excel in leadership positions.
  - Rigorous marketing and communications in displaying these profiles was a worthwhile investment by funded organisations to increase the visibility of women leaders in sport to their target audience. Profiles were often promoted on multiple platforms (e.g., websites, case study videos, social media posts).
  - Women who had strong ties to clubs were also seen as vital, and as the best source of support and authority to ensure opportunities for leadership are set in place.
- **Upskilling through training, formal education, and accreditation**
  - Informal and formally recognised forms of training are also vital. Paying special attention to the development pathways and requirements for the completion of accreditations, training procedures, knowledge of rules and regulations, and other relevant courses was pivotal to progressing women in leadership.
  - These educational aspects and gaining formal recognition for new skills also worked to improve levels of confidence among aspiring leaders and volunteers, such as improving their ability to offer mentoring and expertise in areas such as coaching and judging.
- **Networking and knowledge-sharing**
  - Planning events designed to facilitate social networking between women leaders, from within the same and across different sports, opened opportunities to foster meaningful and productive interactions that were sustained beyond the grant project delivery period.
  - In particular, the use of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook groups) as a networking platform was successful in building flexible occasions for women leaders to socialise alongside their roles in sport and other sectors/personal lives.
  - Whether through online or in person networking, it was observed that women leaders also benefited from knowing they are not alone and could share common experiences, including experiences working in men-dominated environments.
- **Valuing all roles within the organisation**
  - Recognising and embracing that all members within organisations play a valuable role was highlighted as important for successfully steering programs, securing the future of the sport, and keeping up morale.

## Challenges to increasing women in leadership positions

- **Competing commitments and gaps in flexibility and support**



- Organisations commonly reported difficulties with recruiting women into leadership positions due to conflicting timings of the sport itself or coaching requirements/duties and other work commitments.
- Conflicts in timing also affected the capacity of women leaders (or those aspiring to take up leadership positions) who were parents, carers, and individuals with family commitments. Discussions of what childcare support and child-friendly spaces in sport for adult participants may be available were also lacking.
- **Adapting to COVID recovery**
  - Once COVID restrictions eased, several organisations had to re-adapt to in-person events and programs. There was often a lack of confidence and some resistance by leaders to deliver programs, rather than this being a seamless process.
- **Attainment of formal training certificates and qualifications**
  - Many funded organisations (especially ones operating on a smaller scale) are largely volunteer-run. Most reported that it was challenging to engage volunteer leaders when they were asked to commit additional time to attend training, where required, to lead or support delivery of programs and to ensure alignment with the organisation's strategic objectives.
  - In some cases, despite leaders (current and in-training) having years of practical experience, some also did not feel confident taking tests due to long lapses from when they last were formally tested.

## Objective: Improve gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments

The funding had a significant impact on increasing the capability and capacity of funded organisations to develop, deliver and evaluate innovative programs, and reflect on their ability to foster gender inclusive cultures and environments. The areas of improvement that were made were multidimensional, with programs reporting various health, social and economic benefits. These include certain impacts that may be intangible or are not always easy to measure, such as understanding the mental health benefits of gender inclusive environment, and, as one program drew attention to, how it can also contribute to increasing emotional intelligence. Other benefits include having more cohesive teams and effective communication in the workplace, adapting to organisational changes when gender-equity focused projects are embraced, and having greater confidence to navigate conflict and difficult conversations around discrimination and exclusion.

In some sports, effective approaches to boosting women and girls' participation also included considerations of how boys and men can assist, such as with ice-skating requiring or benefiting from mixed gender participation for pair skating and ice dancing. Less evident, but no less important, are considerations of how non-binary and gender-diverse individuals can add to the overall benefits of building up gender inclusive programs. This is not because such individuals are absent in the sports that are funded, but that it fell outside the scope of the program which specifically targeted women and girls. Like the positive impact that boys and men can have in boosting both participation and leadership through inclusively designed programs, the inclusion of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals in the HSHW program will yield valuable insights in the future.

### Successful strategies to creating gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments

- **Creating a unique and consistent brand identity**
  - Displaying cohesiveness throughout the sport (including affiliated organisations and deliverers of funded programs) was identified as an effective strategy to connect women and girls to the sport. Consolidating programs and activities can achieve consistent branding throughout SSOs and thereby, throughout the whole sport.
  - In some cases, programs required a 'rebranding' that was better able to create an alignment between the sport organisation's main identity and something that specifically recognised women and girls. Efforts to link women's and girls' targeted programs with the overall brand of the sport (rather than being totally segregated) was also appreciated. This was considered by funded organisations to be a key enabler in instilling a sense of belonging among women and girls in their sporting communities, and thereby making the sport more welcoming and gender inclusive.
- **Whole-of-organisation vision for gender equity**
  - It was often beneficial when organisations had one or more passionate advocates for gender inclusion who were meaningfully involved in funded programs. Funded organisations that had at least one "champion" for gender inclusion were successful in embedding or emphasising the importance of creating gender-inclusive environments in the organisation's strategic objectives.

- In some projects, this was achieved through the delivery of training and educational sessions about gender inclusion, often run by the champions.
- Having programs that had people who were genuinely committed to building inclusive cultures and environments was also described as more important than just 'having the numbers' via initiatives such as setting quotas.
- **Developing sustainable resources along the way**
  - Funded organisations that developed resources that can be repurposed once the grant project has finished found it easier to keep the project's legacy alive and promote similar gender-inclusive initiatives beyond the implementation period.
  - Keeping communication forums open (e.g., through social media channels or discussion pages) created opportunities for expansion or continuation of gender-inclusive project activities beyond the grant funding period.

### Challenges to creating gender-inclusive sporting cultures and environments

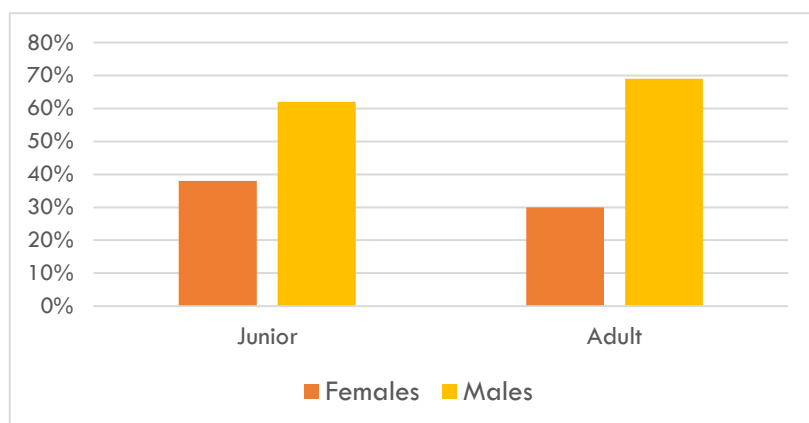
- **Lack of buy-in for active gender inclusion strategies**
  - Clubs and associations do not always prioritise the creation of a gender-inclusive sporting culture. Funded organisations reported that the goal to achieve a more gender-inclusive environment is often overlooked by a primary focus to improve general participation rates in the sport, regardless of gender.
  - Additionally, funded organisations reported difficulties with implementing projects when some program deliverers displayed resistance to modified programming, and instead favoured more traditional versions of the sport. In some situations, SSOs were limited to collaborating with entities that shared a similar vision for gender inclusion.
- **Inadequate gender-inclusive facilities**
  - Facilities that are outdated or left 'run down' may lack certain features that could create barriers for women and girls to participate in the sport. Such facilities could also be unaccommodating with regards to community needs from a multicultural and multi-faith perspective in terms of creating safe and inclusive spaces.
- **Men-dominated environments**
  - Environments that are typically men-dominated are an ongoing issue, and this can extend to outside the spaces where sport is practiced to the places where equipment is bought, suggesting stronger efforts are needed at a cultural level to make girls and women feel comfortable and welcome.

## Survey data

### Junior and adult player memberships

Funded organisations were asked to provide the number of registered players/memberships reported in their last Annual General Meeting. Figure 3 shows the proportions of females and males within junior (0-17 years) and adult (18+ years) age cohorts of registered players.

Figure 3. Proportion of female and male players, by age cohort, in funded organisations



While the proportion of females is higher among junior players (38%) compared to adult players (30%), the overall proportion remains lower than that of males within funded organisations.

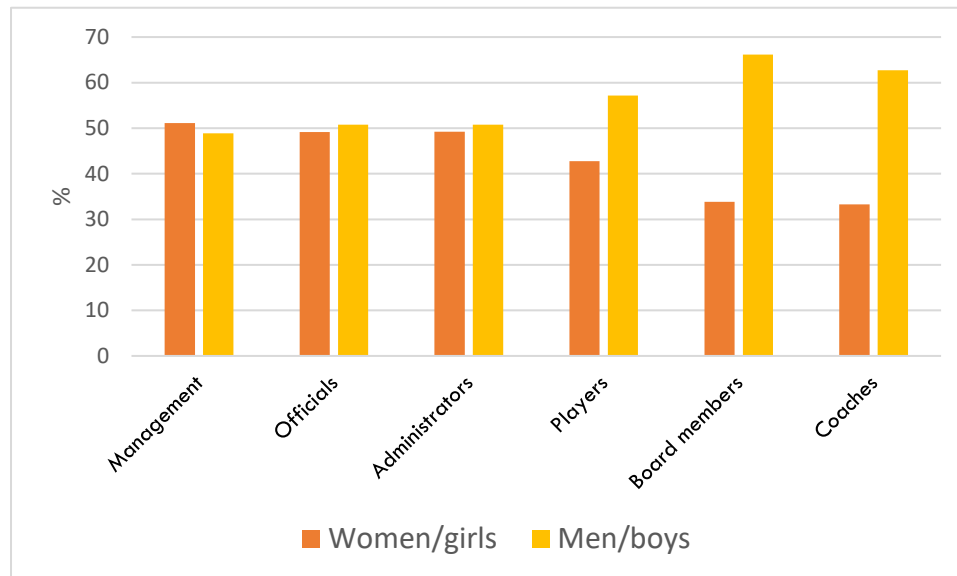
### Participation of women and girls (vs men and boys) in various sporting roles, on and off the field

Figure 4 shows the proportions of women/girls and men/boys in different roles within funded organisations.

In terms of management roles, women/girls make up an average proportion of 51%, while men/boys account for 49%. This suggests a relatively balanced gender distribution in leadership positions, demonstrating progress towards gender equality in organisational decision-making and management.

Among officials and administrators, the gender breakdown displays a similar pattern, with both categories exhibiting near-equal representation of women/girls (49%) and men/boys (51%). This indicates a concerted effort to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunities for both genders in these key organisational roles.

Figure 4. Proportion of women/girls and men/boys in sporting roles, on and off the field, in funded organisations



However, a gender disparity exists when focusing on player demographics. On average, women/girls represent 43% of registered players, while men/boys account for a larger proportion of 57%. This finding underscores the need for continued efforts to address barriers and promote increased participation of women and girls in sports as players.

