

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY WOMEN IN SPORT

Strategic Plan 2022-2026



Dani Stevens
Master of Secondary Education
2020 Tokyo Olympic Games athlete



Skye Nicolson
Bachelor of Education
2020 Tokyo Olympic Games athlete
Gold medallist at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games



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Madison de Rozario
Bachelor of Business
2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games athlete
Two-time Paralympic Gold medallist





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the implementation of this Women in Sport Strategic Plan, Griffith seeks to grow opportunities for all women in sport.

Griffith leads all Australian universities in the support of elite athletes, and elite women make up some of our most decorated athletes. Griffith is also a leader in the delivery of sport, sport education, sporting research and sport services, with focused expertise in women in sport across research fields including sports performance, sports management, sociology and health.

The Women in Sport Strategic Plan sits alongside the Griffith Sport Strategy and focuses on improving gender equity—narrowing in on the unique opportunities specific to women's participation, pathways, performance, research and leadership in sport. Successful and impactful delivery of this strategy will see a multifaceted program delivered in a coordinated manner by Griffith and the sport industry to create:

- increased opportunities for all women in sport
- improvements in the performance of female athletes and teams in Australia
- more leadership roles for women in sport
- social and behavioural changes in our communities.

“I would not have been able to complete my degree without the Griffith Sports College. Their support has been amazing and I would not have managed my swimming and university without their help. The Swimming Australia, QAS and Griffith high-performance partnership was also incredible for me, allowing me to move to the Gold Coast and focus on my swimming while completing my degree.”

Emma McKeon AM

Bachelor of Public Health

2020 Tokyo Olympic Games athlete

Five-time Olympic Gold medallist



BACKGROUND

We have seen a significant shift in the contributions of women in sport over the past decade, both on and off the field.

The presence of women's elite sport in Australia has made leaps and bounds, from a modest community profile to lucrative television deals and national headline news. Global events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games have enabled female athletes to shine and become household names, while the 2018 Commonwealth Games also championed gender equity in sport, with equal opportunity for medals among female and male athletes. Despite these advances, sport in Australia is still not an equitable place for female athletes.

Sport Australia's Sport 2030 paper states, 'Women and girls are less likely to be active in ways which maintain or improve their health compared to men and boys.' In addition to the above-mentioned global multi-sport events, the recent growth of national leagues for women including NRLW, AFLW, Super W, Super Netball, A-League Women and WBBL has been inspirational to the nation's younger generation, acting as a launchpad for young women dreaming to compete at a national level and become the next household name.

'There's nothing like sport as a force for social change and good. The awe-inspiring rise in women's sport and para-sport in the past decade has changed community perceptions and led broader societal changes,' Sport 2030 states.

The pay gap between genders in sport is also narrowing. While some sports are lagging, others, including tennis, are leading the way with all four Grand Slam events having offered equal prize money for some time now, with the last tournament stepping up in pay equality after 2007. Recently, Queensland Rugby League announced a pay parity deal for the women's State of Origin team, which means they will now receive the same amount of money as the men's team. While Olympic and Paralympic sports have equitable training grants and funding for male and female athletes, national leagues are still slowly catching up in closing significant pay gaps. Access to sponsorship and other marketing opportunities for elite sportswomen is also still well behind their male counterparts.

Sport is still far from equitable. We see big disparities in access to sport servicing, facilities, coaching, media coverage, marketing, resources and opportunities for sportswomen. There's also a significant disparity of opportunity for women wanting careers in sport, such as leading sport organisations and board representation, as well as officiating and administering sport. This strategy aims to address and positively influence these inequalities.



VISION, MISSION AND AIMS

VISION

The Griffith Women in Sport Strategy will drive athlete performance, education, research and leadership to improve outcomes for women in sport.

MISSION

To disrupt gender stereotypes in sport in order to maximise opportunities for women to participate, excel and lead sport at all levels.

