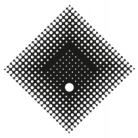
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

Women leaders in sport: a community of practice programme to create social learning

This is the Accepted version of the following publication

Hanlon, Clare and Taylor, Tracy (2022) Women leaders in sport: a community of practice programme to create social learning. Managing Sport and Leisure. ISSN 2375-0472

The publisher's official version can be found at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23750472.2022.2051727
Note that access to this version may require subscription.

Downloaded from VU Research Repository https://vuir.vu.edu.au/45869/

Women Leaders in Sport: A Community of Practice Program to Create Social Learning

Journal:	*Managing Sport and Leisure*
Manuscript ID	RMLE-2021-0146.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	sport, community of practice, social learning, women as leaders

Abstract:	Purpose: A community of practice (CoP) social learning approach can purposefully support change and provide rich experiences to benefit participants and their sport organisations. We explore how a CoP intervention program creates social learning outcomes and expands opportunities for women as leaders in sport. Research methods: Chief Executive Officers (16) undertaking a one year intervention program were interviewed and completed a Gender Equality Diagnostic Tool, pre and post program. Findings: The social network formed during the CoP program expanded participant's social learnings and associated actions, through informal social interactions and discussion of shared practices. Practical implications: CoP interventions that embed social learning into program design and provide impetus to implement organisational change and initiatives can expand opportunities for women into sport leadership. Research contribution: A refined understanding has been gained on how bringing together CoP and social learning theoretical frameworks can be a powerful force for change.

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Introduction

Women's underrepresentation in sport leadership roles has been extensively researched and theorised in sport management, sport sociology and gender studies scholarship (cf Burton, 2019; Harris, Grappendorf, Aicher, & Veraldo, 2015; Pape, 2020). These examinations have been located within critiques about the gendered nature of sport (Taylor, O'Connor & Hanlon, 2019), the existence of an 'old boys club' network of power and privilege (Hartzell & Dixon, 2019), and the persistent prevalence of masculinity as a preferred trait of leaders in sport organisations (Burton, 2019). While recent research indicates that sport leadership roles are becoming more inclusive, it is generally acknowledged the movement towards gender equality has been incredibly slow (Swanson, Billsberry, Kent, Skinner & Mueller, 2019).

The lack of progress in achieving gender equality has prompted a growing number of government and sport bodies to introduce strategies, policies and programs that aim to provide women with greater access to leadership roles in sport. Many government regulatory and funding agencies, industry bodies and sport organisations have mandated targets or quotas for leadership or governance positions (Burton, 2019; Sisjord, Fasting & Sand, 2017). However, evidence from several countries continues to show that women still face challenges in obtaining and maintaining sport organisation leadership roles (e.g. Australia – Sotiriadou & Pavlidis, 2020; Canada - Culver, Kraft, Din & Cayer, 2019; Hungary – Földesi & Gál, 2019; Kenya - M'mbaha & Chepyator-Thomson, 2019; New Zealand – Ryan & Dickson, 2018; UK - Velija & Mansfield, 2018; USA - Gaston, Blundell & Fletcher, 2020).

To better understand this persistent challenge, recent research agendas have productively deployed a multilevel framework categorisation analyses to the study of women and sport leadership; comprising macro (societal), meso (organisational) and micro (individual) levels (e.g., Burton, 2019). This framework provides a basis to locate the barriers and facilitators that operate at each of the three levels. Using this framework, Sotiriadou and

For Peer Review Only

de Haan (2019) suggested concentrating on the micro level based on the influential role individuals play through being 'champions of change' at all levels of governance and how they might address the inequality associated with women in leadership Likewise, de Vries (2015) confirmed the critical role of these champions and the need to understand effective champion behaviours. We examined this premise through working with leaders in sport organisations who participated in a program to designed to develop them as change agents within their own organisations and across the sport industry in the support for women as leaders. Change agents can facilitate transformational change through "two way engagement between men, gender interventions and their organisations" (de Vries, 2015, p.34) to address the underrepresentation of women as leaders in sport. Our research focussed on the development of a community of practice (CoP) to stimulate developmental, transitional or transformational organisational change (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2012) through interactions between the three levels in the multilevel framework.

Our research examines CoP through a social learning approach as this enables the research process to directly benefit the participants. Previous research into CoP in sport has explored sport-for-all (e.g., Willem, Girginov & Toohey, 2019), and women head coaches (Bertram, Culer & Gilbert, 2017). Evidence from the latter indicates that a CoP social learning approach can purposefully support change and provide rich experiences to benefit participants and their sport organisations, individually and collectively. The research aimed to explore how individuals within a CoP intervention program creates social learning outcomes and expands opportunities for women as leaders in sport.

Gender Inequity in Sports Leadership

While advances have been made in increasing women's representation in leadership positions in sport organisations, gender inequality persists (Banu-Lawrence, Frawley & Hoeser, 2020).

For Peer Review Only

Progress has been made in some quarters (e.g. board representation - Elling et al., 2018), but generally male privilege, power and numerical dominance continue across the sport industry (Burton, 2019; Richards, Litchfield & Osbourne, 2020). Women leaders in sport are often hampered by a binary and hierarchically gendered logic that shapes organisational procedures and culture (Pape, 2020). Women are under-represented in board, management and executive positions in sport organisations (Steidinger, 2020), generally paid less (Richards, 2018), experience feelings of marginalisation (Reid & Dallaire, 2019) and are exposed to sexism in the workplace (Hindman & Walker, 2020). The often dominant masculine workplace culture in sport shapes how women leaders are perceived and gives rise to gendered challenges (Burton, 2019; Wicker et al., 2019). In 2019 across the 63 Australian national sporting organisations (NSO), women comprised only 24 percent of CEO's and 15 percent of high performance coaches (Sport Australia, 2021). In 2020, the number of women on the boards of NSO is 41.7% (Women on Boards, 2020). The long-standing gender inequality in leadership is well recognised in Australian sport, and in the national sport governance principles (Principle 4), the standard is that no gender account for more than 60 percent Directors in a NSO (Sport Australia, 2020). These principles do not address other forms of leadership and gendered challenges remain.

