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## The call of the sirens: The women who support the Fremantle Dockers

Fiona Irvine  
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**THE CALL OF THE SIRENS: THE WOMEN WHO SUPPORT THE  
FREMANTLE DOCKERS**

By

Fiona Irvine

Bachelor of Business (Sports Management)

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

Bachelor of Business Honours (Sports Management)



At the Faculty of Business and Public Management, Edith Cowan University

Date of Submission:

November, 2001

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## **Abstract**

Australian Football and sport in general is a large part of the Australian culture. In the past men have dominated most aspects of sport as participants, spectators and administrators. Women have fulfilled a submissive role supporting men's sporting pursuits. However, the role of women is more significant and football clubs are recognising the importance of this membership segment by creating clubs within clubs to cater for the needs of female members.

This study examined the reasons why women enjoy watching men's sport and if there are specific reasons why they joined a women-only supporter club of a male sport. A census of the Sirens, the women-only supporter club of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club was completed using a self-administered questionnaire. A 58 percent response rate was achieved. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics. The qualitative data responses to open-ended questions were analysed using thematic and content analysis.

Demographic characteristics revealed women who were older than expected, employed professionally and predominantly of Australian or British origin. The Sirens' dedication to the Fremantle Dockers team and Fremantle Football Club as a whole was the main reason for women's membership of the supporter club. While social activities were enjoyable more satisfaction was derived from activities associated to the game of Australian football. The findings suggested that the Sirens preference was not for men's sport generally but for the Australian Football League specifically.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

### *Background to the study*

Sport has been a large part of Australian culture for many decades and still remains a strong part of the lifestyle of many families. Love of sport and playing sport are considered characteristics of being Australian (Adair & Vamplew, 1997), and in the past sport was seen more as a way to promote the required male image (Stoddart, 1986). Toughness and resilience, qualities considered among the most important for males to possess were developed on the sporting field. “Women, it seems were never meant to take sport seriously in the Australian context” (Stoddart, 1986, p. 153). A belief held by society was that a serious interest in sport by women would threaten family and marital relationships (Talamini & Page, 1973).

Australian football (traditionally known as “Aussie Rules”) is considered by many to be the epitome of Australian manhood whether in the capacity of participants or spectators (Adair & Vamplew, 1997). The sport gains great benefit from its followers, with attendance at Australian football matches across Australia over 6 million people each year (Butler, 1998). A Grand Final match attracts approximately 100,000 people to the ground, with millions more watching this match on television (Butler, 1998), more than any other sport in Australia (Ryan, 1998). This interest manifests itself in a strong spectator base that has allowed some sporting organisations to build large membership clubs of spectators. The club structure in the Australian Football League provides a loyal band of supporters for games and gives

sport clubs a relatively stable financial base. Australian Football could be called the national sport of the country.

The traditional exclusion of the “second sex” from the sportive world has been in decline and continues to do so (Talamini & Page, 1973, p. 271). This is also shown in the Australian Football League (AFL) where women have long been a significant part of the spectator culture with approximately 43 percent of women stating they prefer AFL to any other sport (Ryan, 1998). Women’s interest in AFL was recently identified by marketers, especially because of the women’s influence on their children and how their money is spent on leisure activities (Butler, 1998). The AFL and the clubs of the league are now promoting Australian Football to women who love the game (Butler, 1998). Several senior clubs created “a club within a club” for their women supporters, such as the Sydney Swans’ Cygnatures (ceased to operate), Essendon Women’s Network, Port Adelaide’s Women in Power and the Fremantle Dockers’ Sirens.

The Fremantle Dockers’ Sirens is the club of interest for this study. Launched in 1999, the Fremantle Dockers formed the supporter group to provide for the needs of female supporters. The Sirens was named after three sisters in Greek Mythology who lured sailors to their island home with irresistible songs knowing the unpassable reefs would cause the sailors death. The Fremantle Dockers believed this was a logical choice of name given the connection to the sea and the port of Fremantle. It costs current Fremantle Dockers members \$25 to be a Siren, while new members to the club pay \$75 which includes membership to the Sirens and to the Dockers general membership supporter group.

### *Significance of the study*

Men have for the most part dominated the history of Australian sport, whether as players, spectators, officials, promoters, journalists or chroniclers (Adair & Vamplew, 1997). Sport helped to define and confirm Australian male sexual superiority (Booth & Tatz, 2000). Although women's sport and spectating in sport is increasing and women have high profiles, sport remains a masculine environment for both players and spectators. Women's activities were never granted the same level of importance as men's sport. Attempts to improve the imbalance encountered resistance from the male dominated world. "Sport has been the site of major sexual discrimination in Australia" (Stoddart, 1986, p. 134).

Sport in 2001 is still a domain not to be contested by women (Mangan & Nauright, 2000). However, there are women who challenge the perception that women are not knowledgeable about sport, especially about Australian football (Birrell & Cole, 1994). This present study attempted to look inside this domain to gain an insight into the motivations of one group of women who love to watch their favourite Australian football team and support their players.

This study, by examining the reasons for the involvement of women in a club such as the Sirens, will contribute to the understanding of the needs and motivations of women who watch sport in general and specifically the AFL. The knowledge gained will help sporting organisations make appropriate decisions when creating activities and opportunities for women who are involved in sport. The information gained may help the club to implement better marketing strategies, increase competitiveness through a better understanding of the female sport market and provide activities more

attractive to women. “The spectator element has long been crucial to the Australian sports culture, and needs to be studied as much as the players component” (Stoddart, 1986, p. 13).

### *Purpose of the study*

The purpose of this study was to examine the reasons why women enjoy watching men’s sport and if there are specific reasons why they joined a women only supporter club of a male sport. The Sirens is a case study of a female supporters club within an Australian Football League club, the Fremantle Dockers in Western Australia.

### *Research Questions and Objectives*

- Who are the women who join the Sirens club of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club?
- Why do female members of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club join and continue as members of the women’s supporters’ club, the Sirens?
- Do these women have specific reasons for following a traditionally male dominated sport?

Objectives of this study were to:

1. Build a demographic profile of the women-only supporter club the Sirens;
2. Determine the reasons that attracted these women to become a Sirens member;
3. Ascertain what makes being a member of the Sirens important to them as fans of Australian football;



4. Identify what the members of the Sirens expect from the club;
5. Determine if they feel the club caters for their needs and if its services could be improved; and
6. Identify their specific interest in men's sport.

### *Definition of terms*

Sirens: The name of the women-only supporter club of the Fremantle Dockers

Fremantle Dockers: One of the sixteen club teams that play in the national competition of the Australian Football League. It is situated in Fremantle, Western Australia. Also referred to as Fremantle Dockers Football Club, Fremantle Football Club or Dockers throughout this study.

AFL: Australian Football League

### *Limitations*

Time: The short time frame for an Honours thesis limits the size of the project.

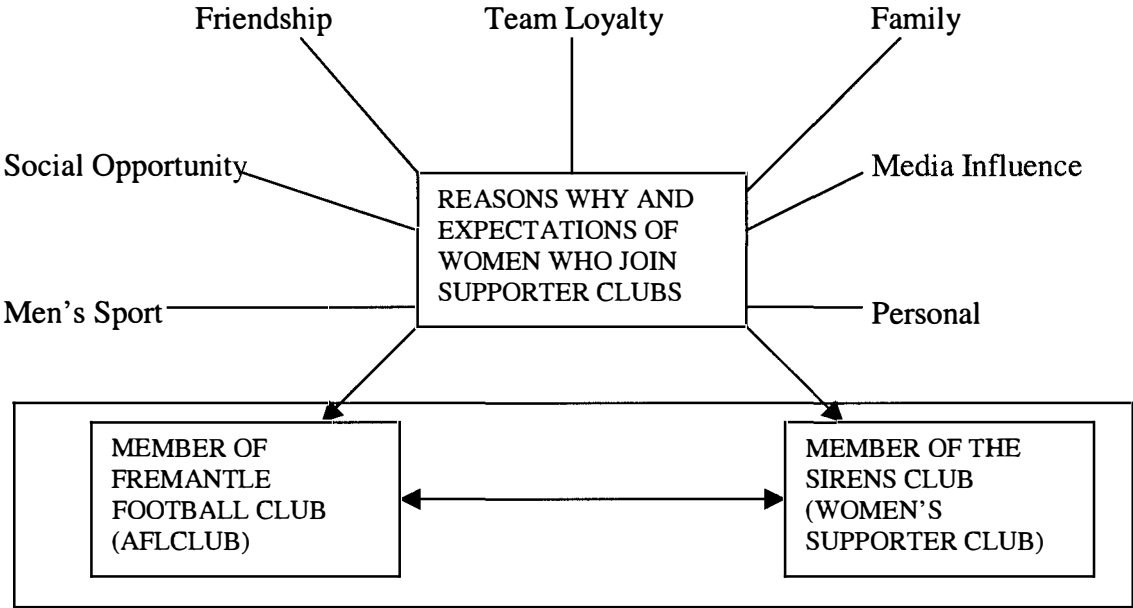
Research Design: The survey approach limited the collection of in-depth data from the Sirens members. However, using the census and the inclusion of open-ended questions allowed for responses that can be accepted as representative of the club members.

Dockers Win-Loss ratio: The form of the Fremantle Dockers during the 2001 season may have disgruntled some members resulting in a negative response to some

questions. The Fremantle Dockers had a season, which resulted in only two wins and the sacking of Damian Drum, the head coach, half way through the regular season. This resulted in the team completing the year in last position and missing a position in the final round for the seventh year in a row.

*Expected outcomes*

Critical factors that motivate women to watch sport and in particular Australian Rules Football were used to develop a framework (Figure 1) to show the reasons why women are attracted to similar women-only supporter clubs. It was expected that influences discussed in the literature reviewed such as friendship, family, men’s sport and team loyalty would emerge as motivating factors for the Sirens members.



**Figure 1:** Conceptual framework of the study

It was expected that another outcome would be a greater understanding of why women like to be involved in supporter clubs such as the Sirens. The reasons for joining given by the women, as well as their likes, dislikes and expectations of the clubs’ services may make it easier for the organisers of female supporter clubs to

identify improvements needed to attract the female market. This information and understanding, will help sporting associations better adapt and market the initiatives they have put in place to attract female members.

The expected outcomes are significant as little is known about the motivation of women who join supporter clubs. Women-only supporter clubs are a relatively new phenomenon. Apart from the Angels (St Kilda), which formed independently in 1985, other clubs are relatively new with the Women in Power (Port Adelaide) forming in 1996, the Essendon Women's Network forming in 1998 and the Fremantle Dockers' Sirens forming in 1999. The clubs and the women, who join the clubs, have expectations that they will want to meet by their involvement in clubs such as the Sirens.

### *Structure of the study*

This chapter outlined background information on the issues of women who are fans of sport and the significance of the study. In addition the purpose, research objectives and the conceptual framework and expected outcomes of the study were discussed. Important definitions and limitations of the study were also explained.

The remainder of the thesis is organised as follows: chapter two provides a review of relevant literature relating to women who watch sport. Chapter three discusses the methodology used to complete the study. The fourth chapter presents the findings of the study, while chapter five summarises and discusses the results and implications of the findings.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### *Introduction*

The literature review is a collection of themes that concern women who watch sport. The review discusses spectators in general, the history of women as spectators, women who watch sport and marketing to female spectators. It focuses on women who follow Australian Football, and the Fremantle Dockers Football Club and the Sirens in particular.

#### *Spectators*

Fans in many cases are largely responsible for the success of sporting organisations. The support fans provide through the purchase of membership tickets and merchandise is financially valuable to the success of all clubs. There is more, however to spectators of sport than the money they spend. They have a desire to be a part of a successful community of the chosen club. The fans create the atmosphere on which athletes and coaches thrive to be a success. Sport researchers have noted the importance of spectators: “Without their physical presence, there can be no contest. Thus spectators share in the collective knowledge that they are vital, important and integral to the action” (Melnick, 1993, p.50).

Spectators are as individual as the teams for which they barrack. They experience different motivations to watch and be involved in the game, often reflected in the nature of the sport. Wann, Bilyeu, Brennan, Osborn and Gambouras (1999) described fans who

watch fast moving exciting games such as football and basketball as more prone to being motivated by feelings of extreme excitement, whereas fans of sport such as baseball may be motivated by the feeling of being relaxed and subdued.

The individuality of spectators brings many different characteristics to the game, but using sport as a social opportunity is one thing they have in common. At the ground they know they will meet like-minded people who share their love for the game. The format of sport with time outs and half time breaks creates a social setting. It is at these times that the recognition of similar interests and sharing of knowledge is most likely to occur (Melnick, 1993).

It is not only fans at arenas and stadia who have distinguishing characteristics. Gantz and Wenner (1995) noted that fans who watch sport on television carry out routines prior to watching the game. They talk to others, read about the game, drink and tune into the radio or television early so they do not miss anything.

The attitude and behaviour of fans is also something that is greatly affected by the competition of sport (Gantz & Wenner, 1995). Many fans feel an emotional connection to the team that they support. They feel happiness after the success of a team or player, but may display nervousness during the progression of a game and talking about the action as it occurs.

The results of sport matches can also affect the fans greatly, either positively or negatively. Numerous fans have such a love for the team that they follow that life after spectating sport can be affected. Gantz and Wenner (1995) found instances where sports fans put household chores on hold to watch the game or have a beer to celebrate a win or stay in a bad mood after a poor performance.

The characteristics of both arena and television spectators show how the love of and interest in a sport can affect moods, behaviour and social interactions of individuals with a similar interest in a game or team. It is these reactions that form the basis of the supporter clubs. These clubs, such as the Sirens, become a forum for like-minded women to meet and discuss an area of their life that they have in common.

### *History of Women as Spectators*

It was through the use of sport in the 1800s that American women made the transition from home-based leisure to involvement in many activities (Henderson, Bialeschki, Shaw, & Freyshinger, 1996). Australian women made the same transition in the 1890s with many female spectators being seen at all kinds of sports events (Stell, 1991). In Australia however, women were being brought up under the influences of Victorian England with emphasis placed on being “lady like” (Lynch & Veal, 1996, p. 256). The presence of women was thought to give a level of respectability to sporting events and resulted in the construction of many ‘Ladies Stands’ at male oriented sports such as horse racing in America (Henderson et al., 1996, p.52) and Australian football in

Australia (Hess, 2000). This notion is in vast contrast to the depiction of sport in 2001 where women are seen as scantily clad spectators accompanied by sexual innuendo from male commentators (Birrell & Cole, 1994).

Sport spectating by women in the nineteenth century was accepted by American society as a way of providing women with a means by which to socialise. The contribution they made involved being present at sport events to provide applause when necessary (Henderson et al., 1996). At the same time in Australia if women did not fulfil this specific role they were labelled anti-social (Stoddart, 1986). However, there were restrictions on the events that women could attend and give their applause due to their place in society. Women were barred from events such as boxing, as the authorities argued that “the pugilism of boxing was unsuitable for the eyes of the fairer sex” (Adair & Vamplew, 1997, p. 48).

There was inequality in Australian sport, with a marginalised position for Australian women in sport as spectators or participants (Rowe, 1999). For much of the twentieth century women were expected to use their domestic skills both privately and publicly to encourage men’s pursuit of glory and community status (Dempsey, 1990). The education system also moulded the attitude of Australian girls with emphasis placed on the need to value male sport rather female sport. With this attitude ingrained at such an early age women became keen supporters of Australian male sport heroes (Stoddart, 1986). Women were accepted into sport as subordinates, in positions where they were at the lower end of the chain of command: as associates not equal participants.

This role undoubtedly led to women being the butt of many jokes concerning sport (Mangan & Nauright, 2000). It was assumed that women had a lack of knowledge about the finer points of sports and were unable to treat sport as seriously as men (Mangan & Nauright, 2000). This was highlighted in the comments of H.C.A Harrison a football commentator in the nineteenth century, “The ignorance displayed by some of the members of the ‘fairer sex’ of the terms used in connection with sport affords one of the humorous side of it” (Stoddart, 1986, p.141). So lacking was the respect for women’s interest in sport it was not uncommon to use the perceived skills of women as degrading comments for players not playing to standard. As one nineteenth century commentator noted, “There were some old women in disguise playing today” (Booth & Tatz, 2000, p. 60)

Women used spectating to make a transition from home-based leisure to a social setting. Society accepted the inclusion of women at sporting events for respectability, however restrictions were placed on the events at which women could spectate to ensure that they behaved in a “lady like” manner. This inequality resulted in women being treated as subordinates, unknowledgeable and unable to treat sport as seriously as men.

In summary, during the twentieth century the ‘Ladies Stands’ have disappeared and there is an acceptance of women’s involvement in the sport environment. Women have made the transition from being providers for men’s participation in sport to having their own identity as participants, spectators and administrators.



### *Women Who Watch Sport*

In 2001, women do take sport seriously and sport takes its female spectators seriously. Women are knowledgeable about sport and seek more than the physical and sexual display. Women are attracted to sport by much more than seeing men in tight shorts (Butler, 1998). Women have a love for sport. It is different from men's views of sport and attention needs to be paid to the subtle differences in men's and women's interests in sport (Rottenburg, 2000).

Women are likely to attend sports events just as often as men, and are as likely to identify themselves as a sport fan (Dietz-Uhler, Harrick, End, & Jacquemotte, 2000). However, female spectators are less likely to participate in "masculine" behaviour such as discussing and reading about or experiencing the same level emotional fluctuations in response to sport results (Bahk, 2000). The activities of attending games, cheering and being with family and friends are more important to women when describing themselves as sport fans (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000). Women are attracted by the more stylistic sports that do not rely on violence. Women are bored by and become disinterested in aggressive forms of sport (Sargent, Zillmann, & Weaver, 1998).

Women are interested in the strategies of the game, but they do not want to know the match statistics that do not allow them to see the game in context. For this reason women, unlike men, are not afraid to ask questions to gain the information that they feel

is important (Rottenburg, 2000). Women want information about the human aspects of the game rather than the statistics of the game (Zobava, 1999).

Women also appreciate the bonds that are formed amongst team members, and want to know more about the athletes outside of the playing arena (Zobava, 1999). Female spectators are inspired by the feats on the field, but they also want an insight into the background and personal lives of their favourite players (Rottenburg, 2000). This personal interest is important, as women usually support a team due to feeling a connection with a specific player. It is this deeper interest that female supporters have for the lives of the athletes that overshadows their interest in the victory and ultimate success of the team (Sargent et al., 1998). This characteristic was reflected in the sentiments of New York Mets fan who said, “no matter what happens they will be my team” (Toy, 1999, p. 43).

Women, who are sports fans, want opportunities for social interaction at the game. Women like to meet people they know and they find watching sport more enjoyable when in the company of friends (Rottenburg, 2000). The social experience also includes the family, for women have a greater interest in being involved in events that can be classified as family activities (Wann, Shrader, & Wilson, 1999).

Overall, in 2001 female spectators take sport seriously and they are just as likely as men to identify themselves as sports fans. Female sport fans do not participate in masculine behaviour such as reading about and talking about sport. They get more enjoyment from

watching sport in the company of family and friends. The ultimate success of a team is not as important as the desire to gain personal information on their favourite player.

### *Marketing to Female Spectators*

As the number of women who play and watch sport continues to rise, the role of marketing to this group increases in value, as many sporting organisations find that if they do not take into account this trend in the market, they are missing a sizeable market segment. Sport organisations therefore are viewing women as a unique and growing target market to be considered when marketing their sport (Branch, 1995).

Many women are no longer detached and unknowledgable about the sports they watch. Companies that are not sports related have realised this and use sport to reach this large portion of the market. Women have become the centre of many advertising campaigns. Kane (1999) noted that this was obvious due to the number of companies that were willing to pay high rates during the 34<sup>th</sup> Superbowl in 1999 to advertise products for women such as toiletries and food items. The Superbowl is the pinnacle of the American football that has a large portion of women who attend matches or watch the televised games.

In the United States of America, Wyatt, McCullough and Wolgemuth (1998) found that of the 130 million people who watched the Superbowl in 1999, 46 million (35.4%) are female. Lavelle (1993, cited Branch, 1995, p.11) noted the ever growing strength of this

market for the period 1989-1993 during which female viewers had risen by 70 percent for the National Basketball Association (NBA), 45 percent for the National Football League (NFL) and 40 percent for baseball. Although there is no mention of the total figure that these percentages represent, given the size of the American market, it could be assumed that these figures represent sizeable increases in the number of female spectators.

In comparison, the 1997 Grand Final of Australian Football captured an audience of over one million people. Forty seven percent of the audience for the game was female (Butler, 1998). Every weekend AFL crowds supporting the game consist of approximately 40 percent women (Ryan, 1998). These are similar to the audience proportions found in the United States, suggesting that Australian women have a similar level of interest in mainstream sport.

While spectators are seen as consumers of the sport, football clubs also see spectators as a commodity that they can “sell” to sponsors and advertisers (Wilson, 1990). Women are a very important part of the spectator commodity that AFL clubs are looking to increase. The clubs seek new opportunities to attract new members to enhance their financial viability, and women are a new market target.

Using sport to market to women is no longer an unusual practice. Burnett, Menon and Smart (1993, p. 26) observed that “Although sports on television may still be one of the most effective ways of advertising to reach men, it also appears to be true for women.”

This has led many sport broadcasters and editors to seek for ways to attract substantial female audiences. Strategies adopted to attract this market segment include sexualising sportsmen, explaining rules to the uneducated, giving greater and more sympathetic coverage of sportswomen and employing female sport commentators and writers (Rowe, 1999). For sponsors and sport promoters alike women are the next target market, one which is huge, barely exploited and is as likely as men's to be both loyal and profitable (Booth & Tatz, 2000).

To summarise, female sport spectators are a sizeable market segment. Women are no longer detached and ignorant about sport, and they make up large portions of game crowds. Many marketing campaigns are now centred on women making them an important commodity to many sport organisations.

