

# **A BRIEF HISTORY OF WOMEN'S LACROSSE IN AUSTRALIA**

The first modern women's lacrosse game was held at St Leonard's School in Scotland in 1890. It was introduced by the school's headmistress, Louisa Lumsden, after a visit to Quebec, where she saw it played. The first women's lacrosse team in the United States was established at Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore, Maryland in 1926.

In England, a women's association was formed in 1912 with schools, colleges and clubs affiliated with it. The Scottish association was formed in 1920, the Irish and Welsh in 1930. In 1931 the United States Women's Lacrosse Association was formed, largely through the influence of a number of English teachers who were working in America.

## **1904**

Women's lacrosse in Australia can trace its history as far back as 1904, when Miss Gwyneth Morris, a physical education teacher at Merton Hall, Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School, introduced the sport as part of the school's commitment to team sports. Ms Morris had been exposed to lacrosse when she studied physical education in London under Madame Osterberg, the famed physical educationist and women's suffrage advocate. On returning to Melbourne, Ms Morris became the pioneer of the Swedish "gymnastic system" in Victoria. The school adopted the policy of organized games as an important part of the development of a girl's character, promoting self-reliance, self-control and teamwork. The Argus Newspaper on 14 April 1928 reported on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school and noted the following from the formative years of the school "In those days the girls played lacrosse and cricket in front of Old Fairlie, the old wooden bungalow with heavy wooden shutters which stood next to Merton Hall, and had been acquired as an overflow house for boarders."

## **1907**

In 1907 ladies were practicing lacrosse in the Western Australian goldfields under the tutelage of men from the Kalgoorlie Lacrosse Club.

## **1908**

An early report indicated that a new and radical movement was about to begin. "Left Home", in "The Leader" of 2 May 1908 wrote: "Hitherto ladies have not ventured into the field of lacrosse, but quite recently the East Melbourne Ladies Cricket Club asked for copies of the rules of the game, and for hints on how to play it, and now Merton Hall, The Church of England Girls Grammar School, has actually formed a team at the college.

## **1913**

The earliest recorded women's lacrosse club in New South Wales, the St Georges Ladies Lacrosse Club, was formed in 1913, soon followed by a club at Manly. By 1914

there were four women's clubs in N.S.W., and there was a competition in place. Therefore the birth of women's lacrosse at club level in Australia started in N.S.W.

While the club competition ceased there was girls schools lacrosse played in NSW during the war period and this picked up to an annual girls high schools competition from 1919 up until the early 1930's. There were up to 6-8 schools that participated and women's matches were played on occasions as curtain-raisers to men's Interstate matches and men's club and finals games. NSW was definitely the originator and 'hotbed' of women's lacrosse in Australia until the start-up in Victoria in the mid 1930's. The depression and WW2 seemed to have dried up this activity.

### **1915**

The N.S.W. ladies competition was suspended in July 1915, presumably due to the outbreak of World War 1, with no further competition recorded after that date.

From the "Critic" newspaper, Adelaide, on 23 June 1915 an article headed Lacrosse. (By "Right Attack") -Association Matters - I was pleased to hear that at last Friday's meeting the executive unanimously approved of the secretary's recommendation to grant the sale of a dozen boys' crosses to the Jamestown ladies' lacrosse team (SA). The original intention, I understand, was to distribute these cheap and light sticks amongst the schools, with a view of attracting interest in the game, and also to eventually form a schools' division in the match program. This latter proposal would probably have reached a concrete form this season, but naturally such matters were suspended upon the outbreak of war. Dozens of boys' sticks have already been well circulated in the suburbs amongst high schools, etc., and this latest move undoubtedly opens up another channel in making the game attractive.

### **1926**

In the *Circular Head Chronicle* (Stanley, Tasmania, 6 October 1926) - Lacrosse for Women - "As a sop to those who consider hockey too rough a game for girls and young women, lacrosse is now being introduced and played in many of the schools, and is being tackled with much interest. There is certainly much more grace about lacrosse for budding womanhood, but I think the overhead and over arm work can do much harm. What do our doctors think about this?"

### **1930**

It is understood that an article was written about lacrosse at St Peter's Girls School in Adelaide as well as a predecessor of Pembroke School (Girton).

### **1931**

Men's and women's lacrosse were played under virtually the same rules, with no protective equipment, until the mid-1930s. Back in the 1930's women used men's cast-

off sticks or junior sticks. In 1931 the South Australian Lacrosse Association discussed the introduction of women's lacrosse in the state.

The *Argus newspaper* (Melbourne) reported on 11 June 1936 "Women who played lacrosse at Albert Park last Saturday believed that they were pioneers of the game as a women's sport in Melbourne but a note from Mrs Colles (formerly Miss Morris) of the Melbourne Church of England Girls Grammar School, sets the pioneering back 30 years. "In December, 1906 there was I in my sports kit, a cherished 'crosse' with which I had played for my college in England. Mrs Colles writes from Beaconsfield Upper, "I had just completed a course of training at Kingsfield Kent, now the Osterberg Physical Training College. Having had hockey firmly established at the M.C.E.G.G.S. I next turned my attention to lacrosse. I obtained 21 crosses from Canada and soon the senior girls were really keen. Among, those who played regularly and keenly at the school were the Percy sisters (now Mrs le Jeune of Western Australia and Mrs Eric Gutteridge) Vera Deakin (now Mrs T. W. White) and several others.

In another newspaper it was recorded "Mrs Colles is a strong, supporter of lacrosse as a game for girls, and there is still a possibility that it will be adopted in girls' schools in Melbourne. "For lacrosse more than for any other game except polo, I consider that training is absolutely essential." Mrs Colles says "Though to my mind it is the most strenuous, it is my first choice among all the games in which we were trained as students. We had professional coaches in England.

GIRLS WANT TO PLAY LACROSSE was the heading on page 8 of the *News* (Adelaide) on 29 July 1931

GIRLS WANT TO PLAY LACROSSE "No More Dangerous Than Hockey"

"THRILLING GAME – Several Adelaide girls are enthusiastic about the possibility of a women's lacrosse association being formed in South Australia. Some attend men's matches each week and they have developed a lacrosse complex. A letter indicating the popularity in England of this winter pastime for women, was to have been placed before the South Australian Lacrosse Association at a meeting last night. But now will not be considered probably until a meeting on 10 August. "Lacrosse is a thrilling game." said one of a group of girls that attends Adelaide matches regularly. "I do hope that we will have a chance to play it here. I do not think that it is anymore arduous than hockey or tennis or other sports that women play. Besides, it is not half so dangerous as a lot of people try to make out. I have seen very few players even slightly hurt since I have been following the game."

Another girl doubted whether there would be sufficient response to enable an association to be formed. But it should be possible to get a couple of teams going, and then other girls would soon become interested, she said. Mr. Harold Rule (manager of the interstate men's lacrosse team) said that as a result of the meeting it was probable that girls' schools and colleges would be communicated with. "Many girls do nothing in the winter, and lacrosse will fill a gap in their lives." He said. In England, according to Miss M. Lockley (Secretary of the All-England Ladies' Lacrosse Association) there are 69 clubs, with 134 girls' schools and 19 colleges affiliated, and 13 country associations. The Scottish Ladies' Lacrosse Association has been in existence for many years, that Irish and Welsh associations were formed only last year.

## 1935

An article in *The Age* on 19 July 1935 - Plans were announced yesterday by the associate general secretary of the Young Women's Christian Association, Miss E. Bennett, for the Introduction to Melbourne of a lacrosse association for girls. It is proposed to begin practice and coaching in September, and if sufficient support is forthcoming competitions will be arranged for next winter. Miss Nell Rawlins, of the Y.W.C.A., will act as coach. The rules of the men's game have been considerably modified for women, and a lighter stick is used. Those interested in this project are invited to attend a meeting at the Y.W.C.A. on next Tuesday evening to arrange coaching.

