

Media Release

The Hon Ros Spence MP
Minister for Agriculture
Minister for Community Sport
Minister for Carers and Volunteers



Thursday, 20 June 2024

RESEARCH SHOWS BENEFIT OF GENDER BALANCE IN SPORT

The Allan Labor Government is boosting the number of women working in sport with new research showing women in leadership roles within Victorian sporting organisations has doubled since 2017.

Minister for Community Sport Ros Spence today announced the release of research by Deakin University into Victoria's *Balance the Board* policy, with findings showing the policy has led to a significant increase in women on Victorian sporting boards.

The findings also showed that these organisations had improved board performance, culture and decision making.

Since 2019, *Balance the Board* has required a minimum of 40 per cent representation of women on boards at state sport and recreation organisations in order for them to be eligible for community sport funding.

In 2017, only 45 per cent of funded state sporting bodies had at least 40 per cent women directors, however since the policy came into effect at least 90 per cent of funded state sporting bodies have had at least 40 per cent women directors.

The research also found board processes improve when steps are taken to attract and retain women and that, women on boards improve the experience for other women directors.

Little Athletics Victoria achieved a gender balanced board through constitutional change and having more women in leadership roles. They now have five women on a board of eight members - these changes have contributed to a positive cultural change right across the organization.

The research also showed that 80 per cent of Victorian sporting organisations said the policy was important in driving women's leadership on their boards.

For more information on *Balance the Board* and the new research visit changeourgame.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Community Sport Ros Spence

"This new research shows the many benefits that come from gender balance in the leadership of sporting organisations."

"We are focused on breaking down barriers for women and girls in sport, ensuring that everyone in Victoria has the opportunity to take part in the sports they love."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Creating a truly equal society requires change at every level, from grassroots right to the top of organisations. I'm excited to see the results of these research which show that having balance on boards improves decision making and outcomes."

Quote attributable to Director of the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation Sarah Styles

"Women bring a wealth of skills and experience to sporting boards, which in turn elevates the important role these organisations have in the governance and decision making of sport and active recreation in Victoria."

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Quote attributable to Deakin University's Professor Pamm Phillips

"When more women were part of boards, our research found women directors brought a focus to crucial skills including governance, strategic planning, risk management and sport knowledge to their positions. Thus, board processes became more professionalised in response to increasing more women on boards.

Quote attributable to CEO of Little Athletics Victoria Anthony McIntosh

"Some positive impacts from having a gender balanced board include contributing to a positive shift in culture, and having more women in leadership roles across all levels of our sport."