

Gender and Cultural Diversity in Australian Sport

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Introduction

Traditions of Anglo privilege and exclusivity that remained intransigent throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century are increasingly being challenged in early twenty-first century Australia. As a culturally diverse nation, many traditional Australian institutions have been forced to reconsider who their stakeholders are, and adapt to the changing population base in order to be viable, sustainable and appeal to a wider range of individuals and community groups. This chapter examines the policies, processes and practices of Australian sport in relation to anti-racism, cultural diversity, social cohesion and gender equity. The intersecting challenges of racism and sexism in Australian sport are explored here in the context of the experiences of a historically marginalised population, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

A conceptualisation of sport as a social vehicle capable of challenging racism and supporting cultural diversity has been often posited in recent years (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007; McNamara, 1998). The potential of sport for expressing and promoting diversity, celebrating cultural difference, challenging stereotypes, and enhancing intercultural relations has also been identified by a number of Australian academics working in this area (Cortis, Sawrikar, & Muir, 2007; Hanlon & Coleman, 2006; Taylor, 2001). Evidence of government institutions supporting these views can be seen across a range of recent government policy documents. *Shaping Up: A Review of Commonwealth Involvement in Sport and Recreation in Australia* states that: '[in] a multicultural society such as Australia, sport is an important mechanism for bringing diverse groups closer together' (Commonwealth of Australia, 1999, p. 55). *Enriching the Lives of All Australians Through Sport* suggested: 'sport provides a strong and continuous thread through Australia's diverse and widespread population [and] is a binding element in our social and cultural fabric' (Australian Sports Commission, 2006, p. 2). It has also been claimed that sport can provide the social glue which binds communities and creates a broader, more unified society (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity

Commission (HREOC), 2007). These statements emphasise the potential role of sport in developing social capital and social cohesion.

Social capital exists in the networks of solidarity and cooperation among members of groups. Despite the positive way in which it is often referred to social capital has a dark side. Privileged groups use social capital to defend social distinctions and social power, to maintain privilege. Group members can be sanctioned if they violate the norms of their group, possibly by exclusion. Employed in a more positive sense social capital predisposes people to cooperate, trust, understand and empathise – ‘to treat each other as fellow citizens, rather than as strangers, competitors, or potential enemies’ (Aria & Pedlar, 2003, p. 193), promoting networks and intercultural understanding in communities. Social capital also benefits sporting organisations, lifting the profile of organisations in local communities and attracting greater numbers of volunteers (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007).

Despite much policy, social and attitudinal change, racism and sexism in sport are still too often a reality. Patterns of exclusion around gender, race and ethnicity remain evident and incidents of discrimination and vilification continue. The anticipation of racist and sexist attitudes and responses, and associated feelings of not belonging, can act as major barriers to sport participation. In this chapter we argue that racist and sexist attitudes that have prevailed in the wider Australian community since European settlement have been reflected and reinforced in sporting institutions and sport culture. We also argue that sport can provide a vehicle for change.

In the following sections we provide an overview of immigration and migration policy and debate since European settlement in 1788 as a contextual foundation, then move to contemporary initiatives including a report on the sporting experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We subsequently present a theoretical conceptualisation of the marginalisation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and detail some strategies currently employed by government and sporting organisations in Australia for overcoming some of the problems that these women experience.

A history of Australian immigration and migration policy

This section highlights the salient immigration and racism debates and policies that have shaped Australian migration patterns and community responses, and complementary historical occurrences in Australian sport. Firstly and foremost, it is acknowledged that Aborigines have lived in Australia for at least 40 millennia and they remained relatively undisturbed until the eighteenth century when many Europeans began to arrive on the country's shores. In recognition of the unique situation of indigenous Australians we defer to Colin Tatz's chapter on 'Race matters in Australian sport' and therefore our chapter delimits discussions to the non-Aboriginal minority ethnic communities and post-white settlement history.

