



**WOMEN PARTICIPATING
AND LEADING IN SPORT**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023 - 2024



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WSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a transformational year 2023/24 has been for Women Sport Australia, our members and the Australian sporting community at large.

The year kicked off with the FIFA Women's World Cup being held on Australian (and New Zealand) shores in July and August 2023. The third largest sporting event in the world galvanised our country, elevating women's sport - the female athletes, high performance staff, media and support personnel, to a level of notoriety not experienced before but where they rightfully belong.



WSA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

During the tournament, Women Sport Australia;

- Supported the launch of It's a Penalty's #keepkidssafe campaign in collaboration with the International Centre for Missing & Exploited Children, highlighting the importance of child protection and safeguarding, particularly in sport.
- Director, David Bond and representatives from Football NSW met with the Brazilian Minister for Sport and their delegation to discuss their upcoming bid to host the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup, providing insight into the sporting landscape for women and girls and legacy planning post-tournament. Brazil have subsequently been awarded the next hosting rights; and
- Then President Gen Dohrmann and her fellow Directors participated in many events and provided comment to a range of publications throughout the tournament, advocating for and celebrating women in sport.

The celebrations continued at Marvel Stadium in October 2023 for the 10th annual Women in Sport Brunch, hosted by Women Sport Australia (WSA) in partnership with Victoria University. WSA recognised a number of community heroes and discussed the topic 'What Women Want'. An insightful panel moderated by sports journalist and presenter, Rana Hussain fueled networking discussions and debate between the 500 strong audience in attendance.

The female centred conversations, insights and networking continued at The Sport Bra Project's annual CeleBRAtion lunch in Sydney in November. WSA has continued to work with The Sports Bra Project (TSBP) as the Australian shop front of the US organisation hosted on the WSA website and fundraising platform via the Australian Sports Foundation.



In March 2024, Women Sport Australia were delighted to be a part of the Women. Sport. The Future luncheon hosted by Pullman Melbourne on the Park for the second consecutive year and in May 2024, we continued to shift the discourse surrounding female athletes by hosting WSA's Women In Sport Photo Action Awards (WISPAA) for the first time in Sydney.



Throughout 2023/24, Women Sport Australia have continued to advocate for women and girls in sport. Our independent and peak body status was recognised on many occasions seeing WSA, represented by Tamatha Harding, Chantella Perera and others invited to a number of Government roundtable discussions and workshops, most notably;

- Australian Government's Gender Equity in Governance and Leadership Industry Workshop;
- Sport Australia Hall of Fame Round Table; and
- Federal Ministers Round Table - National Sports Plan.

I would like to thank our board for all their dedication:

Chantella Perera – Deputy President

Tamatha Harding – Secretary

David Bond – Treasurer

Iain Roy – Board Director

Isaak Dury – Board Director

Jessica Ivers – Board Director

Ruth Holdaway – Board Director

Demelza Fellowes – Board Director

Holly Bailey - Board Director

Laura Byrnes - Board Director (Jan 2024)

We also want to thank Maria Cabeliza who assists WSA with casual administration requirements and our various WSA partners News Corp Australia, ISPT, Global Institute of Sport, Pullman Melbourne on the Park and Victoria University.

Yours in sport,

Helena Dorczak
President/ Chair





ADVOCACY AND RELATIONSHIPS

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

An important part of our work is to make sure that the decision makers of sport are aware of the issues facing women and girls and to advocate for the changes required to ensure equitable access. This year, we have been involved in numerous workshops, provided formal feedback and submissions on the

- Australian Sports Commission (ASC) Play Well strategy
- The National Sports Diplomacy strategy review
- The Gender Equity and Governance Industry workshop with Director Tamatha Harding now a member of the Gender Equity in Governance Program Reference group who are working to increase the number of women in decision making positions.
- The National Sport Plan that connects all strategies across sport
- In conjunction with the Confederation of Australian Sport (CAS), made a pre-budget submission to Treasury to support dedicated projects and a certification scheme that will ensure greater access to and inclusive participation in sport for females.

Directors have also attended meetings with many state, national and international bodies throughout the year to not only share our insights and learnings but to also gather a greater understanding of what is and isn't working and how we can amplify and fast track those initiatives that are making it easier for women and girls to participate in sport how and when they want.

WSA EQUITY PLEDGE

Our WSA vision is to create meaningful change so that all girls and women have equitable access to physical activity and sports, to unlock limitless possibilities in their lives.

In its third year of implementation, The WSA Equity Pledge continued to unite the broader community to impact participation, policy, representation, and leadership in sports in sustainable and measurable ways. It is a way to join the many voices to create a powerful movement when lobbying, advocating, and inspiring change for good.

The Equity Pledge has been front and centre at all WSA events this year and we thank everyone who has signed up to the movement.





