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A female manager in a male-dominated environment: A case study of mentoring and

networking in the Australian Football League.

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ABSTRACT

Few studies have examined the extent to which mentoring and networking supports have assisted women in developing their careers in male dominated sport organisations where men have traditionally held the reins of power. This current study explores the value of mentoring and networking from a woman's perspective in senior and middle management positions at the Australian Football League (AFL). Research has revealed many personal, career and social challenges faced by women employed in management positions, particularly where men dominate the organisations' operations (Coleman, 2011; Sturges, 1999; Cha, 2013; Bierema, 2005; Heilman, 2012; Linehan, Scullion & Walsh, 2001).

Research for this current study comprised semi-structured interviews with 19 women in senior and middle management positions in the AFL. The data was used to determine the effectiveness and impact of mentoring and networking on career development of women managers in a sports organisation. Data was coded manually and using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The CAQDAS software program used as part of this research was NVivo. The manual and CAQDAS helped to identify key nodes and sub-nodes. Results revealed that when mentoring was well structured and ongoing, it enabled participants to not only appreciate the organisation's formal authority relations and communication structures, it also assisted in developing an awareness of its operating culture, informal networks and power relations. Results also revealed networking was unavoidable and came with a wide range of benefits. Findings from this current study expanded knowledge on social capital theory and have the potential to enhance existing, and shape new formal mentoring programs incorporated at the AFL.

MASTER BY RESEARCH STUDENT DECLARATION

"I, Kathryn Cooper, declare that the Master by Research thesis entitled 'A female manager in a male-dominated environment: A case study of mentoring and networking in the Australian Football League' is no more than 60,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work".

Signature: ██████████████   Date: 03/05/2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"Sometimes the people with greatest potential often take the longest to find their path because their sensitivity is a double edged sword – it lives at the heart of their brilliance, but it also makes them more susceptible to life's pain. Good thing we aren't being penalized for handing in our purpose late. The soul doesn't know a thing about deadlines". – Jeff Brown

The past few years have challenged me in many different ways. I have survived and have managed to complete research of which I am proud. I would not have been able to do this without ongoing support from a team of wonderful people. First and foremost I would like to thank Professor Bob Stewart and Associate Professor Clare Hanlon for their outstanding supervision. I could not have asked or hoped for two better supervisors. I will always remember and will be forever grateful for the guidance and compassion they have shown me over my most recent post-graduate journey. I want to sincerely thank my supervisors for not giving up on me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFL – Australian Football League

AHRC – Australian Human Rights Commission

AIS – Australian Institute of Sport

AMC - Australian Mentor Centre

ASC – Australian Sports Commission

ASE - Australian Securities Exchange

CAQDAS - Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Software Analysis

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

GEP – Gender Equality Project

GM – General Manager

HR – Human Resources

IBM – International Business Machines

NRL – National Rugby League

NSO – National Sporting Organisation

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to present a contextual background to the current study, and to introduce the research questions that guided this study. A further aim is to present a brief overview of what is contained in each of the subsequent chapters in this thesis.

1.2 Background

Women employed in male-dominated organisations risk career disadvantage when compared to men employed in the same or similar organisations (Noe, 1988; Ely, 1995; Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Vescio, Gervais, Snyder & Hoover, 2005). In male-dominated organisations, gender stereotypes create subjective judgements and decisions, which hinder women advancing their careers (Heilman, 2012). Women are often judged negatively if they exhibit stereotypical masculine behaviours, and labelled as attention seekers (Liff & Ward, 2001). Heilman (2001) contends these types of gender stereotyping, describe what women should be like, prescribes how they should behave in workplace settings, and can have negative effects on their career development. This can result in devalued performances, exclusion from decision making, not being credited for success, and penalisation for outperforming male colleagues (Sibson, 2010). Gender stereotypes carry considerable power and influence, and are resistant to change. These labels have also been used to explain why women have not been appointed to more powerful and prestigious senior management positions (Heilman, 2001; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Schein, 2007; Heilman, 2012). In sport organisations there are often issues relating to position, dialogue, conflict, exclusion and change; things that ordinary male-dominated organisations also typically experience (Sibson, 2010).

There is a significant amount of anecdotal stories and research, which indicate females are not only under-represented in sport organisations dominated by male participation, they also have difficulty in achieving their career aspirations (McKay, 1997; Mean, 2001; Pederson &

Whisenhart, 2005; Sibson, 2010; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011). Social capital can be defined as 'the sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from [a] … network of social relationships' (Schipani, Dworkin, Kwolek-Folland & Maurer, 2009, p. 103). Social capital is all about how an individual fits within a social network of relationships; with the focus being on resources and access to resources within these social networks (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Research suggests that building social capital might be a way for women to strategically deal with any gender inequalities; and to attain assistance with reaching career aspirations in male-dominated organisations (Timberlake, 2005; Schipani et al., 2009; Wang, 2009; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Social capital theory measures the career advantages that individuals are able to build from the various relationships that they develop (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Social capital is thought to be a valuable commodity; a source of knowledge, resources, and networks essential for career development (Timberlake, 2005). The basic idea behind social capital theory is that investments in social relationships will bring about positive returns (Lin, 1999). There is emerging evidence that mentoring of protégés and networking programs might remove some career progression barriers for female employed in heavily male-dominated organisations (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Coleman, 2011).

A protégé is someone who can attract attention from a mentor through performing their job well. The protégé might look for someone who has more experience to assist them with answering work related questions, and to explain how the organisation works formally and informally (Noe, 1988). Mentoring is viewed as a strategy that women in male-dominated cultures can use to meet these challenges, and progress their careers. Mentors may provide career development support and be capable of filling a number of effective psychosocial roles (Ragins, 1997). Networking is another strategy recognised as an important tool for managing gendered cultures and enhancing the opportunities for career success. Networking has career

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and psychosocial functions such as: information sharing, career planning, career development, emotional support and friendship (Kram, 1988; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

When focussing on the female protégé Ragins (1989) suggested that mentors can help validate the protégé, and alter perceived gender stereotypes. Mentors may also be able to assist women with decoding male-dominated work environments, and with promoting position and value. In addition to mentoring, it is recognised, networking helps men and women with reinforcing their career progression (Bierema, 2005; Broadbridge, 2004; Linehan, 2001). Mentoring is also viewed as important for women to gain access to networks within male-dominated organisations if they are to be noticed and attain career promotions (Linehan, 2001). Effective networking may also be one way of helping women deal with feelings of isolation they might feel in male-dominated organisations. In general, there is a lack of research concentrating on the increasingly problematic issue of managing career progression barriers faced by women employed in male-dominated sport organisations. Fewer studies examine the extent to which mentoring and networking supports can assist women in developing their careers in sport organisations where male sport performance dominates, and where men have traditionally held the reins of power.

The Australian Football league (AFL) is an interesting case in this respect. It has been male-dominated at the management level for the entirety of its organisational life, and, additionally, the products it delivers to the sporting marketplace tend to be highly masculinised. To address this issue in recent times the AFL has introduced a number of gender equality programs, including networking programs, which aim to develop a stronger career path for women in leadership positions. What is unclear is the impact these programs have had on the career progression and satisfaction of women. One effective method to promote, career progression, career satisfaction, and the retention of women employed in male-dominated organisations is through building a better understanding of their experiences, triumphs and challenges (Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

1.3 Research problem

Women are at times judged negatively if they exhibit stereotypical masculine behaviours and labelled as attention seekers (Liff & Ward, 2001). Heilman (2001) contends that gender stereotypes describing what women should be like, and prescribing how they should behave can have negative effects on their career development. This can result in devalued performances, not being credited for success, and being penalised for outperforming male colleagues. Gender stereotypes carry considerable power and influence, and are resistant to change. Gender stereotypes have also been frequently relied on to explain why women have not been appointed to more powerful and prestigious senior management positions (Heilman, 2001; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Schein, 2007; Heilman, 2012).

There is a significant amount of anecdotal stories and research, which show that women are not only under-represented in sport organisations dominated by male participation, but also have difficulty in achieving their career aspirations (McKay, 1997; Mean, 2001; Pederson & Whisenhart, 2005; Sibson, 2010; McDowell & Schaffner, 2011). Emerging evidence indicates mentoring and networking programs might remove some career developmental barriers for women employed in heavily gendered organisations (Coleman, 2011; Burke & McKeen, 1990). When focussing on the female protégé Ragins (1989) suggests that mentors can help validate the protégé, and alter perceived gender stereotypes.

Mentors might be able to assist women with decoding male-dominated work environments, and with promoting position and value. There appears to be a lack of research concentrating on the increasingly problematic issue of managing career developmental barriers faced by women employed in male-dominated sport organisations. Few studies have examined the extent to which mentoring and networking supports have assisted women in developing their careers in sport organisations where male sport performance dominates, and where men have traditionally held the reins of power. The AFL is an interesting case in this respect. It has been male-dominated at the management level for the entirety of its organisational life, and the

products it delivers to the sporting marketplace tend to be highly masculinised. To address this issue, the AFL has introduced a number of integrity and equal opportunity policies, which aim to deliver a more diverse workforce, and especially a more gender balanced staffing arrangement. In 2005 the AFL introduced the Respect and Responsibility policy (see Appendix 3). In 2009 the AFL released the Equal Employment Opportunity policy (see Appendix 4). What is unclear is the impact these policies and initiatives have had on job satisfaction and career development for women.

One effective method to promote career satisfaction, career development and retention of women employed in male-dominated organisations is through building a better understanding of their experiences, triumphs and challenges (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). A number of analyses (Coleman, 2011; Sturges, 1999; Cha, 2013; Bierema, 2005; Heilman, 2012; Linehan et al., 2001) highlight the many negative personal, career and social challenges faced by women employed in management positions, particularly in the social grouping of male-dominated organisations. The research undertaken in this current study is not trying to include all women when referring to them as a group. Women in similar environments (male-dominated environments) are being included in the literature. These women may have differences (e.g. age, ethnicity, (dis)ability but because of their employment experiences they have many things in common.

1.4 Research questions

To explore these challenges the aim of this current study is to examine the effects mentoring and networking have on career development of women managers in a male-dominated sport organisation. The following research questions were used to guide this study:

- How do women in management positions in the AFL respond to the gendered culture of the organisation?

- How does mentoring assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

- How does networking assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

1.5 Research overview

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The Introduction chapter provides a background to the study, the research questions and the research overview. The Literature Review chapter involves an in depth analysis of relevant literature. Strategies known to have assisted women reach their career aspirations in male-dominated organisations are identified and discussed. The review delves into the importance of social capital, mentoring and networking pertaining to the career progression of women in male-dominated organisations. Finally this chapter explores the experiences of women in a male-dominated sport context. In doing this the gendered nature of sporting organisations is examined; and gender inequalities in male-dominated sporting organisations are considered.

The Methodology chapter describes the qualitative methods taken to complete the current research. A grounded theory approach was adopted in this current study, which enabled ongoing data collection. The strategy of inquiry used is a single case study approach. This chapter explains the selection of the specific case study (the AFL). Limitations of the study are included in the Methodology chapter. Due to the study being founded in grounded research, keeping data collection and analysis to a manageable size was a significant challenge (Gratton & Jones, 2004). A major limitation of the study was access to participants. Details of data and documentary evidence collection are recorded. Data was collected through in depth semi-structured interviews. Data was managed using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The CAQDAS software assisted in the analysis of data and helped to identify important themes and sub-themes. Data collection, analysis and coding occurred simultaneously (Charmaz, 2011). The procedure adopted for reporting of results is outlined in this chapter.

The Results chapter has the fundamental aim of presenting the perspectives of participants on the gendered culture of the AFL, mentoring, networking and career progression in the AFL. The Results chapter was structured around the research questions for this current study. Responses to 19 semi-structured interviews, and extra dialogue recorded as part of the interviews

form the basis of the content of this chapter. The interviews were transcribed and manually read and inserted in the CAQDAS processes. Transcripts were read and re-read in an attempt to develop a clear idea of what the participant's viewpoints were. The use of a grounded theory approach enabled the following nodes to be identified: mentoring, networking, environment, career and gender. The node of gender had an overriding influence over the entire study.

The Discussion chapter identifies how women in senior leadership positions in the AFL respond to the gendered culture of the organisation. The chapter also explores how mentoring and networking assists women in management in their AFL careers. The integration of answers to the research questions guiding this current study, and discussing these in light of literature reviewed helped create content for this chapter. In addition the chapter links between findings and current literature, while incorporating a theoretical discussion. The current study's potential contribution to the body of knowledge and implications for policy and practice will be identified; and recommendations for future practice will be made.

The final chapter is the Conclusion to the study. In the Conclusion it will be determined how participants have responded to the gendered culture of the AFL. The ways that mentoring and networking have benefited participants will also be identified. The Conclusion chapter will also provide an understanding of why it was important to conduct this research.

1.6 Conclusion

A contextual background to the current study has been provided to guide the reader on what the six chapters in this thesis comprises. The following chapter will introduce the reader to a variety of strategies believed to assist women reach their career aspirations in male-dominated organisations, in particular addressing mentoring and networking as key strategies. The focus narrows to the special nature of women in male-dominated organisations within a sporting context and strategies to assist with their career development, again noting the importance of mentoring and networking.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review is organised into four sub-sections. The first sub-section deals with a variety of strategies believed to assist women reach their career aspirations in male-dominated organisations. These strategies include: relationships, mentoring, role modelling, sponsorship, networking, policies, career planning, education, a willingness to take risks, embracing masculine work practices and leadership styles, challenging gender stereotypes, and communication and self-promotion. The second sub-section addresses mentoring in more detail; exploring the definitions of a mentor and mentoring and focus on the functions of mentoring; mentoring for women in the workplace is explored, as is cross-gendered mentoring. The third sub-section of the literature review focuses on networking. The term networking is described; the functions of networking are outlaid; and networking for women in the workplace is studied. In the fourth and final sub-section, emphasis is on women in male-dominated organisations within a sporting context. The gendered nature of sport organisations is explored; the gendered inequalities in male-dominated sport organisations are considered and the roles that women occupy in sport organisations are examined. In particular, strategies that can address gender inequalities for women in male-dominated sport organisations, potential catalysts for change; and how the future could look are explored.

2.2 Strategies to assist women reach their career aspirations in male-dominated organisations

Women employed in male-dominated organisations face various issues when trying to develop and advance their careers. Dealing with gender stereotypical prescriptive behaviour can be challenging for women. There are many strategies that organisations and individuals can employ to develop women's capabilities, and assist them in reaching their career aspirations in male-dominated industries. One of the strategies that is recommended for women to engage in;

one that has been identified as decidedly challenging for women to succeed at, is to build their level of social capital within an organisation (Timberlake, 2005; Schipani et al., 2009; Wang, 2009; Eagly & Chin, 2010; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Women might try to engage in mentoring relationships in attempts to care for their career and psychosocial needs (Wanberg, Kammeyer-Mueller & Marchese, 2006). Deciding to network with bosses and managers in charge of recruitment (Bowles, 2012) is another strategy that women can employ when seeking to advance their careers. If women employed in male-dominated organisations can be politically savvy, and approach their careers strategically, they potentially can have an advantage over other women (Wentling, 2003). There are strategies that can be employed that involve initiatives that generally enhance someone's promotional prospects that do not require competing unwaveringly with peers in the work environment. These strategies include relationship building, mentoring, role modelling, sponsorship, networking, policies, career planning and career diversity, education, willingness to take risks, adopting masculine work practices and leadership styles, challenging gender stereotypes, communication, impression management and self-promotion (Timberlake, 2005). Wentling (2003) identified six important factors to enable women to successfully undertake management positions. These factors include: educational credentials, hard work, mentors, interpersonal skills, being able to demonstrate competency on the job, and a willingness to take risks. If women are to attain career success then having managers who guide them and encourage their career development is also important. Additionally women need to develop strategies that help them overcome and deal with issues related to gender discrimination, lack of opportunity, and family obligations (Sanders, Hrdlicka, Hellicar, Cottrell & Knox, 2011).

While strategies for advancing women's careers have been well documented, there is a shortage of research that focuses on the strategies in which women have, in practice, successfully negotiated access to senior positions in male-dominated organisations, and been able to then demonstrate their leadership qualities. 'A study of ways in which women as a subordinate group attain positions of leadership is essential to understanding mechanisms of exclusion from

positions of power and decision making' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, p.497). Grange and Oliver (2014) believe that it is important to develop an understanding of what contemporary leadership looks like. 'Women want to hear and be inspired by stories of success from within the industry' (Grange & Oliver, 2014, p.20). A report prepared by the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) (2013) makes a recommendation that encourages women with ambitions of developing their careers to target organisations that use strategies that promote diversity. However, it is worth noting, that strategies and tactics that work for men when developing their careers will not necessarily work for women, nor for that matter appeal to or even be feasible for women when developing their careers (Ibarra, Carter & Silva, 2010).

2.2.1 Relationships

There is little dispute, about the crucial importance of relationships in building and advancing women's careers. Relationships not only enhance confidence and self-esteem, they also offer individuals personal and professional support (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2002). Relationships 'allow … individuals to address concerns about self, career, and family by providing opportunities to gain knowledge, skills, and competence, and to address personal and professional dilemmas' (Kram, 1988, p.1-2). In work environments '[r]elationships with superiors, peers, subordinates, friends, and family members are essential sources of support during periods of major transition and throughout the ongoing process of career development' (Kram, 1988, p.1).

There are many different types of workplace relationships. One example is peer alliances. It is important for women to form strong peer alliances, since they have the potential to offer mutual gains. Peers can be notable allies, and allies in a work environment can undeniably be advantageous when trying to develop a career (Kanter, 1977). '[H]aving a trusted source who can open doors to opportunity, invite in, include and enable is extraordinarily beneficial' (Grange & Oliver, 2014, p.19). Another example of a workplace relationship is mentoring. Kram (1988) describes the mentor relationship as a type of relationship that can heighten career development.

Mentoring is a key strategy that has received wide acknowledgement for assisting women to develop and achieve career aspirations. Mentoring relationships not only 'support career development … (but also help individuals) address the career challenges encountered moving through … an organizational career' (Kram, 1988, p.1). Mentoring will be discussed in more detail in section 2.3 of this chapter.

Role modelling is an example of a relationship that has the potential to enhance development through personal and professional advancement (Kram, 1988). According to Kram (1988) role modelling is a common psychosocial function of most mentoring relationships. Role modelling is where someone senior (and experienced) sets an appealing example, and someone junior connects with that example. It is recommended that '[l]eading organisations … profile and highlight senior leaders who act as role models for their values and behaviours' (AHRC, 2013, p.38). As role modelling is a concept commonly associated with mentoring it will be incorporated into section 2.3 of this chapter.

Sponsorship is when the mentor goes beyond giving feedback and advice and uses his or her influence with senior executives to advocate for the [protégé]' (Ibarra et al., 2010, p.82). Kram (1988) identifies sponsorship as something that assists with career advancement and a part of mentoring. Sponsorship is known for having strong links to social capital (Timberlake, 2005; Wang, 2009; Schipani et al., 2009; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Timberlake (2005) describes social capital as a commodity that is found in organisations, and something that is a source of knowledge, resources and networks. Sponsorship has been acknowledged as being a part of mentoring and will be discussed in more detail in section 2.3 of this chapter.

2.2.2 Networking

Sharing experiences (whether the experiences are good or bad) with other people is a valuable support for career progression (Male Champions of Change, 2013). Networks built from these shared experiences can be used to promote the career advancement of women in male-dominated organisations through informal and formal networking opportunities. What is thought

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to be critical for women is for them to build social capital within an organisation. Another way

for them to do that is to be able to access and expand their networks (Kumra & Vinnicombe,

2010). Being able to reach influential social networks is 'essential to building the social capital

that allows people to emerge as leaders and become effective in leadership roles' (Eagly & Chin,

2010, p.218). It is important for women to be able to network with both men and women internal

and external to the organisations they work in (Grange & Oliver, 2014; AHRC, 2013).

Networking is a concept that will be covered in more detail in section 2.4 of this chapter.

2.2.3 Policies

Industries at large need to take a level of responsibility for addressing some of the barriers

that women situated in male-dominated organisations face. It is important and possible for

industry to help break down negative gender stereotypes and myths about women in the

workplace. Industry can design and foster workplace cultures that welcome women and men and

where gender specific and structural bias has been eliminated (AHRC, 2013). Women that strive

for leadership positions employed in male-dominated organisations encounter a wide range of

issues that impede their path to management and executive level positions. These barriers can be

removed or weakened by changes to organisational policies and ethical frameworks that aim to

increase the access women have to these sorts of positions (Eagly, 2007). If an organisation

employs effective strategies such as a mentoring policy, there is evidence to support that this

contributes to recruitment, retention and promotion of women within the organisation (AHRC,

2013; Burke, Burgess, & Fallon, 2006; Logan & Crump, 2007).

To support equal employment and career advancement of women in male-dominated

organisations, it is important to encourage policy makers to make changes to the way

organisations are designed. It is difficult to deal with the challenge of equality for women

'without structures that potentially benefit all organization members more broadly' (Kanter, 1977,

p.266). If an organisation can display strategies and policies that aim at attracting and retaining

women, then it has a chance of showing that the organisation is committed to creating a positive

work environment for women. This action is likely to result in strengthening a woman's allegiance to the organisation. Projects such as the Gender Equity Project (GEP) were designed to bring industry, researchers and associates together to create a supportable improvement in the gender equity of leadership positions in organisations participating in the project (Sojo & Wood, 2012).

It is unlikely that there will be gender equity for women in senior management and Board positions 'unless affirmative action policies and initiatives are implemented, and are driven by strong leadership' (Grange & Oliver, 2014, p.54). Strategies organisations can implement to develop gender diversity strategies, have been included in a resource developed by the AHRC (2013) that focuses on women in male-dominated industries. This resource suggests large organisations introduce diversity councils, and organisations in general should be transparently monitored, and have clear targets and key performance indicators. Grange and Oliver (2014) detail a range of different policy areas that women would be likely to benefit from. These areas cover structural, cultural, leadership, and business policies and support diverse career pathways for women to leadership positions. Cultural policies address issues focusing on gender equity, education and training for women into leadership positions, and promoting the visibility of women leaders. Leadership policies focus on ensuring there are ample mentoring and networking opportunities available for women leaders. Business policies are centred on issues relating to open and gender neutral recruitment policies, and processes. Ideally all policies relate to opportunities for women within the organisation, and gender equity goals.

2.2.4 Career planning

The general advice for women wanting to establish and develop careers in male-dominated industries is to accumulate as much work experience as possible. There is also a need for women to develop stronger career planning. Ideally women managers would: 'define their career objectives, aspirations and motivation for themselves, [and] determine the success and development of their careers as women managers' (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007, p.361). It is critical to

encourage and sponsor women to follow lateral career steps on their journey to senior management positions (Male Champions of Change Collaboration, 2013). New capabilities can always be transferrable, and existing capabilities strengthened. Lateral career moves and the development of new capabilities can help women bring new perspectives to male-dominated teams (Male Champions of Change Collaboration, 2013).

Organisations also have the responsibility of making sure that women have the opportunity to access the necessary supports that will help them develop their careers in all areas of the organisation, including 'non-traditional roles' (AHRC, 2013, p.11). Some of these necessary supports include: a range of different mentoring programs, informal and formal networking opportunities, formal sponsorship programs, and role modelling programs. Grange and Oliver (2014) suggest that traditionally male-dominated organisations seeking to become more inclusive need to adopt open and gender neutral recruitment policies, processes and selection panels. Organisations need to be able to identify and target opportunities best suited to women developing their careers; this may include roles that were previously identified as non-traditional. At the same time, challenges exist to mandate opportunities, for example supportive managers and inclusive work environments. Without supportive managers and inclusive work environments it almost impossible to run effective formal mentoring programs (Ibarra et al., 2010).

2.2.5 Education

Education and training are very important strategies for women to access while trying to establish and develop careers in male-dominated organisations (Grange & Oliver, 2014; Wentling, 2003; Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). The 'continued investment in education and training of women managers … will make it more difficult to overlook them in promotion decisions in the future' (Wentling, 2003, p.320). Participation in education and training activities, in addition to creating higher career prospects, are also seen as a sign that someone is committed to the organisation, and satisfied and engaged in their job (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). There appears to be

'double standards, in which men have greater access than women to leadership roles' (Eagly, 2007, p.5). This could result in requiring women to become more highly qualified than their male colleagues if they are interested in developing their careers. Organisations need to create formal leadership courses and high potential programs; and need to make it possible for women to attend the programs (Male Champions of Change Collaboration, 2013). It has been suggested that it might 'be necessary for women to show initiative and request their own training' (Wentling, 2003, p.320).

2.2.6 Willingness to take risks

One of the strategies that women could explore that may help them advance their career positions, is to target companies that are not performing well and/or seek out difficult high visibility positions (Eagly, 2007; Chugh & Sahgal, 2007; Wentling, 2003). It is unpopular amongst the majority of the business world to be involved in management with a company that is not successful. Positions at unsuccessful companies typically become devalued and shunned, therefore possibly easier for women to gain access to (Eagly, 2007). This could be a high risk strategy for women to use and one that might lead to failure in the future. Haslam and Ryan (2008) believe that there is an overrepresentation of women in unstable leadership positions. Women 'are more likely than men to be appointed to leadership positions associated with increased risk of failure and criticism because these positions are more likely to involve management of organizational units that are in crisis' (Haslam & Ryan, 2008, p.530). Haslam and Ryan (2008) also suggest that women might gain access to leadership positions in stressful and unstable organisations because the women generally are not seen as being as valuable as their male colleagues.

2.2.7 Embracing masculine work practices and leadership styles

Women who want to move into senior leadership positions may adopt masculine behaviour (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Chugh & Sahgal, 2007; Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra,

2006). It is thought that masculine characteristics are significant indicators of leadership, and leaders irrespective of gender display these characteristics in a variety of contexts (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006; Schein, 2007). Gender stereotyping is typically thought of as an impediment to women developing their careers (Schein, 2007). If women adopt masculine behaviours they may be able to bypass some of the restrictive established gender stereotypes. This carries the risk of attracting criticism for being unfeminine which may need to be negated by women in this position. It is possible for members of subordinate groups to choose to behave like the dominant group. This is thought to be one way that might negate stereotypes that set them apart from the dominant members of the group (Witz, 2005). If women in management choose to act in similar ways to men in management they might be able to prove that they are just as capable as their male colleagues (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007).

Many women believe the only way for women to advance their career paths is to act like men (Powell, Bagilhole & Dainty, 2009; Fisher, 2012). Unconcealed masculinity has been considered by many people in senior leadership positions to be vital to career success. However women take a risk if they adopt and display behaviours that are too blatantly masculine. They may be judged harshly and become excluded from senior management positions because of perceptions that they are too "bitchy" (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). One way women could attempt to minimise being stereotyped and judged negatively is to become neutral. That is women could 'try and adopt an androgynous sex role identity' (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007, p.355).

2.2.8 Challenge gender stereotypes

There is a common belief that leadership and feminine gender do not fit together. There is a widely held idea the characteristics required for leadership are masculine (Schein, 2007). It seems necessary for women situated in male-dominated organisations to have to deal with gender stereotypes and the belief and expectations that surround them if they are to become successful leaders (Garcia-Retamero & Lopez-Zafra, 2006). Accompanying the success of women in male-

dominated organisations is an apparent violation of gender stereotypes which can carry with them a range of penalties (Heilman, 2012; Heilman & Okimoto, 2007; Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006).

