

MEDIA RELEASE

SPORT CHIEFS UNITE TO ACCELERATE PAY EQUALITY FOR ELITE WOMEN ATHLETES

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CEOs of Australia's leading sports organisations have joined forces to advance equal pay for elite women athletes. The Male Champions of Change (MCC) Sport today released their "Pathway to Pay Equality" - a significant joint initiative, which details the specific actions needed to close the gender pay gap.

It is believed to be the first time internationally that leaders of competing sporting codes and clubs have united on the issue, according to Founder and Convenor of MCC Sport **Elizabeth Broderick**.

"Sport plays a critical role in Australia's economy, national identity, social cohesion and community well-being. Yet equal pay – the most visible manifestation of a genuine commitment to equality – still remains out of reach for elite women athletes across many sports.

"We believe the inter-connected steps outlined in the report provide the pathway to gender equality and delivering equal pay in sport," Ms Broderick said.

The new report from Male Champions of Change Sport outlines:

- ◆ the difference between like-for-like pay equity and sustainable pay equality in the context of sport
- ◆ a model to achieve equal base pay in sport
- ◆ why arguments against equal pay for elite women athletes don't stack up
- ◆ support required across the entire sports ecosystem to achieve pay equality
- ◆ a 'point in time' self-assessment of each MCC Sport member's progress on the Pathway to Pay Equality

All the signatories have committed to evaluate and report on their performance annually to ensure they accelerate progress towards pay equality over the next five years.

Tennis legend, **Billie Jean King** has backed the approach outlined in the report.

"It is very heartening to see CEOs across major sports come together to achieve gender equality and pay equality in sport. The idea of activating the entire sports eco-system to hasten change is an approach that could be considered and replicated throughout the world," says the founder of the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative.

CEO of **Sport Australia** Kate Palmer says our country has the opportunity to be a global leader.

"Many of our elite women athletes are among the most successful on the world stage. As a sports-loving nation, we are championing a system-wide re-set in the way we support, pay and reward our female athletes. The benefits to our economy, our community and our athletes will be exponential," she said.

Tennis Australia has consistently reaped rewards from its focus on equality and inclusion.

"We've demonstrated through equal prize money and exposure that women's tennis has massive appeal and can more than hold its own," said CEO Craig Tiley.

"This is driven by the belief that the best player of a Grand Slam event – both male and female – should be rewarded equally for their ability to achieve at the highest level. It's an approach that has delivered overwhelmingly positive outcomes for tennis."

Cricket Australia's ground-breaking 2017 pay deal introduced an equal base rate of pay for male and female elite cricketers for the first time. CA's experience was drawn upon in the development of the Pathway to Pay Equality.

"We want our women's elite teams to help shape the brand of cricket, drive the game's growth and continue to deliver international success. On every measure they have done this as athletes and ambassadors. There is no question they deserve pay parity and we developed a model to achieve this. We are continuing to put in place the systems and support to ensure we can deliver sustainable pay equality," says CEO Kevin Roberts.

The report shows that even when organisations are not responsible for setting pay for their athletes - such as the **five major AFL Clubs** who are members of MCC Sport - they still have the power to make a difference.

"There are currently more women and girls playing Aussie Rules in Melbourne's southern corridor than across the entire country. While we don't determine base pay for our AFLW players, we are investing in the facilities and pathways to develop the next generation of elite women footballers," said CEO of **St Kilda Football Club** Matt Finnis.

CEO of **Racing Victoria** Giles Thompson believes the Pathway's focus on both pay equity and ensuring equal remuneration opportunities is vital.

"The impact of Michelle Payne's win on Prince of Penzance in the 2015 Melbourne Cup has been inspirational and immeasurable for our sport. Our female jockeys and trainers have pay equity with their male counterparts. However, they may not necessarily have the same access to earn it. Our job is to debunk myths, change mindsets and facilitate the same access," he said.

Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins also expressed her support for the Pathway to Pay Equality for Elite Women Athletes.

"Sport is such a unifying force in Australia. We can and should be leading the way globally in championing gender equality through every aspect of sport - access, participation, investment, recognition and pay for our elite women athletes," she said.

In 2018, MCC Sport also completed a detailed review of pay equity in corporate and administrative roles in their organisations, which is summarised in the report. The review involved a sample of 10-member organisations and was completed based on data provided to the Australian Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

Using the WGEA methodology, an average overall pay gap of 27 per cent among participating organisations was identified. This compared to 31.5 per cent or WGEA's 'Sports and Physical Recreation Activities' category and the national average of 21.3 per cent according to WGEA's 2018 Annual Pay Equity Scorecard.

The MCC Sport Group has committed to reduce the overall gap, and to take immediate action to address any unjustifiable difference in "like-for-like" roles in corporate and administrative roles.

The Pathway to Pay Equality report will be launched at a joint meeting of Male Champions of Change held across Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Perth today. The MCC Sport group will invite peers in the corporate, government, news media and broadcasting sectors to support the goals outlined in the report.

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The Male Champions of Change Sport members are:

- Mark Anderson CEO, Collingwood Football Club
- Raelene Castle (Special Advisor) – CEO, Rugby Australia
- Brian Cook – CEO, Geelong Football Club
- Matt Finnis – CEO, St Kilda Football Club
- Marne Fechner (Special Advisor) – CEO, Netball Australia
- Brendon Gale – CEO, Richmond Football Club
- David Gallop – CEO, Football Federation Australia
- Todd Greenberg – CEO, National Rugby League
- Cain Liddle – CEO, Carlton Football Club
- Paul Maley – Acting CEO, Basketball Australia
- Kate Palmer (Special Advisor) – CEO, Australian Sports Commission
- Stephen Pitt – CEO, Golf Australia
- Kevin Roberts – CEO, Cricket Australia
- Ian Robson – CEO, Rowing Australia
- Leigh Russell – (Special Advisor) CEO, Swimming Australia
- Giles Thompson – CEO, Racing Victoria
- Craig Tiley – CEO, Tennis Australia