## 1936

WOMEN'S SPORTS. (1936, March 26) - *The Age* -Lacrosse association to be formed.

With a view to the organization of a Victorian women's lacrosse association, the sports department of the Young Women's Christian Association has sent out a circular to a large number of women's summer sports organizations asking for co-operation. It is pointed out that this form of sport has been played overseas and in other Australian states for a number of years. There are in Melbourne several woman lacrosse players with an expert knowledge of the game as played in English schools and clubs, all of whom are willing to give coaching. The game is a very modified form of the men's game, and is strongly recommended as an excellent winter game for girls and women. The teams consist of twelve players each, and only a small outlay is necessary, sticks costing only from 12/6 to 15/.

The circular is being sent to athletic groups, business houses, cricket and swimming associations and schools, and provision is being made for individuals to join up. If sufficient Interest is taken in the move coaching will be available to all teams, and a meeting will be arranged to form an association, and arrange such matters as equipment, grounds, etc..Enquiries should be addressed to Miss E. Clydesdale, c/o Y.W.C.A , CO Russell-street, Melbourne.

On 28 March 1936, in *The Australasian* "AND NOW LACROSSE.-Women have invaded another of man's activities on the sporting-field. It is likely that the first women's lacrosse match to be played in Victoria will be held at Williamstown. Several women's clubs are now being formed."

Where are the lacrosse players? Lacrosse, it seems, has no appeal to the average Victorian woman. Or is it, perhaps, that she has no inclination to try it ? Twice have efforts been made - in October, 1935, and again in February last - to establish a Victorian women's lacrosse association, but they have met with no response. It seems rather a pity that this game, so popular as a sport for women in England, should not be given a trial here, especially as there are experienced players ready to give their services and knowledge to teach it, but apparently the games which find favor with women and girls are only those they already know. Valiant efforts have been made to introduce the sport here, and perhaps another year — it is too late to do anything this

season—the promoters will be rewarded with success, after the idea has had more lime to "catch on."

Women's Sports LACROSSE INTRODUCED. (19 May 1936) "Modified Form of Game"

It was decided last night, at a meeting at the Y.W.C.A., to form a women's lacrosse association, and that the first practice should be on May 30, if possible.

Applications have been received from enough players to form two teams. "Lacrosse as played by women is a very modified form of the game played by men," said Miss Nell Rawlins, who has played in England and who, with Miss Ellis, will coach the players.

This new game for women has the support of Miss L. C. Mills, who has been the founder of many women's sports in Victoria, and of Miss Clydesdale. A meeting to form the association will be held at the Y.W.C.A. on Monday evening.

22 May 1936 - If ever an association deserved success it is surely the proposed Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association. For months the organizer, Miss Clydesdale, of the Y.W.C.A., has struggled to bring this game before sportswomen of the state, even to the extent of organising exhibition matches, securing equipment and the like. Now at long last it looks as though her determination is to be rewarded. A most successful meeting was held at the Y.W.C.A. last Monday night, at which it was definitely decided to form a state association, and at a special meeting next Monday the association therefore will be officially formed. At Williamstown there is already one complete team, and another is under the guidance of Miss Clydesdale. Miss Ellis, of P.L.C., and Miss Rawlins, also of the Y.W.C.A., are two of the most ardent supporters the young association possesses, and they have agreed to accept the responsibility of training and teaching the girls. Miss Ellis has a copy of the book of rules adopted by the English Women's Lacrosse Association, and describes it as a modified version of the game played by the men.

In England and America this sport has become most popular, and only recently a team of English coaches was invited to America to instruct, and several international matches between these countries have been arranged. Last year the English team was the victor, and cables tell us that they are likely to repeat the success this year, for they are playing in fine style. They recently defeated Scotland in a most convincing manner, the score being twelve goals to one.

Women's Activities in Sport. 29 May 1936 in The Advertiser (Adelaide) - 'Women's Activities in Sport - Conducted By LOIS QUARRELL - Fresh Fields To Conquer Women In Baseball And Lacrosse

Winter baseball and lacrosse associations for sportswomen have been formed in Victoria, and the question has arisen as to whether South Australian women will seriously consider these two sports in the near future. Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria play baseball as a summer sport, and a strong organization, the All-Australian Women's Baseball Association, controls the game in these states. Interstate matches are played each year, and there is also the possibility of an international visit from either Canada, America or Japan in 1939. Miss Dorothy Bailey, who is well known

to Adelaide Y.W.C.A. members, started the Victorian organization. At present she is at the Perth association, and has promised her cooperation in forming a women's baseball association there. It now rests with South Australia and Tasmania to co-operate and form a complete all-Australian organization. Early this year the Victorian authorities decided to form a winter association, and the idea was met with great enthusiasm by Victorian sports girls. Girl cricketers, athletes, and summer baseball players attended the first meeting on May 4, and last Saturday six teams took part in the opening matches of the Victorian Women's Winter Baseball Association.

Women Try Lacrosse - Following this is an announcement that a meeting was held at the Melbourne Y.W.C.A. on Monday night to complete arrangement for the formation of a women's lacrosse association. Miss E. Clydesdale of the Melbourne YWCA is in charge of the organisation, and two full teams are expected to give demonstrations within the next two months. The Victorian Men's Lacrosse Association has promised its whole-hearted support in the venture.

Australian sports girls were first introduced to lacrosse at the Y.W.C.A. sports conference held at Mount Lofty last September, when Miss N. Rawlins, who has played lacrosse in England and will be one of the Victorian coaches, demonstrated the same. It was felt then, that it would be popularized by Australian sportswomen in the near future, and the Y.W.C.A. sports secretaries were keenly interested. The game as played by women is a modified version of the men's lacrosse, and is considered in England and America to be as excellent, health-giving pastime for girls.

Expense A Bar - When asked this week whether South Australia would fall into line with Victoria and organize women's baseball and lacrosse associations, the sports secretary of the Adelaide Y.W.C.A, Miss Anne Stanton, said that the first thing to consider would be the number of players required for a team — 12 for lacrosse and nine for baseball. Melbourne, with its bigger population, has the advantage over Adelaide in this respect. Another serious problem, particularly with lacrosse, would be the expense. Many Adelaide girls play basketball because of the small amount of expenditure involved (a basketball may be purchased for 7/6, and the initial outlay on poles is reasonable). Lacrosse sticks cost anything from 22/6 to 63/.

However, Miss Stanton would be pleased for any girl interested in these sports to get in touch with the Y.W.C.A. She thinks that baseball would appeal to women cricketers who wished to keep in training for the summer season. Those who doubt the ability of girls as pitchers and catchers have only to see a first-class women's cricket match to be fully convinced that women will make a success of this same.

8 June 1936 in *The Argus* - "WOMEN'S LACROSSE was played at Albert Park on Saturday for the first time in Melbourne." Vigorous play in a women's lacrosse game at Albert Park, when teams representing YWCA and Williamstown, were practicing."



A high-flying Williamstown girl in action in the women's lacrosse practice match at Albert Park between Y.W.C.A. and Williamstown teams. “



Representatives of Williamstown and Y.W.C.A. women's lacrosse clubs attended a meeting of the newly formed association at the Y.W.C.A. last evening. Affiliation was formally given to the two clubs, and it was decided to continue practices and to give an exhibition on 20 September. It is expected that by this date a large number of girls will be able to attend, as winter sports will be almost concluded. Office bearers- elected were: President, Miss L. C. Mills; joint honorary secretaries: Miss Ellis and Miss N. Rawlins; honorary treasurer, Miss J. Newhouse (W'town).