AIMS

The aims of this strategy:

1. Develop Griffith University as an independent and influential leader in sport, specifically women in sport.
2. Encourage and support strong female representation in the Elite Athlete Program.
3. Support and develop influential leaders in women in sport.
4. Promote and foster partnerships and community activities for women in sport.
5. Become a catalyst for positive social change throughout sport and in communities.
6. Attract investment to drive growth and outcomes of this Women in Sport Strategy.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

At Griffith we understand that equity, diversity, and inclusion is our strength. The Griffith Women in Sport Strategy embraces diversity and inclusion with an intersectional perspective to ensure that all women are provided with safe, supportive and productive environments within sport. We are committed to social justice and see the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as one powerful articulation of these values.

Griffith's Women in Sport Strategy links directly to five key strategic priorities relating to women in sport identified as areas where Griffith University can have a positive impact on outcomes for all women in sport.

These five key areas are all interlinked, interrelated and adaptive to industry needs.

These strategic priorities are listed below and detailed in the next section, along with specific program aims.

- **Elite Athlete Program**—recruit, support and retain elite female athletes and provide opportunities for their growth in high-performance sport.
- **Research**—support research across Griffith that is innovative and diverse, and provides positive outcomes for women in sport.
- **Partnerships and engagement**—build and support partnerships and engagement with industry and community specifically to advance outcomes for women in sport.
- **Education and leadership**—grow and support opportunities for women in leadership roles in sport.
- **Social and community impact**—leverage advancement through this Women in Sport Strategy to connect with community and have positive social impact.

KEY DRIVERS

The following key drivers represent areas of strength, opportunity, investment and resources that exist or are integral to advance this Women in Sport Strategy.

- Griffith's expertise in female elite athlete support
- Research excellence in women in sport
- Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- 2023 Women's Football World Cup
- State and national focus on women in sport via AIS and QAS investment
- Increase in women's professional sport investment and coverage
- Community sport participation increase
- Community interest in gender equity issues
- Griffith's legacy in partnering with Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games
- Griffith's core principles of excellence, ethical behaviour and engagement
- Local, state and federal government initiatives.





GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

An investment in sport, particularly supporting women in sport, is not new for Griffith University. Griffith excels in support of high-performance athletes and women in sport research.

Griffith University leverages key strategic partnerships in our pursuit to advance outcomes for women in sport, including:

- Australian Jillaroos
- Gold Coast Suns AFLW team
- Gold Coast Titans NRLW team
- Surfing Australia
- Swimming Australia.



**Associate Professor Clare Minahan
and Rosie Malone**
Bachelor of Sport Development
2020 Tokyo Olympic Games athlete

GRIFFITH SPORTS SCIENCE

Griffith Sports Science promotes performance pathways, preserves athletic development and optimises performance using innovative methodologies and emerging technologies within a scientific environment.

The Griffith Sports Science research group has maintained a strong commitment to research in active girls, women and female athletes since 2002. Collectively, the group is known nationally and internationally for research that examines the unique locomotor movement patterns of women in sport and the effect of female sex steroids on athletic performance. Numerous current and past Griffith Sports Science higher-degree research students have completed their studies embedded in Australian high-performance sport organisations. These context-specific partnerships provide avenues for vigorous academic research and direct applied sports science translation.

SPORT AND GENDER EQUITY (SAGE)

Griffith University is also a national leader in women and sport research, with key expertise in health, sport science and sociology. We are host to the Sport and Gender Equity (SAGE) research group and are one of only a few Australian universities attracting externally competitive research funding in this area. We also provide research consultancy advice and services to a range of sport organisations in gender equity, leadership and performance.

