



**FOOTBALL  
FEDERATION  
AUSTRALIA**

# **GENDER EQUALITY ACTION PLAN 2019**

**Closing the gap and transforming men's football  
and women's football into football**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## The current state of play

Women in football are shining brighter than ever before. Our Westfield Matildas are one of the best teams in the world, inspiring young players to aim for national representation and the next generation to take up the game. Through media coverage and commercial deals in women's football, the likes of which we've never seen before, female football players are getting recognition and building fan bases at unprecedented levels. The fastest growing area of football is womens' and girls' participation, with 139,000 female players participating

in regular structured football activities. Women make incredibly valuable contributions to our clubs and our communities, and the more women and girls we can encourage into football, the stronger our game will be.

Yet we are still facing some major barriers in achieving equality for women and men in our sport, and Football Federation Australia (FFA) believes we must fast-track the pathway to equality if we are to secure a brighter, stronger and more prosperous future for football in Australia.

**The time for action to achieve equality for female players, and long term health benefits for the whole nation, is right now.**

Our Westfield Matildas are about to represent Australia on the world-stage at the FIFA Women's World Cup 2019, Australia will bid for the 2023 World Cup, our national Westfield W-League competition is strong and we have more girls than ever before entering our sport.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

However, while many young girls start playing football, our research tells us that the majority drop out before reaching senior competitions due largely to a culture of inequality within our game and Australia's overall male-dominated sporting culture. For example:

- ▶ Almost half of the girls who stop playing football report they do so because "the clubs do not treat girls' teams equal to boys".
- ▶ Our research also shows that equal access to facilities at a local level greatly impacts on the lack of equality between men and women, with 78 percent of players noting this as our biggest issue at a grassroots level.

- ▶ Our leaders do not reflect the makeup of our community among FFA, state/territory federations and A/W-League clubs. None of our CEOs are women and on average only 24 per cent of Board members are women.

**We believe football is a sport for everyone, and that our game truly reflects the diversity of Australia and brings communities together. Yet it is widely recognised that women and men, girls and boys, are not currently treated as equals at all levels of football. We know there is more work to be done, and that this work must be accelerated if we are to create a truly equal playing field.**

## Our plan to achieve equality

In February this year FFA signed up to the Male Champion of Change 'Pathway to Pay Equity' alongside 15 other major sporting organisations and sports clubs.

Through this Gender Equality Action Plan we are committed to achieving 50/50 women and men players at grassroots level over the next ten years. This means we need to recruit almost 600,000 girls and women to play in local, structured club teams. It's a big task but one that we know will have huge benefits to the health of our local communities and our beloved game.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Improving facilities to attract and retain women and girls is a key priority. In 2019 it is not acceptable that girls do not have female toilets or change rooms at their local grounds. Our aim is to provide women and girls with the same level of access to quality pitches - including synthetic fields - well-lit, safe and secure grounds and changing facilities, that their male counterparts enjoy. EY analysis conducted on behalf of FFA indicates that investing in football facilities could bring 138,000 new female football players into the game prior to the 2023 Women's World Cup.

Through our membership of Male Champions of Change we are committed to shifting cultural perceptions by focusing on women

in leadership. FFA implemented governance reforms in 2018 which committed it to "40:40:20" representation, meaning a minimum of 40% women, 40% men and the remaining 20% being discretionary. It is also a constitutional requirement for the FFA Chair and Deputy Chair to be gender-balanced. This commitment is supported from the grassroots of our game through to our Member Federations. Football is working at all levels of the game to reflect similar leadership representation.

As part of our strategy we have increased investment in development officers at Member Federations, and will be rolling out training to address gender bias, with increased focus from

all levels of the game.