From 1788 onwards the ethnic composition of the migrating peoples underpinned the development of colonial Australian society and identity. This complex interaction of race, religion and culture shaped social, economic and political structures and, patently, has provided the basis for the country's contemporary sporting environment. The influence of generations of successive governments' immigration policies, community debates and political decisions on the Australian socio-cultural psyche is undeniable. For the purposes of providing a simplified historical context, migration evolution is categorised into three phases.

The first period was one of expected and legislated assimilation, this cultural integration approach dominated policy and practice from the early days of white settlement until the mid-1960s. Notably, one of the first acts of legislation passed by the new Commonwealth of Australia was the Immigration Restriction Act, 1901. The underlying principle of this Act was deeply embedded in the so-called, 'White' Australia policy, in which all immigration was predicated by a preference for British migrants. Non-Europeans, and particularly persons from Asian countries, were effectively excluded as it was considered that such races had less potential to assimilate. However, in the years after the Second World War the federal government actively pursued widespread immigration as a reaction to 'populate or perish' mandate. This was primarily because immigrants provided fundamental labour for Australia's reconstruction and industrialisation, and human capital for building the nation's defence.

The second phase, the mid-1960s to 1973, can be viewed as the post-‘White Australia’ policy period, and was defined by a recognition that the large numbers of migrants coming into Australia, especially those whose first language was not English, required more direct assistance to be ‘Australians’. Thus, a proactive policy of acculturation and assimilation was accompanied by associated increases in funding for migrant assistance and welfare. However, it was still expected that new arrivals would eventually culturally integrate into the host culture.

The final phase, introduced by the adoption of multiculturalism in 1973, was complemented by a shift to placing value on, and embracing, ethnic diversity. In this third phase, minority ethnic groups are encouraged to maintain their language and heritage. However, as with many settler nations, while Australia is multicultural, *racisms* that include ‘Anglo-Celtic cultural dominance, intolerance of diversity, antagonism towards some cultural groups and xenophobia’ are still present (Forrest & Dunn, 2007, p. 700).

The historical context and place of Australian sport in relation to its ethnicity, race and cultural milieu, is strongly tied to the tides of immigration. Initially, the dominant elite of the early white settlers introduced civic underpinnings based on established institutional links with Britain, which was evidenced by the introduction and reinforcement of cultural continuity through sports such as cricket and horseracing. As the nation developed, the creation of myths and memories around sport evolved to reshape, yet retain, the relationship with England. Sports such as cricket moved from being defined by their early allegiance to England and deference to all things English, to the creation of an intense rivalry and desire to beat all English sporting teams.

This was followed by the appropriation of cultural symbols that signified Australian uniqueness, evidenced in the emergence of a new sport, Australian Rules football. Australian Rules football had three attributes for successfully attracting diverse ethnic groups (Stewart, Hess, & Dixon, 1997). First, it was the most prominent sport played in the suburbs where newly arrived migrants settled; second, some clubs developed links with particular ethnic communities; and third, it provided financial rewards at the elite level and the players became role models for the young males from their

communities. Many of the players that succeeded also had to overcome racist taunts and labelling (Booth & Tatz, 2000).

The massive wave of post Second World War immigration was accompanied by the advent of appropriating sporting cultures and traditions from the incoming minority ethnic groups and creation of 'new' sports. For example, soccer shifted from its initial English-controlled roots to a sport administered and played by large numbers of European Australians, before being wrested from the 'ethnic minorities' into the mainstream in the early 2000s. Conversely, non-English sports such as handball and *bocce* were introduced by ethnic minority groups into the host society but are still mainly played within non-Anglo ethnic communities.

While there is no common migration experience, in society in general or in sports in particular, the process of immigration and settlement has had vastly different consequences for men and women. From the first days of colonisation women were discouraged from active participation. Female spectators were present in small numbers at the popular sports of horseracing and prize fights but such behaviour was not viewed as socially acceptable for women (Waterhouse, 1995). Across all spheres of colonial life, including sports, officers and gentlemen were largely motivated in their actions by commitment to the principles of paternalism. The lower orders participated mainly out of defiance to authority and engaged in 'illegal' sports, while women of all classes were restrained in their participation by English cultural values and institutions (Waterhouse, 1995). Early formal sports organisations ostracised women from participation and sports were used to reinforce the divide between men and women (Crotty, 2000).

