

# Active Women in Sport Plan 2024-2025

Updated February 2024

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## Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Sport would like to Acknowledge the Bedegal (Kensington campus), Gadigal (City and Art & Design Campuses) and Ngunnawal people (UNSW Canberra) who are the traditional custodians of the lands where each campus of UNSW is located.

# Reflections



**It was with much pride that UNSW was the first-ever university in Australia to launch an exclusive and specific Women in Sport Plan. The success of the strategy outlined in this refresh is an outstanding achievement.**

It must not be forgotten, nor underestimated, that the **Active Women in Sport Plan** was launched on Wednesday 4th March 2020. Only weeks later the NSW Government announced, "that a person must not, without reasonable excuse, leave the person's place of residence." Given COVID lockdowns and restrictions continued until the end of 2021, it is quite remarkable that the strategy has accomplished the results and outcomes it has.

Of the many goals achieved, the highlights include:- the inaugural Alex Blackwell Award recognising the significant contributions to women's sport by a student; the newly introduced Active Women Sports Awards in 2022;

the launch of the Women's Coaching & Officiating grants in 2023; a huge increase in participation of women in the SHE CAN program and a commitment to ensure more women in leadership roles in becoming members of the UNSW Sports Advisory Council and Sport & Wellbeing Executive Committee.

Such results were recognised internationally by the Fédération internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU – the International University Sports Federation) in 2021. The UNSW Active Women Strategy was nominated by UniSport Australia for the stellar work by many members of our sporting community.

The 2024-2025 refreshed strategy will not only maintain the high standards and the commitments UNSW Sport, with Arc Sport and Clublinks, is making to women in sport at UNSW, it will continue to grow opportunities and participation, in the next two years to the end of 2025 and beyond.

**Mark Wright, Head of UNSW Sport & Local Community**



## Background

The UNSW Active Women in Sport Plan was launched in March 2020, the first exclusive Women in Sport Plan by an Australian University. The strategy was recognised by the Fédération internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU - the International University Sports Federation), becoming a top 4 finalist in the 2021 Global Diversity Awards.

The second stage, 2024-2025, of the **Active Women in Sport Plan** will consolidate and build upon the successes achieved during stage one from 2020-2023, a refresh of the strategy with new goals for the remaining two years of the University and the UNSW Sport 2025 strategies.

### Nurture & Grow

Each goal is identified to either continue to nurture what has already been achieved or to establish new goals to grow the strategy. Newly updated key performance indicators have been added to measure the progress of the strategy.

The **Active Women in Sport Plan** has undoubtedly increased opportunities for Women in Sport at UNSW, and this is identified under the Key Achievements. There naturally have been some complexities and obstacles along the journey which have been outlined in Challenges.

The world, and the higher education and sporting landscape, has changed significantly since the start of 2020, and this refreshed strategy reflects these changes, and the related goals and key performance indicators.



"UNSW has shown great commitment to increasing opportunities for women throughout the university sporting community. The updated Active Women in Sport Plan continues to demonstrate a strong dedication in the pursuit of fairness and equal opportunities in sport."

**Alex Blackwell**  
Former Australian Cricket Captain & UNSW Sports Advisory Council member

## Pillar 1 - PARTICIPATION

- Increase in SHE CAN participation from 1608 to 4306
- First ever student attendance at Sydney Swans AFLW & NSW Swifts Netball
- Introduction of:
  - SHE CAN Learn to Gym
  - SHE CAN Learn to Play
  - SHE CAN Group Fitness



## Pillar 2 - INVESTMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Launch of Women's Coaching & Officiating Grants in 2023 – funding of \$10,000 provided to 13 individuals and sporting clubs
- Re-adjusted design of David Phillips Pavilion to include all-gender toilets
- Installation of new shower curtains/screens in David Phillips Central Changing Rooms
- All-gender toilets built in new Village Green Wellness Precinct
- Naming of Moya Dodd Grandstand in the new Village Green Wellness Precinct



