

## President's Report 2011-12

It is my great pleasure and honour to present to the meeting tonight the President's Report and the Annual Report 2011-2012 for the Australian Womensport and Recreation Association Inc (AWRA).

Firstly, I would like to thank our wonderful Board Members: Narelle Gosstray (Vice President, Darwin), Jennifer Riatti (Secretary, Perth), Tony Claydon (Treasurer, Perth) and Board members Dr Imke Fischer (Sydney) Professor Kristine Toohey (Gold Coast), Nicole Dunn (Echuca), Heather Reid (Canberra) Michelle Hogan (Perth) and co-opted member Greg Downes (Lismore). This is the first year we have had men on our Board - quite a milestone for AWRA, as we embrace and demonstrate gender equality!

During the year we accepted an offer of legal assistance from Tim Fuller, from Walsh Hallligan Douglas, Brisbane . He is acting as AWRA's Honorary Solicitor and has recently offered to write a sports law comment for our website and to assist with a future review of our constitution.

Board meetings have been conducted by teleconferences (six weekly) and hundreds of emails and some Skype calls have been sent around Australia over the year. A highlight for the Board was a very successful two day meeting in Melbourne (9-10 November 2012) where we reviewed our strategic and operational plans. A thank you to the Australian Commonwealth Games Association for the use of the Commonwealth Games House for the weekend.

Some highlights from the year are:

- Wider communication strategies through Twitter and the development of the ***Charter for Active Australian Women***, initiated by the Communications Committee
- AWRA's successful role in advocating for the Women's 8 to row at the London Olympics
- A higher profile for the organisation through responding to news items, numerous media releases and interviews
- Improved branding as an advocacy and lobby group
- The very successful delivery of ***The Mighty Mentoring Project***
- Regular enews to our members through ***The AWRA Advocate***

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## Annual Report for 2011-12

Reporting against our 2011-2012 Strategic Plan/ Operational Plan, we have achieved some of the strategies for KRA 1:

**Research, Innovation and Issue management:  
The production of quality, innovative research and reports that are evidence based and related to current needs and issues.**

Through meetings and feedback on issues and development we continue to monitor national government sport policy developments. This October, Catherine Ordway (a Canberra based member) and I met with senior staff from the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) and from time to time there is email and telephone contact on women's sport issues with staff in the Participation Section of the ASC. However we were not offered the opportunity to apply for an ASC media grant when they were granted to selected national sporting organisations. Since then we have written to the ASC requesting a special project grant to develop a video on "keeping girls in the game", based on the USA Women's Sports Foundation excellent video of the same name.

I have had two meetings in Melbourne and Canberra (and informally at sports events) with the Federal Minister for Sport, Senator Kate Lundy, who has since announced the re-establishment of a women's sport unit in the ASC and the return of the Prime Minister's Women's Sports Awards. We will continue to lobby for a national women's sport strategic plan. The August 2011 draft discussion paper is still "parked" in the ASC. However, AWRA's **Charter for Active Australian Women**, nearing completion, will serve as our election policy for 2013 and as our major advocacy and lobbying document to further pursue issue management and directions.

AWRA contributed a submission to the Inquiry into the Broadcasting Services Amendment (Anti-siphoning) Bill 2012.

AWRA has joined the National Compact, an Australian Government initiative. It is an agreement between the Australian Government and the not-for-profit sector "to find new and better ways of working together based on mutual trust, respect and collaboration". There is currently a review of the future of Australia's not-for-profit sector.

In conjunction with the Northern Territory Department of Sport and Recreation, AWRA conducted a leadership training project, to deliver workshops in Alice Springs and Darwin in May. The two workshops were presented by Henny Oldenhove on behalf of AWRA and again Henny did a very professional job. AWRA has been granted a \$3000 Youth Development Grant from Nillumbik Shire Council for 2012-13. We will run a leadership workshop in late March at the Diamond Creek Sports Stadium. It seems there are opportunities at local government level to deliver more leadership training workshops around the country.

AWRA's leadership training workshop was accepted by the Women's Donor Network to be placed on their website as a project for possible donors to support. As yet this has not produced a result.

At the national level the Federal Government continues to fund five national women's alliances that provide policy advice. However, there is no longer grant or project funding to the many peak women's organisations that make up the alliances.

AWRA continues as a member of ERA, the Equality Rights Alliance, with Narelle Gosstray as our representative. In June, I attended a member's one day workshop meeting in Melbourne which was very valuable, listening to other association's reports and contributing to possible election policy formation for next year.

AWRA has not conducted any research projects. We continue to offer advice and support to doctoral students and many other university and school students who require information for projects and course work.