The newly formed Victorian Womens' Lacrosse Association has arranged an exhibition match to be played on the sport ground of Lauriston Girls School, Huntingtower Road, Malvern on Saturday afternoon beginning at 2pm. The teams have been chosen from YWCA and Williamstown players who have been playing practice games throughout the winter. The exhibition teams are: -

Navy Blue- M Hall (first home) J Miller (second home) A. Grimmett (third home), F. Cockcroft (right attack) P Hicks (left attack wing), M. Alexander (centre), J. Newhouse (right defence wing) E. Ellis (left defence wing) B. Newhouse (third man) J. Mott (cover point), B. Hick (cover) J. Reece (goal).

Royal Blue- J. Temple (First home) L. Hansford (Second base) J. Cathie (Third base) D. Hick (Right attack) G. Geddie (Left attack wing) N. Rawlins (Centre), L. Saker (Right defence wing:) M. Johnson (Left defence wing) R. Harland (Third man), D. Scarce (Cover point), M. Banton (Point) and N. Stack (Goal).



(NOTE: the B. Hick is probably Betty Hick (>Ferris), the L. Saker is Lorna Rolley

28 September 1936 in *The Age* (Melbourne) - Interesting Exhibition Match.


The first organised women's lacrosse match in Victoria was played on Saturday at Lauriston Girl's School. It was the outcome of months of preparation by a number of enthusiasts who have been trying to establish the game. The attendance was somewhat disappointing owing to the unpleasant weather conditions. The game was a considerably modified form of men's lacrosse, and any doubts as to its being too rough or dangerous for women were quickly dispelled. The teams, which were drawn from the Y.W.C.A. and Williamstown clubs, included five players with overseas experience, and the standard of the game generally did credit to the girls. Miss N. Rawlins captained the Royal Blue team, and Miss Ellis the Dark Blues. Result: — Dark Blues 8 goals d. Royal Blues 1. Goal Throwers — Dark Blues: M. Alexander (3), Peggy Hick, A. Grimmett, J. Miller. M. Hall, F. Cockroft. Royal Blues: J. Temple.

With the following five players on the field the only players with previous experience - N. Rawlins, E. Ellis. M. Alexander, M. Barton, and B. Barwell, the match proved a very fair exposition of the game. Navy Blue team defeated Royal Blue by 8 goals to 1. The players were:-

Navy Blue- E. Ellis, M. Alexander, M. Hall, J. Miller, A. Grimmett, F. Cockroft, P. Hick, J. and B. Newhouse, J Mott, B. Hick, J. Reece.

Royal Blue – N. Rawlins, M. Barton, B. Barwell, J. Temple. L. Hansford, J. Cathie, D. Hick, G. Gebbie, L. Saker, R. Harland, D. Scarce, N. Stark.

Let's Talk Of  
**Interesting  
People**



—Brooklyn.

**Lacrosse For Women**

LACROSSE has been added to the long list of sports for women in this country, its pioneer being Miss Rawlins, director of sport and physical culture for the Y.W.C.A., Melbourne.

Miss Rawlins, who is a graduate of Bedford Physical Training College (England), has had a varied sporting career. She was an Irish international hockey player, and also English territorial hockey player for five years; territorial lacrosse player for North of England; played cricket for Gloucester and tennis for Lancashire; is also proficient swimmer and life-saver.

“Lacrosse For Women - LACROSSE has been added to the long list of sports for women in this country, its pioneer being Miss Rawlins, director of sport and physical culture for the Y.W.C.A., Melbourne.

Miss Rawlins, who is a graduate of Bedford Physical Training College (England), has had a varied sporting career. She was an Irish international hockey player, and also English territorial hockey player for five years; territorial lacrosse player for North of England; played cricket for Gloucester and tennis for Lancashire; is also a proficient swimmer and life-saver.”

3rd May 1937 The Argus

“Further progress was shown by the players. In the YWCA and Williamstown lacrosse team which met on Saturday. Owing to influenza there was not a full attendance of all

players, and a system of inter-changing was used. The best players were Dorothy Hicks (YWCA) and Laura Handford (Williamstown).”

WOMEN'S SPORTS. (1937, May 17). *The Argus* (Melbourne)

Lacrosse Practice -A practice game of lacrosse was played on Saturday at Newport. The Williamstown team was captained by D Hicks who played in the centre. Y W C A was captained by M. Barton with R. Hardwell centre. The best players for Williamstown were D. Hicks and B. Hardwell. For YWCA F. Cockrin and M. Frith.

There will be a meeting of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association at the YWCA on Monday, May 24 Exhibition matches will be arranged then.

WOMEN'S SPORTS. (1937, May 25). *The Age*

Lacrosse Meeting. A special meeting of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association was held on 24 May 1937 at the Y.W.C.A. last night to arrange the first actual competition matches. It was decided to play two games at the Y.W.C.A. ground at Albert Park on 5th and 10th June. Full teams from Williamstown and Y.W.C.A. will take part, and it is expected that all regular equipment will be used. These games will be the first official lacrosse matches to be played in Melbourne by women, and it is hoped that they will be the forerunner of a series of regular competitions. It was also decided to play an exhibition match towards the end of June. Arrangements for this will be made at an early date.

7 June 1937 *The Argus* (Melbourne)

First Lacrosse Match

YWCA defeated Williamstown 13 goals to 6 in the first match arranged by the newly formed Women's Lacrosse Association. Goal throwers for the winners were M. Frood (4) M. Alexander (3), F. Cockcroft (3) M. Barton (2) Y. Murphy and for Williamstown M. Dunstan (2), B. Newhouse, T. Hicks, R. Miller, J. Newhouse.

Of Interest To Sportswomen. (1937, September 10). *The Advertiser* (Adelaide) wrote

Melbourne schoolgirls play lacrosse.....

It is hoped by the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association that within a few years lacrosse will be an established sport for Melbourne girls. One of the most hopeful signs is that Presbyterian Ladies' College has formed a team and the sport has been included in the curriculum of the new physical education course at The Melbourne University. Lacrosse is not a new game for Melbourne girls. as those who played in the first teams at Melbourne Church of England Girls' Grammar are now middle-aged women. Miss M. Thomson led two keen teams there in 1909 and the girls shared her enthusiasm. Unfortunately the game lapsed through lack of inter-school competition.”

An article in the Melbourne Argus (26 April 1937) on Women's Sports -CRICKET FINALS DECIDED - Lacrosse at Albert Park -

“Two nine a side teams selected from the YWCA and Williamstown clubs played a lacrosse practice match at Albert Park on Saturday. They were captained by Peggy Hick (Williamstown) and Freda Cockram (YWCA). Both teams showed considerable improvement and better understanding of the game. The best players were Rhonda Miller (Williamstown) Lilian Wilson (YWCA) and Dorothy Hick (Williamstown). Miss Ellis coached the girls.”

## 1938

Women's Sports Lacrosse Plans. (1938, April 13). *The Argus* (Melbourne)

At the annual meeting of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association held at the YWCA last night, the following office-bearers were elected: Miss L. C. Mills (president), Miss N. Rawlins (vice president), Miss J. Newhouse (secretary). Miss L. Hansford (treasurer). The growing popularity of this branch of sport for women as indicated by the addition of two new clubs this year - University (composed mainly of students taking the physical education course), and Presbyterian Ladies' College, which is adopting the game as a school sport. PLC will not be available for matches until the second school term, and it has been decided to begin matches between the two new clubs and the former ones- Y.W.C.A. and Williamstown-on Saturday June 4. Coaching practice will start on April 23, and for all games a common ground at Albert Park is to be used. Clubs are asked to send their affiliation and registration fees to the secretary by April 30.