By the first decade of the twentieth century women were 'permitted' to play sports that were perceived as social pastimes, that did not require great physical exertion and that allowed them to retain decorum of femininity. For example, golf was seen to have redeeming feminine virtues (Haig-Muir, 1998). By the 1920s and 1930s women were participating in sports that ranged from the earlier socially accepted sports of tennis, golf, and swimming to the new pursuits of basketball, hockey and cycling. Women began to form their own sports associations and take control of the

administration of their sports but they still had to continually battle for physical space and social acceptance (Booth & Tatz, 2000).

The 1950s signalled a period of rapid change for women in both society and sports that continued to the 1960s. It was a 'golden era' for Australian women in the Olympics and at the 1956 Melbourne Games women won seven of Australia's thirteen gold medals (Booth & Tatz, 2000). Women were still however only allowed limited access to facilities as evidenced in golf where many golf clubs did not allow women to play on weekends until the 1970s (Stoddart, 1994). It was not until the 1980s that women were allowed to engage in rescue work and competitions in surf life saving (Booth, 1994). In male dominated sports such as boxing, cricket, the football codes, horseracing, soccer, surfing, wrestling and weightlifting, women continued to be marginalised in many other ways, and the battle has not yet been won against gender-based inequities in sport. Although, the tide does appear to be turning in respect to some of the domains of gender relations. For example, there is now a ready willingness of media to expose the 'boys will be boys' culture of rugby league and Australian football and a backlash against the 'legitimate spoils of fame and groupies'. In May 2009 the National Rugby League chief executive David Gallop publicly declared that the league will not tolerate clubs and players that fail to show respect for women. While far from ideal, there has at least been movement in the right direction with acknowledgment of the issue.

Within this gendered historical account, women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds notably have been located on the extreme margins of sports in Australia throughout the twentieth century to a much greater extent than males from similar backgrounds (Stoddart, 1994). In the 1940s and 1950s many newly arrived migrant groups formed ethnic-specific sport clubs and soon came to dominate sports such as football (soccer), but the competitions that emanated and provided participants the space and place to express their identity were almost exclusively male. This domination led to the game being labelled as 'wogball' until recently. Soccer is now called 'Football' a growing sport that is expected to challenge the other football codes of rugby union, rugby league and Australian Rules football.

This historical overview provides a political framework which illustrates the gendered and ethnicised ways in which Australian's have traditionally experienced sport. Empirical evidence of the marginalisation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds is presented in the following section.

Sporting experiences of culturally and linguistically diverse women

Women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds consistently report difficulties participating in sport particularly where the sports offered in Australia are different from those offered in their country of origin (Cortis et al., 2007). Research has found that women tend to feel alienated, with any desire to participate being overshadowed by language difficulties and fear of rejection (Taylor, 2004). Common and recurring themes relating to these women's experiences in sport have been identified (Cortis et al., 2007). These include inhibitors such as time constraints, family responsibilities, the lack of appropriate facilities and programs, the absence of companions to attend with, a lack of finances, social and family pressures, negative school sport experiences, and a lack of information about sporting opportunities (Hanlon & Coleman, 2006; Taylor, 2001).

Socio-cultural barriers to participation experienced by women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australian sport have also been linked to the way that sport is organised and delivered (Cortis et al., 2007). These constraints may include feeling different, standing out or having difficulties in communicating in mainstream social contexts, needing to fulfil family and cultural requirements, the need for female-only coaches or sporting environments and flexible dress requirements. These constraints are often indirect and not manifested in the form of direct racism. Previous studies have noted that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in Australia generally did not feel directly discriminated against in sport and recreation settings, however they found formal leisure activities did not recognise their cultural requirements or were not welcoming, thus making it difficult for them to participate (Taylor, 2004; Taylor & Toohey, 2002). In particular, some Muslim women in Australia have reported the need for sporting activities to be structured around religious requirements, such as having no males present, having activities appropriately timed,

easing uniform or clothing restrictions and ensuring venues are appropriate (Taylor & Toohey, 2002).