Considerable research has been taken into prevailing and persistent challenges to women assuming leadership roles, yet, meaningful actions in gender equity are limited (Evans and Pfister, 2021). Effecting much needed organisational culture change and practicable solutions (Evans & Pfister, 2021), include strategies and policies that encourage and enhance female leadership in sport (Hartzell & Dixon, 2019); leadership development programs (M'mbaha & Chepyater-Thomson, 2018); reshaping organisational procedures and processes (Pape, 2020); identifying and addressing organisational barriers for women (LaVoi et al., 2019); or creating equity champions in organisations to tackle gender related issues

For Peer Review Only

(Sotiriadou & de Hann, 2019). Actions should empower women to attain leadership positions while engendering a broader acceptance of women in the governance of sport organisations (Evans & Pfister, 2021; Sotiriadou & de Hann, 2019), and proactive change in sports' organisational culture, structures and policies (Parker, 2019).

Research needs to move beyond studies on gender distribution and the barriers that prevent women obtaining decision-making positions to research that measures the effectiveness of practices to increase the representation of women (Evans & Pfister, 2021). Our research focuses on enabling factors in interventions that support women in sport leadership roles (Pike et., al., 2018) from an organisation perspective. This approach allows us to better understand how organisations resist or facilitate the responsibility to change through addressing institutional and structural practices that impact opportunities for women (Spaaij, Knoppers & Jeanes, 2020). We apply a social learning lens to examine a CoP program initiative aimed at expanding opportunities for women in leadership roles in sport.

The Development of Community Practice through Social Learning

Communities of practice and networked solutions develop through "people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002, p.4). Interactions are informal and evolving (Ardichvili, 2008), occur within a social space (Li et al., 2009), and cross organisational boundaries (Aubry et al., 2011) determined by a shared concern (Willem et al., 2019).

CoP have been explored in a variety of social learning environments, including sport (Culver et al., 2017; Willem et al., 2019). A CoP comprises three fundamental elements: a domain of knowledge, which defines a set of issues (e.g., gender equity in sport leadership); a community of people who care about this domain; and the shared practice that members are

For Peer Review Only

developing to be effective in their domain (Wenger et al., 2002). CoP align with a broader goal (Willem et al., 2019), and include a knowledge broker (Conklin et al., 2013) to facilitate on-going interactions (Culver et al., 2017). Sport governing bodies can be knowledge brokers as they provide support, tools and platforms for knowledge sharing (Girginov et al., 2015). CoP can provide interconnected competencies (Wenger et al., 2002), such as when sport organisation employees become members of a CoP (Willem et al., 2019) to gain an understanding of government requirements, support, practices and opportunities. However, the extent to which government bodies may enhance learning in a CoP and ensure a process of knowledge sharing is not evidenced (Willem et al., 2019).

A social learning approach takes CoP beyond being a transactional lever through identifying learnings gained within CoP. Social learning can occur from peer-to-peer interaction via social networks, as a process of social change where individuals learn from each other for the benefit of society. Social learning can take place at the surface level or involve deeper conceptual change at group, community or societal scale (Reed et al., 2010). Learning occurs through a change of a person's understanding of the world and their relationship to it (Fazey & Marton, 2002). This occurs through the social interaction of others and/or facilitative mechanisms including dissemination of information that results in more than one person potentially gaining new learnings (Reed et al., 2010).

Social learning is when "ideas and attitudes learned by members of a small group diffuse to members of wider social units or communities of practice to which they belong" (Reed et al., 2010, p.5). Reed et al. proposed that social learning outcomes can be evidenced through three actions. First, that a change in understanding has occurred for individuals involved either at surface level or at a deeper level such as a demonstrated change in attitude. Second, the social learning gained goes beyond the individual and is within wider social units

For Peer Review Only

or communities of practice. Finally, that social learning expands through social interactions and processes between stakeholders directly or indirectly within social networks.

Our research explores an Australian state-based program designed to improve the opportunities for women to become leaders in sport organisations. The program was initiated due to low number of women leaders in sport. In particular 29% of the Victorian state sport associations having women executive officers in 2015 (Sport and Recreation Victoria, 2015).

Specifically, our study looked at whether social learning occurred through the program, and if this learning facilitated the implementation of changes to organisational practices to expand opportunities for women as leaders, using the three outcome actions identified by Reed et al. (2010).

Methods

Research Context

The study involved a 12 month intervention program which was part of a government-led initiative. The program was the first of its kind: facilitated by the Director, Office for Women in Sport and Recreation (OWSR); and conducted with two groups (8 each) of state-based sport organisations Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). The participating sports had 6-80 employees, a large membership base, and were actively engaging in gender inclusion efforts. The CEOs had been in their role from 1-10 years.

The program included evolving social interactions designed to create a CoP, with bimonthly three-hour sessions. The aim was to enhance individual leadership capability, and comprised: professional development, thought leadership, listen and learn development, and gender inclusion experts both within and external to sport. Case studies from each organisation were discussed and common issues were identified to provide opportunities for reflection, new insights and identification of inclusive organisational practices.

For Peer Review Only

The program intervention met the requirements of a CoP (Wenger et al., 2002). First, the domain of knowledge focused on women as leaders in sport. Second, CEOs from state sport associations shared a common concern about the need to enhance opportunities to encourage women as leaders in their sport. Finally, learnings were gained and experiences shared on organisational practices implemented to encourage women as leaders.

Data Collection

To explore social learning outcomes, two sources of data were collected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants post-program to explore their learnings. Pre and post program, the Gender Equality Diagnostic Tool (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2019) was used to identify organisational practices related to encouraging women as leaders. Concepts underpinned by social learning, in particular Reed et al (2010), provided theoretical guidance through the inquiry and data analysis. This framing permitted themes to emerge from the process and through the data collected and analysed. In regards to author positionality, one author presented general findings during a program session from pre and post responses gained from the Monitor Framework and knew the majority of participants in the program. The other author was not involved in the program or aware of participant names.

Interviews

Every participant involved in the program was invited to be interviewed (n=16), and all accepted (15 men, 1 woman). Interviews were conducted in person, averaged approximately one hour and were held at the participant's preferred time and location. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. One researcher conducted all the interviews. Notes in the form of research memos were taken during and soon after each interview to record information. In this case, theoretical memos that focused on emerging themes and findings from the interview process (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973).

