

Letter to the editor on Eleni Glouftsis

Eleni Glouftsis will this weekend stake her claim in the history books when she becomes the first female field umpire to ever officiate an official AFL match during Sunday's NAB Challenge clash between Carlton and Essendon.

Eleni was placed on an AFL Female Pathway Scholarship in 2014 and is on the AFL's rookie umpire list this year – an initiative of the AFL's umpiring diversity program.

Her debut on Sunday is evidence of her hard work, skill and dedication and also a reflection of the AFL's commitment to support women in sport and in leadership positions.

Undoubtedly her debut will also inspire many young women who are interested in playing or umpiring in the AFL to strive for the top, which is important given that more than two thirds of Australian women and girls are classified as being sedentary or having low levels of exercise.

VicHealth is working hard to try and increase the number of women and girls who are physically active, while also raising the profile of women's sport in the media and championing the important role women play in sports' leadership and management.

Initiatives like AFL Active, which is funded by VicHealth, that aim to provide fun and social ways for women to workout based on AFL principles and techniques, are an important part of getting more women physically active more often.

Having positive role models like Eleni and AFL player Daisy Pearce, who are paving the way for future players and umpires, is also invaluable in raising the profile of women's sport and getting more women and girls to take part in physical activity.

Congratulations Eleni and well done to the AFL for continuing to support women in sport.

Jerril Rechter
VicHealth CEO