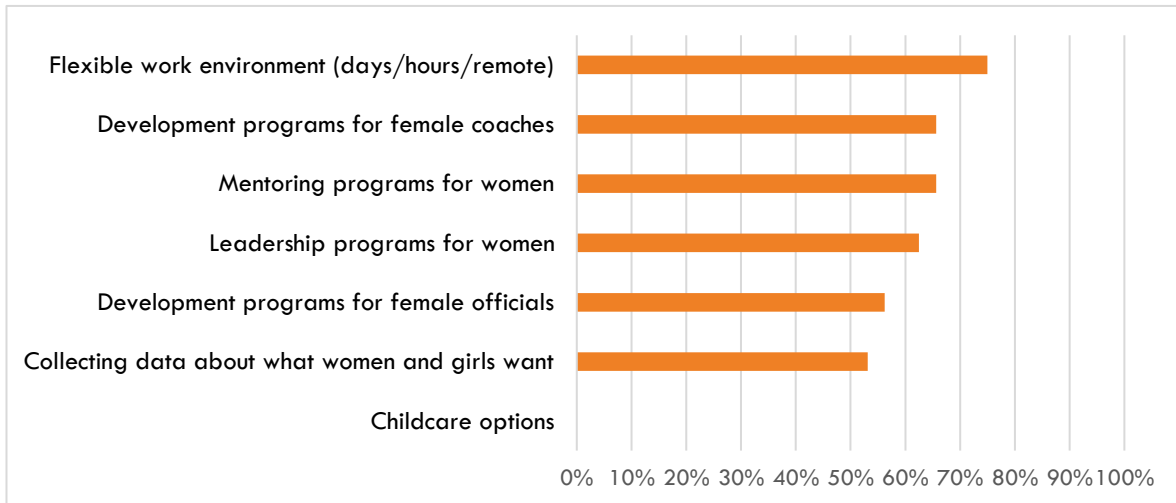
When examining board members, the gender-based difference becomes more pronounced. On average, women/girls constitute 34% of board members, while men/boys occupy a larger share of 66%. This indicates the clear presence of a gender gap in board-level representation, highlighting the need for proactive measures to enhance gender diversity in governance and decision-making bodies within sporting organisations.

Among coaches, women/girls make up an average proportion of 33%, while men/boys account for 63%. This finding reveals a significant gender disparity in coaching roles, emphasising the importance of targeted initiatives and support to increase the representation of women and girls in coaching positions.

### Strategies off the field

We asked funded organisations “Which of the following strategies/actions to encourage greater participation from women/girls off the field has your organisation had in place during the past 12 months?”. Figure 5 shows the proportions of off-field organisational strategies adopted by organisations in the past year.

Figure 5. Organisational strategies to encourage participation OFF the field.



The main findings from Figure 5 are outlined below:

The provision of childcare options are not currently implemented in any of the surveyed organisations. This highlights a crucial area for improvement, as offering childcare support would greatly facilitate the participation of women and girls off the field, particularly those with caregiving responsibilities.

Collecting data about what women and girls want is being implemented by 53% of the organisations. This finding indicates a recognition of the importance of understanding the needs, preferences, and aspirations of women and girls in order to design targeted initiatives and programs that cater to their specific requirements.

Furthermore, development programs for female officials and leadership programs for women are being implemented by 56% and 63% of the organisations, respectively. These findings demonstrate a commitment to empowering women and promoting their involvement in decision-making and leadership roles, both within and outside the sporting arena.

Both mentoring programs for women and development programs for female coaches are each being implemented by 66% of organisations. These initiatives contribute to building a supportive and inclusive environment that facilitates the growth and advancement of women in coaching and leadership positions.

Lastly, a significant proportion of the organisations (75%) have embraced flexible work environments, including flexible days, hours, or remote work options. This reflects a recognition of the need to accommodate diverse work-life situations and foster a healthy work-life balance for women involved in sports administration and management roles. Flexible working cultures will continue to be an important strategy for SSOs to consider having in place, particularly in the wake of a global shift toward hybrid working as a result of changing work practices during the COVID pandemic.

### Strategies on the field

We asked funded organisations, “Which of the following strategies/actions to encourage greater participation from women/girls on the field has your organisation had in place during the past 12 months?”.

Responses were provided on a four-point range (1: Whole organisation, or widely in place 2: Part of organisation, including trials, 3: Currently investigating, but not trialled, 4: Not considering). The proportions of organisations implementing on-field strategies, at each of these four levels of implementation, are presented in Figure 6 below.

Key findings from Figure 6 are described below:

Equitable facility access and uniforms designed specifically for women and girls emerged as the most widely implemented strategies, with over 50% of respondents indicating their extensive adoption. This demonstrates a strong commitment to providing equal opportunities and tailored experiences for female participants in sports. Women/girls-only sessions and events have also gained significant traction, with half of the respondents reporting their widespread implementation. Such initiatives create inclusive spaces that cater specifically to the needs and preferences of women and girls, fostering their engagement and involvement in sports.

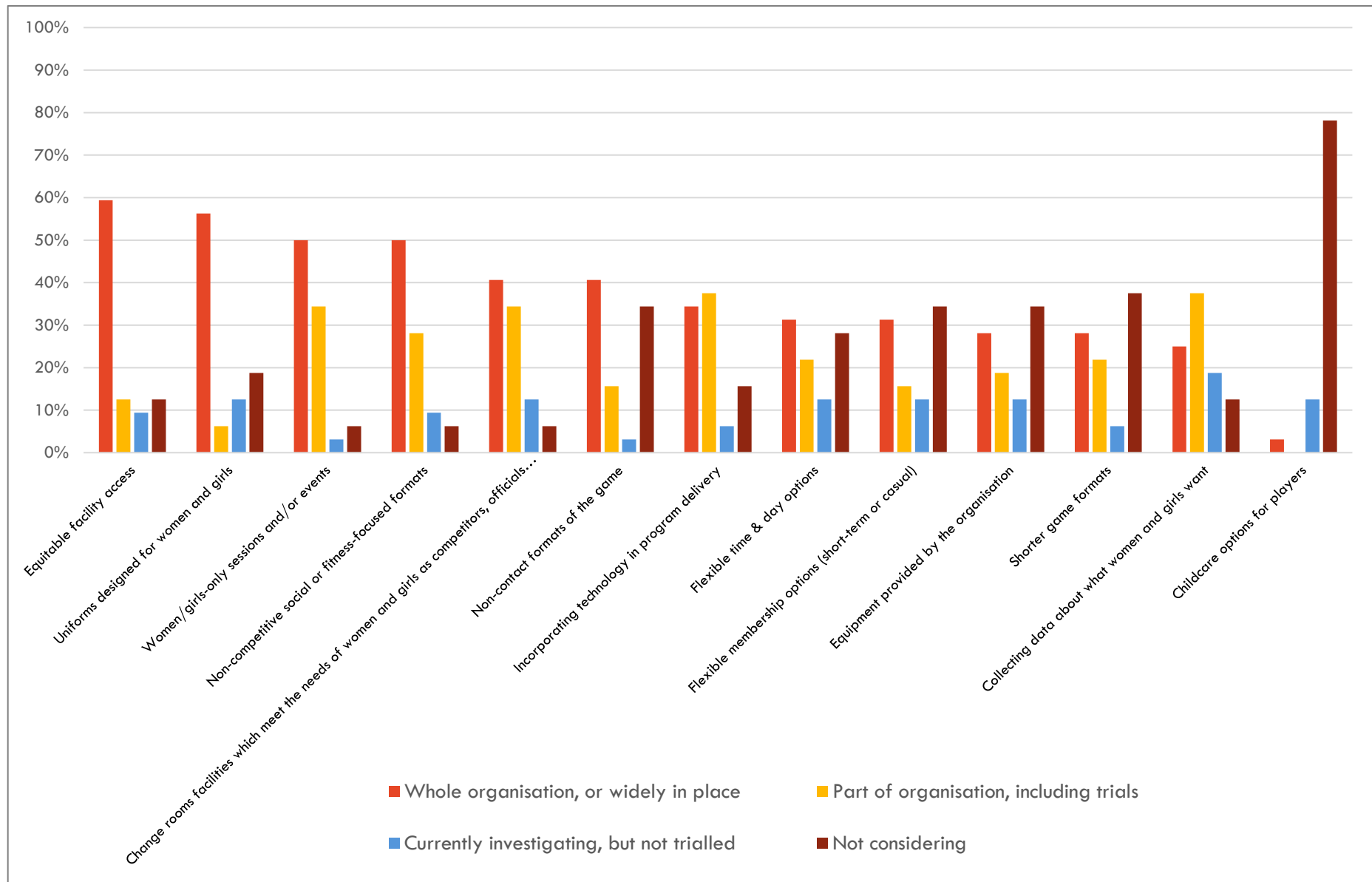
Furthermore, there is a notable shift towards non-competitive social or fitness-focused formats, with 50% of respondents indicating their adoption. This signifies a recognition of the importance of offering recreational and fitness-oriented opportunities, appealing to individuals seeking alternative avenues for sports participation beyond traditional competitive environments.

The implementation of non-contact formats of the game, at a rate of 41%, indicates an acknowledgement of the diverse preferences and requirements of women and girls. By providing non-contact options, organisations are fostering an inclusive environment that accommodates various comfort levels and safe cultural practices, and promotes greater participation.

While progress has been made, there are areas that require further attention. For instance, the availability of childcare options for players emerged as the least implemented strategy, with only 3% of respondents indicating its wide adoption. Addressing this aspect is crucial to removing barriers related to caregiving responsibilities, enabling greater participation of women and girls in sports.

Similarly, the incorporation of technology in program delivery, despite its potential to enhance engagement and accessibility, is reported by only 34% of respondents. Exploring technology-enabled solutions could prove instrumental in better engaging women and girls in sports activities.

Figure 6. Organisational strategies to encourage participation ON the field.

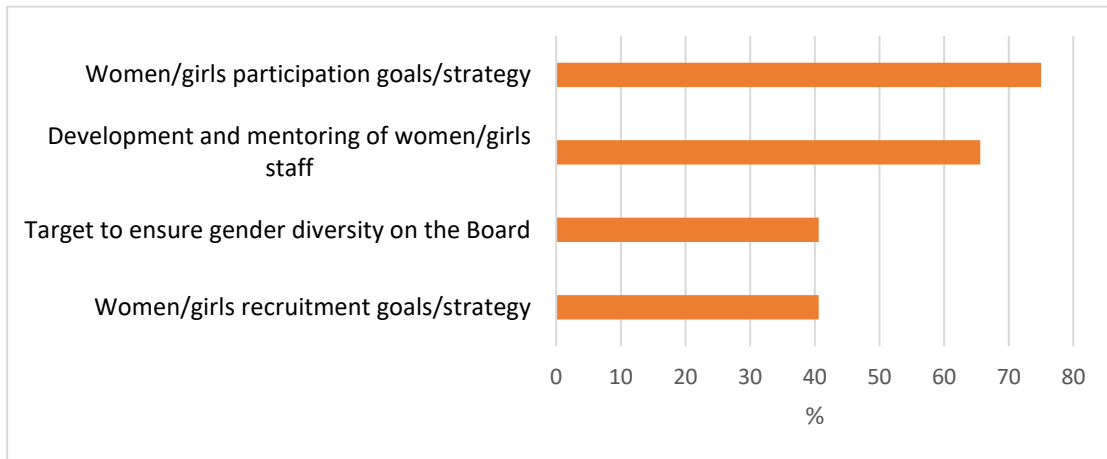




### Formal policies and strategies

We asked, “Which of the following policies/plans/rules for diversity and gender inclusion has your organisation had in place during the past 12 months?”. Figure 7 shows the proportions of organisations with organisational policies/plans/rules to ensure gender diversity.

