# VICHEALTH MAKES A PLEDGE FOR PARITY ON BEHALF OF WOMEN IN SPORT ON THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY

### VicHealth has called for equality on and off the sporting field this International Women’s Day (8 March).

### The theme for this year’s International Women’s Day is Pledge for Parity. Sadly, a disparity between men and women still exists in sport.

We know that female athletes receive significantly less pay and sponsorship opportunities than males and that women’s sport receives less than 10 per cent of television sports news coverage.

VicHealth research on female participation in sport shows women have lower levels of physical activity than men, despite having the strongest intent to increase their activity through social and non-organised sports.

More than two thirds of Australian women are classified as being sedentary or having low levels of exercise.

This inactivity is concerning given the costs associated with inactivity are incredibly high, including the impact to the economy, cost to employers and the effect on our physical and mental wellbeing.

This is why VicHealth is working hard to raise the profile of women’s sport. Our [*Changing the Game*](https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/start-here) initiative, launched last year, directly addresses the issue of female participation by providing innovative and non-traditional activities that focus on making physical activity fun, flexible and social. These activities are designed specifically for women, by women and are being delivered by our sporting partners AFL Victoria, Surfing Victoria, Tennis Victoria, Netball Victoria, Gymnastics Victoria and Cycling Victoria.

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said there are a great number of opportunities for women to get involved in fun and non-organised sport through the six programs funded by Changing the Game.

“In Victoria, four times as many females are choosing to participate in non-organised or more flexible physical activity offerings compared to organised physical activity,” Ms Rechter said.

Women have different motives for getting physically active and they place more importance on the social aspects. We know that people find social physical activities much easier to stay on track with the added benefits of making new friends and having fun.

“Participating in physical activity can help to prevent chronic disease, increase health and fitness, reduce risks of mortality, increases social networks and boosts mental health and wellbeing.

“Women deserve the same opportunities as men, so this International Women’s Day, check out some of the great programs being funded through our *Changing the Game* Initiative and how you can get involved.”

**Find out how to get involved at** [**www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/start-here**](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/start-here)