



SPECIAL PROJECT - EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES

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Please note you can view the comprehensive reports on each of the Special Project Topics on the New Zealand Olympic Committee website by clicking [HERE](#)

The NZ Olympic WSLA(NZ) Programme

The New Zealand Olympic Committee launched an exciting new initiative in 2017 to support New Zealand's female Olympians to connect to an international network of female leaders in sport.

The first WSLA(NZ) intake in 2017 brought together 18 outstanding Olympians. We are pleased to celebrate the second cohort of 19 fantastic women who have participated in the 18-month programme.

The international WSLA programme has successfully delivered Academy programmes since 2014 with more than 283 female graduates from 52 different countries now members of the global network of female leaders in sport.

Content of the Programme

The content of the programme focuses on various leadership behaviours or competencies that research shows to be critical to a great leader:

- **Providing direction** - Providing future direction for an organisation using resources efficiently and effectively to achieve the goals of the organisation.
- **Creativity and innovation** - Enabling creativity to flourish in people in how they analyse problems and identify opportunities for innovative solutions.
- **Performance management** - Ensuring there is a culture of continuous personal improvement which supports people to maximise their potential while achieving goals and targets that meet the needs of the business.
- **Self-management** - Taking responsibility for your own success; managing your own emotions in challenging circumstances.
- **Communication** – Team and partnership working.

Programme Elements

The 18-month programme consists of several elements, all of which are essential for the critical learning and development that takes place during WSLA(NZ).

- Residential Workshops • Personal Development Plans • Mentoring
- Home Teams • Physical Activities • Guest Speakers • Networks

Introduction – Kereyn Smith, CEO NZOC

The New Zealand Olympic Committee is pleased to provide you with the NZ Olympic Women's Sport Leadership Academy (WSLA(NZ)) Special Project Executive summaries.

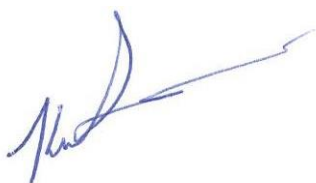
WSLA(NZ) is a programme that supports New Zealand's female Olympians make a positive transition from sport performance to sport leadership and connects them to an international network of female leaders in sport. The programme also requires participants to consider substantive issues relating to women in sport. The participants identified five special topics to research and present their findings to key stakeholders.

The New Zealand Olympic Committee formed a partnership with WSLA(UK) to provide a unique learning environment that supports women to further develop their confidence and leadership competencies.

The purpose of the special projects is for the WSLA participants to work in small groups outside of the formal sessions to further enhance their learning. This has required them to work as a team and individually.

The five projects – Inclusive Sport, Next Gen Leadership, Safe Sport, Social Change, Visual Landscape in Social Media– are of direct relevance to sport in New Zealand today, and particularly issues relating to women in sport.

We are delighted to provide these insights and hope you find this work both informative and enjoyable.



Kereyn Smith (MNZM)
New Zealand Olympic Committee
Chief Executive Officer

NZ Olympic WSLA Team

WSLA(NZ) Leadership Team

Many thanks to the WSLA Leadership and delivery team of Robyn Cockburn, Pauline Harrison, Sue Emerson, Gaye Bryham, Shane Collins, Sarah Cowley-Ross, Lesley Ferkins, Kirsten Hellier, Beth Smith and Cathleen Bias.

Participants

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Olympian #</u> | <u>Sport</u> | <u>Games</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Julia Edward | 1139 | Rowing | London 2012, Rio 2016 |
| Amaka Gessler | 1147 | Swimming | London 2012 |
| Katie Glynn | 1149 | Hockey | London 2012 |
| Debbie Hansen | 1092 | Triathlon | Beijing 2008 |
| Erika Harris | 987 | Skiing | Torino 2006 |
| Lizzy Horlock | 918 | Hockey | Athens 2004, Beijing 2008 |
| Jaimee Lovett | 1303 | Canoe | Rio 2016 |
| Genevieve Macky | 1249 | Rowing | Rio 2016 |
| Kate McIlroy | 1178 | Triathlon | London 2012 |
| Char Pouaka | 832 | Softball | Sydney 2000 |
| Polly Powrie | 1195 | Sailing | London 2012, Rio 2016 |
| Alexis Pritchard | 1196 | Boxing | London 2012 |
| Michelle Rennie | 917 | Cycling | Athens 2004 |
| Rebecca Rolls | 1203 | Football | London 2012, Rio 2016 |
| Angela Subramaniam | 579 | Gymnastics | Seoul 1988 |
| Georgina Toomey | CWG | Swimming | CWG Melbourne 2006 |
| Liz van Welie | 856 | Swimming | Sydney 2000 |
| Leanne Walker | 859 | Basketball | Sydney 2000, Athens 2004 |
| Evelyn Williamson | 865 | Triathlon | Sydney 2000 |

Acknowledgement and thanks to the Special Project Panel

The purpose of the Panel was to provide an expert and critical audience for the groups to test their thinking and recommendations.