Figure 7. Organisational policies/plans/rules for diversity and gender inclusion in place during the past 12 months



Three quarters of surveyed funded organisations had women/girls participation goals/strategies in place within their organisation, making it the most widely adopted formal policy. Over half (66%) of funded organisations engaged in the development and mentoring of women/girls staff. Having organisational goals/strategies to recruit women/girls and a target to ensure gender diversity among Board members were implemented by 41% of surveyed SSOs.

### Inclusive facility design awareness

When organisations were asked, “Is your organisation aware of any inclusive design guidelines?”, 38% responded ‘Yes’. Specific guidelines identified include female-friendly environments and lift/automatic door access for people living with disability.

## HSHW grant projects

The case studies and qualitative interviews from completed projects have been combined to highlight key outcomes of each HSHW project and the most significant changes from their initiatives. Case studies 1-10 are presented in the 2021 evaluation report. This section presents case study vignettes from projects completed during 2021-2023.

### Case Study 11: ‘I am a Girl I Can Do Anything’ Projects – Basketball NSW

Basketball NSW aimed to deliver four interrelated initiatives that are part of Basketball NSW’s long-term strategy to attract, re-engage, and retain women participants whilst forging a pathway for women administrators and coaches to support and strengthen their impact in basketball.

The four initiatives delivered were:

1. Young Leaders Forum
2. Bounce in Basketball (BiB)
3. *I AM A GIRL* Campaign
4. Women in Basketball (WiB) network

Main project initiatives from each of the four initiatives are briefly outlined below:

---

#### **Youth Leaders Forum:**

The Youth Leaders Forum engaged female basketball players aged 15-23, providing a safe space for networking and idea-sharing. It aimed to combat young girls’ dropout rates and increase women’s and girls’ participation in basketball. The geographical reach included metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW areas.

For the project delivery there was a combination of focus groups and social activities. Guest speaker talks consisted of a pre-recorded talk and one live appearance. Guest speakers were chosen for their competition, coaching and professional experience. The video showcased an Olympian, Opal team and former University of Sydney Flame player, Annie La Fleur. While there was a positive response, younger participants’ feedback suggested the video time needed to be shorter. The use of Slido encouraged interactivity within the classroom. In total, 95 girls and women participated.

Valuable insights into the motivators and barriers to playing basketball were highlighted by participants. The biggest motivator for playing was benefits to mental wellbeing, where 19% of participants said that one of the main reasons for being involved in the sport was “to improve psychological/mental health”. On the other hand, cost was identified as a key barrier to participation by 18% of participants. When asked about what “female friendly” ideas participants would like Basketball NSW to consider, top suggestions included designing more female-inclusive uniforms, reducing costs required to participate, incorporating more social or networking events and creating female-friendly environments (e.g., provision of sanitary items at facilities). The findings will be used by the organisation in combination with the Basketball NSW Member survey and operationalised as part of their 2022-2025 Basketball NSW Strategic Plan.

---

#### **Bounce in Basketball (BiB):**

BiB introduced an informal basketball program for women, linking them to established competitions. The program aimed to enhance skill development, game readiness, and

participation. It targeted women aged 18+ years and focused on fundamental motor skills, fitness conditioning, and community building.

The 6-week program piloted 60-minute coach-led skills sessions. Each session consisted of 6 parts, including a welcome, warmups, three drills, game play and a warm down. Along with these sessions, participants were also offered 2 weeks of free basketball at their associations. The age range of the 30 participants involved was 19 to 61 years. It was observed that the program was well-suited women in their 30s, many who were new to the sport, and were also parents. Communication and outreach were enabled through Facebook.

The program had valuable key learnings which included suitability of the program for women over 30 years, participants' preferences to engage in more social play, and parenthood being a major barrier to participation. A positive outcome included that local partnering associations expressed interest to continue running the program beyond the grant funding period. The idea of participants also bringing a friend, and for young children to be welcome to play with their mothers after formal sessions were also suggested. Such inclusions in future versions of this project are seen by the organisation as enablers of increased participation and emphasising the fun and social side of the sport, which were cornerstones of the program's success.

#### ***I AM A GIRL Campaign:***

The campaign developed six promotional videos featuring elite female basketball players showcasing their own personal stories. Its goal was to increase registration for 'I AM A GIRL' Come and Try sessions among girls aged 7-16 years. The campaign adapted its concept based on participant feedback and leveraged social media platforms for targeted engagement, which was identified as a key success of the project. Key outcomes included physical and mental health benefits, social connections, and community involvement. Challenges included sourcing current footage during COVID, although across utilised social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok), **the campaign successfully reached 127,147 people.**

Interesting pivots within the program included changing the primary campaign message from 'females challenging males to a basketball game' over to "I love basketball because..." From this idea the following themes were adopted to accompany the phrase "I love basketball because": 1) I make friends; 2) I can learn new skills; 3) It has given me a sense of community 4) I have improved my fitness; 5) it is a global sport and 6) it is heaps of fun.

The program was successful in encouraging parents to register their children into 'Come and Try' sessions. During the school holiday period the program also made efforts to convey that basketball was a safe space for working parents to drop off their children to participate in sport, encouraging participation and retention of young girls in the sport.

#### ***Women in Basketball (WiB) network:***

The WiB network focused on hosting professional development forums for women to upskill and empower champions of change in the basketball community. Networking participants included directors and senior leadership staff from Basketball Australia and Basketball NSW, NSW Legacy Program scholarship holders, and players, coaching staff, and managers of female NBL1 East Teams. The program consisted of two sessions across Sydney and the Central Coast. Functions were strategically held as pre-game events aligned with the FIBA Women's Basketball World Cup. The overall aim was to recognise leaders and generate more understanding of the role of high-level positive enforcers. This more targeted approach on leadership also presented panels with members of the Opals and Olympians. Panel discussions included themes such as mentorship, post-competition careers, why do girls drop out of sport and how can basketball keep girls and women to stay active and keep involved. There was also an opportunity to watch the Opals versus Japan game after the

dinner and talks. Participants also received merchandise that reinforced the values of the program with phrases such as “I am a girl, I can do anything.”

Challenges encountered in the project included COVID-19 restrictions and low response rates to invitations that were sent out for the networking forums.

Overall, the events provided an occasion to celebrate many aspects of basketball and to inspire women leaders.

The HSHW funded projects have enabled Basketball NSW to actively prioritise the needs and wants of members of their organisation. Basketball NSW has demonstrated commendable efforts in leveraging participant feedback to be incorporated in future strategy planning, as well as networking and learning from other sports in the sector.

---

*“It’s important to be a part of, learn and understand what’s working for other sports and what’s not working. It’s a consensus that everyone is trying to achieve the same thing so it’s always interesting to hear what people do and how well or not well it is going for them”*

---

Across several I AM A GIRL projects, the top suggestions by participants for Basketball NSW to consider in their strategic planning included designing more female-inclusive uniforms, increased representation of women in programs and the whole sport and hosting more women/girls-only events.

---

*“We’re becoming more customer-centric. We’re about enabling, we’re changing the story on inclusion. We’re doing what we can to ensure that more women and girls are aware that basketball, if they choose, is an option for them to play”*

---

Through promoting participation, skill development, leadership, and inclusivity, these projects have contributed to creating a more diverse and vibrant sporting landscape for women and girls playing Basketball in NSW.

## Case Study 12: Girls on Track ‘Dare to be Different’ events in Sydney and Newcastle – Motor Sport Australia

The ‘Dare to be Different’ program is focused on removing barriers that girls (aged 8-18 years) face in engaging with motor sports. There are four key pillars that have helped establish Girls on Track as a gold standard in engaging motorsport: 1) ambassadors who are inspiring, 2) an ability for girls to have a connection with the ambassadors, 3) activities that are fun and engaging and 4) safe, supportive, and inclusive environments.

---

*“You can’t be what you can’t see’ – we strongly believe in this and aim to expose the girls to as many women (in various roles) as we can.”*

---

Four events for ‘Dare to be Different’ were delivered online (Instagram Live), two events at Sydney Motor Sport Park and one at the Bathurst Meet Race. Some highlights at their in-person events include guest-speaker appearances by motor sports ambassadors who delivered a talk for the girls and explained their involvement in the sport. Activities for participants also involved a pit stop challenge, STEM workshop, fitness and reaction challenge and simulator challenge. A total of 110 girls aged 8 – 18 years participated in the Girls on Track – New South Wales events.

Challenges relating to the event included being unable to have schools in the area get involved due to COVID (educational regulations). Instead, for the Sydney events the program focused on social media campaigns and attracted individuals interested in participating in the program. Activities/workshops were then selected based on the expertise of the ambassadors/champions and volunteers that were able to assist with the delivery of the event. The Bathurst event was able to leverage the high-profile nature of the Bathurst 1000 which was able to amplify the core messages through increased media coverage and the provision of high-profile Ambassadors who were present at the event.

Further to the face-to-face events, four Instagram Live sessions were conducted to provide participants with insights into working in the industry from prominent ambassadors that work in the motorsport industry. This helped to generate participants for the face-to-face events and grow the Girls on Track community.

Beyond having girls’ participation other useful insights include the commercial benefits that gender inclusive activities can bring to sport too, including how holding the Bathurst specially related event provided a superior return on investment as a result and facilitated industry partnerships with the Supercars teams that were at the event. There was also a sponsorship workshop which was well received.

Motorsport Australia also plans to include the introduction of a new concept to the program, ‘Girls on Track – Career Pathways and Networking.’ These events are designed to inspire girls and women aged 15 – 22 years to pursue career pathways in the motorsport industry. These events also create opportunities to hear from women who are currently involved in the sport and connect with them and others in the industry. The Pathways events have been delivered in Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. The program has seen girls get jobs in the industry, work placements and even take on officiating roles in motorsport. We hope to see the same success across the country over the next 18 months.

## Case Study 13: 'Next Gen' Female Gymnastics Leaders - Gymnastics NSW

The Gymnastics NSW (GNSW) project 'Next Gen' – Female Gymnastics Leaders aimed to provide 30 women with the opportunity to participate in a year-long program that planned to hold bi-monthly professional development training around core business and governance functions, as well as best practice approaches to sport using a combination of educational workshops, courses, networking events and training initiatives. The goal was to guide gymnastics, coaches and/or administrators in working towards achieving business ownership or club management roles within 1-3 years.

The original program included attending a conference and networking event, plus six in-person workshops. However, due to COVID restrictions there was a shift to online delivery. The project participants undertook training across the following areas through virtual education sessions run by GNSW and its partners. In moving to virtual delivery, the program was also able to offer an expanded scope of educational content to attendees. Participants also engaged in forum-style networking sessions, facilitated by GNSW, which encouraged self-reflection, idea-sharing and goal-setting. These were run virtually to support connection with and between participants during lockdown.