ELITE ATHLETE SUPPORT

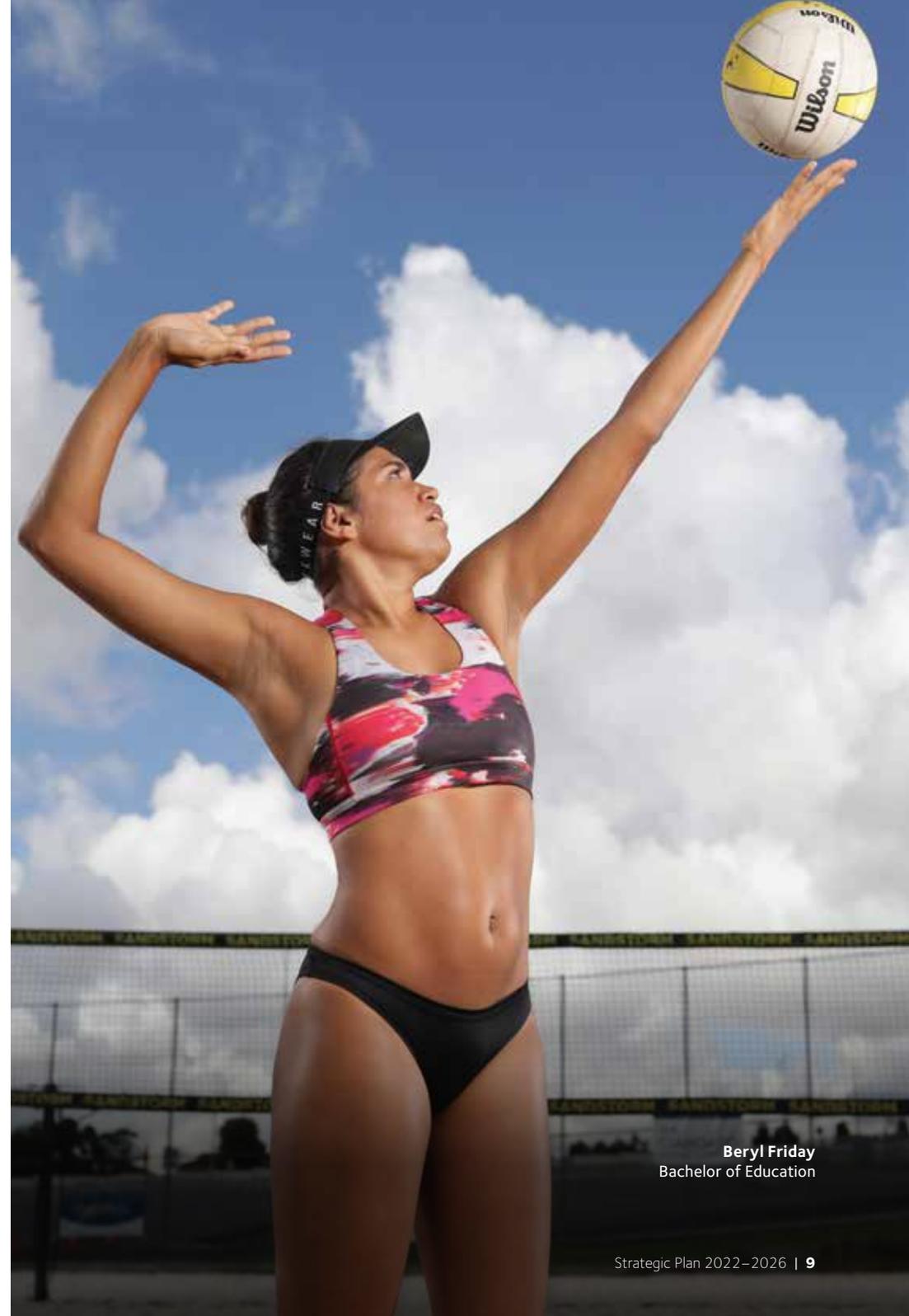
Griffith is recognised as the national leader in support of student athletes. Griffith was the No. 1 Australian university for student athletes at the 2016 Rio Olympics, 2018 Commonwealth Games, 2020 Tokyo Olympics and 2020 Paralympics. The results of our athletes in the 2016 Olympics placed Griffith in the top 10 of all universities in the world and the outstanding results from Tokyo would place us much higher.

