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Secretariat

The National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22

By email: npsecretariat@dss.gov.au

Dear Secretariat

Further to netball's attendance at the national roundtable discussion on the Second Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022 (the National Plan) in Adelaide on 5 February 2014 I have much pleasure providing this written submission.

The Submission is predicated on the three key areas highlighted at the roundtable: Achievements Challenges and What's critical going forward.

Netball applauds the efforts of governments, non-government organisations, the business sector and community groups across the nation to make a real and sustained reduction in the levels of violence against women and children. Netball adds its voice in saying "NO to Violence".

Netball appreciates the opportunity to provide its Submission and looks forward to ongoing involvement.

If you require further information, please contact me on phone (03) 8621 8600, or email nadine.cohen@netball.asn.au

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nadine Cohen".

Nadine Cohen
Head of Government Strategy & Social Innovation

13 March 2014

Encl.





Netball's Submission in relation to the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-22: Second Action Plan

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Netball's Submission in relation to the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010-22: Second Action Plan

Introduction

There is absolutely no doubt that the contribution of sport, both on and off the court, positively contributes to social change. Participation in sport challenges social norms and barriers, enabling women and girls to assume new roles within their communities.

The sport sector helps to achieve many social policy outcomes such as education, housing, employment, safety, crime prevention and economic development. Socialisation, structure, teamwork, confidence, leadership skills, development, pressure of competition, making and learning from mistakes, pride, communication, determination, dedication and so much more are central to the culture of what sport is all about.

The role of netball in helping to reduce violence against women and children is focused on primary prevention.

As Australia's leading sport that women and girls play, netball strives to deliver fair, safe, inclusive, respectful and supportive environments for all Australians. We believe that netball offers the enjoyment of participation, a sense of belonging and life-long involvement – no matter whether that's as a player, coach, official, administrator, volunteer or fan.

Netball in Australia (Netball Australia and the State/Territory Netball Associations) is committed to leading social change, strengthening and building capacity and capability in communities and providing innovative and sustainable netball programs to empower women and girls.

Netball is ranked as the leading women's participation team sport and the top team based sport in Australia for 15 to 24 year olds. Over 1.2 million participants enjoy the game nationally and Australia has been dominant on the international stage since 1963. Netball Australia has more than 350,000 registered members; 5,273 clubs nationally; 730 Associations; and eight member organisations.

Netball is the largest female community based sporting organisation in the world, with more than 70 nations playing and over 21 million participants world-wide. Netball can and does make a real difference in the lives of women and girls.

In 2011, netball in Australia (Netball Australia and the State/Territory Netball Associations) reviewed its strategic positioning. A new vision was endorsed "Netball is more than a game – we lead social change, strengthen and build capacity in communities and empower women and girls". The vision shifts the perception of netball as a sporting organisation to an agent for social change.

Netball's 2014 - 2018 vision refines netball's social cohesion and social inclusion value proposition even further: "Everyone in Australia values their connection with netball".

An important strategic aspiration centres on social responsibility and in particular netball's impact on the social, political, economic, education and health status of women and girls and vibrant relationships with community partners. Netball's repositioning maximises the social good and enhances netball's altruistic activities.

Netball is working to deliver greater equality between women and men through facilitating aspirational leadership, providing opportunities for board directorships and senior executive management positions, increasing opportunities in coaching, officiating and administration, introducing contemporary employment practices, providing minimum terms of employment for elite netballers, and raising the profile of women's sport.

Achievements: Australian Government's Gender Equality for Women Community Action Grants

Netball, rugby league and Australian rules football were fortunate in 2011 to secure Australian government grants aimed at engaging their community to prevent violence against women and to encourage and promote respectful relationships. Critical objectives were to prevent the problem of violence before it occurs; increase community awareness of the issue and change attitudes and behaviours so that violence against women is not tolerated.

Funding of up to \$750,000 was committed for Stream 2: Sporting Codes and applicants were able to apply for up to \$250,000 over three years from July 2011 to June 2014 to fund their project.

Netball Australia	The project will include education modules on healthy relationships and violence prevention for young players, a training course for coaches and a peer education and mentoring program for Indigenous young women.	\$250,000
Australian Rugby League	The project will use a broad based media campaign using the reach of the National Rugby League to raise awareness of violence and a grass roots campaign to promote violence prevention through the code of conduct. The project will also include a video competition for clubs to create videos showing what their club is doing to prevent violence against women, and respectful relationships education for elite representative players aged 13-19.	\$250,000
Australian Football League	The project will distribute training resources nationally, supported by training for trainers in each state, an online violence prevention education tool for young male players, a violence prevention quality framework for state football bodies and tool kits for local football clubs.	\$244,800

Netball's project focuses on **Empowerment: Respect is your Right!**

In summary, netball's project activities focus on:

- **Expect Respect Education module** aimed at young people aged 12 – 24 National Regional Academy Network Program (n = 2500); and young people 16 - 21, National Championships for 21/Under, 19/Under and 17/Under (n = 300). The aim is to help young people understand what a healthy and respectful relationship is, highlight, recognise and act on warning signs that a relationship is abusive, and where to get help. In particular the education helps young women to:

- Understand the components which make up a healthy relationship;
 - Increase their awareness of the different methods that people can use to hurt or control each other;
 - Understand the role a bystander can play when observing a disrespectful interaction between others; and
 - Increase the awareness of, and access to, local resources available to them if they are in a disrespectful relationship.
- **Develop a “NO to Violence” updating module** in Netball Australia’s Foundation and Development Coaching Courses. This targets influencers, such as coaches, parents and the like to understand what a healthy and respectful relationship is; where people can go for help; and how coaches can positively influence women and girls who could be victims and survivors of unhealthy relationships.
 - **Social marketing and peer education** through netball’s partnership with the David Wirrpanda Foundation targeting indigenous school-aged girls 14 - 17 years to increase their understanding of what are the behaviours and characteristics of healthy relationships; highlight, recognise and act on warning signs that a relationship is abusive; encourage contact if support is needed; and increase self-esteem.

