

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Progress in Play

DRIVING CHANGE FOR
WOMEN IN FOOTBALL



women
ONSIDE



women
ONSIDE

About Us

At Women Onside, we're equipping women, men, and non-binary individuals with the knowledge, skills, and community support to build a stronger, more inclusive footballing future.

We are at the forefront of advocating for gender equality in football across Australia. We are committed to creating opportunities, promoting inclusivity, and supporting the growth and visibility of women and non-binary people in all aspects of the sport.



Since 2017, from the grassroots to the elite, Women Onside exists to strengthen and grow the sport that we love.

Our Vision

Women in football,
everywhere.



Our Mission

To ensure women have equitable opportunities and representation in football leadership through advocacy, engaged networks and professional development

Our People

As a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee, Women Onside has a board of directors elected by the membership and complemented by additional directors appointed by the board.

Seven of our directors are elected and one has been appointed. They represent a strongly diverse array of football contributors, all united in their commitment to women's football and women in football.



Kerry Harris

Chair



Kieran Pender

Deputy Chair



Kerry Moulds

Secretary



Heather Reid AM

Director



Sarah Duce

Director



Christina Chipman

Director



Kate Anthonisz

Director



Patrick Clancy

Director



Olivia Roney

Director



Leah Mercuri

Bookkeeper

Our Team

At the heart of Women Onside's work is a small but passionate team, driving change across football with expertise and commitment. Samantha Lewis, Impact Manager, leads our strategic programs and advocacy, ensuring our vision is translated into tangible impact across the game. Laura Noble, Membership and Administration Coordinator, strengthens connections with our growing membership and oversees the systems that support our operations. Lucy Small, Advocacy and Communications Coordinator, amplifies our voice, leading campaigns and communications that have expanded our reach and influence. Together, this team forms the backbone of Women Onside's mission to champion women and non-binary people in football.



Sam Lewis



Laura Noble



Lucy Small
appointed July 2025

Foreword

As Chair of Women Onside, I am proud to report that 2024–25 has been a year of significant progress and momentum for our mission to advance gender equality in Australian football. We have built on the Matildas effect and broader growth in women's sport to drive real change across our four strategic pillars.

Notably, we reached a major milestone by appointing our first-ever Impact Manager, Samantha Lewis, who joined us in early 2025. This new role brings dedicated expertise to expand our initiatives and ensure our work has a lasting influence at scale. It marks a turning point in our evolution, strengthening our capacity to deliver impact for years to come.

In a year of firsts, Women Onside held its first in-person board meeting in February.

Over two meeting days, the board heard from guest speaker Moya Dodd, engaged in collaborative discussions with the FA's Women's Football Council, and conducted a strategic planning session.

This past year also saw important strides in the policy arena. The Australian Government's release of the National Gender Equity in Sports Governance Policy set new benchmarks for achieving gender balance in sports leadership, reinforcing the need for systemic change. Women Onside welcomed this development as a critical enabler that aligns with our advocacy to elevate women's voices in football governance.



Kerry Harris
Chair, Women Onside

One of the standout highlights of 2024 was our partnership with Trailblazers, a Stan documentary celebrating the extraordinary women who have shaped football's history. We hosted an online webinar, Trailblazers: Celebrating the Untold Stories of Women's Football. Our in-person screening in Perth, held during the International Football Cup with support from Tourism WA, encapsulated the essence of Trailblazers in an afternoon of storytelling, celebrations and community spirit. The event reminded me of the power of perseverance, the importance of solidarity, and the impact each of us can have when we work together towards a common goal.

Our Getting on Board governance workshop is the flagship program of our professional development pillar. In 2024 we expanded our reach to Adelaide and Perth, attracting a diverse mix of participants from club committees, boards, and aspiring leaders. Getting on Board equips women in football with the knowledge, belief and tools to step into governance leadership roles.

The sessions covered governance fundamentals, financial literacy, meeting strategy, and pathways to board and committee roles, with lived examples and interactive activities that resonated deeply with attendees. Evaluation feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting increased confidence to ask financial questions, advocate for better representation of women, and apply for board and committee positions. These workshops continue to be a cornerstone of our mission to build gender equity in football governance.

Internally, we have focused on building a strong and sustainable organisation to underpin our mission.