At the Tokyo Olympics, Griffith athletes represented almost 10 per cent of the overall Australian Olympic team, with 34 student athletes and nine alumni competing. Of the 43 Griffith athletes competing at the Olympics, an incredible 72 per cent were women. The team performance was exceptional, with Griffith athletes taking home a total of nine gold, one silver and nine bronze medals. Of these 19 medals, female athletes won 13, including seven gold.

The Tokyo Paralympics saw nine Griffith student and alumni athletes competing. Gender balance was at just under 50 per cent women and Griffith athletes made up 5 per cent of the Australian Paralympic Team. Griffith athletes won six gold, one silver and three bronze

Our support of elite athletes has been developed over many years. Griffith now boasts alumni of more than 82 Olympians, 13 Paralympians and 60 Commonwealth Games athletes, including numerous Olympic medallists, Commonwealth Games medallists, world champions and world record holders. Griffith also has many alumni competing at elite levels in sports including rugby league, Australian rules football, netball, football, cricket and rugby union.

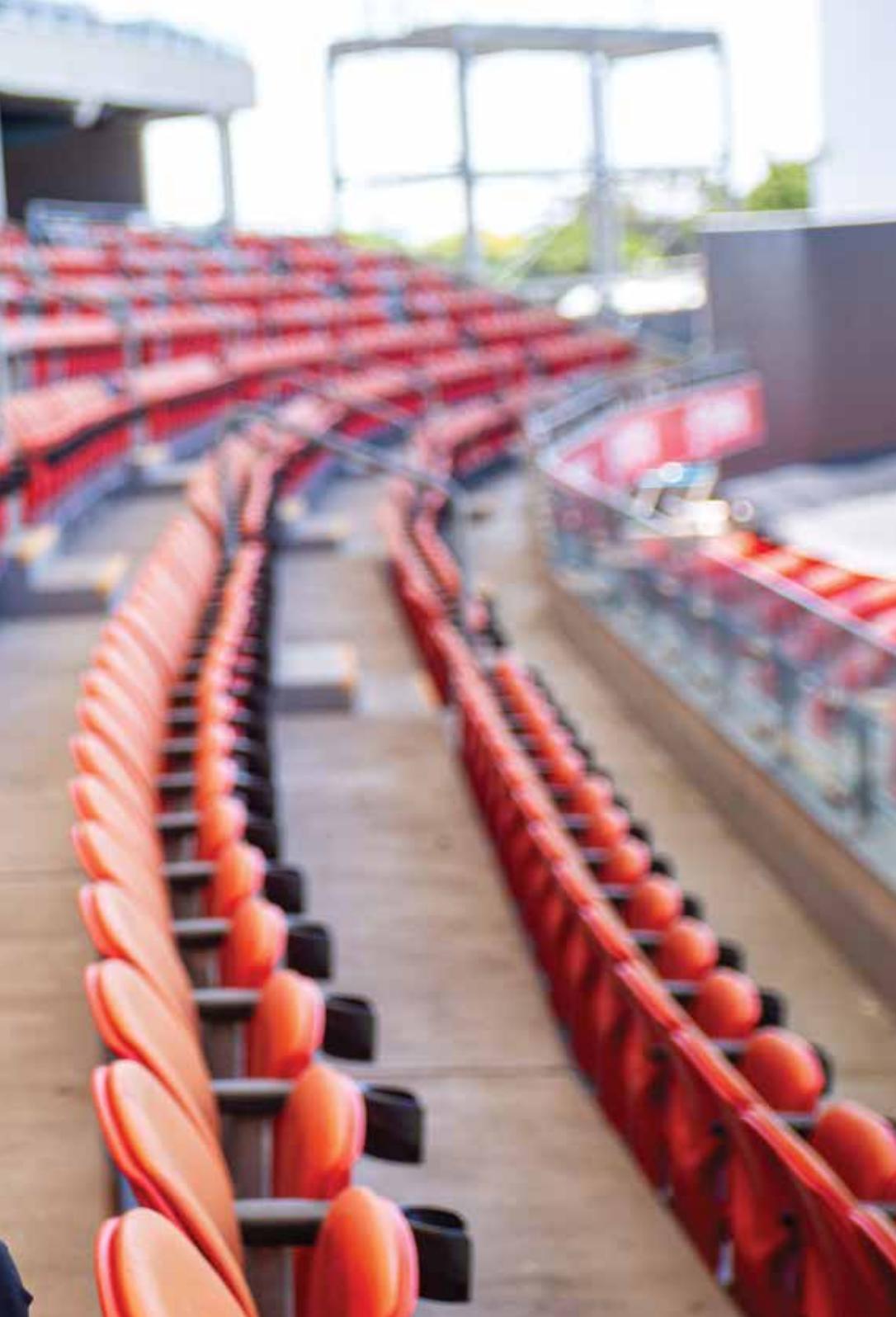
The Women in Sport Strategy will provide a framework for Griffith to extend our existing support for elite sportswomen studying at Griffith and to leverage and coordinate other work promoting women in sport at Griffith.