Addressing the existing gender pay gap is also a critical factor in inspiring women to stay involved in our sport at the highest levels. We have increased promotion of the Westfield Matildas and the Westfield W-League and have taken steps towards bridging the gender pay gap. Last year Sam Kerr was signed up as Australia's first ever female marquee player for the Westfield W-League. The inaugural Westfield W-League Collective Bargaining Agreement this year entered its second year and saw an increase in the salary cap to \$350,000 (up 16.5%), lifting of the salary cap floor to \$221,167 (up 22.8%) and the minimum retainer to \$12,287 (up 22.8%). The highest paid

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

female players are expected to earn more than \$130,000 a year through the Westfield W-League, leagues overseas and the Westfield Matildas.

We have employed a full-time Diversity and Inclusion Manager to ensure we monitor, track and deliver on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Plan (2019-2023), including this action plan to achieve gender equality.

FFA believes that by ensuring we have 50/50 women and men playing our game, improving on-ground facilities, recruiting and supporting women into leadership positions and bridging the pay gap, we can become leaders in our community - living, breathing and playing gender equality.

**It is well overdue for young Australians to look around them and see girls and boys having equal access to local sports fields, equal opportunities to play at a local, state and national level and to see their favourite football stars being paid fairly and equally.**

This strategy outlines our plan to achieving gender equality in football over the next ten years.



**David Gallop AM**  
CEO  
Football Federation Australia



# HOW DO WE ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY IN FOOTBALL?

**Our approach will be to tackle this from two main areas:**

## CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Bring about policy change to drive gender diversity
- ▶ Review the governance structure of the game and determine the barriers to entry for women
- ▶ Mandate and set targets and track progress publicly, for example our FFA Board requirement of 40:40:20 gender representation
- ▶ FFA must lead from the front and be an equality role model that others can aspire to
- ▶ Roll out Gender Bias training for people at all levels of the game
- ▶ Establish Male Champions of Change for Football, with all CEO's across Australian Football to sign up

## BUILDING A PIPELINE OF TALENT

- ▶ Develop mentoring opportunities for all levels of the game
- ▶ Identify talent and females for different roles in the system
- ▶ Develop a list of qualified females who could take on board or committee roles within football
- ▶ Develop leadership training for females at all levels
- ▶ Create recruitment tools and guides for all levels of the game

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### KEY PRINCIPLES WHICH WILL SUPPORT OUR WORK IN LEADERSHIP:

- ▶ Being transparent about the state of play, set KPI's and targets which will be owned by all stakeholders, track our progress

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### WHOLE OF GAME COMMITMENT

- ▶ Framework applies to coaching, refereeing, administrators and leadership
- ▶ FFA, Member Federations, Professional Clubs, Grassroots Clubs and Administration

# KEY FOCUS AREAS

## LEADERSHIP

How do we tackle cultural and governance issues in order to increase the number of females in all areas of the game?

## PARTICIPATION & FACILITIES

How will we achieve a 50/50 gender split at the grassroots, considering the need to develop inclusive environments and connecting with multicultural communities?

## GENDER PAY GAP

How do we define Gender Pay Equity in football and what steps and commitment is required to close the gap?

## WESTFIELD MATILDAS

How do we Support the Westfield Matildas to be the best in the world and raise their profile?

## FUTURE WESTFIELD MATILDAS

What pathway investment and programs would it take to win a Women's World Cup?

# LEADERSHIP

Changing football by  
increasing the number  
of females at all levels,  
in all areas of  
the game





# LEADERSHIP

## Changing football by increasing the number of females at all levels, in all areas of the game

As it currently stands, women are unrepresented in all areas of the game from grassroots club committees to the FFA board. Football has traditionally been viewed as a male dominated sport in Australia, with 21% of the player base being female, and only 24 per cent of Board members across our Boards are women.

The corporate sector has long acknowledged, through numerous reports that gender diversity is a driver for organisational performance. It goes beyond doing the right thing, it is good for business, and leads to better business outcomes. It is about creating a more balanced environment, which will benefit both men and women alike.