Initially the project was set to involve 30 participants. The original cohort was made up of women club owners, managers, or gymnastics coordinators. With the shift to online delivery also came the opportunity to extend the reach of workshop sessions across the state. This saw GNSW expand the education sessions to all 215 affiliated clubs, who identified the relevant person in their club environment to participate in the sessions relevant to their circumstances.

An unexpected challenge that arose was the relevancy of the topics and workshops originally planned. What may have been an important area to focus on upskilling club owners in 2019, was eclipsed by other needs in 2020. The fluctuating nature of the pandemic meant that they had to manage this challenge by consulting with participants to understand what issues were becoming more relevant so that they could support them in current and post-COVID times. Additionally, GNSW was working through similar issues and the management team's feedback on what information would be useful to participants was also sought.

Key learnings included that as the project was underpinned by GNSW strategies and linked to key partners across relevant industries, clear links to further support and learnings were also better able to be available to participants. Supporting participants was also able to guide the direction of workshop sessions and content presented. Positive feedback was provided to GNSW about the relevancy of information being presented. Enabling participants to be directly involved in setting the agenda is something they program will look at prioritising in

future projects. In doing so, more engagement could be achieved in sessions (both in numbers of attendees and participation in the sessions themselves).

Some of the positive health impacts from the program included those participants who identified reduced feelings of stress related to business planning and operations through improved knowledge of subjects and links to GNSW industry partners for further assistance. GNSW is also pleased to report increased capacity of gymnastics club owners in making sound business decisions. In terms of social and professional benefits, gymnastics club owners now have an ongoing network to share knowledge and experiences with other participants. The program also observed increased financial viability of club operations through revised business actions, clubs retaining and hiring employees through improved HR processes and practices and some growth in the number of women-owner/operated gymnastics organisations in NSW.

## Case Study 14: ‘Go Row Indoor’ project - Rowing NSW

The ‘Go Row Indoor’ project, led by Rowing NSW, aimed to engage adult women who were disengaged from sports and provide them with a casual and safe environment to reintroduce physical activity into their lives. The project successfully targeted women who had taken a break from being active, such as those who had recently become mothers or had been away from work due to personal reasons. The Balmain Rowing Club partnered with Rowing NSW to deliver the program, ensuring a woman coach led the sessions to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for participants. The program was delivered across 8 weeks and combined indoor rowing with circuit-based exercises and online resources. The project reached approximately forty women, aged 19 to 65 years, who were new to rowing and members of the local community.

One of the project's significant achievements was the unexpected, positive impact on the coach who ran the program, as it provided an opportunity for them to gain confidence and expand their coaching skills. The project also laid the foundation for the club to continue running similar programs beyond the initial one, indicating the potential for sustainable growth and ongoing participation.

---

*“I think the coach running the project benefitted from it- I’m not talking from a financial point of view; I’m talking from a point of view of actually growing confident again of doing something a little bit different from what they’d done beforehand. She’d maybe done on water coaching and stuff but delivering programs to complete strangers that walk through the door was a little bit different from doing it in the boat.”*

---

Successful strategies of the project included hosting sessions at the rowing club facility, which created an enjoyable and inclusive atmosphere. Additionally, programs were scheduled during times when the target audience were likely to be available and included an informal social

element to motivate participants to come along to sessions. Participants expressed a desire to try rowing on water, demonstrating a potential pathway for further engagement. The project also highlighted the importance of transportable ergometers, leading to an investment in a trailer to facilitate easier transportation.

Challenges faced by the project primarily revolved around raising awareness and dispelling misconceptions about indoor rowing. Additionally, the lack of full-time staff/coaches that were available to deliver the program was also a challenge for the organisation in their capacity to meet demands for the sport.

In terms of how the HSHW grant funding contributed to the grant objectives, the project primarily focused on increasing the number of women and girls playing sport through the engagement of coaches. By inspiring and empowering coaches to passionately share their love for the sport, the project aimed to attract new participants and foster long-term involvement. The project also demonstrated the importance of having the right person in a coaching or leadership role to effectively engage younger individuals.

Moving forward, Rowing NSW has created a dedicated webpage for indoor rowing, which continues to serve as a valuable resource for members. The success and growth of the indoor rowing program during the lockdown period led to the organisation conducting indoor rowing competitions, resulting in increased exposure and interest in the sport. Rowing NSW is also passionate about recruiting junior club members to expand their reach.

---

***“(Juniors)- they’re the future of the sport. If you get juniors on board, you’re more likely to get the parents on board as well and the parents will want to start rowing. All of a sudden, instead of having one person there, you’ve got probably two or three from the same family.”***

---

In conclusion, the Go Row Indoor project has made significant strides in reintroducing adult women to physical activity through indoor rowing. The project's emphasis on creating an inclusive and enjoyable environment, coupled with the professional development opportunities provided to the coach, has positively influenced the participation and well-being of the target audience.

## Case Study 15: ‘Rowing Wrap’ project – Rowing NSW

The ‘Rowing Wrap’ project aimed to improve the retention of girls (16-19 years) in rowing and expand the sport across various regions in NSW through increased provision of acquisition programs. Rowing NSW successfully implemented the project in collaboration with local rowing associations and clubs.

The project also emphasised the involvement of women coaches aged 20-70 years. Collaborating with coaches from local rowing associations and clubs, the project supported



ongoing training of athletes and coaching development. Training camps and talent identification sessions were held in both metropolitan and regional areas, facilitated by the dedicated Sport Development Officer from Rowing NSW. Ongoing collaboration with local coaches ensured athletes received consistent training and led to the formation of crews for pathway events.

The project reached a total of 200 schoolgirls and 20 coaches, including new and existing coaches from both metropolitan and regional areas. Evaluation was conducted through feedback from participants and coaches, as well as the results of the races in which the girls participated.

Successful strategies and key learnings from the project highlighted the importance of early engagement with local coaches to ensure their assistance in program delivery. Rowing, being a coach-led sport, meant that the involvement of coaches was crucial for effective engagement and retention of participants.

Challenges faced in the regional areas included the logistics of gathering everyone together and providing consistent training opportunities. To overcome this in the future, communications will be initiated earlier to facilitate planning and ensure clear understanding of training camp and session dates.

The project's outcomes were focused on improving the physical fitness of young girls throughout NSW while emphasising fun for both athletes and coaches to enhance emotional health and well-being.

In relation to the three HSHW grant objectives, the Rowing Wrap project made significant contributions. It increased the number of women and girls playing sport by engaging girls and retaining their participation beyond school years. The project also supported the objective of increasing the number of women in leadership positions by addressing the hesitation of women coaches, providing coach development training, and involving them in the program's delivery. Furthermore, the project fostered a gender-inclusive sporting culture by creating opportunities for women and girls to connect, promoting the social aspects of the sport alongside the physical benefits.

## Case Study 16: 'Sailing Her Way' training program – Sailability NSW

The 'Sailing Her Way' training program aimed at increasing women's participation in sailing and promoting women's leadership roles within Sailability NSW branches.

The project targeted both existing and new members within Sailability NSW branches, with a specific focus on addressing the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. The project team comprised Sailability NSW executives, Sailing Australia senior trainers, and branch leaders.

Key project activities included promoting the objective to increase the number of women leaders within the organisation to all 25 state branches, conducting information sessions at the State Conference, and promoting training options through branch systems. The training program offered development opportunities for women sailors, encompassing roles such as instructors, assistant instructors, powerboat operators, branch presidents, and vice presidents. Overall, the project reached 15 women directly, equipping them with the necessary skills and support to assume leadership positions.

Evaluation of the project involved regular Zoom meetings with branch leaders, providing a platform for discussions on the *Sailing Her Way* initiative. Feedback from branches, coupled with assessments by Sailability NSW executives, determined the project's success. Notwithstanding challenges posed by branch locations and the COVID-19 pandemic, the project employed successful strategies. Engaging branch leaders, ensuring effective communication channels, and offering ongoing support to new leaders emerged as key factors in fostering women participation and leadership.

The project encountered challenges related to the pandemic, as the organisation's membership comprised a significant number of vulnerable individuals, and face-to-face meetings were preferred over virtual gatherings. However, despite these obstacles, the project contributed to an attitude shift within the organisation, fostering a supportive environment for women's participation and leadership.

Looking ahead, Sailability NSW plans to collaborate with an organisation working with individuals who have experienced domestic violence, aiming to expand participation and build trust among members. The 'Sailing Her Way' project has yielded positive outcomes, empowering participants to experience personal growth in various domains, including mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, as a result of their active involvement in assuming leadership roles within their branches.

## Case Study 17: 'Her Skate Sport' – Skate NSW

The 'Her Skate Sport' program, consisting of an 8-week course, aimed to reach out to new and existing women and girls of all ages, including athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers, and covering the disciplines of Roller Sports (Artistic Figure Skating, Inline Hockey, Speed Skating & Roller Derby). There were 3 main phases (with sub phases in each): 1) Online Profiles / Promotion of Participation Programs, 2) Seminars and Workshops with Internationally recognised Elite Level Female Athletes, Coaches and Officials and 3) Courses & Workshops for Coaches, Officials and Volunteers.

The rationale of Skate NSW creating online profiles was designed to increase visibility of athletes and role models in the sport. The courses and workshops were planned to build women- and girls-friendly environments to increase participation, with examples including international events and competitions promoting participation of women athletes, coaches, and officials.

Six workshops for athletes, coaches, and officials covered the topics of pre-season and mid-season rules and requirements, a mid-season workshop on performance, a rink hockey 'Come Try Day,' and Inline Hockey Ladies Team Project. Plans to recognise and eulogise presenters and participants were conducted through websites and social media, workshops/Come and Try days, and through certification and online promotion. Some courses and workshops for athletes, coaches and volunteers were planned, but needed to be adapted to align with COVID circumstances, whilst others were able to be completed albeit it either in a different format than planned (online/remote) or delayed/extended, with presenters sourced from NSW and externally.

Other challenges for Skate NSW included finding personnel such as a suitable photographer and art director for developing profiles, and a professional who could capture the 'spirit' of various Skate NSW disciplines such as roller derby. Visual representation of women athletes in roller sports required specialist knowledge and an 'eye' for how to best capture special skills as well. When an appropriate professional was appointed, COVID restrictions affected their ability to travel interstate. A photographer was assigned to take images of the State Championships and participant programs. Other hurdles included not being able to bring internationally recognised, elite skaters to Australia for seminars and workshops. Local figures from NSW were selected as an alternative.

Areas for development in the future include some addressing alienation of men participants that Skate NSW observed, particularly in the traditionally women-dominant sports. This is being addressed in some areas, by trying to ensure an inclusive environment and provide equal opportunities for participation'. However, Skate NSW state that they will need to explore other strategies, such as the 'Dads and Daughters' program, to help maintain a balance where

everyone feels valued and provide equal opportunities to participate regardless of their gender.