For women to succeed in senior management there is a view that they need to confront gender stereotypes, and prescribed gender stereotypic behaviours. It is necessary for women to be able to contend forcefully for available positions, to be independent, and to be capable of making decisions. Women need to also have the ability to take control of situations when required (Heilman, 2012). Career success for women in male-dominated organisations unfortunately 'carries the risk of disapproval, negativity, and penalties such as: social rejection and personally directed negativity' (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007, p.81). There are some people who view the success of women in male-dominated organisations as a sign of women not having enough feminine attributes; or what has been termed by Powell et al. (2009) as women undoing gender. Success of women in male-dominated organisations may in this case be viewed by people who are influenced by male-dominated thought processes as an indication that women are doing what men are meant to do, not what women are meant to do.

It appears that it may not be good enough for women to merely perform tasks at the same standard as men. Women may face the added expectation that they have to balance being knowledgeable and someone who gets along with other people really well (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). Diekman and Goodfriend (2006) suggest that if women employed in male-dominated organisations can balance conventional female stereotypes with unconventional male stereotypes the pathway to social change may be made easier; with gender equality eventually becoming the new standard in many roles.

2.2.9 Communication and self-promotion

In an organisation it is vital that people communicate in some way with others. The way in which people communicate has an impact on others in the work place. Effective communication plays an important role in the success of an individual and an organisation (Heilman, 2012). It is important for women striving for career advancement in male-dominated

organisations to develop a communication and management style that male managers are comfortable with (Wentling, 2003; Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). Kanter (1977) suggests it is important for women trying to develop their careers in male-dominated organisations to be able to combine people skills and credibility. To reach leadership positions, it is necessary to appear to others to be a leader (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). In addition, to impression management, the thought is that it is also important to engage in varying levels of self-promotion, 'explicitly drawing attention to one's skills' (Heilman, 2012, p.124). It is important to note that some women in male-dominated organisations may avoid actively promoting themselves for fear of social censure for behaving against prescribed gender roles (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Using a sponsor to help with building important social capital is one way of addressing this fear of social censure (Timberlake, 2005; Wang, 2009). If women are promoted by a sponsor they do not have to promote themselves thus managing to avoid breaking prescribed gender roles.

2.3 Mentoring

Women employed in management positions, particularly in male-dominated organisations, face career challenges. Mentoring can help women overcome various challenges they may face throughout their careers (Kram, 1988). Mentoring has been credited as an effective strategy that contributes to the retention and promotion of women to senior positions (Logan & Crump, 2007). Mentoring involving elements of training has been accepted as a strategy that can be employed to advance careers (Girves, Zepeda & Gwathmey, 2005). Effective mentors are acclaimed with being able to impart knowledge and expertise that will support protégés with career related learning and skill development (Eby, Allen, Evans, Ng & DuBois, 2008). Mentors can help protégés with such things as: career planning, work role clarification, networking opportunities, positive exposure within an organisation, new career opportunities, higher wage compensation, and speedier promotions (Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Manz & Rossman, 2002; Ragins, 2009, Coleman, 2011; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

To place mentoring into the context of this current study it will be expounded, and descriptions of informal and formal mentoring will be provided. Concepts of what a mentor is will be discussed, and then the functions and phases of mentoring presented. The focus will then narrow to mentoring women in the work place, in particular women in male-dominated work places. The research of Kram (1988) continues to be treated as pioneering and seminal when discussing aspects relating to mentoring. Kram's work will therefore have direct and indirect influence on much of what is written in this literature review.

2.3.1 Concepts of Mentoring

There are many different concepts of mentoring. The term mentoring is commonly integrated with phrases such as: sponsoring, role modelling and advocacy. It has been suggested that a single and consistent definition for mentoring would be useful when conducting research and asking participants about their mentoring experiences (Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett, 2003). There are however, some researchers that hold the opinion there may never be a clear consensus as to the meaning of mentoring (Colley, 2002). The existence of multiple definitions of mentoring does not mean that there is no agreement on what mentoring is. The variety of definitions could be an indication that different types of mentoring need acknowledgment and explaining (Higgins & Kram, 2001).

Mentoring that supports career development can involve 'relationships with superiors, peers, subordinates, friends, and family members' (Kram, 1988, p.1). Mentoring has been defined as a path of constant and lively feedback between two people who are working at establishing a relationship where one person imparts knowledge, skills, information, and point of view to promote the personal and professional development of the other (Olivero, 2013).The concept of mentoring has evolved over time. Despite this evolution there are still thoughts that mentoring is a type of hierarchical relationship, not a level relationship based on mutual respect irrespective of career position of those involved (Olivero, 2013). What becomes evident in many of the reviewed studies is the idea of the mentoring relationship providing the protégé with career and

psychosocial support (Kram, 1988; Ragins, 1989; Noe et al., 2002; Eby, 2005; Ibarra et al., 2010; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). Ibarra et al. (2010) describe this combination of career and psychosocial support as classical mentoring.

Mentoring has also been described as an 'intense interpersonal exchange' between a proficient employee who is familiar with an organisation and an employee who does not have the same proficiency and experience (Noe et al., 2002, p. 130). Noe et al. (2002) explain further that the mentor can provide such things as: guidance, encouragement, constructive criticism, and validation that relates to both the career and personal development of the less experienced employee. Mentoring is typically regarded as a developmental relationship involving a mentor and a protégé. Mentoring does not just benefit the protégé; it also has been recognised as something that can benefit the mentor and the organisation. 'The career and psychosocial support that are given to the protégé enhance the personal and professional development of all parties involved' (Russell, 2004, p.615). Sarri (2011) suggests that the objective of mentoring is to learn from the experience of others. Searby and Tripses (2006) and Russell (2004) describe mentoring as a distinct learning relationship between someone who is a more experienced professional functioning as a guide, role model, coach, teacher, and/or sponsor; and someone who is a professional with less experience. This relationship is important for the professional with less experience particularly when they are beginning to develop their career or are going through a crucial turning point in their career. The mentoring relationship ideally would see both the mentor and protégé actively involved. Having both parties equally involved the protégé would be encouraged 'to find solutions to problems on his/her own' (Sarri, 2011, p.722).

If someone has a sponsor it indicates to other people that they have the support of an influential person (Kanter, 1977). This recognition is supported in the AHRC publication (2013). It is suggested in this publication that '[s]ponsorship is about ensuring that individual women are recognised and that they are visible across the organisation. This ensures that influential leaders can be advocates for women's advancement and career development' (AHRC, 2013, p.50).

Sponsors are often in a position to defend anyone they are sponsoring. In meetings sponsors can speak on behalf of who they sponsor if there is ever controversy, and they can endorse who they are sponsoring if any promotional opportunities are discussed (Kanter, 1977).

On the other hand, there is every chance that without sponsorship it is possible that someone will be disregarded for promotional opportunities, irrespective of their competency levels (Ibarra et al., 2010). '[W]ell connected sponsors … would make informal introductions … [and] educate [women] … about the real workings of the system' (Kanter, 1977, pp.278-279). It is also believed to be possible for sponsors to be able to help who they are sponsoring by bypassing a certain level of hierarchy within any organisational structure. Sponsorship is an important aspect of attaining senior management positions. Women are not as likely as men to have someone providing them sponsorship (Male Champions of Change Collaboration, 2013). It has been suggested that 'women are more likely to benefit in career terms from borrowing the social capital of a career sponsor' than trying to develop it themselves (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010, p.537). With apparent less access to sponsorship, it is all the more important that organisations help develop women's capabilities by providing a variety of training opportunities. In addition to this organisations' need to also clearly legitimise women to others in the organisation by openly promoting the levels of expertise that women have (Yoder, 2001).

Ibarra et al. (2010) detail a sponsorship program that IBM Europe use. This program is aimed at women in senior management positions with aspirations of entering the executive level of management. Participants are to be promoted within a year of being selected to join the program. Sponsors have failed if participants do not attain a promotion. This pressures sponsors to work hard at raising the profiles of the women they work with. Ibarra et al. (2010) acknowledge that while the formal sponsor programs are valuable in helping women attain promotions they are limited by their fixed duration. Typically sponsorship ends once promotion has been attained. What would be beneficial is if the sponsorship could continue over a transitional period of time. Ibarra et al. (2010) proposed that this strategy be strengthened by

inviting sponsors stay with participants for at least 100 days past promotion. With this additional attention sponsors could assist with providing promotions and strong transitions.

Disadvantages are acknowledged from formal mentoring relationships. For example, they are likely to have a limited purpose, focussing on specific work-related issues and objectives (Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Formal mentoring is controlled by the organisation and focuses on organisational needs, not the potential benefits employees may gain (Tourigny & Pulich, 2005). Protégés in formal mentoring programs tend to report receiving minimal psychological support from their mentors, and sometimes less career-related support than those in informal relationships (Allen, Day & Lentz, 2005; Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). There is a likelihood that formal mentoring programs risk intensifying segregation from the '[i]nformal and social organizational networks' that already alienate women in male-dominated organisations' (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995, p.49). Guiniven (2006) suggests formal mentoring heavily restricts who a protégé gets their career advice from and can give too much control over a protégé's career to the mentor. Regardless of the disadvantages associated with formal mentoring programs, as noted in the literature reviewed, the advantages far outweigh these. Formal mentoring programs are recognised for: building relationships and trust, encouraging honest feedback and direct discussion related to career opportunities, and developing a protégés understanding and appreciation of varied perspectives (AHRC, 2013).

It is unlikely that formal mentoring relationships start naturally; and are often created and prescribed by the organisation (Allen et al., 2005). This is done in an attempt to increase the profiles of women identified as having lots of potential. Typically 'mentors and protégés are matched up based on some criteria such as similarity of interests and experiences' (Russell, 2004, pp.612-613). Formal mentoring programs are often implemented with the intention of addressing inequalities that women may face in male-dominated organisations (Blake-Beard, 2001). Sarri (2011) identified a number of key factors that play a part in effective formal mentoring programs: a clear set of objectives that both the mentor and protégé have agreed upon; communication and

training; a considered matching of mentor and protégé; and formal evaluation and review of the program. There is a possibility mentors in formal mentoring programs are not as motivated to be part of the mentoring relationship as if they were part of an informal mentoring relationship (Wanberg et al., 2003). Formal mentors may consider their protégés as 'at-risk performers who enter the program because they need remedial attention' (Ragins & Cotton, 1999, p.531). It is also possible formal mentors will not view their protégés as favourably as informal mentors view their protégés. Ragins & Cotton (1999) also suggest that formal mentors may not have a relationship with their protégés based on respect, and that they may not view their protégés as highly competent. It is possible that some formal mentoring programs in male-dominated organisations that have women mentoring women may risk placing additional problems on the limited number of women that are often already dealing with a substantial work load (Quinlan, 1999). In contrast to some of these views Hegstad and Wentling (2005) in their study of formal mentoring programs in Fortune 500 companies that had headquarters based in the United States of America found that formal mentoring relationships often can result in benefits. These benefits can include both personal and professional benefits for the mentor and protégé, and the organisation can often expect 'increased retention, commitment and employee motivation' (Hegstad & Wentling, 2005, p.468).

Informal mentoring relationships progress through a process of mutual selection of mentor and protégé. Informal mentoring is known as spontaneously derived relationships (Blake-Beard, 2001). Informal mentoring is thought largely to be voluntary. The mentor might approach the protégé to initiate the relationship, or the protégé might approach the mentor to initiate the relationship. There are even occasions where both the mentor and protégé might mutually initiate the relationship. '[R]esearch has indicated that informal mentoring results in more benefits (e.g., greater support), possibly due to the closer bonds that are formed in the relationships' (Russell, 2004, p.613). The mentor and protégé may often share likenesses. The protégé might remind the mentor of themselves at the beginning of their own career. The mentor could be interested in

helping another person develop their career. 'A similarity of personality or leadership style may exist that leads to open communication and a supportive atmosphere' between the mentor and protégé (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011, p.3). On the other hand, it is not possible to achieve the passion and dedication found in naturally occurring informal mentoring relationships with formally arranged mentoring relationships (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995). Tourigny and Pulich (2005) claim that informal mentoring relationships offer minimal opportunities to provide career support. If the informal mentoring occurs within the same organisation it is possible that colleagues of the mentor and protégé might view the relationship as a form of favouritism, particularly if a hierarchical relationship is involved. Tourigny and Pulich (2005) also suggest that mentors risk not gaining official recognition for what they do.

2.3.2 Mentor

Literature presents multitudes of descriptions of mentor. A mentor is typically knowledgeable and reliable; someone who guides, protects, and promotes the 'protégé's career, training, and overall wellbeing' (Dean, 2009, p.3). Mentors ideally demonstrate leadership excellence, and have reached the pinnacle of their professions (Grange & Oliver, 2014). Searby and Tripses (2006) describe a mentor as someone who possesses certain knowledge that is important to a protégé. The mentor represents hope, guidance and protection. Mentors are believed to exhibit a number of attributes; typically - credibility, integrity and wisdom, as well as the ability to share their knowledge (Sarri, 2011).

In addition to exhibiting a variety of attributes, an effective mentor is required at times to take on a number of different roles. S/he can be expected to act as a leader, model, coach, and at other times as a teacher, advisor, counsellor and "buddy" (Sarri, 2011). A mentor can provide a protégé with 'knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel, and support in the protégés pursuit of achieving professional and/or personal goals' (Searby & Tripses, 2006, p.6). According to Ibarra et al. (2010) some of the best mentors are able to provide advice and counselling using a caring and unselfish manner. Someone acting as a mentor has the opportunity to offer protégés

psychosocial support that helps with personal and professional development. A mentor can also offer advice and coaching that can support aspects of a protégé's career. Ibarra et al. (2010) add that in their opinion only sponsors actively advocate for a protégé's career advancement. This is an indication that not everyone views sponsorship as part of mentoring.

2.3.3 Functions of Mentoring

As already revealed, mentoring comprises numerous variables. The functions associated with mentoring comprise those of a developmental relationship to enhance individual growth and advancement. The functions are essential characteristics to differentiate developmental relationships from other work relationships' (Kram, 1988). Kram (1988) identified key functions of mentoring and recognised these under two themes, career functions and psychosocial functions.

Figure 2-1. Mentoring Functions.

When a hierarchical relationship provides all of these functions, it best approximates the prototype of a mentor relationship.	
Career Functions	*Psychosocial Functions*
Sponsorship	Role Modelling
Exposure-and-Visibility	Acceptance-and-Confirmation
Coaching	Counselling
Protection	Friendship
Challenging Assignments	

Note: Adapted from *Mentoring at Work: Developmental Relationships in Organizational Life* (p.23), K.E. Kram, 1988, Lanham: University Press of America.

Career functions are known as attributes of a mentoring relationship that heighten learning the ropes within an organisation, and prepares the protégé for advancement within an organisation (Kram, 1988). Psychosocial functions are described by Kram (1988) as features of a

mentoring relationship that heighten a sense of competence, clarity of identity, and success within a professional role. Both the career and psychosocial functions of mentoring are not completely different. In any mentoring relationship an amalgamation of functions are evident. According to Kram (1988), the interaction and combination of career and psychosocial functions can increase the potency and benefits of each function. The combination of career and psychosocial functions also enable individuals to address the challenges of each career stage. Career and psychosocial functions are believed to increase as mentoring relationships progress from an early to middle phase (Wanberg, et al., 2003).

Ibarra et al. (2010) challenge Kram's claim that an amalgamation of all the career and psychosocial functions of mentoring is possible. They suggest that examples of mentoring involving a combination of psychosocial and career support are 'classical … and ideal but rare' (Ibarra et al., 2010, p.84). In their opinion it is also unusual to achieve both types of support from one mentor. Mentoring is clearly linked to career success; and if protégés are effectively mentored they are likely to feel more content in their careers and be capable of displaying affirmative psychosocial skills (McDowall-Long, 2004).

2.3.4 Mentoring for Women in the Workplace

Mentoring can assist women with career advancement and help promote awareness amongst men of specific career challenges that women face (Manz & Rossman, 2002). Mentoring has been accredited with being able to help women form a clear career development path, and is capable of helping women build their personal identity (Noe, 1988). Mentoring is understood to have an impact on the formation of work identity for women who are employed in traditionally male-dominated environments (Ragins, 1989; McKeen & Bujaki, 2007). When focussing on the female protégé Ragins (1989) suggests that mentors can help validate the protégé, and alter perceived gender stereotypes. Mentors may also be able to assist women with decoding male-dominated work environments, and with promoting position and value. Mentors additionally can help women develop a sense of belonging, and help encourage feelings of being connected to the

organisation. These advantages could assist in the formation of work identity (McKeen & Bujaki, 2007).

Mentors can help protégés find ways of surmounting gender stereotypes, preconceptions and prejudices. A female protégé may be able to break into the established traditional networks of male-dominated organisations if she is able to form a relationship with a mentor who is well respected and influential (Logan & Crump, 2007; Ragins & Cotton, 1999). Due to the distinctive challenges women face in male-dominated organisations, it can be appropriate for women to be provided with easier access to, and a greater variety of mentoring options than men (Akande, 1994). These findings suggest mentors need to be able to understand the unique situation that each woman striving to form a work-identity and successful career in a male-dominated organisation faces. Olivero (2013) believes most successful women have at some point throughout their careers, experienced self-doubt, and men are likely to go through periods of self-doubt too throughout their careers, but it is more prevalent with women (particularly women in male-dominated industries). Much of the self-doubt women experience is related to a range of gender stereotypes. Self-doubt can result in a variety of actions, including suboptimal levels of performance in the work environment. 'Mentoring women, then, implies an extra step of communication and advice on how to replace concerns by facts' (Olivero, 2013, p.68). These findings suggest women need to be equipped with skills that support them to cope with self-doubt and gender stereotypes.

Due largely to the gendered and often exclusionary nature of male-dominated organisations, not everyone within an organisation is thought to have equal rights. Women often find that they do not experience the same benefits as men when developing a professional career (Ehrich, 2008; Sealy & Singh, 2010). There is the belief this is not a result of formal barriers, but a result of not having sufficient access to the informal and politicised behaviours of the controlling group (Davey, 2008). Successful sponsorship (a common career function of

mentoring), can help a protégé to gain exposure and build an 'attractive and viable' work-identity that gels with male-dominated organisational culture (Kram, 1988, p. 71).

2.3.5 Cross-Gendered Mentoring

Views relating to cross-gendered mentoring are clearly varied. It is possible that mentoring relationships are likely to be more successful if the mentor and the protégé share the same gender, ethnicity and values (Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011). Davey (2008) believes men are typically offered opportunities to further their careers by same gendered mentors; whilst women protégés are often required to proactively seek career advancement opportunities by male mentors. Mentors of the same gender are likely to be able to form a better understanding of the distinctive challenges facing each gender. This is particularly the case with women working in male-dominated work places who are recognised for facing unique challenges (Dworkin, Maurer & Schipani, 2012). Dworkin et al. (2012) also note that same gender mentoring relationships for female protégés are frequently successful because it is easier for protégés to copy the behaviour of their mentors without the risk of any negative stereotypical judgments. There is a belief that mentoring relationships where the mentor and protégé share the same gender characteristically incorporate more of an effective mix of career and psychosocial functions (Allen et al., 2005). Mentors and protégés that share the same gender are thought to also display higher levels of interpersonal comfort because they share many experiences with each other.

2.4 Networking

The research questions guiding this current study are concerned with building an understanding of how women respond to gendered cultures in male-dominated cultures. Women need to be able to successfully deal with male-dominated cultures if they are to have a chance of developing successful careers in gendered work environments. Networking is recognised to assist with career development (Fadil, Smatt, Segrest & Owen, 2009). However depending on the

organisational environment and particular circumstances, networking can also hinder women trying to develop their careers.

A focus of this current study is to delve deeper into networking, and identify the effects networking has for women with their career aspirations in male-dominated organisations. Descriptions of networks and networking will be examined. A view of informal and formal networks will be taken. The functions of networking will be explored; including the purpose, structure, benefits and value of networking. To conclude, a closer reflection of networking for women working in male-dominated organisations will be made. This reflection will include a variety of suggestions relating to how networking can be made more successful for women in male-dominated organisations.

2.4.1 Networking Descriptions

Networking involves a range of organisational behaviours that materialise as 'interactions between people at work, such as forming coalitions, negotiating, co-operating, manipulating, including and excluding' (Benschop, 2009, p.221). Linehan (2001) describes networks as something that involves connections. These connections are usually between a variety of colleagues and associates. Networks can be valuable support and valuable sources of information. Networks are viewed as social resources and social contexts that can assist someone with creating and fostering their careers (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004). It is accepted men and women form networks to commonly reinforce their career development (Bierema, 2005). Networks can provide knowledge and 'support, they are also the contexts in which individuals discover, construct and transmit their identities' (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004, p.14). Networks may exist either internally or externally to an organisation. Networks operating within an organisation are not always sanctioned by the organisation (Kram, 1988). Networks are principally formal or informal. Formal networks are typically structured and have some of sponsorship either from the governing body or the immediate organisation (Bierema, 2005). Exclusion from formal networks has been noted as a possible barrier to career advancement (Bierema, 2005). Prominent

organisations acknowledge that informal networks play a vital 'role in the career development of both men and women … [and] recognise that women in male-dominated industries have less access to these networks and thus fewer sponsors and mentors and less visibility across the organisation' (AHRC, 2013, p. 52). Informal networks typically comprise professional associations and personal contacts (Bierema, 2005). Women are more inclined to turn to family and friends for career advice and support whereas men alternatively approach professional acquaintances for their career advice and support (Robinson, 2009). It is worth noting that information gathered from informal networking sources; such as family and friends are not as reliable as information gathered from professional networking sources (Robinson, 2009). As a result informal networking gained by women potentially has negative implications for an organisation. The importance therefore is to offer women ongoing networking opportunities that involve experiences of interacting within and externally to an organisation (AHRC, 2013).

The success or failure of networks depends largely on the overall culture of an organisation. Sădal (2009) compares networking to gatekeeping and describes networking as being gendered. Incorporating this view, men have been the gatekeepers and have prevented women from developing their careers to their fullest potential (Sădal, 2009). If there is a healthy level of gender awareness within an organisation, then there is an increased chance there will be positive levels of participation and commitment to the network. For example, if the organisational culture is not conscious of gender issues then there is the likelihood that patriarchy will be reproduced, not eroded (Bierema, 2005). If networks are to be effective at 'eroding inequality and creating atmospheres that are conducive to women [it] requires that both networks and … organizations work [together] to change the structure of power relations' (Bierema, 2005, p. 218). Bierema (2005) does not believe that networks are the dominant source of power for women within organisations. For networks and networking to be effective it is important there are sufficient numbers in the networks and adequate time to successfully network (Bierema, 2005). Networks can be beneficial if centrally located within an organisation. This central locality is

thought to bring with it varied networks of interaction, greater control over resources, and wide-ranging range of benefits and opportunities, unlikely to be available to anyone on the periphery of the organisational network (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004).

2.4.2 Functions of Networking

Networks generally have a variety of purposes and structures. Networks characteristically allow individuals to meet others who share professional interests (Kram, 1988). Participating in organisational networking events is one way of expanding someone's visibility, and creating new contacts (Kram, 1988). Networking relationships commonly provide numerous career and psychosocial functions. This can involve such things as: information sharing, career planning, career development, emotional support, and friendship (Kram, 1988; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). When forming a clear understanding of networks it may be worth noting that the social contextual structures surrounding networks impact on how a network functions (Bierema, 2005). Whilst networks may have different social contextual structures, and function differently from each other; it is not uncommon for the various networks to offer both men and women similar resources and outcomes (Bierema, 2005). Linehan (2001) also believes there are often mutual employment benefits for those actively involved in any form of networking.

Through networking, it is possible to 'directly shape career outcomes by regulating access to jobs, providing mentoring and sponsorship, channelling the flow of information and referrals, augmenting power and reputations, and increasing the likelihood and speed of promotion' (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004, p.3). Networks also can have an effect on someone's career outcomes by shaping the jobs they might get, the promotions they might gain, and the salaries they may earn (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004). Networking has been advocated to assist someone with securing employment, making connections with dissimilar colleagues that may share some common interests, developing a support system and career (Bierema, 2005). High levels of positive developmental networking relationships, and networking assistance promotes a likelihood of someone experiencing career satisfaction and social capital (Wang, 2009). What is thought to be

critical for women is for them to build social capital within an organisation. Another way for them to do that is to be able to access and expand their networks (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Being able to reach influential social networks is 'essential to building the social capital that allows people to emerge as leaders and become effective in leadership roles' (Eagly & Chin, 2010, p.218).

Sharing experiences (whether the experiences are good or bad) with other people is a valuable support for career progression (Male Champions of Change, 2013). Networks built from these shared experiences can be used to promote the career advancement of women in male-dominated organisations through informal and formal networking opportunities. It is important for women to be able to network with both men and women internal and external to the organisations that they work in (Grange & Oliver, 2014; AHRC, 2013). Workplace developmental relationships do not necessarily have to be with someone of high status within an organisation. Receiving psychological support from others (irrespective of employment status) can also result in career satisfaction which may indeed benefit the individual and the organisation (Bierema, 2005). Many organisations are adopting networks as a way of dealing with diversity and purportedly building prospects for women and other assorted groups. However, merely creating networks does not guarantee equity within an organisation (Bierema, 2005).

Organisations committed to assisting the career development of women should be prepared to provide time and resources that enable women to participate in and host external networking groups. One consideration worth noting is the development of women's networks. 'Women can offer each other feedback and support that is difficult for those in [isolated] … positions to get from immediate colleagues' (Kanter, 1977, p.282). It would be advisable if women clients were integrated into these sorts of networking groups with the aim of strengthening women's networks within the organisation and wider industry (AHRC, 2013).

Networking is considered essential for professional career success (Linehan, 2001). The value of networking is undoubtedly recognised by men and women (Broadbridge, 2004).

Networking has the potential to raise work profiles. The ability to network effectively, thus increasing visibility within the work environment, can help increase promotional opportunities that may be presented to someone. There are recognised potential benefits of networking: formal and informal information exchange, career development support, professional support and encouragement, greater visibility amongst senior management, and personal support (Linehan, 2001). Networks have the capacity to provide direct and indirect access to resources. Networks can also signal existing or expected future status of an individual (Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004). Sădal (2009) acknowledges that networking has benefits however it can be very time and energy consuming. When referring to networking in terms of social capital, there are not always positive outcomes. It is up to individuals to draw the productive value from the networks to which they belong; then positive social capital can exist (Sădal, 2009).

2.4.3 Networking for women in the workplace

Men and women might involve themselves in comparable types of networking but will not attain the same benefits because of the ways that organisations are structured (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). There are a range of psychosocial and instrumental benefits associated with networks for women (Bierema, 2005).Women can learn about corporate culture through the relationships that they form. Networks help women assimilate into male-dominated organisational cultures (Bierema, 2005). Through women's networks it is possible to share important information and experiences amongst experienced and inexperienced women (O'Neil, Hopkins & Sullivan, 2011). It is becoming increasingly recognised that women working in male-dominated organisations need networks because women are typically not as well integrated into men's networks. This lack of integration may lead to levels of isolation from career pathways, thought to lead to power, that men have better access to (Bierema, 2005; O'Neil et al., 2011). If women are not part of supportive networks, they risk facing a range of career disadvantages. If women are being informally excluded based on reasons of gender from networks, they risk

missing out on being presented with the same level of promotional opportunities as their male colleagues.