## Pillar 3 - MARKETING & PROMOTION

- Alex Blackwell; Lisa Darmanin; Jessica Miley-Dyer; Moya Dodd; Jane Saville; Prue Watt OAM all named on the UNSW Celebrating Women Trail
- Introduction of the annual Alex Blackwell Award to celebrate student contribution to development of opportunities for women in sport
- Introduction of annual Active Women Awards to celebrate achievements of Women in Sport at UNSW
- Over 40% of UNSW Sport media achieved covering female content
- Top 4 in Global Diversity Awards, International University Sports Federation 2021
- First university in Australia to launch a Women in Sport Plan



## Pillar 4 – LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

- Implementation of 40-40-20 rule to ensure minimum 40% women representation in all relevant UNSW Sport governance and policy procedures
- Over 40% of sports scholarships awarded to women
- Increase in women (to required minimum of 40% representation) in
  - UNSW Sports Advisory Council
  - UNSW Sport & Wellbeing Executive Committee (formerly the UNSW Sports Management Board)
  - UNSW Sport Hall of Fame Selection Committee





# Definitions

The official title of this strategy is "Active Women: UNSW Women's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy", throughout this document it is referred to as the UNSW Active Women in Sport Plan.

Sport and active recreation encompasses sport, exercise, fitness, recreation, leisure, social sport, movement and all physical activity. Sport, for simplicity of language will be used in this strategy to reflect all aspects.

UNSW prides itself on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion. This strategy uses the words women and female in the true spirit of inclusion, and it must be noted that the terms used in this strategy, women and female, include all people who identify as a woman or as female.

Arc is the not-for-profit organisation for students studying at UNSW, similar to a 'student union'. Arc is sub-contracted to UNSW to deliver a range of student services and programs including the delivery of sport and active recreation.

"Key Stakeholders" are UNSW Sport; Arc Sport; Clublinks; Sports Advisory Council; Sport & Wellbeing Executive Committee; UNSW Sports Clubs.

Estate Management is the UNSW Division that manages facilities.

## 40:40:20 Rule

The UNSW Active Women in Sport Plan where appropriate will align itself with the generally recognised 40:40:20 gender equity rule, stipulating that organisations, committees and boards should aim to be made up of 40% women and 40% men, with 20% flexible, which allows for non-binary inclusion, as well as providing flexibility for uneven numbers.



## SHE CAN

Who can? She/They Can! The Arc Sport She Can program is Run by Women, For Women, and is the ultimate program for all people who identify as women including trans and/or non-binary individuals.

She Can provides women and non-binary people with a safe, inclusive, and comfortable environment to try new sports, learn new skills, make new friends and be their best self!

Established in 2017, She Can has gone from strength to strength and continues to grow and will be a focus of the Active Women in Sport Plan.





# Challenges



## **COVID**

The strategy was launched in March 2020, three weeks later the nation entered lockdown and proceeded to operate under major restrictions and lockdowns for 18 months. Further government restraints remained in place well into 2022. It decimated the sporting landscape for two years. Many of the **Active Women in Sport Plans** goals had to be delayed, amended and some cancelled completely.

## **FLOODS & STORMS**

In the year of 2022, Sydney and many areas of NSW, endured four times the annual average rainfall, in the wettest year since records began. This had a major impact on sport, in particular any outdoor sport, recreation and open water activities. Many seasons were either cancelled or revised. It caused a major disruption to the recovery of sport and recreation following the two years of COVID. 2023 was the first-year sport was able to be delivered in its entirety since 2019.

## **BUDGETS & FINANCES**

The impact of COVID reduced the sports budget in three moderations. In 2022 and 2023 the cost-of-living crisis has also caused a further reduction in the sports budget, but more significantly for individuals and specifically students. Sporting participation and club memberships have decreased nationally since 2020, and the current financial environment has further contributed to this trend.

## **DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection methods vary between the three major stakeholders UNSW Sport; Arc Sport and Clublinks, as there is no central records system. The "Data Dashboard" in this document aims to gain consistency in the annual measurements and reporting. In 2020 and 2021 data collection was severely impacted by COVID and the lack of sport and the closure of the university through lockdowns and much of this period, which means the 2019 data has been reported as the pre-Active Women Strategy baseline, and last year being the first fully operational year for sport is the benchmark.

