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Gender Diversity on Sporting Committees

City of Boroondara

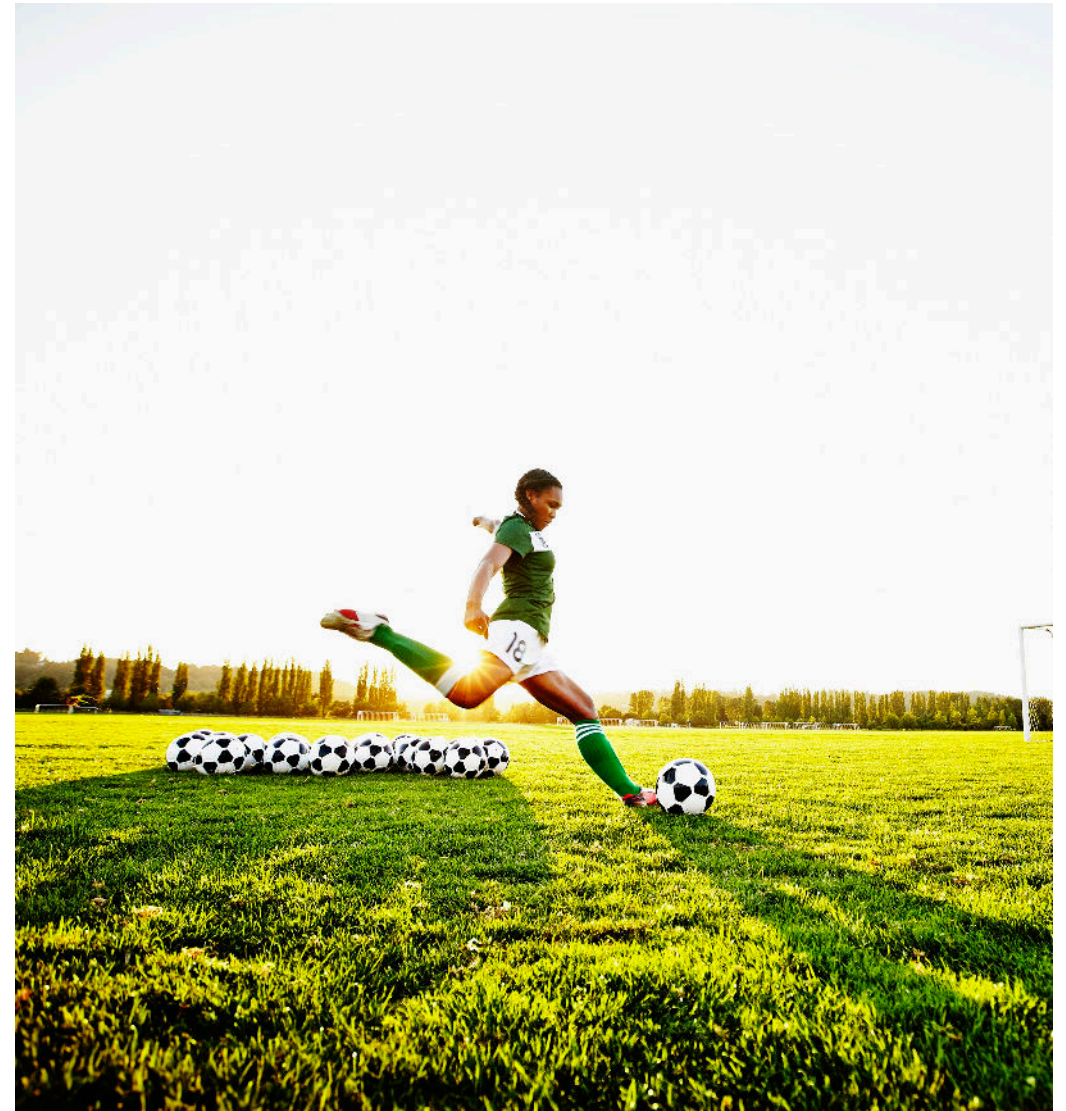
Prepared by:

Dr. Katherine Raw

Dr. Paul Howell

Dr. Chelsey Taylor

Mr. Dan Ferguson



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Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation, who are the Traditional Owners of the land on which Swinburne's Australian campuses are located in Melbourne's east and outer-east, and pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We are honoured to recognise our connection to Wurundjeri Country, history, culture, and spirituality through these locations, and strive to ensure that we operate in a manner that respects and honours the Elders and Ancestors of these lands.

We also respectfully acknowledge Swinburne's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, students, alumni, partners and visitors.

We also acknowledge and respect the Traditional Owners of lands across Australia, their Elders, Ancestors, cultures, and heritage, and recognise the continuing sovereignties of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations.