Leading organisations in male-dominated industries, are recognising women often have less access to informal networks and thus likely to have fewer sponsors, mentors, and potentially less visibility across the organisation (AHRC, 2013).The AHRC (2013) suggested that typically male-dominated organisations have a responsibility to offer a variety of formal and informal networking to women they employ. If and when appropriate, men could also be encouraged to play a part in these networking opportunities. Organisations that do provide women a range of networking opportunities also need to provide the necessary time and resources to enable participation in networking events. Departments within organisations need to be allocated resources to enable them to host external networking groups (AHRC, 2013).

Networking strategies the AHRC (2013) identify to assist women stay in their roles in male-dominated organisations are: access to Equal Employment Opportunity initiatives; programs where employees on leave can keep in touch with the organisation through meetings; phone calls or e-mails; and meeting with career support workers. There are an increasing number of organisations that are introducing formal women's networks. These networks have the purpose of assisting women to develop skills and knowledge that will help them attain career success (Bierema, 2005). Bierema (2005) also provided a range of recommendations aimed to improve the situation for women, and other diverse minority groups in male-dominated organisations. These recommendations include:

- Invest in development programs that aim to enhance women's levels of self-efficacy and sense of identity

- Establish a connection with the gender consciousness of organisations

- Secure a commitment from both the executive management levels of organisations and the members of networks

- Action that accomplishes network goals should be acknowledged and rewarded

- Do not assume that all networks are created and administrated equally

If women are able to hold a number of directorship positions with a variety of organisations, it is then highly likely these women are involved with a variety of networks. This then makes it possible for there to be, and also perhaps encourages, a wide flow of information between the various bodies about the necessity of establishing networks (Hawarden & Marsland, 2011).

Male-dominated networks are typically believed to offer members career development support. Women's networks are generally believed to offer members high levels of social support. Both types of networks have value, but potentially can provide conflicting advice. It is necessary for women involved in both types of networks to reach a balance between the two types. Networks have been found to be more functional for men and more social for women (Wang, 2009). There is a view that men typically belong to networks that are large and economically focussed (Forret & Dougherty, 2004). Alternatively women tend to belong to networks that are small in comparison to men's networks. The networks that women belong to are more localised and are often community minded (Bierema, 2005).

What is questioned is whether or not 'women's networks encourage female acculturation to the patriarchal culture or [are] … they … instrumental in fostering real change and opportunity for women' (Bierema, 2005, p.210). Research shows that in some cases participants in formal women's networks are not sure about the sincerity of the organisation's support. Unfortunately, there are many numerous organisations that do not demonstrate full appreciation of the effects of gender stereotypes and male-dominated organisational cultures on the career advancement of women (O'Neil et al., 2011).

The perceptions that others (male and female) hold of gendered networks may be a mixture of positive and negative views. Broadbridge (2004) suggests women are less likely, in comparison to men, to be involved in informal networking generated within a male-dominated organisation. It is not easy for 'women managers to break through the "old boy network". As a consequence [women] … are denied contacts, opportunities and excluded from [much of] the

information networks provide' (Broadbridge, 2004, p.555; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). In business terms this sort of information provided through networking often equates to power within an organisation. Broadbridge (2004) expresses the view that in male-dominated organisations, organisational politics and networking practices are controlled by power traditionally managed by men. The exclusion of women from these networks might result in the women being disadvantaged in male-dominated work environments. Women may be incapable of competing with their male colleagues on an equal playing field (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

Linehan (2001) suggests it is possible for networks to reject a member if they are committed to contrasting highly gendered networks. Linehan (2001) places emphasis on the importance that gaining access to male networks has for women aiming to become noticed with the result of attaining career promotions. A considerable amount of male networking typically takes place after standard work hours have ended. After hours informal networking might take place at such places as sporting events, in sporting clubs and bars. There is a common perception that business is discussed and useful contacts made at these informal networking events. Women often feel excluded from these sorts of afterhours networking opportunities (Linehan, 2001). Exclusion of women from male-dominated networks risks perpetuating 'exclusive male customs, traditions and negative attitudes towards female managers' (Linehan, 2001, p.825). Tonge (2008) revealed that young women feel that gender is a barrier to effective networking in male-dominated organisations; and young women can feel threatened by having to deal with older men in suits.

There is a view that '[n]etworking processes contribute to the perception of gender inequalities in everyday practices in organisations' (Benschop, 2009, p.217).Women do have the option in some organisations to form their own formal and informal gendered networks. Broadbridge (2004) explains that these female networks are frequently used as a way to offset the exclusion women experience in male-dominated organisations. It is possible these female only networks fail to carry with them the power male networks have. Another probability is these

female networks are harder to create because there are conventionally more men than women employed in male-dominated organisations. Even though 'networking with female contemporaries is a useful support system, until more women gain senior positions in management, women will have to learn how to successfully break into the male-dominated networking system, particularly at senior levels' (Linehan, 2001, p.827).

What might be worth considering is the notion that some women simply feel uncomfortable with networking and self-promotion (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2008). Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) conducted a study within a single international consulting firm based in the United Kingdom that is focussed on provision of management consulting and technology services. The aim of their study was to determine how the promotion to partner process worked in professional services firms. Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) suggest that men are generally conditioned to take credit for their personal achievements and to lead. Women are not thought to do these things; and are typically not encouraged to advocate for themselves. Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) suggest that women are taught to cooperate and that men are taught to compete.

2.5 Women in male-dominated sport organisations

Over the past twenty years many initiatives have been taken to improve the career opportunities of women. Many studies have been undertaken that critically examine the space given to women in management positions in the corporate world (for example Kanter, 1977; Oakley, 2000; Blum, Fields & Goodman, 1994; Liff & Ward, 2001; Ryan & Haslam, 2005). There has in the past been a lack of research that concentrates on women's careers in sport organisations. This situation is certainly improving but when there has been research conducted, often little focus by industry, has been placed on the low figures of women in senior management positions; despite there being a general agreement that increased numbers of women would be positive (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012). In this section of the Literature Review there will be a focus on: the gendered nature of sport organisations, gender inequalities in male-dominated sport

organisations, and the role of women in sport organisations. An emphasis will then be placed on strategies to address gender inequalities, the things that are likely to bring change, and where the situation for women in the male-dominated sport industry is likely to go next.

2.5.1 Gendered nature of sport organisations

Sport is frequently an instrument for the strengthening and continuance of particular ideologies (Williams, Lawrence & Rowe, 1985). Sport organisations are thought to be typically different from normal managerial environments (Whisenhart & Pedersen, 2004). Nicholson, Stewart, Cooper, Gostlow, Perry and Falzon (2005) in their quantitative study on staff lists of AFL employees found that some departments within football clubs are clearly gendered. The primary activity of sport is often implicitly linked with elements of equal opportunity (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). The discourses of equal opportunity in sport are believed to reinforce the notion that sport organisations have levels of sameness and run reasonably harmoniously (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). A term frequently used in literature related to women involved in sport and sport organisations as a research tool is discourse analysis. Shaw and Hoeber (2003) describe discourse analysis as an examination of the dialogue used in a particular social and cultural setting. Gendered discourses play a crucial role in the way that gender is constructed in sport organisations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012). Examining gendered dialogue used in sport and sport organisations gives helpful insight into the gendered nature of sport organisations. Studying these kinds of gendered dialogue helps researchers build an appreciation of how influential and valued masculine discourses are in comparison to feminine discourses (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003).Without doubt the dominant discourse used in management of sport organisations is linked to favourable masculinities (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

What it means to be a man and/or a woman in society is often taken for granted. Even though gendered discourses 'are socially constructed and therefore not natural, they are frequently internalized by individuals, which makes them difficult to challenge and change' (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003, p.351). Masculinity is typically linked to aggression, strength,

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competition and determination (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Women situated in sport organisations dominated by masculine discourses wanting to achieve career success are sometimes in a position where they feel they must adopt a range of masculine work practices (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Adopting masculine work practices places women at risk of being accused of acting like men; which brings with it a range of negative consequences.

Women are clearly under-represented in various positions in sport organisations (Burton, 2015; Cunningham, 2008). Knoppers & Anthonissen (2008) credit the general shortage of women in senior sport management roles to managerial customs that incorporate dominant discursive practices. Sport for many years has been clearly a gendered pursuit (Burton, 2015; Sibson, 2010), and sport organisations show definite privilege towards men and sporting activities pursued by men (Cunningham, 2008). There is a long held view that 'sport operates as a space to define and reproduce hegemonic masculinity' (Burton, 2015, p.156). The mind-set associated with the term "think male, think manager" permeates the majority of sport organisations; particularly male-dominated sport organisations (McKay, 1997). Sport provides an opportunity for men to assert dominance, especially over women. Women are believed to be a threat to this dominance (Mean, 2001), and are often placed under close scrutiny (Burton, 2015). Shaw (2006) explains that there is frequently an assumption that sport does not interest women, or that women do not have much sporting knowledge. This is one reason why it is common to see women being excluded by men from many sport-related dialogues.

The way sport is governed 'determines how sport is structured … and therefore influences all who are involved with organized sport in some way' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012, p.404). Leadership and positions of senior management are connected with masculine discourses and gendered social control. Women who have managed to achieve career success in sport organisations may have been thought to have also expressed discourses of masculinity; something not approved by all men (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Often the masculine discourses in sport organisations linked to senior management roles undermine feminine discourses that are

linked to more subordinate roles (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Schacht, 1996). These kinds of masculine discourses commonly warn of gender inequity within sport organisations. If women taking part in executive meetings were to engage with men in hostile debates their choice of discourse might be viewed as unsuitable because of their gender (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

Women are frequently viewed as being less important in comparison to men in a sporting environment (Mean, 2001). Boundaries of entry into governance are likely to be stronger if the primary activity of the organisation is the construction and maintenance of masculinity e.g. male-dominated sport. It is widely accepted that 'the absence of women from powerful positions of authority has been observed in staffing configurations of many different sport and leisure organizations' (Sibson, 2010, p.389).Views that sport (especially the leadership within sport organisations) typically is the domain of men maintain inequalities (Massengale & Lough, 2010; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; McKay, 1997; Schacht, 1996). It is typically understood and accepted that the executive leadership positions that men have access to in many sport organisations is more natural than the access women have to the same positions (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). In corporate management, there is an occupational and division based largely on gender. This division is particularly evident at Board level in sport organisations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012). 'Vertical segregation is evident in the [disproportionate] … number of women in senior management positions in national sporting organizations' (McKay, 1997, p.21). Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008) explain that male bonding is likely to play a significant part in the way that men undertake their leadership positions in sport organisations. This is largely because so many men are in these sorts of leadership positions; although many admit that they do not see the male-dominance within the organisation.

2.5.2 Gender inequalities in male-dominated sport organisations

Sport has played a role in reinforcing masculine hegemony. Within sport organisations gender inequality is something that is entrenched. There is substantial evidence that demonstrates

women are both marginalised and under-represented in sport organisations (Cunningham, 2008; Sibson, 2010). In some 'extreme cases, men are analysed [in sport] in terms that marginalize women to the point that [women] … are rendered almost invisible' (Schacht, 1996, p.551). There have even at times been attempts to 'silence and rebuff women administrators' voices' (McKay, 1997, p.140).

Moore and Parkhouse (2010) explain that in many sport organisations a gendered work structure is in place which situates women in lower paying positions with not much chance of attaining significant promotion. Whilst men continue to keep control of the majority of senior management positions in sport organisations; the access that women have to management positions is destabilised and limited (Sibson, 2010). The opposition to women becoming involved in leadership in male-dominated sport organisations also restrains the social capital that women can accumulate (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007).

A range of political, functional and social pressures have queried the 'legitimacy of the institutionalized nature of gender inequality in sport organizations' (Cunningham, 2008, p.136). Over the past thirty years, there has been an increase in the numbers of women holding leadership positions in senior Australian sport organisations. This increase can be largely attributed to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASE) making it a requirement that organisations over a certain stipulated size publish their gender diversity policies (McGrath, 2016). Organisations were not however required to meet mandated gender quotas. Even when there was an increase in numbers 'men still remain[ed] dominant in these roles, indicating a level of gender inequity within sport management' (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003, p.347).

2.5.3 The role of women in sport organisations

There are a range of viewpoints related to what role women can and should play in sport organisations. Many women in male-dominated sport organisations adopt gender neutral behaviours. These women are thought to not want to disrupt 'practices of behaving in what [is] … considered stereotypically feminine [or masculine] ways' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012,

p.408).There are also varying understandings on what women bring to sport in general. Traditionally, women are thought to generate nurturing qualities (McKay, 1997) and have played peripheral and supportive roles in sport. There is a traditional belief that supporting roles within an organisation are best filled by women (Sibson, 2010). Williams et al. (1985) describe how there are some people that consider women to have no other purpose than to be decorations in sport; and even though circumstances are changing there are still elements of strong resistance to women branching out from subservient domains. In sport organisations there is frequently an assumption that women are suited to low level management positions, while men are instinctively suited to higher level management positions (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003).

Today there is growing evidence that women are able to climb sport organisational hierarchy. Bower and Hums (2013) explored the career information of women employed in the National Collegiate Athletic Association and found that women who had succeeded in sport management have certain features and experiences. First they attain a good education. For these credentials to work they must also have managed to gain work experience, work hard, have maintained high levels of confidence, and have been able to develop supportive networks in the workplace. It is also possible for others to learn from women who have succeeded by studying: their career paths, most and least enjoyable aspects of their jobs, greatest challenges, career advice they would provide to women considering a career in sport management, and their short and long-term career aspirations (Bower & Hums, 2013).

2.5.4 Strategies to address gender inequalities

In sport management, it is no longer deemed acceptable to not have women involved as Board members (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). Research continues to show that female leaders improve the financial performance, increase the understanding of stakeholders, enhance social responsibility, and expand the growth of participation in an organisation or club (Adams, 2016). Policies and affirmative strategies were developed and adopted aimed to improve the number of women in sport management. Some of these 'liberal feminist-inspired gender policies

have often resulted in a focus on increasing numbers of women in an organization, thereby ignoring deeper attitudes within organizational culture toward gender' (Shaw, 2006, p.510). By introducing one or two women to governing Boards of sport organisations there was a feeling held by the sport organisations in some cases that the principled responsibility to be more gender equitable had been met (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007).

Expanding the number of women in sport organisations is not a guarantee of bringing about gender equitable transformation to the masculine cultures of these organisations. Nor will it necessarily address the pressures that women encounter when they are faced with combining work and home responsibilities (McKay, 1997). One of the difficulties faced by managers seeking to make sport organisations more gender equitable is that many sport organisations tend not to welcome gender equity policies (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Policies have been designed with the purpose of alleviating and eliminating inequity against women in sport organisations (McKay, 1997). Sport organisations are now in positions where they have no choice but to study the idea of gender equity. Sport organisations increasingly need to be able prove that they do not have gender equity problems to receive funding (Sibson, 2010). Based on research conducted by the AHRC, the ASC directed all NSO's to set a target of 40% female representation on Boards by 2015 (ASC, 2015). Increasing the numbers of women in high-level sport governance is aimed at legitimising the presence of women.

Gender diversity policies and initiatives have increased over recent years; however, there is a need to act on these policies. Expressly the AFL and the NRL are reported to be lagging behind other organisations when it comes to appointing women to Board positions (McGrath, 2016). McGrath (2016) claims that on average less than 20% of Board positions with the AFL and NRL are held by women. This average of 20% falls well below the ASC's recommended 40% representation of women on major sport organisation Boards. Despite the recommendations made by the ASC, men continue to dominate at an executive level of sport organisations. The higher up the management chain, the fewer the number of women there are (Claringbould &

Knoppers, 2012). Merely creating policies that welcome women, and providing training to women to help them cope with gender inequities is not enough to significantly address the gender ratio favouring men. Despite numerous obstacles having 'been removed and policies have been implemented that address [gender inequities] … the skewness has changed relatively little over time' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012, p.404). Moore and Parkhouse (2010) noted this lack of change could be because the policies and programs have so far been more symbolic rather than effective.

2.5.5 What will bring change?

If sport organisations are to become more gender equitable, it is necessary for issues organisations face to be recognised as more than issues that concern women. It is suggested the organisation as a whole support the proposed changes (Sibson, 2010). Efforts of sport governing bodies to make recommendations, set gender equity targets, and provide formal programs without adequate monitoring and accountability measures, is 'akin to trying to move the leg of a table without moving the table itself – it simply cannot happen' (Cunningham, 2008, p.142). The position organisational leaders take to gender equity, and related gender equality initiatives are seen as highly valuable. Sport organisations must start thinking of gender equity as an organisational issue, and spend time considering organisational social processes if there is to be increased gender equality at a management level (Shaw, 2006). What might actually be the most principal factor for generating change is the philosophical support for gender equity in sport organisations (Moore & Parkhouse, 2010). If top management can actively encourage gender equity, this assists to motivate others within the organisation to formulate and implement policies and strategies that can promote positive change (Moore & Parkhouse, 2010).

Mentoring plays an instrumental role for women moving up the career ladder (Bower & Hums, 2013). Massengale and Lough (2010) identify the importance for females to act as role models to other females in sport management, as this can influence career choices. Leaders within sport organisations can support gender diversity by modelling 'attitudes and behaviors

needed to ensure (gender equity) … initiative(s are) a success' (Cunningham, 2008, p.141). The visibility of women leading successfully in sport management might even be able to eventually change the perception of sport being male-dominated (Massengale & Lough, 2010).

It is important for women in sport management to make strong connections with other women in similar roles. Building this sort of network can be one way for women to help each other deal with the challenges presented as part of what is commonly known as the old boy's network. Making connections with other women in sport management may be one way of encouraging more women to establish and develop careers in like organisations (Bowers & Hums, 2013). What may also be beneficial for women aspiring to reach leadership positions within sport organisations is the support from women on Boards, and from men who hold Board positions. If there is to be effective advancements in gender equality, men on Boards and in leadership positions need to display committed endorsement of and backing of women. 'Establishing solidaristic relations among women and men on Boards is vital in progressing gender equality' (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013, p.512).

Gendered practices are often engaged routinely, which create challenges to develop sustainable change to these practices. Even though gender equity might be favoured, the meanings given to the roles men and women have, may foster and sustain gender inequities. This suggests that more attention needs to be given to how 'gender is done and undone in organizations' (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012, p.405). Very few studies go 'beyond the surface to investigate how gender works on sport Boards' (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013, p.499). There is a need for scholars to study how those who hold power in sport organisations actually practice gender equality.

2.5.6 Where to next?

Having access to data relating to women in leadership positions within sport organisations is important. The collection and availability of gender equity data will help shed light on current situations for women (Massengale & Lough, 2010). Despite the gender equity policies and

strategies that have been developed and implemented, there are still high levels of gender inequity in sport management. Claringbould and Knoppers (2012) believe that through studying how levels of gender inequity can plausibly continue in sport management, despite initiatives to bring about change, it may be possible to gain insight into why there has not been a significant change in the gender ratio of women in leadership positions in male-dominated organisations (both sporting and non-sporting).

Minimal academic attention has been given to the social dynamics that play a part in the lack of women found in sport management (Claringbould & Knoppers (2007). If additional evidence relating to what women in sport management have experienced, then it may be possible to ascertain a sound understanding of the prohibitive customs women have to deal with when in positions of leadership within a sport organisation (particularly one that is male-dominated). A further benefit of this type of research is results can be used to inform those who control sport to modify how things are conducted within an organisation, therefore maximising the use of skills women in management have to offer a sport organisation (Sibson, 2010). Academic and practical researchers working effectively with leaders in sport management have the opportunity to develop inventive ways of dealing with gendered practice and discourses that favour men (Shaw, 2006). Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) believe that a research focus on how sport management is gendered can make a contribution to theory development concerning the exclusion of women from influential positions within respective organisations. Such research could identify if the exclusion of women from positions of influence is connected to the gendering of the primary activity of the organisation.

2.6 Conclusion

Sport for many years has been clearly a gendered pursuit (Sibson, 2010), and sport organisations have shown frequent privilege towards men and sporting activities pursued by men (Cunningham, 2008). Gendered discourses in sport organisations are widespread, and often deeply embedded in sport culture and practices. Gendered discourses in sport organisations are

also multifaceted, and as a result can in combination contain many exclusionary elements. In fact, Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008, p. 101) say that in sport 'each discourse has a gender subtext that creates or reinforces a culture that tends to exclude women as well as minorities and anyone who does not engage in these discourses or is not associated with them'. There is a need to address the multiplicity of discourses if strategies and policies are going to work. Stories need to be collected on how gender is practiced and experienced; revealing how gender equality is conducted not how it is anticipated to be conducted. Listening to women who are senior leaders in sport organisations, will help provide a clearer picture of what is really happening. This information can then be used to help determine what strategies and policies are most likely to work (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). The next chapter details the current study's research aim and questions, and the methodological approach taken in order to answer these questions.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to outline the research design and methodology for the current study. The chapter details that the study utilised qualitative research and was based on grounded theory. The overall methodological design of the current study is case study research. The benefits of the case study approach are examined. The justification for the selection of, and the limitations of, the study's case setting is provided. This chapter also declares current study's research aims, questions and benefits. Finally, the specific procedures taken to select participants, conduct interviews, select documents, and analyse the data are outlined.

3.2 Qualitative research

Numerous methodological approaches could have been adopted in answering the research questions. For example, a questionnaire-based survey may well have generated a broad range of responses and enabled quantitative analysis. Questionnaires are suitable to use when relatively straightforward quantifiable information from large sample groups is required (Gratton & Jones, 2004). It would also have been appropriate to conduct group interviews if the research questions sought to gain general responses from a collective rather than the more confidential and revealing responses of individuals. Group interviews are noted for the risk of a number of individuals dominating proceedings and oppressing the views of others (Tharenou, Donohue & Cooper, 2007). To effectively explore the research questions for this current study, the most appropriate approach was a qualitative study whereby data was collected from participants using semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are, according to Flick (2007), a superlative way to ensure that genuine viewpoints of participants are clearly articulated. Semi-structured interviews are often time absorbing, however they secure data that reveal the profound feelings that come with making sense of workplaces that can be energising and hostile.

3.3 Grounded theory

This current study will incorporate elements of grounded theory to explore the impact mentoring and networking have on career progression for women who work in the AFL (a traditionally male-dominated environment). Grounded theory utilises data that has been systematically and methodologically collected using strategically and rigorously designed social science research. Grounded theory enables the construction of new theories to occur, and theoretical frameworks generated by using this approach have been developed around an array of studies in organisational behaviour (Saldana, 2013; Charmaz, 2003). Grounded theory is capable of enabling data collection, analysis and coding to occur simultaneously (Charmaz, 2011).

Gratton and Jones (2004) describe grounded theory as an approach that enables data collection to be ongoing and theories to be continually reviewed and modified. Grounded theory is an appropriate research approach to use when exploring social psychological themes, such as identity and interpersonal relations. Identity and how a person relates to others are two things that are commonly believed to influence career satisfaction and development. This theoretical approach may be valuable when theories fail to explain, or do not fully explain processes such as social identity and personal identity formation and integration (Creswell, 2007).

3.4 Strategy of inquiry: Case study research

It was determined that since this current study was based on grounded theory and demanded the collection of detailed commentary, it would be appropriate to incorporate a case study approach in the design of the study. There are many definitions of what a case study is (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) define a case study as an event that occurs in a limited context. Creswell (2007) describes case study research as not only a methodological approach but also as an outcome of investigation. Gratton and Jones (2004) view case studies as something designed to develop comprehensive understandings of collections of issues. For this current study the issues are complex and revolve around describing and

explaining how participants respond to distinctive social processes in a particular organisational culture. Tharenou et al. (2007) suggest in such contexts, case study research can be particularly useful to help explore, and subsequently build understanding of the actual social processes involved.

3.4.1 Features of a case study approach

Case study research is typically thought to have the advantage of being able to gather detailed, rich and complete information. Case study research is capable of dealing with a wide variety of evidence such as: documents, interviews, and observations (Yin, 2014). Tharenou et al. (2007) identify case study research as a systematic study that contextually explains the processes of a phenomenon. Eisenhardt (1989) describes the approach of case study research as a strategy worth employing when the focus of examination is on developing an understanding of the driving forces present within particular case study settings. Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007) suggest that case studies are well suited to revealing and developing conceptual understanding. Case studies by their very nature can be highly narrative. Basically case study research comprises a beginning (setting the scene), a middle (telling the story), and an end (conclusions and recommendations are made) (Flyvberg, 2011). An advantage of case study research is it allows principal data and meaning to be constructed through narrative storytelling, which could make research findings more widely accessible. Being able to incorporate dense narratives and thick descriptions relating to a particular case study setting is one way of decreasing the likelihood of false findings and conclusions being generated (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

Case study research according to Flyvbjerg (2011) promotes new and improved understandings and generates fresh research questions. Clearly identified case study settings, with distinct boundaries adds justification for adopting this type of qualitative research approach (Creswell, 2007). A further advantage of case study research is that it is adaptable and can be used across a variety of disciplines. Case study research should not be viewed as restricted to any

one particular research methodology, and can even be enhanced by incorporating a variety of qualitative and quantitative research tools (Woodside & Wilson, 2003).

One of the potential negatives associated with case study research incorporating semi-structured interviews (as is the case with this particular study) is that despite levels of intimacy created by the nature and context of interviews, and the contact with participants, it can be challenging to maintain focussed attention on the participant (Creswell, 2007). It may not prove easy for qualitative researchers to take meaning from what the participants are saying without also reflecting on their own understandings (Chase, 2011). It might be challenging for interviewers to eliminate active involvement with the data collection from shaping analysis in biased ways (Yin, 2014).

Researchers conducting qualitative case study research are consequently faced with the task of learning 'the logic of the experience [they] study, not to impose [their] logic on it' (Charmaz, 2004, p. 982). Case study research potentially allows for the subjectivity and bias of the researcher(s) to negatively influence the study being conducted. Flyvbjerg (2011) believes criticism of this particular type of research approach, displays a lack of awareness that case study research can be just as rigorous and un-biased as many quantitative research methods.

3.4.1.1 Single case studies

A large portion of qualitative research sets out to explore cases that are often contained in one social setting. Frequently these single social settings are made up of sub-settings (as is the case with the AFL, the case study setting for this current study). Single case study settings are thought to be purposive, heavily ingrained in context and studied in-depth (Yin, 2014). Even with single case study settings, it is still necessary to make within-case decisions about such things as: locations, time periods, and organisational structures (Miles et al., 2014).

3.4.1.2 Selection of the case study setting

It is advisable when undertaking case study research that the selection of the case study setting be influenced by a clear purpose. The focus and boundaries for any case study setting can

be positively influenced by theory, the conceptual framework and research questions, and is a crucial component for later analysis (Miles et al., 2014). The case study setting should be able to illustrate a defined situation (Gratton & Jones, 2004) and the sampling frame for the case study setting needed to be practicable (Miles et al., 2014). For this current study, consideration was given to the time it would take to conduct the research, the resources required to access a sufficient number of participants, and levels of support from respective governing bodies.