### *Women and the AFL*

The unique feature of the AFL is highlighted in the remarks of Hess (2000, p.114) "In a football world dominated by men, perhaps the most remarkable feature of the Australian code is the consistently large number of females who support the game in various ways". It is this reason that many believe makes Aussie rules successful because the male culture is not dogmatic (Butler, 1998). This means, women who are AFL fans feel equal with male supporters when supporting their favourite team.

Women's involvement in sport has always been reported and recorded. Early newspaper articles discussed how a large portion of the crowd consisted of the "fair sex" (Ross, 1996). Ross (1996) noted that football was so popular with women it had started to affect fashion with inclusion of the club colours and design in scarves and jumpers worn by the women. Although recognised, women were often classified as a different type of supporter and spectator. In identifying the role of women in Australian football Hess (2000) used specific labels: *women as passive onlookers*, as the 'fair sex' whose presence gives the game status and prestige; *women as voyeurs*, who admired the male participants for the way they look as well as the way they play the game; *women as socialites*, for football allowed for the display of fashion as well as an approved social setting to meet young men; *women as barrackers*, in 1893 one-eighth of season tickets were held by women rising to 25 percent by 1900; *women as civilisers*, for the presence of women was thought to influence men to play and spectate at socially acceptable levels; *women as auxiliaries*, who donated time and money to run their favourite clubs, but *women as players* in the game are not always accepted even today. One of the earliest accounts of women wanting to play AFL is from 1876. This description shows the evolution of women in the game to a point where they are able to use their skills and resources to provide a strong support in the operations of the game.

There are many recent examples of women playing an integral part in running the game in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The appointment of women such as Beverley Knight to the Essendon board in 1993 (Ross, 1996), reflects the respect for the

knowledge and passion women now have for the game and the levels of involvement they are willing to maintain and the professional skills they can bring to the game.

Sheedy (1998) (Essendon Coach) also analysed the role of women in AFL. The key words he used to describe the women were not as passive as those of Hess. Sheedy's snapshot described the categories of women who are AFL spectators as *feisty*, *loyal*, *thermos*, *religious*, *community* and *battlers*. The feisty supporters were passionate about their support for the team. The *loyal* supporters were involved in everything to do with their team, and the *thermos* group, were always prepared for the job of supporting. The group labelled *religious* has a sense of loss without their team. The supporters classified as *community* are connected to the team and each other, and the *battlers* are willing to do the hard work to continue the success of their team. These categories seem to relate to general spectators more consistently than those of Hess (2000). Similar categories are expected to emerge from the Sirens study.

Women find that their knowledge of football helps them outside their favourite leisure activity where some have noted "the ability of women to talk footy is important in many cases as it is helpful in establishing career and social networks" (Sheedy & Brown, 1998, p. 242). Joan Kirner, the former Premier of the state of Victoria, demonstrated the importance of such knowledge when she said "It was just as well that I know something about football, because the first five minutes of every cabinet meeting was football talk. I would have been left out in the cold if I didn't talk football" (Sheedy, 1998, p. 242).

The function that women play in the AFL is often over looked, because the reasons why women love the sport still remain a mystery (Butler, 1998). There are some theories that the men who manage the AFL clubs do not care why women enjoy football as long as they “keep the turnstiles turning” (Butler, 1998, p. 3). Hess (2000) noted that in order to support the value placed on the women of the AFL, women should be seen, not as ornamental figures but as interested, knowledgeable and passionate supporters of the code. Hess (2000, p.136) summed up the potential role of women in AFL:

*“Supporters, players and administrators of other codes who have little desire for and appreciation of the potential role of women in the game or the club structure, will therefore, at best be envious or at worst have little understanding of one of the most distinguishing features of the Australian code of football”.*

Women have grown with the AFL, evolving from the passive onlooker to a decision-maker in the boardroom. Female supporters now find their knowledge of the game and their ability to talk football helps both socially and professionally. They are valued and encouraged to be a part of the sport as interested and passionate supporters.

Spectators of both arena and television sport show a great amount interest and love for the game they follow. Historically, women are tainted as unable to show a high level of interest in sport resulting in their involvement being marginalised. However, in 2001 female spectators do take sport seriously and are just as likely as males to identify themselves as sports fans.



Marketing campaigns show the importance now being placed on the female sports fan. Female sport spectators represent a sizeable market segment that companies cannot ignore if they want to sell products. The AFL teams are aware of the value of female supporters and have developed initiatives to cater for this growing market segment. The result is the introduction of clubs within clubs to cater for the needs of female members, such as the Fremantle Dockers Sirens.

### *The Dockers and the Sirens*

#### *Background to implementing the Sirens*

There are no records or annual reports containing the relevant information on the foundation of the Sirens. Therefore the gathering of information has revolved around a series of interviews with the Fremantle Dockers Membership Manager.

The Sirens supporter club was the brainchild of the Membership Manager of the Fremantle Dockers. She considered the concept of a women-only supporter group important due to her own position as a woman in a male dominated environment and her belief that women should be recognised as supporters of AFL. This belief evolved from conversations that occurred between the Membership Manager and female supporters of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April, 2001). The women involved felt they were considered unknowledgable 'hangers on' at social functions and activities organised specifically for the male football fraternity. This made the idea of a women-only supporter club very attractive, as there was a consensus

that a women's supporter club would allow women the opportunity to discuss the game without being in an intimidating environment. This notion, coupled with the fact that 40 percent of the Fremantle Dockers membership community was women, provided confirmation that something should be done for the women supporters of the Dockers community (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April 2001).

Knowing that some other clubs within the AFL had similar supporter groups the Membership Department gathered information from these other AFL clubs and the set-up of their women-only groups. The Essendon Football Club was identified as a benchmark with over 400 women involved in its Women's Network. With the emphasis being placed on social activities and the highlight being the Grand Final lunch held every year Essendon had demonstrated how successful the concept could be (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April, 2001).

Although the Fremantle Dockers Football Club was aware that it probably could not have a club the size of Essendon's Women's Network, it felt that a similar concept could be successful (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April, 2001). The club's confidence was boosted by the arrival of a former employee of the Sydney Swans who had experience with the women's group for that club, the Cygnatures. It was believed that her experience and insight in this area would be valuable in helping the Dockers make the correct decisions in establishing its own women's supporter group.

It was late in 1999 that the Fremantle Dockers CEO was approached (at that time, Mr David Hatt) with the idea of implementing the women-only supporter group as a part of the Dockers membership community. Agreeing that the concept had the potential to be successful for the Fremantle Dockers as a whole, the CEO gave permission to continue the process of making the group a part of the football club. Coinciding with this approval was the naming of the group for women who would eventually show their loyalty as members of the group. Hatt's interest in Greek Mythology prompted his suggestion for the club to be called the Sirens (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April 2001). The name of the sisters who lured sailors to their home with irresistible songs knowing the unpassable reefs would destroy their boats and eventually cause their death. The nautical association of this name with the port of Fremantle and the sea made it the logical choice for the group.

The club management was adamant however, that the Sirens would be a sub-set of the Fremantle Dockers membership. This meant that women who were not general or reserved seating members would have to join one of these groups to become a Siren. The result of this decision meant that current female Fremantle Dockers members would pay an additional \$25 to be a Siren, while new members to the club would pay \$75 to be a Siren: the fee also included their membership to the Fremantle Dockers Football Club. This decision enabled the Fremantle Dockers to confidently say that every Siren is also a Dockers member (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April 2001). Although this decision was a simple one for the club there was indecision about how the Sirens group would operate.

In an effort to ensure that the Sirens' members would gain the benefits they wanted from the club two focus groups were conducted with current Fremantle Dockers members. The focus groups consisted of women differing in age and backgrounds. The focus groups came up with clear guidelines for the Sirens (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April, 2001). The guidelines for the Sirens are:

1. Members are only permitted to join if they are over the age of 18, as all functions would include alcohol.
2. There would not be an upper age limit as, the club liked the notion of Mothers and Daughters being involved together.
3. The women would not sit together as a supporter group for three main reasons:
  - Most women wanted to maintain the time at the footy as a family occasion
  - It allowed the Sirens to show a different perspective of supporters of football other than the BLOKE idea of getting together at the footy, and
  - Fans have strong preferences for the area in the ground from which they like to watch the football and their preference should not be constrained by having them sit together.

The Sirens therefore emerged as a group to add value for female members of the Dockers, enabling women to meet on different occasions during the football season. It gives them the opportunity to meet other women with a similar passion for football and in particular the Fremantle Dockers (M. Eddington, personal communication, 10 April, 2001).

### *Making the Sirens a part of the Fremantle Dockers*

The CEO gave approval for the Sirens to become a part of the Fremantle Dockers membership group. Board approval was not required, as the CEO was aware of the planned initiatives and communicated necessary information to board members as required. Although informed of the idea, the attitude of the board members was to leave the membership manager to put the initiatives in place as it allowed the club an opportunity to gain new members and provided a positive perception of the football club. The knowledge that the Sirens group would also be fully self-funded and unlikely to cost the club any money also made the concept more attractive to the board (Meredith Eddington, personal communication, 24 April, 2001).

Following approval from the CEO of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club recruiting of potential members of the Sirens commenced. Recruiting female media personalities was the first step with women like Jane Marwick and Dixie Marshall (radio and television personalities). These high profile women provided a base for the club and gained a great deal of publicity through newspaper columns and feature stories (Appendix A). Not only did this help put some faces to the Sirens name, it also helped the club gain a large amount of promotion that was not an affordable option in the infant stages of the supporter group (M. Eddington, personal communication, 24 April, 2001).

The Dockers, while happy with this exposure also accepted that development of the Sirens would be a slow process requiring a considerable amount of effort to encourage

support for the growth of the club. The Sirens was a concept that was expected to evolve over time from within the general membership. Consequently little direct advertising of the Sirens club was conducted outside the general promotion of the Fremantle Dockers.

All of the initial advertising was done in-house by the membership department. Current female Fremantle Dockers members received a brochure developed particularly for them (Appendix B). The brochure was distributed to the members with their general membership renewal form. Women were able to apply for membership of both clubs at the same time. To increase the awareness of the Sirens, the brochure was also distributed individually by a mail out to each female member to further highlight the Sirens as another entity of the Fremantle Dockers (M. Eddington, personal communication, 24 April 2001). It was anticipated that this in-house advertising of the Sirens would lead to word of mouth promotion. The club believed that the female Dockers supporters would be passionate enough about the concept to let other women know about it (M. Eddington, personal communication, 24 April 2001). However, with membership numbers dropping 12 percent from 250 in 2000 to 220 in 2001 this decision does not seem to have been so successful, but perhaps there were other factors responsible for this membership decline.

Although the membership department staff, with hindsight realised that more effort should have been put into the promotion of the club, advertising was a strategy that was used sparingly for promotion of the Sirens. Several avenues were used to promote the Sirens, including Women's Expos and women's magazines (eg., Women's Health

Expo). The major factor in these decisions was finance, for a restricted budget limited promotion on a broader scale (M. Eddington, personal communication, 24 April 2001).

The main reason for making the Sirens a part of the Dockers membership was to avoid turning the women's club into a fundraising group. This was a different approach from some of the other AFL clubs for female supporters, such as the Angels (St Kilda), which used fundraising as the basis of their development. The Fremantle Dockers believed that this decision not to have the club as a fundraising group made the club more attractive (M. Eddington, personal communication, 24 April 2001). Two membership department employees oversee the management of the Sirens group, from organising functions to producing newsletters. The Membership Manager has become the person to contact for the Sirens due to her media appearances. The Sirens were now a part of the Dockers structure.

The Sirens membership began before the end of 1999. The Sirens club was launched at an Ansett Cup game in 2000 with Shane Gould (former gold medal Olympic swimmer) as the number one ticket holder leading the way. In a year where the Olympic Games were dedicated to the great female athletes the timing of the launch was to be a great marketing tool to further highlight the call of the Sirens.

### *Aims of the Fremantle Dockers by implementing the Sirens*

The Fremantle Football Club did not establish a strategic or business plan to support the implementation of the Sirens. The operations of the group therefore are not subject to any specific aims or objectives except for the initial guidelines. The Membership Department identified a need to cater for female supporters. This perception along with the opening of the new Fremantle Docker clubhouse was accepted as sufficient evidence of demand for the Sirens. Its purpose was established to meet the perceived but not confirmed needs of the Fremantle Dockers' female supporters.

The Fremantle Dockers Football Club was aware that it had found a niche in the Western Australian sport market due to it being the only AFL club in WA with a female supporter group. This unique position demonstrated to the Fremantle Dockers that the Sirens concept could help to address some issues related to women who watch men's football and sport in general. These issues included perceptions of female football supporters as being only interested in the looks of players and being unknowledgeable about the strategy of the game (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). It was these issues that have helped the emergence of aims and objectives for the women's supporter group rather than market research. The Sirens club development and evolution was more ad hoc than strategic and based on professional intuition.

The Sirens is a group that targets all female members of the Dockers regardless of their professional or social background. The football club wanted to ensure that all female



members have the opportunity to socialise and feel involved in the Fremantle Dockers community. This has resulted in a range of ages, occupations and ethnicities within the group (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

Research discussed the negative connotations associated with female supporters. They are often tainted as 'groupies' and unknowledgable about the game (eg., Adair & Vamplew, 1997; Mangan & Nauright, 2000; Rowe, 1999). The organisers were cautious not to make the image of the Sirens appear to be 'groupies' as they did not want the public thinking the women were involved purely to "meet and sleep" with players. Changing the perception about women watching and supporting football was an important objective for the Membership manager and the club (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). The Fremantle Dockers wanted to dispel the notions of women as unknowledgable supporters who are only interested in the looks of players or as unintelligent people who were forced to attend the football by boyfriends and their mates. Showcasing the Sirens members as loyal, informed and passionate supporters was crucial to the set-up of the club and its operations (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

One priority for the Sirens club program was to include Fremantle Dockers players at as many Sirens functions as possible. The organisers know that to retain members it is important for the women to have the contact with their favourite players (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). The organisers of Sirens functions invite all players from the league team including coaches and officials, to meet the Sirens

members as an added benefit their club membership. Maintaining the emphasis on football is also important to preserve enthusiasm and interest in the Sirens and the club as a whole. This desire of the club to have motivated and interested supporters, contributed to the decision to charge a separate membership to the women who wanted to be involved. It was felt that if the women were willing to pay an additional fee for their membership, they had a strong desire to be more active in the Dockers community and make the supporter group a success (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). The Fremantle Dockers also benefit from the additional fee as it increases income to the club that covers the cost of the Sirens activities and functions.

The Fremantle Football Club believes that the guidelines gathered from the focus group and the aims of the club are crucial in assisting the Sirens grow to a size that allows it to manage itself (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). Only then will it be possible for the Sirens to achieve the recognition and respect needed to be a force within the club. If respect and recognition are not achieved the Sirens may not be able to be sustainable in the Fremantle Dockers history and culture (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

#### *Initiatives to cater for the needs of the Sirens*

The members of the Sirens are not involved directly in planning and conducting the group activities. The Fremantle Dockers Membership Department initiates the ideas and decisions made for the group. The limited time and resources of the Membership

Department has limited the activities that are held for the Sirens to during the football season. In order to maintain a flexible program, activities are not planned totally in advance each year (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

The Sirens activities are completely self-funded from members' fees. The Fremantle Dockers budget does not subsidise for any activities of the Sirens in any way, other than through provision of a newsletter. These budget constraints also influence the number of social occasions to which Sirens are invited so the club can benefit from their inclusion. One example of this being the end of year players' function. Due to high costs and overheads the Fremantle Dockers wanted to involve the Sirens to add "flavour" to the event while also raising revenue from the inclusion of more people in the event (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

One of the difficulties in the planning process is the unusual hours of the players' training and playing schedules. The players' training and other club commitments limit their involvement at Sirens activities. The Sirens club is continually searching for ways to incorporate a variety of activities to meet the objective to give Sirens members access to their favourite players (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

Some of the activities that have been held for the Sirens include the season's opening launch, trips to Melbourne and movie nights. The season's opening launch of the club was the first major event of the year and held at one of the Fremantle Dockers home Ansett Cup games. This is the only time of the year that the Sirens sit together as a

supporter club. This event is intended to give the sense of belonging and community that most of the women want. The Ansett Cup games were held in February as preliminary games to the season. Many companies do not use function rooms at this time of year so the Sirens group was able to use them at a cheaper cost than during the season, which also results in a less expensive activity for the Sirens members (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). Changes to the AFL season resulting from the collapse of the Ansett Airline company (mid 2001) will undoubtedly influence the timing of the season's first event for the club.

The Sirens trip to Melbourne each year was a chance for the women to visit the home of AFL and to visit the Melbourne Cricket Ground or Colonial Stadium, some for the first time. This occasion also allowed the women to stay at one of the AFL endorsed hotels and take advantage of the shopping opportunities available in Melbourne. The Fremantle Dockers considered the trips successful, as women were involved without the inconvenience of booking flights and accommodation. Although both trips only attracted approximately 20 women many women formed close friendships due to their similar interests that have continued after the trips. The plan is to have only one interstate trip each season due to price and the history and association of Melbourne with the AFL (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

Although there is a main club newspaper called The Docker that is distributed to every member of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club, the Sirens also has its own newsletter (Appendix C). The Sirens newsletter focuses solely on the group and its activities, and

allows the main club to communicate with the Sirens group. The newsletter is funded by the Fremantle Dockers and reinforces the importance the club places on the women who are members of the Sirens (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

Other social occasions organised for the Sirens included movie nights, tours of the Fremantle Dockers' new facility and cocktail parties. The main emphasis of all these activities was social. The Fremantle Dockers wanted to encourage the women to meet and get to know other women with a similar interest for football (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). To further encourage this interaction between the Sirens members a priority was placed on getting the women together more often in an environment they enjoy. A new initiative proposed is to give the Sirens members the option of sitting together at Fremantle Dockers home games. It is hoped that this opportunity will give Sirens members who sit on their own a chance to sit in a friendly and social environment when watching matches (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

Some of the other future initiatives will include fashion parades, drinks at training sessions and development of social areas where only Sirens members can access the players and officials. The aim of these activities is to allow the women to meet the players in a discreet setting, avoiding any situation generally associated with 'groupies' such as hanging around locker rooms and bars.

Among the efforts to maintain the satisfaction levels of its members the Fremantle Dockers will make the Sirens more of a priority in 2002. This will include an increase in market research to gain greater insight to the needs of the Sirens members. The outcome of the market research will give direction to future initiatives and emphasis of the supporter group. The decision to be made is whether the emphasis of the group will be social, serious football or a mixture of both (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001).

*The future of the Sirens as a part of the Fremantle Dockers*

The number of Sirens peaked at 250 members in 2000 the inaugural year. The Membership Department hoped for 500 members in 2001. Although numbers seem to increase at social events the club has not been able to maintain those initial numbers and the membership of the club was 220 women in July 2001. The Fremantle Dockers want to support the Sirens and make it attractive to the women who are already members of the club. The main club is willing to support market research, including focus groups of members to identify the needs of its female membership. It plans to make the Sirens a recognised part of the Fremantle Dockers culture and a respected group that its female members will want to join (M. Eddington, personal communication, 8 May 2001). The Sirens will be a group that is catered for only during the playing season. However, the members and the club are seen as a major component of the Fremantle Dockers that is destined to be a continuing part of its football culture.

Current research is already under-way to ascertain the motivations, feelings and expectations of the supporter group. The input that the Sirens members have to this study will be useful to more clubs than just the Dockers. Although unique in Western Australia the Sirens are not unique in the AFL. Several clubs also established women's groups including St Kilda, Port Adelaide and Essendon; however, they do not operate the same way.

In summary, the Sirens, founded in 2000, is in its second season of operation at the time of this project. The club caters to the female members of the Fremantle Dockers and was named after three sisters from Greek Mythology, which represents both female and nautical associations. The group meets for social occasions that are organised by the Fremantle Dockers membership department. The Fremantle Dockers Football Club is committed to making the supporter group a part of the club culture.

### *A Comparison*

#### *The St Kilda Angels*

The following information was gathered by a telephone interview with the President of the Angels. This interview took place on the 26 July 2001. The St Kilda Football Club has three distinct supporter groups: the All Saints Women in Business, the St Kilda Cheer Squad and the Angels. The Angels and the All Saints Women in Business are female based, the cheer squad is for both male and female members. For the purposes of this study the focus is on the Angels.

This women-only supporter group was established 16 years ago in 1985 by 12 female St Kilda fans. The founding members formed a committee and decided on the name Angels due to its close connection with the nickname of St Kilda Football Club, the Saints. The women felt it was necessary to form a group that recognised the women already involved as supporters in AFL and to give an avenue for women to be involved in AFL through social networking (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001).

In 2001 this committee consisted of 10 members with the current President holding this position for 10 years. She has seen the general membership of the group grow to approximately 250 members with the ages ranging from new born babies to the oldest member who is 91 years old. The joining fee is \$20 with an annual fee of \$15 (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001).

The Angels has two aims it wishes to achieve. The committee feels that these are sufficient in defining the club and giving direction to the decisions the committee makes for members (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001). The first aim of the Angels is to raise money for the players of the St Kilda football team. Although proud to be a fundraising group the club is not interested in putting money into the administration of the football club. The Angels want to ensure it caters for the players. This has resulted in the Angels assisting with the payment for various things such as a new weight training facility for players to smaller objects for individual players such as televisions and microwaves. The Angels is not concerned with the size of the request made by the players as long as they are the ones who are benefiting from their work (J. Edgar,



personal communication, 26 July 2001). This purpose of the Angels fits Hess's (2000) description of women as auxiliaries.

This desire to help the players has resulted in the Angels sponsoring particular players. Since the inception of the club the Angels has sponsored famous St Kilda player Nathan Burke and in more recent times a young player in the team, Damian Ryan. This support has led to these players being available for all Angels' social functions. In appreciation of the support, Nathan Burke has not missed an organised Angels' function. The president of the Angels commented that the appreciation shown by the players for the work of the Angels makes it worthwhile and motivates the women to continue in their efforts (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001).