# FAIRER REPRESENTATION IN ALL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

**The FFA is a member of Male Champions of Change and is committed to shifting cultural perceptions by focusing on women in leadership at all levels of our game. The FFA constitution commits to 40:40:20 representation, meaning a minimum of 40% women, 40% men and the remaining 20% being discretionary. This commitment is supported from the grassroots of our game through to our Member Federations. Football is working at all levels of the game to reflect similar leadership representation.**

*“In most nations, men largely occupy the seats of power. Relying exclusively on women to lead change on gender equality is therefore illogical. We need decent, powerful men to step up beside women to create a more gender equal world.”*

**— Elizabeth Broderick**  
MCC Founder and Convenor MCC Sport.

# PARTICIPATION AND FACILITIES





# PARTICIPATION REACHING 50/50

- ▶ FFA has is committed to reaching males and females 50/50 at the grassroots. In 2018, 21% of the player base is female, which equates to 139,000 women and girls playing in structured football (affiliated to FFA).
- ▶ Hosting a FIFA Women's World Cup on home soil, with a combination of increased interest and the right participation programs, will fast track football's ability to reach this target in 10 years.
- ▶ The ASC Aus Play 2017 Research highlights that netball is the only consistent team sport in the top 10 participation for women and girls from Juniors through to Seniors, thereby highlighting the opportunity for all team sports to better engage and target females.



# HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE 50/50 PARTICIPATION AT THE GRASSROOTS?

## **BREAK DOWN barriers in the current environment**

FFA must break down barriers in the current environment to ensure it is welcoming to females. We need to provide a safe, supportive and fun environment for women and girls to thrive at all levels, in all areas of football. We will drive this cultural change by increasing Board participation of women, securing funding for female-friendly local sporting facilities, bridging the pay gap and delivering other inclusive policies and programs.

## **DEVELOP NEW products and programs**

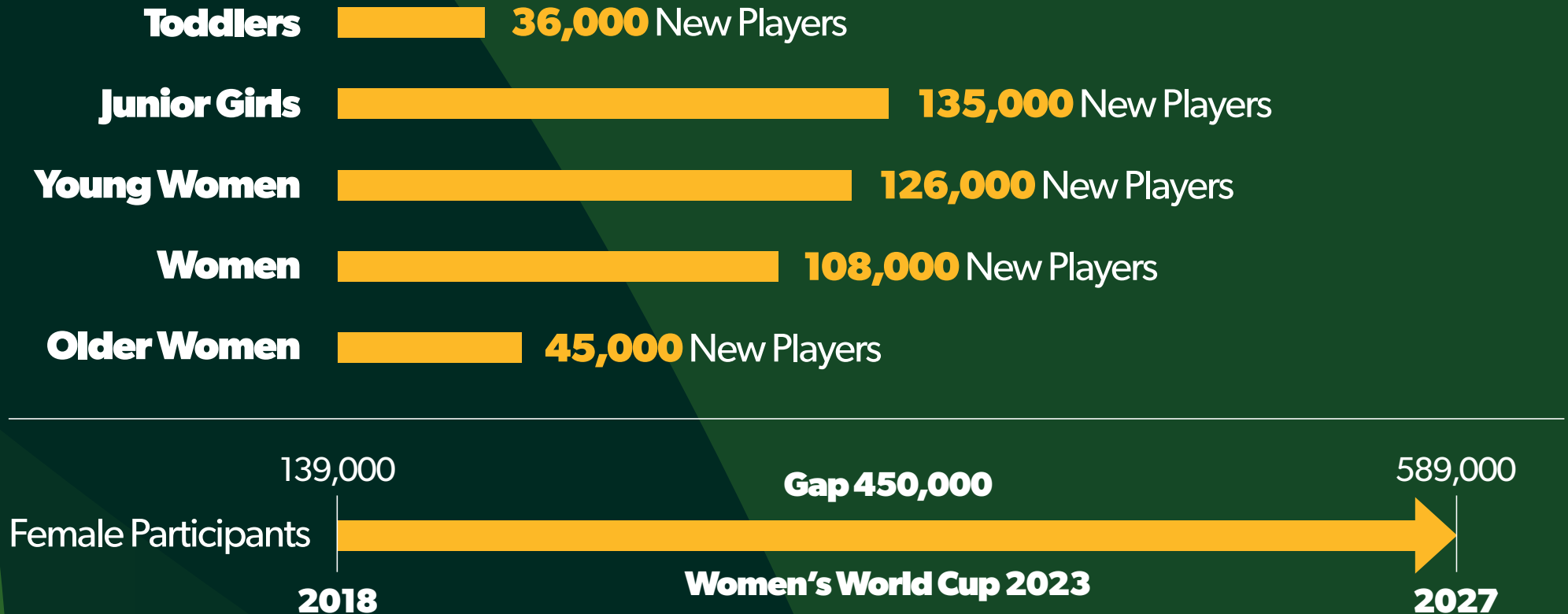
We will work to better understand the consumer needs of women at all stages of life, from toddlers to teenagers, young adults to new mothers and later in life, and develop products and programs that best suit their needs. Our aim is to provide a choice of flexible, inclusive, safe, social and fun ways to participate in football.