The Australian Football League (AFL) is the chosen case study setting and the sub-settings comprise the AFL Commission and the 18 AFL affiliated clubs competing in the national competition. The selection was based on the AFL being widely accepted by the general public that it is traditionally a male-dominated environment. These AFL clubs are located in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland. The AFL Commission is responsible for the national governance of the sport, and controls funding for national, state and international bodies and leagues (Nadel, 2008).

For the purpose of this current study, emphasis will be placed on women managers in the AFL and their experience related to mentoring and networking within this setting. Of further interest will be AFL clubs that employ women in middle and senior management and/or positions of influence (e.g. Board member). Annual reports and staffing lists for the AFL clubs that are publically available from websites and maintained by individual clubs will be accessed. At the time of gaining this information, the reports indicated that 15 out of 18 AFL clubs had women elected to positions on their Boards. Staffing lists accessed via each of the 18 AFL club's websites also indicated that all 18 clubs involved in the senior AFL competition employed women in various senior and middle management positions.

3.4.1.3 Limitations of the case study setting

To apply grounded theory to the case study setting unavoidably places limitations on the research. The acknowledgement of these limitations may benefit future research in this area. The case study method used in this research provides an opportunity to understand a particular context

in-depth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). There is a level of generalisation of findings through studying one case study setting. It is important to note the case study setting of the AFL is largely unique; therefore translating findings to other organisations where men and women work together in various other proportions is limited. Grounded theory is time consuming thus ongoing data collection and analysis to contain the scope of the study to a manageable size is challenging (Gratton & Jones, 2004; Creswell, 2007). It took extended periods of time to wait for responses, organise times to conduct face-to-face interviews with these women in senior positions throughout Australia, transcribe interviews verbatim and code interviews. One major limitation of adopting a single case approach was ensuring access to the participants. Participants maintained exceptionally busy schedules, and had limited time available to participate in semi-structured interviews. Participants were also situated in widespread national geographical locations. An informed and preferential decision was made to conduct interviews face-to-face, which inadvertently contributed to limitations of the case study setting. This decision was revised part way through conducting the interviews to allow for a phone interview with an interstate participant to take place. Gaining access to participants that broadly represented the AFL and the 18 clubs that are in the AFL at the elite level was challenging. The AFL Commission and eight AFL clubs are represented in the data collection. With less than 50% of AFL clubs represented in the study, generalisations could only be strengthened by future research across all 18 AFL clubs.

3.5 Research aim

- The aim of this current study is to examine the effects mentoring and networking have on career development of women managers in a male-dominated sport organisation.

3.6 Research questions

To address the aim of the study, the following three research questions are posed:

- How do women in management positions in the AFL respond to the gendered culture of the organisation?

- How does mentoring assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

- How does networking assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

3.7 Research benefits

It is anticipated the results of this current study will expand knowledge and provide practical benefits associated with mentoring and networking for women in senior positions in male-dominated organisations, particularly within sport. Gaining insights from women can be cross-referenced with existing literature to expand or identify new findings.

Practically, the current study could assist in improving management intervention strategies of mentoring and networking, which can be then used to help prevent women employed in male-dominated organisations from being disadvantaged. Second, the results could provide greater scope for women in developing successful careers and accessing higher levels of organisational governance. Finally, by promoting awareness and understanding of the benefits associated with mentoring and networking for women in male-dominated organisations, it will be possible to enhance the design and maximise the potential of existing mentoring and networking programs.

3.8 Data collection

The research conducted was qualitative in nature, primarily involving semi-structured interviews; with documents providing supplementary material. Preliminary document analysis relating to the AFL was conducted prior to interviewing. The purpose was to develop an understanding of the industry that interview participants are situated in. Once the preliminary document analysis had been completed semi-structured interviews were conducted with women occupying senior and middle management positions on the AFL Commission, or as Board members of AFL clubs. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Additional document analysis focussed on equal employment opportunity and other human

relation policies, and involved the identification and summation of information related to mentoring and networking.

3.9 Documentary evidence and collection process

Documents either produced or used by the AFL, and concerned with equal employment opportunities, codes of conduct, and mentoring were critically examined. These included:

- AFL Respect & Responsibility (2005) (see Appendix 3)
- AFL Equal Employment Opportunity (2009) (see Appendix 4)
- AFL Annual Report 2012
- Australian Mentor Centre Partnership Resource Book (2011-2012)

3.10 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews conducted as part of qualitative research are thought to explore different sorts of personable occurrences, and afford the wider population opportunities to be heard (Kvale, 2006). Semi-structured interviews were elected to be undertaken as part of this particular qualitative study. This approach provided not only clear guidance on what questions would be asked, and in what sequence, but also allowed participants the opportunity to provide additional information. Adopting a probing technique in the interviews enabled additional beneficial information to be gathered. A survey would not have enabled such exploration of data. Structured interviews (in the form of surveys and questionnaires) asking participants the same questions in the same order, are relatively easy to summarise but provide minimal opportunity for participants to contribute additional information (Olson, 2011). A well utilised interview process was incorporated that ensured the interviews were generally relaxed and conversational in nature and were conducted at the participant's office (familiar surrounding) or café/restaurant (relaxed atmosphere). Interviews began with a general introductory statement about how the AFL could be viewed as a traditionally male-dominated organisation. Participants were asked to share something about their personal experiences working within the AFL. This open-ended

introductory approach to the interview was employed with the hope that a conversation between the interviewer and participant would be started (Olson, 2011).

Semi-structured questions were strategically designed, based on key findings from the literature reviewed, to gather relevant information but also to reassure participants their personal experiential stories working in the AFL were decidedly valued (see Appendix 2). Participants were advised in the letter of invitation that interviews would last approximately one hour. Assurances were given to prospective participants in this same communication that no individual would be directly identified in the reporting of research results. Participants were able to instruct the interviewer if they needed to contain interviews to a specific time.

3.10.1 Sample selection and recruitment

The research setting, the research questions, and the single case method set clearly defined boundaries for the conduct of the research. Participants consequently had to be employed in management positions, or situated in positions of influence within the broad AFL structure. The case study boundary (Miles et al., 2014) meant only women involved in AFL would be interviewed. Identification of female middle and senior managers employed at AFL clubs, the AFL Commission or elected as Board members of AFL clubs were obtained from operating lists available from the AFL's official website and the official websites of each of the 18 AFL clubs. A list of 170 prospective participants who at the time of collecting research held positions with AFL clubs, the AFL Commission or were Board members of AFL clubs in the national competition was formulated. Communication with potential participants in research being conducted as part of this current study included a copy an explanatory statement (see Appendix 1) and a letter of invitation.

An invitation to all 170 prospective participants was sent via email using the addresses recognised on the operating lists. Potential participants could choose whether or not to make contact to express interest in participating in an interview. They were encouraged and given the opportunity to alleviate any concerns related to participating in the research through questions

prior to interviews taking place. Once letters of invitation were distributed, it was a matter of waiting for responses. This part of the preliminary research process was lengthy and decidedly influenced by the varied occupational positions and schedules of prospective participants. Some of the women in positions of influence also managed careers in fields' alternative to Australian Rules football. There were 26 prospective participants who initially expressed an interest in participating in an interview, based on availability and follow up a total of 19 women were interviewed.

3.10.2 Interview process

Arranging interview dates and times proved challenging for a number of different reasons. The AFL is a major national sporting competition and potential participants are situated in a variety of locations within Victoria and interstate. In light of the varied locations and the aim to conduct semi-structured interviews with all participants it is understood that due to location and the restricted time these women have to participate in the research, telephone interviews may also be required. As part of ethical protocol participants were given numerous formal and informal opportunities to ask questions about the research they were participating in. Participants were required to sign consent forms prior to the commencement of the interviews. The location of where interviews would be conducted was generally left to participants to nominate. It was anticipated that participants might nominate office space at their workplace or a café near their workplace.

3.11 Data analysis

In this type of study it is important to ensure analysis should not be constrained to merely describing the data. The aim of analysis is to include interpretation, explanation, understanding, and perhaps even prediction. Analysis goes beyond initial descriptions of data by transforming data into something new (Dey, 1993). Triangulation formed an integral part of data analysis in this current study. Triangulation can comprise using multiple and varied sources of data, methods

and theories to confirm facts (Creswell, 2007). Triangulation involves (but is not limited to) such things as: direct observations made by the researcher(s), probing participants in interviews to develop clearer understandings, the analysis of written documents and related policies, and the studying of fieldwork notes (Woodside & Wilson, 2003). The triangulation that forms part of this research will involve (but will not be excluded to) such things as: manual and computerised coding of interview transcripts, and analysis of AFL reports and policies that relate to elements of mentoring and employment equity. Triangulation will have effectively occurred when outcomes from the various forms of coding and document analysis are compared and confirm prominent findings (Gratton & Jones, 2004).

Data was condensed utilising a series of qualitative coding cycles (see Saldana, 2013 and Flick, 2007 for detailed discussion relating to coding cycles), incorporating analytical and reflective notes. Charmaz (2004) suggests that researchers observe and engage with information and data by moving through comparative levels of analysis. Much of the information gathered through the process of conducting research is descriptive and often inferential. Codes are labels that give figurative meaning to this information (Miles et al., 2014). Saldana (2013) describes codes as words or short phrases that help portray and promote understanding of written and visual information.

The coding process that forms part of this current study involved individual and comparative analysis of interview transcripts. This analysis involved a simultaneous combination of manual and CAQDSA methodological data comparison and code development. Data was analysed and then went through a process of comparison with initial codes, with any prominent codes being noted as emerging categories (Saldana, 2013). Bringer, Johnston and Brackenridge (2004) note the complexities of data analysis in qualitative research and that employing CAQDSA does not result in researchers being able to analyse more data in less time.

Data and codes went through further comparison against any identified categories, and any key categories were considered to be concepts. Concepts were compared to other concepts,

which involved comparisons with other existing theories. Inductive and deductive processes were

employed to help identify themes in the collected data. When employing an inductive approach to

the research much of the theoretical understanding and themes are built on the analytical

discoveries being made. A deductive approach allows the researcher to make use of existing

theories when developing research questions, interview questions and propositions (Charmaz,

1996). A deductive approach enables collected data to be reduced to what the researcher

considers important (Seidman, 2013). Both approaches are capable of demonstrating a strong

unison between the research process and theoretical development. The content and organisation

of the semi-structured interview questions had a guiding influence over the fundamental interests

and perspectives of the conducted research. This impact encouraged the forming of propositions

that helped develop and strengthen theoretical understanding. Identified propositions ought to

guide the research, not force preconceived ideas and pre-existing theories upon the research data.

Research conducted as part of this current study, whilst being influenced by a number of guiding

themes and propositions, will aim to support the emergence of key themes. Identified themes

formed through inductive or deductive processes can be used to conceive and demonstrate

conclusions. An additional application of the research data and findings has the potential to

further develop existing theories and possibly generate new theory (Miles et al., 2014).

According to Saldana (2013) coding is more than just labelling. Coding has been

recognised as the transitional link between data collection and data analysis. The methods

involved with coding can be thought of as information filters. Importantly coding should not be

thought of as a substitute for sound data analysis. Analytical ideas can be reflected in coding, but

a clear distinction between coding and the development of conceptual thoughts needs to be made

(Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Coding of data collected as part of the research process can be

performed via both manual and computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

processes (Saldana, 2013).

3.11.1 Data analysis for this research study

The research conducted as part of this research employed a mixture of manual and CAQDAS processes. The CAQDAS process that will be accessed is NVivo. Saldana (2013) identifies NVivo as being particularly useful for studies that aim to place importance on what participants in interviews have to say. Reflective fieldwork notes were taken during each interview. Reflective fieldwork notes and research questions were used to assist with the preliminary coding of interview transcripts. Ten audio recorded interviews were transcribed by the researcher. The transcribing of the remaining nine audio recorded interviews was elected to be completed professionally. Actively engaging in the process of transcription enabled a strong connection between the researcher and the research to be developed (Saldana, 2013). This connection was beneficial when it came time to begin preliminary (first stage) coding of data contained in the interviews.

To ensure validation and accuracy of coding, three interview transcripts were selected for preliminary coding and coded by the researcher and a research supervisor. These selected interviews were read and re-read with emergent themes, possible codes and sub-codes identified by the researcher and research supervisor (Thomas, 2006; Creswell & Miller, 2010). Emergent themes, codes and sub-codes were then compared. The comparison of preliminary coding results encouraged unbiased codes and sub-codes being formed and subsequently adopted for the coding of the remaining interviews (Basit, 2003). The coding that used NVivo software involved importing copies of the transcribed interviews into the software program. The interview transcripts were then read with short phrases and words from the participant that related to the research questions and preliminary codes and themes being highlighted. These highlighted sections of textual data were then copied and moved to the appropriate NVivo node (based on preliminary coding). A node is a key NVivo term that refers to the process of gathering related data in one place. This related data can then be studied at a later date to establish whether there are any emerging patterns and/or ideas (NVivo10, 2012). One of the advantages of this process

according to Miles et al. (2014) is that information gained from coding transcribed interviews is saved in the language that is actually used by the participant (not in a language that has been developed through interpreting the transcriptions). Many of the initial codes involved assigning descriptions to the highlighted text. Selected text would be saved under a word or short phrase that summarised what the participant was saying, and what the general topic of the text was (Miles et al., 2014).

Once the transcribed interviews have gone through this initial stage of open coding (see Flick, 2006 for discussion related to open coding), then the references saved under NVivo nodes were studied in more detail. At times references that were saved related to multiple preliminary codes, and were saved under various related nodes. Revisiting the data gathered under each node made it possible to determine if references belonged more strongly to one preliminary code (Thomas, 2006). This process was supported by referring to the research questions. Each NVivo node had associated sub-nodes. When data saved under the respective nodes was revisited, a decision by the researcher and two supervisors as to what sub-node the references best belonged to was also made. Once again this procedure was supported by referring to the research questions. The allocation of references to sub-nodes has been referred to as the process of axial coding. According to Flick (2006) axial coding is the refinement and differentiation of themes and codes that have resulted from open (preliminary) coding. Preliminary coding inevitably involves the creation of numerous codes, many of which may not warrant further exploration. Also preliminary coding might not create all the necessary codes needed to take the research further. Axial coding provides the researcher with an opportunity to refine existing codes and add in any necessary additional codes. Any relationships between NVivo nodes and related sub-nodes could be refined, clarified or acknowledged through the process of axial coding (Flick, 2006). Once the stage of axial coding has been completed the research then progresses to a more analytical and selective phase (Flick, 2006). Through this stage the researcher spends time looking for clear patterns and explanations in and amongst the

refined codes. Gratton and Jones (2004) suggest at this stage of the research process, a range of issues should be considered. It is at this time the researcher should reflect on whether any of the codes can be refined further and grouped under one more encompassing code (Thomas, 2006).

Two further issues worth considering is whether any of the codes can be ordered sequentially, and to identify any possible causational links between codes and to give these careful consideration (Gratton & Jones, 2004). After these issues have been explored Gratton and Jones (2004) propose the coded data be reviewed further, this time selectively looking for references that can be grouped and help explain concepts informed by the research questions and related literature review. It is recommended this process continue until a point of saturation is reached. Gratton and Jones (2004) refer to saturation as being the point in research where conducting further data collection or analysis would not result in ascertaining anything distinct from what has already been noted.

3.12 Reporting of results

The research questions referred to in the Research Aims section of this chapter has guided analysis and reporting of results. Results will be displayed in a straightforward and informative way, making it best possible for the reader to determine if the research questions have been answered. According to Miles et al. (2014) data collected through the process of research has been truly tested if it can generate meaning. Systematic analysis and display of collected data will allow results to become information that contributes to answering the research questions (Evans & Gruba, 2002).

Reporting of results involved presenting a summative narrative of responses to questions asked in the semi-structured interviews. Narratives can be viewed as one of the best ways to embody and comprehend the experiences of others (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The summative narratives will go through a process of discourse analysis (Flick, 2006). The selected responses were fundamentally influenced by the research questions, and propositions that stem from preliminary coding.

3.13 Reporting issues

The semi-structured interviews provided rich data which proved challenging to condense into a basic form for focussed data analysis. Data analysis consisted of the selection, condensing and transformation of data. Data analysis also involved displaying data in an organised way. Once the data has been condensed and displayed it is possible to verify propositions and draw conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). There is a view that transitioning interview transcripts into research data ready for analysis can be difficult. Various potential forms of research text need to be negotiated before determining the form best suited to answering the research questions. A variety of interim texts may evolve whilst working out the best form of text to ultimately use (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the qualitative method utilised to address the study's three research questions. The chapter commenced with a discussion of the benefits of applying qualitative research methodologies and grounded theory to the current studies research aim. This was followed by the justifications for the employment of a case study design. The chapter then detailed what was involved with selecting the case study setting for this current study (the AFL), and identified some of the potential limitations of the chosen case stud.

The case study discussion was followed by the presentation of the research problem. This discussion centred on the challenges women may have with attaining career aspirations in male-dominated organisations (particularly male-dominated sport organisations), and the potential benefits of mentoring and networking for career progression for women employed in male-dominated organisations. This culminated in a declaration of the research aims and questions, and likely beneficial outcomes of the research.

This chapter then described the data collection processes. This included details of collecting documentary evidence, and the participant recruitment procedures and conducting of

semi-structured interviews. This was followed by an explanation and justification of the data analysis processes. The chapter concluded by reviewing strengths and limitations of the results reporting processes. Chapter four will present the study findings encompassing the perspectives of participants' on mentoring, networking and career progression in the AFL.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to present participants' perspectives on the effects mentoring and networking had on career development of women managers in the AFL. Knowledge was primarily gained from 19 semi-structured interviews conducted for this current study. The semi-structured interviews allowed for a search of patterns in participants responses to questions, and their extra dialogue (Walsh et al., 2015). These patterns can then be used to help answer the research questions guiding this current study. Participants have been allocated first name pseudonyms in an attempt to support confidentiality. Throughout the chapter participants are referred to in general terms as participants or by their allocated pseudonym. Names of AFL clubs and other individuals referred to in direct quotes have been omitted in an attempt to maintain the confidentiality of participants. In some circumstances the status and position participants hold within the AFL have also been omitted because of the risk to their confidentiality. The conversational nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to uncover the views of the participants (Ahmed & Haag, 2016). Direct quotes have been included when fitting because they support the textual conversation, and the words from participants provide the clearest understanding of their views. Where direct quotes have been used they have been offered verbatim, with potentially identifying information omitted.

Using a grounded theory approach and CAQDSA software it was possible to identify nodes and sub-nodes that evolved from the responses related to each research question that guided this study. The nodes identified were: Career, Environment, Gender, Mentoring, and Networking. The nodes of Career and Gender had an overriding influence over the development of all nodes and sub-nodes, and subsequent data analysis. The nodes and themes, while not directly answering the three research questions, inductively emerged from the data and were pervasive. They gave important context to the other nodes and themes that

focussed on the three research questions. Due to the individual expressive nature of respondents not all sub-nodes are directly referred to in the responses to the research questions. Due to the broad and exploratory nature of the interview engagement, and all the text being coded for analysis in keeping with grounded theory practice, the codes that were not deemed to be relevant to answering the current study's three research questions have been omitted from the presentation of results. The structure of the chapter centres on the research questions and the results most pertinent to those questions. The following diagram and table illustrate the research questions and the CAQDAS identified nodes and sub-nodes that directly relate to each research question.

Research Question:
How do women in management positions in the AFL respond
to the gendered culture of the organisation?

Node:
Environment

Sub-nodes:
Characteristics
Development
Exclusiveness
Inclusiveness
Negatives

Research Question:
How does mentoring assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

Node:
Mentoring

Sub-nodes:
Advice
Availability
External
Formal
Gender
Informal
Internal
Outcome
Role
Selection
Strategy

Research Question:
How does networking assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

Node:
Networking

Sub-nodes:
Benefits
Challenges
Connection
Need
Outcome

A table reviewing all the nodes and sub-nodes identified from analysing raw data (interview transcripts) entered into a CAQDSA software program has been included (see Table 4-1). Sub-nodes were identified if they were referenced by two or more participants. There were 19 participants involved in the interviews and it can be observed from viewing the sources column of Table 4.1 that on some occasions not all participants made reference to certain nodes and sub-nodes. Career advice was referenced more than any of the other sub-node. Other sub-nodes that were highly referenced were the characteristics of a career in the AFL, characteristics of the AFL environment, gender mentality, mentoring outcomes, and networking benefits and strategies.

Table 4-1. Nodes and sub-nodes

Node	Sub-nodes	Sources	References
Career	Advice	19	156
	Characteristics	18	108
	Improvements	10	17
	Negatives	11	55
	Progression	15	48
Environment	Characteristics	19	127
	Development	13	35
	Exclusiveness	12	29
	Inclusiveness	13	29
	Negatives	16	49
Gender	Advice	10	27
	Equity	13	50
	Mentality	18	92
	Organisation's Role	9	12
Mentoring	Advice	14	30
	Availability	14	37
	External	7	12
	Formal	11	16
	Gender	5	5

	Informal	14	25
	Internal	6	9
	Outcome	19	71
	Role	13	40
	Selection	9	17
	Strategy	12	32
Networking	Benefits	15	45
	Challenges	13	29
	Connection	9	14
	Need	2	2
	Outcome	14	32
	Strategy	15	44

4.2 How do women respond to the gendered culture of the AFL?

A continuous cycle of exploration, understanding and development was undertaken (Ahmed & Haag, 2016) in an attempt to gauge how the participants responded to the gendered culture of the AFL. The environment was constantly referred to; in particular the characteristics, development, exclusiveness, inclusiveness, and negatives associated with the AFL. These sub-nodes provided knowledge on what the participants thought and what they had experienced whilst working in the AFL environment.

4.2.1 The AFL environment

A male dominated culture existed as the AFL environment. All participants described this culture. For example, Leanne noted that "footy is a boys club … that's a reality". Bonnie felt that the AFL is very male-dominated, and added:

> [D]espite it being very male-dominated there is a culture in football clubs that I've seen in my short time … where it is fairly brutal … it's pretty cut throat … and that's the football department … and I think that there's areas of football clubs that operate like that as well.

Denise provided the following description of the AFL: "[the AFL is] fundamentally a male sport … and so … the paradigm … the culture … the structure … the systems … everything associated with it has been very male oriented". Denise felt that the AFL environment "would be extremely difficult at times because … you are in a male-dominated

area with … paradigms of behaviour that are quite different from other organisations in the sense that they are so significantly male-dominated". In addition to stating the "male-dominated" environment, participants used descriptive terms such as: "boys club", "blokey" and "male-orientated". Hannah is an example of a participant who feels there is also "a degree of conservatism … within the older males in the AFL … [Men] who have not fully accepted that women have an equal voice in … serious [AFL] business". Bronwyn declared that the AFL "can be a very blokey environment at times. Because it is blokey, there's a lot of swearing, [and] sometimes there's a little bit of [sexual] innuendo … [T]he males are making decisions and probably not involving the females as much … they listen to your voice but they're not hearing anything".

Not all participants agreed on how to respond to the male-dominance that shrouded the AFL. Bronte believed that she has "become a little thicker skinned … or just better at dealing with male banter". Molly suggested "sometimes you just put up with [the male-dominance] … you smile and you're utterly feminine because you know that to fight is not going to be … productive". Molly did however make it clear that under no circumstances should a woman put up with "behaviour that's inappropriate". Molly has also learnt the AFL is an environment that requires someone to have "conviction". If you are going to tackle an issue such as male-dominance in a workplace such as the AFL "you've got to be able to back yourself" and "marshal really good evidence … you can't just have an opinion". In contrast to Molly's view Mary advised that if you were a woman working in an AFL environment you would need to be "very adaptable [and tolerant]… because [the AFL] is not a [typical] corporate environment".

Another participant suggested working in a male-dominated environment such as the AFL was centred on adaptation. In contrast to the notion of having to adapt to the male-dominated environment is the following view expressed by Bronte:

[I]nitially you think that you'll need to adapt to everyone else … to fit into the male-dominated world … but in actual fact you're in that position because of everything that you can bring to it as you are … and as a female … so that helps … put perspective on me being a female in a male-dominated world … to not change … be you … really be true to yourself because there are qualities that you have [that] will assist the guys and the environment that you are in … the club wouldn't be the club that it is … and as great as it is without the females in it … if it was just all males.

Michelle is an example of a participant who holds a somewhat contrasting view to Bronte. Michelle described how she attended a women's lunch and that one of the discussion topics at the lunch was survival in a male-dominated workplace. At the lunch it was suggested "you don't have to automatically assume personality traits of a male to get ahead". Michelle commented: "It's not that I disagree with that statement, but how else do you do it? [I]f I want to survive in a guy's world, how the hell else am I supposed to do that?" In this participant's opinion, the preceding question was left unanswered at this particular lunch.

Brodie is an example of a participant who made a distinction between the AFL and other male-dominated industries, and consciously avoids making aspects of her work a major part of her life. Brodie explained:

I'd say maybe [there is] just not as much compassion in a male-dominated environment perhaps … and not just a male-dominated environment … but a football environment … you know … they're ex-footballers … they're not ex-businessmen … a football club is so … different to a corporate environment … I remember when I first started here … everyone said you'll make friends for life … the footy team will become your life and all that type of stuff … and I've been quite conscious to stay away from that … and I don't know whether that's the right thing to do or not.

Georgie shared how she has been working in AFL for nine years, and that for most of that time she feels it has been male-dominated. In dealing with the male-domination Georgie commented: "I've probably become stronger … [and] learned to not let emotion get involved in [my] job". When asked what the consequences would be for a woman struggling to fit in with the male-domination of the AFL Molly responded:

Terrible … I think the industry … is in a time of great change about the acceptance of women in senior positions … and for a woman in management of

football who's struggling … who doesn't know who she needs to be at work to be accepted … doesn't have any role models ahead of her … and is getting confusing messages about what she's got to do to succeed … it is a terrible place I think for a woman to be … because … there's no great history … or great expertise in many of the clubs in the AFL … and there's a naivety about this … it's one of the things that led to the creation of the women's mentoring program … to try to say to those women we'll find you a more senior woman … that you can have these discussions with … [T]he women that I have met … are desperate to do well in this industry … they don't want to leave … the last thing they want to do is give up their hopes of working in this industry … they love the game and they love what it stands for. These are people the industry should not be treating poorly.

Leanne felt that a woman struggling to fit in with the male-dominated environment of an AFL club would have their confidence smashed and that they would be highly likely to feel isolated. Certain Departments within an AFL club are potentially easier to fit in with than others. Leanne explained:

I find that sometimes it is difficult to build relationships with … the footy [D]epartment … and … you don't feel as comfortable or as … integrated as what you do when you're with the staff from … admin … there is a tendency or a feeling you get where there is a little bit of us versus them mentality.

Often women in the AFL would have to report to male managers if they experienced any issues at work. Georgie shared how this was not easy for her because of the male-dominance in the AFL, and how she benefited from mentoring advice:

I'm so passionate about my role I'd let emotion get involved … I previously would go and bottle it all up for a while and then go and speak to a manager … which has pretty much always been a male … my voice would go all funny … very hard to hold back the tears … [My mentor] had experienced that and had some good tips … I think it [has] helped.