The second aim of the Angels is the social experience for its members. The group wants to provide an opportunity for women to meet people and the chance to make new friends amongst women who also have an interest for the St Kilda Football Club. Many of the women who are members use the planned activities as their social outings during the year.

As the activities are also used as the forum for fundraising there is always an effort to have new and interesting initiatives to attract women. The activities include movie nights, family days, fashion shows and formal dinners, which all incorporate past and present players from the AFL including such personalities as Sam Newman and Gary

Lyon (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001). The intention is to have affordable and interesting events that appeal to the entire membership of the club.

January is the only month of the year that the Angels does not have any programmed activities. This break in the programme makes it crucial to keep members aware of club news and any upcoming events. A newsletter is circulated every six weeks. The women are also encouraged to attend the committee meetings that are also held every six weeks. The President, however, noted that like all clubs it is usually the same women who always organise and run the activities (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001).

The Angels is a separate entity from the St Kilda Football Club. Although many women are also members of the main club, that membership is not a requirement to become an Angels member (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001). This allows many women who do not have the funds to be a St Kilda member to be involved in the AFL. As a separate entity the St Kilda Football Club does not assist in the promotion of the Angels in any capacity. The Angels has its own membership drives that consist mainly of word of mouth advertising and handing out of flyers at St Kilda home games. This separation from the main club does not dampen the passion the Angels members have for their team as the club has members who live interstate including 3 from Queensland.

The Angels will continue its role as a fundraising group for the players of the St Kilda Football club. The St Kilda Football Club does not account for the Angels in its future. Mrs Edgar explained “If the Angels folded the club would thank us for our time but they

[sic] wouldn't provide any assistance to maintain the existence of the Angels" (J. Edgar, personal communication, 26 July 2001).

### *The Essendon Women's Network*

There are no records kept on the formation of the Essendon Football Club's Women's Network. Information was gathered by personal communication with the coordinator of the supporter group. This was achieved via e-mail (Appendix D).

The Essendon Women's Network was formed in 1997 by a group of passionate female Essendon supporters who wanted to strengthen their involvement with the football club. The Women's Network was also recognised as an important initiative as women sought an avenue to be involved in the club activities and functions and in turn had a great deal to contribute (M. Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001). The demographics of the Essendon Football Club (the Bombers) membership also shows that this was plausible with 31 percent of its members being female. The Essendon Football Club wanted to bring together women with two commonalities, a passion for the Bombers and a passion as a female Bombers supporter. Essendon wanted a wide variety of women as members regardless of age, profession, lifestyle or personality.

The founders of the Essendon Women's Network were: Joan Kirner, former Victorian Premier; Linda Dessau, Family Court Justice; Louise Asher, Deputy Opposition Leader; Elaine Canty, Broadcaster and Lawyer; Dianan Gribble, Publisher; Elizabeth Curtin,

County Court Judge; Joanne Alber, Financial Adviser and Beverley Knight, Board member of the Essendon Football Club (M. Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001).

The Essendon Football Club established the Network with a meeting of the founding members in April 1997. It was at this meeting that the decision was made to form the Women's Network for the female supporters of the Bombers. This decision was validated in May 1997 by the attendance of 220 women at the introductory event, which gained support from Kevin Sheedy, the coach of the Essendon team, and many of his players (M. Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001).

Potential members are informed of the Network through a brochure sent by the club to its current female members (Appendix D). However, the Network allows women to join even if they are not Essendon Football Club Members. Regardless of the women's membership status with the Bombers it costs \$28 to join the Essendon Women's Network.

The major aim of bringing together women with a passion for the Bombers "is breaking down the social barriers associated with women who follow AFL" (M. Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001). The Network identified several aims crucial to provide for its members. One aim is to be an exciting and innovative part of the Bombers by providing a social network for similar minded women and a business network for fellow supporters. Coupled with this is the aim of providing a range of

functions that are diverse enough to appeal to every Essendon female supporter, allowing mothers, professionals, retirees, students and Essendon supporters alike a greater opportunity to be a part of the Bombers (M.Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001). Finally, the Network aims to provide members with an opportunity to meet players and coaching staff, and an informative link to the club happenings.

The Essendon Women's Network members are given the opportunity to be involved in many activities and functions throughout the season. Many of the activities are exclusive to Network members and have included trips interstate, Kevin Sheedy's book launch, footy panels, cocktail parties and the Grand Final lunch, which is an official AFL Grand Final week event (M. Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001). The majority of these events include players who are new to the club or are achieving milestones in their careers such as playing 200 games. Members are also involved in the Football Women of the Year Award, which recognises the contribution and achievements of women in football. The inaugural award in 1998 was presented to Irene Chatfield for her role in the 'fightback' of the Footscray Football Club in 1989. The Network members are also able to purchase an exclusive Women's Network silk scarf.

In 1997 the membership figure of the Essendon Women's Network was 200, this has grown in the last four years to be well over 400 (M.Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001). The Essendon Football Club gains direct benefits from this membership club such as player sponsorship, a network of people, volunteers and money.

Consequently the Bombers regard the Network an important part of the football clubs future.

The Essendon Football Club is enthusiastic about the potential of the Women's Network. The Essendon Football Club has decided to look at different avenues to satisfy its members, which includes finding a major sponsor of the Essendon Women's Network (M. Dilges, personal communication, 13 August 2001).

In summary, the Essendon Women's Network was founded by a group of professional women who are fans of the Essendon Football Club. Available to all women regardless of their membership status with the Essendon Football Club, the focus of the group is social. Essendon officials are so enthusiastic about the group they are aiming to find a major sponsor. The Women's Network is supported directly by the main club, which is in contrast to the relationship between the St Kilda Football club and its supporter group the Angels.

#### *Port Adelaide: Women in Power*

The establishment of Women in Power was also not a fully documented event in the history of the Port Adelaide Football Club. Information was gathered by personal communication with the chairperson of the supporter club. This was achieved via e-mail (Appendix E).

Women in Power, was established in the first year of Port Adelaide Power in the AFL in 1996. The Port Adelaide Football Club felt that this was a “vibrant and exciting way” to support the club and its players (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001). Established by the Membership Department of the Port Power the Women in Power club did not meet expectations. Members did not receive the promised merchandise nor the opportunity to be involved in social activities. This lack of activity resulted in many members voicing their disappointment (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001).

In order to help Women in Power achieve its potential a decision was made to make changes to the operations of the club. A gathering of all existing Women in Power members ended with the election of a committee consisting of 6 members. This committee, realising that the teething problems of the first year had inconvenienced many women, decided to give all the 1996 members a free 1997 membership (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001). A Port Adelaide employee was appointed to oversee the group to help maintain contact with the main football club.

For women to join Women in Power they have to be a member of the Port Adelaide Football Club. Membership to Women in Power was offered to current 1998 and 1999 members at no extra cost to their general membership. In 2000 however, the committee decided that a higher level of importance had to be placed on the group so for an extra \$29 (on top of \$99 general fee) members received a Women in Power scarf and in 2001 for only an extra \$26 members received a special pin (J. Harper, personal

communication, 2 August 2001). The inclusion of the Women in Power merchandise therefore makes membership of the club \$125. Women in Power however, offer different classes of membership. The Women in Power Concession membership costs \$105 and the Women in Power Associate membership costs \$115. A concession member receives everything general Women in Power members receive and the associate member has limitations on club publications and activities (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001). All of the membership prices include the general Port Adelaide Power membership.

Port Adelaide female supporters are informed of the opportunity to be involved with Women in Power when renewing their membership. The group is also supported by information about the club and its activities posted on the official club web site (Appendix E) (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001).

Women in Power want to be an innovative group especially for women who love both the Port Adelaide Football Club regardless of their age or background. To assist this, Women in Power have three specific aims:

1. Increase the membership base of Women in Power and therefore the Port Adelaide Football Club;
2. To raise funds for the Port Power Foundation and promotion to represent the interests of women;
3. Provide a welcoming and safe environment for female supporters of the Port Adelaide Football Club;



These aims have resulted in the Women in Power statement of purpose:

*“Women in Power is an innovative membership group for women members of the Port Adelaide Football Club that provides an outlet for fun and networking and an avenue to raise funds for the Port Power Foundation”* (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001)

In efforts to achieve their mission the Women in Power has initiatives that allow their members to be involved in the football club. Activities include trips to Melbourne, a barbecue with new players, cocktail parties, suppers, dinners that give members an opportunity to be seated with their favourite player and an opportunity to vote in the Women’s Choice Award. Members are advised of these events through the Women in Power newsletter and members are also encouraged to join the committee (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001). These activities are considered building blocks to bigger and better events in the years to come.

The Women in Power committee runs more autonomously than the previous structure with 10 members who are elected for three years. Contact with the main club is maintained through the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) who attends most of the Women in Power meetings (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001). With this support and the added help of a marketing liaison, Women in Power has a strong and successful future ahead. It is hoped that this will result in continual growth of the group and continual financial support for the Port Adelaide Football Club (J. Harper, personal communication, 2 August 2001).

To sum up, the Women in Power supporter group was formed in 1996. Although there was some teething problems in the early stages of the group it is now a successful part of the Port Adelaide Football Club. The club now runs with a committee providing social occasions for its members. Close contact is maintained with the main club with the presence of the CEO at most Women in Power committee meetings.

Overall, all four supporter groups were established without recording the processes of formation of the clubs in clubs documents or annual reports that explain the initiatives, aims and objectives planned to assist the success of the supporter groups. Despite this fact all of the supporter clubs wanted to provide for the perceived needs of female AFL fans. The provision of these needs is achieved by the organisation of social activities and efforts to involved the players in events. Newsletters are the main initiative used by the supporter groups to communicate with members and to provide relevant information.

The Angels, established in 1985 is the only supporter groups that is not a new initiative. Women in Power, was established in 1996, the Essendon women's network was established in 1998 and the Sirens were launched in 2000. All of the supporter groups are considered to have potential, even if membership trends for some show a decline.

The supporter groups utilise different management strategies for operating the clubs. The respective membership departments manage both the Sirens and the Essendon women's network. A committee manages the Angels and the Women in Power, but the Women in Power, unlike the Angels, has a direct connection with the main football club.

The groups use different fee structures and benefits, but only the Sirens and the Women in Power supporter groups require the women to be members of the main club.

The implementation of the women-only supporter groups to cater for the female AFL fans conforms to the discussion of Talamin and Page (1973) acknowledging that the exclusion of women from the sport world is declining. It also supports the sentiments of Stoddart (1986) that the spectator element of sport is crucial and must be given attention.

The emphasis that the supporter groups place on social activities is consistent with many studies (Melnick, 1993; Wann et al, 1999; Rottenburg, 2000; & Dietz-Uhler et al, 2000) that discuss the importance women place on social interaction when identifying themselves as sports fans. The supporter groups recognise that women do enjoy AFL but for different reasons to men, which is consistent with the discussion of Rottenburg (2000) who stated that attention needs to be paid to the subtle differences in men's and women's interest in sport. Collectively the supporter groups assist to dispel the historical attitudes discussed by Mangan and Nauright (2000) of women being unable to appreciate the finer points of sport and unable to treat sport as seriously as men.

This study on the Fremantle Dockers women-only supporter club, the Sirens, attempts to explore if attention has been paid to the subtle needs of female spectators. The following methodology chapter outlines the design and administration of this study to explore the feelings and opinions of supporters in the Dockers women-only supporter group.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter describes the research design of the study. Following discussion of the research design and the population used, the quantitative study is described. The research instrument, data collection and data analysis are outlined in this chapter.

#### *Research Design*

A positivistic approach was used in this study. There are two broad methods of collecting data when using the positivistic approach; these are experiments and surveys (Mitra & Lankford, 1999). This study adopted a census survey method by utilising a mailed survey form. To gain richer data from the survey open-ended questions (or a qualitative approach), were incorporated into the questionnaire, which allowed the respondents to be more subjective in their opinions and feelings about the group (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

The use of a mailed survey form was important to establish a distance between the respondents and the researcher. It reduced bias from the population derived by the return of questionnaires. Any bias in the sample derived was due to the motivations of the women who returned the survey form.

### *The study population*

The defined population of the study was the Sirens, a women only supporter club of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club, consisting of 220 members at the time of this study. The study involved a census of the Sirens membership as recorded by the Membership Department of the Fremantle Dockers. All were current members of the Sirens and Fremantle Dockers. The participants were identified from the Sirens membership list. The Fremantle Dockers membership department provided labels for mailing.

### *Research Instrument*

The research instrument was a self-administered postal questionnaire. Although this style of questionnaire limits clarifications by the respondents it was the quickest and simplest way to reach the Sirens population who were spread across the Perth Metropolitan areas and some country areas. In addition, a survey form was relatively inexpensive. It also allowed the respondents time to think about their answers before returning the form. This was aided by the inclusion of a tea bag with each questionnaire. The tea bag acted as an incentive for respondents to have a cup of tea and take 15 minutes to complete and return the survey form.

The final survey form was divided into three main sections (Appendix F). The first section concentrated on the Sirens' membership of the supporter group. The second section considered the personal thoughts the Sirens' have about their participation in a women-only supporter group. Section three captured the respondents demographic data.

The first Section of the questionnaire consisted of six questions. These questions were all closed questions requiring the respondents to tick the appropriate responses or rank their top three response choices for a question. Ranking was required for questions three to six. The ranking process required a ranking score of 1 for the most important response, 2 for the next most important response and 3 for the third most important response.

Question one focused on the length of time respondents had been members of the Fremantle Football Club. The second question gathered information on how the respondents became aware of the women-only supporter group. The third question identified the reasons why the respondents decided to join the supporter group. Question four determined the most enjoyed activities by members of the Sirens. Question five considered the importance of being a member of the Sirens. The sixth and final question for this section explored the expectations the Sirens have and if the Fremantle Dockers Football Club was meeting these expectations.

Section two had five open-ended questions seeking the opinions the Sirens held of their membership. Question seven, the first of Section two, asked the Sirens how they felt about their membership of the supporter club. Question eight sought the main benefits the Sirens believed they receive from their membership of the club, while question nine identifies how they felt the club could be improved. Respondents were asked to describe the club in response to question ten. Question eleven explored the members' preferences for watching men's or women's sport.

A demographic profile of the Sirens supporter group was achieved using eight parts. The first three parts sought details of the age, occupation and residential suburb of the respondents. Part four explored the ethnic background of the members' by asking for details of their birthplace and their immediate family. Part five examined the length of time the Sirens had been fans of Australian Football. Part six asked the respondents if they like the name of the supporter club. The seventh part identified the other sports in which the Sirens members were interested, while part eight allowed for further comments to be made regarding the Sirens, the Fremantle Dockers Football Club or the survey form.

### *Data Collection*

The Fremantle Dockers Football Club was approached through the Membership Manager in March 2001 and gave permission for the study to take place. The main club agreed that anything to be distributed to members would be proof read and approved by the Membership Manager of the Fremantle Dockers. The Membership Manager provided labels for Sirens' members to assist the mail-out procedure.

The collection of data consisted of two mail-outs to the entire Sirens' population. Both mail-outs were to all members regardless of returns from the first mail-out due to the anonymity of the questionnaire responses. The first mail-out occurred on the 18 July 2001 with respondents asked to complete and return the survey form by 1 August 2001. The second mail-out was sent on 3 August with a return date of 15 August 2001. The first survey mail-out was accompanied by a Sirens' newsletter and a covering letter (Appendix G). The second mail-out consisted of only the survey form and covering letter (Appendix H).

When the survey forms were mailed to the Sirens members a cover letter was attached explaining the details of the study. The cover letter for the second mail-out also included a thankyou to members who had already completed and returned their survey form. Also attached were a stamped return addressed envelope and a tea bag. The completed survey forms were returned to the researcher at Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus.

There were three major reasons why an anonymous questionnaire was used. Firstly, the respondents were completely anonymous to encourage them to give honest and open responses. Secondly, the use of a survey minimised the cost of the research. Finally, with the short time available for completion of an Honours thesis this was a quick and simple method of collecting data.

The census of the 220 members resulted in 128 returned questionnaires a response rate of 58.2 percent. Once the process of gathering the data was complete it was converted into a format that allowed the research questions to be answered. Missing data were excluded from the analysis. Although not all of the respondents completed every question, all 128 survey forms could be used in the data analysis process.

### *Pilot Study*

The pilot study was comprised of 12 women with an interest in AFL, but who were not members of the Sirens. The women were selected because of their similarities with the study population such as their interest in sport and Australian Football. In this pilot study, used to identify any glaring errors within the survey (Hussey & Hussey, 1997) the women were asked to substitute their favourite team for the



Sirens when completing the questionnaire. The results of the pilot study showed that no changes or additions to the survey form were necessary.

### *Ethics*

Collection of data commenced after approval for research was granted by the Research and Higher Degrees Committee of the Faculty of Business and Public Management. The approval date was 28 June 2001.

The cover letter informed subjects of the research and its objectives. This letter assured the respondents of total confidentiality and that participation was voluntary. The completion and return of the survey form implied consent. To ensure confidentiality all data was securely stored by the researcher. As the questionnaire was anonymous and there was no identifying marks on the form following completion of the research all data sheets and survey forms will be retained for a period of five years.

### *Data Analysis*

The quantitative data of the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics. Responses to question one and two are presented with totals for each category and the percentage this total represents.

Question three to six, which required rankings, are treated with a weighting system. The weights for the rankings are as follows, categories ranked 1 were given a weight of 3, categories ranked 2 had a weight of 2 and categories ranked 3 had a weight of 1. The weighting system was used to reveal the areas the Sirens considered of greater

importance. The weighted totals were used to rank the responses from most to least important. The higher the weighted total the more important was the ranking according to the category. The relevant data are presented in table form in the following chapter.

The open-ended questions in section two, question seven to eleven were analysed by theme. Relevant comments made by the respondents are categorised within themes according to the most frequent content for each. This enabled analysis of the meaning associated with the written text and the themes created a higher degree of generality (Henderson, 1991). Quotes representative of the themes and the content are included in the findings chapter.

### *Summary*

This study used a positivistic approach to the study, using an anonymous survey method. The data collected used two mail-outs over the period of one month. The questionnaires returned were analysed using descriptive statistics and a weighting system, with themes and content for the analysis of qualitative data. Ethical procedures and a pilot study were considerations of the study. The results are discussed in chapter four.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Findings**

#### *Introduction*

The results are presented in three sections. The first section consists of the demographic profiles of the Sirens. Section two examines the reasons for membership of the Sirens, while section three presents the personal thoughts of the Sirens about their membership and Australian football. These results are presented in a different sequence to that discussed in the methodology to enhance the readability and logic of the chapter.

The survey form was distributed to all Sirens members by two mail-outs. The mail-outs took place in July and August 2001. The Sirens group had 220 members at the time and 128 of these members completed and returned the survey form. This resulted in a high return rate of 58 percent, very high for an anonymous postal survey. All 128 of the survey forms could be used in the analysis of data.

The descriptive analysis was used, with weighted total of the responses to rank the categories from most to least important. The treatment of qualitative data involved grouping the comments of the Sirens into themes relevant to the questions asked. The comments made by the Sirens members are used to illustrate the content of the themes discussed. Many women gave more than one answer or ranked equally a number of responses to some questions. Therefore, the data tables often show a number of responses greater than the number of respondents. An example of this would be a Siren who became aware of the supporter group by two alternatives, renewing of membership and seeing an advertisement or story based on the group.

The analysis is based on the total number of responses. Direct quotes from written responses are used to illustrate the feelings of the women, who are identified by occupation and age. As this was an anonymous survey this form of identification illustrates the range of age and occupation and to portray their personalities. To retain the spirit of the responses to open-ended questions the words of the women have not been amended, but are presented as written on the survey forms, with any imperfections in spelling and grammar.

### **Demographic of the Sirens**

The demographic data provide a profile of the women who form the Sirens supporter group. This section of the survey consisted of seven questions. This included basic information regarding age, occupation and residential suburb. Information was also gathered on their birthplace and the birthplace of their immediate family and the amount of time as a fan of AFL. The final two questions explored their feelings about the name of the club, the other sports they are interested in and allowed the Sirens to make any relevant comments regarding these two areas.

#### *Age*

The age range of the supporter group was between 18 and 77, with an average age of 43 years, more than a quarter were aged between 45-54 years (26%). Almost half of the respondents were aged between 35-54 (48%), with the next largest age group under 35 (28%). The age of one Siren was unstated. Table 1 shows the age dispersion of the Sirens.

**Table 1: Age dispersion of Sirens' members**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
<b>18-24</b>	14	10.9	10.9
<b>25-34</b>	22	17.2	28.1
<b>35-44</b>	29	22.6	50.7
<b>45-54</b>	33	25.8	76.5
<b>55-64</b>	23	18	94.5
<b>65-74</b>	3	2.3	96.8
<b>75&amp; Over</b>	3	2.3	99.1
<b>Unknown</b>	1	0.9	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>	

N=128

*Occupation*

The majority of the Sirens members were professional women (49%). Of the 128 women involved in the study only one was unemployed. The professional occupations of some of the Sirens included: Accountant, Registered Nurse, Teacher, Consultant, Company Director and Business Owner. The next largest group classified themselves as non-professionals (23%). The next group were retired and housewives (20%). Table 2 displays the occupational status of the Sirens' members.

**Table 2: Occupation status of Sirens' members**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Professional</b>	63	49.2
<b>Non-professional</b>	30	23.4
<b>Retired</b>	14	11
<b>Home Duties</b>	12	9.4
<b>Student</b>	6	4.7
<b>Unemployed</b>	2	0.9
<b>Unknown</b>	1	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

N=128

### *Residential Suburb*

The Sirens resided throughout the Perth metropolitan area and were also situated in the country. The distribution of the Sirens members extended north to Lancelin and south to Mandurah. However, as expected there was a concentration of Sirens' members living in close proximity to the Fremantle area or south of the river. The women living south of the river was 72 percent, with approximately 45 percent of the Sirens living within a 10km radius of Fremantle. The Sirens who live in the country were situated in areas such as Margaret River and Wagin. The country members however, do make up only 5.5 percent (7 members) of the group.