For Peer Review Only

The semi-structured interviews provided structure and flexibility. Structure was derived from the ability to ask questions that target information on a particular topic (Bryman, 2012), flexibility allowed interviewees to digress and discuss matters important from their perspective, which can be relevant matters the researcher did not consider at the onset of the research (Brinkmann, 2013). Questions focused on identifying if social learning had occurred, whether this was at the individual or organisational level based on the three social learning outcome actions (Reed et al., 2010). Example questions included: "Explain any learnings you may have gained as a result from this program" (change of understanding); "Describe any learnings that may have expanded beyond you and into your organisation" (goes beyond the individual); and "Explain your thoughts about the interaction involved in this program" (social interaction between stakeholders).

Monitor Framework

The Gender Equality Diagnostic Tool was presented during the initial program session to assist participants benchmark and identify organisational practices implemented to encourage women as leaders in their organisation. The Tool comprised a framework and guide, and has been widely adopted by many different industry sectors throughout Australia that aim to advance women as leaders. The first author of this study met with each participant to further discuss its application to their respective organisation. A key aspect involved participants identifying current practices associated with 11 focus areas including: stakeholder engagement; leadership accountability; strategy and business case; measurement and reporting gender composition; policies and processes; supply chain; gender pay equity; flexibility; talent pipeline; leader and manager capability; and gender inclusive culture. The Tool required participants to assess their progress on each focus area using a self-rating scale.

After populating the framework, participants emailed it to the research investigator to review and provide feedback to clarify current and proposed organisational practices for the

For Peer Review Only

following 11 months. A presentation of the overall results (organisations de-identified) was given during a subsequent program session where challenges, opportunities and good practice examples were discussed as a group. At the conclusion of the program, the process was repeated to identify any changes that had occurred and actions taken to propose further changes for the following year. This pre and post program process enabled us to benchmark change and identify what (if any) new practices had been implemented to encourage women as leaders in the respective organisations and were common cross-organisational practices.

Data Analysis

The use of different data sources was incorporated to address our research aim and validate data (Fusch, Fusch & Ness, 2018). The interviews were analysed for key themes identified and the monitor framework provided evidence to validate social learning outcomes. NVIVO 12 was used to assist the reflective thematic analysis of the data (Zamawe, 2015).

The use of multiple investigators was adopted to validate data coding and themes (Bryman, 2012). The authors, experienced in qualitative analysis, first familiarised themselves with the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts, research memos and monitor frameworks. After the analysis, for example, of the interviews by one author, the other author independently reviewed the preliminary coding and analysis. A comparison of coding decisions was then conducted until agreement was achieved (MacPhail et al., 2016). Finally employing illustrative examples from the transcripts and monitor frameworks relating to the themes was incorporated (McArdle et al., 2010). The analytical process was conducted until no new themes emerged (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The development of codes and themes enabled a "coherent and compelling interpretation of the data, grounded in the data" (Braun et al., 2018, p. 6), as reflected in the findings.

Findings

For Peer Review Only

Findings from the two data sources identified learnings gained, and actions taken, by the 16 CEOs involved in a CoP intervention program focused on expanding opportunities for women as leaders in sport organisations. To assist with confidentiality of participants and their organisations, pseudonym names have been used in this paper.

Interview Themes

The interview analysis identified individual and group learning. These included: (i) personal/professional development; (ii) interactions to advance women as leaders; (iii) barriers to interaction; and (iv) structural program enablers.

Personal / Professional Development

Respondents, regardless of the number of years experienced as a CEO, believed interacting with the other participants to discuss how organisational opportunities can open for women as leaders was impactful to their personal and professional development. Comments included, "Collaborating with other CEOs, and the things you would learn not just around encouraging women as leaders, just the way of being a better, more progressive CEO" (Max) and "I've spoken to guys from the other group and they've spoken in the same sense that they felt it was a great process and opportunity to give you some headspace" (Tony).

The time to self-reflect on practices was valued: "When you give them some clear air and time to reflect and work on yourself, it was really beneficial. I've never been in a situation like that in my time in sport" (Geoff). So too was the recognition of investing in the professional development of CEOs, "…we focus on staff development, but often at the neglect our own development. To have someone else invest in us with other leaders, was really beneficial to think about yourself, and your own leadership and development" (Brad).

Interactions to Advance Women as Leaders.

One of the key benefits identified by respondents was the learnings gained by the shared experiences with other CEOs. This was particularly noted by the CEOs who were in

URL: https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rmle

For Peer Review Only

the initial stages of establishing practices to encourage women as leaders. The conversations conducted during each meeting in the program stimulated ideas to implement women in leadership strategies within their respective organisation. Reinforced by Geoff, "I think that opportunity was really experiential change. It was the idea that not only are we learning, but we are collectively interacting in that learning and that was very useful". These learnings were from a personal and organisational perspective: "The benefit was learning what other organisations do, what we could do ... And me as a leader, in my management style, what I could maybe do better, differently, or enhance" (David). Respondents believed these new learnings "sets you up for the next engagement together on a really strong footing" (Sarah). Four forms of interaction were referred to by respondents including: awareness raising; momentum building; important conversations; and the provision of a supportive, respective collegiate network.

Awareness Raising. To work together in the program, share experiences and learn from each other were key drivers in awareness raising around women in leadership and associated good practice case studies. Respondents indicated that sharing CEO experiences on similar issues and challenges was instrumental to improve their general awareness and address issues. As typified by Sarah, the experience of interacting together "opened the eyes of these males". Yet at the same time Sarah, being the only woman involved in the program, believed the program sessions provided an "opportunity to come together in a meaningful way and not have too much on your agenda that you have to rush through things. Taking time to learn was really important for me". As a result the program assisted to stimulate her to change organisational practices to assist women advance as leaders including the importance "to go back and review if there is a gender pay gap, you have to make it a priority" and "the need for constant review of policies". Without the focused interactive discussions respondents acknowledged "…they would never have thought about some of these issues that

For Peer Review Only

confront women, so how do you as leaders, male CEOs address and fix it? I thought that was a reality test for all of us, to make sure we understand that's the case" (Bill). Awareness raising created changes to practices, as explained by Tom:

> If people are aware then they can make better informed decisions. And it just becomes standard business, not an extra initiative. We now make sure that there's equal representation on our imagery, on our panels, on our senior leadership team and when we're presenting to organisations.