## **STAFFING**

The Active Women Executive Committee of six members, established in 2020, has since seen a total of eight staff members leave the University decimating the executive team in a period of two-and-a-half years. Executive member recruitment has been challenging in the new flexible working hybrid model and staff shortages in some areas leading to less individuals willing to volunteer time. The re-invigoration of the Executive is a key goal of the refreshed strategy.

## **FACILITY DEVELOPMENT**

The delay of the construction of the Village Green due to the pandemic and inclement weather also had an impact on some of the goals outlined in the plan. Various works projects at David Phillips Sporting Complex – development of DP South and NSW Rugby Centre of Excellence had a major impact for the UNSW sporting clubs with regards to access to facilities. The Fitness & Aquatic Centre was also closed for 2 years due to the pandemic and experienced a change of ownership from YMCA to Clublinks.

# Women in Sport @ UNSW

## Takwa Tissaoui

UNSW Taekwondo Club,  
UNSW Alumna



As a kid, I never did any sports. I moved to Saudi Arabia and during my time there I still didn't do any sports. When I came to Australia, I wanted to do something where I could just change into pants, do it and get back home, which is how I found taekwondo through the SHE CAN program

Initially there was that physical factor that I didn't find very appealing. Also as it's a mixed club my first impression was 'wow, how am I going to fit into this?'

When I do taekwondo it's something of a cathartic experience that I actually enjoy. It's able to balance out everything else because I have that time of the week where I'm able to calm down. I finally felt a sense of belonging with something that I loved, which is a big deal for me. It was the first time I felt like I could fit in and actually settle down.

Sport has really empowered me. As a Muslim girl who's lived in both an Arab country and a Western country and experienced so many different cultures, it taught me that no matter where you're from, no matter what you're going through, we all share the same worries and experiences.

## Ella Pinkerton

UNSW Basketball Club,  
Alex Blackwell Award Winner

UNSW Basketball Club President, Eleanor Pinkerton won the Alex Blackwell Award for outstanding contribution to women's sport at UNSW at the University Sports Awards, 2023. Ella has been building the women's basketball program, delivering weekly SHE CAN sessions for free, which has seen a growth in women's membership for the club.

Ella has ensured an equal representation of men and women's teams at all Intersport competitions and Unisport Nationals, as well as organising mixed social teams, which often have more female players than male, and has assisted their entry into local competitions.

In 2024, Ella will lead the women's team in their inaugural season of the UBL (University Basketball League) and was integral in the successful application for the club's license, for both men's and women's teams to enter the competition.



## Emily Thomson

Nura Gili Student,  
UNSW Touch Football Club

A proud Wiradjuri woman, current medical student, Arc Sport employee and student representative on the UNSW Sports and Wellbeing Executive Committee. Emily coordinated UNSW's first Intersport Indigenous Nationals Trial event, hosting USYD, UTS and Macquarie University to compete in a netball tournament.

Emily plays Touch Football for UNSW and competes at state and national level. She is captain of the UNSW Indigenous Nationals Team and a student ambassador for Nura Gili, and also volunteers her time as a coaching assistant for Junior and All-Abilities Touch Football teams.

Emily also promotes university life and rural health careers at panels and speaker nights for future students, previously attending events across Sydney, rural high school visits and Youth Off the Streets in Wollongong.