Beryl Friday
Bachelor of Education



Fiona Sessarago
Bachelor of Exercise Science Master of Sport Management
Head of Women's Football, Gold Coast Suns



SPORT MANAGEMENT

Griffith's sport management faculty prioritise focusing on women in sport across their teaching, and in their internationally renowned research. The sport management major has been developed to cover important topics such as pursuing gender equity both in and through sport, the challenges facing sportswomen and women pursuing careers in the sport industry, and how women's sport can best grow commercially. As part of the major, Griffith students are presented with authentic and innovative assessments encouraging them to think critically about how they can change perceptions, attitudes and norms to open opportunities for women across grassroots, community and elite sport contexts. Similarly, the sport management faculty are at the forefront of publishing industry-relevant research examining issues including women's participation in community and high-performance sport, the branding and monetisation of women's sport, and creating opportunities and pathways for women in sport leadership.



GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY WOMEN IN SPORT STRATEGIC PLAN 2022–2026

ELITE ATHLETES

Continue to recruit, support, develop and retain elite female athletes and provide opportunities for their growth in high-performance sport.

- Support high-performance female athletes in dual career balance, supporting their academic and sporting goals.
- Identify high-performance programs for women through which Griffith can support their pathways to national teams.
- Support elite female athletes with regular servicing, performance testing and access to facilities.
- Continue to work with AIS, NIN and NSO network to provide academic pathways to Griffith for sportswomen.
- Maintain alumni database and connections to build engagement opportunities.
- Work with sports and our network to provide women in sport scholarships and education grants.
- Work with sport industry to provide more opportunities to develop Indigenous women's sport.

RESEARCH

Support research across Griffith that is innovative and diverse, and provides positive outcomes for women in sport.

- Collaborate with industry partners to identify multidisciplinary research opportunities.
- Secure grant funding from government, industry and other partners to further interdisciplinary and high-quality women in sport-specific research.
- Use women in sport research to impact on performance outcomes for female athletes and teams and the wider sports industry.
- Link with other universities and sports industry to create collaborative female-specific research opportunities.
- Collaborate with partners and industry to provide knowledge, learning and teaching opportunities for sport-related higher degree research.
- Create career pathways for female researchers in the area of women in sport.

Drive athlete performance, education, research and leadership to improve outcomes for all women in sport.

PARTNERSHIPS AND ENGAGEMENT

Build and support partnerships and engagement with industry and community specifically to advance outcomes for women in sport.