Tess shared the impact that working for an AFL club can have on someone's personal and social life:

The biggest compromise, which isn't in the work, is your social network has to change ... And that I think is not necessarily isolated to football, but sport, because you work weekends, you work crazy hours, you're in a different industry to the nine to five, certainly in corporate … socially you're very compromised and I laugh, I don't see my friends from March to September and they've stopped bothering to call, email, and whatever, they always laugh that they'll see me in the Spring.

In contrast to the views held by the majority of participants Chloe explained that she felt that she personally gets along better with males than females:

> I actually would think that working with females is harder to be honest … I think females are very judgemental of their own work and probably manage … more stricter … [I]n my own personal experience males tend to … if you bugger up oh yeah well whatever you've buggered up do it again better … whereas females dwell on things a lot … so tend to put a bit more pressure on you because [they] … like to be perfectionists … that's a massive generalisation but … [in] my experience I've actually found it a lot easier working with males in a male-dominated industry.

4.2.2 Exclusion and inclusion

One main form of exclusion that participants highlighted was not being recognised for the role they fill within the AFL or the AFL club that they might be associated with. Leanne explains what it was like for her to walk into a room and feel excluded: "you walk in to a room and … and you're just not feeling comfortable … and you're not feeling that sense of belonging … and you're not feeling that worth … it does knock your confidence about". Hannah gave a detailed description of what it was like for her to not be identified when entering the players change rooms after a match:

> I would go down to the rooms after a match and there's always a minder on the door, as there should be, for security. And I'd have to introduce myself and show him my Board member's identity … every week. Because there'd be different personnel and it took a while for them to actually recognise that I was one of the blokes, if you know what I mean, on the Board.

In addition to not being recognised when entering the players change rooms Hannah also spoke about what it was like to not be recognised when attending club and member functions as a Board member. Hannah shared the following:

> [The men] would just walk in in their suits and be recognised as a Board member ... [T]hat was probably in the early days when I didn't have a club suit. So I would be just wearing a [name of club omitted] scarf or something, and ... not in the club suit ... [B]ut even when I got a club suit, because you don't wear a club tie with the suit, it doesn't necessarily look like a club suit ... Certainly if I was representing the Board at any of the ... member functions ... I would always have to introduce myself and explain that, "yes, I'm one of your elected Board members on the [name

of club omitted] Board". Because they would sort of be a bit confused and think I was a staff member or some hanger on.

The following comments made by Miranda provide insight into what it was like to experience exclusion from Board functions by male Board members:

> [I was] ... being forced on [the other Board members], and then there were probably some people that had been on the Board ... for quite some time, 10 years plus. And probably no matter who they're, you know, a traditional business man that probably was thinking that this is all about the game and we had to have males involved. And so didn't then, still don't, understand why you'd ever have a female on a Board.

Cassie mentioned a unique language that excluded anyone that did not have a working knowledge of the AFL language. It was thus challenging for men and women to become familiar with this language. Cassie commented:

> I would say the one thing that I feel as a woman ... is that I sometimes feel there's a language being spoken that I don't speak yet … [A] football language and the blokes all speak it … I know that I'm not the only member of the Board who sometimes feels that we're not in the language. Because there [are] ... two guys on the Board … who I think are still kind of getting their feet around and heads around what that actually means.

Hannah described what it was like to be the only woman in a male-dominated environment such as the AFL, and she could also describe the importance of having more than one woman around:

> There is no doubt that being one out in the circumstances makes it very difficult. It also means that it is still seen as … an oddity, because you are always the odd one out, physically, in terms of how you sound, the sorts of views you have often, you're always one out. Whereas once you get a couple you're no longer an anomaly, there's much broader acceptance that this is just a normal part of the team".

Unfortunately numerous participants shared experiences and opinions that indicated there were many negative aspects to the all-encompassing AFL environment. The majority of these negatives centred on various aspects of male-dominance that the participants identified to be in the AFL. The male-dominance included such things as participants not having an appropriate uniform to wear, and feeling unaccepted and undervalued by colleagues and the

AFL industry in general. The male-dominance also extended to the more extreme suggestions of misogyny.

Mary described how the AFL club that she works for had failed to supply her with an appropriate uniform. Mary shared the following: "[W]e have to wear a uniform to the game and they don't even [make] female uniforms, like I have to wear a men's jacket". Miranda is an example of a participant who struggled to feel accepted or valued. Miranda commented: "I think that getting that acceptance has been difficult, so lots of times … you feel that you're more of an interruption than a positive contribution ... [S]ometimes you just feel that you're making up the numbers and most things have been decided before you get there anyway".

Mary reported that she felt it could be "quite intimidating being surrounded by men", and that there really was "no process" to make her job easier. This same participant mentioned that the "blokey culture" was difficult for some women to deal with, and that this impacted negatively on the industry. Mary stated "[y]eah, it's not a great industry". Another participant described how it was "very daunting … to walk into a male-dominated industry … where your opinion [and] … voice is not valued". Hannah shared what it was like for her to attend meetings and feel like what she had to say was not valued or even heard:

> I don't know whether it's the tamper of the female voice or whether it is just because it's not loud enough ... but my voice literally wasn't heard in ... meetings ... I would make a comment or a suggestion that would be just completely ignored by the group, regardless of who was chairing the meeting, only to find that it might be 15 minutes, an hour or next day, one of my male colleagues would make exactly the same comment and it would be embraced with great enthusiasm ... I have to tell you … it's one of the most frustrating things that I have ever had to deal with.

Tess is an example of a participant who had experienced "locker room talk". Tess gave the following insight into what this was like for her:

> [A] 'boys club' isn't the right word, but the way they went about things was really arrogant and 'old school', where they just yell at you or swear at you. It wasn't a constructive manner in … which problems were solved. It was just like locker room

talk a little bit, you know what I mean? Just yelling at someone … I found that really confronting at first ... I think that [it] is an AFL … mentality.

Molly shared her view on women experiencing what Tess described as "locker room talk":

[T]here is a lesson … I see a lot of this in women … not just in the football industry but in general industries … there are some women who think that when they are then in a social environment with their work colleagues that they suddenly have to lower their tone and be like one of the boys … so a lot of women find themselves in a lot of difficult situations in football where at the end of the day they might go to an event … they might go to the footy … and if they think that part of being one of the boys is to let the language go completely or behave in a particular way … or get completely smashed … if that's what they think it means to fit in and they start to do that … I think that again they are in a very dangerous place … I don't think the industry supports those women enough … and gives them the right to pull back and not have to deteriorate to those kinds of norms.

An extension of the "locker room talk" is detailed in the following comment made by Mary, and is an indication that the negative behaviour and sexist language could influence how long some women might decide to stay in a male-dominated industry like the AFL:

[The football media] have to speak to us because they need to get access [to players, coaches and club officials] ... but I don't think that means that they necessarily respect the role that we [fill]... And a good example, we had the AFL media awards at the end of September, and they had this joke … skit that they'd filmed ... [T]hey made this comment about another female media manager ... about her looks and about how good looking she was and how they wanted her to come into the radio box to bring the players and not the male [media manager] ... [T]hat was just so degrading ... I just know that ... every time on match day you walk into the radio boxes and it's full of six or seven male commentators or, you know, the [name removed], and the [name removed] of the world. [Y]ou walk in and it's intimidating enough ... and you know that when you walk out of there, they're making comments and to hear them actually say it in a room full of people ... [it] is concerning, yeah. And I guess with the media because they're all from different organisations, there's no, sort of ... watchdog ... making sure it's all okay. So that made me think it's one of those industries that I know I couldn't stay in for very long because of those reasons.

Miranda is a Board member at an AFL club who identified with being a minority within the AFL club structure: "... you're very much a minority and so ... sometimes you feel … that they're not really taking [you] … seriously or they're not really listening". It was suggested by Miranda that women in the minority might often have to show initiative. Miranda provided an example of how she felt isolated as a female minority. "I was never introduced to the players after a game ... all the Directors just go down to the change rooms ...

And that was a real difficult one for me". This participant had to take it upon herself to go round to the players (and some of the other club officials) and introduce herself. Molly is another participant who described a time when she used initiative by approaching a Chairman of an executive meeting she attended. Molly shared the following details:

> [I]n a room of around about 15-20 men and I was the only woman. In that first meeting chaired by a wonderful man who oversaw my appointment [name removed] … There were moments where even him in chairing … and men around the table … used highly masculine language. The meeting would go "Good morning gentlemen … are there any comments from any of the gentlemen around the table?" … and as my first meeting I wasn't going to make a big deal of well I am not a gentleman … how about using different language … but after the meeting I did talk to the Chairman and say it is difficult as the minority to sit there and be … excluded from the language by not being addressed as someone who was in the room … and he apologised profusely and he said it wasn't deliberate … "I just haven't done it before" and he said to me "how do you want me to address the room when I open? … Do you want me to say good morning gentleman and [name removed]? Do want gentlemen and lady?" … so I said "why don't you open with good morning colleagues" … You don't have to bring gender into it. He hadn't thought about that because he hadn't had to deal with it.

Despite the rigorous selection process that women were involved in, there was still a feeling that male colleagues believed their appointments to be tokenistic. Molly explained what it was like to have to respond to being in what could be considered a ground breaking position with the AFL:

> I was the first woman in that room ever … and after an exhaustive process of interviews, reference checking … a very heavy interview process. This wasn't just being plucked out of the air unlike the men who had been [previously] chosen … It was an exceptional interview process. They used head hunters for the first time for the appointment that I then received … and have continued to use head hunters in that regard. I was the first … Ten women were approached. The AFL briefing to the head hunters had given them a series of ten criteria … which the head hunter had to then go and find a number of women as a long list who were all approached and told why we were being approached and what the skills were that were being sort … and then … the list got smaller and smaller as we went through a series of rigorous interviews … with multiple sets of men. It was never just one on one. … but there were still men who said this was tokenistic … that this was unacceptable … the legal praecipes … [for] the role that I picked up was one of intense scrutiny of skills and fit beyond anything that they had ever done for any man … so I reject absolutely any notions of tokenism on that basis.

Having more than one woman on an executive team provides support for each woman. Georgie is involved in Executive meetings at the AFL club she is situated at. For Georgie having more than one woman involved in those meetings helped her feel noticed and this provided her with confidence. Georgie shared the following: "[F]or an [Executive] meeting it's 2 or 3 women … rather than it just being 1 … that is … a confidence booster … I think that for the males here at the club well … they take notice". Denise also declared: "I am not the only woman ... there are two of us and that's a lot easier than being one".

A result of being in the minority is not always being able to understand what is going on around you. Cassie is a Director of an AFL club who feels that there is "a language being spoken that [she does not] speak yet". Cassie continues to explain in more detail why she feels this way: "(It is) a football language and all the blokes … speak it … I know that I'm not the only member of the Board who sometimes feels that we're not in the language".

4.2.3 Negatives

It was identified that clubs experiencing structural and management change led to unstable working conditions and unstable working conditions that were not conducive to career progress. Brodie is an example of a participant who experienced a lot of management change in the lead up to one of the seasons. She explained: "we had a lot of management change … [M]y direct manager changed about three times just in the lead up to the start of the season". Brodie commented further:

> [B]ecause the managers were changing my job descriptions were changing … everything was changing … I just didn't know where I really stood so I went to talk to one of the top managers and … ended up bursting into tears … and that made me feel … in front of a male … that made me feel very uncomfortable and I don't think ... it was ever followed up … no-one ever really kind of … ever asked me if I was okay afterwards … I just don't feel like there's … as much compassion for staff [in the AFL].

A lack of professional development was identified by Michelle. She believed her manager didn't provide her with opportunities to grow in her role. Michelle explained:

> [My manager] was someone who I feel didn't let me develop because he didn't want me to go past him … I didn't realise it until I started managing someone [else] that he didn't let me have a lot of opportunities that I should've had … [I]f I was to move up in the ranks it would be his job … I was frustrated that I didn't get more experiences, and he didn't let me have more responsibility.

Participants mentioned instances when they had been overlooked for promotion because of what they believed to be reasons of gender. Mary spoke passionately about what it felt like to be overlooked for promotion because of her gender:

> [T]hey definitely promote men over women here, and I've had a personal example where my previous [male] manager … was promoted from the position I'm in … [when] his boss left … [H]e was promoted to the general manager position and I'd been here a year … but I wasn't even considered for the position. I wasn't even asked if I wanted to apply ... I felt like in that moment, if … I'd been a 6ft tall male in a suit I would've been offered that position. [T]here was no other reason why I wouldn't have been except that I was female … I felt like even if I had been there for years, I don't think I would've been offered it … I did get a promotion at the end of it, but it was … not the senior position … [A]t the time … I was offended … that I wasn't even asked, and I don't know whether I would've even applied for the position, but the fact that I wasn't even considered is what really offended me … I talked to the girls at the AFL about it. And they weren't surprised at all because they've seen it a million times.

Results demonstrate how women working in the AFL are faced with the challenge of adapting to a male-dominated environment. They need to determine how to deal with various interpersonal factors and act professionally whilst earning respect and acceptance within a male-dominated environment. Despite there being an AFL Equal Employment Opportunity policy in place (see Appendix 4) within the AFL there is still varying levels of formal and informal hierarchical ordering of managers and employees. This hierarchical ordering is often gendered and believed to favour men over women. There was a tendency to ask women to undertake what could be fairly described as menial tasks. Bronte shared how in her position she was asked to do certain tasks that she does not agree that she should be doing like getting coffee and tea orders for her colleagues. Initially this participant agreed to do these kinds of

menial tasks because she wanted to make a positive impression when she commenced her position. Bronte explained: "I wish I could turn back time … because I think … I would have … said no to a few things … [T]here does seem to be a hierarchy with [management] … which is where the coffee and tea orders come in … which I'm not too pleased about".

Denise shared how she was personally "not shy when someone [in the AFL] says something dismissive" to her. Denise went on to say that she is "not shy to take it up to them". Sue explained in detail a negative experience she had with her CEO (who happens to be male):

> About a year ago I sent an email, and because my boss is the CEO, I cc'ed him into my email. And I was having a problem with another manager of his. And he called me in and not that he called me a bitch, but he inferred that I was, and that really, really pissed me off … I don't think he would've said it if I was male … I just found that I was this young girl to him and he just thought I was stupid and I hadn't dealt with this situation correctly, and then the feedback that I got from him I thought was pretty immature … I have had to modify my behaviour, because now I'm a little bit … shy … I've kind of been burned once by him … And now I don't trust him with anything like that anymore.

The AFL has had since 2005 an established Respect and Responsibility policy in place (see Appendix 3). The intention of this policy was to introduce anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and the clubs competing in the national AFL competition. Despite the existence of this particular policy, participants in this current study still shared moments where they were subjected to sexual misconduct from male colleagues. Mary is an example of one participant who feels that many men in the AFL do not respect the roles that women fill, and at times make sexist and derogatory remarks about women working in the AFL. Mary explained:

> I don't think … they necessarily respect the role that we do in [the AFL]. And a good example, we had the AFL media awards at the end of September, and they had this joke sort of skit that they'd filmed. And they made this comment about another female media manager … about her looks and about how good looking she was and how they wanted her to come into the radio box to bring the players and not the male [media manager]. And that was just so degrading … And I just know that every …

time on match day you walk into the radio boxes and it's full of six or seven male commentators … you know, the [name omitted], and the [name omitted] of the world. And you walk in and it's intimidating enough, but then to hear them actually say it, and you know that when you walk out of there, they're making comments and to hear them actually say it in a room full of people.

4.2.4 Impression management and career advice

Confusion about reacting to behaviour and what to do was commonly noted particularly by younger women participating in this current study. Participants strongly viewed the importance of 'having a voice' to ensure their actions were noted. At times these women were uncertain on appropriately interact with their male colleagues when attending social work events and Molly provided the following description about what junior women in AFL sometimes experience:

> I've heard women in [AFL football] management … tell stories about being confused about when they are approached by a more senior member of the organisation for an inappropriate relationship … a one night stand … and being confused as to whether they can say yes because it might help their career … it doesn't sort of stop when you walk out of the office … and women are often in highly compromising situations and given a sense that this will help their careers … this is more kind of junior to middle management … where they are young and they're attractive … and they want to be up there.

Molly shared her views on women interacting with men in the corporate AFL world:

> A lot of women think that they're going to have to get drunk with a group of men at a business conference or at a leadership away day or whatever … to prove that they are just as strong … that they've got balls … that they can mix it and cut it with the best … and women don't have to do that … women need mentors and guides.

Having confidence in your own abilities and what you do at work was one way of promoting the likelihood of others valuing you as an employee, and the contribution you make to the workplace. For a woman working in a male-dominated environment part of being self-confident is about developing a "voice". It was recognised that being in the gender minority in formal meeting settings, challenged women to find the confidence to express themselves. The advice from Brodie was "believe in yourself … [and] don't be scared to talk up in a meeting". It was important to be "comfortable" with yourself as a woman working in

male-dominated environment. Brodie encouraged women to be confident to speak up in front of others outside of their immediate team environments. Brodie shared the following:

> I'm always probably a little on edge talking to people in the footy [D]epartment … they're so busy and there's a lot of egos and things like that … I'm a lot more timid when I go in there … whereas I'll bowl into someone else's office and be like "hey what's the deal with this?" … I would definitely change my behaviour when talking to someone in football.

Mandy stressed how important it was to believe in yourself: "don't identify that you are different … be true to yourself … but … don't have your tits hanging out at a Board meeting … that's the business code". Bronwyn explained that anyone working in the industry needs to understand "you're expected to be part of the overall culture … and [to] know what you want and [be able to] voice your opinion". Denise emphasised that there was "no need to tell people how good you are … just do it … and do it so well that people begin to forget about gender". Molly is another example of a participant who revealed advice that she had once received regarding earning respect:

> The best thing you can do in football is to build your own respect base to show people why … the things you do matter … or things about you that's going to help them … take it beyond gender … Make sure that it's a strong picture of yourself … and your own credibility and reputation … That means making friends with a lot of people … be respectful of an industry that's got a lot of people in it … [that have] been around for a very long time.

Bronte provided advice she was given by a female AFL umpire:

> [A]s a female coming into the AFL world … initially you think that you'll need to adapt to everyone else … to fit into the male-dominated world … but in actual fact you're in that position because of everything that you can bring to it as you are … and as a female … so that helps kind of put perspective on me being a female in a male-dominated world … to not change … be you.

Bronte believes women in the AFL have got a lot to give. These women should not try and change who they are; instead they should try and adapt to how the AFL organisation runs. They should not try and change to fit in with the people that work within the AFL organisational structure.

Bonnie believes that it is important to "desensitise a little bit and not take things so personally … otherwise it's very hard to survive … it is a very different workplace … nothing would have prepared me for the intensity of working within an AFL club … you are just on all the time".

4.3 How does mentoring assist women in management positions in their AFL careers?

Participants believed mentors can help provide strategies and language to women in management to assist cope in a male-dominated environment such as the AFL. Examples include mentoring has provided support to "workshop ideas", "workout solutions", validate actions and "discovering a level of balance". These women highly valued mentoring and as noted by Molly "[W]e've got to get better at mentoring them and providing appropriate mechanisms for women to be able to talk".

4.3.1 Characteristics of an effective mentor

Irrespective of whether it was in formal or informal situations, being able to trust and confide in mentors was identified as key components. Participants clearly articulated that honesty and open communication between themselves and their mentor/s were valuable in an effective mentoring relationship. Hannah is an example of a participant who spoke fervently about how important it was for mentors to act as good role models: "If we are going to create a culture around our club that is respectful of others … we have to walk the talk".

Role models of either gender were considered a valuable resource. It meant having someone to model your professional career on. As explained by Tess about one of her role models: "he's really personable, he has a really good work life balance ... [and] seems to have the whole package ... [and is] driven and successful … [He is] efficient and everything else that you want to probably be in a career". Shirley explained that it was important to have the ability to "confide in [mentors] from a professional nature … on a one-on-one basis … and get their guidance and thoughts". Other participants also clearly articulated that honesty and open communication between themselves and their mentor/s were valuable components. As

reinforced by Tess, mentoring is "having someone to bounce [ideas] off ... bouncing off frustrations before going full steam ahead".

Female mentors were noted by at least half of the participants as important. Leanne noted her mentor is "just brilliant … she's all for women … she just gets it … she's walked the shoes … and understands ... and has [a] great ability to just be herself". In addition Bronte explained:

> Nicki was great … mainly because she'd been in the role for like 5-6 years … she'd seen all the highs and lows … and obviously experienced success and … failure at the club … she was one of the only females in and amongst the coaches and players as well … so from a female to a female … she was able to talk about things that might come up … like certain situations that I might come across … and how best to deal with them … so that was really good to have a female to talk through that … if I didn't have a female initially … I probably would have struggled.

On the other hand, Sue is a participant who believes it is essential for women working in male-dominated organisations to be mentored by men. In Sue's opinion, women in male-dominated organisations will only advance if they develop effective relationships with men working in the male-dominated organisations. The AFL could be fairly viewed as one such male-dominated organisation referred to by this participant. Sue stated:

> [I]t's like we're trying to integrate society and we're trying to increase female participation at all levels within the workforce … particularly at higher levels, and ... that's done through networking ... [and] mentoring ... And if we're not mentoring and networking with males who are the majority of that level, then there's no way that … participation of females is going to increase to an acceptable level.

4.3.2 Benefits of mentoring

Many benefits to being involved in a mentoring relationship were acknowledged by participants. These included: confidentiality, broad-spectrum guidance, self-confidence, self-awareness, friendship, networking assistance, validation, career development, personal support, and encouragement. Michelle explained how mentoring has given her more self-confidence, reassurance and has been able to help her work through problems

Mentors create a safe environment. Shirley acknowledged her ability to confide in her mentor about various work related issues. For example, having a mentor who you trust won't share details of what you discussed is important and beneficial. Molly expressed "women need mentors and guides ... and safe places to … ask the questions about their own behaviour ... [and] about who they are". By using the term "safe places" it would be fair to interpret this as making reference to the importance of women (or any staff member) having someone they can trust and discuss sensitive matters confidentially. Molly "encourage[s] all women ... to find a woman that they trust where they can have ... confidential moments where they can just let it out ... [Women need to] know that they are alright ... and that there is someone else who understands what they have felt".

Leanne conveyed that some of the best aspects about mentoring relationships she has been involved in have included looking at different situations, and how to deal with what is commonly referred to as "road blocks". Based on the benefits Georgie has experienced from mentors she is now keen to assist other women in the AFL environment. Georgie explained the broad spectrum guidance mentors could offer their protégés:

> [W]ith the membership people … my direct reports … I've pushed them to do the mentoring program … I've really promoted it to them … because I think that would really help them … get an outsiders point of view … there's things that they might think are … pretty rough to have to do … maybe they think that it's unreasonable … if they're bouncing it off someone else who's been in that position or has [had] that experience … I think that can really help them.

Understanding how men think was an important point made by mentors and mentioned by a few women. For example, recognising the view from males and how they operate. As explained by one of her mentors to Molly, "I love what you do … I love what you are trying to do … but what I am going to advise you to do though is put yourself in the shoes of the men around the table listening to you … and let me give you some advice about how to make your messages more potent … by changing the structure of some of your

presentations … the point he made to me was … put the financial benefit of whatever I was addressing up front".

Mentors develop confidence in women. The majority of participants described how mentoring has helped provide them with the confidence to be who they are and to do their jobs to the best of their ability. For example, Leanne credits one of her informal mentors (also her current manager) as having shaped who she is. Leanne commented: "[S]he is very much herself at work ... it's probably the first time I've seen someone so openly ... be themselves ... I think she's contributed into bringing that to the surface for me". Having a mentor act as a positive role model can influence the self-confidence and self-awareness levels of a protégé.

Participants recognised the value of mentors to assist with networking. Sue is a participant who identified often it is who you know, not what you know that is important. Mentors can be a vehicle for introducing protégés to the right people. Sue commented:

> [I]t's often about who you know in any industry and any place that you work in, even in your personal life ... And so when you have somebody at a higher level taking ownership of a younger person and mentoring them and taking them into meetings, which is what I see happen with people within our organisation, then they gain some kind of respect from other people of higher levels within the organisation, because somebody is showing them enough respect to bring them into the meeting.

Mentoring provides validation and a positive sounding board. For example Hannah made a clear link between mentoring and the provision of validation:

> I guess in a way ... [mentoring provides] validation and I think that's really quite important for any minority group. You want to know that you're not there as a token ... [The] validation ... gives you a lot more strength. And certainly over time, I've found it really has helped me in Board meetings, strategic planning sessions to actually stand up and to make my point ... [W]e have been selected, appointed, whatever, to those positions on our merits as a business individual, hopefully not just because we were a woman.

Mentors help with the provision of career progression strategies. Participants noted how mentors encourage goals to be pursued, help to develop high levels of professionalism and personal presentation skills and the ability to "try and fail and try again". Mentors can

assist protégés with developing their leadership and management skills, which can effect career development. Michelle reported: "[T]he general manager of footy operations [an informal mentor], has ... taught me a lot about leadership and applying different styles of leadership and management to different situations". Mandy whilst acknowledging her mentor manages a busy schedule notes, merely having her mentor find time to work with her was beneficial. Mandy explained: "[H]e's quite busy … but having him invest in me … has certainly helped me grow [professionally]".

4.3.3 AFL's formal mentoring program for women

According to documents obtained for this current study, the AFL purchased a mentoring program from the Australian Mentor Centre (AMC). Anyone participating in the program as a mentor or protégé is provided with a 'Partnership Resource Book' (Johnson, 2011). This resource provides information, a mentoring partnership agreement template, a meeting planner and journal, and advice and support for monitoring the mentoring relationship. To become involved in the program employees needed to self-nominate. Successful candidates were then matched with someone employed in a senior role in the AFL. The following passage provides insight into Bronwyn's experience as a protégé in the AFL formal mentoring program for women:

> I came into the program, the AFL Women's Mentoring Program at the start of this year, and I was matched up to [name removed], who's a very big identity in AFL, so he's my mentor. He's been my mentor for all of this year and it's been fantastic. So we've had regular meetings and he just goes through what I'm going through, what my goals are, a little bit about things that happened within [name of club removed] that I might be a little bit frustrated with and I just get his opinion and it's just between us two, it doesn't go any further than that conversation ... he gives me advice and guides me along the way ... [M]y experience with him has been fantastic ... It's meant to be only for a year as part of the program, but I think that I will always have a friendship with him ... I'll always have a professional relationship with him as well, and I feel if ... in a couple of years' time, if I was to move to another company or to another position, I could count on him for some advice. So I think that [the] mentoring program has worked very well.

Georgie is another participant who participated in the AFL's formal mentoring program for women. Georgie felt that she benefited from the program although her involvement in the program did not run smoothly:

> [T]he AFL introduced a mentoring program for women so I was involved with that … I didn't get the full advantage of the mentoring program because I was involved with someone who after our first meeting ended up leaving … there was a big gap between finding someone else for me … which they did in the end but she was located in Queensland which did make it difficult … we had a few phone conversations and I think we met up once or twice … just from those experiences it definitely helped … it was having that sound board and someone to give you that confidence.