It is also hoped that clubs will nominate two representatives willing to attend lectures for umpires and undergo an umpires' examination.

The next council meeting on Monday, May 9.at 6 30 p m. will be followed at 7 pm by a lecture on lacrosse by Miss Rawlins.

WOMAN LACROSSE PLAYERS. (10 May 1938) *The Age* - International Match ?

Several members of the American women's hockey team which will visit Melbourne this month are also keen lacrosse players. This prompted the council of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association at a meeting last night to Issue an invitation to the visitors to play In an exhibition match. If the invitation is accepted the match will probably be played at the University ground, and schools will be invited to attend. The P.L.C. team, which is new this season, has been granted coaching matches in June, and will begin competitive play in July, The draw will be: — June 4: Y.W.C.A. v. Williamstown, University v. P.L.C. (coaching). June 11: Williamstown v. University, Y.W.C.A. v. P.L.C. (coaching). June 18: University v. Y.W.C.A., Williamstown v. P.L.C. (coaching. July 2: P.L.C. v. Y.W.C.A., Williamstown v. University July 9: University v. P.L.C., Y.W.C.A. v. Williamstown. July 16: Williamstown v. P.L.C., Y.W.C.A. v. University. July 23: State trials July 30: Victoria v.The Rest.

Women's Lacrosse Match. (1938, May 24). *The Age* - “Women's International Lacrosse Match”.

The American women's hockey team, which left yesterday by the Monterey, was seen in a different role at Melbourne University during the morning, when it met a combined

team from the newly formed Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association. From the Americans the Victorian players learnt much of this fascinating game. Excellent passing and good team work despite the fact that they had not before played as a lacrosse combination, gave to the visitors a victory, five goals to three. The Americans were led by the manageress, Miss Gable, and the Victorians by Miss N. Howe."

15 May 1938) *Sporting Globe* (Melbourne) -WOMEN IN SPORT -Vigor Shown -.By "ATALANTA"

"The Americans showed themselves to be versatile sportswomen on Monday when seven, including three U.S. international lacrosse players, Helena Wheeler, Sue Cross and Gertrude Hooper, played an exhibition lacrosse game against a Victorian team at the University. The Americans won 5-3. Actually the time of the match was too short to be of any great benefit to the local players, who are almost new to the game in comparison, but the fact that the visitors "put their name" to lacrosse here, should increase the interest the official opening of the Victorian women's lacrosse season at Albert Park on Saturday"

1 June 1938 *Sporting Globe* (Melbourne)

"Four lacrosse teams will meet on Saturday in the first regular weekly competitions arranged by the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association. After the appearance of several American hockey players in a lacrosse game, and their enthusiasm for this sport expressed during their brief stay in Melbourne, lacrosse is attracting more attention, especially in regard to its possibilities as an ideal winter team game for schoolgirls, The draw for Saturday's games is:- Y.W.C.A. v. Williamstown., P. L.C. v. University."

WOMEN'S SPORTS. (1938, June 4). *The Argus*

"WOMEN'S SPORTS

Lacrosse Today

Lacrosse matches will begin to-day with two new teams competing.

The new teams are Presbyterian Ladies' College, which is now taking lacrosse instead of hockey as a winter game, and University, which is including lacrosse in its sports curriculum for the first time. They will play each other at P L C.

The other two teams, V W C A. and Williamstown, will play at Albert Park, with Miss Nancy Howe as umpire Williamstown has most of last year's players, but YWC.A. has only four - Freda Cockroft (Captain), Lorna Hansford, Mary Hughes, and Irene Pengelly.

Women's Sports LACROSSE BEGINS (1938, June 6) LACROSSE BEGINS – Williamstown Succeeds

The lacrosse season for women opened on Saturday when last year's teams Williamstown and YWCA met at Albert Park. Later in the season Presbyterian Ladies

College and the University physical education students both of whom have adopted the game only this year will participate.

Play of a high standard was seen in the Williamstown v YMCA match, each team adopting a short passing game which achieved better results YWCA played two short which accounted to some extent for its overwhelming defeat.

Results - Williamstown 12 (J. Newhouse 8, B. Rowe 2, N. Simpson, R. Miller) d 1 YWCA 1 (M. Froot).

Best Players-D. Hick, L Saker, R. Miller, J. Newhouse (Williamstown), F Cockroft, I. Pengelly, V. Wellington, L. Hansford (Y W C A ).”

INTER-STATE CARNIVAL. (1938, July 4). The Age“LACROSSE Williamstown was again successful in the match arranged by the newly formed Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association against the Y.W.C.A. team. The result was:— Williamstown **6** (J. Newhouse 3, B. Newhouse 2, P. Hicks 1) d. Y.W.C.A. **2** (I. Ferguson, F. Cobcroft). Best players for Williamstown were J. Newhouse, D. Hicks, L. Saker and for Y.W.C.A. F. Cobcroft, R. Cordner, R. Joynson.”

1938, July 29 *The Age*

“Notes of Interest. Encouraged by the success of the match between the members of the American hockey team and the Victorian players, the members of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association are endeavouring to arrange a match with the English hockey team during their stay in Melbourne next week. Miss Rawlins is endeavoring to get in touch with the girls in Sydney, in the hope that the English girls will play lacrosse, the Victorian association is selecting a representative team tomorrow.”

WILL WOMEN HAVE OWN OLYMPIADS?.(1938, August 3). *Sporting Globe* (Melbourne,

#### LACROSSE MATCH EXPECTED

As the English women's hockey team includes many women who are also keen lacrosse players, the Women's Lacrosse Association hopes to arrange a match against an English side sometime this week. A representative Victorian team was chosen on Saturday as follows:—Bess Meehan (goal), I. Pengelly (point). Myrtle Craddock (cover point ), Rhona Miller (third man). B. Gray-Wilson (right defence wing). N. Simpson (LDW) P. Cornder (left attack wing), Dot Hick (centre), F.Cockroft (third home) Peggy Hick (second home), Joy Newhouse (first home), K. Stranghan (reserve).

WOMEN'S LACROSSE MATCH. (1938, August 27). The Age.

“WOMEN'S LACROSSEMATCH.

A women's lacrosse match between Williamstown and Y.W.C.A. will be played at Albert Park, near the boat sheds, at 3 p.m. today. This will be the final match of the season, and will take the form of a demonstration match."

## 1939

SPORTSWOMEN AND WINTER GAMES. (3 March 1939). *The Age*

"Physical Fitness Council - Representation for sportswomen on the State National Fitness Council is now an established fact with the appointment of Miss Nell Rawlins. Miss Rawlins, who is the physical director of the Y.W.C.A., was nominated by the Victorian Women's Amateur Sports Council after a vote had been taken among sporting organizations affiliated with the organization. She is also a member of the Physical Education Board at Melbourne University, and is well known among sportswomen in all sections of the community. She is an international lacrosse player, having represented England, where she received her training before coming to Melbourne, and founded the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association, which is gradually growing under her direction. The preliminary meeting of this association will take place on March 20 at the Y.W.C.A."

Women's Sport. (1939, March 22). *The Argus* (Melbourne) - "Lacrosse Season

When members of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association met last night at the YWCA it was decided that play would begin in the first week after Easter."