WSA ROUNDTABLES

After the success of our Women in Sport Roundtable series in 2022 we continued with meaningful discussions on various topics in 2023. Once again the sessions brought together significant contributors in the equity for women and girls sector to amplify fantastic work already being done and stimulate great conversation.

Our first Roundtable was held on Harmony Day (21 March) and focused on the landscape for multicultural women and girls in Australian sport. We thank Carmel Guerra OAM, CEO of Centre for Multicultural Youth, for joining us for the online session and sharing her own experience playing sport and providing some great considerations for engaging CALD women and girls in sport and recreation.

The second Roundtable will be held in person at the National Sports Convention in July and will be used as an opportunity to bring industry-leaders together to provide us with feedback on the role WSA needs to be playing in the community. Key themes that come out of this session will shape WSA's next strategy session and help shape our future priorities.

WOMEN. SPORT. THE FUTURE. LUNCHEON - PULLMAN ON THE PARK

In March 2024, with the support of Effie & Co, WSA partnered again with the Pullman Melbourne on the Park to run the first ever Women.Sport.The Future lunch. Hosted by Sam Lane and featuring a star studded panel including Matildas goalkeeper Lydia Williams, Western Bulldogs President Kylie Watson-Wheeler, Retired Australian Netballer & Media Personality Bianca Chatfield and WSA President, Helena Dorczak. The event explored “*The Matilda Effect*” – *Turbocharging future sporting equality*.

30% of ticket sales from the event, as well as proceeds from the raffle conducted on the day were donated to WSA, equating to \$11,000. As a volunteer run organisation, these funds will allow us to explore the possibility of bringing on a paid administrator to continue our advocacy work and run our programs and events.





RUN WITH FRAN - CHICK WITH A BALL

WSA partnered with Fran Hurndall as she ran 1000 kms from the Gold Coast to Sydney, coinciding with the FIFA Womens' World Cup. As a result of this amazing effort she raised over \$15,000 for Women Sport Australia. This epic journey began on 20 July and saw Fran run 32 kms per day for 32 days, all while dribbling a soccer ball! Fran's run meant she is now a Guinness Book of records holder! Her truly remarkable run and support of women's sport didn't go unnoticed as she became a finalist in the FIFA Football Awards 2023 in the Fan Category, heading to London to be part of the celebrations. Thank you so much Fran - your dedication and commitment is very much appreciated and will help us in making sport equitable for women and girls.

NATIONAL SPORTS CONVENTION PARTNERSHIP

This year we were delighted to continue our partnership with Martin Sheppard and the National Sports and Physical Activity Convention. This event is an industry leader in bringing together thought leaders, sport organisations and industry suppliers and partners to address key themes across a number of areas including sport participation, technology and sustainability. This year's Convention was a collaboration with the International Association of Sport and Leisure Facilities (IAKS) and attracted over 1,500 attendees.

Women Sport Australia's partnership with the Convention encompasses a range of collaboration opportunities. These include helping Convention organisers identify and implement women in sport program opportunities, relevant speakers and funding channels.



THE SPORTS BRA PROJECT

WSA was proud to continue to support The Sports Bra Project this year. WSA hosts the Australian chapter of this worthwhile project (sourcing and distributing sports bras to underserved communities) on the WSA website, and continue to provide strategic support through having WSA President Helena Dorczak act as WSA's representative on TSBP's working group. Through this connection WSA hopes to use our advocacy to raise awareness to our networks of the efforts of TSBP across the nation.

We congratulate the TSBP team of Rae Hooper, Jess Hurford, Aysha Down, Hazel Nichols and Jilly Large for their passionate efforts to “provide support” to give women and girls access to necessary equipment to keep their sporting dreams alive.

NEWS CORP

In 2023/24 News Corp Australia extended their partnership to become Women Sport Australia's media partner. The support continued with News Corp Australia brands, CODE Sports & Kommunity TV amplifying the Women In Sport Brunch 2023 and exclusively running the News Corp Readers Choice award across both the professional and the amateur photographer categories in #WISPAA 2024.

Following two years of sponsoring the #WISPAA, News Corp Australia's expansion across WSA's portfolio saw collaboration and support through their well established sporting credentials.

ISPT

The team at ISPT partnered with WSA to allow the WISPAA program awards to be taken to Sydney for the first time. WSA was delighted to showcase the 2024 WISPAA award winners in the Flex by ISPT Collider space, an ISPT function space in the Australian Gaslight Company showroom. This was the ideal venue for our #WISPAA event complete with incredible digital artwork that truly showcased the competition images from the last 12 months. In addition, the ISPT team contributed event catering to really make the event a great success. We thank ISPT for its significant and ongoing support of WSA since the first WISPAA program in 2019.