It has also been reported that some women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds preferred to take part in sporting activities with people of the same background rather than participating in formally organised sport and recreation outside their ethnic community. The tendency to prefer participating in activities with people from a similar background may be misinterpreted as hostility or a lack of desire to conform to mainstream values and practices (Taylor & Toohey, 2002). However, this situation may act against efforts to facilitate broader social inclusion (Cortis, 2007).

The presence of subtle socio-cultural constraints has meant that women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have often felt marginalised in sporting settings. The next section provides a theoretical framework for understanding the marginalised sporting experiences of such women.

Conceptualising the marginalisation

Not dissimilar to Australian immigration and race policies, the dominant cultural patterning in Australia that centres the ‘white male’ and marginalises other social groups to varying degrees has roots in our colonial past. According to Mackie (1996), the Englishmen who colonised Australia brought with them a set of assumptions and thought patterns that continue to influence our thinking today: a sexist and ethnocentric viewpoint that, self-servingly, placed the ‘English gentleman’ at the pinnacle of global civilisation (and the ‘Australian Aboriginal woman’ at the bottom).

According to these thought patterns industrialised western culture was seen as ‘scientific’, ‘progressive’ and superior to non-western cultures, which were considered ‘primitive’. Men were considered to be more ‘rational’ and dominant in cultural and public affairs than women, who were considered to be more ‘emotional’ and closer to nature. These thought patterns remain embedded in our culture and encourage Australians to see persons who are *other* than ‘Western, white male’ as different, less desirable, inferior, possibly dangerous, and sometimes scarcely human (Mackie, 1996). Perhaps the most insidious consequence of this dominant cultural

view is that people who are devalued by these thought patterns are also subject to the same cultural view and may be at risk of believing that they are inferior on the basis of gender or ethnicity (Mackie, 1996). One author is reminded of a story told by a friend of Sri Lankan ancestry who, as a young Australian child, tried to scrub her skin white each night as she sat in the bath.

Recent research has established that racist attitudes associated with ethnocentrism, in which 'Australianness' is tightly linked with Anglo culture and privilege, continue to prevail (Forrest & Dunn, 2007). Specific and recent manifestations of racism include the 'Cronulla riots', a violent clash between Anglo and Muslim Australians which occurred in a beachside suburb south of Sydney, and the televised protests of Camden residents to a proposed Muslim school in their local government area, south-west of Sydney. Both incidents have unearthed significant anti-Muslim sentiment amongst Anglo-dominant social groups in Australia.

In contemporary Australia, we live in culturally diverse communities and there is ample opportunity to view the world outside the ethnocentric and sexist cultural blinkers of the past. We are, arguably, becoming more reflexive as a society, particularly in areas such as literature and the arts, where the stories and voices of a diverse cross-section of Australians are heard, respected and celebrated.

A quick look at the sports pages of any major Australian newspaper, however, will support the view that the 'Western, white male' continues to occupy the central ground in the cultural playground of Australian sport. Using the sports section of *The Australian* – the country's only national newspaper - (20 July 2009) as a snapshot example we can verify that stories and photos of white male cricketers, footballers and coaches dominate the pages. Men of non-white ethnicities receive somewhat less coverage – there is a photo of a non-white footballer, and a back page story on the golfer, Tiger Woods. There is one mention of women's sport (a small insert from AAP on the Australian women's hockey team). There is no coverage of sport women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Of course, the fact that they are not depicted in newspapers does not stop women from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds from participating in sport, whether as player, coach, administrator or other official. The lack of media coverage is, however, evidence of the marginalisation and oppression of certain social groups in Australia when it comes to sport. Other research verifies that the sporting needs of women from non-Anglo backgrounds are sidelined by mainstream providers (Taylor, 2004; Taylor & Toohey, 2001). Taylor's (2004) research into netball, for example, revealed that women from non-Anglo backgrounds do not feel that they 'fit' comfortably into the Anglo-dominated sporting culture of netball.