Respondents collectively saw this learning experience to address women in leadership as "important". It disrupted the status quo, made them aware of their "poor practices" and alerted them of the "need for action, resource allocation, and attention". As typified by Frank, "In a funny way, it's highlighted our deficiencies. I'm now aware of the lack of women as executives who apply for these positions, I'm conscious of it, which is the beginning of the journey".

Momentum Building. Respondents were vocal about the way in which shared experiences resulted in building momentum in their own leadership and organisations. They spoke about a subsequent "organisational push", indicating that understanding what other organisations were doing to address women in leadership issues worked to "Relight the flame" in their own organisations and initiate strategies. Brad noted, "The journey has been accelerated" through the conversations and learnings from others.

As a result of discussions conducted during program sessions, the need to sustain the focus on women in leadership was noted. As recognised by Brett, "It's not a sit and forget. I'm coming back to the efforts periodically and we keep the momentum going, that's been really important to me". Xavier also noted:

> You're able to take a special look inside your own organisation and identify areas where progress and improvement can and still need to be made. It also

For Peer Review Only

doubles your commitment to solidify the ground, the good work that's going on and not to take that for granted.

Important Conversations. All respondents pointed to the benefit in generating important conversations around women in leadership between the CEOs and, by extension, within their organisations. Tom explained:

> The main difference now is having a connection with a CEO where there is far more meaningful and deeper conversations about workforce and importantly women's participation in our organisations, and the leadership opportunities that we create to make sure we have a gender represented workforce moving forward.

Guest speakers who presented during program sessions on women in leadership strategies in sport, encouraged CEOs to "be inclusive and open minded about what women as leaders genuinely mean[s]" (Tony). In addition, CEOs referred to common beliefs and shared values around inclusiveness that occurred through formal and informal conversations within the program which "...encouraged everyone to really open up and share a bit about themselves, and that establishes a degree of trust and openness for future collaboration. That was really powerful" (Sarah). As reinforced by Bill "...just having those informal discussions around what each of us were doing on promoting women's leadership in our organisations was really useful to hear".

The sense that respondents could trust the confidentiality to raise and discuss issues between CEOs involved was seen to engender a certain openness and candour: "I thought that everyone was really open and honest about their appraisal on where their organisations were in regards to this, and how much time they've actually spent looking into this" (Cam). Xavier stated, "...the trust to be able to go and speak to another colleague without it feeling like you're a failure or not doing your job well, that's probably the best thing". The collaboration also provided 'reassurance' that each organisation was facing similar

For Peer Review Only

challenges: “Sometimes … from the outside [we] see nice, shiny Instagram post[s] from someone and think, ‘Oh they've got it sorted.’ But generally when you scratch the surface, everyone's working overtime to get it done” (David).

A Supportive, Respectful Collegiate Network. Another benefit was the supportive network created amongst the CEOs. Max appreciated “the support mechanism” that was established within the program, while Frank acknowledged it made individuals “stronger together”. The interactions were viewed as a conduit to resource and idea sharing and the potency to have a collegiate and respectful network of leaders. As noted by Cam, “I think when you've got a respected, respectful, and forceful voice in the leadership that we had, it’s a very potent combination”. As a result, a sense of support was gained, as typified by Tom: “I’m a lot more comfortable now, to talk about a wider range of topics, and ask for help and offer advice back and forward. So it's really promoted that collegiate approach”.

Barriers to Interaction

Respondents, regardless of the type of sport they were involved in, identified two key barriers associated with being involved in the program. These comprised competition and differences between organisations, and lack of sustainability.

Competition and Differences Between Organisations. Respondents explained that honesty can be hampered in a competitive environment and genuine collaboration was sometimes difficult when the organisations are “competitive by nature”. Competition was referred to when some sports have been traditionally known to compete for the same players or have poached a leader from one organisation to another. Many respondents saw this competition as a significant challenge, stating “I think there's a natural guardedness that there's potentially some competitors in the room” (Bill) and “I've felt that there's something that goes with competition that locks down the notion of collaboration” (Brett).

For Peer Review Only

The differences between organisations that the CEOs represented including structure, size and foci, was a notable barrier. Sarah explained, "Every organisation is totally different in terms of structure and size. And that presented different challenges". David also explained, "I think one of the challenges is, when you've got tiny little sport organisations and then big beasts … I can't compare and contrast anything I do to something that has four or 5,000 employees, so that's a challenge … they just face different challenges". While the differences between organisations was a noted barrier to align with shared experiences, Cam indicated despite the "diversity and differences", effective interaction was possible.

Lack of Sustainability. A few respondents recognised the program ended abruptly and post-intervention this was a barrier to ongoing interaction. Respondents saw the benefit of keeping "things going rather than jerking to [a] deadline" (Geoff). As noted by Xavier, "it just ended abruptly given that if it had continued, we probably would've maintained that momentum". The participants were left with the unanswered question, "How do you facilitate that ongoing collaboration?" (Frank).

Structural Program Enablers

The respondents identified two enablers associated with the program structure which stimulated interaction, reflection and action by the CEOs involved. These included the provision of a safe space and effective program facilitation.

A Safe Space. One of the key enablers of the program was the safe space in which respondents felt able to be open and honest with other CEOs of sporting organisations. Comments included the environment created by the facilitator allowed "you to be totally present, to stretch out, be vulnerable, and share, and this allowed us to get a lot more back" (Bill). Tom noted that the open environment enabled a sense that:

> What you share with us is going to be treated sensitively, confidentially and appropriately. You're going to be challenged but not judged in the way you learn and

For Peer Review Only

take on board the information. It was really great pivoting between provocation and nurture, part of the nurture was exposure, learning and insight. It was really effective.

Effective Program Facilitation. The shared experiences and strong interaction, according to respondents, was enabled by the effective facilitation of the program. It provided a platform to raise awareness and share knowledge, practices and opportunities. Cam acknowledged the facilitator "was a catalyst to provide information and bring people together". Max indicated there was a "sense of comfort, trust and being able to share some information amongst the group ... probably says a lot about the facilitation of the process". Others liked having pre-determined dates with someone to drive the face-to-face sessions.

