

Empowering a Motorsport Nation



Women in Motorsport Club Guide





Photo: Dave Oliver

Cover photo: Daniel Kalisz Photographer

Purpose of the Club Guide

Motorsport Australia is committed to promoting and providing an inclusive environment for its members and potential members.

We recognise the need to give every individual the equal opportunity to participate in and experience the joy of motorsport. Whether they are officials, competitors or supporters, our community is built on a diverse array of participants - our differences in culture, gender, age and abilities make us stronger and more exciting.

The Women in Motorsport Club Guide has been developed for Motorsport Australia affiliated clubs looking to increase women's participation by engaging, re-engaging, and retaining women across all roles in motorsport.

With thousands of women actively involved in motorsport across Australia, clubs need to continue to nurture and create women-friendly environments that will attract and maintain their involvement.

This guide will:

- Help clubs develop strategies to improve and grow opportunities and participation for women across all disciplines and roles of motorsport
- Provide recommendations, advice, and resources to assist Motorsport Australia Affiliated Clubs in creating and fostering a welcoming club environment
- Ensure that every individual has the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities across all roles within the sport
- Provide research outcomes from surveys conducted to get a better insight and understanding into women's participation in motorsport

Women's involvement in motorsport

Despite the perceived barriers and challenges, we must continue to inspire women to participate in motorsport. This not only presents a considerable growth opportunity

for the sport and our clubs (who will benefit from increased membership) but also has more extensive benefits to our community and society.

Why do we need more women involved in motorsport?

- To increase the number of officials, competitors and supporters actively engaged in motorsport
- Women may enhance the interaction and engagement within the motorsport community
- Improve gender diversity in all roles, reflecting a fully inclusive environment. Some of the benefits of this include attracting more women to the sport and retaining existing participants
- Women can positively contribute to and boost operational and financial performance, increase innovation and improve decision-making¹
- Women may influence their children especially girls to participate in the sport²

1. McKinsey Women Matter: Time to Accelerate 2017

2. Nielsen Sports and Entertainment CAMS: Female Participation Research 2018

How the Club Guide was created

Motorsport Australia conducted a participation survey to better understand the attitudes and perceptions that women have towards motorsport.

Over 1,300 responses were received, and the key findings are described below.



Photo: Little Gem Photography

Why do women participate in motorsport?

The main driver for participating in motorsport amongst both current and potential participations include:

- The social and community inclusion provided through involvement in the sport. Like many other sports, motorsport helps build social capital and social inclusion
- Doing something new that pushes them out of their comfort zone

In addition, most current participants have friends, partners or family members involved in motorsport prior to their involvement.

Motorsport clubs provide participants the opportunity to spend time together, build stronger relationships, and share experiences.

“Grassroots motorsport should be approached like any other club-based sport.

“In my experience playing soccer as a child, these clubs are family-centric. Motorsport should be built on the same idea”

– Motorsport Australia Member

What are the barriers that impact the participation of women in the sport?

- Most respondents indicated that the cost, skill, and car suitability required to participate in the sport were barriers to getting involved
- Potential participants and sceptics also perceive motorsport to be a dangerous sport, increasing their reluctance to becoming involved

“Many people think that you need a ‘race car’, a huge budget and to go ‘flat-out’ the first time you compete in motorsport.

This misconception needs to be addressed in a conversation between the club and participant - you can’t expect people to understand that from an event flyer.”

– Motorsport Australia Member

Setting up an inclusive club

The following checklist helps you self-assess and start a discussion about how your club is currently encouraging and promoting participation and inclusion.

It is a great starting point for your club to understand where you stand and how you can develop strategies that will lead to the creation of a more inclusive club environment.

INCLUSIVE CHECKLIST

1. HOW MANY MEMBERS DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE?

2. WHAT ARE THE NUMBERS OF MEN AND WOMEN?

3. DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE AN OPEN AND WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT?

YES

NO



Invest in the people that shape the culture of the club and can ensure that everyone feels welcome and connected. Consider appointing a friendly, warm and approachable 'Engagement Officer' to welcome new members and stay engaged with them.

4. DOES YOUR CLUB ENCOURAGE CURRENT MEMBERS TO ENGAGE WOMEN (PARTNERS, CHILDREN, COLLEAGUES) IN THE SPORT?

YES

NO



Seek assistance from existing members as they can help in inspiring and promoting involvement in motorsport through word-of-mouth promotion.