We continued to benefit from the support of our partners and donors, with generous contributions (including matched donations campaigns) that have boosted our capacity to deliver programs. I want to especially thank the June Canavan Foundation for their unwavering support of Women Onside's vision.

Our volunteer Board, company secretary, bookkeeper, and staff have worked tirelessly behind the scenes. Together, this dedicated team has been the backbone of our success, ensuring sound governance and operational excellence as we grow.

Looking ahead, I am excited and optimistic. With our new 2024–2027 Strategic Plan guiding us, we are firmly on course to achieve our ambitious goals by 2027, from expanding our member networks and development programs to influencing policy and strengthening our foundations. We do this work because we believe that when women lead, everyone wins. Thank you to our members, partners, and supporters for your passion and commitment. The progress we’ve made this year is just the beginning – together we will continue building a more inclusive and equitable future for football. Let’s move forward, together.



“Let’s move forward, together”

Kerry Harris



Impact Statement

Women Onside entered 2025 with a bold and ambitious vision: to lay the organisational foundations required to become the biggest independent body that advances and advocates for gender equity in Australian football.

All big changes require big risk. Sensing the need to evolve, they created their first full-time staff role, the Impact Manager, whose job would be to accelerate the organisation's programs, elevate its visibility, grow its credibility, strengthen its relationships, and build its community.

Over the past year, we've made significant progress across all four of our strategic pillars – Advocacy and Research, Networks and Communications, Professional Development, and Organisational Sustainability – while staying true to our North Star, the bigger vision of “women in football, everywhere.”

This evolution has taken many forms, all of them small pieces of a larger puzzle of impact and change. We've deepened our influence across the football ecosystem by establishing firm relationships with Football Australia, Member Federations, the A-Leagues, and other domestic and international football advocacy groups such as Gaining Ground WA and the Women in Football Global Alliance.

We've taken our flagship Getting on Board Masterclass and scaled it in preparation for the game's growing need to educate and up-skill women in the areas of governance and administration, tying it to the Federal Government's policy requiring national sports bodies to have gender-equal governance representation by 2027.



We have established firm partnerships with research institutions and law firms to collaborate on significant pieces of research that will inform and shape our future advocacy campaigns.

Our communications and public offerings have been injected with more energy, structure, and relevance through the rejuvenation of our newsletter, social media channels, webinars, and soon, a new website and community-building platform.

Next year, 2026, is shaping up as a major opportunity for Women Onside to take the next step in its journey. The AFC Women's Asian Cup hosted in Australia is a crucial platform for the organisation to grow its community, promote its services, secure diverse and sustainable sources of funding, increase its credibility, and position itself as an expert voice in bigger national discussions about women in sports leadership.

Our Women's Asian Cup Strategy is a roadmap towards achieving those goals, which the organic support and visibility on women in football giving us the greatest chance since the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup to shine a light on our work and the impact we're wanting to make.

While we have spent this year laying the foundations, next year will be our chance to execute a lot of the quiet work we've been doing behind the scenes. It is a time for us to tell stories, build community, and begin publicly campaigning for the change we've been wanting to see in football for a lifetime.

Let's get to work.

Samantha Lewis
Impact Manager





"I was a founding member of Women Onside because I believed in a better future for our game – one where women are visible and valued everywhere in football. Eight years on, its role is more critical than ever as we lock in progress and build towards the Women's Asian Cup and Brisbane Olympics. I am proud to support Women Onside as it continues to drive lasting change for women in football."

— Moya Dodd AO, Former Vice-Captain of the Matildas

Our Year in Review

Strengthening Relationships Across the Game

Over the past year, Women Onside has deepened its influence and visibility across the football ecosystem, forging stronger relationships with national and international partners:

Football Australia invited us to host three webinars during Female Football Week.

We now hold a standing invitation to FA's Women's Football Working Group and are collaborating with them on the upcoming Women's Asian Cup Leadership Summit.

Member Federations including Football NSW, Football Victoria, and Football West have engaged Women Onside to deliver Getting On Board workshops, while Football NSW has also piloted a mentorship program for GOB graduates.

What Next?

Building on this momentum, we have initiated a Women's Asian Cup 2026 Strategy, exploring networking events in Perth, Sydney, Melbourne, and the Gold Coast. Internationally, we joined the Women in Football Global Alliance, extending our advocacy network across borders, and began developing the Women Onside Leadership Scholarship in partnership with the Global Institute of Sport.



