

OFFICIAL

Strathbogie Shire Council Fair Access Policy

February 2024



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Fair Access Policy

Document ID:	858811
Effective Date:	
Last Review:	New Policy
Current Review:	
Date Adopted by Council:	
Next Scheduled Review Date:	February 2026
Responsible Officer:	Manager Community and Culture

PART 1 POLICY

1. PURPOSE

The *Gender Equality Act (2020)* aims to improve workplace gender equality in the Victorian Public Sector.

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 tracking of progress over time.

This reform agenda includes addressing the traditional structures and way community sport and recreation organisations operate through the implementation of 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 the level of government closest to the community, Victorian Councils have a mandate to create healthy, safe, and inclusive communities.

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of the community’s culture and identity. Sport and Recreation provides 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.

As the owner and manager of several sport and recreation facilities, Council is well placed to ensure equitable and fair access to each of these facilities regardless of gender.

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 Strathbogie Shire Council (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.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

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

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.

- a. 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.

- b. 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 and power related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS POLICY

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.

The scope 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*, the Council Plan, and Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

Reform Agenda	Objectives
To support Council to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sports infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To 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 sport and recreation. • To ensure an effective place-based response for the gender equitable use and access of community sports infrastructure. • To promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sports infrastructure.

For Strathbogie Shire Council, the Policy applies to the following community sports infrastructure:

Facility		Location
1	Nagambie Recreation Reserve	Vickers Road, Nagambie
2	Violet Town Recreation Reserve	Tulip Street, Violet Town
3	Strathbogie Recreation Reserve	62 Spring Creek Road, Strathbogie
4	Friendlies Reserve	Gobur Street, Euroa
5	Longwood Recreation Reserve	2A Down Street, Longwood
6	Ruffy Recreation Reserve	36 Noye Lane, Ruffy

7	<i>Euroa Memorial Oval (DEECA)</i> Note: Council has less of a sphere of influence on DEECA owned facilities which are operated by a DEECA appointed Public Land Management Group.	2 Dunn Street, Euroa
8	<i>Avenel Recreation Reserve (DEECA)</i> Note: Council has less of a sphere of influence on DEECA owned facilities which are operated by a DEECA appointed Public Land Management Group.	33A Anderson Street, Avenel

4. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Actions

Council acknowledges the requirement to have a gender equitable access and use policy and action plan (or equivalent) in place by 1 July 2024, and the ability to demonstrate progress against that policy and action plan (or equivalent).

Council commits to undertake a Gender Impact Assessment 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 accordance with the Fair Access Principles outlined in section 6.

Council has also identified specific actions outlined in Addendum 1 Fair Access Action Plan to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure.

Role	Responsibilities
Manager Community and Culture	Responsible for implementing Council's Fair Access Policy
Local Government - CEO and Executive, and Land Management Group – President or Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Local Government – Senior Officers, and Land Management Group – nominated committee member/s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the review of sport and recreation policies and process. • Develop and adopt gender equitable access and use policies. • To communicate policy updates to all staff and members. • To monitor compliance and issues. • To promote, encourage and facilitate the achievement of gender equality and improvement in the status of women and girls. • Support the undertaking of Gender Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations

<p>Local Government –Senior Officers, and Land Management Group – nominated committee member/s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 submission of progress reports as per the <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> obligations
<p>Local Government – Senior Officers, and Land Management Group – nominated committee member/s</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate and educate sport and recreation infrastructure user groups and users.
<p>Local Government – all staff, and Land Management Groups – all committee members/volunteers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To adhere to and communicate the policy when required. • To attend training / awareness programs.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Policy 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.

Council will:

1. engage fairly and equitably with all staff, governance working groups, state sporting organisations, regional sport assemblies (where applicable) and members of 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.

6. 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.

1. Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe and inclusive

2. Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator and spectator

3. Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure:

- a) at the highest quality available and most convenient
- b) at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations
- c) to support existing and new participation opportunities and a variety of sports

4. Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles

5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices

6. Prioritise access, use and support all user groups who can demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sports infrastructure

7. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Committees of Management	Comprises of a group of community members who run and operate the day-to-day activity of a property or facility.
Community Sports Infrastructure	Publicly owned or managed 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.
Council	Strathbogie Shire Council
Gender	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.
Gender Diverse	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.
Gender Equality	The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men and trans and gender-diverse people. Equality does not mean that women, men and trans and gender diverse people will become the same but that their rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on their gender.
Gender Equity	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 and power related to their gender and these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies gender related imbalances.
Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	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.
Public Land Management Groups	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.
Transgender (or Trans)	Someone whose gender does not only align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves.

8. RELATED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION

The following Council, State, regional and national plans and policies are relevant to this policy under each subtitle.

Legislation

- *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*

Related Council documents

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2021-2024
- Gender Equity Action Plan
- Leasing and Licensing Policy

9. POLICY REVIEW

Council may review this policy at any time and at least two years from the date of adoption.

Minor amendments to the policy may be authorised by the CEO at any time where such changes do not alter the substance of the policy (eg a change to the name of a related document, or a change in legislation).

10. CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES ACT 2006 AND THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY ACT 2010

The Council acknowledges the legal responsibility to comply with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*. The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* is designed to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. The Charter gives legal protection to twenty fundamental human rights under four key values that include freedom, respect, equality and dignity.

11. ADDENDUM: THE FAIR ACCESS ACTION PLAN

Principle 1: Community sports infrastructure and environments are genuinely welcoming, safe, and inclusive.

Actions To Achieve Progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of Success
Provide education to clubs and committees of management on ways they can create a welcoming, inclusive, and safe club and facility.	<i>Six months from policy adoption.</i>	<i>Regional Sports Assembly in conjunction with Council Staff</i>	Attendance of clubs and committees of management at education sessions. Minimum one in person and one online education sessions to take place.
Undertake facilities audit to identify upgrades.	12 months from policy adoption	Facilities Maintenance Officer	All facilities audited, required upgrades identified and prioritised in the Sport and Recreation Victoria Project Pipeline Document.
Funding sought to support upgrades identified in facilities audit.	Three Years from Policy adoption	Facilities, Sport and Recreation Officer	Minimum one facility upgraded.

Principle 2: Women and girls can fully participate in all aspects of community sport and active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.

Actions To Achieve Progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of Success
Communicate capacity building workshop opportunities to attract and develop women and girls in all aspects of community sport.	12 months from policy adoption	Regional Sports Assembly	Long term indicator increased participation numbers of women in volunteer club positions.

Principle 3: Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure:

- a. of the highest quality available and most convenient
- b. at the best and most popular competition and training times and locations
- c. to support existing and new participation opportunities, and a variety of sports.

Actions To Achieve Progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of Success
Leagues and/or associations to undertake club consultation on suitability of playing and training times (with support from council).	12 months from policy adoption	<i>State and local Sporting Associations, clubs</i>	Leagues/associations of top three participation sports to survey club members once a year.

Principle 4: Women and girls should be equitably represented in leadership and governance roles.

Actions To Achieve Progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of Success
Promote local, state and federal grant opportunities to clubs to upskill women and girls to enable opportunities in leadership and governance roles.	From policy adoption	Facilities, Sport and Recreation Officer	Funding opportunities are communicated.

Principle 5: Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.

Actions To Achieve Progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of Success
Support and provide education and training to user groups utilising The Office for Women in Sport and Recreation and Valley Sport to assist in the delivery of the sessions.	<i>Six months from policy adoption</i>	<i>Regional Sports Assembly in conjunction with Council Staff</i>	All user groups to participate in education session. Survey user groups following sessions to determine the implementation of gender equitable access and use practices.

Principle 6: Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an on-going commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

Actions To Achieve Progress	Timeframe	Responsibility	Indicator of Success
Prioritise access and use for user groups who promote gender equitable access.	From policy adoption	Recreation Reserve Committee of management/Facilities, Sport and Recreation Officer	Survey user groups annually to determine satisfaction of access and use.