



Rural City of
Wangaratta

Community Sport Fair Access Policy

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Responsible Officer	Manager Community Services
Authorising Officer	Director Community and Infrastructure
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1. Purpose

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

2. Background

Sport is a highly visible and valued feature of the Rural City of Wangaratta'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. The Rural City of Wangaratta is well positioned to design and implement a place-based, integrated action plan that progresses 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 tracking of progress over time.

A key component of this reform agenda is the Victorian Government's **Fair Access Policy Roadmap**, which seeks to achieve gender-equitable access to and use of community sport infrastructure and promote fair and inclusive participation opportunities for all Victorians.

This reform agenda also 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 Community Sport Facility Booking Policy, will drive change further”

As a defined entity under the **Gender Equality Act 2020**, the Rural City of Wangaratta is required to conduct **Gender Impact Assessments** (GIAs) on all new policies, programs, communications and services, including those under review, that directly and significantly impact the public. As permitted under the Act, Council has broadened the GIA process to an **Equity Impact Assessment** (EIA), enabling consideration of gender alongside other intersecting factors that may affect equity and access. The access and use of community sport infrastructure is an example of a policy area 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 Rural City of Wangaratta planning, policy, service delivery and practice as they relate to community sport infrastructure.

- a. Rural City of Wangaratta 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. Rural City of Wangaratta 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.

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.

The scope of the Policy is to support the Rural City of Wangaratta to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and usage of community sport infrastructure. This complies with the **Gender Equality Act 2020** and aligns with the **Council Plan 2025 - 2029**, which includes the **Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan**.

Reform Agenda	Objectives
To support the Rural City of Wangaratta to take positive action towards achieving gender equity in the access and use of community sport infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build capacity and capabilities of the Rural City of Wangaratta 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 sport infrastructure. To promote gender equality in policies, programs, communications, and services as they relate to community sport infrastructure.

The Policy applies to all sporting facilities owned or managed by the Rural City of Wangaratta.

5. Policy Framework

The Policy is designed to comply with the Gender Equality Act 2020, and the wider Victorian Government gender equality strategy.

The Rural City of Wangaratta acknowledges:

1. the disadvantaged position some individuals have had in the sport and recreation sector because of their gender; and
2. 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.

The Rural City of Wangaratta 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 Equity 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.

The Rural City of Wangaratta considers that these principles provide clear direction, while also enabling adaption to the specific environment of the municipality.

1. Community sport 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 sport infrastructure
 - Of the highest quality available and most convenient
 - At the best and most popular training times and locations
 - To support existing and new participation opportunities in a variety of sport
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, adapt 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

7. Compliance and Monitoring

7.1 Actions

The Rural City of Wangaratta will review its community sport facility access and use policies and processes, and identify opportunities to improve gender equitable access in line with the Fair Access Principles.

If opportunities are identified, the Rural City of Wangaratta will develop and adopt a locally relevant policy and action plan to improve gender equitable access to community sport facilities in line with the Fair Access Principles.

The Rural City of Wangaratta acknowledges that having gender equitable access and use policy and action plan, and demonstrating progress against it, is a requirement for eligibility for Victorian Government community sport infrastructure funding from 1 July 2024.

The Rural City of Wangaratta has identified actions in its Fair Access Action Plan too support gender equitable access to community sport infrastructure.

7.2 Responsibility

The Manager of Community Services is responsible for implementing the Rural City of Wangaratta's Fair Access Policy. Management personnel, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders (for example Sport Northeast and Sport and Recreation Victoria) at The Rural City of Wangaratta have a shared responsibility to support the policy, as outlined in the table below.

Role	Responsibility
Local Government - CEO and Executives	<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 – Manager of Community Services	<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
Local Government – accountable Officer for the Gender Equality Act or similar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the review of sport and recreation policies and processes Support the formal adoption process of new or revised gender equitable policies Undertake Equity Impact Assessment and submission of progress reports as per the Gender Equality Act 2020 obligations
Local Government - Sport and Recreation Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Support implementation of the Policy through engagement, communication and education with facility user groups and stakeholders
Local Government – all staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act in accordance with the intent of the Policy where relevant to their roles. Participate in training and awareness activities that support gender equity and inclusive practice.

8. Human Rights

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic). In implementing this policy, Council seeks to promote and protect human rights, including the right to equality, non-discrimination, and participation in community life.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has considered and applied Councils Equality Impact Assessment Template and satisfies the provisions established in the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).

10. Monitoring and evaluation

Council will monitor the allocation and use of sport grounds and associated facilities on an ongoing basis to ensure alignment with this Policy.

11. Definitions

Committees of Management

For the purposes of this document, committees appointed by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978 to manage recreation reserves where community sport training and games are held.

Community Sport Infrastructure

Publicly owned local, rural, regional, or state level sport and recreation facilities and infrastructure, including sporting grounds, surfaces, pavilions, buildings and associated assets, that are operated and maintained to support and facilitate community sport and recreation participations.

Gender

How a person understands who they are and how they interact with other people. Many people understand their gender as being a man or woman. Some people understand their gender as a combination 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. Source: Victorian Government, [Our Equal State glossary](#).

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. Source: Victorian Government, [Our Equal State glossary](#).

Gender equality

The state in which access to rights or opportunities is unaffected by gender. Gender equality is when people of all genders have equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

Equality does not mean that women, men, people with intersex variations, and trans and gender diverse people will become the same. Rather, their rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on their gender. Source: Victorian Government, [Our Equal State glossary](#).

Gender equity

Gender equity recognises that differences in gender-related needs and power should be identified and addressed in a manner that fixes any imbalances. Source: Victorian Government, [Our Equal State glossary](#).

Transgender, or trans

A person whose gender does not align with the one assigned at birth. Not all trans people will use this term to describe themselves. Source: Victorian Government, [Our Equal State glossary](#).

12. References and Related Policies

Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)
- Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic) □ Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (Vic)

Victorian Government References

- Victorian Government, Our Equal State: Victorias Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2027 - Glossary.
- Victorian Government, Inquiry into Women and Girls in Sport and Active Recreation (2015) □ Victorian Government, Fair Access Policy Roadmap (2022)

Internal Policies & Plans

- Council Plan 2025-2029, inc Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Community Sport Facility Booking Policy (2026)
- Gender Equality Action Plan (2022-2025)
- Fair Access Action Plan 2026

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed every 5 years, or sooner if required under Government Legislation. The review will be led by Manager Community Services.

Version History		
Version Number	Date of change	Reasons for change
1	May 2026	Reviewed the document and aligned the wording with the supporting body
2	September 2026	Reviewed Definition Section