Ethnocentrism was transported to Australia in the colonial era and remains evident in contemporary society in a variety of guises and levels of intensity (Forrest & Dunn 2007, Taylor, 2004; Taylor & Toohey, 2001). Even among educated groups unconscious aversion to some social groups and the normative gaze continue to oppress in informal ways (Forrest & Dunn, 2007; Young, 1990). Many Anglo Australians, particularly those who are well educated, voice respect for the value of multiculturalism, but we can question whether the rhetoric has led to real connections, friendships and cultural sensitivity between people from the different ethnic groups.

Feminist movements and anti-discrimination legislation have not eliminated gender-based inequalities either. Women are under-represented in the boardrooms of most organisations in Australia including those of our national sporting bodies. There is mounting evidence of a gross lack of respect for women among some players in the football codes. Aggressive hegemonic masculinities based upon 'superiority' over women are reinforced in many sporting environments and bring men power and status (Sparkes, Partington, & Brown, 2007; Wearing, 1998). Dominant discourses construct sport as necessarily aggressive, with a high value placed upon characteristics such as strength and speed. While there are women who are stronger and faster than men, at the elite level men are stronger and faster (due, predominantly, to differences in physiology). Elite female sportswomen tend to receive less media coverage, prize money, sponsorship and other support as their performance is deemed to be inferior to that of their male counterparts. Sports that also require artistry and elegance – such as gymnastics, diving, synchronised swimming and ice skating -

appear to be valued in Australian culture only once every four years, when the possibility of winning a medal at the Olympic Games stirs nationalist pride.

Women's soccer is growing rapidly in popularity and many players report enjoying the fast, aggressive and physical nature of the game (Ledlin, 2009). Some feminists are critical of women adopting masculine traits like aggression (cited in Wearing 1998, p.111). Others note that women are rewriting the 'male rules' of the game. Ledlin's (2009) study of amateur women soccer players found that many women insist on playing with friends rather than being graded into teams based upon ability.

It is argued that women are less likely than men to reach their full potential in sport due to gender and ethnic stereotyping (Wearing, 1998). However, sporting spaces also provide opportunities for women to resist 'domination of the self and inferiorized subjectivities' (Wearing, 1998, p.146). Many women experience a sense of empowerment from sports participation, including an increase in self-confidence and a new and exciting awareness of bodily power (Wearing 1998, p.110). Newly arrived young immigrants to Australia have reported that sports participation has brought them out of isolation, provided opportunities for friendships to develop, and given them hope for the future (Olliff, 2008).

In Australia we pride ourselves on egalitarianism, yet claims to impartiality tend to serve the interests of social groups who are already privileged. Research into the sporting experiences of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds highlights injustices and inequities in Australian sport (Taylor, 2004; Taylor & Toohey, 2001) where the embedded cultural tendencies towards sexism and ethnocentrism intersect. Sporting administrators and policy makers interested in addressing inequities in Australian sport have systematically focussed on the values, strengths and needs of women (and men) from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, centring these groups in their thinking, plans and strategies for the future of their sports. Social justice is about a fair distribution of material goods but also goes beyond material goods to things like respect, opportunity, power and honour (Young, 1990).

The need to address these factors has been recognised by many sport and social policy makers in Australia. This recognition stems from a growing body of empirical research that highlights the potential of sport participation to promote cultural diversity, gender equity and social inclusion. Debate continues as to whether programs, policies and other initiatives should aim at incorporating women from culturally and linguistically diverse communities into existing sporting structures or promoting wider change in sporting institutions and cultures to enable these women to participate on their own terms (Cortis et al., 2007). The next section provides an overview of strategies that have been trialled and/or recommended by sporting organisations and policy makers in Australia.

