

Dawn Fraser, Lisa Curry, Stephanie Rice believe era of change coming to women's sport

Lexie Cartwright, The Daily Telegraph

THE theme at an all-ladies lunch yesterday was centred around women empowerment as the female heroes of Australian sport gathered to honour their past and present achievements.

Three generations of swimming greats, Dawn Fraser, Lisa Curry and Stephanie Rice were among the many legendary athletes to attend an intimate Women in Sport event at Longines Records Club in Broadbeach as part of Gold Coast Commonwealth Games celebrations.



Stephanie Rice, Lisa Curry and Dawn Fraser at the Longines Records Club for the Women in Sport lunch. Picture: Nigel Hallett

Michelle Payne, the first female jockey to win the Melbourne Cup, volleyball queen Natalie Cook, netballer Sharelle McMahon and backstroker Georgie Parks were also among the A-list names to attend the swish luncheon, MC'd by sports presenter Mel McLaughlin.

Freestyle champion Dawn Fraser, as a self-professed pioneer of gender equality in sport, said she was thrilled to see females finally being taken seriously in swimming.

“I’d like to think we’re equal, we aren’t just yet, but we are in these Games when it comes to the same amount of medals for both men and women,” she told News Corp.

“Unfortunately we’re not equal where finances are concerned.

“Their pay packets are starting to get better thanks to Mrs (Gina) Rinehart and if we keep getting people like that behind the sport we’re on our way.

“It might take another five years but after Tokyo I think we’ll see a huge change and I hope so because I’ve been pioneering for a long, long time.”



Commonwealth Games 2018. Longines Record Club womens lunch. Michelle Payne.



High jumper Amy Pejko missed the Games with injury. Picture: Nigel Hallett

Curry on the other hand said she despised the “gender card”, saying she never felt indifferent to men.

“I always said ‘train like an athlete’ not a woman or a man, but an athlete,” she said.

“If we want to be on the same level then women need to play five sets in tennis.

“Of course women deserve the same as men in sport but I don’t like the gender card.

“We have to earn it.”

Fellow swimmer, Rice, who retired from professional sport in 2012, echoed Fraser's comments, saying she felt women were in an era of change.

"We just really need to step up as far as endorsements are concerned but women have just come so far and it's inspiring to see," she said.