- Partner with like-minded organisations progressing outcomes for women in sport.
- Explore industry opportunities in women's sport, particularly around Brisbane 2032 and the lead-up to this home Games.
- Assist in delivering sporting-related sponsorships and partnerships with private, public and government sector partners.
- Partner with professional sports to improve outcomes in women's professional teams, where inequity between genders is greater.
- Delivery of high-performance camps and programs for women in sport.
- Explore opportunities to create a Griffith University-based national centre of excellence for women in sport.

EDUCATION AND LEADERSHIP

Grow and support opportunities and pathways for women in leadership roles in sport.

- Provide internal, multidisciplinary, learning and teaching opportunities and experiences for women in sport-related study and leadership.
- Provide postgraduate and executive leadership education to advance equity in sport.
- Innovate to recognise women in leadership roles, e.g. micro-credentials, digital badges, short courses.
- Encourage greater representation of women on sport boards and in leadership roles.
- Leverage opportunities within the system to advance women within the sporting industry, including in coaching.
- Source scholarships for education grants.
- Provide internal mentorship opportunities, advancing women in sport, alongside external mentorship for sportswomen to excel personally and professionally.

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

Leverage advancement of women in sport to connect with community and deliver positive social impacts.

- Partner with key social change organisations and programs to support gender equity and contribute towards a reduction in violence.
- Deliver social benefits from increased support and recognition of women in sport.
- Leverage sport's ability to make a positive difference in communities, supporting and recognising women in sport.
- Work to build community awareness of Griffith and its success in sport.
- Develop Indigenous women and girls' sport programs, impacting both growth and retention.
- Directly address gender inequalities in sport including pay equity and participation.
- Contribute towards the wellbeing and mental health of women and girls in sport.

“Griffith University has played a key role in the transition of the women’s rugby league landscape over the past five years. We are indebted for their support, research and resources, which have transitioned the female game from amateur to semi-professional in such a short period of time. The research and support given has assisted the evolution of the female game to ensure rules, game statistics analysis, injury surveillance and prevention are key in all decision-making.

“The Jillaroos have benefited greatly from our partnership, with access to Griffith’s state-of-the-art high-performance gym and medical facilities. Expertise and research in the area of women’s health has not only seen individual and team preparation, performance and recovery practices become world-class, but allowed Griffith staff and students to progress into roles within our sport.

“Currently, two of our 11 Jillaroos staff members started out as Griffith students. These students and others have progressed from assisting with testing and research to NRLW, State of Origin and to the Jillaroos. Access and assistance from Griffith staff and students has allowed us to capture valuable athlete information and learnings. Our relationship has been crucial in the Jillaroos’ reign as world champions and their five-year undefeated record.”

“We look forward to our continued partnership with Griffith to ensure the women’s game and the Jillaroos continue to thrive.”



Brad Donald
Jillaroos Head Coach



Georgia Brown
Sports Scientist
Griffith Alumnus

Tayla Relph
Bachelor of Journalism



“Having lived experience in the Australian high-performance sport system as both athlete and sport administration leader, it’s clear we work in a system where male domination in leadership is entrenched. The quality of leadership in high-performance (HP) sport is critical to outcomes in this competitive industry, and my experience in the system is we can improve the accessibility of the full talent pool to increase diversity.

“It’s recognised that a system-wide, coherent approach will be required to achieve gender diversity aspirations in HP roles. We have some phenomenal women working in all areas of our sport industry who simply need an opportunity and who require support to build their capability.

“I acknowledge the work that Griffith University is doing in the women in sport leadership space. This strategy helps raise awareness, influences change, drives the implementation of new initiatives, and looks for ways to partner with the system to improve the landscape.”

“I have worked with the leadership team at Griffith University in my sport partnership roles for a long period of time now.

“The strategic lens they look through is purpose-driven and performance-focused in what’s best for sport and what’s best for the sport high-performance system and wider community sector.”



Kim Crane
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