Not all of the participants had involvement with the AFL's formal mentoring program for women. Some of the participants were not sure of the programs existence. For example, Miranda is a Board member of an AFL club and is unsure of the existence of the AFL's formal mentoring program for women. A number of participants believed that they had not had an opportunity to have any formal mentoring whilst at the AFL. Mary shared her thoughts:

> I think there's a huge lack of formal mentoring. I've never been given a formal mentoring opportunity. It's definitely something I've had to, sort of, source myself. And if I hadn't been fortunate enough to be working with really good people, there probably wouldn't have been any opportunity like that at all given to me. So there's a real need for that within the [AFL] ... And I know they did try and set up a program, but then I was never … part of it, and I didn't hear it was a great success either.

Muriel shared:

> I know that the club … I think it's an AFL initiative, have some form of a mentoring program … because I know that there's others internally that are undergoing that mentoring program … I don't know if it's the AFL or whether it's the club … I have no idea what the program is, maybe the AFL provides two mentors to the club for the year, and the club needs to identify two staff. And maybe it's up to the general managers to determine who they want the mentors to go to, or who they want mentored internally.

The lack of knowledge about the AFL mentoring program has resulted in a couple of participants expressing a desire for the AFL to do more assist women managers. For example,

Bronte expressed a keen desire to be mentored but says she does not know how to go about that in the AFL:

> I would love the opportunity to have a mentor … I feel like almost sometimes … a little bit lost in my role and I'm not developing myself any further and a mentor would be exactly what I would need … but I've never kind of known how to seek that within the AFL or anything like that.

4.4 How does networking assist women in management positions in their AFL careers?

Participants believed networking was beneficial. They commonly defined networking as: a source of advice, an opportunity to discuss ideas, that it was possible to learn from people in networks, someone could seek counsel from another person in a network, and networks were an opportunity for education to take place. Participants strongly considered it was important for women in the AFL to network. Participation in networking to a large degree was viewed as unavoidable. It was suggested by some participants that the better one got to know those that one networked with the more likely one was to succeed. A career in the AFL was acknowledged by most of the participants to be time consuming and demanding, and networking connections could help deal with these career stresses.

Networking took place internally or externally to the organisation participants were based at. Internal networking was described by Molly as an enabler for "people to get their job done". External networking was described as people and organisations wanting to connect with someone associated with the AFL. Internal networking also played a vital role to gain further employment opportunities for some of the women participants. For example, Mandy noted that the person she networked with knew her well, and she was offered the role because this person had seen "the way [she] worked and who [she] was". Denise believed in meeting the right person at the right time to assist with gaining employment opportunities. She explained:

I happened to meet the right person … a man … at the right time so that we were able to work in combination to achieve a few things in football … and he looked at me as just someone on a level playing field who could help with what he needed to achieve … and he was useful to what I needed to achieve … and so we worked very, very well together.

Participants detailed how they had directly and indirectly used networking to gain in some capacity an appointment with the AFL. Miranda, a Director at one of the AFL clubs, described how she employed networking strategies to achieve her appointment to the Board: "[M]y appointment, you know, it's one of those things that the Board didn't change that often, it's something that I wanted to pursue for probably five or six years and did a fair bit of networking ... to let that happen".

Successful networking enhanced career progression. One of the participants expressed the belief that "women are not going to make it in this industry … without men promoting them ... taking their side and actively working for them". Sue believed that "getting into" those networks was not unlike a career "door opener". Volunteering at AFL clubs or the organisation helped form networks and employment opportunities. Volunteering resulted in references and recommendations from managers at the AFL, and ultimately in offers of employment or promotion. One of the participants explained how she attained a position of employment at an AFL club through several years of volunteering. This participant had networked with an employee at one particular AFL club; then moved to a position at another AFL club. The participant followed initially in a volunteering capacity. The networking relationship continued and subsequently led to an offer of employment.

What is also thought to be helpful to women forging a career in AFL is getting to know who can help get them to where they want to be. Georgie is a participant who explained:

[N]etworking is what gets you in … its word of mouth … that's what gets your foot in the door … especially more so at the clubs … I wanted to work in AFL

and I studied for 2 years at Holmesglen TAFE … and throughout that time I volunteered … so I knew what I wanted to do and I got there … but I've probably reached a point now where I feel like my qualifications aren't adequate … where as if I was to look for a job outside of football … well the work experience is great … my qualifications wouldn't cut it.

4.4.1 Formal and informal networking

Similar to mentoring, networking was recognised as being conducted formally and informally. For example social sporting contests were identified as an effective vehicle for informal networking. This type of informal networking provided an opportunity for participants to get to know each other and to form sustainable support networks that in some cases turned into friendships. The following comments were made by Muriel:

> A couple of years ago … [the club] developed a really strong network with quite a few of the sporting clubs that are in the precinct ... I can't remember who the contact was, but every Monday or Tuesday at lunch time we'd get out, there was a few of us that were interested from all the different clubs and codes and go and have a game of touch footy or soccer or cricket or whatever it happened to be on one of the ovals outside. And it was quite a good networking opportunity because you got to know different people from the different clubs and codes that are in the area. And to this day, I still have quite a few of those friendships.

4.4.2 Benefits of networking

Networking was seen to be an avenue through which advice and strategies can be provided and received, and it was also believed to be a vehicle that provides support and empathy. Additionally, networking experiences were noted to be an effective means of sharing important information. Further benefits identified by participants for networking were it was a valuable approach to meeting new people, an avenue for invitations to interesting functions and a way of minimising an employee's feeling of isolation. Participants believed through networking, it was possible to reinforce an employee's sense of belonging to an organisation and facilitate an understanding of the corporate AFL bigger picture. It should be acknowledged several benefits of networking are connected to the challenges women

employed in the AFL may face, and some of the strategies women employed in AFL might

perhaps employ. These challenges and strategies are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Participants believed organisations such as AFL clubs are widely accepted to have

established cultures and networks. Entering an organisation like an AFL club requires

negotiating access to the networks and building an understanding of the established culture.

Mary described how networks within the AFL have helped her to know she has "people to

speak to", and support from the AFL has influenced the quality of work she produces.

Valuable support provided by networks can also help someone deal with challenging

workplace circumstances, as noted by Mary:

> I had one specific player who would yell really demeaning comments at me,
> and dirty comments, and say things to me in front of other players. And I think had I
> been four years younger or five years coming out of uni, I don't think I could've
> handled it very well, I would've just let it keep happening. And I think if you have
> that network around you and you have someone you can talk to about it then it does
> help and you feel the confidence to speak up ... [The situation was] intimidating ...
> Everyone was being really supportive and ... everyone [including our] CEO ... [and]
> President, came and spoke to me, and there's a really, really good support network ...
> [I]f you ever go through any tough times ... everyone always will come around you ...
> and offer all the support you need.

Integrating pre-existing and established networks from other industries with the AFL

was viewed as beneficial. Participants believed there was a degree of reciprocal benefit to all

organisations. Linking networks was an opportunity to share valuable information about each

of the organisations. A further benefit was the networking connections often resulted in

invitations to attend and participate in a range of functions and events. Hannah made the

subsequent statement:

> The networks that I already had, it was terrific to be able to introduce myself
> to those networks as having taken on that role in an elite AFL club at that Director
> level ... [and to] use [networking] ... as an opportunity to promote the club and to
> promote the values of the club ... [A]nother advantage of being in that role was that I
> then got invited to functions and events that I wouldn't have if I hadn't been in that
> role and that therefore introduced me to even more people and provided more
> opportunities ... for me to connect ... with other organisations I'm involved with.

Externally being a member on a Board provided networking opportunities and the ability to learn from contemporaries. Participants noted working on Boards with "strong, strategic, fantastic women and men" was identified as providing advantageous learning opportunities. Chloe's response typified this belief:

> I think to network … opens up doors … opens up your mind to what other possibilities are out there … even if you don't like your job you could speak to other people … "oh that job … I could do that … or I wouldn't like that" … or you could say that "I could integrate that into this job" … I think that you need to be able to network.

Bringing managers together situated in like fields within the broad AFL structure is an initiative designed by the AFL to help promote collegial support. Michelle, a media manager for an AFL club, explained how these meetings are an opportunity for media managers to network, share information and provide support to each other. The annual collective meeting of the media managers is an example of formal networking but has for some of the AFL media managers led to more frequent informal networking. As explained by Michelle:

> [T]he AFL does hold something once a year with all the media managers, and we all get together and talk about the issues and things like that, and present and if you had a certain issue you had to work through, you might talk to everyone about it. But then I also really, really like contacting other media managers, just to see how they're going and how they deal with things.

Personal and professional validation was another beneficial outcome of networking. Creating and developing trust with networks was thought to be important. This was considered to help with "working across the business" and "relationship building with everyone". Another view was networking relationships which women in the AFL have with each other, provide levels of professional validation. Sharing experiences and being able to ask questions related to workplace situations was believed to be a valuable way to achieve validation. As typified by Tess:

> I think [I have] earned the respect. I work with the [name removed] and [name removed] very closely, and they are quite heavily male-dominated ... curators

and event managers and operational planners ... I've been here for a long time and I think my relationships with them ... are really good.

4.4.3 Gender and networking

A majority of participants were able to share advice and strategies that could be implemented to help overcome challenges associated with gaining access to some of the networks associated with the AFL. Gaining access and acceptance to networks strategically was one recommendation. That is to seek advice from men who had been involved in the AFL industry for a long time. As a result there was a need to form camaraderie and trust with others. Molly shared:

> I asked people who I've known in the football world and industry who were my great friends … what's the appropriate way for me to get myself thoroughly immersed in footy … and they gave me some fantastic advice … so much of the education is about learning how all the bits of the industry fit together … and who I could go to … who could advise me about the sorts of issues I should care about … I trusted people who I already knew … mostly blokes … and I also made it my business to get to know my fellow [colleagues] … so along the way it was building friendships and trust … and being quite humble in that process.

The advantages of maintaining relationships with the "right" sorts of people were also highlighted. One example shared by a participant was a male colleague from his previous management role in AFL shared the numerous contacts he had. The sharing of these contacts with this participant resulted in her increased network access. Another participant, Sue, has a brother who plays at a senior level in the AFL competition. She acknowledges that in AFL "it's a lot about who you know", but felt that she would not have ultimately got the position with the AFL club if she was not capable. It was noted the connection she had through her brother, helped with accessing networks at the club. Sue commented: **"**It certainly was easier for me, because it didn't take very long to filter through the organisation that I have a brother that plays at senior level ... So more networking doors or arms were opened up because of that".

The value of a women's network was referred to by the majority of participants. There was a need to connect with other women working in AFL and in other industries. The sorts of initiatives these participants were involved in creating included: women's network groups for various AFL football clubs, awards for women involved in AFL that recognised their contribution to the sport, encouraging senior and experienced women in AFL to connect with women entering the industry, and creating a women's network between AFL clubs and women in other industries in the vicinity of various AFL clubs. Miranda described a networking initiative that the AFL club she is a Director of had managed to establish:

> [As] a business we're trying to engage with more business women in [name of city removed] ... and part of that messaging … is that, it's a great place, football, and the organisation to actually do a lot of business … [M]en really have been in the inner sanctum and taken advantage of that for years … [O]ne of the things that we want to do is not create another women's group as such, we want to create a group that women feel comfortable in where they will enjoy the benefit of the inner sanctum and being able to deal with business … I think that that's important, it's not about hanging out with other women, it's really getting the skills so that we can hang out with business people, regardless of sex.

The notion of women employed in the AFL supporting other women in the industry was noted. Hannah identified this type of networking support as a "sisterhood", and made the following comments:

> I think it's the empathy that we all share, because there is this, sort of … I hesitate to call it a sisterhood, but that's sort of what it is. Because we know, in a way, that we're women that are in the minority in a male-dominated business and there's sort of a bit of pride in that ... When we all meet as a group right across the clubs, it's very noisy and very constructive and we just share ideas and information and lots of silliness, which is great.

Caution was raised by participants that purposely creating gendered networks, in particular networks for women working in male-dominated organisations, risks perpetuating a level of separateness between men and women. Gendered networks may provide valuable support but they also risk being accompanied by negative connotations. The subsequent comment made by Molly helps to explain this: "[T]he other thing that is unique to women in

this environment is if they go too far to create just women's networks there's a downside to that as well … it's seen as perpetuating a kind of separateness and a women's club".

Participants believed there is a heightened need for women to network with men in male-dominated organisations. Sue explained:

> [W]e're trying to increase female participation at all levels within the workforce, but particularly at higher levels, and ... that's done through networking, mentoring [and] all these different things. And if we're not mentoring and networking with males who are the majority of that level, then there's no way ... that participation on female is going to increase to an acceptable level.

4.4.4 Networking advice

On reflection participants were able to share what they would do strategically if they were starting over their careers. Michelle explained what she would do:

> [I]f I was starting this role again, I knew what I knew now, I'd call up, I'd go and face to face meet everyone at every organisation, so they knew who I was and I was so open and easily accessible and give out my number and all of those kind of things ... [W]hen my boss left suddenly I would've preferred to have made those contacts beforehand. So if I was starting this job again, I would've ... sought every media outlet and introduced myself to them all.

Miranda is another participant who if granted the opportunity would give herself the following advice: "I would network more ... If I [had] kept every business card [of people that] I've met in my 30 years of working ... I would have a much better network than I do now". Chloe is an example of a participant who on reflection upon her situation wished she had incorporated networking strategies to network more with females working at other AFL clubs. Chloe works at one of the more recently established AFL clubs and explained:

> You know what I wish I'd done from the start is probably what I'm doing today … and actually visit other clubs … and the clubs that I'm actually visiting … the community departments are all run by females … and I met with [name removed] last week and she was amazing … and the advice I got from her … not only about what they are doing but how she dealt with certain things … and how she set up certain things … that sort of stuff … getting it from an established club is interesting because they deal with all the politics … whereas we don't have any politics at the

moment … we don't have to deal with structures that have been in place for 100 years.

'Riding on coat tails' is the common term given by participants to strategically forming relationships with people who are likely to be able to help introduce someone to other influential people and assist someone gain recognition and possible promotions. When asked about this strategy associated with networking Tess shared:

> I don't like doing it, but taking a deep breath and just say, "Well if this is going to get me the meeting … I'll go and ride behind this person" and then eventually the relationship will build ... that recognition and whatever else you need to keep it going ... when I'm expected to play the game to get into those networks or to meet the right people ... I do find it really frustrating, it goes against probably everything that I want to do.

Muriel made the following recommendation:

> [Going] into someone's office if they're not busy and have a chat about something ... it might be on a social level, but you've got those interactions with people ... [Y]ou're not just confined to your department ... I think they can all teach you something ... not necessarily about your role or the job, but also on a personal level or outside of work ... [Y]ou can learn so much from so many people.

Effective networking requires genuine relationships. For example merely swapping business cards and phone numbers does not mean effective networking has taken place. Denise explained:

> I don't believe in that thing that now I will network … they've got to be genuine relationships … all those people in the final analysis don't actually help you … they don't have a relationship with you … just 'cause they met you at a lunch and you gave them your card … doesn't actually mean that that person will actually look after you … but if you've done a lot of work for them … and they've seen how terrific you are … and how genuinely helpful and useful you are … of course they'll be the one that champions you because they'll think you are good.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the women participant's perspectives on the gendered culture of the AFL. Key themes evolved from the interview analysis and included the Environment,

Mentoring, Networking, Gender and Career Progression. These themes assisted with answering the Research Questions that guided the structure of the Results chapter.

The first research question focused on how women respond to the gendered culture of the AFL. Participants described the AFL environment as being similar to a "boys club", that it was conservative, and very male-dominated. Listening to the participants, it became apparent that some women in the AFL believed that executive males in the AFL made decisions without involving women as much as they could. It was also clear that women in the AFL were exposed to sexual innuendo. The women reported being advised to become "thicker skinned", be 'better at dealing with male banter", have more than "just a good opinion", and be "adaptable and tolerant". Other advice included that impression management is important, so too is the need for women in the AFL to be more "assertive, organised and determined". There were participants that believed women in the AFL would benefit from having confidence in their own abilities. Some participants encouraged other women in the AFL to develop their own voice and to ensure they earn respect from other people.

The second research question focused on how mentoring assists women in management positions in their AFL careers. Participants emphasised that mentoring had the potential to provide a wide range of benefits including: confidentiality, broad-spectrum guidance, self-confidence, self-awareness, friendship, networking assistance, validation, career development, personal support, and encouragement. The AFL's formal mentoring program for women was mentioned by several participants. Some participants had taken part in this program, however not all women knew about the program. It was clear from what the participants shared that the AFL formal mentoring program for women failed to meet the needs of all women in the AFL.

The third research question focused on how networking assists women in management positions in their AFL careers. Overwhelmingly it was clear that participants viewed networking as positive. Networking was an opportunity for women in the AFL to source advice, to discuss ideas, and to learn new things. Networking was also commonly linked by participants to career success. Further benefits of networking identified by participants were: support and empathy, advice and strategies, an avenue for the sharing of important information, and for invitations to important functions. Participants described how networking could reinforce an employee's sense of belonging to an organisation, and could provide professional and personal validation. The results indicated participants felt that networking lifted their confidence levels, and that networking helped them to understand the established culture of the AFL. One participant's advice was to network as much as possible, but to ensure the relationships are genuine.

The next chapter will draw the research findings back to the existing body of literature and discuss how women respond to the gendered culture of the AFL and how mentoring and networking assists women in management positions in their AFL careers. The findings connections to existing literature, contributions of new knowledge, and future research opportunities will be noted.

CHAPTER FIVE - DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

A fundamental aim of this current study was to identify how women in senior leadership positions (administration and Board), in the AFL respond to the gendered culture of the organisation and how mentoring and networking assisted them in their AFL careers. The subsequent narrative is an integration of findings based on the answers to the research questions which guided the Results chapter, and discussing these in light of the literature reviewed. The new knowledge contributions to theory, including in relation to social capital theory, and implications for policy and practice will be identified and recommendations made for future practice.

5.2 How do women in management positions in the AFL respond to the gendered culture of the organisation?

The results reveal women in the AFL primarily perceive the culture of the AFL is similar to a "boys club". Findings indicate a number of characteristics that define the "boys club". For example, the AFL, despite having adopted a Respect and Responsibility policy, and an Equal Employment Opportunity policy (see Appendix 3 and 4), was male-dominated and conservative. The AFL executive (which is largely male), tended not to include women in important decision making as often as they could, and women who participated in the study were exposed to sexual innuendo from male colleagues. To assist with being involved in the "boys club", participants recommended women in the AFL need to be "thick skinned", have the ability to deal with "male banter", and "have more than just a good opinion". Adaptability, tolerance and impression management are important skills for women in the AFL to possess. They also need to be more "assertive, organised and determined". These manifestations of the "boys club" attitude to women working in the AFL all point to the

potential tokenism and questionable efficacy of both the AFL's Respect and Responsibility and Equal Employment Opportunity policies.

Grounded theory is recognised as not just being a methodology; it is also a theoretical position. As a result of this, an attempt was made to establish how the themes and sub-themes from the research conducted as part of this current study relate to each other. The main concepts and findings have been summarised to form a grounded theoretical conclusion of the current study: *Environment* includes degrees of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, in which women utilise various responses in attempts to thrive that can be mediated by effective elements of *mentoring* and *networks*. This theory complements social capital theory whereby investments in social relationships will bring positive returns (Lin, 1999), in this case through mentoring and networking. As a result; potentially removing some career progression barriers for women employed in heavily male-dominated organisations (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Coleman, 2011), such as the AFL.

When exploring how women respond to the gendered culture of the AFL, results of this current study supports literature related to male-dominated organisations regardless of the sector and adds to the body of knowledge regarding social capital theory. Women generally are less central in male-dominated organisations, and have less access to the executive which is composed primarily of men (Timberlake, 2005; Schipani, et al., 2009). Timberlake (2005) recognised the lack of access to the male-dominated executive disadvantages women, as access to these groups is clearly linked to career advancement and influence within the organisation. Even if women have reached access to the executive there is some question over whether or not they gain real authority. Timberlake (2005) suggests women may still be excluded from male-dominated informal networks within the executive, and struggle to build important social capital within the workplace. This continued exclusion

from important aspects of the executive can not only impede the building of social capital, it can also lead to women questioning whether they can manage effectively (Eagly & Chin, 2010).

Results of this current study concur with research that suggests the AFL is a male-dominated environment (Nicholson, Stewart, Cooper, Gostlow, Perry & Falzon, 2005; AFL, 2005). Nicholson et al. (2005) conducted a quantitative study based on the levels and examples of female employment in AFL football clubs and call for a more complete and complex understanding of the environment that women in the AFL find themselves in. With regards to the AFL, this current study added new knowledge to the ordinary perception of what a typical work environment is like (Kanter 1977), in this case for women in senior management/Board positions. The AFL is multifaceted and comprises a collection of environments. Findings revealed there was a clear distension between the corporate AFL governing body and AFL club environments. The AFL governing body was often viewed as non-supportive whereas AFL club environments were more favourably viewed as supportive environments where trust can be gained. The importance of gaining trust in an organisation has been noted by Timberlake (2005). When trust builds in an organisation so too does social capital. Organisations operate less efficiently when structural holes form and a lack of trust results. Structural holes are present when there is a break in the flow of information in an organisation, or there are disconnections amongst people that work within the organisation (Timberlake, 2005).

To build social capital for women in an organisation, Kumra and Vinnicombe (2010) suggest the importance for women to access and expand their networks to enable career advancement is critical. As reinforced from the results of the current study, organisational processes can impact negatively on the ability of women to access networks that help build

valuable social capital. Internal personal connections within an organisation play an important part in career advancement decisions (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

The current study highlighted women in the AFL do not always feel they have an equal voice with their male colleagues, however to fight against the male-dominated "blokey" environment was not a productive stance. Fighting against this environment may also include being penalised if they perform better than their male colleagues (Heilman, 2001). Recommendations to assist women in this situation can be gained from past research. For example sponsors can help their protégés reach the next level within an organisation (Ibarra et al., 2010). Sponsors indicate to others in the organisation that the protégé is supported by someone influential, and it helps the protégé gain wide recognition (Kanter, 1977; AHRC, 2013). Importantly sponsors can defend protégés if there is ever any controversy, and they can endorse their protégés when and if the need arises (Kanter, 1977).

Findings from this current study indicate women face a range of challenges when trying to determine how to deal with gender stereotypes in male-dominated organisations like the AFL. This supports research that recognises the work environment is embedded in gendered stereotypes: men lead and women support (Miller, 2006). Results from the current study suggest stereotypes are hard to avoid and women in management at the AFL, must find ways of managing and overcoming the gender stereotypes if they want to develop successful careers. As a result women need to adopt male characteristics/leadership qualities to succeed in the environment (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). A lack of knowledge continues to exist on what sorts of male characteristics women need to be adopted. For example many leadership qualities successful male leaders possess, such as: self-assertion, toughness, task orientation are prohibited for women in leadership positions (Burton, 2015; Heilman , Wallen, Fuchs & Tamkins, 2004; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). If women choose to adopt male leadership qualities, they chance breaking gender stereotype expectations and risk being penalised by

others in the organisation (Heilman et al., 2004; Liff & Ward, 2001; Ellemers et al., 2012; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Heilman, 2012). Regardless of these findings, there was a perception from some participants in the current study of the importance to have effective impression management in the workplace; whereby it is necessary to be assertive, organised and determined. These actions tend to be negatively viewed by male managers as unfeminine, pushy, domineering and aggressive and being socially censured is a high price to pay for doing your job well (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

The current study identified the importance of self-confidence evident in women in senior management positions. There was a need for women to "back themselves"; maintain self-confidence; positively view their actions as beneficial for the organisation; and that merely having an opinion was not good enough. There is also the view that adopting an androgynous sex role identity might be an alternative way for women to successfully deal with the male-dominated environment (Chugh & Sahgal, 2007). Another suggestion made in past research was that it might be beneficial for women employed in male-dominated organisations to try and balance a mixture of conventional female stereotypes with a mixture of unconventional male stereotypes. If this balance can be achieved then the pathway to social change and gender equality is likely to be made a lot clearer (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006).

The AFL body has not met the quotas recommended by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), and the AFL clubs have not met the quotas recommended by Victoria where the majority of clubs are located. The ASC in 2013 directed all national sport organisations to set a target of 40% female representation on Boards by 2015 (Nicholson, 2015). In response to directives made by the ASC, the Victorian State government commissioned an inquiry into women and girls in sport (Wahlquist, 2015). One of the nine recommendations made and implemented by the government was Victorian sporting

organisations risked losing funding unless at least 40% of their Boards comprised women. Victorian sporting organisations would be expected to comply with the 40% gender ratio within three years (Wahlquist, 2015). The idea of mandated gender ratios may seem reasonable but in reality not necessarily practical. The findings of the current study indicate that the AFL body and AFL clubs are struggling to comply with the recommended 40% gender ratio.

Statistics show women in senior management positions will need to continue to respond to the gendered culture of the AFL. Figures obtained from an AFL report indicate that at the end of 2016 there were only 18.18% (2 out of 11) of the AFL executive management positions held by women (AFL House e-mail communication, November 7, 2016). The gender ratio of the AFL Commission in 2016 showed only 22.22% (2 out of 9) of the Commission positions were held by women. Gender ratios at the executive management and Board level vary at each of the 18 clubs; with some clubs being more gender balanced than others. Thus, the gender ratio figures at the AFL Commission and at most AFL clubs indicate that the AFL is continuing to be run at an executive level predominantly by men. Decisions about how the game is organised now, and organised in future, is being made by men with women having a minor influence over executive management decisions. Wang (2009) has advocated that leaders in organisations need to ensure that mentoring is promoted as part of an organisation's ordinary policy structure.

5.3 How does mentoring assist women in management positions in their AFL careers?

Mentoring is a positive and desirable experience that participants in this current study wanted to be involved in. Components associated with mentoring include: the role of mentoring, the availability of mentors, how mentoring could be used strategically in the workplace, and general advice relating to mentoring. As a result from women receiving

formal or informal mentoring, a range of benefits were noted by participations. These included: confidentiality; broad-spectrum guidance; gaining self-confidence; self-awareness and friendships; networking assistance; validation of actions; career development; personal support; and encouragement. Formally, the AFL mentoring program was recognised by participants. Results indicate the lack of knowledge women in senior management positions at the AFL have about this program. It also indicates the need for stronger communication systems to ensure a program is inclusively provided. For women to avoid being disadvantaged by traditional mentoring, formal mentoring programs need to become an open and natural part of women's professional development (Wang, 2009). It is also noted that formal mentoring programs are more effective when there is some personal connection between the mentor and the protégé. This personal connection is best achieved when mentors and protégés have some choice in who they work with (Dworkin, Maurer & Schipani, 2012).

The way an organisation is structured is believed to influence the effectiveness of any formal mentoring program. Wang (2009) advocates that leaders in organisations need to ensure that mentoring is promoted as part of an organisation's ordinary policy structure. Formal mentoring programs by and large hand control over to organisations who can then decide who is mentored, when they are mentored, and how they are mentored (Chao, 2009).