The Panel:

- **Hon. Grant Robertson** – Minister of Sport
- **Peter Miskimmin** - Chief Executive, Sport New Zealand
- **Michael Scott** - Chief Executive, High Performance Sport New Zealand
- **Paula Tesaoriero** - Disability Rights Commissioner
- **Sarah Cowley-Ross** – Freelance Sports Communication Consultant

INCLUSIVE CULTURES: Challenging unconscious gender bias in sport

Jaimee Lovett, Rebecca Rolls, Angela Subramaniam

Kei a tātou tēnei ao; kei a tātau hoki ēnei iti kahurangi.

This is our world; these are the challenges we must strive to overcome.

(Māori proverb)

Context

This report examines unconscious gender bias in sport, how and why it prevents true gender equality, and the role all involved can play to minimise it. Unconscious bias that impacts women has been described as, “the powerful but subtle and often invisible barriers for women that arise from cultural assumptions, organizational structures, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently benefit men while putting women at a disadvantage. Unconscious bias happens outside of our control. It occurs automatically and is triggered by our brain making a split second assumption about someone. Reducing unconscious bias is one important way to create a more inclusive culture.

Process

In developing this report and its recommendations, we: reviewed relevant information and research, interviewed subject matter experts, assessed case-studies including the diversity and inclusion initiatives of NZ Cricket and High Performance Sport New Zealand, and examined the impact of bias in sporting organisations and environments.

Key themes

Awareness Raising - In order to create the requisite awareness of unconscious bias, a number of approaches are required. These include Implicit Association Tests, training and education, and social marketing.

Inclusive leadership - Some sporting organisations in New Zealand are consciously working towards creating a culture of inclusion for women. Recent initiatives of New Zealand Cricket and High Performance Sport New Zealand provide examples of inclusive leadership.

Recruitment - Unconscious bias can influence hiring decisions within organisations. A number of strategies can help identify bias and provide tools to mitigate against unconscious bias in recruitment.

Early in pathway environments – Opportunities exist to improve the experience of females early in their sport pathways in three key areas: environment, equipment, and enjoyment.

Recommendations

Awareness Raising

Raise awareness of unconscious gender bias in New Zealand sport and the role everyone can play in reducing it.

Ways to do this include: encouraging people to better understand their own unconscious bias through self-testing and education. Using case studies and champions to showcase how to reduce Unconscious Bias in sports organisations. Sharing information through social media and public relations are also recommended actions.

Inclusive leadership

Develop unconscious bias awareness capability in managers and leaders.

This can be achieved by customised training, measuring success against expected behaviours and introducing a diversity and inclusion policy that focuses on equal opportunity.

Recruitment and selection

Sporting organisations to mitigate against unconscious bias in recruitment.

Provide pre-process unconscious bias training for leaders and recruitment panels, and ensure that there are diversity audits analysing position descriptions and ensuring that job titles use gender neutral terminology. Inductions are also an opportunity to also shape systematic behaviour.

Early in pathway environment

Make the environment in which our children experience sport inclusive and welcoming by understanding the current state of facilities, clothing and equipment offered and how suitable they are for girls and gender-neutral participants.

Make the environment in which our children experience sport inclusive and welcoming. Ensure that girls and women can have privacy in changing rooms and in facilities and that equipment available for women and girls is suitable. Review the allocation of facilities and pitch time, with equitable access during peak times for women's sports. Provide information in a variety of formats so that all groups have equal access. Ensure staff undergo regular equality training. Collateral and imagery is unbiased and targets all participants, particularly when planning programmes, promotion or media. Provide support to enhance awareness of unconscious bias in parents and volunteers.

NEXT GEN LEADERSHIP: the voice of young women on early leadership development

Katie Glynn, Char Pouaka, Leanne Walker, Evelyn Williamson

“Not enough knowledge. Young people, especially girls, need to know how they can become a leader in sport, why they would become a leader in sport and what they can do with those skills - how they can use them in a job, how they can get a job in sport leadership. I also think that there are too few female leaders in sport. I can name only one female sportswoman in New Zealand – Dame Valerie Adams”.