## **ADAPT the environment and programs to be inclusive**

In particular we will target multicultural groups, indigenous people and people with a disability. We will adapt our club environment, and introduce new products and programs to actively target participants



# HOW WILL THE 589,000 TARGET BE MET OVER 10 YEARS?



# UNDERPINNING INITIATIVES

- ▶ **Women's and Girls Football Facility Funding:** to increase capacity to cater for new participants.
- ▶ **Club Education Program:** to change perceptions, tackle the cultural issues within clubs and provide support.
- ▶ **Development Officers:** More Boots on the ground to implement, educate and support the rollout of new programs for women and girls.
- ▶ **Aligning and working closely with stakeholders:** including Member Federations and Hyundai A-League and Westfield W-League Clubs.
- ▶ **Marketing and promotion:** changing perceptions for Females and the football community, promoting new opportunities and programs, engaging schools and universities.



# CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Pathway to pay equity





# CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP

## Why is now the time for football to consider the journey to Pay Equity?

**The Male Champions of Change for Sport have identified closing the gender pay gap in sport as a priority, because the gap between Elite level athletes across a range of sports exceeds that in almost every other sector in society.**

The competition for female athletes has increased dramatically in the last two years. Every major code is now offering professional paid opportunities within their sport. Girls at the grassroots now have an ability to make a choice in the same way as boys always have. They now have the option to choose which sport to compete and participate in based on the pathway and potential to be remunerated.

Further to this, the success of the Westfield Matildas is already bringing about comparisons between the Westfield Matildas and the Caltex Socceroos pay gap.

This will require a whole of game commitment, and the Gender Pay Gap can not be viewed in isolation from the overall growth strategy for the Women's game, including

growing the Westfield W-league season and the overall number of matches played by the Westfield Matildas.

Football like all sports must define Pay Equity, between the Westfield Matildas and Caltex Socceroos, and the Hyundai A-League and the Westfield W-League.

- ▶ We must develop a methodology which is transparent and can be explained publicly.
- ▶ Follow the lead of the Corporate sector and be prepared to promote our path to equity.

# THE WESTFIELD MATILDAS

Support our women's  
national team to be  
the best in the world  
and raise their profile





# WESTFIELD MATILDAS

## Becoming mainstream and competing internationally

Our aim is to win a FIFA Women's World Cup and to continue building growth and interest in Australia and our region. The key to both of these priorities is the number of games played by the Westfield Matildas annually, and the number of games played on home soil.

Top women's football nations play on average 24 games annually. The Westfield Matildas currently play 12 games annually. In Europe, teams are playing meaningful home and away fixtures more regularly, while the Westfield Matildas play most of their competitive matches in centralised tournaments. The US in particular has led the way in creating an annual calendar which includes hosting the 'Tournament of Nations' and the 'She Believes Cup'.

Therefore if the Westfield Matildas are to keep up with the leading nations, the team must play more games and more games on home soil. We have already begun to action this, recently hosting the highly successful Cup of Nations.