### *Birthplace of the Sirens and their immediate family*

Eighty-four percent (107) of the Sirens, were born in Australia. Eighty-seven (68%) of the women specifically stated that they were born in Western Australia. The United Kingdom was the most common place of origin outside of Australia with ten (8%) women identifying this country as their birthplace. Four women chose not to state where they had been born. (See Table I1, Appendix I).

One hundred and sixty-six (65%) of the Sirens' parents were born within Australia making it the most common birthplace for this group. Further analysis shows that of the 166 parents born in Australia, 80 (31%) were born within Western Australia. Europe was the most identified region outside of Australia. However, the United Kingdom identified on 43 (17%) occasions was the most common birthplace of parents within the European region. Other countries identified a number of times were New Zealand and South Africa. The birthplace of 12 parents was unknown or unstated (See Table I2, Appendix I).

Australia was identified most often as the birthplace of the Sirens grandparents. Fifty-two percent were born within Australia. The United Kingdom however, was identified more often among this group with 30 percent originating from this region. Europe and New Zealand were also common birthplaces of the grandparents. The birthplace of 48 grandparents was unknown or unstated (See Table I3, Appendix I).

*Time as an AFL fan*

The longest length of time a Siren had followed the AFL was 59 years. The shortest amount of time following the sport was two years. The mean time a Siren had followed the game is 20.5 years. However, there is a large range of responses represented in the mean. The results show that 50 percent of the Sirens started to follow the AFL after the introduction of a Western Australian team (the West Coast Eagles) into the competition in 1987. Eighteen percent of the Sirens became fans after the introduction of the Fremantle Dockers in 1995. Only 11 (9%) Sirens were fans of AFL before it was televised 45 years ago. Seven (5.5%) chose not to state how long they were fans of AFL. Table 3 shows these results.

**Table 3: Time as an AFL fan**

<b>Time Sub-ranges</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>≤ 6 years</b>	23	18
<b>7-14 years</b>	43	33.6
<b>15-30 years</b>	26	20.3
<b>31-45 years</b>	18	14
<b>&gt; 45 years</b>	11	8.6
<b>Unknown</b>	7	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>100</b>

N=128

### *The name, Sirens*

The majority of the Sirens' women were in favour of the women-only supporter group being called the Sirens. One hundred and twenty (94%) were positive about the name. These members felt that the name was "catchy" and appropriately complemented the origins of the Fremantle Dockers. The members liked the mythical connections and believe it showed the group as strong and powerful:

*It has a ring to it (Clerk, 52)*

*It's strong and female (Retail, 19)*  
*Great name keeping the association with the sea (Consultant, 55)*

*I like how it links with mythology and provides alluring images (Student, 18)*

The six percent of women who did not like the name felt that the connotations of a name like Sirens are inappropriate for the group. They believed that it is too strong and does not complement the Fremantle Dockers or the women associated with the women-only supporter club, perhaps reflective of the groupie image.

*I do not like the connotation it has and not many people know the mythological reason for the selection of the name (Teacher, 46)*

*The Sirens name is somewhat belittling. A name with more professional connotations would be preferred (Investment, 35)*

*Perhaps I am old fashioned but perhaps there would have been a softer name (Home Duties, 64)*

### *Other Sports watched by the Sirens*

Ninety-seven percent (124) of the Sirens members were involved in or watched sports other than AFL. Many of the women stated that they enjoyed all sports regardless of the gender of the players. Some of the sports most popular amongst the Sirens were; tennis, cricket, netball, swimming, basketball and hockey. Some women even stated that their involvement in sport included coaching and scoring.



*I watch just about all sports but can't afford to be a member (Reception, 28)*

*I'm a member of the WACA. I watch athletics (level 1 coach), hockey, tennis and netball (Teacher, 48)*

*I'm a member of both tai chi and yoga (Pharmacy Assistant, 48)*

### *Summary*

The profile of the Sirens' members could be summarised in the following profile. The average age of the Sirens group is 43 and they were mostly born within Australia. The Sirens' parents and grandparents were also born predominantly in Australia followed by the United Kingdom. There is a large range in the length of time the Sirens have followed AFL, 2-59 years, but they do enjoy watching and participating in other sports. As mostly professional women the Sirens like the name of their club and feel it is appropriate for a group associated with the Fremantle Dockers.

## **Section Two**

### *Time as a Fremantle Dockers Supporter*

The first question asked the women how long they had been members of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club. The Fremantle Dockers Football Club competes with another Perth team (West Coast Eagles) in the AFL. The Eagles has been extremely successful in previous seasons compared to the Dockers that has had several unsuccessful seasons prior to 2001.

Many of the women became involved with the club from its inception in 1995, with 42 percent stating they were members of the club for six years from its foundation. The remaining respondents were relatively evenly distributed across the 1-5 year

membership bracket. The average membership period with the Fremantle Dockers is about 5 years. This information is summarised in Table 4.

**Table 4: Time as Fremantle Dockers Fan**

	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years
<b>Total</b>	10	21	17	11	15	54
<b>Percentage</b>	7.8	16.4	13.3	8.6	11.7	42.2
<b>Average</b>	<b>4.8 years</b>					

N=128

### *Becoming aware of the Sirens*

The Fremantle Dockers limited the promotion of the Sirens club relying on promotion through brochures delivered to the female members of the club with the renewal of general membership forms, word of mouth advertising and publicity derived from the inclusion of Perth media personalities.

The brochure, delivered with the renewal of general membership forms, was shown, not unexpectedly to be the most frequently mentioned promotional tool used by the Fremantle Football Club. Eighty-eight (59%) women identified this as the most influential factor for them joining the supporter group. The second most influential factor for joining the Sirens was seeing an advertisement or story on the club in the media. This promotional activity was identified by 30 (20%) of the women as the stimulus for taking out a Sirens membership. Friends had little impact with only 14 percent of respondents identifying their friends as an influence on their awareness of the Sirens. Word of mouth promotion did not seem to be effective in attracting members (Table 5).

**Table 5: Becoming Aware of the Sirens**

	<b>Renewal of Membership</b>	<b>I saw an ad/story</b>	<b>Friend</b>	<b>Media Personality</b>	<b>Sign at Ground</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	88	30	21	7	0	4	<b>150</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	58.7	20	14	4.7	0	2.7	<b>100</b>

N=128

Some of the responses in the ‘other’ category included: “My friends signed me up as a birthday present” and “I rang the Dockers to ask what sort of membership they have available.”

*Reasons for joining the Sirens*

Sirens membership is an additional option to the general membership of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club and costs \$25 per year for current members and \$75 per year for new members. Identifying the three most important reasons the Sirens’ members had for joining the group reveals their motivations to join the Sirens as a supporter of the Fremantle Football Club. The women on average selected about four reasons for joining the supporter club.

The three main reasons for joining were *showing dedication* 214 (26%) *meeting other women with a passion for ‘Aussie Rules’* 164 (20%) and *participate in Dockers community* 157 (19%). Forty-eight women stated that *showing dedication* was the most important reason for becoming a Siren. The Sirens were also interested in *meeting other women with a passion for ‘Aussie Rules’* identifying this on 32 occasions as the most important reason to join the club. Although more women in total identified *participating in the Fremantle Dockers community* as the reason for joining, the majority of the women selecting this option ranked it as a second or third

priority. This resulted in this response being ranked third after weighting the responses.

The Sirens members were not as motivated by the idea of *networking, meeting the players* or the *enjoyment of watching men's sport*. These responses were generally identified as a second or third priority. 'Other' relevant responses suggested the women's supporter group was an opportunity for various outcomes. "The membership of the Sirens was a gift"; "I thought it would be a good opportunity to find out what was happening at the club" and "My sister and I wanted to go to Melbourne and thought it would be a good opportunity to meet people." These results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Reasons for Joining the Sirens**

Response	Ranking					
		1	2	3	Total	Weighted Total
	<i>Weight</i>	3	2	1		
Show dedication		48	29	12	89	214
Meet other women with a passion for "Aussie Rules"		32	25	18	75	164
Participate in Dockers community		20	33	31	84	157
Women-only supporter club		13	27	16	56	109
Meet Players		8	8	15	31	55
Enjoy Men's sport		6	9	9	24	45
To Network		4	8	14	26	42
Friends		7	2	10	19	35
Other		4	2	1	7	17
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>411</b>	<b>838</b>

N=128

### *Most enjoyed activities*

The Sirens recognised the benefits they gained from their membership and the activities likely to attract like-minded women by ranking their most enjoyed activities. The ranking showed that the *social activities* were very popular with a weighted total of 204 (28%) with thirty-five women identifying it as the most enjoyed activity. The next three most popular activities however, were related more to football than the social experience. *Talking football* was second (20%), *cheering at games* was third most important (15%) and *meeting the coach and players* was fourth (15%). These three categories related to football, when combined, equate to about 50 percent of the most enjoyed activities.

*Talking football*, with other women the second most enjoyed activity was identified as the most enjoyed activity by twenty-seven women. Sixteen women identified *cheering at games*, as the most important activity. *The trip to Melbourne*, which is the biggest activity of the year for the Sirens was only recognised by 29 women as a most enjoyed activity, possibly due to the low participation opportunity due to the relatively high cost (\$900). Table 7 shows these results.

**Table 7: Most enjoyed Activities**

Response	Ranking					
		1	2	3	Total	Weighted Total
	<i>Weight</i>	3	2	1		
Social Activities		35	38	23	96	204
Talking Football with other women		27	25	17	69	148
Cheering at games		16	22	16	54	108
Meeting Coach and Players		17	20	15	52	106
Other		17	1	6	24	59
Trip to Melbourne		11	6	12	29	57
Training Sessions		4	10	12	26	44
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>350</b>	<b>726</b>

N=128

The ‘other’ response was identified on several occasions and included such comments as: “I enjoyed the panel of players that was held at Challenge Stadium” and “At the moment I have not been able to participate in Sirens activities.”

*The importance of being a Siren*

Exploring the factors that the Sirens consider to be important for being a part of a women-only supporter group clarified the motivation behind paying an extra fee to their current membership. The ranking of responses does not change with the weighting.

The top three categories (by weighted total) were all football related. The women gave similar responses to those for joining the Sirens. The most important factor for being a member of the Sirens club was to *show dedication* to the Fremantle Dockers

Football Club. Forty-seven women ranked this response as the most important reason to be a Siren and a total of 98 recognised this in their top three rankings. The women felt that the Sirens was important for they felt accepted as *serious supporters of football* and the Fremantle Dockers. Thirty-eight members ranked this as their most important reason for being a Siren and a total of 94 recognised it as one of the top three reasons of importance.

*Doing something tangible for the Dockers* was considered an important reason for being a part of the Sirens but this reason received more responses as a second or third priority with seventy-two of a total ninety responses. The football related factors received a greater importance ranking overall (78%) *than socialising with other women* or *doing something with female relatives*. ‘Other’ responses reflected some extreme views “It’s not very important to me” and “To take advantage of the organised, focussed support it provides to the club”. These results are displayed in Table 8

**Table 8: Importance of being a Siren**

Response	Ranking					
		1	2	3	Total	Weighted Total
	<i>Weight</i>	3	2	1		
Show Dedication		47	37	14	98	229
Serious football supporters		38	25	31	94	195
Something tangible for the Dockers		18	41	31	90	167
Socialise with other women		13	17	13	43	86
Something to do with Female relatives		10	13	17	40	73
Other		3		2	5	11
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>370</b>	<b>761</b>

N=128

### *Sirens expectations*

The Sirens members were asked to consider two aspects when expressing their expectations of the Fremantle Football Club. First, they were asked to rank what they expected from the club; secondly, they were asked to confirm whether the club had met these expectations. The responses to their questions were expected to identify gaps between expectations and services and to show where the club could improve its services to ensure members are satisfied with their membership of the Sirens. These responses may also assist in directing the future initiatives for the group to ensure their needs are met.

The expectations of the Sirens members and the importance they placed on their expectations varied amongst the sample group with the difference in the total rankings varying only slightly. The weighted totals however, showed that the *professionalism of the club* was considered the most important expectation of the members. Thirty-seven women ranked this expectation as the most important factor when renewing their membership of the club. The Sirens expected *recognition* as a supporter group, with a total of fifty-six rankings. This expectation, however is mostly considered as secondary to other expectations with the majority of women who identified it as important placing it as a second priority. Members expected to *be kept informed of club news and activities*. They wanted more than information on the Sirens. They wanted to be informed of what was happening with the entire Dockers organisation. These three expectations are considered of greater importance than a *winning team*, receiving *information on Sirens activities* and being given a *chance to plan activities* for the group as shown in Table 9.



**Table 9: Expectations of Sirens**

Response	Ranking					Weighted Total
		1	2	3	Total	
	<i>Weight</i>	3	2	1		
Professional on Every Level		37	15	13	65	154
Greater Recognition		18	29	9	56	121
Information on Dockers and Sirens		13	24	15	52	102
Winning Team		21	9	15	45	96
Information on Sirens Activities		11	18	13	42	82
Chance to Plan Activities		6	9	19	34	55
Other		3	1	2	6	13
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>235</b>	<b>469</b>

N=128

Interestingly some of the responses in the ‘other’ category referred to social activities: “More activities planned”, “More free activities for members” and “To have a least one function per month/two months that the average person can afford.”

#### *Meeting Sirens expectations*

Expectations were met in respect of *professionalism, information on the Dockers and information on Sirens activities*. However, there were three areas where expectations were not met: *winning team, greater recognition and a chance to plan activities*. The Sirens members show that the Dockers meet the most important expectation of *professionalism on every level*. Thirty-six of the women who ranked this category in their top three responses agreed that the club had met this expectation.

The Fremantle Football Club had not met the expectation of greater recognition for the Sirens supporter group. Thirty-nine of the total fifty-six respondents who had this expectation felt that recognition has not been given to the supporter group. The

members also believed the club had not met the expectation of a *winning team*, an opportunity to be involved with the *planning of activities* and ‘other’ relevant expectations. This information is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Meeting Sirens Expectations**

Response (Ranking by expectation)	Ranking							
	1 Met		2 Met		3 Met		Total	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Professional on Every Level	26	11	6	9	4	9	36	29
Greater Recognition	7	11	7	22	3	6	17	39
Information on Dockers and Sirens	9	4	19	5	8	7	36	16
Winning Team	0	21	1	8	0	15	1	44
Information on Sirens Activities	7	4	17	1	12	1	36	6
Chance to Plan Activities	1	5	0	9	3	16	4	30
Other	1	2	0	1	0	2	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>169</b>

N=128

### Summary

The Sirens club members have also been members of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club for at least 5 years. Many found out about the women-only supporter club through communications from the Dockers. Although the Sirens enjoy the social experience of the group their main motivation is to show dedication to the Fremantle Dockers and meet other women with a similar passion for football. The Sirens interest in football was the dominant factor in the women joining the club and considering it an important part of their membership. The activities chosen as the most enjoyable was also predominantly football related. The expectations and the opinions regarding if they have been met vary among the group.

### Section Three

The following results are related to section two of the survey that explored the Sirens members' personal thoughts on the supporter group. The results of these questions are organised by theme and relevant comments are categorised by theme (Appendix J). In some questions, some women have provided two, sometimes opposing, responses to a question. An example of this was a woman who felt proud to be a Siren, while at the same time felt a level of disappointment with the operations of the club.

There are six parts to this section of the findings. Part one explores the feelings of the Sirens. Part two discusses the main benefits the Sirens receive from their membership. Part three ascertains the improvements the Sirens felt are needed to improve the club. Part four develops a description of the club from the group. Part five considers the issue of women preferring men's sport and the final part contains further comments made by the women.

#### *Feelings about Sirens membership*

The Sirens' personal feelings about the Sirens club, which they have willingly joined, explore the women's views of their women-only club membership. The themes are *proud, enjoyment, belonging, giving to the Fremantle Dockers, opportunity, positive, isolation, disappointment* and *losing interest*.

The Sirens' members feel a sense of *pride* belonging to this women-only football supporters group. Their *pride* is elevated by the knowledge that they are unique to Western Australian football making them a special part of the Fremantle tradition.

The *pride* felt by some women was derived from the loyalty and dedication they were able to show to the club.

*I am proud to be involved with a women-only club. Women bring that different perspective to the game. (Consultant, 43)*

*I feel proud and honoured to be part of the Freo tradition and to know it is the only club in WA. (Home Duties, 59)*

*I'm proud to be a member of the Sirens because it further cements my membership and dedication to the Fremantle Dockers. (Home Duties, 38)*

*I'm proud to be a member of the Sirens because I'm one-eyed when it comes to the Dockers. (Farmer, 49)*

The Sirens concept has brought a lot of *enjoyment* to the group, as it is a unique part of Western Australian football. This has resulted in them enjoying the extra dimension of their membership, which for some this emanated from the promise of meeting others. The interaction was made more enjoyable by the discovery that many of the women had similar interests and shared the same passion for football.

*I really enjoy the fact that Fremantle have been so innovative to think of this concept for its women supporters. (Teacher, 27)*

*I enjoy the interaction with fellow supporters. (Teacher, 35)*

*I enjoy being a member of a group of women many of who share common interests particularly AFL. (Sales/Marketing, 45)*

Some women had a feeling of *belonging* by knowing that there were other women like themselves who enjoyed football. The Sirens made the women feel like they were a greater part of the Dockers. This resulted in the feeling that they were finally gaining from their support of the Dockers, something they had always wanted. For many of the Sirens women it is a dream come true because they were finally recognised as knowledgeable and passionate supporters of AFL. The supporter group

confirmed their contribution to the sport of football and the Fremantle Dockers in particular.

*I feel a closer member of the Fremantle Football Club*  
(Executive Assistant, 32)

*I feel great, it's good belonging to a club I love and the Sirens was a dream come true.* (Clerk, 63)

*I like being recognised as a female who appreciates football.* (Travel, 22)

*Fremantle Football Club has realised the important contribution that women make.* (Clerk, 52)

Membership of the supporter group felt like an important contribution. Joining the Sirens resulted in the members feeling they were *giving something to the club* to help the team now and in the future. They felt that giving back to the club was important because the club is still a growing entity. They felt that women should be able to give something to the club as a female member or as a general supporter.

*It's being more than just a member.* (Home Duties, 43)

*I feel like I'm giving something to the club, which is still in its formative years.* (Sales/Marketing, 45)

*For a female it is just that bit extra than being a member.* (Manager, 37)

*It feels good to give the extra bit that being simply a Dockers member can't give.* (Bar Person, 22)

The Sirens believe their contribution to the club also presented them with personal *opportunities* to build on the benefits they gained as a general member. The *opportunities* that they feel were attainable from their membership of a women-only supporter group were both football and socially related. The social opportunities, however also involved an element of football. They felt the club gave every member regardless of age, the opportunity to be involved in the club and meet the people they support.

*It gives me an opportunity to take my interest further than just matches at Subiaco. (Self-employed, 53)*

*It's an opportunity for female supporters to get together and discuss football. (Administration, 40).*

*It offers women of all ages the opportunity not only to support their favourite team but the opportunity to meet coaches and players. (Self-employed, 45)*

Feeling that they were giving to the club, belonging and being more involved in football has resulted in most of the women feeling positive about the supporter club. The members saw the Sirens as a great concept and they were very excited about the future of the club and what it could offer.

*Great, it's a wonderful idea. (Retired, 62)*

*I'm excited about meeting different people from outside my current social network. (Occupational Therapist, 27)*

In contrast to the positive feelings that many of the Sirens had, there was a feeling of disappointment and the belief that the Fremantle Football Club has not delivered what it promised. Some felt that it did not live up to their expectations. The perceived inability of the Fremantle Football Club not to meet some expectations has resulted in a high level of disappointment for some Sirens members. The disappointment felt by the members was compounded by a belief that the Fremantle Dockers does not cater to all female members. Some of the women felt that they were missing out, as they could not afford the activities. The feeling that the Sirens cater to specific women has resulted in two distinct feelings, *isolation* and *a loss of interest in the group*. Some Sirens' members were struggling to find their place amongst the group. This has resulted in negativity towards the supporter group. One explanation offered for these unmet expectations was that the organisers of the club were bored with the

concept. The feeling that they won't be missing out on anything by not joining next year has strengthened their negativity.

*Not what I expected, I expected more.* (Health Professional, 36)

*Thought it was good in the beginning, but it doesn't seem as great a club as I thought.* (Home Duties, 35)

*I feel the running of the Sirens is a chore for those who are running it (it shouldn't be).* (Teacher, 42)

*I'm disappointed because I'm not a professional person and feel the Sirens cater more for that type of woman unlike myself who is a student, housewife and can't afford trips interstate.* (Farmer, 49)

*I am a bit confused as to where I fit in.* (Teacher Assistant, 49)

*I thought I would feel special. I feel isolated.* (Doctor, 40)

*I haven't found any reason to re-join.* (Administration, 50)

*I'm not planning on wasting \$75 next year. What's the point in having a club where you can't even get to meet the people that you so strongly support?* (Reception, 28)

### *Main benefits gained as a Siren*

The Sirens identified five main benefits felt gained from extending their general membership. Examining these establishes a focus for the Fremantle Football Club when providing for the members of the women-only supporter group. The five themes for this section are *no benefit, social activities, social interaction, information and belonging*.

The most common response from the Sirens members' was a negative one: they reported *no benefits* from their membership of the club. Many women felt this was similar to the main Fremantle Dockers Club. The cost of the events organised for the Sirens group seemed to be a limitation for many members as they could not pay to obtain the benefits available. Although there was a feeling that there are no any

benefits to be gained from membership of the Sirens, many women were also optimistic about the possibility of this situation improving. Others felt that benefits will be gained when the Sirens become an established entity of the football club.