Many milestones were achieved across the objectives of participation, leadership and building capacity/cultural change. The events reached nearly 400 participants (aged 7 to 70 years) in various regions, across 3 states: 150 Athletes/Skaters; 21 Coaches; 27 Officials; 16 Presenters / Administrators and 48 Volunteers. These were mostly made up of participants from the Artistic Branch, but also include participants from Inline Hockey and Rink Hockey. As such, participation levels from other roller sports may require extra attention and more targeted approaches. While the participants were from 6 clubs, there were also external participants who attended. This may indicate that an additional word of mouth approach may also be effective where there is a lack of formal structures to communicate with active participants in each sport.

In terms of capacity and cultural change, the program has observed positive outcomes in all areas of social impacts including participants' capacity building through the seminars, courses, workshops, and programs. They have also reported an increase in emotional and mental health and resilience through workshop activities (team building) and courses (increasing the number of leaders and increasing the level/quality of leaders). Another area of advancement has been community safety through recognising and valuing women leaders and participants and ensuring a welcoming and friendly environment for all participants. Social connection was also observed to increase through multi-club/regions participating in the seminars, workshops, and programs, as well as building capacity for online workshops/meetings.

## Case Study 18: 'Engaging Mothers and Friends in softball' – Softball NSW

The 'Engaging Mothers and their Friends in the Game of Softball' was delivered by Softball NSW (SNSW) plus metropolitan area and rural associations. SNSW led the program's planning phase and then delegated it to associations to complete. SNSW received expressions of interest from Associations and they all met the requirements of 1) Level Coach; 2) First Aid; 3) Able to communicate with community via social media, their member base and flyers distribution and 4) Keep communication with SNSW throughout the process. Associations led an 8-week program which consisted of a two-hour skills session for six weeks, then two weeks of modified games. The participants were encouraged to register for a season with that association.

The program was offered in both regional and metropolitan areas. Of the 19 participants involved, only four had ever played before when they were younger, and none registered to play. Most were mothers who had children involved.

Challenges included COVID-related delays in the project, leading to reduced participant numbers upon return. Most hesitated to start again due to concerns about maintaining health. However, the program was still able to increase the number of women and girls in leadership positions by asking the program to be led by women coaches. Initial challenges included gaining responses from associations to implement the program as it was an added commitment. However, once one association decided to run it and demonstrated success, others followed suit.

Successful strategies included making sure the program was free, and advertising it as a social and beginner-friendly activity, with no experience necessary and all equipment supplied. Another key learning was to make involvement social and placing an emphasis on fun. Non-softball related occasions were also held to increase the welcoming environment and build social connections (e.g., Having BBQ and drinks days). SNSW is pleased to report that some friendships that were formed during the program have continued, as seen with participants playing in the summer competition. There were full registrations of 15 players for the summer season and representative teams.

Overall, the program met its aim to create a non-competitive, social environment that provides opportunities for women to be physically active in a fun way whilst meeting other women in their local areas. Participant feedback was positive- the idea of registering for a season was spoken about and produced actual registrations for that season. At the end of 8 weeks all 19 participants were called and surveyed on the content, length of time, the social aspects of the program and if they would do it again. All responses were positive, but it was suggested to hold the program on a weekday when the children are training/at school as it does not interfere with family commitments. Since the inception, the program's associations have also made connections to community hubs. Now, during the return from COVID, they have been researching on how to maintain ties with community members to build future participation activities for women and girls.

As a positive example, two mothers who were part of the program both decided to register into a local club and play in the summer season. They were also encouraged to trial for the Softball Campbelltown Over 35 State Championships team. They made their representative debut on the team alongside their Mothers and Friends coaches.

---

***“It not only builds your association/competition for ladies, but it will also allow us to be family orientated and encourage the kids to play or just cheer on mums.”***

---

Outstanding results included gaining full registrations of 15 players for the summer season and representative teams. The HSHW grant has enabled SNSW to deliver this program for free for women and girls, thereby increasing numbers in local associations and boosting retention amongst younger women.

## Case Study 19: 'SHEroes' program – Tennis NSW

The 'SHEroes' project aims to empower women in tennis and provide them with opportunities to learn, develop, and grow as leaders. The project targets women over 18 years who play leadership roles in tennis but are not typically in coaching positions. Its objectives are to increase the volunteer network, promote women in leadership, and create off-court pathways for women in tennis.

Through the project, positive and supportive conversations have been facilitated among leaders within tennis and other sports, fostering networking opportunities and interactions. Social platforms, such as a dedicated Facebook group, have played a crucial role in sustaining these connections beyond the project duration. The project has generated valuable resources, including a website, learning and development materials, and a dedicated resource platform called 'Bounce.'

COVID posed significant challenges, including the closure of tennis clubs and limitations on gatherings. To overcome these obstacles, Tennis NSW focused on online engagement through social media platforms and a private Facebook group. Despite the challenges, the project successfully delivered seven 'SHEroes' Local Participation Projects, providing participation opportunities for 131 additional women and girls across NSW. One of the excellent outcomes is that 100% of projects are set to continue.

Key learnings include the importance of online engagement and communication. Tennis NSW employed various methods of communicating with program participants, with the establishment of a private Facebook group being the most successful mode of engagement as the content posted was seen to be not only productive, but able to create a safe and respectful environment where supportive exchanges were common.

Tennis NSW state they are proud to have nurtured a group of confident and competent women. The project saw success in creating a platform for women in the sport to connect with each other and upskill in their roles and ability to assume leadership positions.

---

***“The biggest, most significant change is seeing the landscape in tennis in NSW change for the better in terms of the women actually feeling like they have a place within the sport to be able to connect, and to have opportunities to continue to upskill themselves, but then have such impact. We’ve got some club presidents that are now women, and we’ve got some head coaches that are women.”***

---

A significant success of the project lies in its achievement in increasing the visibility of women leaders to participants aspiring to follow their pathways. By observing women in positions of authority, participants gain the confidence to pursue similar roles and contribute to their tennis communities.

---

*“When [participants] see women in the positions of authority at their club, they then have the confidence to go and sit next to that person at that level as well. Building that leadership at the core has built capability and will build participation as people can see where they can go and emulate others that have gone before them.”*

---

Additionally, Tennis NSW is focussing on building the capacity of women leaders in local communities to be delivering programs that aim to create more gender-inclusive sporting environments to facilitate retention of women and girls in the sport.

---

*“The [program] is important because so many of the women that are involved are heavily involved in their local clubs. We want these experienced women to also be driving a lot of specific Women and Girls Programming at their local clubs.”*

---

The project plans to develop a junior version of the program, scheduled for launch in 2023. This expansion aims to further engage young women and girls in tennis and provide them with similar learning and development opportunities.

Overall, the ‘SHEroes’ project has successfully created a supportive network and provided resources to empower women volunteers in tennis. It has fostered leadership development, built capability, and encouraged greater participation by showcasing successful women leaders.

## Case Study 20: ‘Building leadership skills in female athletes’ – Cricket NSW

The Cricket NSW (CNSW) project focused on developing leaders at a young/emerging age within the elite cricket system. The rationale to increase in leaders within the sport includes to help raise the profile of women athletes as role models and as leaders. Through ongoing leadership development, athletes were able to acquire skills that are also applicable outside of sport, to help prepare them for life outside of sport. The project emphasised how leadership is often prematurely assigned to the "best" players – and that in thinking about a bigger, and more sustainable picture, it aimed to spread the number of leaders within cricket, therefore increasing retention levels in the sport.

CNSW engaged the Minerva Network to facilitate the delivery. Minerva is a women’s network enabling elite sportswomen to maximise their opportunities on and off the field, supported by a network of leading women professionals. The final participation to date has included three emerging leaders who were voted and considered within the ‘leadership group.’ They are emerging players who may captain their state in the future if they continue the same trajectory. There were also five future leaders selected for the project who are young pathway cricketers who have been identified as excellent young talented players and people. The program was delivered over 7 months, consisting of six sessions in total. Themes included communication styles, developing resilience, resolving conflict, managing difficult conversations, career transitions, and a leading ‘me/you/others session.’

Challenges were brought on by COVID restrictions- the first four sessions had to be delivered online, with the remaining two sessions offering a hybrid option (in-person or online) for participation. After lockdown restrictions were lifted fully, in-person mode of delivery was made possible at the CNSW headquarters at Sydney Olympic Park.

---

*“Being able to learn more about myself and what makes me tick enabled me to open my eyes to my areas of strengths and weaknesses when it comes to leading and relationships. Having the awareness of these things enabled me to continue to grow as a person and a leader to help others.” – Program participant*

---

One of the strengths of the project was that the inclusion senior had already established leaders in the same forum. Due to the shift to online delivery, the inclusion of these established leaders was a very welcomed and excellent addition to engage and increase the standard across the program. Through ongoing leadership development, it is expected that the athletes will acquire skills that are also applicable outside of sport, to help prepare them for life outside of sport.

---

*“As someone reasonably new to an official leadership role, this course majorly benefited my development in a short period of time. It allowed me to understand what type of leader I was, what my strengths and weaknesses were, and where I could improve as a leader.” – Program participant*

---

Through this project, CNSW has successfully increased leadership capabilities by providing activities to participants that generate greater confidence and exposure to others in leadership positions. This project also aimed to promote a positive cultural change in sport - with a greater emphasis placed on developing women athletes as people, as well as cricketers. With an increase in leaders within the sport, this will have greater benefit across the cricket community and beyond.

## Case Study 21: ‘She Rides: Zero to Hero’ project - AusCycling

The ‘She Rides: Zero to Hero’ project targeted women aged 45+ years who have little or no experience in bike riding. It is an innovative initiative that aimed to change the narrative of engaging in bike riding by increasing the visibility of how perceived entry barriers to the sport can be overcome.

Through a strategic approach, AusCycling partnered with the National Breast Cancer Foundation and an apparel partner to leverage their research and expand the reach of the project. Utilising digital storytelling and local activations, the project engaged the target demographic and inspired them to overcome barriers and embrace bike riding. The campaign was launched during Breast Cancer Awareness month to enhance visibility and generate



greater awareness of the physical and wellness benefits of bike riding, particularly in the prevention and recovery of breast cancer.

The 'She Rides: Zero to Hero' digital storytelling campaign also effectively highlighted the barriers faced by women in entering the sport, challenging traditional perceptions, and finding an inclusive environment. Authenticity behind the stories told by the women was identified as a key success in the project. By showcasing the personal stories of five "Sheroes," the project inspired other women to overcome obstacles and undertake the 50km Heroes Ride.

There was also an issue with the 'look' of the sport or most dominant way cycling is portrayed, which involved tight clothing and being very competitive.

---

***“One of the key barriers for women to engage in cycling is the fact that it feels very Lycra, very racing and very competitive. Women don't like to go into bike shops because they feel like there's a young boy serving them, they don't know about equipment they've got.”***

---

Women were observed to appreciate a range of looks and images of sport that could be more casual, individual, relatable and more leisure-orientated than just being a high-performance sport.

---

***“[Participant], one of our heroes, always looked so cool and I thought that was a really nice showcase. She wasn't in Lycra, she was in her tartan pants and a mustard-coloured jumper. I think a dedicated person who's able to showcase cycling in the form that someone wants to do it in is probably a good thing”***

---

The project's success can be attributed to its emphasis on innovation, flexibility, and adaptability from the inception through to program delivery.