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Introduction and Background

Research has shown the importance of inclusive leadership

Background

- Community sport committees are key to local sports governance, club culture, social fabric
- Challenges of gender diversity and intersectionality

Introduction

- Importance of gender diversity in sports governance
- Boroondara's vibrant community sports culture
- *Aim to examine gender diversity on sporting committees within Boroondara and its impact upon programs, participation, and club culture.*



Evaluation Approach

Our evaluation included a two-phase mixed-method approach



1 Phase 1

Quantitative screening surveys (n=20)

- Gender distribution: 60% women, 40% men
- Average committee size: 9.8 members
- Average tenure: 2.4 years



2 Phase 2

Qualitative interviews (n=14)

- July to November 2024
- Interviews lasted between 20 and 90 minutes
- Transcribed verbatim
- Analysed using thematic coding processes

Context

- Athletics, baseball, cricket, croquet, football, hockey, lacrosse, pétanque, soccer, tennis
- Balwyn, Camberwell, Deepdene, Hawthorn, Kew, North Balwyn

Impact on Club Culture

Gender diversity improves club culture, but challenges persist

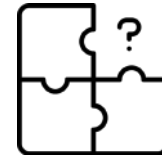


Positive influence of gender diversity

- Inclusivity and productivity
- Improved decision-making processes
- Reduced traditional gender roles



“Diversity helps you be more understanding and inclusive and see things differently... it just drives the way you behave like things get picked up that otherwise wouldn't.” – Club Vice President (Above 40% representation)



Challenges

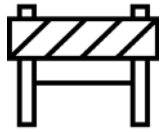
- Entrenched "old school" mentalities
- Need for gender-neutral practices (e.g., language, uniforms, scheduling).



“If it's predominantly men, then they'll automatically be thinking that the women go in the kitchen to do that sort of volunteering work. So, having more of a mixed committee means a more open attitude to who does what jobs.” – Club President (Above 40% representation)

Barriers and Enablers to Gender Diversity

Leveraging existing social networks is key, but entrenched gender roles persist

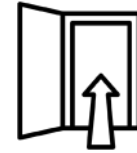


Barriers

- Entrenched committee and club cultures
- Traditional gender roles and administrative overload
- Time constraints and family responsibilities
- Recruitment issues



"Having only one female representative in the executive committee is a bad thing. Because you get lumped with absolutely everything, anything women's programme related gets kind of dumped on to you...." – Club Secretary (Below 40% representation)



Enablers

- Informal recruitment practices
- Leveraging networks of current/past players
- Sense of responsibility among committee members



"I played [senior sport] and some [veteran sport] and then I was asked to join the committee to help run the vets and it kind of went from there." – General Committee Member (Below 40% representation)

Support mechanisms

Support from Councils and State Sporting Organisations (SSOs) are essential

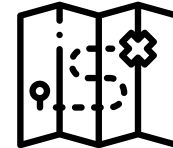


Councils

- Resources, funding, facility access
- Links to policy, templates, and training
- Challenges in understanding, communication and access



"I found a lot of stuff through the Council... So, there's a lot of templates, a lot of that sort of stuff I've been able to draw on" – Club Secretary (Above 40% representation of women on committee)



SSOs

- Women's Charter, leadership programs and resources
- Inclusive approach and diverse representation



"Through [SSO], we went on the women leaders in [sport] program again, which is more about developing women, but that's kind of extends to how do you get other women involved." – Club Secretary (Above 40% representation)

Benefits of Gender Diversity on Club Committees

Enhanced committee and club cultures results in better participation



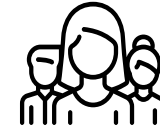
Committee dynamics

- Strategic and productive meetings
- Awareness of diverse voices
- *“The women's president was the only female on the Committee... They made sure that the needs of the women's program were met by that having her there. I think that's positive” – Club Secretary (Above 40% representation)*



Club culture

- Challenging gender norms
- Inclusive and welcoming environment
- *“We've got a social committee which has got men and women on it... We have men volunteering in our canteen, so they are rostered on” – Club President (Above 40% representation)*



Participation

- Increased participation and engagement
- Emphasis on diverse representation, social programs
- *“We ran a LGBT+ social program... We've also run an intro social program for women, where there was a coach that's overseeing it as a safe space” – Secretary (Above 40% representation)*

Recommendations

Council:

1. Support and funding for social programs
2. Foster capacity building on gender, diversity, and inclusion
3. Support knowledge management and transitions
4. Develop leadership networks and mentorship

Clubs:

1. Defining roles and reducing workload
2. Flexible meeting arrangements
3. Addressing gender norms
4. Improving representation → intersectionality



Thank you



Dr. Katherine Raw
Email: kraw@swin.edu.au



Dr. Paul Bowell
Email: pbowell@swin.edu.au



Dr. Chelsey Taylor
Email: cstaylor@swin.edu.au



Mr. Dan Ferguson
Email: dferguson@swin.edu.au