The scheduled sessions provided a "checking point" for participants. As explained by Tony, the sessions were "well organised, well facilitated, and there was never a moment where you thought, 'Ah, what's going on here?', because everyone knew why they were there and what they were doing". The facilitation of these sessions enabled participants to "stop for half a day and just focus" (Tony).

Monitor Framework Analysis

In comparing pre and post intervention results all 16 CEOs had implemented an increased range of strategies to expand opportunities for women as leaders across most of the 11 focus areas. Strategies deployed by three or more of the 16 CEOs are noted in Table 1. After each strategy in the table, the number of CEOs who implemented this strategy is recognised.

Pre-program strategies were sparse, consisting mainly of general organisational approaches to encourage "diversity and inclusion" rather than to specifically address women as leaders. No strategies were identified in the focus area of Supply Chain (encourage suppliers to activate gender equality strategies). Post-program, data shows CEOs reported implementation of specific strategies targeted to increase women as leaders. For example, in regards to the focus area of Policy and Processes, two strategies were in place pre-program,

For Peer Review Only

an additional six were implemented post-program across a wider group of organisations. These new strategies related to developing, implementing and annually monitoring related policies, and gaining feedback from women in their organisations. Two focus areas that had the most number of strategies applied post-program were Leadership Accountability (n=8) and Flexibility (n=7).

Popular strategies introduced by the majority of CEOs (n=13) were in two focus areas; sourcing accurate gender data across their sport (Measurement and Reporting Gender Composition) and providing organisation wide training that included unconscious bias and discriminatory behaviour (Gender Inclusive Culture). The next two most common strategies reported (n=11) were the identification of a range of stakeholders to collaborate with to assist develop and implement strategies into their organisation and across their sport to advance women as leaders (Stakeholder Engagement); and to gather and analyse pay equity data and action accordingly (Gender Pay Equity).

Most respondents (n=10) indicated they were at the early stages of strategic efforts to address the focus areas of Supply Chain and Gender Pay Equity. As a result, a limited number of strategies were identified for each area (n=2).

[Table 1 near hear]

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify whether social learning occurred through the program, and if this learning facilitated the implementation of changes to organisational practices to expand opportunities for women as leaders. The findings demonstrated that the CoP program intervention created social learning outcomes, and the collective support provided the impetus to increase opportunities for women as leaders in sport organisations.

The aggregate themes identified from the post-intervention interviews captured key aspects of the social interactions that occurred between CEOs during the program. These

For Peer Review Only

included awareness raising, momentum building, conversations to gain insights, and the creation of a supportive, respectful collegiate network. The learnings gained within this social network resulted in action. The monitor framework analysis identified an increased range of strategies implemented in the quest to expand opportunities for women to become leaders in each of the 16 sport organisations.

Evidence that social learning outcomes (Reed et al., 2010) had been achieved was not limited to the reported increases in women-focussed organisational initiatives, but also in the empowerment and solidarity narratives present in the CEO interviews. Each participant spoke about the positive change in their knowledge and understanding at both a surface and deeper level. This knowledge created a sense of confidence and empowerment where being part of a CoP meant learnings expanded beyond the individual and its application into their organisation. The formation of a social network within the CoP program was crucial in expanding the social learnings of each individual through social interactions within and between group members. Conversations conducted during the CoP program stimulated ideas for the CEOs to implement strategies within their respective organisations. The outcomes of this are evident in data collected from the monitor frameworks. For example, in the focus of area of 'Measurement and Reporting Gender Composition', pre-program 12 out of 16 CEOs reported they had inaccurate or missing gender-based data on senior leadership positions within their sport. In discussing the results of the monitor framework, including gender compositions, during a group session the CEOs recognised the importance of accurate data and their organisation's knowledge gap in this respect. This discussion led to collective action and post-program 13 CEOs reported their organisation now had accurate data. Further, five of these CEOs reported their organisation was considering strengthening the gender composition by introducing quotas for senior leadership positions. Organisational change occurred through enabling organisational practice and individual commitment to women in

For Peer Review Only

leadership, a recognised pathway to greater gender equality (Cunningham, 2008). However, despite group discussion on the need for accurate recording of gender-based data, three CEOs still reported that their organisation did not hold this information. The lack of progress on a key baseline requirement in addressing gender inequalities is not an indication that the CEO failed to acknowledge the need for change or improvement in a focus area, as structural barriers and organisation culture can be major obstacles to change (Richards et al., 2020).

The reported change in knowledge, understanding and appreciation of actions that could be taken to improve women's leadership opportunities, prompted the CEOs to introduce a range of strategies as a planned response gained from insights during the CoP program. These included developmental and transitional (Welty Peachey & Bruening, 2012) responses. For example, the self-reported 'awareness raising' gained by the CEOs during the CoP program highlighted well-documented issues related to the recruitment, development and retention of women leaders in sport (cf Banu-Lawrence et al., 2020). As a result, human resource management approaches to gender equality taken by each organisation were openly discussed and critiqued, and the collective CoP discussions facilitated actions to introduce more effective strategies. The CEOs reported stimulating change not only within their organisation but also in creating a ripple effect across other associated sports. Strategies that emerged as a result of the intervention, CoP and social learning included: gender data collection for all management levels; the provision of organisation-wide training; alignment of targeted partners/stakeholders; and pay equity data analysis. These changes to practice were evident across sports, reinforcing the positive outcomes associated with social networking, knowledge transfer between individuals, a network for sharing ideas, assistance with problem solving and organisational learnings (Barnes et al., 2017). Taking a CoP approach meant that the CEOs could draw on the group's collective knowledge, experiences

For Peer Review Only

and support to expand opportunities for women as leaders, which in turn provided validity, increased confidence and stimulation to create change.

The positive outcomes associated with a social learning approach (Reed et. al., 2010), may have contributed to the stimulant for the majority of CEOs who initiated targeted stakeholder engagement to assist create opportunities for women in sport leadership. The successes of the CoP studied in this research, is not dissimilar to those found in wider communities of practice within sport (Willem et al., 2019) and elsewhere (Li et. al., 2009).