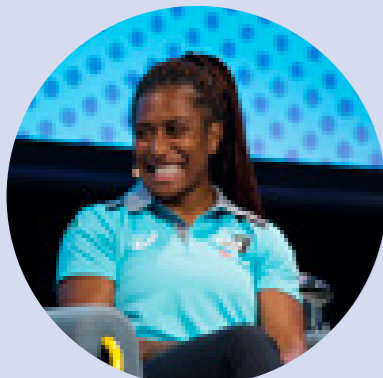
# 2024/2025 Goals



## Participation



## Investment & Infrastructure



## Marketing & Promotion



## Leadership & Governance

## Summary of goals

Pillar	P1 - Participation	P2 - Investment & Infrastructure	P3 – Marketing & Promotion	P4 – Leadership & Governance
<b>2025 KPI</b>	KPI – To increase women’s participation by 100% from 5,017 to 10,000	KPI – AWS to receive min of \$30k each year (UNSW Sport, Arc Sport, Sponsor)	KPI – 40% all marketing and promotions by UNSW Sport inc. media to be women focused	KPI – all UNSW Sport committees/ project teams/ leadership groups to have 40% women representation at all times
<b>NURTURE</b>	Arc, Clublinks, UNSW Sport to continue to provide annual data of women’s participation to the Active Women in Sport Plan.	Annual inspection and audit of all UNSW sporting facilities to ensure all facilities follow best practice and are gender inclusive.	Continue to monitor all UNSW Sport media coverage to maintain 40% female content  Continue the annual celebration of women with the Active Women Awards and Alex Blackwell Award	Continue to commit to the 40-40-20 rule of governance and representation  Continue to fund \$10,000 of Coaching & Officiating grants each year
<b>GROW</b>	UNSW Sport to provide annual funding for the ongoing development of the SHE CAN program.	Secure a commercial sponsor for the SHE CAN program.	Appoint annual UNSW Active Women Ambassador  Arc Sport to grow online SHE CAN community to 1000 by 2025.	Offer Leadership & Mentoring Grants  Leadership & Mentoring Toolkit  Re-establish full executive team with female Chair by end of 2024
<b>ANNUAL MEASUREMENT</b>	SHE CAN participants; UNSW Sports Clubs, Social, Unisport Nationals Participation and Clublinks memberships	Total income/ expenditure on AWS  Facilities audit report	Percentage gender breakdown of UNSW Sport media content  Online SHE CAN membership	Percentage gender breakdown of scholarships holders  Percentage gender breakdown of governance bodies - SAC and SWEC

By end of 2025 Full Review & Proposal for 2026 and beyond



# Data Dashboard



## Reporting

The Active Women in Sport Plan is committed to achieving its goals. Key annual measurements are outlined in this document under 2024/ 2025 Goals.

The data dashboard provides accountability and transparency across all measurable goals for each pillar of the strategy. An annual report will be released each year to track progress.

Data collection has in previous years been inconsistent or incomplete, that has been acknowledged, and the data dashboard provides clarity and a commitment to collate consistent quality data from 2023 onwards.



## ACTIVE WOMEN STRATEGY DASHBOARD

Reports	2019	2022	2023
P1 SHE CAN Registrations	1608	2006	4306
P1 Sports Club Members	39%	NA	2269 (35%)
P1 Clublinks Members	NA	NA	1693 (31%)
P1 Clublinks Overall Visits	NA	46280	65330
P1 UniNationals Athletes	37%	206 (42%)	274 (45%)
P2 Total Expenditure	\$0	\$2,800	\$10,000
P2 Facility Audit Report	NA	NA	NA
P3 Media Representation	41%	45%	46.50%
P3 Online SHE CAN Members	NA	304	553
P4 Scholarship Balance	41%	36%	47%
P4 SAC Representation	29%	42%	42%
P4 SWEC Representation	42%	42%	42%

# Beyond 2025 & Summary

## Beyond 2025

The University and UNSW Sport are currently operating under a 2025 Strategy. The University will announce the future strategic vision and direction in due course, which will provide guidance for a new UNSW Sport Strategy.

Philosophically, the ultimate aim for the **Active Women in Sport Plan** is to make itself obsolete, whereby a specific strategy is not required to continue to improve opportunities for women in sport.

This might be a utopian dream, but women's sport will always remain a focus; whether this is achieved through a strategic plan; a documented commitment or charter; or the aims and goals become part of the overarching UNSW Sport Strategy - this will be decided upon in due course. Regardless, UNSW Sport will ensure there is a fully documented commitment to women in sport.



## In Summary

The **Active Women in Sport Plan** has already had a significant impact, providing further opportunities for women in sport at UNSW, despite the many challenges which have occurred. The new updated **2024-2025 plan** will focus on continuing to build on established success and embedding systems and programs into "business as usual" with an emphasis on data collection, reporting and accountability. New goals and initiatives will add value where required and be realistic. The updated strategy is a further commitment by UNSW Sport to continue to grow opportunities for women in our sporting community.

## CONTACT US

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