For more information, please refer to Recruitment and Retention Guidelines for Woman in Motorsport

"The strongest recruitment strategy is reaching out to your family, colleagues, partners and friends to ask the question 'Hey, have you ever wanted to give this a go?'"

- Motorsport Australia Member



Photo: Sheridan Budsworth

"I've enrolled my 17-year-old daughter into the program for next year, followed by her two sisters over the next two years."

- Motorsport Australia Member

“I love motorsport and I wanted to get more involved and meet other women who felt the same way.”

– Motorsport Australia Member



Photo: Chantel Collins

INCLUSIVE CHECKLIST

5. DOES YOUR CLUB HOST SOCIAL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES?

YES NO ?

Hosting social-focussed activities are a great way to engage and interact with potential members or fringe participants.

6. ARE OFFICIATING OR VOLUNTEER POSITIONS PROMOTED TO ALL CLUB MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS?

YES NO ?

Being involved in motorsport isn't all about being behind the wheel - appeal to a wider audience by encouraging your members to use their expertise and skills by officiating.

“I had no idea how broad the possibilities of involvement were, from being an official, a speed demon or cruising around cones on the wet skip pan.”

– Motorsport Australia Member

7. ARE YOUR CLUB MEMBERS AWARE THAT PEOPLE AS YOUNG AS 12 CAN OFFICIATE?

YES NO ?

Children 12 years of age and above are allowed to apply for an official's licence. This is a great way to get more people involved in motorsport from a young age.

8. DOES YOUR CLUB OFFER AND ENCOURAGE 'COME AND TRY' DAYS?

YES NO ?

Come and Try days are a great way of introducing people to motorsport in a safe and cost-effective way.

9. DOES YOUR CLUB ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ATTEND JUNIOR FOCUSED PROGRAMS?

YES NO ?

Junior programs, such as First Gear, are a safe and welcoming environment for juniors to get behind the wheel.

10. DOES YOUR CLUB UNDERSTAND THE BENEFIT OF BEING INCLUSIVE AND COMMUNICATE THIS TO ALL MEMBERS?

YES NO ?

Everyone needs to feel welcome and supported if they're to engage with a club. If they feel intimidated or treated unfairly, they are likely to leave. Clubs can develop written policies that confirm their commitment to equal inclusion. For instance, a gender sensitivity policy can address what is unacceptable language and behaviour, and what the repercussions are to such infringements.

INCLUSIVE CHECKLIST

11. DOES YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE CONTENT REFLECT YOUR COMMITMENT TO BEING INCLUSIVE?

YES NO ↷

Please refer to our [Marketing and Communications Guidelines](#) for more information.

12. IS YOUR CLUB COMMITTEE GENDER, CULTURAL AND AGE DIVERSE?

YES NO ↷

Develop and implement equality policies to support and encourage a diverse representation on your committee.

It is crucial for clubs to create inclusive environments by encouraging the increased representation of women within the committee.

13. DOES YOUR CLUB HAVE A BUDDY OR MENTORSHIP PROGRAM IN PLACE?

YES NO ↷

Implementing a mentorship program will assist in providing new and existing members with an increased sense of attachment and connectedness to the club.

A mentorship program provides participants with role-models who can help them build their confidence and realise their full potential.

A mentorship program can provide women with guidance, support and training to take on various roles and responsibilities within the club.

Buddy relationships are a less formal pairing with the aim of supporting new members with social inclusion and general club information.

Mentors and Buddies can be club members or even family influencers who can positively contribute to the growth and development of new members.

14. DOES YOUR CLUB ENCOURAGE ALL CLUB MEMBERS TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK?

YES NO ↷

Regularly conduct surveys to get feedback. Host meetings and discussions to grasp and understand the needs and wants of all members from all represented genders, cultures and ages.



Photo: Motorsport Australia Media

“Our female mentor was wonderful through the entire program. She took the time to know each of us individually and help support, encourage and challenge us.”

– Motorsport Australia Member



Photo: Chantel Collins

Club organised programs

Recommendations to clubs when hosting Come and Try events or junior development programs

Research suggests that women feel more comfortable trying something new in a women's only environment. To ensure that potential participants feel more comfortable with getting involved in motorsport, we recommend that clubs host women-only Come and Try events and/or junior development programs.

