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A decade of progress outpaces the past century.

Progress towards gender equality and pay equality in sport "Unstoppable" according to landmark report.

There has been more progress towards gender equality and pay equality in sport in the past decade than the prior century, but key barriers remain according to a landmark report released today by Champions of Change Coalition Sport Group.

Unstoppable describes the wins, challenges and future focus areas to achieve the Group's vision for gender equality in sport within a generation. According to the Sport CEOs, priorities must include:

- **increasing the representation of women in leadership roles**
- **creating viable and sustainable career pathways for women in all aspects of sport**
- **increasing investment in women's sports**
- **closing the gender pay gap, and**
- **most critically, fostering safe, respectful, and inclusive sports cultures for all.**

Released 10 years after the initial call to establish the Champions of Change Sport Group and five years since the launch of the Coalition's measurement framework, *Pathway to Gender Equality and Pay Equality in Sport*¹, the report demonstrates the outcomes of a concerted effort towards gender equality across the entire sports eco-system.

"Sport is in many ways the heartbeat of Australian culture, with an unmatched ability to lead social and community change. The advancements made on gender equality in sport over the past 10 years are proof of the substantial impact we can have if we work collectively, collaboratively, and stay the course," according to Elizabeth Broderick AO, Champions of Change Coalition Founder and Convenor of the Sport Group.

Sustained leadership, commitment and action are now required according to Elizabeth.

"It's not that long ago that women were practically invisible in most aspects of sport, particularly elite sport. While much has been achieved, gender equality must be built into the fabric of all sport into the future. It is critical that more leaders in the sector, and across business and society, join in, contribute to, implement, and amplify this work," she said.

Champions of Change Sport Group Member, Kieren Perkins OAM, CEO of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) added *"As leaders, we need to hold each other accountable to build more representation and break the deeply entrenched biases and norms that sit within the sporting system."*

Progress includes²:

- **Leadership:** Women are advancing in leadership, with 54% of Member organisations having gender-balanced boards (up from 31% in 2022), but few women occupy CEO roles.
- **Cultural Shifts:** 100% of Member organisations have implemented diversity and inclusion action plans and flexible working policies but further efforts are required to create safer, more inclusive environments for women.
- **Participation:** 92% of Member organisations report gender balance in elite athlete pathways (up from 75% in 2022).
- **Pathways:** While 100% of Member organisations now have pathways for women to reach elite levels, only 82% report gender balance in funded development pathways (up from 63% in 2022).
- **Investment:** Investment is growing, with 55% of organisations reporting gender balance in allocated budgets for elite women's sports (up from 44% in 2022), but more targeted funding is needed to fully realise potential.
- **Pay Equity:** While many Champions of Change Sport Group members have lower gender pay gaps compared to industry benchmarks, achieving full parity across all levels requires ongoing focus.

Priorities for the future include:

- **Increasing Representation:** Strive for equal representation of women in senior leadership and decision-making positions.
- **Developing Career Pathways:** Create sustainable career pathways for women in sports to support and maintain a robust pipeline of talent.
- **Enhancing Investment:** Focus on attracting investments to further professionalise women's sports.
- **Fostering Inclusive Environments:** Develop policies and practices that create safe, respectful, and inclusive sports environments for all participants.
- **Closing Gender Pay Gaps:** Implement strategies to address and close gender pay gaps across all levels of sport.

Comments from Champions of Change Sport Group Members:

“Even with all the progress, there are so many opportunities for further development and much work to do. Now is the time to think big, renew our focus and accelerate momentum to be the leading sport for women and girls” - Nick Hockley CEO, Cricket Australia.

“Our challenge to governments, corporate entities, broadcasters and sports' governing bodies is to make a stand—commit, invest and grow women's sport because women's sport is real. And it's here to stay. Women's football in Australia has proved that to us all.” - James Johnson CEO, Football Australia.