To ensure a broad reach to deliver localised activations, the involvement of partners, including community clubs and groups, was highly effective. These activations aimed to provide entry points for participants, including learn-to-ride sessions, social rides, and equipment maintenance workshops. Despite weather-related challenges, the project team incentivised coaching capabilities to mitigate the impact and ensure the successful delivery of activations.

The establishment of an Inclusion and Diversity Committee also demonstrates AusCycling's commitment to developing strategies and policies to facilitate a more gender-inclusive sporting environment.

The project's outcomes were substantial, with approximately 275 participants engaged in the activity and over 417,000 social media impressions.

---

***“We are pleased to report that nearly 2,500 engagements progressed further to search for an activation. Engaging local community clubs and groups was vital in ensuring a visible entry point for women to seek and receive the support they needed.”***

---

Importantly, the project fostered community building, capacity building, and connections to support groups, contributing to the broader social impact of the initiative.

Financial support provided to coaches and clubs proved instrumental in overcoming barriers and creating opportunities for the cohort affected by recent challenges. The project's engagement with sponsors, charity partners, and women-focused bike riding groups further enhanced its economic impact and sustainability.

The project's success was not limited to its immediate outcomes. AusCycling built efficient systems, processes, and toolkits that will have a lasting impact on future activations and engagement in cycling.

The resources developed, such as social media toolkits, case studies, and a website directory, will continue to support community clubs and groups in promoting and communicating initiatives to women. The project's legacy is set to be sustained through ongoing collaboration, leveraging existing *She Rides* channels, and maintaining stakeholder relationships.

The organisation experienced some initial challenges with engaging with local clubs that favoured more traditional forms of the sport.

Feedback from activating partners was overwhelmingly positive, with clubs rating the campaign highly and reporting increased membership as a result of their involvement. The project's impact extended beyond the grant period, as activating partners expressed their intent to continue providing programs and activities promoted through the digital registration platform.

Through innovative approaches, collaborative partnerships, and a focus on overcoming barriers, AusCycling has created a sustainable model that will continue to inspire and support women in the cycling community.

## Case Study 22: 'Recognise and increase the visibility of female diving role models' - Diving NSW

The 'Recognise and Increase the Visibility of Female Diving Role Models' project aimed to recognise and showcase women role models including athletes, coaches, board members from clubs and programs in regional and metropolitan NSW. In doing so, the project recognised and rewarded leaders and role models for their contributions, many made behind the scenes, as well as those of young achievers.

The project was a highly adaptive one due to COVID restrictions, making use of social media following a long period of lockdowns when in-person activities were restricted. One of the

advantages of using social media was its ability to reach a wider and intergenerational audience through platforms like Instagram. For example, the project was also able to raise the profile and stories from a diverse range of women role models due to the capacity for wider geographical reach. The feedback from those who were featured were extremely positive:

---

*“There is not a strong enough word to express how grateful I am for being a part of this program & for you taking a chance on me. I am not the same person that I was when I started. It has been the most influential, life changing experience to date. It was exactly what I needed, both professionally & personally. You’ll never know just how profound of an impact it has had on my life and will continue to have.” – Program participant (Coach).*

---

The program identified sport leaders and role models involved in diving who were well established, but also partnered with the NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) to identify young achievers behind the scenes that have assisted in areas such as High Performance and Talent. They also identified one woman role model from each club and NSWIS to highlight on social media with the intention of inspiring young women who wanted to volunteer/coach or contribute to their local club environment. The identified role models were contacted to obtain their stories and photos and explain how they wanted to inspire the next generation of women role models and leaders. Profiles were typically showcased for one month.

The project also had a large mentoring component, which included participants such as senior level two coaches mentoring young level one coaches in the daily training environment. Club Committee members also mentored young women in strategy and planning. State Official Coordinators mentored women officials during competition and young athletes were encouraged to shadow judges at events with a mentor explaining the rules, protocols, and nuances of judges. This was different to the accreditation process which involves exams and evaluations, as the mentoring comprised a gentler introduction into judging.

Diving NSW also drew on insights from a previous grant round project ‘Dive deeper into Coaching and Officiating’ which was designed to assist more women coaches and officials in gaining accreditation and other skills. This pilot project was also dedicated to recognising current women role models and to highlight and normalise participation, gender equity and leadership. Key learnings were then able to carry on into building more inclusive cultures and environments in the current round. The program report included that the social media responses and recognition in Annual Awards and in competitions and the engagement/enquiries all achieved the goals of helping to inspire the next generation of sports leaders and to maintain the positive culture that exists in the sport.

In terms of participation, three sports leaders from NSWIS were profiled; in metropolitan Sydney, the program identified 13 women coaches, and 5 men coaches; in regional NSW they identified 12 women coaches, and 4 men coaches. Among these women, 12 were contacted to become role models. The program primarily showcased stories of women sports leaders on social

media platforms and websites but also through a video. At the time of reporting, 9 of the 12 identified sports leaders from various backgrounds have been profiled, including physiotherapy, coaching, officiating, athletes, and board members. The program intends to continue this work of recognising and sharing the stories of women leaders/role models on and off the field to inspire the next generation of women leaders and underpin, strengthen, and improve current culture of gender inclusion.

Apart from COVID restrictions and some leaders moving overseas or retiring making it difficult to develop their profiles, other challenges included that many sports leaders were described as “very humble and reluctant to tell their story”. The organisation successfully overcame this issue by explaining the purpose of the program. It was also difficult to evaluate impacts of the program as indicators of “inspiration” may not present immediately. However, it is expected that the stories on the profiles will normalise women’s participation and provide confidence in the next generation of women sports leaders. An increase of women leaders that can grow the sport and build capacity and visibility is seen as crucial for inspiring the next generation while recognising and identifying current leaders.

## Case Study 23: ‘Mental Health Network’ project – NSW Ice Skating

The NSW Ice Skating Association’s (NSWISA) ‘Member Protection Information Officer (MPIO) and Mental Health Network’ project aimed to provide a safe avenue for members to address mental health and member protection issues, establish a network of trained individuals, and deliver mental health training. The project faced challenges due to the COVID pandemic and the loss of ice rink facilities. Despite this, it successfully created a supportive network, expanded mental health support within and among organisations, and empowered members to manage local issues.

The project reached 18 participants who underwent Youth Mental Health First Aid training, with 15 women becoming active members of the MPIO Network. The network included representatives from different ice-skating clubs, coaches, officials, and NSWISA administration and board members. The successful strategies of the project included building a collaborative network, fostering teamwork among clubs, and empowering members to approach MPIOs for assistance. Ensuring a well-functioning support network holds significant importance for NSWISA, particularly in aiding teenage girls during the challenging period of adolescence. The COVID pandemic exacerbated these difficulties as lockdown restrictions isolated individuals and hindered their access to regular support systems. This focus on support is crucial for NSWISA due to its membership largely consisting of teenage girls and the unique context

of ice skating as a performance sport. Addressing issues related to body image and confidence becomes paramount during this crucial phase of development for teenage girls.

---

*“Because we’re a performance sport, it’s about how you look out there (and) technical ability. You’ve got to be strong to do it. Lockdowns meant a lot of [girls] went through the developmental changes all at the same time. You’ve got five years-worth of teenage girls who, all of a sudden, were in lockdowns and needing to deal with all of that stuff as well.”*

---

Key challenges faced during the project included participant availability and maintaining engagement through self-directed learning but were addressed through alternative scheduling and ongoing network-based solutions. Importantly, the closure of ice rinks has significantly impacted on the organisation as a whole in being able to deliver the sport. Additionally, COVID-related increases in travel costs have reduced members’ abilities to participate in the sport.

---

*“[Issues include] from those skaters who are now no longer participating because of the loss of the rinks, to a local expense perspective, particularly after the last couple of years, right through to high performance skaters who can’t afford to travel. The combination of the infrastructure and the funding are the two biggest things. They just add to the burden.”*

---

By improving mental well-being and providing support mechanisms, the project empowered ice skaters to navigate mental health challenges and ensured their safety within the sport. The increased collaboration and teamwork among clubs fostered a more inclusive and supportive environment, demonstrating the project's commitment to gender inclusivity. Additionally, the project contributed to economic outcomes by expanding professional development opportunities for coaches and enhancing the overall appeal of ice skating to potential participants.

Insights from the interview data further emphasise the long-term vision of the project and the organisation's commitment to retaining members and supporting their wellbeing.

Continuing project delivery despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and the loss of ice rinks highlighted the resilience and adaptability of the NSWISA community.

The project lead emphasised that gender inclusivity has always been inherent to the sport of ice skating, with a longstanding history of inclusiveness for women and girls. However, to further enhance gender inclusivity, it is suggested that efforts should be directed towards increasing the participation of boys and men in the sport. Attracting more boys to the sport is crucial in enabling girls to engage in other disciplines such as pairs or ice dance. Currently, many girls express interest in these disciplines but face challenges in finding boy partners. By achieving a balanced participation ratio between genders, it would create more opportunities for girls to pursue their preferred disciplines and promote a more gender-inclusive environment within the sport.

Notably, the project's success lies in the development of a network charter, which provides a structured feedback system for ongoing discussions, training, and policy improvements. Additionally, the establishment of an identifiable badge for the mental health support network showcases the organisation's commitment to athlete safeguarding and member well-being.

---

*“In a sport where there’s so much riding on the performance aspect and there’s so much to do with athlete safeguarding, we want to be seen to be keeping our members’ well-being at the front of everything we do.”*

---

In summary, the MPIO and Mental Health Network project has effectively addressed mental health and member protection issues within the NSWISA community. Through its dedicated efforts, the project has created a safe and secure environment, fostered collaboration among clubs, and promoted the overall well-being of ice skaters. The project's achievements align seamlessly with the objectives of the HSHW grant, specifically in increasing leadership capabilities, and cultivating a supportive and inclusive sporting culture. NSWISA's commitment to athlete safeguarding and member well-being will ensure the continued growth and success of ice skating in NSW.

## Case Study 24: ‘Coach Her Way’ – Rowing NSW<sup>7</sup>

The ‘Coach Her Way’ program aimed to increase and promote women in leadership positions by pairing existing coaches with mentor coaches and providing development opportunities to aspiring women leaders.

The project exceeded expectations, with more coaches volunteering as mentors than originally anticipated, resulting in 12 mentor-mentee pairs. Mentees were paired with coaches based on their desired coaching paths. The program's success was attributed to the positive involvement of passionate mentors, including men coaches, who pleasingly expressed interest in participating.

The program included a conference that successfully engaged 40 participants and generated positive feedback, including from those not directly involved. Valuable insights were shared at the event through four speaker sessions featuring top women coaches discussing their experiences in men-dominated environments, empowering participants to be more proactive and inclusive in their coaching approach.

Grant funding enabled mentees to advance their coaching skills, such as enrolling in coaching courses. The involvement of the Women's Training Centre allowed participants to witness firsthand the possibilities within the sport, inspiring them to pursue their coaching aspirations. The project highlighted the importance of having passionate leaders and coaches who can relate to

---

<sup>7</sup> Project has been completed but completed case study not submitted. Findings presented here have been extracted from interview data only.

and engage with individuals, creating a welcoming and supportive environment, especially to meet the organisation's strategic objective of engaging more junior members.