There are not enough women in leadership positions in sport (or generally).

For wide ranging, but often consistent reasons, young females may not have access to leadership opportunities or feel like they possess leadership qualities to engage in leadership activities.

This project

Our investigations focussed on the secondary school context and the experiences and opportunities available to our young female students and their perception of those.

The term ‘leadership’ for our younger generation holds different meanings and realities than for the current generation of females in leadership positions, as well as those not currently showing leadership. Therefore, it is also important to understand how our young females (Years 10 – 13 at secondary school) perceive leadership and what they see are the barriers to them engaging as leaders.

To help us gain an understanding of the ‘next gen’, their views of leadership and the barriers they are facing, a brief online survey was designed and completed by Year 10 – 13 female sporting students.

Key Findings

Key findings from our survey highlighted some common themes. In particular:

- Over 65% of students viewed leadership as very or extremely important.
- Most young women did not view themselves as a leader.
- Young women view leadership as positional (82%)
- Most young women were unclear about the importance of gender diversity
- 75 respondents expressed confidence, judgement, opportunity and recycling leaders as barriers to leadership

Our findings were consistent with the data collection done by Emerson in 2013 which poses the question as to whether we are or have been doing enough to improve and grow the skill sets and behaviours needed in leadership, educate around the benefits of diversity and equality and help eliminate the barriers for our next gen to have the confidence they need to lead in the many ways possible to them.

Recommendations

Key recommendations for educators in particular, are to outline ways to continue supporting young women, and how best to foster that leadership through sport at secondary school level and beyond.

Hear their voice

We would like to encourage all sporting bodies who oversee youth sports, or school sports committees, to invite young women to their decision-making tables.

If we want initiatives to be effective and meet their needs, they have to be involved in the design of that initiative. Young women want to be involved. Codesign allows for diversity in thinking and problem-solving.

Develop young women's leadership capabilities

We recommend that school's take on a more active role in developing young female leadership in a range of forums including sport, and our sporting organisations or local councils could initiate and support a sport leadership pathway. Initiate student-led school sports committees and create a leadership development framework. Create youth advisory committees through an amalgamation of selected students from a regional community catchment

Offer this across the board to all levels, to any and all young women interested in leading themselves first and then wanting to serve and lead others.

Provide next gen leadership opportunities

Leadership programmes and opportunities are currently in existence however where students live, or the school they attend often determines who has access.

We recommend that local and regional councils, and sport bodies, provide deliberate opportunities for our young wahine to exercise leadership and/or work alongside adults who drive strategy and policy around their sports. Facilitate leadership workshops across a regional area, and utilise key identities, ie female Olympians, or sports people to share their ideas and take on mentoring roles. Picking up the best threads from the current programmes would set a strong foundation for a sport leadership curriculum and development in our sports landscape

Find out more

Our final recommendation is to encourage our sport leadership researchers to initiate further research and illicit deeper analysis of [the information collected through our survey](#). There is immense possibility and peeling back the layers of our findings may contribute to a broader understanding of the actions that can be put in place.

Take action

Covid -19 has presented us an opportunity to seek changes to the way we interact, build new programmes and engage in sport - let's utilise this time to develop leadership capabilities and provide opportunities to our Next Gen Leaders.

SAFE SPORT – Celebrate functionality and performance

Amaka Gessler, Erika Harris, Gen Macky, Georgina Toomey, Liz van Welie

New Zealand's female athletes are suffering from varying forms of emotional abuse giving rise to body weight and image issues. While the scope of this report is limited to the experience of female athletes, the same issues increasingly apply to male athletes. The conclusions and recommendations set out in this report should also be applied to New Zealand's male athletes.

RED-S

Emotional abuse specifically relating to an athlete's body weight and image most commonly manifests itself in female athletes suffering from Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S). An athlete with RED-S does not consume sufficient calories to recover those used during training.

While RED-S is now a commonly recognised issue in New Zealand sport, the underlying cause of this condition is not being addressed.

In New Zealand, emotional abuse typically arises because of a lack of education and reluctance to conduct open dialogue around female specific health issues, coupled with there being a toxic culture in certain sports. The archaic view that restricting diet to achieve weight loss will improve performance is embedded in New Zealand's sporting culture, and often imbalanced power relationships are contributing to the issue.

