

Media Release

12 October 2017

Healthy boost to women's sport in Victoria

Women's sport in Victoria received a huge boost today, with health promotion foundation VicHealth announcing \$6.7 million in funding to get more Victorian women and girls healthy and active over the next three years.

Minister for Health Jill Hennessy and Minister for Sport John Eren both backed VicHealth's new investment to increase the profile of women's sport and create new opportunities for Victorian women and girls to get into sport and physical activity.

Minister Hennessy: "Participation in sport and physical activity is the key to better health and wellbeing. This new funding will deliver more opportunities for women and girls to get involved in grassroots sports and physical activity."

Minister Eren: "Victoria is the leading way when it comes to levelling the playing field for women's sport and this funding will ensure that momentum continues – encouraging even more women and girls to play the game they love."

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter said the funding represents the organisation's biggest ever investment in female sport, which will deliver a range of new opportunities especially designed to help Victorian women and girls to get involved in sport and physical activity – including those who've never played sport.

"Getting enough physical activity into our week is so important for good health and happiness. Unfortunately, not all Victorians have the same opportunities to achieve good health," Ms Rechter said.

"We know that women's participation in organised sport is historically lower than men – in fact sport participation rates among women are half of those of men. Key barriers for women include a lack of confidence, and societal pressures of how women are told they should look.

"We're working with a wide range of sports organisations – from netball and cricket, to frisbee and lawn bowls – to deliver new and modified programs that address the barriers women face when trying to get active.

"We're hoping to encourage more than 23,000 women to become physically active in whatever way, shape or manner they choose."

VicHealth will also partner with 13 sporting organisations to continue to raise the profile of women's sport and tackle key barriers for women being active by promoting VicHealth's upcoming [This Girl Can](#) campaign to their fans and grassroots clubs. The campaign aims to inspire and support women and girls to get active no matter how they look, how well they do it, or how sweaty they get.

"A recent VicHealth survey found that nearly three quarters (74%) of Victorians believe seeing women play sport at an elite level motivates women and girls to get physically active, highlighting the importance of raising the profile of women's sport," Ms Rechter said.

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“Celebrating sportswomen and sportsmen equally sends such an important message – that everyone can be active, regardless of their gender. We want more Victorians knowing that women’s sport matters, and we want to inspire more women and girls to get physically active and involved in sport, throughout their life.

“Increasing gender equality and female participation in sport benefits us all, from the girls who get to continue playing sport all the way to elite levels just like their brothers, to the local clubs whose community is enriched by having more women and girls involved.”

As part of the new program, all funded sporting organisations will sign a **VicHealth Gender Equality in Sport Leadership Pledge**, demonstrating their commitment to achieving gender balance in all their public events and marketing of their organisation, and prioritising access for women and girls in all facilities they use.

Full details about VicHealth’s new Active Women and Girls for Health and Wellbeing program, including how to register interest for the new sporting activities, can be found at www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/activewomen

Notes to editors:

The new VicHealth program complements the State Government’s ongoing work in promoting female sport and building gender equality, including implementing the recommendations from the Victorian Government’s Inquiry into Women and Sport and Active Recreation, the Royal Commission into Family Violence, the Victorian Government’s Gender Equality Strategy, the Department of Health and Human Services’ new strategic plan and Sport and Recreation Victoria’s Active Victoria strategic framework.

To support this new investment VicHealth has today launched the newly developed [Vicsport Healthy and Welcoming Sport website](#) to provide guidance for grassroots clubs to make their sport more welcoming and inclusive for women and girls.

Funding details

The following sporting organisations will share in \$2.9 million to create tailored participation opportunities for women and girls to get involved in sport and physical activity:

- Bowls Victoria
- Surfing Victoria
- Football Federation Victoria
- Netball Victoria
- Victorian Rugby Union
- Ultimate (Frisbee) Victoria
- Touch Football Victoria
- Cricket Victoria

The following sports clubs and organisations will share in \$3.8 million to promote gender equality and increase the profile of women’s sport by promoting the This Girl Can campaign to fans and local sporting clubs across Victoria:

- AFL Victoria
- Melbourne Victory
- Basketball Victoria
- Victorian Institute of Sport
- Cricket Victoria
- Richmond Football Club
- Cycling Australia
- Tennis Victoria
- Hockey Australia
- Western Bulldogs Football Club
- Melbourne City Football Club
- Netball Victoria
- Victorian Olympic Council

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