Challenges included the demanding time commitments involved with the sport itself, which made it difficult for coaches, particularly women with families, to fully commit to coaching activities. For instance, additional commitments outside of the sport may include preparing and packing up.

---

*“You go to a regatta for ten hours, then you take the boats back to the shed and you've got another two hours of unloading it and putting it away. You finally get home at about nine o'clock at night. Those are the sort of things which are hard enough for anybody, but especially for a woman with a family.”*

---

Another challenge involved increasing the participation of women leaders, as some were more resistant to applying for leadership roles. The project lead emphasised that the issue was not related to women's skills or capacity but, rather, a social issue, after having observed that at times women underplayed their abilities or were concerned with not meeting all stated competency requirements.

---

*“There are a lot of very, very confident [women] out there but there are also a lot that could do better themselves if they actually put their hand up and went out a little bit more on a limb. For example, what I find is when [women] see a job advert and it lists ten things you can do, they won't apply for the job because they can't do all ten. Whereas a bloke will look at it and go, 'I can't do any part of it' or 'I can do that one bit there, maybe two bits. I'll apply for the job anyway’”*

---

This project highlighted the need for women and girls to take up space and occasions to learn on the job and assert their right to practice and increase existing skills without fearing that they will be perceived as inferior athletes.

The impacts of the 'Coach Her Way' program were widespread and positive. It has successfully grown the confidence and capability of aspiring women coaches to take up leadership positions in rowing.

## Case Study 25: 'Girls Making Waves' (Round 2) - Water Polo NSW

The 'Girls Making Waves' project aimed to retain women's participation in water polo, promote leadership roles within the sport, and expand reach of water polo into communities with lower rates of participation in the sport. The project targeted adolescent girls aged 7-12 years and focused on overcoming barriers to participation by implementing a modified version of the game, providing shallow water and inflatable tubes, and promoting body positivity through flexible uniforms. The initiative encompassed various activities, including participation sessions across metropolitan and regional areas, women-only coach and referee sessions to inspire

leadership, and online mentoring of Fun Officers (i.e., program leaders). Talent Development sessions were also delivered to address the drop-off rates among adolescent members. These sessions involved engaging a Talent Development coach to share experiences with junior girl coaches and educate them on skills and techniques required to progress on the athlete pathway.

The project successfully engaged 190 girls within the target age range in the 'Girls Making Waves' sessions, along with 12 Water Safety Officers/Future Fun Officers. Furthermore, 16 women referees attended the face-to-face referee development session, and 12 women referees participated in the online workshop.

Successful strategies employed in the project included the involvement of passionate program ambassadors and Chief Fun Officers. These individuals, who were experienced in water polo and introducing newcomers to the sport, played a vital role in creating a recognisable brand and creating a fun and engaging atmosphere during sessions. The presence of Chief Fun Officers from the project's inception helped develop trust and maintain local points of contact to boost community engagement and increase brand visibility. The emphasis on fun and enjoyable experiences proved crucial in the development and retention of participants.

---

***“Having an Ambassador/Chief Fun Officer who is passionate about water polo and introducing new participants to the sport is key to the success of this program. [Program] has really shown the importance of fun in the development of these programs and the retention of participants.”***

---

Challenges encountered during the project included attracting older girls who had no prior connections to water polo. Many hesitated to join without knowing anyone involved. To overcome this, efforts were made to reach out to friendship groups within schools and encourage current participants to invite their friends, breaking down participation barriers and fostering a sense of familiarity and camaraderie. Scheduling sessions with facility availability also presented challenges, especially in regions with limited resources. Coordinating the availability of Fun Officers and participants with pool schedules required careful planning and coordination. To address this issue in the future, the project aimed to train and empower local resources to deliver and promote programs, ensuring better alignment of resources and schedules.

Evaluation of the project involved online registration forms, post-session surveys, and data collection of participant demographics and experiences. It successfully attracted new participants, with 68% being newcomers to the sport, and 95% expressed a desire to participate again. Pleasingly, 100% of participants expressed their enthusiasm to share the fun they had with their best friends, and 61% showed interest in joining a local water polo club, indicating the project's long-term impact in sustaining participation.

Significantly, the 'Girls Making Waves' project observed a cultural shift within water polo clubs. The project revealed the need for clubs to adapt their junior programs to attract a wider audience. By prioritising fun and participant retention, the project demonstrated the importance



of creating engaging programs that cater to diverse skill levels. This cultural shift highlighted the organisation's commitment to inclusivity and gender diversity in sports.

---

*“We saw a cultural shift from our clubs on how they run their junior development programs – there is more consideration now on making it fun and expanding the reach of the programs, which is more inclusive to girls and women, over and above the serious/elite focus, which can be the default” – Program Administrator*

---

By successfully attracting new participants, creating a positive and engaging experience, and generating interest in joining local clubs, the project has showcased the potential for innovative approaches to drive women's participation in water polo.

## Case Study 26: ‘Women in Sport Leadership’ – NSW Rugby League

The 'Women in Sport Leadership' project was a sound example of how projects can evolve despite having needed to pivot and adapt due to COVID restrictions. Originally consisting of in-person events and training sessions targeting only current/aspiring women rugby league coaches, the revised version of the program broadened its scope to include current/aspiring women coaches, from any sport discipline.

---

*“The program was initially developed for coaches in rugby, but an offer was extended to other sports to increase numbers in pilot course, and this proved extremely worthwhile and beneficial to all participants. It highlighted a real need for a program like this for women in all sports.”*

---

Program sessions were open to anyone who identified as a woman, were already active in coaching sport, and had an interest in pursuing coaching at the representative level. The 20-week program was held in partnership with the University of New England (UNE) and consisted of four face-to-face workshops, supplemented with various educational activities.

The program aimed to achieve the following objectives: 1) More women coaches pursuing coaching at higher levels in the game; 2) Removal of barriers for aspiring women coaches and 3) A successful leadership program unique to women coaches.

In terms of outcomes, some of these changes are long-term goals which cannot be evaluated immediately, while others are short-term goals. In terms of participation, 13 women coaches took part in the program from the following sports – rugby league (9), rugby union (2), soccer/ football (1) and Para-athletics throwing focus (1). Workshop components included guest expert presenters, and workbooks, practical activities, quizzes and assignments for participants to complete. Additionally, outside of the workshops, participants also attended webinars, worked through online learning modules and assessments to complete with support from UNE academics. Upon completion, participants attended a graduation ceremony, where

they were graduated with nationally recognised credit towards a Certificate IV or Diploma level qualification in leadership and management.

Challenges included the impact of COVID restrictions, but also general recruitment with the program being opened to both rugby and non-rugby coaches. The organisation also reported a need for a longer lead-time for recruitment. Although the attendance rate and requirements to join the program was impacted by COVID, these were overcome by shifting to online delivery. Other key learnings included the need for better shaping and framing of assessments, opening the course to other women leaders in sport (not just those in coaching roles), re-ordering the delivery of the workshops, and incorporating a higher variety of activities.

The concept and content of the course, including the mix of face-to-face workshops and online self-paced work, were identified as successful strategies. The use of expert guest speakers added enormous value for participants. Having participants from other sports was also successful in providing different perspectives. There was a strong focus on emotional intelligence – self-awareness, social awareness, and relationship management - and participants described this as extremely relevant and vital. Another key focus was on leadership, communication and change management through text, practical workshops, and expert presenters. NSW Rugby League is pleased to report that participants are currently able to use some of the tools/ information they gained from the program in their everyday lives, outside of coaching.

## Conclusions

The evaluation of the HSHW Grant Program has shed light on the remarkable strides made in promoting women and girls' participation in sports and fostering gender inclusivity within the sporting sector. Throughout the funding period, the program's impact on the funded organisations has been profound, creating positive outcomes on multiple levels.

While celebrating the achievements, it is crucial to recognise the potential for further growth and inclusivity. The inclusion of non-binary and gender-diverse individuals in sports initiatives remains an area of untapped potential. By broadening the program's scope, it is possible to glean invaluable insights and foster even more comprehensive gender equity in the sports sector.

The HSHW grant program has been instrumental in fostering a transformative shift in the representation and involvement of women and girls in sports across NSW. By adopting collaborative, adaptive, and inclusive approaches, the program has successfully facilitated the development of gender-inclusive sporting environments. The achievements observed throughout this evaluation exemplify the program's effectiveness in empowering women and girls to excel in sports, leadership, and beyond.

## Contact

**SPRINTER, Prevention Research Collaboration, Sydney School of Public Health, Faculty of Medicine and Health, Charles Perkins Centre, The University of Sydney.**

D17 Charles Perkins Centre

The University of Sydney

NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

Telephone: +61 2 8627 6222

Email: [SPRINTER.group@sydney.edu.au](mailto:SPRINTER.group@sydney.edu.au)

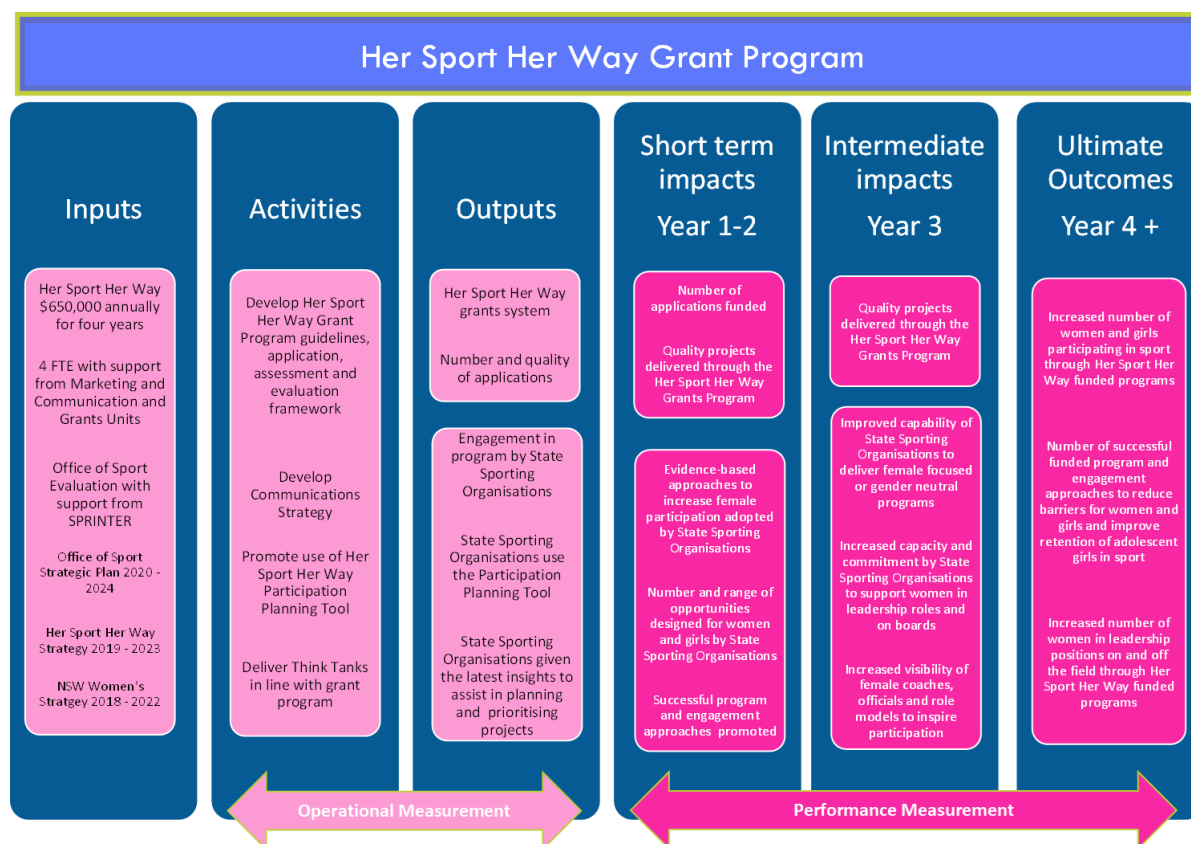
<https://www.sydney.edu.au/medicine-health/our-research/research-centres/prevention-research-collaboration.html>

<https://www.sport.nsw.gov.au/sprinter-group>



# Appendix 1: HSHW Grant Program Logic Model

The below figure presents a logic model with six stages of the HSHW grant program implementation. Although each stage and components appear separate, they are highly related to each other.



