Background

The Gender Equity Advisory Group started in 2020 with the first identified need for the organisation was a Parental Leave Plan and Procedure. Over this year, Sam Marshall, the Project Officer at the time, and the group created the two documents to help employees navigate their way through becoming a parent.

The Parental Leave Procedure is a guide filled with all the information an employee may need to take time away from work for a child’s birth, adoption or fostering. The Parental Plan is so the employee can ensure their role, participants, colleague and tasks are well looked after while away so the employee can feel confident in their return-to-work process. In 2021 the team appointed Project Officers Angie Mitchell and Laura O’Neill to finalise the plans; both are now actively used within Reclink Australia.

Based on the results from the Leadership Self Review completed by women employees in 2020, vital soft skills were identified, including leadership development, gaining confidence and negotiation skills. Overwhelming support was acquired from the Reclink Gender Equity Advisory Group to create a mentor program to cater to these soft skills’ professional development.

In 2022, a focus for the group is the Reclink Mentoring Program. The team will look to work alongside the organisation’s Strategic Leadership Team to implement this program and other critical initiatives identified by the group. In addition to this work, several initiatives have been delivered across the country to support women’s participation in physical activity further.

Group Members

- Laura O’Neill, Senior Sports Coordinator Latrobe Valley VIC - Chair
- Sarah Kitis, State Manager WA
- Angela Hopes, Senior Sports Coordinator Qld
- Luci Davey, Manager Participant Pathways Qld
- Jason Carter, Operations Manager
- Lynda Madams, Sports Coordinator South East VIC

Initiatives

The Reclink WA team had identified, through a program review and analysis, that there is a substantial deficiency in our female participation rates. The team determined that there is an increased requirement to focus on breaking down the barriers for the women from our specialist agencies and creating more targeted pathways into physical activity to help improve women’s health and well-being.

Through the project, health information sessions were also provided to the groups to increase participants’ self-sufficiency in seeking health-related support. These sessions provided tools and strategies for well-being and referral for free specialist support. Topics included Covid vaccine, mental health and well-being, female reproductive organ health, nutrition, continence and diabetes.
In NSW, Riverstone Neighbourhood Centre offer a range of classes to their local community. 15 Women have registered to take part in Karen’s weekly yoga and the feedback has been immense. After the first session, one lady said “It’s been a long time since I’ve allowed myself to switch off and focus on me.”

The program allows Mums to bring their bubs who, pending their age, are allowed to either join the class or play amongst themselves while Mums take time to focus on themselves. It has been 3 weeks now and one participant has already said that her body isn’t as sore doing regular day to day activities, and she attributes that to yoga.

Community Hubs in Logan, Queensland have been working with Reclink to provide a safe space for women to come together and exercise. Our classes are called ‘Move Together’ as we use movement, music and kindness to overcome barriers to communication.

Most often we have small children dancing among us, and driving their toy trucks through our legs as we stretch, meditate, dance and share stories. It is a beautiful and joyful way to get to know our communities and welcome our new neighbours.

Source URL: https://reclink.org/gender-equity-group