Strategies facilitating sports participation

In a bid to overcome both explicit and implicit barriers to sports participation a number of changes have been made to Australian sport policy in recent years. Sports organisations, sporting codes, government and non-government sporting agencies and human rights institutions have recognised the need to combat racism and prejudice within Australian sport in order to give everyone in the community opportunities to benefit from participation in sporting activities of their choice. Strategies, policies and programs have been developed to support the sporting needs of all women. These have, in turn, resulted in a range of initiatives and interventions promoting inclusive practices.

One approach is the provision of information about opportunities and promotion of sporting and recreational activities and issues (Cortis et al., 2007). Womensport and the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues in Victoria publish resources which include translated program resources, tips for sports providers, information for coaches and newly arrived young people about how to engage women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Personal invitations, word of mouth and community radio have proved to be effective strategies (VicHealth, 2000). Strategies such as distributing information about how to access activities at places of worship, specialty shops, community centres and retirement villages with culturally and linguistically diverse populations have also been proposed (Taylor & Toohey, 1998).

Examples of good practice in successful inclusion programs are initiatives that stress the importance of peer support and peer education as effective strategies to increase, establish and maintain activity programs for migrant communities (Cortis et al., 2007; Islamic Women's Association of Queensland Incorporation, 2003). The importance of having an instructor from the same cultural background is also mentioned as a strategy for facilitating sport participation for migrant women (Cortis et al., 2007; VicHealth, 2000). Cross-cultural training and education within sporting organisations about the benefits of cultural diversity and the extension of programs and interventions to support participation have also been recommended (Centre for Culture Ethnicity and Health, 2006).

In 2006 a comprehensive study, *What's the Score*, examining cultural diversity and racism in Australian sport was undertaken by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007). The study included an audit of existing strategies adopted by sporting organisations in order to develop an inclusive, non-discriminatory culture within sport by players, spectators and the broader viewing public (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007).

The aim of the study was to review strategies used by Australian sporting organisations, identify gaps in these existing strategies and identify potential new approaches in order to create greater inclusion of non-traditional sporting participants. The HREOC study included seventeen Australian sports. The selection criteria for the sports included participation numbers, profile, past issues with racism and involvement in cross cultural awareness training. The study also encompassed federal and state government agencies, human rights and equal opportunity agencies and seven non-government sporting organisations.

Table 1: A sample from the ‘*What’s the Score*’ project of Australian Sporting Organisations that offer programs to combat racism and/or sexism

Organisation	Project/s	Description
Australian Football League (AFL)	Multicultural Football Program	Program encouraging migrant and refugee communities to access AFL, promoting anti-racism in various media
Australian Rugby Union (ARU)	National Education Program	Educational program exploring the significance and value of diverse role models in rugby union
Athletics Australia	Sports Leadership Grant Program	Program providing grants for rural and remote women
Basketball Australia	Multicultural Young Women’s Basketball League New Arrivals Basketball Go For Your Life	Programs providing subsidies for basketball participation fees and a welcoming environment including multicultural development officers
Football Federation Australia (FFA)	Refugee Youth Soccer Development Program Onside Soccer	Programs for developing soccer in new refugee communities and in disadvantaged communities
National Rugby League (NRL)	Voices of Australia Cross Cultural Awareness Program	Programs tackle racism issues and provide cross cultural awareness training for players and club members
Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA)	On The Same Wave	Program providing support to young Australians of all backgrounds to engage in surf life saving around Australia
Netball Australia	Cross cultural training programs	Strategies and checklists for clubs to encourage participation of women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds e.g. encouraging flexibility to accommodate religious beliefs and establishing ethnic teams within existing structures

Table 1 provides a snapshot of some of the more innovative and dynamic projects operating in Australian sport. These strategies and programs assist national sport organisations to deliver sport to a more diverse Australian population.