Women's Lacrosse. (1939, March 22). *The Age*

A preliminary meeting of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association was held last night at the Y.W.C.A., when plans for the coming season were arranged. The annual meeting was fixed for April 19. The association has been fortunate in gaining as a **player Miss Margaret Squires**, daughter of General Squires. Miss Squires played for the West Territorial, England, and was also secretary of this section of the English association. The English association has decided to alter its constitution to allow for the affiliation of the Victorian body. It is hoped that both Queensland and New South Wales associations will be playing this season.

Women's Sport. (20 April 1939). *The Argus* - "LACROSSE MEETING

At the annual meeting of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association last night Miss L C Mills was re-elected president and Miss Joyce Newhouse honorary secretary. Although Y W C A and Williamstown are the only clubs which have applied to play this season it is hoped that University will enter before the matches begin on May 13."

## 1941

SPORTSWOMEN COLLECT TO BUY ARMY TRUCKS. (1941, May 16). *The Age*

## New Lacrosse Team

In order to coach new members of the Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association, practice matches will be held tomorrow afternoon, when the season officially opens, and on each succeeding Saturday afternoon until June 21, when competitive matches will commence. A recently formed club, Eastern Suburbs, was affiliated with the association earlier this week, and members are looking forward to competing against the more experienced Williamstown players. The matches will be held on the association's grounds at Albert Park, and prospective players are invited to attend the practice games."

Women's Sports. (1941, May 19). The Age "LACROSSE"

The Victorian Women's Lacrosse Association commenced its activities with practice matches at Albert Park on Saturday afternoon. Members plan to hold their first match on June 21."

By mid 1941, war time conditions again saw the game go into recession and women's lacrosse was not played again until 1962.

1962

The Victorian Women's Amateur Lacrosse Association was formed in 1962 and the first season was undertaken with teams from Footscray, Malvern and two teams from Williamstown.

It took until 1962 for women's lacrosse in Victoria to re-commence. With support from Mal Taylor, a stalwart of the Williamstown Lacrosse Club, 4 teams were formed (Williamstown (2), Footscray and Malvern). Mrs Joy Parker (Former secretary of the Victorian Women's Amateur Lacrosse Association in the 1930's) became president of the newly reformed women's association. Footscray won the inaugural premiership, and again in 1963 and 1964, defeating Malvern in 1962 (12-1) and 1963 (18-0), and Williamstown (9-4) in 1964. Given Footscray was so dominant in the first 2 years the VWALA requested Footscray to equalize its 2 teams, to allow for a broader competition, which they did during 1964.

The SA Women's Lacrosse Association was founded in 1961 and the first competition games played in 1962. The first teams in the competition were Brighton and Plympton High Schools, Kinkajous and Wallabies.





### **Plympton High School lacrosse team 1963**

Back Row L-R: Bergit Kalish, Vicki Tomlin, Barb Jacobs, Helen Duke, Carol Le Vere, Paula Stockham, Stella Manfield, Elizabeth Kretschmer

Front Row L-R: Julie Thomas, Judy Fountain, Olga Wilczynckyj, Linda Evans, Corrie Thyssen

With lacrosse sticks in Australia in short supply, the South Australian Women's lacrosse Association sold 12 women's sticks to the Victorian association for £4. Circa 1962 Joy Parker and Mal Taylor combined to take out a loan to purchase the first batch of wooden sticks from Canada, which were sold at a slight profit to enable more sticks to be purchased. In South Australia sticks were imported from England with free transport courtesy of a personal contact in the Air Force.

In 1962, Mal Taylor noted an advertisement in an Adelaide newspaper for women to play lacrosse. Mr Taylor used this as an avenue to create an interstate match. The first interstate match took place in August 1962 between SA and Victoria (At Norwood Oval in Adelaide), which saw Victoria take the honours (10-7) and the Australian Women's Lacrosse Council formed under the guidance of Mrs Joy Parker (Nee Newhouse). Mrs Parker became the inaugural president following the first interstate match between Victoria and South Australia, with Mrs Titter appointed secretary and Mrs Lorna Rolley (Nee Saker) appointed treasurer. Joy Parker went on to become the first Patron and Life Member of both the VWALA and the AWLC.



Pictured above is a photo of the inaugural South Australia vs Victoria match played at Norwood Oval in 1962. While we are not positive we believe the woman with the ball is Barb Kohler, being pursued by Victoria's Judy Mohr, with Jan Kohler to the front right of the photo. The referee was Allan Vial (Former SA player and manager of the 1959 SA and Australian men's team). The women in the background are Margaret Cleggett (left), and on the right in the background we believe the Victorians are Gail Minniece and Jan Smith. The match was played at the same venue as the men's senior game between South Australia and Victoria. Barb Kohler may have been only 14 at the time but it was not uncommon in those days to have players as young as 14 in the women's state team as the game had just begun in both states and thus there were no experienced women playing and the recruiting grounds were normally the secondary schools and friends of the male players.

An important development, for which the Victorian Amateur Lacrosse Association could claim no direct credit, was the formation of a Women's Lacrosse Association in South Australia and Victoria. As was the mode of the times, the men's and women's associations were quite separate and autonomous, but the V.A.L.A would give any assistance it could. The success of such women's associations would certainly increase the potential spectator support of interstate and international games.

Because of their numbers and success Footscray was required to enter two teams in 1964, and again won the A grade grand final against Williamstown 9-4. Footscray was

also required to split their two teams to ensure that the top 12 players were spread evenly among the two teams, so that there wasn't a dominant team and a secondary team.

Footscray also travelled to Adelaide in 1964 and played a match against the Brighton Kinkajous (Named after a small obscure South American rainforest mammal). The two teams are shown below.



Back row: Meg Pertzelt (F), Pauline Langford (BK), Lyn McPherson (F), Barbara Kohler (BK), Kendrea Pearson (F), Jenny Jones (BK).

Standing row: Judy Jefferies (BK), Pat McAllister (F), Margaret Ennis (BK), Cathy McLeod (F), Anne Fleeson (BK), Dot Ford (F).

Seated: Julie Hepple (F), Glynis Jones (BK), Anne Rowe (F), Janice Kohler (BK), Margaret Cleggett (F), Avril Jones (BK), Maureen Preston (F), Christine Penglaze (BK).

Front Row: Judy Mohr (F), Jan Jones (BK), Di Harwood (F), Libby Armstrong (BK), Neilma McPherson (F), Teena Bennett (BK).

Melbourne hosted the interstate match in 1963, which was played at ? and was won by SA (6-4).

In 1964 the interstate rivalry continued with Adelaide hosting the match, which was again played at Norwood Oval, with the match won by SA (6-2).

The first national women's championships were played in Perth in 1965 between South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia, with South Australia defeating Victoria 15-4 to take out the inaugural Shaw Trophy.



Back row: Helen Stevens, Jan Brinkworth, Barb Kohler and Chris Jenkins

Centre row: Judy Fountain, Paula Stockham, Lyn Veenendaal, Pam Tomlin, Geri Phillis & Lorraine Attenborough

Front row: David Born (Coach), Pat Forrester, Sandra Oxley (Captain), Kate Jennings (Manageress), Elizabeth Armstrong, Avril Jones and unknown umpire

An important development of 1966 was that the men's interstate sub-committee was directed to negotiate with the Victorian Women's Amateur Lacrosse Association to assist in conducting a cabaret dance on the evening of the interstate match. It was later reported to the Executive Committee that a meeting had been held with the ladies association, who were pleased to give their full assistance. This they did graciously and

effectively, as is demonstrated by the Executive Committee's making a donation of \$30 in recognition of its valuable assistance and support to the activities of the interstate sub-committee.