*I gain no benefit from the Sirens, but then again I gain no benefit from the Fremantle Football Club. (Registered Nurse, 36)*

*So far no benefits, I have severe personal budget limitations and cannot participate as much as I'd like. (Administration, 48)*

*Still to come!! I'm sure friendships will be formed and I'll be re-joining next year too. (Retired, 60)*

*Perhaps as the club becomes more established more activities will eventuate that will enable members to become more interactive with aspects of the club. (Clerical, 57)*

*I gain very little, as I don't attend many functions. (Clerk, 52)*

There are members who believed that the club was already established and successfully provided *social activities* with other fans of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club. This allowed many women to interact on a social and professional level using their appreciation of footy as a means to get to know each other. The knowledge that other women were just as passionate about football as they were gave many Sirens members the confidence to discuss the game they love. The setting allowed the women to talk confidently about the game and brought the group closer together.

*The Sirens gives the members an opportunity to do something different from their everyday lives. (Occupational Therapist, 27)*

*You get to meet other women who like football. It shows there are other women in WA who are very passionate about their football. (Student, 20)*

*Being able to mix with people with a similar interest in football and discuss facets of the game within a group where your opinions are given some credence. In mixed gender groups males dismiss the opinions of females as not worthy of consideration. (Self-employed, 53)*

*It's good to have a ladies' side of the club. Mixing with women who have a passion for the greatest game in the world and being able to support it from*



*the female point of view, which is more loyal, passionate and dedicated than males. (Consultant, 55)*

*I have made lots of new friends and had lots of laughs with people who don't make fun of you for asking dumb questions. (Student, 18)*

Other benefits gained by the Sirens members was the *information* supplied to members. The members also have a sense of *belonging* to the club.

*The only benefit I get from my Sirens membership is information about what is going on in the group and its relationship to the club. (Lecturer, 53)*

*I feel a belonging to a group who have the same passion. (Registered Nurse, 48)*

### *Improving the Sirens*

The Sirens were asked to identify improvements that they felt were needed to make the Sirens a better supporter club. The responses may suggest ways to cater for the needs and expectations of the members in an effective and efficient way while allowing the club to also benefit from their participation. The eight themes for this section include; *more activities, Sirens input, information, introductions, player involvement, less expense, merchandise and sitting together.*

Sirens members wanted more occasions to meet socially and believed this can only happen if there are more social activities throughout the year. Many believed this is necessary because there was not much else on offer for the members. Many suggested ideas that they felt were suitable for the supporter group. The suggestion included: casual dinners, movie nights and player panels.

*More social activities before and after the games, and in general. (Claims Officer, 25)*

*Increase the amount of functions per year as if you can't afford to go to Melbourne every year there isn't much else on offer. (Reception, 40)*

*More activities/meetings with the members, ie, BBQ's, dinners, quiz nights, competitions, meeting place for Sirens to watch away games. (Reception, 28)*

*I would like to see more get togethers, before each match played at home (Self-employed, 50)*

Some members believed that they should do more than merely give suggestions for activities. They wanted to be involved in the daily organisation of the club. A Sirens committee was suggested, to plan for a greater range of activities for the members.

*The Sirens should have their own committee and liaise with the club – not be run by the current officials. (Teacher, 46)*

*Perhaps asking members for ideas and suggestion will encompass a greater area than presently covered. (Clerical, 57)*

The lack of input by the members has them craving information about what is happening at the Fremantle Football Club. The lack of a calendar of activities has led to the Sirens feeling they cannot adequately prepare for the activities that do occur. The little information the Sirens do receive focuses on the social events and the Sirens would prefer other information of interest to them. The Sirens also wanted information on football to improve their knowledge of the game.

*More information on what is happening there is a lack of communication. (Librarian, 63)*

*There should be more advanced notice of functions maybe a calendar at the beginning of the season. (Administration, 27)*

*More information about what is happening, more time to prepare, eg, Melbourne. (Bar person, 22)*

*Should be a more informative newsletter eg small bio on each player. Not just on the 'outings' coming and going. (Anonymous)*

*Occasional meetings of the Sirens to learn more about the rules and decisions made in football to take an even more informed interest of the game.  
(Clerk, 57)*

Feeling alone at many of the social occasions prompted many Sirens to suggest the organisers of the club implement a process for introducing members to each other at

events or new members nights. Introduction at these gatherings would support women who attend on their own to meet other supporters. Some members felt uncomfortable with the current social environment.

*I would like to have some type of introduction system to encourage members who may not know anyone to attend and not feel isolated so they would really feel a part of the Sirens. (Retired, 62)*

*It should be hosted in a much more-friendly manner, much too into self-social climbing and basically a chance to seek media attention. (Retired, 65)*

*Would like some sort of list that members can put their names on to be able to get to know other Sirens in their area. (Customer Service, 34)*

*What would be nice is if members would look out for someone who may be alone and make them feel a part of the group. (Clerk, 63)*

Other suggestions made to improve the Sirens experience included: *more player involvement, less expensive activities, Sirens merchandise and a Sirens' sitting area.*

*I loved the old after match functions where players were able to be accessed for autographs etc. It made all the members feel part of the club. (Accountant, 37)*

*Because I'm not in the position to enjoy the Melbourne trip I would love to see more activities such as the dinner and movie nights. (Retail, 38)*

*Exclusive items for Sirens members only. (Mid-wife, 49)*

*It would be nice to have all the Sirens sit together at some of the home games. (Radiology, 47)*

### *Describing the Sirens*

This question explored the perceptions held by the Sirens club members of their club. It is a unique concept in Western Australian football, but dependent of the culture of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club to promote the club. In return the Dockers enjoy the passion and loyalty of the Sirens. The five themes for this section reveal

aspects of the culture of the Sirens; *footy lovers, female support group, social, fun and disappointing.*

The Sirens group see themselves as *footy lovers* who have a passion for the game of Australian football and the Fremantle Football Club. The Sirens members enjoy talking footy and want to be accepted as equal to male football supporters. The Sirens club was identified as evidence of members' interest in football not just the looks of the players.

*The Sirens are a women-only supporter club of the Fremantle Dockers who have a passion for football and especially the Dockers. (Accountant, 24)*

*A ladies club, where we get enjoyment talking and watching football just like men. They think we don't feel the same but we do. (Home Duties, 45)*

*A group of women who are avid supporters of their team, not just a group of women interested in watching men in tight shorts. (Teacher, 42)*

*The Sirens is an opportunity for women who love the Fremantle Football Club and the game of football to get together at meetings and social functions so they can discuss the highs and lows and the decisions made by the club. (Teacher, 27)*

The Sirens was also described as an extension to the Fremantle Dockers Football club involving women. Other positive descriptions of the club noted that it was very *social*. The social atmosphere made the club *fun* and *enjoyable* to be involved with.

*I would describe it as the Fremantle Football Clubs female supporters' club. (Retail, 36)*

*The Sirens is a women-only club for all ages from twenties to oldies who get together to have a good time and let their hair down. (Home Duties, 59)*

*I tell everyone what great fun we have at our get togethers and functions. I'm always trying to get people to join. (Clerk, 63)*

Not all members describe the club in such a positive light. Some responses suggested that the promotion of the club was not accurate because events promised did not eventuate. Some Sirens felt that the club did not give you value for money.

*So far a bit of a non-event. (Finance, 53)*

*Don't judge a book by its cover. If you join with friends it's fine but when you speak to people who come on their own, you don't get introduced and you don't feel comfortable. (Administration, 50)*

*Don't bother, you get nothing for your money. When there is an activity it costs a fair bit and you don't have to be a Siren half the time anyway. Rip-off. (Reception, 28)*

### *Preference for men's sport*

This question was deliberately based on the assumption that the Sirens members preferred men's sport. It drew some interesting reactions that indicated that the Sirens' have a broad interest and involvement in many sports. The themes for this section are; *I don't! I enjoy both men's and women's, it's not men's sport it is AFL, the ability of the players, the looks of the players, the accessibility of men's sport and family influence.*

Sirens' members did not associate their enjoyment of AFL as showing a preference for men's sport. 'Aussie Rules' was seen as one of many sports that they enjoyed watching. Often the members did not make a distinction between the type of sport, but rather their enjoyment of sport influenced their viewing. Others did not identify AFL solely as *men's sport*. Some respondents were adamant in their rejection of any preference towards men's sports

*Your assumption is that I do! I don't! Football is just one of the many sports that I enjoy watching and I'm always disappointed that women's sport/teams get such a raw deal in this state, country. (Professional, 45)*

*I don't distinguish between sports whether it's a male/female thing. I Like watching all sports. (Administration, 50)*

*I don't! I believe football is just as much a girl's sport as a man's and was on the girls' football team throughout high school. You can't classify one sport as men's or women's it's discriminatory. (Student, 18)*

*I don't! I like watching any well run and well disciplined person or team of either gender. (Retired, 65)*

The preference amongst other members was not for men's sport generally, but AFL specifically. Many stated that they liked the game so much that if women played they would also watch that form of Australian Football. The Sirens felt that AFL was the only sport that gave the excitement and atmosphere they wanted.

*I enjoy watching Australian Rules football specifically rather men's sport generally. (Sales/Marketing, 45)*

*I don't think I have preference for men's or women's sport. If the Dockers had a women's team I'd support them as well. (Farmer, 49)*

*I enjoy watching all sport, but 'Aussie Rules' is just so exciting there is nothing else like it, the highs are so high – the lows are so low but it is just the passion of the game. (Consultant, 55)*

*This is an irrelevant question!!! I never think of AFL as "men's" sport. It is an exciting sport, which is enjoyed by all ages and sexes. I love this aspect, It's a clear winner not the boring 0-0 of soccer or yawn of cricket. It's AFL I love not men's sport as such. (Professional, 49)*

Some Sirens felt that men have *greater sporting ability* than women and this in turn made men's sport more exciting to watch and support. The members felt that it is the *superior skill* of men that made sport exciting.

*Men's sport is generally of a higher standard. It is usually faster, smarter, more intense and more captivating. I believe men are more prepared to put their body on the line during a game, which makes it more exciting. (Student, 19)*

*More action, more atmosphere. (Student, 19)*

The skill and atmosphere were not the only attractions for some women. The *looks of players* were inviting and gave the Sirens an opportunity to fantasise about their favourite athletes. Some feel this reaction was natural due to their gender.

*The men are attractive and they usually have good bodies.* (Student, 20)

*Are you serious? Women want to watch men and men want to watch women.*  
(Administration, 40)

Other influences on the preference for men's sport include suggested external pressures such as *access* and *family*. These other influences made it easier to follow. Family was also an influence, with many women involved due to their husbands and male children's interest in football.

*There tends to be much more male sport on t.v. So as a sport fan I tend to watch it.* (Student, 20)

*Because my husband and son have been involved and I have supported them.*  
(Retired, 60)

### *Further Comments*

The final section of the survey enabled the Sirens members to make any further comments regarding the Sirens, The Fremantle Dockers Football Club or the survey. This allowed the Sirens to address issues not covered in the survey or to reiterate their feelings on specific issues. The six themes were found in these general comments that ranged from criticism of the main team to recognition of the Sirens: *there should be greater recognition of members, involvement of members, it's a hard time for the Dockers, the Fremantle Dockers are unprofessional, the Sirens is a great concept and feed back of results.*

Members were aware that the 2001 season had been *difficult for the club* (few wins and coach sacked) and the many obstacles to be overcome to make the club stronger.

*They just have to get through these tough times and come out stronger at the other end. It's not easy running footy clubs.* (Home Duties, 64)

The Sirens, however still believed that *greater recognition of supporter and members* was required due to the support they had shown to the club through the hard times of the team. The members felt that the club should not forget the foundation on which it was built.

*I feel the supporters sit in the rain and sun etc and stay to the very end watching yet another loss and players don't even bother to acknowledge their supporters.* (Project Administration, 26)

*In the search for new members Fremantle Football Club has to not forget they originally marketed themselves as a people's club.* (Student, 20)

*I feel like the Fremantle Dockers, as a club is very unprofessional and disorganised. In order to re-join they would have to offer something worthwhile and unique.* (Reception, 28)

This image of the Dockers as a 'people's club' raised a belief that *members should be involved in the operations* of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club and the Sirens supporter club. Some believe the skills and experience they have can be of some use.

*Members to have 'a say' in the day to day running of the club. It should be a member's club.* (Librarian, 63)

*I would love the chance to be active in the Sirens and in the Football Club. I would like to use my social, admin and interpersonal skills to the good of the club.* (Consultant, 55)

For some, however the Sirens club is a *disappointment*. Many believed that the negative events affected everyone. The public image of the club was an embarrassment to the members

*The Dockers need to sort out their hierarchy and present a more professional and loyal image.* (Occupational Therapist, 27)



*The sacking of Damian Drum was a disgrace and only reflected badly on the Fremantle Management. I was embarrassed to be a member. (Promotions, 36)*

The Sirens wanted the club to be aware of what they have said in this survey and hoped that the club *receives feedback* of survey results.

*I hope the results of this survey are noted by the Fremantle Football Club and influence their decision making with regard to female members. (Self-employed, 53)*

### *Summary*

The personal thoughts of the Sirens about their membership were generally positive. However, some women felt that the club could be better organised to create a more friendly and social atmosphere. The Sirens enjoyed socialising but felt they would gain more from the club if introduced to other members. Although the Sirens have an interest in other sports, Australian football has a special attraction. The group would like to be more involved in the operations of the Sirens club and also have greater involvement in the Fremantle Dockers Football Club as a whole.

### **Summary of Findings**

The Sirens group, tend to be older women and professional women are the most significant group. The women have a long-term interest in the AFL and derived more satisfaction from activities that were related to football. The Sirens are passionate football supporters, however, the categories described by Hess (2000) and Sheedy (1998) did not clearly emerge from these results, although characteristics such as loyalty, community and barrackers were evident. Although supportive of the Sirens and the Fremantle Dockers Football Club the members felt improvements were needed to the operations of the supporter club so it caters more effectively for their needs as fans of AFL and the Dockers in particular.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### *Introduction*

This chapter summarises the study of the Sirens supporter group. The findings from the previous chapter are discussed while addressing the objectives of the research. The implications of these findings on management and operations of the supporter group are examined. Recommendations for the Fremantle Dockers management of the supporter club and further study are provided at the conclusion of the chapter.

#### *Study approach*

A census of the Sirens' members was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire to capture the responses from 128 Sirens' members (58% of the 2001 supporter club membership). The analysis of the quantitative data used descriptive statistics. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic and content analysis.

#### *Summary of results*

This study examined the reasons why women enjoy watching men's sport and if there are specific reasons why they joined a women-only supporter club of a male sport. Three research questions arose from this purpose, from which specific objectives to answer these questions were developed. In responding to the research objectives, the research questions were also answered.

*Who are the women who join the Sirens club of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club?*

*Sirens demographic profile*

The Sirens members were mostly born in Australia. Most of the parents and grandparents were also born and raised in Australia. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the Sirens members were exposed to Australian football from a very young age. The long periods of time that some of the Sirens had followed the AFL reflects their long interest in Australia's "national sport".

It is interesting to note that some of the Sirens and their immediate family, who were not born in Australia, originated from countries such as the United Kingdom, Italy and New Zealand. These countries also have versions of football (soccer and rugby) that are popular national sports, which are also male dominated. It is reasonable to suggest that even those Sirens members not born in Australia were exposed to sports followed passionately as a part of the culture in their countries of origin. It is possible that this cultural heritage made it easy for these members to adapt to supporting the game of Australian football and to develop a passion for the team they adopted as their own. This could be the case for the Sirens as members of the Fremantle Dockers.

Another interesting feature is the period of time that the Sirens have been fans of the AFL. Fifty percent of the women became fans of the game after the introduction of the West Coast Eagles in 1987 and 18 percent became fans in 1995 with the introduction of the Dockers. This membership response suggests that the Sirens were

influenced to follow AFL by the formation of a local team into the national competition as it gave them greater access to the sport of AFL.

Almost fifty percent of the Sirens were professional women, aged within the 35-54 age range and approximately 45 percent of the members live within a 10km radius of Fremantle. These characteristics are inconsistent with the membership profile portrayed by Eddington (2001) of a supporter group with a range of ages, occupations and ethnic origins. It appears that the supporter club attracts a particular, perhaps a select group, of female supporters. However, there was a large composite group of low-income earners, such as housewives, retirees and students, who were also Sirens members.

*Why do female members of the Fremantle Dockers Football Club join and continue as members of the women's supporter club the Sirens?*

#### *Reasons for joining the Sirens*

The findings show that the game of Australian football and showing support to the Fremantle Dockers were the most important reasons for being a part of the Sirens supporter group. The top two responses were football related and included the notions of *showing dedication* and being a part of the *Fremantle Dockers community*. These sentiments conform to some of the characteristics described by Sheedy (1998) as loyal, religion and community. The third top reason given high priority was *meeting other women with a passion for 'Aussie Rules'*, reflecting the suggestion of Melnick (1993) that men and women use sport to meet others with a shared love of the game.

A finding of interest was the lack of influence by *friends* on the women's football passion. The lack of recognition given to friends does not fit with the findings of Rottenburg (2000) who reported women find watching sport more enjoyable when in the company of friends.

The relatively low level of importance placed on *meeting players* and *watching men's sport* as a reason for joining was consistent with Butler's (1998) view that women were interested in more than men in tight shorts. However, the finding is inconsistent with Hess's (2000) view of women as voyeurs, who admired male participants for the way they look and how they play the game.

The women's reasons for joining the Sirens club complemented the activities that they found most enjoyable. *Social activities* were ranked highly as the most enjoyed, which may be consistent with Hess's (2000) description of women as socialites who used the AFL as a means to meet others in an approved social setting. The similarities between reasons for joining and most enjoyable activities are shown in the high ranking of football related activities (*cheering at games, talking football with other women*). This finding indicates a degree of satisfaction that the desire to be involved in football club activities is met through many of the Sirens functions. The football club and the Sirens club organisers may be able to use this information to enhance Sirens activities by providing more football related events in consultation with the members.

The enjoyment the Sirens reportedly gained from *talking football with other women* does not conform to the observation of Bahk (2000) that women are less likely to

participate in 'masculine behaviour' such as discussing and reading about sport. Perhaps this response is due to the study population and its commitment to sport. The enjoyment from *cheering at games* reflects Hess's (2000) description of women as barrackers. This also confirms the findings of Dietz-Uhler et al. (2000) who found that women place great importance on cheering when describing themselves as sports fans. These findings suggest further that Sirens' members want to indulge in all aspects of sport supporter behaviour, cheering at games and talking and reading about sport. The club activities could be assessed to increase this type of activity.

### *Importance of being a Siren*

*Showing dedication* was the most important reason for being a Siren. Also given as a reason for joining the club, it appeared crucial to the Sirens members that they show the Fremantle Dockers their loyalty to the team and the club as a whole. Again this is consistent to some of the characteristics described by Sheedy (1998) as loyalty, religion and a sense of community. The importance placed on being taken *seriously as a football supporter* suggests the Sirens want to dispel the negative attitude towards female spectators identified by Mangan and Nauright (2000), which assumes women have a lack of knowledge and are unable to treat sport as seriously as men.

The importance placed on *family and friends* was surprisingly low. This response reflects the reasons for joining, where the Sirens felt it was more important to be a supportive loyal member than to have a good time with friends. This is inconsistent with other studies that reported that women have more interest in watching sport if family and friends were also involved (Rottenburg, 2000; Wann et al., 1999).

These findings show that the women who have been attracted to join the Sirens are dedicated to their team and the sport. They have a great interest in the sport and participate in a number of ways. It is these interests that have influenced their membership rather than the external influence of friends and family.

### *Expectations of the Sirens*

The most important expectation of the Sirens was for the Fremantle Dockers to be *professional on every level*. This is not surprising given the professional occupational status of many of the Sirens respondents and the requirement to pay an additional fee to be involved with the supporter group. It would be expected that their professional standards would be transferred to their expectations of the supporter group.

The Sirens also wanted *greater recognition* for the knowledge and support of their group that reflects Melnick's (1993) findings that spectators share in the knowledge that they are vital and important to the club and the game. The Sirens expressed their loyalty and dedication to the Fremantle Dockers club and they want some acknowledgment returned to them as members. Perhaps this can be explained by Rottenburg's (2000) findings that women have a love for sport but require attention to be paid to the subtle differences in their needs. It could be argued this feeling of a lack of recognition given to the Sirens women portrays an attitude of the Fremantle Dockers that is consistent to the conclusion of Dempsey (1990) that women are "sport" associates who are expected to encourage the men's pursuit of glory, but not as equal participants.

The expectation of *useful information about both the Dockers team and the Sirens* was more important than the expectation of a *winning team*. This is interesting given the recent poor performance of the team in 2001. However, this expectation is consistent with the findings of Sargent (1998) who concluded the deeper interest that women have in the lives of athletes overshadows their interest in the victory and success of the team. However, a current newsletter (Appendix C) seems to trivialise the Sirens involvement in the club and their interest in football by promoting activities such as a “girls” shopping day on the Melbourne trip. This suggests the editors of the supporter club newsletter are unaware how seriously the women view their participation in football.

The findings suggest that perceived poor performance in administration and operation of the supporter group disgruntled members more than a poor performance by the league team on the field. The Fremantle Dockers Football Club needs to be aware that not all of the expectations of the Sirens were met. The managers may need to change the emphasis of the supporter group to expand the opportunities for learning about football and related social activities.

