



Fair go, sport!

Promoting sexual and gender diversity

In October 2010, I was pleased to announce that Hockey Victoria had been chosen as the major partner in a national Australian Sports Commission project to increase awareness of sexual and gender diversity in sport, and to promote safe and inclusive sporting environments for everyone.

Our goal has been to develop a flexible model of engaging clubs on these issues that will not only be useful for hockey but that can also be adapted to other sporting codes and their governing bodies.

Throughout the year, we have been working with Hockey Australia, the Australian Sports Commission, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, La Trobe University and a committed and supportive Steering Committee.

This project, of course, doesn't mean there are problems in hockey, but rather it has provided us with an opportunity to explore these issues in a positive way and to showcase what we are doing right. It has also been a great opportunity to learn if there are things we could do better to make our sport safer and more inclusive.

We were all reminded just how important this is when Gus Johnston released his YouTube video in September this year. This clip sensitively documents the reality of homophobia in sport and Gus's personal journey of coming out. Gus has shown courageous leadership, and his story challenges all of us to step up to the plate and do likewise.

Fair go, sport! is not about asking people to come out; coming out is a personal choice. Rather, *Fair go, sport!* is about ensuring safe and supportive sporting environments where that choice can be freely exercised.

Consequently, I have strongly encouraged all affiliates to view the video, examine the issues that Gus discusses and consider the ways in which all clubs and their members can help ensure our hockey environments are inclusive, safe and welcoming. This is the spirit of *Fair go, sport!*

I am attaching a report to our hockey community that summarises the project and what we have been able to achieve to date. It is not a final report; Hockey Victoria's commitment to these issues is ongoing.

Ben Hartung
Chief Executive Officer
Hockey Victoria

Project background: why is there a need?

The benefits of being able to participate and get involved in sport can have a profoundly positive impact on individuals. Sport is good for health and well-being – physically, mentally and socially. Sport is a great way to connect and develop a sense of belonging.

Unfortunately, sport can also be a venue and a vehicle for prejudice, exclusion and abuse. For example, we are all aware of recent and persistent media reports of racism in sport. This behaviour not only tarnishes the reputation of individuals, clubs and whole sports but is also very hurtful and offensive to those who are targeted.

Depression, anxiety and isolation have been identified by *headspace* and *beyondblue* as some of the harmful consequences of this unfair treatment. And those who identify as same sex attracted or gender questioning are reported to be four times more likely to suicide.

Recent research by Victoria and La Trobe Universities identified sport as a significant site of homophobic harassment. Many people reported discrimination and exclusion in sport because of their sexuality and gender identity. This failure to nurture an open and welcoming culture in many sporting environments creates some unique challenges, not only for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people (GLBTI), but also for sporting codes. It is not surprising therefore that many GLBTI people fail to participate or eventually drop out of sport.

It can be difficult for anyone to speak up when they find themselves on the receiving end of abuse. Many report they have been unsure of what to do or have hesitated because they fear the abuse will get worse. How much harder it must then be for people to speak up in the face of homophobia, because it often means ‘outing themselves’ which can reinforce their sense of isolation, uncertainty and fear.

So often homophobic behaviours or comments are ignored by the others as ‘just a joke’, ‘didn’t mean anything by it’ or ‘not serious’. It is obviously so much better and more productive for clubs and sports to be proactive; to recognise their duty of care and to put positive, preventative strategies in place – so no-one has to speak-up or walk away from a club because they feel unsafe.

Discrimination is against the law. We all have a legal and moral duty to be proactive and prevent discrimination and harassment before they occur; it is no longer enough to respond to such incidents after they have happened.

In 2009, in recognition of the research and the lack of a strategic response to it, *The Future of Australian Sport* (The Crawford Report commissioned by the Australian Government) identified sexuality and gender identity in sport as an important new opportunity for inclusion and exploration. The report stated “this is an area which has been largely neglected in sports policy and where the ASC can play an important role ... to better understand the issue and work to build appropriate strategies for inclusion” (page 45).

The Australian Government’s response to the Crawford Report, *Australian Sport: The pathway to success* (2009) acknowledged a commitment to enhance community participation and social inclusion, especially for those who are vulnerable, marginalised and disconnected. It stated, “A key task for sports policy makers and administrators is to address the factors, and in some cases the barriers, that prevent sports participation by people from diverse backgrounds” (page 4).

At Hockey Victoria, we are mindful of the needs of GLBTI people and recognise our responsibilities as a sport. Our leadership in the *Fair go, sport!* project will assist our sport and clubs to dismantle any barriers and help extend all the benefits of participation and fair play to GLBTI people in sport.



The project aims:

To increase awareness of sexual and gender diversity and to promote safe and inclusive environments in hockey; and develop a flexible model of engagement that can be adapted for other sporting codes and their governing bodies.