The CoP emerged from an individual-based, sector driven, shared problem approach, and thus was embodied with different characteristics from inter organisational partnerships which are formed to share resources and build organisational capacity (Hambrick et al., 2019). Our study showed that creating a conducive non-threatening environment is vital to stimulate social learning and create a social network built on trust, knowledge sharing, openness and support. In doing so the group evolved to become a CoP which stimulated interaction, a desire to learn and the common goal of addressing a shared concern, the lack of women in sport leadership roles, in order to create change within and across sport organisations. The program provided a safe space in which to be honest and share experiences and was supported by effective program facilitation that enabled open interaction. The CoP was built through regular meetings that instilled commitment, built rapport and allowed sufficient time for meaningful interactions.

In terms of implications for practice, while the program produced a number of positive outcomes, challenges needed to be acknowledged and addressed between group members. The CEOs were from sport organisations which were in direct and indirect competition with each other, and organisational differences existed in size, scale, resources and strategic direction. Unlike other studies which have pointed to inter organisational collaborations being compromised through lack of trust and unequal power sharing (cf

For Peer Review Only

Babiak & Thibault, 2009), participants in our study stressed the benefits of collaboration more than counterbalanced the competition concerns. Challenges perceived by participants would be important to recognise and discuss at the start of a CoP program, to address how these could be overcome and thereby assist create a conducive, trusting and productive environment.

The sport sector needs robust, effective and impactful approaches that can tackle industry-wide systemic structural and cultural challenges such as building the number of women in leadership roles in sport. Creating cross-sport CoP's can provide impetus and capacity by leveraging resources and competencies of individuals and their organisations. Although much research has examined challenges and tensions in organisational partnerships, few studies have tracked the pre and post intervention that promotes shared learning and the actioning of collaborative derived strategies and solutions. The results from our research provide insight on the important contribution a government-led program can make to inspire organisational change. In doing so, we address the gap in the literature on the extent to which government bodies may enhance learning in a CoP and ensure knowledge sharing (Willem et. al., 2019).

The positive interactions between CEOs in the current CoP program created a social network that drove change. However, despite the success of this network, and the CEOs expressed support for its continuation; one year after the completion of the program the social network no longer existed. This raises questions about the commitment participants had to continue with the network, notwithstanding the barriers noted in the findings section. To assist with the effectiveness of the program and sustainability of the network, building in a transition process towards the end of the program focused on leading to a self-sufficient network should be considered. For a CoP to be sustainable and not rely on external funding or facilitation, participants need to commit to its continuation through facilitating ongoing

For Peer Review Only

interactions (Culver et al., 2017). Continuing social connections and building learning communities has the potential to maintain the knowledge sharing and drive collective action (Misener & Doherty, 2012). Following a CoP over a substantial time period through longitudinal research could identify what aspects contribute to a sustained network, or its demise, while also providing evidence attributable to social learning outcomes. This approach could also identify the impact the CoP has to attract and retain increased numbers of women in sport leadership.

Longitudinal research could also focus on the transition of knowledge brokers post a CoP program, including from a governing body to a collective sport industry network, to facilitate ongoing social learning and collaboration. The reliance on cultivating and fostering a healthy CoP is having a knowledge broker (Conklin et al., 2013). In the case of the current program, the CoP however was too reliant on the facilitator and in consequence ended at the same time as the program. Findings reveal the need for less reliance on individual leaders (de Vries, 2015), in this case the facilitator, and more on the practice of championing gender equity stimulated by a group (CEOs). At the same time, gender change is related to the commitment of individuals to embed organisational practice which becomes an organisation's inclusive value position and transformational culture.

An opportunity arises to design a more user-friendly diagnostic tool. After this program a revised version included an increased number of focus areas (from 11 to 17, see https://www.wgea.gov.au/tools/gender-strategy-toolkit). Reflective questions have been included in the Tool to guide managers on potential strategies to incorporate in each area. The number of focus areas however could become daunting rather than inviting, particularly for state sport organisations that need to 'juggle' governance between the national bodies and local clubs. One option is to create a 'manageable' streamlined monitor framework for grassroots, state and national organisations within a sport to enable benchmarking and

For Peer Review Only

monitoring of strategies targeted to women as leaders. Research into what 'manageable' entails would need to be conducted.

Findings from our research extend from existing theory related to CoP (Wenger et al., 2002) and social learning outcomes (Reed et al., 2010). First, through following the development of a CoP, we were able to elicit the participant's perspectives and experiences related to expanding opportunities for women as leaders and track the specific actions and changes that occurred through the collaboration. Second, the social learning outcomes gained in a CoP sport setting comprising senior, predominantly male, leaders shows that focused actions can occur, in this case to create organisational change leading to the provision of greater opportunities for women to assume leadership roles in sport.

The findings amplified the importance of addressing a societal problem from a social learning lens through a collaborative intervention that spanned a range of sport organisations, adding to and broadening previous research in this field (Wicker et al., 2011; Meiklojohn et al., 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2013). It is our contention that the systemic, and seemingly persistent, challenge of ensuring women achieve equality of opportunity to lead sport needs to be tackled through new ways of working, learning, and innovating. Creating communities of practice with a shared vison for change has the potential to be highly beneficial in facilitating synergistic collaboration across the sport sector to reshape, reform, and revamp organisations to create greater opportunities for women's leadership aspirations.

References

Ardichvili, A. (2008). Learning and knowledge sharing in virtual communities of practice: Motivators, barriers, and enablers. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 10(4):541-554. doi:10.1177/1523422308319536

Aubry, M., Müller, R., & Glückler, J. (2011). Exploring PMOs through community of practice theory. *Project Management Journal, 42*(5), 42–56.

For Peer Review Only

Babiak, K., & Thibault, L. (2009). Challenges in multiple cross-sector partnerships. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 38*(1), 117-143. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764008316054

Banu-Lawrence, M., Frawley, S., & Hoeber, L. (2020). Women and leadership development in Australian sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management, 1*, 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2020-0039

Barnes, M., Cousens, L., & MacLean, J. (2017). Trust and collaborative ties in a community sport network. *Managing Sport and Leisure, 22*(4), 310-324. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2018.1465840

Bertram, R., Culver, D., & Gilbert, W. (2017). A university sport coach community of practice: Using a value creation framework to explore learning and social interactions. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching, 12*(3), 287–302. doi:10.1177/1747954117710503

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2019). Reflecting on reflexive thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 11*(4), 589-597. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2019.1628806

Burton, L. J. (2019). Under-representation of women in leadership roles in women's sport. In N. Lough, A.N. Geurin (eds), *Routledge Handbook of the Business of Women's Sport*, New York: Routledge, 255-268.