“We are passionate about growing golf to be a fun sport for all. For too long, golf has been considered a sport for a very select few, but we know the game has the potential to engage with people of all ages, gender and ability.” - James Sutherland CEO, Golf Australia.

“If we can normalise women in coaching and leadership, we will have young people seeing women in these positions and equally represented – I think we can change the world right across our sport” – **Sarah Cook CEO, Rowing Australia**

“Rugby League has been around for more than 100 years, and for most of that time it's been a male-dominated sport. We have to work harder and be very innovative to ensure we are opening up opportunities for it to be a gender equal sport.” – **Andrew Abdo CEO, National Rugby League**

“Equality, inclusion and diversity – both on and off the court – are at the heart of everything we do. Tennis has a longstanding commitment to achieving gender equality, however there is still work to be done. We remain focused on driving positive change in our sport to ensure our communities are welcoming safe and inclusive for women and girls to thrive.” – **Craig Tiley CEO, Tennis Australia**

“Australia has hosted incredible World Cups on home soil, showcasing our best women athletes and allowing the next generation to imagine a future of unlimited potential. The future is full of promise as we deliver more programs aimed at closing the gender gap.” – **Matt Scriven CEO, Basketball Australia**

“Women are an integral part of our game. This Club is committed to ensuring women belong. We have taken some steps forward as a Club and as an industry, but there is still more to be done.” – **Brendon Gale former CEO of Richmond Football Club (2009-2024)**

“For decades, men and women jockey athletes have competed against each other for equal prizemoney. As we applaud the growth in women jockeys competing and their success, our challenge is to ensure the ecosystem enables the growth of women in leadership roles across all aspects of racing.” – **Aaron Morrison CEO, Racing Victoria**

“With a commitment to inclusion, Surf Life Saving Australia embraces the challenge of fostering gender balance within its leadership and beyond.” – **Adam Weir CEO, Surf Life Saving Australia**

“We remain committed to the achievement of gender equality and the advancement of women within our Club and business. Our new state-of-art training facilities provide a benchmark level of integration and equal opportunity for our men’s and women’s programs. A key focus for us is continuing to create pathways for developing women within our Football Department as this remains an area of significant opportunity.” – **Ameet Bains CEO, Western Bulldogs Football Club**

“Our new state-of-the-art facilities for both the AFL and AFLW are a genuine commitment and sign of our contribution to gender equality. All of the facilities for AFL and AFLW are the same size and same quality – gyms and indoor facilities and lot of other areas are integrated. I think it's probably the first of its kind in Australia, and we're very proud of it.” – **Brian Cook CEO, Carlton Football Club**

Notes

The Champions of Change Sport Group includes CEOs of major national sporting organisations in Australia and some of the country’s largest and most successful sport clubs. These leaders use

their influence to drive cultural and systemic changes within the sports sector, aiming to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all participants.

Unstoppable was made possible by the pro-bono support of PwC Australia in shaping the analysis and findings presented in the report. The development of the report involved extensive stakeholder consultations, interviews with CEOs and senior leaders, focus groups, and a comprehensive review of related research and reports from 2014 to 2024. Champions of Change Members have also provided an individual and collective assessment of their progress during the past five years against the 28 measures set out in the Group's monitoring and assessment framework.

The Champions of Change Coalition, established in 2010 by Elizabeth Broderick AO, comprises CEOs, secretaries of government departments, non-executive directors, and community leaders committed to significantly increasing the representation of women in leadership roles across various sectors, and achieving inclusive gender equality across Australia's workplaces by 2030.

For more information, please visit [Champions of Change Coalition](#) or contact:

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¹ Champions of Change Coalition, *Pathway to Gender Equality in Sport Including Pay Equality*, 2020. Online: <https://championsofchangecoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/MCC-Sport-Pathway-to-Gender-Equality-in-SportIncluding-Pay-Equality-Report-2020.pdf>

² Data compared to 2022, the most recent publicly reported year.