As a result of their own experiences and observations within sport, the authors of this report are committed to ensuring that New Zealand's current and future female athletes are

protected from all forms of emotional abuse which manifests itself in disordered eating and body image issues.

We need to build cultures that are healthy for female athletes and do not damage their health and long-term wellbeing. The focus needs to shift to promoting functionality and performance.

Process

To obtain an accurate picture of the current environment, we undertook comprehensive research, scoped key stakeholders and conducted surveys of both athletes and health professionals.

Research included reviewing current literature, both globally and in New Zealand, to understand what processes and mechanisms are already in place to promote safety in sport and address specific issues around emotional abuse of female athletes and the increasingly prevalent RED-S condition.

As part of scoping the project, informal interviews with interested parties including doctors, physios, nutritionists, coaches and both current and retired athletes helped to identify the nature, severity and extent of the issues.

Online surveys were then conducted with high performance female athletes across five sporting codes and health professionals. Each respondent described their personal experiences and perception of the issues, thereby providing a sample representation of a broader range of sports.

Recommendations

RED-S is common and well understood particularly among sports doctors. What is less obvious are the strategies in place to address this in New Zealand in a proactive, preventative manner.

Existing legal protections are not adequate protection in a sporting environment. The issues that are applicable to emotional abuse and body weight and image issues in female athletes have commonalities with the broader topics of emotional and physical abuse and sexual harassment. It is our view that any recommendations and strategies in one area could be more widely applied across all three areas.

Based on the research, interviews and survey information, the following recommendations for action will help athletes cope with issues of body image and disordered eating practices.

Information

A two-way information channel to access information and seek help if needed. A website, supported by a mobile application, will include details about RED-S and warning signs, as well as details about support channels and access if intervention or treatment is required. Coaches and athletes need to be encouraged to use period tracking.

Early Intervention

Work with HPSNZ as it develops the permanent complaints service. Establish regional panels of independent safety / wellbeing officers to address athlete concerns. Explore the role of an overarching sport integrity unit that extends to safety in sport. Ensure availability of support services to women and girls of varying abilities.

Culture

Influence NSO's to create an environment that prioritises physical and mental health as the key to performance. Clarify roles and eliminate coach intervention in weight and nutrition discussions. Educate athletes, coaches and support staff through use of existing international resources.

Personal Empowerment

Educate female athletes early about the significant long-term health risks that can affect their performance and lives well beyond the end of their competitive sporting career. Encourage current and former athletes to be role models who confidently speak out against negative comments and openly discuss menstruation and healthy weight. Promote real women being active. Develop female trainers, coaches and support staff to increase the proportion of females and promote a culture of support, encouragement and resources enabling young women to safely pursue elite level sport.

SOCIAL CHANGE: Harnessing Physical Activity to Enhance the Wellbeing of Adolescent Girls within New Zealand Secondary Schools.

Lizzy Horlock, Michelle Rennie and Alexis Pritchard

Currently, physical activity is not effectively nor consistently being harnessed, to enhance the wellbeing of adolescent (13-17 year old) girls within mainstream secondary school sites in New Zealand. The positive benefits that occur as a result of participating in physical activity is well known and very well documented. 'Be active' as one of the five important actions to be built into daily life to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and organisations.

This Social Change research is based on an examination of case studies, initiatives and research around the concepts of physical activity young women, wellbeing and secondary schools featured across New Zealand and internationally. Interviews with New Zealand experts from education, physical education, young women's programmes and wellbeing initiatives formed a key part of understanding and insight around concepts pertaining to this social change project.

This project focused concepts of wellbeing that are appropriate to engage with for this population of young women, and explores how to create social change in contexts that are influential for this target group.

Conclusion

Secondary schools influence the behaviours, beliefs and attitudes of large populations and are key sites for creating impactful social change.

Girls and women are less likely to meet physical activity guidelines in New Zealand, despite their desire to participate and despite understanding the positive value in doing so. Providing opportunities for girls to be involved in physical activity is key for wider social change because participation can have a positive impact on an individual's wellbeing and has wider and long-term benefits that can occur as a result of being active.

Increasing the collective value placed on physical activity is identified as vital for improving the health and wellbeing of young women and of society as a whole.

This project encourages all people in positions of influence to urgently consider how the Recommended Actions can be implemented. The multi-leveled approach highlights the power that exists within every individual to influence impactful change and requires the support and leadership of schools and government.