## Inputs

The inputs to the HSHW program were all established by the NSW Government.

## Activities

Each of the listed activities are described in the HSHW Annual reports.

## Outputs

The **HSHW grants system** was developed to receive grant applications from State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) and administer the grant to successful applications.

The Participation Planning Tool (PPT) was launched in 2019 for **SSOs to have a gender gap analysis through use of the PPT**. From June 2021 up to April 2023, 53% (n=17) of grant recipients reported using the PPT in the past 6 months.

All SSOs were provided with **the latest insights to assist in planning and prioritising projects** through HSHW Think Tanks. SPRINTER provided insights from the Active Kids evaluation, AusPlay and academic articles and reports for the Office of Sport to share with SSOs.

SPRINTER developed and delivered the following **HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Workshops**:

- **Round 2** HSHW grant program participants: 3 workshops delivered on August 25<sup>th</sup>, August 30<sup>th</sup>, and September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
- **Round 3** HSHW grant program participants: 2 workshops delivered on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- **Round 4** HSHW grant program participants: 2 workshops delivered on February 20<sup>th</sup> and February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023.

These workshops aimed to build capacity for evaluation in SSO staff working on projects funded through HSHW and to help the SSOs understand the evaluation framework and data collection process embedded within the HSHW funding agreement.

After participating in the evaluation workshop, SSOs were provided with a **HSHW case study template**. This resource, developed by SPRINTER, provided each project with a template for reporting from the beginning of the project to assist with their project planning and evaluation design.

Throughout Rounds 1-4, SPRINTER have provided **ongoing evaluation support** to all funding recipients. Emails, phone calls, meetings, and virtual meetings (Teams/Zoom) were used to co-design data collection tools unique to the needs of the funded projects (surveys, feedback forms, registration questions etc.)

## Appendix 2: Funded Projects in Rounds 1 - 4 (2019-2023)

Projects were funded under three objectives of the HSHW Grant program. The organisations in **bold** are the ones who completed the delivery of their project by time or reporting.

In total 41 SSOs received funding to deliver 110 projects during 2019-2023. This includes 101 projects under HSHW grant program and 9 leadership projects under the Strategic Partnership program (2020-21).

### Round 1 (2019-2020)<sup>8</sup>

Participation	Leadership	Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASKETBALL NSW</li> <li>• <b>MOTOR SPORT AUSTRALIA</b></li> <li>• DEAF SPORT AUSTRALIA</li> <li>• FOOTBALL NSW</li> <li>• GOLF NSW</li> <li>• <b>HOCKEY NSW</b></li> <li>• NSW HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING</li> <li>• NSW RUGBY UNION</li> <li>• <b>NSW SOFTBALL</b></li> <li>• <b>ROWING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>ROWING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>SKATE NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>SURFING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>TRIATHLON NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>WATER POLO NSW</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AFL NSW/ACT</b></li> <li>• DISABLED WINTERSPORT AUSTRALIA</li> <li>• <b>DIVING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>GYMNASTICS NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>HOCKEY NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>MASTERS SWIMMING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>SAILABILITY NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>SURFING NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>TENNIS NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>WHEELCHAIR SPORTS NSW</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL NSW/ACT</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> </ul>

### Round 2 (2020-2021)

Participation	Leadership	Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BASKETBALL NSW</li> <li>• CRICKET NSW</li> <li>• CRICKET NSW</li> <li>• CRICKET NSW</li> <li>• GOLF NSW</li> <li>• GYMNASTICS NSW</li> <li>• HOCKEY NSW</li> <li>• NETBALL NSW</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• TRIATHLON NSW</li> <li>• <b>WATER POLO NSW</b></li> <li>• WHEELCHAIR SPORTS NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HOCKEY NSW</li> <li>• LITTLE ATHLETICS NSW</li> <li>• NETBALL NSW</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• <b>NSW RUGBY LEAGUE</b></li> <li>• NSW TOUCH ASSOCIATION</li> <li>• <b>ROWING NSW</b></li> <li>• SKI &amp; SNOWBOARD AUSTRALIA</li> <li>• SURFING NSW</li> <li>• TRIATHON NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TENNIS NSW</li> </ul>

<sup>8</sup> Funded organisations bolded in **orange** have completed their projects at the time of previous reporting. Findings from these projects have been included in the first HSHW Grant Program Evaluation Report.

## Leadership projects (2020-2021)<sup>9</sup>

Participation	Leadership	Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>AUSCYCLING (previously CYCLING NSW)</b></li> <li>• NSW HANG GLIDING AND PARAGLIDING</li> <li>• NSW PARACHUTE</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CRICKET NSW</b></li> <li>• <b>DIVING NSW</b></li> <li>• FOOTBALL NSW</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• <b>NSW ICE SKATING</b></li> <li>• SKATE NSW</li> </ul>	N/A

## Round 3 (2021-2023)

Participation	Leadership	Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GRIDIRON NSW INC</li> <li>• GYMNASTICS NSW</li> <li>• HOCKEY NSW</li> <li>• NSW RIFLE</li> <li>• TENNIS NSW</li> <li>• TRIATHLON NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL NSW/ACT</li> <li>• AFL NSW/ACT</li> <li>• AUSTRALIAN SAILING</li> <li>• BASKETBALL NSW</li> <li>• DIVING NSW</li> <li>• FOOTBALL NSW</li> <li>• HOCKEY NSW</li> <li>• LITTLE ATHLETICS NSW</li> <li>• NSW FENCING</li> <li>• NSW PARACHUTE</li> <li>• NSW RIFLE</li> <li>• NSW RUGBY LEAGUE</li> <li>• TRIATHLON NSW</li> <li>• VOLLEYBALL NSW</li> <li>• WATER POLO NSW</li> <li>• WHEELCHAIR SPORTS NSW/ACT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRICKET NSW</li> <li>• MOTOR SPORT AUSTRALIA</li> </ul>

## Round 4 (2022-2023)

Participation	Leadership	Capability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL NSW/ACT</li> <li>• BASKETBALL NSW</li> <li>• CRICKET NSW</li> <li>• HOCKEY NSW</li> <li>• KARTING AUSTRALIA NSW</li> <li>• KARTING AUSTRALIA NSW</li> <li>• MOTORSPORT AUSTRALIA</li> <li>• NETBALL NSW</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• NSW BASEBALL</li> <li>• NSW RUGBY UNION</li> <li>• TRIATHLON NSW</li> <li>• WATER POLO NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AFL NSW/ACT</li> <li>• DIVING NSW</li> <li>• FOOTBALL NSW</li> <li>• HOCKEY NSW</li> <li>• LITTLE ATHLETICS NSW</li> <li>• NETBALL NSW</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• NORTHERN NSW FOOTBALL</li> <li>• SWIMMING NSW</li> <li>• TRIATHLON NSW</li> <li>• WATER POLO NSW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CRICKET NSW</li> <li>• VOLLEYBALL NSW</li> </ul>

<sup>9</sup> Projects funded under the Strategic Partnership Program



## Appendix 3: HSHW Case Study Template

The purpose of case studies in the Her Sport Her Way (HSHW) grant evaluation is to learn and showcase the innovative approaches taken by NSW State Sporting Organisations. By highlighting the impact of these high-quality projects in communities across NSW, it is intended that others will be inspired to change standard practices in their sport and increase participation of women and girls, on and off the field.

The HSHW objectives and recommendations below should be considered when developing a case study for a funded activity.

- **PARTICIPATION** – Increase the number of women and girls playing sport
- **BARRIERS** – Reduce barriers to participation for women and girls and increase retention of adolescent girls in sport
- **LEADERSHIP** – Increase the number of women and girls in leadership positions on and off the field
- **INSIGHTS** – Base delivery in evidence to reflect what women and girls want
- **VISIBILITY** – Increase visibility of female coaches, officials, and role models to inspire participation
- **CULTURE** – Develop inclusive sporting cultures
- **MOVEMENT** – Increase fundamental movement skills of women and girls
- **SUPPORT** – Harness key influencers like friends, family members and coaches to facilitate participation
- **PLACES** – Identify which region the project is delivered in and connect with locals
- **SPACES** – Ensure the environments and facilities meet the needs of women and girls
- **COMMUNICATION** – Raise awareness and promote the activity to women and girls
- **ACTION** – Complete the project within an appropriate time frame

You can download an editable word document of this guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/HSHWcasestudyguide>

<b>Background</b>	
<b>Project title</b>	
<b>What is the project?</b> Brief description	
<b>Who is the target audience?</b>	
<b>When is the project being delivered?</b> e.g., once off date, 8-week course, season etc	
<b>Where is the project located?</b> OoS region/ postcodes/ setting	
<b>Which HSHW objective was the project funded through?</b>	
<b>Who are the key partners in delivery?</b>	
<b>Why was the project created?</b> i.e., primary aim of the project	
<b>How will you know if the project achieved it's aims?</b> What changes do you want to see? How will you measure these?	
<b>Describe the project phases in detail</b>	
<b>Who was on the project team?</b>	
<b>What insights or evidence informed your project?</b> Pilot, community consultation, planning sessions, focus groups etc.	
<b>What <i>actually</i> took place during the project delivery?</b>	
<b>How many people participated in the funded activity? Who were they?</b>	
<b>What was the evaluation process?</b>	
<b>How did you communicate with participants to engage and retain them in the project?</b>	
<b>What were successful strategies and key learnings gained from this project?</b>	

<b>What challenges arose during the project and how were these overcome? What would you do differently next time?</b>	
<b>What was the cost of the project?</b>	
<b>Does the project have other aspects not mentioned above that may be of interest?</b>	
<b>Health</b> e.g., physical, mental, emotional, spiritual	
<b>Social</b> e.g., capacity building, resilience, community safety empowerment, social connection.	
<b>Economic</b> e.g., employment, education, workplace productivity, tourism/visitation	
<b>Where should people go to gain further information?</b> (websites/email)	