Hegstad and Wentling (2005) investigated formal mentoring programs in Fortune 500 companies that had headquarters based in the United States of America. Their research found that mentoring programs are likely to be less successful if an organisation is downscaling, reorganising or experiencing turbulence. What is thought to have and important influence on the success of formal mentoring programs, particularly for women in male-dominated organisations, is the inclusiveness of the program. Another factor that is considered to strongly influence the success of any formal mentoring program is the priority given to matching the protégé and mentor. If there is no perceived match by either the protégé or the

mentor then the relationship is unlikely to deliver any desired outcomes (Chao, 2009). Research recommends that organisations need to take the time to get this part of formal mentoring programs right. Promoting open communication between the participants and the organisation is believed to encourage successful formal mentoring programs (Hegstad & Wentling, 2005; Sarri, 2011). If women in male-dominated organisations who are receiving mentoring in a formal capacity are satisfied with the support the organisation provides the program then there is a higher likelihood of the mentoring benefiting the protégé (Welsh & Dixon, 2016). Research has shown that if protégés can be satisfied with the level of commitment and support an organisation puts into a formal mentoring program that it runs then that protégé is likely to become a much higher engaged employee (Welsh & Dixon, 2016).

Formal mentoring can assist women in their AFL careers. By providing programs that are transparent, new ongoing evaluation data can be collected and used to modify the program; benefiting the organisation and the participants (Kram, 1988). As noted from the results in the current study, if formal mentoring programs are established, without detailed and transparent planning, mentoring functions are unlikely to be successfully provided (Girves et al., 2005; Kram, 1988). It is important for an organisation such as the AFL to recognise that mentoring research is positively skewed and potential costs and drawbacks tend to be ignored (McDowall-Long, 2004). Different types of mentoring rather than relying on the traditional types need to be explored for participants and the organisation to gain benefits (McDowall-Long, 2004). As a result, the transparency of the programs and the research associated with the programs will benefit the development of effective future mentoring programs (Eby & Lockwood, 2005).

One type of mentoring not referred to by participants of the current study yet well recognised in literature is sponsorship. Social capital has been widely linked to sponsorship

(Timberlake, 2005; Wang, 2009; Schipani et al., 2009; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Sponsors well connected in an organisation can help women achieve access to sources of knowledge, resources, networks, and other forms of social capital that can help with career development (Timberlake, 2005). It is thought that men and women enter the workforce with similar levels of human capital (intelligence, education, skills and experience), but that there are very few managers that know how to invest effectively in social capital (Timberlake, 2005). Mentoring in the form of sponsorship can help promote awareness amongst men of some of the specific career challenges that women might face (Manz & Rossman, 2002). Sponsorship has also been credited with assisting women decode male-dominated work environments, and is a way for women to have their general value in an organisation increased (McKeen & Bujkaki, 2007). One of the biggest obstacles has been lack of access to different types of mentoring such as sponsorship (Wang, 2009). Wang (2009) goes on to suggest that mentoring traditionally occurred at the discretion of the mentors, who in male-dominated organisations are predominantly male.

There is no set opinion on what gender mentors of women in a senior management positions at the AFL should be, as long as it is effective. One problem recognised in the current study was the acknowledgement that there were not enough women to in executive positions to mentor women. This problem did not seem to concern participants as some believed it was essential to be mentored by men in order to break into the networks and executive level. Regardless of the gender this current study identified the lack of mentors available for women in senior management positions. In their attempts to gain access to social capital in male dominated organisations such as the AFL, research supports the view that women have unfailingly faced obstacles (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

Findings from this current study support research that identifies social capital can be gained from sponsorship that in return contributes to career advancement for women in male-

dominated organisations, in this case the AFL. Gender impacts the access and accumulation of social capital (favouring men) (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010), as a result women in this current study have taken it upon themselves to build their own social capital through sponsorship. This is built by borrowing it from someone else who is in higher placed position (Timberlake, 2005; Wang, 2009; Kumra & Vinnincombe, 2010); in this case a person in an executive position. As a result new contacts and networks are formed (Timberlake, 2005).

5.4 How does networking assist women in management positions in their AFL careers?

Networking brings a range of opportunities. As identified from the findings of the current study, there is however, a need to strategically view networking in order for it to be successful. Networking assists women in management positions in their AFL careers as it was an opportunity to seek advice, to discuss ideas, and to learn new things. It was clear from the analysis of this current study that networking is linked to career success. Findings support research that identified it was an opportunity where support, empathy, advice and career related strategies can be provided (Kram, 1988; Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Networking is also perceived to be an avenue for sharing career related information, and invitations to important social functions that may facilitate career advancement. This supports research that networking events provide individuals with the opportunity to meet others who might share professional interests (Kram, 1988). It also supports a powerful benefit of networking for women in male-dominated organisations, that is networking provides an opportunity to have their work profiles raised (Linehan, 2001; Ibarra & Deshpande, 2004; Bierema, 2005; Wang, 2009). It is through processes such as networking that participants feel their sense of belonging to an organisation could be reinforced. Networking was thought to be capable of providing professional and personal validation. It lifted women's confidence, and made it easier to understand the established culture of the AFL, thereby assisting them with a smoother transition for their career development. Being able to build relationships and use

networks is considered essential elements of career advancement (Timberlake, 2005). The main point of networking is to help individuals improve their social capital within the workplace, and it is because of this that networking has a direct constructive impact on career development (Wang, 2009).

Findings revealed that women need to have more access to the networks and contacts that lead to power and advancement in an organisation. To assist Timberlake (2005) recognised networks controlled by powerful connections and supported by strategic sponsors are the most likely to help women reach executive management positions. The access to influential social networks within male-dominated organisations for women is vital if they are to build the necessary social capital that will enable them to evolve into successful leaders (Eagly & Chin, 2010). The problem, as recognised by women in this current study is they are frequently excluded from the organisational networks that influence power acquisition and career success (Wang, 2009). There is a tendency for women of a lower status in a male-dominated organisation in comparison to their male counterparts to have what Wang (2009, p. 36) described as 'low level network centrality'. As a result this hinders the opportunities women have to advance their careers.

5.5 Implications of the research and future research opportunities

The current study confirms organisational politics in male-dominated work environments, such as the AFL, are masculine and are a potential barrier to women wanting to develop their careers. While organisational politics can create opportunities for individuals to succeed, successful individuals are likely to be male not female (Davey, 2008). At times participants in this current study deemed the AFL to be an environment that welcomes women, and at other times an environment that can exclude women and be misogynistic and sexist. As reported in Table 4.1 career advice was referenced more than any of the other sub-

node. Other sub-nodes that were highly referenced were the characteristics of a career in the AFL, characteristics of the AFL environment, gender mentality, mentoring outcomes, and networking benefits and strategies. There is emerging evidence to show mentoring and networking opportunities provided to women might remove some career developmental barriers for females employed in heavily gendered organisations (Coleman, 2011; Burke & McKeen, 1990).

The current study has identified that social capital gained through sponsorship, one type of mentoring, is crucial for women in senior management positions at the AFL to advance their career development. This finding adds new knowledge as the value of social capital theory and the impact that it has on career advancement within an organisation has not been given sufficient attention using a case study approach (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Opportunity for future research is then sought to expand the foci on social capital theory in relation to the career development of women in male dominated sport organisations. For example to identify how individuals perceive the way in which career progression systems operate within their organisations.

Findings of the current study concurs with research, that mentoring assists women managers in male-dominated sporting organisations such as the AFL with career development (Logan & Crump, 2007; Manz & Rossman, 2002; Noe, 1988). Mentors may also be able to assist women with decoding male-dominated work environments, and with promoting position and value. This current study reinforces the importance of transparency with formal mentoring programs. In a male dominated organisation such as the AFL, women are seeking mentoring opportunities yet there are not enough mentors internally available. In research the suggestion that it is important to evaluate not only the short term, but the long-term benefits of formal mentoring programs, highlights the need for future research in the area to continue (Chao, 2009).

The current study identified the necessity for women in the AFL to strategically network with men if they want to advance their careers. Research is sparse on how women could successfully strategically network in a male-dominated sport organisation. There is a prime opportunity for future research to explore this topic, qualitatively and quantitatively, thus gaining depth of knowledge about gender-based differences in network practices (Wang, 2009).

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results of this current study in relation to the three research questions and their relation to the existing body of knowledge. Participants in this current study perceived the AFL's culture to be similar to that of a "boys club"; male-dominated and conservative. The participants felt as if they were not included as much as they could and should be in important decision making. The results of this current study add to the body of social capital theory knowledge. Women in management in the AFL are struggling to build enough social capital to advance their careers. Dealing with gender stereotypes is a challenge for women in organisations like the AFL. Mentoring was thought largely to be a positive experience by the participants and was linked to career success. Findings reveal the positive influence of an effective formal mentoring program for women leaders at the AFL. These programs need to be transparent and have ongoing evaluation to enable modifications to the program (Kram, 1988; Girves et al., 2005). Networking provided a range of opportunities for women in this study that were linked to career success. Mentoring and networking play an important part in building social capital. More attention on the impact social capital has on career advancement was a recommendation made by research (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). The next chapter of this thesis outlines key conclusions and makes some more detailed recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER SIX – CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is to explain the context and importance of this study. The research questions and methodology will be briefly readdressed. The main findings will be summarised, and concluding remarks will be made.

6.2 Study context and importance

Women employed in male-dominated organisations risk career disadvantage when compared to men employed in the same or similar organisations (Noe, 1988; Ely, 1995; Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Vescio et al., 2005). In sport organisations there are often issues relating to position, dialogue, conflict, exclusion and change; issues male-dominated organisations in general also typically experience (Sibson, 2010). This current study examined how women managers responded to the gendered culture of the AFL. It also explored the value of mentoring and networking from a woman's perspective in management positions at the AFL. Findings assist to expand knowledge of insights from women on the extent to which mentoring and networking supports can assist women in developing their careers in sport organisations where men have traditionally held the reins of power. Findings of this current study were used to determine the effectiveness and impact of different types of mentoring and networking for women managers in the AFL.

6.3 Research questions and methodology

To address the aim of the study, the following three research questions were posed:

- How do women in management positions in the AFL respond to the gendered culture of the organisation?

- How does mentoring assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

- How does networking assist women in management positions in the AFL in their career?

Qualitative research methods were employed whilst conducting this current study. Data was collected using a semi-structured interview process. In this context this was the most appropriate way to gain genuine viewpoints from participants. This process helped to reveal the profound feelings of participants being interviewed (Flick, 2007). A decision was made by the researcher to avoid entering the field of research with any strong predetermined ideas surrounding women responding to gendered organisational cultures. It was also decided to not enter the field of research with any strong predetermined ideas surrounding mentoring and networking. On commencement of research there were various generalised ideas of what the research outcomes might be. These decisions made prior to commencing research fit with what Gratton & Jones (2004) describe as grounded theory research. Grounded theory methods were also used which enabled data collection, analysis and coding to occur simultaneously (Charmaz, 2011). A grounded theory approach is also useful to use when existing theories fail to explain or do not fully explain social processes (Creswell, 2007). A case study research design was adopted in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the issues surrounding the research questions (Gratton & Jones, 2004). Case study settings minimise the risk of false findings and conclusions being generated. They also promote new and improved understandings; and they generate fresh questions (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

The AFL Commission and the 18 AFL clubs competing in the national competition were chosen as the case study setting. The AFL is thought to typify a male-dominated sports organisation. The AFL Commission and eight AFL clubs have been represented in the data that was collected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 participants. Due to a

grounded theory approach being adopted it was possible to gather the implicit meanings of what participants were trying to say (Charmaz, 2001). All 19 interviews were transcribed verbatim, with participants being allocated first name pseudonyms to support confidentiality. Relevant policies and documents were used as supplementary material. Data was condensed utilising a series of coding cycles (Saldana, 2013; Flick, 2007). Analytical and reflective notes were taken throughout the entire data collection and data analysis process. Analysis involved a simultaneous combination of manual and CAQDSA methodological data comparison and code development.

6.4 Main findings

The organisational environment of the AFL was one of the key factors in the way women responded to the gendered culture. The AFL environment comprises extremes: inclusionary and exclusionary situations. The way women in the AFL responded to these extremes had an influence on their career development. These women are challenged to determine how to deal with gender stereotypes. Participants were able to share an abundance of opinions relating to various aspects of career advice. Gender stereotypes in the AFL are difficult to avoid and women in this current study felt they needed to find ways to respond to the gender stereotypes if they wanted to develop successful careers. Participants described their experiences of feeling prohibited from displaying many leadership qualities such as: self-assertion, toughness, and task orientation.

Participants were also aware that breaking gender stereotype expectations risked penalties. It was not always productive for the women in the AFL to fight against the gendered culture. Results of the study thus demonstrated that women employed in the AFL not only faced a gendered culture, but also had difficulty in deciding how to best respond to this culture.

Findings revealed the value of mentoring. Mentoring encouraged: confidentiality; broad spectrum guidance; self-confidence; self-awareness; friendship; networking assistance; validation of actions; career development; personal support; and encouragement. There was a general lack of knowledge surrounding the AFL formal mentoring program for women. This apparent lack of knowledge suggests that the mentoring program may not have been as inclusively provided as it could have been. Formal mentoring needs to be an open and natural part of women's professional development (Wang, 2009). There also is a need for there to be a positive connection between the mentor and protégé for the relationship to be completely beneficial (Chao, 2009). The transparency of formal mentoring programs and research associated with these programs will benefit the development of effective future mentoring programs (Eby & Lockwood, 2005).

Participants in the study did not talk about a recognised form of mentoring known as sponsorship. Sponsors well connected in a male-dominated organisation can help women achieve access to sources of knowledge, resources, networks, and other forms of social capital that can help with career development (Timberlake, 2005). Sponsorship can help women with de-coding male-dominated work environments, and can help increase the value of women within an organisation (McKeen & Bujkaki, 2007). Reflecting on the benefits associated with sponsorship, particularly in a male-dominated organisation, perhaps the AFL need to incorporate this to assist women in their careers as managers.

Results show that networking helps women in the AFL with seeking advice, discussing ideas, and gaining new knowledge. Networking was also linked to career success. The findings from the current study and research literature identify that networking is an opportunity for the provision of support, empathy, advice and career strategies (Kram, 1988, Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010). Networking helped participants feel like they connected more positively to the various parts of the AFL organisation that they worked for. Networking also

provided participants with professional and personal validation. It was recognised that these things helped lift the confidence levels of participants, and made it easier for them to understand the male-dominated established culture of the AFL. Understanding organisational culture will help women with their career development (Timberlake, 2005). Results revealed that access to networking opportunities in male-dominated organisations for women is vital if they are going to build enough social capital to enable career development (Eagly & Chin, 2010). A major problem for women in the AFL is that they believe they are frequently excluded from important networking opportunities. The main concepts and findings have been summarised to form a grounded theoretical conclusion of the current study: *Environment* includes degrees of *inclusion* and *exclusion*, in which women utilise various responses in attempts to thrive that can be mediated by effective elements of *mentoring* and *networks*. This theory complements social capital theory whereby investments in social relationships will bring positive returns (Lin, 1999), in this case through mentoring and networking. As a result; potentially removing some career progression barriers for women employed in heavily male-dominated organisations (Burke & McKeen, 1990; Coleman, 2011), such as the AFL.

6.5 Conclusion

Understanding how gender is constructed in an organisation not unlike the AFL could be one way of initiating important and necessary change (Ellemers et al., 2012). Research shows masculine discourses are highly valued and frequently linked to power (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Research also suggests the dominant discourse in sport organisations is masculine (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). The AFL has created policies aimed at addressing matters of respect and responsibility; and equal employment opportunities (see Appendix 3 and 4). Taking a close look at various aspects of the AFL, it becomes clear the dominant discourse of the game and the organisation that manages the game has historically

been, and despite recent initiatives, continues to be, at the senior governing level masculine. Building a better understanding of how gender is constructed in the AFL will hopefully facilitate change; benefit the women working in the AFL, and the AFL organisation as a whole. By building an understanding of how women in the AFL respond to the male-dominated culture of the organisation; and how they use mentoring and networking, it is possible to establish what the current situation is. From this point assessments can then be made regarding any necessary changes to the organisational culture. This current study has taken a significant step towards enhancing understanding on how mentoring and networking can become an important change agent for creating a supportive culture for women's careers in the AFL.

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Appendix 1 – Explanatory Statement to participants

Note: Monash University was where I commenced my Doctoral studies. A decision was made after data collection had been completed to transfer to Victoria University and convert to a Master degree. Sinclair was my former married name. I now use my maiden name Cooper. The title, aim and purpose of the research have been revised.

MONASH University

Explanatory Statement

08/11/2012

Explanatory Statement

Title: Mentoring, Networking and Work-identity for Women in Male-dominated Organisations.

This information sheet is for you to keep.

My name is Kathryn Sinclair and I am conducting a research project with Dr Pieter Van Dijk - Head of the Department of Management, Associate Professor Lionel Frost – Head of Business and Economics Faculty, and Dr Andrea Kirk-Brown – Senior Lecturer with the Department of Management at the Berwick campus towards a PhD at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a 300 page book.

You are invited to take part in this study. Please read this Explanatory Statement in full before making a final decision.

Why were you chosen for this research?
You were chosen for this research because you are a female filling a senior or middle management position in the AFL or one of its 18 clubs. If you are 18+ and female we are interested in your views about your experience at work in a traditionally male-dominated sports environment.

The aim/purpose of the research
The aim of the proposed research is to explore the impact that mentoring and networking has on the formation of work-identity for women who occupy senior or middle management positions in a traditionally male-dominated environment. Several benefits of mentoring and networking have been identified, but little explanation is offered of how and why these processes work. I am conducting this research to clarify how mentoring and networking impact upon the work-identity of women in a male-dominated context.

Possible benefits
This research and its recommendations may be used for developing, or enhancing, mentoring and networking programs for women occupying or aspiring to occupy senior or middle management positions in male-dominated work environments.

What does the research involve?
It is anticipated that the study will involve individual audio recorded semi-structured interviews. The interviews will take place at a mutually agreed upon location that is the most suitable to participants.
How much time will the research take?

It is anticipated that interviews will last between 45-60 minutes asking you questions about your experience of mentoring and networking in a male-dominated work environment.

Inconvenience/discomfort
While there should be no discomfort involved, if you experience any discomfort, counselling services are available through Lifeline Australia on 131114.

You can withdraw from the research
Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participate. However, if you do consent to participate you may only withdraw prior to or during the interview.

Storage of data
Data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University regulations, kept on university premises, on a password protected computer for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Confidentiality
The results of the study will only be reported in aggregated form so no individual will be identifiable in any way. Any data that the researcher extracts from the interview for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

Use of data for other purposes
Your data may be used for other purposes than the thesis, such as in a conference paper, journal article or book chapter.

Results If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research finding, please contact Kathryn Sinclair at Monash University, Berwick Campus, Business and Economics Faculty on 03 99047046 or via email at kathryn.sinclair@monash.edu

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Student Researcher or Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research (CF12/1721 – 2012000928) is being conducted, please contact:
Kathryn Sinclair Doctoral Candidate Department of Management Monash University Ph: 03 99047046 Fax: 03 99047130 E-mail: kathryn.sinclair@monash.edu Dr Pieter Van Dijk Monash University Ph: 03 99047153 Fax: 03 99047130 Email: pieter.vandijk@monash.edu	**Executive Officer** **Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)** **Building 3e Room 111** **Research Office** **Monash University VIC 3800** **Tel: +61 3 99052052** **Fax: +61 3 99053831** **Email: muhrec@monash.edu**

Thank you and kind regards,

Kathryn Sinclair

Appendix 2 – Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

The AFL could be viewed as a traditionally male-dominated organisation.

'Male-dominated organisation are those where a hierarchical ordering of jobs occurs that places men in more powerful roles, based upon assumptions and stereotypes of what is considered masculine and feminine' (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003)

'Male characteristics are privileged in terms of career advancement. Male access to leadership positions in sporting organisations continues to be understood as more "natural" and therefore accepted over female access to such positions' (Burton et al., 2011)

Rewarded/punished behaviours

Male-domination is not related to statistics and male/female ratios. It's where traditionally male values expectations, behaviours still rule.

Q. 1.Tell me about your experiences with the AFL as a woman…

Q.2 Please describe your mentoring experiences working in the AFL?

Mentoring can include such things as: support, counselling, role models, teaching, leadership and friendship between experienced employees and less experienced employees. Mentoring relationships can be formal or informal, transitory or long-lasting.

Q.2.1 Please explain your experience with formal and informal mentoring within the AFL?

Q.2.2 What has been some of the most significant advice that mentors have given you in relation to adapting to a male-dominated environment?

Q.2.2.1 Difference between formal and informal mentoring

Explore the difference in experiences between the two if they have had both.

Use the exploration of the previous experiences as a comparison.

Q.2.3 Have you sought mentors outside the AFL to help you adjust to the work environment you are now in?

Q.3 Please describe what it was like to gain acceptance and to access established organisational networks when you first took on your current role?

Networking refers to the ways that individuals relate and interact with each other and can be a resource. Individuals may use expectations and demands to promote themselves in favourable ways and to gain acceptance from members of established networks.

Q.3.1 Explain how networks have helped/hindered your sense of identity in your current role?

Q.3.2 Describe if you had to adapt your behaviour to gain access to important professional networks?

Q.4 Based on your experience what advice would you give to a female in the early stages of developing their career in a male-dominated environment such as the AFL?

Suggest that the participant uses previous work experiences as a comparison to explore the phenomenon.

Remember that my study is based on a case-study of the AFL first and foremost.

Appendix 3 – AFL Respect & Responsibility Policy 2005

RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

Creating a safe and inclusive environment
for women at all levels of Australian Football

November, 2005.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By Andrew Demetriou, Chief Executive Officer,
Australian Football League

RESPECT & RESPONSIBILITY

Creating a safe and inclusive environment for women at all levels of Australian Football

Traditionally, responsibility for addressing sexual assault has fallen largely to the criminal justice and social services systems, where intervention was understandably focused after violence had occurred. More recently, women's groups and services have been successful in putting the prevention of sexual assault on the broader social policy agenda. This has led to increasing recognition that creating safe and supportive environments for women is a shared responsibility of individuals, organizations, communities and governments.

As an organisation with a strong emphasis on community and social responsibility, the AFL wants to work with government and other groups to contribute to this broader social policy agenda in all States and Territories.

To this end, and in light of the significant health impacts of violence perpetrated against women, a special partnership has been established with VicHealth to implement the strategy during the next two years.

The position of the AFL and our Clubs is quite clear -- we find any form of violence towards women abhorrent and we support moves by government and other community-based organisations to eliminate violence or the potential for violence.

In this regard, one of our key roles, in conjunction with all stakeholders is to make a significant impact on all areas under our direct or notional control. For example, in conjunction with the AFL Players' Association we have and will continue to conduct education programs aimed at promoting respectful relationships between all individuals and to assist individuals to make the right decisions within such relationships.

These programs will extend beyond players to all involved at AFL level as executives, coaches, support staff and board members.

The AFL Commission, with the support of the 16 AFL Clubs, has adopted this policy to address the issues of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and violence towards women. This policy will be written into AFL, rules to require compliance by everyone bound by the rules without diminishing in any way the ultimate responsibility of every individual to behave in an appropriate manner in accordance with the laws of the land.

The AFL's policy, outlined on the following pages is based on recommendations by a Working Group established by the AFL in June, 2004 after allegations of sexual assault were made against AFL footballers.

The Working Group established by the AFL was convened by Professor Jenny Morgan, Deputy Dean, Law School, The University of Melbourne and also included representatives from:

- CASA Forum (Centres Against Sexual Assault) – Deb Bryant.

- VicHealth, Lyn Walker.

- Victoria Police – Acting Deputy Commissioner Leigh Gassner and Senior Sergeant Sue Clark.

- Victorian Institute for Forensic Medicine – Dr. Angela Williams.

- Adolescent Forensic Health Service – Patrick Tidmarsh.

- AFL – Andrew Dillon, Tony Peek.

The AFL Commission has adopted a strategy consisting of six key components which were recommended by the Working Group, with the assistance of Victoria's Statewide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault.

1) Introduction of model anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its 16 Clubs.

2) Development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women.

3) Changes to AFL rules relating to 'Conduct Unbecoming' which cover the specific context of allegations of sexual assault.

4) Education of AFL players and other club officials with avenues for dissemination of the program to the community level being explored.

5) The dissemination of model policies and procedures at the community club level.

6) Development of a public education campaign.

A key part of the policy's introduction has been the establishment of a new position within the AFL, Manager of People and Culture. This senior appointment will develop and implement a human resource strategy for the AFL industry.

A project officer will also be appointed within this department to implement the Respect and Responsibility policy.

Our approach to the development of this policy is similar to the steps associated with the implementation of our Racial and Religious Vilification policy in 1995. This highly successful policy, which won the National Corporate Anti-Racism Award in 2001 and was recognised by the United Nations Association in 1995, emphasised the following:

- A commitment to the continuing education of players to change behaviour and continuing media and promotional activity aimed at reinforcing the AFL's strong stance against racial and religious vilification.

- Rules for players and officials who vilified others based on race or religion.

- A process to assist State and Territory football bodies to adapt AFL policy to address racial and religious vilification in local community football.

[signature]

Andrew Demetriou,
Chief Executive Officer.

THE POLICY OUTLINED

- Introduction of model anti-sexual harassment and anti-sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its 16 Clubs
- Development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women
- Changes to AFL rules relating to 'Conduct Unbecoming'
- Education of players and officials
- The dissemination of model policies and procedures at community club level
- Development of public education program

Introduction of model anti-sexual harassment and anti sexual discrimination procedures across the AFL and its 16 Clubs.

The AFL, as an employer, has clear responsibilities to its employees under state and federal equal opportunity legislation, and under occupational health and safety legislation, to ensure a safe system of work. The clubs as the employers of the players and others, also have similar responsibilities. Where they are acting as service providers, they are also obliged to ensure that sexual harassment does not occur in the provision of services.

The AFL has commissioned the drafting of a set of model sexual harassment and sexual discrimination policies. After consultation with appropriate state and federal equal opportunity experts, and clubs, these will be introduced before the start of the 2006 season.

The AFL has established a new position, Head of People and Culture, to develop a human resource strategy for the AFL industry.

The implementation of these policies will be the responsibility of this new department within the AFL. A project officer with expertise in violence against women issues, will be retained to finalise these procedures and implement other elements of this policy.

Development of organisational policies and procedures to ensure a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for women.

This component aims to foster a culture that creates an environment of equality between women and men. It is difficult to ensure that an environment of equality is generated where women are not appropriately represented at all levels of club administration, or are portrayed as sex objects or otherwise marginalized rather than being recognized for their skills and contributions. Football clubs are an important part of Australian society and thus need to be a safe, supportive and an inclusive environment for women.

This part of the response of the AFL moves beyond the development of formal legal compliance procedures to cultural change within the AFL, AFL clubs and community club systems.

The project officer described above will also develop these broader policies. In doing so, the project officer will work with club directors and managers, women already active in clubs, state-based sporting clubs and associations, and national health promotion foundations with experience in supporting the development of similar resources for community sporting clubs, and importantly, others with expertise relevant to violence against women.

The AFL also recognizes that women are involved at all levels of community football

Changes to AFL rules relating to 'Conduct Unbecoming' which cover the specific context of allegations of sexual assault.

When considering potential rule changes, the AFL ensured that any such changes complemented the existing criminal law and civil law responses to sexual assault and did not undermine the formal justice system.