#### *Catering to the Sirens needs and improvements to the Sirens supporter club*

The responses revealed polarisation of members’ views on benefits from and improvements to the Sirens club. One viewpoint stated that there were *no benefits* to be gained from the membership of the Sirens; the other view expressed that the main benefit was *social interaction* or involvement in *social activities*. Other studies (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000; Melnick, 1993; Rottenburg, 2000; Wann et al., 1999) that found spectators liked the social aspect of being a sports fans (e.g., involvement of



family and friends). While the Sirens stated social activities as the main benefit, overall football related activities (cheering at games, talking football with other women) were the most preferred aspects of their Sirens membership.

The women who claimed not to receive any benefits from their membership tended to cite personal constraints such as a limited budget, restricting their full participation in many social activities. The women pay a Sirens' membership (a levy on the general Dockers membership) then there appears to be a charge for many of the social events. The club policy to make the Sirens self-sufficient would appear to disadvantage some members and may deter other women from becoming members. One example is the trip to Melbourne, a high cost event, beyond the financial resources of many women without careful planning and budgeting for those on fixed or low incomes (students, housewives, retirees). The timing of some events is also a restriction on the full participation of some members in social activities. This disadvantage occurred due to the decision of the Fremantle Football Club to have activities at night and during the week.

This suggests that there is little flexibility in the time and location of events and the cost. It is reasonable to assume that these factors influenced the feelings of *disappointment* and *isolation* of some Sirens' members. The perception held by some Sirens that they are not catered for because they don't have the time and money to be involved, supports the earlier suggestion that the Sirens club appears to cater to a select group of the main supporter group resulting in some women not gaining any benefits. This could be interpreted as subtle indirect discrimination as some Sirens are excluded unintentionally by the criteria to be involved (time, money). This

finding is contrary to Eddington's (2001) comment that the Sirens is a group that caters to all female Fremantle Dockers supporters regardless of social or economic background.

The benefit of *social interaction* was not centred on the activities. The benefit the women believe they gained was a realisation that there are other women who also loved football and loved to talk about it. The statements of the women suggested that they do not have the opportunity to talk to other women with a similar passion for football in their everyday lives. This may also indicate that many of the women attend Sirens activities alone influencing the suggestion that the supporter club could be improved by having introductions or welcoming nights for new members.

The women indicated that they received greater benefits when club activities included football related activities. This response suggests that the members were more interested in being part of a strong group of like-minded women who wanted to contribute to the club through football related activities and were less interested in social activities unrelated to football. It is reasonable to assume that the club was not providing enough football related activities because the Sirens indicated that an increase in these types of activities would improve the supporter club. The desire for an increase in social activities is again consistent with the findings of other studies that discuss the importance women place on social interaction while being involved in sport (Dietz-Uhler et al., 2000; Melnick, 1993; Rottenburg, 2000; Wann et al., 1999).

There was a feeling from respondents that the Sirens members should have more direct input to the activities planned for them. As a group of predominantly professional women it appears that they feel that the current operation of the supporter club does not sufficiently cater for their needs, nor involves them in planning for their club, nor meets their needs as fans of the Fremantle Dockers. It could be argued that the Fremantle Dockers Football Club administrators treat the Sirens as “associates” and not as equal participants in the club as discussed by Dempsey (1990) due to the lack of opportunity to have input into the operation of their supporter club. Dempsey (1990) noted that women in Australian sports clubs were relegated to fundraising, supplying food and running the canteen and not considered full members and equal participants in their club. The Angels (St Kilda) supporter group, epitomise this characteristic described by Dempsey (1990) as the operation of the club is focused on activities such as fundraising but it is not a recognised segment of the St Kilda Football Club.

Another deficiency was also reflected in the desire of the Sirens to receive *more information* from the club. Rottenburg (2000) also found that unlike men, women were not afraid to ask for information. The array of information the women wanted ranged from advanced notice of event dates to player information. It appears that there was insufficient communication between organisers and members. The format of the newsletter (Appendix C) supports the view of the Sirens that relevant information is not supplied as most of the published material was not related to football or the operations of the supporter group. The perceived lack of communication could be the factor in the view of some Sirens that there are not benefits from the club as they might not be aware of what is available.

*Do these women have specific reasons for following a male dominated sport?*

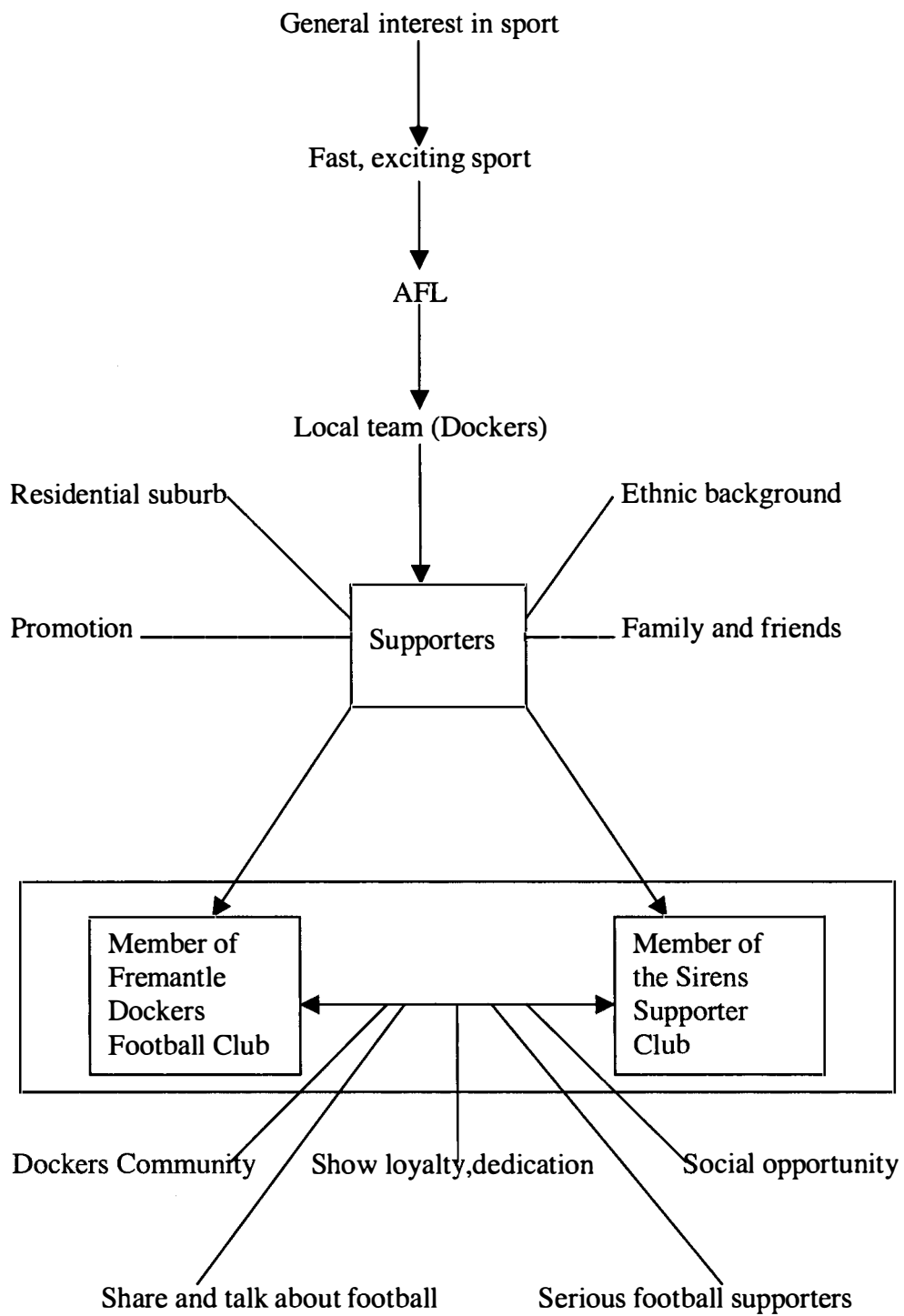
*Interest in men's sport*

The initial interest of this study was women who follow men's sport and the reasons for their intense interest (some call it passion) in Australian football. The Sirens responses to the assumption that they preferred men's sport revealed a range of reactions. Some women openly stated their enjoyment of the players looks and physiques, which is contrary to the findings of Butler (1998) that indicated women are not interested in "men in tight shorts". Other Sirens were influenced by the high accessibility of men's sport on television or live matches. Burnett et al. (1993) noted that many companies focus advertising during sports events on women and use more effective broadcasting techniques to appeal to women, such as sexualising sportsmen and explaining rules to those less knowledgeable about the sports (including Australian football). Others were influenced to follow AFL by their partners' or children's interest in the game, reflecting the findings of Wann et al. (1999) that women are more interested in sport when family is involved. However, family and friends did not emerge as a strong influence on membership of the Sirens.

Many of the Sirens strongly rejected the assumption of their preference for men's sport stating they did not prefer men's sport to women's sport. They supported their stand by listing the variety of other sports in which they had an interest, such as netball, soccer and basketball. It appears that these women have a general interest in fast moving sports like football. They like the excitement of these sports and would watch them even if women played them. Wann et al. (1999) also reported fans of quick paced games such as football were motivated by feelings of extreme excitement.

It was also interesting to note that the preference was not for men's sport generally, but AFL specifically, reflecting the attraction in style of play in the sport. The description of football as *exciting, skilful* and *full of atmosphere* strengthened the women's preference for AFL. Rottenburg (2000) also discussed how women are inspired and motivated by the feats of players on the field. Ryan (1998) reported on the high spectator interest of women in the AFL, perhaps suggesting Australian football as a sport of choice to satisfy this interest in fast exciting sports. For women the high accessibility of Australian football may contribute to this choice. The preference shown for AFL specifically rather than men's sport generally is supported by the Sirens description of themselves as *passionate footy lovers* who prefer the Dockers to any other AFL club. The confidence displayed by the women in describing themselves in this way supports the comments of Butler (1998) that women feel like equals when supporting their favourite team.

It appears that there are two levels of influence on women who become members of the Sirens. The antecedents such as a general interest in sport, a passion for fast moving sport, a strong traditional following of the AFL, the inclusion of a local team in the national competition, ethnic origin and the residential location of the Sirens appear to create a setting that leads to membership of an AFL club. Within the club situation a women-only club offers the women one more "step-up" to becoming equal participants by giving the opportunity to be a part of the Dockers community, to show their loyalty, dedication and interact socially with other women (Figure 2). The degree to which their expectations are then met is determined by the management of the club.



**Figure 2:** Revised conceptual framework

## Conclusion

This study of the Sirens examined the reasons why women enjoy watching men's sport and if there were specific reasons why they joined a women-only supporter club of a male sport. The demographic profile of the Sirens revealed that these women tended to be older and that professional women were the most significant group. The women and their families were mostly born in Australia, and revealed they did not only follow men's sport, but had a strong interest in fast paced sports played by both men and women. Many of the women had a long time interest in Australian football. It was the introduction of Perth teams (West Coast Eagles and Fremantle Dockers) into the national AFL competition that influenced the majority of the Sirens to support the sport.

Most of the Sirens were satisfied with the activities programmed but the greatest satisfaction was derived from social activities that had an emphasis on football (e.g., cheering at games, meeting players and coaches). Those Sirens not satisfied felt isolated by both the other members and the organisation of the Sirens club. They also found that the lack of variety in time location and cost of activities restricted their involvement.

Although the women gained great pleasure from doing something tangible for the football club they had many suggestions for improvement to the Sirens club. However, the Sirens revealed a strong loyalty and passion for the Fremantle Dockers and their membership of the supporter club.

## **Recommendations for the Fremantle Dockers**

The passion of the Sirens members for their club and Australian football shows that the supporter club could be a viable operation for the Fremantle Dockers, and should continue as an additional feature of the Clubs' membership. The recommendations suggested are drawn from the feelings expressed by the Sirens members in the responses to the questionnaire. In some cases the recommendations suggest a change in the operation of the supporter group. However, these changes may attract more female Dockers members who are not already members of the Sirens and may also maintain satisfaction amongst the women already involved in the supporter club.

- *Formation of a Sirens committee*

A committee may resolve the issue of time being a limitation for the current managers of the Sirens to plan activities.

- *Suggestion phone-line or feedback link on the web-site*

Approaching the Sirens for ideas will allow for a greater range of enjoyable activities to be provided and more input to be made by the Sirens.

- *Introduction/welcome nights, name tags or a buddy system*

This will create a more welcoming atmosphere and ease the entry of members attending alone, facilitate interaction and networking between women with similar interests.



- *Calendar of proposed events for the season*

This will allow members to better prepare for involvement in activities allowing them to gain greater benefits from the supporter club membership

- *Better use of the club web-site and a more informative newsletter*

This will make communication of important information such as news updates and relevant dates more efficient than the present situation. Distribution of information electronically by using the web-site or e-mail would also decrease the cost of providing information to those with access to the Internet.

- *Greater recognition of the Sirens supporter group*

The Fremantle Dockers Football Club has to make the group feel a part of the club's community while recognising the special identity and personality of the group. Initiatives could also include those of the three other supporter clubs;

- Sirens merchandise,
- A Siren of the Year Award,
- A Sirens' player of the year award,
- A player sponsored by the Sirens,
- A Sirens' seating or social area,
- A Sirens column in the Docker (The main club newspaper)
- Signage at the club or the ground.

- *Varied activities with more emphasis on football*

These activities will make the club attractive to more members, especially if the activities included the areas of interest for the Sirens and other potential members. Initiatives could include:

- Player question and answer panels.
- Drinks or barbecues at training.
- Information nights on the operations of the team and main football club.
- Meeting places for watching away games.

- *Varied times, locations and price of activities*

This will make involvement in the supporter group accessible to more members, as the flexibility will address the needs of more women. Initiatives could include;

- Activities on game days or major events during the football year such as the pre-season or regular season Grand Final or player milestones.
- Activities before or after games at Subiaco by utilising entertainment facilities in the area.
- Weekend activities such as breakfast or lunch, which can include players.

## **Recommendations for further study**

The Sirens supporter group and female sport fans are a large section of the sport and AFL market. This study showed that women have high levels of dedication to their preferred sport but further research could assist in providing a greater knowledge of this growing segment of the sport market.

It is acknowledged that the Sirens members were limited in expressing their opinions due to the quantitative format of the study. The methodology of this study did not allow for in-depth responses. Future research may explore the Sirens feelings further through the use of face-to-face interview, focus groups or other qualitative interpretive methods to pursue issues raised in this study (eg. Women's interest in men's sport).

Further research could replicate this study with women involved in different women-only supporter clubs of other AFL teams or as supporters of other male dominated sports such as soccer, rugby and cricket.

There is scope for further research to examine the feelings and opinions of female Dockers members or AFL fans who are not members of the Sirens women-only supporter group. Such a study could examine how the feelings of non-members compare to the feelings of the current Sirens members and how they view the women who choose to be members of the Sirens.

Further research could also explore if women use sport for professional networking in a similar way to men.

Women are also involved in male dominated sport as support personnel such as statisticians and managers. Further research could examine their feelings and opinions about their support and involvement in this capacity.

Australian football teams and other male dominated sports employ women in a number of different roles. Further research could explore how these women view their involvement in the operation of the clubs and how they feel they are perceived within the work environment.

Further research of women's needs and interests in non-sporting and community groups could assist in gaining further insight into the importance of groups in women's lives and recreation.

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**Appendix A**  
**Sirens Publicity**



© A new generation of magnificent men in their flying machines is creating a spectacular range of robot aeroplanes that could replace some satellites on journeys to the edge of space. Eureka! page 9

4-5: Television 6-7: Arts 15-16: Alternatives



## The song of the Sirens



### Perth People

Wendy Caccetta 9482 3756

**S**IREN Jane Marwick is used to having men fall at her feet. The PMFM Morning crew presenter, pictured here with Fremantle Dockers Ashley Prescott and Daniel Bandy, is one of the first women in Perth to join a new club set up exclusively for women.

Dockers' chief executive David Hatt said he chose the name — The Fremantle Sirens Club.

"In Greek mythology the Sirens sang alluringly and lured sailors to their ultimate demise on the rocks of the islands," Hatt said.

"That's what we hope they will do to opposing footballers."

Olympic swimming legend Shane Gould will be patron of the club, which will be launched at the Dockers' first home game on February 5.

The Sirens Club is open to women over the age of 18 and will hold several functions during the football season.

Sirens' shows will include a cocktail party with players, a trip to Melbourne to watch the Dockers play at the MCG, a pre-game lunch or breakfast and a fashion parade, also attended by players.

"I think women will really go for it," Marwick said. "I think the West Coast Eagles will be kicking themselves that they didn't do it."

Hatt said he got the idea for the Sirens while attending a function held by the Essendon Football Club during last year's Grand Final week. Most of the 1000 guests were women.

"It seemed like a terrific idea to me except I thought we could do a lot more with it than they do, especially with involvement between our female members, the coach and the players," he said.

"Sydney may also have something similar but no other clubs do. Certainly it's the first time it has been done in Perth."

Hatt said the club's female membership reflected the high percentage of women in the Fremantle population generally — and could also be partly due to the Modra factor, the appeal of star player Tony Modra.

"Forty per cent of our members are women and we don't feel as though we do enough for them. Quite often it is 'Hold my Chiko roll while I go out and surf'."

"Football is a bit blokey but women are just as perceptive in their analyses of football matches."

11/2/2000  
 know-yous. I was curious as to why Phillipa O'Connell had joined up when two of her brothers had played for the Eagles. She explained she shifted her loyalties south when Gerard Neesham moved from Claremont with more than half the Tigers squad.

Carole Kerr, a freelance television producer, already follows the Dockers and likes the idea of women networking. The spunky Jess Sinclair is one of her favourites — "can't kick, but has the best tan".

We all agreed number 35 was a doll, and he *could* kick. Someone piped up that his name was Mark Gale, and he was the boyfriend of a girl from work. We liked him even better after that.

Going into halftime, it was neck and neck with Port. The Sirens, led by number one ticket-holder Shane Gould, started their new chant — a "waa waa" sound like a police car. Daniel Shell must have heard us, since he took a specky mark. He kicked a point but we were all convinced the Dockers owed their lead to us.

In the halftime break, the injured Daniel Bandy was roped in to address the excited Sirens. Blushing puce, Bandy was treated like a rock star.

The gossiping and gaiety toned down in the second half as the serious business of football took over. The Dockers looked like they might just be able to win. A few more "waa waa" siren calls, and they lifted.

Victory by nine points, and we Sirens "waa waa-ed" home feeling at least partly responsible.

Footy and females — who said they didn't mix?

Dixie Marshall is Channel Nine's weekend newsreader in Perth

## Women's network a siren of the times



DIXIE MARSHALL

I'M contemplating becoming a Siren. Not the red flashing type but a Fremantle Football Club Siren — a new group, unique to West Australian footy, just for women.

In Greek mythology sirens were beautiful women who charmed sailors with tempting songs, luring them to their deaths. And, while the Dockers probably don't require a feminine hand to entice failure, the idea recognises that there are plenty of local women with untapped knowledge, passion and cash.

Dockers membership manager Meredith Eddington has been overwhelmed by the response. Businessmen, she says, have always used football as a networking tool; now women have the chance, too.

Saturday night was the official launch of this not-so-secret women's business, at the Dockers-Port Adelaide game.

# Freeo Siren call

Sunday Times 13/2/2000

MOVE over Ellie Macpherson and Kate Fischer, there's a new group of Sirens on the block.

The Fremantle Football Club has started its own version of Sirens — a group for the team's female supporters.

Natasha Wilson from Willagee is a member.

"It's a great initiative by the club. It gives us female supporters a chance to meet other people from different walks of life who share a common interest," she said.

"We're not a cheer-leading group — most of the members are business women who want to network."

Events planned include cocktail parties, forums with Freeo staff and players, and pre-game breakfasts.

And a trip to Melbourne to see their boys at the MCG.

Natasha said the weekend would be full of "football, shopping and eating out".



LL CLEAR: Ashley Prescott explains handball to foundation Siren Natasha Wilson.

**Appendix B**

**Sirens Membership Brochure**



FREMANTLE  
**SIRENS**

# GET YOUR HANDS ON SOME ACTION



SEASON 2001



AlintaGas



**FREMANTLE**

Tel: 08 9433 7111 Fax: 08 9433 7002

PO Box 381, Fremantle WA 6959.

Fremantle Oval, Parry Street, Fremantle WA 6160.

# One for the girls!

Introduced at the beginning of the 2000 season, the Fremantle Sirens Club has been an overwhelming success in its inaugural year. Designed for females 18 and over, the Fremantle Sirens gives women the opportunity to meet other women who have a common interest and passion – the Fremantle Football Club! With a base of 300 women, the foundation has been laid for the exciting growth of this group.

In Season 2001, we're planning to have a number of events including:

- An interstate trip to watch the Fremantle Dockers play at Colonial Stadium.
- A Footy Forum, where you'll get the opportunity to ask the coach and players about their game tactics, and anything else that intrigues you.
- A Cocktail Party where you'll get to meet the players.
- A function to launch the season at our first home Ansett Cup game.
- Special movie nights.

Plus, you'll also receive an exclusive Fremantle Sirens lapel badge.

At just \$25 for Fremantle Members (\$75 for non-members) you too can join in the fun with the girls who've kick-started it all. Simply complete the application form and return it with your payment to the Club.

# Application form

Mrs / Ms / Miss

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ (H) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Fremantle members \$25, Non members \$75 (please circle)

Credit Card details

\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Bankcard  Visa  Mastercard  Amex  D

Cardholder's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Fremantle Football Club invites you to be a part of this exciting group. Join now!

