

# Role Modelling from Leadership Improves Culture and Attracts Diverse Talent

## Western Australian Cricket Association



### WACA Case Study Snapshot

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| <p><b>1 Gender Diversity Challenge:</b><br/>Improving gender diversity in the WACA staff team to create a more inclusive, dynamic workplace and enhance organisational performance</p> | <p><b>2 The Response:</b><br/>Reviewing recruitment ads, proactive succession planning, creating a more inclusive culture and setting gender diversity targets</p> | <p><b>3 Key Outcomes:</b><br/>Gender-balanced management team and increased applications from women and enhanced overall performance (participation, viewership and revenue)</p> |
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### Gender Diversity Challenge

The Western Australian Cricket Association (WACA) was established in 1885 and is the governing body for cricket in WA. In 2012, the WACA's staff team was 24% female, with the majority of women working in support roles.

The culture at the WACA wasn't as professional as members and stakeholders expected, instead reflecting more of a "dressing room" environment.

The WACA also reflected a 'group think' mentality, with staff doing things the way they had always been done as 'that's just the WACA way' rather than bringing constructive challenge and new perspectives.

The incoming CEO of the WACA identified that increasing diversity in the staff team would help address some of these cultural and organisational challenges and better realise Cricket Australia's vision to be a sport for everyone.



*"You don't need to know how to play a cover drive to work in cricket"*  
- Christina Matthews, WACA CEO

### WACA's Response

The WACA focused on increasing gender diversity as a starting point, with the hope that efforts to create a more inclusive environment for female staff would also attract other diverse candidates. Four areas of focus for the WACA included:

**1. Updating recruitment ads in an effort to attract candidates from a broader talent pool.** Specific actions the WACA took were to:

- remove the upfront preamble on the WACA's prestigious history;
- reposition the focus away from technical requirements rather to skill sets (such as time management and interpersonal skills); and
- remove the requirement of experience within the sport.

**2. Taking a more strategic approach to talent management and succession planning.** This was done in several ways:

- forward-planning for key roles within the WACA – not waiting for vacancies to open up but planning careers and development opportunities ahead of time to ensure readiness in key talent and smooth transitions;
- proactively identifying talent and potential leaders – tapping women on the shoulder and encouraging them to apply for roles they otherwise might not have considered;
- being conscious about bringing gender diversity and also diversity of background, perspective and

- professional experience into particular teams; and
- identifying areas of underperformance and, where necessary, moving people out of roles that weren't suitable.



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### WACA's Response continued.

3. **Creating a more inclusive environment around the office.** There were a number of steps taken to increase the employee experience of inclusion, including:

- a) **calling out bad behaviour** and making it clear from the response that such behaviour will not be tolerated
- b) **redesigning the office to create open and engaging workspaces and lunch areas** which promoted interaction and collaboration between people and teams
- c) **role modelling from leadership**, for example the CEO's open door policy and regular staff engagement

d) **increasing diversity in the WACA's staff team**, which reflects an openness to, and celebration of, different people and perspectives.

4. **Introducing gender diversity targets in the Western Australian Cricket Strategy 2017-22.** The Strategy outlines what steps the WACA will take to achieve its purpose to inspire all Western Australians to love cricket and vision to "be the leading sport for women and girls and all diversity groups" in workforce diversity.



## Outcomes, Benefits and Next Steps



In terms of gender diversity, the WACA has achieved the following:

- Moving from a significantly male-dominated management team to a **gender-balanced management team**, currently comprising of **five women and four men**.
- **Increased number of female applicants** for jobs at the WACA;
- **Increased representation of women** in the workforce overall, from 25% female in 2012 to 42% female in 2018.
- A **more inclusive organisational culture** which has **challenged gender stereotypes** typically associated with cricket.
- Deeper relationships with sponsors and partners who can **connect with us about our gender diversity efforts**.



Increased **gender diversity at the WACA correlates with enhanced organisational performance** over the same time period, including:

- **Participation in cricket overall has doubled**, from 79,000 in 2012 to 201,000 in 2018.
- **Viewership has grown and diversified**, with the 2017 / 2018 Big Bash League enjoying a viewership of 50% females and 39% families.
- Improved financial performance, with **revenue increasing from \$24 million in 2012 to \$39 million in 2018**.



The WACA attributes its enhanced overall performance to **improved community engagement, the diversity of skill sets in the staff team and the open and inclusive organisational culture**.