"I have recommended women specific programs to many ladies as I believe that these events take out all the fear and questions of motorsport participation"

– Motorsport Australia Member

While we understand it might not be possible for a club to single-handedly host multiple women-only Come and Try events and programs throughout the year, clubs can collaborate and work together to ensure that there are more opportunities and training days available to women.

The following elements are essential to consider when hosting women-only Come and Try events:

- Women instructors and mentors
- Inviting women officials
- Offering childcare or activities for children
- Ask for feedback on how to improve the event
- Focus on the social aspect of the event
- Promoting the Come and Try events as being a safe and encouraging environment
- Appointing women in leadership roles
- Hosting the event at a convenient time for most participants (evening events can work well)

Seeking support and assistance from Motorsport Australia

The [Supercheap Auto Club Development Fund](#) outlines specific funding opportunities towards supporting women's participation in grassroots motorsport.

Motorsport Australia affiliated car clubs who are interested in applying for the fund are encouraged to contact their local [Regional Development Executive](#) to check eligibility and discuss potential projects in more detail.

Interested in learning and understanding about the strategies and programs that other Motorsport Australia affiliated clubs have implemented to attract and retain women?

View our Case Studies on pages 9-11 in this document.



Photo: Angryman Photography

Additional resources

Motorsport Australia
Participation Programs:

- [FIA Girls On Track](#)
- [First Gear](#)

Club information

- [Motorsport Australia Club Resource Centre](#)
- [FIA Women in Motorsport](#)

Contact

For more information about the research and advice provided in this document, contact the **Motorsport Australia Participation Team**:

development@motorsport.org.au

Club case study: Vic

A Victorian Motorsport Australia Club has developed a multi-part series of driver development events to support, engage and encourage women and junior participation in motorsport.

The programs have been created to help people understand their cars limits and personal limits as a driver, in a safe environment. Guidance and support are provided by experienced car club members that assist in making participants feel both confident and welcome to the track. Below, the club's secretary helps us better understand the club's initiatives and activities to support and grow women and junior participation in motorsport.

How and why did your club decide to focus on actively encouraging and engaging women to participate in motorsport?

I joined the club in 2015 after I bought my first track car. At that time there would be none or sometimes one other woman competing in the sprints or motorkhana events. I found it terribly intimidating and I felt very conspicuous joining in for the first time. Not knowing anyone or having a partner or family that was with me made me feel even more out of place. Once I started making friends within the club, I realised that there was no animosity towards women being involved, that I was welcome and could be respected as an equal because I was there for the same reasons they were. As I became more involved in the committee I decided to run an event for women, to try to encourage more women in the periphery of the club to join in.

I found from the beginning the board and club members were very open and encouraging to having more women participate. Without their help and support the events would not have been a success.

What specific strategies do you implement to attract girls and women to participate and get involved in motorsport?



Photo: Chantel Collins

The design of the events for instance needs to be female centric.

It is important to have a visible and vocal woman as a leader. Our women participants need to see me as a respected leader amongst the group and that I have a vocal presence on the day of the event. Basically, I fill the position of a coordinator on the day, giving a welcome speech, talking through the order of events and explaining the exercises.

Ensure that participants have a mentor. I rely on those more experienced and capable in the club to be the "mentors" and to execute the driving skills exercises. Our women's and junior driver development programs have always been a community effort, utilising the personalities and abilities of those in our club.

Have a woman give a "pep talk" at the start of the day about the emotions they experienced at their first track day, speaking candidly about the fears, nerves and doubts.

How do you ensure that women feel welcome and valued?

Events like ours that encourage women into grassroots motorsport are creating the fertile landscape for the next generation of women and girls who will inherit motorsport. I want them to see the local motorsport car club as a place where women competing

and participating is normal, not segregated and not special.

With our program we struggled with retention in the first 2 years. Our events were hugely successful on their own but when it came to these women joining in with normal competition events or joining the club there was little to no conversion rate. The intimidation factor still remained when it came to stepping up to the "main game" of a sprint or motorkhana event. Pivotal to our improved retention for the 2019 program was the introduction of a "rookie" group into a normal competition sprint event shortly after the driver development day. This provided the middle ground between the development day and normal competition without the pressure and stress of being on track with more experienced and faster drivers.

It is important to have personal contact with each participant and ensure that all their questions are answered, and equipment is prepared before an event. Yes, this does require more work and effort by the organiser. However, it's steps like this that creates a community and builds a relationship between members and the club.

Have you benefited from the involvement of women?