Investing in Organisational Sustainability

This year, Women Onside has taken major steps to strengthen our internal capacity and ensure long-term sustainability. We welcomed Lucy Small as Communications and Campaigns Coordinator, whose leadership has driven a 1000% increase in social media reach and the rollout of a refreshed digital strategy. Laura Noble has accepted a redesigned role as Membership and Administration Lead, supporting CRM implementation and driving deeper engagement with our members. Our new Membership Framework has been finalised and will launch in late 2025 alongside a redesigned website and the introduction of a WhatsApp Community for members.



On the fundraising front, we consolidated and relaunched our Australian Sports Foundation campaign page, which has since raised approximately \$75,000. Our EOFY matched-giving campaign contributed a further \$10,000, complemented by a second \$50,000 donation from valued major donor. Meanwhile, we are progressing toward charity registration with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission

supported by pro bono legal advice. We also strengthened our partnerships, collaborating with the Global Institute of Women's Leadership, The Social Research Centre, and major law firms to deliver research and policy audits that will directly inform our advocacy and programming.

Delivering Impactful Webinars and Events

Our events calendar continues to grow in both reach and relevance, showcasing the breadth of issues shaping women's football today. In 2024, Women Onside delivered three standout events: a Referee Networking session hosted by Allyson Flynn and featuring leading female referees including Joanna Charaktis and Kelly Jones; an in-person Trailblazers screening in Western Australia in partnership with Gaining Ground, The Female Football Project, and Women in Sport WA; and Trailblazing Women in Football: From Field to Screen, hosted by Heather Reid with Maggie Eudes, Karen Menzies, and Moya Dodd as speakers.

In 2025, our webinar program built on this momentum, with sessions exploring LGBTQIA+ Inclusion in Football (March), and Football Fandom: Engaging Women and Non-Binary Fans (June). Each attracted strong participation and sparked important conversations across the football community.

Looking ahead, we are exploring opportunities to align new events with the Women's Asian Cup, including a Melbourne-based Matildas watch party, a Women's Leadership Panel in Perth, and a Women in Football Breakfast on the Gold Coast. These activities will continue to provide platforms for connection, knowledge-sharing, and advocacy, strengthening Women Onside's role as a trusted convener of conversations in football.



Case study

Trailblazers Screening – Celebrating the Women Who Changed the Game

In August 2024, Women Onside brought the inspiring documentary Trailblazers to Perth, creating an unforgettable evening of storytelling, connection, and celebration. Held at the State Library auditorium during the Perth International Football Cup, the two-hour event drew football enthusiasts, families, gender equality advocates, students, and tourists alike.

The screening was more than just a film it was a community experience. Former Matildas sat alongside local grassroots players, while organisations such as Gaining Ground, The Female Football Project, and Women in Sport WA shared their work. The post-screening panel and Q&A sparked meaningful conversations about gender equality, inspiring attendees to reflect on the progress made and the work still ahead.

The venue created a safe and welcoming space where stories flowed freely. Local footballers spoke openly about their own experiences, many for the first time, demonstrating the event's power to amplify voices and build community.

While the timing of the event overlapped with other activities in the Perth International Football Cup, the turnout was strong and the energy undeniable. Attendees left with a deeper appreciation of the women who paved the way, and a renewed commitment to breaking down barriers in football.

Why it matters:

- Raised awareness of gender equality in sport
- Inspired the football community to share untold stories
- Strengthened partnerships with local community groups
- Maintained momentum from the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup

The Trailblazers screening was a resounding success, an example of how Women Onside connects people, sparks dialogue, and keeps the spotlight firmly on progress in women's football.



The event spotlighted three community partners - Gaining Ground, The Female Football Project, and Women in Sport WA and created a powerful space where local footballers shared untold stories for the first time. It sparked meaningful dialogue on gender equality and inspired action across the football community.

"The Trailblazers event was more than a screening; it was a catalyst for storytelling, connection, and change."

Building the Next Generation of Leaders

Onside Mentoring - 2024

Now in its fourth year, the Onside Mentoring Program once again delivered a successful round of mentoring in 2024, supporting the development of emerging leaders across football.