There were ancillary activities and responsibilities. At the Executive Committee (3 February 1967) a sub-committee was formed to conduct social activities. It was to consist of 6 members, with power to co-opt. Among its personnel were the state managers and coaches, 2 members of the Victorian Women's Amateur Lacrosse Association, and 2 executive members. It decided that a cabaret ball should be held, and conducted by a sub-committee to be appointed from the general committee. The Greenball Club became involved in the social program, and reported (7 April 1967) that the St. Kilda Town Hall had been booked for the cabaret ball on a Thursday, the precise date not yet having been fixed. The function must have been a success, and at the Executive Committee meeting (4 December 1967) a verbal report was received from the Greenball Club, which was then asked to make arrangements for a similar function in 1968, and authorized the treasurer to advance the booking fee. The ladies association had been offered 25 cents for every ticket they sold up to 200; any number over 200 would earn 50 cents. It is pleasing to read of this increased social activity, and especially so to read of the co-operation between the men's and ladies associations.

## **1969**

In 1969 Australia experienced its first international visit by teams from overseas. Teams from both Great Britain (the British Pioneers) and the USA visited and played a Test Series, in Perth WA, against the first Australian Women's Lacrosse Team to be selected. These teams toured Victoria and South Australia playing test matches, then travelled on to Perth to play a mini "World Tri-Nations Series."

This tour to Australia by these two teams played an enormous role in the progression of women's lacrosse in Australia. Up until then we had not actually seen the women's game played by anyone other than ourselves and in what we perceived to be the right way. We were certainly in for a really good lesson in how to play the game with such a fantastic demonstration of stick skills and player positioning and this enabled Australian female lacrosse players to re-think all aspects of the game.



Back row (Left to right):Lauris Millar, Gail Williams, Kendrea Pearson, Margie Watmuff, Barbara Kohler, Margaret Kitson, Geraldine Phillis, Barbara Mattson, Dawn Brewer, Margaret Cleggett (Coach)  
Front row: Libby Good, Helen Stevens, Jean Bain, Pat Forrester (Manageress), Vice Captain Anne Rowe, Pauline Kennedy, Lyn Mc Pherson.

## 1972

The 1972 team was selected immediately after Australian Championships in Adelaide in July 1970, and many of the original selections dropped out for various reasons over the

two years prior to the teams departure in March 1972. The Victorian team members trained together at Royal Park, with Anne Rowe taking much of the training. SA members probably trained with Barb Mattson taking charge. (WA had one representative in the final team, and we understand a few selected dropped out).

We understand the tour was largely funded by the players,, it cost approximately \$2,000/player, which in those days was enough for a deposit on an average house approx \$15000 to \$16000. International airfares were very expensive at that time.

The first Australian women's lacrosse team to travel overseas departed Melbourne on Monday, 6 March 1972, returning two months later on 5 May - very different to trips taken by national teams today. The tour was dubbed the "Women's Weekly World Tour" because it covered so many different places. Added into the Tour were quick stopovers in Europe – the same adage that exists now: you are travelling a long way and its costs a lot of money, so get your money's worth out of it.

Maybe it was considered a "once in a lifetime" trip, so stops in Europe for training and sightseeing were included. When the game schedule finished in the US, the team headed to the west coast for tourist time, adding Tahiti, Fiji and Noumea as short stay stopovers on the way home.

The basic itinerary was as follows:

7 March - Coached at Hong Kong University, then played against their men's team, followed by a 12 course dinner (Which emphasized the importance of the dinner) held in their honour by the University men's team.

8 March - Played an exhibition game amongst themselves at The Diocesan Girls School in Kowloon.

10 March – Reception early afternoon at Australian Ambassador's residence in Rome, with only the Ambassador's wife and wives of second and third secretaries present.

12 March – Arrived Munich for sightseeing and training – a light cover of snow and low temperature meant our 72 training style - light warm up followed by star jumps etc, added to the injury list.

14 March 9pm flight to Paris – stayed until 17 March when the team boarded plane for Glasgow Scotland.

17 March met by the Scottish Ladies Association at Paisley Airport and bused to Largs to stay at Government Sports Camp.

18<sup>th</sup> March – First international at Largs against the Scottish team, all very nervous – Lost 3 – 13.

19 March bus to Leeds

21<sup>st</sup> March Harrogate College Tournament - First game against Midland lost 3 – 12

Second game v British Universities lost 3 – 7

Third game v The North County lost 3 – 7

23 March - Played England at Manchester (Hurlingham Park) lost 5 -13

25 March –Australia v England Reserves at Merton Abbey in Clubs & Colleges Tournament -lost 2 – 8

29 March - Australia v Wales 5 – 4 First win. Best players by umpires: Helen Stevens, Barbara Mattson & Kendrea Pearson.

Easter break - Train from Victoria Station to Dover and then ferry to Amsterdam via Oostende and Brussels.

6 April - Quadrangle Tournament, HarpendenHerts, just north of London

Aust v East County 6 – 5 - Second win

Aust v West County lost 0 – 3

Aust v South County 2 – 2 draw

8 April - Aust v England lost 3 – 15 at Hurlingham Park

10 April - Travelled to USA

11 April - Aust v Philadelphia Colleges 0 – 12. This was a very different game – not the English style of game.

At one stage the Americans played all three homes (attacks) behind their attacking goal, very much the style of men's lacrosse, and played in a boisterous or rough fashion. Soon after the game the President of USWLA apologized to our team for the umpiring standard and advised we would not play in such a rough game for the remainder of U.S. tour. Helmets were worn by the college players and it was a night game!

13 April - Aust v Philadelphia No.2 team Draw 6 – 6

16 April - Aust v U.S. Reserves 5 – 11

16 April - Aust v Jersey 10 – 0 Third win!

Both games were played at Sanford School, Delaware

21 April - Aust v New England 9 - 6 fourth win! -Played at Concord Academy Boston

23 April - Australia v USA 6 – 14 - played at Greenwich, Connecticut.



This game was the last of the tour, the score was 2 – 12 at halftime, and the team gave it everything to outscore the U.S. in second half by 4 goals to 2.

The team finished with four wins, one International win over Wales, county win over East and a draw with South. In the U.S. wins over Jersey and New England, but the team learnt so much on that trip.



Front row (Left to right) Margot Taylor, Donna Appleby, Meryl Howie, Geraldine Phillis, Kay O'Loughlin, Elizabeth Cheevers, Ann Rowe, Meredith Fowler, Anne Fowler, Paula Stockholm (partly obscured), Dalma Hannen (also partly obscured) Pam Rolley, Pat Farrell & Helen Stevens.

Steps of plane: Barbara Mattson, Denise O'Connor, Vivienne Parker, Kendrea Pearson.



Above is women's lacrosse equipment for sale in England during the 1972 tour.

## **1975**

The year 1975 was designated as an International Women's Year. The Victorian ladies association now consisted of 15 teams. They played interstate matches between Victoria and South Australia. When the Victorian men's team visited Hobart in 1975 to play S.A., the women's association also sent a team to play South Australia, thus adding a further attraction to the event. The program contained a short explanation of the principal rules of the game. The men played according to the latest rules adopted by the International Lacrosse Federation, which used 10 players on the ground, and 6 substitutes. The ladies retained 12 players and played according to the old English and Australian rules as they had been before the visit to America.