The event has given our club lots of media coverage from Motorsport Australia and our local newspaper,



this raises the status of our club in the local and motorsport community. We are all proud of what we have achieved and that it is being recognised as an example of successful women's participation in grassroots motorsport.

I personally have grown as a leader; it has challenged me to be able to delegate and work as part of an integrated team within the car club. It has taught me to be a more visible and vocal leader, the needs of our women participants have demanded that of me, and I am grateful for the challenge.

***What worked for the program?
What were some of the challenges you experienced?***

It is important to create a community for the women– this is something that will both attract and retain their involvement in your clubs' activities and events. We also realised that it is valuable to develop many aspects of participating in motorsport, i.e., a program of events as opposed to just the one-off track day. The rookie group as segue into regular competition was pivotal in promoting women's retention.

Designing and planning the day as a committee was important to creating a cohesive team on event day and helping those involved to feel ownership over the event. Be clear in your objectives for the day, particularly if you are coordinating mentors. These objectives may be different for each event, but we

found that it was easy to be tempted to try to do and achieve too much in one day. A come and try day or beginner track day/development day may aim only to spark excitement and thrill - enough to get people hooked to come back for more!

What would your advice be for clubs who are not convinced that engaging women is beneficial?

The face and landscape of motorsport is changing, there is no stopping the direction towards women becoming more involved and represented in motorsport in all aspects. It really is inevitable. Clubs have an opportunity to do this on their terms in a way that works for them and their club members, that is the true value of getting involved in the process now. Women's participation should be organic, authentic and club/ community/family centred. At its fundamental level we are people sharing a passion and a past time; clubs have an opportunity to shape what the future of motorsport looks like for the next generation.

Club case study: NSW

This NSW club's passion and commitment to increase the participation of women in motorsport is demonstrated through its unique program designed to take the intimidation out of motorsport for women.

Below, the creator of the program provides an insight about the program and its success.

How and why did your club decide to focus on actively encouraging and engaging women to participate in motorsport?

Our club recognised that girls and women lack awareness and understanding that motorsport is a



gender-neutral sport - it is not just for men. To help change existing perceptions about motorsport, encourage gender equality and provide women the opportunity to participate in motorsport, the club developed and implemented a women's-only program.

What specific strategies do you implement to attract girls

and women to participate and get involved in motorsport?

The program was established in 2016 to take the intimidation out of motorsport for women. It's a 10-part program, run over four months, which takes participants through various aspects of grassroots motorsport. At the end of the program participants can comfortably

enter Super Sprints, Motorkhanas, Hillclimbs and Regularity competitions with confidence, knowledge and event readiness.

Event readiness includes the ability to enter and compete in a motorsport event with the knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the race meeting.

This includes (but is not limited to) car set up, steering, roles of event officials, knowledge of the different flags, supplementary regulations, apparel, setting and adjusting tyre pressures, and completing an event entry form knowing which class a vehicle falls into.

How do you ensure that women feel welcome and valued to ensure retention?

Since the introduction of the program, we have developed and implemented various strategies to ensure that women feel welcome, safe, respected and valued at our club. These have resulted in the high level of involvement and engagement from women in our club.



Photo: Revved Photography

For instance, we started a ladies Championship which encourages and celebrates the achievements of women competitors within the club.

We have women on our club committee, and we set the tone of inclusiveness from the top. We ensure that our women volunteers (officials) and competitors are treated with respect, i.e., we do not allow sexist or derogatory comments to be made against or about women in the sport.

To further support our commitment to women's participation and involvement in motorsport our club shirts are available in both men and women's styles.

Have you benefited from the involvement of women? If so, can you please give us a few examples.

The club has definitely benefited from increased women's involvement. Since the onset of the program, we have seen increased club membership numbers in both competitors and officials. For example, we had an additional all-girl 6-hour team enter the NSW 6 Hour over Easter.

In addition to this, we have improved stakeholder relationships with fellow clubs as we are all working together towards a common goal.

What worked for the program? What were some of the challenges you experienced?

Getting the program off the ground was a challenge as it was a new concept, something out of the box, and a few people needed convincing that it would work.

During the first year we did not market the program to motorsport enthusiasts. However, in the second year we incorporated a marketing program which worked well.

The program provides a safe space for women and girls to not only get involved in motorsport but also to meet like-minded women. The program creates a tight knit community of women, and this is one of the reasons why it has been successful.



Photo: Chris Warwick



Photo: Angryman Photography



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