PROGRAMS & EVENTS

WOMEN IN SPORT PHOTO ACTION AWARDS #WISPA

Entering its sixth year, the Women in Sport Photo Action Award continued to grow with hundreds of entries coming in from Professional, Amateur and Emerging photographers. After the success of the FIFA Women's World Cup, we anticipated a high number of football images, and they did not disappoint.

While photos of the Matildas were plentiful, shots of Olympic track and field athletes, surfers, squash players and more adorned the images entered from over 100 photographers.

Martin Keep was the winner in the Professional category, proudly presented by ISPT, with an incredible shot of Clare Hunt hitting a header in the Matilda's friendly match against France at MARVEL Stadium in 2023.

Amateur photographer Olivier Rachon went back-to-back in 2024 with a winning shot of Vanessa Low taking part in the long jump event at the Maurie Plant meet in February 2024.

And up-and-coming photographer Maya Thomson has joined elite ranks winning the Emerging category with her inspiring capture of Donnell Wallam during the opening round of the Suncorp Super Netball competition.

WSA was again thankful to have the support of Michael Willson, Chief Photographer of the AFL, Sam Lane, Journalist and author, Emma Greenwood, NewsCorp Journalist on the judging panel, joined by Helena Dorczak, President of WSA.

News Corp also supported the awards by running the News Corp People's Choice exclusively across their digital mastheads. After a week of voting, two images edged out the rest, with "Lifesaver in Flight" by Danion Hards and "The Fox Trot" by Bradley Redfern becoming the most popular photos of 2024.

ISPT maintained their partnership with WSA, this time in Sydney, in a brand new space - Flex by ISPT The Collider. Digital screens surrounded the space, showcasing the finalists and what WISPAA truly stands for - showcasing the strength of power of female athletes. It was a terrific event with many finalists in attendance, board directors as well as many sporting and Government VIPs from Sydney.





GLOBAL INSTITUTE OF SPORT

As part of our partnership with the Global Institute of Sport we were able to offer WSA members a discount on tuition and launched a masters scholarship opportunity. This year our inaugural scholarship was awarded to Louise Broadfoot.

Louise is studying MSc International Sport Management and is about to complete her first year of two years part-time. Louise received a 15% tuition fee discount, is being mentored by WSA board member Iain Roy. Next academic year (September to August), Louise will again receive the tuition fee discount and both WSA and GIS will also liaise on supporting her in sourcing a research project for her final research project.

WOMEN IN SPORT BRUNCH

2023 was the 10th edition of the annual Women in Sport event with WSA continuing to build upon the founding partners, Gymnastics Victoria, legacy. Partnering again with Victoria University the event transformed from the breakfast to a brunch welcoming over 500 guests to Marvel Stadium's Victory Room, on Friday 6 October.

Themed '*What Women Want*', lending from the success of the Barbie movie that year, WISB guests from an array of codes, clubs and levels of the community were provided insights covering playing attire for women, mental health of female athletes, breast injuries and prevention, the intersection of brands and women in sport and the importance of empowering our next generation in sport.

The high calibre guest panel lead by sports journalist and presenter, Rana Hassain, included

- Camilla Brockett, Associate Director of Research and Deputy Leader of the Sport Performance and Business research program at Victoria University's Institute for Health and Sport,
- Suzie Betts, CEO and Founder of Boob Armour,
- Olivia McGannon, Head of Brand Marketing at Decjuba, and
- Sarah Wall, CEO and Founder of NetFit Australia

The panel was also streamed for online consumption by event partner Kommunity TV.





In addition to the brilliant panel discussion, WSA outgoing WSA President, Gen Dohrmann and her successor Helena Dorczak engaged in a fireside chat about leadership facilitated by Golf Victoria's Women and Girls Engagement Coordinator, Brioney Wandin-Thomas, a young community leader herself.

WSA also presented their annual Community Champions Awards with recipients nominated by the sports industry in recognition of outstanding contribution to championing the cause for women and girls in sport.

Champions awarded were:



- **Dr Kara Dadswell**, nominated by Victoria University.
- **Melanie Jenkins**, nominated by Gymnastics Australia and Gymnastics Victoria.
- **Dani Monmtague**, nominated by Netball Australia.
- **Rebecca Lewis**, nominated by Basketball Victoria.
- **Fran Hurndall**, nominated by Women Sport Australia.
- **Cortnee Vine**, nominated by A-Leagues

The 2023 Women in Sport Brunch was an incredible success for WSA and the industry bringing together the community to meet, network and be inspired as well as reflect on the incredible achievements of women and girls in sport in Australia.

Special thanks must go to our event partners in particular

Major Partner - Victoria University,

Founding Partner - Gymnastics Victoria,

Media Partner - CODE Sports

Gold Partners - Netball Australia

Silver Partners - Basketball Victoria & A-Leagues

Bronze Partners - Vic Sport, AFL / Marvel Stadium, Commonwealth Games Association, Carlton Football Club and TabCorp.