### Victoria

Val Orr, Barb Cheevers, Heather Bassett, Diana Cornwall, Marie Fitzpatrick, Elaine Matthews, Gay Meyer, Jane Moree, Elizabeth Muhleissen, Francis Pepper, Leonie Parker, Mary Seyfang, Marie Weatherill, Helen Davies (Coach), Margaret Cleggett (Manageress)

### South Australia

Judy Window, Pam Chambers, Helen Donaghay, Diana Cornwall, Jane Flavel, Julia Forrest, Anne Gorman, Mary Herbert, Diane Hoban, Noni McMichael, Rae Martin, Christine Meredith, Helen Rogers, Robin Wilkins, Pam Withers, Barbara Mattson (Coach), June Oliphant (Manageress).

The game was won by South Australia 8 goals to 3.

A side-effect of the celebrations for Women's Year was the proposal by Melbourne City Council to spend \$500,000 on improving Royal Park. It is true that the improvements

were mainly directed towards women's activities, but anything that would make a rather dull area of parkland more attractive, would benefit all. Facilities would be provided for netball, hockey, lacrosse, athletics and softball. A tree planting scheme would be undertaken to reduce the power of the wind, which, as Melbournians know, can be severe in areas north of the Yarra. Although the improvements would provide little direct benefit to Victorian lacrosse, the scheme showed that public bodies, such as the Melbourne City Council were beginning to realize the importance of sporting activities for the welfare of its citizens.

The Glenroy women's team also visited Hobart that year and played against a team from Hobart. The ALC commented on the development in the game in Tasmania, firstly at the junior level, and expressed the hope that they could bring a competitive side from Tasmania to take part in the national championships.

The teacher training section of the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education had been playing, teaching and demonstrating the game for over two years. Four teams of women played regularly, and there was a strong increase in numbers. Male teachers and some friends trained regularly and played demonstration games. Demonstration games and introductory coaching was given in eight local schools. Many trainee teachers acquainted with lacrosse were now holding positions in local schools.

The VLA was anxious to help physical education teachers in country towns to promote lacrosse. The big problem here was to find responsible adults who would make themselves responsible for formation and administration of clubs. They had learned from their metropolitan experience that adult support was necessary for the adequate functioning of junior clubs. Teachers such as Helen Davies, posted as physical education teacher to Castlemaine had toured the United States as vice-captain in 1972. She established a club in 1972 and competed in the metropolitan pennant at Royal Park. Though credit for this venture must lie with the women's association, its formation showed that there was a strong possibility of establishing lacrosse in country towns.

## **1977**

The Tasmanian women's association came into being in 1977, and sent a team to Adelaide. Unfortunately, Australia did not select its next national team until 1977. This team travelled to the USA and played 14 matches, winning 6 of them.

## **1978**

Geelong Advertiser, 29 July 1978, contained a long article on lacrosse in which The, amongst other detail stated: "In recent years in Geelong there has been a growing interest in the game and this year the movers were made to form firstly a women's team, and later a men's team. Response to the moves has been so good it is possible Geelong could be the first provincial centre to have its own competition..."

## 1979

A further variation in the game of lacrosse also came into prominence in 1979 - "Soft lacrosse". It was adopted largely for the advantage of the women's lacrosse association, and for the introduction of lacrosse into schools. The main difference between orthodox lacrosse and "soft lacrosse" was that body contact was banned. Not all women approved. Some club teams in South Australia and Victoria had allowed women to participate with men, which meant that female competitors could be subjected to violent body contact. Most male players disliked being put in the position of having to apply this type of force upon women. Parents of school children were reluctant to have boys subjected to the full rigours of field lacrosse. Thus "Soft lacrosse" gained significant support. Having three forms of lacrosse active in Australia made the question of championships very involved. It became evident that vital changes must be made in the whole organization of lacrosse. This was emphasized by the increasing growth of women's lacrosse, by the desirability of attracting sponsorships. The very fact of development tended to have an adverse effect on administration. For every new club affiliated meant that more delegates attended meetings, and the administration was becoming expensive and top-heavy.

The Tasmanian women's team visited Perth in 1979, and acted as hosts to Victoria and South Australia in 1979. From these achievements it is evident that Australian women's lacrosse was active in three states, and must be included in the thinking of any Commonwealth government's disposal of funds. State government sporting portfolios also must take heed of the requirements of women's lacrosse, to the benefit of lacrosse in general. (Historical details from "Lacrosse 1900, program of matches").

In Victoria, the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation made a grant of \$15,000 to be used as follows: \$9,000 – Director, \$3,000 - Information structure, \$1,000 - Coaching and instructional programs, \$500 - Courses for coaches, \$500 - Participation is "Sport for All", and \$1,000 - Men's and women's championships.

As a result of these grants, at a cocktail party on 6 March 1979, Mr Brian Dixon, Minister for the Department of Youth, Sport and Recreation announced the appointment of Mr Don Miller as development officer for lacrosse. The remaining portion of the salary was to be met by the Association, as well as such things as workers compensation, superannuation, office space and equipment, transport, administrative costs, secretarial and administrative support and opportunities to attend all relative meetings and conferences. This meant that for the first time lacrosse would have its own address, storage area for equipment, and a retail shop. Henceforth the official headquarters of lacrosse would be Lacrosse Victoria, which was directed by both the V.A.L.A and the V.W.L.A.

The shop was opened on 11 May 1979. It would carry a full range of equipment, including men's Brine and STX sticks, gloves, helmets, balls etc. For women it would carry English and American sticks. The address was 21 Waverley Road, East Malvern

and the slogan on the shop window was "Run by lacrosse for lacrosse". To have its own premises, rather than to conduct meetings, store equipment and archives in private homes was a great step forward. The men's association and the women's association co-operated in this development, the directorate consisting of Messrs Phil Humphreys and Bill Taylor and Mesdames Maria Weatherill and Sue Carroll, and the promotions officer, Mr Don Miller.

The second potential source of funds and sponsorship began to add its quota. The president of the VALA in his address to the annual general meeting emphasized that sponsorship was a contract between sponsor and the authority being sponsored. The association and clubs must repay in kind any sponsorship agreements. The appointment of the development officer was already having a dramatic effect on sponsorship. Many sponsors were connected with individual clubs and it lay with the province of clubs to attract such support. Hudson's of Caulfield, a Toyota dealership, was the major sponsor of the Caulfield Lacrosse Club. The Mobil organization provided all the necessary score sheets. The CBA made substantial contributions towards the 1979 championships, and Pub Squash Pty Ltd donated refreshments. In South Australia sponsorship was given by Gambit Direct Sales, Chess Equipment Specialists, Qantas, TAA, Attenborough's Sports Store, CBA, STX sticks through the North Park Sports Store, Don Gorman (Jeweller), and M&V Rollerdoors.

While women's lacrosse participated in the Australian men's championship program it was not the Australian women's championships.

Women's teams from California and Japan took part, along with the Australian women's squad divided into two teams, the Auscrosse Gold and Auscrosse Green, and a composite SA All-stars team.

It is difficult to obtain precise statistics as to the numbers of registered lacrosse players. SA was going through a difficult time. Equal Opportunity for women brought all sorts of problems everywhere. The VLA and VWLA had decided against amalgamation, but decided that cooperation provided a better solution. The situation in SA was a little different. A new organization was established in SA named Lacrosse South Australia, which was an amalgamation of men's and women's administration. For a little while the ALC was at a loss to know whether the old organization represented SA or whether the body newly formed and named Lacrosse South Australia Inc was the constituent member of the ALC. The matter was settled at the meeting of the ALC 27-28 March 1993, when it was noted that Lacrosse South Australia Inc should be accepted as a member of the ALC. However, it was recognized that the SALA Inc still functioned as a separate entity. Such controversies can have only a harmful effect on recruitment, and no doubt has an influence on the state figures of 1993 published by the ALC bulletin 9 (Jan 1993). This stated that an increase of 8.5% had been made over the previous year

and a total of 11.2% over the last two years. The growth in numbers by states was recorded as WA 26.8%, Victoria 21.3% and SA 4.2%.