Recommendations

A multi-level approach to enhance wellbeing of adolescent girls through physical activity can encourage and contribute to powerful shifts in attitudes and behaviours of both individuals and with communities.

Individual Level: The Girls

- Increase individual access to opportunities to be active.
- Respond to the individual needs of students
- Enhance their self determination
- Support participation in physical activity and encourage wellbeing actions as a part of daily life.

Organisational Level: Secondary Schools

- Enhance the culture of schools to reflect the value placed on physical activity and the wellbeing of adolescent girls.
- Identify and engage with positions of influence.
- Activate resources.
- Ensure the school environment/setting supports daily physical activity.

Wider Societal and Political Level: Society & Policy

- Reprioritise physical activity as essential for the flourishing wellbeing of young women, communities and society.
- Shift beliefs, norms, attitudes and behaviours.
- Improve policies and structures.
- Develop relationships.

VISUAL LANDSCAPE: The changing visual landscape in social media

Julia Edward, Debbie Hansen, Kate McIlroy, Polly Powrie

Sport has the power to shift how women are seen and how they see themselves. Social media can create a platform to transform the portrayal of women in sport. This report explores how females are portrayed, how athletes use social media, investigates whether guidance and education is needed around posting, and identifies opportunities for female athletes to take control of their brand. We researched these topics by creating an online survey and reaching out to prominent high performance athletes to gain further insights. In summary:

- Social media coverage of female athletes is still perceived to be less
- The most popular social media platforms are Instagram (95%) and Facebook
- Women athletes use social media to promote their brand, posting stories of their sporting journey with competition and training the basis to their content
- Most manage their own postings, but few pre-plan their posts
- Type of content and timing of posts were the two most important considerations, followed closely by frequency of posts
- Women athletes took sponsorship requirements into consideration when posting.
- The majority of athletes suffered lack of confidence when talking to the camera using facebook live/instagram story with their biggest fear of being judged.

- Majority of respondents (78%) said they would benefit from guidance and expertise around social media posting.

“Female social media influences can receive a large social media following if they invest the time and energy into promoting themselves and what they do. I believe the opportunity to do so does not depend on the gender of the athlete” (survey respondent)

Recommendations

From the survey results, 78% of respondents said they would like guidance around social media posting. After further research we would advise that:

Social Media Advisor

High performance athletes should have access to a social media advisor, to ensure that from the start of their careers they have an understanding of the correct way to use social media, when, who, how and what to post. It will enable them to take ownership of their brand and portray how they want to be seen, make more informative decisions around their brand as an athlete and as they grow showcase a strong positive community for other women to follow. It is important to be organised and plan ahead. To have an opportunity to discuss what measurable objectives can be attained and best use of practise to the strengths of the athlete.

We would recommend there be a list of advisors via the New Zealand Olympic Committee and High Performance Sport New Zealand website that athletes can access free of charge.

Encourage other High Performance athletes to share their knowledge and be advisors for the younger generation in an informal and formal manner.

Personal Brand Awareness

High Performance Sport New Zealand Carded athletes discuss their “personal brand awareness” in their annual Individual Performance Plans. It is recommended that athletes use this as an opportunity to communicate a unique identity and clear value. It will allow athletes to showcase who they are and what they stand for. It will ensure a level of professionalism is brought to their social media accounts and they are accountable to what, who and when they post?

Challenge athletes to stand out, identify their strengths, show skills, qualifications and expertise. This may be done through NSO catch ups or New Zealand High Performance Sport athlete support programme. The strengths and skill sets can be built into their personal brand which then can be showcased via social media

Encourage the individual to be more than an athlete. It is recommended athletes to tap

into the many transferable skills that they have to help them further their career. Working alongside Athlete Life will motivate athletes to realise their potential on and off the field and grow their personal brand awareness as they grow.

Education Portal

It is recommended that the New Zealand Olympic Committee (NZOC) combined with High Performance Sport New Zealand build a digital media education portal to educate our New Zealand high performance athletes. Creating an online digital media portal will allow New Zealand athletes the starting point they need to be educated in the correct way around social media, such as: managing their social media in the right way, separating their personal and sporting accounts, expanding their network, and sharing engaging content.

We would also encourage High Performance athletes that are seen as role models to provide content to the site.

A recommendation to be made to all High Performance athletes to attend social media training as advised by the NZOC.

Outcome

These recommendations will provide current and upcoming female athletes a platform with the tools and resources to make informed decisions that will enhance their brand. Let's empower female athletes to use social media as a platform to take ownership and champion their stories to be told.