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To Whom It May Concern

### **Exposure Draft Australia's National Human Rights Action Plan (2012)**

I refer to the exposure draft released on 9 December 2011 by The Hon. Robert McClellan MP, the then Attorney -General, concerning Australia's National Human Rights Action Plan. Netball appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Action Plan and looks forward to ongoing involvement.

Netball Australia welcomes the Gillard Government consulting with the community on the Action Plan which is aimed at promoting and protecting human rights for all, including the most disadvantaged in our community.

As Australia's leading female sport, netball strives to deliver fair, safe, inclusive, respectful and supportive environments for all Australians. We believe that netball offers the enjoyment of participation, a sense of belonging and life-long involvement – no matter whether that's as a player, coach, official, administrator, volunteer or fan.

Netball Australia and the State/Territory Netball Associations are committed to leading social change, strengthening and building capacity and capability in communities, and providing innovative and sustainable netball programs to empower women and girls.

Netball is ranked as the leading women's participation team sport and the top team based sport in Australia for 15 to 24 year olds. Over 1.2 million participants enjoy the game nationally and Australia has been dominant on the international stage since 1963. Netball Australia has more than 330,000 registered members; 5,000 clubs nationally; 570 Associations; and eight member organisations.

Netball is the largest female community based sporting organisation in the world, with more than 70 nations playing and over 21 million participants world-wide. Netball can make a real difference in the lives of women and girls.

Netball Australia commends the commitment from the Australian and State/Territory governments to create an inclusive society where all are valued, and have the opportunity to participate fully, regardless of factors such as age, gender, race, religion or disability.

By way of background, the sport of netball as a social change agent espouses many of the underlying principles that would have informed the Action Plan, for example:



- As part of the Gillard Government's Gender Equality for Women Community Action Grants Stream, delivering Expect Respect Education aimed at young people aged 12 – 24; delivering Social marketing and peer education in partnership with the David Wirrpanda Foundation targeting indigenous school-aged girls; and developing a "NO to Violence" module in Netball Australia's Foundation and Development Coaching Courses.
- Commending the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their children.
- Enhancing netball's ethics and integrity principles that help to provide a fair, safe and inclusive environment for all.
- Helping to Close the Gap by developing a Netball Reconciliation Action Plan and partnering with community organisations to empower women and girls with the aim of helping girls stay at school, go on to further education, get a job and improved their quality of life.
- Working to deliver greater equality between women and men through facilitating aspirational leadership, providing opportunities for board directorships and senior executive management positions, increasing opportunities in coaching, officiating and administration, introducing contemporary employment practices, providing minimum terms of employment for elite netballers, and raising the profile of women's sport.
- Helping Australia to continue playing a leading role in the delivery of sport for development opportunities (sport as a tool for social, economic, health and educational development), through in-country partnerships in the Oceania, Pacific, Asian, Caribbean and African regions.
- Developing a Corporate Social Responsibility Framework, Respect & Responsibility Framework, and Racial and Religious Vilification Framework.

In terms of the new actions the Australian Government has committed to progressing, Netball Australia strongly supports:

- Exploring options for establishing a new National Children's Commissioner.
- Scoping the foundations for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- Working with the States on the regime governing the sterilisation of women and girls with disability.
- The development of a new National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy, to be led by the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Taking into account all of the imperative actions included in the Action Plan, Netball Australia advocates the following as higher priorities to improve the lives of the most vulnerable people in Australia:

- Specific initiatives to empower Indigenous women.
- Closing the Gap Strategy., with a particular focus on reading, writing and numeracy, year 12 attainment rates, and employment outcomes for girls and young women.
- Strengthening social norms against violence.
- Implementing the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children.
- Cyber bullying.
- National Mental health Reform package.

- National Anti-Racism Partnership and Strategy.
- Freedom from discrimination and harassment which persist for specific groups in our society.
- Initiatives to tackle homelessness.

It is pleasing to note that the Action Plan includes a data collection and analysis priority, with the establishment of a joint Government and NGO Advisory Group primarily focused on the collection and interpretation of data. The key going forward will be the development of quantifiable targets, performance measures and timelines for all of the actions listed in the Action Plan, along with transparent and accountable public reporting mechanisms.

The main concern in reviewing the Action Plan is that the lead agencies are either the Victorian and Northern Territory governments or Australian government departments. The inference is that either the other States/Territories don't have relevant actions or there is a lack of commitment to publically include their activities in the national human rights framework.

If you require further information, please contact me on phone (03) 8621 86009, or email [infonet@netball.asn.au](mailto:infonet@netball.asn.au)

Yours sincerely

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