Notable progress was made in the emerging states. In NSW significant exposure and recruiting was achieved at the Sydney Sports Expo. As a result lacrosse clubs were established in 5 communities. A successfully conducted Easter mini-classic attracted teams from Victoria and Queensland. A 16 week club competition for women was carried through. A fledgling junior club championship was organized. A regular newsletter was published. All the signs pointed to a resurgence of the game in NSW in the near future.

## **1981**

The marked increase in the level of Australia's play is shown in the goals for (122) and against (125) Australia indicating that the 8 losses were by a very small margin. This was a true indicator that the 1972 Tour was of great benefit.

In 1981 the USA toured Australia and played a 5 test series, 1 test in Perth, 2 tests in Adelaide, 1 test in Melbourne and 1 test in Hobart. For the first time Australia had a win over the USA during this test series. This was most certainly a milestone and great for lacrosse development in Australia.

## **1982**

In 1982 the first Women's World Cup of lacrosse was played at Trent Bridge Oval, Nottingham, England. Australia excelled in this event and played the U.S.A. in the final. After a level score at the end of time, extra time was needed to be played to determine the ultimate winner, which was the USA by 1 goal. This Finals match really shook the women's lacrosse world cup. Here was Australia which had so little international experience compared to the other countries who had been playing matches against each other for many years, they were – England, Scotland, Wales, USA and Canada.

Over time the sticks have gone from the wooden frames to plastic moulded head sticks (in 1982) which are much more conducive to a more versatile playing style which enabled players to play either left or right handed, or both. These plastic sticks have evolved over the years and now there are restrictions on which sticks can be used for particular competitions.

In late 1982 there was a proposal put forward in Victoria for consideration for a new competition for under 13 girls, and that each club is required to have at least 1 team, with the existing rule for an under 16 team to be maintained. The proposed under 13 section would be played under modified rules, with stick checking in any fashion not allowed, no player holding or controlling the ball for more than 5 seconds, no trapping of the ball. This proposal was adopted "In principle" by the VWALA in October 1982 with further details to be thrashed out at later meetings.

## 1986

The next World Cup in 1986 saw a reversal of the 1982 outcome with Australia winning the final to bring that wonderful trophy back home. There are many stories around about how that World Cup trophy travelled back to Australia (no travel box provided as the USA expected to win), and then its travels within Australia.

The team and officials arrived at Swathmore College, Philadelphia on 12 June.

Day 1            Australia defeated Wales 11-1

Day 2            Australia defeated Canada 3-1

Day 3            Australia defeated USA 4-3

Day 4            Australia defeated Scotland 6-0

Day 5            Australia defeated England 12-2

Day 6            Finals

Playoffs - England defeated Wales and Scotland defeated Canada

FINAL Australia defeated USA 10-7



Special to the Sunday Times by PETE ZINNER

**HER CUP RUNNETH OVER** Australia's Suzanne Mellis gets a jubilant hug from a teammate moments after the Aussies topped the U.S., 10-7, to claim the World Cup Lacrosse title yesterday at Swarthmore College. Mellis tallied three goals and four assists for the victors.

By CHIC RIEBEL  
Sunday Times Sports Editor

**SWARTHMORE** — The Nightmare of '82 has been transformed into the Dream of '86.

Yesterday, before a sun-splashed crowd of 4,500 at Swarthmore College, the Australian women's lacrosse team won the World Cup title with a 10-7 victory over the United States.

The outcome enabled the Aussies to wipe out the memory of the 1982 Cup loss to the Americans. The U.S. won that game in overtime, 10-7.

What was particularly galling to the Australians in '82 was the fact that they had beaten the U.S., 7-4, in the round-robin portion of tournament and blew a 6-1 lead in the second half of the title game.

The circumstances were virtually the same for this one. Australia defeated the U.S., 4-3, in the round robin game Tuesday and had a 5-3

lead at the half of the gold-medal game.

This time, however, it would be different.

"This time we believed in each other more," said Aussie attack player Suzanne Mellis, hands down the most outstanding player on the field yesterday.

"In 1982 we hadn't accomplished anything yet and we didn't have the confidence we needed.

"Some of us had never forgotten that loss."

Mellis made sure it was the Americans who came away with the lousy memories, scoring three goals and assisting on four others.

Her accomplishment was even more impressive when you consider that the U.S. was expecting Mellis to be the key to the Aussie offense.

## 1989

In 1989 Australia very successfully hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Women's World Cup in Perth, WA, and this was another step in Australia's growth as a women's lacrosse nation. Australia finished third at that event.

## 1993

Singapore Lacrosse Club was accepted as an associate member of the ILF at the 1993 meeting. At least three formal contacts had been made with Australia through John Harris, Ian Whitbourn and George Tillotson. A team known as Koala Crosse visited both Japan and Hong Kong. Australia continued to encourage lacrosse in New Zealand,



especially at the school level, and an annual exchange of visits of teams was under consideration.

In 1993 mouthguards were made mandatory in all women's games. Originally, the women's goalkeepers used the same stick as a field player, but in 1993 the wider goalkeeper stick was introduced

### **1994**

A women's lacrosse team naming themselves the "The Koalas" was arranged for April 1994. The governments saw the value of such contacts as evident from the Dept of Foreign Affairs having financed the members.

### **1995**

In 1995 the Inaugural Women's Under-19 World Championship was held in which Australia again stood out and defeated the USA in that final also.

Up until 2015 Australia and the USA were the only teams to have won both the Women's World Cup and the Women's Under-19 World Championship, and this says an enormous amount about the progress of Australian women's lacrosse, as well as our abilities, passion and determination against the odds. Canada won the 2015 Under 19 World Championship.

Over the years there have been many changes made to the women's game, with most of them having taken considerable time and effort before being implemented, which is probably the way that it should be.

During the 1990s the late Dr Garry Carter of Eltham Lacrosse Club took a team of Under 16 girls to USA to tour there, at around the same time Eltham was conducting boys trips. Not all players were from Eltham, we believe a few from Caulfield and Williamstown may have joined the tour.

### **1998**

In 1998 time-outs and substitution on-the-fly were introduced, previously substitution was only for injury.

### **2003**

In 2003 exact boundaries are introduced. It's hard to believe now, but prior to 2003 women's lacrosse had no fixed boundaries, but played to agreed boundaries or as the umpire saw fit. International rules now have unified field markings which incorporate both the women's and the men's games which makes life easier for the people who have to mark out the grounds each week.

## **2005**

Australia went on to win the gold medal again at the 2005 Women's World Cup, again defeating the USA in the final. Australia has medalled at each of the World Cup events.

## **2007**

In 2007 the yellow ball was made mandatory for women's international play.

Over the years there has been much discussion around the possible use of protective headgear for the women's game, with the USA mandating protective eyewear, however in Australia and internationally the only player who must wear a helmet is the goalkeeper.

## **MERGERS**

The merger of men's and women's sports was taking hold internationally and domestically in the late 1990's. While the national and state men's and women's bodies in Australia had been considering mergers for many years, S.A. was the first to merge in 1993, followed by Victoria in 2007 and W.A. in 2009. The national bodies of men's and women's lacrosse merged in 2008 to form the Australian Lacrosse Association (Later changed to Lacrosse Australia).

The Federation of International Lacrosse came into effect with the merger of the International Lacrosse Federation (ILF) (Men) and the International Federation of Women's Lacrosse Associations (IFWLA) and circa 2021 changed its name to World Lacrosse.