

# Elite performance in women



## *Optimising potential for female athletes, soldiers and emergency services workers*

At the Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games, for the first time in its history the Australian team featured more women than men.

The successful advent of the AFLW in 2017 is further testament to the meteoric rise of professional women's sport in recent years, adding to the significant and ongoing contribution of female athletes to Australia's rich sporting culture.

This phenomenon extends beyond sport. In the occupational domain, increasing emphasis is being placed on the recruitment and performance of women.

For example, as of 2016 female soldiers are now eligible to perform all frontline combat roles within the Australian Defence Force, thus highlighting the growing role of women in physically demanding occupations once limited to men.

As this process continues, so too will it bring changing parameters with regard to performance capability, demands and standards.

Research conducted by Griffith Sports Physiology (GSP) is committed to identifying performance barriers specific to women, and enabling the implementation of female-specific strategies.

Led by Associate Professor Clare Minahan from Menzies Health Institute Queensland at Griffith University, this research arises from a notable and expanding development across many areas of contemporary society, and carries ramifications for women's performance, potential and overall health.

Your support is essential for this transformational work to continue. Thank you.

Matildas players – **Tameka Butt** (Masters of Business and Marketing) and **Elise Kellond-Knight** (Masters of Pharmacy) represented Australia at the Rio 2016 Olympics.

Top-tier sports teams, the defence forces and emergency services all require women able to perform gruelling physical work or exercise at the highest standard. It is paramount that influential factors are identified so strategies can be implemented to optimise performance.

At the Menzies Health Institute Queensland at Griffith University, Griffith Sports Physiology has a long history of researching women and elite athletic performance. The work of Associate Professor Clare Minahan is especially renowned.

Associate Professor Minahan was recently awarded the largest-ever grant for a single project from the Centre of Excellence for Applied Sports Science Research Project Funding Scheme (Queensland Academy of Sport).

Entitled "Who, Why, and wHot: Hormonal Contraception", her project examines the prevalence, perceived benefits, and the adverse consequences on performance in the heat."

*'As women's sports gain momentum, and as women take on more physical work roles, performance standards will rise and physical demands will intensify'*

– Associate Professor Clare Minahan

With support from the Menzies Health Institute Queensland and bodies such as the Queensland Academy of Sport and Australian Institute of Sport, GSP can continue conducting research like this to help optimise the performance of women across a range of sports and other roles.

Ultimately, GSP's goal is to establish a Women's High Performance Centre to support not only female athletes, but women across a range of physically demanding occupations.

Your generosity allows GSP to continue important research that will broaden understanding and enable sound strategies with regard to the performance of elite female athletes and women in many other endeavours.

**For more information on supporting research by Griffith Sports Physiology, contact**

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