## **KRA 2 Communication:**

**A high profile brand through the recognition of AWRA as a valuable source of information and the voice for women and girls in sport, physical activity and recreation.**

A Communications Sub-committee has been established with terms of reference and membership of Michelle Hogan (Chair), Narelle Gosstray, Nicole Dunn, Iain Toohey and Casey Helman. They meet after each board teleconference meeting and have put together our major advocacy document called a ***Charter for Active Australian Women***. Michelle has done a fine job of leading the sub-committee

The following report (in blue) is from our Sydney webmaster Iain Toohey:

AWRA continues to grow membership numbers, as at November 2012 from June 2012.

**Individual Members:** 537 / 503 (this time last year 467 / 406)

**Organisation Members:** 9 / 9

**Media Contacts:** 102 / 98

The last five to six months have seen an increase in members which is consistent to the previous six month period, with 34 new members, matching the 36 from November 2011 to June 2012. These new members have come from both online memberships and forwarding details of new members which Janice and Jennifer had obtained in person.

#### **Emails to members:**

Since June 2012 we have sent out four emails. These have been:

- AWRA Advocate – July 2012
- Gender does make a difference at 2012 Olympics
- AWRA Advocate – August 2012
- Annual General Meeting 19th November - Nominations for AWRA Board Members.

During the time in which these emails went out our send list grew from 598 to 616.

#### **AWRA Advocates**

The July and August Advocates have kept the same open rate as previously, with both sitting just under 25% (24% for July and 23% for August). The click through rates were almost identical to these figures. Overall there was little variation between these sends, and previous *Advocates*.

#### **Media Releases**

We have also sent out one media release during this period: **Gender does make a difference at 2012 Olympics: Sent – 601**

Opened – **122**

Open Rate – **20%**

Total Click Throughs – **45**

Unique Click Throughs – **40**

Click Through Rate – **7%**

The open rates for our sends once again indicates that we're having a similar open rate for all our emails, no matter what the subject. Where there is a large drop, is in the number of click throughs. This is more than likely due to a

combination of the fact that each media release only has one click through link, where there is a greater selection to choose from in an *Advocate*, and the reader not having gained enough interest in that link/the link not being relevant to them, to click through.

Over the year we have increased the number of media releases we have sent out (10) and we have had very good responses to them in regard to follow-up calls and subsequent interviews with print media and many radio interviews from Brisbane to Perth. A highlight would be the reaction to our media release on the selection policy for Australia's rowing team for the London Olympics. Some sections of the press and the sports community have credited AWRA as an instrumental lobbying force to give the Women's Eight a chance to compete in the London Olympics, where they made the final – the same result as our men who had automatic selection!

#### **Site Changes:**

The past five/six months have seen no major changes to the site.

This period has seen the addition of many articles and media releases, but little else of note. The Communication sub-committee have discussed options for a redesign of the site.

#### **Website hits:**

The statistics below show that the second half of the year has had two extra busy months, and three standard months. June and August both received over 1000 visits to the site, whilst July, September and October averaged around 750 visits. This continues in a similar pattern to previously, with little variation in average figures from the first half of the year.

#### **Twitter:**

Narelle has done a great job with the Twitter account, and from the mid-year report, where we had just reached 1000 followers, we have now increased to just short of 2000, which is phenomenal. This means we now have an outlet which over three times the size of our mailing list. Despite this, due to the nature of twitter, this doesn't mean that twice the people will view/read the links which we put up. There are now 907 Tweets which have been made by the account and it is a great tool for interaction between AWRA and the general public, as well as being an effective way to help spread AWRA's message.

Iain Toohey continues in a very reliable and efficient manner, managing our website, reporting to the Board and giving advice when required. The webmaster's position attracts an annual honorarium. He is very interested in AWRAs activities and very supportive of the organization, to the extent he took a

day off work so that he could attend a teleconference with the Communications Sub-committee. Thanks so much Iain!

Our web modules on leadership, governance, risk management and mentoring continue as a free download. The mentoring module is the major resource for our mentoring projects.

Our enews *The AWRA Advocate* continues with a 6-8 weekly turn around time. I have continued as the Editor with very valuable assistance from Narelle Gosstray who does a great job of proof reading and editing. Anne Jackson (Sydney) contributed in this role until mid-year when she resigned. Many thanks Anne for your great support and valuable assistance for the last three years.

We continue to communicate with our Patron, Governor General of Australia, Quentin Bryce AO and every six months her staff receive a list of forthcoming national women's sport events she could attend. Recently Heather Reid, Julie Sarll and I had the pleasure of a long afternoon tea meeting with Quentin at her Melbourne hotel.

