

Date adopted

August 2024

Last review

Next review

Responsible Officer

Community Development Coordinator



**POLICY TITLE**                      **Fair Access Policy**

**POLICY NUMBER**                **POL/COMM815**

**1. PURPOSE**

To address known barriers experienced by women, girls and gender diverse people in accessing and using community sports Infrastructure.

**2. SCOPE**

Sport is a highly visible and valued attribute of the community’s culture and identity in the municipality.

The embedding of respect, fair mindedness, and inclusion through sport and active recreation activities is an opportunity for enriching and strengthening our communities, while supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of all people.

Council, through its strong connection with the community, is well positioned to design and implement place-based, integrated actions that progress gender equality in community sport. This policy establishes the requirement that Equality is considered and prioritised in all current and future Council planning, policy, service delivery and practice in the context of how it relates to community sports infrastructure.

In actively seeking gender equality the objective is to ensure our community will be fairer, healthier, and safer, with violence against women and children reduced; our resources and opportunities will be shared more fairly; and our civic governance structures will be more reflective of all of community.

- a) Swan Hill Rural City 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) Swan Hill Rural City 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

Swan Hill Rural City Council identified in their Gender Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025

*“The Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025 (GEAP) and objectives is building on a foundation of engagement and emerging capacity towards gender equality and intersectional inclusion. This is embedded in the Community Vision and Council Plan that highlights the value of Fairness; embracing diversity and ensuring everyone is treated equally”*

This policy aligns with Council's identified role in Gender Equality.

### 3. 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 actions are based on six (6) principles of inclusivity, including 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 active recreation, including as a player, coach, administrator, official, volunteer and spectator.
3. Women and girls will have equitable access to and use of community 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.
4. Women and girls should be represented in leadership and governance roles.
5. Encourage and support all user groups who access and use community infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement gender equitable access and use practices.
6. Prioritise access, use and support to all user groups who demonstrate an ongoing commitment to gender equitable access and use of allocated community sport infrastructure.

### 4. POLICY ACTIONS

- a) We will continue to build the capacity of Council staff members to apply a gender lens to business as usual and conduct best practice Gender Impact Assessments (GIA).
- b) Council commits to undertake a GIA on all current community sports infrastructure access and use processes and policies (as part of the policy review process).
- c) Council will consider opportunities to strengthen gender equitable access and use of community sports facilities in alignment with the Fair Access Principles where this opportunity is identified through the GIA.
- d) Council staff commits to 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.
- e) Clubs with demonstrated commitment to gender equity (eg Gender Equality Action Plan) are prioritised for use of community sport facilities.

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

Swan Hill Rural City Council has also identified the following specific actions to progress gender equitable access and use of community sports infrastructure:

- g) All organisations seeking Council support to apply to State Government Funding Programs relating to community sports infrastructure are required to demonstrate they are committed and actively progressing Gender Equity in their club. This is demonstrated by any of the following:
  - I. Completion of a gender equity audit and active implementation of a gender equity action plan.
  - II. Completion of gender equality related training programs by committee members and club members e.g. gender equality, Bystander, intersectionality, LGBTQIA+ inclusion.
- h) Council will support clubs to progress Gender Equity and Intersectional Inclusion within their clubs through introduction to industry expertise and coordination of online training opportunities.
- i) Council will encourage and support all user groups who access and use community sport infrastructure to understand, adopt and implement equitable access and use practices.
- j) Council’s Community Grants Program Guidelines will reflect Fair Access Principles and look to projects that encourage participation of underrepresented groups including women, girls, trans and gender diverse people
- k) Council’s community sports infrastructure facility user agreements will be reviewed and updated to include a statement under section 11.12 Fair Access. Responsibilities of the Organisation, outlining the Victorian Government and Councils expectation of equitable access.

**5. IMPLEMENTATION**

The Community Development team is responsible for leading Council’s Fair Access Policy and all staff are responsible for implementing the Policy. Management, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders (for example State Sports Associations and Regional Sports Assemblies) operating within Council have a shared responsibility to support the policy.

**6. DEFINITIONS**

Committees of Management	For the purposes of this document, refers to committees appointed by the Department of Land, Water, Environment and Planning under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.
Community Sports Infrastructure	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.
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, or GIA	A requirement under the Gender Equality Act 2020 to be carried out on policies, programs and services Equitable Access and Usage for Community Sports Infrastructure Policy Page 5 of 5 CP 038 Public Land Management Groups Transgender, or trans 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 Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 and responsible for the management of recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held
Transgender or trans	Someone whose gender does not align with their sex assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves

## 7. RELATED POLICIES/PROCEDURES/DOCUMENTS

SHRCC Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025  
 Recreation Reserves Masterplan 2018  
 Swan Hill Showgrounds Sport and Recreation precinct masterplan 2024 (in Draft)  
 Fair Access Policy Roadmap (Vic)

## 8. RELATED LEGISLATION

*Gender Equality Act 2020*  
*Local Government Act 2020*  
*Equal Opportunity Act 2010*

## 9. DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version Number	Issue Date	Description of Change
1.0	13 August 2024	Initial Policy

**Signed:**  **Mayor** **Date:** 12 September 2024