The objectives

- To engage key stakeholders in identifying existing policies, codes and procedures, and map experiences, practices, attitudes and perceptions in order to develop pilot interventions at all levels of hockey
- To develop, with key stakeholders, pilot interventions that promote safe and inclusive environments and reduce homophobia
- To develop a flexible model for safe and inclusive environments in hockey which is transferable to other sports
- To evaluate the project after 12 months to ascertain its effectiveness and the difference the engagement has had for the sport and its participants.

Our approach

Fair go, sport! has adopted an assets or strengths-based approach, that is, it has endeavoured to identify and build on the existing strengths and opportunities that already exist within our sport and in clubs. An assets-based approach is not about deficits (that is, what we are not doing or not doing well), but rather it's about our opportunities, possibilities and what we could do to make a positive difference.

The project is not a negative or reactionary response to homophobia and transphobia (and therefore just focuses on the barriers to GLBTI participation), but rather it has sought to positively promote a culture of respect and inclusion of people of all sexualities and gender identities in hockey.

Consequently, the project has not sought to impose any particular activities or interventions on those involved; rather it has encouraged conversations about our needs and what we might do to meet them. This is very much an action learning approach as our sport has learned from trying things out, and then tried things out based on these new learnings. In this way, our learning has been developmental and ongoing, and helped us to make better decisions.

The Project Steering Committee

A project Steering Committee was established to ensure the project remains relevant and meets the needs of hockey and the other project partners, as well as the broader GLBTI community and other stakeholders. The Committee's primary purposes are to provide expert advice to guide the development, implementation and evaluation of the project, and to provide sporting, professional and community insights and perspectives to ensure the project is able to meet its objectives.

Committee membership includes all levels of hockey (national, state, association and club), the Australian Sport Commission, VicHealth, Sport and Recreation Victoria, Victoria University, Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria, Transgender Victoria, community advocates, and the relevant project staff at the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

Literature review

The project evaluation team at La Trobe University developed a literature review (November 2010) to inform and support the work of the project. The review summarised the evidence on the existence of homophobia and transphobia in sport, but, in the spirit of the *Fair go, sport!* project, greatest attention was paid to what the research says can be done to engage clubs and create more inclusive sporting environments

Online surveys

Early in the project (October – November 2010) two online surveys were distributed to Hockey Victoria affiliates:

- A stakeholder survey which included questions about awareness of relevant policies, procedures and supports, and perceptions related to inclusive practice. This survey was re-administered in October 2011.
- A survey developed in partnership with the La Trobe University evaluation team to help identify attitudes and perceptions of what constitutes sexual and gender identity harassment in our sport.

These surveys proved to be an excellent starting point for the project, identifying issues and perceptions.

Policy audit

An audit was conducted of all relevant policies, procedures and codes that exist at all levels of our sport (at Hockey Australia, Hockey Victoria and in clubs), and at the Australian Sports Commission.

As a result of this audit, Hockey Victoria's Code of Behaviour was reviewed and reissued with an endorsement by the CEO in late 2010. In April this year, a proactive reminder was sent to all affiliates in light of incidents that had occurred around that time in other sporting codes.

Member Protection Information Officers

Key Hockey Victoria staff were trained (December 2010) to act as Member Protection Information Officers at Hockey Victoria in line with the role described in our Member Protection Policy. Member Protection Information Officers are impartial, confidential support people who can assist members to understand their member protection rights and what their options are if they have a concern or complaint.

Project launches

A project media launch was conducted on 29 March, in the week prior to the start of the 2011 winter season. Photo opportunities were created at Hockey Victoria involving our Project Champions, and media releases were distributed by the project partners and the Federal Sports Minister, Senator Mark Arbib.

A public launch took place on Saturday 21 May to coincide with the AHL women's round in Melbourne. A panel discussion told the story of the project, and the Victorian Vipers, wearing the *Fair go, sport!* logo on their playing singlets, and the Southern Suns contested the inaugural *Fair go, sport!* Cup. We were pleased to have, a couple of weeks later, Hockey ACT partner with us to feature a second *Fair go, sport!* Cup during Round 1 of the Men's AHL in Canberra when the Canberra Lakers played the Victorian Vikings.

Project Champions

The project identified three Project Champions (Katie Allen, Clare Prideaux and Trish Heberle), all well-known and respected former Hockeyroos who continue to play an important role in hockey and its development in Australia. Project Champions are ambassadors for the project and have kindly participated in relevant project events. We aim to increase the number of Champions in the future.

