

## Media Release

Embargoed 00.01am 10 August 2015

### VICHEALTH: TIME TO CHANGE THE GAME FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Some of Victoria's top sportswomen are gathering in Melbourne today for the launch of a \$1.8 million program aimed at increasing the number of women and girls in sport.

VicHealth's [Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport](#) program is designed to get 25,000 women and girls across Victoria physically active over the next two years and to raise the profile and coverage of women's sport in the media.

The program will be launched today by the Minister for Health, The Hon. Jill Hennessy.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said women's sport was languishing behind men's sport in terms of participation from players, coaches and umpires, media coverage, pay and prize money, and women in key decision making and leadership roles in sport.

"VicHealth wants to change attitudes, change the conversation, and change the game. It's time that women's sport got the recognition it deserves

Today's launch coincides with the release of a new VicHealth survey which shows that three in five (62%) Victorians do not think women's sport gets enough coverage in the media.

Ms Rechter said: "This is significantly higher than the rest of Australia, where 55% of people do not think female sports get enough media coverage. Unsurprisingly, a majority of Australian women agree that there's a lack of coverage of women's sport, but we also have half of Australian men (49%) agreeing that we're not seeing or hearing enough reporting of women's sport on television, radio and in newspapers."

Through its *Changing the Game* program, VicHealth is funding six sporting codes to work with women and girls who don't normally participate in traditional sports programs that are provided through clubs and competitions.

The six successful organisations are: AFL Victoria (together with AFL), Cycling Victoria, Gymnastics Victoria, Netball Victoria, Surfing Victoria and Tennis Victoria in partnership with Tennis Australia – each of whom will be running activities which are specifically designed to be attractive to women (*see below for details*).\*

Minister for Health Jill Hennessy said *Changing the Game* is a great program to encourage women and girls to be more involved in sport.

"Unfortunately, we know that girls and women are generally less active than men, particularly when it comes to participating in organised sport.

"We need to do more to encourage girls and women to play sport and these projects will provide women with fun, flexible, and social opportunities to be more active," Minister Hennessy said.

Ms Rechter said "Regular physical activity is one of the most important factors in promoting good health and mental wellbeing and preventing chronic disease. VicHealth's *Changing the Game* program is about

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getting tens of thousands of Victorian women and girls who are inactive or who rarely exercise to get active more regularly through sport – whether it's through a sports club or in a more informal, social way.

“But *Changing the Game* goes beyond participation; VicHealth wants to change the conversation about women’s sport. It’s about raising the profile of women’s sport in the media, championing the important role women all over Victoria and Australia play in sport’s leadership and management, and giving them the recognition that they and women’s sport deserve,” Ms Rechter added.

Changing the Game is part of VicHealth’s long-term plan to get more Victorians living healthier and happier lives. Find out more at [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/changing-the-game](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/changing-the-game)

Details of each of the six successful initiatives are outlined below.

-ENDS-

### **CHANGING THE GAME LAUNCH DETAILS**

*Changing the Game: Increasing Female Participation in Sport* will be officially launched by **Minister for Health, The Hon. Jill Hennessy** launched at the **National Tennis Centre**, Olympic Boulevard, Entrance D, Melbourne at **10.30am on Monday, 10 August 2015**

The following will be available for interview at **11am**:

**Sam Lane**, journalist *The Age* and *Changing the Game* MC

**Minister and VicHealth: Jill Hennessy MP**, Minister for Health and **Jerril Rechter**, VicHealth CEO

**Ambassadors: Nicole Bradtke**, former professional tennis player; **Aasta O’Connor**, Western Bulldogs; **Elise O’Dea**, Melbourne; **Bridie O’Donnell**, National and Oceania cycling champion; **Chelsea Roffey**, first female Grand Final umpire; and **Liz Watson**, Melbourne Vixens

**Sports administrators: Brendon Gale**, CEO Richmond FC; **Matthew Kennedy**, CEO Tennis Victoria; **Kate Redding**, General Manager Game Development, Netball Victoria; **Steven Reaper**, CEO AFL Victoria; **Adam Robertson**, Surfing Victoria; and **Craig Tiley**, CEO Tennis Australia

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## **\*CHANGING THE GAME: SUCCESSFUL INITIATIVES**

### **AFL Victoria (together with AFL)**

'AFL Active' is a group fitness session to improve women's health and wellbeing. It can be tailored to suit any fitness level and doesn't require any AFL specific skills. The program is designed to use activities that combine the unique AFL specific fitness components of endurance, speed, strength, agility and dynamic movement. It's a constantly changing, total body workout based on AFL training techniques which can be delivered anywhere. It is the first product developed by the AFL to reduce key barriers of physical contact, organised sport structure and rigid time commitments and has been consciously developed for women.

### **Cycling Victoria**

Cycling Victoria's program will provide women-only pop-up spin style classes to prepare women for independent bike riding. Based on a fun and social experience, spin classes can be delivered at any community location such as halls or parks using participants' own bikes or setting up 'resistant' indoor bicycles. Over time the aim of the program is to transition women into short supported rides. A user-pays model will be introduced to continue the program.

### **Gymnastics Victoria**

Gymnastics Victoria's entry level program will teach and engage women in simple, fundamental movement which establishes the strength, flexibility and mobility required to advance into other physical activity pursuits. The program allows women to choose how they learn the movement, either through following video instructions online in their own time, or by participating at a gymnastics club leading to further pathways to other providers such as a yoga studio or other sports programs. The development of an online and local community option will be encouraged to motivate women to participate.

### **Netball Victoria**

"Rock Up Netball" is a new initiative being developed by Netball Victoria, which will offer flexible, participant-led and "pay as you go" activities for women and girls over 15 who want to become more active. Designed to provide social, fun and unstructured opportunities for both beginners and those coming back to netball, accredited Rock Up Netball Venues will have skilled coordinators who understand varying fitness and skill levels and respond with a mix of skills, drills and game play - participants will make the rules!

### **Surfing Victoria**

Surfing Victoria's introductory program will deliver Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP) to Victorian women at both Melbourne beach and inland locations and major regional locations. Participants to an initial session will be directed to Clubs, Learn to SUP Schools, Social Groups and Retailers to continue the sport under the supervised direction of the Surfing Victoria SUP Program.

### **Tennis Victoria in partnership with Tennis Australia**

Tennis is creating an introductory program to its innovative Cardio Tennis program specifically for women wanting to get active and moving. 'Get into Cardio Tennis' will be low impact and easy to participate in, regardless of tennis ability. It will feature fun fitness activities using a racquet and a ball and can be delivered for large groups in non-traditional settings such as parks and the workplace.

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