Onside Mentoring was created to provide women in football with a pathway to strengthen their leadership skills, governance knowledge, and networks. Each year, a select group of mentees are paired with experienced mentors from across football and the wider sports sector, with the aim of building confidence, political awareness, and capacity to lead within clubs, committees, federations, and the game more broadly.

Over six months, mentors and mentees worked together to create personalised development plans, identify goals, and meet regularly to share knowledge, lived experiences, and strategies for leadership success. In 2024, participants also had the opportunity to join networking and education sessions, including a special webinar featuring Matildas alumni Renaye Iserief and Tracie McGovern.

The program continues to demonstrate the power of mentoring: creating safe spaces to learn, growing connections across the game, and equipping participants with the skills and networks they need to lead change. Women Onside is proud to deliver this initiative, supported by the June Canavan Foundation, and to see the ripple effect of new leaders stepping forward to shape the future of football.



Inspiring Voices

The Women Onside community came together in July 2024 for an unforgettable webinar through our Onside Mentoring Program, featuring two trailblazing Matildas Alumni Renaye Iserief and Tracie McGovern.

Renaye, Matilda #26, made her debut in 1983, while Tracie, Matilda #102, joined the national team in 1997. Together they shared their journeys in a warm and candid conversation that traced the evolution of women's football from grassroots beginnings to the Olympic stage.

Renaye spoke of her early days playing alongside her brothers before being spotted as a teenager by Central Coast, recalling the friendships and community support that shaped her career.

She described the joy of reconnecting with fellow Matildas Alumni during the 2023 Women's World Cup, a moment that left her feeling valued and deeply connected to the game's history.

Tracie reflected on her time as one of the first women awarded an AIS scholarship in football. Training twice a day, six days a week, she was part of a generation laying the groundwork for professional women's football in Australia. She highlighted the role of her Wauchope community in nurturing her development and the importance of regional pathways in shaping players' futures.

"Women's football has come so far, but we still have a long way to go and Women Onside is here to help lead that journey."

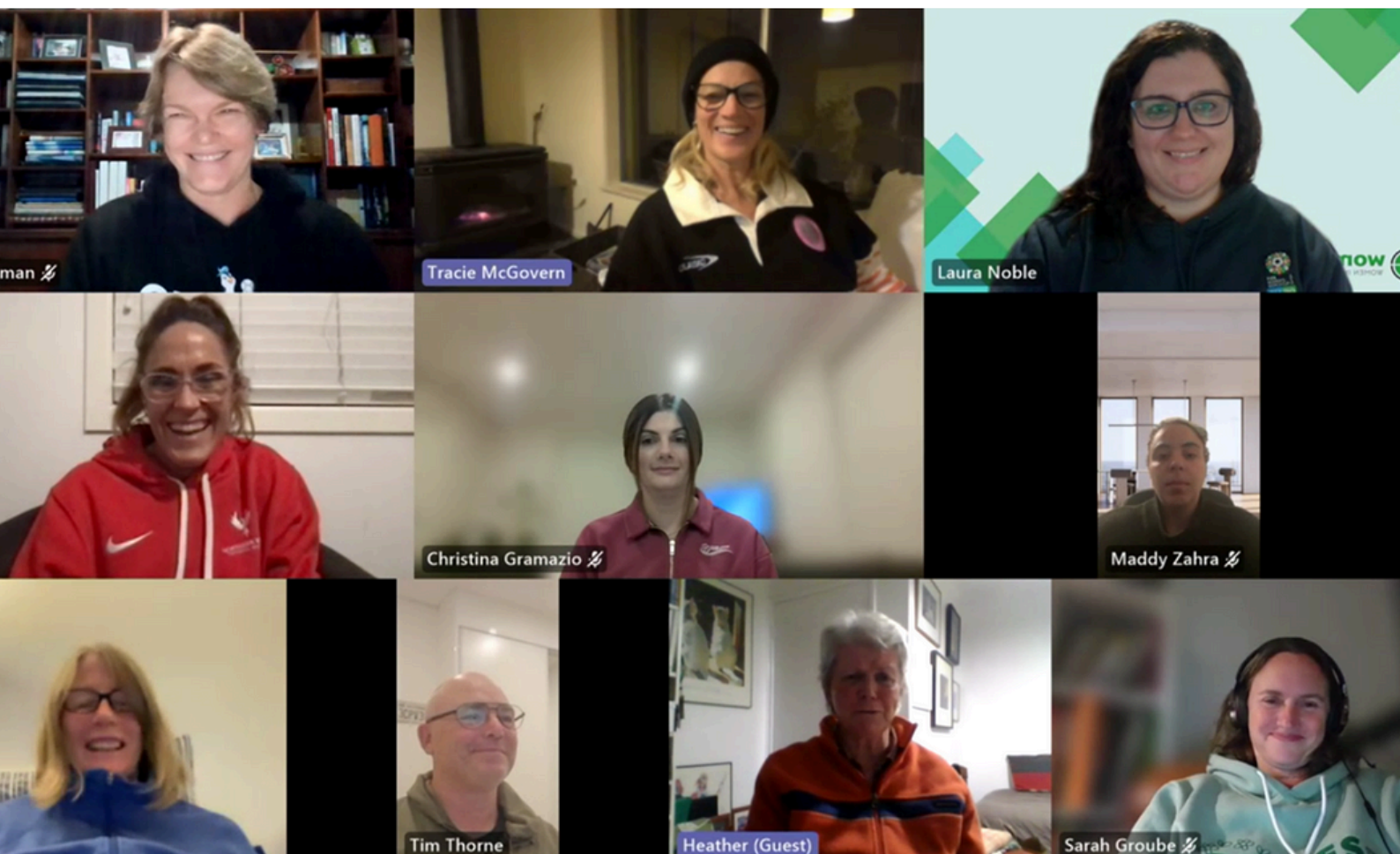
— Kieran Pender, Deputy Chair, Women Onside