**Appendix C**

**Sirens Newsletter**





# Newsletter

FREMANTLE  
**SIRENS**

FREMANTLE OVAL PARRY STREET FREMANTLE WA 6160 TELEPHONE 9433 7111 FACSIMILE 9433 7002

ISSUE 3 FEBRUARY 2001



AlintaGas

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### MOVIE NIGHT

Wednesday May 9  
~~Milennium Cinema~~  
Fremantle 7.30pm



### MELBOURNE GETAWAY

June 8 to 10  
Kangaroos v Fremantle  
Colonial Stadium

### TWILIGHT DRINKS

Date to be  
advised  
Fremantle  
Football  
Club

# WELCOME

*to the Fremantle Sirens*

## SEASON 2001

**T**he inaugural year of the Sirens was a huge success with over 250 women creating the foundation for this exciting group. We're sure all Sirens members enjoyed being a part of the fun and meeting other women who have a passion for Fremantle and football!

**F**or those who have rejoined for Season 2001, thank you for providing such a strong base. And for those who have just joined, we're sure you'll enjoy being a part of the fun and help to build the Club even further this season.

**A**gain, we'll be holding a number of functions during Season 2001 including Twilight Drinks at Training, Movie Nights and of course, another Weekend Getaway to see the team play in Melbourne!

**I**n addition, we'd like to make special mention of our sponsors who have helped lead the Fremantle Sirens into its second season.

Sony Entertainment Corporation – Major Sponsor of the Sirens, who have donated a special gift to members attending this Season's launch, and AlintaGas – Major Sponsor of the Fremantle Football Club. We greatly appreciate the tremendous support shown by these companies.

**O**nce again welcome to the new season and we look forward to another fun year with the Fremantle Sirens Club!



# GETAWAY



# MELBOURNE

Here's your big chance to experience the action...

...and atmosphere at Australia's premier football venue – Colonial Stadium!  
The Fremantle Football Club is once again coordinating a Melbourne Weekend Getaway exclusively for Fremantle Sirens Members.

We will depart on Friday, June 8 where you have the choice of an early morning (6.45am) or evening (5.35pm) flight, and fly back on Sunday evening, June 10.

## HERE'S WHAT'S INCLUDED...

- Return airfare to Melbourne ex Perth flying Ansett Australia;
- Two (2) nights accommodation (twin share) at the Carlton Crest Hotel – the official hotel of the AFL. Including full breakfast on the Saturday morning;
- Dinner with the whole Sirens group on Saturday, June 9;
- Reserved seat game ticket to Colonial Stadium to see the Fremantle Dockers take on the Kangaroos on Sunday, June 10;
- Return transport by bus from Melbourne airport to the Carlton Crest Hotel and to and from Colonial Stadium on game day.

## All of this for just \$900!

Of course, when most girls think of Melbourne, they think shopping! You'll have plenty of time to pick up some bargains, so make sure to take your shopping shoes to hit the city, Chapel Street, Bridge Road and Victoria Markets.

Come along and join us for a weekend of fun and football, and help us paint the town red!

PLEASE NOTE: THIS PRICE HAS BEEN CALCULATED AND QUOTED BASED ON A MINIMUM TRAVELLING GROUP OF 20 PEOPLE.

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST AND BOOKINGS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE FREMANTLE FOOTBALL CLUB MEMBERSHIP DEPARTMENT 9433 7111  
NO LATER THAN APRIL 12

**Appendix D**

**Essendon Women's Network Brochure**

**To:** "fiona irvine" <feeirvine@yahoo.com>

**CC:**

**Subject:** Re: Information on the Network

**From:** mdilges@essendonfc.com.au | [Block Address](#) | [Add to Address Book](#)

**Date:** Mon, 13 Aug 2001 10:39:28 +1000

Dear Fiona

Please find attached some literature that may assist with your endeavours.

My apologies for the delay

kind regards

MELANIE DILGES  
Events Co-ordinator  
Essendon Football Club

# The Essendon Football Club

## Womens Network

*Continues the fine tradition and grows from strength to strength*

*As fellow Essendon supporters, the Essendon Football Club wants you to be involved!*

### What is the Womens Network?

The Women's network was formed in 1997 by a group of passionate, female Essendon supporters who wanted to strengthen their involvement with the Club. Since its inception the Essendon Football Club Womens Network has grown remarkably and it is a tribute to the input women have in AFL Football.

### Who are members of the Womens Network?

The founding members of the Womens Network are a group of well known women within the community. The EFC wants all female supporters to unite in their two fundamental commonalities; their passion for the Bombers and their passion as female Bomber supporters. You will find that the Womens Network comprises a wide variety of women, regardless of age, profession, lifestyle or personality. We want you to be a part of it. The Essendon Football Club wants all Essendon female supporters to know that all are welcome.

### What does the Womens Network do?

The Womens Network will informally get together on several occasions throughout the football season. In order to accommodate all our members we try to schedule our functions at different times throughout the year as well as offering a wide variety of functions. We aim to provide our network members with a first hand look at our players and coaching staff whilst providing you with an informative link to the clubs happenings. Nowadays, synonymous with the Womens Network is our AFL endorsed Grand Final week luncheon. This event has grown in stature since inception in 1998 and now sits formidably on the Thursday of the official Grand Final Week calendar, presenting the Football Woman of the Year award.

### As a Womens Network member you will enjoy the following benefits:

- Complimentary invitation to attend a 'members only' Womens Network function
- Invitations to attend Womens Network activities & functions
- Invitations to attend exclusive Essendon Football Club functions
- A social or business network of fellow Essendon supporters
- Opportunity to purchase an exclusive Womens Network silk scarf.
- Added support for the Essendon Football Club

### 2001 EWN Function Dates

Thursday 19 July 2001 Members Only Function, Colonial Stadium

Thursday 27 September 2001 EWN Grand Final Week Women's Luncheon & Football Woman of the

Year \_\_\_\_\_

Award, Grand Hyatt.

### Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb \_\_\_\_\_ Post \_\_\_\_\_ Ph Bus \_\_\_\_\_

Home \_\_\_\_\_ Mob \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please charge my credit card / accept my cheque:**

Membership Fee \$28  EWN Scarf \$33  Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Bankcard  Mastercard  Visa

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholders Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail, email or fax to:**

**Melanie Dilges Essendon Football Club, PO Box 17 Essendon 3040,**

**Ph 9230 0300, Fax 9370 6804, email [ewn@essendonfc.com.au](mailto:ewn@essendonfc.com.au)**

*Inviting all football supporters to attend the fourth annual*

*Grand Final Week Women's Lunch*

*The Great Football Debate*

*“Football is No Laughing Matter”*

*featuring:*

*Jane Clifton - Moderator*

*Kevin Sheedy*

*Tracy Bartram*

*Greg Champion*

*Elaine Canty*

*Tim Watson*

*Karen Lyon*

***Football Woman of the Year Award***

*will again be presented for outstanding contribution to football*

**Thursday 27th September 2001**

Savoy Ballroom, Grand Hyatt Melbourne, 12noon – 2.00pm

**Come dressed in your team's colours.**

**\$93.50 per person (including GST)**

**Two Course Luncheon & beverages inclusive**

RSVP: Melanie Dilges Ph: 9230 0320 Fax: 9370 6804

PO Box 17, Essendon VIC 3040 Email:ewn@essendonfc.com.au

### Payment Details:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ P/C \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (BH) \_\_\_\_\_ (AH) \_\_\_\_\_ (Fax) \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to secure \_\_\_\_\_ places for the Grand Final Week Women's Lunch

Payment Type: Cheque ( ) Credit Card ( ) Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Visa ( ) B/card ( ) M/card ( )

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

C/holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_ C/holder's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Guests Name/s

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_ 5) \_\_\_\_\_ 6) \_\_\_\_\_

7) \_\_\_\_\_ 8) \_\_\_\_\_ 9) \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**

**Women In Power Web-site Information**



**Message - [2] Women in Power - Port Adelaide Football Club****Printed By: Dingo Mail (sina version 3.12)****For: jharper (Janet Harper)**

**From** jharper@woodendps.sa.edu.au  
**To** feirvine@yahoo.com.au  
**Cc**  
**Subject** Women in Power - Port Adelaide Football Club  
**Size** 3Kb  
**Date** Thu, 02 Aug 2001 08:59:47 +0930

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Dear Fiona,

I have just received your email re Women in Power. My name is Janet Harper and I am the chairperson of Women in Power. Back ground - Women in Power(WiP) established in 1996 the first year of the Power in the AFL. It was advertised about half way through the year, a dinner was held with some of the players auctioned to sit at tables during the dinner. For a fee of \$45 we were promised a Women in Power badge and invitations to special functions. Unfortunately that was all that happened in the first year. After questions being sent to the club about the membership group a cocktail party was held and nominations for a committee were voted on and a committee of 6 was voted by the members there that night. People who had paid the year before were given free membership of the group for the year 1997. An employee from membership oversaw the group. We have had teething problems and it has taken time to get the group where we would like it. In 1998 and 1999 Women in Power was offered to members for no extra cost but in 2000 we decided to make the group a little bit more special and offered a special Women in Power scarf to our members. \$29 extra was charged on top of club membership, you have to be a member of the club to be a member of WiP. This year we have offered a special pin and the extra cost was \$26. The Committee runs more autonomously now and has grown to 10 members. Brian Cunningham, Chief Executive attends meetings when he can and I have just been informed by the marketing group that a liaison person has been appointed to help WiP from now on. Nominations are called for committee membership each year, we have a rotation system 3,3,4 and we are elected for a term of 3 years. The committee can also co-opt people to help. Our mission statement is - Women in Power is an innovative membership group for women members of PAFC that provides an outlet for fun and networking and an avenue to raise funds for the Port Power Foundation.(this keeps the money at Port Adelaide.) Role - we have roles in three main areas, membership - to increase our membership base, fundraising - to raise funds for the Foundation and promotion to represent the interests of women in the club and provide a welcoming and safe environment for women supporters of PAFC. As our Outback Odyssey is on a the moment I can't ask anyone where they see the place of WiP in the future membership, I hope that we can continue to increase our membership and I feel that we are succeeding as our functions this year have attracted good numbers.

If I can help with any more information, please ask.  
Hope your studies go well. I would be really interested to read your findings about the other groups as it may help us, we all have a long way to go in this male bastion.  
Good luck with your research  
Janet Harper  
Chairperson  
Women in Power, Port Adelaide Football Club.

## WOMEN IN POWER

**Women In Power** is an innovative membership exclusively for women of all ages, from all backgrounds, who love both the Port Adelaide Football Club and having fun.

Being a **Women In Power** member provides you with all the benefits of a full adult member of the Club as well as invitations to numerous Women In Power events during the year which suit the whole range of the membership group. There is a glamorous dinner once a year, a BBQ with the new players, cocktail parties, suppers, a trip to Melbourne - which is getting bigger every year - and much more.

**Women in Power** is a vibrant, exciting way for the women of the Port Adelaide Football Club to support the Club and our players. Read on to find out about the upcoming events or to see just how much fun was had at events which have already taken place.

2001

Monday 15/1/2001

"Women in Power" host many wonderful events throughout a calendar year. At this point the dates of two of these have been confirmed. They are as follows:

**2 June 2001 - Trip to Melbourne**

This annual trip is one of the highlights of the social calendar. This year WIP are travelling to Melbourne to see the Power take on Hawthorn at the MCG on Saturday 2 June. Amongst shopping and other activities, this date also coincides with the Victorian Operations Banquet Auction - a gala evening at the Crown Casino.

**24 July 2001 - "Evening with the Stars"**

This is a night where women can get 'up close and personal' with some of the Power stars. The players are auctioned off on the night - so if you are willing to pay you can have the player of your choice at your table. What's more you receive a wonderful meal, and lots of fun surprises!

To find out more about these events or if you would like to attend, please contact one of the following WIP committee members: Janet Harper (0409 416 439), Ann Belmont (0413 502 475), Julie Coghlan (0414 435 752) or Priscilla Thomas (0419 826 281).

## Women in Power Adult Member

Price \$125.00

**JOIN NOW**

Females 18 years and over

Women in Power members receive all the benefits of full Club Power membership plus:

- Women in Power membership pin and newsletter
- Complimentary ticket to an exclusive Women in Power function
- Invitation to all Women in Power events
- Invitation to vote in the Women in Power Women's Choice Award
- Able to vote and nominate for the Women in Power Committee

**Women in Power Associate Member**

**Price \$115.00**

**JOIN NOW**

Females aged 18 years and over

Members receive all the benefits of full WIP membership but share copies of Power to the People and the Year Book with the fully paid member. Associate members come to Members' Information Nights as the guest of the full member.

**Women in Power Concession Member**

**Price \$105.00**

**JOIN NOW**

Female concession card holder

Members receive all the benefits of Women in Power membership at a discounted price for concession card holders

**Appendix F**

**Sirens Survey Form**

# SIRENS SURVEY

The purpose of this study is to gather information on the reasons why women join and stay members of the Sirens. All information will be treated confidentially. If you can spare fifteen minutes of your time to complete this survey form it would be greatly appreciated.

The survey is divided into three sections. The first section is about your membership, the second section asks for your thoughts on the Sirens and section three asks for personal background information.

Please read carefully all instructions to questions.

---

## Section One:

For the following two (2) questions please tick (✓) the most appropriate responses.

**Question 1: Number of years as a member (Please tick one response)**

*How long have you been a Fremantle Dockers member?*

1 year  2 years  3 years  4 years  5 years  6 years

**Question 2: Finding out about the Sirens (Please tick appropriate responses)**

*How did you become aware of the Sirens?*

I saw an advertisement/ story on the Sirens

I saw a sign at the ground

A friend told me about the club

I heard a media personality discussing the club

Through the Fremantle Dockers when renewing my membership

Other (please state)

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The following questions ask you to think about your reasons for joining the Sirens and your experience as a member. For the next four(4) questions rank the three most important reasons, activities or expectations as required

1 is most important, 2 is next most important and 3 is for the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important

**Question 3: Reasons for joining** (Please rank you 3 main reasons)

***Why did you decide to become a member of the Sirens?***

I was influenced by my friend/s

I wanted a chance to socialise with other women who have a passion for "Aussie Rules"

I wanted a chance to meet the players

I saw it as a chance to network

I enjoy watching men's sport

I liked the idea of a women-only supporter club

I wanted to show my dedication to the Fremantle Dockers

I wanted to participate more in the Fremantle Dockers community

Other (please state)

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**Question 4: Activities enjoyed** (Please rank your 3 most enjoyed activities)

***What do you enjoy most about being a member of the Sirens?***

- The trip to Melbourne each year
  - Meeting the coach and players
  - The social activities
  - Cheering at games
  - Talking football with other women who know the game
  - Attending and watching training sessions
  - Other (please state)
- 
- 
- 
- 

**Question 5: Importance of being a member** (Please rank your 3 main priorities)

***Why is it important for you to be a member of the Sirens?***

- I want to show my dedication to the club
  - It's my only chance to socialise with other women who know the game
  - It recognises women as serious football supporters
  - It's something I can do with my female relatives (eg. Mother/Daughter)
  - I feel I am doing something tangible for the Fremantle Dockers
  - Other (please state)
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- 
-

**Question 6: Expectations** (Please rank your 3 most important expectations)

There are two (2) parts to this question.

- First identify your expectations of the Sirens by placing your ranking scores in the column marked Expectation.

With 1 as the most important, 2 is next most important and 3 is for the 3<sup>rd</sup> most important

***What can the Fremantle Dockers do for you so that you continue as a Sirens member?***

	<b>Expectation</b>	<b>Met</b>
Be professional on every level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a winning team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Give greater recognition of the Sirens as a supporter club	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide information on the Fremantle Dockers and the Sirens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide information on the upcoming activities for Sirens members	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A chance to be involved in planning activities for the Sirens	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please state)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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- Now go back and state Y (yes) or N (no) according to whether you feel those expectations are being met by the Fremantle Dockers Football Club, by marking your response (Y or N) in the column titled Met.

**ection Two:**

The next five(5) questions require you to think more about your feelings for your membership of the Sirens. Write a few lines in the space provided in response to the following questions.

**Question 7**

*How do you feel about being a member of the Sirens club?*

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**Question 8**

*What are the main benefits that you gain from your membership of the Sirens?*

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**Question 9 :**

***What changes would you suggest to improve the operations of the Sirens Club?***

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**Question 10**

***How would you describe the Sirens to someone who is not a member of the Club?***

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**Question 11:**

*Why do you prefer to watch men’s sport rather than women’s sport?*

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**Section Three:**

This section asks for background information about you. The information you provide will assist in building a profile of the Sirens members. Please write your responses in the space provided.

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**About You**

- (1)          **Age:** \_\_\_\_\_ **years (at last birthday)**
- (2)          **Occupation :** \_\_\_\_\_
- (3)          **Residential Suburb:** \_\_\_\_\_

(4) Birthplace of you and your immediate family:

Mothers' Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Mothers' Father \_\_\_\_\_

You \_\_\_\_\_

Fathers' Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Fathers' Father \_\_\_\_\_

(5) How long have you been a fan of AFL? \_\_\_\_\_ years

(6) Do you like the name Sirens? Yes  No

Please comment

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(7) Do you watch or are you a member of any other sports?

NO  Yes  (Please indicate if these sports are men's, mixed or women's)

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**If you have any other comments about the Sirens, Fremantle Dockers Football Club or this survey form, please write you comments in the space below.**

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey form. Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please return your completed survey in the stamped return address envelope by the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2001 to**

**Fiona Irvine (0409 141033)**

**C/o Dr Sue Colyer  
Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus  
100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA. 6027**



**Appendix G**

**First Mail-out Cover Letter**

July 2001



**EDITH COWAN  
UNIVERSITY**

PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
JOONDALUP CAMPUS

100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup  
Western Australia 6027  
Telephone +61 8 9400 5555  
Facsimile +61 8 9300 1257

ABN 54 361 485 361

Dear Sirens Member,

My name is Fiona Irvine and I am currently studying at Edith Cowan University in the area of Sports Management. This year I am completing my Honours thesis with the purpose of examining the reasons why women watch men's sport and why they join women-only supporter clubs. The Sirens club of the Fremantle Dockers, as the only AFL women-only supporter club in Western Australia, is of interest. This study examines the reasons why women, such as yourself, join and continue to be a member. A simple survey is used to gather your responses.

The input and suggestions you provide are important and will help establish a better understanding why women watch AFL. The results will also help the Sirens club of the Fremantle Dockers to better cater for your needs.

In an effort to make the process more enjoyable for you, there is a tea bag enclosed with the survey form. Take fifteen minutes to pamper yourself with a cup of tea while completing the survey form. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

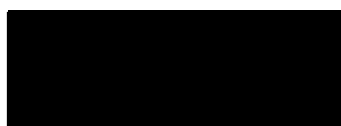
The survey form is anonymous. Please ensure you do not write your name or any other comments that will identify you on the form. By completing the survey form you are consenting to take part in this research. As such ensure you understand fully the intention of the project as mentioned above.

Please return your completed survey form in the stamped return addressed envelope provided by the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2001 to

Fiona Irvine  
C/o Dr Sue Colyer  
Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus  
100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup, WA. 6027

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to your contribution to my study

Yours Faithfully



Fiona Irvine

**Appendix H**

**Second Mail-out Cover Letter**



**EDITH COWAN  
UNIVERSITY**

PERTH WESTERN AUSTRALIA  
JOONDALUP CAMPUS

100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup  
Western Australia 6027  
Telephone +61 8 9400 5555  
Facsimile +61 8 9300 1257

ABN 54 361 485 361

August 2001

Dear Sirens Member,

Thank you to all of the supporters who completed and returned the recent survey form focused on your club. The information and suggestions provided have been extremely valuable in understanding women who watch AFL and the reasons for joining and continuing as members of a women-only supporter group.

If you have not yet returned your form please complete it as soon as possible and put it in the post. A second questionnaire and return addressed envelope are enclosed in case you have misplaced the first one. If you have already completed and posted your form you do not need to complete another form.

Once again in an effort to make the process more enjoyable enclosed is a tea bag. Take fifteen minutes to pamper yourself while completing the survey. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Please remember that the survey form is anonymous. Ensure you do not write your name or any other comments that will identify you on the form. By completing the survey you are consenting to take part in this research. As such ensure you understand fully the intention of the project.

Please return the completed form in the stamped return addressed envelope provided by 15<sup>th</sup> August 2001 to

Fiona Irvine  
C/o Dr Sue Colyer  
Edith Cowan University, Joondalup Campus  
100 Joondalup Drive, Joondalup WA 6027

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to your contribution to my study.

Yours faithfully



Fiona Irvine

## **Appendix I**

### **Birthplace of Sirens and Immediate Family**

**Table I1: Birthplace of Sirens**

<b>Country of Birth</b>	<b>Total</b>
Western Australia	87
South Australia	3
Victoria	4
Australian Capital Territory	1
New South Wales	3
Northern Territory	1
<b>Australia Total</b>	<b>107</b>
United Kingdom	10
UAE	1
Italy	1
New Zealand	3
South Africa	1
Singapore	1
Unknown	4

N=128

**Table I2: Birthplace of Sirens' Parents**

<b>Country of Birth</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Father</b>
Western Australia	41	39
South Australia	4	2
Victoria	9	6
New South Wales	5	5
Queensland	1	-
<b>Australia Total</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>78</b>
United Kingdom	18	25
Italy	4	5
Germany	1	1
India	1	-
South Africa	3	2
Spain	1	-
Croatia	1	1
New Zealand	4	4
Canada	-	1
Bornio	1	-
Singapore	-	1
Austria	1	-
Holland	-	1
Greece	1	1
Unknown	4	8

N=256

**Table I3: Birthplace of Sirens' Grandparents**

<b>Country of Birth</b>	<b>Mothers' Mother</b>	<b>Mothers' Father</b>	<b>Fathers' Mother</b>	<b>Fathers' Father</b>
Western Australia	25	20	21	24
South Australia	5	6	4	2
Victoria	12	8	10	9
New South Wales	5	4	3	2
Queensland	1	1	1	-
Tasmania	-	-	1	-
<b>Australia Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>53</b>
United Kingdom	38	38	42	39
Italy	4	5	5	6
Germany	1	-	1	2
India	2	1	-	-
South Africa	2	2	2	1
Spain	1	1	-	-
Croatia	1	1	1	1
New Zealand	5	6	4	5
Austria	1	-	-	-
Greece	1	1	1	1
Bulgaria	-	1	-	-
Sweden	-	1	1	-
Romania	-	1	-	-
United States	-	1	-	-
Canada	-	-	-	1
Singapore	-	-	1	-
Holland	-	-	1	1
Russia	-	-	-	1
Israel	-	-	1	1
Malaysia	-	-	-	1
Unknown	10	12	11	15

N= 512

## **Appendix J**

### **Sirens Feelings and Opinions Themes**



Q7. How do you feel about being a member of the Sirens?