The AFL Commission has resolved to address the issue of rule change by expanding the definition of "conduct unbecoming" to include as specific examples the following:

» Criminal court finding of guilt for a sexual assault or being placed on a bond without conviction.

» Civil court finding of liability for a sexual assault.

» A player or official pleading guilty to a charge of sexual assault.

» A player or official being committed for trial by a Magistrate's Court on a charge of sexual assault.

» A payment made to someone who has made a complaint of sexual assault by a player, agent, associate or club on his behalf, unless ordered by a Court but being a payment representing compensation and not merely an amount for costs and/or nominal amount being paid to avoid the costs and inconvenience of litigation.

» A club, club official or player responding inappropriately, unfairly or unreasonably to an allegation, charge, commitment for trial, finding of liability or conviction of sexual assault.

› The AFL will develop a template for the competition to assist Clubs and others when dealing with a complaint of sexual assault against a player or official.

» Engage in behaviour associated with an alleged sexual assault that places women at risk.

The AFL will retain a suitably qualified person to advise the AFL Commission when dealing with breaches of these rules which are are summarised on Pages 8 - 10.

Education of AFL players and other club officials.

The first module of an education program for AFL players developed by Victoria's Statewide Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault has already been delivered to all AFL Clubs this year.

The program addressed the basic issues of ensuring respectful and equal sexual relationships, negotiating consent in sexual relationships, and covered aspects of the law of sexual assault, together with information on the incidence of sexual assault and services available to victim/survivors. It also aimed to challenge a series of commonly held myths about sexual assault -- for example, people who are not known to the victim/survivor carry out most sexual assaults, it only happens to women.

The program was developed on the basis of available research in the general community and among young people on attitudes to sexual assault, on the assumption that elite footballers (and those associated with AFL football as the training is to apply to all those associated with AFL football) share similar attitudes to those in the general community.

One secondary aim of the training was to identify players and officials who might be prepared to act as advocates or mentors for others on the issue of violence against women in future training and other initiatives.

During the presentations to AFL Clubs, more than 70 players have volunteered to act as mentors.

The education program was evaluated by the presenters via a brief questionnaire administered before and after the training.

An independent evaluation of the impact of the education program will also be undertaken during the next four to six months.

This education package will be delivered to players during the AFL/AFLPA induction for new draftees before next season.

As part of the AFL's commitment to on-going education on this issue, a second module will be developed to incorporate rule changes and any learnings on research which has been undertaken on this subject by the Australian Sports Commission and Robins, Lusher and Kremer via the AFL Research Board.

Subsequent to evaluation and modification of the education program, liaison will take place with state and community football leagues, including Football Victoria, to ascertain the feasibility of disseminating this program to the community level.

The dissemination of model policies and procedures at community club level.

The AFL recognizes that if it is to take a community leadership role in addressing the issue of violence against women, its work cannot be confined to the AFL competition and the 16 Clubs.

Discussions have already been held with the various State and Territory football bodies about the concept of adapting what will be applied at AFL level for State league and community based clubs.

To progress this work, a representative from Football Victoria, Mick Daniher, has been invited to join the working group responsible for supporting development and implementation of the overall strategy.

Development of a public education campaign.

The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (VicHealth), has undertaken a project designed to:

1) Assess community attitudes to violence against women in 2005,

2) Identify policies, legislative reform, service developments, media activity and communication strategies that may have impacted on community awareness, including a review of international campaigns,

3) Make recommendations for development of future strategies designed to improve attitudes and behaviors in this area.

The AFL has joined this project advisory group and will work with VicHealth and other organizations to develop a communication program, after the results of the media analysis and the community attitudes survey are known.

The AFL has also developed a partnership with VicHealth to develop a communication program after the results of the media analysis and the community attitudes survey are known,

A second focus of the communication program will be on implementing the broader policy and rule change within the AFL system and working with State and Territory football bodies to adapt the policy for community based football clubs and leagues.

'CONDUCT UNBECOMING' – definition outlined

'Conduct Unbecoming': Behaviour targeted	Nature of response	Circumstances
2. (a) Breach of code governing how individuals and clubs should respond to allegations of sexual assault It is a breach of this code for a club/club official or player to respond inappropriately, unfairly or unreasonably in response to an allegation of sexual assault against a player or official including: • Failing to report an allegation of sexual assault made against a player or official to the AFL. • Failing to reasonably co-operate with any police investigation. • Making inappropriate comments in the media in relation to an allegation of sexual assault against a player or official. • Vilifying the complainant publicly. • Making a payment to a victim by a player, official, agent, associate or club on his behalf, not ordered by a Court but being a payment representing compensation and not merely an amount for costs and/ or nominal amount being paid to avoid the costs and inconvenience of litigation.	Range of sanctions from fine, to suspension, to restricted representational duties. The level of sanction imposed may depend on whether, for example, the player, official or the club has apologised for their behaviour.	This part of the code can be invoked when a complaint of sexual assault is made either to a club or the AFL, the police or in the media and throughout the process of investigation

'CONDUCT UNBECOMING' – definition outlined

'Conduct Unbecoming': Behaviour targeted	Nature of response	Circumstances
1. Finding by a court or tribunal of liability for a sexual assault (here defined as including the criminal offences of rape and indecent assault) • Conviction by a criminal court of a sexual offence • A finding by a civil court or tribunal eg HREOC or state anti discrimination tribunal of liability for a sexual assault • A player or official pleading guilty to a charge of sexual assault • A player or official being committed for trial by a Magistrate's Court on a charge of sexual assault • Payment made to a victim by a player, official, agent, associate or club on his behalf, not ordered by a Court but being a payment representing compensation and not merely an amount being paid to avoid the costs and inconvenience of litigation.	**Sanction range:** • Termination/delisting • Financial sanction • Standing down • Suspension for a period • Restricted representational duties • Other	This response is only invoked where there is a conviction for sexual assault, the establishment of a prima facie case for sexual assault, finding of civil liability or an inappropriate payment made.

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'CONDUCT UNBECOMING' – definition outlined

'Conduct Unbecoming': Behaviour targeted	Nature of response	Circumstances
2. (b) Behaviour associated with an alleged sexual assault It is a breach of this code to engage in behaviour associated with an alleged sexual assault that places women at risk.	This response is addressed to remedying and managing possible future harm to women. It is designed to be responsive not punitive The range of responses include: • warning • coaching • mentoring • training/ development • increased supervision • counselling • retraining • personal development • performance enhancement agreements • an apology to the people affected	This response can be invoked at any time, including while an alleged incident is being investigated. In particular, it can be invoked when a woman does not want to pursue her complaint to the police, and/or the police/DPP have decided that no further action will be taken, and there is no publicly available evidence of related conduct.

BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY AFL WORKING GROUP
Sexual assault – major community health issue

In recent decades sexual assault has been identified by a number of bodies both nationally and internationally as a health, social and economic problem requiring urgent attention. It was canvassed in a landmark report on the health implications of violence released by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2002). In Australia it has been addressed through, for example, the Victorian Government's whole of government Women's Safety Strategy (OWP, 2002) and at the Federal level through the Partnerships Against Domestic Violence and the National Initiative to Combat Sexual Assault. (DF&CS, 2005a and 2005b).

Sexual assault, for the purposes of the discussion here, encompasses a range of unwanted sexual touching, and includes the criminal offences of rape and indecent assault, as variously defined under state law. While the precise prevalence of sexual violence is notoriously difficult to establish, it is clear that the overwhelming majority (more than 80%) of victims of sexual assault are women (OWP 2002). In 2003/2004 3600 women reported sexual assault to the Victorian Police, an increase of 250 from the previous year (Victoria Police, 2004). However, the great majority of women (an estimated 8 or 9 out of 10) do not report to law enforcement agencies (ABS, 1996 and OWP, 2002) and many do not disclose to any one (WHO, 2002). The most recent survey of Australian women conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicates that:

• One in 5 (18% of women) reported being subject to or threatened with sexual assault at some time in their adult lives.

• 1.4% of women reported being sexually assaulted by a male perpetrator in the previous year (ABS, 1996).

The Australian component of the International Violence Against Women Survey 2004 indicates that:

• In the previous 12 months, 10% of women reported experiencing at least one incident of physical violence (8%) and/or sexual (4%) violence.

• Over their lifetime, 57% of women reported experiencing at least one incident of physical violence (48%) or sexual violence (34%).

• Two in five women reported that, since the age of 16, they had experienced at least one incident of physical/sexual violence from a male other than a partner (relative, known male or stranger) (7% in the past twelve months).

Exposure to sexual assault has serious consequences for women's physical and mental health as well as for their social wellbeing. In its review, the World Health Organization (2002) found that sexual violence is associated with an increased risk of:

• Unwanted pregnancy, an outcome in an estimated 5% of all rapes

  ◦ Gynaecological complications

  ◦ Sexually transmitted diseases

• Serious mental health and behavioural problems, with the rate of symptoms suggestive of psychiatric disorder being over 5 times higher in women with a history of sexual abuse

as adults, than those without such a history

• Depression and post traumatic stress disorders

• Suicide

• Behaviors which are harmful to health such as drug use and future unsafe sexual activity

• Social exclusion and stigma

Given these serious health impacts, there is also likely to be a profound effect on women's relationships with partners, children and other family members as a result of a sexual assault.

Sexual violence also has a negative impact on the wider community. In a climate in which sexual violence is, or is perceived to be, common and where effective legal and social sanctions against violence are lacking, there is the potential for all women to feel unsafe and fearful. This in turn inhibits women's equal participation in a range of environments and their access to cultural, social and economic resources. Such a climate also undermines respectful relationships between men and women and in so doing diminishes us all.

Although there is a lack of Australian evidence on the economic costs of sexual violence, a US Study estimated that the 2001 equivalent costs associated with rape amounted to A$85,000 for each rape in the form of both direct costs (such as medical treatment and victim compensation) as well as in indirect costs such as lost productivity (WHO 2004).

The causes of sexual violence are complex. However, accumulated evidence from around the world suggests that broader social, economic and cultural factors play a major part, with a significant underlying factor being the unequal distribution of power between men and women (WHO, 2002; OWP, 2002). In general the prevalence of sexual assault is lower in cultures in which power and resources are shared equally between the sexes; in which there are respectful relationships between men and women; and in which there are strong social and legal sanctions against violence (WHO, 2002; OWP, 2002). This evidence suggests that there are significant prospects for preventing sexual assault.

Traditionally, responsibility for addressing sexual assault fell largely to the criminal justice and social services systems, where intervention was understandably focused after violence had occurred. More recently, women's groups and services have been successful in putting the prevention of sexual assault on to the broader social policy agenda. This has led to increasing recognition that creating safe and supportive environments for women is a shared responsibility of individuals, organizations, communities and governments.

Clearly, the problem of sexual violence is not confined to the football community. At the same time, given evidence of under reporting at the community level (see above), the events of 2004 are unlikely to be the only or indeed the last incidents of this nature to come to the attention of the AFL.

The AFL shares in common with other community organizations an interest in preventing crimes (among them sexual violence) from occurring in the environments under its control and influence. With women comprising a significant proportion of the AFL membership and supporter base as well as its paid and volunteer workforce, this responsibility extends beyond a specific focus on crime prevention to broader actions needed to promote a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for women.

Australian football has been an integral and influential part of the Australian cultural landscape for almost 150 years. The AFL, as the administering body of the AFL competition and in its role as "Keeper of the Code" and the major contributor to investment in community based football via the various State and Territory football bodies, has the potential to play a powerful role in shaping attitudes in conjunction with its AFL Clubs and other stakeholders under its auspices, including leagues within the code and within the wider community.

Sexual violence is an inextricable part of the broader problem of violence against women. Many of the underlying causes of sexual assault are also implicated in other forms of physical, sexual, economic and psychological violence against women occurring in a range of public and private settings. Action to prevent sexual assault in and by the sports sector is therefore likely to have a positive impact on reducing violence against women generally, along with its attendant social, economic and health consequences.

The working group has operated from the presumption that the attitudes of AFL players to sexual assault and violence against women is not likely to be different from that of the general community. The 1995 Office for Status of Women survey showed that more than a third of men (37%) disagreed with the statement 'Women rarely make claims of rape', even though the rate of false complaint is tiny (Graycar and Morgan, 2002, p. 356). Surveys of young people also show disturbing attitudes: One 1995 survey found that 12% of young men thought it was 'okay for a man to pressure a woman to have sex if ... he has spent a lot of money on her' and 23% if 'they have dated a long time' (Daws et al, 1995; Crime Research Centre, 2001). With these views in the wider community, it would not be surprising if they were also shared by (some) footballers. Indeed, American research does indicate that young athletes are more likely to believe rape myths and have rape supportive attitudes (Boeringer, 1999). It is also to be noted that footballers work in a world that is extremely male dominated, which may reinforce such attitudes. However, it is also important to recognise that footballers' views are not monolithic.

STEPS TAKEN BY THE AFL SINCE MARCH, 2004

March, 2004:

» Allegations of sexual assault made against two AFL players and players in other codes.

» Victoria Police announce a review of investigations during the past 5-10 years of sexual assault allegations against various professional athletes.

» AFL seeks advice from AFL Clubs on their existing sexual harassment and sexual discrimination policies.

April/May 2004:

» Start of review of current education programs for AFL players.

» Club sexual harassment and discrimination policies reviewed.

» Initial discussions with AFL Club representatives on development of an industry approach to allegations.

» Initial discussions with representatives of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine and Victoria's Statewide Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault.

» Initial meeting held with representatives of CASA Forum (Centres Against Sexual Assault).

June, 2004:

» Law School, The University of Melbourne, agrees to assist AFL, to develop a strategy to deal with issues of sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and violence towards women.

» Working Group convened by Professor Jenny Morgan, Deputy Dean, Law School, The University of Melbourne, established.

July/November, 2004:

» Working Group meets monthly to establish discussion document to address sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and violence towards women.

» Education program for players and officials developed by Working Group in consultation with Statewide Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault.

» Education program trialed with group of players from Western Bulldogs in November, 2004.

December, 2004:

» Discussion document from Working Group received by AFL Commission.

» Discussion document distributed for comment to AFL Clubs, AFL Players Association, various Federal and State Government departments throughout Australia, other community groups and agencies including the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner.

February/March 2005:

» Responses to discussion document received and reviewed by Working Group.

April/June 2005:

» Working Group finalises recommendations to AFL Commission.

July, 2005:

» AFL Commission adopts recommendations in principle.

August, 2005:

» AFL Commission adopts policy document for implementation.

November, 2005:

» Policy released.

Appendix 4 – AFL Equal Employment Opportunity Policy 2009

1   EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Purpose: The AFL regards unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment and bullying as intolerable and believes that all people have the right to work in an environment which is free of unlawful discrimination, sexual harassment, racial and religious vilification and bullying.

Scope: This policy applies to all people in the workplace including employees, casual staff, volunteers, contractors, players, umpires and other persons in the workplace acting as agents of the AFL

Also refer to: Member Protection Policy

Under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act (1995) and the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act (1975), Disability Discrimination Act (1984) and Sex Discrimination Act (1984) unfair discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment is illegal. In its most serious forms harassment can be an offence under State and Federal criminal law.

The AFL is committed to providing a working environment in which all employees are treated fairly and equitably and are not subjected to bullying, unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment. Any reports of unlawful discrimination, bullying or sexual harassment will be treated seriously and sympathetically by the AFL and will be investigated thoroughly and confidentially. The AFL will ensure that complainants and witnesses are not victimised in any way. Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone found guilty of unlawfully discriminating against, bullying or sexually harassing a co-worker.

1.1   AFL'S OBJECTIVES REGARDING UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The AFL aims to:

- uphold the right of all people in the workplace to a safe working and learning environment free from unlawful discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment;
- establish and maintain a working environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment and where all members of staff including volunteers are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect;
- implement training and awareness strategies to ensure that all employees know their rights and responsibilities;
- ensure that effective procedures are in place should unlawful discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment occur;
- treat all complaints in a sensitive, fair, timely and confidential manner;

- ensure protection from any victimisation or reprisals;
- encourage the reporting of all incidents of unlawful discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment, regardless of who the offender may be;
- take appropriate disciplinary action against any person found to be in breach of the AFL policy on unlawful discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment; and
- promote appropriate standards at all times.

1.2   UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination may be direct or indirect. It may be based on the presumption that a person has or had a particular attribute, or upon actual knowledge that a person has or had a particular attribute.

Direct discrimination means treating or proposing to treat a person less favourably than another person on the basis of a certain attribute or personal characteristic, regardless of the nature or whether the discriminator is aware of the discrimination.

Indirect discrimination means unreasonably imposing or intending to impose a requirement, condition or practice that can only be complied with by a higher proportion of people without a certain attribute than those with that attribute.

Discrimination can occur in the recruitment process, during the course of employment, or upon termination of employment.

Under the relevant legislation, it is unlawful to discriminate against anyone on a variety of grounds including, but not limited to the following:

- age;
- carer status (meaning a person on whom another is wholly or substantially dependent);
- disability/impairment (including physical, psychological and intellectual disabilities);
- industrial activity (including being a member of a union);
- lawful sexual activity/sexual orientation;
- marital status;
- parental status;
- personal association (assumed or otherwise with someone possessing or assumed to possess an attribute);
- physical features (such as height, weight, size, etc.);
- political belief or activity;
- pregnancy;
- race;
- religious belief/activity; and
- sex;
- breast feeding
- Gender identity

Discriminatory conduct is not unlawful where an exemption or exception applies as follows:

- employment in dramatic or artistic performance, photographic, modelling or similar work;
- an employer may set and enforce reasonable standards of dress and behaviour;
- an employer may limit the offering of employment to people of one sex if there is a genuine occupational requirement (e.g. physical requirements or for preservation of decency and privacy);
- an employer may discriminate on the basis of disability, pregnancy or physical
  features if the discrimination is reasonably necessary to protect the health and safety or property of any person;
- an employer may discriminate on the basis of disability or other attribute where in performance of genuine and reasonable requirements of employment, special services would be required and could not be reasonably provided; and
- an employer may set reasonable terms of employment or make reasonable variations of those terms to take account of the requirements of the employment.

1.3 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment means an unwelcome sexual advance, an unwelcome request for sexual favours or other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in circumstances where a reasonable person would consider that someone could feel:

- offended;
- humiliated or
- intimidated
  by the conduct.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT MAY INCLUDE SUCH ACTIONS AS:

- uninvited touching;
- uninvited kisses or embraces;
- smutty jokes or comments;
- making promises or threats in return for sexual favours;
- displays of sexually graphic material including posters, pinups, cartoons, graffiti or messages left on notice boards, desks or common areas;
- repeated invitations to go out after prior refusal;
- "flashing" or sexual gestures;
- sex-based insults, taunts, teasing, or name-calling;
- staring or leering at a person or at parts of their body;
- unwelcome physical contact such as massaging a person without invitation or deliberately brushing up against them;
- touching or fiddling with a person's clothing including lifting up skirts or shirts, flicking bra straps, or putting hands in a person's pocket;
- requests for sex;
- sexually explicit conversation;
- persistent questions or insinuations about a person's private life;

- offensive phone calls or letters;
- stalking; and
- offensive email messages or computer screen savers.

SCOPE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment can occur between colleagues where an imbalance of power exists, (for example where one person is a manager or supervisor), or it can occur between two colleagues people who are of equal status. Sexual harassment can also be perpetuated by someone who is of a lower status in the workplace.

Sexual harassment may be an isolated incident or a series of events and can be intentional or unintentional. A person may not intend to offend, however the test is in how the behaviour is perceived by the recipient and the circumstances of the incident. What one person accepts as reasonable, another person may find offensive.

The workplace can extend beyond standard working hours and environments and may include social functions, conferences, celebrations, group functions and training sessions and includes interactions with clients and customers.

The AFL expects all managers, supervisors and staff to treat each other with respect and to behave in a professional manner.

WHAT IS NOT SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is not behaviour which is based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect. If the interaction is consensual, welcome and reciprocated it is not sexual harassment.

1.4 BULLYING

Bullying is repeated, unreasonable or inappropriate workplace behaviour that intimidates, humiliates, insults and/or undermines a person or group. It has many similarities to sexual harassment but the reasons for bullying behaviour may be much broader than the grounds on which it is unlawful to harass someone e.g. a person may be bullied because they are seen to be quiet or weak

Examples of bullying may include:

- Racially based jokes or comments
- Mimicking someone with a disability
- Isolating someone or encouraging other staff to isolate someone
- Unfair or excessive criticism

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- Using abusive
  language
- Initiation "rituals"

CONSEQUENCES IF THIS POLICY IS BREACHED

Where sexual discrimination, bullying or unlawful discrimination is substantiated, the consequences to the person or persons against whom the complaint is made will depend on a range of factors such as the seriousness of the case and the person's employment status. A range of appropriate action is listed below:

- formal apologies;
- counselling;
- undertakings that inappropriate behaviour will cease;
- clarification of expectations about appropriate conduct;
- issuing a warning in relation to the consequences of continued behaviour;
- implementing a period of formal monitoring; and
- disciplinary action including dismissal.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

Under the relevant legislation, the AFL and the relevant managers and supervisors may be held responsible for sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination in the workplace unless all reasonable steps have been taken to prevent the harassment.

Managers and supervisors are responsible for making sure that all employees understand that sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination will not be tolerated in the workplace and for taking early action to deal with behaviour which may be offensive or intimidating. Managers/Supervisors are required to:

- actively promulgate the policy and procedures on the prevention of sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination to all employees;
- model appropriate behaviour at work to ensure the working environment is free from sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination;
- ensure appropriate training is provided to all staff;
- monitor the workplace to ensure the principles are being observed;
- ensure Contact Officers participate in appropriate training;
- provide support for Contact Officers;
- ensure employees are aware of the Contact Officers within their area;
- ensure Contact Officers are relieved of work promptly when required to assist a complainant;
- intervene to stop inappropriate behaviour by others;
- take appropriate action to resolve a complaint informally at the request of a complainant; and
- ensure complaints are resolved promptly, in a sensitive and strictly confidential manner.

RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYEES

Employees are responsible for promoting a positive work environment and being committed to the prevention of sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination Employees are required to:

- comply with the sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination policy and procedures;
- be aware of the procedures for dealing with sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination;
- model appropriate behaviour at work to ensure a working environment free from sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination;
- participate in appropriate training;
- report incidents witnessed to appropriate manager/supervisor or Contact Officer;
- maintain confidentiality if involved in the resolution or investigation of a complaint; ensure they do not lodge a false complaint.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CO-WORKERS

All staff are expected to respect the rights of others and not encourage nor participate in sexual harassment, bullying and/or unlawful discrimination. If any staff member becomes aware that a co-worker is being sexually harassed, bullied or unlawfully discriminated against, they can help prevent it by offering support to the person being harassed. This can be done by:

- offering to act as a witness if the person being sexually harassed, bullied or unlawfully discriminated against decides to report the incident;
- refusing to join in with any sexually harassing, bullying or unlawful discrimination activity; and
- backing them up or supporting them to say no.

It is not a co-worker's responsibility to say anything to the alleged harasser or to spread rumours about someone. If a staff member takes part in spreading rumours, they may be subject to defamation action.

ROLE OF CONTACT OFFICERS

Contact Officers shall be appointed by the AFL to be responsible for providing a support and advisory role to employees. The Contact Officer is required to:

- raise awareness about sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination in their work environment;
- model appropriate behaviour to ensure a working environment free from sexual
  harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination;
- provide a support and advisory role to all staff;

- be approachable to employees who have concerns or complaints about sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination and provide advice and information;
- provide advice on the options available to employees who have been subject to sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination;
- maintain confidentiality when providing a support and advisory role in relation to a sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination complaint unless permission is given from the complainant to speak with a manager or supervisor; and
- participate in appropriate training.

The Sexual Harassment/Discrimination Contact Officer DOES NOT have a formal role in the resolution process of a complaint.

1.5   COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

PRINCIPLES

The principles which apply to the sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination complaints procedure are:

- everyone has a right to be treated with respect;
- everyone has a right to "due process", i.e. the person against whom the allegation is made has the right to know what is alleged against them, the right to put their case in reply and the right for any decision to be made by an impartial decision maker;
- wherever possible a non-adversarial and non-judgmental resolution to the problem will be pursued; and
- complaints will be treated in confidence and where confidentiality cannot be guaranteed this will be clearly indicated.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING SEXUALLY HARASSED, BULLIED OR DISCRIMINATED AGAINST?

1. If possible, promptly inform the offender directly or in writing that their behaviour is offensive and unacceptable and request that it stop immediately; or
2. If you feel you are not able to do this, discuss the matter with your manager or supervisor; or
3. Contact a designated Contact Officer who will deal with the complaint.   (At this stage, the complaint may be informal or formal. This is your choice. If you wish to proceed with a formal complaint you will need to follow the formal complaint process.)

Always keep a record of incidents noting what happened, when and the names of witnesses. You also have the right to raise concerns relating to sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination in the workplace with the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity.

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Informal ways of dealing with sexual harassment, bullying or discrimination can include the following action:

- you may wish to deal with the situation yourself but may also wish to seek advice on possible strategies from the Contact Officer;
- you may ask your manager or supervisor to speak to the alleged harasser on your behalf. The manager or supervisor will privately convey your concerns and reiterate the AFL's sexual harassment, bullying and unlawful discrimination policy without assessing the merits of the case;
- a complaint is made, the harasser admits the behaviour and the complaint is resolved through conciliation or counselling of the harasser; and
- a manager or supervisor observes unacceptable conduct occurring and takes independent action even though no complaint has been made.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS

This procedure assumes that informal resolution of the grievance has been unsuccessful or is inappropriate.

- A formal complaint of sexual harassment and/or unlawful discrimination will need to be in writing and should be made to the Contact Officer.
- The Contact Officer will does not play a role in the investigation and hands over the complaint to the designated Investigations Officer who will undertake a preliminary investigation of the complaint and will then submit a confidential written report to the Chief Executive Officer of the AFL.
- The Chief Executive Officer of the AFL (or delegate) may carry out further investigations if necessary, including referral to an external mediator/conciliator.
- The Chief Executive Officer of the AFL will then take appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action.
- All parties to the complaint will be advised of the outcome.

Each person in the workplace shall:

- fully co-operate with the designated Investigations Officer in any investigation;
- truthfully answer any questions asked by the Investigations Officer;
- provide any document, including without limitation computer records and disks, in a person's possession or control relevant to the matter being investigated; and
- not make any false or misleading statement or act in any manner calculated to or which is likely to mislead the Investigation Officer.

OPTIONS FOR REMEDIES

The Chief Executive Officer shall determine appropriate action as a result of the investigation. If someone has a complaint made against them and is found to have

sexually harassed and/or discriminated against the complainer, disciplinary action will follow. The disciplinary action will depend on the circumstances of the case, but can range from counselling the offender to termination of the offender's employment.

CONFIDENTIALITY

An accusation of sexual harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination can be potentially defamatory, especially if confidentiality is not observed and a person's reputation may be unfairly damaged. Discussions, information and records related to complaints will remain factual and confidential. Minimal but sufficient documentation will be kept.

All documentation and details of sexual harassment, bullying or unlawful discrimination

complaints will be kept securely by the Investigations Officer or HR Manager.