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For the eight 2024 mentees in the Onside Mentoring Program, this session was more than just a webinar it was a chance to learn, reflect, and feel inspired. Drawn from coaching, refereeing, club management, journalism, and other areas of football, mentees gained not only valuable insights but also a deeper sense of belonging to a growing network of women committed to change.

The mentors, too, expressed how much they valued the chance to give back, helping to nurture the next generation of leaders in football.

The Onside Mentoring Program events like this capture its spirit: building confidence, strengthening connections, and showing what's possible when experience meets ambition. This webinar was a reminder of the power of storytelling and mentorship and how vital both are in driving progress for women in football.



Getting on Board

In 2024–25, Women Onside continued to deliver our flagship governance training program, Getting on Board, with two high-impact workshops held in Adelaide and Perth.

Designed to support the leadership aspirations of women in football, these half-day workshops provided practical governance training, financial literacy, and strategic insights to equip participants for decision-making roles in clubs and associations. The Adelaide workshop in September 2024 offered a comprehensive introduction to governance fundamentals, with participants reporting increased confidence in reading constitutions, asking financial questions, and preparing governance CVs.

Building on this success, the Perth workshop in October 2024—delivered in partnership with Football West and supported by a WA state government legacy grant—was hosted at the Sam Kerr Football Centre and attracted a diverse cohort of women and girls. Feedback highlighted the facilitator’s lived experience, engaging delivery, and the value of small group discussions and practical examples. Across both sessions, dozens of participants committed to actions such as applying for board roles, advocating for the representation of women, and improving club governance practices. These workshops directly advance Women Onside’s strategic goal of preparing more women for leadership and governance roles in football and will be scaled further in the coming years.

Our flagship governance and leadership program has entered a new phase of growth with a business case for GOB Expansion was developed and approved, with new facilitators trained and a facilitator manual in development.



"When I joined the workshop, I had just been elected as a director. It gave me the confidence to speak up and put my ideas forward. As the board's first female director, I've since seen two more women join the board, and I've been able to share my knowledge and experience with them."

— Getting on Board Participant

"The program [Getting on Board] has better prepared me to navigate the politics of football, which has helped me foster relationships and stay actively involved in the game. I now feel more equipped to advocate for match officials across the sport."