# THE FUTURE WESTFIELD MATILDAS

Building a system  
which develops  
ongoing generations  
of Westfield Matildas





# FUTURE WESTFIELD MATILDAS

**Building a system which develops  
ongoing generations of national teams**

**The overall aim is to reach equality in the Girls and Boys Pathways over the next 10 years. There are a number of challenges which need to be overcome in order for this to happen.**

The player pool for girls is significantly smaller than boys across Australia. This has had a significant effect on the depth of talent, which is further magnified in a large country like Australia. That is why football must continue to focus on growing girls participation across Australia to enable stronger competitions to develop, and create a greater ability to grade girls based on ability and motivation.

Over time, the Hyundai A-League, Westfield W-League and National Premier League Clubs will play a stronger role in the Girls Pathway, with the establishment of Girls Academies across Australia.





## FUTURE WESTFIELD MATILDAS

Women and girls playing against boys is core to the overall strategy of closing the gap. The current generation of Westfield Matildas grew up playing against boys at various stages of their development.

Furthermore the major issue which impacts the growth of women's football in Australia is the length of the Westfield W-League. It is simply not long enough to enable our best players to remain in Australia for 12 months of the year. This means Australia is reliant on the ability of the top players to secure contracts internationally. This may not be an issue for the top Westfield Matildas, however this is not possible for the majority of Young Westfield Matildas. This is also compounded by the fact there is no National Youth League competition in place for young female players.

This creates a gap in the Women and Girls Pathway between the ages of 17-20. Filling this gap is critical to developing a pipeline of future Westfield Matildas.

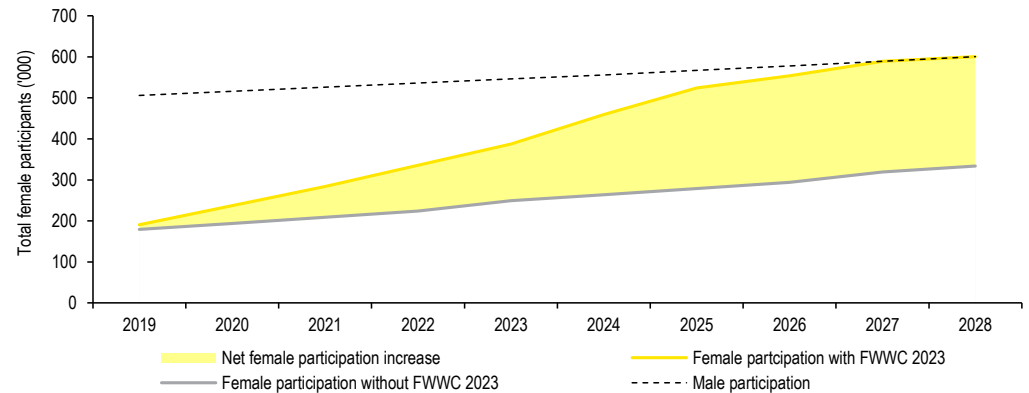


# DELIVERING SOCIAL IMPACT THROUGH HOSTING THE FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2023

**Hosting the Women's World Cup in 2023 is critical to achieving our 50/50 gender participation target sooner than otherwise.** There is some evidence to suggest that major sporting events help drive participation in sport. For example, following the AFC Asian Cup in 2015 registrations for football clubs across Australia increased by 20 per cent. This was a substantial increase on previous registration numbers - the average annual growth rate was approximately 3 per cent over the prior three year period.

EY research conducted on behalf of FFA projected that hosting the Women's World Cup in 2023 would lead to approximately 270,000 Australian women and girls playing structured football who would otherwise not register to play. It is clear that we have a huge opportunity to recruit women and girls into our game and amplify our movement towards gender equality in football.

*FFA participation growth estimates with and without FWWC 2023 (2019 – 2028)*



**EY also quantified \$465 million of social and other benefits from achieving 50/50 participation at a grassroots level in Australian football as a result of hosting the Women's World Cup in 2023.**



# CONTACT US

For more information please visit  
**[www.ffa.com.au](http://www.ffa.com.au)**

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