



**WMAC 2026 DAEGU
WOMEN'S COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday 31 August 2026

9:30 am – WMA Room, Main Stadium

“Celebrating our Achievements as we lead a healthy active life”

WMA Women's Committee

Chair Lynne Schickert (Australia)

Members

Wilma Perkins	(Australia)
Dr. Rose Tata Maru	(Kenya)
Dr Violeta Guzmán	(Mexico)

Apologies – not in Daegu

Ester Balassini	EMA (Italy)
Kalaivalli R. Ratnam	(Malaysia)
Claudia Thomas	(Chile)

Meeting attended by

Huzainah Amshari Yuman	Malaysia	
Mary V. Rosado	USA	
Colleen Barney	USA	WMA Treasurer
Maria Alfaro	Mexico	
Violeta Guzman Magana	Mexico	
Paulina Ordonez	Mexico	
Guadalupe Davila	Mexico	
Mr. Alexander Lopez Palacios	Mexico	
Ansie Hennop	South Africa	
Yvonne Leotiuaku	South Africa	
Dr Richard Ognnleye	Nigeria	
Dr Safiya Yahaya-Kongala	Nigeria	
Folake Okache	Nigeria	
Dr Rose Tata Muya	Kenya	
Catyherine Ndereba	Kenya	
Janelle Delaney	Australia	
Barbara Burton	Australia	
Jill Taylor	Australia	OMA Vice-President
Wilma Perkins	Australia	OMA Representative Women's Committee
Jo Harlow	Australia	Photographer
Margaret Saunders	Australia	
Sharon Gibbins	Australia	
Jayne Hardy	Australia	
Lisa Attenborough	Australia	
Chris McCahill	New Zealand	
Ray Green	Australia	
Bob Schickert	Australia	

The meeting was opened by the Chair with a welcome to all attendees and the three Regional committee members present were introduced:

Wilma Perkins	(Australia)	Oceania
Dr Rose Tata Muya	(Kenya)	Africa
Dr Violetta Guzman	(Mexico)	NCCMA

On arrival, WMA President Margit Jungmann was introduced and welcomed and she provided an overview on matters relating to the championships in Daegu.

In keeping with the theme of the meeting, “Celebrating our Achievements” attendees were asked network and greet others around the room, thus providing an opportunity for everyone to make new acquaintances from other regions.

Discussions during the meeting then focused on the challenges faced by many women athletes who do not have the opportunity to be on committees or have a chance to talk about issues that affect them within their affiliate or region. Attendees were then invited to share their insights on what inspired them to take up and continue being part of the global masters’ family, and what development activities were in place for female masters’ athletes in their regions. This included a comment that by keeping on moving women look and feel younger and have more energy for family commitments.

Dr Rose Tata Maru gave an overview of the challenge to develop pathways and encourage masters-age women in Africa to continue competing in athletics after they have finished at elite level. Communication and personal contact is a key objective to encourage entry into masters competition.

Dr Violetta Guzman offered a view of the challenges on a political level to ensure women have an opportunity to commit to maintaining their fitness in a safe and stable environment.

Janelle Delaney, Australian 2026 inductee into the WMA Gallery of Champions, provided an insight into the difficulties faced by female athletes and how they navigate being a woman in sport when they have to juggle family commitments and children’s sporting activities with their own training and competition.

Wilma Perkins shared her story of how Heather Doherty from Queensland, one of the first women in Australia to become a full member of the then “Veterans” Association rather than an affiliate, was her inspiration to join and compete. As Wilma also said “if you want to make a change, get on a committee”.

Jill Taylor, OMA Vice-President, explained how OMA is rebuilding its communications with regional members to make women’s issues more visible.

It was also noted that representation by women at WMA championships is still one-third to two-thirds for male athletes.

Together with a brief personal overview provided by the Chair, these inspiring stories were applauded by all. Discussions continued and included suggestions for the incoming Women’s Committee for 2026-2028 that:

- A website/page/WhatsApp is set up where their concerns are mentioned as they happen.
- A “Women in WMA” website on which profiles of women athletes at all levels could be included. WMA does currently have a number of women featured in its Gallery of Champions.
- An annual online conference is scheduled for all interested women in each region. This could feature interesting speakers, and provide wider feedback on topics of interest.
- Production of a “Women in WMA” polo or t-shirt by regional or country coordinators for wearing at future championships.

When sending her apology for not being able to attend the meeting in Daegu, Ester Balassini, from EMA has also offered her recommendations on project objectives as part of the activities from club to national level in a region. Examples would be to:

- promote health and well-being among those over 65 through simple but technically sound movement programs – such as “Movement to Music” classes to keep the body fit and strong
- encourage the prevention of frailty and sedentary behavior
- combat social isolation through collective, free, stable, and adapted activities
- enhance the role of master athletes as mentors/coaches and local ambassadors

Ester also recommended that a future Women’s Committee create communication channels between women masters from all over the world in order to get to know each other and share sports experiences, ideas, problems and possibly activate hospitality lines in their countries with related competitions. It was agreed that regular consultation with the WMA Media Committee would help achieve these objectives.

Proposed Strategic Framework

To assist the incoming Committee, the addendum added at the conclusion of this summary provides a guide as to what WMA can do to influence women’s issues within our global structures. The role of the Women’s Committee should be deliberately focused on those areas where WMA can reasonably influence outcomes for women through athletics.

Other matters

There were a number of other matters raised by regions at various times during the year and these were referred to the Competition Committee for consideration. Included below are two items of interest which were not discussed during the Daegu meeting but are provided for information together with an explanation by WMA.