All of the sporting organisations surveyed had a range of member protection policies and codes of conduct in place to address concerns and complaints of discrimination, harassment and other inappropriate behaviour. Individual sporting organisations were

found to employ their own educational anti-racism programs such as the *Bouncing Racism out of Sport* booklet and DVD developed by Cricket Victoria, Football Victoria and Netball Victoria in partnership with the Department of Victorian Communities (launched in 2003). The HREOC report recommended that these policies be audited in order to ensure the inclusion of adequate processes for effective complaint handling and policies to deal with racial abuse by spectators. Most national sporting bodies work with people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as role models to raise cultural awareness and to demonstrate respect. The Australian Sports Commission includes a Women and Sport Unit which aims to foster inclusive practices in sport and to promote equity and respect for women and girls in all aspects of sport. These innovative projects offer unique opportunities to encourage sport participation and value the involvement of diverse populations.

Sporting organisations that provide a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere have a greater chance of attracting participants from a diverse range of backgrounds (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007). The report concluded that NSOs that did not have existing dedicated sports programs for culturally and linguistically diverse communities and dedicated culturally and linguistically diverse development officers should consider implementing these. The report additionally recommended using role models within sport to show the importance of standing up to racism (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007).

On a national level, two important strategies being implemented include the Australian Sports Commission's (ASC) *Harassment-free Sport* strategy (launched in 1998) and the online training program *Play by the Rules* (launched in 2001). After an evaluation of the Harassment-free Sport strategy in 2004 it was realigned to support a greater number of educational and awareness initiatives for national sporting organisations. A significant element of both initiatives is the innovative way in which they are delivered, through a combination of state and territory sport and recreation departments and equal opportunity and anti-discrimination commissions. This involved consultation, cooperation and collaboration between the key stakeholders which include the sporting organisations and federal, state and territory government agencies. This comprehensive approach gives the projects wider reach.

In 1999 the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) established the Living in Harmony Program which assists incorporated, not-for-profit organisations such as sporting bodies and schools with funding for projects that aim to promote Australian values and mutual obligation, engage the whole community and address misunderstanding and intolerance at the community level. Harmony day projects have been developed by a number of sporting organisations. The Australian Football League, Cricket Australia, Netball Australia, Surf Life Saving Australia, Tennis Australia, and the National Rugby League have all been official partners. These projects have been successful in raising public awareness of the potential of sport to promote community harmony.

The ASC established the *All Australian Sporting Initiative* in 2006, to increase participation in sport amongst children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities in Sydney. Large participation numbers have indicated the community need and the community commitment to this project. The ASC has also funded the *Women's Sport Leadership Grants* which provides funding and support for women to seek accredited training and development in coaching, officiating, governance and management. One of the priority areas for these grants is women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The prioritisation of these projects indicates the importance as well as the continued demand for these types of initiatives within the Australian community. This can be illustrated through the continued support by the ASC and the longevity of the *Women's Sport Leadership Grants* over an eight year period. In 2009 funding for these grants was increased to \$500 000 and 132 individual women were supported (Australian Sports Commission, 2009).

NSW Sport and Recreation set up the *WimSWIM* program in 2004. This program provides learn-to-swim and leisure swimming programs for girls and women of all ages. The program resulted from a demand for women only swimming sessions which could not be satisfied by swimming provision at local swimming pools. In the *WimSWIM* program all the swimming lessons are taught by accredited female swimming instructors in a fully enclosed, indoor, private, heated pool. This program has been successful in engaging women and girls from culturally and linguistically

diverse backgrounds, particularly Muslim women. There is also a *Sportrage* program provided by NSW Sport and Recreation that provides sporting clubs with educational and promotional resources to address abusive behaviour. Both projects have drawn considerable public support and have addressed previously unmet needs.