— Getting on board Participant



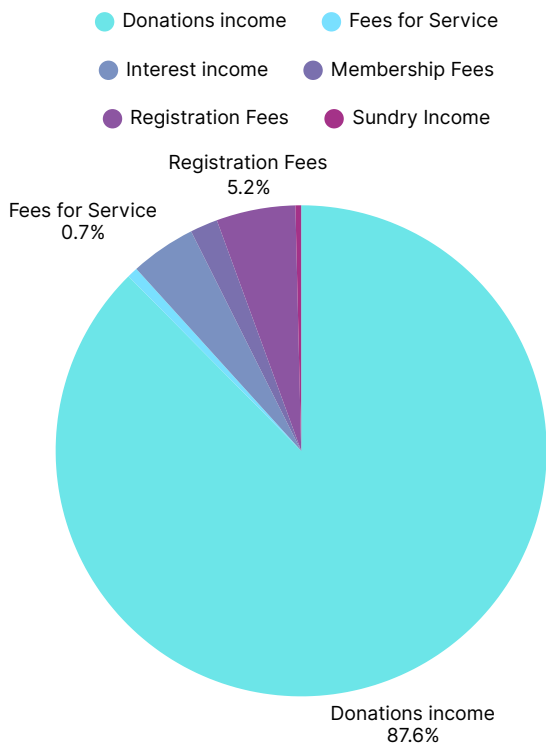
Our Finances

Women Onside ended the 2024–25 financial year in a strong position, with total income of \$106,806 and a net profit of \$25,407.

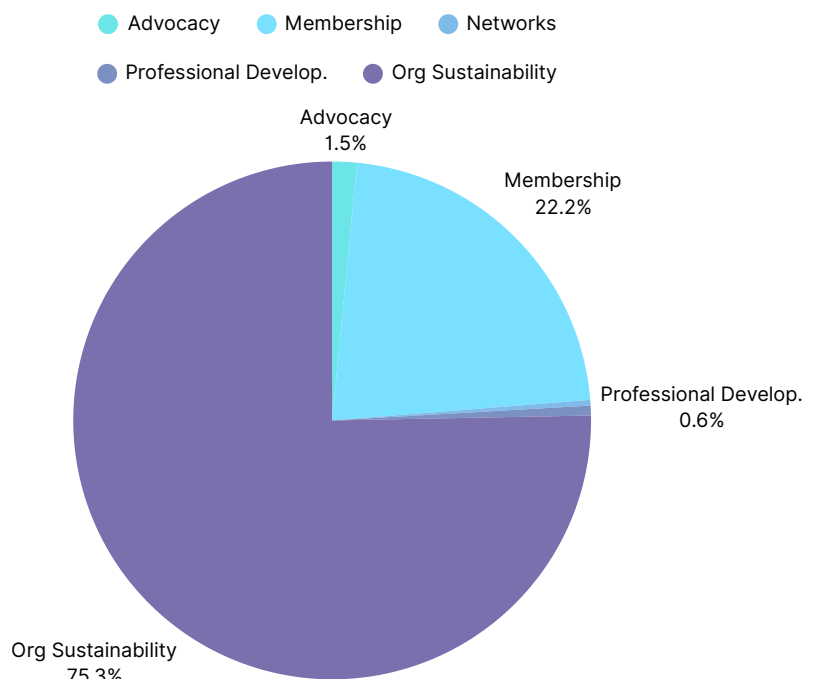
Donations remain our largest source of support, complemented by membership fees, registrations, and other income streams. Operating expenses grew in line with our expanding programs, reflecting significant investment in organisational sustainability.

Overall, our net assets increased to \$136,250, providing a solid foundation for continued advocacy, research, and community initiatives in the year ahead.