The Deadly Sista Girlz Netball Program is designed to build self-esteem and confidence in young disadvantaged aboriginal women and engage, inspire and empower the young women to become leaders in their families, schools and communities. The program combines netball and life skills while mentoring young women about how to improve their health, education and employment outcomes.

The outcomes of this program have been transforming for the young women involved, providing them with a safe space to discuss issues with a trusted mentor. The mentors have provided some feedback in relation to the positive affect the program has had on the participants:

“The girls watched the very sad Four Corners documentary of the domestic violence murder of Andrea Pickett. Andrea was our mentor Kirby’s Aunty. When the documentary finished they went into the room and discussed the content. The girls were full of questions regarding the welfare of the children, the situation of emergency care and restraining orders. It was encouraging to see all of the girls engaged and passionate about the plight of domestic violence – and hopefully this will assist them to make positive relationship choices themselves. One of the girls was absent today due to a court appearance.”

“One of the participants has been abused by her boyfriend on a regular basis and comes to school with bruises and scratches on her body and the most obvious black eye. We focused on the sexual and women’s health program to empower the girls to stand up for themselves and not be accepting of a fearful relationship.”

The overall outcomes on Netball’s **Empowerment: Respect is your Right!** Project are to:

- Reinforce that young people don’t have to put up with violence and control in relationships.
- Increase the awareness and understanding about how to support people who have experienced, or who are experiencing, violence.
- Increase awareness and understanding of the benefits of non-violent relationships and how to form them and maintain them.
- Increase confidence, self-esteem and self-awareness. (Skills development).
- Peer based initiatives that support healthy and respectful relationships.

- Increase the awareness of the effects of violence against women.
- Provide information, encouragement and support.

Building on the First Action Plan

Netball understands that the National Plan targets two main types of violence: *domestic and family violence and sexual assault. These crimes are gendered crimes – that is they have an unequal impact on women.*

From the perspective of an organisation that is not fully versed in this definitional context, the diversity of what is recognized as “violence” against women and (their) children ought to be expanded to include emerging issues such as bullying, cyber stalking, sexting and exploitation of young people.

Rapidly expanding and shifting information technology and convergence of media platforms is already impacting the advancement of gender equality, especially for young people, with resulting psychological and emotional impacts.

Another consideration to inform the development of the Second Action Plan is the portability between states and territories of the Working with Children Check system. In 2009, the Australian Sports Commission provided a submission in response to the Productivity Commission’s Draft Research Report on the Contribution of the Not-for-Profit Sector (November 2009).

“The Australian Sports Commission supported a concept of a national system of mutual recognition for assisting with the safety of children and vulnerable adults in Australia. Sport is a highly mobile activity and coaches, officials and associated service providers often travel with athletes who compete in inter-club, inter-state and national events or may attend training camps or other activities in various locations across Australia.”

Inconsistencies and difficulties that currently exist with state and territory Working with Children Checks could benefit from a national focus and could achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness in addressing gender-based physical, sexual or psychological harm.

Attitudinal & Cultural Change: Extending Digital Awareness and Education Initiatives

Changes over time have seen vocal and visible campaigns around societal issues including “Racism. It Stops with Me” and “Be the Influence” tackling binge drinking and risk taking behaviours and more recently public and political outrage concerning the so-called “Coward Punch”.

By way of example, in May 2013, Australian rules footballer, Adam Goodes was “gutted” by a racial slur during a match. A 13-year-old girl called Goodes an “ape”. Goodes publically stated that education is the key to changing behaviour and positively impacting societal culture. Staggeringly, a few days later, Eddie McGuire implied that Goodes be used to promote the King Kong musical. Goodes admitted that his pain had turned to anger given this racial slur was from a seasoned professional and not a naïve 13 year old. Society was quite rightly outraged and the media rallied behind Goodes and elevated the conversation.

There is no question that incidents such as these are unacceptable. The sporting sector has been at the forefront of addressing in-appropriate behavior and cultural change at the grass roots. For example, Play by

the Rules was first developed in 2001 as an interactive education and information website to provide information, resources, tools and free online training to increase the capacity and capability of administrators, coaches, officials, players and spectators to assist them in preventing and dealing with discrimination, harassment and child safety issues in sport. National campaigns featuring radio and television community service announcement ads, utilising national sporting icons, are also extending positive sporting messages more broadly to the general community. Sport was further elevated in 2012 with the launch of the National Anti-Racism Strategy.

In acknowledging that gender based violence is not a women's issue, but rather a broader whole of community issue that needs cultural, attitudinal & behaviour change at the community, institutional and individual levels to hold people to account, Netball would like to see gender-based violence elevated through targeted public information and awareness campaigns focused on empowering women and girls that complement initiatives such as the White Ribbon, 1800 Respect, and the Line campaigns. Men need to take responsibility that violence is not OK, at the same time women need confidence to take control and to feel empowered and engaged to say No.

