

ASTN receives funding under the Advance Queensland Initiative to accelerate female founders in QLD

MELBOURNE – MONDAY, 31 JULY 2023: Australian Sports Technologies Network (ASTN) has received funding under the Advance Queensland Initiative to increase the success of female-founded sports technology and innovation (sportstech) businesses in Queensland.

ASTN was one of 11 recipients included in round one of the Accelerating Female Founders Program, proudly supported by the Advance Queensland Initiative – delivering a diverse range of initiatives to female founders across Queensland, to support every stage of their innovation journey, and their participation in key industries and technologies.

ASTN has received the grant to connect Queensland-based female founders with national sportstech peers and an international network to strengthen entrepreneurial foundations. The program will prioritise Queensland-based female sportstech founders into ASTN’s renowned early-stage program (pre-accelerator) and specialised activities like masterclasses and workshops designed to enhance pathways for women in sportstech.

The ASTN programs provided under the grant will be open to female founders or co-founders of sportstech startups and organisations in Queensland, with a product or service with a potential application in sports. This includes fitness, wellness, health, and other off-field technologies, as well as facilities and infrastructure, media, and broadcasting.

Elements of the Female Founders Program will be delivered in collaboration with US-based organisation Women in Sports Tech (WiST). In June 2022, ASTN and WiST announced a long-term partnership to help change the ratio and improve business cultures. WiST is a non-profit organisation aimed at expanding career opportunities for women in sportstech, at all stages of their careers, from the classroom to the boardroom.

Over the last 12 months, WiST and ASTN have worked together to develop specialised resources (including the [Power 100+ List](#)), workshops and masterclasses to help shift the culture of sportstech in Australia and encourage a more inclusive and diverse workforce. ASTN is committed to creating the world’s most innovative sportstech businesses eager to #ChangeTheRatio.

“ASTN is looking forward to working closely with WiST to roll out specialised programs to Queensland-based founders under the ‘Accelerating Female Founders Program’ to open more doors for female entrepreneurs and help to shift the culture of sportstech in Australia,” said Amy Crosland, Program Lead, ASTN+WiST.

Gender participation and executive representation of sport in Australia has been a focus of policy makers and industry in recent years. Dr Martin Schlegel, Executive Chair, ASTN says that the wider sports industry is starting to make serious efforts to change the disparity between male and female athletes and hopes this attention will have a knock-on effect for the sportstech sector.



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“Just recently we saw a media frenzy around the Matilda’s push for equality as the sports industry starts to raise questions about the large discrepancy in prize money between male and female soccer players. And the sportstech sector is no different, women are highly unrepresented across the sector, which is why government grants and initiatives like the Advance Queensland Initiative are essential to inspire our next generation of female entrepreneurs and remove current barriers that face the industry,” said Dr Martin Schlegel, Executive Chair, ASTN.

“At ASTN, we are passionate fostering innovation and changing the ratio to give females more opportunity to succeed, and this grant by the Queensland Government is a step in the right direction to drive meaningful change for the sportstech sector,” added Dr Schlegel.

Research shows that less than five per cent of sports startups are women in Australia; however, ASTN has demonstrated above industry average outcomes – with more than twelve percent of female founders or co-founders participating in ASTN programs. ASTN recognises that a specific and separate approach is required to effectively uplift female participation and long-term impact.

"Research tells us that inclusivity drives innovation and that gender-diverse teams generate above-average revenue and profits. Leadership sets the tone, and we are delighted to support ASTN's efforts under the Advance Queensland Initiative to increase the success of female-founded sports technology and innovation (sportstech) businesses in Queensland," said Marilou McFarlane, CEO/Founder of WiST."

Read the official media statement from the Queensland government here: [Queensland female innovators to benefit from almost \\$1 million in support - Ministerial Media Statements](#)

ENDS

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

For more information, or to arrange an interview with ASTN, please contact Tara Ballard on 0436 330 267 or Tara.ballard@astn.com.au

ABOUT ASTN

Australian Sports Technologies Network (ASTN) provides leadership in the commercialisation, development, and promotion of Australian-inspired Sports Technologies. Established in 2012, ASTN is today a world-leading pioneer with over 750 organisations in its national network across the landscape of Sports Digital, Sports Research, Stadium/Venues, Media, Entertainment, eSports, Human Performance, Fan Engagement, Sports Data, Artificial Intelligence in Sports, Sports Equipment, Sports Smart Apparel and Sports Universities. For more information, please visit www.astn.com.au.