### **PROUD**

"I feel proud to be a member of a female group of football supporters. A group of women who feel so passionate about their sport"

"Proud- honoured to be associated with a club that takes such good care of its team members and families. Also their commitment to the local community eg local group involvement in pre and mid games. Especially the Len Hall game"

"Proud to be involved with a women-only club. Women bring that different perspective"

I'm proud to be a member of the Sirens because I'm very one-eyed when it comes to the Dockers"

"I feel proud to be in a female members supporter group. It shows I'm dedicated in supporting the Dockers and being able to communicate with other women who enjoy the sport."

"Feel proud and honoured to be part of Freo tradition and to know its only women's club in WA"

"I'm proud to be a member of a club who recognises the support of its female members in a male dominated sport"

"Proud to be a member of the Sirens because it further cements my membership and dedication to the Fremantle Dockers"

### **Enjoyment**

"I enjoy the interaction with fellow supporters"

"I enjoy being a member of the Sirens. It gives me a chance to socialise with other people who have a similar interest in the FFC"

"I enjoy being a member of a group of women many of whom share common interests particularly AFL"

"I enjoy being a member and being able to help the club. It's nice to be a member of something that's fun and social"

"I really enjoy the fact that Fremantle have been so innovative to think of this concept for its women members"

"I enjoy the idea of being a member of the Sirens but I haven't had the opportunity to join in socially"

### **Belonging**

"I feel a closer member of the FFC"

"I feel great, it's good belonging to a club I love and the Sirens was dream come true"

"I'm part of something that is a great initiative"

"Please to belong to a club that women supporters interests at heart"

"It feels good to be part of another 'team'"

"I feel more involved in the club that a regular member"

"A part of a club which will hopefully develop a culture of its own"

"It's good that FFC has realised the important contribution of women"

"I like being recognised as a serious footy supporter"

"I like being recognised as a female who appreciates footy"

### **Giving to the Fremantle Dockers**

"I see it as support for the Dockers as a whole"

"I feel I can show my support of the Dockers by being a member of the Sirens. I feel it is important to support the Sirens as most football clubs are male very male oriented"

"I feel by choosing to be involved I am giving something to the club which is still in it's formative stage"

"I feel it's a tangible way to show my dedication to the club"

"It feels good to give the extra bit that being simply a Dockers member can't give"

"It was another way I could show support for the team"

"Being more than just a member"

"For a female it is just that bit extra than being a member"

### **Opportunity**

"It's an opportunity for female supporters to get together to discuss football"

"It gives me an opportunity to take my interest and participation further than just matches at Subi"

"A great chance to meet follow female Dockers supporters"

"It offers women of all ages the opportunity not only to support their favourite team but the opportunity to meet coaches and players"

### **Positive**

"I am excited and interested that there is a supporters club for women. No other AFL club in Perth has that acknowledgment that women are great supporters of the game but 'support' in a different manner"

"Great it's a wonderful idea"

"It's a good feeling especially when I meet other women who are keen supporters"

"I think it's fantastic. I feel great that we can show that there is a female support group"

"It's great to have a ladies side of the club mixing with other women who have a passion for the greatest game in the world and being able to support it from a females point of view which is more loyal, passionate and dedicated than the males"

"Excited about meeting different people from my social network"

"I like to meet like-minded passionate female footy supporters, so I was pleased when it first formed"

### **Isolation**

"I thought I would feel special I feel isolated"

"Isolated, I know the focus of activities is WA, but I wanted to be part of this group"

"I'm a bit confused about where I fit in"

### **Disappointment**

"Somewhat disappointed and frustrated at the lack of functions organised for the Sirens"

"Thought it was good in the beginning, but doesn't seem as great a club that I thought"

"It's a good idea but the concept needs work and staff and players should show more recognition"

"I'm disappointed because I'm not a professional person and I feel that the Sirens cater more for that type of woman, unlike myself who is a student, housewife and can't afford trips interstate"

"A bit disappointed because I joined believing that I would meet women like myself but found they were older and the functions formal not what I expected"

“Not what I expected, I expected more”

### **Losing Interest**

“I haven’t found any reason to rejoin”

“Waste of money I feel it’s an ‘exclusive club’ excluding most members”

“I’m not planning on wasting \$75 next year. What’s the point in having a club where you can’t even get to meet the people you so strongly support”

“Most uninterested, it’s not social and there is not team participation”

“Doesn’t make a great difference to my life”

“I feel the running of the Sirens is a chore for those who are running it (it shouldn’t be)”

“Will think seriously about joining next year”

“I feel I’m not really getting value from being a member”

●8 What are the main benefits you gain from you Sirens membership?

### **No Benefit**

“I gain no benefit from the Sirens, but I then I gain no benefit from the FFC”

“There are no benefits. When functions are organised it is up to the individual to get to know other Sirens. We are never acknowledged by the players or the club”

“So far- nothing I have severe personal budget limitations and cannot participate as much as I’d like”

“At this time I don’t feel I gain any benefits from being a Sirens but intend to remain a member”

“None really. I joined to show support without expecting to go to any functions. To be honest knowing that there are so many celebrities involved I feel a bit intimidated to rock up to functions by myself. Maybe the club needs to improve its perceived accessibility to ordinary members of the club”

“Hardly any being a country member”

“Still to come!! I’m sure friendships will be formed and I’ll be rejoining next year too”

“ I haven’t discovered this yet. I haven’t worked out away to gain benefits whilst not ‘standing out like a sore thumb’ I wanted to gain friendship so far this hasn’t happened”

“Not a lot, perhaps as the club becomes more established more activities will eventuate that will enable members to become more interactive with aspects of the club”

### **Social Activities**

“The trips to Melbourne have been very good weekends away. We did not win but had a fantastic time anyway. The organisation of both was a credit to the club”

“Extra social occasions and an opportunity to meet people associated with FFC”

“A chance to do things that I wouldn’t normally do or go places I wouldn’t think of going”

“That I get to go to all of the Dockers social functions being a member and a Sirens member. It is good to be part of a team of other girls that can appreciate a game of footy in a male dominated society”

### **Social Interaction**

“Lots of new friends and people who don’t make fun of you for asking stupid questions- lots of laughs”

“Networking and an opportunity to meet like-minded supporters”

“Meeting other women who enjoy football and share other common interests”

“Social interaction with other women who love football in general”

“You get to meet other women who like football. It shows there are other women in WA who are very passionate about their football”

“Socialise with a great group of ladies and the great events that we all get together as ‘lovers’ of the Dockers”

“Being able to mix with people with a similar interest in football and discuss facets of the game within a group where your opinions are listed and given some credence. In mixed gender groups males dismiss the opinions of females as not worthy of consideration”

“Getting to meet other members who feel as strongly about footy as me”

“Opportunity to meet other female supporters and share the passion”

#### **Information**

“The only benefit I get from my Sirens membership is information about what is going on in the group and it’s relationship to the club”

“Keeping up to date with regular newsletters”

#### **Belonging**

“Belonging to a group who have the same passion”

“A feeling of belonging, mixing with women all supporting the same thing having no conflict all supporting the same club knowing it will become an important part of the FFC”

“A feeling of being part of the group”

Q9 What changes would you suggest to improve the Sirens?

#### **More Activities**

“More functions last year there was a forum with coaches and players attended by 200-300 Sirens. This gave us a chance to be taken seriously and be involved directly with people we are unable to approach”

“More social activities before and after the game and in general”

“Increase the amount of functions per year as if you can’t afford to go to Melbourne every year there isn’t much else on offer”

“Tours of training facilities, fitness for Sirens, functions in areas other than Fremantle”

“More activities/meetings with members ie BBQ’s, dinners, quiz nights, competitions. Meeting place for Sirens to watch away games”

“They should have kept the same events and added to them this would help to build a culture and tradition within the club”

“More functions on Friday nights and weekends. Recognise that members come from all over Perth and holding functions in Fremantle the whole time is not convenient”

“More regular get togethers eg meeting at the club for drinks during training or meeting before or after games at a cafe or pub”

#### **Sirens Input**

“The Sirens should have their own committee and liaise with the club- not run by the current officials”

“A committee set-up with a rep from the Dockers being present. This would give the Sirens more of a say in what they want during the season and what they would like to start”

“Would be good to have a few Sirens members on a committee to plan activities held each year”

“More meetings and discussions on ways we may be able to help the team to a win”

“Perhaps asking members for ideas and suggestions that will encompass a greater area than presently covered”

### **Information**

“More advanced notice of functions maybe a calendar at the beginning of the season”

“More informative newsletter eg maybe small bio on each player. Not just on the ‘outings’ coming and going”

“Would like changes to the newsletter and some information on the strategies of the game”

“Occasional meetings of the Sirens to learn more about the rule and decisions made in football games to take an even more informed interest of the game”

“Maybe if events occurred annually more people would attend because they could plan”

“More information on what’s happening, lacking communication”

“More information on upcoming events, more time to prepare eg Melbourne”

### **Introductions**

“What would be nice if members would look out for someone who maybe alone and make them feel part of the group”

“I would like to have some type of introduction system to encourage members who may not know anyone to attend and not feel isolated so they would really become part of the Sirens”

“When functions are held ensure members are taken care of introduce yourself – basic manners and introduce them to others”

“Should be hosted in a much more friendly manner much to into self social climbing and basically a chance to seek media notice”

“I feel intimidated by the high profile names. So I choose not to go when I know something is on”

“I feel society tends to make us operate within a group of friends who tend not to reach out to people on their own. I don’t feel I can impose myself as an attachment to any group. Maybe the club can organise a time for people on their own to come together as a group and therefore form a strong bond of individuals. Inter-relationships can then develop and contribute to the club”

“Would like some sort of list that members can put their names on to be able to get to know other Sirens in their area this is because I don’t”

### **Player Involvement**

“Ensure players DO meet members not just mix with club officials and the same inner group”

“I loved the old after match functions where players were able to be accessed for autographs, talk etc. It really made all members feel a part of the club”

“There should be events when members have access to players and coaches that are EXCLUSIVE to Sirens ONLY”

“I would like to see one functions with all coaches/admin/players attendance so we have a chance to communicate”

### **Less Expense**

“Because I am not in the position to enjoy the Melbourne trip I would love to see more activities such as the dinner and movie nights”

“Some of the functions seem a little expensive. As I hardly drink and have dietary requirements I object to paying for alcohol and food I won’t consume so I would suggest lower priced functions that didn’t focus on food and drink”

“Less formal function that cost less to attract and keep attracted a wide range of different women”

“Feel one does not get anything from membership as all activities appear very costly”

### **Merchandise**

“Exclusive items for Sirens members only”

“Sirens T-shirt”

“Special clothing scarf, hat top etc”

#### **Sit Together**

“One game a year sitting together at home games”

“A Sirens only area so they could be among familiar faces and able to network”

“Possibly seated together at games”

“It would be nice to have all the Sirens sit together at some of the home games”

Q10 How would you describe the Sirens to someone who is not a member?

#### **Footy Lovers**

“This is a women-only club who have a love of football and the Freo Dockers. We thoroughly enjoy the game and it is a way to become involved”

“A chance for like-minded female football supporters to show their voice and support for their team”

“A group of women of all ages and careers who enjoy football and in particular the Dockers”

“A group of women who are avid supporters of their football team, not just a group of women interested in watching men in tight shorts”

“An informed group of women who get together to support the Dockers”

“A club for women who love AFL who have certain social activities during the year”

“A club for the women supporters to discuss the club and the team performances all for the love of the game”

“The Sirens is an opportunity for women who love the FFC and the game of football to get together at meetings and social functions so they can discuss the highs and lows, in and outs and decisions made by the club”

“A ladies club where we get enjoyment talking and watching football just like men. They think we don't feel the same but we do”

“The Sirens are a women-only supporter club of the Fremantle Dockers who have a passion for football and especially the Dockers”

“A time when women who love footy and being part of an exclusive club can come together to party and discuss knowledge of the game”

#### **Female Supporter Group**

“I would describe it as the Fremantle football clubs female supporters club”

“Large female supporter base for the Dockers great bunch and range of ages”

“A female supporters group of the Fremantle Dockers Football club”

“A group of women who have formed their own group to show support for the Freo club”

“A great women's club”

#### **Social**

“A place where chicks can get together and talk footy in a supportive manner”

“A group for women who meet together at social occasions to enable them to support the Dockers more fully”

“A close knitted lot of people who are all from different suburbs and education levels who mix and have strong commitment to Fremantle Dockers and also a strong social outlook and interest in the Sirens”

“A group of mostly professional women who have taken the opportunity to combine their support for AFL and the Dockers with networking in a social environment”

“A group of women who get together for social activities who have an interest in Aussie rule and Fremantle in general”

“The Sirens is the Fremantle Dockers women’s supporter club who meet for mainly social purposes under the guise of football. Essentially the Sirens is about fun, footy and friendships”

“The Sirens is a women-only club for all ages from twenties to oldies who get together have a good time let their hair down”

### **Fun**

“I tell everyone what great fun we have at our get togethers and functions. Always trying to get people to join”

“Fun night out, let your hair down”

“A women support club for the Fremantle Football Club which is a fun place for all women to talk footy”

“Will be fun when I get to know other members”

“It’s a great club to join especially the fun and enjoyment at functions and just meeting other women with similar interests”

“A different way to enjoy supporting the Dockers having a great time doing it”

### **Disappointing**

“Don’t judge a book by it’s cover. If you join with friends it’s fine but when you speak to people who come on their own you don’t get introduced around and don’t feel comfortable”

“So far a great disappointment”

“Don’t bother you get nothing for your money. When there is an activity it costs a fair bit and you don’t have to be a Siren to go half the time anyway. Rip-off”

“A small group of women who are social mix amongst themselves claim to be football related and conned a lot of others to pay their fees to join. Their group but do nothing to ensure the outer-group really do join in. A real waste of time and money a rip-off con job”

“Bit of a non event really”

“I could not give any positives”

Q11 Why do you prefer to watch men’s sport rather than women’s sport?

### **I don’t! I like both men’s and women’s**

“I don’t, I believe football is just as much a girls sport as a man’s and was on the girls football team throughout high school. You can’t classify one sport as men’s or women’s it’s discriminatory”

“I don’t distinguish between sports whether it’s a male/female thing. I like watching all sports”

“It’s not so much that I prefer men’s sport. I enjoy sport”

“Your assumption is that I do! I don’t! Football is just one of the many sports I enjoy watching and I’m always disappointed that women’s sport/teams get such a raw deal in this state country”

“I prefer to watch any sport regardless of the gender playing so long as it is competitive and they are playing fairly and within the respective rules”

“I don’t. I enjoy watching women’s sport and follow a broad range of sports whether male or female”

“I love watching all sport and knowing results of all sports so whether it is men’s or women’s does not matter”

“I don’t necessarily ‘prefer’ to watch men’s sport rather than women’s. Why do you presume I prefer to watch men’s sport rather than women’s? I like all sports and enjoy watching, participating and learning from many sports. Perhaps football was initially a

man's sport but over the past few years has become 'generic'. Men may still be the only participants but women have been watching for many years"

"I do not prefer to watch men's sport more than women's. I enjoy watch all sport"

### **It's not men's sport I prefer, it's AFL**

"I have followed football since I was a child. I love the game. At this point women's football has not reached the same heights I'm sure it will"

"I don't know if I do particularly. If women played a sport such as AFL I would watch it. However, they don't"

"I enjoy watching all sport, but Aussie Rules is just so exciting there is nothing else like the it the highs are so high- the lows so low but it is the passion of the game"

"I watch netball and other sports but it is the footy I love because of the high marks and play of the footballers that takes your breath away. Yes I do love footy the best with all it's ups and downs and heartaches"

"This is an irrelevant question!!! I never think of AFL as a 'men's' sport. It is an exciting sport, which is enjoyed by all ages and sexes I love this aspect. It's a clear winner, not boring like soccer or the yawn of cricket. It's AFL I like not men's sport as such"

"This question is hard to answer as I like both genders in sport. I guess football has only been a male sport so far and I have followed it for years. If there was a female football team I would follow it as well"

"I enjoy watching Australian Rules football specifically rather than men's sport in general"

"I don't think I have a preference for men's or women's sport. If the Dockers had a women's team I'd support them as well"

"I'm a lover of Aussie rules and there is no top level female competition"

"It's not necessarily an issue of watching men or women's sport it is the fact that football is a great game to watch when played at the highest level."

### **The ability of players makes it exciting to watch**

"I love the levels of fitness aggression and dedication"

"Men are more physical and interesting to watch"

"Men's sport is faster and the players have better skills and are more advanced skills than women. Therefore it is a lot better to watch. There is also a better atmosphere at the games involving men than women"

"More action more atmosphere"

"More action therefore greater entertainment- higher skill levels"

"I consider men's sport to be much more interesting and exciting"

"More physical and the fitness levels of these men are great. It's fast moving with skill and endurance"

"I feel men apply themselves totally to their sport and weed out every ounce of their own ability during the game"

"Generally it is of higher skill level and faster a pace"

"It's more rugged than women's sport and therefore more exciting"

"Men's sport is generally of higher standard. It is usually faster, smarter, more intense and more captivating. I believe men are more prepared to put their body o the line during a game of anything which makes for more exciting viewing"

### **The looks of the men playing**

"Are you serious? Women want to watch men, men want to watch women"

"Love their gorgeous looks"

"Being female no doubt the opposite sex attracts"

"I guess men's sport gives me the opportunity to perve and fantasise over players"



“The men are attractive as they usually have good bodies”

“The men look good in shorts”

“You can perve on good looking physically fit men”

“Men are much more attractive to look at whilst they are playing sport. Glistening muscles look pretty good”

“Nicer to look at men running around in little shorts”

#### **Men's sport is more accessible**

“There tends to be much more male sport on TV so as a sport's fan I tend to watch it”

“Men's sport is the dominant paradigm in our culture so it is more available to most people”

“Men's sport is more accessible than women's sport. Media coverage also tends to make it easier to follow”

“Women's sport is not shown on t.v. or sponsored as much as men's”

“Men's sport is easier to access in terms of t.v. advertising and general start times than women's sport. Therefore men's sport is easier to follow and if women's sport was easier to access in all ways mentioned above then there would be greater appreciation and following of it”

“Men's sport is promoted a lot more than women's so it is more accessible to the general public”

#### **My family have influenced my preference**

“My husband's interest has influences my following because it's something we can do together”

“Because my husband and son have been involved and I have supported them”

“I began originally watching through my boys and husband”

“If you are doing something with your partner it's either go or be left at home”

“Brainwashing as a child”

Further comments on the Survey, Fremantle Dockers or the Sirens

#### **There should be greater recognition of members**

“I believe they do not take us seriously and this diminishes our credibility. The Sirens could be a great club, Sirens clothes and functions could be improved as could recognition”

“I feel that the supporters sit in the rain and sun etc and stay to the very end watching yet another loss and the players don't even bother to acknowledge their supporters”

“In the search for new members Fremantle Football club has to not forget they originally marketed themselves as a peoples club”

The FFC needs to remember their supporter base stretches a lot further than Fremantle and efforts must be made to cater for these members”

“I personally don't feel The Dockers give enough to their members”

“Recognition of the Sirens at some pre-game activities would be beneficial”

#### **The club should involve the members**

“Would love a chance to be active in the Sirens club and in the Football Club as well. Would like to use my social, admin and inter-personal skills to the good of the club”

“I think the Sirens should be encouraged by the FFC to participate more at games, perhaps by combining them with the fan club/cheer squad”

“I would like to see the club and Sirens have more input from members who are the people of the club”

“Members to have ‘a say’ in the day to day running of the club. It should be a members club”

#### **It's a hard time for the Fremantle Dockers**

“They just have to get through these tough times and come out stronger at the other end. It's not easy running footy clubs”

“Like most I have my theories about how to solve the woes of the club. As a supporter I'll stick by the team through thick and thin”

“Whilst understanding the club has been going through a tough time, hopefully more will be on offer next year”

#### **Fremantle Football Club are unprofessional and disappointing**

“I feel the Fremantle Dockers as a club is very unprofessional and disorganised. In order to re join they would have to offer something worthwhile and unique”

“The Sirens are like the club. They make huge promises about being a peoples club and don't deliver. A one way philosophy, I'm rather disillusioned”

“I disappointed at the lack of club spirit engendered”

“The Dockers need to sort out their hierarchy and present a more professional and loyal image”

“The sacking of Damian Drum was a disgrace and only reflected badly on the Fremantle management. I was embarrassed to be a member”

“I was very ashamed to be a member when the club dismissed Damian Drum. It was a dishonourable decision and handled badly”

#### **The Sirens is a great concept**

“The Sirens concept is great. It recognises that women can and do have a passionate interest in football”

“I think the concept of the Sirens is excellent and I hope it will continue and become more active in future years”

“Women are treated as if they know nothing about AFL. Hopefully soon other dockers members will see the Sirens as serious football supporters not just women who have nothing better to do with their time”

#### **Feed-back on results**

“I do hope the football club and Sirens get a copy of the survey results”

“Will there be any feed back on this survey in a Sirens newsletter as it would be good to get an overall feeling of what Sirens members want”

“I was wondering whether the results of this survey would be published in any further Sirens news letters”

“I hope the results of this survey are noted by the FFC and influence their decision making with regard to the status of female members”