



Supporting coverage of under-represented sports 2018–19

Many sports that occupy a central place in the Australian sporting landscape struggle to secure consistent coverage in the mainstream media. The under-represented sports grant, which forms part of the Government's Broadcasting and Content Reform Package, is an important step in addressing this coverage imbalance to enable sporting bodies to lift participation rates and maximise growth.

The Australian Government is providing \$30 million to Fox Sports from 2017–18 to 2020–21 to support television and online coverage of sports that receive low or no broadcast exposure: women's sports, niche sports, and those sports that command high levels of community involvement and participation.

Fox Sports' deliverables in 2018–19

Fox Sports has provided its 2018–19 Performance Report to the Department of Communications and the Arts. The report outlines Fox Sports' performance against the requirements set out in the funding agreement, including the sports that benefited from funding, breakdown of expenditure, and coverage for the selected sports.

In summary, the report shows:

- more than 5,850 hours of content covered by the funding agreement was broadcast during the 2018–19 financial year, including around 1,600 live hours
- it exceeded the forecast broadcast hours in the 2018–19 Strategic Roadmap by 78 per cent
- total coverage represented a 108 per cent increase compared to the number of broadcast hours during the 2016–17 financial year
- 43 different sport competitions benefited from funding, with 19 new programs or events receiving coverage or benefiting from grant funding
- Fox Sports achieved all of its key performance indicators for the 2018–19 financial year.

Success stories in 2018–19

Fox Sports has worked closely with a range of sports bodies and rights holders to establish partnerships to assist the sports beyond just improving their coverage. Some of these include:

- Acquiring the rights to broadcast Softball Australia's inaugural Asia Pacific Cup. In 2019 Fox Sports expanded its partnership with Softball Australia to incorporate both the Asia Pacific Cup and a new competition, The Summer Slam—Fully Loaded Softball. The events have proven an important milestone as softball looks to re-join the Olympic program at the 2020 Summer Olympics. This included live broadcast of the final three days of The Summer Slam—Fully Loaded Softball. Softball Australia were able to confirm commercial sponsors for the Summer Slam, ensuring commercial sustainability for the competition and the sport more broadly.



- In October 2018, the WNBL announced the establishment of its first ever Parental and Pregnancy Care Policy. This was assisted by the commercial sustainability brought by the 2017–18 broadcast deal between Fox Sports and the WNBL.
- Fox Sports delivered increased coverage of the WBBL during the 2018–19 season, bringing more female heroes into homes across Australia. Over the same time period, Cricket Australia saw total female participation reach new heights hitting 498K, up 26% from the 2017–18 season with the addition of 104,000 new players. A total of 873 new female teams were added nationally.
- During the 2018–19 season, Fox Sports broadcasted or streamed coverage of every W League game—a first for the league. This drove a significant increase in value for the W-League’s sponsors, strengthening the commercial sustainability of the entire league. As a result the FFA was able to move ahead with its announcement of pay parity for its women footballers, bringing them in line with the men playing in the A-League.

Sports supported in 2019–20

In 2019–20 it is expected that Fox Sports will broadcast at least 1,580 hours of live coverage, and around 4,600 hours of coverage in total, of women’s, niche and emerging sports.

Details of the sports that will be supported through the grant in 2019–20:

Sport	Competition	Anticipated coverage increase in 2019–20*
AFL	• AFLW	• 15%
Football	• W-League • FFA Cup • Matildas	• -23% • 59% • -36%
Cricket	• WBBL • Australian Women’s Cricket Team • ICC Women’s World Twenty20	• No coverage in 2016–17 • No coverage in 2016–17 • No coverage in 2016–17
Rugby Union	• Super W • Rugby Sevens—Men’s and Women’s • Wallaroos	• No coverage in 2016–17 • -21% • No coverage in 2016–17
Rugby League	• Women’s Tests and State of Origin • NRL Touch Premiership • League Life	• 2020% • No coverage in 2016–17 • No coverage in 2016–17, new in 2019–20
Lawn Bowls	• Lawn Bowls	• 23%
Surfing	• World Surfing League—Men’s and Women’s • Australian Boardriders Battle • mySURF.TV / Australian Surf Content	• -39% • -32% • No coverage in 2016–17
Life Saving	• Iron Series & Super Surf Teams League	• New format in 2019–20



Sport	Competition	Anticipated coverage increase in 2019–20*
Basketball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WNBL • FIBA Basketball World Cup • FIBA Women's Asia Cup • FIBA Continental Cup Qualifiers (Asia) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coverage in 2016–17 • Quadrennial event last held 2015–16 • Quadrennial event last held 2015–16 • Quadrennial event last held 2015–16
Baseball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Baseball League 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coverage in 2016–17
Softball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asia Pacific Cup • The Summer Slam—Fully Loaded Softball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coverage in 2016–17 • No coverage in 2016–17
Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hockey One League—Men's & Women's • FIH Hockey Pro-League—Men's & Women's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coverage in 2016–17, new in 2019–20 • No coverage in 2016–17
Gymnastics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships • Artistic Gymnastics World Championships • Trampoline / Tumbling Gymnastics World Championships • Apparatus World Cup • Acrobatics Gymnastics World Championships • Aerobics Gymnastics World Championships • Australian Championships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No coverage in 2016–17 for all competitions

*Under the funding agreement, the increase in coverage is assessed against the coverage in the 2016–17 Financial Year. The rationale for this is that many sports events are cyclic and happen every few years and competition structures change, meaning not all years will show an increase from the previous years in terms of broadcast hours. Comparing coverage against 2016–17 Financial Year coverage more accurately shows how the grant has provided a meaningful increase from the pre-grant period.

Sport selection

Fox Sports in consultation with the relevant sporting bodies, in accordance with the requirements of the funding agreement, will determine the competitions and events that will receive enhanced coverage. A governance team established within Fox Sports will oversee, review and assess the sports to be funded each year and report on performance.

Benefits of the program

The increased media coverage that selected sports will receive under the program is expected to deliver a range of benefits for consumers and sports bodies alike including:

- greater media exposure will lift the profile of female athletes and produce role models for the next generation
- increased media coverage for sports that have a history of low or no broadcast exposure is expected to boost crowd attendance, community engagement and participation
- greater media exposure will provide sporting bodies with opportunities to secure commercial support, sponsorships and strengthen long term financial viability.