Special thanks also to Maria Cabileza our program administrator and the entire Board of Directors for their incredible support delivering the event.





PROFILE

BRAND, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our overall brand, marketing and communications have continued to grow substantially across digital platforms but continued representation and consistency across traditional platforms as well.

Organisations are continuing to reach out to WSA to help promote their work and their initiatives. These requests come through our website enquiries and/or social media. We have been able to provide support for many of these organisations through social media promotion, helping drive more attention and engagement through our audience.

The WSA social media has provided support for all activities that the organisation undertakes. It serves as our primary source of marketing and voice. We have continued to grow our audience overall and gradually increase engagement.

WSA is also undergoing a brand refresh to provide a more accurate representation of the organisation and allow consistent branding across all channels and touch points. The new brand is due to be launched in September 2024.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media continues to be used by WSA to increase the visibility and strengthen our programs by connecting, engaging and building relations online with WSA's wide audience.

There's been great growth on our four main social media channels - Facebook and Instagram, X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn, with followers now at 36,000.

All channels saw a steady increase of follower growth and engagement, our Facebook page had a reach of 864,000, and 27,000 content interactions. Instagram was equally as successful, with reach sitting at 30,000, which is a fantastic number for an account with not quite 5,000 followers.

LinkedIn is proving to be a popular channel for growth and engagement in professional networking, with WSA content engaged with over 2,700 times, and almost 114,000 organic impressions.

The #WISPAA Instagram account continues to grow, and is used primarily for our library bank of images from the competition, and to repost when applicable.





TRADITIONAL MEDIA

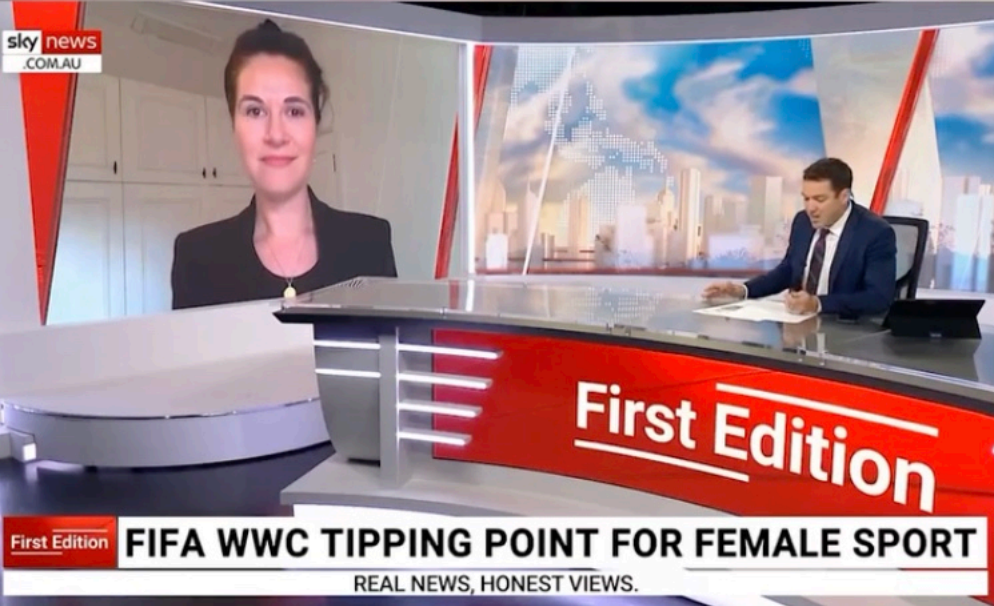
Our traditional media exposure grew significantly in 2023/24, especially with the FIFA Women's World Cup happening in our own backyard.

Almost daily throughout the FIFA WWC, WSA were contacted by media outlets for interviews or comments on the impact this event was having on women's sport.

WSA was featured on the following

- ABC Radio
- Sky News
- Channel 7
- Channel 10
- SBS News
- Sun Herald
- The Guardian

These interviews cemented our space as the peak independent body for women and girls in sport in Australia. We've been able to add to our contacts list, and develop relationships with media for future commentary needs or appearances.



Emily van Egmond, Sam Kerr and Caitlin Foord celebrate the win against Canada. AP

Gen Dohrmann, president of Women Sport Australia, said the Matildas' widespread popularity was a wake-up call to those who think women's sport exists solely to inspire little girls or appease a female audience.



Watch: Leading minds join forces at Women in Sport brunch

The best minds in the business reflect, analyse and advocate the continued success and growth of women's sport in Australia. Watch the REPLAY of the annual Women in Sport brunch in the player below.

