



# FAIR ACCESS POLICY

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RELATED STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS, POLICIES OR PROCEDURES:	Victorian Government Change our Game Initiative Loddon Shire Council Plan 2021-2025
RELATED LEGISLATION:	Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020
EVIDENCE OF APPROVAL:	

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "D. J. ...", written over a horizontal line.

FILE LOCATION: K:\EXECUTIVE\Strategies policies and procedures\Policies - adopted PDF and Word\POL Fair Access v1.docx

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## 1 PURPOSE

The Fair Access Policy (The Policy) seeks to address known barriers experienced by women and girls in accessing and using community sports infrastructure. The Policy aims to progressively build capacity and capabilities of Council in the identification, and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sports infrastructure.

Council will undertake the necessary and proportionate steps toward implementation of the Fair Access Policy.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of Loddon's culture and identity. The sport and active recreation sector provide opportunities for enriching our communities through the promotion of respect and fair mindedness for all people, while also supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all Victorians. Council is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated action plans that progress gender equality in community sport.

The Victorian Government is committed to developing an environment for all Victorians to live in a safe and equal society, have access to equal power, resources, and opportunities, and are treated with dignity, respect and fairness. A reform agenda has been developed to change the systems that have perpetuated gender inequality by designing an enduring structure that requires implementation and tacking of progress over time.

This reform agenda includes addressing the traditional structures and the way community sport and recreation organisations operate through the implementation all nine (9) recommendations from the 2015 inquiry into *Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation*. This includes recommendation six (6):

“...encourage facility owners and managers to review access and usage policies to ensure women and girls have a fair share of access to the highest quality facilities at the best and most popular times”

and

“facilitating a universal adoption of (policies, strategies and audit tools) will drive change further”.

As a defined entity of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Council is required to conduct Gender Impact Assessments (GIA) on all new policies, programs, communications, and services, including those up for review, which directly and significantly impact the public. The access and use of community sports infrastructure is an example of policy that has a direct and significant impact on the public.

## 3 STATEMENT OF INTENT

This Statement of Intent establishes the expectation that gender equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

The purpose of the Policy is to support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sports infrastructure. This complies with the *Gender Equality Act 2020* and aligns with Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans or Council Strategies:

1. Loddon Shire Council recognises that gender equality is the attainment of equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women, men, trans and gender diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
2. Loddon Shire Council recognises that gender equity is the provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

## 4 SCOPE

The Policy enables effective and efficient integration of the requirements of the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, the *Local Government Act 2020* and the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* and other legislative frameworks.

This policy applies to the community sports infrastructure that is owned or directly managed by Council. Infrastructure that is not owned or directly managed by Council is still within the scope of this policy, however Council is committed to working with the owners and managers of those facilities (many of which are owned by the State Government via the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action or DEECA) to support compliance with the Fair Access Policy Roadmap.

Reform Agenda	Objectives
<p><b><i>To support Loddon Shire Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure</i></b></p>	<p>To build capacity and capabilities of Loddon Shire Council in the identification and elimination of systemic causes of gender inequality in policy, programs, communications, and delivery of services in relation to community sport and recreation.</p> <p>To ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure.</p> <p>To promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.</p>

Table 1: Loddon Shire Council Fair Access Objectives

## 5 POLICY

The Policy, a requirement of the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR), is designed to comply with the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, and the wider Victorian Government gender equality strategy.

Council acknowledges:

- a. the disadvantaged position some individuals have had in the sport and recreation sector because of their gender; and
- b. that achieving gender equality will require diverse approaches for women, men, trans and gender diverse people to achieve similar outcomes for people of all genders.
- c.

Council will:

1. engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, regional sport assemblies (where applicable) and our sport and recreation community, regardless of their gender, in a positive, respectful, and constructive manner; and
2. engage in the process of Gender Impact Assessments to assess the implications for women, men, trans and gender diverse people of any planned action, including policies and communications. This is a strategy for making all voices, concerns and experiences, an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring of policies and programs.

### 5.1 Fair access principles

The Fair Access Principles have been developed by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, Sport and Recreation Victoria and VicHealth, in consultation with representatives from local government and the state sport and recreation sector. This Policy and any resultant action plan are based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, full participation, equal representation, encouraging and supporting user groups, and prioritising user groups committed to equality.

Council considers that these Principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of Loddon Shire Council's area.

Council has identified specific actions and are committed to progressing gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure in its Fair Access Action Plan.



Figure 1: Fair Access Six Principles

## 5.2 Compliance and Monitoring

### 5.2.1 Actions

Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current community sports infrastructure access and use policies and processes, and to consider opportunities to strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles.