Conklin, J., Lusk, E., Harris, M., & Stolee, P. (2013). Knowledge brokers in a knowledge network: The case of seniors health research transfer network knowledge brokers. *Implement Science, 8*(7), 1–10.

For Peer Review Only

Culver, D. M., Kraft, E., Din, C., & Cayer, I. (2019). The Alberta women in sport leadership project: A social learning intervention for gender equity and leadership development. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal*, *27*(2), 110-117.

Cunningham, G. B. (2008). Creating and sustaining gender diversity in sport organizations. *Sex Roles, 58*(1-2), 136-145. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9360-8

de Vries, J. (2015). Champions of gender equality: female and male executives as leaders of gender change. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal, 34*(1), 21-36. https://doi.org/10.1108/EDI-05-2013-0031

Elling, A., Knoppers, A., & Hovden, J. (2018) Meta-analysis: Data and methodologies. In: Elling, A, Hovden, J, Knoppers, A (eds) *Gender Diversity in European Sport Governance*. London: Routledge, pp. 171–184.

Evans, A. B., & Pfister, G. U. (2021). Women in sports leadership: A systematic narrative review. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *56*(3) 317–342. https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690220911842

Fazey, J. A. & Marton, F. (2002). Understanding the space of experiential variation. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 3*, 375-380.

Földesi, G. S., & Gál, A. (2019). Professional identity versus gender identity: Empirical study among top-level leaders and managers in Hungarian sport. *Testneveles, Sport, Tudomany,* 32-28.

Fusch, P., Fusch. G.E. & Ness, L. (2018). Denzin's paradigm shift: Revisiting triangulation in qualitative research. *Journal of Social Change, 10*(1), 19-32. https://doi.org/10.5590/josc.2018.10.1.02

Gaston, L., Blundell, M., & Fletcher, T. (2020). Gender diversity in sport leadership: An investigation of United States of America national governing bodies of sport. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, *25*(6), 402-417.

For Peer Review Only

Girginov, V., Toohey, K., & Willem, A. (2015). Creating and leveraging knowledge to promote sport participation: The role of public governing bodies of sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly, 15*(5), 555–578.

Hambrick, M. E., Svensson, P. G., & Kang, S. (2019). Using social network analysis to investigate interorganizational relationships and capacity building within a sport for development coalition. *Sport Management Review, 22*(5), 708-723. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2018.12.002

Harris, K. F. H. F., Grappendorf, H., Aicher, T., & Veraldo, C. (2015). "Discrimination? Low pay? Long hours? I am still excited:" Female sport management students' perceptions of barriers toward a future career in sport. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 35, 12-21.

Hartzell, A. C., & Dixon, M. A. (2019). A holistic perspective on women's career pathways in athletics administration. *Journal of Sport Management, 33*(2), 79-92. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2018-0127

Hindman, L. C., & Walker, N. A. (2020). Sexism in professional sports: How women managers experience and survive sport organizational culture. *Journal of Sport Management*, 34(1), 64-76. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2018-0331

LaVoi, N. M., McGarry, J. E., & Fisher, L. A. (2019). Final thoughts on women in sport coaching: Fighting the war. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal, 27*(2), 136-140. https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2019-0030

M'mbaha, J. M., & Chepyator-Thomson, J. R. (2019). Factors influencing career paths and progress of Kenyan women in sport leadership. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(3), 316-333.

For Peer Review Only

MacPhail, C., Khoza, N., Abler, L., & Ranganathan, M. (2016). Process guidelines for establishing intercoder reliability in qualitative studies. *Qualitative Research, 16*(2), 198-212. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115577012

McArdle, S., Martin, D., Lennon, A. & Moore, P. (2010). Exploring debriefing in sports: A qualitative perspective. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology, 22*(3), 320-332, https://doi.org/10.1080/10413200.2010.481566

Misener, K., & Doherty, A. (2013). Understanding capacity through the processes and outcomes of interorganizational relationships in nonprofit community sport organizations. *Sport Management Review, 16*(2), 135-147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2012.07.003

Pape, M. (2020). Gender segregation and trajectories of organizational change: The underrepresentation of women in sports leadership. *Gender & Society*, 34(1), 81-105. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243219867914

Parker, S. (2019). Women in sport governance: Challenging institutionalised practices in a national sport organisation [Master dissertation, Auckland University of Technology]. http://hdl.handle.net/10292/12552

Pike, E., White, A., Matthews, J., Southon, S., & Piggott, L. (2018). Women and sport leadership: A case study of a development programme. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Feminism and Sport, Leisure and Physical Education* (pp. 809-823). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Reed, M. S., Evely, A. C., Cundill, G., Fazey, I., Galss, J…. & Stringer, L. C. (2010). What is social learning? *Ecology and Society, 15*(4). https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26268235.pdf

For Peer Review Only

Reid, K., & Dallaire, C. (2019). “Because there are so few of us”: The marginalization of female soccer referees in Ontario, Canada. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal, 27*(1), 12-20. https://doi.org/10.1123/wspaj.2017-0031

Richards, K. (2018). An examination of women in leadership positions in sport: A case study of Australian Rules Football (Doctoral dissertation, Charles Sturt University).

Richards, K., Litchfield, C., & Osborne, J. (2020). 'We're in their environment': Gendered barriers for female leaders in sport. *Sporting Traditions*, 37(2).

Ryan, I., & Dickson, G. (2018). The invisible norm: An exploration of the intersections of sport, gender and leadership. *Leadership, 14*(3), 329-346. https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715016674864

Schatzman, L., &Strauss, A. L.(1973). *Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Spaaij, R., Knoppers, A., & Jeanes, R. (2020). “We want more diversity but…”: Resisting diversity in recreational sports clubs. *Sport Management Review*, *23*(3), 363-373.

Sisjord, M. K., Fasting, K., & Sand, T. S. (2017). The impact of gender quotas in leadership in Norwegian organised sport. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 9(3), 505-519.

Sotiriadou, P., & de Haan, D. (2019) Women and leadership: Advancing gender equity policies in sport leadership through sport governance. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 11*(3), 365-383. https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2019.1577902

Sotiriadou, P., & Pavlidis, A, (2020) Gender and diversity in sport governance, in Shilbury, D and Ferkins, L. (eds) *Routledge Handbook of Sport Governance*, Routledge. pp. 366-380.