The pilot clubs

An important and central part of the project has been its work with a small number of hockey clubs. These pilot clubs have had the opportunity to try out some club-specific strategies to promote sexual and gender diversity, and inclusive environments. Four pilot clubs were identified in late 2010 and they have been at the heart of what the *Fair go, sport!* project has been able to achieve over the last year. These pilot clubs have ensured our project has been about 'real people, in real clubs, doing real things'.

The four pilot clubs are each very different in terms of their size, location, history, structure and resources. They reflect well the diversity of our hockey community. Each pilot club had the support of its Committee and identified at least one Project Advocate to be its primary project contact and to facilitate and encourage their club's involvement.

The four pilot clubs in 2011 were:

- Werribee Hockey Club
- Old Carey Hockey Club
- Camberwell Hockey Club
- Baw Baw Hockey Club

As described above, the project didn't tell the pilot clubs what to do but offered training, support (from Hockey Victoria, the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission, the project evaluator and from each other) and some resources so that each could work on ideas and activities to meet its own needs and respond to the project aims in its own way.

The Project Officer met regularly with each of the Project Advocates and their clubs. There were also regular opportunities for the Project Advocates to come together to share ideas and learn from each other.

Hockey Victoria appreciates the inspiring and creative work undertaken in each pilot club and lead with such commitment by the small team of Project Advocates.

Examples of what the pilot clubs were able to achieve this year include:

(a) Werribee Hockey Club

- The club web page was updated to include the project logo and information
- The 2011 club registration flyer and adverts included the project logo and the slogan 'Celebrating diversity through hockey'
- The annual club handbook was updated to include the project logo, and the club values were re-ordered so that 'valuing the well-being and diversity of our people' was at the top
- A *Fair go, sport!* and family day was conducted on Saturday, 27 August:
 - All Werribee teams wore the project rainbow socks and wristbands
 - All team members presented wristbands to the opposing teams with a card that stated: *Fair go, sport! At Werribee Hockey Club this means everyone!*
 - *Fair go, sport!* medals were presented at the end of the four senior games to the fairest player on each team
 - Two *Fair go, sport!* Cups were played against Melbourne University (Women's State League 3) and Baw Baw (Men's State League 3) Hockey Clubs
 - A media release distributed, and media coverage secured
- The club developed a project poster. The poster states: "*What you say matters: Everyone deserves a fair go, sport! There's no place for discrimination on or off the pitch. Werribee Hockey Club is committed to maintaining an environment free from harassment and discrimination*"

(b) Old Carey Hockey Club

- A project page was established on the club website
- The club president/project advocate marched at Pride March with the project partners
- The club celebrated its involvement in the *Fair go, sport!* project on Sunday, 21 August, when the club's Men's Metro 4 East team played Melbourne High School Old Boys. Activities included:
 - A media release distributed, and media coverage secured
 - A Facebook page was established to promote this *Fair go, sport!* event
 - All Old Carey players wore the project rainbow socks
 - *Fair go, sport!* medals were presented at the end of the game to the fairest player on each team
 - A social barbecue was held at the end of the game
- The club developed a banner to display beside the pitch. The banner states: *Old Carey Hockey Club: Giving everyone a fair go since 1961*
- A new code of conduct and welcoming statement was developed and promoted. It will become a standard part of the club's Welcome Pack
- The project logo, an article and a link to further project information was created on the Old Carey Grammarians Association website

(c) Camberwell Hockey Club

- The club website was updated to include the project logo and a link to a project page
- The club Member Protection policy and procedures was reviewed, updated and promoted to members
- The club celebrated the opening of its new pitch with a *Fair go, sport!* day on 2 July. Activities included:
 - Two *Fair go, sport!* Cups were played against Waverley Hockey Club (Men's and Women's State League 1)
 - Both Camberwell teams wore the project rainbow socks
 - A media release was distributed, and media coverage secured
- The club developed a project poster. The poster states: "*What you say matters: Give everyone a FAIR GO SPORT! There's no place for discrimination on or off the pitch. Camberwell Hockey Club supports sexual and gender diversity in sport*"
- All sections of the club (Women's, Men's and Juniors) received project updates by email which included useful links and promoted the MPIO role
- Camberwell and Baw Baw Hockey Clubs Under 17 teams played each other at Camberwell on 29 July. The project was promoted and the fairest team members were presented with *Fair go, sport!* medals