AWRA continues to comment on the breakdown of speakers at sport conference organisers as more often than not the great majority of speakers are male. Heather Reid and I spoke at the Asia Pacific International World Sport and Women Conference in Melbourne this October and I will present our Charter for Active Australian Women at the International Association for Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women's Conference in Havana, Cuba next April. It will also be used as a framework for discussion at the Centenary of Canberra's National Women's Sporting Congress, called aGenda2013, will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at the University of Canberra.

Another part of our advocacy role is writing letters. While possibly seen as old fashioned we have written (hard copy) to Julia Gillard, Prime Minister, and senior Cabinet Ministers in regard to the Australian Broadcasting Commission's cut back of its coverage of women's sport (Women's National Basketball League and the W-League) on Saturday afternoons. We have also written to the Minister of Sport on a number of matters and to the Chair and CEO of the ASC.

### **KRA 3: Business development:**

#### **A governance framework with business operations fully supporting the objects of AWRA.**

AWRA continues to implement its Strategic Plan, although not always meeting its timelines. We have yet to prepare a Risk Management Plan. Two priorities are



the employment of an executive officer to undertake the increased workload of AWRA and the sourcing of funding, apart from government grants.

It is very pleasing to again note that our financials are in good order. We have earned interest on our term deposits and have covered our operating costs. We have had success with another grant (\$7,000) through the ASCs Women's Leadership Grant Program 2012 -2013. This is to develop an E-Mentoring project, targeting regional, rural and remote women. The project will use Skype and other internet resources to establish relationships between mentees and mentors and to deliver workshops and support for all participants. Julie Sarll and Associates Pty Ltd will again manage this project for AWRA with Greg Downes and myself assisting.

Julie is currently winding up *The Mighty Mentoring Project 2011-2012*. We applied for an extension of time past June as the difficulties of starting this project in an Olympic and Paralympic year soon became obvious. The project has actively operated from November 2011 to November 2012 and is ongoing through the established mentoring relationships. A total of 65 mentees and 71 mentors were invited to participate and there are 41 mentoring relationships currently in place. Overall one hundred women and men have been involved in *The Mighty Mentoring Project*.

Positive feedback has been received from many mentees regarding the quality of the information they have received from the workshops and their mentors. Several have already received promotions.

Workshops were run in Perth, Canberra and Melbourne (3) and networking meetings followed these with the mentors attending. The Minister for Sport, Kate Lundy, attended the Canberra networking meeting. A Brisbane networking meeting will be held later in December.

It is pertinent to note that although AWRA received \$10,500 from the ASC for this project that through in kind support from the WA Sports Federation to take the workshop to Perth, the in kind support from NSOs and SSAs that paid for their staff to attend workshops interstate and locally and the extra time given by AWRA and the presenter that the project's expenditure was valued at approximately \$23,050.

Julie Sarll and I have met with two Cricket Australia's senior managers who are interested in using AWRA to deliver a mentoring program for their female staff. There is scope for AWRA to take our mentoring program to more sporting organisations and charge a fee per mentee.

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AWRA has applied for two Volunteer Grants from the Federal Government: for a multi-function centre (\$1000) and for board training (\$4000).

AWRA maintains international contacts, particularly with the International Association for Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW) as I am one of two Vice Presidents and Dr Imke Fischer is the Australian country representative. The Memorandum of Understanding with the International Women's Group (IWG) for Women's Sport has been re-signed by both parties and continues. During the year we responded to their urging for groups to sign the Brighton Declaration and we did so.

AWRA continues as a member of the Pacific Women's Information Network (PACWIN). This is a very active region for women's rights as it is politically the most under-represented region for women in the world. Every day I would receive 10-20 PACWIN emails.

In conclusion, this year, (probably because it was an Olympic and Paralympic year and so more "issues" were arising), AWRA has been able to raise its profile as an advocacy group and to be seen by the media as a voice for women in sport. *The Mighty Mentoring Project* is nearing its successful completion and our website and administration continues on a very sound basis. AWRA has had another good year but there is still much to do.

In the immediate future we need to professionally produce our **Charter for Active Australian Women** and present this around Australia and support it with information and action plans. Upgrading our website is another priority for the year ahead.

Again, I would again like to thank each Board member for their valuable and wise contributions to AWRA and for their personal support. Heather Reid and Imke Fischer have resigned after seven years of valuable service to AWRA and many more years of service to women's sport in general. Fortunately they are not disappearing and we will keep them involved!

And finally I would like to encourage our members to make contact with me or the board should there be issues you feel are important for the board to consider. Having greater feedback can only improve our work and of course greater engagement from our members would be wonderful.

I look forward to another successful and challenging year ahead.

Janice Crosswhite OAM  
President, 19 November 2012