Sport Australia (July 2020). Sport governance standards. Retrieved January 13, 2022.

For Peer Review Only

Sport Australia (May 2021). Women in sport. Clearinghouse of Sport. Retrieved January 13, 2022.

Sport and Recreation Victoria (November, 2015). Inquiry to women and girls in sport and active recreation. Retrieved January 6, 2020 https//sport.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0025/56158/inquiry20into20women20and20girls20in20sport.pdf

Steidinger, J. (2020). *Stand Up and Shout Out: Women's Fight for Equal Pay, Equal Rights, and Equal Opportunities in Sports*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Swanson, S., Billsberry, J., Kent, A., Skinner, J., & Mueller, J. (2020). Leader prototypicality in sport: The implicit leadership theories of women and men entering sport management careers. *Sport Management Review, 23*(4), 640-656.

Taylor, T., O'Connor, D., & Hanlon, C. (2019). Contestation, disruption and legitimization in women's rugby league. *Sport in Society*, *23*(2) 315-334.

Velija, P., & Mansfield, L. (2018). The UK house of commons women and sport report 2014–2015: Policy, evidence and impact. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Feminism and Sport, Leisure and Physical Education* (pp. 825-840). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Welty Peachey, J., & Bruening, J. (2012). Investigating ambivalence towards organisational change in a football championship subdivision intercollegiate athletic department. *Sport Management Review, 15*(2), 171-186. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2011.05.001

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating Communities of Practice: A Guide to Managing Knowledge.* Harvard Business Press.

For Peer Review Only

Wicker, P., Cunningham, G. B., & Fields, D. (2019). Head coach changes in women's college Soccer: An investigation of women coaches through the lenses of gender stereotypes and the glass cliff. *Sex Roles, 81*(11-12), 797-807. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-019-01022-2

Willem, A., Girginov, V. & Toohey, K. (2019) Governing bodies of sport as knowledge brokers in Sport-for-All communities of practice. *Sport Management Review, 22*(5), 584-599. doi: 10.1016/j.smr.2018.08.005

Women on Boards. (2020). National Sporting Organisations. Retrieved 11 January 2022, https://www.womenonboards.net/en-au/reference-items/resource-centre_bdi-(1)/sports-organisations

Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2019). *Gender equality diagnostic tool*. Australian Government. Retrieved January 9, 2020 https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2019_WGEA_GE_Diagnostic_Tool_0.pdf

Zamawe, F. (2015). The implication of using NVivo software in qualitative data analysis: Evidence-based reflections. *Malawi Medical Journal,* 27(1), 13–15.

For Peer Review Only

Table 1

Pre and Post Program Strategies

Focus Areas	Pre-Program: General Strategy Examples	Post-Program: Common Strategies
Stakeholder engagement	• Annual staff satisfaction survey (x3) • Change Our Game Champion program (x16)	• Targeted stakeholders to align with (x11) • Implement women as leaders funding programs (x3) • Actively advocate for women (e.g. speaking engagements) (x3) • Conduct gender equality forums / workshop / training (x3)
Leadership accountability	• Educate staff on respectful relationships (x3)	• Establish a leader's group to mentor junior team members (x7) • Share internal data (x7) • Mandate Executive Management Performance Plans / KPIs (x3) • Develop case studies to highlight progress / promote success (x3) • Roll out new gender equality strategic plan (x3) • Board is to create a narrative of gender equality (x3) • Seek feedback from staff (3) • Coach staff and senior leaders (x3)
Strategy and business case	• Strategic plan embeds diversity across gender, culture and ability (x9)	• Develop Gender Equality Strategy / Strategic Plan (x10) • Provide funding to gender equality (x4) • Initiate Board diversity quota (x3)
Measurement and reporting gender composition	• Inaccurate or missing gender-based data for senior leadership positions (x12)	• Collect gender data composition in all management levels across the sport (x13) • Consider quotas (x5)
Policies and processes	• Paid parental leave (x4) • Constitution includes 40% gender representation at Board level (x10)	• Monitor ongoing effectiveness of policies / annual review (x8) • Develop parental leave policy / Return to work policy (x6) • Gather employee feedback (x5) • Implement and promote existing and new policies (x5) • Flexible Work Practices Policy (x4) • Align policies with gender strategy (x3)
Supply chain		• Review and monitor supply chain (x6) • Promote women as leaders through supply chain (x6)
Gender pay equity	• Advertised roles are salaried according to position not gender (x16)	• Gather, analyse and action pay equity data (x11) • Conduct remuneration / equal pay calibration (x2)
Flexibility	• Flexible work arrangements in place (x9)	• 'Leaving loudly' concept actioned by leadership / leadership modelling flexibility (x7) • Promote/educate about parental leave (x4) • Develop new return to work and parental leave policy (x4)

For Peer Review Only

		• Train leadership / staff on the importance of flexibility (x4) • Ensure IT systems enable remote working training (x4) • Create and promote flexible work and family-friendly practices designed and accessible for all employees (x3) • Implement policy and review success/uptake assessing potential barriers (x3)
Talent pipeline	• Development and implementation of Online/Blended Learning modules (x3) • Equal opportunity for professional development accessible to all (x10)	• Institute professional / leadership development opportunities for talented female staff (x9) • Develop a mentoring program / Career coaching /Career planning (x8) • Provide additional funding / budget for training (x7) • Implement gender balance on panels across recruitment process (x5) • Introduce succession plans (x4) • Formalise recruitment policy for female applicants, encouraging women to apply and particularly for leadership positions (x3)
Leader and manager capability	• Female participation officer appointed (x4)	• Conduct leadership development program (x5) • Build capacity of female leaders / committee members (x4) • Staff feedback (x3) • Elevate female middle managers to senior roles / actively 'shoulder tapping' (x3)
Gender inclusive culture	• All recruitment advertisements declare '[Sport] values inclusive and diverse work environments' (x3)	• Provide organisation wide training (x13) • Continue measuring staff engagement / annual staff survey (x8) • Staff resources (x7) • Identify areas of improvement for broader organisational culture change (x6) • Celebrate successful female leaders (x5)

For Peer Review Only