(d) Baw Baw Hockey Club

- Baw Baw and Camberwell Hockey Clubs Under 17 teams played each other at Camberwell on 29 July. The project was promoted and the fairest team members were presented with *Fair go, sport!* medals
- The club hosted a Sponsors' Day and *Fair go, sport!* launch on Sunday, 31 July. Activities included:
 - Baw Baw players wore the project rainbow socks
 - *Fair go, sport!* medals were presented at the end of the game to the fairest player on each team
 - A *Fair go, sport!* Cup was played between Baw Baw and Yarra Valley Women's State League 2 teams
 - A media release was distributed, and media coverage secured
- A second *Fair go, sport!* Cup was played against Werribee Hockey Club (Men's State League 3) on 27 August at Werribee Hockey Club
- *Fair go, sport!* awards were presented at the Junior and Senior presentation functions in October
- The club August newsletter featured the project and the August Sponsors' Day
- The club is particularly interested in issues related to cyber safety and young people. It is currently exploring education for the whole club
- Club will host a tailored *Play by the Rules* workshop locally in early 2012 in partnership with GippsSport and Baw Baw Shire

Communication and media strategy

A comprehensive communication and media strategy was developed cooperatively by the project partners. The strategy included:

- Communication guidelines
- Media plan
- A statement of key messages
- A glossary
- Briefing notes

Project branding and promotional material

Branding and promotional materials have played a key role in the project. They have assisted us to create interest, profile and, most importantly, start conversations. Merchandise and promotional materials have been a symbol or tangible expression of what the project has set out to achieve. They have assisted pilot clubs and other sporting organisations to promote the project and their commitment to it. As pilot clubs engaged with the promotional material and considered how they might use these resources, it assisted conversations and planning within these clubs in a very practical way.

Specific materials developed included:

- The project name, slogan and logo
- Project signage including a banner, placards, large hockey sticks
- Badges and wristbands
- Promotional cards
- Rainbow socks

Briefings, information sessions, forums and conferences

Raising awareness of sexual and gender identity in our sport is an important part of what the *Fair go, sport!* project aims to achieve. However, we have aimed to do more than just raise awareness. We have actively encouraged others (both within hockey and in the broader sport fraternity) to get involved in the project and take positive steps to promote diversity and inclusion.

Presentations have included:

- Briefings for Hockey Victoria Presidents and Zone Coordinators
- Updates and briefings for the Hockey Australia Council and CEO's meetings
- Sport and Recreation Victoria's SSA Executive Officer Network (May 2011)
- Conference papers delivered at:
 - The Asia Pacific Regional Outgames (March 2011)
 - National Equal Opportunity Conference (September 2011)
 - SMAANZ Conference (November 2011)
 - Victorian ACHPER Conference (November 2011)
- vicsport Sports Talk Members Forum (November 2011)

Participation in community events and campaigns

The project and its partners were visible in a variety of community events and campaigns throughout the year, including:

- A stall in partnership with the Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission at the 2011 Midsumma Carnival
- The 2011 Pride March on Sunday, 6 February
- IDAHO (International Day Against Homophobia) on 17 May
- A photo campaign on *This is Oz* website

Plans are in place for us to again participate in the Midsumma Festival and Pride March next year with our project partners, pilot clubs and supporters.

Project web pages

Project web pages have been created on the websites of Hockey Victoria, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, the Australian Sports Commission and all four pilot clubs. Links have also been established on most State and Territory Hockey Association websites (for example, Tasmania, ACT, NSW, Queensland), as well as on those of many individual club affiliates (for example, Waverley, Frankston), as well as those of relevant organisations, both national and international (Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport, Gay and lesbian Health Victoria, *Play by the Rules*, Baseball Australia).

Evaluation

While there are a number of published recommendations and broad guidelines to help sports address homophobia, there is limited literature that reports on the actual effectiveness of implementing such recommendations. This underlines the importance of the outcomes of this *Fair go, sport!* initiative.

The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University has been contracted as the project evaluators. Specifically, the project has been working with Dr Gillian Fletcher. The evaluation report is due at the end of 2011 and will:

- comment on the extent to which the project has met its objectives
- identify key factors for success of the engagement model and its sustainability
- assess the impact the project has had on key stakeholders



How can you and your club get involved?

- Have a conversation with the staff at Hockey Victoria or Peter Gourlay, the *Fair go, sport!* project officer (telephone: 9032 3420 or email: fairgosport@veohrc.vic.gov.au)
- Check out the *Fair go, sport!* webpage: www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/fairgosport
- Establish a link to the project on your website, including the Gus Johnston YouTube video
- Include a statement of support from your club
- Check out *Play by the Rules*: www.playbytherules.net.au. It has many useful resources and tools to support clubs
- Talk to your members about their needs or interest. Perhaps you could undertake a survey to identify local issues, attitudes, opportunities: an excellent starting point
- Review and promote your Member Protection Policies: don't assume everyone is aware or knows how to access them
- Create interest and conversations through a themed event or a special round in your club, for example, you could think about using the rainbow socks
- Conduct an information session or briefing. Talk to Hockey Victoria or the project officer about helping out.
- Join us at Pride March on Sunday, 5 February, 2012