- *Women’s Health - entering and navigating menopause and the changing science regarding hormone replacement therapy for female athletes.*
This issue was raised by USA as a number of female athletes who have indicated that they are going to stop competing for USATF and only do Senior Games (because they do not test) because their doctors are telling them that the science says it is much better for them to take hormones that are not on the WADA approved list.

WMA’s response to this issue is that there is no doubt that some women will benefit from small doses of testosterone. There is a growing body of research which shows that when women are given testosterone it does give them an unfair advantage. The two marked advantages are increased muscle and therefore power, and also increased red blood cells and therefore increased oxygen uptake and more endurance. By avoiding being tested, they are saying that they will be doping but not getting caught. So anybody using testosterone will have an unfair

advantage over others even if they keep their levels in the normal range. As testosterone primes the whole body, not just one or two aspects, for this reason it is not allowed in female athletes, nor in older men. The following reference may be of interest on this issue:

<https://www.happiesthealth.com/articles/womens-wellness/impact-of-high-testosterone-levels-in-women-athletes>

- *WMA Policies on Anti-Doping and Transgender involvement*

In line with World Athletics policies, WMA is in the process of developing similar masters-related policies to combat anti-doping issues and to ensure fairness within our sport and the integrity of WMA records.

Conclusion

As the meeting concluded, attendees were invited to attend WMA Indoor in Gainesville, Alachua County Florida in 2027 and then to meet again in Breda (Netherlands) in 2028.

Meeting attendees were then advised that regions will be asked by the WMA Board to nominate representatives for this committee and appointments would be made within the next 2-3 months.

In thanking all attendees for their contribution to the meeting, the Chair acknowledged the work being done by women in the regions, and encouraged them to continue their involvement in mentoring and developing pathways for masters-age women.

In wishing the incoming committee well with their future activities, the Chair thanked everyone for their support and fellowship over the years, acknowledging that “my own life has been greatly enriched by my involvement in athletics over many years and despite health issues a few years ago, I am still able to compete and enjoy being part of our global family”.

Meeting closure

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.

ADDENDUM - WMA WOMEN'S COMMITTEE 2026–2028

Proposed Strategic Framework

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Women face significant cultural, social, economic and institutional barriers in many parts of the world. **WMA cannot solve these large-scale societal issues.** It can, however, contribute positively to the broader advancement of women by creating opportunities through masters' athletics and by demonstrating the value of lifelong participation, leadership, health, community and achievement.

The role of the Women's Committee should therefore be deliberately focused on those areas **where WMA can reasonably influence outcomes for women through athletics.**

GOAL

Increase the participation, retention, visibility and leadership of women in masters athletics worldwide, while using athletics as a positive contributor to the position of women within their communities.

STEP 1 — DISCOVER: Understand the Facts

Objective: Establish where the most significant participation gaps and opportunities exist.

Strategy: Understand the problem before developing solutions.

Tactics: Analyze female participation by region, country, age and event; identify high- and low-participation countries; survey female athletes and potential participants; consult regions and member federations; identify cultural, family, health, safety, economic and organizational barriers that directly affect participation in masters' athletics.

STEP 2 — PRIORITIZE: Define What WMA Can Influence

Objective: Separate major societal issues from areas where WMA can realistically create change.

Strategy: Concentrate WMA resources on barriers that can be addressed through sport, participation, communication, mentoring and leadership.

Tactics: Identify 2–3 priority barriers within each region; establish measurable 2028 objectives; determine which issues belong within the Women's Committee and which require another WMA committee or outside expertise; avoid programs where WMA has neither the expertise nor ability to influence outcomes.

STEP 3 — ACT: Develop Regional Solutions

Objective: Turn evidence into practical interventions.

Strategy: Recognize that barriers facing women differ significantly between countries and regions. Use WMA's regional structure to develop locally appropriate solutions within a common global framework.

Tactics: Each region identifies a priority issue and tests an intervention; develop athlete ambassadors and mentors; strengthen pathways into masters athletics; encourage women to become coaches, officials, administrators and leaders; develop initiatives addressing retention and social connection where evidence demonstrates a need.

STEP 4 — PROMOTE Athletics as a Positive Force for Women

Objective: Demonstrate what women can achieve through lifelong participation in sport.

Strategy: WMA should not attempt to solve wider cultural issues, but it can provide visible examples of women exercising independence, leadership, achievement and lifelong physical activity.

Tactics: Build a global 'Women in WMA' story bank; produce 15–90 second athlete stories; showcase women from different cultures, ages, abilities and circumstances; provide regional role models; share successful regional initiatives through existing WMA digital channels; create opportunities for women from different regions to exchange experiences.

STEP 5 — MEASURE, LEARN AND SCALE

Objective: Determine whether WMA actions produce measurable change.

Strategy: Measure outcomes rather than the number of activities undertaken.

Tactics: Establish a 2026 baseline; track participation and retention; evaluate regional initiatives; identify successful programs; report annually to the WMA Board; scale effective interventions; establish evidence-based objectives for the next strategic cycle.

LIMITATIONS

The WMA's Women's Committee is not charged with solving the broader cultural, political or societal inequalities facing women. Its responsibility is to understand how those factors affect participation in masters' athletics and to act where WMA has the ability, expertise and appropriate mandate to make a difference.

Through that focused role, **WMA can make a modest but meaningful contribution to the greater advancement of women in society—region by region—while remaining firmly within its mission as an international athletics organization.**

DISCOVER → PRIORITIZE → ACT → PROMOTE → MEASURE & SCALE