The *On The Same Wave* project (which followed incidents of racism, discrimination and harassment culminating in the December 2005 ‘Cronulla riots’) was designed to foster community harmony and social cohesion after these had broken down on Sydney’s beaches during the disturbances. The project was specifically designed to increase participation of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals in lifesaving and water safety activities in order to improve racial and community harmony on Australian beaches. *On the Same Wave* introduced a greater diversity of participants to the activities of Australian Surf Life Saving and challenged the iconic stereotype of the blond, blue eyed, muscular, male lifesaver as images of a young Muslim women engaged in a surf lifesaver role were broadcast worldwide. The project launched an image of Surf Life Saving Australia as an inclusive organisation reflective of the diverse Australian community. Two significant and tangible outcomes in terms of equality and cultural diversity have been achieved as a result of Surf Life Saving Australia’s *On the Same Wave* project. These include the development of the ‘Burqini’, a modest red and yellow surf life saving uniform suitable for Hijab wearing women, and the qualification of the first Muslim woman surf life saver. The program received positive national and international media coverage and allowed Australia to share a model of good practice around the world.

These successful outcomes illustrate that when gender sensitivities and religious differences are recognised and the necessary cultural adaptations or accommodations are made by the sport concerned then cultural diversity can be embraced and sport can be used to facilitate social cohesion. This occurs when a sporting organisation develops inter-ethnic trust through providing opportunities for positive sporting engagement. Additionally, social and cultural networks start to develop between migrant and mainstream Australian communities. Social capital begins to be produced and (re)produced as individuals and communities engage in culturally and religiously appropriate sports programs and projects. Development of social capital involving

inter-ethnic trust facilitates cross-cultural understanding and in turn reduces racism and discrimination in sport and in the broader society.

Conclusion

Australia has a political and cultural history of privileging the Western, white male and marginalising all others, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This chapter has illustrated that the institution of sport has both reinforced and reflected these historic patterns of privilege and marginalisation, and that sport has also demonstrated the potential to address these issues through the adoption of a social inclusion agenda. Furthermore, research presented here suggests that sport can help build community harmony, social capital and social cohesion and assist with settlement and migration issues.

The benefits of promoting gender and ethnic diversity in sport and building social capital have been widely acknowledged by Australian sporting organisations, government bodies, human rights organisations and non-government organisations involved in the delivery of sport. Social capital (used in its most positive sense) predisposes people to cooperate, trust, understand and care about each other – ‘to treat each other as fellow citizens, rather than as strangers, competitors, or potential enemies’ (Aria & Pedlar, 2003, p. 193). Social capital benefits sporting organisations, lifting the profile of organisations in local communities and attracting greater numbers of volunteers (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC), 2007).

A diverse membership has the potential to stimulate social networking among diverse cultural groups within sporting organisations and the wider community. It should be noted, however, that an increase in cultural diversity within a community can sometimes have the effect of reducing social capital, particularly levels of trust, altruism, and community cooperation (Putnam, 2007).

Social capital is underpinned by the formation of trust (Arai & Pedlar, 2003; Putnam, 2007). In the context of sporting organisations trust can be thought about in two ways – interpersonal trust and abstract trust (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Sporting organisations, mass media and education play a role in the creation of abstract trust; that is, teaching

the art of cooperation and an understanding of abstract ideas such as citizenship, trust, fairness and equality (Arai & Pedlar, 2003). Many of the projects mentioned in this chapter have played an important role in developing abstract trust in Australian communities. *Harmony Day* (developed in Australian schools and many sporting organisations) and *On the Same Wave* (initiated by the Australian government in partnership with Surf Life Saving Australia) are particularly good examples of the development of abstract trust.

As the name suggests, interpersonal trust develops between people linked to the organisation (players, coaches, volunteers, administrators, officials, members of the wider community). Organisations that provide members with order, decision-making capacity, authority based on principle rather than person, and group norms that allow members and authority to influence each other reciprocally (McMillan, 1996) are providing an optimal environment for the development of interpersonal trust.

This chapter has reported a groundswell of policies, programs and other initiatives that have been put in place to combat social exclusion and to build cooperation, trust, networks, empathy and intercultural understanding in Australian sporting communities. Evidence to be collected over coming decades will determine whether these strategies have been effective in reducing marginalisation and providing more opportunities, respect, power and honour for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. We will know that we have succeeded when all Australians have the opportunity to feel that they are welcome and belong in the Australian sporting landscape.

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