Council acknowledges that the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan (or equivalent), will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure from 1 July 2024.

A Fair Access Action plan has been developed outlining the steps council will take to meet the requirements. (see attachment).

## 5.2.2 Responsibility

Management, staff, volunteers and stakeholders (for example State Sporting Associations and Regional Sporting Associations) at Loddon Shire Council have a shared responsibility to support the policy as outlined below:

- to promote a gender-aware and gender-responsive culture and community and championing the Fair Access Policy
- to promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls in sport and active recreation.
- lead the review of sport and recreation policies and processes
- develop and adopt gender equitable access and use policies
- to communicate policy updates
- to monitor compliance and issues
- support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the *Gender Equality Act 2020* obligations
- support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes
- support the formal adoption process of a new or revised gender equitable policies
- undertake Gender Impact Assessment and submissions of progress reports as per the *Gender Equality Act 2020* obligations
- to communicate and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users
- to adhere to and communicate the policy when required
- to attend training / awareness programs.

## 6 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS OR ABBREVIATIONS USED

Term	Definition
<b>Committees of Management</b>	For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
<b>Community Sports Infrastructure</b>	Publicly owned local, rural, regional, or state level sport and recreation infrastructure operated and maintained primarily for the purpose of facilitating community sport activities, including sporting grounds, surfaces, facilities, and pavilions.
<b>Gender</b>	How you understand who you are and how you interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a mix of these or neither. A person's gender and their expression of their gender can be shown in different ways, such as through behaviour or physical appearance.
<b>Gender diverse</b>	An umbrella term for a range of genders expressed in different ways. Gender diverse people use many terms to describe themselves. Language in this area is dynamic, particularly among young people, who are more likely to describe themselves as non-binary.
<b>Gender equality</b>	The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men, trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
<b>Gender equity</b>	The provision of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities based on gender. The concept recognises that people may have different needs related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
<b>Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)</b>	A requirement under the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> to be carried out on policies, programs and services which have a direct and significant impact on the public. The assessment must evaluate the effects that a policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.
<b>Public land management groups</b>	For the purposes of this document, are the Committees of Management appointed under the <i>Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978</i> and responsible for the management of recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
<b>Transgender, or trans</b>	Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

## 7 HUMAN RIGHTS STATEMENT

It is considered that this Policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act. Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees. Council will formally involve elected employee Health and Safety Representatives in any workplace change that may affect the health and safety of any of its employees.

*The Gender Equality Act 2020* requires Council to undertake Gender Impact Assessment when developing or reviewing any policy, program or service which has a direct and significant impact on the public. This policy will alter the way Council reviews and considers policy development and investment decisions to support fair access.

## 8 REVIEW

The Manager of Community Partnerships will review this policy for any necessary amendments no later than 4 years after adoption of this current version.

## 9 ATTACHMENTS

Fair Access Action Plan

DOCUMENT TYPE:	Action Plan
DOCUMENT STATUS:	Approved
POLICY OWNER POSITION:	Manager Community Partnerships
INTERNAL COMMITTEE ENDORSEMENT:	Not applicable
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Signed by Director Community Wellbeing

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## 2 SCOPE

Council acknowledges that the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and

action plan (or equivalent), will form part of the eligibility criteria for Victorian Government funding programs relating to community sports infrastructure from 1 July 2024

## 3 ACTION PLAN

Focus Area	Action	Timeframe	Indicator of success
Infrastructure	Ensure future infrastructure projects (new or upgrades to existing facilities) are fit for purpose and suitable for women and girls' participation (e.g., No urinals, inclusion of baby change facilities where appropriate)	Annually	Safer and more inclusive infrastructure that will lead to improved training and playing experiences for women and girls
Funding and grants	Exploring relevant funding and grants to upgrade facilities. Prioritise upgrades based on identified needs	Annually	Identifying opportunities to seek relevant federal or state government community sports infrastructure funding.
Gender Impact Assessments (GIA)	Complete GIA for all relevant planning process for all new policies, plans, and strategies in alignment with councils GIA policy in alignment with councils requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020	Annually	Minimum one GIA completed to the satisfaction of Council Executive
Fair Access Principles	Collaborate with stakeholders (e.g. Committees of Management, local sporting leagues) to ensure fair and equitable access of facilities	Ongoing (beginning of new seasons)	Provide guidance through gender equity training sessions or resources (facilitated by SSAs, RSAs or Recreation officer.)
Assessment tool	Develop an assessment tool or checklist for clubs to self-identify areas for improvement in gender equity	By July 2025	Assessment tool distributed to all clubs
Representation	Encourage and explore options for working towards gender targets on committees	By July 2025	All clubs have minimum 20 per cent women on committees

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