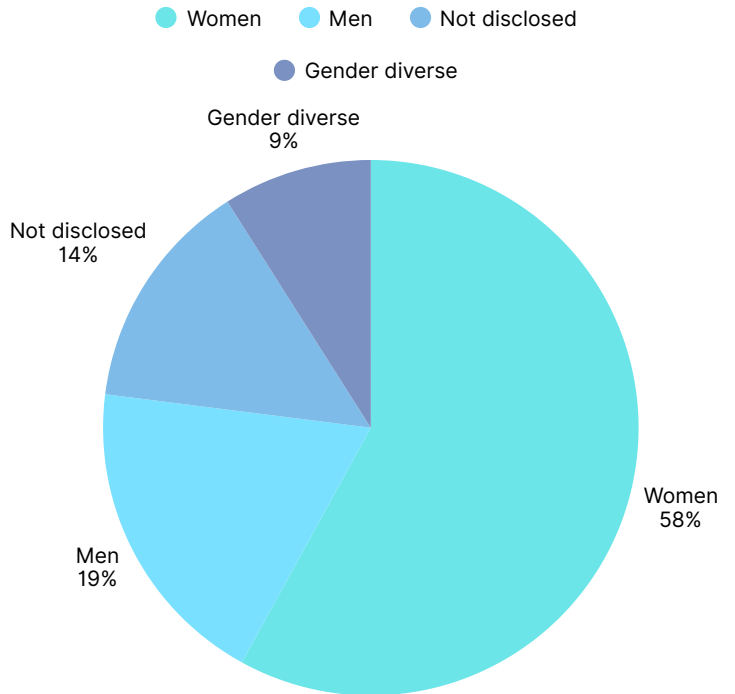
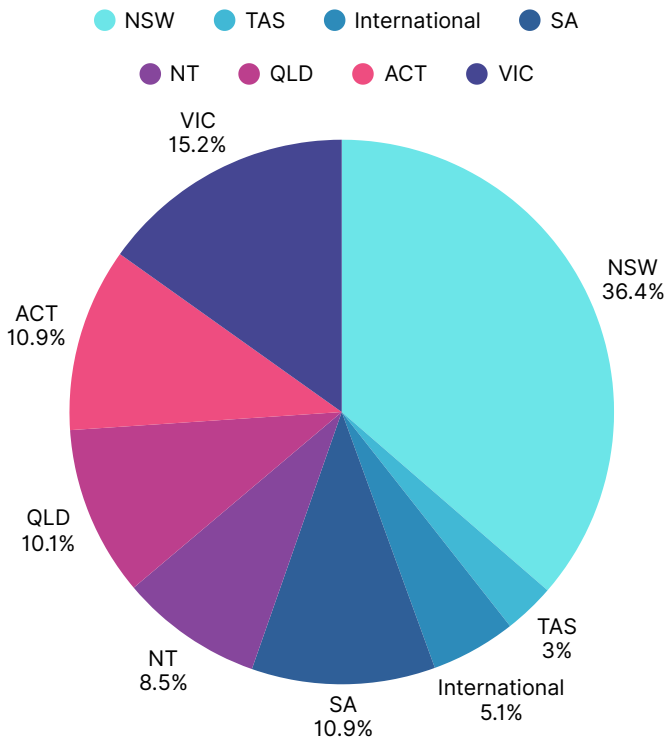
Income Sources



Expenses







Our Members

Our members span every corner of the game and the country. The largest group are based in NSW, with strong representation across Victoria, Queensland, and ACT, plus international members who connect with our work globally.

The majority of members identify as women (58%), with growing numbers of men and gender diverse members joining our network.

Their interests are as diverse as the game itself, from fans and supporters, to those in governance, playing, coaching, refereeing, media, and research all united by a shared commitment to driving gender equality in football.

Thank you

To our donors and partners,

Your support has made a real difference this year. Because of your contributions, we've been able to expand our operations, continue our programs and extend our voice for women in football.

The work we do isn't possible without people who believe in what we're trying to achieve. Whether you've donated your time, money, or expertise, you've helped us strengthen our advocacy efforts, expand our professional development offerings and engage our member base.

We don't take your trust lightly. Every dollar you've given has gone directly to supporting our members and women in football.

There's still more work to do, but we're in a stronger position because of your backing. Our members benefit directly from your generosity, and our equality advocacy gains more visibility and impact.

Thank you for being part of this effort. Your support means we can keep doing this important work.

Kerry Harris, on behalf of Women Onside

Partners & Supporters

- The June Canavan Foundation
- The Global Institute of Women's Leadership
- The Working Women's Centre
- The Social Research Centre
- The Women in Football Global Alliance
- The Global Institute of Sport
- Football Australia and Member Federations
- Monica Beazley, Monarch Management.
- Dylan Young, DKY Captures
- Director/Producers Maggie Miles and Maggie Eudes and Producer Lucy Maclaren, Trailblazers
- Natasha Akib, Documentary Australia
- Kirsten Drower, Tourism WA
- Karen Hennessey, Women in Sport WA
- Kris Marano and Marly Battenburg, Gaining Ground
- Bridie Watson, The Female Football Project
- Ann Odong, photography



Work with Us

We're a movement powered by our members and supporters.

Our growing momentum is only possible with your support. Consider donating today

www.womenonside.com.au/donate

"Being a Women Onside member makes me feel part of a community that is united in driving gender equality and breaking down barriers so that everyone can be part of the world game."

- Member



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